

IRELAND, AMERICAN AND GLOBAL INDEPENDENT CINEMA

...a Study of World-Wide Facts & Fiction

By Thomas J Richards,

BA, MBA, MA

About

IRISH, AMERICAN AND GLOBAL INDEPENDENT CINEMA

…a Study of World-Wide Facts & Fiction

This New Definition of Irish and Global Cinema will assist Independent Filmmakers, Books, Students of the Cinema, Directors, Producers and anyone in the Creative Arts to incorporate a Detailed Business and Marketing Plan in their 'production cycle'.

Following many years of work writing Novels, Screenplays, Short Stories, Stage Plays, Memoirs and Travel Guides, I very much hope my Learnings will contribute to the rocketing growth of the Film Industry – and any other 'Art Practitioners'. This is my way of giving back or 'Paying it Forward'. So many Tutors and Teachers have taught me to write. Beginning in 1973 when my High School teacher and Director of many stage plays, Ron Raben, asked his students to keep a detailed Journal of anything that was on their minds, to Dr John Ficca, McPherson Theatre Head of Department, Illinois Wesleyan University as well as Mr Robert Burda, my lecturer of Shakespeare 101 at the same University, and ending with Doctor Chris Morash, my first Supervisor for my PhD studies who was Head of Department at the National University of Ireland Maynooth – this is my way of saying 'Thank you' to all of them and anyone else who has contributed to my ability to write and think.

In that I have an MBA from the Aderson School of Management at UCLA and an MA in New Product Adoption from Dublin City University, I have a 'global perspective' not only of the Arts but also of Business.

This contribution to Independent Producers, Production Companies, Directors, anyone in the Arts, and stakeholders in small to large Projects is made as I think of those who taught me. May this 'How to Guide' be of help as you Plan any Project in any Nation around the world.

If you would like to contact me to discuss the future of Irish and Global Independent Cinema, any Artform, and how to apply Business and Marketing Practices and Planning, please see below:

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A New Definition of 'Irish Cinema':
How Irish Filmmakers will Transform Ireland's Film business into a Global Industry

By Tom Richards

Original Supervisor: Dr. Chris Morash, National University Ireland Maynooth (now at Trinity University, Dublin, Ireland) started in 2008.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Forward

Dedication

Chapter One

An Introduction to the Ever-Increasing Growth of the Irish Film Industry and the Increasing Opportunities that Growth Represents

Chapter Two

The Financial Contribution of the Irish Film Industry to Ireland's Economy

2.1 Continuing Growth

2.2 The Ever-Increasing Demand for Animated Feature Films in Ireland

2.3 The Contribution of the Hollywood Film Industry to the U.S. Economy

2.4 The Contribution of Irish Cinema to Ireland's Economy

Chapter Three

The Application of Business Knowledge to the Film Industry

3.1 What is a Niche Market?

3.2 Applying Niche Strategies to the Film Industry

3.3 Positioning Strategy

3.4. The Application of Positioning Strategies to Films

3.5. Lost Lovers…or How My Fiancé Lost Me 3 Times on My Wild Journey Around the World! – How our Small Marketing Team Applied Positioning Strategy.

3.6 Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Threats

3.7 The Cash Cow – Why It's Important to any Film Producer

3.8 The Use of Case Studies, a Background

3.9 Applying Case Studies to Irish Cinema

3.10 Using the Case Study Template for a Number of Critical Tasks

3.11 The Small Contribution of Irish Books Who Use Business Principles as Part of Their Books and Articles About Irish Cinema

3.12 The Small Contribution of Irish Books Who Use Business Principles as Part of Their Books and Articles About Irish Cinema

3.13 Summary

Chapter Four

Applying New Product Adoption Theory to Irish Cinema

4.1 An Explanation and Application

4.2 Summary

Chapter Five:
What is an Irish Feature Film? A Definition

5.1 The Ongoing Argument of What is and What is Not an 'Irish Film'.

5.2 Auteur Theory

5.3 Imagined Communities as Part of the Irish Cinema Definition

5.4 Summary

Chapter Six:
The Establishment of Irish Stereotypical Characteristics, Images and Landscapes

6.1 The Creation of Irish Character Stereotypes

6.2 The Creation of Irish Landscape Stereotypes and an Irish Eden

Chapter Seven:

The Four Waves of Irish Filmmakers – Success or Failure at the Box Office?

7.1 Pre-Wave Irish Examples: Produced earlier than the 1970's
7.2 Examples of First Wave Films: Produced in the 1970s and 1980s, ending in 1993
7.3. Summary

Chapter Eight:

The New Age - The Second and Third Waves of Irish Cinema

8.1. The Second and Third Wave of Irish Cinema
8.2 Significant Contributors to the Third Wave of Irish Cinema
8.3. Summary

Chapter Nine:

The Fourth Wave of Irish Cinema

9.1. The Fourth Wave and the Incorporation of Business Practices
9.2 The Fourth Wave: More Examples
9.3 Summary

Chapter Ten:

The Contemporary Age – The Fifth Wave of Irish Cinema

10.1 Selected List of Irish Feature Films, Fifth Wave
10.2 The Changing Distribution and Funding Landscape for Irish Producers
10.3 Summary

Chapter 11 – Defining an 'Irish Cinema'

11.1 Strands to include in a Final Definition
11.2 The Book is Correct but In-correct
11.3 Hollywood – the Master of Nationalism in Action
11.4 The KING Marches into New York City
11.5 The Coming of Age of the Action Hero
11.6 Summary

Chapter Twelve - Moving To a Single Definition of an "Irish" Film

12.1 The Above Elements Consolidated into a Single Definition

12.2 Reflection on Globalization and Identity in Contemporary Irish Cinema

Chapter Thirteen - The Future of Ireland's New Film Industry

Chapter Fourteen - Case Studies of Two Irish Films Now in Development

14.1 Dolphin Song (anticipated Global Release, 2027).

14.2 Lost Lovers…or How My Fiancé Lost Me 3 Times on my Wild Journey Around the World! (Anticipated Global Release: Autumn 2026).

Forward

Irish cinema has long struggled to define itself culturally, economically, and globally. This book re-examines the history and evolution of Irish Cinema through an interdisciplinary lens that unites film studies, cultural history, and business analysis. Beginning with the emergence of indigenous filmmaking in the early twentieth century and moving through the five recognized "Waves" of Irish Cinema, it argues that Ireland's film industry has transformed from a culturally defensive enterprise to a dynamic, globally orientated creative economy.

Drawing on archival research, close textual analysis, and industrial data, the study proposes a new definition of *Irish Cinema* as a filmic practice that is culturally Irish in authorship and intention, economically sustainable through hybridized production models, and globally engaged through entrepreneurial and audience-driven approaches. By integrating principles of marketing, strategic management, and creative enterprise, the book demonstrates that Irish film producers have increasingly adopted business strategies comparable to those of the American and British industries, while retaining distinct national and aesthetic identities. Contemporary Irish Feature Films which are true 'success stories' such as The Banshees of Inisherin shall be cited and analysed to demonstrate how Irish Filmmakers of all kinds and working in many genres shall one day be able to compete directly with the Giants of the Global Film Industry.

The book concludes with two practice-based case studies - including the author's own feature film projects, *Dolphin Song* and *Lost Lovers,* that illustrate how emerging filmmakers can blend artistic expression with sustainable production frameworks. In doing so, it reframes Irish Cinema not merely as a national art form but as a creative industry capable of competing and collaborating on the global stage.

This Book will prove how the Irish film industry has substantially changed over the past twenty years. Today, Modern Irish Cinema is one of the most profitable industries in the world. To do so, this student of Irish Cinema examines the Five Waves of Irish Filmmaking: from the very early days of black and white to the 'turning point' of the New Contemporary Fifth Wave.

I cite a wide range Feature Films, Short Films and Animated Films and take a deep-dive analysis not only into Irish Films but also Films produced in many other countries. Based on this extensive research and analysis, I offer a New Definition of 'Irish Cinema' which, this writer hopes and intends, will help Independent Irish Filmmakers, no matter where they live, to compete directly with the 'Giants' of the Global Industry with particular references to Hollywood Feature Films, the 'Gorilla' from which we will all someday take market share and profits.

This book is based on original research by Tom Richards, an independent book of Irish Cinema. It is intended for educational and creative industry professionals.

Dedication

To Jonathan Richards, PhD and Associate Professor. My thanks for your Guidance and Advice; to Brent Crives, a Master of Stage Plays and Cinema, as well as English; to all of the Irish and German Producers, Directors and Screenwriters I have met over the years; to those Students, Tutors, Filmmakers and Organising Staff at Equinox Germany. Your guidance helped this student of film to become a screenwriter; to those I met at the 2025 Chicago Film Festival. And particularly to my great new friend ‘Bess’ who made me realise that at long last, I was home; to Alex Fenwick, friend and advisor, who edited this draft; to Harsha Ganatra and all who work at Storylines Entertainment Limited and Storylines Entertainment LLC – you have put your hearts and minds into making a Bright Future for our two companies

To Liam O’Neill, Irish Filmmaker – you taught me so much about the Film Business in Ireland and you were the one who encouraged me to pursue my PhD in Irish Cinema; & to Carmel Murray, my partner and Muse who reads most anything I write. And finally to Bill and Mary Richards, my parents, who provided me with a superlative education and told me all I had to do was try my very best.

“Movies are not only a reflection of our cultural present and immediate past; they can also be seen as a refraction of the human condition through time. In our humanistic search for cultural links between peoples and ages, movies can aid greatly in our attempts to understand what it is that we share in common – in order words, the human condition

- Michael T. Marsdon[1]

[1] Marsdon, Michael T. Movies as Artifacts: Cultural Criticisms of Popular Films, page 207.

Chapter One

An Introduction to the Ever-Increasing Growth of the Irish Film Industry and the Increasing Opportunities that Growth Represents

'The best that can be said of Irish cinema today is that it certainly exits. Even with its strata of 'worthy' and 'unworthy' films, its commercial entertainments and its dark dramas, Irish film at least now produces enough films for there to be such divisions in the first place. It was not that long ago when one film a year was a remarkable number, and before that one every few years, and before that one per decade. The film industry has been slow and halting in its development in Ireland, and it may perhaps be subject to the whims of Government and international investment, but this pattern reflects much of what is true in Irish society as a whole. … Irish cinema exists, and its search for identity goes on: to reach a conclusion on the issue would only be to accept that there are limits to what can be found.'

Harvey O'Brien, 'The identity of an Irish cinema,' (3rd edition, 2007), published on www.reelireland.ie.

O'Brien's observations illustrate the tempestuous and often 'slow and halting' journey of filmmaking by Irish filmmakers in Ireland. Certainly, the volume of feature film output produced by Irish filmmakers has increased markedly since the very earliest days of indigenous Irish film production. But O'Brien's comments also underscore a search for identity and solid success by Irish filmmakers that goes far beyond mere output.

Today, Ireland's filmmakers continue to face considerable frustration as they attempt to create, fund, and distribute feature films so as to establish a financial footing that provides them with not only an adequate living, but also enables them to reinvest profits into the further development of their craft, as well as Irish filmmaking activity as a whole. Despite financial support from the Irish Film Board (now Screen Ireland), as well as the implementation of various Irish Government tax incentives (including Section 481), many Irish production companies, filmmakers, crews, actors, skilled film craftsmen and women (such as costume designers, musicians and set designers) continue to struggle financially. That struggle is echoed by the continuing discussions of academics, policymakers, financiers, critics, cineastes, and filmmakers themselves regarding the state of Ireland's film 'industry', the factors that may be inhibiting its further success, and what to do about it.

Despite this struggle, it must be recognised that Irish filmmaking activity has, indeed, come a long way since the foundation of the Republic. Films such as *My Left Foot*, *In the*

*Name of the Fath*er, *The Commitments*, *Michael Collins*, and the Oscar Award winning *Once* demonstrate that Ireland's filmmakers can produce feature films which resonate with a global audience.

The list of Irish Academy Award Winning Feature Films, Leading Men and Women, Screenplays, Animated Screenplays, as well as Academy Award Nominees, grows longer and longer with each passing year.[2] Liam Neeson, one of Ireland's best-known International Actors, made his film debut playing Jesus Christ in the film Pilgrim's Progress.[3] Because of his talent and new-found recognition and his perseverance, he finally found international fame. This Global Industry has always been a high risk business to any individual or company involved. Taking risks occasionally pays off. Often, it does not as many individuals and Irish production companies find to their peril.

Many of the above films – and others – managed to find a global audience, achieving reasonable financial success and return on investment along the way. They have done so by incorporating an Irish perspective, character, and voice that is often unique and peculiarly Irish. (Note that we shall examine this 'voice', and its effectiveness within the global marketplace, in a later chapter.) Unfortunately, and while the above Irish films have achieved notable success, only a small minority of Irish-produced films achieve 'break-through' leading to global distribution, wide audience appeal, and financial profitability for all, not some, stakeholders.

However, and even in light of Ireland's handful of cinematic success stories, some Irish academics and critics continue to believe that Irish filmmaking has lost its way, or never properly found its way in the first place. It is one of the premises of this book that the often-fractious discussion of what constitutes a *proper* Irish National Cinema, together with many other factors, has disrupted the journey of Irish filmmakers; has contributed to the inadequate development of viable business models that are relevant to Irish filmmakers; and has ultimately helped to prevent Ireland from developing a profitable, vibrant, and growing film 'industry'.

Indeed, and based on the pure definition of the word within a business context, Ireland does *not* have a Film Industry. While Irish filmmaking activity is now much, much more than a cottage industry, it does not have the scale, the economic success, the infrastructure, or the continuing and steady employment needed to meet the criteria of 'Industry'. Many professionals and academics involved in Irish filmmaking activity would, of course, argue

[2] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Academy_Award_winners_and_nominees_from_Ireland
[3] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liam_Neeson_filmography

that Ireland does, in fact, have a 'film industry'. This, of course, is nonsense, and as mentioned above, it is the contention of this book that Ireland, de facto, does not have a film 'Industry', at least not within the generally accepted definition of the term.

Used as a business descriptor, 'Industry' defines any segment of economic activity that has a common product or service output, and whose firms operating within that common 'Industry' compete with each other for share of market:

> An industry consists of a number of competitive firms or business units. The firms may be producing the same commodity…or working on the same material…or using the same process…. The crucial test (of an industry) is the way in which competition is delimited; and it is clear that (a segment's) firms are in active competition with one another, but are isolated from the competition of other firms which use (related materials in their processes) or which are engaged in (different manufacturing types).[4]

But 'Industry' implies more than a commonality of product or service output. Rather, 'Industry' also infers the Revenue stream generated from the sale of those products and services within that commonality. As defined by investors (that group of people interested in receiving positive Returns on Investments (ROI) on moneys invested in individual firms operating within specific Industries), an Industry is:

> 'A basic category of business activity. The term industry is sometimes used to describe a very precise business activity (e.g. semiconductors) or a more generic business activity (e.g. consumer durables). If a company participates in multiple business activities, it is usually considered to be in the industry in which most of its revenues are derived.[5]

However, 'Industry' also implies *profits*. In that 'Industry' is a basic category of business activity, and because those categories are populated by individual firms (organisations) having common product and service outputs that operate within that basic category, it must be kept in mind that these individual firms exist to generate profits:

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[4] Alec Cairncross & Peter Sinclair, Introduction to Economics, Butterworth & Co (Publishers), 1982, pp 18.
[5] Modern Language Association (MLA): "industry" InvestorWords.com. WebFinance, Inc, www.investorwords.com/2447/Industry.html.

> A firm is an organisation that transforms inputs (resources it purchases) into outputs (valued products that it sells). It earns the difference between what it receives as revenue and what it spends on inputs, which are used in manufacturing and selling….The firm makes a profit if it sells its (product) for more than the cost of (production) and selling….Most firms are for-profit. They exist to make money….The standard assumption in most economic models is that the primary objective of a manager of a firm is *to maximise the firm's profits*.[6] (italics mine)

Arguably, the term 'Industry' – as used by most business people – is laden with expectations based on current and anticipated production volumes and monetary value, and a given Industrial segment's potential to create profits. 'Industry' therefore implies positive performance across many business metrics. An area of economic activity can be described as an 'Industry' (with a capital 'I') if a group of privately-held and/or publicly-quoted companies, all providing common service or product outputs, are able to generate sufficient (or anticipated) profits in order to: create and maintain employment; consistently enrich owners and shareholders; consistently contribute to a country's Gross Domestic Product; reinvest ongoing profitability and subsequent excess post-tax cash flow to the growth and continuing development of that shared output; and finally are able to achieve these mighty business challenges by consistently meeting consumer needs and expectations with the products or services that the particular 'Industry' provides.

'Industry' is, therefore, a loaded word. A group of companies, no matter how many, producing common products and services that are not demanded by any market segment can only be said to operate within an 'industry' while they continue to exist, and where 'industry' (with a small 'i') is defined as that set of companies producing products or services of a similar nature. However, the lack of profitability due to non-existent demand will eventually result in their demise (unless, of course, profits are artificially maintained by government intervention), and with it that 'industry'. On the other hand, a single company that profitably produces – and sells – a billion widgets to meet the growing global demand for widgets can be said to be operating within a Widget Industry because of its ability to consistently employ people, reinvest in – and continually develop – its product output to meet market expectations, and realise ongoing wealth to its owners and shareholders.

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[6] Dennis W. Carlton & Jeffrey M Perloff, Modern Industrial Organisation, Addison Wesley Longman Inc, 2000, pp 11/12.

Unfortunately, Ireland's past and current community of feature filmmakers cannot be described as operating within a feature film 'Industry' simply because the majority of that community has, at least to date, failed to meet the demands of the marketplace, and the ability to generate ongoing profitability, mentioned above: many Irish feature film companies are unable to reinvest into their businesses, and develop desired projects (without government assistance) because their previous projects do not generate adequate profits; film production activity is project-based rather than ongoing, resulting in output disruption; employment is also project-based rather than ongoing, thereby resulting in long periods of unemployment within companies whose primary business focus is on the production of feature films. While the discussion regarding Ireland's film 'industry' will continue within the body of this book, it is critical to again restate an important premise of the theses' argument: Ireland does not have a film industry, has never had a film industry, and heated discussions attempting to prove or disprove such a claim to 'industry' disrupts the possibilities of generating such an Irish Industry in the future. Rather than arguing about it, this book would rather focus on methods and strategies that might be employed to create a healthy, profitable Irish Feature Film Industry.

In and of itself, this premise is a highly contentious claim and will be viewed with scepticism by many. Yet, this view is at the crux of this book. For this book sets out not to challenge the existence or non-existence of an Irish Feature Film industry, rather it discusses and analyses the factors that have prevented Irish feature film activity from being as successful as it might have been in the past, and – unless strategic and tactical changes are made – might be in the future.

As importantly, it attempts to provide a business model that will contribute to the creation of one. By doing so, the book hopes to provide Irish filmmakers and other interested parties with practical advice and analyses that will contribute to the increasing development of financially successful Irish feature filmmaking; that will contribute – even in a small way – to Irish filmmaking's continuing journey toward a viable Feature Filmmaking Industry; and that might also help to dispel the frustration that filmmakers experience as they contemplate their future careers and the further development of their craft. Along the way, this book also hopes to contribute to the often-fractious body of academic and bookly arguments revolving around Irish cinema history, the factors that have influenced the development of filmmaking in Ireland (and that continue to influence it), while also espousing a direction for the future of filmmaking in Ireland by the Irish.

By its very nature, feature filmmaking – no matter where it is produced or by whom – is a high-risk enterprise where financial success can never be taken for granted. This book hopes to help Irish filmmakers reduce those risks by understanding the social history that underpins current filmmaking decision making and production activity, while also providing business models that may contribute to individual filmmaking success, and consequently, to the further development of Ireland's growing – but still immature – film 'industry' as a whole.

Chapter Two

The Financial Contribution of the Irish Film Industry to Ireland's Economy

Since moving permanently to Ireland in 1982, this writer has noted both misery and profound success not only among the citizens of this country but also the Irish Film industry (the small 'i' is mine. Today, many in Ireland's Film Industry use the capital 'I' to describe the Irish film business. I continue to posit that the 'i' is appropriate. Compared to other open economies such as the United Kingdom, Germany, France and the United States, to name four, Ireland does not and has never had a Feature Film Industry which significantly contributes to Ireland's economy or the financial wellbeing of all involved in the business of Cinema.

When researching the 'industry' at large within Ireland, total revenues from Feature Films are often mixed with revenues derived from Television and Radio. Unfortunately, this 'mix' provides little real insight into the often perilous state of affairs of Feature Film, the Revenues they contribute to the Irish economy, and the number of permanent jobs which are created.

As an example, IBISWorld, a research company, states: "The Market size of the Film, Video and Television Programme Production industry for Ireland in 2025 is Euro 865 million."[7]

While this is fact, the research does not break out the market size (or revenues, profitability or Global Market share) of the Irish film industry. The article also states that the Industry – including all of the above sources – is 'growing at a CAGR of 2.0% between 2019 and 2024." Yet in the years 2020, 2021 and 2022, Ireland's economy has been flourishing. Domestic GDP during those years was:

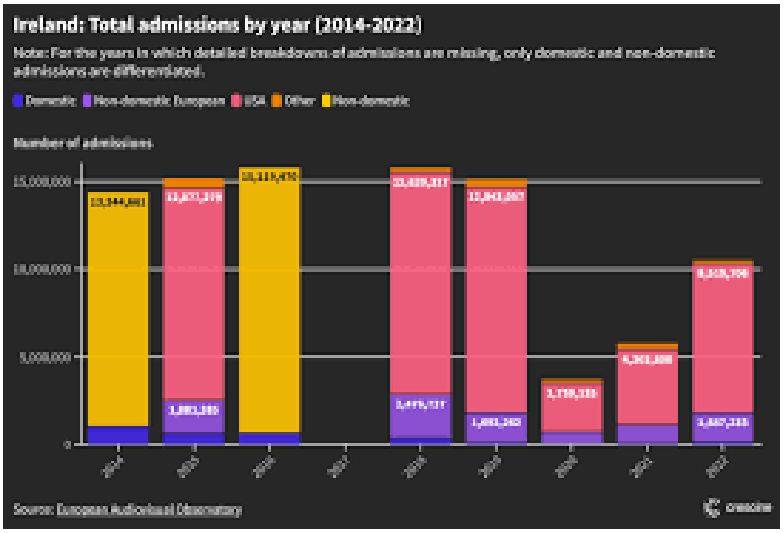
- 3.25 % increase in GDP 2022
- 21.7 % increase in GDP 2021
- 7.23 % increase in GDP 2020

No matter how any researcher 'slices and dices' the Irish total film business (which here does not include revenues created by Radio Stations across the country), our film business significantly lags behind the total increase of Revenues to Ireland. This means it also lags behind contributions to the Irish Exchequer (the Irish Revenue) by millions of Euro per annum.

2.1 Continuing Growth

[7] https://www.ibisworld.com/ireland/industry/film-video-television-programme-production/200634/

The Economists Price, Waterhouse, Coopers reinforce the rather slow, but steady growth of Ireland Entertainment & Media business with its 2024 – 2028 outlook which projects a 2.9 % average growth rate.[8] Once again, however, the state of affairs of the Domestic Film Industry is 'hidden'. These projections include revenue sources from all entertainment (film, radio, TV, page advertising) and the new Generation of AI revenue Value Creation.



One way of analysing the state of our Film Business is to look at Domestic Box Office Receipts. The Bar Chart demonstrates how Irish Ticket Sales are directly related to the state of the Irish economy.[9] Ireland has long been a land of cinema buffs. Since Cinemas were first opened in Dublin, theatres are often backed with people and entire families demanding new films. Unfortunately for our Irish cinema business, those ticket buyers (and now purchasers of Global Streaming platforms such as Netflix, Hulu and hundreds of others) demand Hollywood films (from all Major U.S. Studios. As an example: Irish Children continue to demand Disney productions of almost any of their films). This chart also indicates that while ticket sales are growing again (after several years of recession or near-recession), Ireland has not found a true market 'Niche' in its own domestic market. If it can't find a niche in its own market then the probabilities are it will never find a niche (and continuing profitability) in *any market across the world*.

2.2 The Ever-Increasing Demand for Animated Feature Films in Ireland

Research demonstrates that while children and their families continue to demand Animated Feature Films, most of those films are produced by 'the Hollywood Production Engine:

[8] https://www.pwc.ie/reports/entertainment-media-outlook-2024-2028.html

[9] https://www.google.com/search?q=domestic+feature+film+ticket+sales+ireland+charts&sca_esv=ceb5c2abf123c659&rlz=1C1CHBF_enIE1104IE1106&udm=2&biw=1043&bih=569&sxsrf=AE3TifP3M3L4I7vFUmUtEIoBzvCiX7310w%3A1758396275511&ei=c__OaNHxHtzTp84Prb_t2Ao&ved=0ahUKEwiR94DLiOiPAxXc6ckDHa1fG6sQ4dUDCBQ&oq=domestic+feature+film+ticket+sales+ireland+charts&gs_lp=Egtnd3Mtd2l6LWltZyIxZG9tZXN0aWMgZmVhdHVyZSBmaWxtIHRpY2tldCBzYWxlcyBpcmVsYW5kIGNoYXJ0c0iRMVDAB1jRG3ABeACQAQCYAUegAbAGqgECMTO4AQzIAQD4AQGYAgCgAgCYAwCIBgGSBwCgB8kEsgcAuAcAwgcAyAcA&sclient=gws-wiz-img

In 2024, the demand for animated feature films in Ireland was very strong, especially for big-budget, family-oriented films from major international studios. Disney and Pixar's Inside Out 2 was a massive success, becoming the highest-grossing film of the year at the UK and Ireland box office. The Irish public also showed a continued interest in homegrown, authentic animated content.

The exceptional performance of major animated releases demonstrates a high demand for these films in Irish cinemas.

Inside Out 2: Disney and Pixar's sequel dominated the box office in Ireland and the UK, accounting for 71% of all ticket sales on its opening weekend and becoming the biggest opening film of 2024. It surpassed Dune: Part Two to become the highest-grossing film of the year.

Despicable Me 4 and **Kung Fu Panda 4**: Universal Pictures secured second place for market share in the UK and Ireland for 2024, driven in part by the strong performance of these animated sequels.

Moana 2: Disney's animated sequel was another top-10 earner at the box office in the UK and Ireland during 2024.[10]

However, Ireland's ever-growing Animation Houses are now successfully competing against the above Hollywood Franchises. Our Government, including Screen Ireland, is doing all they can to financially support the Producers of Animated Films (and Television Series):

Demand for Irish animation

The local animation industry is a robust and growing sector, with increasing demand for Irish-produced content both domestically and internationally.

Industry growth: The Irish animation industry saw a 68% increase in production spend in 2023, setting the stage for further growth in 2024.

Government support: This growth is fueled by strong support from state agencies like Screen Ireland, which unveiled several Irish animated projects in 2024.

Cultural appetite: The demand for original Irish animated storytelling is evident through the success of events like the Animation Dingle festival and Screen Ireland's Frameworks scheme, which supports Irish animators.

Overall market snapshot for 2024

[10] https://variety.com/2025/film/box-office/disney-uk-ireland-box-office-2024-1236266889/

The Irish market for animated feature films is thriving, driven by a combination of factors.

International blockbusters: Audiences are drawn to major franchise releases from global studios, which dominate the box office.

Homegrown productions: There is a robust and growing local industry, creating strong demand for authentic, Irish-led animation.

Streaming services: Streaming platforms are a popular and competitive avenue for audiences to consume a wide range of animated content.[11]

The above analysis is a good indication that in a number of years, this growing, successful segment of Irelands Feature Film business may become a real 'Industry' in only a few years. By 'climbing on the back' of the Hollywood Animated Feature Film Industry, and the demand it has created among Global Audiences, Irish Animation houses can 'leverage' this demand into high Returns On Investments for all stakeholders and a significant increase in tax to the Irish Exchequer.

2.3 The Contribution of the Hollywood Film Industry to the U.S. Economy

The U.S. entertainment Industry is a large contributor to the U.S. Economy and has been for many years. The Guardian Newspaper reported in a December 2013 Article:

Creative industries led by Hollywood account for about $504bn, or at least 3.2% of US goods and services, the government said in its first official measure of how the arts and culture affect the economy. "Art and culture is a significant part of the US economy – not just its contributions of ideas and creativity to the innovation economy but also as an important part of the labor force and our country's GDP," NEA senior deputy chairman Joan Shigekawa said in a statement.[12]

That significant contribution has grown to 4.2 percent of GDP, a total of $1.17 Trillion in 2025.[13] However, due to a wide variety of factors, including President Trump's new Tariffs

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11 https://www.animationmagazine.net/2024/02/screen-ireland-unveils-animated-projects-for-2024/#:~:text=%E2%80%9CIt%20is%20a%20fantastic%20opportunity,spend%20of%20%E2%82%AC80%20million.

12 https://www.theguardian.com/business/2013/dec/05/arts-culture-us-economy-gdp#:~:text=Creative%20industries%20led%20by%20Hollywood,and%20culture%20affect%20the%20economy.

13 https://www.bea.gov/data/special-topics/arts-and-culture#:~:text=Arts%20and%20Cultural%20Production%20Satellite,or%20$1.17%20trillion%2C%20in%202023.

some observers of the Global Entertainment Industry now question the ongoing state of the Hollywood Industry.

Is Hollywood Dying? a subheading in a recent article by the BBC, points out that many factors including the president's tariffs, the recent Hollywood actors and writers strike (2023), wildfires, and other content creator and channels of distribution such as YouTube (and TikTok) have resulted in "…a 20% drop from the same period in 2022…" in Hollywood film productions.[14] Yet the Entertainment Magazine Variety states in a 2025 article:

> Although Trump claims that Hollywood is down for the count, 2025 has actually seen a rebound in box office numbers since last year. Overall domestic revenues are up 15.8% head of 2024. Though still 31% behind 2019, hits like "A Minecraft Movie," "Sinners" and "Thunderbolts*" bring hope of closing the gap. Production, however, has struggled to come back forcefully after the 2023 actors and writers strikes. Forty percent fewer films and TV shows have been shot in the United States since a deal between the unions and the studios was reached. At the same time, media conglomerates have instituted widespread cost-cutting measures that have led companies to trim their programming and film slates.[15]

Hollywood as well as all forms of entertainment in the United States continues to be the largest Film Industry in the world. By comparison, Ireland's 'Film business' is holds but a tiny fraction of total revenues produced by all United States Film Production companies.

2.4 The Contribution of Irish Cinema to Ireland's Economy

The state of the Irish Film 'Industry' in 2025 continues to be very robust.

A number of articles, including IbisWorld[16] report:

> As of 2024, the Irish film, video, and television production industry recorded an estimated revenue of €865 million. In addition, total screen production spending reached a record-breaking €430 million in 2024, a 33% increase over 2023.
>
> Here are additional details on the film industry's performance in 2024:

[14] https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cwy04kjwk09o
[15] https://variety.com/2025/film/news/trump-tariff-foreign-film-national-security-1236386566/
[16] https://www.ibisworld.com/ireland/industry/film-video-television-programme-production/200634/#:~:text=The%20Film%2C%20Video%20&%20Television%20Programme,3.1%20%25%20between%202019%20and%202024.

Production expenditure: A separate analysis commissioned by Screen Ireland found that total screen production spending, which includes film, TV, and digital games, reached €430 million in 2024. This was a record-breaking figure for the Irish screen industry.

Total audiovisual sector economic impact: An analysis covering 2021 to 2023 estimated that the broader audiovisual sector, which includes film, contributed €1 billion in gross value added to the Irish economy.

Inward investment: International interest remains strong, with the government increasing the tax relief cap for eligible projects. The increase to €125 million is expected to attract more international productions.

Talent and local films: In 2024, Irish films accounted for 17% of features and shorts classified for Irish cinemas, a significant increase from 10% in 2023. Notable successes included Kneecap and Small Things Like These, which were among the top 25 box office earners in Ireland that year.

Irish box office: Total box office revenue for Irish cinemas was €102.5 million in 2024, a modest increase from €101 million in 2023. The majority of box office revenue came from US releases, though Irish films saw increased representation.

In 2024, Ireland's Gross Domestic Product was €95.7 billion.[17] Simple Math allows us to show that Ireland's Film business contributed approximately .0045 to the Irish economy. This, of course, is much less than the contribution Hollywood makes to the U.S. economy.

However, that contribution does not include the many benefits Ireland's film and film production companies have given to our Nation. Inward investment, cited above, does not include other income with our economy, and local businesses, receive from tourists who – having seen a film featuring Irish talent – decide to visit the country. From The Quiet Man (which is not an Irish Film) to Finegan's Wake (again not an Irish Film) to many others that this book defines as decidedly Irish Productions, tourism has increased significantly over the past fifty years. Too, the above citation does not include 'Intangible Assets' which include: "**Intellectual Property**: A type of intangible asset that is legally protected and cannot be used by another business or individual unless authorized by the owner. Common forms of intellectual property include copyrights, digital assets, franchises, patents, trademarks, and trade secrets." [18]

[17] https://www.worldeconomics.com/country-reviews/Ireland/
[18] https://www.investopedia.com/terms/i/intangibleasset.asp

Intellectual Property (IP) can be almost anything created by anyone associated with an Irish Production. This includes Irish screenwriters, Irish citizens who score music for an existing or future production and any other 'asset' which can be copyrighted or trademarked. 'Intangible Assets' can significantly increase the Net Worth of even the smallest production company. If an Irish Production company can demonstrate to a Bank or other Financial Institution that one of those IP Assets which is part of an existing or future film production is owned by the Production Company, the Directors or owner of that Company can leverage that asset to apply for – and possibly receive – a loan for the balance of the film production or gap funding.

An IP held by anyone in the Film Industry will also allow them to apply for Grants and Soft loans from Screen Ireland and The Arts Council. However, those government sponsored organisations may turn down the applicant due to their lack of experience or, in the case of an Irish Start-up, because the Production Company has never produced a film.

In this case, an IP can also help an Irish Production Company to attract outside investors. Banks, which we have already discussed, but other Financial Institutions which include JPMorgan, Citi Bank and BCP Asset Management. Other companies also support Independent Film Companies across the world.

The Sundance Institute[19] offers a variety of Grants, on-line tutorials, Master Classes and a Video-Library available to anyone who joins the Institute online. Joining is free to anyone interested in becoming a member or supporting the Sundance Institute. Irish Film Producers, screenwriters or anyone involved with Irish Cinema are also welcome to join. This Institute as well as the Sundance Film Festival, both established by the late Actor, Robert Redford, also encourages the production of feature films about (or produced by) Indigenous Native Tribes and the LGBTQ+ Community.

Irish Cinema has come a very long way since the first Irish Feature Film was produced (Ireland a Nation, 1914)[20]. It is the contention of this Book that Irish Cinema still has a great way to go until it can become the highly profitable Industry many Irish Production Companies are *convinced* it can be.

The readers of this book may ask 'why?' Why can't the still 'fledgling' Irish Film business turn itself into a successful, highly profitable Film Industry? The answer is not simple. To achieve that single objective, Irish producers of feature films must immerse themselves in Business Strategies, Tactics and high-value Marketing Concepts. Many of

[19] https://collab.sundance.org/
[20] https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0004164/

Ireland's Film industry 'Leaders' do not have a business degree and have never had to run their own business until they founded and established a production company. These people rely on often high-cost 'advisors' such as Accountants and Lawyers who have no idea how to create an often short-project such as a typical three act Feature Film profitable. Lawyers and Accountants – most of them – are just that: lawyers and accountants. Some specialise in such vital areas as Entertainment Law and Section 481 Accounting. Most of these people are not business people, as many local Solicitors and Barrister will readily admit. They often leave it up to staff to determine the level of profits of their large or small law firms. Too, many lawyers have told me "Tom, I don't care about Profits. That's up for my staff accountant to figure out." This is also why many smaller Irish law firms have gone out of business. And if a law firm or accountancy cannot remain profitable, how can they possibly advise Irish Producers on their level of profitability?

The short answer is: they often can't. But if they can't, who can?

The answer to this question is much longer. As a graduate from the UCLA Anderson School of Management (1980) it took this writer, who has also owned a number of businesses (including an Irish Film Production Company) in Ireland, the United States and India, years to understand how to apply smart business thinking and logic to the Film Industry, either in Ireland or the United States. What follows is a discussion which, I hope, will show Irish Film Producers what constitutes a Feature Film Business Plan and Model and later in this Book, will provide a Template showing how to create a comprehensive Strategic Business and Tactical Marketing Plan.

Chapter Three

The Application of Business Knowledge to the Film Industry

Let's start with a discussion and research of a well-known marketing text often used by many MBA students and their Universities: *Marketing Management* written by Philip Kotler

(Northwestern University) and Kevin Lane Keller (Dartmouth College) – revised over multiple years and with many reprints.[21] While this student does not have the space to cover all of the knowledge, case studies and applications for many small businesses and Global Industries the author's imparted in their books, their concept of Niche Marketing as applied to the Film Industry of any country is a good place to start.

3.1 What is a Niche Market?

I'll start with a good example in a business segment: Unilever Foods (I acted as a Marketing Communications Advisor and Manager through Earthnet, a Marketing Communications Agency I started in Ireland in 1989). Unilever, a highly diversified food conglomerate, has increased its global footprint by purchasing (for cash, share swops or a combination of both) many smaller global companies. In 2002, they purchased Ireland's Knorr Soups for an undisclosed sum. Until the purchase, Knorr had carved out a 'Niche' in the soup segment, competing against many UK companies including Batchelors and MacDonalds. Starting small, this company relied on a few products as 'cash cows'. The product range of Knorr Soups started with Oxtail, Vegetable, Potato, Mushroom and a few other recipes. Almost overnight, it seemed, Knorr had become the largest soup brand in all of Ireland, both North and South. Using the cash their range of soups generated, they developed other soup recipes which their Managing Director told me "Set the company on fire."

Using excess cash derived from retail soup sales, the company bought other smaller companies often based in the UK or set up subsidiary operations including HB Ice Cream (which is now one of the largest Ice Cream producers and distributors across Ireland and the UK). Using that excess cash they pitched to distribute many other brands including Bovril, Marmite, Skippy Peanut Butter, Hellman's Mayonnaise and a full range of other food products. They also set up a Wholesale subsidiary which sold to restaurants and shops making food such as soup across Ireland. That subsidiary quickly turned highly profitable.

Unilever grew to see Knorr as a competitor because it was taking share from the larger company not only in the UK but across Ireland. Deciding to eliminate the threat to its business, it bought the entire company. Thousands of jobs were lost across Ireland due to this purchase and 'War' broke out between lawyers from both Unilever and Knorr. Knorr Customers of all of its products created picket lines and many retailers across the Island of Ireland. It was only after Unilever 'Top Brass' took full page ads in many Irish National and

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21 https://library.uniq.edu.iq/storage/books/file/kotler_keller_-_marketing_management_14th_edition/1666787488kotler_keller_-_marketing_management_14th_edition.pdf

local newspapers which promised the ingredients of Knorr Soups would never change did traditional customers start buying Knorr Soups again. (In fact, Unilever did change many of the recipes. Irish customer 'abandoned ship' and went back to brands like MacDonalds and a few others. A number of business people set up shop across Ireland and started to manufacture all flavours of soups as well as gravy. Today, Knorr Soups is much smaller than it was when I worked for them. The above is an example of how a big company can 'piss-off' the customers of competitors it has bought, just as it has with the recent Ben and Jerry's fiasco).

The above is a good example of a Niche Strategy in action. The people who established Knorr and many companies across Ireland (including Chivers, makers of great Irish Jam and Jellies) not only turned their companies profitable within only a few years, but became global companies soon after.

3.2 Applying Niche Strategies to the Film Industry

[22]Niche strategies and tactics are not difficult to apply to any business, including a start-up Feature Film Production Company. This Chart, Creating a Niche Marketing Strategy



is a simple diagram that I will now apply to any Feature Film Production Company:[23] The Producer, even with a small part-time marketing team, starts with understanding a given Feature Film's target market. This requires extensive research conducted online, in local Libraries, watching films within a similar or related Genre, conducting additional research on those 'research films' target market or markets, examining the films' revenues and profits from all sources (ticket sales, Streaming services, games, DVD sales, Product Placement and any other sources), and continually monitoring those films as they are launched either locally or globally.

The Niche Strategy must also incorporate a method to successfully Differentiate the film (and your production company) from their competitors who may also be launching similar films at or about the same time.

Conducting Demographic research on your Target Market is also highly important. The reason is: if you launch a film to the wrong market by selecting an incorrect channel

22

23 https://fastercapital.com/content/Niche-marketing--How-to-find-and-dominate-a-niche-market-for-your-multi-level-marketing-business--The-steps-and-the-examples.html

(such as a streaming platform that is rarely watched by your Target audience groups) the feature film will fail (as an amazing Flop) and your production company could probably go out of business. In short, it will never make back in sales what the company's stakeholders including its investors have pumped in to Greenlight the film.

I will now use the great deal of research I conducted over two years ago on one of two current Feature Film Projects, Lost Lovers…or How I Lost My Fiancé 3 Times During my Wild Journey Around the World!

This animated family comedy is not certain to be a hit or make back all production money. But the odds are rather high that it will produce profits to all stake holders and with some Luck (and as anyone in business knows, particularly the Film Industry, Luck can be Gold if all elements of a Feature Film are correct).

The story is cross-genre, which creates a larger target market. It is a romance between a white man from the United States and a Christian Black African from the Northwest of that Continent. The Black Protagonist is Swahili and looks like it. The White Man is a Catholic Missionary and also looks like it. The story takes Sean, the white Protagonist, to the young woman's Swahili Tribal Village. Soon, they fall in love with each other (A Romance). The Strong Woman Grace realizes her fiancé Sean has spent all of his cash on a huge Engagement ring when he should have saved the money for after they were wed. Breaking up with Sean, she calls it off and after he leaves the Village for a flight back to the States, Grace decides to go to Calcutta, India, to become a novice Nun who works for Sister Teresa (now a Catholic Saint so this film is also a story of Faith).

The screenplay also includes many talking animals, insects and a talking two-headed Kangaroo (this is fun and children will also love it). The Third act takes place on an Uncharted Mysterious Island off the coast of Australia. That act includes a play-within-a-play based, in part, on William Shakespeare's a Midsummer Night's Dream. During my time at Illinois Wesleyan University, I played Quince, one of the Mechanicals. Kevin Dunn, now an A-List Actor, played Bottom. My hope, after I contact Kevin – one of my best friends in college – is to ask him to create a small Voice Over for the character Bottom. If I am successful, then this very inexpensive Feature Film will have an A-List Actor to help us raise additional investor finance, complete the film, and open it not only in local Cinemas but also on Netflix or one of the other Global Streaming Services.

Therefore, our Niche Strategy and Tactics at this point include: a Cross-Genre film that targets a wide-ranging global audience: adult men and women from the ages of 15 up. All Children down to the age of 3 or 4. Because we are also planning to create subtitles in

many local languages (Indian, Pakistani, the old Irish *As Gaeilge*, French, German and Ukrainian) we will also be in a position to target many countries across the world.

As part of our Niche Strategy, and to increase the probabilities of financial success, we have been awarded a State of Illinois Film Tax Incentive. This incentive, which we can receive even two years after the film opens, mitigates the risk to all investors and shareholders for the film and our company. This Incentive is too complicated to explain in this book, but if anyone reads this is a Film Producer in the State of Illinois, see the footnote on how to apply for the above Tax Incentive.[24]

The Niche Strategy outlined above is only ONE element in the rather long development of a comprehensive Feature Film Marketing Plan.

3.3 Positioning Strategy

A Positioning Strategy used within the context of Marketing is defined as:

> A positioning strategy—also known as a market or brand positioning strategy—is a type of marketing strategy that focuses on distinguishing a brand from its competitors. The goal of a positioning strategy is to influence consumer perception by effectively communicating a brand's competitive advantage.[25]

The concept of positioning rose in popularity in 1969 after the publication of *Positioning: The Battle for Your Mind*, written by Jack Trout and Al Ries. There are several types of effective market positioning strategies for reaching your target audience, including product positioning and competitive positioning.

In the New Forward to Classic Marketing (page ix of Positioning, The Battle for Your Mind by Trout and Reis, Philip Kotler (as an introduction to the book) states: "All good marketing planning must start with R, Research, before any of the Ps can be set. Research reveals, among other things, that customers differ greatly in their needs, perceptions and preferences. …Positioning is a revolutionary idea precisely because it cuts across the other four Ps. It…adds consistency to them. Volvo's conscious decision to build safety features into its product set up the hugely successful "safety" position for the Volvo brand. In the process, a small company from Sweden became one of the world's most powerful automobile brands."[26]

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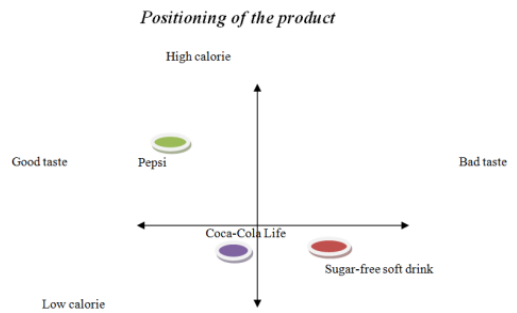
[24] https://dceo.illinois.gov/whyillinois/film/filmtaxcredit/applicationprocess.html
[25] https://www.masterclass/articles/positioning-strategy
[26] Positioning: The Battle for Your Mind, Trout and Reis, The McGraw-Hill Companies Inc, 2001, page ix-x.

Positioning: The Battle for Your Mind is compulsory reading for most undergraduate businesses classes, MBA students and Executives in Global Industries. A simple way to understand this business and marketing Concept is to reduce what Trout and Reis wrote:

Effective positioning strategies can be based on:

- Product Price – which is self-explanatory
- Unique value proposition – that is, the unique features and benefits of your product and how it meets the needs of customers
- Product Quality – customers will pay much more for high product quality but will pay much less for low product quality
- Competitive positioning – directly comparing your product with your competitors' to show how your product is better or unique

Applying the above points is often started using a simple graph. The graph[27] illustrates the position of Pepsi against Coca Cola Life and Sugar Free soft drinks. Pepsi is attempting to increase its market share in their Industry by demonstrating that it is better tasting, but with higher calories, than this much larger competitor. Having implemented this Positioning Strategy, Pepsi Cola carved out a significant increase in market share, the drink's number of consumers and profitability from Coke's much larger global market share. Over the years, as PepsiCo management repositioned the drink again and again against Coca Cola (and large local soft drink companies), Pepsi became (together with its snacks division) one of the most consumed Brands (including Cola and Snacks) in many countries including India and most of the JPA areas. [28]



3.4 The Application of Positioning Strategies to Films

Many Film Producers have successfully applied Positioning Strategies as major part of their marketing strategy. A few examples include the horror feature film classic, Blair Witch. The 'positioning' the producers and their marketing team used is also an all-time classic. This was the first film to use a Unique low-cost 'marketing plan' which included the distribution of

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27 https://www.bing.com/images/search?view=detailV2&ccid=8mSHz0gS&id=94B6E74A3AE1F0FA7F3F23F621E156E05AA85898&thid=OIP.8mSHz0gSUfREziye01fM1wHaEV&mediaurl=https%3a%2

28 https://finshots.in/archive/what-keeps-coke-out-and-pepsi-deep-in-the-snacking-market/

leaflets to major U.S. cities "which, in addition to a brief trailer, led people to a website devoted to *The Blair Witch Project*. People would then discover a compelling backstory on the legend, police report photos and fabricated news stories, all designed to generate word-of-mouth. As details were regularly updated, public speculation escalated via online chatrooms, through which the filmmakers sneakily directed users to their site. The Sci-Fi Channel even aired mockumentary, Curse Of The Blair Witch, designed to boost the legend's validity. Instead of just marketing a film, the production company crafted an entire experience that gripped the public throughout 1999. The film's grainy, homemade aesthetic emphasized its realism, and the actors were even listed as "missing, presumed dead" on IMDb."[29]

This clever, low-cost positioning strategy resulted in the best form of Advertising: word of mouth. The total cost of one of the most frightening horror films ever made was $500,000 at the most. Artisan Entertainment's Bill Block bought the film from its small Production company, paying over $1 million. The Blair Witch Project went on to earn $249 million globally, making it one of the most profitable films in the history of global cinema.[30]

Why is the above strategy a 'Positioning Strategy'? The answer is 'for a number of reasons'. These include a) the name of the 'Project'. The Title does not necessarily suggest a Feature Film. Rather, it can be construed by the public as almost anything. A secret Government Project? A report by the FBI suggesting that a Witch in the real town of Burkitsville (where much of the film's story takes place) and Seneca Creek State Park (a beautiful State Park also used as a real location) was 'on the prowl and murdering many people'. The low-cost leaflet suggested that the murders were 'fact' which led that small film crew to Burkitsville were they were all murdered.

The success of the film, globally, led to feature film franchise which included not only the above film but also The Blair Witch Chronicles, and Blair Witch: Dark Testaments. A number of books and Novels were also released.

The Positioning Strategy used by the original Production Team for the first instalment of The Blair Witch trilogy created a momentum which resulted in the financial success of all stakeholders. That success resulted in 'copycat' productions including Shudder, Paranormal Activity and Willow Creek, to name only three.[31]

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[29] https://screenrant.com/blair-witch-project-trailer-marketing-viral-campaign-influence/
[30] https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/movies/movie-news/what-is-profitable-movie-ever-1269879/
[31] https://movieweb.com/the-blair-witch-project-best-rip-offs/

3.5 Positioning Strategies Used in Irish Feature Films and Television Series

In this writer's extensive research about marketing and the use of positioning, I could not find a direct reference to either of these strategies or tactics applied directly to Irish Cinema. But unstated examples of both of these should be obvious to most students of Irish Cinema.

The Magic Hour of Light is often cited as a good reason for film production crews from any country to shoot even part of their television series or feature film in our country. In his 2009 discussion of The 'Magic Hour', Film Reviewer Marty McCool writes:

> I am a Film Reviewer based in Ireland. I would lilke to gather some opinions on the 'Magic Hour' - this aesthetic cinephiles speak of called 'The Magic Hour'...This is a cinematic term used to refer to the optimum time for filming romantic or magical scenes due to the soft or warm light in the sky, often characterized by a golden/orange hue. Examples of 'The Magic Hour' in the movies are Nestor Almendros' cinematography in Terrence Malick's Days of Heaven (1978) and Phil Alden Robinson's Field of Dreams (1989) and Bertolucci's Last Tango in Paris brilliantly captured that amber Autumnal sunshine.[32]

This 'magical hour of light' allows cinematographers to film in Ireland's early morning or early evening light, usually during the summer months. The 'warm, romantic' glow of the sunshine (or moonlight) is characteristic of many films shot in Ireland. These include: Excaliber, Shine, The Banshees of Inisherin, Michael Collins and The Wind that Shakes the Barley.[33]

Other 'elements' of a film shot by any Production Company include: 'old' Irish locations (such as Kilmainham Jail in Dublin re-created to look just like the 1800s), the soft 'twang' many Irish actors – both male and female – use, the Music of a film located in Irish which often includes Traditional music and the 'softness' of the Irish people (often ordinary Citizens from our country who act as walk-ons or in smaller parts for very little pay).

The recent Television series, The House of Guinness, effectively 'positions' this series as 'an Irish film'. Guinness (first developed in the UK as the world's first stout porter) is one of the most favourite Stouts in the world. The actors are a combination of Irish and English.

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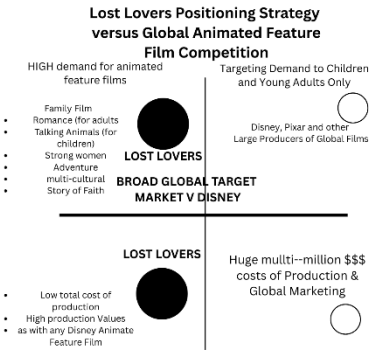
[32] https://cinematography.com/index.php?/forums/topic/39737-the-magic-hour/
[33] https://secretireland.ie/movies-set-in-ireland-stories-carved-from-stone-sky-and-soul/

The Producers include both Irish and United Kingdom citizens while the series has been financed, in great part, by Netflix, the film streaming global giant.

Total audience numbers are not in at this point but because the positioning is so strong and due to the hundreds of millions in our country's wide Diaspora, as well as people from many other nations who love Ireland and occasionally decide that they are Irish (I think of Saint Patrick's Day when people from all over the world come to Dublin and, having seen the Parade, say on TV that they "wish they were Irish"), I am certain this series will be a great success financially and will also contribute to the Irish Tourism Industry for many years to come.

3.6 Lost Lovers…or How My Fiancé Lost Me 3 Times on My Wild Journey Around the World! – How our Small Marketing Team Applied Positioning Strategy.

As a start-up Irish Film Production Company, with a subsidiary in the United States, Storylines Entertainment Limited faces an uphill battle to attract investors for our relatively small budget (which includes marketing). This writer has already spend an undisclosed amount of personal 'cash' including his own investments in the global Stock Markets to create and market the first 30 minutes of this 90-minute Animated Comedy Feature film.



To increase the chances of success in attracting the balance of the required production and global marketing budget, our small marketing team has employed a Positioning Strategy which shall significantly increase the odds of attracting the necessary investments. The Positioning Graph demonstrates how we have applied The Battle for Your Mind to great effect.

