

**FILM AND FILM-MAKING
IN
WATERFORD**

PRELIMINARY STUDIES

DONALD BRADY

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Background

The development of film making from its inception as a newsreel medium to fully-fledged feature film making and inevitably to its acceptance as an acknowledged art form was rapid, successful and indeed spectacular. The response from the public was immediate and so remarkable that within a very short time a new and extremely successful Movie Theatre Business was developed with enormous cinemas built to house the insatiable demand.

In Ireland the response was no less remarkable. On the 17th of April 1896 the Freeman's Journal carried the following notice:

*"Dan Lowrey's Star of Erin Theatre or Varieties (now the Olympia) announced 'the world's most scientific invention: The greatest, most amazing and grandest novelty ever presented in Dublin: The Cinématographe.'"*²

and only three days later cinema arrived in Ireland. The first purpose built theatre, the Volta was opened in 1909.

Very early filming was made in 1907 when a journey from "London to Killarney" was produced which included some shots of the journey from Waterford to Wexford. During the filming of this newsreel short features were made as interludes including "Irish wives and husbands" which is "probably the first fiction film made in Ireland..."³ The first excursion by American film-makers occurred when the Kalem Company commissioned Sidney Olcott to produce some European based features and he chose Ireland because his mother was from Dublin. He made two trips one in 1910 and another the following year. During the visit in 1910 the "Lad from old Ireland" was made and is the first US film made outside America.

In the *Story of Irish film*,⁴ Arthur Flynn dealing with the making of *Knocknagow* in 1918 tells us that Fred O'Donovan having directed the film in the Clonmel area insisted that its first performance was seen in the town. At this period, 1917-20, William Power was very active producing *Rosaleen Dhu* and *Willie Scouts*. Power was killed on the 8th of June 1920 and none of his work is extant. A major watershed was the making of *The Dawn* by Tom Cooper in 1936. It proved a great success and by 1947 Cooper owned four Casinos [cinemas] one of which was in Tramore.

The use of Irish actors and Irish settings for major blockbusters in recent times is exemplified by the film *Excalibur* which was directed by John Boorman and for which Cahir Castle was a significant setting. The Pat O'Connor film *Cal* was produced by David Putnam and another film by O'Connor, *Fools of Fortune* which had a budget of £2.5m used settings in Dublin, Mullingar, The Aran Islands, and Robertstown. It was a co-production of PolyGram and Working Title. Circle of Friends used Kilkenny as Dublin and the village Inistioge. An early example of feature films using actual events as a backdrop is *Rooney* which was made in 1958 and used footage from the 1957 All-Ireland final between Kilkenny and Waterford.

Walter MacNamara

Walter MacNamara was a central figure in the development of the early motion picture industry. He was born in 1876 in Lismore. He was not only an actor in early films but later became a highly respected and influential Director and also produced music for one of his own productions.

Traffic in souls 1913

This was a hugely influential film starring Jane Gail and Ethel Grandin. It was directed by George Loane Tucker and runs for 74 minutes. It is a tale of white slavery and prostitution focused on arriving immigrants at Ellis Island and was filmed on location using real people arriving in a "documentary form." It was produced by Walter MacNamara who wrote the script and also acts as one of the "white slavers." He is the second man seen in this initial scene. The film is "purportedly based on John D. Rockefeller's Commission on white slavery."⁵ An interesting account of the background to this film is provided by Kevin Brownlow in his book "Behind the mask of innocence."

¹ This essay should be viewed in conjunction with a separate article on Pat O'Connor, Waterford's most famous film Director. Both articles are available on the Waterford County Library Website.

² Rockett, Kevin, Gibbons Luke & John Hill *Cinema and Ireland*. U.K. Croom Helm, 1987 xiv, 274p pg. 3

³ Do pg. 7

⁴ Flynn, Arthur *The story of Irish film* Ireland: Currach Press, 2005 328p

⁵ *Perils of the New land: Films of the Immigrant Experience (1910-1915)* [online article] Cineaste Publishers Inc., 2009

Ireland a nation 1914

This is perhaps the most important work produced by MacNamara. It premiered in the 44th Street Theatre, New York on September 23rd 1914. In an account of the premiere we are told that, “a film play in five reels, began an engagement there. A large crowd attended the opening of the new picture house, and saw a well-photographed and interesting movie drama.”⁶ It was filmed in England at the Kew Bridge Studios and Ireland [exterior shots] over five months in 1914.

“*The film is mainly centred around Grattan’s Parliament, the 1798 Rebellion, the Act of Union and the 1803 Rebellion...*”

The film was seen as being supportive of the physical force tradition in opposition to constitutional nationalism. “Two quite distinct sets of newsreel footage were later added as an epilogue: first in the early years of the film’s distribution and subsequently during the War of Independence.”⁸ These later additions included footage of John Redmond, De Valera in the United States and the funeral of Terence MacSwiney. There was certainly an element of playing to the American Irish Audience and the film had a very successful run in Chicago where it entertained huge audiences for over 20 weeks.

As could be expected the film was severely censored in Ireland and many scenes were excised, and it was not shown until two years after its original release. The first print sent from the United States was destroyed with the sinking of the Lusitania in 1915.⁹ On its first showing in Ireland on the 8th of January 1917 police attended and requested that it be banned but further cuts were made. However, following a third showing of the film it was banned by the authorities and “Irish audiences had to wait until 1922 before they had another opportunity to see *Ireland a nation*.”¹⁰

In addition to these productions MacNamara also provided screenplays for *A sprig of shamrock* [1913]; *His hour of Triumph* [1913]; *A dangerous experiment* [1914]; *The poet’s progress* [1916]; *Private – Keep off* [1923]; 16 films in total. He acted in *Terror of the range* [1919]; *Side street* [1929]; 4 films in total. He directed *The story of David Greig* [1913] and *Human Cargoes* [1916]. He produced the soundtrack for *Side Street* [1929].

Edmund Duggan 1862-1938

Edmund Duggan was an actor, novelist and playwright born in Lismore. He was the son of Dennis Duggan a farmer and Mary Ann nee Walsh. The family emigrated to Australia when Edmund was nine years old. He became an actor at an early age and was joined by his brother Patrick [P.J.] who died in 1910. His early acting experience included a period with George Titheradge’s company where his sisters Eugenie and Kathleen also played some parts. He was noted for his “comic Irish roles.”

“In 1891 in Sydney, he had staged his melodrama *The Democrat*, revived as *Eureka Stockade* in Adelaide in 1897, together with his dramatization of *For the term of his natural life*. In 1906 Anderson produced Duggan’s version of *Lady Audley’s Secret*. In 1907 *The Squatter’s Daughter*, written by Duggan and Bert Bailey or ‘Albert Edmunds,’ was performed in Melbourne; it had a near record run, and was filmed with the original cast in 1910.”¹¹

The film was released on the 4th August 1910 with Duggan playing the part of Ben Hall. It was filmed in Victoria and runs for 66 minutes. *The Squatter’s daughter* was filmed again and released on the 29th of September 1933. The new version was directed, with sound, by Ken G. Hall and runs for 104 minutes. Hal had, the previous year, produced *On our selection* based on another play by Bert Bailey and Edmund Duggan. The new version “was a huge success, possibly because the action sequences were unprecedented in their realism.”¹²

Duggan continued to tour and write into the late 1920’s. He died of heart failure on the 2nd of August 1938 and was survived by two daughters. He is buried in Boroondara cemetery.

⁶ The New York Times September 24, 1914 pg. 11

⁷ Rockett, Kevin; Gibbons Luke and John Hill *Cinema and Ireland*. U.K. Croom Helm, 1987 xiv,274p pg. 12

⁸ Do. pg. 12

⁹ The Lusitania was sunk off the coast of Ireland by a German submarine on the 7th of May 1915.

¹⁰ Rockett, Kevin; Gibbons Luke and John Hill *Cinema and Ireland*. U.K. Croom Helm, 1987 xiv,274p pg. 16

¹¹ Williams, Margaret *Edmund Duggan (1862-1938)*. [in] Australian Dictionary of Biography. Vol.8, Melbourne University Press, 1981 pgs. 355-356

¹² Byrnes, Paul *The Squatter’s Daughter: Curator’s notes*. Australian Screen [online article]. This article also includes online excerpts from the film which can be viewed online.

