The Invisible Institution? Reconstructing the History of BAFTA and the 1958 Merger of the British Film Academy with the Guild of Television Producers and Directors

Abstract

As a cultural institution of national and global significance, the British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA) is notably absent within existing scholarship on the media industries. More importantly, BAFTA's role as an independent arts charity set up by the industry to support and develop new talent is often overlooked. Instead, references to BAFTA made by media and film scholars most frequently take the form of footnotes or digressions that detail particular awards or nominations. Drawing on a range of archival sources, including BAFTA's own records, we address this significant omission within existing scholarship on the British cultural and creative industries (CCIs). In particular, we examine the period from 1947-1968, focusing on the 1958 merger of the British Film Academy with the Guild of Television Producers and Directors to form a new institution, known as the Society of Film and Television Arts (SFTA, later renamed BAFTA). We identify and analyse the conflation of internal and external pressures on both industries which facilitated the relative success of the merger, despite the well-documented tensions existing between the two sectors throughout the period. We argue that a crucial factor driving the merger was the desire to develop quality training schemes across both industries. This, in turn, was party enabled by an egalitarian turn in post-war British society towards the development of greater social equality and mobility. In reconstructing these events, we interrogate and reassess the role played by this key national institution on the CCIs, and thus offer an expansion and revision of scholarship on media histories of post-war Britain.

Keywords: BAFTA, 1958 merger, creative industries, film and television industries, training schemes

Introduction

BAFTA's absence from existing histories of British media production has a number of significant implications for the study of film and television industries, not least in the way the two are frequently perceived as distinct and separate fields (Brunsdon, 1997; Cardwell, 2006; Corner, 2006; Murphy, 2009). Recent research into the histories of the British cinema and television industries has, over the last few decades, witnessed a turn towards the study of production cultures. However, the dominant discourse structuring much of this research has been a focus on state-industry relations. This was established in Dickinson and Street's study of the film industry between 1927 and 1984, which mentions the British Film Academy only once in relation to the point at which it was founded in 1947; here they critique this early incarnation of BAFTA as an institution 'composed entirely of people working within the film industry' and for having 'no official status and no state grant' (Dickinson and Street 1985: 164). These criticisms are significant both in the way in which they underscore the dominant discourse of state funding that characterises histories of the British media industries, and in the way they marginalise the significance of industry workers. Likewise, scholarly work within the field of television studies has frequently stressed the specificity of television in terms of industry and texts (Brunsdon, 1997; Cardwell, 2006; Corner, 2006; Williams, 1974). One inevitable consequence of this focus has been a lack of sustained analysis of the ways in which the film and television industries intersect, specifically around issues of labour.² Some notable exceptions to this scholarly trend can be found in the academic studies of Channel 4 (Keene, 2014; Mayne, 2014; Smith, 2014), and also in Hannah Andrews' (2014) broader study of the convergence between film and television in Britain since 1990. This recent scholarly development focuses on cross-platform distribution patterns, and the crossover of

aesthetics between film and television drama. Another exception is Su Holmes' (2004) examination of British film and television culture in the 1950s, which usefully demonstrates the reciprocal relationship between the two industries by looking at early cinema programmes on television. Holmes' archival study of this early TV genre is particularly pertinent to the study of BAFTA's archives in the way it reconstructs the relationship between the film and television industries during the 1950s. However, these noteworthy studies aside, the histories of television and its relationship with the film industry have frequently been overlooked, and neither of these scholarly disciplines acknowledges the historical work undertaken by BAFTA in facilitating cross-industry training initiatives from the mid-twentieth century onwards.

More recently, the state-industry discourse has been challenged by a new scholarly focus on the historical role of workers within the British media industries, some of which cuts across both film and television (Ball and Bell, 2013; Bell, 2017; Williams, 2013, 2016; Wallace, Harrison and Brunsdon, 2017). Feminist media historians have led the way in this research, motivated by the aim of making visible the hitherto unrecognised labour of women working within the media industries. Archival materials held by BAFTA indicate that the period leading up to the 1958 merger of the Guild of Television Producers and Directors with the British Film Academy is particularly interesting in this respect; it was, in part, the need to develop training schemes that served both industries which facilitated the merger. A central aim of this article is to consider the ways in which the development of these schemes impacted upon access and opportunity within the creative industries. We therefore draw inspiration from the field of feminist production studies – a feminist methodology that highlights the contribution of those on the 'margins' of production and interrogates 'the politics of inclusion' (Banks 2018: 160). Less concerned with industry 'elites', feminist production studies scholars pursue an 'anti-auteristic' agenda (Banks 2018: 158) seeking to

make visible the contributions of those 'below-the-line' practitioners, and to understand the cultures of production within which they operate. Marking a departure from the largely quantitative approaches to labour studies and production economics, feminist production studies favours a cultural analysis of labour initiatives as necessary sites of examination for understanding the lack of diversity in filmmaking and other creative practices (Banks, 2017; Kearney, 2018; Citron and Seiter, 1981). With this in mind, we suggest that a missing narrative exists within established histories of the British film and television industries. While existing institutional histories of British cinema and television have focused on production in relation to government policy, this article instead draws on contemporary approaches to the cultural and creative industries (Hartley, 1998; Hesmondhalgh, 2007; Mayer, Banks & Caldwell 2009), which focus on questions surrounding production and labour across both sectors.

