

Odyssey

TN:1110989



NRC

ARTICLE
20190221

interlibrary@ncsu.edu
INTERLIBRARY@NCSU.EDU

IL:193859986



Syracuse University Libraries

Location:

Bird-Reference, 2nd Floor
(does not circulate)

Call #:

PN1994 .O93 2008

Journal:

The Oxford handbook of film and
media studies /

Vol: Issue: Month:

Year: 2008 Pages: 187-223

Article: The History of Media Celebrity

Notice: This material may be protected
by Copyright Law (Title 17 US Code)



MEDIA CELEBRITY
IN THE AGE OF
THE IMAGE

MARSHA ORGERON

The star challenges analysis in the way it crosses disciplinary boundaries: a product of mass culture, but retaining theatrical concerns with acting, performance and art; an industrial marketing device, but a signifying element in films; a social sign, carrying cultural meanings and ideological values, which express the intimacies of individual personality, inviting desire and identification; an emblem of national celebrity, founded on the body, fashion and personal style; a product of capitalism and the ideology of individualism, yet a site of contest by marginalized groups; a figure consumed for his or her personal life, who competes for allegiance with statesmen and politicians.

—Christine Gledhill, ed., *Stardom: Industry of Desire*¹



Figure 6.1 In Oliver Stone's *Natural Born Killers* (1994), Mickey and Mallory get celebrity treatment on a mocked-up cover of *Newsweek*. Wayne Gale's sensationalistic television program *American Maniacs* recycles the image in this celebratory montage.

PART I. CRITICAL TERRAIN

The Canonization of Star Studies

In his 1994 cine-treatise on the mania of media celebrity, *Natural Born Killers*, Oliver Stone represented his outrageously murderous duo of Mickey (Woody Harrelson) and Mallory (Juliette Lewis) as MTV-era media darlings. They begin their spree with Mallory's lecherous father (Rodney Dangerfield), whose abuse of his family is imagined in an "I Love Lucy"-style flashback complete with a painfully inappropriate laugh track. Their violent career escalates as they slay their way across the country, "always leaving one survivor" to tell the story of their homicidal escapades and to ensure that the eagerly anticipating world hears their stories. Fetishized by ratings-hungry news agencies and worshipped by an unthinking cult of the media-numbered, the pair learn to play to the cameras with unlikely ease, making dupes—and

corpses—of almost everyone around them as they gleefully emerge from the blood-soaked narrative in another sitcom-like hallucination of perverse domestic bliss.

Media celebrity in the late twentieth century, the film argues, is not only ridiculous; it has become dangerous. Stone surveyed the media landscape and found inanity, excess, and morbidity. Mickey and Mallory seem on the one hand absurd caricatures and on the other completely plausible modern-day celebrities. They are a crude culmination of a century of moving-image-nurtured fame, which began in the United States with twenty-second kinoscope glimpses of both anonymous and known performers (such as actress May Irwin and Sandow the Strongman), and which has proliferated to a point of near untenable dispersion and occasionally indiscernible justification in the current Internet age.²

A rapidly growing body of scholarship has attempted to study and theorize both the history and the current environs of media fame in which Stone situated his protagonists. Converging under the broad, inviting umbrella of celebrity or star studies, the field has attracted scholars from film and media studies, psychology, sociology, literary studies, women's studies, legal and political studies, history, cultural and American studies, anthropology, and so on. Star studies offers scholars a hook on which to hang any number of critical issues, as Christine Gledhill's generous definition of stardom that opens this essay indicates. The sustained multidisciplinary interest in celebrity derives from its embodiment of so many diverse ideas not only worthy of critical investigation but urgently requiring it, as Stone's film makes clear.

As the term's cosmological origins would suggest, classical-era stardom (the concept mutates after the collapse of the studio system) is conceptualized partly in terms of *distance*. The romantic and celestially grand bodies on screen communicate with the spectator both within the moment of cinematic exhibition and outside of this moment as the star's off-screen persona accrues symbolic weight. During the golden age, formidable forces of promotion conspired to craft the star image. Contemporary stars, however, exist in quite another orbit; deprived of the rigorously protective, all-encompassing forces of the studio system, they are subject to virtually unaccountable and intensely aggressive media outlets that seek to document every moment in the lives of the celebrity du jour, especially, it seems, the embarrassing, humiliating ones. With such differences in mind, Leo Braudy associated stars with "spiritual transcendence," but the celebrity with "material success," suggesting the degree to which the idea of celebrity is more closely associated with the shallow enterprises of the passing headline, the mundane intimacy of television, and the rapidity and indiscriminate nature of postmodern mediation (one need only think again of Stone's hideous progeny).³ For Daniel Boorstin, writing in 1962, the modern-day celebrity, made so by the media for a variety of reasons great and small, is a tautological and empty concept: "*a person who is known for his well-knownness . . . He is the human pseudo-event.*"⁴

Despite these associational differences, stardom and celebrity are both defined by excess. Boorstin argued that stage actors were evaluated on the basis of their

ability to interpret a play, but “the sign of a true star was in fact that whatever he appeared in was only a ‘vehicle.’”⁵ The star’s value, in other words, exceeds her performance; in fact, stars exist largely outside of the moment of performance, be it film or theater. Actors become stars, as Christine Gledhill suggested, “when their off-screen life-styles and personalities equal or surpass acting ability in importance.”⁶ However, the liberal application of the term “star” to virtually anyone in the public eye—Robert Allen and Douglas Gomery point out its use for athletes, soap opera actors, and musicians—has the effect of draining the concept of its historical meaning and impact.

Some scholars have attempted to differentiate between stardom and celebrity by considering issues of power that extend beyond box office or ratings. The Italian sociologist Francesco Alberoni in “The Powerless ‘Elite’” (1962) maintained that one of the ironies of the celebrity is the limited political power that comes with such incredible visibility. Traditionally, Alberoni asserted, the most visible members of a culture were also agents of proportional power, decision making, and influence. Citing Max Weber’s definition of charisma as a quality affording influence over others, Alberoni wondered why “the charismatic element of ‘stardom’ does not get transformed into a power relationship?”⁷ Of course, Alberoni could not have anticipated the emergence of such actors-turned-politicians as Ronald Reagan and Arnold Schwarzenegger, nor the ways that television would eventually compel politicians to behave like publicity-hungry celebrities in their own right. Stars of Hollywood’s emergent era—the likes of Mary Pickford and Charlie Chaplin, for example—eventually controlled their own careers and their own films, moved in elite social and political circles, could pay for extravagant houses and conspicuous luxuries that few others in the culture could, and possessed a significant international presence. But one need only remember the politics that led to the refusal to readmit Charlie Chaplin to the United States in 1952 to glimpse the limits of stardom’s influence and the degree to which politics affects, shapes, and even at times limits the supposed power of stardom.

If power fails to adequately differentiate between stars and celebrities, it also seems insufficient to point to media specificity—movies versus television—as the distinguishing criterion, which John Ellis did in *Visible Fictions* (1982) when he claimed that stars are a specifically cinematic phenomenon because television’s immediacy and familiarity work against stardom’s enigmatic status. Tabloids, celebrity journalism, and the myriad of celebrity and gossip Web sites suggest that, at least in the current day, television and movie performers, politicians and musicians, and headline makers of all sorts hold increasingly equivalent and perhaps even progressively undifferentiated power and allure over audiences, if only for their proverbial fifteen minutes.⁸

The categorical slipperiness here—star and celebrity certainly, but in other contexts personality, superstar, and megastar—exists because our conceptions of these terms are ever shifting, responding to changes in the culture, in the media,



Figure 6.2 Even a seemingly omnipotent star like Charlie Chaplin—who held on to his silence a full decade into sound production, until the musical finale of *Modern Times* (Charlie Chaplin, 1936)—was rendered powerless during the anticommunist fervor of the 1950s.

and in the celebrated themselves. Media celebrity is not, of course, itself a modern phenomenon. Nor do its origins reside solely in the technologies of the moving image: film, television, and—increasingly—the Internet. It is rooted in past centuries and was, in its earliest manifestations, especially indebted to innovations afforded by the invention of the printing press and its capacity for disseminating words and images in books, newspapers, and magazines. As Leo Braudy demonstrated in his seminal *Frenzy of Renown* (1986), the image was the central currency of fame as it was disseminated first through literature, theater, and public monuments; then painting and engraved portraits; and finally photography, movies, and television (Braudy completed his study before the Internet became the latest tool in the fame game). But it is the movie star that has most held captive the imagination of scholars in the field, and it is Hollywood that most visibly and seductively rationalized the process of star making.

Much of celebrity studies has, for these and a number of other industrial, cultural, and political reasons, revolved around American film stardom, especially of the emerging period (the first decades of the twentieth century) into the classical era (primarily the 1930s and 1940s). The earliest literature about stardom was popular—fan magazines, for example—offering details about lifestyles and often-fabricated biographical information about the celebrated. This material was primarily written for, and occasionally even by, the fans themselves; its most palpable effects were on the stars who were made and sometimes unmade by it, and the producers and exhibitors of their films who stood to profit by it. Into this largely



Figure 6.3 Like many of the movie fan magazines, which helped to nurture the public's mania for stars, *Picture-Play* included a regular section of star portraits for its readers' "collections." Mary Miles Minter—who would later become famous for her involvement with William Desmond Taylor prior to his murder in 1922—was given star treatment in the November 1919 issue.

celebratory literature entered the work of historians, sociologists, and anthropologists who, beginning in the 1920s and often—but not always—with the aim of purging the phenomenon of its uncritical populism, investigated Hollywood's denizens, corporate structure, and product.⁹

While anthropologists, sociologists, and historians were publishing their first accounts of how movie stars changed the business of the film industry, cultural theorists began to address stardom's ideological impact. The most coherent of these theories emerged from the Frankfurt School, whose "members" vehemently critiqued the power of the media and of celebrities as agents of capitalism with significant control over presumably passive audiences. Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer in "The Culture Industry" (1944) and Herbert Marcuse in *One Dimensional Man* (1964) pointed to celebrities as agents of containment and placation. The Frankfurt School scholars pointed out, at an especially relevant historical moment, the possible dangers of media celebrity; however, they also underestimated the potential resistance of media spectators and overestimated the effectiveness of those trying to manipulate audiences, as later scholars have amply demonstrated.¹⁰

For a number of these practitioners of cultural studies—Edgar Morin and Daniel Boorstin among them—there is something sinister in the project of celebrity culture. Boorstin, who was concerned less about movie stars than about the general status of celebrity in American culture in *The Image* (1962), argued that the media—television, movies, radio, newspapers, and magazines—conspire to create the illusion that "fame—well-knownness—is still a hallmark of greatness," a notion Leo Braudy in essence affirmed some twenty years later.¹¹ Boorstin did not conceal his attitude toward this state of affairs, suggesting that the prevalence of "artificial fame" is an unfortunate misstep; it is, perhaps, one that we now are currently confronted with in the omnipresence of so-called reality television and the flurry of pseudo-stars (to employ language indebted to Boorstin) it produces. Heroes, for Boorstin, are a kind of lost object, replaced by celebrity, which can too easily and indiscriminately be fabricated and proliferated. Andy Warhol witnessed and exploited a similar phenomenon around the same time, but Boorstin did not possess Warhol's delight in the perversity of this state of affairs. Rather, Boorstin was convinced that the constant media bombardment of the day—a trickle by today's standards—both made and destroyed celebrities through oversaturation, resulting in a situation—or a condition—in which "celebrities die quickly but they are still more quickly replaced," creating an ever-increasing supply as the years go by.¹² Situating movie stars within this "world of pseudo-events," Boorstin was suspicious of the ways in which stars spawn other pseudo-events—like fan clubs and film premieres—in a seemingly endless cycle of unreality that dangerously distracts us from more pressing and politically urgent realities.¹³

Although Boorstin did not perform sustained analyses of such pseudo-events as fan magazines and clubs, nor any specific case studies of the stars themselves, these areas of investigation became, for a post-1960s generation of scholars, key

to determining the ideological significance of stars. While early historical accounts of stardom included in the histories by Lewis Jacobs, Benjamin Hampton, and Leo Rosten veered away from *analyzing* the myriad insinuations of stardom into popular culture, Boorstin set the stage for future generations of scholars who sought to explore stardom's cultural implications, not just to narrate the terms of its existence or to condemn the culture out of which it was emerging. By the late 1970s and 1980s, a significant body of work was appearing about the mediation of stars and, conversely, concerning their influence on mass culture.¹⁴ This new generation of scholars had varied allegiances to film history, cultural studies, semiotics, and emerging theoretical strains such as feminism, psychoanalysis, and Marxism.

