"The Kinematograph View of Life":

Cinema, Fiction & Periodicals in Britain, 1910-20

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> Seated silent and serene,
> Before the magic screen,
> You can watch "big game" at play, or Parish fashions
> Or, alternately, at will,
> You can throb and you can thrill,
> At the animated pictures' potted passions.
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> - Jessie Pope, 'The Picture Palace' (1912)

In 1910, cinema stood on the brink of mainstream acceptance in Britain. Huge popularity and aggressive market adaptations were beginning to force dramatic reappraisals of the medium's aesthetic and moral worth. A new consensus emerged among literary and political elites that cinema had become a permanent cultural fixture ("come to stay"). It could educate audiences about history, science and the natural world, yet the "picture palaces" were also thought to be poisonously mephitic, addictive and detrimental to the well-being of the young. Cinema's capacity for shaping new, sensational ways of seeing appeared to demand high-minded cultural commentators to curb its savage commercial instincts. This article examines the different ways in which popular magazines of Victorian vintage helped to launder cinema's soiled reputation when, after 1910, they began to cover it an art form, a business and a powerful social determinant.

The articulation of this new consensus in magazines was far from uncontested and remained fraught with entwined anxieties, prejudices and aspirations. Magazines provided an open ground where different kinds of popular culture could interact and cross-pollinate in highly dynamic ways across fiction and nonfiction. 1910 also saw the beginning of the first concentrated wave of 'cinema fiction': short stories which exploited both the socio-cultural frictions and the artistic possibilities of cinema. Cinema found its way into popular magazine fiction in both diegetic and non-diegetic forms. It emerged as the object of satire, a fountainhead

of new metaphors and a way of depicting changing social dynamics within tight generic constraints. Critical discussion of fiction and early cinema in the last fifteen years has understandably focused on the canonical writers of high modernism, predominantly Virginia Woolf, James Joyce and Katherine Mansfield, who are often described as engaging critically with the cinema and fusing its new aesthetics with the modalities of fiction writing in the immediate aftermath of the First World War.[1] This article focuses on less-exalted authors who depicted the protean forms of cinema for wide readerships in domestic illustrated magazines just before that format's age of cultural dominance came to an end.[2] These stories addressed more mundane questions about everyday life, class relations, the jostling and disruption of established mediums and cinema's implication in waves of moral panic.

I: The Changing Face of Cinema

The two most famous cinema stories of the early century are Rudyard Kipling's 'Mrs Bathurst' and Katherine Mansfield's 'Pictures'.[3] Both have been subject to heavy analysis for their formal qualities and for the ways in which they exploit disjuncts between cinematic and writerly tropes.[4] The two stories also represent helpful historical markers in the development of cinema as an industry between 1904 and 1917. In 'Mrs Bathurst', the doomed Vickery visits a cinematograph show in South Africa and becomes morbidly obsessed with a female figure that he recognises from his past. The story is notoriously opaque: P. G. Wodehouse wrote that he "didn't

[1] See David Trotter, *Cinema and Modernism* (London: Blackwell Publishing, 2007); Lynda Nead, *The Haunted Gallery: Painting, Photography, Film c.1900* (London: Yale University Press, 2007); Laura Marcus, *The Tenth Muse* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010) and Maurizio Ascari, *Cinema and the* Imagination in Katherine Mansfield's Writing (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).
[2] Howard Cox and Simon Mowatt, *Revolutions from Grub Street* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 67-9.
[3] Rudyard Kipling, "Mrs Bathurst", *Windsor Magazine*, September 1904, 376-86. Katherine Mansfield, 'The Common Round', *The New Age*, 31 May 1917, 113-5. 'The Common Round' was later expanded and republished as 'The Pictures' in the magazine *Art and Letters*, Autumn 1919, 153-6) and as 'Pictures' in Mansfield's collected volume *Bliss and Other Stories* (London: Constable, 1920), 157-171.
[4] See Alex Goody, *Technology, Literature and Culture* (London: John Wiley, 2013) and Ascari, *Cinema and the Imagination in Katherine Mansfield's Writing*, 48-50.

understand a word of it".[5] The nature of its film exhibition, at least, is clearer: cinema appears as a novelty circus sideshow. It functions, as in Nicholas Daly's reading, as a gothic technology intruding into, and fracturing, everyday life.[6] It meets Roger Luckhurst's definition of the late-Victorian gothic tale: "mix[ing] up categories of life and death, past and present, reason and fancy, wakefulness and dream".[7] The story thus encapsulates a 'Victorian' rendering of cinema in a similar manner to Brander Matthews' 'The Kinetoscope of Time'.[8] The projection of Mrs Bathurst onto the screen elevates her beyond ordinary love or admiration into the realm of the phantasmatic, unobtainable object. The images activate dormant reservoirs of longing and desire within Vickery. Mansfield's story, thirteen years later, shared this psychodynamic theme but depicted a much-changed image of the cinema trade. It describes a day in the life of a struggling actress named Ada Moss. As she moves with increasing desperation between production companies and acting agencies she succumbs to cinematic fantasies:

> "If I get there early Mr. Kadgit may have something by the morning's post. . . . I'm very glad you turned up so early, Miss Moss. I've just heard from a manager who wants a lady to play. . . . I think you'll just suit him. I'll give you a card to go and see him. It's three pounds a week and all found. If I were you I'd hop round as fast as I could".[9]

Moss voices these fantasies as if they were film captions. She makes her life bearable by imagining it as the first reel of one of the popular "moral problem" films like *Shadows on My Life* (1917) where female characters were induced through suffering to stray from the path of moral virtue.[10] This comparison is lent final pathos by the fact that Moss ends the day apparently engaging in sex work, the fate from which heroines in such films were usually spared by dramatic *denouements*. Mansfield depicts a socity within which cinema had been fully integrated. Its power

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[5] Francis Donaldson (Ed.), *Yours, Plum: The Letters of P. G. Wodehouse* (London: Hutchison, 1990), 184.
[6] Nicholas Daly, Literature, *Technology and Modernity, 1860-2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 73.
[7] Roger Luckhurst, *Late Victorian Gothic Tales* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), xi.
[8] Brander Matthews, "The Kinetoscope of Time", *Scribner's Magazine*, December 1895, 733-44.
[9] Mansfield, "Pictures", 163.
[10] Rachael Low, *The History of the British Film 1914-18* (London: Routledge, 1997), 20. The wave of "moral problem" films after 1910 were staged in predominantly contemporary settings but also included popular revivals of Victorian sensation fiction narratives such as Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *Lady Audley's Secret* in 1912 and Ellen Wood's *East Lynne* in 1913.

had been largely transmuted from the realm of the uncanny into that of the materialist, economic capacity of any large industry to shape the lives of its workers.

