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Melanie Tebbutt

Crying for *Flicka*: Boys, Young Men and Emotion at the Cinema in Britain in the 1930s and 1940s

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Abstract

This article re-visits contemporary surveys of the cinema in the 1930s and 1940s to explore the implications that the cinema's role as an "emotional frontier" between everyday life and the imagination had for the emotional lives of boys and young men. It makes a novel contribution to the history of youth and emotions, arguing that for boys and young men who were disconnected from social life, the cinema was an "emotional refuge," a space of heightened emotional encounter, where conventional assumptions about masculinity could be fractured and where "feminine" sensibilities otherwise difficult to express publicly could receive cathartic release.

The history of youth and the cinema in the 1930s and 1940s is a story of complex encounters with films' imaginative and emotional meanings. Untangling these is challenging. Revisiting contemporary surveys of young people's engagement with the cinema to explore their findings

from new perspectives does, however, provide a tantalizing glimpse into how feelings and personal experience intersected with these new worlds of the imagination. In the 1930s and 1940s, the cinema helped shape a new kind of self-consciousness among the young, yet the implications of its emotional impact, especially on boys and young men, have been largely neglected in youth history, despite adolescence being the peak age for cinema attendance.[1] Films' sensory and emotional power, designed to play on audiences' emotions, was intensified by the "talkies" from the late-1920s and Technicolor in the 1930s, which opened up new dimensions of sensory experience.[2] "Weepies," westerns and animal themes became very popular among young people. Films like *My Friend Flick*a (1943), set on a ranch in Wyoming, combined all three themes, its beautiful scenery and "glorious horses" made all the more emotionally resonant by Technicolor.[3] *My Friend Flick*a, a sentimental "coming of age" tale, chronicles the love of 10-year-old Ken for a wild foal called Flicka and his attempts to stop his domineering father from putting her down. Ken, a kind-hearted boy who struggles to please his father, almost dies in a harrowing climax when he saves Flicka from drowning. Unfaltering devotion to the colt, however, transforms his father's opinion of his son in a cathartic happy ending which, as will be discussed later, has particular value in nuancing understanding of boys' emotional lives and sensitivities at this time.

These adolescent film fans, pioneers on a new cinematic frontier, offer rich possibilities for emotions research, being less cynical about the "message" and "authority" of films' content than later audiences, yet also "more naïve and vulnerable" to them.[4] Used to shifting between different emotional repertoires and the "often contradictory" "emotional formations" of their daily lives, immersive experiences in the cinema took this informal learning to a different level,

deepening and complicating ways of feeling and creating an "immediate experience of virtual reality" that "became central" to their "fantasy lives."[5] Autobiographies, diaries, oral history testimonies and surveys from the 1930s and 1940s often allude to the intensity of young people's encounters with films.[6] Contemporary cinema surveys by educationists, Mass Observation (MO) and the political scientist, J.P. Mayer, who in 1946 and 1948 published the "first in-depth" qualitative research about the cinema in Britain, intimate how the cinema challenged and complicated their inner lives.[7] These surveys open up new research opportunities in relation to children and adolescents and this article combines disciplinary approaches from the history of childhood and youth and the history of emotions to revisit them from the perspectives of the young. It reflects a scholarly "turn to the personal" and individual subjective experiences in the history of childhood and draws on Karen Vallgårda, Kristine Alexander and Stephanie Olsen in exploring the implications of the cinema's role as an "emotional frontier" between everyday life and the imagination.[8] It also refers to Annette Kuhn's observation of memory work as engaging both the psychic and the social, adapting her analogy that it "bridges the divide between inner and outer world" by evoking the cinema as a permeable border through which sensual and emotional fantasies and feelings were diffused into the imaginative landscapes of young people's everyday lives, where they acquired personal meanings and significance.[9]

Girls and young women, boys and young men, were all influenced by the cinema's social and cultural effects and the emotional intensity of films, although historical accounts have tended to focus on the experiences of girls and young women, especially through the prism of love, romantic fantasy and courtship.[10] The cinema's potential as a space of emotional learning for boys and young men has received less attention. This article thus makes a novel contribution to

the history of youth and emotions, arguing that the cinema became what William Reddy has described as an "emotional refuge," a space of heightened emotional encounter where conventional assumptions about masculinity could be fractured and where "feminine" sensibilities otherwise difficult to express publicly could receive cathartic release.[11] It begins by setting the context of adult anxieties about the cinema's impact on children's unsupervised imagination and early research into its effects on emotional development and behavior. It then moves to consider Mayer's research and the insights which this and other contemporary surveys provide into the effects of certain films on boys who were shy, reserved or from difficult family circumstance. It concludes by discussing the analytical value of the cinema as an "emotional frontier" between everyday life and the imagination, countering narrow views of boys' sensitivities and enabling more nuanced understanding of their feelings and inner lives.

Cinema and the Unsupervised Imagination

Cheap picture-going became a significant working-class leisure activity in the early decades of the twentieth century and stimulated considerable middle-class concern about young people's imagination and emotions, which re-worked long-established concerns about the "emotional power" of fantasy and the "written text." From the end of the eighteenth-century, the idea of the modern feeling child initiated "unprecedented" interest in children's "emotional training" and "self-development".[12] Advice manuals and "respectable" children's literature gave children "emotional learning tools" to nurture empathy and promote moral codes though "mimetic learning."[13] These middle-class standards of emotional behaviour distanced children of the poor and the lower classes, whose perceived susceptibility to emotional excess was "evidenced" by preferences for the behavioural models of "inappropriate" reading matter such as horror, crime

and romance fiction, especially after the expansion of compulsory education from the 1870s enabled many more to read.[14]

Middle-class efforts to monitor and control children's emotional lives pervaded formal education and social welfare by the end of the nineteenth century. Psychology and medical research identified childhood and youth "as the most important life stages for emotional formation and education," placing the young at the heart of debates over nation, empire and citizenship.[15] This professionalization of "emotional self-development" informed growing disquiet at the leisure interests of working-class adolescents, especially the cinema. Male youths' troublesome collective identities reinforced adult distrust of the autonomy that commercial leisure offered. Juvenile delinquency, a persisting stereotype of working-class youth, translated in the 1930s into moral panics about boys' susceptibility to the influence of gangster films and anxieties deepened during the Second World War with family upheavals, evacuation and bombing.[16] Convictions for juvenile delinquency increased in the early 1940s and concerns about anti-social behaviour continued into the postwar years, when youth crime levels continued to rise and were attributed to the young running "wild" during the war.[17] The sensibility of quieter boys who were were shy, reserved or lacking self-confidence is easily lost amidst adult preoccupations about excessive behaviour.

Middle-class commentators viewed youth's exposure to emotional repertoires in films as exacerbating their "natural" excitability and subverting traditional "hierarchical relationships" with "adult authority figures."[18] Working-class parents tended to view the cinema more pragmatically, as a safe space which kept children off the streets and a shared leisure activity.[19]

As a child in the 1930s, Terence Gallacher usually went with his father, who always fell "asleep soon after arrival," sleeping through the film "until it was time to go home" and relying on his son "to wake him up at the appropriate time" to tell him what "it was all about."[20] This early exposure to "unacceptable" emotional stimuli and "sensationalism" eroded expected age boundaries of emotional experience and made the cinema fertile ground for the emergent discipline of psychology, whose behavioral psychologists were among the earliest academics to research its effects on audiences.[21] The German-American, Hugo Munsterberg, author of a pioneering study of the cinema's impact, cautioned against the intensity of audience engagement with films,

> whose associations become as vivid as realities because the mind is so completely given to the moving pictures… The more vividly the impressions force themselves on the mind, the more easily must they become starting points for imitation and other responses.[22]

Munsterberg believed in "rational" recreation and regulating the cinema to develop its emotional and educational potential as a "sophisticated art form" and "a model of the workings of the human mind."[23] This belief that the cinema encouraged imitative behaviour was rooted in long-established and persisting anxieties about the moral perils of the child's unsupervised imagination.[24] The complex role of fantasy and daydreaming during adolescence was largely misunderstood.[25] Rather, wandering minds were seen as undermining adult attempts to regulate and manage adolescent time and feelings; how the cinema's imaginative possibilities enriched their inner lives was ignored.[26] Nineteen-year-old Walter Wilkinson, who described films as "the greatest boon of modern times," was probably typical of many other young contemporaries in remarking how whenever he had "a few idle hours", his thoughts usually went to the cinema.[27] Films acclimatized young people to a gradual process of "social and mental modernisation"

which challenged older attitudes and behaviours and unsettled many adults, although not all.[28] By the 1930s and 1940s, youth workers and educationists applauded how improved "film standards" and better "discrimination in the taste of audiences" were educating adolescents' "imagination and emotions" and fostering more sophisticated understanding of personal feelings.[29] The educationist W.D. Walls described how "very many" in their teens were "avid" for information about "human relationships, from the great themes of love and courage to matter of social behaviour and conversational ease"; the cinema offered not only "a projection of fantasy" but an "emotional education in just those facts of life" which did "not appear on the school curriculum."[30]

