as a contribution to the historical study of film reception and to cultural and sociological studies of the consumption and use of popular media forms, Zur Soziologie des Kino offers a methodological template for the sort of ethnographic study of media audiences which is being reinvented today: for in attempting to understand the appeal of cinema, Altenloh’s investigation aligns itself in spirit with the ethnographer’s quest – in this case, to document cinema audiences’ experiences from the inside.

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A Sociology of the Cinema: the Audience

EMILIE ALTENLOH

Methodology: data collection

The observations set out below have been gleaned with reference to specially conducted surveys... This study draws on statistics indicating the frequency of cinema visits in a fairly large industrial town during two months in the summer and two in the winter. These statistics were kindly made available by four theatre owners, and the similarity of their results made it possible to get an idea of the significance of cinemas in general. In addition, these sources were underpinned by a survey, undertaken in the same town, whose aim was to establish the connections between social grouping, entertainment and cultural interests. In order to ascertain the nature of people’s interest in the cinema, the following questions were asked, some of which were answered verbally and some by filling out a questionnaire:

1. a) Name or sex (of respondent):
   b) Occupation:
   c) Father’s occupation:
   d) How old are you?
   e) Where were you born?
   f) Which school do/did you attend?

2. Do you go to the theatre, public lectures, concerts, variety shows?

3. What do you enjoy best?

4. Do you go to the cinema? How often?

5. On your own or with other people?
6 What prompts you to go to the cinema on each occasion?
7 When do you usually go to the cinema (day of week, time of day)?
8 Do you stay for the whole programme?
9 What kind of films do you like best (dramas, comedies, nature documentaries etc.)?
10 Has anything made a lasting impression on you? What?
11 Has the cinema offered you any artistic insights?

A total of 2400 responses were obtained. This was achieved by contacting the committees of various trade associations, as the aim was to include as large a percentage as possible from each social group. Some committees then put us in contact with individual members of their associations. Young people (fourteen-to-eighteen-year-olds) were surveyed in vocational and trade schools, while workers were surveyed in person. The remaining occupations – artisans, clerical workers, engineers, students, officers, and so on – were sent the forms exclusively through their trade associations or specialist publications. This yielded little success: out of a total of 15,000 forms distributed, only about 200 were returned. With these groups, information had to be gathered in a different way, and personal impressions were incorporated to a greater extent than elsewhere in characterizing relationship to the cinema.

Generally speaking, for this latter group it can be assumed that judging the level of interest in cinema showings and the frequency of cinema visits solely on the basis of the completed questionnaires would be misleading. Among those surveyed through the trade associations, those who never went to the cinema generally put the form to one side with no further thought, so that almost no forms were received from non-cinemagoers. This assumption is further strengthened by comments to this effect made by members of the associations surveyed. Numerical comparisons between the trades and other social groups are therefore impossible. In the case of labourers, however, as well as all the women surveyed, the results are more complete and allow for an internal comparison. Answers were obtained in each case from all the members of the groups gathered specifically for the survey, enabling conclusions to be formed about the group as a whole. A similar situation holds for the results from the elementary schools, further education schools and trade schools, where all individuals in particular classes were included in the survey.

Most comprehensive, finally, are the results from one commercial further education school, gained by surveying all fifty-five classes with a total of 1381 pupils of both sexes. Attendance at this school is compulsory for all male and female apprentices of commercial trades. The school is organized on the basis of a three-year attendance period, so that the first class is attended mainly by fourteen-to-fifteen-year-olds, the second mainly by fifteen-to-sixteen-year-olds and the third by sixteen-to-seventeen-year-olds. In addition there are special classes for those who have obtained their one-year certificate from a middle school. This section of the survey includes all young people of a particular sort, categorized according to age. Due to the completeness of this part of the survey, analysis in this case will include a more detailed discussion of particularities and deviations from the overall picture, since these may be seen not as coincidental failings of the sample surveys but can be numerically adjusted, and assessed for their significance. Given the great expansion of trade in the town selected, all young entrants to the major occupations have been included. This is especially useful for cinema statistics because more money is generally spent on entertainment – and on cinema in particular – during the years between when a young person starts to bring in a wage and when they get married than is spent later, something that is especially true in the case of young shop assistants. This is clearly demonstrated when this group is compared with members of other occupational classes (even if no account is taken of the fact that, of these latter, only those who show most interest in the cinema are included in the survey).

**Cinema and other forms of entertainment**

In order to be able to assess how significant cinema is for a town’s population, it is crucial to ascertain whether it represents the only – or virtually the only – means of entertainment available, or whether other pastimes occupy the audience’s time and capture their attention. There therefore follows a brief overview of other forms of entertainment in Mannheim, such as theatre and concerts.

Until 1908 there were no independent cinemas in Mannheim. People’s desire for spectacle was satisfied by the Hoftheater, or court theatre, a second larger theatre and three specialty theatres. Occasionally, at a fair or some other popular festival, a travelling picture-show might exhibit the odd film, usually of a fairly poor technical standard. For the less well-off classes the court theatre was hardly an option – and indeed less so than today, when popular theatre productions with cheap seats provide at least a thinly spun thread between the theatre and those in the lower social classes who are particularly interested in it. General trends in the development of the modern stage suggest a further reason why most of the population has become alienated from the theatre. These trends are a result of the social divisions that have arisen alongside the contemporary organization of economic life. Most people are integrated into the overall economic system like a small cog in a machine, and this system not only dominates people’s working lives but also constrains the totality of the individual. The free, inviolable
sphere within which a person has sovereign control has been reduced to a minimum. This kind of life produces individuals defined primarily through the work they do, who find it very difficult to look for new avenues of development outside the sphere of life in which they find themselves. The ways in which people from different social groups seek to be entertained and have fun display certain characteristic features, and there is little understanding of what goes on outside one’s own circles, let alone a sense of working together or of communal enjoyment.

In contrast to this highly constrained group is a comparatively small elite whose more favourable external circumstances have allowed them to retain a greater degree of inner freedom. These people are far removed from the majority in their whole way of feeling and thinking. For them, such manifestations of intellectual life as books and works of art do not remain external objects. Instead, they draw them into themselves and render them a living and integral part of their personality. It is through this continual assimilation that the elite become bearers of the entire culture, and in turn determine its content.

This one-sided development is especially clearly revealed in modern theatre, whose entire repertoire can be divided into three groups. Firstly, there is modern drama, in which all the action is transferred onto the protagonists’ inner life. The drama lies in the processes of highlighting and solving purely psychological conflicts. Nowadays this type of drama is cultivated at the best theatres, which have almost the character of private gatherings. It is here that members of this intellectual elite seek intellectual nourishment: with their more finely-tuned emotional life, they alone are in a position to understand the playwright. Alongside these are the classical dramas. However, since the average person today is rooted more than ever in the present and has proper understanding only of contemporary problems and issues, he is less drawn, purely in terms of human sensibility, to things classical, and indeed often lacks the level of understanding required for forming a judgement from an artistic point of view, since this is only possible with a certain cultivation of taste.

The third type is opera, which has numerous adherents from all social circles and constitutes the very essence of theatre for broad sections of the population today. Modern comedies and operettas in particular continue to attract large audiences, and have been staged in Mannheim from time to time over the past few years in response to an urgent need for light entertainment. Most of the big concerts of the season take place in the three auditoria of the town’s concert building. Variety shows and cinemas, of course, also provide entertainment. What is more, they draw away from the theatre all those whose principal concern is to spend a few hours being entertained. Finally, the various cycles of lecture series should be mentioned, which on different evenings of the week during the winter are a source of fascination for some sections of the population, and might therefore have the effect of diverting them from the cinema.

This was the situation regarding pleasure and entertainment facilities in the town when the cinema movement entered dramatically onto the scene in 1908. Although emanating from the urban centres, cinema also made its presence felt in provincial towns. In both locations, the same process occurred: first the audience’s attention was diverted from similar entertainment forms, variety shows and cabarets. But new options awaken new needs, and thus the number of cinemas has grown far beyond the number of cognate establishments. The trend in Berlin typifies this, where in addition to the thirty-four variety theatres that existed in 1908, another 300 cinemas have since sprung up! Typically, this trend did not emerge immediately after the new invention became well known, but only when Sensationsdrama, or sensational drama, brought a radical change to film representation and when the picture houses were transformed from dimly-lit, confined spaces into luxurious and comfortably furnished buildings. These two factors have proved decisive for the role played by the cinema today. From that point onwards in its development, cinema won over ever more elevated social groups and became, as it were, ‘presentable’. At first, cinematographers travelled incognito, and were actually somewhat embarrassed if their predilection became public knowledge. Times have moved on, for today a screening of Der Andere/The Other, with Albert Bassermann in the leading role, constitutes a society event. The modern city-dweller nowadays considers the phenomenon of cinema as something perfectly natural, and an occasional visit to the cinema is just as much a part of life as taking afternoon tea at five on the Kurfürstendamm.