Methodology

In this article we conduct an 'institutional archaeology' (Wheatley 2007: 97) of BAFTA, using unpublished material from its institutional archive. These documents include minutes from monthly council meetings held by the British Film Academy from 1947-1960 and the Guild of Television Producers and Directors (1953-1972), awards brochures, correspondence and the Academy's industry-facing journal.³ As is often the case with archival based research, our lines of enquiry have been shaped by the scope of the material available. During the period we researched this article, BAFTA were in the process of digitising their archive and had catalogued a set of key documents, which included council minutes and journals. These documents represent the views of the 'elite' insofar as the executive team largely consisted of those working in 'above the line' roles. Consequently, much of the material under examination shores up institutional hierarchies that favour the 'creative' over the 'technical'. The experiences of those in the 'below the line' occupations are frequently absent

from such formal records. Thus, while we maintain that the value of this research for production studies is significant, in that these cultural texts serve as the material expression of the organisation's core beliefs and values, we remain mindful that such documents are authored primarily by those within a position of privilege.

Our analysis of this archival material is motivated by the impetus to understand BAFTA's role in shaping the CCIs during the period in question, and in so doing to recover and centralise a narrative that has frequently been relegated to a footnote within existing media histories. This requires a re-examining of those assumptions that have typically been used to justify the lack of scholarly enquiry surrounding BAFTA as an institution (e.g. Dickinson and Street 1985). Moreover, BAFTA's unique position as an organisation drawing membership from both the film and television industries means that it does not sit comfortably within histories that foreground medium specificity. Consequently, we consciously focus upon material concerning the 1958 merger as our entry point, with the aim of better understanding the relationship between the two industries at this historical juncture.

In practical terms, this has firstly involved an examination of the material produced in the period around the 1958 merger (1956-1961). In particular, council minutes from both the BFA and the Guild were searched for information regarding the decisions taken, and relating to the key actors involved in the process. Working backwards, we reconstructed a timeline of the merger from the perspectives of both the BFA and the Guild, before expanding our search to the journals and trade presses. Following this, our approach became more inductive, as key themes and motivations for the merger began to emerge from the material and guided our subsequent enquires into the economic and ideological positions of both organisations.

Our analysis of the documents from BAFTA's archives has been supplemented by materials drawn from other relevant archives, such as the BECTU oral history project⁵, the

Broadcasting, Entertainment, Cinematograph and Theatre Union (BECTU) records⁶, and the British Entertainment History project⁷. These supplementary materials provided us with a wider context in which to understand the way workers moved across and between the film, theatre and television industries throughout this period, thus creating a useful framework for understanding the cross-industry training initiatives developed by BAFTA.

1947-58: The pre-merger years

The British Film Academy (BFA) was founded in 1947, during Clement Attlee's first term as Labour Prime Minister, and was guided throughout its early years by its first Chairman, David Lean. Labour's post-war policies of nationalisation, and the subsequent development of the welfare state, facilitated a period of economic recovery and increased prosperity dubbed by some historians as the 'Golden Age' (Hobsbawm 1995: 284). A rapid succession of legislation, including the Education Act (1944), the National Health Service Act (1946), the National Insurance Act (1946) and the Housing Act (1946) enabled this process of reconstruction. This article considers two ways in which the political ideologies underpinning the shift in post-war British society towards greater social equality and mobility are reflected in the cultural politics informing the early work of the British Film Academy. Firstly, through a consideration of the Academy's commitment to developing training schemes and apprenticeships as a means to support emerging talent. As the Academy's founding constitution (1948) states, its principal aim was 'to stimulate exceptional creative work and to encourage experiment and research in all branches of the industry'. 8 Secondly, we suggest that gestures towards an egalitarian post-war ethos are illustrated by the events and procedures that facilitated the merger of the British Film Academy with the Guild of Television Producers and Directors in 1958, just over a decade after the Academy was founded.

In order to fully appreciate how effective the culture of the Academy was in enabling the 1958 merger, it is first necessary to understand the level of antagonism that existed between the film and television industries during the post-war period. Prior to the merger, the relationship between the British Film Academy and the Guild of Television Producers and Directors was informed by growing tensions that had escalated between the two competing industries since the advent of television. Throughout the 1950s, the number of TV licences in Britain rose dramatically, while the same period witnessed a notable decline in cinema audiences. In the decade between 1953 and 1963, the number of TV licenses issued in the United Kingdom rose from approximately 2 million to 12 million (Barr 1986: 206; Caughie 2000: 36). Charles Barr, John Caughie and Hannah Andrews have all documented the ways in which British film distributors became increasingly competitive towards the television industry during this period, and either prohibited or restricted new film releases from being made available to television (Barr 1986: 207; Caughie 2000: 43; Andrews 2014: 39). Caughie notes that the hostility between the two industries at this time was further exacerbated by the valorisation of television as a live medium, whose transmissions offered a 'direct, spontaneous, authentic reality' that had more in common with theatre than cinema (Caughie 2000: 41). In his study of early British television drama, Jason Jacobs similarly evidences the ways in which BBC personnel, such as the head of drama, Val Gielgud, and producer George More O'Ferrall, articulated their commitment to developing a unique aesthetic for television which they felt was superior to film (Jacobs 2000: 52). In this way, the cultural and aesthetic validity of television drama was legitimated. Tensions between the two industries thus frequently became manifest in their respective value judgements of each other as inferior art forms, and their deployment of technological developments of the era was central to these valuations.

