

Title: 'The Film Gone Male': Women and the Transition to Sound in the British Film Industry 1929-1932.

Author: Laraine Porter

Abstract: Taking its cue from Dorothy Richardson's essay, 'The Film Gone Male' written for the critical, Left-wing British film publication *Close Up* in 1932, this article looks at women working in the British film industry during the transition from silent to sound cinema between 1929 and 1932. It considers the effects of new sound technology on women's roles in front of and behind the camera from production to reception and critique. It also questions whether sound technology further marginalised women as producers of cinema and interrogates whether synchronised sound masculinised film as Richardson asserted.

Key words: women, British cinema, early sound, talkies, film criticism, silent cinema, masculinisation.

Biography: Laraine Porter is Reader in Cinema History at the Institute of Cinema and TV History at De Montfort University, Leicester. She was the Principal Investigator on a recent Arts and Humanities Research Council project, 'British Silent Cinema and the Transition to Sound 1927-1933' in collaboration with the University of Stirling. She has published journal articles and book chapters on British silent and early sound cinema including women cinema musicians and the women's voice in cinema. Her current research is on women working across the transition to sound and the reception of the talkies in Britain. She is the director of the British Silent Film Festival which has been running since 1998.

lporter@dmu.ac.uk

Word count: 9446

Funding: Research for this article has been funded by the AHRC as part of the three-year project, "British Silent Cinema and the Transition to Sound 1927-1933" based at De Montfort University in partnership with the University of Stirling.

‘The Film Gone Male’: Women and the Transition to Sound in the British Film Industry 1929-1932.

...In becoming audible and particularly in becoming a medium of propaganda, it [the cinema] is doubtless fulfilling its destiny. But it is a masculine destiny. The destiny of planful becoming rather than of purposeful being.¹

Overview

In ‘The Film Gone Male’ published in *Close Up* magazine in March 1932, three years after the arrival of the ‘talkies’ in Britain, Dorothy Richardson argued that the erstwhile silent film was essentially a feminine form that had been masculinised by the addition of sound. Synchronised sound, particularly speech, had shifted cinema from a state of ‘purposeful being’ to ‘planful becoming’. The idea that silent cinema had somehow prioritised women and communicated a universal femininity might seem odd to us now, but in the tumultuous times of the early 1930s with global economic recession and the encroaching nightmare of European fascism, early sound cinema was seen to give voice to these masculinist forces. Its ability to deliver information, apparently unequivocally, was exploited by dictators including Mussolini and Hitler who commandeered early talkies to broadcast their speeches and feminist mistrust of this new sound technology coincided with the surge of nationalist rhetoric across Europe. In Britain this perception was exacerbated by the proliferation of sound newsreels, instructional films and ‘topicals’ like

British Movietone News (from 1929) and the *Pathé Super Sound Gazette* (from 1930) screened regularly in cinemas and featuring a stentorian male voice-over barking out information and 'facts'. The male voice was associated with authority in broadcasting and had become ubiquitous on BBC radio from 1922 where men were accepted as educated specialists.

Richardson's essay was also part of a growing culture of women's writing on cinema from the mid-1920s, much of which articulated concerns that the influx of Hollywood talkies simply consolidated US cultural hegemony, transforming cinema into a vehicle for US propaganda. Richardson and other film intellectuals had celebrated silent film's potential for artistic and cultural internationalism and lamented the restriction to Anglophonic talkies with the coming of sound which limited their access to Scandinavian, German, French and Soviet films - before dubbing and subtitling became technically possible. The talkies allowed the human voice and image to be combined for the first time ever in the representational arts, but Richardson's suspicion of the new art form tapped into a swell of intellectual opprobrium. For people like philosopher Stanley Cavell, for example, the loss of the 'silence of the voice' was nothing short of traumatic.²

Richardson was also writing at a time when film criticism was a relatively new discipline, embraced by left-wing intellectuals and modernist writers alongside

newspaper journalists and theatre critics. Writing on cinema in the modernist period has been well-documented by Laura Marcus in *The Tenth Muse* (2007) which defines the period as running from the late nineteenth-century until 1939, though this article will focus on the 1920s. Marcus also identified a gender bias against sound cinema: '...there was quite a marked hostility among women writers to sound technology, and a greater degree of regret for the loss of the silent film'.³ Bryher (real name Annie Winifred Ellerman), the co-editor and co-founder of *Close Up* described sound cinema in her 1963 memoir as the 'art that died'.⁴ Hilda Doolittle (who also wrote under a gender-neutral name, namely 'H.D.') was another *Close Up* contributor who shared Richardson's sense that synchronised dialogue marginalised women's expression and moreover, that language itself was inadequate to articulating female desire - an argument developed later by second-wave feminist writers like Julia Kristeva in the mid-1970s.⁵ With the arrival of synchronised sound and dialogue, they were suggesting that men became naturalised as the bearer of the voice, rather than the silent objectified female. Then, as now, cinema often struggled to give women a voice.⁶ Richardson also felt that there was an essential, gendered difference between the *experience* of silent and sound cinema. Sound privileged assertive masculine expression while silent film offered a feminine cultural space where the spectator could carve her own

contemplative and imaginative world. Richardson's eloquent description of a matinee in 1927, two years prior to the arrival of sound articulated the relationship of one particular group of women to silent film:

It was a Monday and therefore a new picture. But it was also washing day, and yet the scattered audience was composed almost entirely of mothers.... Tired women, their faces sheened with toil, and small children, penned in semi-darkness and foul air on a sunny afternoon. There was almost no talk. Many of the women sat alone, figures of weariness at rest. Watching these I took comfort. At last the world of entertainment had provided for a few pence, tea thrown in, a sanctuary for mothers, an escape from the everlasting *qui vive* into eternity on a Monday afternoon. But I do not forget the balm of that tide, and that simple music, nor the shining eyes and rested faces of those women.⁷

Most working-class women, in 1927 not yet allowed the Vote, would have spent much of their lives listening to and obeying male voices: of husbands, fathers, bosses and boyfriends. These male voices would be further enfranchised by the arrival of sound cinema in 1929, but for the time being at least Richardson's silent cinema provided an affordable escape from domestic toil for working-class women and their small children. Women writers often praised silent cinema for allowing their private reverie and promoting inner realities where the eye, wandering at will across the melting images onscreen, dominated the ear, prioritising the act of looking over listening.⁸

Film criticism and debate was not restricted to the liberal intelligentsia and a growing caucus of more popular female voices represented by journalists

like Iris Barry, Caroline (C.A.) Lejeune and Nerina Shute were central to the development of film criticism during this period with regular columns in the *Manchester Guardian* and *Observer* newspapers and in magazines like *Film Weekly*. Their opinions on new releases and their female-centred insights into cinema culture, tapped into an increasingly cine-literate female readership and will be referred to below. Antonia Lant discussed this formative body of feminist writing on cinema in her anthology *The Red Velvet Seat* (2006) and summarised Richardson's sense of the loss of silent cinema's 'feminine universalism':

Richardson assigned a particular silence to femininity, one distrustful of speech, and transposed the value of this femininity onto the silent film itself...She suggested that silent film had resisted the instrumentalisation which was now the fate of the sound film ... [which] of necessity, spoke to nation or language group, whereas silent film bespoke an internationalism, indeed a universalism.... paradoxically feminine.⁹

Women in silent and early sound cinema: scholarship and resources.