First, we have positioned the Lost Lovers feature film within a number of 'sub-genres'. These include: Romance, Strong Women (global entertainment is focusing on strong women for a great deal of its target market), Fun (for children and young adults due to the animated talking animals and insects), Magic (while not in the Graph above, 'Magic' and 'Magical Realism' are central to the telling of this fun story), Multi-cultural (the story's central characters are a strong, no-nonsense Black woman from Northwest Africa and a white male from Detroit, Michigan. When the two meet, they fall in love and plan to be married very soon). The animated feature film has locations all over the world including the United States

(the cities of Detroit and New York), Calcutta India, Brisbane Australia and a Magical uncharted Island off the west coast of that huge country.

We believe that this part of our Positioning strategy will better meet the demand for Animated Film 'Products' by targeting a very large Global Audience. This compares favourable to Disney (and other large animators of feature films which have tried to control the market for many years). Disney, Pixar and the like usually target much smaller audience groups including Young Adults and Children.

The cost of producing a Disney Animated Film is much, much greater than the total costs of producing and marketing Lost Lovers. Due to our low costs, the chances of a great financial return (called a 'ten-bagger' by accountants and Stock Experts) are very high. On the other hand, the chances of achieving a similar return by any Disney Animated Film are a 'tad' lower.

In conclusion, our Positioning Strategy means we won't have to sell as many tickets or have a huge financial contract with a global streaming giant such as Netflix or Hulu because our costs are much, much lower. As a 'start-up' and first-time Producer of a Feature Film of any type, our marketing team has finally learned to keep our costs low, produce the film to the highest quality we can, meet the soaring demand for Animated Family Feature Films (rather than only Children/Young Adult Features), work hard and focus on those marketing actions that will demonstrate a good ROI to any stakeholder including investors, staff and part-time workers in what we hope will become a Classic Animated Feature Film.

With a lot of luck (and as I mention in this Book – luck is always a part of success) we will be able to develop a franchise from our first Film. Writers have already started the screenplay on the Prequel to Lost Lovers, provisionally titled Jungle Juice Jim. A second film about all the characters in Lost Lovers is also in the works.

To this writer the lesson is this: as with The Blair Witch Project, be as clever as you can with your marketing budget. Money is easy to spend and very hard to earn in the Cinema business. For the Irish Cinema, we must all take a lesson from The Blair Witch Project, which is our next step in our marketing efforts.

We will soon create a series of Marketing Tactics much like the Project Above. "Is the Uncharted Magical Island for real? If so, where is it really located?" and "Are Grace and Sean both real (the names of our primary Protagonists) or not? And if they are real, did they

really get married and if so, where?" These type of questions will be asked on our new company website (now being created) which will promote only Lost Lovers. We will develop a very inexpensive competition as part of those questions and also print a number of leaflets asking the same questions as well as a few more to motivate our audiences across the world to see this Animated Feature Film when it Premiers and is distributed globally on a streaming platform.

The last question might be: "Sean is in jail for murdering Grace? If he is, that's Illegal!" This could lead to a number of our Voice Over actors posing in front of local Jails (a set somewhere outside made to look like a Local Jail), holding up banners that Demand Seans release. Then, as if by Magic (again) a man on a horse pulls the front of the Jail down. Sean escapes and meets Grace. Dropping to his knees he asks her to marry him one more time. Grace says 'No' again for all sorts of humorous reasons. Which sets up the Sequel to our first film.

Newly established feature film companies anywhere in the world, including in our country, must use more of their imaginations than any staff or management working at Disney or Pixar. Tight budgets squeeze additional creativity out of anyone working on a low budget feature film or TV series of any kind. Just like The Blaire Witch Project, an important objective for Irish Filmmakers is to create value for our many global consumers as well as all stakeholders.

3.7 Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Threats

As part of any Business strategy, the Practical Application of a SWOT analysis must be applied which is also very simple. All the Producer of an Irish film must do is:

- List the strengths your competitors have: first, list the 'Strengths' all competitors have (and note some of your company's own strengths). Strengths include:
    - Brand Recognition
    - Skilled Workforce
    - Financial Stability[34]

- Brand Recognition: is, of course, a critical strength to any company. Do your competitors have a 'global brand name' (like a Disney or Warner) which is widely recognised, or those competitive 'brands' a 'one-man-band' production team. If they have a 'recognisable brand' and have produced many feature films (both

[34] 201+ Strengths Examples For SWOT Analysis (Huge List) - Practical Psychology

animation and live action) that means they usually have a ‘reputation’ for superlative cinema films. Big ‘brand’ advertising can be driven by a great deal of ‘word-of-mouth’ (the least expensive form of advertising). The example is simple: Marvel will drive audiences into local Cinemas for the launch of a ‘second instalment in a well-known Film Franchise. Ticket buyers love it and tell all of their friends, neighbours, relatives and colleagues about the great time they had. This drives all of those ‘word-of-mouth’ potential ticket buyers into their local Cinema. While ‘Big Brand’ Production companies often start with huge budgets for advertising, those same budgets are extended a great deal with free word-of-mouth advertising.

A Big Brand in film production means they will also find it much easier to distribute films globally (this writer met with Disney Distribution in Dublin, Ireland many years ago. The Vice President of European Distribution told me it was her and her Team’s plan to ‘lock-up’ the EU film market by buying local cinemas and small competitors for “next to nothing”. Which, of course and due Disney Incorporated’s financial might they were able to achieve. This means it is now much more expensive and time-consuming for a small Irish Production Company to have their films distributed in any Cinema). Compare the above Strength with your Irish company (or Sole Trader Production company). While a Gorilla like Disney can seem to be too large to fight against, smart planning and execution can allow Irish Cinema to successfully complete with these much larger International Production companies.

- Skilled Workforce: if you are competing against a giant in the business like Warner Brothers, you know they will have thousands of skilled global staff which can be assigned to any existing or future project. The staff, which include well-known management, talented creators of live action (or animated) films, location scouts, directors and similar talent will also have a huge network of contacts across the global market. This means it can be much easier for a Global Production Company to hire additional skilled talent and co-finance their films (with other large Production Companies). Do your competitors have a great deal of finance available (for instance, if they are listed on the Stock Market they have huge financial resources. This means a film they produce can flop and there will be little comeback from their shareholders). Do they have existing contracts with Actors and / or Voice Over Artists? Do they have their own contracted, highly

successful Directors, Creators of film scores or other creative talent? Now compare a small Irish Production Company with the description above. While 'established' Irish production companies will have many skilled workers, most 'small' production companies will have only a small team which is hired when a film goes into Prep.

- List of Weaknesses of your competitors and your own Irish Production Company: make the list short of your company's weakness short. These are always related to Strengths and can include: the lack of finance; the lack of a permanent skilled workforce; the lack of years of experience; the lack of contacts. Then list the Weaknesses of your larger Competitors. This list should be extensive and will help practitioners of a SWOT analysis to discover 'holes in the chinks of the Giant's armour'.

  Global Production Company weaknesses can include: the head of a large conglomerate getting fired by the Board of Directors. This can have a major, almost crippling influence on a Feature Film Production company or its many subsidiary companies. Or perhaps a Leader leaves a film company or subsidiary. This can also have a substantial influence on a company's success.[35] The footnote will take you to a recent News Article about Bob Iger, who recently stepped down from the Board of Disney Incorporated. Always a reasonable man, he was appalled when ABC tossed the Late Night Host Kimmel off the air. This is a 'wave' of turbulence that will surely affect not only Disney's bottom line and share price, but will also affect the type of films it produces. In a recent article, an analyst stated that "…Disney has again lost its way. It's films don't seem relevant anymore to adults or children. Rob Iger was the saviour of the Walt Disney Corporation. He was a favourite among shareholders and investors, even future ones. With any luck, Iger will be back to lead Disney to future success once again."

Corporate turmoil can lead any company to lose direction and being to produce 'products' its Global consumers may not want. If any reader of this book has been reading recent news about Disney Films, you will discover they are making Live Action films from the stories of Highly Popular Animated Feature films (such as Snow White). When I talked to one of my former Screenplay students only recently about the plight of Disney, she said,

[35] https://insidethemagic.net/2025/09/disney-says-goodbye-to-ceo-bob-iger-new-ceo-crowned-in-months-ad1/

“How can anyone make a film as successful as Peter Pan or the Lion King or even The Little Mermaid as a Live action film? A musical and ballet works, yes. But Live Action with real actors? That’s horrible! Animation lets the audience use their imaginations.”

She is right, of course. Animation is in huge demand by every Streaming Platform. The research I conducted for Lost Lovers before I started writing the screenplay proved beyond reasonable doubt that I should write and produce a work of Animation, not live action. That decision alone has helped me to deliver a Niche Strategy and Marketing Plan that should lead to success and profitability not only for our shareholders but for any stakeholders we have either now or in the future.

The focus of a comprehensive list of Weaknesses about your competitors will lead to the development of a successful Niche Strategy which can be used to increase the odds of your film’s success in the competitive Global marketplace.

Opportunities: Finding a ‘Vein of Gold: it is now common knowledge that the Irish film and TV production sector has never been stronger. In a recent article written by BBC’s Anne Cassidy, writes:

When Irish director Dearbhla Walsh started her career in Ireland in the late 1980s, opportunities for budding film-makers were limited.

> "There was no work in Ireland," says Walsh, "To aspire to be a director was almost a fantasy." Today, the picture is decidedly different. Ireland has emerged as a major force in the global film industry in recent years, both in the development of its own films and television series, as well serving as a location and production hub for international productions.[36]

Today’s Irish Cinema is climbing on the back of many new ‘assets’ including tax incentives, new knowledge and experience, recent wins and nominations for Academy Awards, the price of filming in the United States and hiring U.S. based actors, crew and staff and the relatively new demand for Irish Feature Films and TV programmes of almost any kind.

But these ‘opportunities’ above are not the only opportunities Irish Film Production Companies should analyse in order to take advantage of global competitors. In my experience, and ‘empirical evidence’, some Irish Film Producers rush into Film Production cycles without understanding the current demand by a Global (or National) audience for a particular type of film or story. Most writer / directors (and screenwriters) I have met in the

[36] https://www.bbc.com/worklife/article/20250716-why-the-irish-film-industry-is-booming

past develop a story because it is their true passion. Often, they state “This is a story that needs to be told!” which is true. Many great films, novels, television series and even the lyrics to songs ‘tell important stories to their audience’. In my case, I wrote ‘Dolphin Song’ (both the novel and the screenplay) and ‘Lost Lovers’ (both the novel and the screenplay) because they were both stories I was passionate about.

However, during the writing process I began to analyse the ‘Opportunities’ both would have in the marketplace (and against global competition). During my research, I realised both stories were ‘unique’. While I could find Story Titles which were very similar, the ‘cross-genre’ methods I used resulted in Dolphin Song (the Novel) moving quickly to Global Number One in many marketplaces around the world. Similarly, the Novel Lost Lovers did well due to many factors I describe elsewhere in this Book.

The sales of the Novels increased my confidence that I could write screenplays that could be just as popular and successful as the books. It is my hope that the above example of my own creative work will provide fellow screenwriters and film producers with the following advice: “Take a moment to pause in order to study the Global Marketplace, noting the Opportunities that are available.”

In Business SWOT Analysis, Opportunities can be comprised as a list of New Markets, Advancing Technologies, Partnerships, Regulatory Changes, a Change in the Demand for Products and Similar. For Irish Cinema a somewhat similar list can include the following: ‘New Markets’ for Irish entertainment including Feature Films (e.g. entering ‘foreign markets’ with dubbed or sub-titles in languages other than English); the lower cost of CGI (meaning that writers, producers and cinematographers no longer have to be constrained by larger older CGI budget lines. Turning a ‘modern’ location into an historical location in any past Century costs much less and, when creating a Feature Film, can reach a much larger audience).

Other Opportunities should include research into new Feature Film trends including Bollywood, Hollywood, and other ‘foreign films’. Such research based on empirical evidence (as well as discussions with many Irish friends and writers) led me to the completion of the Novel Dolphin Song. Using that advice, I was finally able to find the ‘spine’ of the story.

Filmmakers must also research emerging trends within the Book Publishing Industry. In a list of the most popular genres in 2024, Literopedia states:

Why Contemporary Fiction is Thriving in 2024

> Relevance to Current Events: Contemporary fiction often deals with timely, real-world issues like climate change, racial inequality, economic disparity,

and the impact of technology. This makes it highly relevant to today's readers who are seeking books that mirror their own experiences and struggles.

Complex Characters: Readers are drawn to characters who feel real—those with flaws, strengths, and personal growth arcs. The authenticity of contemporary characters makes them relatable, which keeps readers emotionally invested in their stories.

Exploration of Social Issues: Modern fiction frequently addresses critical social issues such as gender identity, immigration, and mental health. These topics resonate strongly with readers who are looking for stories that are not just entertaining but also thought-provoking and transformative.[37]

While Irish Cinema should not be limited to Contemporary Current Events, this does give screenwriters and producers a direction on how to increase the chances of success in an ever-increasing competitive Global Feature Film Industry.

The Film Score as a Source of Ongoing Opportunity: throughout Cinema History, since the age of Black and White 'Talkies' (where an organ was used to provide the live audience with music), music scores have always worked to enhance many emotional moments throughout a theatrical release.

In the Cambridge University Press publication, A History of Film Music by Mervyn Cooke, Professor of Music at the University of Nottingham writes:

> During the Hollywood Golden Age (c.1935–55) it became evident that Film music was widely regarded by intellectual commentators as an impoverished cousin of worthwhile concert music, morally dubious in its overt commercialism and mass-production, and often of lamentable quality: this view was perpetuated by some concert composers who were seduced into film work solely for the generous remuneration it offered.
>
> A few–notably Copland and Vaughan Williams–warmly welcomed film scoring not only for its practical and aesthetic challenges, but also as a rare instance of a medium through which living composers were assured of regular airings of their latest music per
> formed by top-class musicians. It was not until the 1980s that a thorough bookly reassessment of the mainstream film industry's working practices and aesthetic aims rescued conventional film music and its composers from a

[37] https://literopedia.com/the-top-literary-genres-of-2024-a-writers-guide

> wearying critical malaise that had at times in the interim led its staunch defenders to embark on somewhat misguided and unnecessary attempts to claim for it an intellectual status equivalent to that of concert music. This initiative seemed increasingly futile after the film industry's unpredictable course in the sometimes-unstable 1960s and 1970s had potently demonstrated the viability of alternative scoring practices, chiefly those involving a foregrounding of popular music and electronics that synergistically exploited the considerable commercial potential of recorded-music sales.[38]

Professor Cooke's observation is very relevant to Irish Cinema and its Producers. Empirical evidence suggests: event in the recent past, many Irish Production companies did not understand the importance of a film score – of how it could emphasise emotions throughout a film; how the sale of LPs then CD's and then streaming them on platforms such as Spotify, could significantly increase Revenues and Profits to any Irish Feature Film.

Historically, many film producers across the world grasped the undeniable fact that a score, written specifically for their motion picture, could act to increase ticket sales to traditional Cinemas and also act as a 'political statement'.

Sergey Eisenstein's Battleship Potemkin was a 'statement of political will' inspired by Russian Revolution of 1905. It was also reported by many Trotsky reporters that the new Communist Government led by Lenin financially supported the making of the film due to the fact that it was about the low-paid sailors revolting against the Czar's Navy and its officers, one of the first 'small revolution' of the war which ended by de-throning Czar Nicholas II. When the ship was surrendered to the Romanian authorities, they handed it back to Russian Naval Officers which incensed many more Russian Citizens to join the Revolution.[39] The above film and score have been referred to many times in 'modern' novels and cinema.

Many feature films produced in Ireland and across the world develop film scores as part of their Production process. Some music in a full film score have become 'signature tunes or songs' for the film. Examples include Jaws, ET and Romeo & Juliet (directed by Franco Zeffirelli). Irish Cinema examples include The Quiet Man (though it continues to this writer's contention that this is not an Irish film), Dancing at Lughnasa, Circle of Friends and many more.

When beginning the process of writing the screenplay for the Animated Family Film, Lost Lovers…, this writer (also the Producer of the above Feature Film) hired a song writer

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[38] Cooke, Mervyn. A History of Film Music, Cambridge University Press, 2008.
[39] https://www.historytoday.com/archive/months-past/mutiny-potemkin

who also acted to create the film score. The result achieves what many Producers above have also achieved: many of the songs (and singers) are citizens of West Africa which emphasises the plot of the story. The score moves from happy to sad; from sad to excited which emphasises the screenplay as well as the director's intent of the various animated sequence. One of the songs, sung by a choir of West African children, is a hymn emphasising this film is a story of faith. One song, a Tribal Hymn, is the signature tune which we have used in our Trailer.

When Lost Lovers is released globally, it will be followed by the global release of the film score across many social media channels (where it will make additional revenue and profits) and on Spotify and similar music streaming platforms.

Financial success of the Irish Cinema must include as many financial 'strings to our bows' as we can find and leverage. Film scores are a large part of our bow, and another arrow in our quiver.

Threats: the list of 'Threats' should be as long or as short as the writer of a SWOT analysis wants to make it. Threats can include: a writers / actors / directors strike (which is out of the control of many Production Companies); 'Acts of God' including bad weather which can delay – or cancel – the Production of any feature film; lack of finance to complete a Feature Film on-time and to budget, or which may cancel the final filming of a Feature Film; the illness (or sudden death) of a key actor, director or other key member of Film; the sudden decision of a Co-Production company to pull out of an Irish Production without notice, leading to the cancellation of an Irish Feature Film; the 'meltdown' of Advanced Technologies (including many computer systems and CGI creation) at any time during filming or when a film is in Post Production); and additional (and often external threats) which cannot be forecast by any Irish Film Production Company or anyone in the Global Film Industry.

The most recent example of this last threat is the one-hundred percent Tariff President Donald Trump has placed on 'foreign films' produced outside of the United States.[40] The following MSN article, written by reporters Wyatte Granthan-Philips and Paul Wiseman states, in part:

> President Donald Trump says he will slap a 100% tax on movies made outside the United States — a vague directive aimed at protecting a business

[40] https://www.msn.com/en-us/movies/news/trump-takes-his-tariff-war-to-the-movies-announcing-100-levies-on-foreign-made-films/ar-AA1NxjMt?ocid=BingNewsSerp

> that America already dominates. Claiming that movie production "has been stolen'' from Hollywood and the U.S., Trump posted on his Truth Social platform that "I will be imposing a 100% tariff on any and all movies that are made outside of the United States. It was unclear how these tariffs would operate, since movies and TV shows can be transmitted digitally without going through ports. Also unclear is what it would mean for U.S. movies filmed on foreign locations — think James Bond and Jason Bourne — or what legal basis the president would claim for imposing the tariffs.

Threats are part of any business and change constantly. Many of the threats above disappear when least expected which is why Ireland's filmmakers must keep abreast of not only global news but of what is transpiring across the world which could significantly impact their film business, negatively or positively. This list should also be created keeping in mind the Strengths, Opportunities, Weaknesses and Threats of any Irish filmmaker's major competition.

By constructing a detailed SWOT Analysis, Irish producers of Feature Films (as well as any company or individual working within the Irish Entertainment Industry) can better identify their competitors and significantly increase their knowledge to increase the odds that their Irish Film will be the success they want it to be. Too, this important SWOT Analysis better positions their company to minimise the risk to all concerned. The success of even a single feature film created by an Irish Production Company could well lead to the development of a high-value Film Franchise.

Summary: A SWOT analysis must be employed by any film producer in the world but is particularly important to small Irish feature film producers due to the highly competitive nature of the Global Feature Film business. Too, Irish Cinema requires to integrate all the business practices it can afford because large Global Production Companies have entire Departments, including Marketing, Finance, Planning and Accounting to ensure their continuing financial success.

SWOT is a proven method which assists small companies in any Industry to successfully take market share away from large competitors. This student of Irish Cinema knows that his company is at War with all other Filmmakers across the world. Our Company Directors and marketing Team constantly fight for inward investments to finance our films, work hard against much larger Entertainment Corporations to make our potential investors and audiences across the world aware of vital elements to our business including our

company website address and the Memes which feature our upcoming films across many Social Media Platforms. We fight for enough cash to pay our small staff and fight for tax breaks across the world and recognition from Screen Ireland, which we have not yet been successful in achieving.

The 'fight' our small Company goes through every day as well as the many battles we must engage in can by summarised as follows:

The Art of War, written in the 6th Century by the Chinese General Sun Tzu, is highly relevant to those who practice the Art of Irish Cinema. While many of his points are relevant to our studies, the great General's 19th point is possibly the most appropriate:

> "Hence, when able to attack, we must seem unable; when using our forces, we must seem inactive; when we are near, we must make the enemy believe we are far away; when we are far away, we must make him believe we are near."[41]

This single quote neatly encapsulates any SWOT analysis. The Irish Cinema is 'at war' with 'enemy production companies' across the world. By using stealth, foresight, wisdom and 'generals' and commitment, we arm ourselves for the battles which we must fight every day for years to come.

3.8 The Cash Cow – Why It's Important to any Film Producer

What oh what is a Cash Cow and why is this small phrase important to Irish Cinema? That's what I asked when I first began my MBA studies at UCLA. I thought it was a *real cow* that spurted dollar bills or Euros. My marketing professor then told me, "It's a cow all right but it has many, many udders. If a product (or film) is spouting cash, use the excess cash to develop another product (or in our case, a Feature Film).

Which is also correct. Let's assume that Lost Lovers does what this Book writer hopes it does. When I am pitching this film to possible Investors and financial institutions, I cross my fingers and smile. "With any luck, your small or large investment will turn into a Ten Bagger. That's how confident I am in the financial success of this Animated Family Comedy Feature Film. Which is still true.

If we can execute our entire marketing plan as inexpensively as I hope to (as do all of our Management), we'll make enough excess cash to begin shooting our next full length live Irish Feature Film, Dolphin Song. This film (the screenplay has already been approved by our Board of Directors) will cost between 70 and 80 million dollars to complete. And that is a

[41] Tzu, Sun. The Art of War, Arcturus Publishing Limited, 2017.

great deal of money to raise. But if can start the film by creating a great Trailer; then show that Trailer to a number of Investors, this student of Irish Cinema is convinced the Feature Film will be a Global Success.

We now look at a number of Case Studies which will help us understand how some companies apply Business Principles to the creation of any film. Too, the Case Studies help us to understand how some companies have mitigated financial risk across the entire Film Production Cycle.

3.9 The Use of Case Studies, a Background

In the research I have completed about the application of businesses principles to Global Cinema, I found few which were written like a true Business Case Study though many articles have been written about the application of Marketing Principles to the Hollywood / American Film Industry. A brief overview will help readers of this book to understand why many Independent Filmmakers do not yet grasp the fundamentals of business marketing (including Business Principles and appropriate Case Studies) to help them greenlight their feature films.

Film Independent, an online resource whose Mission is to 'Champion Creative independence in visual storytelling in all of its forms…'[42] includes a wide range of 'case studies' on their website. Most of the case studies concern 'The making of' an Independent Film'. As one example of a 'case study' they have archived for use by Independent Filmmakers, I will cite the low-budget Feature Film Green is Gold (writer/director Ryan Baxtor, Produced by Anthony Burns, Budget $110,000, Released in 2016). [43]

This 'case study' is actually a description of how the above writer/director met many obstacles prior to receiving financial and production assistance from the above Producer who was also a good friend. The article does enlighten readers about the many steps the above small Production Company took to raise finance and have the film greenlit. Some of these steps included:

- The Self-financing of an initial 'cut' made possible by the writer/director's friends, their encouragement and also the personal cash they all invested, and also the personal loan the writer/director took out to start creating the film
- How Ryan Baxter became discouraged with his first cut and how he almost went broke
- The steps he took to raise additional finance

[42] https://www.filmindependent.org/about/
[43] https://www.filmindependent.org/blog/case-study-the-making-of-green-is-gold/

- How the LA Film Festival accepted the film on condition the Festival would host the World Premier
- Subsequently, and after Baxter invested an additional $29,000 for music licensing fees, legal fees, a new sound mix and compensation to his cast and crew (who had worked for nothing), he found he had spent more than $15,000 than the sales price of his project
- Baxter then hired a lawyer who sold the worldwide rights to Netflix.

At the very end of this case study, Ron Baxter gives good advice to other Filmmakers: "Make sure you get all the contracts done ahead of time. Be on top of the releases, licensing and contracts before you step foot on set so there's no last-minute leveraging (when the film gets distributed). And work with people you love and trust."

It is my opinion that while Film Independent have called the above a 'case study', it is not really a business case study all. Film Independent's Archives are full of such 'case studies'. They do impart a broad range of experience and advice and can be interpreted as 'How to Guides' for fellow Independent Filmmakers.

The Sundance Institute has a long history of assisting Independent Filmmakers. Founded by Actor Robert Redford and named after the character he portrayed in Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid, Redford and his organisation have worked hard to enable individuals and small Production Companies to build and network with a large community of fellow writers, directors and producers. [44]

The Institute's Online Case Studies use business elements. The following is a brief extract from the Case Study regarding the development of a Distribution Plan for the short film Thunder Road. Director Jim Cummings won the Sundance Grand Jury Prize following this short's 2018 Sundance Film Festival premiere. His desire to turn his short into a Full-Length Feature Film resulted in the formation of a larger development team which included a production partner, Zack Parker.

Using investment platforms such as Kickstarter, they then approached a number of other investors who also contributed to the film's small budget. 'Kicking in' an additional $100,00 paid by the Producers, the $200,000 budget allowed Cummings to greenlight the film.

[44] https://www.sundance.org

Following Awards received for the new Full-Length release of Thunder Road, Jim and his team developed a business plan to achieve wide Distribution independent of the usual Gatekeepers of the Distribution Industry.

The following is an extract from a much longer online Case Study. [45]

THE DISTRIBUTION PLAN

Setting Distribution Goals

FROM OUR EXPERIENCE AND FROM THE RESEARCH WE HAD DONE, IT SEEMED LIKE WE WOULD BE ABLE TO EMULATE EVERYTHING THAT A DISTRIBUTION COMPANY DOES, DO IT BETTER, AND STILL OWN THE FILM."

JIM CUMMINGS

The team's overarching goal is to not rely on gatekeepers to determine the worth of *Thunder Road*. The team wants to show other filmmakers that it's possible to democratize the release of a film. The lean, entrepreneurial team sets out to handle the entire rollout, keeping all work in-house in order to cut down on costs and show that it's possible to take full control of the release of your film. The team uses this main goal to craft five ambitious distribution and marketing goals for the release of *Thunder Road*.

Distribution Goals:

- Make the coolest trailer they possibly can and have it blow up online
- Build a wild case study that filmmakers can follow and use to impress investors
- Build an audience that they can return to and others can use
- Learn a lot about distribution and subsequently educate others
- Democratize the release of the film and create a new distribution paradigm

Creating a Release Pattern

The *Thunder Road* team approaches their release pattern shrewdly and frugally. They want to be fiscally smart. They know theatrical is expensive, so they decide to only explore this avenue if they can find a partner who will help keep costs low. They focus their efforts on digital distribution, TVOD through Premiere Digital and SVOD through the SXSW Amazon Festival Stars deal (now defunct), with targeted marketing and foreign sales, leveraging the ACID program and their robust festival run. They also decide to explore DVD, with a deal from boutique distributor Passion River on the table, aiming to explore library sales and the educational market, since their previous work has been taught in film schools before, in addition to the traditional DVD market and Netflix DVD.

- Theatrical, only if it doesn't cost additional money
- TVOD (transactional video on demand)

[45] https://www.sundance.org/case-studies/creative-distribution/thunder-road/?utm_source=chatgpt.com

- SVOD (subscription video on demand)
- Foreign sales
- Festival run
- DVD

Identifying the Audience

Thunder Road walks the fine line between comedy and drama. Gauging audience reactions, Jim knows people tend to laugh and cry while watching the film. He thinks about other films that have the same effect and narrows in on a nuanced set of audience targets; Jim describes, "When building an audience for digital ads, you have to input interests and age, so we targeted exclusively adults (because of the cursing in *Thunder Road*) who like Pixar and *This Is Us* (because people watch them to laugh and cry), who also like *Eastbound & Down* (for the raucous Southern comedy), *Training Day* (for its strong performances and interracial police/friendship story), and Alfonso Cuarón (for his long takes)." The team uses this test audience as a jumping-off point, pairing it with the audience they've already built with their other shorts, amounting to 40,000 followers on Vimeo. This, along with Jim's personal following, gives the team a solid base from which to start experimenting. Ultimately, they believe the best way to discover new audiences will be through social media marketing analytics. They feel it's important not to prescribe at the onset who they think their audience is and keep an open mind and let the data speak for itself.

When analysing the above case study from a pure business perspective, I make the following observations:

- Focusing on a Specific Target Market and Niche – while the term 'Niche Marketing' is not used in the above, Cummings and his team analysed the current market for similar feature films. Selecting a few films which seemed similar to Thunder Road, the decided to use inexpensive Social Media as a way of marketing their film to prospective viewers which would result in a reasonable viewership across all Distribution Channels.
- Financially Astute Release Plan – Cummings refused to be drawn in to the 'ego' of a theatrical release in Cinemas. Due to the expense involved, he and his team decided to implement this small part of their Distribution Strategy only if they brought on someone who could keep costs low.

- Leveraging Many Avenues of Future Revenue – their Plan also calls for accessing all other possible sources of revenue which should result in a reasonable Return on Investment for all of the Production Company's stakeholders and outside investors
- Their Plan also wanted to prove that they, as an Independent Film Production company, could execute Distribution independently without the need for a Gatekeeper of any kind.

Jim Cumming's success points the way for other Independent Filmmakers anywhere in the world to use their knowledge, artistry and the support from those with much more experience (such as the Sundance Institute) to yield success. The success of this one feature film (starting with a film short) gave him the financial resources and contacts to create a number of other feature films including The Beta Test, The Wolf of Snow Hollow and Halloween Kills. [46]

While the above case studies use some elements of a business case study, they do not use all of the elements necessary to properly plan and execute a Feature Film Production or Marketing Plan.

A very useful article published by the *AmWorldGroup*, the Evolution of Marketing: How Movies Win Audiences in the Digital Age[47], discusses the application of Marketing Principles to Global Feature Films and their Production Companies. In part, the article states:

> Entertainment marketing has evolved into a vital part of the film industry, utilizing innovative strategies that extend beyond traditional advertising. The rise of digital platforms and social media has empowered studios to create immersive promotional experiences and transmedia storytelling, enhancing viewer engagement and financial success. Successful campaigns, such as Marvel Studios' interconnected universe, exemplify how cultural moments drive box office results, as studios increasingly rely on data analytics to refine marketing approaches, optimize audience targeting, and build sustainable fan communities.

This long and comprehensive article includes nine chapters starting with The Evolution of Marketing in the Film Industry and goes on to discuss Strategic Marketing Approaches for Blockbusters vs. Independent Films. The Marketing of Blockbusters notes that most "Major studios typically allocate 50-100% of a blockbuster's production budget toward marketing efforts. Marvel's "Avenger Endgames" reportedly spent over $200 million on global marketing, utilizing a multi-platform strategy…"

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[46] https://www.imdb.com/name/nm3526993/
[47] https://www.amworldgroup.com/blog/entertainment-marketing-for-the-movie-industry

That large budget cannot be afforded by a small production company but the writers of the article goes on to discuss Guerilla Marketing Tactics[48] and how they can be actioned by Independent production companies. Those tactics can include:

- A purpose-built website for a specific film
- Distributing Missing Person flyers at Film Festivals
- Maintaining 'Found Footage' premise throughout all promotional materials
- Limiting cast appearances to maintain the illusion of authenticity

This article not only reinforces the need for any small independent production company to understand, develop and action a Marketing Plan as they gear up to raise Investor cash but also to be clever in how to plan and spend scarce company financial resources. This is also true for Irish production companies most of whom have very little financial resources.

Telefilm Canada provides Filmmakers of all sizes with a Case Study Template which can be used to develop a very professional Business Plan which can then be applied to lower-cost Feature films. This PDF can, of course, be downloaded to be easily shared with other members of a production team.

The Telefilm Case Study focuses on the Micro-budget documentary, Un Film de Chasse de Filles[49], which "tells the story of four women hunters ranging in age from 14 to 72….the film touches on the lives of these four women and on the emotions they experience while hunting such as compassion, love, care and sensitivity – emotions that non-hunters would normally be incredulous to think can characterise a hunter."

Without noting each chapter of this impressive case study, takeaways include:

- If a topic is controversial, use it to your advantage to tell your story
- When looking to quickly reach a specific target audience online, make use of paid advertising
- Use a blog to increase SEO (Search Engine Optimisation) to drive traffic to your film's website

This impressive Case Study is one of the only true 'Business Case Studies' I could find during my research. The paper goes on to examine such basics as the Challenges the Production Team had when first trying to think through how the negative aspects of their

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48 https://www.amworldgroup.com/blog/entertainment-marketing-for-the-movie-industry#Strategic_Marketing_Approaches_for_Blockbusters_vs_Independent_Films

49 case-study-marketing-distribution-audience-engagement-digital-channels-un-film-de-chasse-de-filles-aug-2016.pdf

controversial topic could be successfully distributed and marketed; the development of a successful marketing strategy; a Two-Way conversation with fans and non-fans of the film on various Social Media Platforms; paid and unpaid online marketing; how to increase global reach using very limited budgets on Social Media; and an Appendix detailing many of the memes the Producers used; and a timeline from Development through production, marketing, and distribution.

During my research I was unable to find Case Studies focusing on Irish Cinema or Irish Films of any kind. But there are a number of free (or low cost) online courses which Producers (or anyone involved with an Irish film) can use to help them create a relevant Case Study which can then be transformed into a Business and Marketing plan. Examples include:

- Passport to Production (Screen Ireland): this is a 6 week intensive course aimed at those individuals who want to work in Irish Film and Television. Part of this course includes:

  Self-Management in the Industry

  - Navigation through the Industry
  - How to manage as a free lancer
  - STAR Technique
  - CV Clinic
  - HR the basics
  - Getting Your First Job
  - Reading Contracts
  - Essential Networking

See the Footnote below to access more information about this Course.[50] (Note: Screen Ireland 'rotates' this course with other courses all year long. Check back to the website to see when the next course takes place and where).

- Creative Business Development & Leadership for Producers: Building Your Production Company (Screen Ireland)[51]: in collaboration with the UK's National Filom & Television School (NFTS)[52] is a very comprehensive, but short (nine week) 'business school' for Irish Producers. The course (both online and face-to-face with Professional Tutors) has a Structure similar to many business courses and Screenwriting training courses I have taken over the years. Modules include:

[50] https://www.screenireland.ie/courses/passport-to-production-january-2025
[51] https://www.screenireland.ie/courses/creative-business-leadership-development-for-producers
[52] https://nfts.co.uk/

- Management Strategy and Leadership
- The Film & TV Value Set – sales and rights
- Managing a (Production) Slate and Formats
- Streaming Platforms, Strategies for Pitching and Producing, Licensing IP
- The Business Plan, Growth and Raising Investment – Financial Models

The Creative Business Development Course (above) would seem to have two real problems. First, unlike a 'standard' course in Business, this course does not include 'How to Market Your Film'. Too, to apply, an individual "must have credits as a producer on either a first feature (fiction or documentary), HETV drama or a substantial body of funded shorts."[53]

The restrictions Screen Ireland has to applicants means that many who have 'raw talent' and create smaller 'unfunded' short films or any kind of 'unfunded' documentary are not eligible to take part in this Irish government funded course. Too, the absence of a Marketing Module means the Producers who are accepted to this valuable Course will not gain the knowledge they need to 'break-through' into a highly-competitive Global Feature or Documentary market.

For those Irish Production companies, or anyone in the Irish Arts, I include a very short How to Write a Business Plan Template in the Appendix.

Once again in my research, I was unable to find any other online courses for anyone wanting to gain knowledge in the Business Applications (including Marketing) which could be applied to their Production Company or team members. This 'paucity' of courses in Ireland is detrimental to Irish Cinema. While there are many online courses in the United States (such as the New York University 'Yellowbrick'[54] and other countries, these courses are not designed with Irish filmmakers in mind.

3.10 Applying Case Studies to Irish Cinema

The use of Business Case Studies can, and should, be applied by all Film Production companies in Ireland, no matter what size they are or how successful they have been in the past. Case Studies help all 'stakeholders' in the production of any film to focus on what is important, rather than become distracted by action items that have little to do with a specific film production.

First, I must provide a definition of this useful business term:

[53] https://www.screenireland.ie/courses/creative-business-leadership-development-for-producers

[54] https://www.yellowbrick.co/film?utm_source=Bing&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=405166889&utm_term=%2Bfilm%20and%20%2Btv%20%2Bcourse%20%2Bonline&utm_content=79164969526959&partner=NYU&program=JRN&utm_source_platform=&utm_creative_format=o&msclkid=a0bb98b525e515e439dbf06bf38f2e81

> A case study is a detailed description of a real-life or simulated example from practice, designed to illustrate a specific strategy, method, or solution. *In marketing, a case study is often used to highlight the success of a project, campaign, or product and to serve as a best practice or a source of inspiration for others*.[55] (italics mine)

While this definition uses the phrase "…to highlight the success of a project, campaign, or product and to serve as a best practice or a source of inspiration for others.", many Case Studies focus on current or future project, campaign or product. Often, a case study will be used to write 'Battle Cards' which further focus any marketing or sales team (or other departments) on specific actions and anticipated results.

The example below provide readers of this book with a typical Business Case Study. I will include only two examples to illustrate how this 'template' can be applied to Irish Cinema businesses:

> *Lir Chocolate Case Study*[56]
>
> Lir Chocolate is a premium chocolate manufacturer that specialises in seasonal gifts and is a leading supplier of handmade Easter eggs. The company's factory and headquarters is located in Navan, County Meath, where it employs over 300 people. Exports have helped the company grow spectacularly in the last 10 years, which means sales and marketing people spend a lot of time travelling across Northern Europe, Asia, Australia and the US. Many are in senior management roles and need to be contactable at all times. But Lir's communication challenges were not just around mobility.
>
> The seasonal gift business in particular is all about just-in-time manufacturing, where hand decorated chocolates are made to order. Always being available to demanding retail customers was crucial in helping establish the business and the firm wanted to retain its customer-centric focus as it grew further. The business simply couldn't afford to have its networks go down – landline, mobile or broadband.
>
> *Solution*
>
> Looking for peace of mind as well as better value from its service providers, Lir talked to Three who came in and made an assessment of what it could do for the company as one-stop provider.

[55] https://daviesmeyer.com/en/thinking/marketing-glossary/case-study
[56] https://www.three.ie/business/insights/case-studies/lir-chocolates.html

In the first phase, Apple iPhones and iPads were issued to all senior sales and marketing executives. The devices, connected to Three's mobile network, facilitating the "mobile office" that keeps them in constant contact with customers, suppliers and the factory back in Ireland. The fixed-line and broadband network is just as crucial to the business, enabling EDI (Electronic Data Interchange) communication with large multiples, supporting its just-in-time manufacturing processes. "We take all our orders through EDI so the Three network is critical," explains Frazer. "With tight turnaround times, you can't afford to have the connection go down and risk missing orders or shipping dates."

Results

Mobile benefits have been numerous. From the outset the company experienced better coverage. Abroad, the company relies on the top-end data plan but it continually benefits from Three's efforts to keep costs down, particularly around roaming charges.

The example was written by three (Ireland), the telecommunications company, as a sales and marketing tool. Case Studies usually start with 'about the business (or client)' then move to one (or a series of) solutions and finally to results. I offer one more case study to better illustrate a more complex solution. Rather than place the entire case study just below, I will summarise it here and include it in the Appendix at the end of this book:

RBS Bank Romania

EMC backup and recovery solutions enhance performance, management and security

A focus on EFFICIENCY AND FLEXIBILITY

As one of the first foreign banks in Romania, RBS has built strong relationships with its clients in its 15 years of presence there. Therefore, providing quality products and services is a permanent objective. To maintain high levels of customer service, and to meet compliance requirements, the bank must rely on reliable backup and recovery solutions that minimize impact on IT performance while also maximizing data protection.

The above is only the start of this highly technical case study. Other elements include: the Challenge, Why the Customer Chose EMC, the Benefits the Customer Received by Choosing EMC Technologies and other elements. Once again, EMC (now a subsidiary of the Global Giant Dell Technologies) hired many staff (and third-party workers) to write many

such case studies. They are always used as sales and marketing tools by their sales and marketing staff to prove, within a shadow of a doubt, why EMC is the right choice for large and smaller companies across the world.

I should explain that the above was written by this Book writer in 2012. In that I have written well over one-thousand business case studies for large global companies such as Dell (EMC) Technologies, Sage Accounting Software and many smaller Irish technology companies, I will share how I have applied that learning and experience to the following series of Case Study I have created for my company's first feature film, the animated comedy for families: Lost Lovers…or How my Fiancé Lost Me 3 Times on my Wild Journey Around the World!

This feature film is now in production but requires a great deal of outside investment to be completed. I have used the Case Study format as a 'Template' and have applied it for a number of uses.

3.10 Using the Case Study Template for a Number of Critical Tasks

In order to demonstrate how business principles can be applied directly to film production, I have chosen to employ a standardised Case Study Template. This format, adapted from global business practice, allows for clarity, consistency, and comparability across projects. Each example that follows - whether drawn from historical productions, current proposals, or internal staff communications - is presented in this format to illustrate its adaptability. By using the same structure for both fictional and real-world cases, I aim to show how Irish cinema can benefit from adopting a more systematic, business-oriented approach. The intention is not to replicate investor pitches or marketing materials in an academic context, but rather to demonstrate how such formats can provide Irish producers with sharper tools for communication, planning, and profitability.

In that there are few true Business Case studies available focusing on Feature Films, I will start by applying the 'Template' to an older feature film. We must start by assuming this Case Study is to be used to finance the film and also assume the Production Company does not have the cash to complete filming but needs to attract more investments from individuals and financial institutions.

As written in other sections above, Case Studies – used as a Template for organising almost anything to do with the Production of an Irish Feature Film – are an efficient method of communication with all staff (or stakeholders) who are involved in a Production. The use of the 'Template' is provided below. While the first two are not 'Case Studies' they use the

same methodologies. The last one is a Case Study for our Animated Feature Film now in production.

The following is a 'fictitious' use of the Case Study Template. If the Producers of this Great Feature Film did not have enough cash to 'greenlight' their film, and if this Feature Film were being Produced today, this is what they might have used:

The African Queen

Our Objective: The African Queen is now in Pre-Production. With a total budget of $1 million, our Producers Horizon Pictures and Romulus Films have secured $750,000 from a variety of sources. We come to you, seeking part of the $250,000 balance.

Attached Cast and Director Minimise all Risk to Your Investment

The well-known actor and actress, Humphry Bogart and Katherine Hepburn, have both been signed to the Film. Director John Huston has also agreed to helm this well-known story made famous by the Novel of the same name. Cinematographer Jack Cardiff will head the film crew.

Those already acting as Financial Partners include Sam Spiegel (Producer), as well as Horizon Pictures and Romulus Films. A number of United States Financial Institutions including Bank of America, Carnegie Melon and the Howard Hughes Investment Group have also agreed to a significant investment. These financial giants have already recognised the significant return on investment they will all receive when this Feature Film is rolled out by our chosen Distribution Company, United Artists across the United States. Independent Film Distributors UK will roll this film out across the United Kingdom and the UK Commonwealth (India, Canada and Australia). When the film is sub-titled, Independent Films will also seek distribution across Europe and countries throughout the world.

Why Your Organisation Should Invest

Due to the pulling power of our cast, as well as the Director; as well as the global distribution, the Producers of African Queen are convinced any investment in this Feature Film will result in a significant Return on Investment to you and / or your organisation.

"Humphry and I have been great friends for many years. We have agreed to Star in African Queen due to the wonderful story and trust the great director John Huston to turn this film into a Global success." Katherine Hepburn (who will play the character Rose)

"The screenplay of African Queen takes our audience into the depths of darkest Africa. All of this film will be shot in an African location. Taking place during World War One, we know anyone who watches this film will be both entranced and horrified by the events that take place. The budding Romance between Rose – played by Ms Hepburn – and

Charlie – played by Mister Bogart – will be a surprise to our audience due to the chemistry of love occurring on screen between the great actress and actor." John Huston, Director

What our Current Investors Say

"As most people know, I've taken an interest in film for many, many years and have helped to bring many Feature Films to fruition by investing in what I and my financial staff believe will be a success both to my Company and to other financiers involved with African Queen. I would recommend all potential investors to contact me to receive a copy of our investment analysis for this exceptional Feature Film. Due to the Star-Studded cast and amazing Director, I am assured that not only is my investment safe but that our company will receive a significant return on our investment." Howard Hughes

Summary

The Producer of African Queen will contact you soon to gauge your company's interest in contributing to the final financing of this significant feature film. If you would like more information, please write to us or telephone us.

Sincerely (Names of the Primary Producer contact, telephone and Telex number, address)

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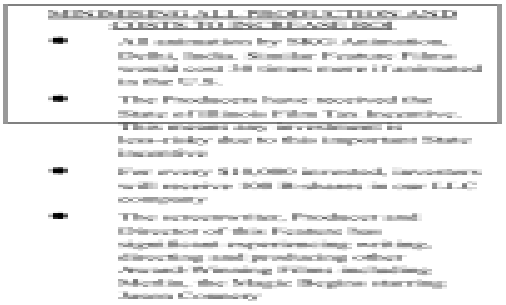
Now let's use this same 'Template' to write a Pitch to Potential Investors for:

LOST LOVERS…or How My Fiancé Lost Me 3 Times on My Wild Journey Around the World! (an animated family comedy in 3 Acts)

An Exceptional Return on Investment

Investment Proposal from Storylines Entertainment LLC

Why Invest in Lost Lovers?



- Animated Feature Films including Comedies for families, are in high demand by all Global Feature Film Streaming Companies (Netflix, Hulu, Peacock, and all others)
- *Lost Lovers* exactly meets that Global Demand
- The Global animation market is now valued at $400 Billion per annum and will continue to increase by at least 7 percent per annum for the foreseeable future
- This Investment Proposal demonstrates why an Investment in *Lost Lovers* will yield a High ROI.

As part of an Investment Contract with Storylines Entertainment, any investment will be placed in a safe, ring-fenced fund: a CD held and managed by JP Morgan Chase Bank. In the event that the film is not completed for any reason, all investments will be returned to

all parties. This Proposal proves that an investment in *Lost Lovers* yields a Substantial Return on Investment, much greater than most Global Stock Markets will Return.

Shared Profits

Any investment in Lost Lovers will share profits and net income from a variety of sources related to the film including:

- All Net Proceeds from the Global Distribution of our Feature Film by any Streaming Company
- DVD sales; Online Games; Merchandise; Product Placement and any other Source

Lost Lovers – the Creative Vision:

This animated feature film is being created to meet the demands of our Immense Global Audience.



Grace Upendo (32), a woman born in a Swahili Village in Africa, wants to marry a man of any color who also wants a child. When she wins a Global Singles Competition advertised in a local newspaper, she discovers that **Sean Hope**, a young White American, is the male winner. When these two Single People meet in the Swahili Village, they fall in love at first sight. Sean travels to Mexico City, where he is employed as a missionary. Over the course of this hysterical Feature Film, Sean finds then loses her three times. Located in Calcutta, India; New York City; Detroit, Michigan; Brisbane Australia; and a Magical Uncharted Island, Sean finally convinces Grace to marry him during a Play within a Play (based in part on Shakespeare's Midsummer Night's Dream).

Filled with Talking insects and animals (including a Talking 2-headed Kangaroo, Sue the Two-Headed 'Roo and a talking Dolphin named Sally), the plot of the story is so much fun every adult and child in our Global Audience will applaud when it's done!

LOST LOVERS is a story of a Strong Woman (Grace who is black African) and a Romance with a rather weak man (Sean who is white). The story is not only about multi-racial cultures, Adventure and a story of Faith, but the slapstick comedy action scenes will have our Audience rolling in the aisles. For more information and to see our Trailer (a fifteen-minute segment will soon be available) go to our website: https://storylinesent.com

Lost Lovers: A Captivating Comedy for Families Across the World

The cross-genre screenplay has a global reach due not only to the multi-racial and multi-cultural aspects of the film's story but also due to the High Demand for Animated Feature Films for Families. Due to that Global Reach, and following extensive research, our Board of Directors is convinced that any investors will see up to a 10-times return on their investment.

For more information, contact the President of our Company, Tom Richards (contact information here)

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Let's use this same template to create a 'To Do' List for our Global Staff regarding short-term marketing tactics for the above film

LOST LOVERS…or How My Fiancé Lost Me 3 Times on My Wild Journey Around the World! (an animated family comedy in 3 Acts)

DISTRIBUTION

To: Ahmed, Sami, Toqueer, Divya SKG Animation (India and Pakistan); Frank, Larry (Ireland), Carol W and Harsha G (United States)

From: Tom Richards

SHORT-TERM MARKETING TACTICS, 4TH QUARTER 2025

RESEARCH

Conduct research in your specified geographic area as follows:

- Market size of our potential audience both animated and live action feature films
- What is the Value of that Audience in the period 2020 – 2024. Convert your findings to US $
- Continue discussions with your local Film Distributors
- Find the least expensive channels to market for Paid-for Advertising on all relevant Social Media Platforms. Be specific about those Platforms

BARBIE-OPPENHEIMER STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION

The producer and Board of Directors is in the process of expediting the implementation of the above inexpensive marketing strategy. When the 15-minute Segment of Lost Lovers is completed by SKG Animation, we shall sign a contract with the most appropriate Production Company.

MEME CREATION

Please use the following content to create Memes in your nation's language (and also in English, tweaking the content to your national potential audience for our first Feature Film)

- Content to come within the next 10 days –

DELIVERABLES

- Sami – creation of new Lost Lovers website. Xfer all relevant Feature Film content when the new website is completed. Link both websites. SEO both websites.
- Tom – write above content. Create Memes for each country. Continue to create videos for YouTube and TikTok announcing the that soon, the new Lost Lover 15-minute video will be available

- India, Pakistan Staff – see notes above. Also contact local Cinemas to determine if they are willing to place low-cost Posters about Lost Lovers onto their Cinemas. Include Q of our Website(s) address.
- US and Ireland Staff – see above. Also approach all local Cinemas across Ireland and the UK.
- Paid-for Online Advertising across a number of Social Media Platforms will start in mid-November of this year. Our budget continues to be very small compared to our Competitors. Therefore, we shall employ our strict budget according to the research you have completed above.

RESULTS OF DELIVERABLES

Our company is now positioned to seek additional investment for our Animated Feature Film LOST LOVERS. As of this date, the total investment in Lost Lovers is approaching $1.5 million. We continue to need an additional $2.0 million to complete the film. For that reason, all staff are asked to contact major financial institutions in your area of responsibility as well as your local Angel Investors.

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The above example is the actual activities which our small Global staff is now implementing. While the U.S. dollar figures are incorrect (due to the desire of our Board to keep them 'secret'), this Short-Term Marketing Strategy, using the Case Study Template, is easy to understand even by those of our staff who have trouble reading English. To complete this section, we shall now look at a case study I hope to be able to write in just over one year.

A GLOBAL SUCCESS BUT HOW?

LOST LOVERS…or How My Fiancé Lost Me 3 Times on My Wild Journey Around the World!

Creating and Distributing a Low-Cost Animated Feature Film Comedy on a Shoestring

Storylines Entertainment Limited (with registered offices in Dublin, Ireland) and its subsidiaries Earthnet (a marketing communications company also registered in Ireland) as well as its U.S. company, Storylines Entertainment LLC, had a sole objective to create a Unique Animated Three-Act Feature Film, market it and distribute globally, on a shoestring.

With a total budget of $5,000,000 (much less than our Competitors like the Walt Disney Corporation have) which included all elements of Production and Marketing, our sole objective was to a) provide exceptionally fun entertainment to our Global Target Audience; b) to provide a significant financial return to all outside investors and stakeholders c) to secure the future for our Global Companies, their offices and staff members and d) to produce a Live Action Feature Film, Dolphin Song, which will add significant net worth to all of our companies.

Challenges: to leverage scarce financial resources for the creation of this 3-Act Animated Comedy; to use low-cost marketing strategies and tactics which will appeal to our Global Target audience; to attract significant investment from outside investors; to minimise all costs of production, marketing and staff salaries in order to increase the probability of a significant ROI to our investors and all stakeholders.

In the face of enormous Global Competition, the Directors of our companies considered a number of ways to Animate, Finance and Distribute this Feature Film. The final decisions were to:

- Employ Extensive Research – on our target audience, all costs of production and marketing and pick those which are the least expensive.
- Write and polish the Screenplay – the screenwriter started to write this project two years prior to Animation. This allowed enough time to rewrite the screenplay a number of times in order to increase Global Distribution
- 'Tweaking' to Meet Audience Demands and Needs – as part of the writing process, additional research was conducted on the Global Animation Market. The resulting screenplay met Global Audience Expectations.
- Based on the Novel by the same name – the screenplay is based on the Novel by the writer of the screenplay. It's popularity among selected readers enabled the writer to use the book as a 'template' for screenwriting.

Following the selection of a low-cost Animation House in Delhi, India, the Directors of all companies made the decision to raise outside investor finance using low-cost methods. These included personal visits to Local Financial Institutions in the U.S. and Ireland; applying and receiving the State of Illinois Film Tax Incentive; hiring professionals such as marketing experts, accountants and law firms in both countries as well as an Entertainment Lawyer (all on a best-of-cost basis); and developing a marketing and Distribution plan which would achieve our financial targets while keeping those costs low. Our staff are all part-time workers except for the Board of Directors. But the Members of the Board took no salaries or

expenses during the Production Cycle. It was only when full finance was in our Production Bank account that we all took some of what we were owed. The ‘shoestring’ budget made it possible for our company to distribute and market this Animated Feature Film for ‘next to nothing’ compared to industry Giants such as Disney.

