

Irish Audiences Watch Their First US Feature: *The Corbett-Fitzsimmons Fight* (1897).

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During the coming week the sporting public of Dublin and others will have the opportunity of witnessing the veriscope presentation of the famous fight between Corbett and Fitzsimmons at Carson City on the 17th of March 1897, in which there was a world-wide interest taken. In Dublin the excitement of a large section of the public was intense, and during the evening of the battle the *Telegraph* publishing offices were besieged by an immense crowd extending away to Nelson Pillar and the bridge.¹

This is the beginning of an April 1898 article in Dublin's *Evening Telegraph* previewing a moving-picture entertainment that was to open shortly afterwards at the Lyric Hall, one of the city's variety theatres. The show consisted chiefly of what was then an exceptionally long film depicting the full fourteen-round prizefight between champion James J. Corbett and challenger Robert Fitzsimmons for the world heavy-weight title in Carson City, Nevada, on St Patrick's Day, 17 March, 1897. The *Telegraph's* image of a large crowd surrounding its offices on St Patrick's Day in Dublin is striking for several reasons. First, it shows that a significant portion of the 'sporting public' had followed the daily updates from Carson City in the run up to a fight that was perceived as being connected to Irish ethnicity. Indeed, boxing was so bound up with Irishness at the time that boxing historian Nat Fleischer contends that 'American ring history from the middle

of the 19th century through the early part of the 20th is primarily the history of Irish supremacy'.² Second, the phrase 'sporting public' prompts questions about the gendered nature of the gathering because in the 1890s, in both Ireland and the United States, the audience for such blood sports as boxing would have been assumed to be made up exclusively of men. Despite this, in its chronology of events immediately preceding the fight, the *Telegraph* article indicates that the Corbett-Fitzsimmons contest offers an instance in the breakdown of this homosocial world: 'Fitzsimmons' wife appeared in her private box at 11.35, and was greeted with loud applause. Many other ladies were present.'³ Third, the crowds besieging the *Telegraph's* offices knew that the newspapers would receive word of the outcome of the fight almost instantaneously by telegraph. The immediacy with which the telegraph provided these sports fans or 'sports' with news of the outcome is in marked contrast to the year and more these fans had to wait to see cinematograph pictures of the contest. Despite or because of the delay before *The Corbett-Fitzsimmons Fight* reached Ireland, it was the named film show that received the most Irish press coverage during the Victorian period. An examination of this coverage and of the reception of the film itself reveals the importance of other cultural practices – in this case, boxing, journalism and popular theatre – to early film shows and the ways that these intermedial borrowings connect to issues of gender and ethnicity.

In discussing the decisive contributions to early cinema, Luke McKernan has argued that 'the mere mechanical construction of a film projector has been overestimated, and that it was boxing that created cinema. Cinema was ultimately the creation of its audience, and many among that first audience were not interested in films per se; they were interested in sports.'⁴ McKernan's revisionism is perceptive and useful in rejecting

the ‘great man’ theory of technological progress and placing the agency for change with audiences – such as those that besieged the *Telegraph* offices in March 1897 and thronged the Lyric Hall in April 1898. His use of the term ‘cinema’, however, is anachronistic. Although the audiences at the Lyric Hall assembled with the specific purpose of watching a named film – and one that ran to seventy-five minutes at a time when most films were just a minute long⁵ – they were in fact doing something that was a recognizable part of the attractions of the popular theatre: they were going to see a boxing display. The fact that this entertainment was provided by an unprecedentedly long moving picture is, of course, significant and new, but it was not yet something that contemporaries could have identified as ‘cinema’ – a new form independent of its theatrical context. Rather than seeing this new phenomenon as the birth of cinema, then, it can more plausibly be viewed as a significant case of the ‘intermediality’ of early moving pictures. As used by André Gaudreault and other early film scholars, studies of intermediality acknowledge the dependence of early filmed entertainment on established cultural practices before the emergence of cinema, but they also pay attention to how early film modified other media.⁶ If McKernan is to some extent right that boxing created ‘cinema’, *The Corbett-Fitzsimmons Fight* of 1897 recreated boxing.