The 1979 publication of Richard Dyer's *Stars* is one of the benchmark moments in this era of the discipline's history, partly because its appearance signaled that stardom had "arrived" as a valid subset of film and media studies. Utilizing theories of sociology, semiotics, and cultural studies, Dyer established the legitimacy of star studies by enumerating the scholarly and political value of stars in relation to other aspects of culture and identity. Dyer laid out a formal approach by which to read "star texts," the signifiers of stardom, which include films, advertisements, publicity, magazines, and television. Dyer's mantra, in *Stars*, is that culture and ideology go hand in hand, and that stars matter precisely because they embody the confluence of the personal with the political. By analyzing star texts and contexts, Dyer suggested a way that the critic can tease out the ideological contradictions that divergent spectators might encounter when interacting with any element—from page to screen—of star construction. With the publication of his follow-up work, *Heavenly Bodies* (1986)—which used case studies of Marilyn Monroe, Paul Robeson, and Judy Garland to reclaim the audience as a site of resistance by emphasizing the degree to which it is "disparate and fragmented" and "not wholly controlled by Hollywood and the media"—Dyer paved the way for studies of both the construction and the reception of star images to proceed.¹⁵

Justifying, defining, laying claim to, and establishing critical boundaries for understanding stars—as exemplified by Dyer's work, and by scholars such as Anthony Slide, Janet Staiger, and Charles Musser in film history—were tasks undertaken in earnest by the late 1970s. Concerns over establishing critical authority, over distancing star studies from star adoration, were reflective of a larger tendency toward the serious consideration of identity and politics within the humanities at a historical moment when few lines of inquiry seemed as frivolous or as suspect as "star studies." The works of these scholars aided in the legitimization of the field at a time when history and theory were collectively sharpening their approaches.

Staiger's "Seeing Stars" (1983), for example, is indicative of this critical formalization of star studies because it pauses, and reviews, reflects on, and rethinks the ways film historians had been telling the story of stardom; in other words, its concerns are both historical and methodological. Staiger rehearsed the major star evolutionary theories and pointed out the ways that certain narratives were being reproduced without question as the histories accumulated.¹⁶ She stepped back

from the archival details to look at the broader picture of stardom's history, urging historians to consider, for example, the theatrical star system as a key precedent to the burgeoning cinematic star system, as well as to ask "whether or not the audiences were also seeing stars."¹⁷

The most important response to Staiger's plea for a re-historicization of motion picture stardom came in the form of Richard deCordova's authoritative *Picture Personalities: The Emergence of the Star System in America* (1990). In it deCordova documented the emergence of the "picture personality," a phenomenon he defines as being created by audiences who were making their own connections between performers in different roles and then seeking out knowledge about these performers. Arguing that there is "a more complex logic in the rise of the star system," one that resists the seductiveness of the "good simple story" that had so often been repeated, deCordova questioned and amended many of the interpretations of the star chronology.¹⁸ To date, deCordova's history remains the most convincing account of stardom's emergence. He insisted that the star system, emphasized here above the individual star, cannot be understood simply by narrating a chain of major star-making events because this fails to acknowledge the complexity of this system; the "events," in other words, do not simply speak for themselves. DeCordova's scholarly care for the unfolding star narrative took the field a long way from such popular book-length studies as Alexander Walker's 1970 *Stardom*, important in its own right (and own time) for attempting to resuscitate then-obscure stars such as Rudolph Valentino, Lillian Gish, and Douglas Fairbanks. DeCordova restructured the way that the emergence of stardom was understood and recognized, while also mandating a kind of historical rigor absent from the popular literature.

Although the academic field of star studies emerged in the post-studio era, with a particular interest in the era preceding it, its largely retrospective focus has not yet adequately accounted for the myriad shifts that have transpired in the post-studio age, especially in terms of the latest generation of diversified, global media stars. So much had star studies focused on star history that it was not until the 1990s that the first significant upsurge in critical attention focused on the contemporary star situation, or on star systems generated outside of Hollywood. Joshua Gamson's *Claims to Fame: Celebrity in Contemporary America* (1994), for example, blends interviews with celebrity-industry workers and observations of celebrity-based settings in 1990s Hollywood—in the mode established by Leo Rosten sixty years prior—to assess the current production and reception of celebrity, how people in the late twentieth century "interpret and use celebrity images."¹⁹ Following the path laid out by Alberoni, P. David Marshall's *Celebrity and Power: Fame in Contemporary Culture* (1997) approaches the current celebrity-making industries of the movies, music, television, and politics in an effort to discern the ways that "power is articulated through the celebrity."²⁰ Both scholars are indebted to the works in history and cultural studies preceding them, but they looked to the present and future instead of the past to fill the significant need for

to determining the ideological significance of stars. While early historical accounts of stardom included in the histories by Lewis Jacobs, Benjamin Hampton, and Leo Rosten veered away from *analyzing* the myriad insinuations of stardom into popular culture, Boorstin set the stage for future generations of scholars who sought to explore stardom's cultural implications, not just to narrate the terms of its existence or to condemn the culture out of which it was emerging. By the late 1970s and 1980s, a significant body of work was appearing about the mediation of stars and, conversely, concerning their influence on mass culture.¹⁴ This new generation of scholars had varied allegiances to film history, cultural studies, semiotics, and emerging theoretical strains such as feminism, psychoanalysis, and Marxism.

The 1979 publication of Richard Dyer's *Stars* is one of the benchmark moments in this era of the discipline's history, partly because its appearance signaled that stardom had "arrived" as a valid subset of film and media studies. Utilizing theories of sociology, semiotics, and cultural studies, Dyer established the legitimacy of star studies by enumerating the scholarly and political value of stars in relation to other aspects of culture and identity. Dyer laid out a formal approach by which to read "star texts," the signifiers of stardom, which include films, advertisements, publicity, magazines, and television. Dyer's mantra, in *Stars*, is that culture and ideology go hand in hand, and that stars matter precisely because they embody the confluence of the personal with the political. By analyzing star texts and contexts, Dyer suggested a way that the critic can tease out the ideological contradictions that divergent spectators might encounter when interacting with any element—from page to screen—of star construction. With the publication of his follow-up work, *Heavenly Bodies* (1986)—which used case studies of Marilyn Monroe, Paul Robeson, and Judy Garland to reclaim the audience as a site of resistance by emphasizing the degree to which it is "disparate and fragmented" and "not wholly controlled by Hollywood and the media"—Dyer paved the way for studies of both the construction and the reception of star images to proceed.¹⁵

Justifying, defining, laying claim to, and establishing critical boundaries for understanding stars—as exemplified by Dyer's work, and by scholars such as Anthony Slide, Janet Staiger, and Charles Musser in film history—were tasks undertaken in earnest by the late 1970s. Concerns over establishing critical authority, over distancing star studies from star adoration, were reflective of a larger tendency toward the serious consideration of identity and politics within the humanities at a historical moment when few lines of inquiry seemed as frivolous or as suspect as "star studies." The works of these scholars aided in the legitimization of the field at a time when history and theory were collectively sharpening their approaches.

Staiger's "Seeing Stars" (1983), for example, is indicative of this critical formalization of star studies because it pauses, and reviews, reflects on, and rethinks the ways film historians had been telling the story of stardom; in other words, its concerns are both historical and methodological. Staiger rehearsed the major star evolutionary theories and pointed out the ways that certain narratives were being reproduced without question as the histories accumulated.¹⁶ She stepped back

from the archival details to look at the broader picture of stardom's history, urging historians to consider, for example, the theatrical star system as a key precedent to the burgeoning cinematic star system, as well as to ask "whether or not the audiences were also seeing stars."¹⁷

The most important response to Staiger's plea for a re-historicization of motion picture stardom came in the form of Richard deCordova's authoritative *Picture Personalities: The Emergence of the Star System in America* (1990). In it deCordova documented the emergence of the "picture personality," a phenomenon he defines as being created by audiences who were making their own connections between performers in different roles and then seeking out knowledge about these performers. Arguing that there is "a more complex logic in the rise of the star system," one that resists the seductiveness of the "good simple story" that had so often been repeated, deCordova questioned and amended many of the interpretations of the star chronology.¹⁸ To date, deCordova's history remains the most convincing account of stardom's emergence. He insisted that the star system, emphasized here above the individual star, cannot be understood simply by narrating a chain of major star-making events because this fails to acknowledge the complexity of this system; the "events," in other words, do not simply speak for themselves. DeCordova's scholarly care for the unfolding star narrative took the field a long way from such popular book-length studies as Alexander Walker's 1970 *Stardom*, important in its own right (and own time) for attempting to resuscitate then-obscure stars such as Rudolph Valentino, Lillian Gish, and Douglas Fairbanks. DeCordova restructured the way that the emergence of stardom was understood and recognized, while also mandating a kind of historical rigor absent from the popular literature.

Although the academic field of star studies emerged in the post-studio era, with a particular interest in the era preceding it, its largely retrospective focus has not yet adequately accounted for the myriad shifts that have transpired in the post-studio age, especially in terms of the latest generation of diversified, global media stars. So much had star studies focused on star history that it was not until the 1990s that the first significant upsurge in critical attention focused on the contemporary star situation, or on star systems generated outside of Hollywood. Joshua Gamson's *Claims to Fame: Celebrity in Contemporary America* (1994), for example, blends interviews with celebrity-industry workers and observations of celebrity-based settings in 1990s Hollywood—in the mode established by Leo Rosten sixty years prior—to assess the current production and reception of celebrity, how people in the late twentieth century "interpret and use celebrity images."¹⁹ Following the path laid out by Alberoni, P. David Marshall's *Celebrity and Power: Fame in Contemporary Culture* (1997) approaches the current celebrity-making industries of the movies, music, television, and politics in an effort to discern the ways that "power is articulated through the celebrity."²⁰ Both scholars are indebted to the works in history and cultural studies preceding them, but they looked to the present and future instead of the past to fill the significant need for

understanding how celebrity has been altered in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century, the era that bequeathed us the fictional Mickey and Mallory and their many nonfictional celebrity counterparts. In doing so, they—and a number of other scholars who have turned their attention outside of Hollywood's domain—have begun to fill in the many gaps that remain in our understanding of the global media celebrity phenomenon.

A Star System Is Born

An argument can be made that movie stars legitimated and elevated the American film industry, enabling the kind of growth necessary for the creation of the most successful mass-entertainment enterprise of the early twentieth century. The arrival and escalation of movie stardom coincided with and, I would argue, was instrumental in the transition of moviemaking from a geographically diffuse, economically unorganized, somewhat haphazard enterprise to a consolidated, organized, localized, and coherent business structure soon to be ruled by a few corporate giants. The American movie star system's emergence is attributable to a complex series of conditions and motivations, not all of them economic but certainly having significant financial consequences. As much as the rationalization of a star system by the nascent studios intended to create a methodology, of sorts, for the making of stars, it was never a system that intended to homogenize; rather, the emerging system operated on the principles of differentiation, and stars were being used to distinguish (in every sense of the word) producers' products from one another.