The same development has been repeated on a smaller scale in provincial towns, including Mannheim. As has already been noted, two out of three variety theatres have disappeared; one of these was converted to a cinema, and eleven additional cinemas were built from scratch. Five of these are located in the town centre and seven more around the edge of town. Most of them have only come into existence during the past three years. Their location is also a key feature. Until 1910 only four movie theatres existed in the town centre and one in the town’s suburbs. At that time there was as yet no appreciable difference between them. In terms of both their external appearance and the content of their screenings, they were all tailored to the most primitive expectations. Accordingly, the audience was almost exclusively recruited from the lower social groups. Then the cinemas began to spread rapidly. In Mannheim this involved three new cinemas being opened in 1910 and three more in 1911. These theatres are by no means all located in the town centre, but rather in those parts of town where the largest section of the
contemporary cinema audience lives, namely the labourers. At the same time, two film theatres in the town centre began to differentiate themselves by the more elegant design of their auditoria, the introduction of more expensive seats, and by employing a small ensemble of musicians instead of an orchestra or solo piano player. The location and interior design of movie theatres, then, as well as the ticket price, are more significant in determining the composition of the audience than the quality of what is being shown. Hence the opening in 1912 of a competitor establishment, the third of this more luxurious group.

The same phenomenon that had occurred some years earlier in Berlin was now being repeated here: cinema became a fashion, indeed different social circles became actively involved in supporting and promoting it. A demonstration screening was organized by the Verein der Künstler und Kunstfreunde (Association of Artists and Friends of the Arts), in which the peculiar pictorial effects made possible through cinematography were shown, using extracts from various films as examples. These illustrations did not provide a model for producing good film programmes so much as an education in an artistic way of viewing: the emphasis was not on the material content of the film but solely on the effect of individual images and movements. In practice only very few film directors have as yet shown any interest in achieving an image in which the succession of moving bodies forms a continuous whole with the background of a scene in order to create a harmonious aesthetic impression. In film, however, when such an impression is achieved, all attention becomes focused solely on film's potential as a series of images, with action and plot neglected. Thus a degree of perfection is achieved, but only ever in one aspect of film presentation.

Similarly, and despite all efforts, there has never existed, even in theory, the movie theatre with a perfect programme. Any judgments that might be made concerning the excellence or quality of any given enterprise can therefore be of only limited significance. The three town centre theatres mentioned above, which incidentally are owned by rather large theatre chains, in contrast to the private enterprises of the suburbs, differ from the smaller ones mainly in terms of their external appearance. At least the worst excesses have been eradicated from the programme, partly out of consideration for the reputation of the enterprise, and in their place nature documentaries have come to constitute a somewhat larger part of the repertoire.

The remaining cinemas, usually situated at various locations in the suburbs, differ from one another in only a few minor respects, the most important being the quality of ventilation in the auditoria. They offer everything that those seeking horror and sensationalism could possibly want, and appeal to the type of person vilified in many quarters as pernicious and lacking in taste. Loud, garish posters with sensational titles, often specially altered to appeal to a particularly unshocked audience, cover entire facades. Just how low the level is and what kind of visitor is expected is best summed up by the following notice in one of the auditoria: ‘Wrecking of chairs and bench is prohibited.’ Anyone who has ever strolled through the suburbs knows this kind of den. Each is no better and no worse than the other and is, in the end, always tailored to the needs of audiences who remain shockingly indifferent to, and uncritical of, the entertainment they enjoy, as long as they are watching does not require any intellectual effort.

Taken together, the twelve cinemas [in Mannheim] offer about 4500 seats for a population of around 204,000. A certain degree of saturation appears to have been reached with this figure, and further theatre openings would be unlikely to be profitable. The proportion of cinemas to inhabitants is similar in a number of other industrial towns. But cinemas have already achieved such widespread popularity that all other forms of entertainment lag far behind. One cinema (albeit one of the largest) has as many visitors every evening as the court theatre. Based on an estimated number of seats and on statistics from all the different theatres, it can be concluded that around 7500 people go to the cinema every evening. By contrast, even when all the other entertainment establishments are counted together and when, for example, several events are taking place at the same time, audience figures still do not equate with those for cinema.

The number of cinemagoers on particular days of the week seems to be subject to certain regularities. This is clearly demonstrated by a curve whose shape varies according to whether the cinema is located in the centre or in working-class areas of town. In the case of the former, the minimum frequency falls with greatest regularity on a Friday. The reason for this is not immediately apparent. Perhaps we need to postulate a psychology of the different days of the week in order to explain it. Fridays represent a kind of preparation, a time of waiting for events that will occur on the free Saturday afternoon and Sunday, which are usually devoted exclusively to the pursuit of pleasure. Fridays have always been largely devoted to work, perhaps precisely in order to increase the sense of anticipation for the coming days of rest. Saturday itself, on the other hand, is already a part of Sunday, especially since the introduction of earlier closing times. One practical reason could also be the fact that Friday has traditionally been cleaning day in multi-roomed apartments, when the women of the petite bourgeoisie and middle classes are busy with domestic duties: these women make up a large proportion of the cinema audience, especially in the film theatres under consideration here.

The curve for the frequency of cinema attendance in the suburbs shows that the minimum falls on Thursdays, when money has probably already become a little tight, whereas on Friday, pay day,
the frequency picks up again. The majority of visitors to these cinemas are labourers, that is, people who have to manage with limited means and who have usually spent their weekly wage by Thursday. For the majority, however, going to the cinema seems to be the Sunday outing. For those who, are busy at work during the week, going to the cinema is the only time when they are completely freed from the daily grind. All other forms of entertainment are more expensive (for instance, the theatre) or more difficult to arrange (as is the case with daytrips). But picture houses can be found in every part of town. So on Sundays all the cinemas are reserved for those sections of the audience who only have time to go on that day.

Moreover, both the suburban establishments and the bourgeois cinemas in the town centre show a three- to fourfold increase in audience numbers on Sundays compared with weekdays. After all, everyone likes to be seen out in their Sunday best, so people will happily pay a little extra for the greater comfort provided by the better theatres. On the remaining days of the week, cinema attendance manifests fewer but also fairly regular fluctuations. 6

The relationship between day of the week and cinema attendance is the only factor that has a consistent impact on the shape of the curve. No other factor seems capable of disrupting this regular cinema attendance: not the weather, nor well-attended events happening at the same time in the theatre or the Rosengarten, nor even the festival weeks of 1 to 12 May or special entertainment programmes. At most these circumstances have the effect of increasing or reducing the level of cinema attendance in one instance or another within the frequency shown on each day of the week.

This is true first and foremost for particular programmes. But it is only in isolated instances that any of the above influences can be identified at all. In the absence of any other decisive factors the likely reason why extraordinarily large numbers of people go to the cinema on some days may be rainy weather. Boredom and inactivity soon set in, and for many that is just the right mood for a trip to the cinema. What also emerges from the questionnaires is that bad weather in itself can be a reason for going to the cinema. But those who are thus motivated do not constitute the majority. Even if the odd rainy day does not always mean a particular increase in cinema going, business does fall off greatly during the summer months, which explains the large number of bankruptcies during the warm season.

It is easy to see why the theatre and concerts do not exert much influence on attendance figures when one considers that two cinema establishments alone have, almost without exception, more visitors daily than the court theatre and the Rosengarten put together — and there are twelve cinemas in town. Generally speaking, a person will rarely have any trouble choosing between the theatre or the cinema, because each suits a completely different mood. This is even more true where concerts are concerned; thus these too exert no diversionary influence. For example, within a given two-month period, the greatest number of cinema visits occurred at the same time as three well-attended concerts in the Rosengarten. Public lectures on science pose still less of a challenge to the cinemas. The obvious inference is that the cinema audience is recruited from different circles than the audience for other events. Where individuals are strongly influenced by a lively interest in things musical or scientific, the lure of cinema seems to be less enticing. But wherein lies the great attraction that still guarantees it a sizeable following?

By what means has cinema gained an audience that at one time was completely indifferent to any kind of artistic representation? Let it be remembered that one cannot watch a film drama while sitting at a table drinking beer, for example, as one can a variety number, or as one might elsewhere enjoy the 'Indian Nightingales' or some peasant band from the Schiersee as background entertainment. And how does the cinema win for itself an ever-increasing audience from among the educated classes?

We shall first consider some general reasons for the above going on to consider films which have proven particularly appealing to audiences. Whenever the question is raised as to why cinemagoing is on the increase, the answer usually given is, 'The admission price is low, and you can go anytime without making any special preparations'. The strong enjoyment nature of most films, intensified by the accompanying music as well as the darkness of the cinema auditorium, is also emphasized as exerting appeal. This certainly represents part of cinema's mysterious power of attraction. But these factors can only be an effect when they act in concert with many other causes, products of the general character of our times which influence the audience in particular ways.

