

**Kevin B. Lee,  
Florian Model**  
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**FM** Today, we intend to talk about your practice. And what I'm interested in is the future of teaching and learning. You are a self-taught film critic, filmmaker and leading proponent of video, film and film criticism. You produced over 300 short video essays on cinema and television over the past decade. How did you get into video essays in any case, without ever having studied at a film school?

**KBL** The way I began making video essays was really that I just set out on my career, wanting to be a filmmaker. But the problem was that I didn't go to film school, because I couldn't afford to. It was also the time when the Internet was presenting itself as a platform for people to learn as much as they could about whatever they wanted to learn. There was just so much information being published on the Internet in so many ways and in increasing quantities that I felt: yes, you really could teach yourself about filmmaking or about whatever you wanted at that point. This was around the early 2000s. I worked as an independent filmmaker on some film sets. And then I eventually just took on a regular job, because I wasn't making any money from making independent films. I would work just a few hours in this office job and then spend the rest of my time going on the Internet, learning about movies, and participating in chat rooms. That was really a part of this Internet cinephilia, the Internet culture of film.

**FM** This was before YouTube, right?

**KBL** This was before YouTube. It was through these activities that I then

started to develop a career as a film critic. I was writing a lot. And then some of my writing was published. Then I started a blog, because around that time blogs became a really popular way for people to publish their thinking and their writings. I had this project where I was looking at the greatest films of all time. And as I was blogging about these films, I started feeling this desire to have some video content or some images to put on the blog. And it was around this time when YouTube was launched and started to become popular and so I thought: okay, this is a great way for me to include video clips. If I can post some on YouTube and then put them on my blog, it'll be a really nice combination of video and textual content. As I continued to do this work, I started thinking: okay, maybe I can combine the text with the video footage of the films, so I can start talking directly about the films that I'm using. This was around 2007. And that was really the beginning of what we now call video essays. And it was a great way to combine my background as a filmmaker—my skills in video editing and filmmaking—with a critical background too; and to merge these two in the context of YouTube, the Internet and social media culture. It was very exciting for me to explore this material and the world of cinema, which I love very much, but in ways that were new for me and for other people.

**FM** Before YouTube—I mean, YouTube definitely was a turning point, right, in how the discourse developed on certain platforms? Before YouTube, it was more on blogs, forums and image boards, or

stuff like that. And then I guess the discussion or the discourse switched to YouTube entirely, more or less, didn't it?

**KBL** YouTube really allowed audio-visual content to become available online in a way it had never been available before. It also became a social media platform—and such platforms are now a major channel for film and critical discourse. Twitter and Facebook have really become a kind of central meeting point for a lot of discussion of cinema that takes place online. In many ways, the social media platforms have replaced the blog platforms. I really started noticing this around the early part of this decade, when I began losing interest in my own blog because I was spending most of my time on Twitter and on Facebook and the YouTube comment sections. This is a bit unfortunate, because one thing I do miss about blogs is the depth of the content—compared to Twitter, where the limit was 140 characters, and is now 280.

**FM** So, the way people interact with each other or the depth of their conversation has changed?

**KBL** Absolutely. The interaction has become more intense and more frequent. There are people who are just kind of fixed on Twitter all day, just following these discussions, you know, because there are still people commenting all the time. But you just can't get very deep in that space. That is one thing I miss about blogs. I was in residency at the Farocki Institut last year, where Volker Pantenburg is one of

the directors. He asked me if I would consider doing a blog during the residency. And I hadn't blogged in many years, like, six or seven years. I was really wondering: What's even the point of doing so? But that's how he discovered me, ten years ago, through my blog. And so I started blogging again and it was actually a really wonderful experience. Because it was a way to take time to reflect, to write at greater length, and with greater reflection. I ended up producing some pretty good writing from that experience.