“We had a long way to go until we were assured of success,” Managing Director Tom Richards stated after the film was launched Globally. “Finding a ‘path’ to ensure a low-cost total budget while minimising all costs, was an almost impossible undertaking. But, working efficiently and productively, while ensuring High Production Values of our first Feature Film, also ensured that the financial return was as good as we’d promised our investors and stakeholders.”

Low-Cost Marketing Strategic Tactics

Low-cost Strategic Tactics included: a Barbie Oppenheimer strategy which was negotiated with a like-minded company who had a live action feature film coming out at the same time as Lost Lovers; free (and paid-for) Memes on all social media platforms relevant to our Global Audience Groups; the creation of a Lost-Lovers Website which was linked to the company’s website; paid-for advertising was limited to a very small budget; successful negotiations with our chosen Streaming Platform with whom we signed a very beneficial contract which also guaranteed Global Distribution; the sale of related Products including the film score (CDs, LPs, Spotify and other platforms); games developed from the Animated Characters and similar actions which increased the company’s revenue; the development and writing of a Feature Film provisionally entitled Lost Lover II; the possible development of a Feature Film Franchise.

The Results

The financial return exceeded the expectations of all shareholders and stakeholders in our companies. Residuals from our first Feature Film are enabling us to develop even more feature films whose return on investment will be as large or larger than that of Lost Lovers. We are now in a position to apply and receive Grants and Soft loans from Ireland and many other countries across Europe because we have now proven that we are a serious, low-cost Independent Irish Production Company. We have also been able to create a ‘pipeline of new development’ which includes not only Feature Films but books and Novels sold on an Author-specific Website. Much of that revenue will go back to Storylines Entertainment Ltd.

Should the company generate enough cash through sales and other investments, we plan to open a Trust to 'share that wealth' with a variety of Charities helping people across the world.

Now in Development

The success of Lost Lovers has enabled us to invest in the Production, Marketing and Distribution of Dolphin Song, based on the Number One Bestselling Novel also written by Tom Richards. Rather than depend on the Distribution efforts of a handful of highly competitive Global Streaming Companies, we have entered a co-Distribution agreement with a small but growing Streaming Service. This will allow our company to earn even more ROI on each film we produce, co-produce or Distribute in a Competitive, fast-growing global Feature Film and Documentary market.

For more Information:

In Ireland Contact Larry Power, our Financial Director
Tel: +353 84 22979

In the United States Contact Tom Richards, Managing Director and CEO

Tel: 011 799 96587

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Summary

The above use of a 'Case Study Template' is vital to all Irish Theatrical Production Companies. The efficient 'format' is also applicable to anyone in the Arts (major symphony orchestras, owners and managers of live Theatres, large or small choirs and other organisations working in Ireland's Arts area).

While the 'case studies' above are all 'fiction' the formatting uses best-of-breed Case Studies written for and by Global Businesses. As a student of both Irish Cinema and Global Business, I have come to rely on these formats to communicate with my small global staff in 'short-hand' which is much more efficient than my 'long-winded' emails to them. 'Short-hand' in any business helps all managers and staff to understand not only a company's objectives but enables all staff to understand what is expected of them and the timeframe for any actions they must take.

3.11 The Small Contribution of Irish Books Who Use Business Principles as Part of Their Books and Articles About Irish Cinema

A limited number of Irish books have used a some Business Principles when examining Irish Cinema (as has research conducted by Screen Ireland).

Book Ruth Barton writes in her book, Irish Cinema in the Twenty-First Century, (Chapter two, 'Animating Ireland'), how Ireland's animators and films "…question otherwise fixed identities, reimage space and destabilise linearity", thus functioning in interesting ways that can "destabilise or question paradigms". Barton then breaks down Ireland's animation output into categories of those produced for global television (financially successful) and those concerned with Irish themes and creating a distinctly Irish animation tradition, which draw attention and esteem to Ireland's animation industry, but often make a loss despite critical success.[57]

Her research highlights (but does not go into depth) the opportunities now available to Ireland's animation companies in the fast-growing market for Animated Films of all types. However, those opportunities cannot guarantee financial success for any Irish Animation House or the financial contribution their films make to their stakeholders or to Ireland's economy. Once again, this work highlights a 'weakness' in Irish business. While no filmmaker can guarantee a 'success' for any film made anywhere, the fact that United States filmmakers have much more financial muscle substantially increases the probability of 'success'.

In his deep analysis of the history of Irish Cinema (both North and South), Screen Workers and the Irish Film Industry[58], author Denis Murphy helps readers to understand the ongoing financial pressures and constant constraints Irish Producers have when trying to access larger budgets, finance and state involvement. His research contributes to an understanding of how certain business principles (funding, marketing, distribution) have evolved in Irish Cinema.

In their article, "Support for film and television production in small nations" C. Noonan (2024), the authors writes about the importance of Screen Ireland's continuing contributions 'enhancing the …collaboration and action between industry and policy stakeholders." The abstract of their articles 'highlights the agency's role in facilitating co-productions as it attempts to transform the nation from a service provider to a more strategically diverse sector.' On page 27 of their article, the author continues:

"It appears that in the strategy of Screen Ireland, the emphasis is firmly on developing Irish talent, as opposed to any demonstrable commitment to Irish culture, stories, or language.

[57] Barton, Ruth. Irish Cinema in the Twenty-First Century, Manchester University Press, 2019.
[58] Murphy, Denis. Screen Workers and the Irish Film Industry, Liverpool University Press, 2025.

Hence, we might read the critical success of the Irish language drama An Cailín Ciúin (2022) *not as the outcome of a commitment to Irish content, and more the outcome of a strategy which builds the capacity of Irish makers to find resonance in a global marketplace*." (italics mine).[59]

The findings of this article demonstrate how the Irish government, working through Screen Ireland, are making a continuing effort to increase the financial stability of many Irish Film Production companies. Unlike the United States, which does not have a similar 'United States Film Agency' to offer grants and soft loans to U.S. filmmakers, the Irish Government's objective for the Irish Cinema is to increase the competitiveness of Irish Cinema in all Global markets. While the writer of this article does not go into great depth about other Business Practices that can be used by Irish Production companies, she does demonstrate how Ireland is forging ahead to turn its small business into a world-class Industry.

Screen Ireland commissioned Alma Economics to write 'Economic and Skills Analysis of the Audiovisual Sector in the Republic of Ireland' (January, 2025)[60] The report emphasises the ever-growing financial contribution our audiovisual sector is making to the Irish economy. It notes that between the years 2021-2023, the Total Audiovisual sector had a total Gross valuation of over 1 Billion Euro, which is a substantial sum. The report also highlights how many full-time and part-time people work in this ever-growing sector noting, "The sector supported approximately 15,899 Full Time Employees…" with an undisclosed number of part-time workers.

While the report does not give an Irish filmmaker any grasp of how to use Business Principles in the Production of a Film, it is a useful resource for Irish Cinema, providing a depth of financial and economic detail which can be used to show potential investors how Ireland's support of our film business provides the resources for financial success of an Irish Produced film.

3.12 Unites States Cinema Experts: Documentary Summit, Forging New Paths Amid Systemic Destruction[61]

At a Roundtable Discussion taking place at the AMC Newcity Building, 1500 Claybourne Street, Chicago, Illinois, a panel of three expert speakers discussed the state of American

[59] https://ojs.tchpc.tcd.ie/index.php/ijamcp/issue/view/113

[60] https://www.screenireland.ie/images/uploads/general/Economic_and_Skills_Analysis_of_the_Audiovisual_Sector_in_the_Republic_of_Ireland.pdf?utm_source=chatgpt.com

[61] Chicago Film Festival, Friday 17 October, 2025.

Cinema. The following is a transcript this student took during the question and answer session.

The speakers included Lisa Cortex, Cortez Films (LC), Michele Stephenson, True North Films (MS) and Stacey Robinson, Karetemequin Films (SR). Here are the answers these women gave to those in the audience. When this student asks a question or provides comment, see TR.

MS: Engage your audience to know your target market.

LC: "Go with your core values. Dexterity has to be a part of your DNA. Put on your armour. Find creative ways to move forward. Community, dexterity, armour and scalability. These are your 'new armour'."

TR: So the target market is important as is the 'new armour' you describe. Filmmaking in any country is never easy. What is the way forward for United States Cinema? Do you think that way forward is relevant to Irish Cinema?

LC: "Be of Service to others. Don't pigeon-hole yourself. Being of service is being in a position to 'give back'. To the team who works in any position on a Film Project. To those charities you'd like to give you if you can afford it or your film makes a profit. Selecting the right Charity can be of valued importance to your project. For instance, let's say you own a pet and love him or her. In your research, you discover that many in your target audience own pets or are pet lovers, too. So, include Pets and pet Wranglers in your storyline, script or screenplay. Then, in your Marketing, let people know that if your film makes a profit you or your company will give a small percentage of all net proceeds to one or more pet Charities."

MS: "Censorship is attacking the film industry in the United States. Just look at the Tariffs the Trump administration has imposed on so-called Hollywood films. How is the U.S. government supposed to apply those tariffs? Films of any kind made in the United States are often co-produced with production companies from other countries. Distribution is often undertaken by companies and streaming platforms located all over the world. What Trump has done is egregious to the Film Industry not only in the United States but all over the world. The number of films produced and released in America is growing smaller and smaller and will drop even more until the Tariffs are removed by the next government. At least I hope they are." (Audience laughs and applauds)

TR: "Funding of any kind is drying up too, isn't it? What would happen if all larger production companies in all nations were to create a slush fund of a kind. If a film makes a good profit, each of those production companies and rich stakeholders would 'throw a few

quid' into a Trust. Small filmmakers unable to access investors of any kind, could take what they needed to make and distribute their film even if in a small way. If the film is unprofitable and the filmmaker goes 'bust' they don't have to repay it. But, if they make a profit, they pay it off slowly at a very low interest rate."

SR: "We have something similar already set up. Investors of all sizes are waiting to see what happens in this new Censored regime. We have a large number of Foundations which lend or give investment cash even to small filmmakers. Too, those foundations can you help you as you budget line by line. They can help pay for a Producer, Line Producer, AD, actors, pre-and post-production and help to distribute a film."

TR: "It's rather like a Fram Cooperative in Ireland, is that right?"

SR: "Exactly right. The foundations of American cinema is under attack by Trump and his stupid policies (the Audience laughs)…Local is now the new global. We must rely on Grassroots filmmaking strategies again to finance and create films of all sizes and budgets. In Mexico, as an example, ten percent of profits from all films are placed in a Mexican Film Industry Fund. This is why that country has such a vibrant and growing Industry."

At the end of the roundtable, I sat down and consolidated the above transcript into a few sections. This discussion attended by well over two-hundred Producers, Directors, Actors, Screenwriters, Composers and others interested in the American Film Industry listened as these three ladies tore apart the 'structured' Tariffs of Trump. They attacked the factors that were weakening American Cinema and demanded change.

The above discussion and its many conclusions should be added to any Irish Filmmaker's SWOT Analysis for very good reasons. Currently, the Irish Government continues to support Irish Cinema through its Grants and soft loans. But Screen Ireland has forgotten its legislatively passed remit. This student, who is also a producer and writer of both Live Action and Animated Feature Films (as well as shorts and documentaries) had applied five or six times over the last few years for soft loans, location grants and other grants what would have supported his companies two feature films now in Prep or production: Dolphin Song and Lost Lovers…or How My Fiancé Lost Me 3 Times on My Wild Journey Around the World!

The process was very frustrating. Having applied online numerous times, I never heard from anyone in Screen Ireland except one man who promised to provide us with a Subvention for location scouting. Having promised, he never phoned me back or emailed me and when I tried to contact him again, I found out he was not interested in helping a small Irish Production company which had not been credited with Producing a film of any kind.

If you find IMDb and look up Thomas J Richards, you will see that I have a number of Feature Film and B-Roll credits as Director, Writer and Producer. Often I have also acted as a financial accounting manager and location manager, responsible for the Film's budget while on location. Did this make a difference to Screen Ireland?

The answer is NO, it did not. This means that small Independent Film Companies located in Ireland must consider other locations to not only shoot or finance their films, but to establish a small office in order to attract any local grants or tax incentives. This is what I had to do with the two Feature Films I mention above. I have established a small office near Chicago, Illinois and have set up an LLC in order to be granted Illinois State Film tax credits. Upon receiving approval from the State of Illinois, I realized this was a bankable document. The Incentive will pay 25 – 40 percent of all budget items actioned and paid for in Illinois. This is a tremendous benefit and while not a soft loan, I can apply to be paid up to two years after the film is completed and distributed anywhere at all. According to the rules of this tax incentive, if my company does not use all of the incentive, I can sell it to the highest bidder at a value 10 to 20 percent less than the 'book' value. In other words, if I have $100,000 left out of the Incentive, I can expect to be paid about $85,000 in cash. Now, that is one incentive the Irish government must match if it is to gain market share of the Global Film Market,

And, it must remind Screen Ireland that it is there legal remit to help small Irish filmmakers as well as any 'artist' who qualifies as living in Ireland or being a citizen of our small country. If Screen Ireland does not provide financial aid even to small 'artists' like me, we will all 'run' to another country. Just like Bono and many other artists did when the Irish Government lowered the Artist's Exemption.

3.13 Summary

The above is an explanation of how to apply business principles including knowledge, experience and know-how to Ireland's Feature Film business. The Process, as I've told many marketing students, is not 'Rocket Science'. Rather it is simple if you use what's in your head and heart. Here is a bullet-pointed summary of all, or most of the steps, used to develop and execute a Professional Feature Film Business Plan for any Genre:

1. Research Your Film's Market – decide on if the film is live action, animated or another kind of film such as one for Television or a documentary. Conduct extensive research on your target market. Use those to hone the rest of your plan.
2. SWOT Analysis – per the above short example. Work at this and the above most days as you develop your feature film.
3. Plan Budgets – talk to a good line producer to develop a line by line budget

4. Develop your Pitch Plan and Materials – if your company must pitch to investors of any kind to complete and greenlight your Feature Film.
5. Research Grants and Tax Incentives – from relevant U.S. States or from across the world. Many countries offer tax incentives, grants and Soft Loans
6. Develop a marketing plan (see Appendix for a Low-Cost Marketing Plan Template) – if you're a startup, make that a low-cost plan. For Lost Lovers, I've typed up any number of pages of this one area: a Barbie-Oppenheimer Joint Marketing Plan and follow-up tactics; sources of inexpensive co-promotional advertising; truly cheap paid-for advertising; a Global PR Plan; a wide range of related products such as Lost Lover Games, Mugs, T-Shirts and other low-cost items; the detailed plan to build a customer data base from our website and online ticket sales… the list goes on and on and on.
7. Go to local Feature Film / Film Festivals – this is a major source of contacts across all feature film resources as well as possible investors.

The above list six major points but there are many more. All are simple if you apply your own 'business sense'. All of it can be quickly learned by reading free books available online; going to a local library; going back to 'school' for even one semester.

The Irish Film business still has a great deal to learn even about simple marketing strategies and tactics, marketing joint ventures and co-promotions and events. This is a major reason why the Irish Film 'industry' is still a relatively 'small business' in the global scheme of this growing industry. But it is also why our country can foster a highly successful Industry within our lifetimes and leave that as a National Inheritance to all Irish film producers, talent, students and 'cinephobes' in the coming years.

The paucity of bookly books and articles written about Irish Cinema which use any Business Principles at all is disappointing to this student of Irish Cinema and Business. This lack of application into large studies about Ireland's film 'industry', and the lack of training which incorporates Business Practices with all other disciplines needed to Produce an Irish Film, will – if not recognised by the Irish Government, stall the vast potential of Ireland to transform itself from and Irish Cinema business into a Global Irish Cinema Giant.

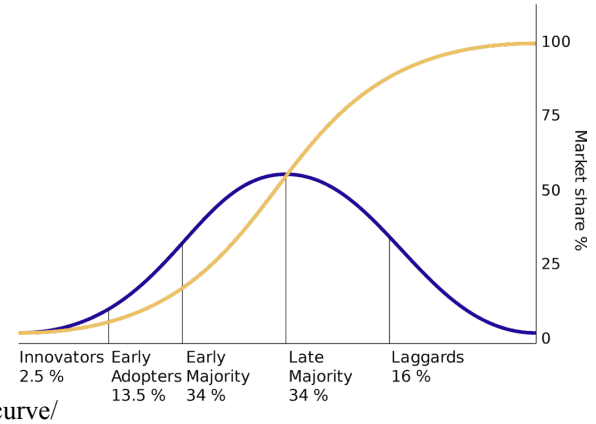
Chapter Four

Applying New Product Adoption Theory to Irish Cinema

We start with a definition of the Innovation-Adoption Curve as proposed by Business Book and practitioner Everett Rogers:

> The Innovation-Adoption Curve is a graphical representation of Diffusion of Innovations (1962), a model created by Ohio State professor Everett Rogers as a method of explaining how, why, and the rate at which an innovation spreads through a population or social system. An innovation is a product, service, or idea that is perceived as new by its audience.
>
> The Diffusion of Innovations model and the innovation-adoption curve offer three valuable insights into the process of commercialization:
>
> What qualities make an innovation spread successfully.
> The importance of peer-to-peer networks.
> Understanding the needs of each adoption segment.
> These insights have been tested in more than 6000 research studies and field tests, so this is probably the most reliable model in the field of technology and innovation adoption.
>
> The Innovation-Adoption Curve has spawned a range of adaptations that extend the concept or apply it to specific domains of interest, such as a model specifically for technology-based products.[62]

A 'Typical' Innovation-Adoption Curve is better described by those in Business as a 'Bell Curve' which is represented by the illustration:



Why is this important to Irish Producers of Feature Films?

4.1 An Explanation and Application

[62] https://www.hightechstrategies.com/innovation-adoption-curve/

To illustrate how a Producer can apply this Theory (and the extensive research Rogers used) this writer will use a well-known Irish film.

P.S. I LOVE YOU

Based on the Novel by Cecilia Ahearn (Global Bestseller)



Produced by: Alcon Entertainment (UK / US)

Directed by: Richard LaGravenese (U.S. Credits Include 'Bridges of Madisson County starring Clint Eastwood & Meryl Streep)

Financed by: IFB, Irish Investors, International Investors

Production Budget: $30 million

Box Office: $156.8 million Release date (U.S. December 21, 2007)

Global Distribution: Warner Brothers, Momentum, Summit Entertainment

Synopsis: When Gerry (Gerard Butler), the husband of Holly Kennedy (Hilary Swank), dies from an illness, she loses the love of her life. Knowing how hard Holly will take his death, Gerry plans ahead. Beginning on her 30th birthday, she receives the first in a series of letters written by him, designed to ease her grief and encourage her to move forward to a new life.

A. a Feature Film is a Product not only a 2 Hour Piece of Art – how many times have I talked to screenwriters, directors and producers about their 'art'. Many refer to themselves as Auteurs, like the French Directors did many years ago. Yes, while many feature films are Art, they are also Products. This is a critical start to applying the above Theory to the success of modern Irish Cinema. If all stakeholders in an Irish produced film do not agree on this, the chances of making a profit and continuing in business are very slight.

B. Diffusion – this term describes the above Bell Curve. 'Innovators and Early Adopters' represent less than 20% of those who will try, say, a new technology such as AI when it was first developed and launched. While the 'early' part of the adoption curve was rapid in this case (AI has significantly increased business efficiency and productivity) other products such as new brand of cereal can take years to develop, distribute and make a profit for its company. Many, many new products on the market – from soup to nut to cars, restaurant chains, creative artists such as bands and groups of singers – 'die an early death' because they are either not financed properly or their target audience refuses to even try their product one time.

'Diffusion' is of critical importance to Irish Producers (and other talent and stakeholders) due to a number of reasons. Producers must first grasp why their film and story is relevant to a) their target audience and b) why is it relevant to a much larger audience. If a film is not relevant to a large audience who will pay hard-earned cash to see it in a cinema , a streaming service or on a DVD , the odds of making a profit are incredibly thin. This writer does not have to make reference to recent statistics on what other forms of Entertainment are competing with Feature Films for 'eye-balls, bums on seats, or money'. The list is very long: online free feature films, free or virtually free to access streaming platforms (they make their money with advertising), the increasing popularity of 'terrestrial' television channels and programming; the increasing segmentation of the global market which makes it more difficult than ever to reach a specific, or multiple, global audiences… due to the above factors, many businesses operating in almost any Industry find it more and more difficult to make a profit much less provide a reasonable return to their stakeholders.

With the above in mind, I shall now turn to the next critical factor in Roger's Theory.

C. <u>The Length of the Diffusion 'Bell' Curve</u> – for any feature film released in any country or Globally is very, very short.

> "Traditionally, the theatrical window for a new movie release has been several weeks to several months, usually 40 to 50 days. After a movie's theatrical run, there's usually a three or so month wait for its home release.
>
> "If you are a regular theater goer, you've probably noticed that these time periods have changed. As of recently, the theatrical window for new releases have been shrinking.
>
> "Let's use "Transformers One" as an example. Paramount's newest instalment in the ever-so-popular series started its theatrical run in the United States on Sept 20. *The film's digital streaming release is planned for Oct. 19, not even a month after release*. (Italics mine)
>
> "Transformers One" isn't the only movie this has happened to. "Late Night with the Devil," "Longlegs," "Joker 2" and "The Wild Robot" all received shortened theatrical runs. They also received digital releases immediately after, killing any chance they might have at major success.

"While I've only listed a few, this shortened run has affected almost every release in the last year. One of the worst parts about all this is that we don't know why this is happening. Film studios are staying silent on the matter."[63]

'Transformers' is, of course, a Highly Profitable Feature Film Franchise. It has made Millions of Dollars in ROI for any investors. A good friend of mine who starred in one of the first films (A-list Actor Kevin Dunn) told me some time ago he could retire early due to the Residuals he received from the Franchise run and also from other feature films such as 'Mississippi Burning'.

Back in the 1980s, and for many years, Feature Films had a run in local Cinemas for a year (depending on the contract between the Production company, the Distribution company and the Cinema Chain). This means 'Blockbusters' such as the Feature Films 'Airport', 'The Great Race', Disney's 'Fantasia', 'Pinocchio' and many more made extraordinary profits not only months after their release but even today.

D. Other Factors at Play to Extend the Standard Bell Curve for Irish Feature Films: the above example, P.S. I Love You created the business momentum which allowed the Producers to receive a good return on investment, not a 'moderate' one. The Feature Film screenplay was based on the Novel of the same name which was a Global Bestseller for many years. I had the good fortune to meet Ms Ahearn not long after her novel was optioned by a Producer. She told me,

"The success of my first novel, P.S. I Love You (published in 2003) not only allowed me to option the novel to a well-known producer, it also became a global platform which allowed me to publish other novels and write fulltime. I encourage all writers of any kind to understand the market you are writing for. Knowledge such as this is of great benefit to writers of fiction, non-fiction, screenplays, poetry and other type of writing."

Ms Ahearn used her Knowledge of her target markets to help write her novel, polish it, find a publisher (and an agent) and propel her first Novel to Number One. But being able to use the well-known Ahearn name is not the only reason the above Feature Film did so very well at the box office.

The Director, who also Directed 'Bridges of Madisson County starring Clint Eastwood and his 'Romantic Interest' Meryl Streep increases the odds of a 'break-out' film.

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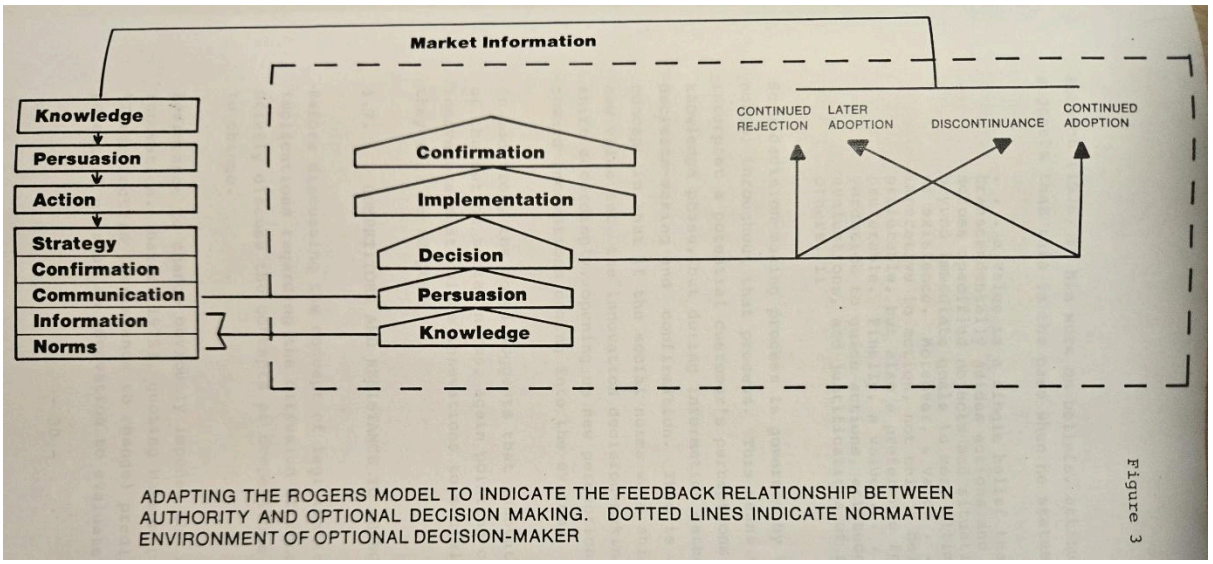
63 https://www.thewilkesbeacon.com/opinion/2024/10/23/are-movies-leaving-theaters-too-soon/#:~:text=Traditionally%2C%20the%20theatrical%20window%20for,these%20time%20periods%20have%20changed.

Tie that fact together with a well-known cast and you have a good probability of 'breaking through' if you're a first-time producer, director or cast member.

The 'Packaging' of a Feature Film is critical to its success. 'Packaging' in the Feature Film business includes the Director, the Producer and a single well-known star. Any of these people, if attached even to a screenplay which is not yet finished, is 'bankable'. This means a Production Company's chances of fully financing and greenlighting a film significantly increase.

E. The Concept of Legitimation and Innovation Diffusion by Thomas J Richards – in my Book for my Master of Arts at Dublin City University, my Examiner, Doctor Tim Wheeler (head of the Communications Department) told me before I started: "Tom, I have not a clue about business. You teach me some business and I'll teach you how to write a relevant book," which is what Tim did and so did I.

I will not examine my entire M.A. these for this Doctoral Book. Instead, I will extract only a few relevant points. Let's Start with this diagram:



Above Chart © Copywrite 1987 – 2025, Thomas J Richards as part of his Masters Degree These, "The Concept of Legitimation and Innovation Diffusion," Prof. Tim Wheeler, Supervisor and Internal Examiner.

I'll start on the far Left-Hand Side.

Knowledge of your Marketplace: (and Target Audience) is of critical importance to a Feature Film or any product. Those 'who trial' your product (in a feature film, 'Trial' is defined as a trailer of your Feature film or any Interview with the Producer, Director or a well-known cast member which appears either as Advertising, on your company's website or in a Cinema) leads to:

Persuasion: those who see your Trailer or an Interview might buy tickets to (or Stream) your Film. Persuasion is the best form of 'Advertising' because Word of Mouth generates Product Loyalty. Persuasion is often defined as those who have actually tried your product (through free samples) or go to your Feature Film (ticket discounts).

Action: this is the very start of your Business Plan and Marketing Strategy. In this short step, Producers and their teams of advisors sit down to write up a small initial plan to market their film in order to ensure the success of the film and their Business.

Strategy Through Norms: these are the various 'methods' you and your team agree to Action. These may include items such as: continuing discounts on entry to your Feature Film (buy a full-price ticket and receive two other tickets for the price of one at a different showing of the same film); discounted price of another film you may be launching soon; 'virtually free advertising' using Memes and short Videos on many social media platforms, Email campaigns which are also 'free'; joining like-minded Social Media Groups (film fan club groups, reader groups who love films, your college or University Group, 'fandom' Groups, and similar which will increase your message 'reach'.)

Compared to the year 2000 when I first started to write this Book, we have many more 'free' advertising channels to exploit. The balance of your 'Campaign' should include additional research on upcoming Feature Films. If a Producer can discover a Feature Film in development that will launch at about the same time as your Film, then explore the possibility of a Barbie-Oppenheimer' Campaign.

In a previous Chapter, this Candidate has explored the contents of a Business and Marketing Plan. Product Adoption and Diffusion (Bell Curve) Theories should be included in any Marketing Plan. By using the above, Producers (as well as other business people, students of Feature Films and their Professors and teachers) can increase the probabilities of success of literally any Feature Film your company Produces, finances and greenlights.

4.2 Summary – this chapter ends the application of 'business' teachings, practices and theories in this Book. The intent is to provide readers with a 'very brief' grounding in Business Practices which are highly relevant to Irish Filmmakers. I encourage any Irish Producer, Irish Film Student or anyone involved in the financing, budgeting, planning, launching or in Film education, to take at least one short course on General Business Marketing and General Business Theory.

Coursera (see the footnote) offers Free Digital Marketing Courses – a wide range of them.[64] Many of the concepts they teach will be relevant to Irish and other international Filmmakers. By taking even one of these short courses, going to a local Library, or sitting in on a Marketing Class at your local college, you will have a firm grasp and foundation of how to put a Marketing Plan into Action.

In all business sectors, 'Best Practice' is not defined. This two word 'Guideline' is used by most Business Leaders across the world as commercial or professional procedures that are accepted or prescribed as being correct.

4.2 Summary

Irish Cinema is driven by professional leaders in our growing industry. But 'best practice' does not yet include what most drives many Global Industries ahead to reach the potential which their Chief Executive Officers (both men and women) now demand from their many co-workers. Best Practice always includes constant re-tooling of a company's business and marketing plan, constant Global Research, and constant re-allocation of 'scarce resources' (both budgetary and staff) to many areas.

Irish Cinema will only achieve its global potential by 'redefining' Best Practice to include the many Business Principles this writer has provided in many of the above chapters.

64 https://www.coursera.org/search?authMode=signupSuccess&query=free&isNewUser=true&skills=Digital%20Marketing&showTouAccept=1

Chapter Five:
What is an Irish Feature Film? A Definition

While the above discussion of Business Practices used within the context of Irish Cinema is a foundation of this book, we must now turn to the question: Exactly what is an Irish Feature Film? Why have so many Irish (and other) Books as well as anyone interested in Irish Cinema been arguing about that question for so many years? Many interested in the business of Irish Film are still arguing about a true and valid definition.

5.1 The Ongoing Argument of What is and What is Not an 'Irish Film'

Because this book focuses on the Irish Feature Film Industry, it is necessary to define an 'Irish' feature film as used within the context of this discussion. Such a definition of an 'Irish' film is necessary because, as will soon become apparent, academics and those studying Irish film have argued incessantly over such a definition. By adequately defining an 'Irish' feature film, this book will be in a better position to focus on those critical factors that are influential to the development of Irish feature film productions, and arguably, an Irish Feature Film Industry as opposed to an Irish Film business.

The 'fight' over what constitutes an Irish Film dates back to the very beginning of modern Irish Cinema history.

In Harvey O'Brien's IFI essay, The Identity of an Irish Cinema, he shows how our Cinema continually struggles with notions of identity and how definitions shift with economic, institutional and cultural pressure.[65]

Ruth Barton , in her seminal book, *Irish National Cinema* and *Irish Cinema in the Twenty-First Century*, argues national cinema must account for diaspora and transnational production, the "Ireland" of cinema is protean and constructed.[66]

In short, Ms Barton argues that the definition of what constitutes an 'Irish Film' is under constant change and is focused on satisfying the 'artistic needs' of Ireland's many citizens living overseas.

In The Historical Dictionary of Irish Cinema, 2nd Edition, written by co-authors Tony Tracy and Roddy Flynn, the authors '…discuss the self-imposed limits they placed on the work regarding what the notion of an "Irish Cinema" actually means within the confines of this dictionary. Tracy and Flynn argue that their choices are "influenced by a common sense

[65] https://www.ifi.ie/downloads/history.pdf
[66] https://www.routledge.com/Irish-National-Cinema/Barton/p/book/

definition of a film text: live action, structured by narrative, feature length and intended for big screen exhibition".'[67]

In this writer's opinion, the above definition of 'Irish Cinema' is much too broad to be useful.

Many Screen Ireland reports and official economic studies of Ireland's film business provide a 'practical' definition which includes such economic parameters as production spend, inward investment and tax incentives. Again, in this writer's opinion, this is not a definition of Irish Cinema.

In his short history, Dr Harvey O'Brien tussles over the definition of 'Irish Cinema' in his paper, The Identity of Irish Cinema, 2nd revised edition, 2006. Starting from the very early days of films being shot on the streets of Dublin by the French moving picture company, Lumière Cinematographe, through the release of The Wind that Shakes the Barley (2006), Dr O'Brien realises that any agreed definition of Irish Cinema will be slow in coming.

> "Though the identity of Irish cinema remains unfixed as far as consensus within Ireland is concerned, perhaps this is not so much an absolute evil as necessary one. As cinema itself goes through another of its periodic revolutions and faces the challenges of the digital age, the time when one could speak of a national cinema which influences the world has long passed. Irish cinema may never affect the development of other cinemas, but its products continue to find a forum at festivals and, increasingly, on commercial release in theatres around the world. This is no bad thing by any measure. Irish cinema exists, and its search for identity goes on: to reach a conclusion on the issue would only be to accept that there are limits to what can be found."[68]

Since this paper was written, the Irish Film business has grown significantly. More and more Irish Feature films are now transnational productions with one or more co-producers signed on to help minimise the financial risk and increase global audiences. Yet, despite our hard-won success, few can agree on a single definition of Irish Cinema.

In The Historical Dictionary of Irish Cinema, 2nd Edition, Roddy Flynn and Tony Tracy write in their introductory remarks how the authors discuss the self-imposed limits they placed on the work regarding what the notion of an "Irish Cinema" actually means within the confines of this dictionary. Tracy and Flynn argue that their choices are "influenced by a common-sense definition of a film text: live action, structured by narrative, feature length and

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[67] https://www.estudiosirlandeses.org/reviews/the-historical-dictionary-of-irish-cinema-2nd-edition/
[68] https://www.ifi.ie/downloads/history.pdf, page 31

intended for big screen exhibition". They do not necessarily stick to these definitions; their "common sense" definition therefore still includes entries on some documentary films and documentarians. They also include entries on long discussed American and British productions which often have more substantial entries than some twenty-first-century Irish films. This tendency has become a fixture of the study of Irish cinema from Rockett, Gibbons and Hill's seminal Cinema and Ireland (1987), to McLoone's excellent Irish Film: The Emergence of a Contemporary Cinema (2000) and Lance Pettit's Screening Ireland (2000). The reason for this relates to a relative absence of production in Ireland until the 1970s and 1980s and the consequences of this are eloquently described by Ruth Barton in the essential Irish National Cinema: "if we are to talk of a national cinema … we have to engage in a series of acts of creative bricolage; that is, to see how an image of Ireland on screen emerged out of the national industries of other countries". (attributed to Stephen Boyd, Institute of Art, Design and Technology, Dun Laoghaire, Ireland.)[69]

Both books and practitioners of Irish Cinema disagree on what constitutes an 'Irish film': some define it by funding and production location (the institutional/policy view), others by creative authorship or thematic content (the cultural studies view), while a growing literature emphasises deterritorialisation and transnational production.

For the purposes of this book I shall offer a simple definition of Irish Cinema which includes many of the sub-definitions listed above (sources of tax funding and inward investment, the cultural/authorship criteria, the inclusion – or not – of Irish talent including a Producer, Director and cast). I will also 'mix those sub-definitions with some of the Business Principles mentioned in previous chapters.

But why is a simple definition of Irish Cinema important to our business and to this book? The answer is very simple, too. By defining 'Irish Cinema', this book can successfully posit how the Irish Government working together with Irish Production partners can better grow this small 'i' Irish film business into a true Irish Film Industry.

To reach that definition, I now turn to other factors that have influenced Irish Cinema since its days of first inception

5.2 Auteur Theory

This section will explore auteur theory and its relevance to the development of such a definition. Auteur theory, as will be seen, can help us to focus upon the specific individuals who are responsible for the creation of feature films. By understanding the fundamentals of

[69] Tracy, Tony and Flynn, Roddy. The Historical Dictionary of Irish Cinema, 2nd Edition, Rowman and Littlefield, 2019.

auteur theory, we are in a better position to develop a definition of 'Irish' feature films that is relevant to the body of this book, and that can help us to further analyse 'Irish' feature films, and the feature film industry, within the context of a global marketplace.

It must be further noted that developing an agreed definition of an 'Irish' feature film has been problematic, and academics have long argued about such a definition. Additional comments about the problems with defining 'Irish Cinema' includes:

Lance Pettitt notes the confusing nature of this long discussion about an appropriate definition:

> '… contemporary bookship suggests that to examine national cinemas sensitively, a range of different factors beyond film production must be taken into account and analysed. This is to recognise that it is a difficult enough task to establish which films make up the corpus of a national cinema, and begs the question on what basis are films included or excluded? If a film is funded by Warner Brothers but based on native creative writing, acting and directorial talent, to what extent is it an Irish film? Does a film by an Irish writer or director have to be set in Ireland to qualify as part of a national cinema?'[70]

Of course, Pettitt's observations beg the question as to what 'range of different factors' should be considered when determining what is or isn't an 'Irish' film. Film book James MacKillop points out the fractious nature of that discussion when stating that it is a '…hotly contentious, inexhaustible question of what makes a film "Irish"'.[71]

In the same study, MacKillop (with Anthony Kirby) attempts to answer his own question: 'An "Irish film" is here defined as (a) one made in Ireland, with (b) an Irish director, (c) produced or backed by an Irish company, and (d) based on a text by an Irish writer, or a compelling minority of those four elements.'[72] MacKillop goes on to create a sub-definition, which he titles 'Irish Related'. For instance, he categorises *The Quiet Man* as Irish Related in that its subject matter is decidedly Irish in nature, and it was shot in Ireland.

However, his definition of an 'Irish Film' is far too narrow for the purposes of this book in that it would preclude many 'Irish' films that do not contain one – or more – of the four elements that form the basis of his definition.

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[70] Lance Pettitt, Screening Ireland, pp 30.
[71] James MacKillop (ed), Contemporary Irish Cinema, Syracuse University Press, 1999, pp viii.
[72] Ibid, pp 182.

To use but one example: *How Harry Becomes a Tree* was shot in Ireland in 2001, was directed and written by a married couple from Yugoslavia (Goran Paskaljevic and his wife Christine Gentet Paskaljevic, respectively), was produced by an Irish film production company (Paradox Pictures, Liam O'Neill producer), and received production co-funding from a variety of sources located both in Ireland (the Irish Film Board, now Screen Ireland) and abroad (Italian distributor finance). According to MacKillop's definition, *Harry* would not be classified as an Irish Film (in that it may not incorporate a compelling minority of the four elements that he puts forward) even though its producer believes that the film is decidedly Irish.

Similarly, *Dolphin Song*, a feature film currently in pre-production (Produced by Storylines Entertainment Ltd) and scheduled to be shot in 2027, originally contracted a German director (Katja von Garnier who has since unattached herself from the Film), an Irish-American writer (Tom Richards), Irish and English actors, will be shot in Ireland, London, and Morocco (or Puerto Rico. Both locations may be used to attract tax concessions), will have post-production carried out in Germany, and will receive co-production funding from a variety of sources including Irish, German, Canadian and American. Again, this film would not be construed as 'Irish' according to MacKillop's definition. However, the film's story is decidedly Irish, and therefore should be construed as an Irish film (or so the Irish-American writer, the originator of the story, would argue).

Unfortunately, the original Producer of *Dolphin Song* (Liam O'Neill)[73] passed away in early 2022 due to complications arising from the very early variation of Covid. His Production Company, Paradox Pictures Ltd, has subsequently pulled out of the film. Storylines Entertainment Ltd and its subsidiary Storylines Entertainment LLC are now the sole Producers of this film. The majority shareholder of that Irish company, who is also the Managing Director and CEO, and who is also the writer of this book, will carry on by raising investment finance all over the world. The 'mix' of Irish, American, English, German and Canadian involvement will not change. Which means we must still develop a new definition of what constitutes an Irish Film.

Auteur theory may shed additional light on the development of an appropriate definition of an 'Irish' feature film (and Irish Cinema) in that this theory provides methods of re-interpreting feature films according to their 'creators', most often defined as film directors.

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73 https://www.irishtimes.com/life-and-style/people/liam-o-neill-obituary-film-maker-was-key-in-development-of-irish-film-industry-1.4277580

First espoused by a group of French film critics in the late 1940s and early 1950s as the *politiques des auteurs*, the theory was originally conceived as a reaction by those critics (many of whom would become influential filmmakers, themselves) to the established, conservative French film industry of the time. That conservative cinema, and the contemporary filmmakers that controlled it, espoused a literary filmic 'voice' within the construction of their films; one that failed to embrace, or even acknowledge, the establishment and existence of American Hollywood cinema, a cinema that many reactionary critics believed could provide a new direction to what was perceived by some as a mundane and laconic French film industry.

The result of that reactionary criticism – the *politiques des auteurs*, or auteur theory as it eventually became known – was developed initially as a critical device, and analytical tool, that was used to attack, and eventually transform, the French film industry. But as auteur theory began to gain acceptance within the minds of critics and cineastes both in Europe and the United States, the concept of the *politique de auteurs* also began to gain prominence – and influence – among filmmakers and directors, which in turn, has influenced the creative process of filmmaking, itself.

Peter Wollen describes the development of auteur theory:

> The *politique des auteurs* – the auteur theory, as Andrew Sarris calls it – was developed by the loosely knit group of critics who wrote for (the French magazine) *Cahiers du Cinema* and made it a leading film magazine in the world. It sprang from a conviction that the American cinema was worth studying in depth, that masterpieces were made not only by a small upper crust of directors…but by a whole range of authors, whose work had previously been dismissed and consigned to oblivion.[74]

First established in France in the late 1940s, an outgrowth of the cinematic theories of Andre Bazin, and a foundation stone of the French *nouvelle vague* (New Wave)[75] cinema, 'auteur theory' was a reaction to the 'intensely critical … post-war French cinema which it (*Cahier du cinema*) saw as overtly literary at the time.'[76] *Cahier du cinema* contributors, including Bazin, Jean-Luc Godard, Eric Rohmer, and Francois Truffaut, posited the *politique des*

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[74] Peter Wollen, Signs and Meaning in the Cinema, pp. 50.
[75] In *Encyclopædia Britannica*, from Encyclopædia Britannica Online: http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/44609/auteur-theory
[76] www.artandpopularculture.com.

auteur as a method of countering that reliance on the 'overtly literary' within French films of the time. Truffaut, in particular, seemed anxious to 'legitimise the film's director as a creative force' in order to ensure cinematic authenticity. Enamoured with Hollywood films (which had been disparaged by French film critics of the time), and an expert in feature films directed by Alfred Hitchcock, in 1953 Truffaut published an article that championed the film director as 'autuer' in order to remove the reliance on what he believed to be a literary motif:

> The defining moment in the early history of *Cahiers du Cinéma* arrived with issue number 31, published in January 1953. An article by Truffaut, ingenuously titled "Une certaine tendance du cinéma française," offered a violent attack on the French film establishment of the day. Truffaut tore into the leading lights of French cinema … for being excessively faithful to the literary sources of their films. For Truffaut, the "qualité française" … was nothing more than a matter of transposing…novelistic values from the page to the screen …that had nothing to do with the expressive qualities specific to the cinema… The magazine's aggressive stance became codified as *"la politique des auteurs"* - a policy, essentially, of being *for* some filmmakers (Hitchcock, Hawks, Rossellini, Renoir) and *against* others (including several - Wyler, Huston, Wilder…).[77]

In developing this 'policy', proponents of auteur theory had consciously, or unconsciously, underscored the ever changing role of the film director: from *metteur en scene* (defining a film director as a *craftsman* rather than an *artist*, and one who only puts onto film what is present within the written text, and who thereby subordinates his or her own 'style' or vision to that text), to that of the true *auteur* (a film director who interprets that text, or screenplay, using his or her own particular vision, thereby giving any film a personal, unique, and individualised cinematic 'stamp'):

> What the auteur theory demonstrates is that the director is not simply in command of a performance of a pre-existing text; he is not, or need not be, only a *metteur en scene*. …Incidents and episodes in the original screenplay or novel can act as catalysts; they are the agents which are introduced into the mind…of the auteur and react there with the motifs and themes characteristic of his work. The director does not subordinate

[77] Dave Kehr, Film Comment, Spetember/October 2001, www.filmlinc.com/fcm/9-10-2001/cahiers.htm

himself to another author; his source is only a pretext, which provides catalysts, scenes which fuse with his own preoccupations to produce a radically new work.[78]

Moreover, that 'stamp' of individuality provided both academics and film critics with new methods with which to analyse and interpret various cinematic works:

> …it is generally recognised that the *politique des auteurs* did something for film studies which is rarely accomplished in literary studies when it focuses on the individual author as a means of understanding that text. What auteurism accomplished in film was in fact the beginnings of an elaboration of film language. In attending to how the individual auteur transformed the elements of the raw material into meaning and a style which was distinctive, this approach to film did in fact bring critics into a close textual analysis of the visual image. …what began to emerge were the tools of material analysis of film which deals with codes, ideologies, orders of discourse (the social factors in determining meaning rather than the life or personality of an individual).[79]

That 'elaboration' mentioned above became a primary focus for analysis as critics, now armed with auteur theory as an innovative method of deconstructing filmic codes and language held within the flickering images of the cinema, began to scrutinise individual directors' *mise en scene*: that is, the filmic styles of individual directors: their 'voices', interpretations, and unique renderings of original texts onto film, and within the body of the individual works of those directors being analysed.

Proponents of auteur theory had therefore opened up new avenues with which to interpret cinema: '…the pleasure of auterist criticism was discerning style and individuality where it had not been detected before….The novelty of auteur theory was to suggest that studio directors like (Howard) Hawks and (Vincente) Minelli were also auteurs, even though they worked within a (Hollywood industrial) system traditionally regarded as a powerful machine destructive of individual talents.[80]

Andrew Sarris, an American critic, realised the relevance of *politique des auteurs* (as put forward by Truffaut and other Europeans) to film criticism, and introduced the theory to

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[78] Peter Wollen, Signs and Meaning in Cinema, pp 76.
[79] Rosalind Coward, "Dennis Potter and the Question of the Television Author" in Stam, Robert & Miller, Toby, Film and Theory: An Anthology, pp. 9.
[80] Robert Stam, Ibid, pp 2.

America through both a *Village Voice* article, and his book, *The American Cinema.*[81] Coining the phrase 'auteur theory', Sarris built upon the hypotheses of the French auteur theorists, '…Sarris proposed three criteria for recognising an auteur: (1) technical competence; (2) distinguishable personality; and (3) interior meaning arising from tension between personality and material.[82] In a 1962 article, Sarris elaborates:

> As far as I know, there is no definition of the auteur theory in the English language, that is, by any American or British critic. … I believe there is a misunderstanding here about what the auteur theory actually claims, particularly since the theory itself is so vague at the present time.
>
> First of all, the auteur theory…claims neither the gift of prophecy nor the option of extracinematic perception. Directors, even auteurs, do not always run true to form, and the critic can never assume that a bad director will always make a bad film. … A great director has to be at least a good director. This is true in any art. What constitutes directorial talent is more difficult to define abstractly. There is less disagreement, however, on this first level of auteur theory than there will be later.
>
> The second premise of the auteur theory is the distinguishable personality of the director as a criterion of value. Over a group of films, a director must exhibit certain recurring characteristics of style, which serve as his signature. The way a film looks and moves should have some relationship to the way a director thinks and feels….
>
> The third and ultimate premise of the auteur theory is concerned with interior meaning, the ultimate glory of the cinema as an art. Interior meaning is extrapolated from the tension between a director's personality and his material. This conception of interior meaning comes close to what Astruc defines as *mise en scene*, but not quite. It is not quite the vision of the world a director projects nor quite his attitude toward life. It is ambiguous, in any literary sense, because part of it is imbedded in the stuff of cinema and cannot be rendered in noncinematic terms. Truffaut has called it the temperature of the director on the set, and that is a close approximation of its professional aspect. Dare I come out and say what I think it to be is an élan of the soul?[83]

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[81] 'Andrew Sarris', www.artandculutre.com.
[82] Robert Stam & Toby Miller, Film and Theory: An Anthology, pp 3.
[83] Andrew Sarris, extracted from 'Notes on auteur theory in 1962', Film Culture, No 27, Winter 1962 – 1963, in Caughie, John (ed) Theories of Authorship, pp 62.

Having successfully imported the auteur theory from France to the United States, Sarris – as the primary US proponent of *politique des auteurs* – provided film critics not only with a new method of analysing film, but also as a method of legitimising the work of Hollywood films as worthy of serious study: '…the development of auteur theory marked an important intervention in film criticism: its polemics challenged the entrenched view of Hollywood as monolithic, and stripped of its normative aspects the classification of films by director has proved an extremely productive way of ordering our experience of the cinema. In demonstrating that Hollywood was at least as interesting as art cinema, it marked an important step forward.'[84]

'Auteur' critics began to focus on 'directors whose work, viewed over a number of films, displayed a consistency of underlying theme and style which was surprising in the industrial and commercial system in which they worked, and which therefore, it seemed, could be ascribed to the force of the director's personality…'[85]

As auteur theory grew in popularity, the director – particularly those who rose to prominence within the Hollywood filmmaking industry – were perceived as being the most critical component of filmmaking's creative process. The belief of director as *author* was embraced not only by critics, but also by film production companies as a marketing tool that was used to provide a sense of credibility as well as relevance to particular target market audiences and demographics groups that those production companies sought to target with new feature film releases.

Auteur theory, used as a marketing tool, is today embraced as a powerful method used by production companies to promote new releases: audiences flock to see 'A Steven Spielberg Film'. Or a movie is touted as 'by Francis Ford Coppola, five-time Oscar Winning Director'. Because audiences have become aware of the particular 'élan of the soul' and *mise en scene* 'signatures' of specific directors, and because those 'signatures' are reinforced by the publicity machines of production companies promoting new films directed by specific auteurs, productions companies are able to effectively market new film releases by matching that 'signature' to target market expectations. As an example: director Daniel Myrick (*The Blair Witch Project*, 1999) also directed *Believers* (2007). Due to the success of the 1999 film, the *Believers'* production company Gearhead Pictures ensured that 'Directed by Daniel Myrick – *The Blair Witch Project*', was prominently featured on all marketing materials supporting the release of the newer project. In this manner, audience members who had

[84] Simpson, Utterson, and Shepherdson, Film Theory: Critical Concepts in media and Culutral Studies, pp 186.
[85] John Caughie, theories of Authorshiop, pp 10.

watched *Blair Witch* would hopefully flock to see *Believers* because they had an expectation of the 'voice', 'vision', 'mise en scene', and storytelling skills that auteur Myrick would bring to the new film.[86]



Believers' DVD cover prominently features director Myrick's name, as well as *Blair Witch* reference, in order to position the new film within this film auteur's growing body of work.

Of course, there was also historical precedent that legitimised the 'auteur director' as author, in the literary sense. In discussing the very earliest days of motion pictures, Margaret Mehring states, 'Historically the film director was the person with the original vision – the one who thought up a story, gathered a cast of performers and crew, and made a movie….Louis and Auguste Lumiere, Georges Melies, Alice Guy, David Wark Griffith…Charles Chaplin, and many others were truly "auteurs" of their produced work.'[87]

Screenwriter William Goldman also notes the crucial role of the director as author in the Silent Era of filmmaking: 'In the silent days, (director David) Griffith could stand there and, with his actor's voice, he could talk to Lillian Gish or whoever and literally mould the performance with long, heated verbal instructions while the camera was rolling.'[88]

The idea and concept of *auteur* is still relevant in today's Global films (if not more relevant) and has a direct bearing on every aspect of film making. As discussed in a previous chapter, a 'Irish star' such as Liam Neeson can be of significant assistance in raising finance, marketing the film to this actor's base of loyal fans, increase Cinema attendance for his Irish or International films and make enough profits from a single film to finance not only the next production but many future productions.

Auteur is an old and dying term but in this student's opinion should be revisited and in many ways redefined as well. *Auteur* implies someone who has a significant impact and vision on the final production of a film of any kind. While directors have always been called 'the auteur' many actors and screenwriters also become contributing auteurs. As an example, when he was working in the Feature Film The Avengers, here is what he demanded:

[86] *Blair Witch* and *Believers* images freely available on the Internet
[87] Margaret Mehring, the Screenplay, a Blend of Film, form, and Content, pp 1.
[88] William Goldman, Adventures in the Screentrade, pp 100.

> The Avengers was supposed to end with Iron Man (Robert Downey Jr.) waking up after crashing to the ground, saying "What's next?". But the line didn't resonate with Downey Jr., and he knew there was a snappier way to end the superhero flick. He convinced director Joss Whedon to let him try something else, and that's how they ended up filming the shawarma line we know and love today. Without Downey Jr., we'd never have that iconic post-credits scene of the Avengers chowing down on shawarma.[89]

Many A-List Stars will demand whole pages of dialogue and action are changed before they start shooting or even during the shoot. This may have to do with the actor / auteur's desire to better engage the audience with more realistic dialogue; change action sequences due to safety reasons; or to use a language other than English to emphasise the fact that the character he or she plays is not only a French citizen but also an Irish citizen. Often, an actor working also as an 'auteur' will change action sequences or dialogue to create a much better Film than was originally envisioned by the auteur Director.

