

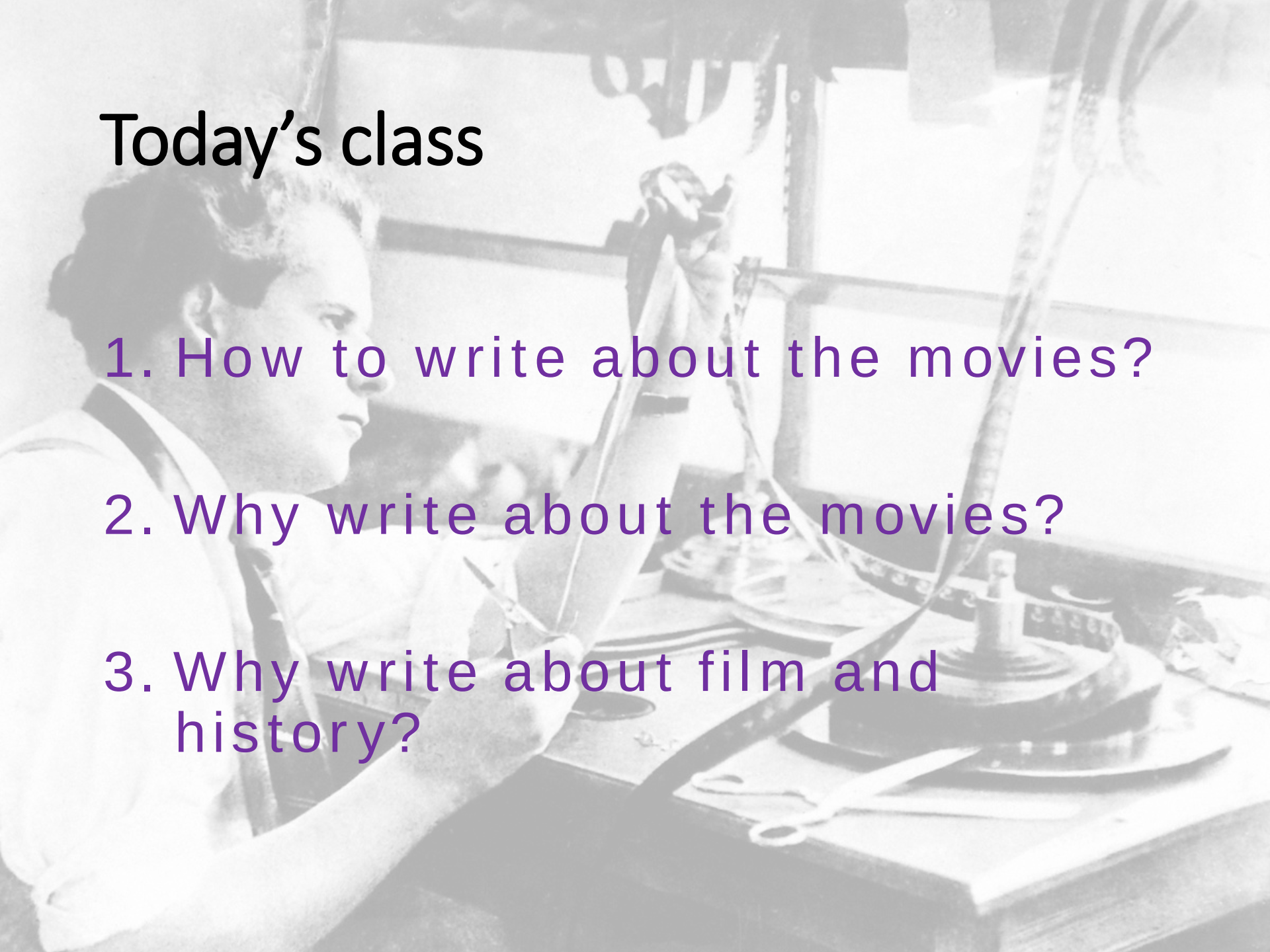


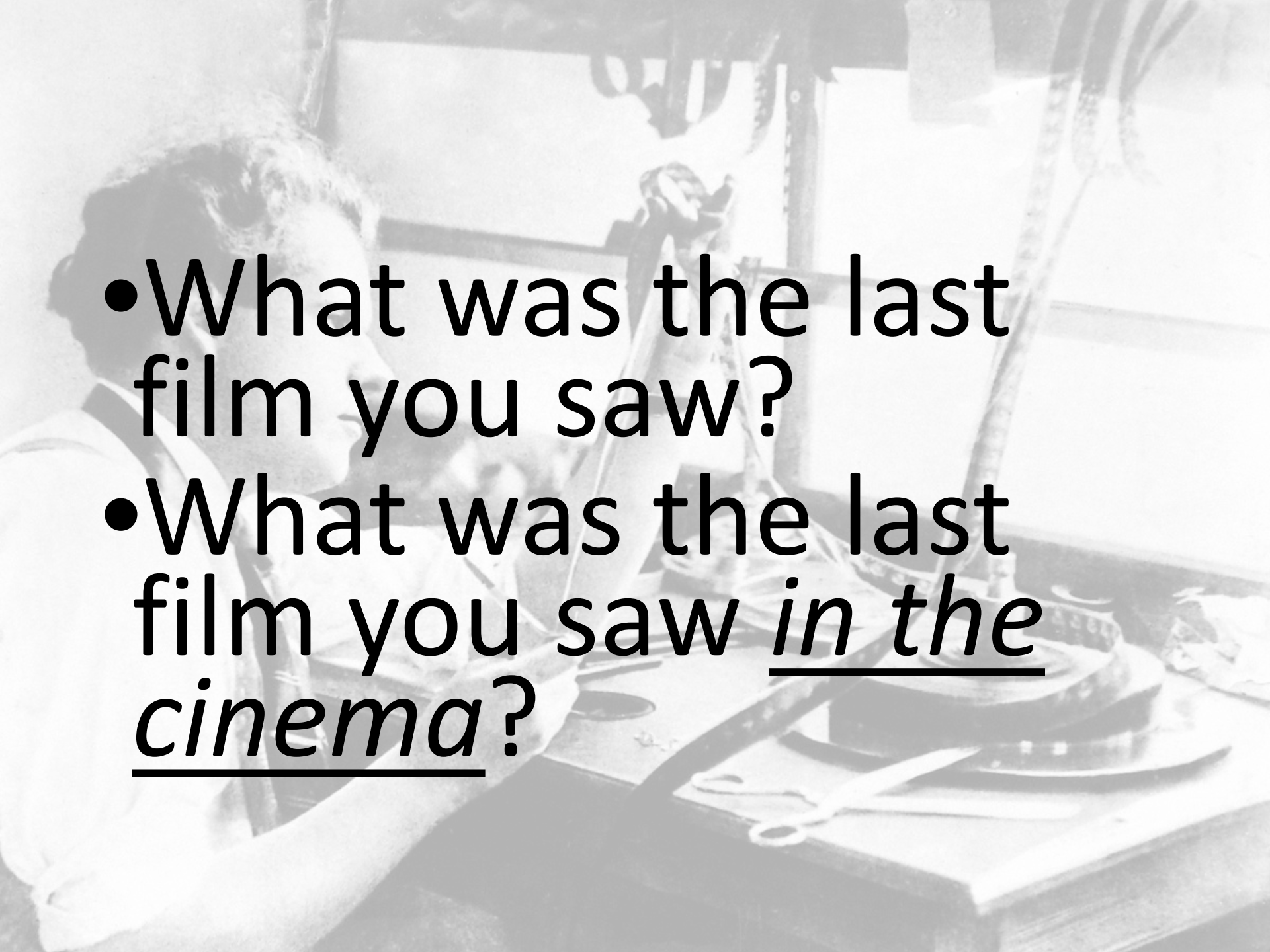
HPHI7011 Screening the Past: Film and History - Ancient, Medieval, Modern