The fight had been arranged by US boxing promoter Dan Stuart in association with Enoch Rector, a former member of the Kinetoscope Exhibition Company. The latter company had made significant profits by filming fights for Thomas Edison’s peepshow kinetoscope in 1894. Their *Corbett-Courtney Fight* featured the world heavyweight champion in a contest of six one-minute rounds, each of which could be watched as a separate film – and for a separate fee – at one of the company’s kinetoscope parlours. The

films were very popular, and Corbett's royalty deal eventually saw him earning as much as \$20,000.⁷ This mutually lucrative arrangement was under threat, however, because prizefighting was illegal throughout the United States and a New Jersey judge initiated a grand-jury investigation into the heavily advertised fight. Although this investigation was eventually dropped, the Kinetoscope Exhibition Company experienced numerous difficulties in its vain attempt to film a title bout between Corbett and Fitzsimmons in 1895. The advent of film projection in the United States in 1896 saw the company's demise but not the profitability of fight films or Rector's desire to make them. In 1897, Stuart finally concluded a deal whereby Corbett and Fitzsimmons agreed to fight for a purse of \$15,000 and a share in the film profits. He also convinced politicians in Nevada – a state impoverished by the collapse of its mining industry – that legalizing boxing would help the local economy. Meanwhile, Rector built a special camera designed to take a unique 63mm widescreen-format film that both facilitated the shooting of the ring and could only be exhibited by a modified projector, the veriscope or 'truth seer'. He thereby ensured that his new Veriscope Company retained control of the film, but it was as a result of this shrewd commercial decision that Irish audiences would wait over a year to see the film while US audiences were exploited first.⁸

The Irish public were kept informed about the film by the extensive newspaper publicity surrounding the fight itself and by the numerous fight- and veriscope-related stories in subsequent months. As a result of the laying of the first successful transatlantic telegraphy cable between Newfoundland, Canada, and Valentia Island, Co. Kerry, in 1866, the Irish public of the 1890s had almost immediate access to newsworthy happenings in North America. Consequently, an interested newspaper reader in Ireland

could have encountered both the active publicity of the fight promoters and the film producers and articles about their struggles and triumphs as they mounted the fight and exhibited the film. This included not only the considerable manoeuvrings required to find a location for the fight and the details of the filming but also such minutiae as the presence of celebrities at the fight, epitomized by the *New York World's* engagement of gunfighter Wyatt Earp as its special correspondent.⁹ Additionally, controversy over whether or not Fitzsimmons had dealt Corbett a foul blow in the fourteenth round, after having floored him with a punch to the solar plexus, allowed boxing pundits to question the result. In the first instance of the recorded moving image being used to decide a disputed result, a leading US boxing expert who viewed the film concluded that the referee had missed Fitzsimmons' foul, entitling Corbett to a rematch. The veriscope was 'quicker than the eye', capturing the truth that eluded human vision.¹⁰ Controversies of this kind were not uncommon in boxing discourse because they helped in arranging rematches and in selling newspapers to fight enthusiasts. This one also contributed to promoting the film because sports fans were invited to judge the true outcome for themselves when they saw the film. In tandem with this, anti-boxing groups, having failed to stop the fight, lobbied to prevent the film from being shown. These and related stories served to keep the fight in the public gaze in Ireland for the year it took the film to reach the country.

Of all the articles that Irish newspapers picked up from the telegraph, two that included drawings from US newspapers are of particular importance in assessing how audience members were prepared for viewing the film. A *Telegraph* article in June 1897 included drawings from the *New York World* of key moments in the fight as the veriscope

showed them. The film was being shown at this point at New York City's 2,100-seat Academy of Music, where it had premiered on 22 May. A long caption accompanying the drawings explains:

We reproduce herewith two of the most striking scenes at the Corbett-Fitzsimmons fight, as taken by the Veriscope, which will shortly be brought to Europe by Corbett's manager. In picture No 1 is shown Fitzsimmons' plight in the famous sixth round. [...] Picture number 2 deals with the alleged foul. It shows Corbett sinking to the floor in the 14th round after receiving the decisive left-hand blow over the solar plexus. Fitzsimmons is standing close by ready to land another if the circumstances justify it.¹¹

A second illustrated report appeared in the *Telegraph* on the Saturday before the veriscope was due to open at the Lyric in April 1898. It noted that

