

INTRODUCTION

The Emergence of Film Culture

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When film became a technological reality in the late nineteenth century, its future shape and role was far from obvious. Discussions regarding the theoretical nature, the aesthetic function and the social role of cinema began as soon as commentators took note of the medium, but conceptualizations remained fluid for the first decades. It was not until the 1920s that knowledge about film and cinema was systematically, consistently and reflexively articulated, gathered and disseminated on a broader basis. Over the course of two decades, the 1920s and 1930s, institutions, practices and arguments arose which have been crucial for any serious engagement with cinema ever since. There are many aspects that can be said to have aided this 'emergence of film culture' in the interwar period: the beginnings of film festivals; the formation of canons; the point at which film became recognized as a subject of study at institutions of higher education; the consolidation of film criticism and archiving as serious occupations; and the recognition accorded to the relevance of film history and film theory. Cinema as a discursive field of its own began to emerge slowly but steadily over the course of the 1920s. In the following decade across Europe, many film-related institutions and organizations were founded and achieved stability, such as archives, festivals and film institutes. The 'emergence of film culture' implies that the medium was starting to be taken seriously as an aesthetic object and social force, and this has to be taken into account when trying to understand the political,

social and aesthetic modernity that came to dominate industrialized countries before the Second World War.

While the first steps towards the institutionalization of film culture were taken within the decidedly transnational film culture of the 1920s, many activities continued in the increasingly nationalist atmosphere of the 1930s, even though these developments were often far from smooth or unidirectional. A history which is in no small part European in nature remains largely hidden and buried. This volume aims to start uncovering the outlines of this configuration. There are effectively three major strands one has to keep in mind when drawing a preliminary map of the field: the trajectory of the avant-garde, the influence of the nation state, and the role of the industry. First of all, the avant-garde developed and grew over the course of the 1920s, articulating countless ideas and arguments as to why and how cinema was making a valuable and productive contribution to the modern world. Theoretical discussions as well as practical initiatives shaped film as an aesthetic and political force to be reckoned with. Nevertheless, the avant-garde constituted a miniscule, fragmented and fragile formation that was more geared towards temporary interventions and tactical skirmishes than durability and longevity. Thus, the avant-garde provided insights and inspirations, but other entities had to turn these forays into permanence and stability.

Secondly, the nation state has a long and complex history in relation to film and media.¹ Well into the 1920s, cinema was regularly seen as transgressive, dangerous and in need of regulation, yet state officials had also begun to realize that modern mass media, such as cinema and radio, could be an effective platform for governing and controlling a mass society. Various official initiatives in Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, and the Soviet Union under Stalin bear witness to this active engagement of national state policy with cinema, but in a different ideological configuration, this desired symbiosis of cinema and social engagement also characterized John Grierson's activities in Great Britain. While in the 1910s, the state had frequently resorted to mechanisms of suppression and censorship, subsequent developments are more in line with what Michel Foucault has termed 'governmentality', the regulation and control of large populations not through coercion or negative sanctioning, but by way of guiding the individual (or groups) towards desired behaviour and reaction.

The third factor in this configuration is the industry, both the film industry in the narrow sense, but also industry at large, represented by sectors such as manufacturing, electricity, and consumer goods.

Cinema's emergence paralleled that of Western consumer societies which quickly gained ground throughout the first decades of the twentieth century. Film became both a mirror reflecting this social transformation, and an engine that pushed it forward. Projects such as the foundation of a film school, a national film archive or a film festival required not only state support, but also the cooperation of the industry in providing financial backing and access to commissions and resources if these institutions were expected to become a productive part of the circulation of images and films in the society at large. As might be expected from the interaction of such different force fields and interests, the 'emergence of film culture' was a complex and contested process. Moreover, even where projects were undertaken in the name of the nation state, many of the protagonists involved in these initiatives had a decidedly transnational outlook, a legacy of the cosmopolitan avant-garde of the 1920s and the various initiatives towards achieving a European film. Taking these uneven and contradictory contexts into account, the chapters in this volume attempt to sketch a history of how film culture emerged, and how various strands developed into the 1930s and beyond. The overall argument of the book is that the initiatives of this period laid the groundwork on which film culture, and hence also the discipline of film studies, still rests today.

