2000; Archaeology of the Moving Image, UIMP Valencia, 1996; Moving Images, Culture and the Mind, University of Copenhagen, 1997; Historical Reception Studies, University of Bergen, 1992. Enthusiastic comments and additional 'evidence' from audiences outside academe have also been offered at talks given at the Forum, Heversham, Cumbria; the Storey Institute, Lancaster; and Glasgow Film Theatre.

In the course of the research, numerous libraries and archives have been consulted: these are listed in full in the Appendix. I am enormously grateful for the efficiency and helpfulness of their response to what must sometimes have seemed obscure requests.

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Picture acknowledgements: Cover – still from *The Long Day Closes*, directed by Terence Davies, reproduction courtesy of BFI/FilmFour and the Ronald Grant Archive. Frontispiece – photograph by Humphrey Spender, Bolton Museums, Art Gallery and Aquarium, Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council; p.86 Boris Karloff in *The Mask of Fu Manchu*, BFI Film Stills, Posters and Designs; p.114 Peggy Kent with friends, collection of Peggy Kent; p.119 Deanna Durbin in *Three Smart Girls*, BFI Film Stills, Posters and Designs; p.122 Sheila McWhinnie and colleagues, collection of Sheila McWhinnie; p.142 The Astoria, Finsbury Park, courtesy Cinema Theatre Association; p.159 Lili Damita, collection of Denis Houlston; p.160 Madeleine Carroll, collection of Denis Houlston; p.163 Marlene Dietrich in *Blue Angel*, courtesy the Ronald Grant Archive; p.199 *Maytime* publicity, courtesy Half Brick Images. Extracts from Crown-copyright records in the Public Record Office appear by permission of Her Majesty's Stationery Office.

Last, but absolutely not least, I owe an enormous debt of thanks to all the 1930 cinemagoers who so generously shared their memories of 'the pictures' in interviews, questionnaires and letters; and to the staff who worked on and sustained the project between 1994 and 1996, without whose skill and dedication successful completion of the ethnographic research would have been impossible. Joan Simpson, the project's secretary, transcribed hundreds of hours of interviews; and Research Fellow Valentina Bold travelled many hundreds of miles to

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Cinema Memory as Cultural Memory

THIS book traces a path through social history and the history of cinema, through ideas about popular culture and its place in people's everyday lives, through memories, life stages and life narratives. The journey begins where personal and collective memory meet in stories about cinema and cinemagoing and about what these meant, and still mean, in the lives of the first movie-made generation[1] – those men and women who grew up in the 1930s, when 'going to the pictures' was Britain's favourite spare-time activity. The stories, memories and histories in the chapters which follow emerge from a wide-ranging ethnohistorical inquiry into 1930s cinema culture, conducted over a period of some ten years.

In the 1930s, Britain boasted the highest annual per capita cinema attendance in the world; and cinema's popularity and ubiquity increased steadily throughout the decade, with admissions rising from 903 million in 1934 (the first year for which reliable figures are available) to 1027 million in 1940 and a concurrent increase in the number of cinema seats per head of population. It has been estimated that some 40 per cent of the British population went to the pictures once a week with a further 25 per cent going twice weekly or more. If this is accurate, something like two-thirds of the population were regular and frequent cinemagoers: ballroom dancing was the only pastime that came anywhere close to

In his authoritative study of cinema and British society in the 1930s, *The Age of the Dream Palace*, Jeffrey Richards sets out an extensive overview of contemporary data on patterns of cinema attendance, concluding that 'while a large proportion of the population at large went to the cinema occasionally, the enthusiasts were young, working-class, urban and more often female than male'.[3] Richards also notes that as the decade progressed, cinema widened its appeal to the middle classes. This process of embourgeoisement went hand-in-hand with the economy's recovery from the recession of the early 1930s, the development of middle-class suburbs on the fringes of British cities and a boom in the building of 'supercinemas' in these new suburbs and in existing town and city centres.