How had these changes been effected? Between 1906 and 1910 film exhibitors, especially those in larger cities and towns, began to invest in permanent, custom-designed cinema theatres in contrast to older peripatetic business models. The rise of the dedicated cinema theatre demonstrated that film had, according to Rachael Low, "crept up the bill to be the pride of the evening".[11] Cinema experienced a sharp gentrification process expressed through a general increase in prices, a commitment in some cases to extravagant décor and the obsolescence of the "showman" figure who might previously have performed between films.[12] The market was also becoming increasingly globalised, with American films making up 30% of all those exhibited in 1909 and becoming a majority by 1914.[13]

These changes allowed for a general sense that cinema had speciated from the other *milieu* and forms with which it had previously been associated. Film shows were often still heterogeneous, comprised of multiple short offerings in clearly demarcated genres but films were becoming longer and more ornately constructed from multiple reels and camera angles. American production companies which, in contrast to their British counterparts, could call upon much larger reserves of capital to invest in such projects, particularly favoured the shift to single-film exhibitions.[14] Single-seating ticketing ensured a regular flow of customers and suited the monetising exhibition of expensively-rented prestige films. Soon, hour-long historical dramas like the American *The Manger and the Cross* (1912) and the Italian *The Last Days of Pompeii* (1913) would carve out a market for bigger-budget, standalone films. Prestige single-film events were easier to consider as discrete art objects in established magazines and reviews. *The Academy*, a

[11] Rachael Low, *The History of the British Film 1906-1914* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1974), 14.
[12] Low, *The History of the British Film 1906-1914*, 48.
[13] Jon Burrows, *The British Cinema Boom 1909-1914* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 200.
[14] See Low, *The History of the British Film 1906-1914*, 17-8. See also Neil Brand, "The View from the Pit" in *The Routledge Companion to British Cinema*, I. Q. Hunter, Laraine Porter and Justin Smith, eds. (London: Routledge, 2017), 76-86, 77.

serious monthly review of the arts of sciences which seldom considered films worthy of comment, noted that *The Last Days of Pompeii* demonstrated the "enormous extent this art has developed since the days of the few moving pictures shown at the end of a music-hall performance" and compared it favourably to the many theatrical adaptations of the same story.[15] The freeing of cinema from old, inartistic novelties aided the construction of a criteria by which individual films could be assessed by critics. Appreciation of literature or drama might depend upon education, history or knowledge of ancient languages. Cinema, by contrast, promised to develop its own aesthetics in real time regardless of its audience's education or, indeed, the medium's own short history. Older films were often discarded or industrially repurposed leaving cinema to live in a perpetual present.[16] Distributors were constantly seeking new ways to remove old films from circulation, including moving from a sales to a rentier model where only the most recent films would be hired out to exhibition sites and then returned.[17] This set of circumstances meant that by 1910 cinema was poised on the brink of spiralling financial success and real cultural capital as well as being more structurally predisposed towards Americanization than other established mediums such as book and periodical publishing.[18]

II: Cinema Amongst the Illustrated Magazines

These developments caused intermingled expressions of panic and enthusiasm amongst magazines which, like the *Academy*, felt pressure to adapt. The *Quiver* and the *Pall Mall Magazine*, though they occupied different cultural and ideological positions, would both become

[15] "*The Last Days of Pompeii* at the West End Cinema", *The* Academy, 11 October 1913, 472. Even two years later, *The Academy* could be found denouncing the "plague" of picture houses providing "entertainment wholly divorced from mental effort". Alfred Berlyn, "The Plague of Pictures", *The Academy*, February 21 1914, 240-1, 240.
[16] "When cinema was young it had no memory, no history. It told no stories of its pioneers; kept no record of its endeavours. The medium celebrated nothing but the flickering present". Matthew Sweet, *Shepperton Babylon* (London: Faber and Faber, 2005), 3.
[17] Burrows, *The British Cinema Boom*, 175-6.
[18] See Nicholas Reeves, "Official British Film Propaganda" in *The First World War and Popular Cinema*, Michael Paris, ed. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press), 5-26. See also Mark Glancy, *Hollywood and the Americanization of Britain: From the 1920s to the Present* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2014), 3-6.

determined publishers of early cinema fiction. The *Quiver* had cultivated a community of middlebrow, evangelical readers since its appearance in 1861 and its relaunch as an illustrated magazine in 1864.[19] The first issue in September 1861 had proudly proclaimed that "the press and the pulpit are kindred powers" and concluded that magazines could reach "congregations far larger than any temple or tabernacle could contain".[20] It was consequently sold relatively cheaply at a penny for weekly parts or five pence for a monthly edition.[21] The magazine was aimed at a family readership with a specific emphasis on the moral health of the young.[22] Its proprietor, John Cassell, imagined each number containing "one article to address the intellect, one full of gushing feeling addressed to the heart, then one literary […and a] juvenile tale".[23] It sought to capitalise upon the periodical boom of the 1860s as a means of building an "evangelical", though "unsectarian", community of readers from amongst the middling classes and the newly-literate.