As an instance of the extraordinary interest taken by the American public in the fight it may be mentioned that the New York papers gave sketches of the men, with dots representing the blows as struck by each on the other's body in each round. Herewith we give two of these sketches. [...] As great interest will be taken in the noted sixth round in which Fitz was nearly out, and the final one, we reproduce them so that those who see the veriscope will have a guide to what is taking place.¹²

These articles helped not only to create and maintain anticipation over an extended period but also to provide spectators at the film with a visual key in a medium familiar to ‘observers, many of whom, doubtless, witnessed for the first time anything in the nature of a realistic representation of a genuine prize-fight’.¹³

Although Irish sports fans had limited opportunities for attending genuine prizefights, Irish theatres had featured genuine prizefighters. Championship boxers would capitalize on their celebrity and supplement frequently modest prize purses by doing a theatrical tour. This usually consisted of boxing demonstrations on the variety stage. Corbett’s career, however, showed that other options were available for the celebrity fighter. After Corbett defeated John L. Sullivan in the first heavyweight championship under the Marquis of Queensberry Rules at New Orleans’ Olympic Club in 1892, the new champion embarked on a theatrical tour of the United States and Europe in the sensational melodrama *Gentleman Jack*. The play – whose title refers to Corbett’s nickname, ‘Gentleman Jim’ – had been commissioned from Charles T. Vincent by Corbett’s manager, the sometime theatrical impresario and later film producer William A. Brady, who also took a role in the play.¹⁴ ‘The chief interest of the evening centred in the athletic portions of the play,’ commented the *Weekly Irish Times* when this US hit opened at Dublin’s Queen’s Theatre in July 1894. ‘In Act 4, Mr Corbett introduces his celebrated display of “bag-punching,” an exercise in which he is said to excel any other athlete in the world. But it is in the final act, in which is represented the Olympic Club at New Orleans, with a prize fight, that the excitement of the play reaches its climax.’¹⁵ Although the play was clearly designed to allow Corbett display his fighting rather than his acting skills, the *Times* opined that he played ‘the part of Jack Royden with very good effect, his

manner being quiet and honest'. Brady honed Corbett's image as the decorously behaved, college-educated and middle-class 'Gentleman Jim' – originally an insult hurled at him by Sullivan – so that he appealed to bourgeois audiences around the world and became boxing's first matinee idol, at least in America.¹⁶ In his involvement with the kinoscope and veriscope fight films, Corbett was also a key figure in demonstrating that fighters could make considerable sums merely through negotiating for the rights to take moving pictures, a development that would change boxing and its relationship with theatre.

Given Corbett's status as a matinee idol, it is not so surprising that US film historians have pointed to the key role that *The Corbett-Fitzsimmons Fight* played in breaching the men-only bastion of boxing. For Miriam Hansen, the unexpected presence of substantial numbers of women at the US exhibition of the film points up the fact that it was not merely an epic of violence but also one of possible hetero-erotic contemplation.¹⁷ Part of a cultural dynamic that she charts from 1897 to the unrestrained desire and loss female fans expressed at the death of matinee idol Rudolph Valentino in 1926, the women who interest Hansen are increasingly unchaperoned and choosing to watch projected moving pictures. 'The theatres housing the veriscope were those that women regularly visited,' contends Charles Musser, pursuing a similar line of argument, 'and many of the "fairer sex" felt free to go on their own, at least to the matinees. Suddenly they had access to the forbidden and could peruse the semi-naked, perfectly trained bodies of the male contestants.'¹⁸

Although the presence of women at the fight was reported in Irish newspapers, surviving accounts of the Dublin exhibition of the *Corbett-Fitzsimmons Fight* in April 1898 do not offer evidence of interest from significant numbers of women similar to that