The cinema's first producers, in the 1890s, did not place their "performers" in the privileged position they would hold in later years. Audiences of cinema's first decade were most fascinated with the apparatus itself, with its ability to magically reproduce the "real." Coming to see actualities, early cinema spectators were lured by the medium's ability to capture and reproduce different places, people, and events, and were especially intrigued by the enchanting qualities of movement itself.²¹ "Actors," such as they were, were more often than not unprofessional recruits for the camera, bystanders caught by the camera's wandering eye, or temporary loans from the "legitimate" stage or vaudeville. Films were not marketed in the near-star-auteurist way they would be by the late 1920s and 1930s—"Garbo's latest," "Valentino in"; rather, they were sold and marketed by manufacturer name (Biograph, for example).

Coincident with these earliest "flickers," however, was an atmosphere in which an abiding interest in, and perhaps even a mania over, celebrity was making itself apparent. The twentieth century began equipped with an increasingly forceful and celebrity-mad press, which reflected a reorientation of moral standards (privacy, for example, had been a major tenet of Victorian culture) and the urbanizing

modernization of recreational behavior and lifestyles; it is possible, then, to view American movie stardom as a continuum growing out of the culture's sustained beliefs in exceptional individualism combined with a burgeoning interest in celebrity and fascination with media visibility.²² Movie stardom's precedents were set in nineteenth-century theater and vaudeville, themselves outgrowths of eighteenth-century innovations in publicity.²³ The term "star" was used as early as 1830 to refer to an "exceptional performer" of the stage,²⁴ and in the early 1900s the theater, vaudeville, and opera "all operated to a large extent on the basis of a star system, in which the personal magnetism of a particular performer often outweighed other considerations of artistic talent, or the value of the drama or music."²⁵ Despite the existence of such time-tested models for performance recognition and marketing, however, motion picture performers in the first decade of American filmmaking were not named in film credits, which did not yet exist; nor did their names appear in publicity.²⁶ When celebrity was being touted in connection with the new medium in the early 1910s, in fact, it often extended past those on-screen performers to the fame of the films' well-known authors, who provided the story material for filmmakers when sustained narrative films came into vogue and even, on occasion, to emerging star-directors such as D.W. Griffith.

It was not until 1907 that a sustained tendency toward fiction filmmaking, regular film-acting employment, and trade press coverage of film actors converged to create a climate in which certain performers began to garner recognition from the public. Over the course of 1909 and 1910, when intertextual connections between screen performances were being made by these audiences, information began circulating in the press that allowed the public to learn about the actors' professional lives, but not (yet) their personal lives. A January 5, 1910, article in *The Moving Picture World* notes "a new method of lobby advertising" by the Kalem company that included photographs of "principal actors" for "lobby display."²⁷ The article partly explains the novelty of this mode of promotion by claiming that acting "professionals" frequently tried to "shield their identity," fearing "that their artistic reputations would suffer." Ten months later, the same magazine would acknowledge that the "better known moving picture actors and actresses are known to the public at large," but that "the rank and file, however, are not," using this lack to make a plea for "each picture or reel [to] be preceded by the full cast of characters . . . with the names of actors and actresses playing the parts."²⁸ Actors were, in other words, becoming objects of curiosity and sites of knowledge, encouraging the hierarchical conditions for stardom. The movies already seemed to foster an ongoing relationship between spectators and performers that was unlike prior relationships built around similar entertainment contexts, most obviously in terms of market penetration and regularity.

In response to the public's desire to see more of movie actors offscreen, in February of 1911 the *New York Telegraph* added a motion picture section to its Sunday editions that included portraits of movie players;²⁹ this is also the date of

publication for *Motion Picture Story Magazine*, which became a fan magazine largely in response to readers' pressures for it to move beyond its initial film promotional (versus star promotional) role. By the early teens, as deCordova asserted, "the question of the player's existence outside his or her work in film became the primary focus of discourse."³⁰ In answer to a growing public interest in knowledge about stars' lives, and prompted by the industry's recognition that such interest could be exploited to help ensure the success of their enterprises, stories about the personal lives of movie actors began to proliferate—as did the number of publications that carried these stories—throughout the teens and twenties.

With a substantial mass media now revolving exclusively around film stardom, the exploitation of the star commodity became a practicable part of filmmaking and marketing. Around this time Carl Laemmle made an oft-cited contribution to the process of star making, one that has been widely understood as a—if not *the*—foundational event in most of the histories of stardom's birth, however problematically. Laemmle recruited Biograph actress Florence Lawrence—then known to the public only as the "Biograph Girl"—away from the powerful Trust company on behalf of his Independent Motion Pictures (Imp). Several months later a series of ads publicized his new star, by reproducing first the image—but not yet the name—of his new performer in the trades in December 1909, and then both name and image in January 1910. In March of 1910 Laemmle began a new campaign countering alleged reports of the death of his star, and although these death reports have never been found, his advertisements proclaimed that Florence Lawrence—no longer a nameless player—was alive and well.³¹ This public star-naming campaign culminated in April 1910, when Lawrence personally appeared in St. Louis to once-and-for-all squelch the rumor concerning her untimely demise, signaling a highly visible instance of deliberate star publicity in the tradition of P.T. Barnum-style sensationalism.

The Florence Lawrence incident, invoked by virtually all scholars of stardom's history as a turning point in the evolution of movie stardom, is not an isolated episode and cannot, on its own, account for the "birth" of the star system. Richard deCordova has produced the most compelling rereading of the Florence Lawrence/Imp affair, not to invalidate the event but to reject "the singular and supposedly initiatory appeal of Florence Lawrence" without regard for "the broader context within which actors became well known."³² He read Lawrence's emergence as signaling the existence of an intermediary figure between the movie performer and the full-fledged star, pointing out that the marketing of her "picture personality" began well before her naming changed the stakes of this familiarity.

Indeed, by the end of 1910 numerous companies—including Trust members—were starting to promote their stars, suggesting a confluence of market conditions and strategies to which Laemmle was, no doubt, responding, however innovatively.³³ The Lawrence incident, then, is indicative of a larger trend toward recognizing and publicizing performers to market the film product, which was itself

becoming more reliant on the prestige of its literary sources alongside the prominence of its players. In June 1910 a photograph of Florence Turner, the "Vitagraph Girl," was described in captions as "A Motion Picture Star" alongside a story about her in the *New York Dramatic Mirror*; by 1910, stock company photographs were being displayed in theater lobbies; "Broncho Billy" Anderson was starring in westerns that bore his nickname in mid-1910; and the Famous Players Film Company was founded in 1912 with the intent to produce "Famous Players in Famous Plays," as their slogan put it, which contributed to elevating the status of film performance through prestige productions associated with theatrical greats.³⁴

Movie stars were thus becoming widely recognizable as such by the second decade of the twentieth century. Star packaging and promotion were developed and refined over the course of the teens, during which time fan magazines worked in concert with producers to construct and sell a breed of performer whose appeal could far transcend their brief appearances in the space of theatrical exhibition. As actors became fetishized by mass audiences, they could regularly be encountered in the mainstream press as well as at public appearances (which were, of course, covered by the press in the emerging pseudo-event cycle to which Boorstin pointed) or in direct studio publicity (in the form of autographed photographs, fan clubs, and correspondence). Performers became essential economic determinants in the production and exhibition process, and as the studio system was codified over the course of the 1920s, they came to inform every element of a film's production, from genre to budget to distribution. The contractual nature of star employment under the studio system, at its peak in the 1930s and 1940s, allowed for the ownership of stars' images, performances, and even behavior, both on-screen and off. The genius of this system, to borrow a phrase from André Bazin and Thomas Schatz, was the impressive manipulation of the economic value of the star through the realization of the fantastic, erotic, romantic, identificatory, deistic, and on occasion even antagonistic personal relationship audiences had grown to have with the stars.

Global Star Systems

Hollywood is often casually assumed to have a monopoly on stardom's history, but it is worth recalling that the early years of film exhibition did not always find America in the foremost position of film production or distribution. France, England, and Italy were also dominating powers in the cinema's first decades. Their films—and their performers—greatly influenced the nature of the American film product, performance style, and even star handling. Many "foreign" luminaries lit up the silver screen both in their countries of origin and abroad: Max Linder and Sarah Bernhardt from France, Alma Taylor from England, and Italian divas such as Francesca Bertini and Lydia Borelli, just to name a few. In recent years

scholarly attention has taken note of the truly global nature of stardom, moving from Hollywood as the center of celebrity studies out to include television and other mass-media personalities, politicians, musicians, as well as formerly neglected international stars. It is true that by the 1930s Hollywood stars disproportionately resonated outside of American borders, often—and for a variety of reasons—occupying center stage in the hearts and minds of spectators around the globe. Although the opposite exchange transpired, if perhaps with less regularity and intensity, the Hollywood star has always been at the center of academic star studies.

Scholarly attention has only recently, however, begun to shift beyond the dominant Hollywood orbit. Book-length studies on stardom in Britain, Spain, and India—to name a few—begin to answer questions about stardom outside of the United States, as well as to explain the industrial practices of other national cinemas with regard to the use and treatment of star performers, and the impact of American stars on other national cinemas. Due to the disproportionate attention that has been paid to Hollywood stardom, there exists an odd lacuna that has shrouded the stars of other nations whose cinemas—as in the case of Britain—have been widely studied in virtually every other way. The work of historical explication—how a certain nation's film performers came to be known, how they were publicized, how the public reacted to them, how they were treated by the producers and corporations who employed them, and so on—is crucial to informing a more balanced understanding of the global impact of film stardom.

As the American film industry dominated the global market in the 1920s and beyond, national cinemas often modeled their star systems on Hollywood's. It is often this context, then, that must be kept in mind when looking at stardom beyond Hollywood. In the case of Britain, where only two studios could compete with the big eight of Hollywood, seven-year contracts, publicity stills, and high (but not nearly as-high) salary practices were born of Hollywood emulation.³⁵ But British film stars—Bruce Babington refers to them as “indigenous stars”—require a total rethinking of Hollywood-based star theory for a variety of reasons: British films tend to be ensemble pieces rather than star vehicles; publicity in Britain was not as furious as it was in Hollywood; British theater was considered of greater importance (intellectual and otherwise) than cinema; and acting was considered of primary magnitude in the evaluation of a star's status.³⁶ In France, where the industry was not dominated by large corporate film studios in the 1930s, star contracts of the American variety were not the standard and, therefore, French stars did not have the same degree of carefully handled promotion during America's, or France's, golden age.³⁷

Without considering the national contexts of stardom, we remain myopic to systems that operate outside of—or even in opposition to—the Hollywood model. Even when Hollywood was the unrepentant model for other industries, which is not surprising given the status of that industry's films in the world market during the studio era in particular, cultural specificity complicates the simple adoption of

that system around the globe. Bombay stars did model themselves on their Hollywood counterparts such as Charlie Chaplin, Douglas Fairbanks, and, later, Elvis Presley, largely as a consequence of Hollywood films' dominance for middle-class Indian spectators through at least the late 1950s.³⁸ But without an intimate knowledge of India's cultural and national history, it would be impossible to understand such phenomena as Indian male stars' disproportionate salaries, which are at least double that of their female counterparts; or early Indian women stars' reluctance to be photographed because of Hindu and Muslim taboos about women's public exposure; or the Indian star's decidedly greater political power when compared to their Hollywood counterparts, which allows them a degree of freedom unthinkable for any other member of the culture.³⁹

Whereas Indian cinema's star system might parallel, or even exceed, that of Hollywood, it may be impossible to identify a star system, as we understand it, in Spain, which has had a proportionately small and only sporadically international presence. While not full-fledged in comparison to the American standard, Spain's star system can, however, be detected in the value of actors' names to producers, as well as in the considerable media attention given to celebrities and the significant role film viewing plays in everyday life.⁴⁰ The nuances of national stardom, whether in relation to Hollywood or not, contain essential revelations about the cultures in which they are created and consumed, and about patterns of exhibition and viewing. The fact that numerous national star systems have not yet received significant—if any—treatment in the form of books or even articles suggests a vast area of potential growth in the field in terms both of understanding star history and of better grasping its contemporary state.

