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The “Taste of Age”: Movie Attendance and the Generation 50plus

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The cinema audience in Germany is in a rapid transition. Within the past 5 years the cinema audience in the age group of the over 60 year old has doubled from 4 percent in 2002 to 8 percent in 2006. There has been a steady decline of the younger generation in the cinemas. The age group that has long defined the cinema audience, the under 29 year olds, used to be about 70 % of the audience, now this age group has shrunk to just 50 % over the past 5 years (according to the German Federal Bureau of Film FFA www.ffa.de). The reason behind this change is on one hand the aging of the German society as the age pyramid is changing to very few young people to many old people.

On the other hand, the generation now 50 years and plus has always considered itself active and will still be active and outgoing, even in their 60s, 70s or 80s. Marketing experts call this age group the “Best-Agers” or “Silverliners” or come up with other friendly names for ‘older’ people.

In Germany this age group has rediscovered the cinema. The suggested presentation will briefly discuss the transformation of the cinema audience regarding the sociodemographics especially regarding the age of the movie audience (Prommer 1999) in a historical perspective. The main focus will be the different tastes of different age groups and how this will affect filmmaking and the film market. The study will evaluate the official German statistics about the cinema audience (www.ffa.de), compare these data with international findings about cinema audiences in transition.

Core of the presentation is an own representative study that compares cinema attendance of the younger generation with the older generation conducted at the Hochschule für Film und Fernsehen (University of Film and Television) in Potsdam Germany. We have asked (telephone survey by a professional market research company) 1200 people (600 under 29 years and 600 over 50 years) about their movie attendance, the reasons for going to the movies and their tastes of film. The data show significant differences in the film taste according to genre and whether the films are made in Germany or abroad. The older generation significantly prefers German movies no matter the genre. They also have significantly different motives for movie attendance. Having fun is far less important to the over 60 year old than to the 14-19 year old. 72 % of that young

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generation is seeking suspense in the movies while only 50 percent of the older ones do.

The analysis will show, that in an aging society films with different contents for different taste cultures would be necessary to gain a certain success.

Participants, Community and Activism: Women Make Movies Film Festival (Taiwan)

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The paper will investigate the role of Women Make Waves Film Festival (WMW), the first women's film festival in Asia. It was founded in 1993, and the only gendered-focused film festival in Taiwan in construction of a community and in activists' inspiration for the cultural form of 'film festival' as a power tactic of mobilising, educating, even changing society.

There are two methods in my research to collect data. One method is conducting in-depth interviews with loyal audiences (intellectual fans, activists and gender/sexual minority), professionals (scholars in film/gender studies, critics, news reporters and film directors) and core members of WMW. The other method is participant observation during WMW from 1994 to present, of which I have also been the audience, the volunteer, the programmer and the festival director.

From my data, the paper will examine critically two points by drawing on cultural and social-psychological approaches and under political, cultural, and economic contexts in Taiwan. The first point is the construction of the community formed by participants' similar taste of viewing and class. By doing so, the community not only becomes a powerful support in continuity of WMW, but also causes exclusivity of WMW from 'ordinary' film audiences. The other point is the function of WMW as a motivation for present activist/minority communities to advocate issues through "film festival", which not only expands the reach of 'film as social practice' but also advances the mobilisation of more people to defend justice and rethink the diverse dimension of essential issues in contemporary society.

The paper also aims to highlight the cultural role of Women's film festivals that are cultural product of the Second Wave Feminist Movement from the 1970s to present, the accompanying productions of feminist films, and the development of feminist theories, although it is often under-estimated in feminist film studies.

Watching with Baby: Cinema, Intimacy and (Maternal) Identity

Dr. Karen Boyle

University of Glasgow, United Kingdom

Taking your baby to the cinema is a growing phenomenon in the UK. This paper reports on a study investigating women's experiences of baby screenings based on participant observation and interviews with female cinemagoers and staff at one Glasgow cinema. After a brief account of the research process, this paper focuses on how "watching with baby" becomes part of a re-negotiation of identity for these new mothers.

