

EARLY IRISH CINEMA
1895-1921

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DENIS CONDON

National University of Ireland Maynooth



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Abbreviations

BBFC	British Board of Film Censors
BFI	British Film Institute
CSORP	Chief Secretary's Office Registered Papers, National Archives of Ireland
<i>DEM</i>	<i>Dublin Evening Mail</i>
DMP	Dublin Metropolitan Police
<i>EH</i>	<i>Evening Herald</i>
<i>ET</i>	<i>Evening Telegraph</i>
<i>FJ</i>	<i>Freeman's Journal</i>
FCOI	Film Company of Ireland
FIAF	Fédération Internationale des Archives du Film
fps	frames per second, projection speed of film
GFS	General Film Supply
IAPC	Irish Animated Photo/Picture Company
<i>IDI</i>	<i>Irish Daily Independent</i> ; after 1905, <i>Irish Independent</i>
<i>IT</i>	<i>Irish Times</i>
IFA	Irish Film Archive
LOLA	Liam O'Leary Archive, National Library of Ireland
M&K	Mitchell and Kenyon, British film production company
MPPC	Motion Picture Patents Company, the Edison Trust
MPW	<i>Moving Picture World</i> , US trade journal
NAI	National Archives of Ireland
NFTVA	National Film and Television Archive, London
NLI	National Library of Ireland
PH	Picture House
PHC	Public Health Committee, Dublin Corporation
POV	Point of view shot
RDS	The Royal Dublin Society's show grounds in Ballsbridge Dublin
RIC	Royal Irish Constabulary

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The Condons and Kilbrides, who did the proofreading, got books from various libraries, and babysat.

And Lisa, Oscar, Finn and Ronan for everything else

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Introduction

Diarist, architect and habitual theatre-goer Joseph Holloway made frequent visits to the different kinds of film shows that were mounted in Dublin between 1895 and 1921, and his diary entries on these entertainments are uniquely illuminating on early Irish cinema. ‘Went down about 3.15 in the afternoon to the Star to see the wonderful Cinematographe’, he writes of his first visit to a film show at Dublin’s Star Theatre of Varieties in November 1896,

& found the place full & the 4d seats instead of being 4d each were going at the modest sum of one shilling, & even at that figure I could only secure standing room at the side. Certainly it is an astonishing invention – incidents such as cavalry charges, bathing scenes, trains arriving, live before you for some minutes as if you were taking part in them. Some few subjects were a trifle blurred & indistinct but on the whole the original Lumiere Cinematographe was a huge success & a thing to marvel at.¹

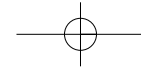
During the initial novelty period of projected moving pictures, spectators went to see a technological wonder that, under an assortment of trade names, made photographs of everyday objects move. Devices such as the *cinématographe*, *animatographe*, *vitascope*, *biograph* and *bioscope* showed waves breaking on a beach or a train arriving at a station or the scene in a busy street. These film shows formed a recognizable part of established entertainments: they were the latest of the visual novelties that turned up occasionally at fairgrounds and in the popular theatre. They were more popular than most of their kind because the illusion of movement was not limited to the central action: to take a famous instance, that of the train arriving and the passengers alighting, motion extended to such incidental details as smoke billowing from the smokestack and steam rising from the engine. Movement was generalized within the frame in a realistic manner. Projected moving pictures were an improvement on a device that had appeared in Ireland the previous year, the *kinetoscope*, a machine that made photographic



1 Passengers alighting from the train in *Arrivée d'un Train en Gare à la Ciotat* (France: Lumière, 1895).

images move but that could only be viewed by one spectator at a time. This made the kinetoscope, like the peepshow device that had preceded it, unsuitable for theatrical exploitation. The cinematograph,² however, combined the moving-picture technology of the kinetoscope with the projected-image technology of the magic lantern to produce an instrument that could exhibit animated photographic scenes to large groups of viewers. With the interest that the device generated, it was a bill-topping act in the music-hall programme that could completely fill a large theatre with spectators who were willing to pay a shilling for seats (or even standing room) that were normally priced at a third of that amount. The individual films lasted less than a minute each, so that they delivered a burst of images before being replaced by the next of the ten films that were typically shown. Therefore, when the first moving images of Ireland were shown at the Star in early 1897, the fact that they were local films was just one of the reasons that the audience were likely to have found them interesting.

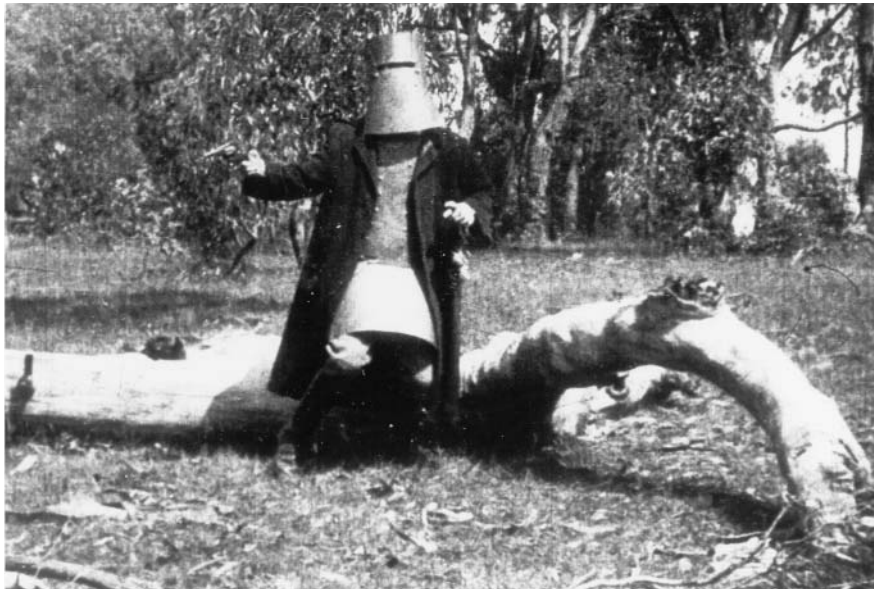
Spectators began to go to see particular films at about the same time as dedicated film venues appeared in the late 1900s. For the ten

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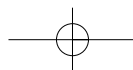
3

months between 2 March 1908 and 9 January 1909, during a period in which its theatrical patent had lapsed, the Queen's Royal Theatre acted as one of Ireland's first dedicated cinemas.³ Visiting it on its opening night, Holloway

found the entrances to the cheaper parts of the house thronged with small boys eager to gain admittance – *The Story of the Kelly Gang* evidently was the attraction to these youthful minds who are so full of the horrors of the “penny dreadful,” & who longed to see some of them realised before their eyes in “living pictures.” The excitement in the street outside was fully maintained inside (I got standing room on the upper circle for 6d). The house was thronged in every part, & a series of pictures depicting the humours and excitement of a man's first row on the river. This was followed by “the sorrows of a clown” & “Her rival's necklace” – two dramatic shows. Mr. Alan Wright sang “The Boy on the Raft,” to a series of pictures & then a three minute interval occurred, & the lights put up. Smoking was freely indulged in & the whole house was agog with excitement. The event of the programme – “*The Story of the Kelly Gang*” was then announced amid “sensation,” as they say in a murder trial, & the story was dramatically & excitingly unfolding itself amid noisy approval as I left a little after eight o'clock.⁴



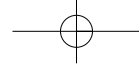
2 An armoured Ned Kelly advances towards the camera in *The Story of the Kelly Gang* (Australia, 1906). Courtesy of the National Film and Sound Archives, Canberra, Australia.



Here, Holloway focuses on a named living picture, *The Story of the Kelly Gang* (Australia, 1906; dir. Charles Tait), rather than on the apparatus that projects it. He distances himself, however, from the excitement of the spectacle, which he presents as being more the preserve of the 'small boys' that he frequently notes in Dublin's popular theatres.

Holloway suggests that spectators constitute themselves as an audience in response to a film belonging to a genre that they follow in other media: in popular literature and in the sensational melodramas that had previously been (and would soon be again) staged at the Queen's. *The Story of the Kelly Gang* was clearly represented the featured item on a programme of films and live music, which included songs illustrated by magic lantern slides. The programme was designed to build anticipation and to offer periods for smoking and social interaction within the cinema. The story of the fate of an outlaw of Irish extraction in Australia would also doubtless have appealed to an audience used to the stage melodramas enacting the deeds of Irish nationalist heroes that had been a staple of the Queen's. The Irish rebel has gone global, but his adventures abroad are no more successful than those of Wolfe Tone or Robert Emmet. The Irish-produced films that were shown at the Queen's did not occupy the top of the evolving cinema programme. Irish material was limited to the travel films produced by British producers, such as the Charles Urban Company's *Beautiful Erin* (Britain, 1907), a composite travelogue of seven films made of tourist views of the country. In leasing the Queen's as the site for its cinema, the Colonial Picture Combine gambled on a large venue for their film-based entertainment. The company hoped, however, that by offering melodrama it could hold on to a substantial part of the theatre's regular audience. In occupying existing premises, it also avoided the capital costs of building that speculators in Irish cinemas would venture from 1910 on.

The opening of Dublin's La Scala Theatre in August 1920 was a significant moment in Irish cinemagoing. On one hand, the building represented the pinnacle of the cinema construction boom of the early 1910s that had been interrupted by World War I. On the other hand, it marked the first appearance of the cinema palaces that would dominate cinemagoing for decades to come. The luxuriously appointed building seated 3,200 patrons, twice the number of spectators of any other cinema in the country at that time. Purpose-built premises, it also included such facilities as a restaurant, cafés, smoking and dressing rooms, as well as

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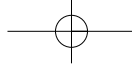
a tearoom, lounge and bar on each floor. Its designers conceived of it as a venue where it was possible and desirable to spend the whole evening. Holloway was impressed by the building and the musical offerings but expressed his discontent with the film fare by leaving before the interval:

The theatre looked nice when lighted up. The Symphony Orchestra of 23 performers opened the programme with a Faust selection, then followed the singing of the Prologue from *Pagliacci* by Jay Ryan (I think) & the voice sounded very well in gallery & showed that the acoustics of the house were alright.⁵

On 'a night of interest, wonder and brilliancy', newspaper columnist Jacques was particularly impressed by the efficiency with which the numerous attendants ushered people to their seats: 'It was a triumph of orderliness that could only be possible with the co-operation of the public, and, one ventures to say, could not have been possible some years ago.'⁶

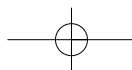
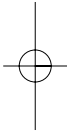
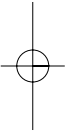
Having long resisted the introduction of the queue, the popular Dublin audience was finally accepting such decorous behaviour at their entertainments, or having it imposed upon them with sufficient will. Alone among the features of the evening, Jacques expresses reservations about the feature film, *Parentage* (United States, 1918; dir. Hobart Henley). 'It has a mission certainly,' he conceded, 'but it is one that can be preached in the home far better than in the mixed company of strangers in the theatre.' Irish films rarely appeared on La Scala's programme because of the miniscule level of production in the country in the 1920s. It was here in January 1922, however, that *Ireland a Nation* (United States, 1914–20; dir. Walter Macnamara), a film of 'unusual and, incidentally, topical interest' about the struggle for Irish self-determination, shot partly in Ireland in 1914, would finally enjoy an uninterrupted run in an Irish cinema.⁷

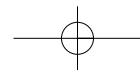
These three vignettes of particular moments of cinema-going indicate the concerns of this book. It aims to examine the cinema in Ireland between 1895 and 1921 in a way that registers the dialectical relationship between the instances of production, distribution, exhibition and reception. If exhibition and reception appear to be privileged in these examples, this acknowledges the fact that Ireland was not an important country for film production. Foreign production companies made most of the films shown domestically, and, indeed, most of those produced here, for audiences outside



Ireland. There is a sense in which a history of Irish cinema could marginalize production within the country in favour of an account of exhibition and reception history. This may be a case in which 'film viewing is really an inappropriate research method'.⁸ This provocative statement by Robert C. Allen and Douglas Gomery aimed to challenge the privileged place of textual analysis in film studies of the 1970s and early 1980s, but it might also have relevance in a country where cinema-going was popular but film production was, in international terms, insignificant, at least quantitatively. It is on the basis of this logic that scholars interested in early Irish film have recently chosen to concentrate on distribution, exhibition and reception. Niamh McCole's doctoral research on visual culture in provincial Ireland between 1896 and 1906 offers insights by focusing on the exhibition and reception context of magic lantern and cinematograph entertainments.⁹ Kevin Rockett's forthcoming book on film distribution and exhibition in Ireland intends to engage substantially with the early period.

Although this book recognizes the importance of such work, it argues that a unique relationship existed between film production and reception at times before the 1920s necessitating that these instances be examined together. One of its important points of departure is Rockett's claim, in a co-authored book seminal in Irish film studies, that 'the silent period represented an initial important phase in indigenous fiction film-making that in volume, quality and relevance to contemporary and historical events in Ireland, was not to be emulated until the 1970s'.¹⁰ In addition, the considerable attention paid by commentators in the 1910s to the early efforts in film production suggests that they had a symbolic significance far out of proportion to their numbers. There remains, however, relatively little scholarly writing on the period. Although research on film before the 1980s was sparse, the contributions of Liam O'Leary were particularly critical. His interventions included not only his research seen in publications and in the documents that now make up the Liam O'Leary Archive but also his identification of Irish material while working at the British Film Institute and his contribution to the establishment of the Irish Film Archive. Proinsias Ó Conluain's 1953 *Scéal na Scannán* was also important as the first Irish-language history of film that focuses on Ireland.¹¹ The volume of film research increased remarkably, however, in the late 1980s. Shortly after Rockett's chapter in *Cinema and Ireland* appeared in 1987, Anthony Slide and Brian McIlroy published survey works on the history of Irish film that covered the silent period and added useful insights on, respectively, the British

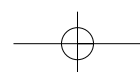




pioneer film-makers in Ireland and travelling showmen in the north of Ireland.¹² Rockett has both built on and modified his account of the period in more recent essays, and his monumental *Irish Filmography* corrects many misconceptions about fiction film-making during the period.¹³ In the most recent scholarly survey of Irish film history, Ruth Barton offers a significant engagement with the films of the silent period that not only shows its continuities with later developments but also introduces analytical tools, such as gender, that are new to studies of Irish silent cinema.¹⁴ In his history of Irish documentary film, Harvey O'Brien pays close critical attention to surviving non-fiction films of the early period.¹⁵ An indication of the value of Robert Monks' long awaited history of Irish cinema during the silent period – based in the first instance on the material held in the Liam O'Leary Archive (LOLA), National Library of Ireland (NLI) – is provided by his informative essay on the films made in Ireland by the British firm Mitchell and Kenyon.¹⁶

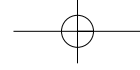
The period considered in some detail here runs from 1895 to 1921. The year 1895 appears as the initial date primarily for local film-historical reasons, because it was in that year that the kinetoscope first exhibited moving photographic images to paying audiences in Ireland. The significance of the 1921 end date may need more explanation. A book following a periodization based more strictly on film aesthetics might, like *Cinema and Ireland*, extend its coverage to the 1930s to take in the whole sweep of the silent period and finish with the introduction of sound. The creation of the Irish Free State and Northern Ireland, however, has become the start date for the period on which much recent writing surveying the history of Irish film focuses, notably the important books produced in 2000 by Martin McLoone and Lance Pettitt, and John Hill's more recent treatment of film in Northern Ireland.¹⁷ In contrast to these works, this book concentrates on the relatively neglected history of Irish cinema in the period before 1921. This political hiatus is also a local film-historical hiatus because the impact of political events on the cinema in Ireland hastened the demise in the late 1910s of both the Film Company of Ireland (FCOI) and the General Film Supply (GFS), the country's most important producers of fiction and non-fiction films respectively, as well as of Ireland's first film journal, the *Irish Limelight*.

If relatively little Irish writing on the period has appeared, the opening of the Irish Film Archive (IFA) in Dublin in 1992 has made the study of its surviving Irish films far easier than ever before. The



IFA holds viewing copies of ten of the thirteen fiction films that survive fully or partially. Because most silent films have been lost and only the most basic contemporary accounts exist of many of them, it is not easy to put a figure on the total number of films made in Ireland prior to 1921. Based on the best available information, there appears to have been about seventy fiction films made in the country during the period.¹⁸ Seven of the thirteen that are known to survive were directed by Sidney Olcott for Kalem and other US film companies between 1910 and 1914: *The Lad from Old Ireland* (1910), *Rory O'More* (1911), *The Colleen Bawn* (1911), *His Mother* (1912), *'You Remember Ellen'* (1912), *For Ireland's Sake* (1914) and *Bold Emmett, Ireland's Martyr* (1915). Films survive from two other US production companies that shot in Ireland during the early 1910s. J. Theobald Walsh made the *Life of St. Patrick: From the Cradle to the Grave* (1912), and Walter Macnamara produced *Ireland a Nation* (1914–20) partially in Ireland in 1914. Three films made by the FCOI in the late 1910s survive: the historical dramas *Knocknagow* (1918) and *Willy Reilly and His Colleen Bawn* (1920), and one reel of the two-reel comedy *Paying the Rent* (1919). A later life of St. Patrick also survives, Norman Whitten's *Aimsir Padraig/In the Days of St. Patrick* (1920).¹⁹

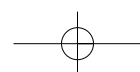
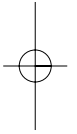
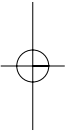
Far more non-fiction titles survive, although there are instances in this period where the distinction between fiction and non-fiction in this period can be difficult to decide. Surviving factual films range from Lumière productions of 1897 to news films of the early 1920s. Some historically significant newsreel exists in the public domain. Recognizing the particular importance of newsreel films at a time of profound historical change, the Irish-language cultural organization Gael-Linn and film director George Morrison made the films *Mise Éire* (1959) and *Saoirse?* (1961), compilations of newsreel, photographs and newspaper headlines treating the struggles to establish the Free State, respectively, from the 1916 Rising to the Sinn Féin victories in the election of 1918 and from the War of Independence to the Civil War that followed it. Much surviving newsreel is held by and commercially available from the still-existing companies that originally produced it. For example, British Pathé, which had a significant presence in Ireland, have digitized their newsreel, including the Irish material, and made it available through their website.²⁰ The website of the British Universities Film and Video Council provides information on the Gaumont and Topical Budget newsreels.²¹ The RTÉ film library holds copies of some of the issues of the only indigenous newsreel of

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the period, *Irish Events*, which was produced by the GFS between 1917 and 1920.

As well as referring to work in Irish film studies, this study has developed in dialogue with the diverse body of historical and theoretical writing on early and silent cinema that has appeared in the last thirty years. The study of early cinema has undergone a particular flowering since 1978, when film archivists and early film scholars from around the world met at Brighton, England, under the aegis of the Fédération Internationale des Archives du Film (FIAF) to examine the surviving films from the period up to 1906. The argument here is indebted to numerous works of film-aesthetic and film-historical significance written in the wake of the Brighton Conference, and these are credited in the notes. It is characterized by debts to two particular bodies of scholarship that it is appropriate to acknowledge here because they help to explain the methodology that will be used. The first, particularly associated with André Gaudreault, is the notion of the intermediality of early cinema, a process whereby film shows before the advent of dedicated cinemas assumed the characteristics of the entertainments in whose venues they were exhibited, thereby producing hybrid film entertainment.²² A film of a boxing match at a music hall in which live boxing displays were common was an event that spectators treated as though it were happening before them, although they were aware that it was not. The intermedial nature of the cinematograph show in such circumstances will be illustrated in Chapter 1, but, because of the continuing importance of intermedial relationships to the emergent cinema in Ireland throughout the two and a half decades considered here, Gaudreault's argument will be extended into the period after the arrival of dedicated moving-picture venues. This argument will be pursued in Chapter 2. The second body of scholarship that should be acknowledged as vital to the way this book operates is reception studies. It is indebted to Janet Staiger's elaboration of a reception studies methodology that attends to the material historical conditions in which films are interpreted,²³ as well as to Miriam Hansen's work on the silent cinema as an alternative public sphere, which stresses the importance of what was occurring in the cinema space while the film played. Hansen highlights 'exhibition practices [that] emphasize the value of the show as live performance over the projection of the film as uniform product, thus providing the structural conditions for locally specific, collective formations of reception'.²⁴ This study proceeds by paying attention to ways early cinematograph shows in Ireland interacted with the other

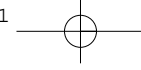


media with which they came into contact, and to the changing nature of moving-picture entertainments and the collective moments of reception that contributed to the ways these changes were negotiated by Irish audiences.

The main body of the current work attends to these factors. It contends that Irish audiences for early cinematograph shows watched a film to experience certain activities collectively, gazing at the screen together. In doing so, they shared the multiple cultural practices that fed into the first projected film shows. A number of these practices – namely, mass tourism, the theatre and public events – became particularly important to the cinema in Ireland and prompted audiences to view films made in the country in particular ways. Spectators may have viewed these films by adopting the perspective of a theatrical audience, a tourist party, or participants in a public event, or a combination of these spectatorial positions. As attractions, these modes of spectatorship do not operate alone within a film but arise in pre-classical narrative films to disrupt the illusion of reality. Classical film does not banish these moments of scopic pleasure but integrates them into the flow of narrative progression. Because of the lasting appeal of these different ways of looking, however, producers of films in Ireland may have been slow in adopting the classical mode of representation.

This study aims to discuss the significant events in the early development of the cinema in Ireland. Its geographical ambitions extend to the whole island, but it focuses on Dublin for a number of reasons. As the capital, the home of the national press and a major centre of population, Dublin represented a particular attraction for travelling entertainers. They frequently launched a country-wide tour with well-advertised shows that could subsequently be marketed as coming ‘direct from’ a big Dublin theatre or as having been patronized by the fashionable classes of the capital. In order to treat the wealth of previously unexplored primary sources on early film in Ireland in a systematic manner, it has been necessary to restrict the focus to Dublin in the first instance. This is not the case, however, with Chapter 3 on ‘Virtual Tourism’, in which the cinema in Kerry receives detailed examination. Significant work, therefore, remains to be done on travelling exhibitors and the emergence of the cinema outside these areas. In particular, the early cinema in Belfast, which is merely glimpsed here (in a rate of cinema building that rivalled Dublin’s in the 1910s, for example), deserves considerable work.

This book proceeds in this spirit of attending to the locally specific by adapting an international body of theory. Chapter 1, ‘Retrospection and Projection’, seeks to illuminate the contexts in which the first film

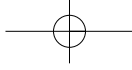
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shows were presented to Irish spectators. It begins with an overview of film shows in the period 1895–1901, before detailing significant moments from the advent of the kinoscope to the first season of the exhibition firm that would become the Irish Animated Picture Company, Ireland's most significant film exhibitor before the opening of dedicated venues in the late 1900s. In doing so, it examines newspaper accounts of the new medium to discover how much it was seen to stem from existing media and how much as something new.

Proceeding on the basis of questions raised by the surviving films, the following chapters move from the films themselves to their historical contexts. Chapter 2, 'Theatre', examines how the theatrical manifests itself in a film show, invoking modes of spectatorship appropriate to the theatre. It demonstrates that an intermedial relationship with theatre was particularly important to early cinema throughout the period studied but that the kind of theatre that was party to this alliance changed and, with it, the kind of spectatorship. The music hall was important to the first projected moving-picture shows both because it provided a venue for these shows and because its variety bill offered a model for the cinema programme. The importance of the melodrama house lay in offering popular narrative texts that could be readily adapted, performance traditions and a *mise en scène* designed to communicate information without the use of dialogue, and actors willing to work in the new medium. These popular theatrical forms relied on a type of active spectator, ready to banter with a comedian or hiss a villain. The final important theatrical form that interacted with early Irish cinema was the literary theatre. Performers associated with the Abbey Theatre and the Theatre of Ireland were instrumental in the FCOI. In a moment that illuminates the theatrical and touristic legacies of Irish film, the central character in the FCOI's *Knocknagow*, Mat the Thrasher, pauses as he ploughs a field in the shadow of Slievenamon to sing a song about ploughing. At performances of the film, the actor playing Mat would appear in the cinema to sing songs, including 'Slievenamon'.

The cinema had much earlier intermedial links with tourism. Indeed, one of the most striking features of the earliest surviving fiction films, those directed by Sidney Olcott for Kalem and other US film production companies, is the explicitly divided form of address with which they confront their audience. Nominally narrative, these works highlight the prominence of scenic landscape in Irish film from



its inception. Chapter 3, 'Virtual Tourism', begins, therefore, by noting the appearance in 1900 of the Warwick Trading Company in Ireland in 1900 to film the country's most renowned tourist sights. Images of landscape occur frequently in Irish-produced films. Many foreign companies came to Ireland specifically to produce travelogues or scenics. Indeed, landscape shots become so important in Irish films that the action is suspended in order that the audience can better appreciate the scenery, and the narrative itself becomes a kind of charabanc transporting spectators from one tourist sight to the next.

Chapter 4, 'Participation', turns its attention to a certain kind of theatre of the streets, examining the way in which films of crowds (such as congregations leaving churches, workers leaving factories, or spectators at sporting events) attracted their audiences from among those who believed they had been filmed and who attended the film show in order to see themselves on the screen. It explores the ways in which this kind of attraction could be used to create a visual representation of the people that was an extension of the cinema audience. Arguing that local film-making expertise was particularly located in non-fiction production, it shows that the figuration of the people could be deployed to great effect, such as is epitomized in the orchestrated public events commemorating the funeral of republican hunger striker Thomas Ashe in October 1917. It focuses attention on the co-presence of the past and the present seen in the apparently anomalous use by fiction films shot in Ireland in the 1910s of newsreel as a way of representing the historical roots and contemporary reality of an Irish nation.

Chapter 5, 'The Great Institution of Kinematography', charts the end of Irish cinema's intermedial phase and its emergence as an independent cultural institution. It details the uneven development of the institution in Ireland, particularly the discrepancies between the strong sectors of exhibition and distribution and a comparatively weak production sector. It contends that the major feature films of the FCOI constitute the instance at which Irish film production consciously aims to produce work according to the norms of classical narrative cinema that had become internationally dominant by the late 1910s.

The first twenty-five years of moving pictures in Ireland represent the period in which a visual novelty of the music halls and fairgrounds underwent profound changes to become the most powerful medium of the twentieth century. Little in its early years suggested that



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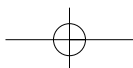
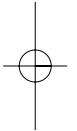
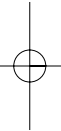
the film show would last longer than the many other flitting diversions of the late-Victorian entertainment world. By the end of the 1910s, however, Irish producers were offering a popular audience long feature films that they could argue with some justification rivalled the productions of Ireland's most prestigious cultural institution, the Abbey Theatre. What remained constant was that, between 1897 and 1921, groups of Irish people could (usually) sit together in a place of public amusement and view Irish or nominally Irish people on screen in recognizably Irish locations. All else was flux.

NOTES

1. National Library of Ireland manuscripts (NLI Mss.) 1794–95, Joseph Holloway Diaries, 14 November 1896, pp. 106–7.
2. The word 'cinematograph' will be used as the generic term for a moving-picture projector. When referring specifically to the invention of the Lumière brothers, or other French manufacturers who used the word as part of their proprietary name, the term 'cinématographe' will be employed.
3. Ireland's first fixed-venue, all-film entertainment was Hale's Tours, which opened in Dublin in June 1907 and showed films of railway journeys in a specially rigged railway carriage; see Chapters 2 and 5.
4. NLI Ms. 1806, Holloway, 2 March 1908, p. 220.
5. NLI Mss. 1856–7, Holloway, 10 August 1920, p. 248.
6. Jacques, 'La Scala Opened: Crowded and Enthusiastic Audience', *Irish Independent*, 11 August 1920.
7. *Dublin Evening Mail*, 31 January 1922, p. 5.
8. Robert C. Allen and Douglas Gomery, *Film History: Theory and Practice* (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 1985), p. 38.
9. Niamh McCole, 'Seeing Sense: The Visual Culture of Provincial Ireland, 1896–1906' (Unpublished PhD: Dublin City University, 2005). Two essays by McCole based on this research have appeared: 'The Cinematograph in Provincial Ireland, 1896–1906: Exhibition and Reception', in Kevin Rockett and John Hill (eds), *National Cinemas and World Cinema* (Dublin: Four Courts, 2006), pp. 31–41; and 'The Magic Lantern in Provincial Ireland, 1896–1906', *Early Popular Visual Culture*, Vol. 5, Issue 3 (November 2007), pp. 247–62.
10. Kevin Rockett, Luke Gibbons, and John Hill, *Cinema and Ireland* (London: Croom Helm, 1987), p. 46.
11. Prionsias Ó Conluain, *Scéal na Scannán* (Baile Átha Cliath: Oifig an tSoláthair, 1953).
12. Anthony Slide, *The Cinema and Ireland* (Jefferson, NC, and London: McFarland, 1988), and Brian McLroy, *World Cinema 4: Ireland* (Trowbridge: Flicks Books, 1989).
13. Kevin Rockett, 'The Irish Migrant and Film', in Patrick O'Sullivan (ed.), *The Creative Migrant* (Leicester: Leicester UP, 1994), pp. 170–91; 'Representations of Irish History in Fiction Films Made Prior to the 1916 Rising', in Laurence M. Geary (ed.), *Rebellion and Remembrance in Modern Ireland* (Dublin: Four Courts, 2001), pp. 214–28; 'Something Rich and Strange: James Joyce, Beatrice Cenci and the Volta', *Film and Film Culture*, Vol. 3 (2004), pp. 21–34; *The Irish Filmography: Fiction Films 1896–1996* (Dublin: Red Mountain, 1996).
14. Ruth Barton, *Irish National Cinema* (London: Routledge, 2004), pp. 13–33.
15. Harvey O'Brien, *The Real Ireland: The Evolution of Ireland in Documentary Film* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 2004).
16. Robert Monks, 'The Irish Films in the Mitchell and Kenyon Collection', in Vanessa Toulmin, Simon Popple and Patrick Russell (eds), *The Lost World of Mitchell and Kenyon: Edwardian Britain on Film* (London: BFI, 2004), pp. 93–102. Toulmin has also written a booklet that accompanies the DVD *Mitchell and Kenyon in Ireland* (Britain: BFI, 2007).
17. Martin McLoone, *Irish Film: The Emergence of a Contemporary Cinema* (London: BFI, 2000); Lance Pettitt, *Screening Ireland: Film and Television Representation* (Manchester:



- Manchester UP, 2000); and John Hill, *Cinema and Northern Ireland: Film, Culture and Politics* (London: BFI, 2006).
18. Rockett, *Filmography*. Robert Monks, *Cinema Ireland: A Database of Irish Films and Filmmakers 1896–1986*, CD-ROM (Dublin: NLI, 1996), while superseded by the *Filmography* for comprehensiveness and accuracy in relation to fiction film, currently offers the most complete filmographic details for non-fiction work, at least until Rockett and Eugene Finn's second, non-fiction volume of the *Irish Filmography* appears.
 19. The films for which the IFA does not currently hold a viewing copy in any format are: *Life of St. Patrick: From the Cradle to the Grave*, which is held by the National Film and Television Archive (NFTVA) in London; *His Mother*, which is held at the Netherlands Filmmuseum; and *Paying the Rent*, which is held by the film library in Radio Telefís Éireann (RTÉ), the Irish national broadcaster.
 20. <www.britishpathe.com>. Searching for items containing "Ireland" between 1896 and 1921 yields 244 hits (accessed 1/11/ November 2007).
 21. <joseph.bufvc.ac.uk>. Searching for items containing "Ireland" between 1896 and 1921 yields 359 hits (accessed 1/11/ November 2007).
 22. André Gaudreault, 'The Diversity of Cinematographic Connections in the Intermedial Context of the Turn of the 20th Century', in Simon Popple and Vanessa Toulmin (eds), *Visual Delights: Essays on the Popular and Projected Image in the 19th Century* (Trowbridge: Flicks Books, 2000), pp. 8–15.
 23. Janet Staiger, *Interpreting Films: Studies in the Historical Reception of American Cinema* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1992).
 24. Miriam Hansen, *Babel and Babylon: Spectatorship in American Silent Film* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1991), p. 17.



Retrospection and Projection

‘My last wandering round the Gaiety during the week,’ reveals a writer for the *Irish Playgoer*, reporting on preparations for the Christmas 1899 pantomime at the Dublin theatre,

was after twelve o’clock the other night, when I slipped in to see a trial act of the big final scene of the pantomime, ‘the Temple of Hymen’, in which in commemoration of the wedding of Red Riding Hood and Boy Blue, we shall have on the Gaiety Stage the most magnificent electrical tableaux I’ve ever seen. It was a curious picture the other night – the great empty, silent, dark theatre, and the wonderful blaze of light, through which Mr. Armstrong and his assistants were moving quietly here and there as the voice of Mr. M’Ewen, from away up at the back of the circle, directed an occasional change.¹

Dublin’s other legitimate theatre, the Theatre Royal, had a rival pantomime, culminating with an electric tableaux that also featured an intense light illuminating silent figures. In the Royal’s case, it was a ‘Grand Bio Tableaux. The Latest Development of the Brilliantly Successful Living Photography, with all the Latest Eventful Pictures’.² The Royal’s choice of a recorded moving picture act rather than the kind of live-action entertainment presented by its rival indicates the way early cinema in Ireland was viewed at this point in its history. The decision to engage a projector called the bio-tableaux from among the very many projectors available for hire and the placing of the pictures suggests that the management of the Royal were thinking retrospectively of the kind of *tableaux vivants* entertainment that the Gaiety mounted, which involved actors holding a series of dramatic poses. The terms in which the bio-tableaux were advertised suggest that the management were also thinking progressively. This projector was in the vanguard of developments in moving picture technology and representation: it was the latest development in living photography, and it was showing the latest pictures.

This chapter examines the simultaneous invoking of a backwards and a forwards look in presenting early film shows in Ireland. The practice of looking back to the past and projecting forward to the future was a particular feature of Irish culture at the time, succinctly expressed in Terry Eagleton's phrase 'The Archaic Avant-Garde'.³ This could be seen in the appeal to an immemorial Gaelic past as the basis for the fashioning of a distinctly Irish polity of the future. In this insistence on a distinct Irish culture, it was necessary to project back to an ancient, even mythic, past and retrieve or invent such cultural furniture as an Irish language, literature, mode of dress, field games, brehon law, music, and dancing. This Gaelic revival was intended to impact on the contemporary moment and was no mere antiquarian interest. It explicitly rejected precisely those forms of Victorian popular culture that were important to early cinema. These included such manifestations as the movement through space epitomized by train travel, crowded cities, variety entertainment, and a largely homogeneous industrial modernity. The incompatibility of industrial modernity and the archaic avant-garde bubbles to the surface of W. B. Yeats' 1898 debate with John Eglinton on Irish literary ideals in the pages of the *Daily Express* in 1898. 'The epics of the present are the steam engine and the dynamo', writes Eglinton, 'its lyrics the kinematograph, phonograph, etc., and these bear with them the hearts of men as the Iliad and the Odyssey of former days uplifted the youth of antiquity, or as the old English ballad expressed the mind of a nation in its childhood.'⁴ 'This message was apparently lost on Yeats,' comments Luke Gibbons, 'for whom even the neon lights on O'Connell Street were signs of Armageddon.'⁵

The present book argues that moving-picture entertainments in Ireland before the establishment of the Irish Free State and Northern Ireland in 1921 were comprehensively intermedial. Because the cinema did not exist as an independent cultural institution for much of this time, cinematograph shows relied on the physical infrastructure and/or the aesthetic language of other cultural practices to reach their audiences. Subsequent chapters will examine moving pictures' interaction with what were the most important of these other cultural practices: theatre, tourism and public events. For reasons that are connected to the various dynamics between the cinematograph and these practices, the later chapters will take up the story for the most part in the period after 1901.

This chapter looks in detail at the period up to 1901. Its placement at the start of the book, however, is not to be read as treating this early

period merely as a precursor to what comes after it. Indicating the dangers of simplification that arise from the unguarded application of a chronology of pre-cinema, early cinema and cinema, early film scholar André Gaudreault suggests that it is time

to recognise the fundamentally *polymorphous nature* [...] of the Cinematograph which would basically have been, in its first years of existence, no more than one incarnation of the cultural series '*projections lumineuses*', or of the one that we might call 'photographic views', or even of that one recognisable as 'vaudeville or café-concert act'. It seems to me of the utmost importance that the historian strives to discover how these various expressions reveal the various associations of the Cinematograph, which was at the very beginning considered only as a *recording device*.⁶

He advocates a history of early moving pictures that 'systematically favours a retrospective, rather than a progressive, point of view', 'going against the grain of chronology' by examining what he reluctantly calls 'early cinema' in relation to its past rather than its future.

Gaudreault's proposal of reading the history of moving pictures backwards appears to be a good way to avoid imposing a periodization of cinema at a juncture when contemporary observers would not have been able to say what 'cinema' was because neither the dedicated moving-picture venue nor the cultural institution based on the production and exhibition of films existed. In relation to the history of Irish popular culture, however, it is not the imposition of an insufficiently historicized periodization that obscures the field but rather a general lack of knowledge of popular entertainment at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. While taking on board Gaudreault's points on periodization, I will try to do something more basic than he proposes by examining the reception of early film entertainments to uncover their polymorphous nature, showing what contemporary observers believed was important about this new phenomenon.

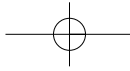
Gaudreault's salutary wariness of the term 'cinema' raises the issue of terminology and the degree to which the terminology used by historians of early cinema obscures rather than illuminates their subject. This point has been emphasized by Rick Altman, who insists that '[u]nderstanding of century-old material depends instead on the researcher's ability to learn a new language, to recognize that the most obvious terms meant something different many years ago'.⁷ Therefore, the term 'cinema' and even 'early cinema' will also only with reluctance be used here, and every effort will be made to employ such

historically accurate terminology as ‘moving pictures’, ‘cinematograph show’ and, eventually, ‘picture house’ and, where relevant, to analyze what is meant by differences in language. ‘Cinematograph’ will appear as the generic term for an early film projector because this is the one used most often in contemporary sources, but in discussing any of the multiplicity of film projectors, the specific name will be employed. The word ‘cinematograph’ is also used at times in contemporary sources to refer to the phenomenon of moving pictures, to the making and showing of films.

Historians of Irish film have tended to pass quickly over the Victorian period, after discussing the cinematograph shows at the Star Theatre of Varieties in 1896–7 and the films shot by a Lumière cameraman in Belfast and Dublin. In so doing, they neglect film shows that are fascinating in their staggering number and multifarious nature. Because the period is so little studied, this chapter begins with an overview of Irish Victorian film shows, focusing on Dublin, between the introduction of Edison’s kinetoscope in April 1895 and the long season of the Thomas Edison Animated Pictures at the Round Room of Dublin’s Rotunda, which began in December 1901. After charting this chronological progression, it moves on to consider in more detail how these were received, examining the type of events at which they were shown and the other entertainments, if any, that



1.1 W. K. L. Dickson’s 1894 film of Eugen Sandow for Edison features the beginning of the strongman’s stage show, during which he strikes poses that show off his muscles.



accompanied them. It is particularly interested in establishing what Irish audiences went to see, and what they might have been led to expect from their first encounters with photographic moving pictures by newspaper reports and by the venues in which the pictures were shown. It also seeks to find out to what existing cultural practices film shows were compared, in order to try to trace backwards the multiple cultural strands that fed into the phenomenon that would become cinema.

FILM SHOWS IN DUBLIN, 1895–1901: AN OVERVIEW

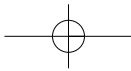
The kinetoscope, a moving-picture peepshow developed in Thomas Edison's laboratories in West Orange, New Jersey, was first advertised for Irish exhibition in the Dublin papers of 4 April 1895. It was initially exhibited at 68 Dame Street, the business premises of the Kinetoscope Company. The first films shown were Edison productions and included 'a barber's shop, a cock-fight, a skirt dance, Sandow exercising, and a scene from the Wild West Show'.⁸ Offered for appearances at bazaars and other events, it was engaged for two large charity bazaars during May: the ITO Chino-Japanese carnival at the Leinster Hall (14–18 May) and the Ierne bazaar and fête on the Ballsbridge grounds of the Royal Dublin Society (RDS) (21–8 May). It does not appear among the named attractions at the many other bazaars advertised during the year.

Although Irish people interested in visual novelties were particularly engaged in early 1896 by Wilhelm Röntgen's discovery of X-rays, they would also have seen newspaper reports of the first exhibitions of the Lumières' cinématographe to the London press and public on 20 and 21 February. The success of this attraction in London prompted Dan Lowrey, manager of the Star Theatre of Varieties, to engage a cinematograph and operator as the star turn for the week of 20 April, but it was not a complete technical success. The appearance of the animatographe, however, proved to be a hit at the Cyclopa bazaar at the RDS (19–25 May) and was followed by the projector's engagement (26–30 May) at the World's Fair Waxworks, Henry Street, Dublin. Cinematograph projectors were the hit of the year at the British music halls, and Dan Lowrey secured the services of the Lumières' cinématographe for a popular two-week run at the Star in November (2–14).

Lowrey tried to extend the engagement of the cinématographe, but was unable to do so until January 1897. This two-week run (4–16

January) was followed immediately by the appearance of Professor Joly's (frequently spelled 'Jolly's') cinématographe, which remained at the Star until the theatre closed for renovations on 27 February. Professor Joly filmed local scenes in Dublin, and promoted them, along with coloured films, as special attractions during his extended engagement. The exploitation of the novelty value of the cinematograph reached its height in 1897. As well as the Star shows, the first two months of the year saw a cinematograph among the attractions at the Dublin Cycle Show (16–23 January) and the Dublin Exhibition (week of 20 January), the animatographe engaged for a two-week run at the Gaiety (8–20 February), and Hicks' famous cinematograph at the Rotunda as part of the first big charity bazaar of the year, the Granada. There were no film shows in the city in March, but the much-postponed boxing match before the camera of James Corbett and Robert Fitzsimmons finally took place in Carson City, Nevada, on 17 March. The vaunted ability of the veriscope ('truth-seer') to allow spectators to make up their own minds on the controversy surrounding the outcome of the fight would keep living pictures in the minds of Irish sports fans until they finally saw the film more than a year later. Professor Joly's cinématographe headed the bill at the opening of the Cork Palace of Varieties on Easter Monday (19 April).

Professor Kineto, the exhibitor who had appeared at Granada, also ran the cinematograph at the year's second big charity bazaar at the Rotunda, Moy-Mell (4–8 May). Moy-Mell's opening coincided with the opening in Paris of a charity bazaar at which an accident with the illuminant of a cinematograph on the first day caused a disastrous fire leading to the deaths of at least 120 people, many of them from the city's elite. Four other bazaars in Dublin or its hinterland advertised cinematograph shows: the Victoria (13–14 May) at the Rotunda, which showed 'Edison's Vidoscope'; the Pembroke (1–7 June), whose specified attractions included 'Dalton's Famous Cinematograph, Phonograph, Kinetoscopes, Gramophone, and Ray's Viatoscope'; the Dalkey bazaar (27 July–2 August), which listed Le Praxinscope; and the Bray bazaar (10–14 August), which exhibited a cinematograph. At the Rotunda, a film of Queen Victoria's diamond jubilee procession formed part of the entertainment from Poole's myriorama (19 July–14 August), a long-running dioramic and variety show. Films of the jubilee also featured prominently in an all-film entertainment at the Rotunda that ran from 23 August to 4 September. On 1 November, the World's Fair Waxworks began advertising the eragraph, a living-picture turn that would be an almost constant part of its variety enter-



tainment until early 1901. When the Star reopened on 15 November with a change of management as the Empire Palace Theatre, the Lumières' new triograph projector showing local views featured prominently. At the opening on 27 December on Dublin's Burgh Quay of the Lyric Hall, which operated as a de facto music hall, the electorama showed views of the Klondike, where a gold rush had begun in 1896. For the Christmas season, optician Thomas Mason of Dublin's Dame Street exhibited and offered cinematographs of various sizes for sale.

On 17 January 1898, the longest-running film show to date ceased for a period as the World's Fair Waxworks, which had been showing the eragraph since the previous November, closed for alterations. On the same day, the first newly advertised film show of the year began as an attraction of the Griffith Cycle Corporation at the Cycle and Motor Show at the RDS. On 31 January, the biograph made its first visit to Ireland, as part of the Theatre Royal's pantomime *Dick Whittington*, and the well-received attraction was held over for a week after the pantomime ended on 26 February. Egbert's cinematograph was the featured attraction in advance publicity for the Old Paris bazaar at the Rotunda during Easter week (11–16 April), where it showed sports news films. The same week saw the long-awaited opening of the veriscope pictures of the Corbett–Fitzsimmons fight, which ran for two weeks at the Lyric (11–23 April). The Glendalough bazaar at the Town Hall, Rathmines, counted a cinematograph prominently among its attractions (14–16 April), and the Lyric's next change of programme also had a film-based draw, Rosenbert's jubileograph, (25–30 April). In May, Eugen Sandow, the famous strongman who had posed for an early kinoscope film, performed feats of strength at the Empire. His first show (2 May) coincided with the reopening of the World's Fair Waxworks with a bill that included the eragraph and with an entertainment featuring projected pictures at the Mansion House to publicize and contribute to the relief of Irish poverty.

Film shows at two bazaars in May appear to have been among the few moving-picture entertainments during the summer months, apart from the ongoing appearance of the eragraph at the World's Fair Waxworks. The Lucina Grand Fête and Fancy Fair at (and in aid of) the Rotunda (17–21 May) exhibited the American bioscope. The Lucan bazaar (30 May–2 June) included the cinematograph among the attractions provided by travelling showman William Toft. The eragraph had been temporarily dropped from the advertised bill of the World's Fair in early October, the same month as the Modern Marvel

Co. projected both colour-still images from a device called the analyticon and animated pictures in the Concert Room of the Rotunda. On 17 October, the Irish Mutoscope Co. advertised its first parlour of penny-in-the-slot peep-show moving-picture devices at 14 College Green, and, by mid-December, it had opened at least one other city-centre premises at 24 South Great George's Street. For two weeks in November (7–19), the Empire featured the Edison–Thomas pictures on its bill, including a special exhibition on 17 November of a sound synchronization system, the Edison–Sinclair animatophone. When the biograph returned to Dublin for a two-week engagement at the Empire in December, the shows were advertised as the projector's first in Ireland.

In early January 1899, reports on poor children's temperance fêtes reveal that this was the context in which some children had their first view of moving pictures; children at the annual meeting of the Presbyterian Church on 25 January were also treated to a cinematograph show. This may mark the point at which the novelty value of the cinematograph among much of the Irish population ended. Until the events depicted evinced more interest than the novelty of moving-picture technology itself, (a point that would be reached in 1900), the cinematograph would be particularly associated with such cheaper places of entertainment as the Lyric and the World's Fair Waxworks. There appears to have been fewer shows this year, and they followed the format already established. R. W. Williams showed films from the Klondike for two weeks at the Empire (23 January–4 February). The Klondike-themed fête at the Cork Assembly Rooms (31 January–3 February), however, featured animated pictures of the launch in Belfast of the S.S. *Oceanic*. Having reopened as an acknowledged music hall in December 1898, the Lyric hosted two film shows: Montel's iconograph (27 February–4 March) and a two-week run of the cineograph (9–21 October). Three other bazaars, all at the Rotunda, projected films: the Egyptian-themed fête Tektonion (6–11 February), which featured 'cinematographs, phonographs, mutoscopes'; the St Vincent de Paul bazaar (4–8 April), at which Montel's iconograph was exhibited; and the Calaroga bazaar (1–6 May). The photographic firm of William Lawrence was selling cinematographs for domestic use during the Christmas season. As already mentioned, the pantomime at the Theatre Royal finished with the bio-tableaux.

The eragraph at the World's Fair Waxworks was advertising new but unnamed pictures in January 1900. At other entertainment venues, after a slow start, pictures of the Boer War, prize fights, and the

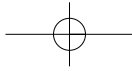
visit of Queen Victoria to Dublin on 3 April made film shows popular but also controversial, with a wide audience again this year. The broader availability of the cinematograph saw it engaged for such events as the annual *conversazione* of the Church of Ireland Young Men's Christian Association on 5 January, a *conversazione* and concert organized by the Presbyterian Association in the Sackville Hall on 19 February, the annual dinner and variety entertainment for the employees of A. and R. Thwaites on 1 March, and a children's entertainment in Kingstown on 6 April organized in connection with Queen's visit. During the week of 12–17 March, Scott's metascope showed the first films on South Africa following the outbreak of the Boer War. The Photographic Society of Ireland's annual exhibition in the week of 26–31 March offered bioscope films. After a break of a few weeks, the metascope returned to the Lyric at the start of April (9–14), facing a rival film show in the shape of Gibbon's bio-tableaux at the Empire featuring war pictures and the Queen's arrival in Dublin. The bio-tableaux were re-engaged for a second week, but this time they faced competition from an all-picture show at the Round Room of the Rotunda (16–28 April). The main attraction of the latter was its fight films, Fitzsimmons–Jeffries in the first week and Jeffries–Sharkey in the second, but it also showed Boer War films, the Queen in Dublin, and a Cinderella pantomime film, all 'described by Mr Pryce'.

The Belgravia bazaar at the Rathmines Town Hall (18–22 April) featured a cinematograph and the St Vincent de Paul bazaar at the Rotunda (7–12 May) included biograph pictures of the Queen's arrival in Dublin and the Boer War, but 'Edison's Latest Invention', the 'Grand Concert Phonograph' garnered special publicity after its late arrival on 11 May. The cinematograph was also among the attractions advertised for Limerick's Kincora fête (4–9 June), but elsewhere bazaar organizers do not seem to have been as inclined as in previous years to include animated-picture entertainments on their bills. Entrepreneurs occasionally used the cinematograph as an advertising medium, such as at the cycling promotion lecture in the Antient Concert Rooms on 28 May. Overwhelmingly now, however, the cinematograph appeared as part of established entertainments, particularly variety shows. So, the metascope returned to the Lyric for two two-week runs (4–16 June and 10–22 September). The Queen's hosted moving pictures alongside drama in July, when Professor Andrews showed films after *Rip Van Winkle* (2–7), and in October, when Edison's cinematograph was exhibited after performances of the 'sensational

Anglo-Russian drama' *Under the Czar* (1–6 October). When one of the Poole's myriorama companies visited the Rotunda for a month (6 August–8 September) around the lucrative Horse Show week (27 August–1 September), their pooleograph showed pantomimes and topical films. The return of Gibbon's bio-tableaux to the Empire for a week's engagement on 8 October was to be the year's final theatrical engagement of the cinematograph. The only other advertised film shows were local events such as the concert with cinematograph at Ballintore on 19 November.

Advertised film shows in 1901 showed multiplicity similar to previous years, but by December, the company that would become the most significant Irish travelling film show held its first season at the Rotunda. Cinematograph shows supplemented entertainments at the Metropolitan Hall in Dublin's Abbey Street during the year, including a lecture on street life on 5 January and engagements by Nashville's Fisk University singers on 23 February–9 March and during Horse Show Week (24–31 August). The annual prize giving on February 5 of the Meath Protestant Industrial School in Blackrock, Co. Dublin, ended with a cinematograph display provided by the Dublin firm of J. and T. Mayne. Eldon Total Abstinence Society organized a cinematograph show on 20 March at the Rotunda that featured pictures of the opening of Parliament, the Queen's funeral and visit to Dublin, the Boer War, and 12 July parades in Belfast taken by W. Erskine May. A bazaar and sale of work at the Town Hall, Kingstown, on 7 and 8 May sought to raise money to install an organ in memory of the Queen's visit at the local Mariners' Church. St Mathias Temperance Society's concert in a school on Dublin's Adelaide Road on May 17 featured a cinematograph, as did the Alexandra bazaar at the Rathmines Town Hall for the week of 23 October, where war pictures were shown.

The theatres' film year began with the biograph playing a part in the pantomime at the Theatre Royal for two weeks from 21 January. The Lyric engaged the vitagraph from 28 January, showing pictures of the Jeffries–Fitzsimmons fight. Gibbon's bio-tableaux made two visits to the Empire, exhibiting pictures of Queen Victoria's funeral during the week of 11 February, and returning in March (25–30) as the phono bio-tableaux with synchronized pictures of cross-dressing music-hall singer Vesta Tilley. In April, the Modern Marvel Syndicate played a two-week season (8–20) of films and varieties at the Rotunda's Round Room. Poole's myriorama occupied the same venue for almost the whole month of August (5–31) with their diorama and variety entertainments supplemented by films from the myriograph.



After a period of closure for refitting, the Lyric reopened on 28 October as the Tivoli. Like its predecessor, the Tivoli made a feature of film shows, beginning in early November with a two-week run (4–16) of the electric stereograph. On 2 December, Edison Electric Pictures opened at the Round Room, Rotunda, where it ran until 1 February 1902. By the end of this extraordinarily successful run, the company was operating in three locations simultaneously and had begun to call itself the ‘Original Irish Company, from Rotunda Dublin’. Later managed by James T. Jameson as the Irish Animated Photo/Picture Company, this was to be the most important film exhibitor of the period before the advent of dedicated cinemas in 1908.

The remainder of this chapter will focus on aspects of the period just outlined. Certain patterns are apparent from the survey above. Although the variety theatre and charity bazaar were particularly important exhibition spaces for film shows, moving pictures were also shown at business premises, trade shows, lecture halls, pantomimes, and concerts, as well as featuring in film-based entertainments. Furthermore, the abundance of names for film projectors indicates the importance of this piece of equipment in distinguishing between competing shows and establishing their place in the vanguard of technical innovation. Instead of naming the pictures that constituted the content of the show, for example, an exhibitor might merely promote his or her projector as ‘A Cinematograph of Cinematographs’ or the ‘Grandest and Most Interesting of All Cinematographs’.⁹

THE KINETOSCOPE

On 29 May 1895, a Liverpool court fined two men named Hird and Starkey 50s. shillings and costs each for running a cock-fight.¹⁰ In the late nineteenth century, cock-fighting was an illegal activity that remained on the margins of the public sphere, surfacing in newspapers only when it was detected and punished by the law. The illegal spectacle of fighting animals was transformed, however, when it was filmed. Almost two months earlier, Dublin’s *Evening Telegraph* had reported on the opening of the ‘Edison’s “Kinetoscope”’ in Dublin, and as already noted, a cock-fighting film was among the scenes shown. Accompanying an article discussing some technical details of the apparatus is an illustration captioned ‘Viewing a Cock-Fight in the Kinetoscope’ in which a fashionably dressed couple stand beside a kinetoscope, the man peering into the viewer while the woman and



VIEWING A COCK-FIGHT IN THE KINETOSCOPE.

kinetoscope is a thaumatrope on a grand

1.2 This image from the *Evening Telegraph* of 6 April 1895, the first in an Irish newspaper of the new moving-picture devices of the 1890s, stresses the respectability of the kinetoscope by featuring a well-dressed family enjoying the entertainment. Image courtesy of the National Library of Ireland.

girl wait beside him.¹¹ The suggestion here seems to be that not only is nothing illegal taking place but that a cock-fight, and, by extension, the other views offered by the kinetoscope, is pleasurable viewing for respectable family men and women.

The presence of the woman suggests that the filming of the cock-fight not only allowed the respectable classes to engage in virtual slumming but also permitted women to participate in activities that were once the sole preserve of men. Both Charles Musser and Miriam Hansen have written about the way in which the advent of moving pictures in the kinetoscope reflects the movement from an entertainment world dominated by all-male forms to one in which the perceived tastes of women began to be catered for. 'Kinetoscope films and their exhibition', writes Musser, 'were involved in a breakdown and curtailment of an older homosocial world and the emergence and

expansion of a newer heterosocial culture.¹² For Hansen, moving pictures and other mass cultural entertainments could create an alternative public sphere by making available spaces in which women and other excluded groups could gain access to a dominant culture.¹³ The advent of the kinoscope literally opened up the space that became known as the kinoscope parlour, and it was made accessible to women through its coding as respectable not only by the choice of images but also, as will be shown below, by its connection to the discourses of science bound up with the name Edison.

The way in which the kinoscope contributed to the birth of a heterosocial culture becomes clearer when one considers the other films in the early kinoscope shows. As well as the cock-fight, they included scenes set in a barber's shop and from a Wild West show, a skirt dance, and Sandow exercising. Even the more US-specific acts would have been familiar to Irish audiences from touring shows, whether on the vaudeville/variety circuit or as such stand-alone entertainments as Wild West shows. If the cock-fight and the skirt dance may be said to appeal to a dominant male gaze familiar with blood sports and the display of the female body, the other scenes have a wider appeal. The barber's shop film, which shows how a customer gets a rapid shave for 5c, may make its joke on the basis of norms more familiar to men, but it is not exclusively accessible to them. Turning activities on the American frontier into a pleasurable spectacle, the Wild West show was also likely to have had a broad appeal. The film of Sandow exercising may have appealed not only to those interested in trials of strength but also, with its display of the almost naked male body, to homosexual men and heterosexual women. Even those films that may be said to appeal to the heterosexual male gaze may have been attractive to women as a kinoscope show because in this safe environment women could have access to what were still mainly male pursuits. Visiting a well-appointed premises at a respectable address in the city, a middle-class woman could satisfy her curiosity about male culture without having to endanger herself or her reputation by entering a taboo environment.

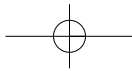
The film of Eugen Sandow bears more scrutiny in this regard. This German-born muscleman, the Arnold Schwarzenegger of the *fin de siècle*, became famous not only for the feats of strength that he performed in variety theatres around the world but also for the way he looked. Sandow developed a system of controlled muscular development and is so revered in body-building circles to this day that the Mr. Universe trophy is called the Sandow or the Eugen. He wrote a number of

books, including *Strength and How to Obtain It*, which appears on Leopold Bloom's shelf in the Ithaca episode of James Joyce's *Ulysses*.¹⁴ His physique was considered so admirable that, when the British Museum planned an exhibit of the world's major races in 1901, it used Sandow's body as the exemplar of the Caucasians, the race that was to be placed in the pre-eminent position.¹⁵ Sandow used images of his body for advertising, and among the products he promoted was Murphy's stout, whose label at one time featured a well-known image of him lifting a horse with one hand. His first stage show in Dublin in May 1898, at a point when the Empire was actively courting a larger female audience with its respectable variety offerings, was described in detail by an *Irish Times* reviewer:

Every part of the Empire Theatre was last night crowded to excess, the great attraction, doubtless, being the first appearance of Sandow, most appropriately described in the programme as 'The Modern Hercules'. Sandow, after a preliminary display of muscle, calculated to engender a hope of marvellous feats of strength, proceeded to perform a number of the feats which has made his name famous. He lifted enormously heavy weights which he raised above his head, stretching out the arm in which he held them to its full length; getting on the back of a horse, he leant back over the crupper and lifted enormous weights from the level of the stage and brought them up until he sat upright with them on horseback. He lifted a full-sized man, who was lying flat on the stage, and threw him into the saddle in front of him with apparently the greatest ease. To show his great finger strength he tore in halves first one, then two, and finally three packs of playing cards. In conclusion, he carried away from a raised dais, a piano, and the pianist by whom it was being played. He was warmly applauded throughout, and at the close was repeatedly recalled.¹⁶

As Musser points out, it was not the feats of strength that Edison's cameraman William Kennedy Laurie Dickson chose to film but the opening posing sequence of Sandow's stage act. This creates the sense of a series of still images connected by small changes of position, allowing the spectator ample time, within the constraints of the twenty-second film, to feast his or her eyes on Sandow's body.¹⁷

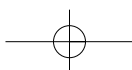
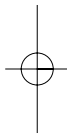
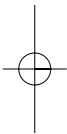
The respectability of the kinoscope parlour was also reinforced by its firm location within a popular scientific discourse particularly associated with the name of Thomas Edison. The newspaper advertisement of the first kinoscope parlour advises that the device 'reproduces Scenes in all their natural life and action – a marvellous combi-

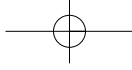


nation of Photograph and Electricity'.¹⁸ If it is as a respectable heterosocial entertainment that the illustration accompanying the early article on the kinoscope depicts the device, it is principally in terms of a scientific novelty that the discursive portions of this and later articles describe it.

The 'Kinoscope', the latest, and one of the many remarkable inventions of Mr. Edison, is at present being exhibited at 68 Dame street. The invention is fairly well known, as far as its principle is concerned, but the instrument itself is now being exhibited for the first time in Dublin. By the means of the 'Kinoscope' photographs of objects in motion, taken instantaneously, are then reproduced in the same duration of time and in the same order so that a practically continuous movement is obtained. The impression produced on the eye is exactly the same as if the figures were in motion in life. The only noticeable difference is the absence of sound. The machine is worked by electricity, and the electric light is used to present the views distinctly.¹⁹

By the mid-1890s, Edison was synonymous with inventive brilliance in newspapers all around the world. In previewing the kinoscope among 'the Easter amusements' in 1895, the *Freeman's Journal* observed that 'numbers of people will, no doubt, take advantage of the holiday to see the remarkable outcome of Edison's genius'.²⁰ Lauded also as a self-made man, Edison was distinguished from the academic scientists who forced their way into public consciousness. 'In order that the use of the Rontgen rays for direct vision should be perfected,' the *Telegraph* contended on the uses of X-rays, 'the work must be undertaken by a man who is not only a good scientist, but a practical mechanic and an inventive genius, also – and Edison is perhaps the only man who combines all these qualities, and therefore the most likely to bring the great pursuit to which he is undoubtedly devoting himself to a triumphant conclusion.'²¹ The newspaper-reading public was well apprised of developments in his experiments with moving pictures and had long been expecting the kinoscope. Even as the it was being seen for the first time in Dublin, reports of his ongoing experiments to produce a synchronized picture and sound device prepared readers for Edison's refinement of the existing machine. 'The combination of the kinoscope with the phonograph,' reported the *Telegraph*, 'upon the perfection of which Mr. Edison and his assistant, Mr. Dickson, have been working for several years, is said to have been made practical, and will be offered to the public within a short time,



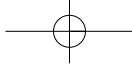


in the shape of an instrument which will show motion and give phonetic expression simultaneously.²²

A two-part article on the kinetoscope in the *Freeman's Journal* on the day after the first *Telegraph* report also stresses the machine's fidelity to life except for its lack of sound reproduction. The first part of the article reproduces the text from the *Telegraph* before going on to describe the 'Exhibition at Central Lecture Hall':

There are at present on view in the Central Lecture hall, Westmoreland street, a series of machines belonging to the Edison Kinetoscope Company. Yesterday a large number of visitors attended the exhibition, which certainly is of the most marvellous character. The chief and most striking of the pictures on view are those representing a pas de trois, a pair of knockabout acrobats, and a cock fight. In each case the movements of the figure are reproduced with the most absolute fidelity. The dance is after the most approved 'Gaiety Girl' fashion. Every step is given and all one requires is the addition of sprightly music to complete the illusion. The cock fighting scene is quite an exciting affair, and the onlookers, who are represented at the side of the 'pit', have been caught with all their varying phases of humanity, and the scenes are of really wonderful vitality. The knockabout artists are in the act of accomplishing one of their many marvellous feats, and one can readily imagine the applause of the crowds who were present when the performance actually took place.²³

The writer explicitly praises the qualities of the moving images, but the descriptions of the films themselves are marked by their lack of sound far more than in the previous article. While the mimetic qualities of the dance are undoubtedly impressive, the music is lacking to complete the illusion. The cock -fight is particularly remarkable for the wonderful liveliness that is conveyed by the inclusion of the onlookers (Chapter 4 will discuss this phenomenon under the rubric of 'Participation'). The acrobat act is so realistic that it prompts one to imagine the applause of the original audience. For this spectator, the marvellous realism of the movement is in fact alienating because it draws attention to the lack of sound. To see a dance that recalls George Edwardes' 1893 *Gaiety Girl* reminds one of the absence of Sidney Jones' songs for this first stage show identified as a musical comedy. To see the animated audience at a cock -fight and to imagine the applause that would have rewarded the skilful acrobats is to be reminded that one is not part of that audience because one was not there when the performance actually took place. By completing the

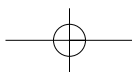


illusion, the writer imagines that sound would suture the lone peep-show viewer into the film world.

A second *Telegraph* article focuses on ‘The Mechanism of the Kinetoscope’ rather than its films. After stressing the difficulties that Edison went through to produce the device, it first compares it to an existing visual novelty, the thaumatrope, before discussing its likely future development into projected living pictures:

We are all familiar with the thaumatrope. The kinetoscope is a thaumatrope on a grand scale, capable by means of photographs from life of producing the most complicated movements. At present the instrument is something like the popular peep-show into which the spectator has to look through a slit at the pictures which are placed within, and being illuminated are passed rapidly before his vision. In time, however, it is likely that the arrangement will be replaced by an optical lantern through which the slides will be passed rapidly so as to produce the same effect on a screen in view of a large audience as is now by means of this box arrangement. The kinetoscope is an object of great popular and scientific interest, and is well worthy of a visit. One of the great difficulties in bringing the machine to perfection was the calculation of the proper speed at which the photographs should be taken. To reproduce rapid motion it seems about 50 or 60 photographs per second are necessary, and the reproduction of a slogging match, lasting about a minute, involves passing successively before the eyes no less than 1,200 pictures.”²⁴

The subject, the slogging match, appears here not for any inherent interest in boxing but because it produces rapid movements that show the capabilities of the device. The calculation of the number of pictures that comprise a film would be a feature of film reviews for some years, being particularly prominent in Irish reviews of the long 1897 Corbett–Fitzsimmons fight film (see below). If the kinetoscope is, as the above article suggests, of great popular and scientific curiosity, it is particularly to the latter interest in its readers that this article appeals. In this context, it locates the kinetoscope in an intermediary stage of a development that begins with the familiar thaumatrope and ends with filmic projection. The kinetoscope is a synthesis of the thaumatrope and photography, capable of catching not only reality’s resemblance at a specific moment but also its changing face. The words ‘familiar’ and ‘popular’ appear to be working here as negatives, so that the box arrangement of the kinetoscope, which resembles the popular peep-show, must be improved upon in a further synthesis involving sliders, magic lantern, and screen. At this point the article

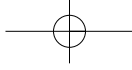


parts company with Edison's vision at the time. Making his profits from selling kinetoscopes, Edison had no wish, as he put it, to 'kill the goose that lays the golden egg' by inventing a 'screen machine' for which he foresaw little commercial potential.²⁵

It was more than a month later when the next substantial article on the kinoscope appeared in the newspapers, as the device was about to appear at the Ierne bazaar. This one also made substantial reference to Edison:

Those for whom the Edisonian scientific triumphs have an attraction – and their name is legion – will learn with pleasure that a full set of the famous kinetoscopes (five machines) and also the improved phonograph will be exhibited at the 'Ierne' fete, under the supervision of Mr Wyndham. It would be rather late in the day to dilate upon the fascinations of the kinoscope, for Dubliners have for some time past been enabled to feast their eyes on the wonders which it unfolds at the Kinoscope Company's establishment 68 Dame street. Briefly, however, it may be stated that what the phonograph does for the ear the kinoscope does for the eye. Photographs are reproduced on a celluloid film, and by a mechanical contrivance the film is passed before the eyes with such rapidity that the action depicted is brought out with life-like vividness. Whether the subject be a dancing display, a cock fight, or a wrestling bout a living picture is accurately shown and any scene can be produced, no matter how complex or multitudinal the figures. Both the kinoscope and the phonograph should prove great draws at Ierne.²⁶

It was nearly too late to describe the kinoscope a month after its introduction to Dublin. In an entertainment world in which a stage show or variety act was typically engaged for a week, the kinoscope, with what seem to be a limited number of films, has achieved an extended run more akin to that of a circus or pantomime. Of the films mentioned, the wrestling bout appears to be the only novelty, but even this might be the slogging match of the previous review. In any case, this article is less interested in the subjects for their own sake than for the way they demonstrate the capabilities of the machine. The kinoscope can show the movements of any number of figures that appear within its purview. The two Edison inventions of phonograph and kinoscope are here connected, but there is not the same sense of lack as in the previous articles. 'I am experimenting with an instrument that does for the Eye what the phonograph does for the Ear,' Edison wrote in October 1888.²⁷ At that moment, the inventor envisaged that the kinoscope would reproduce movement to the visual senses as the



phonograph reproduces sound to the auditory ones. By putting the kinoscope in this context, the article presents not a failed synthesis but twin triumphs.

The first Irish reviews of moving pictures in the kinoscope invite their readers to view the new technology in terms of both its past (retrospectively) and its future (progressively). The dominant progressive presentation locates the new phenomenon firmly in the context of the popular scientific attractions particularly associated with Thomas Edison. The retrospective presentation sees moving pictures in terms of their relationship to photography and the realism associated with it, while their motion is connected to popular visual novelties such as the thaumatrope. In the thaumatrope, the spinning of a disk with a different picture on either side, for example, of a horse and of a man, causes the two pictures seemingly to synthesize into a single image, in this case, a horse and rider. The thaumatrope provides no illusion of motion; it is motion that provides the illusion of synthesis. These articles, however, are interested in charting progress from the parlour game to the kinoscope parlour. First, photographs replace the hand-drawn images on the thaumatrope disk. Second, the single still photograph is multiplied fifty or sixty fold for every second, and this profusion of images is printed onto a celluloid strip. Third, an electric motor and electric light move and illuminate the strip of photographs in the kinoscope at the same speed at which the subject was captured, restoring its movement. In these articles, however, the kinoscope rarely represents the finished state of this invention. It is merely a stage that gestures on to projected moving pictures and to synchronized sound films. As such, the announcements of its arrival also represent announcements of its imminent demise. It was important, therefore, to exploit its novelty value with a certain urgency. This was done with the opening of dedicated venues.

KINETOSCOPE PARLOURS, CHARITY BAZAARS, AND OTHER VENUES

The peepshow nature of the kinoscope rendered moving pictures unsuitable for theatrical exploitation in early 1895, but the device was exhibited in other existing venues and one newly established one. Initially because there were only a small number of machines and these could only show one person one film at a time, they had to be centralized in one or two locations, giving rise to the kinoscope parlour. Because these were not, as later single-viewers would be, coin-in-the-slot machines, a patron typically paid an entrance fee and could

AS GOOD AS ANY PANTOMIME.

**HAVE YOU SEEN THE
MUTOSCOPE?
KINDLY FORGET TO CALL!!!**

**ALL YOUR FRIENDS HAVE CALLED
AND ARE DELIGHTED.**

**They put a penny in the slot, turn the handle to the
right, and, with the aid of electric light, gaze upon
strange and interesting ANIMATED PICTURES
from all parts of the world.**

ON VIEW EVERY DAY! ON VIEW EVERY DAY!

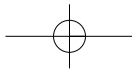
**Your Friends call at either 14 COLLEGE GREEN, 24
SOUTH GREAT GEORGE'S STREET, or any of our
other shops, whichever suits them best.**

1.3 This advertisement for the mutoscope not only provided information on the location of some of Dublin's mutoscope parlours but also on how patrons should operate the device. Image courtesy of the National Library of Ireland.

view each of the scenes in turn. Initially there appears to have been ten machines in Dublin, five at the Kinetoscope Company's premises at 68 Dame Street and five at the Central Hall, 12 Westmoreland Street.

Following the Belfast launch of the Irish Mutoscope Company in April 1898, the penny-in-the-slot mutoscope would become an increasingly common sight in Ireland.²⁸ The Irish Mutoscope Company was one of the companies set up by the parent Mutoscope and Biograph Syndicate to take full commercial advantage of all the territories of Britain and Ireland.²⁹ It began advertising in the Dublin newspapers in October 1898, and, by May 1899, when it advertised films of Pope Leo XIII, it had premises at 14 College Green, 24 South Great George's Street, and 29 Grafton Street, as well as at other unspecified locations.³⁰ Patrons put money in the machine that held the desired view rather than paying a fee for access to all the machines in the parlour, which extended the commercial possibilities of this design, making each mutoscope an independent provider of moving-picture entertainment. As well as in the relatively short-lived mutoscope parlours, the machines would be located in public places, such as the one in Kingstown railway station that the Kingstown Police Court convicted Thomas Murnell of having damaged in 1907.³¹

Apart from the specialized kinetoscope parlours, the big charity bazaars were the other main venues at which the kinetoscope was exhibited. Fêtes and charity bazaars took place all over the country,

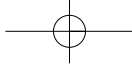


and, although they were held throughout the year, because at least a portion of the event was usually staged outdoors, they were particularly frequent in the summer months. Here, they took advantage of the rhythm of the entertainment year. For Dublin theatres, the busiest periods of the year were around the holidays of Easter and Christmas and during long-established events that drew crowds to the city, particularly the horse show at the RDS in August. Apart from the latter event, summer was generally slow in the poorly ventilated theatres because the weather favoured outdoor pursuits such as sports, excursions to parks and bathing places, bicycling, and bazaars.

It was the largest of Irish bazaars that included early kinoscope and, from April 1896, cinematograph shows. The large Dublin bazaars were annual events that generally took place in either the RDS or the Rotunda. These venues were frequently decorated in accordance with the central theme of the bazaar, such as the Middle Eastern stylings of the Araby fête (RDS, 14–19 May 1894) or the Swiss accoutrements of the Helvetia bazaar (Rotunda, 17–22 January 1898).³² The considerable organization required was carried out largely by women from the city's élite, and patronage was sought from a prominent titled person, such as the Lord Lieutenant. This organizational work began a year in advance and included the staging of ancillary events to fund the bazaar itself.

