Firat Oruc

Space and Agency in the Petrocolonial Genealogies of Cinema in the Gulf

Following the discovery of oil in Bahrain in 1932, the Gulf entered a new phase in its history.[1] As hydrocarbon modernity gave rise to new spaces of urban culture, the interest in the moving image was invigorated, stimulated also by the growing popularity of sound film as a global phenomenon of entertainment (Gomery 2005). Despite hydrocarbon modernity's promise of what Mark Simpson calls "lubricity" (2017) to refer to oil's enabling capacity of smooth flows of people, material resources, life styles, and cultural forms, the circulatory energies made possible by the discovery of fossil fuels in the Gulf were managed through a new logic of governance that I call petrocolonial in so far as it captures the very intersectionality of bureaucratic imperial power and capitalist energy extraction. If carbon-based energy – coal in the nineteenth century and oil in the twentieth century – played a fundamental role in shaping modern governance (Mitchell 2011), in the Gulf context, it led to the constitution of the petrocolonial state as a result of the coming together of British imperialism and American venture capitalism.

The embeddedness of cinema in the formation of hydrocarbon modernity in the Gulf generated a set of characteristics that were resonant with, but also different from, other cinematic formations in the Middle East and South Asia. The petrocolonial configurations of cinema in the Gulf were refracted through three spheres of moving image culture: private, corporate-sponsored, and commercial public cinemas. Although these moving-image practices are often examined separately, in this chapter I show that in the Gulf context they were intricately connected. What was common to these three spheres was a certain logic of exclusion and restricted access norms. The private cinema sphere was exclusive to the colonial and indigenous elite; the corporate cinema was confined to the Euro-American staff of the oil companies; and the commercial public cinema was reserved for the local and labour migrant audience. The triumvirate of the Political Agent, the

1 Throughout the chapter, "the Gulf" is used as a geographical designation to refer to the Arabic-speaking coastal areas (*al-khalij*) of the Persian Gulf. Today, it comprises the Gulf Cooperation Countries (GCC) of Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, and Oman.

Note: An earlier version of this chapter was published as "Petrocolonial Circulations and Cinema's Arrival in the Gulf" in *Film History: An International Journal* 32:3 (2020): 10–42, courtesy of Indiana University Press.

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110740301-004

Government Adviser, and the Oil Company in Bahrain regulated each cinema sphere and the processes of socialisation, interaction, and acculturation they facilitated using legal codes as well as restricted access norms, adopting, in particular, patterns of colonial paternalism already well established in India.

In contextualising the emergence of cinema in the Gulf within the broader comparative histories of colonial cinema culture and spatial planning, this chapter aims to foreground a complex interplay of space and agency. The arrival of cinema in the Gulf took place along three spheres of moving image culture, each of which was shaped by multiple local and transnational actors, including British colonial officers, American oil company managers, South Asian entrepreneurs, indigenous merchants and ruling elites. These agents participated in multiple configurations and regulations of the emergent cinematic experience in terms of defining the physical spaces of film exhibition, undergirding the urban segregation of different audience groups, and administering the transnational traffic of films and film bureaucracy (licensing, censorship, sales, and so on).

This chapter traces the formative years of cinema in the Gulf and the configurations of cinematic spaces by multiple agents through the colonial archives. Whether in the form of official circulars, correspondences, or personal writings, the objects of the archive are riddled with prejudices, silences, and elisions that their authors usually did not even bother to hide. Therefore, rather than treating these records as authoritative and objective sources for constructing the history of the emergence of cinema in the Gulf, I approach the internal and often times confidential exchanges in these documents as literary texts emerging from the imperial cultural archive as a storehouse of "a particular knowledge and structures of attitude and reference" (Said 1993, 52) as well as an ethnography of the archive that Ann Laura Stoler and Nicholas Dirks, among other historical anthropologists, have proposed for the study of colonial administrative apparatuses. "To engage in an ethnography of the archive," writes Dirks, "entails going well beyond seeing it as an assemblage of texts, a depository of and for history. The archive is a discursive formation in the totalizing sense that it reflects the categories and operations of the state itself" (Dirks 2002, 59). The primacy of official records in the study of the colonial histories of cinema, including that of the Gulf, is in itself a symptom of the extent to which colonial administrations regulated its arrival and engineered the logic of control. Equally important, the archive (often against the will of the administrative power) is inherently polyphonic and heteroglossic. In the case of the records that I study in this chapter, the voices of various "other" actors appear through the correspondences they have with the British political agents as well as the American oil companies.

1 The Question of Cinema in Imperial Circulation

> I hear a rumour that an "Arab" is arranging to establish a cinema here . . . If the rumour is true, I think that prohibiting the establishment of a cinema should be carefully considered, and in any case that censorship should be provided for. I cannot but think that His Excellency Shaikh Hamad would regard with distaste the type of film which experience elsewhere tells me is likely to be shown. ("File 32/7 (4/6) Bahrain Cinemas," [2r] 3/200)

Thus begins the first correspondence in the "Bahrain Cinemas" file of the India Office Records (Fig. 1), a confidential letter (dated April 7, 1934) from Lieutenant-Colonel Percy Gordon Loch, the Political Agent in Bahrain, to Charles Dalrymple Belgrave, the British Advisor (*al-mustashar*) to the Government of Bahrain. The "Arab" whom Loch mentioned in the circulating "rumour" was Hussein Yateem, a local merchant, who had approached the government of Bahrain to obtain a licence for establishing a public cinema. Hussein Yateem belonged to a well-established merchant family that was particularly interested in importing new media technologies of that time period such as gramophones and cameras ("Kingdom Mourns Death of Builder of Modern Bahrain").

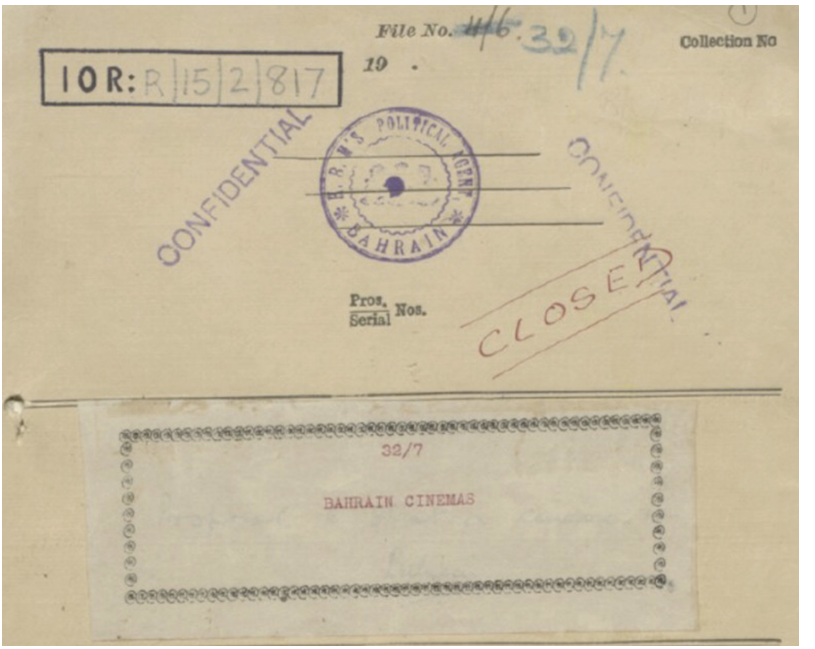


Fig. 1: "Bahrain Cinemas" cover page.