Baby screenings offer both the conventional pleasure of "losing oneself" at the cinema and the very material experience of holding, feeding and soothing one's baby. In the cinema the mothers enjoy an unusual period of sustained and non-instrumental intimacy with their babies ("cuddling for cuddling's sake"), dependent not (or not simply) on the organisation of the cinema-space as theorised in canonical accounts of cinema-spectatorship, but rather on an awareness of its materiality (seating, lighting, smells, noise levels, positioning of the projector) and of other audience members. Other mums and babies provide both an affirmation of identity (everyone is "in the same boat") and a permission to set that maternal identity to one side and do something "for me". As such, and particularly for first-time mothers, baby screenings provide a link to their old selves ("being a grown-up again") that is nevertheless dependent on becoming an accepted part of a new community. Mostly, such tensions are easily negotiated in individual accounts, however I also discuss how some films and cinema-experiences place the identities of mother and cinemagoer in conflict. In conclusion, I argue that in these mums' accounts of "watching with baby" here is a play between losing and becoming oneself that reflects broader anxieties and tensions in the experience of becoming a new mother.

"Dear Mr. Kubrick": Audience Responses to 2001: A Space Odyssey in the Late 1960s

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The audience for Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) has always included an unusually large number of people who felt the need to express their thoughts and feelings about the film in writing. A broad spectrum of such writing, including a selection of (in many cases edited) personal letters sent to Kubrick, was published early on in Jerome Agel's *The Making of Kubrick's 2001* (1970). These and other letters have recently become accessible to researchers in the Stanley Kubrick Archive in London.

As part of my research for the BFI Film Classics volume on *2001*, I propose to examine how members of the film's initial audience who were neither film journalists nor academics responded to it. I will contextualise my analysis of the letters with an outline of the film's marketing in the US which framed audience expectations, and with a discussion of the film's reception amongst professional film writers in late 60s America.

My analysis will focus on three types of responses: rejection, dialogue and appropriation. Since *2001* was initially marketed as an adventure for the whole family, many letter writers were unable to reconcile their experience of the film with their expectations and rejected it outright as incomprehensible and boring (a judgment shared by many professional critics). A second group of letter writers understood the film as a challenge posed to them by Kubrick, and they offered their own reflections on the film's possible meanings and purposes to Kubrick (a similar strategy was later adopted by many academics). Finally, the letters contain traces of a third strategy, which according to newspaper reports was widely adopted by youth audiences and was certainly encouraged by the film's revamped marketing campaign (centring on the tagline "The Ultimate Trip"): The film was appropriated as a mind-expanding, psychedelic experience.

‘I should remember them because I sort of picture them but I...’ The Challenges of Working with Older Cinema Audiences and Distant Memories

Louise Anderson (PhD)

University of Newcastle on Tyne, United Kingdom

In October 2006 I was awarded an Arts and Humanities Research Council funded Collaborative Studentship to investigate audiences’ memories of newsreels on Tyneside in the 1940s and 50s. The non-academic organisation in the partnership, the Tyneside Cinema (Newcastle), had itself until 1968 been a News Theatre. In 2007 the cinema, following a Heritage Lottery Fund Award, was about to undertake major re-development including the creation of an interpretative display celebrating both its own history and the history of the newsreels. (This process is now complete and the cinema re-opened in May 2008, visit www.tynecine.org for more details). During the summer of 2007 I began working with older people across the region collecting their memories in oral history style interviews which, I hoped would situate the newsreels within the participants’ life-stories and reveal something about regional identity (newsreels were shown as part of every cinema programme of the period, while cinema-going itself was an enormously important leisure activity, particularly in the ‘North’). However, during the course of the data gathering it became clear that the memories I was collecting were revealing insights into the newsreel audience that rendered my initial research questions, at best, inadequate. Following a period of re-evaluation I have begun to re-focus the research around the following questions: is there what one might call a specific ‘newsreel memory’, and if so how it is formed; how it has been shaped in the intervening 60 years; what has it to tell us about a specific wartime generation; and (perhaps ironically given the collaboration) how might heritage displays, like that at the Tyneside Cinema, unwittingly serve to perpetuate popular mythologies about newsreels and the news theatres themselves. This paper will then, attempt to outline the progress and set backs of my research process to date, while considering some of the issues of working with real audiences and their memories!

