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CHAPTER NINE

"Shillelah Swing Time"...You'll thrill each time a wild Irishman's skull shatters: Representing Hurling in American Cinema: 1930–1960

SEÁN CROSSON

Sport and the media have become increasingly interconnected over the past hundred years. As Raymond Boyle and Richard Haynes have noted, "Sport and the media...are now integral components of what we often called the entertainment or cultural industries." However, sports films, and particularly sports fiction films, have played a relatively small role in the pantheon of cinema history, such that there is considerable difficulty in defining what exactly a 'sports film' is. As J.H. Wallenfeldt observes in *Sports Movies*, though the sports film is "among the most engaging the cinema has to offer and one of Hollywood's specialties...It isn't easy to define the difference between a sports film and a film with *sports in it*." Wallenfeldt's comments are particularly relevant in the Irish context where it is difficult to identify definitively a distinct genre of Irish sports film *per se*, and indeed few fiction films that feature sport at all, and sill less that feature Gaelic games.

However, Gaelic games have had a place in film, and arguably a role that outweighs the actual minutes of screen time such games occupy. While significant research has been done over the past twenty years on the important role that Gaelic games and their promotion played in the construction and development of Irish nationalism and Irish identity, particularly from the end of the nineteenth century, less commented upon has been how depictions of these games have contributed to representations of Ireland abroad, and indeed, reaffirmed prevailing stereotypes regarding the Irish. This chapter proposes to provide an initial intervention in this area by examining representations of the game of hurling in a number of American productions made between the 1930s and 1960s – including work by seminal Irish-American director John Ford. In particular, I want to argue that these productions – in common with many international productions made in this era and subsequently – have been influenced, or concerned with, a force termed by John Urry as 'the tourist gaze'.

The term 'the tourist gaze' was coined by Urry in his 1990 book of the same name to describe a culturally constructed manner of perceiving a place which informs tourist expectations. For Urry the tourist gaze was 'constructed through difference' and 'in relationship to its opposite, to non-tourist forms of social experience and consciousness'. Furthermore, whereas in commercial cinema, stereotypes play a central role providing 'characters with an almost instant knowability' by 'reducing other landscapes, other peoples, and other values...to a normative paradigm', the tourist gaze is similarly, as Urry continues, 'constructed through signs, and tourism involves the collection of signs'. 'The tourist', Jonathan Culler has also observed, 'is interested in everything as a sign of itself...All over the world the unsung armies of semioticians, the tourists, are fanning out in search of the signs of Frenchness, typical Italian behaviour, exemplary Oriental scenes, typical American throughs, traditional English pubs' or, indeed, typical Irish pastimes, such as Gaelic games.

Of course, Gaelic games are not unique in this respect and John Arundel and Maurice Roche's 1998 study of the relationship between British Rugby League and Sky TV found, similarly that as with the tourism industry, the media sport industry, in general...tends to promote local identities in a way which transforms them from the unreflective 'ways of life' and traditions of local people, into reflexive and organized cultural productions and stagings for outsiders, whether tourists or TV viewers. [Where] this process does not threaten the very existence of cultural forms and ways of life, it certainly raises the problem of their 'authenticity' in their new touristic or mediated guise.'

Ironically, as Gerry Smyth has noted, the search for the 'authentic' has nonetheless been an important determinant of tourism in Ireland, though one 'with a long and troubled career in Irish cultural history.' Hurling in particular, by far the most common sport portrayed in international productions, would seem to have provided an 'authentic' and 'primitive' contrast to the modernity of American sports such as American football, while also apparently containing the violence so
often associated with the Irish. As Rockett, Gibbons and Hill, in Cinema and Ireland, have noted, in terms comparable to John Urry's description of the tourist gaze, 'Whether it be rural backwardness or a marked proclivity for violence, the film-producing nations of the metropolitan centre have been able to find in Ireland a set of characteristics which stand in contrast to the assumed virtues of their own particular culture'. 14 Hurling's setting in rural Ireland, and the apparent violence of the game, seemed to encapsulate both of these elements, and it is these traits that are most often emphasized and exaggerated in descriptions and depictions of the sport in American productions, influenced by the exigencies of the tourist gaze.15

