

Circulating cinema

The moving image archive as Anglo-German contact zone

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Circulating Cinema (CIRCE) uses as its primary material extraterritorial and 'orphaned' archival holdings: media artefacts and documents that register traces of transnational connectivity and illuminate lost or critically neglected aspects of Germany's relations with the Anglophone world. The moving image archive is seen in the project as a resource for an especially vivid reconstruction of transnationally shared historical experience. Scholars have suggested that the projection of archive film may generate in the audience the experience of a history that is no longer 'a dormant organism....simply written about in the past tense,' but 'which actually and physically exists, imprinted into celluloid, within the present moment'. Film's capacity to 'register, represent and archive time and movement' (Wood 2010) is drawn upon in this project in live events—screenings, talks, creative workshops—that are designed as fora for a collectively conceived research process with determinate **academic outcomes** (publications, online resources); as **training platforms in archival methods** for a rising generation of film, history and German Studies researchers; and as **sites of public engagement** with a selection of academic and non-academic publics in both local (physical) and global (virtual) space. Subprojects are detailed below.

STRAND 1: EXILE AND MIGRATION: FROM GERMANY TO THE ANGLOPHONE WORLD (AND BACK).

1.1 Global cinematic entanglements, Indo-German migrations (Dr Eleanor Halsall, King's College, London).

Halsall's doctoral research charts the involvement of German filmmakers in India from 1925 to 1939. Tracking the development of sound cinema in Bombay, the study considers a partnership between Indian producer Himansu Rai and German director Franz Osten that shaped the Bombay Talkies, one of India's major 1930s film studios. This subproject augments Halsall's Rai/Osten study with additional research that considers traffic in the reverse direction (from India to Germany), exploring in particular the involvement in Germany of Indian film producer, Mohan Bhavnani, and the latter's contacts with Jewish critic Willy Haas. Halsall is using new archival research to explore what Bhavnani's case reveals about Indo-German cinematic relations within the globally entangled context of the Weimar industry.

1.2: Lotte Eisner's exile correspondence: the case of Gerhard Lamprecht (Julia Eisner, KCL)

This project derives from PhD research at KCL by Julia Eisner, great-niece of the writer, curator, collector and archivist Lotte Eisner. It brings together holdings from the Deutsche Kinemathek and Cinémathèque Française with hitherto unresearched correspondence from the Eisner family archive, generating a database and translation of correspondence from and to Eisner by German filmmaker-collector Gerhard Lamprecht. Lamprecht and Eisner began corresponding around 1955. Julia Eisner's PhD research has so far charted the different trajectories that led to the formation of the Deutsche Kinemathek as a national cultural institution whose mission is to 'collect, index, restore and preserve national and international film,' and the Cinémathèque on the other hand as an institution that sits alongside and at a tangent to the CNC French National Film Archives, providing an archive, museum and exhibition space whose explicitly international mission is 'to collect....preserve and....present films from the past to the public...regardless of origin or format.' The Lamprecht-Eisner correspondence is examined for the light it sheds on the origins of these two institutions' distinct approaches to the national-transnational relation that is the focus of *Circulating Cinema*.

1.3 *Below the Surface*: Siegfried Kracauer's unmade exile film (Dr Leila Mukhida, University of Cambridge)

Centring on holdings in the German Literature Archive in Marbach, *Below the Surface* complements Eisner's study of Lotte Eisner with an investigation of print archive materials that recall a cinematic history of German-Jewish exile. The research corpus is the screenplay and surrounding correspondence from an unmade experimental film developed by German-Jewish Frankfurt School thinkers in exile. From the early 1940s, Theodor W. Adorno, Max Horkheimer, and Siegfried

Kracauer, all three of whom had fled German fascism for destinations in the US, focused their efforts on analysing the root causes of prejudice. The trio turned their attention in different ways to the unconscious mind, drawing on psychoanalytical methods to uncover latent anti-Semitic tendencies among different audience groups, and developing social-scientific tools for testing susceptibility to fascism and anti-semitism. One such tool was an experimental film, *Below the Surface*, developed by the three writers as a barometer to test audience tendencies to prejudice. The film was intended for screening to focus groups in order to measure their responses to different characters, and thus to reveal anti-Semitic prejudices hidden 'below the surface' of knowing minds. Several script versions were written, and the final draft was single-authored by Siegfried Kracauer, the most film-literate member of the group. Yet the film was abandoned, apparently for financial reasons, and 'all that is left behind is a confusing paper trail of archive documents'. (Gilloch 2015). Leila Mukhida aims to reconstruct the history of the project and to explore the feasibility of a short film based on the script.

