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The dynamics of audience practices: Mobilities of film consumption

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Abstract:

This article addresses a dynamic of audience practice in engaging with film and identifies that this is characterised through mobilities in film consumption. It draws on rich mixed methods data to argue that not only is film an accessible and highly popular cultural activity, but that it is engaged with in various ways, and shaped by particular configurations of social, cultural, economic, and political factors as well as personal choice. The article develops a novel theoretical approach, combining audience studies and New Cinema History literature. For this, it draws on Hartmann's (2006) notion of a triple articulation of media, treating screens as technological *objects*, films as media *texts*, and the social, spatial, and temporal contexts in which films are watched as particular *environments*. Each of these are considered equally important to understanding film consumption. The article also incorporates Urry's (2008) concept of 'mobilities' to account for how people move between triple articulations. Here, mobilities can be: *corporeal* with audiences physically travelling to watch at particular venues, or in adjusting their environment around bodies; *social* in as far as people share films, both as material objects and in the shared experience of watching together; *virtual* where audiences discuss films online, share on-demand platform logins, or watch simultaneously in different places; and/or *integrative*, where digital technologies provide new affordances for watching films while carrying out other practices, e.g. watching

via a smartphone while commuting on a train. By combining triple articulation with mobilities to examine interview and survey data, the article identifies and examines five triple articulations of film: (1) going to watch films at the cinema; (2) watching films on television at home; (3) watching films on laptop or tablet whilst in bed; (4) watching films on a smartphone when away from home; and (5) watching films on an in-flight entertainment system (e.g. on long-haul flights). It contends that people move and migrate between triple articulations of film in various ways through a diverse set of mobilities. Overall, the article argues that film consumption is best explored not just through a focus on the film as text, or on the social, temporal and/or spatial environments in which film-watching takes place, but through an understanding that the two are related and framed by wider cultural and economic factors - as well as various interactions between films, people, places, platforms, screens, and venues.

Keywords: Audience studies; New Cinema History; Mobilities; Triple articulation.

Introduction

This article examines the dynamics of film audience members' practices and the range of mobilities that film consumption entails. To do so, it draws on Hartmann's (2006) notion of a triple articulation of media, in which the screen technologies on which people watch films are treated as material *objects*, while films and their varying content are treated as media *texts*, and the social, spatial, and temporal contexts in which people watch films are treated as *environments*. Rather than placing priority on any of one of these three aspects, it is the interplay between them in which triple articulations are seen to emerge. The article extends this idea by drawing on mobilities literature to explain how and why people configure particular triple articulations, and to examine how they move between different ones. Here, mobilities can be *corporeal* in the sense of any bodily movement through space involved with watching film, i.e., travelling to the cinema, or moving about to adjust an environment for bodily comfort while watching films. They can be *social* too, both in sharing films as physical objects, and in sharing the experience of watching with others. There are also *virtual* mobilities at stake, with people reading reviews and discussing films online (both with strangers and people known to them) and watching them via video-on-demand (VoD) platforms. This often intersects with social mobilities in as far as people share logins and/or watch films simultaneously in different places. Finally, there are *integrative* mobilities, where different types of mobility are brought together to form a stable configuration - a routine. For example, digital technologies provide an opportunity for new mobilities to emerge that are both corporeal *and* virtual, e.g., people watching films online via an on-demand platform on a smartphone while commuting on a train. The article combines the notion of a triple articulation of media with a mobilities lens to examine interview and

survey data. It identifies and examines triple articulations of film in: (1) watching films at the cinema; (2) watching films on television at home; (3) watching films on a laptop or tablet in bed; (4) watching films on a smartphone when away from home; and (5) watching films on an in-flight entertainment. The article shows how people move and migrate between these triple articulations in various ways, highlighting the diverse set of mobilities they employ to do so. Overall, the article argues that film consumption is best explored not just through a focus on the film as text, or on the social, temporal and/or spatial context of which film-watching takes place – but through an understanding that the two are related and framed by wider cultural and economic factors as well as various interactions between films, people, places, platforms, screens, and venues.