Often at the leading edge of architecture and design, supercinemas offered – aside from respectability – a luxurious entertainment experience, bringing a taste of the modern and 'essentially democratic' England of J.B. Priestley's by-passes, suburban villas and cocktail bars to the less affluent parts of Britain.[4] And yet cinema was not really a democratising force in these years. Social distinctions within the audience persisted everywhere, manifesting themselves in different types of cinema, from the 'fleapits' at the bottom of the scale to the supercinemas at the top. They are evident, too, in the rigorously stratified organisation of auditorium space reflected in ticket prices, which even within one cinema might range from as little as 3d (just over 1p) right up to 2/6d (12½p). Nonetheless, it is certainly true that for the British population at large, 'the pictures' was as familiar and taken-for-granted a part of daily life as television is today.

By 1930, Hollywood had long established its dominance over Britain's cinema screens. Even though screenings of British pictures exceeded the legally imposed quota and locally-made films were booked for longer periods than foreign ones, throughout the 1930s something like seven in every ten films shown in Britain were American.[5] Given this state of affairs, British cinema culture was far from synonymous with British cinema. If the influence of Hollywood on British filmgoers' tastes in films and stars was apparent, however, British tastes were highly distinctive.[6] Films aside, a cinema culture is in any case shaped by the contexts and the manner in which films are consumed, and by the people who consume them. The British cinemagoing experience was part of a range of activities, circumstances and experiences peculiar to people's daily lives, and the cinema culture – or cultures – of 1930s Britain was

We know about the demographics of British cinemagoing in the 1930s, and we know broadly who the keenest consumers of films were. We also have some idea about British cinemagoers' distinctive preferences in films and stars, and which kinds of films were most popular in Britain during the 1930s. And yet in an important sense we hardly know these people at all. The picturegoing heyday of the 1930s generation lies within living memory, but the cinemagoers' own stories remain largely unrecorded. This state of affairs is in some measure attributable to a condescending attitude towards the 'ordinary' cinemagoer; for in the 1930s, certainly, the stereotypical portrait of the film fan was far from complimentary. She (for the fan is always assumed to be female) is a silly, empty-headed teenager, thoroughly duped by the cheap dreams purveyed by the picture palaces.[7] It is hardly likely that filmgoers would have pictured themselves in such an unflattering light: this is clearly the tone of voice of the 'concerned' social commentator. What, then, did British film lovers of the 1930s, male and female, bring to their cinemagoing? What did they take away from it? How did going to the pictures fit in with other aspects of their daily lives: school, work, leisure, friendship, courtship? In what ways was this generation formed by cinema? How was cinema experienced by, and what did the pictures mean in the lives of, the 1930s generation?

This book is not just about British cinema culture, nor is it only about people who went to the pictures in a past that may now seem distant. The questions that arise as soon as 'ordinary' media users are taken into account as makers of cultural history are more fundamental, touching on ways of thinking about films, cinemas, and cinema cultures of all kinds, past and present. Pivotal here is the point at which people come into contact with cinema – the moment, that is, of the reception and consumption of films. How do films and their consumers interact? And what, if anything, can we know about this interaction if it has taken place in the past?

These questions may be approached from several disciplinary and methodological angles. A humanities-based study of cinema, for example, will take films as the starting point for exploring the cinema-consumer relationship. As a discipline, film studies models itself largely on literary studies, and to this extent is predominantly text-centred: films as texts are its primary objects of inquiry, and textual analysis its method

of spectatorship in the cinema are predominantly about a spectator addressed or constructed by the film text – the 'spectator-in-the text'.[9] The film text remains central, then, and the question at issue is how a film 'speaks to' its spectators, how the meanings implicit in its textual operations may be brought to light. This has nothing at all to do with how the people watching a film might respond to it.

