



The Kid, 1921, Charlie Chaplin (1889-1977) and Jackie Coogan (1914-1984)

MOVING IMAGES

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- My other talks on the early days of photography have been about static images but with the advent of sub-second exposure times it became possible to take a series of photos that could then be projected to give the illusion of movement.
- This talk traces that development from multiple still images into the film industry and the rise of **film star's like Charlie Chaplin.**

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Panel of Horses, wall painting in the Chauvet Cave (replica), France, c. 30,000 – 28,000 BCE or c. 15,000 – 13,000 BCE

Panel of Horses, wall painting in the Chauvet Cave (image from the Caverne du Pont d'Arc replica), France, c. 30,000 – 28,000 BCE or c. 15,000 – 13,000 BCE (photo: Claude Valette)

- The history of representing movement goes back at least 15,000 years. These horses heads from the Chauvet Cave in France may represent four horses or they may represent the movement of a single horse. I am inclined to think they are separate horses as they are each so distinctive but they do also seem to represent movement.

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Iranian bowl from Burnt City, 3200 BCE

Iranian bowl from Burnt City, 3200 BCE

- Another early example is a series of images that may have been intended to view as movement are on a bowl from Iran that is 5,200 years old. A goat jumps towards a tree and eats the leaves. However, it is difficult to know if this was animated, as shown here, as it would have required a smooth, fast rotation and a series of slits or stroboscopic lighting. The intention may have been for the viewer to turn the bowl to see the series of images.
- In the 1st-century BCE a Chinese engineer created a lamp with a circular band containing pictures of birds and animals that was said to move quite naturally when the heat of the lamp caused the band to revolve. However, this was probably just shadow pictures moving around the lamp shade.
- Many ways to produce moving images were described by the ancient Greeks, through the middle ages to the nineteenth century which is where I want to start.

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A modern replica of a Victorian zoetrope



Prof. Stampfer's Stroboscopische Scheibe No. X
(Trentsensky & Vieweg 1833)

A modern replica of a Victorian zoetrope

Prof. Stampfer's Stroboscopische Scheibe No. X (Trentsensky & Vieweg 1833)

- In the early 1830s a number of people developed devices for deceiving the eye into seeing motion. Examples are the zoetrope (pronounced '**zow-ee-trowp**') and the stroboscopische (pronounced '**strow-boss-cop-i-shu**'). These devices became known as Phénakisticopes (from the Greek for cheating the eye, pronounced '**fena-kiss-t'scopes**') after a French product that became a popular form of family entertainment.
- Experts used to explain that way it worked was that **persistence of vision** meant that the eye would blend together a series of static images if they were presented quickly enough. We now know that it is not the eye but the visual system of the brain that creates an apparently seamlessly moving image from a series of static images as the best analysis of a complex sequence of changing stimuli. This has been called **short-range apparent motion**. [1]
- Our brains reconstruct an apparent world view from a rapid sequence of still images. So, a film is not a moving image but a series of still images rapidly presented. It is as if the film always lies but we reconstruct a truth. The history of moving images in the nineteenth century is the recognition and exploitation of this lie.

NOTES

- The persistence of vision was known about in classical times, see Lucretius *De Rerum Natura* (*On the Nature of Things*, Book IV, written 50 BCE).
- Induced motion is the apparent movement of a train seen through the window of a second train when, in fact, it is the second train moving. It was described by the Greek mathematician Euclid of Alexandria (325?-265? BCE).

- Newton's disk is a disk coloured with the colours of the spectrum which when rotated looks white or off-white. The illusion was first described by Ptolemy in his *Optics* in 165 CE.
- The phi phenomenon is the illusion of movement you get from a series of light bulbs are switched on and off in sequence. This phenomenon is also sometimes proposed as an explanation of short-range apparent motion.

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[1] <https://faculty.uca.edu/wsmeador/ccsmi/ccsmi/classicwork/Myth%20Revisited.htm>



A paper zoopraxiscope disc by Eadweard Muybridge (1893)



A paper zoopraxiscope disc by Eadweard Muybridge (1893)

- This is another example, a Phenakistoscope (pronounced '**fena-kiss-t'scope**') from later in the century. It was a circular disk with images radially drawn between slits. It was spun and you looked through the slits from the other side and saw the images reflected in a mirror. The series of static images are reconstructed in the brain as a moving image.
- All the early devices used hand-drawn images which limited their appeal to entertaining toys.