Four decades later, this evangelical community was part of the wider group of campaigners characterised by Dean Rapp as "moralists" who took up a vigorous opposition to cinema.[24] Whilst the *Quiver* was not at the forefront of this movement, it regularly published the opinions of the "social purity" campaigner Amy B. Barnard who saw much of popular culture, and especially the cinema, as a corrosive social evil and an impediment to self-improvement. Nevertheless, in March 1912 the *Quiver* took a public editorial stance in support of cinema against some of its more fundamentalist constituents who were then aggressively petitioning parliament and forming citizen's patrols to disrupt cinema shows and reveal the depraved

[19] Simon Nowell-Smith, *The House of Cassell* (London: Cassell, 1958), 60-1.
[20] "Our Plans and Purposes", *Quiver*, September 1863, 1.
[21] 'Prospectus', *Quiver*, September 1861, 550.
[22] "Our Plans and Purposes", 2.
[23] Nowell-Smith, *The House of Cassell*, 127.
[24] The movement's "leadership was drawn together from sections of the middle class: some clergy and religious periodicals, interdenominational groups such as the Free Church Councils and Sunday School Unions, and morality leagues like the National Vigilance Association". Dean Rapp, "Sex in the Cinema: War, Moral Panic, and the British Film Industry, 1906-1918", *Albion* 34, no. 2 (Fall 2002), 422-3.

activities therein.[25] The issue featured a strongly-worded editorial, "The Picture Palace: How Are We to Regard It?":

> [W]e are at a parting of the ways on this matter: either we can uncompromisingly condemn the picture palace and ignore it, or we can […] take definite steps to exercise a wise supervision over it and make it an instrument of good in the life of the nation.[26]

The idea that an illustrated magazine could exert "supervision" of any kind over cinema would prove to be a dramatic misestimation of the relative statuses of both mediums over the ensuing years. The editorial also contained supportive statements from eminent religious figures. It seemed designed to overwhelm the potential objections of readers through sheer weight of religious capital.[27] An essay on the subject by Harry Crane also attempted to make rational appeals to readers: money spent in the cinema could not be spent in public houses or music halls, educational films had an enduring power far beyond any "school-book" and trainee doctors could study filmed operations.[28] Yet the piece also betrayed a sense of panic. Crane feared that direct opposition to the cinema would exacerbate the decline of the evangelical movement's cultural reach. He pleaded that his readers not give way to "condemnation" or "sweeping criticism": "We have made such gross blunders in the matters in times past, that now, when we are face to face with quite a new phase of public amusement […] we should approach the matter […] without prejudice".[29] Cinema appeared to pose an existential threat to *Quiver* as both a representative of the evangelical community *and* as a monthly illustrated magazine. "Press and pulpit", two prominent buttresses of Victorian culture both were imperilled by the rise and gentrification of cinema.

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[25] See Audrey Field, *A Social History of the Cinema* (London: Gentry Books, 1974), 25-8 and Rapp, "Sex in the Cinema", 441-2.
[26] "The Picture Palace: How Are We to Regard It?", *Quiver*, March 1912, 453-4, 453.
[27] The Liberal MP and lay preacher Joseph Compton-Rickett, for example, took for granted that the cinema had "come to stay" and outlined a vision for the church that included cinema to attract the young in the same way that it had reached out to the masses with "miracle plays" in the middle ages. "The Picture Palace", 454.
[28] Dennis Crane, "The Picture Palace: How Are We to Regard It?", *Quiver*, March 1912, 453
[29] Crane, "The Picture Palace", 458

The Pall Mall Magazine had a very different provenance. It was founded by William Waldorf Astor in 1893 as an offshoot from the *Pall Mall Gazette*. It sought to combine a little of the literary prestige of shilling magazines like the *Cornhill* with the popular appeal of newer sixpence illustrated magazines such as the *Strand* and the *Idler*. The *Pall Mall Magazine* was thus intriguingly positioned between defiant intellectualism and middlebrow populism. It featured expensively-acquired popular fiction alongside poetry and in-depth discussions of politics and history. As a result, it could assume a greater degree of enthusiasm for cinema amongst its readers than the *Quiver*. Two months after Crane's essay appeared, the *Pall Mall* published Jessie Pope's 'The Picture Palace' which articulated a vigorous defence of the aesthetics and morality of cinema as a mass art form.[30] She wrote that the "craze" of cinema would endure because "its supporters realise that they are getting remarkably good value for the same nimble coin".[31] The cost of a cinema ticket (generally sixpence) was the same as readers would pay to buy magazines like the *Strand* and half as much as for the more lavish *Pall Mall Magazine* itself. "The cinematograph", she declared, "is a power in the land […] outrivalling the claims of the drama, the variety stage, and even League football itself'. Pope suggested that this importance had been established in the face of criticisms from the "super-cultured" who dismissed it as childish and idiotic. In doing so, she claimed a familiar kind of middlebrow legitimacy for the cinema: safe from sententious accusations of salaciousness as well as from high-minded aesthetic critiques. Film, in Pope's mind, established itself as a vital art form precisely because it was unencumbered by history and mirrored the lived experience of "all classes and all ages":

> [C]rude and homely as some of these cinematograph dramas may be, they live, they get right home, and the note they strike touches a responsive chord in the most decadent heart of a twentieth-century audience.[32]

[30] Jessie Pope, "The Picture Palace", *The Pall Mall Magazine*, May 1912, 693-698, 693.
[31] Pope, "The Picture Palace", 693-4.
[32] Pope, "The Picture Palace", 694.

For the idealist Crane, cinema wielded a fearful power to reshape its audience. Pope, however, argued that cinema was the only art form truly representing lives that had already been materially changed by the experiences of the early century. Once elevated from the filthy "penny gaffs", circus sideshows and smutty comedy routines, cinema could offer a more vital, less analeptic cultural experience.[33] Class itself might even dissolve in the gloom of the auditorium.