But what was Political Agent Loch referring to by "experience elsewhere"? His point of reference was none other than India. As a circulating imperial officer, Loch had held numerous posts in India between 1919 and 1932 in the Multan, Gilgit, Rewa, Kathiawar, and Mysore regions prior to his appointment to Bahrain from 1932 to 1937 (Rich 2009, 223). Loch was in India during precisely the time period when there was an acute controversy over the moral and political effects of film in the Empire. Strikingly enough, Belgrave's diary notes during a recruitment trip to India in late 1927, approximately a year after his arrival in Bahrain, show that Advisor Belgrave also encountered that "experience elsewhere." While in Karachi, Belgrave attended several silent era films, including Henry Otto's *Dante's Inferno* (Fox Film, 1924) and Alexander Korda's *The Private Life of Helen of Troy* (First International, 1927). Critiquing those adaptations of two major European classics to the screen as "decadent," "depressing," and "dreary," Belgrave ended this diary entry as follows: "I can't imagine what an Indian audience made of it" (Belgrave 1993, 118; 123). Belgrave did not elaborate further on his remark; but we can safely infer that he was convinced that those films were not fit for a "native" audience.[2]

Loch and Belgrave's initial reactions to the rumours about the opening of a public cinema in Bahrain reflected a set of anxieties that were circulating in the late imperial period among the British colonial administrators who were alarmed by the increasing appeal of cinema as a popular form of entertainment among colonial subjects. The "Bahrain Cinemas" files of the India Office Records illustrate clearly the extent to which the experiences of colonial India shaped the formative years of cinema culture in the Gulf. Administrators in Bahrain looked to how cinema was handled in India for models and ideas to create actual policies on the ground. The arrival of cinema in Bahrain was closely monitored and regulated by the British colonial network of administrative personnel who followed meticulously the general film policies that were implemented across the Empire. The bureaucratic traffic over the case of early public cinema petitions in Bahrain shows how regulatory practices and norms of governance over cinematic spheres circulated from one colonial context (South Asia) to another (the Gulf).

The story of the opening of the first public cinema in the Gulf, therefore, constitutes a significant, yet so far overlooked, episode in the transregional history of the circuits of cinema across South Asia and the Middle East. Bahrain Cinema

2 Throughout the chapter, "native" is meant to be in quotation marks as a colonial administrative term used to describe the local peoples administered by the Empire.

opened its doors to the local audience under the rules of censorship and conduct adopted from the Government of India to screen as its first film the Egyptian iconic singer Umm Kulthum's first musical *Wedad*. Prior to film industry exchanges in the 1960s and 70s, circulation from South Asia to the Middle East started in the Gulf with censorship manuals, segregation systems, and anxieties over the influence of cinema on native populations. The films that were screened across the Euro-American exclusive club house theatres of the oil company settlements in the Gulf were obtained from distributors in India. Indian entrepreneurs, moreover, were the first foreign investors to petition for a licence to operate a commercial cinema open for the local Arab population as well as South Asian migrant communities in the Gulf. This was the natural result of the increased labour flow from South Asia to the Gulf after the rise of the oil economy as well as the strong historical connections between South Asian and Gulf merchants, as Bombay and Karachi began to emerge as central hubs of film industry in the early twentieth century.

As cultural anthropologist Brian Larkin points out, to the extent that Empire functioned as a network of repeating and multiplying circulations afforded by "a ceaseless movement of persons, laws, administrative practices, commodities, texts, [and] images," the panic over the new medium was characterised by "the diversity of situations in which cinema found itself, and the regularity of the stories narrated about those films" (Larkin 2010, 174; 155). It was, therefore, not a coincidence that Loch and Belgrave shared the same discomfort about how colonial subjects viewed and interpreted films with, for instance, governor Sir Henry Hesketh Bell in Northern Nigeria, expatriate journalist George Bilainkin in Malaya, or writer Aldous Huxley in Java.

But the anxiety over cinema as a new space and form of visual media did not remain limited to a mere epistemological curiosity about what the colonial audiences were thinking about the images they saw on the screen. As popular cinema, particularly Hollywood, was making its way to the colonies, it was also accompanied by the metropolitan concerns about governance and mass culture. The British Empire strove to control, survey, and supervise the emergent circulation of films in the colonies, responding to the question of how moving images affected "the mind and morals" of individuals and destabilised proper citizen conduct (Grieveson 2008, 5). As Larkin argues:

> Controversy over the effects of film in the empire was part of a wider moment in which cinema was constituted as a public sphere of regulation, with intense efforts made by governmental and private bodies to control and limit its exhibition. By 1914, domestic debates in England about the demoralising effects of film on "immature minds" (most especially children) were being transferred into concerns about the influence of films in colonial territories. The concern for the influence of film in Empire was in part an outgrowth of debates about the moral effects of film within Britain itself. (Larkin 2010, 164)

But in the colonial context, the cinema question was not merely a sociological issue; rather, it was a politically-charged question that challenged "white prestige" (Stoler 2002).

In 1927 (while Loch was still posted to India), the Government of India formed the Indian Cinematograph Committee (ICC) to report on the influence of films on the native subjects and their ability to properly decode them. Cinema presented a paradox for the colonial order: on the one hand, it provided "an unprecedentedly efficacious means for conveying the blandishments of civilization," on the other hand, however, it embodied an overwhelmingly powerful "visceral appeal to the senses" (Mazzarella, 2009, 66). As a sensuous experience, cinema stimulated feelings of excitement and passion that challenged Victorian notions of civilising mission and imperial pedagogy in the colonies. The concerns over the effects of the cinema were predicated on the idea that native spectators (at least, the uneducated, non-Europeanized lower classes) were not ready to process the sensory stimuli of the cinema. To prove its point empirically, the ICC conducted a massive opinion poll project based on interviews with more than a thousand respondents in Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Lahore, and Burma (Jaikumar 2003). The interviews of the ICC centred on rhetorical questions that implied that the new visual medium could not be properly understood and decoded by colonial subjects: "Do you consider that the differences in social customs and outlook between the West and the East necessitate special consideration of films in this country?" "Have any of the films exhibited in India a tendency to misrepresent Western civilization or to lower it in the eyes of Indians? Is it a fact that films representing Western life are generally unintelligible to an uneducated Indian or are largely misunderstood by him?" (quoted in Sinha, 2009, 291–292). The expected answer to each of these questions was "yes."

As scholars of late colonial cinema have consistently shown, although framed in cultural and moral terms, the alarmism over cinema was a symptom of deeper concerns triggered by the challenges the new medium posed to colonial governmentality and state control (Jaikumar 2003). More than the images themselves, the question at stake was "how this symbolic flow was reconstituted within colonial power relations" (Larkin 2010, 173). Cinema, after all, brought into contact populations that had been distant to each other, particularly due to its affordances of "spatial intimacy . . . across national, racial, and gender boundaries" (Sinha 2009, 292–293). As such, the social topography of cinema undermined established colonial divisions and hierarchies. Films, specifically Hollywood productions, undermined the white European image established in the colonies over centuries and exposed private metropolitan life to the native viewers (Arora 1995). Just imagine the scandalous gaze of the brown man on the white woman on the screen, or the unsettling experience of sharing the same space with people from lower social

classes in the cinema house. One of the British interviewees for the ICC would express this sense of losing representational superiority as follows: "It is useless to expect the coloured people to respect the white races when they see these false representations of so-called 'civilised life'" (quoted in Chowdhry 2000, 20–21). In response to these colonial anxieties, and in line with the late imperial attitude of British self-insulation, the ICC called for a spatial separation of the cinemas along Western(ised) *versus* local audiences, tastes, exhibition patterns, and literacies.