The coming of sound was a highly gendered process in every aspect of its manifestation, from invention to its exploitation in radio, gramophone, popular film and later, television. Its history is presented as one of male scientific inventiveness combining experiments in electricity, light and telecommunications by a host of men, from Eugene Lauste, Alexander Graham

Bell, and Thomas Edison, Lee De Forest and others in North America to Axel Petersen, Arnold Poulson in Denmark. Across mainland Europe, Britain and the US, competing inventions and patents wars culminated in the domination by US conglomerates like Western Electric and The Radio Corporation of America (RCA). There are no women mentioned in any of the histories documenting the invention of recorded sound or the design, engineering and manufacturing processes that produced the new technologies.¹⁰

Adopting the tenets of New Cinema History, which seeks to understand the social and cultural contexts of cinema, feminist film historians in the US have long asserted that women producers and directors fared much better during cinema's pioneer period up until the end of World War I.¹¹ The first two decades of the twentieth-century had accommodated women to a much greater extent, with pioneers like Alice Guy Blaché and Lois Weber running their own production companies and forging creative spaces in early Hollywood. Anthony Slide (1977), Ally Acker (1991), Mark Garrett-Cooper (2010), Shelley Stamp (2015) and Jane Gaines (2018), among many others, have uncovered histories, sometimes hidden in plain sight, of female agency and power.¹² The 'Women Pioneers Project' inaugurated in 1993 by Jane Gaines at Columbia University in New York, has done much to excavate these histories, promoting feminist scholarship on Hollywood cinema and beyond.

Since 2009 the 'Women and the Silent Screen' (WSS) conferences and publications have extended this to an international history. Despite the work of the 'Women in British Silent Cinema' (WBSC) initiative founded in 2007, feminist scholarship on British pre-sound cinema remains less developed than US cinema of the same period.¹³

In Britain the transition to sound caught the domestic film industry on the back-foot before sweeping through it from mid-1929 to 1930. This period has mainly been characterised by the impact of Hollywood talkies, like *The Jazz Singer* (1927) and *The Singing Fool* (1928), on popular British audiences and the marginalisation of domestic sound systems like British Acoustic, that were effectively obliterated by the cut-throat tactics of Western Electric.¹⁴ These tactics signalled the death knell for British manufacturers of sound technology and consolidated control by vertically-integrated corporations, contributed to the very real sense of US technological and cultural domination across Europe. A year behind the US in transitioning to sound, but marginally ahead of mainland Europe, British producers and exhibitors were also just coming to terms with the impact of the 1927 Cinematograph (Quota) Films Act. The Act, which created quotas for British films, made no provision for the coming of sound and perversely facilitated further Hollywood domination as producers circumvented it by using British studios and personnel for what were

ostensibly Hollywood films.¹⁵ By the late 1920s, Paramount, United Artists and Warner Brothers all had studios in Britain, co-producing films of variable quality which British film pioneer George Pearson described as 'catch-penny films made on shoestring budgets' which 'made the word British on a film a term of contempt'.¹⁶ The flood of Hollywood talkies into British cinemas further destabilised the fragile British film industry and increased the more general concerns around the Americanisation of British culture, language and literature alluded to by 'H.D.' and Richardson cited earlier. By 1929 the British film industry was in a state of flux; recovering from near bankruptcy in 1926, enjoying a bounce-back following the 1927 Quota Act before catching the shockwaves of the 1929 Wall Street crash that ushered in the Great Depression.

The coming of sound to British cinemas; contextual notes and gender statistics.

Richardson's concept of 'the film gone male' also offers a useful paradigm to further analyse patterns of gender discrimination for women working across British cinema during its transition to sound and the impact of new sonic technologies on women's agency and involvement. The 'mature' British silent cinema (from the mid-to-late 1920s) can be used as a benchmark to assess whether there was a diminution in female participation with the coming of

sound between 1929 and 1932 offering a feminist perspective on the British film industry in transition.

The British sound revolution arrived in the middle of 1929 with Hitchcock's *Blackmail* which coincidentally wrestled with the 'problem' of the female voice.¹⁷ The upheaval caused by sound is significant when we come to consider the women producer/directors who attempted to make films amidst this turmoil and change. If the British film industry during the 1920s was in a precarious state, then the numbers of women employed in it make for even more sober reading. The online British Film Institute (BFI) Filmography launched in 2017, uses screen credits to provide a valuable snapshot of gender imbalances in British cinema since 1911 where gender was specified.¹⁸ Statistics quoted in this article have been extrapolated from this BFI data and triangulated with Denis Gifford's comprehensive *The British Film Catalogue* in order to provide as much accuracy and detail as possible.¹⁹ According to BFI data, between 1920 until the transition from pre-sound to sound cinema in June 1929 men comprised 99.2% of all directors, 99% of producers, 93.3% of set designers, 95.2% of studio musicians and 80.6% of writers. No women were recorded as writing intertitles or in cinematography. During the transitional period, from June 1929 until December 1932, little changed, with men representing 97.7% of directors, 97% of producers, 87.5% of designers, 88.7%

of musicians, 100% of those working in sound and 90% of all writers. Women's overall contribution to film crew reduced from 7% to 4% after the transition but the statistics are numerically so small that it would be rash to draw meaningful conclusions whether British film had 'gone male' in terms of production practices. Women's roles were also hidden by the lack of on-screen credits for what were seen as 'below the line' roles like costume design and continuity, which were often not recorded and so rarely show up on databases.