William Desmond Taylor

William Cunningham Deane-Tanner was born on the 28th of April 1872 at Compton Hall Carlow. His family also owned Belleville Park in Cappoquin and had a house at 3 Upper Merrion Street, Dublin.¹³ The family was distinguished on both sides: his paternal grandfather, William Kearns Tanner was Professor of Surgery at University College Cork for nearly 20 years and his Uncle, Dr. Charles Deane Tanner was an M.P. from 1885 until his death in 1901; on his maternal side his great-great grandfather, Sir Thomas Deane (1792-1871) was Lord Mayor of Cork in 1830. His father was Kearns Deane-Tanner of The Elms Carlow and is described on William's birth certificate as a Captain and Adjutant in the Carlow Rifles. His mother was Jane Deane-Tanner nee O'Brien and the birth of William was registered on the 16th of June 1872. In *The Old Dark Blue*, an account of the Cappoquin Rowing Club, we are given further details of the family and its residency in County Waterford. The account concerns the Regatta of 1896 which we are told took place on the 21st of August, and

“Major Kearns Deane Tanner J.P. who had earlier presided as a steward and judge, presented the prizes that day. Deane Tanner, a Cork man, was then residing with his family at Belleville Park. He was prominent in Unionist politics while at the same time his brother Dr. Charles Deane Tanner, M.P. for Mid Cork, was a radical member of the Irish Parliamentary Party.”

William was the second of “four children (Ellen, or Nellie was a year older; Elizabeth Mary was born in 1874, and Denis, the youngest, in 1876).¹⁴ Robert Giroux describes William's father as “a martinet who made his son's life miserable” and from a local interest perspective we are told that he was “the agent in Ireland for the Duke of Devonshire's Irish landed estates...”¹⁵ In two separate pieces: the first an introduction to *Silent Lives*;¹⁶ and the second an announcement of the Killruddery Arts Festival 2007, “*An evening of Silent Cinema with Kevin Brownlow*” we are told that Taylor was “brought up at Belleville, Cappoquin.” Taylor himself, in his earliest known published interview recorded by Richard Willis following the completion of the 5 reel film *Captain Alvarez* starring Taylor as Captain Alvarez and Edith Storey, informs us that he had “a jolly boyhood and went to Clifton College in England.”¹⁷ He later tells us that he “was a leader in college theatricals.” This account of his education is flatly contradicted by Giroux who states,

“Taylor never attended Clifton College, the English public school near Bristol, according to the headmaster; it was his younger brother Denis, who was enrolled there in the preparatory school, Poole's House.”¹⁸

Taylor had early aspirations to pursue a career on the stage but his “folks had visions of the army...” He was later “shipped first to France and then to Germany to study languages.” Eventually, according to Dina-Marie Kulzer¹⁹ he left home after a row with his father when aged eighteen. Following Taylor's arrival in America he “went ranching for a year and a half...at a place called Runnymede in Southern Kansas.”²⁰ He then “returned to the old country and through a mutual friend, I met Charles Hawtrey, the famous comedian.”²¹ He was “not quite nineteen at the time and I acted in Hawtrey's company in the provinces.”²² Later he “met Fanny Davenport and joined her company. I was with her for three years.”²³ He then moved to New York, where in 1901 he married Ethel May Harrison and had a daughter, also named Ethel born in 1903. He spent periods acting there but in 1908 according to Ron Davis in *Silent Lives*²⁴ he deserted his family and fled firstly to participate on the Klondike gold rush in Dawson City. According to Taylor he “went there three times in all and made plenty of money and

¹³ In the Dublin Street Directory for 1862 the house is ascribed to *Sir Thomas Deane & Sons, Architects* with Sir Thomas Deane and Thomas Newenham Deane listed as occupiers.

¹⁴ Giroux, Robert. *A deed of death: the story behind the unsolved murder of Hollywood Director William Desmond Taylor*. New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1990. xix,275p pg. 51

¹⁵ Do. pg, 52

¹⁶ Davis, Ron *Silent lives: 100 biographies of the silent film era* U.S. BearManor Media, 2008 411p

¹⁷ Willis, Richard *William D. Taylor: Actor, athlete and Irishman*. Movie Pictorial, June 6th 1914

¹⁸ Giroux, Robert. *A deed of death: the story behind the unsolved murder of Hollywood Director William Desmond Taylor*. New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1990. xix,275p pgs. 52-53

¹⁹ Kulzer, Dina-Marie *William Desmond Taylor: the unsolved murder* [online article 16pgs] pg. 1

²⁰ Willis, Richard *William D. Taylor: Actor, athlete and Irishman*. Movie Pictorial, June 6th 1914

²¹ Do.

²² Do.

²³ Do.

²⁴ Davis, Ron *Silent lives: 100 biographies of the silent film era* U.S. BearManor Media, 2008 411p

lost it all again.”²⁵ He then spent a short time in Seattle and from there proceeded to Los Angeles where he was bitten by the film bug and gained a position with the Kay Bee Company and then moved to Vitagraph which led to his starring role in *Captain Alvarez* [1914] which he believed was “the best thing I have done for the screen.”²⁶ On his arrival in Los Angeles he assumed the name William Desmond Taylor. He spent some time in the army and served in Europe though some accounts state that he served in the British Army others say that it was with the Canadian Army a claim that is supported by the United States Nationwide Cemetery Records. These state that Taylor served in the Canadian Army as a Captain and provide details of his Burial at Hollywood Forever Cathedral Mausoleum, Crypt 594. Taylor became a quite successful actor in Hollywood and according to Ron Davis “in a town populated by uneducated actors Taylor stood out as a cultured gentleman.”²⁷ But it was as a Director that Taylor excelled, directing over forty films and serving as President of the *Motion pictures Directors Association*. On February the 1st 1922 Taylor had drinks with actress Mabel Normand and

*“discussed Nietzsche, Freud and the movies...At about 7.45pm he walked her to her car leaving the door open or unlocked to his exclusive Alvarado Street bungalow. As her chauffeur drove off, they blew kisses at one another. With the exception of the murderer, Mabel Normand was the last person to see William Desmond Taylor alive.”*²⁸

The following morning Taylor was discovered shot and murdered. It is almost certain that the murderer was someone involved in the movie business but the case was never solved. This case “had an unprecedented effect on the industry in the twenties” and led to the appointment of Will Hays as a censor “for years to come.”²⁹

Charles Higham in his book “*Murder in Hollywood: solving a silent screen mystery*” published in 2004 advances the proposition that actress Mary Miles Minten was the murderer which he suggests was committed out of unreciprocated love. Another suggestion is that Charlotte Shelby, mother of Minten, committed the murder and yet another possibility is that Margaret Gibson was the guilty party and indeed she confessed to the crime prior to her death in 1964. She had starred with Taylor in *The Kiss* filmed in 1914. So significant was the murder that it has spawned an online newsletter called “*Taylorology*” dedicated to “a continuing exploration of the Life and death of William Desmond Taylor”

Details of Taylor’s will are provided in *William Desmond Taylor: a dossier* by Bruce Long³⁰. He left a total estate of \$26,728.38 with liabilities of \$7995.38 including funeral expenses of \$1112.20. The residual of \$18733 was left to his daughter then residing at Orienta Point, Mamaroneck, New York.

In “Fragments from Taylor’s life” written by Ray Davidson and published on November the 27th 1920 we are informed that Taylor,

“will be particularly remembered for Huckleberry Finn, Tom Sawyer, The Varmint, The soul of youth The Furnace and a score of other pictures, all of them remarkable for their reality.”

Taylor used his expansive and varied life experience to great effect in his film career and according to Taylor himself,

“A story can’t be presented on the screen in a human, gripping manner unless the director has been actually in contact with the situations depicted.”

In a further comment he echoed the life and work of fellow county-man John Palliser as he stated,

“I found a month’s hunting and fishing trip along the Mississippi River invaluable in working out the character of Huckleberry Finn”

Patrick A. Powers

Patrick A. Powers was born in Waterford on the 8th of October 1870. His family emigrated when he was a child to the United States and settled in Buffalo, New York. There are records of a sister, Mary Ellen Powers who continued to live in Buffalo.

In 1900 Powers joined Joseph A. Schubert, Sr. in the photographic business. By 1910 he had moved to New York. In 1927 he invested in the company of DeForest Phonofilm. He left this company having

²⁵ Willis, Richard *William D. Taylor: Actor, athlete and Irishman*. Movie Pictorial, June 6th 1914

²⁶ Do.

²⁷ Davis, Ron *Silent lives: 100 biographies of the silent film era* U.S. BearManor Media, 2008 411p William Desmond Taylor pgs 356-359 pg. 356

²⁸ Kulzer, Dina-Marie *William Desmond Taylor: the unsolved murder* [online article 16pgs] pg. 1

²⁹ Davis, Ron *Silent lives: 100 biographies of the silent film era* U.S. BearManor Media, 2008 411p

³⁰ Long, Bruce *William Desmond Taylor: A dossier*. U.S., The Scarecrow Press, 1991457p. pgs 331-332.

failed to take it over but he copied the sound system developed by DeForest who due to financial encumbrances were unable to sue him. In 1928,

*"Powers sold Disney a bootlegged sound system recording system the Cinephone so that Disney could make sound cartoons such as Mickey Mouse's Steamboat Willie. Unable to find a distributor, Disney began releasing his cartoon through Powers' Celebrity Pictures Company."*³¹

The system provided by Powers was used in the production of "*Steamboat Willie*" a ground breaking animated film which was released in November of that year. Powers continued to work with Disney but differences a few years later led to a separation of their business interests. The Powers Motion Pictures Company merged with IMP and others in 1912 to create Universal Pictures.

