

Interview with Respondent 0347/0765

Date: 27/11/2014

Location: UCL

Interviewer: Dr. Matthew Jones

Interviewer: Thanks very much for coming along today. I was wondering whether we might start by asking you if you could tell me a little bit about your life in the 1960s. Where you were living, what you were doing.

Respondent: Well I was living in North London, Wood Green in the 1960s. I would have been ten or eleven at the beginning of the 1960s, so I was just going to secondary school. At the end of the 1960s I would have been 21... 22... Studying and going out to work. So over that period, I grew up!

Interviewer: Fantastic. And how often did you go to the cinema during the 1960s?

Respondent: Uh probably on average at least once a week I would have thought, I mean sometimes more than that.

Interviewer: And this was in London that you were...

Respondent: Yeah, yes. I mean locally and towards the end of the period, into central London.

Interviewer: Fantastic. So if you were going into Central London towards the end of the decade, whereabouts was it that you were you going before that?

Respondent : Uh the purely local cinemas. Wood Green, Palmers Green, South Gate, Finsbury Park, areas like that.

Interviewer: And what do you remember of those cinemas?

Respondent: Uhm. Well there was still a sense of occasion about them. I can remember that some of them, like the Finsbury Park 'Astoria' [??] were really quite impressive art-deco buildings. Some of them were smaller ones, I think it was probably called the Queens in Palmers Green and the Ritz in Wood Green, were much smaller. They were very much bug-hutch cinemas. But they would be the ones that were probably showing a lot of double bills. And there were some interesting double-bills and they were probably the ones that were more likely to be showing the occasional foreign film. Some of them, the Odeon's, the Gaumont's [??], the ABC's – they were still quite large single screen cinemas with big box offices, foyers, foyers cards, photographs, posters and usherettes with torches – quite a few of those. On reflection I suppose, they employed quite a few people. More than the three or four people you see employed in current cinemas.

Interviewer: If you wouldn't mind, could you tell me a little bit about what you remember of the buildings themselves? What was it like to go into them?

Respondent: Well, it was – there would usually be quite a large, quite an impressive entrance – with posters, a lot of stills, the box office, often a sort of free-standing ticket office. And then there would be a long walkway into the cinema. And it would then be quite – you would enter into quite a large single screen, big screened cinema – usually with a balcony. De-marketed [??] seating for smokers and non-smokers. One of the things which I probably should have said when I was filling out the questionnaire, is – what I had forgotten how much of the cinematic experience was looking at a screen through a haze of smoke [laughing]. The great black and white films of the 30s and 40s – classic Hollywood - must have been wonderful when they were enshrouded in smoke! So it was a pretty – So it wasn't *all* a pleasant experience.

Interviewer: So did you have a particular favourite cinema during the decade that you remember?

Respondent: It was probably what was the Gaumont and later the Odeon, in Wood Green. I suppose that was what I had in mind when I was describing that sort of cinema. That was very much, kind of, the standard – I think the building is still there. I think it was a bingo hall and then... I think it might be occupied by some sort of religious organisation at the moment... Seventh day... [muffled speech??]

Interviewer: What was it that appealed to you about that cinema, above others?

Respondent: Uhm, well I suppose it did have a sense of grandeur, and a sense of scale and you were going to a very discernible experience that was very different from the other things that you went to.

Interviewer: If you wouldn't mind, can we talk a bit about the West End cinemas that you went to as well later in the decade as well?

Respondent: Yeah, yeah. I suppose sequentially when I – when I was still sort of an early teenager I went to to a few West End cinemas with ones parents as sort of big events going out. Going to see 'Cleopatra' I remember, in the big one in Tottenham Court Road that has got the musical on at the moment – I have forgotten what its name is, whatever it is. And the Astoria [??], Tottenham Court Road. I remember going to see, with my parents, the 'Fall of the Roman Empire' there, the end to the 'Man' [??] movie. 'My Fair Lady', I think that may have been at the Astoria, or the other one whose name escapes me. 'South Pacific', those were sort of the events – event outings with my mother and father, maybe with someone else. So probably, you know, 3, 4, 5 people going. We weren't the sort of family who went out very often, very much exceptional events. I was thinking I might have been to the Odeon in Leicester Square for something – and I think the Empire in Leicester Square- I remember going to the Empire Leicester Square with my girlfriend at that time to see Doctor Zhivago. I remember, some sort of strange sort of reason, I was going to be away the following week, it may have been for some sort of school trip or something like that, and I remember buying as a present for my mother and father tickets to go and see Doctor Zhivago at the Empire. I have to say, I think it is a terrible film and I hated it then and I hate it now! [laughing] I thought it was just the sort of thing that my parents would like.

