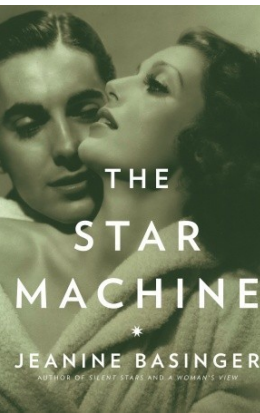


Star Studies Theory

Part 1: Mapping the Field after *Stars*

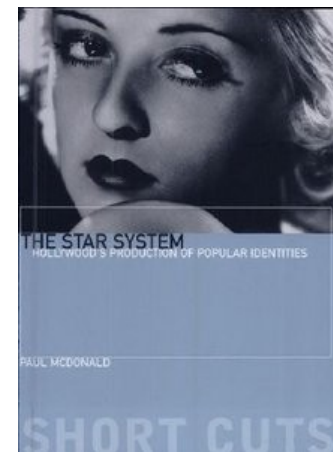
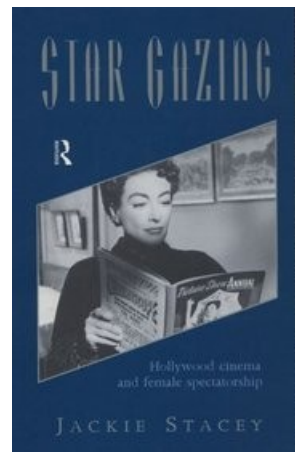


Introduction

- This part of the lecture will map out the field of star studies after the publication of *Stars* in 1979.
- Discuss Dyerian star studies, both audience and industry-based.
- Consider how scholars have subsequently developed and departed from Richard Dyer's work.

Dyerian Studies

- Two branches:
 - in-depth investigation into the part played by audiences in terms of how they engage with stars: most notably, Jackie Stacey's *Star Gazing* (1994)
 - detailed examination of stardom as an industrial process: most notably, Paul McDonald's *The Star System* (2000).



Stardom: Industry of Desire (1991)

- This anthology brought together works that were variously informed by sociological, semiological and psychoanalytic approaches.
- Marks the beginning of New Film History
- Several of the essays reproduced in *Stardom*, had originally appeared in the journal *Wide Angle* in 1985.
- Essays by Janet Staiger, Richard deCordova, Charlotte Herzog and Jane Gaines.
- Jackie Stacey's essay 'Feminine Fascinations: Forms of identification in star-audience relations'.
- Method: placed advertisements in two leading women's weekly magazines in search of readers willing to write about their favourite stars of the forties and fifties, receiving over 300 replies



Stacey's 'Feminine Fascinations'

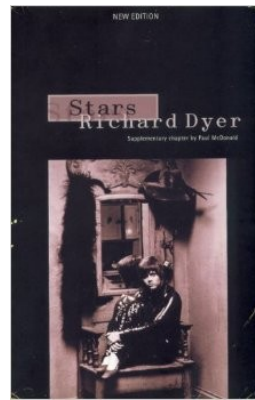
- Stacey notes that, what little feminist work on stars had been carried out by this time was largely based on textual analysis (either 'images of women,' e.g., Molly Haskell's work, or 'woman as image,' e.g. Laura Mulvey's work).
- 'Little attention ... has been paid to female stars in Hollywood by feminist film theorists outside the ways in which the stars function within the film text' (Stacey, 1991: 143).
- Jane Gaines, 'War, women and lipstick: fan mags in the forties,' *Heresies*, 1986.
- Richard Dyer discussed the responses he received to an advertisement from gay men about their attachment to Judy Garland in his book *Heavenly Bodies*.

Jackie Stacey's *Star Gazing* (1994)

- Provides a more extensive account of Stacey's research into British fans of Hollywood female stars.
- Combines psychoanalytic theories of spectatorship with Cultural Studies approaches to television audiences (e.g. ethnography) in order to investigate the ways in which psychic investments are grounded in specific historical and cultural contexts.
- One of the first major attempts to use ethnographic methods as the basis of a star study and also one of the first to confine itself to an investigation into a fairly narrowly defined cultural/historical and theoretical framework.
- Work on memory and nostalgia, escapism, identification and desire, consumption and consumerism, knowledge and taste.