He produced nearly 300 movies many of which were westerns including "*Galloping Cowboy*" and "*King of the saddle*" released 1926. He died on July 30th 1948 at Doctors Hospital New York and left a daughter Mrs Roscoe M. George.

The Horgan Brothers

The Horgan brothers, Phil, Jim and Tom owned a shoemakers business which is recorded at Brown Street Youghal in 1892. At an early stage they started a commercial photographic business which soon became so successful that they abandoned shoemaking. As part of the promotion of their business they incorporated their still photographs into magic lantern shows which they gave throughout the region including areas such as Clashmore, Killeagh, Glendine, Knockmonlea, and Ballymacoda.

With the invention of movie film in 1896 the brothers bought a projector and hired films from the Lumiere Firm. Jim Horgan then built a camera and thus became "the first Irishman to make film, circa, 1900. Much of the film remains today"³²

The first Cinema in Ireland, The Volta,³³ was opened by James Joyce in 1909 and the Horgans immediately grasped the potential of this venture:

*"They obtained a Cinema licence in 1910 and opened the Horgan Picture Palace in Youghal, a six-hundred-seat purpose built theatre."*³⁴

As part of their venture they produced newsreel film from the area which was shown with the feature and became known as the "Youghal Gazette." Included in this collection is the visit of King Edward and Queen Alexandra to Lismore Castle and footage of the Ardmore Pattern. A significant portion of this collection is extant and together with their camera and projector was donated to the Irish Film Archive. Jim also made experiments in animation. The collection is particularly noteworthy in its rural focus and in its date and is most certainly worth considerable study. The brothers were buried in the native Youghal in the North Abbey Cemetery. An interesting and valuable documentary on the Brothers was made by RTE and presented by Mike Murphy in his Arts Programme some years ago.

Anna Manahan

Anna Manahan was born on October the 18th 1924 at Lombard Street, Waterford. Her interest in the theatre was apparent from an early age when, while still at the Mercy Convent, she participated in school productions. Her father Paddy was a comedian and other members of the family were also involved in the business. She became a member of the Waterford Dramatic Society and made her first appearance with them in *Quality Street*. She joined the Gaiety school of acting which propelled her into the professional ranks. While playing in Limerick she met Carl O'Kelly whom she later married. In 1956 when the newly married couple were touring in Egypt with the Gate Theatre Group led by MacLiammóir and Hilton Edwards, Carl O'Kelly went swimming in the Nile. He contracted polio, died and is buried in Alexandria. Anna was again touched by tragedy when her sister Billie became ill and she returned to Waterford to nurse her but Billie later died aged 28.

Theatre:

Anna became active in the Dublin Theatre scene in the 1940s. She worked with Hilton Edwards and Michéal MacLiammóir. Her first major breakthrough came with her role as Serafina in the *Rose Tattoo* by

³¹ NationMaster.com [online article]

³² *Horgan Brothers Photographers: Chronicling 100 years of Youghal's history* [online article]

³³ The Volta continued as a cinema until late 1940's and had 450 seats.

³⁴ O'Brien, Harvey *The real Ireland: The evolution of Ireland in documentary film*. U.K.: Manchester University Press, 2004 xii, 352p [*The Horgan Brothers* pgs. 25-28] pg. 25

Tennessee Williams. The European Premiere of the play opened in Dublin in 1957 at the Pike Theatre. The notoriety of the play is explained by Fintan O'Toole in the Irish Times:

"That production was notoriously brought to a halt by the arrest of the director Alan Simpson on trumped-up charges of 'producing and showing for gain a performance which was indecent and profane'"

A member of the audience had "mistakenly thought a packaged condom was used as a prop" and informed the authorities. Brendan Behan was so enraged by the action of the Gardaí that he went to the alley behind the theatre afterwards, "case of Guinness in his arms spouting voluble vituperations about the authorities."³⁵ The legal actions were devastating for the theatre which subsequently closed but the reputation of Manahan was greatly enhanced.

John B. Keane was so impressed by her work that he wrote the play *Big Maggie* and its central character Maggie Polpin with her in mind and though she couldn't act in the first run of the play she later made the part her own. She was nominated for a Tony in 1969 for her performance in *Lovers* by Brian Friel. In 1977 she won the Evening Standard award as "most promising newcomer for her performance in a revival of Sean O'Casey's *The Plough and the Stars*. Her role as Molly Bloom in *Bloomsday* so impressed Sylvia Beach that she said of the interpretation of Molly Bloom's soliloquy that it was, "the Molly that Jimmy wrote about."

In 1998 she travelled to New York with the play *The Beauty Queen of Leenane* which was directed by Garry Hynes. Ben Brantley in a review of the play stated that it was "a proper, perfectly plotted drama"³⁶ and that "the symbiosis between Ms. Manahan and Ms. Mullen is extraordinary."³⁷

Another review commented that it was "one of the most popular plays of the season."³⁸ So successful was the play that it moved from the Atlantic Theatre off Broadway to the Walter Kerr Theatre where "advance ticket sales of more than \$1.1m" were taken.

The play is "about the terror unleashed when love is undermined and the intimacy of family subverted by the need for absolute control." The reviewer writing of the acting of Marie Mullen and Anna Manahan stated that they "have been playing Maureen and Mag for the better part of two years during the production runs in Galway, London, Sydney and now New York." Apparently the playwright Martin McDonagh suggested Manahan for the part after seeing her play the "creepily mysterious housekeeper, Mrs Cadogan." In one final review Elyse Sommer was so captivated that she couldn't "imagine anyone who could match Anna Manahan's portrayal of the mountainous, monstrous Mag Foley."³⁹

The play ran at the Walter Kerr Theatre from April 23rd 1998 to March 14th 1999 and led to Manahan winning a Tony as the "best featured actress" in 1998

Declan Hassett wrote the play *Sisters* with her in mind. It is a one woman monologue and opened to mixed reviews in New York where "the attraction of this one person show is the splendid Irish actress, Anna Manahan."⁴⁰ She "portrays the sisters Clooney: Martha in the first act, and her barely younger sister Mary in the second." She frequently acted for the Red Kettle Theatre Waterford and is well remembered for her roles in *Happy Birthday Dear Alice*, *The old ladies' guide to survival* and *The Crucible*.

TV

Anna Manahan was a regular participant in television series'. She featured in the *Riordans*, *Leave it to Mrs O'Brien* and played Mrs Kenefick in *Me Mammy*. Recently she played Ursula in *Fair City* from 2004 and her performances have been credited with contributing enormously to the perspective of the Active aged. Her niece, Michele Manahan (daughter of Michael Manahan), is a writer for this series.

It is, however, her part as Mrs Cadogan in the Irish RM which is most readily known. This humorous and greatly loved series is based on the work of Somerville & Ross and was,

"Shot entirely in the beautiful and dramatic Irish countryside, The Irish RM is the tale of Major Sinclair Yates, played by Peter Bowles, An Irish Army Officer who resigns his commission to become a Resident Magistrate in the West of Ireland before Irish Independence. The Major has to maintain the balance between befriendng the local townspeople and bestowing law & order on the eccentric community" first shown by Channel 4"

³⁵ Barnes, Steve Irish Actress credits writers with her stage success Electric Times Union 1999

³⁶ Brantley, Ben Theater Review: A gasp for breath inside an airless life Friday February 27th 1998 New York Times

³⁷ Do.

³⁸ Marks, Peter Critic's Notebook: Depicting the hurt of love curdling into hate New York Times Tuesday April 21st 1998

³⁹ Sommer, Elyse The Beauty Queen of Leenane Curtain up: The internet Theater Magazine of Reviews, Features, Annotated Listings 13th March 1998

⁴⁰ Gutman, Les Sisters Curtain up: The internet Theater Magazine of Reviews, Features, Annotated Listings 14th September 2006.

Film

Her first significant role was as Maggie Murphy in *She didn't say no* [1958]. This film is about a woman in an Irish village who had six children by different fathers. The local community consider her presence as lowering the tone of the area and try to have her removed offering to pay for her relocation. The film was banned in Ireland on its release. It starred Eileen Herlie as Bridget Monahan and featured Jack MacGowran, Joan O'Hara, Ray McAnally and Hilton Edwards. It was directed by Cyril Frankel.