American childcare experts were in the vanguard of research into the cinema's impact on emotional development and behaviour, influenced by the American psychologist, G. Stanley Hall, pioneer of adolescent psychology, who constructed adolescence as a time of emotional turbulence and heightened susceptibility to external influences. Hall believed adolescents' emotional volatility made them overly vulnerable to the sensual pull of popular culture, so enticingly expressed in the cinema and his misgivings, freighted with class assumptions about the fragile balance between inner feelings and outer show, were especially troublesome in the case of working-class boys.[31] Interwar studies of the cinema's effects on the young highlighted excessive "sentiment, emotion, and thrills" as especially worrying because they leaped over "educational inadequacies" and appealed "directly to the imagination."[32] W.W. Charters, who directed the first American investigation into the cinema's influence on youth, summed up the addictive quality of films in the 1930s:[33]

> In books, the adult drama cannot be understood by the children. In the theatres they cannot comprehend the legitimate drama. But the movie is within their comprehension and they clamour to attend.[34]

Adults in the United States and in Britain struggled to understand the emerging mass character of cinema culture and the ease with which it was accepted by a generation of children acclimatized to films after the Great War and who entered their teens from the mid-1920s. American childcare experts criticized the cinema's "amoral provocation of emotion" and lack of values or "consistent philosophy of life" for threatening not only the child's emotional development but home, school and religious authority.[35] The American Motion Picture Research Council backed calls for greater legal and censorship controls in a moral crusade which aimed to "prove" that motion pictures "harmfully excited" emotions and supported the Payne Fund Motion Picture Studies, the first research to try and measure the cinema's influence on attitudes and emotions, which was published in eight volumes between 1933 and 1935.[36] Payne Fund researchers used a range of methods to test their theories. Some, like Wendell Dysinger and Christian Ruckmick aimed to assess children's physiological responses to films by attaching them to "psychological equipment", psycho-galvanometers, and pneumo-cardiographs, to measure "scientifically" "sweaty emotional reactions" like "excitement, arousal, fear and nervousness" through perspiration, respiration, and heart rate.[37] Herbert Blumer took a different tack by focusing on the film-going experiences of adolescents and young adults in their own words through "motion picture life histories" or "movie autobiographies," published in *Movies and Conduct*.[38] Payne findings were sensationalized in the popular press and crudely used by movie industry critics to support calls for censorship on the basis that films damaged the young, but Blumer's suggestive evidence of youth attitudes and feelings was later used as a model by cinema researchers in

Britain.[39] This was not, however, until the mid- to late-1940s. There was no comparable British research into young people's "emotional responses and attitudes" to the cinema in the 1920s and 1930s.[40] The cinema's significance was certainly recognised, especially in the 1930s, as an escapist panacea to unemployment and in relation to the demoralizing effects of American cultural influence on the young.[41] Social research tended, however, to focus on attendance, the popularity of different kinds of films, audience behaviour, and "problem" groups, such as juvenile delinquents.[42] In the late-1930s, Mass Observation collected valuable information on attendance and audiences as part of the "Worktown project" in Bolton, but it was only in the immediate postwar years that researchers sought to understand the cinema's emotional appeal to the young.[43]

Films became an important morale booster during the war when cinema audiences grew, and attendance remained strong into the late 1940s. About 80 percent of films shown between 1945-1950 were American, but optimism about the future of British film as a nationally important industry meant the cinema attracted much attention from government, and in reports and social surveys seeking evidence of youth attitudes and feelings towards films. Concerns persisted about the vulnerability of working-class audiences, especially the young, to the cinema's harmful effects. Arthur Watkins, Secretary of the British Board of Film Censors, stated in 1948 that the "youthful and unstable element" of cinema audiences had to be "protected from the harmful influences" which would "undoubtedly appear" if there were no censorship.[44] The backdrop to such concerns were fears that prewar constraints on young people's behavior were unravelling as sensationalized press reporting of crime and violence fed popular perceptions of disorder and lawlessness that often had a youth dimension.[45] The press pounced on the "transgressive",

“flashy” “exhibitionist street styles associated with “cosh boys” and young “spivs” popular among working-class young men in the late-1940s, yet adjustments to peace in the shadow of war were also laced with hopes for the future which inevitably involved youth.[46] The cinema was part of this optimism and, as in the years between the wars, reformers were keen to discover more about its psychological meanings to the young and to harness its educative and cultural potential.

Learning and Uncovering Emotions

In the late-1940s, educational researchers at the University of Birmingham, many of them teachers supervised by the educationist and psychologist, W.D. Wall, used questionnaires and school essays to elicit “objective” information about films’ effects on school children aged 10 to 16.9 years.[47] This “investigation of emotional life” hoped to emulate the Payne Fund investigators but researchers found the subject “more hampered by lack of investigational techniques than almost any department of psychological research.”[48] Wall recognised how “vivid” and “varied” cinema experiences could influence adolescents’ emotional lives but was frustrated at the lack of “adequate investigational techniques.”[49] He considered research during “the impressionable years of the teens,” especially after leaving school, to be essential because the cinema was “almost the only source of information about life” to which adolescents could turn.[50] The cinema’s very popularity suggested it fulfilled “a deeply felt psychological need”, yet its nature was “very largely unexplored.”[51] Wall described Mayer’s *Sociology of Film* (1946) as the only British study to offer a “direct approach” to the subject, although “knowledge of this most important field’ was “as yet barely out of the anecdotal stage.”[52]

Mayer was similarly influenced by the Payne Fund Studies but also dissatisfied by "their entirely *quantitative* approach."[53] While Blumer had employed qualitative ethnographic methods, Mayer disliked how this was used to "draw conclusions about the general influence of motion pictures on youthful conduct."[54] His own approach, close to Mass Observation emphases on the imagined and the emotional, was also influenced by the work of the child and adolescent psychologist, Charlotte Bühler, a developmental and clinical psychologist who "pioneered the autobiographical method" in analysing adolescent thought processes.[55] Mayer used personal film histories sent to him through the magazine *Picturegoer* to address how the cinema affected young people through their emotions and the imaginary worlds of day-dreams and fantasies, observing that it was this "influence on our emotional life" which made "a social study of film so imperative."[56]

Mayer embarked on his "qualitative appreciation of the film experience" in 1944 with the support of J. Arthur Rank, founder of the Rank cinema organisation, who was commercially motivated to know more about young cinema audiences.[57] This relationship allowed Mayer to interview cinema managers and distribute questionnaires to film-goers, but Rank's interest cooled and Mayer went on to develop a more productive association with Maurice Cowan, editor of *Picturegoer*, the most popular film fans' magazine of the day, whose sales per issue by 1946 averaged around 325,000, with a probable readership of more than a million.[58] *Picturegoer* was ideal for Mayer's purposes. Through it, he placed an advertisement requesting readers to help "a lecturer at the University of London" who was investigating film audiences. They were advised to write to their "heart's content," with no word limit, in response to two main questions. The first asked whether films had ever influenced them "with regard to personal decisions and

behaviour," such as "love, divorce, manners, fashion etc." The second enquired whether they had ever dreamt about films. Writers, guaranteed anonymity, were requested to state age, sex, nationality, occupation, and their parents' occupation. Modest financial prizes were offered for the best accounts.[59]

The *Sociology of Film*, which came out in 1946, published 68 responses, printed as received, with no regard to "grammatical or orthographical correctness."[60] 72 percent were from women and 28 percent from men. 42.6 percent of respondents were under twenty years of age. These were, as Mayer accepted, the partial accounts of keen "movie fans" but he believed this passion to be an advantage, enabling them to write with much greater freedom about "such intimate and delicate experiences" than frequent cinema-goers, who rarely reflected on their film-going. He had already been disappointed trying to interview people under twenty, "e.g. my local coal boy," from whom he had never been able to elicit more "than the admission 'I liked this film', or 'this was a pretty film'."[61]

Mayer continued this research in *British Cinemas and their Audiences* (1948), which he described as "more mature" than the first book, "less groping with a new and difficult subject-matter."[62] *British Cinemas* began with another competition in *Picturegoer,* again with prizes, and a "guidance-sheet" which was a simplified version of the "somewhat more elaborate one" Blumer used for *Movies and Conduct*.[63] This second appeal, also in 1945, gave contributors "a chance to adapt their answers" and write about "more intimate personal experiences" through "motion picture autobiographies", to show "the effect of films on their whole development rather than on only one or two aspects of their lives."[64] As before, respondents, were requested to give

similar personal details and asked to describe how their interest in films had evolved since childhood: how films had influenced play and aroused their emotions; how they had affected behaviour, dress and "love-making," perhaps by falling in love with a screen idol; whether films inspired "temptations and ambitions," such as occupation, "yearning" to travel, leaving home or becoming dissatisfied with way of life or neighbourhood.[65]

This new appeal elicited 200 responses, of which 60 were published, also "practically unedited" as received.[66] The majority were from clerks "and other 'black-coated' workers," which may have reflected their greater literary confidence. 10 percent were from "the proletarian working class." [67] Most (68 percent) were from girls and young women, 19 (46 percent) of which were from girls in their teens and 16 (39 percent) from young women in their twenties. Letters from boys and young men amounted to just under a third (19) of the total. Most of these were from young men in their twenties (12) with two from men in their thirties. Only four were from boys in their teens, with one account from a 12-year-old. Most of their film memories consequently stretched back into the 1930s and further, as they were in their mid- to late-teens when war started, with a couple of respondents in their early thirties. Five were aged between six and ten when war broke out.

