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CHAPTER NINE

"'Shillalah Swing Time" ... You'll thrill each time a wild Irishman's skull shatters': Representing Hurling in American Cinema: 1930–1960[1]

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'.[2] 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.[3] 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*'.[4] 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 still 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,[5] 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'.[6] Furthermore, whereas in commercial cinema, stereotypes play a central role providing 'characters with an almost instant knowability'[7] by 'reducing other landscapes, other peoples, and other values ... to a normative paradigm',[8] the tourist gaze is similarly, as Urry continues, 'constructed through signs, and tourism involves the collection of signs'.[9] '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 thruways, traditional English pubs'[10] 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 unreflected '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.[11]

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'.[12] Hurling in particular, by far the most common sport portrayed in international productions, would seem to have provided an authentic and 'primitive'[13] 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 stateside. 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,[16] 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 in's and out's, prims and propers of the modern sports broadcaster',[17] 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.[18]

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

released in Ireland,[19] 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 Caoimh, 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 *Connaught 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 humourous 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 'fake 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 liniments, 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 Crosse[25] 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

Figure 1. A promotional poster and two advertising materials for David Miller's *Hurling* (1936).

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

MacNessa reigned as Ard Ri of 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 for '[a]s 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*

Figure 2. Some starting shots from the film *Hurling* (1936).

Figure 3. Climatic scene from *Hurling* (1936).

Man 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 'deterritorialization'[28] of the planet (the process through which such diasporic communities have emerged), while such

> deterritorialization creates new markets for film companies ... the homeland is partly invented, existing only in the imagination of the deterritorialized groups, and it can sometimes become so fantastic and one-sided that it provides the fuel for new ethnic conflicts.[29]

This 'fantastic and one-sided' perspective might be compared to the tourist gaze both in its distance from life or culture in Ireland and its 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 where referred to in Ford's films, hurling also seems inevitably to precede or suggest an occasion of violence.[30] 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,[31] 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.[32] While we don't actually witness a game of hurling in *The Quiet Man*, significantly the mere mention of the game, during a dispute between the engine driver, Costello (Eric Gorman), the train guard, Molouney (Joseph O'Dea) and the stationmaster, Hugh Bailey (Web Overlander), seems to inspire violence in those discussing it:

> *Costello* (from the train engine): Well 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 ...
> *Molouney* (pointing his flag in a threatening manner at Bailey): If you knew 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 for 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. Molouney' 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 Molouney, who also removes his glasses. Bailey responds by removing his hat, and begins to remove his jacket for the impending fight 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 'chronotope', 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.[33]

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 Dunfaill 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 lovable 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*.[34]

Myles na Gopaleen – probably better known today as Flann 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 'an 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'.[35] 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.'[36] 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'.[37]

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 Ruan 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'.[38] 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 murdher. Failure to present it is, they feel, low trickery.'[39]

It would appear that Na Gopaleen, a commentator whose own contributions to the *Irish Times* were often tour de force performances in

Figure 4. 1956 cartoon from *Dublin Opinion*[41]

themselves, including his celebrated moniker,[40] 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 remained 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 'John Ford, [and] [Lord] Killanin ... doing a very funny turn in the hurley boys' jerseys'.[42] 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'.[43]

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 1950s progressed and four days before the Irish premiere of the next film considered here, the Justin Herman directed *Three Kisses* (1955)[44] 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'.[45]

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 main feature, this time as part of the Paramount topper series, running for two weeks in Ireland as support for the Alvin Ganzer directed *The Leather Saint* (1955).[46] The film features a young hurler, Colm 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[47] 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.[48]

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, Seanie O'Brien, John Lyons, Joe Hartnet, Mick Cashman, Jimmy Brohan and Christy O'Shea); the GAA General Secretary Pádraig Ó Caoimh in attendance at an underage hurling game in Ferranferris and several other prominent hurling figures from Cork in the 1950s.[49] 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.'[50] 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'.[51]

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?[52]

Given the differing concerns of each of the organizations involved, however, it is not surprising that the finished film is more remarkable for the tensions 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 "though 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!'[53]

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

project ultimately compromises the veracity of its portrayal. While drawing comparisons between the film and other depictions of hurling, including that found in *The Rising of the Moon*, the *Cork Examiner* reviewer remarked on the film's release in Ireland:

> That more Americans are likely to come to here looking for the 'traditional' Ireland is evident from [the] film ... It is in line with other productions of the type ... *Three Kisses* ... accurately describes the game itself, but the film company have gone to a great deal of trouble with the insertion of the 'Blarney'. Result, the picture becomes a farce and hardly a true representation of the Irish scene.[24]