In *Ulysses* she played an extremely risqué part as “brothel madam Bell Cohen, a whip-cracking lion-tamer with a top hat and waxed moustache, crushing Leopold Bloom with her impressive posterior.” She also worked with Laurence Olivier, Peter Cushing, Kenneth More, Maggie Smith, Albert Finney and Brenda Fricker.

Later years and Death

In 1984 she won the gold medal of the Éire Society of Boston. In later life Anna was very active in the Sacred Heart Active Retirement Group in Waterford. Perhaps the honour she most appreciated occurred on the 12th of April 2002 when she was enrolled as the 28th Freeman of Waterford. In 2003 her handprints were added “to those of John B. Keane and Maureen Potter at Gaiety Theatre Plaza. She played a crucial role in Waterford’s “Golden years Festival” in 2004. In 2005 she acted as Grand marshal of the St. Patrick’s Day parade in Waterford.

She resided for most of the latter part of her life with her brothers Val and Joe at William Street, Waterford. She died at the Waterford Regional Hospital on March the 8th 2009. Her removal to Waterford Cathedral took place on Tuesday the 10th at 6.30pm and she was buried in St. Mary’s Cemetery in Ballygunner the following day. She is survived by her brothers Val and Joe and nieces and nephews.

At the funeral playwright Jim Nolan gave a eulogy and present were Martin McDonagh author of *The Beauty Queen of Leenane*, Garry Hynes, Des Keogh, Bryan Murray, Bernard Farrell, Pat Moylan Chairwoman of the Arts Council and many local dignitaries. In an obituary in the Irish Independent, Alan Stanford, specifically highlighted her pride in being from Waterford, “a badge she wore with honour and pride for her entire life.”⁴¹

Assessment

In an obituary published in the Irish Times, Fintan O’Toole suggested that she will be remembered as the “wheedling, manipulative and desperately doomed Mags Folan” and stated that she “revelled in a kind of almost operatic theatricality.” Perhaps his most glowing and appropriate tribute was that,

“No actor, and few artists in any other field, did more to challenge Irish taboos about sexuality, womanhood and the body.”

Minister for the Arts, Martin Cullen described her as an “affectionate charismatic woman and consummate artist.” Thankfully a documentary on her life and work, “all about Anna” was made by Charlie McCarthy/Icebox Films for RTE in 2005 and will serve as an appropriate memorial.

Dermot Power

Dermot Power was born in Dungarvan where many of his family still reside. His father is well known local artist, Sean De Paor, from whom I bought the first original painting I have ever owned. He was a huge influence on his son as an enthusiastic teacher, who emphasised the “the fundamentals of perspective, anatomy and so on...” He was educated at St. Augustine’s College Dungarvan and the National College of Art and Design. Dermot has lived in London and the United States for the last 22 years.

In London he had a “somewhat disastrous career as an artist, creating portraits, murals, greeting cards and childrens’ books...” But his initial breakthrough occurred when he was commissioned to produce a cover for a Judge Dredd video game in 1990. He subsequently worked on the Judge Dredd and Sláine segments of the British Anthology Comic 2000 A.D.

His work attracted the attention of director Steve Barron who was then working on the Jim Henson mini series of *Merlin* for the Hallmark Channel. Dermot’s work on this project brought him to his artistic home: the area of computer assisted and generated design.

In 1999 he worked on *The Mummy* and subsequently joined the team working on *Star Wars Episode II: Attack of the Clones* [2002]. For this film he created “a staggering 500 costume designs over a year.” His success on this project led to other major film work including: *Harry Potter & the Chamber of Secrets* [2002]; *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* [2004]; and *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* [2005]. He was a conceptual artist on *V for Vendetta* released in 2006 and was also involved in visual effects and animation for *Beowulf* [2007]. In an interview prior to the release of *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* Alex McDowell stated that:

⁴¹ Stanford, Alan *My memories of the truly remarkable Anna Manahan* Irish Independent Saturday 14th March 2009.

“Dermot Power made some beautiful atmospheric art for the boat racing through the subterranean funnels of the Chocolate River,”⁴²

He subsequently worked with Doug Chiang at Ice Blink Studios on *A Christmas Carol*. In Ireland he has been involved “for a month in Mooncoin with Paul Bolger who is from Lisduggan. I was helping him develop a Cúchulainn project.”⁴³ Speaking of his art he commented, “concept art is a mixture of inspiration and research...”⁴⁴ His analysis of the importance of research perhaps best reflects the sheer effort and time necessary to achieve good results not only in this discipline but in any area of creative endeavour.

“A good researcher talks about the subject and helps you get a deeper understanding of why a particular object or building or whatever looks the way it does...”

Paul Bolger

Paul Bolger was born in Lisduggan, Waterford City and graduated with a degree in Design (Communications) from the Waterford Institute of Technology. He has been involved in the film industry for over twenty years and his credits include: *Land before Time*, *All dogs go to heaven*, and *Pippi Longstocking*. He has also been involved in ‘Television Series’ and the design of computer games. He created his own animation business called Dagda Film Ltd. and has been involved in many other art fields.

In 2007 the feature length 3D animation “*Happily N’Ever After*” was released in Ireland. It was directed by Paul Bolger and featured Sigourney Weaver and Sarah Michelle Gellar. Also involved, were the renowned animation artists, Deane Taylor and Dino Athanassiou. Interviewed about the film Paul set down the central preoccupation of his art: “the most important thing for me was the personality of the characters, not just the look.”

Paul is currently working, having been assisted by Dermot Power, in “developing a major screen version of the Irish legend Cúchulainn.”

Hurd Hatfield

Hurd Hatfield [1917-1991] is famous for his part in *The picture of Dorian Gray* released in 1945 which also starred Angela Lansbury. This experience generated a lifelong friendship and she later featured him in three episodes of the award winning *Murder she wrote* series.

“Having been introduced to Ireland by his friend Angela Lansbury, Hatfield lived at Ballinterry House Rathcormac, County Cork...from the early 1970’,”⁴⁵

He was an integral figure in the social life of East Cork and West Waterford. He became a close friend of Molly Keane and spoke most eloquently at the special event in Lismore Castle in honour of her. He died at his Irish home on December the 26th 1998.

Kevin Brownlow

Kevin Brownlow was born 1938. He is a key figure in chronicling the history of silent film and has produced the monumental biography of David Lean.⁴⁶ He has played a crucial role in the restoration of many classic movies including the classic, *Napoleon*. He is a maker of documentary films, owning his own production company *Photoplay* and is married to Virginia daughter of Molly Keane. He spends significant periods in the Keane family home in Ardmore.

Langrishe, go down. 1978

⁴² Desowitz, Bill *Previewing Charlie for ‘Burtonvision’* [Bill Desowitz reveals how production designer Alec McDowell and preview supervisor Nic Hatch set up a centralized preview unit unique to the U.K. to meet the 3D design challenges of Charlie and the Chocolate Factory.] *Animation World Magazine* July 25th 2005

⁴³ Power, Dermot *Quotation from Dermot in response to my enquiries.*

⁴⁴ Imagine FX. *Dermot Power: from greeting cards to concept designs for Star Wars, Dermot Power reveals how he made the jump from jobbing artist to working on top Hollywood Films.*

⁴⁵ Hurd Hatfield biography from Wikipedia

⁴⁶ Brownlow, Kevin *David Lean: A biography*. U.K. Faber & Faber, 1997

This film is based on the first novel of Aidan Higgins which was published in 1966. Higgins was born in Celbridge in 1927 and is a member of Aosdána. In a review the novel is described as “an eminently poetic book” which “comes to represent not only the invasion and decline of an insular family, but the decline of Ireland and Western Europe as a whole in the years preceding World War II.”⁴⁷ A later novel, *Balcony of Europe* was short listed for 1972 Booker Prize.

Langrishe go down was adapted for the screen by Harold Pinter and was “filmed for BBC Television in association with RTE, and first broadcast in September 1978.” The original version released to cinemas in 2001 ran to 90 minutes but the DVD version runs to 112 minutes. It was directed by David Jones and stars Judi Dench, Jeremy Irons, Annette Crosby, Susan Williamson, Margaret Whiting and Harold Pinter. It is set in and old Irish mansion in the 1930’s and features some scenes in Dublin. It was filmed in the Ferrybank area of Waterford. The central characters are three sisters who “...lose their equanimity – and in the case of Imogene her virginity – when a mature German student (Jeremy Irons) rents lodging from them while he works on his thesis.”⁴⁸

The film is overlong and pretentious rather like the character played by Jeremy Iron and indeed none of the characters display significant redeeming characteristics. The house is surrounded by over-grown vegetation and the only use made of this magnificent backdrop involves the symbolism conveyed by the cutting down of a magnificent tree in full green foliage. The film concludes with the reading of a newspaper announcing the invasion of Austria as a prelude to World War II. The funeral of Helen, one of the sisters conveys further dislocation and in an earlier scene Helen’s response to Imogen’s relationship is one of tactical rather than moral disapproval and her death at the end marks a transfer of authority to Imogen who has “grown up.”

