Film Landscapes

Film Landscapes:
Cinema, Environment and Visual Culture

Edited by

Graeme Harper and Jonathan Rayner

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INTRODUCTION

GRAEME HARPER AND JONATHAN RAYNER

This collection represents the outgrowth and continuance of the 'Cinema and Landscape' project begun by the editors just over half a dozen years ago. The initial exploration of this project produced an international conference co-convened at the University of Sheffield in 2010. The present volume represents an amalgam of work presented and debated at that lively Sheffield conference, and subsequent inspired or invited contributions to the continuing cinema and landscape debate that the project to date has stimulated. The post-industrial setting of Sheffield was entirely fitting to keeping the questions posed in previous years open, and beckoning, as Elizabeth Mahoney gives us good reason to believe:

> The cities of postmodernity are obviously suggestive places for thinking through connections between spatial categories and [...] dominant structures: the postmodern city has been conventionally theorized as a site of difference, fragmentation [...] and plurality. (Mahoney, 1997: 168)

The multiplicity of debates maintained at each of the stages through which the 'Cinema and Landscape' project has moved testify to the questioning and connecting of categories, examination of structures of meaning, and the fostering of difference and plurality which moving images of place incite and support. Just as our project succeeded several new works emerged where the discussion of the meanings of landscapes in moving pictures was initiated - one important example being Martin Lefebvre's *Landscape and Film,* published in 2006, early in our own cycle of investigations. The evolution of our project has thus run in parallel with that wider and burgeoning interest and debate in this interdisciplinary area. This situation has been marked by a widening territory of publication (for example, works such as *Urban Cinematics*, edited by François Penz and Andong Lu, which offers a cornucopia of examples and approaches to landscape-image interactions, and also Intellect's *World Film Locations* series).

The suggestiveness of 'moving images of place' as a term, perhaps re- or dis-placing the comparative certainty of the dualistic 'cinema and

landscape', should indicate some of the acceptance and development of plurality which the present volume represents. While our first forays into publishing in this area treated a wide national and geographical range of cinematic examples, they did so within the comparatively conventional frameworks and orthodox theoretical approaches of established film studies. In that respect, cinematic landscapes were proposed and interrogated on grounds of aesthetic distinctions, auteurist emphases, and relevance to national, historical and cultural identity. What emerged in the proposals and presentations of the international conference in Sheffield, and is represented in the present volume in the array of thematic, theoretical and textual alternatives which it encompasses, was a far more eclectic and enterprising engagement with moving images of landscapes.

This volume therefore embraces forms other than the realist narrative feature film, images in media other than film, viewing in environments other than the cinema, and imagining landscapes with meanings and significance other than the representational or symbolic. What was desired and discovered were fresh texts, in virgin territory. We use the word 'landscape' in a wide variety of ways, from the colloquial description of the world or vistas around us personally, to specialist descriptions of topography, land use, habitation, industry, design and control, and even of cultural condition and understanding. For example, writing in the January 2013 edition of the journal *Land Use Policy*, Józef Hernik, Krzysztof Gawroński and Robert Dixon-Gough declare:

> One of the most important factors of all landscapes – also the cultural ones – is the way in which they have constantly evolved, which is a feature that must be both celebrated yet viewed with caution since, taking into consideration a conscious impact of humankind on the process of creating them, the rate of evolution in current and future times could lead to the elimination of their characters leading to a greater degree of unification and subsequently loss of diversity. (800)

Such is the case with our understanding of landscape and the landscapes of film and film-making. Of course, humankind doesn't just 'impact' on the landscapes of film, we create them. Even if these landscapes are captured or recorded rather than constructed it is the place and purpose of film to bring them to the aesthetic and communicative fore, where both makers and audiences can experience and, to an increasing extent, interact with them. Imagining the filmic landscapes of many cultures is not simply to locate national ideals, or to engage with particular directorial, written or even acted notions. The sense in which the composition of film is ultimately defined by particular sets of expertise is well highlighted by consideration of the cinematographers' craft; and yet,

cinematic landscapes are not only the remit of cinematographers. When Elizabeth Davies and Albert Moran speak of Australian cities as 'a symbol or set of human sounds on the aural landscape of the city' (Davies & Moran: 239), they remind us that film landscapes are not only about images.

Film landscapes are additionally landscapes of sound and of movement, as well as landscapes of image. They are also often landscapes focused on human interactions, not only on situations of earth and rock and flora and even sunlight. In Davies and Moran's case they remind us also that even defining a landscape as 'filmic' is fraught with potential dangers of analysis. In their case they are dealing with the landscapes of television, so defined, not the landscapes of film. We might well wonder where we draw the line between 'moving image landscapes' (if this is a term that can be used), if indeed the world we now live in increasingly sees converged landscapes in the media and the notion we can deal with one and not the other is somehow a challenge the media world we see around us. Similarly, as film has occupied many aesthetic, industrial and audience positions it is clear that one concept of film landscape, one concept of film, and one concept of the relationship between film-maker and film audiences would hardly be appropriate.