The funny thing is, I haven't done anything like that since then. So, things like writing and engaging in a deep mode of thinking and reflection, that's something I feel is really necessary. But it's really hard to put oneself in that state of mind. Because there is just so much to occupy us or distract us on a moment-by-moment basis, stuff that is just sort of freely available; and at times, it is not even that you are looking for it, but it comes looking for you. If you have notifications on your phone, from newsfeeds or from your friends or social media accounts, then you're basically pulled into this perpetual state of momentary distraction and occupation that prevents you from entering a deeper state of contemplation. That's something I've been thinking about a lot recently: What kind of states of mind do I want to engage with? What do I want in terms of social relationships with other people?

**FM** That's interesting, because I myself run a blog too. But the link is private. It's the Google platform blogger.com, which I use for self-reflection, to extend my

artistic practice. I upload images and videos on that blog and I write a lot of texts. But no one else can access the content. As you said, it's really hard to maintain this practice, once you are on Instagram or whatever, because then all the visually appealing bits of information are flowing through you.

**KBL** With regard to how this may relate to the Crossmedia Publishing programme that we're developing at Merz Akademie, the one thing people ask all the time is: What exactly is crossmedia? Especially the first semester students, who are new here and haven't heard this term before. The distinction I make is this: while the other practices, such as film/video, new media, visual communication, do a really good job of cultivating medium-specific skills—since each of these fields entails certain skills and a certain kind of technique and a certain craft, as well as the ideas and theories underlying them—with Crossmedia, I like to think that it's about being able to incorporate all of these aforementioned fields, but while also putting the focus more consciously on the craft of creating a discourse, of engaging an audience, of making one's work public. And this makes you think of the public as a medium that you're working with and, therefore, also about how you engage with it, and about what kind of skills and techniques you need to apply in order to craft a public around your work. So, you know, the first thing I do in the first semester is, I just get the students to be much more extroverted, more open about presenting themselves, more prepared to present their work, in order

to overcome a lot of the shyness that I see. Because they possibly just came from a secondary school and so are kind of conditioned to be more passive or more obedient.

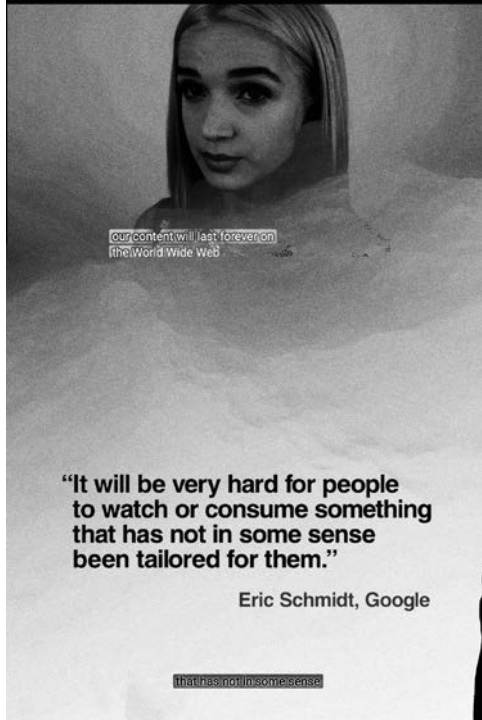
**FM** In school, to a certain degree, they're told not to pursue their own interests. Now, when they come to Merz Akademie, they can more or less choose their own projects.

**KBL** Right, so a lot of it is about getting them comfortable with being in a position to make choices and to take responsibility for themselves and the experience they want to have here. So, a paradigmatic thing is to take a more proactive and extroverted attitude towards everything. But on the other hand there are limitations to that, because you also want to encourage moments of reflection. This really becomes kind of the line that we're exploring. It's the line, you know, around questions like: When should you become more public? And when is privacy necessary? When is the time for introversion, for withdrawal, for entering a deep state that doesn't need to be connected to other people all the time?