The tensions and hostilities between the film and television industries throughout this era are also evident in the British Film Academy's minutes and journals from the period. The *British Film Academy Quarterly* of July 1949 reports a discussion that took place on the evening of 31st May, 1949, at which Robert MacDermot (then Head of the BBC's television drama department) and George More O' Ferrall both spoke to the members of the Academy on the subject of 'Television's Challenge to the Feature Film'. The report documents that, during the course of the evening, More O' Ferrall argued that while the challenge was 'mainly economic', it should also be noted that 'compared to television, the cinema's degree of specialisation on each shot was carried to extremes which he felt were bad for the film as a whole'. Records such as these reveal that the reservations felt by members of the television industry towards the film industry manifested as a critique of the medium. Similarly, members of the Academy regularly extolled the virtues of film during these discussions by focusing on the significance of factors such as location shooting. One 1954 journal article by documentary film-maker Paul Rotha, for example, argues that:

The economics of TV are such that exterior filming for stories (or plays) is restricted to a minimum. TV drama is constipated by its studio bindings but it serves its mass-entertainment purpose well enough. It can never aesthetically hope even to equal the film because of the latter's easy powers of mobility and its god-given access to the whole living world. ¹⁰

Rotha's description of television drama as being 'constipated' underscores how heightened the tensions between the industries had become by the mid-1950s. Alongside such impassioned debates around the merits and respective value judgements of television and film, the development of television drama also led to lively internal debates amongst BFA members as to whether the British film industry should be primarily focusing on high-budget

or low-budget productions. In one such discussion between director David Lean and Harry Watt (director of *Night Mail*, 1936), it was reported:

David Lean closed his part in the discussion by saying that pictures should cost what their subjects demand, and that, in his view, it was fatal to withdraw entirely into the sphere of the low budget film in the face of the competition offered by television.¹²

Throughout this period, then, the devaluation of television drama was being framed both artistically and economically by key members of the film industry.

As the 1950s progressed, discussions of the television industry featured more frequently on the Academy's agenda, and were increasingly framed as a problem. For example, in January 1958 the BFA committee minutes record that there was a talk given to Academy members which explored the question 'is television lowering our technical and artistic standards?' Similarly, the minutes from this period also record the proposal of a special edition of the Journal entitled 'The Problem of Television'. This proposal is interesting as much for its matter-of-fact articulation of the attitude held by the Academy towards the television industry, as it is for the fact that it never actually went ahead; it illustrates both the animosity felt by the Academy towards the television industry, and simultaneously their determination to put such hostilities to one side in order to work together to accomplish some common goals. Given the hostile character of relations between the two industries, it is perhaps surprising that a merger between the two organisations was mooted so early on in the Academy's history, and it is to the factors informing this merger that this article now turns.

'Moving forward together': The development of training schemes

Between 1955 and 1958, discussions developed between the Academy and Guild regarding a possible merger of the two organisations. These discussions were underscored by a general

sense of uncertainty that affected both industries. For the film industry, the review of the Quota Act in 1957 threatened to abolish those laws which had been crucial to the survival of the industry in the post-war period. For television, the introduction of the commercial channel, and the rapid growth of the industry raised concerns that the quality of programming and its reputation would decline. Such was the case that the Association of the Cinematographer, Television and Allied Technicians union (ACTT) dedicated their 1957 AGM to discuss the situation, ultimately reaching the conclusion that: 'At bedrock the problems of the workers in Television and the workers in Film are the same. We are, in fact, all members of one union, we are all working in one big industry, the entertainment industry, [and] only in unity can we march forward together.' ¹⁴

Records indicate that the Academy initiated these negotiations, calling an informal meeting with their members in April 1958 to discuss their 'future relationship with television'. As early as 1954, however, there had been an acknowledgement of the permeable boundary between the two industries. This led to the Academy formally stating its position regarding the membership eligibility of those working on films for television: 'the Academy is an organisation for people who are making films, for *whatever medium*' (emphasis added). In May 1958 the Academy's Chairman, James Lawrie, reported meeting with two members of the Guild to discuss a proposal to amalgamate the two organisations. The first record of the proposal appears in the minutes of the Guild's council meeting one month later, when the Guild's Treasurer, Andrew Miller Jones 'put to the meeting a possible amalgamation with the British Film Academy'. A sub-committee of Guild members formed to pursue the matter. By October 1958, plans for a 'Society of Screen Arts' (later to become the 'Society for Film and Television Arts') were underway.

There were a number of recurring issues driving plans for the merger forward, the most pressing being the financial insecurity of both organisations. Records of financial

difficulties are evident in the Academy's minutes from its inception. These include multiple requests for financial assistance, proposals to reduce staff salaries and, in 1952, discussions about closing the Academy altogether. 19 Records of an emergency meeting held on 25 June, 1952, reveal that 'the Council had been called to make a decision for or against closing the Academy, as there were in the Bank only just sufficient funds to meet current liabilities.'20 It was noted that the Academy required an income of approximately £10,000 a year 'to carry out adequately the basic work it should do', and that their current annual income was unlikely to exceed £5,000.21 In 1952, an overdraft was set up with the Academy's bank to manage the financial crisis, and in May 1953 there was discussion of obtaining a grant from the Treasury.²² Although the Academy's balance between income and expenditure subsequently stabilised for a brief period, in December 1957 the Guild reported financial difficulties; in a council meeting, members took the decision to wait six months before approaching the BBC and ITV for grants, despite the fact that 'it was admittedly urgent'. 23 It was agreed that a focus on increasing membership be prioritised in the hope that this would increase the likelihood of securing financial support from the organisations.²⁴ The predicament of both organisations is captured by a record of annual finances at the end of 1959, which reveal the reality of economic situation and financial necessity of the merger. Whilst the Academy had a balance of £1,930, the Guild had just £300.25 The promise of additional finance from outside bodies as a result of the merger, reported in a December 1958 meeting, was very much welcomed by members.