A description of the Irish-themed Ierne bazaar at the RDS, in aid of Sir Patrick Dun's Hospital, shows the nature of these events and the place within them of the new moving-picture entertainments. 'Around the Central Hall', begins a detailed press account,

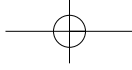
will be grouped items of a national character, several famous Irish ruins, &c., being represented in the stalls. The South Hall will contain in the central space a large stand for children's International dances, arranged by Mr. and Mrs Leggett Byrne; and here also will be the 'Tea Garden', 'Village Green,' 'Fairy Palace,' 'Doll's House,' 'Country Produce' and confectionery stalls. The scenery has been specially constructed by Messrs Womersley, of Leeds. The magnificent diningroom will be in the East Hall, where 1,000 people can be served with dinner and in this department Mr. Harrison, of 17 Henry street, has promised the committee generous assistance as caterer. The wines will be supplied by Messrs Kinahan and Co. The remaining halls will contain the café chantant, concert room, smoking concert, optical illusions, ball room, theatre, shooting galleries, and numerous other attractions. The café chantant will be under the direction of Mrs Houston, whose able assistance at the Kilkenny bazaar last year is gratefully remembered by the



people of 'Ye Faire Citie'. Of the outdoor amusements, the most extraordinary will be the 'Water Chute', which has proved an immense success elsewhere, and is represented for the first time in Dublin. Then there will be Toft's switchback railway, a captive baloon [*sic*], flying machine, pigeon shooting, merry-go-rounds, concluding each night with a splendid display of fireworks by Brock and Co. of the Crystal Palace, and an outdoor lantern display of a character hitherto unattempted in Dublin.³³

While these large bazaars did, like their smaller local cognates, include stalls selling knick-knacks and home-prepared foods, they aimed to attract large attendances by providing both well-tried and novel spectacular entertainments. The article quoted above, for example, was illustrated with images of the new water chute and captive balloon attractions, but it spends some time describing what appears to have been the biggest consistent bazaar draw, the café chantant. It was the café chantant that attracted Joseph Holloway to both Ierne and Cyclopa, at the former of which he assessed the entertainment as '[a] good show for sixpence'.³⁴ Some bazaars, such as the Chino-Japanese themed ITO, capitalized on the attractiveness of the café chantant by offering a special half-price entrance of 6d. to this attraction for those unwilling or unable to pay the full bazaar admission of 1s. By contrast, while Edison's kinetoscope features prominently in the advertisement for Ierne, in this preview it remains anonymous among the optical illusions.

The fact that Mr Harrison catered for a thousand diners and Messrs Kinahan and Co. supplied wines gives a sense of the numbers and the classes of people expected to attend. An item in the *Dublin Evening Mail* gives the attendance figures for the first four days of Ierne as 60,506, rising from 8,850 on Tuesday to 19,516 on Thursday, in a city of approximately 250,000, although the organizers advertised extensively to bring in patrons from well beyond the city.³⁵ The article also reports that the bazaar, which was initially advertised to open from Tuesday to Saturday, would remain open on Sunday and Monday, purportedly because of the large attendance. It is likely that the weekend attendances would have increased these figures to well over 80,000. Attendance at the bazaars would, of course, have been limited to those who could afford the 1s. admission charge. Working from census figures indicating social class in Dublin between 1881 and 1911, it appears that between 41 and 46 per cent of the population of Dublin belonged to the group that was 'impoverished and vulnerable to economic and personal crises'.³⁶ Although it is difficult to locate the precise level of income at which attendance would have been impos-



sible, a craftsman in the building industry, who earned between 34 and 36s. a week. in the mid-1890s, could probably afford to attend a bazaar or similarly priced entertainment, while an unskilled labourer working for one of the city councils and earning between 15 and 18s. at the same period, probably could not.³⁷

There may have been other class or sectarian issues that deterred workers or persons of the 'wrong' religion from attending certain bazaars. A review of the Ballybrack bazaar on the 1897 August Bank-Holiday weekend notes that '[t]he attendance, if not great, was most select, and remarkably free from that rowdy element so noticeable in many of the recent bazaars'.³⁸ This may have been putting a positive interpretation on a poorly patronized event competing with the better-advertised Dalkey fête. The terms in which it is expressed, however, may betray a wider attitude by those in the leisured classes who organized charity events towards those of the lower classes who chose to attend these occasions. Furthermore, the bill of a charity meeting at the Mansion House for the relief of Irish distress suggests that poverty constituted a spectacle for the better off. Sponsored by the Lord Mayor, this event included moving and still projected pictures of the poor, as well as musical entertainments. It is doubtful that those intimately familiar with poverty would have found this an educational or an edifying evening.

A romantic attitude to the rural poor is revealed by a review of the Swiss-themed Helvetia bazaar that praises, 'the costumes of the lady-stallholders and their assistants, who appear to have made a very careful study of the styles of dress worn by Swiss peasant girls'.³⁹ Whereas some bazaars catered particularly for the preoccupations of the élite, others catered for those of a particular religious persuasion. At the inaugural meeting called to raise the funds for a new Roman Catholic church in Terenure, for example, the Archbishop of Dublin gives a clue to local parishioners to whom he expected to attend the projected Tektonion bazaar: 'I trust that you will not be left to bear the burden single-handed, and that your neighbours, and not only your neighbours but the Catholics of the city and diocese at large, will be generous in their help to you in this heavy undertaking.'⁴⁰

The fire at the Bazar de la Charité in Paris on 4 May 1897 shows that class issues marked the cinematograph's appearances at charity bazaars internationally. The fire occurred at an old-Paris-themed charity bazaar in aid of the poor, held in the rue Jean Goujon, and it was caused by one of the operators of a Joly-Normandin cinématographe (the machine that had appeared earlier in the year at the Star as 'Professor Joly's Cinématographe'), who carelessly struck a match 'whilst recharging the

oxy-ether saturator used as the illuminant in the projector'.⁴¹ Shooting flames caught the highly flammable hangings used to create the scenery of old Paris, and the building was consumed within minutes and burned to the ground. The *Irish Times* reported that

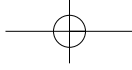
[a]s the object was to make as much money and spend as little as possible the wooden building in which the bazaar was held [...] had been erected in a very flimsy manner, and the nudity of the scaffolding inside was concealed by tapestry and rich hangings of the most inflammable material. Moreover, contrary to all rules, there was only one exit from the place.⁴²

Some 120 people were killed in the fire, some burned beyond recognition, and others are likely to have died in the period that followed as a result of their injuries.⁴³ It was not just the fact of the scale of the tragedy but the class origin of many of the victims that made the fire a news story until late August, when the president of the bazaar and the two operators of the cinematograph were convicted of negligence.⁴⁴ 'The bazaar, which is one of the most fashionable events of the Paris season,' reveals an *Irish Times* correspondent,

was only opened yesterday, and this was the most fashionable day. It is therefore, not unlikely that over 1,000 persons representing wealth, distinction nobility, and diplomacy, were thronged within the building to contribute all that grace, beauty, and money could do to succour the needy and distressed.⁴⁵

Because of the publicity it garnered, H. Mark Gosser has argued that this fire is the third most significant event of cinema's early years, after the commercial debuts of the kinoscope and cinématographe.⁴⁶

Given the detail with which the Bazar de la Charité fire was reported in Ireland, the public discourse it generated appears to miss some obvious points of local relevance. At a meeting on 10 May, the town clerk of Dublin Corporation read a letter he himself had addressed to the municipal council urging a resolution of sympathy for the victims and 'suggesting that some steps should be taken by the Council in connection with the egresses from public buildings in Dublin'.⁴⁷ The chief of the fire brigade also expressed his opinion to the council that the disaster had happened because of too few exits, and councillors proceeded to discuss the alleged danger of getting trapped by fire in the Gaiety Theatre's pit-stalls, a discussion that petered out when another councillor pointed out that alterations under way at the Gaiety would



relieve this. Michael Gunn, the owner of the Gaiety, sent letters to the papers, contradicting claims that the pit-stalls were not adequately served with exits in case of fire.⁴⁸ There appears to have been no discussion of the safety of the Moy-Mell Grand Fête in aid of the Temple Street Children's Hospital that the Countess Cadogan had opened at the Rotunda on the same day as the Paris bazaar. It was decorated with 'Gorgeous Scenery, representing the most beautiful places in Ireland, blended into one magnificent Panorama' and featured 'The Cinematographe – The Wonder of the Age'.⁴⁹ It was at the Rotunda rather than the Gaiety that most of the elements (except, and perhaps crucially, the flimsy construction of the building) that led to the Paris fire were to be found.

Part of the reason for the focus on the safety of theatres at the time may have been that the Dublin theatre world was in some flux. The importance of the theatre to the early cinema will be taken up in detail in a later chapter, but it is worth making a few points about the theatre as it affected the Irish Victorian experience of film shows. In Dublin's competitive theatre environment, the Lyric cut its prices in early December 1899, making it the theatre with the second cheapest seats in Dublin at 3d. 'Stroller', the writer of the *Irish Playgoer's* 'Wandering Notes' column, commended the move, arguing that Lyric patrons 'have had good all-round companies of a kind which clearly met the tastes of the audience, at a price which, to quote the popular "advt," were within the reach of all'.⁵⁰

At 2d. for adults and 1d. for children, the World's Fair Waxworks offered the cheapest admission of any entertainment in the city that advertised in the newspapers. Run by Charles Augustus James as an adjunct to his hardware shop at 30 Henry Street, it consisted of a waxworks exhibition and a theatre area that played host to variety acts, such as 'Unzie, The Hirsute Wonder! The Human Paradox!! A Living Illustration of Black Being White!!',⁵¹ and 'Captain Stanley, The Living Picture Gallery, all different designs, beautifully Tattooed on the body'.⁵² As this venue also featured the eragraph strongly on its bill, it is likely that many of those with just the minimum of disposable income saw moving pictures first either here or at one of the cheapest entertainment venues of all, the 'penny gaffs'. These places of amusement typically consisted of a vacant shop premises barely converted into a performance space with the addition of a simple stage and possibly seating. One such venue was the Mary Street Theatre of Varieties, run at 57 Mary Street by Ralph Smyth, who was prosecuted by Dublin Corporation in January 1896 for not having proper exits from the

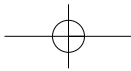
building.⁵³ Unlike the World's Fair Waxworks, which operated as an entertainment venue until the building was destroyed during the fighting of Easter week 1916, the Mary Street Theatre was a short-lived enterprise, the building being described as 'Ruins' in the 1897 *Thom's Dublin Directory*. Smyth may never have shown moving pictures, but it is likely that other such venues did. At a somewhat later period, the *Bioscope* records the prosecution in 1909 of Simon Brownstein for running a cinematograph show at the Royal Arcade, 35 Capel Street, without a Corporation certificate.⁵⁴

Certain developments at the Star Theatre of Varieties deserve special mention. This theatre was the first venue to show projected film entertainment in Ireland in 1896. When it closed for renovations in February 1897, Professor Joly's cinématographe showing Dublin films had been drawing crowds for several weeks, and when it reopened as the Empire Palace Theatre of Varieties, the Lumière triograph with local views was the star turn. Although this billing suggests a certain continuity, Joseph Holloway highlights two features of the opening night that indicate the fundamental changes that had taken place in the transfer of ownership from the Lowrey family:

The Empire Palace Theatre that has risen out of the ashes or rather the debris of the old 'Star' better known as 'Dan's or 'Lowrey's', was opened to-night with brilliant success. The opening was noticeable chiefly for two things – the successful introduction into Dublin of the queue system – the two-deep-first-come-first-served-without-getting-your-ribs-knocked-in-as-is-in-vogue-at-other-places-of-amusement-in-this-fair-city-at-present & also the hostile reception accorded to the orchestra when it struck up the air of 'God Save the Queen' at the conclusion of the programme. – I thought the angry gods and balconyites would tear down the house in their exceeding wrath. I hope the management will take the lesson to heart & omit the offending air in future entertainments.⁵⁵

Respectable Dublin was in favour of the introduction of queueing. An editorial item in the *Evening Telegraph* indicates this but suggests that pleasure in the introduction of the system was not shared by working-class Dubliners:

For the higher priced parts of the house its success was most unequivocal, and directed by the police present the people took up their positions in Dame street and Crampton court where they waited their turn for admission contentedly enough. The patrons of the pit and gallery, who mustered

*Retrospection and Projection*

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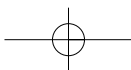
in Sycamore street, did not take quite as readily to the new system. Their stock of patience began to peter out a quarter of an hour before the advertised time of opening, and the force of constables present being insufficient to preserve order the queue was abandoned in favour of the older and most unsatisfactory method of pushing and crushing your way through a number of opponents who are all making towards the same point.⁵⁶

The relative success of the introduction, however, prompted H. H. Morell to announce that the Theatre Royal intended to use this system when it reopened in December,⁵⁷ and calls would be made in the following years for the adoption of the queue by other theatres.⁵⁸

Already irked by the attempted imposition of the queue, the occupants of the cheap seats showed their displeasure unambiguously when the orchestra played the British national anthem at the end of the programme. The evening was not, however, one of frustrations merely for this part of the audience, and among the more appreciated items was the cinematograph. 'Some of the local views shown by the Lumière Triograph, especially The Dublin Firebrigade at Stephen's Green, The Traffic on O'Connell Bridge, & views taken from the train of Blackrock Park and Sandymount, were warmly received,' notes Holloway. 'On the whole the views were interesting and clear, but the cicerone who explained them came in for any amount of playful banter.'⁵⁹ This description of a projected film show at the end of 1897 hints at the perceived differences between the cinematograph and the kinoscope. Particularly salient are the facts that films of Dublin were shown to a Dublin audience, that the audience was a theatrical one that viewed the pictures as a group rather than individually, and that this audience was able to interact with the show because it was presented by a lecturer. The changing nature of the moving-picture show can best be explained by an analysis of the reception of the cinematograph in 1896. What is especially striking in contextualizing these shows is the attention given to another optical novelty introduced to Ireland in that year: the X-rays.

THE CINEMATOGRAPH AND THE X-RAYS

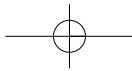
Irish newspaper readers interested in visual novelties would probably have been surprised to learn that the source of projected moving pictures was not Thomas Edison but two French brothers called Auguste and Louis Lumière from a photographic firm in Lyons. A report in the



Dublin Evening Mail, one month after the first public exhibition of the Lumière cinématographe in Paris on 28 December 1895, discusses it alongside other 'Triumphs of Photography':

A new species of cyclorama has been brought out by Mr. Chase, an American, and is expected to figure on a grand scale at the Paris Exhibition of 1900. It may be described as a cyclorama of the sort familiar to us in the cases of 'Niagra', the 'Siege of Paris,' &c, but with real photographs of the scene projected from lanterns suspended from a car in the centre of the hall, and forming a complete circuit round the spectator. The projecting lanterns have diaphragms to give the usual panoramic effects of night, dawn, or gloaming, &c. By combining the kinoscope of Edison and the cinematograph of Lumière with it, animated figures are added to the streets, and processions, whether of soldiers or civilians, political manifestations, and so on, can be reproduced with vivacity. Lumière's cinematograph reproduces past scenes, such as processions, ceremonies, situations on the stage, and so on, by means of photography, and paves the way for a new art in the shape of a pictorial retrospect of past events near or remote, so that in future a person will be able to review photographically the actual scenes he may have witnessed in the course of his life, or others belonging to times and places beyond his reach.⁶⁰

The cyclorama was a kind of panorama or diorama in which spectators stood or sat in the middle of a room surrounded by a large circular wall painted with a scenic view that revolved to produce the effect of an unfolding story. In this account, the Lumière cinématographe begins as a supplement to a spectacular cyclorama and in the company of the kinoscope, but the writer quickly recognizes its unique features. These apparently allow it to found a new art, the 'pictorial retrospect of past events', by which a person can create a visual record of his or her own life or view significant events that he or she has not personally experienced. On the contrary, however, the kinoscope would have been of little use at a cyclorama but it would have been as effective as the cinématographe in showing the individual past events. The writer is less concerned with drawing these distinctions accurately than in establishing the link between the kinoscope and the cinématographe as photographically based machines that lend vivacity to the actual scenes they depict. By the end of the article, the consumption of the images is to be a private affair, part of a private recollection rather than as part of a public entertainment, such as that with which it begins.



The first long Irish article on the cinématographe, published by the *Telegraph* in February, restores the projector to a public context:

Our reader may probably remember that old 'Wheel of Life' [zoetrope], and they are more likely still to be familiar with Edison's kinoscope. An instrument which is a further development of the principle of both these inventions is now on show in London, which is as far ahead of the kinoscope as the kinoscope was of the wheel of life. This is the cinématographe, which may be seen any day from two p.m. onwards at the Marlborough Rooms in Regent street. It is the invention of Messrs Auguste and Louis Lumière, and is now shown for the first time in England, although it has been attracting crowds in Paris for a month past. It is impossible to describe the extraordinary effects produced. You enter a hall which is darkened, and where you can sit in comfort without screwing up your eyes and peering (in a very uncomfortable position, as was the case with the kinoscope) into two tiny holes. At the end of the hall is a large white screen, upon which the pictures are thrown, and the illusion is so complete that you appear to be looking through a window at something actually occurring in the next street.⁶¹

Here the reader is encouraged to see the cinématographe as the culmination of an evolutionary process of which the zoetrope, a revolving cylinder with slits that gave the illusion of movement to a series of images drawn on its internal surface, and the kinoscope are earlier manifestations. While the benefits that accrued in the development from zoetrope to kinoscope remain unstated, those that arise in the development from kinoscope to cinématographe include greater comfort for the spectator and completeness in the illusion of reality. This account is content to stress the achievements of the new invention without mentioning any limitations. The quality of the illusion is such that it is like looking at the events through a window, but the implications of the intervention of the cinematographic window in excluding sound and colour, for example, are not explored.

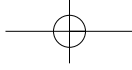
The article proceeds to describe some of the items on the bill in vivid enough detail that they can be easily identified as some of the Lumières' most famous films. These are *Sortie d'usine* (*Workers Leaving the Lumière Factory*), *Arrivée d'un train en gare à La Ciotat* (*Arrival of a Train*), *L'Arroseur arrosé* (*The Gardener and the Bad Boy*), *Partie d'écarté* (*A Game of Cards*), and *La Mer* (*Sea Bathing*). The last of these films aroused the greatest interest in the writer:

[T]he most extraordinary and remarkable scene is the last. You are apparently looking at the sea. The long rollers come tumbling in. A party of bathers run along the springboard and take headers. The waves dash against the rocks, the foam flies up into the air, and you expect every moment to see the water pouring into the hall. There are other pictures shown, all of which are interesting, and the exhibition is of so entirely novel and pleasing a character that it will well repay a visit, affording as it does remarkable evidence of what science can do to deceive the senses.⁶²

The writer is clear here that what science has produced is an illusion but one so complete that the spectator might anticipate being drenched. As Stephen Bottomore has shown, this was a common reaction all over the world to the first viewings of, in particular, films depicting trains approaching or the sea.⁶³ This acknowledgement by the audience of an unprecedented visual realism would be embellished by impresarios into stories of the first cinema audiences running from the auditoria in fear of being struck by a train. Such later films as Robert Paul's *The Countryman and the Cinematograph* (Britain: 1901) and Edwin S. Porter's *Uncle Josh at the Moving-Picture Show* (United States: Edison, 1902) would turn this myth of the naïve spectator into humorous cinematic spectacle. Articles like this one, however, provided a horizon of expectation that would help ensure that newspaper-reading spectators would respond appropriately when they encountered the new entertainment.

By the time of the first exhibition of moving pictures in Ireland at the Star Theatre of Varieties in April 1896, therefore, a discourse on the new entertainment already existed. The Star shows were commercially successful in the numbers attracted, but the cinematograph did not meet the expectations of at least some members of its audience. The manager of the Star, Dan Lowrey, notes in the theatre's engagement book that there was '[n]ot enough light on the pictures'.⁶⁴ The effect of this lack of light is made clear by the way in which reviewers compare the device unfavourably to existing optical novelties. The *Irish Times* reviewer, for example, compares the cinematograph to a kaleidoscope:

The 'Cinematographe' was exhibited, but the character of the exhibition would, perhaps, be more correctly conveyed by a not unfamiliar word, and one which has a recognised place in respectable dictionaries, 'Kaleidoscope', which is defined as 'as optical instrument, in which we see an endless variety of beautiful colours and forms'. The exhibition of last night consisted of

*Retrospection and Projection*

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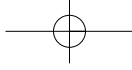
a kaleidoscope, with the figures brought out in relief with the aid of a magic lantern, and it represented what might be described as a quiet boxing match, an acrobatic performance, serpentine dancing, a dragoon band, a Scotch dance by eight persons, a Scotch reel by two persons, and boxing cats. All the figures were in motion, but it may be questioned whether the cinematographe is at all an improvement on the kinoscope, except in the enlargement of the figures with the aid of the screen. The audience, however, regarded the exhibition with interest, and applauded it.⁶⁵

The projection of identifiable kinoscope films may have made the comparison with the peepshow viewer inevitable, but here the projector is not seen as an advance on its predecessor. Indeed, the use of a frosted film stock in the printing of kinoscope films made them unsuitable for use with a projector, which required a clear film base to produce a distinct image. While alluding to the lack of sound in the case of the quiet boxing match, the writer anomalously adds colour to the films by using the analogy of the kaleidoscope projected by a magic lantern. The *Irish Daily Independent* reviewer similarly locates this show in the context of other optical novelties without perceiving improvement. The reviewer opines that

a little disappointment was experienced in connection with the display of the cinematographie [*sic*]. This instrument is undoubtedly capable of accomplishing great things, but it seemed to be out of order, and the pictures which it showed were much below the level of excellence which the kinoscope or the zoopractiscope [*sic*] have already showed to music hall audiences. Possibly it may be in better form to-night, but last night it was certainly disappointing, the only good scene which it portrayed being a contortionist act by a noted performer.⁶⁶

The poor image quality locates this cinematograph below the standard of optical devices such as the peepshow kinoscope or the projected images of human and animal locomotion shown by the zoopraxiscope during Eadweard Muybridge's lectures in Dublin in February 1890.

At the end of this disappointing week for projected moving images in Dublin, the *Telegraph* published a short report on the successful debut in New York of the vitascope, a cinematograph with the trusted Edison name, after the 'wizard of Menlo Park' had been latterly convinced of the viability of a screen machine: 'A series of life size figures were projected on a screen, which reproduced dances and prize fights with startling fidelity,' records the New York correspondent of the



London *Daily Chronicle* of the first vitascope show at the Koster and Bial's Music Hall. 'The splashing waves on the seashore was also reproduced.'⁶⁷

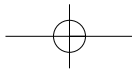
Although Lowrey cannot be credited with holding the first successful exhibition of moving pictures in Dublin, he did contribute to that event. On the afternoon of Saturday, 25 April, he held a special matinee in aid of the Cyclopia bazaar, 'under the immediate patronage of the Countess of Mayo'.⁶⁸ It would be at Cyclopia in the RDS, between 19 and 25 May 1896, that projected film in Dublin would become technically accomplished enough to achieve popular approval.

The exhibition of Robert W. Paul's animatographe projector at Cyclopia met with widespread approbation in a context in which it could be compared directly to other state-of-the-art novelties. Among the main attractions of this large fête, patrons could stroll around the mock-up Dutch village, ride the water chute, switchback railways, and merry-go-rounds, ascend in a hot-air balloon; and attend the café chantant, the Pembroke Concerts, and the Olympia Variety Entertainment. Other moving-picture and projected visual novelties vied for attention with the animatographe. A kinoscope synchronized to a phonograph showed 'a champion high-kicker perform[ing] a vigorous and graceful dance to the accompaniment of an orchestra'.⁶⁹ Projection on a spectacular scale issued from the Lantern Tower:

From this, as soon as the darkness had come over the land, numerous lantern slides were projected on to an immense linen screen, some 30 feet-square, at a distance of fully 150 feet. It is said that the screen is the largest one of the kind ever used in Ireland, and one can easily credit the statement. A display of the kind, on account of its rarity, is one of much interest, and that of last night attracted very general attention.⁷⁰

Although impressed, the *Evening Mail* reviewer expressed reservations because '[m]ixed with the slides dealing with subjects of general interest were many others which partook of the nature of advertisements, and were calculated to make the spectator feel that he was being more or less imposed on'.⁷¹

Even in this dazzling company, the animatographe stood out. Reporting on the first day of the fête, the *Times* reveals that the projector showed 'many life-like "living photographs"' and that 'their rapid succession and dexterous manipulation produced a most pleasing illusion'.⁷² The *Independent* records that by the end of the second day the 'animatograph was so well patronised that an extra perform-



ance was given a little before 10 o'clock'.⁷³ By the third day, the *Independent* attempted to explain enthusiasm for the new device:

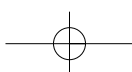
From the first exhibition yesterday the animatograph drew large crowds of patrons. This is certainly, of the many things worth seeing at Cyclopa, one of the most entertaining. It is more so than the kinetoscope, for it shows the figures life size, and so imparts additional realism to the pictures. The Trilby [s]cene is an excellent one, and so is the boxing match.⁷⁴

If cinematography was the most favoured visual attraction at Cyclopa, another spectacle had a far tighter grasp of the public imagination, at least as far as the latter is reflected by the daily newspapers. Among Cyclopa's well-patronized scientific attractions was one that had beaten cinematography to the title of the 'new photography': the X-rays. As a souvenir of the fête, '[m]any had the skeletons of the hand photographed under the new process'.⁷⁵ The relatively small amount of press coverage given to X-rays at Cyclopa is in stark contrast to the abundance of stories devoted to them in Irish newspapers in the first half of the year, far more than those dedicated to the development of moving pictures. In April, for example, at almost precisely the same time as the cinématographe, 'the world's most scientific invention',⁷⁶ premiered at the Star, Wilhelm Röntgen's discovery was causing a sensation in the national press and among the medical profession. While the editorial in the *Freeman's Journal* of Monday, 27 April, reported on the progress of Wilhelm Röntgen's experiments, an article on the same page reported on developments in Dublin:

We understand that Professor Barrett has been continuing very successfully his investigations into the question of direct vision by means of the Röntgen rays. The Professor has now, we believe, succeeded in producing a fluorescent screen by which he has been able to see quite through the body of an adult – the ribs and vertebrae being well seen. He has also succeeded in seeing through a copy of a London directory of 3,200 pages with thick covers. These results seem to be equal to any of those reported from the other side of the Atlantic.⁷⁷

Interest in Barrett's experiments was such that he gave a public lecture on them for '[a]ny of the medical profession or others particularly wishing to attend' at the Royal College of Science on 30 April.⁷⁸

Röntgen's discovery was first publicized by the Viennese popular press on 5 January 1896, and appeared in the following morning's



Daily Chronicle.⁷⁹ The initial Irish account of what was variously described as the new photography, the new light, and even, oxymoronically, invisible light seems to have appeared in the *Evening Mail* of 10 January. Because many of the public exhibitions in Ireland were conducted within a scientific paradigm and so attempted to reproduce Röntgen's experiments, it is worth quoting this first article in some detail. It reveals that Röntgen's findings consist

in the discovery of a new conductor of light. Professor Röntgen, the well-known Professor of the Wurzburg University, has succeeded in photographing metal weights shut up in a wooden box, without showing anything of the casing on his negative. He is also said to have photographed the bones of the hand, all the soft parts being invisible. He photographs by means of light of an exhausted Crooke's pipe, through which an inductive current is passed. The discovery appears to be so far that the rays in question penetrate wood and flesh, but not bone or metal. It is surmised that photographs of the kind mentioned may have a valuable practical application in the discovery and location both of fractures and of bullets. If this discovery is sustained it will certainly take a first place among the many marvels of this scientific age.⁸⁰

This short article gives the bare bones of Röntgen's rays as they are discussed in numerous other articles: they are emitted by a Crookes' vacuum tube, through which an electric current passes; they are akin to light in producing an image on a photographic plate, but differ



1.4 This cartoon from the *Evening Telegraph* of 22 February 1896, offering a 'Tip for Card-Players', shows how closely linked initially were X-rays and photography in the public imagination. Image courtesy of the National Library of Ireland.

from it in penetrating certain solid substances; they can show metal objects in a wooden box and the bones through the flesh; their practical application seems to be in detecting broken bones and metallic objects such as bullets or needles lodged in the body.

Over the next few months, the newspapers and journals reported further developments as other researchers sought to confirm and extend Röntgen's findings. The papers also editorialized on their possible significance. The volume of X-ray stories in the *Telegraph*, which seems to be the Irish paper most interested in the subject, may reflect public interest in the early part of the year. Its coverage began on 11 February, and, in the seventeen working days to the end of that month, it had published twelve items on X-rays. In the same period, it published one moving -picture story.⁸¹ The X-rays were discussed in newspaper editorials⁸² and in substantial feature articles in the Saturday editions of the dailies.⁸³ The content of these stories already locates the discovery firmly in the institutional frameworks in which it is still embedded: in medical diagnosis, in security applications, and in industrial-scientific contexts. The medical uses extended from the surprisingly large number of metal items that were secreted in people's bodies to the investigation of mummies.⁸⁴ Of security uses, the defusing of anarchists' bombs, or 'infernal engines' as they were called, is of particular note⁸⁵; and industrial-scientific applications include the detection of fake precious stones and of additives in Bordeaux wine.⁸⁶

Several reports claim that the interest in X-rays was not limited to the scientific, medical, and photographic communities. 'The much talked about X Rays,' begins a report in the *Evening Mail*, 'have penetrated into the centres of the medical and scientific circles of Dublin, and are illuminating the minds of servants and students alike – to say nothing of the ordinary observant thinker – with irrepressible amazement and curiosity at the remarkable developments of Röntgen's great invention.'⁸⁷

Given the apparent ubiquity of X-rays, it is difficult to explain the reversal in relative interest, by the papers and perhaps by the public, in the Röntgen rays and in the cinematograph at Cyclopa. The success of the animatographe was such that the exhibitor at the fête, Charles Augustus James, was able to advertise it as the 'wonderful triumph of Scientific Research, [...] which has been patronised by the Nobility and Gentry of Ireland at Cyclopa', when he presented it at his Henry Street, Dublin, variety show, the World's Fair Waxworks, in the week following the fête.⁸⁸ Although it notes that that the projector is a 'marvellous invention', a substantial review of the World's Fair

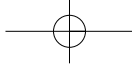
shows focuses on the details of some of the ten sensational films presented – particularly the narrative of a fire brigade rescue that is possibly Edison's 1894 *Fire Rescue Scene* – rather than on the technical details of the apparatus (as is typically the case with the X-rays). 'The flames are shown bursting through the windows, and the different parts of the house are being gradually invested by the fire,' the writer begins.

Suddenly at a top window a number of figures appear gesticulating to those below. The crowd below are shown swaying in horror at the peril of the little group towards whom the flames rapidly approach. Then the fire brigade arrive, the escapes are run up, and the ladders are mounted. The little group are brought safely to ground, and the crowd is shown with waving hats as if cheering the brave deed. The hoses are played on the fire, which gradually yields beneath the volume of water poured on it. The screams, the shouts, the huzzas of the crowd, the hissing of the fire, and the noises of falling floors, are only needed to complete the representation of the scene. The slides are from a series of photographs of an actual fire.⁸⁹

This description again points out that the impact of the lack of sound on the realism of this exhibition seems to be the crucial difference between the two technologies. While both are able to produce spectacular visual artefacts, the images produced by the cinematograph are far more multifaceted in their appeal to an audience.

Unlike moving pictures, X-rays had a very brief period as a fairground or variety theatre novelty. In England, for example, William Friese-Greene, an inventor who had experimented with a motion-picture camera in the early 1890s, in 1896 brought his X-ray apparatus briefly onto the stage of the Old Oxford Music Hall.⁹⁰ Among other showmen around the world who exhibited X-rays were Mark Blow in Australia, Yokota Einosuke in Japan, William Paley in the United States, and Jasper Redfern in Britain.⁹¹ However, while X-rays could produce spectacular visual results, they failed to find a long-term place as an entertainment attraction.

In his account of the arrival of moving pictures and X-rays in Britain, Richard Crangle stresses that, in terms of marketing, cinematography benefited from its assumption into the programme of the variety theatre rather than remaining at the fairground.⁹² It could, therefore, take advantage of variety's 'traditions of itinerance rather than ephemerality', whereby acts moved on to new audiences once their novelty value had been exhausted in a particular place.⁹³ Unlike early moving-picture



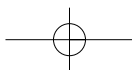
equipment, X-ray apparatus was relatively delicate and required skilled operation to produce good results. The differences in the portability of the equipment meant that the potential subjects of the X-ray were limited by having to be determined in advance, brought close to the apparatus, and, if the end product were a photographic image, held steady for the duration of the relatively long exposure. The cinematographic subject-matter, by contrast, was potentially limitless because the equipment could be brought to a location and await a subject, take subjects of varying sizes, and capture both still and dynamic subjects.

By the summer of 1896, the X-rays may have passed their peak as a novelty, and the detrimental physical effects of sustained exposure also began to be noted. In July the *Telegraph* reported the findings of a German medical paper 'that Röntgen's rays burn the skin like the rays of the sun'.⁹⁴ The dangers were made more explicit in November when the scientific journal *Nature* made known the damage done to the exhibitor of X-rays at the Earl's Court Exhibition in London.⁹⁵ X-rays, nevertheless, continued as a more occasional fairground attraction for several more years.

Also in November, 'the original Cinematographe, under the direction of Mons. Trewey, from the Empire Theatre, London' made its successful debut on the Dublin music-hall stage.⁹⁶ 'A series of very attractive performances took place last night in the Star Theatre of Varieties,' reveals the *Irish Times*,

and after the overture the first place on the programme was deservedly given to the 'Lumière Cinematographe', which was viewed with immense pleasure by the large audience who repeatedly applauded. The 'Cinematograph' comprises a number of animated photographs, of which it may be said that prior to the days of Edison, not only would it have been impossible to produce, but the possibility of ever producing them could scarcely have been conceived. Street scenes in the vicinity of the Houses of Parliament in London and elsewhere were with the aid of the magic lantern reproduced in a marvellous form, showing all the varied life of the great metropolis, with its hansom cabs, omnibuses, bicycles, and the moving population. The military review, with the 'march past' of bands and regiments in their varied uniforms, the Household Brigade, the Coldstream Guards, and others, formed one of the attractive pictures, which evoked the loud applause of the audience.⁹⁷

Here, projected moving pictures are a combination of photography and the magic lantern, the product of Edison's special creative genius.

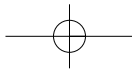


The overwhelmingly positive reviews hinge on the unprecedented illusion of reality.⁹⁸ 'This very wonderful instrument,' contends the *Freeman's Journal*, 'produces with absolute correctness in every detail animated representations of scenes and incidents which are witnessed in every day life.'⁹⁹ These mundane incidents 'are presented with such fidelity as to induce a momentary belief in the actuality of the spectacle'.¹⁰⁰

For various reasons, the exhibition of X-rays was better suited to the more controlled environment of the lecture theatre than to the variety theatre or fairground. Initially, it was those with links to universities in Ireland who experimented with X-rays because 'the requisite apparatus was available in almost every physics department in the country'.¹⁰¹ The first public exhibition of X-rays in Ireland occurred not at the funfair or on the popular stage but as part of a lecture given by the physician Cecil Shaw, at the invitation of the Ulster Amateur Photographic Society, in the Museum, College Square North, Belfast, on 24 February 1896. 'The attendance in the hall of the museum was almost too large to be comfortable', reveals a detailed press account, 'but, notwithstanding the inconvenience of the crowding, the interest evinced was very great.'¹⁰² Shaw offered an illustrated explanation of Röntgen's discovery and showed the results of some of his own experiments with the rays, but a live experiment seems to have been unsuccessful. He also acknowledged and sought to dispel some of the popular speculations on the subject of X-rays, which constituted a substantially part of their fascination:

A man might contemplate with comparative equanimity the idea of photographing the money in his purse, or the keys in his pocket, or the nails in his boots, but the line must be drawn at photographing his skeleton. That this last feat could be accomplished by the aid of Professor Röntgen's discovery was a widespread belief. It had been gravely declared that satin was the only dress material impervious to the new light, and it was even whispered that certain ladies' outfitters in the West End were doing a brisk trade in satin garments warranted Rontgen ray proof. (Laughter.)¹⁰³

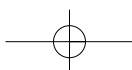
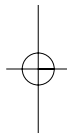
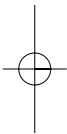
It would be April 1897 before any successful attempt was made to combine the two phenomena in what would later be called cineradiography. This was accomplished by Dr John Macintyre, whose *X-Ray Cinematography of Frog's Legs* was discussed in the *British Journal of Photography*.¹⁰⁴ Macintyre's work might be seen as an extension of Eadweard Muybridge's studies of animal locomotion, which took a



series of photographs that could subsequently be projected with his zoopraxiscope during his popular lectures around the world to produce the illusion of movement. The high doses of radiation needed to produce a moving image, however, made cineradiography too dangerous for the subject until electronic image enhancement techniques were developed in the 1950s. Pioneer film-makers succeeded far earlier in incorporating the spectacular image-making abilities of the X-rays. G. A. Smith's 1897 *The X-Ray Fiend* deals with the popular anxieties around the rays at their inception by portraying a mad professor turning his apparatus on an amorous couple to reveal their embracing skeletons.¹⁰⁵ For an Irish audience whose imagination had been fired by the possibilities of X-rays in early 1896, the limited use to which they could be put ultimately restricted their term as a visual novelty, while the cinematograph was only just beginning to show its potential.

THE VERISCOPE

The Victorian entertainment world's exploitation of popular science as entertainment, which for a brief time during 1896 and 1897 offered members of the Irish public the possibility of being X-rayed or cinematographed, would be evident again when a long sports film made in 1897 promoted itself on its ability to show the truth that had eluded the unaided human eye. Specially arranged to take place before the camera, the prize-fight between James Corbett and Robert Fitzsimmons in Carson City, Nevada, on 17 March 1897, demonstrates film's ability to change its subjects. Whereas previously boxers would capitalize on their wins by undertaking a theatrical tour, this 'veriscope' enterprise, while it did not end touring, showed that fighters could make considerable sums through negotiation for the rights to take moving pictures.¹⁰⁶ It also altered the nature of early cinema. At around a hundred minutes, this was one of the first long films, and it appears to have been the first feature-length film to have been exhibited in Ireland. The film was shot with a camera designed to take a widescreen-format film suitable for shooting the ring and was exhibited by a modified projector, the veriscope or 'truth-seer'. Although an Irish audience might have been expected to have been particularly interested in a fight on St Patrick's Day featuring the prominent Irish-American boxer 'Gentleman Jim' Corbett, the quasi-scientific aspects of the enterprise features most strongly in press coverage for this film show which generated the most newspaper interest in Ireland in the late 1890s.



The promoters of the fight, the members of what came to be known as the Veriscope Company, faced the difficulty of having to create a market for the film with pre-publicity that in turn would alert groups in the United States intent on making prize-fighting illegal. The 'preliminary press skirmishes'¹⁰⁷ in this case involved not only the boxers squaring up to each other but also the competing claims of the promoters of the contest and of anti-boxing lobby groups. The considerable manoeuvrings required to find a location for the fight and the details of the filming generated coverage far beyond the US press. The publicity did not end there. The presence of celebrities at the fight called for special reports, epitomized by the *New York World's* engagement of gunfighter Wyatt Earp as its special correspondent.¹⁰⁸ Controversies about the outcome of the fight allowed boxing pundits to dispute the result. This was an important part of boxing discourse because it helped in arranging a rematch and in selling newspapers to fight enthusiasts. In this case, it also contributed to promoting the film. In tandem with this, the anti-boxing groups lobbied to prevent the film from being shown. All this served to keep the fight in the public gaze in Ireland for the year it took the film to reach the country. As pundits cast doubt on the outcome, sports fans, or 'sports', were invited to judge for themselves when they saw the film. In this sense, it might be said that the preliminary press skirmishes for the fight lasted until audiences got the chance to see the film and decide on the correct result.

Although the film was a unique phenomenon, boxing displays in the variety theatre were not. Boxing and wrestling bouts were common on the popular stage and consisted of either a performance of his skills by a past master and/or open challenges to local contenders. Such acts were clearly targetted at 'sports', who would know the fighters, but they may also have had attractions for other spectators. Both Miriam Hansen and Charles Musser note the seemingly anomalous interest that women showed in the Corbett-Fitzsimmons fight film, explaining it in terms of the emergent heterosocial entertainment world already discussed in relation to the kinoscope but manifesting itself here in a theatrical space.¹⁰⁹ Although no direct evidence appears to exist of women's particular interest in the film in Ireland, the variety theatre in the 1890s increasingly marketed itself to women, explicitly so with the opening of the Empire in 1897. The evidence remains inconclusive, however, because the lower class of variety at the Lyric, which engaged more boxers and wrestlers than the Empire, remained less attractive to women spectators.

The visit of heavyweight champion J. J. Jeffries to the Lyric for one night in September 1899 offers a good example of what was to be expected of the prize-fighter on the variety stage. The theatre increased its prices because of the alleged cost of engaging Jeffries, a move that suggests that it expected great interest, and it promised that Jeffries would give a demonstration of training and announced itself 'pleased to arrange a bout with the gloves with any Irish heavy-weight'.¹¹⁰ The *Evening Telegraph's* review explicitly shows that it was not just the display of boxing but also the muscular bodies of Jeffries and his sparring partner, John Dunkhorse, that represented an attraction:

Physically, a more perfect pair of well-developed specimens of manhood one could hardly see. Jeffries is formed on quite ideal lines. His head, neck, shoulders, and arms are quite suggestive of the Apollo Belvidere, whilst his lower limbs are heavy to look at, but capable of the most marvellous activity. No greater combination of strength and grace could well be imagined. Dunkhorse is also a fine man, a very fine man, and one who apparently could give a very good account of himself if he were put to it, but one could not help being impressed of the fact that he did not think it proper to put his partner out, even when he had a chance. [...] The pair fought four rounds, and although it wanted something of realistic earnestness, and suggested now and then a brotherly friendliness, a finer display of skillful sporting within the time could not be given. [...] In the final round there was just the slightest suspicion of earnest work, and there the rapid movements and quick and hard interchanges of the two men was becoming a bit exciting when 'time' was called, and the bout was over.¹¹¹

It appears that it was primarily the 'sports' who were attracted to the Lyric, but the lengthy descriptions of the boxers' physique makes explicit the erotic possibilities of the act for those not interested in the finer points of fighting styles. The reference to Apollo suggests the appropriateness of a Nietzschean distinction: the article's focus on the Apollonian beauty of the boxers' bodies is here justified because of a lack of the Dionysian chaotic ecstasy of the truly contested fight. The restrictiveness of the music-hall time slot meant that the boxers fought only four rounds, which allowed for 'just the slightest suspicion of earnest work'. The theatre tamed the true spirit of boxing that was to be witnessed in the prize-fighting ring. Jeffries undertook his tour between championship bouts with Fitzsimmons and the Irish boxer Tom Sharkey. Films of both the Fitzsimmons-Jeffries fight, which had

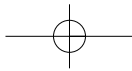
taken place in June 1899, and the Jeffries–Sharkey fight, which would take place in November 1899, would be shown on successive weeks in Dublin in April 1900.

The Lyric played host to other contests in which the Dionysian and Apollonian elements appear to have been more in harmony. Because Jeffries played for only one night in Dublin, there was little opportunity in a music-hall context to face any challengers. Boxers and wrestlers of lesser renown could accept a longer run. 'A novel engagement is announced to head the bill of the Lyric Theatre,' the *Telegraph* announced in May 1900. 'The management have secured Jack Carkeek, America's champion wrestler, at a big expense. He offers £10 to any wrestler, professional or amateur, whom he fails to defeat in 15 minutes. Such a novel exhibition ought to attract crowded attendances during the week, and it is said that already three or four aspirants have signalled their willingness to tackle Carkeek.'¹¹² Carkeek used the fifteen-minute time slot of the music-hall turn to structure what seem to have been truly contested bouts. Among the challengers who were named during the week and presumably known to the 'sports', were Joe Carroll of Drogheda and Charles Green of Wigan.

Interest in the veriscope fight film was maintained among Irish 'sports' by a series of newspaper stories that charted the film's progress to Ireland. Some of these focused on the ongoing controversy over the result that the film fuelled rather than diminished as it was shown. Others concerned the distribution of the film, such as the sale of European rights and the strength of public interest in US cities. A number of stories reproduced drawings from American newspapers. A *Telegraph* article in June 1897 included drawings from the *New York World* of key moments in the fight. The film was being shown at this point at New York's 2,100-seat Academy of Music, where it had premiered on 22 May.¹¹³ '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,' explains a long caption accompanying the drawings:

In picture No 1 is shown Fitzsimmon's plight in the famous sixth round. He is in a crouching position, with his right knee and right hand on the floor, to the left his referee, George Silber counting off the seconds, while Corbett looks on anxiously awaiting the result of the count. The referee says he counted eight seconds when Fitzsimmons arose.

Picture number 2 deals with the alleged foul. It shows Corbett sinking

*Retrospection and Projection*

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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.¹¹⁴

A second illustrated report appeared in the *Telegraph* on the Saturday before the veriscope was due to open at the Lyric in April 1898. 'As an instance of the extraordinary interest taken by the American public in the fight,' it noted,

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 [*sic*] will have a guide to what is taking place.¹¹⁵

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 familiar visual medium to what for many was probably their first experience of moving pictures.

As these two extracts intimate, controversy focused on whether Fitzsimmons dealt Corbett a foul blow in the fourteenth round, after having floored him with a punch to the chest. This was the main thrust of a *Telegraph* article on 5 June 1897. Having viewed the film, a leading US boxing expert concluded that the referee had missed Fitzsimmons' foul, which entitled Corbett to a rematch. The veriscope was 'quicker than the eye', capturing the truth that eluded the human vision.¹¹⁶ In addition to the controversy, the veriscope was also kept in the news by the fact that it was a new business venture. One of several boxing stories in the *Telegraph* of 17 July 1897 reveals that 'the British [veriscope] rights have been sold to a syndicate headed by George Edwardes',¹¹⁷ but an article in November named the English rights holder as J. R. Bradley.¹¹⁸ An article at the end of August anticipated the arrival of the veriscope in England by again discussing the fight's controversial climax.¹¹⁹ By November, the preliminary press skirmishes leading to a rematch began to appear.¹²⁰

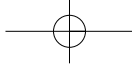
At the time the veriscope was actually engaged to appear at the Lyric for Easter week, it was described as a 'wonderful scientific instrument' that reproduces the fight with 'life-like fidelity. [...] The realism of the entire performance is simply phenomenal, and its advantage over the cinematograph 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.¹²¹ 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. What was novel was that here was 'a film lasting an hour and a half at a time when the average film lasted no more than 50 or 60 seconds'.¹²² That the management of the Lyric clearly expected a substantial return from the film is demonstrated by the fact that they devoted to it a large part of their lucrative Easter bill.

The substantial reviews of the first performances that appeared in Tuesday editions of the *Irish Times*, *Freeman's Journal*, and *Evening Telegraph* agree that the shows received large and enthusiastic audiences who were there for the boxing film rather than for the vocal items on the bill. 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'.¹²³ 'The figures were perfectly life-like in all their movements,' elaborates the *Times*,

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.¹²⁴

The review in the *Freeman* is of particular interest because it appears among the sporting news rather than the entertainment reviews, addressing 'sports' directly. This offers 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 the limitations:

*Retrospection and Projection*

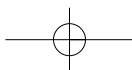
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The difference is that the whole scene, the densely packed assemblage, the combatants on the stage, their seconds and followers are all shown in three shades – white, black, and grey – and the combat of the Veriscope proceeds in silence and without 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.¹²⁵

Here, the audience supplies some of the missing sound elements of the film, even if they could do nothing about the missing colour. As discussed previously, one viewer of a cockfight in the kinoscope apparently felt alienated by the device’s lack of sound. When the viewing experience is shared, as the veriscope was at the Lyric, one’s fellow spectators can provide an approximation to the ambient sound of the boxing arena. Other sound supplements do not appear to have been included at the Lyric shows, specifically a cicerone commentating on the fight, as occurred at the New York shows, marking the advent of the sports commentator.¹²⁶ 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.”’ 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 had an orchestra. It is also possible, however, that the writer imagined the sound because the timekeeper who strikes the gong is so prominently placed in the frame.

The fighters’ advances and returns, however, highlight one of the visual limitations of film. This movement represents what seems to this spectator to be a distortion of perspective that, along with the absence of colour, casts 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 opponents 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 rais-



ing his white hat from his head at the right time. This action is watched with curious interest.

The fight was filmed in long shot from a fixed perspective with a number of cameras in sequence, the only slight change of view occurring 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 lifelike 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 is favoured by the choice of perspective, that the camera, by being literally on his side, may make at least non-partisan spectators unconsciously side with him.

Other technical issues cast some further doubt on the veracity of the veriscope. Assessing the two shows on the opening day, the *Telegraph* concluded that '[w]ith a little improvement in the light the representation will be perfect'. The *Freeman* elaborates: 'The Veriscope upon the whole worked well at the first essay yesterday afternoon. There was a certain tremor in the film which at times marred the effect, and the light was not as good as it might be. But the evening show (which drew a thronged attendance) marked a great improvement, and the applause was frequent and hearty.'

On the whole, the veriscope was reviewed positively and accepted largely on the terms set down by the Veriscope Company. This is particularly evident in the similar line that ends a number of reviews, such as the *Times*'s claim that '[t]he film employed in the veriscope views is over two miles in extent and the number of pictures shown is 165,000'. When the film was taken seriously as a representation of the fight, however, the technical spectacle that these statistics represent was not allowed to overshadow the veriscope's limitations vis-à-vis attendance of the actual fight. When moving pictures of the Boer War were exhibited, Irish audiences expressed some more serious reservations about film's ability to show the truth.

SHOWS OF PROTEST: QUEEN VICTORIA AND THE BOER WAR

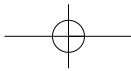
Vanessa Toulmin has recently written that the body of surviving local films shot in Ireland in 1901 and 1902 by the Mitchell and Kenyon (M&K) company for British showmen exhibiting in the country ‘challenges traditional notions of Ireland under British rule, showing, on the whole, a distinctly middle-class and loyal population firmly at the heart of the British Empire’. ‘The brief and perhaps sunny hiatus that was Edwardian Ireland was soon to be overshadowed by events in Ireland and Europe as a whole’, including the Great War, the Easter Rising and the Civil War. The film *Munster Fusiliers Returned from Boer War to Victoria Barracks, Cork* (1902), ‘reminds us of the importance of Irish soldiers to the wars of Empire throughout the Victorian period’, particularly the fact that ‘more than 30,000 Irish soldiers fought in the British army during the Boer War’, a point that has been obscured because ‘the nationalist press at the time and later historians have emphasised the pro-Boer aspects of Irish society’.¹²⁷ Study of the exhibition and reception of Boer War magic lantern slides and films in Ireland suggests, however, that the loyalty of the population should not be exaggerated. Niamh McCole’s work on magic lantern shows in provincial Ireland indicates a ‘binarism of response’ to Boer War slides from unionist and nationalist audiences, but she stresses the role of the lecturer in mediating the content of the slides and avoiding negative audience reaction.¹²⁸ The account below of Boer-based war entertainments in Dublin largely confirms McCole’s findings, demonstrating the sometimes contentious nature of such shows and how they prompted reflection on the possible ideological uses of new media forms.

P. J. Mathews has pointed out the continuity between street protests organized against the jubilee of Queen Victoria in June 1897, through pro-Boer demonstrations that began in August 1899, and up to the visit of Edward VII in July 1903.¹²⁹ It was around events such as these that the separatist nationalists that would later coalesce under the Sinn Féin banner could rally and begin to draw public distinctions between themselves and the parliamentary nationalists. Mathews calls particular attention to the public demonstrations by the Irish Transvaal Committee, an organization led notably by James Connolly, Maud Gonne, Arthur Griffith, and John O’Leary, but also receiving assistance from such figures as W. B. Yeats, Michael Davitt, and William Rooney. What he terms ‘the last of the great pro-Boer demonstrations’ was held on 17 December 1899, on the eve of the arrival in

Dublin of colonial secretary Joseph Chamberlain.¹³⁰ When the Transvaal Committee's efforts against recruitment in early 1900 seemed to be having an effect, a two-week royal visit was announced, to begin on 3 April 1900.¹³¹ Dublin Corporation's decision on 14 March to deliver a loyal address to the Queen led to angry scenes in the council chamber, with separatist nationalists singing 'God Save Ireland' from the gallery,¹³² and as a result the inauguration procession of the Lord Mayor, T. D. Pile, on St Patrick's Day was attacked in the streets.¹³³ A planned peaceful protest against the Queen's visit organized by Yeats for 4 April was suppressed by the police.¹³⁴

Whereas these demonstrations occurred in immediate response to or even in advance of events, it was to be some time before resistance manifested itself to moving images of the Boer War and the Queen's visit. There appears to have been a number of reasons for this. One was, of course, that there was a delay between the events and their representation in moving pictures. The speed with which a film production company could show images of the war on screens in Britain and Ireland was dependent on how quickly a camera operator could be shipped to and from 'the seat of war'. The telegraph, by contrast, although it could not transmit pictures, could deliver information extremely quickly between the parts of the Empire suitably connected. The cineograph was showing war films at Dublin's Lyric in the week following the outbreak of hostilities between the Boers and the British, but these were from the Spanish-American War, which had been underway for nearly a year and a half. When the advertisement for this presentation claimed that 'All Important News from the Seat of War arriving during the Performance will be Announced Nightly on the Cineograph', however, the war referred to was that in South Africa, which was dominating the news. 'The war itself straddled the end of the old and the beginning of the new century, and marked the end of a tradition dominated by the manual transcription of information and impressions,' writes Simon Popple. 'New media based on the technologies of the camera and the telegraph altered not only the speed with which the war could be covered but also the nature of the representation.'¹³⁵

From an early point in the war Dublin theatre audiences voiced their displeasure at jingoistic stage displays by British artistes on the stage. In January 1900, the *Irish Playgoer's* 'Odds and Ends' column advised '[t]hat all reference to the war and soldiers should be omitted from our entertainments for the present, seeing the divided state of our people on the matter'.¹³⁶ In February, a writer in the same journal



LYRIC NIGHTLY LYRIC
AT 7.45
 Cineograph Realistic Pictures of the
SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR,
 Showing all the Sensational Incidents of the Campaign.
 Beatrice Bloom, Ignacio, Mark Lane, Queenie
 Wallace, Wal Pink and Co.
 ADA FAWN.....W. P. DEMPSEY.
 £1 1s. to 4d. Half-price (Gallery Excepted) at 9.15.
 Booking at Cramer's
 All Important News from the Seat of War arriving
 during the Performance will be Announced Nightly on
 the Cineograph.

1.5 This advertisement for the cineograph at the Lyric Hall that appeared in the Dublin-based papers in October 1899 shows the prominence of the film show on the variety bill. Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland.

described the Gaiety audience as ‘over sensitive’. ‘Our Wilkie Bard was singing a capital medley song, and the very mention of one line of “The Soldiers of the Queen” created an uproar.’¹³⁷ At the same theatre, more substantial disruption greeted the opening of the musical comedy *San Toy*, which included such jingoistic songs as ‘Tommy Atkins’ from *The Gaiety Girl*:

[T]he indefensible introduction of war glorification and jingoistic bunkum of that sort completely marred the ordinary playgoer’s enjoyment on the opening night, as each reference to such caused a disturbance, which, at times, developed into quite a pandemonium of discordant sounds that completely obliterated what was taking place on the stage. This introduction of contentious matter into musical plays ought to be discontinued, especially in Dublin, where so much diversity of opinion on such-like affairs is, at present, or in fact, always to be found.¹³⁸

It was not just the Gaiety audience that reacted in this way. When comic singer Harriet Vernon appeared on the stage of the Lyric on 15 May 1900, dressed as an English officer, ‘though she looked exceptionally well in the uniform, a very large number of the people who were present objected, and showed that they did so in the usual way’. Despite establishing that the uniform was the problem, ‘Vernon came out in the same dress and sang what a majority of the audience considered a Jingo song, with the result that during the time she was on the stage hissing was very noticeable.’¹³⁹ The *Irish Playgoer* columnist Conn comments:

I, for one sincerely wish the war was over, in order that amusement-seekers in Dublin may again be allowed to enjoy themselves in peace. [...] I fear

our local managers are greatly to blame for the state of affairs that exists at present, in not compelling all companies to 'blue pencil' every Jingo allusion while here. [...] If this were done, I, for one, would go with a merrier heart to the theatre, knowing that I could then sit out a play without uproar and hideous noises.¹⁴⁰

The same sensitivities were not apparent in Belfast, where for several weeks in late January and early February the Alhambra featured war sketches such as 'Briton or Boer' and 'The Union Jack'.

What appears to be the first Boer War films in Ireland were exhibited by Scott's metascope, 'the most up-to-date appliance for showing living pictures',¹⁴¹ at the Lyric in March 1900. As well as views of the battles of Spion Kop, Modder River, and Nicholson Nek mentioned in the advertisement, the show included both general films of South Africa and other war films, 'among many others, Cape street, Port Elizabeth; the Roslin Castle, conveying consignments of troops for the war; the "Fighting Fifth" digging trenches at Estcourt; a Skirmish with the artillery outside Ladysmith; the Lancers at the Modder River; Bridging the Tugela, and Watering the Artillery and Transport Mules; the Ambulance at Work, etc.'¹⁴² These films do not seem to have caused demonstrations in the Lyric.

A delay in the arrival of pictures could have increased the likely resistance to them as reduced it, but the way in which the films were presented was crucial in the audience's reception of them. It seems that, when the films were shown in a neutral way, without the use of patriotic display in the presentation of the lecturer, in the choice of music, and or in the wording of any titles, they could be accepted as information rather than resisted as propaganda. Reviewing the first week of 'WAR PICTURES. The Very Latest, including "Relief of Kimberly," Troops in Action, Most Thrilling Scenes' and the first showing of 'HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN'S Gorgeous Entry into Dublin' at the Empire Theatre of Varieties, the unionist *Dublin Evening Mail* briefly comments that they 'were greatly appreciated' and 'received with unstinted applause'.¹⁴³ A paper with this ideological outlook might be expected to emphasize demonstrations of loyalty and downplay those of protest. In its review of the public's reactions at the Empire during the second week of these films' run, however, the same paper makes it clear, however, that the music-hall audience could divide on political lines and that it could report it. The show on the evening of 16 April had not yet, though, reached the potentially explosive film material: 'Mays and Hunter, banjoists, played several charming selections, and for a moment or

two the gallery threatened to become disorderly, in consequence of representations of different schools of politics, calling – some for “Killarney” and other for “Rule Britannia.”. Eventually the banjoists played “Killarney,” and were cheered again and again.¹⁴⁴ In this context, and, given that the loyal element in the audience was prompted to sustained applause, it seems remarkable that the pictures were not more contentious.

If audiences do not seem entirely consistent in their responses to the new technologies, they did largely follow established interpretative patterns. As Pople demonstrates, the variety of messages that could be delivered by these technologies were not received naïvely in Britain, and this was also largely true for Ireland. The Irish nationalist press, for instance, expressed skepticism about the power of the most instantaneous of the new technologies, the telegraph, to give a true picture of the war. In December 1899, the *Evening Telegraph* reprinted a cartoon from the *Baltimore American* showing how a British defeat becomes victory by the mistakes or prejudices of the series of telegraph operators interpreting the message as they relay it on to its destination.¹⁴⁵ The paper also, however, published a series of war-related advertisements for Ogden’s Guinea Gold cigarettes, many of them illustrated on the themes of the good Tommy and/or the untrustworthy Boer.



1.6 Ogden’s published a series of pro-British Boer War-themed advertisements to promote their Guinea Gold cigarettes. These were also published by Irish newspapers with a nationalist leaning, such as the *Evening Telegraph*, which published this ad in October 1899. Image courtesy of the National Library of Ireland.

The *Telegraph's* strong pro-Boer stance reflected the broad nationalist position that saw a clear analogy between the British threats to the self-determination of the Boers and to the Irish, whether in the latter case that meant home rule or an independent state. The paper gave prominence to illustrated articles on the Transvaal Irish brigade, such as 'The Transvaal Irish Brigade' and 'Transvaal Irish Brigade: Four of its Sturdy Members'.¹⁴⁶ It could not ignore, however, that Irish soldiers fought as part of the British army against the Boers, and it is here that the discourse on the British establishment's manipulation of the news emerges in an interesting way. An article like 'A Sensational Story: Dublin Fusilier's Letter from the Front: The Boers and the Border Regiment'¹⁴⁷ reveals members of the British army's Dublin Fusiliers as those telling the true story of British losses covered up by the military hierarchy.

The delay in the delivery of genuine films of the war in South Africa, and the subsequent difficulty of filming a guerrilla war, encouraged certain film producers to shoot staged war film. 'A correspondent asks us how he is to know real from sham war films, seeing that several subjects are made at home from life models?' reports the *Optical*



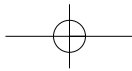
1.7 The *Evening Telegraph* also published articles and illustrations sympathetic to the pro-Boer Transvaal Irish Brigade, here being addressed by Piet Joubert, commander-general of the South African Republic. Image courtesy of the National Library of Ireland.

Magic Lantern Journal and Photographic Enlarger in March 1900, suggesting that the letter writer search for signs of their staging in the counterfeit films themselves.¹⁴⁸ These staged war films, the longest running series of which were produced by M&K between 1900 and 1902,¹⁴⁹ 'draw on the standard Boer narratives, in which the patriotic behaviour of the Tommy is contrasted with the devious and unchivalrous conduct of the Boer'.¹⁵⁰ Staged films were joined in late 1900 by patriotic trick films, such as Robert W. Paul's *Kruger's Dream of Empire*, which includes the disappearance of characters and features an animated dream.¹⁵¹

The first film exhibition at which protests are recorded was the Modern Marvel Syndicate's film and variety show at the Rotunda between 8 and 20 April 1901. The company was run by T. J. West, 'a gentleman long and favourably known in theatrical and amusement matters in Dublin, his association with our city extending over twenty-five years, during which time he has been very successful in his endeavours to meet the public taste'.¹⁵² When protests were made against parts of the show, the reviews are careful to exonerate West. As well as managing the show, he delivered 'a descriptive and interesting lecture at each display'. Far from offering a damning verdict, the two substantial reviews in the *Telegraph* might be said to be generous in their attentiveness but equivocal in their praise. Their overall assessment is that '[t]he whole show certainly makes an amusing, interesting, and wonderful entertainment'. The variety acts, consisting of singers and jugglers, were 'a pleasing adjunct to the photographic portion'. This main attraction was

most elaborate, and certainly perfection in many respects. The living pictures spectacle illustrating the story of Joan of Arc is a fine animated representation of twelve changes of scenery, in which about 500 persons are depicted in a variety of characters in scenes of remarkable animation and vivid reality. The series of moving photographic plates, in which the history of the Sainly Maid is pourtrayed, make a panorama that is both entertaining to the old and instructive to the young, and last night the display was received with loud and long well-merited applause. It is well worth seeing again. Among other quaint, weird, comic, and sensational cinematograph [pictures] are the Grand Pantomime, the Christmas dream, and a series of up-to-date events, all instinct with actual life.

It was not Georges Méliès' fiction films *Joan of Arc* (*Jeanne d'Arc*; France: Star, 1899) and *The Christmas Dream* (*Le Rêve de Noël*;



France: Star, 1900) but certain of the ‘actualities’ that elicited conflicting responses from the audience:

Some did not meet with the approval of a large section of the audience. They objected to representations of her late Majesty Queen Victoria, and scenes representing ‘Our gallant soldiers, who have been fighting for the last eighteen months.’ Some of those present cheered and clapped, and the remainder booed and hissed, but probably both parties were satisfied, notwithstanding the Khaki flavour of that portion of the entertainment, for, as a show, it was good, and this, the manager said, was all he wanted the audience to admit.

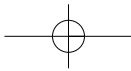
By the end of the week, the *Telegraph* was describing the presentation without mentioning audience disapproval. It seems likely that West altered the show to make it more acceptable to the divided loyalties of Irish audiences.

Two South African-themed entertainments played seasons in Dublin to coincide with the lucrative Horse Show week in late August 1901. Savage South Africa, playing at the grounds at Jones’s Road, advertised itself as ‘NOT A CIRCUS BUT REAL LIFE. NOT PICTURES BUT REALITY.’¹⁵³ Its demonstrations of trick riding and pageantry based on the Zulu Wars were lent new currency by the outbreak of the Boer War, and new acts were added accordingly,¹⁵⁴ including a

realistic scene descriptive of Major Allan Wilson’s last stand on the banks of the Shanghani River, and the piece de resistance was afforded in the concluding spectacle dealing with the battle of Elandslaagte, in which the rattle of Maxim guns and the roll of heavier ordnance played a leading part.¹⁵⁵

As newspaper reviews describe it, audiences could read this variation on the Wild West show as either a pro-Boer, a pro-British, or an apolitical spectacle.

The other South African-themed entertainment running in August was not so ambiguous in its address to its audience. One of the Poole’s myriorama companies, which had long-established links to Dublin, encountered difficulty because of the jingoism of its Boer War-based show of pictures, both still and moving, and varieties. ‘There are no less than seven of Messrs Poole’s organisations all being exhibited tonight in various parts of the kingdom’, reports the *Evening Mail*, ‘and so well is the business arranged, that no show is ever seen twice in the same town.’¹⁵⁶ The one that met protests in Dublin was owned by



Joseph Poole and managed by Fred Mayer. The *Telegraph* offers a blunt assessment:

The entertainment is styled 'Our Empire', and the title is entirely expressive and descriptive. The principal portion consists of scenes in the Boer war, and while the pictures as pictures are good enough, the history pourtrayed [...] by them will not be of much assistance to the young student. Of course the Myriorama was painted for a British audience who imagine that their aggression in the South African Republics has been an uninterrupted series of successes, and that the Yeomanry are the equal of Napoleon's Old Guard. Yesterday these pictures were not received with unmixed approval. But better than these unfortunate views was the photographic display in reference to the Pekin [*sic*] disturbances and scenes of general interest all over the world.¹⁵⁷

The *Telegraph* reiterated its claim of controversy in its Saturday 'Music and the Drama' column at the end of the first week of the season: 'Poole's Myriorama continues to draw large houses at the Round Room, Rotunda, and the pro-British representation of South African war scenes give rise to a little excitement nightly between the patrons of the show who hold opposite views on the subject of the war.'¹⁵⁸

The Poole's case is illuminating because the war films were included with paintings and still photographs. In assessing the entertainment as a whole, the *Telegraph* reviewer admires them as aesthetic objects while criticizing the ideological work to which they are put in advancing the British cause against the Boers. In the context of competing ideologies, Dublin-based newspapers pointed out the limitations of the new media technologies based on the telegraph and the photograph. "[F]aked" snapshots of the war,' observes the *Irish Playgoer*, 'made with pictures of theatrical supers, who are made up as Boers or Englishmen as occasion demands are much more dramatic than the real ones, and find ready sale in Paris.'¹⁵⁹ Although they are remarkable achievements in themselves, these media could be made to lie, whether inadvertently, to increase their entertainment value, or to suit the ideological position of the user.

THE THOMAS-EDISON ANIMATED PICTURE COMPANY

In light of the difficulties experienced by both British theatre producers and film exhibitors in Dublin in 1900–1, the Thomas–Edison Animated Picture Company displayed skilful public relations during their long and successful season at the Round Room of the Rotunda in late 1901 and

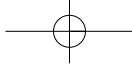
early 1902. For instance, the company cannily appears to have avoided advertising war pictures during its Dublin engagement. Despite its name, this company had nothing to do with Thomas Alva Edison, representatives of whom would take legal action in 1903 against an Irish showman using the Edison name without permission. The firm was, rather, one of the many touring companies founded by the flamboyant British showman A. D. Thomas, who owned the Thomas–Edison companies that had previously visited Ireland. His collaborator Arthur Rosebery managed the Rotunda operation.

The *Telegraph's* 'Music and the Drama' column previewed the company with a long item, clearly based on the company's own publicity material. 'Edison presents in animated photography all the latest and most interesting events of the day, from all parts of the world,' it reports:

Included in next Monday's programme will be the Funeral of President M'Kinley, the Corpus Christi Procession in Madrid, the Race for the America Cup, scenes at Manchester Races. Edison's operator is always on the spot, and thus the pictures are always up-to-date, and vividly illustrate the history of our times. A feature of Edison's programmes are the local scenes taken during the visit, wherein the public may see themselves, their friends and local celebrities. Among the pictures to be presented on Monday will be a special section depicting life in Ireland, and Dublin Day to Day, which will be supplemented by others taken by Edison's operators, who are already on the spot.¹⁶⁰

The Edison name is constantly invoked to guarantee that what is to be presented will be the latest and best internationally, and this is underlined later in the review by the claim that the entertainment had been seen by two million people in Manchester. The specific examples of the up-to-date events that constitute the history of our times are state occasions such as McKinley's funeral, religious observances such as the Spanish Corpus Christi procession, and sporting events such as the America Cup yacht race and horse racing in Manchester. These were likely to be of wide interest without causing controversy in Dublin. Local views were the feature on which the peculiar success of the company would be based, and the audience is here primed on what this will involve. The show was to be an all-picture affair, but appropriate music would accompany the pictures.

After journalists had actually seen the show, the *Times's* correspondent records that a packed house witnessed it:

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We are not unused to exhibitions of the kind of late, but, certainly, the palm must be ungrudgingly given to this really capital entertainment. The pictures are admirable and well chosen, and there is an element of variety in the subjects which cannot fail to attract any audience. Perhaps the primary triumph is the clearness of each picture, and this fascinating trait is so general that no one presentation can be picked out for special praise. Many will, however, agree that the unique set of pictures, descriptive of the 'Toils and Perils of Deep-Sea Fishing off the Newfoundland coast,' cannot be surpassed for vividness of illustration. The railway journey through Switzerland was also a most enjoyable trip, and was generously applauded. [...] There can be no hesitation in saying that the entertainment is interesting and enjoyable. A feature of the performance is the reproduction of local scenes, a very good picture being that of the employees leaving the Railway Works at Inchicore. To-night (Tuesday) another special series will be presented of the football match between Lansdowne and Trinity teams at Lansdowne road last Saturday.¹⁶¹

For this writer, seemingly a veteran of film exhibitions, the show compares very favourably with previous entertainments of its type because of its variety and the quality of the image. The phrase 'vividness of illustration' remains ambiguous, however, because it could refer to image clarity or narrative clarity. The use of earlier exhibitions as the point of comparison is important because it implies that audiences have experienced enough film shows to be able to measure new ones against previous ones. The novelty phase has certainly finished. Rather than the topical films mentioned by the *Telegraph*, here its highlights are the 'interest' films about fishing in Newfoundland and the Swiss travelogue. Of the local views, the factory-gate film at the Inchicore railway works particularly stands out, but, unfortunately, the writer does not specify the reasons.

Having established itself as a popular entertainment at the Rotunda over the course of an unprecedented two-month run for a moving-picture entertainment (2 December 1901–1 February 1902), the company toured other towns and cities in Ireland in early 1902. It made a one-day visit to the Town Hall, Kingstown, on 16 January because of a prior engagement at the Rotunda. While still playing the Rotunda, a second company opened at the Theatre Royal in Dublin on 20 January for a two-week run. It appears a third company toured the country, advertising itself as the 'Original Irish Company direct / From Rotunda, Dublin' and visiting the Theatres Royal in Wexford (23–5 January), Waterford (27 January–1 February), and Limerick (3–8 February). After visiting halls in Drogheda (10–11 February), Newry (13–14

February), and Dundalk (15 February), the company opened for a season at the Theatre Royal in Belfast on 17 February before returning to the Rotunda on 24 March for a run that ended on 3 May. The company also ran a season in Cork during May and June. It kept itself in the public eye by advertising these shows not only locally but also in the national press.

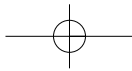
An example of Rosebery's extraordinary success in creating and maintaining audiences for filmed entertainment can be seen in the extra publicity he garnered just before Christmas 1901. On Christmas Eve, the *Telegraph* published a letter from John Irwin, secretary of the Mansion House Coal Fund, which provided fuel for poor families under the patronage of the Lord Mayor:

The Right Hon. the Lord Mayor, M.P., has asked me to convey through the medium of the Press his warmest thanks to the Thomas Edison Animated Picture Company, and to their manager, Mr. Rosebery, in particular, for the most interesting and enjoyable performance which they so kindly gave this afternoon upon behalf of the above Fund, by which a sum of over £50 has been placed in the hands of my committee.¹⁶²

This was almost the middle of this company's extended run. The choice of charity and the stage managing of the event seemed perfectly designed to maintain the high profile the company had established in publicizing its attractions over the previous three weeks. In the two weeks between 30 November and 13 December, for example, the *Times* published six articles and the *Telegraph* published three on the company, but neither paper carried an item on it in the third week until the announcement of the charity show.