Screenwriters have the same responsibility to most Feature Films and are therefore 'screenwriter / auteurs'. In a recent article, How Often are Scripts Revised on Set,[90] Artist weekly writes (in part) that a screenwriter of a Feature Film is on-call to revise their work many times throughout a shoot. These revisions include:

> **Actor Improvisation and Performance**
>
> Actors are often encouraged to bring their own interpretation to the role, which sometimes results in improvisation. A spontaneous line or a shift in delivery might spark a fresh idea for a scene, prompting script revisions on the spot. Directors and writers may embrace these improvisations if they align with the overall vision, thus allowing the actor's natural energy to shape the final product.
>
> **Changes in the Director's Vision**
>
> Filmmakers often find that the original script doesn't fully align with their evolving creative vision. This may lead to a shift in tone, style, or focus. Directors are sometimes inspired by unforeseen elements of the set, weather

[89] https://screencrush.com/actors-who-demanded-script-changes-list/
[90] https://artistweekly.com/how-often-are-scripts-revised-on-set/

conditions, or actor chemistry, prompting script modifications to reflect these new ideas.

Logistical Constraints and Time Limitations

Time and budget constraints can also drive script revisions. If the production schedule changes, certain scenes may need to be shortened, altered, or completely removed. Likewise, unforeseen logistical issues such as location problems or technical challenges might require revisions to keep the filming process moving smoothly.

Test Audience Feedback

Test screenings and audience reactions can also influence script changes. If early test audiences respond negatively to a scene or character, the script may be adjusted in order to improve the film's appeal. Revisions based on test screenings often focus on pacing, emotional impact, or the clarity of the narrative.

This very long article concludes by stating: "Despite the challenges, on-set script revisions ultimately contribute to the quality and success of the final film. Revisions allow filmmakers to adapt to changing circumstances, improve performances, and address issues that arise during production. The flexibility to revise a script on set helps ensure that the film stays true to its creative vision, even if that vision evolves over time."

Screenwriters, many of them, therefore act as 'auteurs' by "staying true to the creative vision, even if that vision evolves over time. This is also the case for this book writer.

As a personal example: when I wrote my first produced Feature Film Screenplay, Merlin, the Magic Begins, I was invited to Peebles Scotland by the Production company, Seagull Productions with its headquarters in Hollywood, California. The Producer, Mister Siegel asked me to be ready to change pages and pages of actions and dialogue for the actors, which I did. Using a pencil (this was in the days before I could afford a laptop) I crossed out dialogue for the Merlin Character (Jason Connery, Sean Connery's son) and added dialogue one line at a time. Jason would often refuse what I had written but because he was not a writer he trusted me to turn those lines into words Merlin would say. The same is true for Deborah Moore (who played Nimue and is Roger Moore's daughter). Mister Siegel also asked me to mind the production budget and values while I was working in Peebles. When I discovered the steady cam operator had gone over budget by refusing to return the camera, I telephoned the production company in LA. The Producer came onto the phone and after listening to me started to scream down the phone. I won't type what he said (it's unprintable

language) but the result was I had to tell the Director, David Winning to 'pull the plug on the entire film due to one silly person'. That is not a direct quote but the result was the film closed its location and sent all cast members and crew home with a day to go before Winning was supposed to shoot the last page of the screenplay.

Was I, a humble screenwriter, truly an 'auteur' or even an Assistant Director? In this case, yes, I was. Due to my quick thinking based on the demands of the Producer, I helped Mister Siegel to save enough cash to shoot a pick-up in Canada a few months later. The result was better than anyone could have hoped for, especially this writer. Therefore, I helped to 'preserve the creative vision' I and my co-writer Chris Roosen had when we finalised the screenplay.

Merlin, the Magic Begins (re-titled Merlin, the Quest Begins in the North America) opened in a selected number of Cinemas. It soon appeared on shelves as a Video (Blockbuster and many more) and began airing on a number of Global Cable Channels including Sky Television in the UK. On Rotten Tomatoes, it received any number of five-star reviews with an average rating of 82%[91] When I finally revise my personal IMDb pages, I will emphasise these 'five-star' reviews to 'market' myself as a screenwriter available to any Global Production company.

This screenwriter got a 'pat on the back' not only from the Director, the Producer but also from Liam O'Neill. I received a credit on Liam's IMDb page, was paid (a rather large sum, I might add, much higher than most first-time screenwriters are paid), gained a great deal of experience, and used this single credit to gain 'traction' which led to other work with a few other Production companies (RAI in Italy and RTE in Dublin, Ireland).

Another article points out that the argument over a true definition of 'Auteur' continues to stump many interested in Feature Films, even among Academicians:

> There has been a lot of debate within the filmmaking community on whether a film director is always an auteur. Quentin Tarantino argued that to be a true auteur the film must be both written and directed by one person. This is likely because some directors, like David Fincher—whom many consider to be a modern-day auteur with a very distinct style—would not begin working on a film until the genesis of the story was already established by a writer.
>
> Members of a school of thought called Schreiber Theory believe writers to be the rightful auteurs of a film. Another school of thought believes

[91] https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/1081623-merlin

> that actors can be auteurs, like Marlon Brando for example. Before Brando, Lawrence Olivier's style of stage-acting dominated movies, but Brando's method acting style inspired by Stanislavski's system became widely influential. As a result, many people argue that Brando himself was an auteur even though he never directed a film.[92]

If no one can decide the definition of '*Auteur'* how can those interested in Irish Films come up with a single definition of the meaning of Irish Cinema? These two discussions have become on-going arguments ever since the long History of Cinema began. In the case of Irish Cinema, the argument began during the days of Chaplin (who had Irish ancestry and was married to an Irish woman) and the filming of the documentary (by an American), *The Man of Aran*.

Therefore, I argue that an *auteur* by definition can be almost anyone tied to the creation of a Feature Film. But is a film's director the *only* legitimate author of a theatrical release? As noted above, this is important to our discussion because, if we revert back to the beginning of this chapter, and if we are to develop a definition of an 'Irish' film that is relevant to this book, then we must also identify the primary constituents that contribute to such a definition. If we stick rigidly to the definition of auteur theory as noted above, and if the director (or writer/director) is truly the only legitimate author of a film, then it stands to reason that *any* film directed by an Irish director is also an 'Irish' film. The definition becomes even more difficult when seeing how the media (and certain auteur theorists and critics) viewed directors such as Alfred Hitchcock. Though he was born in England, Hitchcock is often categorised as an American auteur because, for most of his career, he worked in the United States, with American film production companies, and shot films based on American content:

> …many critics and film lovers alike see his (Hitchcock's) films as…the work of a great auteur, especially after Truffaut and his fellow *Cahiers du Cinema* critics placed Hitchcock in a privileged and central position in their revaluation of American cinema in the 1950s. However, they pointedly did not extend the same courtesy to his British films…. Hitchcock is often thought of as an American director (he himself said this in late interviews). Critics have been largely guilty of taking this statement too literally. He almost certainly was not denying his British origins, but in fact asserting that he

[92] https://www.thecollector.com/what-is-a-film-auteur/

> had the vision of an American director, unlike many (or any) of his British contemporaries. He is not simply an American director, and this is evident to any critic who would only choose to study the facts rather than continue prejudices against British Cinema.[93]

Therefore, does this mean that Hitchcock was a *British* auteur when directing a film located in Britain? Does it mean that he was an *American* auteur when directing a film set in America? How then does the geographic location of a film affect the classification of the film's auteur director, or indeed, the national origins of a film, itself? It should also be noted that the definition of 'auteur' has been stretched and reshaped over the years to include almost any 'famous personality' associated with a theatrical release:

> Another thing to note is that while the French pinpointed directors as film auteurs, and almost all film auteurs are directors, some critics with more open minds feel that an auteur does not have to be the director. A writer, cinematographer, even a producer may be an auteur. Steven Spielberg, for instance, lends his touch to films he's associated with, whether it's as director OR producer, as with *The Goonies*. A strong actor or actress can ALSO be an auteur. For example, we tend to think of an Arnold Schwartzenegger film, and we talk about a Barbra Streisand film, whether she's merely appearing in it or is also directing and producing. However, usually it is a film director that is accorded such status.[94]

Despite the confusion, those espousing a rigid view of the director as the film's only *auteur* – as the 'artist' and principal author whose personality and vision frames the creative constructs of a given film or body of films – largely ignored the collaborative nature of filmmaking. It has been argued that those taking such a rigid stance have gone too far because such proponents assign complete credit for the authoring of a film to the director. Auteur theory, and the out-of-balance view of the director as a film's *only* author, has been blamed (at least in part) for the recent ineffectiveness of European feature films in the global marketplace. Frank Daniels notes that:

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[93] Paul Nash, Hitchcock: A British Auteur, www.6degreesfilm.com/features.php?id=16
[94] Author unknown, The Genesis and Application of the Auteur Theory, http://www89.homepage.villanova.edu/elana.starr/pages/genesis_and_formulation_of_the_a.htm

> European filmmakers only recently began to admit – reluctantly and with constant apprehension, I must say – that the total abandonment of the screenwriting *metier* in the past thirty years of unrestricted rule by the director-as-auteur theory has led to an unhappy result. National filmmakers have lost their own audiences, although sporadically some of their films have been able to impress selected festival juries in other countries and have had limited exposure in art theatres. This loss of audience is why there is such enormous renewed interest in the theory and practice of writing scripts, and it is why even the term *dramaturgy* has been resurrected. The various national cinemas want to regain their viewers.[95]

Critics of auteur theory also note that the creation of a finished film involves much more than the vision and voice of a gifted director. Rather, a produced feature film is the result of a *composite* of efforts from a team of talented people, (including Professional Business Advisors as mentioned above) all focusing on the professional execution and production of a specific film project.

> Auteurism was … criticised on more practical grounds. Auteurism, it was pointed out, underestimates the impact of production conditions. While the poet can write poems on a napkin in prison, the filmmaker requires money, camera, film. The film author also requires collaborators….Writers, cinematographers, composers, stars, corporate executives all collaborate in film authorship…. (A)rtists [directors] are creative but they do not create ex nighilo; rather they "orchestrate" pre-existing voices, ideologies, and discourses, without losing an overall shaping role. Most contemporary auteur studies have jettisoned the romantic individualist baggage of auteurism to emphasize the ways a director's work can be both personal and mediated by extra-personal elements such as genre, technology, studios and the linguistic procedures of the medium.[96]

It must also be acknowledged that other individuals who are critical to the sensibility of a feature film believe that their contribution to the finished project – their stamp and signature, however disguised behind the vision of the auteur director – has been largely ignored due to the overwhelming importance placed on auteur director as the only author:

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[95] Frank Daniels in Howard, David & Mabley, Edward, The Tools of Screenwriting: A Writer's Guide to the Craft and Elements of a Screenplay, pp xxi.
[96] Robert Stam & Toby Miller, Film Theory: An Anthology, pp 4

> Some directors, for example Alfred Hitchcock, relished the notion of the Auteur Theory and in Donald Spoto's book *The Life Of Alfred Hitchcock* he writes that Hitchcock's acceptance of the Auteur Theory 'hurt and disappointed just about everybody who had ever worked with Alfred Hitchcock, for the interviews [Truffaut's interviews with Alfred Hitchcock published in the book by Francois Truffaut *Hitchcock Truffaut: The Definitive Study Of Alfred Hitchcock*, Simon & Schuster, 1967] reduced the writers, the designers, the photographers, the composers, and the actors to little other than elves in the master carpenter's workshop.[97]

Even established and successful screenwriting gurus were sometimes dismissive of the auteur-director as a feature film's only author. Syd Fields, noted author of a number of 'How to' instruction books for screenwriters, notes:

> Renoir was right. Film is a collaborative medium. The filmmaker depends on others to bring his vision to the screen. The technical skills required to make a movie are extremely specialized, And the state of the art is constantly improving.
>
> The only thing you can do by yourself is write a screenplay. All you need is pen and paper, or a typewriter or computer, and a certain amount of time. You can write it alone or with someone. It's your choice.
>
> Screenwriters collaborate all the time. If a producer has an idea and commissions you to write it, you will be in a collaboration with the producer and director. In Raiders of the Lost Ark, for example, Lawrence Kasdan, the screenwriter (The Empire Strikes Back, writer/director of Body Heaf), met with George Lucas and Steven Spielberg. Lucas wanted to use the name of his dog, Indiana Jones, for the hero (Harrison Ford), and he knew what the last scene of the movie would be: a vast military basement warehouse filled with thousands of crates of confiscated secrets, much like Citizen Kane's basement was filled with huge crates of art. That's all Lucas knew about Raiders at the time. Spielberg wanted to add a mystical dimension. They spent two weeks locked in an office, and when the three of them emerged, they had worked out

[97] Ellen Cheshire, The Singer or the Song, www.kamera.co.uk/features/authorship.html

> a general story line. Then Lucas and Spielberg left to work on other projects, and Kasdan went into his office and wrote Raiders of the Lost Ark.
>
> That's a typical collaboration in Hollywood. Everybody works for the finished product.
>
> Writers collaborate for different reasons. Some think it's easier to work with someone else. Most comedy writers work in teams, especially television writers, and shows like Saturday Night Live have a staff of five or ten writers working on each episode. A comedy writer has to be both gag man and audience a laugh is a laugh. Only the gifted few like Woody Allen or Neil Simon can sit in a room alone and know what's funny and what isn't.
>
> While I was attending the University of California at Berkeley, I had the privilege of working with Jean Renoir, the great French film director…Renoir felt that film, though a great art, was not a "true" art in the sense that writing, paining, or music is, because too many people are directly involved in its making. The filmmaker can write, direct, and produce his own film, Renoir used to say, but he can't act all the parts; he can be the cameraman… he can't develop the film. He sends it to a special film laboratory for that, and sometimes it doesn't come back the way he wants. "One person can't do everything," Renoir used to say. "True art is in the *doing* of it."[98]

Due to the collaborative nature of producing a feature film, it has been argued by many that the auteur-director should not be considered as a feature film's only author. Rather, other creative talent is required to create a feature film: screenwriters, script doctors, producers, actors, cinematographers, costume and set designers, editors, and film score composers all contribute to the final product of the finished film:

> …film by its very nature, is a collaborative medium subject to a host of outside elements and rarely the result of a single person's efforts and input. The director has to work with contracted actors, scriptwriters, camera operators, and many other personnel…DeRosa's account of Hitchcock's collaboration with the scriptwriter John

[98] Syd Fields, The Definitive Guide to Screenwriting, pp 349-350.

> Michael Hayes indicates that Hitchcock's artistic vision were not always his alone and were often radically reshaped and transformed by Hayes' writing.[99]

Screenwriters, in particular those who have laboured to develop screenplay stories for feature film of an original and creative nature (as opposed to those working on adaptations of other story constructs, including novels and stage plays, for film) often wonder why their creative storytelling efforts are not viewed as important as that of the film director. Screenwriters are taught that all screen stories start with the written word (which, of course, is usually true). However, reinforced by auteur theory, the screenwriter – as well as other relevant project team members – are sometimes subordinated to the bottom of the creative heap, and remain practically anonymous within the film's development and promoted authorship. Margaret Mehring notes that 'The screenwriter has always been and continues to be the low person on the totem pole. The prevalent views in the industry presume that almost everyone can improve the final draft of a screenplay, that if one writer is good, three more will be even better, and that writers do not and should not have control over what's produced from their material.'[100]

Anecdotal evidence abounds which reinforces Mehring's point: during the 1997 production of the television film, *Merlin the Magic Begins* (David Winning director; 1998), the film's screenwriter (Tom Richards) was invited to attend part of the shoot. Upon meeting the writer, one of the co-producers suggested to the writer a quick rewrite to incorporate a games concept that could then be transformed into consumer merchandise. 'All you have to do is write-in a magic crystal!' the executive co-producer stated, 'and we'll have a winning formula that will make millions.' Fortunately, the principle producer disagreed despite the fact that the director was more than willing to personally make changes to the screenplay, and the shoot proceeded as had been previously written.[101]

Who, then, is auteur – the author – of a feature film? The answer expounded by screenwriter William Goldman is both 'no one and everyone':

> I remember the moment I was first told about ….auteur theory…and all I could think was this: "What's the punch line?" …Maybe it's true in other places…But…it sure as shit isn't true in Hollywood….I haven't even met a director who believes it (auteur theory). The word *auteur* has come to mean this: It is the director who creates the

[99] Un-attributed, Alfred Hitchcock: Auteur? www.members.tripod.com
[100] Margaret Mehring, The Screenplay, a Blend of Film, Form and Content, pp 1.
[101] Tom Richards, screenwriter, Merlin the Magic Begins, David Winning directing, 1998.

> film….But creator? Well, then, if it's so untrue, why is the idea still around? Answer: the media….It's convenient. If you want to talks about *Jaws*, you can't mention all the technicians…So shorthand is a reason. …And don't forget publicity – they don't send production designers on hype tours. So when…the director explains that he had this vision and *voila*, it's now up there on the screen for you all to see and admire, that's what gets reported….As I've said before – and please believe me, it's true (and if you don't believe me, ask anybody in the business for verification) – movies are a group endeavour. Basically, there are seven of us who are crucial to a film, and we all seven have to be at our best if the movie's going to have a shot at quality. Listed alphabetically: the actor; the cameraman; the director; the editor; the producer; the production designer; the writer.[102]

While auteur theory may have provided a tool that can be of significant importance in the critical analysis of a director's body of filmic work; while it may have also provided a *philosophy* that a director (or anyone involved in a film's creative processes) can use in their endeavours to shape a unique 'vision' or 'voice' within a film's story; while auteur theory may provide both the media and production companies marketing department's with a method to position a film by referring to particular (and usually successful and well-known) directors in order to effectively communicate to film audience groups, auteur theory is not, as Goldman points out, a particularly practical method that can be used alone to help define a national cinema.

However, certain aspects of auteur theory are relevant to our search for a definition of an 'Irish film'. To reach such a definition, we shall abstract elements of that theory, as well as other definitions of 'Irish films' noted toward the beginning of this chapter.

First, the idea of director as auteur – author – of a film must be considered. Like the analysis of Hitchcock above, if a director is working on a film project that is shot in Ireland and financed with Irish funding, and if that director is Irish – or lives in Ireland – then must it be construed that the film is an 'Irish' film only because the director is Irish? But what about an Irish director shooting a film in the United States that is financed only by Irish funding? Or what about the Irish director who is shooting a film in the United States that is financed by co-production funding, and where that funding comes from, say, the United States, Canada,

[102] William Goldman, Adventures in the Screentrade, pp 100 – 102.

and also Ireland? Are these also 'Irish' films because they are directed by an Irish auteur-director?

Or what about yet another example: take the case of Neill Jordan. In 2007, he wrote and directed *The Brave One*. The film starred American actress Jodie Foster, was produced by highly successful American producer Joe Silver, and was distributed by Warner Brothers. Moreover, the film's official website notes:

> The film also brought Jordan a BAFTA Award for Best British Film, an Independent Spirit Award for Best Foreign Film, the London Film Critics Award for Best Screenwriter and Best Director, the New York Film Critics Award for Best Screenplay and the Writers Guild of America and Writers Guild of Great Britain Awards for Best Original Screenplay…[103]

Based on the awards named above, the film might be considered British or American. But any reference to Ireland, or Irish cinema, is decidedly absent despite Jordan's credentials as a highly successful Irish director.

The confusion about what is or isn't an 'Irish' film or an 'American' film or a 'British' film is due, at least to some extent, on the definition of a National Cinema, itself. In his introduction to Film and Nationalism, editor Alan Williams writes:

> What is a national cinema? In arguably the most influential single recent article about the subject, Andrew Higson points out that the idea of a national cinema 'has been appropriated in a variety of ways, for a variety of reasons: there is not a single universally accepted discourse."[104]

Then, focusing on the French cinema, he writes: 'So what is French national cinema? In a sense, it is whatever you need it to be to make a point in the ongoing struggle to conceptualise France, and the cinema.'[105]

So is the definition of an 'Irish' Cinema "whatever I need it to be" to make a point about the Irish film business? Perhaps it is. Benedict Anderson, in his seminal work *Imaged Communities*, gives us a clue as to why an agreed definition of national cinema, and hence

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[103] www.thebraveone.warnerbros.com/
[104] Alan Williams, Film and Nationalism, pp 4.
[105] Ibid, pp 5.

agreed definitions of the cinemas of individual nations, is so difficult to develop. Anderson defines Nation as:

> …an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign. It is *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion. … Communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined…The nation is imagined as *limited* because even the largest of them, encompassing perhaps a billion living human beings, as finite, if elastic boundaries, beyond which lie other nations….It is imagined as *sovereign* because the concept was born in an age in which Enlightenment and Revolution were destroying the legitimacy of the divinely-ordained, hierarchical dynastic realm….Finally, it is imagined as *community*, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship.[106]

While we shall examine Anderson and his critical thinking regarding imagined communities, and its relevance to the Irish feature film industry later in this book, here it is only important to note Benedict's primary points: nations are *imagined*; they are *limited*; they are imagined as a *community* of like-minded comradeship. Benedict's thoughts are useful here, too. Because, as with a nation, a 'national cinema' is also imagined, limited, and imagined as a community. Hence, an 'Irish' national cinema, and an 'Irish' film might also have the same qualities.

So, drawing on the discussion of what is or isn't an 'Irish' cinema mentioned above; what is or isn't relevant from auteur theory to our discussions of the definition of an 'Irish' cinema, also mentioned above; and what is or isn't relevant from Benedict's 'imagined' communities, mentioned above, we can begin to draw some conclusions regarding what is, or isn't, an 'Irish' film:

A director, as auteur, as an important and critical element in the collaborative development and production of a feature film, should be part of our definition;

[106] Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities, pp 6.

But as Goldman notes, other critical personnel are essential to the development of a quality film. That list includes (but is not limited to) actors, editors, producers, cinematographers, and writers.

McKillop (in his definition of what is, or isn't, and 'Irish' film) particularly stresses the importance of the 'Irishness' of a director and producer (or production company) if a film is to be deemed 'Irish';

And again touching on Anderson, that definition should somehow incorporate the ideas of nation as an 'imagined community': that is, an 'Irish national cinema', and subsequently an 'Irish' film might be at least in part defined as a *reflection* of the *community imagined* by those considering themselves to be 'Irish'; and *limited* to that imagined community of like-minded comrades.

5.3 Imagined Communities as Part of the Irish Cinema Definition

This writer's contention that the definition of Irish Cinema is imagined (in other words, not yet having an agreed definition), in part relies on Anderson's Seminal work, Imagined Communities, Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism.

In the Introduction, Anderson writes:

> The aim of this book is to offer some tentative suggestions for a more satisfactory interpretation of the 'anomaly' of nationalism. … My point of departure is that nationality, or, as one might prefer to put it in view of that word's multiple significations, nation-ness, as well as nationalism, are cultural artefacts of a particular kind. To understand them properly we need to consider carefully how they have come into historical being, in what ways their meanings have changed over time, and why, today, they command such profound emotional legitimacy. I will be trying to argue that the creation of these artefacts towards the end of the eighteenth century was the spontaneous distillation of a complex crossing' of discrete historical forces: but that, once created, they became 'modular. capable of being transplanted, with varying, degrees of self-consciousness, to a great variety of social terrains, to merge and be merged with a correspondingly wide variety of political and ideological constellations. I will also attempt to show why these particular cultural artefacts have aroused such deep attachments.[107]

[107] Anderson, Benedict. Imagined Communities, Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism, Verso Books 2006, page 4.

While Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* famously argues that nations are socially constructed "imagined political communities" bound by shared symbols and print cultures, subsequent critics have complicated this foundational idea. Ernest Gellner, in *Nations and Nationalism* (1983),[108] foregrounds the structural role of industrialization and education in producing nations, challenging the purely cultural emphasis. Eric Hobsbawm's *Nations and Nationalism since 1780* (1990)[109] emphasizes how elites *construct traditions* to manufacture continuity and a sense of national identity. Partha Chatterjee, in *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories*[110] (Princeton University Press, 1993), problematises Anderson's Eurocentric model by arguing that colonized societies imagine their national identity through a distinct internal logic, shaped by the tensions of colonial domination. Declan Kiberd's *Inventing Ireland: The Literature of the Modern Nation*[111] (Harvard University Press, 1996) applies Anderson's concepts to the Irish case, showing how writers projected ideas of Irish-ness and myth-making into cultural life through literature.

Meanwhile, theorists like Bhabha, Hall, and Appadurai push matters further: the nation becomes a narrative performance (Bhabha), identity a becoming rather than a fixed essence (Hall), and imagined communities extend transnationally via media and diaspora (Appadurai).

Other theorists and philosophers apply the thinking of 'imagined communities, to their philosophical works. The Christian Philosopher, Paul Tillich, stated at the end of his book, that to understand God, we all must take a "leap of faith." Voltaire, the French Philosopher, is attributed in stating, "I may not believe in what you say, but I defend your right to say it," but actually written by Evelyn Beatrice Hall in her 1906 biography "The Friends of Voltaire", imagines a community dedicated to the freedom of speech and tolerance. In Philosophy Now, a Magazine of Ideas, their article on Existentialism, Imagination & Creativity in Jean-Paul Sarte,[112] written by Maria Antonietta Perna, states in part,

> "What is imagination? The word itself seems to be used in at least two different ways, and as this ambiguity is reflected in various studies of the imagination, it needs to be cleared up. This I will try to do in the first part of

[108] Gellner, Ernest. Nations and Nationalism, Blackwell Press, London, 1983
[109] Hobsbawm, Eric, Nationals and Nationalism since 1780, Cambridge University Press, 1990
[110] Chatterjee, Partha. The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories, Princeton University Press, 1993 page 282.
[111] Kiberd, Declan. Inventing Ireland: The Literature of the Modern Nation, Harvard University Press, 1996 page 719.
[112] https://philosophynow.org/issues/32/Imagination_and_Creativity_in_Jean-Paul_Sartre

> this article. Afterwards, I will focus on Jean-Paul Sartre's theory of the imagination. In my view it offers an insight into our relationship with the world, and with each other, which deserves renewed attention. The conclusions arrived at in the first part of the article will help defend Sartre's position against a common line of criticism…. Sartre devoted two major works to the nature of the imagination. In *The Psychology of the Imagination* (1940) he drew a sharp line between imagination and perception. He claimed that consciousness can either perceive or imagine, but that the two kinds of act can never be combined. But, his critics have pointed out, this goes against our ordinary perceptual and aesthetic experience, where perceived and imagined elements often intertwine."

Sartres' idea that 'consciousness can either perceive or imagine' sheds great light on the creativity which must be used to reach a true definition of 'Irish Cinema'. It also explains why artists of all kinds use their individual perceptions of the world around them (their personal histories as backstories, their own realities as a series of stories, actions and dialogues and their *motif* in the arts as being a painter, sculpture or writer of any description.

So many historical painters have used the idea of 'imagined communities' in their many works or series of art. From Monet to Renoir, Cezanne to Rousseau, Van Goch to Picasso – all of these artists painted 'imagined communities' of people, plants, portraits, rivers, Cathedrals – all were inspired by the communities they lived with or visited. These famous French artists 'imaged these communities' as part of their art.

Other artists have re-interpreted many of these artists for their own 'imaged purposes'. The screenplay, American in Paris, relied in great part on French Art. The novelists Ernest Hemingway relied in great part on the art of Miro, Gris and Masson. Some of Ireland's feature films and shorts use many artists to inspire their films. In one of his first Feature Films, Pete's Meteor, Producer Liam O'Neill used 'the Scream' painted by Edvard Munch as a central motif of the visual story.

This writer has used a number of philosophers and artist as either part of a novel or as inspiration for a screenplay. In the novel Dolphin Song by Tom Richards, I chose to start the story with a short quote from Paul Tillich. I again used the idea of 'a community of faith and leap of faith' as the central spine of both the screenplay and novel. Van Gogh's paintings and personal history are part of my unfinished novel "The Van Gogh Brothers" which is based solely on a stage play written by Robert Burda, Lecturer, Illinois Wesleyan University.

“Art is art” is a wise old saying. “Artists of any kind inspire other types of artists and their works” is another wise and useful saying. Painters using their creative imaginations work the same way as many novelists and screenwriters. They often start by sketching an idea onto canvas with charcoal or a pencil. When they are satisfied with that stage, they move on to begin painting it by applying many types of colours. Some paintings are 3-dementional.

Novelists and screenwriters can study how painters work and apply those stages to their work. All start with a blank screen (canvass). They may start with a very short premise or logline (charcoal or a pencil). If the painter or writer isn’t happy, they’ll deleted their ‘art’ and start over again. Then the writer may write a chapter breakdown and / or a step outline (the first application of paint). Finally, the writer will begin writing the chapters or the first scenes of a screenplay (more paint).

Artists of any kind and from any nation use the ‘imagined communities in their minds’ as inspirations. All artists combine ‘imagined communities’ with other artists using other mediums. Artists are one large ‘imagined community’. Though many famous artists using any medium are dead, living artists can imagine them as alive in order to ‘climb on the shoulders of these dead or living giants’ as a way of preserving all art in history and applying it to the art of today so that it will until they are long dead.

Working as an artist, like any job, is part of the ‘circle of life’. When this writer is dead and gone, and should my novels and feature films still exist in any form for people to read and see them, I will have contributed to the ‘imagined communities of Irish artists’ who will someday live in Ireland and, if they immigrate to other countries, then also in other nations.

5.4 Summary

The idea of Imagined Communities sprang from the writer Anderson’s imagination. To understand any ‘imagined community’ or society, all anyone has to do is think about the Nation they live in.

The United States Constitution (1788), written by men using the United States Declaration of Independence (1776) as a foundation in their search for liberty, posited that “We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.” Their desire to free the British Colonies from tyranny resulted in an ‘imagined community’ of ‘One Nation under God, with Liberty and Justice for all.”

Those ‘Framers’ of the United States Constitution included such luminaries as John Adams, Samual Adams, Benjamin Franklin and, the first President of the United States, General George Washington. Their collective ‘imagined’ quest for freedom resulted in just that.

The thirty colonies under British Rule were transformed by the Constitution – and the Framers mentioned above - into American’s first Thirteen States. Yet it was the result of the collective imagination of all those colonists who sought to ‘throw of the yoke of imperial rule’ that gave these men, women and children the courage of their own convictions to pick up arms and fight.

The U.S. Constitution offered the ‘imagined planks of courageous used by many other Nations. Following the American Revolution in 1776, the French people ‘tossed out the old King Louis XVI of France and formed their own Nation. The Irish followed suit first with a Civil War against the English who had occupied all thirty-six counties of Ireland. During the period 1649 to 1653, Oliver Cromwell used draconian measures to force the people of Ireland to bend its knee to ‘their Sovereign King Charles the First’. Following over two-hundred years of War with the English, and at the very start of their 1916 Civil War, the Irish Provisional Government published POBLACHT NA hÉIREANN which stated, in part:

> In the name of God and of the dead generations from which she receives her old tradition of nationhood, Ireland, through us, summons her children to her flag and strikes for her freedom.[113]

The result of this courageous document, distributed as a small pamphlet in the Irish Language (as Gaeilge) worked to ‘imagine freedom’ for the people of all of Ireland’s thirty-two counties. However, during negotiations between members of the Irish Government and representatives of the British government to end all War, Irish General Michael Collins was forced to give up the six Northern Colonies in exchange for lasting peace.

Other nations across the world have used ‘imagined communities’ as cultural memories in their films. In Robert Rosenstone’s book, Visions of the Past, he discusses African History and how auteurs can keep alive “the words of a *giot*, one of those tribal storytellers responsible for tribal memory.”

Rosenthal quotes Ousene Sembene, an African filmmaker and historian:

[113] https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-the-taoiseach/publications/proclamation-of-independence/

"Our history was not taught to (our) people by my generation. We know the dates, the legends, but we don't know clearly what happened. Our aim is to dramatize history and to teach it so as not to let others teach it to us.[114]

Irish Cinema as well as all nations in our world work to preserve history and cultural identity for those who come after those films were produced and distributed. This is why since Irish filmmakers began to shoot films in Black and White, they would include some Irish language in their screenplays and scripts and also why much of the footage would be shot on location anywhere across the twenty-six counties.

In the same book cited above, Rosenstone writes about how to adapt a book to make a film based on cultural history and identity. "When you think about writing a book on history, make it personal. The story of a quest. Desire to understand if and how (but mostly how) the film medium can be (and has been) used to talk about the past."[115]

This student of Irish and Global Cinema has and will cite many film productions which preserve cultural identity, language, history and the 'imagined communities' of the past. Some examples include Braveheart, Titanic, The Man of Aran, Michael Collins, An American in Paris, Sink the Bismark, A Lion in Winter, Mississippi Burning and many more.

In summary, many types of people living in our past, as well as the present and into the distant future will use the bold thinking and definition of Benedict Anderson's 'Imagined Communities'. Artists of all kinds and practicing in many Nations as well as the leaders of those Nations and their people practice 'imagination' to help them define what they do for a living, where they live or want to live, their Citizenship – be that in the country they might have a passport or a country they long to live in and become a citizen, and the way they choose to live. Every one of us is 'imagined' to some extent. In the lecture 'Kant's Concept of Self"[116] published by Philo Notes, they state in part:

> "I will briefly explain the nature and dynamics of the "Self" according to Immanuel Kant. But it must be noted at the outset that Kant's concept of the self is very difficult to systematize because in the first place, Kant himself did not fully develop this concept. This is partly because Kant's concept of the self serves only as the foundation of his moral theory. In fact, for Kant, the human person as a rational moral agent is the sole basis in determining the truth of the categorical imperative.

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[114] Rosenstone, Robert A. Visions of the Past, page 177 – 178.
[115] Ibid, page 227.
[116] https://philonotes.com/2022/05/kants-concept-of-the-self#google_vignette

> Indeed, behind the formal ethical façade of Kant's categorical imperative is the attempt of the human person to achieve *moral perfection*. Hence, we can surmise that the ultimate goal of Kant's moral teachings is for the human person to become morally perfect. And for this reason, it can be argued that anybody who wants to study Kantian ethics should first and foremost understand Kant's concept of the self as the anthropological basis of his moral teachings.
>
> So, how does Kant view the self? According to Kant, the human person has a two-fold nature, namely: 1) homo noumenon and 2) homo phaenomenon
>
> On the one hand, the term noumenon, which is derived from Kant's epistemology, refers to the *essence of things*. For Kant, the noumenon is the thing-in-itself (das Ding an sich). According to Kant, the noumenon *cannot be known* because, as the essence of things, it is beyond experience. For example, as Kant would have us believe, we cannot know the "*tableness*" of the table, or that which makes a table really "a table". Later on, Hegel argues that there is no such thing as "thing-in-itself" or the "tableness" of the table. For Hegel, what reason knows is all there is to know.
>
> On the other hand, the term phaenomenon, according to Kant, refers to *the thing as it appears to the observer*. In other words, the phaenomenon is the empirical part of a thing. It is indeed that *part of a thing that can be experienced by humans.* The hardness, texture, color, and shape of a table are all that we can know about the table. For Kant, they are the phaenomenal aspects of the table. (italics mine)

Kant's views of moral perfection, the essence of things and tableness directly oppose the thing as it appears to the observer: part of thing that can be experienced by humans. 'Tableness' is therefore part of the 'collective imagination' of those seeking to understand what cannot be directly observed. The very ideas of 'Nations conceived in liberty', the many paintings of Vincent van Gogh who used his 'collective imagination' to paint many versions of Sunflowers and the creative writings of all writers (Novelists, Screenwriters, Essayists, Playwrights, Biographers, Auto-biographers and even students writing any class paper or book, depend on 'collective imaginations' to draw conclusions from the research, reading and histories we source to understand what we are writing and why we put pen to paper (or fingers to a keyboard).

In the balance of this book, I draw on both Anderson's tradition of 'Imagined Communities', others writing or practicing 'imagined communities' and its critics. I adopt the institutional, business-oriented criterion of national cinema (funding, production location, tax incentives) *and* the cultural authorship criterion (representation, identity, diaspora). By referring to this writer's screenplay *Lost Lovers* as an example of the intersection of these logics, I show how Irish cinema might imagine itself in the global order - not as a fixed "national" territory, but as a living, hybrid, and business-savvy imaginative community.

'Irish Cinema' is a cultural artefact which stretches back to the very beginning of Ireland's Cinematic History. While we have already discussed some of Irish Cinematic History, we now must examine what is, and what is not, an Irish Theatrical Production. Interlacing my conclusions with more thinking of Anderson's long 'treatise' on Imagined Communities and nationalism, I shall then propose a final definition of Irish Cinema.

Merriam-Webster defines 'existential' as a grounded in existence or the experience of existence; of, relating to, or affirming existence.

This book therefore posits that 'Irish Cinema' must be grounded in its own contemporary existence and affirming that existence not only in Ireland but around the world.

Chapter Six:
The Establishment of Irish Stereotypical Characteristics, Images and Landscapes

'…for a film that uses its landscape setting to register the familiar markers of Irishness that it trades on, it was not even shot in Ireland. This seems to confirm the shoddiness and inauthenticity of the whole project….The film trades on a blatant recycling of outrageous clichés and on rehashing old myths about rural Ireland.'

Martin McLoone assessing, and reacting to, *Waking Ned Devine*[117]

Since the early twentieth century, and the advent of moving pictures, Irish filmmaking entrepreneurs have attempted to establish a viable Film Industry. Initially, cinematic images of Ireland were produced and distributed by 'foreign' film production companies located both in North American and Britain. Films such as *The Lad from Old Ireland* (US, Kalem, 1910), *The Colleen Bawn* (US, Kalem, 1911), *Man of Aran* (UK, Flaherty, 1934), *The Quiet Man* (US, Ford, 1952), and *Darby O'Gill and the Little People* (US, Stevenson, 1959) presented the world with cinematic images and cultural impressions of Ireland that quickly transcended story, resulting in icons and stereotypical images of Ireland and the Irish, some of which were not much appreciated by the peoples of this land. Tropes such as the priest, the gombeen, the Mammy, the drunk, the idiot, the ape, the Frankenstein, and a green-tinted land of Leprechauns and magic grew to populate the popular worldview of Ireland.

But even as early as 1916, prior to the establishment of the Irish Free State, Irish nationals produced filmic images of the Irish and Ireland that provided the world with an indigenously produced point of view, and which – in part – attempted to repudiate those stereotypes. This Pre-Wave / Early Indigenous Period (1916 – 1960's) included such films as Irish Identity (1926), Guests of the Nation (1935) and the Cradle of Genius (1961).

As we shall see in later chapters, the founding of The Film Company of Ireland (1916), and its subsequent production of *Knocknagow* (Ireland, O'Donovan, 1918), as well as the establishment of General Film Supply (1917) and its periodic production of the *Irish Events* newsreel, illustrate an Irish entrepreneurial zeal to produce Irish film for an Irish population that were based on stories of Irish origin and interest. Many of these efforts also attempted to counter the stereotypical images of Ireland, previously mentioned.

[117] Martin McLoone, Irish Film, the Emergence of a Contemporary Cinema, pp 126.

As will also be discussed in more detail later in this book, these early efforts were followed – sporadically enough, it must be stated – by other Irish filmmaking activity produced by filmmakers indigenous to Ireland. The history of these efforts can be disaggregated into a number of broad Waves of Irish filmmaking: initial indigenous filmmaking activity (films shot by indigenous film companies from 1916 through the 1960s); the so-called First Wave (films shot primarily in the 1970s and 1980s, and ending with the re-establishment of the Irish Film Board in 1993); the Second Wave (usually defined as films funded by the re-established Irish Film Board); and a Third Wave (the most recent period of Irish filmmaking activity funded, in part, by Screen Ireland). Each of these 'waves' had a general objective: the First Wave was intent on countering established global Irish stereotypes; the Second Wave was primarily concerned with contemporary Irish history, including the Troubles and the impact of Irish institutions such as the Catholic Church on the peoples of Ireland; the Third Wave has been principally focused on the societal and economic impact of the Celtic Tiger, and the changes that these changing values have brought to Irish society. The history and impact of these waves of indigenous filmmaking activity will be analysed in detail later in the book.

Many books now pose several new arguments and strong indicators that a Fourth Wave of Irish filmmaking is occurring post-Celtic Tiger (after 2010). In The New Irish Studies[118], published by Cambridge University Press, the authors examine how post-apocalyptic Irish Films (made after the collapse of the Celtic Tiger) respond to the social, economic, and political fallout of recession and austerity. Films like *One Hundred Mornings* (2009), *The Survivalist* (2015), *The Cured* (2017) are discussed. These are seen not just as thematic successors to the Third Wave of Irish filmmaking but as markers of a new sensibility.

Other commentors on this 'Fourth Wave' are noting the increasing success and visibility of Irish-language cinema (for example *An Cailín Ciúin / The Quiet Girl*), which suggests a renewed interest in linguistic/cultural identity.[119]

> "As the announcement of the 2023 Oscar nominations approached, the creators of Irish-language film *An Cailín Ciúin* (*The Quiet Girl*) celebrated a "breakthrough" moment as it became the first of its kind to be shortlisted in the Best International Film category.

[118] Reynolds, Paige, editor. The New Irish Studies, Cambridge University Press, 2020.
[119] https://languagemagazine.com/2023/03/20/a-breakthrough-moment-for-irish-language-filmmaking

> Written and directed by Colm Bairéad, the film is a feature-length adaptation of Claire Keegan's 2010 short story "Foster." Set in 1981, the title follows the story of neglected nine-year-old Cáit, who is sent to live with relatives in County Wexford, finding herself in a loving home for the first time.
>
> *An Cailín Ciúin* has already appeased multiple critics, scooping up several domestic and international awards, including the Dublin Film Festival's Audience Award and eight Irish Film and Television Academy awards (IFTAs). For Irish filmmaking, *An Cailín Ciúin's* submission to the Academy comes after surpassing box office records and has been hailed as a promising development in the creative film sector."

This 'cultural breakthrough' demonstrates how Irish Cinema, and As Gaeilge, is now appealing to people living in many nations. This is an example of an affirmation that Irish Cinema is finally being recognises as part of an ever growing, more popular, film 'industry' as well as Irish 'imagined cultural identity'.

There are also more international co-productions, a greater presence at global film festivals, and diversified funding sources (e.g. broadcasters, public funding, and private/international partnerships) in recent Irish film work. This suggests a changed industrial environment compared to the earlier Waves. Some of the films listed among 2024/2025 Irish output show varying genres, producers, more location variety, language experimentation, and more ambitious international reach.

However, all of these waves of filmmaking activity have one unfortunate commonality: a failure to establish a vibrant and profitable Feature Film Industry in Ireland; that is, a business model that provides for the proliferation of a wide range of *profitable* Irish-owned, Irish-developed, and Irish-financed feature film production companies, whose primary mission is the creation of Irish feature films (as defined previously), and whose business characteristics are marked by *continuing* profitability, reinvestment of excess cash flow into future projects, and subsequent financial success, without the need for outside government financial assistance.

Many factors have contributed to the on-again, off-again success (and failure) of Ireland's feature film activities. Some of these factors are practical: finding adequate sources of finance and distribution, or the development of a successful marketing and sales programme, for instance. But other factors are also at work. Filmmaking, after all, and like any literary or visual art form, is often a reflection not only of the film auteur's creativity,

background, 'voice', and personal values, but also of the state of the society from which it has sprung:

'Ideologies, ideas, symbols, literary and cultural periodicals, even lyric poems are social facts, just as potato crops, tractors, and new industries are, and they can be fully understood only within the material world in which they come to life.'[120]

For that reason, and to understand the current state of the Irish film 'industry', it is first necessary to explore the history of Irish cinema, the people and cultural events that were significant to its formation, and the establishment of stereotypes of Ireland and the Irish that many Irish filmmakers, as well as Irish citizens and their successive governments, eventually sought to challenge.

6.1 The Creation of Irish Character Stereotypes

'The very month the Treaty was approved, January 1922, a columnist in The Irish Times…reported on the need to:

> "…build up our own school of cinema interpretation, and absolutely adhering to our own technique as we evolve it. By doing this we will, in time, as we become more thoroughly masters of this new art, establish a standard of interpretation that will bring to the markets of the world a product peculiarly our own which will receive a reasonable share of the world's patronage…. Experience gained by previous efforts…has taught the lesson that we must produce features in which the country and the people can take national pride. We must start by being Irish in our point of view, and when our work is finished it must be of such a character that there will be no doubt in anyone's mind that the result attained is all the time Irish. This does not necessarily preconceive narrowness of treatment; it merely means that the only picture worth making in Ireland is an Irish picture.'[121]

This Irish Times reporter, unidentified by the quoting authors (Rocket, Gibson & Hillin Cinema and Ireland, was obviously reacting to a situation of critical personal importance to him. By pointing out that at least one Irish voice was crying out for Ireland's 'own school of cinematic interpretation…in which the country and the people can take national pride', and his view 'that the only picture worth making in Ireland is an Irish picture', at a time so close

[120] Terence Brown, Ireland a Social and Cultural History, 1922-2002, pp xi.
[121] K Rocket, L Gibbons & J Hill, Cinema and Ireland, Syracuse University Press, 1987; pp 38.

to Ireland's independence from Great Britain, Rockett et al illustrate how important the establishment of an Irish national cinema was to the heart of the newly independent State.

That Irish Times reporter was reacting to a number of conditions that were unique to Ireland at that time. Moreover, those conditions – and the reaction to them by Irish politicians, policymakers, and important influencers, as well as Ireland's indigenous filmmakers (as will be seen in later chapters) – actually helped to stifle the success of indigenous Irish filmmaking activity as it set about making films about Ireland and the Irish during the initial critical period of that activity's birth and infancy.

This chapter will illustrate the stereotypical images established by 'foreign' filmmakers within the minds of a global audience, and will begin to establish the argument that the reaction by Irish filmmakers, as well as academics and policymakers, to those often negatively perceived stereotypes detracted from the successful growth of Ireland's film industry.

Ireland and her people had been witness to the advent of moving pictures since its very earliest days. Moreover, Ireland was quickly proven to be useful creative fodder for international filmmakers, as Harvey O'Brien points out: 'As early as April 1896, four months after the Paris debut of the Lumiere Cinematographe, moving pictures were being shown in Dublin city. … The first images of Ireland on film were made not long after by visiting Lumiere cameramen.'[122] While these films expressed 'comparatively innocent scenes of life in the cities and countryside of Imperial Ireland (that) speak of a world in quiet transition,' the rallying cry made by the Irish Times reporter for the development of Irish filmmaking activity 'that will bring to the markets of the world a product peculiarly our own' indicates that the Irish view of 'foreign' filmmaking had changed considerably since the early days of 'innocent' cinema production focusing on Ireland and the Irish. What on earth could have caused such a ruckus?

As Rockett et al points out, the very earliest filmmaking activities taking place in Ireland did not cause much of a stir among either the locals or the wider Irish Diaspora, but rather were embraced by them. Sydney Olcott, a director for US film production company Kalem, visited Ireland in 1910. There, 'he shot one feature film, *The Lad From Old Ireland*, which is regarded as the first American film made on location outside the US.'[123] Following the success of that film, Kalem together with Olcott produced many more projects in Ireland

[122] H O'Brien, *The Identity of an Irish Cinema*, (3rd edition, 2007) published on www.reelireland.ie, pp 1.
[123] K Rockett, L Gibbons, & J Hill, Cinema and Ireland, pp 9.

including *Rory O'More* (1911), *The Colleen Bawn* (1911), *For Ireland's Sake* (1912), and *Arrah-na-Pogue* (1911). As a Canadian-born director whose mother was from Cork, working for an American company, shooting film within a country controlled by the British, and with strong Irish nationalist feelings, Olcott's films were a success story: '…all the films made in Ireland were profitable' he wrote.[124] This success was due not only to the story premises of Olcott's films (which were highly supportive of the popular Irish nationalist cause and independence from Great Britain), but also due to the support of a wider Irish immigrant audience (our Diaspora) living outside of Ireland: 'I addressed eleven groups ranging from 50 to 1,000 in less than two weeks. As a result, all the films made in Ireland were profitable. It seemed everyone with Irish ancestry wanted to see the old country again.'[125] Rockett stresses Olcott's sympathetic treatment of Ireland, factors that undoubtedly contributed to the success of his films within Irish immigrant communities who were sympathetic to a nationalist cause, and independence from Great Britain. 'A wide range of themes are evident in Olcott's Irish made films. Irish nationalism is sympathetically portrayed while English rule in Ireland is unfavourably contrasted with America which proves (in his films) to be the escape route from both political oppression and poverty.'[126]

In discussing Olcott, both Rockett et al and film book Ruth Barton point out striking features that led to the success of his films: first, Olcott shot his feature films using screenplays written prior to the shoot. This was an unusual practice in those early days of cinema and possibly increased the probability that he would achieve a cohesive, successful, and entertaining visual narrative. Second, Olcott often shot on location. As Barton points out, 'Olcott's decision to shoot on location is exploited throughout the films' narratives as a guarantor of authenticity as well as satisfying a secondary tourist discourse. Thus, for instance, the opening titles of *The Colleen Bawn* assure the audience that the entire film is shot in genuine Irish locations…'[127]

Shooting on location allowed Irish immigrants to 'see the old country again', even though those immigrants might live thousands of miles away. In point of fact, and according to Barton, Olcott's comments regarding his addresses to groups of Irish immigrants (cited above) were made following a series of talks in a variety of Irish clubs located in the United States. By incorporating filmic images of Ireland with stories and characters that resonated with most Irish people of the time, Olcott and the Kalem Company produced 'foreign-made'

[124] Ruth Barton, Irish National Cinema, 204, pp. 19.
[125] Ibid, quoting Foster, pp 19.
[126] Kevin Rockett, Cinema and Ireland, pp 8.
[127] Ruth Barton, Irish National Cinema, pp 20.

films that were decidedly Irish at their heart, and that reflected contemporary and commonly held Irish values and objectives. For those reasons alone, the Irish people – living both in Ireland and abroad – were favourably disposed to such foreign-produced cinema because Olcott's films reinforced existing Irish values, rather than undermine them. (That said, Barton and Rockett et al also point out that Olcott ran foul of a local Irish priest during the shooting of *The Colleen Bawn*: 'At Mass one Sunday, the local priest (verbally) assaulted the "tramp photographers" who had invaded the (local) peace and quiet… These intruders…were portraying the Irish as gypsies and ne'er-do-wells…and he was perturbed to know that some local lads and lasses were…selling their souls to the devil by taking part in these vile activities.'[128] These observations of this priest's negative reaction to filmmaking activity in Ireland were a foreshadowing of things to come.)

Black and white newsreels, produced by early 20th Century Irish filmmakers, "…are luring the Dublin public (into Dublin cinemas)," JHC, an Irish Independent Columnist wrote on 12 July, 1922. "People are taking 'a fearful joy' in re-witnessing the ordeal they passed through… The events of the past fortnight fulfil Lessing's exacting definition of drama – life with the dull parts left out."[129] The anonymous reporter was commenting on the fighting between the Irish Republican Army and British armies just prior to Republic's independence. This report demonstrates how the people of Dublin relied on their local cinemas and Irish filmmakers, as well as journalists, to report on film the exact facts of what had happened in their local area. Irish newsreels as well as those filmed by Pathé were shown on American cinemas in this same period.[130] Coverage of Ireland's politicians from this era including President Eamon de Valera, President Cosgrave, as well as an American Mission visiting devastated Irish villages to relieve distress in Ireland worked to show how Irish film could be shipped on boats from Ireland to the United States and U.S. film could be shipped to Ireland. These films also helped to form a foundation of Irish Cinema and was often used to raise funds for the I.R.A. throughout the Civil War with Great Britain.

The black and white newsreels brought facts to the many people watching them and did not contribute to the stereotypes

But if Olcott and Kalem produced many 'foreign' films that reinforced Irish people's view of themselves, and were subsequently embraced by them, other films made by other 'foreign' producers did not. This was, in many ways, due to the simple fact that Ireland – in

[128] Kevin Rockett in Rockett et al, Cinema and Ireland, pp. 10.
[129] JHC, Taking a Fearful Joy in Rewitnessing the Civil War on Irish Cinema Screens in July 1922 https://earlyirishcinema.com
[130] https://www.irishcentral.com/roots/history/historic-irish-american-pathe-newsreels

those early days of filmmaking – did not have the resources to produce films about Ireland, created and shot in Ireland for Irish people by Irish people, and that were a reflection of the 'real' Ireland. Discussing cinematic representations of Ireland and the Irish within the context of 'foreign' made feature films, film book John Hill notes, 'From the early days of silent cinema through to the present day, Irish characters, situations and settings have exercised a continuing attraction for both filmmakers and audiences alike. The source of these images, however, has rarely been Ireland itself.'[131]

Because in those early days of the twentieth century, Ireland did not have indigenous filmmakers to produce Irish films about Ireland and the Irish for Irish – and global – audiences, Ireland inadvertently left the task of portraying the Irish to others. And some of those 'others' quickly occupied that vacant space with an impression of Ireland that many Irish found distasteful, as Hill notes: 'The images of the Irish constructed by the British cinema did not emerge newly-born but drew on a reservoir of ideas and images inherited from earlier historical periods. The associations of the Irish with violence had already enjoyed an extended career.'[132] Those historic 'images of violence' were the result of a colonial view of Ireland shared by much of Britain and the British people. Lance Pettitt touches on colonial theory, its relevance to filmmaking, and how negative characteristics might distort the worldview of an entire culture:

> 'According to colonial logic, the colonised can never match its master since the colonised is deemed to possess no worthwhile indigenous culture. "He represents not only the absence of values, but also the negation of values", (Pettitt quoting Fanon, F., *Wretched of the Earth*, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1985) and comes to be personified by a raft of negative characteristics, which include being violent, alcohol-dependent, stupid, irrational, dirty, disordered, feminine and infantile. Correspondingly, the coloniser tries to monopolise all the opposite positive attributes such as being peace-loving, sober, intelligent, logical, pure, ordered, manly and adult. These might seem ridiculous caricatures that belong to the less enlightened period of High Imperialism… but they have lingered well into this century and recur in contemporary media representations, from US-produced films like *Far and Away* (1992) to British television serial dramas like *EastEnders*, *Coronation Street* and *Brookside*.'[133]

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[131] John Hill in K Rockett et al, Cinema and Ireland, pp 147.
[132] John Hill in K Rockett et al, Cinema and Ireland, pp 148.
[133] Lance Pettitt, Screening Ireland, Manchester University Press, 2000, pp 10.

