



# Star Gazing: Hollywood Cinema and Female Spectatorship

*Jackie Stacey*

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## **Star Gazing: Hollywood Cinema and Female Spectatorship** Jackie Stacey

In a historical investigation of the pleasures of cinema, *Star Gazing* puts female spectators back into theories of spectatorship. Combining film theory with a rich body of ethnographic research, Jackie Stacey investigates how female spectators understood Hollywood stars in the 1940's and 1950's. Her study challenges the universalism of psychoanalytic theories of female spectatorship which have dominated the feminist agenda within film studies for over two decades.

Drawing on letters and questionnaires from over three hundred keen cinema-goers, Stacey investigates the significance of certain Hollywood stars in women's memories of wartime and postwar Britain. Three key processes of spectatorship - escapism, identification and consumption - are explored in detail in terms of their multiple and changing meanings for female spectators at this time. *Star Gazing* demonstrates the importance of cultural and national location for the meanings of female spectatorship, giving a new direction to questions of popular culture and female desire.

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