

Chapter 1 : Top shelves for Studying Contemporary American Film

This is a guide in the best tradition of 'Teach Yourself Film Studies', of which 'Studying Contemporary American Film' could be seen as a welcome sequel. Read more.

Gove has harped on this chauvinistic string for some time now. As he told his party conference, on assuming office: Gove clearly sees it as contaminated with the ideological prejudices of the left-leaning teaching profession. *To Kill a Mockingbird*, another title on the Gove blacklist, makes a collateral fictional push for the American civil rights bill. My own honest opinion is that American literature should be as prominent on the British syllabus as British literature is on the American syllabus. And what should be highlighted in the texts for the British classroom is what William Carlos Williams called that unique "American grain". What, then, would be the best 10 prescribed works? Why not kick off with Williams, to get the target in sight. Historically the starting point of American literature is Anne Bradstreet. Bradstreet was born in England in Her family was part of the Puritan "Great Migration" – under religious persecution – to "New England". Both her father and her husband would go on to be governors of Massachusetts. Bradstreet, meanwhile, was charged with running the family farm. She did it well. The Puritans believed that daughters should be as well-educated as sons. Bradstreet was intelligent, extraordinarily well read and herself an ambitious writer. She wrote poetry as a spiritual exercise – an act of devotion – rather than for any fame, current or posthumous. Her poems tend to be short. Her life was too busy for long works. I blest His name that gave and took, That laid my goods now in the dust. It was His own, it was not mine – The world no longer let me love, My hope and treasure lies above. But what one hears is an entirely new voice – an American voice, moreover the voice of an American "making" the new country. Bradstreet and her husband had built the house, now in ashes; they would, of course rebuild; America is a country constantly rebuilding America. Out of Puritanism came transcendentalism. Ralph Waldo Emerson is too dense and *Moby-Dick* too bloody long. Walt Whitman, the self-declared disciple of Emerson, embodies another aspect of the transcendental tradition: Emily Dickinson – fashioned greatness out of simple materials. Corbis American literature thinks big. But it also has the ability to fashion greatness out of the simplest materials. A powerful and defining impulse in American literature of the 19th and 20th century is the "frontier thesis" – the idea that the essential quality and worth of Americanness is most clearly demonstrated in the struggle to push civilisation westward, from "shining ocean to shining ocean". Virtually every cowboy novel and film springs from the same frontier thesis root. The western is one of the few genres one cannot credit to the author Edgar Allan Poe, father of science fiction, "horror", and the detective story, notably *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*. So, to sum up: Ernest Hemingway in But there is something else, even more important. Ernest Hemingway put his finger on it when he proclaimed: The detective story writer Raymond Chandler, who gave great thought to the subject, called it "cadence". *Huck Finn* is currently unteachable because of its profuse use of the n-word. Read and "hear" its first sentence: The word, surely, would be "American".

Chapter 2 : Race and Cinema - Cinema and Media Studies - Oxford Bibliographies

Studying Contemporary American Film has 20 ratings and 0 reviews. This text presents the most appropriate theories and methods for analyzing contemporary.

Robert Shail *Studying Film Stardom*: It has remained central to the successful commercial production, distribution and exhibition of films. The relationship which cinema has forged with its audience has frequently been defined by the status of film stars. Considering the enormous financial, social and cultural impact that film stars have had during the history of cinema it is all the more surprising that they have remained so little discussed in academic terms. The subject has been the basis for any number of popular books and magazines, but the scholarly, theoretical study of film stardom has only substantially developed in the last thirty years or so. The reasons for this neglect are varied, but can probably be traced back to the dominance in film studies of two broad methodologies used for the analysis of film texts. The first tends to emphasise narrative construction and has therefore viewed the role of film stars only in relation to their creation of characters within the narrative, rather than considering their specific function as stars. The second has focused on the visual properties of the medium, specifically *mise-en-scene*, in which stars are principally viewed in relation to their contribution to the visual choreography of a scene. These approaches have tended to sideline the contribution of stardom in its own right as a factor in the signification process of film texts. This will be divided into four sections covering the production of film stardom, stars and ideology, stars and their audience, and stars as representation. In drawing out the main methodologies and debates which have developed over this period I will be seeking to focus on two key aspects which I believe will fundamentally effect the way in which star studies develops over the next few years. These are the changes which have occurred in the way that stardom itself is constructed in contemporary media and the increasing importance of a historicist approach for academics and students attempting to make sense of how stardom functions. The *Production of Stardom* Richard de Cordova has shown how the notion of film stardom developed in American cinema between and Cinema as a commercial industry then recognised the importance of stars in attracting and retaining an audience. This in turn becomes a key part of the industrialisation of filmmaking practice in the first thirty years of cinema history in America. This theme is taken up by John Ellis in *Visible Fictions* where he equates the role of film stars to that of genre in that for producers stars are a definable quantity which can be repeated in a relatively formulaic manner in order to encourage the attendance of an audience who are increasingly seen as passive. By defining stars in this way Maltby is able to delineate the various production practices employed by Hollywood in the classical era to manufacture and retail these products. It is also included the development of the star vehicle as a means for showcasing stars and the creation of the star persona. It is perhaps this final feature which was most important in terms of establishing the commercial attractiveness of any given star. The studio system then works to maintain these qualities both in the films the star features in and in their various other appearances within the wider media. For example, it was perfectly possible under the star system for Rock Hudson to be marketed for twenty years as a charming and conventionally heterosexual leading man whilst the reality of his homosexuality, a factor which Hollywood perceived as potentially damaging to his commercial viability as a star product, remained completely out of the public sphere. Whilst this model of stars as commercial products is useful in considering how the studio system operated in its heyday, it is important to consider the nature of the changes which have occurred since the s. The impact of these changes is particularly central to the ideological functions of stardom which will be discussed in the next section. The collapse of the studio system in the s had a direct correlation to the changing position of film stars within the production process. This has manifested itself in three distinct ways. Firstly, the breakdown of the studio factory production system led to the end of long term, restrictive contracts. The studios effectively became investment houses providing finance for film projects developed outside of the system itself. As Geoff King points out, in this context stars have actually become even more important within the production process. In this process the inclusion of a star name in the package can be seen as a prime indicator of its commercial viability. The second area where there has been a significant change has been in