PART II. THEORETICAL DIRECTIONS

The first half of this essay maps out the terrain of star studies to orient the reader with the basic elements and history of the field; this half charts three major directions that star studies has taken, largely in the post-Dyer years. The scholarship about media celebrity is diffuse in terms of both its breadth and its disciplinary focus. The subject is widely applicable, its contexts variable and complex. Having already acknowledged the interdisciplinarity of star studies—which Dyer's landmark work established from the outset—we can identify three organizational umbrellas that seem capable of categorizing much of the work of the field. Beyond the scholarship involving star history, which in fact weaves its way throughout all of the other scholarship, work on stars might be conceived of as occupying three major categories of thought dealing with (1) the work of stardom, which engages

with issues of labor and performance; (2) star texts, which follow the lines laid out by Richard Dyer to analyze how stars are constructed, represented, disseminated, and consumed; and (3) identity politics, which works to understand the ways that stars function in relation to issues of race, class, gender, sexuality, and ethnicity, both in terms of star representation and in terms of spectatorship and reception. The sections that follow briefly map out these major theoretical currents that constitute this still-evolving field, with full awareness that these categories are themselves much more discrete than the interdisciplinary scholarship practiced by most scholars in the field, whose work typically defies such rigid segmentation.

The Work of Stardom

Richard Schickel, writing in the 1960s, claimed that “movie stars are not basically actors, although many of them demonstrate mimetic gifts of a high order. They are, simply, empty vessels who indicate to us the kind of fantasies with which they and their superiors in the production hierarchy want us to fill them.”⁴¹ Schickel’s imagining of stars outside of the realm of labor is representative of much of the pre-1980s scholarship on stars, which tended to evince an understanding of stardom as a product of the studio’s labor, if acknowledging that labor was involved in the process at all. Stars have more typically been conceived of as laborless icons, when quite the opposite is true: the work of being a cynosure may be concealed, but it is hardly labor free. In fact movie stars are actors well beyond the limited time they spend in front of the cameras; their obligations to perform and to, in essence, live their lives *as stars* is elided by Schickel’s estimation, which is indicative of the tenor of much of the scholarship written about movie stardom.

The *work* of acting seems, in fact, to be one of the more impenetrable aspects of the field, and this certainly points to the fact that stardom is part of a labor division that intends to valorize—and reward—only a small portion of those who collaborate on the moviemaking process. Published in 1941, Murray Ross’s pioneering *Stars and Strikes* made some of the first strides in considering the impact of celebrity on Hollywood’s corporate and labor practices, attempting to make a certain aspect of star actors’ work visible; but only recently have scholars interrogated star studies’ assumptions about the relationship between stardom and labor, and about the labor of stardom, with the first significant body of critical work emerging in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Scholarship has so focused upon the celebrity components of stardom, it might be argued, that it has often failed to acknowledge the literal work of the stars themselves.

Despite Alberoni’s thesis about the relative disempowerment of stars, many stars have had a significant influence on public opinion as well as on the shape of the industry itself. Stars affected, during the golden age, the studio’s treatment of all

of its actors, not just the elite few who had been elevated to stardom. Stars played a crucial role in Hollywood's labor history, especially in relation to the rise of the Screen Actors Guild and the battles over the salary control provisions of the National Recovery Administration.⁴² These struggles reveal that stars had significant influence over their employers, however limited by the letter of their contracts, which in some cases enabled all unionized actors—ranging from day players to extras, stuntmen, and freelance players—to make gains during the contentious 1930s.

Throughout their existence, then, stars have sought to justify not simply the fruits—which are always highly visible—but the *labor* of their labor. Stars could exert their limited contractual will, typically by refusing to work (James Cagney's, Bette Davis's, and Olivia de Havilland's struggles at Warner Bros. in this vein are well-known). By depriving the studios of their labor, they could hold sway over the moguls and the studios that sought to control them on paper, in turn impacting studio resources and, therefore, production. In one of the best-known and most dramatic incidents of star labor history, escalating salaries and a desire for greater autonomy compelled a collective of stars—the founders of United Artists, Mary Pickford, Charlie Chaplin, Douglas Fairbanks, and the star-director D.W. Griffith—to form their own corporation to accommodate their status and to allow them to profit more directly from their unparalleled audience draw.⁴³ Star work and our cultural understanding of it, then, have had a significant practical effect on the business and output of Hollywood more generally.



Figure 6.4 James Cagney's legendary efforts to use his celebrity—here he appears in the credit sequence for *The Public Enemy* (William A. Wellman, 1931)—as leverage against what he felt were restrictive long-term contracts at Warner Bros. resulted in years of legal and publicity battles.

The ways that work and stardom intertwine, and the ways that stardom often obscures the nature of labor in the industry, first came to the critical fore in the high-theory dominated 1980s. Certain theorists, most prominently Barry King and later Danae Clark, have attempted to disabuse scholars of the notion that stardom is divorced from traditional conceptualizations of labor. Stardom, the argument goes, is a job that fits into the labor hierarchy of the studio system, albeit one at the apex of that hierarchy. Stardom is rarely discussed as work *per se*, but the star is part of a much larger matrix of labor, production, distribution, and consumption. King, in fact, argued that "stardom is a strategy of performance that is an adaptive response to the limits and pressures exerted upon acting as a discursive practice in the mainstream cinema," demonstrable by examining "the cultural economy of the human body as a sign; the economy of signification in film; and the economy of the labour market for actors."⁴⁴

However alluring this conceptualization is, performing the study of non-star actors' labor is decidedly more difficult and is especially complicated by the fact that most surviving evidence of actors' labor—films, records, press accounts, biographies, and the like—pertains almost exclusively to the stars, and not to secondary personnel. This is coupled with the unsettling fact that the little "evidence" that does remain cannot help but compound the overvaluation of "the star image." Star studies have thus traditionally neglected the labor issues behind stardom and acting in favor of a model in which a star—one of the chosen few—is studied with nominal attention to the labor required of that position.⁴⁵

It is possible, however, to remedy this state of affairs by unmasking the labor that we often presume is made invisible in the star-making process. Rita Hayworth, as a recent study of labor and stardom by Adrienne McLean suggests, is precisely one of those stars who begs to be understood in the context of stardom as labor. Hayworth's ethnicity was discussed openly in print media throughout her career, as was the occasionally agonizing work—from hairline electrolysis to dance lessons—it took for the actress to become star material. The work of becoming a star, in other words, was foregrounded over the course of Hayworth's career, as were the star's origins. As McLean put it, "contra the assertions of Danae Clark and others about the 'erasing' of an actor's previous identity, name, and personal history during his or her ascent to stardom, the half-Spanish Margarita Carmen Cansino was always present in Rita Hayworth as a star text."⁴⁶ Furthermore, the work of stardom is—in Hayworth's and in many other a star's case—revealed to be much more than filmmaking; it is, in fact, the work of star making and star being that is revealed as rigorous here. The contradictions borne by stars—the fantastic with the everyday, the perfect with the flawed, the seeming effortlessness with the effort—are, in some instances, a crucial rhetorical tool used to get audiences to appreciate the work required of becoming a star (not born, one might say, but made).

However, the fact that stardom as labor is in a constant state of retreat in the critical literature merely points up our cultural fascination with stars as they exist

outside of the realm of the practical, the knowable, the accounted for. Despite its vivid presence every time we watch a film, another manifestation of star labor—film acting, the most seemingly accessible aspect of the star—suffers from a similar elusiveness.⁴⁷ Star performances are, after all, the thing that allows stars to exist, and star images, which circulate constantly, are incomplete without films, which are themselves only occasional.⁴⁸ We might analyze transitions in performance style—for example, the compensatory acting style of silent film stars or the physically frenetic performance style of the 1920s flapper—but how these conventions relate to ideas of stardom remains undertheorized. Film performers function, as James Naremore pointed out, on multiple levels: “as actors playing theatrical personages, as public figures playing theatrical versions of themselves, and as documentary evidence.”⁴⁹ Without each element, stars are incomplete, and by analyzing the layers of star performance—diegetic and extratextual, as Dyer advised—we can, at minimum, perceive the construction of the star text. However, the work of the star is often lost in this explication of star textuality, which has become a much more conventional—and concrete, and *seemingly* objective—way of dealing with the signifiers of stardom.

Star Texts: Construction and Consumption

In *Stars*, Dyer handled issues of labor and performance obliquely, favoring an analysis of the star text that has become paradigmatic to the discipline. During the studio era, stars were handled by studio heads, who worked in concert with well-oiled publicity departments to disseminate the star product as efficiently and widely (and profitably) as possible. But stars, both then and now, are of course reliant on a host of other collaborators in the process of becoming and staying: costumers, make-up artists, and directors; the media and the agents who feed stories to them; and, of course, the fans who perceive them in relation to their own imaginations and desires. Although promotion and publicity, as concepts, are often blurred, promotion is that which emanates from the star and his or her “camp,” while publicity is that which generates from the media, often (but not always) well outside of the star’s (or studio’s) control. Through product tie-ins, advertising campaigns, and the like, the Hollywood studios certainly tried to make a science of predicting and guiding spectatorial response through the marketing of their stars. The aim, then, in the scholarly pursuit of the star is largely to understand how “extraordinary” stars are disseminated to the “ordinary” public, how stars are used to compel audiences to behave, largely as consumers.⁵⁰ As Andrew Britton pointed out, “the importance of publicity and promotion consists in the fact that they *seek* to define an orientation to the star—not that they succeed.”⁵¹ In other words, the construction and consumption of star promotion are

necessarily distinct categories, each revealing more, perhaps, about their maker and consumer than about the stars themselves.

Promotion and publicity are not, of course, unique to the motion picture industry, nor to the motion picture star; however, Hollywood in particular refined the processes of selling its product through the promotion of its stars. By the 1930s, all of the major studios had public relations departments that worked to test their up-and-coming stars through print media; to develop mutually beneficial relationships with advertisers; and to keep their current roster of screen favorites in the public eye by writing puff pieces for the newspapers and fan magazines, providing photographs, and working with exhibitors prior to and during the release of new films. Promotion provides the key narrative elements of the star text—stories of youth and hardship, romance and disappointment—that material upon which the public feeds to gain a perceived intimacy with the star. But, as Richard Dyer and many others have argued, this fabrication of knowledge fails to ever bring us closer to the star's "true" identity; rather, it provides consumers with a seductive illusion of proximity, something on which to chew but which can never sustain.

Promotion can take many forms—from advertising to magazine puff pieces to cutting the ribbon at a supermarket. Some scholars, such as Simon Dixon in "Ambiguous Ecologies: Stardom's Domestic *Mise-en-Scène*," have used the nuances of the star text to study the attempts at narrative cohesiveness of star marketing in the golden age, and the ways that these signs are often organized around gender and ideology. Dixon's title refers to the "part dwelling, part location" nature of the star home in the golden age, with the star residing in a place that might be defined somewhere between "privacy and exhibition."⁵² Mining the star home-tour issues of *Photoplay* and *Architectural Digest*, Dixon rethought the star home in the context of star exhibition, here in the case of prominent male stars such as Edward G. Robinson and James Cagney. The star home evolves out of the demands of set design intended to create a *mise-en-scène* reflective of the mood and message of the unfolding "real life" narrative at hand. A star's home is less a "place" and more a "location," ready for public display.⁵³ Like other elements of the star's life during the studio era, the star's home and home life become part of the exhibition of personality, part of the marketing strategy worked out by publicists, the stars, and the media.