Week 1 Film and History: Key Terms and Concepts

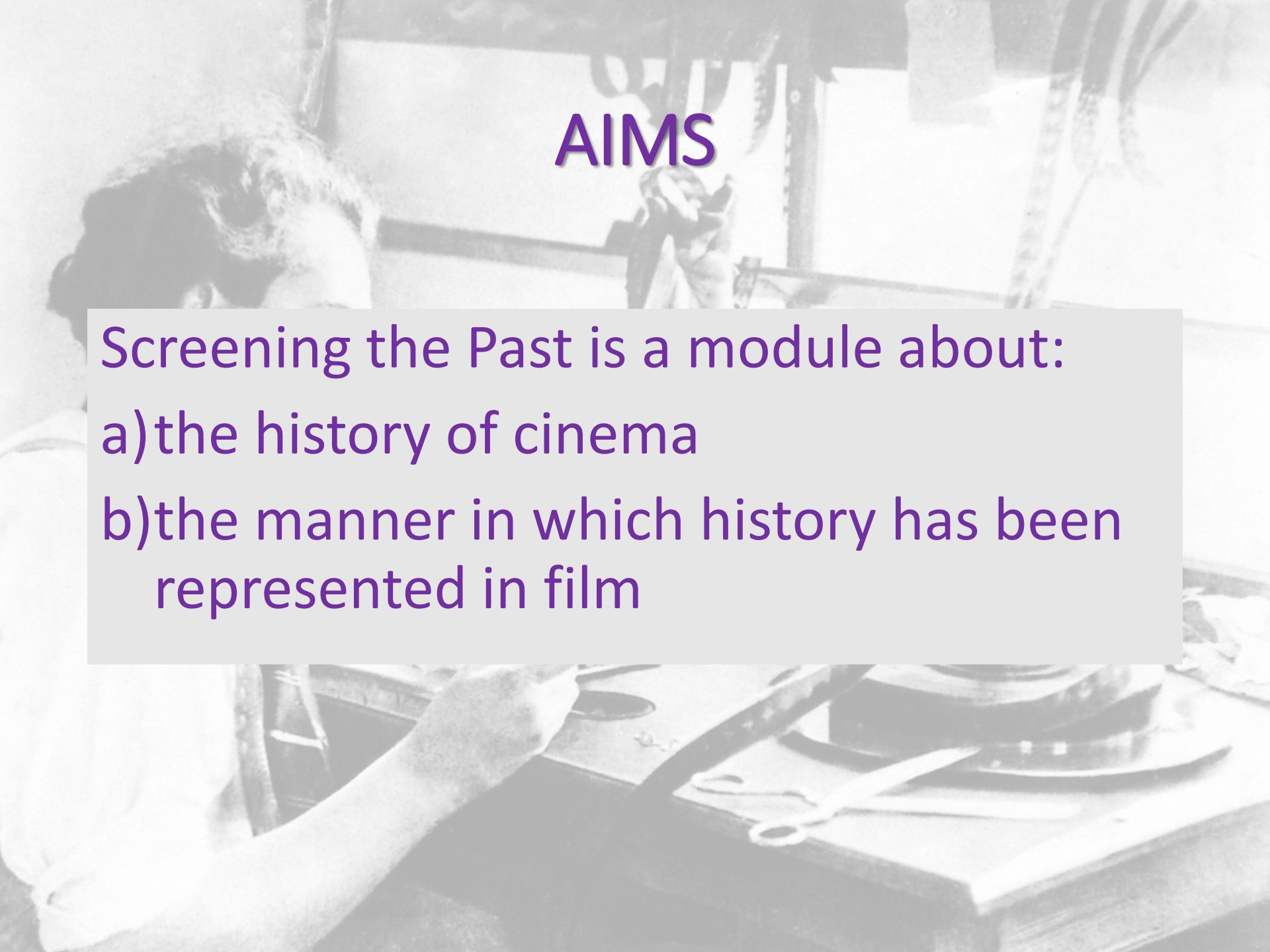
Today's class

1. How to write about the movies?
2. Why write about the movies?
3. Why write about film and history?



- 
- What was the last film you saw?
 - What was the last film you saw in the cinema?

AIMS

A black and white photograph of a person, likely a woman, working at a desk. She is looking down at a piece of equipment, possibly a film reel or a camera component. The desk is cluttered with various items, including a pair of scissors, a ruler, and some papers. The background is slightly out of focus, showing more of the workspace.

Screening the Past is a module about:

a) the history of cinema

b) the manner in which history has been represented in film

AIMS

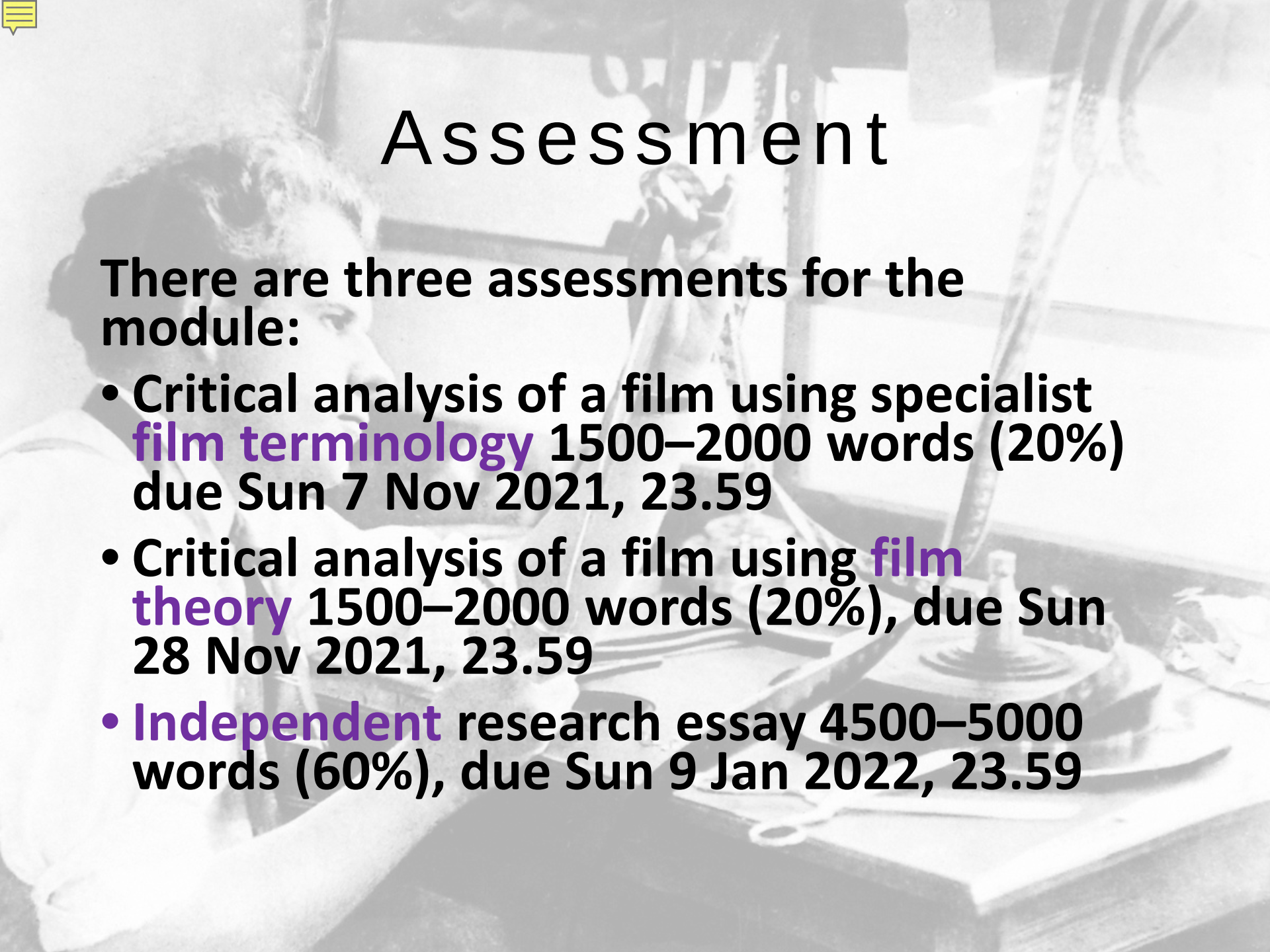
Module aims

To explore the history of cinema and the manner in which history has been represented in film.

Learning outcomes:

Upon the successful completion of the module, students should be able to:

1. Critically analyse films from different time periods and which depict different historical eras
2. Consider the problems and potentialities of using historical films as a medium to understand, represent and interpret the past
3. Understand aspects of film theory and literature on the techniques used by filmmakers to depict the past
4. Complete a detailed independent research essay on an historical film (or films) of their choice.

A woman with dark hair is shown in profile, working on a large film reel. She is holding a pair of scissors and appears to be cutting the film. The background is slightly blurred, showing what looks like a workshop or a film studio.

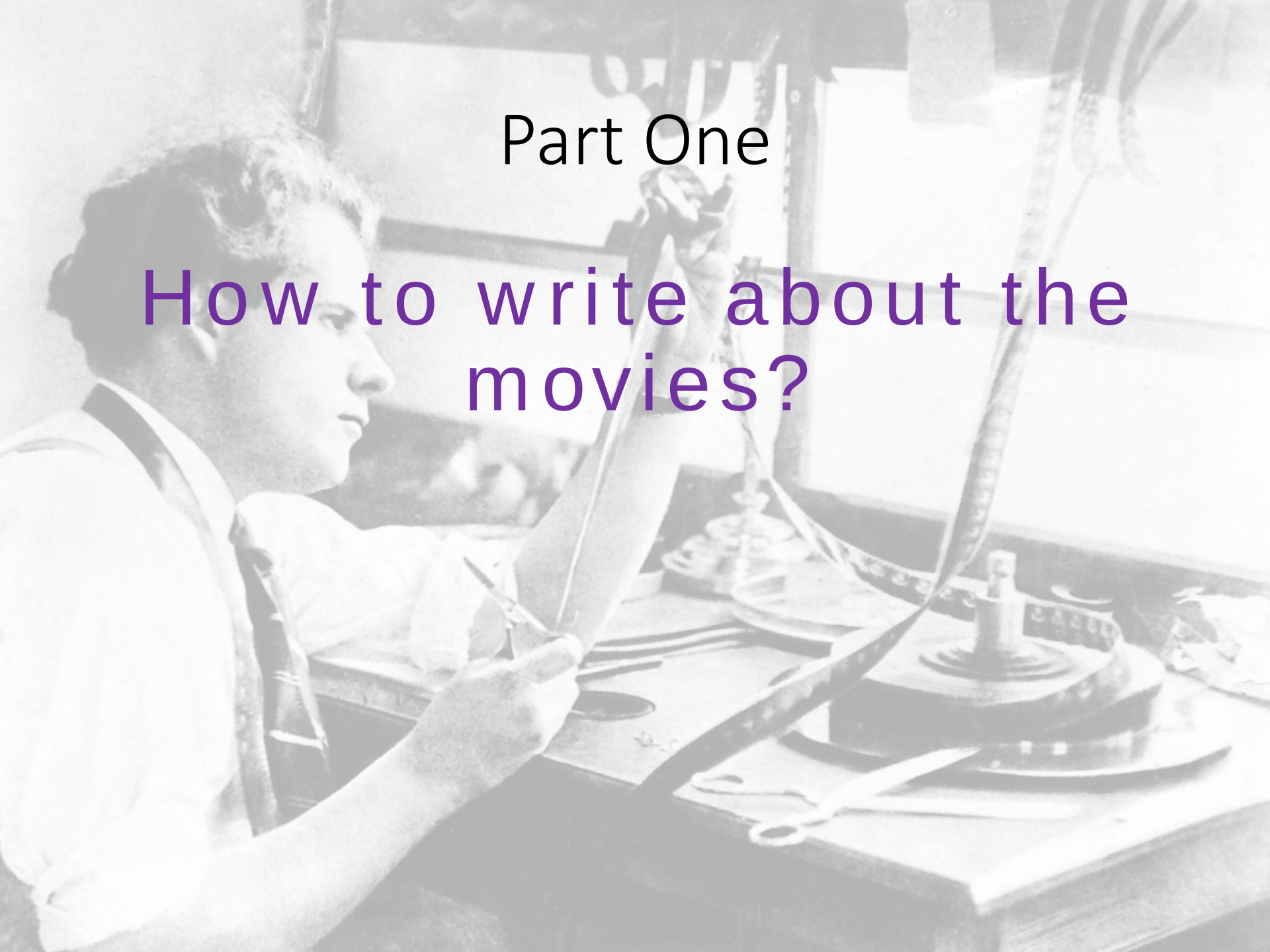
Assessment

There are three assessments for the module:

