**Shadow Screens: Unmade, Unseen, and Unreleased Film and Television**

Conference co-organized by James Fenwick (Sheffield Hallam University) and Kieran Foster (University of Nottingham) and hosted by the Centre for Culture, Media and Society at Sheffield Hallam University, 23th and 24th May 2022

Final report for BAFTSS Event Grant Scheme

*Shadow Screens* was a two-day conference held at Sheffield Hallam University. The conference examined the phenomena of unmade, unseen, and unreleased films, an area of burgeoning scholarly enquiry across the broad spectrum of screen studies. As co-convenors, it is a topic that we have previously explored: Kieran Foster’s research has dealt explicitly with the theme of unmade Hammer films, drawing on the Hammer Script Archive at De Montfort University; James Fenwick’s research has investigated the unmade films of Stanley Kubrick and unmade films of other filmmakers in archives such as the Kirk Douglas Papers at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, the Production Code Records at the Margaret Herrick Library, and the John Boorman Papers at Indianan University. We’ve also previously published the co-edited volume [*Shadow Cinema: The Historical and Production Contexts of Unmade Films*](https://www.bloomsbury.com/us/shadow-cinema-9781501351594/)(Fenwick, Foster, Eldridge 2020), which was the basis for this conference.

Sensing that there was a broader community of academics interested in the topic, we decided to instigate what is one of the first international conferences on unmade, unseen, and unreleased films. The conference call for papers was purposely broad in order to encourage a wide array of perspectives on the topic, a reflection of the fledgling nature of the field as well as the case study approach that currently dominates. And we did not want to narrow perspectives to one particular method, national viewpoint, or theoretical framework. The conference was intended to prompt debate about what constitutes the unmade, unseen, unreleased, how it can be studied, the implications for existing fields and, in particular, the impact on our understanding of produced, seen, and released films and television.

The BAFTSS event funding was specifically for a keynote speaker, Dr Hannah Hamad (Cardiff University). The keynote was titled ‘Hollywood Film Production, the Yorkshire Ripper, and the UK Women’s Movement: MGM, United Artists, and the Non-Productions of *The Yorkshire Ripper* (1980) and *Hail Mary* (1981)’ and examined unmade biopics of serial killer Peter Sutcliffe a.k.a. the “Yorkshire Ripper”. As Dr Hamad states in the abstract for the keynote,

One aim of this research therefore is to demonstrate some of the new possibilities enabled for film history and feminist cultural history by the opening up of film archives and the archives of filmmakers and producers to research by scholars. While another is to showcase some of the possibilities that feminist activism enables for intervening in the formation of damaging cultural myths that turn ‘Ripper’ figures into folk heroes. And that thus contribute to the perpetuation of a rape culture in which the enactment of male violence against women lends itself readily to narrativization, in easily marketable forms such as theatrical feature films.

Dr Hamad contributed to the edited collection *Shadow Cinema*, with a chapter about the unmade Yorkshire Ripper films.

The conference also featured a keynote by Professor Sue Vice on unmade Holocaust films, titled ‘Versions of the Unmade: Scripts, Drafts and Reels’. The conference was a hybrid format across two days, though with most delegates choosing to attend in person. The programme for the conference is attached, which provides details of the speakers and talks.

Conversations are now underway about future publication outputs from the conference. This includes a potential special journal issue, to be co-edited by Sue Vice, James Fenwick, and Kieran Foster, on unmade, unseen, and unreleased Holocaust films, which was a major theme of the conference. James Fenwick and Kieran Foster are also finalising a new edited collection, *Studying the Unmade, Unseen, and Unreleased: Histories, Theories, Methods*, for the Intellect book series [*Unmade Film and Television*](https://www.intellectbooks.com/unmade-film-and-television).

The conference convenors wish to extend their thanks to the BAFTSS Event Funding Scheme for the financial support for *Shadow Screens*, which enabled us to host a vital, important, and timely keynote from Dr Hannah Hamad, as well as to reduce the overall delegate fee.

**Conference programme – click image below to download:**

