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THE ROLE OF FILM ARCHIVES IN CREATING CANONS OF EASTERN EUROPEAN CINEMA

Ewa Mazierska

This article discusses the role of Eastern European film archives in creating national and regional cinematic canons. To examine how Eastern European archives contributed to the canonisation of films, it looks at the interests and tastes of the staff working in film archives—especially in the early phase of their existence—the programming of archive cinemas, and the politics of film digitisation. This choice is dictated by two principal considerations. The first is the author's conviction that considering these processes offers valuable insight into canon formation over a longer period, including recent decades. The second is the opportunity to draw on the author's first-hand knowledge of the operations of some Eastern European film archives and her interactions with colleagues working there, with whom she has discussed issues about canonisation over the years. The article argues that archives play a significant, although often unrecognised, role in the formation of Eastern European film canons.

KEYWORDS: Film archive; film canons; Eastern Europe; digitisation; archive cinemas

Over twenty years ago, while working on my book *Women in Polish Cinema* (2006), I visited the Polish National Film Archive (Filmoteka Narodowa), to watch films by Wanda Jakubowska, a director noted for her contributions to Holocaust cinema. The archivist arranging my screenings commented on the dust covering the boxes of tapes—a clear sign that nobody had watched these works in ages. This experience made me realise that visiting film archives provides valuable insight into what is considered in or out of the canon at any given moment. This article is an attempt to examine this issue more closely by discussing how archives in several

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Eastern European countries create national canons and the canon of (pan)Eastern European cinema: a corpus of films regarded as important and worthy of ongoing research. I argue that archives have played a significant role in canon formation, though this influence has remained largely unofficial and unacknowledged by film historians.

Archives and cultural memory

It is only natural to look at archives when thinking about canons, because canons are always created retrospectively: from the wealth of existing works of art, archives single out those deemed worthy of remembrance, based on their aesthetic, political, or social significance. Aleida Assmann, one of the leading scholars in memory studies, uses the concepts of 'archive' and 'canon' to describe the dynamics of cultural memory. She defines the *archive* as passively stored memory that preserves the past, and the *canon* as the actively circulated memory that keeps the past present.[1] Canonisation, in a nutshell, consists of sifting through the archive of available artefacts in search of works that need to be discussed and reassessed in the present moment.

Authors drawing on Assmann's work, as well as on other pioneers of the studies of cultural memory—such as Maurice Halbwachs, Pierre Nora, Astrid Erll, and Ann Rigney—note that as the field of memory studies advanced,

> one can note a shift towards understanding cultural memory in more dynamic terms: as an ongoing process of remembrance and forgetting in which individuals and groups continue to reconfigure their relationship to the past and hence reposition themselves in relation to established and emergent memory sites. As the word itself suggests, 'remembering' is better seen as an active engagement with the past, as performative rather than as reproductive.[2]

Archives, according to this conceptualisation, are not passive repositories of old artefacts, but rather dynamic sites of remembering. Archives do not merely provide material for canonisation, but, by their very existence, they state what is worth remembering—they are themselves a broad canon, which can be further refined by additional commemorative practices, such as specific curatorial activities.

The dynamic character of cultural memory and archives is also reflected in discussions about what archives lack. Archives, often state-funded institutions, reflect the ideology and politics of the dominant political forces. This can result in privileging hegemonic narratives at the expense of minority viewpoints. Consequently, it may lead to a sense of 'commemorative injustice' and a demand to repair the harm caused by this injustice, voiced by those who feel that their stories have been ignored.[3] Such suspicion of injustice pertains particularly to countries that have experienced authoritarian regimes—including countries of the former Eastern bloc.

The sense that official archives might ignore, marginalise, or misrepresent certain minority groups has also resulted in calls to create counter-archives and to support the self-archiving efforts of social movements not represented in official archives.[4] The development of digital technologies has facilitated the proliferation

of new archives, as well as the reconfiguration of existing ones, due to the greater storage capacity of digital space compared to the physical space of buildings housing material artefacts. That said, archives cannot collect everything. As Paolo Cherchi Usai observes, 'If all moving images were available, the massive fact of their presence would impede any effort to establish criteria of relevance - more so, indeed, than if they had all been obliterated, for then, at least, selective comprehension would be replaced by pure conjecture.'[5]

Film archives can play different roles in the canonisation of films. They may focus solely on collecting films and providing access to them, leaving the task of canonisation to other agents, such as film historians, critics, or filmmakers working with archival materials. Alternatively, archives can be actively engaged in canonisation through exhibiting and curating their collections. Initially, the first function of Eastern European archives was emphasised, as they simply needed to build up their collections and ensure their preservation and restoration so that future generations could appreciate their cinematic heritage. In due course, the second function came to the fore: archives were expected to provide access and guide visitors to their collections, not unlike museums. They thus became more active agents of cultural memory. This was in line with development of film archives at large. As Penelope Houston argues, this is because the 'demand has been that the archives should be seen to justify their existence by bringing out their films.'[6]

Their history can be mapped onto two stages of film canonisation, which Janet Staiger describes using the terms 'politics of admission' and 'politics of selection'.[7] The former consists of admitting films to the realm of art or history simply by collecting them; the latter involves choosing from those already admitted the films worthy of a special status as objects of particular aesthetic, political, or social significance.

Sources and methodology

To examine how Eastern European archives contributed to the canonisation of films, I focused on the staff working in film archives—especially in the early phase of their existence—the programming of archive cinemas, and the politics of film digitisation. This choice was guided by two principal considerations. First, my conviction that examining these aspects of the archives' work provides valuable insight into canon formation over an extended period. Second, the opportunity to draw on my first-hand knowledge of the operations of some Eastern European film archives and the colleagues working there.

Over the course of long-term contact with the archives discussed in this article, I engaged in ongoing conversations with current and former staff members as well as users of various Eastern European archives—particularly in Poland, Czechia, Slovakia, Hungary, the former Yugoslavia, Serbia, Slovenia, Albania, and Estonia. I also consulted secondary sources about these archives, including archive websites and both popular and academic articles. I attempted to reach out to as many archives as possible, drawing on my personal connections. In total, I spoke with approximately twenty people. These conversations were conducted in English, except in the case of the Polish archives, where I used Polish. Approximately 60% of

the exchanges took place *via* email, with the remainder occurring in person. All participants were informed of the purpose of my inquiry and asked whether they preferred to remain anonymous. While the majority did not object to being named, I anonymised all responses for the sake of consistency. In relation to the Polish archive, I also drew on ethnographic and autoethnographic insights—specifically, my memories of frequent visits from the late 1980s to the present day and ongoing informal conversations with its employees. These exchanges addressed topics such as staff transitions, the archive's institutional relationships, cinema programming, and the digitisation of its film holdings.[8]

This approach turned out to have some limitations. Although I asked similar questions regarding each archive—for instance, about the first film digitised in the respective country—the responses varied considerably, reflecting different interpretations of terms and concepts. At times, my interlocutors had no answer or chose not to respond. Some information proved too anecdotal to include, or respondents preferred it not be published because their personal views diverged from the official positions of their institutions.