While Mayer did not claim that the published sample was representative, he did believe "the extraordinary influence exerted by the cinema on cinemagoers" was revealed by the "confessional tone" that characterised the whole survey.[68] Many writers used the competition as something of an "emotional outlet" and "seemed to welcome the opportunity of expressing themselves."[69] In evoking the role that films played in self-reflection, they give insight into the

writers' psychological worlds at a time when the pace of emotional expression in popular culture was changing and quickening. For some, familiarity with film conventions may have enhanced the value of "being oneself" and "personality," a significant trope in the 1930s and 1940s which pervaded popular newspapers pursuing human interest stories. Many writers revealed incidentally how cinema had become, a "point" around which they "anchored" their everyday lives, much as nineteen-year-old Walter Wilkinson described.[70] This testimony, "by its very nature" "specialized", attracted keen cinemagoers.

Mark Glancy has argued that film fans enjoyed showing off their expertise and knowledge as more sophisticated than that of the usual film-goer and Mayer's respondents were similarly keen to exhibit cinematic expertise and literary aspirations.[71] Several intimated desires for personal affirmation and recognition, setting themselves apart from their peers by stressing novel expertise and understanding built up over many years of cinema-going. "I am not one of those gullible film fans who believe that a film actor or actress displays in real life the same characteristics as those they portray on the screen."[72] A 25-year old clerk distinguished himself from less discerning contemporaries by insisting that even when very young, he had been "conscious that screen characters were merely actors playing a part," and that "what one saw portrayed was not always 'the thing'."[73] Not infrequently, writers attributed to their younger film-going selves maturity beyond their years in their precocious awareness of the distinction between everyday life and film fantasies.

The autobiographical accounts which Payne researchers collected in the early 1930s intimate how films could be an escape from loneliness and social anxieties and while there is always the

possibility that respondents "were writing to please," similar responses may be inferred from Mayer's evidence. An unemployed shop assistant suggested how films seen in his late-teens had released him into a world of the imagination where he could take centre stage, unlike his everyday life, where he had never attended a dance and was something of a "weakling," with a "quiet disposition," "plain appearance," "moderate health" and "bad teeth."[74] A 24-year-old farmer described how keen interest in the cinema had changed him from a "shy, retiring person, and very quiet: could never think of anything to say," to someone whose manner was "more easy." "The cinema taught me that shyness was unattractive, and that loquacious, communicative people got the most out of life, especially popularity."[75] For others, films helped displace them into imaginative situations which could help cope with personal awkwardness.[76] A 19-year-old clerk described how the cinema had helped rid him of "self embarrassment" because whenever he found himself

> in an uncomfortable situation, such as tripping up in an overcrowded street (and I have fallen plenty of times in frosty weather) you would feel as though everyone round about was either laughing or looking hard at you. But this does not worry me, because all I do is think of the films, for if anything similar happens on the screen, no one seems to take any notice.[77]

These are suggestive hints of male shyness, reserve and loneliness which have been largely neglected by historians, often obscured by assumptions based on the public nature of youth leisure lives on the street and in public spaces.[78] The kind of emotional loneliness that arises when an individual "feels estranged from, misunderstood, or rejected by others" is often manifested in the psychological need to tell stories of loneliness to an interested outsider, as was the case here, to Mayer, the anonymous university lecturer.[79] A "rather shy" boy aged "sixteen and half" described himself as a late cinema-goer, who had not attended regularly until he was 13 and still at elementary school. He was encouraged to go by a friend, who thought it would

help “broaden his outlook on life.” This boy did not lack interests – he often cycled and walked with his pals - so this new pursuit may have had something to do building his confidence with girls. Sadly, the well-meaning advice did not go as intended and rather than becoming more outward-looking, he became an obsessive filmgoer, attending as many as five times a week, dropping previous interests, neglecting his work and becoming “easily irritated and upset.”[80] This boy’s account is unusual but not unique. There are similar examples in other contemporary surveys, such as Storck’s study of juvenile audiences published in 1950, which commented on the “exaggerated taste for excitement” that the cinema evoked in children who were trying “to escape from unfortunate family or social circumstances,” “unhappy” young people “suffering from an emotional disturbance,” who found “a seat at the cinema” “some escape from the sadness of their own life.”[81]

A compelling example of male escapism in Mayer’s study was from a 25-year-old, who had also been a “film fanatic” during adolescence. Mayer described his account as a “remarkable piece of self-analysis,” one of three documents separated from the others in *British Cinemas* because none of the writers had enjoyed “a normal home life.” Two were by young women brought up by widowed mothers but the young man’s account was in Mayer’s opinion so “exceptional” that he could not “be classed” with any of the other writers.[82] He was in the Royal Army Medical Corps when he replied to Mayer’s survey, but much of what he described related to his teen years, when he had been an errand boy in south-west London. Boarded with strangers between the ages of 9 and 11 due to his parents’ financial problems, on returning to live with his mother, her new husband and their new baby, he had been away for so long that he felt “left out in the cold” and “an imposition.” “Packed off” to make his own amusements, he found “emotional refuge” in the

cinema, which he attended regularly, usually on his own. On leaving school at 14, he was sent away again, this time to a boys' home for eighteen months, where he created "his own small world around the cinema and friends from the home." Outwardly, his life was "secluded" and "lonely," but his "love of films, and the enjoyment they gave me, quite compensated for my more depressing thoughts of the small world I lived in. I was unsociable I know, but I attribute this to a shy and embarrassed nature." "During that four years, I can honestly say that but for the films, and my enjoyment of them as a pastime, and ideals associated with them, I would have found life unbearable."[83] Estranged from family and familial affection, the young man was "deeply moved" by sentimental films of the sort that Americans specialised in, which "unfortunately" did not always seem to be appreciated by the "staid Britisher." Films "of the tragic and sentimental type" had made a great impression, including *Winterset* (1936), about a young man trying to get justice for his father, who had been executed due to a wrongful murder conviction, and *Boys Town* (1938), based on the real-life story of Edward Flanagan an Irish priest who had established Boys Town as a rural orphanage in Nebraska for homeless city boys.[84] The film starred Mickey Rooney as a tough but troubled teenager transformed by the inspirational Father Flanagan, played by Spencer Tracy. Dedicated to Flanagan and his "splendid work for homeless, abandoned boys," *Boys Town* affirmed the priest's conviction that there was "no such thing in the world as a bad boy," merely friendless boys who "never had a chance." Entreating a newspaper proprietor to support his project, Tracy pleads "when you got into trouble at 11 or 12 years of age...you had your mother or you had your father to put their arms around you...to talk things over with. Can you imagine the fright and the loneliness of a boy... without that love and understanding?" *Boys Town's* evocations of abandonment and feeling

unwanted as a child were likely to have resonated profoundly with the lonely adolescent boy on whom the 25-year-old writer reflected.[85]

Research into how individuals engage with the emotions evoked by a film actor's performance suggests the cinema's complex role as a space in which personal emotions may be projected onto film characters' feelings and situations.[86] Several of Mayer's film biographies illustrate this interplay between the cinematic and the personal, as in memories of difficult family relations and lack of confidence. A 20-year-old cinema operator recalled the hurt and distress of a painful family incident when the affective boundaries off age, seniority and fraternity were breached on seeing a "dispute" between his father and elder brother, and described how witnessing a similar incident in the *Human Story "*soon brought tears to my eyes."[87] The film was probably *Of Human Hearts*, released in 1938 when the young man was 13. This story of fractured family relationships and a mother's love for her rebellious, stubborn son during and after the American Civil War starred James Stewart as the son who abandons his parents after a fierce fist fight with his father, whom he never sees again. The cinema operator had also cried during other films but noted that "in general" it was only when "watching a film which reminds me of something that happened to me in real life that I find it difficult to control my emotions."[88]