An Entangled Story of Encounters and Exchange: The Avant-Garde and its Historiography

In some respects, this book is a collaborative attempt to begin writing a *histoire croisée* (entangled history) of the avant-garde, its legacy and aftermath; it is a story of encounters and exchange, of translation and interference.² Traditional national history – and this holds true for most of film history that exists – sees the nation state as the key frame of reference, a container with very few contact zones to the outside world. Movements and regulations, markets and aesthetics, production and reception are all first and foremost conceived of in terms of the national. A comparative history, a step towards leaving the nation behind, establishes a singular point of view which then determines the categories of comparison. In this vein, one can compare the national characteristics of universities and armies, of social security systems and trade regulations, of film subsidy and media policy. Transnational (or entangled) history goes further as it develops ideas first broached under labels such as connected or shared history into

a focus on interaction, interdependence and complexity. The implicit aim is to multiply perspectives in order to shatter any one dominant reading, and to open up historiography to the potential limitless infinity of empirical reality. It is a misunderstanding to see a transnational approach as antithetical to regional, national or global histories; instead it complements the latter by understanding the reciprocity and interaction of developments at different speeds and in different places. Harking back to earlier approaches such as the *Annales* school, and sharing many concerns with postcolonial history, *histoire croisée* is necessarily reflexive as it denies to take one single point of view from which to survey a field. In order to make this multiplication of perspectives productive, one needs to see each of them in relative terms.

Michael Werner and Bénédicte Zimmermann, two French historians who have championed this approach, describe the fundamental premises upon which entangled history rests:

Histoire croisée belongs to the family of 'relational' approaches that, in the manner of comparative approaches and studies of transfers (most recently of 'connected' and 'shared history') examines the links between various historically constituted formations. But, while these approaches mainly take the perspective of 'reestablishment/rehabilitation' of buried reality, the stress laid by *histoire croisée* on a multiplicity of possible viewpoints and the divergences resulting from languages, terminologies, categorizations and conceptualizations, traditions, and disciplinary usages, adds another dimension to the inquiry. In contrast to the mere restitution of an 'already there', *histoire croisée* places emphasis on what, in a self-reflexive process, can be generative of meaning.³

In order to make visible the non-synchronicity of culture, the complex temporal and spatial disparities and displacements so typical of material culture circulating on a global scale such as film, one needs to constantly change perspective. One could point to any number of examples to highlight the temporal breaks and ruptures, the glitches in concepts and definitions. Let it suffice to give but two examples here, as the book offers many more. The theoretical debate about the status of cinema (as an art form and a medium), that was current in France, Germany and the Soviet Union in the 1920s, only arrived in Italy in the 1930s. By that time, the political, technological and cultural framework had shifted considerably, and therefore ideas and terms acquired a different meaning.⁴ The distinctively modernist ideas about cinema resonated in 1930s Italy and, after a turn towards narration and figuration (prefigured in the films and writing of Vsevolod Pudovkin), helped to develop

what would become 'neorealism' in the 1940s. Subsequently, the reception and adaptation of neorealism, first mediated through French film culture (via André Bazin and the *Nouvelle Vague* [new wave]), took a decidedly political and even militant turn towards 'Third Cinema' in the 1960s and 1970s. In these instances, we can map an entangled history of mutual influence as much as of misunderstanding and adaptation over the course of several decades, ranging across different countries and institutional regimes.⁵

A second example for the kind of *histoire croisée* that informs the approach of this book can be provided by the shifting meaning of a term such as 'montage' through the interwar period. In the late 1920s this term was employed by Sergei Eisenstein, Vsevolod Pudovkin, Dziga Vertov and other Soviet filmmakers in very specific ways to characterize their editing style and the different registers of montage. For Eisenstein, montage in 1929 was a psychotechnique with which spectators could be manipulated in a precise manner towards desired reactions. By 1939 the same term implied pathos and organicity – a wholeness derived from nature and not anymore committed to conflict and contrast. Now, this is as much a result of the political changes as transformations in the cultural landscape that also bear witness to the international dimension of intellectual transfer.⁶ Both examples might illustrate how ideas, terms and concepts are never stable, but dependent on context and usage, as well as prone to change, especially if translated and transferred. The changes from the 1920s to the 1930s were indeed significant as they coincided with a number of factors, both related and unrelated: the decades (very roughly) separate silent from sound cinema, the internationalism of the 1920s gave way to increasing nationalization in the 1930s, and the onslaught of the economic crisis in the early 1930s had repercussions all through the decade, not least in the way it helped to restructure the management and production routines of the film industry.