As a twentieth-century phenomenon, Hollywood stars were made to appear a new breed of American success story: luxury was compensation for a life lived in the spotlight, one begun humbly if not poorly—or so the story usually went—suggesting the everyman or everywoman lurking within the mansions and beneath the furs. Constructing stars as symbols of the success of the American dream was both a political necessity, more urgently at some times than others, and a practical means for sustaining the desirability and likeability of what were both immensely valuable and volatile assets. As Lary May has put it, stars were intended to be "the models, not the enemies, for the middle class," and therefore needed to appear both extraordinary and yet not incompatible with the ranks of the everyday.⁵⁴ But

this goal was no assurance of a sympathetic relationship between stars and the public. The star narrative—well documented in the media—includes the acquisition of the signifiers of true stardom: the houses, cars, lifestyle, and so forth. It also typically includes the trappings and failures, the squandering and the excesses, the divorces and the scandals, the depression and the anxiety, even the murders, overdoses, and suicides. The moral of the story is usually that stardom is no guarantor of happiness, an ironic moral given the fact that the star system can be understood as the “basic leverage for audience involvement,” as Andrew Tudor put it.⁵⁵ Perhaps that is the key to stardom’s ambiguous success: it is at once a seemingly ideal and flawless condition, and simultaneously nearly always on the verge of crumbling into ruin, seeming to signify caution for the rest of us out there in the dark to stay clear of such devastating and frequently humiliating twists of fate.

However divergent and frequently conflicting, the audience’s reactions to stardom contain perhaps the most crucial residue of the efficacy and effects of stardom. Despite this, the media audience presents a host of problems for the scholar of celebrity. In her introduction to *The Adoring Audience*, Lisa Lewis asked why fans have been overlooked or dismissed as research subjects given their status as “the most visible and identifiable of audiences.”⁵⁶ The answer resides both in the difficulty of this kind of research and its inherent flaws. Some of the earliest academic work in this area, which appeared in the 1970s, when psychoanalytic and feminist scholars, in particular, began to theorize the nature of spectatorship and the spectator’s relationship to stars and the roles they played, sought to avoid the problem of the “real audience” by creating a theoretical one. Laura Mulvey’s “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” which used psychoanalysis alongside textual analysis to produce an idea of theoretical—and necessarily speculative—spectatorship to understand how certain female stars and characters signified within Hollywood narratives, sparked a wave of such criticism. Although perhaps more about the psychosexual politics of roles than about the stars themselves, Mulvey’s argument about the patriarchal, punishing nature of classical Hollywood cinema makes certain assumptions about stardom that fail to account for the extratextual and lived-body nature of stardom that would later inform the audience work of such scholars as Jackie Stacey.

Indeed, work in reception can be approached through a variety of methodologies, ranging from the theoretical (Mulvey), to the empirical (Jackie Stacey), to elements of the former combined with the study of archival and historical documents (Miriam Hansen and Gaylyn Studlar, the latter practicing a kind of historical archaeology in *This Mad Masquerade*). Dealing with actual audience members and their memories and experiences of film stardom is perhaps the most seductive and most problematic of these approaches. The preeminent study using audience responses to stardom—as opposed to theoretical formulations about spectatorship and reception, or interpretations of promotions aimed at audiences—is Jackie Stacey’s *Star Gazing* (1994). Stacey, a British professor of

sociology, attempted to remedy the paucity of attention given to Hollywood stars by feminist scholars outside of textual analysis by polling more than three hundred British women filmgoers, located through advertisements in two popular women's magazines, about their memories of Hollywood stars during the 1940s and 1950s. Audience research comes with its own difficulties—audience memories are especially subject to any number of empirical flaws (selectiveness, forgetfulness, etc.)—of which Stacey is fully aware. But the results yielded valuable revelations, and Stacey used them to make an argument about “white British women’s fantasies about glamour, Americanness and about themselves.”⁵⁷

Stacey’s study interweaves filmgoers’ responses with analysis and theory, although the theory and the practice sometimes appear to be at odds with each other. Using repeated references by her respondents to the careers of Bette Davis and Joan Crawford, for example, Stacey demonstrated that ideals such as confidence and worldliness were frequently considered to be crucial elements of these star texts, so that these stars were not just physical ideals but behavioral ideals. Stacey concluded that “powerful female stars often played characters in punishing patriarchal narratives, where the woman is either killed off, or married, or both, but these spectators do not seem to select this aspect of their films to write about. Instead, the qualities of confidence and power are remembered as offering female spectators the pleasure of participation in qualities they themselves lacked and desired.”⁵⁸ This interpretive terrain is markedly different from that produced by the generation of theorists before Stacey. The most valuable aspect of Stacey’s study is her use of “lived” examples to rethink theoretical ideas such as psychoanalytic models of identification.

But Stacey’s work, an exemplar of audience research, is not without its flaws. Bruce Babington, in *British Stars and Stardom* (2001), severely criticized Stacey for neglecting British stars in favor of Hollywood stars, and especially for ignoring responses she received to questions about British celebrities in order to emphasize respondents’ adulation of Hollywood stars. Although Babington read this as symptomatic of a larger problem with British film historians favoring American stars over British, he was most irked by Stacey’s repression, of sorts, of her own respondents’ affinities for such notable British performers as Margaret Lockwood. What Stacey attempted to do, however imperfectly, was to assess the processes and consequences of star consumption: how those on-screen and offscreen texts are digested by those who opt to consume them.

Consumption is one of the central theoretical conceits in the study of stardom and fandom, that element of the star system on which its functionality depends. Because stars cannot simply be plucked from the populace and imposed on a public, despite the numerous efforts to do so, they must be made into something so desirable that it elicits mass interest and participation. This cannot be achieved solely in the brief moments of exhibition, in part because that is an exchange with very limited elements of audience participation and self-involvement. To

compensate for this, the industry developed modes of interactive culture—fan magazines, star search contests, fan correspondence—with which to encourage a more engaged and energized fan experience, ultimately fostering a cumulative relationship between fan and future ticket buyer. As Miriam Hansen explained, “film spectatorship epitomized a tendency that strategies of advertising and consumer culture had been pursuing for decades: the stimulation of new needs and new desires through visual fascination.”⁵⁹ Spectatorship was, in other words, recast as consumption, and this consumption revolved almost entirely around the stars.

For example, in the 1930s, prior to a film’s release, photographs or sketches of the fashions worn by actresses were used by manufacturers so that advertising and merchandising tie-ins would be awaiting female consumers at the time of the film’s premiere.⁶⁰ This, of course, served multiple purposes, the main function of which was to make the star all the more consumable even offscreen. Mass-marketed fashions or even homemade copies allowed “normal” people to engage with a tangible element of stardom, to feel intimate with those heavenly bodies if only in a symbolic way. These interactions were always of a highly personal nature, for the act of consumption—be it in the theater or with a fan magazine, a knockoff dress, or even a star-endorsed beauty product—brings the corporate construction of the star text home, individualizes that which was always intended for the masses. Star consumption is, therefore, an act imbued with politics of a personal nature. Elements of race, gender, sexuality, class, and ethnicity come to the fore in such cinematic and post-cinematic acts, and this foregrounding produces some of the more exciting and important territory for star studies to explore.

Identity Politics

Acknowledging, of course, that it is a gross oversimplification and that many other mechanisms are of equal importance, the “subject” of star studies is fascinatingly and frustratingly “human,” in spite of industrial attempts to regulate that humanity. As the previous section suggests, in fact, the star system as such grew out of the industry’s desire to mediate between star bodies and spectatorial bodies, to maximize control, to minimize loss. Humanity, however, is notoriously unruly, and in the 1970s theoretical and critical attempts to account for the points of rupture began to circulate within the field, growing in some ways out of literary models for reader response and a newly invigorated interest in the politics of identity. Guiding many of these approaches is a central question still swirling around attempts to negotiate the Hollywood product: in its highly suspect mode of “universal” address, in its regulated and equally limited creation of ideal spectators who will behave ideally, what are we to do with the uninvited and the alienated? Similarly, what is at stake when the calculations go haywire, when even the ideal spectator



Figure 6.5 Operating well outside of Hollywood's economic sphere, Oscar Micheaux cultivated his own star system with regular performers such as Evelyn Preer, who appeared in a number of Micheaux films and is pictured here in the role of Sylvia Landry from *Within Our Gates* (1919).

misbehaves, or behaves in a manner that is less than ideal? The questions are as difficult to answer as they are important.

It is impossible to adequately conceive of stardom without understanding the ways that identity politics inform star making, marketing, and consumption. It will not come as a surprise, for example, that black actors were largely excluded from stardom in mainstream Hollywood throughout the golden age. Dominant racial politics informed casting, which relegated African Americans to roles as servants, slaves, and entertainers. Race films—directed, for example, by Oscar Micheaux or Spencer Williams—had their own star constellations, but these films did not circulate widely outside of the racially segregated exhibition practices of the Jim Crow era. Karen Alexander has argued that, for black people, cinema is “iconically impotent,” but this fails to account for the complexity of raced spectatorship, and the contradictory appeal of the white Hollywood star system.⁶¹ As James Baldwin made clear in his meditation on his own cinematic coming of age, *The Devil Finds Work*, the awe of seeing movies as a black spectator in the golden age is necessarily mingled with the shame generated by Hollywood's largely retrograde racial representation.

In the 1960s, black stars were allowed to ascend in Hollywood as part of an effort to recapture a steadily declining box office, resulting in a slew of mannered civil rights conscious films such as *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner?* (Stanley Kramer, 1967) starring Sidney Poitier, and markedly less polite films such as *Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song* (1971), starring and directed by Melvin Van Peebles.

Race—not unlike gender, ethnicity, sexuality, and class—informs every element of filmmaking and spectatorship, influencing the business and the politics of representation and reception. Richard Dyer's chapter on Paul Robeson's stardom during the 1924–45 period in *Heavenly Bodies* asks a series of questions that still require scholarly answering within this context, and which might be applied to any of the categories of identity listed above: "How did the period permit black stardom? What were the qualities this black person could be taken to embody, that could catch on in a society where there had never been a black star of this magnitude? What was the fit between the parameters of what black image the society could tolerate and the particular qualities that Robeson could be taken to embody? Where was the give in the ideological system? . . . What was the price that had to be paid for a black person to become such a star?"⁶²

As Dyer acknowledged in his case studies involving race, gender, and sexual identity, all of his subjects experienced alienation from their star identities, which functioned to reproduce ideas about race, gender, sexuality, and class with which their performers were often at odds. Both performers and spectators, however, can behave in unruly ways, undermining the seeming efficacy of dominant forms of representation. As Andrea Weiss pointed out in "A Queer Feeling When I Look at You": Hollywood Stars and Lesbian Spectatorship in the 1930s," the actual sexual identity of actresses in the golden age was less important than the way they were perceived by audiences, allowing for—in Weiss's example—lesbian spectators to read into and beyond the films they were watching. Weiss took the kind of theoretical work done by Mulvey in a different direction to argue that gossip and rumor so inform "the unrecorded history of the gay subculture," that "what the public knew, or what the gay subculture knew, about these stars' 'real lives' cannot be separated from their 'star image.'"⁶³ Moments like that of Marlene Dietrich kissing a woman in *Morocco* (1930) have become iconic lesbian moments claimed by an audience who refuses to obey the narrative provided to them, which almost always recuperates such on-screen deviancies within the context of heterosexuality (or, I would add, comedy). Weiss saw spectatorship as less bound up in a singular interpretation of filmic narrative, opening up the possibility for subversive readings of movie characters and stars based on personal spectatorial issues of identity and, in turn, identification.

