"The Men Who Came Back": Anonymity and Recognition in Local British Roll of Honour Films (1914-1918)

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There are six examples of Roll of Honour films held at the Imperial War Museum and the National Film and Television Archive in London (See Appendix One). These are locally produced films of photographs of men who had been killed, wounded, taken prisoner or were still serving at the front. They were produced in varying quality. Some were quickly made on a rostrum with a rough black background with hand-written nameplates the only form of identification. Others were produced with more care, the borders flat against a deep black background and the names printed with information about their deaths, wounds or predicaments. Some cut the figure out of the photograph and placed them on a black background, the edges softened to give the image an eternal spiritual quality. In each case these films stressed the relationship between the cinema exhibitor and the local community that practical patriotism worked to achieve (See Appendix Two). They publicly acknowledged the role of the community in the war effort and the cinema theatre provided the public space for the recognition of the individual sacrifice of its members.

Recently, an example of these films from the town of Milnrow in Lancashire appeared in a Channel Four documentary series about British culture between the two world wars made in 1996 called *The Long Summer*. This Milnrow film opens the first in a series of six documentaries and is meant to be a powerful evocation of a nation in mourning. It stands as an indicator of the prevalence of bereavement at this time. The narrator, Alan Bennet, explains that it was produced and exhibited by the manager of the Empire Cinema. Here the photographs, paradoxically still images projected by an animating machine, arrest for a brief moment the momentum of modernity. They are a visual pause prior to the frenetic pace of the jazz age. Their poses suggest a wide-eyed innocence and vitality lost, frozen in the pre-moment of their entry into eternity. The backgrounds look back to a nineteenth century mode of pictorial representation, of landscapes and props which suggest, in these faded images, the worn cloth on the furniture in stately houses, the musty smell of flat scenery in an abandoned theatre. At the end of the twentieth century they represent a memory of the war as tragedy and these young faces are its victims. The pictures, or portraits, are shown with a reverent commentary - "The years of the long summer would be dominated by the memory of men like these" - and are accompanied by the funereal chords of a brass choir. In the representational harness of the documentary these men have already never existed. Their moment, and the films' originally intended purpose, are erased. They exist only to represent the bereavement of a nation. Apart from this brief reference these films have received scant scholarly attention.

However, when they were screened for audiences at the time these films were meant to represent fulfilment of duty and glorious sacrifice. They were screened with patriotic musical accompaniment and were greeted with applause. In that sense, they provide evidence which helps towards an understanding of the developing sense of the war as national tragedy. The

cost of the war and its consequences dawned slowly and the role cinema played in the unfolding knowledge of the nature of the front in the homefront imagination was played out on the local as well as the national level (See Appendix Three). The purpose of this paper is to explore the reception of these films and their function in British cinema culture during the Great War.

An important part of the cinema's function at this time was its representation of the local space. Local actuality films depicted important events alongside the newsreels of national and international news. In wartime they worked as a form of practical patriotism with depictions of soldiers departing or at drill, or the queues outside recruitment centres. These all served to knit the local space into the national narrative of the war effort. The Roll of Honour films were the cinematic expression of a common practice of local and national newspapers which depicted the photographs and listed the names of those local men who were serving. In this article, I will argue that these locally produced Roll of Honour films functioned overtly as a strategy of practical patriotism but that they are also evidence of the tensions between public recognition and the private fears of anonymous obliteration in the homefront imagination. It is structured around three connecting arguments related to the question of how audiences were encouraged to respond to these films and to make sense of them. They were part of the industry's efforts at "practical patriotism" and like so many of those efforts they sat easily within already existing traditions. They arose out of the traditions of the local actuality film, newsreels, slideshows, the aesthetics of Victorian portrait photography, and the use of portraits in newspapers and magazines. In the first section I will explore those antecedents. In the second section I will suggest that these films worked through a reception trope of recognition. By this I mean that recognition was an expectation which accompanied these films. This operated on two levels of meaning; the predominant public recognition central to the ennobling of local soldiers and their sacrifice and, as the war progressed, a more subdued function of the private identification of individuals. The last section seeks to explain why these films were rarely if ever part of cinema programmes after 1917 as these films increasingly depicted the human cost of the war in a public entertainment space.

I. Antecedents

The Local Film on the Programme

The Roll of Honour films fitted into the programme as part of the exhibition of local scenes for local audiences. In 1914 local films were a regular programme feature (See Appendix Four). Local British films such as *Festive Crowd Scenes* (1914) featured crowded streets and a number of "youths" waving at the camera. It is possible to follow some of the same faces as they swirl around the camera, sometimes on each others shoulders, other times rushing towards the camera. They suggest that one of the pleasures was to recognise oneself or friends and acquaintances. This aggressive gesturing and moving towards the camera has its mirror image in the viewer who works to make sense of the films. The local viewer knows the space of the city and the faces of some of the participants and can attach stories to go with those spaces and the familiar faces. The reading of the local town space through cinematic mediation requires an investigation of familiarity, a placing of oneself into the text. This is a very different mode of reception than that associated with the classical spectator. The classical style that characterised the rise of the feature film prompted the classical reception mode where the fictional space is maintained, and expected to be maintained, by the dictates of the narrative. Peter Kramer and Ina Van Dooren have argued that this mode could be disrupted by direct address to camera and used to "create heightened dramatic effects and/or

to explicate the film's message, often for propagandistic purposes, so as to influence the audience's attitudes and behaviour with respect to the war effort." (Kramer and Van Dooren, 1995: 105) Within the factual film they argue that direct address was often used for propagandistic purposes but that it was just as likely that direct address held no more specific intent than to interpellate the audience with "An offer they could not refuse: I want YOU to look at THIS." The local films functioned in this manner. The familiarity of the local space represented on the same screen as the most exotic scenes and places created an uncanny effect, a familiar space and/or face in a different frame.

