

## Introduction

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Cinema, television and the related media fascinate their audiences in a variety of ways, but entertainment is what most people want when they pay for leisure products. Well aware of this, the media industries build their profits by seeking to gratify audiences' expectations that what they are buying will give them pleasure. The potent impact of moving pictures on the imagination is plain from audience response. A particularly striking feature film or television drama will be received with the most intense private and public reactions. And ever since they first became sources of popular entertainment, both large and small screens have been channels for deeply felt legends, myths and cults. The most exciting fictional characters catch the public's attention and pass into popular discourse where they may remain familiar figures for years. Then too there is the enduring phenomenon of stardom and the hero-worship associated with it.

Orthodox modes of Media Studies have developed effective means of analysing some aspects of the screen experience, including narratives, characters and settings, not to mention the control of style through sound and imagery. However, most spectators want films to give them a buzz through the arousal of intense emotions. Particularly in the case of movies, with their creation of a world that appears entire unto itself, many viewers want the screen's fantasy to lift them in imagination out of their own daily lives. They hope to enjoy pleasures and experience emotions aroused by events which they themselves are not personally undergoing – even if that means being pained witnesses to the sufferings of characters with whom they empathise.

In general, the producers, distributors and exhibitors of films and television drama work alongside those who market the product to attract audiences by responding to this desire. From the initiation of an idea in the scriptwriter's first treatment, the spectator's likely emotional responses are usually among the prime considerations that shape the way a drama will be made. And indeed, mainstream productions have developed highly sophisticated machineries to support the communication

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of potent emotions to their audiences. Colour, light, camera angle, lens and movement; the density of voices and effects on the sound track; the nature of accompanying music; the pace, logic and elegance of picture and sound editing – all these factors are habitually deployed to enhance the pleasures the audience takes. To highlight one feature alone, mainstream narratives typically move towards resolutions which the audience is well placed to perceive intuitively. In the attainment, not without difficulty, of those goals, gratifying feelings (invariably deferred through conflict, uncertainty, suspense, horror or pain) are communicated to the spectator.

There is a striking imbalance between the effectiveness of filmmakers in awakening emotion and the lame attempts of academic screen analysts to write compellingly about it. As a profession, we are not good at analysing the pleasures of the text or understanding what those pleasures might mean. This is equally true of most of those who have adapted psychoanalysis to film theory. Given that the primary concern of psychoanalysis is the interior life of the subject, every psychoanalytic theory should be well fitted to account for the inner experiences of moviegoers. However, this is more true of Jungian analytical psychology than of other methods.

The inviting, although inexact, resemblance between the experience of watching a film and dreaming has, since 1916 when Hugo Münsterberg wrote *The Photoplay: a Psychological Study*, enticed a number of theorists to find the screen a ready subject. And in the last quarter of the twentieth century, Sigmund Freud's ideas proved susceptible to sustained attempts to bring them, albeit not without strain, into the orbit of the neo-Marxist theory that dominated media studies in Britain in the 1970s. Once his theories had been established in that field, feminist scholars (once again not without considerable difficulty and the need for some astonishing intellectual acrobatics) absorbed them and the variants proposed by Jacques Lacan into the orthodoxies recognised by some currents of feminist theory.

During the last fifteen or twenty years of the past century, something of a rapprochement occurred between some of the leading post-Jungian and post-Freudian thinkers in what had previously been two warring clans. Andrew Samuels's writings, including *Jung and the Post-Jungians* (1990) and *The Political Psyche* (1993), are alive with his desire to pluck what is useful from all schools of psychoanalysis and create a productive synthesis. From the other tradition, Jonathan Lear's *Open Minded: Working Out the Logic of the Soul* (1998) is a positive reappraisal of Freud's work much of which, like his innovative reading of Sophocles's

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*Oedipus Tyrannus*, sits comfortably with the Jungian uses of myth.<sup>1</sup> However, no comparable rapprochement has taken place between the two traditions in Film, Media and Cultural Studies.

As revamped by screen analysts, Freudian and Lacanian theories proved for several reasons to be at best rather limited, and at worst cack-handed implements. In the first place, in common with most late twentieth-century interpreters of Freudian theory, film theorists insisted on referring every disturbance manifested in adulthood back to the traumatic shocks suffered by the infant as it begins to acquire a separate, gendered identity. At its most naive, this tendency is illustrated by Daniel Dervin's use of the orthodox Freudian assertion that the impact of the primal scene (whether witnessed or fantasised) comes at a time when the child is so emotionally and mentally ill-equipped to deal with it that it gets repressed. Dervin contends that the scene's force is so great that it underlies much cinema – the vast imagery in its darkened chamber recalling the parents so much bigger than the infant in the original nocturnal scene (Dervin 1985: 10–14).