‘The live entertainment far exceeded the shadows on the sheet’: On being a European Cinema Audience in a Rural Australian Town¹

Dr. Deb Verhoeven
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In the post-war period significant numbers of migrants from small rural populations in Greece and Italy made their way to urban centres in Australia, Canada, South Africa and the US. Coincident with this movement was the rise of popular film production industries in both Greece and Italy. The successful cinema circuits established to service the local diaspora by urban entrepreneurs in Australia in the 1950s and 1960s were used as a cultural and business model for other locations around the world and have inspired research on the particular role of cinema in the urbanisation of migrant populations. This paper however focuses on the specific dynamics of Italian migrant cinema audiences who lived and laboured in the small rural Australian town of Myrtleford.

Using archival and oral history research this paper presents the untold story of Italian film screenings in Myrtleford (occurring regularly from 1950–1970) as a notable, vividly remembered feature of the cultural and business landscape of the post-war town and surrounds. The paper considers several questions in highlighting the social opportunity represented by cinema-going in a culturally diverse rural setting:

the extent and nature of practices of social or commercial ‘segregation’ in picture theatres on the basis of ethnicity, and the audience explanations for these;

the extent to which the social meaning of cinema-going is affected by the demographic profile of the cinema’s local population;

the ways in which diasporic cinema experiences simultaneously forge feelings of longing and belonging in migrant communities;

the role of cinema attendance in fostering a sense of inter-generational Italian-Australian identity and knowledge

the role of cinema enterprises and experiences in fostering significant social and relationships between members of the Italian and non-Italian communities of Myrtleford.

¹ Tiff Raynor, Manager, Myrtleford Theatre (1961-2004)

Popular Cinema-going and Film Preferences in Scotland, 1896-1939

Dr. Trevor Griffiths

University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom

This paper examines pattern of cinema-going and the nature of film preferences among Scottish audiences in the first half of the twentieth century. Although the emergence of distinctive cinematic cultures in the different regions/nations of the United Kingdom has been explored, the Scottish experience remains seriously under-researched. Yet the Scottish audience had an importance that extended beyond the nation. At the height of cinema's popularity as a form of mass entertainment around mid-century, when the British were the most avid cinema-goers in the world, Scotland, with more cinemas and cinema seats per head of population and with some of the highest rates of attendance, stood out for the depth of its commitment to the medium.

The research for this paper, part of a broader project on the development of the industry across Scotland, draws on records of cinema exhibitors, in the form of profit and loss ledgers, cash books, daily and weekly summaries, all of which chronicled fluctuations in business in close detail. These provide the basis for an analysis of changing patterns of cinema-going across time and more especially the impact of wider economic circumstances in which Scotland experienced sharp fluctuations in fortune, from marked prosperity to prolonged depression, and of changes in modes of exhibition, with the arrival of sound and of the plush picture palace. In addition, the records facilitate a close examination of audience preferences, as attendance patterns can be mapped on to particular programmes.

The evidence enables us to examine afresh debates on the existence or otherwise of a national audience for film across the United Kingdom, and the comparative popularity of British productions following the Quota Act of 1927, particularly in the light of recent attempts to rehabilitate British film by, among others. John Sedgwick and Steve Chibnall.

‘I just don’t think I could sit through [Jurassic Park or The Texas Chainsaw Massacre]’: Films as Cultural and Emotional Measure

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Aberystwyth University, United Kingdom

This paper is part of a wider cross-national and cross-generational audience study of media-related fears and anxieties. Over the course of several months, qualitative material in the form of viewing diaries, open-ended questionnaires and semi-structured interviews was gathered from three-generation families in Germany and the UK, in an attempt to explore the meanings and functions of broadly ‘fearful’ responses to film and/on television. Some key initiating questions were the following:

What kinds of fears and anxieties might be media-related?

How are media-related fears connected to people’s wider understandings of and actions within the world?

Are there any distinctive generational fears?

What does it mean for certain fears to be welcome or unwelcome to the generations?

In what ways might the specific media environments of Germany and the UK affect the ecology of fear?