What is critically important to Pettitt's observation is the possibility that, once established, a stereotype can linger within the mindset of a global audience long after such a stereotype has been projected toward a global community. Unfortunately, such 'negative' and unflattering stereotypes about the Irish and Ireland had long ago been established and nurtured within the global mindset.

Even more recent films about Ireland and its people continue to reinforce these stereotypical Tropes. In an article written by Declan Troop available on www.movies.ie, he lists a number of feature films as being 'dishonourable' in the article, Paddywackery the Worst Depictions of Ireland in Film.[134] These include: P.S. I Love You, Leap Year, Waking Ned, The Most Fertile Man in Ireland and the previously mentioned Feature Films The Quiet Man and Far and Away. Declan Troop writes at the beginning of his article:

> Begosh and begorrah, sure. Well, be the hokey Saint Patrick, we'll be wanting to mark that occasion here at movies.ie. Heavens preserve us, look at them with their Yank ways: what's wrong with calling it 'fillums' to be sure, to be sure…? Ok I give up. I'm exhausted keeping up that Oirish shtick even for a couple of paragraphs, so I really must tip my hat to Hollywood for persevering enough to spend entire months transmuting that very same paddywhackery into celluloid form.And so, although it was a gruelling experience, and at times we were tempted to pack the whole thing in and rescind our citizenship out of pure mortification, here is our far-from-definitive (for it would take too long) guide to five of the worst offenders when it comes to cinematic depictions of Ireland. Erin Go Brath, and may the luck of the shillelagh keep the banshee from your door.

His amusing, yet cynical piece, is written 'tongue-in-cheek'. His comment, "…and at times we were tempted to pack the whole thing in and rescind our citizenship out of purse mortification," is a view that many Irish citizens (including this writer) take of many 'modern' films which continue to portray the Irish as 'stupid', 'silly', 'drunks', 'cowards' or worse.

'Foreign' writers and directors can often portray the Irish or characters first drawn and written by an Irish screenwriter and / or novelist using 'Tropes' that are unacceptable to the original creators of a world about Ireland and Irish characters. During our attempts to have

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[134] Troop, Declan. Paddywackery the Worst Depictions of Ireland in Film, www.movies.ie/paddywhackery-the-worst-depictions-of-ireland-in-film/

my the screenplay Dolphin Song financed, the Producer (Liam O'Neill) contacted the CEO of Tobias Film Production Company (Germany). Tobias stated that my 'interpretation' in the Screenplay draft which I had emailed to him was unacceptable and therefore he would not work with Paradox Pictures (Mister O'Neill's Irish Film Production Company) as Co-Producer. Instead, the CEO (a German citizen and Producer) hired the Director at the time, Katja Von Garnier to rewrite the screenplay one last time. Ms Garnier, who has never written a screenplay of any kind, hired a co-writer. The woman, based in Florida and an American, had also never written a screenplay. For a small payment, she agreed to work with Katja Von Garnier.

Liam O'Neill and I (as well as the German Production Company for well over six months for the first draft of the final screenplay. When Katja finally emailed Liam her 'script' (not the German CEO who had hired her), Liam read it cover to cover. When he finished, he phoned me at my office in Eyeries, County Meath. In that I recorded the conversation, I will now add a partial transcript:

"Hey Tom. Guess what? I finally got an Email from Katja and she attached her 'script' as she calls it."

"Liam, she did? Finally, after all these months?" (big pause as I wait for him to speak about it). Liam, did you read it?"

"Yes I did and, well (another big pause), I'm not sure I even want to email it on to you."

"Why, Liam? Don't you like it?"

"Tom, it's terrible. Horrible. It uses almost every Trope about the Irish we've ever seen in so many terrible films about the Irish and Ireland."

"You're kidding! Liam, is the screenplay that bad?"

"I'll send it to you and Tom, you tell me."

A day later, I received the screenplay from Liam. I also read it cover-to-cover. The co-written 'script' was filled with Irish Tropes that had been used by so many foreign film producers (as well as some Irish film producers) over and over again. Many of my well-drawn 3-dimensional characters were now 2-dimensional. Gone was the original Spine of the story I had worked so many years, and in so many Media-sponsored screenwriting (and Novel writing) training programmes (Step-by-Step, North x Northwest and Pitch Point). The midpoint had been replaced with a fight between a group of drunken Irish fisherman and a group of English fishermen. It was so terrible that I phoned Liam back early the next day,

begging him not to send the 'final' screenplay to Tobias. But he had to because Paradox Pictures was contracted by Tobias to send them the final 'approved' version.

A week later, Liam phoned me back. When I answered my office phone, my friend could not utter one single word for a number of minutes. When he did, he told me that Tobias had rejected the screenplay just as we both thought they would. The end result? The co-production deal was never signed. The existing short-term 'deal' between Tobias and Paradox Pictures was torn up. Back then, in May 2018, Liam O'Neill and I thought Dolphin Song would never be greenlit or brought to fruition as we had both planned since 1999 when I first came up with a very simple logline.[135]

Since then, I've 'resurrected' Dolphin Song first as the Novel and now as the screenplay which has been approved as already mentioned, though we have well over two years until this film is 'greenlit'. I have never again read that 'failure of a script' which Katja Von Garnier sent to us and never will. As so many educators and reporters have stated, as well as some Irish filmmakers, and as I have always stated to the students I have taught, "Stereotypical Tropes of the Irish have no place in any modern screenplay or Novel. While what we all write is fiction, our stories must be based on the 'reality' of Ireland and her people. Yes, we can use some small 't' tropes to make a screenplay or script funny – just like Mrs Brown's Boys – but making a story funny does not mean you can 'hang Ireland and her people out to dry'. We must show the world what Ireland is really like in this modern Century. If we do, we will all contribute to the establishment of a true Irish Cinema and a profitable Irish Film Industry."

Returning to our history, well prior to the advent of the very first cinematic images of Ireland the worldview of Ireland and the Irish had already been coloured negatively by a colonial view and impression of this country as espoused by the British. 'For centuries, English writers, both eyewitnesses and more distant observers, remarked with professions of shock and horror upon the peculiarly cruel and anarchic nature of Irish violence. From Giraldus Cambrensis's chilling vision of nation "cruel and bloodthirsty" and a country "barren of good things, replenished with actions of blood, murder, and loathsome outrage", to Barnaby Rich's assertion "That which is hateful to the World besides is only beloved and embraced by the Irish…", the English perspective was clearly drawn.'[136] This Imperial bigotry became so much embedded within the colonial perspective of the British that 'by the nineteenth century, "the major characteristics attributed to the Irish – indolence, superstition,

[135] This partial transcript is taken from a recording I made back in 2008.
[136] Charles Townshend cited by John Hill, Cinema and Ireland, pp 148.

dishonesty and a propensity for violence … remained prominent in the British image (of Ireland and the Irish) for over six hundred years.'"[137]

This bigotry and development of negative cultural stereotypes by the British of the Irish was itself a reaction brought on by the Imperial occupation of Ireland by Great Britain, and the nature of British Imperialism. Benedict Anderson alludes to an established tradition of British racism, and the result of that racism upon the peoples occupied by the British:

> 'Much more serious, however, was that such strangers in their native land were still condemned – no less fatally than the American Creoles – to an 'irrational' permanent subordination to the English muturrangoes. It was not simply that, no matter how Anglisized a Pal[138] became, he was always barred from the uppermost peaks of the Raj. He was also barred outside its perimeter….'[139]

Furthermore, Anderson provides a reason for that racism:

> 'As has been repeatedly emphasized official nationalism was typically a response on the part of threatened dynastic and aristocratic groups – upper classes – to popular vernacular nationalism. Colonial racism was a major element in that conception of 'Empire' which attempted to weld dynastic legitimacy and national community.'[140]

Therefore, racism was a reaction by Imperialist Britain to the perceived threat of the Irish subjects that they attempted to subjugate, as a method to legitimise their rule, and helps to explain the resulting negative stereotypical images portrayed by the British regarding Irishness which eventually became embedded within the attitudes and beliefs held by the worldwide community. We have already discussed Anderson's seminal work on imagined communities in great detail, and have noted how his concepts will contribute to a strategy leading to the positive development of Ireland's film activities and Industry.

In Ireland, that racism developed by the British was greatly influenced by the continuing efforts of the Irish to gain independence, as well as the normative relationship

[137] John Hill citing Ned Lebow, Cinema and Ireland, pp 149.
[138] A 'Pal' is a generic term developed by Anderson for those native peoples living within British-occupied India, who also attempted to build 'British' careers and attended the British educational system and 'had not only passed a very rigid test on the same terms as British members of service, but had spent the very best years of the formative period of their youth in England' in an attempt to build those careers and lives within an occupied country.
[139] Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities, pp 93.
[140] Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities, pp 150.

between coloniser and colonised: 'Within the particular instance of Anglo-Irish colonial relations, Englishness (coloniser) is defined in a fixed and oppositional relation to Irishness (colonised). Although mutually dependent, this is not a relationship based on equality since colonialism operates a built-in valorisation favouring the coloniser. … According to colonial logic, the colonised can never match its master since the colonised is deemed to possess no worthwhile indigenous culture.'[141]

This lack of 'worthwhile indigenous cultural traits' resulted in the establishment of Irish stereotypes within the mindsets of the British occupiers that was far from positive. British (and other films produced by non-indigenous production companies) became laden with such stereotypes, as Luke Gibbons notes in his abstract of the Victorian melodrama *The Groves of Blarney* (1838): 'Well! Such a set of savages, I never did see! All real original Hirish; the aborigines of the soil.'[142] Images that painted the citizens of Ireland as aboriginal, drunks, apes, and Frankenstein's were planted not only in the British conscious, but also within the consciousnesses of a global British constituency. The British magazine *Punch* published a number of illustrations (see below) that visually and powerfully underscored what, to many people, became characteristic of the Irish as a whole.[143]





These characteristics infiltrated not only British newspapers, but eventually, British (and American) film, and are – at least sporadically – employed even in the film premises and images found in today's 'modern' film and television media. As just a few examples of the stereotypical portrayal of the Irish character: mainstream films such as *Titanic* (Cameron, 1997), *The Birds* (Hitchcock, 1963), and episodes of the popular British television series *Dr*

[141] Lance Pettitt, Screening Ireland, pp. 10.
[142] Luke Gibbons in Cinema and Ireland, pp 195.
[143] Punch Illustrations freely available on the Internet.

Finlay (BBC, 1993) all contain negative stereotypical images of the Irish character, and illustrate how these images are now accepted – and anticipated – by global cinema audiences as well as the filmmakers who create those images: *Titanic* employed the Irish steward taking recourse to a bottle of whiskey as the Titanic sank – resulting in his conspicuous drunkenness – using it as a method of coping with the cold and eventually helping him to survive the icy waters of the North Atlantic; in *The Birds*, Hitchcock and writer Evan Hunter foreshadowed the murderous, yet unbelievable, intent of the birds in part by using a drunk Irish fisherman to plant that information; in an episode of *Dr Finlay,* Irish travellers are incorporated into the storyline for a number of reasons: first, to contrast the 'ignorance' of the Irish vis-à-vis 'modern' medical knowledge; second, to further contrast that information through the incorporation of a female Irish Seanachai (storyteller) who apparently represents a 'traditional' Irish belief system that precludes the use of 'modern' medicine, relying instead on an illogical form of mysticism; and third, as an agent of threat in that the local villagers believe that the nomadic Irish travellers are carrying disease that might wipe out that English community. These characters were used to 'hang a lantern' which lit up the 'unbelievable' (such as killing Seagulls and Blackbirds in *The Birds*) with 'funny' characters in a situation which were used to make the 'world' they all lived in believable.

Many other contemporary films (both feature and episodic television) including *The Quiet Man*, *Ryan's Daughter*, *Far and Away*, *Patriot Games* (which definitely underscores Gibbon's observations about the 'violent' aspects of Irish stereotypes), *Darby O'Gill and the Little People*, and *The Irish RM* incorporate stereotypical, and often negatively portrayed, aspects of Irishness that propose sweeping generalisations about the Irish and our culture, are not particularly appreciated by the Irish themselves, but which have nonetheless helped to reinforce those characteristics within a world mindset as being true and based on 'established' fact. In turn, the Irish reacted to those stereotypes by demanding cinematic images that would be based on 'real' Ireland: '…the Irish peasant or rebel tended to be depicted as part of an undifferentiated community or criminal gang, lacking the psychological complexity which distinguishes the individual personality. Conventionally, these figures are seen as the type of cardboard cut-outs or stereotypes which *give rise to repeated demands for greater realism and individual depth of character in representations of Ireland on the stage or scr*een.'[144] (*italics mine*)

[144] Luke Gibbons, Cinema and Ireland, pp 211.

Experiential evidence also supports the overwhelming contention that the contemporary view of Ireland and her people are still riddled with mistruths. When this student first wrote his bestselling travel guide and memoir, A Survivor's Guide to Living in Ireland (Tom Richards, Storylines Entertainment Ltd, 2005), I start by stating without reservation that the "…only things I knew about Ireland before I moved here was what I had seen on The Quiet Man and other films about Ireland, and the song my second-grade elementary school nun had taught my class for Saint Patrick's Day…. Ireland is not the Quiet Man. At least not anymore."[145]

Having now lived in Counties Cork and Meath for over forty-three years (and having worked in Dublin City for half that time), I have met many tourists from all over the world. Drawn to their American accent, we will have a conversation about this 'Yank's' life in the 'Old Country'. Most can't get over the fact that no Irish person ever says, "Top o the morning" and often asks me if I've ever seen a Leprechaun. Usually, I simply smile at their American ignorance, and reply with a few words in As Gaeilge and 'stir the shit' by telling them, "I've never seen a Leprechaun but I have seen the King of a Tu Danaan. Steal the King's crown and you can bribe him for his Pot o' Gold if you return it to him."

Many Americans (and those people from many other countries) still don't realise that Ireland has one of the largest GNP's per capita in the world. This 'ignorance', while amusing, can be used when writing screenplays about Ireland or the Diaspora at large. The beliefs still held by many people in many countries can truly be turned into that 'Pot o' Gold' for the Irish Film business. Some examples of feature films produced by many countries who use 'amusing but often violent' characteristics of the Irish – thereby combining both positive and negative traits into those film's central characters, include:[146]

- The Gangs of New York, Directed by Martin Sorsese starring Leonardo DiCaprio, Cameron Diaz and Daniel Day-Lewis. Plot summary: In the 1846 slum of the Five Points, two rival gangs, the Anglo-Protestant Confederation of American Natives, led by William "Bill the Butcher" Cutting, and the Irish Catholic, immigrant Dead Rabbits, led by "Priest" Vallon, engage in their final battle to determine which faction will hold power over the territory. Bill kills Vallon and declares the Dead Rabbits outlawed. Having witnessed this, Vallon's young son hides the knife that killed his father before being taken to an orphanage on Blackwell's Island.

[145] Richards, Tom. A Survivor's Guide to Living in Ireland, Storylines Entertainment Ltd, 2005, page 2-3.
[146] https://www.imdb.com/list/ls051462992/

- Million Dollar Baby, Directed by and Starring Clint Eastwood with co-stars Hillary Swank and Morgan Freeman. Plot Summary: Frankie, an ill-tempered old coach, reluctantly agrees to train aspiring boxer Maggie. Impressed with her determination and talent, he helps her become the best and the two soon form a close bond.
- Goodfellas, Directed by Martin Sorcese, Starring Robert De Niro, Tony Darrow, Frank Vincent and many more. Plot summary: an 'Irish kid' from a tough neighborhood joins the local 'Italian mob'. Working for his 'godfather' he soon learns that Irish craic doesn't work to collect cash owed from local 'kingpins' who want to kill not only his family but also this 'Italian mob' family.

All of the above Feature films use 'tropes' with a small 't' to draw in their audiences. But the screenwriters, directors and Irish actors involved with these films also use violence which is real, not a Trope. Films incorporating Irish humour is a reality of the Irish people. Violence is also part of the culture of Ireland (though not gun violence). By portraying Irish characters as we really are, any Film, screenwriter, director or auteur can help their Global audiences to 'reimagine a community' of Irish Citizens exactly as we are, thereby reflecting the nature and character of Ireland.

These Irish Tropes, either using a 't' or a 'T' have been present since with 'First Wave' of filmmaking in our small Ireland began. When the time was ripe, the 'First Wave' of indigenous Irish filmmakers focused on an attempt to turn the tide of these negative stereotypes, and establish 'realistic' portrayals of the Irish, as Barton explains: 'The small cluster of independent filmmakers who were responsible for the first wave of indigenous films in the 1970s and 1980s was marked by a desire to *deconstruct received notions of Irish images and themes as they had appeared on screen up to this point* and to confront the issues that were emerging within Irish society as modernisation took increasing hold.' (*italics mine*)[147] Irish filmmakers such as Black, Comerford, Murphy, O'Sullivan, and Quinn saw it as their mission to deconstruct the negative impressions of the Irish character by producing Irish films seeking to 'establish a new Irish cinematic idiom (in order to) look at Ireland from the inside out, rather than vice-versa.'[148]

Therefore, and as Barton succinctly states, the subject matter of that first Wave of Irish filmmaking was, in many ways, a reaction to global Irish stereotypes that had been established by a wide range of media activities (both print and film) over the course of hundreds of years. Unfortunately, supplanting these preconceived and bigoted Irish

[147] Ruth Barton, Irish National Cinema, pp 85.
[148] Ibid, pp 85.

stereotypes with characteristics of the Irish that were more sympathetic, and at the same based on realistic and 'authentic' assessments of the Irish character, is problematic as Gibbons points out:

> 'Faced with these alienating images, it is not surprising that cultural apologists within Ireland should seek an alternative body of imagery which addressed itself to the realities of Irish life, free from the straightjacket of stereotypes and misrepresentation. Underlying this belief is an assumption that stereotypes are somehow rebutted by a simple recourse to truth, as if, like the incarcerated remains of Egyptian tombs, they have only to be exposed to the harsh glare of reality to disintegrate before our eyes. The view that truth can only win out in the struggle against myth and prejudice manifested itself in film debates in the call for greater realism in Irish cinema.'[149]

Though indigenous Irish filmmakers would attempt to sway worldwide public opinion and the held beliefs that were the result of established (and continually reinforced) stereotypes about the Irish character as communicated through filmic images previously produced, those filmmakers were to discover that shifting such preconceptions in any significant way among global audiences would prove to be difficult, if not impossible. As shall be discussed later in the book, the creative decisions employed by this 'First Wave' of Irish filmmakers were, for the most part, not particularly successful in achieving global distribution, box office success, or wider global audience appeal. Consequently, few people actually saw many of the First Wave of Irish films. Irish filmmakers' attempts to challenge the globally accepted perception of the Irish and counter established Irish stereotypes were, in many ways, and as we shall later discuss, ineffective and inconsequential.

Critically, and as shall be argued, the decision by these First Wave filmmakers to concentrate their filmmaking efforts on deconstructing stereotypical images of the Irish held by global audiences was in part responsible for the failure of the development of an Irish Feature Film Industry.

Many countries fear Ireland's growing Film Business for good reason. Historically, and as has been shown above, the Irish have been viewed as Apes by many other nations particularly Great Britain. Why were they afraid? Because our citizens had the courage of our convictions; the strength to fight a Civil War and after fighting for many years, the resources

[149] Luke Gibbons, Cinema and Ireland, pp 195.

to rebuild our country. This is a good analogy for the growth of Irish Cinema and the fear we strike into many other production companies across the world.

6.2 The Creation of Irish Landscape Stereotypes and an Irish Eden

But if many of the non-indigenous filmic expressions of Irish character stereotypes portrayed that Irish character unsympathetically, the filmic expressions of Ireland's landscapes and its geography were often portrayed in a much more favourable and romantic light. In point of fact, global audiences observing Ireland's landscapes through the prism of the Big Screen would have believed that Ireland was a corner of the world in which a romantic Garden of Eden continued to flourish, albeit an Eden that was sometimes disturbed by images of primitivism and dark ancient hauntings.

However, and despite that sympathy on behalf of a global audience for a stereotypical 'Eden', such stereotypes are not always appreciated either by Irish filmmakers or film academics. In his conclusion to the first section of *Cinema and Ireland*, Kevin Rockett writes:

> 'The twin poles of the romantic West of Ireland and urban Dublin serve to highlight the difficult path which Irish film-makers face. A tension exists between the dominant international view of Ireland with its stereotypes usually located in the rural idyll and the attempt by indigenous film-makers to bring to the fore alternative versions of Irish history and society, an interaction with contemporary issues and an interrogation of these stereotypes themselves.'[150]

Rockett seems to allude that the 'stereotypical' image of Ireland as a geographic idyll can actually prevent Irish filmmakers from producing successful films that espouse 'alternative versions' of Ireland and its people. To understand why Rockett might hold this opinion, and what this stereotypical 'idyll' might contain, we shall examine the development and establishment of the 'Eden' of Ireland landscape as created by various 'foreign' filmmakers and as portrayed within their cinematic images of Ireland.

The geography of Ireland has long been recognised for its scenic beauty and tranquillity, and as a location for rest and relaxation. This 'romantic' view of Ireland had long been held, as John Hill reports: 'As Raymond Immerwahr states in his comprehensive study of the origins of European romanticism: "beginning about 1755, the picturesque

[150] Kevin Rockett, Cinema and Ireland, pp 142.

landscape really comes into its own descriptions of Ireland….The adjective is applied a number of times to the environs of Lake Killarney.'"[151] This romantic view of Ireland was to be reinforced by images of Ireland used extensively throughout the nineteenth century: 'Victorian melodrama lent itself particularly to the type of pictorial aesthetic which was to dominate the romantic representations of Ireland. Throughout the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries…it is not surprising that playwrights in search for the exotic or picturesque began to quarry the Irish landscape for their materials, looking particularly to Ireland as the setting for some of the more Gothic and violent excesses of melodrama.'[152] McLoone stresses this romantic trope, as well as noting that many early observers of Ireland were ignoring the contemporary reality present in the country: 'Ireland has been represented as a kind of rural utopia, bathed in a romantic sensibility that ignored the urban centres and elided the poverty and stifling lack of opportunity in rural Ireland that prolonged emigration in the first place.'[153] His observations indicate that such representations are not authentic to the 'real' Irish landscape, and do not demonstrate the reality within which the Irish people lived.

But this nineteenth century romanticism was also textured with aspects that contrasted vividly with urban-ness, or even understood civilisation, as McLoone also notes: 'The writers of the late nineteenth century literary revival* were particularly interested in promoting, in Marianne Elliott's phrase, "an image of an organic link between an ancient civilisation and a haunted landscape". These haunted landscapes became the symbols of Ireland's cultural awakenings…'[154]

From as far back as the eighteenth century, the Irish landscape was becoming a rich tapestry of contrasts in the creative minds and souls of writers and artists. This tapestry contrasted the light of a 'romantic' landscape with the shadows of a haunted, primitive land. These rich, but 'inauthentic' perceptions of 'landscape' ('inauthentic' at least in the minds of some Irish filmmakers and academics) filled the visual imaginings of those contemplating Ireland, providing a heady template upon which later filmmakers might paint their cinematic images.

As McLoone alludes, 'foreign' film producers – both today and during the emergence of cinema – chose to ignore the 'reality' of Ireland and its history of impoverishment and

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[151] John Hill quoting R. Immerwhar, Cinema and Ireland, pp 204.
[152] Luke Gibbons, Cinema and Ireland, pp 210.
[153] Martin McLoone, Irish Film, the Emergence of a Contemporary Cinema, pp 34.
* Note that here McLoone is referring to Irish literary activity including work by JM Synge, JB Yeats, WB Yeats, and Paul Henry.
[154] Martin McLoone, Film, Media and Popular Culture in Ireland, pp 84.

isolation, and instead focused their cameras on the scenic, romantic landscapes of a rural Ireland. Therefore, and in the early days of cinema, global audiences (as well as the Irish themselves) were presented with images of Ireland that 'ignored the urban centres' and that established stereotypes of a 'vision of rural backwardness (that) was often a "benign primitivism" (and) that was used to show up the urban inadequacies of the developed world and to suggest a sense of escape from the worst aspects of urban, industrial modernity.'[155]

Ireland therefore provided filmmakers with a ready-made backdrop of natural beauty contrasted with rugged primitivism; a coastline of wild oceans surging against sheer cliffs; and a romantic and bucolic tincture of Eden-like pastureland filled with the heroic, haunted architecture of past civilisations. Is it any wonder that Ireland's visual resonance proved irresistible to many 'foreign' filmmakers?

Within Irish film literature, *The Quiet Man* (Ford, 1952) is possibly the film most referred to when illustrating the romantic imaginings, primitivism, and subsequent visual landscape stereotypes established by 'foreign' filmmakers shooting their projects in Ireland. Some Irish film academics have taken a decidedly dim view of how Ford portrayed those landscapes within his film:

> 'Yet there is an inherent paradox in the depiction of landscape in *The Quiet Man*, a serious difficulty which detracts from any attempt to identify nature with a deeper, more authentic mode of existence. This has to do with the blatant unreality of the studio sets and fake backdrops which are inserted at key moments in the film, often indeed at precisely those points where nature is meant to impinge most forcefully on the action. This 'flaw' in the visual style of the film was a source of some concern to contemporary reviewers...'[156]

However, and despite some academic's (and critic's) misgivings, it will be shown below that Ford's creative decisions regarding landscape were wholly intentional, and only contributed to the director's creation of an effective and highly successful film. As such, and viewed within the context of the world of *The Quiet Man*, the negative opinion of landscape espoused by some critics can only be viewed as misguided.

It seems redundant to run through the plot of this famous film for the purposes of this book: the plot and themes are referred to time and again by McLoone, Rockett et al, Barton,

[155] Martin McLoone, Irish Film, the Emergence of a Contemporary Cinema, pp 34.
[156] Luke Gibbons in K Rockett et al, Cinema and Ireland, pp 225.

Pettitt, and many others. What is relevant, however, is to note how director John Ford used the Irish landscape to visually reinforce this simple love story between a retired, guilt-laden American boxer and the Irish girl that took his eye, and because of its success – like it or not – also reinforced established Irish landscape stereotypes.

When the film's protagonist, Sean Thornton, first lays eyes on Mary Kate Danaher, he can't help but ask Michaleen Oge Flynn 'Hey, is that real? It couldn't be.' This simple dialogue sets up the major dramatic question and premise of the story: 'Will Sean win the heart, and respect, of the woman he loves by overcoming his fear to fight, or will he lose Mary Kate's love forever?' In screenwriter's structural parlance, that first meeting is the film's Inciting Incident (it can also be argued that this first scene is only the set up to the Inciting Incident; the actual Inciting Incident being the scene at the Church, occurring only a few moments later, where Sean offers holy water to Mary Kate, allowing her to play 'paddy fingers' within his open palm – which is also the first time that they physically meet). This Inciting Incident is therefore one of the most important and critical scenes in the entire film: if Sean does not meet Mary Kate, there would be no love story, and subsequently no story at all.

At this critical stage in the arc of the story, this scene works hard to also establish the type of world that Ford – and his story – is developing for his audience. Screenwriters and filmmakers establish 'story worlds' that reinforce and parallel the genre of the story that they choose to tell and that visually speak to an audience with images that emotionally impart information and markers that allow the audience to suspend disbelief, enabling them to submerge into that story. The University of Southern California film school's Professor David Howard, a produced screenwriter and lecturer in the craft of screenwriting, explains why the world of the screenplay is so critical to its telling:

> 'The world of a story in any film is a unique creation, a variation – from very realistic to very fanciful – on the reality of our world, today or in another period….Specificity in the world of a story derives from…the nature of the central character (in most films)…. Much of what is important and unimportant in a story's world comes from who the central character is, the qualities of this person and his or her predicament.[157]

[157] David Howard and Edward Mabley, The Tools of Screenwriting, pp 26.

The world of the screenplay is therefore, and at least in part, derived from the characteristics of the story's protagonist: of his or her needs and wants, of his or her backstory, and of the conflicts that he or she experiences as part of the story. It is the film storyteller's job – the result of the collaboration among writer, director, actors, cinematographer, editor, and set designer – to bring to the screen a world that works *with* that character, that *reflects* his or her story, and that acts as a visual marker that helps the audience to *believe* the 'reality' that the protagonist is experiencing. That 'world' is composed of many inter-related elements: the historical timeframe of the film, and the prejudices and opportunities that the characters encounter as part of that historical timeframe; the genre of the film and how it might impact the 'reality' of the world within which the characters live, and – finally – landscape, which viewed by a writer is also a combination of a number of factors.

To a screenwriter (or filmmaker) 'Landscape' incorporates 'setting' (where and when a particular scene, sequence, or entire story takes place), together with creative 'treatment' (that is, the creative variables that might be brought to bear on that particular scene, sequence, and story in order to achieve an emotional sub-text that helps the audience to better identify with the particular situation of a given character within a particular scene, sequence and story.) 'Landscape', as discussed by the academics and historians mentioned above, and now used within a filmmaking context, implies much more than a simple geographic setting to an audience. Rather, a filmic landscape imparts a series of emotional layers that work together to enhance the story told by a filmmaker. The negative reaction by some Irish filmmakers and film academics to the 'landscape' stereotypical tropes established by foreign filmmakers is therefore a reaction not only to the visual (what they have seen and heard on the screen as those foreign filmmakers tell their stories), but what they have felt (the emotional impact of those landscapes upon them).

However, filmmakers carefully construct their worlds (both visual and emotional) as a powerful tool to more effectively tell their stories. As a simple example: the *Wizard of Oz* (Fleming, 1939) contrasts black and white filmic images with full Technicolour images as 'landscape markers' that visually tell its audience that they are journeying from one environment into another that is quite different from that previously shown. When Dorothy resides in Kansas – and in a 'real' world landscape of flat, boring, unadventurous Kansas corn fields (a landscape that also vividly enhances Dorothy's desire for escape) – Fleming chooses to shoot in black and white. But when Dorothy lands with a bump in Oz (and particularly in Munchkin Land), having experienced the violent journey through a tornado's eye, and opens the door of her home, she opens that door on vivid colours that instantly tell

the audience that she – and they – are entering a world of surrealism and magic. The colourful enchanted landscape of Oz, full as it is with a Yellow Brick Road, wee fairytale cottages, and a surreal village populated by Munchkins, is that much more enhanced – and brought to life – by the full colour treatment that Fleming brings to it. Fleming's contrasts of 'worlds' (from the black and white, flat landscape of Kansas to the vivid colours and amazing landscapes of Oz) therefore not only reinforces the magical land that Dorothy has journeyed to, but subsequently helps the audience to suspend disbelief, thereby helping them to accept the magical land of Oz, and Dorothy's journey, as 'reality' within the scope of the film's story. That Fleming chose to create such a visual landscape, and though that landscape was obviously helped along by L Frank Baum's novel, also comes directly out of the main protagonist's (Dorothy's) character, and the journey that she is about to embark upon. Eventually, her primary dramatic need of realising that 'There is no place like home' is met. And that need is given dramatic impetus by allowing her to experience her journey in an enchanted, colourful world and landscape so different from the flat Kansas plains.

Like Fleming, Ford also uses visual landscape elements to paint a picture of Ireland that successfully reinforces the story of Sean, the film's protagonist. Undoubtedly, *The Quiet Man* is a love story. But it is also, in many ways, a literary fairytale.[158] In order for an audience to accept such a world, Ford knew that, early on in the film, he had to establish a world landscape that would help his audience to suspend disbelief, and that would create a world of 'new reality' that would provide Sean Thornton with personal conflict. Consequently, Ford made the decision to establish the landscapes of Ireland as both romantic and primitive, thereby visually reinforcing the film's genre and Sean's story, and allowing both Sean and the film's audience to enter a world of romance and emotional magic.

Ford does this successfully: in that scene in which Wayne's quiet man first sees Mary Kate, he undoubtedly intrudes upon a romantic, idyllic, and pastoral setting; a cinematic world that reflects a 'garden of Eden':

> 'This articulation of Sean's world…is carried forward to the next scene in which his eyes alight on Mary Kate Danagher for the first time. Here, in John Ford's most memorable evocation of the pastoral ideal, we see a radiant Mary Kate driving sheep through a primeval forest in luminous sunlight, a perfectly realised image of woman

[158] See William C Dowling, John Ford's Festive Comedy: Ireland Imagined in The Quiet Man, published by Eire-Ireland: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Irish Studies, 2002; available through www.rci.rutgers.edu/~wcd/quietman.htm

at home with nature. Such is the visual excess of the spectacle that Sean is led to question its authenticity…' [159]

This student wryly disagrees with Gibbons that the scene is filled with images of either a 'primeval forest' or 'visual excess' (in that the scene is no more excessive than other images portrayed within the film). What the scene does offer, however, is the establishment of a landscape of intense visual, emotionally romantic, magic. That magic of visual romanticism offers the audience an emotional platform that instantly asks of us: 'What kind of wonderful world are we entering?', and upon seeing Mary Kate, 'Who is this beautiful Irish woman?' and 'Will Sean, an American, fall in love with her?' and (because we know that of course he will fall in love with her), 'Will this American manage to win her Irish heart in the end?' And that, of course, is also why the scene is so important, and also so impressive. It is important because if those un-stated questions weren't asked of the viewing audience by Ford within the sub-text of that scene, then the film's dramatic question would also never be asked. It is impressive because its effective use of romantic landscapes immediately sets up the genre, and the type of genre, of the film: this is a romantic love story, and it is also a romantic love story filled with emotional magic. It is also impressive because it does all of this, while also believably introducing Sean to Mary Kate and his unanticipated passion for her, within mere seconds of screen time.

The visually, emotionally romantic, landscape of this scene also works to foreshadow and establish the tension between the very different worlds from which Mary Kate and Sean have sprung, and is used to help establish vital story contrasts between these two primary characters. This pastoral scene directly follows a scene of exposition and backstory taking place between Sean and Michaleen Oge. As the pair make their way in a 'traditional' horse drawn cart (a system of transport that contrast's vividly with Sean's usual form of urban travel by modern car) from the train station to the small fictional village of Innisfree, the 'nosy' Michaleen finally learns that Sean (while originally born in Ireland) was raised in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and there honed in the fires of the steel mills. While the audience never sees that 'modern' and tough visual landscape of urban America, the description of that landscape is enough: it is obvious to them that the pastoral setting through which Sean and Michaleen travel is very different from the world that Sean has come from. And when Sean lays eyes on Mary Kate, the visual contrast of her pastoral 'home' with his urban American

[159] Luke Gibbons, Cinema and Ireland, pp 200.

homeland acts as a marker – and a visual foreshadowing – to the audience of not only the cultural differences between the two would-be lovers, but of the struggles that they will have to endure and overcome in order to achieve their heart's desires.

This visual, pastoral, romantic landscape – contrasting the cultures of the pair, and marking the world in which they will conduct their romance – sets up the entire conflict between Sean and Mary Kate regarding her dowry. Because of this scene, the audience understands (and believes) why Mary Kate would desperately want her dowry, an important requirement within the traditional 'Irish' world that Ford creates. And they understand why Sean would not understand the importance that the dowry holds to Mary Kate or to the other characters that populate that traditional 'Irish' world.

The location of this scene near the beginning of the film, the style with which it is shot, the light that it uses, the blocking of Mary Kate as she runs – and trips – within a herd of sheep, all evoke a mise en scene of high romanticism. Which, of course, is exactly what Ford had in mind in the first place, and is also why this particular scene is used by many academics as an example of how established Irish landscape 'stereotypes' have been reinforced by foreign filmmakers.

Ford obviously had in mind exactly the type of film he would produce, and how he would use the romantic ideal of the Irish landscape to the film's advantage. As William Dowling states,

> 'The special claim of *The Quiet Man,* perhaps, produced against the massive resistance of a Hollywood geared to the making of profits, incorporating the ethos and rituals of Ford's film family into the very texture of this story, and lingering lovingly on its image of Ireland as a green world so far magically exempt from the remorseless economic individualism of the America in which Sean Thornton killed an opponent for a piece of the purse, is that it is a festival for our own time. …one may perhaps say about Ford in *The Quiet Man*… "he will continue to release future generations from a captivity that may be more irksome than our own."'[160]

The visual landscape that Ford provides helps to release modern 'urban' dwellers from just such a captivity, while also releasing Sean from his American 'urban' captivity of

[160] William C Dowling, John Ford's Festive Comedy: Ireland Imagined in The Quiet Man, published by Eire-Ireland: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Irish Studies, 2002; available through www.rci.rutgers.edu/~wcd/quietman.htm

money and guilt. If Ford had not painted such a landscape of 'stereotypes', the story of the film would not have been as effective, or as successful.

The Quiet Man's story also uses other visual images that reinforce related themes that are intrinsic to the film's storyline. Its visual appeal lies in the emotional tensions that permeate that story. Its plot is simple: the conflict of Sean's want (his desire to win Mary Kate) with his need (to forgive himself for killing a fighter for a piece of the purse). Yet the visual subtext of the film holds a rich texture that contrasts the romantic with the primitive. Most visually striking, perhaps, is the 'first kiss' scene between Sean and Mary Kate at the Old Church Ruin and Cemetery.

Standing in the grounds of the ruins of a thirteenth century church; surrounded by the ancient stony markers of ancient kinsmen now long dead (thereby emphasising a haunting tradition); forced to stand close together by the impending rain; and with Mary Kate frightened by the thunderstorm (a foreshadowing of the difficulties that were yet to come to the couple, as well as a visual signal of Mary Kate's continuing beliefs in the 'old ways' of her world's traditional behaviours and practices, and traits that also reinforce her primary want for a dowry submerged in traditional values), the visual landscape of the Cemetery scene incorporates the simple human sexuality of that first kiss between the couple with the 'haunted', primitive traits of an Irish landscape established long ago. It is no accident that Ford used these contrasts between romantic idyll and primeval hauntings as a method of visually reinforcing the primary plot, tensions, and conflicts of the film. However, it is a credit to his skills as a director and storyteller that he was able to do so effectively.

Like Fleming before him, Ford carefully applies visual images to *The Quiet Man* that reinforce primary plots, that act as markers to the audience with regard to the film's genre, that help the audience to accept the world within which the film's story is told, and which dramatically enhance and underscore the protagonist's journey, conflicts, and character arc.

Finally, and briefly, the Irish stereotype of violence, as first muted so many years earlier, must also be noted within the context of the film simply because Ford's use of violence is viewed by many as detracting from the 'reality' of Ireland and the Irish. For instance, and citing a review of *The Quiet Man* in the *Dublin Evening Mail* (9 June 1952: 6), Ruth Barton writes: 'Another writer noted that the film divided its audiences into "those who have laughed heartily at a clever comedy, and those who came away aggrieved because it paints a grotesque picture of Irish rural life"'.[161] That Ford used violence as a primary plot

[161] Ruth Barton, Irish National Cinema, pp 75.

and structural device within the film, there is no doubt. The fight between Sean Thornton and Squire Red Will Danaher remains one of the most celebrated scenes of its type in the history of cinema. That fight provides not only the final visual aftermath of the primary conflict between Sean and Danaher, but ultimately leads to the film's denouement. That the fight is also riddled with moments of high – almost vaudevillian – comedy cannot be denied: Michaeleen's insistence on the fighters' use of the Rules of Queensbury; the use of visual repetition as both fighters are refreshed by being drowned with buckets of water; the mid-point of the scene when Danaher is knocked into the river by Sean only, in a reversal, to get the upper hand on him; and the decision by the two rivals to take an 'end of round' break with a well earned pint in the local pub – these moments of comedy and the visual style with which the film is directed work to minimise what would otherwise have been a bloody, extraordinarily violent clash between these two antagonists.

However, violence – comic or not – is at the heart of the film's story, and that violence is vividly juxtaposed with the otherwise pastoral, romantic setting of the film: 'Sean Thornton …returns to Innisfree in pursuit of the peace and harmony which has eluded him in the United States. But, notwithstanding the film's title, both his reconciliation with Mary Kate…and his acceptance by the community more generally are dependent upon his participation in the donnybrook, or collective brawl. It is the resort to violence…which holds the key to the narrative's resolution, uniting both wife and husband while bringing the community together. Violence, as Tudor suggests, resolves all problems and tensions.'[162]

Due to the popularity of *The Quiet Man*, these landscapes of filmic representations could only reinforce the Irish stereotypes of violence, romanticism and primitivism already established within the global cinema audience. The financial success of *The Quiet Man* is undoubted, and its reinforcement of stereotypes regarding Ireland and the Irish are well noted, as MacKillop explains when discussing films directed by Ford: 'In these films (*The Quiet Man* included) Ford offered mythical, romanticized visions of Ireland, created by an American of Irish descent. The movies – owing to the quality of moviemaking and commercial popularity – formed a collective vision of Ireland in the minds of Americans and, for that matter, moviegoers the world over.'[163]

McLoone also notes both the film's success, as well as its effectiveness in reinforcing Irish stereotypes. In discussing *The Quiet Man* (as well as *Man of Aran*), he states, 'These films are particularly interesting because their success with audiences for over half a century

[162] John Hill, Cinema and Ireland, pp 151.
[163] James MacKillop (ed), Irish Cinema: from The Quiet Man to Dancing at Lughnasa, 1999

has meant that, more than any other cinematic vision of Ireland and the Irish, it is these which have stood as markers for a general "Irishness". …Indeed, Ford's bucolic knockabout has gained a whole new lease of life since its release on to video…so that by1990, it had sold almost 200,000 copies in the UK alone. However, it has also come to be seen as the epitome of "paddywhackery" and its popularity, especially among Irish audiences at home and abroad, is often the occasion of some acute national embarrassment.'[164]

It is unfortunate that *The Quiet Man* has been the cause of 'some acute national embarrassment' to the Irish. On a human level, of course, this student can understand why some people – including critics and academics – would feel this way, and why they have responded, at least in part, negatively to the stereotypes of Irish landscape and character that Ford has portrayed.

But importantly, filmmaking is not always meant to be 'authentic', at least not as Gibbons means it in his quotation regarding Irish landscape and authenticity cited above. Many films tell stories of fiction. *The Quiet Man* is a fictional story. As importantly, it is a romantic fairy tale of magic. Ford's Ireland, which included landscapes and characters that relied in part on stereotypes, was not meant to detract from Ireland or the Irish but, at least in the opinion of this student, actually meant to add to it. And I believe that this is exactly what the screenplay has done. But whether Ford's images are acceptable to some Irish or not, it cannot be denied that the romantic, mystical landscape that Ford portrayed in *The Quiet Man* continues to 'stand as a marker for general '"Irishness"' throughout the world. We – meaning academics and Irish filmmakers – must recognise that Ford's landscape is part and parcel of accepted attitudes and beliefs that form the global audience's accepted view of Ireland and the Irish. Filmmakers can of course attempt to thwart Ford's landscape (and many have attempted to do so) within the worldview of Ireland, but as will be seen, shifting established visual tropes can prove very difficult.

But *The Quiet Man* is not the only film to have established stereotypes within the minds of a global audience that are challenging to many Irish people. In addition to the stereotypes as discussed in Ford's film, other 'foreign' filmmakers have reinforced other stereotypical images of Ireland. The romantic, pastoral images of Ireland have also been vividly contrasted with a rugged landscape, and a rugged way of life, that gave rise to rugged individualism. Within Ireland, nowhere is that ruggedness better illustrated than in the West

[164] Martin McLoone, Irish Film, the Emergence of a Contemporary Cinema, pp 34.

of Ireland. In his sweeping discourse on Irish history from 1922 to 2002, Terence Brown discusses the West of Ireland as a primal source of the nation's being.

> 'So in the 1920s the sense of the western island and of the west as specially significant in Irish life became a cultural commonplace. Even an English visitor in 1924 fell under its spell. "The West is different. Its spirit was used by the intellectuals in the late struggle but it was never theirs. It seems to come from some primitive elemental force which smoulders on, like a turf fire, long after such movements have spent themselves." … The vision of the western island as the primal source of the nation's being received further confirmation in 1929 with the publication of Tomas O Criomhthain's work *An tOileanach* (*The Islandman*). A sense of an almost Homeric, heroically charged zest emerges from a keenly objective record of island life….The work has an exhilarating freshness about it, an impression of fundamental things, a sense of origins.'[165]

McLoone also vividly notes that the West of Ireland came to work as the spiritual heartbeat of Ireland's soul: 'The West of Ireland landscape, in other words, came to symbolise the very essence of Irishness and its harsh beauty and traditional ways became a source of both escape and regeneration.'[166]

This heroic image of the West of Ireland, and how it was established as a filmic image – and Irish stereotype – is possibly best illustrated in *The Man of Aran*.

Shot in 1934 by Robert Flaherty, an Irish-Canadian, and according to our definition, not an Irish film but rather a 'foreign' expression of Ireland, this documentary 'is part of a tradition of envisioning Ireland, for which the Aran Islands function as a palimpsest, as the bearer of an authenticity otherwise lost in Western culture.'[167] The film, a documentary, sets a rugged Irishman and his family against the difficult and sometimes cruel aspects of an Irish landscape embodied by the images of a violent sea. Flaherty's documentary follows that heroic Irishman and his family 'as they move between their small, sparse cottage, their daily routine of hefting stones, clearing ground, spreading seaweed and their participation in the communal activity of fishing…culminating in the dramatic shark hunt amidst the Atlantic storm. …He (Flaherty) positions his subjects so that they seem engulfed by the mass of land

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[165] Terence Borwn, Ireland, A Social and Cultural History, 1922-2002, pp 83.
[166] Martin McLoone, Film, Media and Popular Culture in Ireland, pp 86.
[167] Ruth Barton, Irish National Cinema, pp 47.

and sky. Man, in Flaherty's world, is part of nature but subordinate to it, always in danger of being crushed by forces greater than his own.'[168] In Flaherty's world, it is the ruggedness of man, together with his steely courage and persistence, that will lead to personal survival, or not.

McLoone suggests why the film reverberated so effectively within contemporary Ireland: 'Flaherty's film is a romantic, stylised image of an elemental struggle – Man against the Sea, as the opening titles suggest – and its perspective on tradition and essentialist humanity makes its message a rather conservative one….its evocation of an Ireland of harsh beauty and resilient peasants neatly encapsulated the ascetic nationalism that dominated political culture in Ireland at the time.'[169] However, and ironically, although the film was viewed as 'authentic' it was, at least in part, fictionalised, as McLoone also notes: 'Thus the two centrepieces of *Man of Aran* – the building of a field on the barren rocks and the shark hunt – were practices that had long since died out. Even the family in the film, central to Flaherty's depiction of the struggle for existence on the island, was constructed around the need for photogenic faces…'[170] Although the film came to represent the spiritual heart of Ireland, and reflected the 'rugged individualism' of at least one Irish government, the director's manipulation of factual realism is problematic, as Barton discusses:

> *Man of Aran* now occupies a troubled position within Irish cultural life, representing for many the falsification of Ireland by the many cultural invaders who plundered it for its transformative powers, and of local Irish willingness to collude in this process. Denis Johnston…observed with some disapproval (Flaherty's) manipulation of reality for the shoot.[171]

While we will discuss *Man of Aran* and how it became representative of aspects of Irish cultural nationalism in a later chapter of this book, it is important to note here that the visual tropes and stereotypes of Ireland, as exemplified by *Man of Aran* and *The Quiet Man*, were established very early on in the history of films about Ireland. As depicted by 'foreign' filmmakers, Ireland is typified as a place of natural, rugged, and idyllic pastoral beauty. As mentioned above, few people – including many Irish people – can fault that 'tourist' view of

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[168] Ruth Barton, Irish National Cinema, pp 48.
[169] Martin McLoone, Film, Media and Popular Culture in Ireland, pp 82.
[170] Martin McLoone, Film, Media and Popular Culture in Ireland, pp 39.
[171] Ruth Barton, Irish National Cinema, pp 49.

Ireland other than the fact that those visual landscapes represent only certain aspects of Ireland, and not the country as a whole.

However, other stereotypes that have been established about the character of the Irish people, in part, by foreign films are more troublesome: the Ireland of violence; the Ireland of the Frankenstein; the Ireland of the ape, the drunk, and the idiot; the Ireland as a place of primitivism haunted by a primitive people and visually-stereotypical historic archetypes; all of these portray a land and a people which incorporate decidedly negative aspects of character. Is it any wonder that the Irish Times reporter, cited at the beginning of this chapter, demanded an Irish cinema for Ireland and her people?

Over the years, many Irish academics have called on indigenous Irish filmmakers to work to deconstruct those negative stereotypes:

> As indigenous filmmakers increasingly gain international recognition the pendulum will begin to swing once more towards making international films but with a more 'authentic' Irish dimension. While Irish film-makers must fully engage with commercial cinema as they shift away from smaller scale 'independent' productions and make films for a mass audience, this does not necessarily entail the need for a cultural compromise. … If the errors of the past are to be avoided then artistic control of Irish-theme films must remain in Ireland while Irish film-makers need to fully appreciate the necessary compromises of international co-productions. … The appeal of the myriad features of the Irish perspective is also the main strength of the emerging Irish Cinema.[172]

The history of an attempt to develop an indigenous Irish film 'industry', owned by the Irish, that projects 'authentic' cinematic images and characteristics of the Irish, that are based on stories of the Irish, and that are created for the Irish, has been – at least in part – a reaction to the stereotypical, and sometimes negative, images established by a succession of successful foreign filmmakers and their films within the minds of a global cinema audience. Over the years, Irish critics, academics, government agencies, and filmmakers – exemplified by that Irish Times reporter's rallying cry that '…the only picture worth making in Ireland is an Irish picture' – have focused a great deal of attention and resource on portraying the 'authentic' Ireland to the world. However, and as will be discussed and argued later within this book, it is extraordinarily difficult to change stereotypes – negative or not – that have

[172] Kevin Rockett, Cinema and Ireland, pp 143.

been previously established within the minds of the Irish film 'industry's' potential global audience. As will be seen, research and practice suggests that rather than pushing hard against mental stereotypes that have been firmly established within world attitudes and beliefs, Irish filmmakers stand a much better chance of achieving success by *using* those stereotypes in order to achieve their objectives. In other words, rather than rant about the 'blatant recycling of outrageous clichés' that foreign filmmakers portrayed, and often continue to portray, about Ireland and the Irish (as McLoone has done and cited at the very beginning of this chapter), it will be argued that to achieve success in a highly competitive global market, Irish filmmakers (as well as academics and government agencies and their policies) should, however tentatively, embrace those clichés in order to effectively change them.

Later, we shall explore how the Five Waves of Irish filmmakers, as well as indigenous filmmakers working during the earliest years of Ireland's statehood, attempted to overturn established, and often negative, Irish stereotypes by embarking on film activity that portrayed a much more 'realistic' and 'authentic' Ireland. We shall also undertake to establish the success – or failure – of those activities, and how those activities contributed to the present state of affairs of Ireland's film 'industry'.

As part of this next chapter, we shall also illustrate what other historic factors experienced by Ireland – and the Irish – affected Ireland's film 'industry' and have influenced its development.

Chapter Seven:

The Four Waves of Irish Filmmakers – Success or Failure at the Box Office?

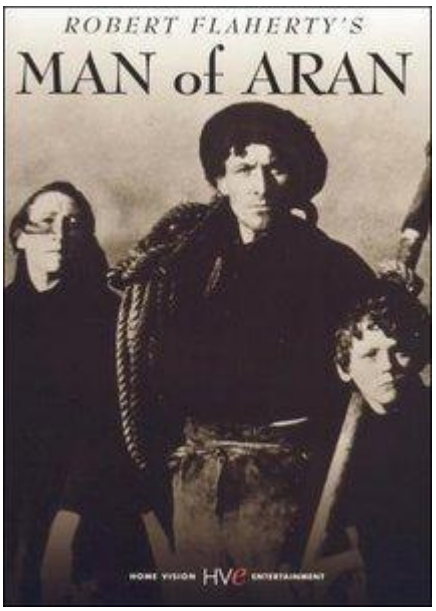
To reach a narrow definition of 'Irish Cinema' I must start by examining past films (and other Irish artistic works) that are truly 'Irish Cinematic Films' and which are not. To do this, I remind all readers of the Four Waves of Irish Filmmakers:

- Pre-Wave (films shot earlier than the 1970s)
- First Wave (films shot primarily in the 1970s and 1980s, and ending with the re-establishment of the Irish Film Board in 1993)
- Second Wave (usually defined as films funded by the re-established Irish Film Board)

- Third Wave (the most recent period of Irish filmmaking activity funded, in part, by Screen Ireland).
- Fourth Wave – contemporary Irish Films

7.1 Pre-Wave Irish Examples: Produced earlier than the 1970's

Below is a small sample of Films about, or taking place, in Ireland most of which do not meet the definition of 'Irish Cinema'.