Arguing from the formative power of this trauma, Dervin seeks and finds primal scene signifiers in an improbably wide range of films including those where sex and danger are associated; or where life and death secrets are uncovered; or again where envy, betrayal, desertion and loneliness are experienced; and even where there is a marked interplay between immobility and motion – this last recalling the horrified seizure of the child confronted with the sexual frenzy of its parents (ibid.: 17). The insistence that this hypothetical moment underlies a huge number of films can lead to reductive banality: witness his analysis of the slaughter in the Odessa Steps sequence from *The Battleship Potemkin*.

Chaos is everywhere. And yet the culmination of the total process has purpose, for a message is being received from the archaic unconscious: *Father is murdering mother*, which is translated en route to: *The Czar is destroying Russia*. Infantile distortion is converted into political fact... (ibid.: 39)

Robert Eberwein has published a Kleinian account of cinema which focuses on a different aspect of the medium's links with infantile experience in a less cavalier manner.

<sup>1</sup> Lear (1998: 39–55) argues that the tragedy of the tyrant king lay in his ignorance of the unconscious and failure to recognise that, like all humans, he would frequently act in ways he could not understand. On the contrary, like a modern man, Oedipus was confident that any human problem could be solved by the application of practical reason, unaware that the unconscious has its own logic which can influence any individual's future. According to Lear, Freud did not register this the full meaning that was to be found in Sophocles' play. His famous reading to some extent missed the point.

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Seated in the darkened theater, observing a film on the cinematic screen, we find ourselves thrust back in time to infancy. At some point in our development, when we drifted off to sleep after feeding, we began to dream. In our mind's eye, we sensed those first oneiric images as being somewhere, projected on a field that provided the screen for the dream . . . This field is a complex psychic structure, a 'dream screen' comprised of two elements: the mother's breast, or a surrogate for it, and our own sense of self, the ego. These elements merge to form a dream screen where dreams appear to the sleeper. (Eberwein 1984: 3–4)

For Eberwein, the child cannot yet imagine any other perspective than its own because, both in space and time, it is locked into the passing moment. 'Film and dreams force us to regress back to a level of childish perception inasmuch as we are constantly assaulted with "scenes" that we must appropriate initially as belonging solely to *our* perspective' (ibid.: 47).

Just as Jung always accepted that some dreams were best analysed by reference back to traumas of the infant mind, so, in application, Eberwein's schema (and even occasionally Dervin's) does throw light on some films where the reduction to infancy illuminates, for example, the motivations driving a leading protagonist. But if some movies can productively be read by this means (which we shall term, after Jung's usage, the reductive method), there are others where the predicaments of adulthood are better understood through the constructive methods that Jung advocates.

The strength of Laura Mulvey's psychoanalytical description of mainstream Hollywood cinema 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema' (widely recognised at the time of publication) was its polemical identification of the way that cinema functioned to favour the male point of view and gaze at the expense of woman's. For Mulvey, screen texts worked to lock their subjects into viewing positions; and with relatively few exceptions, those positions were constructed as male.

Woman then stands in patriarchal culture as a signifier for the male other, bound by a symbolic order in which man can live out his fantasies and obsessions . . . by imposing them on the silent image of woman still tied to her place as bearer, not maker, of meaning. (Mulvey 1975: 15)

In its claims to have adapted to the screen the concepts of psychoanalysis, however, Mulvey's reading was weakened by its conflation with neo-Marxian theory. British film theorists of the 1970s and early 1980s argued that Hollywood films were the product of the dominant ideology that kept the ruling classes in power. One consequence of the ideological freight which mainstream movies were said to bear was that they imposed a 'subject position' – the hypothesis being that films prepare positions for

spectators from which to view, and where their role is predetermined, 'subject' to the ideology the film conveys. Spectators in general were construed as passive receivers deceived and locked in by a dominant ideology which, to function effectively, must subject all classes in society to the false belief that it reflects the way things actually are.

