

INTRODUCTION, CHAPTER SUMMARY AND DEFINITIONS

I. INTRODUCTION

Early cinema and warfare: overall argument

It has sometimes been assumed by historians that the First World War was the first war to be extensively recorded on film, and that this war in a sense marked the beginnings of the cinema's relationship with the military. However, as I will show, war and film had come together long before the Great War. Almost as soon as the cinema was born in the mid 1890s, links with the military flourished. Many military events were recorded on film, and cameramen were soon travelling all over the world to cover the various so-called 'small wars' which were taking place at the turn of the century, in places such as Cuba, South Africa, the Far East and the Balkans.

I cover the period from 1897 to 1902 in this thesis, examining how the filming and representation of wars developed rapidly in this period of a mere half a dozen years. The armed conflicts dealt with are the following: the Greco-Turkish War, Sudan War, Spanish-American War, the Philippine War, Boer War, and Boxer Uprising. I trace the stories of the cameramen who covered these conflicts, describing where they went and what they tried to film. I also look at the problems they faced, and how these were (sometimes) overcome.

In this era of increasing official regulation and censorship, it was often difficult for correspondents to reach the front, especially if they were wanting to take photographs or films. And, ironically, at just the time cinema arrived in the 1890s, military technology was developing and the nature of warfare was changing, so as to make war more difficult to film. Longer range weaponry such as the machine-gun and long-range rifle meant that the battlefield was effectively stretched out, and there was an increasing emphasis on defence, thereby consigning the old style of close-order combat – with its hand-to-hand fighting and cavalry charges – to the history books. In the Boer War, for example, opposing forces were often at hundreds of meters distance from one another, concealed from view while exchanging sniper fire.

Early filmmakers had an almost impossible task to capture this new kind of warfare. Several early cameramen attempted the task on their primitive equipment, but in this newly emerging era of 'invisible war' – with camouflage, smokeless powder and long-range rifles and artillery – these efforts often failed. Using large, noisy cameras and without telephoto lenses, they were constantly frustrated. So, unable to record much if any actual combat, cameramen usually had to content themselves with merely filming troops on the march and other routine, non-combat activity in the war zone.

But cameramen and producers learned rapidly, and made great efforts to cover the new style of warfare. Early filmmaking in general was often a

question of 'problem solving', overcoming the inchoate technology and production processes in order to get the point across in the best way possible; nowhere was this more important than in the war film, where news of the war was in great demand, yet the events were so difficult to film.¹ One innovative strategy which had emerged by 1899, was to work closely, almost as partners, with the military authorities in the war zone. Thus, cameramen like Carl Ackerman in the Philippines began to seek help from officers to film troops in set-up engagements ('arranged', as I call them), such as charging past camera, as if the soldiers were attacking an off-screen enemy.

But some other cameramen shunned this 'pally', 'embedded' relationship with the military authorities, and remained more independent, finding alternative ways to overcome the practical problems of filming warfare. Some of these men – such as Paley in Cuba, Dickson in South Africa, and Rosenthal at several conflicts – surmounted official restrictions through persuasion and guile, working hard and taking risks to reach the war front. Their efforts established a foundation of moving picture journalism for the cameramen who would come later and cover wars throughout the 20th century and beyond.

Part of the reason for the success (albeit limited) of these early war cameramen was their increasing degree of professionalism. While some of the first war cameramen were war correspondents like Frederic Villiers, or former military men (like Surgeon-Major Beevor) who had acquired or been lent film cameras to take to the front, by the time of the Boer War several of the operators (such as W.K.-L. Dickson) were in every respect professionals.

My thesis is not restricted to dealing with the filming of warfare on location, for development was also taking place 'back home' as producers and showmen experimented with new ways of representing war. Producers made up for the paucity of films from the front by shooting re-enacted incidents of the war, sometimes called (at the time and since) 'fakes'. They also made allegorical acted scenes, which were usually nationalistic propaganda in all but name. These various kinds of dramatised film satisfied some audiences, but also led to heated arguments in the case of the fakes, about whether spectators were being conned, especially if the film in question was claimed to have been 'shot at the front'.

Aside from such debates, exhibitors too were learning how to present war on screen more effectively. Some go-ahead showmen began to programme several military films together – including such subjects as shots of marching troops, genuine and faked films of the conflict, along with war-related lantern slides – in order to make more complete 'stories of the war'. The Eden Musée in the USA played a significant role in the development of this practice, for during the Spanish-American War this theatre screened extensive shows built up from individual film titles and lantern slides, sometimes rousing audiences to a frenzy of patriotism.