NOTES

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2. R. Boyle and R. Haynes, *Power Play-Sport, Media and Popular Culture* (London: Longman Press, 2000), p.xi.
3. See R. Cox, G. Jarvie and W. Vamplew, *The Encyclopaedia of British Sport* (Oxford: ABC-CLIO, 1996), p.139; and Glen Jones, '"Down on the floor and give me ten sit-ups": British Sports Feature Films', *Film & History: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Film and Television Studies*, 35, 2 (2005), pp.30–1.
4. J.H. Wallenfeldt, *Sports Movies* (NY: CineBooks, 1989), p.iv. Italics in original.
5. Scholars such as Marcus de Burca, W.F. Mandle and Mike Cronin have established the unique insight these games provide towards, as Cronin has noted, an 'understanding and appreciation of how Irish nationalism has been formed and has functioned over the last century or so'; Mike Cronin, *Sport and Nationalism in Ireland: Gaelic Games, Soccer and Irish identity since 1884* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1999), pp.18–19. See also W.F. Mandle, *The Gaelic Athletic Association and Irish Nationalist Politics, 1884–1924* (London: Croom Helm; Dublin:Gill and Macmillan, 1987), and Marcus De Burca, *The GAA: a History* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1999).
6. John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze* (London: Sage, 2001), pp.1–2.
7. Beth Newell, 'Racial Stereotypes in Jim Sheridan's *In America*', in Kevin Rockett and John Hill (eds), *Film History and National Cinema* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005), p.143.
8. V.Y. Mudimbe, *The Idea of Africa* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press; London: J. Currey, 1994), p.6.
9. Urry, *The Tourist Gaze*, p.3.
10. J. Culler, 'Semiotics of Tourism', *American Journal of Semiotics*, 1, 1/2 (1981), p.127.
11. John Arundel and Maurice Roche, 'Media Sport and Local Identity: British Rugby League and Sky TV', in Maurice Roche (ed.), *Sport, Popular Culture and Identity* (Oxford: Meyer and Meyer, 2000), p.84.
12. Gerry Smyth, *Space and the Irish Cultural Imagination* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave, 2001), p.35. See also Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (London: Macmillan, 1976) for a discussion on the importance of 'the search for the authentic' among tourists.
13. Indeed, this view was encouraged by the Gaelic Athletic Association itself in asserting hurling's antiquity.
14. Kevin Rockett, Luke Gibbons and John Hill (eds), *Cinema and Ireland* (London: Routledge, 1988), p.xii.

15. This essay is not suggesting that the game of hurling cannot involve occasions of violence. However, violence is no more a part of the sport than any other physical contact team game. Indeed, as Patrick McDevitt has noted, right from the codification of Gaelic games in the 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 quickness and finesse and to lessen the worth of brute force'; Patrick F. McDevitt, 'Muscular Catholicism: Nationalism, Masculinity and Gaelic Team Sports, 1884–1916', *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 creation of proper control as the first and most important task' of the GAA. P.J. Devlin, *Our Native Games* (Dublin: M.H. Gill & Son, 1935), p.12. Furthermore, McDevitt argues that: 'Irish 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 on through the pain of injury. Gaelic games, he adds, 'not only allowed but stressed compassion for others; men must play unafraid of injury but receive prompt and proper treatment if injuries occur'; McDevitt, 'Muscular Catholicism', p.276.
16. Fox Movietone and Pathé both covered the 1936 challenge game between all-Ireland hurling champions Limerick and New York as well as several other visits by Irish teams to the US. See http://www.itnsource.com/ for more information on matches covered and sources for surviving clips.
17. John Lewis, 'Who Was Ted Husing?', http://www.tedhusing.net/Who%20Was%20Husing.htm (accessed 27 April 2007).
18. 'Warner Bros. Short Subjects', AAP Catalog (New York: Associated Artists Productions Corp., 1957), pp.51–2. This would not be Ted Husing's last involvement with Irish sport. In 1940, he provided the narration for the Paramount short *Grantland Rice Sportlight: The Sporting Irish* directed by Jack Eaton, a film that climaxes with footage of the All-Ireland hurling final at Croke Park.
19. While there are no precise reports of Husing's shorts being screened in cinemas in Ireland, there are several mentions of 'Vitaphone Varieties' being screened in the early 1930s – *The Meath Chronicle*, 21 February 1931, p.4; *The Meath Chronicle*, 14 March 1931, p.4. As Richard Ward has noted: 'At the beginning of the 1930s, practically all Warner–Vitaphone shorts were grouped under the umbrella title "Vitaphone 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*, 9, 3 (2003), p.226.
20. The exact date is unclear as records of shorts exhibited are few and little coverage was given to them in the media. However, according to the Irish censor's (James Montgomery) notes in the *Record of Film's Censored* (No. 12367), held in the National Archives of Ireland, *Hurling* was censored 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 Saturday, 12 February 1938, at 8.30 p.m. at which Mr. R. O'Keeffe presided. Held in the Gaelic Museum, Dublin. I want to acknowledge the assistance of Dónal McAnnallen in finding information, including these minutes, relating to the reaction of the GAA to this film.
22. *Connaught Tribune* Special correspondent, 'Our American Letter, Ireland's Ancient Game, Hurling Film to be Made', *Connaught Tribune*, 1 August 1936, p.6.
23. Ward, 'Extra Added Attractions', p.225. Even the pioneering British documentarist John Grierson commented on 'the very frequent beauty and very great skill of exposition ... in the sports shorts from Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer' which have brought 'the popular lecture to a pitch undreamed of, and even impossible in the days of the magic lantern'. John Grierson, 'First Principles of Documentary', (1932) in Catherine 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 Balbirnie in supplying me with a copy of the press sheet.
25. I realize that this sport is more commonly referred to as Lacrosse today, but this is the spelling given on the press sheet.
26. Anonymous, 'Unfairly Treated, G.A.A Discussion on Land Commission and Playing Fields', *Irish Press*, 14 February 1938, p.10. Minutes of the Meeting of the Central Council of Gaelic