The Gulf, it must also be noted, differed in one significant aspect from India; that is, the discovery of oil in the 1930s at precisely the time when natural pearling economy that the coastal towns depended on declined irrecoverably due to the global dominance of cultured pearl in the aftermath of the Great Depression. The transition from one extractive mode of production to another came with an epochal intensity (Potter 2017). Oil signified the "marvellous" arrival of a hydrocarbon modernity, which, in addition to a whole set of technological, infrastructural, urban, and economic development, generated a new cultural dynamic that contemporary scholars of energy humanities have termed petroculture to designate oil's shaping influence on the (trans)formation of modern of everyday life in material and immaterial ways (Wilson, et al. 2017; Barrett and Worden 2014). The primary cultural form that came with oil capitalism in the Gulf was film.[3] Cinema was embraced as a key site of leisure for the oil settlements precisely at a time when British administrators' suspicious attitude toward Hollywood's impact in the colonies was at its height. The following sections offer a historical account of the three aforementioned moving image cultures by focusing primarily on Bahrain, which, in the wake of its ascendancy as the regional nodal point in the British colonial network, became the first country in the Gulf where the question of cinema unfolded in multifaceted circulatory forms that I have outlined above.

2 Enclaves of Private Cinema

In his 1935 report on the progress of Evangelical activities of the Arabian Mission of the Reformed Church in Bahrain, Rev. Gerrit Van Peursem would observe astonishingly the growing interest in new media technologies and visual culture:

3 For further scholarship on the role of the oil company in the formation of cinema culture in oil producing countries of the Middle East, see Naficy 2011, 183–186; Damluji, 2015, 147–164; Elling 2015.

> There are still a few of the older men who object to phonographs, radios and musical instruments of any sort. But they are few. The radio is getting very general, and the phonograph is used in the public coffee shop except during the fast month of Ramadan . . . . The same thing can be said of pictures in Islam. Time was when coolies and boys took to their heels at the sight of the camera. Some said pictures were images and thus smacked of idolatry. Others thought there was Jinn [sic] inside the box of the camera. Behold, what a change! It is difficult to exclude the crowd from the photo. The more the merrier. The more poses the better. Kodaks and films are sold in the bazaar to Arabs as well as to Europeans. The Shaikhs are especially pleased to have their pictures taken and the subjects aspire to be near their rulers . . . . There is not yet a public cinema in Bahrain, however, the lantern slides given in our hospital every week and in the men's mejlis are thoroughly appreciated in spite of the fact that the pictures illustrate the Bible story. (Van Peursem 1935, 9–10)

Although Rev. Gerrit Van Peursem's account comes with a strong Orientalist as well as evangelical rhetoric in its description of the "miraculous" attraction of the locals to media technologies (taken as a sign of progress), it also demonstrates how in the absence of licensed public cinemas, private nontheatrical spaces (the political agent's residence, the oil company club house, the ruler's palace, the mission hospital, and so on) played a significant role in the formation of cinema experience in the Gulf.

As such, film exhibition in its early years remained restricted to a highly select group of the British colonial administrative staff, members of the local ruling elite and their entourage, oil company employees, military personnel, and foreign visitors. According to the archival records of British offices in the Arabian Peninsula, "private cinema shows" were the most common form of spectatorship during the interwar period. In the January 1934 report of the British Legation in Jeddah, we read: "Picnics, wireless auditions, private cinema shows, and all the apparatus of occidental civilisation, now compete with the rigours of life among the Wahhabis" (Jarman 1990, 475). The Annual Report of the same year reiterated positively private cinema performances as a new addition to "the resources of Europeans" for enjoyment and leisure, while also stressing that local restrictions on entertainment activities were "as a whole weighed very lightly" on the British subjects (Jarman 1998, 229). The private cinema form also enabled the indigenous ruling elite to enjoy films in the comfort of their own exclusive courtly spaces, without having to worry about any religious or cultural criticism of the moving image.

The leading figure in both producing and screening private cinema in Bahrain was none other than Eleanor Isabel Wilkie-Dalyell, Political Agent Gordon Loch's wife. Following formal receptions, Dalyell would share her actuality films – short fragments of real footage – about local events and public gatherings in Bahrain with invited guests in the "cinema parties" at the Agency residence. Adviser Belgrave was among the regular attendees and recorded these

cinema shows regularly in his diary entries between 1933 and 1936 (Belgrave 1993, 826; 843; 861; 869; 1144; 1152; 1154).

Dalyell was a practitioner of what historian of imperial visual culture Annamaria Motrescu-Mayes calls late colonial home moviemaking. Although amateur moviemaking may not at first glance look relevant to the exclusionary practices in the physical cinematic space itself, Dalyell's films in fact reproduced the segregationist logic not only in terms of where and to whom they were exhibited but also through their formal elements and thematic material. During Coronel Loch's post in Bahrain between 1932 and 1937, Dalyell shot numerous intertitled 16 mm films using the Kodacolor lenticular system – a relatively rare and expensive experimental colour process (Motrescu-Mayes 2013, 48). Following its standardisation in 1923, the portable cine-camera had become a sought-after commodity by non-professionals who wanted to make films. The cine-camera was popular particularly among upper-class colonial expatriates who not only could afford to purchase one but also enjoyed relatively greater mobility than their compatriots.

Amateur filmmaking was notably embraced by women in the colonial outposts for whom it provided a lens for "taking an intelligent interest in the country, in the natives, and in [their] own immediate surroundings" (Procida 2002, 105). Filmmaking encouraged them to come out of the private sphere and participate in public life, and record extensive scenes of "life away from home": administrative, entrepreneurial, and military activities of the Empire, touristic outings in "exotic" landscapes, and ethnographic encounters with native populations and customs. By the same token, Dalyell's short films in Bahrain fell into two categories.[4] The first category included official visits by high ranking British bureaucrats, Imperial Airways planes and Royal Navy warships, official parades, marches of the police force, soldier drills, as well as expatriate leisure activities. The second category reflected the typical ethnographic style of filmmaking about the colonies in the 1930s, with extensive footage of dhow sailing, camel riding, pearl diving, horse racing, hunting, wedding ceremonies, religious celebrations, and royal parades. The anthropological subjects of Dalyell's films included local women drawing water, dancing, singing, and carrying shrines, villagers and vendors in the market as well as "emancipated slaves" playing drums and dancing outside the Agency residence (Fig. 2). In these films, Dalyell followed the major generic visual strategies of colonial amateur filmmaking: (1) panorama shots to emphasise the gap

4 Now housed in the British Empire & Commonwealth Museum, the Dalyell collection is approximately 230 minutes long and includes 37 short films shot in India (1926–1931) and Bahrain (1932–1937).

between the maker and the subject, (2) sneaking shots of natives to produce the effect of neutrality and authenticity, (3) smooth cinematographic organisation of landscapes to limit the traces of dislocation and disorientation, and (4) shots that would invoke exotic contrasts to life at home (Zimmermann 1996, 89–90).

Fig. 2: Still shot from Dalyell's cine film "Celebration of the 'Id," circa 1934.