Another limitation is the small pool of academic works concerning Eastern European archives, with existing articles often published only in local languages rather than English.[9] As Eva Näripea observes in her editorial for the special issue on archives of *Studies in Eastern European Cinema*, published in 2020:

> The varied and intriguing landscape of Eastern European film collections has attracted rather meagre scholarly attention, even though film-archive-as-subject has gained increasing academic currency, substantially fuelled by the 'archival turn' in the arts and humanities of the 1990s.[10]

Consequently, the overall method I employed can be described as a partial or 'patchy' comparison of archives in different countries. This means that while I have some data relating to all the archives mentioned above, the depth and detail vary considerably. Given that I am Polish and have used the Polish National Film Archive for almost 40 years, this article draws most heavily on my intimate knowledge of that institution and offers the most detailed account of the situation in the country. Beyond that, I gathered much of the information about Czech, Slovak, and Estonian archives through personal contacts and on-site visits. My knowledge of the Hungarian, Slovenian, and Albanian archives, on the other hand, is based entirely on e-mail exchanges. Despite these methodological limitations, this article outlines some general trends in the canonising efforts and achievements of film archives in Eastern Europe.

A short history of Eastern European film archives during the period of state socialism

Näripea observes that over the course of the past century,

> film collections of various size and composition have been accumulated by private collectors, eccentric cinephiles, film studios and governmental agencies (...). The stories of film archives are perhaps especially chequered in Eastern Europe, which saw an entire series of historical cataclysms over the 20th

> century. The numerous metamorphoses of the region's political map have had a direct effect on the status and operations of its film preservation hubs in terms of how their collections are formed, managed, curated and shared.[11]

In the countries of the former Eastern bloc, film archives were established at different points in time after the end of the Second World War, although the idea of preserving film heritage had emerged in these countries as early as the 1920s. The delay between the birth of the concept and its realisation can be attributed to the Second World War, which was obviously a watershed moment in the histories of these countries. In this section, I will outline the circumstances of the archives' establishment and briefly sketch their history up to the fall of state socialism, as it was during this period that they developed specific approaches to film canonisation, which will be discussed in the following parts of this article.

The first film archive in Eastern Europe was established in 1943 in Prague, during the Nazi occupation of Czechoslovakia.[12] As noted on the archive's website, 'paradoxically, the conviction of the need for a film archive was only fulfilled during the Nazi occupation, when Slovakia declared its independence and became a fascist client state of Nazi Germany.'[13] The German Walter Gottfried Lohmayer was officially appointed as the first head of the National Film Archive (Národní filmový archiv), but its true founder was Jindřich Brichta, a respected expert on film technology, who served as deputy head. From this position, he aimed to create an institution capable of preserving and subsequently studying the film industry in its complexity.[14] Although the National Film Archive in Czechoslovakia, like others in Eastern Europe, faced various challenges, one can conjecture that its early establishment and integration into broader cultural structures made it more self-aware about its role in preserving and researching national film heritage—and, by extension, in canonisation.

The film archive included departments focused on film-related documents, research, and a professional library. Its collection expanded rapidly during the war, prompting the need for additional storage capacity. Film materials were stored wherever possible—for example, in the greenhouse of the Kinský Garden in Prague's Smichov district. Following the nationalisation of the Czechoslovak film industry in 1945, the Film Archive was incorporated into the newly established Czechoslovak Film Institute (Československý filmový ústav, ČSFÚ) at the end of that year. It was admitted to the International Federation of Film Archives (FIAF) in 1946, becoming one of its earliest members.[15] During subsequent reorganisations, the archive and its departments were incorporated into or aligned with various Czechoslovak film institutions. Continuous organisational changes, combined with chronic underfunding, meant the archive could only partially fulfil its original mission of preserving and exhibiting Czechoslovak films.[16] For many years, its precious film collection resembled a warehouse of discarded reels. This provisional period ended in 1963 with the re-establishment of the Czechoslovak Film Institute, into which the film archive, along with the documentation and library departments, was integrated. Notably, 1963 also marked the beginning of the Czechoslovak New Wave; the flourishing of the Czechoslovak film archive thus coincided with broader renaissance in national cinema. After 1963, the archive's operations were gradually rationalised, with greater emphasis placed on the quality

of cataloguing and management of the existing collections.[17] The collection expanded significantly in the following decades, thanks to the acquisition of both old films and new Czechoslovak productions. After the fall of state socialism, the archive became part of the Czech Film Institute, while Slovakia established its own archive (Slovenský filmový ústav) based in Bratislava.

The Yugoslav Film Archive (Jugoslovenska Archiva) was the next archive established in Eastern Europe and one that, early on, embraced its role as an educational institution. It was officially founded in 1949, at the outset of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, although the first document calling for its creation dates to 1944. The archive's stated tasks were to preserve films and film materials, promote film culture and education, present films, and research the history of Yugoslav cinema.[18] Milenko Karanović was appointed the first director of the Yugoslav Film Archive, serving from 1949 to 1954. In 1951, the Yugoslav Film Archive became a member of FIAF. A year later, in 1952, it was renamed Yugoslav Cinematheque (Kinoteka), and it officially began presenting both domestic and foreign films—underscoring that exhibition of films was considered as important as preservation. This suggests that the Yugoslav film archive, like its Czechoslovak counterpart, was aware from early on of its role in canonisation.

The Polish National Film Archive (Figure 1 and Figure 2) officially came into existence in 1955, though its origins can be traced back to the immediate post-war period, specifically to Krakow Film Studio. At that time, it functioned primarily as a storage facility for films used to educate the new cadres of Polish cinema. Its holdings, along with those of *Film Polski* (Polish Film)—an institution set up in

Figure 1. The Polish National Film Archive, photo by Adam Wyżyński.

Figure 2. FINA. The Polish National Film Archive, photo by Adam Wyżyński.