The specifics of the audiences the company targeted with special shows will be detailed in Chapter 4, but the *Irish Times* preview of the charity show demonstrates a combination of locally shot views designed to satisfy different segments of the audience, as well as early fiction films likely to appeal to Irish spectators at Christmas:

Special attractions are announced for the occasion, including the first presentation of pictures of the Duke of Connaught inspecting the Cork Exhibition Buildings, and Mr. Redmond's progress through Cork after his arrival from America. The management will also on Monday afternoon introduce, if possible, their Christmas programme, comprising pictures illustrating Dickens's Christmas Carol and Hengler's great spectacle, 'Tally-Ho'.¹⁶³



With such thoughtful programming, this company managed to produce and exhibit its films to Irish audiences of different ideological views without uproar in the auditorium. When this company was taken over by local businessman James T. Jameson in late 1902, he would successfully reproduce the Thomas–Edison formula.

THE CINEMATOGRAPH IN THE VICTORIAN ENTERTAINMENT WORLD

The sections of this chapter have examined the main strands of the public interaction with the new moving-picture entertainments in Victorian Ireland as they are represented chiefly in the Dublin press, in the theatre-based entertainment journal *Irish Playgoer*, and in the diary of inveterate theatre-goer Joseph Holloway. What is most striking, in a period of Irish film history little previously studied, is what André Gaudreault calls the polymorphous nature of the form at this time, the sheer variety of cinematograph exhibitions. The large number of film shows took place at a multiplicity of venues, including bazaars, theatres of all kinds, trade shows, conversazioni, charity events and circuses, and within those venues, the cinematograph served a host of functions. Some of the key points of the chapter bear repetition.

Although the focus here is on projected moving pictures, contemporary evidence makes it clear that the kinoscope was a phenomenon that people used as an important point of reference in discussing the cinematograph. The kinoscope had shown people photographic moving pictures before the cinematograph arrived, and it had shown them very recently. In the year before the arrival of the cinematograph, the kinoscope had been seen in Dublin at new venues, kinoscope parlours, and such innovations as the kinoscope synchronized to a phonograph would be seen alongside the cinematograph at the large charity bazaars that offered a showcase for novel entertainments.

These great charity bazaars of the 1890s and 1900s were a cultural phenomenon that is only now receiving the attention it deserves.¹⁶⁴ Conceived on a grand scale, they played a key role in the introduction into Ireland of technological mass culture, but their status as charity events organized by the most respectable members of society both facilitated and complicated this process in an Ireland in which cultural nationalists were retrieving ancient cultural traditions as a bulwark against a popular culture perceived as British.

The bazaars were also the venue at which the cinematograph had its first successful exhibition, following a disappointing theatrical debut.

Here, too, a patron could choose to visit one or both of the technologies that might have been called 'the new photography' by having an X-ray taken of his or her hand or by watching films projected by the cinematograph, and – unlike the kinoscope – in the company of others. The simultaneous emergence into the public arena of the X-rays and the cinematograph points up some of the reasons why the cinematograph became so successful. Whereas the X-rays could produce startling images of a hidden world, once one had had one's hand X-rayed and seen the coins in one's purse, radiography had little else novel to show. The relative portability of the cinematograph allowed it to reveal both the exotic and the mundane of the visible world for the entertainment of the viewer.

By 1897, therefore, interest in the cinematograph as novel technology had lessened as the content of the projected image received greater attention. This development is epitomized by *The Corbett-Fitzsimmons Fight*, which, although presented by a modified projector, the veriscope, was of more interest to theatre-goers and boxing enthusiasts for the fact that it offered a 100-minute film of a title fight at a time when most films lasted less than a minute. The film seems also to have been an attraction for those less interested in boxing than in the sight of fit men in a state of undress.

Although disappointment was expressed occasionally at a cinematograph show in the lack of sufficient light or of blurred images, the first really negative publicity that the content of a film show attracted from Dublin audiences concerned the moving pictures of the Boer War. British companies who did not tailor their shows to Irish audiences risked outbursts of anger from nationalists. When such disturbances occurred at the exhibition of war pictures, they appear to have arisen not so much in response to the pictures themselves as to the way they were presented, hinging on whether or not a lecturer's presentation were overtly pro-British and whether or not the musical portion of the entertainment contained jingoistic songs. The Thomas-Edison Animated Picture Company avoided contentious elements in its presentation of war films and achieved unprecedented success on the back of skilful publicity, suggesting that the cinematograph show modified for local consumption would continue to be popular for some time to come.

The advent of moving-picture entertainment in Ireland has uniquely Irish aspects, therefore, but it also shares features with Britain, other European countries and North America. These include such phenomena

as a widespread interest in technology, the existence of popular theatres as venues, knowledge and experience of international popular culture, and a business community willing to exploit the opportunities opened up by new technologies. Attempts by such Irish institutions and organizations as the Catholic Church and the Gaelic League to shape how the cinematograph was presented and received would mainly be felt in Dublin after the appearance of dedicated film venues in the early 1910s, although such efforts seem to have manifested themselves earlier in provincial Ireland.¹⁶⁵ What did have a formative influence on the new entertainment from its inception was its intermedial links with such cultural practices as the theatre, tourism and public events. Of these, the borrowings from theatre in its various manifestations would be particularly critical to the development of the new medium over the next two decades. The direction of influence between the two forms, however, would not be all one way. The next chapter, consequently, focuses on the intermedial links between the cinematograph and the theatre.

NOTES

1. *Irish Playgoer*, Vol. 1, Issue 7 (21 December 1899), p. 12.
2. See advertisements in *Irish Playgoer*, Vol. 1, Issue 7 (21 December 1899), p. 14 (where the entertainment is erroneously called the 'Grand Big Tableaux') and Vol. 1, Issue 8 (28 December 1899), p. 10.
3. Terry Eagleton, *Heathcliff and the Great Hunger* (London: Verso, 1996), pp. 273–319.
4. John Eglinton et al., *Literary Ideals in Ireland* (London: Unwin; and Dublin: Daily Express, 1899), p. 43.
5. Luke Gibbons, 'Montage, Modernism and the City', *Irish Review*, No. 10 (Spring 1991), p.1.
6. Gaudreault, 'The Diversity of Cinematographic Connections' in the Intermedial Context of the Turn of the 20th Century', in Simon Popple and Vanessa Toulmin (eds), *Visual Delights: Essays on the Popular and Projected Image in the 19th Century* (Trowbridge: Flicks Books, 2000), p. 13.
7. Rick Altman, *Silent Film Sound* (New York: Columbia UP, 2004), p. 12.
8. 'Edison's "Kinetoscope"', *Evening Telegraph* (Dublin) (*ET*), 4 April 1895, p. 3.
9. See advertisements for, respectively, the pooleograph during Horse Show week 1900 and the biograph at the Empire in early December 1898.
10. 'Cock-Fighting in Liverpool', *ET*, 30 May 1895, p. 4.
11. 'The Mechanism of the Kinetoscope', *ET*, 6 April 1895, p. 5.
12. Charles Musser, 'At the Beginning: Motion Picture Production, Representation and Ideology at the Edison and Lumière Companies', in Lee Grieveson and Peter Krämer (eds), *The Silent Cinema Reader* (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 23.
13. Hansen, *Babel and Babylon: Spectatorship in American Silent Film* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1991), passim.
14. James Joyce, *Ulysses* (New York: Random House, 1934), p. 694.
15. David L. Chapman, 'Sandow: The Man Who Made the World Mad for Muscles', <www.sandowmuseum.com/sandowtwo.html>, accessed 10 December 2007.
16. 'Empire Palace Theatre', *Irish Times* (*IT*), 3 May 1898, p. 3.
17. Musser, *The Emergence of Cinema: The American Screen to 1907* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1994), p. 75; 'At the Beginning', p. 19.

18. *ET*, 4 April 1895, p. 1.
19. 'Edison's "Kinetoscope"', *ET*, 4 April 1895, p. 3.
20. *Freeman's Journal (FJ)*, 15 April 1895, p. 3.
21. 'Dublin Hospitals and the X Rays: What Edison Has Been Doing in America', *ET*, 11 April 1896, p. 8.
22. 'Phonograph and Kinetoscope', *ET*, 8 April 1895, p. 1.
23. 'The Kinetoscope', *FJ*, 5 April 1895, p. 5.
24. *ET*, 6 April 1895, p. 5.
25. Terry Ramsaye, *A Million and One Nights: A History of the Motion Picture* (London: Cass, 1964), p. 119.
26. 'The Kinetoscope at "Ierne"', *Dublin Evening Mail (DEM)*, 14 May 1895, p. 4.
27. Musser, *Emergence of Cinema*, p. 64.
28. See company's share prospectus in *Irish News*, 23 April 1898, p. 3.
29. John Barnes, *Pioneers of the British Film, 1898: The Rise of the Photoplay*, (London: Bishopsgate, 1983), p. 164.
30. See ads in *IT*, 17 October 1898, p. 4; 19 December 1898, p. 4; and 26 May 1899, p. 4.
31. 'Smashed the Mutoscope: Scene at Kingstown Station: Rowdiness Severely Punished', *ET*, 29 July 1907, p. 6.
32. See 'Araby: The Great Bazaar Opened: Visit of the Lord Lieutenant: Brilliant Scenes at Ball's Bridge', *IT*, 16 May 1894, p. 6; and 'Helvetia: To-Day's Brilliant Function: Opened by the Countess of Fingall: Speech by His Grace the Archbishop of Dublin', *ET*, 17 January 1898, p. 3.
33. "'Ierne": To Open on Tuesday: Striking Novelties – The Water Chute – A Captive Balloon, &c.', *ET*, 18 May 1895, p. 8.
34. NLI Ms. 1794–5, Joseph Holloway Diaries, 1895, p. 32, and 1896, p. 31.
35. 'The Ierne Bazaar', *DEM*, 27 May 1895, p. 4.
36. Mary E. Daly, *Dublin: The Deposed Capital, A Social and Economic History, 1860–1914* (Cork: Cork UP, 1985), pp. 64–7.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 69.
38. 'Ballybrack Bazaar: Will Close To-Night', *ET*, 4 August 1897, p. 2.
39. 'Helvetia', *ET*, 17 January 1898, p. 3.
40. 'Tektonion: The Scenery of Egypt in Dublin', *ET*, 11 February 1899, p. 5.
41. John Barnes, *The Rise of the Cinema in Gt. Britain: Jubilee Year, 1897* (London: Bishopsgate, 1983), p. 130.
42. 'Terrible Calamity in Paris: Fire at a Fashionable Bazaar: Fearful Panic: Over 200 People Burned to Death: Upwards of 180 Injured: Leaders of French Society Killed: Duchess D'Alencon Missing: General Meunier Among the Victims: Narrow Escape of the President's Daughter: Narratives of Eye-Witnesses', *IT*, 5 May 1897, p. 5.
43. H. Mark Gosser, 'The Bazar de la Charité Fire: The Reality, the Aftermath, the Telling', *Film History*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (1998), p. 74.
44. 'Charity Bazaar Disaster: Sentences on the Accused', *ET*, 24 August 1897, p. 3.
45. *IT*, 5 May 1897, p. 5.
46. Gosser, 'The Bazar de la Charité Fire', p. 70.
47. 'Panics in Theatres and Public Buildings', *Irish Builder*, 15 May 1897, p. 95.
48. See, for example, 'The Gaiety Theatre', *IT*, 12 May 1897, p. 5, and 'The Gaiety Theatre Exits', *ET*, 13 May 1897, p. 2.
49. See advertisement in *IT*, 3 May 1897, p. 4.
50. 'People's Prices', *Irish Playgoer*, 14 December 1899, p. 4.
51. *ET*, 27 February 1897, p. 4.
52. *ET*, 3 July 1897, p. 1.
53. See 'An Unsafe Place of Amusement', *DEM*, 9 January 1896, p. 3, and 'To-Day in the Police Courts: The Mary Street Theatre', *ET*, 16 January 1896, p. 2.
54. 'Law and Legal: Further Prosecutions at Westminster and Dublin', *Bioscope*, 8 July 1909, p. 17.
55. NLI Ms. 1795, Holloway Diaries, 15 November 1897, pp. 373–4.
56. *ET*, 16 November 1897, p. 2.
57. Letter 'The Queue System', *ibid.*
58. See the *Irish Playgoer* items 'The Voice of the Pit: Also Wants a Gaiety Queqe [sic]', Vol. 1, No. 6 (14 December 1899), p. 16, and 'The Voice of the Pit: Also a Queue', Vol. 1, No. 13

- (1 February 1900), p. 13.
59. NLI Ms. 1795, Holloway Diaries, 15 November 1897, p. 374.
60. *DEM*, 27 January 1896, p. 4. Unless otherwise indicated, subsequent newspaper accounts in this section are from 1896.
61. 'The Cinematograph: A Startling Invention', *ET*, 26 February, p. 4.
62. *Ibid.*
63. See Stephen Bottomore, 'The Panicking Audience? Early Cinema and the "Train Effect"', *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (1999), pp. 177–216.
64. Cited in Eugene Watters and Matthew Murtagh, *Infinite Variety: Dan Lowrey's Music Hall 1879–97* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1975), p. 166.
65. *IT*, 22 April, p. 6.
66. *Irish Daily Independent (IDI)*, 22 April, p. 6.
67. 'Edison's Latest', *ET*, 25 April, p. 7.
68. 'Star Theatre', *DEM*, 21 April, p. 2; see also 'Cyclopa Matinee at the Star Theatre', *DEM*, 27 April, p. 3.
69. 'Cyclopa: A Big Attendance', *IDI*, 21 May, p. 6.
70. 'Cyclopa Fete', *DEM*, 21 May, p. 3.
71. *Ibid.*
72. 20 May, p. 8.
73. 21 May, p. 5.
74. 'Cyclopa: Third Day of the Fête', *IDI*, 22 May, p. 6.
75. 'Cyclopa', *ET*, 23 May, p. 6.
76. The phrase is used in the advertisement for the cinématographe shows in the *IT*, 20 and 21 April, p. 4. It is one of a series of hyperbolic expressions used to describe the phenomenon in the newspaper advertisements.
77. Editorial items 'The Rontgen Rays' and 'The X Rays in Dublin', *FJ*, 27 April, p. 4.
78. 'The Rontgen Rays', *FJ*, 30 April, p. 5.
79. James Murray, 'The Early Formative Years in Irish Radiology', in J. C. Carr (ed.), *A Century of Medical Radiation in Ireland: An Anthology* (n.p.: Anniversary, 1995), p. 6.
80. 'Electric Photography in Surgery', *DEM*, 10 January, p. 4.
81. 'The Cinematograph: A Startling Invention', *ET*, 26 February, p. 4. This article focuses on the content of the films. It begins by showing how far ahead the cinematograph is of the kinoscope.
82. See, for example, the editorial item 'The Röntgen Rays', *FJ*, 27 April, p. 4.
83. See, for example, 'Shadowgraphs: The Process Described by Professor Barrett: Its Aid in a Dublin Surgical Case', *ET*, 28 March, p. 7, and 'Dublin Hospitals and the X Rays: What Edison Has Been Doing in America', *ET*, 11 April, p. 8.
84. 'Röntgen Rays upon a Mummy', and 'Mummies and the New Photography', both *ET*, 17 February, p. 4.
85. 'The Anarchists and the New Rays', *ET*, 4 March, p. 3, and 'Bombs and the X Rays', *ET*, 17 April, p. 4.
86. 'Photography and Jewels', *ET*, 22 April, p. 4, and 'The New Tell-Tale Photography', *ET*, 6 March, p. 1.
87. 'The Röntgen Rays: Interesting Demonstration', *DEM*, 25 April, p. 4.
88. See advertisements in *ET* during week of 26 May.
89. 'The Animatograph: On Exhibition in the City', *ET*, 27 May, p. 4.
90. Ray Allister, *Friese-Greene: Close-Up of an Inventor* (London: Marsland, 1948), pp. 78–9.
91. Stephen Herbert and Luke McKernan (eds), *Who's Who of Victorian Cinema: A Worldwide Survey* (London: BFI, 1996), p. 124.
92. Richard Crangle, 'Saturday Night at the X-Rays: The Moving Picture and "the New Photography" in Britain, 1896', in John Fullerton (ed.), *Celebrating 1895: The Centenary of Cinema* (London: John Libbey, 1998), pp. 138–44.
93. *Ibid.*, p. 142.
94. 'The Latest about "X" Rays', *ET*, 11 July, p. 7.
95. 'The Bad Side of the X Rays', *ET*, 5 November, p. 4.
96. 'The Star Theatre: The Cinematographe', *FJ*, 3 November, p. 7.
97. 'Star Theatre of Varieties', *IT*, 3 November, p. 6.
98. Joseph Holloway remarks, however, that '[s]ome few subjects were a trifle blurred and indistinct', NLI Ms. 1795, Holloway Diaries, 14 November 1896, pp. 106–7.

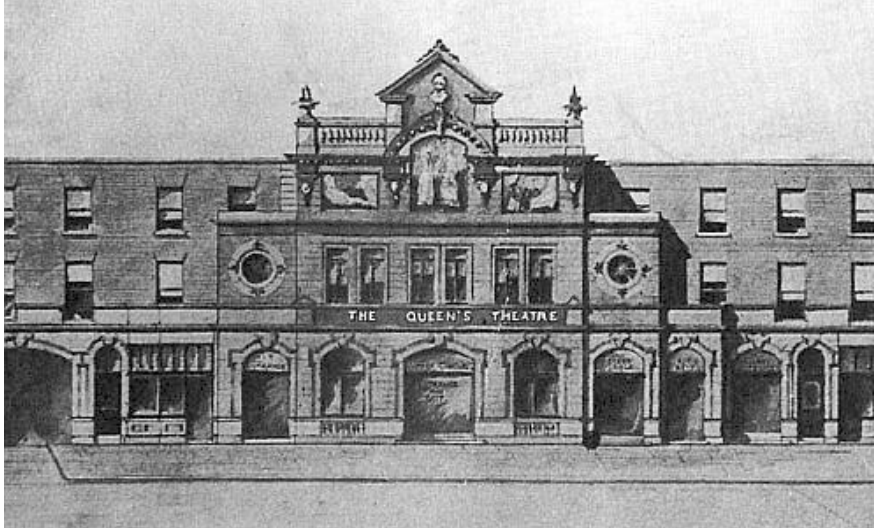
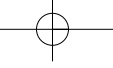
99. *FJ*, 3 November, p. 76.
100. 'The Cinematographe at the Star Theatre', *ET*, 3 November, p. 3.
101. Murray, 'The Early Formative Years in Irish Radiology', pp. 6–7.
102. 'The New Photography: The Röntgen Rays: Interesting Lecture in Belfast', *Irish News*, 25 February, p. 5.
103. *Ibid.*
104. *British Journal of Photography*, 23 April 1897, p. 260.
105. Denis Gifford, *The British Film Catalogue, 1895–1985: A Reference Guide* (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1986).
106. For an account of the filming of the fight, see Musser, *Emergence of Cinema*, pp. 195–200, and Ramsaye, *A Million and One Nights*, pp. 285–7.
107. This phrase comes from a report on the preparations from for a later fight between Corbett and Fitzsimmons, 'Boxing: The Coming Great Fight: Preliminary Press Skirmishes: The Great Heavy Weights Coming to Closer Quarters: A Battle Worth Probably Two Hundred Thousand Dollars', *ET*, 22 January 1898, p. 6.
108. Musser, *Emergence of Cinema*, pp. 195–7.
109. Hansen, *Babel and Babylon*, pp. 1–2; Musser, *Emergence of Cinema*, p. 200.
110. See advertisements for engagement in, for example, *ET*, 9 September 1899, p. 1.
111. 'Jeffries at the Lyric', *ET*, 14 September 1899, p. 4.
112. *ET*, 26 May 1900, p. 8.
113. Musser, *Emergence of Cinema*, pp. 197–9.
114. 'The Corbett–Fitzsimmons Veriscope', *ET*, 1 June 1897, p. 2.
115. 'Corbett–Fitzsimmons Fight at the Lyric Hall', *ET*, 9 Apr. 1898, p. 8.
116. 'The Veriscope Pictures of the Great Battle – Quicker Than the Eye: One of the Best Boxing Authorities in the World Says Corbett is Entitled to Another Battle', *ET*, 5 June 1897, p. 8.
117. 'Corbett and Fitzsimmons: Brady and the Veriscope', *ET*, 17 July 1897, p. 6.
118. *ET*, 27 November 1897, p. 8.
119. 'The Corbett–Fitzsimmons Fight: What the Veriscope Tells: The First Exhibition in England', *ET*, 30 August 1897, p. 2.
120. As well as the story from 22 January already referred to, see 'Corbett and Fitzsimmons: A Very Definite Statement: Assertion that the Famous Pugilists Will Soon Be Matched Again', *ET*, 24 November 1897, p. 3, and 'Corbett and Fitzsimmons: Looks Like a Fight', *ET*, 1 January 1898, p. 7.
121. 'Corbett v. Fitzsimmons: The Veriscope at the Lyric Hall', *ET*, 2 Apr. 1898, p. 7.
122. Barnes *Rise of the Cinema in Gt. Britain, 1897*, p. 150.
123. *ET*, 12 April 1898, p. 4.
124. 'Lyric Hall', *IT*, 12 April 1898, p. 7.
125. 'Corbett and Fitzsimmons at the Lyric Hall: The Veriscope Version of the Great Battle', *FJ*, 12 April 1898, p. 2. Unless otherwise indicated, all quotes in this and the following paragraph come from this article.
126. Musser, *Emergence of Cinema*, p. 198.
127. Toulmin, *Mitchell and Kenyon in Ireland*, pp. 1, 12 and 6.
128. McCole, 'The Magic Lantern in Provincial Ireland', pp. 254–6.
129. P. J. Mathews, *Revival: The Abbey Theatre, Sinn Féin, The Gaelic League and the Co-operative Movement* (Cork: Cork UP/Field Day, 2003), pp. 17–18, 66–91, 122–4.
130. *Ibid.*, p. 72.
131. Editorial, 'The Royal Visit', *ET*, 8 March 1900, p. 2.
132. 'Corporation and the Queen: The Lord Mayor Proposes an Address: Scenes in the Council Chamber: "God Save Ireland" Sung from the Gallery', *ET*, 14 March 1900, p. 3.
133. 'The Lord Mayor's Procession: A Hostile Reception', *ET*, 17 March 1900, p. 5.
134. Mathews, *Revival*, p. 89.
135. Simon Popple, "'But the Khaki-Covered Camera is the Latest Thing': The Boer War Cinema and Visual Culture in Britain", in Andrew Higson (ed.), *Young and Innocent? The Cinema in Britain 1896–1930* (Exeter: U of Exeter P, 2002), pp. 13–14.
136. *Playgoer*, Vol. 1, No. 9 (4 January 1900), p. 4.
137. *Playgoer*, Vol. 1, No. 14 (8 February 1900), p. 12.
138. 'San Toy: Lively Scenes at the Gaiety – Singers Turn the Theatre into a Bear-Garden by Singing "Jingo" Songs', *Irish Playgoer*, 3 May 1900, p. 11.

139. *IDI*, 15 May 1900; quoted in 'Odds and Ends', *Irish Playgoer*, 24 May 1900, p. 2.
140. *Ibid.*
141. *ET*, 10 March 1900, p. 8.
142. *Ibid.*
143. *DEM*, 10 April 1900, p. 1, and 14 April 1900, p. 3.
144. 'The Empire Palace', *DEM*, 17 April 1900, p. 1.
145. 'Acrobatic Performances: Victories by Telegraph', 9 December 1899, p. 7.
146. *ET*, 28 October 1899, p. 6, and 9 December 1899, p. 6.
147. *ET*, 27 January 1900, p. 7.
148. 'Sham War Cinematograph Films', *Optical Magic Lantern Journal*, Vol. 11, No. 30 (March 1900), p. 30.
149. Robin Whalley and Peter Worden, 'Forgotten Firm: A Short Chronological Account of Mitchell and Kenyon, Cinematographers', *Film History*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (1998), pp. 37–8.
150. Popple, 'The Boer War Cinema and Visual Culture in Britain', p. 20.
151. *Ibid.*, pp. 20–1.
152. *ET*, 13 April 1901, p. 8. All the quotes in the following paragraph are from this review and a longer one that appeared as 'The Modern Marvel Syndicate, Limited: An Interesting Show', *ET*, 9 April 1901, p. 3.
153. Advertisements appeared in the week of 29 July 1901.
154. Popple, 'The Boer War Cinema and Visual Culture in Britain', p. 23.
155. "'Savage South Africa": Unique Entertainment at Jones' Road', *DEM*, 6 August 1901, p. 2.
156. 'The Stage and Gallery: Poole's Myriorama', *DEM*, 24 August 1901, p. 7.
157. 'Poole's Myriorama', *ET*, 6 August 1901, p. 4.
158. *ET*, 10 August 1901, p. 8.
159. 'Odds and Ends', *Irish Playgoer*, 15 March 1900, p. 2.
160. *ET*, 30 November 1901, p. 8.
161. 'The Thomas Edison Animated Pictures at the Rotunda', *IT*, 3 December 1901, p. 6.
162. 'Mansion House Coal Fund', *ET*, 24 December 1901, p. 8.
163. 'Edison's Pictures at the Rotunda: Exhibition in Aid of the Coal Fund', *IT*, 21 December 1901, 9.
164. Stephanie Rains, 'Modernity and Consumption in Nineteenth-Century Ireland: The Araby Bazaar and 1890s Popular Visual Culture', *Early Popular Visual Culture*, Vol. 5, No. 3 (November 2007), pp. 285–300.
165. McCole, 'The Cinematograph in Provincial Ireland', pp. 31–41.

Theatre

‘The weakness of the Abbey for “peasant plays” – even French classics become Irish “peasant” plays in the Abbey – the preparation of the plays and players for export, and certain idiosyncrasies in the management, all come in for a touch of the satiric pen of Mr. MacDonagh.’¹ So writes the *Evening Telegraph*’s ‘Gossip of the Day’ columnist S.O.C. in a June 1917 review of a production of John MacDonagh’s play *Author! Author!* at Edward Martyn’s Irish Theatre (also called the Theatre of Ireland) in Dublin’s Hardwicke Street. The previous week, columnist J.A.P. had expressed similar views of the Abbey at the close of its season to those expressed in MacDonagh’s satire. J.A.P. had, however, been generous in his welcome of the theatre’s new actor-manager, Fred O’Donovan. ‘I do not know exactly what the powers of the Abbey actor-manager may be,’ he had written, ‘but I am quite sure that if he is permitted a reasonable liberty Mr. O’Donovan will launch the playhouse on a career of redoubled prosperity when it re-opens in September.’² Although the Irish Theatre staged works critical of the Abbey Theatre, its more successful sibling that had emerged from the Irish Literary Theatre, MacDonagh and O’Donovan would over the following two years direct the two most ambitious feature films of the period before the foundation of the Free State, the Film Company of Ireland’s (FCOI’s) *Knocknagow* (shot in the summer of 1917) and *Willy Reilly and His Colleen Bawn* (shot in the summer of 1919).

The presence of these two prominent theatre figures of the late 1910s in FCOI is just one of the many ways in which close intermedial links between the film medium and the theatre manifest themselves from the first appearance of film shows in Ireland. At the level of reception, many early film audiences, particularly those living in cities, first saw moving pictures as part of a more extensive theatrical show. Entering venues that were identical or similar to ones at which they had attended theatrical shows, they brought to the experience expectations that were, at least initially, shaped by these previous entertainments.



2.1 The Queen's Royal Theatre is depicted here after its reconstruction in 1909, when it was transformed back from a moving-picture and variety venue into a melodrama theatre. Dublin City Library and Archive: Dixon Slides.

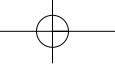
That the auditoriums where dedicated film shows were first exhibited were most frequently called picture theatres, cinematograph theatres, or – less often but evocatively – electric theatres, neatly captures some of the interplay between the established form and the technological novelty.

That interplay does not begin with sometimes Abbey actor-manager Fred O'Donovan in 1917 or with the 1908 transformation of the Queen's Royal Theatre from a melodrama house into a moving-picture palace but with the first exhibition of projected moving pictures at the Star Theatre of Varieties in 1896. As the dominant cultural medium of the nineteenth century, theatres formed a network of stratified spaces that were public in the restricted sense that entry was reserved for those who could afford the entry cost of the ticket and frequently for persons above a certain age. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the larger spaces in particular were often internally stratified according to social class by a system of pricing, and this was usually reinforced by a dress code. The theatre network was also stratified by a system of taste that designated entertainments preferred by the dominant class as a privileged high or literary culture and those associated with the lower class as popular culture. Offering a range of entertainments, theatre incorporated works from many other media. Novels, news stories, and ballads became stage dramas, melodramas, operas, burlesques, and

music-hall turns. Paintings and prints influenced and were influenced by scenic painting. Scientific discoveries, including such technological inventions as the cinematograph, were exploited for their potential as spectacle. As the dominant form of public entertainment of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, theatre in its various forms bequeathed an emergent cinema a complex legacy.

The term 'intermediality', borrowed from the early film scholar André Gaudreault, will be used frequently in the coming chapters to discuss the interaction between cinematography in Ireland from 1895 to 1921 and the cultural practices of theatre, tourism and public events. 'The cinema, as we describe it, did not exist before 1910,' argues Gaudreault.³ 'Edison and the Lumière invented *cinematography*, not *cinema*. The inventor of the microscope invented *microscopy*, not *micro-biology*. Cinema is a super-structural grouping, artistic and cultural in nature, that requires cinematography to exist, but it is not tethered to it.'⁴ Given the close intermedial links between 'early cinema' – a term he treats with suspicion – and other cultural practices before this period, he stresses the importance 'of writing a history of cinema that takes into strict account [...] the dependence of cinema on other mediums and culture spheres'.⁵ The reliance of early film shows in Ireland on an extensive range of existing cultural institutions and practices is clear in Chapter 1, as the technological novelty was exhibited in a multitude of contexts. By the end of the Victorian period, however, cinematograph shows were particularly the preserve of the theatre, and this chapter focuses on the film show's multiple debts to the various kinds of theatre with which it interacted.

Although Gaudreault's argument is convincing and useful in discussing an emergent Irish cinema, the periodization he suggests requires modification for Ireland. He puts the date for the emergence of cinema at 1910, by which time an international mass market for film existed, housed in dedicated venues and served by producers from a number of countries. Jon Burrows adopts Gaudreault's argument but qualifies it by contending that, after an initial period of hybridity, British cinema progressed to a second stage of intermediality, up to the end of the 1910s, in which it was dominated by its relationship to the legitimate and popular theatre.⁶ Burrows argues that 'the use of theatre stars in British cinema throughout the 1910s represents a distinctive form of intermedial cinema, which worked toward particular cultural goals that would largely have been impossible to imagine or implement if the film industry had not reached a stage of advanced capitalisation and expansion'.⁷ Although the same kind of consolidation in



the ownership of theatrical and cinema companies that occurred in Britain was not replicated in Ireland, good reasons exist to argue that Irish cinema remained intermedial for a considerable period after 1910, and at least to the end of the period dealt with in this book, in the early 1920s. This chapter and the two that follow will describe in detail the intermedial links between the film show and a range of other cultural institutions and practices, beginning here with the theatre.

Film historians in the past have seen the influence of theatre on early film as decisive and negative, contending that a true cinema only emerged out of its primitive state when it had cast off its theatrical cocoon.

The argument that cinema of the period under discussion is a hybrid form, that comprehensive ‘intermediality’ is a dominant feature of early cinema,⁸ explains why influential accounts of the differences between the theatre and the cinema have difficulty with early cinema. The play of presence and absence that theatre and cinema scholars such as Erika Fischer-Lichte and Christian Metz posit as a fundamental difference between the two cultural practices is not so clear cut in relation to the early period.⁹ For theatre to occur, writes Fischer-Lichte,

performers and spectators must gather together in a specific place for a specific duration of time [...] Theatre, thus, is an event which happens in a community of physically present people, whereas the printed media and the new media are commonly used by individual people independently and in isolation from others (i.e., without any physical contact with either the producers or other recipients).

In terms of perception, it can be stated that the camera in the new media prescribes the focus and perspective to the spectators, while in theatre the spectators can let their eyes wander over the performance and choose the focus and perspective for themselves.¹⁰

Fischer-Lichte stresses that, whereas theatre is about human relationships, the cinema and other forms are bound up in the relationship between the individual spectator and the camera, the mechanical eye that directs the gaze. She is picking up on arguments that had been used by such cinema scholars concerned with the ‘gaze’ as Christian Metz. Metz argues that every film is a fiction because the actors are not physically present in the cinema. ‘[W]hat unfolds there may, as before [in the theatre], be more or less fictional,’ he contends, ‘but the

unfolding itself is fictive; the actor, the “*décor*”, the words one hears are all absent, everything is *recorded*.¹¹

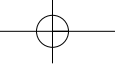
This does not, however, describe the way films were exhibited in Ireland and elsewhere in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. At early film shows and in the silent cinema, the entertainment arrived only partly pre-manufactured or recorded, and it had to be supplemented by live performance. This was most obvious in the case of music, whereby musicians improvised a score live as the film was projected, but other possible sound supplements included the use of a lecturer during times when the recorded images were not sufficiently self-explanatory. In some places – but, it appears, not in Ireland – actors were employed to stand beside or behind the screen and speak the dialogue of characters on-screen. Furthermore, even when it was possible to fill a programme with films in a dedicated moving-picture venue, some cinemas engaged variety acts, and virtually all cinemas projected magic-lantern slides with an image and the words to a popular song to which the audience could sing along.

More recently, particularly since the 1978 Brighton Conference of the Fédération Internationale des Archives du Film (FIAF), film historiography has shown, according to Ben Brewster and Lea Jacobs, that

early filmmakers borrowed from whole series of sources unlinked to the theatre (short stories, novels, strip cartoon's political caricatures, lantern slides, wax museums, pyrotechnic displays), and that the kinds of theatre they drew on when those sources were theatrical were so diverse (from vaudeville dog act to Shakespeare via conjuring tricks, *féerie*, and Grand Guignol) as to make 'theatrical' a vitiatingly vague term.¹²

Despite their admonition that the term theatre is used too loosely, Ben Brewster and Lea Jacobs do not doubt the importance to early film at specific junctures of particular kinds of theatre. Their examination of the influence of other cultural practices on multireel films of the 1910s reveals that 'theatrical models came back with a force that overwhelmed all of the others except perhaps the literary ones'.¹³

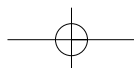
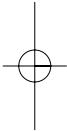
Theatre in Ireland played a multifaceted role in the cinematograph show's development into the cinema. An historical evolution was, however, also underway in which different forms of theatre influenced the development of the emergent cinema at different points and in different ways. In Ireland, this legacy falls into three phases, each of which is characterized by a different form of theatre. In the first phase, from 1896 to about 1909, the film show owed a particular debt to the



music hall; in the second phase, from 1909 to 1915, cinema was especially indebted to the melodrama; and in the third phase, from 1916 to 1921, the literary theatre exerted a strong influence on cinema. The activities at three theatres, respectively, exemplify these phases: the music-hall entertainment at the Star Theatre of Varieties, later the Empire; the melodramatic repertoire of the Queen's Royal Theatre; and the literary drama at the Abbey Theatre.

As was seen in the last chapter, the audience at the Star Theatre of Varieties was the first to see projected moving pictures in Ireland, and through its regular exhibition of film, this and other music halls helped establish an audience for the novelty, and the variety format represented a lasting legacy to the cinema programme. Apart from this, the intersection of international capital and popular formats in the music-hall context provided a model for the cinema industry. After 1900, film was shown on an increasing basis outside the music halls, with J. T. Jameson's Irish Animated Picture Company, initially at the Rotunda and eventually in a chain of theatres all over Ireland, being a particularly important pioneer. It was not until after 1907, though, that Ireland's first dedicated film venues opened. The contribution of the melodrama houses, therefore, and particularly the Queen's Royal Theatre, was not so much to provide an exhibition space but, by developing the tradition of Dublin-born playwright Dion Boucicault's patriotic melodramas, to provide not only producers such as P. J. Bourke and Ira Allen, who would contribute to major Irish-made films, but also an audience intimately familiar with the discourse of Irish political melodrama. The influence of this type of theatre is particularly clear in the films of the US Kalem Company (1910–1914) and in Walter Macnamara's *Ireland a Nation* (United States: Macnamara, 1914–20), but it is also present in such later productions as the *Aimsir Padraig/In the Days of St. Patrick* (Ireland: General Film Supply, 1920), in which Ira Allen, whose company had produced a about the saint at the Queen's, takes the role of the adult Patrick. The post-1915 period, however, was marked by the formation of FCOI, which produced both short comedies and features based on major works of national literature: Charles Kickham's *Knocknagow, or the Homes of Tipperary* (1879) and William Carleton's *Willy Reilly and His Dear Colleen Bawn* (1855).

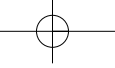
The historical emergence of these three types of theatre determined the interaction that they would have with silent film. Melodrama was the first to make its appearance. For much of the twentieth century, literary studies employed the term melodrama in a largely negative



sense as the antithesis of high literary culture. It re-emerged as an object of renewed analytical interest, first, in the late 1960s in theatrical histories that focused on it as a generic system and, second and seminally, in film studies in the 1970s, where it was employed primarily to discuss the post-World War II woman's film. The slipperiness of the term has prompted a number of critics to suggest that it is not a genre at all but a mode that is fundamental to popular culture in the West. What is of most interest here, however, is how film adopted the defined conventions of a variant of Victorian melodrama; a short description of how this theatrical form emerged gives an idea of why it was so readily adopted by early film.

Melodrama first appeared in France and England of the eighteenth century, where royal edicts granted the monopoly on the production of spoken drama to two or three theatres. It is from this development that the terms legitimate and illegitimate theatre come. The 'illegitimate' theatres or minor houses relied on a range of non-dialogue entertainments that drew on such forms as dumb show, pantomime, harlequinade, ballets, spectacles, acrobatics, clowning, busking, the exhibition of animals and freaks, and, particularly, musical accompaniment and song, from which the French term *melos-drame* (music drama) derives. Words also formed a part of illegitimate theatre's heterogeneous entertainments through the employment of placards and banners, and, as Peter Brooks has pointed out,¹⁴ pantomime developed a large repertoire of non-verbal signs or 'visible emblems', such as meteors, rainbows, lightning, spectres, crosses in flames and rising tombs, that immediately told spectators how to read the scene. By developing these traditional techniques, the minor houses had by the end of the eighteenth century evolved a complex theatrical *mise en scène*. When the economic potential of such forms brought them into the legitimate theatres, they melded with eighteenth-century sentimental drama's relocation of dramatic action from 'feudal and aristocratic hierarchies to the "democratic" bourgeois family'¹⁵ and the associated emergence of the types of hero, heroine, and villain.

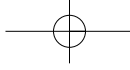
By the early nineteenth century, a kind of theatre was already in existence that would later be particularly suited not only to adaptation by early and silent film but also to film's wholesale adoption of its conventions. There was, of course, direct adaptation, represented famously in the case of the Kalem Company by the location shooting of Dion Boucicault's Irish plays. A number of melodramatic conventions, however, lent themselves to wholesale adoption by silent film. Of the repertoire of non-dialogue features deployed by Victorian melodrama,



the most important to silent film were its immediately identifiable stock characters, its gestural acting style, its expressive use of costume, setting, and music, and its incorporation of written words in the form of banners and placards.

If the melodrama was ‘the most popular dramatic form of its age’,¹⁶ another type of illegitimate, music-based theatre was to have a formative influence on early film: the music hall. In many industrial countries of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, popular culture was dominated by a form of musical variety entertainment, with regional variations, that went under such names as music hall, variety, vaudeville, and cabaret. This kind of theatre had its roots in public houses that mounted entertainment to attract customers, who would drink alcohol as they enjoyed the show. In some establishments, these productions became elaborate affairs and could include the production of dramatic works. Although the phenomenon existed before the legislation, the music hall was formally created by an 1843 act of the British Parliament that ended the theatrical monopoly but that also ruled that spoken drama could be performed only under licence in premises that did not sell alcohol in the auditorium. This encouraged ‘tavern theatres’ to abandon their experiments with spoken drama and to focus on music-based entertainments.¹⁷ Many of the same kinds of performance that constituted the melodrama, including those that were important to early film, were to be found in the music hall. They were not synthesized to produce a recognizable dramatic unit, however, remaining distinct items on the modular music-hall bill. The model for the industry was Charles Morton’s Canterbury, opened in Lambeth in 1852, a lavish establishment that on occasion mounted full operas and that attracted a Bohemian and working-class audience.¹⁸

The entertainment was not the only attraction that brought patrons to the music hall. Apart from drinking, some music-hall patrons were reputed to be lured by the illegal gambling and prostitution that the halls also attracted.¹⁹ It was against this tawdry reputation, compounded by what were considered vulgar acts, that the business had to work in order to assert its respectability and find a wider audience. This aim was achieved from the 1890s on with the rise of music-hall syndicates and the rebranding of their offerings as ‘variety theatre’. The latter move saw the end of the dominance of programmes by bawdy singers and comedians on programmes and an increasing stress on a range of entertainments that aimed to appeal not only to the established male clientele but also to women and children. The larger chains could

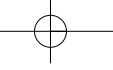


increase their share of the audience by using capital generated by economies of scale to improve their premises, and host the more popular acts and so attract a larger share of more affluent theatre-goers. In 1890, *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* distinguished four classes of music-hall theatre in London: 'the "aristocratic" variety theatres of the West End, chiefly around Leicester Square; the smaller, less "aristocratic" West End halls; the large "bourgeois" halls to be found in less fashionable middle-class districts and suburbs; and finally the minor halls in the poor and squalid working-class districts'.²⁰ At the turn of the century, music hall, or variety theatre as it now increasingly styled itself, was an expanding international entertainment industry.

These developments would have implications for audience behaviour in the popular theatre and in the dedicated film venues when these appeared. In the melodrama houses and music halls, performance traditions and modes of popular theatrical spectatorship combined to make interaction of various kinds between spectator and performer – singing along, heckling, cheering and booing/hissing, throwing rotten fruit and vegetables – part of the theatrical event. In the early twentieth century, a range of factors combined to threaten this interaction. Among the most prominent of these were the influence of reform movements²¹ and the perceived economic benefits to owners – increasingly corporations – of popular theatres of rendering their houses free of 'trouble' in order to attract a more prosperous clientele.

For quite different reasons, the literary theatre of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries contributed to a widespread desire to control the behaviour of theatrical audiences. The reverence for text that the audiences were expected to show at the literary theatre was significant not in terms of the small number of theatre-goers who frequented and were directly affected by such performances but in relation to their cultural prestige. Here, scenic decoration, costume, and acting were generally muted in order for the interpretation of the text to remain the focus of the event.

The standards set by the changing discourse on modes of theatrical spectatorship were those applied to the dedicated film venues. Reporting on a court case taken by a music-hall patron who had been ejected for expressing his dislike of the show, the British cinema trade journal *Bioscope* in 1910 recorded the judge's opinion that a patron 'by purchasing a ticket for a theatre, acquired the right to express his approval or disapproval of the play being performed and the actors performing in it, so long as that was done with a due regard to the rights of the other people in the theatre to enjoy the performance'.²²



As the *Bioscope* reporter noted, however, this judgement singularly failed to establish a consistent standard for audience behaviour because

[t]he degree in which certain modes of expressing approval or disapproval is to be allowed, vary in the individual theatre. Such terms of encouragement as ‘Go it, old girl!’ to a comedienne or ‘Yank it out, lad!’ to an actor, might be considered quite graceful remarks or even witty in some of the more popular slum-land halls and theatres; but used in a West-end theatre they would at once magnetise the attention of the attendants and, unless the offender promised to abstain, lead to his enforced departure from the precincts.²³

As the last chapter showed, the world of the Dublin popular theatre world was undergoing transformation in the late 1890s, when the Star that had catered to all classes became the Empire that courted the middle class, and the expected standard of audience behaviour changed accordingly. Cinema owners in the 1910s thereby learned that the more lucrative patrons could be attracted if audience interaction with the entertainment was minimized.

MUSIC HALL

Discussing early film exhibition in Britain, Michael Chanan points out that the music-hall milieu had aesthetic, ideological, and economic effects on the early development of cinema:

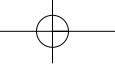
Aesthetically the screen is significantly shaped by discoveries about the medium which were made in the context of filming the simple stories of popular sketches – and the differences which thereby soon began to appear between the film medium and the music hall traditions. In economic terms, there was the influence of the commercial patterns of music hall business – performers selling their acts through agents to impresarios and circuits – which the film business transformed into the different sectors of production, distribution and exhibition. [... O]n the ideological level, film inherited many of the issues of representation and identification in a society still dominated by class interests already found in music hall as the principale form of popular culture, but it gave them a new slant.²⁴

All of these influences are apparent in the first theatrical instances of film exhibition in Ireland: at Dublin’s Star Theatre of Varieties in April

and November 1896. The Star had undergone a number of enlargements and name changes since its opening as a music hall in 1879, but to many Dubliners it was 'Dan's'. Dan Lowrey was actually the name of two men, a father and son (the latter changed his name from Thomas), who managed the Star between 1879 and 1897. Both men had had theatre management experience in Britain before taking over the Star, and they strove to attract all classes to the Dublin house.

In terms of aesthetics, the theatrical context of early film shows in music halls tended to erase the differences between the cinema and the theatre. The fundamental difference posited by Metz and Fischer-Lichte between the theatre and the cinema, the presence and absence, respectively, of the performer, appears less absolute in this initial Irish film show. What patrons went to see, when they attended the first Irish film show, what they were led to expect, were not particular images but the cinematograph, the device that showed animated pictures. This primary focus on the projector rather than the films, the hardware rather than the software, displays continuity with Thomas Edison's economic calculation in making the sale of his peepshow kinoscope the focus of his motion picture business in 1894 and the sale of films merely a means to that end.²⁵ In the music-hall context, however, the concentration of attention on the machinery formed part of an existing discourse on scientific curiosities. At the Star many of these, were of an anthropological nature, such as Farini the Freak Merchant's 1883 missing-link girl, Krao, and 1886 Village of Earthmen, composed of a group of African pygmies in twig huts. In December 1891, the Star played host to Matilda Lee Price, the Magnetic Lady, capable of lifting several large men with the sole aid of her animal magnetism. In the case of Price, as with Krao before her, Lowrey increased publicity for the attraction by inviting a committee made up of prominent politicians, lawyers, doctors, journalists, and academics to examine the phenomenon privately.²⁶

The exhibition of the cinematograph, therefore, could be subsumed under a recognizable music-hall genre, but in this case it was first and foremost the device rather than any human mediator that headed the bill. The newspaper advertisements emphasize the scientific novelty and expense of hiring the projector before they mention the images to be projected.²⁷ The advertisements during the week beginning Monday, 20 April, make the link between the film show and science more explicit by amending their description of the cinematograph to 'The World's Most Scientific Invention'. This view of the device as a scientific instrument was fostered by the fact that the Lumière



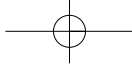
cinématographe was first exhibited in Britain, on 20 February 1896, by Félicien Trewey at the Polytechnic Institution in London's Regent Street. To coincide with this launch, British film pioneer Robert Paul unveiled his theatrograph on the same day at a private exhibition at London's Finsbury Technical College; after these scientific unveilings, the machines were engaged by rival music halls.²⁸ Although the film projector made its Irish debut in a commercial entertainment venue, the phenomenon of projected moving pictures entered scientific discourse in the country within a year of this show, on 27 January 1897, when William Nicholl delivered a lecture on the invention and workings of the cinematograph to the Belfast Natural History and Philosophy Society.²⁹

This open lecture suggests that the new technology was being explained to the public as it was being commercially exploited, but this is only partly true because secrecy and mystery formed an important element of the new novelty. In an important argument, Charles Musser attempts to obviate the technological determinism of many histories of the cinema by locating the history of cinema as part of a wider screen practice. Musser therefore begins his history of 'screen practice' not with a moment of invention but with one of elucidation, that of Athanasius Kircher's demystification of the magic lantern in 1646:

He laid out the apparatus for all to see (at least all who had access to his book), not only through description but by illustration. He also urged practitioners (exhibitors) to explain the actual process to audiences so that these spectators would clearly understand that the show was a catoptric art (involving reflection and optics), not a magical one.³⁰

Such openness, however, is not always expedient in the world of the showman or of the inventor when patents, or lawsuits, are pending. It is also anathema to the world of stage magicians, some of whom used projected images in their acts, and a number of whom became prominent in early cinema, including Félicien Trewey, David Devant, William Selig, and, perhaps most notably, George Méliès.³¹

Many early films featured music-hall turns or adapted to the new medium the interaction between the music-hall performer and his or her audience. Tom Gunning describes early cinema as a cinema of attractions, in which 'the recurring look at the camera by actors' is 'emblematic of this different relationship the cinema of attractions constructs with its spectator'.³² A telling example of this is the Williamson's Kinematograph Co.'s *The Big Swallow* from around



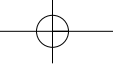
1901. The company's catalogue of that year gives the text of the spiel with which the film lecturer was to accompany the film:

'I won't! I won't! I'll eat the camera first.' Gentleman reading, finds a camera fiend with his head under a cloth, focussing him up. He orders him off, approaching nearer and nearer, gesticulating and ordering the photographer off, until his head fills the picture, and finally his mouth only occupies the screen. He opens it, and first the camera, and then the operator disappear inside. He retires munching him up and expressing his great satisfaction.³³

Thematically, this film portrays a situation in which the camera is familiar but is perceived as being invasive. If the cinema spectator identifies with the camera, as Metz insists, this film specifically confronts the voyeurism of the 'camera fiend'.

Whereas theatrical influences on early cinema are more commonly discussed, the relationship between the two institutions is dialectical. Cinema had a profound effect on theatre, particularly after the appearance of dedicated cinemas. For example, although music-hall turns constituted some of the earliest fiction films, the music hall also looked to films for the content of its turns. 'An excellent burlesque in imitation of moving pictures is being played by Mr. George Mozart at the London Empire,' reveals a *Bioscope* article from May 1910. 'Everybody pursues everybody else in semi-circles, amidst roars of merriment.'³⁴ It was not until the week of 4 March 1918, that film-making in Ireland featured on the variety stage. Arthur Sinclair and the Irish Players' production of Thomas King-Moylan's one-act farce *Movies* at the Empire featured an American film crew making a sensational melodrama in Ireland on a tight budget. Having engaged the participation of Darby Spillane, a rich farmer who 'has played in *Willy Reilly* in the days of his youth', as the hero, the film-makers proceed to shoot 'the usual love-making, the attack, the rescue, and return of the son and heir, the foiling of the villain's romance'. While the tied-up Darby and his labourers await the filming of the spectacular finale, however, the film crew burgles Darby's house and absconds.³⁵

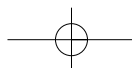
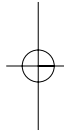
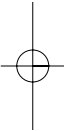
Ideologically, the music hall in Ireland had to contend with being double damned: as both a low form of entertainment and for being 'English'. A number of important studies on the relationship between music hall and early cinema put particular stress on the class composition of the audience of turn-of-the-century variety theatre.³⁶ Unlike in certain cities of Britain or the United States, the population of Dublin was too small to support a theatre the size of the Star as the



preserve of a single class. The new building was lavishly decorated in an attempt to ensure that the theatre was, in a Lowrey phrase, 'Patronised by the Classes, popularised by the Masses'.³⁷

The Lowreys had a good sense of Irish nationalist sentiment. In 1891, old Dan proposed the Star as '[a] National Theatre of Ireland. Companion piece to a National Parliament. And a National University'.³⁸ Lionel Pilkington has argued that 'the notion of a national drama itself sought to replace what were regarded as pre-modern cultural forms – such as wakes, mumming and other "folk" practices – with theatre, a cultural practice fully consistent with the idea of the state as a community of individual subjects or citizens'.³⁹ The impulse towards modernization was as strong in the music hall as in other parts of the theatre network. In fostering Irish acts including W. J. Ashcroft, Pat Feeney, Nellie Farrell, Pat Rafferty, Pat Kinsella, Robert Martin of Ross, Percy French and Johnny Patterson, the Star could legitimately claim a place in promoting a modern form of national culture to a significant proportion of Dublin theatre-goers.⁴⁰

It is instructive to examine the case of a music hall whose management was not so closely attuned to the ideological bent of Dublin audiences. Music-hall building in Dublin continued until 1915, when the Coliseum opened in April of that year in Henry Street, behind the General Post Office (GPO). With accommodation for an audience of 3,000, this made it the largest of the city's four music halls, topping the Theatre Royal (2,011), the Empire Palace (1,600), and the Tivoli Variety Theatre (1,252).⁴¹ Joseph Holloway's account of the reception of the Coliseum's opening programme throws interesting light on the political views of the music-hall audience. In 1902, actor Frank Fay had condemned the politics of the audience of J. W. Whitbread's melodramas at the Queen's by linking them to the allegedly unsophisticated nationalism of the music-hall patrons: 'His theatre is the home of the shoddiest kind of melodrama and is only a little less harmful than the music hall. His patrons are or ought to be nationalists but are of the music hall type, and they applaud the British flag as soon as the Irish'.⁴² The responses of the gallery to the playing of 'God Save the Queen' at the opening of the Empire in 1897 and the uproar caused by the jingoistic presentation of Boer war entertainments suggests that this was not true in 1902. Other evidence suggests that it was not true in 1915. The Coliseum's management had courted controversy since the building of their theatre because of their refusal to entertain the calls by the Dublin Industrial Development Association to award the contracts for the fibrous plaster work and the furnishing of what was then called the



Premier Palace Theatre to Irish contractors.⁴³ Knowledge of this disagreement may have contributed to the audience's reactions to the theatre's opening bill, which was headed by the singer Zona Vevey accompanied on organ by Max Erand. These performed many encores, but

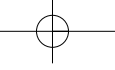
the turn that was doing so well was completely spoiled by her singing of a recruiting Jingo song, 'Your Country Wants You.' 'It does, and we intend to stop it' said a man behind me as she sang. 'Give us something Irish' shouted another, and then I knew trouble was brewing for her, and sure enough when she had finished, a stream of hissing and booing broke out and the two artists, retired amid a tornado of ugly sounds.⁴⁴

The programme ended with the bioscope showing newsreel, but the trouble was not ended:

A bar of England's anthem brought the first show to an inglorious end, amid hissing, which cut short the music, as the imported conductor dropped his baton when he saw the way the land lay.

This anthem has always been translated, when played in Ireland, into 'To Hell With The Catholics', and will always, I fear until we are allowed to govern ourselves. Therefore, it is better omitted from programmes of a general nature.⁴⁵

Economically, the music hall proved important to early cinema in offering an exhibition network and in representing a model of industrial organization that a growing cinema business could emulate in order to achieve its institutional independence. This was particularly the case with the music-hall chains, to one of which the Star became attached in 1897. Although the Star had always been a commercial enterprise, it underwent a further process of capitalization during which the music hall went out of the control of the Lowrey family into the hands of a board of directors interested in variety entertainment purely for its ability to turn a profit. This process began in 1893, when Dan Lowrey relinquished executive control to a syndicate led by Adam Findlater, in return for funding to expand the premises and compete with the legitimate theatres in Dublin, particularly Michael Gunn's Gaiety.⁴⁶ The Star Theatre of Varieties, as it was called after its flotation, completed its process of commercialization in 1897 when, after a further name change to the Empire Palace, it became associated with the music-halls circuit owned by the Moss and Thornton Group and later part of the Moss–Stoll chain of Empires.⁴⁷



Small-scale speculative activity was behind the opening, in December 1909, of Ireland's most famous early cinema, the Volta in Dublin's Mary Street, run by James Joyce (as detailed in Chapter 5). Many Irish cinemas were minor ventures like the Volta, but large chains, such as the Provincial Cinematograph Theatres, also established a significant presence in the country. 'The craze for building cinematograph theatres in Dublin seems to be unabated,' commented *The Irish Builder and Engineer* in 1913.⁴⁸

MELODRAMA

The direct influence of the Irish theatre on film production was not felt until the establishment of the Film Company of Ireland in 1916, which will be discussed later in this chapter. In the absence of indigenous film production, the relationship between theatre and cinema in the period between 1909 and 1915 initially manifests itself in the continuing influence of variety entertainment on the appearance of the programme in the dedicated film venues. The first of these was at the Queen's, whose programme displayed this influence by variety both in the variety nature of the programme offered and by the presence of variety acts on the programme. The bill for the week beginning 30 March 1908, for example, included *The Burns-Palmer Fight* (Britain, 1908), *Dumb Sagacity* (Britain: Hepworth, 1907; dir. Lewin FitzHamon), *A Difficult Problem*, *The Horse that Ate the Baby*, *A Voyage to the Stars*, *Scenes at the Grand National*, *The Short-Sighted Cyclist* (France: Éclipse, 1907), *Kidnapped by Gypsies* (United States: Edison, 1905; dir. Wallace McCutcheon), *A Gambler's Wife* (Britain: Graphic, 1908) and *The Twins and the Bulldog*. The films were accompanied by orchestral music and live performances provided by Alan Wright singing 'Asleep in the Deep' to lantern slides, the young violinist and dancer 'Little Della' rendering 'Mr. Golliwog, Good Night' and Mdlle. Cordelia offering a 'terpsichorean performance'.⁴⁹

The period between 1910 and the outbreak of World War I saw an extraordinary amount of film production in Ireland, by foreign producers, principally US film companies. The contribution of theatres that produced melodrama, pre-eminently the Queen's, restored to its theatrical status, was, therefore, not so much to provide an exhibition space but to continue the tradition of Boucicault's patriotic melodramas. In doing so, they fostered a recognizably Irish melodramatic *mise en scène* and the talents of actors and producers such as

P. J. Bourke and Ira Allen, who would contribute to major Irish-made films. They also encouraged in their audience an intimate familiarity with the discourse of Irish political melodrama that was likely to transfer to film adaptations of these works. The influence of Irish political melodrama is particularly clear in the films of the US Kalem Company (1910–1914) and in Walter Macnamara's *Ireland a Nation* (1914–20), but it is also a key element in later productions such as the 1920 *Aimsir Padraig/In the Days of St. Patrick*, in which the adult Patrick was played by Ira Allen, who wrote, directed, and acted in *Tara's Halls, or, St. Patrick and the Pagans* at the Queen's.

The films made between 1910 and 1914 by US film production companies in Ireland display a large debt to the Irish stage melodrama epitomized by the work of Dion Boucicault. Christopher Morash has shown how Boucicault's plays represent the epitome of the internationally popular nineteenth-century 'Irish play'.⁵⁰ Employing a 'palate of recognisable characters, situations, and scenic devices that had come together since the eighteenth century', the genre had become sufficiently codified that, by the 1840s, 'anyone with a good knowledge of the theatre could write an Irish play, and many did'. The conventions of the genre had become so transparent by 1880 that the satirical journal *Pat* could publish a set of instructions in ballad form:

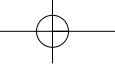
How to Write an Irish Play

Come all ye rising dramatists, where-ever ye may be,
Just take your places round the fire and listen unto me;
Now let the tankard pass around, illuminate the clay,
While I teach you all, both great and small, to write an Irish play.

First have a red-haired peasant boy, called Peter, Tim, or Pat,
Who dances well, sings comic songs, and wears a brimless hat;
He must be very funny, all must laugh whate'er he say,
Or he'll never do to put into a brand new Irish play.

Then have a fair haired lady, with some very Irish name,
Who is awfully delightful, and up to every game,
She must wear a riding habit, of lively blue or gray,
As Irish ladies always do – in every Irish play.

Then have a fine young gentleman, of prepossessing mien,
With a hat shaped like a sugar-loaf, and a body-coat of green;



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Of course he is an outlaw, and he should be far away,
But outlaws always stop at home in every Irish play.

Next comes the base informer, he must have a broken back,
Be bandy, croaking, lantern-jawed, and dressed in rusty black;
He pretends to be a patriot, tho' in the English pay,
This man is indispensable in every Irish play.

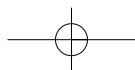
Next introduce a country girl, who constantly is sighing,
And singing Irish melodies whenever she's not crying,
She must be most pathetic, and never, never gay,
For that's the sort she always is in every Irish play.

Then comes the parish priest, of course, the guardian of the piece,
I think it would be well to make the country girl his niece,
He must appear in every scene, and never be away,
As he's of great importance in every Irish play.

Then take a scene from 'Arrah', and one from 'the Shaughraun',
Take one scene from the 'Peep o'Day', also 'the Colleen Bawn',
Then mix them up together in every sort of way,
And you then will be the author of the last new Irish play.⁵¹

While in the past Irish political melodrama, a sub-genre of the Irish melodrama that is set at times of conflict between Britain and Ireland, has been dismissed as artistically insignificant, it has received serious critical attention in the last twenty-five years or so.⁵² This scholarship has focused on works of the period from the 1860s into the early years of the Irish state by dramatists such as Boucicault, J. W. Whitbread, Hubert O'Grady, P. J. Bourke, and Ira Allen, plays particularly associated, in Ireland, with Dublin's Queen's Royal Theatre, the justifiably self-proclaimed 'Home of Irish drama' after Whitbread took over in 1884.⁵³ It has tended to identify Boucicault's Irish dramas, particularly the historically located *Arrah-na-Pogue* and *The Shaughraun*, as the most significant early texts in this form. Comparing Boucicault's and Whitbread's approach to the British-Irish conflict, for example, Stephen Watt contends that

Boucicault's comic plays advance an optimistic, inherently conservative myth of reconciliation, while Whitbread's for the most part form a tragic, at times potentially emancipatory chronicle in which this opposition will



inevitably continue. Equally important, both playwrights create dramas in which the status of native Irishness is elevated, offering effective counter-representations to especially loathsome [*sic*] Victorian caricatures of Irishmen.⁵⁴

Of all British–Irish conflicts, the 1798 Rebellion featured most frequently in political melodramas, and its centenary witnessed the composition of many new plays in the mode, notably those of J. W. Whitbread. It was partly as a reaction to this melodramatic view of history that W. B. Yeats justified the establishment of the Irish Literary Theatre in 1899:

All the past had been turned into a melodrama with Ireland for blameless hero and poet; novelist and historian had but one object, that we should hiss the villain, and only a minority doubted that the greater the talent the greater the hiss. It was all the harder to substitute for that melodrama a nobler form of art, because there really had been, however different in their form, villain and victim; yet fight that rancour I must, and if I had not made some head against it in 1892 and 1893 it might have silenced in 1907 John Synge, the greatest dramatist of Ireland.⁵⁵

The dynamic state of the Irish theatre at the turn of the century led Arthur Griffith's *United Irishman*, in March 1902, to encourage the writing of new Irish plays for amateur groups, with the ultimate aim of uniting the Irish people. The fiction of Kickham, Carleton, and Lover that Griffith suggested (together with that of Banim, Le Fanu and Lever) would make effective plays, without the 'stage Irish' representations anathema to cultural nationalists, are precisely those that would later be adapted by film-makers between 1910 and 1920.⁵⁶ The first firm to produce Irish political melodrama on film was the Kalem Film Manufacturing Company of New York, which sent a unit, including director-actor Sidney Olcott and scenarist-actress Gene Gauntier, to Ireland in 1910.

The US trade press would call these film-makers the 'O'Kalems', but this term can only accurately designate Olcott, Gauntier, and their colleagues in the years 1910–12. Olcott and Gauntier left Kalem at the end of 1912 to found the Gene Gauntier Feature Players and returned to Ireland under that banner in 1913. When Olcott made his last films in Ireland in 1914, however, it was without Gauntier and for his own production company, the Sid Olcott International Feature Players. Once this is borne in mind, however, the term 'O'Kalems' does provide

a useful shorthand for referring to these films and film-makers and to distinguish them from the other Kalem stock companies that were formed during this period. In all, the O'Kalems made twenty-two fiction films in Ireland in the following years (1910: *The Lad from Old Ireland* and *The Irish Honeymoon*; 1911: *Arrah-na-Pogue*, *The Colleen Bawn*, *Far from Erin's Isle*, *The Fishermaid of Ballydavid*, *Gypsies in Ireland/The Irish Beggar Maid/The Vagabonds*, *His Mother*, *The Kerry Gow*, *Losing to Win*, *The Mayor from Ireland*, *The O'Neill*, *Rory O'More* and *'You Remember Ellen'*; 1912: *Ireland the Oppressed*, *The Shaughbraun*, *When Cromwell Came to Ireland/Lady Peggy's Escape and Wives of Jamestown*; 1913: *Come Back to Erin* and *For Ireland's Sake*; and 1914: *All for Old Ireland* and *Bold Emmett, Ireland's Martyr*) and four non-fiction films (1911: *Among the Irish Fisher Folk*, and *Corpus Christi Celebration at Killarney*, *The O'Kalems Visit to Killarney*; and 1913: *Conway, the Kerry Dancer*). Of these twenty-six items, seven fiction films survive: *The Lad from Old Ireland*, *Rory O'More*, *The Colleen Bawn*, *His Mother*, *'You Remember Ellen'*, *For Ireland's Sake* and *Bold Emmett, Ireland's Martyr*. (Note that the years mentioned in these lists are production dates, while dates appearing in brackets after film titles are those of first exhibition.)

'On the stage melodrama was in its heyday,' reminisces Kalem scenarist and lead actress Gene Gauntier, 'and from the ranks of melodramatic actors were drawn the players for the first pictures.'⁵⁷ Among those she mentions from the O'Kalems are herself, director Sidney Olcott, and actor Robert Vignola. Many of the films that they made in Ireland are melodramas. They adapted three of Boucicault's Irish plays, as well as *The Kerry Gow*, a popular Irish-American play by Fred Marsden.⁵⁸ Films such as *The Fishermaid of Ballydavid*, *Far from Erin's Isle*, and *Come Back to Erin*, give an Irish twist to melodramas focusing on the experiences of the young single woman in cities such as New York. They form an interesting contrast to films that focus on male emigrants, such as *The Lad from Old Ireland*, *His Mother*, and *The Mayor from Ireland*. The heroines of the female emigrant films eventually return to Ireland chastened in their different ways by their experiences. For male emigrants, the United States is a place that rewards hard work and talent, to the extent that the rival men in *The Mayor from Ireland* successively achieve the office of mayor of New York. In this connection, the gender discourse of the O'Kalem history films deserves mention. The two films they made in 1912, *When Cromwell Came to Ireland/Lady Peggy's Escape* and *The Wives of Jamestown*, are set in seventeenth-century Ireland. In the first, a

resourceful Lady Peggy shows physical prowess equal to the male heroes in other films, a display of female agency that the Kalem Company was noted for in its 1909 *Girl Spy* series.⁵⁹ In contrast to this film, *The Wives of Jamestown* may be seen as a fantasy of transcending class boundaries similar to 'You Remember Ellen' but with the gender of the aristocrat reversed. By saving Lady Geraldine from being sold at a marriage market in colonial Virginia where he is a successful immigrant, lowly born Bryan transcends his humble origins to form a union with her.

The surviving O'Kalem rebel-and-redcoat dramas *Rory O'More*, *For Ireland's Sake*, and *Bold Emmett, Ireland's Martyr* manifest particularly clearly their relationship with the theatrical genre of Irish political melodrama. Politically, the O'Kalem films occupy similar ideological territory to this theatrical genre. Like the stage melodramas, the films espouse a popular militant nationalism that focuses, in particular, on the events of the 1798 and 1803 rebellions, and they delivered their political message while respecting the conventions of a popular form.

The opening scene of *Rory O'More* offers a good example of how the film negotiates the conventions of Victorian melodrama. It is a clear instance of the establishment of melodramatic types in dumb show before the emergence of any real specificities of the historical situation in which the story is set. On the extant copy of the film, no opening titles or intertitles give a clue as to who the characters are in the first one-shot scene, but their costumes, actions, and gestural acting establish them as stock melodramatic characters of hero, heroine, and villain. In front of a picturesque waterfall, Rory kisses Kathleen before she exits right. Rory looks up joyfully, then exits left. From behind a rock, the villain, who will soon be identified as the informer Black William, emerges laughing evilly, points first left then right, and exits left. While their costumes give some sense of the time period, there is as yet no indication of the wider context of the action.

In this single-reel film that runs to about nine minutes, the engagement with Irish politics is not long in coming in this single reel film that runs to about nine minutes. It consists of four sequences. The first begins by establishing the characters of Rory, Kathleen, and Black William, as discussed above, and goes on to reveal, through the use of a printed proclamation, that Rory is an Irish rebel leader for whose capture the British authorities have offered a substantial reward. The second concerns Rory's attempt to elude the authorities, helped by Kathleen, and

his eventual capture by the redcoats, led to him by Black William. The third shows Rory's defiant court appearance and his receipt of the death sentence. The fourth recounts the local priest's sacrifice of his life in order to ensure Rory's escape from the gallows to America.

The film certainly includes a generic mix, with strong elements of the chase, a popular form of early film narrative, playing a major part. The dominant genre, however, is melodrama constructed around Ireland's historical resistance to British colonialism during the rebellions of 1798 and 1803. While there is no explanation here of the reasons for resistance (the later films do feature evictions – *Bold Emmett, Ireland's Martyr* – and crop burnings – *For Ireland's Sake* – by soldiers), the very fact that Rory is a melodramatic hero means that he must pursue his righteous struggle and win out against the forces of evil. By producing such films between 1911 and 1914, the Kalem filmmakers were aligning themselves with the contemporary armed resistance to British rule in Ireland. The only dialogue intertitle in the film is Rory's speech from the dock: 'IF TO FIGHT FOR IRELAND BE A CRIME, THEN I AM GUILTY.'

Because of its brevity, *Rory O'More* not only presents a basic narrative plot but it also conflates melodramatic stock characters. Michael Booth writes that the 'stock character types of melodrama – hero, villain, heroine, old man, old woman, comic man, comic woman – are almost unvaryingly present in every play'.⁶⁰ A subaltern figure, the comic man was often a friend or loyal retainer of the hero and is frequently responsible for saving the hero and/or thwarting the villain. As Booth puts it, '[t]he comedian – servant, artisan, or tradesman, usually a member of the working class and thus closely identified with this audience – is a friend or man-servant of the hero, and sometimes carries on the battle against villainy (though by comic means) in the absence or incapacity of his superior'.⁶¹ Rory represents the peasant as hero, blending heroic and comedic roles. Marty, his equivalent in *For Ireland's Sake*, more clearly manifests the dual role of hero and comedian by engaging in battle with the villain but also providing the film's main moment of comedy, when he hides from the pursuing soldiers under Eileen's cloak.

The distinctions between hero and comedian had, in any case, long become somewhat erased in the most famous Irish melodramas. The comedian's capacity for heroic acts, and the fact that the comic man in Victorian melodrama was frequently Irish, created space for Boucicault, in his full-length Irish stage melodramas, to blur the line between comedian and hero in his full-length Irish stage melodramas.

In *The Colleen Bawn* (1860), *Arrah-na-Pogue* (1864), and *The Shaughbraun* (1874), Boucicault played peasants, who, while nominally comic characters, overshadowed the supposedly central heroes. By the time of *The Shaughbraun*, indeed, the role of the 'pleasant peasant'⁶² had expanded to such an extent that he steals the eponymous role from the heroine.

An earlier text than Boucicault's *Arrah* that deals with the 1798 Rebellion, and of obvious relevance to the films, is Samuel Lover's *Rory O'More: A Comic Drama* (1837). Lover's play is an adaptation of his novel *Rory O'More: A National Romance* (1836), which, in turn, derives from his popular ballad. First performed at the Theatre Royal, Adelphi, on 29 September 1837,

[i]ts representation was a complete triumph. It was played for one hundred and eight nights in the first season, in London, and afterwards universally through the kingdom. The *Athenæum* remarked that Rory O'More,—a triple glory in song, story and drama,—was the greatest success of the day.⁶³

The play lacks many of the more critical scenes of the novel, such as the lynching of an alleged rebel sympathizer by a yeomanry captain and magistrate, the pronouncing of Rory guilty of murder even when the man who he is charged with having killed is produced in court, and the fact that Rory must leave Ireland because his identification as a United Irishman leaves him open to official harassment and possible extrajudicial execution. In common with the novel, however, it offers sympathetic central portrayals of its melodramatic hero de Lacy, a United Irishman reconnoitering in Ireland for a French landing, and its comedian and real focus, Rory, a peasant and rank-and-file member of the United Irishmen. Boucicault was well acquainted with *Rory O'More*: it was the second leading role that he played in his acting career, in Cheltenham in 1838.⁶⁴

Many of the narrative functions of the O'Kalem film, however, do not derive from Lover's work. There is no court scene, for example, in Lover's play, and the court sequence that recurs in all of the O'Kalem rebel-and-redcoat films is not a distillation of the long and eventful court scene in his novel. Each film's court sequence serves to show that the judicial system is unsuited to weighing the subtleties of the interactions between Irish people and the British authorities and inexorably resorts instead to meting out summary justice. With the limited possibilities of the legal system exhausted, the way is clear for a climax involving a spectacular escape and/or a last-minute reprieve.

In both form and function, the judicial sequences more closely resemble the court scene in Boucicault's *Arrah-na-Pogue*.