Interviewer: So what was the difference between the cinemas in the West End and the local cinemas? You have talked a bit about the films that they showed, but were the buildings any different?

Respondent: Er, they were just a bit more grandiose, a bit more maintained. The sensation was of having bigger screens but the local screens were pretty impressive. Certainly the Gaumont or the Odeon were quite large. Later going to the West End I was still probably going to see big-event films, but also I remember getting into the sixth form at school and starting to think more seriously about cinema and starting to go to the Academy in Oxford Street. Wonderful cinema, terrific experience. I suppose in sort of modern parts, that was a cinema which had a very distinct brand. In its strange kind of way, we were all aware of the brand. It had very distinct posters. And the black and white interior and the sort of facade of the cinema was very distinct. And I can remember queuing on a Saturday night in Oxford Street to see 'Chimes of Midnight'. And a very interesting documentary on the Spanish Civil War called 'To Die in Madrid', directed by Frederic Monseif [??] I think. And also that cinema would always have in the Summer period, the three Olivier Shakespeare's. So I got to see them on the screen for the first time, and also they would always have a Buster Keaton season, so I got to see sort of Keaton 'Silence' [??] then. SO that was it was over that period I suppose.

Interviewer: Lovely. You talk in the questionnaire, if you don't mind me bringing things up from the questionnaire, you talk about how, well if you don't mind me quoting 'Cinema was a window on the world which seemed to distant from me at that time'. I was wondering whether you could clarify what you meant by that?

Respondent: Well I suppose coming from a very sort of straight-forward working-class background in Wood Green at that time, the world was quite a narrow place. It was the people in your street and your immediate community and the people you met at school – and Britain at that time was quite a narrow world. Very few black people, I remember that on the street that I lived, there was only one Chinese man. And that was thought to be quite exceptional. And there was an older Polish person who I subsequently discovered was Jewish and had left Poland before the Second World War – that was, those was very much of the boundaries in which you lived, so to think of the wider world, you were pretty much absorbing that through Hollywood films – the few foreign films that you were able to see locally and then – y’know, starting to read more widely. But yeah. I probably had no real idea what Russia was like until I saw Doctor Zhivago! [laughing] And sort of, films like the John Ford ‘Shy in Autumn’ which I did remember as sort of as an exceptional film that sort of was – a game-changer, that changed your view of American history. You had just been absorbing Western – cow boy films – and then you could see it in a historical context that made things appear in a different light.

Interviewer: Let’s talk a moment about American cinema because you say in the questionnaire that you particularly enjoyed American films. What was it about American films that particularly appealed to you?

Respondent: Well I suppose the sense of scale, sense of style, erm the power of the stars, all of those things – of the end of classic Hollywood. Again, sort of talking about the 60s there is a ten year period – I suppose over that time the, the beginning of new Hollywood and something that seemed very in touch with society, very different from what had gone before, and you were ware of social changes. In a sense at that time, you felt Hollywood – the American cinema was cinema – British cinema was local,

parochial and interesting in a different way. Starting to see foreign films over that time, you could see that they were something very different indeed – much more, obviously artistic, comparable to literature. And also much more directly political. I remember seeing a film like the ‘Rocko and his Brothers’ Visconti [??] and that made a lot of sense about my life and – but done at an operatic scale which was very different from anything else I had seen.

Interviewer: When you say that ‘Rocko and his Brothers’ made sense of your life, or with your life, what do you mean by that?

Respondent: I suppose my life as a working class person, y’know, the son of a carpenter who worked a lot in the building trade – and a lot of my relatives worked in the building trade and my sort of – my aspirational brothers starting to do different jobs, the sense of social change I suppose. One of my brothers was a surveyor, my other brother started working in a bank, did a lot of insurance and things like that. You could see a lot of social change taking place in the same way that you could see change taking place in Rocko and his brothers, where his family were coming from the country to work in the big factories in Milan. You could relate to that. And also, you could relate to Alan [***] and [***]! [laughing]

Interviewer: [laughing] So let’s take a moment to talk about European cinema because you have mentioned it a few times now. How important was European cinema to you in the 1960s?

Respondent: Erm... I suppose because it was something that you were aware of having status – and you could see sort of discernible artistic worth, but very different from

Hollywood cinema, much more complicated, in a sense much more like life as opposed to idealised but very attractive vision of life which you may aspire to but didn't really recognise as your own.