Such subversive readings can go beyond on-screen performance and spectatorship to inform the writing of history as well. If race and sexuality are operative forces in the often-suppressed narratives of film production, so too is gender. We may revisit history through the lens of a star's identity politics to see, for example, Ida Lupino's tenure as one of the studio system's only female directors directly as an outgrowth of her status as a frustrated Warner Bros. star, an actress trapped by a studio favoring male stars and genres. As Lupino navigated the publicity landscape as a novelty woman director in the late 1940s and early 1950s, her former star status enabled a public banter that, in turn, facilitated her career move into the strictly male domain of directing.

Looking to an earlier moment in film history, Jennifer Bean in “Technologies of Early Stardom and the Extraordinary Body” attempted to remedy “the conspicuous absence of early women stars” in the scholarly histories by turning to “a pantheon of unusual female stars collectively known as ‘those daring missies of the movies.’”⁶⁴ Bean claimed that the cinema’s first “en masse celebrities”—Pearl White is an exemplar, but there were dozens of adventurous female heroines that were, among other things, serial stars in the teens—should compel us to reassess the birth of stardom: “Rather than a fixed galaxy of stars associated with ‘great’ auteurs and the bid for bourgeois respectability,” Bean asserted, “we find an entirely different constellation of figures associated with thrilling modern film genres and praised for their superlative physical and psychical stamina.”⁶⁵ These adventurous actresses do not fit neatly into the chronology of stardom, but it is their incongruity—mingling athleticism with beauty, bravery with feminine charms, fantasy with realism—that suggests a new framework through which we can more perceptively understand the layered variety of stardom’s earliest years. The suppressed elements of star history may be resuscitated by looking to the past through the politically aware lenses afforded by advances in theories of identity that have evolved over the course of the past forty years.

The myriad variations on identity politics, in other words, can be a productive lens through which to view star history, politics, and spectatorship. It is impossible to view stardom, as Richard Dyer and many others have noted, without an awareness of the personal implications wrought by that institution for the lives and psyches of a variety of spectators with widely divergent aspirations. The political urgency of understanding stardom in these contexts should be apparent if only because stardom is always geared toward the masses and is therefore necessarily reflective, however problematically and untidily, of mass desire. Difference is, as my earlier discussion of Rita Hayworth suggests, always mediated in the process of star making, sometimes in surprising ways. Stars can and should be used as cultural markers that enable the mapping of personal politics. Such critical work allows us to see the variable resonances of stardom as they are exchanged across the lines that, at least in theory, demarcate personal identities.

A Discipline Unbound

As should be evident from even the preceding and highly selective cartographic history, what might best be thought of as the formative base for celebrity studies has been anything but monolithic. Richard Dyer, who occupies the center—but not, by any means, the beginning—of this history, pulled together several key threads within the nascent field in an organized, critical, and highly influential

manner. The seductiveness of his model and a nearly decade-long need to recapitulate or take issue with it yielded numerous subdisciplinary pursuits, which fork out from Dyer's understanding of stardom as a phenomenon of both production and consumption. Star studies has made its longest and most revolutionary strides in the post-*Stars* years, which saw a shift both in the theoretical models employed and, perhaps even more crucially, in the objects of inquiry itself. Recent work in the field has continued to unearth neglected elements of celebrity, to fill in the blanks—the neglected sites—of stardom's history and legacy. Subdisciplines revolving around issues of race, nation, sexuality, gender, labor, and audience reception have become especially energized sites of inquiry in this larger project of understanding stardom's past and future.

There are still significant areas in the field that require scholarly attention, as has been pointed out throughout this essay. Digital technology and the Internet remain perhaps the most undertheorized of stardom's recent developments. These technologies have radically altered the possibilities of star performance, which no longer needs to be tied to a living actor being filmed before a camera. Star marketing and publicity have changed as well. A new kind of celebrity self-mediation exists today—celebrities can, of course, have their own Web sites on which they may post competing versions of stories being reported in the press, daily updates, photographs, and the like—and we seem to find ourselves in an era in which the control of star images is even more decentralized and uncontrollable than ever before.⁶⁶ Anyone—fans, detractors, publicists, corporate sponsors—can create a Web site or post information or images about a star's life. A Google search for Julia Roberts, for example, finds hundreds of fan sites (some claiming to be the “best,” the “official,” or the “unauthorized”—see, for example, www.aboutjulia.com), photo archives, links to eBay, where Julia Roberts memorabilia is being auctioned off, chat rooms, promotional links asking quiz questions about whether or not fans like the names Roberts bestowed upon her children, domestic grosses on her films, Julia Roberts screensavers, archives of interviews and quotes, tips on how to make your hair look as good as Julia's, a Julia Roberts essay about the books that inspire her from Oprah Winfrey's “Oprah's Books” pages, and so on.

Absurd? Yes. Harmless? Perhaps. There are consequences of overinvesting certain members of our culture with collective fantasies and ideals, as well as rewarding them with material gains of such seemingly impossible magnitude. If heroes rise to the top by doing deeds worthy of our admiration, stars have much less to keep them perched on the summit, with consequences both for them and for their admirers and detractors. Stardom has often afforded a kind of permissibility for those who attain it to behave in ways that are outside of the bounds of the rest of society, fostering a disparity in which “they” do not have to act like the rest of “us.” While it is unfair and decidedly untrue to claim that this inequality has gotten worse than it was twenty, or forty, or sixty years ago, it is reasonable to argue that the most dramatic consequences of such elevation are clearly bound to the

seemingly untouchable, however illusorily, place we have, over the course of the past century, put our stars.

Now more than ever we seem to be at a crossroads in terms of our understanding of the unprecedented and multiple mediations of celebrity with which we are confronted on a daily basis. As my brief discussion of Stone's *Natural Born Killers* with which this essay opened should indicate, celebrity itself appears to have mutated to a kind of boiling point. With the collapse of the studio system in the 1950s and 1960s in concert with the arrival and proliferation of television, video, tabloids, and the Internet as the major creators, conduits, and diffusers of celebrity, we can no longer point to the kind of localized, concerted efforts to construct star images that were present in the golden era. Today celebrity matters precisely because it reveals so many different things about culture and political climate, the entertainment and information industries that produce that culture, and the individuals who consume and otherwise react to that culture. The discipline of star studies has a kind of boundlessness that is both fascinating and frustrating. Oliver Stone and his improbably like-minded predecessors—Boorstin, Adorno, Horkheimer, Morin—suggest that our overevaluation of the unextraordinary, or even the shamefully unworthy, has placed us in a precarious position in which reality and decency are slipping quickly out of our grasp, lost in a flurry of meaningless celebration and mediation. If they are right, then there is more urgency than ever to the task of star studies.

NOTES

1. Christine Gledhill, ed., *Stardom: Industry of Desire* (New York: Routledge, 1991), xiii.
2. This is not to say that Sandow and Irwin were recognized as "movie stars" in the 1890s. As Richard deCordova pointed out, "although personalities from other fields (particularly politics) were presented in documentary 'views' from a very early date, they were not in any strict sense of the term movie stars." Richard deCordova, *Picture Personalities: The Emergence of the Star System in America* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1990), 23. Having said this, it is still the case that Thomas Edison and Edwin S. Porter turned to known personalities, performers, and public figures for a number of their early kinetograph films, motivated on some level by certain assumptions about what might appeal to the earliest moving-image audiences.
3. Leo Braudy, *The Frenzy of Renown* (New York: Vintage Books, 1986), 554.
4. Daniel Boorstin, *The Image* (New York: Atheneum, 1962), 57.
5. *Ibid.*, 158.
6. Gledhill, *Stardom*, xiv.
7. Francesco Alberoni, "The Powerless 'Elite': Theory and Sociological Research on the Phenomenon of the Stars," trans. Denis McQuail, in *Sociology of Mass Communications*, ed. Denis McQuail (Middlesex: Penguin, 1972), 79.

8. For recent work on the relationship between celebrity and scandal, gossip, and tabloid culture, see Elizabeth Bird, *For Enquiring Minds: A Cultural Study of Supermarket Tabloids* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1992); Gail Collins, *Scorpion Tongues: Gossip, Celebrity and American Politics* (New York: William Morrow, 1998); and Adrienne McLean and David Cook, *Headline Hollywood* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2001).

9. See, for example, Terry Ramsaye, *A Million and One Nights: A History of the Motion Picture Industry* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1964; originally published in 1925); Benjamin Hampton, *A History of the American Film Industry* (New York: Dover, 1970; originally published in 1931 as *A History of the Movies*); Herbert Blumer, *Movies and Conduct* (New York: Macmillan, 1933); Lewis Jacobs, *The Rise of the American Film* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1939); Leo Rosten, *Hollywood: The Movie Colony, The Movie Makers* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1941); and Hortense Powdermaker, *Hollywood the Dream Factory: An Anthropologist Looks at the Movie-Makers* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1950).

10. For example, see Jackie Stacey, *Star Gazing* (New York: Routledge, 1994); Andrea Weiss, "A Queer Feeling When I Look at You": Hollywood Stars and Lesbian Spectators in the 1930s," in Gledhill, *Stardom*; and Richard Dyer, *Stars* (London: British Film Institute, 1982; originally published in 1979).

11. Boorstin, *The Image*, 47.

12. *Ibid.*, 64.

13. *Ibid.*, 154–160.

14. Jane Gaines, Charles Eckert, John Ellis, Christine Gledhill, and Miriam Hansen are among those who made substantial contributions to star studies in this period. Their articles and books appear in this essay's bibliography.

15. Dyer, *Stars*, 4. A number of authors after Dyer, such as Robert Allen, have applied Dyer's guiding methodology to approach the study of a particular star, in Allen's case for an insightful reading of Joan Crawford. Robert Allen, "The Role of the Star in Film History," in *Film Theory and Criticism*, ed. Leo Braudy (New York: Oxford, 1999). Still others have critiqued Dyer's methodologies, including Pam Cook in her critical response to *Stars*, "Star Signs," *Screen* 20 (Winter 1979–80): 80–88; Danae Clark in her labor-centered critiques, which include a plea to re-term "star studies" "actor studies" to reduce the "elitism of text-based analysis concerned only with stars": *Negotiating Hollywood: The Cultural Politics of Actors' Labor* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1995), 119; and Barry King, who alleged that Dyer failed "to define stardom as a form of agency deriving from the site of production," which "mirrors the governing imperative of the capitalist media": "The Star and the Commodity: Notes Towards a Performance Theory of Stardom," *Cultural Studies* 1 (May 1987): 148.

16. The histories Staiger referred to are by David Cook (in his 1981 *A History of Narrative Film*), Lewis Jacobs (in *The Rise of the American Film*, 1968), Benjamin Hampton (in his 1931 *History of the American Film Industry*), Anthony Slide (in "The Evolution of the Film Star," 1974), and Richard deCordova (in a conference paper given at a 1982 Ohio University Film Conference).

17. Janet Staiger, "Seeing Stars," *Velvet Light Trap* 20 (1983): 13.

18. deCordova, *Picture Personalities*, 6.

19. Joshua Gamson, *Claims to Fame: Celebrity in Contemporary America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 5.