An interesting example of a specific film-maker group (indeed, an audience group also) is that involved in the 2009 project, *Figuring Landscapes.* This project brought together artists' films under its finely landscaped title. Examining this project in *The Guardian* newspaper in January 2009, reporter Phelim O'Neill, brightly declared that 'landscape, as cheap and bountiful an asset to film-makers as ever there was, can say more than a mere performer ever can. What it says, though, depends on how it is presented.' (21) With such a sweep of interest O'Neill references a popular understanding, while at the same time setting aside a critique that makes filmic landscape far more than a 'cheap and bountiful asset'.

The notion that landscapes might be captured or employed informs some popular beliefs, but likewise underpins investigations into the accuracy of such relatively unobtrusive interplays of landscape and other aspects of our lives. If we merely approach a landscape or seek it as kind of benign or in some way 'stationary' asset, then much that might be discussed comes about *only* because the study of film has generated theoretical differences of opinion. This hardly seems to represent the full picture. Film landscapes come about from much more than mere asset management, or the kind of anthropological observation or big-game hunting approach that such a notion suggests. Even the *Figuring Landscapes* project site itself goes well beyond how this project appeared

in the newspaper view, but popular press representations should not be dismissed: they frequently capture very well the nature of common interpretation. Less commonly, however *Figuring Landscapes* is said to be:

> . . . a remarkable collection of moving image works that has grown from the background of the political and cultural history that links the UK and Australia. Presented internationally as a series of screening programmes, the works in Figuring Landscapes address questions of ecological survival, post-industrialism, gender, the touristic gaze, and uniquely in Australia, the social, political and cultural status of Indigenous people in a post-colonial society. (*Figuring Landscapes*: 1)

Film landscapes thus come not only with cultural history but also with political intent and with wider context. They arrive with questions, and they arrive as the result of questioning. They can bring together the ecological – and this might embrace the ecologies of cities and suburbs as much as the ecologies of the rural or, indeed, what might be called the 'unoccupied'. Landscapes carry tropes of race and gender – at least as they might adopt or adapt such tropes. They explore the economies of human interaction with nature, with each other, with place and with time. Film landscapes, bound as they are in time and in the space (or shape) of film text, bring to film-makers and present to audiences the vision and sounds and human contexts of being resident, passing through (the touristic gaze, as it is referred to in *Figuring Landscapes*) of ownership, citizenship, companionship and stewardship.

All this goes well beyond the simplicity of asset value, though undoubtedly value and concepts of value inform our engagement with, and must inform out understanding of, film landscapes. Plainly speaking, if we were to present landscape as a concept to those who have never experienced it where would we start? How would we explain the ways in which the art of film has presented, manipulated, created or investigated landscape? The answer to these questions informs not only how we have evolved the 'Cinema and Landscape' project but how we have structured this book. Of course, as a study of landscape soon reveals, structure most certainly isn't everything; but the material structure of what is before us often reveals at least something of the conditions under which it was created, if not also something of the philosophy and intention behind it.

This book has introduced categories (but certainly not boundaries) to its contributions in recognition of the diverse and differentiated approaches which they further. In **Section One**, which is entitled 'Filmed Landscapes and Cinematic Identities', analysis of the historical imprint and articulation of personal and collective interpretation of filmed

landscapes are the concerns of our writers. **Ken Fox** provides a penetrating personal discussion of the remaking of Irish history in non-Irish filmmaking and the consequent reconstitution of Irish landscape and culture in the American and British feature films of his youth. Acknowledging the malleable and suggestive realities of cinematic representation, in representing the historical past and marking and evoking an individual's memories, his piece foregrounds how film can proffer a persuasive imagined landscape to the (inauthentically) portrayed culture and community as forcefully as to an ignorant international audience.

Ann-Marie Cook's consideration of a landmark Australian feature, *Picnic at Hanging Rock* (Peter Weir, 1975), interrogates the two-way exploitation of both the culturally high-profiled film and its prominently featured landscape. The impact and evocativeness of the film and the filmed landscape respectively have, Cook argues, become central and institutionalised within discourses of regional and national identity, in terms of tourism, cinema and the popular imaginations of both. Even over thirty years after its release, *Picnic at Hanging Rock* exerts a considerable influence over the Australian cultural imagination, and the imagined Australia propagated at home and abroad, as an unusually powerful and persistent example of the cumulative effect of a cinematic landscape.

A second event, following the 2010 'Cinema and Landscape' conference - one that was themed to discuss the specific relevance of landscape in East Asian cinema - was held in Sheffield. One of the products of that gathering is the detailed and revelatory historical essay contributed by **Kate Taylor** to this book. That Japanese, Korean and Taiwanese cinematic landscapes from the period of the 'Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere' could be subjected to analysis alongside twenty-first century documentaries of Chinese politico-cultural and economic landscapes, in the setting of a former industrial, Northern European university city, underlines the portability, persuasiveness and penetration of the cinematic landscape in informing the study of historical and contemporary societies, crossing language barriers and bridging academic disciplines and debates as they go.