1945 to organise film culture in Poland—were subsequently passed to the Lodz Film School.[19] This initial phase of the Polish film archive's history highlights its dynamic role as an educational resource. Moreover, already at its early stage, efforts were also made to align the work of the Polish archive with international institutions dedicated to film preservation. In 1948, thanks to Professor Jerzy Toeplitz, the first Rector (Vice-Chancellor) of the Lodz Film School, Poland became a member of FIAF, with Toeplitz being its president from 1948 to 1971. The first staff of the Polish archive included Władysław Banaszkiewicz, an archivist; Leon Birn, active in the cine-club movement; and Bolesław Michałek, then a young film critic, who was appointed the head archivist (*naczelny filmograf*).[20] I will return to Michałek later; suffice it to say that Banaszkiewicz became the archive's first director, even though the institution was initially confined to a single room. Though the space was eventually expanded, it remained cramped and poorly suited to the storage of film reels.

From the beginning, the Polish archive focused on locating and restoring films previously thought lost, while showing limited interest in collecting and preserving contemporary Polish film productions. Compounding this, there was no legal requirements for film producers—mainly the state-run studios—to deposit copies of new productions with the archive.[21] Hence, many films were never acquired. Over time, this led to a significant gap in the archive's collection of Polish films, and by the end of the state socialist period, this had grown into a major omission—hundreds of full-length Polish fiction films were missing from the national archive, with

copies scattered across various institutions. Paradoxically, the longer the archive existed, the smaller the proportion of contemporary Polish films it contained.[22] As I will argue later, this had a dramatic impact on the role the Polish archive could play in the digitisation of Poland's film heritage.

The Polish Film Archive was widely regarded as the Cinderella of Polish film institutions. This low status could be attributed to several factors. One was chronic underfunding, which left the archive without sufficient resources to develop its curatorial, exhibition, or educational functions. Additionally, the archive was known for offering low salaries, which contributed to low staff morale and led many ambitious film professionals to leave the institution. Perhaps the biggest problem was the lack of coordinated thinking about the place of the archive in the landscape of the film institutions. Under state socialism, it was never formally integrated into any larger institutional framework, which likely worked to its disadvantage by isolating it from other cultural and cinematic bodies. All these factors undermined both the archive's capacity and its willingness to play a greater role in canonisation efforts.

Among the three Central European countries, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary, Hungary was the last to establish a film archive—in 1957. This occurred despite the efforts of prominent cultural personalities in Hungary, including Béla Balázs, who even before the Second World War, advocated for establishing a film archive and conveyed ideas about how it should be run. In 1946, Balázs took practical steps to initiate the establishment of the Institute of Film Science, which was intended to include the founding of a film archive and to facilitate exchange with film institutions in other countries. However, progress towards establishing such an institution was halted by Balázs's death in 1949. Later, the Hungarian Ministry of Education appointed Andor Lajta, a pioneering researcher into Hungarian film history, to organise a film archive. It was finally established in 1957 and immediately became a member of FIAF.[23]

There is not enough space to discuss all Eastern European film archives in detail, but it is worth noting that most were established in the 1950s. For example, the Bulgarian Film Archive was founded in 1952, and the Romanian Film Archive followed in 1957. This suggests that the emergence of Eastern European film archives occurred mostly between the final years of socialist realism and the rise of a new, modernist approach to filmmaking—both in Eastern and Western Europe. This modernist style emphasised the director's role as the *creator* of an autonomous cinematic world. My argument is that this modernist attitude influenced how those in positions of power within Eastern European archives understood and approached canonisation.

Film archivists as canonisers

Initially, Eastern European film archives functioned primarily as depositories of films and film-related documents, chiefly those produced before the Second World War or withdrawn from cinema circulation, rather than serving as museums and educational institutions aimed at shaping local film culture. By the same token, their official role in the canonisation of respective national films was modest: it

was limited to merely providing material for individual researchers. However, this role was greater than it appears. Film archives were connected to the wider national 'film ecologies' in their countries, most importantly through their collaboration with other cinematic institutions and transfer of personnel, a reflection of the fact that archives are never sealed from the larger world.

This was particularly visible in the Polish film archive, where the greatest role in creating the national canon was played by Polish film critics who gained prominence in the late 1950s and the 1960s, most importantly Bolesław Michałek (1925–1997). Michałek was involved in setting up the Polish film archive, before moving to the magazine *Film* as its principal editor. Michałek played a crucial role in introducing a certain attitude to film canonisation. Being a Francophile, influenced by the French critics from the *Cahiers du Cinéma* circle, he prioritised auteurism. He regarded the film director as the ultimate author and favoured films in which the director's personal stamp was most noticeable, at the expense of films adhering to genre formulas. Consequently, Polish film history became highly director-centred, with the bulk of film books devoted to individual directors, such as Andrzej Wajda, Andrzej Munk, Krzysztof Zanussi, and Krzysztof Kieślowski. This is exemplified by Michałek's own book on Polish cinema—the first to be published in English—which extols auteurism.[24] His article commemorating the archive's history explicitly links the establishment of the archive in 1955 with the reorganisation of the Polish film industry and the creation of film studios that nurtured the talents of future Polish auteurs such as Jerzy Kawalerowicz and Andrzej Munk. Michałek's broader aim was to internationalise Polish cinema after the period of isolation during socialist realism. This internationalisation involved presenting films of these directors-auteurs on the international film festival circuit and connecting Polish film archivists with their foreign counterparts, with the expectation that they would adopt a shared agenda of promoting auteur cinema.[25]

Although relatively modest, the publishing efforts of the Polish film archive also focused on the work of directors-auteurs, with some volumes dedicated to figures such as Andrzej Wajda and Jerzy Hoffman. Their importance is further reflected in posters still displayed in the archive today, which highlight the works of these directors. After Michałek, a key historian working in the archive was Leszek Armatys, the author of several volumes on the history of Polish cinema. Many other individuals who later held prominent positions in Polish film criticism and education also began their careers in the archive. Among them were Teresa Rutkowska, who went on to become the editor-in-chief of *Kwartalnik Filmowy*, Poland's leading academic journal devoted to film culture, and Jacek Cegiełka, who became editor and later publisher of the high-brow yet accessible magazine *Kino*. Both journals have played an important role in promoting Polish cinema and celebrating its international achievements, thereby shaping the canonisation of a particular type of films.