During the course of the study, it emerged that specific films functioned as reference points in participants’ discussions of emotional ‘thresholds’ (compare Hill, 1997), even if family members had not in fact seen the films in their entirety (or any scenes at all). This paper interrogates the different criteria against which participants evaluated these and other films, for instance through associations with film-makers, imagined audiences, specific textual content (e.g. forms of media violence), or the emotional responses they anticipated in the light of their preconceptions of the movies. As such, this paper seeks to illustrate the ways in which audiences choose films for specific purposes, as well as how known and unknown films come to serve as cultural and emotional measures against which other films are judged.

Reference:

Hill, Annette (1997), *Shocking Entertainment: Viewer Response to Violent Movies*, Luton: John Libbey.

Remembering Liverpool's Rialto

Glen McIver (PhD)

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If film studies were to re-invent itself around a study of the popular audience and cinema going as such, then a crucial aspect of this study, particularly when it relates to the historical audience would be a study of the cinema buildings themselves and how people recall their relationships with them. The buildings and the social practices linked to them are often what stand out in people's memories as opposed to the memory of particular films. This presentation will look at some of the ways in one particular cinema complex is remembered. Opened in 1927 Liverpool's Rialto was a local landmark and especially interesting in a number of ways. Combining a state of the art (silent) cinema with an elaborate ballroom and cafe and flanked on either side of its triangular site by twelve proposed "luxury" shops the site could be seen as emblematic of the innovation characteristic of the city's capitalist entrepreneurs and of the social and economic status of city at the time. The overlapping patterns of leisure and consumption on offer within the site were the very epitome of modernity.

The "social offer" of the site was, however, almost immediately compromised by the impact of the 1930s depression and the subsequent world war. The Rialto was eventually closed in 1961. The decline of the building and its eventual destruction in the Toxteth riots of 1981 could be seen as an extreme version of what happens to many sites of popular entertainment. It could be argued that these "haunted" sites were ones which eventually disappointed their users, however people's memories of the building tend not to show this. Based mainly around first hand interviews, the presentation will focus some of the complex ways in which people remember the impact of the site and on how the building has been used to structure both memory and experience.

In Search of an Audience: Lindsay Anderson's Britannia Hospital

**Karl Magee, Kathryn Mackenzie, John Izod & Isabelle Gourdin
University of Stirling, United Kingdom**

On its UK release in the summer of 1982 *Britannia Hospital* was condemned by critics and largely ignored by the public. For Anderson it was a miserable finale to a grand trilogy of films about Britain which began with *If...* and continued with *O Lucky Man!*

Anderson's personal and working papers, held in the University of Stirling Library, are the subject of a three-year research project funded by the AHRC. Our paper will look at aspects of the relationship between the director and his audience with particular reference to the strains exerted on this relationship by *Britannia Hospital*.

The film took a critical swipe at several elements of British society and its pessimistic view of the country was not appreciated by a nation fighting in the Falklands. The effect on the audience of negative press stories and poor reviews will be examined as will Anderson's reactions which can be found in the letters he wrote to the critics who savaged his film.

Anderson replied to the fans who wrote to him, thanking them for their positive feedback on the film, and that personal aspect of the relationship between the director and his audience will be examined through a study of this correspondence.

The film's failure at the British box office caused difficulties when it came to promoting *Britannia Hospital* in other countries. The search for an audience led down very different routes with advertisements presenting the film as a sub 'Carry On' romp in the US, an art-house movie in France and a video nasty in Australia. Anderson's correspondence with the various distribution companies concerned with the film's release provides an insight into its marketing, files enlivened by the director's criticisms about how the promotional campaigns were conducted.