Indeed, in the first American productions to focus on hurling in the 1930s we find a recurring emphasis on the alleged violence associated with the game. The Gaelic Athletic Association, responsible for the administration and promotion of Gaelic games in Ireland, organized annual tours to the US in the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s by the All-Ireland winners in both hurling and Gaelic football to promote the games state-side. These visits would seem to have inspired some American producers to consider hurling in particular as the subject for their work. While both Pathé and Fox Movietone newsreels covered several of the games during these visits, hurling would also appear in a number of short films released in cinemas in the early 1930s. Ted Husing, regarded as the father of sports commentary in the US, 'single handily [sic] establish[ing] the n's and oot's prims and propers of the modern sports broadcast', introduced and narrated two one-reel series, 'Ted Husing's Sports Slants' and 'Sports Thrills', made by the Vitaphone Corporation for Warner Bros, in 1931 and 1932 respectively. The distinctiveness of hurling in particular would seem to have appealed to the producers as, unusually, it was featured in both series, episode No. 4 of 'Husing's Sports Slants' and No. 5 of the 'Sports Thrills' series. However, what most struck the producers about the game is clear from the description they supplied to the Vitaphone Catalogue. Indeed the rather unusual juxtaposition of hurling with moose hunting in the 'Sports Thrills' episode is suggestive in itself. The description provided for the episode makes this suggestion all the more explicit stating simply:

Moose hunting in the mountains of Wyoming. Hunters shown from the time they start off to the time they kill 1200 lb. moose in 10 below weather. Irish game of hurling. One of the roughest competitive games ever played.16

While it is unclear whether Ted Husing's sport series were ever

released in Ireland17 the next American production to feature hurling, the Pete Smith Specialty Hurling (1936), was and would provoke some considerable concern among members of the Gaelic Athletic Association regarding the rather unorthodox manner in which hurling was depicted. Indeed, after the film was shown in cinemas in Dublin and London in late 1937,20 a delegation from the GAA, led by the Ard- Rúnaí (General Secretary) Pádraig Ó Caoinéil, visited the film censor, James Montgomery, to ask that 'objectionable comments' be removed from the film. In the end, according to the minutes of a meeting of the GAA Central council held on the matter on Wednesday 16 March 1938, 'The Censor explained [to the delegation] that he had no power under the Act to cut the film but that the distributors had agreed to cut out the objectionable parts'.21

The director of Hurling, David Miller – probably best known as the director of the Marx Brothers' 1949 feature Love Happy – was apparently inspired to make the short, according to an article in the Connacht Tribune of August 1936, following his attendance at the Limerick versus New York hurling game played in Yankee Stadium in May 1936.22 The short film was produced by Pete Smith who also provided the narration, as part of the Pete Smith Specialties series of short films produced for MGM studios from 1931 to 1955. These black and white one reel novelty shorts were very popular during their run, each no more than eleven minutes in length (Hurling is ten minutes long), and characterized by Pete Smith's own humorous and 'rather sarcastic narration'.23 This ironic comic voice is also apparent in surviving promotional material relating to the film, where the potential for serious injury for players of hurling is most emphasized. In a surviving press sheet for Hurling sent out to exhibitors in the US,24 recipients were advised on how to 'sell the Irish' through the use of 'face mallets' resembling, we are told, the 'swinging shillalahs [used in hurling apparently] [which] sock every part of the players' anatomy from head to shins'. This feature of the game is suggested to promoters as a great advertising opportunity as 'The remedy calls for all manner of linitments, abrasives, bandages etc. – and here is your perfect opportunity for interesting window and ad tie-up with drug stores!' Indeed, a prominent feature of the press sheet is its contrasting of hurling with the implied more civilized games in the US, including ice hockey, la Crosse25 and football – presumably American – all of which are mentioned. Unlike these games, however, 'hurling', we are told, 'is perhaps the roughest outdoor sport of them all where players... don't deign to reflect on their Irish manhood by donning padded helmets or similar
MacNessa reigned as Ard Ri o’ Ireland, “Shillalah Swing Time” ... You’ll thrill each time a wild Irishman’s skull shatters”, and Science and Sock ... Pete Smith reveals in hurling a scientific form of mass murder.