There were other instances of war films stirring audiences to patriotic pride or fury during this period, for during wartime, with heightened emotions on all sides, films about war (even apparently mundane shots of troops marching)

can elicit powerful passions. In some instances such films were aimed at legitimising, even glorifying warfare. Thus, within only its first decade, cinema had become thoroughly implicated in the prevailing militarism of the time.

During this first half dozen years of the war film, the visual language for presenting war on screen became increasingly sophisticated. I will map out some of the key elements of this visual language or 'cinematic apparatus', which employed as its vocabulary various war-related film genres: from general military scenes and shots of commanders, to actuality and 'arranged' films made at the front, as well as fakes shot far from the conflict. In this way exhibitors presented diverse images which represented the distant fighting for audiences far from the conflict, thereby managing to satisfy public curiosity about these wars.

The convergence of war and cinema had effects on the development of the film medium itself. In overcoming some of the problems of filming and exhibiting war on screen, these early film pioneers managed to further the aesthetic and commercial development of cinema in general, popularising longer durations of shows, and spurring on stylistic developments and the shift to the story film. In my conclusion I examine some of the evidence for this 'galvanizing' effect of the early war film on cinematic style.

Particular points in my thesis

Particular points of note which I present in my thesis include the following. I offer a historical introduction to and interpretation of this subject, covering pre-cinematic modes of representing war in media such as photographs, lantern shows, newspapers and periodicals (though in the main body of the thesis I concentrate on film rather than on other media). I show that these existing traditions and practices of war reporting were significant for early war cameramen, and indeed some of these pioneer filmmakers had formerly been in the lantern or photographic trades or war correspondents.

War correspondents have a further importance for us, because the early cameramen were sometimes observed by such journalists while filming in the war zone, and through my reading of a large number of accounts by war correspondents, I have managed to find some fascinating and previously unnoticed descriptions of these cameramen at work.² In addition to these accounts, my sources include many trade journals, including photographic, theatrical, lantern and (later) film journals, some of which have scarcely been used by film historians to date.³

My thesis offers new information about some of the filmmakers who helped advance the art of early war filming. These include: veteran war correspondent Frederic Villiers who took a film camera to the Greco-Turkish war in 1897; lantern lecturer William Paley who filmed during America's first colonial war with Spain in 1898; cameraman Joseph Rosenthal who filmed the Boer war; and American journalist Carl Ackerman who filmed pro-American scenes in his country's conflict in the Philippines and China from 1899 to 1901.

In studying the exhibition of war films, I use data from various local and national film histories to show how war films, faked and genuine, were received around the world. It is especially interesting that audience reactions to the same films were different in different countries (this applies to non-war films too, though less markedly), and I trace some of this national variance in reception, including several examples of both enthusiastic and hostile reactions to Boer war films. Incidentally, through my unearthing of rare descriptions of war films by early spectators, and from published synopses, I have managed to identify for the first time several hitherto unidentified early war films held in major film archives.

I have researched this subject of war and early cinema for many years using numerous sources.⁴ Nevertheless, despite examining large numbers of books and journals, the evidence for some of this activity of early war film making and exhibiting remains slim. Sometimes the only proof that a particular war film was made or that it was subsequently screened, is a single tantalising sentence in a magazine of the time. One would wish for more evidence, but in some of these cases we probably will never know for sure what really happened, for we reach the limit of historical resources. In these circumstances my task has been a historiographical one of trying to work out, or make reasonable guesses about, what happened and when.⁵ I hope that my readers will bear with me in this task. Fortunately, this only applies to some filmmaking activities, and in many cases we are on surer ground, with more reliable or multiple sources to confirm the historical facts.

I should add that, while I have attempted to be as impartial as possible, and to take account of international dimensions, many of my sources are British and the thesis is written from a somewhat British perspective. I should also say that, while I take into account certain other media (such as the press and magic lantern shows) my study fundamentally concentrates on cinema.

Previous writers' work

Surprisingly little attention has been devoted by scholars to the origins of the war film to date. Probably part of the reason for this neglect is that there is little contact between the disciplines of military history and media studies/film history. Practitioners of military history tend to concentrate on the conduct of war rather than on its media representation; humanities/media scholars are generally uninterested in, and sometimes hostile to, the military. My bringing together of these two subjects is therefore quite an unusual exercise in interdisciplinary history.