The logic of this argument inflicted costly damage on the case that Mulvey was advancing. She had shown to persuasive effect how movies evacuated the anticipated viewing position of women. In the process, however, her materialist philosophy undermined the role of actual women as spectators because she was inhibited by that same philosophy from arguing that they could have an independent existence in front of the screen. In a later essay she herself recognised that 'Lacan brilliantly represents the power relationships of patriarchy, but acknowledges no need for woman to escape. Woman in this scheme becomes merely "not-man"' (Mulvey 1985: 165). That is uncomfortably close to the position she had inscribed for women in her 1975 paper. What, then, as D. N. Rodowick inquired, is the place for the female subject in this scenario? Only as an object defined in the receiving end of the glance. Female unconsciousness, he added, takes place in Mulvey's analysis 'only as an absence, a negativity defining castration and the not-masculine, or as a yet unrealized possibility' (Rodowick 1991: 12, 16).

Rodowick also argued that the hard-edged opposition between masculine and feminine identification which Mulvey's papers embody (in common with the work of other Freudian and Lacanian film theorists) gave a very different picture from that of the psychoanalysts. Rather, psychoanalysis 'saw a variety of fluctuating configurations in the ratios between masculine and feminine identifications within every individual' (Rodowick: 47). The idea, he writes, that there could be a masculine or a feminine identification, equatable in any direct sense with a man or a woman, does not fit with Freud's theory of sexuality (*ibid.*). Nor does it fit, we should add, with the thinking of post-Jungians.

A further problem inherent in the work of psychoanalytic film theorists parallels that recognised by Elizabeth Wright in her study of Lacan. She identified the lack of power in his concept of the unconscious, recalling his dictum that 'the unconscious is structured like a language'. It is so, in Lacan's thinking, because the unconscious is no more than those contents in the individual's imagination which escape encoding into the symbolic order – that is, principally, language.

The fact that every word indicates the absence of what it stands for intensifies the frustration of this child of language, the unconscious, since the absence of satisfaction has now to be accepted. Language imposes a chain of words along

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which the ego must move while the unconscious remains in search of the object it has lost. (Wright 1987: 111)

Thus Lacan appears not to give the unconscious power to correct the order of language that created it (*ibid.*: 112). It is a feature of Freudian and Lacanian film theory that the unconscious is not conceived as having the power to overthrow or remake elements of the symbolic order and rewrite cinematic and spoken language to meet the insistence of hitherto unvoiced desires. Jungian theory, by contrast, hypothesises the unconscious as containing just such high potential energy.

Don Fredericksen has referred to the Freudian method of screen analysis as depending on a hermeneutic of suspicion (Fredericksen 2000). That suspicion arises, first, from the belief that the unconscious consists exclusively of injurious contents of consciousness repressed in large part during infancy. Secondly, suspicion is augmented by Freud's concept of displacement. This is the idea that nothing coming from the unconscious is what it seems to be because dreams disguise their elements in order to shield the ego from their fearful meanings. We shall see in a moment that the Jungian take on dream images is very different. Thirdly, Freudian and Lacanian film theorists heightened distrust of cinema in their theoretical models when, like Mulvey and Christian Metz, they associated the unconscious roots of mainstream cinema with perversions of the sexual drive. The latter were said to reveal themselves in the fetishism, voyeurism and exhibitionism that these writers believed to underlie cinema's visual regimes (see Wright 1987: 120).

Fredericksen regards the hermeneutic of suspicion as a methodology limited at best in its potential to the interpretation of films whose signifiers are already familiar. It does not serve well screen works that are suffused with the erotic and inviting mysteries of symbolic art – films such as Fellini's, Bergman's, Roeg's and many of those that are analysed in the following pages. These are better read via the Jungian hermeneutic of amplification. Using this method the analyst seeks understanding through a form of extended conversation and argumentation with the screen text. Nor is it incidental that this constructive process (which we shall discuss in detail in chapter 1) makes demands upon the analysts' intuitions such that, while pursuing the work, they find themselves being worked upon (Fredericksen: 2000).

Freudian and Lacanian work has an unwelcome characteristic in that it is conveyed in the rebarbative jargon of high theory. This language, as surely as that of any high church, marks out its users as an elite, separating initiates from laity. Worse, it distances the reader from the feel of the remembered screen text. To work well, Jungian screen analysis must

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deliver the analyst's evidence and intuitions to the reader in terms aimed at engaging the latter, and therefore should speak as plainly as it can.