The low admission price certainly plays an important role. For someone of modest means there is, after all, a difference between spending seventy-five pfennigs on the most uncomfortable seat in the theatre and occupying a box in the cinema for considerably less. However, as the questionnaires show, almost one third of cinemagoers, including those from less well-off social groups, go to the cinema once or even several times a week, and therefore spend just as much money on entertainment as they would on a once or twice-monthly trip to the theatre, a fact that substantially undermines this line of argument. The second reason holds more water: namely, the fact that going to the cinema is possible at any time one chooses. 7

What seems to me more crucial, however, is that both the cinema and those who visit it are typical products of our times, characterized by constant preoccupation and a state of nervous restlessness. Those who are constantly on the go at work during the day cannot even free themselves from this haste when they want to relax. As they pass the cinema they will go in to look some
distraction for a short period of time and, as they do so, will already be half thinking of how they might fill the next few hours. In order to connect with a work of art, whether it be drama, a piece of music or a painting, a certain amount of time and leisure is required, as is a focusing of the mind. Cinema does not demand such concentration. It creates such powerful effects that even shattered nerves can be stirred to life, and the rapid succession of events, the jumble of the most varied kinds of things, allow no room for boredom.

But it is not only the fast-paced, overwhelming form of cinema (which is indeed its very element) that satisfies so completely the needs of a broad mass of people: the content of cinematic representations also does this. The fact that erotic films and films about criminals attract such large audiences is utterly explicable: surely these films are the only ones that can strike a chord among the mass of people whose intellectual life is often in deep slumber and who have nothing in common with each other, at least as far as more elevated matters are concerned. As Heine wrote of that mode of understanding that is founded on the common basis of inferior emotions: 'Rarely have you understood me, rarely too have I understood you, but whenever we found ourselves in the mire, we understood one another straight away!'

Alongside these particular attractions there is another possible reason for cinema's great popularity. Cinema drama has stepped in where theatrical literature has left a gap. Nowadays, dramas are not at all popular and yet they are exactly what a large part of the audience is looking for and appears to have found in the cinemas. Plenty of action, lively changes of scene: these are the main characteristics of cinema drama, and those who seek such excitement come here at their own expense. The particular suitability of cinematic technique has placed cinema drama on this path and earned it its popularity. Objection might be raised at this point that historical and classical theatre dramas are just as rich in observable action. This is why they are still the most popular, relatively speaking, because people understand them. But in general the current generation is not especially interested in history, and the social problems of today are much more of a lively presence in people's lives. The same themes provide the basis for most film dramas. Here they are dealt with in not in abstract form, but through real examples and in the most powerful possible form. Whether or not what is shown has artistic integrity is not at issue here; the point is that cinema moves with the current of the times, it is the product of a general sensibility. In a certain sense, people's interest in printed news and weekly reports in the cinema is not so different from their interest in cinema drama. Certainly one major reason for this is their devotion to and immersion in the present. Film drama enters and touches people's everyday lives. It might be that extraordinary things happen to ordinary people, but as a rule this representation of life

Which way this trend will go we cannot yet predict; but it will certainly be in stark contrast to modern theatrical literature.

The features that characterize cinema drama have already been named, and the more pronounced these typical features are, the more they captivate the audience. If one looks at those programmes that have proven especially popular, this success can usually be traced to particular dramas. For example, the Asta Nielsen dramas were without exception the most popular ones shown in the better theatres. (In contrast, the situation in the suburbs was exactly the opposite. For the film Zu Tode gehetzt (Harried to Death, with Asta Nielsen in the lead role, audience numbers fell below average.) A programme containing the hit In der Nacht des Urwaldes (Jungle Nights) had almost the same high frequency of attendance, as this film is named again and again on the questionnaires.

All these box-office successes (they include, along with the Asta Nielsen dramas, Das Weib ohne Herz (The Heartless Woman), Abgründle/Abyss and Fräulein Fraulein Little Miss Woman) have certain uniform features in common: Dramas made by German companies, exclusively, are at the centre of interest; it is true that most of the great dramas that are shown originate from German-based companies, simply because these can in general be sold somewhat more cheaply. Furthermore, a degree of conformity to national tastes seems to be the most favourable precondition for great success in terms of the kinds of films shown. In the case of the majority of cinemas, one cannot yet speak of a cosmopolitan sensibility in people's tastes. Films that allow members of an audience to make a connection with their own social environment, whether depicting life as it is or as they wish it could be, are the most popular and allow for greater emotional identification. Indeed emotional identification really is the crucial factor here, for film representations have a very direct effect, sweeping spectators along with the action and enabling them to experience the hero's predicaments. Foreign films are less able to arouse this sort of interest because they are characterized by a foreign sensibility and only seldom strike a chord.

In terms of their content, all the films deal with that issue which constitutes the object of representation not just in film but in every area of art nowadays, and it is this theme that gives rise to their popularity in the first instance: Social issues are the focal point of attention. These dramas usually describe a woman's struggle between her natural; sensual instincts and the social conditions she faces that contradict these instincts. Her options are either spinsterhood on the one hand or the possibility of marriage to a husband who usually comes from a significantly higher or lower social group on the other. The details of the action, such as the strong sensual content of individual scenes to which the material frequently lends itself, do not miss their mark and are the reason why these films are especially popular. These kinds of drama are so significant for cinemas and so
The cinema and its audience

Children

The link between the degree of interest in dramas and in cinema in general is least marked in children. It also seems too hasty to assume a straightforward association between the frequency of children's visits to the cinema and the extent of their enthusiasm for the medium, as they are not yet entirely independent agents and cannot be assumed to have the necessary money at their disposal.

Nonetheless the proportion of those who may be assumed to have no interest whatsoever in either theatre, concerts, public lectures, variety shows or cinema is only twenty per cent. It is impossible to explain this negative result by reference to specific conditions within the children's social environment, since this figure includes children of both skilled and unskilled labourers as well as those of artisans and low-ranking civil servants. Rather, the cause is most likely to be found in psychological factors, in a certain listlessness on the part of the children surveyed towards their parents' social position. For example, a trip to the theatre or a concert is feasible for the majority, while for others cinema is the only form of entertainment available.

Wherever the desire for spectacle is awakened, it turns first to the nearest opportunity, the cinema. Seventy-nine per cent of boys among our respondents and thirty-three per cent of girls have been to the cinema at some time. One rarely encounters children who have been to the theatre, concerts, public lectures, variety shows or the circus and who have never been to a movie house.

Indeed, the opposite occurs more frequently. The urge that makes some children seek out both sorts of entertainment – a hunger for sensation, for something different from everyday life, for stories that will allow the imagination to run wild – is not bound by any discrimination whatsoever concerning the method by which these impressions are created. Cinema satisfies these demands at least as well as a theatrical performance. Images that for most people only existed in imagination are brought tangibly close to them in film – a daring ride across the steppes, a fire in a prairie woodland, a criminal escaping over rooftops and walls. A boy will seldom approach a film so dispassionately as to criticize the unreality and impossibility of these kinds of scenes. But this delight in the

popular within individual occupational groups that we have already addressed above the question of their overall role in the cinema. The following chapter sets out, however, to examine in greater detail their relationship within and towards the cinema movement as a whole.

10. Every age group and almost every occupation contains about twenty per cent of people from a lower social group such as this; that figure becomes somewhat smaller as the economic situation improves and thereby removes any external obstacles that might stand in the way of people engaging in leisure activities. Custom and social influences later draw even the outsider into the realm of entertainments. Of course these wider social influences have a more permanent effect on the issue at hand here, namely theatre and concert visits, in those social groups where both have become a tradition and less so in the proletariat groups that lack any tradition and in which new elements within the class gradually provide this motivation.

11. This proportional relation between boys and girls accords with observations made at children's drawings.

12. See previous chapter.

13. Main and female pupils in the special classes.
six go to the cinema once or more a week (one quarter)
six go to the cinema once or more a month (one quarter)
seven go only rarely to the cinema (one third)
two never go to the cinema (one tenth)

What emerges clearly from these figures is that the opportunity for
cinema-going is enough to awaken a taste for films, and extended
exposure is not necessary. On the contrary, the only respondents
whose sole interest in entertainment relates to cinema all come from
rural areas, and all maintain that plays, concerts or other events are
as yet outside their range of interests – this is why they describe
cinema as ‘the best’. Characteristic of this kind of respondent is one
metalworker who gives the following responses:

To question 1: Father: vegetable merchant
To question 2: ‘I like cinema the best.’
To question 3: Has no answer or only knows films, as these are
the only things that have made an impression on him.
To question 4: ‘Three times a week.’
To question 5: ‘On my own and in company.’
To question 6: The programme.’
To question 8: ‘Yes.
To question 9: ‘Funny things, love dramas, Fritzchen, Max
Linder.’ He prefers three cinemas in the suburbs of Mannheim that
are particularly cheap.