The next section provides an outline of audience studies and New Cinema History literature and explains how an analytical focus on either film content, processes of interpretation, or the moment of viewing itself has often come at the expense of a broader understanding of how film consumption can feature within people's cultural and social lives. The article then moves on to set out a framework, combining Hartmann's triple articulations of media with Urry's mobilities. Having set out a background context and framework, the article moves on to methods, where the data drawn on are discussed alongside their fit with the framework. The article then presents findings, examining five particular triple articulations of film and various mobilities between them. The concluding section provides a discussion of those findings, showing the framework in action as a useful way of understanding the dynamics and audience practices of contemporary film consumption.

Mobilising relations and interactions in the triple articulation of film

Studying the experiences and practices of audience members has been a mainstay of both audience studies and New Cinema History; the two main fields of literature concerned with understanding film consumption. In both, the contexts in which audiences engage with films are seen as important sites of study. In audience studies, theory has shifted from media-centric notions of particular media texts (such as a specific film) having an effect on a singular mass audience when watched on a specific type of screen (Livingstone, 2005; McQuail, 2013). In its place, audiences are often seen as multiple, plural, and diffused through a massively increased set of opportunities for watching film (Tewksbury, 2005). Here, audience members are held to be active in the decisions they make over what to watch, when, where, with whom, and how (Barker, 2012). Meanwhile, audiences are seen as relational and interactive constructs formed both through the personal relationships people have with different screens, venues, and texts, and with other people through film. Between the two opposed positions, audience studies theorists have looked at uses and gratifications models, to examine why people choose particular texts, why they watch them on particular types of screen, and what needs they might satisfy by doing so (Katz, 1973; Banks and Wasserman, 2019). They have also examined the signified meaning with texts,

and the processes by which encoded messages are decoded in similar ways by audiences (Hall, 1973). In each approach different levels of agency have been ascribed to the people watching films, and audiences have been held to be constituted in different ways. What unites these differing approaches is a separation between screens as the material technology that people watch films on, and media as the content or texts that are accessed through them. Scarce attention has been given in audience studies literature to the broader social, spatial, or temporal contexts in which people watch films and in which audiences form.

In New Cinema History literature, a recent successor of audience studies, the same separation applies between screens as the technologies used to watch films and films as media texts watched on them. This often revolves around generating historically contextualised and empirically informed theory about the experience of watching film in particular social and spatial contexts. In part, this follows a departure from grand theory in cinema studies with theorists often drawing on empirical insights from case studies involving qualitative or mixed methods research on one particular technology, medium, screen, or context. Hubbard (2003) for example, examined the experiences of people watching films at multiplex cinema venues at night, as a specific consumer-focussed place with leisure and recreation facilities. Similarly, Evans (2011) examined the formation of audiences as temporary communities in independent cinema venues. Others, such as Barker and Brooks (1998) and Barker et al. (2007) have drawn on mixed methods research in other ways to examine nuance in the reception of particular films in different countries. In contemporary new cinema histories, focus often rests on the screen technologies and film texts that people interact with in particular social, spatial, and temporal contexts - albeit with an understanding that influences from outside the immediate moment of viewing can shape people's film-watching practices and experiences. Atkinson (2015) and Grundström (2018), for instance, both find that people engage with various paratextual and transmedial aspects of film prior to, during, and after watching. This includes the advertisements, promotional material, critical acclaim, and public debate on social media surrounding a film's theatrical release. For Das and Ytre-Arne (2018) and Livingstone (2018) these aspects, alongside the algorithmically defined sets of recommendations people receive based on their past viewing history, are equally defining of the social context in which people watch films. This has led some, such as Styliari et al. (2018) to argue that people form personal (and therefore individualised) cinematic digital identities as they individually navigate between watching films in particular contexts, in turn raising questions about the constitution of film consumption patterns, and recognisable practices.