In the standard histories of European cinema, the 1930s are somewhat uneasily sandwiched between the late blossoming of classic silent film in the 1920s and the stirrings of neorealism in the 1940s, which is often seen as the harbinger of the new waves dominating European cinema (at least in retrospect) well into the 1980s. Therefore, in terms of film history *tout court*, the 1930s seem to belong firmly to the United States where a mature oligopoly had taken hold of the film business with fixed routes for distribution and exhibition, set routines for production, and an institutionalized form of censorship.⁷ The untimeliness and non-synchronicity of the European situation on the other hand is far more difficult to map, as it lacks regularity and

stability. Even though this book only details limited aspects of 1920s and 1930s European cinema, it nevertheless focuses on how knowledge was produced and disseminated, how processes of institution building and stabilization took hold, how different temporal registers led to (productive) misunderstandings and adaptive behaviour, why specific initiatives proved to be successful while others vanished (almost) without a trace. The way in which this volume proposes to understand the 1930s is to see the decade as the 'incubator' of developments that became influential much later. Many of today's insights and critical methodologies in film and media studies can be traced back to ideas and arguments in 1930s Europe, and their rivalling and often mutually exclusive claims continue to shape critical debates to this very day. David Bordwell's and Kristin Thompson's neo-formalist approach, for example, combines a psychological Gestalt theory influenced by Rudolf Arnheim and others with Russian neo-formalist vocabulary and an attention to the intricacies of montage as learned from Eisenstein and Vertov. Equally, much of current media theory is unthinkable without Walter Benjamin's and Siegfried Kracauer's interventions which took shape through their encounter with 1920s alternative film culture. In particular, Kracauer's model of writing a national history of German cinema, and Benjamin's approach to the mediality of film, have provided the classical templates for numerous subsequent analyses.⁸

On a general level, this book is concerned with the migration and traffic of images, ideas and people within the institution cinema in its widest sense. This is of course a topic that is all too familiar and current, as we today partake in the global circulation of film images via digital networks. In this sense, the collection can be understood as a genealogical investigation into how certain practices, institutions and assumptions took hold in the 1930s on a transnational level. But we should not lump all instances of border crossing together under a single term, but instead differentiate between phases and usages. Dudley Andrew has, in a discussion of contemporary film culture, proposed a historical schema of how the 'vast geographical flow of images, as well as the time-lag that inevitably accompanies it' has passed through various phases since the beginnings of film in the late nineteenth century. For him an ontological slippage lies at the heart of cinema, a '*décalage* ... between "here and there" and "now and then"' that distinguishes cinema from television with its incessant liveness and direct address. Whether one wants to follow Andrew in his Bazinian media ontology or not, an outline of five phases through which the cinema has passed

in rough succession, but which are nevertheless not a teleological path in the sense that they necessarily follow one another, is helpful for our purposes. Andrew terms these successive stages as cosmopolitan, national, federated, world and global. The cosmopolitan is typical of early cinema up to the 1920s, when films circulated regardless of national production, and stars were not necessarily identified by their origin – at the time Asta Nielsen, Pola Negri and Louise Brooks could all become stars in Germany, while Ewald André Dupont made films in England, Carmine Gallone directed in Germany, and Carl Theodor Dreyer worked in France. A national refocusing had already taken root by the end of the First World War (Andrew sees 1918 as a watershed in this respect), but I would argue that the avant-garde as well as the Film Europe movement¹⁰ kept the cosmopolitan spirit of early cinema alive well into the late 1920s. The national phase becomes more clearly prominent in the developments following the introduction of sound, when voices and the bodies from which they emanated became firmly tied to specific linguistic communities and therefore specific territories. While this process was far from smooth, the 1930s were nevertheless characterized by an intensification of the bonds between nation state and film. Andrew identifies the third, federated, phase, with postwar developments in film festivals and criticism, but also in other international and intergovernmental organizations beyond film (UNESCO, EC) which coincided with the heyday of European modernist art cinema. However, it is worth noting that the first steps towards a federated structure had already been taken in 1938 with the foundation of FIAF, the international federation of film archives. The last two categories, world and global, do not need to concern us here, as they hinge on later developments from the 1970s onwards.

