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CRITICAL, CREATIVE AND COLLABORATIVE LEARNING IN A SCHOOL FILM CLUB:

FILM EDUCATION AND CRITICAL PEDAGOGIES IN PRACTICE

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation analyses the ways in which critical pedagogies and film education practices in primary schools relate to each other. The current political climate in Britain enforces the quality of state education to be judged through quantitative measurements of performativity and accountability. Within this context, this research aims to reveal insights into how film education relates to and broadens more arts-based practices in schools, advocating to lessen the burden on teachers of numeric evaluations.

As the knowledge and data that this dissertation presents are products of the researcher's situated knowledge and practice within the film education field, this qualitative study is situated within a critical emancipatory research paradigm. Influenced by questions concerning relations between power and knowledge, critical emancipatory research aims to discredit the notion of objectivity in academia.

As a case study, this research explores an after-school film club in a North London primary school, guided by the British Film Institute and the Cinémathèque française as part of the Cinéma, Cent Ans de Jeunesse (CCAJ) project. Through observations and interviews with the project's participants, this study argues that film education is inherently related to critical pedagogies. The combination of the two schools of thought produce a balance of pedagogical ideals that are based on creativity, criticality and collaboration. These ideals are reflected in the CCAJ project and through the act of filmmaking, students, as well as educators experienced a greater sense of autonomy and agency.

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1. INTRODUCTION

To what extent is the knowledge that I teach children of true interest to them? As a film and art educator, this is a question I ask myself sometimes. Teaching involves passing knowledge on to someone else, but is this knowledge something that I want to teach? And is the recipient of this knowledge not more capable of deciding what they want to learn? These broader questions underpin my research question: *How do film education practices relate to critical pedagogies in primary schools in the UK?*

The purpose of this research is to analyse the relationships between critical pedagogies and film education practices in schools, within a critical emancipatory research paradigm. With critical pedagogies I am referring to educational theorist Paulo Freire's notion of education as 'the practice of liberty' (Freire, 2013a, p. ix). Freire believes that by problematising the roles of educator and learner, the educated will become more active participants in their own education, which will provide a more liberating and more challenging process. Central to critical pedagogies is a belief in the importance of education in determining political and social relations and the critiquing of institutional power relations within the production of knowledge. Influenced by questions concerning relations between power and knowledge, critical emancipatory research aims to discredit the notion of objectivity in academia. As the knowledge and data that I aim to present are products of my situated knowledge and practice within the film education field, I position this study within a critical emancipatory research paradigm. This research paradigm aims to produce knowledge that examines societal problems with a view to exposing issues of marginalisation (Truman et. al., 2005).

Drawing on theories from the fields of Cultural Studies, sociology, anthropology, critical pedagogies, film and media education, I will compose a theoretical framework that will form the foundation of my analysis. By exploring an after-school film club in a primary school as a case study of film education practices, I will argue that film education and critical pedagogies produce a balance of pedagogical ideals that are based on creativity, criticality and collaboration. Within the current political climate in Britain, in which the quality of state education is judged through performativity and accountability (Ball, 2017), this research aims to reveal insights into how film education relates to and broadens more arts-based practices in schools and moves to lessen the burden on teachers of numeric evaluations.

1.1 Knowledge deposition and constructivist education

The foundations of the Western education system are commonly decided within institutional control, depending on the social, cultural and economic context of that period. Before the seventeenth century, religious institutions agreed on the content that should be taught in schools. In the wake of the Reformation and during the chaos of wars between Christian groups, a new educational system was proposed which would be egalitarian and common to all, despite their religious affiliations (Benn, 2011). As the focus on religious education within schools diminished, it was essential that 'all members of a society [were] educated together' (Benn, 2011, p. 78) to create a sense of one cohesive society. With the rise of the nation state in the nineteenth century, the idea of encouraging individuals to feel a sense of belonging within the borders of the nation state permeated the public sector. Education proved to be a vital means for this end (Anderson, 2006), education:

> redefines the politics of power, the political nature of representation and the centrality of pedagogy as a defining principle of social change (Giroux, 2011, p. 48).

Within western contemporary society, the neoliberal capitalist system requires individuals to become employable by being flexible and skilled in various aspects, while also adaptable to short-term and project-oriented employment (Boltanski & Chiapello, 2005). With this perspective, Western education policy has become dominated by these economic aims – education is 'a producer of labour and basic and 'high skills', and of subjectivities, values and sensibilities, like enterprise and entrepreneurship' (Ball, 2017, p. 13). Former UK Prime Minister Tony Blair (1997-2007) emphasised this idea, claiming that 'education is now the centre of economic policy making for the future' (Blair, 2005 quoted in Ball, 2017, p. 14). Education centres around economic possibilities and therefore, it is deemed necessary to evaluate education with achievement criteria that are measurable and accountable.

Critiques of this educational model argue that judging a student's skills through statistical measures can be limiting and resembles an act of 'knowledge-deposition'. This knowledge deposition through accountability is what Freire (2013b, p. 72) calls the 'banking concept of education'. The banking concept assumes that students are passive recipients of knowledge (hooks, 1994). Many theorists contest the banking concept, particularly those who follow a constructivist educational philosophy (Dewey, 1916; Piaget, 1971; Vygotsky, 1978; Bakhtin, 1981; Lave & Wenger, 1991). They posit that learning occurs through situated processes of meaning-making, which consist of a dialogue between academic knowledge and personal experiences and ideas. Learning

is not merely memorising facts and ‘understanding the ‘true’ nature of things […], but rather a personal and social construction of meaning’ (Hein, 2011, p. 44). According to Cannon (2018), education systems should aspire to be:

> devised to maximise the potential for leading a life that is personally fulfilling, socially rewarding, culturally enriching and economically beneficial whilst being of benefit to the wider community (Cannon, 2018, p. 20).

The school environment might provide more than instrumental models of the curriculum for children and young people: education systems have the potential to go beyond this and develop creative, social and personal skills extensively. The banking system, however, marginalises these developments and privileges the individual as serving one’s own needs first by gaining skills which are of the highest economic value.

1.2 Discourses: creativity, collaboration and playful identities

Combining a constructivist approach to learning with a theoretical foundation based on critical pedagogies, my pedagogical approach encourages creativity, collaboration and an acknowledgement of hybrid identities. There are different ways to look past the accountable measurements of education that are the dominant objectives of curricula in the majority of British schools. Aside from rigid tests and reproducing knowledge through the act of memorising, demonstrating knowledge through creative practices involves an active and critical engagement and meaning-making (Dewey, 1916).

Acts of creativity are arguably inherent aspects of human beings: Vygotsky argues that the imaginative and the playful, which are crucial parts of creativity, occur naturally within the development of young children (Vygotsky, 2004). An example of this can be a baby constructing a tower by placing blocks on top of one another: creativity arises when one creates something new by constructing, combining or changing. This process of creativity rarely occurs in an isolated situation, as 'art reflects the development of society and touches upon people's lives' (Lindqvist, 2003, p. 246). Creativity involves interactions between an individual and their social environments (Buckingham, 2009). Hence, creativity is a collective process, one that requires an understanding of its social and historical context:

> a cultural practice, text or artefact cannot be understood in isolation from the historically situated 'structure of feeling' from whence it emerges (Cannon, 2018, p. 34).

Here, Cannon is referring to Raymond Williams' definition of 'structure of feeling' with which he implies that at any time in history, there are different ways of thinking that are constantly fleeting, as well as fixed through socio-cultural and institutional frameworks

(Williams, 2013; Cannon, 2018). These frameworks define our ways of being and relating to each other within a particular time.

Creativity is not only intertwined with the socio-cultural context; it also occurs through interactions with other human beings. Creativity is a collaborative process, contrary to the romanticist notion of the 'tortured genius' (Csikszentmihalyi, 2013, p. 19). Instead of assuming that an individual receives unexpected surges of inspiration, creativity is a process of co-creation. Through collective exchanges with each other, 'drops of individual creativity' are combined to produce a 'collective creative work' (Vygotsky, 2004, p. 12). This process of co-creation engages with other different processes, such as the construction of identities. During collaborative creative practices, aspects of a person's identity are constantly being negotiated and balanced between 'the limits of their own individual input and their resonances with each other' (Potter, 2012, p. 41). This playful negotiation of identities is also part of the critical pedagogies' ideals. Critical pedagogues argue that the classroom should be a site in which education is a cooperative act of learning, where each individual's identities and histories are respected.

There are a range of hands-on activities that combine the development of creative, social and personal skills to shape these active meaning-making pedagogies. One that I will be focusing on in this research is filmmaking. Many scholars have emphasised the importance of media and film literacy (Bergala, 2016; Buckingham, 2009; Burn & Durran, 2007; Cannon, 2018; Potter, 2012). Bazalgette claims that 'film and the moving image is the richest and most complex art forms and means of expression human beings have ever invented' (Bazalgette in Cannon, 2018, p. 7). More importantly, moving image and media are intertwined with our contemporary society – 'they offer us ideas, images and representations (both factual and fictional) that inevitably shape our view of reality' (Buckingham, 2009, p. 5). Following this perspective, it is arguable that studying these media and learning to develop a critical understanding of them is necessary. Practical media work can 'nurture the skills and disposition for inclusive, praxis-oriented cultural participation' (Cannon, 2018, p. 2).

Yet, across European education systems (FLAG, 2013) media and film literacy practices do not seem to be considered as significant enough by educational policy makers to include in the core curriculum. In the United Kingdom, media and film literacy are sometimes included in a minor way within the core subjects, such as technology or citizenship. Media within these subjects merely possesses an instrumental function, rather than encouraging young people to study media in a creative, critical and analytical

manner. Media Studies and Film Studies are minor and optional subjects offered at GCSE[1] level and taken only by around one percent of students taking GCSEs (Ofqual, 2018). Other times media literacy practices take place in schools in extracurricular clubs, with support from national institutions. An example of projects like these is the international film education project 'Cinéma, Cent Ans de Jeunesse' (henceforth CCAJ) led by the Cinémathèque française.

1.3 Methods and expectations

As a case study for film literacy practices, I will explore the CCAJ project in relation to the question of how film education could exemplify critical pedagogies in schools. The CCAJ has become an international project, collaborating with various cinemas and film institutions in fifteen countries. The project is led by the British Film Institute in England. A few primary schools in and around London are participating in the project, and for this research I have collaborated with a primary school in North London.

The project provides a rich setting for investigating how film projects in schools operate. Through observations of this film club from the start to the end of the project, and interviews with the class teacher and four participants of the film club, the research aims to reveal critical insights into their experiences of the film club and opinions on film education, creativity, and the collaborative working environment. By exploring these discourses with the interviewees, I hope to discover whether the students experienced a greater sense of autonomy, agency and criticality, ideals that are advocated by critical pedagogues, through film education practices. These stages in my research will help me find answers to my research question.

The process of data collection will revolve around the students and teacher participating in the film club, as well as a reflective account of my experiences working with these particular students and teacher. This research is a qualitative reflexive account in keeping with a constructivist approach to knowledge production, rather than a quantitative account seeking to prove a hypothesis with numbers and statistics. As I've mentioned before, I am aware of my partiality and bias within this subject and situate this study within a critical emancipatory research paradigm. I aim to adopt an auto-ethnographic narrative style within this research, one that reflects a variety of roles and identities: I am a researcher, student, educator and colleague.

[1] General Certificate of Secondary Education.

The next chapter will discuss various theories from critical pedagogies and film education, from which I have distilled my discourses: creativity, collaboration and identity play. This theoretical framework will help me design an analytical framework through which I interpret the data that I have collected through the interviews and participant observations in the analysis chapter. Subsequently, the discussion chapter explores the ways in which these analyses relate with the theoretical framework. Combining a solid theoretical framework on film education and critical pedagogies, with a critical analysis of the CCAJ film club, I advocate for a balance between critical pedagogies and film education within the formal school environment and illustrate a more profound understanding of film education projects in practice.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In this section I present an overview of the debates surrounding the subjects discussed in the introduction. Starting with a critique of the current education system in the UK and the policies behind this system, I will explain how critical pedagogies offer an alternative approach to education. I will then move to discussions on film education in formal settings to finally analyse how film education and critical pedagogy theories relate to each other in practice.

2.1 Knowledge economy and critical pedagogies

As educational systems have become the means to prepare children and young people to be employable in the neoliberal capitalist economy, the instrumental models of the British school curriculum are tailored to measure students in a goal-oriented manner. Evidently, not all schools within the neoliberal paradigm conform to this ideology – some schools are developing innovative practice and regard their students' creative development as important, such as the primary school that I visited for this study. However, it is difficult for these innovative practices to flourish when educational policies state otherwise. Within the discourse and rhetorics of policy talk and policy texts, there is a sense of urgency to reform the British education system from an economic perspective (Ball, 2017). These rhetorics of reform and innovation are then linked to discourses on equality and social mobility that lean on neoliberal notions of self-improvement and meritocracy:

> Schools should be engines of social mobility. They should enable children to overcome disadvantage and deprivation so they can fulfil their innate talents and take control of their own destiny. (Michael Gove's speech, 2009, quoted in Ball, 2017, p. 22).

Former Secretary of State for Education Michael Gove (2010-2015) made conclusions that to contribute to positive reforms, there is a need for a 'knowledge economy' (Ball, 2017). The knowledge economy refers to the present era, in which there is 'a greater reliance on intellectual capabilities than on physical inputs or natural resources' (Powell & Snellman, 2004, p. 201). Knowledge becomes a 'factor of production' (Ball, 2017, p. 26) and has an increasingly significant impact on 'skills, learning, organisation and innovation' (Ball, 2017, p. 26).

Advocates of the knowledge economy foreground the potential to share knowledge extensively through society, which will result in 'greater social progress and inclusiveness and the reduction of global poverty and inequalities' (Leadbeater, 2000 in

Sokol, 2005, p. 218). While these social benefits have yet to manifest itself fully, the effects of a knowledge-driven economy on education have been profound. There is an increasing desire to produce greater numbers of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) students who, the government hopes, will plug knowledge gaps in this knowledge economy (Beard, 2018). It is believed that education has the task to prepare young people for this economic system and offer them skills and competencies in the age of knowledge capitalism.

Within this context, education is perceived as integral to the knowledge economy. This can be deemed problematic as it assumes that '*information* and *knowledge* are replacing capital and energy as the primary wealth-creating assets' (Ball, 2017, p. 25) within this stage of capitalism. If knowledge and education are considered as economic commodities (Sokol, 2005, p. 216), then it is deemed necessary to legitimise education policies by its relevance for economic reform, instead of its contribution to children and young people's social and intellectual developments (Lyotard, 1984).

2.1.1 Critical pedagogies against 'the banking system'

Due to the importance of performativity and achievements in education, judging students' achievements in schools has to be as efficient and pragmatic as possible (Malott & Porfilio, 2011). Accomplishments of both students and educators thus need to be accountable. Educational theorist Paulo Freire, who is the leading advocate of the critical pedagogies movement, called this accountability in education the "banking' concept of education' (Freire, 2013b, p. 72) in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Freire primarily argues that education systems, specifically in ex-colonised countries, reproduce processes of oppression (Freire, 2013b). Following the Marxist concept of historical materialism[2], he examines the power relations between the oppressed (colonised) and the oppressor (coloniser) and believes that through praxis (a balance between theory and practice), the oppressed can be liberated. According to Freire, the banking concept assumes that students are empty vessels who need to be filled with knowledge by an authoritative educator, a system analogous to the colonial enlightenment of 'primitives' in colonised countries (Freire, 2013b).

[2] The Marxist concept of historical materialism refers to the idea that society is driven by material (economic) forces, instead of intellectual forces. To Marx and Engels (who were influenced by Hegel's idea of dialectics), history develops in a cycle of revolutions triggered by the interrelations of the production of human requirements. This means that when one elite group (oppressor) owns the modes of production, another group (oppressed) serves the elite by producing the materials. Marx and Engels believed that as the oppressor gains more power, the oppressed will protest against this, followed by a revolution. The revolution will be won by the oppressed group, making them the oppressor and the powerholder of the next mode of production (Marx & Engels, 1976).

To illustrate this, he questions the necessity for a student to memorise and revise facts that the teacher imposes on the student – as if it was an act of 'depositing' knowledge. From this perspective, there is an unbalanced power relation between the teacher and the pupil: 'knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing' (Freire, 2013b, p. 72). From my own personal experience as a Dutch pupil with Indonesian heritage, I remember being taught about the Dutch colonisation of Indonesia. The narratives that I was being taught by my history teacher were contradictory to the stories that I had heard from my family growing up – when I contested my teacher's knowledge, he replied with a nonchalant 'that's the way we teach it in the Netherlands'. This recollection illustrates Freire's claim that the banking concept shows a 'characteristic of the ideology of oppression' (Freire, 2013b, p. 72) as this approach to education 'serves to obviate thinking [critically]' (Freire, 2013b, p. 76) and dismisses the presence of multiple voices and perspectives in a globalising society.

At the heart of the commodification of knowledge lies the denial of 'the primacy of human relationships in the production of value – in effect, erasing the social' (Ball, 2017, p. 28). This results in a dichotomy between social values and the relevance of quantities, or in Freire's words: 'a dichotomy between human beings and the world' (Freire, 2013b, p. 75). The implications of the knowledge economy can be found within pedagogical practice, where the educator becomes merely a depositor of knowledge, whose work it is to assess students based on standardised tests (Comber & Nixon, 2009). A teacher's job security then, can depend upon the students' 'failure' to achieve high scores in these tests. This 'ready-to-wear' template in education might serve as an efficient instrument to evaluate students' and teachers' performances, however it does not acknowledge students' different voices and perspectives (Comber & Nixon, 2009), nor does it allow students to make mistakes, which in themselves contain educational value. Standardised teaching leaves teachers with less agency and flexibility to mould the curriculum according to the students' different approaches to learning. Teachers and students might feel less secure to 'take risks and explore the unknown' (Sahlberg, 2008, p. 59), resulting in a less creative and experimental classroom environment.

Although Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* was first published in Portuguese in 1968, critical pedagogy can serve as a critique and praxis against these developments in education systems within neoliberal capitalism. Structural inequalities between different classes, races and genders are issues that have always been prevalent. Some segments of the population are becoming increasingly aware and vocal about how:

> neoliberal globalisation is responsible for debasing education, militarisation, poverty, pollution, and hopelessness in various social contexts as well as forge [sic] pockets of resistance to the structures, social actors, and ideological forces that are empowering the few at the expense of many (Porfilio, 2011, p. xv).