And this, in light of what's been happening in social media over the last few years, with all the backlash controversies around the negative aspects of this culture: the fake news, and the superficiality of exhibitionism and narcissism, as well as the growing commercialisation of how people present themselves, and the ways that this becomes a kind of commodity. And the superficiality of both



Screenshot Kevin B. Lee, *Transformers: The Premake* (a desktop documentary), 2014



*Videostill Florian Model,  
Simulations as liquefied Realities,  
2017*

content and states of mind, and the endless distractions and restlessness... I could go on. The thing is, ten years ago, when I began using Twitter and social media more, I didn't have any of these doubts or anxieties. I just had this wonderful sense of: oh wow, we can really start to connect with more people. There was a kind of utopian impulse behind it all. Maybe it's still possible to experience that, but now there's a lot less innocence involved in this proposition.

**FM** I mean, if you look at Instagram or YouTube now, you see these eighteen-year-old students who suddenly want to become YouTubers or influencers on Instagram. They really think about commercializing themselves. Whereas anyone who comes from the old Internet of ten or fifteen years ago generally has this democratic approach, advocating open access, no patents, no fees, open data—or Creative Commons, as we'd say now. But now there are, like, really restrictive private platforms. And as you said, it's often just about narcissism and commercializing yourself. Which is really frightening, isn't it?

**KBL** Yes, absolutely. But the thing is, you wonder if it's just an extension of what the platforms themselves promote in terms of the ideology underlying their business models. It starts off with this idea of openness. They take the utopian impulse that was really important in building the web in the first place—that idea of a space everyone can take part in to exchange information and experiences, and where everything circulates

freely—but they somehow manage to turn it into a means to exploit people. To use people's trust and desire for that kind of openness, they find a way to capitalise on it. They use people's data, their personal information, and sell it to other companies, for the purposes of advertising and data collection. It's really almost a kind of gamble: like, you really feel like displaying yourself so openly and exhibiting the details of your life, and that's something you can make money with. But it actually seems only a few people are really successful at doing this. And they do it in ways that I find rather superficial. It leads to a lot of reflection and questioning that I want my students to take part in; I want them to really think about all the consequences of their participation in this kind of social media economy. Not that I want them to just completely denounce and disassociate themselves from social media or this kind of prevailing practice, but I do want them to think: Okay, is there an alternative that I could come up with myself, or take part in? So actually, it's not about making people feel disillusioned or making them withdraw, but rather about encouraging them to think more critically about all this stuff.

**FM** What's also interesting is, that you're teaching Crossmedia here. And when you started doing videos and essays and then combined the two of them, YouTube was super new and Vimeo was too, I guess. So, you're maybe teaching them to take a critical approach to platforms and the Internet or even to a society in general that don't

yet even exist. We don't yet know what the new Instagram or Facebook or future society will look like. But the way students might approach them or need to deal with them in the future is a fairly urgent question, isn't it?

**KBL** Well, one thing I would say it's important for them to learn is this issue of constant evolution. Another is that constant evolution is very exciting but also threatening or exhausting. Because as we said at the start, I really benefited a lot from the Internet at a point when it was about chat rooms and then blogs and then social media. And with each of these I was able to adapt; I had an open mind and an enthusiasm for what each new platform could offer—and for using it to the best of my abilities. But then, somewhere in the last five years, I think either I lost the energy to be able to adapt to it or I had been through enough iterations, enough cycles of it, that I started to wonder: Okay, how many more of these do I need to do? And what happened to all the ones from the past? What about the blog that I spent years working on? For five years I was blogging all the time, and now that blog is in a really terrible condition. It still exists on my website, but all the images have been taken down and a lot of the links are defunct. And so you can look at it as a ruin. It really looks like ancient history now, even though it's only ten years old. So, that becomes a kind of a marker for this immanent obsolescence that haunts the Internet even as so much attention and energy is being put into making us care about what's about to happen next, or what we have to look

forward to. Having awareness of that is something my colleague Olia Lialina cares about a lot, I think. She deals a lot with media archaeology and preservation, and I think these are very important questions, because they make us ask: What is lasting? What of this activity, all of this momentary enjoyment, is worth keeping, worth saving, in the long term?