- **Critical analysis of a film using specialist **film terminology** 1500–2000 words (20%) due Sun 7 Nov 2021, 23.59**
- **Critical analysis of a film using **film theory** 1500–2000 words (20%), due Sun 28 Nov 2021, 23.59**
- ****Independent** research essay 4500–5000 words (60%), due Sun 9 Jan 2022, 23.59**

Today's class

- Timothy Corrigan, *A Short Guide to Writing about Film* (London: Pearson Longman, 2007). Chapters entitled 'Writing About Movies' and 'Film Terms and Topics for Film Analysis and Writing'
- Geoffrey Nowell-Smith. 'On History and the Cinema,' *Screen* 31:2 (Summer 1990), pp. 160–171
- Robert A. Rosenstone, *History on Film/Film on History* (Harlow, Essex: Longman/Pearson, 2006), pp. 1-31



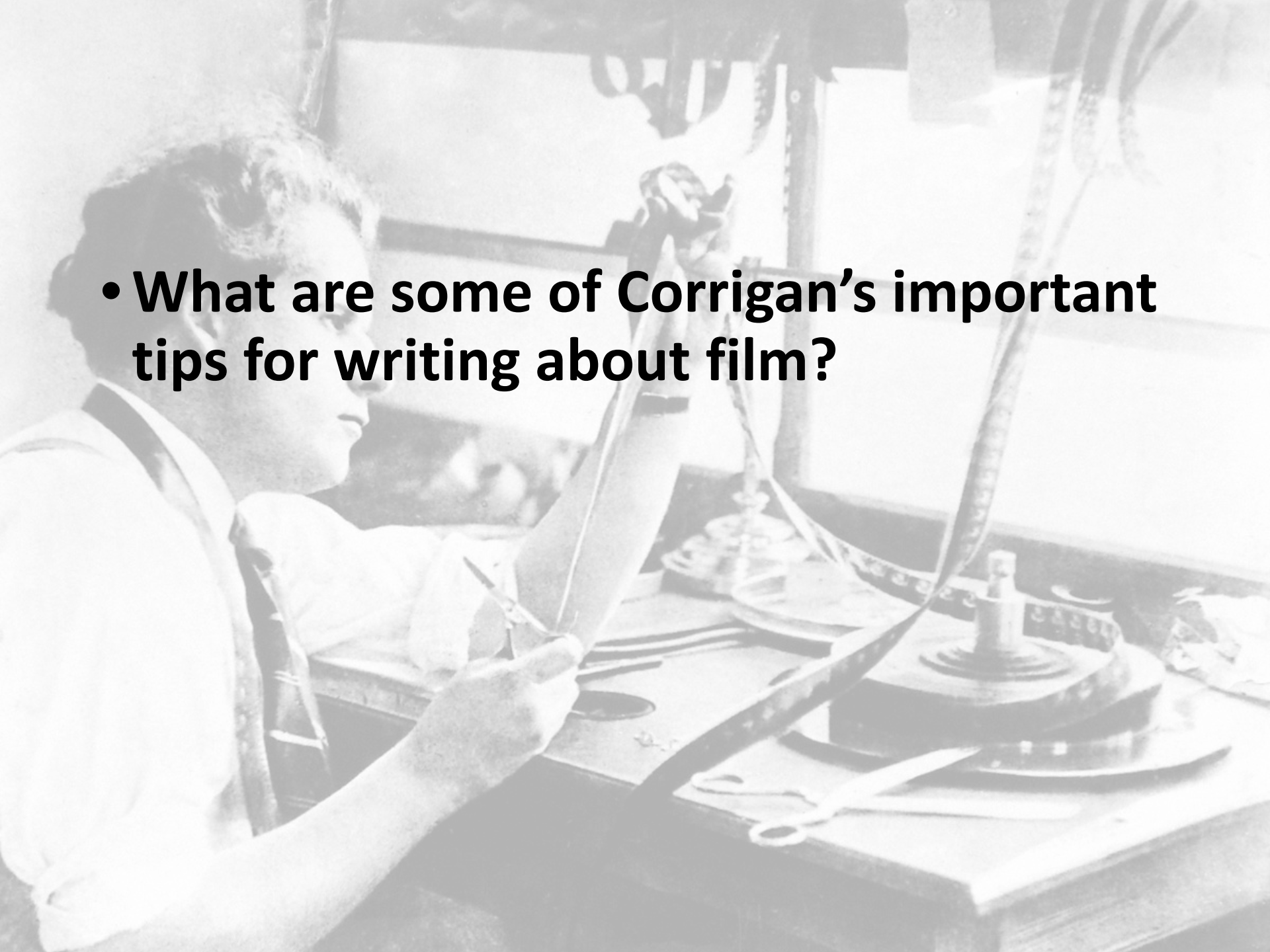
Part One

How to write about the
movies?

- Did you like this week's films?
- What were your general impressions of this week's assigned films?
- What were their strengths and weaknesses?



- **What are some of Corrigan's important tips for writing about film?**



Below is a list of key cinematic terms used by Corrigan. What do you understand them to mean and what application might they have in film criticism?

- FRAME
- THEMES
- NARRATIVE
- CHARACTERS
- POINT-OF-VIEW
- MISE-EN-SCENE
- REALISM
- SETTINGS, SETS
- COSTUMES
- LIGHTING
- SHOT
- EDIT
- CONTINUITY EDITING
- ESTABLISHING SHOT
- SHOT/REVERSE-SHOT
- DIEGESIS
- NONDIEGETIC SOUND



Animation and Special Effects in *Jason and the Argonauts*



- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pF_Fi7x93PY
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UulttxTU00>



Animation and Special Effects in *Jason and the Argonauts*



Opening scenes ...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N7oj9JkcRGc&t=1s>