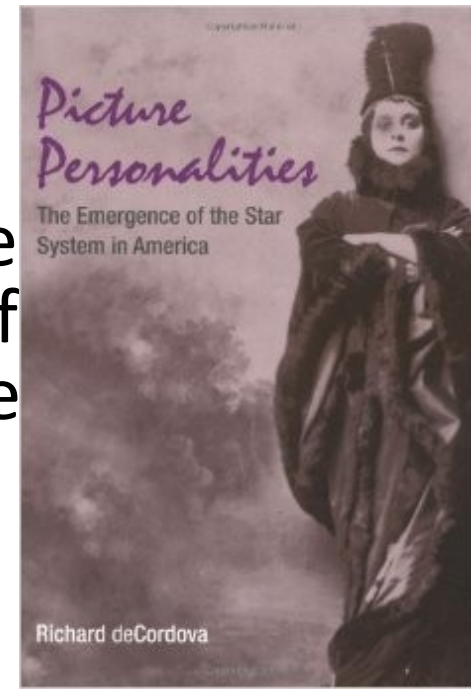
Dyer's *Stars* Republished

- In 1998, Routledge republished Richard Dyer's book *Stars*, almost 20 years after its original publication.
- This new edition included a supplementary chapter by Paul McDonald entitled 'Reconceptualising Stardom,' which assessed the extent to which the avenues opened up by Dyer for scholars of film stars had been pursued.
- McDonald noted four main areas in which Star Studies developed since the original publication of *Stars* in 1979:
 - (1) Stars and history
 - (2) star bodies and performance
 - (3) stars and audiences
 - (4) stardom as labour.



The Historical Turn in Film Studies

- McDonald pointed out that scholars of cinema had both re-examined the origins of the star system in American cinema and historicized stardom (i.e., by examining the social circumstances of a star's significance).
- McDonald cites Richard de Cordova's book *Picture Personalities* (1990) as an example of the former and Richard Dye book *Heavenly Bodies* as an example of the latter (e.g. Marilyn Monroe and the Kinsey report).

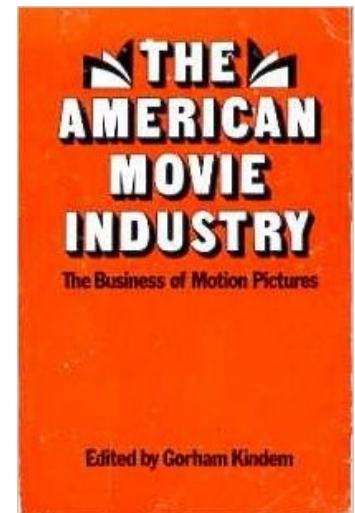
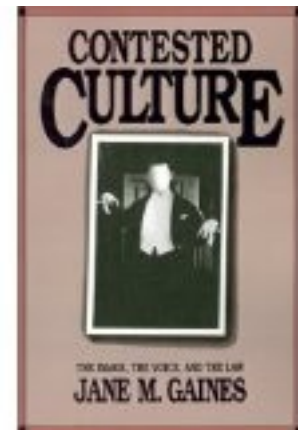


'Reconceptualising Stardom'

- McDonald notes a number of influences on Star Studies, including:
 - Yvonne Tasker's *Spectacular Bodies* (1993)
 - James Naremore's *Acting in the Cinema* (1988)
 - Barry King's essays on 'Stardom as an Occupation' (1986) and 'The Star as a Commodity' (1987).