A certain amount of important work, however, has already been done in this field. To date the most influential theoretical examination of *war and cinema* has been Paul Virilio's book of that title. Virilio's main argument is that the evolution of war in the 20th century has gone hand in hand with, and is in a sense linked to, a change in human perception; and this has been accompanied by developments in photographic and cinematic technique.⁶ Virilio also suggests that the principal instigator and beneficiary of photographic image innovation has been the military, for whom a 'supply of images' has become almost as important as an ammunition supply.

Virilio's work is provocative and perceptive, and offers an interesting starting point for investigating why photographic images have been so important to the conduct and perception of warfare. But the book's main drawback as an analysis is that it is based on little primary research (and is not without errors). While he argues that war creates a demand for war news, Virilio scarcely describes how moving images of war were actually filmed and presented to audiences, and notably fails to look at the *early* development of these practices. Some other film historical works are similarly disappointing in the latter respect.⁷

In addition to Virilio's theoretical examination of war and cinema, there has been some more detailed historical work in this field which I have drawn on. Nicholas Hiley's all-too-little known thesis, *Making War*, is mainly about the First World War, though devotes considerable attention to the earlier era, and is extremely valuable for a number of insights, including its examination of the relationship between government and the media, notably film.⁸ On the theme of the media and film in the Boer War and the First World War, the work of Stephen Badsey is equally important.⁹

Several authors have described the relationship between individual wars and cinema in the early period. Charles Musser in his *The Emergence of Cinema* deals admirably with the Spanish-American War; authors including John Barnes and Elizabeth Strelbel have studied the Boer War and cinema.¹⁰ The films of the Philippine-American War have been the subject of several studies.¹¹ And Frank Gray's work on the Boxer Uprising is full of insight.¹² But all these historians have kept a quite narrow focus, discussing only films of the particular war in question. By contrast, my thesis goes deeper and wider, covering early films of several conflicts in this era, showing who made the films and how, and to what extent these pioneers built on pre-cinematic media traditions of war reportage, and how practices of presenting military subjects on screen evolved in the early film era.

II. CHAPTER SUMMARY

My thesis is divided into parts and subdivided into chapters, covering the particular wars one by one, starting with the Greco-Turkish war of 1897, and going through to the Philippine and Boer Wars which ended in 1902, and finishing with the Boxer Uprising. In addition to this war-by-war coverage, I also have two initial more general chapters in which I examine the origins and aesthetics of early war filming, and a conclusion. I deal with six wars altogether, and generally cover three main themes to do with film in each war: filming, staging and exhibition (sometimes in separate chapters). In addition, I give a background historical and media context for each war. Within chapters I sometimes use 'boxes' for placing filmographic or other information which is peripheral to the main argument.

The individual chapters may be summarised as follows:

I begin in chapter 1 by looking at the military context in the 19th century and earlier, and the popularity of media accounts of far-off, small wars, and I describe the changing battlefield, notably the adoption of accurate, high-velocity rifles and smokeless powder. I examine how pre-cinema media represented warfare: I briefly cover photography, the magic lantern and war correspondence and war art, and discuss how the changing nature of warfare affected its reporting.

Three issues or practices seem to me particularly significant in the pre-cinema era in relation to later issues about film and warfare. Firstly, a debate which took place in the 1890s about the relative merits of photography or drawings for the visual reporting of war. This has something in common with the debate which was to develop among early filmmakers about the relative value of actuality films versus re-enacted films of war. Secondly, the practice whereby photographers who covered conflicts from as early as the American Civil War, would 'arrange' the scene, especially the aftermath of battle, to produce a more vivid or pleasing photograph, which found its analogy among war cameramen, who sometimes 'arranged' their shots. Thirdly, the use of symbolic and nationalistic imagery in the press, often to comment on conflicts taking place between nations, was to find a direct parallel in the many allegorical films produced during the Boer and other early wars.

After this foray into pre-cinema, in chapter 2 I then move on to a general examination of war as represented in the early cinema. I note the strong drive to report the wars of this era in the new medium, yet the problems that early cameramen experienced in trying to film modern, warfare-at-a-distance. I cover the ways in which they tried to surmount these problems, such as 'arranging' troop movements at the front for the camera; and by post-production programming of films, which practice – through showing a multiplicity of short films related to the war – could offer audiences a greater feel for the event. In a more theoretical vein, I show that, based on discussion and discourse at the time, a push for 'authenticity' was behind the choice of what producers tried to film as well as what exhibitors chose to show. I delineate a 'theory of authenticity' as applied to early news and war films.