REFERENCES

See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phenakistoscope>



Théodore Géricault, *Le Derby d'Epsom*, 1821, Louvre

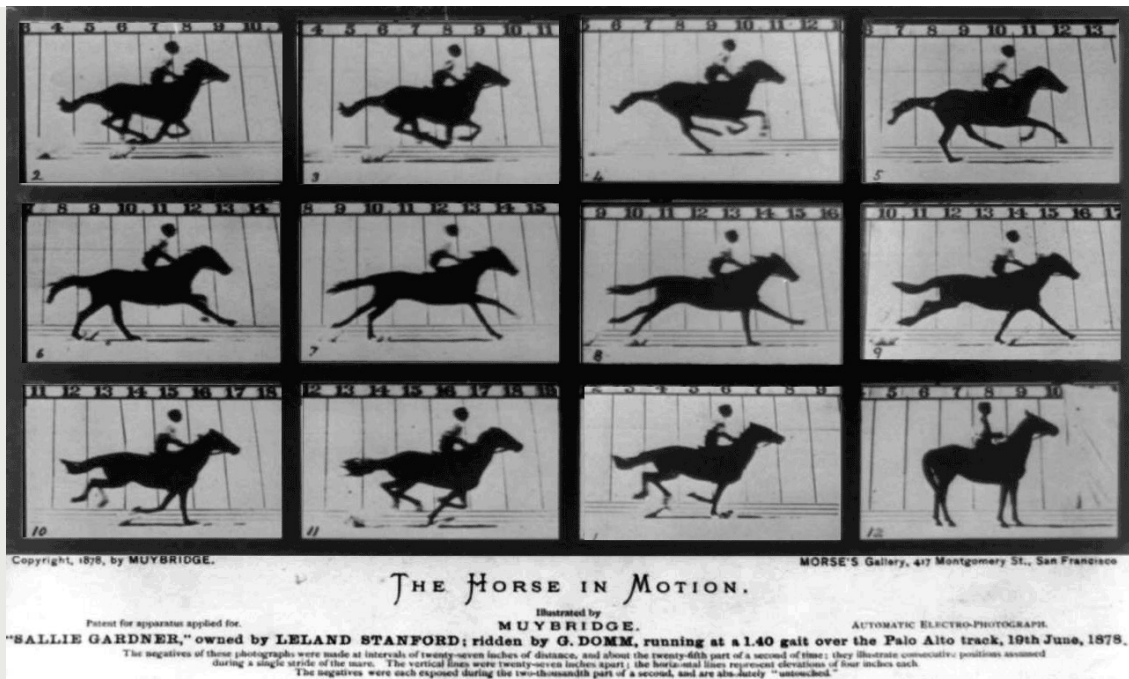
Eadweard Muybridge (died 1904), first published in 1887 at Philadelphia (*Animal Locomotion*).

Théodore Géricault, *Le Derby d'Epsom*, 1821, Louvre

- The next step arose from a bet. In 1872, **Governor Leland Stanford** (1824-1893, 8th Governor of California) bet **\$25,000** that a galloping horse lifts all four feet of the ground at the same time.
- (CLICK) Artists, such as Géricault here, showed all the horses feet lifted outward at the same time to show the horse galloping.
- To win the bet Stanford employed **Eadweard Muybridge** (1830-1904, aged 74, pronounced '**my-bridge**') and he spent the next three years photographing galloping horses but failed to convince anyone. One problem was that exposure times were still too long so Muybridge had get an artist to redraw the images. The solution was to find and develop a more sensitive emulsion in order to stop the motion. He also faced another problem—photographers would remove the lens cap by hand, count the exposure time in seconds and replace it. Muybridge had to buy and improve on the few automatic shutters that were available and then find a way to take a series of photographs rapidly, one after another, equally spaced in time.