Featured in the film are Irish-American teams ‘the New York Selected’ and ‘the Cork Fifteen’, and it was filmed at Baker’s Field, Columbia University in New York. The narrative begins innocently enough with a selection of shots demonstrating how the game of hurling is played (see Figure 2).

However, it is the depiction of the game itself, where a recurring focus is on the potential for injury, and Smith’s own ironic narration that was no doubt most problematic for GAA members. The only player identified is a certain ‘Low Gear’ O'Toole, who as the press sheet relates ‘enters the scene as the second half begins’ but is the only one to survive the mayhem ‘or [as] the contest reaches a crashing climax, no member of either team remains to score the winning goal. They are all laid out as Chopin’s Funeral March sounds a sad accompaniment’ (See Figure 3). It was this scene in particular that would appear to have been most problematic for members of the GAA executive and was apparently deleted by distributors from screenings in Ireland.26

Irish-America provided both the participants in, and no doubt a large segment of the hoped-for audience, for films such as Hurling. The presence of this huge ethnic community in the United States was an important factor in the popularity of Irish-themed subject matter in American productions. As Martin McLoone has noted, Irish-American filmmakers, such as John Ford, were also engaged in a project of exploiting the performative potential of Irish stereotypes in film while contributing to the assimilation of Irish-America into mainstream American life.27 However, as the reactions of the GAA to Hurling suggest, the performative dimension of films such as Ford’s The Quiet

sissy safeguards’ and ‘the game does not stop when players are disabled’. The violence of hurling – described as ‘Ireland’s Athletic Assault and Battery’ – is further underlined in the promotional posters and advertising materials (Figure 1) used to promote the film, which place particular emphasis on its violence and the strong possibility of serious physical injury for any would-be players.

Furthermore, catchlines suggested to exhibitors to promote the film include ‘Doctor’s Delight … The dizziest game since Connor

Figure 1: A promotional poster and two advertising materials for David Millar’s Hurling (1936).
Men or The Rising of the Moon was not always recognized by audiences in Ireland. As Arjun Appadurai has noted in his discussion of the increasing "deterioritization" of the planet, the process through which such diasporic communities have emerged, while such
deterioritization creates new markets for film companies ... the homeland is partly inverted, existing only in the imagination of the
deteriorititized groups, and it can sometimes become so fantastic
and one-sided that it provides the fuel for new ethnic conflicts.  

This 'fantastic and one-sided' perspective might be compared to the
tourist gaze both in its distance from life or culture in Ireland and is
concern with contrasting presumptions regarding American culture
with the exaggerated depictions of Ireland found in some American
films. While one is hesitant to compare the work of a filmmaker of the
stature of John Ford with a film such as Hurling, nonetheless it is
notable that were referred to in Ford's films, hurling also seems
inevitably to precede or suggest an occasion of violence.  
With regard to the tourist gaze, Ford's own comments indicate at least an
awareness of the contribution of his work to tourism in Ireland, 18 while, as
Luke Gibbons has noted, Ford's most popular Irish-themed film, The
Quiet Man, provided a template for Bord Fáilte's promotion of
Ireland from its establishment in 1952, the year of The Quiet Man's
release.  
While we don't actually witness a game of hurling in The
Quiet Man, significantly the mere mention of the game, during a
discourse between the engine driver, Costello (Eric Gorman), the
train guard, Moloney (Joseph O'Dea) and the stationmaster, Hugh Bailey
(Nevan O'Leary), seems to inspire violence in those discussing it:

Costello (from the train engine): Wel, we're off.

Hugh Bailey (shaking a pocket watch): And might I suggest Mr.
Costello, the train already being four and a half hours late ... 

Costello: Is it my fault, Mr. Bailey, that there's a hurling match at
Ballygar and that the champions of all-Ireland are playing ...

Moloney (pointing his flag in a threatening manner at Bailey): If
you know your country's history as well as you claim to know it,
Mr. Bailey, you'd know that the Mayo hurlers haven't been beaten
west of the Shannon or the last twenty-two years ... 