STRAND 2: THE COLD WAR ARCHIVE: DEFA MEETS BRITAIN AND EMPIRE

2.1. Back in the GDR: Stanley Forman and ETV (Martin Brady, King's College London)

This subproject takes as its focus archive holdings housed since 2003 at the British Film Institute, and deriving from the collection of British film distributor Stanley Forman. The archive is a unique resource for research into Anglo-German film relations across four decades of German division. The son of Jewish immigrants, Forman studied at the Marx Memorial Library in Clerkenwell, and went on to serve as part of the post-1945 de-Nazification programme in Germany, before establishing his first distribution company, Plato Films (later ETV, Educational & Television Films) in 1950. Over more than 50 years Forman collected and distributed films from the Soviet Bloc. Though he worked with distributors, producers and filmmakers in many countries, he had particularly close connections to the GDR, producing English-language versions of documentaries by filmmakers including, most famously and controversially, Andrew and Annelie Thorndike, whose 1958 film *Unternehmen Teutonenschwert* (Operation Teutonic Sword) resulted in a landmark libel case that was debated in the British parliament and led to the renaming of Forman's company.

Aside from the saga surrounding *Operation Teutonic Sword*, the history of Forman's relationship with the GDR remains unresearched. Brady's research addresses that deficit, drawing on BFI archive holdings as well as DEFA papers in Berlin archives to examine the work of Forman and ETV in respect of the GDR.

2.2 Cold war icon: Kwame Nkrumah between DEFA and British Film

This subproject involves a comparative study of British history and European colonial memory in DEFA and British archive film. The focus is on 1950s and '60s decolonization in the context of Cold War; the case study is the film image of the Pan-African leader, anti-colonial intellectual, and first Prime Minister of Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah. Nkrumah was the subject of intense media scrutiny on both sides of the Iron Curtain before and after his 1957 inauguration as the first postwar leader of

an independent African state. Whereas in Britain, Nkrumah was courted as a key (if not entirely trusted) partner in the maintenance of British influence in an expanded postcolonial Commonwealth, socialist states including the Soviet Union, North Vietnam and China pursued alliances with a leader hailed as a revolutionary figurehead for a socialist Africa.

Film archives in London (National Film Archive) and Berlin (DEFA-Stiftung/ Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv, Deutsche Kinemathek) hold newsreel and documentary titles that register in audio-visual form the ambivalences of Nkrumah's postwar political persona. These analogue collections are complemented by digital resources including the online BFI Colonial Film Database, and DEFA Film Library DVDs. Early postwar UK newsreels as well as British fiction and documentary titles show a Ghana in which Nkrumah's Convention People's Party works in tandem with the colonial authorities to develop the country as a western-style liberal democracy. DEFA documentaries meanwhile, including *Ghana heute* (Ghana today, Walter Marten, 1960), *Der schwarze Stern* (The Black Star, Joachim Hellwig, 1965), or newsreels from the GDR's *Augenzeuge* (Eyewitness) series, locate Nkrumah as a key protagonist within narratives of African socialist modernization. These holdings are examined for the light they shed on Nkrumah's contested status within Cold War geopolitical imaginaries.

STRAND 3: ARCHIVES OF TOMORROW

3.1 Archive Theory and Found Footage in Contemporary Screen Media Works (Annie Ring, University College London)

Informed by archival research in Berlin as well as filmmaker interviews, this subproject approaches its topic via an internal reading group, a public screening day, and a conference paper and journal article that feed into a future monograph on contemporary German and Austrian film. The subproject is informed by cultural-theoretical approaches to the archive as a site of the preservation and generation of knowledge by mid-twentieth century theorists (Derrida, De Certeau, Foucault), and more recent writings on the digital archive as a site of knowledge-production across national borders (Katherine Hayles, Orit Halpern, Wendy Hui Kyong Chun). For both groups of archive theorists, archives are not stable or neutral sites for holding knowledge; instead the architectures and apparatuses of a given archive construct both the knowledge held in them and the self-understanding of the societies to which they pertain. The subproject considers recent screen media works by German-speaking directors that engage big data and digital archives as dynamic sites that cross national borders to produce new relations of knowledge and power. The project corpus comprises experimental documentaries, gallery and online installations that sample found footage from sources including activist material, surveillance and historical actuality. These works offer illuminating engagements with questions of the archive and contemporary politics: engagements rooted in part in issues in German history, but that extend to global questions of surveillance, technology and politics.

3.2. Archive researchers of tomorrow (Elizabeth Ward, University of Hull)

This final subproject aims to recruit a new generation of British and German researchers for future work on the Anglo-German archive. The workshop—coordinated in Hull, Berlin and Frankfurt by Ward—starts from the premise that the preservation and revivification of transnational film heritage depends on building not only archival, but also intercultural competence amongst a rising generation that may have little experience, either of analogue film, or of comparative and transnational historical research. It addresses that need with a research skills workshop on the moving image archive in intercultural context. The three-day event will draw together German and British students who are moving from BA to MA, from MA to PhD, or are in the early stages of PhD research. An introductory colloquium focusing centrally on the ETV archive (see subproject III.2.1) will address questions of the collection's history as a transnational resource, and explore issues of preservation and access in a UK policy context based around unlocking the heritage specifically of British film. Sessions on practical research and archival skills, will include—with a session on subtitling and programming—training in practical skills in intercultural film exhibition. Following a visit to the BFI Library and National Film Archive, students will complete a group exercise that will provide the basis for posters to be uploaded on the GSSN website, following displays by undergraduate participants at the University of Cambridge UG German Studies Conference, and by postgraduates, at the 2020 BAFTSS and AGS conferences.