For the Jungian, the intensity of the fascination generated among audiences by screen narratives is sufficient grounds for finding the phenomenon interesting. Where large numbers of people find a fiction occupying their emotions, there Jungian analytical psychology leads us to expect we shall discover minds engrossed at levels beneath those of which most of them are conscious. This is no accident: emotion is the key to the deeper levels of the psyche because the expression of deep-seated needs and desires is inextricably bonded to the formation of myths, no matter what medium of communication is employed. Jung recognised in every aspect of his psychology the over-mastering force that emotion can exert on the individual. Indeed, he sometimes reversed the usual formulation, saying rather that a strong emotion possesses the individual than the other way about. Thus *affect* (as emotion is also called) is seen as a primary force exercised by the unconscious over which the individual has little control (Samuels, Shorter and Plaut 1986: 11).

What, then, are the purposes and merits of undertaking a Jungian analysis of contemporary media, and what are its limitations?

Many facets of Jungian theory can readily be adapted to advance the understanding of media texts – not just the characters therein, but also plots, settings and aesthetics. Deploying analytical psychology to interpret a media artifact certainly can reveal information about the psyche of the characters. But it can also do a great deal more.

Jungian analysis makes much of the interrelated (intertextual) nature of all cultural artifacts. It elaborates the reading of characters, plots, settings and images in a given movie or screen drama by extending it through comparison with the language and symbolism of pre-existent texts (both on screen and embodied in other art forms). When working with analysands, Jung termed this practice amplification, and it matches a familiar interpretive procedure in the humanities. It enriches the significance of those texts that can sustain the comparison by setting them against the backdrop of legends and myths both ancient and modern. This is done not as an end in its own right, but because myth has an important function in the Jungian understanding of human psychology. To appreciate this, it is simplest to start with the cultural dimension of analytical psychology.

Jungians consider images that arise in dreams and reveries to be the most direct means available for the unconscious to communicate with the conscious mind. Unlike Freudians, they do not believe that such images cover up secret impulses that are too disruptive to be contemplated. Rather, they hold that such figures compensate for the biases of conscious drives. It is a further distinguishing tenet of Jungian work that some

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dreams reveal more than the repressed contents of an individual's past life. They do so through their robust links with the dreams that other people have experienced and the myths that other cultures have recorded. For Jungians, myths bear the ineradicable traces of dreams, reveries, desires and fears that have touched many people. They are seen to have a collective dimension (in that they may, for example, express the longings or fears of a community or a nation) as they place in the realm of consciousness previously unconscious impulses. Today's cultural artifacts do so no less than those of our forebears. One function of Jungian textual analysis is to identify and explicate some of the undercurrents of collective feeling that electrify those movies which audiences accept (whether they verbalise the experience in such terms or not) as the shaping myths of our time.

It follows that the emotional impact of media texts on audiences engages the attention of the academic Jungian because the distinctive claims of Jungian screen theory include its capability to model the ways in which the subjective and felt experiences of spectators arise from their encounter with the screen text. Therefore, while a Jungian reading does not attempt to determine subject positioning, it can show how a text seeks to open a viewing position for audiences. More interestingly, it has the potential to speak about the collective psychological disposition of the audiences who invest it with their responses. It can also address the cultural significance of their experience, with the caveat that shifts in the psychology of the audience are the more readily detected in broad currents. This is the case, for example, where the object of study can be linked to a persistently popular phenomenon – a movie to its genre, a televised drama to a series, a leading player to his or her stardom.

Fredericksen has remarked that a Jungian reading, if it is to be distinguishable from any other form of textual analysis, must find its base in the intuitive and emotional response of the interpreter. Where nothing more than a routine equation is offered between, say, a character or event on the screen and a pre-existing archetype, the supposedly Jungian reading dies at birth. This is the case with, among others, the lamentably mechanical books by Clark Branson (1987) and James F. Iaccino (1994 and 1998). As we shall discover in chapter 1, Jungian screen theory institutes a positive role for the subjective experience of the textual analyst. Although the latter is not permitted to depart from an interpretation licensed by the textual evidence, without his or her intuitive understanding of what the screen offers, the Jungian reading has little value. The analyst shares the subjective impact of the text so that the reader tastes its emotional impact vicariously through him or her. In doing so, the Jungian invokes the feel of the remembered text and invites the readers' participation – in a way which Freudian and Lacanian film analyses seldom do.