The sentimental film melodramas of the 1940s which powerfully foregrounded personal feelings were especially effective in eliciting emotional responses by creating in Kristyn Gordon's word "viewing subjects" who, in layering their "privatised worlds" of personal experiences and emotions onto the emotional landscapes evoked on-screen, allowed fictional film narratives to elide with memories of genuine grief and unhappiness.[89] The cinema's function as a site "where

difficult or problematic emotions" could be more or less freely expressed was particularly significant during the Second World War, which intensified susceptibility to melodrama and stories of suffering and contributed, as Richard Farmer argues, to the creation of "an alternate emotional community, one that existed within the war, but which stood apart from the most common tropes of the 'wartime community'."[90] Janet Thumin observes the heightened emotions of British cinema audiences in 1942-3, when many would have recently experienced a "traumatic fracturing of daily routines" through bereavement and displacement.[91] *My Friend Flicka*, released in 1943, illustrates how such "therapeutic engagement with narratives of emotion and fantasy" encouraged the cathartic freeing of feelings by mediating wartime anxieties about violence and uncertainty. Ken's kinder, gentler model of behaviour, at odds with his father's hard masculinity, showed the moral rightness of humanity and caring and prompted tears among adults as well as children. *My Friend Flicka* was described as "balm to the wartime filmgoer," a "refreshing relief" and an "escape from a war-worn world"; an "eye-filling" film whose "glimpses of remote domestic existence" were "delightful entertainment for all but those staid folk who dislike being made to weep in public places."[92] A "shy" shorthand-typist in his teens who confessed to Mayer that he found it difficult to conceal his feelings was so overwhelmed by the beautiful foal "Flika" lying in the water, dying, that he "shed a tear" and "really cried" when she recovered and everyone was happy.[93] Yet Ken's passion for Flicka, which resonated with many boys, is also suggestive of other meanings, as a love story drama between Ken and the foal, whom he named Flicka, Swedish for "little girl." The tears through which the shorthand typist expressed his feelings may well have been caused him much greater discomfort had he encountered an on-screen human love story, given the frequency with which boys' embarrassment at romantic sloppiness in films was noted.[94]

The cover of a darkened auditorium made it easier to release strong feelings otherwise constrained by the powerful cultural expectation of masculinity that "emotional and physical pain should be met without tears."[95] Crying in the cinema held different meanings for individuals but also changed over the course of adolescence, as emotional responses to films coalesced with emotional development, maturity and changing expectations of felt emotion. Some adolescents, especially girls, were said to enjoy opportunities to cry, and interesting cultural differences may be inferred in responses from children who attended secondary modern schools, which took about three quarters of children aged 11-15 and whose intake was overwhelmingly working class, and the largely middle-class pupils at grammar school.[96] Wall's 1948 study, based on 13 to 16.11 year-olds found the percentages of girls from different educational backgrounds who admitted that films made them "cry or feel sad" "markedly exceeded" those for boys. 72 percent of secondary modern and 68 percent of grammar school girls over the age of 13 admitted to feeling sad or wanting to cry at certain films, compared with 34 percent of boys at secondary modern school and 30 percent at grammar school. The figures for boys and girls reduced as they grew older but remained distinctively gendered. Aged 15-16+, the figures for girls of both educational backgrounds remained relatively high, at 46 percent for secondary modern girls and 55 percent for grammar school girls. In the boys' groups, however, these figures fell to 24 percent for secondary modern boys and 16 percent for secondary grammar boys."[97] Comparative studies make an interesting contrast with these figures. In Le Moal's survey of 1,163 French children aged 10 to 16, published in 1947, 60 percent of boys admitted to crying at the cinema. At 16, this fell to 30 percent, although Le Moal perceptively observed how "pride" perhaps prevented them from offering a "sincere" answer.[98] Thomas Dixon has pointed out how men "did not always conform to the level of stiffness to which they gave lip-service," although

"always in the background of discussions of tears in western cultural history" is "the notion that weeping is weak and effeminate."[99] Harper and Porter's analysis of a 1950 Mass Observation (MO) directive on weeping and the cinema described a "distancing phenomenon" among men which was "entirely absent from the female replies," although this observation was also deceptive.[100] Dixon has described, for example, how the "disdain" with which men regarded "weepies" conflicted with their admission of frequently having a "lump in their throat" or "watery eyes," something also reported by several of Mayer's male respondents who similarly described often getting a "lump" in the throat "during a sad scene."[101] An unemployed shop assistant aged 28 who did admit to weeping rationalised this as a personal virtue, describing himself as "a sentimentalist," a self-conscious cultivator of sentimentality, who had "cried sincerely when I seen *Men of Boys Town*" (released in 1941 as a sequel to *Boys' Town*) and also during the musical drama *San Francisco* (1936), a tangled love story set against the San Francisco earthquake of 1906 whose impressive special effects immersed the audience in the dreadful destruction of people and buildings. Ultimately, however, the spectacle of chaos and lovers trying to find each other shifted the narrative from one of despair to a tale of hope at people's capacity to overcome disaster; an inspirational message during America's Great Depression which was perhaps especially affecting in memory as the Second World War drew to a close.[102]

When the 1950-MO directive of 1950, asked adult respondents whether they ever cried at the pictures, 40 percent of men and 72 percent of women admitted that they did.[103] Like MO respondents generally, these writers had "an unusually strong taste for self-analysis and self-expression," their social backgrounds largely middle, especially lower-middle-class employees

in administration and "lower management." Many were upwardly aspiring and sensitive to an ambivalent social status which often gave rise to social anxieties.[104] Men from this background, unlike men in other social groups, were often moved by similar themes to women. Most women were affected by films with children but a "significant proportion" of lower-middle-class men was also "intensely" moved by films which emphasized family relationships and mentioned children and animals as giving rise to tears, "the only male group to do this."[105] Where middle-class respondents often expressed a powerful anti-Americanism, the films that most affected men in this group were American ones, seen as portraying a world in which "the hard-won securities of home and family" seemed "under threat."[106] Relaxed portrayals of personal feelings and emotion in American films also seem to have been important in mediating the social constraints which surrounded the expression of intense, "powerless", "female" feelings.[107] Responses from lower-middle-class young men in Mayer's study, published two years before the MO survey, show similar patterns, suggesting how American cinema's cultural power gave some the confidence to express their feelings in new ways. The 25-year-old writer who was member of the Royal Army Medical Corps described, for example, finding "un-British" comfort and consolation in the sentimentality and emotional "excesses" of some American films.[108]

"The emotional privations and disturbances" of the war years seem to have brought about a "significant change in audience responses."[109] Younger men, who had grown to maturity and who had "probably fought" during "the uncertainty and anxieties" of the war admitted to weeping "more easily" in the cinema "than those who were older" and more "stoical."[110] Both men and women were "more liable to weep", but "the impact on the traditionally reticent males was more noticeable than on women" because it so differed from the behaviour traditionally

presumed of them, although older stoical masculinity remained powerful and continued to influence how women monitored male emotion.[111] In 1950, a young woman, who "always believed that men didn't cry," asked the *Daily Herald*'s advice columnist whether her boyfriend was a "sissy", because despite loving him "dearly", he often cried at films, and more than once, "when we've had a tiff, I see tears in his eyes." Mary Marshall's reply perhaps reflected some of the broader social shifts brought about by the war:

> Maybe you don't realise that as recently as Victorian times men wept as copiously and openly as women - and it was regarded as a sign of creditable sensibility!
>
> Fashions have changed, but human nature doesn't not change with them, and I'm prepared to bet that men today weep far more frequently than they would admit - though they may do it in private.
>
> The fact is that some people - men and women - weep easily and some don't. It is no proof whatever of 'softness'.[112]

Elizabeth Bird has argued that visual images and messages often "wash over us" and leave little trace, unless they resonate, "even for a moment" with "something in our personal or cultural experience."[113] Films' capacity to release the deep emotion of unhappy family backgrounds may be seen in several of Mayer's male writers. Those films which the 25-year-old writer had favoured in his teens included *Tough Guy*, released in 1936, about a homeless adolescent boy, played by Jackie Cooper, and his beloved dog, "an alsation after the style of *Rim-Tin-Tin* (sic)."[114] The boy manages to survive in a hostile world after running away from his father and falling in with a gang leader, played by Joseph Calleia, whose heart was "softened" by Cooper's love for his dog. The death of both the dog and gang leader at the film's climax had a profound effect on this writer's emotionally deprived younger self. "I found Cooper's tearful outburst on finding his dog shot and Calleia dying almost too much for my pent-up emotions. I honestly confess I was in tears . . . Many films from that time have brought tears to my eyes, and still do."[115]