Within this context, critical pedagogies have the potential to create critical consciousness, or in Freire's words: *conscientização,* among new generations of students and instil a positive set of values that resists the issues of our time (Malott, 2011).

2.1.2 Dialogue & Praxis: critical pedagogies in the classroom

While critical pedagogies advance a greater level of active participation and critical thought on behalf of the learner, there are doubts surrounding how critical pedagogies could effectively be utilised in classrooms. The aims of a neoliberal education system mean that critical thinking is not regarded as an important part of education. How could applying critical pedagogies in the classroom achieve a more equitable and democratic learning process?

Freire claimed that the most important aspect of education is a 'dialogue' between educators and students, following a rejection of the belief that 'educators hold absolute knowledge' (Durakoğlu, 2013, p. 104). Dialogue necessitates a sense of curiosity within students as well as educators and involves a collective act of thinking and learning. Freire's dialogue suggests a 'horizontal relationship between persons' (Freire, 2013a, p. 42). A horizontal relationship indicates that educators and students are equal subjects connected through dialogue. The dominant state school teaching method favours a monologue of imposed knowledge covering a pre-set curriculum, with limited student participation and little agency for the learner to dictate their knowledge. Freire's alternative foregrounds dialogue as 'essential to communication' and

> a requirement of human nature […] where human nature is understood as socially and historically constituted, *unfinished, self-conscious, hopeful and curious* [italics mine] (Rule, 2011, p. 930).

Dialogue is therefore not only a form of communication; it is also a way of understanding and respecting one another's histories and agencies. When Freire's dialogue is involved in the classroom, education shifts from a way to impose knowledge to a cooperative act of learning. As dialogue constitutes an understanding of each other's lived experiences, Freire believed that it has the ability to 'enhance community and build social capital' (Smith, 2002) and has a liberating potential against oppression (Rule, 2011). Dialogue

in Freire's terms can lessen oppression, because students are asked to consider and discuss critically the material they are taught.

Dialogue can only be performed if one is able to turn theoretical ideas into praxis[3]. Praxis is defined in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Freire, 2013b, p. 126) as '*reflection* and *action* directed at the structures to be transformed'. It is an approach to certain situations based on an individual's intentions, moral judgments, criticality and reflection. Praxis in education necessitates a democratic stance from educators towards students, involving students in theoretical thoughts behind practical actions to ensure a horizontal relationship between students and educators. This way, the educators continue to foster curiosity and learning within the students - the learning then happens within the dialogue between students and educators instead of as a hypothetical result of a pre-planned lesson plan. Through dialogue, Freire believes that both educators and the educated can 'codify their own experience' (Street, 1984, p. 202), and use words and phrases that are more representative of their own lives.

Dialogue is therefore a crucial aspect of praxis if one is to enact critical pedagogies within the classroom. The discourses that I will explore during my interviews - creativity, learning through social interactions and identity play - are all examples of Freire's notion of praxis: within film educational practices, such as the Cinéma, Cent Ans de Jeunesse project, it is vital that there is a cooperative and respectful environment in which students' learning processes are allowed to be 'unfinished, self-conscious, hopeful and curious' (Rule, 2011, p. 930).

2.1.3 Critiques of critical pedagogies

Applying critical pedagogy theory in classroom settings is possible, however it is a complex process for educators, who are pressured by the neoliberal banking system of education. Critical pedagogy theory has also been criticised by other scholars and educators. One of the most common critiques on critical pedagogy theory is its disconnect with the realities of classroom teaching (Buckingham, 1996; Neumann, 2013). An educational theory is only meaningful if it takes into account 'the experience of classroom practice, and that practice itself should be a site in which new theoretical insights and challenges can be generated' (Buckingham, 1996, p. 628). Some critical pedagogy theories seem to lack a consideration of classroom practices: most school teachers I have worked with, and my own experiences teaching in classrooms, have indicated that teaching a classroom of twenty-plus students and managing different

[3] Praxis is a Marxist term for turning beliefs and theories into actions, the enactment of theoretical notions (Gramsci, 1999).

behaviours is challenging. This high-pressure environment is further exacerbated by the importance of accountability and numeric evaluations within the current education, metrics by which a teacher's performance is assessed, which influence a teacher's job security (Neumann, 2013; Ball, 2017). Following state-regulated curricula and managing behaviours leaves teachers little time to implement their own pedagogical beliefs (Ferguson, 2018).

These difficulties reflect the fact that education systems are inherently 'institutions of power' (Weiner, 2007), which generate soft power by promoting essentialist ideologies. Considering that the current neoliberal 'banking system' is the dominant system in education, critical pedagogies are associated with the marginalised or alternative discourses in education. As critical pedagogy theory often aims to give a voice to the less dominant, or in Freire's words, the 'oppressed group', it is usually excluded from dominant debates on schooling and has 'failed to reach or attract a critical mass' (Weiner, 2007, p. 59). This may be due to its intention to dismantle the current dominant education system in a language that can be characterised as vague, mystical or exclusive (Neumann, 2013). The language used in critical pedagogy theories is based on ideas from critical theory and Marxism, which can seem removed from everyday life (Neumann, 2013).

These theoretical foundations of critical pedagogies, however, cannot be reduced to a simple step-by-step guide to teaching (Buckingham, 1996). Critical pedagogies are multi-faceted and ambiguous, hence the difficulty in applying it in classroom practice: on one hand,

> we want our teaching to serve left-oriented liberatory goals; yet on the other hand, we want to avoid betraying such goals through exercising power in the classroom (Buckingham, 1996, p. 634).

Buckingham criticises the idealism and lack of practical awareness of critical pedagogues, however he argues that critical pedagogy theories and media education theories share similar political and theoretical ideals. Buckingham then suggests that perhaps critical pedagogy is applicable to certain parts of the school curriculum, such as Media/Film Studies or citizenship (Buckingham, 2019). A recent turn in critical pedagogies towards popular culture, such as media and film, may make its theories less stuffy and more fitting with our contemporary culture. In the next section of this chapter I will give an overview of the ideas and debates within the film education field. Concluding this chapter, I will analyse in what way film education practices in formal settings can provide a practical approach to apply critical pedagogies in classrooms.

2.2 The current role and potential of film education

As educational assessment is becoming increasingly reduced to quantified and accountable evaluations, many scholars, educators and cultural professionals are finding more reasons to resist these governmental interventions. The scarcity of creative and expressive opportunities in schools' curricula 'could be construed as discriminatory' as 'schools are the agencies through which we make available representative forms to children and young people' (Cannon, 2018, p. 6). Many scholars are advocating film and media education to be positioned in school curricula in a more cross-curricular way and emphasise the necessity for children and young people to develop a critical understanding of the moving image (Bazalgette, 2010; Buckingham 2009; Burn & Durran, 2007; Cannon, 2018; Potter, 2012). Film and the moving image are part of our popular culture as we are surrounded by moving images, thus it is arguable that literacy practices should range from written language to audio-visual language (Burn & Durran, 2004).

Education in film and media are deemed less legitimate by policy makers. Media Studies and Film Studies are merely available as optional modules for students taking their GCSEs (at the ages 14-16) and later on A-level students (ages 16-18) are able to choose Film Studies or Media Studies as optional modules (Ofqual, 2018). The study of film and media are pushed towards extracurricular and after-school clubs. In 2015, there were concerns about the scrapping of Media Studies at state schools, as it had the reputation of being a 'soft subject', subjects that are considered 'easy' and less academic (Rustin, 2016). However, the instrumental use of (digital) media in education is increasing. Here, I am referring to the most basic functions of media, such as: history teachers using films or photographs as sources of evidence, geography teachers showing documentaries to illustrate anthropological narratives on different cultures, or maths teachers using interactive smartboards to demonstrate an algorithm (Buckingham, 2009).

Children and young people are encountering digital media intensively outside school; it can be argued that the use of media in schools could be extended from the instrumental to the analytical (Buckingham, 2009; Cannon, 2018). Additionally, studying film and media does not necessitate assessment criteria that are standardised and quantitative. Film education can be deemed as a more experimental and alternative approach to the banking system in education. Similar to critical pedagogies, the intentions of film education emphasise the importance of students' criticality and creativity rather than memorising and revising state-imposed knowledge.

2.2.1 A social and multimodal literacy

As 'increasing amounts of information, stories and ideas are transmitted in non-print forms' (Bazalgette, 2010, p. 51), there is a disparity between how education presents and teaches information and 'the most common means by which our population receives the vast majority of its information' (Bazalgette, 2010, p. 51). Educational policy should broaden its attitude towards literacy: the way that children and young people make meaning from written and oral language bears comparison with the manner in which meaning-construction occurs through images and sounds. From this perspective, literacy 'moves objectives beyond achieving remote predetermined standards of reading and writing to embrace multimodal 'signifying practices' (Cannon & Potter, 2019, p. 435).

Burn and Durran (2007) argue for 'a shift towards an expanded, semiotic conception of literacy and meaning-making in the curriculum' (p. 163), to include the study of the moving image and media in school. The authors suggest a multimodal approach to the study of media, one that involves the analysis of signifying modes, the integration of textual analysis with audience studies and the analysis of political, economic and social contexts (Burn & Parker, 2003). Taking these three types of analyses into account, the study of media and moving image eludes the subservient status of media in the curriculum, to become part of a wide range of modes through which to study our 'structure of feeling' (Williams, 2013).

Burn and Durran further argue that media literacy comprises three social functions: the cultural, creative and critical. Engaging with media is 'part of wider cultural complexes of taste, pleasure and critical engagement, in which social identities are built and negotiated' (Burn & Durran, 2007, p. 12). This is the cultural function, as interpreting and making media texts are intertwined with the cultural context in which individuals are positioned. The creative function of media literacy is related to the question of agency – to what extent does an individual have control of their identities, actions and ideas? Burn and Durran believe that creative acts enhance the idea of agency: 'making something valuable, worthwhile, new, we change our sense of ourselves, whether through representing some aspect of ourselves in what we have made, or in our altered sense of what we can do' (Burn & Durran, 2007, p. 13). Related to this question of agency is the critical function of media literacy. Although the idea that students should develop a critical ability to understand the dangers of media texts can be considered outdated (Buckingham, 2009), Burn and Durran emphasise the inevitable power of the media industries. However, they are not suggesting that media literacy should merely prepare students to 'read through' media messages critically. Rather, they claim that the critical function of media literacy should allow for

> pleasure, for contingency, for negotiation of meanings in social groups and in classrooms, for diversity of taste and experience. (Burn & Durran, 2007, p. 14).

There are similarities in this multimodal approach to media literacy and the ideals of critical pedagogy theories. Both ideas emphasise the relations between learning and the wider sociocultural context, while foregrounding the diversity of individuals' identities and agencies and their abilities to be creative and critical.

Cannon and Potter also argue for an inclusive approach to literacy, as primary-aged children from different sociocultural contexts 'bring digital skills and discrete cultural repertoires to the classroom for which there is no outlet or space in formal school structures' (Cannon & Potter, 2019, p. 437). They posit that literacy practices should be dynamic as the nature in which human beings construct and share meaning is constantly changing. If this dynamism in literacy practices is acknowledged, it allows for more space for an acknowledgment of a multiplicity of voices and perspectives that are represented in the produced texts. The concept of reimagining literacy practices to include different voices that are traditionally subjugated, is what Gutierrez (2008) calls 'sociocritical literacy.' Similar to arguments made by critical pedagogues, and by me in this study, Gutierrez urges for a 'paradigm shift' (Gutierrez, 2008, p. 148) in our approach to education. She is particularly referring to a rethinking of education and literacy for 'poor and immigrant youth whose education has been defined by "marketplace reforms" (Gutierrez, 2008, p. 148). These reforms are those that have been discussed in this chapter: the neoliberal approach to education in which employability and accountability are signifiers for a successful school experience. The sociocritical literacy is then an approach to literacy that resists these reforms as well as 'privileges and is contingent upon students' sociohistorical lives' (Gutierrez, 2008, p. 149).

Drawing on Gutierrez' call for a literacy that is based on social justice and reiterating Bhabha's sociocultural linguistic theory[4] (2004), Potter and McDougall call for a 'third space literacy' (2017). Positioning the term 'third space' within pedagogical theory, the authors believe that along with the formal classroom settings, the third space is another site in which learning processes can occur: a space in which 'hierarchies are dissolved and the cultural experiences of children and parents are welcomed as locations for

[4] Bhabha (2004) refers to the third space as a metaphorical location in which the production of meaning occurs. During processes of interaction between individuals or groups, one's enunciation of a word represents a cultural performance of histories and meanings. The third space is the site where these cultural performances are challenged, as one's sense of cultural and historical identity can never be identical with another's. Therefore, the discourse that 'historical identity of a culture [is] a homogenizing, unifying force' (p. 54) is disrupted.

different forms of educational experience' (Cannon & Potter, 2019, p. 439). This can be in an after-school club or museum workshop, where the teaching is not bound by curriculum constraints and where neoliberal notions of assessment and accountability can be resisted (Potter & McDougall, 2017). As media and film are not deemed crucial enough to be included in the formal curriculum, practices such as these are pushed towards after-school settings. This is, however, not always a negative consequence as film literacy is perhaps more suited to an environment where students have the opportunity to think critically and creatively and to act autonomously. The time constraints and assessment criteria of the current education system mean that, unfortunately, there is little room for these affordances to be developed (Potter & McDougall, 2017).

Whether one calls it social, semiotic, dynamic or sociocritical literacy, there is an urgency to reimagine literacy practices in education. In a time in which global politics are highly polarised, it is a task for educators and policy makers to design literacy practices that acknowledge different modes of meaning-making, different ideas and different identities. The reimagining of these literacy practices should also take into account the various conditions of learning according to particular contexts: a universal or centralised approach to literacy is unlikely to succeed, as this could result in an exclusion of particular, marginalised contexts in which learning occurs (Cannon & Potter, 2019; Chambers, 2018). Each continent, country, city or school has its own idiosyncrasies depending on the 'available resources, leadership, and sociocultural and geographic settings' (Cannon & Potter, 2019, p. 19). One film education programme that operates internationally and strives to be translatable to localised contexts, is the project that is at the heart of this study, Cinéma, Cent Ans de Jeunesse. Although its principles vary slightly from the media/moving image literacy ideas that I have described in this section, the French project has succeeded to cross many borders since its conception in 1995, demonstrating that film education practices can transcend 'national and sociocultural differences' (Chambers, 2018, p. 36). The next section will provide a more comprehensive account of the project and the ideas behind it, as laid out in Bergala's *The Cinema Hypothesis* (2016).

2.2.2 Bergala's hypothesis and the CCAJ

This study focusses on one particular after-school film club: the Cinéma, Cent Ans de Jeunesse project, founded by Alain Bergala, who combined his ideas on the pedagogy of cinema in *The Cinema Hypothesis* (2016), originally published in French in 2002. This section will discuss his ideas that underpin the aims of the CCAJ.

Bergala is convinced that to devise an appropriate pedagogy for cinema, one should consider film not to be a form of visual language, but as a ‘true art-form’. He criticises the popular notion of studying film 'as a language and an ideological vehicle' (Bergala, 2016, p. 23) as this results in an approach to film education in which students should develop the ability to recognise and decode 'bad' films. Bergala believes that ’each shot is like a painter's brushstroke' (Bergala, 2016, p. 23) associating filmmaking with the romantic notion of the 'auteur' and 'creative genius'. Those who contest this view, including myself, prefer to focus on films as products of many collaborative processes (Sabal, 2009; Chambers, 2019), any creative act is inherently a social process that arises from negotiations between the self and inspirations from the social sphere (Vygotsky, 1978).

In his pedagogy, Bergala positions the film educator as *passeur*, a person who acts as a messenger with passion and enthusiasm for cinema. Although the passeur is bound by institutions, once they abandon this role, they are in theory more able to interact with students in a more equal way, showing:

> a different part of [themselves], more vulnerable, where [their] personal tastes come into play, as well as [their] more intimate relationship to one work of art or another (Bergala, 2016, p. 39).

The educator is not merely a person defined by an institution and more knowledgeable than the students, but rather a person that has their own histories, tastes and agencies. Through this education practice, they can pass on something much more valuable than just knowledge, such as passion and appreciation. The passeur has the affordance to not only teach ‘objective knowledge’, but also to communicate ‘the personal significance of a certain work of art and make it perceptible’ (Bergala, 2016, p. 121).

This balance between theory and practice/subjective knowledge is the centre of Bergala’s ‘pedagogy of creation’. The idea is that the creative process of filmmaking should be included in the analysis of cinema: students learning about film should firstly learn by viewing films, to review the choices that the filmmakers have made in their conditions and consequently reflect upon what the students would have done differently. These processes will then aid the students to apply the acquired knowledge to the practicalities of filmmaking.

Bergala’s pedagogy of creation is similar to Freire’s praxis, both include elements of respect, reflection, analysis and criticality as well as the emphasis on a balance between theory and practice. Parallel to critical pedagogies, Bergala argues that pedagogy

should focus on personal histories and intimate experiences (Bergala, 2016, p. 120). This way, education helps to transcend differences between students' cultures and personal experiences. As the CCAJ project operates internationally, Bergala attempts to ensure that the project does not depend on cultural contexts by for example, choosing film clips from different countries. The aim to dissolve hierarchies and differences between students and educators makes the CCAJ an example of the third space explained before. Bergala believes that the classroom may not be the ideal space to teach cinema, as specialist equipment and facilities that film institutions or cinemas can provide are generally lacking in the classroom setting. However, as this project is supposed to be for children and young people from different parts of a country, some of them may not come from an area that offers easy access to an institution with adequate equipment, for example, in the countryside (Bergala, 2016). Because of these variables, the extra-curricular class becomes the most democratic space to teach cinema – similar to the third space in which traditional classroom hierarchies are dissolved.

Projects which aim to take a critical approach to film literacy are tasked with the difficulty of finding a universal formula which also accounts for differences in cultural contexts, education systems, teachers, and students. Although I contest some of Bergala's key ideas, such as his emphasis on the appreciation of film auteurs and his disregard of the development of critical analysis, *The Cinema Hypothesis* offers thoughtful ideas on the state of film education and how to make steps towards an interconnective and universal approach to film education. Bergala's pedagogy of creation, that combines theoretical notions with practical creative acts, is a pedagogy that I strive for in my own practice. In the next and final section of this chapter, I will provide a summary of the literature review and highlight the theories and ideas to position my study, creating a theoretical framework for this research.