The Man of Aran, the 1934 documentary by American Filmmaker Robert J. Flaherty, is a film based on the reality of what he witnessed when visiting the Aran Islands. The portrayal of Strong Irish men, women and their children showed the world living in 'pre-modern' conditions, fishing off high cliffs, creating 'fields' by carrying baskets of sand and seaweed across rocky shores and finally, planting potatoes. Fishing for basking sharks off the shores of County Galway in open boats made of wood and sometimes leather, these hearty men pulled oars to outrun their much larger quarry and homemade spears were used to kill the large sharks.

Men died when they fell overboard, sinking beneath the stormy seas. Their woman and children grieved at their loss. But the small villages of Aran gathered around them, becoming a new 'community of families (not an 'imagined community') who would take care of these grieving families sometimes for the rest of their lives. This culture has disappeared from contemporary Ireland but Flaherty's recreation preserved the past world of these great Irish people.

Is The Man from Aran and example of 'Irish Cinema'? No, it is not. However, it is a good example of a 'foreign' filmmaker preserving the history of Irish culture which would have been forgotten by many people, both Irish and those not familiar with Ireland or its distant history.

Return to Glennascaul (1951), one of Ireland's first true Feature Films, was Directed by Hilton Edwards (who also wrote the screenplay), Produced by Micheal Mac Liommoir, starred American Orson Welles and was distributed by a UK distribution company.

Plot Summary: Orson Welles, taking a break from the filming of The Tragedy of Othello: The Moor of Venice (1951), is driving in the Irish countryside one night



when he offers a ride to a man with car trouble. The man relates a strange event that happened to him at the same location. Two women flagged down his car one evening, asking for a ride back to their manor. They invited him in for a drink, and after leaving, he went back for his cigarette case. He found the manor deserted and decayed. In Dublin, a real estate broker told him the mother and daughter had died years ago. Welles, sufficiently spooked, drops the man off at his home, and speeds on by when two other stranded women wave for a ride.[173]

The 'world' the screenwriter/Director created was 'spooky', using an 'imagined community' of Ireland's tradition for ghosts and 'spooks'. As one of our country's first true Theatrical feature films, this is a 'jumping off point' as Irish Producers, writers and directors attempt to define the meaning of 'Irish Cinema'.

Home is the Hero, 1959 was the first Irish film entered into the 9th Berlin International Film Festival. Directed by Fielder Cook and starring Walter Macken, the background of its production is quite relevant for this Book.

> "Home is the Hero was the first film to go into production in the newly formed Ardmore Studios. Directed by American J. Fielder Cook, the script is by
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> Henry Keating from the 1952 stage play of the same name by Walter Macken. It tells the story of Paddo O'Reilly (beautifully played by Macken himself), 'the Goliath of Galway', who is released from prison after a five-year conviction for killing the father of his son's girlfriend, and his attempts to re-establish his role as head of the family, entering into conflict with his wife Daylia (Crowe), his daughter Josie (Joan O'Hara) and his assertive son Willie (played by American Arthur Kennedy). Cook's direction is strong on mood and alternates studio shooting with familiar Dublin locations. A cast of Abbey actors including Philip O'Flynn, Harry Brogan, Eileen Crowe and Macken in particular give strong performances throughout. As the Sunday Press review noted on the film's release: 'Paddo will surely rank as one of the greatest characterisations the screen has given us… (The film) will bring Ardmore Studios into the front rank of film factories.'"[174]

[173] https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0043964/plotsummary/
[174] https://ifi.ie/film/home-is-the-hero-aka-sins-of-the-father/

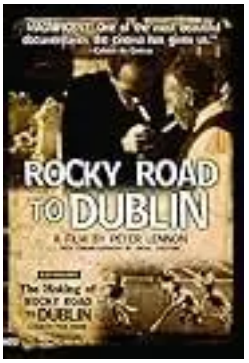
This Feature Film is also a 'jumping off point' for Irish Cinema and their Theatrical Release. As the first film to be produced in privately owned Ardmore Studio, with an Irish cast, an American Director, an Irish Screenwriter, and based on the play written by the Screenwriter, Home is the Hero was one of the first true Irish Produced Feature Films. This film alone helped to define the meaning of an 'Irish Cinema' and was a precursor to the many successes Irish filmmakers have had since those early years when Ireland had very few film productions.

But simply because Ireland was beginning to produce its own home-grown feature films did not mean they were particularly liked by the Irish people. As many producers, directors and screenwriters have said to me, "Just because you make a great film doesn't mean anyone is going to want to watch it."

Rocky Road to Dublin (1967) is a good example of having a 'rocky road to public acceptance'. Directed by Irishman Peter Lennon (also employed as a Journalist), with a star-studded Irish cast, and…was never released in Dublin though it was one of the first Irish films to be entered into the Cannes Film Festival.

Anne Marie Hourihane writes in the 28 February 2024 edition of the Irish Independent Newspaper:

> "In the midst of yet another referendum campaign, we are wondering about what kind of Ireland we want, and how much of our past we should keep. There is a film that looked at the same questions, and received little thanks for it. It would not be true to say that Rocky Road to Dublin, made in 1967, is in the news, exactly, but it is being discussed on a podcast.
>
> "Rocky Road to Dublin, a documentary just over an hour long, was not formally banned. Instead it was what Aoife Bhreatnach, presenter of the Censored podcast, calls "shadow banned".
>
> "Rocky Road To Dublin is a beautiful, furious film. It tells the truth: that the rare oul' times were pretty awful. And it shows that the people, although dancing and singing and watching sport and snogging (a bit), deserved better. Made shortly after the 50th anniversary of the Easter Rising, it asks an interesting question: "What do you do with your revolution when you've got it?" One old revolutionary, Seán Ó Faoláin, who fought in the War of Independence,



is not impressed with the Ireland of 1967. In the film he calls it "a society without moral courage, observing a self-interested silence, never speaking in moments of crisis. The whole spirit of '16 has been lost."

"That was never going to go down well. The film was not distributed in Ireland."[175]

The honest views of these filmmakers her intensely disliked by a majority of the Irish Public. For that reason, this documentary was never distributed in Ireland.

The bravery of the writer, director and actors could be deemed a success and a true 'break-through turning point' in Irish Cinema. Does this provide part of the definition of 'Irish Cinema'? Yes, along with the other example I cited above.

Next, I will look at some Irish Stage Plays which have also been made into Feature Films as other good examples of a definition of 'Irish Cinema'.

Irish Stage Plays and Their Feature Films

The Stage Plays of John Millington Synge: though not 'film' in the true sense of the word, this Irishman born in 1871 (County Dublin) has become one of the best known and most successful playwrights in Ireland (and most of the world).

Like Flaherty, Synge's 'single objective' was to capture the true essence of Irish culture, its morality and the horrors that early 19th Century Irish citizens coped with as they fought to earn a 'crust of bread'.

In the famed stage play, *The Playboy of the Western World*, Christy Mahon lies about killing his father. When his father, Old Mahon, walks back into the local pub, Pegeen Mike – Christy's 'woman' shuns him as do the rest of the townsfolk. Attacking his father again and thinking he has finally killed him dead, Christy's friends and most of the rest of the town decide to hang him but his life is saved when Old Mahon rescues his son, which is the final denouement of this stage play. Is this a true example of 'Irish Cinema'? No, not the stage play. However, the low-budget feature film produced by Michael Killian et all (all born in Ireland), starring Irish actors including Gary Raymond and Siobhain McKenna, and shot at Inch Strand on the Dingle Peninsula leaves no



175 https://www.independent.ie/irish-news/rocky-road-to-dublin-the-film-that-revisits-the-old-ireland-we-tried-so-hard-to-escape/a491732197.html

doubt to this student and screenwriter that this feature film is a true definition of 'Irish Cinema'.

J.M. Synge is also well known for many of his stage plays. His one-act play, Riders to the Sea, recounts a story of loss, Celtic paganism, superstition and hard living. The short summary of the story is: Maurya has lost her husband and five sons to the sea. As the play begins Nora and Cathleen receive word from the priest that a body, which may be their brother Michael, has washed up on shore in County Donegal, on the Irish mainland north of their home island of Inishmaan. Maurya predicts that by nightfall she will have no living sons, and her daughters chide her for sending her son Bartley off with an ill word. Maurya goes after Bartley to bless his voyage, and Nora and Cathleen receive clothing from the drowned corpse that confirms it was Michael. Maurya returns home claiming to have seen the ghost of Michael riding behind Bartley and begins lamenting the loss of the men in her family to the sea, after which some villagers bring in the corpse of Bartley. He fell off his horse into the sea and drowned.

As an aside, when I attended Illinois Wesleyan University, and as a third-year student studying Theatre Arts, I picked the above stage play as my final examination prior to graduating. As part of that project I had to design the set, props, costumes and dissect the play to be ready to direct it. As a 'prop' and to design all lighting, I used the single metaphor of a Spider's Web. All the characters in Synge's one act stage play could were trapped in a life they no longer wanted to live, particularly the five sons and the youngest daughter Nora, but trapped they all are.

Synge's short stage play brought to life a world most of us no longer experience. Some of this culture is still reenacted in many parts of the world including the Aran Islands.

Is this an example of 'Irish Cinema'? Of course not. But, as with the film Playboy of the Western World, Riders to the Sea meets the criteria for one definition of Irish Cinema. Produced in 1935 by Brian Desmond Hurst and John Flanagan, the film was adapted by Patrick Kirwin and featured cast from the Abbey Theatre including Sara Allgood.

The Dance of the Aran Island Selkie People: this one act stage play, written by Tom Richards, has not yet been produced. Currently, it is being considered in number of one-act competitions in the United States and Ireland. The play may be performed by local Drama Groups (in the State of Illinois) and this stage play will soon be produced as a short Feature Film by my company, Storylines Entertainment Ltd.



The single most important reason I wrote the stage play was to preserve the culture and legend of the Selkie People (which is both an Irish and Scottish legend). The 3-act Stage play version of the above stage play has already been reviewed by the Abbey Theatre who stated that '…this stage play helps the Irish People to remember its early 20th Century history and the legends, customs and traditions that were practiced only one-hundred years ago.

A plot summary: When Kaitlin finds the shedded tail of a Selkie, she learns to love Sebastian again when he helps her remember the previous life that she had as a Sealwoman. She also remembers the son that they had who is now six years old. Together, they try to find him all across the Island. Then they discover that Cahal, their son, has been adopted by a couple living on their Island. When they explain that the young boy is their son, the Human couple refuse to give him up because they love him with all their hearts. Sebastian and Kaitlin are distraught. That night they make love for the first time in years and the next morning, Kaitlin realizes that she's pregnant again. Now there's hope not only for this Seal Couple but also for their fellow Selkie seals as well as the Islanders who are once again starting because there's no fish to catch and their crops have failed. Storms prevent them from getting to the mainland.

The Islanders are burying their dead due to starvation. No priest can celebrate a funeral mass because of the storms that prevent them from traveling to the island. But Seb, Cahal (the elder – who has found his wife and Son, Seb) and Kaitlin have a plan. If the Villagers befriend the Selkie race (who many find to be horrifying), and help them survive by protecting the few Seal Pups that have been born, the Seal Race will drive fish to the island. Then the Islanders can also survive. Most of the Villagers make friends with the Selkies and help to protect their Pups. But the man and women who adopted Young Cahal refuse to do so. They've discovered that their adopted son is also a seal. Determined to turn him into a Human Being forever by destroying the tail that has suddenly appeared on his hind end, Seb prevents them from chopping it off. The Seal Race learns of how those Humans tried to chop off the tail and, incensed, decide to fight the Islanders. Meanwhile, Kaitlin gives birth to a female Pup. When the Villagers, who are battling the Seal Race, see that Pup, they become even more frightened. Killing the girl Pup, Kaitlin is so distraught about losing both her son and daughter, that she decides to commit suicide by drowning at sea. Yet when she swims out to sea as a Human, she transforms back into a seal. It is only then that she remembers her previous life. She also finds her Son and Daughter, who by the Intervention of the Seal God, have been brought back to life. When the family swims back to the Island, they find Seb who, with Cahal, has been looking for them. Seeing his family, Seb thanks his God. Showing his

family of Seals to the Villagers, he tells them that they have all come in Peace to help the Human Race. The Humans agree to end the War on the Seals.

Years later, the Entire Island Village population has moved to a new sunny Island. There, the world is peaceful again. This is a play of Happiness and Heartbreak, of War and Final Peace, of Different People and Different Beliefs. All part of the story of life and our present world.

As I worked to develop the script I made the decision to preserve as much Irish traditions, culture and legends as I could while also making it relevant to contemporary times. I also made the decision to make certain any small theatrical company could mount the play at very little cost or no cost at all. For that reason, the stage play is now available free on our company website.

Once again I must ask the question: is the above stage play an example of the definition of 'Irish Cinema'? No. When the Feature Film starts to be financed, it will be produced by Storylines Entertainment Ltd (an Irish Production company), will star Irish talent, will be crewed by an Irish crew, will be financed in part by Screen Ireland and other Irish and EU financial sources, will have the screenplay written by Tom Richards and will be based on a stage play written by an Irish Citizen.

Will the above Irish Feature Film provide a true definition of Irish Cinema? Yes, it does. Is this film in the Pre-First Wave of Irish Cinema? No, it will be in the Fourth Wave when it is fully produced. But this one-act stage play, due to the reliance on many aspects of early Irish life, does meet the criteria of a Pre-wave stage play (and feature film), just like J.M Synge.

7.2 Examples of First Wave Films: Produced in the 1970s and 1980s, ending in 1993

The Crucible by Arthur Miller, directed by Nicholas Hytner - Other examples of Pre-Wave Cinema include Films, Novels and Stage Plays which have already been discussed.



A good example of a correct definition of United States Cinema is The Crucible.[176] Originally a Stage Play written by Arthur Miller, the 1996 Feature Film was directed by Nicholas Hytner[177]; the screenplay written by Arthur Miller, the Cast included Daniel

[176] Miller, Arthur. The Crucible, Penguin Books 1953.
[177] Hytner, Nicholas, The Crucible, 20th Century Fox, 1996.

Day-Lewis (the famous Irish actor portraying John Proctor) and many other American stars including Winona Ryder. The English actor Paul Scofield portrayed Thomas Danforth.

Brief Synopsis

Because I portrayed Giles Corey in The Crucible, the Stage Play at Illinois Wesleyan University (1977) with Kevin Dunn (the semi-retired American actor), I easily remember the plot and have recently re-read the play. Abigail Williams has been caught by her uncle, Reverend Samual Parris, dancing in the woods with a number of other of local girls (one of whom was caught by the Reverend, naked). Fearing they would be soon tried as Witches, Abigail meets John Proctor, hoping to seek comfort. But John, who has been cheating on his wife Elizabeth, tells Abigail she's a fool and to forget about him. But not easily swayed, Abigail seeks comfort with Tituba, a former black slave who is accused of also conjuring the 'Evil Spirits' in the local forest.

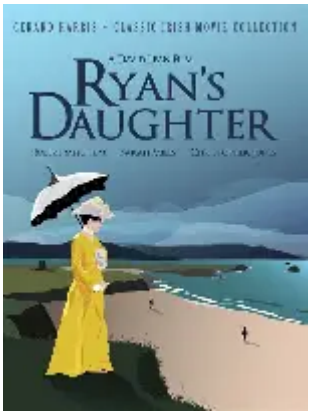
When the girls are subsequently tried as Witches, without real evidence of this crime, the Judge, the Reverend John Hale, has those accused of witnessing 'these crimes' to be arrested. All who are arrested, which included John, Elizabeth and Giles Corey, are also tried as Heretics. When Giles denies his 'crime of supporting John Proctor', he is put to death by being 'pressed' – a long, wide plank of wood is slowly pressed with many heavy stones until the man is crushed to death. Many others in this small Massachusetts town are hung or stoned to death. John eventually agrees to sign a 'confession' in order to save his own 'skin'. But John, knowing he has never 'sinned' for the crime of Witchcraft (though he has sinned against his wife Elizabeth) tears up the confession and is hung to death on the local Gallows.

The above small Plot Summary illustrates that the playwright and screenwriter used real history of Witchcraft in Salem Massachusetts to tell his story. Most of the characters, the setting, the location and the horrors of being stoned, burned or hung to death for the 'trumped up' charges of Witchcraft back in 1642 took place. Miller used that History as a way to let the play and feature film resonate with audiences around the world using lines like Giles Corey's, "Thar be blood beneath the soil" as a way of warning his audiences and readers of the perils of Communism and, when the Play was first performed, the McCarthy Era in the United States which is when Joe McCarthy, then a Senator, accused many normal Americans of being Communists without evidence. McCarthy, and then J. Edgar Hoover, head of the FBI, focused on Hollywood stars who, when tried, were usually Blacklisted, and were unable to find work again in their many trades of choice.

Once again, Miller like many other artists, used Benedict Arnold's 'imagined communities'. This playwright 'imagined' a world based both on American historical fact as

well as ‘current news and problems’ in what was the Contemporary United States and in other ‘hotspots’ located all over the world. The Feature Film is a correct example of ‘United States Cinema’ in action. But by using the actor Daniel Day-Lewis as the Leading Man, portraying John Proctor (Proctor is the central character. He stands to lose more than any other character and learns more than any other character), it can also be argued that this example does not fit the true definition of “National Cinema”.

Ryan’s Daughter, Directed by David Lean: does not, unfortunately meet the ‘definition of Irish Cinema’ as is my position in this Book. Produced in 1970, the screenplay



was written by English screenwriter Robert Bolt. The cast included American James Mitchum, English actor John Mills and the English actresses Sarah Miles and Julie Christie. Shot on location in Dingle, County Kerry, the set of a small Irish Village was recreated by using local quarries to build all the buildings in the Village. Irish people were paid much more than the ‘going daily extra rate’ to act in this Feature Film or help the crew construct the stone Village. Their pay, of course, significantly contributed to the local economy during a period of historic economic stagnation across Ireland.

Rather than provide a small Plot Summary for this well-known Film, I will quote Robert Ebert, the U.S. film critic, who in large part, panned David Lean’s efforts: “Ryan’s Daughter” persists in giving us several scenes that work. There is an absolutely stunning storm sequence, for example, where quite authentic waves and winds pound against men who tie ropes around their waists and go into the surf after weapons for the IRA. By its very success, this scene demonstrates what’s wrong with the tone of most of the movie. The actions of the characters and the scale of the scene suit each other; there’s a reason for the men to be there, risking their lives. But Lean insists on the spectacular even in his trivial scenes.”[178]

Lean and his Director of Photography (DOP) captured the ‘authenticity’ of the Wild North Atlantic which was used as a metaphor for the Troubles facing all of the Island of Ireland. The screenplay is also a story metaphor for the troubles facing ‘the simple Irish’ in that troubled era.

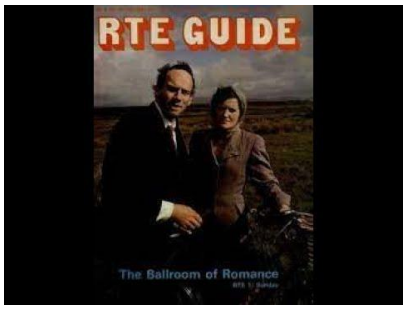
Due to the fact that the Production is directed and written by individuals from America and England, financed by sources other than Irish, and cast with many stars from

[178] https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/ryans-daughter-1970

'across the waters' from Ireland this Feature Film, too, does not meet the criteria of an 'Irish Film' and there does not contribute to the definition of 'Irish Cinema'.

Now let us see what does fit the definition of 'Irish Cinema' in this First Wave of Film.

The Ballroom of Romance Directed by Irishman Pat O'Connor (1982) stars Brenda Fricker, John Kavanagh, Mick Lally (one of the Stars of the Irish Television series Glenroe), Niall Toibin and Cyril Cusask and is based on the short story written by William Trevor. This great poignant comedy Feature Film is, of course, inspired by the many true stories of romances that bud between an Irish man and an Irish Gersha when (usually) they are both still young.



I add this note because many younger people who read this Book may never have been inside a Traditional Ballroom. Ballrooms still exist, many in rural areas. They continue to act as a 'heart' of rural Villages in towns across our green country. In the past, which this Feature Film captures so well, young men sat on one side of the large Ballroom and women sat on the other side. Often, the local Parish Priest stood in the middle of the room, warning all attending this great hooley of a dance that no alcoholic beverages of any kind were allowed or your name would be read out during Sunday Mass.

A traditional group would start to play as most of the young men walked shyly across the dance floor. If wanting to dance with a very popular young women, men would stand in line to take a ticket from their chosen young woman. If a young woman was never approached by a young man, she would fear she could well become an 'old Maid' and never marry.

This feature film exactly captures the authenticity of the Irish Ballroom 'scene'. The short plot summery is:

> The Ballroom of Romance is a "poignant short story set in rural Ireland, centered around Bridie, an unmarried woman in her mid-thirties. Balancing her life as a caretaker for her disabled father, Bridie clings to the hope of finding a suitable husband at the local dance hall, which she cycles to each Saturday night. Throughout the story, readers are introduced to a range of characters, including Dano Ryan, the drummer Bridie secretly admires, and Bowser Egan, a middle-aged bachelor who expresses interest in her. The

dance hall serves as a microcosm of Bridie's longing for connection and the societal pressures surrounding marriage. As Bridie navigates her interactions with various men, she reflects on unfulfilled romantic hopes and the inevitability of loneliness. The narrative explores themes of desire, disappointment, and the societal expectations placed on women, all while capturing the atmosphere of rural Irish life. Ultimately, Bridie's journey encapsulates a deep sense of yearning and the bittersweet realities of love and companionship."[179]

This film fully meets the definition of 'Irish Cinema'. The director and cast are Irish, as are the Producer, Cinematographer and Editor. With a running time of less than 60 minutes, this film was financed by local sources. As a true definition of 'Irish Cinema' this film assists this student in reaching my own final definition of 'Irish Cinema'.

Poitín, (1978) Directed by Bob Quinn and starring Cyril Cusack, Donal McCann and Niall Toibin, also meets the criteria for the definition of 'Irish Cinema. While using many Irish 'Tropes' it does so in a highly humorous manner and was not dismissed as 'rude to Ireland' by most people across our country. This well known feature film was the first to be made in the Irish language and received a grant from the Arts Council of Ireland which was formed, in part, to support As Gaeilge.

Rather than a plot summary, I shall use the small article written by Irishman Jim Doyle in early 2020:

"CIARAN CARTY HAILS IRISH LANGUAGE FILM "POITIN" -

Poitín is partially conceived as a response to The Quiet Man, also set in the coastal area of Connemara, and its sentimental portrayal of the Irish landscape. Poitín tells of a small community centered on a home-distiller of Irish moonshine whiskey, or poteen.



"In Gaelic dialogue, using local actors, with Cyril Cusack as the moonshiner, it shifts between a humorous, whimsical account of two men's bumbling attempts at theft and a harsh series of revenges. Director Bob Quinn, a strong advocate of Gaelic

[179] https://www.ebsco.com/research-starters/literature-and-writing/ballroom-romance-william-trevor

> culture, calls it "a horror story told amusingly." Carty suggests that Quinn "implicitly deromanticizes the Robert Flaherty image of the rugged West as a place of primal dignity where man does noble battle with the elements."
>
> "Since incurring the wrath of his first editor in 1960 by making Alfred Hitchcock's Psycho his film of the year, Carty has consistently championed the arts, developing a career as one of Ireland's leading critics and broadcasters. He serves as deputy editor of the Sunday Independent (1961–65) before becoming arts editor for the Sunday Tribune (1985–2011). Since 1988 he has edited the New Irish Writing page for both the Tribune and the Irish Independent, and is curator of the prestigious annual Hennessy Literary Awards. He is the author of Confessions of a Sewer Rat (1995), a two-volume biography of the artist Robert Ballagh (1985, 2011), and has co-edited, with Dermot Bolger, two anthologies of Hennessy fiction (1995, 2006)."[180]

What this student finds both fascinating and relevant is this humorous feature film is based, in part, on fact and is a riposte to John Ford's Classic, The Quiet Man, which was based on Irish legends, romance and many Tropes. The Quiet Man held a few facts about Ireland and its long ago culture but it was romanticised, few 'facts' about real Ireland were seen by the audience (except the locations). Poitín is a 'real' Irish film. While some of the plot is fiction, it is based on real events, some which still occur in real Ireland (while Poitín is now legal in Ireland, many rural families still 'Poitín poison' from potato mash which is much stronger than the legal limits set by the Irish government).

This feature film meets the full definition of 'Irish Cinema' and will also help this student to discover a final definition of 'Irish Cinema' for this Book.

My Left Foot Directed by Jim Sheridan (1989): screenplay by Jim Sheridan and Shane Connaughton. Cast includes Daniel Day-Lewis, Ray McAnalty and Brenda Fricker, as well as Cyril Cusack and many other Irish actors. Distributed by Palace Pictures (UK Company) and financed by English and Irish Participants. Academy Awards (1990) included Best Picture, Best Director, Best Actor, Best Supporting Actress and Best Adapted Screenplay.

This feature film is a 'break-through' not only for Irish Cinema but also for many of the cast as well as the co-screenwriter.

A very small plot summary follows again written by Roger Ebert:

[180] https://seamusdubhghaill.com/2020/02/26/ciaran-carty-hails-irish-language-film-poitin/

"The story of Christy Brown is one of the great stories of human courage and determination. He belongs on the same list with Helen Keller, and yet it is hard to imagine Christy being good company for the saintly Miss Keller, since he was not a saint himself but a ribald, boozing, wickedly gifted Irishman who simply happened to be handicapped. Jim Sheridan's "My Left Foot" is the story of Christy's life, based on his autobiography and on the memories of those who knew him.

"He was not an easy man to forget. Tiny and twisted, bearded and unkempt, he managed, despite his late start, to grow into a poet, a novelist, a painter and a lyrical chronicler of his own life. Like many geniuses, he was not an easy man to live with, and the movie makes that clear in its brilliant opening scene. "My Left Foot" charts Christy's life from his earliest days until his greatest triumph, but the key scene in the movie may be one that takes place shortly after he is born. His father goes into the local pub to have a pint and consider the fact that his son has been born handicapped, and then he stubbornly makes the statement that no son of his will be sent to a "home." The decision to raise Christy as part of a large and loving family is probably what saved his life, for a man of such intelligence would have been destroyed by an institution."[181]

As a student of Irish Cinema, I have chosen to end this Chapter with "My Left Foot", one of the most authentic Irish Feature Films ever presented to the world. Daniel Day-Lewis, playing Christy Brown, said when he was practicing to play that character authentically, he studies many people with the same illness and problems as the main character. It too Mister Lewis many, many months of painful practice to learn how to kick a football with only his left foot; how to slur and drool when he was talking or eating; how to 'skate' on the roller-bed he was pushed around in by his many friends and relatives; and how to survive in a world which was prejudiced against those like Christy Brown.

The real Christy Brown led a rather sort life, dying at the age of 49. As a talented Irish writer (Christy wrote his own autobiography upon which the screenplay is based) and a talented artist in his own right, painting with only his left foot, the Irish band, The Pogues, paid tribute to Christy Brown and his life with their song, "Down All the Days".

This feature film fully meets the criteria of a definition of Irish Cinema. As a turning point in this 2nd Wave of Irish Filmmakers, it is a huge jumping off point to the Third Wave of Irish Cinema.

7.3 Summary

[181] https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/my-left-foot-1990

This Chapter has been devoted to a real surge in the development of Irish Cinema, Irish Production companies, Global Awareness, Marketing and Business sensibilities and a movement by Irish Production companies to ‘transform the Irish Cinema Landscape’ by taking some of their films to a Global Audience.

In the next Chapter we shall explore how the Third and Fourth Waves became a New Age of Irish Cinema now fully supported by government artistic grants and the Irish Film Board. We shall also begin to apply the first few Chapters of this Book to our exploration of films in the Fourth Wave of Irish Cinema.

Chapter Eight:

The New Age – The Second and Third Waves of Irish Cinema

8.1. The Second and Third Waves of Irish Cinema

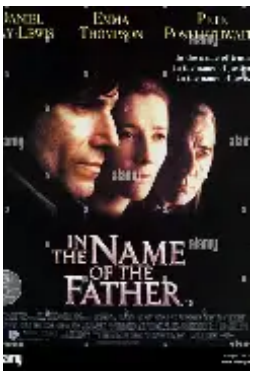
The Second Wave of Irish Cinema is often defined by many as the emergence of indigenous auteur directors in Ireland while the Third Wave of Irish Cinema is loosely defined as: 'The most recent period of Irish filmmaking activity funded, in part, by Screen Ireland (which had been previously been named The Irish Film Board). The period from the mid-1990s until what this Book posits is the Fourth Wave of Irish Cinema saw a Surge in the establishment of Irish Production Companies, the 'break-through' of a number of Irish Actors, Directors, Writers and Producers, and a reliance, in part, on the Business and Marketing Principles discussed in earlier Chapters. During this period of rocketing growth in the Irish Cinema business, many of our country's Producers began to think of themselves as entrepreneurs.

So many Irish Produced films were released during this period, this Book shall limit its discussions to only a few of the more popular Feature Films.

This student shall now begin to examine, in some detail, why many of the above Irish Feature Films were well received not only by Irish audiences but also Global audiences. I shall also delve into the many factors which led to success not only during the year after their release date but also why some of these 'Irish Cinema Feature Films' can still be seen today on Global Streaming Platforms across the world.

I shall also note, where relevant, which films won (or were nominated) for Academy Awards and those films which were based on true events and how those real-life events contributed to their continuing success.

In the Name of the Father, 1993: Directed by Jim Sheridan, Screenplay by Terry George and Jim Sheridan, based on the Autobiography written by Gerry Conlon, 'Proved Innocent: the Story of Gerry Conlon of the Guildford Four' (published in 1991), Staring



Daniel Day-Lewis, Emma Thompson and Pete Postlethwaite. Produced by Irish Production Company Hell's Kitchen Films, Distributed by Universal Pictures, Budget: $13 million, Box Office $65.8 Million.

Academy Award Nominee: Best Picture, Best Director, Best Adapted Screenplay, Best Actor, Best Supporting Actor, Best Supporting Actress and Best Film Editing

Plot Summary[182]: The film begins with Gerry Conlon (Daniel Day-Lewis), a young man from Belfast, being wrongfully accused of bombing a pub in Guildford, which resulted in several deaths. Gerry and his friends, known as the Guildford Four, are arrested by the British police. Despite a lack of concrete evidence, they are coerced into confessing through intimidation and physical abuse.

The Trial and Conviction

Gerry's father, Giuseppe Conlon (Pete Postlethwaite), travels to London to support his son and is also wrongfully arrested and convicted as part of an alleged IRA conspiracy, along with other family members known as the Maguire Seven. The trial is a travesty of justice, with the defendants receiving life sentences based on fabricated evidence and coerced confessions.

The Climax and Resolution

Life in Prison

While in prison, Gerry initially struggles with his father's deteriorating health and the harsh realities of incarceration. Over time, Gerry and Giuseppe develop a stronger bond. Giuseppe, a devout and gentle man, maintains hope and dignity, inspiring Gerry to fight for their freedom.

The Fight for Justice

Lawyer Gareth Peirce (Emma Thompson) takes on their case, uncovering suppressed evidence and police misconduct. Her relentless pursuit of justice eventually leads to the discovery of documents proving that the police knew the Guildford Four were innocent.

The Courtroom Victory

In a powerful courtroom scene, Gareth presents the new evidence, leading to the acquittal of Gerry and the others. The film ends with a triumphant Gerry vowing to continue the fight to clear his father's name and seeking justice for all wrongfully convicted.

This Feature Film, based on a true story, used the 'war' between Margaret Thatcher's United Kingdom Government in Northern Ireland against the old IRA as a method of leveraging Global interest in the fight to free the innocent victims who were wrongly convicted for IRA bombings in 1974. The screenplay, based on the autobiography, was a real history of life in a UK jail, the death of the Father in the story while confined in prison without true legal representation, and the battle by many people in Ireland to free these victims and free them.

[182] https://spoilertown.com/in-the-name-of-the-father-1993/

One of the first Academy Award nominations in Irish Cinema history, this Feature Film became one of the many foundations of the Irish Cinema we know today. The $13 million budget, which was a very large Feature Film budget during the Production Cycle, paid off handsomely. This Feature Film is still watched by a Global Audience on a number of Streaming Platforms.

Director / Writer (and auteur) Jim Sheridan leveraged the Global Interest in the English Injustice as part of his Global marketing strategy not only to attract funding from Investors in his film, attract a world-wide audience and to gain enough votes to be nominated for a number of Academy Awards.

This is a good example of a 'Business Loop'. That is, 'Global interest' in a news-worthy true-life event brings in enough investments to hire the 'best team' that money can buy which included not only the A-List stars attached to this Film, but also the Cinematographer, Line Producer and other Key Crewmembers (Costumes, Location Scouts, use of Prisons and other key line items) that, combined, created an Academy Award Nominee. This Irish Feature Film Success Story could be used by other students of Irish Cinema to write a short case study illustrating the 'business and marketing strands' which were used to create a highly successful film with a generous Return on Investment to all stakeholders. The Case study could also be used to show how the profits from this single film benefited not only Hell's Kitchen Films, Jim Sheridan, and the Irish and UK tax authorities.

What is also of interest to this student of Irish Cinema and our history is In the Name of the Father led to a better understanding among all United Kingdom citizens of how the lack of UK justice divided our two countries. Sheridan's 'peace offering' in part led to the Good Friday Agreement which occurred only a few years after this Film's release.

Once, 1997, Directed and written by John Carney, Produced by Martina Niland, Production companies include Summit Entertainment (UK) and Samson Films (Ireland),



Starring Glen Hansard and Marketa Irglova, Music by Glen Handsard and Marketa Irglova, funding contribution – The Irish Film Board. Budget: $150,000, Box Office: $23.3 million.
This comedy Irish co-production is one of the funniest romantic films ever released by an Irish Production Company and, though this writer is unable to find total ROI's from all Irish Produced films, it has one of the best Return on Investments in the history of Irish Cinema.

Some Short Comments about 'Once'[183]:

> Once, the critically acclaimed musical film directed by John Carney, has captured the hearts of audiences all over the world. Released in 2007, the movie follows the story of a struggling musician and a Czech immigrant as they form an unexpected bond through their shared love for music. Set on the streets of Dublin, Once is a raw and authentic portrayal of love, dreams, and the power of music to connect people from different walks of life. The film's stars, Glen Hansard and Markéta Irglová, wrote and performed all the songs, and their chemistry on screen was undeniable. Once" celebrates the transformative power of music and the beauty of human connection.

This Facts.net short article also points out: Rotten Tomatoes' combined score was 97% (one of the highest scores this student has ever seen); the film was turned into a Tony Award-winning Musical, the Feature Film "had a profound impact on independent filmmaking by proving that a low-budget production with a heartfelt song could resonate with audiences (and) inspire a new generation of filmmakers", the song 'The Swell Season' won an Academy Award (the first Academy Award Winner in our Cinema History) and "The movie Once sparked a renewed interest in Traditional Irish music."

While this writer and student, and a great lover of Irish Traditional Music, will never be able to prove it, Once 'climbed on the back' of the Global success of Jim Whelan's Riverdance. First appearing on 30 April 1994 during the Eurovision Song Contest, the Riverdance Global success story and the subsequent Stage Show (which continues to be mounted all over the world) opened the doors for Once, one of the first Irish Musicals ever produced as a Feature Film.

The 'Business and Marketing Strategies' employed by Samson and its Co-Producer are obvious to this writer and practitioner of similar Strategies. Leveraging the enormous Global success stories of Second and Third Wave Irish Films, the Producers (and actors/musicians) engaged a large Target Market Audience Group, and many demographics (all people of any age in any country world-wide who love the Irish sense of humour, Irish Music, and Ireland's Dublin streets where the film was located), saw the film. In turn, they told their friends, neighbours, relatives and co-workers what a great they had. This 'word-of-mouth' advertising went 'viral' in a day which did not use 'online technologies'.

[183] https://facts.net/movie/47-facts-about-the-movie-once/

The film's miniscule budget demonstrates the Production Team had no budget for almost any advertising of any kind.

In turn, the large number of 'bums on seats' in Cinemas was noticed by the Academy. In turn, someone in the Academy nominated Once. The Academy then voted the song as an Academy Award Winner for Best Music and Song.

Viral advertising, based on word-of-mouth, is as has been noted in previous chapters, the cheapest form of advertising. As a 'plank' and foundation of any Film Production Strategy, it can lead to millions of 'bums on seats' and a true success story for any Irish (or 'foreign') Independent Production company even when having only a Miniscule Production Budget.

A Note from this student: as mentioned above, our first animated feature film, Lost Lovers, has a similar total production budget and is competing against other animated and live action films with budgets 10,000 times as large. Once was competing with all other films launched in 1992 and 1993. Yet, it became one of the most popular and profitable films in Irish Cinema history, or in any National Cinema globally.

Once is a tremendous case study on how, with almost nothing in terms of budget, a small Independent production company (just like Storylines Entertainment), can produce an Academy Award Nominated Feature film and win.

The Commitments (1991): Directed by Alan Parker, Screenplay by Dick Clements, Ian La Frenais and Roddy Doyle (based on the Doyle Novel of the same name), Producer Lynda Myles, Irish Production Company Beacon Pictures, starring Robert Arkins, Angeline Ball an Maria Doyle, Original Band members: guitarist Kenneth McCluskey Aka Derek "The Meat Man" Scully, Piano Player Michael Aherne Aka "Steven The Soul Surgeon" Clifford, Ronan Dooney, Trumpet; Budget $13 million, Box Office $14.9 million.



Small Plot Summary[184]: Jimmy Rabbitte (Robert Arkins), a self-proclaimed promoter, decides to organize an R&B group to fill the musical void in his hometown of Dublin, Ireland. The band comes together but ends up consisting entirely of white musicians who have little experience with the genre. Even though their raw talent and lofty aspirations gain the group notoriety, the pitfalls of fame began to

[184] https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/1037024-commitments

tear at their newfound friendships as they prepare for their big show. Based on the novel by Roddy Doyle.

Rotten Tomatoes scored this feature film as a 90% which is a very high score for an Irish Feature Film in this early year of the Third Wave of Irish Cinema. Other reviewers including Robert Ebert's 'Thumbs Up' for the film. In his 1991 review, Ebert writes: "Alan Parker's "The Commitments" is a loud, rollicking, comic extravaganza about a rock band from the poorest precincts of North Dublin that decides to play soul music. The organizer of the band is the lean, ingenious Jimmy Rabbitte (Robert Arkins), whose suggestion is greeted with puzzlement by his friends. They like soul music, yes, but they don't particularly identify with it. Rabbitte's logic is persuasive: "The Irish are the blacks of Europe. Dubliners are the blacks of Ireland. North Dubliners are the blacks of Dublin." The movie is based on a novel by Roddy Doyle, a North Dublin school teacher, but it is founded on charm. Parker introduces a Dickensian gallery of characters, throws them all into the pot, keeps them talking, and makes them sing a lot. The result is a movie that doesn't lead anywhere in particular and may not have a profound message – other than that it's hell at the top, however low the top may be. But the movie is filled with life and energy, and the music is honest. "The Commitments" is one of the few movies about a fictional band that's able to convince us the band is real and actually plays together."[185]

While the 'monetary' Return on Investment was not 'fantastic' for all stakeholders, the popularity of the Feature Film, the Band and their music (much of which was composed by the Band) started the first Irish Film Franchise in Irish Cinema. The Band became so famous, they were invited on tour not only in Ireland but across the United States and Canada.

Though not part of the definition of Irish Cinema, this film marked, as the first in a Trilogy of Doyle novels turned into 'Movies' sparked a rising popularity for Irish comedies across the world.

The Snapper (1993) and The Van (1996): both Feature Films are based on the Novels of the same names written by Roddy Doyle.

The Snapper: screenplay by Roddy Doyle, Directed by Stephen Frears, Starring Colm Meaney, Tina Kellegher and Ruth McCabe, Produced by Lynda Myles, Music by Stanley Myers, Production Company: BBC Films. Budget and Box Office not available.

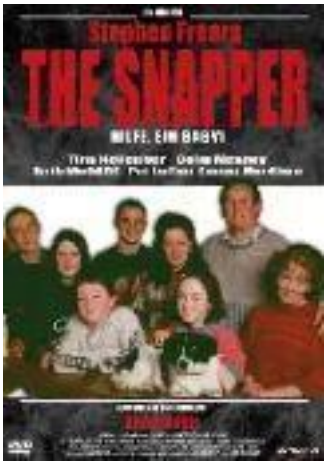
1993 Review by Roger Ebert[186]:

[185] https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/the-commitments-1991
[186] https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/the-snapper-1993

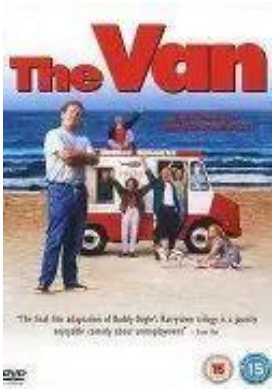
"The Irish seem to talk more than other people, and to take more joy from it. There are times when they have arguments simply for the sake of talking, and they don't always mind being overheard, because they love an audience. Two Irishmen in a pub may be silent. Add a stranger at the other end of the room, and they'll start talking, putting on a subtle performance. This trait is at the heart of the comedy in "The Snapper," which is a very funny movie about the people packed into small houses on a small street in a tight little neighborhood in Ireland.

"I haven't liked many comedies lately, maybe because the humor seemed forced and formulaic, cut off from genuine human qualities. "Mrs. Doubtfire" contains some laughs, but is there anyone in it we could describe as a believable person? "The Snapper" sees its characters with warmth and acceptance, and earns its laughs by being wise about human nature."

While not an Academy Award Nominee or Winner, Roger Ebert's review – read by a Global Audience – shows what a 'winner' this Irish comedy Feature Film was and still is. While the novel and screenplay, to some, may be filled with Irish 'Tropes', the review makes it clear that anyone seeing this Feature Film has discovered what the Irish are really like. Roddy Doyle started writing fiction when he worked as an Elementary and Secondary school teacher in Dublin. His novels, while fiction, are authentic in that he lived in the same areas as the eventual locations used in the 'Snappy / Doye' Irish Film Franchise. The love which the 'Snapper' family has for each other in the Feature Film is based on a number of true-life stories. Even in 1993, it was still a 'sin' to become pregnant when a 'lady' was not married.



This is a Prime example of the writer becoming the 'auteur' in the Feature Film. Doyle used many small 't' Tropes to "Stir the Shite" not only among the Irish People but around the world.



The Van: starring Colm Meaney and Donal O'Kelly, Directed by Stephen Frears, Produced by Lynda Myles, Beacon Pictures and BBC Films, Music by Eric Clapton, Box Office $712,000 is the weakest of the three films in this Franchise. This comedy, again based on Doyle's book of the same name, uses Irish

‘Tropes’ with a Capital ‘T’. Most reviews were ‘thumbs down’. This Irish Feature Film marked the end of the ‘Film Franchise’.

While The Van ended this ‘Trilogy’, the series is Ireland’s first Global Feature Film Franchise and therefore a highpoint in Irish Cinema. I will also use the above Irish Films to assist this student in coming to a final definition of ‘Irish Cinema’.

I will use two more examples of Irish Feature Films that were Nominated for an Academy Award and proved to be ‘breakthroughs’ for Irish Cinema. In that I have already discussed three Irish Films in detail, I will keep the next two rather short.

Michael Collins, 1996: Directed and written by Neil Jordan, Produced by Stephen Wooley, Starring Liam Neeson, Julia Roberts, Alan Rickman (and many others). Production companies: The Geffen Film Company, Warner Brothers (also the Global Distributor), and the Irish Film Board (this was one of the largest Irish Co-Productions in terms of Budget and Box Office in Irish History). Budget: $25 million Box Office: $32.8 million.

Partial Plot Summary[187]:

"In 1922, Joe O’Reilly (Ian Hart) seeks to comfort Kitty Kiernan (Julia Roberts), who is overwhelmed with grief following the death of Michael Collins (Liam Neeson). The narrative then shifts back to the tumultuous finale of the Easter Rising in 1916, where Collins, alongside Harry Boland (Aidan Quinn), Éamon De Valera (portrayed by Alan Rickman), and other patriots surrender to British forces. Determined not to follow the oppressors’ lead again, Collins tells Boland, >“We won’t play by their rules, Harry. We’ll invent our own,” foreshadowing the battles yet to come.

"As the Dublin Metropolitan Police intensively search for revolutionary leaders, the tragic fate of Collins’ companions unfolds, leading to all but De Valera, an American citizen, facing execution by firing squad. Following his confinement, Collins finds himself in Frongoch internment camp with Boland and others, where they begin plotting their next moves. Upon his release, Collins runs for election in the First Dáil but faces fierce violence from the Royal Irish Constabulary during a rally, where Boland comes to his rescue.



"On Bloody Sunday, a tragic turn occurs as Collins’ squad assassinates fourteen individuals from MI5’s Cairo Gang, provoking retaliation from the Black and Tans, who indiscriminately fire on a

[187] https://www.whatsafterthemovie.com/summary/michael-collins

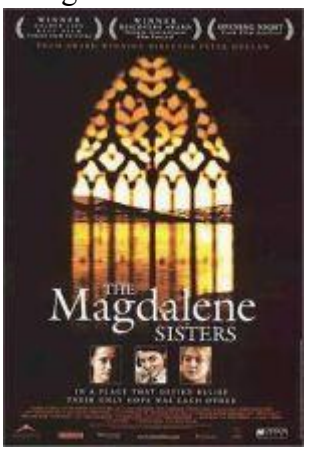
crowd attending a Gaelic football match at Croke Park. In the aftermath, Broy meets a grim fate for destroying documents.

"Crushed by Boland's fate, Collins makes a heartfelt plea for peace through intermediaries, unwittingly setting a meeting with De Valera at Béal Na Bláth. Tragically, a surprise ambush occurs as government troops are attacked en route, and Collins is mortally wounded in the chaos. His life slips away in Joe O'Reilly's arms, and as Kitty prepares for their future together, she receives the devastating news of his death just moments after trying on her wedding dress. In a bid to console her, O'Reilly reflects on Collins' wishes, urging Kitty to move forward from her grief."

The Magdalene Sisters, 2002: Directed by Peter Mullin, Starring Geraldine McEwan, Anne-Marie Duff and many others (most stars were born in Ireland), Production Companies: The Irish Film Board, UK Film Council, Scottish Screen, Momentum Pictures (a Co-Production). Budget (unavailable), Box Office $21.1 million

Plot Summary[188]:

> "The film starkly reveals the dismal lives these girls endure as inmates, focusing on their cruel daily routines and deplorable conditions in the laundries. The Mother Superior, a figure of terrifying authority, oversees their punishment with brutal fervor. Sister Bridget, played by Eileen Walsh, presents a façade of gentleness, but her cruelty is indisputable. Her sadistic tendencies manifest in harrowing scenes, such as her merciless beating of Rose (also played by Anne-Marie Duff), visible to Bernadette. In another shocking instance, after Una attempts to escape, Sister Bridget cruelly mocks her by shaving her head while laughing at her despair.
>
> "The financial exploitation of the asylum system is evident, with Sister Bridget delighting in the revenue generated for the institution, while the women, likened to Mary Magdalene, endure deprivations that include inadequate meals—Sister Bridget enjoys opulent breakfasts while the inmates are left with meager oatmeal. An especially dehumanizing scene showcases the women forced to stand naked after communal showers as the nuns subject them to a grotesque "contest" based on their physical attributes.



[188] https://www.whatsafterthemovie.com/summary/the-magdalene-sisters

"The presence of Father Fitzroy, a corrupt priest, amplifies the tragedy, as he sexually abuses Crispina. As time goes on, modernization creeps in with automatic washing machines, heralding the decline of commercial laundries and the eventual unsustainability of the Magdalene institutions.

"Amidst the gloom, three girls exhibit resilience against their circumstances. After Margaret is allowed to leave thanks to her younger brother's intervention, she defiantly confronts Sister Bridget, only to fall to her knees in prayer when rebuffed. The surprise of the Mother Superior allows her to pass, highlighting her quiet strength. Meanwhile, Bernadette and Rose come together in a bold escape attempt, wrecking Sister Bridget's office in their quest for freedom. With a mix of suspense and determination, they manage to evade her and receive aid from a compassionate relative. The film concludes on a hopeful note as Rose boards a coach to Liverpool and Bernadette pursues her dream of becoming a hairdresser.

"In stark contrast, Crispina's fate is tragic; voiceless due to the abuse she suffered, she spends her life in a mental institution and ultimately succumbs to anorexia at the tender age of 24. Although the script is fictionalized, it draws inspiration from real-life testimony, as captured in the documentary Sex in a Cold Climate, shedding light on the grueling realities faced by these women."

The above two Feature Films are exemplary examples of Irish History used by writers (and Directors) to create Award Winning Film which contributed substantially to the Third Wave of Irish Cinema. Both of the above Films are still offered on many Global Streaming Platforms. In the case of The Magdalene Sisters, a story which underscored the reality of many young women being placed involuntarily into 'Prison Wash Houses' by the Catholic Church, working with the Irish Government, many of these young women – now much older – are still waiting for a 'pay-out' by the current Irish Government for the many laws that were broken at the hands of the Catholic Nuns who 'ruled over them'.

In the case of Michael Collins, based on one of Ireland's bravest and most courageous Generals of the Irish Civil War, the film was written to ensure that any viewer across the world would understand the 'bitter relationships' between General Collins and Ireland's first Taoiseach Eamonn De Valera. Used by the De Valera to negotiate with the English Government, Collins inadvertently 'gave away' all of what is now known as Northern Ireland to bring peace to Island of Ireland and establish Democracy in the Republic of Ireland.

Collins was shot in County Cork, dying in his Motor Car. It was rumoured then (and still is) that many politicians in the old Fiana Fail Party ordered General Collins execution.

Both Irish Co-Produced Films were Oscar – Nominated. These as well as a number of other films which I shall list just below significantly influenced the Third Wave of Irish Cinema and all contributed to a 'jumping off point' in the development and new definition of 'Irish Cinema'.

8.2 Significant Contributors to the Third Wave of Irish Cinema

Below, find a short list of the over one-hundred feature films Produced or Co-Produced by Irish Production Companies in this Period:

The Third Wave

1993 – In the Name of the Father, *Academy Award Nominee*

The Snapper – based on the Novel by Irishman Roddy Doyle

1996 – Michael Collins – *Academy Award Nominee*

The Van – sequel to The Snapper, based on Irish Novelist Roddy Doyle

1997 – the Boxer

The General – based on real life series of Murders

Angelas Ashes – based on real life Irish Novelist Frank McCourt

The Butcher Boy

2000 - About Adam

Ordinary Decent Criminal

Borstal Boy

Bridget Jones's Diary

2002 – the Magdalene Sisters

In America, *Academy Award Nominee*

2003 – Intermission

2004 – Adam & Paul

Man About Dog

Mickybo and Me

Omagh

2005 – Breakfast on Pluto

2007 – Once, *Academy Award Winner for best original song*

2007 - The Wind that Shakes the Barley

Garage

Shrooms

2009 – Five Minutes of Heaven

The above Feature Films were, and still are today, some of the most famous Films to be produced by an Irish Production company or Co-Produced with other Production Companies. While many of these films had a rather low initial Return on Investment, the fact that most – if not all – of these Feature Films are still available on Global Streaming Platforms indicates that the ROI at this date is large even by Global Standards.

8.3. Summary

This Wave, which is the 'jumping off point' to the Fourth Wave of Irish Cinema, was critical to the development of the careers of many Irish Actors and Actresses, Directors, Screenwriters – new or experienced, crews, new forms of shooting and editing films, and truly started the use of Business and Marketing plans as part of an Irish Production Plan.

While Business and Marketing plans are not available for any of these films, my understanding is many of them have been copied to Digital Vaults which are now owned by these Irish Producers, UK Producers or other Co-Producers.

Many of the above Irish Feature Film Productions shall be used in helping this student not only to argue his own interpretation of 'Irish Cinema' but will help him to reach his own somewhat radical definition of the meaning, in contemporary Ireland, of what constitutes 'Irish Cinema' and an 'Irish Feature Film'.

Chapter Nine:

The Fourth Wave of Irish Cinema

The New Contemporary Age of Irish Cinema demonstrates that some Independent Production Companies are using Business and Marketing Plans as part of their production cycle. The Feature Film below produced by Paradox Pictures, an Independent Filmmaker with registered offices in Dublin and County Wicklow Ireland, illustrates how a 'one man band' can create an award-[189]winning Feature Film on a 'shoestring' budget. While some of his films were shot and released during the Third Wave, all are part of the Fourth Wave of Irish Cinema.