Films of the street were not the only type of local subject the exhibitors would film. During the war favourite subjects were the parade of new recruits through the city, special occasions such as royal visits, dedication ceremonies and sporting events. In contrast to *Festive Crowd Scenes* one local film, *Recruits,* (1915) depicted the 1st Surrey Volunteer Training Corps going through their drills on a field in Croydon. The camera slowly pans across orderly, well-dressed, crowds who have turned out to watch the local men. There is a festive air to the event which looks to be a genteel picnic on a summer's day but unlike *Festive Crowd Scenes* the camera and the crowd are restrained. The frantic rush to and around the camera is replaced by the symmetrical lines of the marching men and these are echoed by the spectators who stand in a similar rank posing as if for a still camera. Movements are reserved for straightening the clothes of the children. Occasionally someone ventures a grin or laughs as they look at the camera. Slow panning shots provide close-ups of recruits with their families after the drill is over.

The pose, the slow panning movement, the mise-en-scene of the park in which the drill takes place all work to include the viewer in the proceedings. At the same time their appeal also lies in their contrast to the national and global images which accompanied them on the film programme. The slow panning allows time for recognition of familiar faces and locations set against the abstract recognition of world leaders, royalty, film stars or exotic locations of the other films on the programme. The drill in the setting of the park is a military display against green fields; an idealistic reconstruction of the battlefield within the iconography of military pageant and a marked contrast to the devastated buildings and scarred scenery of the front which by 1915 characterised much of the newsreel footage of the war. The park, presents a pastoral background for the relief of everyday existence in factories and in town and city centres for which they were designed. Perhaps more abstractly the collection of families posing with relatives in uniforms recalls the separations of families from their loved ones already at the front. These local films, and the Roll of Honour films particularly, depended upon a pattern of looking which suspended the tension between the placement of the local community within the public narrative of the nation and the displacement and disruption to those communities which made up the texture of individual, private experience during the war.

Portraits of Heroes

In the seventh series of Will Onda's Preston and District Roll of Honour films (1915) each photograph was accompanied by brief narrative information. For example the photograph of Private Rampling is reported as; "Wounded on June 16th in the arm and back" while the next is of Corporal F.W. Holmes "The first soldier to gain the VC and the French Legion of Honour". These explanatory titles worked to celebrate and ennoble the local man in his role as ordinary soldier. The pose and background of the Roll of Honour films worked within the formal codes of nineteenth century portraiture. The photographer's studio props of ornate

chairs, painted backgrounds drew on the portrait tradition of associating the personality with property and the sign of authorship. Will Onda's tenth series of films depicted two photographs signed by local photographer A. Winter of Preston. The first is a full-length portrait of Second Lieutenant W.A. Davies, killed, and the second is a bust, surrounded in fog, of Second Lieutenant Norbert Craven, wounded. In the case of the second the treatment of the photograph serves to aestheticise the soldier, to place a mist of infinity around the bust to raise his image beyond the quotidian.

Similarly magazines which featured "celebrities" imbued the photograph with an aesthetic of distinctiveness. (Ohmann, 1996) Their address worked to bridge the distance between the reader and the "important person". These photographs, placed in magazines meant for a new middle class, worked to democratise the images. The readers were brought in to a "close though formal relationship" with celebrities not only through the pose and the photographic reproduction, which in themselves functioned to distance the reader, but by the text which took the form of a personalising narrative. This "condescension" effect worked to bring the reader into the *private* life of the celebrity. In an article in *Pall Mall Magazine*, Jan-April 1901, entitled "Victoria the Well Beloved", which was accompanied by engravings of the Queen at various stages of her life, the Rt. Hon. Sir Herbert E. Maxwell, MP wrote an accompanying narrative. Recounting a number of stories of the Queen's kindness and clarity of thought the article balanced a familiar tone with due reverence. One story told of how she instigated the award of war medals to soldiers of the rank:

> It pained the Queen ... to see the breasts of Princes and Ministers, who perhaps had never seen a shot fired in earnest, glittering with stars and orders, while the men who had offered their lives and endured wounds and hardships in the service of their country were undistinguished from the latest recruit. So in 1848 the Queen bestowed medals upon all the old soldiers, of whatever rank, who had served in their country's wars; and such has remained the rule ever since. (Maxwell, 1901: 414)

The case for her greatness is made through her natural attributes of sensitivity and a sense of justice through a glimpse into her private thoughts. By contrast the Roll of Honour films worked along this transforming dynamic but with the reverse effect, formalising and distancing a close relationship.

Striking in that reversal was the films' use of portraiture codes that were clearly within the conventions of presenting a public image. Unable to utilise extensive text the films depended upon audience recognition of individuals, and the more detailed narratives available in the local press and word of mouth. The Rolls of Honour in newspapers ennobled the local soldier by stressing their *public* life. An example is that of Second-Lieutenant Major W. Booth "whose death is reported in action, was a very prominent member of the Yorkshire eleven for five seasons. Although a fine punishing batsman when set his chief claim to fame will rest on what he accomplished with the ball"(Topics of the Hour, July,1916: 2). While Booth was undoubtedly a commissioned officer and the narrative of his qualities at cricket provided a metaphorical testament to his bravery commensurate with his class status similar treatment was also given to non-commissioned officers and men of the rank. Private Ragless of Southampton had appeared in the local newspaper's Roll of Honour as missing the previous week and received three paragraphs of biography on the report of his death on the Somme which focused on his service record and his training for the Royal Engineers prior to the outbreak of the war.(Topics of the Hour, Aug. 1916: 2) The Roll of Honour films, unable to

provide such detailed information, achieved this ascension effect through the quality of the image, the pose and their appearance in the public space of the cinema.