This is just one instance of discursive similarity between the O'Kalem films and Boucicault's Irish plays. Another important case is their correspondence in allowing that at least some British soldiers can act honourably and, once again in distinction from Lover's work, in making the informer the real villain. Boucicault demonstrates this in the 1874 *The Shaughraun*, where the defeat of the land-grabbing Corry Kinchela and police informer Harvey Duff leaves the way clear for the British Captain Molineaux to marry the sister of the Fenian Robert Ffolliott. 'Holding together the ambivalent politics of these Irish plays of the 1850s and 1860s,' Morash elucidates,

are two key conventions, both inherited from earlier theatrical forms: the conciliatory ending and the rebel hero. [...] By bringing together adversaries (or by combining contrary qualities in the same character), the Irish play becomes a parable of reconciliation, equally capable of playing at a command performance before the Lord Lieutenant in Dublin [...] or filling theatres in New York or Boston, where many in the audience would have had strong Fenian sympathies.⁶⁵

By 1911, such a symbolic reconciliation between Britain and Ireland was not imaginable. Although it is possible in *Rory O'More* for a local commander to attempt to give Rory his freedom as a quid pro quo for Rory's rescue of one of his men from drowning, and subsequently, to speak in his defence in court, the film ends with the rebel having to flee Ireland.

In its inability to represent *rapprochement* between Ireland and Britain, the film is closer to the work of Whitbread, written at a later historical juncture. Manager of the Queen's from 1884 to 1907, the English-born Whitbread wrote fifteen plays on Irish themes, including *The Nationalist*, *Lord Edward Fitzgerald or '98*, *Sarsfield*, *The Insurgent Chief* (on Michael Dwyer), and *The Ulster Hero* (on Henry Joy McCracken), as well as a version, now apparently lost, of Lover's *Rory O'More*. His 1898 *Theobald Wolfe Tone* was one of the numerous cultural events marking the centenary of the 1798 Rebellion. A surviving daybill (poster) from a September 1901 production at the Queen's by Kennedy Miller's Celebrated Irish Company describes the play as 'illustrating the early adventures, romantic marriage, and stirring episodes in the life of this immortal figure in Ireland's history'.⁶⁶ This play begins by setting up the rivalry between Tone and Samuel

Turner, a 'Barrister, United Irishman and informer', for the affections of Susan Witherington, before moving to France, where Turner continues to pursue Susan, now Tone's wife, while seeking to undermine Tone with Napoleon.

The centrality of the informer as villain is a peculiarity of Irish political melodrama from the mid-nineteenth century. It is not the subaltern British soldier in Ireland but the traitor within that represents the most pernicious threat to Irish rebel hopes of emulating American revolutionaries in throwing off the yoke of imperialism that the redcoats represent. Kevin Whelan has shown that it was the Catholic Church, in its attempt to wrest ideological control of the memory of 1798 from the Fenians, that focused attention on the weakness of the United Irishmen in the face of spies and informers. Part of the Church's wider battle with oath-bound societies, this struggle resulted in the emergence of the pairing of informing and clerical heroism. Franciscan friar Patrick Kavanagh's *A Popular History of the Insurrection of 1798*, first published in 1870 and in nine further editions up to 1928, dominated discourse on '98 at the time of the centenary and through the foundation of the Irish Free State. Stressing the heroic role of Father John Murphy, Kavanagh argues that the spy-riddled United Irishmen deceived and abandoned the Irish people when fighting broke out.⁶⁷

The O'Kalem's *Rory* follows this pattern, contrasting the heroic priest selflessly giving his life to save the rebel, while greed drives Black William to betrayal. Kevin Rockett contends that the priests in the later O'Kalem rebel-and-redcoat films show a decreasing pro-rebel stance because of difficulties that the O'Kalems experienced from the local priest in Killarney. Rockett argues that Father Flannigan's motives for helping the rebel Marty to escape in *For Ireland's Sake* may be to leave an unchallenged clerical leadership in the community.⁶⁸ By the time of the 1914 *Bold Emmett, Ireland's Martyr*, the priest's role has diminished to the extent that he merely accompanies the condemned Con to the gallows, and it is left to Robert Emmett (as his name is spelled throughout the film) and a British officer grateful for Con's assistance when he was wounded to save the rebel from execution.⁶⁹

The guile of the 'pleasant peasant', expressed most famously in the artful brogue of Boucicault's Myles-na-Coppaleen, Shaun the Post, and Conn the Shaughraun, was crucial to the international success of this form of Irish drama. Shane McMahan, the plain-speaking Trinity College porter turned French Army corporal who foils the informers'



2.2 This scene from the Kalem 1911 *Colleen Bawn* depicts a scene that is notable in Dion Boucicault's play for the wordplay with which Myles (right, Jack Clark) outwits Corrigan (Robert Vignola). In the silent film, this scene is far more important for its dramatic use of Killarney scenery. Courtesy of the Trustees of Muckross House (Killarney) Ltd.

plot in *Wolfe Tone*, is a manifestation of this character in an urban setting. Because silent cinema was unable to reproduce the linguistic acrobatics of the peasant trickster, he drops out of sight in film, as is clearly shown by the relative unimportance of Myles to the O'Kalem *Colleen Bawn*. Reduced to the slapstick of the chase and signalled by costume and by inferred social relationships, both the pleasantness and peasantness of Rory are features that rely on the audience's ability to read the intertextual signs. The trickster character also falls out of sight to some extent in filmic melodrama because he functions best in the theatre, where he develops in the interaction between the actor and the stage audience. If the villain worked the audience up to a hissing frenzy by his dastardly acts, the trickster relied on comic timing to produce laughter and cheers. Indeed, it could be argued that film, by occupying the same space as melodrama and eventually supplanting it, played as large a role in killing off its performance tradition and participative audience as the decorous strictures of bourgeois literary theatre.

'Of course there had to be an informer,' writes a correspondent to

the *Irish Limelight*, indicating the historical inaccuracies in *Ireland a Nation* (United States: Macnamara, 1914–20), ‘and the latter was the typical dirty-faced and out-of-pocket villain of melodrama, with a hump and a slither that was a cross between Boucicault’s “Danny Mann” and the late Frank Breen’s Kennedy-Miller characterisations.’⁷⁰ If the O’Kalem films appear to aim for, but do not always achieve, a coherence of plot, this other 1914 film with a heavy reliance on political melodrama has no apparent ambition for narrative unity. Dealing with the struggle to achieve Irish self-determination, *Ireland a Nation* had been shot substantially in Ireland in 1914 but had taken more than two years to reach Irish screens. As submitted to the press censor in late 1916, the film dramatized moments in the early nineteenth-century history of Ireland, ranging from the debates on the Act of Union in the Irish Parliament in 1800, through the rebellion of 1803, to the actions of Daniel O’Connell. It included newsreel of political events relating to the passage of the Irish Home Rule bill through the British Parliament that were occurring as the film was being made in 1914.⁷¹ Although the censor passed the film with cuts (including the newsreel material), the fervour with which spectators greeted it caused the military authorities to ban it. It was not shown again in Ireland until 1922, by which stage further newsreel material relating to the War of Independence had been added. This, according to Morash, makes it a kind of ‘Rosetta Stone’ with which it is possible to decipher the politics of the Irish political melodrama.⁷²

The *Limelight* correspondent mentions the villain of Boucicault’s *Colleen Bawn*, but *Ireland a Nation* more obviously draws on Boucicault’s later political melodrama *Robert Emmet* (1884). Among the elements of the discourse on Emmet common to both play and film are his dealings with Napoleon, the romantic portrayal of his relationship with Sarah Curran and the heroic representations of Wicklow insurgent Michael Dwyer and of Anne Devlin. The most important way in which the film differs from the play is in the former’s far more straightforwardly villainous portrayal of Major Sirr (or ‘Sir,’ as the intertitles spell it). While the film’s main opprobrium falls on what an intertitle calls ‘[T]HE MOST INFAMOUS OF THINGS – THE INFORMER’,⁷³ Major Sir is allowed none of the gallantry that his dramatic counterpart displays.

As this suggests, the centenary of the 1803 Rebellion offered another opportunity to celebrate with the increased production of political melodrama. While Boucicault’s play well predates the centenary, Yeats’s early plan for an Irish theatre involved a travelling troupe who

would bring plays, including *The Countess Cathleen* and a history play about Emmet that he never actually wrote, to rural areas.⁷⁴ Among the notable productions of the 1900s was Frank and William Fay's production of US dramatist Robert Pilgrim's *Robert Emmet* on 24 and 25 October 1900.⁷⁵ Members of the National Players Society (Cumann na nAisteoirí Naisiunta) premiered Henry Connell Mangan's *Robert Emmet* at the Molesworth Hall on 31 October 1903.⁷⁶ Of later productions, the Abbey production of Lennox Robinson's *The Dreamers* in 1915 is interesting in light of the fact that the role of Emmet was played by Fred O'Donovan, who had the previous year played in the Emmet sequence of *Ireland a Nation*.⁷⁷ In February 1918, Roberto Lena played Emmet with his own company at the Queen's in the new play *His Life for Ireland*, supported by Breffni O'Rourke, who two months later would be singing at the opening of FCOI's *Knocknagow*.⁷⁸

Some of the theatrical personnel who had contributed to the complex of theatrical portrayals of Emmet participated in its adaptation to the screen in *Ireland a Nation*. Reference has already been made to Fred O'Donovan, but in his history of the Queen's, Séamus de Búrca also describes his father's roles in the film:

My father, P. J. Bourke a successful actor-manager-playwright was engaged to write the scenario, direct the film and supply the costumes. He did more than that – dressed as Michael Dwyer, the Wicklow insurgent [*sic*], a role he had played in the Whitbread play in the Queen's Theatre, and mounted on horseback he rode round the farms near Baltinglass, calling the farmers from their labours in the fields, to come and take part in the filming as yeomen and insurgents.⁷⁹

The images of a costumed Bourke riding around Wicklow rounding up farmers to take part in the rebellion, albeit on film, is an attractive one, but it is not all romanticism. Bourke certainly made important contributions to the scenes filmed in Ireland. The *Bioscope's* Ireland correspondent 'Paddy' reveals that Bourke worked on the production in the roles of 'writer of historical drama, actor in a play, artiste's dresser, and also advance agent'.⁸⁰ The role that is now identified as 'director' – the person on a set who is in overall charge of the shooting – was in 1914 called 'producer', and Bourke's 'directing' role on set may have been limited to his work, as de Búrca describes, with the extras. Bourke is likely to have contributed to the film his intimate familiarity with Irish political melodrama, but it seems unlikely, given

the interest that his plays show in Irish history, that the glaring historical errors in the film are attributable to him.

The direct influence of Irish melodrama personnel was also seen in the 1920 *Aimsir Padraig/In the Days of St. Patrick*. Many of the actors in the film were amateurs, but among the professionals were Ira Allen, who starred as the adult Patrick, and, in a minor role, May Murnane, Allen's wife and the female lead of many stage melodramas by Allen's Irish Players. These melodramas include *Tara's Halls, or St. Patrick and the Pagans*, in which Allen played King Laeghaire and Murnane played Queen Erminelda. First staged at the Queen's for the week starting 8 October 1917, this was '[a]n Irish Play' that was 'Historical & Instructive' as well as 'Thrilling and Sensational' and that included 'Ancient Irish Costumes, Special Scenery,' and 'Ancient Irish Dancing'.⁸¹ The significant intermedial links between the two works include the Irish dancing that takes place in the Tara scenes of *Aimsir Padraig/In the Days of St. Patrick*.

The following section on the literary theatre will discuss *Knocknagow* and *Willy Reilly and His Colleen Bawn*, but it should be noted here that both of the FCOI's surviving films obviously employ melodramatic conventions. The melodramatic elements of *Willy Reilly* are clearest within the stock characters present in the shape of Willy as hero, the Colleen Bawn as heroine, Whitecraft as dastardly villain, Tom the fool as the subaltern comic man, and the Red Rapparee as the villain's helper. The plot offers a straightforward melodramatic action. *Knocknagow* also evidences the main stock characters – Mat Donovan as 'pleasant peasant' hero, Mary Kearney as heroine, Pender the land agent as dastardly villain and Barney Broderick as subaltern comic man – but its multiplicity of subplots mean that the hero and heroine identified here are never intended for one another.

Melodrama, therefore, thoroughly pervades film-making in Ireland up to the beginning of the twentieth century's third decade. Films' influences from stage melodrama can be traced from the work of Samuel Lover in the 1830s, through Dion Boucicault's Irish plays of the 1860s–80s, and to the late-nineteenth and early twentieth-century Irish political melodramas of such playwrights as J. W. Whitbread and P. J. Bourke.

LITERARY THEATRE

Reviewing the 'stirring national play' *For the Wearing of the Green* (Domino: United States, 1914), the *Bioscope* comments that '[e]ven

the well-known Irish players of Dublin, who are just at present delighting London theatre-goers with their delicate art, have never produced a drama more thoroughly impregnated with the true inner spirit of Ireland than is this admirable film production'.⁸² The film clearly draws on Irish political melodrama, with its titular reference to the ballad 'The Wearing of the Green', notoriously banned from performances of Boucicault's *Arrah-na-Pogue* in Britain and Ireland, and with a scene that refers to Sam McAllister's sacrifice, which forms part of the *mise en scène* of the Michael Dwyer play.⁸³ Filmic Irishness was indebted to Irish political melodrama to such an extent that it is here taken to represent the 'true inner spirit of Ireland' that the 'delicate art' of the Abbey players can only palely imitate.

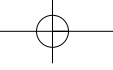
This view of the Irish theatrical landscape, in which the melodrama is privileged above the literary drama, appears balanced in comparison to the wholesale dismissal of the products of Irish theatre history by the founders of the Irish Literary Theatre, the theatre society that would eventually find a home at the Abbey Theatre. The first statement of intent by Lady Augusta Gregory, W. B. Yeats and Edward Martyn outlines their aims 'to build up a Celtic and Irish school of dramatic literature' for 'an uncorrupted and imaginative audience trained to listen by its passion for oratory',⁸⁴ effectively marginalizing all previous Irish drama and its audiences. '[T]he Irish Literary Theatre,' comments Morash, 'came into being by imagining an empty space where in fact there was a crowded room.'⁸⁵

If, as argued above, the popular theatre participated strongly in the discourse of modernization, the ambiguous politics of melodrama allowed its audiences to be condemned as not nationalist enough by Irish Literary Theatre actor Frank Fay, while the plays themselves were perceived as being too narrowly nationalist. With calls for a respectable national drama that transcended narrow political issues, the work of the Literary Theatre (or the Irish National Theatre Society, as it soon styled itself) became the favoured candidate. Pilkington has shown that, despite their differences on devolution, what Irish nationalists and unionists 'did agree, at least initially, was that a national theatre was a wholly beneficial sign of a desired political and social consensus'. It was a 'desirable sign of modernization' indicating 'that Dublin was no colonial or provincial outpost, but a civilized, European metropolis'.⁸⁶ He has also convincingly argued that this national drama, far from being above politics, promoted a constructive unionist agenda.⁸⁷ Almost by a force of will and with a skill for managing controversy, Yeats and Lady Gregory succeeded in

establishing a national institution that gained an international reputation by touring.

Irish literary drama would lend the cinema cultural prestige. By the early 1910s, watching films was undoubtedly a popular activity in Ireland. It also formed the basis of a growing business. Chapter 5 will chart the massive expansion of film distribution and exhibition in detail, but the *Cinema Year Book 1915* gives a snapshot of this growth, listing forty-seven Irish cities and towns with at least one cinema, and forty-five picture houses in the Dublin area alone.⁸⁸ This gives an indication of the independence of the distribution and exhibition aspects of cinema at this point, while reception and production seem to manifest a residual dependence on the theatre. The advent of the 'super' feature film in the late 1910s reasserted, for a brief period, the importance of the theatre in exhibiting of this new kind of film.

Ireland's first cinema journal, the *Irish Limelight*, both asserted cinema's superiority over theatre and offered evidence of cinema's continuing reliance on the prestige of Irish literary theatre. 'Only a short while ago the screen was almost wholly dependent upon the stage play and the novel for its material,' it argues, 'but with its wonderful powers of illusion, its breadth of atmosphere, and its extraordinary portrayal of minute details, it has proved an inspiration which the best of our modern writers are unwilling to resist.' The cinema is sure to make advances at the expense of theatre, 'if only because no other medium can provide the man who has something to say with so receptive and so enormous an audience'. The man with a message, whatever that message might be, now deserts the theatre and the novel because he has at his disposal a medium to address the masses. As will be seen below, it was precisely writers, actors and directors from the theatre adapting short stories and novels that played such a large part in Irish film production before 1920. One indication that the strongly expressed independence of cinema from theatre was still aspirational is the fact that the nine issues of the *Limelight* up to October 1917 carried the subtitle 'The Only Irish Journal Devoted to Cinema and Theatrical Topics'.⁸⁹ The reference to the theatre may be there to provide a supplementary source of entertainment stories if film proved insufficiently forthcoming, to encourage the readership of those who preferred theatre but were not hostile to the cinema, and to attract potential theatrical advertisers. The presence of cinema and theatre together also indicates an attempt to suggest an equality of prestige between the two practices in the context in which the literary theatre had become such a large presence in Irish cultural life, a presence



that the new Irish state would recognize in 1926 by subsidizing the Abbey.

Given the cultural importance of the literary theatre in Ireland, it is hardly surprising that the the *Limelight* emphasized the Abbey's influence on FCOI, the most significant fiction film production company based in Ireland at that time, and outlined how the film company could continue and expand the work begun by the theatre. Two of the Abbey's main actors, J. M. Kerrigan and Fred O'Donovan, were contracted to FCOI in 1916, with Kerrigan directing and acting in all nine of the films made that year and O'Donovan taking over the role of actor-director in 1917, most notably on *Knocknagow*. 'The fact also that the stars who have helped to make the Abbey Theatre famous, were the interpreters of our stories has not been lost on the Irish public,' comments an article on FCOI in the first issue of the *Limelight*, noting the public's appreciation of 'actors who had brought Irish drama into a high place in the theatrical world':

The actors now associated with the Film Company of Ireland, before motion plays even had a chance of being accepted, were in the work of carrying a knowledge of the true Ireland to other peoples. Not only was their high art accepted, but their message was received also with pleasure in that it was a long time coming. Any Film Company starting in Ireland without representation from the group of actors who have developed Irish drama would have lacked an essential element in striving for high artistic and general acceptable success.⁹⁰

Whereas in the past Irish drama abroad was synonymous with Boucicauldian melodrama, the Abbey players had raised it to the status of art and had used it to disseminate a true picture of Ireland.

Those Abbey players involved in FCOI could, it is implied, raise the Irish photoplay to artistic statue. In the process, they could take advantage of a resource unavailable in the theatre, cinema's photographic realism:

Neither book nor stage can properly make known to the rest of the world what a country really is. By means of the film, the mountains, the valleys, the rivers, the sea coast, the cities, the country and the people can be shown in their usual avocations, living their lives, enjoying their pastimes, combating their troubles and meeting destiny in each particular country's own way. [... T]he purpose of the Company is to make Ireland known to the rest of the world as she has never been known before; to let outside people realise

that we have in Ireland other things than the dudeen, buffoon, knee breeches and brass buckles.⁹¹

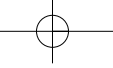
The sense of the modernization of Irish representation through a mass medium is strong here.

By 1917, what the *Limelight* was calling the 'institution of cinematography' in Ireland had achieved a certain cultural self-confidence, but it still had a residual reliance on the theatre. The industry in Ireland, as elsewhere, had bypassed the existing cinema circuit in 1916 to exhibit a new phenomenon, the 'super' film, in theatres. The economic reasons for this were compelling. Because cinemas tended to have a smaller capacity than theatres, the hiring of the larger exhibition space made economic sense for an expensive 'feature' film. The desire of prominent figures within the industry to improve the image of the business, however, also played a part here, and they pursued a strategy of décor and decorum. By showing prestige productions, frequently literary or theatrical adaptations, in theatres, exhibitors, many of whom were also employing plush and stucco to transform their picture houses into pictures palaces, hoped to attract the respectable middle-classes and so reflect the legitimacy of an art form onto the cinema as a whole.

If these are some of the reasons that brought 'super' features into the theatres, prominent members of the industry offered arguments against doing so. In an item called 'Keep Pictures out of the Legitimate', a regular column in the *Bioscope* began 1920 by quoting Cecil B. De Mille on the incompatibility of theatre and cinema:

Mr. De Mille believes the motion picture should be shown in its own specially built and equipped showhouses and that the present-day fad of 'featuring' special productions in theatres previously devoted to the spoken drama is a mistake which reacts disastrously on the cinema art [...] He points out that if big productions can be shown with profit in legitimate houses, regular exhibitors can afford to pay the increased price which distributors demand for this type of picture [...] They also owe it to themselves and to the reputation of their houses to see that they show the special productions which frequently find their way, temporarily, into legitimate theatres, these, of course, in addition to the regular releases.⁹²

De Mille also points out the different technical biases in the way theatres and cinemas are constructed, the former requiring particular attention to acoustics but being relatively flexible in the arrangement



of seating, while the latter need attend less to acoustics and more to seating: 'it is vitally important that the seats be arranged so that the screen is in a direct line of vision. Distortion and discomfort is the result of attempting to watch a motion picture from an angle.'⁹³

The unsuitability of film exhibition to the theatre was not a novel topic in 1920 but merely the latest instalment of a long-running debate on the introduction of the 'long' film, a debate that had started when a long film was three-reels or more and *The Birth of a Nation* extended to twelve reels. The many exhibitors who ran continuous rather than scheduled shows were reluctant to accept long films because the entertainment they provided worked on the basis that patrons could enter at any stage in the knowledge that a film already in progress would soon be succeeded by one they could see from the beginning. Such exhibitors also argued that a manager who knew his or her audience could offer a programme of films and variety acts that would attract a more diverse audience than a long film, which would inevitably not please all potential cinemagoers. If resistance to films of more than two reels was particularly fierce in the tightly controlled nickelodeon system in the United States, it was also manifest in Britain and Ireland. For example, at the annual general meeting in February 1912 of the Provincial Cinematograph Theatres, which had four cinemas in Ireland, managing director R. T. Jupp noted that '[j]ust now there is rather a fashion for long films. I do not think it will last, as these are quite unsuited to the continuous type of entertainment; the public do not like them.'⁹³ By 1920, the debate on the long film had all but concluded with the triumph of the long film and the appearance of cinemas that rivalled theatres in size and comfort.

In Ireland, as elsewhere, probably the most important of the 'super' films was D. W. Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation* (United States: Epoch, 1915), which was first shown at one of Dublin's legitimate theatres, the Gaiety, in a two-week run that began on 18 September 1916. Elaborate advertisements appeared in the daily newspapers, emphasizing the scale of the production and stressing the need, in a quote from Griffith, for a film of such proportions to be exhibited in 'the highest-class theatres and at prices charged for the best theatrical attractions'.⁹⁴ When patrons were still being turned away after this initial period, the film was brought back after a break of some weeks to crowded houses for a third week.⁹⁵ In December 1917, the Bohemian Picture House in Phibsborough on Dublin's north side became the first Irish cinema to exhibit Griffith's film. Some months later, the publicity and exhibition route for FCOI's adaptation of Charles Kickham's *Knocknagow*

mirrored that of *The Birth of a Nation*, which was a literary adaptation of epic proportions that was praised as a ‘magnificent film spectacle’ and ‘the biggest thing ever attempted in the annals of motion pictures’.⁹⁶ When the ‘eight-reel’ *Knocknagow* followed its ‘eight-part’⁹⁷ predecessor into the theatre, objections were raised within the film trade that echo those that De Mille would make more than a year and a half later. ‘The Irish Super Film, “Knocknagow,” was extraordinarily successful during its recent run at the Dublin Empire,’ argued an item in the *Limelight* in May 1918. ‘But with all due respect to those concerned, we expect the film to be shown to better advantage when screened in the genuine picture house.’⁹⁸

By copying the exhibition strategy of *The Birth of a Nation*, the FCOI was not only expressing its ambition for its first major feature but also attempting to stress a cinematic lineage for a literary adaptation that already had been dramatized and that was cast with well-known stage actors. ‘There is a play also founded on “Knocknagow,”’ reveals an *Evening Herald* review of the film, ‘but there is no comparison whatever between the filmed version of the novel presented on the screen and the dramatised version presented on the stage.’⁹⁹ The *Herald* reviewer may have felt it necessary to emphasize that this was a new adaptation of the novel because a dramatized version was produced a number of times during the period that FCOI were conceiving and making their film. *Knock-na-Gow, or, the Homes of Tipperary* was staged by W. J. Walshe at the Abbey from 22–4 April 1915 and 2–4 March 1916 and at the Queen’s during the weeks beginning 9 July 1917 and 21 October 1918. R. G. Walshe adapted the novel, and it appears to have been first staged in Clonmel, Co. Tipperary, sometime before the 1915 Abbey production.¹⁰⁰ Given that FCOI also decided to have a premiere in Clonmel, at Magner’s Theatre, contemporary observers could be forgiven for believing that a link existed between the two works. In fact, there appear to be substantial differences between the Walshe’s play and FCOI’s film, which was based on a script by Mrs N. F. Patton. Although Walshe’s play script does not appear to have been published, a surviving playbill for the second Queen’s run reveals that the middle-class Kearneys, of whom the novel makes an important critique and who feature prominently in the film, were excised.¹⁰¹

The intermedial link between the play, film and book in this instance and in the case of FCOI’s other major literary adaptation may be one of publicity. ‘Since the announcement that the [film] is being produced,’ a writer in the *Limelight* reports in May 1917, ‘there is a

revival of the book, and “Knocknagow” will be opened in the coming soft summer days to be read once again with smiles and tears, as the joys and sorrows that hover around the Homes of Tipperary are read once more.”¹⁰² Some of those who were expecting the arrival of the film in late 1917 would no doubt also have been induced to attend the play at the Queen’s in July. Whereas the two Abbey runs of Walshe’s play would have been fresh in the minds of members of FCOI as they contemplated their adaptation, dramatizations of the literary source of the FCOI’s other major feature film, *Willy Reilly and His Colleen Bawn*, appear to have been revived in response to the announcement of the film, which was shot during the summer of 1919. At the Queen’s during the week of 10 November 1919, H. J. Condrón’s company staged their ‘*Willy Reilly and His Dear Cooleen [sic] Bawn*, Dramatised from William Carlton [sic] Famous Novel, by Mrs. J. B. Carrickford’, and this production returned to the Queen’s almost a year later in the week beginning 6 September 1920.¹⁰³ Although it is attributed to Carrickford, this dramatization is likely to have at least owed significant debts to an earlier Queen’s version by a Mr Gardiner-Coyne, first staged in 1880, the year after the appearance of Carleton’s novel, and revived in 1905 as a new work, co-written by Gardiner-Coyne and Whitbread.¹⁰⁴ It is most likely in a production of this early dramatization that Darby Spillane, the farmer in King-Moylan’s 1918 farce *Movies*, played *Willy Reilly* in his youth, but no copy of the Queen’s versions appears to have survived.

When *Knocknagow* went into production in the summer of 1917, a writer in the *Limelight* praised the FCOI for having chosen Fred O’Donovan ‘of the Abbey Theatre, Ireland’s Premier actor’, to direct or ‘supervise’ the production. ‘The Film Company of Ireland, in securing the services of Mr. O’Donovan for this work, having in mind his great histrionic ability, is giving proof of the Company’s determination to do full justice to this old tale of homely Irish folk, with its soft love stories, its pastoral glamour, and with all its deep note of intense Irish feeling.’¹⁰⁵ For this commentator, O’Donovan’s ‘histrionic’ or acting ability is the main attribute that fits him for the role of interpreting the subtle Irish aspects of the novel. It is likely that what the writer admires about the acting ability of O’Donovan and the other Abbey players in FCOI is precisely the fact that they are not ‘histrionic’, in the sense of the exaggerated gestural acting style associated with the melodramatic stage. Although the Abbey’s restrained style may not have been popular with those audiences that were more familiar with the colourful histrionic style, it did put them more in step with film

acting internationally.¹⁰⁶ In an interview with the *Limelight*, Nora Clancy contended ‘that the initial success of the Abbey Players as cinema artistes was due to the fact that the Abbey school always insisted upon striving after natural characterisation. Consequently they were more adapted for cinema acting than most artistes.’¹⁰⁷

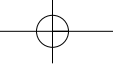
The 1910s had, in fact, seen the growing dominance of a naturalistic or ‘verisimilar’ type of acting in US film, displacing the older histrionic manner relying on elements of pantomimic gesture, referred to above.¹⁰⁸ This was part of the more general move to a classical style associated with Hollywood, whereby the audience is presented with a film that communicates its narrative without allowing any of the film’s formal elements – such as its acting style – to disrupt the illusion that the story is unfolding on the screen for the first time. In surviving Irish-shot films, the histrionic style can be seen clearly in *Ireland a Nation*, in which actors who play roles that were familiar to them from stage melodrama display the same style of exaggerated body performance that they would have employed in the theatre.

Although the acting in FCOI films conformed to emerging international norms on the construction of an illusion of reality, the exhibition of *Knocknagow* featured a theatrical form of interaction with the recorded image that seems designed to undercut the illusion of reality that is associated with classical Hollywood style. ‘Brian McGowan [usually spelled Magowan, but also M’Gowan, and MacGowan], the Film Company of Ireland’s popular player,’ reveals the *Limelight*,

is a vocalist of considerable merit. Previous to joining the Film Company he toured America for four years with musical comedy. His realistic portrayal of Mat the Thrasher in “Knocknagow” will be much enjoyed. Brian, in his costume of Mat the Thrasher, proposes to attend the house where the picture is being screened, and render some of the celebrated songs of Kickham, the author of “Knocknagow.”¹⁰⁹

When the film opened at the Empire on Monday, 22 April 1918, it was advertised that ‘Breffni O’Rorke [also O’Rourke] and Brian Magowan will sing Irish Folk Songs during the Evening’.¹¹⁰ If the appearance of actors supporting their film with a singing accompaniment does not seem so incongruous in a variety theatre like the Empire, it should also be borne in mind that the cinemas at which Magowan later sang also had orchestras that provided live musical accompaniment to films and may also have featured variety acts.

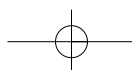
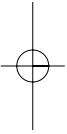
Nevertheless, the presence in the auditorium of the actor who



appears on the screen seems to represent a singular kind of intermediality between the performer and his recorded image. Sung musical accompaniment to films was not unusual and, indeed, FCOI had used Magowan to provide such accompaniment before. Specially engaged musicians were occasionally used at important film showings. Advertisements for the last night of the run of FCOI's first film, *O'Neil of the Glen* (1916), at the Town Hall, Rathmines, in early September 1916 announced that 'Miss Terry O'Connor, a really talented contralto, will sing the "Coulin" and "Teddy O'Neil" during the performance.'¹¹¹ When *O'Neil of the Glen* was revived at the Rotunda in May 1917 as part of a programme including Charlie Chaplin's *The Pawnshop* and the variety act Fry and Fry, Brian Magowan appeared on stage and sang some tenor songs.¹¹²

Despite these precedents, *Knocknagow* seems to represent a refinement to this kind of intermediality by incorporating it into the recorded text. When *Knocknagow* had its cinema debut at the Phibsboro' Picture House, an advertisement in the *Limelight* promised that 'Brian McGowan ("Mat the Thrasher") [...] will sing "Slievenamon," "the song with the haunting refrain," in connection with the screening of this picture'.¹¹³ The film includes a scene in which Magowan on screen playing Mat bursts into song, providing a motivating link for Magowan in the theatre to perform some synchronized singing. The scene, which introduces Mat, forms part of the opening sequence, in which the main protagonists are presented. An introductory intertitle is followed by a long shot of Mat guiding a horse-drawn plough, and the shot pans to keep him in frame. There is a cut to a mid-shot of Mat from behind as he stops and turns around to camera. A second intertitle that is cut into this shot includes a musical stave and the lyric 'TO REAP AND PLOW AND SOW AND MOW, / AND BE A FARMERS BOY'. After the intertitle, the previous shot continues with Mat singing before he turns back to ploughing. In the scene's final shot, Mat ploughs from right to left in long shot with Slievenamon in the background. Anomalously, however, that lyric does not come from Kickham's ballad 'Slievenamon' but from the anonymous ballad 'The Farmer's Boy', a song well known in Ireland and Britain. At what point Magowan sang 'Slievenamon' is unclear, but in the surviving print of the film, no other musical intertitle cues where the song should be sung.

The ploughing scene may offer insights into how FCOI intended to avoid the stereotypical tourist views of Irish landscape in its features and perhaps in the series of twenty scenic films that it shot in 1917. It was a scene that provoked detailed comment by *Evening Herald* cor-



respondent 'Jacques': 'There is one simple picture showing Mat ploughing his field in the spring sunshine with the hedges in their early foliage. The man who "sensed" that scene was a genius. It is art wedded to nature.'¹¹⁴ This scene seems far from simple in its attempt to combine the live and the recorded performance and in its placement in the film, following a complicated opening pan and iris shot across the Tipperary landscape, thereby lending the film a scenically spectacular first few minutes. It seems, however, that such scenes are where FCOI fulfils its aim of using film to show 'the mountains, the valleys, the rivers, the sea coast, the cities, the country and the people [...] in their usual avocations, living their lives, enjoying their pastimes, combating their troubles and meeting destiny in [their] own way'.¹¹⁵ In this case the landscape is not one of the tourist sights reproduced so frequently in foreign production in the country; this is a mainly pastoral landscape that also contains a mountain celebrated in a song by an Irish revolutionary.

INTERMEDIALITY IN THE ELECTRIC THEATRE

This chapter demonstrates, that, although an intermedial relationship with theatre was particularly important to early cinema throughout the period studied, the kind of theatre that was party to this relationship changed. Since theatre was the dominant cultural medium of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, it is hardly surprising to find that it had a pervasive influence on early film shows and the cinema in Ireland before 1921. In recognition of Ben Brewster and Lea Jacobs' point about the inexactness of the term 'theatrical' given the multiplicity of theatrical entertainments that had provided a source for early and silent films, the focus here has been to specify those forms of theatre that were most influential on early film entertainments in Ireland. As the argument in this and subsequent chapters is that the film shows that would become the cinema during this period partly constitute and are partly constituted by other media, the type of influence other media and cultural practices have on early film is of such a fundamental character that it should be called intermediality. Film shows in Ireland manifested particular intermedial links to three forms of theatre: music hall, melodrama and literary theatre. Although the links with these forms is not neatly circumscribed, it is strongest in three successive periods.

The music hall was important to the first projected moving-picture shows both because it provided a venue for these shows and because

its variety bill offered a model for the cinema programme. Early film shows in Ireland displayed their closest intermedial relationship to the music hall and variety theatre from the first appearance of the cinematograph at Dublin's Star Theatre of Varieties in April 1896 to the advent of dedicated film-exhibition venues in 1908. Many people first saw a film show as an act or 'turn' on the music-hall stage. For these people, a film show *was* a music-hall turn, one of the acts that provided entertainment for ten minutes or so before it was replaced by something different. Initially, audiences' curiosity was directed at the cinematograph, the apparatus that projected the moving images, rather than at the films themselves.

Although it is suggestive that the Queen's Royal Theatre, the home of Irish melodrama, should also have been Dublin's first dedicated film venue, melodrama displays its intermedial links with early cinema primarily as a form of theatre that was readily adoptable by the new medium. Its popularity meant that the audience's intermedial knowledge could be brought to bear on a film that would otherwise be incoherent. It was a non-dialogue form that had developed a repertoire of features for communicating story, including stock characters with known modes of dress and action and a demonstrative, gestural acting style. Beyond this, a form of specifically Irish melodrama existed, particularly associated with Dion Boucicault in the late nineteenth century, with Queen's manager and playwright J. W. Whitbread from the 1890s to 1907, and with playwrights such as P. J. Bourke, and Ira Allen in the early twentieth century.

These popular theatrical forms had relied on a type of active spectator, ready to banter with a comedian or hiss a villain, but this kind of audience behaviour was undergoing revision as the music hall was refashioned as variety theatre in order to attract a more decorous middle-class audience willing to pay a higher price for more respectable entertainment and more comfortable theatres. Decorum was also expected in the literary theatre, the third theatrical form with substantial intermedial links to early Irish cinema, where the literary qualities of the play were expected to be the focus of an audience's attention.

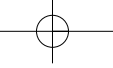
The literary theatre's intermedial links with cinema were particularly strong in the instrumental contributions that performers from the prestigious Abbey Theatre and Irish Theatre made to the Film Company of Ireland. The company aimed to use the new medium to modernize Irish representation, thereby banishing the stage Irishman, at this point apparently associated with the comical rogues of Irish

melodrama. The literary theatre's minimalist acting style, which had developed so that the audience would not be distracted from the text by extravagant performances, proved to be in tune with changes in film acting internationally, which now favoured a more naturalist verisimilar style. In 1917, FCOI took on the task of producing a 'super film', a production to equal the cutting edge of film-making that was represented in particular by D. W. Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation*. *Knocknagow*, the company's first landmark production, was an adaptation of the most popular nineteenth-century Irish novel, written by the Fenian Charles J. Kickham. The film was well received in Ireland, but the way it was exhibited shows the cinema's continuing intermedial links with the theatre: as this prestigious production, in imitation of the exhibition route of *The Birth of a Nation*, was first shown at a theatre. Furthermore, the leading actor, Brian Magowan, appeared in the theatre, and subsequently toured Ireland, accompanying the film screening with renditions of folk songs. The film also employs the Irish landscape in a way noted by contemporary critics. It was, quite different, however, from the tourist uses of landscape evident in so many British and American films made in Ireland in the 1900s and 1910s.

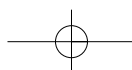
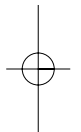
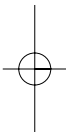
NOTES

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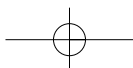
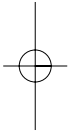
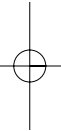


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69. The romantic revolutionary Robert Emmet was so widely visually represented that the music-hall comic singer Pat Feeny could wear a costume that was instantly recognizable as Emmet's. See Watters and Murtagh, *Infinite Variety*, p. 97.
70. 'The "Ireland a Nation" Film: Criticisms of Historical Inaccuracies', *Irish Limelight*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (February 1917), p. 3. Breen was the favourite melodramatic villain at the Queen's between 1889 and 1907; see de Búrca, *Queen's Royal Theatre*, pp. 13 and 75, and the interview with Breen, 'A Double-Dyed Villain', *Irish Playgoer*, Vol. 1, No. 7 (21 December 1899), pp. 22–3.
71. Official involvement with *Ireland a Nation* is detailed in the National Archives of Ireland file CSORP/1919/11025. For a narrative account based on these documents, see Rockett, Gibbons, and Hill, *Cinema and Ireland*, pp. 12–16.
72. Morash, *History of Irish Theatre*, p. 155.
73. This intertitle echoes the description of a white slave trader as '[t]he most infamous type of man' in a previous film that Macnamara had scripted, George Loane Tucker's 1913 *Traffic in Souls*.
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80. 'Picture in Ireland. By "Paddy"', *Bioscope*, 30 July 1914, p. 494.
81. *IT*, 9 October 1917, p. 3; undated playbill reproduced in de Búrca, *Queen's Royal Theatre*, p. 34.
82. 'Two Stirring National Plays: "For the Wearing of the Green" and "Rob Roy," from Albion Exclusives', *Bioscope*, 2 July 1914, p. 30.
83. Andrew Parkin (ed.), *Selected Plays of Dion Boucicault* (Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe; Washington, D.C.: The Catholic U of America P, 1987), p. 20.
84. Lady Augusta Gregory, *Our Irish Theatre: A Chapter of Autobiography* (Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe, 1972), p. 20.
85. Morash, *History of Irish Theatre*, p. 117.
86. Pilkington, *Theatre and the State*, p. 9.
87. *Ibid.*, pp. 11–17.
88. *Cinema Year Book 1915 and Diary* (London: The Cinema, 1915), pp. 94ff. Some four or five of the premises listed (including the Queen's) were not dedicated cinemas at this time, but this still leaves about 40 forty premises in Dublin whose main business was moving pictures.
89. The most substantial item on theatre in 1917 was a page on the pantomime at the Queen's in the first issue.
90. *Limelight*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (January 1917), p. 3.
91. *Ibid.*
92. 'Matters of Moment by "The Observer": Separate Arts on Stage & Screen', *Bioscope*, 1 January 1920, p. 27.
93. *Bioscope*, 14 March 1912, p. 766.
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97. These terms are used in advertisements for the films in *Limelight*, Vol. 1, No. 11 (November 1917), pp. 2–3 and Vol. 2, No. 5 (May 1918), pp. 12–13.
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99. Jacques, 'Knocknagow Filmed: Wonderful Irish Picture of Storied Incident', *Evening Herald*, 7 February 1918; reprinted in *Limelight*, Vol. 2, No. 4 (April 1918), p. 5.
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103. Queen's Theatre Playbills 1918–1935, Theatre Archive, Dublin and Irish Collections, Gilbert Library.
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112. *IT*, 30 May 1917, p. 6.
113. *Limelight*, Vol. 2, No. 5 (May 1918), pp. 12-13.
114. 'Knocknagow Filmed: Wonderful Irish Picture of Storied Incident', p. 5.
115. 'What the Irish Film Co. Is Doing', *Limelight*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (January 1917), p. 3.



Virtual Tourism

Ladies and Gentlemen. The heading of our programme indicates the style of expedition, on which I ask you to accompany me this evening. Were I an adept in the wizard's craft, I should not hesitate to transform my audience – for the time being – into a tourist party; but lacking the magic powers (save in my lamp), I have to ask you to imagine yourselves my travelling companions for the present. My task is to place before this very intellectual assembly sights and scenes of a country which if not as sunny, is, in many chapters of its scenery, as fair as any country in the world.¹

The lantern lecturer beginning one of the early twentieth-century illustrated talks *Lantern Tours in Ireland* requests the participation of the members of his or her audience in imagining themselves as tourists actually visiting the sights of Ireland. The lecturer would then have projected a sequence of eighty-seven photographic slides produced by the Dublin firm of William Lawrence and have described each image according to the printed text. If they complied with the lecturer's request, the audience would become a party of tourists on a virtual tour. The success of the talk would have hinged on the lecturer's dramatic powers, on his or her ability to bring the images to life. It is not surprising to find, therefore, that lanternists and others included projected moving pictures in travel lectures at an early stage in cinema history, making the virtual tour one of the cinema's earliest genres.

The nature of the cinematic virtual tour changed over the period examined here in ways that resemble the earlier changes undergone by the magic lantern tour. As with the lantern, the itinerant lecturer-exhibitor who dominated early film exhibition bought individual short films from a range of 'manufacturers' and organized them into a programme. The exhibitor retained a good deal of creative control over the film show, deciding on the sequence of the films and on any accompanying spoken text, sound effects, or music. Early lanternists and early film exhibitors also frequently produced at least some of the



material they projected. The scenario of the lantern lecture, set out, on the previous page represents a later stage in the lantern-slide business, in which the manufacturer of the images attempts to control how they are used by providing an authorized sequence of slides and a prescribed text. The photographic-slide manufacturer could probably exert no more control than this on the content of the lantern lecture, whose success still rested on the lanternist's skill as a performer. Because of the nature of moving pictures, however, the medium would eventually develop a system in which a combination of editing and intertitles would replace the need for a lecturer outside the film's textual systems.

Reflecting these changes in the roles of manufacturers and exhibitors, travel films made in Ireland before World War I fall into three broad groups that may be associated with the national origins of their producers. The French producer-exhibitors constituting the first wave shot brief actuality films in the streets of Belfast and Dublin and panoramas from trains between these cities. The Professor Joly and the Lumière Frères operators describe a geography of Ireland in the late 1890s that maps the country's large east-coast cities and the spaces between them. Their films show busy streets and panoramas of suburban areas. A cinema spectator viewing a Lumière film of Belfast or Dublin sees an up-to-date city framed in the modern progressivist technology of the cinematic apparatus. Modernity frames modernity; and the Parisian spectator might see a place at a roughly similar stage of development to his or her own city. As such, these early French films differ from the British and US films that will be the focus of this chapter.

The British film production companies who made the second wave of travel films in Ireland show a similar or even greater interest in modern transport. Such film-makers as the Warwick Trading Company and the Charles Urban Trading Company, who shot frequently in Ireland in the 1900s, sold films that are presented in their catalogues as long, composite entities held together by a bare narrative, but exhibitors could usually purchase these films separately. As composite works, the films frequently bring the metropolitan tourist from London by train, then by steamship across the Irish Sea, and, in Ireland, by one (or more) of the rail routes that criss-crossed the country at the time. Their destination, however, is not the modern city, but the Irish countryside, a place of picturesque landscape and a whimsical premodern people. They often portray the country's long-established or emerging tourist resorts, such as the Giant's Causeway,

Achill, or Killarney, frequently because a rail company has paid to have its tourist route publicized. The cinematograph here allies itself with the train and frames the picturesque and the premodern.

The preference that certain of the British films show for Killarney as a destination becomes far more explicit in the US films made in Ireland between 1910 and 1914, particularly those directed by Sidney Olcott. Logistics played a part in this development because the transatlantic ships stopped at Queenstown (Cobh), Co. Cork, making such well-known sights as Blarney – which Vitagraph's John Bunny and Larry Trimble visited in 1912 to make *Bunny Blarneyed* – easily accessible, with Killarney also within relative easy reach. These US films are predominantly fictional narrative works and, as such, were not offered as individual scenes that the exhibitor could arrange as he or she saw fit. Indeed, the Kalem Irish films were pioneering in reducing even the possibility of using music to put a local stamp on the exhibition of a film. Kalem provided US exhibitors with a list of suggested Irish airs to play at screenings of *The Colleen Bawn* after its release on 16 October 1911, and, when Walter Cleveland Simon composed a score for the 4 December 1911 release of *Arrah-na-Pogue*, this was probably the first specially composed film score.³ These and other US films rarely depict Irish cities, preferring to contrast a traditional, rural Ireland with a modern, urban America. In this comparison, the films privilege the United States as the land of economic opportunity and as the Irish rebel's place of sanctuary from British oppression. Given that it was the diasporic Irish in the United States to whom these ethnic dramas were primarily addressed, it is hardly surprising that they should flatter their audience by endorsing their decision to leave Ireland, a country of acknowledged natural beauty but with serious economic and political difficulties.

The term 'autoexoticism' usefully describes the responses of Irish audiences to films such as these, shot in Ireland but intended in the first instance for non-Irish and diasporic audiences. The fact that they were filmed in Ireland and usually depicted the Irish lent them a degree of marketable exoticism. These films often constructed their spectators as travellers on a virtual tour, enjoying the picturesque landscape and the interesting characters who inhabit it. Frequently they were also successfully exhibited in Ireland. In viewing themselves and their country from the perspective of virtual tourists, Irish spectators had to deal with the process by which the familiar is made exotic. Autoexoticism is a concept advanced by historian of Irish literary culture Joep Leerssen to explain why Romantic Irish novels of the early nineteenth century so markedly strive to explain Ireland to a readership assumed to be

English. Leerssen notes that '[t]he auctorial voice in these novels, or the focalizer (i.e., the character through whose eyes scenes are represented, with whose perspective the narrative identifies) is almost invariably non-Irish, tracing an approach *towards* Ireland from outside (rather than describing Ireland from within)'.² Because the mediating voice in these novels is externally imposed, 'Ireland is a passive object of representation.' Among the assumptions underlying these texts is 'the tacit but by no means self-evident presupposition that Ireland is most itself in those aspects wherein it is most un-cosmopolitan, most unlike other nations'. Leerssen draws an explicit analogy between the narration in these novels and tourist discourse. 'Like an importunate tourist guide,' he writes,

the text says 'Ireland is there; I am here to show it to you.' The self-consciousness of the description (which devotes a good deal of space and attention to establishing its own credentials) interposes itself between reader and subject-matter, hides Ireland from view, indeed pushes it beyond the horizon. In this manner [...] Ireland is made exotic by the self-same descriptions which purport to represent or explain Ireland.

Leerssen locates autoexoticism in the conjunction of Romanticism with the reorientation of Irish public life to the imperial centre after the Act of Union of 1801 dissolved the Irish Parliament. In the context of the early nineteenth century, autoexoticism describes Anglo-Irish novelists' attempts, in their anxiety to distinguish Ireland and the Irish from England and the English, to present Ireland as exotic to an English reader. In this way, it entails viewing one's own country and fellow citizens from the perspective of the tourist, making the familiar exotic.

This phenomenon occurs not only in the literature of the early nineteenth century but also in the magic-lantern trade as it had evolved in the late-nineteenth and early twentieth-centuries. The virtual tour with which this chapter begins makes an explicit address to a non-Irish audience, indicating, that while the slides were made in Dublin, the manufacturer did not intend them primarily for a local audience. The first slide of the tour presents the virtual tourists with a map of Ireland, over which the script prompts the lanternist to speak a preamble. Part of this text draws attention to the possible presence of Irish spectators among the audience, observing that '[t]here may be many sons of [the Emerald Isle] in our audience – for where do we not meet them?'⁴ Although they might 'recognize some well-remembered scenes' in the *Lantern Tours*, the presentation will allow these hypothetical sons – and, presumably, daughters – of the Emerald Isle to 'view with glad surprise other beauties

of their native land which they may have never thought so fair'.⁵ The text rhetorically invokes these Irishmen and women in order to assert the power of the lantern lectures to incorporate local knowledge but to go far beyond it. A lantern tour produced by the same company in about 1889 includes a passage in square brackets and a footnote that the piece was '[o]nly to be read by lecturer when delivered out of Ireland'. It runs:

For some years past much has been written, but more has been said, about our 'Sister Isle.' [...] Ireland is looked upon as wild, ungovernable, and uncivilised. You have only to step on its shores and there be met by a party of Moonlighters, or boycotted at every move; and behind every hedge is a son of Erin crouched, ready to shoot you, or phrenologise you with the mother of a sloe, *i.e.* feel your bumps with a shillelagh. [...] Let me assure you that you may travel from the Cove of Cork to the Giant's Causeway, and find nothing but true Irish hospitality.⁶

'Out of Ireland' in this case clearly meant 'in Britain', and, in the late 1880s, it was necessary to assure even virtual British tourists, who might be in the company of unpredictable sons or daughters of Erin, that they would come to no harm in Ireland.

It is perhaps this superiority of knowledge that is the connecting thread between tourist discourse and the wider imperial discourse support it. This is exemplified in the guidebooks of Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Hall (discussed in more detail below), which combine the high imperial tendency for archiving scientific and cultural data on a region, bringing together the literary exploration of character and customs with the pictorial aesthetic that stresses sublime landscape at the expense of the people who live there. '[E]ven where a place associated with natural beauty forms the basis for a traveller's tour of Ireland,' writes Glenn Hooper in the introduction to *The Tourist's Gaze*, a collection of extracts from travel writing on Ireland, 'political considerations frequently intrude.'⁷ Film-makers would similarly claim to transcend local knowledge. 'One and all the jarvies had discounted the beauties of Cork,' writes US filmmaker Gene Gauntier of her first visit to Ireland in 1910. "Ah," said they, "ye should go to Killarney. Up Killarney way it is the loveliest of all Oirland. Though meself, I've nivir been there."⁸

The title of Hooper's book is a variation on the term the 'tourist gaze' deriving from the title of John Urry's well-known work on the sociology of tourism.⁹ Urry connects the rise of mass tourism to the advent of photography, tracing the link to 1839–41, the period in which

Daguerre and Fox Talbot invented their cameras and Thomas Cook organized his first package tour. 'Photography gives shape to travel,' Urry argues, and in fact the trip becomes an attempt to capture images that the tourist has already seen prior to departure, the personal versions of which he or she will subsequently display.¹⁰ Although photography was certainly important to tourism, by the 1900s moving pictures were in the forefront of tourist representation. They not only provided another medium in which prospective tourists could see picturesque scenery that they may then have recaptured on their own excursions but also sometimes recreated the kinetic sensations of travel itself.

The following sections of this chapter examine early Irish films in terms of the gaze of the virtual tourist and the autoexoticism that emerges when Irish spectators viewed their own country mediated by the tourist gaze. The next section investigates the British-produced Irish tourist films of the 1900s, a group of films little discussed by film scholarship. It argues that tourism formed the economic base, as well as the representational economy, of the major series produced between 1901 and 1909. Many of these films depict Killarney, the Irish resort with probably the most developed tourist infrastructure because it had already been a tourist destination for 150 years. The ubiquity of tourist images of Killarney made it the epitome of Irish tourist resorts and sometimes of the country as a whole. An overview of the iconography of Killarney shows the proliferation of images in a range of media – from fine-art prints to furniture – that the local tourist industry spawned. Because of this visual heritage, Killarney is the exemplary case and that of most interest to the emerging cinema of the 1900s and 1910s. By 1900, however, a number of forces combined to push less developed parts of Ireland into the tourist gaze. Saturation by images of Killarney and other well-known resorts created a desire to see something new. The intersection of this desire with local discourses on tourism as an agency of development, and Celtic revival discourses on the essence of the Gaelic nation, contributed to raising the West of Ireland, and particularly its coastal fringes, to a place of privilege. It was largely the established tourist sights, however, that remained the focus of US film-makers' attention and became the backdrop to their peasant dramas. These films were also exhibited to the contemporary 'peasants' of Killarney and Tralee. The history of film exhibition in Kerry during the early 1910s, while US film-makers were shooting in the area, unsurprisingly belies the image of a homogeneous traditional society and demonstrates that different local interests viewed the arrival of a regular film show, and the films exhibited, differently.



3.1 Norwegian and Irish whalers dance at the conclusion of Robert Paul's *Whaling Afloat and Ashore* (Britain, 1908).

TOURISM AS THE ECONOMIC BASIS FOR FILM PRODUCTION IN 1900S IRELAND

In his 2004 book on Irish documentary, Harvey O'Brien contrasts Robert Paul's 1908 *Whaling Afloat and Ashore* unfavourably with Robert Flaherty's 1934 *Man of Aran*. Although O'Brien approves of Paul's depiction of work in the early scenes aboard the whaling ship, he finds the fact that Paul made the Norwegian and Irish whalers dance and play games for the camera at the end of his film more worrying than Flaherty's infamous alterations to the lives of the Aran Islanders he was supposedly documenting. '[A]t least [Flaherty] didn't make them dance,' he concludes.¹¹

Rather than by drawing a comparison with a film made twenty-five years later, the incorporation of footage of the dancing whalers in the Paul film is better illuminated – though not, perhaps, made more palatable – by locating his work in the context of 1900s film-making. Paul may have shown the whalers at play simply because this was one of the things that a film-maker could do in fishing films at the time, and, as

Chapter 1 demonstrated when discussing the shows at Dublin's Rotunda in December 1901, a fishing film could be considered the highlight of a show. An early precedent exists for this in the Warwick Trading Company's 1901 series *Among the Deep Sea Fishermen*, which included the films *Sports on a North Sea Fishing Smack* and *Cricket Match at Sea*.¹² Such a series would be expected to show different aspects of its chosen subject. This may be part of the explanation, but Paul may also have had recourse to conventional ways of representing the Irish. As far as the earliest films of the period were concerned, the Irish were a people who danced, such as in Levi, Jones & Co.'s 1898 *Irish Jig*. Film-makers also made decisions such as these because they were looking with, at the same time as constructing, a tourist gaze. Certain sights are appropriate to the tourist gaze, while others, such as the unpleasant aspects of poverty and the unequal development at the heart of tourism in this period, are avoided. When depicted, the rural poor frequently appear as peasants leading a traditional lifestyle in a picturesque landscape. In Paul's film, they appear first as factory workers and second as revellers.

One of the few surviving films produced in Ireland between 1900 and 1910, *Whaling Afloat and Ashore* shows a high degree of narrativization for a factual film in its integration of its various elements. It begins with scenes on a whaling ship showing the capture of a whale, proceeds with a detailed depiction of the dismemberment of the carcass at the whaling station, and concludes with the entertainments already mentioned. The long description that appeared in the trade press gives an indication of the kind of attractions such a film may have had for its spectators:

A trip on a Whaling Ship is an exciting experience; the fortunate spectator sees the whale 'blowing' in the distance; after a stern chase, during which the whale may escape a few times, the ship is eventually manoeuvred to the spot where the whale next rises. The captain, having previously prepared the harpoon and fitted it to the gun, makes ready to fire. [...] On the arrival at the Station, whose buildings are seen as a panorama, the whale is hauled up on the slipway, and the 'flincher' commences removing the blubber, which is hauled off in long strips by the aid of a steam winch. [...] A humorous conclusion to the series is provided by a series of characteristic Norwegian Sports at the station, with a finale in which the Norwegian and Irish workmen perform their respective national dances on the slipway.¹³

The film includes an exhilarating whale hunt, a panorama of the station and details of its industrial processes, and a humorous ending. These attractions constituted a 'series', a word that could mean



3.2 Exciting scenes of harpooning a whale at sea begin Paul's *Whaling Afloat and Ashore*.

a single-shot film ('a series of photographs'), a multishot film (such as the one just described), or a number of loosely related single- or multishot films organized into a composite film. The first sense of the word was falling out of use as the 1900s progressed and films contained more than one shot. The film trade, therefore, particularly employed the term in the latter two senses to describe the different kind of films made in Ireland in the 1900s because producers could offer them for sale in different ways. Instead of offering *Whaling Afloat and Ashore* as a single film, Paul could have offered it either in its constituent scenes alone (*Whaling Afloat* and *Whaling Ashore*, for example, or *A Whale Hunt*, *A Whale Station*, and *A Whale of a Time*) or with other films he had shot in Ireland as a composite film with an uninformative title such as *Exquisite Ireland*. As we shall see, production companies such as the Charles Urban Trading Company grouped films to form composite productions in precisely this manner while also offering the constituent films for sale separately. Paul chose, however, to construct a film narrative in which recreation follows work at sea and on land.

The films Paul made in Ireland in 1908 are somewhat unusual for their focus on fishing and for the associated locations that they depict. The film *Lobster Catching*, for example, appears to avoid the knowing comicalities of the whaling film:

This work is usually carried on by two fishermen working in partnership and owning a coracle and the necessary lobster pots and lines. Having carried their portable boat to the water's edge, they set out at a suitable state of the tide, and examine the pots which they have set overnight. Hauling the pots into the boat, they remove the lobsters, and set the pots with fresh bait. In a rough sea this work requires considerable experience, owing to the instability of the frail boat. The lobsters, having been thrown into the bottom of the boat are taken to the landing stage, where they are put temporarily into wicker receivers, ready for sending to the market.¹⁴

Paul's tour of Ireland takes the spectator along the west coast from the remote Inishkea Islands to *The Falls of Doonas* on the river Shannon in Co. Clare. He shot *Whaling Afloat and Ashore* at sea and at the Aranmore whaling station, a Norwegian enterprise that was based between 1908 and 1911 on Rusheen Island, an islet that forms part of the Inishkea group off Mayo's Mullet peninsula.¹⁵ He also shot *Lobster Catching* somewhere on the west coast, while *A Cattle Drive in County Galway* (discussed in the next chapter) and *Village Life* seem to depict non-fishing communities somewhat inland.¹⁶ Both *With Rod and Fly / Salmon Fishing* and *The Falls of Doonas* were filmed on the river Shannon, the first featuring 'Champion Fly-Caster' John Enright and the second offering scenic views of the named falls.¹⁷

Paul's fishing films make an intriguing intervention into the discourse on the islands off Ireland's west coast at a time when they had come to 'embody the nation' for both the Anglo-Irish and Irish Irishmen.¹⁸ Emily Pine has recently suggested a segregated geography of the western isles, whereby the Protestant Anglo-Irish lay claim to the Aran Islands (epitomized, perhaps, by J. M. Synge's 1907 *The Aran Islands*), as an alternative to which the 'Blasket Islands represent the ideal of Catholic, Gaelic, traditional Ireland'.¹⁹ In both cases, the essence of the islands' attractiveness hinges on their isolation and relatively undeveloped state. By contrast, Paul shows us western islands where the inhabitants work in a factory and where the men who fish from currachs are not engaged in a subsistence activity but catch lobsters for the open market. Inland, one might encounter sports fishermen competing on the river Shannon. Despite such peculiarities, if

Paul's films are considered as composites, his work can be identified as part of a genre of non-fiction films produced by British companies in Ireland in particularly concentration in the 1900s.

'As well as receiving regular films from an operator in South Africa', a writer in *The Bioscope* reveals in September 1909, the London Cinematograph Company

have also produced a number of films illustrative of a trip through Ireland. The natural beauties of the Emerald Isle form a subject which will appeal to all lovers of nature, and of such excellence is this subject of films that in witnessing them upon the screen one is transported to Erin's Isle, and in imagination enjoy[s] a holiday sojourn there without undergoing the trouble and annoyance of a long railway journey, to say nothing of the terrors of a choppy passage across the Irish Channel.²⁰

This film was *Beauty Spots of Ireland*, directed by John Y. Brown, and this brief notice of it gives the sense in which tourists could imaginatively travel by the latest modern convenience, the cinematograph.²¹ The title of the first of these series, the Warwick Trading Company's *With the Bioscope Through Ireland*, gives precisely this sense of travelling by the cinematic apparatus, in this case the bioscope projector of Warwick's managing director, Charles Urban.²² The stops on this latter tour are mainly at the well-known resorts of the country, including Queenstown, Youghal, Cork, Bantry, Glengarriff, Gougane Barra, Kenmare, Parknasilla, Killarney, Killaloe, Dublin, Belfast, the Antrim Coast, Portstewart, Derry, and Bundoran. At first sight, this seems to resemble the projects of such photographic firms as William Lawrence in offering photographs and lantern slides of all parts of the country. As a less extensive undertaking, however, the Warwick series is far more selectively touristic. Like lantern slides, however, the individual films in the series could be combined and accompanied by a lecture to offer a more extensive tour. Among the other significant British tourist films made in Ireland between *With the Bioscope Through Ireland* and *Beauty Spots of Ireland* are the Gaumont Company's composite film *Picturesque Ireland* (1906), the Charles Urban Trading Company's composite film *Beautiful Erin* (1907), the Alpha Trading Company's *London to Killarney* (1907), the 1908 films from Robert Paul just discussed, and the Pathé Company's *In Ireland – Excursion to Killarney* (1908).

The nature of the composite films varies considerably. Gaumont's *Picturesque Ireland*, which appears in the company's October 1906

catalogue, includes the films *Giant's Causeway* (500 ft), *Tramway Ride Through Belfast* (200 ft), and *Railway Ride from Lagilligan to Coleraine* (400 ft).²³ Urban's *Beautiful Erin* is a more disparate collection of seven films. The November 1906 catalogue offers for separate sale four of the films that would eventually form part of the composite: *Euston to Erin* (580 ft), *Railway Run from Waterford to Wexford* (350 ft), *Transferring Mails at Queenstown* (150 ft), and *Irish Life and Character* (300 ft); and the February 1907 catalogue includes *Glimpses of Erin* (605 ft) and *Irish Scenes and Types* (665 ft).²⁴ Urban advertised these six films and a further one, *Irish Life and Character* (300 ft), under the 'comprehensive title' *Beautiful Erin* in the March 1907 issue of the *Optical Lantern and Kinematograph Journal*.²⁵ Two of the seven, *Features of Ireland* and *Irish Life and Character*, were made by US travel lecturer E. Burton Holmes and his cameraman Oscar Depue, who retained rights for exhibition in the United States.²⁶ Holmes used film in the educative lectures that he delivered to wealthy Americans, and it is not surprising that he should do business in this way with Charles Urban, a producer whose commitment to travel and other factual films was encapsulated in his motto, 'We Put the World Before You', which also formed part of his company's logo. By 1909, Urban's catalogue stretched to 428 pages of non-fiction film from all parts of the world.²⁷

Urban's 1909 catalogue reveals the composite nature of *Beautiful Erin* and underlines the importance of a lecturer to the exhibition of this film. The catalogue offers a detailed scene description for most of its factual films. *Beautiful Erin* is listed in the British Isles subsection of the catalogue's travel section, but the detailed description of films such as *Euston to Erin* and *Railway Run from Waterford to Wexford* appears in the railway section. This presumably reflects the company's opinion that customers keen on rail travel were more likely to purchase the films than customers interested in Ireland. Furthermore, individual films were episodic in themselves. The catalogue entry allows the reader to see how some but not all scenes of *Irish Life and Character* are related. The first three scenes – boys leaving school, a flock of geese, and girls leaving school – are humorously connected to one another, but the fourth scene of two old men singing appears not to be related to these or to the fifth scene of an outdoor dance at a hotel. Unlike Paul's *Whaling Afloat and Ashore*, *Beautiful Erin* would have required considerable input from the lecturer to make the links between the scenes of each of the films as well as between the separate films themselves in the composite.

Beautiful Erin, or part of it, was exhibited at least twice in Dublin,

but it received its longest review in the trade journal the *Irish Tourist*. The first exhibition occurred at the start of January 1907, when a writer in the *Evening Telegraph* praised the Irish Animated Picture Company's (IAPC's) show at the Rotunda:

The entertainment is an excellent one, providing the means of acquiring knowledge in a most interesting form, and also supplying a large fund of enjoyment. Those to whom the expense attendant upon foreign travel is an insuperable bar to attempting it can obtain from the magnificent living pictures now being shown in the Rotunda an idea of foreign lands and incidents of interest which no amount of reading could give; while some of the humorous scenes which are shown are simply irresistible as provocatives of laughter. Among the new scenes at the entertainment are the trials of the 'Patrie' Airship, Japanese pastimes, the Landing of the Mails at Queenstown, Scenes in the West of Ireland, and at Killarney, and Dublin Street Scenes which must prove of particular interest to residents in the city who may chance to see themselves or their friends moving across the screen in life-like reality.²⁸

The focus here on such edifying subjects as acquiring knowledge and foreign travelling abroad accords with Kevin Rockett's identification of the IAPC's audience as predominantly middle class.²⁹ The expense of foreign travel and the advantages of the cinema over literary education are topics in which middle-class readers are more likely to have been interested. *The Landing of the Mails at Queenstown* is most probably the Urban film *Transferring Mails at Queenstown*, and the scenes in the West of Ireland and Killarney could be Urban's *Glimpses of Erin*, a film of eleven scenes that includes one film of the Giant's Causeway, three of Achill, and seven of Killarney. The IAPC are likely to have shot the Dublin scenes: the special attraction that these kinds of films represented for contemporary audiences will be discussed in the next chapter. The second exhibition of *Beautiful Erin*, 'the best of travel pictures,' was to the clearly more proletarian audience of the 'People's Popular Picture Palace' at the Queen's at the beginning of April 1908.³⁰ The Queen's also exhibited a film that is sometimes confused with *Beautiful Erin*, Arthur Melbourne-Cooper's *London to Killarney*. The confusion appears to originate with Anthony Slide's conflation of the two films in his well-known book on Irish cinema, *The Cinema and Ireland*.³¹ Melbourne-Cooper's film remains obscure, but it may be identifiable with a film called *A Trip from London to Killarney* that was exhibited at the Queen's in March 1908, two weeks before the second showing of *Beautiful Erin*.³²

By reviewing *Beautiful Erin*, a powerful tourist lobby in Ireland began to publicly acknowledge these films as an important advertising medium for Ireland as a holiday destination. A long article that appeared in the *Irish Tourist* in 1907 discusses film-making efforts in Ireland as the vanguard of touristic representation. The article recognizes that films of Ireland are directed only at British audiences, and that their virtual tour may induce some members of that audience to become corporeal tourists in Ireland. As we shall see, a similar reception greeted the film-making of the US Kalem Company when they arrived in Ireland in 1910. Noting the intense competition in advertising Irish resorts, the writer in the *Irish Tourist* reveals that

[t]he London and North Western Railway company [...] have recently adopted a most novel method of making known the attractions of their route. At the Alhambra Theatre, London, a cinematograph display, entitled 'Urbanora', has been attracting much interest and attention. The title of the turn reads, 'Euston to Erin, reproducing a trip to Ireland over the most popular route via Crewe and Holyhead: sights and scenes of Irish city and village life. By the courtesy of the London and North Western Railway,' and a most realistic series of pictures follows. The imaginary traveller is carried by express train and steamer via Crewe and Holyhead to Dublin. One of the best views is that of the express steamer leaving Holyhead, and arriving at North Wall, Dublin, where the traveller is safely landed within half an hour of departure from London (Euston). He is then transported to beauty spots in the Counties of Wicklow and Wexford, to Killarney, Queenstown, Cork, Limerick, and the West of Ireland, including Achill Island. Life-like and amusing scenes amongst the peasantry in the West are in contrast to other scenes produced in the series, but all are sure to create a desire on the part of the spectators to visit Erin this year.³³

Setting out from London, this imaginary traveller is clearly of English origin, or is at least naturalized to a metropolitan perspective. The writer implies some shift in representational strategies after the virtual tourist reaches the West of Ireland and experiences some frolics among the peasantry, and the acknowledgement of this shift may reveal the writer's disquiet with the way this British film presents the Irish. The writer appears to be more impressed, however, by such transportation details as the express steamer than with the local colour of the destination.

In Britain, the London and North-Western Railway (L&NWR) appears to have been the company with the most interest in using the cinema as a form of advertising. As the *Irish Tourist* article indicates,

the L&NWR financed part of *Beautiful Erin*, the film called *Euston to Erin*, in order to advertise its new route to Ireland. As well as this film forming part of Urban's composite, it was exhibited by L&NWR with other films it had commissioned. 'One of the most popular shows at Shepherd's Bush this year,' reveals the *Bioscope* in June 1909, 'is the motion picture show run in the interests of the London and North-Western Railway, where tours of Scotland, Ireland, and North Wales are shown every half-hour.'³⁴ The interest of travel companies and tourism promoters in film as an advertising medium during the late 1900s suggests the economic importance of tourism to film production in Ireland during the decade.

The end of the first decade of the twentieth century saw the first sustained period of fiction film-making in Ireland. This reflected the international dominance of story films in the cinema internationally by that time. Numerous reasons doubtless prompted the choice to come to Ireland to shoot on location, but chief among them was surely the existence of a sizeable Irish ethnic population in the cities of the United States. As we have seen in the previous chapter, Ireland also had an globally familiar popular theatrical imaginary in the work of Dion Boucicault. The opening up of the transatlantic tourist routes by Thomas Cook and other companies in the mid-1890s made possible the promotion of Irish resorts in North America. It was on such tourist routes that US film companies would travel and around which they would construct stories of personal migrations. They would construct their spectators as virtual tourists, and they would choose Killarney as their emblematic Irish location.

KILLARNEY, THE NINETEENTH-CENTURY FOCUS OF THE TOURIST GAZE

In one of the most frequently recounted stories of early film production in Ireland, in the summer of 1911 a priest in the village of Beaufort, Co. Kerry, berated 'those tramp photographers' of the US Kalem Film Company in the summer of 1911. The members of the company had based themselves in the village because it offered convenient access to the famous tourist sights around Killarney. As Kalem actress and scenarist Gene Gauntier tells it, they believed that they had established a good rapport with the locals, not least through the money they spent employing 'peasants' and 'pony boys'. The Catholic members of the crew were shocked, therefore, when they attended mass one Sunday to witness the priest's attack, which included the

order that his parishioners not assist the outsiders and, indeed, that they “grab their shillelaghs” and drive them out of Beaufort and across the bridge of the River Laune’. Because this was a part of Ireland where ‘there was not much law and order’, the Kalem crew awaited ‘the onslaught of the half hundred pony boys’ of the district. The tension ended the following day, however, after director Sidney Olcott appealed to the bishop in Killarney, who ensured that ‘the young firebrand was removed to another parish’.³⁵

The parishioners’ reluctance to follow the priest’s instructions may have had a number of sources, including a curiosity about the film-making process and local people’s potential loss of earnings. Among them also was surely an understanding of what the film-makers were doing: they were taking landscape views in an area in which the commodification of scenic beauty had been of economic importance for over 150 years. Located at a strategic point on the road between Killarney and the Gap of Dunloe, the people of Beaufort were accustomed to hosting strangers in search of the picturesque. ‘Mr. Olcott had a great eye for a picture’, recalls Annie O’Sullivan, whose father accommodated the Kalem crew, ‘and travelled far and wide to take in the most attractive scenes.’³⁶

The construction of a tourist subject seeking natural beauty, ‘with an eye for a picture’, has a long history. Travel writers and visual artists had begun the visual commodification of Killarney under the banner of the picturesque by the late eighteenth century. In his examination of Romanticism and Irish film, Luke Gibbons quotes Raymond Immerwahr’s study of the origins of European Romanticism:

Beginning about 1755, the picturesque landscape really comes into its own in descriptions of Ireland and the English lake country. The adjective is applied a number of times to the environs of Lake Killarney in Charles Smith’s book on *The Antient and Present State of the County of Kerry*.³⁷

Prints frequently accompanied a descriptive account of the region’s scenic spots, or a short account provided an introduction to a collection of prints. Writing of Kerry in the 1770s, T. J. Barrington notes that the ‘practice of making prints – elegant but often wildly inaccurate – of views of Killarney and its surroundings began about this time. The first artist of note seems to have been Jonathan Fisher, a Dublin draper, who published six copper plate engravings of Killarney in 1770.’³⁸ Fisher recommends these ‘detached prints’ to the readers of his 1789 *Picturesque Tour of Killarney*, a work with a six-page

description of the sights of the district followed by twenty aquatint prints.³⁹ Set out as a four-day walking and boat tour of the district, the description aims 'to lead the curious (who visit the Lake) to points of view, where the sublime and beautiful are most picturesquely combined'.⁴⁰ The prints apparently strive to satisfy the curiosity of those who do not visit the lake.