The transfer of personnel between the archive and other film institutions once ensured that different institutions shared the same ethos, particularly a recognition of the importance of Polish cinema within the broader context of national history. Over time, however, the links between the archive and other film institutions weakened, as the latter increasingly hired graduates of formal film studies

programmes rather than individuals who acquired their expertise working in the archive. More recently, the archive has experienced a revival of its intellectual profile with the appointment of the prominent academic, Professor Barbara Giza. She revitalised the archive's publishing programme with a focus on uncovering lesser-known aspects of Polish film history. A key example is the 2024 publication *Zjazd Filmowy w Wiśle 1949. Źródła – Komentarze – Opracowania* [Film Convention in Wisła 1949. Sources, Commentaries, Studies], co-edited with Adam Wyżyński, head of the archive's library. This volume examines the introduction of socialist realism in Poland in 1949 and draws partly on material that would have been considered unpublishable during the state socialist era. By doing so, it tacitly reinforces the idea that post-socialist realist, New Wave, and auteur cinema particularly merit canonisation.

Contrary to other Eastern European countries, the Polish film archive maintained a low profile, as it was disregarded by the political authorities and barely visible to the public. Nevertheless, the very idea of film preservation is closely linked to a Polish figure: Bolesław Matuszewski, an author and filmmaker. In 1898, he published a pamphlet in French titled *A New Source of History* (*Une nouvelle source de l'historie*), in which he argued that film archives should hold the same status as other established archival institutions.[26] According to Matuszewski, archives should not only collect films but also exhibit them. The significance of this pamphlet lies in its early recognition of the value of film as a historical document, at a time when cinema was widely regarded merely as cheap entertainment.[27]

Another influential Polish figure in the broader field of film preservation was the historian and educator Jerzy Toeplitz who, as I previously mentioned, served as president of FIAF from 1948 to 1971. One of his major achievements during this period was fostering cooperation between film archives on both sides of the Iron Curtain. This included exchange of films and knowledge about national film productions, a spirit of collaboration symbolised by the Congress of Film Archives held in Poland in 1955.[28]

As in Poland, Hungarian film studies after 1945 were closely aligned with the national film archive, particularly in terms of personnel. I have already mentioned the efforts of Béla Balázs to establish the archive and of Andor Lajta, its first director. Like Michałek, Lajta was active in various areas of film culture. He had previously worked as a film journalist and served as editor of *Film Annual* from 1919 to 1949. From 1928 onward, he also edited the journal *Filmkultúra*, which became the official magazine of the Hungarian Film Institute and Film Archive. In addition, he authored two books on Hungarian cinema.

Another important figure associated with the archive was Yvette Bíró. In the 1950s and the 1960s, Bíró oversaw research at the archive and played a key role in shaping the Hungarian film canon. Her books, published in Hungary, and her journalistic work as editor-in-chief of *Filmkultúra*—much like Michałek's contributions in Poland—advocated an auteur-focused approach. She singled out the work of such directors as Miklós Jancsó, Zoltán Fábri, and Károly Makk, who would come to epitomise Hungarian cinema both nationally and internationally. Bíró also collaborated on a dozen of films with these directors. In the 1970s, she emigrated to the United States, where she contributed to film education, holding academic

positions at prestigious institutions including the universities of Berkeley, Stanford, and NYU's Tisch School of the Arts.

Following the regime change in the late 1980s, the archive continued to play an important role in Hungary's broader film culture. Scholars such as Gábor Gelencsér and Balázs Varga worked there, and the archive published an English-language periodical on regional film culture titled *Moveast*. Both Gelencsér and Varga are respected scholars, specialising in the history of Hungarian cinema.

In Czechoslovakia, Jindřich Brichta, in addition to being one of the founders and leading figures of the national film archive, was also involved in the organisation of film festivals and film exhibitions. He published numerous studies on cinema in both Czechoslovak and international journals and contributed to the publication *Historie československého filmu v obrazech 1898–1930* [History of Czechoslovak Film in Pictures, 1959], co-authored with Jaroslav Brož and Myrtil Frída. Another significant figure who combined archiving work with canonising efforts was Stanislav Zvoníček, head of the archive's research department from 1964 to 1973, who published numerous articles and books on Czechoslovak cinema. As in Hungary, there was a considerable movement of personnel between the archive and other film institutions, including the film departments of major universities and film schools. Two names come to mind: Ivan Klimeš and Michal Bregant. Klimeš began his career as a researcher in the film archive in 1981 before transitioning to an academic post at Charles University in Prague, where he specialised in Czechoslovak and Eastern European cinema. He was also one of the founding members of *Iluminace*, the leading Czech journal of film theory and history, published by the archive. Bregant, likewise, began his career at the archive, then moved to the Film and TV School of the Academy of Performing Arts (FAMU) in Prague, and returned to the archive to become its director in 2011.

In summary, the examples discussed above show that, for many leading historians of Eastern European cinema, working in archives served as the basis for shaping their countries' film histories. Their archival experience often led to roles in journalism, education and film scholarship, both domestically and internationally, allowing them to contribute significantly to the canonisation efforts of their respective national cinemas.

Archive cinemas

One of the most important ways through which film archives fulfil their role of museums and engage in the process of canonisation is through the curation of their collections, specifically by screening their collections in archive cinemas, which are cinemas owned and programmed by the archives.

Most Eastern European archives acquired such cinemas at some point. These cinemas' mission was to screen films otherwise inaccessible to the public and to curate their exhibition. Consequently, screenings were often organised in cycles and were accompanied by introductions from film historians. Programming focused on interwar cinema, arthouse films, and works considered significant for national identity, such as adaptations of canonical literature. This focus is also reflected in the names of these cinemas—Iluzjon in Warsaw, which evokes the name of

popular interwar Polish cinema theatre, and Makavejev in Belgrade, renamed in 2019 after the death of Dušan Makavejev, one of the most celebrated directors in Yugoslav cinema.

The cinema belonging to the Yugoslav film archive opened in 1952. There, in 1954, the archive's director, Milenko Karanović, oversaw a landmark collaboration with the French Cinémathèque titled French Cinémathèque Exhibit and Retrospective of French Film. It lasted for three months and featured 53 different programmes ranging from the first films of the Lumière Brothers in 1895 to the most recent French documentaries of 1953, including Jean Rouch's *Mammy Water* (1956), Georges Franju's *Les poussières* (1954), and others.