(May Craig, described in the credits as 'Fishwoman with basket
at station' interjects here and shouts 'true for you Mr.
Moloney' only to be cut off by Bailey.)

Bailey: That's a lie, that's a lie Costello!

(At this point there is silence as Costello removes his hat, followed
by Moloney, who also removes his glasses. Bailey responds by
removing his hat, and begins to remove his jacket for the
impending flight only for proceedings to be interrupted by the arrival
of Sean Thornton to bring his wife Mary Kate from the train.)

A common motif in representations of Ireland is its positioning as
a primitive traditional society. As Gerry Smyth has noted:

One of the discursive mechanisms through which this effect is
realised is the 'chronochrome', described by Joep Leerssen (after
Bakhtin) as a place with an uneven distribution of time-passage,
where time is apt to slow down and come to a standstill at the
periphery...'' What Leerssen is referring to here is the impression
that not only is the island physically removed from 'real' life, but
also that time functions differently there.  

For Ford's next Irish-themed film, The Rising of the Moon, time did
indeed appear to function quite differently in Ireland, not just through
the film's depiction of the country as a traditional society, emphasized
in the characters and stories chosen for this three-part work called
Three Leaves of a Shamrock during production and on release in the
United States, but equally in the difficulty this society appears to have
in adapting to modernity. This includes, in the central segment 'A
Minute's Wait', based on a one act Abbey Theatre play by Michael J.
McHugh, the Irish approach to time-keeping whereby, in rural Ireland,
time, here represented by the Ballyscran to Dungarv train, could wait
for everything from prize goats to Bishop's dinners, and, in one of the
film's most notorious sequences, the local victorious hurling team.
Though a commercial failure on release in 1957, *The Rising of the Moon* was important as part of Ford’s ongoing attempts to promote the establishment of an Irish film industry that would partly encourage others to set up Ireland’s first designated film studios at Ardmore the following year. In terms of representations of hurling, however, the film included one of the most controversial depictions that resulted in considerable press coverage during the film’s production and a staunch defence of the film and Ford’s work by *Irish Times* columnist Myles na Gopaleen.

‘A Minute’s Wait’ was shot in Kilkee, Co. Clare. As Joseph McBride has observed, the segment reinforces the insidious notion of Ireland as a backward island filled with lousy incompetents who haven’t yet made it into the twentieth century. Ford’s use of an old-fashioned train with an engine built in 1886 was deliberately anachronistic, provoking a complaint from the director of the West Cork Railway who could not understand why Ford refused a modern train with a diesel engine. ‘He’ll find out when the tourists come over next summer’, Ford grumbled in what [Frank S.] Nugent [the film’s scriptwriter] took as an allusion to the tourist craze for jaunting carts provoked by *The Quiet Man*.\(^4\)

Myles na Gopaleen – probably better known today as Fann O’Brien, the acclaimed author of the novels, *At Swim Two Birds* (1939) and *The Third Policeman* (1967), was an occasional commentator on cinema and was particularly upset by reactions to *The Rising of the Moon* among members of the GAA, even before the shooting of the film was complete. On Tuesday 1st May 1956, both *The Irish Press* and *Irish Independent* reported the shooting of a scene of hurlers returning victorious from a game, with some ‘on stretchers’, after ‘in encounter which’, the *Independent* correspondent related ‘from the appearance of the players, must have been bloody and very rough, and hardly played according to the rules of the Gaelic Athletic Association’.\(^5\) Unsurprisingly, the GAA responded with some alarm to the reports the following day with a statement, published in both papers, from the General Secretary Pádraig Ó Caoimh declaring that he was ‘deeply concerned lest there should be any substance in this report’. The statement went on to note that Ó Caoimh had been ‘in touch with Lord Killanin, one of the directors of Four Provinces Productions [the production company behind the film]. He has assured me that the report referred to is exaggerated and completely out of context; that there are no stretcher-carrying scenes, and that in fact there is nothing offensive to our national tradition in this film’.\(^6\) The controversy rumbled on nonetheless and by Friday of that week it was on the front page of the *Irish Times*, where it was announced that the shooting of the scenes ‘resulted in an official deputation [consisting of Rev John Corry C.C., chairman and Mr. Sean O’Connor, treasurer] from the Clare County Board of the GAA making a strong protest yesterday in Kilkee to Lord Killanin’. A statement was issued by the board which said it was a matter of ‘grave concern to the GAA that the national game of hurling should, or would, appear to be held up to ridicule ... the matter of 15 players returning home all suffering injuries would be calculated to give the impression that instead of a national sporting game that they were casualties returning to a clearing station at a battlefield’. While noting that such violent incidents and injuries were extremely rare in GAA games, ‘Father Corry pointed out that the scene as depicted was completely derogatory to the Gaels of Ireland and to the hurlers in particular. The scene if placed on the screen as filmed would bring the association into disrepute and would be calculated to hold up the national game to ridicule both at home and abroad’.