For these social groups the impact of an urban environment seems to be
indispensable for stimulating greater understanding of plays
and concerts. This is quite understandable if we recall that, on
average, members of this class approach all forms of art with no
previous knowledge and attain a certain level of understanding only
through constant exposure and reflection. Only a very small elite
manages to progress far in the face of this lack of prior
instruction and other stimuli. The proportion of those who have a
natural ability to appreciate artistic phenomena, and who have
broadened their horizons despite the many obstacles in their way, is
very low, and they stand out completely from their work
colleagues. A printer who gives the following answers may be
considered representative of the type of adult worker who is
interested in the arts:

1. Elementary school.
2. Theatre twice a month, and more often if I had more money. I
   used to go more frequently. I’ve gone without food to go to the
   theatre.
3. Grand operas, then troubadour, Undine, Freischütz, operettas,
   Fidelio, Flachsman als Erzieher/Flachsman the Educator
   nine times.
4. Less often.
5. Nature documentaries, farmers, lectures of any kind.
6. Film, but not.

7. Yes.
10. Yes, lasting artistic insights.

Working-class women

The distinctive elements that produce different types among male
workers – the enthusiastic theatre-goer, the trade unionist – do not
exist among working-class women. They offer a much more uniform
picture than the men since their interests are mainly focused on just
two areas: theatre and cinema. The latter is of particular significance
as a form of entertainment. Going to the theatre, which occurs on
average somewhat more frequently than in the case of their male
counterparts, lags far behind, and working-class women never go to
concerts or lectures. These women show almost no interest in
scientific or party matters, which occupy a large proportion of men’s
leisure time. Those women who belong to social democratic
associations are certainly keen party members. Some individuals have
even been to meetings or lectures on occasion. But in general these
women’s ambitions to acquire useful knowledge that might serve as
the basis for a political standpoint are extraordinarily weak. This
explains why cinema plays such an important role, especially for
those women who have no job: they have a lot of free time outside
of their domestic work and relatively few immediate opportunities for
filling it. They therefore go to the cinema more often, out of
boredom more than from any genuine interest in the film or
programme. While men might be at an election meeting, women will
go to the local picture house, and will meet up with their husbands
again after the performance. As time goes on, however, the cinema as
stopgap becomes an important component in the existence of these
women: they become gripped with a real enthusiasm for it, and
more than half seek its pleasure once, or several times, a week. At the
cinema they live in another world, in a world of luxury and excess
which makes them forget their dull daily routine. All other interests
appear meaningless by comparison, and the number of working-class
women who have occasionally been to the theatre and have
otherwise only been to the cinema is relatively large.

The only other interest evident in the group is music, as indicated by
the repeated mention of operas in women’s responses. Among the
composers mentioned, Bizet and Mozart appear more frequently than
Wagner – the former are not mentioned once by the men. However,
it cannot be music alone that makes these women go to the opera so
often – otherwise, concerts would surely be equally popular. Instead,
it is opera’s and cinema’s simultaneous effect on the ear and eye,
their musical interpretation of the story – something both forms have
in common – that seems to appeal particularly to women’s tastes.
The latter is especially true of female shop assistants, who mention a
preference for both opera and cinema music with particular frequency.

Urban artisans
In the case of workers and artisans alike, there exists a particular focal point around which all other aspects of life are organized, and in relation to which members of these social groups may best be understood. If this dominant aspect is politics and trade union interests in the case of workers, for those in the artisanal class it is their occupation. For the working class, work fills only the hours spent in the factory. The self-employed artisan, whose survival demands a considerable amount of careful planning, takes his occupational worries home with him (though he shares with the worker the goal of achieving the highest possible standard of living).

The worker, as an individual, is only able to get so far: thus he seeks affiliation to a larger and more powerful trade association. Like a trade union, this organization aspires to more than the fulfilment of work-related ideals: its programme of activities enters and affects the private lives of its members, and relates among other things to cultural matters. Going to plays and concerts is recommended as a vehicle of cultural education, and adult workers go for this reason alone. The cinema in its contemporary form may not yet be able to lay great claim to being a component of education, but it is valued as much in these organizations.

Many artisans today, admittedly, lead a more solitary existence than that suggested by the trade associations. The whole of their personal progress, their concerns and efforts for the development of their business are in the end the only real measure of the standard of living they struggle to achieve. For the artisan, the two activities in which the working-class male engages – work in the factory and trade union activity – come together only in so far as these are geared towards his personal development. His occupation stands at the centre of his life. This means that the influence exerted by the trade union upon the development of workers’ cultural interests does not exist for the artisan. For this reason alone his attitude towards theatre and cinema must be different from that of organized labour.

For the artisan, plays and concerts as well as films are things that lie outside his main area of concern, namely, his occupation. Only if they are brought into some relation to his occupation does he pay any attention. For example, master builders and decorators often go to the cinema to get new ideas from looking at buildings and furnishings.

Meanwhile, plays and concerts are only important to artisans in relation to a certain tradition which ensures that entertainment is not completely absent from the lives of their petit-bourgeois families. These artisans’ fathers were artisans themselves and, as such, belonged to a social group whose circumstances allow for a trip to the theatre or to a concert now and again. Thus there are very few who have never been to any entertainment show. Nevertheless, none displays a great interest in such activities. An occasional visit to a play or concert is simply a matter of course for this social group, and only ‘tasteful’ or ‘instructive’ works are chosen. Nature and travel documentaries as well as films detailing technical processes and procedures are especially popular, since these are of practical value. Fiction films and operettas cannot make the same claim, and since cinemas mainly show this kind of film, people ‘prefer not to spend any money on that kind of nonsense’. For a few, it is the place where they go with their family on a Saturday evening after work, in order to take a few hours’ break from mulling over business matters. But artisans consider even this kind of entertainment to be very poor. What is actually screened means nothing to those questioned, and not one of them could recall the title or content of any particular film.

Rural artisans
For artisans living largely in the country, theatre and concert visits are rarer because in addition to the adverse circumstances described above, there is also the difficulty of getting to such events. This is why a fairly large number of rural artisans have never been to a play or concert, nor to see a film, unless they did so while on military service. But those who come to the city are often familiar with almost all entertainments on offer. A visit to the city is a rare event, and these artisans use it to compensate for the long periods of isolation they spend in the country. As theatre performances take place at inconvenient times, cinema is the usual form of entertainment chosen. This gives rise to the apparently strange phenomenon that the proportion of artisans who have been to the cinema is larger among the rural population than among the urban one, namely seventy-five per cent (as opposed to thirty-two per cent in Mannheim). These visits are few and far between, of course, and there are no regular cinemagoers among this group.

Artisans represent the one social group in modern society for whom work functions merely to provide the necessary economic basis for their ‘real’ existence outside work. The life of the artisan is predominantly centred on occupational ideals; and in the absence of any division between ‘life’ and ‘work’, the realms of life that lie outside work, such as art, can be of only incidental importance. As soon as work becomes organized on a large scale this unity disappears, and individual workers seek maximum pleasure in their free time to compensate for the associated mechanization of their occupation. This dual existence, with its need for multiple pleasures, for stories that nourish the individual, is not peculiar to the class of industrial workers alone. The importance of theatres and cinemas, indeed of all forms of entertainment, is increasing in line with
division of labour that is rising today in all sectors of the working population.

Male clerical workers in the commercial sector.

It is among the commercial clerical professions that the above is especially evident. In smaller towns or smaller businesses these professions display more of a conservative character, akin to the artisans. But in Mannheim they represent a broad social group comprising individuals who mostly play only minor roles within large-scale commercial enterprises. Their passage through life therefore bears a certain similarity to that of the industrial worker. Yet fundamental differences lend this group a quite specific character in terms of its members’ attitude towards the entertainments being explored in this study. While they come from the same petit-bourgeois circles as young workers, and while the majority enjoy the same level of education, they nonetheless develop a marked class-consciousness, and seek to differentiate themselves from the workers in every conceivable way. Having attained a certain self-awareness, the younger ones will emphasize rather strongly—often unnecessarily so—that they go to a better kind of movie theatre, while for the older ones this becomes a quite natural expression of their distinct group identity. For example, clerical workers never go to the cinemas in the suburbs: rather, even the youngest among them sets great store by sitting in a theatre ‘that isn’t so popular’ and ‘where there’s only a better class of audience’. In general, the desire for comfortable and pleasant surroundings seems to be more developed in this group than among the working class, perhaps because the former sit in clean offices during the day and so develop a greater desire for cleanliness and comfort.