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Eadweard Muybridge (1830-1904), *The Horse in Motion*, 1878

Eadweard Muybridge (1830-1904), *The Horse in Motion*, 1878

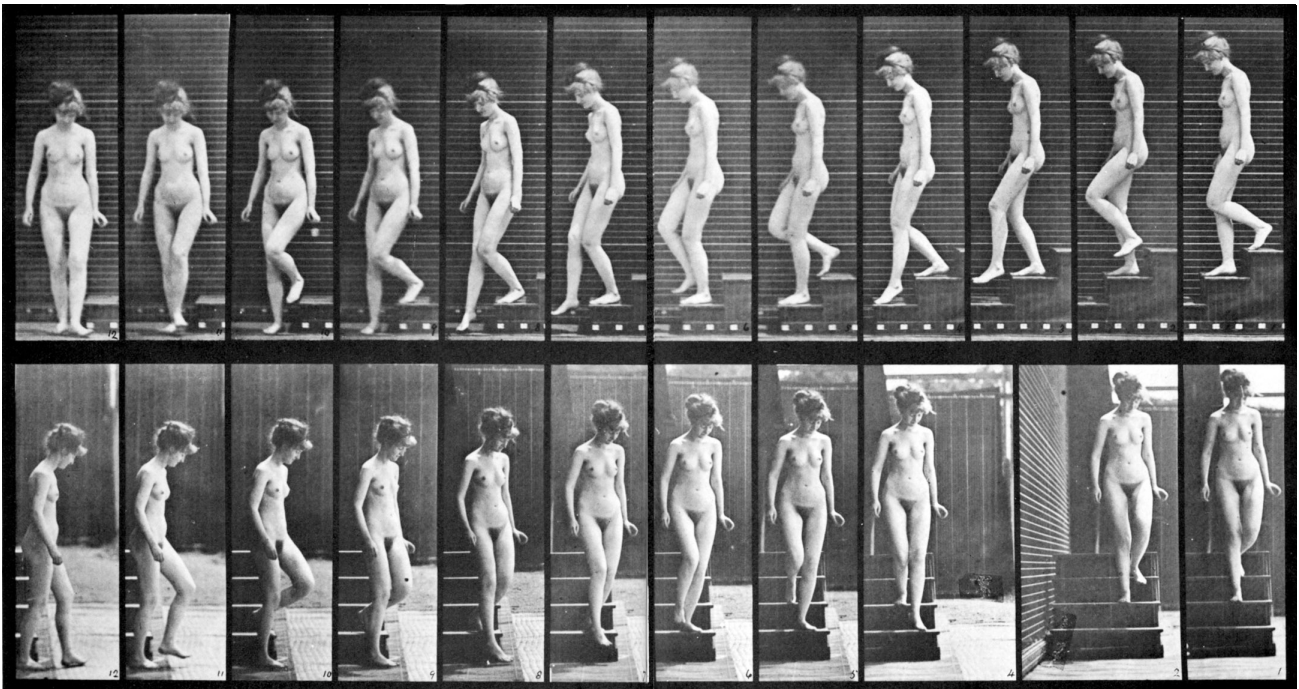
- Six years later, in 1878, Stanford was getting frustrated and ordered Muybridge to use a battery of 12 cameras in a row triggered by strings attached to their shutter releases. As the horse ran past it pulled and broke the strings releasing the shutters in sequence. Muybridge couldn't make it work so Stanford hired a young engineer called **John B. Isaacs** who used 24, then 48 cameras triggered by strings.
- This is one of the sequences of images that settled the bet. It is clear that the horse lifts all its legs under it but when its legs are stretched out one is always on the ground. The first photograph shows when they are brought together under the horse they are all lifted at once.
- The sequence of images was taken in 1878. **A Frenchman called Meissonier** (pronounced 'meh-son-yay') **invented a way to project the images, a stroboscopic disk he called the Zoopraxiscope. On March 13th 1882 Muybridge used a Zoopraxiscope to project his moving images to a sell-out audience including members of the Royal family.** The device projected images from glass plates in rapid succession and can be considered as the first movie projector but from a disk rather than a film and so of limited length.
- (CLICK) This modern reconstruction shows how the images look animated. Seventy-one of Muybridge's disks still survive of which 67 are in the Kingston Museum. He was born and died in Kingston-upon-Thames, a town on the outskirts of west London. He emigrated to America when he was 20 and became a photographer and his large-scale photographs of **Yosemite Park** made him famous. He later became notorious for shooting and killing his wife's lover. The jury acquitted him on the grounds of justifiable homicide.