in the United States. In March 1897, Irish newspapers had reprinted accounts of the fight that mentioned the ‘remarkable’ presence of women in Carson City and at the ringside.¹⁹ Describing the city on the morning of the fight, one story revealed that the ‘streets were swarming with a very queer collection of people – Indians, Chinese, miners, gamblers, roughs, gentlemen, and women’.²⁰ Some of these women were named in other stories, including the dancers Loïe and Ida Fuller,²¹ and Rose Fitzsimmons: ‘There was a perfect *furor* when Mrs Fitzsimmons (the wife of the champion) made her appearance. She was accompanied by several ladies, and the party were applauded when they took their seats in their private box. They seemed perfectly at their ease, and appeared as though they were at a matinee in a leading theatre.’²² Neither such accounts nor Corbett’s attractions appear to have induced Irish women to view the film in any numbers in Dublin. The reasons for the lack of female spectators may be linked to the choice of venue. The Lyric Hall was not a venue ordinarily frequented by ‘respectable’ women because it featured acts – including live boxing displays – that marked the difference between what was at that moment being defined as respectable variety and distinguished from lower-class variety. This distinction emerged in a theatrical war for audiences after the opening in Dublin within two months of each other in late 1897 of the Empire Theatre of Varieties, a spruced up music hall that was recently Dan Lowrey’s Star of Erin, and the Lyric Hall. The Empire marketed itself at women, guaranteeing acts that did not test the limits of respectable entertainment, whereas the Lyric frequently featured acts of various kinds that could be considered sexually risqué.

At the time that the veriscope was actually engaged to appear at the Lyric for the lucrative Easter season, it was described as a ‘wonderful scientific instrument’ that

reproduces the fight with 'life-like fidelity. [...] The realism of the entire performance is simply phenomenal, and its advantage over the cinematograph and kindred instruments of its kind is that it is a series of living life-size pictures, which are absolutely and perfectly continuous, without a single break from start to finish.'²³ The emphasis on the verisimilitude of the images and the claim that they were life size would have been familiar to those interested in the cinematograph, though not beyond critical comment, as will be seen below. The novel element was the continuity of a film lasting more than an hour. This continuity was not, however, 'without a single break from start to finish' because there were 'intervals' during which reel changes took place and the pianist Oscar May 'played a selection of popular airs'.²⁴ With shows at 3pm and 8pm, the evening performance was preceded by a concert featuring the soprano Edith Wynne Mattison and baritone C. J. Lyons.

A long review that appeared in the *Freeman's Journal* among the sporting news, addressing sports fans directly, offered a critical perspective on the film that points up the perceived differences between a boxing match and what it calls its 'replica' in moving pictures. 'The spectator sees everything that occurred first as if he had occupied a high-priced seat around the actual arena,' it notes positively, before turning to some of limitations:

The difference is that the whole scene, the densely packed assemblage, the combatants on the stage, their seconds and followers are all shown in three shades – white, black, and grey – and the combat of the Veriscope proceeds in silence and without visible injuries to the fighters. But the company within the

Lyric yesterday enlivened the dumb show of the stage with many a shout and round of applause, when Corbett landed a hard ‘facer,’ or Fitzsimmons did a fierce bit of ‘in fighting’ which seemed to give him a momentary advantage.²⁵

Here, the audience supplied some of the missing sound elements of the film, even if they could do nothing about the missing colour. Reviewers of the Irish shows do not mention such other sound supplements as a lecturer commentating on the fight, as occurred at the New York shows and marked the advent of the sports commentator.²⁶ There does, however, appear to have been at least one live sound effect: ‘The beginning and ending of each “round” is noted by a gong – and not the least interesting feature is the prompt return of each man to his corner at the signal, and his quick advance to the centre of the stage when the gong sounds “time.”’²⁷ This description suggests that an actual sound marked the end of the rounds. This effect would have been easy to produce in a theatre that employed musicians. It is also possible, however, that the writer imagines the sound because the timekeeper who strikes the gong is so prominently placed in the frame.