**FM** And what is sustainable?

**KBL** Yes, what is sustainable, certainly. And that remains abstract: environmental consequences are something we're not encouraged to think about too much. Like, where does all the energy and power come from to drive our devices and our technology? How will we be able to maintain this degree of human communication when it is, like, so out of proportion with, so far beyond the extent of, all previous fields of human communication put together?

**FM** Just look at the crypto mining going on in the world's coldest regions, where it needs no cooling. Because even a Google search takes so much energy: all this data needs to be processed; it's all individualised.

**KBL** One thing I notice is that we continually ignore these questions about the consequences, possibly because there's this kind of cultural addiction to novelty, to newness, to innovation, to excitement. And this is particularly true of western civilisation, which has always been about enlightenment and advancement. And we're really at a point now, where

we're starting to have to question what is the greater good of these impulses that have allowed the human race to actually conquer nature and to conquer so many things that were threatening throughout human history. Now it's like this gift that human beings have—to innovate, to create, to invent, to look for new things—is actually the very thing that might be threatening us. That is, unless we manage to actually comprehend all of the consequences and apply our innovative abilities to solving this new problem of imminent catastrophe caused by our own creations.

**FM** One thing I'm fairly interested in, also with regard to the way you teach, is how to motivate the students or spark their intrinsic motivation. And sustainability isn't usually an issue when you're thinking about new projects; also resource-wise, in terms not only of the material resources but also the labour resources required when it comes to making students burn for things, to motivating them to do their own projects. Which, incidentally, you have to do without them becoming workaholics or overdoing their self-exploitation. Because ultimately, our own energy is also a resource we need to take care of.

**KBL** Right, and this is connected to what we were talking about earlier, the ideologies of the companies that are basically running our culture, companies like Facebook, Google and Amazon. They've made an obscene amount of wealth just from being able to exploit people's willingness to give their information, their own personal information,

freely. With what I think is just a genius strategy, i.e. they've created a system that offers all kinds of things for free—free email, free web services, or fast and convenient delivery of shopping services, whatever; a system that, without ever really stating it very clearly, tells us that all we users need do is opt in and give it permission to keep track of our every click: everything we put in, every word we ever enter. And so we suddenly find ourselves within a system where every interaction we have through our digital devices is a form of labour that we're performing for free, and which produces value for these companies. It's genius, how they've basically turned just the act of living into a form of labour. And I want my students to think about this, about the labour of existence—because these companies have made billions and billions of dollars from addressing that very question. We should be thinking in those terms too. Which is not to say we want to be the next Google or Amazon. It's really more a case of thinking about ourselves as citizens or subjects within this sort of domain, (or system), a domain that is, in many ways, inescapable. As in: even knowing everything I know about Google, Facebook, or whatever, I still can't live without it. Again, that's the genius of their system. They've managed to make themselves necessary, at least to me. Then the question is: How do I behave as a citizen within this domain? How can I devise a form of citizenship, a way of living and conducting myself, that reflects my awareness of the consequences of engaging in this domain (or system)? And how do I protect myself? How do

I ensure there's a benefit of some sort for myself and other people, so that we're not just blindly giving ourselves away to be exploited?

**FM** I think awareness is a good point here. Some people argue that being aware is enough. If you read the news daily, you are being aware. But I guess that to engage in a critical sense takes a bit more effort, right? And the big question here is, how to do so. Of course, we've no definitive, clear answers to that, as it's a very individual matter. But certainly, as you said, it's important to consider how we engage with these platforms. We can't avoid them, or at least not completely. We could live in the woods, but that wouldn't make us content.