Some confusion arises here because in everyday usage the terms spectator, viewer and audience are more-or-less interchangeable. It is therefore worth restating the distinction between the implied spectator of text-based criticism, the spectator-in-the-text, and the 'social' audience, the flesh and blood human beings who go to cinemas to see films. The social audience is the province of social scientific inquiry, of media audience research and similar types of investigation. However, while one or two sociologists made forays into the study of cinema and its audiences during its heyday as a popular entertainment medium in the 1940s, there is little interest in this area of inquiry among today's media sociologists, for whom contemporary mass media like television are the main focus of attention.[10]

These diverse objects of inquiry – texts and audiences – produce distinctive conceptualisations, methodologies and research procedures. To the extent that film studies privileges the film text, for example, it will downplay not only the reception of films by social audiences but also the social-historical milieux and industrial and institutional settings in which films are produced and consumed.[11] The practice of film analysis has been called into question by critics who find its preoccupation with subtexts and hidden meanings antithetical to the spirit of a popular entertainment medium, irrelevant to the experience of the 'average' cinemagoer, or overweening in its assumption that a spectatorial engagement is somehow built into a film's textual organisation.[12] However, if film analysis is sometimes conducted as if films were not produced and consumed by people at particular times and places, social science-based studies of media and their audiences routinely sideline media texts, treating them as mere epiphenomena of their social, cultural, or industrial conditions of existence.

This division of labour produces a conceptual and methodological dualism of text and context – a divorcing of film texts from their industrial, cultural and historical contexts, and vice versa, and this weakens studies of cinema and other media by ensuring that accounts of media texts and their consumption and reception remain [illegible]

One way of tackling the text-context dualism is to treat texts and contexts alike as discursive practices: thus film texts may be conceptualised as discourses caught up in and informing contexts, and vice versa. This approach is applicable equally to contemporary and to historical studies of media reception.[13]

As a counterweight to text-centred approaches to film spectatorship, Janet Staiger, for example, has proposed that the historical study of film reception could productively adopt a dialectical and 'context-activated' approach:

> the reception studies I seek would be historical, would recognise the dialectics of evidence and theory, and would take up a critical distance on the *relations* between spectators and texts. It would not interpret texts but would attempt a historical *explanation* of the event of interpreting a text.[14]

For evidence, Staiger favours a range of historical sources of information on responses to films, most notably contemporary reviews; and these are then treated as discourses shaping the reception of films. This method offers insight into the discursive features of a film's historical moment, which indeed is what Staiger understands by the context of a film's reception. Rather than the film text proposing the manner of its reception, the film's discursive context performs this work. However, while rightly emphasising the contextual aspects of film consumption, this approach offers no access to the historical social audience.

If neither text-centred nor context-activated approaches to the study of film reception admit the present-day or the historical social audience, and if media audience research admits little else, how might the cinemagoer's experience be investigated in its interaction with films and reception contexts? Media audience research takes a variety of forms, ranging from large-scale investigations based around structured interviews or pre-coded questionnaires through focus groups to small-scale studies involving depth interviews or participant observation. Inquiries into media use conducted within a cultural studies remit invariably adopt research methods at the qualitative end of the methodological spectrum. Borrowing from cultural anthropology, research of this type calls itself 'ethnographic'.

A dictionary definition of ethnography is 'the scientific description of nations or races of men, their customs, habits and differences'. The key word here is 'description', the presumption being that ethnographic

description can be conducted 'scientifically' only if the researcher has been fully immersed in the culture under observation. In its 'description of races and nations' sense, ethnographic inquiry today retains little of its former *raison-d'être* in a post-imperial context, and postmodernity forces issues around cultural otherness, intersubjectivity and the fragmentation of identities to the top of the ethnographer's agenda. A postmodern, post-imperial ethnography must necessarily engage with the dialogic and discursive aspects of ethnographic inquiry, and also accept that it produces new meanings alongside its 'thick description' and interpretation of the 'flow of social discourse'.[15] Furthermore, while holding to these tenets, it must reframe its objects. As James Clifford contends, a renewed ethnography will embrace 'diverse ways of thinking and writing about culture from a standpoint of participant observation'.[16] The object of ethnographic inquiry is no longer 'races and nations', then, but culture; and increasingly it is aspects of the researcher's own culture.