From Active Service to Memory

The use of the ennobling conventions of the portrait made the transition from celebration of duty to memorialising sacrifice terribly easy. The Roll of Honour portraits, in spite of the patriotic fervour, were memorials to the sacrifice of the local community (See Appendix Five). By 1916 the Roll of Honour practice in all areas of public life had taken on a resonance of loss and had begun to acquire its more sombre meaning. Following the release of the official film *The Battle of the Somme* in September 1916 a series of magazines entitled *Sir Douglas Haig's Great Push*, in eight fortnightly parts (they were actually extended as the battle dragged on to make up at least thirteen parts), were published by Hutchinson and Company of London "by arrangement with the War Office". They sold for 8d which was almost three times that of the cheapest price of admission to the cinema. On the inside of the cover page of the fifth instalment was an announcement entitled The Roll of Honour "now being compiled by The Marquis de Ruvigny" author and editor of "The Blood Royalty of Britain" and "The Titled Nobility of Europe". The Marquis was now turning his considerable skill to the collation of an illustrated biographical record of all "officers, non-commissioned officers and men of his majesty's forces who are killed or die on active service". No one providing information would be charged and no fee would be accepted. The intention was to include a large number of portraits of officers and men but "with over 100,000 dead for the first year, it is clearly impossible to undertake that one will be given in every case". The form at the bottom of the page stated "Please send me a form so that I may give you particulars concerning ----- who was killed on active service". It was intended to include "a biographical sketch of their career, extracts from letters of Commanding Officers or Comrades relating to the action in which the Officer or Man fell, or to the particular circumstances of his death."

The language of this announcement is significant for its rhetoric of reverence and transcendence. The photographs are referred to as portraits, the aestheticised image was to be accompanied by a biographical narrative, an act of bringing to life in the memory of those who have been left behind, a penance for a debt that could never be repaid. The Marquis De Ruvigny's announcement denotes a change in the nature of Rolls of Honour. By 1915 the films' function of celebrating the ordinary soldiers had shifted to one of commemoration. By locating them within their community, these films became a precession of the community's loss.

Precisely how the Roll of Honour films were exhibited is difficult to ascertain as very little information exists about their screening conditions. What is known is that they were shown in the manner that slides of military leaders such as Kitchener were and accompanied by patriotic music. There are some indications of the kind of music which may have accompanied them through what is known about the music for the Official War films. *The Bioscope* columnist for music, J. Morton Hutcheson, printed the recommendations he had supplied to William Jury, the booking director for the trade screenings of *The Battle of the Somme* in August, 1916 and for *The Battle of the Ancre and the Advance of the Tanks*, in January, 1917. For *The Battle of the Somme*, which depicted actual photos of the dead and the wounded, Hutcheson warned:

> Musical directors should, if and where at all possible, "rehearse" the
> accompaniment *before* showing it to the public, and also that they - musicians

especially - must realise the seriousness and awfulness of the scenes depicted most realistically, and even where the scenes are showing the brighter side of events in The Great Push the "accompaniment" *must* not be too bright. We don't want to hear "Sunshine of your Smile" played in any part of this film. The pictures themselves will impress the public ... and the "accompaniment" must be treated with all respect and seriousness, having regard to the tragic situations depicted. (Hutcheson, Aug. 17,1916: 449)

Hutcheson often wrote disparagingly about the widely varying types of music in the cinemas generally and the purpose of the column was to offer guidance. He complained about the type of music played in cinemas but here his recommendations are directed at the treatment of the music. These selections were meant to be played with reverence and solemnity (See Appendix Six). Thus it cannot be ruled out that any of the Roll of Honour films were accompanied by sombre music. Most likely the music drew on the patriotic pageantry in music halls and theatres and primarily military marches in the early months but it is likely that this changed, in treatment if not in selection, with many of these films exhibited after 1916.

The exhibitors who made these films obtained the photographs in much the same way as the Marquis or the local newspapers. They appealed for them through posters and handbills advertising the programme. The cinema exhibitor's relationship with the press was such that the portraits used in the local press were another likely source for the Roll of Honour films. The significance of this relationship with the local press is that the audiences for these films had available the narratives of the soldiers prior to seeing them on the screen. The columns which provided the information were often run a few days after the announcement of the fate of local men serving. In the *Southern Daily Echo* these biographies were run in the column "Topics of the Hour". The dynamic between the biographical notes and the portrait elevates the local personality to the status of hero and the inclusion of men from all ranks worked toward a conception of community which subsumed class distinctions. This form of address at the local level placed the local community within the context of the national narrative of the war, a serial narrative with an open ending. They were also inclusive intralocally in that they engaged or located the viewer/reader within the local community through encouraging an affect of empathy and recognition. While there were precedents for these types of subjects in magazines and in the local scene film these films remain unique from those antecedents in significant ways. They were funereal, they depicted the cost of the war, and however mediated by the music, the portrait/biography format or the pleasure of recognition inherent in the local scene film, this sombre nature had the effect of counting the cost to the community.

Public or Private?