**KBL** These are questions I leave open for my students: How do you define contentedness? How do you define a fulfilling experience of life? In the introduction to the Crossmedia course I am teaching this year, the first thing I do is ask them to spend one week writing down every item of media that they consume; so basically I get them to keep a media journal, to record what media they consumed, where it came from, and how much time they spent on it. And at the end of the week we calculate the totals and look at the results. A lot of them are shocked to see how much time they've spent just checking social media, or watching Netflix or YouTube videos, or listening to Spotify. And sometimes they do two or three of these at the same time. And then we consider how all that time they spend generates statistics,

data and value for these companies. So I get them to think about this time when they think they are just having fun, chatting with their friends, listening to music, watching TV shows, or whatever, as simultaneously being time when they are working and generating value for those companies. And this is major: to have them think about their activities in those terms; to make them aware of the consequences their activities have, even if that's not their intention, even if, in their eyes, the activities are just harmless habits. I encourage them to be more conscious of their habits. Then I ask them: What do you think about this? A lot of them were ashamed. Some said: I spent fifty hours this week on social media, and now I feel like... well, what could I have done with that time? I have them really think about that question. What could you do with that time if you had that time back? Let's say, I give you another thirty hours for the rest of this semester. What would you want to spend those thirty hours on? And so then they did this project, where they spent thirty hours on something or other... I didn't tell them what would be a useful project. The students had to choose a project themselves, and dedicate thirty hours to it. Which made them think: What would be worth spending thirty hours on? Some of the results were quite brilliant. One of them spent thirty hours trying to overcome her shyness by going to different places around Stuttgart, talking to strangers, and documenting that process: a really brilliant project. Another person learned how to train horses, which was something she really wanted to do: really

imaginative. Two or three learned how to skateboard or to play a musical instrument or to speak a foreign language. And a couple of them went a little bit mad: their thirty-hour project was to spend thirty hours trying to think of something they could spend thirty hours doing. Which I think is actually very to the point; there is something very real about that. Because just making a choice or a decision is very difficult, especially if you are put in the position I put the students in, of having to not be thoughtless any more. People get used to their habits—then suddenly I make them enter this different mental space of conscious intent. And how paralyzing that can be!

**FM** Totally, I agree. Because I went to art school myself. At high school I'd always been told what to learn but then suddenly I had this freedom. And at first, I didn't know what to do with it. So many of my fellow students said to the professors and teachers: please, tell us what to do. We don't know what to do. As you said, this freedom is pretty paralyzing; and super frightening also, because it gives you a glimpse of what comes after university. Because until then, institutions shield you from so many responsibilities, but then suddenly you find you are on your own. At Merz Akademie, an interesting part in the students' lives is exactly that transition. Finding out their own interests and how they want to work, how they want to spend their time. That is a really big question.

**KBL** Absolutely. The challenge all art schools and art institutions face these

days is, they're supposed to fit into a neoliberal social system or social ideology where freedom is in the service of capitalism. Like, you are free to do whatever you want, but there also has to be some sort of production proposition attached to your freedom. How can you be more productive? How can you optimise yourself? And being an American, this is something... [laughs loudly]. I grew up in San Francisco and when I go back there are all these new products, things coming out of Silicon Valley, that are geared to optimising yourself, optimising your phone, your devices, optimising every moment of your life, optimising your mind. Even something like meditation or sleep is related to productivity. You actually need more sleep to be productive, which on the one hand feels like a critique of 20th century practices—we all need to work harder and work ourselves to death—and on the other hand it is like this new kind of capitalist ideology that is related to wellness. This is connected to sustainability too, all these things about what is the optimal state. What is the peak state of existence for us and for our planet? It's weird to see capitalism taking this turn towards seemingly more kind of humanitarian stuff.

**FM** Twenty years ago there was no social media; and even ten years ago there was hardly any social media, apart from Myspace. Facebook was launched in 2004, I think, and YouTube followed a year later. So, there are these echo chambers of social media. With regard to the creative professions, social media has—so the hypothesis—a major

impact on what the students create, on how they approach their own work, and on how these influences play into their work. What do you think about this? Is it dangerous? You can't disconnect, right?