Whereas for young workers the most important motivation for going to a particular movie theatre is a long programme with as many stories as possible about moral dilemmas and detectives, among the white-collar clerical workers concern is focused primarily on their surroundings, on having ‘a pleasant time’, and on the other people in the auditorium. Their desire, in other words, is for a comfortably furnished space and an audience wearing smart attire. But these differences are not based solely on considerations relating to the viewing environment. Plays, concerts, variety shows and public lectures are a normal part of life for this group, and virtually none go only to the cinema, even among the fourteen-year-olds: only occasionally is there an exception to this. The majority, indeed, display a preference for theatre and music and have no interest whatsoever in cinema.

There is no doubt that a more cultivated taste is in evidence here as compared with that of the average worker. This is apparent not only in the wider range of cultural productions with which these kinds of workers are familiar, but also in their articulate mode of expression in the questionnaires, and in the range of artistic fields in which they express an interest. It is difficult, of course, to capture specific details of this in figures. If their tastes could be summed up in a word, it would be ‘Lohengrin’ for the younger group and ‘Wagner’ for the older ones, who also mention Tannhäuser and the Nibelungenringe alongside Lohengrin. Wagnerian operas are mentioned as favourite works seventy-nine times by 241 shop assistants aged between sixteen and eighteen, and many of those who simply mention ‘opera’ or ‘music’ may well have been thinking of Wagner. For this group Wagner—especially Lohengrin—is just as important and representative as, for example, Zigomar the King of Crime is for the lowest stratum of young workers. Indeed, interest in music is more pronounced here than among other groups, although in general plays are still mentioned just as often as operas and concert works. But whereas the mention of particular favourite composers is rare among artisans, it is a fairly frequent occurrence among clerical workers. On average musical preferences are articulated through frequent visits to military concerts, which seem synonymous with the very concept of music among younger apprentices in this group.

Considering male clerical workers as a whole, other features besides these general ones can be discerned which point to a certain progression in taste with increasing age. This is revealed in particular through a consideration of the place of cinema among different age groups. As earnings increase from the age of fourteen, so does the frequency of cinema visits, and the number of weekly cinemagoers trebles. The proportion of those who rarely go to the cinema falls accordingly in each subsequent year after age fourteen. But the predilection for cinema only seems to last up to a certain age, peaking at seventeen or eighteen. After this, interest tends to turn towards other pastimes, and cinemagoing never features highly from this age on among clerical workers. Detective films, moral dramas and acrobats are among the their favourite entertainments, as they are for young people in general: however, in this instance, they feature only in second or third place within the overall range of interests expressed. At the same time, this group reveals a more developed sensibility for nature, expressed in the frequent mention of nature documentaries which are just as popular as dramas. As with other groups, however, the latter constitutes the main attraction for regular cinemagoers.

Tastes also change among clerical workers as they mature. Whereas those who have barely left elementary school display much the same interests as the schoolchildren who enthuse about stories involving Red Indians and historical themes, older boys are interested in sensational dramas as well as Red Indian stories. Later on, the sensational dramas alone attract interest. The preference for humorous stories is strongest among very young people: there follows a period when dramas and nature documentaries feature more
prominently, while sixteen and seventeen-year-olds turn increasingly to dramas. Those mentioned most frequently are Asta Nielsen dramas, as well as Der Eid des Stephan Huller/The Oath of Stephan Huller and Die vier Teufel/The Four Devils, alongside numerous nature documentaries. 

Three stages can be pinpointed in the clerical workers' developing taste in film and entertainments in general between the ages of fourteen and eighteen. The mass of those who represent the least mature type can be characterized roughly as follows: A large proportion, about twenty per cent, have never seen a play or film. The rest have been to a production of William Tell, while some individuals have also been to other classical plays. Members of this first group especially enjoy watching wrestlers and acrobats. When they want to listen to music, they go to military concerts. Few (about thirty-three per cent) go to the cinema, although this is a high percentage when compared with theatre or concert visits. Some go to the cinema fairly often but never to a play, concert or public lecture. Their tastes are directed exclusively towards dramas about detectives and robbers; and some humorous stories are also popular. Sundays are reserved for cinemagoing, and members of this least mature group go to those movie theatres that provide the greatest stimulation and sensation at least cost.

The second group among the adolescent male clerical workers comprises an average type who has roughly the following range of interests. The number of those in this group who have never seen any film or play is considerably lower than those in the least mature group. The majority have not only seen a number of plays, but have also been to several concerts and display a strong interest in scientific or work-related public lectures. The range of works has increased and includes such dramas as Wallenstein, Maria Stuart or Glaube und Heimat. Some operas, usually Lohengrin, also feature here, alongside modern operettas. A few individuals with a deeper interest in music mention Beethoven's symphonies or string orchestras. About seventy-five per cent go to the cinema, or have tried it at least once. In this group, the main motivation for attendance is no longer to see 'lots' and for the cinema—to be 'cheap', but the actual content of the programme: they show a preference for nature documentaries and urban drama.

It is more difficult to characterize the most highly developed type among the male clerical workers, since multiple interests coincide here. Essentially, they differ from the two groups above in that they have a heightened taste for plays and music (whereas the more developed group among the working-class males, for example, generally seeks to extend its education by attending public lectures and guided tours of art galleries). For this third group of office workers, Wagnerian operas — especially the Nibelungenring and Tristan und Isolde — and the classics of literature: Morteau, many

(predominantly those who also play an instrument themselves) take part in the Mahler celebrations and listen to symphony concerts on a regular basis. Although members of this third group go to the cinema extraordinarily often, a rather narrow range of films appeals to their tastes: these might include, for example, Asta Nielsen dramas, as well as Der Eid des Stephan Huller or Die vier Teufel. In addition, films detailing processes in the natural world, documentaries about foreign lands, and technical accounts of cinematographic representation arouse considerable interest.

In general, though, it is not so much particular films that represent the tastes of this group, but rather the fact that they spend so much time at the cinema. Their lack of interest in specific films, despite the extraordinarily high rate of cinemagoing, is symptomatic of a marked change in attitude towards cinema in general. The motivations for going to the cinema are no longer the same as for the first two groups of young male office workers. Whereas younger apprentices were motivated by subject matter, among older ones answers such as 'out of boredom' or 'to kill time' appear more frequently with age. These comments highlight a very important point in understanding the significance of cinema in general, which goes some way to explaining the huge queues at cinema screenings. Cinema draws people away (and consequently can be said to benefit) from the ennui of our times, which is particularly apparent in certain occupations, despite — or perhaps precisely because of — the strain they place upon workers.

What may be a temporary condition for one group can be a permanent one for another — especially, it seems to me, for the young male clerical worker. At seven o'clock in the evening he has served his time at the office where he works. This still leaves a long period of free time ahead of him, a period that may often seem to constitute merely a boring interlude between this evening and tomorrow morning. For very young workers especially, other interests are rarely sufficient to counter the dreariness of their existence. Only those who are better off can afford frequent visits to plays or concerts, and with very few exceptions they remain at best somewhat unresponsive spectators, with what they watch in no way broadening their mind or horizons. This helps to account for the apparently random array of productions they mention as having particularly enjoyed, which does not reveal an evolved taste in any particular direction. Indeed most young office workers lack the necessary parental guidance or adequate education to engage with artistic matters on any deeper level. Class-consciousness does not allow them to subscribe to common ideals, as it can amongst the working-class labourers. At the same time, the activities of the various trade associations to which they may belong are usually directed towards occupational matters alone. Likewise, as a consequence of the ever-increasing rationalization of work that keeps
individuals in subordinated positions throughout their lives, the majority of office workers cannot find complete fulfilment in work, as may be the case with artisans, for example. A large proportion of this group in consequence remains trapped within an isolated existence lacking in prospects, and so many seek escape by exposing themselves to as wide a variety of sensational stimuli as possible. Occasionally individuals can be found who have managed — usually at an older age — to give their life a goal and meaning by developing some interest or other. But for many, and for the younger ones almost without exception, cinema is the best way of filling the unoccupied hours, despite the sharp criticism they level at it. The fact that almost half the young male office workers surveyed spend at least one evening every week at a movie theatre can be attributed in part to the great popularity it enjoys as a place where they can spend time 'with [their] girlfriend'; partly, though, cinemagoing can be explained by the boredom that plagues young people, with the attraction of a certain thrill constituting one of the motivating factors for attendance — even if few of them openly acknowledge this.

Since the merit of attending with a girlfriend is no longer an option for older white-collar workers, who are usually married, the cinema declines ever further in popularity among this group. For a few, it remains an evening's entertainment that is still valued from time to time. Others apparently consider it an insult to suggest that cinema might hold any interest for them. In principle, however, all members of this generation take a decidedly negative view of cinema, citing their own personal reasons for condemning the medium either in its entirety or on account of its various excesses. The precise nature of their tastes, however, can only be guessed at from the general comments made in response to the question about favourite works, to which they reply with the incontrovertibility of dogs' ‘everything that was good about it’ or ‘everything in its own way, if it was really top notch’. Answers to this question varied greatly between individuals, however, and at best the average cinema performance, ‘this second-rate art’, is not considered to reach the cultural standards expected by older white-collar workers: cinemas are visited at most infrequently and then just to pass the time. If anything, nature documentaries are considered acceptable, especially ‘as a means of education for the people’, while now and again someone in this group expresses a taste for drama.