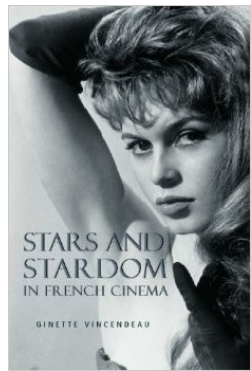
Industry-based Studies of Stardom

- Barry King's research into the role of agents, casting officers and unions, on working conditions and contracts.
- Jane Gaines, *Contested Culture* (1992), examines actors' contractual arrangements with Hollywood studios.
- Gorham Kindem's anthology, *The American Movie Industry: The Business of motion Pictures* (1982)



Embracing European Stars

- ‘In most people’s view, “stars” means “Hollywood stars” (Ginette Vincendeau, *Stars and Stardom in French Cinema*, 2000: Preface, vii).
- Most of the academic studies of stardom (e.g., Dyer’s *Stars*, Gledhill’s *Stardom* and Stacey’s *Star Gazing*, even Morin’s *Les Stars*) have been ‘devoted overwhelmingly to Hollywood’ (ibid.).
- Historically France can lay claim to being the first country to create international film stars, from Sarah Bernhardt and Coquelin to Maurice Chevalier and Max Linder, all of whom were making films by 1910, films that were distributed around the world, particularly across the United States (ibid., 3).



French Cinema Stardom

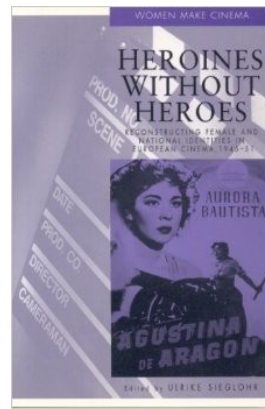
- French star system, like the French film industry, operates in a very different way to Hollywood, providing an alternative model.
- French stars have been able to retain greater levels of autonomy and creative freedom than most of their Hollywood counterparts, certainly during the classical period (1920-60), due to the closer links between film and theatre, along with a more artisanal (small-scale and craft-based) mode of production.

Stars as Producers & Models

- Many French stars have founded their own companies (e.g., Jean-Paul Belmondo's Cerito Films and Isabelle Adjani's Lilith Film).
- Their high-degree of international fame often comes from their appearance in auteur and art-house films and, in the case of female stars, through their appearance in international advertisements for France's leading perfume and cosmetics companies (e.g., Catherine Deneuve for Channel No.5, Isabelle Adjani for Dior, Juliette Binoche for Lancôme).
- Vincendeau includes case study chapters on Max Linder, Jean Gabin, Brigitte Bardot, Jeanne Moreau, Jean-Paul Belmondo and Alain Delon, Catherine Deneuve, Gérard Depardieu and Juliette Binoche.

Post-war European Female Stars

- Ulrike Sieglöhr (ed.) *Heroines without Heroes: Reconstructing Female and National Identities in European Cinema, 1945-51* (2000).
- Included essays on major female stars from Britain, France, Germany, Italy and Spain.
- The editor notes, ‘sad irony that this volume may inadvertently create a larger exclusivity’ given that the five countries chosen here are western Eurocentric’ (Sieglöhr, 2000: 5).



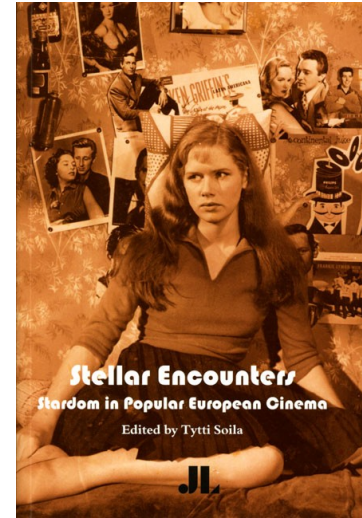
The Internationalism of Star Studies

- Bruce Babington (ed.) *British Stars and Stardom* (2001)
- ‘Hollywood’s unquestionable status as the paradigmatic site of stardom’ (Babington, 2001: 3).
- The combination of a small-scale film industry combined with certain cultural values (such as an opposition to self-promotion and publicity-seeking) led to a ‘more muted version’ of stardom in Britain than in the USA for much of the twentieth century (ibid., 7).