the crucial relationship between stars and the wider media. In the classical period this can be seen to be a largely amicable and reciprocal arrangement which both filmmakers and the wider media saw as advantageous. With the collapse of the studio system stars no longer found themselves protected by the studios in the way they had previously become accustomed to. Consequently the wider media were also freed from their subservient role. In a contemporary context, the media at large is both far more intrusive in the way that it covers the private lives of film stars and much less deferential. The position of a star such as Madonna typifies the tension in this relationship in which the star continues to court media attention as a necessary part of their commercial function and yet resents the excessive intrusions and lack of deference in the way the media then treats them. The final change in the production of contemporary stardom results from the extraordinary proliferation of various media texts which have occurred over the last twenty years. Although Dyer recognised that stars are constructed through various media outside of films, the range and complexity of these other media texts has changed out of all recognition. There are two direct consequences of this change. Firstly star personas tend to become more fragmented and contradictory as they are assembled from such diverse sources. As a result the creation of a tangible, unified persona in the terms understood in the classical period becomes more difficult. Secondly, it is much more difficult for the star, or any other person, to maintain any control over the production of that persona. The very status of film stardom itself becomes challenged as access to the media becomes more widespread. Klapp, Dyer adopts a system by which film stars can be assigned to one of three dominant types: It would be easy to assume these types operate as a form of cataloguing device whereby we might take a given star and allocate them to the type which seems to best fit. Dyer is fundamentally concerned with the nature of ideology and how it is manifested in popular culture. Hollywood films as popular, commercial phenomenon are seen to embody and uphold the dominant values of American society, principally the values of a capitalism, patriarchy and heterosexism. Thus identification with James Dean allows the audience an outlet for feelings of disquiet with the norms of their society, but the inevitable ending of any James Dean film will be for the rebel to achieve happiness by finding a way of reintegrating into society. Even in films featuring these types conventional values dominate. Of course this does not necessarily negate the underlying principles of his approach, but merely suggests that the list of types might need to be extended. In essence, this is the approach taken by Andrew Spicer in his *Typical Men*: Effectively, film stars cannot help but reflect and endorse the dominant ideology of Western culture. This deterministic approach has been challenged by the intellectual enquiries of post-structuralist and postmodernist thought, as well as by some Marxist thinkers. At the heart of these modes of analysis is an attempt to move away from a deterministic, all-encompassing theory towards a more pluralistic approach. One consequence of these approaches is that dominant ideology can be seen to function in a less monolithic or determinist manner. Individual agency is fed into the picture, along with the possibility that dominant ideology operates in a more fluid, dynamic manner, with spaces opening up which allow for dissent or deviation. In terms of star theory this might allow us to see that an individual star operates in a complex and varied manner, and is therefore subject to a range of ideological functions. Such an approach also seems more appropriate when contending with the changes in modes of star production indicated in the previous chapter, whereby the construction of dominant ideology in stardom has become more fractured and less coherent. In a media context where the meaning of stardom is constantly being renegotiated this more pluralistic approach has obvious advantages.