The 4th Loyal Lancaster Roll of Honour film shown in Preston in July 1915 shared a bill with Chaplin's A Gentleman of a Nerve. Audiences expected variety and viewing habits were shaped by the continuous programme where they tended to come and go at various points. Will Onda's film received special attention in the Preston press in the same way that his live pageant of the "Pals" regiment had. However this is the only instance where Onda "boomed" these films. This instance of a shift or, more accurately, a response by an exhibitor to shifting reception contexts, is evidence of an engagement with his audiences' "social horizon of understanding". Here Miriam Hansen's assertion that this horizon is "not a homogeneous storage of intertextual knowledge but a contested field of multiple positions and conflicting

interests" helps to account for the reception of these films. The cinema during this period was a relatively new social space of entertainment and conflicting perceptions and debates about its social function circulated among official, and unofficial, interpretive communities, but it was also an instance where the cinema converged with other social and cultural formations which required particular delineations between the public and private spheres. As Hansen puts it; "...the question is which discourses of experience will be articulated in public and which remain private..."(Hansen, 1991: 7-8) The Roll of Honour films' placement between the serials, short comedies and features set up a diverse set of texts which, in conjunction with a "discursive organisation of experience", here associated with nation/community, identity/anonymity, alienation and loss, resonate across each other. (Hansen, 1991: 13) The dominant discourse of patriotism was the primary public language of the homefront imagination yet private anxieties which accompanied this as an "undercurrent" were made up of significant concerns: anonymity, loss and disappearance, the shock and trauma of the loved one returned, or the apparent rearrangement of class and gender boundaries both at the front and at home. These were all the subjects of the films which surrounded the Roll of Honour films on the programme, and within cinema culture of the period, and it is to these resonances that I now turn.

II. Recognition as a Trope of Reception

In the Will Onda 4th Lancaster Roll of Honour Film there is a photograph of a group of soldiers who were wounded at Aisles. Beneath the caption in brackets is the phrase "you may be able to recognise them". The Roll of Honour films call attention to the different meanings of the term "recognition". As we have seen, the portraits in conjunction with the biographical information constitute a trope of social recognition. Elevating the individual to heroic stature they function in the same way as the uniform and medals of honour in that they bestow culturally recognised social status. The means by which these images were acquired, given to the press/exhibitor by family or friends, suggests a private desire to publicly express the recognition of their service, sacrifice and loss.

A second, more discreet type of recognition is subservient to this public recognition. This is the literal recognition of faces and individuals. The caption "you may be able to recognise them" presents this more private dimension as a possible pleasure. Pathe made this personal recognition the centre of their advertising campaign for the Pathe Gazettes in 1915. Entitled "Pathe Types" these appeared in *Pictures and the Picturegoer* in the autumn of 1915. The first "type" was "the munition worker" with a drawing of a young woman in a fashionable work smock and cap with the caption "Oh yes, I always enjoy the Pathe Gazette. You see, it shows us pictures of our workshops and the girls just as they are. Besides I've seen Bert several times with his regiment..."(28 Oct. 1915: 95) The following week the second type "The Wounded Tommy" appeared. Depicted with arm in a sling; "I dunno about danger, but those Pathe Gazette chaps that take the pictures were in the thick of it. It's really grand to sit down and see the scenes that you've been in ..." (4 Nov.,1915: 115) The pleasure in these films is directed at personal, private expectation and couched within the interpellative form of direct address. YOU might expect to recognise someone, or even yourself, in these films.

Yuri Tsivian, in his book on the cultural reception of early Russian cinema, looks for a form of "cultural" reception which is "reflective, responsive or interventionist". His formulation of reception works with a moment in the formation of early cinema in Russia, but indeed applies to the reception of the new moving images wherever they were encountered. In this early period, he argues, the cinematic image was perceived in ways which are lost to contemporary

viewers. In encountering this new medium Russian commentators drew on already existing forms of representation and mapped those onto the new moving images. Writing about a response to the Lumiere's train coming into a station he quotes Vladimir Stasov; "... it gets bigger and bigger and you think its going to run you over, just like in Anna Karenina - its incredible." Tsivian adds "real fun has been replaced by literary fun". For Tsivian this relationship is reciprocal for while the real is replaced by the literary so the moving image breathes life into literary cliché. (Tsivian, 1994: 3-4) The attachment of literary frames, of course, can easily be extended to a range of interpretive frames available to cinema audiences at the time. These frames of reference make up the "media landscape" of cinema culture and include popular fiction, theatre and, more elusively, personal experience. In order to contain a potentially endless range of interpretive frames I have selected texts which contain similar scenarios involving recognition known to be familiar to audiences at the time. Following Tsivian I assume tropes of reception are echoes or mirror images of tropes within texts and that an expectation of reflexivity in these texts is central to their pleasure. There are two themes I would like to draw out of these implied pleasures of recognising, and of being recognised. The first concerns the way that intertextual frames of reference form a mode of reception, in this case the reception trope of recognition. The second is the action of investigative looking that an expectation of recognition incites.

Recognition Scenes

The Roll of Honour films require a reception trope of recognition, a trope which resonates in the recognition scenes prevalent in popular film and theatrical productions of the day. Three examples, Chaplin's *The Vagabond*, the British film *The Man Who Came Back*, and a contemporary account of a single response to the stage melodrama *East Lynne*, testify to the ubiquity of recognition scenes in contemporary entertainment culture.

Charles Chaplin's move from the "vulgar" Keystone comedies to more "respectable" work entailed the incorporation of pathos in his slapstick comedies (Maland, 1989). In the 1916 Mutual film *The Vagabond* Charlie rescues an orphan woman/child (Edna Purviance) from a brutal gypsy family. In the middle of the comic rescue there is a fade to a rich woman in her parlour who pulls from her embroidery box a portrait of a little girl. The trope is familiar enough to signal that the girl in the picture is the woman Charlie is rescuing. After getting away from the gypsy family an artist who is roving the countryside for inspiration sees the woman and paints her portrait. Her long lost mother happens into the gallery where he is showing his work and recognises the woman as her daughter. She is led to the daughter by the artist and Charlie is left on his own, until the newly united daughter realises that she really loves him and they all ride off in the mother's car together.