These final remarks were quoted at length by Myles na Gopaleen some weeks later while referring to what he called the ‘farcical drool emitted by the GAA’. Na Gopaleen, apparently at that time a regular reader of the provincial papers, ‘the only true mirrors’ he observed ‘of Ireland as she is’, was quoting the Clare County Board’s statement not from the *Irish Times* but from *The Clare Champion*. Na Gopaleen went on to note a report on the same page of the *Champion* of a local game between Run and St Josephs where the game was described as ‘probably one of the worst exhibitions of bad sportsmanship ever seen on a Gaelic field’. There was ‘literally a procession to the Co. hospital from the match’, the report continued, while ‘One, a spectator from Ennis, had survived the war in Korea but he almost met his waterloo in Cusack Park’.\(^7\) Na Gopaleen was dismissive of the GAA’s criticisms of the film and while extolling the virtues of Ford (apparently a close friend, the article suggests), remarked that: ‘To many people, the possibility of vital injury is part of the attraction of hard games ... The non-belligerent spectators regard absence of such occurrences as an attempt to defraud them. They have paid their two bobs to see melia murder. Failure to present it is, they feel, low trickery’.

It would appear that Na Gopaleen, a commentator whose own contributions to the *Irish Times* were often tour de force performances in
themselves, including his celebrated moniker, "admired the performative elements within Ford's work while also being highly critical of the hypocrisy he sensed in the reactions of the GAA. Whether or not one agrees with his interpretation of supporters' expectations at hurling matches, and despite Lord Killanin's assurances, the scenes remain in the film, including images of several hurlers being carried on stretchers to the train after successfully winning their match. Indeed, it seems the reactions of the GAA were not taken seriously among those involved in the production. Records of correspondences with Lord Killanin held in the Lord Killanin Collection in the Irish Film Institute reveal that the film's producers collected newspaper clippings and correspondences, both for and against the depiction, and would appear to have been more amused than alarmed by the response (see Figure 4).

Anita Sharp Bolster, who appears in 'A Minute's Wait' as the recently wed English wife, could recall the arrival at the wrap party of 'Ford, [and] Lord Killanin ... doing a very funny turn in the hurling boys' jerseys.' Furthermore, Ford appeared in a small part in an Abbey Theatre Irish language play shortly after the film's production in which a 'short passage of Gaelic dialogue was improvised for him.' When asked if he was going back to Spiddal' (the birthplace of his parents) he said he was not as he was 'afraid of the GAA.'

Whether, as Ford seemed to suggest, film had a significant impact on tourist numbers coming to Ireland in the 1950s is hard to quantify. What is clear is that the numbers did increase as the 1930s progressed and four days before the Irish premiere of the next film considered here, the Justin Herman directed Three Kisses (1955) at the Capitol theatre in Dublin on 18 July 1956, the Irish Times carried a front page headline declaring 'Tourist Industry Has Prospects of Record Year'. Since the beginning of the summer, the report continued, '[Aer Lingus, British railways, and the British and Irish Steam Packet Co.] have been transporting the biggest number of holiday-makers to this country in their history.'

The Oscar-nominated Three Kisses, like the Pete Smith Speciality Hurling, was released – along with a further Paramount short on the Irish bloodstock industry Champion Irish Thoroughbreds (1955) – as an opener for a train feature, this time as part of the Paramount top- per series, running for two weeks in Ireland as support for the Alvin Ganzer directed The Leather Saint (1955). The film features a young hurler, Colin Gallagher, narrator of the film, who progresses from playing with his local team in the fictional rural Cork village of Ballykilly to training with the senior Cork team and eventually playing in the Munster championship final. Gallagher's sporting prowess is partly motivated, the film suggests, by his quest for three kisses from the girl he loves, thus giving the film its title, each a reward for his improving fortunes on the playing field.