Soila's *Stella Encounters* (2009)

- The chapters of Tytti Soila's (ed.) *Stella Encounters* originated as papers at the fourth Popular European Cinema conference ('Methods and Stars') in Stockholm in July 2003.
- This conference was dedicated to the task of reclaiming some of forgotten or neglected stars of Europe in a bid to redress the Anglo-American bias of Film Studies.
- 'For the first time ... in the history of cinema studies *Stellar Encounters: Stardom in Popular European Cinema* explores and collects presentations of a number of different stardoms circulating in the European media constellation' (Soila, 2009: 18).



Euro Stardom's distinctive qualities

- Questioning the notion of Hollywood as the originator of the star system and European cinemas being essentially adaptors or imitators of that system.
- The major issue here is the relationship between stars and notions of nationhood, the ways in which stars embody national characteristics and represent specific moments within a nation's history.

Film Stars: Hollywood and Beyond

- Andy Willis (ed.), *Film Stars: Hollywood and Beyond* (Manchester University Press, 2004).
- This collection included new essays by Mark Jancovich, Peter Krämer, Philip Drake, Cynthia Felando, Jane Hendler, Mark Gallagher and Lisa Taylor, among others.
- The editor noted that some of the biggest stars in the world are not Hollywood stars or even European stars but either from Bollywood (e.g., Amitabh Bachchan) or Hong Kong (Jackie Chan).



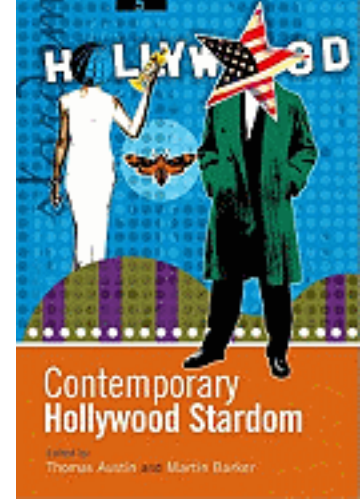
Chinese Film Stars

- Mary Farquhar and Yingjin Zhang (eds.), *Chinese Film Stars* (2010).
- An historical account of the stars of Chinese cinema from various territories (including Taiwan and Hong Kong) from the silent era through to the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century
- This reflects the prominence of Chinese stars in the international arena since the 1990s: most notably, Maggie Cheung, Gong Li, Michelle Yeoh, Zhang Ziyi, Jackie Chan, Chow Yun-fat, Leslie Cheung, Jet Li and Tony Leung Chiu-Wai.



It's Complicated

- 'Chinese stardom is multifaceted, long-lived and complicated by history, spectatorship, gender and politics' (Mary Farquhar & Yingjin Zhang, 2010: 12).
- Their collection of essays also reveals how, 'stars in China and elsewhere embody multiple meanings that encapsulate the private and public, the ordinary and extraordinary, off-screen and on-screen personas, as well as the individual within the contemporary world' (ibid.)
- 'stars personalize social meaning, cultural identity and ideology for different audiences, at different times, and in different locations (ibid.).



Rethinking Hollywood Stardom

- Tom Austin and Martin Barker (eds.) *Contemporary Hollywood Stardom* (2003).
- Stated intention to, ‘contribute to the reawakening of star studies, after a period in which they have seemed to lose the energy that characterised their early 1980s life’ (Austin and Barker, 2003: 1).
- ‘stardom itself has changed significantly in the last decade in ways that challenge a number of the ideas that became “common sense” in star studies in that early, lively period’ (2003: 1).