2.3 Film education + Critical Pedagogies = Praxis in the Third Space

Through this literature review, I aim to shed light on the implications of an education system that is based on neoliberal ideals of performativity and employability for the development of a more liberating and creative curriculum. The increase in a more quantifiable manner to measure students' achievements, such as standardised tests, may be helpful to wider institutions aiming to assess schools' attainment in statistical data. However, by prioritising STEM and emphasising the significance of numerical data on students, the state education system marginalises the role of cultural and creative literacies. Evidently, subjects such as creative writing or video production do not meet the current ideals of performativity or employability, producing subjective and qualitative data.

Although these implications can be harmful for the development of a rich cultural and creative curriculum in the UK, there are a number of advocates for creativity within education. Positive developments are occurring from initiatives to emphasise the importance of visual literacies, in a period where we are increasingly surrounded by (moving) images. It is difficult to change the priorities of an educational system, with any new change likely to be gradual and subject to protracted debate. Some scholars find optimism in extracurricular activities, such as after school clubs (Potter & McDougall, 2017). Within this liminal space in state education, which Potter and McDougall call the third space, students and educators are able to extend the boundaries of traditional pedagogy and find a more liberating pedagogy.

In relation to my research question, I follow this argument and posit that the third space is the site in which one can find a balanced approach to critical pedagogies and film education. As I have argued, the cultural benefits of critical pedagogies and film literacy are clear in a time where global politics are increasingly polarised, and many groups in society are progressively marginalised. The ambiguity and multivalence of critical pedagogies may make it challenging to practice in the classroom, however as I believe that critical pedagogies and film education strive for similar ideals, such as an acknowledgement and encouragement of multiple voices and perspectives, applying critical pedagogies to film education would promote a diversity of perspectives and people within the classroom. Within the current education system, the third space can be the site in which these two schools of thought create an environment where theory and practice are combined and critical thinking, creativity and collaboration are encouraged, resulting in praxis or pedagogy of creation.

Mirroring the balance between theory and practice within film education and critical pedagogies, this research will now move to a practical account of film education. Drawing on the combination of ideas suggested by critical pedagogies and film education, I have based my analytical framework on this theoretical framework and tried to arrange the ideas in discourses: creativity, collaboration and playing with identities. The next chapter will explain my choices in research methods and describe the ways in which I have collected research data, as well as a brief philosophical exploration on academic research.

3. METHODOLOGY

Throughout this research, I have adopted a qualitative ethnographic approach rather than a quantitative one because of my intentions with this study. Commencing this dissertation, I did not aim to prove a hypothesis with statistics and numbers. Rather, I strived to provide a reflexive account of the practicalities of film education projects set in primary schools and give critical insights into my experiences and the experiences of the participants of said film projects. For this reason, I wanted to adopt an auto-ethnographic narrative style for this research, as it acknowledges my complicated position within this study. My position is an ambivalent one, and this became clear during my involvement with the Cinéma, Cent Ans de Jeunesse project at a North London primary school: I realised that I am not only an observant researcher, but I am also an educator, student and colleague.

Hence, in this chapter, I aim to pose questions about the implications of my various positions on this study. Focusing on the ambiguities involved in doing research and generating knowledge, I will look at issues of 'epistemic imposition' (Chambers, 2019) and the politics involved in knowledge construction. As my research question relates to critical pedagogies and the ways in which film education can promote a horizontal relationship between educators and the educated to encourage criticality and autonomy within students, I acknowledge the need to ask questions about my own epistemological authority. This research and the knowledge that I aim to convey are influenced by my perspective and ‘situated knowledge’ (Haraway, 1991) on film education, therefore I have positioned this study within a critical emancipatory research paradigm.

The critical emancipatory research paradigm strives to construct knowledge that examines societal issues involving marginalised groups. However, I understand that taking this perspective can be problematic in the sense that I am representing stories that are not entirely my own. These inherent power structures between me as a researcher/teacher and the participants/students are crucial to be aware of - the choice for an auto-ethnographic narrative has helped me to be reflexive about these issues. Yet, through self-reflexivity, I am not disclaiming 'the problem of appearing to 'speak for others'' (Buckingham, 1996, p. 631): I am writing about and studying young children, a group that is more vulnerable than me in different ways. Consequently, I aim to story their lives and experiences in a way that is both sincere and attempts to reflect the lived experiences of the children at the film club. Ending this chapter, I will therefore explain my chosen process of data collection and analysis while discussing different kinds of ethical issues that arise during research involving children.

3.1 Researcher as mediator for Foucault's 'emancipation'

In this section, I will provide a philosophical discussion on the process of academic research and the process of knowledge production. Scientific research is traditionally research of positivist nature, research that is quantitative and measurable. This meant that epistemology relied on research into the exact sciences. With the emergence of humanistic social sciences and qualitative research methods, qualitative research is often considered as 'lacking rigour' when compared to studies with verifiable numerical data (McCabe & Holmes, 2009, p. 1519). Proponents of qualitative research studies tend to foreground its ability to 'interpret all human actions (including those of the researcher) as being infused with social meaning' (McCabe & Holmes, 2009, p. 1522).

Research in social sciences places its emphasis on cultural phenomena rather than on any adherence to rigorous methodological research processes. To account for the researcher's subjectivity in its interpretation of a cultural phenomenon, reflexivity of the researcher and awareness of their own bias are used to account for the lack of measurable validity. A reflexive approach then allows the researcher to reflect upon their own interests and background, as well as to question 'the theoretical and other assumptions of the project' (Gray, 2005, p. 21-22).

However, it is important that qualitative research does not apply reflexivity solely to account for its subjectivity (McCabe& Holmes, 2009). In the case of this research, that is positioned within a critical emancipatory research paradigm, it is essential that a reflexive approach is applied for emancipatory purposes. To elaborate on this, I will briefly describe Foucault's perspective on power within the production of knowledge. For Foucault, power exists not only in the form of sovereign authoritarian control, but power also exists within the social body, exerting itself through social networks and relations. The former kind of power is what Foucault called repressive power, as it forces individuals to do things that they do not naturally want to do. The latter is called normalised power – it reinforces individuals to act according to the rules of a form of social contract or 'status quo'. Foucault believed that everyone in our society is subjected to this normalised power and consequently, the production of knowledge cannot be separated from power (Foucault, 1977). The truths and knowledges that institutions produce 'are internalized by individuals and groups and are acted out accordingly – power produces specific subjects' (McCabe & Holmes, 2009, p. 1522). Within the context of educational practices, such as in film education, the producer of knowledge (the teacher) can risk 'epistemic imposition' (Chambers, 2019) by intervening with and contributing to students' work in any way.

Although Foucault initially believed that everyone is subjected to this power, at the end of his life he began investigating the ways in which human beings emancipate themselves from this power through 'technologies of the self' (Foucault, 1988). With technologies of the self, Foucault was referring to:

> [that] which permit[s] individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality (Foucault, 1988, p. 18).

Individuals have the agency to manage their own sense of 'self' to produce a new way of being. I agree with this late-Foucauldian perspective: an awareness of the dominant truths allows individuals to choose an alternative way of being and to take action to change the status quo. The emancipatory aspect of my own research comprises the aim to illuminate 'these dominating truths, and requires individuals/groups to negotiate new modes of acting' (McCabe & Holmes, 2009, p. 1522). Within this research, the interviewing process can be the site in which the children are the most 'emancipated' in the sense of being able to express themselves freely. During an interview, the researcher can play the part of mediator, facilitating the interviewees to explore 'common-sense assumptions' (McCabe & Holmes, 2009, p. 1523) together with the researcher, while reflecting on their actions in the light of these assumptions. This idea, however, can be critiqued by the inherent power relations between adults and children. Although my intentions with the interviews are to facilitate 'emancipation' for the students, they still see me as an adult who mediates their responses, someone who is inherently in power over them. Simultaneously, I am still a visitor to the school, someone who is inherently positioned as an 'institutional 'other'' (Thomson, et. al., 2012, p. 47), who is not bound by the institutional context of the school.

Apposite with the researcher as mediator is Bergala's *passeur*: the film educator who is at once a teacher and a 'partial, worldly individual shaped by particular personal experiences and encounters with film' (Chambers, 2019, p. 32). Acknowledging that the film educator is a historical subject will allow the film student to not only learn from them, but also through them (Chambers, 2019). From this perspective, there is a shift from 'epistemic imposition' to co-creation, allowing both educator and student to make collective decisions and create something together. The *passeur* becomes a reflexive and subjective mediator, collaborating with the student to reflect on their decisions and create a new way of being. Bergala's passeur implies that the fear of epistemic imposition is redundant. In film education practices with children, it is unnecessary for the adult to claim that "the children did everything" (Bergala, 2016, p. 100). In a

productive educational situation, the educator should be comfortable about their interventions and negotiations between the children and adults.

Within qualitative research, as well as film educational practices, change [or episteme] are ‘not imposed, but rather should emerge organically from the research [or creative] process’ (McCabe & Holmes, 2009, p. 1524). Taking the notions of technologies of the self and epistemic imposition into account, I have tried to achieve emancipation in the Foucauldian sense in my data collection, particularly within the interviews with the film club participants. This becomes clear when the participants were expressing their opinions on the repressiveness of ‘regular school’ compared to the CCAJ film club (see chapter 4) – therefore providing critique of a system that is deemed to be ‘common sense’. In the next section I will explain the processes of data collection and data analysis that occurred in this research.

3.2 CCAJ Film Club at a North London primary school

For this research, I was involved with the CCAJ project, an international project involving schools and agencies from fifteen countries. CCAJ started in 1995 in France as 'an experimental cinematic training which cultivates ways of seeing, married with the experience of creative expression' (Bourgeois, 2019). Its aim is to combine theories of Film Studies and the practice of filmmaking, considering specific cinematic questions through workshops in primary and secondary schools. Cinematic questions in the past include 'light', 'otherness in cinema' and 'the weather'. This year's theme is '*la situation*', referring to dramatic situations that occur in films. The project occurs throughout the whole academic year and starts with an exploration of the cinematic question through discussions and film viewings. Then, the participants perform small filmmaking exercises, to prepare for the final film. The project’s finale is marked with a screening of the students’ final films at a cinema, where the filmmakers have the chance to present their films and answer questions asked by other participants of the project. The screening of the students at the North London primary school takes place at the British Film Institute.

In England, the project is supervised by the British Film Institute and each year the project kicks off with an initial meeting with the participating teachers at the BFI. The head of education of the BFI, Mark Reid, led the meeting and explained the basic ideas of the CCAJ project: it is a mixture of watching, discussing and making. We explored the theme ‘situation’ and how cinema can convey a dramatic situation through location, body language, camera angles and image composition. After going through all the exercises in detail, we discussed the brief for the final film:

> Make a film where the establishing incident affects how the characters relate to each other.
>
> The situation will flip during the course of the film, which will mean that the way that the characters interact changes.
>
> The viewer should identify at first with one, then another of the characters during the course of the film.
>
> The film, including credits, will be between 5 – 8 minutes maximum.

Through this initial meeting at the BFI, I learned of a few primary schools in and around London participating in the project this year - and built up a rapport with teaching staff. For this research, I have collaborated with a primary school in North London. The collaboration happened quite organically: I found myself connecting to the two teachers of this particular school more than with other teachers. Mr. C. is an art teacher and Ms. D. was a French teacher (unfortunately she left the school halfway through the project), neither of them had experience in teaching film.

After I visited their film club for the first time, I grew fond of the group: there were sixteen children from diverse backgrounds. For my research, I felt that the diversity of the children's background might provide broader perspectives of the film club. Although the students might be third, fourth or fifth generation migrants and are therefore British children, from my own experience I believe that growing up in a European city with multiple cultural heritages provides a different perspective on society than children with a more homogeneous cultural background. For personal reasons and interests, I felt that I could relate to the makeup of the classroom as I went to a school with children from different heritages. My interest in a culturally diverse classroom was also due to my initial idea for this research project: originally, I wanted to explore theories of identity and representation in film in relation to film education practices. Eventually, I found that there was so much to explore about the occurring pedagogical processes in film education, that I felt that I should keep the identity and representation element in the background for further research.

As this is a qualitative research study, I decided to conduct participant observations and interviews to explore the participants' perspectives on the CCAJ project. Participant observation is useful in ethnographic research such as this one, as it allows the researcher to be fully immersed within the research subject. To generate 'a rounded, in-depth account' (Bryman, 1992, p. 44) of the group, I visited the film club every week. However, participant observation does not create sufficient knowledge to do research on a particular subject (Bryman, 1992). Therefore, I also conducted interviews with the

participants. Ultimately, it is rather impossible to only be a participant observer while conducting research, as researchers tend to mix with the group and interact with them to learn about the group in more depth. Interviews allow the researcher to engage more intimately with participants and to avoid treating the group as just 'data' (Bryman, 1992).

3.3 Ethical considerations and research limitations

As I have used and collected data from children, a group that is more vulnerable than me, a number of ethical issues can arise. The most important ones are informed consent and transparency throughout the research process; guarantee of confidentiality; safeguarding/child protection and pinpointing and reporting sensitive topics discussed by the students. I have received safeguarding and child protection training in a number of educator roles - and am familiar with the Department for Education's guidelines. Additional training was provided by the head teacher of the primary school itself, therefore I knew what actions to take if risky situations might arise according to the school's protocol. Concerning the first two issues, informed consent and confidentiality, I believe I have ensured this through extreme awareness of the binary power structures between me as the researcher, and the children as the researched (Green, 2012). As I stated at the beginning of this chapter, reflexivity about my own position within this research helps me to be wary of inherent power relations.

In the early stages of this research, I ensured informed consent and transparency by giving the children and their parents/carers a clear information sheet and consent form in which the purpose of the research, the expectations of the children's participation and the resulting ethical matters are discussed.[5] The ethical matters that were discussed in this information sheet were those that would be of significance for the participants: confidentiality and anonymity of the child and the collected information. I explained that they would be protected by the use of pseudonyms, encrypted storage of the information and taking into account the parent's/carer's consent. Luckily, the consent forms were all returned and all parents/carers, apart from one, gave me consent to record my observations and interviews for this research.

While I believe the research method that I have used is the most fitting for the kind of research that I have done and the time and budget restrictions of a Masters' dissertation, there are many limitations to this research. Firstly, instead of visiting and observing different schools participating in the CCAJ project, I chose to visit one school. This could be construed as a shortcoming: a small sample that is not necessarily representative of

[5] See Appendix B for information sheets and consent forms.

the whole. Visiting different schools would have provided the research with other perspectives, depending on various factors such as the students' ages and personal histories, the school's geographical location, and/or the teachers' experiences in leading this particular project. On the other hand, focussing on one school's experience of the film club offered me a chance to build a stronger rapport with the students and the teachers, and gain a more comprehensive insight into their stories and experiences.

A second limitation is the fact that I did not involve the students in the process of data analysis and interpretation. My initial wish to do this was because I originally planned to analyse the students' final film with them while looking at theories of identity and representation. As my research question changed, the process of data analysis changed accordingly. I felt that the discourses that I have used in my theoretical and analytical framework were too jargonistic and complex to translate for the students, for them to be able to reflect in their own words, without imposing a theoretical standpoint on them. Another limitation is related to a lack of time and meticulous planning of the film club. Regretfully, towards the end of the project we had to rush the production of the final film, and there were some aspects that I could not explore with the students thoroughly, such as the editing process. Speaking to the students about their editing choices may have provided rich material to shed light on the discourses that I explore in this research. Fortunately, as will be described in the next chapter, the study yielded enough material in the form of interviews: the students provided an organic, broad range of responses that merit critical discussion.

4. ANALYSIS

4.1 Educational and liberating at the same time?

From the start of the Cinéma, Cent Ans de Jeunesse project, I visited the film club once a week and observed the dynamics of the group. Interestingly, after two months, the teachers' and the students' perception of me at the film club changed from stranger/researcher to teacher/filmmaking 'expert'. The teachers relied on me for teaching material and asked me to lead a few sessions. Before commencing the film club, I felt strongly about not getting too involved with the group dynamics and I was convinced that for this research it would be best if I stayed the observer. This proved to be difficult: the teachers had never taught filmmaking before and I felt responsible to fill in some of the gaps. An example of this is when I visited the film club when the students were doing a practice exercise. At first, I observed the students to gage how the process might go without intervention. When I found the students filming with a level of enthusiasm matched only by the absence of any discernible roles or structure, I realised that it was necessary to step in. Rudimentary guidance in filmmaking would be enough to set the project in motion: a grasp of different shot types and crew roles could provide a framework for playfulness within the confines of the project.

Over the course of the programme, I became an educator as well as a researcher. Aiming to apply critical pedagogies to the film club, I was worried that due to the time constraints stipulated by the school, there would not be enough space for the students to express their autonomy and criticality. Every session was 45 minutes and especially towards the end of the project, I requested longer sessions for shooting and editing days to finalise the students' film. These requests were unfortunately not met, leaving me and the teacher to finish editing the final film outside school-time. One could understand this as an extended metaphor for the difficulties in translating radical educational theory into a real education setting, particularly one squeezed by the scarcity of resources characteristic of contemporary British state schools. I understand that the adults' intervention is not what is usually supposed to happen in a creative educational setting: as Chambers argues, educators fear that they would intervene in the purity of a child's creativity, and they believe that they should let the students be. However, it is perhaps more interesting to shed light on the context in which a student is able to 'just be' and look at the ways educators contribute to a *'fascinating collaborative matrix* every film completed within an educational context represents' (Chambers, 2019, p. 29). Within this particular context, the collaboration is not only found within participating students, but also between the teacher and the students: the teacher was learning about filmmaking together with the students - culminating in this 'collaborative matrix'.

Towards the end of the project, when the students started to plan and shoot the final film, I started conducting my interviews. I approached four students and the selection of these students went quite intuitively. I felt that it was important to speak to students with different personalities to acquire a range of perspectives on the project. I also consulted the teacher to gain more insights on the students. The interviews were conducted individually with the four participants during the sessions at school. After the screening of their final film at the BFI, I sat with all the students of the film club and had an informal conversation over our lunch about the screening. After conducting the interviews, I am content that the students felt a great sense of autonomy during the film club. In this chapter, I present my interpretations of these interviews with the students and the teacher involved. These analyses are guided by an analytical framework that will be explained in the next section.