The animal-human relationships exemplified by *Tough Guy* and *My Friend Flicka* are a suggestive theme in the study of adolescent emotions. Surveys of children's film preferences in the 1940s found that most younger children aged 8-14, slightly more boys than girls, liked animal films.[116] 53 boys and 16 girls in Walls's study chose the *Lassie* series as their favourite.[117] The highest scoring film choices included *My Friend Flicka*, popular with 17 boys and five girls and another Technicolor animal film, *Smoky* (1946) about the bond between a cowboy and an abused wild horse, which 16 boys but no girls rated highly.[118] Themes of love and redemption in animal-human relationships were prominent in films during the war, when families were under strain and many fathers absent.[119] Heart-wrenching animal stories appealed to film-makers precisely because they evoked strong "emotional reactions" through love of animals," "pleasure in action" and "enjoyment of sorrowful emotions."[120] Their narratives offered not only "practical knowledge" about how to feel but also how to deal with difficult feelings. Showing that crying could be a natural response to distress was especially significant for boys, given its cultural connection with weakness, although the effects of such films were diluted as young people entered their mid- to late-teens.[121] Walls, struck by the popularity of animal films with both boys and girls aged 13-14, noted how their "emotional effects" were "less striking" among older adolescents, "especially fifteen and sixteen-year-old boys, whose greater experience" seemed "to make them less vulnerable or more blasé."[122] Animal films' declining popularity among boys in the mid-teens was accompanied by decreasing willingness to admit to crying, although the readiness of a substantial minority of older boys to say that they did cry in the cinema not only reveals cultural differences between secondary modern and secondary grammar boys mentioned earlier but also illustrates how different types of peer and social pressure during adolescence constrained potentially embarrassing types of emotional expression.

Conclusion: Private and Public Worlds

How young people learned "to do" through cinematic example has often been observed, notably copying fashions, mannerisms, slang, kissing and smoking.[123] How children learn to feel and broaden their emotional responses through reading about "somebody else's pain and joy", for example, has also received significant attention.[124] Less well-considered has been the cinema's role as a site of emotional learning, despite its significance in the 1930s and 1940s as the most popular form of youth entertainment. As the examples explored here suggest, the cinema gave the young opportunities to "re-feel" specific situations from their own lives, to connect their own feelings with what they saw on screen and to learn through feeling excitement, sadness or fear. It exposed them to emotional repertoires whose impact was intensified by the sensory immediacy of sight and sound and whose "emotional responses" were largely internalised and private, despite being experienced in "communal public space."[125]

The images and sensory power of the cinema's technology intimate a pervious frontier between everyday life and the imagination whose immersive visual and auditory sensations flowed across into the emotional topographies of young people's everyday lives. They engaged young people with many different types of emotional expression, some familiar, others more challenging, diluted or intensified according to an individual's state of mind, personal history and manner of attendance and in ways which suggest new ways of understanding male emotion in this period. Sara Ahmed observes that even when individuals share the same feeling, the relationship to that feeling is not necessarily the same. "Some will laugh, some feel bored, some cry at the same moment as feelings are inflected by social context and individual experiences."[126] Mayer,

sympathetic to the "experiences and self-interpretations of the individual", was similarly careful not to assume homogeneity,

> In the cinema the film is presented to every member of the audience. But the sensation-perception mechanism is unique for every individual. What is perceived is unique in each case, but what is 'seen' is also unique.[127]

Yet his nuanced examples of boys and young men's emotional responses to films intimate complex subjectivities and interactions between the individual and the social; "mimetic", imitative and creative encounters that reveal more of boys' inner-lives than their better-chronicled experiences of outdoor public spaces and street gangs.[128] Unscientific though they were, Mayer's case studies, communicating "feelings and thoughts" in ways more akin to "those expressed in a diary", illustrate the diversity of young people's emotional responses to films and counter a literature on popular culture and male youth dominated by boys' predilection for adventure, action and horror.[129] Film-going could be a sociable familial experience, especially for younger children and young women in their teens, but for the boys and young men described here, its solitary aspects accentuated susceptibility to films' emotional power, sustained in a darkened auditorium where it was much easier to forsake the powerful cultural expectations of public masculinity that "emotional and physical pain should be met without tears." [130] The remembered feelings they chose to describe evoke the cinema as a place of belonging whose moments of catharsis were redolent of the gulf between individual adolescent uncertainties and public expectations of masculinity, which associated emotional expressiveness with women's "weakness" and lack of power. For boys and young men disconnected in many ways from social life outside their film-going, the cinema became both a place of emotional learning, an "emotional refuge" whose opportunities to self-soothe through daydreaming sanctioned the

release of conflicted "feminine" sensibilities otherwise so difficult to express publicly in their everyday lives.

Endnotes

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[1] Henri Storck, *The Entertainment Film for Juvenile Audiences* (Paris, 1950), 16. Working adolescents attended more frequently than younger children because of their disposable income. See Kathleen Box, *The Cinema and the Public: An Inquiry into Cinema Going Habits and Expenditure made in 1946* (London,1946), 5; J. Richards and D. Sheridan (eds.), *Mass-Observation at the Movies* (London, 1986). A wartime survey of cinema audiences found it "most remarkable" that a "very high proportion of children aged 14-17 (all wage-earners) went to the cinema once a week or more often", 79 percent at least once and 43 percent twice a week or more: L. Moss and K. Box, *The Cinema Audience: An Inquiry Made by the Wartime Social Survey for the Ministry of Information* (London,1943), 1, 4. Other studies of children's attendance include F.H. Spencer, *School Children in the* Cinema (London, 1932).

[2] Jonathan Sterne, *The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction* (Durham, London, 2003), 12.

[3] *Worthing Herald,* December 17, 1943, 12; *The Manchester Guardian*, November 30, 1943, 3; *The Sketch*, October 20, 1943, 205; E.S. Tompkins, "The Colour Enthusiast at the Cinema," *The British Journal of Photography*, November 19, 1943, 420. There was much discussion of the psychological effects of colour on children and adolescents. "Too violent" colors were termed "shock" colors because of their capacity to provoke excitement: Storck, *The Entertainment Film*,

78. Mayer thought children under the age of 13 generally preferred "technicolour films , because, if I may put it tentatively, their rationalising mechanisms are still undeveloped…to what extent colour corresponds particularly to child emotionalism, I am unable to say, but I would not be surprised if there is such a correspondence." J.P. Mayer, *Sociology of Film: Studies and Documents* (London, 1946), 110-11.

[4] Patti M. Valkenburg, *Children's Responses to the Screen: A Media Psychological Approach* (Mahwah, NJ, London, 2004), 8; B. Crowther, "The Partial Picture: Framing the Discourse of Sex in British Educative Films of the Early 1930s," in L. D. H. Sauerteig and R. Davidson, *Shaping Sexual Knowledge: A Cultural History of Sex Education in Twentieth Century Europe* (London, New York, 2009), 181.

[5] For the history of emotions, see Peter N. Stearns and Carol Z. Stearns, "Emotionology: Clarifying the History of Emotions and Emotional standards", *American Historical Review* (1985) 9 (4): 813-836; Jan Plamper, "The History of Emotions: An Interview with William Reddy, Barbara Rosenwein and Peter Stearns," *History and Theory* (2010) 49 (2): 237-265; Ute Frevert, *Emotions in History: Lost and Found* (Budapest, 2011); Peter N. Stearns, "Childhood Emotions in Modern Western History," in Paula S. Fass (ed.), *The Routledge History of Childhood in the Western World* (London, 2013), 158-173; Rob Boddice, "The Affective Turn: Historicizing the Emotions," in Cristian Tileaga and Jovam Byfors (eds), *Psychology and History: Interdisciplinary Explorations* (Cambridge, 2014), 147-165; Susan J. Matt and Peter N. Stearns (eds), *Doing Emotions History* (Urbana, 2014); Jan Plamper, *The History of Emotions: An Introduction* (Oxford, 2015); Peter N. Stearns, "Children and Emotions History", *European Journal of Developmental Psychology* 14 (6) (2017): 659-671. For new connections between histories of childhood and youth and emotions history, see Stephanie Olsen, *Juvenile Nation:*

Youth. Emotions and the Making of the Modern British Citizen, 1880-1914 (London, 2014); Karen Vallgårda, Kristine Alexander and Stephanie Olsen, "Emotions and the Global Politics of Childhood" in Stephanie Olsen (ed.), *Childhood, Youth and Emotions in Modern History: National, Colonial and Global Perspectives* (Basingstoke, 2015), 12-34; Dorothy G. Singer, Jerome L. Singer (eds.), *Handbook of Children and the Media*, (Thousand Oaks CA, 2011), xiii; Sterne, *The Audible Past*, 12.

