Mapping Movie Magazines
Digitization, Periodicals and Cinema History

Edited by
Daniel Biltereyst
Lies Van de Vijver
The *Global Cinema* series publishes innovative scholarship on the transnational themes, industries, economies, and aesthetic elements that increasingly connect cinemas around the world. It promotes theoretically transformative and politically challenging projects that rethink film studies from cross-cultural, comparative perspectives, bringing into focus forms of cinematic production that resist nationalist or hegemonic frameworks.

Rather than aiming at comprehensive geographical coverage, it foregrounds transnational interconnections in the production, distribution, exhibition, study, and teaching of film. Dedicated to global aspects of cinema, this pioneering series combines original perspectives and new methodological paths with accessibility and coverage. Both ‘global’ and ‘cinema’ remain open to a range of approaches and interpretations, new and traditional. Books published in the series sustain a specific concern with the medium of cinema but do not defensively protect the boundaries of film studies, recognizing that film exists in a converging media environment. The series emphasizes a historically expanded rather than an exclusively presentist notion of globalization; it is mindful of repositioning ‘the global’ away from a US-centric/Eurocentric grid, and remains critical of celebratory notions of ‘globalizing film studies.’

The first seeds in the germination of this edited volume were sown at an international conference on digitization, movie magazines and audience research held in Ghent, Belgium (Turning the page: Digitalization, movie magazines and historical audience studies, 12–14 November, 2015). It was a vibrant three-day conference with stimulating presentations, workshops and meetings of film archivists, librarians and scholars from various parts of the world. The conference included participants working in diverse fields such as film and cinema studies, history, literary and periodical studies, digital humanities, library and archival studies. Most of the chapters in this volume originate from material presented at this conference. The consensus of the conference was that that movie magazines largely remain an unexplored field of research and that much work needs to be done to make them more accessible for scholars and film enthusiasts. As the editors of this volume, we are convinced that the chapters in this book show the richness and variety of the work that can be done on and with movie magazines. We would like to express first and foremost our sincere gratitude to the contributors to this volume, whose stimulating work and patience brought this book into being. A very special word of thanks goes to the film and media archivists and librarians, who shared their invaluable knowledge on movie magazines and various other kinds of film-related periodicals, especially Lea Whittington (Margaret Herrick Library, Los Angeles, USA), Anastasia Kerameos (British Film Institute Library, London, UK), Jean-Paul Dorchain (Belgian CINEMATEK/Royal Belgian Film Archive, Brussels, Belgium), and Christopher Natzên and Mats Rohdin (National Library of Sweden). A big thanks also goes to the
DICIS network (Digital Cinema Studies) and the Flemish Scientific Research Foundation (FWO-Vlaanderen, Belgium) for helping to finance the conference and the book project. Thanks to Leen Engelen, Philippe Meers and Roel Vande Winkel from the DICIS network and to Robert Hensley-King for translating and proofreading chapters in this volume. We are also especially grateful to the staff at Palgrave Macmillan for their excellent guidance throughout the entire editing process of this volume, with a particular thanks going to Camille Davies, Shaun Vigil, Glenn Ramirez and Aniko Imre of the Global Cinema Series. Finally, we thank our families and friends for their support during this book’s journey to completion.

Daniel Biltereyst
Lies Van de Vijver
Praise for *Mapping Movie Magazines*

“*Mapping Movie Magazines* reveals how the increased accessibility through digitization of fan magazines and film trade papers presents exciting new opportunities for research.”

—Annette Kuhn, *Emeritus Professor in Film Studies, Queen Mary University of London*
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CHAPTER 1

Introduction: Movie Magazines, Digitization and New Cinema History

Daniel Biltereyst and Lies Van de Vijver

Paraphrasing Richard Abel, who in his *Menus for Movieland* calls the local newspaper a relatively unexamined treasure trove for writing film history,¹ this volume turns the spotlight on another horn of plenty, the cornucopia of movie magazines. Whereas a handful of film magazines and trade journals like *Variety* are now widely used sources in the film and cinema scholar’s tool kit,² many other cinema-related periodicals largely remain untouched. Besides drawing attention to the vast amount and the diversity of film periodicals, this edited collection aims at illustrating the considerable research opportunities offered by film trade journals, popular movie magazines and other periodicals with content about the medium that became one of the twentieth century’s most distinguished art and popular leisure forms.