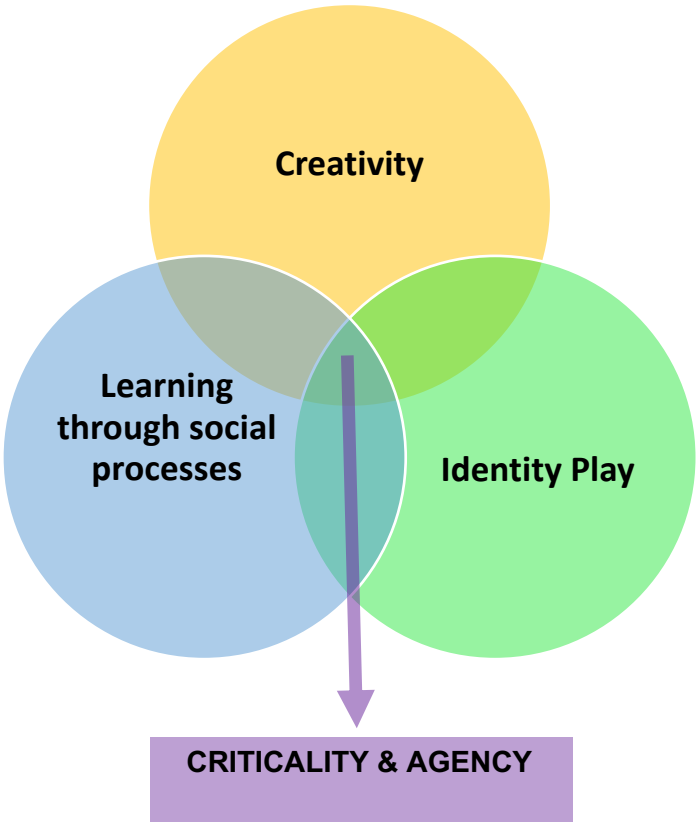

Figure 1: *A visualisation of the interaction between the three main discourses.*

4.2 Framework for analysis

Through my theoretical framework, I was able to identify certain discourses that I wanted to explore within the collected data. These are: creativity, learning through social and collaborative processes, and the acknowledgement of different identities. Through these discourses, I aimed to find out how significant elements of critical pedagogies, criticality and agency, were advocated and encouraged in film education practices. The diagram in figure 1 illustrates the way these discourses interact with each other, with criticality

and agency at its centre. With criticality, I am not referring to criticality within the study and analysis of media texts as described Buckingham (2009) or Burn and Durran (2007). Criticality within these analyses can be better defined in the Foucauldian sense – the acknowledgement and critiquing of the fact that society is subjected to dominant truths.

For the analysis, I have categorised my data into these three discourses. As the interview questions were somewhat guided by these themes, I felt that the results of the study would be more comprehensible if I analysed the data through thematic analysis or thematic coding. Initially, I decided to structure the analysis per discourse, however as I was re-reading the transcriptions, I believed it would be most fitting with this type of research to structure the analysis per student. This way, I was able to explore each students' distinct personalities and perspectives on the film club, rather than regarding the students' statements as pure data that would fit rigorously into my discourses. During the transcription process and after reading the interviews, I assigned students' phrases with certain codes and as I started analysing the second interview, I recognised similarities in their phrasing. Therefore, I grouped similar phrases into four sub-themes that correspond with the three discourses. I have tried to visualise this structure in the diagram below:

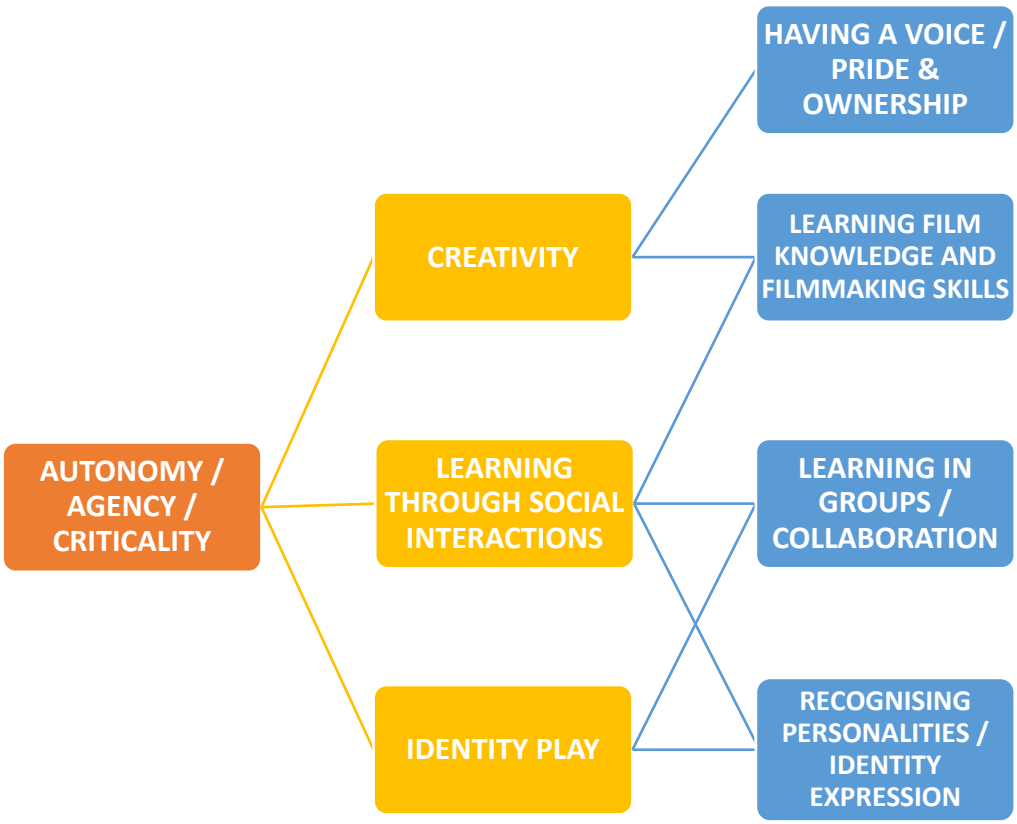

Figure 2: *Diagram for the analytical framework.*

4.3 Four perspectives on the film club

This section will provide my explorations and interpretations of the CCAJ film club, guided by the words of the participants.[6] Some quotes and thoughts by their teacher, Mr. C., are woven into these interpretations, as he positions himself as a co-learner in the project as well. This way, I aim to mirror Chambers' 'collaborative matrix' in film education practices within this analysis.

As I mentioned before, I have spoken to four students from the North London primary school, who took on different roles in the film club and thus would provide different perspectives on the CCAJ film club. The primary school, a co-ed school, has a large council estate as its primary catchment for pupils. The school has an ethnically diverse pupil body, with nearly half of the students having learned English as an additional language and around two-thirds qualifying for Pupil Premium[7] or free school meals. Both of these figures are roughly double the national average.

4.3.1 Emma

Two months before the screening day at the BFI, the film club prepared to make their final film. Because the group was quite large (fourteen students), Mark Reid advised us to split the group in two, and produce two shorter final films. Therefore, when the students pitched their ideas for the final film, we chose two different ideas. In one session, all the students were able to pitch their ideas individually or in a duo and in the end, everyone was able to vote for one idea anonymously. The teacher then tallied the most votes: one of the winning ideas was pitched by Emma.

Emma was an outgoing student who was not afraid to share her opinions. The teacher, Mr. C., has high hopes for her as 'she's a very bright kid' who has 'great ideas'. During her pitch, Emma proposed a story that revolves around football. I found this fitting with this group of students, as most of the sessions that I have visited, there seems to be class-wide heated discussion about football: about who supports Arsenal or Tottenham, and why they would support the rival team. Emma's plot would centre around a girls versus boys football match, that would prove the stereotype that 'girls can't play football' wrong. Emma then said that 'the movie is supposed to show that girls are equal to boys'. The group was enthused by this idea, including Mr. C., who started making associations

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[6] For the transcriptions of the interviews, see Appendix A.

[7] Pupil Premium is additional funding for state schools in England to provide (deprived) schools with extra resources to bridge 'attainment gaps' for 'disadvantaged children'. By receiving this grant, schools are made accountable to 'improve disadvantaged pupils' academic attainment' (Great Britain. Department for Education, 2019).

with other sports-themed films such as *Rocky* (1976) and *Escape to Victory* (1981). Mr C.'s enthusiasm was contagious and other students started making associations as well, referring to the famous cinematic trope: the training montage. Towards the end of the planning phase, we realised that there was not much time left, especially because we couldn't receive extra time for the shooting and editing days. For this reason, we decided to submit one film instead of two, and as everyone was so excited about Emma's idea, we started shooting the student's final film 'Terrible at Football' (link to video: vimeo.com/344791965, password: girlsvsboys).

As we decided to make one film and chose Emma's idea for this film, Emma's sense of pride and authorship was highly present when I spoke to her for an interview. When we were talking about her passion for acting, I asked her if she felt that she did a lot of acting during the film club and she answered:

> Emma: Yeah, a lot of acting, and the whole idea of the movie is something I really love as well.
>
> Int: Well, I mean, it was your idea, you came up with it!
>
> Emma: Yeah, I came up with it [laughs].

Emma here relished the chance to express her pride and to explain how and why she came up with it. She explained how the story is inspired by her own experiences, and how she wanted to convey an important message about gender notions:

> Emma: […] like football is not a game for just boys or just girls, like you have to kind of realise the fact that, just cause boys play it more than girls doesn't mean girls can't play it. And it's just, cause I like football so much, and I would love to be a footballer. Like, kind of based on a real thing… like *I got picked on for playing football* and everyone was like to me 'Oh you can't play football, you're a girl' and like now, it's just more like, yeah you can play football. Just cause you're a girl, that doesn't matter. And I just feel like *the whole idea of the film… it's so relevant*.

Emma seemed to consider film as a way to express a piece of her identity, as well as a way to explore current 'relevant' issues such as gender biases. In a way, the project provided Emma a chance to foster a sense of empathy and understanding towards the message that Emma found significant. She emphasised this aspect of film and acting in particular:

> Emma: Yeah, acting, I love acting. Erm… I used to go drama, it's so fun. It's basically… I enjoy acting, like you spend your whole life being yourself and sometimes being someone else is a little bit more fun. And say for example, you play someone opposite to you, so like pretend you're them, and your real

> lifestyle is nothing like theirs, so it's fun to put yourself in someone else's shoes sometimes. And like acting, cause like you can be yourself, but you have to be someone else, kind of. I just find it really fun, erm… so fun.

It is in the experience of playing and 'putting yourself in someone else's shoes' that I believe Emma perceived the power of film and drama: through listening to other people's stories we can understand the world from their perspective, making everyone that is involved in the film (viewer, actor, filmmaker, script-writer) empathetic towards their perspective. Emma appreciated this liberating aspect of filmmaking and acting, especially in comparison to regular school:

> Emma: […] if you were like 'well that doesn't make any sense because it could be something else'… no, the teacher would say 'no it possibly couldn't'. In film club it is better because there are no right or wrong answers and when someone says 'you're wrong, you're wrong, you're wrong' it just doesn't really feel nice to be told you're wrong and then people like laugh… but at film club it's so fun. So fun, super fun.

The film club was deemed 'fun' because for Emma there was a chance to express her creativity without being judged on having the correct or incorrect answer. During the film club, the classroom is open for discussions, allowing students to gain an understanding and tolerance of each other's perspectives. Emma later talked about the possibilities to experiment in film club, voicing a sense of agency and autonomy that is lacking in 'regular class':

> Emma: […] whereas in film club, like there wasn't a base of an idea, like you didn't have to go off an idea. So, in regular class, you always have to base your idea on something, whereas in film club, like it's just any idea. But in class where we have like subjects and stuff, you'd have to do your idea based of what you've been told to do*. And not having to do what you're told to do is actually fun [laughs]. But erm… if you're always getting told to do things, after a while it gets pretty boring and you won't do them, but now we can*.

Emma appreciated that the film club allowed her to film subjects that were of her choosing, instead of being instructed to create something within a certain subject. It was noticeable how important this autonomy and sense of individuality was for her. When I asked her about working in groups and other students, she emphasised her significant role within the group as a script supervisor, repeatedly drawing attention to the fact that the film's premise was initially her idea. In my interview with Mr. C., he foregrounded the empowering aspect of the film club, particularly for students who have (had) a difficult upbringing. Seeing the students take pride and responsibility in their creative work gives him hope for their futures:

> Mr. C.: […] hopefully this is enough to keep ‘em on more of the right path in using their time wisely cause they’ve seen […] that what they’re able to do could be turned into something physical and something really good […] so they can see what they can achieve now in primary school so hopefully, in secondary school, through this project, they have this little memory in the back of their mind that can keep them on the straight and narrow, so they know ‘okay, in the past I’ve had made good use of myself and I wanna build on that in the future’.

Emma: Authorship and Autonomy

From Emma's perspective, the film club has provided her with a feeling of pride and authorship, especially as she has played a big part in the conception of the narrative. This sense of liberation in contrast with the pre-set curriculum of 'regular class' has made Emma feel important and valued. She has used filmmaking as a way to express her identity and challenge gender structures. In this sense, the film club has been a site where Freire's praxis took place. The students were free to be critical about existing power structures, reinvent their education using their perspectives on the world and reflect upon their actions. Despite being insecure about the educational values of the film club due to lack of time and planning, and thus feeling that I was imposing too much upon their actions, I am relieved to discover that Emma still felt a strong sense of autonomy and individuality, enjoying the pleasures of creating something tangible that is of her own inspiration.

4.3.2 Daniel

From the start of my visits to this film club, I noticed that Daniel had an interesting position within the group dynamics. He didn't seem to be particularly close to anyone in the class and didn't quite belong to any friendship group. While all the boys talked and laughed with each other, and all the girls seemed to get along despite being in different friendship groups, it looked like Daniel was floating in between the rest of the group. It is not that Daniel isolated himself from the group, on the contrary, he listened and joined in with the conversations that his peers were having. It was his peers that did not seem to include Daniel in their jokes, making him the butt of the joke sometimes. This is a situation that I can sympathise with: in my secondary school experience I used to be in the same position as Daniel. However, it eventually made me exclude myself from my peers and adults, whereas Daniel did not seem to be discouraged by this form of exclusion. He kept a positive mindset and he was still a cheerful and enthusiastic student, who kept trying to socialise with his peers and with me and the teachers.

The first time I visited the film club, I followed a group of four students while they were shooting their first practice film in the gym. Daniel was one of them, taking on the role of

camera operator. As this was before I explained the club about crew roles, the shooting of the exercise film felt chaotic: the three other students were all actors and directors of the film, who had taken it upon themselves to instruct Daniel, offering multiple instructions each at the same time. Daniel seemed annoyed by the loudness of the other students; however, he followed their instructions anyway. At one point, I interrupted their work flow and probed them to try changing some crew roles. Daniel was adamant that he did not want to be in front of the camera, so I taught him to direct and operate the camera and taught another student to be the first assistant director. While the actors took a minute to understand that they now have to follow the director's instructions and protested a little bit, Daniel took on the directing role swiftly and seemed to enjoy being the lead of the group.

For Daniel, social conditions in learning environments are important: during my interview with him, Daniel expressed his discontent with one of the louder kids in the group and explained how he considered quitting the film club:

> Daniel: It was… basically… really… hard. I was struggling all the time to film without getting shouted at by Colin. And well erm… it's gotten much better instead of getting shouted at.
>
> […]
>
> Int: […] what do you mean by this?
>
> Daniel: Because usually when it kept happening over and over again, Colin shouting basically at me, and then in the end I thought… I might as well just give up.
>
> Int: Give up how?
>
> Daniel: As in just give up altogether.
>
> Int: Oh, that's not very nice, is it…
>
> Daniel: No, it's the fact of… being shouted at, made me think of giving up.
>
> Int: So, what made you stay, what made you not give up then?
>
> Daniel: Just the thought of well… there's no point in me just wasting my time being behind the camera for… I think it was around three weeks in… and then I thought, well instead of spending altogether a few hours filming, *I might as well just carry on. Because I knew that in the end it would stop*. Because I'll probably not be in this group [the group he was making his exercise film in], and it stopped eventually.

Similar to staying positive about his position in the group, Daniel kept resilient about the social conditions which he described as 'getting shouted at by Colin'. Daniel did not avoid confrontation and attempted to assert himself during the filmmaking. Sometimes his peers did not listen to him, so he accepted that some of his peers are not worthwhile arguing with:

> Daniel: As in like, because when we were doing it, Colin… I'm not just saying Colin, but the people that were in my group, I can't remember who exactly it was, but they were like 'oh put it [the camera] here'. And then I would be like 'why don't we try it from here?'. 'No just put it there', and I thought… well *instead of getting in an argument, I might as well just*…

To my relief, Daniel told me that the film club was not merely a place where his voice was shut down by other students. He explained that after a few weeks of the film club, Daniel felt a greater sense of autonomy when he is working with other students:

> Int: […] when you were in a group without Colin, with other kids, did you feel like you have more freedom?
>
> Daniel: Well it felt different, because then… like I could get away from people shouting in my face and I could just… it was much better because I was able to like get more shots in of my own in a way of like, I could decide from whatever [camera] movement. So, say they're walking past, I will be able to do it [filming] here, instead of others going 'no, here!'.

Daniel felt quietly passionate about expressing his own voice during the film club. In the classroom, he believed that teachers should be more aware of creating a democratic class, in which more reserved students like him, receive the same amount of attention as the louder students. For him, the film club provided this kind of environment:

> Daniel: […] *make more children have more of a say*, because usually louder children… erm, I think personally, *we should all have a say* instead of just like the first kids that… sometimes they even shout out, so like someone's thinking what they want to say, like a maths question and then you got like the kids that know the answer and they just shout out without putting their hand up. *They're just basically taking the learning away from them. That's how it felt*.
>
> […]
>
> Int: Okay, so erm… so, in what way is film club different than maths class or English class then?
>
> Daniel: It felt much different, because in class we only have like two teachers, we have more in film club, like three or four sometimes, it depends… and then you have more people to go to and, [?] if there's only one teacher and we're in the middle of class and then they [other students] all go say something, they

> all get up and you have to wait longer. There's more teachers, so basically you can get things done quicker.

Daniel's appreciation for the attention that he received in film club is then linked with the increase of his self-esteem and confidence to show his creativity and filmmaking knowledge to his peers. This correlation between receiving attention and gaining self-esteem is well established, but in this instance Mr. C. talked about how film can amplify these positive feelings in the children:

> […] taking a big part [of the film club] just makes them feel better, they're the kind of star of the show, […] that's something that everyone wants, that kind of attention, everyone needs a bit of that sometimes… so, I think that's good, and also that someone's ideas can be valued enough and made into a movie… that's great for their self-esteem.