**KBL** We see what is happening with young people and how sucked up they are by social media. It can be a little shocking for older people, and even for me. But then I think back to when I was young: I watched TV all the time, so older people worried about me. But it was just what I was immersed in. I think it's not so much a question of good or bad, but just of understanding which circumstances inform this situation. When I was young, well, my parents were working class and busy working all the time, so I spent a lot of time watching television as a way to keep myself company. I don't know if you want to call that tragic or if you want to call it actually resourceful. If I hadn't been in front of the TV all the time, I could have been doing something else, getting into trouble, joining a gang or something. It is not a case of good or bad, but just of kind of understanding the larger framework. You can't understand my television habits as a child without thinking about immigration, the immigration experience in the United States, and what it was like for my parents to be in a situation where they could not be at home with me.

So, if you ask why a kid is spending so much time on social media you also have to think about what is the larger social and cultural situation leading to this particular phenomenon. Which is

not to say that these parents are bad or neglectful. They may not even be completely aware of, or prepared to deal with, the fact that their child is using Instagram or YouTube or Snapchat all the time. Because social media is just something that came out of nowhere and maybe exploited the space between the child and the parents. This space was kind of a vacuum until social media came along and figured out how to take it over. You can't think about these things, these technological questions, without also considering cultural questions, no more than you can think about culture without thinking about technology. The crucial question is always: How does this particular technology work within this cultural situation?

**FM** It's an interesting point. You're from the USA. You grew up there. Now you're in Europe, in Germany. What are the differences culture-wise, also in relation to Internet cultures? The Internet is always connecting: networks connect all people, more or less. But then, there are language barriers as well as class barriers within the Internet. And, certainly, there are age barriers. I am not on Snapchat, for example. I feel I am too old for that.

**KBL** That's okay. I mean in two or three years' time Snapchat may not even be here. Instagram is taking it over.

**FM** But, for example, you are famous for your video essay on *Transformers*, a movie series shot at so many different locations all around the world—locations with completely different cultural back-

grounds. The concept behind *Transformers* works in a variety of cultural fields. How do you deal with all these different cultures?

**KBL** Speaking about *Transformers* in that way... Volker Pantenburg from the Farocki Institut, when he saw my film come out, and based on what he knew about me, he thought it was actually this perfect distillation of everything I cared about. Because *Transformers: The Premake*, my video, combines my interest in video essays and in understanding film not just in terms of the art of movies, but also in terms of the industry, the ideology of cinema, and the politics of film production in relation to social media and online platforms and YouTube, which was another part of my background; and also in relation to these international dynamics, specifically with China, because my background is Chinese. In a way, it just kind of mirrored a lot of things that I cared about. There is a way to engage with the diversity of the world by somehow recognizing the diversity within yourself. In a way, that work was a relief for me, it was like an incredible solution to this dilemma that I'd had for so many years: Am I a filmmaker or a critic? Am I working in cinema or am I working on social media, Internet and YouTube? Should I be making films in the United States or should I be making films in China? And somehow that film was able to address all of those dilemmas—and also to answer them.

I think the 21st century gives us—those of us who are open and sensitive enough to feel this kind of anxiety and who are

interested in many things—a lot of interesting things, but too many things, an overwhelming number of things. And it does create this state of anxiety and dilemma; and it brings up questions like: What shall I choose? In many ways, or this at least was my experience with my film, just being able to identify what your dilemmas are is a first step towards then finding a way to connect them somehow, a first step towards identifying your states of conflict and confusion so as to be able to describe them. And only then can you start to see how they connect with each other; and this can be a solution, or at least a way of navigating, of situating yourself. Of saying, okay, these are some anchor points that seem to attach to me first. That is also another way of thinking about choice. My whole relationship to choice and agency has changed a lot, as I have gotten older. As you get older, you start to realise your limitations, and also you start to realise that all the things you once felt were your own choices or your own individual expression were actually influenced in many ways by so many things around you; things you didn't really care so much about because you were just caring about yourself the whole time. But over time you come to realise: I am actually a product of so many things working through me. And this, I think, is a very important thing and actually quite liberating, especially for students, who are always kind of terrorised by this question of what is the right thing to do, of how to do things the right way. Instead of: What are you doing? just think: What is being done to you?