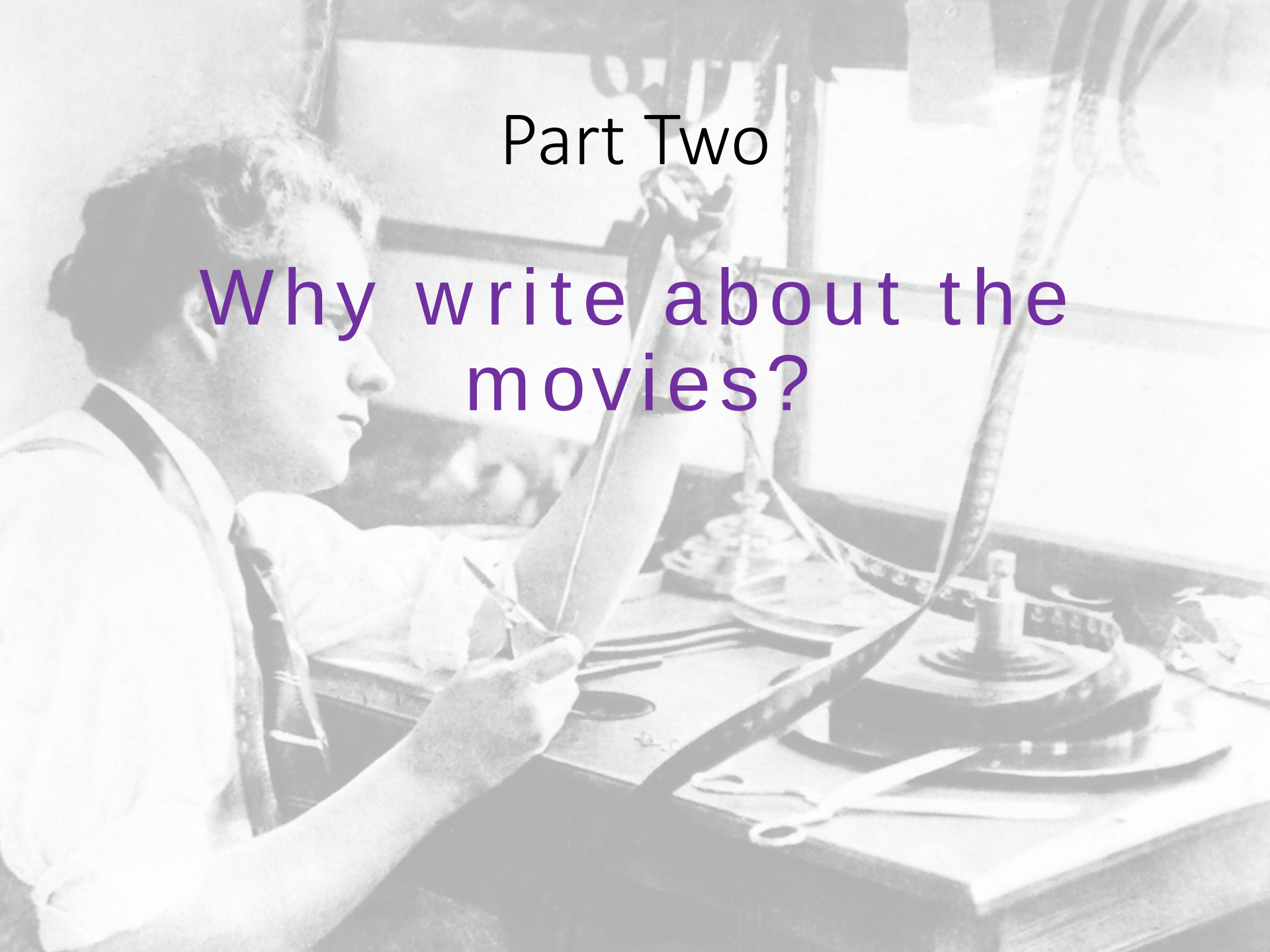


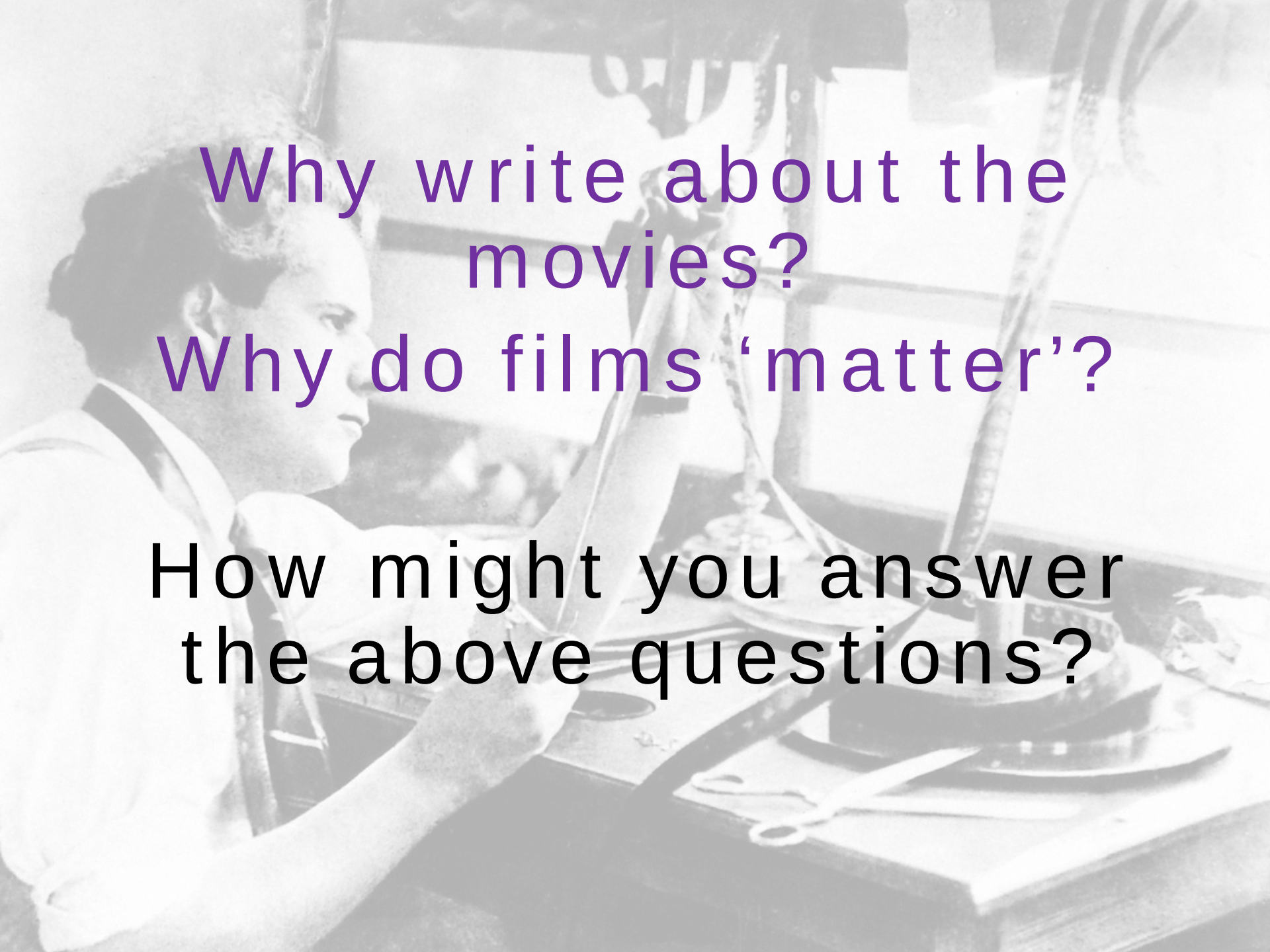
'Intertextuality' and Homage



Part Two

Why write about the
movies?

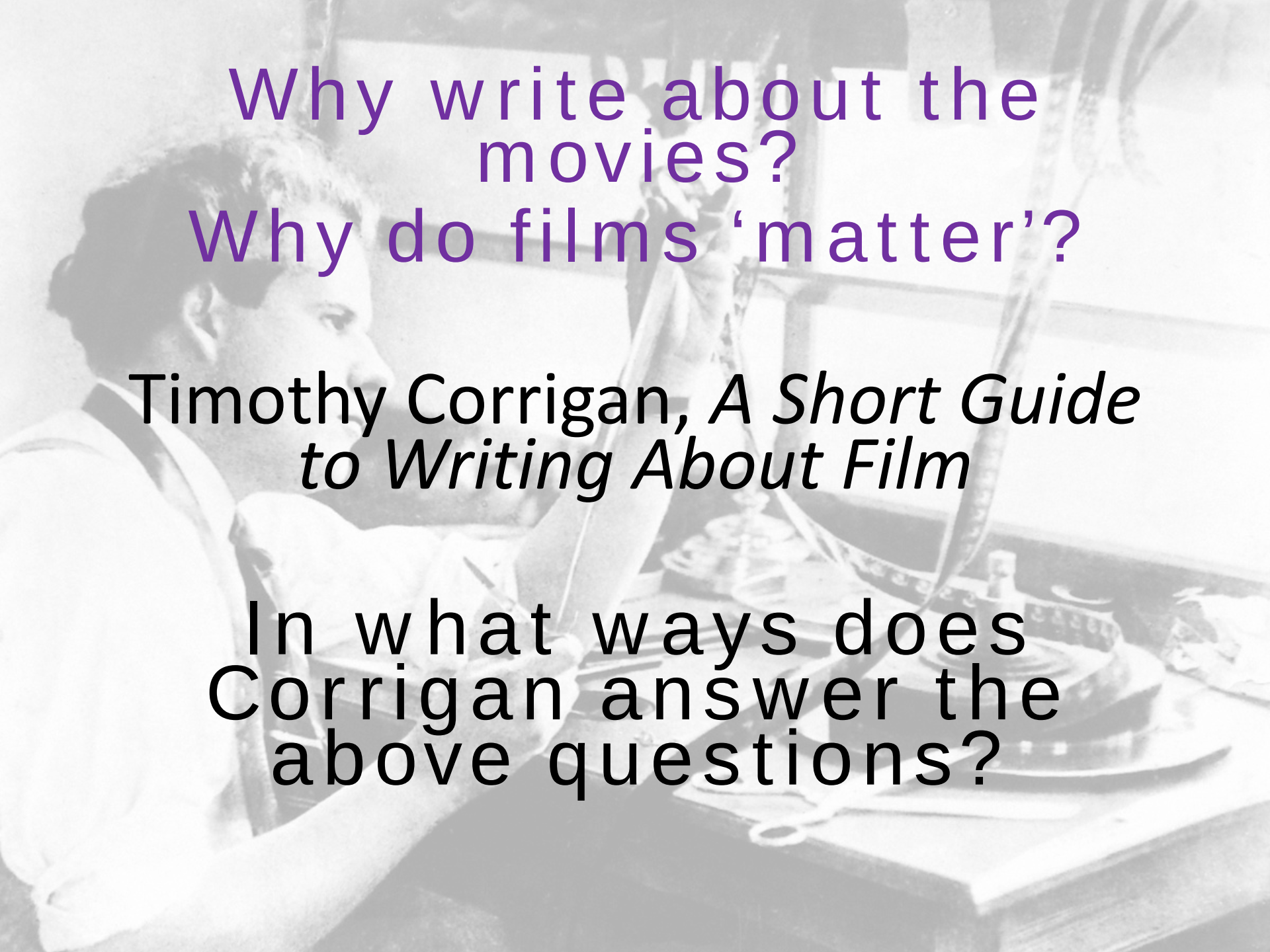




Why write about the
movies?

Why do films 'matter'?

How might you answer
the above questions?



Why write about the
movies?
Why do films 'matter'?

Timothy Corrigan, *A Short Guide
to Writing About Film*

In what ways does
Corrigan answer the
above questions?

Do movies still matter?

- By many estimates, the contemporary video game industry is more lucrative and grosses more than the movie industry.
- Streaming sites place increased emphasis on long-running series versus feature films.
- Covid-19 has wreaked havoc on the cinema industry.

Cineworld to close all UK and US venues putting thousands of jobs at risk

World's second-biggest cinema chain to close 536 US theatres and 127 UK sites amid Covid-19 crisis

Julia Kollwe

Sun 4 Oct 2020 10:59 BST

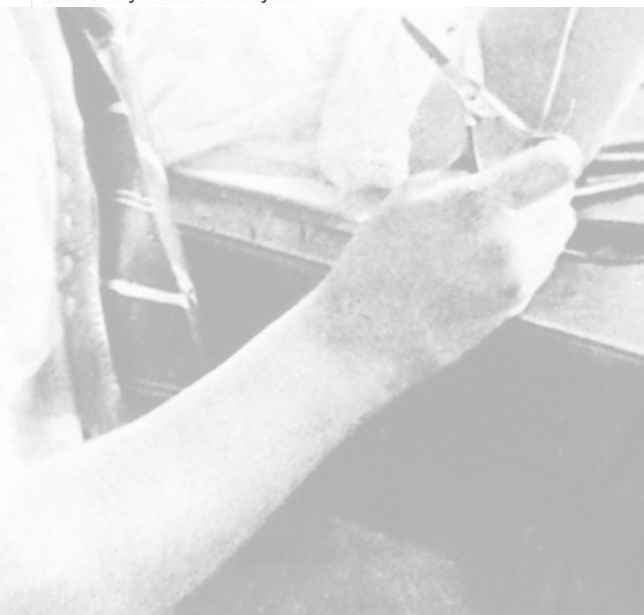


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▲ Cineworld is the UK's biggest cinema chain. Photograph: Mike Egerton/PA

Britain's biggest cinema chain, **Cineworld**, is to shut all its UK and US venues, putting up to 5,500 jobs in Britain at risk, after the latest James Bond movie was delayed into next year.