Understanding the mobility of film audiences requires a careful balance in stepping up and outward from the focus in New Cinema History on particular spatial, temporal, and social contexts. Especially, if any pattern in the dynamics of audience practices is to be sought. Doing so provides a way of looking across the different contexts in which people watch films, as well as the different screen technologies, media, and particular films involved,

without losing sight of the relations and interactions through which audiences are constructed or the specific aspects of each context involved. One way to do this is to follow Hartmann's (2006) suggestion of a triple articulation of media. Here, she expands Silverstone et al.'s notion of 'double articulation', a concept which upholds a dialectic between each technology as '...the means (the media) whereby public and private meanings are negotiated...[and as]... the products themselves, through consumption, of such negotiations.' (Silverstone et al., 1992, p. 28, footnote 9). That is, the focus on double articulation is not just placed on the screen (such as the cinema screen or television set) as a material technology, nor on the particular media that carries a text (e.g., scheduled television and cinema programmes which foreground the content of particular films over others). Instead, the approach focuses simultaneously on both, holding them to be in relation to one another. However, in doing so it '... neglect[s] the specific articulations of objects and especially media texts (Courtois et al., 2012, p. 423-424). Although double articulation brings screen technologies (as materials) and media (as the types of text carried by screens) together, it diminishes diversity and nuance in how the use of each screen technology and choice of media relates to users' active interpretations of film content and of the context in which they engage with a medium. This limitation is noted by Livingstone, who adds that '...people are always both interpreters of the media-as-text and users of the media-as-object...' (2003, p. 14) and therefore individuated, raising questions about how audiences form and how different people engage with particular screens and media in similar ways. To address this, Hartmann (2006) extends the idea of a double articulation to a 'triple articulation' by examining screens as material objects, texts as the messages that media contain, and the context (physical and/or symbolic environment) in which film consumption it takes place (Courtois et al., 2012). Overall, Hartmann provides a way to examine people's use of different screens to watch films through an interactive and relational lens with an understanding that film consumption is a triple articulation. This involves examining people's relationships with particular screens, films, and contexts. However, the approach does not fully address people's mobilities in moving in, out, and between different triple articulations of film - or the relations and interactions involved in doing so.

One way of addressing people's movement between triple articulations of film is to turn to mobilities literature, a field that emerged in the 1990s. It offered a sociological attempt to focus on making sense of the then increasing amount of movement, both of bodies in terms of migration and transport, and of ideas through the opportunity to communicate to a far wider network through the internet (Urry, 2000). As such, it followed on as an extension of the spatial turn (Sheller and Urry, 2006) focussing on movement, flux, and temporalities as well as space. To date, it has been applied to various topics as a way of uncovering the experiences and practices involved with any activity that involves movement, including film (Archer, 2012; Borden, 2013; Merriman, 2014). When Urry (2000) first set out the notion, he included five types of mobility: corporeal – i.e. where audiences physically travel to watch at

particular venues, or adjust their environment around human bodies; social - where people share films, both as material objects and in the shared experience of watching together; virtual - where people discuss films online (e.g. via social media), share on-demand platform log-ins, or watch simultaneously in different places; and/or integrative - where digital technologies provide new affordances for watching films while carrying out other practices, e.g. watching via a smartphone while commuting on a train. As the findings below demonstrate, these five forms of mobility fit with the notion of audiences being interactive and relational constructs, and with film consumption being enacted through different triple articulations of screens, texts, and environments.

Overall, the framework developed in this section has involved a discussion of concepts from audience studies and New Cinema History as well as those of triple articulation, relations and interactions, and mobility. What the different literatures have in common is an understanding that audiences, alongside their experiences and practices are contingent, emergent, and always open to change. In turn, this raises questions about the methods and data to employ when studying them.