Cultural studies of contemporary media use have taken on board some of these protocols, notably a commitment to qualitative research and to giving serious attention to informants' accounts of their own worlds. To the extent that it is more catholic in its research methods than cultural anthropology and less self-conscious about the dialogic and discursive nature of ethnographic inquiry, though, cultural studies practices an attenuated version of ethnography.[17] As to its objects, with very rare exceptions, cultural studies ethnography concerns itself with contemporary life and contemporary, usually domestic, media. Among the exceptions, Jackie Stacey's study of the written memories of female cinemagoers of the 1940s and 1950s and Helen Taylor's work with female fans of the novel and the film *Gone With The Wind* have brought cultural studies-style ethnographic approaches to the study of historical media consumption.[18] This work may be described as historical ethnography; or, to appropriate another term from cultural anthropology, 'ethnohistory'.

Ethnohistory emerged as a distinct field of inquiry in the 1940s, its object being the historical study of non-literate cultures. This area had been neglected not only by cultural anthropology, which tends not to concern itself with history, but, because of the absence of written records in these cultures, by historians as well. Ethnohistory deployed ethnographic description and interpretation alongside oral historical inquiry and the historian's traditional source materials, in this instance documents

which are of greatest relevance to an historical study of film reception and consumption are, firstly, the use of oral accounts as a research resource and, secondly, the deployment of sources and research protocols of several different kinds. An ethnohistorical study of film reception will aim to keep several balls in play. Following Staiger, it will ideally adopt a dialectical, discursive, and context-aware approach to its source materials and data. Following Clifford and Geertz, it will respect informants as collaborators, and yet make no presumptions as to the transparency of their accounts. In the quest to transcend the text-context dualism, it will aim for inclusivity, bringing together issues around film texts and spectatorial engagements with questions relating to the social audience and the contexts of reception.

The stories, histories and memories in this book are the product of a wide-ranging ethnohistorical study of 1930s cinema culture, conducted over some ten years and involving three parallel sets of inquiries. These inquiries draw on the historian's traditional source materials, contemporary records of various kinds; on ethnographic-style inquiries among surviving cinemagoers of the 1930s; and on readings of selected 1930s films. Although historical, ethnographic and film-based investigations are normally conducted in separate disciplinary and methodological universes, the objective here is to follow the precepts of methodological triangulation, whereby more than one method is brought to bear on a single research problem. The three sets of inquiries have been conducted in parallel with the aim of producing an ethnohistorical account which encompasses all the various objects: the research design is set out in the Appendix. Taken on its own, each inquiry produces a different story; and while each story may be informative in its own right, and even offer new knowledge, it will fill in only a fraction of the picture. For a nuanced and integrated understanding of how cinema works historically, culturally and experientially, it is essential to work at the point where historical, ethnographic and textual stories meet.

The ethnographic element of this investigation consists of a groundbreaking piece of research whose aim is to enter imaginatively into the world of 1930s cinema culture by attending to the stories of those most closely involved, the cinemagoers themselves; and as such it raises conceptual and methodological issues germane to the entire ethnohistorical

of particular films and stars, say), for an ethnographic inquiry the experience of cinemagoing must be the core and the *raison-d'être*. In consequence, cinemagoers are involved in the research process as informants, and their accounts constitute both the engine and the product of investigation.

Ethnographic inquiry depends upon direct contact between researchers and informants, on building a relationship between them, and on researchers treating informants and their stories with respect. If the ideal type of this relationship is participant observation, less sustained qualitative research encounters – in-depth interviews, for example – also involve varying degrees of collaboration and shared productions of knowledge. As far as the principle of collaboration in a non-participant observation context is concerned, oral history interviews offer a good case in point.[19] But even at the other end of the qualitative spectrum, where researchers and informants do not necessarily meet but make contact in other ways, a dialogic process is still at work, and the research encounter will still combine elements of collaboration and maieusis: for in all degrees of ethnographic inquiry, besides actively listening the researcher acts as midwife to the informant's stories.