The chapters collected in this anthology follow but also complicate the shifts between the first three phases when a transnational and cosmopolitan film culture became nationalized and tied in one way or another to the state, successively giving way to international cooperation. This cannot be conceptualized as a unilinear story of loss and decline or of triumph and victory, but rather has to be reconfigured as a complex development in which gains in one field went hand in hand with loss in another. The avant-garde of the 1920s was cosmopolitan in the way films and ideas circulated, but also in the way that national belonging did not play any significant role. Viking Eggeling was not primarily seen as a Swede or as a German at the time, but as a fascinating filmmaker who happened to be working in Berlin, just as Eisenstein, a Latvian Jew, born in Riga to a family of German-Swedish descent,

fluent in many languages, educated in St Petersburg and hailing from Moscow, could become the most celebrated film artist of the late 1920s. The national paradigm of clearly separated and circumscribed spheres, of specific aesthetics and thematic preoccupation began to hold sway in the 1930s, as can be seen in the first books on film history which introduced a logic of national schools, as well as in the birth of competitive spaces such as film festivals.¹¹ After the introduction of sound, the separate linguistic communities with their recognizable sounds and typical actors appeared to divide the former cosmopolitan space into nationally circumscribed entities.

In this respect, Andrew's temporal argument about how time lags and delays are to be accounted for should be complemented by a spatial one, a dimension he only hints at in passing. Here it is relevant to point to the relation of centre and periphery, as these relational terms are in constant flux and transformation.¹² In the 1920s, the avant-garde (whether individuals, films or ideas) moved easily between Paris, Berlin, Moscow, Amsterdam and London, but these metropolitan centres also provided hubs for the national and regional spaces around. Whereas the 1920s saw artists move and connect relatively easy and on an informal basis, in the 1930s this was often predicated on official state visits such as Joris Ivens' trips to the Soviet Union or Iris Barry's European journey as an official mission on behalf of the Museum of Modern Art in the mid-1930s. It is the emergence of festivals as an arena for the competition of the nation that might show most clearly how institution building was predicated upon the nation state being a partner to provide stability and durability.

Film Studies: The Origins of a Discipline

In recent years, there has been an upsurge in the number of publications detailing the beginnings of film studies in the Anglo-American world, dealing with the history of relevant institutions such as journals, museums, archives and university departments, but also encompassing questions such as canon formation that helped to create a stable configuration and therefore a subject that one could study and research. Dana Polan's monograph *Scenes of Instructions* details the early efforts towards establishing film studies at institutions of higher education in the United States.¹³ In her study *Museum Movies*, Haidee Wasson illustrates how the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in the 1930s became a central node for the appreciation and study of the cinema

as a recognized aesthetic form.¹⁴ Peter Decherney complements these insights with an examination of the collaboration between Hollywood and institutions such as universities, museums and archives, from the end of the First World War to the start of the Cold War,¹⁵ while Lee Grieveson's and Haidee Wasson's anthology announces nothing less than the *Invention of Film Studies*.¹⁶ Meanwhile in Britain, Terry Bolas examines the trajectory from the early attempt at film appreciation within the framework of the emergent British Film Institute in the 1930s to the high theory of 1970s *Screen*.¹⁷ While all these studies are highly valuable and make important contributions to our understanding of the development of the discipline, their outlook is overwhelmingly and almost exclusively Anglo-American. Within the wider fields under consideration here, investigators have also addressed the non-entertainment uses of film¹⁸ and the intersection of the cinema with the colonial project,¹⁹ adjacent fields where the industry, the avant-garde and the nation state intersected in specific configurations.

This volume aims to expand on the existing scholarship by widening and broadening the field, and to chart the European film culture of the interwar period, taking into account that timing, intensity and inflection were open to many influences and depended on numerous factors. While the individual chapters may cover specific national contexts, they also highlight transnational connections; they consider the circulation of material (films, texts, ideas, people) and the foundation and stabilization of institutions. The contributions to this book examine how knowledge about the cinema was produced and disseminated, how film canons were constructed and enforced, how institutions of film culture were built and maintained – but also how many of these early efforts turned out to be dead ends.