Methods and data

This article draws on two datasets, both part of an AHRC-funded mixed-methods project called *'Beyond the Multiplex: Audiences for specialised film in English Regions'* (BtM) (UKRI, 2017). The project examined how a wider range of audiences might be enticed to engage with and watch non-mainstream films. To do so, it gathered data from four English regions outside London (North East, North West, South West, and Yorkshire and the Humber) via various research methods, including: secondary analysis of national datasets about cultural consumption and film in particular to develop a socio-cultural index; analysis of 114 main UK film policy and industry documents; 200 semi-structured interviews with audience members on their experiences and practices of watching films; a three-wave sample survey on film preferences and past film consumption activity, using a within-group subset sample to hone in on specialised film viewers in particular, gathering N=5,071, n=547, and n=317 responses on each respective wave; a set of 27 semi-structured interviews with UK film policy and industry experts including exhibitors, gathering insights on the UK policy landscape and how it has changed over time; and 16 x film-elicitation focus groups to gather insights into the ways in which people make sense of specialised film content.

This article focuses primarily on BtM's 200 semi-structured interviews (conducted equally across the four English regions), with basic descriptive analyses of survey wave one data (conducted November 2018) to contextualise insights from them. The interviews were gathered between November 2017 and April 2018 and examined through an applied thematic analysis (Guest et al., 2012) between May 2018 and June 2019. For a copy of all anonymised interview transcripts, the coding scheme developed through their analysis, and the socio-demographics of each participant, see Wessels et al. (2019). To analyse the

interview data, the above framework provides a specific lens for examining the different triple articulations involved with film consumption, the screens, texts, and environments involved, and the relations and interactions at stake. The survey data used to contextualise interview-based findings was analysed exploratorily using descriptive statistics in-line with interpretivist underpinnings of the analysis, with the full set of survey responses (to all three waves) available for reuse as a publicly open dataset (see ; Yates et al., 2020). All data can be explored on the project website (Wessels et al., 2021).

Five different triple articulations of film and mobility between them

As noted above, this article approaches film audiences as relational and interactive constructs and film-watching as a triple articulation. It focuses on the interactions and relations between screens (as material objects), texts (as particular films and their content), and environments (social, spatial, and temporal contexts) in which film consumption takes place. Also, people's mobilities between them. In this section, five distinct triple articulations of film are identified, alongside a discussion of how people move between them.

Watching films at the cinema

The first triple articulation of film identified in the research was 'watching films at the cinema'. Here, people travel to a particular place (the cinema venue) to watch a broad range of films on a large screen. In the survey, 72% of the 5,071 respondents (n=3636) had been to the cinema at least once in the previous year, with 33% having been four times or more over that period. Within this, 48% of all respondents had been to watch a film at the cinema alone at least once, with very little variance (standard deviation 62) between regions suggesting that this is a commonplace triple articulation of film across the country.

As an object, the cinema screen is fixed in place with viewers seated in an often dark auditorium facing towards it. As a particular environment, people may watch alone or as part of a group whilst being surrounded by strangers and a sense of anonymity. Josephine, for instance explains that:

Everyone is alone in the cinema really, no one knows who anyone is. A tiny temporary community is formed... You wouldn't normally sit at home in a dark room with people you don't know... It feels like the rules are temporarily suspended...

Her account demonstrates that the sense of anonymity gained by watching films in the darkness of the cinema auditorium provides not only a sense of temporary community (cf. Evans. 2011) but also a brief respite from the normal rules and routines of everyday life. As well as being steeped within the moment of watching a film, people also consider which particular films to watch at the cinema. Max for instance notes that his decision to watch at

the cinema revolves around there being ‘...a really good film that you want to watch... you want to give your entire attention...you are engaged from start to finish...’. Here, his account relates to the cinema venue as a particular context in which he can fully immerse himself within a film, and be attentive to its content. His rationale however, is not indiscriminate and implies that some films (which he labels ‘really good’ ones) are worth watching at the cinema, while others might not be.

