

crafted self-definitions of multiracial identity and local meanings of colonial citizenship. While protesting against the racism of colonial societies, multiracial Africans avowed racist thinking of being superior to other Africans. In chapter 6, Lee interprets the Anglo-African Association in Nyasaland that emerged between the wars as an expression of community coherence of multiracial peoples, while in chapter 7 he shifts to Southern Rhodesia, in which a fragile coalition of Colored and Euraficans formed the Eurafican Patriotic Society and published the newspaper *Rhodesian Tribute*. The society's cooperation with the Anglo-African Association of Nyasaland, Lee argues, signifies transregional and transcolonial multiracial ties. In chapter 8, Lee turns to Northern Rhodesia in the 1940s–1950s and analyzes the creation of a neighborhood in Lusaka called Thorne Park. Financed by the colonial state and providing subsidized rents, the neighborhood came about from the Eurafican Association of Lusaka's campaign for urban housing of European standards.

In his conclusion, Lee elaborates further on the question of colonial and postcolonial nativism. Lee argues that opening up African colonial history beyond these analytical categories also has implications for thinking about sweeping political and social change across postcolonial Southern Africa.

Lee is astonishingly erudite in engaging varied theoretical tool kits from the political theory of Antonio Gramsci to the imperial cultural history of Anne Stoler to the critical analysis of the term “native” by Mahmood Mamdani. Lee is also a character in the book, with personal reflections, encounters during fieldwork, and the first person “I” interspersed throughout. Clever in theoretical conceptualization and writing, Lee creates sophisticated new concepts repeated throughout the book such as the idea of “uncustomary history” and “uncustomary communities,” which are terminologies that critique how many scholars have conceived of African societies as organized into ethnic groups regulated by customary practices. Empirical thinness generates the book's strength but is also a limitation. Lee conflates the existence of multiracial advocacy groups with coherent multiracial communities and identities. Reflecting the availability of sources, most of its historical actors are men. He could have made further impact with “gendering men,” investigating how ideas of masculinity have been constructed and constrained, as historian Luise L. White called for decades ago. Nevertheless, this book makes important interventions in African history and also broadly in histories of the family, imperialism, citizenship, and racial thought. Providing new taxonomies, theoretical frameworks, and innovative methodologies, it will undoubtedly be the launching pad for novel research questions and creative thinking about the myriad expressions of peoplehood in Africa and globally.

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RICHARD LOWELL MACDONALD. *The Appreciation of Film: The Postwar Film Society Movement and Film Culture in Britain*. Exeter Studies in Film History. Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2016. Pp. 248. \$110.00 (cloth).
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The rise of the cinema as a popular entertainment medium in the early twentieth century posed a dilemma for British tastemakers. How to educate audiences on the appropriate way to enjoy and experience film became a question that animated thinking about the role that this new technology of theater and performance would play in everyday life. With *The Appreciation of Film: The Postwar Film Society Movement and Film Culture in Britain*, Richard Lowell MacDonald offers a window into this world through the study of film societies, which first emerged in

the 1920s. By attempting to create a culture that centered on the appreciation of noncommercial films, these voluntary societies sought to improve tastes and knowledge. Film societies, in this way, can be seen as “alternative culture institution[s]” that exhibited for their members films that did not have wide commercial appeal (6). This was a sentiment shared by the people MacDonald calls “activists,” who dedicated themselves to this movement and understood cinema as a universal language that served both to educate and entertain audiences.

After World War I, audiences flocked to the movie theater for entertainment and information. A survey of the *British Film Catalogue* for these years shows a preponderance of comedy, drama, romance, and, to a lesser extent, crime films. Twenty million mainly middle-class and working-class viewers in Britain went to the cinema every week, and film magazines encouraged viewers to experience moviegoing as both a reflection of everyday life and a pleasure of the imagination. Some critics, however, rejected film as part of a frivolous prewar culture and called the movies little more than a new illusory form of entertainment. Going to the cinema carried a stigma in the early days of film. Attempts to make film viewing a respectable and accepted pastime came to define the moviegoing experience in Britain and the United States during this period. With three quarters of the audiences made up of women, charges that watching movies promoted immorality, whether stemming from the fictions depicted on screen or the viewing conditions in the dark theaters themselves, had real power. Scheduling “women only” matinees and screening films in alternative venues such as church social halls allayed some fears, as did the showing of films with themes that did not challenge traditional values. Educational and political films of this period served a multiplicity of purposes, which included fund-raising for humanitarian causes. Their respectable aims helped make films seem worthwhile for all audiences.