As stated previously, the avant-garde which blossomed in the 1920s played an important part in this complex history of institution building and nationalization. It took root in the 1920s as a radical movement aimed at transforming life and art by way of aesthetic, political and social interventions. It was in no small part thanks to the avant-garde that the configurations of film culture would blossom in the 1920s. Screening societies and ciné-clubs, magazines and pamphlets, exhibitions and gatherings laid the groundwork for film schools and archives, for art house cinemas and journals, and for festivals and exhibitions. Contrary to received wisdom which sees the avant-garde as a short-lived and ultimately failed attempt at establishing an alternative film aesthetics, this book considers it as a social and political force aimed at transforming the very essence on which our discipline still depends.²⁰

In this respect, this anthology also demonstrates how film studies has been, from the very beginning, a transnational endeavour.

About the Book

The contributors to this volume attempt to find out how, where and why knowledge about the cinema was discursively produced, disseminated and propagated in 1920s and 1930s Europe. The chapters examine the founding of institutions and the overall transformations in the cultural landscape regarding cinema during this period. In this sense, the book is also a genealogical investigation into the history of film studies as a discipline. Of course, such a broad, multidimensional and transnational complex cannot be mapped out in a single volume, thus this book is an invitation for further research. It consciously leaves out some aspects of European film culture in the 1920s and 1930s because they have already been treated in considerable detail elsewhere. This is especially true of developments in France which undeniably boasted an active and important cinema scene throughout the 1920s and well into the 1930s, and so substantial historical research has already been undertaken.²¹ Likewise, the German scene, more politically minded than the French, has been investigated quite thoroughly,²² while the 'little journal' *Close Up*, published in Switzerland and aiming at a transnational audience, has been reprinted in its entirety and examined in a scholarly anthology.²³ Therefore, the present volume self-consciously turns the spotlight to less-well-researched examples and case studies, trying to highlight in particular those aspects that have been neglected in the past.

The volume is organized into three sections which focus on different aspects of film culture in interwar Europe, but inevitably there are temporal as well as thematic overlaps between the different parts of the book. In fact, a number of themes echo throughout the chapters: the role of film education, the impact of Soviet film, and the translation and adaptation of ideas and theories. The first part focuses on the formation of knowledge and relates to recent concerns with the history of (film) theory. This history cannot be written in isolation as an abstract history of ideas, but needs to be put into specific material frameworks and historical contexts. These contexts range from colonialism to historiography, from gender to praxeology, as they approach film as an epistemological object – something that can give us knowledge about the world we live in.

Tobias Nagl's chapter details how 'how racial and racist representations were "normalized" through regulatory responses and institutional formations of knowledge'. Nagl's contribution serves as a reminder that knowledge about cinema was not only produced and disseminated within the 'progressive' circles of the avant-garde, but could equally well be connected to reactionary, racist and imperialist notions. Race and nation as two frameworks, despite their obvious differences, were often interchangeably applied, but they could also be mobilized in specific and very different ways. The 'complicated ideological and institutional relationship between the cinema reform movement, the film industry and the German *Reichskolonialamt* (Imperial Colonial Office)' can be seen as a prototype of the configuration sketched in several other essays between avant-garde, nation state and industry that became more central in the 1930s. As Nagl argues, this configuration anticipates 'the later 20s and early 30s, [when,] motivated by the League of Nations and the founding of the International Institute for Cinematographic Education (ICE), European discussions about the intersections of racial knowledge, ethnography, film pedagogy and institutional film policies began to assume a more internationalist direction, celebrating cinema as a harbinger of "universal humanism"'. Thus, despite its focus on a specific aspect of German cinema, Nagl's chapter demonstrates how certain ideological and institutional discourses can only be properly understood when contextualized transnationally.

Whereas Nagl highlights the importance of the often neglected category of race, **Erica Carter** reminds us that feminism and gender are also categories which are too often ignored in relation to early film theory and film culture in the 1920s, which was overwhelmingly male. Carter corrects this common assumption by examining the life and work of Béla Balázs – critic, theoretician and filmmaker – whose transnational career between Budapest, Vienna, Berlin and Moscow is seen through the prism of the feminist movement in the early decades of the twentieth century. By 'situating Balázs's film theory within the larger cultural-historical field', Carter shows how different discourses and ideas from and around the 'new woman' were generative for his film theory which proved to be highly influential in the 1920s and beyond. Given its canonic and classical status, it is surprising how little attention has been paid to 'the conditions of emergence of Balázs's early film writing'.