NOTES

- Stanford was right, all the horses feet were lifted at the same time but to everyone's surprise that were all lifted inwards. Stanford collected his \$25,000 bet but it had cost him \$40,000 (about \$1.1 million today).

EADWEARD MUYBRIDGE (1830-1904)

- **Born Edward James Muggeridge in Kingston-upon-Thames** he emigrated to America in 1850 (when he was 20) and returned to England in 1861 and took up professional photography. He went back to San Francisco in 1867 and in 1868 his large-scale photographs of **Yosemite Park** made him famous.
- In 1874 **he shot and killed Major Harry Larkyns**, his wife's lover, but was acquitted in a jury trial on the grounds of justifiable homicide.
- In the 1880s he produced over **100,000 images** of animals and humans in motion at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. He gave lectures and demonstrations of photography and in 1894 returned to England permanently.
- He died at the home of his cousin Catherine Smith, Park View, **2 Liverpool Road**, Kingston-upon-Thames of prostate cancer on 8 May 1904. The house has a British Film Institute commemorative plaque and a Royal Photographic Society plaque (sponsored by Olympic) on the outside wall. His collection was bequeathed to Kingston Museum.



Eadweard Muybridge, *Woman Walking Downstairs*, 1877, Plate 137, published as *The Human Figure in Motion* in 1901

Eadweard Muybridge (1830-1904), *Woman Walking Downstairs*, Plate 137, 1877, published as *The Human Figure in Motion* in 1901

- The technology he developed for photographing the horse enabled Muybridge to capture movement for the first time and he applied his skills to producing literally thousands of photographs of people clothed and naked and other animals, in motion carrying a wide variety of tasks. This was the first time that the precise position of the body could be examined second by second.
- I mentioned that Muybridge was born in Kingston-upon-Thames, I live a few miles away and frequently visit and the top sequence was displayed on an animated billboard as you came over Kingston Bridge into the town a few years ago.
- (NEXT SLIDE)

Notes

- In March 2023, Kingston University held the first Muybridge international conference, in partnership with Kingston Museum and the Stanley Picker Gallery



Eadweard Muybridge, *Woman Walking Downstairs*, 1877, published as *The Human Figure in Motion* in 1901

Marcel Duchamp (1887-1968), *Nude Descending a Staircase, No. 2*, 1912, Philadelphia Museum of Art

- The earliest series he took had to be photographed one pose at a time because of the long exposure times but soon he was able to take a series of photographs in real time.
- In the 1880s he produced over **100,000 images** of animals and humans in motion at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. He gave lectures and demonstrations of photography and in 1894 returned to England permanently.
- He died at the home of his cousin Catherine Smith, Park View, **2 Liverpool Road**, Kingston-upon-Thames of prostate cancer on 8 May 1904. The house has a British Film Institute commemorative plaque and a Royal Photographic Society plaque (sponsored by Olympic) on the outside wall. His collection was bequeathed to Kingston Museum.
- The sequence is reminiscent of Marcel Duchamp (1887-1968), *Nude Descending a Staircase, No. 2* of 1912 (Philadelphia Museum of Art).

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Egypt, 1859, Gaudin brothers publishers, photographer unknown

Egypt, 1859, Gaudin brothers publishers. Photographer unknown. Stereocard.1182. Le Sphinx et pyramide, près du Caire (No 1). One of 224 stereoviews of Egypt, Cairo and Nubia, published by the Gaudin and advertised in their photographic journal *La Lumière* in November 1859.