Mark Sweney

@marksweney

Mon 4 Oct 2021 11:33 BST



Opinion

Sport

Culture

Lifestyle

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Books Art & design Stage Games Classical

No Time to Die: James Bond film smashes box office records

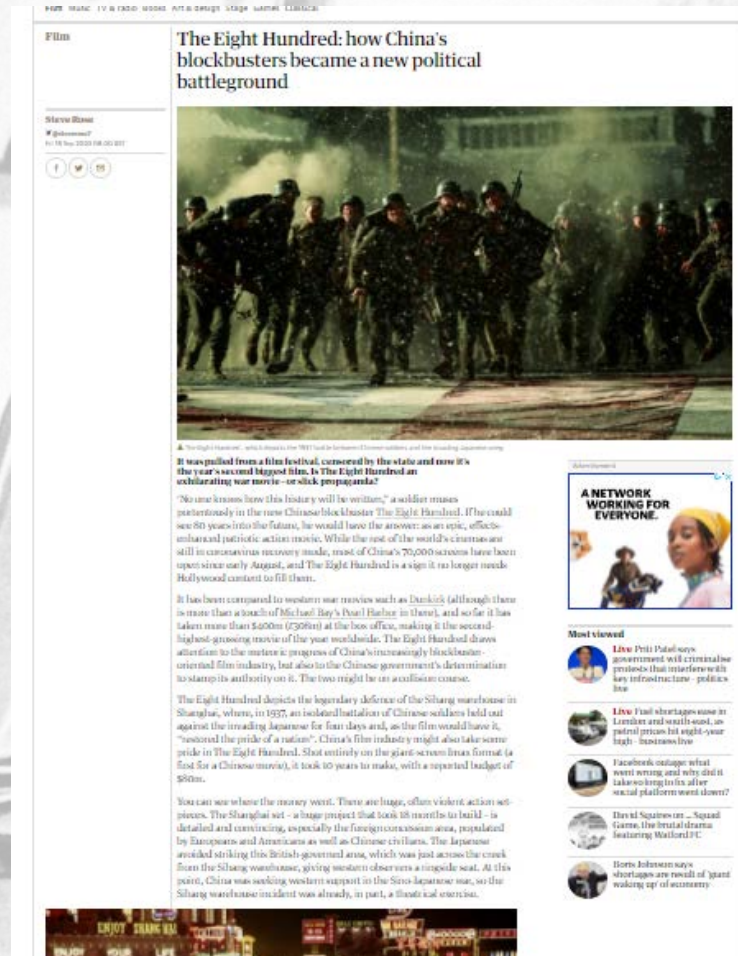
Daniel Craig's final outing as 007 has made £88m in the 54 countries worldwide in which it has launched



▲ Lashana Lynch and Daniel Craig in No Time to Die. Photograph: Allstar/MGM/Universal Pictures/Eon/DANJAQ/Nicola Dove

Daniel Craig's final outing as 007 has smashed UK box office records, grossing more on its opening weekend than any other film in the history of the **James Bond** franchise, and has become the biggest movie of the year after only four days in cinema.

Do movies still matter?



Steve Rose, 'The Eight Hundred: how China's blockbusters became a new political battleground,' *The Guardian*, 18 September 2020



Do movies still matter?

“The Eight Hundred depicts the legendary defence of the Sihang warehouse in Shanghai, where, in 1937, an isolated battalion of Chinese soldiers held out against the invading Japanese for four days and, as the film would have it, “restored the pride of a nation”. China’s film industry might also take some pride in The Eight Hundred. Shot entirely on the giant-screen Imax format (a first for a Chinese movie), it took 10 years to make, with a reported budget of \$80m.

“You can see where the money went. There are huge, often violent action set-pieces. The Shanghai set – a huge project that took 18 months to build – is detailed and convincing, especially the foreign concession area, populated by Europeans and Americans as well as Chinese civilians.





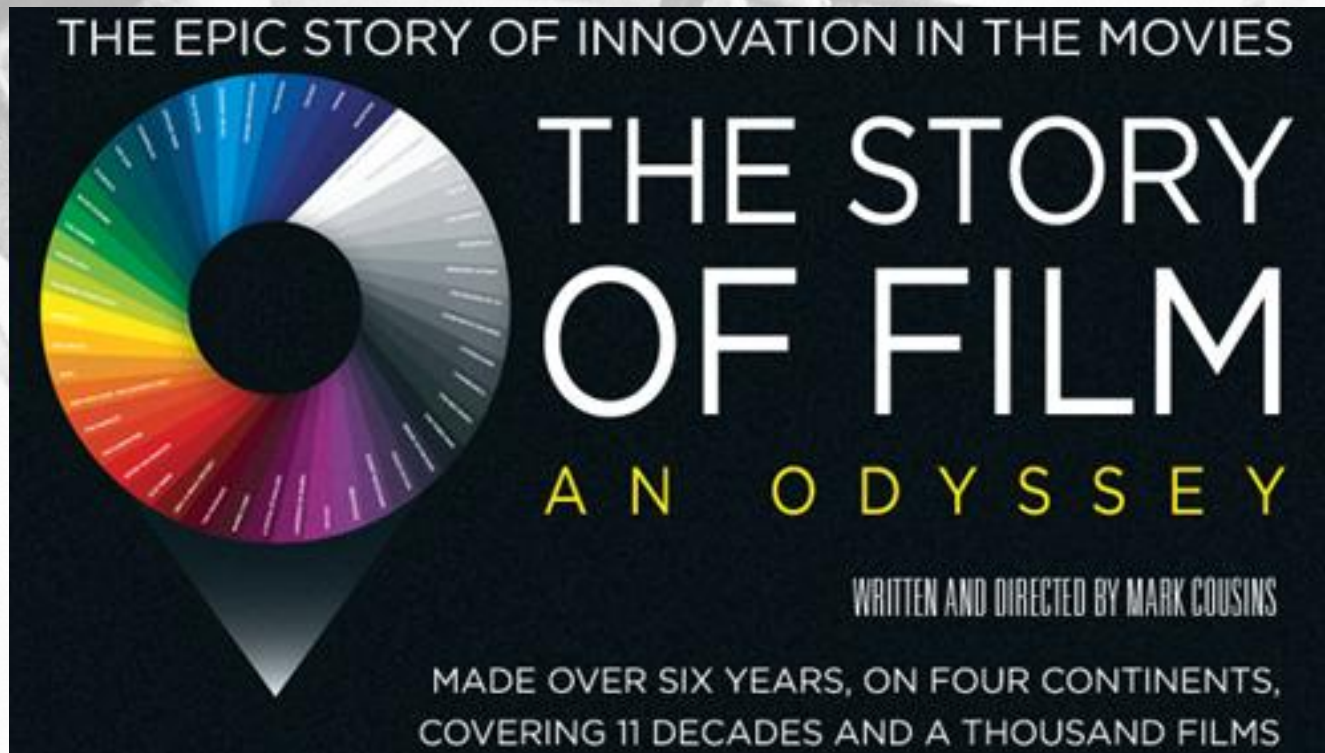
“The Eight Hundred’s success is not quite as straightforward, though. The movie was scheduled to open the Shanghai film festival in June 2019, but its release was suddenly cancelled just days before, owing to “technical difficulties”. One of the problems with the Sihang warehouse story is that the resisting Chinese forces were from the nationalist side, the Kuomintang, who were later defeated by Mao’s communists and retreated to Taiwan in 1949. At one point, the soldiers rally round the flag, Iwo Jima-style, as the Japanese try to shoot it down – except the flag is that of the Republic of China (red, with a white sun on a blue square in the corner). It is now the national flag of Taiwan. Last year was the 70th anniversary of the People’s Republic of China, so for the ruling Communist party to be glorifying the future founders of Taiwan was not a good look.



“In a revealing comment, the secretary general of the China Red Culture Research Association, a government-affiliated group, reportedly [said](#) of the film: **“It is a reversal of history and misleads the audience. If left unchecked, it will certainly deprive the entire Communist party of its historical basis. Once the party’s leadership is lost, the Chinese nation is bound to fall into the deep, miserable abyss of colonised and semi-colonised countries.”**

“*The Eight Hundred*’s history had to be rewritten. It is impossible to know what was changed, but in the finished movie much is made of the support of the Chinese civilians across the river, who catapult over supplies and lift spirits. As for the troublesome flag, it is usually seen from a distance, and is conspicuously missing its white sun symbol.