This advance and return, however, highlights one of the visual limitations of film. This movement represents what seems to this reviewer to be a distortion of perspective that, along with the absence of colour, casts some doubt on the veriscope’s vaunted truth-seeing ability:

The figures are larger and more life-like on Corbett’s side of the stage (the left), and it is curious to see the gradual increase in the size of Fitzsimmons as he comes into his opponent’s ground in a smart rally across the stage, both

fighting rapidly and desperately for a decisive advantage. Perhaps the most realistic group of all is the line of persons in front of the spectators and just below the roped arena. One striking figure is a man who notifies Corbett that in ten seconds more the 'round' will end. This is done by raising his white hat from his head at the right time. This action is watched with curious interest.²⁸

The fight was filmed in long shot from a fixed perspective with a bank of three cameras shooting in sequence, the only slight change of view coming in the shape of a jump cut when one camera ran out of stock and the next one took up filming. In this article, realism is not marked by movement alone, but by a combination of movement and size. The most true-to-life figures are not the constantly moving boxers but the almost stationary timekeepers lining the ring in the foreground. When the white-hatted timekeeper signals Corbett ten seconds before the end of each round, he becomes the focus of interest because he combines attention-catching movement with foreground position. If the figures in the foreground are the most realistic, Corbett is the most life like of the middle-ground figures in the ring because his corner is nearest to the camera. Although the conclusion is not drawn in this article, it is possible to argue on this basis that Corbett was favoured by the choice of perspective, that the camera by being literally on his side may have made at least nonpartisan spectators unconsciously side with him.

What is curious about this and other surviving responses to the film in Ireland, however, is the extent to which partisanship for Corbett of a more straightforwardly ethnic kind is absent. This is curious when seen in relation to both the coverage of the fight in 1897 and the heightened level of popular anti-Britishness in Ireland in 1898,

prompted by nationalist commemorations of the centenary of the rebellion of 1798. In such a context, it might be expected that the nationalist members of an Irish audience for the film in 1898 would support Corbett and the unionist members would support Fitzsimmons. Ethnic identity was clearly on the minds of the promoters when they chose St Patrick's Day 1897 to hold the fight, with the date intended to be auspicious for the champion, Corbett, who was the most prominent of the many Irish and Irish-American boxers at the time. Ethnicity was certainly an important element of the much-publicized antagonism between the Irish-American Corbett and the English Fitzsimmons. In some wire stories reprinted by Irish newspapers in March 1897 and in editorial commentary on the fight, such ethnic antagonism is apparent. Reprinting material from the *Daily Mail* and the Dalziel Agency, the *Telegraph* reported that

Corbett intends wearing the American and Irish colours to-morrow, and there is talk of his sporting a bunch of shamrock which an enthusiastic St Patrick's Day man has presented to him. [...] Corbett, who received this morning a green flag to be used as his belt, said to our representative – 'I was born of Irish parents, while Fitzsimmons is an Englishman.' [...] Fitzsimmons, it may be stated, was born in Cornwall, his father being a miner and a black smith. He lived in England until he was twelve years of age.²⁹

These ethnic affiliations seem straightforward, but other reports complicated them. Because Fitzsimmons fought his first professional bouts in Australia, he is sometimes described as an Anglo-Australian boxer; this hyphenated identity is then occasionally

presented as the equivalent of Corbett's Irish-Americanness.³⁰ An editorial item in the *Evening Herald* the day after the fight summarized events with the announcement that 'the Australian from Cornwall beat the Californian from Galway'.³¹ Dispensing with one half of each boxer's supposed ethnic affiliation, an editorial item in the *Irish Daily Independent* earlier that day had described Fitzsimmons as 'the Australian bruiser who defeated the Irishman, Corbett, at Carson City, Nevada, yesterday', and claimed that 'Corbett was the favourite in Ireland, not only because he is an Irishman, but because of his undoubted skill and fine form'.³² Amid this confusion, no Irish newspaper appears to have pointed out in either 1897 or 1898 that Fitzsimmons' blacksmith father was also an Irishman.³³ Allied to the fact that Fitzsimmons won, it may be that by April 1898, a more nuanced or confused understanding of the ethnic identity of the men made simple partisanship for Corbett less tenable for audiences.