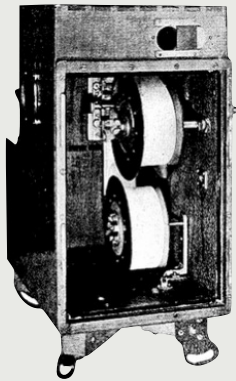
- I would like to mention stereoscopy at this point even though it doesn't involve motion as it was another aspect of recreating the real world and it became extremely popular from the early 1850s.
- When I was young in the 1950s we had one of these devices at home with a big box of stereo photographs. Sadly now lost.
- The device on the left is similar to the cheap folding device we had and the stereo photograph on the right is similar to the many educational stereo photos that could be slid into the back of the viewer. I still remember that the depth effect was surprisingly good, the foreground, middle-ground and background clearly separated providing a strong three-dimensional effect.
- As I said, the images were not moving but another element of reality had been added. The advent of stereoscopic photography, which became mainstream in the early 1850s and was popular until the 1950s, led to the belief that photography could be further developed into a perfect illusion of reality. Photographic recordings with motion and colour were the logical next steps.

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1930 (National Science Museum, London) frames copy of Louis Le Prince's 1888 *Man Walking Around A Corner*



Back view of Le Prince's single-lens Cine Camera-Projector MkII opened (Science Museum, London, 1930)



Roundhay Garden Scene, 1888

1930 (National Science Museum, London) frames copy of Louis Le Prince's 1888 *Man Walking Around A Corner*

Back view of Le Prince's single-lens Cine Camera-Projector MkII opened (Science Museum, London, 1930)

Roundhay Garden Scene, 1888

- **Louis Le Prince** (1841-1890) was one of the early pioneers of moving images from film and he shot the first moving pictures on paper film using a single lens camera. He was a Frenchman who worked in the US and UK and invented moving pictures in 1888 in Leeds.
- (CLICK) Arguably ***Man Walking Around A Corner*** is the earliest film, taken in 1888. However, technically it was not a continuous film but a sequence of 16 photographs taken by a special camera with sixteen lenses which opened one after the other. He was able then to project a short moving image (although this film was reconstructed from the images in 1930). As it was not strictly a film it was little different from Muybridge's public demonstration six years before.
- He went on to develop a single-lens cine-camera and projector that used a film, shown in the centre.
- (CLICK) The film on the right, later called *Roundhay Garden Scene* (1888) **has come to be regarded as the earliest true film.**
- **Le Prince** was a French artist and inventor and he has been described as the "Father of Cinematography". His work did not influence the commercial development of cinema—owing largely to his disappearance in 1890 just before he was to give his first public demonstration of his patented camera and projector.

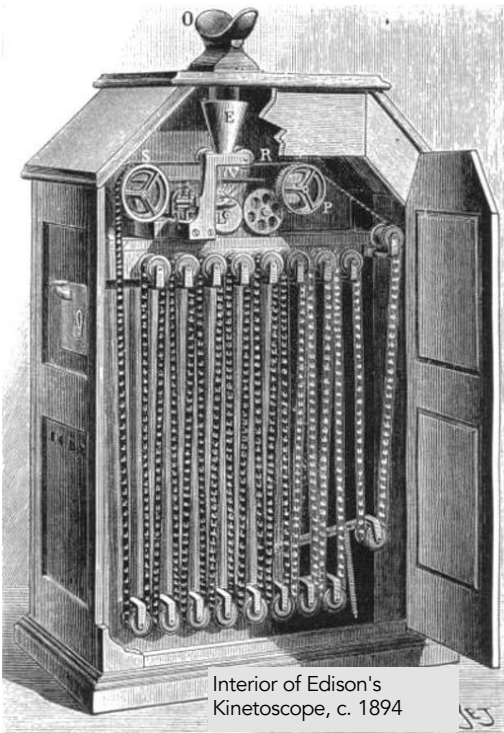
- There are many conspiracy theories about his disappearance include, believe it or not, a murder set up by Thomas Edison, his secret life as a homosexual, an arranged disappearance in order to start a new life, suicide because of heavy debts, and his murder by his brother over their mother's will.
- He has been rediscovered by scholars but is little known compared with...

NOTES

- **William Friese-Greene** patented a "machine camera" in 1889, which embodied many aspects of later film cameras. He displayed the results at photographic societies in 1890 and developed further cameras but did not publicly project the results.