The amateur film work of Dalyell and other British women, claims Annamaria Motrescu-Mayes, offers us uncensored and unedited visual texts about life in the colonies beyond the limited view of the official imperial representations. "Such fortuitous records," she writes, "were usually filmed by chance, eluded the filmmaker's initial thematic choice, and were never edited . . . .Some of these films now reveal unexpected details of British imperial identities and cultures" (Motrescu-Mayes 2014, 95). Similarly, in his work on amateur filmmaking in the Dutch East Indies, Nico De Klerk maintains that colonial private films – "being the closest visual records of the 'grassroots' level of interaction in the colony" – demonstrate that daily life did not always coincide with colonial ideologies (2008, 152). But it would be a far-fetched argument to defend that Dalyell and other late colonial amateur filmmakers intentionally subverted the colonial governmental framework, except for a few fleeting moments in which the colonial native was "accidentally" recorded as the subject, not the ethnographic object, of the film. As Patricia R. Zimmermann writes:

> Although the argument that these films present resistance to the aesthetic prerogatives predominating this period could be made, their shaky camerawork, inability to change composition, and absence of conscious narrative may more simply demonstrate that amateur camera usage was not situated within the discourse of filmmaking, but operated more within the discourse of hunting – to bag a prize, to get a trophy, to capture the experience, and project it on a screen. (1996, 90)

Late colonial home movies ultimately reasserted the imperial gaze. Their ability to cross over private and public spheres as well as feminine and masculine settings was guaranteed by their privileged status in the exclusive colonial structures.

3 The Corporate Screen of the Oil Company

In tandem with the private cinema of the exclusive domain of the governing elite, the oil company cinema emerged as the second film sphere in the Gulf. In 1935, the Bahrain Petroleum Company (BAPCO) – a subsidiary of Standard Oil of California – applied for permission to equip its Club House in Awali with "a modern Talking Cinema for the entertainment of their employees and their friends amongst the British residents of Manama" ("File 32/7 (4/6) Bahrain Cinemas," [4r] 7/200). Awali was the first oil settlement (*madinah al-naft*) in the Gulf. The company management demanded exemption from censorship on the grounds that BAPCO's cinema would be a non-commercial space "confined to British and American audiences" (ibid.) only. BAPCO's request for exemption from censorship was based on the assumption that only the locals needed censorship. Loch and Belgrave honoured BAPCO's request with slight modifications. While the company management was given freedom over the selection of films, the government reserved a nominal right of censorship. By reserving the right of censorship, Belgrave would be able to prevent the screening of "controversial" films at the BAPCO theatre, which could pose a problem both to the British administration and the government of Bahrain.

In addition to the issue of censorship, Political Agent Loch's private notes on his conversations with BAPCO's representatives reveal that he was still acting on the assumption that the local inhabitants would misconstrue films:

> About the 10th January 1935 I spoke to the Chief Local Representatives Mr. Russell and Mr. Davies on the subject of the proposed B. A. P. C. O. cinema . . . I told Mr. Davies at some length of the unfortunate results which follow the exhibition of films which are perfectly suitable in their own countries in places like Bahrain, where people get entirely wrong impressions from what may be to *us* [emphasis added] a perfectly ordinary film. ("File 32/7 (4/6) Bahrain Cinemas," [71r] 141/200)

Loch, in other words, reiterated the colonial claim that films that were otherwise appropriate for, and properly processed by, Western audiences would be understood by native spectators in problematic ways. In Saudi Arabia, where the first movies arrived in 1937 with the so-called early pioneers of the Arabian American Company (ARAMCO), exclusionary measures were in place, too. As Tom Barger, one of the iconic figures of the early "discovery" years, would write in one of his

letters to his family, "Arabs were forbidden to attend" the film screenings (quoted in Vitalis 2007, 60).

Notwithstanding restricted access, during the interwar years, cinema became the primary means of entertainment in the oil company camps.[5] BAPCO and ARAMCO rented films (usually two per week) via the company's agents in Bombay from distributors in India, including Metro-Goldwyn-Meyer, Warner Bros., R.K.O., and Paramount ("File 16/32 VII Correspondence with the Bushire Residency," [25r] 49/380). The films were shown first in Awali, and later in Saudi Arabia's oil towns such as Dhahran, Ras Tanura, Dammam, and Abqaiq in the Eastern Province (Fig. 3). By 1945, BAPCO had to request priority air freight from the British Overseas Airways Corporation in order to transport 120 kilograms of film a week to India ("File 10/17 (10/26) Priority air freight for BAPCO cinema films," [2r] 3/16). Although as a government official Belgrave was painstakingly particular about rules and regulations, he himself was a very regular movie-goer. His diary entries between 1935 and 1947 refer to more than 80 titles of American (and some British) films he saw there. The oil company cinemas received a wide variety of films in the popular genres of the period such as biopics, musicals, dramas, cartoons, and in a steadily increasing number, war films.

BAPCO and other oil companies in the Gulf nevertheless kept their strict measures to ban labourers (local and foreign alike) from the cinema well into the late 1950s. As social historians of oil in the Middle East have pointed out, despite the material welfare and prosperity that hydrocarbon modernity promised, the oil conurbations in the Gulf were structurally influenced by "colonialist, racist ideas about managing a multi-ethnic, overcrowded society" (Elling 2015). All early oil settlements were built on the same model of segregation, "of dual character, partly planned by [the oil company] and partly wild-grown formations that were shaped by a steady influx of job seekers . . . and their families" (Ghrawi, 2015, 243). The degree of segregation in the oil settlements strongly echoed Frantz Fanon's portrayal of the colonial city as strictly compartmentalised in its ordering and geographical layout, enforced by "the principle of exclusivity" (Fanon 1968, 37). This was particularly the case for ARAMCO, which followed a strictly enforced regime of segregation between "the American camp" and "the Saudi Camp":

5 The Anglo-Persian Oil Company (AIOC) in Iran was the first company to establish a cinema for its employees in 1926. Before the movie theatre, in 1912, AIOC brought the first portable projector to Abadan for the exclusive entertainment of the British employees. In the 1940s, the Company would lead the establishment of fully-equipped cinema complexes such as Taj (Crown) and Naft (Oil) Cinemas in Abadan (Elling 2015).

> Americans and Saudis lived in two worlds apart. The fenced American camps provided a living standard similar to that of middle class suburbs in the United States, including lush greenery and ample recreational areas. Saudi workers were housed in tents or concrete dormitories in separate areas that were bare of vegetation and thus directly exposed to heat and dust. Company services such as transportation, hospitals, cafeterias and water fountains were provided separately for Americans and Saudis and differed considerably in quality. (Ghrawi 2014, 19–20)

Fig. 3: ARAMCO company cinema in Dhahran, circa 1951.

Formal classification of the employees in professional ranks – senior, intermediate, and general – overlapped almost entirely with divisions across national, ethnic, and racial lines. American expatriates occupied the top of the hierarchy, various "semi-skilled" migrant labourers (primarily Indians, Pakistanis, and Italians from Eritrea) the intermediate level, and local Saudi workers the lowest ranking. The three staff levels, marked by coloured badges, lived in separate camps with different standards of amenities. By 1953, in the oil towns of the Eastern Province, Saudi workers exceeded 13,500; whereas, the number of Saudi employees at the senior staff level numbered less than a dozen (Ghrawi 2015, 245).

In ARAMCO'S recreated Jim Crow world, not only was work life organised according to "norms of separate and unequal rights and privileges" but also

there was a structural resistance to cross-cultural interaction and socialisation (Vitalis 2004, 154; 163). In so far as it was a privilege granted exclusively to the American senior staff, cinema appeared as one of the strongest markers of the segregation regime of the oil camps. ARAMCO's local employees were not permitted into the movie theatre even as the job-nationality hierarchy began to change slightly with rise of a limited number of non-American staff members to the senior level even in the late 1950s. Abdullah al-Tariki, who was among the first few Saudi nationals to reside in the American camp (and later to become Saudi Arabia's first oil minister and co-founder of Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries) would recall that ARAMCO's movie theatre displayed an explicit "for Americans only" sign, and that he was questioned each time he wanted to enter the theatre (Danforth 2016, 44; 49).