Interviewer: And that was in American films?

Respondent: In American films. Whereas European cinema seemed more thoughtful, more strange, and more complex. You had to work harder to get something out of them. It wasn't a passive all-consuming experience. In a sense you felt was productive.
[?]

Interviewer: Did you get to see any foreign films before the 1960's at all?

Respondent: I can't recollect that at all. One thing which I thought about in retrospect, I'm not sure if I mentioned it in the questionnaire, I remember that there was a television series showing a lot of Italian cinema. I imagine – Well, it must have been around the theme of Italian neo-realism. I have got a vague feeling it was called 'South Wind' or something like that. I can remember watching that on television and thinking 'oh I would like to see a lot more of that'. Stuff by [Vitori ***], I'm not sure whether if it was 'Bicycle Thieves', I don't ever remember seeing 'Bicycle Thieves' on television. But I think – must have been [Antionioni ***] or something like that. I wouldn't be so pretentious to say y'know I was 12 years old and I thought 'oh wow Antonioni, he's really good – what a ****'. But you could see that they were something very different that drew you in, in a complex way and I suppose sort of comparable to- of starting to study Drama at school and seeing that there was a complex artistic expression that you had to work at to get something out of – as opposed to sitting back and enjoying it.

Interviewer: Which you would watch with American films?

Respondent: Uhm, as a generalisation, yes. I mean, as I was saying about 'Four Shy in Autumn' or the Hitchcock's which I saw – something like 'Marney' which I remember as a tremendous film and I remember going to see it about three times within a week. I remember going to see it first with my mother and I think I went to see it a couple of times on my own afterwards, because you could see there was great film making there in a way that you couldn't quite work out – you had to absorb the way that the story was being told.

Interviewer: How often did you get to see European films in the 60s?

Respondent: This is something which I didn't mention in the questionnaire. On reflection, I thought it was surprising that there were a lot of European films being shown in some local cinemas, that may have been a London phenomenon. There was the local cinema, one of these sort of bug-hutch cinemas, the Ritz which in Wood Green did show foreign language films usually in dubbed versions. I think there may have been occasional subtitled versions. I suppose the selling point of those films was sex! [laughing] There was more nudity in that sort of stuff, than the classic Hollywood [***]. I think I mentioned the French spy thriller series OSS117, with Kirwin Matthews, which were French films, I remember one that was shot in Corsica – again y'know I didn't know what Corsica looked like until I had seen that film – which were being promoted on the back of the success of the Bonds films. There was another one with Jean-Paul [Belmondo***] the man from Rio, I remember he did a lot of his own stunts in that. And that was sort of a fairly striking – I just thought it was exceptional that from today's perspective that there would be such a volume of local showings of European cinema.

But I mean let's not forget that the biggest box office successes of those periods were often things like 'Hercules Unchained', the 'Giant of Marathon', things like that which were Italian films with American stars or European stars.

Interviewer: Yes, they were.

Respondent: And the Steve Reeves ones were the big box office, the number one films shown over the Summer that huge queues round the block, I do remember that.

Interviewer: I wonder if we might talk for a moment about British film then? [B: Yep, yep] I mean we have touched on it here and there, but I wanted to just get a clearer sense of how you felt about British film during the era?

Respondent: Erm, I remember you could see that things were changing and that these were obviously important films, like 'Room at the Top' uhm... 'Saturday Night and Sunday Morning'. A bit later 'A Kind of Loving'. I suppose those films, the one that I related to most was probably 'A Kind of Loving', again that seemed more- I could relate that more reasonably to my world. The others, I felt they were, you could see that they were important, the Arthur Seaton [***] character in 'Saturday Night and Sunday Morning' you could see a character who was very representative of quite a few people around at that time. Whether it became more representative after people had seen the film I don't really know! [laughs] Typical of behaviour... I suppose one became more aware of sort of changes in style later on in the 60s. The Beatles films very much reflected ones taste in music, they were huge hits.

Interviewer: You were a Beatles fan then?

Respondent: Yes, yes. Difficult not to be in a sense. Such a phenomenon, 'Hard Day's Night' - things like that. And the Richard Leicester style was, at that time, you could see was very very flashy, very very up to the minute, very different to what had happened before.

Interviewer: Do you have any specific memories of how these films connected up with your life? You mentioned in the questionnaire that your parents talked about a couple of films, I think you remember talking about a couple of the kitchen-sink dramas?