In addition to these financial issues, a letter sent to the Guild's members in advance of an Extraordinary General Meeting in October 1958 outlined two further advantages the merger would offer in terms of resources. Firstly, that the Guild would be granted access to the Academy's administrative office: 'The advantages of such an arrangement are many. It would provide what the Guild urgently needs – a permanent administrative office; with the

expectation, in the not too distant future of central club premises and facilities such as rehearsal rooms, meeting rooms and a projection theatre'.²⁶ Secondly, it was understood patronage of HRH the Duke of Edinburgh would be extended to the newly formed Society: something the Guild had sought since 1956.²⁷

A second issue, contingent to this widespread financial insecurity, was the subject of training, recruitment and irregular employment. The issue of training and its provision within the creative industries was a central point of discussion throughout the early years of the British Film Academy. Deliberations on this topic are regularly recorded in the minutes of the monthly meetings of the Academy's council of management.²⁸ The discussion gained traction, however, in 1956²⁹ leading to a special edition of the SFTA journal focused on 'Training – The Way In?' in autumn 1958. Here, issues around skills and training across both the film and television industries and how these could be developed was proposed as follows:

It is hoped that the London School of Film Technique will eventually be taken over by a body set up by the Film and Television Industries, since it is felt that it would be negative to limit the School's development to one or other of these fields.³⁰

Minutes of a council meeting held on 21st March, 1956, record a discussion as to whether or not a bursary for film design should be set up in conjunction with the Royal Society of the Arts (RSA). The management council concludes that 'unless it were possible for them to put forward schemes for similar bursaries in respect of all aspects of film-making, they should not do one alone.' It was also agreed at this meeting that the RSA 'should be asked for the views of the BBC and ITA (Independent Television Authority) who has also been approached on the question of instituting Bursaries'. A month later, the council minutes report that not only the BBC were keen to sponsor a bursary, but also that screenwriter and producer George Minter was interested in sponsoring a bursary for film production, and that

there was the scope to organise a similar scheme for theatre. These developments initiated a new assessment of training possibilities across all aspects of filmmaking, and in April 1956 a decision was taken by the council to contact the trade union, ACTT (Association of Cinematographer, Television and Allied Technicians) the BFPA (British Film Producers Association) and the ASFP (Association of Short Film Producers) to discuss the possibility of creating an apprenticeship scheme.³³

Discussion of a possible apprenticeship scheme by the Academy's management council continued into the latter half of 1956. While the other two associations expressed their support in pursuing this idea, the trade union, ACTT, was more hesitant.³⁴ The union Secretary, George Elvin, 'felt it might not be the business of the academy to take the initiative'.³⁵ Academy council minutes suggest that Elvin's objections seemed to concern a potential conflict of interest, though this is difficult to ascertain because ACTT records from this period have not survived (Reid, 2008: 40). What is clear, though, is that under Elvin's leadership the ACTT was also involved in attempts to set up a national film school in the 1950s, though these efforts were not fully realised until 1970 (see Petrie 2008). In response to Elvin's concerns, the Academy felt it was necessary to reach out to him a second time, a move documented in the council minutes which state that 'the academy's sole interest was in convening meetings to discuss the possibilities of the starting of a training scheme, and that if points of difference arose between employer and employee interests the academy's attitude would be purely that of an observer and not an interested party.'³⁶

The Academy continued to pursue the possibility of a training scheme and eventually in August 1957, Elvin, along with representatives from the British Film Institute (BFI) and British Kinematograph Society (BKI), would become a member of the expanded committee, tasked with introducing a robust training initiative for film technicians. Initial plans of apprenticeships and mentor schemes were replaced in favour of an initiative that could be

'integrated into state arrangements for education'.³⁷ Consequently, in June of 1958, the expanded committee were in discussion with Wandsworth Technical College and Regent Street Polytechnic regarding a potential scheme. As it turned out, neither scheme came to fruition. Records suggest that the management of the Polytechnic saw little value in such an initiative and threatened to repurpose the space previously earmarked for a 35mm film production studio.³⁸ In September 1958, it was suggested that the Academy might approach the Royal College of Art as part of this endeavour. Significantly, the Royal College of Art approached the Guild in 1957 with a view to launching a new course specifically in TV Design,³⁹ and it is reported in the SFTA minutes that a joint venture in Film and Television production becomes a priority for the organisation, and one of the key reasons for the merger:

It is more than ever necessary that a united body of informed film and television opinion should exist among those people who provide the creative inspiration in both fields. Only such a united opinion can give effective backing to such schemes as that put forward by the Royal College of Art.⁴⁰

Thus, it becomes clear that in order for both industries to thrive supporting and fostering new talent through robust training programmes was essential, and that these training initiatives would benefit from the combined support of both the film and television industries. This could partly be understood in the context of already existing employment patterns. Archival evidence, such as that gathered by the BECTU project, reveals that just under half of those working in the media industries in the mid-twentieth century moved across the film, theatre, radio and television industries.⁴¹ There was therefore a pragmatic rationale for both the Guild and the Academy to invest in the development of cross-industry training schemes.

Training Scheme Issues: access and opportunity

Archival resources relating to this period suggest that in addition to providing good quality training, increasing access and opportunity for those wishing to work across multiple industries was also important for both the Academy and the Guild. It is worth considering in more detail, though, the kinds of access and opportunity that were being offered. In a detailed discussion of these issues in October 1956, the Academy explicitly articulate a desire to make the training scheme as flexible as possible, stating 'it must allow for 'the very young recruit, entering before or after his National Service; the older man with a special background that fits him for the industry; and the technician within the industry who wants to better himself'. ⁴² Indeed, the very nature of vocational training has historically served working and lower middle class populations for whom higher education is neither desirable nor possible (Banks and Oakley, 2015). In this spirit, the chairman at the time, Edgar Anstey argued that any training scheme the Academy endorsed must be organised around supporting young people already working within the industry, and providing appropriate training for those wishing to enter it. ⁴³

However, it is also worth registering that despite this focus on young people and the working classes, the Academy's attempts to increase access and opportunity around training issues were highly gendered, reflecting historical attitudes prevalent throughout this period. This is evident not simply in the fact that masculine pronouns were used exclusively in all discussions – indeed, we might expect this given that the masculine has historically been used as the default – but also that the subject was characterised as male. The schemes were designed to fit around National Service, an initiative for which only able-bodied men aged 17-21 were eligible at the time. While this might not be an unexpected finding given the patriarchal culture of the 1950s, it is also noteworthy that on the special committee designated to deal with training issues, two of the seven members were women: documentarian Mary Field and film editor Helga Cranston. This confirms, as has been argued

elsewhere by feminist media historians (Ball and Bell, 2013; Bell, 2017; Williams, 2013, 2016; Wallace, Harrison and Brunsdon, 2017), that it was clearly the case that there were *some* women working as film and television technicians; however, they were not actively encouraged to enter and participate in the industry to the same extent as their male counterparts.