It was no wonder that during the labour strikes of the 1950s against ARAMCO, access to the cinema became a key site of contesting the types of privileges that only Western staff members could enjoy. As discontent over work and living conditions grew, in 1953, a Saudi staff member, Abd al-Aziz Abu Sunayd (Director of the Permits and Contracts Division of ARAMCO's Labour Department in Dammam), wrote a letter of protest to ARAMCO's president. In his letter, Abu Sunayd objected to having been denied entry to the Senior Staff movie theatre in Dhahran to see Charlie Chaplin's *Limelight* (1952). He censured ARAMCO for implementing a Jim Crow system in his native country, recalling how he had also been banned from entering a movie theatre when he was training in the United States, due to the colour line then in place (Vitalis 2007, 153). Three years later, in 1956, as ARAMCO workers held another general strike for better working and living conditions, and union rights, they stormed the cinema in ARAMCO's Intermediate Camp – which housed middle level foreign employees – in Ras Tanura (Vitalis 2007, 159). The movie theatre, open to white attendees only, epitomised the deep-rooted segregation of the oil town. As tensions rose, the workers occupied the movie theatre as a symbolic claim to a range of amenities that they demanded from the company. Storming the cinema was an act of transgressing the system of segregation and the racial colour line, which circulated globally, reproducing itself at each new site of extraction in the US, Mexico, Iran, the Dutch Indies, and the Gulf. In Stephanie LeMenager's words, "the growth of U.S. oil interests into Bahrain and Saudi Arabia followed closely on Mexican oil development of the 1920s, and racial lessons learned in Mexico carried into the Middle East" (94). Yet the oil company responded harshly to the strike, fearing in particular that it could spread to other oil conurbations. The workers were severely beaten, leaders were jailed, and unions were banned (Matthiesen 2014).

4 The Public Cinema in the Colonial Circuit

Rewinding back to 1935: In his final letter to the BAPCO Club Manager, Belgrave stressed that the company had been granted an exclusive privilege denied to "various persons asking permission to open cinema" ("File 32/7 (4/6) Bahrain Cinemas," [7r] 13/200). He was not exaggerating. Until 1937, he and the British political agent did reject all requests to establish a commercial public cinema for local citizens and foreign immigrant workers. During this time period, the British officials received four petitions from South Asian entrepreneurs outside Bahrain: from Abadan, Bangalore, Bombay, and Karachi. All the petitioners were essentially trying to convince (often in an excessively reverential tone) the British officials with a more positive and inclusive discourse on cinema, modernity, and mass culture, dwelling on three main points: (1) A public cinema would enhance the rising image of Bahrain as a modern country in the Gulf; (2) Cinema would meet the popular demand for leisure, created by the increasing urbanisation, prosperity, and mobility that was taking place in Bahrain; (3) Cinema would enable labourers to break away from the alienating monotony of industrial work.

Just two months after BAPCO's cinema was approved, on June 3, 1935, two entrepreneurs named Mohammed Faqir and Daulatram Rochiran applied for a licence to establish a public cinema in Manama. In their letter, they made their case in the idioms of *laissez-faire* liberalism. But despite their experience and commercial success in Iran's oil cities (Khorramshahr – then Muhemmarah –, Ahwaz, and Abadan) as owners of the Koh-i Nur Cinemas, they wrote, trade restrictions towards foreign merchants in Iran were becoming unbearable: "We hardly feel safe to invest large sums of money in Business in Iran nowadays" ("File 32/7 (4/6) Bahrain Cinemas," [9r] 17/200). A public cinema in Manama, they claimed, would not only enhance the rising image of Bahrain as "the most progressive" country in the Gulf but also provide a leisure outlet for the increasing "influx of large numbers of foreigners who are migrating to Manamah day in and day out" (Ibid.). Cinema, in other words, would demonstrate Bahrain's modernity as well as its openness toward foreign labour. Two days after the petition, Rochiran travelled from Abadan to Bahrain to make their case in person. But Political Agent Loch told him firmly in a brief interview that "there was not a hope" and directed him to Adviser Belgrave. Belgrave noted in his diary on June 6, 1935 that the application was categorically rejected: "A M[erchant?] from Abadan came & asked if he could open a cinema here – I said no" (Belgrave 1993, 1099).

Roughly one year later, an Indian named M. A. Sam, who worked as a sound mechanic in "The Paramount Talkies" in Bangalore, wrote a letter to the Political Resident in Bushehr for a licence to establish a public cinema in Bahrain. Sam's

rationale was quite similar to Faqir and Rochiran's. "With large influx of foreigners and the general improvement on the Bahrain island," he wrote, "the presence of such amenities of life as a Talkie Theatre would, I have no doubt, be very welcome" ("File 32/7 (4/6) Bahrain Cinemas," [28r] 55/200). Sam also emphasised the labour-leisure nexus: "After a day's hard work," he argued, "one requires some sort of amusement and diversion from the humdrum routine of life, in common with the rest of the world" (Ibid.). Hence, the general public as well as immigrant workers deserved access to films. He also referred to BAPCO's successful petition "to have a Talkie for their European and American personnel only" (Ibid.) Based on this precedent, M.A. Sam asked the British Political Resident in Bushehr "to extend the same privilege to the general public on the Island [to] fill a crying need" (Ibid.). Concluding his letter on a more pragmatic note, he indicated that he would be content with limiting admissions to foreign residents only.

The Political Resident in Bushehr forwarded the request to the Political Agent in Bahrain, who in turn passed it to Belgrave. Sam was told that the question of establishing a public cinema was under consideration, but no decision was made. Meanwhile, Coronel Loch contacted the Political Resident in Mysore to inquire about Sam, the financial situation of the firm he worked for and "whether the firm in question [was] reputable, in particular as regards the type of films that they show[ed]" ("File 32/7 (4/6) Bahrain Cinemas, [32r] 63/200). Four months later, the residency in Mysore sent a report on Sam, which had been prepared by the Chief Secretary to the Government of the Maharaja of Mysore. The report confirmed that Sam belonged to a respectable family in Bangalore, that he owned two houses, and that he intended to "make his fortune by running a Talkie House of [h]is own investing the cash he has at present and supplementing the same by raising a loan" ("File 32/7 (4/6) Bahrain Cinemas," [42r] 83/200). More importantly, it included a signed statement by Sam himself that if he were to be granted a licence to operate a cinema in Bahrain, he would "exhibit only English films [approved] by Bombay and Bengal Censor Boards" (Ibid.). But in the end, despite this "clear" background check, Sam failed to acquire a permit.

Meanwhile, the local "Arab," Hussein Yateem, and his business partners, came up with a new strategy for acquiring a licence to establish a commercial public cinema. They solicited the patronage of two nephews of the Shaikh of Bahrain – Ali bin Mohamed al-Khalifa and Ali bin Abdullah al-Khalifa. As members of the ruling family, these two had a natural advantage to pressure the British on Yateem's behalf. The petition once again began to circulate in the British administrative circuit when Shaikh Hamad forwarded his nephews' request to Charles Belgrave. Although Belgrave was still adamant that Bahrain was not "sufficiently advanced for a cinema" ("File 32/7 (4/6) Bahrain Cinemas," [15r] 29/200), he also began to accept

that it was getting increasingly difficult to delay its arrival. He sent a memo to the political agency for input. The officiating agent – Tom Hickinbotham (who was supervising the office in Loch's absence) – passed it to the Persian Gulf Residency in Bushehr. Like Belgrave, Hickinbotham submitted that it would not be possible to officially prevent the establishment of a public cinema in Bahrain. But the government of Bahrain would have to agree to a Board of Censors that would be authorised to revoke the operation licence and/or fine the cinema management "in case a really undesirable film was shown" ("File 32/7 (4/6) Bahrain Cinemas," [17r] 33/200). Despite these conditions, Hickinbotham reassured his supervisors that his experience "in other parts of Arabia" (Ibid.) had shown him that movies never caused trouble or complaint from a moral and religious point of view. Accordingly, he embraced public cinema as a sign of opening the Gulf to the outside world: "I . . . do not think that we can live out of the world forever here" (Ibid.).