Kate Taylor's chapter which concludes our first section reinforces the concentration on landscapes subjected to national and cinematic imprinting, in its study of the imperial project to which Korean, Taiwanese and Manchurian landscapes are subjugated during the 1930s and 1940s. Taylor's contemporary examples across these colonised countries reveal the enforcement of national and political agenda upon peoples via possessive, proprietary rhetoric and an homogenising vision of landscapes and cultures within Japan's euphemistic 'Co-Prosperity Sphere.'

Section Two of the book, 'Authored and Constructed Landscapes', unites the work of European, Scandinavian and Australian filmmakers, in analyses of the filmed landscape's encapsulation of nested and complimentary concerns: the expression of individual artistic intentions; the embodiment of contemporary cultural and political concerns; and the exploration of nationally specific imagery.

Precious Brown's chapter closely considers Matti Kassila's Finnish drama, *The Harvest Month*, and the decidedly personal in the concept and consideration of landscape, while **Anja Schwarz** pursues an analysis of encroachment in her consideration of *Dark City*, Digitalism and the Australian context. In some way these chapters, though certainly different, share considerations of subjectivity that link them. The notion of personal experience *within* filmic landscape but also the influence of personal experience *on* filmic landscape comes to mind in reading both author's chapters, and it is via their concentration on the ideals of experience that thoughts turn to the ways in which filmic landscapes embrace change as much as they embrace continuities. In **Eva Cermanova**'s chapter the personal is explored and examined in a somewhat different way, with that notion of experience involving not so much the human interaction with landscape as the subtraction of the human from filmic landscapes. Cermanova's concentration is on the work of Czech photographer Josef Sudek and the film directors Andrei Tarkovsky and Béla Tarr. Her chapter clearly brings to light the interplay of the politics and aesthetics of images, both still and moving.

James Cameron's *Avatar* forms the core of considerations in **Stella Hockenhull**'s chapter in our **Section Three**, 'Abject, Horrific and Sublime Landscapes'. Hockenhull deftly explores films where there is 'a concern for the environment through the use of landscape'. The ecology, therefore, of film landscapes constitutes an area of investigation rarely considered and one in which not only richness and decay but reality and unreality, the mundane and the mystical are juxtaposed. Time and the impact of time float somewhere in every part of this analysis, time somewhat less measurable and more unsure as humans bring their influences to bear on landscape. Time too shows itself to be an aspect of landscape in **Fran Pheasant-Kelly**'s chapter on Peter Jackson's *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy – in this case historical time and the impact of a relatively contemporary events on not so contemporary imagined space and time. Pheasant-Kelly notes, with regard to *The Lord of the Rings* that 'in its focus on the notion of the Shire, and the traversing of other spaces, the trilogy reflects post- 9/11 anxieties of both infiltration into home, territories, and the transformation of familiar and sublime spaces into sites

of terror.' Here, a fascinating consideration of the relationship between the landscapes of film and the landscapes of history, of events that shape us no less in their impact on our ways of behaving as on our ways of viewing the physical world, is evoked. Section Three concludes with **Allister Mactaggart**'s chapter 'Lynchian Landscapes and the Legacy of the American Sublime.' Mactaggart references the sublime, as others have referenced it in this section also, but he considers how we must be reminded of the relationship between different forms of the media, with Lynch as an artist who has embraced the concept of media convergence – a convergence of impressions perhaps where decay and delight seem strangely in tune.

Finally, we have entitled **Section Four** 'Communicable Environments, Contestable Spaces' in order to raise important questions about how aesthetic forms and types of space conflate issues of tradition and concerns of evolving exchange. In **Catherine Elwes**'s chapter, which indeed relates directly to the work of the *Figuring Landscapes* project, she notes how in Australia 'Aboriginal artists are mobilising their traditional relationship to the land while simultaneously embracing the modern world through their use of new technologies, including the digital moving image.' This chapter is a personal story as well as an analysis of settler-indigenous relations as they pertain to film making and filmic landscapes, and the tone and pitch of this chapter offers a distinctive contribution to the book.

Chris Pallant, also, brings a unique element to Section Four. The animated landscape, in comparison with the manipulation and representation of the tangible, recordable environment, presents particular obstacles to theoretical and aesthetic discussions of moving-imaged place. Specific conceptual challenges (akin to those precipitated by digital effects in mainstream film production) with which the study of animation is endowed become acute in relation to the rendition of animated landscapes. Pallant gives fine shape to these explorations and also points us forward to the potential, and potential polemics, that will no doubt attach to the augmented realities of our filmic futures.

Finally, **David Forrest and Jonathan Rayner** offer a detailed report on a project in which the landscapes of community map onto the landscapes of film, embracing this in regional, collective and individual terms. Elsewhere Forrest's work on the British New Wave and on Social Realist cinema has determined the poetic nature of expression in our cinematic engagement with experience and environment, where he has discussed what he calls 'a wider meditation on actuality' (Forrest, 2009: 194). Rayner's previous work on directors such as Peter Weir and Australian Cinema is relocated productively here between people and nations. His most recent analysis of naval war films takes landscapes out

into seascapes in a first time discussion of the role of the sea in perceptions of self and nationhood during times of war. The authors in this chapter bring their varied backgrounds to a film-based product that provided the next generation an opportunity to consider their own personally significant and signifying landscapes.