[6] Annette Kuhn's oral history study of people who were regular cinema-goers in the 1930s highlights the contribution that the cinema made to the identities of youth in this decade: *An Everyday Magic: Cinema and Cultural Memory* (London, New York, 2002). See, also, Jeffrey Richards, *The Age of the Dream Palace: Cinema and Society in Britain, 1930-39* (London, 1984); John Sedgwick, *Popular Filmgoing in the 1930s* (Exeter, 2000).

[7] E.g. W. D. Wall, "The Adolescent and the Cinema - I," *Educational Review* 1 (1), (1948): 35. Mayer, *Sociology of Film*, 151; Mayer, *British Cinemas* (London, 1948).

[8] Stephanie Olsen, "The History of Childhood and the Emotional Turn," *History Compass* (2017): 1-10; Kristine Alexander, "Can the Girl Guide Speak? The Perils and Pleasure of Looking for Children's Voices in Archival Research," *Jeunesse: Young People, Texts, Culture*, 4 (1) (2012): 132-145. The concepts "emotional formation" and "emotional frontier" were coined by Vallgårda, Alexander and Olsen, who have defined an "emotional frontier" as a border between different ways of feeling and expressing emotion and between different emotional formations, as between home and school. See Vallgårda, Alexander, Olsen, "Emotions and the Global Politics of Childhood."

[9] Annette Kuhn, *Family Secrets: Acts of Memory and Imagination* (London, New York, new edition 2002), 2.

[10] S. Street, *British Cinema in Documents* (London, 2000), 153. For young women and interwar cinema, see Lisa Stead, *Off to the Pictures: Cinemagoing, Women as Writing and Movie Culture in Interwar Britain* (Edinburgh, 2016). Literature on women's involvement with films and film culture is extensive from the 1970s. For examples from the 1970s and 1980s see Lea Jacobs, "Reformers and Spectators: The Film Education Movement in the Thirties," *Camera Obscura: A Journal of Feminism, Culture, and Media Studies* 22 (January 1990): 44, 49. For the changing context of courtship in this period and its relationship to the expansion of consumer culture and the role of the cinema (and dance halls) as "dominant arenas for romantic encounters" see Claire Langhamer "Love and Courtship in Mid-Twentieth-Century England," *The Historical Journal* 50 (1) (2007): 173-196 and Judy Giles, "'Playing Hard to Get': Working-Class Women, Sexuality and Respectability in Britain, 1918-40," *Women's History Review* 1 (2) (1992): 239-255.

[11] William Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (Cambridge, 2001), 128-29; Heather J. MacArthur, Stephanie A. Shields, "There's No Crying in Baseball, or Is There? Male Athletes, Tears and Masculinity in North America," *Emotion Review*, 7 (1) (January 2015): 40; Ute Frevert, Pascal Eitler, Stephanie Olsen, Uffa Jensen, Margrit Pernau, Daniel Brückenhaus, Magdalena Beljan, Benno Gammerl, Anja Laukötter, Bettina Hitzer, Jan Plamper, Juliane Brauer, Joachim C. Häberlen, *Learning How to Feel: Children's Literature and Emotional Socialization, 1870-1970*, (Oxford, 2014).

[12] For the relationship between early films and their spectators, see Noel Burch, *Life to those Shadows*. Trans. and ed. by Ben Brewster, (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1990); Brenton J. Malin, *Feeling Mediated: A History of Media Technology and Emotion in America* (New York, 2014), 7; Matt, Stearns, *Doing Emotions History.*

[13] Frevert et al, *Learning How to Feel*.

[14] Malin, *Feeling Mediated,* 13. Stephanie Olsen in *Learning How to Feel* examined how children's reading matter helped children not only to learn about emotions but encouraged them to "enact" those emotions by "putting themselves onto the scenes, experiences and feelings of the characters they were reading about or listening to in children's stories": Stephanie Olsen, "Learning How to Feel through Play: At the Intersection of the Histories of Play, Childhood and the Emotions," *International Journal of Play* 5 (3) (2016): 326.

[15] Olsen *Childhood, Youth and Emotions*, 13.

[16] James Chapman, *The British at War: Cinema, State and Propaganda, 1939-45* (London: New York, 1998), 253; H. L. Smith, *Britain in the Second World War: A Social History* (Manchester, 1996), 77, 78; Kirsten Drotner, (1992), "Modernity and Media Panics" in Michael Skovmand and Kim Christian Schrder (eds), *Media Cultures: Reappraising Transnational Media* (London, 1992), 42-62. See, also, John Springhall, *Youth, Popular Culture and Moral Panics: Penny Gaffs to Gangsta-Rap, 1830-1996* (London, 1998).

[17] Smith, *Britain in the Second World War*, 17; Field, *Blood, Sweat and Toil*: 194, 196; T. Zahra, *The Lost Children: Reconstructing Europe's Families after World War Two* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2011), 63.

[18] Richard Abel (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Early Cinema* (London, New York, 2005), 45.

[19] Melanie Tebbutt, "Fears of the Dark: Children, Young People and the Cinema in World War One," in Maggie Andrews, Neil Fleming, Marcus Morris, *Histories, Memories and Representations of Being Young in the First World War* (London, 2020), 80.

[20] "Terrence Gallacher's Recollections of a Career in Film: A Series of Articles on Documentary Film Making": Terrence Gallacher, "Saturday Morning Cinema in the 1930s", November 23

2010: https://terencegallacher.wordpress.com/2010/11/23/saturday-morning-cinema-in-the-1930s/, accessed August 2021. Most of J.P. Mayer's respondents had become cinema-goers before the age of 10. Mayer, *British Cinemas*, 15.

[21] Mayer, *British Cinemas*, 67-8; W.W. Charters, *Motion Pictures and Youth* (New York, 1934), 61.

[22] Hugo Munsterberg, *The Photoplay: A Psychological Study* (New York, 1916. Reprint, New York, Dover, 1970), 95.

[23] Allan Langdale (ed.), *Hugo Munsterberg on Film. The Photoplay: A Psychological Study and Other Writings* (London, 2002), 9. The sociologist Emilie Altenloh emphasised the sociable side of cinema-going, arguing that the cinema's popularity among working-class children, adolescents and women was because it was a warm, inviting environment in which to meet friends and conduct courtship: Abel, *Encyclopedia*, 46. For the cinema as an experiential, communal space for those largely excluded from other public arenas, see Luke McKernan, '"Only the Screen was Silent...": Memories of Children's Cinema-Going in London before the First World War," *Film Studies* 10 (1) (2007): 1-20.

[24] Malin, *Feeling Mediated*, 13; Frevert et al., *Learning How to Feel*, 188; G. Stanley Hall, *Adolescence, Its Psychology and Its Relations to Physiology, Anthropology, Sociology, Sex, Crime, Religion and Education* (New York, London, 1904: 1916), vol 1, xv-xvi; Jowett et al., *Children and the Movies*, 21.

[25] Marjorie Taylor (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Development of the Imagination* (Oxford, 2013), 258-9. Adult attempts to police young people's imaginative lives have been the basis of moral panics since the nineteenth century and continue to resonate in contemporary worries about the impact of new media technologies on the young, especially on those born between

1980 and 1995, the first generation of "digital natives", and on those born after 1994, the first generation to grow up with the world wide web and mobile technology: Tamara J. Erickson, "How Mobile Technologies are Shaping a New Generation," *Harvard Business Review*, April 18 (2012): https://hbr.org/2012/04/the-mobile-re-generation, accessed August 2021.

[26] Felicity Callard, Jonathan Smallwood, Johannes Golchert, Daniel S. Margulies, "The Era of the Wandering Mind? Twenty-first Century Research on Self-Generated Mental Activity," *Frontiers in Psychology* 4 (891) (2013), published on-line December 18, 2013: https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2013.00891/full accessed August 2021.

[27] Richards and Sheridan, *Mass-Observation*, 82.

[28] Thomas Elsaesser (ed.) with Michael Wedel, *A Second Life: German Cinema's First Decades* (Amsterdam, 1996), 44.

[29] Board of Education, The Youth Service After the War: A Report of the Youth Advisory Council appointed by the President of the Board of Education in 1942 to advise him on questions relating to the Youth Service in England (London, 1943), 13.