Women behind the camera

Writing in 1926, British critics Caroline Lejeune and Iris Barry acknowledged that women formed the majority audiences for cinema. Lejeune argued that cinema needed to 'please the women or die' while Barry claimed that three out of four cinemagoers were women and that 'cinema...exists for the purpose of pleasing women'.²⁰ The corollary of this, according to Barry, was that women *should be making* films because they had a better sense of what other women wanted.²¹ However, women did not gain a significant foothold in film production during the transitional period, any more than they had from the early-1920s when film production solidified into male-dominated studio systems on both sides of the Atlantic. During the 1920s, British production companies were run entirely by powerful men like Basil Dean (Associated

Talking Pictures at Elstree), Walter Mycroft and John Maxwell (British International Pictures at Elstree), Michael Balcon (Gainsborough Pictures), Herbert Wilcox (British and Dominions Film Corporation), H. Bruce Woolf (British Instructional Films) and Julius Hagen (Twickenham Studios). These autocrats overwhelmingly employed other men in key positions as producers, directors and writers, despite much of their output being aimed at a female market. Masculinist attitudes created few spaces for women, but, when women *did* occupy positions of power, they extended employment to other women. Elinor Glyn's *The Price of Things* (1931), for example, had a female screenplay writer in Juliet Rhys-Williams and the script for Dinah Shurey's *The Last Post*, (1930) was by Shurey's regular collaborator Lydia Hayward. As these films were produced and directed by Glyn and Shurey respectively, they effectively had a 100% female crew for the top four positions, the only two films out of 450 produced between 1929 and 1932 to do so.²²

That no women worked in sound production during the transition, is also borne out by data from the Association of Cinematograph Television and Allied Technicians (ACTT formed in 1933), where the first and only woman in the entire 1930s to gain union membership in sound joined the ACTT in 1936.²³ The BBC operated a marriage bar between 1932 and 1944 and, unsurprisingly perhaps, it was an entirely male cohort of sound technicians, many trained by

the BBC, who moved into British film studios like Elstree in the early 1930s, and developed their craft in what remains an overwhelmingly male-dominated area to this day.²⁴

Women directors: Dinah Shurey

Dinah Shurey was Britain's only female director of feature films by the late 1920s, having started in 1925 producing *Afraid of Love*, a romantic drama about a woman who leaves her faithless husband. In January 1929 Shurey produced, directed and wrote *The Last Post* for Gaumont, the story of a soldier who takes the blame for a murder committed by his brother. Like many directors of silent films caught in the transition, Shurey later added sound in an effort to revive the film's fortunes in a market that was now geared for talkies and turned *The Last Post* into what was unflatteringly described as a 'goat-gland' film.²⁵ Shurey set up her own company, Showman Films, to distribute the new sound version in January 1930 but the venture failed and like fellow female entrepreneur, Elinor Glyn, she became bankrupt. To add to her troubles, Shurey was the subject of a damning indictment in *Film Weekly* by the talented and pugnacious 21-year old film journalist Nerina Shute. In an article Entitled 'Can Women Direct Films? A Decided Negative from a Woman who Knows', Shute targeted Shurey for opprobrium, further damaging the status of women film makers in the trade press at this time:

It is pathetically obvious that women can't produce films. In England only one lady has had the temerity to try. Dinah Shurey (who will go to heaven by reason of her great courage) has created several appalling pictures. Critics have bowed with sad courtesy to the gentle creator of such films as "The Last Post". They can't fail to admire her good intentions, and yet...²⁶

Shurey won a libel case against *Film Weekly* but the damage had been done and the magazine gleefully publicised the trial's proceedings.²⁷ The 'woman who knows' in Shute's article was Adeline Culley-Forde aka Mrs Walter Forde, the wife of successful British comedy actor/director Walter Forde. Culley-Forde dubiously claimed that although women were capable of great feats of endurance, like swimming the English Channel, and could produce great art, they were incapable of combining stamina and artistry in film production:²⁸

A woman isn't fitted for direction. As you know, I am Walter's assistant, and he comes to me after every scene and asks my advice. A woman of ideas can be invaluable to a director, lending all sorts of feminine subtleties to his work, but *she cannot do the work herself*. ...If a woman is fitted artistically to the post, she has never the temperament to endure 15-hour days of hard mental and physical exertion.²⁹

Despite being a successful editor, assistant director and later, producer in her own right, Culley-Forde's self-effacing evaluation of her contribution to her husband's films echoes another well-known husband and wife team working at this time, Alma Reville and Alfred Hitchcock. Reville also maintained a gender-

normative supportive, low-profile role and both women avoided centre stage on the male-dominated studio floor.

Shurey's *The Last Post* was further blighted by getting caught in the crossfire of a damaging dispute between exhibitors and renters. Cinema managers accused renters of blocking silent films in an effort to force cinemas to rent costlier sound films and singled out Shurey's film for their boycott. Rather unfairly, Shurey never garnered positive media plaudits in Britain or the US. Described as 'imperturbable' in a *Picturegoer* article that reeks of cultural snobbery by Isadore Silverman on women directors, she was accused of making 'naïve and unsophisticated' films only popular outside of London, where working class audiences were considered less sophisticated.³⁰ The US-based *Variety* reporting on an 'all-women film makers' event at the London Film Society on 22 March 1930, compared Shurey unfavourably with Hollywood director Dorothy Arzner. *Variety* reported 'ironic cheers' from the 'highbrows' for her film *The Last Post* which it described as 'about the most treacly mess of heroics which ever made the grade as hokum'.³¹ *Variety* had also accused Shurey's earlier film *Carry On* (1927) of exploitative sentimentalism:

Nothing to get sobs and sniffles from the working-class woman fan is left out, and although the film is weak in story, poor in acting and patchy in direction, it will pull them in and send them out satisfied here...As a

contribution to movie making it's out of focus. As a local box-office hit it is on the spot.³²

Women producers: Elinor Glyn and Betty Balfour

Along with Shurey, Elinor Glyn and Betty Balfour were Britain's only women producers in the transitional period. Glyn, in particular was an influential force in the film industry, having earned significant status from her popular erotic novels at the beginning of the century. Despite scandalising Edwardian middle-classes with her novel *Three Weeks* (1907) its Hollywood film adaptation in 1924 was enormously successful. Glyn's entrepreneurialism (she branded herself 'Elinor Glyn Ltd') was derided by Cambridge scholar Q. D. (Queenie) Leavis (wife of F. R. D. Leavis) in *Fiction and the Reading Public* (1932), where she accused Glyn, among other film makers, of commercialising and debasing the novel as an art form.³³ But Glyn and other British women writers like Ethel M. Dell and Edith Maude Hull whose works were also adapted for cinema [,] had tapped into a massive female market for semi-erotic fiction. Their novels 'put the female body at its centre' and drew upon a 'sexually aggressive culture to imagine female pleasure' without punishing the female protagonist for her masochistic sexual adventures.³⁴ Leavis would certainly not have approved of such fiction, given that she so roundly denigrated in print other forms of popular cultural production and practices that were more acceptable to certain

sectors of the working and middle classes, namely cinema-going, popular jazz and magazines. Her argument that they prevented 'normal development' reveals her class snobbery and disdain for the cultural consumerism of 'ordinary' women.³⁵

Producer Herbert Wilcox also displayed a lack of insight into popular female tastes when he gloomily predicted the failure of Glyn's *Three Weeks*:

I met Elinor Glyn-and when you met her you really met her! She not only flattered but overwhelmed me...To my horror a special Sunday *premiere* at the Oxford Music-Hall...had been arranged by her society friends. I endeavoured to have it cancelled since I felt confident that the reaction of a sophisticated society audience would be a 'send up'. I was not heeded.... the premiere was a total loss, but nevertheless the film went out and made big money with real cinemagoers.³⁶

