

CROSS-DRESSING, SEXUAL AND GENDER DISSENT IN PRE-SOVIET CINEMA (1908–1920)

SUBJECT

The dissertation project traces cross-dressed and non-heterosexual characters in early films produced before the emergence of the Soviet film industry. I analyze these characters and explore how generations of film historians dealt with the depictions of what we now could define as queer subtexts and gender play. I develop a critique of the established pre-Soviet film history canon, which disproportionately focuses on preserved films, and investigate alternative paths in its vast cinematic legacy.

RESEARCH QUESTION

CROSS-DRESSED AND NON-HETEROSEXUAL CHARACTERS OF PRE-SOVIET CINEMA – WHAT WERE THEY LIKE, HOW WERE THEY PERCEIVED BY THEIR CONTEMPORARIES, AND WHAT IS THEIR PLACE IN THE EARLY FILM HISTORY?

APPROACH

This project aims to outline the conventions behind the early screen representation of several types of performances:

- cross-gender casted characters,
- characters temporarily disguising their gender identity,
- non-heterosexual characters, including the ones from literally works adapted for the screen.



A promotional still for Klub nnavstvennosti / Morality Club (Petr Chardynin, 1915)
Vestnik kinematografii 1915 (113): 4