Henri Langlois, the founder and director of the French Cinémathèque, personally presented this programme. During that period in France, Langlois was actively engaged in introducing young French cinephiles to the treasures of international cinema, deeply influencing and jump-starting what would eventually be known as the French New Wave. His visit to Belgrade had a similar profound effect on young Yugoslav cinephiles and played a key role in the emergence of the New Yugoslav Film movement.[29] The cinema of the Yugoslav Film Archive thus became known not only for the films it screened but also for the visitors it attracted—among them Dušan Makavejev, who used archival materials from the Cinémathèque for his *Nevinost bez zaštite* (*Innocence Unprotected*, 1968) and *Sweet Movie* (1974).

Archive cinemas favoured New Wave films in their programming, including works from both the West and the socialist East. However, films from Eastern Europe were shown relatively rarely in these cinemas. This reflected a broader attitude towards goods originating from different parts of the world. In this hierarchy, products from Eastern Europe were generally regarded as being of lower quality than those from the West.

The cinemas also provided a crucial source of income for the film archives and their underpaid staff, as previously noted. This was especially true in the case of Warsaw's Iluzjon cinema, which opened in 1959. Iluzjon held a unique position in Poland's cinematic landscape, as it had access to all non-Polish films ever officially exhibited in the country, including those from the West—because Polish distributors were required to deposit one copy of each imported film in the archive. Unsurprisingly, Iluzjon capitalised on screening them for enthusiastic audiences, who sometimes queued for hours to watch American Westerns or Monty Python films. In contrast, Polish and Eastern European films rarely achieved comparable popularity, though there were exceptions: Czech comedies were widely appreciated in Poland and across the Eastern bloc. This popularity was partly supported by the active role of the Czechoslovak Cultural Institute in promoting national cinema. Films from Bulgaria and Romania, on the other hand, were almost never screened. This was due both to a lack of Polish interest in the culture of these countries and to the absence of efforts to find an audience for these films by organising thematic cycles or engaging specialists able and willing to introduce them. Moreover, the cultural institutions representing Bulgaria and Romania made little effort to promote their national cinemas abroad. As a result, the Polish archive cinema played virtually no role in fostering a pan-Eastern European film canon.

If anything, its role was counterproductive, as it may have reinforced existing prejudices against films from the socialist East.

As previously mentioned, during the state socialist period in Poland, there was no legal provision for producers or distributors of Polish film to deposit copies of their productions with the national archive. This had significant consequences—both for the digitisation of Polish films, as will be discussed later, and for the repertoire of the Iluzjon cinema. To screen Polish films, the archive had to borrow copies and obtain permission from their producers, namely the Polish studios, which could demand high fees for such exhibitions. By contrast, no such permissions were required for foreign films. These were deposited in the archive by Polish distributors as a routine matter. Paradoxically, then, screening films from the West was relatively easy and free of charge, whereas showing post-1945 Polish films was both costly and cumbersome.[30]

The situation was different in Czechoslovakia. During the state socialist period, the Czechoslovak archive cinema was less focused on screening films from the West—partly because it had access to fewer of them than its Polish counterparts, and partly because it was less commercially oriented. Crucially, the archive received copies of domestic productions from national distributors, resulting in the largest collection of Czechoslovak films in the world. As a result, the Czechoslovak film archive exhibited a higher proportion of Czechoslovak films and other Eastern European films—especially Polish ones—than was the case in Poland or other archive cinemas in the socialist East. This had clear implications for canon formation, as it enabled wider public access to the region's audio-visual heritage. Without such exposure, the construction of any hierarchy of important films would be virtually impossible.

After the collapse of state socialism, archive cinemas across the former Eastern bloc gradually lost their privileged status. This was primarily due to the emergence of many more ways to access films, such as video libraries, DVDs, and later, streaming platforms, which affected cinema-going habits at large. The Iluzjon cinema and the film archive lost a significant portion of its audience due to these changes, and in 1995, it faced serious accusations of piracy from Western film distribution companies for exhibiting foreign films without the necessary licences.[31] This was a source of major embarrassment for the archive and damaged its reputation. Conversely, the post-1989 period has seen a renewed interest in Polish interwar cinema, reflecting both its 'rehabilitation' and genuine public enthusiasm for what could be described as truly 'popular cinema'.[32] This growing interest is reflected in the publication of numerous popular books devoted to interwar film stars and, finally, in the production of the widely viewed television series *Bodo* (2015), which dramatises the life of Eugeniusz Bodo—one of interwar Poland's greatest stars, who perished in the Soviet gulag. Despite this renewed interest in prewar films, the exhibition of Polish post-war films remains costly for the archive in comparison to Western productions. Films from other Eastern European countries, as during the socialist era, still account for only a small portion of Iluzjon's programming. This results from a combination of factors, including the previously noted lack of viewer interest and issues related to copyright. There is a reasonable expectation for increased interest in Ukrainian cinema in the aftermath of Russia's

full-scale invasion of Ukraine and influx of Ukrainian refugees to Poland from 2022 to 2024. Yet, the exhibition of Ukrainian films from state socialist period poses challenges, as the copyright belongs to Russian institutions, primarily Mosfilm. As during the socialist period, the prevailing assumption that Polish audiences are less interested in the cinemas of neighbouring countries is complicated by the sustained popularity and circulation of Czech films within Poland. However, the broader lack of public engagement with neighbouring cinemas, inevitably, has led to minimal effort by Polish film historians to participate in shaping a pan-East European film canon.

Politics of digitisation

Before the advent of digital technologies, access to films kept in the archives was largely through the cinemas, which belonged to archives and through television, whose programming relied on prints loaned by archives. Following the digital shift, audio-visual heritage became accessible through DVD releases or online platforms, some of which are run by the archives themselves. In this case, we can talk about the second admission to the national canons, with its own distinctive rules and politics.

Digitisation has its advocates and critics; those who highlight its advantages and risks. For the previously mentioned Paolo Cherchi Usai, the benefits of digital technology are questionable. He points to such dangers, as distortion of original versions of films in the process of digitisation, destruction of (analogue) copies following digitisation and marginalisation of archived films which did not undergo this process.[33]

The history of digitisation of films in Eastern European archives points to some of these dangers, not least because digitisation is a complex and costly process; hence it is highly selective. Smaller countries and institutions cannot afford to digitise many films. For example, the Film Archive of the National Archives of Estonia can only afford to digitise one full-length film per year due to financial and human constraints. But even the larger film archives in Eastern Europe can afford to digitise only a few films per year. Digitisation is often combined with the restoration of the film, but this does not need to be the case—it can equally result in producing versions which are significantly different from the original analogue versions.