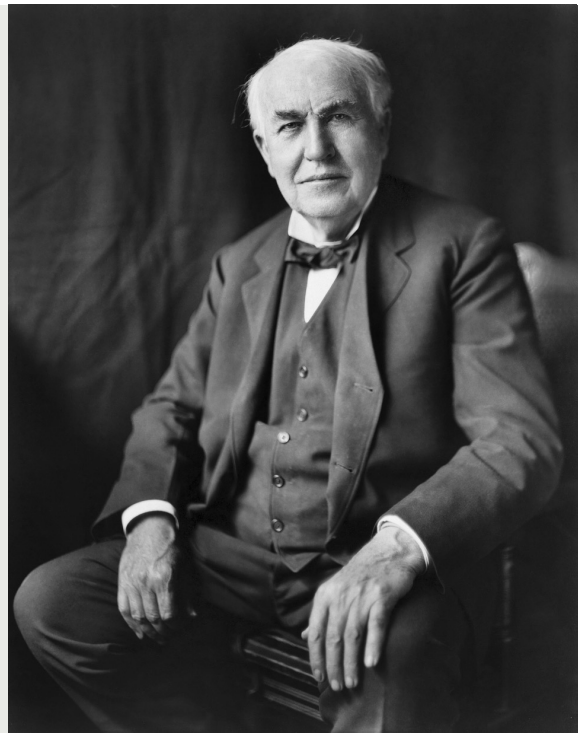
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Interior of Edison's Kinetoscope, c. 1894

Thomas Edison (1847-1931), three-quarter length portrait, c. 1922



Interior of Edison's Kinetoscope, c. 1894

Thomas Edison (1847-1931), three-quarter length portrait, c. 1922

- **Thomas Edison** (1847-1931, aged 84) who invented this "peepshow" device called a Kinetoscope. However, he believed the projection of films to an audience wasn't a viable business model and he saw the Kinetoscope as an adjunct to his phonograph. Even then he thought he would only sell ten in America.
- It was his assistant **William Kennedy Laurie Dickson** (1860-1935), a Scottish inventor, who made the first film projector when Edison was away in **1887**. On his return Edison was shown the **working movie projector and rejected it** as it would 'spoil everything' as he wanted to make many peep-show machines to enhance his phonograph. It became his Kinetoscope, which was developed by Dickson and patented in 1891 and premiered publicly in 1894.
- Meanwhile, Reverend **Hannibal Goodwin** (1822-1900) had filed a patent for nitrocellulose roll film in 1887 but it was not granted for 11 years by which time **George Eastman had already filled another patent for nitrocellulose film in 1889**, the ideal medium for a sequence of still images for projection as it was strong and flexible. Edison used Eastman film stock in his Kinetoscope.

NOTES

- Thomas Alva Edison was an American inventor and businessman, born on February 11, 1847 in Milan, Ohio¹. He is best known for **his invention of the phonograph and practical electric lighting systems**¹. Edison had **very little formal education as a child**, attending school only for a few months but he was taught by his mother². His first job was selling newspapers and sweets on the train. When he was 15 he saved the life of

a three-year-old boy from a runaway train. The boy's father was so grateful he paid for him to become a telegraph operator. Edison spent all his money on equipment and chemicals as he loved to experiment and invent at home. When he was 22 he patented his first invention, an electric voting machine. He went on to become a prolific inventor, holding over 1,000 patents¹. His most important inventions were the **electric light** (patented 1880), **the phonograph** or speaking machine (1878), the **carbon microphone** (1884), the **phonograph record** (1887), **the kinetoscope or moving picture camera (1891)**, and the **storage battery** (1900). Edison's inventions revolutionised the world and forever changed our way of life¹. He died on October 18, 1931⁴.

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Source: Conversation with Bing, 23/11/2023

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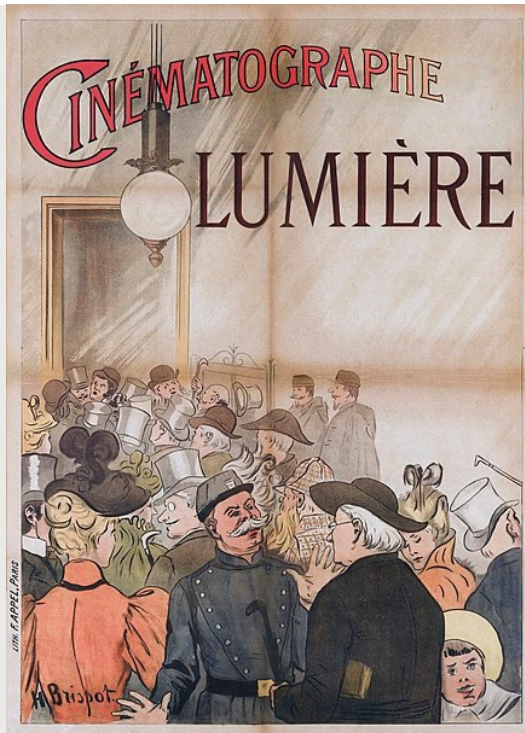
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Poster for the first ever public screening of a film, by Henri Brispot, 1896