9.1. The Fourth Wave and the Incorporation of Business Practices

Five Day Shelter, 2010. Directed by Ger Leonard, with Thomas J Richards as B-Roll Director and Producer, Screenplay by Ger Leonard, Starring Antonia Campbell Hughes, Kate Dickie, John Lynch, Marcella Plunkett, John Travers, Keith Ward and many other Irish and UK actors. Produced by Paradox Pictures, Liam O'Neill Managing Director, and NALA Films LLC. Co-Producers include Cathleen Door (line Producer), Maeve McAdamand Villi Ragnarsson, Production Designer Annabel Konig. Budget $22 million, Box Office $3.2 million.



Plot Summary: A drama interweaving the lives of several characters in a contemporary urban setting over five days. All the characters live untenable existences of quiet desperation. It is only by letting go of the lies they have forced themselves to live that they can ultimately find release; then they can connect with the beauty and poetry to which their numbing routines have made them blind.

In that I was the B-Roll Director and Producer, and the best friend of Liam O'Neill, I am somewhat biased about the what happened at the very end of the long shoot (in horrible weather), with a single location in Dundalk, County Louth. The Producer and co-producer (Liam and Villi) tracked every penny spent on this long Production. When the two men realised they were going well over budget, they closed down the film and fired the

[189] https://fivedayshelter.blogspot.com/2010/

Director/Screenwriter who say himself as an auteur. In a Blog following the release of the film, Ger Leanord wrote in part: "The film created in post does not reflect those of us who believed in this film throughout the production and kept faith in what we were working towards. Instead, it is a misinterpretation of our work. The Director is the immune system of the film. The immune system was removed and I could not save our film.[190]"

When Liam was told by the First Assistant Director (Charlie Endean) that the fault lie with the Director/Screenwriter for going 20% over budget due to his insistence that every scene was shot at least five times, Liam stormed off the outdoor set, confronted the Director and fired him.

Five Day Shelter was Ger Leonard's first Feature Film of any kind. He had no experience on set and little understanding of cinematography. He also threated to destroy the film canisters that held the last few rolls of film (this production used traditional film cameras rather than digital cameras). Liam and I rescued all the film canisters (Leonard had placed them in his large satchel and had ordered a taxi to take him back to Dundalk where he was staying with the entire production team in a first-class hotel Liam and Annabel Konig had reserved for the entire shoot) and after weeks of editing, Liam and his Editing Team were relatively satisfied with the outcome. The Film opened at the Belfast Film Festival (I attended along with my partner Carmel Murray). The reaction of the audience was better than Liam expected. When Leonard discovered he had not been invited to the Film Festival, he 'blew his top'. Phoning Liam, he again threatened the Production Team with a civil action which, yet again, never went to court.

To this student's knowledge, Ger Leonard has never Directed, Produced or written a Feature Film again though he did contact Paradox Pictures, begging them to help him make his second Feature Film.

The lesson here is simple: the shooting of a Feature Film or any Film for that matter is a Collaboration of a Team of talented and experienced people. Mister Leonard, insisting that he was the 'auteur' threatened to sue all members of the Production Team but he never went through with it.

I witnessed Producers Liam O'Neill and Villi Ragnarsson use a variety of Business Practices as well as some marketing, throughout the Production Cycle. Their attention to detail regarding all Production Budgets and Distribution Agreements (this Irish Feature Film was also distributed in the United States, 2014) was exemplary. Their largest issue was

190

reigning in the ‘loose cannon’ (as Liam called him), the Director Ger Leonard. Liam looked at this film as a failure and in financial matters it was. The Return on Investment was approximately zero to the Co-Production Partners. But the entire Cast as well as the crew were paid well above Union rates. The O’Neill’s (Liam and Annabel) were almost forced to take a mortgage out on their Wicklow home to finish editing the film. But friends advanced him enough cash that he was able to release the film Globally with enough revenue to finally break-even.

Pitching with Marketing

At the time of my friendship with Mister O’Neill, I was the sole owner and Managing Director of Earthnet, an Irish Marketing Communications Agency. Earthnet is a tradename of Storylines Entertainment Ltd (and is once again active as a ‘strand’ of Storylines Entertainment Ltd and Storylines Entertainment LLC). In 2009, just before the Fourth Wave ‘officially began’ he asked me to create a PowerPoint Card Deck to be used to pitch various co investors in his Feature Film, Dirty Rats. To my knowledge, and based only on ‘personal evidence’, Paradox Pictures was one of the first small Independ Irish Production companies to hire an expert in Marketing.

Following approximately 3 months work, I gave Liam the PowerPoint deck. The contents were the same as any Strategic Marketing Plan I had developed for large Business Clients and included: Exploitation of all rights in domestic and Global markets; the Film’s Synopsis; Project Attributes (genres) and how this Crime Feature Film would meet target market demands and expectations; the Package which included first time Writer / Director John Dawson, Liam O’Neill as Producer together with Paradox Pictures; Cast which included Irish Actors Aiden Gillen, Christ O’Dowd, Christiane Paul and German Actor Antonio Wannek; a statement on Target Marketing and Brand Positioning; a SWOT Analysis; Integrated Marketing Strategies and Tools; and a Budget on the total cost of creating this Feature Film.

(Side-Note: as a writer, business person and student, I have always encouraged other students of Irish Cinema to use ‘Business and Marketing’ tools as part of their Production Planning of any Film. My good friend, now gone, had the very same attitude. He would not mind if I shared the PowerPoint Slide Deck he used to pitch Dirty Rats. You can download this here and this Google Drive Link is also in the Appendix.
https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1SDT_Wq410sNLPLQnoxDKF-GdKIafP02g/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=106979493427031874908&rtpof=true&sd=true

Liam presented the Card Deck to many possible investors. He received a number of verbal agreements from much larger Irish Production Companies but he also required the Irish Film Board to invest in the project in order to close the final gap in the very small budget. When the Irish Film Board turned him down, Liam knew the Feature Film would never be made. All potential investors and Co-Producers pulled out the project. When Liam phoned John Dawson, he was 'gutted', as Liam told me. Both Liam and I knew that Mister Dawson would never see another Feature Film opportunity again.

The lesson here is also simple. As Liam told me many years, "A feature film is not over until the entire film is in the can and edited. Then, it's still not over until it's been distributed into your selected geographic locations. And it's still not over until the Producer earns enough cash on the project to pay all of the bills that are still outstanding."

Which, of course, is all true. Small Independent Production Companies must generate profits from one feature film to finance the next Project. If one feature film fails to breakeven, that company could be doomed to go into liquidation.

A Matter of Luck

Before leaving Paradox Pictures, I want to discuss a 'matter of luck' and how it can contribute to the success or failure of any small Independent Production Company.

Liam always told me that he never had much luck at almost anything. When it came to his Filmmaking business, this unfortunately turned out to be true. The above two examples demonstrate how 'luck' can play a huge part in the success or failure of a film of any kind. In Dirty Rats, Liam was unlucky due to the obstinance of the Irish Film Board (the Film Board had given Liam many Grants and soft loans for years, ever since he set up his production company. He actually climbed in his car, driving from Wicklow to Galway, to argue with them. He told me later "They never heard a word I said.") Five Day Shelter, also ignored by the Irish Film Board, would have a success if it not had been for the obstinance of Ger Leanord. While this student of Irish Cinema has briefly mentioned the following Feature Film, I will now cite the film as an example of a potentially award-winning Irish Film Production 'Going down in Flames'. Literally.

How Harry Became a Tree, 2001[191]. Produced by Paradox Pictures, Directed by Goran Paskalijevic, starring Colm Meany and Adrian Dunbar, release date Globally 13 September 2001. Invited to the Toronto Film Festival of that Year. Budget $6 million, Box Office

191 https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0256084/?ref_=nv_sr_srsg_0_tt_1_nm_0_in_0_q_Liam%2520O%27Neill%2520How%2520Harry%2520Became%2520a%2520Tr

$114,000 as reported by Box Office Mojo[192]. This writer and student was later informed that this Feature Film made enough Profit to pay all bills, with enough left to finance Mister O'Neill's next feature film.)

Plot Summary: In rural Ireland in 1924, Harry Maloney, believing "a man is measured by his enemies", nurses an unjustified enmity for George O'Flaherty, who owns the local pub and most of the businesses in the area and is the local matchmaker. When Harry's son Gus, upon whom Harry regularly heaps mental and verbal abuse falls for George's maidservant, Eileen, George helps put the two together. George's seduction of Eileen gives Harry the opportunity to create a scandal, despite the effect on his own family.

In Liam's first Full Length Feature Film, 'luck' was never good. It seemed even during one of the location shoots high in the Dublin Mountains that Mister O'Neill's luck had finally run out. During that location shoot in the snow at the foot of the mountains, Liam caught what he thought was a bad cold. Taken to a local hospital, he was told by the doctors he had contracted Pneumonia. Never one to be deterred by his health, Liam went back into the snow covered fields and forests of Dublin and shot the rest of the film. The result of his 'courage in Production was Tinitus which he had for the rest of his life. During almost all subsequent filmmaking, he could only hear if one of the crew yelled at him.

But the 'bad luck' did not continue through the rest of the film cycle. When it was released, Rotten Tomatoes gave Mister O'Neill's first Feature Film a score 62%[193]. The organisers of the Toronto Film Festival 2001, hearing of the film's ratings, invited Liam and a few members of his production Team, booked round trip flights from Dublin to Toronto. When he departed on September 11, 2001, he was filled with excitement thinking, after all the years of studying and Producing Feature Films, Harry would be his big breakthrough.

Sitting at my office desk in Dunshaughlin, County Meath, I received a telephone call from Liam. He told me the flight had been waiting for take-off when the Captain told all the passengers aboard the aircraft that the Twin Towers in New York City had been bombed. The flight was cancelled. Liam missed the Toronto Film Festival and had the 'bad' feeling he'd never be invited again.

His bad luck revisited him many times, finally culminating with his death due to Covid in the Spring of 2021. Yet, his memory continues. As one of the 'Grandfathers' of the Irish Film Industry, I am honoured to have been many aspects of Irish Cinema by this gentle 'giant' of a man.

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[192] https://www.boxofficemojo.com/title/tt0256084/
[193] https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/how_harry_became_a_tree

The Learnings:

For all students of Irish Cinema, the learnings that Liam continues to give to us are as follows:

1. 'Bad Luck' is a large factor in the success of any Film Production Company located anywhere in the world. But Back Luck does not usually persist. Even Liam O'Neill had his moments of wonderful success and made a good living at his chosen profession: Producer, writer and director.
2. 'Bad Luck' will never prevail – if students of Irish Cinema do their best to incorporate as much Business sense and savvy into any Filmmaking Production Plan.

Liam is proof of this 'savvy' idea. As the owner of a very small Irish Independent Production Company, he knew he was always going to be an entrepreneur. For that reason, he spent a great deal of time marketing any Feature Film or Short anywhere he could including most Social Media platforms. He used GoFundMe to fully finance one of his last Short Films, Lost and Found. Liam, as well as most Independent Irish Filmmakers knew (and still know) they must all incorporate the same Business 'sense and savvy' if they are to compete successfully with Global 'King Kongs'. "It's a matter of survival," a good friend of Liam's told me on the day I attended my friend's funeral. "If we don't do what Liam did, there's a good chance we'll all go out of business."

9.2 The Fourth Wave: More Examples

In a recent article by Little White Lies, the writer defines the Fourth Wave of Irish Cinema as:

"…refers to a significant shift in the representation and production of Irish-language films, marked by the rise of films that focus on the Irish language and culture…. Notable films like 'The Quiet Girl' have made history by receiving International Acclaim, showcasing the potential and appeal of Irish-language cinema to a broader audience.[194]"

The Article, titled 'The Unlikely Rise of Irish-language Cinema;, written by Eoin O'Donnell, goes on:

> "For a language that has long been thought to be going through an irreversible decline, the recent wealth of films in Ireland's native tongue has told a very different story. Despite less than 2% of Ireland's population speaking the language on a daily basis, the nation's cinematic output has seen an enormous cultural shift towards its cultural and linguistic roots over the past few years.

[194] https://lwlies.com/article/the-unlikely-rise-of-irish-language-cinema

> "The foremost example is Rich Peppiatt's raucous musical comedy-biopic Kneecap, a smash-hit at both UK and Irish box offices this year. Kneecap had the prestige to go along with its buzzy word-of-mouth, sweeping nominations at both BIFA and the European Film Awards as well as being chosen as Ireland's submission for Best International Feature at the Oscars. In fact, of the five Irish submissions so far this decade, Kneecap marks the fourth Irish-language film chosen to represent the country at the industry's première awards ceremony; a marked change for a country that has championed just a handful of films in its native tongue (Gaeilge, to Irish people). Colm Bairead's drama The Quiet Girl (An Cailín Ciúin) made history last year when it became the first of these submissions to secure an Academy Award nomination for Best International Feature, and again when it became the first Irish-language film screened at the Berlin Film Festival."

While the writer confines himself to the 'study' of Irish-language films, the Fourth Wave of Irish Cinema also includes Feature Films, Documentaries and other Filmmaking projects using English only, or subtitled in As Gaeilge.

To remind readers, I now discuss those Irish Feature Films made and released during the period 2010 to 2020.

The Guard, 2011. Directed and written by John Michael McDonagh, Production Companies include the Irish Film Board, Element Pictures and Reprisal Films, starring Brendan Gleeson, Mark Strong and Finnula Flanagan. Budget $6 million, Box Office $21.2 million.



Plot Summary[195]:

"Sergeant Gerry Boyle, portrayed by Brandon Gleeson, serves as a brash officer in the Garda Siochana, stationed in Connemara, Ireland. Known for his crass demeanor and confrontational nature, he often indulges in drugs and alcohol, even while on duty. Despite these flaws, Boyle has a deep emotional side, particularly evident in his care for his terminally ill mother, Eileen, played by Fionnula Flanagan, who has only 6-8 weeks left to live and resides in a nursing home for proper care. In the midst of his chaotic life, Boyle is paired with a rookie partner, Aidan McBride, portrayed by Rory Keenan, on his first day of work.

[195] https://www.whatsafterthemovie.com/summary/the-guard

> Their investigation into a murder in their jurisdiction points toward a potential occult serial killer. The victim remains unidentified, and as McBride sends in fingerprints for analysis, they uncover that money is missing, and a cryptic 5 1/2 is written in blood on the wall—hinting at the killer's victims, one of whom was seriously maimed rather than killed. An anonymous tipster named Sheehy claims that a man named Billy Devaney is connected to the murder. Billy asserts he was at a bar during the time of the crime, entangled in a ruckus over a bet, and boasts having more than twenty witnesses to corroborate his alibi. Shortly thereafter, Boyle is thrust into a briefing with Wendell Everett, masterfully played by Don Cheadle, an FBI special agent collaborating with the Garda to track down four Irish drug traffickers led by the elusive Francis Sheehy-Skeffington, acted by Liam Cunningham. They believe a substantial cocaine shipment—worth $500 million—is en route to Connemara from the Dominican Republic."

This absolutely hysterically funny comedy uses 'tropes' with a small 't' to drive audiences to see this Caper Crime story. At the same time, the screenwriter used deep emotions to portray the Protagonist Sargent Boyle as a 'caring but deeply troubled man'. This feature film was a hit across the world, and represented a breakthrough film for star, Brendan Gleeson.

While no business or marketing plan is available, it is apparent the producers of The Guard used many aspects of business. This can be seen in the high return on investment which the stakeholders of this Irish Feature Film enjoyed. Too, in using a 'black skinned partner', this Feature Film demonstrated the relatively new 'melting pot' Ireland has become to most 'foreign' people, many of whom continue to think that Ireland is populated only by White-skinned Catholics.

Brooklyn (2015): Directed by John Crowley, Screenplay by Nick Hornby, based on the Novel written by Colin Toibin, Produced by Finola Dwyer and Amanda Posey, Production companies: BBC Films, Telefilm Canada, the Irish Film Board, starring Saoirse Ronan, Domhnal Gleeson and Julie Walters. Budget $11 million Box Office $62.4 million. Awards: BAFTA, Critics Choice, Golden Globe and Screen Actors Guild. Nominated for the Academy Awards: Best Actress, Best Picture, Best Adapted Screenplay.

> Plot Summary and Review from Roger Ebert[196]: Colm Tóibín's 2009 novel "Brooklyn" is one of those books that seems like a miracle, a book that

[196] https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/brooklyn-2015#google_vignette

reminds the reader just how much power can reside in relatively unadorned language. The Irish-born writer's book tells the story of Eilis Lacey, a young woman from a working family circa 1950. She's bright, open and industrious, and there's not much meaningful opportunity for her in her small Irish town. An Irish priest visiting from the United States sponsors Eilis for a job in the book's title borough, and Tóibín beautifully tells of her uncomfortable crossing, her loneliness and alienation in her new world, how she finds her own way and finds romance, and what happens after she's called back to her old home—away from the place where she's been working so hard to make good. Ebert's 4 Star out of 4 Star Review includes: The persistent feeling that this movie so beautifully creates is that even when the world is bestowing blessings upon us, it's still at the bottom a sad place, and the key to an emotionally healthy existence involves some rooted acceptance of that. The



movie ends with Eilis having made some substantial steps to that accepting place, and also determined to move purposefully forward. People have spoken about how understated and old-fashioned "Brooklyn" is, to the extent that it might come across as a pleasant innocuous entertainment. Don't be fooled. "Brooklyn" is not toothless. But it is big-hearted, romantic and beautiful.

This will be the final reference to an Irish Feature Film in the Fourth Wave. Brookly was a great success for all stakeholders with an excellent Return on Investment. As a History of Irish immigration to the United States, this well-told story about a woman on her own in New York City is one of the best films (and Novels) in the Romance category Ireland has ever produced.

9.3 Summary: The period lasting from the very end of the Second Wave of Irish Cinema to the end of the Fourth Wave of Irish Cinema resulted in a lasting foundation for those Irish Feature Films that came after that turbulent but productive and somewhat profitable period. All of the Directors, Writers, Producers, Production Companies, Crews and actors who were Irish participated in a Break Through Era for the definition of 'Irish Cinema'.

This student continues to posit, however, that while Business and Marketing Principles were sometimes used as part of less than half of the Feature Films produced in the above Periods, many profited by 'chance'.

As I have consistently pointed out in many sections of this book, most Feature Films produced in the United States used a wide range of Business and Marketing Strategies and Tactics to minimise risk to all stakeholders while also maximising opportunities for Investors and increasing the probability of a high ROI.

Even today, as of this writing, 'older' American Black and White Films such as King Kong sell Merchandise, DVDs, games and related items which support the everlasting Franchise opportunities 'old' films have created. While I have cited only one or two Irish 'franchises' above, no Irish Feature Film exists which is part of a Franchise that goes back to the first or second wave of Irish Cinema.

But Directors and Producers (sometimes writers and auteurs) have laid a series of 'business planks' that Contemporary Irish Producers and Production Companies can cobble together. By studying the success stories of Irish Feature Films, Novels and other art, we can develop a Production Cycle which always includes Business and Marketing Strategies and Tactics. By doing so, we are all in a better position to approach other European Co-Producers and Investors to create everlasting Franchise opportunities. This will secure the future for all Producers now and in the future.

As I said only yesterday (19 October 2025) to an American Producer/Director/Writer of Documentaries: "In only five to ten years, Irish Filmmakers of all kinds will be able to produce Feature Films, Television Series, Animated Series and Films, and Documentaries that will compete head-to-head with American films. Someday soon, Ireland filmmakers will be part of a new European 'Hollywood' competing with Bollywood to take significant market share and profits from Film created and produced in the United States.

> The list of Irish Directors who have fostered the Irish Success Story in the Fourth Wave of Irish Cinema is long. As Far Out Magazine wrote in a short article (17 March, 2023)[197], "Ireland has long been responsible for producing some of the greatest playwrights, writers and creatives of all time, with the likes of Samuel Beckett, Oscar Wilde and George Bernard Shaw each helping to revolutionise contemporary art throughout the late 19th and 20th centuries. Ever since, the country has been seen as a geyser of imagination, where ancient folklore blends with timeless scenery to inspire countless original tales."

The writer, Callum Russel states in his article, "The 10 Greatest Irish Filmmakers of All Time," that the following are the greatest filmmakers since the advent of Irish Cinema.

[197] https://faroutmagazine.co.uk/the-10-greatest-irish-filmmakers-of-all-time/

These individuals include: William Desmond Taylor, Rex Ingram, Aisling Walsh, John Carney, John Michael McDonagh, Nora Twomey, Neil Jordan, Lenny Abrahamson, Martin McDonagh and Jim Sheridan.

I would add other ‘unsung heroes’ to that list. They include but are not limited to Thadeus O’Sullivan, Liam O’Neill, Herbert Brenon, Rex Ingram, Aisling Walsh, Eilis Kirwin and many, many more.

All of the above Irish Talent contributed more to the creation of an Irish film business, and a future Irish Film Industry than most individuals in the History of Irish Cinema. This is not to denigrate the contribution of relatively unknown Irish Directors, Producers and Writers.

Students of Cinema anywhere in the world must remember that even a Gaffer, Tea person or the men and women who clean up and ‘strike the set’ after a Production ends are part of the History of Irish Cinema. Those are the real ‘unsung heroes’. Without the help of even the lowest paid member of a crew, a Film of any kind would find it more difficult to be made.

Chapter Ten:

The Contemporary Age – The Fifth Wave of Irish Cinema

Speaking as a writer of Screenplays and Novels, most of which are located at least in part in Ireland, I write many of them because I'm Passionate about the story. Often, I believe a 'story must be told'. When I write the first logline or premise, I rarely think of the 'commercial market' for a particular Film or Book. But then I'll sit back and consider the following:

"Do I want to Film (or publish) this story? Do I care if I personally make a profit or if I break-even financially?" The answer is Yes and No depending on what I'm working on. Most of the time, I know I (or my Film and Book publishing companies) must make a profit to survive. As for my Novels and Travel Guides, and to be frank, I often don't care if I make a profit or not. Yet, some of my Novels (as I've cited above) have gone on to make a great deal of profits which I've ploughed back into Feature Films.

Similarly, many American Film Production companies (as well as their Producers) keep profitability to front-of-mind on most if not all Projects they are undertaking now or in the future.

According to my research on the U.S. Filmmakers, all American Production Companies must generate profits on all if not most of their Feature Films. In an Accounting Insights article (2025)[198], How do Entertainment Companies Generate Revenues and Stay Profitable?, the Accounting Insights Team writes:

> Entertainment companies play a pivotal role in shaping culture and influencing public discourse. Their ability to generate revenue and maintain profitability is essential for sustaining creative endeavors and delivering captivating content worldwide. As the industry evolves, understanding their financial strategies becomes increasingly important.
>
> Multiple Income Streams
> Entertainment companies diversify revenue streams to mitigate market volatility and support expansive production budgets.
>
> Box Office Sales
> Box office sales represent a significant revenue source for the film industry. Factors such as release timing, marketing strategies, and audience

[198] https://accountinginsights.org/how-do-entertainment-companies-generate-revenue-and-stay-profitable/

> demographics directly influence these sales. Blockbuster films released during holiday seasons, for example, often achieve higher revenues due to increased audience availability. Studios typically receive 40% to 50% of domestic box office receipts, with international markets contributing similarly. Theatrical performance also affects ancillary revenue streams, such as streaming rights and DVD sales. Understanding box office trends informs decisions on production investments and marketing expenditures.

The Article goes on to provide the multiple streams of Revenues U.S. Film Producers use to Generate additional profits for all Projects they undertake. These 'multiple streams' include: Digital Subscriptions, Licencing and Merchandising and Product Placement / In-Brand Entertainment.

The two Feature Films my companies are creating include all of the above. But, because we are a very small 'global' company, this student of Irish Cinema will use even more 'multiple streams and channels' not only to generate more profits / Revenues but to minimise risk and maximise returns to all stakeholders.

Our Marketing Plan, Strategies and Tactics include but are not limited to: Barbie-Oppenheimer Pre-launch through launch strategy, tactics and marketing communications across very inexpensive global Social Media channels; Product Placement / In-Brand Entertainment (which will generate enough 'free cash' to complete both films; Posters and flyers announcing the Premier of the films which will be distributed near local Cinemas in selected Target Counties and Cities – all posters and flyers will use 'Q-Squares' so film lovers can immediately access our two Websites; the development and launch of online Games which will be sold across multiple Global Social Media Channels; Film Subtitles in relevant languages appropriate to specific Countries: Mechandising of Branded Caps, T-Shirts and Mugs in selected Premier Cinemas (and online); Give-aways including Bookmarks and autographed copies of the first three pages of our Screenplays; Autographed copies of large 'cards' having pictures of our Actors / Voice Over talent; the Sale of our Film Scores to multiple streaming audio companies such as Spotify; the creation and uploading of many videos to TikTok and YouTube; the creation of an emailing list; the emailing of a Company Newsletter (containing updates to the pending launch of our Films) every two months; and other marketing tactics are small Global marketing team is currently developing.

While United States Production Companies have large Marketing Departments to develop each 'strand' of their marketing strategy, and employed individuals to expedite and track the success of each marketing tactic that has been actioned, many small production

companies in any country cannot afford such a Team. We are all confined by the reality of limited financial resources.

In Ireland, due to our small population, Irish Production Companies must look across the Atlantic Ocean and East, across all of Europe and all the way across the Pacific to plan for the future for their companies.

The Fifth Wave of Irish Cinema is moving in this direction. Many Irish Film Producers are considering the demographics in 'far-flung' locations such as Ukraine, the African continent, the Indian Sub-Continent, China and, of course, all of North America and South America. Streaming giants such as Netflix and Hulu constantly stream Films produced in many different countries into even the smallest Nation. Today, the multiple channels of distribution 'fragment' the Global market so much so that an Irish Film Production company must contract with a number of Distributors to target each Country and Continent in order to make a significant Return on Investment. Larger Irish Production Companies have created a network of distribution contacts which can make it relatively easy to strike a deal. Small Irish Production companies with no contacts or track-record will find it much harder to strike even one deal with a single distributor.

The following Feature Films which I will now discuss have an established track record of creating Films and they have any number of contacts across the Global Industry. To start this Chapter, I will quote an article (2025) written by Offscreen which defines the Fifth Wave of Irish Cinema[199]:

> "The fifth wave of Irish cinema can be understood as a significant evolution in the country's film industry, characterized by a shift towards a more transnational or even a national perspective. This wave reflects a broader trend away from traditional Irish institutions and narratives, as seen in films like "The Banshees of Inisherin" and "Brooklyn," which challenge conventional storytelling and cultural representations. The fifth wave also marks a move towards a more imagined community approach, where the narrative of Ireland is less defined by national borders and more by shared experiences and cultural influences. This evolution highlights the complexities and challenges faced by the Irish film industry in the contemporary landscape."

[199] https://offscreen.com/view/state-of-imagination-the-fifth-province-of-irish-cinema

To this student, the use of 'imagined communities' combined with 'narrative of Ireland is less defined by national borders and more by shared experiences and cultural influences' demonstrates a creative willingness to move beyond only an Irish Audience but to the shores of other nations and ethnicities to a New Age of Irish Cinema.

While the following thoughts are based only on a remembered conversation which I had with Producer Liam O'Neill about many of his films, this will be relevant to the above new thinking of Fifth Wave Irish Film Production Companies.

Liam's first Feature Film was Pete's Meteor (1998). Directed by Joe O'Byrne and starring Brenda Fricker and a very young Mike Myers, Liam O'Neill was convinced this would establish his new Production Company, Paradox Pictures, as one of the largest and most profitable companies of its kind in Ireland and then in all of Europe. He told me that the star value of Mike Myers and Brenda Fricker would guarantee success for all stakeholders.

When I watched some of the rough cuts and saw the Title of the Film, I thought the story was about Outer Space. As an aficionado of Science Fiction I was looking forward to reading the entire screenplay and seeing the Director's Cut Feature Film. But when I saw the final cut, prior to the Premier and limited Distribution, my 'gut' told me it would be a failure in all markets. Unfortunately, it was.

Sitting down with my best friend Liam after the Premier, I told him why it would never work in the marketplace. I said the title itself let the Audiences down because it did not reflect the actual story of the Film. I also said that the marketing plan agreed by both Producers was non-existent. Liam admitted that it was.

For years, Liam and I 'argued' about the use of Marketing as part of his company's Production Cycle. Many of his films 'failed' at the box office and barely broke even. Yet, as Irish Cinema moved into its next wave, Liam and Paradox Pictures (and its subsidiary, Agnes Films) adopted many of the Business and Marketing Principles I suggested to him.

If Liam had survived, he would also face the challenges and complexities that all Irish Filmmakers now face together. In this student's opinion, we must 'fight together with like minded Film Producers' no matter where they are located: in Ireland, America, across Europe – the reason is simplicity itself. If Irish Film is to become an International Success Story, as I hope it will soon be – we must 'gather together' to take on the world's giant Producers. Most Irish Film Companies are Independents. By Producing Films that compete directly with the Hollywood Giants, we can carve off profits and market share, making these Giants look somewhat embarrassed because many will think, as a future Director walks up the Red Carpet to pick up an Oscar for an Irish Best Picture Award, "Why didn't I think of Producing

a Film based on that Irish Bestselling Novel?" And all of us sitting in the audience will yell back, "Haha! Because Ireland adapted it and produced it first!"

I shall now examine a number of Fifth Wave Irish Film Productions to determine who they will someday 'fit' into the new definition of 'Irish Film'. All films listed below will stick to the definition of the Fifth Wave, above, as well as: exploring themes of identity and belonging, moving away from the singular national narrative towards a more inclusive and diverse representation; a reclamation of Irish Cinema's history and identity, addressing the complexities of representation and the impact of global media and how Irish Producers, Directors and screenwriters are moving towards a more nuanced and global perspective.

For the purposes of the discussion to follow, I will examine Irish Feature Films Produced and released during the period 2015 through the current day.

10.1 Selected List of Irish Feature Films, Fifth Wave

Arrach, 2019. Directed by Directed by Tomás Ó Súilleabháin, Screenplay by Tom Sullivan, Produced by Cúán Mac Conghail, Starring Dónall Ó Héalaí, Saise Ní Chuinn, Dara Devaney, Music by Kíla, Production company Macalla Teoranta, Distributed by Break Out Pictures, Language Irish (Budget and Box Office unlisted)

Plot Summary: this 'Irish Famine' story witnesses the deaths of a wife and child on a rented plot of land near the Atlantic Coast. Filmed in As Gaeilge, this Feature Film preserves the History of Famine victims who suffered at the whims of their landlords. Because the Irish language is used throughout the screenplay and by all actors, our language is also preserved.



Audience reviews were a solid 7 out of 10 among a small Global Audience. But the musical score, sung by Ireland's greatest Global Music Band (Kila) exposed those who have seen this Film to a blend of traditional Irish music. Kila also collaborated on the Oscar-nominated animated films, the Secret of Kells and Song of the Sea[200]. This is a good example of Marketing in Action. People who live in all parts of the world have Irish Ancestry or are Irish born. Too, many people want to be Irish during Saint Patrick's Day or when they experience anything related to Ireland: films, a pint of Guiness or Murphys in their local 'foreign' bar or tavern or when they lift a small glass of Jameson. By 'playing the Irish card', though not using a 'Trope' but instead real Irish History, this

[200] https://kila.ie/

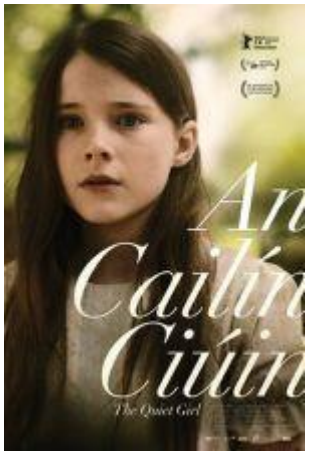
filmmaking team has helped to broadcast the culture, language, traditions and rural History of the Republic of Ireland.

Other examples of Fifth Wave Films showing innovative hybrid models are as follows:

The Quiet Girl aka An Cailín Ciúin (2022). Directed by Colm Bairead, based on the Novel by Claire Keegan, Starring Carrie Crowly, Andrew Bennett, Catherine Clinch and more Irish actors, Produced by Screen Ireland, Inscedal, TG4 and BAI, Languages Irish and English, Budget $1.2 million Box Office $6.8 million.

Plot Summary: In the summer of 1981, Cáit, portrayed by Catherine Clinch, is a nine-year-old girl growing up in a rural Irish household that is both impoverished and neglectful. Among many siblings, she finds herself struggling to fit in at school, experiencing a moment of humiliation when milk spills on her lap. With her mother expecting another child, the family decides to send this quiet girl away to live with her middle-aged cousin, Eibhlín Cinnsealach, played by Carrie Crowley, and her husband Seán, depicted by Andrew Bennett.

Upon arriving at the Cinnsealach home, Cáit is warmly welcomed by Eibhlín, who shower her with affection and teaches her the day-to-day chores involved in running the household and the farm. Eibhlín introduces Cáit to a



deep well on the property, cautioning her about the dangers of fetching water from it. Initially, Cáit finds herself in a spare bedroom and experiences fear about the presence of adults nearby, leading her to have an accident in bed. Since Cáit's luggage was left behind, Eibhlín dresses her in boys' clothes from the wardrobe, but later goes out to purchase a set of new girls' clothes for her.

A significant event occurs when the Cinnsealach family attends a wake. In Cáit's restless state, a neighbor offers to look after her, and after a moment of hesitation, Eibhlín consents. During their walk, the neighbor divulges the tragic past of the Cinnsealachs, revealing that they lost a young son to drowning in their slurry pit before Cáit's arrival. When Cáit returns and shares this information, she unwittingly stirs up emotions in Eibhlín and Seán, who are visibly affected but do not contradict the neighbor's tale.

As Cáit's stay at the Cinnsealach home stretches over a month, her mother gives birth and expresses a desire for Cáit to return in time for the new school year. Each member of the Cinnsealach family feels a profound sadness about this impending separation. In an impulsive moment, Cáit sneaks off to fetch water from the well but tragically falls in, overwhelmed by her greatly filled bucket. Eibhlín, panic-stricken upon realizing Cáit's absence, finds her shivering and soaked, comforting her during this distressing episode.

As she watches the car drive down the long driveway, the gravity of the moment sinks in for Cáit, who suddenly breaks into a sprint toward the vehicle, managing to reach them just as Seán is closing the gate. They share a heartfelt embrace, while Eibhlín quietly sobs in the car. Caught between her conflicting emotions, Cáit gazes over Seán's shoulder and glimpses her father's angry approach, calling out "Daddy" as she closes her eyes again in an attempt to retreat from the tumult of her reality.

This Feature Film demonstrates the growing confidence of Irish Filmmakers. Using both English an As Gaeilge; co-produced with a number of funding bodies as well as a the U.K.'s TG4, and resulting in a quite reasonable Return on Investment to all stakeholders, Roger Ebert gave this Irish Feature Film 3.5 stars out of 4.0 which is a great achievement for modern Irish Cinema.

Banshee of Inisherin (2022). Directed and written by Martin McDonagh, Starring Colin Farrell, Brendan Gleeson, Kerry Condon and Barry Keoghan. Distributed by Searchlight Pictures. Budget $20 million Box Office $52.3 million. This film won a number of Awards including the Academy Awards for Best Supporting Actor (Barry Keoghan), Best Film Editing and Best Original Score.

Short Summary: A Peaceful Life Shattered - Set in 1923 during the Irish Civil War, the film takes place on the fictional island of Inisherin. Padraic Súilleabháin (Colin Farrell) is a kind-hearted but simple man who leads a quiet life with his beloved donkey, Jenny, and enjoys daily pints with his best friend, Colm Doherty (Brendan Gleeson). But the tranquility is suddenly broken when Colm abruptly ends their friendship, telling Padraic he simply "doesn't like him anymore." This baffling declaration sends Padraic into emotional turmoil. He seeks answers, and when Colm doesn't budge, Padraic grows increasingly desperate and confused. What begins as a breakup between friends slowly turns into something tragic, absurd, and occasionally violent.

Escalation and Ultimatums

Colm, a fiddler and self-proclaimed artist, wants more from life. He believes Padraic is dull and that spending time with him is wasting Colm's potential legacy. Colm warns that if Padraic speaks to him again, he'll cut off one of his own fingers. Padraic, heartbroken and still hoping to salvage the friendship, doesn't believe Colm is serious—until Colm delivers on his promise. He severs a finger and throws it at Padraic's door. Padraic's desperation turns to bitterness. Even his sister Siobhán (Kerry Condon), who has always tried to steer Padraic toward a more meaningful life, begins to see the futility of staying on the island.



Isolation and Loss

Padraic spirals. He loses Jenny in a heartbreaking accident—she chokes on one of Colm's discarded fingers. That becomes the turning point. Grief overtakes kindness. Padraic, no longer the "nice" man he was once proud to be, tells Colm he'll burn his house down—with or without him inside. He does exactly that, after ensuring Colm's dog is safely out. Whether Colm is inside the burning house remains ambiguous—until we later see him alive, standing on the beach, speaking with Padraic as if nothing had changed.

This Irish Produced Feature Film, Directed and written by an Irish auteur, and with an all Irish All-Star Cast, made a 'splash' not only in Ireland but across the world. The financial success (and significant Return on Investment to all stakeholders) was – and still is – generating more revenues due to the continuing sale of this Film on many Global Streaming Platforms as well as sales from such other Revenue sources as the Score. Again, this demonstrates the ever-increasing confidence of Irish Producers to 'test the waters' with films which would not seem to attract such a large Global audience. Research does not explain why Screen Ireland or the BAI was not included in the Funding. But it is apparent that significant use of Business tools including Marketing was used throughout the Production Cycle.

Wolfwalker (2020). Directed by Tomm Moore, Screenplay by Will Collins, Starring (Voice Over Talent) Honor Kneafsey, Sean Bean, Tommy Tiernan, Maria Doyle Kennedy and many more. An all-Irish cast. Produced by Cartoon Saloon and Melusine. Budget $11 million Box Office $1,266, 570.

Short Summary and Review by Robert Ebert:[201] Cartoon Saloon, the studio behind "The Secret of Kells," "Song of the Sea," and "The Breadwinner," returns this year with what could be their best film, a rousing, lyrical, gorgeous adventure called "Wolfwalkers." This beautiful piece of work has echoes of other art from classic fairy tales to Studio Ghibli films about man's relation to nature like "Princess Mononoke," but it also develops its own robust, powerful voice. Textured in ways that family entertainment is rarely allowed to be and even more visually ambitious that the other Cartoon Saloon films, this is a special movie.Set in 1650, "Wolfwalkers" takes place against the backdrop of the English colonization of Ireland. Oliver Cromwell sends a hunter named Bill Goodfellowe (Sean Bean) to a remote outpost that has seen wolf attacks as the city grows into the woods around it. Bill's duty is to hunt and kill the wolves, but his daughter Robyn (Honor Kneafsey) aches to join him on his daily duties, frustrated by being left behind in a city that doesn't really want her father or her there. It's essential to remember that Robyn is an outsider too, her father forced into duty in a way that makes her a target of ridicule by local kids.



Giving this Animated Feature Film a 3.5 Star out of 4.0 Star rating, this Feature Film is filled with the History of early Ireland. It tells a long-ago tale of Cromwell and how his enormous Army invaded all of Ireland. This well-told feature film, while apparently not enjoying any return to investors, will achieve a significant Return on Investment over the next five to fifteen years. Animated Features produced anywhere in the world have a significant advantage compared to Live Action Films. As described elsewhere in this book, the Global Demand for animated Features and shorts is continually growing due to a number of factors including Demand by any number of Global Target Markets.

Streams of revenue from various sources, including a Theatrical Release and Global Online Streaming Platforms, demonstrates yet again how this 'hybrid model' of Production can achieve financial success to all stakeholders as well as the Irish People.

10.2 The Changing Distribution and Funding Landscape for Irish Producers

It is acknowledged Globally that Ireland has always been a Land of Storytellers. Our ability to captivate Audiences and Readers with our written and oral words and songs told in Novels, Films, recordings and poetry have contributed to the Global recognition of Ireland, its history

[201] https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/wolfwalkers-movie-review-2020

and culture. Storytelling in Screenplays and Scripts have significantly contributed to the Fifth Wave of new Success.

But a changing business landscape has also significantly contributed to this ever-growing success.

In an article by Far Out Magazine[202], What was the First Streaming Service for Movies, writer Michael Gordon reports that "…in 1998, a full nine years before Netflix established its streaming service, Hong Kong Telecom launched the world's first streamer."

This first streaming service, which was plagued by technical difficulties, lasted only four years. But this 'innovation' in broadcasting was followed by other streaming services that soon turned into Global Giants. As technological broadcasting innovations caught up with consumer demand, true Global Streaming Services for Feature Films, Television, Music and online Shopping soon followed. A Good Movie to Watch reports that there are now over 200 streaming services across the world. Some American services include the Streaming Giants Netflix, YouTube, Hulu, Philo, Fubo, Disney+, Apple+, Peacock, Hallmark Movies and many more.

Streaming services are also 'localised'. In Britain, they include ITV Hub, BBC iPlayer, RTE Player, Freeview, SKY and more. Every country (or large region) now has a Streaming Service which is relevant to its citizens and broadcasts programmes in many National Languages.

The diversity of Global Streaming Services has fragmented the market. As examples: when I was growing up in the United States, we only had a handful of Terrestrial channels including ABC, NBC and CBS and one local channel. In Ireland, when I first moved to my country in 1982, those who could afford a Television Set had a choice of RTE One and a few years later, RTE Two. Occasionally, depending on atmospheric conditions, some of us on the East Coast of the country could receive BBC. And that was it!

Now, as part of a Business Plan in any Irish Film Production, Producers must plan well ahead to attract an appropriate Distributor who can 'match' any Irish Film to the appropriate Global (and / or National) streaming services. Too, they must consider subtitling their Film into a number of different languages (or using a series of different soundtracks in other languages, or if Animated, re-dubbing their film) to meet the needs of the local geographic and markets they desire to target.

[202] https://faroutmagazine.co.uk/what-was-the-first-streaming-service-for-movies/

Since the advent and global growth of streaming services, the subsequent fragmentation has created both opportunities and threats for all Irish filmmakers. Opportunities because we now have ‘key entry points’ to the entire world. Threats because streaming globally can significantly increase production budgets.

Irish organisation who are relevant to Irish Filmmakers such as the Arts Council, Screen Ireland and the BAI keep these financial costs in mind when Production Teams apply for Grants and Soft Loans. The Irish Government, who has continually allocated more money to these key organisations, help to increase the likelihood of Global Success for all Irish Filmmakers in the Fifth Wave and well beyond.

10.3 Summary

This review and analysis of those Irish Feature Films which have had a significant positive impact on both the Definition of ‘Irish Cinema’ as well as National Cinemas and Filmmaking across the world have demonstrated how the ‘fragment hybrid-model’ of the Production Cycle can be used to great advantage.

Screen Ireland, the Arts Council and BAI are now supporting most, but not all, Production companies and producers by providing them with the funds to compete in global market against the Giants of many National Film Industries.

These factors, including Business Practices, will be used as part of this book continuing position on developing a New Definition for ‘Irish Cinema’. The world has changed significantly since Ireland created its first Feature Films, and broadcast some of them on a limited range of National Television stations. Those Broadcasts of our Films were supplemented by the adoption of VCR equipment in only a few Irish households. The demand for Feature Films from any country was supported by ‘Video Rental Stores’ including Blockbuster and Xtra-vision.

Today the world is a better place due to the fact that almost anyone can rent any feature film produced in any country on an online streaming platform. Often, thousands of Feature Films and Television programmes produced in almost all Nations across our world can be accessed for free.

Chapter 11 – Defining an 'Irish Cinema

11.1 Strands to include in a Final Definition

Any attempt to reach a Definition of Irish Cinema must first define a National Cinema as part of the Global Film Industry. Geoff King, in his book American Independent Cinema, provides one definition: "The story of American Independent Cinema in recent decades is one of innovation and enterprising filmmaking, whether on relatively lower or higher budgets. But it is also the story of the development of industrial and institutional frameworks that have provided the infrastructure for a sustained base of production."[203]

Ireland's filmmakers / Production Companies have not been in business since the very 'Dawn of Cinema' in the United States or France. Since the First Wave, we have had comparatively little time to develop a 'national theatrical' infrastructure. Some of that is already available to all Independent Filmmakers. Much more will be required if we are to successfully compete with the Global Film Industry.

King goes on to write, "The success of the bigger Independent Distributors, especially Miramax and New Line, has been based on their ability to achieve a crossover into larger audiences, beyond those of both the arthouse and specific social groups defined by class, ethnicity or gender. Miramax grew into the biggest name in the Indie scene through the use of a strategy often associated with the exploitation market, handling a number of films that leant themselves to controversial media coverage"[204] King goes on to cite a number of films distributed by Miramax. Controversial Feature Films included Scandal (1989), The Cook, the Thief, His Wife and Her Lover (1989), Tie Me Up, Tie Me Down! (1990) and You So Crazy (1994) all of which this Distribution company challenged after these films were given an X Rating. All stakeholders were 'thrilled' by the initial X Rating on the above Films. 'X' yields controversy which means that Cinema goers will flock to Cinemas to see what 'should not be seen'.

The Lesson: is once again simple. As P.T. Barnum, the 19th Century American showman and circus owner said, "There is no such thing as bad publicity."[205] Irish filmmakers have courted controversial topics since the First Wave of Irish Cinema began. Controversies surround Irish Films including Documentaries and Feature Films already cited above. 'Controversial' subjects in the past and present (in Ireland and many places in the world) include sex, drugs, alcohol, ethnicity and gender to name only a few. Independent

[203] King, Geoff. American Independent Cinema, page 16.
[204] Ibid, page 32.
[205] https://www.phrases.org.uk/meanings/there-is-no-such-thing-as-bad-publicity.html

Filmmakers in Ireland should embrace such controversial topics in order to attract news coverage, publicity and – occasionally – free advertising including Word of Mouth.

We have already discussed how Business Planning which includes Strategies, Tactics and Marketing can maximise the probability of financial success (as well as cultural success) for almost all Films of any type or genre. In a later chapter, this Student of Irish Cinema will provide a case study, based on real events, for his upcoming Feature Film, Dolphin Song. This Feature will be shot on the Beara Peninsula and Boston. We will also use locations in Canada and / or Puerto Rico to attract various tax incentive and Grants. Post Production will take place in the State of Illinois to attract additional Illinois State Film Tax Credits.

Toward the end of King's book on American Independent Cinema, he gives another lesson to Irish Filmmakers. To paraphrase this long entry, King writes how even small Irish Independent Filmmakers can 'fight' against the Godzilla's of the Global Industry, including large Production Companies (like Warner Brothers, Universal and Columbia) by stating in part, "…Hollywood is willing to embrace only a limited quota of genuine novelty and then only when underwritten by a 'star' director's name, or by the stars attracted by the presence of such figures.[206]

This 'marketing tactic' will also be illustrating when this student writes another case study about our Animated Feature Film, Lost Lovers… also cited above.

In the textbook A Companion of Film Theory (edited by Toby Miller and Robert Stan), they also contribute to an understanding and definition of 'Cinema'.

"A strand of national cinema analyses the national cinema in question into a larger international cinema to others (which) becomes a way to understand it."[207]

In other words, we define 'Irish Cinema' in part by comparing our films to the films produced by in all other nations. This concept of 'a strand' shall also become part of our new Definition. 'Cultural Industries' must also be considered as part of my final Definition of 'Irish Cinema'.

Miller and Stam go on to write, "In capitalist societies, film production has been by and large a form of commercial entertainment controlled by media corporations. Thus, the Frankfurt School coined the term "cultural industries" to call attention to the industrialization and commercialization of culture under capitalist relation of production…. Consequently, the

[206] King, Geoff. American Independent Cinema, page 262.
[207] Miller, Toby and Stan, Robert, A Companion to Film Theory, page 273.

concept of culture industries in film studies finds its paradigm in analyses of Hollywood as a distinctive mode of cinema production…"[208]

Many agree that 'national cinema' is difficult to define. Its meaning, as has been cited above, has been debated and argued by film books, teachers, critics, cinephile and students of Films across the world. As we have discussed above, many factors and concepts contribute to an understanding of national cinema: language, culture, music, locations and other cultural references written by a Director / Auteur, the screenwriter or an Actor who insists that the writer makes changes to the screenplay or script to reflect the cultural aspects they are determined to preserve.

As with auteur theory, many in the Global Film Industry as well as its students, have difficulty deciding on a single definition because it's so difficult define. In a bookly paper, *Where is National Cinema Today*, author Ian Chirstie states:

> I want to pose the issue of national cinema as a conundrum that sits problematically among film history, post-structural theory, and the operations of contemporary media policy. From one perspective, it is flourishing, keeping well over one hundred state, regional, and municipal agencies around the world in business. These can be seen every year at the Cannes Film Festival, where their stands cluster along the beach like medieval pavilions….
>
> From another perspective, it could be argued that none of this really makes much of an impression on the larger world of cinema, which remains dominated by the major studios and similar U.S.-based companies. Whatever Slovakia, Tunisia, or South Korea do to promote their films, the world still overwhelmingly watches *Harry Potter, The Dark Knight Rises, Taken* and their like. Films from the major U.S. studios earn between 70 and 90 percent of the total revenue (in the world).[209]

11.2 The Book is Correct but In-correct

Ian Christians is correct but also incorrect – why is he wrong but right? This book was correct when he wrote the article because the United States and its massive Film Industry owned the Global Marketplace. The table below (courtesy baripedia.org) demonstrates the domination of US films and tape rentals into countries all over the world. Finding a similar comparison of exports to the U.S. of 'foreign' produced films and tape rentals is

Exports from the United States in the form of film and tape rentals, 1986-2000. All values given in millions of constant 2000 dollars.

Country	1986	1990	1995	2000
United Kingdom	178	275	328	1,235
Germany	126	224	303	1,050
Netherlands	256	492	35	862
Japan	138	232	226	756
France	171	191	205	647
Canada	174	291	180	633
Spain	na	na	295	563
Italy	168	165	199	459
Australia	173	123	151	332
Brazil	na	na	105	237
Mexico	22	45	78	186
Belgium-Luxembourg	19	37	54	132
Sweden	na	na	73	108
South Korea	na	na	53	107
Rest of the world	na	na	654	1,545
Total exports	1,683	2,586	2,939	8,852

Theory, page 203.
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no longer available. But the following data from Statistica again demonstrates the Dominance of U.S. Film Producers:

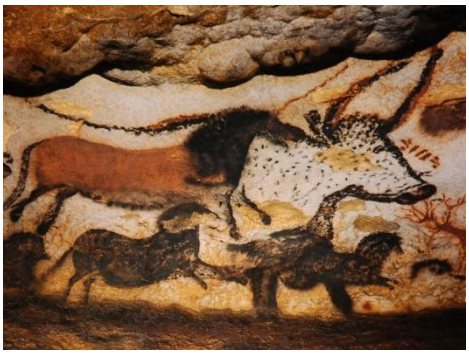
The United States and Canada – collectively known as the North American movie market – are home to one of the most influential film-producing industries worldwide. In terms of box office revenue, the region garnered 7.5 billion U.S. dollars in 2022, still far ahead of other economies across Asia and Europe like Japan and the United Kingdom. India was also the absolute global leader in the number of movie tickets sold that year, with China and the U.S. ranking second and third respectively. By another metric, however, North American cinema remains at the top of the game. As of mid-2024, all of the most expensive film productions in history were either made by or in collaboration with studios in the U.S. This includes the most recent iterations of successful franchises such as Pirates of the Caribbean, the Marvel Cinematic Universe, and Star Wars.[210]

Many countries have a growing Film Industry (I in their cases) including France, Germany, the United Kingdom, Canada, most of Eur-Asia (including India, the home of Bollywood and Japan), and these countries are fighting back. Many of the governments of these countries offer grants, soft loans, production loans, tax incentives and other support to both large and start-up Production companies, screenwriters and other talent. I emphasise 'Start-Up' just like my small Production Company.

The result of this short analysis is: Ian was right years ago but, if he rewrote his paper, would source additional data and economics on this subject area. He was right over 10 years ago but if he wrote the same comments now, he would be wrong.

11.3 Hollywood – the Master of Nationalism in Action

Human beings have always been fascinated by art, light and darkness. When I lectured Media students about the History of Film as part of my course on Screenwriting, I started the first lecture with a slide showing a cave lit up with the light of a camera. The light



showed a group of animals – early horses, cattle and human beings who were hunting them. I explained to the room full of fascinated students how with their cave paintings, early Human Beings told stories and many parts of their Culture which – a hundred thousand years later – could be viewed by men, women and children and interpreted by books. I also explained how, if you

[210] Film industry in the United States and Canada - statistics & facts | Statista

took an old hand-held camera using a flickering candle, took pictures using a full roll of film and edited it, you would have created one of the first ‘stop-action’ motion pictures. It had no voice but that early ‘revolution’ was adopted by many ‘producers, writers and cameramen’ who used those films in early Cinemas.

The ‘silent film’ early was the very start of a global film industry. Business people having no experience at all using an early motion camera ‘leaped in’ not only to entertain themselves, their co-workers, friends and early cinema goers, but to enjoy a very, very modest return on their few dollars of investment. The United Kingdom, the United States, France, Germany, Italy and many more nations were part of this wonderfully silent era. If the readers of this Book enjoy ‘silent film’s as much as I do, they will find old silent black and white films produced by and staring Charlie Chaplin. One of the greatest film makers of all time, his brilliant creativity fostered not only an Industry in England but ‘across the Pond’ in the United States. Films made by Charlie’s, exported and seen by people in the United States helped in large part to foster the Industry not only in the U.S. but also across the world.