I also cover staged films. The best known of these films were re-enactments of battlefield incidents, and some filmmakers/showmen, claimed them to be actual recordings of the incidents themselves. I discuss the controversy which arose about these so-called 'fakes', and about the claims made for them, especially issues of deception and believability. I cover the reaction of early cinema spectators to such films, and discuss the advice on spotting fakes by commentators of the time, based on 'plausibility'. Also, there was another (less often discussed) class of acted films about early wars: symbolic or allegorical scenes, which did not claim to represent (or be recordings of) real battlefield events. These were often nationalistic or colonial in theme – and therefore effectively were propaganda.

After this, the main body of the thesis begins, in which I discuss particular wars and how these were filmed or otherwise represented and then exhibited by early showmen. Chapter 3 covers the Greco-Turkish War (1897). I prove that this war was filmed by war correspondent Frederic Villiers, meaning that he was the world's earliest war cameraman. Re-enacted films of this war were produced by Georges Méliès, and so this became the first war to be both filmed and to be faked. Interestingly, it seems that the fake films of Méliès eclipsed those of Villiers in audience appeal. The issue of believability of fakes emerged at this early juncture in film history, for some of Méliès' re-enacted films were apparently believed to be genuine records of the war by some spectators.

Several other issues which we cover later in more detail emerge for the first time in this war: including the importance of war correspondents in the early development of war filming. And there is a possible first example by a filmmaker of 'arranging' events on the battlefield, for Villiers may have posed some Greek soldiers in order to film them. The issue of propaganda arises too, for Villiers only filmed from one side in the war (the Greeks), and he was undoubtedly biased in their favour. I also cover the theme of deception and re-titling (a variation on faking), and I show that a film depiction of a completely different battle was shown as a Greco-Turkish War film, and taken by some in the audience as a genuine record of Greeks under attack. Some writers at this time addressed this issue of deception, using the criterion of *plausibility* to demonstrate that these first fake war films could not be genuine.

My 4th chapter covers the Sudan Campaign of 1898, especially the Battle of Omdurman. I prove that at least two men used film cameras at this campaign: Frederic Villiers (again), and the squire-filmmaker, John Benett-Stanford; and a third man, René Bull may have done so. All three were war correspondents, and I cover their work individually. Only Stanford managed to return with a film, this being a single shot of troops before the battle: seemingly a disappointing outcome, but this was a very important film given that it was taken on the site of battle, albeit just before the allied victory. But film exhibitors needed more, and to make up the difference they showed a number of 'related films': films of troops marching or at exercises (preferably the same units which had fought), views of the commanders in the war, etc. In addition a number of more symbolic, nationalistic moving images were produced and screened: British flags flying, allegorical pantomimes about the war, etc. Sometimes several films of the war were programmed together. This showmanship was in a sense a mini version of the more ambitious patriotic film exhibitions which galvanised American audiences during the Spanish-American War, the subject of our next chapters.

The Spanish-American War of 1898 – sometimes called the Cuban War – forms the theme of chapters 5 to 7. In the previous wars mentioned, the cameramen had all been war correspondents, and while this was not the case in America's war, there was a close relationship between film and newspaper reporting. The two cameramen who managed to reach Cuba to report on the war, William Paley and Billy Bitzer, worked hand-in-hand with print and photographic journalists (of whom there were many) and were conveyed to

the front courtesy of major newspapers, notably Hearst's. I have found new sources which reveal more details of Paley's views and thoughts on filming the campaign than have been known hitherto (notably his disillusionment with the non-cinematic nature of modern warfare) as well as about his actual film work and his misfortunes in Cuba. Both cameramen, Paley and Bitzer, had severe problems filming in Cuba and both were invalided back to the USA with acute fever, though had managed to film some scenes of military activity on the island, and Paley's in particular were of considerable merit.

Back in the USA, producers were also at work, filming soldiers during training and the like, and also trying to represent this war in staged moving images. New sub-genres of dramatised war films emerged during this war. Several symbolic scenes, featuring Uncle Sam, flags etc, were released, the most famous being *Tearing Down the Spanish Flag*, the first known use of abstract imagery in film history. And while Méliès had pioneered the re-enacted battle scene the previous year, a new sub-genre emerged during this war in the shape of restaged naval battles with scale-models, by Smith and Blackton and by Amet: this being the first use of models in cinema history.