The Story of Film: An Odyssey



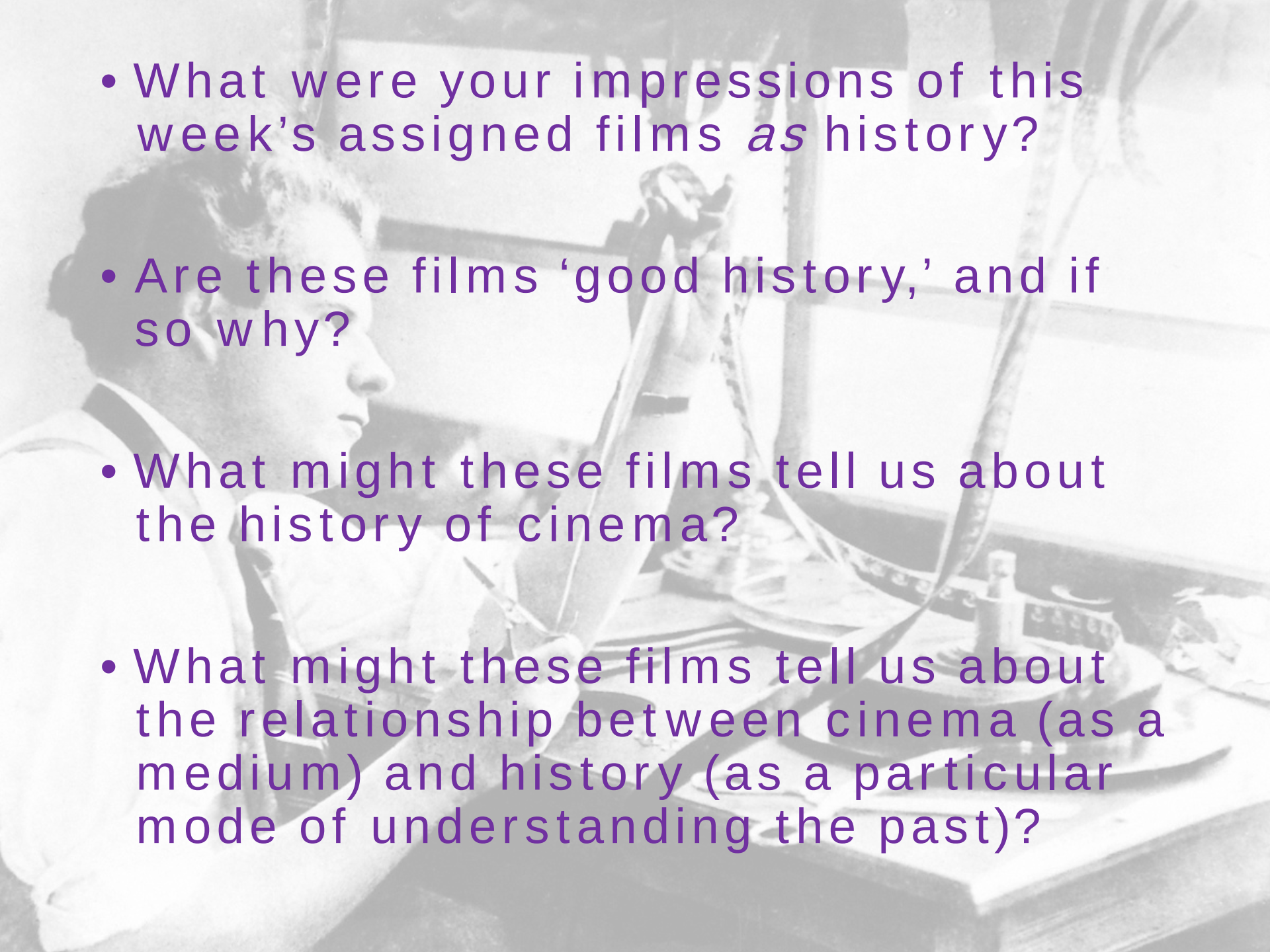


- <https://www.clickview.co.uk/>
- Huge library of films; have a look and lecturers may be able to share them with you.

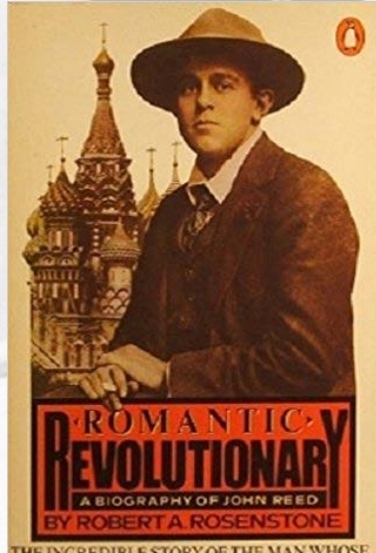
Part Three

Why write about film
and history?



- 
- What were your impressions of this week's assigned films *as* history?
 - Are these films 'good history,' and if so why?
 - What might these films tell us about the history of cinema?
 - What might these films tell us about the relationship between cinema (as a medium) and history (as a particular mode of understanding the past)?

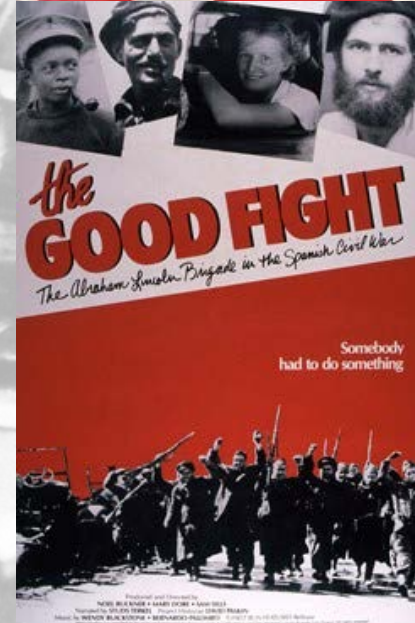
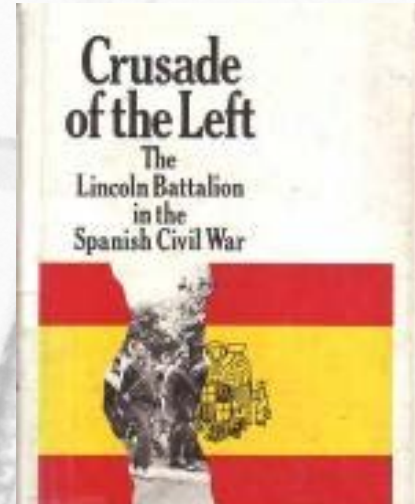
Cinema and History: Robert A Rosenstone

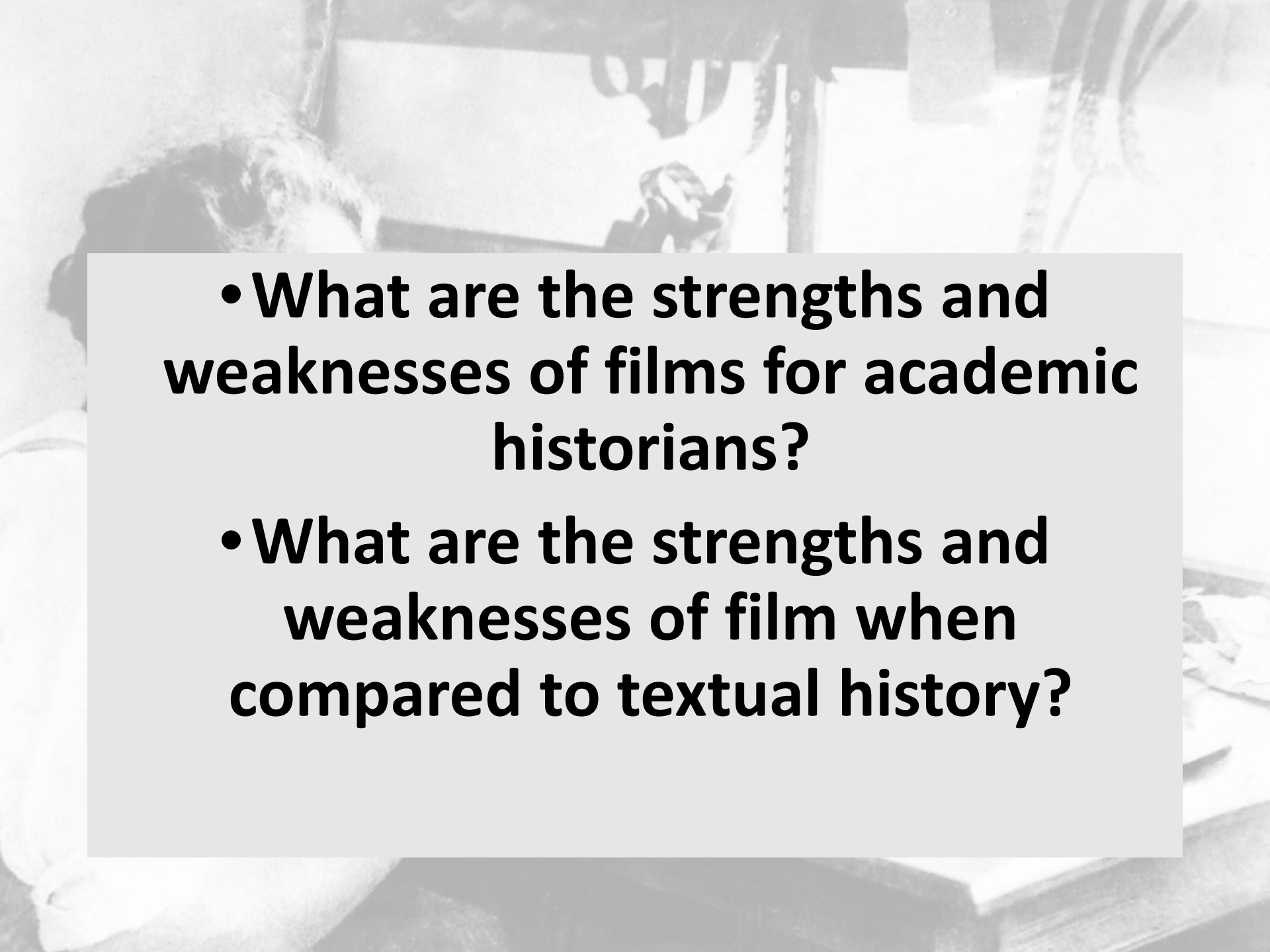


“ ... history that appears on screen can never fully satisfy the historian as historian.”

- Robert A. Rosenstone, 'History in Images/History in Words: Reflections on the Possibility of Really Putting History onto Film,' *The American Historical Review* (Vol. 93, No. 5, December 1988), pp. 1173-1185.