All of the students I spoke to expressed a feeling that their thoughts and ideas were more valued in film club than in a typical classroom setting. This feeling of relative liberation seemed to help Daniel appreciate the experience of participating in the film club. When I asked him about his creativity in the film club compared to other creative acts in school, such as within art classes, he answered:

> Daniel: […] well, maybe the same amount of creativity. It's just the fact of… more ideas in film club, because usually in art, we have set things but in film club we don't… cause say for the practice, we could film whatever we want really for practice, but with art it was always like 'do this, do that'… and *it don't allow as much creativity as we would wish*.

Here, Daniel was voicing his sense of agency and ownership when he was making the exercise films, because he could film 'whatever' he wanted. In this and other film education research studies, this feeling of autonomy seems to be a common finding (Cannon, et. al., 2014). As Daniel had an active role in the film club as a camera operator, he believed that he had become more knowledgeable in working the camera and showed a rudimentary literacy of filmmaking:

> Daniel: […] because I just went off with what I knew of, basically: being behind the camera and film what's there really. That's what I thought, I didn't think of all these shots and different scenes. *All I thought was one straight shot*.
>
> Int: So, in a way, are you maybe looking differently at films now?
>
> Daniel: Yeah, in the way of more knowledgeable like in a way of *knowing and seeing different*. […]

As a result of Daniel's 'learning curve' and his increasing knowledge of film literacy, Daniel took much pride in his creative acts. However, he felt that this was sometimes disrupted by the louder children who in his eyes were:

> messing around in films… in that it's taking up much more time and BFI will probably be like… be confused as if to say 'what you've had this amount of time to do this film' and we haven't done it, all we've done is mess around, it will be embarrassing for sir and to our school really.

Despite his annoyances about his peers' carelessness, Daniel was still optimistic about the quality of their final film:

> Int: […] what do you hope the final film will achieve? Do you want it to make people happy, erm…, laugh, sad?
>
> Daniel: Probably like something that they'll remember really, something that like, something basically like Rocky, like something that everyone knows kind of thing, like a remake kind of that.

Daniel: Personal and Collaborative Processes

Before we visited the BFI for the screening of their final film, we organised a small screening with the group in the school classroom. The teachers brought popcorn and closed the blinds in the classroom, while the students sat in front of the projector screen. During this screening the classroom was filled with laughter and comments as the students saw themselves on the screen. As Daniel did not appear in front of the camera, his moments of pride occurred when he recognised the camera shots and scenes that he was responsible for. When the group watched the close-up shot of the football during the ‘injury scene’ in the beginning of the film (see figure 4), one of the students commented: 'Oh I like that shot!', to which Daniel happily replied 'Ah, you like my camera work?'. His reserved nature within the group has perhaps contributed to his ability to observe and watch the group from a distance, which is reflected in his desire to be behind the camera.

Daniel hopes that their final film will be part of the cultural landscape and the audience's collective memory: ‘something basically like Rocky, like something that everyone knows’. This illustrates his pride in participating in the film club. Daniel has had an interesting development throughout this project. He started as a student who seemed to be less assertive than the students he was working with and was thus less able to show his knowledge and creativity. In a way, Daniel is dependent on the right social conditions for him to learn successfully. His chagrin about his peers 'messing around' and 'having a laugh' may have disrupted his learning flow, however this disruption is an inherent aspect of filmmaking, particularly within an educational context (Cannon et. al., 2014). In spite of his agitation, Daniel explained that he believed the film club gave him a sense of autonomy and creativity that he hasn't felt in other creative situations. Seeing first hand that 'messing around' can be a valuable part of a creative, educational process lent added value to the experience for Daniel. His capacity to work through the noise

created by the louder kids has demonstrated Daniel's confidence and perhaps an increasing self-assertion, resulting in an experience that he seemed to value.

Figure 3: *Daniel's camerawork for the 'injury scene' (link to video: vimeo.com/344791965, password: girlsvsboys).*

4.3.3 Ruby and Crystal

For structural purposes I have decided to group two of the four students together in this section, as after reading my transcriptions I believed that Ruby and Crystal had similar opinions and roles in the film club. Despite having similar roles, the students remain individuals and have different voices. Ruby is the prefect of year six at the primary school, and this is evident from her attitude towards her peers and vice versa. She is

smiley, forthcoming and seems to enjoy social interactions with her peers, presenting herself with the demeanour one would expect from a leader of the upper school. Crystal is a calmer student who also seems to have found her place in the group. She is personable and seems enthusiastic about learning at the film club. In my interview with her, she was insightful and critical - resulting in fruitful discussions about the film club. The most striking thing that I have learned from Crystal is how she believed the film club has helped her gain confidence about herself.

Unlike Daniel and Emma, Ruby and Crystal did not have active roles in the production of the final film. During the practice exercises, however, Ruby was notably animated in helping peers to fulfil their individual roles - acting as a mediator and leader. In this sense, Ruby is a model prefect - she enjoys pleasing people and makes sure that everyone is enjoying themselves. She confirms this in my interview with her, talking keenly of the collaborative processes in the film club.

> Int: […] because you are acting in drama classes and stuff like that… do you think you've helped others maybe in a way?
>
> Ruby: [hesitant] Yeah I think so… maybe because like… *if I like say something… say I'm director and I say something good to change it and there might be… some people might be like 'oh yeah that's really good*' and stuff like that.
>
> Int: So, as a director you can tell your ideas and people might say 'oh that's really good'…
>
> Ruby: Yeah, but sometimes people might be like 'I don't really like that idea'.
>
> Int: And then, what happens then?
>
> Ruby: I kind of base the idea off another idea… so like… so to combine them, and sometimes they think it's good as well.
>
> Int: Oh so… as in if you don't think your idea's good then…
>
> Ruby: I can use part of that idea with another idea.
>
> Int: That's a really good skill you know! That's really good because you sort of…
>
> Ruby: *If I like a part of it then I'll put it in another part of that story, so it kind of combines with the part that I like and then a part the other person likes*.

In the transcribed excerpt above, Ruby explained how she cherished the collaborative processes in the film club. She appreciates encouragement from her peers, allowing her to develop her ideas further in a way that accounts for the collective wish. For Ruby, it is important that they create a story that everyone is content and comfortable with. Ruby

often takes on a mediator role, as she is always aware of the group and her position within the group. This proves to be fruitful for Ruby's creative process: she feels that social interactions with her peers and brainstorming with them results in a creative flow. This is reminiscent of Vygotsky's social constructivist theory in learning, in which he argues that learning occurs within social interactions with others (Vygotsky, 1978). These social interactions do not necessarily always lead to serious creative discussions, rather most of the learning through social interactions occur within playful banter between the students. Ruby emphasised how the film club provided moments of amusement when something does not happen according to the plan:

> Ruby: Erm… I enjoyed the filming when we were told what we were supposed to do in the football, but that was kind of fun… and then like some bits were funny when we were filming it.
>
> Int: Hmm, like which bits?
>
> Ruby: Like… watching Rayna do the pull-ups, erm… and sometimes when we do something wrong, but it would be like in a funny way.

While Ruby seemed more confident to share her ideas from the start of the film club, Crystal was more reserved. However, she claimed that through brainstorming sessions at the film club, she believed to have gained more confidence in her ideas and contributions to the group:

> Crystal: Well, at first I thought that some of my ideas wouldn't be like, that good, because people… like, other people would make good ideas. *But I think that now, I think maybe the things I'm saying to try help them maybe has helped it, or something like that? Or trying to like… you know, like give ideas to try and improve it*.
>
> […]
>
> Int: Oh, that's really good! What do you think has changed?
>
> Crystal: Erm… maybe like *sharing my ideas*, like if we have to try improve something and we all have to like, pitch some ideas, then yeah, I think that has improved, like *saying what I think about it… like, maybe this should happen or something like that… like that should happen to make it better*.

Crystal's development from feeling insecure about her ideas to feeling confident about her input and contribution to the group might come from her discovery about the level of agency that is permitted in the film club. At the start of the film club, she was surprised about the amount of responsibilities her and her peers held, expecting the adults would take control:

> Crystal: […] I thought we were gonna make like, *maybe adult films or something like that*?
>
> Int: What is that, what are adult films?
>
> Crystal: You know when you have like in films… when it's like people who are like adults, like not kids or something like that, we were gonna have people from like, erm… different places that come and film, stuff like that.
>
> Int: Oh so… you mean, like you would pretend to be adults in the films, is that what you mean?
>
> Crystal: Or like, film people who are adults, like film other people… like learn different types of filming like that, *but not really in the film as much*.

The fact that the students were expected to write, direct, act and edit their own film was a surprise to Crystal. Her initial belief that the process would be led and performed mostly by adults reflects the normative nature of adult led learning in education. It is unusual for children to be given autonomy to create a film from their own ideas, and Crystal expected adults to lead the process and star in the film, with children learning mostly by demonstration. This might be due to the lack of serious child acting roles in mainstream cinema or television that are suited to a young audience. Due to the amount of agency that the students worked with, Crystal felt that film club has helped her feel more confident in expressing her ideas and think more creatively. Mr. C. believes that the responsibility given to the students 'makes them feel like their choices are valued enough and are special enough to make something work. You know, they are important, their ideas are important […]'.

Because of the freedom the students received in developing their ideas and the lack of a meticulous structure of the film club, for Ruby, the playfulness of the film club and the opportunity to make mistakes became moments of learning as well. Ruby's moments of learning thus differ from Daniel's learning style, as he preferred a learning environment that was quiet and planned out. Similar to Daniel and Emma, Ruby was convinced that the film club allowed them to 'do whatever you want':

> Ruby: Erm… cause like film… filming is an art in a way, but like it's different… because sometimes we get to like, we get to do a lot of planning of it, but like in art… they just say… or like they show us how to do it and tell us what we're doing and how to do it. And I suppose you can get like a little bit creative in it, cause we're being told how to do it, *but in film club you can be… you can do whatever you want.*

Crystal also emphasises the liberating aspect of the film club, a site where she has a voice and where she can express a sense of criticality, compared to the more rigid and results-based structure in regular school:

> Crystal: Like you know when you're in regular school time, and you have some ideas about like trying to improve something, like filming something or acting something, but you can't really say it or do it because there's not really opportunities to say it… *but then in film club, because we're doing like a film and everyone's involved, you can say it*.

It's worth noting that children's perception of agency differs from that of an adult. Throughout the project I was worried that the teachers and I were sometimes too strict in behaviour management. Mr. C. felt that 'sometimes they were a bit exuberant and wanting to have too much input, and I had to reign in there just so we've got our ideas now, no more ideas'. Yet, the students did not mention this aspect of the film club at all. I perceived that the tension we created between the constraints and freedom in the film club proved to be productive for these students, who in contrast to 'regular school time' feel that the film club was more liberating for their creative development.

The film club is also a site where learning processes are allowed and where making mistakes are unavoidable. The experimental aspect of the film club gave them agency over their creative process. For Ruby, this meant that she was able to do something out of the ordinary, such as giving the main character a different kind of character development than usual. Similar to Emma, she considers the plot of the final film as a kind of resistance to the mainstream, and finds that cinema allows her to challenge prevailing narratives:

> Ruby: Erm… I hope that other people like it too and see what we're trying to put out… like the message, that girls can play football too and not just boys, and they can be good at it as well.
>
> Int: Hmm, yeah so you hope that people can understand that… that message. And do you want people to be like happy or sad or…
>
> Ruby: I want them to feel like happy about it… *like that we are noticing it, and like some people are still being a little bit like sexist in the world so like… we're trying to stop all of it*…
>
> Int: Okay wow that's a great aim to have, that's really good! So, do you think film can solve problems like that?
>
> Ruby: Yeah, if you're sending out a message, then some people might follow that message, and realise 'oh yeah girls can do that, or boys can do that'.

For Crystal, it is important that their final film has an empowering effect on its viewers:

> Crystal: […] Like if something like that happened in their life, you know the scenes that happens in the football film, like when someone puts you down when they threw the note… like something happens to you… because it kind of shows that you should never give up and maybe that's something that they can relate to if something like that happened to them and if that happened to them or if it's going to happen to them or it will happen in the future like you should just always give up… No not give up! Sorry not give up [laughs] [You should always] try, I mean.

Through filmmaking, Crystal and Ruby felt that they could communicate a message that is important and perhaps create change in the society. The power that they deem the final film possesses is feasibly connected to Ruby's sense of pride in this project - I asked her about a film that she could think of that has changed something in herself and she answered:

> Ruby: I don't think so… probably this film.
>
> […]
>
> Ruby: I would say that it's IMAX-worthy to be [screened] there, because it's like… quite a good film to be shown there, like if people want to see it and want to get that message, then it's good.

Ruby and Crystal: A Group Effort

Some key ideas recur throughout Ruby and Crystal's ruminations in the interviews. Most clear is the prevalence of a group mentality: Ruby makes regular reference to the good of the group as a whole, referring to the creative process though pronouns such as 'we' or 'our' rather than 'I' or 'my'. Flexibility and curiosity characterise her approach to roles within the club. Happy to compromise and allow other children to be the actors, Ruby found that becoming a director was a process of learning which fostered greater autonomy, linking film club to art class while repeatedly referring to one's perceived liberty to 'do whatever you want' with film. This amount of agency came as a surprise to Crystal, who expected the adults to take control, as is usual in formal school settings. The fact that Crystal felt to gain confidence in her ideas was, I believe, due to the freedom that the film club provided the students in choosing their own subject to film and the way they would create their film. Apart from the sense of autonomy and agency, Crystal felt more empowered to be critical of some ideas and share her contributions to the group because of the collaborative environment of the film club as well. It was mostly during group work or brainstorming sessions when Crystal felt that she was able to 'say something'.

Ruby and Crystal positioned the film not only as a collaborative learning process but as a chance to challenge perceived injustices within society. For Ruby, the film's screening

at the BFI represented a chance to convey 'the message that girls can play football too and not just boys and they can be good at it as well… some people are being a little bit sexist in the world so like we're trying to stop all of it.' The students' autonomy in deciding a subject and a narrative for their film resulted in them considering social issues and using their creative practice as a means to address these. The social issues that they discuss are perhaps issues that are reflected in their own lives, and Crystal hopes for their film to resonate with her peers who have perhaps been bullied or discouraged. In relation to this, Mr. C. calls film 'a metaphor of life':

> Mr. C.: […] cause film and music, is things that we feel that are empathic to us in what we're going through and it's a way of projecting our needs onto the big screen or onto music. […] something like this is an opportunity to make a film and to make a project that's a metaphor of how you want your life to turn out so if you can make it in a short film it's gonna give you confidence to make it in your life. It's important!

An analysis of recurring sentiments within Ruby and Crystal's interviews produces a sense of pride in creating, collaborating and using film to put forward an idea deemed socially emancipatory.

4.4 It's a wrap! Screening at the BFI

As I have written before, due to lack of time towards the end of the project, Mr. C. and I had to take the responsibility to edit the students' final film with some guidance from the group: the students visualised certain parts of the film which we adhered to. In the cinema, the students had to stand in front of the audience and answer questions about their production. I was worried that Mr. C's and my intervention would be considered unfair by other schools, thus admittedly, before the screening, I tried to tell the students how important it is to refer to the project as a collaborative work and use 'we' instead of 'I'. Because of their excitement, I believe they did not pay attention to this and when they were asked questions about their film, they pointed out Mr. C. as the leader of the group, resulting into a chuckle by the audience. Mr. C. did not seem to be concerned about this at first - in my interview with him he considered this project to be a chance for him to learn something new:

> Mr. C.: […] it's a great opportunity to express some of my creativity through a medium that I've never done before. Like in the past I've done some school plays that have gone pretty well, but nothing ever filmed… so yeah, it was a way for me to, well it's about the kids, but it's also a way for me to better myself in what I can do, in terms of pushing projects with dramatisation involving children.
>
> […]

> Mr. C.: […] [the project] has definitely opened my eyes a little bit more about the little nuances and intricacies of making like a… like a film.

I believe that as he deemed the project to be a learning process for him as well as for the students, Mr. C. did not see his interventions as a negative aspect. As such, he was discovering new filmmaking knowledge together with his students: from a critical pedagogies perspective, this produces a dialogue between the teacher and students where education is not a way to impose knowledge, rather it is a collaborative act of learning. After the screening of other students' films however, it was clear that most of them had had a clear division of crew roles. Mr. C. then admitted that we could have been more aware of this in our film club.

The first film to be screened was our students' film 'Terrible at Football': when this was announced the cinema was filled with gasps and shouts of excitement from the animated students. After the screening, all fourteen students were invited to the front for the Q&A section: most of them seemed eager to say something and hold on to the microphone. The remarks from the audience were positive, other students appreciated that the film was indicative of contemporary debates: 'I really enjoyed that the boys lost, people think that [football] is a boy's game and now it's equal'. The students were happy about this comment, as some of the students I spoke to felt that they wanted to convey this message through their film.

Halfway through the day, during lunch time, I sat with the students and conducted an informal group interview to hear their thoughts about the screening. They all felt proud about their production and believed that this sense of pride was heightened by being able to speak about the film afterwards:

> Johnny: I felt a little bit nervous, but I felt kind of proud, that I've been chosen for the film club in our school. I was really happy that erm… that I was up there and that I was allowed to speak and stuff like that, so I was really proud of myself… and everyone else in my class.
>
> Omar: Yeah, it was amazing seeing erm… seeing myself, seeing my friends, seeing everyone erm… acting and presenting the film. And when we went down to speak, I felt really proud and erm… to say how I felt and the bloopers and everything, that's how I felt, yeah.

The students appreciated that they had the chance to express themselves and to reflect upon their choices in their filmmaking. This sense of reflection occurred through watching the films created by other students:

> Colin: […] I think that the other kids were really good, there were some bits in other movies that I thought like 'oh they could've done that' or… I was watching theirs saying 'oh we could have magpied them and done some of that in our movie', or something along the lines… so I think it was good to watch other kids' [films], so we like, know in the future what erm… like, other things that we could do.

Through this project, the students have learned basic filmmaking theory and techniques and applied it to their practice, while discussing and reflecting on their choices with some adult intervention. The relationships formed between ‘educator’ and ‘learner’ became fluid, some moments at the film club indicated that everyone in the classroom became co-learners. The presence of dialogue in the critical pedagogical sense ensured a form of praxis and the participants combined theoretical notions with practical activities in a critical and playful collaborative environment. In the next chapter I will explore and develop the ways in which my interpreted data connect with my theoretical framework.