Films related to the Spanish-American War were shown in several countries, the reception varying markedly, and in this regard I present, for the first time, an overview of how the films were received in Spain – generally, in rather a lukewarm manner. By contrast, in the USA the reception was often vocal and passionate, and to feed this audience demand, enterprising American exhibitors started programming groups of films and slides of the war together to create what were in effect early feature documentaries. This is another important cinematic innovation, partly engendered by this war, and all in all the Spanish-American War had momentous effects on the American cinema. As well as helping to initiate stylistic changes in filmmaking, the war steered the medium toward topicality and so conferred motion pictures with greater status. On the negative side, though, by turning warfare into spectacle, the film industry was helping to promote US imperialism.

The latter theme is taken up in my 8th chapter, which concerns the Philippine war (1899-1902), a conflict which followed the Spanish-American War, and involved Philippine nationalists fighting the new colonial power, America, for control of their country. This war entailed a successful counter-insurgency campaign by the Americans, and, as I demonstrate, an equally successful effort by US forces to control reporting of the war in the media, including film.

Three cameramen filmed the war: Burton Holmes and Joseph Rosenthal were each there for a few weeks, while Carl Ackerman was in the islands for half a year. All of them faced the by now, familiar problems of filming warfare, and, as some kind of solution, 'arranged' events with US military units, in order to capture authentic-looking action for the screen. All three shared a pro-American outlook, and Ackerman was actually working for the US War Department, contracted to provide them with copies of his films. In furtherance of this aim, he was living among the troops, wore Army uniform, and only filmed events which cast the Americans in a good light.

In addition to this location work, several dramatic representations of the war were made and sometimes released before the genuine Philippine-shot material was even filmed. Like the genuine films, these scenes – many produced by Edison – also tended to be strongly pro-American, and often took a demeaning view of the Filipino adversaries. However, uniquely in this early war, anti-colonial screen propaganda was also presented – in the form of lantern shows by the Anti-Imperialist League (though fewer spectators would have seen these shows than saw the commercially-produced films).

The following chapters, numbers 9 to 11, cover the Boer War (1899-1902), a conflict which was more fully represented in motion pictures than any other until the First World War. Militarily this was undoubtedly an important conflict, the first truly ‘modern war’ it might be said, with two forces fighting one another with up-to-date long-range weapons. At least eight different film cameramen were in South Africa to film the war. However, capturing action was a near impossible task, as camouflaged, Khaki-clad forces traded artillery shells or Mauser bullets across the vast empty battlefields of the ‘veldt’. Even reaching the war zone was an effort, for cameramen faced impediments from British military censors (present in force in this campaign), as they sought to get to the action. But as their frustrations grew, so did their skills, and Rosenthal and Dickson in particular displayed an increasing professionalism during the war, even managing to capture moments during actual fire fights. Part of the reason for their success – albeit limited – was that they based themselves within British military units, following the progress of their hosts and sharing the combat experience. But these two cameramen – unlike Surgeon-Major Beevor, who was actually part of a regiment, or Ackerman in the Philippines – were not tied umbilically to their host units and managed to retain some independence. Nevertheless the lesson was learned, that filming a war could not be done entirely independently: cameramen would always have to seek approval from officials and stay at least partly among the troops if they were to have any chance of being present during combat.

The Boer War inspired more acted films – battlefield re-enactments and allegorical scenes – than any other conflict before or since: 40 or 50 in all. Their tone and bias varied considerably, depending in which country they were produced. Pathé’s films, depicting battlefield incidents (probably filmed at Buttes-Chaumont park in Paris), were fairly neutral – contrary to British comments at the time – and alternately depicted the British and Boers as victors and vanquished. The Edison company’s films made in the USA were similarly even-handed, if laughably inaccurate in locale and details of costumes. The only really strongly anti-British film was by Nöggerath in the Netherlands. On the other hand, most of the British-made films were robustly pro-British. R.W. Paul made over a dozen films representing incidents in the war, many with a strongly anti-Boer tone, a tone also found in the fakes made by Mitchell and Kenyon (M&K produced even more such films than Paul), including the most popular of Boer War fakes, *The Dispatch Bearer*. Other British companies made similar films, British Gaumont taking demonisation of the Boers to the extreme with its production, *Boer Atrocities*; and Hepworth produced a couple of allegorical films which stressed British triumphalism.