In ethnographic investigations in which informants are asked to recollect events from the past, their stories may acquire additional value as contributions to historical record. As cultural historian Alison Light observes, 'an understanding of any period might have new things to yield if it acknowledged other perspectives and positions in the culture'.[20] Adding the accounts of marginalised people to the historical record is an entirely worthwhile objective, and indeed is one of the aims of the present inquiry. But it is not its sole nor even its primary purpose; and in any case historical records grounded in remembering have their own distinctive status as evidence. Ethnographic material has been gathered here with the aim of understanding the meanings of cinema for its users and the place of filmgoing in people's everyday lives; to shed light on the ways in which cinema culture figures in history, society and experience; to revitalise and complicate current thinking about the relationship between cinema and its users, past and present; and, above all, to understand how cinema memory works, both in its own right and as a distinctive expression of cultural memory.

As part of the broader ethnohistorical investigation, ethnographic inquiry was undertaken in full recognition of the fact that, in dealing

memory texts, or recorded acts of remembering, and that particular questions arise concerning the evidential status of accounts which rely on remembering – and thus also on forgetting, selective memory and hindsight. However, memory is regarded here as neither providing access to, nor as representing, the past 'as it was'; the past, rather, is taken to be mediated, indeed produced, in the activity of remembering. When informants tell stories about their youthful filmgoing, they are producing memories in specific ways in a particular context, the research encounter. In other words, they are doing memory work: staging their memories, performing them.

Informants' accounts are consequently treated not only as data but also as discourse, as material for interpretation. Concern is as much with *how* people talk about their youthful picturegoing – with memory discourse – as with *what* they say about it – memory content. For an understanding of cultural memory, it is important to attend to the ways in which memory is produced in the activity of telling stories about the past, personal or shared; to the construction and narration of these memory stories; and in the present instance to the ways in which cinema figures in and shapes these memories. Analysis of ethnographic material is thus conducted on two levels: firstly, it is treated as data which generate insights into the place of cinemagoing and cinema culture in people's everyday lives in the 1930s; and secondly, it is read discursively for the light it sheds on the nature and workings of cinema memory. This inquiry, in other words, is as much about memory as it is about cinema. It is about the interweaving of the two as cinema memory.

This is not a predictive or a deductive process. As Clifford Geertz observes, ethnography's thick description and interpretation are continuous with one another, the ethnographer's 'double task' being

> to uncover the conceptual structures that inform our subjects' acts, the 'said' of social discourse, and to construct a system of analysis in whose terms what is generic to those structures, what belongs to them because they are what they are, will stand out against the other determinants of human behaviour.[21]

One of the central aims of the present inquiry is to observe the characteristic tropes of memory, of cinema memory, as they present themselves in informants' testimonies. Approached inductively these rich and diverse testimonies yield a limited, but recurrent and pervasive,

impersonal and past/present. They differ from each other most markedly in the degree or the manner in which the informant implicates herself or himself in the story and/or its narration.

Impersonal discourse, for example, is characteristically delivered in the third person, distancing the informant from both the content of the account and its narration. This is the register of a witness momentarily standing aside from 'what happened' ('what stupid teenagers we were!'); or, where deployed throughout a testimony, it marks an informant's self-presentation as an expert witness or social commentator rather than as an involved participant ('Hollywood was a dream factory'). At the opposite extreme, anecdotal discourse deploys first-person narration of a specific event or occasion, with the informant constructing herself or himself as a protagonist – more often than not as chief protagonist – in the story ('I remember one time…'). In repetitive memory discourse, the most frequently occurring type, the telling also implicates the informant in events, but both the events themselves and the narrator's involvement in them are represented as habitual ('I always went with my mother'); and often as collective ('we used to hang around outside'; 'you wanted to impress the girls').