Three Weeks was a massive international success. Glyn, who had lived and worked in Hollywood since 1920 returned to Britain in 1929, allegedly for tax-avoidance reasons, and produced her first British talkie *Knowing Men* in February 1930 under Elinor Glyn Productions Ltd in association with United Artists. Glyn had funded the development of a new colour film system 'Talkicolor' specifically for the film, but *Knowing Men* was released only in black and white due to technical problems which contributed to the film's financial shortcomings. Despite the failure of Talkicolor, Glyn was committed

to working with new technologies in sound and colour and invested her own funds into developing them.³⁷

Irrespective of her past Hollywood successes, Glyn was interviewed by Shute in 1929 for a *Film Weekly* article entitled 'Can Women Direct Films?' which charged her with settling the tiresome question of women's abilities; 'The time has come for Elinor Glyn to prove to us whether or not a woman director is capable of making a first-rate talking picture'.³⁸ Acknowledging that women 'have been given far too little encouragement', Glyn side-stepped the issue, claiming she had never 'been proclaimed' as a director while blowing her own trumpet about her contributions to filmmaking and taking something of a side swipe at women in general by stating that perhaps 'the combined strain of physical and mental exertion [of directing] is beyond their power'. Her comments appear to have been chosen to show her as noble, patriotic and self-effacing yet, having said that she never sought credit for production, she went on to refer to herself as 'the producer' of *Knowing Men*. Her response is particularly prescient in terms of the financial failure of that film. She was reported as stating:

I have always had a hand in the making of my pictures, but I have never been proclaimed as a director. I never asked for the credit of production. After all, it only belonged partially to myself, and I didn't want the additional publicity. Nevertheless, I have had much to do with film making. If in any way I can help the British industry by my knowledge of

Hollywood, ...I shall have done something more than worthwhile...I want to make a British colour picture which will be a step forward in the history of talkies...I like doing difficult things. If "Knowing Men" is a failure I, as the producer, shall be the sufferer.³⁹

Glyn had cast the popular Elissa Landi alongside Danish star Carl Brisson but, despite being beautifully photographed with fabulous costumes designed by Glyn's sister Lady Duff-Gordon, known in the fashion world as *couturière-to-the-stars*, 'Lucile', the film flopped. It was lambasted in 1986 by the biographers of Glyn and her sister Duff- Gordon for being dated:

The film opened with Elinor [as herself in the film], dressed in Ruritanian black velvet, pearls and plaited hair-do twenty years out of date, analysing the various shortcomings of the male sex. This list was illustrated with vignettes so amateurish in conception and execution as to be laughable. The pace was slow; the actresses appeared ridiculous, clad as they were in Lucy's dresses which looked as if they had just survived a touring company of the *Follies* circa 1915. *Knowing Men* was a deplorable film.⁴⁰

Glyn was encouraged by Joseph Schenk, head of United Artists, to produce a second talkie to recoup the losses on *Knowing Men* but her next film, *The Price of Things*, also produced by Elinor Glyn Ltd, required her to borrow extensively and again failed to recoup its costs.⁴¹ Glyn presided over a matriarchal production outfit. Working with her daughters Juliet Evangeline Williams and Lady Margo Davson who ran the company, and her sister the above-mentioned fashion designer 'Lucile', this ageing female icon in a cinema culture obsessed

with female youth established an early example of a female brand icon in an emerging celebrity culture.⁴²

Britain's most popular film star in the 1920s, Betty Balfour had also achieved sufficient status in the industry to produce her first talkie, *The Nipper* (aka *The Brat*) in June 1930 with established director Louis Mercanton.

However, the strain of working 16-hour days as both producer and star took its toll on her health. According to a leading newspaper:

It is stated that, after the strain of producing her first independent all-talkie picture "The Brat" in three weeks and four days, Miss Balfour was taken seriously ill...Two doctors diagnosed a poison-germ, which had become operative owing to her lowered vitality caused by excessive strain.⁴³

Film Weekly described Balfour as 'working like a Trojan' to produce the film quickly, which doubtless contributed to her physical collapse.⁴⁴ Like Glyn, Balfour formed a production company (together with her aunt Mrs H. M. Balfour), Betty Balfour Pictures Ltd, that bore her own name. She was enthusiastic about the prospect of British talkies and, a few days after her recovery, stated that British talkies could 'beat the world' if British producers put their 'hands deep into their pockets' and invested in the best sound equipment.⁴⁵ *The Nipper* garnered mixed reviews but most agreed that Balfour was on form as its star but criticised Mercanton's weak direction.

Both Glyn and Balfour derived power and influence from successful careers forged earlier in the silent period. Their ages differed - by the transition, Glyn was in her mid-60s [in 1930] and Balfour in her late 20s, but they both found that they had to finance their own productions. Both were effectively in the twilight of their careers for different reasons. The indefatigable Glyn was virtually bankrupted by her foray into talkies, having to sell her house and furniture in the aftermath of her two box-office flops.⁴⁶ Although Balfour appeared in seven films as an actress between 1930 and 1936, her bankability as a star declined and her career stalled at the age of 33 in 1936 and she never produced another film after *The Nipper*.

Balfour, Shurey and Glyn stand out among a cohort of men as the only women in Britain producing fiction films during the transition from 'silent' to sound. They were forced to defend women in the face of excoriation from the popular and trade press, including female journalists, and an unforgiving masculinist production culture that closed ranks during the economically challenging period of the early 1930s. Two other women working during this period who have slipped beneath the radar in British cinema history, also deserve a mention. Ada Kearton (nee Forrest), a South African-born opera singer, shared directing credits with her more famous husband, the pioneering British wildlife filmmaker Cherry Kearton on the 1930 film *Dassan* about a

penguin colony on the Cape of Good Hope. Ada accompanied Cherry on his film making safaris around the world between 1922 and 1940 and in 1941 and 1956 wrote accounts of their travels wherein she described the privations of working as a wildlife filmmaker, but downplayed her own role in film production.⁴⁷ Secondly, Leontine Sagan, the Austrian-Hungarian born director of the acclaimed German film *Mädchen in Uniform* (1931) came to Britain and directed *Men of Tomorrow* in 1932 with the Hungarian producer Zoltan and Alexander Korda for London Films.⁴⁸ Unfortunately now lost, the film garnered excellent reviews with the *Scotsman* newspaper lauding Sagan as 'one of the most respected women in cinema' and her arrival as 'good news for the British cinema'.⁴⁹ Unfortunately for British filmmaking, Sagan moved into theatre, directing and producing successful plays mainly in London's West End during the 1930s and 1940s.

Women's literature and women screenwriters.