The large format of Fisher's book confirms that it is intended more for the virtual than the corporeal tourist. The beginning of the nineteenth century saw the appearance of books that could function as both illustrative travel literature and tourist guides. While it lacks illustrations, the Reverend John Jones's brief 1806 exploration of what was then called the Lake of Killarney begins by indicating that the area

affords such an ample field for nice investigation, and such an inexhaustible fund of rational entertainment, that it should engage, as it does, the attention of the philosopher, the naturalist, the poet, of every one who is not insensible to the glories of creation. To draw a meer [*sic*] outline of this celebrated natural curiosity shall here be attempted.⁴¹

While Jones's 'drawing' is confined to words, sixteen prints, one elevation view, and two maps adorn Isaac Weld's weightier *Illustrations of the Scenery of Killarney and the Surrounding Country* (1807). It justifies its publication by arguing that

the following pages [are] descriptive of a part of the united kingdom [*sic*], which, though confessedly interesting, has hitherto remained very imperfectly known. The lake of Killarney, however, has not wholly escaped notice: in every general account of Ireland its extraordinary beauty has been dwelt on; it has been the theme of the poet; and has afforded subjects for a great variety of engravings.⁴²

Including two views of Muckross Abbey, Weld engages in imaginative historical reconstruction:

[T]he sight of a monastery carries us back to distant ages, and gives rise to a train of reflection which every mind of sensibility feels a pleasure in indulging [...] Hither the aged peasants from the neighbouring hamlets flocked, in the hours of sickness and of affliction, to obtain the advice and consolation of the ghostly fathers, to crave the boon of charity, or implore the blessing of Heaven on the labours of their toiling offspring.⁴³

‘Although there have been published many picturesque and poetic descriptions of the sublime scenery of Lough Lein,’ writes G. N. Wright in the preface to his 1822 *Guide to the Lakes of Killarney*, ‘not a single *Guide* or *Directory* for Visitors [*sic*] has yet seen the light.’⁴⁴ Among the books of his predecessors, he praises Weld’s as ‘an extremely interesting and useful work for the residents of Kerry’. He sees it as inadequate, however, because it ‘does not point out what measures the Tourist is to adopt, the moment he arrives at the Inn in Killarney, and at each subsequent period of his stay’.⁴⁵ He aims to address the practicalities of tourist travel in his small book, as well as providing illumination of the sights through both words and a modest number of engravings based on designs by artist and antiquarian George Petrie.

Prints continued to be used in guidebooks throughout the nineteenth century. Probably the most renowned Victorian guide to Ireland was Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Hall’s three-volume *Ireland: Its Scenery, Character, &c.* (1841–43) and the numerous regional guides with which they followed it. Among these is *A Week at Killarney*, first published in 1843. The Halls took advantage of the publicity created by Queen Victoria’s four-day visit to Killarney in August 1861 to issue a revised edition in 1865. This later book is illustrated not only with the many wood engravings alongside the text that had appeared in the 1843 edition but also with twelve additional lavish steel engravings from drawings by Thomas Creswich and William Henry Bartlett, printed on separate inset pages. The steel engravings aim to convey the sublimity of the landscape, emphasizing the insignificance of human figures, the jaggedness of rocks and islands, and the steepness of mountain passes.⁴⁶ This is in harmony with the Halls’ text. As well as prominently featuring descriptions of such landscape, they also promote Ireland as the ideal destination for English painters. These artists would find that, because of their ‘peasant’ clothing and because they tended to be seen in groups, the inhabitants of scenic districts, represented a ‘valuable accessory [*sic*] to the landscape’.⁴⁷

The work of one theatre artist intertwines remarkably with Victoria’s visit to Killarney. It was partly the discovery, in New York, of a set of steel engravings of Killarney in New York that inspired Dion Boucicault to write his 1860 melodrama *The Colleen Bawn* in that city. Whereas Gerald Griffin’s novel *The Collegians* provided the main source for the dramatic incidents of the play, the tourist sights of Killarney provided the main inspiration for its sensational setting. Boucicault’s discovery in New York these steel engravings demonstrates the reach of images produced by the region’s tourist trade in

the mid-nineteenth century. Because of this, tourist views of the Killarney lakes, the Gap of Dunloe, Muckross Head, and the Old Weir Bridge, featured prominently in a play that had record runs in New York in 1860, in London and provincial cities in Britain from September 1860, in Dublin in early 1861, and, thereafter, all over the English-speaking world and beyond. Queen Victoria was an enthusiastic patron of *The Colleen Bawn*, attending the play three times between its opening in London in September 1860 and the death of Prince Albert in December 1861, which put an end to her theatre-going. As well as creating a theatrical sensation and making Boucicault a fortune, *The Colleen Bawn*, and the works it spawned, notably Julius Benedict's opera *The Lily of Killarney*, served as another mode by which Killarney was promoted.

Writers generally agree that Queen Victoria's visit was instrumental in raising the profile of the area as a tourist destination, but it was not the only factor.⁴⁸ The press following the royal visit sent reports and images of Killarney all across the Empire and further. This international media event had been preceded by the less-sensational visit of the Prince of Wales to Killarney in 1858. If the royal visits made Killarney 'the place where every self respecting Victorian visited',⁴⁹ improvements in the transport infrastructure that were made around the same time, most notably the opening of the Great Southern and Western Railway line to Killarney in July 1853, ensured that this could be carried out in large numbers and in relative comfort.

Many visitors to Killarney carried a version of the Halls' guidebook. The composite nature of the text reinforces the distance from the Irish rural poor constructed for the viewer of the Creswick and Bartlett illustrations. A typical chapter of the guides begins with statistical and historical information on the district covered, includes details of the practicalities of touring the area and of the Halls' personal experiences there, and offers accounts of local customs and characters for which Mrs. Hall had become famous in her literary work. All this served to locate the reader-viewer at the intersection of multiple streams of information that ensured the superiority of the literate tourist. In their Prefaces and Concluding Remarks, the books explicitly address English tourists, whom they wish to bring to Ireland for the purpose of instilling in them an informed empathy for the Irish. As it is expressed in *A Week at Killarney* and in the 1878 pocket-sized *Companion to Killarney*:

We again express our conviction that they will return to their homes in happier and more prosperous England, with a higher estimation of, and a kinder feeling towards, the country and its people: nevertheless, they will be often startled, saddened, and pained by the knowledge of how much must yet be done for both, to enable both to take the position that God and Nature intended them to occupy – and which, of a surety, they will occupy at no very distant period.⁵⁰

If the inferiority of Ireland is here reassuringly asserted, by the second half of the nineteenth century, the guidebook had to broach the question of the safety of the country. Citing their own experiences in Ireland, the Halls obligingly dismissed the dangers of “agrarian disturbances,” and of “agitators” who strive – in vain – to excite hatred of “the Saxon” in the people.⁵¹

Reassured of their metropolitan superiority and of their safety, English visitors to Killarney in the 1860s could acquire arbutus mementoes.⁵² Made from the distinctive wood of the locally plentiful arbutus or strawberry-tree, these items typically offered representations of the neighbouring sights. They were produced by local craftsmen, the most famous of whom were the Egans. Their workshop produced a range of wooden mementoes, from simple carvings to elaborately inlaid furniture, to suit the pockets of all classes of tourist. ‘An Oxonian’ comments:

Egan’s Bog-oak and Arbutus warehouse well deserves a visit. Here we learn from a ledger, opening, as ledgers will, at a brilliant galaxy of noble names, which makes a commoner’s eyes wink, how the Right Honourable the Earl of Cash bought an elaborate table for my Lady’s boudoir, and how Rear-Admiral Sir Bowline Bluff made purchase of a Backgammon board, marvelously inlaid, over which I venture to surmise, he has ere this discoursed in stony language, when the gout and the dice have been against him. Let us tread softly and at a distance, in these illustrious footprints, and buy our meek memorials of Killarney.⁵³

At the top of the ‘brilliant galaxy of noble names’ in the Egans’ ledger were Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. On the occasion of the royal visit to Killarney in 1861, they received examples of ‘Killarney style’ or ‘Muckross Abbey’ furniture, the latter name registering the frequency with which that local sight featured on such furniture. An article in the *Tralee Chronicle and Killarney Echo* describing the davenport presented to the queen shows the sophistication of marquetry in Killarney at the time:

In the centre of the desktop is a representation of Glena-cottage surrounded by a wreath of roses, shamrocks and thistles. This accurate representation, and all the others on the same piece of furniture, are made by the insertion or inlaying of pieces of wood, which has been accomplished in a highly artistic manner. On the upper part of the desk the royal arms and the letters VR are inserted. In the panels of the doors concealing the drawers are similarly executed representations of Muckcross-abbey, Ross Castle, Innisfallen, Aghadoe and Dunloe Castle. At one side is seen Killarney House, with the Kenmare arms. At the opposite side Ross Castle is presented to the view. The royal arms are also on the front panels.⁵⁴

If such handcrafted works achieved prominence in the early 1860s, the later years of that decade saw the wide-scale commercial introduction of mechanical image production in the shape of photography. Although the Halls remained loyal to the work of the engraver in their books, they advise their Killarney-bound readers in 1865 that

there are plenty of photographs of the Lake scenery to be obtained in Dublin. But visitors will do well to postpone purchases until they are at Killarney, where they will find a skilful and intelligent artist – Mr. Hudson – who has a large stock of views, taken by himself, which exhibit nearly all the places of interest and beauty in the locality.⁵⁵

John Hudson was resident in Killarney and provided the images that constituted the Killarney volume of a photographic series on Ireland published by the Glasgow-based Andrew Duthie.⁵⁶ Frederick Holland Mares, who took most of the photographs in the other volumes of the Duthie series, also published a collection on Killarney in 1867, *Sunny Memories of Ireland's Scenic Beauties: Killarney*.⁵⁷

Alongside these elaborate pictorial works and the Halls' books, which could be enjoyed at least as much by the virtual traveller as the actual tourist, by the 1860s publishers were producing pocket tourist guides that focused as much on the practicalities of travel in Ireland as on description of the sights. The Scottish firm of Adam and Charles Black issued a sparsely illustrated pocket guide in 1867, devoting 25 of its 111 pages to Killarney. By the time of its twenty-second edition in 1909, printing technology and practices had changed so much that four of its five illustrations were photographs.⁵⁸ By the early years of the twentieth century, the traveller could have in his or her pocket the sights of Killarney distilled down to a few photographic views.

Increasingly, however, the informed tourist was choosing some of Ireland's other resorts.

THE MUTOSCOPE IN THE ROUND TOWER

'Killarney is about the one spot in Ireland which was, until recently, known as beautiful to those Americans who had supposed they had seen all that was worth seeing in Europe, and who had really visited Ireland,' writes Marie O'Dowda in the *Irish Tourist* trade journal in 1900,

and, certainly, all declare it to be unique – there is nothing, of its kind, to equal it on the surface of the globe but is it not reasonable to suppose that a country where lay embedded such a gem of natural beauties should have within its environs similar or relative scenes of loveliness?⁵⁹

A 1911 article in a local paper unfavourably compares the advanced tourist development in Killarney with the relatively unspoiled Leenane in Connemara:

I am in the heart of Leisure Island. No such thing as a town or a railway for miles and miles. Nothing to connect you with the hurry and scurry of alleged civilization save the single thin line of telegraph wire that stretches along the mountain roads and gets lost among the loughs and hills, and the countless dancing rivulets where swim the speckled trout. None of the 'tourist atmosphere' of beautiful Killarney, yet much of the same sort of scenery and more of it.⁶⁰

This image of the lone tourist gazing on a sublime landscape that swallows up the faint signs of modernity shows how the romantic tourism that had long been associated with Killarney had found new Irish destinations. The development of poor areas of Ireland as tourist sights had powerful and articulate advocates in the country. The theme of tourism as a panacea for the economic ills of Ireland had played a prominent part in the tourism discourse at least since the 1890s, becoming the main ideological current in F. W. Crossley's trade journal, the *Irish Tourist* (1894–1908). This publication was also concerned with how representations of Ireland and the Irish impacted on the tourist traffic, particularly that from Britain. In the editorial introducing the first issue, it announces that

[t]he mission of THE IRISH TOURIST is to make better known to the world this country's charm and beauty and to attract multitudinous visitors to annually sojourn at our health and pleasure resorts and thus leave with us that historic 'plethora of wealth,' which might act as the panacea for Ireland's ills.⁶¹

If it is a little coy here about the way in which it presents the economic potential of tourism, it was soon to show in practical terms how the introduction of a rationalized industrial tourism could cure distress in economically depressed areas of the West. Noting the poverty of Achill, Co. Mayo, an article in the second issue argues that

although scenery will not feed a starving cottier at Dooagh or Dooega, we put forward the natural beauties of the 'Isle of the Eagles' as an available and valuable asset in the administration of its affairs that has been undertaken by the Congested Districts Board. [...] Achill island, in our opinion, might be developed as a health and pleasure resort into a place of comparative prosperity. Its relief will certainly never be found in grain-growing; but by well-directed enterprise in the direction stated a considerable amount of 'hard cash' might be forced annually into that district. [...] A Sanatorium established on the site proposed would prove a commercial success, and would also prove the pioneer project for the development of the island's natural resources. [...] During the winter months the establishment might be utilized as a training school for the girls of the district as hotel and housemaids.⁶²

The euphemistic 'leave with us that historic "plethora of wealth"' is here replaced by the frank 'a considerable amount of "hard cash" might be forced annually into that district'. The impression is that the exploitable natural resource of the region is not an extractable mineral or fertile soil but scenic landscape, which, in providential fashion, is the given when other resources are lacking. By drawing the attention of the inhabitants in picturesque but poor regions of the West to the marketable value of the landscape (and, in this case, by advocating the establishment of a kind of tourism factory), the promoters of tourism attempted to redirect their energies from agricultural production to another seasonal harvest, the tourist.

Other writers were less sanguine about the benefits of tourist development to local people. 'Ah! I like this spot. I like this view. This would be a jolly good place for a hotel and a golf links. Friday to Tuesday, railway ticket and hotel all inclusive.'⁶³ So speculates English

civil engineer Tom Broadbent in George Bernard Shaw's 1904 play *John Bull's Other Island*, the most famous Edwardian dramatic portrayal of incipient tourism in Ireland. When Broadbent travels to rural Rosscullen with his partner Larry Doyle, an emigrant from the area who has not returned in eighteen years, it is clear that the tourist infrastructure is poor. While Doyle decides to drive in their motor car on what are later revealed to be very bad roads, Broadbent travels in 'a monster jaunting car, black and dilapidated, one of the last survivors of the public vehicles known to earlier generations as Beeyankiny cars, the Irish having laid violent tongues on the name of their projector, one Bianconi, an enterprising Italian'. That Rosscullen is still served by the Bianconi car rather than the railway at the start of the twentieth century marks it out as something of a backwater. It is similarly lacking in what is now called visitor accommodation. As there is no hotel in the locality, Broadbent accepts the food and lodgings offered by Doyle's family in their humble cottage.

These signs of the experience of the genteel traveller, however, come under threat during the play. Its dénouement turns on the question of who should gain ownership of the land in Rosscullen, the former tenant farmers and local tradesmen or the syndicate represented by Doyle and the seemingly bumbling Broadbent. It is because of their superior efficiency, their apparent ability to wring higher productivity from the land, that Broadbent and Doyle emerge by the play's end as the almost certain victors in this struggle. Under their plan, the locals are to become their employees or be disposed of, motor boats are to exploit the river's amenity value (in the process closing an inefficient mill), and the ruined round tower is to be turned into a tourist attraction, 'with admission six-pence, and refreshments and penny-in-the-slot mutoscopes to make it interesting'. They intend to rationalize the relationship of the people to the landscape until, as Peter Keegan, Rosscullen's visionary former priest, points out, 'at last this poor desolate countryside becomes a busy mint in which we shall all slave to make money for you'.

Local people's lack of knowledge of tourism is a key feature of this discourse on the subject. For the *Irish Tourist*, this results in continued poverty in areas that could otherwise take the initiative of exploiting a local resource and so reap the benefits of capitalist modernity. For Shaw, the internecine conflicts for position in rural communities after the purchase of land for tenants under the Land Acts leaves such communities vulnerable to the depredations of metropolitan entrepreneurs.

Shaw's mention of the mutoscope here locates a moving-picture

entertainment as an adjunct to mass tourism. The relationship between the cinematograph and tourism in Ireland, however, was more complex than this; it began with the production and exhibition of films by Lumière cameramen. The fascination of film-makers with travel, indeed, is evident in the first public projection of cinematographic images. Among the approximately fifty-second *actualités* that the Lumière brothers exhibited in Paris in December 1895, the film *Arrivée d'un train en gare à La Ciotat* was received with such enthusiasm that exaggerated accounts of audiences' panicky reactions to it became cinema's founding myth or 'primal scene'.⁶⁴

On 20 April 1896, Dan Lowrey's Star Theatre of Varieties in Dublin attempted to satisfy the public curiosity for the new invention by hosting the first public exhibition of moving pictures. Both manager and audience were disappointed by the quality of the images. Lowrey went to London to negotiate with the Lumières' agent, Felicien Trewey, who was enjoying an exclusive run with the *cinématographe* at the Empire Theatre, Leicester Square, that would last fifty-nine weeks, until May 1897.⁶⁵ The 'original Cinématographe' opened at the Star in early November and was seen by 7,000 people in its first week. The show included films of Westminster Bridge, a cavalry charge, the wedding of Princess Maude of Wales, and sea bathing.⁶⁶

In a contribution to the myth of film's relationship with its audience, however, *Arrivée d'un Train* was the film that most caught the imagination of the *Freeman's Journal* reviewer of the November shows:

To those who witness the exhibition for the first time the effect is simply startling. The figures are thrown upon a screen erected in front of the audience, and taking one of the scenes depicted – that of a very busy railway terminus into which the locomotive and a number of carriages attached dash with great rapidity, the effect is not only wonderful, but is so realistic that for the moment one is almost apt to forget that the representation is artificial. When the train comes to a standstill the passengers are seen hurrying out of the carriages, bearing their luggage, the greetings between themselves and their friends are all presented perfectly true to life, and the scene is an exact reproduction of the life and bustle and tumult which is every day to be witnessed at the great railway depots of the world.⁶⁷

It was not only the audience, though, that was fascinated by the movement that was the *raison d'être* of the cinematographic apparatus and frequently its subject. Because they relied for their exhibition space on

such forms of entertainment as the fairground and the music hall, forms that in their different ways might be called transient, film producers travelled to display their wares. They travelled to see, and they travelled to show. It is likely that the Lumière films shot in Ireland in 1897 were taken by the firm's roving cameraman Alexandre Promio. On 21 October 1897, during the successful first season in Britain of the new Lumière triograph projector, Promio gave a private screening of a number of English and Irish subjects.⁶⁸

Promio is credited with originating 'panoramic views', travelling shots in which the subject is filmed from a moving vehicle. When later taken with a camera attached to the front of moving vehicles, such as speeding trains, these shots were called 'phantom rides', a term that acknowledges their similarity to the visceral effects of a fairground attraction. Promio's term, however, better captures the vista out of the train window seen by the passenger leaving a city that his films offer. Although fourteen of the twenty-five Lumière Irish films consist of street scenes in Dublin and Belfast, eleven are panoramas.

Quoting Wolfgang Schivelbusch, Lynne Kirby calls the perception shared by the rail passenger and the spectator of early cinema 'panoramic perception'. The term, she argues, underscores 'the sense in which what early train travelers referred to as the "annihilation of space and time" owed something to the effect of the panorama, an eighteenth-century invention that was the virtual reality experience of its day'.⁶⁹ This kind of perception was native to the railroad's subject, the tourist, who was 'invested in the consumption of images and motion – that is, physical displacement – for entertainment'. Kirby's argument for 'early cinema's status as an entertainment medium partly defined by the railroad' is most clearly illustrated by the fairground exhibition practices of Hale's Tours in the United States. 'Here,' writes Kirby, 'films shot from moving trains were projected inside converted railroad cars, thus advancing film's appeal to a mass spectatorship common to both the train and the cinema and joining the tourism of the passenger to that of the spectator.'⁷⁰ Hale's Tours and their imitators were a sensation at such summer resorts as Kansas City's Electric Park and Coney Island in 1905 and 1906, and while some of them existed into the 1910s, they lost their influence over mainstream cinematic exhibition practices in America after 1906.⁷¹

It was only in 1906 that Ward C. Gifford brought Hale's Tours to Europe⁷² and in 1907 that the phenomenon finally reached Ireland.⁷³ The promoter of the show in Ireland was Will C. Pepper, who acquired the premises of the former Savoy Theatre of Varieties near

the Grafton Street corner of Dublin's South Anne Street and advertised it as, alternately, Savoy Station and Grafton Station. The first programme featured *A Trip Through the Canadian Rockies* and *Lumber Camp*, and a contemporary review offers a description of the entertainment:

Much interest was centred in the opening yesterday afternoon of the 'Savoy Station', which may be described as the Dublin terminus of Messrs. Hale's tours. [...] As the tours are new to Dublin it should be mentioned that they are conducted by an ingenious arrangement, in which the important factors are a railway carriage and a cinematograph. The 'tourist' enters the carriage – which in its construction resembles a Pullman car – and takes his seat. The lights go out, and the panel at the top end of the carriage opens revealing a bioscope view of the track in front, and the surrounding scenery. Yesterday's tour was across Canada, on the Canadian Pacific Railway. It was very realistic. The passengers experienced all the sensations of travelling through the delightful country in a comfortable railway carriage. The rush of the train through the pine forests, across the broad bridges spanning the creeks, and up the steep slopes of mountains was very faithfully executed. The lurching of the carriage going round the curves could be unmistakably felt. The tourist was afforded a splendid view of the trees being felled, and the logs being rolled into the rivers; the splash caused by the timbers as they struck the water could be heard, and had the effect of heightening the illusion. The whole was carried out in a most convincing way, and the least imaginative mind had to yield to the spell.⁷⁴

Hale's Tours is merely the most spectacular evidence for exhibition practices in Ireland that show the influence on the cinematic spectator of train travel and the panoramic perception of the rail tourist. Cinema offered its audience a modern way of looking at the world, mediated by new technology. As we have seen above, the films produced in Ireland between 1900 and 1915 by film companies based in Britain and the United States evince the fostering of a tourist gaze focused on scenic views and local colour. By accepting the viewing position offered by the camera, the spectators in the cinema distinguished themselves from the rural poor depicted on the screen. The business links between rail companies and these film producers active in Ireland encouraged the proliferation of such films. Furthermore, British and American film-makers engaged in fostering in film a romantic tourist gaze that is not apparent in the Lumière films. With their panoramas and street scenes, the Irish Lumière films evince a

remarkably similar *mise en scène* to Lumière productions shot elsewhere. The effect is to emphasize the simultaneity of modernity in many parts of the world. The next chapter, on participative modes of spectatorship, takes up in more detail the dynamics of the Lumières' Irish city films; here it will be sufficient to note the contrast between a modernity that is seen in the Lumière films to be widely spread across the globe and the unequal development that is crucial to the tourist gaze.

From the turn of the century, distinctions already existed between Irish-made films produced primarily for exhibition in Ireland and those produced for consumption abroad. The contrasts between the 1900 films shot in Ireland by the Warwick Trading Company and those shot for and exhibited by the Thomas-Edison Animated Picture Company offer a useful point of departure for an examination of how this occurs. These contrasts may also indicate some of the differences between the attractions of virtual tourism and the kinds of participative modes of spectatorship that the next chapter examines. As seen above, most of the Irish items listed in the Warwick Trading Company's catalogue of October 1900 are tourist films belonging to the series *With the Bioscope Through Ireland*. The films exhibited by the Edison Animated Pictures at the Rotunda, Dublin, and other venues during the company's 1901–2 season appear to have been far more in the nature of local views and newsreels of local events. The events depicted include news stories, local sporting events (including Gaelic games), workers leaving factories, street scenes in Dublin, and children playing.⁷⁵ The majority of these films seem to invoke the gaze of a participant, assuming an amount of local knowledge and interest unlikely to have been available to even the informed tourist.

The textual dichotomy between local and tourist films should not, however, disguise the fact that the moving-picture business as a whole represented a manifestation of a capitalist modernity that provoked ambivalent responses. Shaw's vision of the mutoscope in the round tower suggests the penetration of moving-picture entertainments not only into the Irish hinterland but also into one of the privileged places of Irish nationalist discourse. Frequently used in nationalist iconography, the round tower indicates Rosscullen's political prelapsarian past as a centre of religion and learning. For Shaw, the mutoscope is one manifestation of an encroaching capitalism that must put the past to work and incorporate indigenous small holders as employees. In tandem with a tourist infrastructure developing outside the traditional resorts in the 1900s, the cinematograph show provided moving

images of this new West. When film-makers from the Kalem Company made their transatlantic trip in 1910, however, they came to Killarney.

THE O'KALEMS IN KILLARNEY

The earliest surviving fictional film image of Irish people is of a group of workers harvesting turf on a bog. The shot is so composed that four figures are easily distinguishable: three men in the foreground cutting the sods and an elderly woman who moves around the men, throwing cut sods over her shoulder into a basket on her back. A donkey stands somewhat behind these figures and a whitewashed cottage is visible in the distance. Of the three men, the two standing beside each other on the left-hand side of the frame, like the woman, are clearly practised in their task and work steadily throughout the single-shot scene. The third man, on the right, however, disrupts this idyllic image of rural labour. He draws the eye because he is slightly nearer the camera than the other men, because he is closer to the edge of the frame than harmony of composition would seem to demand, and because his agitation is tangible as he works fitfully and ends the scene by throwing down his spade and appealing to the heavens.

This man is also differentiated from his companions by the fact that, while they remain anonymous, anyone who seeks out this film, *The Lad from Old Ireland*, is likely to know his name. He is Sidney Olcott, the Canadian-Irish film director and actor. Born John Sidney Alcott of Irish parents in Toronto in 1874, Olcott was the premier director with the New York-based Kalem Film Company.⁷⁶ His companions in the scene are likely to be farm workers from County Cork, staging an everyday activity for the camera.

In 1910, Olcott made a pioneering trip to Ireland with scenarist and actress Gene Gauntier, and cameraman George Hollister. On their voyage to Queenstown, they began filming *The Lad from Old Ireland*, the first surviving fiction film shot substantially in Ireland.⁷⁷ This film shows how Terry (Olcott), unhappy with his lot in rural Ireland, emigrates to New York, where, after ten years, he has worked himself up from a job on a building site to success in public office and high society. Learning of the desperate plight of Aileen (Gauntier), his half-forgotten sweetheart, Terry returns to Ireland to save her from eviction and marry her.

Luke Gibbons has pointed out the importance of the Irish landscape to the films made by the Kalem film-makers in Ireland (the 'O'Kalems'), particularly in those films they made when they returned

in greater numbers to Killarney in the summer of 1911 and in subsequent years until 1914.⁷⁸ The above account of *The Lad from Old Ireland* indicates some of the wider contextual relevance of tourism to the O'Kalem project. The film's myth of the triumphant return of the emigrant as a kind of tourist is directed primarily at the diasporic Irish in the United States, whom it constructs as virtual tourists. Its counterpart, the solving of Ireland's problems by tourist wealth, dovetails nicely with the turn-of-the-century Irish discourse on tourism as a panacea for Ireland's ills. Furthermore, as represented in the travel writing produced by the O'Kalems themselves, the film-making process emerges as a kind of tourism.

Kalem was one of the smallest of the ten companies admitted to the US Motion Picture Patents Company (MPPC). The MPPC was a cartel established by Edison that attempted to regulate the burgeoning film industry during the nickelodeon era to its members' advantage by pooling the patents on film production and exhibition technology and licensing all who wished to use them. As Gauntier's autobiographical series of articles in *Woman's Home Companion* reveals, Kalem made a virtue of their initial lack of studios by focusing on action films in real outdoor locations rather than in front of painted sets.⁷⁹ The company took their focus on location filming a stage further in 1910 by gambling on the expense of sending a small film crew overseas in 1910. Eileen Bowser shows that Kalem were at the forefront of a search by US film companies for increased scenic realism that also saw Vitagraph and IMP shooting on location outside the continental United States. 'Local color is the order of the day in moving pictures making,' noted the *Moving Picture World* (MPW) early in 1911.⁸⁰ By promoting the pictures made in Ireland, England, and Germany, and on their journey to and from these countries, on the basis of their authentic locations, they succeeded in distinguishing their products in the marketplace. The use of the two-part landscape titles in the 1911 films serves to reinforce this message, to foreground the background. References to the landscape in which the O'Kalem films were shot are made in four of their six surviving films. These are *Rory O'More* (United States: Kalem, principal photography Ireland 1911; US release 4/9/1911), *The Colleen Bawn* (United States: Kalem, 1911; 16/10/1911), *For Ireland's Sake* (United States: Gene Gauntier Feature Players, 1913; 12/1/1914), and *Bold Emmett, Ireland's Martyr* (United States: Sid Olcott International Feature Film Players, 1914; 11/8/1915). The landscape intertitles that are a particular feature of *Rory O'More* and *The Colleen Bawn*, however, represent something of

an anomaly if, as Eileen Bowser argues, '[b]y 1911 some producers were trying to tell stories with an absolute minimum of words, and this was thought of as the artistic ideal'.⁸¹

The O'Kalems disrupted coherent film narrative, such as it existed before 1914, and, in order to address the virtual tourist, eschewed the artistic ideal of employing the fewest words to explain that narrative in order to address the virtual tourist. Reference to Irish landscape and tourist sights was the *raison d'être* of O'Kalem travelogues, such as the fictionalized *Irish Honeymoon* (1910; 8/3/1911) and the non-fiction *O'Kalems Visit to Killarney* (1911; 5/1/1912). The shallow fiction *Irish Honeymoon* boosts its virtual tourism by offering a honeymooning couple – tourists – as its viewpoint characters. Fiction films that could not justify breaks in the narrative illusion, however, risked alienating their spectators. 'Audiences were fascinated with the details of how movies were made,' asserts Bowser, '[... b]ut for the duration of the film, the spectator wanted to be able to suspend disbelief.'⁸² The Kalem Company must have felt that the competitive advantage that references to the Irish landscape conferred outweighed concerns over loss of narrative illusion, and the popularity of the O'Kalem films would seem to confirm that feeling.

The nature of the intertitles varies in the four surviving films that make references to the landscape. *The Colleen Bawn*, *For Ireland's Sake*, and *Bold Emmett, Ireland's Martyr* indicate in their opening titles that they were shot in Ireland. There is a reference to Muckross Abbey in the course of *For Ireland's Sake*, but it is integrated in such a way that it does not serve to distance the spectator from the narrative. The two-part format of a number of the intertitles in *Rory O'More* and *The Colleen Bawn*, however, directs the spectator's gaze, first, to the narrative action and, second and distinctly, to the landscape in which this action takes place. These 1911 films draw particular attention to the conditions of their own production, reminding their spectators that Kalem sent a company to Ireland to capture authentic Irish locations.

The two landscape intertitles in *Rory O'More* establish a format that is followed in *The Colleen Bawn*. Loosely adapted from Samuel Lover's novel, play, and ballad of the same name, *Rory O'More* is a single-reel, approximately nine-minute drama concerning the escape of the eponymous fictional 1798 rebel from the British authorities to exile in America. It is while Rory is chased through the countryside by the red-coats, that the landscape intertitles appear. These two titles relate to the two locations in which pursuit takes place: the Gap of Dunloe and

the Lakes of Killarney. The chase sequence opens with the first landscape intertitle, which begins: 'LEARNING OF THE INTENDED CAPTURE, KATHLEEN WARNS RORY'. This continues below a dividing line in a smaller font size: 'NEAR THE GAP OF DUNLOE'. The second title occurs at the climax of the chase. It announces that 'RORY RESCUES THE DROWNING SOLDIER' and continues, in the same style as before, beneath a dividing line in a smaller font, 'LAKES OF KILLARNEY'.

Of all their surviving films, it is the O'Kalems' adaptation of Dion Boucicault's *Colleen Bawn* that contains the most references to the Killarney landscape. Among the film's opening titles is an 'explanatory title' that reads: 'Every scene, including interiors, in this Irish production was made in Ireland, and in the exact location described in the original play.' The more extensive material in brackets in *The Colleen Bawn* gives a fuller picture of how the Kalem Company viewed the spectators of their O'Kalem films. Three kinds of information are provided: that relating to the landscape, that relating to Boucicault's play, and that relating to Daniel O'Connell's furniture. The titles relating to the landscape of Killarney not only indicate scenes taken at such spectacular tourist sights as the Gap of Dunloe and Muckcross Head but also at such wholly mundane locations as 'A PEAT BOG NEAR THE KILLARNEY LAKES'. In this last case, it seems that virtual tourists must, like their actual counterparts, endure the ordinary, in contrast to which the extraordinary gains its special character. The title also helps explain to the uninitiated what the Colleen Bawn (Gauntier) is doing at the opening of the scene when she bends to pick up sods and throw them over her shoulder into a basket on her back.

The information on Boucicault's drama and the single title referring to Daniel O'Connell more directly relate to how the O'Kalems constructed their audience. The concern with the faithfulness to the play of such titles as 'SHOWING THE IDENTICAL LANDING DESCRIBED BY BOUCICAULT IN HIS PLAY' and 'EXACT REPRODUCTION OF THE INTERIOR OF THE ORIGINAL DANNY MANN COTTAGE' indicates an audience intimately familiar with the stage version. The single unmotivated reference to the Irish Liberator in the title, 'THE BED USED IN THIS SCENE BELONGED TO DANIEL O'CONNELL AND WAS OCCUPIED BY HIM', reveals that the intended audience is Irish and Irish-American. It was only such audiences who, without further explanation, would have been aware of the implications of this title.

It is not only in the representation of scenic landscape that the tourist gaze manifests itself in these films. Portrayals of work also seem to evince exoticism. In his book *The Tourist: A New Theory of the*

Leisure Class, sociologist Dean MacCannell uses the term ‘work display’ to describe the way in which the work of others has become an object of fascination for the tourist gaze.⁸³ MacCannell contends that the internal differentiation of modern societies means that their members are unable, by virtue of the limiting perspective of their own social role, to grasp the totality of the workings of the society in which they are embedded and so seek insight into the workings of modernity in the course of tourist travel to other societies. ‘The act of sightseeing,’ he writes,

is uniquely well-suited among leisure alternatives to draw the tourist into a relationship with the modern social totality. [...] As a tourist, the individual may step out into the universal drama of modernity. As a tourist, the individual may attempt to grasp the division of labor as a phenomenon *sui generis* and become a moral witness to its masterpieces of violence and viciousness.⁸⁴

The concern with the display of work in *The Lad from Old Ireland* and subsequent O’Kalem films is striking at a time when the types of film narrative that were to become the dominant paradigm were attempting to erase traces of their own ideological work, to make filmic story-telling appear natural and seamless. Tensions between maintaining competitive advantage based on the appeal to the virtual tourist and conforming to an emerging aesthetic of narrative absorption are perceptible in the surviving O’Kalem films.

If turf-cutting has special status as a sign of authentic Irishness, it is only one form of ‘Irish’ work portrayed in the O’Kalem films. At the same time as Terry arrives in New York and gets a job on a building site, Aileen harvests grain in Ireland. Although it differs in genre and setting from the other surviving films, ‘*You Remember Ellen*’ also epitomizes the concerns with work and travel that occupy the other films to varying extents. In fact, it might be seen as a recasting of *The Lad from Old Ireland*. Based on a Thomas Moore poem and supplied with elaborate intertitles illustrating the poem, it is set in a feudal Ireland with porous class boundaries. William, a nobleman disguised as an itinerant farm labourer, makes the acquaintance of the beautiful Ellen, a farmer’s daughter. Her parents accept him as a member of the household, and William and Ellen work in the fields together. The time comes, however, when William decides that they must take to the road together. Following an arduous journey through the countryside, they catch sight of a manor house, of which William reveals himself to be the lord and Ellen, consequently, to be his lady. The love that allows

for the transcending of social hierarchies is constructed around a companionship based on working and journeying together.

Although the three surviving 1798 films, *Rory O'More*, *For Ireland's Sake*, and *Bold Emmett, Ireland's Martyr*, are mainly concerned with negotiating the conventions of political melodrama, as discussed in detail in the previous chapter, they do not entirely exclude portrayals of work. The diegesis of *For Ireland's Sake* opens with Marty making weapons at a forge hidden in a cave. More elaborately, the opening sequence of *Bold Emmett* shows a more developed interest than in previous Kalem 1798 films in locating the stock characters of rebel, colleen, and mother in the rural economy. In an unusually leisurely introduction, Nora Doyle (Valentine Grant), Con Daly (Olcott), and Mrs Doyle (Laurene Santley) are first established as workers before they assume their functions in the plot. Nora lugs a creel up a steep shoreside cliff; Con manoeuvres his currach; and Mrs Doyle makes 'rush lights'. The characters are shown twice engaged in these actions, and, on the second occasion, it is Mrs. Doyle who is in focus. She is seen in mid-shot putting the rushes in the pan of fat, before a close-up shows the rush being submerged in fat, and then, returning to mid-shot, she hangs up the light to dry in the mid-shot.

Like Gauntier's later 'Blazing the Trail', articles in 1912 by O'Kalem actors Agnes Mapes and J. P. McGowan reveal a concern with work and travel that illuminates the handling of these issues in the O'Kalem films. 'To [Olcott, the Kalem executives] handed a map of the world,' writes McGowan, 'with the remarks, "There is your territory – Your company is ready – You had better sail on Saturday."' Nominally concerned with the O'Kalem productions in Ireland and the Middle East, his articles focus on the logistics of travel between the various locations. Travelling at high speed between Jerusalem and Tiberias, the O'Kalems 'established a record for this road that will stand for many a long day to come, and one that has caused no little wonder amongst the people here'. For this reason, the rail strike in Ireland in 1911 is of particular concern to him, briefly slowing the progress of what seems at times like a latter-day *Around the World in Eighty Days*. Mapes' article is less frenetic. While sightseeing on the lakes, she extols the scenic virtues of Killarney, a place that 'still holds its old look [...] without a sign of the new world marring the picture'. The primitiveness of the accommodation that the film-makers have to endure in the hotel in Beaufort, however, in her view seems to be connected with the poor work ethic of the locals in comparison to the visitors. 'We are certainly making the Irish open their eyes,' she states.

‘We have done in two days what they would have taken months to do.’⁸⁵ Whereas these articles presented film-making as a type of sight-seeing tour, this process also involved a kind of missionary work on behalf of modernity.

FILM EXHIBITION IN KERRY, 1910–15

The films that the O’Kalem filmmakers made in Kerry disseminated images of the county and of Ireland all around the world in a pleasurable assimilable form. The films offer images of the successful emigrant returning, of peasants toiling in the fields, and of the rebel on the run – all in a picturesque landscape. Spectators in Kerry also viewed and responded to the films containing these powerful images. The responses that survive in local newspapers reflect a community with its own concerns about the uses of its representation and the increasing place of the cinema within it.

The local press in Killarney, which the O’Kalems visited in 1910 and where they based themselves during their subsequent visits from 1911 to 1914, saw implications for Ireland from the activities there of the US film-makers primarily in the context not of the entertainment industry but of tourism. The weekly *Killarney Echo and South Kerry Chronicle (Echo)* carried some articles on the O’Kalems. The issue dated 27 August 1910, reports that

[r]epresentatives of the Kalem Motion Picture Company, New York are at present engaged in a tour of Ireland for the purpose of securing a series of ‘motion’ pictures for exhibition before American audiences. Already they have secured a number of excellent views in and around Cork. Harvesting operations yesterday formed the object of their attention. Scenes at Blarney Castle, Queenstown, and other places of interest were also taken. Of course, places like Killarney and Glengariffe [*sic*] will come in for special attention. The pictures, in addition to being full of interest for the American audiences, will at the same time contribute a splendid advertising medium for the tourist resorts of this country. Mr. Geo. K. Hollister, the leading expert of the Kalem Co., and his colleagues, are staying at the Victoria Hotel during their stay in Cork.⁸⁶

This account of the activities of the Kalem Company film-makers during their first exploratory trip outside the United States, and the rarity of such accounts, says much about the state of knowledge of film-making in Ireland at the time. Its title, ‘Cinematographing

Ireland: Motion Pictures for America', nicely conveys the sense in which scenic views of Ireland, including, significantly, the agricultural work of harvesting, were to be captured for consumption by US cinema audiences. This circuit was to be closed to some extent by the pay-off for Ireland that the films would advertise Irish tourist resorts and, hopefully, bring American tourists to those resorts to consume the authentic sights themselves.

It is notable, however, that there is no sense here yet that the films have a role as cultural products in Ireland. This is curious because film shows by travelling companies in Kerry were well publicized and played to good houses. The author of the article also assumes that, if film-makers do come to Ireland, they could only be filming tourist views for consumption in the United States. Indeed, by the time Olcott, Gauntier and Hollister came to Killarney, they were shooting scenic views for the fictionalized travelogue *An Irish Honeymoon*.

The regional press in Kerry, therefore, largely failed to register the first sustained fiction film-making in Ireland, a series of events that was repeated each summer in southern Ireland between 1910 and 1914. Although published in Tralee, the declared interest of the *Echo* in the area around Killarney suggests that it should have been more than fleetingly aware of the activities of the members of the US O'Kalems Film Company, who based themselves, from the summer of 1911 on, at O'Sullivan's Hotel in the village of Beaufort.

The next report that the *Echo* published on film-making in Kerry appeared in September 1911, at the end of the O'Kalems' busiest season. This confused article states that

[a] series of Irish romances is to be the next feature of the cinematograph theatres. One of the leading American firms has just completed a film of Samuel Lover's famous historical romance, Rory O'Moore, which will soon be in view. Thirty artistes, under the superintendence of the producer have been specially brought over to America for the purpose, and they are now visiting the various scenes where subjects can be staged.⁸⁷

The suggestion here seems to be that Irish artistes travelled to America for the production of Irish-themed films there.

It is not surprising that there was a certain amount of confusion – the reference in the first article to cameraman George Hollister as Kalem's 'leading expert', for example – regarding a medium that was only fifteen years old and whose production methods were still evolving. It does seem surprising, nevertheless, that so little interest was

manifest in the local newspapers concerning events out of the ordinary around Killarney. Part of the reasons for this may simply be the significance of other political and cultural events at local, national and international levels during the period. Another important reason why there was scant reporting on the O'Kalems' film-making was that as yet no discourse on film had developed in the Irish press or society at large. 'It was well into the 1910s,' writes Kevin Rockett, 'before there was regular commentary on films in Irish newspapers.'⁸⁸ The institution of cinema, nevertheless, was beginning to emerge into Irish cultural life. After the opening of the first dedicated film venues in 1908 and the building of picture houses in earnest from 1911 (see Chapter 5), cinema established an independent presence on the physical and cultural landscape, from which it rapidly expanded.

The establishment of regular film shows in Tralee and Killarney occurred during the period of the O'Kalems' ongoing filming. These shows encountered resistance from other providers of recreation such as publicans and amateur theatre groups, as well as attracting protests against filmic representation of the Irish. In the absence of cinema buildings around the country, touring companies showing films as the main attraction on a bill including musical and dramatic entertainment visited all the major Irish towns during this period. For example, the IAPC – here very much identified with its director, James T. Jameson – visited Tralee and Killarney in June of both 1910 and 1911; the Empire Animated Picture, Dramatic and Variety Company visited Tralee in April 1911; and the details of a Tralee court case in July 1911 involving a film impresario reveal that he also intended to exhibit films in Tralee earlier that year.⁸⁹ These visits by touring companies were advertised and in some cases briefly previewed in the provincial press, but, unlike more established and prestigious cultural events, they were not reviewed.

There is also a sense, that, at least in certain contexts, the content of the 'animated pictures' was still relatively unimportant in comparison to the mere fact of their exhibition. Moving images were an attraction in and of themselves because they offered a convincing representation of 'reality' in motion, regardless of what they showed. In the cities, where animated pictures were available every night of the week on variety programmes and, from 1908, in dedicated venues, differentiation of shows grew on the basis of content and quality of image. However, in the early 1910s in provincial towns such as Tralee, where animated pictures were shown only twice or three times a year, they could still be the 'star turn' for touring variety companies for their relative rarity.



Picture Personalities: Mr. J. T. Jameson.
That well-known Irish showman, Mr. J. T. Jameson, owns many successful shows in the Emerald Isle, chief among which is the Rotunda, Dublin.

3.3 This caricature of Irish exhibitor and producer James T. Jameson, which appeared in the *Bioscope* in November 1911, depicts him in peasant dress in a Killarney setting with the figure of Erin beside him and a representation of Dublin's Rotunda in his hands. Image courtesy of the National Library of Ireland.

The preview article for the IAPC's 1911 showings gives more of an idea of what the film programme consisted and how it was presented to local readers:

We welcome this week a visit from these prime favourites, the Irish Animated Picture Co., direct from the Rotunda, Dublin, where their success has been so extraordinary. The proprietor has succeeded in serving a splendid assortment of new films, portraying the latest important events in home and foreign life, as well as many scenic and humorous sket[ches.] The programme includes scenes of fox-hunting with the Meath hounds, the picture of this year's Grand National, depicting the whole race from the start to the finish, panoramic views, humorous sketches, etc. As regards the musical side of the programme, it is keeping with the high standard of the other side. Mr. Patrick O'Shea, the well-known Irish tenor, and the Sisters Colley, as charming as ever in their catchy songs and graceful dancing, once

more accompany the Company. We are sure Tralee people will patronise the entertainments as usual in large numbers.⁹⁰

Although such notices are frequently based on the impresario's own publicity, this does offer some useful information. Despite the fact that the IAPC visited Tralee only a couple of times a year, it is presented as an anticipated and regular part of the town's entertainments, and its continuing quality is guaranteed by its ongoing success at the Rotunda. Among the films of topical Irish and international events and of fictional subjects, this writer appears most interested in equine sports. The live musical acts forming the variety portion of the show also draws praise based on past performances.

The frequency of film shows in Tralee changed dramatically in December 1912, when Jameson rented the urban district council's Theatre Royal as a de facto dedicated cinema.⁹¹ The format of entertainments here was similar to that of the travelling show, consisting of films and variety acts. Despite a number of attempts to oust him by local publicans, some councillors and members of The Collegians amateur theatre group,⁹² Jameson continued his tenancy at the Theatre Royal beyond the period under discussion here (1910–14), largely because he provided the council with a secure income for the hall of £50 a month.⁹³ The popularity of the daily shows with the inhabitants of the town, particularly those of the lower classes, was also a factor. The chairman of the council urged his fellow councillors on the occasion of one push against Jameson not to 'deprive the people of the town and the working classes of Tralee of the entertainment and lose the money to the town'.⁹⁴

Jameson and his picture shows clearly also had supporters among the influential citizens of the town, some of whom pointed out how the cinematograph could redistribute cultural capital. Articles and letters championing his enterprise appeared in the *Echo* at strategic points. The new medium itself also had its advocates. Almost a year before Jameson took over the Theatre Royal, an article on the film show as a social institution announced that the

Cinematograph has evidently come to stay. Most of us expected that the boom of the 'picture-hall' would soon share the fate of most of the skating-rinks. But the cinematograph almost daily shows new signs of increasing vitality. To-day it is a very different thing from the shaking and nerve-racking spectacle of a decade ago. The improvements and emendations which cinematography has undergone during that period are among the marvels of this marvellous age of ours.⁹⁵

Jameson intended to make daily film entertainment in Tralee a reality. Almost exactly a year after the article above, a long letter from the frequent correspondent T. B. Cronin outlined the advantages, as he saw them, of having Jameson in Tralee.⁹⁶ Cronin dismisses the arguments of local publicans that the cinema was impinging on their custom and addresses the claims of those who contended that Jameson took money out of Tralee that would otherwise circulate in the town. He reveals that Jameson paid £22 a week to his permanent staff in Tralee, almost all of which was spent in the town. He also points out the financial gain to the town accruing from the fact that 'nearly every week there is a "turn" on, consisting of two, three, or four artistes and sometimes a whole company is brought down'. Turning to the educative value of the cinematograph, he remarks that it is 'possibly the most remarkable invention since Caxton brought the printing press into being'. He argues that opposition to the picture show 'is chiefly aimed at the working classes, who, in my judgement benefit most by the charms of the cinematograph. They are unable to afford the joys of travel or the luxury of books'. On his visit to see *Quo Vadis?* he lingers not on the epic on the screen but on 'the remarkable spectacle of a vast audience, representative of every section of the people, keenly appreciating what one might well have thought no one but the most highly cultured would be able to appreciate'.

The movement noted elsewhere towards the regulation of working-class behaviour at public entertainments is visible here in the way the press treat the significantly proletarian cinema audiences. Cronin praises the conduct of the spectators at the Theatre Royal, attributing it both to their 'innate self-respect' and to 'the tact and unfailing courtesy of the manager, Mr. J. J. Martin'. 'Those of us who remember the pandemonium of the old Concert Hall cannot fail to appreciate the church-like decorum of the Theatre Royal,' he argues. He describes how after *Quo Vadis?* he heard 'groups of urchins excitedly discussing classic drama!' Other writers are less complimentary about sections of the audience. 'The orchestra in itself is well worth listening to,' a writer for the *Kerry Evening Star* remarks,

and in this connection it may be mentioned that the audience could very well do without the whistling obligato rendered occasionally by some of our young 'nuts' when the orchestra strikes up a lively air.

The audience want to hear the orchestral music. They don't want the distraction of any siffleur, no matter how artistic, for his efforts under the circumstances are only ill-mannered and irritating.⁹⁷



Describing his or her 'Night at the Pictures' at the Killarney Town Hall, the columnist 'Murphy' reveals that '[a]ll the seats were filled with a well-conducted and appreciative crowd'. There were exceptions:

There was one fully developed young man near me, however, whose demonstrations with his feet at the picture of a soldier in any position were clearly insincere, or it is not moving pictures he would be witnessing. There was a young lady, on the other hand, whose demonstrations with her tongue were of the same character. She kept telling her companions that 'a Sinn Feiner was a mad Irishman', and a lot of other things of the kind, about which she was clearly not very fully informed, and of which there seemed no particular necessity to keep prattling. Perhaps, however, these little displays by some of the audience are some of the pleasures of picture shows.⁹⁸

If the audience at these picture shows were generally well behaved, enthusiasms of different kinds were aroused by a number of productions. Sporting films generated several articles in the press and appear to have been well received. The *Echo* of 9 July 1910, features a round-by-round commentary on the famous Jeffries–Johnson fight of 4 July 1910, and an account of race riots and the banning of the exhibition of a film of the fight following the victory of the black contender Johnson over the white defending champion.⁹⁹ This interest in the martial arts was served in late October 1911 by the exhibition in the Theatre Royal of a series of fight and wrestling films and a display of 'the value of scientific wrestling as a method of self-defence'.¹⁰⁰

The film of the victory of Kerry over Louth in the 1913 Gaelic football final of the Dr. Croke Memorial Championship raised more local interest:

Large audiences attended this week at the Theatre Royal, Tralee, and there was unbounded enthusiasm when the pictures of the Kerry and Louth match was [*sic*] thrown on the screen. For three nights the place was packed with enthusiastic people who showed their appreciation of the enterprise of the management in having this splendid picture shown so soon after the contest.¹⁰¹

The football match generated much enthusiasm in the press because it was of local interest and because it coincided with a growing support for the Irish-Ireland movement that is apparent in the *Echo*. The 5 July 1913, edition of the paper that is dominated by news of Kerry's

victory also reprints a report from the *Cork Examiner* of the previous Thursday on a change of film programme at the Cork Opera House:

The chief feature will be the reproduction of the sensational match for the Dr. Croke Memorial at Jones's Road, Dublin, last Sunday, between Kerry and Louth. Gaels were enthused by the mere descriptions of the game, and its presentation through the cinema should attract very large houses to the Opera House for the remainder of the week. It was a great game, and should be well worth seeing. The enterprise of the management of the Opera House in securing the films must be highly commended. Other pictures of interest are 'Bird's Eye View of Paris,' and a splendid Western drama entitled 'Arizona Bill,' a film in two parts. The Topical Budget includes many events of interest. 'The Four Mexicans' and Mr. J. A. Condon supply very pleasing 'turns.'¹⁰²

The match film is clearly taking the place of a feature, around which a supporting programme of films and variety acts assembles. If no Irish production company made a fiction feature before 1915, they did make these sporting films, which were exhibited in the feature slot. Significantly too, these films depicted events organized by the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA), an organization whose activities straddled the cultural and political realms. Travelling on the IAPC circuit to Tralee in the week ending 12 July, this programme was rapturously received. The journalist describing this reception implies links between the conduct of the Tralee audiences and that of the spectators at Jones's Road. By quoting a report from the *Westminster Gazette*, the writer explicitly marks the match as a political demonstration:

Never was there such a gathering of the Gaels! [...] Jones's Road presented the picture of a new Ireland. [...] Referring to the match played at Jones's Road between Kerry and Louth, the Dublin correspondent of the 'Westminster Gazette,' writing in that paper, says: 'To-day there took place here one of the biggest demonstrations ever seen in the Irish capital. It recalled to many people the funeral of Parnell in 1891, and to others the visit of Mr. Asquith last summer. Yet it simply had to do with a football match – the final in the Dr. Croke Memorial Championship of the Gaelic Athletic Association, between Louth and Kerry. Six weeks ago the match was played in the presence of 30,000 people, and ended in a draw. To-day it was replayed before at least 60,000 inside and outside the grounds [...].'¹⁰³

In November 1913, Gaelic matches made a welcome return to the screen at Tralee's Theatre Royal:

The programme for the week-end is very attractive. On Thursday and Friday nights the leading features at Messrs. Jameson's picture show will be the Kerry v. Galway and Mayo matches, pictures which were specially taken; and 'The Lion's Bride', a picture of great interest. A great variety of other pictures will be shown. Miss Florence Kendall, who possesses a voice of great charm, has been singing to appreciative audiences, and will contribute to the programme for the remainder of the week.¹⁰⁴

If the GAA films received the most favourable local press during this period, the US film *The Banshee* (United States: Kay-Bee, 1913) probably garnered the least favourable coverage. This Irish-themed film from the Kay-Bee Film Co. was shown in Tralee in early February 1914 and attracted the anger of the local branch of the Ancient Order of Hibernians (AOH). One article reports that the Tralee AOH took inspiration from the diaspora in the United States, who 'had hunted the stage Irishman and everything anti-Irish from the Theatres and halls'.¹⁰⁵ They sent a letter to Jameson, objecting strongly to 'the anti-Irish type of film recently shown in the Tralee Theatre, in which the Irish character is caricatured and held up to ridicule, and the Irish priesthood depicted as superstitious, vulgar and uncultured, and we trust such objectionable pictures will not be shown in future'.¹⁰⁶

A letter in the same issue argues that, although *The Banshee* is 'a low and crude attempt at burlesque and caricature of the Irishman', it cannot be merely ignored because of 'the false impression which such a picture would create in the mind of an outsider, ignorant of the character and customs of our people'.¹⁰⁷ The letter writer proceeds to specify that, the significant minds in which such a false impression might be implanted are English:

One would think, judging from the picture last night, that we were a race living in the height of squalor and misery, and steeped in the lowest form of superstition and not far removed in civilisation from the condition of the lowest Hottentot. Yet such is the type of picture, flaunted in the eyes of the English public year after year, and from such pictures they get their notions of what the Irishman must be.¹⁰⁸

This is a clear example of autoexoticism, in which the concern is to make Ireland understandable to the English. For this writer, however, the issue at stake was not that an unfavourable representation of the country might drive away English tourists. 'How long will we suffer ourselves to be maligned by our enemy across the water,' he asks

rhetorically, ‘and continue to be the laughing stock for other nations to point the finger of scorn at?’ Although the film was actually of American origin, the fact that it offered what the writer and others saw as a degrading view of the Irish, bringing them down to the level of the Hottentots – here representing the acme of barbarism – made it automatically ‘English’ in viewpoint.

Jameson had credibility in radical nationalist circles, having worked with Thomas Clarke on the filming of the 1913 Wolfe Tone commemoration ceremony at Bodenstown.¹⁰⁹ His reply to the AOH offers some insight into the workings of his company. It reveals that ‘[w]e took the film in the ordinary marketable way through our London representative (who occasionally recommends the selection of these things to us) as an Irish picture only, and no member of our firm had personally an opportunity of seeing it until after the film was delivered to use in the ordinary course of business’.¹¹⁰ His argument appears to be that, although he recognized the problems with *The Banshee*, because the film had been booked unseen in good faith, predominant business pragmatics necessitated that it be exhibited.

It is in this cinematic context that the Irish-made fiction films of Kalem and other US and British production companies were shot, exhibited, and received. A number of Irish-produced films that were shot around Killarney receive coverage in the local press. The O’Kalems’ *Arrah-na-Pogue*, *Ireland the Oppressed*, and *The Colleen Bawn* are specifically mentioned, as is Photo-Historic’s *Life of St. Patrick: From the Cradle to the Grave*. None of the films were reviewed, however, in the current sense of the term. *Arrah-na-Pogue* and *Ireland the Oppressed* were previewed by reprinting information presumably provided by Jameson. Before Jameson became established at the Theatre Royal, Tralee, his New Living Pictures successfully exhibited *Arrah-na-Pogue* at the Town Hall, Killarney, on Sunday, 21 July 1912. This film had been on the IAPC circuit for more than five months, having been first shown to Irish audiences at a number of Dublin cinemas in early February.¹¹¹ Although the *Echo* described the film as a ‘celebrated series’, it offered no further details of the programme in Killarney other than the fact that it included *Battle Hymn of the Republic, or In Washington D.C. 1861* (United States: Vitagraph, 1911; dir. Larry Trimble).¹¹² The brief preview of *Ireland the Oppressed* in the *Echo* of 8 March 1913, consists mainly of a plot synopsis, describing it as ‘an excellent picture’ that

shows the life the Irish people had in the days of 1719. It further shows an eviction of an Irish family from their home, when Father Falvey interferes with the eviction. For this he is arrested, but while on his way the English soldiers who are guarding him are attacked by some of the Irish peasants. Father Falvey escapes, and after many days' dwelling in a cave he escapes to America.¹¹³

This amount of description, even if it does come from publicity material rather than from a personal viewing, is rare enough to suggest that this film resonated with members of the local press, at least. The approval that this writer apparently expresses of the O'Kalem rebel films – in this case with oppression represented in the particularly emotive form of eviction and with the priest playing the role of the hero – comes as little surprise in light of the earlier reactions to *The Banshee*.

More surprising, however, are the connected articles on *Life of St. Patrick* and *The Colleen Bawn*, seen by the writers at the Town Hall, Killarney. This venue had been cleared by Killarney urban district council for film exhibition in late September 1913, from which point there appears to have been regular and possibly daily shows in Killarney.¹¹⁴ The professionalism of these shows seems to have compared unfavourably with those of Jameson. The columnist 'Murphy' reports of one show in December 1914 that 'Miss Curran gave us some very good music out of a rather not too good piano, and on the whole Mr. MacMonagle provides a very pleasant evening for his patrons'.¹¹⁵ The item on *Life of St. Patrick* praises the various aspects of the film's exhibition at the Town Hall, Killarney, but humorously exposes its cinematic rewriting of the Patrick legend and its virtual touristic features:

St. Patrick did most assuredly visit Killarney, and in accordance with the custom of the place, he had his photograph taken as he gazed enraptured out over the placid waters of Loch Lein from Reen Point. And one felt the centuries melt away into nothingness, and the dim past telescoped, as it were, into the present, when one saw the old white-haired saintly Patrick gazing with wistful interest at the ruins of Ross Castle with the Union Jack fluttering from the white flag-staff of its ivied summit.¹¹⁶

Referring to this article, Joseph Reidy regrets

that the learned critic did not see the limelight on the *Colleen Bawn* and the other plays acted and photographed at Beaufort. If he did instead of

viewing a misrepresentation of Irish History he would view a misrepresentation of the ancient and modern life and customs of the Irish people. He has done his part in holding up to ridicule the absurdity of misrepresenting St. Patrick's life to the people of Killarney. Let us hope that he and others will be found ready to hold up to public indignation those who would represent the Irish people either at home or in foreign land.¹¹⁷

This is the first indication that the O'Kalem films were received negatively in Kerry. Other extant signs that exist indicate that the O'Kalem films were well attended. If the GAA match films, on the one hand, and *The Banshee*, on the other, represent the poles of acceptability in the representation of the Irish, then the O'Kalems are located firmly in the field of influence of the latter. Reidy's article is perhaps an indication that any representation of Ireland and the Irish by non-Irish people, however partisan in favour of the Irish, would not pass the highly attuned antennae of cultural nationalism.

IRISH AUDIENCES: AUTOEXOTICISM AND AMBIVALENCE

Audiences at IAPC shows in Tralee and Killarney could have seen the two waves of films of Ireland that invoke a tourist gaze. These were the factual films made by British film-makers around the 'London to Killarney' axis in the 1900s and the scenes of picturesque landscape frequently roughly integrated into fiction films shot by US producers around the 'Killarney to New York' axis in the early 1910s. Sometimes funded and specially exhibited by travel companies and reviewed in the tourist trade press, the British films evidence the importance of tourism as a source of finance and of subject-matter during the first decade of the twentieth century. Formally, the films owe a substantial debt to the lantern travel lecture and its reliance on the figure of the lanternist. Some of them, however, demonstrate considerable narrativization and would have required little explanation by a lecturer. Like lantern travel lectures, many of the films assume that their spectators are English sightseers, and they frequently begin their virtual tour in London.

It is not clear if audiences in Kerry saw these films, but it is possible. The radical transformation in the availability of film shows in both Tralee and Killarney, which saw the local availability of the entertainment locally increase from just two or three visits a year to daily shows, occurred in the early 1910s, after the peak in the production

of these British tourist films. Nevertheless, such films as Warwick's *Shooting the Rapids at Killarney* (1910) and at least part of the Urban series *Beautiful Erin* (1907) were exhibited on the IAPC circuit and may have been specially chosen for a Kerry audience. These films invoke a tourist gaze and, as such, were not intended for Irish spectators, but at least those that avoided presenting local people in a humorous way may not have caused much offence in an area that made a considerable part of its income from tourism. Some local people in Kerry are likely to have agreed with F. W. Crossley's Tourist Development company about the economic benefits of tourism and would have seen the usefulness of a film that clearly advertises a rail route to Killarney.

Although some Kerry people no doubt saw the value of tourism in attracting wealth, the graphic depiction of English tourists disporting themselves in the Irish countryside could be controversial, particularly at times of tension between Irish nationalists and the British state. Strong views were expressed in the tourist district of Mayo in 1900, for example, when the Ballinrobe board of guardians – officials elected under the provisions of the poor law – voted to support a pro-Boer demonstration in Westport, arguing that it came 'very opportunely at a time when the West of Ireland is threatened with a invasion of English cads in the guise of tourists'. The Ballinrobe guardians rejected the views of

Mr. Crossley and men of his ilk [who] hold that Royal visits and tourist invasions are the great panacea for Ireland's wrongs under the rule of the Saxon[. W]e join with the Nationalists of Westport in showing the Prince of Wales and every cockney tripper who follows in his train that the pro-Boer and anti-British feeling is as intense in Ireland as it was before Her Majesty came over to recruit more Connaught Rangers.¹¹⁸

Furthermore, as expressed in Shaw's *John Bull's Other Island*, a process of capitalist rationalization might see tourism threaten to displace farmers who had recently struggled to purchase their land, because tourism can make more profitable use of land than can farming.

Many of the films made by US producers in the 1910s were exhibited in Kerry after the IAPC established its resilient picture-and-variety shows at Tralee's Theatre Royal and a regular film show was instituted at Killarney's Town Hall. The US films, most of them directed by Sidney Olcott, focus even more strongly than the British tourist

films on Killarney, probably Ireland's best-promoted resort at that time. Olcott's films often depict migration between Ireland and America. A number of films, notably the 1910 *Lad from Old Ireland* and *The Irish Honeymoon*, employ tourism as a plot device. They frequently set their stories against the backdrop of Killarney's famous sights and call attention to this fact in intertitles. Nominally narrative works, these films show that the depiction of scenic landscape is so important to Irish-produced films at this time that they suspend their action in order that the audience can better appreciate the scenery, and the narrative itself becomes a kind of charabanc transporting spectators from one tourist sight to the next.

In viewing these depictions of their country, Irish spectators were put in the place of the tourist and shown their homeland as an exotic sight. With the rise of cultural nationalism, this autoexoticism produced protests that questioned the right of foreign producers to depict Irish people at all. Although the O'Kalem rebel films appear to have been welcomed, their *Colleen Bawn* received some criticism. As film shows developed a presence in the local community, they also became a significant focus of local attention, ranging from hopes that the film show could redress the imbalance in access to the highest cultural achievements to protests by the Ancient Order of Hibernians against the representation of the Irish.

The material presence of the IAPC in Tralee offers a view in microcosm of the advent of the dedicated moving-picture venue. The IAPC occupied the local theatrical space in Tralee, paying a regular rent to the urban district council and providing a regular, well-regulated entertainment. Although money drawn from local audiences went back to IAPC in Dublin, the wages of IAPC's locally based staff and some of the earnings of visiting variety artistes went back into the local economy. A conflict of interest arose with local amateur theatre groups who mounted productions at festivals, also a lucrative time for IAPC. Publicans in the town, too, also expressed unhappiness with the presence of the regular film show, which they saw as usurping their place as the focus of local entertainment. Some of these problems would be solved with the building of picture houses in the town, which would eventually displace the Town Hall show.

Kerry's greatest level of local interest in individual films focused on IAPC's productions of GAA matches. The next chapter looks at the ongoing importance of non-fiction film for indigenous film-makers.

NOTES

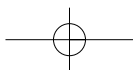
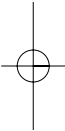
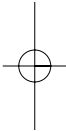
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Participation

When Joseph Holloway attended the opening night of *Dick Whittington*, the pantomime at Dublin's Theatre Royal, on 31 January 1898, he recorded his disappointment, and that of at least one other member of the audience, in the closing moving-picture act:

[T]he 'wonderful' American Biograph [...] proved anything but wonderful as most of the scenes depicted were blur and nothing more. The machine must have been out of order – at least I hope so; & the subjects selected did not meet with general approval – a voice from the upper regions was heard to remark 'Give us something Irish', a remark that applied to the pantomime itself also.¹

Irish theatre-goers had got their first taste of 'something Irish' from a moving-picture show just a year earlier, when Professor Joly's cinematographe, in the latter half of January 1897, had shown films shot in Dublin. An article in the *Evening Telegraph* informed readers that filming was underway in the city for the cinematograph shows at the Star Theatre of Varieties, 'including the running of the Defiance, the Malahide coach. Next Tuesday a visit will be paid to the Royal Irish Constabulary Depot, Phoenix Park, for the taking of views of a full dress parade to be held there that day.'² Advertisements also show that other subjects filmed by Professor Joly included 'O'Connell Bridge, Sackville street and the 13th Hussars on the March through Dublin Streets'.³ When these films were advertised, theatre-goers were invited to '[s]ee yourselves as other see you',⁴ a phrase, or a variation of it, that would be repeated frequently during the early decades of filmed entertainment as the 'local view' became a popular feature of these shows. Although the 'as others see you' part of this phrase – which was generally absent from the advertising of other exhibitors, who merely invited spectators to 'come and see yourself' – might seem to have undertones of the autoexoticism discussed in the previous chapter, the local view (as it will be discussed below) is distinguished from the



4.1 Members of the crowd smile and gesture happily when the newsreel camera is trained on them in *Release of the Sinn Fein Prisoners* (Ireland: General Film Supply, 1917).

tourist film and the other kinds of film that a camera operator might decide to take in a particular locality by the fact that the people who appear in the film are its primary intended audience.

This chapter focuses on the stypes of participation that result from an audience's encounter with early film shows including local views. The term participation is intended to suggest that a more advanced form of interaction than has been seen with theatre and tourism occurs between the film's subject, producer, exhibitor and spectator because both the subject and spectator and, at least in some instances, the producer and exhibitor are frequently identical. A showman, for example, could film, or hire a camera operator to film, the workers emerging from a factory or the congregants leaving a church, making sure that the people in front of the camera knew that they were being filmed and the hall at which they could attend to see themselves on screen. These people could then choose to go to a cinematograph show at which a film featuring them was one of the attractions. This does not, however, represent a species of alliance between the producer/exhibitor and spectator/subject transcending the material conditions in which the films were produced and consumed. The producer/exhibitor usually shoots the film without the prior knowledge or consent of the subject, who would have had little or no time for self-presentation. In

fact, the earliest manifestations of this participative spectatorship, when it is particularly associated with the local-view film, seems to involve a form of primitive accumulation in which the moving image of previously unfiled groups is expropriated for profit.

These sorts of works have received unprecedented publicity in recent years with the discovery, restoration and the selected release in easily accessible DVD formats of some 800 films from the Blackburn, England, film production company of Mitchell and Kenyon (M&K). M&K were discussed in Chapter 1 in relation to the fake Boer War film they made between 1900 and 1902, but the hoarde of films discovered by local historian Peter Worden in the basement of a shop in Blackburn in 1994 consists largely of films of crowds of people, including ninety-nine films of workers leaving factories in towns across northern England.⁵ In these 'factory-gate' films, the camera is placed close enough that the men, women and children who stream through the gates could recognize themselves without difficulty when they attended a locally mounted film show.

The twenty-eight surviving films produced by M&K in Ireland between May 1901 and December 1902 for three British travelling shows – the North American Animated Photo Company, the company of Preston-based showman George Green and the Thomas-Edison Animated Picture Company – include only one factory-gate subject, *Workers Leaving Lee Boot Factory – Dwyer & Co. Ltd, Cork* (1902). Such street scenes and 'church-gate' titles as *Cattle Market in Derry* (1902) and *Congregation Leaving Jesuit Church of St Francis Xavier, Dublin* (1902) also feature large groups of people facing the camera. Although earlier films of Belfast and Dublin survive in the Lumière collection, Irish films in the M&K collection include unique street scenes from Derry and Wexford and a film of Edward VII's Grand National-winning horse Ambush II at Eyrefield Lodge in the Curragh, Co. Kildare.⁶ Twenty of the M&K Irish titles, however, were filmed in Cork, where an international exhibition was mounted in 1902, attracting the Thomas-Edison Animated Picture Company and the showman George Green, the latter of whom had sole rights to take and show films there.

This chapter, therefore, focuses on the uses to which the local view was put in its earliest manifestations and to shows how, in offering an image of locally constituted groups that possessed some sort of common purpose or identity, the kind of participative dynamic created by the local view gave it an affective power that could be employed for political purposes. Some of the long feature films produced in Ireland in

the 1910s – namely, *Ireland a Nation* and *Aimsir Padraig/In the Days of St. Patrick* – also feature actuality material partly for this reason and partly both because film-making expertise in Ireland particularly resided in the factual sphere and because these films strive to provide narratives linking Ireland's past and present.

LOCAL VIEWS AND CITY FILMS

Not all early films of groups of people at the turn of the century were local views. An examination of the distinctions that have been made elsewhere between such local films as the M&K titles and such internationally distributed city films as the Lumière's Belfast and Dublin titles throws light on the context in which these films were made and viewed in Ireland. Uli Jung has drawn an illuminating comparison between two films made in Germany around the turn of the twentieth century: Charles Moisson's *Cologne: Sortie de la Cathédrale* (*Cologne: Leaving the Cathedral*), shot for Lumière Frères on 3 May 1896, and *Domausgang in Trier* (*Leaving the Cathedral in Trier*), probably shot by Peter Marzen in 1904. The films are similar in many ways: 'they both depict large masses of individuals moving about, they both use major catholic churches as backdrops, and they both utilize the end of high mass to make sure a large number of people will fill the space in front of the camera. Stylistically they both consist of one long shot and they both run for approximately one minute.' Jung stresses that neither operator was 'interested at all in a tourist's view of the cathedral' in question but focused instead on people in motion. The films are aesthetically identical and both attracted their first audiences substantially from those who suspected they had been captured on celluloid. They are differentiated chiefly by the fact that, while Moisson's film appeared on the Lumière catalogue and was available for international distribution, Marzen's was the work of a travelling cinema operator who exhibited only locally. Because of its wide availability, *Cologne: Sortie de la Cathédrale* represents 'an early example of the generic pattern of city films', while *Domausgang in Trier* 'is a typical local view'.⁷

Many of the Lumière films display this transformation of local views into the city films for which they were to become particularly famous. A film called *Sortie d'usine* was among the items shown by Louis and Auguste Lumière at the first public exhibition of projected moving pictures at the Grand Café's Salon Indien on the Boulevard des Capucines, Paris, on 28 December 1895. It depicts workers leaving the Lumière factory in Lyons. The film that is now normally now

shown under this title, however, is the third film of workers leaving the Lumière factory and was shot in 1897 to be identical to the original one, attesting to the popularity of the subject but also creating the possibility that the workers who act up for the camera are responding to their own depiction in the previous films.⁸ Although this is the first and most famous factory-gate film, it is not a local view because the workers were not the primary intended audience for this film, which was made to be used to demonstrate the Lumières' projector. Among the other films exhibited at the Grand Café was *Le Débarquement du Congrès de Photographie à Lyon*, which shows members of the Congress of Photographic Societies arriving for their gathering and interacting with the camera by smiling, lifting their hats, and pretending to take photographs of the cinematographer. When this film was shown later the same day to the participants, members of the photographic trade who had witnessed earlier attempts to project moving pictures, they could respond to the screening of their own moving images. At this first exhibition, the film was a local view, holding the audience's attention by way of their amusement in seeing themselves. It became a different type of film, however, when it was shown with *Sortie d'usine* to a public, paying audience at the Grand Café.