In turn, Trenchard Craven William Fowle, the Political Resident in Bushehr, contacted O.K. Caroe, the Deputy Secretary to the Government of India in Shimla, for guidance on the idea of starting a cinema in Bahrain, exclaiming half-sarcastically: "Such is progress in the Gulf!" ("File 32/7 (4/6) Bahrain Cinemas," [18r] 35/200). Although in principle Fowle was against the idea, he also acknowledged that as it was increasingly difficult to "prevent a cinema being started," the only alternative was "to try and censor the films" (Ibid.). Once again, for the colonial administrators, the question of cinema was about maintaining control over the film experience of local spectatorship. Due to the absence of any established cinema guidelines in the Gulf, the Resident asked the Government of India's advice on censorship rules and movie house regulations. In response, in September 1936, the Foreign and Political Department sent two copies of the "Manual of the Bengal Board of Censors" to Bushehr.[6] The Manual included the 1918 Cinematograph Act, and more strikingly, a copy of the Report of the Indian Cinematograph Committee, 1927–1928. The ICC report gave detailed instructions for film inspectors in charge of making censorship decisions in India.

The most striking feature of the ICC report was the extent to which it was based on what we might call a reception theory of colonial difference. The report reminded inspectors that movies would have a different impact on "an average audience in India, which includes a not inconsiderable proportion of illiterate people or those of immature judgement" ("File 32/7 (4/6) Bahrain Cinemas," [22r] 43/200). Crime films, for instance, could "normalise" certain illegal

6 Following the Cinematograph Act of 1918, censor boards were set up in major provinces of India – Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Rangoon, and (later) Lahore. Each board was headed by the British commissioner of police and was composed of representatives from each local community (Chowdhry 2000,19).

conducts as recurring incidents of everyday life, and thus "undermine the teachings of morality" among the native populations by "casting a halo . . . round heads of the vicious" (Ibid.). Films that represented British or Indian officers "in an odious light, and otherwise attempt[ed] to suggest the disloyalty of Native States or bringing into disrepute British prestige in the Empire," that were "calculated . . . to foment social unrest and discontent," that depicted "the violence that results in an actual conflict between capital and labour," and that "promote[d] disaffection or resistance to Government" (Ibid.) were all subject to forms of censorship. In such cases, the inspectors were authorised to remove subtitles, modify the narrative, or cut out portions of the film. Moralistic concerns aside, censorship in the colonial context reflected deeper political anxieties. As Babli Sinha notes, "although it was felt that licentious films were undermining British rule, the censorship board did not ban them. Most of the films that were banned outright . . . had overtly political content that was thought to promote revolution" (Sinha 2009, 296–97).

Two copies of the manual reached the Political Resident's office in Bahrain on October, 14, 1936. In January 1937, the Shaikh's nephews approached Belgrave again for a cinema permit. Reluctantly accepting the inevitable, Belgrave obtained one of the copies and began drafting the contract for Bahrain's first public cinema. On April 12, 1937, he sent the contract to the Political Agent in Bahrain and then the Political Resident in Bushehr. The contract granted a non-transferrable five-year exclusive licence and mandated that the cinema begin operations within eleven months of the date of the letter, according to the regulations in India and any other regulations required by the Government of Bahrain. Again providing direction, the Government of Bombay dispatched copies of licence forms and electrical installation guidelines outlined in a booklet titled "Rules for places of Public Amusement in the city of Bombay 1914." Finally, on August 2, 1938, the British Commandant State Police of Bahrain (who was authorised with suspending or closing the cinema) met with the owners to inspect the films scheduled to be shown the following week. After more than a decade of deliberations, the first commercial public cinema in the Gulf, "Bahrain Cinema" (Fig. 4), opened in Manama with Umm Kulthum's 1936 debut film *Wedad* (Sarhan 2005, 15). A musical based on a story from *The One Thousand and One Nights*, *Wedad* was Studio Misr's first international success on its path to becoming the leading force in the Egyptian film industry under the directorship of German expatriate Fritz Kramp.

Bahrain Cinema remained the only public commercial cinema in the country throughout the interwar period. Only after World War II, another entrepreneur from India, S. M. G. Badshah (apparently encouraged by the physical dilapidation and permit expiration of the Bahrain Cinema) applied for a permit to open a new cinema.

Fig. 4: Bahrain Cinema, the first commercial public cinema in the Gulf.

His letter was the same in tone, content, and rationale as the earlier petitions of foreign entrepreneurs:

> The fact that Bahrein [*sic*] Islands are lacking in Public entertainments of any kind is keenly felt by the ever increasing local population and foreigners, like Indians etc., and this is a great hindrance for the social uplift if no recreational facilities are forthcoming in a country . . . . After a hard day's work, if a man never gets any sort of entertainments, thereby enabling him to refresh himself, his life will be nothing but a morose and melancholy one. The present only one Cinema Theatre of an antique type now running in Manama, instead of giving some entertainments to the public, has become a source of nuisance, for want of modern machinery equipment and sanitary conditions . . . . In view of the above mentioned circumstances, I would like to state that I am prepared for the construction of an up to date Cinema Theatre, with well furnished furniture, and equipped with the most modern up to date machinery . . . . [M]y aim is to exhibit Indian and Arabic Films and also some English Pictures at intervals, so that the public may derive the best benefits for the money they spend . . . . I need not mention that the exhibition of pictures has its own educational value also. ("File 32/7 (4/6) Bahrain Cinemas," [58r] 115/200)

What is striking in Badshah's text is the *strategic repurposing* of the discourses of cinema as a functional, harmless, and hygienic space of leisure fit for working-

class spectatorship. In the new post-World War II cultural climate, as a certain understanding of "useful cinema" (Wasson and Ackland 2011) was being steadily embraced by the colonial administrators and the oil companies, Badshah's application was quickly approved.

Yet Belgrave and the British administration continued to remain distant from local cinemas. But this time, they were not as much concerned with Hollywood films as they were with Indian and Arabic ones. The following passage from the memoirs of British journalist H.V. Mapp, who arrived in Bahrain in 1950 to work as an editor for BAPCO's magazine *Bahrain Islander*, illustrates strikingly that even after three decades, the early alarmist discourse on the bad influence of film was still in circulation (this time projected on Hindi films):

> Belgrave had no qualms about attending Awali's open air free cinema [at the BAPCO Club], making occasional visits to see Hollywood epics as a sophisticate without fear of corruption, but was distressed by films shown in Manama – probably Hindi productions with their emphasis on dramatic events such as suttee, where a widow perishes on her husband's funeral pyre. Films had a bad effect on a comparatively primitive people, in Bahrain causing deterioration in manners and morals, even to committing suicide pouring petrol over their clothes and setting them alight, he said. (Mapp 1994, 86)

Although I could not locate any record that confirms Belgrave's claim, his invocation of petroleum, film, and sati in the same breath is telling. Hindi films, in his view, encouraged bad customs such as sati and the use of oil for self-inflected violence. For those who work on the history of colonial discourse in South Asia, the reference to sati cannot be missed here. When the practice was abolished in 1829, the British colonial rulers in India had celebrated the act as a landmark moment in their moral civilising mission and reform. But as postcolonial critics have argued, the prohibition of the rite of sati was based on the imperial superior discourse of "white men saving brown women from brown men" (Spivak 1994, 93). In effect, Belgrave's dismissal of the films shown in Bahrain's cinemas was reiterating the same idea as "saving brown audiences from brown cinemas."