Alongside production and direction, screenwriting was one of the few other roles given screen credits in which women figured numerically and thus can be used to trace their roles from silent cinema to talkies. Before discussing the role of women screenwriters, it is important to understand the wider context in which women writers and women's fiction flourished outside of cinema and provided a massive pool of commercial talent on which cinema could draw. In

the first three decades of the twentieth-century, women novelists accounted for a third of all bestselling authors in Britain. 'Women's romance' which dominated much of the publishing industry, came into its own; 'codified and organised into a self-contained world by the 1930s'.⁵⁰ Women were avid novelette readers and the format was central to the growing literacy among the working and lower-middle classes.⁵¹ Work by several bestselling British women writers, including Edith Maude Hull, Ethel M. Dell, Baroness Emma Orczy, Agatha Christie and Elinor Glyn, were adapted into silent films on both sides of the Atlantic.⁵² By the 1920s women's literature and cinema formed the key female leisure pursuits and enjoyed a symbiotic relationship. Lisa Stead has documented the importance of women's writing on and around cinema during the interwar period, examining the continuum across female novelists and story writers, cinema critics, fan magazines and the wider culture of female readership in relation to cinema.⁵³ Alison Light, like Stead, argues that women were pivotal to new consumer cultures epitomised by cinema and print media aimed specifically at female markets.⁵⁴ Both agree that cinema and popular fiction were central to driving women's sense of cultural modernity and selfhood during the 1920s.

But despite a burgeoning culture of female literacy and a massive market for women's novels this growth did not translate into jobs for women

writers in early sound cinema and women screenwriters declined in the first few years of the talkies with a reduction of 6.6% from a sample size of 620, representing a loss of 48 women, as male production teams consolidated around generic and established formulae. This may also reflect the increase in the popularity of crime films. With the exception of the hugely popular British female crime mystery writer Agatha Christie, whose first novel to be adapted into silent film was *The Passing of Mr Quin* (1928) and her first into sound film, *Alibi* in 1931, these were largely adapted from the work of popular male authors.⁵⁵ Despite the importance of women's stories for female audiences and the success of key women writers adapted for the screen, only 17% of all scripts that went into production were written by women between 1895 and 1928.⁵⁶ Even a rise in the number of comedy and romance films produced over the transitional period and the need to write dialogue for women characters now that the talkies ostensibly gave them a voice, failed to improve opportunities for women scriptwriters.⁵⁷ Jill Nelmes and Jule Selbo (2015) argue that during this period the British film industry became more sexually divisive and that opportunities for women writers lessened, and comment that, even though Lydia Hayward declared in 1927 that there was a shortage of writers, the shortfall was filled more often by university graduates and writers who were predominantly male.⁵⁸

However, a few women writers maintained careers into the sound period including Violet E. Powell, who had adapted and written popular Hollywood and British films in the 1920s. Powell was co-credited, along with Marjorie Young and Benn W. Levy, for the script of Victor Saville's 1929 romantic melodrama *Kitty* which was released silent in January 1929 but had sound added in New York in May, making it one of Britain's first talkies. Powell also scripted a romantic comedy *The Plaything* released in September 1929 as a part-sound film directed by Castleton Knight at Elstree Studios. Around the same time, Alma Reville was co-writer with Hitchcock on his adaptation of Sean O'Casey's 1925 play *Juno and the Paycock* (released December 1929) and, although Hitchcock himself later dismissed the film, it came fifth in a *Film Weekly* poll for the best British films of 1930 and was described as a 'masterpiece' by James Agate in *The Tatler*.⁵⁹ A successful screenwriter from 1927, Reville shared writing credits with Hitchcock on his early talkies like *Murder* (1930), *The Skin Game* (1931) and *Number Seventeen* (1932).⁶⁰ Although her role is often downplayed or omitted entirely by Hitchcock's biographers, Reville's own biography, *Alma Hitchcock, The Woman behind the Man* (2003), co-written by her daughter Patricia Hitchcock O'Connell and Laurent Bouzereau, confirms the centrality of her often uncredited work on

Hitchcock's most successful films from the late silent period onwards, as well as her polymath abilities across the production process.⁶¹

The success of these women screenwriters did not necessarily create opportunities for other women, and Powell and Reville were the only two women writing screenplays for British talkies in 1929. During those early years when dialogue screenwriting was a new art, there was a perception that the male cohort of theatre playwrights made the best screenwriters.⁶² Hollywood screenwriter Leonore Coffee also observed that women novelists did not make the leap into screenwriting based on a perception of their reticence as playwrights:

'...a silent film was like writing a novel, and a script (for a talking picture) was like writing a play. That's why women dropped out. Women had been good novelists, but in talking pictures women were not predominant'.⁶³

Early British talkies often turned to the theatre for writers, and this further marginalised women writers for, with the exception of Clemence Dane (who co-wrote *Murder* for the stage in 1928), there were very few successful women playwrights in interwar British theatre.⁶⁴ Film producers were also inclined to rely on tried and tested formulae, falling back on popular theatre shows like the Aldwych Farces, mostly written and produced by an all-male team of Ben Travers and their star performers Tom Walls and Ralph Lynn. Popular touring

revues like *The Co-optimists* and the drag show *Splinters* (both adapted for film in 1929) also seemed a safe bet during this financially risky period.

Two women who later gained footholds in screenwriting for talkies were Billie Bristow and Lydia Hayward. Bristow, who began her career during the late 1910s as a cinema publicist, scripted *Two Many Crooks* (1930) starring a young Laurence Olivier in his first film role, and went on to work on 13 further films, several with Hitchcock's screenwriter, Charles Bennett.⁶⁵ By contrast, Hayward, one of Britain's most successful silent cinema screenwriters, started as an actress before writing screenplays, many adapted from popular middle-brow authors like Jerome K. Jerome and W.W. Jacobs. Her career peaked in the early to mid-1920s with 25 silent films and a further nine talkies to her name.⁶⁶

Despite inroads made by these women, male scriptwriters, often working in teams, overwhelmingly dominated the field. The names Miles Malleon, Victor Saville, A.E.W. Mason, Ben Travers, Edgar Wallace, Val Valentine, Eliot Stannard and Charles Bennett crop up over and over again in film credits. These men wrote dialogue and character directions for female characters in romances, dramas and musicals, genres which in 1929 accounted for over 40% of the output of British studios.⁶⁷ Although their films were designed to appeal to women C.A. Lejeune lamented the film industry's lack of insight into female psychology, and commented thus on male screenwriters:

He still grounds his appeals to woman on a misconception of her tastes. ...When she wants to see horses, he gives her children, when she longs for dogs, he smothers her with babies...For adventure, domesticity: for the gun, a Paris gown: for the boarhound, a Pekingese: in every way the showman provides his woman patrons with the things that have for them the least appeal.⁶⁸

For Lejeune at least, women craved adventure over domesticity; desires that early sound cinema failed to redress.

