

**Colonial Film: Moving Images of the British Empire,
1895-1939 and 1939-1965.**

We are seeking contributors to two major international conferences on British colonial film, to be held in London in June 2010 and Pittsburgh in September 2010. The proposed conferences will be the final part of a multi-partner research project on British colonial film. The overall project, entitled "Colonial Film: Moving Images of The British Empire," has been financed by an Arts and Humanities Research Council Major Resource Enhancement grant and is led by Lee Grieveson (University College London) and Colin MacCabe (Birkbeck/Pittsburgh). The project will lead to the production of a detailed catalogue of the entire corpus of films representing British colonies either factually or fictionally held by the British Film Institute, the Imperial War Museum, and the British Empire and Commonwealth Museum. The process of producing this catalogue, which aims to marry the most advanced academic knowledge to the best archival practice, has raised new questions both about British imperial history, the history of British cinema, and the history of didactic cinema. The final catalogue will identify over 6000 films and some 10% of the collection will have enhanced entries bringing a wealth of detailed knowledge to illuminate particular films. In addition there will be entries on a series of broader topics relating to colonialism and British cinema. Two post-doctoral researchers have been examining these collections for over a year, and have been recently joined by a third, and the project runs until September 2010. The catalogue will be available online together with 30 hours of digitized film.

The production of the catalogue as a major academic resource is dependent on conferences that will make the richness of these collections available to the widest possible academic and archival audience. The first conference, covering the years 1896-1939, will be held in London on 8/9th July 2010, and the final conference will be held in Pittsburgh on 25/26th September 2010 and will focus on the years 1939-1965. Archival screenings of rare material will take place at both conferences alongside presentations by senior archivists. Together, the conferences will seek to develop both historical and contemporary understanding of the British Empire, of the role of cinema in practices of colonialism, of the different generic formations of

colonial cinema, and of the interconnections of media and liberal imperialism.

We welcome contributors from a wide variety of disciplines to seek to understand the interplay of political control and cultural representation in the late colonial period, and the ways that cinema was used as part of projects of colonial governance. The conferences are divided according to historical period but this structure will not preclude papers that pursue issues that cut across periods, like, for example, conceptual questions about colonialism and cinema or the long lineage of liberal imperialism and its continuing resonance. Papers will likely address film production, exhibition, and distribution from 1895 to the separate moments of independence, including various kinds of non-fictional and non-theatrical film – industrial films, newsreels, instructional films, government produced documentaries, ethnographic, travelogue, amateur – and the articulation of fictions of Empire.

Keynote speakers confirmed thus far include Paul Gilroy (LSE), Tom Gunning (Chicago), Pat Manning (Pittsburgh), Priya Jaikumar (USC), Laura Mulvey (Birkbeck), and Gayatri Spivak (Columbia). Two edited collections will be produced from papers initially presented at the conferences.

Proposals of 300-400 words and a brief biographical statement to be sent to Lee Grieveson at l.grieveson@ucl.ac.uk by September 30th 2009.