**Female clerical assistants**

As with male clerical workers, cinemagoing among adolescent girls seems to be popular mainly with a particular age group, and becomes progressively less important as time goes on. However, even at those ages when attendance is highest, cinema never becomes as important for girls as for boys. Overall, only sixty-three per cent of the total of young women now mean these female clerical workers were cinemagoers, whereas seventy-nine per cent of their male counterparts went to the cinema.36 The extent of young women’s disinterest comes more fully to light if one contrasts the numbers of regular cinemagoers in each group of clerical assistants: the ratio is eleven women to twenty-one men. The reason for this surely lies in the lesser degree of independence among young girls. Daughters are always more closely guarded by the family, and parents have a large say in how their daughters spend their free time. Girls rarely do anything completely of their own choice. They may occasionally go to the cinema with their family, and later on with their ‘boyfriend’ or ‘suitor’, though much less often with other female friends. Apart from the greater dependence that precludes regular cinemagoing among these girls, they also do not seem particularly interested in cinema: if they were, this would surely be demonstrated through more frequent cinemagoing as they grow older, earn more and thus enjoy greater independence, as is the case with their male counterparts. On the contrary, however, cinemagoing peaks among young women at the age of fourteen or fifteen and declines year by year thereafter.

It is almost exclusively the better movie theatres that are frequented by female office workers. The content of these cinemas’ programmes is such that dramas about robbers and detectives are only rarely mentioned in the questionnaires, as are licentious productions along the lines of *Asphalt Pflanze/Asphalt Lass* or *Sündige Liebe/Sinful Love*. Nor do these girls show much enthusiasm for Red Indian stories or historical themes. Even among fourteen-year-olds, love stories are the main object of interest, especially those whose content they can relate most easily to their own lives and circumstances, or which depict the glamour of cosmopolitan modern circles. These films’ narratives usually involve the destiny of an ordinary woman who, after many misguided adventures, ends up either in moral turpitude or ‘in silent happiness’. Most dramas of this sort are highly sentimental in character, as the titles of various works mentioned by female office workers indicate: *Die Rose der Mutter/Mother's Rose*, *Fräulein Eura, Der Leidensweg einer Frau/One Woman's Suffering*, *Die Kontristin/The Clerkess*, *FrauenSchicksale/Women's Destinies*. At the centre of all these films are emotional conflicts experienced by a woman. It therefore goes almost without saying that Asta Nielsen enjoys huge popularity and arouses great admiration. In films directed by Urban Gad especially, Nielsen’s passionate temperament, consequent guilt and ultimate destiny correspond to an outlook on life that these girls already have, and so they are able to identify with her completely.

In addition to dramas, nature documentaries arouse as much interest among female office workers as among their male colleagues, but these girls’ attitudes towards them seem to be distinct. While the young men tend to mention pictures of far-off countries and of
scientific processes and procedures, thereby demonstrating an interest in these films’ content, the girls respond in much more general terms, with their preferences seemingly fixed mainly at an aesthetic level. For example, the girls frequently mention images of water or the ocean, such as Italianisch Wasserrfall/Italian Waterfall or simply ‘waterfalls or wave movements’ and ‘shifting icebergs’, without adding any more precise description. Comedies, however, are less popular with these girls than among their male colleagues. In general, both groups show equal interest in different genres, albeit that such interest is generally less pronounced among the girls. However, a preference for dramas does become more apparent among female clerical workers from the upper classes. Here, the generally lukewarm interest in cinema on the part of female workers is matched by more frequent visits to plays and concerts; but tastes in these areas too are characteristically vague.

It seems that, on average, even the fourteen and fifteen-year-old girls in the group surveyed have been to see more plays and concerts than boys of the same age. Their musical tastes are also more strongly developed from the outset. The way they indulge this enjoyment is different from boys of the same age, for whom music is synonymous with military music and is connected primarily with patriotic emotions rather than a feeling for the music. This patriotic dimension is completely absent among the girls, to whom opera melodies hold a greater appeal. Besides Wagnerian music, which is just as popular as among young male office staff, romantic operas such as Mignon, Martha and Tosca are mentioned much more frequently by adolescent girls. The musical accompaniments of the cinema ensembles are also very popular; indeed these ensembles are the decisive factor in girls’ choice of cinema, much more so than for male apprentices. This enjoyment of music does not, however, seem to lead to any heightening or development of these women’s tastes: they may go to concerts more often than the men, but almost never mention particular pieces of music or favourite composers. Women seem to engage with music on a purely emotional level, with which the conscious mind has so little to do that even titles remain a truism: the girls lag far behind their male colleagues when it comes to registering music at an intellectual level. This predisposition, which makes them focus less on reality and cultural phenomena, is matched by the lack of interest they show in public lectures and scientific documentaries. In general, then, female office workers’ tastes are not high-minded or serious, but neither equally do they lose themselves in the depths of tastelessness: while none shows an interest in Bach or Beethoven, in religious issues or social problems – unless these are made tangible through cinematic drama – so none of them is interested solely in acrobats, marches, or detective dramas.

Other social groups

For women of the higher social classes – in so far as one is not dealing with members of the educated intellectual elite – the same is essentially true as for the young female office workers considered in detail above: the only difference is that these higher-class women go to the cinema much more frequently, so long as their time is not limited by any occupation. Asta Nielsen dramas and historical productions in particular motivate them to attend a screening. And the more uncomplicated and carefree their own lives are, the more they seek out sensational stimuli and escape through watching films. Cinema brings representations of a wider world to small towns; it shows women the new Paris fashions, and the kinds of hats that are being worn. With sensations large and small, cinema helps them to while away those dreary daytime hours that are these days increasing as domestic chores become progressively simpler. Films must be especially accessible to women, and indeed it is said that women tend to absorb cinematic impressions on a purely emotional level, as a unified whole. By comparison it seems positively arduous for highly educated, intellectual people to empathize with films, whose action is often arranged in sequences without any overriding context. Several people used to grasping matters on a purely intellectual level thus state in the surveys that they find it extraordinarily difficult to understand what is going on in a film.

One cannot really speak of adult members of the higher social classes having any particular tastes as far as cinematic productions are concerned – although they have opinions about the cinema phenomenon in general. Members of these classes rarely responded to the questions about which films they had enjoyed best: films tend to be rejected in toto on artistic grounds. Even nature documentaries are accorded no more than a certain didactic value, ‘especially for the lower classes’, and yet members of the higher social classes still go to the cinema – indeed, fairly regularly. They go in the evenings if they have nothing else arranged or, in the case of women, preferably in the afternoons when they have done their shopping and want to escape the hustle and bustle of the shopping centres and streets in a cinema rather than a cafe. Thus, about eighty out of a hundred members of these classes in the survey had been to a cinema at least once, and sixty of these on a regular basis. These regular cinemagoers come exclusively from the officer and merchant classes, whereas members of academic professions (including students) produce the lowest proportion of cinemagoers across the board. Whether the need for light entertainment alongside other intellectual pursuits is not as strong in these groups, or whether such distraction is found through other means, is hard to tell. Perhaps the more abstract thinking required in the academic profession makes it easier for them to relax with header pursuits, while still expending little concentration. However, those belonging to professions
involving practical and tangible goals seem capable of enjoying art only after completely modifying their whole way of thinking: this demands intellectual effort, however, and is why they prefer very light entertainment in their leisure time in order to help them escape from thoughts of work. "I'm too tired in the evening to deal with serious things like theatre and concerts" is a frequent response, "and that's why I go to the cinema."

Apart from work commitments, a hundred other things occupy the time of those in the higher social classes - being a member of a club or having social commitments, and consequently needing to be informed about all the latest plays and works of art and to have a grasp of politics and modern literature. Such obligations mean that (non-academic) members of these classes need a counterweight - something that once places no intellectual demands on them - and thus entertainment for entertainment's sake becomes a necessity.

Equally, those who have a lot of time and few pursuits find in cinema a suitable activity for taking their mind off things and experiencing sensations. Cinema can satisfy these multifaceted needs - the desire to escape from the everyday, to relax from the demands of modern life, boredom and the hunger for sensation. If cinema had not been invented, something else would have had to appear in its place. Perhaps cafes with troupeles of artistes or variety shows would have witnessed much greater expansion without cinema. However, as things stand, cinema has proven to be a form of entertainment that has attained a power and significance well beyond that of all these antecedents. If in the process it has encroached on other entertainment media and diverted audiences away from plays or concerts - which, judging by the complaints of theatre directors about how badly their business is doing, would seem to be the case - then the only ones on whom responsibility can be pinned are those huge numbers of people for whom theatre and concerts have turned out to be only a temporary diversion. Members of these higher social classes want nothing more from cinema than entertainment pure and simple, and the opportunity to have a good laugh: but cinema should not and cannot take the place of theatre or other forms of artistic experience for them - it simply satisfies a quite different need.