Respondent: I remember my mother going to see 'Room at the Top' and that was a film which I wouldn't have seen until much later because of the X certificate rating. I can remember her talking about that to my Aunt and relating quite strongly to the Simone [***] character in that. And also sort of seeing the Lawrence Harvey character as being quite a typical character – a real bastard! [laughing] I suppose the subtext y'know was that all men are bastards, but he was just typical! And I think both of my parents went to see 'Saturday Night and Sunday Morning' and I can remember talking to them about that and asking why it was such an important film. I must have seen it later and having a subsequent discussion with them about that.

Interviewer: After the 1960s?

Respondent: No later in the 60s. Those films were often re-released in a double bill with something else shown in the bug-hutch cinemas, so I probably caught up to those when I was at school whilst starting to go out to work. The other thing I was going to say was I remember, I suppose it's one of those Freudian primal scene- things, the kind of equivalent of seeing your parents having sex for the first time or something like that. I

remember we went to see a Swedish sort of sex-caper film and were quite coy about talking about it. I think it was called – might have been called ‘Seventeen’, I remember it was a big big hit, a big big hit at the time. And they were sort of coy about talking about it, and I remember working it out afterwards that they must have seen this. I just - I found that quite shocking in a way. I suppose, in a sense, now I still find it quite shocking – that my parents liked sex! [laughing]

Interviewer: Did you see that film yourself?

Respondent: No! Still never seen it! [A+B: Laughing]

Interviewer: You say in the questionnaire that you often looked for information about films in different magazines? [B: Yes.] You mentioned a few, let me just bring out that questionnaire, you mentioned ‘Photo Play’, the ‘ABC Review’, ‘Films and Filming’. I was wondering whether you could tell me a little bit about those publications.

Respondent: Yeah. The Photo Play and the ABC film review, I can remember you would buy those in the cinema, y’know adjacent to the ticket office. I imagine they... the ABC Review was in a sense was an in-house mag which they were using to promote their films. Photo Play also you could buy at news agents. Films and Filming I suppose that’s sort of more towards the end of the 60s, the second half of the 60s. I remember seeing that, reading that in the school library and I also remember seeing ‘Sight and Sound’ in the school library.

Interviewer: The school library stocked them?

Respondent: Yeah. Yes. And being surprised that sort of, this was a different way of writing about film, to what one read in the Daily Mirror or the News of the World or whatever. 'Films and Filming', was all part of – there are other varieties of – there was 'Plays and Players', I imagine – well, they were all the same publishing house. They all must have folded in the late 70s, early 80s. They were well illustrated; quite well-written articles by people who you later discovered were reasonable academics. Raymond [***] used to write articles in the 'Films and Filming'. And it was very much sold on the pictures. Much more sexual explicit than anything else! It was also known as 'Eff- and Eff-ing' for obvious reasons! And that was probably the first time I saw a film still of a penis for instance, and they were sort of quite – well much more liberal in their attitudes. One can remember articles about homosexuality, things like that, from a liberal standpoint. It wasn't being shot – I remember they sort of- they were covering a German film called 'Men in the Mud'. And they were saying 'get used to it - this is life for a lot of people'. 'Don't be shocked by this sort of thing'. And y'know, 'society is going to have to change to meet sexual liberation' I suppose. I suppose that's the subtext for all of this. These films and these publications, as the films were, were starting to reflect more liberated society with a greater level of tolerance for a range of social and political and sexual matters.

Interviewer: And this progressive material was available in the cinemas?

Respondent: You wouldn't have bought 'Films and Filming' or 'Sight and Sound' in the cinema. You would have got those from newsagents, but they were in my school library which was probably quite a – probably quite a progressive library for the time. I mean – I remember they sort of, they seemed to spend quite a lot of money – quite a lot of art publications and as well as sort of things like 'Scientific American' and so – I can't speak

for other schools, but that was the sort of stuff that one saw and was encouraged to read, and did read.

Interviewer: Whereabouts were your school?

Respondent: In Wood Green.

Interviewer: In Wood Green.

B: This was the period of the change to comprehensive schools and I went to a Grammar school first of all, which merged into a big comprehensive school. One went to a new building, there were a lot of facilities really, and the library was obviously in retrospect, you could see they spent quite a lot of money on it and had it well stocked.

Interviewer: I wonder whether we might talk about your personal cinema going habits for a moment or two, if that's okay. You say in the questionnaire that you quite often went with dates to the cinema. I was wondering why would you go to the cinema with a date, what is it about the cinema that made it a good place to go with a date?

Respondent: I suppose it was cheap comparatively. And I suppose it was a sort of – a sort of way of trying out whether you liked this person – whether you were going to have something in common.