Three Kisses is a film that one might quite easily dismiss as yet another exploitative depiction of Ireland using hurling for local colour. It is unquestionably a patronizing and problematic depiction of the country. Yet, it is a considerably more interesting work than this description might suggest, not least because it is one of the first examples of the Gaelic Athletic Association and Bord Fáilte together facilitating a major American studio to produce a fictional work on Gaelic games primarily for international consumption. One commentator (encouraged by the success of the first indigenous sound feature, Tom Cooper's The Dawn (1937)) wrote in 1938 regarding the Pete Smith Speciality Hurling that instead of ridicule [hurling] could be turned into propaganda, as is the case with foreign games. Now that we can turn out films comparable with the best, it should not be a matter of much difficulty to make a picture illustrating how Hurling should be properly played. We have hurlers without peer and capable directors. Such a film would delight the heart of any boy with Irish blood in his veins and fill him with an urge to emulate the feats of heroes, ancient and modern.'
It would appear that *Three Kisses* partly emerged from concerns such as those expressed in this article. In terms of the GAA’s involvement, as well as featuring several scenes from hurling games in the Munster Championship, including the 1955 Munster semi-final between Cork and Clare, the film also includes appearances by the legendary Cork manager, Jim ‘Tough’ Barry, most of the great all-Ireland winning Cork team of the 1950s in training (including Vincy Toomey, Paddy Barry, Sean O’Brien, John Lyons, Joe Harrington, Mick Cashman, Jimmy Brohan and Christy O’Shea). The GAA General Secretary Pádraig Ó Caomhóin in attendance at an underage hurling game in Fermoy and several other prominent hurling figures from Cork in the 1950s. With regard to Bord Fáilte’s involvement, newspaper reports of the Irish premiere of *Three Kisses* – which was also the Irish premiere of *Champion Irish Thoroughbreds* – describe the film as having been made with the co-operation of the Bord and give considerable space to the comments of the Bord’s then Director General, T.J. O’Driscoll, who introduced the film to audiences on the night. According to the *Irish Times*, O’Driscoll welcomed the growing interest among foreign film companies in making films in Ireland, pointing out that ‘filmmaking was a costly business which the board could not attempt on its slender budget, in the ordinary course of events. For that reason it was more than grateful to Paramount for making these films and distributing them throughout the world.’ In the *Irish Independent*, under the headline: ‘Films and the Irish Tourist Industry’, the paper’s film correspondent also quoted O’Driscoll’s remark that: ‘Films are one of the best methods of publicising the tourist industry of this country.’

Film reviews also recognized the tourist potential of the work. Benedict Kiely in the *Irish Press*, under a headline ‘The Tourists and the Screen’ remarked of *Three Kisses* and *Champion Irish Thoroughbreds* that even with their defects from our point of view, they could get people interested in Ireland ... we should always remember that films like these documentaries and *The Quiet Man*, are meant not for us but for an American public. *The Quiet Man* I’m told was a great help to the tourist trade; and why not indeed. Who wouldn’t like to spend a holiday in a land of green fields, sunshine, horse-racing, singing, fighting, boozing and romance?

Given the differing concerns of each of the organizations involved, however, it is no surprising that the finished film is more remarkable for the tension it reveals between an attempt to depict indigenous culture authentically and engage a diverse international audience, than for the quality of either the sport depicted or film produced. The film, nonetheless, features an intriguing encounter between the traditional and the modern – young Gallagher’s village of Ballykilly, for example, is depicted as an idyllic pastoral and pre-modern space, complete with a familiar horse and cart and village pump for running water. However, his elevation to the senior Cork team is described as being picked to represent the ‘city’ rather than the County, and the city itself is depicted as ‘the mighty metropolis ... with its busy vehicular traffic and its fine buildings of stone and brick’. However, there is in all of this a patronizing tone throughout where the mere mention of someone having been to the US, for example, is considered a remarkable achievement by the narrator, ostensibly young Gallagher himself. Indeed, the film is narrated in an extraordinary accent, which suggests the tension between a wish to present the authentic Irish voice but also one that remains accessible to an American audience. And it is an American audience that is the primary concern here, for all those involved in the production.