The Man Who Came Back (Regent 1915) begins with Harold March, the son of a wealthy merchant, faking his own death so that he might join up in the ranks. His father and his aristocratic stepmother read of his death in the newspaper. His stepbrother George is an officer who has just received his orders to take his regiment to the front. Harold has changed his name to John Learning and has been in the thick of the fighting since the beginning. Returning to the British lines as the only survivor from his company he meets George. He begs his stepbrother to follow him with some men to take the post. George, who does not recognise him, as indeed he would not recognise any enlisted man, takes his time following. Our hero goes ahead and takes the post single handedly. Just before his stepbrother arrives with reinforcements he is knocked out by a shell explosion. His stepbrother is given credit for silencing the German gun while he is taken in by kindly Belgians. Returning to England

disguised as a Belgian refugee he goes to his home. On his return to the estate he is recognised by his old servant who tells him that a celebration dinner is being held for his step-brother who has won the VC for silencing the German gun. The next shot shows Harold and the servant peering through the window at the celebration dinner. Looking up from her plate his sweetheart sees him through the window and recognises him. Slipping outside she stands with the servant and Harold and pleads with Harold to tell the truth. After a significant amount of hand wringing Harold looks at the camera and the accompanying title reads: "No dear they must never know the truth, if they did, those men who have just vowed to serve their King and Country, would think it all a mockery, and go back on their words."

Melodramas such as *East Lynne* (novel by Mrs. Henry Woods, various versions in play form) work for their affect of tears through tropes of recognition/misrecognition. Lady Isabel, due to the dastardly deception of Francis Levinson, has been reduced to raising her own son disguised as his nanny Madame Vaux. She never reveals herself to her son even on his deathbed. When Little Willie dies she utters the immortal line "Willie, my child - he is dead, dead and never called me Mother!" In 1916 the *Bristol Observer* ran the following story which offers an insight into audience familiarity with, and their response to, these type of scenes. The article was titled "The Emotion of An Ex-Convict":

> It was in a Leeds Theatre that the writer found himself one evening seated next to a man who had more than once done duty as a convict in His Majesty's Gaol. Forgery and Swindling had been brought to a fine art by this person but he still posed as a "gentleman" when at liberty. On this occasion the play was the inimitable *East Lynne* and it may seem strange, but it is perfectly true, that when the death bed scene with Little Willie and Madame Vaux took place, this man had big tears rolling down his cheeks, and was sobbing like a child! He turned to the writer and said: "Pardon me, sir. I don't know how this scene affects you but it always makes me cry like a kid!" I nodded that I understood. He didn't know he was recognised by me, but I felt there must be a tender spot somewhere in such a convict to cause such a result. ("Queer Folks in Theatre Audience": 6)

In each example the recognition scene is the emotional centre of the narrative. In *East Lynne* the power of the scene rests on the fact that Lady Isabel never tells her son of her true identity which prompts the tears of the ex-convict. The journalist in turn is enlightened through the power of the trope to the true nature of the ex-convict. The turn to pathos (and Chaplin's move toward respectability) in The *Vagabond* depends on a recognition scene and like *The Roll of Honour* portraits the recognition is of a loved one who has been lost, her salvation dependent upon the investigating gaze of the mother. In *The Man Who Came Back*, Harold Marsh/John Learning is positioned in the same space in the homefront imagination as the men in the Roll of Honour films. He can never be known but by a few, and through a similar mechanism of distance/personal he is able to traverse class boundaries and oddly acknowledge the irresponsibility of the upper class while at the same time covering it up. What marks this film is the scene when the father and the stepmother read of his death in the papers. This re-enacts the terrible moment of recognition which accompanied the arrival of the telegram for officer's families and letters for enlisted men. The film then generates through a fantasy of loss of identity a re-establishment of the family, if only for the audience. He still exists but is carrying out his duties to his country under another guise.

The Investigating Gaze

Recognition was also one of the attractions of the official war films. An attraction akin to the searching for a familiar face in a crowd at a football match these films, as seen with the Pathe Gazette, were talked about as offering the possibility of seeing someone you know. The reception trope of recognition here exists in the same way that the Roll of Honour films work. They require a narrative to be placed alongside the images. *The Battle of the Somme* film encouraged a double engagement, as a citizen of the nation and as a viewer with a personal interest. Each regiment was identified in a title prior to the image which would prepare the viewer. Like the slow camera pans of the *Recruits* film the official war films, and particularly *The Battle of the Somme* used the slow pan to provide close ups of faces. This concentration on the visage, this appeal to private recognition encourages a searching engagement with the films.

The etiology of the act of reading faces in public and in photographs has been the subject of a number of critical histories. Richard Sennett, for example in charting the rise of the "personality" from the eighteenth century has centred his ideas on shifts in conceptions of the public on the nature of appearance. He suggests that the personality had, by the nineteenth century, replaced the Enlightenment concept of natural character resulting in a situation where "appearances made in the world are not veils but guides to the authentic self of the wearer" (Sennett, 1977: 153). Reading faces became a popular obsession with the publication of physiognomy books in the mid-nineteenth century. Jennifer Green-Lewis has suggested that the availability of the photographic image "validated and authorised ... certain kinds of readership ... [and] ensured the practice of reading faces would become widespread." (Green Lewis, 1996: 160-161) These physiognomy books featured accompanying narratives with the photographs of criminals or the insane which instructed and practised reading the face, a mode of reception which assumed that the photograph, as scientific recording device, would unveil the mind. Following from the dynamic relationship between the narrative and the portrait a similar reception mode is referenced in the investigative gaze of the mother in *The Vagabond*. She identifies her now grown daughter through her shamrock-shaped birthmark. Her gaze simultaneously matches and socially validates both the tramp's and the artist's recognition of her daughter's innate beauty. Most crucially, this trope of recognition is imbedded in a narrative of anonymity/identity and loss/recovery and therein contains a resonance with the type of visual engagement assumed and encouraged by the Roll of Honour films.