The autumn 1958 issue of the Academy's journal is a particularly rich source for thinking through issues of access, and barriers to opportunity, insofar as it dedicated to the issue of training and 'ways into the industry'. In the editorial note, it is made clear that the material covered in the journal is a direct result of the 1956 debates within the academy on the issue of training, and its purpose is to open up that discussion with interested parties. Moreover, it provides more context for the discussions between the Academy and the colleges detailed above:

The British Film Academy... considers that the revival of a proper system of training for the film technician should be regarded as a matter of priority by the industry. In 1956 following encouraging meetings with the producer associations the Council of the Academy set up a special Joint Training Committee with the ACTT to consider the matter.⁴⁴

The opening article of the 1958 issue on training by R.K Neilson Baxter (a documentary filmmaker) details various training initiatives in operation across the world. These include, Japan, Russia, Italy, and the US, which are employed as a means to illustrate the unsuccessful past ventures in the UK. The article indicates that the Academy's global outlook and awareness around issues of training dates back to its earliest years of operation, even though their training initiatives encompassing other parts of the world did not develop until much later. Baxter provides a comprehensive account of a four-year training programme at a

private university in Japan, which offered courses in 'film art, the history of motion pictures, the theory of film technique, the study of films, film appreciation and criticism' in addition to other practical courses such as acoustics, lighting, sound recording'. His assessment of this particular approach to training is that it is simply too time consuming, and will fail to produce high quality technicians quickly. Instead, he observes:

Most of the apparatus which is used in film-making is not difficult to use. If you have any skill in your hands at all, you can learn to load a magazine in a day; use a joiner in an hour, a moviola in two days; read an exposure meter in half a day.⁴⁸

Though aware that such a position might cause offense to those technicians working in the industry, he writes 'now I shall be riddled with bullets', Baxter continues his polemic by arguing that one could

spend the next five or ten years learning by sheer repetition of these comparatively simple tasks, to do them more efficiently; to organise yourself so that you are not caught in an embarrassing tangle of uncontrollable celluloid; to do even the most menial and routine job perfectly...Then he begins to be a technician. And no course, no schooling, no formal training will teach him this fact⁴⁹

Such a position seems at odds with the Academy's commitment to implementing rigorous training for technicians. If these skills could not be taught, then what value could a training scheme – particularly one attached to an established higher education institution - have? For Baxter, there was a distinction to be made between 'technicians' and 'creators' since 'it is unlikely that the same man will have the qualities of both'. Resultantly, he maintained that 'Selection is more important than training. There is an innate quality which makes a chap a filmmaker. If it exists it can be developed, fostered, encouraged'. Baxter's provocation reproduces the assumption that 'talent' is a natural ability that cannot be acquired through

training – though it can be refined - and in so doing risks obscuring the social dispositions that make the journey into the industry a lot smoother for those with a certain level of social, economic and cultural capital. Thus, the question of what value these training schemes could have becomes bound up with the issue of access. How could a training scheme serve to produce highly skilled practitioners, while at the same time honouring the Academy's commitment to 'inclusivity', if only certain candidates possessed the innate quality that makes a 'chap' a filmmaker? In an attempt to work through this question, the Journal includes three separate articles from some of the institutions the Academy approached about its proposal for a training initiative: the Regent Street Polytechnic (later the Polytechnic of Central London and now the University of Westminster), the London School of Film Technique (later the London Film School) and the Royal College of Art. As Duncan Petrie has documented in detail, this was a period in which the education of British film-makers, and who was to lead on it, was a lively and contested focus of discussion across the media industries (Petrie 2011; Petrie and Stoneman 2014). The 1958 edition of the Journal reveals the way in which each of these three institutions details its approach to training, and either implicitly or explicitly addresses concerns over the legitimacy of their teaching provision and its commitment (or lack thereof) to increasing access to the industry.

At the time of publication, plans for the Polytechnic to introduce their two-year course on Film Production endorsed by the BFA, ACTT and BFPA were still looking likely. Those plans include establishing not only 'a full-time course but also part-time day course and evening classes for young people already engaged in the industry'. ⁵² If this were not evidence enough of its commitment to inclusivity, the article is also keen to stress that for most full-time and part-time day course students, the course would be free. The Royal College of Art seems less concerned with inclusivity, and indeed, shares Baxter's sentiment that 'selection' is crucial in ensuring 'quality' of candidate: 'The successes which the college

has enjoyed since the war are primarily due to the highly selective recruitment of advanced students from all over the country which it is in a position to command.'53 Such a position perhaps explains the absence of the RCA in earlier discussions.

The London School of Film Technique article, however, confronted some of the more difficult questions surrounding the sustainability of training programmes, and the attendant over supply of labour within the industry. Its solution to this predicament was that a governing body representing the film and television industries should be set up to take responsibility for training: 'It is hoped that the London School of Film Technique will eventually be taken over by a body set up by the Film and Television Industries, since it is felt that it would be negative to limit the School's development by one or other of these fields'. ⁵⁴ Thus, the London School of Film Technique underscores the necessity of a more reciprocal relationship between the film and television industries in order to create sustainable, quality training for practitioners.