Film Stars and their Audience The approaches discussed in the previous sections tend to focus on the ideological construction of stardom itself, but another central strand in star studies has been to examine the way stars are consumed by their audience. This more sociological approach has drawn heavily on methods found in psychoanalysis and from conceptual frameworks devised within feminist discourses. As with the debates over the production of stardom, there has been a broad shift from a more deterministic approach towards a pluralist one. The potential threat which such an object of desire might represent for the male psyche is then contained by the effective punishment of the female. This punishment is achieved by allowing her to be possessed by the central male protagonist through romantic conquest or through more violent action if she is stigmatised in the role of the destructive femme fatale, for example. For women in the audience the only pleasures allowed to them are masochistic, in that they are forced to identify with an objectified and passive

female star, or perversely they are obliged to try to identify with the male protagonist. Either response is inevitably disempowering. The role of male stars is therefore constructed to provide a reassuring embodiment of male domination to male members of the audience. Female stars function as objects of male desire requiring female spectators to identify with a role which sublimates them to the male gaze. Don Siegel might equally attract identification from female members of the audience, just as male spectators conversely might easily identify with Jane Fonda in *Klute USA*. This effectively deconstructs the determinist discourse established by Mulvey, replacing it with a more flexible system which accentuates the independent role of the spectator. This approach has been reflected in a variety of subsequent work which has looked at the relationship between audiences and film texts, including the stars in them. In doing this female spectators often show a remarkable degree of autonomy in being selective over which parts of a film they may identify with. This might mean associating strongly with the sections of the film where the female star is playing a very active role, whilst preferring to almost opt out of the tragic, conventional ending. Further examples of the way that stars are open to multiple interpretations by an audience can be found within the field of queer studies. Stanley Kubrick, make the male form the object of their eroticised, voyeuristic focus and therefore play upon a fetishistic objectification of maleness, equivalent to those directed towards women. This might be applied to star fandom through the way that certain stars, such as Marlene Dietrich or Brad Pitt, have developed a gay following. Again, these analytical developments tend to reflect a shift in theoretical discourse from essentialist frameworks to ones which respond more to the specifics of any given film text, including individual stars.

Stars as Representation The concepts dealt with in the previous section emphasise the process through which stars are consumed by their audience. Central to this is the notion that stars represent something meaningful to those who identify with them. The whole subject of film as a system for representing reality is too large to consider within the remit of this chapter, but for my purpose here it is perhaps sufficient to note that a central thread in film theory has been the analysis of films as language systems which bear witness, directly or indirectly, to the context in which they are produced and consumed; that is, in the simplest sense, that they provide an image of how the world is, or should be, usually with an aspect of approval or disapproval built in. Not surprisingly then, one of the major trends in the study of film stardom has centred on the way in which stars embody particular forms of representation. In the recently published *America on Film: Representing Race, Class, Gender, and Sexuality at the Movies*, Benshoff and Griffin offer a survey of the key topics which the study of representation in film has tended to focus on, these being race, class, gender and sexuality. As indicated in the work of Jude Davies and Carol R. In considering how stars in their representational function reflect on dominant ideologies the importance of specific context cannot be overstated. This process of locating the ideological meaning of a star within the framework provided by their context is inevitably a complex process fraught with the possible danger of misreading the significance of a given star through inaccurately relating them to their context. The difficulties inherent in this historicist approach have been addressed by Robert C. Allen and Douglas Gomery in their study *Film History: This layering of interpretation, with the support of empirical investigation, also strengthens this method of analysis against the accusation of selectiveness which might otherwise occur. The centrality of this development of historicist investigation into film stardom forms the basis of the conclusion which follows. Every essay contains some attempt to understand the meaning constructed by each star through relating them specifically to their historical moment and to their particular cultural context, in this case a national one. The purpose of this chapter has been to map out some of the thematic and methodological patterns which have developed in the short history of the academic study of film stardom. It has also been the intention to explore the direction in which epistemological practice has moved in recent years. This has clearly been towards a more historically aware and pluralistic approach, one which recognises the centrality of context in both the production and consumption of film stars, but one which also recognises the diverse range of forms in which film stardom is created and interpreted by its audience. An approach which emphasises plurality and mutability, particularly at a time when the way in which stardom functions is being affected by the rapid rate of change in the wider media itself, seems the only way in which star studies will keep pace with the extraordinary range of meanings which contemporary film stardom can offer.* Gledhill ed, *Stardom: Cinema,*

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Television, Video London, , pp. An Introduction London, , pp. Benshoff and Sean Griffin, America on Film: Allen and Douglas Gomery, Film History:

Chapter 3 : NECS | European Network for Cinema and Media Studies

About Studying Contemporary American Film. How should the student set about analysing contemporary American cinema? This book takes an innovative approach to film analysis: each chapter examines the assumptions behind one traditional theory of film, distils a method of analysis from it, and then analyses a contemporary American movie.