Our book concludes with a **Postscript**, 'Synaptic Landscapes: Exploring the 21st Century Moving Image.' **Graeme Harper** suggests it might be that we need to urgently reconsider the discussion of film landscape, and to make it much clearer within the historical context of the 20th century, and then to begin considering more closely new types of moving image landscapes in the more contemporary world – not many of which might fit easily within some of the ideas concerned with the cinematic. In addition, with considerable technological changes occurring over the past 20 years or so, might it be possible that we have not yet come to understand this world when our engagements with space and time have been so fundamentally changed? Is it possible, in fact, that the dimensions of the world (at least metaphorically, if not always physically) have been changed by new ways of communicating, new ways of sharing experiences, new socially influenced modes of production and consumption, personal exchange and public identity? These factors may make our comprehension of the world one in which moving image landscapes can be considered anew and in ways that might bring us to better understand our contemporary world.

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SECTION I:

FILMED LANDSCAPES AND CINEMATIC IDENTITIES

CHAPTER ONE

IN PRAISE OF THE INAUTHENTIC: *THE FIGHTING PRINCE OF DONEGAL'S* CINEMATIC LANDSCAPE

KEN FOX
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> History is […] recognised as Truth by the viewer not by virtue of the facts being correct, but because the image looks right. The recognition effect 'that's the way it was' is a product not of the historicity of the plot, but the manipulation of the image. (Tribe, 1977-8: 16)

I will argue in the case of *The Fighting Prince of Donegal* (Michael O'Herlihy, 1966) (TFPOD hereafter) it is not the veracity of the image that gives the film its lasting quality; paradoxically, it may be its very falseness (inauthenticity). The film's celebration of rebellion, escape, and at least temporary victory and, crucially, its naming of the place where I was born, secure the film's longevity in the theatres of my memory.

TFPOD is a generic swashbuckling adventure that bears resemblance to films such as *Bonnie Prince Charlie* (Anthony Kimmons & Alexander Korda, 1948), *The Master of Ballantrae* (William Keighley, 1953), *Kidnapped* (Robert Stevenson, 1960) and *Quentin Durward* (Robert Thorpe, 1955) among others, critiqued by Colin McArthur as examples of "tartanry" in relation to Hollywood's use of a regressive ideology in its representation of Scotland (McArthur, 1982). Based on the novels of Robert Louis Stevenson and Walter Scott these tales of adventure were a strong influence on Robert T. Reilly's novel *Red Hugh, Prince of Donegal* (1957) from which the screenplay for TFPOD is adapted. Using McArthur's critique it is all too easy to dismiss TFPOD as another example of Hollywood's stereotypically romanticised notion of Irishness and the Irish landscape, and therefore fail to capture the richness of meaning produced by giving due attention to the film's production context and the historical context of its time of release. I will argue that

while the film takes its place as part of the tradition of American-Irish romanticized visions of the landscape which include *A Man of Aran* (Robert J. Flaherty, 1934) and *The Quiet Man* (John Ford, 1952), the production background and historical context for the film's release provides a fascinating case study for the analysis of how landscape, memory, identity and history coalesce. I was born in Donegal so a focus of my work is on how the film's images of castles and forests integrate with an idealised misremembering of my own childhood landscape; where a small stream was a swollen river and the rope swing across that stream produced its own epiphany of emotion replicating our most recent cinematic adventures.

As Graeme Harper and Jonathan Rayner note, "cinematic landscapes, while obviously part of a continuum, and equally composed of frames, can also be considered conduits of memories, and a form of time, that transcend cinema itself" (Harper and Rayner, 2010: 19). In the following analysis I suggest the film has as much, if not more, to say about the date of its release, 1966, than it does about the 15th century cinematic time depicted. The film exists in at least four dimensions of time: its date of release; the historical time of its depiction; its place in the chain of representations of the Irish cinematic landscape that is ongoing; and in the now of my re-examination from a twenty-first century perspective.

Drawing upon notions of the inauthentic as proposed by Vincent Cheng (2004), I will contend that the film's representation of the cinematic landscape of 15th century Ireland functions metonymically as part of Hollywood's continued invention of Ireland as an idealized wilderness landscape, but also comment upon how that stereotype can be appropriated for audience pleasure and memory production.

Naming the Landscape: Some Helpful Complications

The title of the film TFPOD refers to a region of north-west Ireland that in the 15th century was ruled by the clan O'Donnell. The name Donegal has a richly contested history. The Gaelic name is Dun na nGall, translated as the "fort of the foreigners"; you can see how this might appeal to my argument in praise of inauthenticity. I come from a place that as far back as the 15th century was recognised as a region of potential outsiders. What is often disputed in explaining the name is who the foreigners might have been. In some accounts the foreigners are Danes, part of a band of Vikings who sailed around the north-west in the 8th and 9th centuries and caught the natives unawares. The phrase still exists in Gaelic: "Thainig se aniar aduaidh orm", "they came from the north-west"

means being caught out or taken by surprise. In 1585 the town of Dun na nGall, was assigned as the title for the administrative region by the English. This was much to the annoyance of some proponents of a more, as they saw it, authentic version of Irishness who claimed the county should be called Tirconnaill, named after Conaill, the second son of Niall of the Nine Hostages, a famous chieftain who, as legend would have it, was responsible for stealing the young St. Patrick from his home in Wales and inadvertently setting him on the road to become the patron saint of Ireland.