The other substantial reviews of the first performances suggest a remarkable degree of unanimity on this novel entertainment among audiences that all agree were large and enthusiastic. All the reviews use the audience's engagement with the film as an index of the realism of the representation. The *Telegraph* contends that 'the interest evinced by the spectators in the varying fortunes of the fight was a remarkable tribute to the fidelity and vividness of the reproduction'.³⁴ The *Irish Times* elaborates:

The figures were perfectly life-like in all their movements, and the various stages of the contest could be seen with absolute clearness. An idea of the realism of the display may be gathered from the fact that the great body of the audience at the evening show, who, by the way, were pretty equally divided in

their preference for the boxers, called repeated terms of encouragement to one man or the other as if the actual fight was occurring before their eyes. Cries of ‘Another like that, Fitz,’ and ‘Now’s your time, Corbett,’ uttered in tones of genuine earnestness, were quite common, and with every effective blow shown to be dealt by either combatant an enthusiastic cheer was raised by a section of the house.³⁵

Neither this review by a unionist newspaper nor the review by the nationalist *Freeman’s Journal* quoted above – and these are the reports that offer the most vivid descriptions of the audience – portray the division between the supporters of Corbett and of Fitzsimmons as ideologically motivated or likely to erupt into a political disturbance. Even though the vast majority of the people – of the men – present must have known the outcome of the fight, the *Times*’ writer claims that the ‘great body’ chose to suspend that knowledge in order fully to experience the pleasures of the recorded fight and that many shouted out encouragement. The audience was clearly interpreting these images without difficulty and interacting with them as if the events depicted were taking place live on stage.

By the end of the first week of the veriscope’s Dublin season, however, another review indicated the limits of this ‘as if’ interaction with the filmed image. The writer of the *Evening Herald*’s ‘The Stage and Music’ column expressed snobbish amusement at the naïve reaction of the ‘gods’ – the cheapest seats on the theatre’s highest balcony that were occupied by mainly working-class patrons – to the conclusion of the fight, when spectators had invaded the ring:

[W]hen this part of the show is reached the principals in the affair are quite hidden from view by the figures of the onlookers who crowd into the ring. The other evening some of the 'gods' were so excited that they yelled 'go back' and 'sit down,' apparently forgetting that the invading mob was only a picture and not a reality. Certainly the representation must be very life-like when the shadow is mistaken for the substance in this amusing fashion.³⁶

The vagueness about the day and some of the wording suggest that the writer did not witness these events. As a possibly apocryphal story, it is revealing of how a hierarchy of knowledge based on class reasserted itself after a brief period when it may have been suspended by a generalized enjoyment and coming to terms with the novel phenomenon of an historic boxing match reproduced by a long moving picture. The behaviour the *Herald* reporter described does not seem incongruous in light of that of present-day sports enthusiasts – still predominantly but by no means exclusively male – watching a televised title fight or football match on a 'big screen' at a public house or similar venue. In this latter case, the supporter who cheers on his or her fighter or team and shouts appeals at what s/he sees as the poor decisions of the referee – or even as inappropriate behaviour by the spectators at the event – is likely to be making a public performance of his or her connoisseurship, displaying a profound knowledge and enjoyment of the sport's rituals.

For the writer in the *Herald* in 1898, however, although it was apparently acceptable to shout encouragement to the boxers when the fight was being shown, to continue such behaviour when the fight was halted displayed an insufficient appreciation

of the nature of the entertainment being presented. To escape being identified with the naïve gods, spectators for the first really long film exhibited in Ireland were expected – by some commentators at least – to demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of the new moving-picture technology and of its relationships with other cultural practices. Here, the gods are the naïve figures against whom other viewers could measure their sophistication. This phenomenon would soon be encoded in the spectatorial position of superior knowledge epitomized in such early films as Robert Paul's *The Countryman's First Sight of the Animated Pictures* (Britain, 1901) and Edwin S. Porter's remake for Edison, *Uncle Josh at the Moving-Picture Show* (United States, 1902), which feature naïves engaging 'inappropriately' with screened images. The naïves of the Lyric were not, however, hermetically sealed in an impermeable screen world. Regardless both of whether the gods shouted out in the manner described or not and of why they did so – could it have been for humour? – the story was interpreted in a way that made the apparently gullible spectators visible to the sophisticates occupying the same theatrical space, thereby demonstrating – at least to itself – the latter group's technological advancement.

Therefore, although the film's Irish reception context is illuminated by consideration of the questions about gender and ethnicity that the film elsewhere prompted, these were not the issues that entered public discourse on the film in Dublin. Here, the film was discussed as unproblematically and exclusively the preserve of the sporting male, who did not appear to favour the more 'Irish' Corbett. Newspaper coverage of the exhibition is notable for the advanced intermedial knowledge used in critically remarking on the film's advantages and disadvantages vis-à-vis attendance at a

fight or live boxing demonstration. This sophisticated engagement with the new moving pictures could be founded, however, on a class-based hierarchy of knowledge.