The Eagles and the trumpets

This film is based on a short story written by James Plunkett which was published in his *Collected Short Stories* produced by Poolbeg Press in 1977. The feature was produced by RTE and directed by Deirdre Friel who has worked on episodes of *Ros na Run*, *Fair City*, and *The Riordans*. It stars Jim Norton as Cassidy, Philip O’Sullivan as Sweeney and Fidelma O’Dowda as Lucy. Ronnie Patterson, one of the members of the renowned Donegal *Patterson Group* of folk music fame, was Assistant Director of the production. While the cast and crew operating extraordinarily long hours during their short stay in Lismore, this did not preclude late nights shared in Eamon’s Place. The drama was filmed in West Waterford in 1983; at the Public Library in Lismore on the 24th June and at the Devonshire Arms Hotel in Tallow on the 23rd and 24th of June. Local actors who participated included the late Tony Bolger and his wife Mary.

The title of the piece is taken from the poem “*A cooking egg*” by T.S. Eliot published in 1920:

“Where are the eagles and the trumpets?

*Buried beneath some snow-deep Alps.
Over shattered scones and crumpets
Weeping multitudes
Droop in a hundred A.B.C.’s.”*⁴⁹

The core of the story concerns a frustrated romantic meeting between a town librarian and a Dublin Clerk. While story and poem are deeply concerned with the banality and repetitiveness of the ordinary and the inability of the protagonists to overcome these challenges, the film chooses to project an Ireland of 1950 as a time-warp where religion and place are crucial motivations. We are presented with a picture of small town Ireland contrasted with an up to date resort experienced by Higgins which was “bang up-to-date with a huge ballroom.” This theme is explicitly proposed by Mary, the principle character when she states, “a lot of people can’t wait to get up to the city. Sometimes I feel like that myself.” Activity is presented as an escape in the script where “love” is perhaps more critical in the story. A further point made in the film suggests that reading is “anti-practical” and inimitable to the prospects of the young character Bernadette.

Northanger Abbey

This ITV produced version of the classic, and first, novel of Jane Austen was first shown by ITV on the 25th March 2007. It was directed by Jon Jones, runs for 90 minutes and is only the second adaptation of the novel. The first adaptation was produced by the BBC. This version stars Michael Judd as the Pastor;

⁴⁷ Dalkey Archive Press, University of Illinois. [online article.]

⁴⁸ Wikipedia article

⁴⁹ Eliot, T.S. *The complete poems and Plays*. U.K., Faber & Faber, 1969 pgs. 44-45.

Julia Dearden as Mrs Morland; Gerry O'Brien as Mr Morland; Felicity Jones as the heroine Catherine Morland; David Brittain as a Gothic Villain; Patrick Ryan as a second Gothic Villain; Sylvestra Le Touzel as Mrs Allen; Desmond Barrit as Mr Allen; David Sheehan as "Cheeky man"; William Beck as John Thorpe; Liam McMahon as Sedley; Mal Whyte as "Rude man"; J.J. Field as Henry Tilney; Myles Breen as Mr King; Carey Mulligan as Isabella Thorpe. Geraldine James who starred in *Echoes* provides the voice of Jane Austen at the start of the film.

"ITV filmed Northanger Abbey entirely on location in Ireland, largely thanks to the generous tax incentives offered by the Republic's government. It might annoy purists that Dublin's Georgian streets have replaced Bath's honey-coloured stone."⁵⁰

Lismore Castle was used to depict Northanger Abbey and the producers were extremely lucky that the weather at the time of filming was particularly bleak and threatening.

The novel is partially a parody of the Gothic novel and particularly those of Anne Radcliffe and Regina Maria Roche. Novel reading by women and the "undesirable" consequences of an overactive imagination are a central theme of Austen's work as highlighted by the specific reference to the "Horrid Novels":

"Dear creature! How much I am obliged to you; and when you have finished Udolpho, we will read the Italian together; and I have made out a list of ten or twelve more of the same kind for you."

"Have you, indeed! How glad I am! What are they all?"

*"I will read you their names directly; here they are, in my pocketbook. Castle of Wolfenbach, **Clermont**, Mysterious Warnings, Necromancer of the Black Forest, Midnight Bell, Orphan of the Rhine, and Horrid Mysteries. Those will last us some time."⁵¹*

Clermont, written by Regina Maria Roche, was published in 1798. Roche is undoubtedly the most important of early Irish female fiction writers and her *Children of the Abbey* published in 1796 was a bestseller which was never out of print during the 19th Century. She was born in Waterford and is buried in St. Patrick's cemetery in the city.

Terror of Frankenstein

This film was originally issued as *Victor Frankenstein* and was released in 1976. It is a Swedish-Irish co-production involving Aspekt Films in association with the National Film Studios of Ireland. Starring Leon Vitali as Victor Frankenstein and Per Oscarsson as the monster it was written and directed by Swedish born Calvin Floyd. Floyd had previously made the "vampire docudrama *In search of Dracula*" and while Frankenstein was originally conceived in similar terms it was soon reformulated as the "most faithful adaptation of Mary Shelley's gothic tale."

English was chosen for the film soundtrack and it was shot largely in Ireland. The Waterford countryside, the Bunmahon mines and the Comeragh Mountains feature prominently, somewhat displayed in a shroud of mist and coldness but as one reviewer suggests this,

"modestly budgeted, the film makes great use of the (sometimes snowy) Irish countryside, with quaint interiors that give it a literary look."⁵²

Frankenstein, written by Mary Shelley, was completed in 1817 and first published in 1818. The subtitle of the novel: "*or the modern Prometheus*" is central to an understanding of the main theme of the work.

Prometheus was assigned the task of forming man from water and earth but in achieving this, his allegiance was transferred to his creation. He then stole the secret of fire from Zeus' lightning and provided it to man. Prometheus was subsequently punished by Zeus for his defiance. Thus, Frankenstein's creation of the monster, like God's creation of man, conveys a responsibility for the actions of his creation. This point is specifically made in the film, though rejected by Frankenstein. As the novel was written at the dawn of the industrial revolution when all challenges seemed surmountable, there is an underlying theme emphasising the power and validity of "old beliefs."

In his review Robert E. Seletsky has stated that "all of the ninety-one minutes, it is a dead-accurate wonderfully literate retelling of the novel."⁵³ And suggests that

⁵⁰ Shannon, Sarah *How ITV aims to lure viewers with quality drama* The Independent, Wednesday 7th February 2007

⁵¹ Austen, Jane *Northanger Abbey* [online version] pgs. 28-29

⁵² Dvddrive-in.com/reviews

⁵³ Seletsky Robert E. *Terror of Frankenstein* [online article]

“..it captures Mary Shelley’s dark, claustrophobic atmosphere of very personal, nightmarish tragedy and alienation unlike any other production.”⁵⁴

The film is singularly lacking in special effects and those shock ingredients which are so much a part of the genre. Violence occurs largely off-camera or as rapid sub-scenes. Interestingly “blood” only appears during the scientific experiments conducted by Victor. While the monster may be close to what the author intended the reaction of those who encounter it, and immediately recoil in horror or endeavour to destroy it, is difficult to accept as the monster appears only so by virtue of movement and pale pallor.

This film represents “Leon Vitali’s most prominent film role; after appearing as Lord Bullingdon in Barry Lyndon.”⁵⁵ Per Oscarsson won the Cannes Film Festival prize for his depiction of the monster. The film quality is somewhat grainy and the landscape shots sometimes appear slightly out of focus and lacking in sharpness. While these characteristics may be deliberate aesthetic devices it is more likely that they are a result of the quality of the DVD edition.

Barry Lyndon

This film is without doubt the most important film ever produced in Waterford. The novel by William Makepeace Thackeray commences in witty and humorous fashion:

“Since the days of Adam, there has been hardly a mischief done in this world but a woman has been at the bottom of it. Ever since ours was a family (and that must have been very near Adam’s time, - so old, noble, and illustrious are the Barrys, as everybody knows) women have played a mighty part with the destinies of our race.”⁵⁶

The book is suffused with humour and the dissipation, anarchy and amorality so typical of 18th Century life. The mood of the period is accurately captured by Thackeray and echoes extraordinarily well the work of Henry Fielding and Samuel Richardson.