Industry Loses Faith in Stars

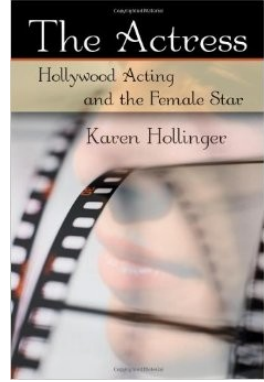
- By the 1990s, big-name directors (e.g., Steven Spielberg, Ridley Scott and James Cameron), could attract audiences as much as any star.
- With the massive success of animated feature films like *The Lion King* (1994), *Toy Story*, (1995), *Shrek* (2001) and *Ice Age* (2002), stars appeared to lose some of their visibility.
- Meanwhile, a massive explosion in terms of information available about stars, particularly on the Internet, made some stars more visible than ever (e.g., celebrity nude sites).
- So, many film scholars believed that Star Studies needed updating.

Stars: The Film Reader

- Lucy Fisher and Marcia Landy (eds.), *Stars: The Film Reader* (2004).
- Featured Anna May Wong on the cover
- The first Chinese American movie star (born in Los Angeles in 1905) and worked in British and European cinema as well as Hollywood in the 1920s and 1930s.

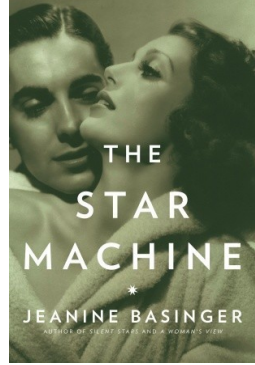


Increasing the Focus

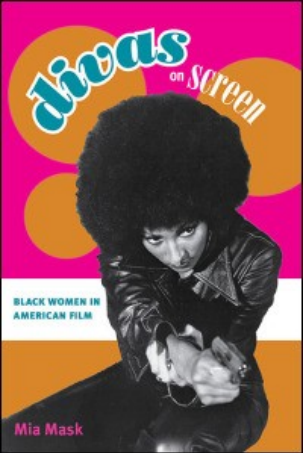


- Karen Hollinger's *The Actress: Hollywood Acting and the Female Star* (2006) has chapters on Meryl Streep, Susan Sarandon, Jodie Foster, Angela Bassett and Gwyneth Paltrow.
- Here Hollinger charts the rise and fall of their careers, identifying break-through roles, discussing training and work in other media (such as theatre and television), notes the effects of typecasting, ageing and critical reception, as well as discussing the actress's approach to acting.

The Star Machine

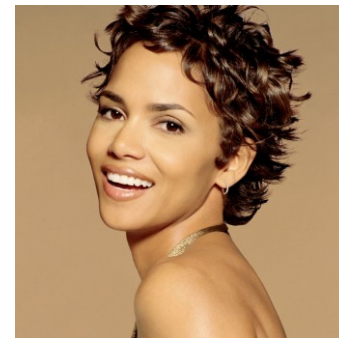


- Jeanine Basinger's *The Star Machine* (2007) contains case studies of Eleanor Powell, Tyrone Power, Lana Turner, Errol Flynn, Deanna Durbin, Jean Arthur, Lorette Young, Irene Dunne, Norma Shearer, Charles Boyer, William Powell, Wallace Beery, Mickey Rooney (among others), which bring to light the careers of a diverse range of Hollywood's leading stars of the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s.