This form of visual engagement had been implicit in the scenes of everyday life since the beginnings of cinema. The local personality is the object of the investigating local gaze in the Roll of Honour films. The investigating look is drawn into high relief when compared with the experience of viewing these films outside the local context. A stranger would read a meaning of sacrifice and patriotism but these would be general, undifferentiated readings. The inquisitive, but detached, gaze here may be left to speculate or perhaps invest the faces of these soldiers with an image of the "angelic invalid" or search for a spiritual sign of doomed youth. In this regard they most match the viewing practices of the physiognomy books which turned on difference. Photographs of the insane or the criminal "promoted the inferiority and otherness of their subjects". (Green Lewis, 1996: 161) In the Roll of Honour films the images were invested with an otherness in the sense that the men they depicted were dead, wounded or made different by their experience. This difference was mediated through a dominant public discourse of noble sacrifice and yet within a local context with local knowledges which attached individual identities ran the undercurrent of private loss.

The sub rosa dynamics present in the Roll of Honour photographs and films are brought poignantly to the fore in the case of Sir Oliver Lodge. Here the photograph becomes evidence of the existence of the next world. His son Raymond was killed in 1915, his death prompted the publication in 1916 of *Raymond or Life and Death* which was a treatise on the existence of a spiritual world and the probability of communication with it. The book is organised much like a prepared court case with evidence meticulously laid out. One of the pieces of evidence that Raymond was communicating with them through spiritual mediums hinged on the existence of a photograph. The medium mentioned a photograph Raymond had told her about but one which had been unknown to Lodge and his wife as it had been taken while he was at the front three weeks before he had been killed. The photograph was broadly described by the medium and then a few months later the photographs were found. While much of the account is taken up by Lodge trying to prove his case a significant part is concerned with a reading of the photograph. There were three photos of Raymond sitting amongst a group of officers. Two of these photos depict Raymond sitting uneasily as a soldier behind him has rested his hand on his shoulder. Putting the three photographs together Lodge attempts to read the thoughts into his son's face. The photographs showed:

> ... some one's (sic) hand sitting on Raymond's shoulders and Raymond's head leaning a little on one side, as if rather annoyed. In another the hand had been removed, being supported by the owner's stick; and in that one Raymond's head is upright. This corresponds to his uncertainty (in his "discussions" with the medium after his death) as to whether he was actually taken with the man leaning on him or not. In the third, however, the sitting officer's leg rests against Raymond's shoulder as he squats in front, and the slant of the head and slight look of annoyance has returned. (Lodge, 1916: 113-114)

Lodge's use of the photograph as evidence of the hereafter is also evidence of his desire to see the static images move, to re-animate. The comparison of the three photos is a cinematic re-animation. The re-animation does not simply stop at the movement of Raymond but the reading reawakens his thoughts, his appearance indicates his personality as does the actual existence of the photographs.

The importance that Lodge attaches to the recognition of his son's personality is paramount in his treatise on the existence of the afterlife. He predicates his case on establishing in the reader an empathy for his son Raymond. The first part contains the letters from Raymond to his family and friends in order to impart "The life lived and the spirit shown by any number of youths, fully engaged in civil occupations, who joined for service when the war broke out and went to the Front." The object being to "engender a friendly feeling towards the writer of the letters, so that whatever more has to be said in the sequel may not have the inevitable dullness of details concerning an entire stranger." As a memorial to his son the book strives not only to establish that "communication across the gulf is possible" but to iterate his son's actual existence in this life, to counterpose the anonymity intrinsic to military service, death at the front and finally to that obliteration of identity in the spirit world. His sense of duty was driven by "the amount of premature and unnatural bereavement at the present time" and his strategy of making his son's identity known to the reader was a gesture of defiance to his anonymous obliteration. (Lodge, 1916: vii-viii)

Lodge's method was that of the "rational scientist" and in this sense he followed the methods of the Spirtualist movement to which he belonged. In his use of photography he was also part of a conception of the realism of the photographic image as testimonial. While he stops short

of spirit photography its afterimage remains. In this respect the static images of the Roll of Honour films, representing as they do noble sacrifice *and* the countercurrent of nameless loss, perform a similar function. They provide a public testament but also signal private anxieties. This combination of anxiety and technology is the concern of the next section.

III. Cinema, Anonymity and a Hidden Necropolis

Still Life and Moving Pictures

Lodge, in his desperate wish to reanimate his son through photographs, was not only bringing to the foreground unspoken private anxieties, grief and fear, he was also raising the spectre of primal fears associated with the cinema and photography specifically but also with modern technologies generally. The official war film *The Battle of the Somme* provided an example of re-animated soldiers in a faked attack which was undoubtedly the main attraction of the film. By late 1917 it had circulated throughout the country and the depiction of these soldiers going over the top had taken on the texture of ghosts. Yet from the outset the cinematic image had been associated with the spirit world. Maxim Gorky's famous response to the Lumiere's first showings as "This is not life but the shadow of life" is but one association of cinema with a necropolis. That association was also accompanied by an unease and one which at times became fear. Yuri Tsivian points to the centrality of Symbolist sensibility that dominated Russian literary culture in his account of the cultural reception of early cinema in Russia. Many Russian critics absorbed the new technology through the language of Symbolism. Gorky's association of the cinema image with the land of the dead gives evidence to the anxiety provoked by the uncanny black and white world. (Tsivian, 1994: 5) One of the aspects of this anxiety was the fear of seeing one's own image. He quotes Olga Votskoya's memoirs of Alexei Tolstoi's visit to the cinema for a film in which he appeared. After watching himself for a few minutes he left saying "I don't know why but I feel frightened" (Tsivian, 1994: 4). Although Tsivian uses these quotes to argue that the perception of the moving image was not always as universal nor "stable" as it has become, following Tom Gunning, it is clear that the transition to a viewer comfortable with images on the screen, from a cinema of attractions to a cinema of absorption, has never been complete. (Gunning, 1990: 52-62)