Pioneer cameramen arrived relatively early to the fast-growing Latin American cities of the time. Buenos Aires, Mexico City, and Rio de Janeiro saw their first film screenings in , and most other Latin American cities soon after. By the s all countries were making films locally, but only Mexico, Argentina, and Brazil would eventually develop large film industries. While few studies exist on the early history of Latin American cinema as a whole, all works dealing with the individual national film histories touch upon the subject. By the s, Mexican and Argentinean films were being distributed throughout Spanish America, with the ones from Mexico in particular developing an enthusiastic following. The Brazilian film industry also developed its own audience. These national film industries declined in the s, mainly as a result of the strong international expansion of Hollywood-based studios. The s marked the emergence of the influential New Latin American Cinema. There is a large amount of literature on this movement, whose influence continued throughout the s. The economic crises of the s had a negative impact in the production of movies. In the s reforms in film legislation led to a dramatic decrease in state sponsorship. Since the mids film production in Latin America has been revitalized by transnational coproduction agreementsâ€”like Ibermediaâ€”and the creation of new state legislation aimed at promoting filmmaking in each country. Many recent books study this new trend in Latin American film, reflecting on its links to globalization and its cultural significance for the region. General Overviews Most books on Latin American film focus on a particular era, topic, or national context. One reason for this tendency is the existence of clear dissimilarities between conditions for the production of films in the various Latin American countries and during different historical periods. Earlier historical surveys of Latin American cinema, such as King and Schumann , were descriptive in nature, without a deep emphasis on the conditions and evolution of filmmaking in each particular country, or the transnational trends in the continent. Several overviews opt for including contributions by various authors, each specializing in a particular country or era, unified by an introduction or prologue see Edited Collections. While these compilations are eclectic, with chapters reflecting the individual expertise of each contributor, they provide a good general sense of various aspects of filmmaking in Latin America, including its links to other forms of cultural production, and how the industry has historically been affected by socioeconomic conditions in each historical period. Books published since the early s show a greater emphasis on transnationalism than their predecessors, due in part to the importance gained by coproductions and international cooperation agreements since that time. A Companion to Latin American Film. An introduction offers a general description of filmmaking in the region. A History of Cinema in Latin America. Two chapters discuss films made before the s. The remaining eight analyze production after the s, organized by country. The author pays close attention to films produced before the s and reflects on filmmaking in the region in comparison to the cinemas of Europe and the United States. The author, a well-known scholar of Latin American cinema, includes here commentaries on films that are, in his view, the best and most representative works of Latin American cinema. Films from all countries and periods receive attention here. Historia del cine latinoamericano. Chapters are organized by country, with the longest ones dedicated to Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, and Cuba. Emphasis is placed on films produced after the s, but there is considerable information on previous periods. Users without a subscription are not able to see the full content on this page. Please subscribe or login. How to Subscribe Oxford Bibliographies Online is available by subscription and perpetual access to institutions. For more information or to contact an Oxford Sales Representative click here.

Chapter 4 : Spanish - Department of Modern Languages and Cultures - University of Liverpool

Against the background of rising temperatures and shorter tempers among film theorists, 'Studying Contemporary American Film' sets out to pour oil on troubled waters.

Hollywood can be read as an ethnographer, reinforcing the hegemony of whiteness onscreen by producing experiences of the black racial types it creates. Representations of blackness in early and silent cinema were largely characterized by the ideology of a landmark film *Birth of a Nation*, which would form the template textually, visually, and in many ways, thematically for filmmaking that followed. In such ways, both visually and narratologically, film codes can position the Other as inferior to the white male hero, even where a superficial egalitarianism might seem to prevail. Very recent cinematic productions, such as *The Help*, deploy race knowledgeably but still problematically. In fact, while it has been established that there is no biological basis for the idea of race, notions of racial difference are routinely dramatized by filmmakers and expressed through film and visual media technology. It suggested that 69 percent of roles were reserved for white actors and another 8. Nonwhite actors were limited to between 0. Thus nonwhite actors continue to be marginalized and cast according to largely denigrating racial types. The study also found that American cinema remains deeply patriarchal and centered on white masculine heroes. In a content analysis of major films, men were almost three times as likely as women to work in the first-billed lead role. Women made up 44 percent of second-billed roles and 40 percent of third-billed roles, but were outnumbered by men in each category. Due to institutional and cultural sexism, filmmakers still privilege male characters and limit female roles. Thus nonwhite female actors continue to be the most marginalized within the system. References to whiteness as a hegemonic structure are expanded upon in the section titled *White*. Hence contemporary references to the miscegenation taboo in films such as *Hancock*, where races are positioned as incompatible and interracial romance is rejected in favor of racially homogenous unions. As Robinson observes, casting breakdowns prove that the cinema industry is subject to extreme racial and sexual discrimination. As Shohat and Stam notes, fictional identities are creative ventures, and so casting can be seen as unimportant. Hamilton and Block explores the history of racial representation in American cinema, while Davies and Smith considers contemporary issues. *Native Americans and Hollywood Movies. The Persistence of Whiteness: Race and Contemporary Hollywood Cinema*. Scholars explore these discourses across a range of genres, styles, and stars of American filmmaking. *Hollywood Fantasies of Miscegenation: Spectacular Narratives of Gender and Race*. Princeton University Press, She notes a continuing degree of resistance to change; many films appear to renounce the miscegenation taboo yet reassert it and other classical Hollywood stereotypes. Davies, Jude, and Carol R. *Projecting Ethnicity and Race: How Hollywood Views Ethnic Groups*.

