

The second husband, buying an Irish estate and a seat in the Dublin Parliament, ended up – like Tenducci did more than once – bankrupt and in gaol.

Helen Berry has been able to exploit a rich source in the case papers produced for the suit for annulment. They include depositions which had been collected in Florence by eye-witnesses to Tenducci's emasculation and in Ireland relating to the first marriage. A vivid detail is that the consistory court of the bishop of Waterford and Lismore assembled in The Royal Oak tavern in Waterford. Much information comes from these testimonies; more has been gathered from contemporary newspapers. However, a great deal, including the fluctuating fortunes of Tenducci and his resilience, as well as the authorship of the justificatory pamphlet, has to be inferred. At times, Dr Berry elaborates on contexts at excessive length. She contrasts the savagery of some parts in the story, particularly the castration itself, but also the violence directed against the wayward bride, with the politeness and refinement attending the courtly opera and musical societies in English cathedral closes. For the author, it is in the end a tale of exploitation, in which permanent psychological and physical scars were inflicted. These are salutary correctives to a story that hitherto has been regarded as confirming the oddity of foreign (and Catholic) musicians and of the Irish Protestant gentry. Yet, so far as eighteenth-century Ireland is concerned, the account tends to remind how readily the propertied manipulated the law and mobilised brute force.

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MAGIC LANTERN, PANORAMA AND MOVING PICTURE SHOWS IN IRELAND, 1786–1909. By Kevin Rockett and Emer Rockett. Pp 403, illus. Dublin: Four Courts Press. 2011. €45.

It is undoubtedly a major event in Irish film studies when one of its most prominent scholars, Kevin Rockett – here writing in collaboration with his wife Emer Rockett – publishes a new book. Readers familiar with *The Irish filmography: fiction films 1896–1996* (1996) and *Irish film censorship: a cultural journey from silent cinema to internet pornography* (2008) are prepared that a new book by Kevin Rockett may be a weighty tome, and so they were likely only mildly surprised when the most recent publication saw the simultaneous arrival of two books, both of them weighty. While writing what would become *Film exhibition and distribution in Ireland, 1909–2010* (2011), the authors encountered a substantial gap in the literature occasioned by the almost complete silence of cultural historians on the popular visual culture imported into Ireland during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The authors argue that to neglect such popular forms in favour of the period's folk culture and/or high art is to miss the 'more meaningful and complex fluidity that surround all cultural forms' (p. 11). More than this, it 'necessarily negatively impacts on how all cultural forms, and indeed all aspects of society, are understood historically' (p. 11) but especially on an understanding of cinema. Aiming to contribute to a more complete understanding of cinema in Ireland, this is a very welcome study of early popular visual culture that provides innumerable insights into its subject based on both substantial original research and a synthesis of existing work.

As a pre-history of Irish cinema, the book focuses on those cultural forms that the authors see as the precursors of the twentieth century's dominant medium. The authors organise their material into four substantive chapters, which are supported by an introduction, an appendix of statistics on Irish population and wages during the period, over one hundred pages of notes consigned to the back matter, a select bibliography and two indexes, one of which is devoted to entertainment venues. The chapters focus on the magic lantern, on panoramas and other pre-cinematic moving pictures, on the

establishment of venues where such visual entertainments could be exhibited and controlled, and on the beginnings of the projected moving picture entertainments that would become cinema.

A brief review cannot hope to do justice to the range of topics covered here, but as the early history of the magic lantern and the panorama in Ireland are so little known, the chapters on these topics are particularly fascinating. While Irish scientists and inventors are not usually linked to the development of the optical devices that formed the basis of cinema – Lucien Bull's experiments in high-speed photography perhaps excepted – Ireland can, the authors show, lay claim to pioneers of the magic lantern and the panorama. Indeed, the authors' discussions of the role of William Molyneux (1656–98) in explicating the magic lantern and of Robert Barker (1739–1806) in the invention of the panorama also demonstrate the interactions of Irish science and entertainment during the period. A precursor of the slide projector, the magic lantern was a multi-faceted device that could be used not only for such illuminating purposes as illustrating lectures on educational or otherwise edifying subjects but also in spectacular 'phantasmagoria' shows in which projected images on smoke or gauze gave the illusion of ghostly presences. The chapter on the magic lantern ends with the apparitions at Knock in 1879, a case in which science, magic and religion suggestively intertwine.

The book is well illustrated, with three plate sections containing 108 images as well as thirty reproductions of mainly publicity matter printed alongside the text. Given the nature of the book, it is a pity that one of the plate sections could not have been devoted to colour reproductions that would give a better sense of the kind of images that contemporary audiences would have enjoyed. It is also a curious anachronism that the jacket illustration of the Rotunda – which includes the Parnell statue in the foreground – was clearly taken after 1911.

The book is not a narrative history and, as such, would have benefited from more extensive framing sections. The one-and-a-half pages of introduction can offer little by way of historiographical, methodological or theoretical discussion for the book as a whole, and individual chapters lack prefatory or concluding sections that could pick up the threads of an evolving argument. No overall conclusion is provided. Similarly, readers familiar with the literature on early cinema are likely to feel the lack of engagement with such scholars as Tom Gunning and Charles Musser, particularly of a discussion of how the latter's history of screen practice relates to this book's historiographical model.

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THE STORY OF IRISH MUSEUMS, 1790–2000: CULTURE, IDENTITY AND EDUCATION. By Marie Bourke. Pp xxxii, 562, illus. Cork: Cork University Press. 2011. €49.

Marie Bourke's *The story of Irish museums, 1790–2000* is very welcome to those with a passionate interest in the sector, its history, politics and significance. As a reference point for the development of museums nationwide, this is a very useful book. The book draws upon two bodies of literature: published work on the history of museums and galleries in Ireland along with that which critiques museums more generally. It provides background information, and an ideal starting point, for in-depth investigations into the significance and meaning of museums in Ireland.

Bourke provides a comprehensive account of the important periods of Irish museum history. For any student of this subject, it will be most helpful to have this resource to hand. The history of museums is tackled century-by-century and, within that, the origins and development of key institutions told. The section on the nineteenth century, for