

has collected and augmented a generation of scholarship, delivering a definitive accounting of the rise of small-gauge film cultures in the United States. Through meticulous research, sophisticated argumentation, and a strong sense of what was truly significant about portable cinema, Wasson has written a book that will help ensure, from now on, that film historians, theorists, and students think of the cinema as belonging not just to the theater, but also to the portable projectors that made movies possible everywhere they went.

BOOK DATA. Haidee Wasson, *Everyday Movies: Portable Film Projectors and the Transformation of American Culture*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2020. \$85 cloth; \$29.95 paper; \$29.95 e-book. 288 pages.

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## JESSICA SCARLATA

### ***Women in the Irish Film Industry: Stories and Storytellers* edited by Susan Liddy**

Susan Liddy's edited collection *Women in the Irish Film Industry* brings together fifteen essays and interviews, plus an editor's introduction and conclusion, that address in detail the issue of gender parity in the Irish film industry. As Liddy explains in her introduction, the book aims to place questions of female and feminist representation at the core of how the Irish film industry imagines itself (11–12). Representation here refers not only to audiovisual or narrative representation, but to the extent to which women occupy the lead creative roles in filmmaking, the visibility of women-made films in festivals, and the presence of women in decisions about film funding. While Screen Ireland (formerly the Irish Film Board) plays a prominent role in discussions of financing, the book is not solely focused on national funding, nor is it exclusively about women filmmakers in the Republic of Ireland; some of the women live, work, or have made films in Northern Ireland, Britain, Eastern Europe, and the United States. Thus, rather than focus on the extensively debated question of what constitutes Irish national cinema, the book allows an understanding of "Irish" to emerge across fifteen essays. This conception is fluid, flexible, and culturally distinct, as well as connected to the film cultures and industries of the European Union, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

*Women in the Irish Film Industry* provides qualitative and quantitative evidence for what it shows to be a stark lack of women in the roles of producer, director, cinematographer,

and editor in documentary, fiction, and animated filmmaking. Its contributors consider an array of ways in which women might be *in* the Irish film industry, and in so doing expands the field of vision concerning women's work in cinema: in filmmaking, in policy and funding decisions, in festival programming, and in education. Several of the essays bring to the foreground women whose work is often marginalized within or excluded from previous studies of Irish film that might be more familiar to non-Irish readers. This fact makes it especially enlightening for US readers, since films by Irish women are rarely accessible here.

The book is divided into four sections. In the first, "Revisiting the Past," Díóg O'Connell's essay on Ellen O'Mara Sullivan's relationship with the Film Company of Ireland, which produced the silent-era *Willy Reilly and His Colleen Bawn* (John MacDonagh, 1920) along with nearly thirty other films between 1916 and 1920, considers questions of feminist historiography and the absence of women in the archives. From there, the book moves to the 1980s and Northern Ireland, with Sarah Edge's "Feminist Reclamation Politics: Reclaiming *Maeve* (Pat Murphy, 1981) and *Mother Ireland* (Anne Crilly, 1988)," which considers both films in relation to feminism and Irish nationalism.

In the opening essay of the second section, "Practitioners and Production Culture," Liddy addresses the experiences of women filmmakers in Ireland, considering patriarchal power in the industry in relation to a range of concerns, including the "myth of the male genius." That critique is implicitly carried into Laura Canning's essay "Irish Production Cultures and Women Filmmakers: Nicky Gogan," which, in critiquing auteurist approaches, makes the point that "considering the producer *as* a filmmaker allows us to move away from masculinist-auteurist frameworks and centre instead ... the unexamined work of women who have built sustainable careers in Irish film" (68). In examining Gogan's work as producer, Canning also gives detailed attention to funding resources and criteria. The challenge to auteurism and its role in eclipsing women filmmakers is continued in Maeve Connolly's essay on cinematographers Suzie Lavelle and Kate McCullough. Connolly not only looks at the work produced by each woman; she also marks, as professional work, "the labour of professional self-representation" (86), addressing the ways that "the culture of production has a direct impact upon the form of the finished work" (91), and opening an important avenue for thinking about women in film.