**FM** This is also the question of identity.

**KBL** Absolutely. In many ways, we need to be liberated from certain concepts of individuality in order to find our sense of who we are. It is a paradox. But I think it's a very powerful one. To become an individual you kind of have to let go of that very notion of individual agency. That is something I really want students to think about, even as they are formulating themselves as adults: to just be aware of so many things working around them and through them, things they have to respond to. It is how they respond to all these forces that helps to shape them.

**FM** There's one last thing I wanted to ask you. You've talked about this flood of information coming through the Internet as well as through everything else, but mainly through the Internet now. You are teaching them how to deal with information, how to develop a certain kind of critique, or critical mind-set. Is the student becoming a gatekeeper? Or more like an author? Or something in-between?

**KBL** Gatekeeper is an interesting word, because it has actually become a contested term. It used to be the person we were trying to get rid of. Gatekeepers were the editors of newspapers, or heads of broadcast networks, or Hollywood executives and so forth—the ones telling us which things were worth caring about. And the big utopian promise of the Internet and social media was that now we would get to be the gatekeepers and the curators of our own lives, that

we would get to share what we want; that we would become the centre of our own universe and therefore have more agency in deciding what deserves our attention.

The problem is, however, that when it comes to putting this into practice there is another gatekeeper involved. And that gatekeeper is the algorithm. Facebook, YouTube, etc. all say everything is open and able to be shared, but actually there is an algorithm at work, calculating and deciding what is potentially worth your attention, or what will keep you engaged. And the algorithm operates in such a way as to engineer a maximum state of engagement—which is another way of saying addiction. Our culture really is one in which addiction plays a major role. Addiction has been built into our interaction with technology and social media.

So, we are inside a giant addictive machine, and we have to deal with it. So, coming back to your question about the students, we have to ask: Is giving them this idea of being gatekeepers actually leading them to be imprisoned, each as a supposed ‘curator of self’ within a larger prison of media addiction?

The term addiction has its own implications when applied to media. There’s a theory about how so much of the media has taken on a certain kind of pharmacological dimension. So, if students are not gatekeepers, should they be their own doctors or caretakers, able to diagnose their own situation, and then prescribe for themselves whatever it is they need to do? For myself, as a teacher... Well, we talked about what

the role of the teacher is, and you also asked me earlier, what the difference is between the USA and Germany, and I do find in general that German students are quieter than American students. But I am also noticing there is one thing that they do have in common: there is more of a desire for teachers to get to the point, and to have things be understandable. Because if I’m talking about things that might be too complicated I really notice the moment when students switch off. And it has me wondering: Is this a generational thing? Past generations of students, even if they didn’t understand you, would still sit and pay attention; they would really try to do that. And I wonder how much the way students act now—their limited (or reluctant) attention span—is a result of the technology they have been exposed to over the last generation or so.

**FM** You mean the way they consume the information that comes through the media?

**KBL** Exactly. In an earlier conversation we talked about whether it’s the social logic of the app that informs this kind of dynamic. Because the apps they use all the time work to keep them engaged at all times and make them want to continually use them. If this is the kind of social logic that has conditioned them then I have to consider how to design my lectures in such a way that they have a kind of app-like quality, so they kind of dispense a piece of useful information, or a cool experience or moment, one after another. I’m just thinking about how an app is designed, how an app

works to keep you engaged, and about using that as a way to engineer a social or pedagogical interaction. And I find that very troubling to think about. At the same time, it could be very useful—if it works, it works. We need to be aware that this might well be going on, just so we can really evaluate it—and this is something I also want the students to be aware of.