The Society of Film and Television Arts, 1958-1976

On 15 April 1958, a paper was circulated by the BFA to its members setting out their relationship with the Guild, and on 9 June of that year, the first joint meeting of the Academy and the Guild was held. Minutes from the Guild's records on this meeting state that an amalgamation of the Guild and the Academy was discussed, and that there was a "mood of caution" on the part of the Guild.⁵⁵ Four months later, however, on 14 October, an extraordinary meeting was convened to discuss the amalgamation of two organizations into the Society of Screen Arts, and on 12 December 1958 the inaugural meeting of the Society of Film and Television Arts (SFTA), as it was initially known, was held at Buckingham Palace. The SFTA was formally incorporated on 31 December 1955; within a mere seven months, then, the merger of the two institutions was a *fait accompli*.

The first annual meeting of SFTA was held on 27 May, 1959, and was described as being 'very successful' despite 'grumblings from old members'. 56 The discrepancy between descriptions of this meeting within the Guild minutes suggests that not all members were in favour of the merger, and this is also in evident in the fact that three distinct organisational entities remained: the "Society", the "Academy" and the "Guild". The Academy ceased operating as a separate entity at the end of 1959, and the final minutes recorded are from early 1960. In effect, then, the Academy as it was became the Society of Film and Television (SFTA). The Guild minutes, however, remained a distinct entity from the Society minutes for a further decade, until the end of the 1960s. Continued tensions between the two sectors characterised the early years of the SFTA, to the extent that in 1961 a special sub-committee, also known as the "committee of four", was established to 'find a modus vivendi by which the society may continue to work.'57 The original members of the "committee of four" were James Archibald, Richard Attenborough, Richard Cawston and Peter Graham Scott, with James Brodin and Charles Frend as alternates.⁵⁸ The sub-committee's first report stated they 'feel strongly that the continuance of a virile society is essential for the future of television and film', making it clear that both sectors must continue to work together to ensure their survival.⁵⁹ The report stressed that a 'united body of informed film and television opinion should exist among those creative inspiration in both fields'. 60 However, initial proposals by the sub-committee were not accepted by the Guild, and in June 1961 the Society's minutes record that the Guild Council had asserted that the dissolution of the Guild was still not acceptable to them. 61 The SFTA's minutes indicate that strained relations between the two groups continued beneath the surface for some time, and that resistance to the amalgamation was, in part, due to a lack of understanding amongst Guild members as to "what the Society stood for".62

During this period of on-going tensions, the SFTA developed an even-handed approach to implementing the integration of the two institutions. This is evident in a number of ways. Firstly, a commitment to power sharing is illustrated by early discussions regarding the structural composition of the SFTA, in which it was decided that 'the Society should still be run by a Council of 14. This 14 should be made up of 7 film and 7 television members. Each section should elect a Deputy Chairman of Council who should be responsible for considering and making recommendations to full Council concerning matters relating to film and television respectively. 63 Secondly, the membership was of the SFTA was divided equally between film and television personnel, even though the membership of the Academy had been larger than the membership of the Guild before the Society was formed. In 1958, the year prior to the merger, it was noted that membership of the Guild had increased from 87 to 165 members, whereas Academy membership was approximately three times this size.⁶⁴ Thirdly, an egalitarian approach is evident in the way that the role of Chair of the SFTA alternated between film and television members (Fig. 1). This sharing of power illustrated a genuine attempt on both sides to value each other as equal partners, despite the animosity that existed between them. The aspiration to display an egalitarian ethos was, however, somewhat undercut by the classed and gendered privilege characterising the backgrounds of this early cohort of BAFTA Chairs. Not only were they all men (the first female Chair being Hilary Bevan Jones in 2006) but they were almost all from middle- and upper-class backgrounds, and counted amongst their numbers a lord and a baronet. 65 All ten men were educated either at independent (private) schools or attended grammar schools, and over half went to university at a time when this accounted for less than 2% of the British population (Dyhouse, 2007). The table below therefore illustrates the institutionalised classed and gendered privilege represented by these men, despite their determined endeavour to bring the

competing media industries together and implement egalitarian training opportunities within them.

Year	SFTA Chair	Industry role
1959-60	Michael Balcon	Film producer
1960	Bill Ward	Television producer
1961-62	Peter de Sarigny	Film producer and screenwriter
1962-63	(Baronet) Anthony Havelock-Allan	Film producer and screenwriter
1964	James Bredin	Television director
1965	(Lord) Michael Birkett	Film producer and director
1966	Christopher Morahan	Television producer and director
1967	Edgar Anstey	Documentary film-maker
1968	Peter Morley	Film producer and screenwriter
1969-71	Richard Attenborough	Actor and film director

Fig. 1: Table of SFTA Chairs and the industries they were affiliated with, 1959-71

A fourth indication of the Society's commitment to fostering collaboration between the two industries is reflected in the reconfigured membership of the Journal's editorial board: Robert Barr (BBC journalist), Peter de Sarigny (film producer and screenwriter), Roger Manvell (screenwriter), James. H. Lawrie (film producer), Kay Mander (documentary director) and Vivian Milroy (film and television producer). The inclusion of Barr and Milroy clearly highlights the effort being made to balance the steering of the new Society by including members of both the Academy and the Guild. Finally, there was a balanced approach to organising the newly configured journal. The first joint journal of the SFTA was published in the winter of 1959-60, and included an editorial statement that proposed

the Journal will be concerned in future with both films and television, and in general each issue will give the greater part of its space to a single subject which we hope will be of use and interest to those who do creative work in either fields, or in both.⁶⁶

The theme of the first issue of the SFTA Journal was a discussion of video-tape, thus reflecting the Society's commitment to exploring issues which affected both the film and television industries alike.⁶⁷ These public-facing conciliatory gestures were also maintained in the choice of subject for the second issue, which focused on film and television news and was published in the spring of 1960. Following this, the choice of theme for each issue alternated between subjects that were of interest to either the film or television sectors.