By decontextualizing such films, the Lumière company created city films from what might otherwise be local views. Considerable economic benefits accrued to the company from doing this that were not available to the exhibitor of the local view. As a local view had no economic value outside the area in which it was shot, an exhibitor had to ensure that as large a local audience as possible came to see it. Essentially, the local-view exhibitor made a profit by selling its own moving image back to a geographically delimited audience. As a consequence, the local-view subject retains greater control of his or her moving image and can choose whether or not to contribute to the success of the exhibition of the film and the show of which it is a part.

Once Lumière had established a national and international market for its views, the local market was of decreasing interest. The company's camera operators developed strategies for dealing with the desire of members of the public to put themselves in the picture. Describing his experience shooting on the New York streets in September 1896, Lumière operator Alexandre Promio reveals that he 'could not take a step in the town without being followed by a crowd desiring to take part in a scene so that they might then see themselves on screen. How many times have I filmed without film in the camera people who came and placed themselves less than two meters from it.'⁹ The scenes shot

by Promio in New York would become city films before they had a chance to be local views. The Lumière practice of returning exposed negatives to the factory in Lyons for processing meant that these films were not seen by New York audiences until they were available internationally on the Lumière catalogue.¹⁰ Similarly, it was November 1897 before the views probably shot by Promio in Ireland in the late summer of that year were shown in the country.

That the participative kind of film-making associated with the local view was becoming increasingly inconvenient to Lumière operators aiming to produce more lucrative city films is clear in one of the twenty-five fifty-second films shot by Promio in Ireland in 1897.¹¹ Replicating in Dublin the firemen pictures that were already becoming an established genre of early cinema, the film in question features two horse-drawn fire engines galloping up Dublin's Grafton Street and past the camera on the corner of St Stephen's Green, watched by a large number of people. The crowds visible on the opposite side of the street are being held back by a Dublin Metropolitan Policeman (DMP man), but, as the engines pass, members of the crowd behind and to the right of the camera begins to follow the action down the street, passing the camera. In doing so, they stop in shot, dividing their attention between the camera and the action on the street. They then begin to retreat again to camera right, as two DMP men usher them back off the street and out of the camera's line of view – although the policemen themselves seem interested in the camera.

What is occurring here is discussed by Livio Belloi in his work on the *badaud*, or gawker. Engaging the rich literature on the city film that identifies the urban spectator and the spectator of a film show with the strolling-observing *flâneur*, Belloi focuses on the instance of film production rather than to the audience's encounter with the film.¹² He identifies the Lumière camera operators largely with the *flâneur* and the subjects who stare back at them with the *badaud*, stressing that the filming of Lumière views arose out of an interaction between them. He shows how this interaction came to define the space viewed by the camera, such that sports events and processions were favoured because the spectators were generally absorbed in watching the featured event and so the operator could film without the intrusions of those curious about the filming. This was necessary because the intrusion of onlookers anxious to show themselves to the camera so they could see themselves on screen made the view less desirable as an item on the Lumière company's international catalogue. The sight of a small group of gawkers grinning at the camera might draw them and their acquaintances to



the local theatre or hall, but it would have been unlikely to have attracted a large international box-office return. Belloi points out, however, that, although events such as sports meetings and processions may impose a strict demarcation between onlookers and participants that generally allowed the event to be shot without intrusion, the attraction of the camera may have been so strong in some instances that it gave unin-tended sanction to the invasion of the sports persons' or marchers' space by the onlookers.¹³

For the Lumière operators, the crowd was an indispensable component in its city films – indeed, an essential element in the definition of the genre – but one that had generally to be kept on the fringes of the shot where its gawking could be reserved for the central action. For the makers of local views, gawking itself was central. Unlike the production context described by Belloi, a member of the M&K crew – sometimes James Kenyon himself – can occasionally be seen urging the workers towards the camera so they can be assured of appearing in the film.

Using some films supplied by M&K, the Thomas-Edison Animated Picture Company exhibited the first regular series of Irish local views, alongside other kinds of film, as part of its engagement beginning at the Rotunda in December 1901 (see Chapter 1).¹⁴ Run at this point by British showman A. D. Thomas, the company focused particularly on local views, even though its advance newspaper advertising stressed its international reputation. 'Edison's operators are already on the spot,' it reported, 'and readers need not be surprised to see themselves in the special series depicting Dublin Day by Day and Life in Ireland, which will be presented next Monday. Fine pictures were secured on Friday of the workmen leaving Inchicore Railway Works and O'Connell Bridge.'¹⁵ Such scenes resemble films shot by the Lumière cameramen, but, as the season progressed, there was further emphasis on depicting the local as the advertisements encouraged patrons to 'Come and See Yourself at Edison's'.¹⁶ Some of the events featured included a 'football match between Lansdowne and Trinity College',¹⁷ 'a tram ride from Kingsbridge station to the Rotunda, [...] the pensioners leaving their dining hall, the boys at play at the Royal Hibernian School, after chapel and church, [and] Sunday afternoon in the Phoenix Park'.¹⁸ The management induced the less amorphous of the groups filmed to attend and participate in the event, as happened with the boys of the Royal Hibernian School, who, it was announced, 'will attend on this (Saturday) afternoon and they will be accompanied by their band, who will play a selection during the interval'.¹⁹

Themed nights inaugurated in the second week of the season attracted larger parties from a variety of social groups. Wednesday, 11 December, was titled a 'Grand Gaelic Night', featuring probably the first film of a Gaelic games contest, the hurling match for Cullen's Challenge Cup. Two days later, the main item at the 'Grand Military Night [...] Under the Distinguished Patronage of H.R.H. General the Duke of Connaught, Commander-in-Chief of the Irish Forces' was '[t]he Presentation of Medals by His Excellency the Lord Lieutenant to the Irish Hospital Corps', accompanied by music from the Northumberland Fusiliers Band.²⁰

From the composition of these and later featured groups, it seems clear that these picture shows courted the upper and middle classes and appear to have been successful in attracting them. They claimed wide patronage in their advertisement for the 'Fourth Grand Dublin Season of Original Irish Animated Photo Company', which began on 23 July 1903:

During our recent Dublin season the entertainment was honoured by the presence and patronage of His Excellency the LORD LIEUTENANT, LADY DUDLEY, and a large viceregal Party, and subsequently by several important Castle parties, besides the Right Hon. the LORD MAYOR, the Clergy of all denominations, the elite of Society, the most popular sportsmen, and an enormous concourse of people, the spacious Rotunda being daily packed.²¹

This is confirmed by an item in the *Irish Times*' 'Platform and Stage', a column that at this time typically dealt with news concerning the more up-market theatrical entertainments. 'Although there are matinee and evening performances daily,' it reveals, 'both are well attended, and the matinees in particular are presented to fashionable audiences.'²² The degree to which they also pursued such groups as the railway workers of Inchicore is unclear.

The shows at the Rotunda in July 1903 did not appear as the Thomas-Edison Animated Pictures, but this was not because the company had been taken over by the Irish printer and journalist James T. Jameson, who would become a leading member of the Irish cinema trade. Jameson had been using the phrase 'Edison's Grand Pictures' prominently in advertisements for shows at the Empire Theatre, until, in July, the Edison Manufacturing Company instituted proceedings through legal representatives in London against both the Empire and Jameson for improper use of its name.²³ Jameson thereafter presented the Rotunda shows as the work of the Irish Animated Photo (sometimes Picture) Company (IAPC) and his shows at the Empire as the

Empire Pictures. Jameson let his irritation with this development be seen in an advertisement for 'New Bioscope Living Pictures, The Talk of the City. The Envy of the Great Edison, but jealousy cannot thwart the deserved success of these Marvellous Animated projections. Admittedly they beat all others.'²⁴

Despite these legal difficulties, the IAPC attempted to reproduce the successful formula established by the Thomas-Edison company in attracting large Irish audiences. Among the important elements of the formula were the courting of elite patronage, the use of publicity to ensure the company remained prominently in the public eye, and a skilful use of the local view that involved inviting groups who had been filmed to a special exhibition that frequently saw members of the group providing part of the musical entertainment. Although an entertainment based around the self-identity of the Gaelic movements, for example, could have been the occasion for friction if the other films were ill chosen, this company had, as noted in Chapter 1, negotiated the difficult terrain presented by the clashing opinions on the Boer War in Dublin in 1901–2. The political possibilities of the participative dynamic of the local view would, however, find outlets as protest became more pronounced in the Ireland of later 1900s and 1910s.

POLITICAL FILM AND NEWSREEL

The 'come and see yourself' films that were first shown to Irish audiences by such prominent early exponents as Professor Joly, the Thomas-Edison Animated Picture Company and the IAPC would have a fascination for some film-makers and audiences throughout the 1900s and 1910s. Although these films encapsulate an early form of participative interaction with the projected moving image, this form of interaction did not disappear entirely as other kinds of film came to predominate in picture shows of the mid-1900s. An obvious difference between the two films in Uli Jung's juxtaposition of *Cologne: Sortie de la Cathédrale* and *Domausgang in Trier* is the eight years that lies between their makings. When Moisson made his film in 1896, it was at the leading edge of film-making, but this was not the case when Marzen made his in 1904. Already by the latter date, more fictional subjects were being than non-fictional ones, and the drawing power of films of such national and international events as wars and coronations would by 1910 see the topical rationalized and commodified as the newsreel. Nevertheless, showmen and -women and, when dedicated venues appeared, cinema managers continued to use local



4.2 *Irish Limelight*, October 1917. Image courtesy of the National Library of Ireland.

views as an inducement to patrons to attend their shows.

Probably the best example of Irish cinema managers who shot local views is provided by Thomas and James Horgan of Youghal, Co. Cork, brothers who ran the town's Picture Palace, for which they produced their local newsreel, the *Youghal Gazette* (ca. 1910–22).²⁵ Much of the extant Horgan material consists of such scenes as religious processions and people at the beach, that are shot in long shot, resulting in just a small number of readily identifiable faces, while the attention is drawn to the dress and movements of the participants or features of the location. In some of the films that show crowds of people leaving church, however, the camera is so close that few architectural details of the building are visible and attention is fixed on nothing but the discernable faces in the crowd and their immediate context. In classic church-gate style, locally shot films of crowds of individuals' faces were produced to attract the people featured to the show. In this instance, however, the film-makers were not travelling impresarios or camera operators engaged by them but locally based cinema proprietors.

Local views reflected the increase in political activity in Ireland in the 1910s by offering moving pictures of local political demonstrations. The Horgan brothers shot and showed films of local political happenings, including their *Sinn Féin* film, which features shots of a parade through the town and moving-picture portraits of three Youghal men who went on hunger strike while in jail. They also shot and showed items on the return of soldiers from World War I and the celebrations that marked the end of the war.

Before 1910, Irish topical events of more than local interest were taken either by Jameson or by such visiting British firms as Warwick, Hepworth and Urban. Other politically based factual subjects in the early 1910s include Jameson's films of Republican commemorations at the grave of Wolfe Tone in 1913 and 1914. One film-maker based in Ireland made predominantly non-fiction films for national and international consumption between 1913 and 1920, including many films that invoke the producer-audience relationship of the local view. Norman Whitten founded his General Film Supply (GFS) company after his arrival in Ireland in 1910. Whitten had worked in film since its earliest days, beginning his career with the British pioneer film-maker Cecil Hepworth. Working with the camera operator J. Gordon Lewis, Whitten distributed films and supplied cinema and film-making equipment, but he also made many kinds of films. These included news films of such events as the funeral of Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa in 1915; local-interest films; the British army recruitment films *Britannia's Message* (1914) and *Sons of John Bull* (1914); promotional films for such companies as Court Laundry (1914), the Midland Great Western Railway (1915) and Patterson matches (1917); a film of the 1913 Irish National Pilgrimage to Lourdes; the early Irish animated film, *Ten Days' Leave*, with cartoonist Frank Leah (1917); and the 1920 drama *Aimsir Padraig/In the Days of St. Patrick*. Whitten also founded Ireland's first newsreel, the weekly Irish Events, which first appeared in July 1917 and was important in charting the key events of the period in the run up to the War of Independence.

Robert Paul's 1908 title *A Cattle Drive in County Galway* is a remarkable participative film that is neither a local view nor a topical. It deserves mention for the way it provides the occasion for demonstrators and onlookers apparently to join together to reproduce a political protest. Paul was a pioneering British film-maker, who had built and shot films for one of the world's first moving-picture projectors, the animatograph, in 1895. As was seen in the last chapter, Paul's attraction for fishing subjects apparently brought him, or a camera-

man in his employ, to the West of Ireland in 1908, where he made such films as *Whaling Afloat and Ashore*, *Lobster Catching*, and *With Rod and Fly*. Paul made a film on this occasion that did not concern fishing but rather addressed the issue that featured particularly strongly in the Irish press at the time and that was the subject of much debate in the House of Commons: cattle driving. The *Galway Observer*, for instance, carried a large number of cattle-driving related reports in 1908, its issue for May 16 detailing four different cattle-driving stories, as well as carrying an advertisement offering land to graziers, the cause of the demonstrations. 'One of the main tactics employed against graziers during the Ranch War' of 1906–9, writes Heather Laird, cattle driving 'was to peak in the summer of 1908 with 297 cattle drives occurring between April and July of that year'.²⁶

The *Bioscope's* synopsis of Paul's *A Cattle Drive in County Galway* gives an explanation of this form of protest for the British cinema trade:

This lawless and exciting practice is adopted by tenant farmers in order to compel an obstinate land-owner to sell his pastures to them in place of renting them to a grazier. The tenants, banded together in a league, decide on concerted action, and, on a prearranged signal, collect together, and drive off the grazier's cattle to some remote spot. Usually, as in the case depicted, the occasion is taken advantage of for a general demonstration, in which the local drum and fife bands, as well as the women, dressed in their best, join.²⁷

Rather than attend an actual cattle drive, Paul relied on the reconstruction of a demonstration under extraordinary circumstances:

On a recent occasion 31 men were arraigned at Galway Assizes for this offence, and they very kindly arranged to repeat the scene for the purpose of this picture; over 200 people, collected from within a radius of 20 miles, joined with their bands and banners, and about 100 head of cattle and sheep were driven. The scenes include the calling out of the leaguers with their hazels, removing the grazier's cattle from the fields, and an attempt by the owner to restore them with the aid of the police, who are called out from the barracks, on their cycles, by a hasty messenger. There is no straining after effect in this film, which gives a true insight into one of the most extraordinary forms of popular coercion in modern Ireland.²⁸

No documentation has come to light on the exhibition of this film in Ireland, and the brevity with which it was advertised in the trade press

relative to Paul's other Irish films perhaps suggests that it was not popular with British exhibitors.

The political nature of the kinds of local and political films made in Ireland in the 1900s and 1910s is bound up with how an audience interacted with them. Although *A Cattle Drive in County Galway* appears to be a remarkable political film of Ireland during the Ranch War, it remains merely a curiosity of film history if it cannot be shown to have been exhibited to a receptive audience. More is known about the reception context of some of the other films referred to in this section, particularly those of GFS, seeming apolitical producers who made films that could be viewed in clearly political ways.

ATTENDING THE FUNERAL OF THOS. ASHE (1917)

A review in Dublin's *Evening Telegraph* in October 1917 notes the fury to which H. J. Condon, playing the part of the villain Feeny, worked the gallery of the Queen's Theatre on the opening night of the latest production of Dion Boucicault's *Arrah-na-Pogue*. After nearly sixty years, the play had remained popular 'not so much by reason of fidelity to the actualities of Irish life and character as to its merits as a stage romance with an Irish revolutionary subject'.²⁹ The fury of the gallery would have needed little provocation to invoke. Irish revolution was particularly topical because this play, which hinges on the fate of a suspected Irish rebel sentenced to death by court martial, opened on the night after the spectacular public culmination to a protest against British government treatment of 'Sinn Féin' prisoners in Mountjoy Jail. The occasion of the protest was the death of Thomas Ashe, president of the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB), as a result of force feeding while on hunger strike. In a series of demonstrations carefully stage-managed by Michael Collins, Ashe's body became the focus of public solidarity with the strands of insurgent nationalism that were approaching coalition under the Sinn Féin banner. The protest's highlight was the funeral at Glasnevin cemetery on Sunday, 30 September, the largest public demonstration since the 1916 Rising, at which the Irish Volunteers marched openly under arms and fired three volleys of shots over the coffin, 'the only speech which it is proper to make above the grave of a dead Fenian'.³⁰

If the production of *Arrah-na-Pogue* was the response of popular theatre to political events, the cinema made a more immediate intervention and one, arguably, with more 'fidelity to the actualities of Irish life'. The *Evening Herald* commended the exhibition on the evening



4.3 Members of the Dublin Brigade of the Irish Republican Army fire a graveside volley in *The Funeral of Thos. Ashe* (Ireland: General Film Supply, 1917).

of Ashe's funeral 'of films showing various ranges of the procession and scenes associated with it. The rifling part at the grave was included.'³¹ The widespread publicity of organized events after Ashe's death allowed Whitten's GFS to plan a newsreel special for their Irish Events serial. In what might be called a 'prequel', some of the material relating to Ashe's lying in state at City Hall was shown at the Rotunda Pictures and Varieties on the Saturday night preceding the funeral, with the full film including the procession through the city to the cemetery due for general release on the following Monday. This full film was first exhibited, however, on the night of the funeral at the Bohemian Picture House (PH) in the north-city suburb of Phibsborough.³² Run by Frederick A. Sparling, who earlier that year had experienced official opposition to his exhibition of *Ireland a Nation* at the Rotunda (discussed below), the Bohemian was a 1,000-seat cinema located on the route of the funeral procession out of the city between Mountjoy Jail and Glasnevin cemetery.³³

Reporting on the filming of the funeral, the cinema journal *Irish Limelight* observed that '[p]eople took part in the procession, went home to have tea, and an hour later saw themselves on the screen. Some

hustle on the part of the camera men!³⁴ While by no means unprecedented for important events, the speed with which Whitten prepared the film for exhibition distinguished the General Film Supply (GFS) from its competitors, in this case, from Charles McEvoy, proprietor of the Masterpiece PH, who was also filming the funeral but who was only able to show his film on Monday evening.³⁵ The immediacy of the appearance of this film may resemble contemporary television news, but, unlike the domestic context in which such news is normally received, the theatrical exhibition of *The Funeral of Thos. Ashe* was as important as the speed of its appearance. The *Limelight* report suggests that, having taken some refreshment, mourners reassembled at the cinema to reconstitute the political demonstration that the funeral represented. Here, they viewed the funeral distilled to its ten-minute highlights – twice the usual length of a newsreel – taken from advantageous viewpoints. In this sense, the exhibition at the Bohemian could be said to represent the culmination of this protest, the concentration of the energies and emotions that had been built up over several days. The spectators that night were freed from the limited perspective that their position in the crowd necessitated, while remaining part of the audience seeing all the key events from a privileged vantage.

Described thus, this seems like a moment when the cinema took a key role in an Irish political protest. Unlike the performance of *Arrah-na-Pogue*, however, little information survives on what actually happened in the Bohemian that night. Nevertheless, a reconstruction of elements of the reception context of this film suggests that it would have fostered a participative form of spectatorship among the people who chose to attend that night.

Sunniva O'Flynn has pointed out that George Morrison, in making *Mise Éire* (Ireland: Gael-Linn, 1959) and *Saoirse?* (Ireland: Gael-Linn, 1961) – his documentaries about Irish history from the Boer War to the Irish Civil War – extracted the political items contained in Irish Events, while neglecting other items of a non-political nature with which they were screened to their first audiences.³⁶ O'Flynn's insight – that political items filmed by an Irish newsreel company were presented to their audiences as part of a series of short scenes of local interest – begins to re-imagine the context in which these films were viewed: the cinema programmes in the late 1910s. For O'Flynn, the typical appearance of a one-minute political newsreel film along with four other one-minute newsreel films of sporting or cultural interest is likely to have lessened the impact of the political material on the audience. As well as that, the audience of a late-1910s cinema programme would usually have seen

this newsreel material as an accompaniment to a featured dramatic film, one or more short comedies, and perhaps a travelogue or other non-fiction 'interest' film of five to ten minutes. This can be seen in the programme at the Bohemian PH for the first part of the week in which *The Funeral of Thos. Ashe* formed the Irish Events contribution:

On Monday next a splendid picture by the Fox Company is announced, 'The Island of Desire,' featuring George Walsh, a thrilling tale of the South Seas; a two-part Keystone comedy, 'Teddy at the Throttle', will afford plenty of fun. The Gaumont Graphic and Irish Events, with a cartoon, will complete a really first-class picture programme.³⁷

Although this recontextualization is vital to a proper consideration of the historical importance of topicals, it will be shown below that these films did provide the occasion for sometimes remarkable political displays.

Advertisements for the Bohemian's Sunday evening show at which the funeral film was exhibited reveal that *The Funeral of Thos. Ashe* was at the top of the bill. The programme is described as 'a special long and interesting' one featuring 'a five-part exclusive comedy-drama entitled, "A Modern Taming of the Shrew" [United States: New York Motion Pictures, 1915; dir. Reginald Baker]'.³⁸ With the evening performance beginning at 8.30 and the funeral film screening at 10.00 o'clock, the spectators would have experienced an hour and a half of other entertainments that do not seem to have been in sympathy with the solemn or the political nature of the day's event. There is, for example, no review reporting that the cinema's well-publicized orchestra played dirges or patriotic tunes, although this seems very likely and happened in other instances.

That the other films on the programme might dissipate the fervour of demonstration is suggested by events earlier in 1917. When Whitten managed to get the Irish Events film of the *Release of the Sinn Fein Prisoners* screened just hours after their arrival in Dublin on 18 June 1917,

[s]ome of the ex-prisoners and their friends could not resist the temptation to see themselves 'in the pictures', and a contingent marched up to the Rotunda early in the afternoon. They cheerfully acceded to the genial manager's request that they should leave their flags in the porch, and, when inside, gave every indication of enjoying not only 'their own film' but the rest of the programme.³⁹



This suggests the power of the cinema to subsume even the most interested spectator, but, on the level of reception, it also indicates a tension that undermines the apparently smooth identification being advanced between the cinema audience and the mourners on screen. This tension is present in the *Limelight*'s suggestion that it was not the continuation of the demonstration that brought mourners to the Bohemian but the narcissistic pleasure of seeing oneself on screen, of picking oneself out of the crowd. This kind of pleasure was a particular feature of the earliest films, but early films also employed the figuration of the crowd as an instance of identification.

It is unlikely that many individual mourners could have spotted themselves among the throngs depicted in long shot by the funeral film. However, with the camera viewing events from among the spectators, it could help recreate for its audience their participation in the funeral as a group by reproducing their optical perspective. Newspaper reports and photographs demonstrate that even such apparently god-like perspectives as the high-angle shots above the crowd reproduce the points of view of numerous mourners. 'Over 200,000 spectators and sympathisers thronged the route', declares one evening newspaper, 'roofs, windows, verandas – even lamp-posts, railings, walls, hoardings, trees, statues, and monuments – every possible point of vantage was utilised by eager sightseers.'⁴⁰ The *Freeman's Journal* reported that 'residents of many houses were charging for seats at their windows, and that the sites were appreciated by those taking advantage of them was testified by the numbers who witnessed the procession from these points'.⁴¹ The caption to a photograph in the *Freeman* reads:

Sunday at the O'Connell Statue: The above picture gives a very good idea of the dimensions of the crowd which surged round and up the base of the O'Connell Statue on Sunday afternoon. For fully two hours before the cortege was due to pass men and boys by the score fought to obtain a good view by climbing amongst the figures which adorn the plinth, until all but the statue itself was obscured.⁴²

This film and others like it address not just those who could claim this very direct form of spectatorial identification with the image but also those who desired to witness the event. Apart from cinema-goers who were indifferent or hostile, it is likely that screenings of the film in Dublin, and in the fifty cinemas around Ireland that subscribed to Irish Events in the weeks following the funeral, would have brought togeth-

er spectators who had taken part in the demonstrations and others who would like to have done so.⁴³ From this perspective, these films are essentially local newsreels targeted at spectators who could bring contextual information to decode them. It was, therefore, not just the actual participants who would be able to place themselves in the crowd but also those who could fill in the back-story, and would have wanted to place themselves in the crowd, who became virtual participants. These films worked on the desire to see oneself as a participant, in the cases both of those who had been participants and of those who wished they had been. For both of these groups, it also provided a semi-public context in which to experience this mediated participation. The affective power of newsreels such as *The Funeral of Thos. Ashe*, as well as the expertise of indigenous film producers in factual film-making, probably accounts in part for the inclusion of newsreel in such major silent Irish feature films as *Ireland a Nation* (1914–20) and *Aimsir Padraig/In the Days of St. Patrick* (1918).

In later films by GFS, an assumed identification apparently exists between the audience and popular protest. Whereas the Thomas-Edison Animated Picture Company seem to have wanted to address the widest possible audience with a content of different ideological interest, GFS seem to have guaranteed its audience in the period between the 1916 Rising and the War of Independence by being increasingly partisan to the nationalist cause. An advertisement listing Irish Events Specials includes the *Irish Sinn Féin Convention*, *Funeral of Thos. Ashe*, *Release of the Sinn Fein Prisoners*, *South Armagh Election*, *Consecration of the Bishop of Limerick*, *Funeral of the Late John Redmond, M.P.*, and the *Waterford Election*. 'It has been proved', it boasts, 'that topical such as any of the above will attract a larger audience than a six-reel exclusive.'⁴⁴

Despite the attractiveness of Whitten's specials for Irish audiences in the late 1910s, he fell afoul of the authorities in April 1919 when he attempted to assemble some of his topical on the explosive political developments he had filmed into a half-hour special called the *Sinn Féin Review*. The film sought to offer a 'General Review of the Sinn Fein Movement, from 1916 to the Present Day', and featured a 'special film of E. De Valera, F.D.E. / Taken in Dublin after his escape from Prison', along with footage of such other party notables as Countess Markievicz, Laurence Ginnell, Arthur Griffith, Count Plunkett and Father O'Flannagan.⁴⁵ The film was, however, banned by the authorities and dramatically seized by the police from the Boyne Cinema in Drogheda, Co. Louth, where it had gone on show. Despite his



4.4 *Irish Limelight*, April 1918. Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland.

protests, Whitten was not permitted to exhibit it in Ireland again. The loss of earnings from what undoubtedly would have been a lucrative film project may have contributed to the apparent demise of Irish Events in October 1920. In any case, Whitten had turned from political events in the summer of 1919 to a subject that had proved popular with audiences of his *Irish National Pilgrimage to Lourdes* (1913): religion. Given his knowledge of factual film-making, it is not surprising that he incorporated non-fiction material into his dramatized life of St Patrick. He may also have been inspired by *Ireland a Nation*, a film that was shot in Ireland in 1914 and first shown briefly at the Rotunda in Dublin in 1917 before being banned.

FIGURING THE CROWD IN FICTIONS OF CHURCH AND STATE

The attractiveness for Irish audiences of factual film based on the local view, and the expertise in actuality film-making that had been acquired in supplying the demand for these films had an influence on the indigenous fiction film-making that began in Ireland from the mid-1910s. This meant that the figuration of the crowd as an instance of identification passed from its supporting position among in the newsreel to become a part of the feature, with its privileged place in the programme. As will

be seen below, this phenomenon was not unique to Ireland during the transition to the dominance of the narrative feature, but there are certain peculiarities to the Irish use of factual material in the feature.

The mixture of the fictional and the non-fictional was unusual after feature films achieved international dominance of cinema exhibition in the mid-1910s. This phenomenon is visible in two films shot in Ireland in the 1910s: *Ireland a Nation*, first shown in New York in 1914, but first seen, briefly, in Dublin in 1917; and *Aimsir Padraig/In the Days of St. Patrick*, which premiered in Dublin in 1920. Striking structural parallels exist between these films, which dramatically reimagine selected events in Ireland's past and show their immediate relevance by following them with contemporary newsreel. The addition of newsreel material to the dramatic portions of these films appears to be less the result of adherence to an outmoded filmic aesthetic than part of a process of conceptualizing the Irish nation that is also present in popular written histories of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The earliest film-making was dominated internationally by the production of short actuality films, but, after 1904, film-manufacturing companies made their biggest profits from story films.⁴⁶ These short fiction films, however, did not deploy strategies aiming to involve the spectator in the scene depicted, such as occurs with the continuity system of classical Hollywood.⁴⁷ It was possible, in 1904, for Edwin Porter to cut shots from three earlier Edison actuality films into his *European Rest Cure*, a fictional travel film that also included scenes shot against pasteboard sets of pyramids, Roman ruins, and the Blarney Stone.⁴⁸ By the middle of the 1910s, however, rapid expansion made multireel feature films exhibited in picture houses the focus of the industry. 'When filmmakers began to relate more complex stories,' argues Eileen Bowser, indicating the paradoxical importance of artifice to cinematic realism, '[... r]eality began to be demanded for the staged fiction film, [and] anything that dragged the spectator out of that dream was subject to criticism on the grounds of breaking the illusion of reality.'⁴⁹ Non-fiction films were, of course, still made in large numbers, but the tendency was to distinguish them clearly from the dramatic feature and to relegate them to supporting positions in the cinema programme.

Films from fundamentally non-narrative genres generally appeared as part of a programme that was headed by a feature and included a number of other films and/or variety acts. Although the cinematic programme headed by either a drama or an episode from a spectacular serial



4.5 Edwin Porter did not travel to Europe to film Edison's *The European Rest Cure* (United States, 1904) but incorporated images from existing Edison films and staged scenes against obviously unrealistic backdrops, such as this one in which a serially misfortunate tourist is accidentally dropped while kissing the Blarney Stone.

featuring an international star was the emerging norm for the dedicated cinema of the late 1910s, experiments in the combination of non-fiction and dramatic film continued. An example of a hybrid actuality-fiction feature of the mid-1910s is the five-reel *From Dusk to Dawn*, made in the United States in 1913. The story of the romance and struggle against capitalist exploitation of a foundry worker and a laundress, it combined scenes taken in the studio with shots of real working-class demonstrations. 'One of the first multireel docudramas ever made,' writes Steven J. Ross, '*Dusk* used documentary footage as integral parts of its plot and not simply as colorful background.'⁵⁰ *From Dusk to Dawn* strives to produce a generic synthesis and this distinguishes it from, the two films considered here, which are content to yoke actualities and drama together without an attempt at integration.

The synthesis of actuality and drama footage was attempted in at least one well-publicized film shown in Dublin in 1917. In the travelogue drama *Lost in the Eternal City*, Rome 'is lavishly portrayed in the story of a little girl who gets lost, and obligingly looks for her father in all the pet scenes of the city'.⁵¹ The drama that frames the travelogue is complicated by the fact that father and daughter are sun-

dered by the machinations of ‘a jealous woman and her equally unscrupulous though misguided lover’ and are reunited by the actions of ‘the good Angel of the story, the beautiful and talented Madam Valli’.⁵² Reviewers of the film’s first run at the Theatre Royal in March 1917 agree that the sights of Rome are of at least as much interest as the drama, but they divide on their assessments of the effectiveness of the fictive elements. *The Irish Times*’s reviewer suggests that drama and travelogue are successfully integrated, contending that ‘[t]he finding of the child is interwoven with a love story which has interesting developments before it is brought to a satisfactory conclusion’.⁵³ The writer for the *Freeman’s Journal*, however, argues that ‘[i]t would have been better to have given frankly a series of Roman pictures without the story. The child jumps about from one quarter to another – from the Pigeon House to the Park, so to speak – with incredible rapidity.’⁵⁴ Distributed by GFS, *Lost in the Eternal City* was considered ‘suitable for exhibition during Lent’ when it was shown at the Theatre Royal, one of Dublin’s large legitimate theatres, with GFS’s 1913 *Irish National Pilgrimage to Lourdes*, targeting a theatre audience amenable to religiously oriented entertainment during the festival.⁵⁵ GFS made several films that were aimed at the Irish religious audience, most notably *Aimsir Padraig/In the Days of St. Patrick*, and attempted to maximize attendance by timing their release to coincide with religious holidays. Like *From Dusk to Dawn*, the structure of *Lost in the Eternal City* differentiates it from *Ireland a Nation* and *Aimsir Padraig* in that its drama and actualities are integrated, however clumsily, into the narrative.

Although substantial portions of *Ireland a Nation* had been filmed in Ireland in 1914, with studio scenes shot in Kew Bridge studio, London, it took more than two years to reach Irish screens.⁵⁶ Before a print of the film finally arrived in Ireland in late 1916, two previous prints had fallen afoul of German submarines patrolling the Atlantic, including one that went down with the *Lusitania* in May 1915. Bohemian PH owner Frederick A. Sparling acquired the rights for Ireland and Britain, and sought to avoid objections from the authorities to showing the film by submitting it to the press censor in late 1916. The censor’s report shows that the film as submitted dramatized moments in the early nineteenth-century history of Ireland, ranging from the debates on the Act of Union in the Irish Parliament in 1800, through the Rebellion of 1803, to the actions of Daniel O’Connell. It included newsreel of political events relating to the passage of the Home Rule bill through the British Parliament that were

THE "BOHEMIAN" BOY.

4.6 *Irish Limelight*, August 1917. Image courtesy of the National Library of Ireland.

occurring as the film was being made in 1914. The longest sequence of the film concerns Robert Emmet and contains many of the elements of his story as it is dramatized in Dion Boucicault's play *Robert Emmet* (1884). Among the common elements are Emmet's relationships with Wicklow insurgent Michael Dwyer, Sarah Curran, and Anne Devlin. The censor passed the film on condition that six cuts were made, including all the newsreel material. Anticipating a large profit, Sparling hired the Rotunda for the week beginning 8 January, gambling on a run twice the length of the normal film exhibition. The film had just opened for business on that Wednesday, however, when the military authorities revoked their permission for its screening because 'the seditious and disloyal conduct apparently caused thereby, make it clear that the further exhibition of the Film in Ireland is likely to cause disaffection to His Majesty, and to prejudice the recruiting of His Majesty's forces'.⁵⁷ The ban covered all of Ireland, and *Ireland a Nation* was not shown in the country again until the end of January 1922, under the very different political circumstances following the ratification of the Anglo-Irish treaty by the Dáil earlier that month. The film that was exhibited at this point included newsreel of some of

the political events in Ireland at the time it was reissued in the United States, in 1920. These events include Eamon de Valera's visit to the United States in 1919–20, the hunger strikes of Michael Fitzgerald and Terence MacSwiney, and MacSwiney's funeral.

Aimsir Padraig/In the Days of St. Patrick premiered in early 1920, between the two showings of *Ireland a Nation*. Although this was in the midst of an increasingly bitterly fought War of Independence and Dublin was under curfew, the film experienced no official restrictions on its exhibition because it was of a different type from *Ireland a Nation*. This cinematic hagiography was released in Dublin on 15 March, to coincide with the festivities for St. Patrick's Day. It dramatizes events in the life of the Irish patron saint as they were known in the popular imagination.⁵⁸ Certain scenes, however, principally the landing and selling of Patrick as a slave, owe much to the conventions of the cinematic biblical epic. Films of the life of Christ were popular in Ireland, and like Passion plays before them, they were generally shown at religious holidays; they include *From the Manger to the Cross* (United States: Kalem, 1912), made in Palestine early in 1912 by film-makers who produced in Ireland in the summers of 1911 and 1912; and the Italian epic *Christus* (Italy: Cines, 1914), which played opposite *Aimsir Padraig* in Dublin in March 1920. The slave market and chariot of *Aimsir Padraig* may also be influenced by the marriage market and chariots of the Babylonian story in D. W. Griffith's *Intolerance* (United States: Triangle, 1916), which premiered in Ireland at the Gaiety Theatre during St. Patrick's week 1918. *Aimsir Padraig* closes with a sequence of actuality footage, including travelogue material of sites associated with Patrick, newsreel of the 1919 pilgrimage to Croagh Patrick, and staged shots of Cardinal Logue at Armagh Cathedral.

These brief synopses show that, although this cinematic history and film hagiography may be quite different, they have common structural elements that make it feasible to compare them. Because they try to cover a relatively long time span, for example, both *Ireland a Nation* and *Aimsir Padraig* are more or less episodic. Although parts of both films display strong causal links between scenes and sequences, these connections weaken in the later dramatized sequences. Of more immediate interest here, however, is the placement of the actuality material.

The accompanying table, which outlines the main sequences of the two films, makes it apparent that the actualities come at the end of each of the films. This implies that the moment depicted in the actualities,

<i>Ireland a Nation (1914–20)</i> ¹	<i>Aimsir Padraig (1920)</i>
A. Framing devices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Players introduced (ii) Old man begins story 	1. Prologue <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Opening titles b. Emblematic shot of Patrick c. Angels venerate Patrick
B. Act of Union passed	2. Patrick's early life
C. Fr. Murphy leads rebellion	3. Patrick brought to Ireland as a slave
1. Robert Emmet and Michael Dwyer	4. Patrick heeds call to return to Ireland
2. Daniel O'Connell's duel	5. Patrick's first conversions
3. Emigration	6. Patrick's struggle with Laeghaire
4. Newsreel <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. A 1914 Home Rule Mmeeting b. De Valera's visit to America c. Unrest during hunger strikes d. Terence MacSwiney's funeral e. Ireland today 	7. Other important elements of the legend
5. Framing device <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The story told 	8. Epilogue (Actualities) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Sites associated with Patrick b. 1919 Croagh Patrick Pilgrimage c. Armagh Cathedral and Cardinal Logue

1. The capital letters and Roman numerals indicate lost sections of *Ireland a Nation* that are here recreated from contemporary sources.

which is marked as generically and temporally immediate to its audience, is, if not the endpoint of a particular trajectory, then a crucial stage in an historical development. It also raises questions about the status of the 'reality' of the drama. If the actualities (including, notably, newsreel) represents contemporary reality, does the drama constitute a valid recreation of a period before the existence of moving pictures, even though it clearly relies on the conventions of theatrical melodrama, in the case of *Ireland a Nation*, and biblical epic, in the case of *Aimsir Padraig*? Although a relatively large body of documentation exists on the conduct of the audiences at *Ireland a Nation* in 1917 because it eventually led to the banning of the film, it is not helpful on this question. The newsreel was among the material that the censor demanded cut from the film as a condition of passing it for exhibition. This documentation does, nevertheless, offer insights into the reception of the film in general. Official accounts of audience behaviour show that the film played to enthusiastic audiences. '[T]he Picture was received with applause throughout,' reports Inspector George Love of the Dublin Metropolitan Police of the first day's exhibition, 'except some slight hissing, when Lord Castlereagh and Major Sirr were exhibited.'⁵⁹ The main daily newspapers carry brief reviews of the opening. The reviewer of the unionist *Irish Times* focuses on the brief section of

the film that depicts constitutional nationalist Daniel O'Connell rather than on the much longer sections on nationalist revolutionaries. The writer is disturbed by the audience's appreciation only of the film's nationalism at the expense of its psychological subtleties:

The film, which treated the rebel cause with sympathy, and the music, which included a number of Irish patriotic tunes, were received with loud and frequent applause by the audiences, who were not the least demonstrative when D'Esterre fell to the pistol of 'The Liberator,' and who did not seem to appreciate the mental anguish from which O'Connell was subsequently depicted as suffering.⁶⁰

'From a historical standpoint, and indeed, from the standpoint of realism,' writes the reviewer of the constitutional nationalist *Freeman's Journal*, 'the film is undoubtedly excellent, and will attract numerous visitors to the Rotunda during the week. [...] Irish airs were discoursed by the orchestra while the film was being screened.'⁶¹ Both reviewers note the role of the live musical accompaniment in providing continuity to the showing.

Although narrative cohesion is already under severe strain in the final dramatic sequences of both films, this does not make any less abrupt the change from drama into representations of the contemporary moment. The effect of this suddenness is not only to destroy any remaining narrative illusion but also to highlight the urgency of bringing the historical into contact with the contemporary. The two films work through the drama towards the newsreel, showing that the historical process in some sense culminates in the present and emphasizing the relevance of the past to the current process of defining the Irish nation.

The films are constitutive of the national on different levels. *Ireland a Nation* concerns itself with the struggle for national self-determination and with the legitimacy of armed resistance in pursuit of this goal. 'The very phrase "Ireland a Nation"', an article in the *Freeman's Journal* begins, 'is sufficient to conjure up thoughts of daring deeds and splendid memories of the cause in the days when Robert Emmet, Michael Dwyer, Father Murphy, Wolfe Tone, and their followers were making the history of their country glorious.'⁶² This emphasis on the use of force is highlighted by the decision to concentrate on the section dealing with the constitutional O'Connell on his duel with D'Esterre, the one event in his public life in which he could be said to have killed for his country. As the film was targeted primarily at an

Irish-American audience, it takes care to account for the Irish who belonged to 'greater Ireland beyond the seas'.⁶³ Collapsing the differences between several strands of nationalism, its argument is that after the brave but failed attempts of Fr. Murphy, Emmet, Dwyer, and O'Connell to achieve independence, many Irish people had to emigrate. A New Hope arrived in 1914 with the apparent success of the Home Rule party, a hope seemingly fulfilled by the visit of de Valera to the United States in 1919–20. At home, however, continuing British intransigence on independence was causing further unrest, epitomized by the death on hunger strike of Terence MacSwiney and others. Given these ongoing problems, contemporary Ireland today continued to board the emigration ship to the United States. As Chris Morash puts it, the film 'creat[es] an extended narrative of Irish history in which the stage world of Whitbread's Wolfe Tone bleeds into the real world of the War of Independence'.⁶⁴

Aimsir Padraig constructs Irish national identity as Catholic and Irish-speaking. As such, it is an intervention in a long-running debate on the confessional status of St. Patrick. From 1829, the participation of the viceroy in festivities on 17 March lent official sanction to St. Patrick as the symbol of national unity for both Catholics and Protestants.⁶⁵ Despite this, sectarian struggles continued throughout the nineteenth century over which tradition could claim descent from Patrick. By beginning with an emblematic shot of Patrick and ending with a similar portrait of the Catholic primate Cardinal Logue, *Aimsir Padraig* leaves its allegiance in no doubt. The final section of the film's actualities epilogue re-emphasizes the links between Patrick and the cardinal. It begins with the intertitle 'ST. PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL ARMAGH, AND CARDINAL LOGUE, HEAD OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN IRELAND'. It includes a full shot of a statue of Patrick on the cathedral wall that dissolves to a shot of Cardinal Logue in clerical vestments and is followed by the intertitle 'CARDINAL LOGUE SUCCESSOR TO ST. PATRICK'. As the final image in the film, this shot makes clear that Patrick should be identified with the Catholic Church in Ireland.

Cardinal Logue is also significant in relation to the film's discourse on the Irish language. Whereas he opposed Sinn Féin for its use of violence, the Donegal-born cardinal supported the Gaelic League. Of the film's interventions in the construction of the Irish nation, the equal use of Irish and English intertitles is the first feature that confronts the spectator. This seems particularly striking for a film largely shot in 1919 and released in early 1920, in view of the fact that the increasingly politicized Gaelic League had been declared illegal in September

1919. Like its future status in the Free State, the Irish language is privileged in the film by being placed first in the title, credits, and intertitles.

The importance of the fact that the ends of both films include newsreel footage lies in the depiction of moments of 'real' contemporary public participation in defining Irish identity. It is through these participatory moments, rather than through absorptive narrative, that the films attempt to engage their audiences. These shots show how the cinema audience can enter history, following the example of Father Murphy's congregation in *Ireland a Nation* by transforming themselves into an 'insurrectionary band'.⁶⁶ In *Ireland a Nation*, such moments are numerous, particularly in the long section on the funeral of Terence MacSwiney. Many of these shots are taken from among the crowd, or 'throng' as several of the intertitles put it, giving a sense of what a participant would have seen. In *Aimsir Padraig*, such moments are chiefly confined to the scene on the pilgrimage to Croagh Patrick.

These two films also include images that invite forms of identification with the image that are common in other kinds of films. If these newsreel images show the contemporary Irish masses playing their part in the creation of history, these shots are complemented by depictions of the historical Irish people playing their part in the ongoing struggle for self-determination. Embedded in the dramatic sequences are scenes that in different ways court the participation of the cinema audience. This occurs in the case of Father Murphy's congregation and in the emigration scenes of *Ireland a Nation*. By employing the representational conventions of stage melodrama, that film succeeded in eliciting responses from its audience that ultimately led to its prohibition. By hissing the villain, the audience at the Rotunda was following an established practice of the Dublin theatre audiences, but in the context of the First World War and the Easter Rising, the military authorities considered the hissing of representatives of the Crown to be 'seditious and disloyal'.

Two scenes in *Aimsir Padraig* point up the difference between the type of participation associated with the local view and the kinds of primary and secondary identification – with the camera and a character in a drama, respectively – that are common in classical narrative films. The first is a shot of Patrick's investiture that lasts approximately six minutes. This single shot with a stationary camera is taken from behind a line of priests, who watch from the middle distance the deliberate movements of the more senior clerics performing the ceremony



in the background. For the many Irish Catholics who saw the film, this scene must have reminded them of the rituals of the mass. The audience in the cinema is an extension of the action on the screen, watching from the distance as a congregation present at the investiture would have done. In fact, because no such congregation is shown on the screen, the audience *is* the congregation. This scene offers an example of what Christian Metz called primary identification, identifying with the look of the camera.⁶⁷

The second scene, involving secondary identification with a character, concerns Patrick's learning of Irish, the only positive experience that the saint-to-be undergoes during his period as a slave in Ireland. Patrick, the intertitles explain, 'WORKING AS AN ORDINARY LABOURER', 'LEARNS THE IRISH LANGUAGE AT THE FOOT OF MOUNT SLEMISH FROM HIS COMPANIONS'. When Patrick attempts to pronounce the Irish words they mouth for him, they laugh uproariously. By showing that the saint also had to learn Irish, the film offered a point of identification for the many Irish people who were struggling to learn the language at the time. Here, the hero of the film is the figure with whom the audience is expected to identify. This scene epitomizes what Christian Metz calls cinema's secondary identification, where the spectator identifies with the gaze of a character on screen.⁶⁸

The structure of these polemical screen histories suggests intermedial links with popular Irish historical writing of the nineteenth century. Formal similarities exist between the films and such histories, often titled *The Story of Ireland*, that have been analyzed by Joep Leerssen and by Roy Foster.⁶⁹ Foster stresses their mythological status by showing how they conform to the narrative strategies of Russian folktales examined by Vladimir Propp.⁷⁰ Unlike professional histories, Leerssen argues, the popular histories are not progressive, that is, they do not engage critically with the work of their predecessors but merely update them to the time of writing. He contends that '[p]opular, illustrated histories of Ireland, from Milesian antiquity to the present day, are for the Irish reading public what George Eliot and Thomas Hardy are in England'.⁷¹ These texts occupy the place in the literature of Ireland that nineteenth-century realist novels do in that of England. Instead of interest in the progress of the individual in the realist novel, however, Irish readers are concerned with the progress of the history of the nation. Like the novel, popular histories are not considered to be in need of revision by the next author who comes to work on the story.

In relation to the newsreel content of the films, there is relevance in Foster's comment on the 'mercilessly present-minded preoccupation'



of the popular histories, in offering narratives that stretch from Ireland's mythological past to the moment at which the book is published.⁷² For example, after outlining the events of the recent Fenian rebellion of 1867, A. M. Sullivan ends his *Story of Ireland*: 'Here abruptly pauses "the Story of Ireland"; not ended, because "Ireland is not dead yet." Like that faith to which she has clung though ages of persecution, it may be said of her that, though "oft doomed to death," she is fated "not to die."⁷³ Linking religion and politics, Sullivan draws attention to the ongoing nature of the story and the necessity of incorporating events relevant to the struggle against persecution that occur in the contemporary moment. In these circumstances, any closure is contingent.

The films show different degrees of closure. *Aimsir Padraig* ends, as already mentioned, with a shot of Cardinal Logue that echoes the emblematic shot of Patrick with which the film begins. The effect of this is to stress the continuity of the church in Ireland, but it does this by promoting Catholicism as Patrick's true bequest, eliding sectarian differences within Christianity. The inclusion of the Croagh Patrick pilgrimage footage, however, strongly suggests that the story of Patrick's church is ongoing. Although the cathedral in Armagh looks like a stronghold of the faith, the frailty of Cardinal Logue indicates the need for ordinary Catholics to participate in pilgrimages and other church events in order to ensure continuity of the faith.

Ireland a Nation seeks stronger closure. Leerssen writes that 'Emmet's statement that his epitaph is not to be written, that his biography is to remain open-ended, until the day of Ireland's independence, is implicitly echoed by all these open-ended histories with their Fenian or Parnellite sympathies'.⁷⁴ *Ireland a Nation*, however, contains a scene just after Emmet's execution in which Erin ceases playing her harp at his graveside to write his epitaph. The scene may suggest that Emmet's self-sacrifice is constitutive of the independent nation, but this would both ignore the history of the continuing nationalist struggles of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and render the newsreel material irrelevant. Logically, the shot of Erin should be placed after the newsreel material, indicating that current events – whether that is the passing of Home Rule in 1914 or de Valera's visit to the United States in 1919 – are so momentous that they allow Emmet's epitaph to be written. This order of shots would better integrate the newsreel and better explain the joy of the onscreen narrator, who is telling the story to his grandchildren in the final shot. Introduced by the intertitle 'THE STORY TOLD', this framing shot replicates the film's

opening scene, explained by the intertitle 'ONCE UPON A TIME IRELAND HAD A PARLIAMENT OF ITS OWN'.⁷⁵

Ultimately, however, the difference between the popular histories and these films is not primarily one of closure or textual integrity but the way in which they are consumed. Although the situation is complicated by public readings and newspaper serializatiton, the histories as literary works were usually read at different times by individuals separated from each other. The films, by contrast, were viewed at the same time in a semi-public space by large groups of people. As such these films are structured to link the people who constituted the audience with a lineage of struggle for self-determination or with the Ireland's Christian heritage. In January 1917, the audiences who saw *Ireland a Nation* before it was banned were, in any case, denied the opportunity to see 'themselves' on the screen.

SEEING THEMSELVES IN THE LOCAL VIEW

The local view, a film that featured crowds of people so that they would attend a film show to see themselves on screen, was as popular in Ireland as it was elsewhere at the turn of the century, but the participation associated with this kind of film took on a particular importance in the heightened Irish political environment of the 1910s. The local view can be distinguished from other seemingly identical early films featuring crowds, such as those made by the Lumière company, by the fact that the local view did not interest an audience apart from the one represented on screen and therefore did not have the economic potential of what might be distinguished as the Lumière's' city films, which circulated internationally. The most important early producer and exhibitor of local films in Ireland was the Thomas-Edison Animated Picture Company, a travelling British firm that was bought out by James T. Jameson in late 1902 and renamed the Irish Animated Picture Company. Whereas these companies aimed at exploiting the many potential audiences among self-identified groups in Irish society, they were careful to contain potentially contentious political energies – in the case of the IAPC, at least until the early 1910s – so as not to lose lucrative elite support that guaranteed the respectability of their entertainment.

The momentousness of political developments internationally and in Ireland in the 1900s and 1910s was such that topical films had a particular attractiveness for film-show audiences. Operating from 1913 to 1920, General Film Supply was the period's most important indigenous producer of factual film, but locally based producers –

many of them cinema owners like the Horgans of Youghal also offered local views in the Ireland of the 1910s. The appearance of an international newsreel service after 1910 encouraged some local producers to regularize their production of local news films, which the Horgans did for their town with the Youghal Gazette and GFS did for a national audience with their Irish Events service between 1917 and 1920. The reception history of films produced by GFS, particularly its newsreel special on the orchestrated public events commemorating the funeral of republican hunger striker Thomas Ashe in October 1917, shows that the figuration of the people on film could be used to focus the energies of a key political demonstration.

In light of the power of these films in drawing audiences and the resulting expertise in factual film-making in Ireland, it is not surprising that newsreel and other actuality material was incorporated into two of the major feature films made in Ireland in the 1910s, *Ireland a Nation* and *Aimsir Padraig/In the Days of St. Patrick*. With their incorporation into feature films, local-view films were now placed in the privileged place on the cinema programme, potentially attracting most audience attention. Their placement at the end of a historical film focuses that attention on the co-presence of the past and the present.

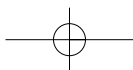
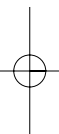
There were Irish films made in the late 1910s, however, that in their mode of representation adhere far more closely to the norms of classical film-making that had emerged internationally in the mid-1910s. These forms of film-making were particularly associated with the emergence of the cinematic institution.

NOTES

1. NLI Ms. 1796(i), Joseph Holloway Diaries, 31 January 1898, p. 56.
2. 'The Cinematographe: Local Views', *Evening Telegraph (ET)*, 21 January 1897, p. 3.
3. *Irish Times (IT)*, 22 February 1897, p. 4.
4. *IT*, 8 February 1897, p. 4.
5. Robin Whalley and Peter Worden, 'Forgotten Firm': A Short Chronological Account of Mitchell and Kenyon, Cinematographers', *Film History*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (1998), pp. 35–51; and Richard Brown, 'New Century Pictures: Regional Enterprise in Early British Film Exhibition', in Vanessa Toulmin, Simon Popple and Patrick Russell (eds), *The Lost World of Mitchell and Kenyon* (London: BFI, 2004), p. 79.
6. On the Irish films in the M&K collection, see Robert Monks, 'The Irish Films in the Mitchell and Kenyon Collection', in Toulmin, Popple and Russell, (eds), *The Lost World of Mitchell and Kenyon*, pp. 92–102.
7. Uli Jung, 'Local Views': A Blind Spot in the Historiography of Early German Cinema', *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, Vol. 22, No. 3 (August 2002), pp. 253–4.
8. See Georges Sadoul's letter to Louis Lumière dated 2 March 1947, Auguste and Louis Lumière, *Letters: Inventing the Cinema* (London: Faber and Faber, 1995), pp. 282–8.
9. Georges-Michel Coissac, *Historie du Cinematographe, de ses Origines a à nos Jours* (Paris,



- 1925), p. 198. Quoted in Livio Belloi, 'Lumiere and His View: The Cameraman's Eye in Early Cinema', *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, Vol. 15, No. 4 (October 1995), p. 463.
10. Charles Musser, *The Emergence of Cinema: The American Screen to 1907* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1994), p. 143.
 11. For a fuller discussion of some of these films, see Harvey O'Brien, *The Real Ireland: The Evolution of Ireland in Documentary Film* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 2004), pp. 21–4.
 12. Belloi, 'Lumiere and His View', pp. 461–2.
 13. *Ibid.*, p. 465.
 14. *IT*, 30 November 1901, pp. 9 and 10.
 15. 'Thomas-Edison Animated Pictures', *IT*, 30 November 1901, p. 10.
 16. *IT*, 5 December 1901, p. 4.
 17. 'Animated Pictures', *IT*, 2 December 1901, p. 5.
 18. 'Edison's Pictures', *IT*, 7 December 1901, p. 10.
 19. *Ibid.*
 20. *IT*, 9 December 1901, p. 4.
 21. 'Rotunda' file, Liam O'Leary Archive (LOLA), National Library of Ireland.
 22. *IT*, 15 August 1903, p. 9.
 23. 'The Animated Pictures at the Star Theatre: Action by the Edison Manufacturing Company', *IT*, 29 July 1903, p. 3.
 24. *IT*, 14 August 1903, p. 4.
 25. O'Brien, *The Real Ireland*, pp. 25–8.
 26. Heather Laird, *Subversive Law in Ireland, 1879–1920: From 'Unwritten Law' to the Dáil Courts* (Dublin: Four Courts, 2005), p. 119.
 27. *Bioscope*, 24 December 1908, p. 22.
 28. *Ibid.*
 29. *ET*, 2 October 1917, p. 2.
 30. This accounts for most of Collins' laconic oration at the graveside, reported in the daily papers; see, for example, *IT*, 1 October 1917, p. 6.
 31. *Evening Herald*, 1 October 1917, p. 3.
 32. See advertisements in the *Dublin Evening Mail (DEM)*, 29 September 1917, p. 4.
 33. For details of the location, management, and seating capacities of most Irish cinemas of the period, see *Cinema Yearbook 1915*, pp. 94ff.
 34. *Limelight*, Vol. 1, No. 10 (October 1917), p. 8.
 35. *Ibid.* Material from the film can be seen most readily in a sequence from George Morrison's *Mise Éire* (Ireland: Gael-Linn, 1959).
 36. Sunniva O'Flynn, 'Irish Newsreels: An Expression of National Identity?' in Roger Smither and Wolfgang Klau (eds), *Newsreels in Film Archives: A Study Based on the FIAF Newsreels Symposium* (Trowbridge: Flicks Books, 1996), pp. 57 and 59.
 37. *DEM*, 29 September 1917, p. 4.
 38. *Ibid.*
 39. 'Sinn Fein Prisoners' Homecoming: Story of the Filming of Recent Remarkable Street Scenes in Dublin', *Limelight*, Vol. 1, No. 7 (July 1917), pp. 16–17. This incident is treated in more detail in Kevin Rockett, Luke Gibbons, and John Hill, *Cinema and Ireland* (London: Croom Helm, 1987), p. 34.
 40. '30,000 Mourners: Incidents in Yesterday's Mighty Funeral: Facts and Figures: 3 Miles of Marchers in Massed Formation', *Evening Herald*, 1 October 1917, p. 1.
 41. 'Thomas Ashe: Funeral in Dublin Yesterday: Impressive Scenes: Enormous Crowds Throng the Streets', *Freeman's Journal (FJ)*, 1 October 1917, p. 3.
 42. *FJ*, 2 October 1917, p. 6.
 43. *Limelight*, Vol. 1, No. 12 (December 1917), cover.
 44. *Limelight*, Vol. 2, No. 4 (April 1918), p. 15.
 45. National Archives of Ireland (NAI) file CSORP/1919/11025; Rockett, Gibbons and Hill, pp. 35–6.
 46. Musser, *The Emergence of Cinema*, p. 375.
 47. See Kristin Thompson, 'The Formulation of the Classical Style, 1909–28', in David Bordwell, Janet Staiger, and Kristin Thompson, *The Classical Hollywood Cinema: Film Style & Mode of Production to 1960* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985), pp. 175–240.
 48. Charles Musser, 'The Travel Genre in 1903–1904: Moving Towards Fictional Narrative', in



- Thomas Elsaesser, (ed.), *Early Cinema: Space, Frame, Narrative* (London: BFI, 1990), p. 125; Rockett, *The Irish Filmography*, (Dublin: Red Mountain, 1996) p. 239.
49. Eileen Bowser, *The Transformation of Cinema: 1907–1915* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1994), p. 55.
 50. Steven J. Ross, *Working-Class Hollywood: Silent Film and the Shaping of Class in America* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1998), p. 97.
 51. *FJ*, 13 March 1917, p. 3.
 52. 'A Story of Rome', *Limelight*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (March 1917), p. 8.
 53. *IT*, 13 March 1917, p. 3.
 54. *FJ*, 13 March 1917, p. 3.
 55. 'Dublin Film Hire Case', *Limelight*, Vol. 1, No. 7 (July 1917), p. 20.
 56. *Limelight*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (February 1917), p. 19.
 57. NAI CSORP/1919/11025; Rockett, Gibbons and Hill, pp. 12–16.
 58. The Catholic Truth Society widely disseminated a series of hagiographies in the form of penny pamphlets, including Canon Arthur Ryan's *St. Patrick: Apostle of Ireland* (London: Catholic Truth Society, [1901]).
 59. NAI CSORP/1919/11025.
 60. *IT*, 9 January 1917, p. 3.
 61. 'Irish History Films: "Ireland a Nation" at the Rotunda', *FJ*, 9 January 1917, p. 3. With its motto of 'Ireland a Nation', it is not surprising that *FJ* was particularly important in promoting the film.
 62. 'The '98 Rebellion: Interesting Film Production', *FJ*, 5 January 1917, p. 2.
 63. 'The U.I.L. in Dublin', *ET*, 1 January 1912, p. 5.
 64. Christopher Morash, *A History of Irish Theatre, 1601–2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002), p. 155.
 65. Jacqueline R. Hill, 'National Festivals, the State and "Protestant Ascendancy" in Ireland, 1790–1829', *Irish Historical Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 93 (May 1984), pp. 30–51.
 66. 'The "Ireland a Nation" Film: Criticisms of Historical Inaccuracies', *Limelight*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (February 1917), p. 3.
 67. Christian Metz, 'The Imaginary Signifier', *Screen*, Vol. 16, No. 2 (Summer 1975), pp. 14–77.
 68. *Ibid.*
 69. Joep Leerssen, *Remembrance and Imagination: Patterns in the Historical/and Literary Representation of Ireland in the nineteenth Century* (Cork: Cork UP/Field Day, 1996; and R. F. Foster, *The Irish Story: Telling Tales and Making It Up in Ireland* (London: Penguin, 2002).
 70. Foster, *The Irish Story*, pp. 5–8.
 71. Leerssen, *Remembrance and Imagination*, p. 154.
 72. Foster, *The Irish Story*, p. 7.
 73. A. M. Sullivan, *The Story of Ireland* (Dublin: Gill, 1867), pp. 581–2.
 74. Leerssen, *Remembrance and Imagination*, p. 154.
 75. 'Irish Heroes the on Film [sic]: From Robert Emmet to Daniel O'Connell', *FJ*, 6 January 1917, p. 2.

The Great Institution of Kinematography

‘He had not died but he had faded out like a film in the sun.’

James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916).

‘Not less slow than in other countries,’ begins the editorial in the inaugural issue of the *Irish Limelight*, ‘our people have come to regard the motion pictures as a mighty force which no other agency has yet surpassed in power as an educative and instructive force.’²¹ Leaving aside, for the moment, its opening comparison with other countries and its closing presentation of the cinema as primarily an instrument of instruction, this statement makes the apparently uncontroversial claim that cinema culture existed in Ireland in 1917. By that date, a large number of cinemas were supplied by a significant number of distributors and patronized by large audiences. The two most significant Irish production companies of the silent period, the Film Company of Ireland (FCOI) and the General Film Supply (GFS), were making well-received fiction and non-fiction films. Given these facts it is unsurprising that the *Limelight* should assume the existence of the cinema as an institution and present its own role as ‘the fostering and development of all that is entertaining and wholesome in what may now be described as the great institution of kinematography.’²²

The tortuous syntax of the *Limelight*’s opening statement, however, perhaps indicates uncertainty about the claims it makes. In important respects, particularly in relation to film production, Ireland had been slower than other countries in adopting the cinema. This seems to have been more a matter of choice than of Ireland’s geopolitical position as a small island possession of Britain, the imperial centre that lay between Ireland and the cultures of Europe. After all, new media of transport and communication – particularly the train and the telegraph – ensured that few parts of the country were untouched by the international popular culture that the cinema disseminated and,

indeed, epitomized. 'All epoch-making inventions', begins John Ryan's assessment of the advantages and disadvantages of cinema in 1918, 'railway facilities, telegraphy and the like – which have broken down the barriers of time and space, and served to bring alien races into contact, have by the same means tended to rob other nations of their salutary isolation.'³ Ryan does not argue for the boycotting of cinema, which he sees as 'the greatest education and social influence that has arisen in any age', but he warns that '[w]e must master the "movies" or they will master us!'⁴ Certain influential groups did, however, believe that isolation from the popular culture that cinema was increasingly dominating would benefit self-determination. Looking back to an ancient Gaelic culture as the basis for a unique Irish future, Irish cultural nationalists had been slow in seeing film, given its inevitable involvement with a technological modernity associated with British domination, as a worthwhile expressive medium, and many would remain hostile. Nevertheless, by the mid-1910s 'going to the pictures' was a popular activity, and the distribution and exhibition sectors of the industry thrived. A key part of the shaping of the cinema institution in Ireland in this period was the instrumental role played by Irish cultural groups allied to Catholic moral reformists championing a Catholic Gaelic Ireland in lobbying for regulation of the cinema.

Whereas Chapter 2 charts the intermedial links between theatre and FCOI's *Knocknagow* and *Willy Reilly and His Colleen Bawn*, this chapter focuses on the aspects of these films that might be considered specifically cinematic, against the background of a thriving cinema trade in Ireland in the late 1910s and the various attempts to control it. It begins with a discussion of the available writings that made the various aspects of cinema visible to Irish cinema-goers, particularly the trade journal and fan magazine *Irish Limelight*. Using *Limelight* and other sources, it charts the establishment of the industrial sectors of production, distribution and exhibition, which, as the US Halsey, Stuart & Co. prospectus 'The Motion Picture Industry as a Basis for Bond Financing' put it in 1927, 'correspond, roughly, to the manufacturing, wholesaling, and retailing activities common elsewhere' in industry.⁵ The industrial nature of the film business made explicit by this American prospectus was already apparent in 1917, ten years before this document was issued, not only in the United States and other major film-producing countries but also in Ireland. The sectors of production, distribution and exhibition that existed in Ireland, however, were in a different balance from the film-producing countries,

where these sectors operated in a mutually supporting way, albeit by relying on significant elements of import and export. The Irish film industry, by contrast, was largely an import, wholesaling and retailing business because the 'product' was overwhelmingly manufactured elsewhere. Furthermore, the most desirable film product was increasingly the fictional drama; this provided novelty but its novel elements were presented in the form of a coherent narrative in order to require as little contextual information as possible, so as to be viewed with ease by international audiences.

These facts had profound implications for an Irish production company like FCOI that had to find distribution networks both within Ireland and outside it for its films, which were made by people with little or no previous film-making experience. After examining the flourishing business of distributing and exhibiting films in Ireland in the 1910s and the attempts to control this business, this chapter considers the considerable success of FCOI's first films in this context, how and why the *Limelight's* discussion of *Knocknagow* (1918) attempted to fit these films into an international framework, and the extent to which *Willy Reilly and His Colleen Bawn* (1920) responded to multiple pressures by subordinating its intermedial elements to narrative.

RECEPTION

The main extant sources illuminating the development of the Irish cinema industry in the 1910s are the Irish trade journal *Irish Limelight*; the British trade journals *Bioscope* and *Kinematograph and Lantern Weekly* (*Kine Weekly*); columns in the mainstream press; entries on the cinema in the diaries of Joseph Holloway; and articles on cinema building in the *Irish Builder and Engineer*. Few relevant articles appear in scholarly journals of the period: these few include John Ryan's 'The Cinema Peril', referred to above, which was written in response to the 1917 publication of the report of the Cinema Commission of Inquiry in Britain in 1917.

The first publication in January 1917 of the dedicated Irish film journal *Irish Limelight* was an important development in film reception in the country. The small size of the Irish population meant that the journal had to address both the trade and the cinema audience, and, in doing so, it located itself in a mediating and didactic role between the public and the industry:

We venture to submit this issue, confident in the knowledge that here in Ireland a great gulf exists between picture-goers and the realities and efforts associated with the production of the fascinating film, and confident in the hope that our columns will meet with the approval and support of all tastes and fill a long-felt want in this country.⁶

This divided loyalty meant that the tone of the magazine was frequently celebratory, and it carried a large range of frequently well-illustrated articles, including short items of interest and gossip on cinema nationally and internationally; more extensive amusing or serious commentaries on trends in the Irish trade; lengthy production-company synopses of films currently on show; local and international star biographies and interviews; occasional advice pieces on such topics as how to become a screen actress; and many advertisements for cinemas, distributors and associated services. As well as such articles addressing the trade or the fans, some items engaged in more critical discussion of the cinema, providing a specifically Irish context for cineastic debate, such as the article that detailed the historical inaccuracies in *Ireland a Nation* that was discussed in the previous chapter.⁷

The *Limelight* was not the only outlet for Irish film criticism at the time. 'Readers of the Saturday *Evening Telegraph* got an agreeable surprise recently', reveals a report in the third issue of the *Limelight* in early 1917, 'when they found that cinema notes were introduced. This recognition of the people's amusement proves pleasant reading after the many bitter attacks which have been made in the local Press. And the fact that it comes so soon after the appearance of the Irish *Limelight* sets us thinking.'⁸ The appearance of a column like 'Kinematograph Notes and News' in the *Evening Telegraph* with other cultural news in early 1917 may represent even more significant evidence of the growing pervasiveness of the cinema than the existence of the *Limelight*. Aside from irregular previews and reviews of film shows and reports of cinema-related court cases, there are no really substantial writings on the cinema as such up to this point. That a major evening paper felt it worthwhile to publish a weekly column on cinema indicates that the institution not only was important among a group of dedicated cinema-goers but also possessed more general appeal. Certain journalists also began to specialize in cinema topics, such as J.A.P. (Joseph A. Power), who wrote at various times for the *Telegraph*, the *Limelight* and the *Bioscope*.

Both of the major British trade journals *Bioscope* and *Kine Weekly* provide articles on Irish cinema as well as on the wider contextual

framework of cinema as it existed in Britain. In the more diversified British publishing market that also offered film-fan magazines, these journals specialized in addressing the trade, providing advice on such technical matters as the wiring of a cinema, musical accompaniment, and financial aspects of the industry, as well as carrying information on and advertisements for the latest offerings from producers and distributors. Letters in the correspondence columns show that these journals were read in Ireland, a fact demonstrated explicitly by a note from J. Magner of the Clonmel Theatre in the *Bioscope's* 'Topics of the Week' column in 1916 that praises the journal as 'the Best Trade Paper'.⁹ Of particular importance to Irish cinema is the *Bioscope's* column 'Pictures in Ireland. By "Paddy"' ('Paddy'), which made its first appearance in the issue of 29 February 1912. Up to this point, the British trade journal covered Irish topics haphazardly, mainly in its news and financial columns.

The trade journal *Irish Builder and Engineer* offers detailed information on, but not comprehensive coverage of, the progress of cinema building during the 1910s. These details can be at least as valuable in reconstructing how audiences of the period interacted with films as are the few surviving films. 'The surviving prints have considerable value as evidence of the developing art of film,' argues Nicholas Hiley,

but historians can learn more about the British film industry between 1895 and 1920 by studying the venues in which these films were exhibited, than by restoring these prints and projecting them according to their own tastes. Film history is not the history of a medium, it is the story of how the medium was transformed by the intervention of a mass audience.¹⁰

The increasing number, size and comfort of picture houses in the 1910s is an index of the transformation that the cinema underwent from an occasional novelty to a central part of Irish social life. The story of film exhibition will be taken up after a discussion of what has just been called the wholesaling end of the cinema business, distribution.