Josephine and Max both hold the cinema venue to be tied to particular viewing experiences through its specificity as a space - and therefore focus on the spatial context in which films are viewed. However, others are more concerned with its temporal aspects. When watching newly released films, Robin for example, opts to go to ‘...big [multiplex] cinemas in the town [because he feels] the local cinemas will get [it] probably later - years, months later...’. Here, the decision to watch new films at a city centre multiplex rather than a local independent venue is tied to film release cycles and venue programming as a particular temporal context which comes prior to any consideration of the particular space provided by different venue types.

Watching films on television at home

The second articulation of film identified through the research was ‘watching films on television at home’, something that 89% of the survey respondents had done at least once in the previous year. Like watching film at the cinema, this triple articulation was relatively evenly split between two social contexts, with 87% having watched one on television at home alone compared to 61% who had done so at home with a group at least once over the previous year. However, it is important to note that many people move between these two different social contexts in the course of their day-to-day film-watching activities. Gemma for instance highlights the different corporeal mobilities involved with sitting still in the living-room when watching alone or with her partner as a way to relax, and moving around to adjust the space (to emulate the cinema auditorium environment) when watching with friends.

I will quite happily sit by myself and chill out in front of a movie.... Myself and my boyfriend...[are] both really busy... [we] take a day out on a Sunday to chill... I do still have friend film nights ...me and my friends will get together... the stereotypical “let’s pull up a bunch of [fast-food] together and close the curtains and make a cinema night of this”.

Her account shows a triple articulation of film in that the television screen is embedded and fixed in place within the living room as a technological object, while other materials (such as curtains) within the same space are adjusted around it. Here the spatial context is treated as a domestic one, which can be changed according to the temporal and social context in

which a film is watched e.g., whom it is watched and shared with (alone, with a partner, with friends), and when (e.g., film night). Other factors beyond the moment of watching also come into play. For example, eating fast food and socialising with friends or spending time with a partner by relaxing together both involve particular sets of interactions between people carried out at the same time as watching a film.

By contrast, when Jacob describes watching films on television at home, he explains that doing so during his lunch break provides a means of reminiscence and comfort in watching previously known and familiar films:

I'm self-employed [and] work from home some days, so when I'm having lunch at home I may stick on Film4 and see what's on. There might an old John Wayne [film] or something, and I'll watch half an hour of it while having my lunch. If it's a familiar film I know what happens, [so] I don't need to watch the whole thing, I'll just reminisce for half an hour.

Like Gemma, for Jacob the television is fixed in place within the domestic space of his home, albeit fostering interaction based on the set temporal rhythm of taking a break from work rather than on a weekly meet up with friends. It does however also revolve around Jacob eating whilst watching, during a short period of relaxation, and therefore offers a form of integrative mobility.

Watching films on a laptop or tablet whilst in bed

A third triple articulation of film identified by the research involves watching films on a laptop or tablet whilst in bed. Whilst the survey did not directly gather detail on how many people had watched films on either technology independently, 78% and 57% of all respondents did report having used a laptop or tablet respectively during the previous year to watch film, either to download or stream a film on their device. As such, it appears to be a relatively commonplace way of watching films.

In terms of the social context in which people enact this triple articulation, it tends to be done primarily (although not always) when alone, with the small and portable screen of a laptop or tablet being associated with the bedroom as a specifically private space for relaxation, and the bed as a site of bodily comfort and lack of corporal mobility. Rhiannon for example explains that the '...the predominant way that I would watch film would be by myself on my laptop at home, in bed with some red wine...'