Women and cinema music

Since the first purpose-built cinemas in the 1910s, women played a key role in providing musical accompaniment as pianists, singers or as part of ensembles. Some, like the three Baga sisters, Ena, Florence and Celeste, started playing to silent films as children in the 1910s and maintained successful careers beyond the silent period.⁶⁹ The 1911 census shows that of the 47,100 registered musicians in Britain, over 50% were women.⁷⁰ A few women had forged careers as music directors in silent cinemas, but between 1929 and 1932 when cinema music moved from live cinema performance to become part of the studio production system, women comprised only two percent of registered cinema musicians in the 450 sound films released.⁷¹ Cinema music in the early sound period rapidly became dominated by men like Louis Levy and John Reynders who conducted British International Picture's (BIP) own orchestra at Elstree Studios and transferred seamlessly into sound cinema. The tendency

was also to commission film scores from well-known male composers like William Walton, Hubert Bath, Benjamin Britten, Eugene Goossens and William Alwyn. Women composers like Elisabeth Lutyens, who had studied at the Royal College of Music, among others who tried to break into film in the early 1930s, were overlooked. Lutyens had to wait until 1944 for her first commission to provide a score when, during the exceptional circumstances of World War II, she created a score for a film about the Royal Air Force (RAF).⁷² In 1948 she became the first British woman to compose a film score for the 'B' movie, *Penny and the Pownall Case* (1948). Described as 'at the cutting edge of musical modernism in 1950s Britain', Lutyens went on to a successful career composing scores for Hammer Horror films during the 1960s.⁷³

Cinema exhibition as a space for women?

By World War I, women formed the majority audiences for British films. With so many men serving at the Front they also moved into positions of governance, running cinemas and taking over men's roles.⁷⁴ According to Robert James (2010) it was precisely the social and demographic changes brought about by that war that changed patterns of entertainment consumption for which working-class women were the chief beneficiaries.⁷⁵ British cinemas needed to attract women patrons and the feminisation of the cinema space during this period has been documented by Nathalie Morris

(2010) writing about Stoll Cinema's luxurious spaces which encouraged women to socialise. Cafes decorated in delicate colours served tea in Wedgwood crockery, flattering lighting, powder rooms with complementary beauty products and cloakrooms with storage for baby carriages were promoted to women through its house magazine *The Stoll Herald*.⁷⁶

Like Richardson, Lejeune felt that the cinema matinee offered women a refuge from the daily grind of housework and childcare. Matinees also suited working women who could snatch an afternoon off. In a somewhat essentialist manner, she described the cinema as a cosy, female-friendly refuge:

The small cushioned seats are women's seats; they have no masculine build. The warmth in winter, the coolness in summer, the darkness, the sleepy music, the chance to relax unseen, are all women's pleasures which no man.... can ever quite appreciate or understand.⁷⁷

After WWI, women also went on to play significant roles in alternative exhibition practices. Josephine Harvey and Iris Barry, along with Harvey's employer Sidney Bernstein, were among the founders of the influential London Film Society in 1925 which prompted the national spread of Film Societies in the early 1930s. Elsie Cohen imported and screened European films in London's run-down Windmill Theatre in 1928 and became the manager of the London's foremost arthouse cinema, the Academy from 1931.

Conclusion

The arrival of the talkies in Britain certainly consolidated pre-existing patterns of gender discrimination in the British film industry, but was Richardson correct to claim that the 'film had gone male'? While this was not entirely true in the sense that a few women were active in certain fields of the film industry, they were excluded from the new sonic technologies and their practical application. No women sound technicians were registered in Britain until 1936 and women remain relatively excluded in sound production to this day. Early cinema sound was considered a science derived from male inventiveness and controlled by male specialists; factors which marginalised women's access. The BBC had trained many of cinema's new sound technicians, but its marriage bar would have deterred women from achieving the kind of career foothold that would have allowed them to cross over into working in cinema sound. Nor did women gain a significant public voice at the BBC as newsreaders or presenters that might have allowed them access into the burgeoning sound newsreel industry whose content was invariably delivered by a male narrator. The male voice became associated with authority and veracity, particularly during the later 1930s with the arrival of Ministry of Information films which informed the nation's preparedness for war.

Despite cinema's appeal to female audiences and the popularity of its adaptations of women novelists during the silent period, opportunities for

women script-writers failed to emerge in the sound period. The source material for early talkies largely overlooked novels or plays by women and it was overwhelmingly all-male scriptwriting teams who wrote for female characters, with Bristow, Reville and Hayward as notable exceptions. Glyn, Shurey and Balfour, the only women producer/directors working during the transition, had to set up their own companies in order to make talkies, virtually bankrupting themselves in the process and failing to secure their future careers. Their fate, compounded with negative press coverage and spurious assertions about women's biological *inabilities* to command a film set would have discouraged other women from entering a masculinist industry which consolidated around its dominant male cohort. Even successful women in cinema were caught up in wider debates around female physical and psychological stamina which ran counter to evidence emerging from women's achievements in other fields and their attainment of full suffrage in 1928. Women like Culley-Forde, Reville and Kearton worked in collaboration with their husbands which, without denying any of their achievements, afforded them opportunities rarely open to women not married to powerful men with established careers. Avoiding the spotlight also protected them from media attacks on women directors like Shurey. Although women made significant

contributions to the burgeoning discipline of cinema criticism, as Shute's example shows, they did not always support women directors.

In stating that sound rendered film 'male', Left-wing intellectuals like Richardson and the *Close Up* group were waking to cinema's potential to be other than 'male', hegemonic, corporate and US-dominated. But it was not sound technology *per se* which had nudged cinema towards its masculine destiny of 'planful becoming', but rather complex patterns of gender discrimination and the consolidation of male power in the post-WWI period. British cinema, like other national cinemas, emulated the commercially successful masculinist, homogenised, industrial production practices of Hollywood and the commercial pressures of sound-era production squeezed out independent producers and alternative practices.⁷⁸ Despite their significant track records and commitments to new technologies of sound and colour, women producers like Shurey, Glyn and Balfour were already marginalised and the coming of sound simply sealed their fate. These patterns of discrimination, in place by the mid-1920s, continue to marginalise women today. Reports by Smith *et al* (2018) indicate the parlous state of gender inequality in Hollywood.⁷⁹ In Britain, the BFI Filmography's gender statistics show that women accounted for only 23% of all film crews in British films made between 2010 and 2019 from a sample size of over 680,000. The technological

revolution caused by the arrival of sound and its economic and aesthetic aftershocks in the early 1930s simply exacerbated women's marginalisation which had begun in the aftermath of World War I.

Notes.

¹ Richardson, Dorothy (1932), 'Continuous Performance: The Film Gone Male', *Close Up*, vol. IX, no. 1, March 1932, pp. 36-38, p.38.

² Cavell, Stanley (1979), *The World Viewed: Reflections on the Ontology of Film*, Cambridge Mass, Harvard University Press, p.147.

³ Marcus, Laura (2007), *The Tenth Muse: Writing about Cinema in the Modernist Period*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, p.406.

⁴ Bryher (1963), *The Heart to Artemis: A Writer's Memoirs*, London, Collins, p.265.

⁵ Kristeva, Julia (1984) [1974], *Revolution in Poetic Language*. Trans. M. Walter New York, Columbia University Press.