[30] W.D. Wall and E.M. Smith, "The Film Choices of Adolescents," *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 19 (2) (1949), 134. A positive understanding of films' emotional potential in student learning is clear in the film appreciation movement in the United States, which aimed to harness the cinema enthusiasms of the young. High school students formed approximately a third of the movie-going audience in the 1930s and Edgar Dale of the Payne Fund was a prime instigator of the movement which encompassed educators, librarians and civic leaders. It produced a range of materials about the educational uses of film, which sought to train high school students in critical awareness and to foster healthy emotional responses. See John Nichols, "Countering Censorship: Edgar Dale and the Film Appreciation Movement,"

Cinema Journal 46:1 (September 2006): 3-22 and Lea Jacobs, "Reformers and Spectators,": 28-49. Thank you, Will Holub-Moorman, for drawing my attention to the movement.

[31] Hall, Adolescence, xv-xvi; Jowett et al., *Children and the Movies*, 21.

[32] Frevert et al., *Learning How to Feel*: 188; Wall and Smith, "The Film Choices of Adolescents,": 133-4.

[33] Bart Beaty, *Fredric Wertham and the Critique of Mass Culture* (Jackson, MS., 2005), 177.

[34] Charters, *Motion Pictures*, 62.

[35] Malin, *Feeling Mediated*, 13; Herbert Blumer, *Movies and Conduct* (New York, 1933), 199.

[36] Blumer, *Movies*, vii. The studies were led by W.W. Charters. Beaty, *Fredric Wertham*, 177; Jowett et al, *Children and the Movies*, 79; Herbert Blumer and Philip Hausser, *Movies, Delinquency and Crime* (New York, 1933); Wendell Stuart Dysinger, Christian Alban Ruckmick, *The Emotional Responses of Children to the Motion Picture Situation* (New York, 1933); Edgar Dale, *Children's Attendance at Motion Pictures* (New York, 1935); Edgar Dale, *The Content of Motion Pictures* (New York, 1935); Margaret Farrand Thorp, *America at the Movies* (London, 1946).

[37] Malin, *Feeling Mediated*, 159; Jowett et al., *Children and the Movies*, 69; Matt, Stearns, *Doing Emotions History*, 190.

[38] Blumer, *Movies and Conduct*, 2, 3. Blumer's respondents were largely young people in education: 634 university students, 481 college students, 583 high school students, 67 office workers, 58 factory workers.

[39] Martin Conboy, John Steel (eds), *The Routledge Companion to British Media History* (London, 2015), 87; William D. Romanowski, *Reforming Hollywood: How American Protestants Fought for Freedom at the Movies*, (New York, 2012), 85. Henry James Forman's

best-selling *Our Movie-Made Children* (1933) selectively used the Payne Studies research to argue that children's excessive movie-going damaged emotional development and sowed the seeds of psychoses and nervous disorders which matured in adulthood.

[40] Wall, "The Adolescent and the Cinema – I", 35.

[41] E.g. H. A. Marquand and G. Meara. *South Wales Needs a Plan*, (London, 1936); H. Durant. *The Problem of Leisure*, (London, 1938); A. E. Morgan. *The Needs of Youth,* (Oxford, 1939); A.J. Lush, *The Young Adult in South Wales*, (Cardiff, 1941).

[42] Sir James Marchant (ed.), *The Cinema In Education: Being the Report of the Psychological Investigation Conducted by Special Subcommittees Appointed by the Cinema Commission of Enquiry Established by the National Council of Public Morals* (London, 1925); Birkenhead Vigilance Committee, *The Cinema and the Child: A Report of Investigations*, June-October 1931 (Birkenhead, 1931); Birmingham Cinema Inquiry Committee, *Report of Investigations*, April 1930-May 1931, (Birmingham, 1931); F.H. Spencer, *School Children and the Cinema* (London, 1932); John Mackie (ed.), *The Edinburgh Cinema Enquiry. Being an Investigation Conducted into the Influence of the Film on School Children and Adolescents in the City* (Edinburgh, 1933); S. Rowson, "A Statistical Survey of the Cinema Industry in Great Britain in 1934," *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, 99 (1) (1936): 67-119; H. K. Clarkson, *A Survey of the Leisure Time of West Lothian School Children* (Edinburgh 1938); Richard Ford, *Children in the Cinema* (London, 1939); A.J. Jenkinson, *What do Boys and Girls Read?* (London, 1940); Louis Moss, Kathleen Box, *The Cinema Audience* (An Enquiry Made by the Wartime Social Survey for the Ministry of Information), New Series, No. 37b (June-July 1943); Douglas Moul Macintosh, *Attendance of School Children at the Cinema* (Glasgow, 1945); Kathleen Box, *The Cinema and*

the Public (An Enquiry into Cinemagoing Habits and Expenditure Made in 1946), New Series 106 (London, Ministry of Information, 1946).

[43] See Richards and Sheridan*, Mass Observation*.

[44] *Kinematograph Weekly*, December 9, 1948. For the British film industry after the Second World War, see Stephen Guy, *After Victory: Projections of the Second World War and its Aftermath in British Feature Films, 1946-1950* (Doctoral dissertation, Queen Mary, University of London, 2002).

[45] Melanie Tebbutt, *Making Youth: A History of Youth in Modern Britain* (London, 2016): 143.

[46] Mark Roodhouse, *Black Market Britain: 1939-1955* (Oxford, 2013), 160, 245; Peter Hennessy, *Never Again Britain, 1945-51* (London, 1992), 2. "Spiv" was British slang for a flashy dresser who was typically connected with crime and the illicit trading of goods.

[47] W. D. Wall, "The Adolescent and the Cinema – I", 35.

[48] W.D. Wall, "The Adolescent and the Cinema – II", *Educational Review,* 1:2 (1949), 119.

[49] Ibid.

[50] Ibid, 127.

[51] Ibid. William Douglas Wall, b. 1913, worked in the Department of Education, Birmingham University, 1945-53. He founded the *Educational Review* while at Birmingham and became Reader in 1948. Derek May,

Obituaries: "Professor W.D. Wall, gifted educationist and psychologist," *Independent*, March 1 2004: https://www.independent.co.uk/news/obituaries/professor-w-d-wall-38090.html, accessed August 2020.

[52] Wall, "The Adolescent and the Cinema – I,", 35.

[53] Mayer, *British Cinemas*, 15, 58.

[54] Christina Petersen, "The Crowd Mind: The Archival Legacy of the Payne Fund Studies Movies and Conduct (1933)," *Mediascape* (Winter 2013), 2.

[55] Mayer, *Sociology*,151. Charlotte Bühler (nee Malachowski), 1893-1974. Bühler's *Das Seelenleben des Jugendlichen* (*The Mental Life of Young People*), published in 1922, was based on detailed analysis of adolescent diaries, including her own. http://www.feministvoices.com/charlotte-buhler/ [accessed March 2019); Richard M. Lerner, Anne C. Petersen, Rainer K. Silbereisen, Jeanne Brooks-Gunn (eds), *The Developmental Science of Adolescence: History through Autobiography* (New York, 2013),168.

[56] Mayer, *Sociology*, 272.

[57] Mayer, *Sociology*,11, 12.

[58] See, Mark Glancy, "The Hollywood Woman's Film and British Audiences: A Case Study of Bette Davis and *Now Voyager*," in Melanie Bell, Melanie Williams (eds), *British Women's Cinema* (Routledge, 2010), 49-61. For details of readership and circulation, see Mark Glancy, "*Picturegoer*: The Fan Magazine and Popular Film Culture in Britain During the Second World War," *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 31 (4) (2011), 453-478; Mayer, *British Cinema*, 13.

[59] Mayer, *Sociology*, 181. For an earlier exploration of Mayer's case studies, see Melanie Tebbutt, *Being Boys: Youth, Leisure and Identity in the Inter-war Years* (Manchester, 2012), 156-161.

[60] Ibid, 259.

[61] Ibid, 260-1.

[62] Mayer, *British Cinema*, 1.

[63] Ibid, 13, 14.

[64] Ibid, 13, 15, 58.

[65] For respondents' comments on holiday films, see Matthew Kerry, *The Holiday and the British Film* (London, 2012), 21-4.

[66] Mayer, *British Cinema*s, 15.

[67] Ibid, 144.

[68] Ibid; Street, *British Cinema*,153.

[69] Mayer, *British Cinema*, 15.

[70] Kristyn Gorton, *Media Audiences: Television, Meaning and Emotion* (Edinburgh, 2009), ix.

[71] Glancy, "*Picturegoer*": 471.

[72] Mayer, *Sociology*, 242. Male clerk aged 30.

[73] Mayer, *British Cinema*, 17.

[74] Mayer, *Sociology*, 182-3.

[75] Mayer, *Sociology*, 208.

[76] Blumer, *Movies and Conduct*, 223-233.

[77] Mayer, *Sociology,* 240.