The institutional culture of the early SFTA is therefore characterised by an outward commitment to a power-sharing, democratic ethos which, although flawed in some respects, is also evident in their other activities around the promotion of the media industries in postwar Britain. We suggest that, in addition to the primary economic imperative already outlined, the SFTA's aspirations towards an egalitarian post-war ethos discussed above are inflected in these events and procedures. Indeed, studies of parallel cultural institutions, such as the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, home to the Oscars, serve to reinforce how unique BAFTA is in this respect.⁶⁸ Thus, although the SFTA was initially fraught with significant tensions, it eventually coalesced after the first decade, and on 18th April, 1968 the decision was taken to dissolve the Guild and set up one SFTA Council to represent both sectors.

Conclusions

This reconstruction of the early institutional history of BAFTA offers a significant expansion of our understanding of the key issues characterising the British CCIs during the post-war period. Analysis of material from the BAFTA archive, together with supplementary materials

from other archival sources, has facilitated a revision of our understanding of the relations between film and television as two distinct and at times antagonistic industries in the midtwentieth century. This 'institutional archaeology' offers new insights into the role played by the SFTA in uniting the film and television industries, enabling us to understand the tensions that existed between the two industries and how these were transcended through an egalitarian turn towards greater social equality and mobility. The archives demonstrate that, despite artistic and cultural antagonisms, the two industries worked together collaboratively to create the SFTA and to set up training schemes and other initiatives that prioritised the prospects of young people working within the industries. However, there is also evidence that despite these benevolent intentions, their approach to improving access and equality within the media industries was underpinned by historical gendered and classed inequalities that informed these initiatives. Thus, in constructing the first sustained analysis of the ways in which the film and television industries intersected around issues of labour during this period, this article reveals an historical disjuncture between the existing classed and gendered privileges characterising these industries, and the extent to which these were partly ameliorated by a post-war impetus to improve address issues around (in)equality in terms of access and training.

In addressing the missing narrative around post-war cross-industrial training initiatives with the British CCIs, this study also opens up other avenues of research around the relationship between this historical moment and the study of the labour market within the media industries today. Contemporary accounts of labour and the new creative economy suggest a disconnect between the image of the creative industries as a 'cool, creative and egalitarian' sector and the lived experience of those working in cultural production. Changes in economy and policy are rightly acknowledged as contributing factors to the increasing inequality at the level of gender, race, class, disability and so on. However, there is a danger

of recognising these issues as specific to the contemporary period when an historical approach may, and we contend does, reveal that some of the issues (though perhaps intensified in the contemporary neoliberal moment) have much deeper roots. Moreover, these issues are frequently more difficult to observe when they have been normalised over a period time, or even relegated to the past. Further explorations of BAFTA's archives thus have the potential to render visible the frustrations, the pleasures and the difficult conditions under which many working in the industry have operated under. This article indicates that through excavating and curating these histories we can continue to advance our understanding of the contemporary creative industries, and the complexity of issues surrounding inequality and limited access which are historically rooted.

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Notes

¹ This has included research on studios such as Gainsborough (Cook, 2009), Gaumont-British (Ryall, 1997; Murphy 2009) and Ealing (Barr, 1998; Harper and Porter, 2003), producers such as Balcon (Street, 2002) and Klinger (Spicer, 2014) and institutions, such as the BFI (Nowell-Smith and Dupin, 2012) and more recently, the UKFC (Doyle, Schlesinger, Boyle and Kelly, 2015).

² While the history of television and its relationship with the film industry remains largely unexplored, there are a few notable exceptions that focus on carefully delineated moments, such as Holmes (2004) and Andrews (2014).

³ Data was gathered from these documents by using the internal search engine on BAFTA's archives and inputting the terms 'television', 'training' and then focussing more specifically on the organisations and actors that had been central to the decision-making process, eg, George Elvin, the ACTT.

⁴ From the1990s onwards BAFTA's remit also included video games, though this is not a primary focus of this study.

⁵ Found at: https://www.uea.ac.uk/film-television-media/research/research-themes/british-film-and-tv-studies/british-cinema/oral-history-project

⁶ Found at: http://mrc-catalogue.warwick.ac.uk/records/BEU

⁷ Found at: https://historyproject.org.uk/

⁸ BFA minutes, 1948, p.3. London: BAFTA archives.

⁹ British Film Academy Quarterly, July 1949, p.10. London: BAFTA archives.

¹⁰ The Journal of the British Film Academy, spring 1957, p. 4. London: BAFTA archives.

¹¹ There are also discussions, for example, around television lowering technical and artistic standards within the industry, BFA minutes, 1957, p. 342; 1958, p.350.

¹² British Film Academy Quarterly, February 1952, p.5. London: BAFTA archives.

¹³ BFA minutes, 1957, p. 342. London: BAFTA archives.

¹⁴ Film and Television Technician March 1957, p. 42. New York. The Museum of Modern Art Library.

¹⁵ BFA minutes, 1958, p.350. London: BAFTA archives.

¹⁶ BFA minutes, 1954, p. 264. London: BAFTA archives.

¹⁷ BFA minutes, 1958, p.355. London: BAFTA archives.

¹⁸ GTPD minutes, 1958, p.150. London: BAFTA archives.