⁶ Current research shows that women occupy only around 30% of speaking parts in contemporary films. See data collected by the Annenberg Institute including Smith, Stacy L., Choueiti, Marc, Pieper, Katherine, Case Ariana, & Choi, Angela (2018), *Inequality in 1,100 Popular Films: Examining Portrayals of Gender, Race/Ethnicity, LGBT & Disability from 2007 to 2017*, USC Annenberg Institute. Available at: <http://assets.uscannenberg.org/docs/inequality-in-1100-popular-films.pdf>. Accessed 12/12/2018. See also Porter, Laraine (2018), "'Have you a happy voice'" in *Music, Sound and the Moving Image* vol. 12 no. 2 July 2018, pp. 141-169, for a discussion of this issue in the early sound period.

⁷ Richardson, Dorothy (1927), 'Continuous Performance' *Close Up*, 1:1, July 1927, pp. 35-36.

⁸ Antonia Lant discusses women's writing on different sensory responses to silent and sound cinema and the relationship between mental processes and

cinema which was an intellectual preoccupation during this period. See Lant (2006) pp. 151-159.

⁹ Lant, Antonia and Periz, Ingrid (eds.) (2006), *The Red Velvet Seat: Women's Writings on the Cinema*. London, Verso.

¹⁰ See: Scotland, John (1930), *The Talkies*, London, Crosby, Lockwood and Son; Harry M. Geduld (1975), *The Birth of the Talkies: from Edison to Jolson*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press; Eyman, Scott (1997), *The Speed of Sound: Hollywood and the Talkie Revolution 1926-1930*, New York, Simon and Schuster and O'Brien, Charles (2005), *Cinema's Conversion to Sound*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press.

¹¹ Chapman, James, Glancy, Mark, Harper, Sue (2007), *The New Film History: Sources, Methods, Approaches*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan.

¹² See: Slide, Anthony (1977), *Early Women Directors: their Role in the Development of the Silent Cinema*, South Brunswick N.J., A.S. Barnes; Acker, Ally (1991), *Reel Women: Pioneers of the Cinema 1896 to the Present*, New York, Continuum Publishing Company; Garrett-Cooper, Mark (2010), *Universal Women: Filmmaking and Institutional Change in Early Hollywood*, Illinois, University of Illinois Press; Stamp, Shelley (2015), *Lois Weber in Early Hollywood*, Los Angeles, University of California Press; Gaines, Jane (2018), *Pink-Slipped: What Happened to Women in the Silent Film Industries?*, Illinois, University of Illinois Press.

¹³ Morris, Nathalie (2010), 'Women and Cinema: 1910s and 1920s' in Bell, Melanie and Williams, Melanie eds. (2010) *British Women's Cinema*, Abingdon, Routledge.

¹⁴ The battle for control of European markets for the installation of sound equipment was widely documented in the trade press like *The Bioscope*; in the papers of the Cinema Exhibitors' Association (CEA) and by the Federation of British Industries (FBI) whose papers and reports are held in the Modern Records Centre at the University of Warwick.

¹⁵ Chibnall, Steve (2007), *Quota Quickies: The Birth of the British 'B' Film*, London, BFI Publishing.

-
- ¹⁶ Pearson, George (1957), *Flashback: An Autobiography of a British Film Maker*, London, George Allen & Unwin, p.187.
- ¹⁷ Porter, Laraine (2018), "' Have you a happy voice'" in *Music, Sound and the Moving Image* vol. 12 no. 2 July 2018, pp. 141-169.
- ¹⁸ <https://filmography.bfi.org.uk/>
- ¹⁹ Gifford, Denis (1986), *The British Film Catalogue 1895-1985*, Oxford, Facts on Film Publications.
- ²⁰ Lejeune, C.A. (1926), 'The Week on the Screen: The Women', *Manchester Guardian*, 16 Jan 1926, p.9. Barry, Iris (1926), *Let's Go to the Pictures*, London, Chatto and Windus, p.59.
- ²¹ Marcus p.295.
- ²² BFI Filmography.
- ²³ Bell, Melanie (2017) 'Learning to listen: histories of women's soundwork in the British film industry', *Screen* Volume 88 no.4, Winter 2017, Oxford, Oxford University Press, p.441.
- ²⁴ According to the BFI Filmography, in 2019 women still comprise only 2.6% in sound direction and 8.8% in sound overall.
- ²⁵ 'Goat Gland' described films shot silent during the late 1920s, with sound added later to revive their fortunes in a market geared for talkies.
- ²⁶ Shute, Nerina (1929), 'Can Women Direct Films?' *Film Weekly*, 10 June 1929, p. 12.
- ²⁷ *Film Weekly*, 8 Feb 1930 p. 25. Although Shute claimed that Shurey was Britain's only woman film producer to date, she had overlooked the American Florence Turner (1887-1946) who had a prolific British career as a producer/director/performer and in 1916, produced and starred in the successful comedy *East is East*. Turner abandoned her production company Turner Films in November 1916 due to difficulties making films in wartime Britain, but returned in 1921, starring in successful comedies. See Cook, Ann-Marie (2000), 'The Adventures of the Vitagraph Girl in England' in *Pimple, Pranks and Pratfalls: British Film Comedy Before 1930*, eds. Burton, Alan and Porter, Laraine, Trowbridge, Flicks Books, pp. 33-41.
- ²⁸ A swathe of women beat men in swimming the English Channel for the first time in 1926 and 1927.
- ²⁹ *Film Weekly*, 8 Feb 1930, p. 25.

-
- ³⁰ Silverman, Isadore (1931), 'Women behind the Screen' *Picturegoer*, May 1931 p.18.
- ³¹ 'Frat' (1930), 'All-Woman Films in London's Show Given 50% Razz' *Variety*, 2 April 1930, p.4.
- ³² 'Frat' (1927), *Carry On* film review, *Variety*, 28 Dec 1927, p.20.
- ³³ Leavis, Q.D. (1932), *Fiction and the Reading Public*, London, Random House 2000 edition, p. 50.
- ³⁴ Light, Alison p. 175.
- ³⁵ Leavis, Q.D. p.224.
- ³⁶ Wilcox, Herbert (1967), *Twenty-Five Thousand Sunsets*, London, The Bodley Head Ltd., p.170.
- ³⁷ Street, Sarah (2012), *Colour Films in Britain: the negotiation of innovation 1900-1955*, London, BFI Palgrave, pp.283-284.
- ³⁸ Shute, Nerina (1929), 'Can Women Direct Films?' *Film Weekly*, 10 June 1929, p. 12.
- ³⁹ Ibid.
- ⁴⁰ Etherington-Smith, Meredith and Pilcher, Jeremy (1986), *The "It" Girls: Elinor Glyn Novelist and her sister Lucile, Couturière*, San Diego, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, p.249.
- ⁴¹ Ibid, p.249.
- ⁴² See: Stead, Lisa (2016), *Off to the Pictures: Women's Writing, Cinemagoing and Movie Culture in Interwar Britain*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press and Weedon, Alexis (2018), 'An Introduction to Elinor Glyn: Her Life and Legacy', *Women: A Cultural Review*, 29:2, pp. 145-160. Also, Randell K. & Weedon, Alexis. (2015), 'Reconfiguring Elinor Glyn: Ageing Female Experience and the Origins of the 'It Girl'', in *Women, Celebrity and Cultures of Ageing*, London, Palgrave Macmillan.
- ⁴³ *The Scotsman*, 17 May 1930, p.15.
- ⁴⁴ Herbert Thompson (1930), *Film Weekly*, 7 June 1930, p.1.
- ⁴⁵ 'Miss Betty Balfour and the Talkies' *The Evening Telegraph*, 29 May 1930, p.4.
- ⁴⁶ Etherington-Smith, Meredith and Pilcher, Jeremy (1986), *The "It" Girls: Elinor Glyn Novelist and her sister Lucile, Couturière*. San Diego, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, p.250.
- ⁴⁷ See Kearton, Ada (1956), *On Safari*, London, Robert Hale Ltd.

