

Anthony McKenna and Andrew Spicer, University of the West of England. “The Creative Producer: Michael Klinger”

This paper argues that it is the producer who plays the central creative role in film-making, despite having been marginalised within Film Studies that has privileged the director’s role. However, the producer is often the one person involved in the making of a film in its entirety, from its inception through to its exhibition and promotion. Focussing on the producer’s role, therefore, can hope to understand films as complex (and collaborative) creative processes rather than simply as ‘texts’.

These arguments will be substantiated through detailed consideration of the work of the British producer Michael Klinger, who made 32 films between 1960 and 1980. Klinger’s creative ‘genius’ was to straddle the normally separate spheres of the internationalist action-adventure film (notably *Gold*, 1974), the medium-budget crime thriller (e.g. *Get Carter*, 1970), exploitation cinema (from *Naked as Nature Intended*, 1961 through to the ‘Confessions Of’ series, 1974-76), and the art-house film: Klinger produced Polanski’s *Repulsion* (1965) and *Cul-de-sac* (1966), and Chabrol’s *Les liens de sang* (*Blood Relatives*, 1975). Through the range of his productions, Klinger became the most successful independent British film-maker during the 1970s, but has not received any critical attention, typical of the conventional neglect of producers.

In making the case for Klinger’s creative authorship, the paper will draw extensively on the Michael Klinger Papers, an archive housed at the University of the West of England, which contains information about aspects of film production not normally available for inspection and analysis, including itemised production costs, film grosses, distribution rights, company profit and loss accounts, annotated draft screenplays and extensive correspondence with various personnel, companies (including American studios), and institutions. The paper will seek to demonstrate that it is only through the use of archive material that the normally invisible role of the producer can be examined and understood.

Andrew Spicer has published extensively on British cinema including *Typical Men* (2003) and *Sydney Box* (2006) and is on the editorial board of the *Journal of British Cinema and Television*. **Anthony McKenna’s** PhD was on Joseph E. Levine. They are working on a joint research project to catalogue and interpret the Klinger archive.