The sinking of Titanic shocked and horrified people in both Britain and America. They were shocked that there were not enough lifeboats. They were shocked that so many people had died, and that the families of many of them were left in poverty. The story of Titanic still fascinates people today. The wreck of Titanic was rediscovered on the bed of the Atlantic in 1985, and many items such as crockery and bits of luggage were brought to the surface and exhibited for people to see. How wrong they were!

There are lots of words in English with the same pattern as “unsinkable”, that is “un” + something + “able”. For example, if you say that something is “unforgettable”, you mean that you will never be able to forget it. If something or someone is “unlovable”, it means that you cannot love it. Nonetheless, the impression one gets from Memory and History is that the gauging the reception of memory is a highly problematic affair which even the doyens of the field have struggled to get to grips with. In her introduction Tumblety states that the aim of the volume is to ‘animate and interrogate’ rather than resolve outstanding problems – but with regards to the reception of memory, animation seems thin on the ground. Similarly, Joan Tumblety documents how the image of resistance fighters in post-war France was cultivated through films which were ‘often publically funded and controlled’ (p. 109). Such films functioned as historical sources ‘in the absence of much written material about that had been of necessity secret” (p. 109).

ABSTRACT

[Summary of the book this chapter appears in] On April 14, 1912, the Titanic struck an iceberg off the coast of Newfoundland. Taking more than 1,500 souls with her, Titanic sunk on what was intended to be the glorious maiden voyage of the biggest, most expensive and most technologically advanced ship ever built. In 1997, James Cameron’s "Titanic", the most expensive and technologically advanced movie ever made, hit theatres. In 13 weeks, it became the highest-grossing film in North America, and shortly thereafter, the first motion picture to earn a billion dollars worldwide. The cultural studies and film scholars who have contributed 13 essays to this collection ask the key question: Why? What made "Titanic" such a popular movie? Why has this film become a cultural and film phenomenon? What makes it so fascinating to the film-going public? The articles address everything from the nostalgia evoked by the film to the semiotic meaningfulness created around "The Heart of the Ocean" diamond that figures so prominently as a symbol. Contributors address questions of the representations of class, sexuality and gender; analyze the cross-cultural reception of the film in nationally specific contexts; and examine the impact of strategies for marketing the film through music.

"...it was true! How can you laugh?": the conflation of history and memory in the reception of Titanic in Britain and Southampton

Massey, Anne and Hammond, Mike (1999) "...it was true! How can you laugh?": the conflation of history and memory in the reception of Titanic in Britain and Southampton". In: Titanic: Anatomy of a Blockbuster. Studlar, Gaylyn and Sandler, Kevin S., eds. Rutgers University Press, pp. 239-264. ISBN 9780813526690

Full text is not in this repository.