Interviewer: In terms of film taste?

Respondent: Yes, yes. Y'know –whether there was going to be something else to the relationship. I remember going to see – I mentioned before, Dr Zhivago, and I

remember the person I went with really didn't like it either and most other people did. I could kind of see that she was something a bit out of the ordinary.

Interviewer: A fellow spirit

Respondent: I just remember the bloody music which I still can't stand! I liked David Lean, most of it, but...

Interviewer: You also said in the questionnaire that you sometimes went to the cinema alone?

Respondent: Yeah. I suppose that – it's something I should have said earlier. I remember my mother going to the cinema, quite often on her own. I suppose she would often go with my aunt, or she would go quite a lot on her own – often sort of- on Wednesdays or Thursdays, if she had done the housework, washing, if I was at school she would go and then probably come back and tell you about it over the evening meal. I suspect y'know, I was always interested in the cinema. I can't quite work out why but I suppose the habit of going and talking about it from quite an early age – so I did go quite a lot on my own. Often sort of, often Saturday afternoons.

Interviewer: Why was it that you went by yourself?

Respondent: Uhm it wasn't that I was a sad sort and I didn't have that many friends – I suppose I quite liked to think about it on my own, without having the sort of distraction of talking to someone else about it. I suppose that habits probably still stayed with me - I enjoyed going to the cinema with other people – It becomes a completely different experience. I don't usually have a particularly good instantaneous reaction so – I quite

like to absorb things, I don't like to come out of *Gravity* and say 'blimey, that was incredible – that blew my mind away!' I'd like to process it a bit more.

Interviewer: And you felt like that in the 1960s too?

Respondent: I'm trying to think of a sort of honest, sincere answer. I suppose I did, I quite liked to absorb it myself to see what it meant to me.

Interviewer: That's really interesting.

Respondent: I mean I did go – I did go with my cousin a fair bit. Both of my brothers were a lot older than me – 10-12 years older, I was the last child in the family after quite a period of time. So they would be going out with girlfriends or with their other friends – they would be seeing different things to me. I suppose sort of, they wouldn't want to go out with – they wouldn't want to go out with a 10 or 12 year old, when they were 18, 19, 20!

Interviewer: I had much of the same experience with my brother growing up!

Respondent : And I mean, it was a safe sort of - environment that you were in. You never thought of - You just saw it as a place to go really. It would be like going to a local library or something like that.

Interviewer: How did audiences behave in cinemas in the 60s?

Respondent: Erm... I was thinking about this following the questionnaire. Uhm, I suppose they were a bit more animated on Saturday nights – if there had been out for a

drink beforehand, been to the pub beforehand or whatever. I don't remember them being especially raucous or noisy. I remember Saturday morning pictures, I was trying to think about this, children cinema – That was probably for me, more late sort of 1950s thing, but it did run into the 1960s – and I can remember those being absolutely bedlam! A cauldron of noise! I can remember the usherettes and the other people trying to manage those places, just sort of shouting y'know! 'Shut up and listen!' I remember the manager of what must have been the uhm the Odeon Wood green, going on stage trying to calm the kids down, stop them shouting and making noise and all that sort of thing.

Interviewer: Were you a part of this behaviour?

Respondent: Difficult to say! Probably yes! So after all of that, it was probably like a relaxing experience to start going to adult films with an adult audience. I remember I didn't like smoking, and uhm – the thing about eating in the cinema and that was part of the questionnaire – I got the feeling that people would eat during the trailers and the intermission or something like that, or after the first film. But I don't remember there being a lot of eating during the films very much. That seems to be a later phenomena of the growth of the television age – in a sense of people eating at home in front of the TV who took that to the cinema with them. The other thing I would say, the sort of things like the 'Ki-ora' [***] orange drink or choc-ices, or probably things that you would only consume in the cinema. I don't remember them being especially widely available out of the cinema. I can't remember but that was the impression that I took.

Interviewer: You mentioned Ki-ora Tell me about that.

Respondent: Uhm, there was usually an advert about Ki-ora – the orange drink which was probably so crammed full of chemicals that would probably blow your head off with it. But there was always an advert and then there would be a Ki-ora sales girl who would be picked out by the spotlight, right at the front of the cinema – and you would run down to the cinema and you would buy your Ki-ora. I think she probably sold chocolates as well. That sounds like the stuff of nostalgic myth, but I do actually remember that as being reality.