It was in this space that the film society emerged to educate the public and engage in civic discourse about the meaning and usefulness of film. MacDonald traces this engagement beyond the well-studied interwar years to focus on the period after World War II, when the movement began to spread thanks to improved technologies that made it easier and cheaper to screen films. The rise of the 16 mm film and the accompanying relatively portable projector took film viewing outside of the cinema to more intimate and private spaces. These new societies, which could now meet in private venues, had an easier time navigating provisions restricting the film industry set by the British Board of Film Censors, a voluntary organization of industry experts set up to police film content. The film society movement grew as a result and started to have an influence on the “changing meanings and practices of film appreciation” (9).

This is an institutional history of the film societies, along with the technologies, institutional mediums, and cultural structures that gave rise to them. MacDonald includes very little on audience reception, participation, or the effects of the movement on actual tastes. For example, it is unclear how much women participated in this movement or were affected by it despite their overrepresentation in film audiences. Instead, his focus is on the idea that film could function as a “reforming agent” relative to tastes. The movement began by targeting the working class and spurred a “better films discourse” that demanded quality programming in mainstream cinemas (23). The belief that “active participation” should characterize film viewing grew as a reaction to the perceived passive reception of content by audiences of commercial films. The film society movement, according to MacDonald, sought “to assert the cultural prestige of the cinema” as film appreciation emerged as a form of arts education (69).

Film societies were aided in their mission by the advent of the National Film Library and the British Film Institute, which facilitated the acquisition and dissemination of films cheaply to regional organizations after World War II. The National Film Library took on the role of an arbiter of taste due to its ability to select and then control the types of films sent to regional film societies. The emergence of academic programs designed to critically study film shifted this terrain in the following decades by exercising a new authority over what constituted “classic” and worthwhile films.

The influence of these voluntary societies extended beyond Britain. In a chapter titled “Making the World Our Home,” MacDonald explores the importance of internationalism to filmmaking and film screening in the postwar movement. International film festivals provided an important venue for documentary films, which embraced a liberal universalism to thrive. The Edinburgh Film Festival, for instance, one of the most “enduring legacies” of the film society movement according to MacDonald, provided such a space. Edinburgh was an ideal site to spread the message as it was called at the time “a Jerusalem of the Arts” (105). A spirit of liberal internationalism that grew in influence in the postwar moment drew on British documentary filmmaking expertise and united institutions as distinct as UNESCO and the Empire Marketing Board in a common cause.

This long history of a little-studied movement demonstrates the significance of film as a domestic and international cultural institution as well as the vibrancy of voluntary organizational life after World War II. Part of the Exeter Studies in Film History series, this volume adds to a long list of publications that chronicle the social and cultural importance of early film in Britain. The story of the rise of the influence of film and the requisite hand-wringing that accompanied it sounds not unfamiliar in the context of our own media-saturated moment. Concerns over the quality and effect of the images consumed by the public have persistently dominated discourses surrounding civic engagement. There is little to suggest that worries about the perceived quality and influence of popular entertainment on the public will ever disappear. As Film Society of London member Iris Barry commented in her critical study *Let's Go to the Movies* (1926), “the great strength of the cinema is that it caters for daydreams, surface excitement, riches, travel, splendor and wild excitement . . . more thoroughly, more generously, more convincingly than any other form of entertainment.” But just as she praised this new technology of imagination she also hoped that “in the midst of its pleasures” the public may one day “ask for slightly better dreams” (24).

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ANDREW J. MAY. *Welsh Missionaries and British Imperialism: The Empire of Clouds in North-East India*. Studies in Imperialism. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012. Pp. 304. \$105.00 (cloth).
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In present-day Meghalaya, a state in northeastern India, the official language is English, a testimony to the successful labors of several generations of the very self-consciously Welsh missionaries of the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Foreign Missionary Society. Meghalaya was the biggest overseas commitment of Welsh missionaries. Thomas Jones, the first of the society’s missionaries—and ancestor of Andrew May, the author of *Welsh Missionaries and British Imperialism: The Empire of Clouds in North-East India*—arrived in 1841 in the Khasi Hills lying between Sylhet in modern-day Bangladesh and Assam in India. The last Welsh missionaries departed in the 1960s, leaving behind a region where, according to the most recent census, Christians made up 70 percent of the population (as compared to 2.3 percent of India as a whole). It is also one of the wettest places on the planet. Difficult to traverse, densely forested, and inundated with rains, the Khasi Hills had historically evaded deeper cultural, social, and political integration into the Indo-Gangetic Plains to the west. Consequently, Hinduism and Islam had not imprinted themselves so deeply into local communities, making the area a much more tempting field for Christian missionaries. In a deliciously ironic twist, the Welsh