Disputes about naming the landscape were already in full swing before the English map makers anglicised the place names in the 19th century, an event dramatized so effectively in Brian Friel's play *Translations* (1981). Another Brian Friel play set in 1930s Donegal, *Dancing at Lughnasa* (1990), is perhaps one of the best known representations of the region. Many of Friel's plays are set in the fictional Donegal town of Ballybeg. Along with the work of Frank McGuinness, another Donegal playwright, (who wrote the screenplay for the 1998 film of *Dancing at Lughnasa* directed by Pat O'Connor) Friel's writing asserts the primacy of the landscape as a central motif in narratives of Donegal. Film and television representations of the region, particularly since the early 1990s, tend towards what Luke Gibbons has identified as soft and hard primitivism; the first focuses on the romantic, unspoiled nature of the landscape, while the other highlights the harshness of life and the need to escape (Gibbons, 1996: 215-18). I would like to add a further variation which I call magic primitivism, where there is uncertainty about the degree to which the magic in the landscape will yield comfort or catastrophe.

Some of the defining natural features of the Donegal landscape are the mountains, valleys and rugged Atlantic coastline where the Atlantic Ocean's long wave light provides a clarity that cries out to be captured on screen. A defining man-made feature of the landscape to the east is the border with Northern Ireland. As time passes the border continues to fade but is never fully erased, this liminal zone, particularly during the Troubles, saw Donegal becoming a haven for Northern Ireland tourists as well as IRA planners, a dichotomy captured beautifully in Paul Muldoon's poem *Ireland*:

> The Volkswagen parked in the gap,
> But gently ticking over.
> You wonder if it's lovers
> And not men hurrying back
> Across two fields and a river. (Muldoon, 1980)

The plainness in the description of the border landscape, two fields and a river, makes all the more appalling the way the land yielded so much sectarian blood. Representations of Donegal in films such as *The Railway Station Man* (Michael Whyte, 1992), *The Secret of Roan Inish* (John Sayles, 1994) and *A Shine of Rainbows* (Vic Sarin, 2009) play on the magic primitivism of the land and sea to restore; reform and make whole. However, *Wakewood* (David Keating, 2011) constructs this renewal through landscape to produce a magic that is destructive, morbid and claustrophobic. Shot on location in the border region of south Donegal around the town of Pettigo, the restorative powers of the coastline are nowhere in sight, instead the town is bounded by an invisible border beyond which the magic will not work; two fields and a river, one might say.

Wakewood is one of the first releases under the revamped Hammer Horror Films Production label which sets up certain expectations in the audience, as much, one might argue as a film bearing the Walt Disney Production title. I want to suggest there is a degree of magical primitivism in TFPOD clearly proclaimed in the opening frame of the title sequence: A Walt Disney Production. What is added to the quasi-historical basis of O'Reilly's book and the subsequent screenplay is the legend regarding the succession of Hugh (O'Donnell), the father, by his son Red Hugh (O' Donnell). The complications about naming and ownership of the land and the emphasis on the how the cinematic landscape figures in shaping the attitudes and actions of the central characters is a key narrative element in TFPOD.

The Significance of 1966

The film's first three minutes are filled with the suspense of waiting for news of the O'Donnell's death. The establishing shot of Donegal Castle is then intercut with a series of shots seen from the castle ramparts of the sky over the adjoining woodland filled with hundreds of cacophonous crows. The scene cuts to the edge of the woods where two young children, one on a donkey with their granny (a literal old wife) as she points to the same sky filled with birds and declaims:

> Listen to them crying, it's part of the legend. The birds will gather when Hugh succeeds Hugh as Prince of Donegal and Ireland shall be free.

The articulation of this legend, as if nature itself was lining up to defeat the English, fills these opening shots of the landscape with a sense of promise and foreboding. The establishing shot of Donegal Castle, followed

by shots of generic wooded countryside, in this case Iver Heath in Buckinghamshire near Pinewood Studios, standing in for the terrain of Donegal, helps to produce the combination of Disney Production and swashbuckling genre that proclaims the film's fantasy lineage. This is the landscape from which Red Hugh O'Donnell emerges with his wolfhound, ready to return to the castle to hear the news of his father.

Released in 1966 as a family entertainment, the film was also edited as a three part series for television screened in the *Wonderful World of Disney* strand in 1967. The lead role is played by Peter McEnery with Susan Hampshire as Kathleen Mac Sweeney, the love interest. The use of these popular young English actors was an attempt to appeal to the teenage magazine culture of the 1960s. Peter McEnery, at that time, was a favourite Romantic lead from the previous Disney hit *Moonspinners* (James Neilsen 1965) where he played opposite Hayley Mills. As well as being a Disney production the film proclaimed more directly its inauthenticity with the first end title: "Shot on location in Pinewood Studios, London, England." However, as Martin McLoone has noted in relation to Robert Flaherty's *Man of Aran*, "location filming in itself does not guarantee objective reality or authenticity" (McLoone, 2000: 41). The film was directed by an Irishman, Michael O'Herlihy, using mainly English and Scottish actors in the leading parts, although some (authentic) Irish accents can be heard in the parts played by Donal McCann (Sean O'Toole) and Maire Kean (Mother). As an audience in 1966 we were amused at Peter McEnery's pronunciation of Donegal and the range of accents of the central characters but we could understand them as fake and mocked their use as we replayed the film in our playground games.