Accordingly, when cinema ventures to take on higher, artistic goals, many see this as inappropriate. Likewise, they view attempts at raising the standard of productions through the participation of famous stage artists to be doomed to failure from the start. They think this would at once eliminate the refreshing naivety and simplicity of cinema, and drag down artistic work to the level of mediocrity. Nonetheless, the demands that members of the higher social classes make on cinema are by no means meagre, and the average film is still completely unable to deliver what the cultured city-dweller considers acceptable in aesthetic terms. The very tasteless presentation offend many such people. Others even find the inherent nature of cinema, with its rapid succession of funny and tragic depictions, unbearable. For the majority, however, the quality of films is of no significance whatsoever, because their impact retains vividness for only the briefest of moments, and indeed, it is in any case quite different motivations that influence cinemagoing. Genuine interest in films remains the motivation mentioned most frequently only among clerical workers and women. But the degree of enjoyment offered by the cinema is sufficient only to persuade very few of them to go on their own. Some unmarried men will make use of this escape route once in a while, probably out of boredom. Among married couples, it is the wife who suggests going, while for young people it is more frequently their blossoming romances that constitute the motivating factor. For the male companion in these couples, however, 'she' allegedly becomes the object of observation more than what is going on on the screen. 'She is always moved to tears', and indeed many find it far more entertaining to watch other cinemagoers - especially female cinemagoers - than to watch the films, with this providing an occasion for many people to spend an hour in the cinema now and again.

When all these cinemagoers are asked why they actually go to the cinema, most look blank. 'Faut de mieux' ('there's nothing better to do') answered one lady, but this 'mieux' is very different for each individual. What can be said in general, however, is that cinema combines a broad enough variety of elements to appeal to many different people in different ways, and has thus come to represent a powerful force whose absence is so unthinkable that it seems scarcely justified to question whether its very existence is 'good' or 'bad'.

Conclusion

Cinema is a phenomenon to which most people feel some connection if they are at all caught up in the mood of our modern times: it lacks significance only for those who remain rooted in an earlier period of economic organization on account of their occupation (hence the low frequency of cinema visits among artisans) or who remain aloof from entertainments in general on account of other overriding interests in their lives (such as science or party politics). Cinema exists, then, primarily for modern people who are simply carried along by the current of the times. Indeed, cinema can be understood only as having arisen out of the fullness of this present time, and out of a broader constellation of cultural phenomena. With the new demands placed on people by a century of work and mechanization, with the greater use and abuse of people's energies, bringing with it for some individuals a struggle for survival, the
other side of everyday life – relaxing doing something purposeless, being preoccupied with some aimless pursuit – had to offer some counterweight. The thousands of picture houses could never have emerged had the need for such entertainments not been engendered for the broad mass of the population by precisely such an intensification of work and consequent concentration of work time into fewer hours of the day. As industrialization has progressed, moreover, people found they had more money in their pockets. Increased leisure time and higher wages for the working classes are two of the factors crucial to any understanding of this characteristically modern medium.

And yet the cinema does have antecedents that satisfied similar, if less pronounced, needs in earlier times. Cinema now enjoys the position occupied since time immemorial by those forms of mere entertainment that have commanded justification simply by virtue of their very existence: yet the need for such a counterweight has never been articulated so clearly as it is today. In response to the question of what they seek in the cinema, the majority of respondents simply say ‘diversion and entertainment’, rather than something that instructs or uplifts, for example. Cinema is the place where no intellectual effort is required, where the greatest sensations can be effortlessly experienced. Wherever individuals prefer to seek relaxation by taking an interest in ‘high’ art, cinema loses ground: yet it may be wrong to think that individuals possessing extensive cultural knowledge can use this to relax or to reach an equilibrium in their lives.

On the other hand, of course, a level of cultural discipline can nurture a more worthy kind of entertainment. But who has the desire or the time for this, at a time when theatre and the fine arts move in ever more distant realms and lose all relation to daily life? Anyone wishing to experience art today must tear himself away as far as possible from earthly and everyday realities! Relaxation after work is not expected to place new demands on the individual; thus as long as art remains more than a game, as long as it retains its didactic aspect, so the desire for sheer spectacle will continue to seek fulfilment elsewhere. The average person needs something that will occupy his senses but requires no effort.

For decades the demand for light entertainment was suppressed and its legitimacy denied. In an age in which rationalism predominated, in which attention was fixed first and foremost on the purpose of any activity, the demand for cultural disciplining and ‘high art’ in all areas of life became a veritable preoccupation. Every coffee-house conversation, every visit to the theatre, had to enrich the individual with new insights and offer them something of ‘worth’. And all too easily people mistook the appearance, the external signs, for the genuine article. All types of enjoyment, all forms of ‘mere entertainment’ were rendered, in effect, illegitimate. Illegitimacy of entertainment, and therefore find themselves in an ambivalent position vis-à-vis cinema. They go, but always with a feeling of shame and embarrassment, even though the need for mere diversion, for sensation, is perhaps more pressing than ever before.

There used to be folk festivals, processions and performances given by travelling artists’ troupes. What people were primarily looking for in such occasions was something out of the ordinary – something that made sense in relation to their lives, yet something not ordinary or everyday. The pleasure in looking was indulged to the full on these occasions, and it is this same urge that today propels the majority of the population into theatres and cinemas. In those days, entertainment was a creation of the masses, closely tailored to prevailing needs and dominant tastes; but these tastes were simple and the same from place to place. Thus entertainment gave expression to a common sensibility, in terms of both its form and its content: there was something of the popular psyche in these performances. However, as the power of the great cities of old dwindled, these communal sensibilities decayed too, and shared leisure pursuits ceased to exist. Theatre and sociability continued in the (socially) exclusive context of private, closed gatherings. This period progressively brought about the emergence of the isolated individual, and by the time the city re-emerged, very recently, as a great communal entity, the individual had become too reserved and isolated to share every aspect of life with his fellow citizens. Leisure and sociability are no longer based on larger communities of people sharing an approach to and outlook on life.

Nowadays, too, entertainments are mass amusements, but individuals who participate in them are complete strangers to one another, and it is only on a superficial level that they join together and seek common ground. This trend is exacerbated by the ever greater decline in family-based sociability: as a result of economic development, younger family members attain financial independence and fly the nest early on. Thus life is lived to an ever increasing extent in public, and entertainment venues now bring together the most heterogeneous social groups in their audiences. There are theatres and art galleries, concert halls and coffee houses, clubs and lecture halls, and then there is cinema, the most modern form of mass entertainment.

In every era, people’s desire for entertainment has been satisfied in a distinctive way, and cinema is a medium inconceivable outside the present epoch. And yet not only is the need it satisfies an old one, the content of its presentations is not as new or lacking in tradition as might appear at first sight. If one looks a little more closely, there is much in cinema that resonates from the past and has merely re-emerged in this new form. Everyday life has never been lacking in sensation and excitement, and in earlier times ghost stories provided this – indeed they are still alive and well in rural areas. And where
enlightenment made these ghostly figures fade away, people found enough stimulating material to entertain themselves with over a tankard of beer and in conversation over coffee, as they gossiped about their neighbours or about war and intimations of war. And the heads of fourteen-year-olds are still filled, as they always have been, with stories about Red Indians, detectives, robbers and war.

Fifty years ago – and still today – young people were surrounded by fairground stalls where brightly-painted Red Indians performed with wild cries, or where their imaginations were stimulated by grisly depictions in painted panoramas – the earthquake in Lisbon or a shipwreck on the high seas, for example (the name being changed according to the most recent disaster): as long as countless people had died in the most gruesome way possible!

But these travelling entertainments came to town only rarely, while small and large volumes of pulp literature about Red Indians and 

Nick Carter, King of the Detectives provided the requisite variety. But fairground enterprises and pulp reading matter are no longer in keeping with the times: they have outlived their function. The cinema has not pushed them out, but has rather taken their place: its stories are testament to the unchanging nature of young people’s tastes. Cinema first arose in exactly the same place where live-rabbit-eating Red Indians and snake charmers, panoramas and waxwork displays celebrated their great successes – at the fairground.

Gradually these other entertainments disappeared, and in the middle of the fairground stood the cinema, shining brightly with its thousand electric lamps. No direct decline in fairground activities has been recorded. But they have been stagnating for decades and have failed to keep pace with the spread of cinemas, coffee houses and cabarets: and this must surely imply that they belong to a past era. Today, boys and girls gather around cinema posters as they used to around fairground stalls – only nowadays it has become much easier for them to gain access to a world of adventure.