Interviewer: Well nostalgic myth is always built on memory somewhere, so no, no! You mentioned the Saturday mornings children's films? Where, how, you mentioned that children often misbehaved at those, that they were raucous and noisy. [B: Yeah, yeah] How often did you go to those? Were you attending every week? Or was it more an infrequent treat?

Respondent: It was probably more in an infrequent treat because I was probably doing other things on Saturday morning, like playing football or athletics, or cricket or that sort of stuff. Or occasionally drama, which I was into at school. That's rather confusing things, the Saturday morning pictures was something you probably stopped going to when you were about 12.

Interviewer: And you were 12 in 19... 6...1? If my maths is correct?

Respondent: Yes, yes, yes. 61.

Interviewer: And that was when you stopped going?

Respondent: Yes.... yes, yes. Because they always sort of showed children's films, and sort of kind of – children light-weight westerns.. Things like that. I was thinking about this, 'what did they actually show?' Probably sort of 5 year old Disney's, something like that. I remember them showing 'Francis the Mule' which was a film that must have been 10, 15 or 20 years old at the time. I remember it being very very funny indeed. I suppose that was kind of – the untrimmed audience response, of laughter, of general noise, of shouting. Often sort of, kind of rebellion against authority I suppose in a strange kind of way. But you would be rebelling against the usherettes, or rebelling against the managers and going there to cause a lot of racket!

Interviewer: Did your parents go with you to the...?

Respondent: No, no, no. That was sort of – you would go – I'm trying to remember, they might have taken you to the cinema and dumped you there and then picked you up afterwards. That may have been in a sense the feature of Saturday morning cinema; that your mum would take you to the cinema, she would go out and do her shopping for the weekend and then pick you up afterwards. Your dad wouldn't be anywhere around doing that stuff! [A+B: Laughing]

Interviewer: Would your friends be there or would you be....?

Respondent: Yes, yes, yes.

Interviewer: And you would spend time with them there?

Respondent: Yes, yes. You would probably – there would probably be a row of people who all went to the same primary school or something like that. That's the sort of thing

that died off when you went to secondary school really. You wouldn't probably still have a reason to do that when you were going to big school.

Interviewer: Why would you not have a reason at big school?

Respondent: 'Cos you were aspiring to be grown up.

Interviewer: I see. [Laughing] We all did that at big school! You mentioned the Western a few moments ago; you said that Saturday morning children cinema they showed children westerns. But you also mentioned in the questionnaire that you were a fan of the Westerns later in the 60s too?

Respondent: Yeah, yeah I suppose the western was the governing genre of that period. You got the feeling that there would probably be a Western out every week – you got the sense, y'know like now, like science fiction and science fantasy is the dominate genre. That was the governing thing. I think it is very comparable with sci-fi; a lot of the stylistic characteristics pop up in current day science fiction.

Interviewer: What do you mean by that? Where do we see that?

Respondent: Sorry, do you mean the characteristics or... [A: Yeah] The sort of quest, the journey – all of that sort of Joseph Camble kind of stuff – and the kind of- the construction of the personality I suppose.

Interviewer: That's interesting. So what was it about Westerns in the 60s in particular that appealed?

Respondent: Uhm well I suppose the visual style which was always very attractive. The landscape, the open air, the animals – the horses. The costume, I think that's actually – they are very understated characteristic of Western still. They are quite stylish costumes, they are quite stylish to look at I think. I remember one of the very earliest films which I can recollect seeing, I remember seeing that with my mother was 'Shane' [***] with George Stevens with Allan Lare [***], which I still think is an absolutely terrific film. And I remember again, the sort of, the way you went and saw things – that one was probably actually the 50s when I saw that. Because of the continuous showings, I remember going in there about 15 minutes into the movie with my mother and sitting all the way through it – and then sort of sitting to the appropriate point of the next showing to work out the whole kind of trajectory of the story. But I can remember the black leather of Jack [***] the white buttskin of [***].... very conventional stereotypes of masculinity. You could relate to the figure of the young boy in that, responding to the [***] 'Shane' characters. Very conventional, distinct masculine characteristics in comparison with his own father.

Interviewer: And you say that is something you can relate to?

Respondent: Uh yes I suppose that was sort of, what you learnt growing up in a sense. A sort of masculine role model in a strange kind of way.

Interviewer: That's really interesting.

Respondent: I mean I think that is one of the characteristics of the Western, that a lot of Westerns have that kind of dynamic it seems to me.

Interviewer: I think I would agree with you. There's a particular memory that you mentioned in your questionnaire, if you could just give me a moment to find it.