No-one who examines the representation of the Boer War in the British media can but be struck by the strongly patriotic, jingoist tone of much of it. There has been some discussion in academe about the extent to which the British working classes supported the war, but the evidence of film reception seems to show it as pretty wholehearted. Audiences at music-hall and fairground venues were vociferous in their appreciation of films representing British victory. Given the lack of battlefield material, numerous films were made of troops, commanders and their units returning to the UK or elsewhere, and again these were received enthusiastically by British spectators. On the other hand, beyond the shores of the UK the reception could be very different. I have found evidence that audiences for films about the Boer War in countries such as Russia and Belgium were vociferous in their disapproval of Britain, to such an extent on some occasions that British consular staff became quite concerned. Such reactions are significant for film history, as they show both an active involvement of spectators in the film going experience, and also a growing concern (interest?) among authorities in the capacity of film to move audiences emotionally.

The final conflict I cover, in chapters 12 and 13, is the Boxer Uprising of 1900, and its aftermath. More than any other conflict of the period (or perhaps since) the anti-western Boxer movement united the developed world – western countries and Japan – in opposition, and inspired one of the first multinational military interventions, aimed at quelling the uprising and punishing China. Capturing these events on celluloid presented major problems for filmmakers, the principal one being that the events – including the famous siege of the foreign legations – had finished before the crews could arrive. So cameramen could only film the aftermath, including aspects of the brutal punitive expeditions which pressed into the Chinese hinterland.

The trans-national character of the intervention meant that it was of direct interest in various parts of the world, and so film companies from several nations were inspired to cover the situation: there were cameramen from Britain and France – one each – and two each from Japan and America. The Briton, Joseph Rosenthal, shot what was perhaps the most interesting coverage, in technical and other ways. Rosenthal experimented with panning shots, an important development for documentary, and in terms of attitude he maintained a refreshingly independent line, escaping his western hosts and managing to cover some aspects of the Chinese side of the war, and even daring to film at the forbidden outpost of Port Arthur. By contrast, most other cameramen were tied to the foreign military forces, none more so than Carl Ackerman – just as he had been in the Philippines – who was working with both the American and German militaries, and mainly filmed their activities rather than anything to do with the Chinese (apart from a couple of shots devoted to statesman Li Hung Chang). I have unearthed several new sources about Ackerman's work, revealing the details of his mission. Thanks to this new information I have traced his itinerary from Tientsin to Peking, and I can describe his methods of work and relations with the forces for the first time. Ackerman provides an important case study in the early history of war filming, being a cameraman utterly in thrall to western military forces, for whom he was effectively making propaganda.

Many dramatic representations were made of the Boxer Uprising by French, British and American producers – nearly as many as for the Boer War. Almost all demonise the Boxers (and often the Chinese generally) for daring to rise against the West, and the films rejoice in the comprehensive victory by the allies. Producers of such films included Mitchell & Kenyon, Lubin, Méliès and Pathé: of these only Méliès' film about the uprising presents the Chinese in a positive light. James Williamson's film, depicting an attack on a Chinese mission, is highly significant in the development of editing, and indicates that war faking was turning out to be an important stepping stone in the development of fictional representation in cinema.

In terms of exhibition, a mixture of genres was screened, including general shots of China and departing troops, in addition to whatever had been filmed in the conflict zone. The Boxer events overlapped with Britain's involvement in the Boer War, and interestingly the two conflicts were often conflated for exhibition purposes, with 'war shows' featuring films from both wars, and indeed from other conflicts. It seems from this practice, that by this stage the 'war film' had become a genre unto itself, almost despite which particular conflict was being exhibited. In this sense, war had effectively planted itself in the cinematic scenery.

In my Conclusion, chapter 14, I pull together some of the previously discussed themes, as well as introducing a hitherto unmentioned theoretical concept. This is the idea, due to the celebrated German sociologist Werner Sombart, that historically speaking, war has often acted as a motor of industrial and technical progress. This seems to have applied to cinema too, for in addressing the problem of 'how to represent war', filmmakers made genuine cinematic innovations, and throughout the thesis I have described technical and stylistic developments which were seen first in war films.

Two obvious examples would be the scale-models used in staged war films; and multi-film exhibition practice. One could also argue that faking and staged representations in general were highly influential, and might have helped lead to the rise of fiction films; what's more, allegorical scenes showed that film could deal with abstract concepts. In terms of documentary practice, war cameramen made several technical advances and became more professional as operators; the acclaim for moving images about current wars elevated the news film as a genre. In short, one can argue that the early war film helped to 'develop' cinema in general.

But while all these examples of the positive role of the war film in stimulating cinematic development are important, one should not forget a more negative aspect to the genre. Most early war films glorified warfare, or at least failed to condemn it, and the demonisation of the other side which one sees in some of these films probably helped lay the groundwork for film propaganda later in the twentieth century. What's more, several films related to wars in this era were shot or presented in a highly deceptive manner. Films were not only faked, but others were falsely titled, and in the war zone troops were artificially 'arranged' for the purposes of filming. Altogether, while the war film led to

stylistic developments, and stimulated a public interest in seeing news events on the screen, it also demonstrated in the most comprehensive possible fashion that film could be a means of deception and propaganda.