Chapter 5 : Studying Contemporary American Film | racedaydvl.com

"How should the student set about analysing contemporary American cinema? This book takes an innovative approach to film analysis: each chapter examines the assumptions behind one traditional theory of film, distils a method of analysis from it, and then analyses a contemporary American movie.

The first recorded instance of photographs capturing and reproducing motion was a series of photographs of a running horse by Eadweard Muybridge, which he took in Palo Alto, California using a set of still cameras placed in a row. In the United States, Thomas Edison was among the first to produce such a device, the kinetoscope. Harold Lloyd in the famous clock scene from *Safety Last!* The cities and towns on the Hudson River and Hudson Palisades offered land at costs considerably less than New York City across the river and benefited greatly as a result of the phenomenal growth of the film industry at the turn of the 20th century. Such notables as Mary Pickford got their start at Biograph Studios. The Edison Studios were located in the Bronx. Chelsea, Manhattan was also frequently used. Picture City, Florida was also a planned site for a movie picture production center in the 1890s, but due to the Okeechobee hurricane, the idea collapsed and Picture City returned to its original name of Hobe Sound. Other major centers of film production also included Chicago, Texas, California, and Cuba. They started filming on a vacant lot near Georgia Street in downtown Los Angeles. While there, the company decided to explore new territories, traveling several miles north to Hollywood, a little village that was friendly and enjoyed the movie company filming there. Griffith then filmed the first movie ever shot in Hollywood, *In Old California*, a Biograph melodrama about California in the 19th century, when it belonged to Mexico. Griffith stayed there for months and made several films before returning to New York. Before World War I, movies were made in several US cities, but filmmakers tended to gravitate towards southern California as the industry developed. They were attracted by the warm climate and reliable sunlight, which made it possible to film movies outdoors year-round and by the varied scenery that was available. In the early 20th century, when the medium was new, many Jewish immigrants found employment in the US film industry. They were able to make their mark in a brand-new business: Soon they were the heads of a new kind of enterprise: The US had at least one female director, producer and studio head in these early years: Other moviemakers arrived from Europe after World War I: Sound also became widely used in Hollywood in the late 1920s. Meanwhile, in 1927, US politician Will H. Hays became widely used in Hollywood in the late 1920s. In the early times of talkies, American studios found that their sound productions were rejected in foreign-language markets and even among speakers of other dialects of English. The synchronization technology was still too primitive for dubbing. One of the solutions was creating parallel foreign-language versions of Hollywood films. Around 1930, the American companies[which? Also, foreign unemployed actors, playwrights, and winners of photogenia contests were chosen and brought to Hollywood, where they shot parallel versions of the English-language films. These parallel versions had a lower budget, were shot at night and were directed by second-line American directors who did not speak the foreign language. The productions were not very successful in their intended markets, due to the following reasons: *Brown Derby*, an iconic image that became synonymous with the Golden Age of Hollywood. The lower budgets were apparent. Many theater actors had no previous experience in cinema. The original movies were often second-rate themselves since studios expected that the top productions would sell by themselves. The mix of foreign accents Castilian, Mexican, and Chilean for example in the Spanish case was odd for the audiences. Some markets lacked sound-equipped theaters. In spite of this, some productions like the Spanish version of *Dracula* compare favorably with the original. By the mid-1930s, synchronization had advanced enough for dubbing to become usual. Classical Hollywood cinema is defined as a technical and narrative style characteristic of film from 1929 to 1968. During the Golden Age of Hollywood, which lasted from the end of the silent era in American cinema in the late 1920s to the early 1960s, thousands of movies were issued from the Hollywood studios. The start of the Golden Age was arguably when *The Jazz Singer* was released in 1927, ending the silent era and increasing box-office profits for films as sound was introduced to feature films. At the same time, one could usually guess which studio made which film, largely because of the actors who appeared in it; MGM, for example, claimed it had contracted "more stars than there are in heaven. For