- Verdict based part on Rosenstone's own participation with documentary & feature films

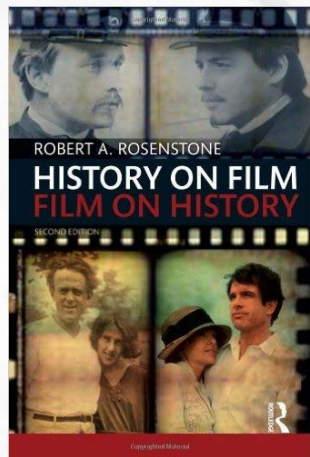
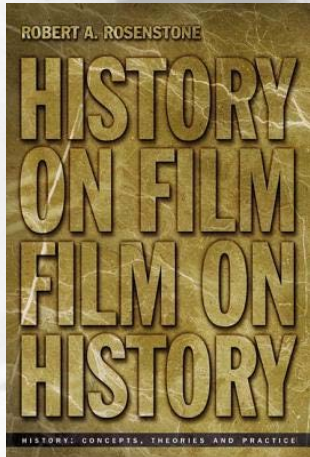


- 
- **What are the strengths and weaknesses of films for academic historians?**
 - **What are the strengths and weaknesses of film when compared to textual history?**

BUT ... in 2006 Rosenstone writes:

Film “not only challenges traditional History but returns us to a kind of ground zero, a sense that we can never really know the past, but can only play with, reconfigure, and try to make meaning out of the traces it leaves behind.”

- Robert A Rosenstone, *History on Film/Film on History*, (Pearson: Harlow, Essex, 2006)



Rosenstone, *History on Film/Film on History*

Why does Rosenstone think historians have traditionally been resistant to using films as a legitimate historical source?

- What challenges to (capital 'h') History does cinema pose?
- Why is that films often seem to fall short of the standards expected of academic history?

Why is Rosenstone sympathetic to the possibilities and potentialities of films as a mode of expressing knowledge about the past?

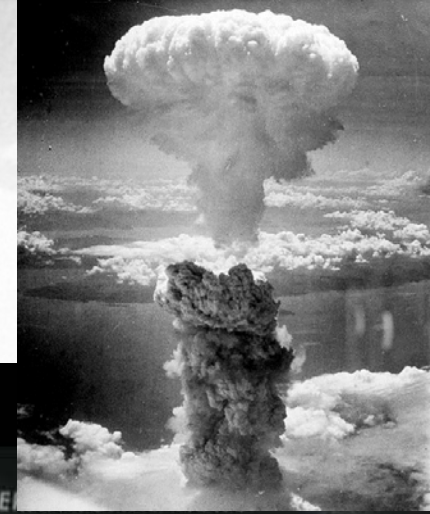
- How does he rebut criticisms of the film by traditional historians?
- What similarities does he suggest exist between textual, academic history and history as presented in film?
- Why does he think the ideas of postmodern theorists are helpful in thinking through the relationship of history and cinema?

A black and white photograph of a woman, likely a film editor, working at a desk. She is wearing a light-colored blouse and a dark tie. She is holding a pair of scissors and cutting a long strip of film. On the desk, there are several other film strips, a pair of scissors, and a small container. The background is slightly blurred, showing more of the workspace.

Why write about film
and history?

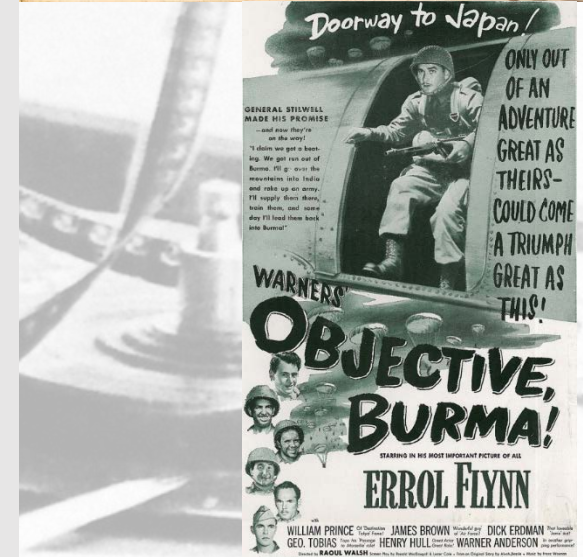
“The history of the twentieth century is the history of cinema ... Cinema is **witness to**, and **participant in**, all major world developments, from wars and revolutions to ideological and demographic shifts and to the subtly changing patterns of everyday life. The Belle Epoque, the Jazz Age, Austerity, the Swinging Sixties ... are all part of cinema, and of history, in the same way as the Russian or Cuban revolutions, Hiroshima, Auschwitz, the Berlin Wall or Tiananmen Square.”

- Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, 'On History and the Cinema,' *Screen* (Vol. 31, No. 2, Summer 1990), p.160



“ ... The war in the Pacific from 1942 onwards, and that in Europe from the invasion of Sicily to the German surrender, were **prevailingy represented through fictions**: some made at, or close to, the time; some made subsequently ... Between 1942 and 1945, Hollywood turned out over thirty feature films dealing with battles then being fought. With a few exceptions (such as Wellman's *The Story of GI Joe* [1945], Ford's *They Were Expendable* [1945] or Walsh's *Objective Burma!* [1945]) these combat films were for the most part forgettable, and have duly been forgotten; **but at the time they acted as demonstrations that war was manageable – horrible perhaps, but containable as an experience within the trajectory of a narrative. What happened in the death camps, of course, and widely on the Eastern front, was not containable in conventional narratives, but the war in the West and in the Pacific was represented from a point of view innocent of horrors that exceeded the possibilities of representation.**”

- Nowell-Smith, 'On History and the Cinema,' pp. 162–263



“ ... So strong is the presumption of the cinema's realist and truth-telling vocation that even overtly fictional films are regularly criticized for historical untruth. Winston Churchill, for example, took deep offence at *Objective Burma!* because of the way it represented the recapture of Burma as an American achievement (led by Errol Flynn) rather than British. Churchill might have been epistemologically confused, but his confusion was typical: **there is in fact no clear border at which cinematic representations pass unequivocally from the attested real to the avowedly fictional.**”

- Nowell-Smith, 'On History and the Cinema,' p.163

BRITISH BAN “OBJECTIVE BURMA”

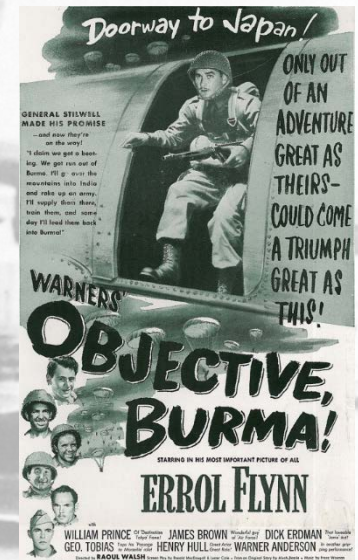
LONDON, Wednesday.—Following a storm of protest led by prominent London columnists, the American film “Objective Burma,” starring Errol Flynn, has been banned throughout Britain.

It is claimed that the film suggests that Burma was liberated by the Americans, and completely ignores General Slim's famous 14th Army.

The storm of protest came almost immediately after the first screening of the film, and theatre proprietors were instructed not to make any further screenings.

Leading the criticism of the film, one London columnist quoted comparative strengths of British and American forces in Burma at the peak of Allied operations.

He said the strengths were:—Combat air force personnel: British 43,000, American 30,000. L. of C. troops: British, Indian, and South African 138,000, American 130,000. Front-line combat troops: British, Indian, and South African 678,000, American 7,000.





“Most of the imagery of the October Revolution is retrospective, created by Soviet filmmakers in the 1920s and beyond. Other events, however, have had their record written for them at the time of happening. There is in these cases both a deliberate process at work – an attempt to ensure that certain representations become record – and a less controlled process by which particular images or narrations become fixed in memory as canonical, and retain this canonical status by being, literally, re-presented. In the case of the Second World War, there are certain canonical images of the Blitz, which tend to come either from photographs published in *Picture Post* or from documentary films such as *London Can Take It* (1940). Not only were these images effective in their own time, but they are now regularly recycled on television to renew historical memory.”

- Nowell-Smith, 'On History and the Cinema,' p.162

- See <http://media.nationalarchives.gov.uk/index.php/london-can-take-it/>



“ ...To focus on the representation of war and revolution, however, or indeed on the representation of historical events of any kind, runs the risk of confining discussion within the framework of a **basically realistic notion of the cinema**. The issue tends to become whether a particular representation was or was not 'true' or whether 'truth' (and the spectator who assumes s/he is in presence of the truth) is being manipulated. These issues are not unimportant, because the cinema is a **realistic medium** – and is widely believed to be such – to the extent that it can both show what is, and can represent things that are presumed to have been. **One of its operations is to confer a certain status of reality on what it shows.**”

“ ...Cinema is a **realistic medium** – and is widely believed to be such – to the extent that it can both show what is, and can represent things that are presumed to have been. **One of its operations is to confer a certain status of reality on what it shows.**”

- Nowell-Smith, p.163

HOW MIGHT THIS APPLY TO *CITIZEN KANE*?

Warrior Leader of New World Called By Death in Numbata



Generalissimo of Italy
Adolf Hitler's Death

Hitler's Death in Berlin
Hitler's Death in Berlin
Hitler's Death in Berlin

NEWS ON THE MARCH

DAILY NEWS **FINAL**
NEW YORK, N.Y., MONDAY, JANUARY 14, 1938
Price 10 Cents

FAKE RADIO 'WAR' STIRS TERROR THROUGH U.S.

"War" Victim
A woman who was
frightened by the
radio broadcast of
the war, is shown
in a state of distress.
She is being comforted
by a friend.

"I Didn't Know"
A woman who was
frightened by the
radio broadcast of
the war, is shown
in a state of distress.
She is being comforted
by a friend.

DAILY NEWS **FINAL**
NEW YORK, N.Y., MONDAY, JANUARY 14, 1938
Price 10 Cents

FAKE RADIO 'WAR' STIRS TERROR THROUGH U.S.

San Francisco Chronicle
Dramatized War
Believed Real
By Thousands

**Probe Front
Dix Charges
New Deal
Intimidation**

**Hall Wages
F. R. Meets
Employers,
Labor Today**

**FCC Will Probe
Radio 'War'**

DAILY NEWS **FINAL**
NEW YORK, N.Y., MONDAY, JANUARY 14, 1938
Price 10 Cents

U. S. BANS FAKE RADIO ALARMS

The Monsters from Mars Did NOT Attack



HD

SPORTING SPECIAL. **NEW YORK JOURNAL** BASEBALL

AN AMERICAN PAPER FOR THE AMERICAN PEOPLE.