- ¹⁹ BFA minutes, **1948**, p.55, p.78; **1949**, p. 87, p.96, p.104, p.107, p.110, p.112; **1951**, p.152, p.153, p.159, p.165, p.173; **1952**, p.192, p.195, p.197; **1953**, p.213, p.214, p.222, p.223, p.225, p.226; **1954**, p.253, p.254. **1956**, p.298; **1957**, p.342; **1958**, p.350, p.252.
- ²⁰ BFA minutes, 1952, p. 197. London: BAFTA archives.
- ²¹ BFA minutes, 1952, p. 197; p.194. London: BAFTA archives.
- ²² BFA minutes, 1952, p. 198; 1953, p. 223. London: BAFTA archives.
- ²³ BFA minutes, 1957, p.344. London: BAFTA archives.
- ²⁴ Other discussion points within meetings suggest some concern over the financial security of the Guild. Complaints over the cost of the Annual Television Ball are recorded in a September 1957 meeting.

Additionally, various initiatives designed to 'augment the Guild's income' are proposed in January 1958.

- ²⁵ For context, the Annual Television Ball often cost nearly £1500 to host.
- ²⁶ GTPD minutes, p.154. London: BAFTA archives.
- ²⁷ According to minutes of the 19th December meeting, 'it was felt that the guild was not yet big enough to approach the Duke of Edinburgh as Honorary President. Maybe next year'.
- ²⁸ These date back to November 1947.
- ²⁹ BFA minutes, 1956, p. 304. London: BAFTA archives.
- ³⁰ The Journal of the British Film Academy, autumn 1958, p.11. London: BAFTA archives.
- ³¹ BFA minutes, 1956, p. 301. London: BAFTA archives.
- ³² BFA minutes, 1956, p. 301. London: BAFTA archives.
- ³³ BFA minutes, 1956, p. 311. London: BAFTA archives.
- ³⁴ ACT became ACTT in 1956 when the union was expanded to incorporate commercial television technicians.
- ³⁵ BFA minutes, 1956, p. 311. London: BAFTA archives.
- ³⁶ BFA minutes, 1956, p. 311. London: BAFTA archives.
- ³⁷ BFA minutes, 1957, p. 335. London: BAFTA archives.
- ³⁸ BFA minutes, 1957, p. 359. London: BAFTA archives.
- ³⁹ GTPA minutes, 1958, p.123. London: BAFTA archives.
- ⁴⁰ SFA minutes, 1961, p. 83. London: BAFTA archives.
- ⁴¹ Of the 720 interviews archived on the British Entertainment History website, 395 interviewees claim they worked in one industry alone, while 272 claim they worked across two or more industries. The rest do not specify. In reality, many of those who identify as working only in the film industry also offer details of work done in the theatre or television industries.
- ⁴² BFA minutes, 1956, p. 318. London: BAFTA archives.
- ⁴³ BFA minutes, 1956, p. 317. London: BAFTA archives.
- ⁴⁴ The Journal of the British Film Academy, autumn, 1958, p.1. London: BAFTA archives.
- ⁴⁵ The Journal of the British Film Academy, autumn, 1958, p.2. London: BAFTA archives.
- ⁴⁶ For example, in the current form of BAFTA's Global Scholarship Schemes:

http://www.bafta.org/asia/initiatives/scholarships

- ⁴⁷ The Journal of the British Film Academy, autumn, 1958, p.2. London: BAFTA archives.
- ⁴⁸ The Journal of the British Film Academy, autumn, 1958, p.3. London: BAFTA archives.
- ⁴⁹ The Journal of the British Film Academy, autumn, 1958, p.3. London: BAFTA archives.
- ⁵⁰ The Journal of the British Film Academy, autumn, 1958, p.3. London: BAFTA archives.
- ⁵¹ The Journal of the British Film Academy, autumn, 1958, p.3. London: BAFTA archives.
- ⁵² The Journal of the British Film Academy, autumn, 1958, p.9. London: BAFTA archives. ⁵³ The Journal of the British Film Academy, autumn, 1958, p.12. London: BAFTA archives.
- ⁵⁴ The Journal of the British Film Academy, autumn, 1958, p.11. London: BAFTA archives.
- ⁵⁵ GTPD minutes, 1958, p.156. London: BAFTA archives.
- ⁵⁶ GTPD minutes, 1959, p.57. London: BAFTA archives.
- ⁵⁷ SFTA minutes, 1961, p. 82. London: BAFTA archives.
- ⁵⁸ SFTA minutes, 1961, p. 82. London: BAFTA archives. It is noted at the second committee meeting that Richard Attenborough had resigned (p.89)
- ⁵⁹ SFTA minutes, 1961, p. 89. London: BAFTA archives.
- ⁶⁰ SFTA minutes, 1961, p. 89. London: BAFTA archives.
- ⁶¹ SFTA minutes, 1961, p.86. London: BAFTA archives.
- ⁶² GTPD minutes, 16 January 1967, and SFTA minutes, 17 April 1967. London: BAFTA archives.
- ⁶³ SFTA minutes, 1961, p.89. London: BAFTA archives.

⁶⁴ GTPD minutes, 1958, p.135. There are no precise figures for Academy membership, but in 1955, for example, membership subscriptions (of £2, £5 or £10 per annum) were raising £4000 a year, suggesting a membership of approximately 400-700 individuals. SFA minutes, 1955, p.277. London: BAFTA archives.

⁶⁵ Michael Balcon was the exception to this rule, being the son of Jewish immigrants who experienced financial hardship in his early life.

⁶⁶ The Journal of the Society of Film and Television Arts, winter 1959-60, p.3. London: BAFTA archives.

⁶⁷ The Journal of the Society of Film and Television Arts, winter 1959-60, p.3. London: BAFTA archives.

⁶⁸ As Levy notes in *Oscar Fever* (2001), the creation of two separate academies for cinema and television in the US 'underlines both functional and symbolic differences ... in the United States, unlike other countries, film and television are still considered to be different media that perform different functions in popular culture' (Levy 2001: 33).