The past/present register is about the way in which time is organised in memory discourse, and may embrace a range of relationships between narrator, story and narratee. An extremely common variant of this trope is a simple comparison between past and present, between things as they were long ago and as they are today: this often takes the form of apparently detached observation, and is always firmly rooted in the present, the moment of narration ('the film stars used to be so elegant then, they are all so scruffy now'). This register also incorporates accounts showing greater profundity of engagement on the informant's part with the activity of remembering and with the detail of what is remembered. Often observed in orally transmitted life stories, this discursive register marks accounts in which informants, usually unaware of doing so, shift or 'shuttle' back and forth between past and present standpoints.[22]

Informants' testimonies acquire their idiosyncratic qualities from the degree to which each type of memory discourse is deployed and the manner in which shifts between discursive registers are negotiated. Although observations on these points should be regarded as suggestive rather than conclusive, gender, social class and regional differences in

example, marks a number of the middle-class male informants' accounts. Testimonies characterised by anecdote, often assumed to be the mark of a 'good' storyteller, come across as particularly vivid. Anecdote is relatively rare and does not appear to be the preserve of any one social group, but one commentator has noted that this variant of memory discourse may have a specific function in working-class autobiography, acting as 'a way of mediating between rawer, unformulated experience and more general or formulated truths; it does so by turning such truths into narrative and character'.[23]

If memory stories are not, in the usual sense of the word, fictions, they can certainly be treated as narratives. Considered thus, memory stories share a number of formal attributes, prominent among which is a distinctive organisation of time. Time is rarely continuous or sequential in memory-stories, which are often narrated as a montage of vignettes, anecdotes, fragments, 'snapshots', flashes. Memory texts often display a metaphorical – as opposed to an analogical – quality, and as such have more in common with poetry than with the classical narrative with its linearity, causality and closure. To borrow the terminology of Formalist literary theory, the memory text stresses plot over story, and its formal structure and organisation are typically as salient as its content, if not more so. Often, too, memory texts will deliver abrupt and vertiginous shifts of setting and/or narrative viewpoint.[24]

The formal attributes of memory texts, too, often betray a collective imagination as well as embodying truths of a more personal salience: 'The degree of presence of "formalised materials" like proverbs, songs, formulaic language, stereotypes,' suggests the oral historian Alessandro Portelli, 'can be a measure of the degree of presence of "collective viewpoint"'.[25] Thus memory texts may create, rework, repeat and recontextualise the stories people tell each other about the kinds of lives they have led; and these memory-stories can assume a timeless, even a mythic, quality which may be enhanced with every retelling. Such everyday myth-making works at the levels of both personal and collective memory and is key in the production, through memory, of shared identities. The philosoper Edward Casey uses the word 'commemoration' to describe communal acts of memory: with its sense of a public space of memory, this form of remembering clearly has a ritual quality.[26]

In this project's ethnographic inquiry, interpretation of informants'

starting-point, and interpretations arise from the material itself rather than from any hypotheses or a priori assumptions. This approach has the benefit of giving priority to what people say about their cinemagoing experiences and memories; and, since historical and film textual materials are likewise treated discursively and inductively, it also offers a point of triangulation between the three sets of inquiries, as well as a common methodological grounding for the ethnohistorical investigation as a whole.

The chapters which follow trace a trajectory from the earliest memories and cinema's place in them, through to what for the majority of the 1930s generation is a significant endpoint, the close of a chapter: 1939, and the rapid coming of age brought on by the outbreak of war. The landscapes of memory are populated by friends and family, long gone; and from this lost everyday world many brief excursions into the out-of-the-ordinary world of the pictures are ventured in memory. Cutting across narratives of formation we witness moments of intensity – images, fragments, vignettes – recollected as if out of time: daydreams of romance, keen longings for life to be somehow better; bodily memories of movement and activity – running, dancing; even out-of-body sensations.

The story starts out from the places of memory, the places of childhood: the paths that lead back into a past that is remembered as a landscape across which cinemas are dotted like beacons in the night, and where all journeys begin and end at home.

Notes

1. This phrase is from the title of Henry James Forman's digest of the findings of the 1930s Payne Fund Studies of the cinema audience in the USA, *Our Movie-Made Children* (New York: Macmillan, 1933).