Likewise, Sandra adds that 'you can sit on [the] bed. You can just sit on bed and do, you can pause it whenever you want', highlighting the convenience of being able to control when and what to watch whilst in the private comfort of her own bed. This, however, can differ and the boundaries between triple articulations of film can be permeable. Nicole for instance explains that:

Most of the time, I watch the movie in my bed, and then [in] my time before going to sleep. On the laptop and before going to sleep, in my bed, in my room, with my partner... [at] around nine o'clock-ish in the evening. And sometimes, when we have spare time together and we don't feel like we can go outside because of the weather or whatever, we watch a movie during the afternoon, and it's, in this occasion, we watch in the living room, and on the sofa.

Whilst watching films on a laptop in bed, Nicole's viewing is shared with her partner rather than being a solo activity. Here, despite the portability of the laptop it is associated firmly with the bedroom as technology is fixed within that space. While the inclusion of her partner means Nicole's film-watching holds a different social dynamic than Rhiannon's or Sandra's, the screen is embedded within the same context and engaged with in a similar way. However, when the screen itself (the laptop) is moved to watch films elsewhere the articulation changes. In Nicole's account this can be seen when she and her partner use it to watch films in the living room on rainy days. Here her account resonates with Gemma's account of watching a film at home on television with a partner.

Watching films on a smartphone when away from home

The fourth triple articulation identified involves watching films on a smartphone when away from home. In the survey, this is best represented by a figure of 32% of all respondents who reported having watched a film either on a train or aeroplane over the previous year, of whom 74% had also stated that they regularly used a smartphone to go online. Although these figures are only indicative, they do align with Ofcom (2019) who find that 19.1 million people had subscribed to a video-on-demand platform via a smartphone over the same period, with 44% of them having watched a film on a smartphone - suggesting that it is fairly commonplace across the UK. As a triple articulation, watching films on a smartphone when away from home involves not only a corporeal mobility in people travelling between places and away from home, but also a concern for temporal context. Henry for example notes that watching films on a smartphone screen is something he does to fill the commute time when travelling between cities on the train. However, he notes that it involves pre-planning, forethought, and setting aside the time to download a film in advance of his journey - and thus prior to the moment of viewing.

If I'm prepared enough to have downloaded a film so that I can watch it on my phone then I would watch a film on the train, but only if it's a long distance journey obviously... so if you're travelling Liverpool to London it's two hours approximately, so it's a perfect length of time to watch a film.

What Henry's account demonstrates is that the smartphone as an object, with its small, portable, and personal screen, offers access to films online (which can be streamed or watched as downloaded content offline). It provides a way to engage with films alone that he has chosen specifically to download, and to watch them via a personal device in a public place for a set period of time. Samantha provides a similar account, albeit one that involves a sharing of film resources. Here, she notes that:

Actually the other day, because my friend had her Netflix up, so I was using one of her screens and so I got the Netflix account, and the BBC iPlayer app, then we were coming back on this big long bus journey so I thought, right, I'm going to download all this stuff, I'm going to sit on this bus and watch it all. So it's like I share Netflix!

For Samantha, the past activity of sharing her smartphone screen to watch a film with a friend (who had in turn used Samantha's smartphone to log into her own Netflix account) served to frame her ability to later watch a film on the bus. Here, Samantha had downloaded various films and television shows in advance (like Henry) to watch whilst travelling, requiring forethought and planning. He also watched the downloaded films via the small smartphone screen whilst travelling. However, where Henry's practice was personal and solitary, for Samantha it was shared with a friend in a small dyadic group, providing a different social context.

Watching films on an in-flight entertainment system (IFES)

A fifth (and final) articulation of film-watching involves long-haul flights, where films are viewed on small screens embedded in the rear of passenger seat headrests via an in-flight entertainment system (IFES). Here, the IFES screen is fixed in place as a technological object and situated within a semi-private space (with accoutrements such as headphones/earphones adding an element of privacy). In terms of film itself, as text, IFES offer a limited range of new releases, with the free time; enabling people to indulge in guilty pleasures and to engage with (and catch up) on films not watched elsewhere. There is also a corporeal mobility involved with physically travelling long distances between places, often across national borders, with film used to fill the journey time. As such, much like smartphone film-viewing as a form of entertainment during train or bus journeys, the experience is typically personal. Leanne personifies this when she states that 'I might not watch a lot of films but when I, I fly a lot - like I travel a lot, and that's when I will catch up with the films, I suppose...I watch like three films on the plane, back-to-back', highlighting the intensity of film-watching the triple articulation invokes.