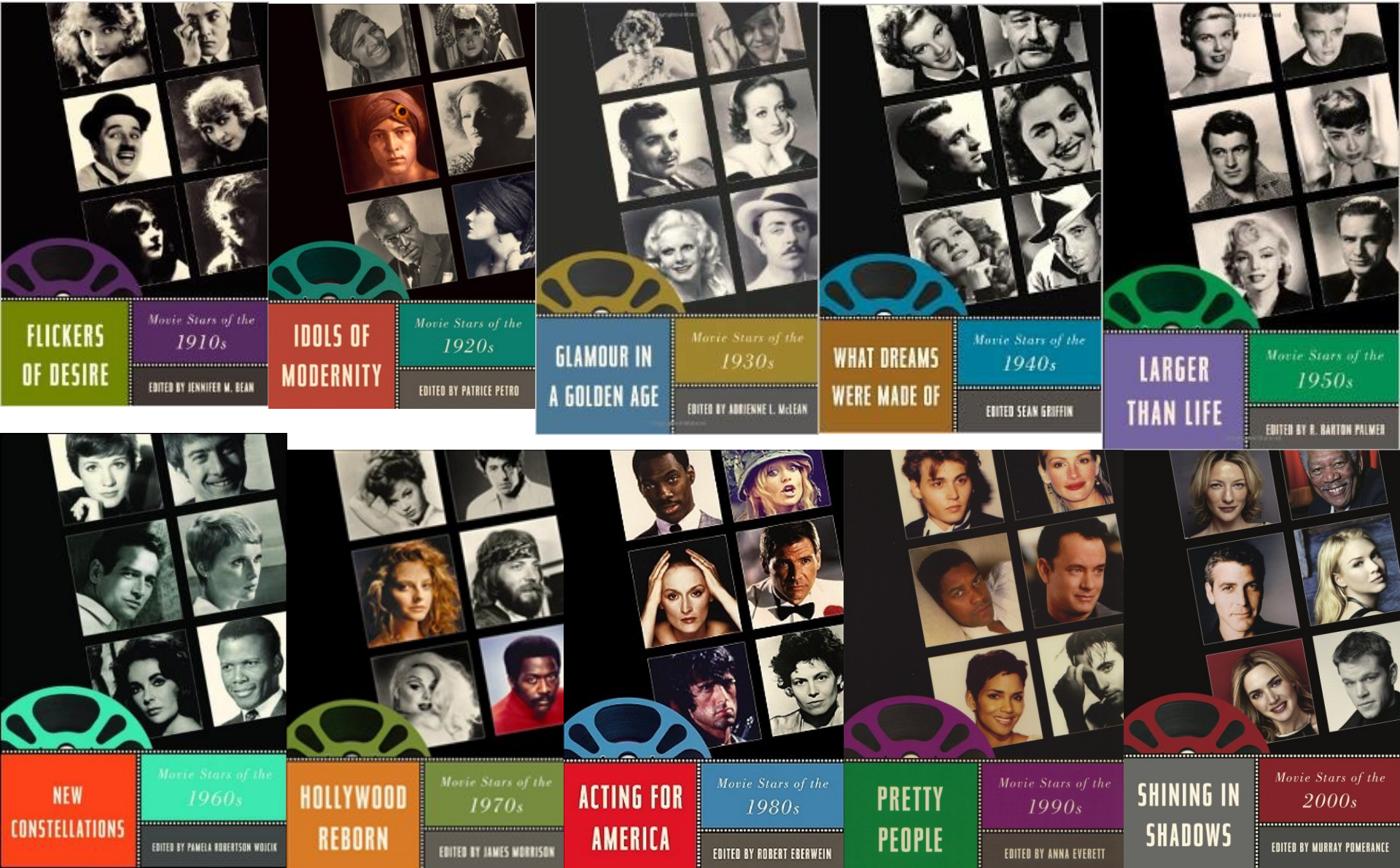


Focusing on Black Film Divas

- Mia Mask, *Divas on Screen: Black Women and American Film* (2009), includes chapters on:
 - Dorothy Dandridge
 - Pam Grier
 - Whoopi Goldberg
 - Oprah Winfrey
 - Halle Berry