Respondent: I suppose the other thing I would say in relation to that is ours wasn't a particularly bookish household uhm – reading was something that I started to do voraciously, so I probably read comics a lot, read annuals a lot – started to read much more going to secondary school. There were never a lot of books around the house so those kinds of things, experience of growing up; one took much more from the cinema I think.

Interviewer: That's very interesting. Because of course, this is a period in which you are growing up yourself.

Respondent: Yeah... hmm.

Interviewer: That's very nice..... Sorry, I was very impressed with that. I'm just trying to find the question where we asked you about what your favourite cinema memories of the 1960s were and whether any particular stand out for you?

Respondent: I can't remember what I said [laughing]! Saying something completely different now and completely contradictory!

Interviewer: It's okay, I'm sorry, I will lay my finger on it in a moment if you could just give me a second.

Respondent: I remember thinking – I think I said that *Marnie* [***] made an impression on me as a terrific film, in a very complex way that you couldn't work out all the stuff immediately. But uhm was very rewarding to watch in a strange kind of way.

Interviewer: How do you mean rewarding?

Respondent: Well I suppose with Hitchcock, you were very aware that there was a really intelligent director behind all this. That for the first time you could see there was a presence behind the camera.

Interviewer: And you were aware of that in the 60s?

Respondent: Yes. I mean sort of, the early parts of the film where she is assuming another character and sort of dying her hair and acquiring – in a sense acquiring another personality. And then the way all of that is sort of, is scrutinised in the second half of the film. And the fact you are very involved with her, she is very complicated – in a way she isn't a particularly likeable or obviously likable character but you are really really drawn to her.

Interviewer: And you remember feeling that way in the 60s?

Respondent: Yes, yes, yes.

Interviewer: Fantastic.

Respondent: And again, sort of what was all the sex about in that? [Laughing]

Interviewer: I don't think anyone knows! [Laughing] Actually, it's interesting because I had just drawn out that question in the questionnaire, and you do indeed mention *Marnie* in that, but you also mention going to see the 'It-cras' [***] film with your first girlfriend, would you mind me asking what you remember about that visit to the cinema?

Respondent: Uhm, I remember I thought it was quite a strange film. Well it is quite a strange film. Very different to the Bond movies for instance, and quite sort of stylish in a very 60s kind of way. The kind of attitude of the Harry Palmer character – well he was doing some cooking in that – I can't ever recollect I'd seen a bloke doing cooking on film before. And living in his sort of quite a cool flat.

Interviewer: Why did it matter that you saw him do cooking on film?

Respondent: That's a very interesting question I think. I suppose that's... I just never thought that blokes would do that sort of stuff. My father never did the cooking at home. And again sort of cinema offering alternative views to how you would choose to live your life.

Interviewer: So were your memories of that visit to the cinema bound up with the film, or do you have memories of... I mean in the questionnaire you mentioned seeing it with your first girlfriend. So was it memories of the film or of the social experience?

Respondent: Both I suppose. I have quite a distinct memory of the film. Sorry, I was probably ignoring my girlfriend quite a lot! [Laughing] I remember talking about it quite a lot afterwards, in a way that I don't usually do. And there is a long scene at the British

Museum, the old reading room – things like that. There is a long scene where he's – they sort of attempt to indoctrinate him, but he sort of fights back by sticking a screwdriver or a nail in his hand to sort of deactivate the experience. They are trying to brain wash him and he tries to halt the experience by creating extreme physical pain, I remember that being quite a memorable, quite a shocking scene in a strange kind of way. The person I was with was quite shocked by it, but uhm.

Interviewer: When you said you discussed it quite a lot afterwards, do you mean with the person – with the girlfriend you went to the cinema with?

Respondent: Yeah, yeah, yes.

Interviewer: SO after you had seen the film, did you go on elsewhere to discuss it?

Respondent: I can't remember. I think we went back to her home.

Interviewer: Sure. If we could...

Respondent: Go home, I didn't go in.... [Laughing]

Interviewer: I would never expect such a thing! [Laughing] Sorry I didn't mean to imply! If we could *swiftly* move on to talking about how you remember these films now, after this time has passed. You say in the questionnaire that the films and I'll quote if that's okay [B:Mmm], 'these films reflect my growing up and the factors that moulded my personality. Inevitably these films mean a lot to me now, above and beyond just nostalgia'. [B: Yeah] What do they mean to you above and beyond nostalgia?