example, *To Have and Have Not* is famous not only for the first pairing of actors Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall, but also for being written by two future winners of the Nobel Prize in Literature: Ernest Hemingway, the author of the novel on which the script was nominally based, and William Faulkner, who worked on the screen adaptation. They owned or leased Movie Ranches in rural Southern California for location shooting of westerns and other large-scale genre films. And they owned hundreds of theaters in cities and towns across the nation in film theaters that showed their films and that were always in need of fresh material. Throughout the 1930s, as well as most of the golden age, MGM dominated the film screen and had the top stars in Hollywood, and was also credited for creating the Hollywood star system altogether. One reason this was possible is that, with so many movies being made, not everyone had to be a big hit. A studio could gamble on a medium-budget feature with a good script and relatively unknown actors: *Citizen Kane*, directed by Orson Welles and often regarded as the greatest film of all time, fits that description. In other cases, strong-willed directors like Howard Hawks, Alfred Hitchcock, and Frank Capra battled the studios in order to achieve their artistic visions. Decline of the studio system late 1940s [edit] Percentage of the US population that went to the cinema on average, weekly, 1940s Walt Disney introduces each of the seven dwarfs in a scene from the original *Snow White* theatrical trailer. The studio system and the Golden Age of Hollywood succumbed to two forces that developed in the late 1940s: Embarrassingly for the studios, it was an independently produced animated film that did not feature any studio-employed stars. Eliminate the block-booking of short film subjects, in an arrangement known as "one shot", or "full force" block-booking. Eliminate the block-booking of any more than five features in their theaters. No longer engage in blind buying or the buying of films by theater districts without seeing films beforehand and instead have trade-showing, in which all 31 theater districts in the US would see films every two weeks before showing movies in theaters. Set up an administration board in each theater district to enforce these requirements. As a result, the studios began to release actors and technical staff from their contracts with the studios. This changed the paradigm of film making by the major Hollywood studios, as each could have an entirely different cast and creative team. Certain movie people, such as Cecil B. DeMille, either remained contract artists until the end of their careers or used the same creative teams on their films so that a DeMille film still looked like one whether it was made in or Fewer films, larger individual budgets[edit] This section does not cite any sources. Please help improve this section by adding citations to reliable sources. Unsourced material may be challenged and removed. August Learn how and when to remove this template message Also, the number of movies being produced annually dropped as the average budget soared, marking a major change in strategy for the industry. Studios now aimed to produce entertainment that could not be offered by television: Studios also began to sell portions of their theatrical film libraries to other companies to sell to television. By 1950, all major film studios had given up ownership of their theaters. Industrial Commission of Ohio case, and stated that motion pictures were a form of art and were entitled to the protection of the First amendment ; US laws could no longer censor films. By 1950, with film studios becoming increasingly defiant to its censorship function, the Motion Picture Association of America MPAA had replaced the Hays Code which was now greatly violated after the government threat of censorship that justified the origin of the code had ended with the film rating system. New Hollywood and post-classical cinema's [edit] Main article: New Hollywood Steven Spielberg is considered one of the pioneers of the New Hollywood era and one of the most popular directors and producers in film history. He is also one of the co-founders of DreamWorks Studios. Post-classical cinema is the term used to describe the changing methods of storytelling in the New Hollywood. It has been argued that new approaches to drama and characterization played upon audience expectations acquired in the classical period: The New Hollywood describes the emergence of a new generation of film school-trained directors who had absorbed the techniques developed in Europe in the 1930s; The film *Bonnie and Clyde* marked the beginning of American cinema rebounding as well, as a new generation of films would afterwards gain success at the box offices as well. A *Space Odyssey*, Polanski with *Chinatown*, and Lucas with *American Graffiti* and *Star Wars*, respectively helped to give rise to the modern "blockbuster", and induced studios to focus ever more heavily on trying to produce enormous hits. June Learn how and when to remove this template message The 1970s and 1980s saw another significant development. The full acceptance of home video by studios opened a vast new business to exploit.

Films such as *Showgirls* , *The Secret of NIMH* , and *The Shawshank Redemption* , which may have performed poorly in their theatrical run, were now able to find success in the video market. It also saw the first generation of filmmakers with access to videotapes emerge. Directors such as Quentin Tarantino and Paul Thomas Anderson had been able to view thousands of films and produced films with vast numbers of references and connections to previous works. Tarantino has had a number of collaborations with director Robert Rodriguez. With the rise of the DVD in the 21st century, DVDs have quickly become even more profitable to studios and have led to an explosion of packaging extra scenes, extended versions, and commentary tracks with the films. Please help improve this article by adding citations to reliable sources. The drive to produce a spectacle on the movie screen has largely shaped American cinema ever since. Since then, American films have become increasingly divided into two categories: Blockbusters and independent films. Studios have focused on relying on a handful of extremely expensive releases every year in order to remain profitable. Such blockbusters emphasize spectacle, star power, and high production value, all of which entail an enormous budget. Blockbusters typically rely upon star power and massive advertising to attract a huge audience.

Chapter 6 : American Studies and History BA - The University of Nottingham

All students of film and popular culture will find this book ideal preparation for writing clear, well-structured, detailed analysis of their favourite American movies. Citation: Elsaesser, Thomas & Buckland, Warren, Studying Contemporary American Film, London: Arnold,

Studying Contemporary American Film: We have already seen that Eisenstein invented the term *mise en shot* to focus attention on the way shots are staged – that is, the way the parameters of the shot translate the actions and events into film. Statistical style analysis characterizes style in a numerical, systematic manner – that is, it analyzes style by measuring and quantifying it. More specifically, there are three standard aims of statistical style analysis: In language texts, the quantitative analysis of style and pattern recognition is usually conducted in the numerical analysis of the following variables: The first aim, the quantitative analysis of style, involves descriptive statistics, and the second and third authorship attribution and chronology involve both descriptive and inferential statistics. As its name implies, descriptive statistics simply describes a text as it is, by measuring and quantifying it in terms of its numerical characteristics. Inferential statistics then employs this formal description to make predictions. Whereas descriptive statistics produces data with complete certainty, inferential statistics is based on assumptions the statistician makes on the basis of the descriptive data. The assumptions the inferential statistician makes only have degrees of probability rather than certainty.