Ciné-club culture has been recognized as the ferment on which many of the key ideas of film culture could blossom in the first half of the twentieth century. What has been largely overlooked is how

programming can be thought of and conceptualized as a mode of producing knowledge and affect about films. By examining the concrete programming practice of the Dutch *Filmliga* which provides perhaps the most self-contained and coherent example in this period, **Tom Gunning** argues that the construction of a film programme can be likened to theoretical activity and can be employed as didactic tools. Working with contrast and fragments are specific modes of producing knowledge about film, specific methods that archaeologically link film studies to the activities of the 1920s avant-garde. Gunning discusses the early films of Joris Ivens as examples of how films reflexively and aesthetically embody their own programme. In this respect, it is important to remember that knowledge concerning the cinema is not just to be found in academic discourse, but also in films, in programming strategies, in discussions and in many other formats.

From the mid-1920s until the early 1930s, the Soviet Union was surely the most exciting place from which cinematic innovations and discourses emerged. While the circulation of those films, ideas and central protagonists will be looked at in more detail in other sections of the book, **Natalie Ryabchikova** presents a little-known but important aspect – how film studies was invented and institutionalized in Soviet Russia. While the explosive ideas and theories of Eisenstein, Pudovkin and Vertov circulated freely among the intellectuals and activists in Europe and beyond, the situation in the Soviet Union looked markedly different from the early 1930s onwards. Ryabchikova's chapter also charts how canonization and institutionalization interacted with film production, how the narrative that was told about the emergence and development of Soviet cinema was bound up with cinema itself, and vice versa.

The second part of the book shifts attention to the circulation of material conditions and networks of exchange, which were hallmarks of the avant-garde film culture of the 1920s that contributed to many important activities of the next decade. One example of this mobility is the circulation and reception of Soviet avant-garde art in Western Europe, discussed by **Ian Christie**. The long-term results and influences of these contacts and transmissions illustrate how the term 'avant-garde' has transformed and changed meaning over time. With Ryabchikova's study of Soviet film studies, Christie shares a concern with questions of retrospection and historiography – how have terms, arguments and concepts shaped our view and understanding of a past that is always more complex than acknowledged. By tracing out three successive waves of Russian modernist avant-garde, Christie

complicates the canonical story of the sudden impact that Eisenstein's montage aesthetics and revolutionary strategies allegedly had across Western Europe. One of the key questions that this volume addresses is that of influence and impact, of transmission and transference. In this respect, Christie suggests that one lesson to draw from these successive waves is 'a recurrent pattern of *formal challenge*, combining the old and the radically new, and an insistence on the essentially hybrid nature of what might be termed "modern spectacle"'.

Turning to a more 'peripheral' part of Europe, if that qualification is allowed, **Greg de Cuir**, in an overview of the situation in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, stresses how amateurism went hand in hand with an active cinephile culture, and how this infrastructure provided the basic context on which postwar Yugoslav cinema could blossom. Inside the multi-ethnic state, various initiatives formed connections and thus could be seen as a transnational network that was not able to sustain itself for a longer time, but that could feed into the active film culture at the service of a new nation state. Despite its relative distance from the main conduits between Moscow, Berlin, Paris, Amsterdam and London, groups in Zagreb and Belgrade nevertheless explored similar ideas, styles and aesthetics. Despite local diversity and personal idiosyncrasies, there was a common ground to fall back on which was recognized in most European urban centres.

An even wider transnational network in geographical terms is sketched by **Masha Salazkina** who discusses film cultural activities in the early 1930s in Italy, especially the active exchange with the Soviet Union. As Salazkina argues in respect to activities in the field of film education: 'The history of Italian and Soviet film cultures has a strong relevance to the institutionalization of cinema studies, and their role in this process could be argued to rival that of France'. The complex interaction of Soviet and Italian film cultures demonstrates that, even with similar ideas circulating, a specific national context could nevertheless turn out very different. More importantly, this encounter was crucial for postwar film aesthetics, as neorealism emerged from this juncture and turned out to be the signal for the various new waves that would dominate the 'modern' cinema from the 1950s well into the 1980s.