Respondent: Well I think I was probably quite lucky in that there were a lot of good films around then. But then is this what people always think about films that they have seen in their formative years? Uhm. I was trying in responding to that, to actually be as honest as I could in reflecting what I thought at the time and also what I think now. In some of those films - haven't lasted very well. A lot of the British ones, the quite dated, quite earnest, quite pretentious – whereas uhm – well the Hitchcock's still stand the test of time. I think the John Ford's still stand the test of time. Seeing films like 'Shy in Autumn' or 'Man in Sharp Liberty Balance' [***], seen those recently – well I haven't seen 'Shy in Autumn' for a long time. But I saw 'Man in Sharp Liberty Balance' recently – really good film in a very sort of different way. Quite a sort of chamber film, in a strange kind of way. Seeing West Side Story very recently at the NFT, within the last 18 months or so, probably last year. I thought that was actually in a way better now than it was then.

Interviewer: In what ways?

Respondent: Uh I suppose it's – there are films which have a sort of a high style which are often ahead of their time. At the time you'd thought they were probably quite pretentious, a bit above themselves- very much sort of films art. And I'd put both *Shane* and *West Side Story* in that category. They weren't typical of the time but in as sense in the years of the past, you've caught up with that and they still seem innovative, they don't seem dated especially. But they still have some sort of edge to them.

Interviewer: That's interesting. Finally, before I sign off as it were, I was wondering whether there was anything else you would like to add? Is there anything that I haven't asked about that you feel was important about 1960s cinema and cinema-going?

Respondent: Uhm again some of the other things that I have mentioned in the questionnaire, just the sheer number of cinemas that were around. There were 11 or 12 cinemas within easy travelling distance of where I lived and now there is probably 4. The number of screens may be the same, but that is a big big difference. I can't think of anything else that we haven't covered – your taste about things change very rapidly, stuff you liked a week ago you probably you'd probably view in a different light now – not much point in going on about that. But uhm I suppose it's sort of quite, it's quite-one clings to a point in your life where you are looking at people studying things – and you realising that the way people study the topics is quite different to how you experienced it at the time. I went to a discussion about British stars recently at Queen Mary college and they were talking about Julie Christie and she was a very interesting star, she still is a very interesting star and people tend to forget that at that time, that she wasn't that popular. I suppose because she was new and different that people find her quite irritating.

Interviewer: Did you?

Respondent: Not especially. But I could see why other women found her quite irritating and girly. Sort of slightly kind of girlish – the kind of free spirited personality which people now see in her films of that period wasn't necessarily viewed like that at the time.

Interviewer: How was it viewed at the time?

Respondent: I suppose you were starting to get the sort of rise of feminism and you are expecting to see stronger female personalities on the screen. She was and is quite a strong personality but probably there is someone like Glenda Jackson in 'Women In Love', I can remember a lot of women relating to her as a very different depiction of femininity.

Interviewer: In what ways?

Respondent: Stronger, more powerful. Less apologetic, less vulnerable. And that sort of links back to – I suppose people like Diana Dors in a strange kind of way. I suppose she was sort of a 50s star and still around, but starting to burn out in the 60s. But liked equally by men and women. Men because she was sexy, and she was sort of beautiful and overwhelming and women because she was quite good fun and she wasn't sexually invulnerable like Marilyn Monroe. She was sexy and quite strong and people could relate to that in different sort of way. Women could relate to that in a different sort of way. I mean I do remember older women like my mother, really liking Diana Dors.

Interviewer: And it is your impression that these stronger female stars, were better liked at the time? Am I right in thinking that?

Respondent: Uhm... It's complicated 'cos – Audrey Hepburn was an enormously popular star at the time. I suppose it's sort of – stars were y'know would relate to different audiences I suppose. A lot of audiences would have related to Audrey Hepburn - as they do now. A young audience, an older audience. Probably someone like

Julie Christie at that time was very much geared towards a sort of a younger metropolitan male and female audience. Yeah, 'Spinning in London' [??] was [laughing] was related to quite a small segment of society. A lot of people have appropriated it afterwards but I can remember a lot of stuff on TV about 'Swinging in London' and finding it quite irritating – I think that was one of the early instances of the media talking about itself.

Interviewer: And that was in the 1960s?

Respondent: Yeah. Yes. I remember that very much.

Interviewer: So I am taking it that you weren't part of the 'Swinging London' phenomenon? [laughing]

Respondent: [laughing] No! I was always waiting for it to happen somewhere, it never got to 'Swinging Wood Green'!

Interviewer: Well on that note, thank you ever so much for your time. It's been a real pleasure, thank you.

Respondent: Thanks.

End of interview.