⁴⁸ *Men of Tomorrow* is on the BFI's most-wanted list.

<https://www.bfi.org.uk/explore-film-tv/bfi-national-archive/archive-projects/bfi-most-wanted>

⁴⁹ *The Scotsman*, 'The Cinema: Courage in Production', 1 November 1932, p.6.

⁵⁰ Bloom, Clive (2002), *Bestsellers: Popular Fiction since 1900*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, p.5.

⁵¹ *Ibid.* p.9.

⁵² Nelmes, Jill and Selbo, Jule (2015), *Women Screenwriters: An International Guide*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke.

⁵³ Stead, Lisa (2016), *Off to the Pictures: Women's Writing, Cinemagoing and Movie Culture in Interwar Britain*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

⁵⁴ Light, Alison (1991), *Forever England: femininity, literature and conservatism between the wars*, London, Routledge.

⁵⁵ *Alibi* (1931) was adapted from the 1928 play *Alibi* by Michael Morton which was based on Christie's *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd* featuring the now famous detective Hercule Poirot. But by the mid-1920s half of all scripts in British cinema were supplied by two men, Eliot Stannard and Kenelm Foss. See: Low, Rachael (1971), *The History of the British Film 1918-1929*, London, George, Allen and Unwin, p. 240.

⁵⁶ MacDonald, Ian (2011), 'Screenwriting in Britain 1895–1929', in J. Nelmes ed. *Analysing the Screenplay*, London: Routledge, pp. 44–66, p.48.

⁵⁷ Shafer, Stephen (1997), *British Popular Films of the 1930s: The Cinema of Reassurance*, London, Routledge, p.21.

⁵⁸ Nelmes and Selbo, p.596.

⁵⁹ Truffaut, Francois (1978), *Hitchcock*, St Albans, Paladin, p. 75. For positive reviews of the film see *Film Weekly*, 16 May 1931, p.6 and Agate, James (1930), 'The Cinema: Bravo, the British!' *The Tatler*, 5 March 1930, p.420.

⁶⁰ Reville started her film career playing the young Megan Lloyd George in Maurice Elvey's *The Life Story of David Lloyd George*, (1918, released 1996) and worked in continuity, editing and assistant direction. See Spoto, Donald (1983),

The Dark Side of Genius: The Life of Alfred Hitchcock, Boston, Little Brown, for evidence of Reville's centrality to Hitchcock's films. See also, Natalie Morris' entry for Reville in Nelmes, Jill and Selbo, Julie eds (2015) in *Women Screenwriters: An International Guide*, London, Palgrave, pp. 619-624.

⁶¹ Hitchcock-O'Connell, Patricia and Bouzereau, Laurent (2003), *Alma Hitchcock, the Woman behind the Man*, New York, Berkley Books.

⁶² Eyman, Scott (1997), *The Speed of Sound: Hollywood and the Talkie Revolution 1926-1930*, New York, Simon and Schuster, p.352.

⁶³ Cited in Eyman, p.279.

⁶⁴ Gale, Maggie (2000), 'Women Playwrights of the 1920s and 1930s', in Aston, Elaine and Reinelt, Janelle, *The Cambridge Companion to Modern British Playwrights*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, p.23.

⁶⁵ Bristow's first sound film *Deadlock* (1931), is missing believed lost and on the BFI's most-wanted list.

⁶⁶ See: Christine Gledhill's entry on Lydia Hayward in Nelmes, Jill and Selbo, Julie eds (2015) in *Women Screenwriters: An International Guide*, London, Palgrave, pp. 610-619

⁶⁷ Shafer p.30.

⁶⁸ Lejeune, C.A. (1926), 'The Women', *Manchester Guardian*, 16 Jan 1926, p. 9.

⁶⁹ See Porter, Laraine (2017), "' The "Missing Muscle": Attitudes to Women Working in Cinema and Music 1910–1930', *Journal of Popular Music and Society*, Vol 40 issue 5, pp. 499-517.

⁷⁰ Erhlich, Cyril (1985), *The Music Profession in Britain since the Eighteenth Century: A Social History*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, p. 233.

⁷¹ See Porter, Laraine (2017) "' The Missing Muscle": Attitudes to Women Working in Cinema Music 1910-1930', *Popular Music and Society*, vol. 40 issue 5, July 2017, pp.499-517.

⁷² <http://www.musicweb-international.com/film/britlist.htm>. Accessed 25 May, 2019.

⁷³ Huckvale, David (2008), *Hammer Film Scores and the Musical Avant-Garde*, North Carolina, McFarland & Company Inc., p.54.

⁷⁴ Williams, David R. (1997), "Ladies of the lamp: the employment of women in the British film trade during World War I", *Film History* 9:1: 1997, pp. 116-127.

⁷⁵ James, Robert (2010), *Popular Culture and Working-class Taste in Britain, 1930-1939*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, p.15.

⁷⁶ Morris, Nathalie (2010), 'Pictures, romance and luxury: women and British cinema in the 1910s and 1920s'; *British Women's Cinema*, Bell, Melanie and Williams, Melanie, Abingdon, Routledge, p.29.

⁷⁷ Lejeune, C.A. (1926), 'The Week on the Screen: The Women', *Manchester Guardian*, 16 Jan 1926, p.9.

⁷⁸ O'Brien, Charles (2005), *Cinema's Conversion to Sound*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, p.7.

⁷⁹ Smith, Stacy L., Choueiti, Marc, Pieper, Katherine, Case Ariana, & Choi, Angela (2018), *Inequality in 1,100 Popular Films: Examining Portrayals of Gender, Race/Ethnicity, LGBT & Disability from 2007 to 2017*, USC Annenberg Institute. Available at: <http://assets.uscannenberg.org/docs/inequality-in-1100-popular-films.pdf>. Accessed 12/12/2018.