5. DISCUSSION

In the previous chapter, I explored and presented the main findings of my interviews and observations of the Cinéma, Cent Ans de Jeunesse film club. This chapter will show in what way the students' thoughts relate to the discourses and theoretical framework that I discussed at the beginning of this research. These discourses interact with each other in a dynamic manner, resulting in a 'fascinating collaborative matrix'. Through a combination of creative expression, collaborative processes and playing with different identities in the film club, the students that have participated were able to gain a sense of autonomy, agency and criticality. Therefore, this chapter serves as a presentation of arguments that address my research question: *How do film education practices relate to critical pedagogies in primary schools in the UK?*

5.1 Critical creativity

Although in curricular literacy models, creativity and criticality are seen as two separate entities, the former referring to the production aspect and the latter to the 'reading' aspect (Burn, 2009), researching the CCAJ project and analysing the interviews have taught me that creativity and criticality are inseparable. At this stage of the research process, I recall Burn's work *Making New Media* (2009), in which he elaborates on the common dichotomy between creativity and criticality by drawing on Vygotsky's creativity theory. According to Vygotsky, creativity is related to children's play because through playful activities, children gain symbolic understandings of physical objects. These playful processes, when combined with 'rational thought', allow imaginative play to develop creativity. Creativity is thus, 'linked to intellectual development, rather than being something mysteriously separate from it' (Burn, 2009, p. 12).

Notably, most of the students I spoke to, mentioned the disparities between film club and other creative acts, such as art class. Although both classes focus on creativity, the students spoke about how, compared to film club, art class doesn't 'allow as much creativity as we wish', claiming that film club allowed them to be more creative. When I asked them what the reason was for this, the students referred to the freedom that they had at film club to make their own creative choices, such as what subject they wanted to explore and how they wanted to do this. Emma referred to the film club as 'fun, so fun' and spoke of the welcome chance to express her creativity without being judged or told what to do – resembling acts of play. Adult intervention in the film club was the minimum needed to fulfil the task brief within the set time frame, which to the students represented a higher level of freedom than within school lessons. Film education practices allow for a pedagogy that encourages creativity, makes space for critical

reflection and is playful with constraints (Burn, 2009), aims expressed also in Bergala's 'pedagogy of creation' for the CCAJ film club.

The students created a film telling the story of a girl who is injured playing football. She is discouraged by others, who insist that 'girls can't play football'. Through training and hard work, the girl becomes empowered and in the finale of the film, a girls versus boys football match, the girls' team win. The students' creative inspiration seems to be drawn from socio-political events: the rising popularity of women's football marked by the widely televised FIFA Women's World Cup 2019, and the continuing fight for women's rights. One student, Ruby, mentioned that she wished her final film will show that they 'are noticing it, and like some people are still being a little bit like sexist in the world so like… we're trying to stop all of it'. Creativity is here related to 'children's cultural resources' (Burn, 2009, p. 12) and their sense of criticality about themselves and their 'lived culture' (Williams, 2013).

5.2 Social learning

The creative processes that the students experienced at the film club seem to derive mostly from collaborative activities: the most obvious illustrations of this were given by Ruby and Crystal. Although neither of them had particular roles in the production of the final film, they both felt that through the group work and brainstorming sessions, they developed a sense of self-assertion and confidence to share their ideas. Through encouragement from their peers and adults, Crystal and Ruby believed that their contributions were valued. Without pre-set roles or a clear topic set by the educators, the children's ability to learn from one another of their own volition was clear, most students reflected on the social nature of their learning, commenting on the valuable input of others. This aligns with Vygotsky's social constructivist learning theory, which argues that through interactions with peers and others, learning processes occur (Vygotsky, 1978).

These learning processes did not merely concern scientific (academic) concepts, but also spontaneous (everyday) ideas (Burn & Durran, 2006). Through social interactions, the students gained an understanding of filmmaking, as well as of themselves and the group. One of the students, Daniel, expressed his grievance with classroom learning: the disruption of 'louder children'. He argues that 'we should all have a say instead of 'the children who shout out without putting their hand up'. Within the less structured CCAJ project, Daniel found that having power focused away from only one teacher and the classroom setting made him feel more listened to, empowering him to express his voice. This more democratic environment, in which all students feel that they are being

heard and valued, allows everyone in the classroom to be able to 'change our sense of ourselves, whether through representing some aspect of ourselves in what we have made, or in our altered sense of what we can do' (Burn & Durran, 2007, p. 13). By understanding his qualities and character (Sabal, 2009), Daniel flourished in the group once he gained knowledge of his position within the group context.

The CCAJ strives to be a democratic project, with Bergala aiming for the project to be accessible for children who do not have easy access to cinemas or film institutions. I found greater democracy between educators and learners to be a big part of the CCAJ's enaction. A key aspect of this was the fluidity of roles within the project: educators and learners both gained valuable insight and experience from a more democratic environment. The teacher, Mr. C., positions himself as a co-learner, as he believed that he did not hold absolute knowledge of the subject film – allowing a dialogue to occur between the educator and the students (Freire, 2013a). Here, I am reminded by bell hooks' approach to teaching:

> When I enter the classroom at the beginning of the semester the weight is on me to establish that our purpose is to be, for however brief a time, a community of learners *together*. It positions me as a learner. But I'm also not suggesting that I don't have more power. And I'm not trying to say we're all equal here. I'm trying to say that we are all equal here to the extent that we are equally committed to creating a learning context (hooks, 1994, p. 153).

Although Mr. C.'s (and my) involvement in the students' creative work can be seen as a kind of 'epistemic imposition' (Chambers, 2019, p. 4), I argue that when educators open themselves up for dialogue with the students, the traditional classroom hierarchies become dissolved within this class at the North London primary school, and the classroom becomes the 'third space' (Potter & McDougall, 2017), a space for experiment and collaborative learning.

5.3 Empathetic learning or 'putting yourself in someone else's shoes'

Related to creative playful activities and collaborative learning, playing with different identities is a composite part of acting and film-making. Emma described acting as 'fun', as she enjoyed putting '[herself] in someone else's shoes sometimes […] cause like you can be yourself, but you have to be someone else'. Through learning to see the world from other people's perspectives, Emma could play with her own identity-construction as well as others'. In a collaborative and playful learning environment, it is vital that 'group members can also spot the qualities and strengths that others are bringing to the team' (Sabal, 2009, p. 13). With younger children, this is perhaps more challenging to achieve. Nevertheless, encouraging students to gain an understanding of each other's

perspectives, identities and histories, could instil a sense of compassion and empathy towards each other – following the ideals of critical pedagogies.

Working with representational media can provide 'young people with symbolic resources for constructing or expressing their own identities' (Buckingham, 2008 in Potter, 2012, p. 39). As Burn and Durran argued, through representing something of ourselves in a new medium, we gain an understanding about our sense of self (Burn & Durran, 2007). Although this understanding may not be explicit sometimes, when the students at the North London primary school were asked about this, they articulated that their final film represented multiple meanings for them. Not only was football a pastime that most of the students enjoyed, the underlying themes in the film – bullying, discrimination and exclusion – were subjects that the students deliberately wanted to challenge. Ruby hoped that the film can stop people who 'are still being a little bit like sexist in the world.' This was an ambitious aim for the project, but one which demonstrates that many of the children see film as a way of changing the world. Crystal believed that their film would be relatable and extend empathy to people who are experiencing these injustices: 'something that they can relate to if something like that happened to them'.

Creative acts in education allow space for empathy and tolerance towards others. Through filmmaking, the students were able to gain knowledge about themselves, as well as about experiences of others. Film education practices are inherently critical in their pedagogy, aiming to create a space for creative, critical and collaborative processes to develop. The CCAJ afforded students a chance to empathise with each other through creative and critical thinking, working together and playing with different identities and roles.

5.4 Agency from children's perspective: 'doing whatever you want'

The phrase 'doing whatever you want' seems to recur throughout my interviews with the students and this is not uncommon in film education projects (Cannon et. al., 2014). From an adult perspective, this was not necessarily the case. The CCAJ project builds the students up by preparing small filmmaking exercises and the teachers and myself gave them tasks to plan and create their final film. Compared to the regular curriculum however, the film club made the students feel liberated and gave them a sense of responsibility that they perhaps have not felt before in this capacity. Parallel with critical pedagogies, film education practices encourage a greater level of participation and critical thinking than in 'regular school'. Within the after-school film club as the third space, it was encouraged to share your ideas and to be critical and playful. The tension

that was created between the students' autonomy and the project's constraints produced an environment that seemed to challenge all the students and the teachers.

The students that were interviewed expressed a sense of pride and ownership about their final film, especially after its screening at the BFI. This sense of pride is a result of the level of agency and autonomy the students held at the film club: they crafted the narrative, (partly) directed the film, acted in it and (partly) led the editing of the film. Some students that I spoke to expressed a sense of criticality as well, they wanted to critique and disprove gender stereotypes by showing the opposite in their film production. The students were also vocal about the negative aspects of 'regular school', in particular the 'right or wrong' nature of teaching a specific curriculum within the classroom. Emma, Daniel, Ruby, Crystal and other students felt empowered to express their identities and ideas in filmmaking.

The film club enacted something resembling a 'collaborative matrix', which develops through playful interactions between criticality, creativity and play. Film education practices develop both creative and critical skills, which are key to collaborative environments. Collaboration encouraged the children to 'put themselves in someone else's shoes' and consider the group's dynamics. The experiences of the children linked naturally to global issues and ideologies. By situating themselves in their stance on an issue that effects them or their classmates, the children took a stance on a social issue that for some of them was new. This new identity is then represented in the final product of a creative act, one which may be associated with pride and ownership for the students. The CCAJ film club represents the 'third space', creating an environment in which discourses and identities can manifest playfully.

As I have explained in previous chapters, I encourage an educational practice that fosters creativity, criticality and collaboration while acknowledging the multiplicity of perspectives that students hold. Through my literature research, I find that my views resonate with the ideals of critical pedagogy theory, and my involvement with the CCAJ project has convinced me of these principles. However, while critical pedagogues claim that it is important to create a learning environment in which the educator does not hold an authoritative stance, I personally found it challenging to balance a non-authoritative approach in which the students are able to lead their own educational experience, with an assertive attitude in terms of managing the students' different behaviours. In the end, I believe that the collaborative negotiation between me, the teachers and the students resulted in a good balance between the liberating and assertive attitudes. Everyone involved with the film club, students and adults, felt responsible for their tasks, with the

students not vocalising any discontent about the adults' interventions. On the contrary, all the students I spoke to suggested that the film club has made them feel more autonomous and/or creative than in other situations in school. Therefore, I found that film education and critical pedagogies can cultivate a balance and manage tensions between different teaching methods that encourage a feeling of agency, autonomy and creativity within students.

6. CONCLUSION

As an educator in film and arts, I have always been interested in how to make teaching material as engaging as possible for students. My training in education has taught me the value of active participation between co-learners, to create critical discussions and encourage creative thinking. In the initial stages of this dissertation, I delved into critical pedagogy and film education theories and developed my research question: *How do film education practices relate to critical pedagogies in primary schools in the UK?* I started to question the current education system in the UK and its emphasis on grades and mathematical problem-solving, discovering that this emphasis is mostly based on neoliberal ideology and its resulting policies, which prioritise individual achievements and employability. This has, I believe, marginalised the importance of creative and critical skills.

For this reason, I became interested in the teachings of critical pedagogies as it emphasises the importance of students' critical skills to create a sense of autonomy and agency. To achieve this, it is vital to make the classroom a site in which both teachers and students are co-learners and a space where everyone is committed to the learning experience. My practice as a film educator has always encouraged collaboration between students, however during this research process I realised that this collaborative process should also extend to me, the educator, to develop the 'collaborative matrix' within film education. Film education offers space for a critical approach to teaching, as it is inherently rooted in inclusivity, in the sense of allowing children's literacy to extend to other modes of meaning-making. Children and young people are increasingly engaging in media and the moving image, and formal education settings should further embrace these cultural repertoires. Underpinning this research is the belief that, when it comes to literacies, the current educational model is no longer apposite to the everyday experience of children and young people growing up in a world dominated by the moving image and an abundance of information presented through this medium.

Both film education and critical pedagogies foreground making connections between learning and the wider sociocultural context, encouraging the diversity of individual's perspectives and identities and allowing learners to be creative and critical. Within this current education system, these affordances are not yet included in the curriculum, however the after-school club as the third space, where teaching is not as confined within the institutional constraints, can be the site to develop students' creative and critical skills.

One example of an after-school club is the Cinéma, Cent Ans de Jeunesse film club that is studied within this research. The data collection revolved around its participants' experiences of the project at a North London primary school. Although I was concerned that the lack of planning and the time limitations might restrict the students' autonomy and creativity, I discovered that the students of the film club experienced a sense of autonomy and agency that they have not yet felt before. The combination of creating something, working in groups and playing with different roles made the students feel pride, responsibility and ownership of the films that they created. The teachers' and my interventions did not seem to hinder this, as we were also part of the collaborative learning process at the film club.

The fact that the students were given the chance to craft a narrative of their own choosing, to film the shots that they decided and to act in and direct their film made them feel liberated to 'do whatever they want'. The critical skills that they developed did not include criticality in the media literacy sense, i.e. reading and decoding media, but the students voiced their critiques of current issues, such as 'sexism' and bullying. Through these processes, I believe the students were involved in a kind of praxis, as they are representing their perspective on theoretical ideas into a creative, practical act.

Unfortunately, there was not much time for them to edit their final film. This would have offered more analyses on the students' creative decisions. Further research on the CCAJ project could include students' editing choices, to learn and experiment with this aspect of filmmaking. A looming question for the implementation of film education and critical pedagogies is the assessment of progression for students. If film education should become part of the formal curriculum, then policy makers will want to know how teachers can assess pupils' achievements. As filmmaking is a collaborative experience, assessment should account for this by giving one collective grade. This would recognise social learning in a system which currently promotes the individual. As the project naturally produced a film which aimed to challenge a perceived societal issue surrounding gender, questions surrounding identity and representation in relation to film education and critical pedagogies seem to be fertile ground for further research.

Conducting this research, I have found that film education and a critical approach to teaching affect a positive development in learners' sense of agency and autonomy. Although this research is not representative of all film education practices in the UK, the CCAJ project offers food for thought in the implementation of film education and media literacy in the school environment. In what way can film education have a more integral role in the school curriculum? And would its implementation display on a wider scale the

positive effects found in this case study? Policy makers should act to develop multi-modal literacies and foster cultural, creative and critical skills which are increasingly integral in a media-saturated society. If it is inevitable to follow neoliberal or market-based trends, one could advocate the development of practical creative skills to be valuable in the 'knowledge economy'. Education may change significantly in response to the changing nature of work in advanced technological society. If the educational and social benefits of film and media education are not enough to incentivise policy makers, one should champion the potential economic value of creative and critical thinking. One thing that can be said with certainty is that film education and critical pedagogies contribute significantly to children and young people's social and intellectual developments, which deserve to be considered and explored further.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A*: Extracts from interview transcriptions*

Emma

21/06/19

Int: Okay, so first of all there are no right or wrong answers. I'm just here to find out what you thought of the whole film club and what you think you've learnt and stuff like that. So, first of all, just go back to the beginning, before the film club… Why did you choose to participate in the film club in the first place?

Emma: Erm… well last year I know we got told, when erm, a load of people were asking erm, if we could go, last year's people they went to France and we watched the video of them in France… [disappointed] it would have been nice to go to France but [politely] I just think filming is so fun because sometimes you sit at home and you watch a movie and you just think 'oh my god oh my god that must have taken about seven hours of editing. oh my god that must have taken years and years to make.' I mean a whole one-hour film could have [taken] oh my god a long time. [Int laughs in agreement]

[…]

Int: What did you enjoy the most?

Emma: The whole idea of the whole football idea. Kind of just getting involved and being able to make decisions… I think that's really fun and if one person thinks one thing you can disagree with them and I just feel like the whole experience is so fun

Int: That's really good. So, when you said that you can make decisions what do you mean exactly?

Emma: Say for example on one of the projects we did we was erm … ah we was filming and there was three of us in a group and erm ah we was editing the film and erm ah one person was like to me 'ah that's cool I like this effect' and I was like 'no but I think this effect would look more real.' And you just get to make decisions and give your opinion and say how you feel about it. And that's really, really fun.

Int: So, what do you think you would base your decisions on?

Emma: Erm just what would look better. What is more real and say for example Someone wanted to put like for really fun movie someone wanted to put a black and white thing on it and like horror movie music I would disagree because that's not really real… a happy movie with horror music in the background, that doesn't make any sense but I just find film club so fun.

Int: Yeah? Oh, that's good. So, do you think that you can make your own decisions more in film club than in regular school then?

Emma: Yes definitely. Because normally in class, say for example you are doing a lesson on maths and someone's like '14+28 is…' [Int and Emma laugh at length of time taken to work out sum]

Both: … '42' (laugh)

Emma: and if you were like 'well that doesn't make any sense because it could be something else'... no, the teacher would say 'no it possibly couldn't'... in film club it is better because there are no right or wrong answers and when someone says 'you're wrong you're wrong you're wrong' it just doesn't really feel nice to be told you're wrong and then people like laugh… but at film club it's so fun [whispers] so fun. So fun, super fun.

Int: [laughs] So, okay, so first of all there are no right or wrong answers, so you can basically just say anything in film club and also, you don't feel like there's a pressure to have that right answer because if you don't have the right answer, is that what you're saying?

Emma: Yeah, acting, I love acting. Erm… I used to go drama, it's so fun. it's basically, I enjoy acting, like you spend your whole life being yourself and sometimes being someone else is a little bit more fun. And say for example, you play someone opposite to you, so like pretend you're them, and your real lifestyle is nothing like theirs, so it's fun to put yourself in someone else's shoes sometimes. and like acting, cause like you can be yourself, but you have to be someone else, kind of. I just find it really fun, erm… so fun.

Int: Yeah definitely. Do you feel like you've done that in film club a lot?

Emma: Yeah, a lot of acting, and the whole idea of the movie is something I really love as well.

Int: I mean it was your idea, you came up with it.

Emma: Yeah, I came up with it [laughs].

Int: How do you feel about that, that we chose your idea?

Emma: I feel really, really happy, and also like, almost everyone who goes film club, enjoys it…

Int: it as in football?