Earlier associations between projected images and ghosts, and attendant fears in viewers were evident in the slide shows and phantasmagoria throughout the nineteenth century. Phantasmagoria often used themes of raising the dead or the depiction of departed loved ones. The third term of the entry "phantasmagoria" in the *Oxford English Dictionary* describes it as a "shifting series or succession of phantasms or imaginary figures, as seen in a dream or fevered condition, as called up by the imagination, or as by literary description." Terry Castle uses this entry to open an argument that the phantasmagoria has shifted in meaning to become a metaphor for the "spectralization or ghostifying of mental space" (Castle, 1988: 27) Given this older continuum of visual engagement and the cinema's associations with the showmanship of the carnival, the series of static images in the Roll of Honour films appear as apparitions.

Through their stasis, these images were marked out as distinct from the rest of the programme whether it was live acts or moving pictures. The paradox of these static images projected by a moving picture machine can be imagined to have had the effect of freezing these men in time and space in a defiance of the forward temporal movement suggested by the parade of moving soldiers and munitions in the official war films. In this there is encoded a

desperation, a placing of the ideal, and still, portrait across the moving images of the soldiers in the official war films. The ideal is represented in the pose. Most of the men are looking straight into the camera but some are posed looking off camera and up, inspired by, and bathed in, a divine light. The settings contain either a background of indeterminate colour and texture which suggest infinity or they are idyllic. In some the picturesque countryside is hinted at, the classical pedestals connote a timelessness. The one backdrop scenery in the Milnrow films which refers to battle has an early nineteenth century cannon on a green field. A stark contrast to the chalky churned-up greys of the fields in the Somme film where at times the men disappear, swallowed up by the vast sweeping longshots or simply because they too are the same colour as the land. They disappear as individuals in the Somme film into uniform columns meant to be an impressive display of the modern army. The Roll of Honour films replace for a brief moment this modern crowd of soldiers in two ways, by their static eternal pose, and through their identifiability, their recognisability. Both qualities incorporate the local position within the national narrative while countering the primary anxiety of anonymous absorption within that narrative.

The Hidden Necropolis in the Homefront Imagination

In peacetime the fear of anonymous death had been associated with paupers, bodies unclaimed by family or friends. These bodies often ended up truly obliterated in dissection labs of medical schools. Further the threat of anonymous death throughout the nineteenth century had been associated with fears of crowded urban conurbations and social transience. Joanna Bourke has argued that the war had the effect of extending this indignity to the corpse on the battlefield and thereby creating a necessity for differentiating the experience. "The allure of a clean death was pervasive. The vision of death during war - painful, humiliating, ugly - intensified the urge for its immaculate counterpart."(Bourke, 1996: 220) The traditional nineteenth century funereal rituals which signified a "clean death" marked out class distinctions and social or community recognition. Yet the war created bereavement on a massive scale and as the bodies remained in graves at the front these traditions were largely inadequate. Adrian Gregory has remarked of parental grief:

> Their affective state was miserable, a combination of the worst of Victorian
> sense of grief and modern sense of loss, but without access to the defensive
> strategies of either period, extravagant public mourning or 'denial of death' ...
> the needs of wartime morale prevented the former, yet the latter, the long term
> internalisation of processes in the mores of mourning, would not be effective
> for at least a generation. (Gregory, 1994: 22)

The shift in the traditions of remembrance of the dead were largely predicated on anonymity and culminated at the end of the war in the burial of the Unknown Warrior on Remembrance Day 1920. The cinema's role in this bereavement was similarly caught between traditions and processes. The local Roll of Honour film seems to be one clear example of the changing role of the cinema theatre in the community. The potential for public mourning was contained through the accepted attitude of maintaining morale. Public displays of grief were not on the whole acceptable and this accounts for the applause at the screening of these films.

The Roll of Honour films nevertheless are evidence of an alternative experience which hinges on their overdetermined theme of identity. The undercurrent of anxiety around anonymity was not allowed expression in public forms of ritual but had ready access to expression through fictional texts. Raymond Williams in his unfinished work on the politics of

modernism outlined five literary themes which existed in 'pre-modern art forms and "in certain conditions led to actual and radical changes of form."(Williams, 1989: 37-48) All of these themes were formed in response to the rise of the metropolis and three were overtly driven by anxieties of loss and anonymity; depictions of crowds of strangers, isolation and loneliness, a sense of impenetrability. Williams offers these themes as structuring agents in the development of modernism. These themes are useful here in that they were also predominant themes in the films of the period. Chaplin's use of pathos incorporated these themes as did melodramas depicting the dangers for women in the "dark city" such as Ideal Films' *Alone in London* (1915) starring Florence Turner.

The association of the experience of modernity with the city is axiomatic but those anxieties of anonymity have their parallel in those that constituted a significant part of the homefront imagination. The official war films echo this image of the modern city in their depiction of the war effort as industrialised mass production, the plenitude of shells, ships and tanks, the isolation of separation from home, of the anonymity of the endless identically dressed soldiers and of course the chance, the danger of disappearance. The Roll of Honour Films held these images of the front as dangerous at bay. The front as feared in the homefront imagination in terms of the chaos of imminent impersonal death and injury, is an imagining which is more easily associated with the city than the adventure of the foxhunt. The Roll of Honour Films, through their poses and painted backgrounds, along with the newspaper biographies which told of their subjects' achievements at home and of their bravery at the front, served to hide those imaginings and at the same time are their strongest evidence. The actual unseen necropolis of course escaped the representational powers of the cinema. Wilfred Owen wrote in a letter to his sister: "I have not seen any dead, I have done worse. In the dank air I have perceived it and in the darkness, felt. Those 'Somme Pictures' are the laughing stock of the army, like the trenches on exhibition in Kensington." (Hibbard, 1973: 63)