The quantitative analysis of style One of the few film scholars to apply statistical style analysis to film is Barry Salt. Salt then represents the quantity and frequency of these formal parameters in bar graphs, percentages, and Average Shot Lengths there will be more on these methods in section 3. When he compares and contrasts the form of the films of different directors, he moves into the realm of stylistic analysis. Style in this sense designates a set of measurable patterns that significantly deviate from contextual norms. As just one example, Barry Salt calculated that the average shot length of a film in the s is around seconds. A s film with an average shot length of 30 seconds therefore significantly deviates from the norm, and is therefore a significant indicator of style. Statistical style analysis has contributed its computerised statistical methods to these areas with controversial results. One of the principles behind authorship attribution of written texts is that the stylometrist should not focus on a few unusual stylistic traits of a text, but on the frequency of common words an author uses – particularly minor or function words, whose use are independent on the subject matter or context. These include words such as prepositions of, to, in as well as synonymous function words such as kind vs sort, or on vs upon. One author may be prone to use on instead of upon, or kind rather than sort. Morton argues, these words offer the stylometrist a common point of comparison between authors: Furthermore, we can argue that a stylometric analysis is analogous to fingerprinting or to DNA testing. Humans share an enormous amount of DNA with other animals. It is only the minute details that distinguish humans from animals. Furthermore, human beings can be distinguished from each other on the basis of DNA testing or, more conventionally, on the basis of other small details – particularly fingerprints. One of the most common metaphors of stylometric authorship attribution is that it is fingerprinting authors. Being a trivial and humble feature of style would be no objection to its use for identification purposes: Just one example, on Raymond Chandler: Sigelman and Jacoby The auteur critic should then focus on the frequency of the common stylistic parameters a director uses – whose use are independent on the subject matter or context – rather than on a few unusual stylistic traits of a film. The inferential dimension of authorship attribution has a more limited application to film, but some films such as *Poltergeist* have disputed authorship was it directed by Tobe Hooper or Steven Spielberg? Of course, because we move from descriptive to inferential statistics, then the result can never be certain, but only predicted with a degree of probability. Only the descriptive aspect of the analysis remains beyond doubt. Secondly, the results need to be statistically significant, rather than due to chance occurrence. Many statistical tests are in fact tests for significance.

Chronology The third area of statistical style analysis is chronology. Here again the statistics used can be either descriptive or inferential. A description quantifies and measures the changes in a body of work, usually of a single author. Salt collected data from these parameters by laboriously going through the film shot by

shot. For most of his analyses, he in fact collected data on all the shots that appear in the first 30 minutes of each film, because this is a representative sample from the film. We shall employ and test the viability of this practice in our statistical style analysis of *The English Patient* in section 3. Salt is also interested in combining the results of each parameter. So, a director may use close-ups for a total of 20 minutes during a film, long shots for 30 minutes, and so on. Calculating the ASL involves dividing the duration of the film by the number of shots. However, the distribution of shot scale is similar for the four directors he analyses. Firstly, the histograms, or bar charts, representing the number of each shot type in each film the number of close-ups, long shots, etc. Secondly, he takes equal lengths of film, calculates the expected number of shots and shot types in each section, and then counts the actual number of shots and shot types in that section, to determine if they conform to the average the mean or deviate from it. There are several ways to select the equal section intervals: Salt recommends intervals of one minute. If calculating shot types one can define the intervals in terms of no. Take the ASL of the whole film, and then analyze it scene by scene each scene is defined in terms of spatio-temporal unity and in terms of events. Work out the expected no. If the ASL is 10 seconds, and the scene lasts 2 minutes, the expected number of shots for that scene is For instance, in scene 1 five shots would be expected if the cutting were even throughout every part of the film, but in fact there are only three shots. Contrariwise, in scene no. Caught is the first Max Ophuls film in which there is a very definite reduction in the amount of variation in Scale of Shot and cutting rate from scene to scene, and this becomes very apparent if a breakdown into ft sections is made on a 35mm. After the point in the film at which Leonora has married Smith-Ohrlig and been left alone in his mansion, we have for the next half hour of screen time very little departure from the average Scale of Shot distribution, and the cutting rate is also very steady for lengths of several minutes at a time, despite the occurrence of scenes of quite varied dramatic nature. It is only in the last 12 minutes of the film, when the most dramatic twitches of the plot take place, that there are any strong deviations from the norms. For example, in *La Ronde*, with the scene between the Young man and The Chambermaid we get, after the first 11 shots, long strings of up to 10 shots each with the same camera distance in every shot. Most of these are also in the Medium or medium Long Shot scale, and the film continues in the same manner after this scene. Statistical style analysis focuses the research on how films are put together, rather than how they are perceived or comprehended. Barry Salt carried out his statistical analysis by hand, which limited the types of tests he could perform on the data he collected. With the exponential growth in computer technology and software over the last decade, statistical style analysis can now be carried out using computer technology and powerful software programs. SPSS is a spreadsheet program, with rows and columns. In film analysis, each row which is automatically numbered represents a shot, and each column represents a parameter of that shot. The parameters recorded include: Once the data has been entered, it can be represented both numerically and visually, and then numerous statistical tests performed on it. The following analysis of *The English Patient* will consist of both the visual and numerical representation of data particularly bar graphs, and frequency and percent tables. Then a few simple statistical tests will be applied: The results will also be compared to a similar analysis of *Jurassic Park*. The mean is a measure of central tendency, of the average value of a range of values. Standard deviation is the reverse of measuring the mean, for it is a measure of dispersion, or distribution-spread of values, around the mean; if the value of the standard deviation is large, this means that the values are widely distributed. Skewness measures the degree of non-symmetrical distribution of values around the mean. If the values are perfectly distributed, then the skewness value will be zero. If more of the values are clustered to the left of the mean that is, if their value is less than the mean, then the distribution is positively skewed. If the values are clustered to the right of the mean, the distribution is negatively skewed. These tests properly apply only to ratio data where zero is an absolute value "zero weight, zero time, etc. Only shot length is, strictly speaking, ratio data. In the shot scale, numbers have been assigned to the categories, which means they constitute a nominal scale. Other useful data can be collected on: Percentiles are also a useful tool. They measure the number of variables at regular intervals of a text. For example, at every five percent, count the number of variables. This will reveal if the variables are evenly distributed throughout the film, or concentrated in a particular part of it. One of the most interesting tests, however, is to determine the correlation between variables. For example, what is the