These unique qualities of cinema, along with its other claims to popular appeal, suggested that the written word's hegemony at the centre of British culture was under threat. What other vestiges of the past might be obliterated by its rise? Richard Washburn Child's story 'The Case of Mary Jones', published in the same magazine three years later, featured a fetishized vision of a young, working class 'cinema girl'. Child is perhaps now best remembered for his support of European fascism in the 1920s. Mussolini, as Child later wrote, "conceive[d] a dynamic world" and was prepared to "destroy all of yesterday and create a screaming tomorrow".[34] "The Case of Mary Jones" was an early testing ground for that philosophy. The story played with the dominant Victorian sense of charitable relations between the lower and upper-middle classes. It focuses on Barbara Antrim, an affluent, unmarried woman in early middle age thrown into the path of the young Mary Jones who she attempts to 'improve'. Antrim first sees Jones on a rain-sodden night in London where "the glaring entrances of cinema theatres seemed to yawn hungrily".[35] Antrim is troubled by Jones's "vitality" and becomes morbidly interested in the difference between their lives: "All my life I have had instincts – impulses to do things. I never yielded to them". Mary Jones, whose mantra is "I always follow my feelings […] I want to live hard and leave something behind", eventually subverts the Victorian charitable dynamic, teaching Barbara to abandon the dogmas of her childhood and live a "modern" life. Child

[33] The term "Penny Gaffs" had been common throughout the nineteenth century to describe cheap theatrical venues and was repurposed to describe older cinemas after 1910. For example, a *Fortnightly Review* piece in 1919 observed that "[f]rom the position of a superior penny-gaff the cinematograph exhibitions have grown into a leading industry". "The Art of Moving Pictures", *The Fortnightly Review*, 1 September 1919, 448-456, 448.
[34] Benito Mussolini, *My Autobiography (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons*, 1928), xii-xiii.
[35] Richard Washburn Child, "The Case of Mary Jones", *Nash's and Pall Mall* Magazine, January 1915, 541-551, 542.

exhibits all of the subtlety that one might expect of a Mussolini supporter in describing the story's conclusion: "The girl of the gutter, Barbara could see, was symbolical of youth, vitality, promise, dawn itself".[36] The tightly-bound constraints of popular magazine fiction helped soften the intense feeling on all sides of the cinema debate. Even Child's rigidly ideological beliefs could be diluted into a gauzy utopianism. Pope's article and Child's story worked alongside each other to project a vision of the future where cinema was central, rather than peripheral, to the national culture and where its vital energy could burn through the otiose social niceties of the past.

Other writers responded in more moderate terms to these perceived tensions. Magazine fiction developed a new network of intertextual references for readers assumed to be equally familiar with cinema and magazine culture. Through the 1890s, popular fiction magazines had begun to regularly include cowboy fiction alongside other established genres such as detective fiction, the courtship narrative and the ghost story. The cowboy story developed a set of generic conventions that played upon cultural and environmental differences between prosaic Britain and the desolate, beatified scenery of the American West. The cowboy story could be seen to be endangered by the rise of the cinema where, as noted by Pope, cowboy films were particularly popular. This micro-climactic skirmish amidst the wider jostling between cinema and print media was depicted directly in Jeffrey Silant's Australian-set series *Long Barclay* in the *Pall Mall Magazine*. "The Cleanskin Film Co.", published in September 1914, set up a culture clash between the hardened "cattle king" Barclay and the aristocratic film director, Lord Richard de Winton-Villiers, who seeks to capitalize upon the "regular craze on cowboy films in London".[37] Barclay confronts and attacks Winton-Villiers with a whip before it is revealed that the whole scene is being filmed by a cameraman who remarks that "unrehearsed effects are the best".[38]

[36] Child, "The Case of Mary Jones", 550.
[37] Jeffrey Silant, "The Cleanskin Film Co.", *The Pall Mall Magazine*, November 1913, 681-694, 684.
[38] Silant, "The Cleanskin Film Co.", 682.

Fig. I: Illustration by Fred Leist in Jeffrey Silant, "The Cleanskin Film Co.", *The Pall Mall Magazine*, November 1913, 681-694, 683.

Fred Leist's illustration captures this intertextual confrontation. The film camera in the background of the image provides a competing gaze to that of the illustrator and reader. As such, the image draws attention to the reader's dual role as a consumer of both popular fiction and cinema. The story establishes this rivalry but firmly denounces film as an absurd artifice. Barclay eventually warms up to the idea of appearing in the film and participates in a staged cattle stampede that gets spectacularly out of hand. The film-makers are satirized for believing that they can adequately capture the realities of "cowboy" life. The crew leave with a film expected to bring in "thousands" but their cannisters accidentally tumble over a waterfall and

Barclay, "with a snarl", throws a souvenir camera over along with them.[39] Readers could then pick up the next edition of *Pall Mall Magazine*, safe in the knowledge that cinema had failed to adequately imitate its attractions.

Elsewhere, the "super-cultured" commentariat were gravely concerned about the new prominence and proliferation of cinema. Filson Young, an early admirer of James Joyce and champion of the motor car, addressed the issue in *Saturday Review*:

> with the gramophone and the piano-player, [the cinema] shares the doubtful distinction of being one of the wonders of this age. The kinematograph has worked itself into the life of the people in a way that I, for my part, never suspected […][40]

Young fitted cinema into his pessimistic reading of the relationship between society and technology, asking whether "we are really conquering science or is science conquering us"? He described his first visit to a "Kinema Palace" where he was struck by the diversity of what he saw: "some wonderful things, some stupid things". He found the unique accomplishment of cinema only in pure sensation: "[M]otor-cars fly asunder before your eyes […]".[41] This passing sensationalism was freighted with fears that cinema might breed a passive, nihilistic torpor in its audience: "No journeys need be taken […] you need not go through the toil and discipline of learning the technique of music".[42] He feared that cinema would instigate a new hunger for visual sensation, warp its audience's expectations and bleed into other media such as newspapers and literature. His later article, 'Sensation and Kinema', catalogued a series of international disasters including the sinking of the Titanic, the burning of the immigrant transit ship Volturno and the coal mine explosion at Sengenhydd in Wales. Young was troubled by these events in themselves but also by the ways in which they had been packaged for the general

[39] Silant, "The Cleanskin Film Co.", 694.
[40] Filson Young, "Kinema", *The Saturday Review*, 27 January 1912, 108-9, 108.
[41] Young, "Kinema", 108.
[42] Young, "Kinema", 108.

public; the newspapers and short documentary films covering the disasters had seemed to fulfil his darkest expectations. "All of life", he concluded, "is treated as a sort of kinematograph show, and the moment an event becomes tiresome readers are switched onto another film".[43] Newspapers, he argued, had succumbed to the "kinematograph" style, pandering to readers' expectations which had been bolstered with a vertiginous sense of the "cinematic".