NO. 1009 E. 26. NEW YORK, THURSDAY, MAY 16, 1900. PRICE ONE CENT.

SPANISH SHIPS ON OUR COAST! DIED IN FOLDS OF OLD GLORY!

Mysterious Warships Seen by Incoming Vessels May Be Privateers.

FIRST DEAD OF THE WAR.
 ENSIGN WORTH BAGLEY.
 OILER J. VARVARESE.
 FIREMAN J. DENESE.
 COOK E. B. TUNNELL.
 FIREMAN G. B. MEER.
 The Wounded.
 Lieut. J. B. Bernadou.
 William Patterson.
 Daniel McKewin.

Bagley and His Men to Be Revenged by the Machias and Wilmington.

“Yellow Press” mongered for war under the cause of ‘Remember the Maine’ in newspapers owned by Joseph Pulitzer (e.g. *New York World*) and William Randolph Hearst (e.g. *New York Journal*)

\$50,000 REWARD.—WHO DESTROYED THE MAINE?—\$50,000 REWARD.

EDITION FOR GREATER NEW YORK.
NEW YORK JOURNAL
 AND ADVERTISER.

The Journal will give \$50,000 for information furnished in a reliable way, that will establish the person or persons who used the Mine.

DESTRUCTION OF THE WAR SHIP MAINE WAS THE WORK OF AN ENEMY

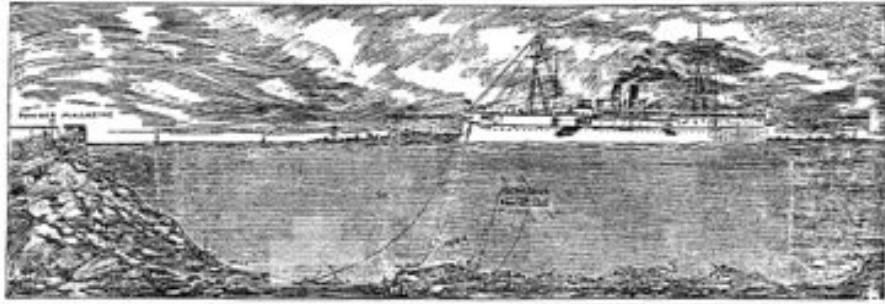
\$50,000!
\$50,000 REWARD!
 For the Detection of the Perpetrator of the Maine Outrage!

Assistant Secretary Roosevelt Convinced the Explosion of the War Ship Was Not an Accident.

The Journal Offers \$50,000 Reward for the Conviction of the Criminals Who Sent 258 American Sailors to Their Death. Naval Officers Unanimous That the Ship Was Destroyed on Purpose.

\$50,000!
\$50,000 REWARD!
 For the Detection of the Perpetrator of the Maine Outrage!

The Journal will give \$50,000 for information furnished in a reliable way, that will establish the person or persons who used the Mine.



NAVAL OFFICERS THINK THE MAINE WAS DESTROYED BY A SPANISH MINE.

Hidden Mine or a Sunk Torpedo Believed to Have Been the Weapon Used Against the American Man-of-War—Officers and Men Tell Thrilling Stories of Being Blown Into the Air Amid a Mass of Shattered Steel and Exploding Shells—Survivors Brought to Key West Scout the Idea of Accident—Spanish Officials Protest Too. Much—Our Cabinet Orders a Searching Inquiry—Journal Sends Divers to Havana to Report Upon the Condition of the Wreck.

Spanish-American War as a Media Event

Spanish-American War and Early Cinema



“ Within three years of being ‘invented’ the cinema was already inserting itself into the problematic of the historical record and re-marking the boundaries of fact and fiction, truth and falsehood, in history.”

Nowell-Smith, 'On History and the Cinema,' pp. 161–162



Spanish-American War and Early Cinema

- *Advance of Kansas Volunteers at Caloocan* (<http://www.loc.gov/item/98501192/>), Edison Company, re-enacted May 1899
- *Filipinos Retreat from Trenches* (<http://www.loc.gov/item/98501198/>), Edison Company, May 1899
- *Capture of Trenches at Candaba* (<http://www.loc.gov/item/98501201/>), Edison Company, May 1899

Theodore Roosevelt



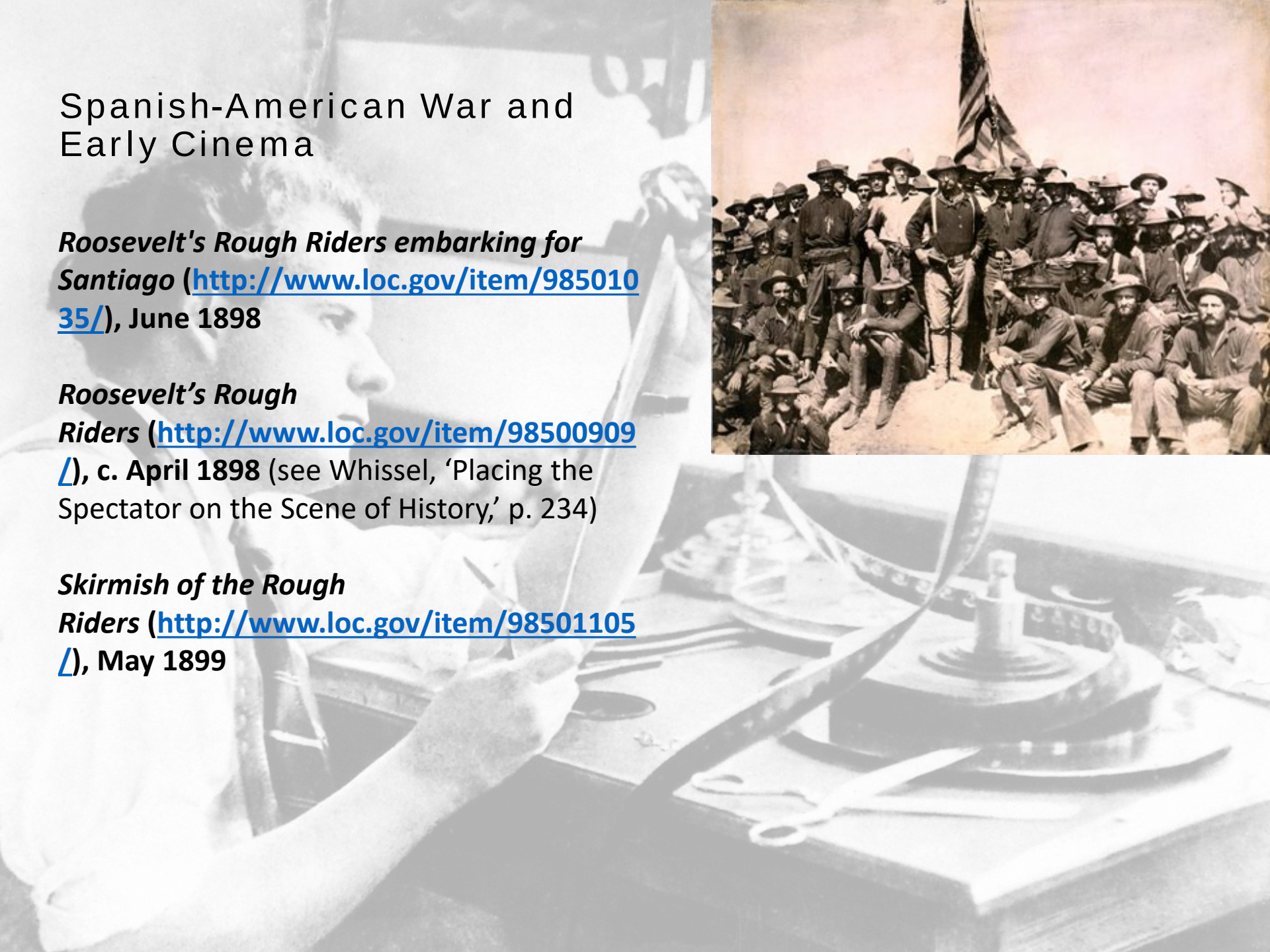
- Assistant Secretary of the Navy (1897–1898)
- Governor of New York (1899–1900)
- Vice President (1901)
- President of the United States (1901–1909)

Spanish-American War and Early Cinema

Roosevelt's Rough Riders embarking for Santiago (<http://www.loc.gov/item/98501035/>), June 1898

Roosevelt's Rough Riders (<http://www.loc.gov/item/98500909/>), c. April 1898 (see Whissel, 'Placing the Spectator on the Scene of History,' p. 234)

Skirmish of the Rough Riders (<http://www.loc.gov/item/98501105/>), May 1899



Theodore Roosevelt: 'Picture Man'

"[Roosevelt] is such an overmastering personality that we go the length of expressing the hope that moving pictures of him may be preserved in safe custody for future reference. What would the public of this country give today to see Abraham Lincoln or George Washington in their habits as they lived, in moving picture form? Don't you think the student, the historian, the biographer, the patriot would be glad to see moving pictures of these great men? It is the same with Mr. Roosevelt.

"... [He is] more than a picture personality – he is A PICTURE MAN."

- *The Moving Picture World*, 22 October 1910

Teddy Roosevelt (Thomas A. Curran)
campaigns with Kane (Orson Welles) in the
News on the March sequence



Kane as American Myth





Next Week

- Complete the formative assessment
- Watch *Platoon* and/or another Oliver Stone 'history' film
- Complete the below reading:

Required reading:

- Robert A Rosenstone, *History on Film/Film on History* (Harlow, Essex: Longman/Pearson, 2006), pp. 1–10, 111–133, 154–164.
- Oliver Stone, 'We Were Not the Good Guys Anymore,' *The Massachusetts Review* 29:3 (1988), pp. 423–427.

Non-essential reading:

- Marita Sturken, 'Reenactment, Fantasy, and the Paranoia of History: Oliver Stone's Docudramas,' *History and Theory* 36:4 (1997), pp.64–79.