Following this concluding chapter, I include several Appendices, in which I deal with such matters as the alleged use of telephoto lenses to film early wars, the opposition expressed to war films in the first years of cinema, Winston Churchill's little-known plan to film the Boer War, and I offer an Ackerman war filmography.

III. DEFINITIONS OF TYPES OF EARLY WAR FILMS

I present here a glossary of the terminology which I use throughout the thesis, which offers a more precise definition of the types of early war films than has hitherto been in use by early film historians. Throughout this thesis I divide early war films into two broad types, categorising them as either 'actuality' or 'staged'. I define these categories and further sub-divide them as follows:

A. Actuality war film: a film of real people and events, shot at an actual war-related location, i.e. a non-fiction recording of reality (not with actors, nor filmed in substitute locations nor a studio). This term 'actuality' has the additional benefit that it suggests a film related to topical/current (i.e. newsworthy) events.¹³ This category is divided into three sub-classes, which I call:

- 1) *Conflict-zone actuality*: a film shot in the conflict zone showing military activity. I also call this kind of film, 'battlefield actuality'.
- 2) *Arranged actuality*: a film shot in the conflict zone with genuine troops, but in which the action has been 'set-up' to be filmed. I sometimes call this category 'arranged film' or 'set up film'. Even though such on-location films were prepared 'artificially' to be filmed, I do not use the term 'staging' or 'staged' in this context, as this misleadingly suggests a stage or actors were used.
- 3) *War-related actuality*: a film which, while not shot in the conflict zone at the time of war, is somehow related to the war and shows military activity. I sometimes call this category, 'related film' or 'close substitute' (a substitute for real conflict-zone footage). For more on this category, see my section on 'Conceptual distance' in Chapter 2. I identify three such kinds of film, depicting either:
 - i) a similar kind of *event* to the conflict in question (e.g. general images of charging troops or artillery firing);
 - ii) the *same soldiers/commanders* who fought in the war, but filmed elsewhere (e.g. at exercises or in transit to/ from the front);
 - iii) the *same location* where hostilities took place (often being scenic views of the conflict zone before the war began).

B. Staged war film: a film about the conflict, shot with actors or scale-models away from the war zone. Another appropriate term might be ‘imaginative representation’, though I include only those films made at or near the time of the conflict (i.e. excluding much later dramatisations), so a longer but more accurate term would be ‘staged film about a current war’.¹⁴ This category is divided into three sub-classes, which I call:

- 1) *Fake war film:* a staged film which re-enacts an incident or event from the current conflict, and was not made at the real location nor with the real participants. I will sometimes use the term, ‘re-enactment’ for this type of film or ‘battlefield reconstruction’, or ‘faked war incident’. Other terms which have been used for this type of film are ‘re-constituted newsreel’, ‘war re-enactment’ or ‘reproduction’.¹⁵ An objection might be made that the term ‘fake’ is, strictly speaking, only applicable when there is proven *intent to deceive*, but this would mean that the same film would sometimes be categorized as a fake and sometimes not, depending on what one knows about the intentions of the producer or exhibitors. I will therefore normally use the term ‘fake’ as a definition of genre, i.e. a staged re-enactment. (I discuss this intent issue elsewhere in the thesis). I further sub-divide fakes into two types:
 - i) *Re-enacted battlefield incident:* a film made with costumed performers depicting a war incident from the current conflict (the incident may or may not really have happened). Such films were usually staged with actors and shot in studios or on land vaguely resembling the war zone, far from the front. An alternative term is ‘acted fake’.
 - ii) *Re-enacted war film with models:* a staged film using scale models to reproduce a major actual battle of the current conflict, especially a naval battle.
- 2) *Staged allegorical war film:* this type, rather than reproducing specific military incidents, portrays wider allegorical or emblematic themes. Made in pantomime style, such films often include the theme of national victory, with figures such as Britannia, Uncle Sam, et al triumphing over their foreign opponents. Alternative terms are: ‘symbolic representation’, ‘allegorical scene’ or ‘staged symbolic film’.
- 3) *Dramatised film about the conflict:* a film made during or soon after the conflict which is more elaborate than a mere re-enacted battlefield incident.