A recurring feature of representations of hurling, as apparent in the films I have mentioned, is the bewilderment of those who encounter it from afar at the apparent irrationality of the sport and its potential for violence. A strong focus is placed in *Three Kisses*, therefore, on illustrating the rationale behind the game, emphasizing its rules, and downplaying the potential for injury. However, it is a less than convincing riposte to previous representations. As the cinema correspondent of the *Irish Times* remarked: ‘the soundtrack informs us that “although you may suffer a fracture of a leg or a concussion of the brain, ... [hurling] is not considered a rough sport – at least, not by us Irish.”’ ‘This, the indignant correspondent continues, “is certainly nice to know!”’

To conclude, the focus of filmmakers such as Miller, Ford and Herman on audiences in America, influenced by the exigencies of the tourist gaze, has had considerable consequences for the integrity of the portrayal of a Gaelic sport such as hurling. Indeed, hurling would seem to have provided a useful motif for filmmakers outside of Ireland encapsulating prevailing stereotypes regarding the Irish, including their proclivity for violence. However, what is remarkable for those who follow the sport of hurling is not so much the potential for injury but rather the sophistication and skill levels involved in the game, aspects almost entirely absent from these foreign depictions. Even in a film such as *Three Kisses*, which appears at least partly an attempt to correct these perceptions, the complicated address involved in such a
Shillalah Suing Time

15. This essay is not suggesting that the game of hurling cannot involve occasions of violence. However, violence is in no part of the sport than any other physical contact team game, and indeed, as Patrick McDevitt notes, right from the codification of Gaelic games in the late 1880s, the GAA sought to encourage 'scientific play' by reducing the number of players per team from twenty-one in the beginning to fifteen by 1913 and working to 'heighten the value of skillful, thoughtful and intelligent and to lessen the use of brute force.' Patrick F. McDevitt, 'Masculine Catholism: Nationalism: Masculinity and Violence in the Formation of a New National Identity in Ireland,' in Gender & History, 9, 2 (August 1997), p.276. Gaelic games commentators in the formative years of the GAA stressed the need for discipline in games, with one observer identifying the need for proper control as the first and most important task of the GAA's Fr. Devlin, Our National Sports (Dublin: M.H. Gill & Son, 1933), p.12. Furthermore, McDevitt argues that 'Gaelic codes went further than other contact sports at the time in curbing violence', by legislating for sending off players for retaliation and the replacement of injured players. In rugby, by contrast, players were expected to 'play hard' and to play through the pain of injury. Gaelic games, he adds, 'not only allowed but stressed compassion for others; men must play unharmed by injury yet receive prompt and proper treatment if injuries occur.' McDevitt, 'Masculine Catholism', p.276.

16. Fox, Morrison and O'Reilly both covered the 1956 challenge game between all-Ireland hurling champions Limerick and New York as well as several other visits by Irish teams to the US. See https://www.courier.ie for more information on matches covered and sources for surviving dips.


19. While there are no precise reports of Husting's shorts being screened in cinemas in Ireland, there are several mentions of 'Viparose Varieties' being screened in the early 1930s - The Irish Times, 2 February 1931, p.4; The Irish Times, 20 April 1931, p.4. As Richard Ward has noted: At the beginning of the 1930s, practically all Warner-Metro shorts were under the umbrella title 'Viparose Varieties', so it is possible that these shorts were screened in Ireland though they would appear to have attracted little commentary in the press. Richard Ward, 'Extra Added Attractions: The Short Subjects of MGM,' Warner Brothers and Universal, Media History, 3, 3 (2003), p.226.

20. That the race records as recorded in shorts exhibited are few and little coverage was given to them in the media. However, according to the Irish Census of 1936, notes that in the record of Ream's Census (No. 12367), held in the National Archives of Ireland, Hurling was covered on 12 November 1937 so one would presume it was released shortly thereafter.

