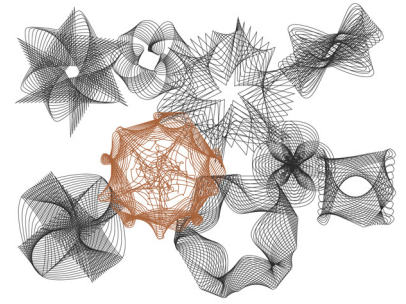


## Time for Cultural Mediation

- 1 What is Cultural Mediation?
- 2 Cultural Mediation for Whom?
- 3 What is Transmitted?
- 4 How is Cultural Mediation Carried Out?
- 5 What Does Cultural Mediation Do?
- 6 Cultural Mediation: Why (Not)?
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### 8.0 Intro

Accompanying the increasing degree of differentiation in cultural mediation as a field of research and practice are debates about quality. In this context cultural mediation professionals point out that "the process of ascribing quality is a normative one: it is bound up with individual and social values." (→ *Fuchs 2010*). The evaluation of cultural mediation is therefore always also a political act: which objectives, artistic and educational concepts come to the fore in an assessment depends on who possesses the power of definition [Deutungsmacht].

The example below is intended to illustrate how the situation and interests of the assessor determine the assessment of quality:

Suppose that the director of a cultural centre devoted to literature believes that a cultural mediation project is successful when many of the participants become regular visitors to the centre. The mediator responsible for the project wants quality to be measured on the basis of time and materials planning or on the level of satisfaction of the individual participants. The participants might assess quality based on the mediator's charisma, the personal meaning they found in the project or the extent of their enjoyment. One of the mediator's colleagues might deem the project too conformist, while the managing director of the centre is primarily excited about how inexpensive it was. The author of the work at the project's focus might be offended because she feels the treatment of her art was too superficial. The funding agency's representative might note approvingly that the project generated a larger than normal audience for the centre, while actually sharing the author's scepticism, because of what he feels he owes to his passion for new literature and because he believes deep down that high-quality literary art can never find more than a few interested readers.

This chapter looks at the current debate about quality in cultural mediation and at the criticism of quality management's introduction into the field. It then puts forth sets of criteria specific to cultural mediation's various functions for discussion. The text For Reading at Leisure focuses on issues relating to the evaluation of cultural mediation as a critical practice. It also discusses certain aspects of quality, drawing on examples from the projects described in the → *case studies*.

→ *Fuchs 2010* [http://www.bkj.de/fileadmin/user\\_upload/documents/Qualitaet/BKJ\\_Studie\\_Qualitaet\\_web.pdf](http://www.bkj.de/fileadmin/user_upload/documents/Qualitaet/BKJ_Studie_Qualitaet_web.pdf) [21.2.2013]; see Resource Pool MFE080001.pdf

→ *case studies* see Texts CS1 and CS2 under the heading Service