correlation between shot length and shot scale? We would expect some correlation, because close ups usually appear on screen only for a short time, whereas a very long shot usually has a long duration on screen. But we can determine if there is a correlation between any of the variables – camera movement and shot length, or camera movement and shot scale, for example. The English Patient Data was recorded from the following five parameters of the shot over the first 30 minutes of *The English Patient*: For comparative purposes, the same data were recorded from the first 30 minutes of *Jurassic Park*. Barry Salt has already argued that 30 minutes is a representative sample to analyze. To test this hypothesis, we shall compare the results of the statistical style analysis of the first 30 minutes of *Jurassic Park* with the statistical style analysis of the whole film. The statistical tests applied in this section to the collected data are the simplest ones available on SPSS: The first 30 minutes of *The English Patient* up to the moment where Caravaggio introduces himself to Hana, and they go into the kitchen of the monastery consists of shots. In terms of shot length, the main values are to be found in Table 1. The first column indicates shot length values 1 second, 2 seconds, and so on ; the second column the number of times this shot length appears in the first 30 minutes of *The English Patient* 1 second shots appear 41 times, 2 second shots 84 times ; and the third column indicates the percentage of shots with each value 1 second shots constitute Table 1 only represents shots of length 1 to 10 seconds. There are additional values, up to seconds the opening credit sequence shot , but the frequency of shot lengths above 10 seconds is usually very small – one or two examples. Table 2 shows that the mean the average value of shot length of this sample is 5.

Chapter 7 : Cinema of the United States - Wikipedia

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subsequent years of the course, modules may change due to developments in the curriculum and the module information in this prospectus is provided for indicative purposes only. Typical year one modules

Core American History 1: Around four hours per week will be spent in lectures and seminars studying this module. You will spend around two hours per week in lectures and seminars. **Learning History** This module will provide you with the skills necessary to make the most of your studies in history. You will be introduced to different approaches and perspectives in the study of history. The module also encourages you to reflect on the place, role and function of history within society. The module aims to: You will usually spend three hours in lectures and seminars each week. **Optional Introduction to the Medieval World,** This module provides an introduction to medieval European history in the period. It offers a fresh and stimulating approach to the major forces instrumental in the shaping of politics, society and culture in Europe. Through a series of thematically linked lectures and seminars, students will be introduced to key factors determining changes in the European experience over time, as well as important continuities linking the period as a whole. Amongst the topics to be considered are: You will spend three hours in lectures and seminars each week. **From Reformation to Revolution: An introduction to Early Modern History,** This module introduces you to major issues in the social, political and cultural history of Europe in the early modern period by analysing demographic, religious, social and cultural changes that took place between and You will spend two hours per week in lectures and seminars. **An Introduction to Modern History** In the first semester the module provides a chronology of modern history from to which concentrates principally on key political developments in European and global history such as the French Revolution, the expansion of the European empires and the two world wars. The second semester will look more broadly at economic, social and cultural issues, such as industrialisation, urbanisation, changing artistic forms and ideological transformations in order to consider the nature of modernity.

Chapter 8 : Warren Buckland

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