Digitisation leads to the formation of 'super-canons', composed of a very narrow selection of films that typically include those already canonised through other means, such as national polls for best films or Academy Awards nominations. Their advantage over non-digitised films is that they reach much larger audiences, thereby reinforcing and perpetuating their privileged status in national and international film histories.

This raises the crucial question: who decides which films are digitised, and according to which criteria? Before addressing this issue, it is important to note that archives can only digitise films to which they hold the copyright and for which they have access to high quality physical copies. This is the case in most Eastern European countries, where the national film archives have served as the main

drivers and centres of digitisation. The exception, as already indicated, is the Polish film archive, to which I will return at the end of this section. Among all the film archives examined in this research, the Slovak archive appears to have the most clearly defined approach to digitisation, based on the following five criteria:

A. Restoration, conservation and preservation—if a film has undergone a conservation-restoration process in film laboratories, it is possible to include it in the digitisation process.
B. Diversity and history—films representing the diversity and history of Slovakia (thematic, geographical, temporal, artistic, scientific, technical, cultural, etc.).
C. Curatorial decisions—the internal interest of the Slovak Film Institute (e.g. DVD/Blu-ray release, research, cultural diplomacy) or external interest from Slovakia or abroad (e.g. film festivals and events, cultural heritage institutions) in the cultural appreciation of digitised films.
D. Distribution—the interest of Slovak and foreign cinema distributors, video distributors, TV broadcasters, audiovisual on-demand media service providers and other entities in the economic appreciation and dissemination of digitised films.
E. Creativity—the interest of Slovak or foreign producers of audiovisual works or television programmes and other entities in the creative appreciation of digitised films in creating new works or programmes (e.g. compilation films).[34]

These five principles arguably reflect the core functions of the archives—conservation, preservation, and the shaping of national identity—while also integrating more contemporary requirements such as diversity, representation, inclusion, and social justice.[35] They also recognise the increasing importance of global accessibility and reach.

While other archives might not have such a clearly articulated approach to digitisation, they follow similar principles: prioritising the digitisation of films that are deemed historically significant and appealing for both domestic and foreign distribution. Typically, digitisation is quickly followed by the release of the films on DVD. In Slovakia, the first film canonised was *Obrazy starého sveta* (*Pictures of the Old World*, 1972), directed by Dušan Hanák, in 2002. This film is regarded as one of the most important films in the history of Slovakia and scored highly according to all the criteria outlined by the Slovak archive. It has been widely covered in literature about Slovak cinema and consistently voted one of the most significant films in Slovak film history. Its canonisation was validated by multiple subsequent DVD editions, both in Slovakia and abroad, including releases by Malavida Films in France (2012) and Second Run in the UK (2015). The Slovak archive also implemented a programme to digitise and distribute short films—works typically excluded from the 'short histories' of national cinemas. This initiative highlights the archive's proactive role in shaping, rather than merely reaffirming, national film canons.

Perhaps nowhere has the link between digital restoration and canon formation been more explicit than in the case of Czechia. As Irena Řehořová states,

> The report released by the Czech Ministry of Culture in 2010, which declared digitisation of national film heritage a priority task, included a list of 200 works from the Czech cinema, set for priority digitisation in 4K format. The notable fact about the selection was that it included almost exclusively full-length narrative films, most of them by celebrated directors.[36]

This decision confirms my argument that digitisation tends to produce narrow, conservative super-canons. A clear example of this approach can be seen in the

selection of *Marketa Lazarová* (1967), directed by František Vláčil, for digital restoration. The film had already been recognised as the best Czech film in a 1998 poll conducted among Czech film critics and publicists.

In Hungary, the national archive has been active in the field of restoration since the early 1990s. One of its early flagship digitisation projects was the restoration of *Lúdas Matyi* (*Mattie the Goose-boy*, 1949). The film was selected for two principal reasons: its historical significance, and the technical challenge posed by its digital restoration. As Eszter Fazekas asserts, the film represented a milestone in the newly nationalised film industry after the Second World War. Based on the 1805 poem by Mihály Fazekas, the narrative's emphasis on peasant life and leadership of the common people aligned well with the principles of socialist realism. Although originally shot in colour, the film's hues had faded over time, making its visual restoration particularly challenging.[37]

In Slovenia, the first film selected for digitisation was *Sedmina* (*Funeral Feast*, 1969), directed by Matjaž Klopčič, a popular war film with lasting cultural resonance. In Albania, the first film to be digitised, in 2012, was *Nëntori i dytë* (*The Second November*, 1983), a historical drama by Viktor Gjika depicting Albania's declaration of independence in 1912. This digitisation coincided with the centenary celebration of that event.[38] In each of these cases, digitisation not only reaffirmed but also strengthened the selected films' importance for the national canon.

Digitisation efforts across the former Eastern bloc have been supported by public and private funding, driven by the goal of preserving original works in as perfect condition as possible. These projects are typically overseen and conducted by specialists who possess both the required technical expertise and cultural knowledge necessary for such work. While film directors and original crew and cast members are seldom involved in restoration activities, notable exceptions exist. For instance, the famous Yugoslav-Slovenian director, Karpe Godina, participated directly in restoration of Slovenian films, due to his technical skill and his long career as both leading cinematographer and director of fiction and documentary films.

In this respect, the Polish archive is an outlier among film archives in Eastern Europe. As mentioned earlier, the Polish film archive does not own the copyright or store physical copies of Polish films produced after 1945. This situation stems from the lack of post-war ownership rights—both in terms of copyright and, in many cases, physical materials. In the second half of the 1980s, the rights to these films were assigned to film studios. These studios, in turn, prioritised digitising the works of living directors, especially those with institutional power or already considered part of the national film canon. The archive had virtually no influence over these decisions. This arrangement negatively impacted directors like Wojciech Has, who died in 2000 and is widely regarded—alongside Andrzej Wajda and Krzysztof Kieślowski—as one of Poland's greatest filmmakers of all time. Despite his stature, has had limited power to promote or protect his work, even during his lifetime.[39] Moreover, during the digitisation process, some filmmakers used their position to 'improve' on their earlier work, often in a problematic way. The most well-known examples involve two films by Andrzej Wajda: *Ziemia obiecana* (*The Promised Land*, 1975) and *Popioły* (*Ashes*, 1965). In contrast to most 'director's cuts', the digitised versions of these films are shorter, reflecting Wajda's later moral views. *Ziemia*

obiecana was extensively re-edited, with much of its erotic content removed, while *Popioły* lost the scene depicting a horse's death, likely in response to modern sensitivities around on-screen depictions of animal cruelty.