Mis-description or false titling: In addition to these categories, there is an important issue of labelling or naming such films by distributors or exhibitors. As we shall see – firstly and most notably in the Greco-Turkish War chapter – films might be given a ‘new identity’ by being re-titled. Usually this re-labelling was mendacious, and designed to confer increased topicality or authenticity on a film. For example a routine film of troops marching might be given added value and topical interest by telling the audience that the soldiers had been filmed en route to the war zone, or just before battle; or generic shots of artillery firing would be claimed as having been filmed in battle. Alternative terms for this category would be: ‘mis-titling’, or even ‘faking by renaming’.

Notes for Introduction, Chapter Summary and Definitions:

¹ I have been influenced in this issue by Charlie Keil's book, *Early American Cinema in Transition: Story, Style, and Filmmaking, 1907-1913* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2001). Keil looks at changes in filmmaking style, discussing this partially in terms of filmmakers *solving problems* of how best to tell stories and communicate with their audiences. I would argue that the filmmakers who tried to present war on screen in the early era also had problems to overcome (the new kind of warfare; increasing regulation) and had to innovate to find ways of presenting war effectively on screen.

² This applies in particular to cameramen William Paley and Surgeon-Major Beevor.

³ These include the *Music Hall and Theatrical Review* and the *Photographic Dealer*.

⁴ For much of the time while researching I have been lucky enough to live within easy travelling distance of the British Film Institute and the British Library, including the unique resources of the BL's periodical department at Colindale.

⁵ Through the digitisation of historical newspapers we will have the means to search a wider range of resources than could ever be achieved by one mere researcher reading texts. This might add more detail to some of the incidents which I have managed only to sketch out.

⁶ Paul Virilio, *War and Cinema: The Logistics of Perception* (London: Verso, 1989), p.7. Virilio argues that an alteration in our 'fields of perception' has taken place in relation to warfare.

⁷ Several books on the history of cinema and warfare neglect the early period. For example, Joseph Daniel, *Guerre et Cinéma : Grandes Illusions et Petits Soldats, 1895-1971* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1972) begins his main coverage from the First World War onward, and there is not much even about that war.

⁸ Nicholas Hiley, 'Making War: The British News Media and Government Control, 1914-1916', Ph.D., Open University, 1984.

⁹ Stephen Badsey, 'The Boer War as a Media War', in *The Boer War : Army, Nation and Empire*, edited by P. Dennis and J. Grey (Canberra: Army History Unit, 1999); Stephen Badsey, 'The Battle of the Somme: British War-Propaganda', *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 3, no. 2, 1983, p.99-115.

¹⁰ Charles Musser, *The Emergence of Cinema : The American Screen to 1907* (New York: Scribner's, 1990). Elizabeth Grottle Strebel, 'Imperialist Iconography of Anglo-Boer War Film Footage', in *Film before Griffith*, ed. J. L. Fell (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), p.264-271. John Barnes, *The Beginnings of the Cinema in England, 1894-1901*, volumes 2 to 5 (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1996 onwards).

¹¹ Published studies about the films of this war include: Clodualdo Del Mundo, *Native Resistance : Philippine Cinema and Colonialism, 1898-1941* (Malate: De La Salle University Press, 1998); Nick Deocampo, 'Imperialist Fictions: The Filipino in the Imperialist Imaginary', *Bulletin of the American Historical Collection* 27/4, no. 109, Oct-Dec 1999, p. 47-60.

¹² Frank Gray, 'James Williamson's "Composed Picture": *Attack on a China Mission - Bluejackets to the Rescue* (1900)', in *Celebrating 1895: The Centenary of Cinema*, edited by J. Fullerton (Sydney: John Libbey, 1998), p.203-211.

¹³ The French word, *actualité*, was widely used in the late 19th century to suggest a *current* news issue or event. The term 'actuality' is not quite perfect for our purposes, as it implies an 'actual' recording of events as they happen, whereas, as I mention, some films might have been set-up or 'arranged'. However, I think that 'actuality' is reasonable shorthand for what I have in mind.

¹⁴ Méliès' term, 'artificially arranged scenes' is a useful term for dramatised films in general (including staged war films), as are other shorthand terms employed in the early film period, 'posed' or 'made-up' films.

¹⁵ David Levy uses the terms: 're-constituted newsreels', 're-enactments', and 'reproductions' in his important paper: David Levy, 'Re-Constituted Newsreels, Re-Enactments and the American Narrative Film', in R. Holman, ed., *Cinema 1900-1906: An Analytical Study* (Brussels: FIAF, 1982), p.245.