The film tells the story of Red Hugh O'Donnell (born 1571, died in Spain, 1602, possibly poisoned by English spies), the eponymous Prince of Donegal, in his battle against the English colonisers to preserve the chieftains homeland, his capture, recapture and double escape from Dublin Castle, his unifying of the clans and his attempts to win the hand of Kathleen Mac Sweeney. As the opening title sequence reveals the story is set in Ireland in 1587, when Elizabeth 1 ruled and the country was garrisoned by English troops against the threat of Spanish invasion.

The film was released in October 1966, a year charged with historical significance for Irish audiences and the Irish Diaspora. One can hear in the dialogue adapted from the O'Reilly novel the nationalist fervour that was in the air in 1966 as Hugh declares once he is named Prince of Donegal: "To every man who is not afraid to die for Freedom, to die for Ireland." Or as Hugh's mother intones: "And remember Hugh you have not just inherited the crown; this is the moment all Ireland has been waiting for."

1966 was the year of the 50th anniversary of the 1916 Rising; it was also, as all football fans will know, the year of the World Cup in England, with the famous final between England and West Germany on July 30. A few months earlier the 50th anniversary celebrations of the Easter Rising had seen street parades throughout the Republic with adults and children wearing the Easter Lily. The Lily becomes associated symbolically with the 1916 Easter Rising in Dublin due to the seasonal decoration in churches during that period. It is worn as a flower of remembrance for those who gave their lives for the cause of Irish independence. A decade after 1966 the Easter Lily had become such a potent symbol of Republicanism that many of those same adults and grown up children would not have felt comfortable wearing it. During Easter Week 1966 each night on Irish Television (RTE) a documentary went through in vivid detail the uprising and resulting executions of many of the rebels.

In 1966 there was a strong feeling that it was at some level unpatriotic, perhaps even un-Irish to support England, a feeling that West Germany, as it was then, should win. I played Gaelic football but I also loved soccer, as did most of my friends, but there was a time when you were forced to make a choice between Gaelic games and soccer. It was a kind of rebellion to set aside Gaelic for soccer. In fact members of the Irish Garda and the Armed Forces were prohibited from playing foreign games, particularly soccer, in their contracts. And what about supporting an English soccer team? Many of us unpatriotic types already supported English teams and had much more of a sense of loyalty to Charlton, Hurst, Ball and Peters than Franz O' Beckenbauer or Uwe McSeller. 1966 was a year when the past weighed heavily on the shoulders of a nation working hard to find an identity for itself between the axis of influence of the United States and the United Kingdom. However, a cautionary note is sounded by McArthur when he asserts: "cultural historians love temporal coincidence and the less wary may be seduced into regarding it as an explanatory principle" (McArthur,2003: 7). I stand accused, less wary and seduced, not offering 1966 as an explanatory principle but pointing to the complexity of the film's context and reception as a further layer of meaning that complicates the film's wish-fulfilment politics and notions of the authentic.

Vincent Cheng notes: "an argument for authenticity in fact ends up segregating people by drawing boundaries of essentialist categories of ethnicity, race, and gender" (Cheng, 2004: 17). For growing up in 1960s Ireland, a checklist of authentic Irishness might have included a mix of the following cultural and identity categories:

1. The ability to speak Gaelic;
2. Participating in Gaelic Games;

3. Being a Catholic;
4. Living in the West of Ireland;
5. Supporting one of the two main political parties, Fianna Fail or Fine Gael.

This list does not even begin to deal with categories of ethnicity, race and gender. While my family ticked most of these boxes, on the political front my father supported and canvassed for the Labour Party. From the pulpit the Labour Party was denounced as a party of communists, anti-Pope, anti-church and ultimately anti-Irish. I am ashamed to say that close to Election Day when Fine Gael and Fianna Fail badges were being passed around at school I took both just in case I had to disavow the politics of my father. Despite my father's somewhat unconventional politics I didn't feel as if I had been constructed as other, after all I was raised as a Catholic which, at the time, was probably the most important box that had to be ticked in claiming authentic Irishness. Irish was not my first language, but at least I was from the primitive west. Amidst the wonderfully corrupting images from the local cinema and television, and the barely tolerated passion for soccer, the version of history we were given at school contained the certainty of an historical football match, two opposing sides them (the oppressors) versus us (the colonised). My love of English popular culture and football helped to muddy the waters and confusingly TFPOD made me feel proud to belong while it flaunted its inauthenticity.