The changes in *Ziemia obiecana* were most concerning, given that, along with *Rękopis znaleziony w Saragossie* (*The Saragossa Manuscript,* 1964) by Wojciech Has, it has on multiple occasions been voted the best Polish film of all time. The alterations have not, as far as I am aware, affected the position of these films in the national canon, but they might affect the films' future standing when memory of the original versions fade.

The Polish film archive, within its financial constraints, focused its efforts on digitising interwar films. In this respect, its most prestigious project was the digital restoration of Ryszard Ordyński's 1928 adaptation of Adam Mickiewicz's epic poem *Pan Tadeusz*, a restoration completed in 2012. On this occasion the film received a new score, composed by Tadeusz Woźniak. The project was financially supported by the European Union. The importance of this restoration for national identity was emphasised by the fact that one of its screenings took place in the Polish Parliament.[40] In 2012, the then Minister of Culture and National Heritage announced that all Polish pre-war films would be digitised and made available online for free.[41] Indeed, in subsequent years an impressive resource for researchers and fans of Polish interwar cinema was created. However, frequent changes in archive management, driven by political shifts, have led to an absence of a coherent digitisation strategy, reflecting wider institutional 'paralysis'.

The high cost and complexity of digital restoration frequently require sharing knowledge and resources beyond the boundaries of the national archives and individuals. Most commonly, this involves collaboration between the film archives of the former Yugoslavia, but it can also involve archives and personnel outside of the Soviet bloc or the former socialist countries. For example, the digitisation of the Bosnian film *Slike iz života udarnika* (*Life of a Shock Worker*, 1972), directed by 'Bato' Čengić, was undertaken by the Slovenian cinematheque (Slovenska Kinoteka) in cooperation with the Film Centre Sarajevo (Filmski centar Sarajevo), Croatian cinematheque (Hrvatska Kinoteka), and Austrian Film Museum (Österreichisches Filmmuseum). In this process, the 'Slovenian' contribution was represented by the work of Karpo Godina, who participated both as the film's original DOP and as one of the leading experts in the digitisation process.

Albania's film archive, located in one of Europe's smallest and poorest countries, found partners in the United States—a collaboration that reflects the significant Albanian diaspora in the USA. This partnership followed a 2012 visit to the archive by film directors Iris Elezi and Thomas Logoreci, where they were

> Met with the overwhelming odour of vinegar emerging from the main vault. The directors further noted the presence of mould and condensation. Logoreci entered into contact with Regina Longo, a San Francisco-based academic and archivist, who made her own visit to AQSHF [Central State Film Archive], witnessing the same deplorable conditions. The Albanian Cinema Project (ACP) was thus born as an 'urgent call to arms to save a national film archives' building and its unique contents that were on the brink of collapse.[42]

The original goal of ACP was to restore five films over the course of five years. Of these, two feature films underwent extensive digitisation: the previously mentioned *Nëntori i dytë* by Viktor Gjika and Xhanfise Keko's *Tomka dheshokët e tij* (*Tomka and His Friends*, 1977), both of which have had wide international screenings. However, ACP ceased operations in 2017 following the death of its primary funding partner, Stephen Parr, and was forced to abandon its preservation efforts. The remaining three films were never restored.[43]

In Poland, digitisation of *Rękopis znaleziony w Saragossie* (1964)—widely regarded as one of the most canonised Polish films and frequently voted the best Polish film of all time in various polls—was financed by two American directors: Martin Scorsese and Francis Ford Coppola.[44] Using foreign funding to digitise Eastern European films points to the influence of foreign actors on the character of national and pan-national canons. This yields two significant outcomes: first, it places newer films at a disadvantage within the canon, as noted by Vinzenz Hediger and corroborated by my prior observations, which indicate that Polish film canons are largely dominated by films produced before the collapse of the state socialist system.[45] Second, it illustrates the influence of foreign tastes on national culture, which may be interpreted as a form of cultural imperialism.

On the one hand, the digitisation stories of Albanian and Polish films highlight the importance of private capital in film preservation, particularly in poorer countries. On the other hand, they demonstrate that such support cannot replace a long-term strategy that recognises the importance of films for a country's history and culture. Film archives, with their specialised expertise, are best positioned to provide such strategic oversight.

Conclusions

Film archives in Eastern Europe play a significant role in the formation of national canons. First, the very effort to establish film archives underscores the importance of film heritage, which warrants the same level of attention as literary and art heritage. The establishment of film archives allowed them to preserve and store in one place films and other materials contributing to national culture. The opening of archive cinemas further allowed audiences to familiarise themselves with both domestic and foreign films, which were not accessible through other channels. Finally, by engaging in digital restoration and distribution, the archives contributed to the creation of selective 'super-canons' that became imprinted on the national psyche simply by virtue of being widely accessible. That said, many canonisation activities remain unacknowledged and unofficial, most notably those carried out by archive staff serving as educators, who subsequently moved to other film institutions. In some cases, such as that of the Polish National Film Archive, canonising efforts were thwarted by legal limitations that prevented the archive from serving as the primary repository of national films. These efforts were further obstructed by the absence of a clear digitisation strategy and by the low cultural status afforded to film archives in the country. This article argues for the continuous relevance of film archives not only as 'memory vessels' but as active agents in shaping the cinematic histories of individual nations and the region.