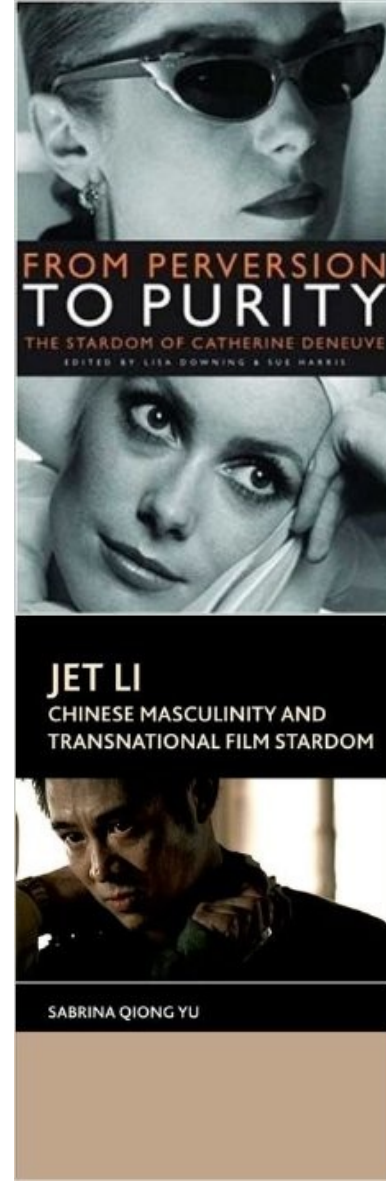


Rutgers *Star Decades* series



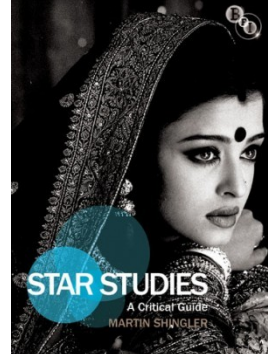
Single Star Studies

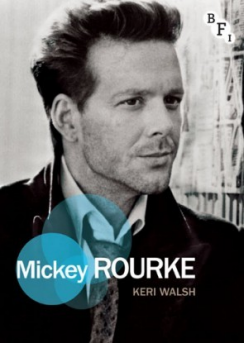
- Rachel Moseley, *Growing Up with Audrey Hepburn: text, audience, resonance* (2002)
- Adrienne L. McLean, *Being Rita Hayworth: Labor, Identity and Hollywood Stardom* (2005)
- Lisa Downing and Sue Harris, *From perversion to purity: The stardom of Catherine Deneuve* (2007)
- Amy Lawrence, *The Passion of Montgomery Clift* (2010)
- Sabrina Qiong Yu, *Jet Li: Chinese Masculinity and Transnational Film Stardom* (2012)



The BFI *Film Stars* book series

- British Film Institute *Film Star* book series launched in 2012.
- Co-edited by Martin Shingler and Susan Smith.
- Series includes: Pam Cook's **Nicole Kidman**, Susan Smith's **Elizabeth Taylor**, Ginette Vincendeau's **Brigitte Bardot**, Lisa Shaw's **Carmen Miranda**, Keri Walsh's **Mickey Rourke**, Ann Davies' **Penelope Cruz** and Ulrike Sieglöhr's **Hanna Schygulla**.
- To be published: **Denzel Washington** (Cynthia Baron), **Rock Hudson** (John Mercer), **Julie Christie** (Melanie Bell), **George Clooney** (Paul McDonald), **Sean Connery** (Andrew Spicer), **Amitabh Bachchan** (Sunny Singh), **Madhuri Dixit** (Nandana Bose), **James Mason** (Sarah Thomas), **Tony Leung Chui Wai** (Mark Gallagher) and **Deborah Kerr** (Sarah Street).

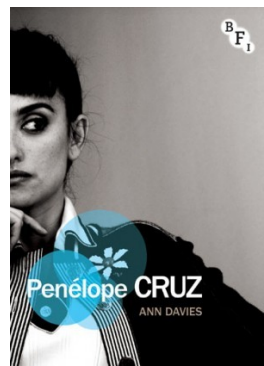




Conclusion



- Star Studies has evolved significantly since the publication of Richard Dyer's *Stars* in 1979.
- Diversity of approaches and methods, many of which have been inspired by Dyer's work.
- However, as we shall see in the next lecture, there are also studies that have been diametrically opposed to Dyer's work and taken star studies in different directions from the Cultural Studies, socio-semiological approach advocated by Dyer.



Any questions?