In addition, the triple articulation invites greater risk-taking on choice of film watched, as Gwyneth notes; 'it's like you can watch, em, loads more guilty pleasures on planes, or stuff that I'd probably have been intrigued about but never would have actually gone to watch',

marking film-watching via an IFES while flying as a potential site for exposing people to wider range of film. For others, watching whilst flying is a luxury generally not afforded by the business of their day-to-day life. As Philip notes, in his usual routine finding time to watch a film can be difficult. Flying provides a suspension of his normal duties for an 11-hour flight where he can catch up on films he has not had the chance to watch.

Philip: Coming back from China, it was an 11-hour flight, and I probably watched four or five films. I never get a chance, never get the time... But on the plane, sat there [I've] got nothing else to do. I watch them, and really enjoy them as well.

Interviewer: So is time a factor in watching?

Philip: Em, yeah, the time is...Is a big issue. I can't justify watching too many... There's this thing on Netflix that I use and that has, films. It's actually my sister's but you can share it with like the other... People, and she's kind enough. Actually, I use it, so that has films on that, but it's a big commitment like two hours, two-and-a-half hours, so normally, I might watch 20-minute TV episodes... rather than a full length two-hour...two-and-a-half-hour film.

In short, watching films on the fixed screen of an IFES over a set time period (the duration of the flight) enables people both to take risks and to catch up from a semi-private space whilst traveling between places.

Conclusion

The subsections above have set out five distinct triple articulations of film, each centred around a specific screen type. In doing so, each subsection has drawn out details about the relevant objects, texts, and environments that constitute each triple articulation. They have also brought out the relations and interactions, and the types of mobilities that each entail. However, in setting them out separately the article has not fully addressed the types of mobility that can be found between them. Here, as technological objects film audiences move towards and orient themselves in relation to various screens. Some are immobile in as far as they are fixed in place, such as cinema screens within an auditorium, television screen in the domestic space of the home, and IFES screens in the headrest of aeroplane passenger seats. By contrast smartphones, laptops, and tablets are portable and can move with people as they traverse from place to place. The latter enables integrative mobilities, where people carry out various other activities whilst watching films on each screen. For example, watching on a smartphone while commuting on a train or bus. However, people also watch films on television with friends whilst socialising and/or while eating. As texts too, films enable various forms of social interaction such as connecting with others through film in

virtual mobilities, learning about other people, places, and cultures through the stories and narratives of films in imaginative mobilities, or by sharing films as material objects (e.g., by gifting or exchanging DVDs, or sharing a video-on demand log-in. In the experiences of watching film within these different temporal, spatial, and social contexts, there are different physical mobilities at stake when audiences choose whether to travel to specific venues, stay to watch in particular places within the home, or watch whilst on the move for the embodied experience of watching in particular material environments. There are also social mobilities at stake when people come together to watch films together as shared experience, while others may choose to watch alone either in order to immerse within film content at a personal level, at times as guilty pleasures, or to catch-up with missed films. Overall, this article has argued that examining film audiences by looking at their mobilities and the triple articulations involved with film-watching can help make sense of film consumption. Whilst the article is limited in drawing on data from a narrow range of four English regions, its argument might be applied to empirical data elsewhere (and perhaps extended) providing an entry point into the data. This is significant in as far as it contributes a lens to the field, at the intersection of audience studies and New Cinema History which can account for film content (text), place/environment, and material/screen at the same time as well as accounting for the wider social contexts in which films are watched.

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