Moreover, although film scholars such as Brian Larkin and Babli Sinha rightfully argue that in the colonies Hollywood subverted the British Empire's media and communication order and generated an alternative infrastructure (Sinha 2013), the above anecdote shows that during the formative decades of cinema in the Gulf, the British colonial personnel would still prefer Hollywood to the emergent regional South Asian and Egyptian film industries. Thus, the late British reliance on Hollywood presents an important and overlooked dimension of the phenomenon of competing imperial infrastructures. In fact, during wartime and its aftermath, as the British administration in the Gulf (reflecting a pattern in other colonies and protectorates across the Empire) became more concerned about

maintaining the support of the local population, the Public Relations Office in Bahrain began to screen the predominantly Hollywood films that BAPCO rented from distributors in India in various local clubs, administrative buildings, schools, and private residences in Manama as part of its publicity efforts ("File 16/63 Cinema Programmes").

5 Conclusion

Yet the decades-long negative discourse and regulatory practices could not prevent the steady increase in the number of public cinemas across the Gulf. Cinema eventually became a permanent component of "the repository of new patterns of leisure" (Fuccaro 2013, 62) in hydrocarbon urban life. Both local and South Asian entrepreneurs established new cinemas, which screened a variety of Hollywood, Egyptian, and Indian films in a range of popular genres. By the 1950s, Bahrain already had a total of five cinemas: Al-Lu'lu, Al Hamra, Al Nasr, Al-Ahali, and Al Jazeera. In Kuwait, the Kuwait Cinema Company opened Al-Sharqiah in 1954, followed by Al-Hamra and Al-Firdous cinemas. The cinemas functioned as key public "spaces of diversity" not only for the screening of Arabic, English and Hindi films but also for holding large meetings organised by the emergent nationalist middle classes (Al-Nakib 2016, 48; 165). In the 1960s and early 1970s, cinema as an affordable popular medium of entertainment spread to other Gulf cities, including Dubai (Al-Nasr, Plaza, and Deria), Muscat (Al-Hamra and Rivoli), and Doha (Gulf and Doha). Meanwhile, as the rising nationalist movement in Bahrain demanded more say in the ruling of the country, Belgrave (once hailed as "Chief of the Gulf") became increasingly unpopular. In 1957, after 30 years of running the government of Bahrain single-handedly, it was time for him to depart.

Film scholars such as Lee Grieveson have shown that in the formative decades of North American and European cinema, the discourses and regulatory practices of cultural and political elites focused on containing the film medium as "harmless and culturally affirmative entertainment," that catered to "the common interest" (Grieveson 2004, 33–34). The colonial history of the regulation of cinema shows how these early structures were carried over to other contexts of governance. In the oil colonies of the Gulf, the primary concern across the different kinds of moving-image practices and spheres that were covered in this chapter centred on *who* was entitled to cinema in *what* type of space. The core political issue of the emergence of a cinema culture in the Gulf was the restriction of cinematic medium and space to certain populations. As such, "policing cinema" was linked to the question of managing the social forces of hydrocarbon

modernity that the discovery of oil unleashed. In short, the arrival of cinema in the Gulf took place in an exclusionary and uneven world, entangled with circulations of colonial practices, regimes of segregation, expansionist oil capital, international labour, and of course, film cans. Equally important, the petrocolonial structures of space and agency along the spheres of private, corporate, and public spheres and actors have left a long-lasting impact that continues to structure the cultural field in the Gulf.

Works Cited

Al-Nakib, Farah. *Kuwait Transformed: A History of Oil and Urban Life*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016.

Arora, Poonam. "'Imperiling the Prestige of the White Woman': Colonial Anxiety and Film Censorship in British India." *Visual Anthropology Review* 11.2 (1995): 36–50.

Barrett, Ross, and Daniel Worden, eds. *Oil Culture*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014.

Belgrave, Charles Dalrymple. *Papers of Charles Dalrymple Belgrave 1926–1957: Transcripts of Diaries*. Exeter: Library of University of Exeter Archives, 1993.

Chowdhry, Prem. *Colonial India and the Making of Empire Cinema: Image, Ideology and Identity*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000.

Damluji, Mona. "Petrofilms and the Image World of Middle Eastern Oil." *Subterranean Estates: Life Worlds of Oil and Gas*, eds. Hannah Appel, Arthur Mason, and Michael Watts. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015. 147–164.

Danforth, Loring M. *Crossing the Kingdom: Portraits of Saudi Arabia*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2016.

De Klerk, Nico. "Home Away from Home: Private Films from The Dutch East Indies." *Mining the Home Movie: Excavations in Histories and Memories*. Eds. Karen Ishizuka and Patricia Zimmermann. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008. 148–162.

Dirks, Nicholas. "Annals of the Archive: Ethnographic Notes on the Sources of History." *From the Margins: Historical Anthropology and Its Future*. Ed. Brian Keith Axel. Durham: Duke University Press, 2002. 47–65.

Elling, Rasmus Christian. "Abadan: Unfulfilled Promises of Oil Modernity and Revolution in Iran." *Ajam Media Collective*, February 26, 2015, https://ajammc.com/2015/02/16/abadan-oil-city-dreams.

Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth. Trans. Constance Farrington*. New York: Grove Press, 1968.

"File 16/32 VII Correspondence with the Bushire Residency," IOR/R/15/2/1535. India Office Records and Private Papers, British Library.

"File 16/63 Cinema Programmes," IOR/R/15/2/1575. India Office Records and Private Papers, British Library.

"File 32/7 (4/6) Bahrain Cinemas," IOR/R/15/2/817. India Office Records and Private Papers, British Library.

Fuccaro, Nelida. "Shaping the Urban Life of Oil in Bahrain: Consumerism, Leisure, and Public Communication in Manama and in the Oil Camps, 1932–1960s." *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 33.1 (2013): 59–74.

Ghrawi, Claudia. "Structural and Physical Violence in Saudi Arabian Oil Towns, 1953–1956." *Urban Violence in the Middle East: Changing Cityscapes in the Transition from Empire to Nation State*. Ed. Ulrike Freitag, Nelida Fuccaro, Claudia Ghrawi, and Nora Lafi. New York: Berghahn Books, 2015. 243–264.

Ghrawi, Claudia. "Political and Civic Life at the Dawn of the Saudi Petro Age." *The Middle East in London* 10.4 (2014): 19–20.

Gomery, Douglas. *The Coming of Sound: A History*. New York: Routledge, 2005.

Grieveson, Lee. *Policing Cinema: Movies and Censorship in Early Twentieth-Century America*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2004.

Grieveson, Lee. "Cinema Studies and the Conduct of Conduct." *Inventing Film Studies*. Ed. Lee Grieveson and Haidee Wasson. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008. 1–37.

Jaikumar, Priya. "More than Morality: The Indian Cinematograph Committee Interviews (1927)." *Moving Image* 3 (2003): 82–109.

Jarman, Robert L., ed. *Political Diaries of the Arab World: Saudi Arabia. Volume 5. Annual Reports, 1930–1940*. London: Archive Editions, 1998.

Jarman, Robert L., ed. *The Jedda Diaries, 1919–1940. Volume 3. 1928–1934*. London: Archive Editions, 1990.

"Kingdom Mourns Death of Builder of Modern Bahrain," *DT News*, December 20, 2015, http://www.newsofbahrain.com/viewNews.php?ppId=11032&TYPE=Posts&pid=21&MNU=2&SUB.

Larkin, Brian. "Circulating Empires: Colonial Authority and the Immoral, Subversive Power of American Film." *Globalizing American Studies*. Ed. Brian Edwards and Dilip Gaonkar. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2010. 155–183.