Young's pessimistic view of the future was crystalized above all else by his "sensational ideal", the Titanic disaster.[44] Just as it fuelled his jeremiads, it also helped to shape new cinematic tastes.[45] August Blom's 1913 film *Atlantis*, adapted from Gerhart Hauptmann's 1911 German-language novel, featured an extraordinary extended scene depicting the sinking of a transatlantic liner which drew much comment from the British press.

Fig. II: *Atlantis* (August Blom, 1913)

[43] Filson Young, "Sensation and Kinema", *The Saturday Review*, 18 October 1913, 484-5, 484.
[44] Young, "Sensation and Kinema", 485.
[45] Young wrote a book-length treatise on the subject of the Titanic and the historical significance of its sinking: Filson Young, *Titanic* (London: Grant Richards, 1912).

The *Times*, for one, satirically complained that a "cinematograph sub-editor" was needed more than a "cinematograph film censor" in order to address its excessive length.[46] Nevertheless, the article praised the shipwreck sequence which, it claimed, was "a revelation of the pitch of excellence to which film production has attained".[47] The influence of this sequence proved some truth to Young's fears by demonstrating a circular relationship between big-budget cinema productions and a print culture which fed upon the terrifying sublimity of technology. The English translation of Hauptmann's novel was not advertized in 1914 with reference to its literary quality or its author's Nobel prize but rather with the claim that "this novel is so dramatic that £22,000 is being spent on filming it by a kinema firm".[48] Such advertising asked readers to imagine the contents of the novel in direct relation to cinema's capacity for capital outlay and destructive excess.

Laurence Clarke's 'The Scoop', which appeared in the *Pall Mall Magazine* in May 1914, offered a more benign take on emerging media dynamics. The story depicts an insouciant English journalist, George Weather, whose easy life is made miserable by the imposition of an American editor, Goland, who plans to "make this old newspaper hum!". Goland, a clear satire of the American "yellow" journalism trend, pays no respect to the nuances of class-bound English discourse and dispatches Weather to "buttonhole" the visiting Emperor of Austria. Clarke highlights a clash between old and new media where Goland's Americanized cultural values disrupt the archetypal 'Idler' embodied by Weather. 'The Scoop' transforms into a romance when Weather encounters the Archduchess Alicia of Austria fleeing the constraints of her family. A cinema visit is depicted as the epitome of her desire to escape everything "respectable" and boring: "it makes one feel so dead […] every day, every day always the same".[49] In the "obscurity of a Cinema theatre" class and national differences dissolve before the

[46] In some versions it ran to nearly two hours.
[47] "Realism on the Cinematograph", *The Times*, 18 December 1913, 6.
[48] "Atlantis", *The Times Literary Supplement*, 8 January 1914, 13. At this point, confusingly, the film had already been released.
[49] Clarke, "The Scoop", 598.

"comic scenes", "cowboys" and "melancholy drama".[50] The vividity of their encounter also allows Weather to escape his "drab and dreary existence" and reshape his work for the modern rigours of Goland's editorship.

The confrontation between Goland and Weather was representative of a broader Americanization of the British periodical marketplace in the 1910s. The stage had been set in the 1890s when illustrated magazines had developed from "the control and management of self-funded, family-owned firms" into a "modern, capital-intensive industry dominated by increasingly vertically integrated, publicly-listed corporations".[51] This opened up British publishing houses and individual titles to acquisition by multinational companies. American firms expanded aggressively into the British market during the First World War and helped to popularize the glossier lifestyle magazines like *Harper's Bazaar* and *Cosmopolitan* which also featured short fiction and which broke the cultural hegemony of the domestic illustrated magazines. *Pall Mall Magazine* was retitled in December 1914 after it merged with *Nash's* Magazine which was owned by William Randolph Hearst, the innovator of the very journalistic style embodied by Goland. Hearst published *Cosmopolitan* and also acquired the British incarnation of *Good Housekeeping* in 1914.[52] His American newspapers had become known for their aggressive and salacious coverage merging news and gossip. As he made these incursions into the British marketplace, Hearst wrote to his mother that British journalists, an army of concerned George Weathers, were "fearfully excited over the advent of the yellow peril as they call it".[53] Hearst later expanded into film production and built an enormous multimedia empire capable of extraordinary cross-pollination and cross-promotion between film, periodicals and literature. Louis Pizzitola has written that Hearst's "newspapers became print moving-picture screens, and in turn the movies in the nickelodeons and storefronts became a reflection of

[50] Clarke, "The Scoop", 600.
[51] Cox and Mowatt, *Revolutions From Grub Street*, 35.
[52] Ben Procter, *William Randolph Hearst: The Later Years, 1911-1951* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 38.
[53] Procter, *William Randolph Hearst: The Later Years*, 26.

Hearst newspapers".[54] The alignment of film production, periodical publishing and book publishing under unified, transnational ownership represented a decisive break from the past, transformed the economic incentives for British authors and helped soothe some of the more irritable tensions between the mediums.

III: War, Cinema and Authorship

Debate over the role of cinema within society, particularly its impact upon the young, intensified during wartime and manifested as an aggressive wave of anti-Cinema activism. Paul Moody has shown how this activism fed into a co-ordinated response between local and national government to provide safeguards such as "children's attendants" to monitor auditoria in London.[55] Moody also shows that these institutional responses were effectively neutered by cinema trade influence and that, by 1918, the problem as a whole had come to appear parochial.[56] Amy B. Barnard was the movement's most trenchant mainstream voice for the old evangelical revanchism. In her mind, the cinema theatres posed a particularly urgent threat during wartime by further exacerbating the related problems of fragmented families, under-staffed schools and juvenile delinquency.[57] Commentators of all types, though, were united through their deprecations of the medium. In the radical *English Review*, Mrs Alec-Tweedie argued that foreign films should be subject to higher taxation and that domestic film production could be used as a vehicle for social change by modelling more austere and socially-conscious lifestyles. Rather than see the cinema theatre as flattening class difference, she saw it as evidence that the war-time economy had inverted class relations: "the rich have become poor, the poor