Emma: Yeah, so everyone enjoys it, I just feel like, it's something that everyone can take part of, like football is not a game for just boys or just girls, like you have to kind of realise the fact that, just cause boys play it more than girls doesn't mean girls can't play it. And it's just, cause I like football so much, and I would love to be a footballer.

like, kind of based on a real thing, like I got picked on for playing football and everyone was like to me 'oh you can't play football you're a girl' and like now, it's just more like, yeah you can play football just cause you're a girl that doesn't matter. and I just feel like the whole idea of the film… it's so relevant.

Int: Yeah, especially with the women's world cup! Have you been watching it?

Emma: Yeah…

[…]

Int: I feel like, do you think in film club, even though you weren't acting, so say you were editing or thinking about a story, do you feel like that is also a kind of acting maybe?

Emma: Erm… I suppose it is, because still you're filming, you're acting, you're editing… but whereas in film club, like there wasn't a base of an idea, like you didn't have to go off an idea. So, in regular class you always have to base your idea on something, whereas in film club, like it's just any idea. But in class where we have like subjects and stuff, you'd have to do your idea based of what you've been told to do. And not having to do what you're told to do is actually fun [laughs]. but erm... if you're always getting told to do things, after a while it gets pretty boring and you won't do them. but now we can.

Daniel

07/06/19

Int: […] I would like to make sure that you know that your name is not gonna be in my research, so you can make up your own name or I can make one for you.

Int: So just to start with, I just want you to go back to the beginning of the film club, before we even started. First of all, why did you choose to be at the film club?

Daniel: Cause I thought it was like something different that I could do instead of… I just wanted to try something out really, cause I didn't know whether… what it was… as in like cause, years before, like years before me in year 6 when they've done it, it looked quite fun when they were doing it, so I thought I might as well have a go at it myself.

[…]

Daniel: […] I remember the one by the structure, when it was basically a learning curve because all you could only see was my fingers over the camera, or a slight glare from the [?]

Int: yeah, what did you mean by learning curve?

Daniel: It was… basically… really… hard. I was struggling all the time to film without getting shouted at by Colin. And well erm… it's gotten much better instead of getting shouted at.

Int: Oh, that's good. Cause I feel like you really like to be… to film. Do you do that outside of school as well?

Daniel: No. Cause I don't prefer to be in front of the camera cause I don't really feel comfortable in front of the camera, but I do prefer being behind the camera.

[…]

Int: Okay, so when you said: it's nicer now cause I'm not being shouted at when I make mistakes, what do you mean by this?

Daniel: Because usually when it kept happening over and over again, Colin shouting basically at me and then in the end I thought I might as well just give up.

Int: give up and do what?

Daniel: As in just give up altogether.

Int: Oh, that's not very nice is it…

Daniel: No, it's the fact of being shouted at made me think of giving up

Int: So, what made you stay, what made you not give up then?

Daniel: Just the thought of well there's no point in me just wasting my time being behind the camera for, I think it was around 3 weeks in, and then I thought well instead of spending altogether a few hours filming I might as well just carry on. because I knew that in the end it would stop. Because I'll probably not be in this group, and it stopped eventually.

[…]

Daniel: Not really sure, because I just went off with what I knew of, basically: being behind the camera and film what's there really. That's what I thought, I didn't think of all these shots and different scenes. All I thought was 1 straight shot.

Int: So, in a way, are you maybe looking differently at films now?

Daniel: Yeah in the way of more knowledgeable like in a way of knowing and seeing different… when to stop a shot. But I'm still working on when to stop and starts as you know from previous in the classroom

Int: Well we're all still learning… I mean last week we just did our first scene you know, so when you're saying, 'oh I can't really learn from Colin', do you feel like you are learning in a way from other kids in your group I wouldn't.

Daniel: I wouldn't say like I'm not learning from him it's just a way of explaining how… like what I have learned from him… I know I have learned from like say where to put the camera for like glare and all that so that's one thing I'm fine with... Hands in front of the camera has stopped completely and all the things really is when to stop and start

[…]

Int: Okay, but for example when you are thinking 'why don't we put it here', why do you think you should put it there?

Daniel: Because it's just the way that… where the camera was in that position it looks quite… there's no glare and it looks like the shot would work. Say someone was walking and I prefer the shot here facing upwards, it would have looked much better than just filming it normally.

[…]

Int: it is too bad that maybe some kids are a bit louder and then that's why you didn't have…

Daniel: …a say

Int: …yeah, that much. for example, when you were in a group without Colin, with other kids, did you feel like you have more freedom?

Daniel: Well it felt different because then… like I could get away from people shouting in my face and I could just… it was much better because I was able to like, get more shots in of my own in a way of like I could decide from whatever movement. So, say they're walking past I will be able to do it here, instead of others going 'no, here!'.

[…]

Int: …yeah. Do you think, how do you think we could have done that differently?

Daniel: As in like, if they set more limits in the way of like, make more children have more of a say because usually louder children… erm I think personally we should all have a say instead of just like the first kids that… sometimes they even shout out, so like someone's thinking what they want to say like a maths question and then you got like the kids that know the answer and they just shout out without putting their hand up. They're just basically taking the learning away from them. That's how it felt.

[…]

Int: So, in what way is film club different than maths class or English class?

Daniel: It felt much different because in class we only have like two teachers, we have more in film club, like 3 or 4 sometimes, it depends… and then you have more people to go to and, […] if there's only one teacher and we're in the middle of class and then they [other students] all go say something, they all get up and you have to wait longer. There's more teachers so basically you can get things done quicker.

[…]

Daniel: […] It's just the fact of … more ideas in film club because usually in art, we have set things but with film club we don't… cause say for the practice, we could film whatever we want really for practice but with art it was always like do this do that… and, it don't allow as much creativity as we would wish

Int: Yeah, so did you feel like you had more room to make your own decisions in film club?

Daniel: Yeah, instead of just set things we could do much more than just do what the teacher says… cos like you are told to build a boat, which we are doing, you can't build something else that we thought ourselves would be much more creative… and we could have done more different things and it would be much more different then just making the same thing

[…]

Int: Okay, so there's like half of your class at the film club. That's a lot. Why do you think so many people joined?

Daniel: Because all they thought was this… basically like what I thought film but there are kids in the class who mess around, they probably thought that the film club was

somewhere to mess around, somewhere to have a laugh then just film. But it could have been taken much more seriously, because instead of just messing around even if this is for sir, as he was saying beforehand about some of us messing around in films… in that it's taking up much more time and BFI will probably be like… be confused as if to say 'what you've had this amount of time to do this film' and say we haven't done it, all we've done is mess around, it will be embarrassing for sir and to our school really.

Int: Hmmm. I wouldn't say it would be embarrassing, I think this always happens when you're making a film at the end of the projects you're always really stressed.

Daniel: Yes, but usually when we first started, when we were doing the practice films they always just used to mess around and they just thought they were having a laugh, when it could have been taken much more seriously.

[…]

Int: Do you remember when I was trying to explain about the shots, what kind of shots there are? Do you remember when I said oh say if you want to show emotion then you usually use this kind of shot… do you understand why that is?

Daniel: Because like it looks different, it looks much better and different to… say someone is walking down the road you could have filmed that… but you could have also filmed different shots that would make it look like… so much better than just someone holding the camera and then they would just walk past.

Int: Yeah okay, so you know our final film, which is not finished yet, what are your hopes for it, what do you think about it?

Daniel: It's probably going to turn out basically, probably… better… than what they basically, probably… We are going to try much better… I ain't gonna say that the other years didn't try it better as in… they did try it, but we're going to try the best as we can and try to get better than what we have done previously… like the years before us.

Int: what do you mean better then, in what way better?

Daniel: As in like we'll try to get as good as we can but try better than what last year's film was.

Int: But in what way better? Like the look of the film, the story?

Daniel: Yeah, the story in itself, try more of an image, basically.

Int: More of an image, what do you mean by that?

Daniel: Say, it was a silent film, which it is, a silent film, and then as you're saying an image saying a thousand words, something like that, but more of an image. In the way of more description, in the way of like… the way you're filming it.

Int: Okay, so more description in the way you're filming it.

Daniel: Yeah, as in like, the actual, like as in, what the film is about kind of thing.

Int: Yeah, okay, so like that the film in itself describes itself through images.

Daniel: yeah that's it.

Int: Cool, and do you have any expectations about the screening, you know it's in two weeks now!

Daniel: Two weeks! Hmm no not really, well I expect it to be probably really short in a way of, like cause its only 5-8 minutes. It's gonna be really short, and it's probably like, it would feel a bit weird just knowing that you're on camera kind of thing.

Int: Okay, last question, what do you hope the final film will achieve? do you want it to make people happy, laugh, sad?

Daniel: Probably like something that they'll remember really, something that like, something basically like Rocky, like something that everyone knows kind of thing, like a remake kind of that.

[…]

Ruby

14&21/06/19

[…]

Int: So just to start, I want you to think about to the beginning of the film club... so before we even started, why did you choose to do the film club?

Ruby: Erm… I just... I like acting a lot and I go to acting classes so I thought it will be a good club for me.

Int: Okay, what kind of acting classes do you go to? Is it at school as well?

Ruby: No, I do it in another club... they do like improv and all sorts of acting skills.

Int: That's cool! Okay... so, what did you do... what did you expect at the beginning of the film club, what did you think we were going to do?

Ruby: Erm… I kind of expected that we started planning straight away [laughs] but we just did like little things to help us get to the big finish erm... yeah

Int: Yeah... so, it was a bit different than you expected then...

Ruby: Yeah... but it was still fun, erm... I really like learning about the shots and trying to put them into a movie.

[…]

Int: So, at the beginning, because you said you like acting, did you hope that you were gonna act a lot in the film club as well?

Ruby: Yeah... yeah, a little bit but I kinda... I like directing a lot as well.

Int: Yeah? Why is that?

Ruby: Just because sometimes I use like erm... iMovie at home and I film my brother and I tell him ‘oh yeah do this’... that kind of thing.

Int: What kind of films do you make at home then?

Ruby: Just random things that pop into my head, erm... well I made one about my brother, he was upset about football so he was like... so I filmed on his bed and then he was like carrying a football coming up, and he was like angry and then I think it’s a flashback, I can't remember...

[…]

Int: Oh amazing! so, do you think you've learned something new at the film club?

Ruby: Erm… yeah, I've learned like that you can use different shots depending on how the characters, erm... what the character is doing and how they're feeling so like, if the character is crying, maybe you can like zoom in on their face when they're crying and then if like someone's walking, then you can do a medium shot or like a half body shot.

Int: Is there something that you think you're gonna use when you're making films at home as well?

Ruby: Yeah, I think in the movie erm... the movie I did with my brother, I kind of just used like half shots and full body shots... but I think I'll start using a range of different ones.

[…]

Int: So, for example when we were making the practice films what was it that you usually did, or did you just do everything?

Ruby: oh I… I kinda did a bit more directing cause sometimes people like I want to be the actor and then the other person says I want to be in after 2 so I was like oh that's ok I'll just be director, but I do prefer to be an actor

[…]

Ruby: Well most people they wanted to be an actor, but I said that's ok I'll be director like that, but I don't mind being either to be honest, but I prefer to be an actor…

Int: Okay, but it's not too disappointing?

Ruby: No, I don't mind I do like being a director because like you can stage up different parts of the story

Int: Yeah, so do you think you because you are acting in drama classes and stuff like that do you think you've helped others maybe in a way

Ruby: [hesitant] yeah I think so I think so maybe because like if like I like say something say I'm director and I say something to change it and there might be some people might be like oh yeah that's really good and stuff like that

Int: So as a director you can tell your ideas and people might say oh that's really good

Ruby: Yeah but sometimes people might be like I don't really like that idea…

Int: And then what happens then?

Ruby: I kind of base the idea off another idea so like so to combine them and sometimes they think it's good as well

Int: Oh, so… as in if they don't think your idea's good then

Ruby: I can use part of that idea with another idea

Int: That's a really good skill you know! that's really good, because you sort of…

Ruby: If I like the part of it then I'll put it in another part of that story, so it kind of combines with the part that I like and then a part the other person likes

[…]

Int: […] Do you think you have learnt from others then?

Ruby: Yeah I think some other people people's ideas have help me make other like other ideas but like I said when I have an idea and people don't like it I kinda put another idea that basically I kind of use someone else's idea but in my own kind of words in a way, so yeah…

[…]

Ruby: […] when I come up with an idea maybe like, I try and make it a little bit more creative so that people kind of find it interesting

Int: In what way?

Ruby: Like it can make them want to… cause sometimes when you watch a movie when… like you get first impressions of it and you're like oh I don't really like it But like then if you find it if you get it more interesting at the start then it will be a bit more so that people don't stop watching it

Int: Okay, so how do you make it interesting then?

Ruby: Erm… I think the way through the acting and then what happens during the film yeah

Int: So, what do you think of the… this film, do you think…

Ruby: Yeah I think it's pretty good because like when she gets a paper thrown, people think 'oh that's quite sad' and then like they see how she pulled herself back up a bit and then thinks like 'oh well I'm just going to make a football match so that I can show them that I *can* play football'

Int: Yeah so for you making something interesting is to do things that are unexpected is that what you mean?

Ruby: Yeah like no interesting like yeah unexpected like it's good to see someone like get back up from something that happened, and I think if like someone throws [?] and

then when they see her like, get back up from that they're probably going to think like 'oh well from that she picked herself back up again'

[…]

Int: […] so you know how you have an art class; how do you feel like film club is different than art class?

Ruby: Erm… cause like film... filming is an art in a way but like it's different… because sometimes we get to like… we get to do a lot of planning of it but like in art they just say, or like they show us how to do it and tell us what we're doing and how to do it and I suppose you can get like little bit creative in it, cos we're being told how to do it but in film club you can be… you can do whatever you want

[…]

Ruby: Well so generally like art can be on paper… generally art is like on paper but with a movie it's on screen you can play a bit with it, but we can do that on paper as well… but maybe if you make like something wrong then you can't fix that, but in a movie you can

Int: so, you can make more mistakes than maybe and actually do stuff with it… I guess that's true, with your film as well. So obviously we've made a few mistakes but I think in the end we made it good because we put music over it and we had to be really creative in what it is that you want to put in the final film… but what do you mean because you said last week it's different in the way that in art they show us how to do it

Ruby: so like… cause they…. they tell us what we need to do and then like generally we can be creative on the paper and I do like kinda follow what they say but in our own way, but in like filming you can just specifically do whatever you want… But in like art you're told what to do but you can still change it up a little bit, but It's supposed to be on that thing, but with filming it's like… you can just do whatever you want

Int: yes, you feel like you can make your own decisions more in film?

Ruby: decisions on the paper but like sometimes it can be… like I said, it would have to be based on something that you can do it in your own way, but in the filming it's like… well yeah you can just do whatever you want and be more creative with it

Int: yeah that's nice… So, what did you enjoy the most in film club you think?

Ruby: erm…. I enjoyed the filming when we were told what we were supposed to do in the football but that was kind of fun and then like some bits were funny when we were filming it

Int: mmm, like which bits?

Ruby: like watching Rayna do the pull-ups, erm… And sometimes when we do something wrong, but It would be like in a funny way

Int: yeah and what are your hopes for this film at the screening on Monday?

Ruby: erm.. I hope that other people like [?] and see what we're trying to put out like the message that girls can play football too and not just boys and they can be good at it as well

Int: hmm yeah… you hope that people can understand that message… and do you want people to be like happy or sad or…

Ruby: I want them to feel like happy about it like that we are noticing it and like some people are still being a little bit like sexist in the world so like we're trying to stop all of it…

Int: Ok wow that's a great aim to have that's really good! so you think film can solve problems like that?

Ruby: yeah if you're sending out a message, then some people might follow that message and realise 'oh yeah girls can do that, or boys can do that'

Int: do you have a specific film that you have seen and made you feel like that? like wow this has really changed my mind

Ruby: I don't think so probably this film

Int: this film, the film that you made! oh wow that's lovely! so what are your expectations of the screening at the BFI what do you think it's going to be like what do you imagine?

Ruby: erm…. I don't know…

Int: is it going to be like an Imax cinema with maybe a red carpet even?

Ruby: I would say that it's Imax worthy to be filmed there because it's like quite a good film to be shown there like if people want to like see it and want to get that message then it's good

Int: you seem very proud of this film

Ruby: [laughs] yeah.. very proud!

Crystal

07&14/06/19

[…]

Int: So, to start with, just think about before the film club started. Do you remember why you wanted to join the film club?

Crystal: Erm because like, I kind of like really wanted to be an actor, like that's like one of the things that I really wanna be. And then like film club might… I still want to do different kinds of filming and stuff like that, and learn different types of techniques, but I also wanna be, also act in it and see how it really is, like how you really do it.

Int: Okay, yeah, so what did you expect of the film club at the beginning then?

Crystal: I thought we were just gonna do like, filming, like choose a subject and film, but not do… like I didn't know it would be that hard cause you have to do things so precisely and make them perfect and you do so many takes to make it perfect.

Int: Yeah definitely. So, in a way it was quite different than what you expected then. what kind of films did you think we were gonna make?

Crystal: Erm, probably like, I thought we were gonna make like, maybe adult films or something like that?

Int: What is that, what are adult films?

Crystal: You know when you have like in films, when it's like people who are like adults, like not kids or something like that, we were gonna have people from like, erm, different places that come and film, stuff like that.

Int: Oh, so you mean, like you would pretend to be adults in the films, is that what you mean?

Crystal: Or like film like people who are adults, like film other people, like learn different types of filming like that. but not really in the film as much.

[…]

int: […] how do you feel like you've learned something new from the film club then?

Crystal: Well I've learned that it takes time to make something perfect. Like you don't get just one try or two to make something perfect, you just have to carry on and I've learned different types of filming and what you have to say before filming to get everything done.

Int: Absolutely, it takes so much time and effort to finish one scene. Okay cool, erm so how do you think you've helped the group to make the practice films but also the final film?

Crystal: Well at first I thought that some of my ideas wouldn't be like that good, because people, like other people would make good ideas. But I think that now, I think maybe the things I'm saying to try help them maybe has helped it, or something like that? Or trying to like, you know, like give ideas to try and improve it.

Int: Yeah, what do you mean at the beginning you didn't think your ideas weren't good?

Crystal: Like I thought that my ideas wouldn't be as good as other people's ideas. but then now, I feel like my ideas are good, like that I can share them and that they might be of use or something.

Int: That's really good! What do you think has changed?

Crystal: Erm, maybe like sharing my ideas, like if we have to try improve something and we all have to like, pitch some ideas, then yeah, I think that that has improved, like saying what I think about it, like maybe this should happen or something like that, like that should happen to make it better.