DISTRIBUTION

Of the industrial sectors, the increasing importance of distribution is perhaps the most evident fact in the trade journals of the 1910s. In his inaugural 'Pictures in Ireland' column in February 1912, 'Paddy' had outlined the difficulties for Irish exhibitors created by the fact that they had to hire from distributors, often called renters, in Britain:

In a conversation which I had recently with one of Dublin's leading managers, he mentioned that it was difficult to secure special features or exclusive films for Ireland. But the reason for this, he remarked, was not hard to find. A film, hired from Monday till Wednesday, could not be dispatched to England until the Thursday, therefore by the time it arrived the company hiring it would have lost about two days. He found, in consequence, that a second or third release was generally the most suitable.¹¹

In interviews with the trade press in early 1913, Charles Pathé – the co-director of what was then the world's largest film company – confounded film distributors by arguing that 'no renter, unless he is also an exhibitor, or exploits exclusive films, can hope to make money, and that the renter will not be able to exist in business much longer'.¹² As far as Ireland was concerned, the distributors were just arriving. One of the first distribution companies to establish a substantial presence in the country was British Gaumont. In April 1913, the company moved into purpose-built and well-appointed premises in Dublin's Lord Edward Street. The building housed both utilitarian facilities for processing and printing film that could be used for the production of newsreels, and 'an operating room and projecting theatre for showing the films before hire or purchase. The walls are handsomely panelled and the porch laid with mosaic. The floors are laid with wood block flooring.'¹³ During this period, however, the facility seems to have been used almost exclusively for distribution rather than for newsreel production. When Gaumont's Mr Russell competed with GFS's Norman Whitten to film the homecoming of Sinn Féin prisoners in 1917, he relied on the help of two exhibitors – J. D. Hozier of the Mary Street Picture House (PH) and Ernest Matthewson of the Pillar PH – but lost the race to reach screens first by sending the initial day's footage to Britain for processing and printing, and only 'under great difficulties' processed and printed the second day's film.¹⁴

As reflected in the items discussed by the 'Paddy' column in the *Bioscope*, in 1915 interest in distribution in Ireland reached somewhere near parity with that in exhibition, in 1915 from a position in which it was rarely mentioned. Of the twelve items discussed on 7 October 1915, for example, only five deal exclusively with events in the cinemas without linking the films show to a named distributor. Of the other seven, five discuss exhibition and distribution issues together, and two focus exclusively on distributors' trade shows. Of the latter, the item on Gaumont's trade shows at their Lord Edward Street premises comments that '[t]hese Tuesday shows held in Gaumont's

own showroom have become quite the thing, and a goodly number of exhibitors drop in from time to time'.¹⁵

By the time the *Limelight* appeared in 1917, distribution was recognized as central to the Irish film industry. In the 'Movie Musings' column in its first issue, 'Senix' outlined the sectors of a 'new home industry' that 'point to a prosperous future for the cinema in Ireland'. Prominent among these are 'the splendid start made by the Film Company of Ireland' and 'an Irish journal to supply them with the latest news concerning the trade generally'. The sector that is mentioned first, however, is distribution: 'During the past few years cross-Channel renters have realised the growth of the cinema in Ireland, and several of the leading firms have now got representatives on the spot.'¹⁶ In the late 1910s and start of the 1920s, those London-based firms with branch offices in Dublin and Belfast included Gaumont, Weisker Bros., Pathe Frères, Famous-Lasky, Ideal Films, Film Booking Offices and Western Imports.¹⁷ Although these companies controlled the majority of the most lucrative films shown in Ireland, such Irish firms as James T. Jameson, General Film Supply (GFS), National Films, Express Film Agency, Levi and Sons, J. Y. Moore and Phoenix Films either acquired the Irish rights for films or acted as agents for other large renting firms. Indeed, quite a few cinema owners and others involved in the business tried their hands at distribution at one time or another: for example, in 1916 Frederick A. Sparling's acquired the rights for *Ireland a Nation*. Of the Irish firms that pursued distribution on a long-term basis, James T. Jameson's company at one time acted as agents for Vitagraph, for instance, and Express handled the Irish distribution of the films offered by Charles Urban.¹⁸ These and other firms also watched the trade journals for advertisements offering the distribution rights for a territory that included Ireland, such as the division of Britain and Ireland into four territories by R. Prieur & Co. in disposing of the rights for the film *Nero and Agrippina* (Italy: Gloria, 1913; dir. Mario Caserini), one of the four territories consisting of Lancashire, Cheshire, the Isle of Man, North Wales and Ireland.¹⁹ The film eventually had its first Irish run at Dublin's Masterpiece in August 1916.

EXHIBITION

Whereas there seems to be good reasons for pointing to a transformation in the reception of film in Ireland after 1917, the large number of cinemas in the country suggest that film exhibition was well established

by that date. Apart from the special case of Hale's Tours (see Chapter 3), Ireland's first dedicated moving-picture venues opened in 1908. Among these were Dublin's Queen's Theatre, discussed below, and two Belfast venues, the St. George's Hall (opened 17 August) and the Star Picture Palace (opened 14 September).²⁰ Hale's Tours opened on 3 June 1907 and seems to have closed, possibly due to financial problems with the British operation, by the beginning of 1909. Hale's Tours (United Kingdom) went into liquidation in January 1909 and announced bankruptcy in March 1909.²¹

The Queen's was discussed in the Introduction but some more detail can be added. Closing in March 1907 for what were to be extensive renovations, the theatre was redecorated and opened as a dedicated moving-picture venue – the term 'cinema' was not yet used – by the Colonial Picture Combine on 2 March 1908.²² The former 'home of transpontine melodrama', writes the *Evening Telegraph's* 'Music and the Drama' columnist, 'is being transformed into a two-shows-a-night place of entertainment at which animated pictures will be shown, together with a first-class orchestra, vocalists, etc.'²³ W. S. Pearce, the leasee and manager of the operation, boasted that his entertainment included 'The World's Best Pictures. Full Band. Good Singers'.²⁴ It may have been the right time to open a dedicated venue in Dublin because picture shows had their adherents among journalists. Reviewing shows by the New Living Pictures and the Musical Repertoire Company at the Rotunda's Round Room in January that year, a reporter for the *Evening Telegraph* enthuses:

The entertainment has become immensely popular in Dublin, and no wonder. It is, without any doubt, one of the most interesting and enjoyable forms of amusement imaginable. The stage of perfection reached by the animated pictures, the marvellous scenes reproduced from all corners of the earth with the utmost faithfulness and fidelity to life, are wonderful, and enchant and delight the audiences. The entertainment affords the delightful opportunity to parents and guardians of bringing their little ones to a performance that will certainly give them the fullest measure of enjoyment while the parents also find themselves assisting at an entertainment that has fully as great attractions for them as for the children.²⁵

By the end of March 1908, the Queen's was advertising itself as 'The People's Popular Pictures Palace'.²⁶ Complications with the lease meant that it remained open as a film-based entertainment until 9 January 1909, when it closed for extensive structural alterations that

preceded its reopening as a theatre in October 1909.²⁷ The Queen's venture had proved the viability of a dedicated moving-picture venue of over 1,000 seats in Dublin.

It was to be nearly a year before Dublin's most famous early picture show opened its doors, and this was to have a more modest capacity. When a consortium comprising of impecunious author James Joyce and four Trieste businessmen opened the Volta in Dublin in December 1909, the country's main exhibitor, James T. Jameson, was still playing seasons at the Rotunda and touring his film-and-variety Irish Animated Picture Company between these engagements. Joyce's associates already ran two picture houses in Trieste and a third in Bucharest.²⁸ With their move into Dublin, they beat at least two British exhibition chains that were planning on filling the entertainment gap in the Irish capital. In late 1909, both the Electric Theatres and the Provincial Cinematograph Theatres had acquired or were in negotiations to acquire sites in Dublin for the construction of picture houses. Among other fascinating details on how speculators in film exhibition viewed the business, the prospectus for the relaunch of the Electric Theatres in 1908 reveals that the company was looking for premises to adapt and planning to spend less than £750 on the refurbishment.²⁹ It was perhaps with the aim not only of generating publicity but also of discouraging such competition that the Joyce consortium sent a press release to the *Bioscope* in December 1909 announcing that the 'International Cinematograph Society Volta [...], which has no less than 23 film-producing factories, situated in different countries to rely on for its program', intends 'to introduce to Dublin the quick continental system of low prices, present only the newest films, with a constant change of subject'.³⁰ Although the Electric Theatres apparently abandoned their plans for Irish venues because of their focus on the South African market,³¹ Provincial Cinematograph Theatres made their entry into Ireland with their Sackville PH in April 1910, acquired the Volta in July 1910, and opened two lavishly decorated premises in 1911: the Grafton PH in April and Belfast's Royal Avenue PH in June.³² Provincial abandoned plans for a large picture house in Belfast on a site fronting High Street and Corn Market in March 1913, apparently because the company saw the scheme as too ambitious to be profitable.³³

The building industry in Ireland was interested in the construction of picture houses not only because they offered privately funded outlets for the crafts of its members, but also because the buildings employed materials such as ferroconcrete in compliance with the

Cinematograph Act's requirements that cinematograph theatres be protected against fire. The trade journal *Irish Builder* argued in 1916 that fires started during the hostilities of Easter Week would not have been as destructive as they proved to be if these new building materials had been more widely utilized. In picture houses, the structural materials of steel and ferroconcrete were generally overlaid with decorative fibrous plaster and terrazzo flooring. The uniformity of picture-house design was also a result of the fact that certain architects specialized in this work, prominent among them being the firms of Thomas Houston, George L. O'Connor, and A. V. O'Rourke.

The discourse on cinemas – the term became current around 1912 – in the Irish building trade, as represented by the *Irish Builder*, peaks in 1913. There are a number of reasons for this: the lock-out of workers in the construction industry in 1913–14, the difficulties of obtaining building materials after the outbreak of World War I in 1914, and a concern with the reconstruction of the Sackville/O'Connell Street area of Dublin after the Easter Rising of 1916. It is also possible that cinema construction received more detailed coverage in the period in which it represented a novelty in the building trade, and that it was only projects that deviated from the norms established during this period in terms of scale or materials that received subsequent attention.

The Irish Builder has no stories on picture-house construction in 1909 or 1910 but does carry a number of items on the related boom in the erection of roller-skating rinks. Nicholas Hiley has shown that part of the reason for the British boom in the construction of purpose-built picture houses from 1909 on was to provide investment opportunities for speculators interested in the entertainment industry.³⁴ Speculative funds were initially lured away from such commodities as rubber and oil by the phenomenal returns on the building and operating of roller-skating rinks, a success that began with the chain constructed and run by the American Roller Rink Company from 1908 but ended abruptly with the loss of investor confidence at the start of 1910. In the wake of the 'rinking' boom and bust, speculators looked to picture-house construction and operation as an alternative source of fast returns from the latest entertainment craze.

As part of the *Bioscope*'s special Machinery issue of 27 October 1910, the journal reprinted an article from *Vanity Fair* entitled 'Will the Picture Craze Last?' that outlines the benefits of the picture shows over roller skating:

Without going into the merits or demerits of skating rinks, there is little in common between them and bioscope shows. The former are more expensive – a shilling entrance and another shilling for skates – while the skaters have to entertain themselves, which in time becomes monotonous. An animated picture show has constant change, and, with the enterprise with which the large concerns are conducted, an interesting novelty is always forthcoming. The picture show is an innovation, but so was the modern theatre and music-hall less than a generation ago.³⁵

Contrasting *Bioscope* reports from early and late summer 1909 give an indication of how sudden was the rinking collapse. In early May, ‘Skating Finance’ reports that ‘[f]ortunes have been made out of roller skating this past winter’.³⁶ At the end of July, it was reprinting articles from other publications with such titles as ‘The Rinking Collapse’ and ‘The Rinking Crash’.³⁷

The *Irish Builder*’s first report on a picture house, the Provincial Cinematograph Theatre’s Grafton PH in Dublin, shows that the company was seeking to attract a very different clientele to the Queen’s or, indeed, to the company’s other venues in the Sackville Street area. Spending an estimated £5,000 on the building, Provincial clearly aimed to attract passing wealthy shoppers who frequented the city’s most fashionable street:

The superstructure is chiefly built with Rathnew brick and cement, and the front will be in Kingscourt brick and Dumfries stone facings enriched with carvings, and two bay windows filled with lead lights. The entrance from Grafton Street will have polished granite columns and carved caps, the walls lined with marble, and the floors laid also in marble, whilst the inside walls will have Duralite and ceramic face. Special mechanical arrangements are being provided for ventilation with hot and cold air, and the sanitary fittings will be modern in every respect. The floors will be all fire-proof, and the internal woodwork will be in fibrous plaster with ornamental cornices. Two flights of stairs will be in mosaic and one in teak wood.³⁸

When the Grafton opened on Easter Monday 1911, the *Bioscope* noted that it ‘is most handsomely furnished and decorated, in the usual ornate style of the Company’s houses, and is equipped with a luxurious tea-room’.³⁹

Although film venues with less than 500 seats continued to be built up to 1915, with the Pillar PH in central Dublin opening in February 1915 with a capacity of 400,⁴⁰ the trend in cinema construction during

the period was for venues with ever more seating capacity. Introducing an account of the construction of new cinemas in Dublin's Sackville Street and Summerhill, the *Irish Builder* comments in early 1914 that

[f]our year have passed since the Cinematograph Act came into existence, and few matters have given rise to so much discussion as the remarkable growth in the number of halls devoted to the exhibition of pictures by cinematograph. In Dublin alone there are no less than twenty-six buildings carrying on cinematograph displays, having an approximate seating accommodation for about 15,000 persons.⁴¹

Notable among the large-capacity houses around the country were the Mountpottinger Picturedrome, Belfast, holding 900; the Dorset Picture Hall, Dublin, holding 1,000; the Clonard PH, Falls Road, Belfast, holding 1,200; and the Phoenix Picture Theatre, Ellis Quay, Dublin, holding 1,500.⁴²

A project to construct a cinema with more than twice the capacity of the largest of these venues was announced in the *Limelight* in early 1918. La Scala Theatre was to occupy the site in Dublin's Prince's Street of the premises of Alex Thom and of the *Freeman's Journal*, which had been destroyed during the fighting of Easter 1916. The *Limelight* stressed the progress that had been made in film exhibition by reminding its readers that

the earlier home of the 'movies' was almost invariably an old store or shop that happened to be vacant. Some enterprising individual would rent it, sweep out the dirt, fill up – or partially fill up – the floor space with ordinary wooden chairs, place a screen at one end of the fit-up and a projecting machine at the other and his 'theatre' was complete.⁴³

Although great advances have been made, the article continues,

[t]he last word in scientific construction and luxurious appointment still, however, remains to be said, but unless we are greatly mistaken, Dublin's new super cinema – which is to occupy the site of the old 'Freeman's Journal' office in Prince's Street – will mark an immense advance on anything hitherto achieved. [...] 'La Scala,' as it is to be called, has been planned as a colossal temple to the art of cinematography.⁴⁴

As the construction neared completion in August 1920, the *Irish Builder* revealed that this 'temple to the art of cinematography'

has a seating capacity of 3,200. In addition to the theatre there are a restaurant, cafes, and a ballroom. Adjoining are smoke and dressing rooms. On each floor are luxuriously appointed tea-rooms, lounge, and bar, and on the ground floor is the restaurant. The picture screen, which is of the latest pattern, is set on the back wall at a distance of 50 feet from the front row of the parterre. The stage is capable of staging the largest productions in comedy, drama, or grand opera. The theatre covers an area of more than a quarter of an acre and has cost up to the present £120,000. It is estimated that £10,000 additional will be necessary for its completion.⁴⁵

Surviving files from the Chief Secretary's Office Registered Papers (CSORP) in the National Archives of Ireland (NAI) show how the opening of a cinema on the scale of La Scala changed the geography of film exhibition in Dublin.⁴⁶ This can be seen in documents relating to the Dame Street PH's applications for Sunday opening. Cinemas in the city's fashionable streets had long been denied this, while those outside the city centre and particularly in what were seen as predominantly working-class districts were allowed restricted Sunday opening hours. Having been refused a Sunday licence on 2 April 1913, the management of the Dame Street PH applied on 22 July of that year for permission to open on Sundays pending their repeat application to the Recorder's annual Licensing Sessions in October.

The management was aware of the Recorder's position that picture houses such as the Grafton and Sackville Street that 'were frequented by persons of the better class' should remain closed on Sunday. In cognizance of this position, the cinema's case was that the 'people who frequented the Grafton street house were generally people who went shopping. The Dame street house was frequented largely by the work-ing classes, and the object of the application was to give facilities to the working classes to attend performances on Sundays.' The Recorder explained that

he had great sympathy with the working people. He did not see why Sunday should be a day of gloom at all. He had no Puritanical views in reference to the matter. He had stated that in no case would he grant a licence for Sunday unless the premises were closed between 7 and 8 o'clock in the evening, and were not opened before two o'clock. The Grafton street, Sackville street, and Dame street houses were of an entirely superior class. They were of the class of houses in London where they were not permitted to open by the London County Council. In the present case he could not put his hands on any ground which would justify him in disregarding the

view of those charged with the peace of the city. He was unable to grant the application.

Asked for comment on the Dame Street PH's application in July, Inspector Cornelius Kiernan of the Dublin Metropolitan Police (DMP) reiterates the arguments made in April and adds the fact that people going to worship in nearby churches and the Friends' meeting house might be obstructed. On these arguments, it is decided that the Recorder's decision in October should not be anticipated.

These exchanges might erroneously suggest that the working-classes did not come to Dame Street for their entertainment. Although this street was the centre of government, containing City Hall and entrances to the administrative offices of British rule in Ireland at Dublin Castle, it also housed the Empire Palace Theatre of Varieties, an establishment that relied on attracting a large working-class audience. In fact, what is implied here is that, while people were prepared to travel to a central location for varieties and other theatrical entertainments, they were more inclined to view pictures in the areas they frequented. Cinema-goers, it seems, visited their local cinemas. This notion is lent credibility by the fact that cinemas were built in the suburban centres of population, and it explains why some of the largest cinemas were located on the edge of the city. An item in the *Bioscope* on the Princess cinema in Rathmines, however, shows that local cinema-going was not such an established practice that measures like targeted advertising could not attract the right kind of spectators to suburban cinemas. "The Jockey of Death" was the feature at the Princess Cinema last week', it reports, 'and this great Gaumont exclusive filled the house. [...] The Princess put up special posters and these caught the eye of the fashionable public who daily parade Grafton Street. The result of this advertising is observed in the full houses prevailing at the Princess in the evenings.'⁴⁷ From the perspective of the licencing authorities at least, working-class cinema-going was focused on certain large suburban cinemas and not on the smaller, more exclusive city-centre venues.

The opening of La Scala on 20 August 1920, not only increased competition for city-centre cinemas but also required an influx of spectators from the suburbs. The state papers show that one of the immediate effects of its arrival was to present substantial grounds for city exhibitors to campaign for Sunday opening, in the difficult circumstances in which insurgent activity had led to curfew restrictions.⁴⁸ On 14 October 1920, John J. Farrell of the Pillar PH, Upper Sackville

Street, informed the superintendent of Store Street police station by solicitor's letter that he was applying for an extension to his music licence to cover Sunday from 2–6.30 pm and 8–10.30 pm. A report of 29 October from Store Street station to the Chief Secretary's Office ends with a note 'for the information of the Chief Crown Solicitor': 'The La Scala theatre first opened on Sunday 10th inst. for pictures. The Empire Theatre is open every Sunday evening after 8 pm also for pictures.' The main text of the report reveals that the 'new, spacious and beautifully constructed' La Scala, with entrances in Princes Street, 'about 40 yards distant from Lr. Sackville Street', was granted its patent on 2 September 1918, and it mentions 'Cinema production' and 'Cinematograph performances' but also makes reference (in the passages quoted in the report) to theatrical performances of all kinds. The report ends by stating that it seems that the patent allows them to open at whatever time they like and that the management is well aware of this. As the government sought legal opinion and was reluctant in any case to ban performances if they were orderly, the Chief Commissioner of the DMP intervened on behalf of a deputation of cinema owners who had come to see him by sending a minute on 6 January 1921:

One of the points, however, made by the Deputation was that La Scala Theatre, which is simply a Cinema Theatre, is permitted, under the terms of its patent, to open on Sunday evenings and is thus in a favoured position as compared with other Cinema Theatres, and is thronged on Sunday evenings with those who would, in other circumstances, attend some of the other Theatres. [...] The Association naturally do not desire to take from La Scala the privilege which its patent gives, but they, I think fairly, claim that the other Cinema Theatres should have a like privilege.

In reply to a letter from C. M. Martin-Jones, the Commissioner revealed on 2 February 1921 that the Recorder had allowed named cinemas to open on Sundays from 6.30–8.30 pm: the Bohemian Picture Theatre, the Dame Street PH, the Dorset Picture Hall, the Mary Street PH, the Phibsborough PH, the Theatre de Luxe, the Palace Cinema and the Phoenix Picture Palace.

By the start of the 1920s, therefore, a pattern had established itself whereby cinemas would dominate popular entertainment until the advent of television. Picture palaces already existed, so, in a further inflation of the hyperbolic language of the entertainment business, these larger and more lavish venues were to be 'temples to the art of cinematography'. Unlike the music halls and theatres, which relied on

attracting business into the city centre, the larger of Dublin's cinemas constructed during the pre-World War I cinema-building boom were located on the outskirts of the city. This seems to reflect the licensing authorities' understanding that working-class audiences, whose leisure time was restricted by long hours of employment, visited cinemas outside the city's main commercial areas. This understanding meant that suburban cinemas received fewer restrictions on opening hours. This pattern was reversed in the building of 'super' cinemas after the war. The first of these, La Scala, obviated restrictions on cinema licences by obtaining a theatrical patent. By the time La Scala opened in 1920, however, a frequently bitter struggle was taking place over the type of restrictions that should properly limit cinema-going.

REGULATIONS AND CENSORSHIP

'It is almost certain that not again will an Irving or a Terry come to us invoking our admiration to the conceptions of the supreme dramatists', laments a *Freeman's Journal* editorial on the cinema in January 1917. 'It is, therefore, imperative that we should consider how the new theatre [that is, the cinema] can be made subservient to the public utility.'⁴⁹ The emergence of the cinema as a recognized cultural institution can be seen in the increasing regulation of film exhibition by central and local government after 1910. The first important piece of legislation targeted at the cinema, the Cinematograph Act, 1909 [9 Edw. 7, c. 30], became law on 25 November 25, 1909., and its provisions came into force on 1 January 1910. Before this, such early cinemas as Dublin's Queen's and the Volta, were obliged to secure a music licence from the Recorder under music and dancing provisions of the Public Health Act, 1890 [53 and 54 Vic., c. 59], and a certificate from Dublin Corporation's inspector of theatres and places of public resort showing that the premises was 'on its completion in accordance with Corporation Theatre Bye-Laws.'⁵⁰

The main provisions of the Cinematograph Act concern the drafting of fire safety regulations that were to be specified in accompanying legislation by the Secretary of State in Britain and by the Lord Lieutenant in Ireland. The Lord Lieutenant duly issued regulations for Ireland on 21 January 1910, but this legislation was replaced by amended regulations issued on 20 April after experience proved the initial provisions to be inadequate. Problems arose, for example, when some exhibitors charged with non-compliance with the Act claimed that as Section 1 specified inflammable films, their exhibition of non-inflammable films

was not covered by the legislation. This section states that the Act applies to '[a]n exhibition of pictures or other optical effects by means of a cinematograph, or other similar apparatus, for the purposes of which inflammable films are used'. When such a case arose at Naas District Court on 7 March 1910, the Solicitor General advised that no prosecution should proceed until instruction had been received from the Home Office.⁵¹ On 21 March, the Home Office confirmed that the Act applied only to shows that used inflammable films, adding rather unhelpfully that '[t]he Secretary of State understands that there are non-inflammable films, although he has no official knowledge of them'.

Section 2 of the Act, however, opened up the regulation of film exhibition far beyond the demands of fire safety. This section allowed local authorities to specify further regulations, permitting in Subsection 1 that '[a] county council may grant licences to such persons as they think fit to use the premises specified in the licence for the purpose aforesaid on such terms and conditions and under such restrictions as, subject to regulations of the [Lord Lieutenant], the council may by the respective licences determine.' It was 'to avoid the peculiarities of local censorship' that this part of the act allowed that the British film industry opted for self-regulation.⁵² It established the British Board of Film Censors (BBFC) in 1913, and films coming to Ireland from British distributors after that date would have borne the seal of this body. At a meeting in early 1913 between the Recorder and a subcommittee of the Public Health Committee (PHC) to establish a coordinated approach to cinema licencing, the protagonists 'agreed that one of the conditions of the Licence should be that only films bearing the mark of the [BBFC] should be allowed to be exhibited in Dublin'.⁵³ The PHC, under the chairmanship of cinema-owner John J. Farrell, added other paragraphs to the licence in 1913. The PHC accepted the advice of the Dublin Juvenile Advisory committee that restrictions be introduced on the entry of children under 12.⁵⁴ Apart from those already referred to, the most notable of the eight conditions attached to Dublin Corporation's cinematograph licence by 1914 was one stipulating that '[n]othing shall be presented which is licentious or indecent or likely to produce riot, tumult or breach of the peace'.⁵⁵

The tactic of breach of the peace was employed by certain protestors against films they disliked, while pro-censorship organizations like the Irish Vigilance Association, with local branches such as the Dublin Vigilance Committee, combined large public demonstrations

with political lobbying. Two indictments for protests by William Larkin show the nature of the individual action. The first followed a letter to the *Freeman's Journal* by P. Donnelly of 30 Finglas Rd, Dublin, objecting to *In the Shadow of a Throne* (United States: Powers, 1913) at the newly opened Phibsboro' PH because it allegedly showed a nun performing mass and a novice nun falling into the arms of a prince. 'How long is Catholic Dublin going to stand this sort of thing?' asks Donnelly.⁵⁶ Dubliners of whatever confession reacted variously. Alderman John J. Farrell, managing director of the cinema and recently chairman of the PHC, responded by retaining the film for the second half of the week, writing a letter to the *Freeman's Journal* contradicting Donnelly's claims (and perhaps, as alleged in court, threatening legal action if the paper did not print a retraction), and inviting a reporter from the newspaper to give an 'objective' assessment of the film. The resulting publicity brought around 570 Dubliners, the seating capacity of the cinema, to subsequent showings of the film. On Friday these included William and Francis Larkin, who had close links with the Dublin Vigilance Committee.⁵⁷ These young men were indicted and fined a nominal 5s. at the Northern Police Court on Saturday for causing a disturbance in which William threw ink at the screen, splattering the blouse and music of Miss Eager in the orchestra.⁵⁸

As Kevin Rockett shows, William Larkin also made protests at Frederick A. Sparling's Sandford and Bohemian cinemas in 1915, for one of which he was indicted.⁵⁹ Larkin's campaign continued into 1917, when he used precisely the form of protest just outlined, members of the orchestra again receiving an inking, against the film *The Soul of New York* (United States: Fox, 1917) in another of Farrell's cinemas. Larkin was indicted in February 1917 for 'maliciously damaging the screen, walls, floor and carpet of the Pillar Picture House, 62 Upper O'Connell street, the property of the Irish Kinematograph Company, 12 Mary street, to the amount of £10, by throwing a quantity of blue liquid over same last night'.⁶⁰ The cinema's management issued a statement to the effect that the film not only bore a certificate from the BBFC but had also been passed by the Corporation's censors. The management had projected a lantern slide with the following information before showing the film:

Public Health Committee,
Dublin Corporation,
Municipal Buildings, Dublin.

Dear Sir—Having viewed the film, 'The Soul of New York,' prepared by

the Fox Film Company, we have passed same for exhibition in the City of Dublin.

Walter Butler

Patrick Lennon

(Censors appointed by the Dublin Corporation).

Farrell's relationship with the Vigilance Committee was stormy, and he openly clashed with them on Sunday opening a month after this incident.⁶¹

As this certificate indicates, the Corporation had introduced their own layer of censorship by early 1917. *The Soul of New York* was among the first films to be passed, and Larkin's protest occurred in the context of continuing pressure to apply the new regulations on censorship rigorously. Pressure came in particular from the Catholic Irish Vigilance Association, whose local committees had been instrumental in the institution of local film censorship. Reform from both inside and outside the industry had been underway in many countries since the late 1900s, a move that aimed, on the one hand, to protect the morals of the masses and, on the other, to win respectability and lucrative middle-class audiences for the cinema. The industry's efforts are evidenced by the increasing lavishness of cinema decoration and in 'art' films that appeared in the late 1900s, such as the French Film d'Art and US company Vitagraph's potted Shakespeares and other classics. The Irish Vigilance Association added an Irish Catholic nationalist flavour to the reformism seen elsewhere. Its pronouncements against the popular culture of the cinema, the music hall, or popular literature frequently condemned its English origins, and linked the Englishness of the works with the evil, filth, or depravity supposedly evident in them. As if to suggest that nationalist and Vigilance protests had a common aim, the *Freeman's Journal* juxtaposes photographs captioned 'Vigilance Committee's Demonstration' and 'Great Volunteer Demonstration at Portarlinton' that depicting two marches that occurred over the same weekend in June 1914.⁶² There is a strong sense that the national struggle went hand-in-hand with a radical liberation of Ireland from an imposed cultural corruption. An *Irish Independent* report of 21 November 1919, headed 'Filth Importation Must End: [...] Enemies of Religion and Nationality', describes a mass meeting at Dublin's Mansion House led by Father Paul of the Vigilance Association and Sean O'Tuama of the Gaelic League. Meetings such as this, here under the patronage of the Lord Mayor of Dublin, brought together the Catholic and Gaelic elements

of cultural nationalism to make explicit the discursive frame within which the religious and Irish-language elements of Norman Whitten's *Aimsir Pdraig/In the Days of St. Patrick* operates.

The Dublin Vigilance Committee formally approached Dublin Corporation on a number of occasions in the year leading up to the institution of local censorship of films in August 1916 to request its establishment. The council was informed on 9 August 1915 that a deputation of the Dublin Vigilance Committee would address them at the next monthly meeting. On 6 September, a deputation consisting of 'the Very Reverend Father Paul, O.S.F.C.; the Reverend Father MacInerney, O.P.; Mr. Peter Tierney; Mr. O'Malley Moore; Mr. McHugh; and Mr. J. Deering' complained about the exhibition of what they saw as objectionable films at certain Dublin cinemas.⁶³ By 5 June 1916, when the Corporation received its next letter from the Vigilance Committee requesting information on what had been done about the appointment of a censor, de facto censorship was being exercised by the Vigilance Committee and by Walter Butler, the Corporation's inspector of theatres and cinemas. The PHC's report for the quarter ended 30 June 1916, records that '[t]he managers of the numerous cinema houses in Dublin had been found most willing to comply with any changes suggested by the members of the Vigilance Committee or by Mr. Butler by way of cutting out parts of pictures to which exception would be taken'.⁶⁴

The extraordinary influence that the Vigilance Committee was allowed to exercise is particularly evident in the report of the PHC meeting of 15 August 1916, at which the decision was taken to recommend the appointment of film censors for Dublin. Although Butler recommended the renewal of twenty-six licences, the PHC, under the chairmanship of Joseph Isaacs, postponed the granting of renewals 'until the Vigilance Committee were communicated with and supplied with a list of the places in respect of which applications for renewals of the licence had been made'.⁶⁵ A Vigilance Committee delegation then addressed the meeting, and, referring to the recent prosecution of a cinema for indecency, assured the PHC that they 'were not out to destroy or injure the Cinema business – in which many citizens had invested capital – they merely desired to ensure that the class of picture was such as any member of the community, young, or old, could visit without having their morals injuriously affected'. They suggested that the Corporation either appoint a censor or empower a body of citizens and/or councillors 'to supervise and investigate complaints'. They also proposed amendments to the conditions included on the licence.

Although the PHC found itself fundamentally in agreement with the Vigilance Committee, it took legal advice and decided to recommend to the council that Butler and Councillor Patrick Lennon be appointed censors and that certain changes be made to the licence. While these recommendations awaited ratification by the council, the Vigilance Committee continued to press for the appointment of a censor, sending a deputation led by Canon Dunne and Thomas Deering to the Corporation on 2 October 1916 to seek information on the appointment, and writing a letter on the same subject that was read at the council meeting on 9 October 1916.⁶⁶ It was at the latter meeting that the council ratified the recommendations of the PHC, and, on 4 December, Lennon and Butler were appointed censors of films.⁶⁷

Having overseen the passage of these measures, the Vigilance Committee lobbied for their strict enforcement. As part of its report for the quarter ended 31 March 1917, the PHC announced its 'Appointment of Honorary Lady Inspectors of Theatres and Places of Public Resort'.⁶⁸ The honorary title indicated that the position was to be unpaid and therefore reserved for women of the middle classes who did not have to earn their living. L. G. Sherlock, chairman of the PHC, informed the *Freeman's Journal* in January that the appointments were to be made from among the two candidates each suggested by the Juvenile Advisory Committee of the Board of Trade, the Vigilance Committee, and the PHC itself. He revealed that '[t]here are no special qualifications for the positions. What is required is a commonsense outlook and intelligent appreciation of what is or is not objectionable in stage productions.'⁶⁹ 'I would that the Public Health Committee and the Vigilance Committee would drop the moral scare somewhat and look after the health, housing and feeding of the poor,' commented 'T.S.' in the February edition of the *Limelight*.⁷⁰ Undeterred by the views of the trade, the PHC meeting of 31 March appointed Mrs. E. M. Smith and Mrs. A. O'Brien for the period of one year and gave them the following duties:

- 1st. To draw the attention of the attendants to any indecency which they may observe, and report the result of their actions to the Committee.
- 2nd. To see that children and young girls are accompanied by proper persons.
- 3rd. To draw attention to any film likely to morbidly affect young persons.
- 4th. To draw attention to and report on any overcrowding or structural defects calculated to be dangerous to those attending performances.

From the specific mention of films, it is clear that cinemas, over which

the Corporation had particular control under the Cinematograph Act, were to be of special concern to Smith and O'Brien.

The honorary lady inspectors were soon to be joined by gentlemen colleagues engaged as honorary censors of films. On 13 August, the PHC received a letter from the Vigilance Committee commending the work of the film censors but suggesting that they faced so heavy a workload as to necessitate assistance. 'We admit with pleasure that the Censors have done everything possible in reference to the censoring of pictures, and undoubtedly there has been a considerable improvement in consequence of their exertions,' the letter began.

However, there are many films still exhibited without the Censors' knowledge, and have not been censored in any way, with the result some of them are not free from objectionable features.

It is quite impossible for two Censors, who have many other duties to perform to carry out adequately the onerous work of censoring all films. Under these circumstances we respectfully request the Public Health Committee to appoint two additional Censors. We have submitted to the Censors the names of two gentlemen of education and standing in the City who are willing to devote their spare time to carry out the work, without fee or reward, solely in the interests of the citizens.⁷¹

The PHC's three quarterly reports between the appointment of the censors on 4 December 1917, and the PHC's receipt of this letter on 14 August 1918, show that the Vigilance Committee were right in their assessment that the censors were not seeing all the films exhibited in Dublin. The report for the quarter ended 31 December 1916, reveals that, in connection with the twenty-three premises with cinematograph licences, the censors viewed five films, passed four and banned one.⁷² In the second quarter, ending 31 March 1917, the reports submitted by the censors 'showed that during the quarter ten films were passed for exhibition, five were passed after excisions, and five were prohibited from being exhibited to the public'.⁷³ In the quarter ended 30 June 1917, forty-one films were passed, eight were cut, and twelve were banned.⁷⁴ The total number of films viewed by the censors in their first seven months of office was eighty-six. To put this in perspective, a major cinema in Dublin in 1917 typically showed a programme of four or five films headed by a dramatic feature and supported by comedies, non-fiction, news films, and so on. New programmes were offered on Mondays and Thursdays, and on Sundays at cinemas with a Sunday licence. Such a cinema would be expected to

show between twelve and fifteen films a week, adding up to between 360 and 500 films in a seven-month period. Clearly the censors needed to increase their work rate. Approving of the Vigilance Committee suggestion to appoint honorary censors, the PHC advised that the term of office of those proposed honorary censors, Eugene McGough and A. J. Murray, be coterminous with the period of the licence, beginning initially on 1 November 1917, and ending on 31 October 1918. The council adopted the PHC's report on 8 October 1917.⁷⁵ In 1921, ten councillors were appointed as honorary censors.⁷⁶

As represented in the *Limelight*, which began publication in January 1917, the responses of the Irish film trade to local censorship were ambivalent. Recognizing the advantages of regulation in advancing its interests, the British trade had seized the initiative and established the BBFC. It seems that the Irish Vigilance Association wrested the initiative from the Irish trade, leaving it more exposed to the uncertainties of the developing situation. The editorials in the second and third issues of the *Limelight* reflect this uncertainty. The first of these, 'Lesson from History', seems to be against any censorship. It warns that it was the repressive cultural policies of the Puritans that led to the licentiousness of the Restoration. It ends with a rallying cry: 'The fight against the cinema is a lost battle!'⁷⁷ The second article makes a more measured assessment of the situation:

Exhibitors cannot fail to have noticed the important events which have occurred recently in connection with censorship of films, and leaders of the trade are to-day making great efforts to organise the industry with a view to doing away with the uncensored film.

By so doing an effective check can be maintained. If the members of the trade act together it is quite certain that many of the dangers at present threatening the Kinematograph industry will be got rid of – so now is the time to hustle. He who hesitates is lost.⁷⁸

Here censorship is a tool of the cinema business, but its effective use for the benefit of the trade necessitates that exhibitors act in concert against those who could use perhaps the same instruments to damage the industry.

Censorship remained a contentious issue in the *Limelight*. Under the headings 'An Erratic Censorship' and 'Why Harass the Industry?', the 'Behind the Screen' column of the February 1918 issue argues that, if the members of the Dublin Vigilance Committee 'conclude that cinematography has not yet reached a stage of development that would

warrant its emancipation, if they feel that a rigid censorship is necessary in the interests of morality, they at least should endeavour to constitute the office in a manner that will inflict the minimum amount of hardship upon the industry and the men employed therein'.⁷⁹ The 'Notes and News' column of May 1918 features three items on censorship that suggest discontent over the way it was being applied. 'Some forty films are now on the black list compiled by the Dublin Film Censor's Office', a brief item begins, before implying that the process is unsystematic. 'Some of these deserved to be banned while others were merely unlucky.'⁸⁰ A second item marvels at the censors' requirement that a synopsis of all films be submitted to them, while a third concludes that 'unless certain members of the censorship committee develop a more reasonable attitude, an open rupture will sooner or later become inevitable'. Although he is not singled out in any article, Eugene McGough gained notoriety above the other censors when he was the subject of the caricature among the brief items of the 'Flickerings' column in June 1918.⁸¹ 'It appears that certain Dublin film censors are developing the undesirable habit of voicing opinions during their attendance at screenings that are being held for trade purposes,' sniffs the journal's 'Lynx-Eyed Observer' in July 1918. 'So far as we understand the matter these gentlemen are – by virtue of their office – invited to these gatherings for the purpose of safeguarding the moral standards of the public. It should therefore be quite unnecessary for us to have to refer to this matter again.'⁸²

If Irish distributors and exhibitors were experiencing difficulties with the local censors, then Irish producers, and FCOI in particular, garnered praise from the organization pushing for regulation of the industry. 'Irish film productions received a striking tribute at the recent meeting of the Irish Vigilance Association, from Rev. J. S. Sheehy, C.M., President of All Hallows College, Dublin,' reveals J.A.P. in the *Bioscope* in 1920.

Father Sheehy emphasised the fact that the Vigilance Association were not out merely for destruction, but had a constructive policy. They hoped, he said, that some Irish company would take hold of all aspects of Irish life calculated to make them proud of being Irish and Catholic, and film plays produced 'which cater for all classes of the Irish public who are still faithful to the Irish tradition'.

'I am glad to say,' he added, 'a great beginning has been made by the Film Company of Ireland.' He praised the Willy Reilly film, and said the company deserved well of Ireland and deservedmerited all the encouragement the

Vigilance Association could give it. 'For my part,' he declared, 'I should like to see not only one 'Irish Film Company,' but many of them; even from an economic point of view it would be good business.'⁸³

This is an example of the inclusion of film-making in what Kevin Rockett has called, in relation to Irish film censorship, the fusing of 'the moral concerns of the Catholic Church with the issue of nation-building'.⁸⁴

Sheehy's statement is also noteworthy for the stress it put on Irish film production and on the work of FCOI in particular, which received public endorsement from the Vigilance Committee, rather than GFS's explicitly Catholic and Irish-language *Aimsir Padraig/In the Days of St. Patrick*, which was trade shown that week before an audience that included a large clerical representation.⁸⁵ The influence of the rhetoric of D. P. Moran's Irish-Ireland movement on the promotion of Irish industry is clear in the discussion of the economic benefits of having the films viewed in Irish cinemas made by Irish producers, particularly in the way in which, in John Ryan's essay on 'The Cinema Peril', it is bound up with an ethnic argument and, in Sheehy's case, with a religio-ethnic one: Irish film-makers making an Irish audience proud of being Irish and Catholic. As will be seen below, *Willy Reilly* may allow Catholic members of Irish audiences to feel proud of being Irish and Catholic, but it also insists that they take account of their nationally minded Protestant neighbours, who have good reasons to be proud of being Irish and Protestant. For Ryan, the vast majority of the films that are shown in Ireland are unsuitable for Irish audiences because they are of English and American origin. English comedies do not suit the Celtic temperament of the Irish because they are produced by English film-makers under the influence of a Saxon sense of humour that is founded not on wit but on impropriety. American films display an inappropriate humour based on indecency and 'the ill-treatment of invalids and sick persons' as well as featuring too many bedroom scenes and lightning marriages. Given these facts, '[i]t is quite clear that we need Irish films, made in Ireland, brightened by Irish humour and illustrative of Irish scenes'.⁸⁶ *Aimsir Padraig* may be tainted from this perspective by the fact that, although it was made by an Irish firm, the film and the company were directed by Norman Whitten, an English man.

In the context of a widespread recognition by the late 1910s that cinema was a major cultural institution and that, as such, it should be controlled, some detractors and critics of the cinema were promoting

indigenous film production as a bulwark against inappropriate foreign imports. An examination of film-making by Irish firms in the 1910s shows some of the pressures faced by producers and the extent to which they were overcome by the most successful company of the silent period, FCOI.

PRODUCTION AND THE FILM COMPANY OF IRELAND

‘Previous to the [FCOI]’s existence two or three futile attempts had been made to start the business of picture-play making, but these attempts were abortive, and not representative of Ireland,’ opines a columnist in the first issue of *Limelight* assessing the achievements of the company.⁸⁷ Although earlier attempts at indigenous production cannot be seen as unrepresentative of the country, they do throw light on FCOI’s successes, which can be seen from the time of their first release, *O’Neil of the Glen* (1916). The relatively undeveloped nature of the Irish film business, and the opportunity this represented, was outlined in a British trade journal article in early 1912. In April of that year, the Irish correspondent of the *Bioscope* interviewed W. H. Huish on the occasion of his resignation as Dublin manager for the British cinema chain Provincial Cinematograph Theatres:

Ireland is simply teeming with possibilities, he said to our representative. At the moment she is wrapped in slumber, but when she awakes, she will take her place as a country to be reckoned with in the cinematograph world. In a year or so, I prophesy that there will be almost 400 picture theatres in Ireland. There is no reason at all why Ireland should not have her own renting houses and her own projectors. [...] And, beyond this – the most important question of all – why should not Ireland produce films? We have seen some of the finest scenery in the world, and a wealth of legendary lore, which would form admirable subject matter. There would be a tremendous market for such pictures. In America alone – where there is so much Irish blood – the sales should be enormous.⁸⁸

For Huish, Ireland offered opportunities for, among others, cinema builders and owners, for rental houses or distributors and for manufacturers or assemblers of projection equipment. Above all, however, it offered possibilities for producers, who could rely on both a large Irish-American audience – that was being tapped at the time with particular skill by Sidney Olcott’s films for Kalem – and a domestic one that was shaking off its dormancy.

A brief examination of indigenous film production in the 1910s shows that Huish's projections were optimistic and that the development of this facet of the cinematic institution was considerably slower than in other countries. Although James T. Jameson and his cameraman Louis de Clercq shot many actualities throughout the 1900s, the first sustained efforts to produce fiction film in Ireland date to the early 1910s. In 1912–13, Irish Film Productions, a company run by Dublin cinema-owner Alderman John J. Farrell, distributed a number of one-reel titles through the London-based Cosmopolitan Company. It released the 850-foot drama *Michael Dwyer* on 12 January 1913, and the 965-foot comedy *Love in a Fix* on 23 January 1913, with *Ride for a Bride* and *Punching Powder* set to follow.⁸⁹ The *Bioscope* columnist 'Paddy' drew particular attention to these films 'because I think it "up to" exhibitors in Ireland to deal in "home produce" as it were. I would like to see every hall, eventually, screening these films.'⁹⁰ Reflecting on his experience in 1942, Farrell claimed that Irish film production was and remained commercially unviable and that his venture in the 1910s cost him £200 a week rather than offering him a return.

Another Dublin cinema owner who ventured into production in this period was Charles McEvoy of the Masterpiece in Talbot Street. During a Chaplin season in the week of 4–9 October 1915, he showed the *Chaplin Competition Film*, which he had shot himself to display the talents of 'All the Local "Charlies"'.⁹¹ Although 'Paddy' describes it as 'the first Chaplin competition film ever produced', Chaplin was a popular phenomenon in Dublin at the time. The Rotunda ran a Chaplin competition on 8 October, the Dame Street PH had a Chaplin week at the end of September, and the same week's bill at the Coliseum music hall included a Chaplin revue that 'featured the only Charlie Chaplin *girl extant*'.⁹² Chaplin's first film, the Keystone comedy *Making a Living*, had been released on 2 February 1914, but his impact was so singular that he was being not only being watched but also burlesqued and imitated by competing Dubliners less than two years later. 'On the accompanying card,' the programme for the Masterpiece's competition prompts spectators, 'you are requested to vote for the one you think best.'⁹³

The somewhat fluid relations between production, exhibition and reception evident with the *Chaplin Competition Film* were not so evident when McEvoy ran a competition earlier in 1915 for what was to be a more generically conventional film. In February, he had offered 3 guineas for the best one-reel Irish comedy.⁹⁴ The winning entry

became *Fun at Finglas Fair*, in which two escaped English criminals are foiled in their attempts to rob farmers in Ireland. The film was trade shown but, according to a contemporary witness, was destroyed by British soldiers in the aftermath of the 1916 Rising before it could receive a general release.⁹⁵

William Power, a barber in Bray, Co. Wicklow, was the leading member of the Celtic Cinema Company, which also featured the blind organist Matthew Tobin as camera operator.⁹⁶ The company completed *Willie Scouts While Jessie Pouts* (1918) and the more widely screened and well-received *Rosaleen Dhu* (1919), and were shooting *An Irish Vendetta* in 1920 when Power was killed as the result of a fall from a horse. *Rosaleen Dhu* was trade shown at Dublin's Carlton on 16 December 1919 and exhibited to packed houses at the Rotunda in early May 1920.⁹⁷ Although this film does not survive, it is interesting because it is the first indigenous Irish film to portray Africa. Based on a story by John Denvir, it concerns a young man who, forced to emigrate during the Land War of nineteenth-century Ireland, 'although happily anything that could be objectionable in the way of political controversy or class hatred is completely absent from the picture'. Ending up in Algiers, 'where exciting encounters, captures and rescues are the order of the day',⁹⁸ he falls in love with a woman he meets there, brings her back to Ireland and discovers that she is a kidnapped Irish heiress. This film appears to represent the first moment in indigenous Irish film production when the exoticist gaze is turned outward, even if the sands of North Africa are represented by the strands of Co. Wicklow.

Along with GFS's *Aimsir Pdraig/In the Days of St. Patrick*, discussed in detail in the previous chapter, these represent the main attempts at 'the business of picture-making' contemporary with the efforts of FCOI. To throw light on why FCOI achieved its success, the remainder of this section will offer an overview of their productions, focusing in particular on the reception of their first film, *O'Neil of the Glen*.

Coming into being just before the Easter Rising of 1916 and dissolving as the War of Independence reached its height, FCOI's own history reflected the turbulent period in which it operated. Registered in Dublin on 2 March 1916 by Irish-American lawyer James M. Sullivan and Henry M. Fitzgibbon, it immediately advertised in the press for submissions of 'Photo Play Scenarios, preferably with Irish atmosphere and background'.⁹⁹ Its first offices at 16 Henry Street, close to the General Post Office, headquarters of the rRising during

Easter week (24–29 April), were destroying during the fighting along with some early work, but it is not clear if this included filmed material.¹⁰⁰ They put a large notice in the daily papers of 12 May advertising their new premises at 34 Dame Street,¹⁰¹ from which they announced a ‘trial exhibition’, or what would now be called a test screening, of their first completed production, *O’Neil of the Glen*, on 29 June at the Carlton.¹⁰² By this time, and in the context of management difficulties at the Abbey Theatre, FCOI had been able to contract J. M. Kerrigan and Fred O’Donovan, two of the Abbey’s biggest stars, but still allowing them to appear in certain plays.¹⁰³ Kerrigan, indeed, had directed and taken a leading role in *O’Neil of the Glen*, a three-reel feature that was said to be based on a script adapted by W. J. Lysaght from the novel of the same title by Ulster novelist Mrs. M. T. Pender. The film told how Don O’Neill (Brian Magowan), the son of a landowner who had been defrauded by the solicitor Tremaine (J. M. Carre), saves the life of Tremaine’s daughter, Nola (Nora Clancy), whose love he wrests from Graves (O’Donovan), a blackmailing suitor.¹⁰⁴ ‘The film is of a quality which leads one to anticipate success for the venture’, wrote an *Irish Times* correspondent at the trial exhibition, noting that a process of perfecting the film was underway: ‘the promoters are engaged in a ruthless revision of the film to bring it up to the highest possible standard’.¹⁰⁵ The *Bioscope*’s ‘Paddy’ was less complimentary about this early cut of the film, pointing out that although ‘[g]reat care was taken with the production and camera work’, it possessed ‘many of the weak points common to first productions’.¹⁰⁶ Addressing a lunch for the press at the Gresham Hotel after the screening, Fitzgibbon claimed that FCOI ‘had started an industry which would eventually be a source of great revenue in Ireland’. For his part, Sullivan argued that the film showed that Irish productions – taking advantage of Irish ‘imagination, ideals, and artistic temperament and beautiful scenery’ – could competing with those anywhere.¹⁰⁷

‘Paddy’ began to revise his lukewarm opinion of *O’Neil of the Glen* in light of the news that Frederick A. Sparling had booked the film for its first run at his Bohemian Picture Theatre for the week of 7–13 August. The Bohemian was one of Dublin’s biggest and most luxurious cinemas, and Sparling’s commitment to a run that was twice the usual three days ‘speaks well for the film and the undoubted drawing powers such a production will have for Irish audiences’.¹⁰⁸ In the event, Sparling also included an unplanned Sunday show to take advantage of the phenomenal level of interest. Although FCOI appears to have

taken the bookings itself, prominent local distributor Ben Cowan of Express Film Agency handled this and other FCOI films from 1916 by running trade shows and placing advertisements in the daily and trade press, and it may have been one of his 'novel ideas in the advertising line' for FCOI cameraman John A. Bennett to film the audience on the first night and for this local film to be shown subsequently with the feature.¹⁰⁹ The musical attractions included a special programme of Irish melodies and the cinema's 'world-renowned violinist' Signor Simonetti playing a fantasy on the 'Snowy Breasted Pearl' at the evening shows. 'It is confidently hoped that large audiences will visit the Bohemian during the coming week,' revealed a preview in the *Evening Mail*, 'and thus mark in a tangible manner their appreciation of what may justly be described as a really first-class picture-play, and one that is sure to bring the work and the players of the Film Company of Ireland right into the forefront of popularity with audiences and trade alike.'¹¹⁰

The surprising extent of the success of *O'Neil of the Glen* must be measured in the first instance as a marketing victory by FCOI, rather than an artistic one. The way in which the company were able to capitalize on the interest and goodwill attending the exhibition of this first indigenous Irish feature film and, crucially, to publicize the large attendances not only in Ireland, where interest was likely to be strong in any case, but also in Britain, appears to have secured a British distribution deal and thereby to have ensured the company's survival in this initial period. This success was built on what appears to have been a genuinely surprising level of interest in the picture. 'The film, which was expected to prove a good draw, actually surpassed all anticipations,' observes 'Paddy', warming further to the film, 'a record being established for the week, and queues being the rule every evening'.¹¹¹ The *Irish Times* commented that enthusiastic audiences in a crowded cinema 'proves that the Dublin public is always ready to support and encourage Irish enterprise'.¹¹²

The company followed up this successful debut with the announcements of their next films in the dailies and trades. On the Monday after the last show of *O'Neil of the Glen* at the Bohemian, the Dublin papers carried an advertisement headed 'Films that Draw Crowded Houses Every Night!', recommending FCOI's new films on the basis of the audience-drawing power of that first film.¹¹³ Four two-reel comedies were scheduled for release in September – *The Miser's Gift*, *Woman's Wit*, *Food of Love* and *An Unfair Love Affair* – and nine other forthcoming productions were mentioned, only one of which, 'Willie

Reilly', is recognizable as a subsequent FCOI release. An *Evening Mail* reporter who attended *The Miser's Gift* trade show at the Dame Street PH later that week commented that '[i]t is not only characteristically Irish, it is characteristically good. The Irish Picture-House manager who does not support an Irish company which can produce work of the class of "The Miser's Gift" is missing an opportunity of giving his shows a touch of distinction.'¹¹⁴ The narrative of the film is not clear from surviving sources, but it appears to involve a scheme of Eileen Dolan (Nora Clancy) and her lover, Ned McGrath (Fred O'Donovan), to get her miserly father (J. M. Kerrigan) drunk and so dream of leprechaun gold so that he will look favourably on their relationship.¹¹⁵ "It is agreeable to have pictures such as this," comments the *Irish Times*, 'preserving a genuinely Irish atmosphere and that inherent charm which is to be found in Irish life. The sight, for instance, of leprechauns and other little people who live in legend disporting themselves in a fairy fort is a feature which surely is pleasing to Irish eyes.'¹¹⁶ The Irish public got its chance to delight in its first authentic Irish leprechauns on the cinema screen from on 26–28 October at the Dame Street PH, which showed all the remaining FCOI films made in 1916 first.¹¹⁷

As these arrangements were being made for Ireland, FCOI also entered the British film market on the foundation of *O'Neil of the Glen's* Irish success. The Bohemian debut was the subject of an article on the company in the *Bioscope* of 24 August, which also carried a full-page advertisement listing the actual and intended films mentioned in the Irish papers.¹¹⁸ Both the article and the advertisement included quotes from Sparling on the huge business the film generated, 'the absolutely whole-hearted appreciation of every person who has seen it', and the fact that 'the "music" at the pay-box has kept time with the orchestra throughout.' In contrast to 'Paddy's original critical assessment of the film, this article described the audiences' appreciation of 'the exceptional excellence of the first film produced in Ireland by an Irish company and by Irish players'. A month later, although mentioning the film's success everywhere it had been exhibited, 'Paddy' contended that FCOI's 'second picture, "The Miser's Gift," is greatly in advance of the first as regards the quality, and if this company stick to their guns they should still be well in the front rank of British producers'.¹¹⁹ Despite 'Paddy's' reservations, the message prevailed that *O'Neil of the Glen* packed cinemas in Dublin and Belfast and that Irish exhibitors were eager for more, a message that helped FCOI to acquire a British distributor.¹²⁰ This the company did

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EXCLUSIVES THAT PAY! PAY! PAY!
'NOUGH SAID WHEN THE PAY-BOX SPEAKS!
BUY FILMS THAT DRAW Crowded Houses Every Night!

“O’NEIL OF THE GLEN” (In Prologue and THREE ACTS).

Played by Irish Players and produced in prettiest spots in Ireland.
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Drew crowded houses all the week to one of the largest Picture Houses in Dublin, notwithstanding tropical heat. THE EXHIBITOR'S VIEW: Mr. F. R. Sparling, Bohemian Picture House, Dublin (where "O'Neil of the Glen" was shown exclusively August 7th to 13th) wrote to the Film Company:—"I have been **PACKED SOLID ALL THE WEEK.** Absolutely whole-hearted appreciation by all who saw it, and the **MUSIC AT THE PAY-BOX** has kept time with the Orchestra throughout."

**THE FILM COMPANY OF IRELAND,
34, Dame Street, Dublin,**

Now offers in this splendid Film **SOLE BRITISH and COLONIAL RIGHTS.**
FOUR SPARKLING IRISH COMEDIES FOR RELEASE IN SEPTEMBER:
"THE MISER'S GIFT" TWO REELS. "WOMAN'S WIT" TWO REELS.
"FOOD OF LOVE" TWO REELS. "UNFAIR LOVE AFFAIR" TWO REELS.

The Company is at present engaged in producing the following photo-plays:
"BLARNEY," "THE GIRL FROM THE GOLDEN VALE,"
(Thomas Parnell)
"THE UPSTART," "TREASURE TROVE," "THE BYE-
WAYS OF FATE," "WILLIE REILLY," "The IRISH GIRL."

BOOK AT ONCE—
**FILM COMPANY OF IRELAND, LTD.,
34, Dame Street, Dublin.**

5.1 Bioscope, 24 August 1916. Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland.

at the end of October, when Davidson’s Film Sales Agency bought the rights for FCOI’s 1916 films.¹²¹

By the middle of January 1917, therefore, FCOI had chalked up some singular achievements in early Irish film production. They had released the nine films they had shot during the preceding summer, the five already mentioned and *The Eleventh Hour* (three reels), *Widow Malone* (one reel), *Puck Fair Romance* (one reel) and *A Girl of Glenbeigh* (four reels). This was a considerable number of films from a new production company, but reviews, and not only those of ‘Paddy’, would retrospectively indicate that the achievement may not have been an artistic one.

The company faced the important question of whether or not this early momentum could be maintained. From a commercial perspective, it could have gone on producing one- to four-reel romantic comedies and dramas or could have attempted an Irish-themed serial, a form that was experiencing enormous popularity at the time.

Indeed, the Monday after the Dame Street PH had hosted the trade show of *The Miser's Gift*, directed by and featuring J. M. Kerrigan, the cinema began showing the nine-part serial *The Adventures of Terence O'Rourke* (United States: Trans-Atlantic, 1916), featuring the US actor J. W. Kerrigan. The titles of such projects as *Shanachies Tales* and *Irish Jarvey Tales* that FCOI reported to be in production in 1916 suggest that they were seriously considering a serial.¹²² From other perspectives, the company was under pressure to produce a landmark production that would seal its status as Ireland's film company, a national epic that could match the ambition and the commercial potential of *The Birth of a Nation*. Therefore, although in 1917, the company also made a comedy, *Rafferty's Rise*, a drama, *When Love Came to Gavin Burke*, and twenty short scenic films, public interest was particularly focused on the far more ambitious project of adapting Charles Kickham's sprawling nineteenth-century novel *Knocknagow, or the Homes of Tipperary* (1879) for the screen.

IRISH LIMELIGHT REVIEWS KNOCKNAGOW

"'Knocknagow,' the great picture play of the year for Ireland, and the Irish in all parts of the world,' announced the writer of the first major article on the film in the *Limelight* in May 1917, 'is now under way.'¹²³ Articles on the film would continue to appear in the journal for the next year. By the time the film was ready for release in early 1918, the *Limelight* was the forum for the detailed reception of what was then being described as the first 'Irish Super Film', another important development in the great institution of 'kinematography' that could be placed alongside La Scala, Ireland's first 'super' cinema, the construction of which was also announced at this time. The reception of *Knocknagow* represents a crucial moment for indigenous production in Ireland for a number of reasons. At eight reels or about two-and-a-quarter-hours long, it was twice the length of any previous indigenous production. It was an adaptation of a key national and nationalist literary work, *Knocknagow, or the Homes of Tipperary*, the most popular Irish novel of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which was written by the prominent Fenian and president of the Irish Republican Brotherhood Charles J. Kickham. FCOI filmed their adaptation largely on location in the region of Mullinahone, Co. Tipperary, that is associated both with the novel and with Kickham himself. Furthermore, from the perspective of film history, the fact that several key issues of

the *Limelight* dealing with the reception of *Willy Reilly and His Colleen Bawn* and *Aimsir Padraig/In the Days of St. Patrick* are not extant means that *Knocknagow* is the indigenous film of the period whose production and reception phases are documented in most detail.

The film is set in the townland (rural district) of Knocknagow on the slopes of Slievenamon, Co. Tipperary, where the tenants of the absentee landlord Sir Garrett Butler (Charles Power) are left at the mercy of the land agent Pender (J. M. Carre), who is intent on clearing the estate to make way for cattle grazing. As Pender plots, the younger people of the various strata of the local community pursue their love affairs, particularly the middle-class Mary Kearney (Nora Clancy) and medical student Arthur O'Connor (Fred O'Donovan), Mat 'the Thrasher' Donovan (Brian Magowan) and Bessie Morris (Alyce Keating), and turf man Billy Heffernan (Breffni O'Rourke) and the sickly Norah Lahy (Kathleen Murphy). Pender's first victims are the Brians, a labouring family, whom he evicts, burning out their cottage. When Mat, a freeholder, stands up to Pender, the land agent decides to frame him for a staged armed robbery. Mat, preparing to emigrate after breaking up with Bessie, is arrested; Norah dies of her illness; and Bessie emigrates to America. Mat's name is cleared when Barney Broderick (Patrick O'Donnell) provides information corroborating his version of events. Having been told of the misdeeds of Pender, Butler returns to set matters right and is rebuked by his tenants for not tending his estates. Mat travels to America and convinces Bessie to return with him to Ireland, where they meet Mary, Arthur and Billy outside Mat's cottage in Knocknagow.

As the major surviving indigenous films of the period, FCOI's features have received probably the most attention accorded by film historians to films of the pre-1921 period. The writers of the most convincing analyses have sought, in the main, to locate the films in relation to the important political developments in the aftermath of the 1916 Rising and the beginning of the War of Independence. In particular, while noting the fact that FCOI chose two literary adaptations focused on events in the nineteenth century rather than engaging with contemporary developments, these readings have sought to link the political affiliations of members of FCOI with an advanced nationalist ideology said to be present in the films. In one of the most perceptive readings of this kind, Kevin Rockett has argued that both of the FCOI's long films encode Sinn Féin policy on Irish land ownership at a particularly crucial historical moment. He shows that, in the context of the growing struggle for self-determination, the film-makers adapt-

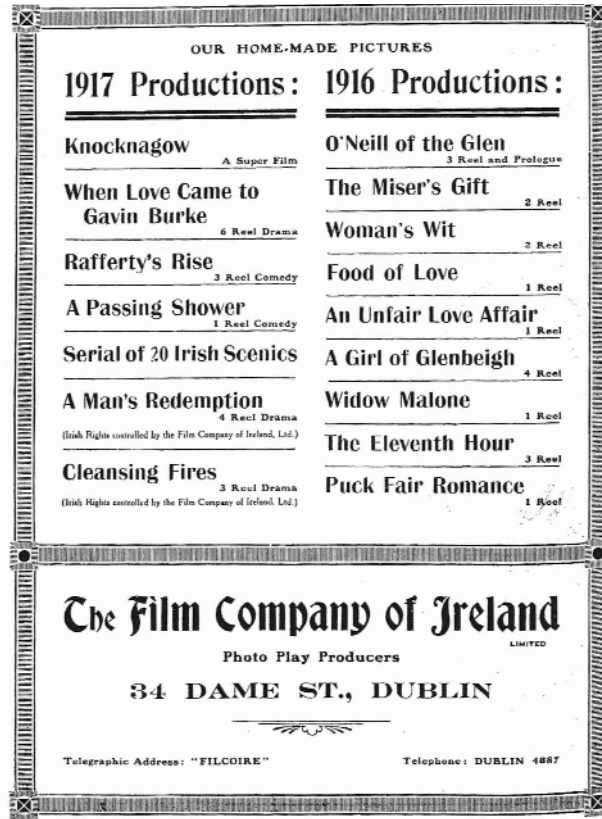
ed these literary works so as to de-emphasize the divisions among groups within Irish society. 'Just as *Knocknagow* displaced tensions between landlords, tenant-farmers and other classes,' he writes, '*Willy Reilly*... sought to dissolve tensions between Protestant and Catholic landowners.'¹²⁴ Important readings along similar lines include those offered by Taylor Downing and Ruth Barton.¹²⁵

As yet, however, no systematically attempt has been made to show how audiences of the time interpreted these films. If they can be said to encode Sinn Féin ideology, did contemporary audiences perform the decoding? If the reception of the films was generally positive, what impressed contemporary Irish observers about them and about what, if anything, did they express reservations? This section, therefore, will attempt to begin the process of putting the audience back into the discussion of the major FCOI feature films by examining the discourse on *Knocknagow* in the *Limelight*, which offers the most extensive writings on them. On this basis and in relation to the intermediality discussed throughout the book, the following section will offer a reading of these films.

Writers in the *Limelight* used *Knocknagow* extensively to develop the discourse on Irish cinema, locating the film variously in specifically Irish contexts or in relation to international cinema aesthetics. These writers employed such concepts as narrative, history and realism, but some writers also broached film-specific features, such as the article on authorial 'touches' discussed below. That Irish writers wanted to treat FCOI as a film company that could compete internationally is made explicit in an article by J.A.P. Visiting the company on location in May 1917, he wrote:

These Irish Players have completely got the hand of the business by now. When you consider that they practically had to teach themselves the business, the progress they have made is really marvellous. This year's films will, I think, be a revelation to the general public. Last year the company were learning. This year they have learned. One thing is certain already, they can compete with the very best films produced in Great Britain.¹²⁶

For J.A.P., 'the business' is something that has been developed abroad and now must be learned by Irish film-makers. His contention that FCOI films can now compete on an equal basis with British productions seems to carry with it an unstated belief that they had not yet reached the standards of the other international productions that dominated Irish cinema screens, principally those of the United States.



5.2 *Irish Limelight*, December 1917. Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland.

Between the start of production on the film in May 1917 and substantially into the film's Dublin run in July 1918, the *Limelight* published five articles on *Knocknagow*, as well as many other short items and captioned photographs. Written in response to the announcement of the start of production, the first major article on the film stresses the importance of a faithful adaptation of the novel, commends the FCOI's judgement in choosing Abbey actor Fred O'Donovan as director and invites a debate on the correct historical setting of the novel and its realization.¹²⁷ The importance of correctly rendering Kickham's book is underlined by the fact that the article's readers are addressed as readers of the novel, who can appreciate that O'Donovan's Irishness and acting abilities fit him to judge correctly how to bring out its 'soft touches', who would be familiar enough with the source to recognize the discrepancies in the dates of the setting of the narrative, and who

might be knowledgeable enough to correspond with the *Limelight* about whether 1845 or 1857 should be chosen by the producers.

Of the many shorter items that appeared in ensuing months, profiles of Brian Magowan and Alyce Keating that appeared alongside their portraits in the column 'The Starry Filmament' indicate the construction of a fan culture around FCOI's 'star' and new actors.¹²⁸ During this period, the column also featured items on such international stars as Clara Kimball Young, Mary Pickford and Mary Miles Minter, but it was frequently made up of short items of film gossip.

At the time of the film's successful premiere at Magner's Theatre in Clonmel from the 30 January to 2 February 1918, a full-page advertisement appeared in the *Limelight* reproducing a telegram from Magner's to FCOI on the film's triumph: 'Knocknagow a terrific success. All records smashed. Packed solid before advertised hour. Waiting crowds necessitated police supervision. Heartiest congratulations on film which is a credit to yourselves and to Ireland.'¹²⁹ An article in the local *Clonmel Chronicle*, which reported on the Magner's screenings without giving the same sense of excitement communicated by the telegram, praised FCOI on coming to Tipperary, where love of the novel was so strong, and opined that 'the members of the Company are to be congratulated on having preserved the correct atmosphere, showing perfect sympathy with the original conception throughout, and placing before the public a delightful study of genuine Irish life, and not as it is too often pourtrayed by the stage Irishman'.¹³⁰ The writer approved of the fact that there was 'no propaganda in the film. Politics and all such controversial matters are excluded, and the result is a beautiful pastoral – an ideal genuine Irish play.' Concern with the treatment of a famous locally set novel would be expected, but the Clonmel writer also compares *Knocknagow* to other epic film productions:

It measures 8,700 feet, and is the biggest thing of its kind ever made in Europe. It runs "The Birth of a Nation" very close in point of measurement, taking two hours and a half to show, and there is not one dull minute in the whole hundred and fifty, while it knocks that great "show" film clean over for compelling human interest.

A *Limelight* review after the Clonmel premiere and in advance of the trade show at the Sackville Street PH on 6 February notes the film's historically accurate costumes, location filming in Tipperary and 'perfect' cinematography, enthusing that 'it visualises the genius of its

famous author in a manner that cannot fail to appeal to all classes and creeds'.¹³¹ The writer, who claimed to have seen the film, indicated the fruitlessness of analyzing its attractions in detail because 'the story was conceived of genius, and it has been sympathetically handled with an ability that cannot fail to gladden the hearts of all who are interested in the future of Irish motion photography'.

After attending the trade show, J.A.P. offered critical remarks as well as praise in the course of a substantial review in the *Telegraph*. He begins by discussing the experience of sitting in the cinema with the actors present: 'Occasionally I fancied I heard a half-suppressed groan as the film revealed to somebody the bitter truth that he wasn't as good as he thought he was in some particular scene.'¹³² J.A.P. praises the acting of Brian Magowan, Kathleen Murphy, J. M. Carre and Arthur Shields, drawing particular attention to the scene in which Murphy portrays the death of Norah Lahy. Set design, cinematography and Fred O'Donovan's 'producing' are also lauded. His criticisms are directed in particular at Mrs N. F. Patton's script, although he acknowledges the difficulties Kickham's novel presented to her:

The story meanders along through over six hundred pages its placidity disturbed by very little of what the playwright dubs 'action'.

To extract from these 600 pages enough incidents for a photoplay – which, above all things, must have virile action, – and to contrive that there should be sufficient continuity to sustain interest throughout a half-dozen reels, was a task to daunt the most expert scenario writer.

That he thought Patton by no means an expert scenario writer is clear. His suggested improvements to the film focus on deficiencies in the script: '[T]he action could be brisked up by sub-editing it down from eight reels to six, the sub-titles would be improved by more frequent quotations from the book and better choice of incidents would have helped to get more of the "atmosphere".' In advising James M. Sullivan to take care with scenarios in future, J.A.P. – who had had opportunities to see how FCOI worked at close hand – reveals what he sees as their inadequate working methods on screenplays that in some cases saw them working with a script 'written wholly in dialogue, and in others as an ordinary short story'.

As if refuting the charges of incoherence implied by J.A.P., an *Evening Herald* review of the trade show by 'Jacques' (J. J. Ryce) strongly asserts the film's narrative clarity, while simultaneously stressing that spectators require a good knowledge of the novel to understand it. The article orig-



inal appeared in February, on the same day as J.A.P.'s, but the *Limelight* reprinted the unambiguously positive piece in April, when it would be available to those attending the Dublin premiere at the Empire on 22 April. 'To appreciate this filmed version of "Knocknagow"', he contends,

you must first have read the book. [...] The filmed story we saw yesterday is a collection of the incidents from the novel, strung together in such a manner as to present a coherent narrative. [...] We were back again in Knocknagow, and not a man, woman, or child of us wanted to leave it until we had the story complete. And that is what the Irish Film Company gave us a full, complete, detailed narrative.¹³³

The members of the film's audience are once again addressed primarily as readers of Kickham's novel. Patton's adaptation represents a coherent text only to those already steeped in its world, a definition of narrative coherence at odds with the contemporary and current interpretation of the concept. 'Jacques' stresses the coherence of the narrative for two reasons. First, *Knocknagow's* world for him includes not only the intermedial links between novel, play and film, but also traumatic historical experience that must be purged. Beginning his review with a vivid account of his personal experience of an eviction, 'Jacques' invokes historical memory and links it to the reception of a film in a manner discussed in the previous chapter as a participative mode of spectatorship. 'Long years ago,' he begins,

in the black days of the battering ram and the barrel of pitch, I was witness to evictions on an estate in the County Cork. I saw the cabin doors broken in, the furniture flung out, and the poor half-dressed families lying on the roadside amid the wreckage of their home. I have seen all these horrors again yesterday on the screen. They occurred in 'Knocknagow'.

As he describes it, this scene addresses an Irish audience as if it were a local view, one that was taken on an estate in Co. Cork and that arouses one's memory of being a horrified onlooker at this event. This, for 'Jacques', is the reason for stressing the coherence of the narrative. The film works as a cathartic experience, invoking historical memory to be collectively experienced but then banished by the image that he finds the most appealing in the film, Mat ploughing in the shadow of Slievenamon. A case can be made on such evidence that the print of the film that survives is not the one seen in Ireland in February 1918 but represents a re-edit for the British release in May. 'Jacques' implies

that the film ended with the ploughing scene when he states that '[i]t occurs [...] in the story when the mind is best moulded to receive the impression of this ploughed field and the lone man with the giant arm, of the giant heart, filled with the joy of life, the greatness of endeavour, and the hope of happiness to come'. In any case, this scene represents closure for the political energies in the review, the outrage at class relations on the land 'long years ago', that might arise in an Irish audience viewing the eviction scene. The closure of the narrative brings expressions of pleasure in its completion rather than demanding condemnation of class relations on the land. Second, the forcefulness with which he must assert the completeness of the narrative – as well as the way in which that completeness is described – betrays that this was a criterion that had to be successfully applied to *Knocknagow* to declare it a good film.