The Cycle of Reinvention

Salman Rushdie remarks in relation to the publication of his novel *Midnight's Children* that he realised he wanted "to restore the past to myself, not in the faded greys of old family-album snapshots, but whole, in Cinemascope and glorious Technicolor" (Rushdie, 2010: 9-10). TFPOD, although it represents its version of Donegal in glorious Technicolor, it does not offer the density of mythologizing produced by, for example, *The Quiet Man*, "the ultimate Irish-American dream of Ireland" (McLoone, 2010: 141). However, TFPOD is part of the same project of the invention of Ireland for the Irish-American audience. A realization by the Irish government that tourism would become Ireland's most effective and sustainable indigenous industry produced, from the 1950s onwards, a great appetite for images of the landscape that could be sold to attract the Irish-American market.

As much as Hollywood (Disney) wanted to invent Ireland for the Irish-American audience, Ireland is very adept at re-inventing itself as historians,

philosophers and cultural commentators such as Declan Kiberd (1996), Roy Foster (2007) and Richard Kearney (1996) have attested and film scholars such as Kevin Rockett (1987) Luke Gibbons (2002), Martin McLoone (2000) and Ruth Barton (2006) among others have illustrated so expertly. These inventions and re-inventions have continued as we have seen Ireland emerge from the margins of Europe to become the Celtic Tiger and on to its current position as one of Europe's most indebted economies.

The illusion of an economy based on land speculation and property development was shattered by the banking crisis and the subsequent fall in property prices and this is often constructed as a metropolitan problem. Dublin was the centre for growth and it is now the epi-centre of dissatisfaction about the ways in which a paradigm of unrestricted development has blighted the landscape of many rural towns in commuting distance of the capital. It was not only the lure of the commute to the metropolis that spurred the rampant development but also the promise of one's very own piece of the west coast idyll so fixed in the mythology of what represents authentic Ireland. Hundreds of houses and apartment built as second homes are now lying empty obscuring the views of the Atlantic in Donegal coastal towns such as Port na Blagh.

A recurring visual motif of Ireland's fall from economic grace are the ghost estates that remain unfinished at the edge of many Irish towns, where the steady advance of nature is in the process of reclaiming the land making the buildings all the more desolate. In the post-Celtic Tiger era it will be interesting to see how filmmakers choose to represent the Irish landscape. How will the ghost estates and empty apartment blocks figure in these representations and how will they be incorporated in to a continuum of either soft, hard or magical primitivism or produce another variant that might reflect the social realities of a landscape once again suffering the depopulation of emigration? Anthony Haughey's photographic exhibition *Settlement*, which opened in Dublin's Copper House Gallery in October 2011, provides an iconographic template for how the ghost estates might well figure in moving image representation in the coming years. It may well be, to adapt Vivian Sobchack's remark in relation to American cinema, that Ireland's spatial mythology will continue to privilege the non-urban and be seen, indeed, as anti-urban. (Sobchack, 1999: 129).

The anti-urban sentiment in some Irish artistic production and the invention of Ireland for an Irish-American audience figures in Roddy Doyle's latest novel in the Henry Smart trilogy, *The Dead Republic* (2011).The trilogy tells the story of a young IRA man who takes part in the 1916 Rising and has to flee to America in its wake, following on from

A Star Called Henry (2000) and *Oh, Play that Thing* (2005), *The Dead Republic* brings Henry back to 1950s Ireland. Nick Rennison's review of Doyle's novel notes that Smart becomes a kind of mascot for the mythologizing John Ford, a man eager to bring to the cinema his fantasies about the world of his Irish forebears (Rennison, 2010). Ford brings Henry back to Ireland as the IRA consultant on the set of *The Quiet Man*. "He knew what I was doing", Henry says. "I was reclaiming my life. And I knew what he was doing. He was making me up. I'd tried to tell the truth", Henry says of his contributions to Ford's work, "but I'd ended up inventing Ireland." In an interview for BBC Radio 4's *Open Book* in Apil 2010 Roddy Doyle, as a Dubliner, states that to be born in Dublin you were somehow constructed as less Irish and this is a discourse worked on in countless films, plays, novels, poems and songs and very evident in the metonymic use of Dublin in the TFPOD.

Landscapes of Oppression and Freedom

Hugh O'Donnell, kidnapped by the English from his home territory, is imprisoned in Dublin Castle, and Dublin comes to represent not just a less authentic version of Irishness but almost a state of being un-Irish. Dublin and its surrounding counties were known as The Pale, where the English had control over the landscape: if you lived beyond the Pale your allegiance was to your local clan chief. The closer you were to the Pale, the less Irish you were considered: what more spatial a metaphor could we have for the severe identity politics associated with landscape? Vincent Cheng identifies how:

> The English imperial discourse had long fashioned the Irish as a primitive and uncivilized Celtic 'other'. In response, the Gaelic Revival searched for many of the same elements (of rural primitivism) in the authentic Irish self thus mirroring the English stereotype of the Celt. What resulted … is a construction of Irish national identity around the idealization of a rural and primitive West, the sentimentalized national mythology about rural Ireland as the authentic Ireland. The discursive result is that in such an ethos, the real thing, the authentic culture and ethos of the tribe/people, can only be found in the countryside of an Aran or a Connemara, and certainly not in the cityscape of Dublin. (Cheng, 2004: 48-9)