20. P. David Marshall, *Celebrity and Power: Fame in Contemporary Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), ix.
21. Tom Gunning has theorized these early years in terms of a cinema of attractions, suggesting that early moviegoers went to theaters precisely to see events, novelties, spectacles, things that would excite their curiosity along the lines of what they might see at a fairground. Tom Gunning, "Now You See It, Now You Don't: The Temporality of the Cinema of Attractions," in *Silent Film* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1996), 73.
22. For more on this turn-of-the-century environment, see Charles Ponce de Leon, *Self-Exposure: Human-Interest Journalism and the Emergence of Celebrity in America, 1890-1949* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 33-44.
23. See Raymond Williams's "The Romantic Artist," in *Culture and Society: 1780-1950* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958), and Leo Lowenthal's *Literature, Popular Culture, and Society* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1961) for more on the evolution of mass culture and its relationship to fame, particularly of the literary variety, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.
24. Jib Fowles, *Starstruck: Celebrity Performers and the American Public* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1992), 10.
25. Eileen Bowser, *The Transformation of Cinema: 1907-1915* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990), 106.
26. Bowser pointed out that a May 1909 film, Vitagraph's *Oliver Twist*, uses a credit title "years before they were commonly used" when the actress Elita Proctor Otis first appears in the film. *Ibid.*, 107.
27. "Photographs of Moving Picture Actors: A New Method of Lobby Advertising," *Moving Picture World*, January 5, 1910, 50.
28. "The Actor—Likewise the Actress," *Moving Picture World*, November 12, 1910, 1099.
29. Charles Musser noted this date in "The Changing Status of the Actor," in *Before Hollywood: Turn-of-the-Century Films from American Archives* (New York: American Federation of Arts, 1986).
30. deCordova, *Picture Personalities*, 98.
31. Gorham Kindem and Richard deCordova have separately documented their futile searches for this evidence.
32. deCordova, *Picture Personalities*, 55.
33. Anthony Slide demonstrated that despite allegations that the Biograph Company refused to name its stars, the popular press was writing about its actresses by name at least since 1911.
34. See Bowser, *Transformation of Cinema*, 113-114, 171, 225-227.
35. See Geoffrey Macnab, *Searching for Stars: Stardom and Screen Acting in British Cinema* (New York: Cassell, 2000), 173.
36. See Bruce Babington, ed., *British Stars and Stardom from Alma Taylor to Sean Connery* (New York: Manchester University Press, 2001).
37. For an account of the French star system, see Ginette Vincendeau, *Stars and Stardom in French Cinema* (London: Continuum, 2000).
38. See Vijay Mishra's *Bollywood Cinema: Temples of Desire* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 126.
39. See Behroze Gandhi and Rosie Thomas, "Three Indian Film Stars," in Gledhill, *Stardom*. Originally published in *Wide Angle* 6 (1985): 108-109.

40. See Chris Perriam, *Stars and Masculinity in Spanish Cinema: From Banderas to Bardem* (New York: Oxford, 2003), 2–3.
41. Richard Schickel, *The Stars* (New York: Dial Press, 1962), 16.
42. For more on this, see Ross's *Stars and Strikes: The Unionization of Hollywood* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1941).
43. Tino Balio's *United Artists: The Company Built by the Stars* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1976) discusses the birth of this company and its relationship to its founders' celebrity status.
44. Barry King, "Articulating Stardom," *Screen* 26 (1985), 27.
45. Danae Clark challenged this tendency in *Negotiating Hollywood* (1995) by distancing herself from the concept of star studies to "destabilize the concept of 'star' and to interrogate the very premises upon which 'star studies' traditionally rests" (ix) and by turning her critical gaze toward "the politics of actors' labor." Echoing, in some ways, Laura Mulvey's influential 1975 psychoanalytic treatise—which sought the "destruction of pleasure as a radical weapon" (15) to foreground the masochism of female spectatorship—Clark presented a provocative rethinking of stars as *the* privileged site of scholarly interest, which consigns "workers further down in the labor hierarchy" to the neglected, invisible place capitalism intends them to occupy. Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," in *Visual and Other Pleasures* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), xii. Originally published in 1975.
46. Adrienne McLean, *Being Rita Hayworth: Labor, Identity, and Hollywood Stardom* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2004), 11.
47. Charles Affron's gracefully written *Star Acting: Gish, Garbo, Davis* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1977) is one of the first contributions to the critical literature on star performance. Jeremy Butler's more recent *Star Texts: Image and Performance in Film and Television* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1991) anthology includes writings about acting from film and theater directors, playwrights, screen theorists, and interpretive film scholars that develop multiple angles from which to approach the subject, and to suggest directions for future work in the field. Roberta Pearson's *Eloquent Gestures: The Transformation of Performance Style in the Griffith Biograph Films* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992) addresses silent screen acting, especially of the melodramatic variety, and Robert Sklar's *City Boys* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992) analyzes performance, typecasting, and publicity in relation to three male Warner Bros. stars, James Cagney, Humphrey Bogart, and John Garfield.
48. For more on this, see John Ellis, *Visible Fictions: Cinema: Television: Video* (London: Routledge, 1982).
49. James Naremore, "The Performance Frame," in *Star Texts: Image and Performance in Film and Television*, ed. Jeremy Butler (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1988), 108.
50. John Ellis pointed out the dual function of the star image as both "an invitation to cinema" (a form of advertising) and an embodiment of "an impossible paradox: people who are both ordinary and extraordinary" (an ideological function) (97).
51. Andrew Britton, *Katharine Hepburn: Star as Feminist* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 15.
52. Simon Dixon, "Ambiguous Ecologies: Stardom's Domestic Mise-en-Scène," *Cinema Journal* 42.3 (Winter 2003), 81.

53. *Ibid.*, 82.
54. Lary May, *Screening Out the Past: The Birth of Mass Culture and the Motion Picture Industry* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 233.
55. Andrew Tudor, *Image and Influence* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1974).
56. Lisa Lewis, *The Adoring Audience: Fan Culture and Popular Media* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 1.
57. Jackie Stacey, *Star Gazing* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 17.
58. *Ibid.*, 158.
59. Miriam Hansen, *Babel and Babylon: Spectatorship in American Silent Film* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 13.
60. For more on this, see Charles Eckert, "The Carole Lombard in Macy's Window," in *Fabrications: Costumes and the Female Body*, ed. Jane Gaines and Charlotte Herzog (New York: AFI, 1990); and Jane Gaines and Charlotte Herzog, "Puffed Sleeves Before Tea-Time: Joan Crawford, Adrian and Women Audiences," in Gledhill, *Stardom*; originally published in 1985.
61. Karen Alexander, "Fatal Beauties: Black Women in Hollywood," in Gledhill, *Stardom*, 54.
62. Richard Dyer, *Heavenly Bodies* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 65–66.
63. Weiss, " 'A Queer Feeling,' " 283, 286.
64. Jennifer Bean, "Technologies of Early Stardom and the Extraordinary Body," in *A Feminist Reader in Early Cinema*, ed. Jennifer Bean and Diane Negra (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002), 404.
65. *Ibid.*, 407.
66. Paul McDonald sees the Internet not as a threat to the star system, but rather as a decentralized—and, I would add, democratized—continuation of star promotion. *The Star System: Hollywood's Production of Popular Identities* (London: Wallflower, 2000), 114–115.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adorno, Theodor, and Max Horkheimer. "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception." *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. New York: Continuum, 1987. Trans. John Cumming from original publication, 1944.
- Affron, Charles. *Star Acting: Gish, Garbo, Davis*. New York: E.P. Dutton, 1977.
- Alberoni, Francesco. "The Powerless 'Elite': Theory and Sociological Research on the Phenomenon of the Stars." Trans. Denis McQuail. *Sociology of Mass Communications*. Ed. Denis McQuail. Middlesex: Penguin, 1972, 75–98. Originally published in *Icon*, 12.40 (1962).
- Alexander, Karen. "Fatal Beauties: Black Women in Hollywood." *Stardom: Industry of Desire*. Ed. Christine Gledhill. London: Routledge, 1991.
- Allen, Jeanne. "The Film Viewer as Consumer." *Quarterly Review of Film Studies* 5.4 (1980): 481–501.
- Allen, Robert. "The Role of the Star in Film History." *Film Theory and Criticism*. Ed. Leo Braudy. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.

- Allen, Robert, and Douglas Gomery. *Film History: Theory and Practice*. New York: Knopf, 1985.
- Anderson, Mark Lynn. "Shooting Star: Understanding Wallace Reid and His Public." *Headline Hollywood*. Ed. Adrienne McLean and David Cook. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2001, 83–106.
- Auerbach, Jonathan. *Male Call: Becoming Jack London*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996.
- Babington, Bruce, ed. *British Stars and Stardom from Alma Taylor to Sean Connery*. New York: Manchester University Press, 2001.
- Balio, Tino. *United Artists: The Company Built by the Stars*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1976.
- Barbas, Samantha. *Movie Crazy: Fans, Stars, and the Cult of Celebrity*. New York: Palgrave, 2001.
- Barthes, Roland. "The Face of Garbo." *Mythologies*. Trans. Jonathan Cape. New York: Hill and Wang, 1972. Originally published in 1957.
- Basinger, Jeanine. *Silent Stars*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999.
- Bean, Jennifer. "Technologies of Early Stardom and the Extraordinary Body." *A Feminist Reader in Early Cinema*. Ed. Jennifer Bean and Diane Negra. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002, 404–443.
- Bingham, Dennis. *Acting Male: Masculinities in the Films of James Stewart, Jack Nicholson, and Clint Eastwood*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1994.
- Bird, S. Elizabeth. *For Enquiring Minds: A Cultural Study of Supermarket Tabloids*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1992.
- Blumer, Herbert. *Movies and Conduct*. New York: Macmillan, 1933.
- Boorstin, Daniel J. *The Image*. New York: Atheneum, 1962.
- Bowers, Q. David. "Souvenir Postcards and the Development of the Star System, 1912–1914." *Film History* 3 (1989): 39–45.
- Bowser, Eileen. *The Transformation of Cinema: 1907–1915*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990.
- Braudy, Leo. *The Frenzy of Renown*. New York: Vintage Books, 1986.
- Britton, Andrew. *Katharine Hepburn: Star as Feminist*. New York: Columbia University Press: 2003. Originally published in 1984.
- Butler, Jeremy, ed. *Star Texts: Image and Performance in Film and Television*. Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1991.
- Byars, Jackie. "The Prime of Miss Kim Novak: Struggle Over the Feminine in the Star Image." *The Other Fifties: Interrogating Midcentury American Icons*. Ed. Joel Foreman. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1997.
- Clark, Danae. *Negotiating Hollywood: The Cultural Politics of Actors' Labor*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995.
- . "The Subject of Acting." *Stars: The Film Reader*. Ed. Lucy Fischer and Marcia Landy. New York: Routledge, 2004, 13–28.
- Collins, Gail. *Scorpion Tongues: Gossip, Celebrity, and American Politics*. New York: William Morrow, 1998.
- Cook, David. *A History of Narrative Film*. New York: Norton, 1981.
- Cook, Pam. *The Cinema Book*. New York: Pantheon, 1985.
- . "Star Signs." *Screen* 20 (Winter 1979–80): 80–88.
- deCordova, Richard. "The Emergence of the Star System in America." *Stardom: Industry of Desire*. Ed. Christine Gledhill. New York: Routledge, 1991, 17–30.