Disclosure statement

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Notes

1. Aleida Assmann, 'Canon and Archive', in *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook*, ed. Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), 97–107.
2. Astrid Erll and Ann Rigney, 'Introduction: Cultural Memory and its Dynamics', in *Mediation, Remediation, and the Dynamics of Cultural Memory*, ed. Astrid Erll and Ann Rigney (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2009), 1–11.
3. Achille Mbembe, 'The Power of the Archives and its Limit', in *Refiguring the Archive*, ed. Carolyn Hamilton et al. (Springer Netherlands, 2002), 19–28; Tyler Youngman, Sebastian Modrow, and Isaac Meth, 'Deceiving Dichotomies: On the Interrelation of the Archive and the Cultural Memory Canon', *87th Annual Meeting of the Association for Information Science & Technology*, Oct. 25–29, 2024, Calgary, AB, Canada.
4. Ann Rigney, 'Prefigurative Remembrance: Archiving as Activist Mnemonic Practice', *Memory Studies*, no. 5 (2024): 1195–1212.
5. 5. Paolo Cherchi Usai, *The Death of Cinema: History, Cultural Memory and the Digital Dark Age* (London: British Film Institute, 2001), 19.
6. 6. Penelope Houston, *Keepers of the Frame: Film Archives* (London: British Film Institute, 1994), 3.
7. Janet Staiger, 'The Politics of Film Canons', *Cinema Journal*, no. 3 (1985): 4–18.
8. 8. Rather than using a fixed set of standardized questions, I allowed conversations with staff and users to develop organically, shaped by the specific institutional and national contexts. Nonetheless, several core themes guided these exchanges: the archive's role in shaping national or regional film canons; the individuals most influential in shaping collections; and the politics surrounding archive cinema programming. Notes and transcripts from these conversations are stored securely on the author's personal computer.
9. I identified fewer than ten English-language articles of academic standard on Eastern European archives, the majority of which appeared in the 2020 special issue on archives of *Studies in Eastern European Cinema*, guest edited by Eva Näripea: *Studies in Eastern European Cinema* 11, no. 2 (tandfonline.com).
10. Eva Näripea, 'Editorial', *Studies in Eastern European Cinema*, no. 2 (2020): 115.
11. Ibid., 115.
12. 12. Eastern European film archives changed names numerous times during their history, therefore for simplicity and to save space, I describe all of them as 'film archives..'
13. *Národní filmový archív*'s website: https://nfa.cz/cs (accessed January 12, 2024); see also Jan Trnka, '75 years of Czech film archiving', *Filmový* přehled, 25 September 2018, https://www.filmovyprehled.cz/en/revue/detail/75-years-of-czech-film-archiving (accessed June 6, 2025).
14. Trnka, '75 years of Czech film archiving'.

15. 15. While the Fédération Internationale des Archives du Film (FIAF) is frequently referenced in this article, there was no equivalent association of film archives within the Eastern Bloc during the socialist period. Collaboration among Eastern European archives tended not to be mediated through a dedicated professional body.
16. 16. Underfunding is frequently mentioned both in the secondary sources about Eastern European archives and in interviews. This contradicts the claim of Penelope Houston that East European archives were well provided for thanks to being state owned. See Houston, 5.
17. Trnka, '75 years of Czech film archiving'.
18. Greg DeCuir, *Yugoslav Black Wave: Polemical Cinema from 1963 to 72 in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia*, second edition (Belgrade: Film Center Serbia, 2019).
19. Magdalena Niedźwiedzka, 'Zarys dziejów Filmoteki Narodowej', *Archiwa – Kancelarie – Zbiory*, no. 5 (2014): 95.
20. Bolesław Michałek, 'Duch filmoteczny,' *Kino*, no. 6 (1980): 18–9.
21. Ibid., 19.
22. Niedźwiedzka, 'Zarys',100.
23. 'Magyar Nemzeti Filmarchívum', Magyar Nemzeti Filmarchívum (MNFA)—filmarchives-online.eu (accessed February 15, 2024).
24. Michałek, Bolesław, *The Modern Cinema of Poland* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988).
25. Michałek, 'Duch filmoteczny', 19.
26. This pamphlet is discussed in Houston's *Keepers of the Frame*.
27. Houston, *Keepers of the Frame*, 112.
28. Ibid., 18.
29. DeCuir, *Yugoslav Black Wave*, 115.
30. 30. Houston, op. cit., draws attention to the issues around the copyright of films stored in archives, writing: 'Companies can, and do, remove their films from the archives, for all sorts of reasons, because they are still their films. Also, every archive probably has some material of uncertain provenance, films picked up from private collectors or from outside the system of heavily policed industry control', 3.
31. Niedźwiedzka,'Zarys', 105.
32. Tadeusz Lubelski, *Historia kina polskiego. Twórcy, filmy, konteksty* (Chorzów: Videograf II, 2009), 73–104.
33. 33. Paolo Cherchi Usai, *The Death of Cinema*, 115–120.
34. Péter Csordás and Marián Hausner, 'Digitisation and Digital Restoration of the Film Heritage in the Slovak Film Institute', *Pamiatky a múzeá*, vol. 7 (2022): 68.
35. Mbembe, 'The Power of the Archives'; Youngman, Modrow and Meth, 'Deceiving Dichotomies'.
36. Irena Řehořová, 'Curating access, shaping cultural memory: the Czech National Film archive in the era of digitisation', *Studies in Eastern European Cinema*, no. 2 (2020): 195–196.
37. Eszter Fazekas, 'Amidst the digital restoration of the first Hungarian colour feature, LUDAS MATYI (Mattie, the Goose-boy)', *Filmkultúra*, 2004, https://

filmkultura.hu/regi/2004/articles/essays/ludasfazek.en.html (accessed February 5, 2024).

38. Bruce Williams, 'The Albanian state film archives in a transnational world', *Studies in Eastern European Cinema*, no. 2 (2020): 203.
39. Ewa Mazierska, 'Canons of Polish Cinema and the Place of Polish Films in Global Film Canons', *Studies in Eastern European Cinema*, no. 1 (2025): 18.
40. 37. 'Pokaz filmu "Pan Tadeusz" z 1928 r. w Sejmie', *Dzieje.pl*, 3 May 2014, Pokaz filmu "Pan Tadeusz" z 1928 r. w Sejmie | dzieje.pl - Historia Polski (accessed March 12, 2024).
41. Sylwia Czubkowska, 'Niezwykle cenne polskie filmy za darmo i dla wszystkich!', *Dziennik.pl*, January 2, 2012, https://kultura.dziennik.pl/artykuly/373391,zdrojewski-przedwojenne-filmy-w-internecie-za-darmo-i-dla-wszystkich.html (accessed March 3, 2024).
42. Williams, 'The Albanian state film archives', 202–203; see also Regina Longo, 'The Albanian Cinema Project: Saving and Projecting Albanian Film Heritage for Global Audiences', *KinoKultura* (2016), Special Issue 16, Albania. http://www.kinokultura.com/specials/16/albania.shtml (accessed February 10, 2024).
43. Williams, 'The Albanian state film archives', 203.
44. Eugeniusz Wołoszczuk, 'To polski film wszech czasów. Mija 55 lat od jego premiery', *Dziennik*, February 9, 2020, https://film.dziennik.pl/news/artykuly/6438407,rekopis-znaleziony-w-saragossie-film-wszech-czasow-premiera.html (accessed November 10, 2023).
45. Mazierska, 'Canons of Polish Cinema', 20.

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