The exact setting of the novel is undefined but it would appear to be in the broad geographical area of Tipperary and Waterford as is evidenced in a question about the location of Tipperary:

“It is a beautiful district in Ireland, the capital of which is the magnificent city of Clonmel: a city let me tell you, sir, only inferior to Dublin and London, and far more sumptuous than any on the continent.”⁵⁷

On his first return from Europe Barry “...reached Bristol, from which port I embarked for Waterford...” Following his marriage to the widow Lyndon Redmond takes the name Barry Lyndon. The theme of marriage and women is reiterated:

“They are the deuce, these troublesome wives, and that is the truth. No man knows until he tries how wearisome and disheartening the burthen of one of them is, and how the annoyance grows and strengthens from year to year, and the courage becomes weaker to bear it; so that that trouble which seemed light and trivial the first year, becomes intolerable ten years later.”⁵⁸

And again he returns to this theme, if “I can prevent any of you from marrying, the ‘Memoirs of Barry Lyndon Esq.,’ will not be written in vain.”⁵⁹

In 1973 the “filming commenced in the Waterford area amidst a veil of secrecy.”⁶⁰ However as recounted in “*An awfully big Adventure*” by Pavel Barter⁶¹ the filming was disrupted when,

“On an overcast night in January 1974, Stanley Kubrick and his family fled Ireland...the director had received a tip-off from the gardai that death threats had been made against him by the IRA.”⁶²

There had been “a spate of bomb hoaxes” in Dublin which though they had absolutely nothing to do with the film “probably encouraged his departure...He was in constant fear of the IRA...”⁶³ The official report

⁵⁴ Do pg. 2

⁵⁵ Amazon.com Editorial Review

⁵⁶ Thackeray, William Makepeace *The memoirs of Barry Lyndon, Esq. written by himself.* U.K.: The Caxton Publishing Company, N.D. pg. 3

⁵⁷ Do. pg.59

⁵⁸ Do. pgs. 189-190

⁵⁹ Do. pg.191.

⁶⁰ Flynn, Arthur *The story of Irish film* Ireland: Currach Press, 2005 328p pg. 128

⁶¹ Barter, Pavel *An awfully big adventure* Sunday Times Culture 3rd May 2009 – pgs. 10-11

⁶² Do. pg. 10

“from the company stated that the reason for his departure was that he had completed his shooting schedule in Ireland and was finishing the film in England.”⁶⁴

*“The hauntingly beautiful film is considered one of the author’s greatest works, in which the characters’ idle follies play out against Kubrick’s meticulously composed backdrop...”*⁶⁵

Kubrick had used Huntington Castle Carlow, Powerscourt Wicklow, Cahir Castle and many locations throughout Waterford. He was, in this film, the “first director to shoot footage solely by candlelight.” On completion “the budget had ballooned from an initial \$2.5m to more than \$11m, while the film was savaged by critics.”⁶⁶ Many local people participated as extras with local children, including Councillor Mary Greene involved on a rate of £5 per day. The local scenery is magnificent and is quite recognizable. The film was probably “ahead of its time in its meticulously constructed sequences and discombobulating use of music, which included the Chieftains alongside Schubert, Mozart and Paisiello.”⁶⁷ The essence of the book with the exception of its humour has been caught in the film. However the descent of Barry Lyndon into passivity and his destruction by dissipation and loss of mental energy which are so central in the book have been, to some degree, replaced by a physical destruction following his duel with Bullingdon, in which he suffers the loss of a leg, an occurrence that does not happen in the book. Stanley Kubrick was nominated for Oscars as best director and for best film but it was “the cinematography of John Alcott, Art Direction, Costume Design, and Musical Score which all deservedly won Academy Awards.”⁶⁸

The work of Molly Keane

As one would expect, the novels of Molly Keane have received significant attention from the film industry. Three of her works have been filmed to date and the latter two were extremely successful attracting high quality casts.

Treasure Hunt [June 1952]

This novel was originally produced as a play. The film was directed John Paddy Carstairs. It starred Martita Hunt as Aunt Anna Rose; Jimmy Edwards as Hercules Ryall/Sir Roderick Ryall; Naunton Wayne as Eustace Mills; and Maire O’Neill as Brigid. It runs to 79 minutes and was made in black and white.

Good Behaviour 1983

This is based on the most famous novel of Molly Keane’s second period published in 1981. The book was adapted by Hugh Whitemore and directed by Bill Hays. It starred Daniel Massey, Hannah Gordon, Joanna McCallum, Timothy Sinclair, and Judy Cornwell.

Time after time 1985

This is a much darker novel published in 1983 and the film production accurately reproduces this mood. The film was directed by Bill Hays from a screenplay provided by Andrew Davies. It stars John Gielgud, Googie Withers, Helen Cherry, Trevor Howard, and Fiona Walker.

The McKenzie Break

The McKenzie Break was adapted from the novel by Sidney Shelley with the screenplay produced by William W. Norton. It was directed by Lamont Johnson and stars Brian Keith as Captain Jack Connor; Helmut Griem as Kapitanleutnant Willie Schluter; Ian Hendry as Major Perry; and Jack Watson as General Ben Kerr. It premiered in New York on October 28th 1970 and runs for 108 minutes

The story tells of an escape attempt by German POWs from a Prisoner of War Camp in Scotland during World War II. The film was shot in Ireland. An area around Ballymoney County Wicklow was used as the Prison Camp and the escape route was centred on the village of Bunmahon incorporating magnificent sea scenes of the Waterford coastline adjacent to the old Copper Mines. One of the most interesting actions taken during the shoot was the destruction of the getaway truck by its dispatch down an old mine shaft for concealment. The remnants of the truck are still apparently visible at the bottom of the shaft.

Beat the Devil

⁶³ Flynn, Arthur *The story of Irish film* Ireland: Currach Press, 2005 328p pg. 130

⁶⁴ Do. pg. 130

⁶⁵ Barter, Pavel *An anfully big adventure* Sunday Times Culture 3rd May 2009 – pg. 10

⁶⁶ Do. pg. 11

⁶⁷ Do. pg. 11

⁶⁸ Flynn, Arthur *The story of Irish film* Ireland: Currach Press, 2005 328p pg. 130

This film is based on a novel written by Claud Cockburn, under the pseudonym James Helvick, who lived in Youghal and subsequently Ardmore for many years. The screenplay was co-written by John Huston and Truman Capote. The film was shot in southern Italy and directed by Huston. It stars Humphrey Bogart, Bernard Lee, Peter Lorre, Robert Morley, Gina Lollobrigida and Jennifer Jones. It presents a “whimsical parody of the Maltese Falcon and other 1940’s detective movies.” It runs for 89 minutes and was released in 1954.

“Four international crooks are bound for Africa with an undisclosed ambition to stake a claim in a rich uranium seam found there.”

As this film was made just two years before *Moby Dick* it is very possible that the friendship and liaison between Huston and Cockburn may have contributed to the choice of Youghal as New Bedford.

Moby Dick

Though its contacts with Waterford are tenuous this film, the third version of the classic novel by Melville, deserves mention. It was directed by John Huston from a screenplay produced by renowned novelist Ray Bradbury. It stars Gregory Peck, Richard Basehart, Harry Andrews, Noel Purcell and Orson Welles and was released on the 27th of June 1956. It runs for 116 minutes and was shot at Las Canteras beach, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria with exterior shots in Youghal. Huston used the port area of the town as a double for New Bedford in Massachusetts circa 1840. The harbour had to be dredged in order that it could accommodate the departure scenes for the whaling ship. Beautiful photographic records of the shoot were taken by the Horgan Brothers and were subsequently used in a documentary on the life of Huston.

This film is particularly noteworthy as it was one of first “major features which used Ireland merely as a location and not for a specifically Irish subject film.”⁶⁹

A review in New York Times stated that the film “...is herewith devoutly recommended as one of the great motion films of our times.”⁷⁰ It notes that almost the entire film was made at sea as Huston “clears his film early from New Bedford and gets it out into the sea.”⁷¹ It was however critical of the settings in Youghal, “a rather poor little Irish port and used the faces of plainly Irish women as their brief frieze of sad New Bedford wives.”⁷² In contrast in a review in 2008 by Jeannie Delahunt states:

“The Puritan ripples of New England are captured in the rigid church scene, where there is a lengthy service. Further, the clothing colors for women are muted per the Puritan style, and some men are dressed in traditional black and white garb.”⁷³

A comment on Orson Welles as Father Mapple is particularly revealing:

“Though physically somewhat rigid in his performance, perhaps displaying the rigidity of Puritan life, Welles speech, delivers what his body does not through the use of tonal and facial expressions. Fortunately, Welles and Peck were gifted with flexible, vocal tone color”⁷⁴

Gypsies

Gypsies is a 16mm short film of 15 minutes shot on the Bray seafront and the magnificent Tramore Bay and beach. It was released in 1994 and was written and directed by Miriam Gallagher. Miriam is the daughter of a senior Bank Official and she was born in Parnell Street Waterford but was raised in Tramore. She has featured in the major publication *World Cinema: Diary of a day*.