2. H.E. Browning and A.A. Sorrell, 'Cinemas and cinema-going in Great Britain', *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, vol. 117, no. 2 (1954), pp. 133–168; this revises the figures in Simon Rowson, 'A statistical survey of the cinema industry in Great Britain in 1934', *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, vol. 99, no. 1 (1936), pp. 67–129. See also Rowson, *The Social and Political Influences of Films*, (London: British Kinematograph Society, 1939).

3. Richards, *The Age of the Dream Palace: Cinema and Society in Britain, 1930–39* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984), p. 15. See also Andrew Davies, *Leisure, Gender and Poverty: Working-class Culture in Salford and Manchester, 1900–1939* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1992); Stephen G. Jones, *Workers at Play: A Social and Economic History of Leisure, 1918–1939* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986);

1930s', *Journal of Popular British Cinema*, no. 2 (1999), pp. 39–53. For contemporary data, see, for example, E. Wight Bakke, *The Unemployed Man: A Social Study* (London: Nisbet and Co Ltd, 1933); A.P. Jephcott, *Girls Growing Up* (London: Faber and Faber, 1942); London School of Economics and Political Science, *The New Survey of London Life and Labour, Vol ix: Life and Leisure* (London: P.S. King and Son Ltd, 1935); John MacKie, *The Edinburgh Cinema Enquiry: Being an Investigation Conducted into the Influence of the Film on Schoolchildren and Adolescents in the City* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Cinema Enquiry Committee, 1933); T.M. Middleton, 'An Enquiry into the Use of Leisure Amongst the Working Classes of Liverpool' (MA, University of Liverpool, 1931).

4. J.B. Priestley, *English Journey* (London: William Heinemann Ltd, 1934), p. 401. For a social history of the period, see C.L. Mowat, *Britain Between the Wars, 1918–1940* (London: Methuen, 1955).

5. Kristin Thompson has calculated that in 1930 US films took a 75 per cent share of the UK market and that the proportion remained similar throughout the decade: Thompson, *Exporting Entertainment: America in the World Film Market, 1907–34* (London: BFI Publishing, 1985) p. 219. At 69.5 per cent in 1930, 72.6 per cent in 1931 and 70 per cent in 1932, Margaret Dickinson and Sarah Street's figures are close to Thompson's: see Dickinson and Street, *Cinema and State: The Film Industry and Government, 1927–34* (London: BFI, 1985), p. 42. On British films' share of the market, see Tony Aldgate, 'Comedy, class and containment: the British domestic cinema of the 1930s', in *British Cinema History*, (eds) James Curran and Vincent Porter (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1983), pp. 257–271; Stephen Craig Shafer, 'Enter the Dream House: the British Film Industry and the Working Classes in Depression England, 1929–1939' (PhD, University of Illinois, 1982).

6. For details, see Appendix; and Annette Kuhn, 'Cinema culture and femininity in the 1930s', in *Nationalising Femininity*, (eds) Christine Gledhill and Gillian Swanson (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), pp. 180–2. See also John Sedgwick, *Popular Filmgoing in 1930s Britain* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2000). Although a distinctively national set of tastes is observable, there are regional variations within this overall profile: see 'Census tells what film stars Britain prefers', *Daily Express*, 14 November 1933, p. 8; 'Conflicting tastes of British film-goers', *World Film News*, February 1937, pp. 6–7.

7. See Kuhn, 'Cinema culture and femininity in the 1930s', p. 177–8, in which it is argued that the stereotype undergoes a change towards the end of the 1930s.

8. Jackie Stacey, 'Textual obsessions: method, memory and researching female spectatorship', *Screen*, vol. 34, no. 3 (1993), pp. 260–274.

9. These debates originated within feminist film studies, and are rehearsed in the special issue on 'The Spectatrix' of *Camera Obscura*, nos. 20–21 (1989).

10. For an informative discussion of cinema audience studies, see Jostein Gripsrud, 'Film audiences', in *The Oxford Guide to Film Studies*, (ed.) John Hill and Pamela Church Gibson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

11. Kuhn, 'Women's genres', *Screen*, vol. 25, no. 1 (1984), pp. 18–28.

12. For an interesting debate on this question, see Janet Staiger and Martin Barker, 'Traces of interpretations: Janet Staiger and Martin Barker in conversation', in *Framework*, no. 42 (2000), http://www.frameworkonline.com/42jsmb.htm (17 August 2001).