Arguing that film magazines are more than just additional sources for understanding movies, stars and the wider cultural-economic institution of cinema, this book is part of the recently intensifying interest for periodi-
cals within the humanities and the social sciences. One of the key insights gained from periodical studies as a discipline is that film magazines are best considered as significant sites of intermediality and remediation, or as crossing points between different media, formats and story types. In this volume we maintain that in the case of movie magazines, intermediality not only resides in how these periodicals transgress the borders between film and print media, but that there are also clear links with other media and art forms like literature, photography, radio, television and fashion. Hence, film periodicals’ intermediality is also an internal feature, more precisely in how movie magazines cover the realm of cinema with a plethora of formats and story types such as reviews, interviews, poetry, short stories, fashion reports and contests, reader’s letters, photos, comics and many other kinds of narrative and graphic materials. Collectively, this volume argues that through these strategies, movie magazines play an important role in re- or intermediating between the realm of cinema and the audience’s everyday life, practices and imagination.

The idea that movie magazines are not just by-products or paratexts (around the main text which is the movie) is also central to another inspiration for many of the contributions to this volume, that is, new cinema history. This recent trend in film and cinema historiography refers to a process of defocusing or decentralizing the movie as the core research object of the discipline. While film analysis, close reading and other perspectives related to understanding the aesthetic, ideological or rhetorical complexities of movies remain a vibrant strand within the discipline, new cinema history has increasingly explored other facets of what constitutes cinema over the last 15 years or so. Within the new cinema history perspective, cinema is conceived as a multifaceted concept, encompassing not only the films and their stars, stories and the movies’ diegetic worlds. New cinema historians promote the study of what has often been conceived as marginal or peripheral to cinema, namely issues of the socio-cultural and economic realities within which films are produced, distributed, circulated, exhibited and received. Much of this work looks at cinema from a bottom-up perspective, examining audience’s experiences of the movies and their encounter with the places and spaces in which motion pictures were shown and consumed. New cinema historians study the socio-cultural practices of going to the movies and they are interested in the wider imaginative scope and meanings of cinema for audiences. Arguing that films are only one part of what constitutes cinema, the perspective provocatively brings forward the argument that movies might not have
been that important at all in the strategies, tactics, practices and pleasures linked to cinema and cinemagoing as a social practice.

This comprehensive approach to cinema, obviously, requires the usage of a wide, eclectic array of sources and traces. In order to understand more fully the subtleties linked to the experience of films, cinema and the practices of cinemagoing, cinema historians now use methodologies like oral history, and the analysis of film popularity figures and film programming schedules. They closely examine fan letters and diaries, photographs showing audiences as well as film trade statistics and all other materials concerning cinema attendance and audience behavior. Scrutinizing movie magazines is an important part of today’s film and cinema historian’s research strategies. While there is already some literature on movie magazines, both as research objects and as sources for examining issues like the discursive construction of stars and fans, we believe that much more work could be done about and with movie magazines.

In terms of movie magazines as research objects, we need to acknowledge that the existing scholarship often focuses on the film trade press and on a handful of popular movie magazines, mostly from the USA, the UK and a few other major film production countries. It is impossible to estimate the number of film periodicals, partly because defining them is difficult (see Chap. 4 on film criticism in the British Broadcasting Corporation’s cultural magazine and Chap. 5 on fan magazines and newspaper entertainment pages). Looking at what is available only in libraries linked to film archives and other film heritage institutions, it is clear that movie magazines constitute a vast and multisscopic area with many thousands of titles. Hence, only the tip of the iceberg is now used, and much work needs to be done in mapping this extensive field, both within and beyond the scope of the Anglo-Saxon world. In addition to chapters on the movie magazine markets in Britain (e.g. Chap. 4), France (Chap. 10) and the USA (e.g. Chaps. 2, 3, 5 and 6), this volume looks at the political economies, editing strategies and representational practices in small or ‘peripheral’ markets such as Canada (Chap. 7), South Africa (Chap. 8), the Netherlands (Chaps. 9 and 11) and Chile (Chap. 12). This international perspective offers the opportunity not only to gain new insights into, or to compare film magazines’ editorial systems in different countries and continents, but also to enhance our understanding of the transcultural entanglement between periodicals. In this volume, several chapters address the intercultural influence, circulation and exchange between major cinematic centers and ‘peripheral’
receiving cultures, such as those between the Netherlands and Germany (Chap. 11), and the realm of Hollywood for Chilean movie magazines (Chap. 12).