[54] Louis Pizzitola, *Hearst Over Hollywood* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), x.
[55] Paul Moody, "'Improper Practices' in Great War British Cinemas" in *British Silent Cinema and the Great War*, Michael Hammond and Michael Williams, eds. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 49-63, 51-2.
[56] Moody, "'Improper Practices'", 59-60.
[57] Barnard was one of the few voices entrusted to make this case in mainstream periodicals like *Quiver*. The other examples cited by Rapp, Moody and Field all come from more specialized religious or organizational publications.

have become rich".[58] Cinema, the site of so much wasteful lower-order spending, should change from being the site of "crass and lamentable wastefulness" to the pedagogical engine of "thrift, duty and discipline".[59] W. T. Stead's *Review of Reviews* suggested that cinema's "evil influence" could only be conquered by "taking away the kinema from private capital" or, at a minimum, "reaping revenue from taxation [to] create a national value".[60] This view developed in part from the new statist political consensus that was beginning to prevail in the Western European nations: taxation, regulation and censorship were all demanded to a greater or lesser extent.

Popular fiction was naturally averse to fundamentalist anti-cinema rhetoric. However, Herman Scheffauer's story "Nero Junior" in the *Strand Magazine* of September 1914 came close to capturing an image of pan-societal decay centred on the picture palaces. The story describes a street of slum tenements and drinking houses owned by a callous landlord and cinema owner named Samuel Bracker. The families, starving and sickening thanks to Bracker's "pestiferous drains", grow to depend upon the cinema as the only source of transcendence in their lives.[61] Scheffauer makes sure to depict this relationship as an integral part of their wider economic exploitation. The cinema has a particularly powerful effect upon the local children who "live only for the palace". Five-year-old Mart Pemblin, for example, finds school "pale and dim" by comparison.[62] His fascination leads him to minor acts of negligence and petty theft, subtly perverting his natural qualities ("seeds of future genius or crime") towards evil. Mart becomes obsessed with a film called *The Burning of Rome* whose scenes of lavish destruction echo *The Last Days of Pompeii*. He steals a roll of film and attempts to project it in his bedroom but ends up incinerating the entire street, "a long, black, evil sore of death, poverty and disease".[63] Mart and his family watch the fire in "ecstasy" as fire consumes the cheap décor of the "sham" picture

[58] Mrs Alec-Tweedie, "Women and the War Economy", *The English Review*, April 1916, 353-9, 358.
[59] Mrs Alec-Tweedie, "Co-operative Homes", *The English Review*, May 1917, 439-446, 446.
[60] W. T. Stead, "The Kinema as a Source of Taxation", *The Review of Reviews*, June 1916, 603.
[61] Herman Scheffauer, "Nero Junior", *The Strand Magazine*, September 1914, 296-304, 301.
[62] Scheffauer, "Nero Junior", 297.
[63] Scheffauer, "Nero Junior", 304.

palace. Scheffauer, a writer of great ability in contrast to his more workmanlike peers, was able to capture this "sublime spectacle" as a multifaceted social event. The family's view of the blaze is finally obscured by the arrival of film cameras hoping to capture events in footage that will then be featured as a short documentary in other cinemas. The climactic inferno also functioned as a metaphor for the ways in which periodical and cinematic propaganda had, in Scheffauer's view, been drumming up support for an Anglo-German war. Eight years earlier he had decried the "deplorable propaganda" printed by newspapers which could stimulate cheap xenophobia: "they are able to create the sentiments which they afterwards reflect".[64] He was fiercely opposed to a European war and deprecated the fact that cinema had become implicated in the new European militarism.

The *Quiver* reopened the cinema question in 1917 by staging a debate between Barnard and the public health advocate Eustace Miles. Barnard's article, "The Child in the Cinema" presented the picture palaces as nothing less than the epicentre of a social and cultural cataclysm. Film's early promise had been "perverted to evil uses […] as disastrous to the future generation as the effects of warfare".[65] She attributed a "great increase in juvenile offences" to the moral and physical "harm" done to children who regularly attend the cinema. Late nights spent in cinema theatres "reeking with disease germs" were described as damaging children and raising a generation of Mart Pemblins to terrorize the country. She described the cinema as giving children an unmediated guide to acts of criminality such as burglary and safe breaking alongside jeering audiences which "sympathised with the criminal". The article reached an hysterical pitch as Barnard described the "empty perambulators" heaped outside the theatre whilst audiences inside enjoyed "throttling, fighting, rifle-firing, drowning [and] suicide".[66] The vehemence of her language would have been familiar to anyone versed in the literature of the anti-cinema

[64] Herman Scheffauer, "The Powers Preservative of Peace", *The Westminster Review*, August 1906, 129-134, 129.
[65] Amy B. Barnard, "The Child at the Cinema", *Quiver*, May 1917,605-8, 605.
[66] Barnard, "The Child at the Cinema", 606.

campaigns of the period.[67] Moral citizens, she argued, should ask for nothing less than full government control of exhibition and active, censorial supervision of film production.

Miles' response to Barnard in *Quiver*, 'In Praise of the Cinema', was banal by comparison and reiterated many of Crane's earlier points. Cinema could be "a refresher" and mitigate the more "formal" kinds of entertainment and socialising which might take up "four to five hours from the working day".[68] Films encouraged a "boisterous" good humour and acted as a counterweight to the increased seriousness of early middle-aged life in general. For Miles, the virtue of the cinema was that it was uncluttered by class-bound conventionalities and particularly appealed to the adventurous souls of young boys. The "fierce, vital energy" of the cowboy stories in particular offered release from the relatively dry commercialism of modern life.[69] He fancifully suggested the inauguration of what he called "vista-graphs" which would be long, unpeopled, narrative-free shots of scenery which might offer peace of mind relative to the "general restlessness of the age".[70]

By 1917, Miles' equanimity far more reflective of the country at large. The great triumph of anti-cinema activists had been the creation of the Cinema Commission of Enquiry by the National Council of Public Morals in 1916. Yet this effort would prove to be the dying gasp of serious cultural or religious resistance to the medium. The final report, published in 1917 as *The Cinema: Its Present Position and Future Possibilities*, did not inaugurate a new age of state-controlled film production. Instead it made far smaller recommendations relating to the staffing and lighting of theatres and encouraged the independent British Board of Film Censors to codify specific criteria with which to undergird their classifications. Meanwhile, establishment voices from magazines and novelists to clergy and politicians were finding their own comity with cinema's newly central role in British life. Hugely popular news and propaganda films during the