Poster for the first ever public screening of a film, by Henri Brispot, 1896

- **The first to present projected moving pictures to a paying audience were the Lumière brothers** (Auguste Marie Louis Nicolas Lumière, 1862–1954 and Louis Jean Lumière, 1864 –1948) in December 1895 in Paris, France. They used a device of their own making, the **Cinématographe, which was a camera, a projector and a film printer all in one**. It had been **patented in 1892** but the Lumière brothers continued to refine it.
- The precise date of their first film is disputed. They later said it was 1894 but historians say a functional camera did not exist until the following year. This is important as Edison's kinetoscope arrived in France in 1894.
- We do know that on **22 March 1895 they screened one film, *Workers Leaving the Lumière Factory***, to a small audience. Remember, Edison's Kinetoscope was for a single viewer. The **Lumière brothers** main interest was not film however but a new colour film process they had invented and they were surprised to find **the film invoked so much interest**. They considered film a novelty, in fact they said, "**the cinema is an invention without any future**" and they dropped out of the film business in 1905 to concentrate on their photographic colour process. They may have been wrong about the film business but their colour process was successful and the Lumière company became a major producer of photographic products in Europe until the brand merged with the British film company Ilford in 1982.
- Despite their lack of belief in its future the Cinématographe became a popular attraction all over the world. They took their machine to China and India and it was enjoyed by everyone. Cinemas appeared, called nickelodeons, which even the poorest could afford and which quickly took over from "peep show" machines.

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ARRIVAL OF A TRAIN
AT LA CIOTAT

Lumière No. 653

Arrival of a train
1895

Arrival of a train, 1895

- This film, **Arrival of a train**, 1895 is typical of the short films being shown at the time. The film is said to have terrified audiences at the time as they thought the train was coming into the theatre. A nice story but it may be just an urban legend. Although, if the audience thought it was a camera obscura, the only technology they would have seen previously, they cannot be blamed reacting that way.
- It was extremely competitive in the 1890s. There were **seven inventors**, five in the US, and all working independently on different methods for creating moving images.

NOTES

- Typical films of the period include:
 - Horse galloping, 1878
 - Roundhay garden scene, 1888
 - Dickson greeting, 1891
 - Record of a sneeze, 1894
 - Buffalo dance, 1894
 - The contortionist, 1894
 - Exciting the factory, 1895
 - Fishing for goldfish, 1895
 - Jumping the blanket, 1895
 - Cordeliers square in Lyon 1895

- The sprinkler sprinkled, 1895 (early comedy)



News film, Czar Nicholas II's Coronation and the Khodynka Tragedy, 1896

Khodynka Tragedy, Russia, 1896

News film, Czar Nicholas II's Coronation and the Khodynka Tragedy, 1896

KHODYNKA TRAGEDY

- From about 1895 there were more and more films becoming available including **comedies, dramas and news events**.
- Audiences in Europe were particularly interested in **news film**. In **1896** a Frenchman filmed **Czar Nicholas II's coronation** and four days later the celebration on **Khodynka Field**. The Czar offered imperial gifts and the subsequent stampede resulted in **1,389 deaths** and 1,300 injured (the Khodynka Tragedy). The gifts were a bread roll, a piece of sausage, pretzels, gingerbread and rumours circulated that some people would receive a commemorative cup containing a gold coin.
- Nicholas and his wife Alexandra were told about the tragedy later and wanted to cancel the dinner at the French Embassy but were convinced by others that it would be an insult to the French. They visited the injured in hospital the following day but he became known as **'The Bloody' because of the Khodynka Tragedy** and later the violent suppression of the 1905 revolution. In 1918, Nicholas, Alexandra (granddaughter of Queen Victoria), their family and their faithful servants were put to death by the Bolsheviks.