13. Annette Kuhn, *Cinema, Censorship and Sexuality, 1909–1925* (London: Routledge, 1988), pp. 9–10; Jostein Gripsrud, 'Moving images, moving identities: texts and contexts in the reception history of film and television' (Los Angeles: Society for Cinema Studies

14. Janet Staiger, *Interpreting Films: Studies in the Historical Reception of American Cinema* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), p. 81 (emphasis in original). See also Staiger, 'The handmaiden of villainy: methods and problems in studying the historical reception of film', *Wide Angle*, vol. 8, no. 1 (1986), pp. 19–28; Robert C. Allen, 'From exhibition to reception: reflections on the audience in film history', in *Screen Histories: A* Screen *Reader*, (eds) Annette Kuhn and Jackie Stacey (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 13–21; Staiger, 'The perversity of spectators: expanding the history of classical Hollywood cinema', in *Moving Images, Culture and the Mind*, (ed.) Ib Bondebjerg (Luton: University of Luton Press, 2000), pp. 19–30; Staiger, 'Writing the history of American film reception', in *Hollywood Spectatorship: Changing Perceptions of Cinema Audiences*, (eds) Melvyn Stokes and Richard Maltby (London: British Film Institute, 2001).

15. Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), pp. 6, 20.

16. James Clifford, *The Predicamant of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), p. 9. See also *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (eds) James Clifford and George E. Marcus (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).

17. See, for example, David Morley, *Family Television: Cultural Power and Domestic Leisure* (London: Comedia, 1986); James Lull, *Inside Family Viewing: Ethnographic Research on Television's Audiences* (London: Comedia, 1990); John Tulloch, *Watching Television Audiences: Cultural Theories and Methods* (London: Edward Arnold, 2000); Jostein Gripsrud, 'Film audiences'.

18. Jackie Stacey, *Star Gazing: Hollywood Cinema and Female Spectatorship* (London: Routledge, 1994); Helen Taylor, *Scarlett's Women: Gone With The Wind and its Female Fans* (London: Virago Press, 1989). See also Richard de Cordova, 'Ethnography and exhibition: the child audience, the Hays Office and Saturday matinees', *Camera Obscura*, no. 23 (1990), pp. 91–106.

19. On the oral history interview, see Karl Figlio, 'Oral history and the Unconscious', *History Workshop*, no. 26 (1988), pp. 120–132; Luisa Passerini, 'Memory', *History Workshop*, no. 15 (1983), pp. 195–196; Alessandro Portelli, 'The peculiarites of oral history', *History Workshop*, no. 12 (1981), pp. 96–107; Paul Thompson, 'Believe it or not: rethinking the historical interpretation of memory', in *Memory and History: Essays on Recalling and Interpreting Experience*, (eds) Jaclyn Jeffrey and Glenace Edwall (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1994), pp. 1–13. See also Michael Agar, 'Stories, background knowledge and themes: problems in the analysis of life history narrative', *American Ethnologist*, vol. 7, no. 2 (1980), pp. 223–239; Mark Freeman, *Rewriting the Self: History, Memory, Narrative* (London: Routledge, 1993).

20. Alison Light, *Forever England: Femininity, Literature and Conservatism Between the Wars* (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 6.

21. Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, p. 27.

22. Alessandro Portelli, '"The time of my life": functions of time in oral history', in *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1991), pp. 59–76.

23. Simon Dentith, 'Contemporary working-class autobiography: politics of form, politics of content', in *Modern Selves: Essays on Modern British and American Autobiography*, (ed.) Philip Dodd (London: Frank Cass, 1986), pp. 60–80. The quotation is from p. 71.

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25. Portelli, 'The peculiarites of oral history', p. 99.

26. Edward S. Casey, *Remembering: A Phenomenological Study* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University, 1987), p. 216.