[78] K.D.M. Snell, "Agendas for the Historical Study of Loneliness and Lone Living," *The Open Psychology Journal*, 8 (Suppl 2-M2) (2015): 62. Rotenberg and Hymel suggest girls tend to demonstrate lower loneliness than boys: Ken J. Rotenberg, Shelley Hymel, *Loneliness in Childhood and Adolescence*, (Cambridge, 1999), 4.

[79] Nina Junttila, 'Cognitive Distortions: Maintaining Adolescents' Loneliness'. Paper delivered to *Trauma and Changing Circumstances in Youth* workshop, November 4, 2016, Manchester Metropolitan University.

[80] Mayer, *British Cinemas*, 119.

[81] Storck, *The Entertainment Film*, 34-5.

[82] Mayer, *British Cinemas*, 127, 151.

[83] Ibid, 132-43.

[84] Daire Keogh, "'There's No Such Thing as a Bad Boy: Fr. Flanagan's Visit to Ireland, 1946," *History Ireland*, 12 (1) (Spring 2004): 29.

[85] Boys Town Movie Script: http://www.stockq.org/moviescript/B/boys-town.php accessed December 2021;
http://www.boystownmovie.org, accessed September 2021.

[86] See Murray Smith, *Engaging Characters: Fiction, Emotion and the Cinema* (Oxford, 1995).

[87] Mayer, *British Cinemas*, 105-6.

[88] Ibid, 106.

[89] Gorton, *Media Audiences,* 6.

[90] Farmer, *Cinemas and Cinemagoing*, 222. Mayer observed that the fact it was even darker in the cinema than in the theatre was "not without its sociological implications!... I doubt whether this darkness produces 'the comfortable community of feeling' of which some writers who have written about the cinema, have told us." Mayer, *Sociology,* 274,

[91] Janet Thumin, "The Female Audience: Mobile Women and Married Ladies" in Christine Gledhill and Gillian Swanson, *Nationalising Femininity: Culture, Sexuality and British Cinema in the Second World War* (Manchester, 1996), 251.

[92] James Agate, "Myself at the Pictures," *The Tatler and Bystander*, October 13 1943, 86; *Daily Herald*, October 9 1943, 2.

[93] Mayer, *British Cinemas*, 118.

[94] Mackie, *The Edinburgh Cinema Enquiry*, 14–18; Kuhn, *An Everyday Magic*,147–8.

[95] Thomas Dixon, *Weeping Britannia: Portrait of a Nation in Tears* (Oxford, 2015). See also Tebbutt "Fears of the Dark," 75-96.

[96] Sally Tomlinson, *Education in a Post Welfare Society* (Maidenhead, 2005), 17.

[97] Wall, "The Adolescent and the Cinema – II": 122.

[98] Two-thirds were aged 12 - 14. 80-90 percent of younger and older girls admitted crying. P. Le Moal and M.M. Faugere, "Le cinema and l'enfant," in *La Sauvegarde de l'Enfance*, Paris, (15-16), November-December 1947, 66-77, cited in Storck, *The Entertainment Film*, 28; *The Influence of the Cinema on Children and Adolescence: An Annotated International Bibliography* (Paris, 1961), 25.

[99] Dixon, *Weeping*, 145.

[100] Mass-Observation Archive, University of Sussex [M-O A]: Directive for August 1950. Sue Harper and Vincent Porter, "Moved to Tears: Weeping in the Cinema in Postwar Britain," *Screen*, 36 (2), (Summer 1996): 154-6.

[101] Dixon, *Weeping*, 233-4; Mayer, *British Cinemas*, 118.

[102] Mayer, *Sociology*, 182-3.

[103] [M-O A]: Directive for August 1950. 318 replies, 193 from men and 125 from women, mostly aged between 20 and 40; Dixon, *Weeping*, 232.

[104] Harper and Porter, "Moved to Tears," 153.

[105] Ibid, 163.

[106] Ibid, 163, 172.

[107] Agneta Fischer, Marianne LaFrance, "What Drives the Smile and the Tear: Why Women are More Emotionally Expressive Than Men," *Emotion Review* 7 (1) (January 2015): 22-9; MacArthur and Shields, "There's No Crying in Baseball", 39.

[108] Ibid, 169; Glancy, "The Hollywood woman's film," 57.

[109] Harper and Porter, "Moved to Tears": 168.

[110] Sue Harper and Vincent Porter, *Weeping in the Cinema in 1950: A Reassessment of Mass-Observation Material* (Sussex, 1995), 19.

[111] Harper and Porter, "Moved to Tears," 171.

[112] *Daily Herald*, January 15, 1950.

[113] Elizabeth Bird in *The Audience in Everyday Life: Living in a Media World* (New York, 2003), viii, 2.

[114] Mayer, *British Cinemas*, 137.

[115] Ibid.

[116] Wall and Smith, "The Film Choices of Adolescents,": 132.

[117] Ibid: 132. For Lassie and children's fiction, see "Her Suffering Aristocratic Majesty" in Henry Jenkins, *The Wow Climax: Tracing the Emotional Impact of Popular Cult*ure (New York and London, 2007).

[118] Ibid, 127. Adapted from Will James's children's novel, *Smoky the Cowhorse* (1927). Wall noted how more grammar school boys than non-grammar school boys chose to write about animal films.

[119] The book *Black Beauty*, published in 1877, was another anthropocentric story of equine suffering with which subordinate groups and individuals identified. The popular film version of *Black Beauty* was released in 1946: Frevert et al., *Learning to Feel*, 96.

[120] Wall and Smith, "The Film Choices of Adolescents," 133.

[121] Frevert et al., *Learning to Feel*, 110.

[122] Wall, "The adolescent and the cinema – II": 120.

[123] Tebbutt, *Being Boys,* 129-30.

[124] Frevert et al*, Learning How to Feel*, 2.

[125] Alan Maddox, "Performing Emotions," in Katie Barclay, Sharon Crozier-De Rosa, Peter N. Stearns, *Sources for the History of Emotions: A Guide* (London, New York, 2021), 128.

[126] Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (Edinburgh, 2004), 10, 61; Frevert et al., *Learning to Feel*, 8.

[127] Mayer, *Sociology*, 59

[128] Mayer, *British Cinemas*, 14. Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries Britain's youth were characterised as a problem for society, labelled as hooligans, delinquents and antisocial and a continuing threat in public space. An extensive literature includes: Peter King, "The Rise of Juvenile Delinquency in England 1780–1840: Changing Patterns of Perception and Prosecution," *Past and Present*, 160 (1998): 116-166; J. R. Gillis, "The Evolution of Juvenile Delinquency in England, 1890-1914," *Past and Present* 67 (1975): 96-126; Heather Shore with Pamela Cox, "Introduction: Re-inventing the Juvenile Delinquent in Britain and Europe 1650–1950," in P. Cox and H. Shore (eds.), *Becoming Delinquent: British and European Youth, 1650–1950* (2002), 1-22; Heather Shore, "Home, Play and Street Life: Causes of, and Explanations for, Juvenile Crime in the Early Nineteenth Century," in Anthony Fletcher and Stephen Hussey (eds.), *Childhood in Question: Children, Parents and the State* (Manchester, 1999), 96-114; Heather Shore, *Artful Dodgers: Youth and Crime in Early Nineteenth-Century London* (London, 1999); Andrew Davies, "'These Viragoes are No Less Cruel Than the Lads': Young Women, Gangs and Violence in Late Victorian Manchester and Salford," *British Journal of Criminology* 39 (1) (1999): 72–89; Cyril Burt, *The Young Delinquent* (London, 1925); Barbara Littlewood and Linda Mahood, "The 'Vicious' Girl and the 'Street-Corner' Boy - Sexuality and the

Gendered Delinquent in the Scottish Child-Saving Movement, 1850-1940," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 4 (4) (1994): 549-578; Stephen Humphries, *Hooligans Or Rebels? An Oral History of Working-Class Childhood and Youth 1889-1939* (London, 1981); John Bowlby, *Forty-Four Juvenile Thieves: Their Characters and Home Life* (London, 1946); Pamela Cox, *Gender, Justice and Welfare: Bad Girls in Britain, 1900-1950* (London, 2003); Abigail Wills, "Delinquency, Masculinity and Citizenship in England 1950–1970," *Past and Present* 187 (2005): 157-85; David Fowler, "From Jukebox Boys to Revolting Students. Richard Hoggart and the Study of British Youth Culture," in Sue Owen, *Richard Hoggart and Cultural Studies* (London, 2008), 105-122; Victor Bailey, *Delinquency and Citizenship: Reclaiming the Young Offender* (Oxford, 1987).

[129] Street, *British Cinema*, 153; Wall and Smith, "The Film Choices of Adolescents,": 126.

[130] Thomas Dixon, *Weeping*. See also, Tebbutt, "Fears of the Dark".