A shorter piece that appeared in the April issue of the *Limelight* with the 'Jacques' review also broached the issue of narrative and history. It argued that the secret of the film's success was its basis in Irish history, which provides a source for stories rich in the quality producers continually stress as a requirement for good films, 'human interest'. It contends that history – events that have actually involved people in the past – is what constitutes human interest and points out that Ireland not only has a rich history but also the locations in which these events took place. Factors such as these, it concludes, inspire the achievements of actors like Breffni O'Rourke, Brian Magowan and Kathleen Murphy in *Knocknagow*.¹³⁴

One *Limelight* article on editing cutaways in *Knocknagow* links the film to advanced thinking on filmic story-telling by the British screenwriter Elliot Stannard: 'Although mainly used to provide a picture with a little light relief, "Touches"', the article explains,

are often used to intensify a dramatic situation. To demonstrate the horrors of solitary confinement, Elliot Stannard, in 'Justice', showed in rapid succession Falder locked in his cell, a dog chained to his kennel, a small bird imprisoned in a tiny cage; then in equally quick succession happy children free from care romping in a sunlit garden, a dog racing happily after a tennis-ball, a lark soaring up to the heavens. The impression created was the extraordinary contrast between captivity and liberty.¹³⁵

The writer is here drawing on a series of five articles on scriptwriting written by Stannard for the *Kine Weekly* between 23 May and 20 June 1918. The first of these is on 'Symbolism',¹³⁶ and it describes precise-

ly the scene mentioned above from Maurice Elvey's *Justice* (Britain: Ideal, 1917). Comparing this scene and other examples from films scripted by Stannard with montage from Pudovkin and Eisenstein, Charles Barr argues 'that some British filmmakers were, many years earlier, thinking in imaginative montage terms, even if their ideas may not have been realized on screen with anything like the force of the contemporary films of Griffith, or of the later Soviet ones'.¹³⁷ Writers in the *Limelight* recognized Stannard's imaginative use of film language as a positive value and attempted to discover instances of it in the most ambitious Irish film to date. 'In our own super-film, "Knocknagow"', claims the 'Touches' article, 'symbolic "touches" were introduced with extraordinary success. Who that has seen the film will ever forget the death scene in the Lahy cottage or deny that its dramatic effect was intensified manifold by the subtle touch which showed the hitherto dumb cage bird trilling forth its death call to poor Nora Lahy?' Clearly this is not what Stannard or Soviet montage were doing, but what is significant is that Irish writers on film were absorbing these ideas and attempting to apply them to Irish films. It suggests that even as a kind of spectatorship that might be considered indigenously cinematic was beginning to dominate film-going in Ireland, it is already possible to identify a range of cinematic spectatorships on the basis of the self-consciousness of the film-goer. At one end of this range were the cinéastes, such as those who would have known that it was possible to edit a film in different ways to achieve different effects.

A second article in this issue discusses another filmic device used in the film. Of the surviving Irish pictures of the period, *Knocknagow* is the most interested in guiding the gaze of its audience by using optical effects, the most frequently employed of which is the before-the-lens iris. In July 1918, the *Limelight* reprinted an article from the *Scientific American* by Austin C. Lescarbourea that explained some of the effects that the device could achieve.¹³⁸ Because of its origin, the article, of course, makes no reference to *Knocknagow*, and there is no editorial comment that establishes the link between the techniques discussed and the Irish film. This rare technical article appears, however, in the same issue as the item on 'Touches', at a point when writers in the *Limelight* seem concerned to locate the film in relation to a wider cinematic discourse.

The extensive coverage that *Knocknagow* received in the *Limelight* is revealing, in the first instance, of the determination to give the film something far beyond a fair viewing but to actively promote it by

keeping it in the public eye. The tenor of the surviving *Limelight* articles on *Knocknagow* is invariably positive, contrasting with J.A.P.'s critical *Telegraph* article. FCOI's ambition in attempting a 'super film' is rewarded by the writers of the *Limelight*, who suggest that the film will appeal to a wide range of audiences. Produced by the Abbey Theatre's best actor and featuring the most interesting 'stars' in Ireland, these articles seem collectively to say: *Knocknagow* is Ireland's most ambitious film production to date, constituting a national history epic on a scale comparable to *The Birth of a Nation* and, like it, a masterly adaptation of a widely read novel. It offers a narrative of the nation, a way of charting progress from conflict on the land to rural idyll, that takes up a historical story that is, by definition, full of human interest as well as inspiring to those who appear in it. The film was presented in ways that were likely to appeal to many sections of the Irish public, from film fans to those interested in promoting Irish industry.

Irish distribution was not enough, however, for a film of the scale of *Knocknagow*. Details of the distribution of the film abroad are sketchy, and what filtered back to Ireland consisted of positive developments that could be used as further publicity in the home market. Discussing the awaited release of *Willy Reilly and His Colleen Bawn* in late 1919, the *Telegraph*'s 'Theatrical Topics' column claimed that the new film would replicate the US success of *Knocknagow*: In 'Boston alone [*Knocknagow*] showed for three weeks, and took more money than the much "boosted" "Birth of a Nation".¹³⁹ Other sources suggest that British and American reviewers were less willing to overlook the film's weaknesses. 'There is more than a soupcon of underlying propaganda about this native Irish production,' commented a *Bioscope* reviewer, 'which, although it has many technical faults, is by no means without charm and interest [...], but it obviously needs thorough revision.'¹⁴⁰ FCOI was able to include positive comments from reviews that appeared in the *Boston Pilot* and *Boston Globe* in December 1918 in a press book for the re-release of *Knocknagow* in 1919 or 1920.¹⁴¹ A review, however, appeared in *Variety* in 1921 that is all the more damning for being sympathetic but consistent in examining the film in relation to classical film-making. It concludes that '[t]he trouble with "Knock-Na-Gow" is simple enough. Whoever made it had little or no knowledge of 1921 picture making methods.'¹⁴²

Knocknagow exhibited many features that did not belong to either classical narrative or montage cinema under whose rubrics the writers in the *Limelight* appear anxious to place it. It may be that the compa-

ny were still learning and that its first attempt at a long film can only expect to display features that even its most sympathetic critics would find anomalous. If the firm was on a journey of discovery, contextual and textual evidence from their next major film, *Willy Reilly and His Colleen Bawn*, suggest that a classical style was the direction in which they were travelling.

WILLY REILLY AND HIS COLLEEN BAWN:
CLASSICAL NARRATIVE CINEMA?

Ruth Barton has argued that both *Knocknagow* and *Willy Reilly and His Colleen Bawn* 'are interspersed by a number of set-pieces that function outside of the narrative to trigger associations with non-diegetic events [events that do not progress the story]'.¹⁴³ The argument here will be that, although this is certainly true of *Knocknagow*, where those intermedial elements discussed in previous chapters are evident, it far less the case with *Willy Reilly*, which fits much more readily under the rubric of the classical narrative cinema that represented the dominant form of film-making internationally.

The last section showed that certain Irish writers on the cinema attempted to present *Knocknagow* as a cinematic epic of the nation on a par with Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation*. The film's narrative is interrupted, however, by elements that betray the film's intermedial debts. These include Brian Magowan's touring with the film to sing an accompaniment to his recorded image; the use of picturesque landscape, albeit in a way different from imagery designed to appeal to foreign tourists; and the elements of the participation discussed in relation to the film's eviction scene. Although *Willy Reilly*'s intermedial links with the Irish Theatre and with melodrama have already been discussed in Chapter 2, the film shows few overt uses of the landscape or attempts to involve its audience in a heightened form of participation. The universality of the film's theme of toleration was pointed out by one *Limelight* writer: 'Surely Carleton's fine old novel with its lesson of religious toleration offers a fine opportunity for the making of a gripping, interesting story, which will no doubt be welcome within all parts of the world.'¹⁴⁴

'The Film Co of Ireland has been reconstructed, I understand, and is now known as the Irish Film Company – which was what the general public always called it, as a matter of fact', a *Telegraph* writer reveals in December 1919:

Only one film has been produced this year – Carleton’s famous story, ‘Willy Reilly and his Colleen Bawn’ – but I understand that Mr. J. M. Sullivan, who personally supervised the production, considers it easily the best film the company has yet made.

All the scenes were filmed in th[e] vicinity of Dublin – in the grounds of St. Enda’s College, Rathfarnham, and amongst the picturesque scenery of the Pine Forest. The costumes of the period, the artistic settings, and the romantic nature of the story combine to make a picture of exceptional attractiveness, which, besides its special appeal for Irish audiences should have an attraction with audiences in general the world over.¹⁴⁵

The fact that the FCOI had made only one film for general release in 1919 was a sign of the scaling back in the company’s activities that would end in its demise. Among the reasons for this were such personal factors as the death of producer James M. Sullivan’s wife in an influenza outbreak in 1919, which seems to have precipitated his return to the United States.¹⁴⁶ Film work was made difficult by the fact that some members of the company, including *Willy Reilly* director John MacDonagh, were under surveillance for their suspected involvement in subversive activities. When MacDonagh appeared heavily made-up in the film as Tom the Fool, he protected his identity by assuming a renowned Dublin theatrical name, Richard Sheridan. MacDonagh, a member of the Irish Volunteers, had spend time in Frongach prison camp in Wales for his part in the 1916 Rising, and his brother Thomas had been executed for his leading role in the Rebellion.¹⁴⁷

During the filming of *Willy Reilly* at St. Enda’s, MacDonagh shot a film advertising bonds to finance the political activities of Dáil Éireann, an assembly founded in January 1919 as an alternative government of Ireland by members of Sinn Féin who had been elected to Westminster. This film, referred to as *The Dáil Bonds Film* or *The Republican Loan Film*, begins with two intertitles, the first promising an ‘INTERESTING GROUP OF SINN FEIN NOTABILITIES,’ and the second revealing that ‘MICHAEL COLLINS T. D. USED THE BLOCK ON WHICH ROBERT EMMETT WAS BEHEADED FOR THE TRANSACTION OF BUSINESS.’. After these, the first image depicts two Irish republican relics: the block associated with the leader of the 1803 Rebellion, Robert Emmet, and the façade of St. Enda’s, also linked to Emmet but more recently the Irish-language school run according to progressive educational principles by the leader of the 1916 Rising, Patrick Pearse. After Collins reads a letter of support from Michael Fogarty, bishop of

Killaloe, he sits at the block and sells bonds to a number of Dáil members and relatives of the executed 1916 leaders. For such a film during the Anglo-Irish War, an unorthodox method of distribution and exhibition was required. MacDonagh takes up the story:

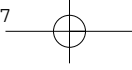
In those dangerous and exciting times no cinema owner would dare risk exhibiting the Republican Loan films so it was planned for a few volunteers in fast cars to visit certain cinemas, rush the operator's box, and at gunpoint, force the operator to take off the film he was showing, and put on the Loan Film. On the appointed night, all went smoothly as arranged, and the volunteers got safely away before the British forces discovered the plot.¹⁴⁸

There was good reason to expect that *Willy Reilly* would be popular when exhibited on more regular distribution networks. In *Knocknagow*, the FCOI had chosen the most popular Irish novel of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries for their first major film, and with it they seem to have achieved a measure of success in the United States, with one report (mentioned before) suggesting that in Boston it outperformed *The Birth of a Nation* during a three-week run.¹⁴⁹ The company may have been expecting *Willy Reilly* to provide further success with US audiences because the William Carleton novel on which it was based had been reprinted many times in America in the latter quarter of the nineteenth century.¹⁵⁰ Announcing a new edition in 1875, twenty years after its first appearance, New York publisher Robert De Witt commented that it is '[u]nquestionably the best Irish story ever written. It had an enormous sale when first published, and sells even better now. Probably because, among its other merits, it is entirely free from sectarianism.'¹⁵¹ The novel and the film tell how Willy Reilly (Brian Magowan), a Catholic landowner in the Ireland of the anti-Catholic Penal Laws, saves a prejudiced Protestant squire (Dermot O'Dowd) from a bandit, the Red Rapparee (Barrett McDonnell), and falls in love with the squire's beautiful daughter, the Colleen Bawn (Frances Alexander). Willy pursues the relationship despite the machinations of Whitecraft (Jim Plant), a persecutor of Catholics who had planned to marry the Colleen Bawn with or without her consent. When Willy is targeted by Whitecraft and goes on the run, he is helped by Reverend Brown, a Protestant clergyman, and Hastings, a local Protestant landowner, both of whom are more interested in the common Irish identity they share with Willy than in division on religious grounds. After a trial in which Willy is exiled for a

period and Whitecraft is sentenced to death, Willy and the Colleen Bawn are reunited. The conventions of melodrama clearly underlie the story, allowing the FCOI's theatre actors and directors familiar structural materials that could be shaped more readily into a coherent film than the sprawling epic of sentiment presented by Kickham's *Knocknagow*.

It was not only in the choice to adapt a literary work well regarded in Irish America but also in the refinement of filmic story-telling that the FCOI hoped to ensure success. By comparison with *Knocknagow*, there is little obtrusive camerawork in *Willy Reilly*, like that especially apparent in the earlier film's opening shot, discussed above, or the extensive panning seen particularly in *Knocknagow*'s hurling scenes ((although these latter movements are motivated by what is taking place before the camer). This may have to do with a change of camera operator. Although it is not recorded who shot *Willy Reilly*, William Moser, a professional cameraman who had worked extensively with Pathé, photographed *Knocknagow*.¹⁵² The film's camerawork may be attributed to the experimental nature of *Knocknagow* as the company's first long film combined with the resource of having a cameraman experienced enough to attempt spectacular effects. It appears that the more restrained camerawork of *Willy Reilly* is an effect of an overall aesthetic unity to the film, a stricter subordination of technique to narrative. Although the film does have scenes played in one wide shot with intercut intertitles, it also shows in general a more consistent application of the principles of continuity editing, including the techniques of cutting on action, cutting in to a significant detail, eyeline-matching shot-reverse-shot, and cross-cutting between scenes to convey simultaneity.

These features can be seen in key scenes. Cross-cutting between scenes is used particularly effectively in the sequence in which Willy has been jailed and his Protestant benefactors Reverend Brown and Hastings decide to act to save the Colleen Bawn from being married to Whitecraft against her will by having the villain arrested. Excitement and coherence are added to a long sequence by the periodic intercutting of shots of Hastings galloping through the countryside. The sense of urgency is heightened by the use of intertitles. The first, 'A RIDE – NOT FOR LOVE – BUT FOR A GIRL'S HAPPINESS', precedes a shot of a mounted Hastings jumping a fence. The second, 'WILL HASTINGS ARRIVE IN TIME TO SAVE THE DEAR COLLEEN BAWN FROM WHITECRAFT?', may be unnecessarily intrusive in a scene that intercuts shots of the Colleen Bawn dressing for the wedding, the title, two



shots of Hastings galloping to Brown's, Brown pacing, the Colleen Bawn putting on her veil, Hastings galloping, the Colleen Bawn arriving in the room for the wedding, and Hastings finally reaching Brown's and ending his pacing. The sequence ends with the arrest just before the wedding and the incarceration of Whitecraft. Cross-cutting is also used effectively in the early scene in which the squire and his servant are attacked by the Rapparee. In this case, there is cutting between three groups: the squire and his servant, the Rapparee and his men, and Willy and his entourage. The spaces they occupy are marked as spatially proximate by the fact that, although they do not see each other (in the novel, this is because of an obscuring mist), they can hear each other's whistled signals. This is also, therefore, an example of shot-reverse-shot, with the actions made to produce (putting fingers in the mouth and blowing) and hear (cupping a hand behind the ear) the sound motivating the cuts. It is not, however, an instance of match cutting because the direction from which the sound appears to come is different from the direction in which the Rapparee and his men move.

This kind of match cutting is seen to better effect in the climactic courtroom scene. Here, the rules concerning the eyeline match are followed such that when the judge looks and addresses a comment to camera left, the Colleen Bawn appears to answer him by looking and returning a comment to camera right. Match cutting on action is seen in a number of scenes. A good example is that in which Willy secures his deeds before going on the run. The action consists of Willy climbing in and out of a side window of his own house, beginning after he has told Tom to keep watch under the slightly open window. Willy opens the window fully and climbs inside, the camera square on to the house. There is a cut to a view from inside the room that picks up Willy walking from the window and pans with him as he goes to the desk in which he will find his deeds. Two shots reverse the action with a second match cut that brings Willy out of his house for the last time before Whitecraft razes it.

Kristin Thompson argues that, internationally, early feature films quickly absorbed the continuity system in the 1910s, such that certain countries were able to add elements of national style to continuity when they were cut off from the major film production countries during World War I.¹⁵³ One of the elements on which Thompson focuses is acting. Pointing out that the advent of the feature allowed time for film-makers to linger over actors' reactions, she contends that '[b]y the mid-1910s, a key moment in the story would be allotted a virtuosic

bit of acting, often with its own beginning, middle and end'.¹⁵⁴ There is a good example of this in *Willy Reilly*, in a scene that shows Tom delivering a letter to Willy warning him of his impending arrest. It begins with Willy as the picture of the gentleman of leisure, framed in a full shot leaning against one of the pillars of the portico at the front of his house while two wolfhounds lounge beside him. It is composed symmetrically such that the pillars and the top step of the portico form a frame within the film frame, containing Willy and the dogs in the foreground and the open door of the house behind them, a window visible through the door adding depth. Tom enters, checks his pockets and pats his chest looking for something, takes off his hat and removes the letter, gives it to Willy, receives a coin, salutes Willy, and exits. Willy unfolds the letter and begins reading. There is a cut to a close-up of the letter: 'I WRITE TO INFORM YOU THAT SIR ROBERT WHITECRAFT AND MY FATHER HAVE DETERMINED UPON YOUR ARREST. / COME TO ME TO-NIGHT.' There is a cut to a low-angle mid-shot that catches Willy acting out his reactions to its contents. He looks up from the letter and speaks some words to the sky; he folds the letter and begins putting it into his right pocket; he smiles down, it seems from the eyeline, at his dogs; he brings his left hand to his heart as he looks happily skyward again; then his expression changes to one of anger as he punches the air with his left fist. After this, there is a cut back to the wider shot, in which Willy plays with his dogs for some seconds before the cut. The acting gives expression to the mixed joy and pain that might be expected from a letter from a lover requesting a meeting but also warning about a plot on one's liberty.

The ending of the scene, however, detracts from its place in the narrative. It appears here that the scene is a self-containing mini-narrative, with an opening equilibrium, a disruptive action and reaction, and an end that returns to the initial equilibrium. Willy is once more playing with his dogs as if some further action were not urgently required. This kind of scene construction, in which an opening tableau shot is disrupted to progress the narrative but then restored, is a particular feature of this part of the film. The previous scene opens in a garden with a mid-shot of the Colleen Bawn leaning picturesquely on a somewhat precarious sundial. Tom enters, tells her of the plot, and she exits leaving Tom in her place at the sundial. A fade down and up to Tom still at the sundial indicates passage of time, and the Colleen Bawn returns with a letter that Tom puts in his hat before exiting. The scene ends with the Colleen Bawn resting once more on the sundial. The return to stasis in this scene is not so marked because the specta-

tor has been led to expect impotence from the Colleen Bawn. She is the character who is first pictured waiting for her father's return as he is attacked by the Rapparee, who has not yet been seen outside the precinct of her father's house. She is the 'fair girl' whose renowned beauty must be displayed, the desire for which commodity drives the narrative economy. Although it creates a parallel between the lovers, Willy's inaction is anomalous.

The film, therefore, offers ample evidence that the techniques of continuity editing were well understood. Although there are instances where they are not applied consistently, there are also moments where their application can reach a new expressivity, such as in the area of acting where the company may be expected to think of themselves as having particular competence. 'The attempt to kidnap the "Colleen Bawn"', enthuses a writer in the *Bioscope* after a trade show in Belfast in February 1920, 'and her opportune rescue by the hero of the story lends itself to one of the finest scenes every portrayed on the moving pictures, and the other episodes are also dealt with in a vivid manner.'¹⁵⁵ On its opening to the general public at the Bohemian in April 1920, the *Evening Herald* described the film as 'an unqualified success. The acting, the photography, and presentation left nothing to be desired.'¹⁵⁶

In *Willy Reilly*, FCOI appeared to have a production that could have been successfully marketed internationally, but such factors as the company's poor distribution networks and entanglements in the difficult political situation in Ireland during the War of Independence militated against that success. MacDonagh reveals that, although their distributor in the United States, the Irish Film Co. of America, showed their films, it was a poorly organized company that did not send back any money to FCOI.¹⁵⁷ In addition, FCOI also appears to have had difficulty in distributing the film in Britain. MacDonagh describes his own experiences when, fleeing arrest in Ireland, he aided in exhibiting *Willy Reilly* in halls in Scotland because no local distributor would take the film initially.¹⁵⁸ Although he did manage to arrange for a local distributor to handle the film in Scotland, the story reveals the problems that a small producer faced outside their own area.

BOOMING EXHIBITION, STRUGGLING PRODUCTION

The last production of the Film Company of Ireland, or the Irish Film Company as it was called after its reorganization in 1920, was a far more modest affair. *Paying the Rent*, a two-reel comedy, premiered at

the Empire in September 1920, appearing on a variety bill with, among other turns, Marie Sweeney's Irish musical comedy sketch, 'Mary Ellen Makes Good'.¹⁵⁹ The intermedial links between the film and the variety sketch seem clear here, and director John MacDonagh would build on these when he partnered producer Norman Whitten in 1922 in Irish Photo-Plays, a company established in May that year by advertising executive Charles McConnell, Breffni O'Rourke and J. J. Bradlaw.¹⁶⁰ This company produced three film comedies in the early 1920s – *The Casey Millions*, *Cruiskeen Lawn* and *Wicklow Gold* – the last two of which featured the stage comedian Jimmy O'Dea. *Paying the Rent* also promoted itself on the basis of picturesque landscape and other attractions, the pressbook revealing that '[t]he picture shows the beautiful scenery of Co. Wicklow. The Irish Derby is also shown and the scenes containing the grand parade, the race itself, and the finish add great interest to this altogether splendid comedy of Irish life and manners.'¹⁶¹

Rather than the four sectors of production, distribution, exhibition and reception, the 'great institution of cinematography', as it developed in Ireland in the late 1910s looked more like consisting of an industry of two very unequal sectors – exhibition and indigenous production – bridged to some extent by the sheer will of the third, reception. The far larger sector was engaged in operating, servicing and regulating film exhibition, relying on foreign film productions supplied by a competitive distribution business and shown at dedicated venues that increased in quantity and quality as the decade progressed. The appearance on the streets of many towns across the country of buildings constructed specifically for the purpose of showing moving pictures would provide a sign in ferroconcrete of the new entertainment's increasing importance and independence from the theatre and hall, and this development would be crowned at the end of a decade of cinema-building with the construction of La Scala, the first of the country's 'super cinemas'. The onward march of progress in exhibition was not without its obstacles, however, notably the problems of building during World War I and in the unstable political landscape of the War of Independence. Furthermore, building lagged behind the ambition of foreign film-makers, who produced their long and expensive 'super films' some years before the appearance of the 'temples to the art of cinematography'. In order for these films to receive the attention their makers thought they deserved, they were exhibited in the largest and most prestigious theatres at a ticket price equal to live

drama and far above the cost of regular film shows. This legitimation of the 'picture play' was also driven by a desire to head off forms of regulation and censorship that might impede the growth of the industry worldwide, because what began with regulations on fire safety quickly included censorship provisions to protect public morals. In Ireland, the motive force for censoring the cinema was the Catholic Church, allied to elements of the Irish Ireland movement bent on keeping Ireland free of foreign influences – particularly one as pervasive as the cinema was increasingly proving to be – while Ireland moved towards some form of self-government.

The fledgling indigenous production sector, essentially consisting of FCOI and GFS at the national level, was shaped by its relationship to the exhibition sector. That FCOI included several key personnel who were prominent in Ireland's most prestigious theatre reflects an international trend towards legitimation of the cinema. This included a preference for a naturalistic style of 'verisimilar' acting above the 'histrionic' style of melodrama that had been a boon in first adapting narrative to early cinema. FCOI began by producing a substantial number of short comedies and romances, capitalizing on good initial interest and publicity by securing British distribution. The same number of productions could not be made in its second year, when both internal and external pressures impelled the company towards more challenging work that could rival the best of foreign productions in scale and ambition. It first adapted *Knocknagow*, the period's most popular Irish novel, a rurally set historical epic written by a key republican activist. Although Irish audiences were enthusiastic, the film's chances of reaching a substantial audience abroad were marred by lack of narrative clarity. The company's next big production, *Willy Reilly and His Colleen Bawn*, another literary adaptation but from a source with a clearer narrative line, displayed a better understanding of international standards of film-making. Its financial success was hindered, however, by the involvement of key members of the company in political activity as the War of Independence intensified and by poor foreign distribution.

The reception sector, and particularly writers in *Irish Limelight*, supported film-makers from FCOI and GFS to a degree far out of proportion to their economic contribution to the Irish exhibition sector. That Irish film production existed at all was a sign for these writers that cinema existed in Ireland not only as an imported phenomenon but as one that Irish people shaped in their own unique ways. It was a sign that cinema was Irish too.

NOTES

1. 'The Outlook', *Limelight*, Vol. 1, No. 1, January 1917, p. 1.
2. *Ibid.*
3. John Ryan, 'The Cinema Peril', *Studies*, March 1918, p. 112. A remarkably similar assessment is offered by Max Drennan in his article 'The Cinema and Its Dangers', *Irish Monthly*, Vol. 45 (1917), pp. 74–82.
4. Ryan, 'The Cinema Peril', p. 126.
5. Reprinted in Tino Balio (ed.), *The American Film Industry* (Madison and London: U of Wisconsin P, 1976), p. 174.
6. 'The Outlook', *Limelight*, Vol. 1, (No. 1, January 1917), p. 1.
7. 'The "Ireland a Nation" Film: Criticisms of Historical Inaccuracies', *Limelight*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (February 1917), p. 3.
8. 'Movie Musings', *Limelight*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (March 1917), p. 3.
9. 1 June 1916, p. 958.
10. Hiley, "'At the Picture Palace": The British Cinema Audience, 1895–1920', in John Fullerton (ed.), *Celebrating 1895: The Centenary of Cinema* (London: Libbey, 1998), p. 102.
11. *Bioscope*, 29 February 1912, p. 593.
12. 'Is the Renter Necessary?' *Bioscope*, 9 January 1913, p. 79.
13. *Irish Builder*, 12 April 1913, p. 250.
14. *Limelight*, Vol. 1, No. 7 (July 1917), p. 17.
15. 'Paddy', *Bioscope*, 7 October 1915, p. 57.
16. *Limelight*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (January 1917), p. 11.
17. 'Film Rivalry: Room for Irish Producers', *Irish Times (IT)*, 15 October 1921, p. 9.
18. 'Items of Interest', *Bioscope*, 10 February 1916, p. 563.
19. *Bioscope*, 2 July 1914, pp. 64–5.
20. On the Belfast venues see Michael Open, *Fading Lights, Silver Screens: A History of Belfast Cinemas* (Antrim: Greystone, 1985), p. 3.
21. Apart from the newspaper reports discussed in Chapter 3, there appears to be few extant accounts of Hale's Tours. J. Hanlon mentions this entertainment in 'Flash Back to Dublin's First Picture Houses', in Richard Devane (ed.), *Irish Cinema Handbook* (Dublin: Parkside, 1943), p. 98.; see *London Times*, 1 January 1909, p. 3, and 16 March 1909, p. 3.
22. See *Dublin Evening Mail (DEM)*, 29 February 1908, p. 4, and *Evening Telegraph (ET)*, 29 February 1908, p. 8.
23. *ET*, 29 February 1908, p. 8.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 1.
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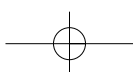
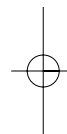
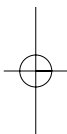
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101. *IT*, 12 May 1916, p. 7.
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Conclusion

Political conditions were not favourable for the success of *Willy Reilly and His Colleen Bawn* on its release in 1920, and the situation did not improve for Irish cinema in general in the 1920s. In October 1921, a writer in the *Irish Times*, noting that the British film industry was seriously competing with its US rival, offered a bleak assessment of the trade in Ireland: ‘There have been spasmodic attempts to produce films here, but no motion pictures really worthy of Irish national life have been secured. This certainly, in face of all circumstances, seems extraordinary, especially in view of the great influence exercised by Irishmen and Irish traditions and ideals on the English-speaking world.’¹ Although Ireland contained an abundance of raw materials for picture making – ‘picturesque settings, historic associations, and a host of capable and earnest artists’ – the crucial missing elements identified by this writer were producers, directors and other specialists in film production:

What is needed most is a band of experts, fortified by adequate capital, to organise the technical side of the industry. Very little is, in fact, known in Ireland about this phase of cinematography beyond the exhibition of pictures at the cinemas. The adaptation, scenario writing, setting, staging, acting, and photography of a motion picture provide a very interesting industry, which is capable of great development in Ireland.

This is a singularly negative summation of the business of moving pictures in Ireland in the wake of the sustained burst of indigenous filmmaking at the end of the cinematograph’s first twenty-five years in the country. Its seeming dismissal of the achievements of indigenous filmmakers in the late 1910s finds echoes among film-industry observers because of the apparent inability of Irish film production companies to sustain a consistent level of production. Noting the halt in indigenous production just a year and a half earlier, J.A.P., writing in the *Bioscope*, expressed hope in the latest reorganization of FCOI but also

frustration in the general lack of overall development in film production in Ireland:

One day one hears of the elaborate plans that are about to be carried out immediately, of studios to be built on the most up-to-date lines, of lavish expenditure on super-films to be, and so on. I myself have seen the ground mapped out for one such studio, and a portion of the work actually started. But it has got no forrader. [...] Owing to the lack of studio accommodation [interiors] have to be taken in the open air as in the pioneer days, or as was done on at least one occasion, filmed in the studio of some firm in Great Britain.²

Looking forward from 1921, these assessments also offer a gloomy outlook in light of the fact that the 1910s would turn out to have been the most developed period for indigenous film-making until the 1970s. The situation did not improve for the cinema business with the foundation of the Irish Free State, which witnessed early in the term of its first administration the passing of the Censorship of Films Act, 1923, which was directed at the area in which the *Times* writer identifies Irish cinematographic expertise, 'the exhibition of pictures at the cinemas'.

This book is a history of Irish film from the arrival of the kinoscope peepshow moving-picture viewer in 1895 to the demise of the first major Irish film production companies at the start of the 1920s, at the same time as, and partly as a result of, the emergence of the Irish Free State. It is particularly concerned to chart Irish people's experiences of the first cinematograph shows and of what would eventually become 'cinema', and their encounter with early film images of Ireland and the Irish. It wishes to do this, however, by eschewing the benefit of hindsight that allows a later observer to see the inevitability that the first cinematograph shows would become cinema. It aims to show the advantages of studying the early period on its own terms and not as part of a larger narrative of Irish film history, thereby freeing it from its obligation to be the precursor to later developments. As a period of cinema history, film historians have tended to define the early period in relation to later developments, typically characterizing the period as primitive, as a time in which narrative cinema had not emerged. Although fictional narrative was an important development in the history of cinema, it was only one of the potential ways in which the cinema could have evolved. Film shows developed in dialogue with existing and developing cultural practices and the audiences they

attracted. The first twenty-five years of the cinematograph in Ireland constitute a fascinating period in which a popular cultural form emerged *from* but also developed *in* the fairgrounds and music halls to become a significant independent cultural institution. 'Why do you think we have suddenly become so interested in early cinema?' wrote avant-garde film-maker and theorist Peter Wollen in 1998. 'It's more than archaeology. It is to regain a sense of cinema as potential, not yet frozen into the world spectacle. It is to imagine a renaissance.'³

In 1998, interest in early cinema can hardly have been said to have been sudden among the film historians and archivists who had been working with renewed concentration on the period for at least twenty years, since FIAF's Brighton conference in 1978. In 2008, that work may be undergoing another shift in focus. As work on this book was concluding in December 2007, Richard Maltby starkly posed the question of the wider significance of the history produced by film studies.⁴ He asked cinema historians how their work might be of more use to other historians, noting that, despite decades of careful film-historical scholarship, a recently published thousand-page history of Victorian and Edwardian England devoted only one paragraph to the cinema. Distinguishing between 'film history' – focused, like literary history, on texts – and 'cinema history' – focused on the institution of cinema and its audiences – he argued for a cinema history without a fixed disciplinary focus, as interested in land zoning and the price of popcorn in multiplexes as in *Singin' in the Rain* or *The Wind Among the Barley*. He pointed out that a cinema-goer's ongoing encounter with the cinema is with the experience of going to the cinema rather than with individual films. The correct focus of cinema history should, therefore, be on revealing the social agency of the cinema, a goal glimpsed but not attainable by the methodologies pursued by 1970s apparatus theory.

This book is, by Maltby's definition, a work of both film history and cinema history. It undoubtedly proceeds from a film-studies methodology, engaging at points in discussion of the aesthetics and/or the reception of individual films, and aiming in part to use the few surviving films from the period as the basis for an examination of how Irish audiences encountered their own image on the screen. Although it is relatively easy to discuss representations of Irishness in the surviving films, and a substantial literature with which to engage in doing so, the nature of Irish theatrical or cinematic audiences at this time, or at any other time, remains little studied and the kind of events that they encountered has been almost entirely neglected. Unlike the United

States or Britain, little historical work on early film shows has been done and there has not been, what Maltby calls, 'a sufficient body of consensual historical knowledge around which to stage a debate about historical method'. Indeed, the task here has frequently been to return to the archives to uncover neglected areas or to correct what have turned out to have been widespread misapprehensions about the period. This book has in the course of its research been newly directed as a hitherto unknown set of facts emerged, such as the importance of charity bazaars to the dissemination of knowledge and experience of the cinematograph, the extent of British film-making of a tourist kind in Ireland in the 1900s, and the existence of dedicated film venues before the Volta.

To the extent that it has happened at all, the examination of the social agency of cinema in Ireland has meant charting its contribution to the national struggle. Viewing the cinema only or even primarily in terms of its relationship to the national question, however, misses much of what constituted early cinema culture. As the previous chapter argued, the exhibition sector of cinema dwarfed the indigenous production sector. Furthermore, the lack of fiction film-making that could be identified as nationalist before 1916 may have been the result of active hostility rather than a lack of knowledge of the cinema. The way this situation changes during the mid-1910s is remarkable. In Lennox Robinson's 1912 play *Patriots*, for instance, the republican revolutionary James Nugent is released from jail after eighteen years, and attempts to infuse the people of Coolmore with renewed fighting spirit by holding a meeting.⁵ The hall remains resolutely empty until two young men enter and ask: 'I beg your pardon, but is this where the Moving Pictures are?' When urged to stay for the speech of a patriot as great as Robert Emmet or James Stephens, they reply: 'Thank you, but we want to see the pictures tonight.' The promise of a lantern lecture on Egypt from the local priest keeps other potential audience members away. Dedicated to 'the James Nugents of history', Robinson's play clearly presents the projected image as a way in which the local people distract themselves from the urgent business of forging the nation, and, in doing so, it has much in common with the view of the mutoscope in the round tower in George Bernard Shaw's *John Bull's Other Island*. A new technological medium embedded in Victorian popular culture, the cinema emerges at a time when separatist energies defined Ireland as a nation of ancient cultural traditions opposed to contemporary England and its culture industry. On this basis, disengagement from the cinema is a consistent and logically

defensible position. Neither St Patrick nor the pagan Gaels had had cinematographs.

This was not, though, the last word on the cinema and Irish politics. Politico-cultural organizations were represented on screen in popular films of GAA matches and Volunteer demonstrations; Irish revolutionaries appear in John MacDonagh's advertising film for Dáil Bonds and in the newsreel material that recorded the rise of the disparate groups that united as Sinn Féin in 1917; and a nationalist ideology pervades at least the longer fiction films produced by FCOI's Abbey actors and political activists. Evidence even exists that films made in Ireland may have, to paraphrase W. B. Yeats, sent out certain men and women the English shot at. Annie O'Sullivan, whose father hosted the O'Kalem film-makers at Beaufort, Co. Kerry, recalls that their rebel films were part of a political awakening that saw her serve as a captain in Cumann na mBan.⁶ Robinson also seems to have changed his mind about the value of the moving pictures, at least as a commercial prospect. During his second term as manager of the Abbey Theatre some seven years after the premiere of *Patriots*, he contemplated showing 'educational interest and travel films' on Sundays. 'Films at the Abbey Theatre would be an amazing recognition of the much-despised "movies" by our intellectuals', announced J.A.P. with apparent glee in the *Bioscope*, 'and my news will create a sensation in Dublin.'⁷

The social significance of the cinema may be bound up with its growing dominance in popular culture in the 1910s. Like music-hall/variety entertainment, the cinema underwent capital expansion in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, pursuing more lucrative middle-class patrons. Cinema's enduring intermedial connection to variety can be seen not only in the cinema programme but also in the immense popularity into the 1960s of cinema-variety at Ireland's largest theatre, the 3,600-seat Theatre Royal, Dublin. It may be in its links to variety that cinema most clearly manifests the marks of a commodity culture that was prevalent in Ireland from at least the 1890s.⁸ The importance of the cinema may be in disseminating this culture, not only, or even mainly, through the images on the screen, but through its variety structure. Again, this does not necessarily make cinema merely the medium of a trans-national capitalism imposed from without, as the campaigns to employ Irish workers and to buy Irish goods suggest. Nationalists also relied on what Yeats disparaged as 'fumb[ing] in the greasy till' to fund their movement, offering the seemingly incongruous sight of a nationalist force in 1914 equipping

itself through the advertising columns of one of Ireland's most prominent daily newspapers in 1914. A special section headed 'The Irish Volunteers' included advertisements for companies such as H. H. E. Hunt, Ltd., which could supply 'Inspection Camps and Training Schools [...] at Wholesale Prices with [...] everything but Guns' and tobacconist Kapp and Peterson, which invited Volunteers to 'Smoke a Petersons / The Pipe of Peace'.⁹

Making sense of such phenomena should perhaps be the concern of a cinema history interested in social agency. Another part of this must be a recognition of cinema as a social space where a unique performance takes place a number of times a day because a unique audience assembles at that place. The cinema as a social space within a community is illuminated by a short item on the Bohemian Picture House, Phibsborough, Dublin, that appeared among a number of other short humorous pieces on the 'Flickerings' page of *Irish Limelight* in December 1917. 'A lady coming from the Botanic Gardens admired the evergreens at the entrance of the Bohemian', it begins. "Has Mr. Sparling any more plants like that?" she asked the boy. "Not at the front of the house, ma'am," he replied, "but he has 'Twelvetrees' inside."¹⁰ The joke is based on the name of the chief musician of the resident orchestra, Clyde Twelvetrees, a cellist who played solos each day at advertised times. This brief piece vividly depicts the cinema as a physically located premises that might be encountered on a walk by a stroller (a *flâneuse*, perhaps), who would notice it not only because it had a street address but also because it presented a public face in the guise of its 'boy', a liveried page, and its plant display. The anecdote reveals the cinema as a place of considerable and stratified employment, with the anonymous 'boy' on the street and the named manager and soloist specifically mentioned, but these would also have to be supplemented by the other members of the orchestra, the projectionist, the ticket seller, and doubtless such staff in the auditorium as liveried ushers and attendants selling programmes and snacks, whom patrons would have encountered as part of the event of 'going to the pictures'.

Much work on the period remains to be done, and part of this book's task has been to make sources available through extensive quotation and referencing. What is presented here, therefore, is envisaged not as the definitive word on the cinematograph in Ireland before the foundation of the Irish Free State but the start of a debate on the meaning and importance of projected moving-picture entertainments in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Research has yet

to be done in many areas. Systematic work is required on Irish audiences for film shows and the cinema, as well as for popular theatre, particularly music hall and variety. Detailed studies of IAPC, FCOI and GFS, among other companies, are required. Very little is presently known about the itinerant impresarios who brought the first taste of cinema to more remote areas. Given that cinema-building in Belfast rivalled that of Dublin, the former city deserves substantial research, building on the work of Michael Open.¹¹ Work on these and other areas undoubtedly promises new discoveries and challenges to long-held assumptions about cinematic development in the period.

NOTES

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6. Tadhg O'Sullivan, 'The Kalem in Kerry', *Ros*, Christmas 1976, p. 4; obituary, 'Death Recalls Epic Film Days in Killarney', LOLA file 'Kalem', National Library of Ireland.
7. 'Irish Notes: Pictures in the Other Theatres', *Bioscope*, 13 November 1919, p. 111.
8. Stephanie Rains, 'Modernity and Consumption, in Nineteenth-Century Ireland: The Araby Bazaar and 1890s Popular Visual Culture', *Early Popular Visual Culture*, Vol. 5, No. 3 (November 2007), pp. 285–300.
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11. Open, *Fading Lights, Silver Screens.: A History of Belfast Cinemas* (Antrim: Greystone, 1985).

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- Aimsir Pádraig/In the Days of St. Patrick* (Ireland: General Film Supply, 1920; 6,200 ft; dir. Norman Whitten)
- Bold Emmett, Ireland's Martyr* (United States: Sid Olcott International Feature Film Players, 1915; 3,000 ft; dir. Sidney Olcott)
- The Colleen Bawn* (United States: Kalem, 1911; 2,817 ft; dir. Sidney Olcott)
- The Dáil Bonds/Republican Loan Film* (Ireland, 1919; dir. John MacDonagh)
- For Ireland's Sake* (United States: Gene Gauntier Feature Players, 1914; 3,000 ft; dir. Sidney Olcott)
- The Funeral of Thos. Ashe* (Ireland: General Film Supply, 1917; 600 ft; dir. Norman Whitten)
- His Mother* (United States: Kalem, 1912; dir. Sidney Olcott)
- Ireland a Nation* (United States: Macnamara, 1914–20; dir. Walter Macnamara)
- Irish Events* (Ireland: General Film Supply, 1917–20) – newsreel serial, partly extant
- Knocknagow* (Ireland: Film Company of Ireland, 1918; 7,910/8,700 ft; dir. Fred O'Donovan)
- The Lad from Old Ireland* (United States: Kalem, 1910; 824/1009 ft; dir. Sidney Olcott)
- Life of St. Patrick: From the Cradle to the Grave* (United States: Photo-Historic, 1912; dir. J. Theobald Walsh)
- Lumière Irish Films (France: Lumière, 1897; ph. probably Alexandre Promio) – series (listed by Lumière catalogue numbers): 708. *O'Connel[l] Bridge* [Dublin]; 709. *Départ de la Gare, Panorama* [Westland Row, Dublin]; 710. *Pompiers: Un incendie, I* [Dublin]; 711. *Pompiers: Un incendie, II* [Dublin]; 712. *13e Hussards: Sauts d'obstacles* [Dublin]; 713. *13e Hussards: Sauts d'obstacles par douze* [Dublin]; 714. *13e Hussards: Défilé* [Dublin]; 715. *13e*

Hussards: Défilé par douze [Dublin]; 716. *13e Hussards: Arrivée et pied-à-terre* [Dublin]; 717. *13e Hussards: Exercices du sabre, pied-à-terre et départ* [Dublin]; 718. *13e Hussards: Charge* [Dublin]; 719. *Castle Place* [Belfast]; 720. *Queen's Bridge* [Belfast]; 721. *Panorama de l'arrivée à Belfast*; 722. *Panorama du départ de Belfast*; 723. *Pompiers: Alerte* [Belfast]; 724. *Pompiers: Exercices de sauvetage* [Belfast]; 725. *Soundy Mounts* [Sandymount, Dublin]; 726. *Départ de Surgan* [Lurgan, Co. Armagh]; 727. *Ligne de Belfast à Kingstown, I* [Drogheda, Co. Louth]; 728. *Ligne de Belfast à Kingstown, II* [Balmoral, Belfast]; 729. *Ligne de Belfast à Kingstown, III* [Blackrock, Co. Dublin]; 730. *Départ de Dammurey* [Dunmurry, Co. Antrim]; 731. *Lisburn*; 732. *Arrivée à Kingstown* [now Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin].

Man of Aran (Britain: 1934; dir. Robert Flaherty)

Mise Éire (Ireland: Gael-Linn, 1959; dir. George Morrison)

Mitchell & Kenyon in Ireland (Britain: BFI, 2007) – DVD contains 28 surviving films shot by the Blackburn firm of Mitchell and Kenyon for British exhibitors in Ireland: *Ride on a Tramcar through Belfast* (1901), *Cattle Market in Derry* (1902), *Congregation Leaving Jesuit Church of St Francis Xavier, Dublin* (1902), *Panorama of College Green, Dublin* (1902), *Congregation Leaving St Mary's Pro-Cathedral, Dublin* (1902), *Wexford Railway Station* (1902), *Life in Wexford* (1902), *Ride from Blarney to Cork on Cork and Muskerry Light Railway* (1902), *Panorama of Queenstown Harbour* (1902), *Albert Quay in Cork* (1902), *Train Ride from King Street to Patrick's Bridge, Cork* (1902), *Views of the Grand Parade, Cork* (1902), *Workers Leaving Lee Boot Factory –Dwyer & Co. Ltd, Cork* (1902), *Cork Fire Brigade Turning Out* (1902), *Congregation Leaving St Patrick's Church in Cork* (1902), *Congregation Leaving St Mary's Dominican Church in Cork* (1902), *Regiments Returned from the Boer War to Victoria Barracks, Cork* (1902), *Preparation of the Cork Exhibition Grounds and Erection of the Buildings* (1902), *Panorama of Cork Exhibition Grounds* (1902), *Trade Procession at Opening of Cork Exhibition* (1902), *Arrival of VIPs for Official Opening of Cork Exhibition* (1902), *Lord Mayor of Cork Arriving for Official Opening of Cork Exhibition* (1902), *The Visit of the Duke of Connaught C-i-C of Forces in Ireland and Prince Henry of Prussia to Cork Exhibition* (1902), *Ambush II at Eyrefield Lodge, Curragh* (1902), *Sports Day at Queen's College Ground, Cork* (1902), *Two-Oared Boat Race, Sundays Well, Cork* (1902), *Crews Practicing on River Lee at Cork Regatta* (1902), *Final of*

International Cup at Cork Regatta Between Leander and Berlin (1902)

Paying the Rent (Ireland: Film Company of Ireland, 1920; dir. John MacDonagh) – partially extant

The Queen's Visit to Dublin: Royal Procession Entering the City Gates (Britain: Hepworth, 1900)

Release of the Sinn Fein Prisoners (Ireland: General Film Supply, 1917; ph. Norman Whitten)

Rory O'More (United States: Kalem, 1911; 761 ft; dir. Sidney Olcott)

Saoirse? (Ireland: Gael-Linn, 1961; dir. George Morrison)

South Armagh Election (Ireland: General Film Supply, 1917)

Whaling Afloat and Ashore (Britain: R. W. Paul, 1908; 750 ft)

Willy Reilly and His Colleen Bawn (Ireland: Film Company of Ireland, 1920; dir. John MacDonagh)

With the Bioscope Through Ireland (Britain: Warwick, 1900) – series, partly extant: *Coaling a Battleship at Sea* (75 ft); *Transport of American Mails at Queenstown* (75 ft); *Panorama of Picturesque Queenstown* (125 ft); *Panorama of Seashore and Promenade at Youghal* (50 ft); *From Queenstown to Cork* (75 ft); *Patrick Street, Cork* (50 ft); *Approaching Cork, Panorama* (75 ft); *Prince of Wales's Route Between Cork and Bantry* (100 ft); *Passengers Getting on Coaches, Bantry* (50 ft); *Panorama of Glengariff* (50 ft); *Coaching Through the Keim-an-Eigh Pass* (75 ft); *Shrine of Gougane Barra* (50 ft); *Panorama from Engine Front Between Macroom and Cork* (150 ft); *Coaching Through the Tunnel of Kenmare Road* (50 ft); *Panorama of Parknasilla and Its Hotel* (50 ft); *Coaches Leaving Great Southern Hotel, Killarney* (50 ft); *On Horseback Through the Gap of Dunloe* (150 ft); *Shooting the Rapids at Killaney* (50 ft); *River Shannon at Killaloe* (100 ft); *Panorama of College Green, Dublin*; *Royal Avenue, Belfast* (50 ft); *High Street, Belfast* (75 ft); *From Belfast to the Antrim Coast* (105 ft); *Three Waterfalls near Antrim Coast* (75 ft); *Giant's Causeway* (75 ft); *Rough Sea at Port Stewart* (50 ft); *Downhill to Castle Rock by Rail* (100 ft); *Londonderry to Ballykelly* (125 ft); *Panorama of Seashore at Bundoran* (50 ft); *Panoramic Views Between Petigo and Ballyshannon* (125 ft)

'*You Remember Ellen*' (United States: Kalem, 1912; dir. Sidney Olcott)

The Youghal Gazette (Ireland: Horgan, ca. 1910–22) – local newsreel serial, partially extant, including people leaving church and beach scenes and some titled items: *Sinn Féin*, *Peace Celebrations*, *The*

North Abbey Band, Youghal, Comrades of the Great War, The Feis Day, Ardmore Patron, The Frogmore Racecourse

FILMS SHOT IN IRELAND: LOST

- After Chapel and Church* (Britain: A. D. Thomas, 1901)
All for Old Ireland (United States: Sid Olcott International Feature Film Players, 1915; dir. Sidney Olcott)
Among the Irish Fisher Folk (United States: Kalem, 1911; dir. Sidney Olcott)
Arrah-na-Pogue (United States: Kalem, 1911; 3,000 ft; dir. Sidney Olcott)
Beautiful Erin (Britain: Urban, 1907) – series: *Euston to Erin* (580 ft), *Railway Run from Waterford to Wexford* (350 ft), *Transferring Mails at Queenstown* (150 ft), *Irish Life and Character* (300 ft), *Glimpses of Erin* (605 ft), *Irish Scenes and Types* (665 ft), *Irish Life and Character* (300 ft)
Beauty Spots of Ireland (Britain: London Cinematograph Co., 1909; dir. John Y. Brown)
Boxing Powder (Ireland: Film Productions, 1912)
The Boys at Play at the Royal Hibernian School (Britain: A. D. Thomas, 1901)
Britannia's Message (Ireland: General Film Supply, 1914; dir. Norman Whitten)
Bunny Blarneyed (United States: Vitagraph, 1912; dir. Larry Trimble)
The Casey Millions (Ireland: Irish Photo-Plays, 1922; dir. John MacDonagh)
A Cattle Drive in County Galway (Britain: R. W. Paul, 1908; 275 ft)
Chaplin Competition Film (Ireland: McEvoy, 1915)
Come Back to Erin (United States: Gene Gauntier Feature Players, 1914; dir. Sidney Olcott)
Consecration of the Bishop of Limerick (Ireland: General Film Supply, 1918)
Conway, the Kerry Dancer (United States: Gene Gauntier Feature Players, 1913; dir. Sidney Olcott)
Corpus Christi Celebration at Killarney (United States: Kalem, 1911)
Court Laundry Film (Ireland: General Film Supply, 1914; dir. Norman Whitten)
Cruiskeen Lawn (Ireland: Irish Photo-Plays, 1922; dir. John MacDonagh)
The Duke of Connaught Inspecting the Cork Exhibition Buildings (Britain: A. D. Thomas, 1901)

- The Eleventh Hour* (Ireland: Film Company of Ireland, 1916)
The Falls of Doonas (Britain: R. W. Paul, 1908)
Far from Erin's Isle (United States: Kalem, 1912; 1000/1060 ft; dir. Sidney Olcott)
The Fishermaid of Ballydavid (United States: Kalem, 1912; 1000 ft; dir. Sidney Olcott)
Food of Love (Ireland: Film Company of Ireland, 1916; dir. J. M. Kerrigan)
Football Match Between Lansdowne and Trinity (Britain: A. D. Thomas, 1901)
Fun at Finglas Fair (Ireland: McEvoy, 1915; 1000 ft; dir. F.J. McCormick)
Funeral of the Late John Redmond, M.P. (Ireland: General Film Supply, 1918)
A Girl of Glenbeigh (Ireland: Film Company of Ireland, 1917; dir. J. M. Kerrigan)
Gypsies in Ireland, also known as *The Irish Beggar Maid* and *The Vagabonds* (United States: Kalem, 1911)
Hurling Match for Cullen's Challenge Cup (Britain: A. D. Thomas, 1901)
In Ireland – Excursion to Killarney (Britain: Pathé, 1908; 692 ft)
Ireland the Oppressed (United States: Kalem, 1912; dir. Sidney Olcott)
Irish Wives and English Husbands (Britain: Alpha, 1907; dir. Arthur Melbourne-Cooper)
The Irish Honeymoon (United States: Kalem, 1911; 950 ft; dir. Sidney Olcott)
Irish National Pilgrimage to Lourdes (Ireland: General Film Supply, 1913; dir. Norman Whitten)
Irish Sinn Féin Convention (Ireland: General Film Supply, 1917)
The Kerry Gow (United States: Kalem, 1912; 2,770 ft; dir. Sidney Olcott)
Kerry v. Louth, 1913 Gaelic Football Final (Ireland: Irish Animated Picture Company, 1913)
Lobster Catching (Britain: R. W. Paul, 1908; 212 ft)
London to Killarney (Britain: Alpha, 1907; dir. Arthur Melbourne-Cooper)
Losing to Win (United States: Kalem, 1911; dir. Sidney Olcott)
Love in a Fix (Ireland: Irish Film Productions, 1913; 965 ft)
The Mayor from Ireland (United States: Kalem, 1912; 1000/1015 ft; dir. Sidney Olcott)
Matchmaking in Ireland (Ireland: General Film Supply, 1917; dir.

- Norman Whitten)
- The Mayor from Ireland* (United States: Kalem, 1912; 1000/1015 ft; dir. Sidney Olcott)
- Michael Dwyer* (Ireland: Irish Film Productions, 1913; 850 ft)
- Midland Great Western Railway Film* (Ireland: General Film Supply, 1915; dir. Norman Whitten)
- The Miser's Gift* (Ireland: Film Company of Ireland, 1916; dir. J. M. Kerrigan)
- Mr Redmond's Progress Through Cork after His Arrival from America* (Britain: A. D. Thomas, 1901)
- O'Connell Bridge* (Britain: A. D. Thomas, 1901)
- The O'Kalems Visit to Killarney* (United States: Kalem, 1912; 480 ft; dir. Sidney Olcott)
- O'Neil of the Glen* (Ireland: Film Company of Ireland, 1916; 2,572 ft; dir. J. M. Kerrigan)
- The O'Neill* (United States: Kalem, 1912; dir. Sidney Olcott)
- Parade at the Royal Irish Constabulary Depot, Phoenix Park* (July, 1897)
- The Pensioners Leaving Their Dining Hall* (Britain: A. D. Thomas, 1901)
- Picturesque Ireland* (Britain: Gaumont, 1906) – series: *Giant's Causeway* (500 ft), *Tramway Ride Through Belfast* (200 ft), *Railway Ride from Lagilligan to Coleraine* (400 ft)
- Presentation of Medals by His Excellency the Lord Lieutenant to the Irish Hospital Corps* (Britain: A. D. Thomas, 1901)
- Puck Fair Romance* (Ireland: Film Company of Ireland, 1916; dir. J. M. Kerrigan)
- Punching Powder*, also known as *Boxing Powder* (Ireland: Irish Film Productions, 1913)
- The Queen's Visit to Dublin* (Ireland: Lizars, 1900)
- Rafferty's Rise* (Ireland: Film Company of Ireland, 1917; dir. J. M. Kerrigan)
- Ride for a Bride* (Ireland: Irish Film Productions, 1913).
- Rosaleen Dhu* (Ireland: Celtic, 1919; dir. William Powers)
- Running of the Defiance, the Malahide Coach* (July, 1897)
- The Shaughraun* (United States: Kalem, 1912; dir. Sidney Olcott)
- Sinn Féin Review* (Ireland: General Film Supply, 1919; dir. Norman Whitten)
- Sons of John Bull* (Ireland: General Film Supply, 1914)
- South Armagh Election* (Ireland; General Film Supply, 1918)
- Sunday Afternoon in the Phoenix Park* (Britain: A. D. Thomas, 1901)

- Ten Days' Leave* (Ireland: General Film Supply, 1917; 450 ft; dir. Jack Warren)
- A Tram Ride from Kingsbridge Station to the Rotunda* (Britain; A. D. Thomas)
- An Unfair Love Affair* (Ireland: Film Company of Ireland, 1916; dir. J. M. Kerrigan)
- Village Life* (Britain: R. W. Paul, 1908; 345 ft)
- Waterford Election* (Ireland: General Film Supply, 1918)
- When Cromwell Came to Ireland*, also known as *Lady Peggy's Escape* (United States: Kalem, 1913; dir. Sidney Olcott)
- When Love Came to Gavin Burke* (Ireland: Film Company of Ireland, 1917; dir. Fred O'Donovan)
- Wicklow Gold* (Ireland: Irish Photo-Plays, 1922; dir. John MacDonagh)
- Widow Malone* (Ireland: Film Company of Ireland, 1916; dir. J. M. Kerrigan)
- Willie Scouts While Jessie Pouts* (Ireland: Celtic, 1918; dir. William Power)
- With Rod and Fly / Salmon Fishing* (Britain: R. W. Paul, 1908; 310 ft)
- Willie Scouts While Jessie Pouts* (Ireland: Celtic, 1918; dir. William Power)
- The Wives of Jamestown* (United States: Kalem, 1913; dir. Sidney Olcott)
- The Wolfe Tone Commemoration* (Ireland: Irish Animated Picture Company, 1913 and 1914)
- Wives of Jamestown* (United States: Kalem, 1913; dir. Sidney Olcott)
- Woman's Wit* (Ireland: Film Company of Ireland, 1916; dir. J. M. Kerrigan)
- The Workmen Leaving Inchicore Railway Works* (Britain: A. D. Thomas, 1901)

OTHER FILMS DISCUSSED

- The Adventures of Terence O'Rourke* (United States: Trans-Atlantic, 1916)
- Among the Deep Sea Fishermen* (Britain: Warwick, 1901) – series, including *Cricket Match at Sea* and *Sports on a North Sea Fishing Smack*
- Arizona Bill* (United States: Kalem, 1911)
- Arrivée d'un train en gare à La Ciotat* (France: Lumière, 1895)
- L'Arroseur arrosé* (France: Lumière, 1895)

- The Banshee* (United States: Kay-Bee, 1913; 1,975 ft; dir. Raymond B. West)
- Battle Hymn of the Republic, or In Washington D.C. 1861* (United States: Vitagraph, 1911; dir. Larry Trimble)
- The Big Swallow* (Britain: Williamson's Kinematograph Co., 1901)
- Bird's Eye View of Paris* (Britain: Charles Urban Trading Company, 1910)
- The Birth of a Nation* (United States: Epoch, 1915; dir. D. W. Griffith)
- Boer War Films (1900–1) – Shown March 1900: *Battles of Spion Kop, Modder River and Nicholson Nek; Cape Street, Port Elizabeth; The Roslin Castle Conveying Consignments of Troops to the War; The 'Fighting Fifth' Digging Trenches at Estcourt; A Skirmish with the Artillery Outside Ladysmith; The Lancers at the Modder River; Bridging the Tugela; Watering the Artillery and Transport Mules; The Ambulance at Work.* Shown April 1900: *Relief of Kimberley*
- The Burns-Palmer Fight* (Britain, 1908)
- A Christmas Carol* (c.1901)
- The Christmas Dream*; English title of *Le Rêve de Noël* (France: Star, 1900; dir. Georges Méliès)
- Christus* (Italy: Cines, 1914; dir. Giulio Antamoro)
- Cock Fight* (United States: Edison, 1894; ph. William Kennedy Laurie Dickson)
- Cologne: Sortie de la Cathédrale* (France: Lumière, 1896; ph. Charles Moisson)
- The Corbett-Fitzsimmons Fight* (United States: Veriscope Company, 1897)
- Corpus Christi Procession in Madrid* (c.1901)
- The Countryman and the Cinematograph* (Britain: R. W. Paul, 1901; dir. Robert Paul)
- Le Débarquement du Congrès de Photographie à Lyon* (France: Lumière, 1895)
- A Difficult Problem* (c.1908)
- Domausgang in Trier* (Germany, 1904; ph. probably Peter Marzen)
- Dumb Sagacity* (Britain: Hepworth, 1907; dir. Lewin FitzHamon)
- The European Rest Cure* (United States: Edison 1904; dir. Edwin S. Porter)
- Fire Rescue Scene* (United States: Edison, 1894)
- For the Wearing of the Green* (United States: Domino, 1914)
- From Dusk to Dawn* (United States, 1913; dir. Frank Wolfe)
- From the Manger to the Cross* (United States: Kalem, 1912; dir. Sidney Olcott)
- Funeral of President M'Kinley* (United States, 1901)

- A Gambler's Wife* (Britain: Graphic, 1908)
The Horse that Ate the Baby (c.1908)
In the Shadow of a Throne (United States: Powers, 1913)
Intolerance (United States: Triangle, 1916; dir. D. W. Griffith)
Irish Jig (Britain: Levi, Jones & Co., 1898; 70 ft)
The Island of Desire, (United States: Fox, 1917; dir. Otis Turner)
Joan of Arc; English title of *Jeanne d'Arc* (France: Star, 1899; dir. Georges Méliès)
Johnson-Jeffries Fight (United States: Moving Picture Patents Company, 1910; dir. J. Stuart Blackton)
Justice (Britain: Ideal, 1917; dir. Maurice Elvey)
Kidnapped by Gypsies; probably *Stolen by Gypsies* (United States: Edison, 1905; dir. Wallace McCutcheon)
Kruger's Dream of Empire (Britain: R. W. Paul, 1900)
Life of a Cowboy (United States: Edison, 1906; dir. Edwin Porter)
The Lion's Bride (United States: Vitagraph, 1913)
Lost in the Eternal City / A Story of Rome (c.1917)
Lumber Camp (c.1907)
Kruger's Dream of Empire (Britain: R. W. Paul, 1900)
Making a Living (United States: Keystone, 1914; dir. Henry Lehrman)
La Mer (France: Lumière, 1895)
A Modern Taming of the Shrew; British title of *The Iron Strain* (United States: New York Motion Pictures, 1915; dir. Reginald Baker)
Nero and Agrippina; English title of *Nerone e Agrippina* (Italy: Gloria, 1913; dir. Mario Caserini)
Parentage (United States: Paragon, 1918; dir. Hobart Henley)
Partie d'écarté (France: Lumière, 1895)
The Pawnshop (United States: Lone Star, 1916; dir. Charlie Chaplin)
Quo Vadis? (Italy: Cines, 1913; dir. Enrico Guazzoni)
The Race for the America's Cup (United States: Edison, 1901)
Sandow (United States: Edison, 1894; ph. William Kennedy Laurie Dickson)
Scenes at Manchester Races (Britain, 1901)
Scenes at the Grand National (c.1908)
The Short-Sighted Cyclist (France: Éclipse, 1907)
Sortie d'usine (France: Lumière, 1895–7)
The Soul of New York (United States: Fox, 1917)
The Story of the Kelly Gang (Australia: Tait, 1906; dir. Charles Tait)
Tally-Ho (Britain: Gibbons Bio-Tableaux, 1901)
Teddy at the Throttle (United States: Keystone, 1917; dir. Clarence G. Badger)

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Toils and Perils of Deep-Sea Fishing Off the Newfoundland Coast
(c.1901)

Traffic in Souls (United States: Universal, 1913; dir. George Loane
Tucker)

A Trip Through the Canadian Rockies (c.1907)

The Twins and the Bulldog (c.1908)

Uncle Josh at the Moving-Picture Show (United States: Edison, 1902;
dir. Edwin S. Porter)

A Voyage to the Stars (c.1908)

X-Ray Cinematography of Frog's Legs (Britain: John Macintyre, 1897)

The X-Ray Fiend (Britain: G. A. Smith, 1897)

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Irish Tourist
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Kerry Evening Star
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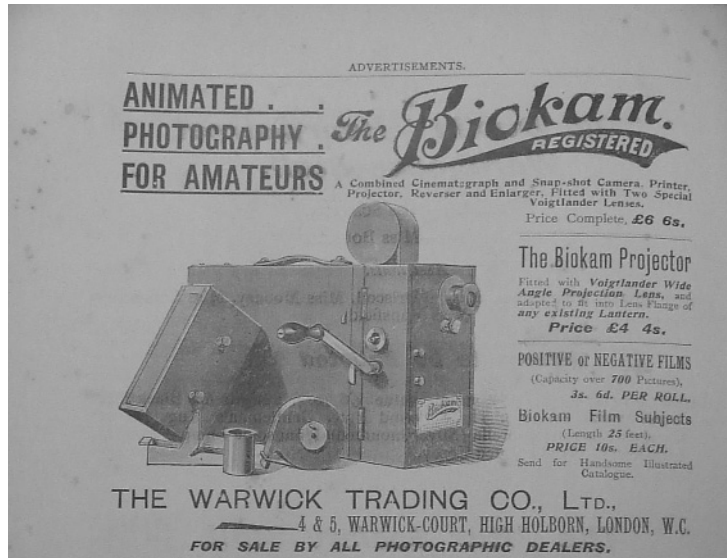
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1. An advertisement for the Biokam, the Warwick Trading Company's home cinematograph, that appeared in the souvenir programme for the Calaroga bazaar, which took place at the Rotunda, Dublin, between 1 and 6 May 1899. Courtesy of Special Collections, University College Dublin, and the Dominican Priory, Dublin.



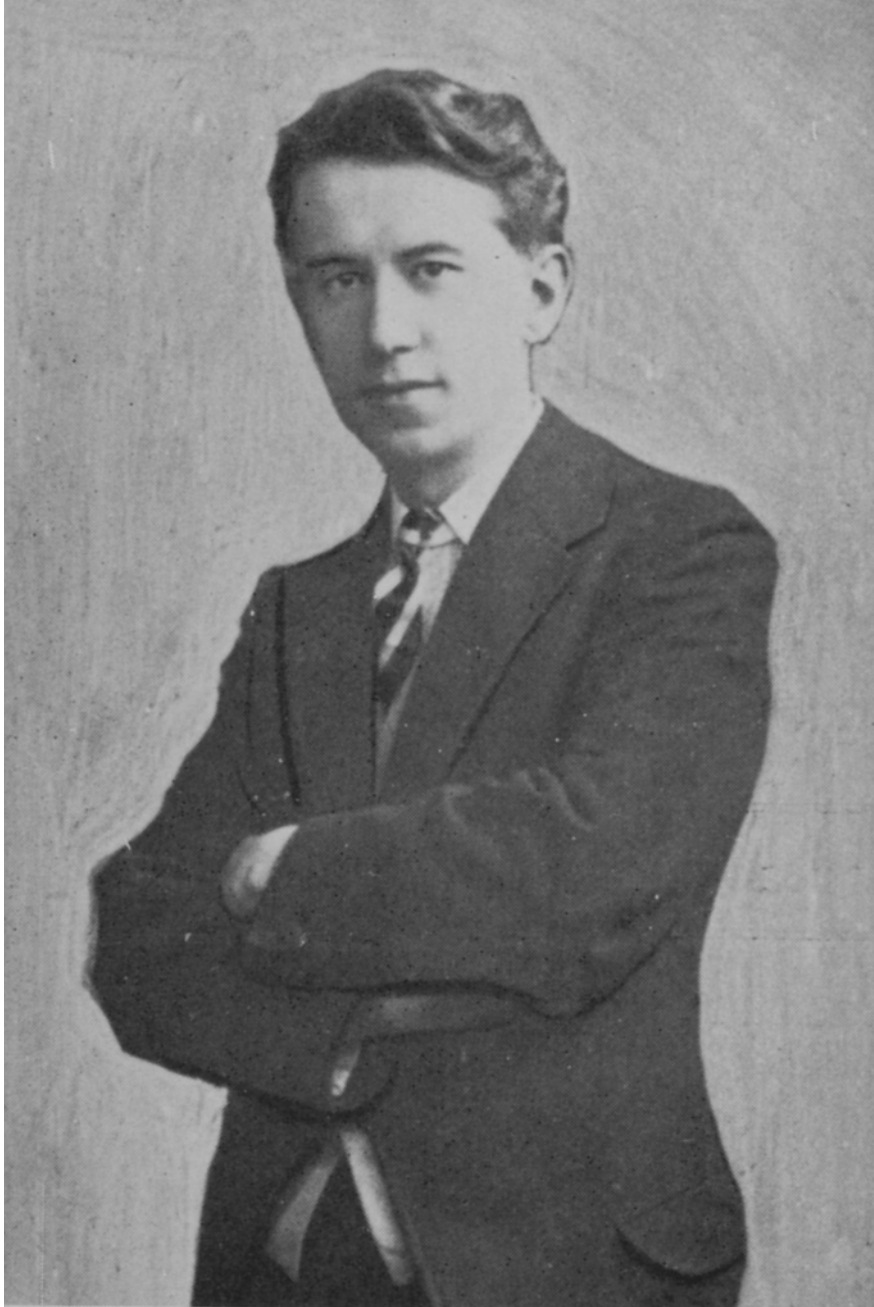
2. Among the sideshows at Toft's fairground, locals and attendees at the races in Tramore, Co. Waterford, in 1901 could see moving pictures. The shows caused some controversy, however, when a correspondent to the *Waterford News* complained that some of the pictures were objectionable. Image courtesy of the National Library of Ireland.



3. Local people from the Killarney area look on as Sidney Olcott directs Jack Clark and Gene Gauntier in *For Ireland's Sake* (United States: Gene Gauntier Feature Players, 1914). Courtesy of the Trustees of Muckcross House (Killarney) Ltd.



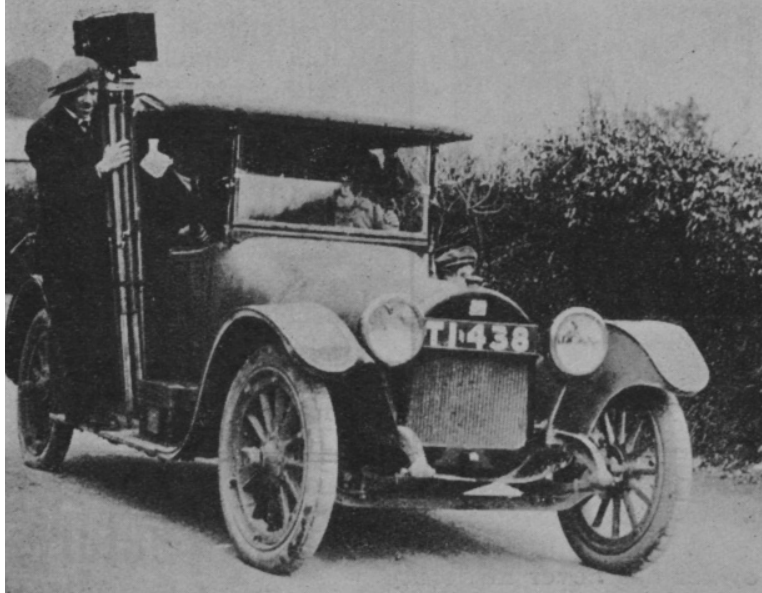
4. This rare image of an early Irish cinema audience shows children attending a show at the temporary cinema erected for the Civic Exhibition that was held in Dublin between 15 July and 31 August 1914. A magic lantern and projectionist are visible in front of the projection booth at the back of the hall. Courtesy of Philip Darling and the Irish Film Archive.



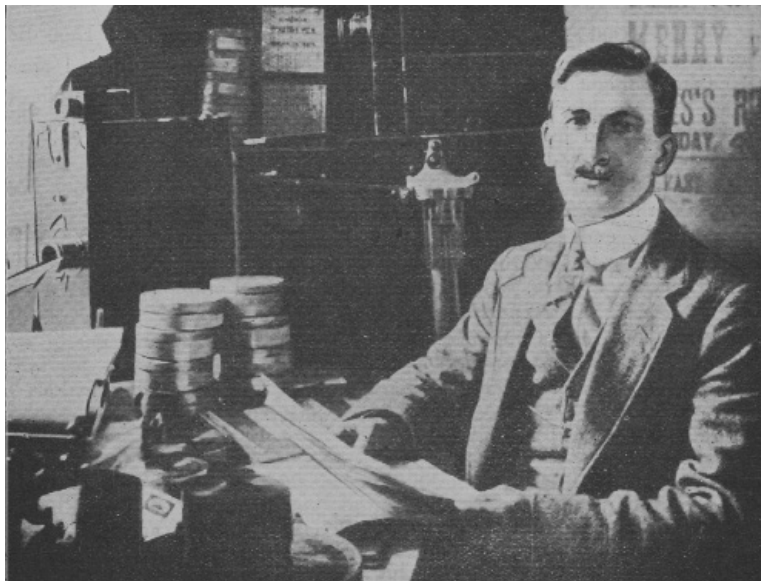
5. FCOI actor and director Fred O'Donovan as he featured in the *Irish Limelight* in May 1917. Image courtesy of the National Library of Ireland.



6. FCOI actor Brian Magowan is presented as a star persona in the June 1917 issue of the *Irish Limelight*. Image courtesy of the National Library of Ireland.



7. This photograph from the *Irish Limelight* in July 1917 accompanies an interview with William Moser, the former Pathé cameraman who shot the FCOI films in 1917, including *Knocknagow*. Image courtesy of the National Library of Ireland.



8. Norman Whitten preparing negatives for America of the *Release of the Sinn Fein Prisoners* (Ireland: GFS, 1917) in his offices at 17 Gt Brunswick (now Pearse) Street, Dublin. He is surrounded in this photograph from the July 1917 issue of the *Irish Limelight* by film cans, a camera on a tripod and a poster for a Gaelic games match at Jones's Road. Image courtesy of the National Library of Ireland.



9. Mat 'the Thrasher' Donovan (Brian Magowan) gets a new coat from the tailor Phil Lahy (Arthur Shields) in FCOI's *Knocknagow*. Courtesy of the Irish Film Archive.



10. Director John MacDonagh (centre), his identity protected by heavy makeup and the pseudonym Richard Sheridan, played the role of Tom the Fool in FCOI's *Willy Reilly and His Colleen Bawn* (Ireland, 1920). Courtesy of the Irish Film Archive.



11. A student of celebrated Czech violinist Otakar Ševčík, Erwin Goldwater played daily solos at the Carlton Cinema Theatre, Dublin, that attracted middle-class patrons. This photograph accompanied his profile in the *Irish Limelight* in May 1917. Image courtesy of the National Library of Ireland.