In a revisionist study of Swiss film culture of the 1930s, **Yvonne Zimmermann** sets out by contrasting two events which are not normally seen in connection – the 1929 avant-garde meeting of La Sarraz and the First European Educational Film Conference in Basel in 1927. Zimmermann points out how avant-garde and educational cinema not only ran on parallel tracks for a long time, but how it makes sense to

consider them as part of the same non-commercial and non-theatrical film culture. Zimmermann also reminds us that it would be short-sighted to concentrate on the avant-garde as the only alternative to mainstream cinema, proposing instead a 'polyculture' in which educational, industrial and scientific films are equally present. At the same time, her contribution also highlights how a key figure of the 1920s avant-garde, Hans Richter, made the transition into commissioned film work and educational activities.

The third and final part of the book attempts to map some of the consequences of the interwar developments. As argued above, the nation state and its various agencies began to take an active interest in the cinema in this period, which led to the foundation and institutionalization of many bodies that are still with us today. In his contribution, **Lars Gustaf Andersson** details the various Swedish initiatives of the 1920s and 1930s at taking the cinema seriously as a cultural factor. Film archiving, theory and aesthetics, as well as film production, all belong to this wider field. The Swedish context amply demonstrates that there is no overwhelming trajectory of how cinema evolved as a medium and art form in this period, that there is no preordained path on which film interacted with progressive circles and the nation state in different countries. Andersson's study also makes a case for how local context and international developments interact and intersect, while reminding us how the key ideas about the cinema and the ways to study them were in no small measure forged in the period under discussion here.

Francesco Pitassio and **Simone Venturini**'s jointly authored contribution details how the shaping of film culture was bound up with the project of (re-)constructing the nation in the 1930s; indeed, similar (yet also, in some respects, very different) attempts can be seen all across Europe, from Grierson's socially engaged documentaries, to Nazi Germany's celebration of the Aryan body, all the way to the Socialist-Realist model heroes of Soviet cinema. The chapter concentrates on Luigi Chiarini's career as an exemplary case study to illustrate the contradictory ways in which a transnationally circulating film culture was integrated into national institutions such as festivals, schools, institutes and magazines. Whereas Salazkina's chapter highlights the debt of the Italian advances to the model put forward by the Soviet activists, Pitassio and Venturini focus more on state policy. Read together, the two essays give an impression of how and why the 1930s were such a crucial period in which Italian film culture adapted and transformed ideas from the 1920s that would reach fruition after the war. In this sense, the 1930s were much less nationally confined than is often

acknowledged – they continued, albeit in a different form, what had begun in the 1920s.

The remaining three essays examine important types of institution that have become an indispensable part of film culture ever since the 1930s: film schools, archives and film festivals. **Duncan Petrie** gives an overview of the first film schools, and looks at how ideas about teaching film (making) were developed, exchanged and ossified into curricula. Even though these institutions were marked by an outward nationalization – they were usually inaugurated and branded as national film schools – it becomes obvious how they influenced each other, how patterns and routines emerged that were shared across different nation states. **Malte Hagener** examines the emergence of the film festival and illustrates how the nation state was instrumental in giving stability to what was originally nothing but a supplement to an art exhibition; he also looks at the beginnings of the archival movement across Europe, showing which factors had to be in place in order for a certain type of institution to come into existence. In a detailed case study, **Rolf Aurich** provides a history of the ‘Reichsfilmarchiv’, which came into existence in Fascist Germany in the mid-1930s. The trajectory that leads into the 1940s demonstrates how a Nazi prestige project retained ideas from the avant-garde and was, moreover, shaped by a clear sense of transnational circulation of film culture – even this institution cannot be seen isolated from its transnational context.

In conclusion, it is fairly safe to say that this anthology will probably raise more questions and issues than it is able to provide answers. *The Emergence of Film Culture* hopes to provide a first draft of a force field that has so far not been mapped very intensely. As the biography and the nation state remain the default values in film studies, international transfers and institutions of film culture have only recently provoked interest. If the present volume acts as a catalyst and impetus towards further examinations of such configurations, then it has already achieved a lot, because the networks, exchanges and transformations in 1920s and 1930s Europe are rich and rewarding topics for further research and studies.