Brands, Markets and Charitable Ethics: MTV's Parallel Lives

Prof. Jane Arthurs

University of West of England, United Kingdom

The MTV Foundation's EXIT campaign to raise awareness about sex trafficking included a package of five short quasi-documentary films titled *Parallel Lives* which were distributed on television and the web. The problem was framed within the context of global economic inequality and a 'think global and act local' analysis of consumerism and human rights. The films aimed to reinforce the company's youthful branding for a generation steeped in the rhetoric of globalisation and related political activism. Yet extensive qualitative audience research revealed that the films were not successful at reaching the people they had hoped to influence. The documentary style was considered lacking in authenticity and impact, and was too didactic and 'political correct'; the celebrities' contributions were found gratuitous, stilted and patronising; and few embraced the cosmopolitan connection to people across national borders. The researchers offered a blueprint for an improved campaign taking these reactions into account. But their suggestions were highly problematic. They argued the need to connect with audiences whose ethical perspectives and aesthetic tastes have been shaped by 'shoc docs' and reality TV within an individualistic, consumer culture. As a result their proposals returned to a familiar sensationalist aesthetic focused on women's 'suffering and pain'. This paper highlights the danger of responding to audience research in this way without calling on ethical judgements drawn from other sources – in this case, for instance, debates about sexual representation in visual culture. In its absence MTV's EXIT campaign is at risk of exposing the deleterious consequences of global inequality only to reinforce, inadvertently, the problematic portrayal of women's bodies in a sexually exploitative culture. Charitable campaigns are caught in a double bind which requires an ethical aesthetics to be effective in the longer term, not simply a research based marketing approach that reinforces the status quo.

“Fate is never final”? Why Movies Re-enact the RPG Experiences

Prof. Miruna Runcan
University of Cluj, Romania

Starting from a complex debate in a six teenagers focus-group (from thirteen to fifteen) on why and how do they enjoy or dislike the movies based on RPG, this paper tries to raise some questions about the differences and relationship between the spectator's and the computer-gamer's condition. Its central focus is on the circular road of self/presence representations, from linear narrative to level-stratified experiencing of the computer game, and back. After a short resume of the current tendencies in interpreting the mutations from spectatorship to game-controlling representations, the paper will try to sketch a hypothesis-theory concerning the displacement of the moral and aesthetical values, as classical basement of audience motivations in cultural consumption, to the “experience” value, seen as a chance to identify, built and consume different and alternative constructs of the Subject/Self.

The paper-essay constitutes a small part from The Everyday Drama Research and Creation Program, a complex interdisciplinary research project conducted the last five years by the author and by Professor C.C. Buricea-Milnarcic PhD, both from the Theatre and Television Faculty of the Babes-Bolyai University of Cluj, Romania. The actual theme/field of this program – “The X-Men & Women Generation”- focuses on the young people's representations of self based on their cultural consumption. The Everyday Drama Research and Creation Program was awarded with a two year grant from the Romanian Ministry of Culture (2007-2008) and produces empirical and theoretical studies, video-productions, written journalism, playwritings and theatre productions.

Cinephilia and Film Festivals – The Ballerina Ballroom – Cinema of Dreams

Karen Smith (PhD)

Kings College/London Metropolitan University, United Kingdom

My wider study of historical film exhibition practices – promotion, exhibition and audiences – prompted investigation of the Ballerina Ballroom Film Festival in Nairn, 15th to 23rd August 2008. This recent development in the international film festival circuit provides a case history of both a new festival in a specific location and time plus a particular form of audience address which focuses on cinephilia in its widest context and understanding.¹ This paper will address definitions and uses of ‘cinephilia’. It will then analyse the festival programme, local programme distribution and involvement, press coverage and events at the actual festival using participant observation methodologies. In addition, analysis of the festival blog will provide further material where the experiences and meanings generated by the diverse audience for the festival is presented in a public forum, encouraged by the organisers as an extension of the festival events.

This festival has been presented by its organisers and programmers globally and locally in Nairn as a ‘hand-made’ object.¹ This object, it is declared, was born out of love of cinema itself, ‘cinema’ as screening to an audience in a shared space with all the unexpected and accidental moments that come with public events. That Tilda Swinton and Mark Cousins, festival programmers, presented each screening with a hand made banner, with ‘State of Cinema’ hand embroidered across its length, from rickety ladders either side of the screen during personally chosen music, followed by their joint and personal introduction to each film, dramatised both their personal investment in the events, love of cinema and ‘hands on’ approach. The importance of film festivals for the film industry has been documented, but rarely the festival experience either for organisers or audiences. This paper will provide a case history of a new and developing event, how it has been framed by its organisers and the press and how the event’s image is being managed and negotiated in relation to cinephilia and identities from the local in Nairn, to the Scottish Highlands, Scotland, the international and global.