[67] Barnard, "The Child at the Cinema", 608.
[68] Eustace Miles, "In Praise of the Cinema", *Quiver*, May 1917, 602-604, 602.
[69] Miles, "In Praise of the Cinema", 602.
[70] Miles, "In Praise of the Cinema", 604.

war helped to break down some of the remaining stigma about cinema attendance for the "better educated". Cinemas thrived even after the imposition of the "amusement" taxes on exhibition.[71] The move away from "continuous showing" alleviated some of the angst about youthful delinquency. As if to underscore the defeat of Barnard's position, *Quiver* followed her confrontation with Miles by publishing Anne Weaver's 'The Heart of Beatrix' in October 1917. This story shows how short, popular fiction could synthesise fraught issues into a generally benign view of the modern world and its upheavals. A young high-minded writer, Maurice Aylwin, falls in love with an affluent heiress named Beatrix Severne. He considers Beatrix "out of reach", inhabiting to his eyes a world where "no one worked or struggled".[72] Beatrix, meanwhile, is equally in love with Maurice but thinks herself too far removed from his literary *milieu*. The couple meet a familiar set of romantic barriers that are buttressed by perceptions of class and culture. Beatrix travels in Europe for a year and returns to hear of Maurice writing a "film play", a prospect which disgusts her: "Every film play I've ever sat through has seemed to me shockingly inartistic and absurd". Yet Beatrix contrives to appear as part of the walk-on "crowd" for the film where she modifies her judgmental attitudes about cinema and the lower classes: "a cheery, good-tempered set of people, with a ready, if somewhat crude, sense of humour".[73] Wearing a black dress belonging to her maid and heavily made up, Beatrix is able to transcend her identity as a "useless plutocrat" and pretend that she has lost her money.[74] The couple commit to a whirlwind engagement in the background of the film set. Weaver identifies cinema as a site of social and cultural change (new identity formations, new romantic mores, new social relations) but within comfortable and already-familiar borders. This is, perhaps, the kind of "wise supervision" imagined by Crane five years previously. In the proper hands cinema might untwine the snobbish distinctions between the proto-modernist values of Maurice and the

[71] Rachel Low, *The History of the British Film 1914-1918* (London: Routledge, 2013), 24.
[72] Anne Weaver, "The Heart of Beatrix", *Quiver*, October 1917, 1016-22, 1016.
[73] Weaver, "The Heart of Beatrix", 1017.
[74] Weaver, "The Heart of Beatrix", 1018.

leisured, hidebound cultural elitism of Beatrice without sacrificing too much of the past. Readers of *Quiver* throughout 1917 could hardly doubt that Barnard's position was a minority dissent even within the community of believers.

Aylwyn, the intellectual who made peace with cinema, would become an intriguing model for the new generation of post-War writers. The rise of cinema and the globalization of the print marketplace created a markedly different media landscape to that enjoyed by their predecessors of the 1880s and 90s.[75] Cinema assumed a central role in the careers of middlebrow writers, either through the promise of adaptations or, more circuitously, through the general reshaping of public tastes and expectations. British film producers in the immediate aftermath of the war began to rely more heavily on adaptations of domestic fiction. Economic constraints lead to a widening gap between British and American production values.[76] British firms compensated by emphasising a distinctive Britishness to their output.[77] Cinema had "no famous writers of its own" and so instead "found it easier to borrow the celebrities of other spheres".[78] The cinema, in the words of W. T. Stead, quickly became "the newest and most rapid of circulating libraries" as a result.[79]

Writers like E. Phillips Oppenheim, who had spent his literary apprenticeship as a creature of the domestic illustrated magazines, adapted smoothly to the new reality.[80] Though he still wrote regular short fiction for *Nash's and Pall Mall Magazine*, his novels were adapted for the screen multiple times every year until the early 1930s. Oppenheim himself "hated the cinema" and sadly recalled acquaintances who had been crushed by the Hollywood system, yet his work

[75] See Winnie Chan, *The Economy of the Short Story in British Periodicals of the 1890s* (London: Routledge, 2007) and Dean Baldwin, *Art and Commerce in the British Short Story, 1880-1950* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2013).
[76] Burrows, *The British Cinema Boom*, 175-6.
[77] Laraine Porter, "'Temporary American Citizens': British Cinema in the 1920s" in Hunter, I.Q *et al* (eds.), *The Routledge Companion to British Cinema History* (London: Routledge, 2017), 34-46.
[78] Low, *The History of the British Film 1914-1918*, 60-1.
[79] "The Cinema as Circulating Library", *The Review of Reviews*, December 1915, 492.
[80] Hodder and Stoughton pitched Oppenheim throughout the 1920s and 30s as "the prince of storytellers" and the *Bookman* noted that by 1920 he stood "in command of the lending libraries". See Brian Phillips, "E. Phillips Oppenheim", *The Bookman*, November 1920, 77-9, 77.

depicted a benign cooperation between the two mediums.[81] He blithely asserted to the *Bookman* in 1920 that fiction would withstand the apparent assault of film and that the two mediums would ultimately become complementary: "the film has come into partnership with the presentation of fiction through print, but it can never become its rival".[82] His 1918 novel *The Other Romilly* was republished in America with its more famous title *The Cinema Murder* and was subsequently adapted by Hearst's Cosmopolitan Productions into a hugely popular (now lost) film starring Marion Davies.