Athletic Association, held at Croke House on Saturday, 12 February 1938, at 8.30 p.m. at which Mr. R. O'Keeffe presided. Held in the Gaelic Museum, Dublin.

27. Martin McLoone, *Irish Film: The Emergence of a Contemporary Cinema* (London: British Film Institute, 2000), pp.44–59.
28. Appadurai is describing here the process through which the old stabilities of place and people are more and more 'shot through with ... the woof of human motion, as more persons and groups deal with the realities of having to move, or fantasies of wanting to move'. Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), p.33.
29. Ibid., p.49.
30. While both *The Quiet Man* and *The Rising of the Moon* are discussed in this chapter, another example of the juxtaposition of hurling and violence is also found in Ford and Jack Cardiff's *Young Cassidy* (1965).
31. See Joseph McBride, *Searching for John Ford: A Life* (London: Faber & Faber, 2003), pp.577–8.
32. Luke Gibbons, *The Quiet Man* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2002), p.91.
33. Smyth, *Space and the Irish Cultural Imagination*, pp.36–7. Smyth is quoting from Joep Leerson, *Remembrance and Imagination: Patterns in the Historical and Literary Representation of Ireland in the Nineteenth Century* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1996), p.226.
34. McBride, *Searching for John Ford*, pp.577–8.
35. *Irish Independent*, 1 May 1956, p.13. See also *Irish Press*, 1 May 1956, p.1.
36. Anonymous, *Irish Independent*, 2 May 1956, p.12. See also *Irish Press*, 2 May 1956, p.1.
37. *Irish Times*, 4 May 1956, p.1.
38. Myles na Gopaleen, 'GAATHLETES', *Irish Times*, 18 May 1956, p.8.
39. Myles na Gopaleen, 'Ford-Proconsul', *Irish Times*, 14 May 1956, p.6.
40. The name Flann O'Brien was itself a pseudonym for the author, born Brian Ó Núalláin in 1911 in Tyrone.
41. This cartoon was published in the June edition of *Dublin Opinion* Magazine, 1956, p.106. Included in the Lord Killanin Collection in the Irish Film Institute. I want to thank Charles Barr for bringing this collection to my attention and providing me with copies of materials from it, including this cartoon.
42. Anita 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 Killanin Collection in the Irish Film Institute.
44. I want to thank Sunniva 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 Littlest 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/gst/fullpage.html?res=9C04E3DE1638F933A25751C1A965948260&sec=&pagewanted=print, (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 fictionalized, as the above narrative summary indicates.
48. M.L. Kennedy, 'Bring Back the Days of Cuchulainn', *Irish Independent*, 31 March 1938, p.10.
49. This information was kindly supplied to the author in an interview with Jimmy Brohan, one of the Cork players depicted in the film.
50. Anonymous, 'First Showing of Two Films About Ireland', *Irish Times*, 19 July 1956, p.1.
51. Anonymous, 'Film and the Irish Tourist Industry', *Irish Independent*, 19 July 1956, p.8.
52. Benedict Kiely, 'The Tourists and the Screen', *Irish Press*, 23 July 1956, p.6.
53. The Cinema Correspondent, 'The Business Jungle', *Irish Times*, 23 July 1956, p.6.
54. Anonymous, 'Dublin Letter: Too Much "Blarney"', *Cork Examiner*, 19 July 1956, p.6.

RELIGION AND MYTH