The theme of the film is centred on remembrance of a childhood encounter with Gypsies on the strand of Tramore and the romantic associations with the life and style of the wandering minstrels and dancers. The child is played by Roisín Deady who was just seven at the time of filming. The since defunct Celtworld is a significant and relevant metaphor in the film.

⁶⁹ Do pg. 113

⁷⁰ Crowther, Bosley *Moby Dick [1956] Screen: John Huston and Melville's White Whale; 'Moby Dick' opens at Sutton and Criterion Gregory Peck starred as Captain Ahab*. New York Times, July 5th 1956. [online article] pg. 1

⁷¹ Do pg. 2

⁷² Do pg. 2

⁷³ Delahunt, Jeannie *Moby Dick [1956] film review: A whale of a saga; Revenge and counter revenge upon the open sea*. Suite101.com June 28th 2008

⁷⁴ Do. Previous entry

The film was screened at the Irish Film Centre, Cinemagic New York, Plaza Cinemas San Francisco, ICFE India, and has been broadcast twice by RTE. It was featured at the San Francisco Irish Film Festival in 1995.

In an article by Anthony O’Keeffe on a film festival in Waterford published in the Sunday Business Post on November 13th 1994, *Gypsies* is described as “one of the highlights of the two-day festival.”

Her “*Girls in silk kimonos*” which celebrates the lives of Constance and Eva Gore Booth won the 1988 Arts Council and 1989 European Script Funds awards. The rights to this script have been acquired by John Lynch’s production company but there are no indications yet of the piece being filmed.

Echoes

The screenplay for *Echoes* was produced by Barbara Rennie, Julia Jones and Donald Churchill from the novel by Maeve Binchy. The film was directed Barbara Rennie and runs for 210 minutes. It was a Working Title Production for Channel 4 in association with RTE and was released in 1988. It stars Geraldine James, Siobhan Garahy, Denise McCormack, Robert Hines, Stephen Holland, John Kavanagh and Alison Doody.

*“Clare O’Brien seems to have achieved her dreams of escape from small-town life when she wins a scholarship to University in Dublin. Once there, however, she embarks on a passionate relationship with David Power, son of Castlebay’s doctor and a fellow student. The affair has devastating results for Clare and the repercussions echo throughout their home town.”*⁷⁵

The film is set in Castlebay between 1952 and 1962. It was filmed in Dunmore East where the seascapes are magnificently used and the Haven Hotel doubles as the Doctor’s house. Ballinroad Hall in Dungarvan served in a pivotal role in the film and the scenes portrayed there are akin to those from the *Ballroom of Romance*. This was perhaps the largest and most significant film production in Waterford in the recent period.

The Purple Taxi Un taxi mauve

This film was produced in 1976. [Rocket gives a release date of 1979 for this film.] It depicts Fred Astaire, who, “as the village doctor, drives his brightly-painted London taxi of the title, manipulating the fate of everyone around him.”⁷⁶ The film is important as “Purple Taxi was the only film with a cash investment from the National Film Studios of Ireland. For about £260,000 the NFSI received a 7 per cent stake in for English language territories except North America. The NFSI had no artistic control over the production and it received a poor critical and box-office response in Ireland.”⁷⁷ Arthur Flynn in his book lists locations used but does not include Waterford and states that “the film serves as a perfect showcase for the windswept scenery of the west.”⁷⁸ However, Lismore was used as a location and filming took place “between October 1976 and January 1977.” Director Yves Boissot in his summation stated that “It’s not specifically a love story or great action.”⁷⁹

During the filming Fred Astaire spent considerable time in Lismore where his sister had once lived. She had married Lord Charles Cavendish, younger brother of the Duke of Devonshire, in 1932. On the death of her husband in 1944 Adele left Lismore but Fred Astaire continued to visit the town regularly. There are many interesting anecdotes noted in the area of Fred Astaire’s escapes from the shoot to partake in social events in the town.

The Dawning 1988

The Dawning is based on the Jennifer Johnston novel “*The old Jest*.” It was directed by Robert Knights and stars Anthony Hopkins, Rebecca Pidgeon, Hugh Grant, Jean Simmons, Adrian Dunbar Trevor Howard and Joan O’Hara. The film runs for 97 minutes and was Rebecca Pidgeon’s first film and Trevor Howard’s last. In “*The story of Irish film*”⁸⁰ Arthur Flynn informs us that it was shot in Cork and Wicklow and makes no mention of Waterford where the most crucial and atmospheric scenes were made.

⁷⁵ Note from the blurb for the DVD edition.

⁷⁶ Flynn, Arthur *The story of Irish film* Ireland: Currach Press, 2005 328p pg. 136

⁷⁷ Rockett, Kevin, Gibbons Luke & John Hill *Cinema and Ireland*. U.K. Croom Helm, 1987 xiv, 274p pgs. 112-113. (Flynn in his book states that the figure provided was £270,926)

⁷⁸ Flynn, Arthur *The story of Irish film* Ireland: Currach Press, 2005 328p pg. 136

⁷⁹ Do. pg. 136.

⁸⁰ Flynn, Arthur *The story of Irish film* Ireland: Currach Press, 2005 328p

The central narrative of the film concerns the arrival of Hopkins, an IRA man charged with organising a major action, who develops a relationship with the schoolgirl niece of Jean Simmons. Hopkins is eventually shot by the army. His character is devoid of real motivation and appears to have a death wish. Likewise the maiden Aunt, played by Simmons, appears to be devoid of any ambition and unfortunately her accent ranges from an Anglo-Irish to a straight Irish resonance. The relationship between Hopkins and Rebecca is nebulous and appears like that of father-daughter with blood-ties being suggested. At the conclusion of the film Nancy throws a bottle from which Hopkins had drunk into the sea in a gesture that suggests that she has grown up and tossed away the preponderant mood of death which pervades the film. A central feature is that the war of independence is seen through Anglo-Irish eyes.

A key feature of the film is the use of literary allusions including: reference to Hamlet indicating the indecisiveness of the central characters; the very title of the original novel is mentioned by the housekeeper who exclaims, "Death is an old jest but it comes new to everyone," a direct quotation from *Fathers and Sons* by Turgenev; and perhaps the most telling, reference is to *Riders to the sea* by J.M. Synge for not only is the play quoted but Nancy, Maeve, and Harry go to see a performance in Dublin.

"MAURYA (*raising her head and speaking as if she did not see the people around her*). They're all gone now, and there isn't anything more the sea can do to me. ...I'll have no call now to be up crying and praying when the wind breaks from the south, and you can hear the surf is in the east, and the surf is in the west, making a great stir with the two noises, and they hitting one on the other. I'll have no call now to be going down and getting Holy Water in the dark nights after Samhain, and I won't care what way the sea is when the other women will be keening."

The importance of this quotation can be understood as Hopkins arrives from the sea in the very first scene, is shot subsequently and receives the coup de grâce in the sea.

Two critical analyses are laid out in *Irish Film: The emergence of contemporary Cinema* and *The past is always there*.⁸¹ In the first Martin McLoone deals with distortions in cinematic presentations which are due to contemporary events. He links what are described as heritage films into,

"the 'Big house' cycle' that includes Robert Knights' *The Dawning* (1989), Pat O'Connor's *Fools of fortune* (1990) and Deborah Warner's *The last September* (1999). In these cases, the films' careful evocation of 'heritage' Ireland of the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy is skewed by the facts of history and the triumph of nationalism."⁸²

In his book John Hill sees the film as part of an English preoccupation with the past and particularly that "associated with the upper or upper-middle classes, the country and the south of England or ex-colonies."⁸³ He suggests this as a nostalgic nuance and relates these themes to *The Dawning* and *Fools of Fortune* stating that despite the fact that both were filmed in Ireland and that the latter was directed by Pat O'Connor it "was still regarded by the critics as 'classically British film-making' and 'Illustrated Brit. Lit.'"⁸⁴ His central thesis is that,

"The past that *Fools of Fortune* and *the Dawning* evoke, therefore, is not so much one form which violence is absent as one in which the main characters are unaware of, or are protected from, its existence. Thus both films set up lapsarian narratives in which characters experience the disruption of their youthful idylls."⁸⁵

The film is somewhat wordy and ponderous but the scenery of Waterford and specifically the seascape in and around Ardmore, where much of the film was shot, is undoubtedly the star of the show. During the filming I visited Ardmore, just as a night shoot was concluding, and with a friend and my two sisters Rosaleen and Josephine met Anthony Hopkins who invited us back to his "changing caravan." During some two hours of conversation and "some of the hard stuff" Anthony Hopkins proved the most amiable and charming of hosts.