- . *Picture Personalities: The Emergence of the Star System in America*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1990.
- de Leon, Charles Ponce. *Self-Exposure: Human-Interest Journalism and the Emergence of Celebrity in America, 1890–1940*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002.
- Dixon, Simon. "Ambiguous Ecologies: Stardom's Domestic Mise-en-Scène." *Cinema Journal* 42.3 (Winter 2003): 81–100.
- Dyer, Richard. *Heavenly Bodies*. New York: Routledge, 2004. Originally published in 1986.
- . *Stars*. London: British Film Institute, 1982. Originally published in 1979.
- Eckert, Charles. "The Carole Lombard in Macy's Window." *Fabrications: Costumes and the Female Body*. Ed. Jane Gaines and Charlotte Herzog. New York: AFI, 1990, 100–121.
- . "Shirley Temple and the House of Rockefeller." *Stardom: Industry of Desire*. Ed. Christine Gledhill. London: Routledge, 1991. Originally published in *Jump Cut* 2 (July–August 1974).
- Ellis, John. "Star/Industry/Image." *Star Signs: Papers from a Weekend Workshop*. London: BFI Education, 1982.
- . *Visible Fictions: Cinema: Television: Video*. London: Routledge, 1982.
- Finney, Angus. *The State of European Cinema: A New Dose of Reality*. London: Cassell, 1996.
- Fischer, Lucy, and Marcia Landy. *Stars: The Film Reader*. New York: Routledge, 2004.
- Fowles, Jib. *Starstruck: Celebrity Performers and the American Public*. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992.
- Fuller, Kathryn. *At the Picture Show: Small-Town Audiences and the Creation of Movie Fan Culture*. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1996.
- Gaines, Jane. "Costume and Narrative." *Fabrications: Costume and the Female Body*. Ed. Jane Gaines and Charlotte Herzog. New York: AFI, 1990, 180–211.
- . "From Elephants to Lux Soap: The Programming and 'Flow' of Early Motion Picture Exploitation." *Velvet Light Trap* 25 (1990): 29–43.
- . "The Queen Christina Tie-Ups: Convergence of Show Window and Screen." *Quarterly Review of Film and Video* 11 (1989): 35–60.
- . "War, Women, and Lipstick: Fan Mags in the Forties." *Heresies* 5 (1985): 42–47.
- Gaines, Jane, and Charlotte Herzog. "'Puffed Sleeves Before Tea-Time': Joan Crawford, Adrian and Women Audiences." *Stardom: Industry of Desire*. Ed. Christine Gledhill. London: Routledge, 1991. Originally published in 1985.
- Gamson, Joshua. *Claims to Fame: Celebrity in Contemporary America*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994.
- Gandhy, Behroze, and Rosie Thomas. "Three Indian Film Stars." *Stardom: Industry of Desire*. Ed. Christine Gledhill. London: Routledge, 1991. Originally published in *Wide Angle* 6 (1985).
- Geraghty, Christine. "Re-Examining Stardom: Questions of Texts, Bodies and Performance." *Reinventing Film Studies*. Ed. Christine Gledhill and Linda Williams. London: Arnold, 2000.
- Giles, David. *Illusions of Immortality: A Psychology of Fame and Celebrity*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000.
- Gledhill, Christine. *Stardom: Industry of Desire*. London: Routledge, 1991.
- Gunning, Tom. "'Now You See It, Now You Don't': The Temporality of the Cinema of Attractions." *Silent Film*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1996), 73.

- Gustafson, Robert. "The Power of the Screen: The Influence of Edith Head's Film Designs on the Retail Fashion Market." *Velvet Light Trap* 19 (1982): 8–15.
- Hampton, Benjamin. *History of the Movies*. New York: Dover, 1970.
- Hansen, Miriam. *Babel and Babylon: Spectatorship in American Silent Film*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991.
- Haskell, Molly. *From Reverence to Rape: The Treatment of Women in the Movies*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987. Originally published in 1974.
- Jacobs, Lewis. *The Rise of the American Film*. New York: Teachers College Press, 1939.
- Jenson, Joli. "Fandom as Pathology: The Consequences of Characterization." *The Adoring Audience: Fan Culture and Popular Media*. Ed. Lisa Lewis. New York: Routledge, 1992, 9–30.
- Kerr, Catherine. "Incorporating the Star: The Intersection of Business and Aesthetic Strategies in Early American Film." *Business History Review* 64.3 (Autumn 1990): 383–410.
- Kindem, Gorham. "Hollywood's Movie Star System: A Historical Overview." Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1982.
- King, Barry. "Articulating Stardom." *Screen* 26 (1985): 27–50.
- . "The Star and the Commodity: Notes Towards a Performance Theory of Stardom." *Cultural Studies* 1 (May 1987): 145–161.
- . "Stardom as an Occupation." *The Hollywood Film Industry*. Ed. Paul Kerr. New York: Routledge, 1986, 154–184.
- Klaprat, Kathy. "The Star as Market Strategy: Bette Davis in Another Light." *The American Film Industry*. Ed. Tino Balio. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1976.
- Leff, Leonard. *Hemingway and His Conspirators: Hollywood, Scribners, and the Making of Celebrity Culture*. New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 1997.
- Lewis, Lisa, ed. *The Adoring Audience: Fan Culture and Popular Media*. New York: Routledge, 1992.
- Lowenthal, Leo. *Literature, Popular Culture, and Society*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1961.
- Lusted, David. "The Glut of Personality." *Stardom: Industry of Desire*. Ed. Christine Gledhill. London: Routledge, 1991. Originally published in *TV Mythologies*. Ed. L. Masterman. 1984.
- Macnab, Geoffrey. *Searching for Stars: Stardom and Screen Acting in British Cinema*. New York: Cassell, 2000.
- Mann, Denise. "The Spectacularization of Everyday Life: Recycling Hollywood Stars and Fans in Early Television Variety Shows." *Star Texts: Image and Performance in Film and Television*. Ed. Jeremy Butler. Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1991. Originally published in *Camera Obscura* 16 (January 1988).
- Marshall, P. David. *Celebrity and Power: Fame in Contemporary Culture*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997.
- May, Lary. *Screening Out the Past: The Birth of Mass Culture and the Motion Picture Industry*. New York: Oxford, 1980.
- McDonald, Gerald. "Origin of the Star System." *Films in Review* 4 (November 1953): 449–458.
- McDonald, Paul. "Reconceptualising Stardom." *Stars*. New ed. Ed. Richard Dyer. London: BFI, 1998.

- . *The Star System: Hollywood's Production of Popular Identities*. London: Wallflower, 2000.
- McLean, Adrienne. " 'New Films in Story Form': Movie Story Magazines and Spectatorship." *Cinema Journal* 42.3 (Spring 2003): 3–26.
- . *Being Rita Hayworth: Labor, Identity, and Hollywood Stardom*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2004.
- McLean, Adrienne, and David Cook. *Headline Hollywood*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2001.
- Mellencamp, Patricia. "Situation Comedy, Feminism, and Freud: Discourses of Gracie and Lucy." *Star Texts: Image and Performance in Film and Television*. Ed. Jeremy Butler. Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1991. Originally published in *Studies in Entertainment: Critical Approaches to Mass Culture* (1986).
- Mishra, Vijay. *Bollywood Cinema: Temples of Desire*. New York: Routledge, 2002.
- Monaco, James. *Celebrity: The Media as Image Makers*. New York: Delta, 1978.
- Morin, Edgar. *The Stars*. Trans. Richard Howard. New York: Grove Press, 1960. Originally published in 1957.
- Mulvey, Laura. "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." *Visual and Other Pleasures*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989. Originally published in 1975.
- Musser, Charles. "The Changing Status of the Actor." *Before Hollywood: Turn-of-the-Century Film from American Archives*. With Jay Leyda. New York: American Federation of Arts, 1986.
- Naremore, James. "The Performance Frame." *Star Texts: Image and Performance in Film and Television*. Ed. Jeremy Butler. Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1991. Originally published in *Acting in the Cinema* (1988).
- Ndalianis, Angela, and Charlotte Henry, eds. *Stars in Our Eyes: The Star Phenomenon in the Contemporary Era*. Westport, CT: Praeger, 2002.
- Negra, Diane. *Off White Hollywood: American Culture and Ethnic Female Stardom*. New York: Routledge, 2001.
- Orgeron, Marsha. "Making It in Hollywood: Clara Bow, Fandom, and Consumer Culture." *Cinema Journal* 42 (Summer 2003): 76–97.
- . *Hollywood Ambitions: Celebrity in the Movie Age*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2008.
- Pearson, Roberta. *Eloquent Gestures: The Transformation of Performance Style in the Griffith Biograph Films*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992.
- Perriam, Chris. *Stars and Masculinities in Spanish Cinema: From Banderas to Bardem*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.
- Powdermaker, Hortense. *Hollywood the Dream Factory: An Anthropologist Looks at the Movie-Makers*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1950.
- Prizogy, Ruth. "Judy Holliday: The Star and the Studio." *Columbia Pictures: Portrait of a Studio*. Ed. Bernard Dick. Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1992.
- Ramsaye, Terry. *A Million and One Nights: A History of the Motion Picture Industry*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1964. Originally published in 1925.
- Renov, Michael. "Advertising/Photojournalism/Cinema." *Quarterly Review of Film and Video* 11 (1989): 1–21.
- Roberts, Shari. " 'The Lady in the Tutti-Frutti Hat': Carmen Miranda, a Spectacle of Ethnicity." *Cinema Journal* 32 (1993): 3–23.

- Rodden, John. *The Politics of Literary Reputation*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1989.
- Ross, Murray. *Stars and Strikes: Unionization of Hollywood*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1941.
- Rosten, Leo. *Hollywood: The Movie Colony, The Movie Makers*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1941.
- Schickel, Richard. *Intimate Strangers: The Culture of Celebrity*. New York: Doubleday, 1985.
- . *The Stars*. New York: Dial Press, 1962.
- Sedgwick, John. "The Comparative Popularity of Stars in Mid-1930s Britain." *Journal of Popular British Cinema* 2 (1999): 121–127.
- Sklar, Robert. *City Boys: Cagney, Bogart, Garfield*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992.
- Slide, Anthony. "The Evolution of the Film Star." *Films in Review* 25 (1974): 591–594.
- . "The Fan Magazines." *The Stars Appear*. Ed. Richard Dyer MacCann. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 1992, 259–264.
- Stacey, Jackie. *Star Gazing*. New York: Routledge, 1994.
- Staiger, Janet. "Seeing Stars." *Velvet Light Trap* 20 (1983): 10–14.
- Stamp, Shelley. *Movie-Struck Girls*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000.
- Studlar, Gaylyn. *This Mad Masquerade: Stardom and Masculinity in the Jazz Age*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1996.
- . "The Perils of Pleasure? Fan Magazine Discourse as Women's Commodified Culture in the 1920s." *Silent Cinema*. Ed. Richard Abel. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1996, 263–299.
- Tudor, Andrew. *Image and Influence: Studies in the Sociology of Film*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1974.
- Vincendeau, Ginette. *Stars and Stardom in French Cinema*. London: Continuum, 2000.
- Vincent, William. "Rita Hayworth at Columbia, 1941–1945: The Fabrication of a Star." *Columbia Pictures: Portrait of a Studio*. Ed. Bernard Dick. Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1992.
- Walker, Alexander. "Elinor Glyn and Clara Bow." *The Stars Appear*. Ed. Richard Dyer MacCann. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 1992, 199–258.
- . *Stardom: The Hollywood Phenomenon*. New York: Stein and Day, 1970.
- Weiss, Andrea. "'A Queer Feeling When I Look at You': Hollywood Stars and Lesbian Spectatorship in the 1930s." *Stardom: Industry of Desire*. Ed. Christine Gledhill. London: Routledge, 1991.
- Willis, Andy, ed. *Film Stars: Hollywood and Beyond*. London: Manchester University Press, 2004.
- Wyatt, Justin. *High Concept: Movies and Marketing in Hollywood*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994.
- Yacowar, Maurice. "An Aesthetic Defense of the Star System in Films." *Quarterly Review of Film Studies* 4 (1979): 39–52.