

# What to do with cinema memory

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It used to cost tuppence – two pennies old money and we saw a variation of films such as westerns, comedies, not too serious films. Mainly westerns... I did my Saturday morning pictures at the Broadway, at the bottom of Tanners Hill, right opposite Deptford High Street. That was well used by everyone in my area. We mainly were all school kids together ... mainly because it was cheap and cheerful and the film suited us... I invariably stood in the queue outside until they let us in with Alec, Gladys, Sid, Keithy – all schoolmates and we're still firm mates. *In actual fact I still see four or five of them now – even at my age and that's nice. We often talk about the old pictures.*

Ted, *Screen Dreams* (emphasis added)

# Modes of cinema memory

- A. Remembered scenes/images from films
- B. Other memories of films
- C. Memories of cinemagoing

# Modes of cinema memory

A. Remembered scenes/images from films

A dark night, someone is walking down a narrow stream. I see only feet splashing through water, and broken reflections of light from somewhere ahead, where something mysterious and dreadful waits.

(Victor Burgin)

It was...a silent film about the sea. And these waves were making this ship go, it was a sailing ship. And I was so frightened I got on the floor to hide my face in my mother's lap.

(Tessa Amelan)

# *On The Mummy (1933)*

[T]hey opened the lid and it shows him like,  
you know, he moves his hand

Annie Wright

He [Karloff] had one where he sorta come  
out the coffin, ye seen the hand coming up'

Helen Donaghy

# Modes of cinema memory

## B. Other memories of films

Oh, I remember the first film we went to see [Boris Karloff] in. Em, at The Globe, in, where was it? Old Trafford, I think it was. An it was The Mummy. Well there were benches then, ye know, not seats. I don't know whether I'd left school. Probably I'd left school. Anyway, I went to see im. I was sat there, dead quiet. An when they opened the lid and it shows im like, ye know, and he moves is hand. Well I let out one! I slid along the seat.

Annie Wright

I must've been five. Eh, and seeing, we came in the middle. Films in those days were continuous. You see. And em, I remember going in, and it had already, it must've been halfway through. And I remember seeing Janet Gaynor and Charles Farrell, in *Seventh Heaven*. I knew it was called *Seventh Heaven*. I remember them going up this spiral staircase. More than that I don't remember.

Beatrice Cooper



When I was seven I was taken by my eldest sister to see 'Singin' in the Rain'. Sitting in the dark brown, baroque interior of the Odeon, Liverpool watching Gene Kelly dance with an umbrella, I entered for the first time a world of magic: the cinema.

Terence Davies exhibition, BFI Southbank, 2007

And sometimes there would be drama  
and I can always remember the lady  
being tied down on the track and the hero  
coming to rescue her, and the music  
playing. Pearl White I believe.

Ronald, *Screen Dreams*

# Modes of cinema memory

## C. Memories of cinemagoing

Normally when we went to the 'Ionic' [in Golders Green], one of us would pay and then...go to the toilet and open the emergency exit doors and let our friends in for free.

J.B. Ryall

Used to be shelling the nuts on the floor, an then they'd take an orange, peel'd be on the floor. All these were going backwards and forwards. And em, you sit next to some children you could smell camphorated oil. You know, they'd have their chests rubbed with camphorated oil.

Ellen Casey

So you had to go out on Saturday mornings with a bucket and shovel, shovelling up horse manure because we had all the horse traffic around and selling it for a penny a bucket... All young boys would be doing it because we'd all go to the cinema... This was the Park Cinema up at Hither Green.

Ronald, *Screen Dreams*

**A**

**B**

**C**

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Remembered  
scenes/images

Other  
memories  
of films

Memories of  
cinemagoing

‘sequence-  
image’

‘social cinema  
scenes’

phenomenological  
metapsychological  
primary process  
inner world/speech  
Pcs, Ucs

secondary revision  
social currency

social audience  
everyday life  
place

**A**

**B**

**C**

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Remembered  
scenes/images

Other  
memories  
of films

Memories of  
cinemagoing

‘sequence-  
image’

‘social cinema  
scenes’

fragmented  
narration  
‘memory-text’

‘anecdotal’

‘collective/  
repetitive’  
formulaic

- distinctive thematic and discursive features of cinema memory
- situated expressions of cinema memory
- cultural aspect of 'inner world' productions
- cinema memory and shared subjectivities
- interweaving of personal and collective in cinema memory
- cinema memory, cultural memory, identity and community