21. Minutes of the Meeting of the Central Council of Gaelic Athletic Association, held at Croke House on Thursday, 2 February 1938, at 8.30 p.m., at which Mr. R. O'Reilly presided. Held in the Gaelic Museum, Dublin. I want to acknowledge the assistance of Idéal McMillan in finding information, including these minutes, relating to the relations of the GAA to this film.

22. Dunwoody Bridge, special correspondent, 'Our American Letter,' Ireland's Ancient Game, Hurling Film to be Made,' Dunwoody Bridge, 1 August 1936, p.6.

23. Ward, 'Extra Added Attractions,' p.225. Even the pioneering British documentarian John Grierson commented: 'the very quietest beauty and very great skill of exposition... in the sports shorts from Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer... they have brought to the popular feature a pitch undreamed of, and even impossible in the days of the magic lantern.' John Grierson, 'First Principles of Documentaries', (1933) in Gelscoe Fowler (ed.), The European Cinema Reader (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), p.40.

24. Press sheet with the author. I want to acknowledge the kind assistance of collector Paul Balbi in supplying me with a copy of the press sheet.

25. I realize that this was a more common reference in the last decade, but this is the spelling given on the press sheet.

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Athletic Association, held at Crois House on Saturday, 12 February 1998, at 8.30 p.m. at which Mr. R. O'Neill presided. Held in the Gothic Museum, Dublin.  
28. Appadurai is describing here the process through which the old stabilities of place and people are more and more 'shot through with ... the weed of human motion, a more persons and groups deal with the realities of having to move, or fantasies of wanting to move', Anir Appadurai, Modernity at Large (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), p.33.  
29. Ibid., p.49.  
30. While both The Quiet Man and The Quoing of the Moor are discussed in this chapter, another example of the juxtaposition of hurting and violence is also found in Ford and Jack Cardiff's Young Cassidy (1965).  
40. The name Flann O'Brien is itself a pseudonym for the author, born Brian O'Nialldin in 1911 in Tyrone.  
41. This cartoon was published in the June edition of Dublin Opinion Magazine, 1956, p.106. Included in the Lord Killian Collection in the Irish Film Institute. I want to thank Charles Bar for bringing this collection to my attention and providing me with copies of materials from it including this cartoon.  
42. Arto, Sharp Bolster, 'Shamrocks and Moons "Goodbye and Safe Home now"', Irish Independent, 30 April 1957, p.7.  
43. Anonymous, 'Mystery Abbey extra was - John Ford!', Evening Press, 8 May 1956. Included in the Lord Killian Collection in the Irish Film Institute.  
44. I want to thank Sinead O'Flynn in the Irish Film Archive for bringing this film to my attention and her ongoing help with my research into representations of Irish sport in film.  
45. 'Tourist Industry Has Prospects of Record Year', Irish Times, 14 July 1956, p.1.  
46. The Paramount 'Topper' series began in 1951 and would last for six years, by which time shorts were being phased out by all the majors. Altogether thirty-six were made in the series, with quite a few, such as The Littles, Expert on Football (1951), Touchdown Highlights (1954) and the final film Herman Hickman's Football Review (1957), taking sport as their theme. All, including Three Kisses - released in the US on 7 October 1955 - were directed by Justin Herman. Philadelphia-born Herman, who was also a cartoonist and contributor of short stories to The New Yorker, worked as a 'writer, producer and director of short films at Paramount ... from the late 1930s until the mid-1950s and altogether made 118 shorts, two of which, Roller Derby Girl (1949) and Three Kisses, were nominated for Academy Awards.'Justin B. Herman Dead at 76, Writer and Producer of Films', The New York Times 10 December 1983, http://query.nytimes.com/s/t/t/all?query=JC04F33E1D39F53A25751C1A96294260&sec=&p&apiwanted=prn, (accessed 10 June 2007).  
47. Even though the film was described in the press on its release as a 'documentary', the subject matter itself is clearly fictionalised, as the above narrative summary indicates.  
49. This information was kindly supplied to the author in an interview with Janny Brohan, one of the Cork players depicted in the film.  

RELIGION AND MYTH