A research agenda on the movie magazines as an object of enquiry not only applies to mapping the phenomenon geographically. It also ties in with many other levels of the film periodical taxonomy. To name just a few taxonomic levels, work needs to be done on differences in temporal (e.g. the start of movie magazines, or recent developments)\(^\text{14}\) and generic terms (e.g. Chap. 14 on pornographic reimagination of Hollywood in *Tijuana Bibles*),\(^\text{15}\) and in the film periodical’s cultural appeal and targeted audiences (e.g. Chap. 2 on *Variety* as a leading trade magazine). There are major differences in the movie magazines’ periodicity (weekly, monthly, etc.), life span, formats, degrees of professionalism and intermediality (e.g. Chap. 4 on *The Listener* where film criticism is only one part of the cultural information).\(^\text{16}\)

More work could be done on movie magazines from a production studies perspective, with studies on creative and editorial practices in this distinctive form of the cultural industry.\(^\text{17}\) This includes studies on editorship and gender in the magazine industry (e.g. Chaps. 6 and 7 on female movie magazine writers and editors in the USA and Canada), and on strategies related to attracting particular audiences in terms of gender and race (e.g. Chap. 8 on the first ‘mass-circulation’ magazine aimed at African readers in South Africa).\(^\text{18}\) Other levels of investigating the film periodical require a political-economic approach, for instance, on differences in the magazines’ industrial-economic and financial status, or in their political orientation. A key aspect, which needs to be excavated more thoroughly, we think, is the movie magazine’s role as a cultural intermediary.\(^\text{19}\) Given the magazines’ central position in the circulation of evaluative reviews, background stories and other types of symbolic services in the context of cinema as a key twentieth-century cultural economy, they played a significant role in linking the industry and audiences (e.g. Chap. 11 on popular cinephilia in the Netherlands), and in their link with the film and entertainment industry (e.g. Chap. 5 on the struggle between movie fan magazines and Hollywood).

Although the market of the movie magazine is to be understood as a niche segment within both the film and the periodical industry, it is clear that it is a large and varied one, which offers many research opportunities. This is made clear by recent digitization projects on movie magazines, like the Media History Digital Library (MHDL, see Chap. 2) and the many
other initiatives, which significantly increased the availability and accessibility of source material. In recent years, major digitization projects like the MHDL intensively stimulated the use of previously neglected film periodicals as new key research sources.

Quoting Robert C. Allen, we hope this volume illustrates that this material “now available through digital means supports discovery, serendipity, and the asking of new questions.” The chapters in this book offer many examples of what can be done with movie magazines as a source, or of how the availability of digitized magazines facilitates ‘thick’ descriptions of many facets of the cinematic experience. In this edited collection, we present case studies of how to use digital film trade articles and magazines for examining issues of race (e.g. Chap. 3 on ethnic programming in American picture palaces), gender (Chap. 6 on the depiction of female labor in US movie magazines), stardom (e.g. Chap. 10 on French magazines and stars), and cinephilia and fandom (e.g. Chap. 11 on Dutch movie magazines). Magazines are also used for examining the representation of genres, the film industry and authorship (e.g. Chap. 13, on magazines and classical Hollywood directors) and the image of Hollywood (e.g. Chap. 12 on a peripheral view on Hollywood; Chap. 14 on the pornographic reimagining of Hollywood).

Magazines, Digitization and Cinema Historiography

The first set of chapters in this edited collection reflects on the importance of movie magazines for (re)writing film and cinema historiography. The opening chapter in Part I focuses on the first 35 years of Variety, the leading American film entertainment trade journal that was founded in New York in 1905. Using MHDL and its search engine Lantern, this chapter by Eric Hoyt, Derek Long, Tony Tran and Kit Hughes looks at how Variety covered the entertainment industry over time. In their sophisticated longitudinal analysis, the authors combine the robustness of these digital tools with quantitative content analysis in order to track Variety’s coverage of entertainment forms from 1906 to 1940. Concentrating on the shifts in and the relationships between coverage of motion pictures and radio in Variety, the chapter illustrates how the trade journal was an active participant in a dynamic industry, rather than being only a chronicler standing outside that environment.

The next chapter also focuses on Variety as a source and uses MHDL as a platform and Lantern as a digital tool. In their chapter, Judith Thissen