[…]

Int: Cool, do you feel like others have learned from you?

Crystal: Maybe (laughs), I don't really know from their perspective, but like maybe from what I said or something like that.

Int: Hmmm

Crystal: Like maybe in acting or something like that, or the ideas maybe, like maybe if I have an idea then they can improve that or something?

Int: So, in a way, do you think that over the course of the film club, you feel like you have more confidence in expressing yourself?

Crystal: Yes definitely!

Int: So, in film club, do you feel like you were able to be more creative in certain things?

Crystal: Yeah with like ideas or something

Int: How do you mean?

Crystal: Like you know when you're in regular school time, and you have some ideas about like trying to improve something, like filming something or acting something, but you can't really say it or do it because there's not really opportunities to say it, but then in film club, because we're doing like a film and everyone's involved you can say it.

[…]

Crystal: […] you know when there's a subject about film, something like that and you can say the idea that relates to it but in regular school that doesn't happen that much.

Int: So, is it like... do you think you can make your own decisions more in film club than in regular school time? Is that what you mean?

Crystal: Yeah with like your own... like, idea.

Int: In what way, like can you give an example?

Crystal: In like… when we're trying to think of a subject if we're thinking of a part in the film like a scene, then you can just say about how you could improve it or stuff like that.. if the scene is okay but you need to improve it then, yeah...

[…]

Int: […] Erm... so you know how... well you have an art teacher of course. Do you think film club is any different than that then?

Crystal: Erm… kind of well... because it... well in art, like you can use creative ideas to do like when you draw something or... when you do a subject in art, like it's more creative because you can use like, ideas of them and then like, when you're doing film club it's like, the same because you have that creativity and stuff like that... which is the same as art.

Int: Okay, and how are they different you think?

Crystal: Because film club is more... they're kind of the same, but film club is more as like... filming like... scenes, basically filming scenes but art is like putting them down on paper. Like how it is now instead of how it is drawn on the paper.

[…]

Int: Yeah... what about like... cause in film you're always working in groups. What about that, do you think there's any difference with art class for example?

Crystal: Sometimes you can kind of do it independent like by yourself, and just like have your ideas just put on the paper but sometimes... but like not all the time, because if there's a certain something that you have to do... But like in groups it's kind of good too because you like... share your ideas and stuff like that. You put into something with everyone's ideas in it and it comes out something really cool kind of... and new.

Int: So, do you think you feel like you've learned something from other students? So not just like us but from the others?

Crystal: I feel like I have learned... like from you, the different like…. how... what... how the different camera positions and the camera shots... and then what you have to do before you actually do the whole thing. And the thing from others I think like I've

learned... like how they would do it how they would do the filming, how they would edit it, how they would improve it... like learn how they would make it more like... interesting or fascinating.

Int: Okay yeah... do you have an example that you remember? Something in particular that you felt ‘oh that's really interesting’?

Crystal: You know when we did the flashback… [referring to one of the practise exercises] yeah that was really good and there when we zoomed into the faces and then we did the flashback... I think that was really cool

Int: Yeah because... were you filming then?

Crystal: Yeah, I was filming the flash back and then... because me and Layla took turns filming, so Layla was doing the zooming in and I was doing the flashback.

Int: Oh yeah, who came up with that idea?

Crystal: Erm... I don't really know [laughs]

Int: [laughs] How did you come up with it again?

Crystal: I think it's because we were just... we had the glasses that we left and then we came back and then we were like... we were talking about seeing Omar, because Ruby was seeing Omar and she had like a flashback about when they were fighting, so we thought that maybe that will be like a nice flashback.

Int: Yeah that was really cool, really good! So, what did you enjoy doing the most you think, I don’t think I've asked that have I?

Crystal: Maybe doing the acting but kind of the filming more because it was kind of something new... yeah, the filming probably... like the camera... but kind of the acting too yeah...

[…]

Int: Yeah cool, so what are your hopes for the final film?

Crystal: I hope it gets really good [laughs]

Int: That it’s really good?

Crystal: Because I think it is really good... because I think that that the concept is really good, and the message is really good... like that girls can play football too or something like that... I think the message is that but... yeah, I think it's really good.

[…]

Crystal: Erm... I think I want people to like... have like... you know when erm... have maybe... relate to that or something? Like if something like that happened in their life you know the scenes that happens in the football film, like when someone puts you down when they threw the note... like something happens to you... because it kind of shows that you should never give up and maybe that's something that they can relate to if something like that happened to them and if that happened to them or if it's going to happen to them or it will happen in the future like you should just always give up... No not give up! Sorry not give up [laughs]

Int: [laughs] you mean you should always try and not give up!

Crystal: Yeah try I mean [laughs]

Int: Ah that's really nice! So, what are your expectations for the screening at the BFI… because it's... not next week but the week after already!

Crystal: I think there's going to be a [makes big hand gestures] big, big screen like a big screen and people sitting down watching... like the cinema but even bigger.

Int: How are you feeling about that?

Crystal: [smiles] Kind of excited, but also nervous... yeah

[…]

Mr. C.

21/06/19

[…]

Int: So first of all, why did you choose to lead the film club at the beginning?

Mr. C.: Erm… I was asked to lead it by the headteacher, I took the role as art teacher cause film comes under the arts, but erm… it was, I kind of would've asked to do it anyway, because it's a great opportunity to express some of my creativity through a medium that I've never done before. like in the past I've done some school plays that have gone pretty well, but nothing ever filmed… So yeah, it was a way for me to, well it's about the kids, but it's also a way for me to better myself in what I can do, in terms of pushing projects with dramatisation involving children. I've done it on the stage before but not on film so… obviously the BFI is massive so it's a great opportunity.

Int: do you feel like you've learned something about the medium film then?

Mr. C.: Yeah, through the training, and through the editing process we did the other day, erm… yeah it's definitely opened my eyes a little bit more about the little nuances and intricacies of making like a… like a film. even though it was quite basic through iPads, it was still… you gotta think about this shot and you gotta think forward, about the audience… if you were the audience what would you see, kind of things that I haven't thought about much before, so yeah it's improved my knowledge on filmmaking.

Int: and erm… what was it that you enjoyed the most about the film club?

Mr. C.: Erm… that some of the children, their ideas managed to be put into an actual film. erm… some of the children who I know have had difficulties in the past, seeing something that's gonna build up their self-esteem. yeah that was good. there's a lot of opportunities to build up self-esteem, especially one or two of the children had a more active role in making this film, you know they might have had a history of some needs, and it's… nice for them.

Int: Hmm.. so, in what way can they build their self-esteem through filmmaking do you think?

Mr. C.: Erm.. seeing themselves on film and… you know taking a big part and it just makes them feel better, they're the kind of star of the show you know, someone always wants to be the star of the show in their lives, do you know what I mean? so, that's something that everyone wants, that kind of attention. everyone needs a bit of that sometimes.. so, I think that's good, and also that someone's ideas can be valued enough and made into a movie… that's great for their self-esteem. you know, hopefully, this is enough to keep 'em on more of the right path in using their time wisely cause they've seen… when they go to secondary school, using their time wisely cause they've seen that what they're able to do could be turned into something physical and something really good… their ideas can be turned into something tangible and into a good piece of film, or they can be an actress in a film.. or an actor.

so they can see what they can achieve now in primary school so hopefully, in secondary school, through this project, they have this little memory in the back of their mind that can keep them on the straight and narrow, so they know 'okay, in the past I've had made good use of myself and I wanna build on that in the future'.

Int: yeah, definitely. cause, do you think that these kind of opportunities for children to express themselves in such a physical way and actually produce something creative, do you think that is lacking in regular school?

Mr. C.: yeah definitely! like I've worked in quite a few schools and this kind of thing is not done that much, which is a shame, because there is so much focus and energy put on erm… academic grades in subjects just like English and maths, which is not necessarily, you know… we need to know our English and maths to get by in the world, but so much focus is put on it that other parts of the curriculum aren't erm… it's not given as much emphasis and it's… that whole thing it's not about the kids it's about the school. it's selfish, the way the system is now. schools now, if I'm honest, for me, and I'm not talking about this school but in general, they're more about their grades and their budgets and lots of things that aren't necessarily for the good or better in the lives of children. but just how the school is seen by the powers that be, and unfortunately that doesn't matter so much in a child's life. but something like this [the film club] does. they're gonna remember this, cause they made a film, you know. like when I was a kid, I would have loved to make a film, I used to watch loads of films, but they've done it, so… yeah hopefully this kind of thing can carry on. but schools just need the staff to take on the project, the time to be put aside, and these days with budgeting issues.... it's difficult. they say, 'money makes the world go round' and in this case… it kind of does, cause you need the staff to take on a project like this, who've got time to take on a project like this.

Int: hmm.. so, there's a lot of pressure on the school but also on the staff to produce these high grades, do you feel that kind of pressure as well?

Mr. C.: [determined] yeah, definitely. like, this year, I'm lucky enough to have a role as an art teacher, so there's less pressure. in the past I've been a regular class teacher… I'm lucky, this school, the children get at least an hour and a half worth of art every week, which is supposed to be what happens in a school. some schools, I mean, the kids would be lucky to get art once every half term or once a term because the emphasis is so much on grades for exams A lot just puts pressure on a child's life and they don't have the outlet to express themselves through art artists important art allows people to express themselves allows people to say things that they can't say with their voice at times so when I'm talking about all I'm not just talking about paintings and drawings but film drama lots of ways to express themselves

[…]

Int: yeah definitely and it's a lot of kids on Friday afternoon… so when you're saying that art is good for kids like these because maybe they don't have the chance to express themselves in English that much or something like that, how do you think film can be a good medium for it? so like film specifically?

Mr. C.: well film is a metaphor of life so for example like if we made a film about the underdog like we've made the film about the underdog starting off in life hurting themselves but eventually overcoming... the girl that hurts herself in a football match against the boys, But eventually through working hard and overcoming the problems and taking on such a high… well beating a football team that they've never thought they'd beat, it's a metaphor of life you know. The underdog starting up in life doin' something that is difficult in life but eventually at the end of their life, they're gonna make it. if they work hard, it gives them hope, this is a metaphor of what their lives can be. even though this film is about a girl getting injured after playing with a group of boys in football, she works hard, she eventually scores a winning goal in a rematch and life is brilliant as they're celebrating a winning goal. that's a metaphor of life starting hard, working your way through it and knowing that there's hope cause eventually everything's gonna be alright. so, it's a way of expression.

Int: so, for you film is more realistic…

Mr. C.: it's a metaphor of life. cause film and music, is things that we feel that are empathic to us in what we're going through and it's a way of projecting our needs onto the big screen or onto music. so, it's important. for me, my thing in life, is music like erm… music was my big outlet, it's where I found empathy, it's a way of… erm… how can I put it… of escapism. it's the same with film. it's an opportunity… something like this is an opportunity to make a film and to make a project that's a metaphor of how you want your life to turn out so if you can make it in a short film it's gonna give you confidence to make it in your life. it's important!

[…]

Int: Yeah, definitely. So, how do you think the kids experienced the film club then, do you think they learned something?

Mr. C.: Erm… I think the resilient ones stayed with it till the end, cause admittedly I kinda told them, quite a few, off, and I told them in no uncertain terms like, don't mess about, you know, people are here for a reason, you know letting them know that they can't do certain things. but, you know they've been resilient, and they've kept coming which is good. and erm… what do I think they've learned… they've learned, probably the intricacies of making a film and editing, how to shoot and reshoot, and things like that. Erm… they've learned how to turn a project from idea into a film, and the whole process from idea to planning, shot-sequencing, and eventually doing that whole film so the experience has been good.

Int: So, like when you said at the beginning, like it's good that they learn that their opinions can be valued whatever opinion it is… cause I did feel like that was definitely what happened here.

Mr. C.: Yeah, I mean it was a child's idea, erm... and they all had their input. sometimes they were a bit exuberant and wanting to have too much input and I had to rain in there just so we've got our idea now, no more ideas. erm… but it's good that you know, it's their film erm… yeah, it's been their film and we've just helped carry that across with them and make it happen.

Int: Yeah, cause how beneficial is it do you think that they were able to choose, well, you know, basically everything, every aspect of their film? you know there were some rules, but there were no rules about what you're supposed to film or what topic it should be.

Mr. C.: Well it gives them, it makes them feel like their choices are valued enough and are special enough to make something work. you know, they are important, their ideas are important, it gives them a feeling of importance, you know.

[…]

Mr. C.: […] and the kids, they have made the film, you know. and it wouldn't have been so creative. but at the same time, I understand that we need rules, we need boundaries, cause something has to fit in a theme and that's cool. but erm… we need to remember that these are children at the end of the day and as much as we say to ourselves and tell them what they should and shouldn't be doing, that can be quite a dangerous thing to do continually, to keep on telling a child you shouldn't do this, you shouldn't do that.

Int: Exactly, yeah… cause I think these kids really enjoyed just… sort of, putting their own inferences and their own stuff of their own cultural repertoire into the ideas that they came up with. I think they really liked that you know, like when they say, 'oh we could do slow motion here like this'.

Mr. C.: Yeah, these kids probably come from… some of them don't have… anything like this. you know they might lead a such controlled life at home, they don't get to express themselves, you know, they don't get to feel like a part of a club or a team… it's important for them.

[…]

Group interview, after BFI screening

24/06/19

This interview was conducted informally during lunch time. The students were sitting outside the BFI by the Southbank and I joined them for lunch while we were talking about the screening.

Int: Okay so, how did you feel when you were up there on the stage after they screened your film?

Johnny: I felt a little bit nervous, but I felt kind of proud, that I've been chosen for the film club in our school. I was really happy that erm… that I was up there and that I was allowed to speak and stuff like that, so I was really proud of myself… and everyone else in my class.

Amir: Erm… I felt nervous, because everyone's looking at me, erm… and, yeah.

Daniel: It was a bit stage fright in a way, but… it was mainly that loads of people, just knowing that loads of people have just seen us up on stage and the fact of… I ain't gonna say who exactly, but some of them weren't on their best behaviour on the stage, messing around… I'm not gonna say exactly who.

Emma: I felt really, really proud and realise that it was my idea as well, it was really fun, I had loads of fun making it, it was really, really fun. I was so proud of our finished film.

Int: And how did you feel when you saw your film on the big screen like that?

Omar: It was amazing seeing erm… seeing myself, seeing my friends, seeing everyone erm… acting and presenting the film. and when we went down to speak, I felt really proud and erm… to say how I felt and the bloopers and everything, that's how I felt yeah.

Amir: Yeah, I felt proud, I felt erm… that we've done a lot together and… we've done really well.

Daniel: It felt weird, cause like… like everyone else, like a hundred people were seeing that film and it felt weird that the fact… it just felt weird that loads of people were watching it and erm… it did annoy me that one kid was putting down our film, the one who said 'oh that was so fake', it felt like… well, annoying. Praise, no put downs [referring to their school motto].

Int: Does it feel any different seeing your film on the big screen instead of at school when we showed it?

Amir: Yeah, cause there were loads of people watching it and it was just like a little group when we were watching it in school and now it was a whole cinema watching us.

Emma: Yeah, definitely, yes. Because like in front of a load of other schools… it was really fun cause, like they can learn from us and we can learn from them. So, really fun.

Int: Was there anything that you thought 'oh we could have done that differently', about the film?

Omar: Some parts, yes. Like, when erm… when we were playing football in the match, I think we should have done that better and told people to spread out more. cause they were like, [to his friends] innit though, they were like all packed and everything.

Johnny: I think erm… like you know when the girls were doing the training bit? and they were doing the squat jump, no [to his friends] what was it again they were doing? Yeah, the burpees it was, and I thought we should have done something else in that bit cause some of them like, weren't doing it right. So, like, I feel like, we could have done something else like sit-ups or push-ups, so like everyone is really good at it… so that would make more sense in the story. yeah, that's what I think.

Int: When you guys saw the other students' films, what did you think? Were you like 'oh that was really good' or did you think that yours was a bit better in some ways?

Omar: I thought erm… some of us… I thought that our one was better. Some other films, I thought like, we could have done better, like some pictures like that…

Amir: Yeah, some of them I thought were really good, erm… I wouldn't do the Lego one [referring to other students' film that was live action mixed with stop motion Lego animation], I would just do the tennis thing, like just real life, but I kind of did like the animation bit because like erm… because everyone else just had live people but this was animation and stuff and Lego stuff, that was creative.

Emma: I was thinking… like some of their shots were really amazing, like 'oh yeah that was really good, that was really good', but erm… I still really enjoyed our film… a lot.

Colin: Yeah like, a lot of them were really good, but erm… I really do like ours better, because I hadn't seen it before [he was absent during the editing and the school screening session], erm… I think that the other kids were really good, there were some bits in other movies that I thought like oh they could've done that or… I was watching theirs saying, 'oh we could have magpied them and done some of that in our movie', or something along the lines… so I think it was good to watch other kids' [films], so we like know in the future what erm… like, other things that we could do.

***Appendix B**: Information sheets and consent forms*

For students:

Learning at the Film Club

I am a researcher at University College London and I am trying to find out what you think about making films at a film club. I would like to ask you to help me in this study because this study is about your experiences!

As part of my research, I will ask you to do some of the following things:

- Talk to me about your experiences at the film club.
- Talk to me about the films that you've made so far and what you thought of them.
- Help me with writing my research by checking if what I've written about the film club makes sense.

Your name will not appear in any writing about the project, and if you want, you can come up with a different name that I can use in my writings.

Please let me know if you are happy to take part by ticking the correct box:

☐ I am happy to take part in this project.

☐ I am not happy to take part in this project.

My name is .....

For parents / carers:

[redacted]

PARENTS/CARERS CONSENT FORM

I understand that by ticking 'Yes' I am consenting to that element of that study. I understand that by ticking 'No' I do not consent to that part of that study.

	YES / NO
I have read and understood the information sheet for the above study.	☐ ☐
I agree to my child to be observed and interviewed.	☐ ☐
I am happy for his/her interview and/or observations to be recorded on audio/video	☐ ☐
I understand that all data will be treated as confidential and that my child's identity will be protected through anonymization.	☐ ☐
I understand that I can withdraw my child from the project at any time, and that if I choose to do this, any data collected will be deleted.	☐ ☐
I understand that I can contact the researcher at any time.	☐ ☐
I understand that the results will be shared with supervisors and course tutors, and that the results may be available in the IoE library.	☐ ☐

Name of Participant _____	Name of Researcher _____
Signed _____	Signed _____
Date _____	Date _____

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