She Didn't Say No! [1958]

⁸¹ Hill, John "The past is always there in the present": *Fools of fortune and the heritage film* [in] *Contemporary Irish Cinema: From the Quiet Man to Dancing at Lughnasa* (edited by James MacKillop) U.S.: Syracuse University Press, 1999 290p pgs. 29-39

⁸² McLoone, Martin *Irish film: The emergence of a contemporary cinema*. U.K.: British Film Institute, 2000. 234p pg. 14

⁸³ Hill, John "The past is always there in the present": *Fools of fortune and the heritage film* [in] *Contemporary Irish Cinema: From the Quiet Man to Dancing at Lughnasa* (edited by James MacKillop) U.S.: Syracuse University Press, 1999 290p pg. 29

⁸⁴ Do. pg. 30

⁸⁵ Do. pg. 31

This film is based on the novel “*We are seven*” written by Una Troy⁸⁶ which was published by Heinemann in 1955. It was directed by Cyril Frankel from a script by T.J. Morrison and Una Troy. It stars Eileen Herlie as Bridget Monaghan, Perlita Neilson as Mary Monaghan, Jack MacGowran as William Bates, Joan O’Hara as Mrs Bates, and Ray McAnally as Jim Power. It is in colour and runs for 97 minutes.

It concerns Bridget Monaghan a dressmaker and mother of six illegitimate children by different members of the town’s respectable well-to-do. The key action concerns attempts by the townspeople to force her to leave including the purchase of a farm well removed from the area.

In a review following its showing at the 55th Street Playhouse in New York the critic unimpressed with the writing commented:

“Eileen Herlie is almost listless...Jack MacGowran is oafishly comic...By the time an attempt to shift the mother and her embarrassing brood to another town has been forestalled by one of her old lovers’ suddenly marrying her, the mite of whimsy and humour in this minor fiction has been drained.”

There is, however a positive comment on view of the Aran Islands. The film was England’s entry in the Brussels World Film Festival in 1958 and was banned in Ireland like Una Troy’s first novel *Mount Prospect* published by Methuen in 1936.

The Yellow Bittern

The *Yellow Bittern* is a full length feature documentary directed by Alan Gilsenan on the life and work of Liam Clancy. The film which took almost 5 years to make runs for almost 2 hours and 20 minutes and much of the footage is sourced from Liam’s private collection. The title of the film is taken from the poem *An Bonnán Buí* by Cathal Buí Mac Giolla Ghunna.⁸⁷ Translations have been made by Seamus Heaney and Thomas McDonagh and it is one of the most important of the 18th Century Irish laments:

“But the yellow bittern, my heartsome namesake
With my looks and locks, he’s the one I mourn.

....

For taking drink’s what prolongs your days.
You saw for yourself a while ago
What happened to the bird when his throat went dry;
So my friends and neighbours, let it flow:
You’ll be stood no rounds in eternity.”⁸⁸

The film charts the life of Liam, who was described by Bob Dylan as “just the best ballad singer I’d ever heard in my whole life,” and depicts the “remarkable rise to fame of these devil-may-care singers, from their small-town beginnings...” The Clancy’s and Tommy Makem at the zenith of their popularity in America outsold the Beatles. The segment of the film which deals with Diane Hamilton Guggenheim⁸⁹ is particularly well presented. The story of their appearance on the Ed Sullivan show through to the break-up of the band in 1969 and the underlying problems of alcoholism and income tax liabilities are not fudged. Liam returned to success in Canada as a solo artist and later with Tommy Makem. In a well considered comment the IFTN stated:

“Gilsenan may be the film’s director but truly Liam Clancy is the storyteller throughout.”⁹⁰

⁸⁶ Una Troy was born in Fermoy but lived for much of her life in Waterford. She resided in Bunmahon following the death of her husband and was an avid user of the Mobile Library Service.

⁸⁷ Cathal Buí Mac Giolla Ghunna [c.1680-1756] was born in Fermanagh and is considered one of the most important poets of Bréifne. The yellow bittern is considered his most important poem and a festival is held in his honour each year in Blacklion County Cavan.

⁸⁸ Heaney, Seamus (transl.) *The Yellow Bittern*. Though Heaney’s translation is now the best known version, that of Thomas McDonagh is the most historically relevant.

⁸⁹ Diane Guggenheim’s life is largely un-chronicled. She spent time in Ireland collecting folk music and accompanied by Liam Clancy visited Sarah and Tommy Makem in 1954. Her recordings taken during this trip were released as *The lark in the morning* which is the “earliest album-length collection of Irish folk songs.” Following an unsuccessful relationship with Liam she had a breakdown but subsequently returned to producing folk music recordings. Her period with Liam is recorded in his memoir “*Liam Clancy: Memoirs of an Irish troubadour*” which was published by Virgin Books in 2002.

⁹⁰ IFTN Review [online article]

A premier of the film was given at the Dungarvan SGC on the 8th of September following a Civic Reception by the Dungarvan Town Council. Town Mayor Damien Geoghegan presented Liam's wife Kim with a Parchment inscribed bodhrán. Present with Kim was Liam's daughter Fiona and her son Finn together with other members of the family. Joan Clancy widow of Tom [1923-1990] and Mary Clancy widow of Paddy [1922-November 11th 1998]. Film producer Anna Rodgers was present as were film distributors Neil Roddy and Robert Finn. Donald Brady Acting Town Manager reflected on *The Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem* contribution to the promotion of Irish Folk Music.

Nemeton Television Productions

Nemeton⁹¹ was established in 1993 and is located in the heart of An Rinn, the Waterford Gaeltacht. It has now become one of the largest television production companies in the country and employs over 25 people. Its founder and Managing Director is the visionary local man, Irial Mac Murchú. While Nemeton is well known as a major contributor to the broadcast output of TG4, particularly in the area of G.A.A. and other sporting events, its documentary programmes are of the highest quality and value. One of the most remarkable programmes produced is *The Brothers*. This award winning production includes footage,

“collected over 2 decades by a cinematographer in the Waterford area, who teamed up with Nemeton to see the realisation of this highly acclaimed documentary for the screen...”

It has also provided a major outlet for potential new talent by providing, in association with Waterford Institute of Technology, a Level 8 one year Higher Diploma and the fruits of this course have already led to broadcasted output on national TV by successful students.

Music

Since the inception of film music has played a central part in the transmission of the thematic content of films. During the silent era piano, organ, and orchestral music was played live in theatres and so central did it become that many of the major Directors including Charlie Chaplin and William Desmond Taylor composed and arranged scores to accompany their films. Though written in 1952, the theme music called *Limelight* by Charlie Chaplin perfectly reflects this tradition. Later film music was added to the soundtrack and became a recognised art form with some of the most gifted composers involved.

The use of contemporary music and particularly compositions by recognised popular composers is now not only central to the soundtracks of many films but is seen by the composers as bringing a new audience and increased recognition for their work.

In the case of Waterford two composers/performers are particularly noteworthy in this regard. Gilbert O'Sullivan was born in Waterford in 1946 and his family moved to Swindon in England in 1960. In 1970 he released “*Nothing Rhymed*” which was a huge hit and in 1972 “*Alone again (Naturally)*” became his biggest hit reaching No. 1 in the US and holding that position for six weeks. It sold almost two million copies. His songs “*Get down*” and “*Alone Again*” were used illegally in the Japanese animation series *Maison Ikkoku*. “*Alone again*” was used in the BBC's second series of *Life on Mars* while it also featured in the films, “*Summer time machine blues*,” “*Stuart Little 2*”, and “*Stuck on you*.” It also “received the ultimate accolade” when it was used in an episode of the *Simpsons*. Sofia Coppola⁹² used “*Nothing rhymed*” in the *Virgin Suicides* and it also featured in *Anita and me*.

Liam Clancy has acted in several plays including a production of *Juno and the Paycock*. He not only performed but also wrote some of the music featured in the Bob Dylan film, *No direction home* [2005]. This major documentary was directed by Martin Scorsese and was released on the 21st of July 2005. The film concentrates on the life of Dylan in the period from his arrival in New York in January 1961 until he incurred serious injury following a motorcycle accident in July 1966. The Clancy Brothers, represented by Liam, appear as an important influence on the development of the art of Dylan. The film received several awards including a Columbia-duPont award in January 2007.

Donald Brady

22nd October 2009

⁹¹ Nemeton is an ancient Irish word signifying a “sacred place of druidic ritual.”

⁹² Sofia Coppola was born on May the 14th 1971 and is the daughter of Francis Ford Coppola. She is a film director, actress and Oscar winning screenwriter. She is the only American woman film director to be nominated for an Oscar.