Whatever remained of the rudiments of pulp literature from an earlier epoch has now been forced into retreat, because it is cinema that has adapted itself more adroitly to the particular needs of the present. At a time when people live life so intensely, when every moment must hold its own experience and everything is caught in a swirling maelstrom, there is no longer a suitable context for Red Indian stories or cheap novels. For the imagination to travel along the hero’s path, the reader requires an undisturbed environment, a small room into which nothing from the real world can enter. The young seamstress who loves a count, or the horror-filled secrets of a castle, still arouse as much interest as they used to. It is just that there is no longer time to wait for the tension to finally be resolved in the ninety-ninth of a hundred instalment pulp serial. In one cinema showing you can experience the same sensations in a short time, and for just a few pence.

If, moreover, people are reading less pulp fiction because its stories are told more efficiently in films, they are also reading less folk literature. The cinema will probably receive the blame for this too, but is it not rather the case that films based on folk literature constitute an entirely new form, a phenomenon contingent upon the other and yet not directly caused by it? This tendency cannot even be halted by the occasional successes achieved by the book trade following the appearance of film versions of famous novels such as Quo Vadis by Sienkiewicz or Der Eid des Stephan Huller by Felix Holländer. Readers who judge a book on the basis of more than just how much excitement it generates will doubtless remain loyal to literature of value; but the rest are going along with the trend, unless the reading matter is of a distinctly modern cachet and conforms to the demand for plentiful and varied content for little money, as is the case with reading circles and the numerous illustrated weekly magazines.

The theatre has been much more adversely affected by competition from cinema. This has occurred not only in those instances where individual theatres are in direct competition with cinemas to entertain audiences in a light-hearted way, as with operettas: the power of the new rival is also perceptibly felt in those instances where ‘serious’ art is the order of the day. It would be wrong to declare cinema the heir to the theatre – it has surely managed this inheritance badly!

But it has drawn in large numbers of people who previously went to the theatre only to be entertained and amused for an evening, and who derived as much or as little from the play that was being performed as from a moving playtoplay. No damage is done to art by the loss of this audience, even if individual theatre companies are faced with issues of survival as a consequence. For theatre companies supported by public funds, this loss is less serious: these are usually located in the cities, where enough enthusiasts remain to fill the seats. But it is worse for smaller provincial theatres, where the proportion of the audience being enticed away by the cinema may constitute a fatal blow. 1908 represents the point when a drop in theatre audience numbers first became apparent. Since then theatre directors have been forced to watch as, year by year, their buildings have grown ever more deserted as the apostates flock to the movie houses. The displeasure of these theatre directors has therefore been directed in the first instance towards this rival. And yet the same is true here as for pulp literature, as noted above: cinema could not have attained its position of power if theatre and modern theatre literature satisfied current needs, and not just those of a small cultural elite. This can be attested by examining the kinds of plays which have suffered as a result of the fall in audience numbers.

Despite reduced admission prices at theatres, which are seldom higher than those for average cinema seats, the number of people going to see classical plays and comedies is falling each year. The
the majority of people today have a different, modern, sensibility and find themselves alienated from the classics: even expensive seats for these performances, generally seating the cultural elite, are scarcely ever filled. However, having said this, taking into account the lowering of admission prices for popular performances, then visitor numbers are dropping less rapidly in the cheaper sections of the theatre than in the expensive and midprice seats; classical and other older comedy plays have even shown a small increase in attendance. Meanwhile, it is hardly surprising that dialect folk plays such as Der Pfarrer von Kirchfeld/The Pastor of Kirchfeld or Die Jüdin von Toledo/The Jewess of Toledo show decreasing audiences from year to year (especially since 1908). There are no longer any real folk plays for the present day that can articulate the sensibilities of the population as a whole, and in terms of spectacle a reasonably good film will always beat a play staged in a provincial theatre.

Only one or two modern dramas can claim to speak for broad sections of the population at the present time, and even these can scarcely claim to do so for every group in modern society. Apart from the great success enjoyed in recent years by Alt Heidelberg/Old Heidelberg and Glaubt und Heimath, interest in this kind of play has also been in steady decline. For the bulk of the population, modern one-act plays, satires and comic stories are completely alien, and they can make little of them. Consequently, with the exception of one or two modern dramas and older comedies, the theatre is no longer able to attract mass audiences. The strong bonds that held audience and theatre together no longer exist: theatre no longer determines culture as it once did, and at the same time there seem to be no great creative forces that might arise out of the populace itself to enrich our current dramatic art. Where the theatre has completely forgotten its duty to culture and is no longer a place of artistic experience even for members of cultural elites, it has not been able to assert itself at all: putting on folk plays has done nothing for profits, but where entrepreneurs have attempted to win the audience over with light entertainment, they have gone to the wall even faster. Nowadays light entertainment really is the domain of cinema, which has progressively and with great aplomb seen off all other entertainments. This is clearly the case when one considers the development of theatre and other entertainments in Berlin over the past few years. From the beginning of the twentieth century, theatre, variety and cabaret companies in the capital constantly increased in number. Until 1908 they represented the crux of public entertainment and at their height totalled thirty-four theatres and thirty-four variety clubs and cabarets. Then, however, a more powerful rival appeared in the shape of cinemas, and these soon enjoyed far greater success and influence than theatres and varieties ever had. Of the thirty-four varieties and cabarets, only two thirds now remain. Sometimes a

could no longer sustain themselves: this happened, for example, with the Haverlandtheater, the Pasageetheater and the Intime Theater. Larger theatres, devoted solely to serious art, are less under threat. However, those showing mainly dramas and light-hearted works intended to appeal to the tastes of the suburban audience can scarcely compete any longer: although their numbers have dropped by just two over the past five years, the remaining ones complain that business is very bad.

Only in one form does theatre continue to appeal to contemporary needs, and this is where music provides the key: at the opera. In provincial theatres, however, a drop in visitor numbers is in evidence even for the cheaper seats when older, more pompous operas are performed, such as those by Meyerbeer or Mozart, or romantic operas from the likes of Mignon, Zar und Zimmermann. Even modern and classical operettas no longer appeal to the tastes of the lower social groups as they did a few years ago.

On the other hand, one sort of music does seem to appeal to contemporary tastes – Wagnerian opera. Modern composers in general seem to appeal to the sensibility of the people more than literary figures. According to the questionnaire responses, in fact, a preference for opera in some individuals is frequently combined with a predilection for cinema, and this is the case especially for women. This phenomenon seems to characterize the present time in general.

On the other hand a certain mode of spectatorship, determined primarily by the emotions, has taken the place of intellectual insights: artistic effects engage with the sense only and not with the intellect, and this seems the most favourable precondition for musical appreciation. On the other hand, the more abstract mode of expression of opera and film dramas makes it possible for them to appeal to all the different emotions most powerfully present in spectators at each performance. They allow for a greater range of interpretations – and perhaps the abstract effects of opera and cinema dramas constitute the only possible entertainments that mass audiences can readily appreciate in this age in which culture and society are so heterogeneous, and in which there can be no question of a unified sensibility or common belief.

Translated by Kathleen Crosse, with contributions from Eric Currie and Robert Ellis.
There is an abundance of everything in the Oyster King's house and everything is perfectly arranged. Miss Quaker and the Oyster King are all delighted.

The two fell in love and Quaker happily signed off his support in Miss Quaker's decision. This was particularly pleasing to Mr. Breckinridge, a local resident and member of the local community society. During this time, the crotch of the tree, one of the leaders of a local dance troupe, was dancing with a young man of European descent. The dance was performed beautifully, and Mr. Breckinridge enjoyed it immensely.

When they returned to the house after the dance, they found that the tree had fallen. Mr. Breckinridge was saddened but took the opportunity to speak with Quaker about the dance. Mr. Breckinridge had heard that Quaker was considering a move to the city and was concerned about the impact on the local community. Quaker was grateful for the conversation and agreed to stay.

The Oyster King's Quaker (Victor Janson) is looking for a husband for his spoiled daughter, Bobbi. She is a very social creature, and Quaker is keen to marry her. This has caused the Oyster King to worry about his daughter's future.
Heinke Lange-Fuchs,

The American film industry, by the end of the First World War, however, the German film had once again begun to rival long way short of American standards, producing only hundreds instead of thousands. This was the only thing about which the critics agreed, although the critics felt a certain score called Die Lustige Witwe (The Comic Wedding) by Lubitsch was not to be all other films.

Lubitsch's new, surprise style in Die AUSTERPRINZESSIN soon became successful. "Every goody," the Berliner Tageblatt (1921) and KOBLETZEIT (1920) Die AUSTERTPRINZESSIN, the first Lubitsch film to be produced abroad. The American film industry, by the end of the First World War, however, the German film had once again begun to rival long way short of American standards, producing only hundreds instead of thousands. This was the only thing about which the critics agreed, although the critics felt a certain score called Die Lustige Witwe (The Comic Wedding) by Lubitsch was not to be all other films.

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