The trend established by the Gaelic Revivalists continues in Irish-American versions of the landscape in TFPOD. The establishing shot of Dublin Castle, where Hugh is held, offers a strong contrast to the previous establishing shots of Donegal Castle and the Castle of the Mac Sweeney clan in terms of colour, light and the natural surroundings of woodland and

sea coast. Framed as a prison more than a castle the stark grey stone of the walls and battlements beyond which can be seen the grey roofs and chimneys of the city. This emphasis in the Dublin castle scenes of grey stone and the iconography of captivity makes the earlier countryside scenes and the merry cheer of castle life in Donegal all the more idealized. When Hugh makes his first ill-fated escape there is no help available in the narrow streets surrounding the castle. Through his earlier dialogue with a cell mate, Sean O'Toole, whose clan rule in Wicklow to the south of Dublin, Hugh knows that he can expect no assistance until he moves beyond the Pale. The castle is the first circle of imprisonment but beyond Dublin the tentacles of English power spread across the landscape. When Hugh is recaptured having made it to open countryside the audience is reminded this is the landscape where he really belongs. The threat of his imminent removal to the Tower of London hastens his next escape attempt. If Dublin is the focal point of English power in Ireland then the Tower of London represents the fortress of oppression that will rule out any chance of escape. Days before his intended exile in the Tower of London, Hugh escapes again. Hugh has been joined in captivity by Henry O'Neill (Tom Adams), prince of Tyrone, a sometimes rival but now a confederate of O'Donnell. They are aided in their escape by Martin (Maurice Rooeves), a young jailer who brings their food. Born of an Irish mother and English father, Hugh and Henry befriend Martin and persuade him to help through recourse to monetary reward but also with an appeal to his loyalty to his Irish mother stuck in servitude in London: "There's a way for you to escape your bondage and be a hero for all of Ireland."

The metonymic use of Donegal, in the figure of Hugh, as standing in for Ireland is repeated through the film, as in contrast is the use of Dublin as representative of English rule. The escape of O'Donnell and O'Neill spurs the villainous Captain Leeds (Gordon Jackson) as the Viceroy's Deputy to travel north with an army to capture Donegal Castle before Hugh can make his triumphant return. While the historical record shows Donegal Castle was never taken by the English as a plot device Leeds' devious manoeuvre enables O'Donnell to demonstrate his superior knowledge of the landscape and architecture of the castle. The castle is retaken, Hugh's mother and Kathleen MacSweeney are freed but Leeds must remain in Donegal as a hostage to ensure no further attacks by the English, a fitting end for Leeds, the character who represents the most malevolent aspects of English rule. Perhaps he may end up taking an Irish wife and interbreeding in the time honoured fashion of coloniser and colonised.

Just before the attack to retake Donegal Castle, Hugh speaks with his captains in the castle of MacSweeney. The coming together of the clans that the English were trying to avoid by the capture of O'Donnell has now come to pass by Captain Leeds' dishonourable attack on Donegal Castle. For the first time in the film religious symbolism is invoked. There is no representative of Catholicism in view throughout the film, an interesting structuring absence for an historical tale than hinges so much on the Elizabethan view of Ireland as a jumping off point for a possible Spanish (Catholic) invasion. Having set out his plan to retake his castle, Hugh calls the clans to recite the battle prayer. As with most warring tribes both groups claim to have God on their side, but it is only the Irish as represented by O'Donnell who demonstrate their religious fervour when going in to battle.

The celebration of their victory which is the final section of the film brings together the full range of stereotypes of stage Irish-ness; dancing, drinking, brawling (good naturedly, of course) and singing. In terms of film release dates TFPOD is the descendant of *The Quiet Man*, but in those other dimensions of time which the film depicts it is clear these characters are the ancestors of Sean Thornton (John Wayne), engaged in similar stage-Irish behaviour. The film's magic primitivism has receded and the soft romantic primitivism returns as Hugh and Kathleen escape from the crowd to stand on the battlements of Donegal Castle. As the camera pulls away to a Wonderful World of Disney happy ending, the lovers are set once more in the landscape of the film's opening shot. For all of us who knew the fate that was soon to befall the real Hugh O' Donnell, an untimely death in Spain, and The Flight of the Earls, that saw the self-imposed exile from Ireland in 1607 of those Gaelic aristocrats who might have offered opposition to English rule, the ending was wonderfully fake, like the collective singing in the final scene of the song O'Donnell Abu, not written until the 1840s. In one sense this anachronism is of little consequence, in another sense, it points to the way in which film time can collapse the past in to an everlasting present film-time. I continue to wonder why this cinematic geography of my own place had such an impact on me years after I knew the film had not been shot in Donegal but still retained for me an element of essential Donegal-ness. Ultimately the film's impact may well hinge on the celebration of the place where I was born as a big screen story that would travel all around the world. I am engaged in my own collapse of time where my viewing of the film in 1966 meshes with subsequent reviewing since that time and as Jonathan Coe reminds us: "A film is a mercurial thing; its very nature changes,