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Inevitably, some of Jung's hypotheses have been overtaken by scientific work undertaken since his lifetime. For instance, knowledge of and speculation about cognitive processes have developed vigorously in ways he could not have anticipated. Jungian theory cannot claim, any more than Freudian or Lacanian psychoanalysis, a holistic scientific base. Nor would this have distressed Jung. He described his model of the psyche as a metaphor intended to aid exploration and insisted that (*pace* Iaccino) it should not be reified and treated as if it were the real thing, cast in iron. Its distinctive qualities as an implement supporting screen studies lie not in its scientificity but in its potential for deepening readings of screen myths and heroes in the context of enhanced appreciation of the psyche.

It is worth noting in this connection that Jungian screen theory does not claim to be the most useful analytical tool for dealing with every screen fiction; rather, as we shall have ample occasion for observing, it serves certain kinds of film – the symbolic, the mythically charged and the visionary – better than others.

Despite its high potential, it is still true, as I wrote several years ago, that theorists of Film and Media Studies have not given the writings of Carl Jung a hundredth part of the attention devoted to Freud. This indifference can be directly attributed to the dominance of materialist theories in academic studies of the screen since the late 1960s. Indeed, neo-Marxists were able to wreck before its inception any attempt to do so by two assertions that were taken to be fatal: first, that the concept of the collective unconscious is at odds with sociological theories that represent human beings as subject to ideological pressures exerted on them through every social and cultural channel, including the language they utter; and, secondly, that Jung's psychology rests on an essentialist philosophical base.

The first challenge alleges that an analysis of media texts according to Jung's theories must be incompatible with models acceptable to social scientists of the ways cultural and social forces impact upon individuals. Whatever the failings of Freudian film theorists in over-determining the position of the viewer, they did perceive links between discourse, culture and society and the formation of the psyche. They recognised the authority of Lacan's Symbolic Order, such as the structures of language and cinema; but they too closely identified the Symbolic Order with the Law of the Father. As Rodowick put it succinctly, feminist Freudian film theorists wrongly took sexual identity as being essentially linked to the possession or lack of cultural and societal power. They mistook,

a biological prop – the penis – as the signifier of patriarchal authority and power, when what is at stake for all social beings is the delegation of that power which

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under the sign of the phallus takes the form of division and hierarchy. (Rodowick 1991: 32)

With the benefit of hindsight, it is possible to see that this fault sprang from the centrality of ideological concerns in feminist readings of the screen. In effect, their interest in demonstrating the cultural mechanisms of patriarchy led them into psychoanalysis from a starting-point locked in ideology. Nevertheless, given that media products are made, distributed and consumed in a social and cultural context which they themselves reflect and influence, the Freudian film theorists' objection to Jungian work is clearly important. Rather than attempt to discharge it in an introduction, several of the following chapters include, as an integral activity along with Jungian textual analysis, an account of the way in which that analysis is inflected by recent Jungian thought concerning the interaction between psyche and culture. Among the ideas which post-Jungians have been developing during the last quarter of the century, some of the most significant concern the manner and degree to which the psyche of the individual is formed by the interplay between psychological factors and social and cultural pressures. These are complex questions, and the responses of Jung's successors to them are still incomplete. Nevertheless, it is fair to say that sufficient progress has been made to show that Jungian theory is by no means incompatible with due respect for social and cultural processes.

The second objection of materialists to Jungian theory, that it rests on an essentialist philosophical base, is more readily answered. Jung invariably declined, when writing as a psychologist, to speculate on the existence of a divinity. He based his refusal on the grounds that what is beyond our understanding is in all ways out of its reach. As James Hillman wrote on this topic some years later,

Theology takes Gods literally and we do not . . . Religion and psychology have care for the same ultimates, but religion approaches Gods with ritual, prayer, sacrifice, worship, creed. Gods are *believed* in and approached with religious methods. In archetypal psychology Gods are imagined. They are approached through psychological methods of personifying, pathologizing, and psychologizing. They are formulated ambiguously, as metaphors for modes of experience and as numinous borderline persons. (Hillman 1975: 169)

Jung emphatically affirmed the concept of a god as a psychological fact because in countless cases he observed that the psyche presented powerful and apparently autonomous images of deity. These archetypal figures tended to exert a controlling force, often forming both the centre and circumference of the individual's being. He described the *imago Dei* as a dominant and autonomous psychic content which, like other autonomous