Finally, the Roll of Honour Films call up another form of exhibition associated with the city. In George Du Maurier's novel *Trilby* the Paris Morgue is an attraction, an exercise in sensational voyeurism and a threat. Sandy and the Laird often walk through the streets of Paris as artists and flaneurs who seek inspiration and often visit the morgue as part of the routine of their long walks. Vanessa Schwartz has observed that the morgue was a municipal institution primarily there to serve as "a depository for the anonymous dead", (Schwartz, 1995: 229) the function being to place corpses in public view in hope for an identification. This was recognised as a kind of public theatre. Svengali threatens Trilby with this fate of anonymous death. "And people of all sorts, strangers, will stare at you through the big plate glass window" (Du Maurier). The fear and threat of dying anonymously lies just under the surface of the Roll of Honour films.

Photographs found on dead soldiers published by the *Daily Sketch* offer another example of the anxiety present in the homefront imagination. In a reverse of the spectacle of the morgue it is the traces of the individual as father or brother or husband represented by photographic evidence which are presented in the search for identity rather than the body, the corpse. The last big budget official war film was D.W. Griffith's *Hearts of the World* which was released in November 1918. The idea was to have Griffith combine actual footage with a moving story and, as he had done with *Birth of a Nation*, place the individual drama in the context of modern war. Griffith expressed disappointment with the battlefield. It was not cinematic. It was anonymous, no mans land was precisely that, the necropolis of Europe and no place for the sweetest love story ever told. Griffith did not shy away from the task however and filled

the screen with the spectacle of war through the manichaen lens of melodrama. His resolution of the threat of individual obliteration was direct. At the climax of the film Lillian Gish searches through the battlefield to find her lover. As she walks through the devastation she finds him, apparently dead, only to discover him alive at the climax of the film. It may be that the recognition plot of *Hearts of the World* rang hollow for a British audience weary of war films and all too familiar with the impossible hope that the film held out. It was only moderately successful on its release at the end of the war.

At the beginning of the war the Roll of Honour films functioned to provide a distinction for the local audience. They referenced the older function of the colourful uniform of the soldier, to be recognised in the crowd - a man in uniform. They combined the private with the public, opposed anonymity with identity, they wrote the local into the narrative of the nation. At the end of Will Onda's tenth series of 4th Loyal Lancashires Roll of Honour (1915) there was the title "more to come". This perpetuity, the seemingly endless procession of the dead, with time, worked to an effect which was less inspirational. Onda exhibited his last Roll of Honour films in 1915. By 1917 exhibitors moved by "practical patriotism" to keep up morale were responding to their audience's stated desires - they were not attracted to war films. By the end of the war the the cinema's role had become more clearly defined as a modern space for entertainment and news but its role as a space for public mourning, as a house of the living dead, never materialised.

Appendices

Appendix One: Six examples of these films survive in the archives. Four in the Imperial War Museum are from the towns of Milnrow and Newhey in Lancashire which are now part of Greater Manchester, Braintree in Essex and Chapel St. (possibly the coastal town of Chapel St. Leonards in Lincolnshire). The National Film and Television Archive holds Roll of Honour films from Westhoughton also in Manchester and from Preston a series of films made by Will Onda, owner of the Prince's Theatre but also directing manager of the Will Onda regional film renters.

Appendix Two: "Practical patriotism" is a term I have borrowed from Leslie Midkiff De Bauche who identifies the concept of combining "allegiance to country and business" as a central tenet in the US film industry's practices during the First World War. (De Bauche, 1996: xvi)

Appendix Three: The homefront imagination is a term I use to describe the relationship between the public images of the front and the reception of those images in Britain.

Appendix Four: Travelling exhibitors often took films of the local area and its inhabitants and, in the evening, screened them to those same inhabitants; audiences who wished to see themselves, their friends and their locality. This was carried out on a European wide scale by the Lumieres in the late 1890s and 1900s. Discussing the Lumieres' street scenes Tom Gunning has suggested that these films take on the role of the Baudelarian flaneur, he likens the cinema images of the city to the kaleidoscope; "Instead of an evanescent and immediate experience, the transfer to film allowed the city streets to become another sort of spectacle, one mediated by the apparatus." Following this the familiar local space of any size town or village takes on this quality of mediated, and uncanny, spectacle. (Gunning, 1997: 25-61)

Appendix Five: Memorial films were not unfamiliar to cinema audiences at the time. Films of the assassination and funeral of McKinley were, famously, ended with the static tableaux shot of a woman in classic gown laying at the foot of a monument upon which were projected the "martyred presidents" Lincoln, Garfield and McKinley. The funerals of Victoria and Edward VII were popular films during the previous decade. After the death of Lord Kitchener in 1916 commemorative slides were similarly popular.

Appendix Six: His recommendation for the attack sequence of *The Battle of the Somme* was the "Light Cavalry" overture. It is hard to understand now how this piece fits Hutcheson's requirements of gravity without thinking of it as a parody of military march music. I can only think of a modern day equivalent. Apparently during the week leading up to Princess Diana's funeral programmes broadcast on the BBC were "toned down" to avoid being incongruous with the feelings of a grieving nation.

Appendix Seven: Samuel Hynes attributes this comment to mean the paintings of the Somme battlefield which were displayed in London in 1917. However, I would like to suggest that it is entirely possible that Owen could be referring to the film as it was being circulated to the troops at this time and that "pictures" was the common term for the cinema at this time. In either case the point here to emphasise is not only the disparity between homefront imagination and those at the front but the private communication of it to those at home.

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