Notes

1. See the collections Mette Hjort and Scott McKenzie (eds). 2000. *Cinema and Nation*, London and New York: Routledge; and Alan Williams (ed.). 2002. *Film and Nationalism*, New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

2. See on a historiographical level Michael Werner and Bénédicte Zimmermann. 2006. 'Beyond Comparison: *Histoire croisée* and the Challenge of Reflexivity', *History and Theory* 45 (February), 30–50.
3. Werner and Zimmermann, 'Beyond Comparison', 31f.
4. See the contributions in this volume by Masha Salazkina, Simone Venturini and Francesco Pitassio for more on the Italian–Soviet exchanges.
5. See Masha Salazkina. 2011. 'Moscow – Rome – Havana: A Film-Theory Roadmap', *October* 139 (Winter), 97–116, as well as her contribution in this volume.
6. See Wolfgang Beilenhoff. 2011. 'Montage 1929 / Montage 1939', *Montage/av* 20(1): 213–22.
7. On the *locus classicus* of Hollywood as a simultaneously economic, organizational and aesthetic system, see David Bordwell, Janet Staiger and Kristin Thompson. 1986. *The Classical Hollywood Cinema: Film Style and Mode of Production to 1960*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
8. See Siegfried Kracauer. 1947. *From Caligari to Hitler: A Psychological History of the German Film*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press; and Walter Benjamin. (1936) 2008. *The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility, and Other Writings on Media*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
9. Dudley Andrew. 2010. 'Time Zones and Jetlag: The Flows and Phases of World Cinema', in Nataša Đurovičová and Kathleen Newman (eds), *World Cinemas, Transnational Perspectives*. New York and London: Routledge, 59–89, here 60.
10. See Andrew Higson and Richard Maltby (eds). 1999. *'Film Europe' and 'Film America': Cinema, Commerce and Cultural Exchange, 1920–1939*. Exeter: Exeter University Press.
11. The epitome allegorizing this development in Leni Riefenstahl's *OLYMPIA*, a film about the competition between nations that won the main prize at the Venice Film Festival in 1938, another event at which nations would compete in a circumscribed field for a prize. For more on the history of film festivals, see Marijke de Valck. 2007. *Film Festivals: From European Geopolitics to Global Cinephilia*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
12. For the relationship between centre and periphery in respect to the avant-garde, see the anthology Per Backstrom and Hubert van den Berg (eds). 2013. *Decentering the Avant-Garde: Towards a New Topography of the International Avant-Garde*. Amsterdam: Rodopi.
13. Dana Polan. 2007. *Scenes of Instruction: The Beginning of the US Study of Film*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
14. Haidee Wasson. 2005. *Museum Movies: The Museum of Modern Art and the Birth of Art Cinema*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
15. Peter Decherney. 2005. *Hollywood and the Cultural Elite: How the Movies Became American*. New York: Columbia University Press.
16. Lee Grieveson and Haidee Wasson (eds). 2008. *Inventing Film Studies: Towards a History of a Discipline*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
17. Terry Bolas. 2009. *Screen Education: From Film Appreciation to Media Studies*. Bristol: Intellect.
18. See Charles R. Acland and Haidee Wasson (eds). 2011. *Useful Cinema*. Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press; Vinzenz Hediger and Patrick Vonderau (eds). 2007. *Filmische Mittel, industrielle Zwecke. Das Werk des Industriefilms*. Berlin: Vorwerk 8.
19. See Lee Grieveson and Colin MacCabe (eds). 2011a. *Empire and Film*. London: Palgrave Macmillan; Lee Grieveson and Colin MacCabe (eds). 2011b. *Film and the End of Empire*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

20. In this respect, the present anthology can be seen as complementing Malte Hagener. 2007. *Moving Forward, Looking Back: The European Avantgarde and the Invention of Film Culture*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
21. See Richard Abel. 1988. *French Film Theory and Criticism, 1907–1939. A History/Anthology. I: 1907–1929. II: 1929–1939* (2 vols). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press; and Christophe Gauthier. 1999. *La Passion du cinéma. Cinéphiles, ciné-clubs et salles spécialisées à Paris de 1920 à 1929*. Paris: Association Française de Recherche sur l’Histoire du Cinéma / Ecole des Chartes.
22. Besides the many studies available in German, the best overview of the alternative political film culture in English is still Bruce Murray. 1990. *Film and the German Left in the Weimar Republic: From Caligari to Kuhle Wampe*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.
23. See the reprint *Close Up* (1927–1933). Territet (CH). Complete reprint in 10 volumes Nendeln (Liechtenstein): Kraus Reprint 1969; and James Donald, Anne Friedberg and Laura Marcus (eds). 1998. *Close Up, 1927–1933: Cinema and Modernism*. London: Cassell.