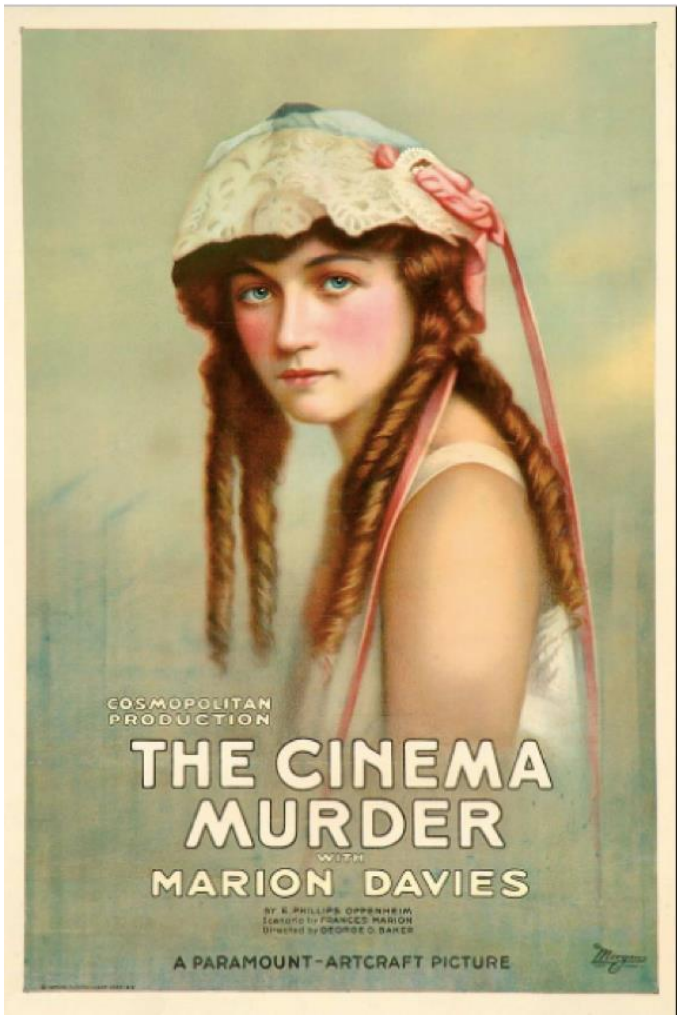

Fig. III: *The Cinema Murder* poster (1919)

[81] E. Phillips Oppenheim, *The Pool of Memory* <http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks12/1203301h.html> (Date accessed 9th November 2018).
[82] Phillips, "E. Phillips Oppenheim", 78.

The plot involves a poor writer, Phillip Romilly, who attempts to murder his duplicitous cousin Douglas. He assumes the 'dead' man's identity, sails to New York, meets an American film producer as well as a famous actress, Elizabeth, with whom he falls in love. In New York he uses these connections to successfully mount his play, *The House of Shams* and prise Elizabeth away from a Hearstian millionaire named Sylvanius Power. Romily's escape from his sombre, enervating life is facilitated by the eruption of cinematic tropes and experiences which unlock his dormant artistic potential. The novel features a recurrent metatextual commentary on its own cinematic qualities. The film producer, Raymond Greene, witnesses Philip and Douglas' confrontation from a train window: "There's the beginning of a film story for you! What more do you want than that? There's dramatic interest, surprise, an original situation".[83] Romilly is presented as the archetypal saturnine man of ideas crushed into impotence by the world's indifference. His sudden vault into 'cinematic' experiences imbues him with animus, commits him to decisive action and allows the two parts of his character to work harmoniously together.

Oppenheim played down the acridity of any cultural divide between America and Britain as well as between culture and big business. Power, whose "grim, strong-looking hands […] grip the levers of modern American life", is enraged by Elizabeth's desire to marry Philip and burns down the opulent theatre that he had built in expectation of her becoming his mistress.[84] His megalomaniacal project to subordinate high culture to his aggressive, acquisitive mode of capitalism runs aground when confronted by a stern Philip who calls him "a very insufferable fellow" to murmured assent from a gaggle of artists and writers.[85] Yet Oppenheim's post-War work was reshaped to fit the expectations of cinema just as his earlier efforts had been shaped to the demands of the illustrated magazines. By the 1920s, this approach to popular fiction had become an accepted practice. Joseph Michael's advice pamphlets for aspiring authors were

[83] E. Phillips Oppenheim, *The Cinema Murder* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1917), 34.
[84] Oppenheim, *The Cinema Murder*, 214.
[85] One writer complains that Power "builds theatres for our plays, museums for our pictures, libraries for our books." Oppenheim, *The Cinema Murder*, 214.

disarmingly blunt on these matters. He observed that the twin influences of "cinema" and "the American short story" had created demand for "stories which are practically nothing but action from start to finish".[86] He advised that the "standard" of American magazines was "generally higher than ours" and that the fees paid were becoming vastly different: "Twenty pounds" on average in England as opposed to "£200 [on] the American market".[87] The market had thus become bifurcated by the penetration of American magazines. The most successful English authors had their work siphoned off leaving a diminished domestic market behind with shrivelling economic power.[88] Joseph urged authors to remember that magazine editors of the 1920s were under enormous pressure to "not depress their readers".[89] Authors unable to court American titles could shape their work for cinematic appeal by following Michael's strict guidance to "[h]ave as few main characters as possible", "avoid complicated plots" and always remember that "a happy ending is best".[90]

Domestic illustrated magazines had played a crucial role in the cinema debates of the 1910s. In doing so, they had generally helped to reinforce the legitimacy of a medium and a business architecture that, in turn, brought dramatic changes to the production of popular and middlebrow fiction. Such changes were, perhaps, inevitable. The Late-Victorian magazine marketplace produced massed ranks of aspiring authors desperately in search of original or striking ideas around which to develop short stories. Cinema began as one such discrete idea (like the phonograph, the submarine or the x-ray machine) to be contained *within* fiction. Yet, over time, cinema would come to eat the old-fashioned illustrated magazine whole, and along with it the models of authorship upon which they had been built.

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[86] Joseph Michael, *Complete Writing for Profit* (London: Hutchinson and Co., 1930), 140.
[87] Michael, *Complete Writing for Profit*, 162
[88] For a summary of the *Strand*'s waning economic reach in the 1920s see Jonathan Cranfield, *Twentieth-Century Victorian* (Edinburgh: EUP, 2016), 193-6.
[89] Michael, *Complete Writing for Profit*, 883.
[90] Michael, *Complete Writing for Profit*, 602.

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