Liddy's subsequent interview with multiple-award-winning editor and director Emer Reynolds marks another important creative role—editor—and provides a space

for Reynolds to address the impact on women filmmakers of sexism on set. Reynolds has worked on feature films, documentaries, and TV shows, and Liddy's interview, in which Reynolds discusses quotas as well as the comparatively stronger representation of women in documentary, provides a smooth transition to Anne O'Brien's interrogation of precisely that increased representation. O'Brien's "semi-structured interviews with a snowball sample of twenty filmmakers" (121), together with her analysis of all phases of documentary making, from commissioning through preproduction, production, and postproduction, provide important evidence of "patterns of gender inequality, which relate to informality, autonomy and flexibility" (131) that amount to an ambivalence about documentary: on the one hand, women have greater representation in the field; on the other, they are still subjected to gender bias at all levels of production.

The third section, titled "Changing the Conversation: Education, Celebration and Collaboration," takes the book's overall examination of the marginalization of women in Irish filmmaking in an exciting direction, addressing education, film festivals, archives, and collaborative approaches to documentary. Through interviews, quantitative and qualitative analysis, and a close examination of education policy, Annie Doona addresses the gender dynamics at work in film education from primary school through university. She concludes with recommendations for policymakers as to how education may become a way to facilitate gender parity in the film industry. "Activism through Celebration: The Role of the Dublin Feminist Film Festival in Supporting Women in Irish Film, 2014–2017," by Karla Healion, Aileen O'Driscoll, Jennifer O'Meara, and Katie Stone, argues for the importance of the DFFF as a "valuable space for working through issues related to women in cinema in terms of Irish productions, distribution, exhibition and criticism."

Importantly, the authors acknowledge a diversity within the category of "woman," pointing out that programming decisions within the DFFF reflect a commitment to "inclusive art," "showcasing documentary, fictional, and experimental films, as well as work by non-heteronormative women and women of colour" (159). Bringing their own programming expertise into dialogue with feminist and cultural theory, the authors foreground three case studies involving special screenings of films by Vivienne Dick, Lelia Doolan, and Anne Crilly. Following Leshu Torchin, they note that festivals may "preach to the converted,

however, there is value in that process," particularly in the case of feminist programming.

Similarly, Laura Aguiar considers a complex of factors in addition to a filmmaker's gender in her essay on collaborative filmmaking in Northern Ireland. Her self-reflexive and engaging account of her experience working with the Prison Memory Archive and Cahal McLaughlin on *We Were There* (Aguiar and McLaughlin, 2014)—a film about women's experiences in relation to the Maze/Long Kesh Prison—raises the important question of power dynamics in documentary. Aguiar brings practice and theory into dialogue and describes her collaborative approach to authorship, which involved including the women interviewed in various stages of production beyond their interview. She concludes with Trinh T. Minh-ha's notion of "speaking nearby" and argues for a much richer understanding of both gender and "the plural experiences of women" (183).

If the third section emphasizes a fusion of theory and practice, the fourth and final section, "Text and Context: Documentary, Fiction and Animation," gives greater prominence to textual/contextual analysis, featuring essays on individual filmmakers (Dearbhla Glynn, Pat Murphy, and Juanita Wilson) as well as essays that consider gender in relation to space and visual representation. Eileen Culloty and Isabelle Le Corff focus on directors whose films explore contexts outside of Ireland, addressing trauma and loss. Lance Pettitt's "Pat Murphy: Portrait of an Artist as Filmmaker" reframes the question of authorship by studying Murphy's work through the lens of her relationship to nonfilmic visual art. Ruth Barton, in "Irish Cinema and the Gendering of Space," addresses the narrative spaces inhabited by female characters in relation to "the space women filmmakers occupy in the Irish production landscape" (233). In the collection's final essay, Ciara Barrett measures "the link between female creative authorship at the directorial level and the manifestation of a progressive politics of gender representation on-screen" within the Irish animation industry (249).

Overall, *Women in the Irish Film Industry* contributes new information and perspectives to the discussion on Irish cinema. Although the book allows a nuanced and capacious understanding of "Irish" to emerge, the same is not always true of the category "women." It would have been helpful to have a more direct engagement with questions of diversity in ways similar to how Healion, O'Driscoll, O'Meara, Stone, and Aguiar engage with the complexities of gender. Additionally, while the collection sheds an important light

on an exciting array of films and filmmakers, the absence of any meaningful consideration of Margo Harkin's extensive and award-winning filmography is disappointing. Finally, although *Women in the Irish Film Industry* tends to marginalize cultural theory, it does contain extensive qualitative and quantitative historical and industrial research, making it valuable for academic and general audiences.

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