NOTES

- Nicholas II replaced Alexander III, an autocrat who reversed the liberal measures of his father but who fought no major wars for which he was styled 'The Peacemaker'. Nicholas II was called **Nicholas the Bloody** by some and **Saint Nicholas the Martyr** by the Russian Orthodox Church.

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The Kid, 1921, Charlie Chaplin (1889-1977) and Jackie Coogan (1914-1984)

THE RISE OF THE STAR

- **Over the next twenty-five years** the cinema developed into a **popular entertainment**. By 1920 there were just under **4,000 cinemas in Britain alone** and some cinemas in London as many as 2-3,000 people could be seated. It is estimated that there was one cinema seat for every 20 people in London.
- Britain had a number of film studios including **Ealing Studios** which opened in 1902 and became the oldest continuously-operating film studio in the world.[2] However, by **1920** most of the films shown came from **Hollywood**.
- Early stars included **Charlie Chaplin**, seen here with Jackie Coogan aged 7. To give you some idea of the money being made by the film industry, in 1913, he was making \$130 a week, but by 1914, he was getting \$10,000 a week (\$500,000 a year, at a time when there was no federal income tax) and he also got a signing bonus of \$150,000 to make twelve two-reel comedies.
- **His first feature-length film was *The Kid* (1921)**, followed by *A Woman of Paris* (1923), *The Gold Rush* (1925), and *The Circus* (1928).
- Other early stars of the silent screen included **Mary Pickford** (1892-1979), **Douglas Fairbanks Jr.** (1883-1939), **Fatty Arbuckle** (1887-1933) and the **Keystone Cops** (in silent films between 1912 and 1917).

NOTES

- 80% of early films (1890-1920s) had colours, some were monochromatic tinted, some were hand painted and from 1905 Pathécolor, a manual, frame-by-frame semi-mechanised stencil process. Technicolor was initially used mainly for musicals like **The**

Wizard of Oz (1939), in costume films such as *The Adventures of Robin Hood*, and in animation. In the 1950s colour became more of less standard.

- "The first public film shows in the UK to a paying audience took place in London in 1896. On 21 February that year, the Polytechnic Institute on Regent Street hosted a display of the Lumière brothers' new moving-picture device, the Cinématographe."
[1]

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[2] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cinema_of_the_United_Kingdom



Al Jolson in *The Jazz Singer*, 1927

Al Jolson in *The Jazz Singer*, 1927

- Within six years, on October 6, 1927, Warner Bros. released ***The Jazz Singer*** (Al Johnson, 1886-1950), the first feature-length film to incorporate synchronised sound for sequences of dialogue including the famous line "**You ain't heard nothin' yet**". Though these sequences were limited and brief, hearing the voices of the film's stars was a revelation for audiences. The following year *The Lights of New York* had its entire dialogue recorded and there was no going back. The modern cinema and the modern movie was born.
- Al Johnson became one of the most famous and highest paid stars of the 1920s.

NOTES

- "There was never any intention to have dialogue in the film, but during his first vocal performance, Jolson improvised the words: "Wait a minute, wait a minute, you ain't heard nothin' yet!" In actuality, *The Jazz Singer* contains a total of only two minutes of synchronised talking, most of it improvised, while the rest of the "dialogue" is presented through the typical standard "title cards" found in all silent movies of the era. But after Jolson uttered his now famous line, the rest was history. Less than two years later, nearly 8,000 theatres were wired for sound." [1]

REFERENCES

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- The moving image had arrived and it ushered in a new way of seeing the world, everything from news to entertainment.
- Notice that I have hardly mentioned art. In the early days there were few films art films, perhaps the Italian *I'Inferno* of 1911 ('Hell', pronounced 'lin-fer-no') based on Dante's *Divine Comedy* was the first and the work of the Russian filmmaker Sergei Eisenstein (pronounced 'sir-gay eye-zen-stine') had a major influence on later art films. However, that is for another day.
- For now, thank you for your attention.