LeMenager, Stephanie. *Living Oil: Petroleum Culture in the American Century*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Mapp, H.V. *Leave Well Alone! Where Oil Shapes Dynasties and Destinies*. Essex: Prittle Brook Publishers, 1994.

Matthiesen, Toby. "Migration, Minorities and Radical Networks: Labour Movements and Opposition Groups in Saudi Arabia, 1950–1975." *International Review of Social History* 59.3 (2014): 473–504.

Mazzarella, William. "Making Sense of the Cinema in Late Colonial India." *Censorship in South Asia: Cultural Regulation from Sedition to Seduction*. Ed. Raminder Kaur and William Mazzarella. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009. 63–86.

Mitchell, Timothy. *Carbon Democracy: Political Power in the Age of Oil*. London: Verso, 2011.

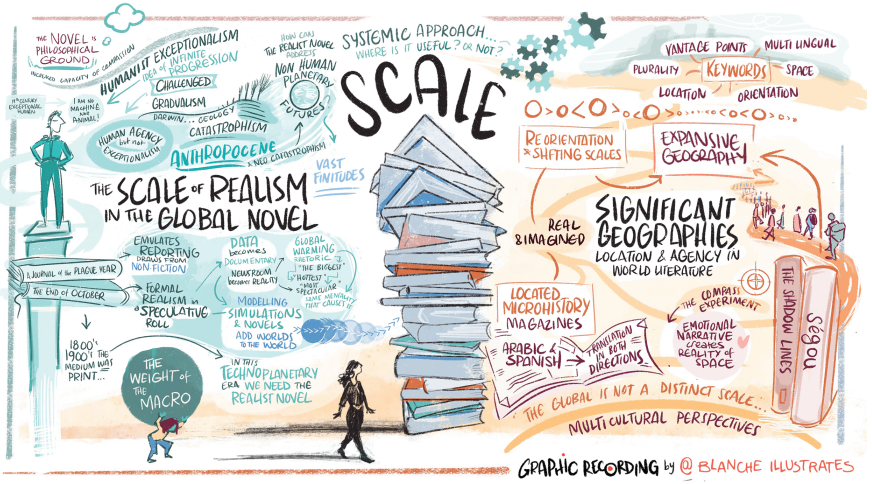
Motrescu-Mayes, Annamaria. "Uncensored British Imperial Politics in Late Colonial Home Movies: Memsahibs, Indian Bearers and Chinese Communist Insurgents." *Amateur Filmmaking: The Home Movie, the Archive, the Web*. Ed. Laura Rascaroli, Gwenda Young, and Barry Monahan. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014. 95–108.

Motrescu-Mayes, Annamaria. "Women, Personal Films and Colonial Intimacies." *Close Up: Film and Media Studies* 1. 2 (2013): 37–49.

Naficy, Hamid. *A Social History of Iranian Cinema, Volume 1: The Artisanal Era, 1897–1941*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2011. 183–186.

Rich, Paul John. *Creating the Arabian Gulf: The British Raj and the Invasions of the Gulf*. Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2009.

Potter, Lawrence G. "Society in the Persian Gulf: Before and After Oil." *CIRS Occasional Papers*, vol. 18. Doha: Georgetown University School of Foreign Service, 2017.
"Priority Air Freight for BAPCO Cinema Films," IOR/R/15/2/445, India Office Records and Private Papers, British Library.
Procida, Mary A. *Married to the Empire: Gender, Politics and Imperialism in India, 1883–1947*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002.
Said, Edward. *Culture and Imperialism*. New York: Knopf, 1993.
Sarhan, Mansoor Mohammed. *Tārīkh al-sīnma fī al-Bahrāin [The History of Cinema in Bahrain]*. Manama: AlAyam Publishing, 2005.
Simpson, Mark. "Lubricity: Smooth Oil's Political Frictions." *Petrocultures: Oil, Energy, Culture*. Ed. Sheena Wilson, Adam Carlson, Imre Szeman. Montreal: McGill Queen's University Press, 2017. 287–318
Sinha, Babli. *Cinema, Transnationalism, and Colonial India: Entertaining the Raj*. New York: Routledge, 2013.
Sinha, Babli. "'Lowering Our Prestige': American Cinema, Mass Consumerism, and Racial Anxiety in Colonial India." *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 29. 2 (2009): 291–305.
Spivak, Gayatri C. "Can the Subaltern Speak?" *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*. Ed. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994. 66–111.
Srinivas, Lakshmi. *House Full: Indian Cinema and the Active Audience*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016.
Stoler, Ann Laura. *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002.
Van Peursem, Rev. G[errit]. "Can We Report Progress?" *Neglected Arabia* 172 (July-August-September 1935): 9–10.
Vitalis, Robert. *America's Kingdom: Mythmaking on the Saudi Oil Frontier*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007.
Vitalis, Robert. "Aramco World: Business and Culture on the Arabian Oil Frontier." *Counter-Narratives: History, Contemporary Society, and Politics in Saudi Arabia and Yemen*. Ed. Madawi Al-Rasheed and Robert Vitalis. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004. 151–181.
Wasson, Haidee and Charles Ackland, eds. *Useful Cinema*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2011.
Wilson, Sheena, Adam Carlson, and Imre Szeman, eds. *Petrocultures: Oil, Energy, Culture*. Montreal: McGill Queen's University Press, 2017.
Zimmermann, Patricia R. "Geographies of Desire: Cartographies of Gender, Race, Nation and Empire in Amateur Film." *Film History* 8 (1996): 85–98.


THE NOVEL & PHILOSOPHICAL GROUND
HUMANIST EXCEPTIONALISM
IDEA OF INFINITE PROGRESSION
CHALLENGED
GRADUALISM
DARWIN... GEOLOGY
CATASTROPHISM
HUMAN AGENCY BUT NOT EXCEPTIONALISM
ANTHROPOCENE
NEO CATASTROPHISM
NON HUMAN PLANETARY FUTURES?
VAST FINITUDES
THE SCALE OF REALISM IN THE GLOBAL NOVEL
SCALE
SYSTEMIC APPROACH...
WHERE IS IT USEFUL? OR NOT?
VANTAGE POINTS
MULTI LINGUAL
PLURALITY
KEYWORDS
SPACE
LOCATION
ORIENTATION
RE ORIENTATION × SHIFTING SCALES
EXPANSIVE GEOGRAPHY
REAL & IMAGINED
SIGNIFICANT GEOGRAPHIES
LOCATION & AGENCY IN WORLD LITERATURE
EMULATES REPORTING
FORMAL REALISM & SPECULATIVE ROLL
DATA becomes DOOM ENTRY
NEWSROOM becomes REALITY
GLOBAL WARMING HISTORIC "THE BIGGEST" "HOTTEST" "MOST SPECTACULAR" "LAST CHANCE"
MODELLING SIMULATIONS & NOVELS ADD WORLDS TO THE WORLD
1800's 1900's THE MEDIUM WAS PRINT...
THE WEIGHT of the MACRO
IN THIS TECHNOPLANETARY ERA WE NEED THE REALIST NOVEL
LOCATED MICROHISTORY MAGAZINES
ARABIC & SPANISH
TRANSLATION IN BOTH DIRECTIONS
THE COMPASS EXPERIMENT
EMOTIONAL NARRATIVE CRAVES REALITY of SPACE
THE SHADOW LINES
Sebald
THE GLOBAL IS NOT A DISTINCT SCALE...
MULTICULTURAL PERSPECTIVES
GRAPHIC RECORDING by @ BLANCHE ILLUSTRATES