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¹ 'Corbett-Fitzsimmons Fight at the Lyric Hall', *Evening Telegraph (ET)*, 9 April 1898.

² Nat Fleischer, *The Heavyweight Championship* (London: Sportsman's Book Club, 1954); quoted in Patrick Myler, *The Fighting Irish* (Dingle: Bandon, 1987), p. 37.

³ *ET*, 9 April 1898.

⁴ Luke McKernan, 'Sport and the First Films', in Christopher Williams (ed.), *Cinema: The Beginnings and the Future* (London: U of Westminster P, 1996), p. 107.

⁵ 'Corbett and Fitzsimmons at the Lyric Hall', *Freeman's Journal (FJ)*, 12 April 1898.

⁶ See, for example, André Gaudreault, 'The Diversity of Cinematographic Connections in the Intermedial Context of the Turn of the 20th Century', in Simon Poppo and Vanessa Toulmin (eds), *Visual Delights: Essays on the Popular and Projected Image in the 19th Century* (Trowbridge: Flicks Books, 2000), pp. 8–15.

⁷ Charles Musser, *The Emergence of Cinema: The American Screen to 1907* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1994), p. 84.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 195–200; Terry Ramsaye, *A Million and One Nights: A History of the Motion Picture* (1926; London: Cass, 1964), pp. 285–7.

⁹ Musser, *Emergence of Cinema*, pp. 195–7.

¹⁰ 'The Veriscope Pictures of the Great Battle – Quicker Than the Eye', *ET*, 5 June 1897.

¹¹ 'The Corbett-Fitzsimmons Veriscope', *ET*, 1 June 1897.

¹² 'Corbett-Fitzsimmons Fight at the Lyric Hall', *ET*, 9 April 1898.

¹³ 'Lyric Hall', *Daily Nation*, 12 April 1898.

¹⁴ Alan Woods, 'James J. Corbett: Theatrical Star', *Journal of Sport History*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (1976), p. 164–75.

¹⁵ *Weekly Irish Times*, 14 July 1894.

¹⁶ Woods, 'James J. Corbett', pp. 165 and 169.

¹⁷ Miriam Hansen, *Babel and Babylon: Spectatorship in American Silent Film* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1991), pp.1–2.

¹⁸ Musser, *Emergence of Cinema*, p. 200.

¹⁹ 'The Great Fight: Fitzsimmons Beats Corbett', *ET*, 18 March 1897.

²⁰ 'The Great Fight: Biggest Ring Battle in History', *Sport*, 20 March 1897.

²¹ 'The Corbett-Fitzsimmons Fight: Fourteen Stern Rounds', *Dublin Evening Mail*, 18 March 1897.

²² 'The Great Fight: Corbett and Fitzsimmons', *ET*, 19 March 1897.

²³ 'Corbett v. Fitzsimmons: The Veriscope at the Lyric Hall', *ET*, 2 April 1898.

²⁴ 'Lyric Hall', *Irish Daily Independent (IDI)*, 12 April 1898.

²⁵ 'Corbett and Fitzsimmons at the Lyric Hall', *FJ*, 12 April 1898.

²⁶ Musser, *Emergence of Cinema*, p. 198.

²⁷ 'Corbett and Fitzsimmons at the Lyric Hall', *FJ*, 12 April 1898.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ ‘The Great Fight: Corbett v. Fitzsimmons’, *ET*, 17 March 1897.

³⁰ ‘The Coming Great Fight: Corbett v. Fitzsimmons’, *ET*, 16 March 1897.

³¹ ‘Ave, Fitzsimmons!’ *Evening Herald (EH)*, 18 March 1897.

³² *IDI*, 18 March 1897.

³³ , Gilbert Odd, *The Fighting Blacksmith: A Biography of Bob Fitzsimmons* (London: Pelham, 1976), p. 8.

³⁴ *ET*, 12 April 1898.

³⁵ ‘Lyric Hall’, *IT*, 12 April 1898.

³⁶ *EH*, 16 April 1898.