One of his greatest characters, “The Tramp”, has become an Icon of our era. Mister Chaplain was also prone to make fun of many political figures. In The Great Dictator, one of the greatest films of all time, Chaplain impersonates Adolph Hitler. I was told not long ago by a fellow film buff that when Hitler watched Charlie lifting his right arm in a ‘Salute’ the real Dictator laughed at the screen he was watching Chaplin’s film on.

Chaplain’s many talents and business qualities allowed him to from his own company, United Artists. As he grew wealthy, he took great pride in his independence from other Production Companies:

> Chaplin wrote, directed, produced, edited, starred in, and composed the music for most of his films. He was a perfectionist, and his financial independence enabled him to spend years on the development and production of a picture. His films are characterised by slapstick combined with pathos, typified in the Tramp's struggles against adversity. Many contain social and political themes, as well as autobiographical elements. He received an Honorary Academy Award for "the incalculable effect he has had in making motion pictures the art form of this century" in 1972, as part of a renewed appreciation for his work. He continues to be held in

high regard, with *The Gold Rush*, *City Lights*, *Modern Times*, and *The Great Dictator* often ranked on lists of the greatest films.[211]

Charlie Chaplin is, in my opinion, the founder and first auteur of the Modern Cinema we enjoy today. If it were not for Chaplain and the success of his company, and the foresight he had to distribute his many films across the world, few people would have seen any films, silent or talkie. Due to the lack of demand, Production of any Feature Films in the United States alone would have been considerably delayed.

11.4 The KING Marches into New York City



This is not the first feature film produced by a United States Producer but this Film Classic is now a great metaphor. Who can possibly forget the Original Black & White as it showed the Gorilla climbing the Empire State Building while gently holding the Beautiful White Blonde (Fay Wray wearing a silken white nightgown) who screamed at Kong (while beating him on his large hand): "Let me down!" Or the World War One biplanes strafing 'The Monster' as whole United States squadrons attempted to kill this 'beast'? Produced by RKO Radio Pictures and released on March 7, 1933, this was beginning of Franchise which created not only incredible global profits for many other Production companies but spawned many other franchises. The Stop Action industry (used in King Kong, 1933) has advanced at the rate of knots – stop action moved over for 'the blue screen'. This was replaced by the 'green screen' which offered higher production values which, combined with CGI (Computer Generated Imagery) can make entire Cities disappear into the Pacific Ocean (such as San Francisco in the Action Hero Feature Film starring Dwayne Johnson, San Andreas).

Today, many producers are also using AI as part of their productions. While not a subject of this Book, I often wonder out loud "Will Artificial Intelligence eventually replace writers of Novels and Screenplays? Will this technology replace actors?" The answer is, I'm afraid, possibly. Not in my lifetime but the odds are great that any student who reads this in the next 10 years will see a feature film made entirely with AI created stories, actors and a

[211] Charlie Chaplin - Wikipedia

‘world’ they create in the Cloud – settings simply projected by those advanced minds onto a green screen for shooting or, when this technology becomes even more advance, simply edited by a co-AI editor / Producer, placed on the Internet, and sold to those living at home on an AI Streaming platform owned by a non-human Corporation.

Now think of similar Film Franchises to King Kong produced by American and ‘foreign’ production companies across the world. From Godzilla to Transformers; Iron Man to The Incredible Hulk; the Captain America Series; Star Wars to Indiana Jones; Jurassic Park to the Avengers. Even Television has picked up this profitable banner, waving it proudly with series including The Avengers and Doctor Who. All represent the efforts of the RKO Radio Pictures organisation who used ‘Horror’ as a means of gaining business traction resulting in high ROI’s for all stakeholders.

11.5 The Coming of Age of the Action Hero

In many ways, Kong (the Immense Gorilla) was one of the first Action Heroes in Cinematic History. His actions, though construed by many humans as murderous, sought to protect Ann Durrow (played by Fay Wray) from being sacrificed by a tribe of Island natives to their God Kong. The giant Gorilla rescues her. Saving her life, this ‘Ape’ protects her to the best of his ability right through the end of the film.

Since then, the Action Hero Figure, both men and women (and occasionally even younger men / women and children) have been used by screenwriters and auteurs. Think of just some of the Action Heros who have helped major studios to create profitable decades-long franchises.

Dwayne Johnson (San Andreas and many more), Liam Neeson (Taken and more), Sylvester Stallone (Rocky), Brendan Fraser (The Mummy), Tom Cruise (Mission Impossible), Harrison Ford (Indiana Jones and others); Carrie Fisher (Star Wars), Cameron Diaz, Drew Barrymore and Lucy Liu (Charlies Angels), Yu Shu Lien (Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon), Linda Hamilton (and Arnold Schwarzenegger (Terminator), Sigourney Weaver (Alien and AI), Charlize Theron (Mad Max) – many more Action Heroes could be included.

Countries other than the United States also incorporate Action Heros which have resulted in a few Film Franchises. In the Republic of India, Bollywood film star Aamir Khan lent his popular ‘weight’ to help create the Dhoom Franchise, produced by Yash Raj Films. Jackie Chan, the Hong Kong marshal arts Hero and one of the first ‘Asian’ action heroes in Film History, ‘kung-foo’d’ his way to stardom with the Film Franchise Police Story.

Jean-Claude Van Damme, the Belgium Strong Man, is famous for Bloodsport, Universal Soldier and many European action pictures.

What is somewhat unfortunate is that most of the above European and Asian Hero Pictures were Produced by U.S. Production Companies or co-produced with U.S. companies. As cited above, many European Production and Distribution companies do not have the financial muscle or breadth of global distribution to 'pull off' the development of a Global Film Franchise.

Ireland, as small as it is, have a few 'Action Heroes' but regrettably Irish Producers have been unsuccessful in leveraging their 'star power' for the full benefit of Irish Production companies or the Irish economy. These stars include: Liam Neeson (already cited above); Aiden Gillen / Luke McQuillan and Pierce Brosnan (James Bond, Mama Mia and Mrs Doubtfire). During my research about Action Heroes in Ireland, I could find no women.

The economic state of Irish Cinema does not depend upon Action Hero Feature Films. 'Action Hero' films can be incredibly expensive to produce. But this student's hope is that someday in the near future, a few well known Irish Production Companies can pull their resources together including grants from Screen Ireland, local Irish Finance and Global Finance. By creating a screenplay which would appeal to one of the above Irish male stars (and also grooming a few good women actors to be Action Heroes), there is a reasonable likelihood Ireland could produce a great, high-impact Action Hero Feature Film which will successfully compete with U.S. Produced Action Hero Films.

My upcoming Feature Film Dolphin Song is an Action Hero saga. The 'Hero', Michael McCarthy, becomes the Hero of this film (and the Novel by the same name) when he rescues his wife and son (Dawn and Jason) from certain death during a force 10 gale on the North Atlantic. Later, in the Third Act, Dawn and Jason also become Heroes when they make the hard decision to be transformed into Dolphins in order to stay with Michael (who has also been transformed into a Dolphin) forever. While this Action Screenplay (and Heroes) is decidedly Irish in voice, world, plot and character (this is a story of Faith, Adventure and Eternal Love) and is in no way like the films Alien or Star Wars, I like to think that when it is produced and distributed, the characters alone will contribute to Irish Action Heroes.

While it is unlikely to become a Film Franchise, I am convinced that Dolphin Song will contribute not only to my start-up Production Company, the Irish economy and the current and future state of Irish Cinema. With, I might add, a lot of luck.

11.6 Summary

To summarise this chapter, we must again ask a few questions. Does National Cinema still exist? The answer, of course, is yes it does. Is a National Cinema still relevant to any producer or film 'artist' in any country? Yes it is. Does the United States hold a 'lock' on the Film Industry? Undoubtedly.

However, and going back to Business Practices and Actions, because Hollywood now dominates the Global market, many small film Production companies – even in a small country like Ireland – can run rings around that 'King Kong Action Hero' competitor. I have already discussed the importance of applying a Business and Marketing Plan as well as professional advisors very early in the Film Production Cycle. If a Producer plans well, and even with limited resources, he or she can 'kill' the King Kongs of this world.

While the Irish Cinema industry will never become as large as the Hollywood Cinema Industry, the U.S. Industry is not as agile as smaller companies. U.S. based Production Companies will have a large number of films in development, in Prep, or in Production. This 'Pipeline' of products is often 'set in cement'. Smaller companies, on the other hand, are usually much more adept than larger companies. Assuming a screenplay has been approved by its Board of Directors or owner(s) and finance is in place as well as Global Distribution, an Irish Production company can launch a high-value competitive film against a Hollywood film more quickly and with increased odds of 'winning in the marketplace. Too, Irish production companies are usually much more flexible than larger companies abroad. As an example: let's assume that a small Irish production company, even a start-up like mine, heard about a Feature Film Warner Brothers had in development. The Irish owners also heard that it would take that large company over 4 years to complete and launch a continuation of a Film Franchise such as James Bond.

The Irish owners hire a great screenwriter or co-writers. Deciding to write something rather unique for the market, they contact Author Tom Richards and option the Hysterical Comedy Trilogy set primarily in London, England (but also in Ireland), The Mary Sweet Crime Series. The Irish Producer hires a small marketing team to develop a highly-profitable 'niche strategy' that will position the first Mary Sweet Comedy Feature Film against often very serious Crime Caper, Action Hero Franchises.

Inspector Mary Sweet is already an Action Hero(ine), according to the Novels' reader reviews. Having successfully raised all necessary finance to greenlight the project (including production, post, marketing and Distribution), this small Irish Production company makes incredible profits (not as much as a Disney Franchise but for an Irish company? Amazing profitability). Disney, hearing about the Mary Sweet series, contacts the producer and

stakeholders offering to co-produce the next Franchise Film. That Film, launched only 12 months after the first film appeared in Cinemas, did so well that Disney helped to finance any number of Mary Sweet Franchise Action Heroine Films.

This really is possible for any small company in any industry. The ability to ‘run rings around Giant King Kongs’ comes down to the internal and external resources available to those small companies, or by being ‘very clever’ in how management spends very small financial resources.

My ‘mentor’ Producer/Director Liam O’Neill used to tell me as we both struggled to find investors for his early films: “Tom, if they can do it (meaning very large and profitable Production Companies in the United States), I can do it. And if I can do it, you can do it. And if we can both do it, then anyone with a good education in Film Studies, from any country, can also do it. The only other thing they need is intense hands-on training.”

Liam was right. Irish Cinema is, we both thought, in very good hands as younger people pick up the reins of small Production Companies. And like Liam said, and I entirely agree, “If we can do it, then so can you. Failure is often not an option but is how anyone of us learns. If you fail at raising finance for your first feature film this year, then pick yourself up, dust yourself down, stand up and try again.” Which is simply a part of life and living.

Chapter Twelve

Moving To a Single Definition of an "Irish" Film

To develop a definition of an 'Irish' film, that is 'whatever we need it to be', we must keep in mind the primary objectives and discourse of this book: it is at least in part concerned with the economics of Irish films and Irish filmmakers; of the financial contribution that Irish filmmakers derive from their activities that enables reinvestment in future feature film projects; the book is concerned therefore with films that financially enrich *Irish* filmmakers; that 'showcase' Ireland's cultural heritage; and that contribute to the further development of the Irish filmmaking 'industry' (and consequently, the Irish economy). And going back to our definition of 'Industry' (cited in the Introduction), the book is necessarily concerned about financial profit: of those factors that can positively contribute to the profit of any 'Irish' film, where those profits are received by the principle players that contribute to the creation of an 'Irish' film, and where those profits lead to the further development of the Irish filmmaking 'industry' as a whole.

Therefore, defining an 'Irish Feature Film' is, in some ways, about tracking the money. Using the above arguments, this book will rely on the following as a definition for an Irish Feature Film:

An 'Irish Film' is defined, and shall be limited to, any feature film that is:

a) Produced, or co-produced, by an Irish-based production company that will benefit financially from those feature film(s) that they produce or co-produce; *and*
b) Where Directed and/or written by a non-Irish national, that the Director and/or Writer are contracted by the Irish production company; *or*
c) Where an Irish production company is *not* involved in the production of a film, that the feature film must be Directed *and/or* Written by a person of Irish nationality and whose permanent residence(s) is/are in Ireland, *and* where any financial gain from their filmmaking activities are deposited within the Irish financial system (thereby contributing to the Irish economy); *and*
d) Where an Irish production company is not involved in a film's production, but is Directed and/or written by an Irish national, the film must be based on a story premise that concerns Ireland and its culture, including Irish literature or Irish history; *or*

e) Where it is *perceived* that a film produced or co-produced by an Irish production company, and written and/or directed by an Irish person, or directed by an Irish non-national who is contracted by the Irish production company, leads to the further development of the Irish film industry, where that 'industry' is defined as the community of Irish filmmakers residing in Ireland.

f) The definition of 'Irish Cinema' must also include the strands of national cinema and film industries as cited above.

12.1 The Above Elements Consolidated into a Single Definition

Irish Cinema is best defined as a filmic expression that is culturally Irish in authorship and intention, economically sustainable through hybridized production models, and globally positioned through entrepreneurial engagement with audiences.

By 'grouping' and 'selecting' from the above possible elements, I come to a final definition:

> ***'Irish Cinema' is defined as and Irish Film Produced or co-produced by an Irish Company and / or its subsidiaries; financed in part by an Irish Production company with the possible assistance of the Irish Government; includes at least one Producer, Screenwriter, or Actor born in either the Republic or Northern Ireland; and supports the morals, national identity, future 'National Industry' and culture of Ireland. This new definition must also include a portion of all profits deriving from an Irish Produced film to return to Ireland, thereby supporting the Future of our Industry as well as the People of Ireland.***

By using this definition, analysing 'Irish film' within a context of how Irish filmmaking activity financially impacts Irish filmmakers, and the further development of an Irish Feature Film Industry, becomes clearer. As examples, Producer Liam O'Neill's *How Harry Becomes a Tree Harry,* and Producer Tom Richards *Lost Lovers*, and *Dolphin Song* (cited in previous Chapters) are decidedly Irish because they are produced and/or written by Irish people (or non-Irish Directors that have been contracted by the Irish producer) and involve an Irish production company that received into Ireland, or will receive into Ireland, financial benefits derived from the creative and/or production activities derived from these films. *Man of Aran*, *The Quiet Man*, and *Ryan's Daughter* are *not* Irish (though they are 'Irish influencers' in that they have had a significant impact on the formation of Irish stereotypes) because they were not produced, directed, or written by Irish citizens. While other Irish people (actors, crew, and similar) were employed as part of these films' production activities, and though money was undoubtedly spent within the Irish economy as part of those productions, the creators of these films were not Irish, and the primary financial gain derived

from the marketing, sales, and distribution of the films did not accrue to Irish nationals, Irish production companies, nor were retained in Ireland by Irish nationals. Similarly, *Saving Private Ryan* is not an Irish film even though significant parts of the film were shot in Ireland, resulting in monetary spend within Ireland that is directly associated with this project. Too, Neil Jordan's *The Brave One* (cited above) is not Irish because the film was produced (and therefore financed) by US production companies; nor should the recent *PS I Love You* be considered an Irish film even though it is based on Cecelia Ahern's Irish novel, and – at least nominally – concerns an Irish character. More examples: Kirsten Sheridan's recent film, *August Rush*, would not be considered an Irish film using this definition because it was not produced by an Irish production company, nor did its story premise concern Ireland or its culture.

But some films that have long been considered as not belonging to an 'Irish Film' category are decidedly Irish, when using this definition. For instance, *Michael Collins* is decidedly an Irish film (despite a debate about the extent of its 'Irishness') because it was written and directed by an Irish national and resident (Neil Jordan) who financially benefited from its production, and its story premise focussed on Irish history (despite the fact that it was produced by a British production company, was distributed by an American distribution company, and received funding sourced outside of Ireland.) Similarly, *In America* is defined here as an Irish film, even though it was shot outside of Ireland and received funding from 'foreign' sources, because Irish national and resident Jim Sheridan co-wrote the screenplay (with daughters Kirsten and Naomi), directed the project, financially benefited from the film, and the story's premise concerned the plight of an Irish immigrant family in the United States, a theme central to Irish culture. The above examples of 'Irish Films' have also significantly contributed to the financial development of Ireland's production companies; the growth of this Irish business across our country; an increase in employment of Irish actors, screenwriters and others. This 'business' which was once defined as a cottage industry is developing so rapidly that it is possible Ireland may one day create not only an Irish Industry but also a Global Industry.

This definition means that to be considered 'Irish', a film does not have to be shot in Ireland; it does not necessarily have to employ an Irish director; nor does its central story premise have to revolve around Ireland or Irish people. An 'Irish' film, using this definition, could be co-produced by an Irish production company (based in Ireland and owned by an Irish citizen resident in Ireland); could be a horror story whose creative world is based in Hungary (as well as shot there); could be directed by a French woman, written by a Spaniard,

star Hungarian actors, and be co-financed using a variety of international sources. What makes the above example an 'Irish film' is the fact that it is co-produced by an Irish citizen living in Ireland whose Irish-based production company will financially benefit should the film be produced and make a profit.

As has been discussed, and based on an analysis of Ireland's film activity, part of the problem with the development of a vibrant film 'Industry' in Ireland has resulted from a definition that is far too narrow in scope, and that has worked to influence producers, writers, and directors to produce films that are simply unattractive to a wider global audience. Historically, Irish filmmakers have reacted to a number of factors including established (and negative) Irish filmic stereotypes, indigenous institutions (such as the Catholic Church), and historic conflict (the Troubles) in making creative decisions regarding their films' premises, as well as the story vision and 'style' with which those stories are shot and edited. The definition of what comprises an 'Irish' film and even the troublesome discussion of what should be the focus of a National Cinema for Ireland has, at times, resulted in a filmic 'voice' and 'vision' that is highly parochial, and arguably, won't appeal to audiences outside (and often inside) this country.

This student of Irish Cinema has long recognised the ongoing debates and even arguments academics and Irish filmmakers have had with regards to a widely accepted definition of what is an 'Irish Film' and what is 'Irish Cinema'. I have already cited many who work in or study Irish and / or National Cinema. There is a good possibility that some would 'embrace' the new definition I offer above.

Below, I consolidate some citations I have already used and which have been placed in this book footnotes:

Martin McLoone, assessing and reacting to *Waking Ned Devine*, said: '…for a film that uses its landscape setting to register the familiar markers of Irishness that it trades on, it was not even shot in Ireland. This seems to confirm the shoddiness and inauthenticity of the whole project….The film trades on a blatant recycling of outrageous clichés and on rehashing old myths about rural Ireland.'

McLoone, is of course, discussing the use of Irish Tropes and the fact that it was not shot in Ireland. But this student's new definition is adamant that an 'Irish Film' does not have to be shot in Ireland to be defined as being a part of 'Irish Cinema'.

Ruth Barton successfully argues that, historically, many Irish films were a reaction to global Irish stereotypes: 'Faced with these alienating images, it is not surprising that cultural

apologists within Ireland should seek an alternative body of imagery which addressed itself to the realities of Irish life, free from the straightjacket of stereotypes and misrepresentation.'

Roddy Flynn and Tony Tracy '…discuss the self-imposed limits they placed on the work regarding what the notion of an "Irish Cinema" actually means within the confines of this dictionary. Tracy and Flynn argue that their choices are "influenced by a common sense definition of a film text: live action, structured by narrative, feature length and intended for big screen exhibition".'

Other books and practitioners of Irish Cinema have 'tossed around' a definition of our growing Industry since the very start of the First Wave. As I have cited in a number of Chapters, the 'old definition' of Irish Cinema never included such important factors as financial considerations, profits generated from Irish Produced or Co-Produced Films being funnelled back to Ireland or similar 'Business considerations'. Some past definitions included very important factors such as the inclusion of Irish culture; Irish Directors, Producers and / or Writers; whether or not an 'Irish Film' was shot in the thirty-six counties and / or other locations in the world; or if – despite having Irish A-List Stars as part of the cast (such as The Quiet Man) – it was an Irish Film at all.

This student offers a subtle yet important shift in this new Definition. By gathering all the strands together, I offer a single definition which should help contemporary and future Irish Production Companies, books and academics who study Irish Films, and those simply interested in tracking the further development of Irish Cinema, to move ahead.

In short, arguing about a Definition is distracting. To move forward, this book' new Definition hopes to stop that ongoing argument and instead to use our energy to write and produce great Irish Films that will be enjoyed by Global Audiences for years to come.

The definition proposed above sets out to explode the traditional definition of 'Irish film' into a much broader, much more practical definition that allows analysts of the Irish film 'industry' to better understand how any film activity that involves an Irish national producer, director, or writer living in Ireland contributes to our country's filmmaking objectives. Too, it hopes to re-focus filmmakers' creative decision making away from what their projects 'must' contain (stories about Ireland that repudiate established stereotypes, for instance) toward decision making that views creative choices as part of a broader mission that will lead to financial success resulting in the firm establishment of a healthy, and growing, Irish Feature Film Industry.

12.2 Reflection on Globalization and Identity in Contemporary Irish Cinema

The contemporary Irish film industry occupies a unique position within the global media ecology. Irish filmmakers now operate in a landscape that is simultaneously national, regional, and international. The emergence of the Fifth Wave marks a decisive shift from earlier models of cultural defensiveness toward one of confident participation in global storytelling.

Globalisation has enabled Irish producers to access unprecedented levels of funding, distribution, and audience reach through co-production treaties, streaming platforms, and transnational partnerships. Yet, despite this outward expansion, Irish Cinema has largely retained its cultural integrity. Films such as *The Quiet Girl* and *Wolfwalkers* demonstrate that stories rooted in local language, landscape, and mythology can achieve worldwide resonance when delivered with universal emotional clarity and professional industrial backing.
This duality - local authenticity combined with global accessibility - has become the hallmark of contemporary Irish filmmaking.

The Irish film community's ability to collaborate across borders while preserving its linguistic, thematic, and creative distinctiveness suggests that globalisation need not erode cultural identity; rather, it can reinforce it. In this respect, Irish Cinema exemplifies the modern ideal of a *glocal* industry: one that draws strength from its national roots even as it speaks to the world.

Chapter Thirteen

The Future of Ireland's New Film Industry

Like many Producers, Directors, Screenwriters – and may I say 'auteur' among Irish Filmmakers – be they in Ireland, the United States, France, Germany or all over the world, I too am an optimist. In a few years – well within this student's lifetime – our 'industry' with a small 'i' shall grow into a giant of an Industry with a Capital 'I'.

The reasons for our skyrocketing growth have been cited in the many articles, films, novels, histories, textbooks and other writers I have already quoted in previous Chapters.

In his well-researched book, The Film Industry, which is about Irish and Global Cinemas across our world, Roman Espejo, the Book Editor, writes:

"American psychologist Stephan Littger has interviewed 21 "Hollywood Directors". Since eight of them are non-Americans, (the) EU's categorization of Hollywood is pure national-American which even here appears out of focus. Wolfgang Peterson, the German Director responsible for epic dramas like *Troy* and *Poseidon*, says to Littger:

"When you leave your country for Hollywood, they say 'now he's lost his soul and it's all very American!'. I think that's all complete bullshit. Simply look at any movies or the movies of other European Directors who work here. They bring their heritage and upbringing with them."[212]

Which, of course, they do. Today's Irish Directors, Screenwriters, Producers and Production companies search for opportunities across the world. They make films, or will make films, that will meet the demand not only for the Irish Market but for the Global Audience Target Market. After years of attempting to incorporate some elements of Business Planning into Production Cycles, all stakeholders in any Irish Film today seek to incorporate all elements of Professional Business Planning into every aspect of their individual Productions and work hard to use a Professional Marketing Team – either full-time or part-time, to make profits and an exceptional Return on Investment for all stakeholders as well as the people of Ireland.

Later in his book, this editor states, "Hollywood thrives when the economy dives. Domestic and (international) box office revenues in five of the past seven recession years dating back to the 1960's (have significantly risen). While budget conscious consumers in today's economic downturn may hold off buying that 50-inch Plasa Television, it seems they always put together the money to go to the movies."

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[212] Espejo, Roman, (ed). The Film Industry, page 79.

While this ‘history’ was written and edited in 2009, what is true then is still true today and always will be. Economists from all nations have long researched Recessions. On average, a world-wide recession occurs every seven to ten years. Due to the current United States Administration, it is likely the American people will experience a Recession or economic downturn during President Trump’s administration. Should that occur, the ‘fall-out’ from the United States economy will impact all economies in the world. Trump’s Tariffs have already placed our Irish Economy – as well as all European Economies, the Indian Economy and many other Global economies – in peril.

Irish Filmmakers who take note of the present tide of unemployment hitting the United States and many other nations will take note of a possible downturn in the Irish economy. Better prepared than ever, and with the financial resources ready to meet the incoming Tide Wave of possible world-wide economic collapse, we shall meet the challenge by creating Irish Films which resonate across the globe.

This is our future. A future of ‘glad tidings’ for not only our Small Nation but for any Nation who joins with us. Ever history, Irish filmmakers of all kinds have worked together as one, consolidated Independent Film Community. We are the ‘inspired, imagined community’ of Irish filmmaking. We are already reaching out to other filmmakers across the world. Soon, we shall ‘hold hands together’ to become ‘one inspired imagined community’ of Global Independent Filmmakers.

Wolfgang Peterson is correct. If you leave (Ireland, Germany or any other Nation) and go to Hollywood, many in our business of filmmaking will say ‘You’ve lost your soul and your way.’ But like that great German Filmmaker countered, “That’s all complete bullshit!”

The world is a better place for filmmakers of all kinds. We strive to bring images, sound, words and music to flickering screens across the world. God willing, this student of Irish Cinema will be around long enough to contribute to a new Wave of Irish Cinema. A Sixth Wave. And if I am not around, there will other students of ‘Irish Cinema’ who will follow me.

I will end this Book with a very relevant quotation for this subject matter:

‘We don’t have an industry in Ireland, we have film-making activity.’

Bob Quinn, Imagining Irelands Conference, IFI, Dublin, November 2002.

But today, only twenty-three years later, we do.

Chapter Fourteen

Case Studies of Two Irish Films Now in Development

Dolphin Song and Lost Lovers

To illustrate how business practices can be included in any Irish Production Cycle, I will now include two Case Studies. Both of the Feature Films this student of Irish Cinema presents shall include only some of the Business thinking and Marketing strategies and tactics my Global Marketing and Business Team shall use to a) attract large investors and appropriate distributors b) establish and increase awareness of our chosen geographic target markets to both Projects and c) position both Projects as stories that are relevant and culturally significant to Irish Cinema, all stakeholders, the Irish Diaspora and our key Audience Groups.

14.1 Dolphin Song (anticipated Global Release, 2027). Directed, Written and Produced by Tom Richards. Production Company: Storylines Entertainment Limited and its U.S. subsidiary Storylines Entertainment LLC. Distributed by (currently in negotiations). Starring (unknown, a list of Irish Actors has been selected and given to key Directors of both companies). Budget: (unknown – we estimated a Production budget of $60 million which does not include a significant Global Marketing Budget). Locations: Boston and the Beara Peninsula, County Cork Ireland. Other locations or Post Production shall be selected due to lower costs or the attraction of Grants and Soft Loans. Dolphin Song is based on the Number One Global Bestselling Novel by Tom Richards.

Logline: overwhelmed by the horrifying death of her husband and soulmate, a bitter young American is forced to reconnect with life's mysteries. Finally learning that love truly is forever, she is at last able to heal her traumatized son – and herself.

The Above Logline can be reduced to the single question the Antagonist, Dawn McCarthy, asks her Priest in the Castletownbere Catholic Church after she and her young son, Jason, have lost her husband Micheal in the tragic sinking of their Trawler.

"Father, is it possible to love someone so completely they never die?"

The Business Plan: Below is the Pitch this Producer used at a Film and Book Festival in London, 2024. It shall be revised to reflect increasing in prices for A-List Actors, new locations, a slightly revised Screenplay and other Production and Marketing related expenses. This 'short' version is based on a PowerPoint Card Deck. It is too long to include all salient points for Irish Producers who require a similar PowerPoint Presentation to pitch to investors, Co-Producers or distributors.

The ‘deck’ below uses all Business planning that this student and my small Global Team developed over two years:

A Proposal for Co-Producers & Private Investors

Dolphin Song

The Feature Film

Based on the Novel by Tom Richards

Screenplay by Tom Richards

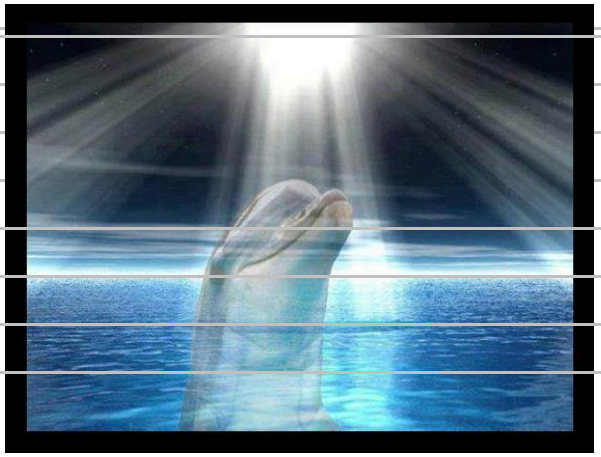
Produced by Storylines Entertainment Ltd

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Co-Production & Investor Proposal provided to you by Storylines Entertainment Limited is based on one consistent fact: entertainment in all forms and in all global markets is ever- increasing and is becoming even more profitable not only to the companies involved but also to their investors.

The feature film, DOLPHIN SONG, is based on the #1 Global Bestselling and Award Winning Novel of the same name. We believe that its story, genres and target audience will allow us to leverage that increasing demand for great films. This is why we hope you’ll consider this proposal to enjoy an exceptional Return on Investment.

The sections below paint a picture of a superb investment opportunity. We are available online to discuss this with those individuals and companies who may be interested.



Cross-Genre:

Dolphin Song will appeal to a wide range of demographics and Target Audience Groups. It is a story of Romance, Adventure/Sea-story, Magical Realism, Faith and a Psychological Thriller.

Following the Tragic Death at sea of his father, Michael, Jason becomes Mute. Dawn searches everywhere for a cure but until he's back with his Da', Jason can't and won't talk.

ynopsis

Bostonian Dawn McCarthy's life is shattered following a profound double tragedy. Michael, her Irish husband, drowns in a fiery boating accident off the southwest coast of Ireland. Their only child, Jason, who has witnessed his

father's death, is diagnosed with traumatic mutism and no longer speaks. Following a series of failed therapies in Boston, Dawn believes her son will never talk again.

Rejecting the doctor's advice, Dawn returns with Jason to the remote Irish fishing village of Kilcastle where her husband had lived and died. There, along the rugged Irish Atlantic coastline, she hopes to find a cure for her son. But it is not easy for Dawn. She faces daily reminders of what might have been. The sudden appearance of a wild dolphin delivers profound new hope. In the days that follow, Dawn witnesses a powerful bond grow between Jason and the dolphin as the boy takes his first small steps towards healing. It is only then that she suspects the enigmatic mammal is much more than she had at first supposed.



Dolphin Song is a tale of terrifying tragedy, magical

Irish legends and eternal love. Dawn's voyage takes audiences on an unforgettable journey where those we have loved and lost are ***not gone forever***.

Instead, we need only take a leap of faith t find them again. The story is ***contemporary*** and set in

The Elevator Pitch:

If the writer/producer of this feature film were to have the good fortune to meet you online or at your office, and if we climbed into an elevator together, I know that I'd have only 30 seconds to capture your attention. This is what I would say to you, given that opportunity: The film is based on the Global Number One Bestselling Novel *Dolphin Song*. Think of a combination of four very successful Feature Films: **The Big Blue**, **The Perfect Storm**, **Whale Rider** and **Lorenzo's Oil**. That captures the essence of *Dolphin Song,* both the film and the novel, and is why I hope you'll read this proposal and the screenplay."

The Primary Characters

Dawn McCarthy (30s) – a wonderful mother from Boston. When she first meets Michael in Kilcastle, prior to their marriage, she's like a fish out of water. She doesn't understand how the Irish speak, drink or enjoy themselves. After their marriage and the sinking, this person of deep faith comes to believe the implausible: that a man or a woman can transform themselves into something wonderfully amazing: A dolphin, just like her husband has become.

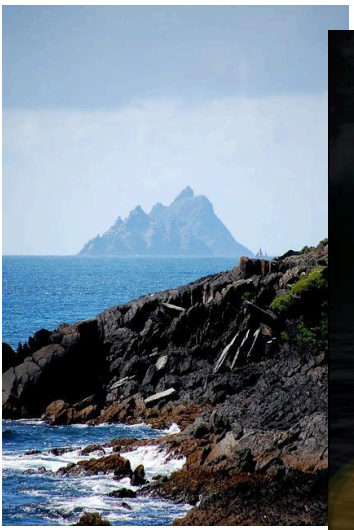
Michael McCarthy (late 30s/early 40s) – a hard working Irish fisherman. When Michael first meets Dawn romantic sparks fly. Also a musician, Michael surprises Dawn with his sensitivity and, when he first takes her to the magical Island of Solas Mor and proposes to her, Dawn is soon pregnant with Jason.

Jason McCarthy – Dawn's 6-year-old son. A rambunctious, talkative, and intelligent boy, when Jason sees his father drown in the tragic sea accident, he chooses not to talk anymore. When he sees a spark of something magical in a the Unique Dolphin's eye, he knows that it's the soul and love of his father reaching out to him again.

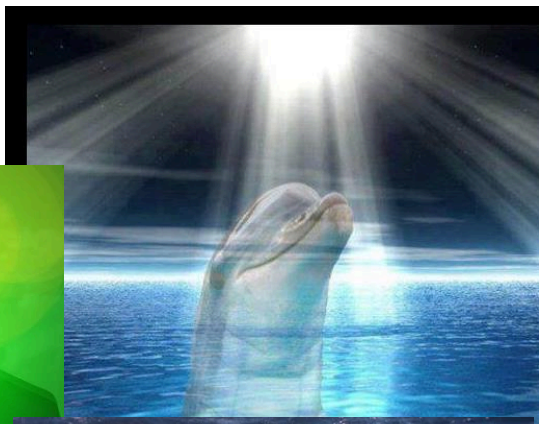
Margaret McCarthy (70s/80s) – Michael's mother is an amazing woman and fit as a fiddle. She takes Dawn under her wing when she moves back to Kilcastle following Michael's

Below is a link to our current Mood Movie. This gives you some idea of not only the visual approach to this film but also some of the plot and story. The Tone of the story depends on where we are in the film. Some of it is highly romantic. At other times, it is adventurous or tragic. At other times it is mystical and spiritual. Dolphin Song Mood Movie © 2024 Storylines:

Dolphin Song Mood Movie (click to view)









Song Brings this Tale of Magic to Life: Christy Moore is one of Ireland's favourite and most famous songwriters, singers and musicians. His song, *The Voyage*, encapsulates the mystical tale of *Dolphin Song*: its themes, the loving relationship between two partners and their child, and how hard it is to navigate through the storms of life. We are in contact with Mr Moore's agent and are confident of receiving permission to use this song. The music and the lyrics are here and you can watch Christy, a wonderful Irishman, sing, laugh and play:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xYZXbU_d_7c

In the screenplay and the novel, Michael sings this beautiful song to Dawn at a pub in Ireland.

Because he is also a musician, he plays

the uilleann pipes with a group of Irish Traditional musicians. Then, he dances with Dawn and Jason just before the tragedy that most think will separate this family forever.

Target Audience

The Storylines Marketing Team has spent a great deal of time analysing the demand for films such as Dolphin Song. Some of our findings include:

* **High Demand for Stories based in Ireland** – the Irish diaspora across the world continues to demand content based in, or about, Ireland. This demographic, almost 500 million strong, are a also a key driver of increased audience attendance in Global cinemas.
* **The Genre and its influence on demand** – some of the largest successes and highest returns in theatrical releases are dominated by Romance, Legend, Faith and Adventure. Recent Oscar nominees underscore this fact, as well as the above point about films based in Ireland or using Irish actors. This will also drive sales of tickets to see Dolphin Song, as well as online streaming, merchandise, some DVD sales (a slowing market), online games and similar
* **Gender / Age Range** – due to the genre and the story, this feature film would be considered 'gender neutral'. That is, both men and women would choose to see this feature film. Because it is an entertaining family film with some swearing and some content which only adults will understand, the film will receive a rating of either 'G' or 'PG' in the United States.

Global Release – we seek a Global Release for this film. The novel upon which the film is based received great ratings and reviews from all English speaking markets (it was not translated) including: all of North America, Mexico, India,the United Kingdom, parts of Europe, Australia and New Zealand.

The PowerPoint Pitch goes on to itemize all critical Production line items including the estimated costs of two A-List Irish Actors (to open the film and who, when signed, will be 'bankable'), the cost of a Director, Crew, purchase or rental of all equipment, additional scouting, the use of a large 'Tank' and Bluescreen for shooting water scenes, all transport and catering, hotels/motels, the estimated costs of Extras and all other Production costs.

Marketing costs are also estimated both for a low-cost Barbie / Oppenheimer campaign, local and international advertising, the costs of our Global marketing team, and additional ongoing research into our Target Markets, competitive films due for release at about the same time as Dolphin Song and a low-cost paid for Social Media Campaign. Social Media Memes: The Memes and content will be based on the same 'social media' and Email campaigns we created for all Global Media Platforms used for the launch and continuing support of the Novel Dolphin Song. Below is an example:



Email Content Example (sent to all Irish and Global contacts on my personal email list:



Dear ,
Yes, this is a marketing e-mail and I very much hope you don't mind. You're on this list because you are a relative or friend; acquaintance or colleague. Perhaps we talk all the time. Perhaps we've not talked in years. Whatever the frequency, I appeal to you to read this because I need your help (by the way, I apologize if this is annoying. If so, go to the bottom to Unsubscribe).
Why this message?

Dolphin Song, a new novel, is being launched on 21 September, 2021. I had help all along the way, especially from my best friend, filmmaker and director Liam O'Neill. Liam was with me every step of the creative journey. He passed away from Covid-19 in May, 2020. The novel is part of his legacy. If we can generate enough interest in *Dolphin Song*, I hope to attract a film producer as Liam had hoped. Below, find out a little about the story and what you can do to help. You can also download the first chapter FREE right here (feel free to pass it along to friends and relatives), and watch the Dolphin Song Cinematic Trailer by clicking here.

About Dolphin Song

Bostonian Dawn McCarthy's life is shattered following a profound double tragedy. Michael, her Irish husband, drowns in a fiery boating accident off the southwest coast of Ireland. Their only child, Jason, who has witnessed his father's death, is diagnosed with traumatic mutism and has retreated into a world of silence. Following a series of failed therapies, Dawn believes her son will never talk again.

Rejecting the doctor's advice, Dawn returns with Jason to the remote Irish fishing village of Kilcastle where her husband had lived and died. There, along the rugged Irish Atlantic coastline, she hopes to find a cure for her son. But it is not an easy return for Dawn. She faces daily reminders of what might have been.

The sudden appearance of a wild dolphin delivers newfound hope. In the days that follow, Dawn witnesses a powerful bond grow between Jason and the dolphin as the boy takes his first small steps toward healing. It is only then that she suspects the enigmatic mammal is much more than she had at first supposed.

Dolphin Song is a tale of terrifying tragedy, mystical Irish legends and eternal love. Dawn's voyage takes readers on an unforgettable journey where those we have loved and lost are not gone forever. Instead, we need only take a leap of faith to find them again.

What Readers Say

"…spiritually uplifting. A thought-provoking, inspiring and intriguing story. I will recommend *Dolphin Song* to my book club and anyone interested in Ireland" and "If this was a film, I'd describe it as *The Big Blue* meets *Lorenzo's Oil*. A compelling mix of Irish legend, the magic of dolphins, tragedy at sea and a final twist of eternal love" and "This is one of those books you never want to end" and "The seascape of southwest Ireland jumps off the page. A powerful novel about finding courage and hope in the face of tragedy. Today's world needs just such a story."

What You Can Do to Help Us Launch

- Pre-order *Dolphin Song* now, which will really help – on Amazon.com or Amazon.co.uk. We're running a special 70 percent-off offer. Buy the Kindle edition for only $1.49 (price varies in each market). The price will go back to the usual RSP of $4.99 on Sept 21, 2021. If you pre-order, your Kindle edition of *Dolphin Song* will be emailed to you by Amazon on the day of the official launch.

- Forward this email – to friends, relatives and colleagues. Ask them to do what they can to help, and to forward the letter to *their* friends, relatives and colleagues.

- Goodreads – follow Tom on Goodreads at https://www.goodreads.com/tommyjohn Place *Dolphin Song* on your Want to Read List, and / or leave a review. Good or bad, it truly helps. Not a member? Why not join: www.goodreads.com. If you love to read,

Goodreads is a wonder!

- Facebook – follow Tom on his Author's page, share it with your friends, and ask them to share it with *their* friends: https://www.facebook.com/dolphinsongthenovel/

- Amazon – follow Tom on his Amazon page: https://www.amazon.com/Tom-Richards/e/B001HPISGA?ref_=dbs_p_ebk_r00_abau_000000

Thank you so very much for your help. Your efforts will truly make a difference.
All my best,
Tom Richards

Eyeries, Beara Peninsula,
County Cork, Ireland
UNSUBSCRIBE: I'm sorry if this email is intrusive. To Unsubscribe from Tom's mailing list, please email Tom placing UNSUBSCRIBE in the Subject Box.
Dolphin Song is published by Storylines Entertainment Ltd, an Irish Company

A Note about Positioning:

The 'Target Market and Genre' in the PowerPoint pitch was discussed by this Producer face to face. During that discussion I emphasized how this Magical story would appeal to anyone of faith who also wanted to learn more about the 'mysteries and legends of Ireland'. I also compared the storyline to other films in the same genre which was backed up by extensive research. I told those in my small audience that very few 'new' feature films being developed anywhere in the world had a storyline like this film does. The 'Positioning' was low-cost, high value production values compared to high-cost high production values of all other Feature Films due for Distribution in the same year we planned to Distribute our Film. I also argued the point that the amount of people in our Global Diaspora and those interested in Ireland would make it much more likely that our investors would receive a very high Return on their Investment, as well as B-Shares related to the amount they invested.

The Results: were beyond this Author's expectations. Thinking we would breakeven for my personal spend of only 10,000 euro, the Novel sold well over 300,000 copies. All 'profit' made by the novel was transferred from my personal account in Ireland to my Company, Storylines Entertainment Ltd, as Director's loans. With those 'small' financial resources, my Financial Director and I worked to further develop this live action Irish Feature Film as well as place in Development what turned out to be our First Feature Film in Development.

A Note to all Non-Produced Irish Independent Producers and Production Companies: to fund Dolphin Song, the Feature Film, I submitted Online Applications to Screen Ireland not once

but four times. Each time, they turned me down for any Production Grant or Soft Loan. I have already mentioned this tragic tale in a Chapter Above. The Irish Government and our Arts Council must remind Screen Ireland directors and management that it is a legal remit to aid 'start-up' Production companies with even a small amount of financial aid.

By doing so, more Irish Filmmakers will be financially positioned to release unique Feature Films about our Country to the world.

14.2 Lost Lovers…or How My Fiancé Lost Me 3 Times on my Wild Journey Around the World! (Anticipated Global Release: Autumn 2026). This Animated Comedy for Families is Produced, Directed and Written by Tom Richards. V/O Stars include: Tina Blane – Kylie, Victoria C – Grace, Phil S – Sean, Binja – Luna. All songs are 'public domain' with English lyrics and signing by local citizens of India and Africa. Co-Produced by Storylines Entertainment LLC and Storylines Entertainment Limited and SKG Animation, Delhi India. Financed in part by the Illinois State Film Tax Credit. Budget for Production Only: $300,0000; including low-cost Global Marketing: $600,000. Anticipated Box Office: $7 – 10 Million. Based on the Novel of the same name by Tom Richards.

Logline: Grace, a strong, free-spirited Black African woman from a Swahili Village and Sean, her persistent white fiancé from the United States navigate time travel, talking animals, and historical chaos in India during the English Raj. Losing her 3 times on their magical quest across three continents, he finally wins her heart on a Magical, Uncharted Island off the coast of Australia.

In this Case Study I will not attempt to include *even part* of our very long PowerPoint Card Deck we are now using to pitch many investors. It is very similar to the one for Dolphin Song. The 'pitch' materials at this point includes (some of these are in the Appendix):

- The PowerPoint Pitch Deck
- Printed Pitch Book reflected the PowerPoint Pitch
- Printed Posters of some of our Characters
- A four-page full colour flyer synopsising the pitch
- A new website for only Lost Lovers: https://lostloversfilm.com
- Product Placement / In-Brand Entertainment – a 'tactic' that can raise a significant amount of cash from like-minded companies. In the case of Lost Lovers, this would include (but is not limited to): one Airline, one hotel Group, one rental car agency, a soft drinks company, a 'snack' company (all of these must be 'global' to match our

Target Audience), and also smaller local companies all over the world who would be interested in having their logo placed in our 'animated Cartoon'.

Ongoing Research: my small Global Marketing Team (all low-cost to minimise total company expenses) worked to a) understand what kind of Feature Film to produce (animated or live action). When we discovered the demand for Animated Feature Films for Families from all Global Markets; b) we obtained a number of quotations from Irish and U.S. Animation Studios, as well as all of India. c) having obtained two quotes from Animation companies in India, as well as viewing their websites to see trailers of their productions, and finally having received professional references and advice, we chose SKG Animation based in Delhi India. Realising the company and its two owners (also Producers) had worked with Netflix on the Production of many Animated Films, our Board of Directors made the decision to 'go with them'. The choice of this Animated House was critical to keeping all costs much lower than the competition.

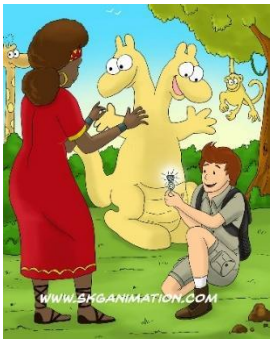
Target Market and Positioning: Working with a research company, we recognised that our First Animated Feature Film would meet the demand and desire for Family Comedy Animation in almost all markets. As the Producer and CEO / President of the LLC, this meant that as a first time Independent Producer of any Film, we would be able to 'run circles around Hollywood Animation Giants like Disney. Our positioning 'Grid' is very low-cost, high-production values compared to our competitors' high-cost / high-production values. But more than this, our small also firmly believed that the story of a black woman falling in love with a white man – a romance – both of whom have great faith in God – a story of faith – which also has talking animals and insects as 'stars' would enable us to contribute a Unique Film to the ever-growing demand for family entertainment.

Using this Business Plan to Pitch Investors: as the Producer responsible for pitching possible investors and distributors I decided on a few low-cost actions: a) to attend the Chicago Film Festival 2025 in order to make contacts, network, find a co-writer for our other projects now in development; find a good U.S. / Global Distributor and learn more about Independent Cinema. b) start the process of pitching large investor institutions such as JPMorgan. c) complete act one by first finishing the first half of that act which will soon stream on our new film-only website; and d) action the many activities I learned about at the Film Festival.

Marketing Plan and Actions:

The Strategy and many of our Marketing Tactics are included in our PowerPoint Pitch. But additional marketing actions which 'were outside our box' include:

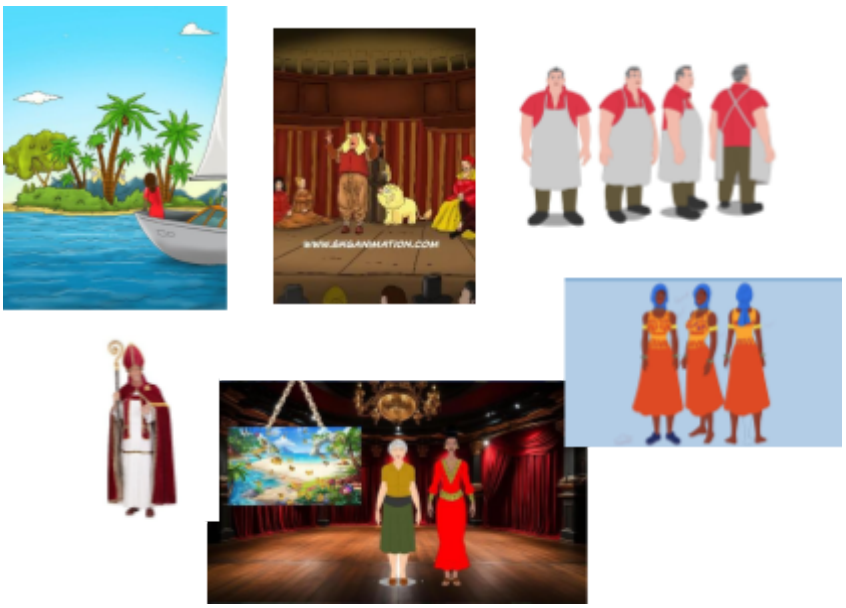
- The creation of a new, large email list – originating initially from all Team Members. Then adding to that list by paying for a U.S. list of those individuals interested in Films with an emphasis on animated films.
- YouTube and TikTok – was always part of the plan. But from this point on, I have hired a person who is very familiar with placing Videos on both platforms. He will be contracted to maximise the impact of any Videos the Team develops for our Film. The 'Copy' placed over the Videos will always contain our new Film-Only URL as well as my personal email address. To motivate those seeing the Video to email me back, we plan to run a number of low-cost Global competitions which will include very inexpensive items that are easy to post anywhere in the world. Friend-Gets-Friend will also be a part of that campaign.
- Email Newsletter – will be sent out once every two months to keep our 'followers' abreast of developments of Lost Lovers and any other of our Films now in Development. We plan to again run low-cost competitions targeting individuals in specific countries that are important to the success of the Film.
- Foundations – we are now in the process of contacting a list of U.S. Foundations whose remit is to help Independent U.S. Production companies such as our LLC who have a similar 'point of view'. We will soon be applying to a number of Foundations line-by-line for grants which will help us pay for the Producer, Writer, Director, Post-Production and Animation.
- Barbie Oppenheimer Campaign – it is almost time to contact 'similar' Film Production Companies to see if they may be interested in both a short-term, low-cost marketing campaign as well as a longer-term slightly higher cost campaign. Like those two major Feature Films and their large Marketing Teams, we plan to start with almost no 'paid-for' elements at all. Instead, we will drive interest in both films using a variety of low-cost Social Media Campaigns.
- Raising smaller amounts of from investors – via Kickstarter and GoFundMe
- A Blair Witch Marketing Strategy – prior to the global launch of the film, we will action a Lost Lovers 'Let Sue the Two Headed Roo' out of their Cage! Conducted at local zoos, we will use Costumes with two heads talking to each other and bickering about how the world is always cruel to two headed 'critters' like them. If done correctly, we could well make the local news because people in



the Zoo will really think that Poor Sue is being treated very unfairly.

- Continued Word of Mouth – via all of the above
- Finally, and as part of our Production plan, I will personally approach an A-List actor who will be willing to voice over Bottom. This well-known Shakespearian character from A Midsummers Night's Dream acts in a 'take-off from the Mechanical Scene. By adding an A-lister to our credits, prior to Distribution, we are more likely to raising any 'gap funding' and have a higher likelihood of attracting a global audience.

In the meantime, we continue to pitch for investors and market our films not only in the United States but across the world. I will end this Chapter and this Book by introducing readers to some of the many animated characters in Lost Lovers, the Animated Feature Film Comedy for Families across our World.



To see the Lost Lovers Trailer and all of our other Films now in development, go to our website: https://lostloverfilm.com

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Encyclopædia Britannica Online:
http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/44609/auteur-theory

“industry” InvestorWords.com. WebFinance, Inc,
www.investorwords.com/2447/Industry.html.

www.thebraveone.warnerbros.com/

List of Films, Novels, Scores and Stage Plays

Films

Ahern, Cecilia, P.S. I Love You

Baird, The Quiet Girl, aka, An Cailin Ciuin

Cameron, The Titanic

Carney, Once

Chaplin, The Gold Rush, City Lights, Modern Times, The Great Dictator

Flanagan, The Man of Aran

Ford, The Quiet Man

Frears, The Snapper, The Van

Hitchcock, The Birds,

Hytner, Nicholas, The Crucible, 20th Century Fox, 1996.

Jordon, Neill, Michael Collins et al

Kalem, The Lad from Old Ireland, The Collen Bawn

Lean, Ryan’s Daughter

Miller, The Crucible

Paradox Pictures (Dublin, Ireland), Five Day Shelter, Dirty Rats, How Harry Became a Tree, Produced by Liam O’Neill

Parker, The Commitments

RKO Studios, King Kong

Samson Films, Once

Sheridan, Jim. In the Name of the Father

Stevenson, Darby O'Gill and the Little People

Storylines Entertainment Ltd: Dolphin Song, Lost Lovers…or How My Fiancé Lost Me 3 Times on My *Wild* Journey Around the World!

Novels

Ahern, P.S. I Love You

Doyle, The Commitments, The Snapper, The Van

Richards, Dolphin Song, Lost Lovers

Scores

Jaws

E.T. The Extraterrestrial

Romeo & Juliet

The Quiet Man

Dancing at Lughnasa

Circle of Friends

Stage Plays

Miller, Arthur. The Crucible, Penguin Books 1953.

Richards, The Dance of the Aran Island Selkie People

Synge, Playboy of the Western World, Riders to the Sea

APPENDIX

Appendix One – an EMC Technology Case Study

EMC Case Study written by Tom Richards, 2012. Copyright EMC / Dell Technologies

RBS BANK ROMANIA

EMC backup and recovery solutions enhance performance, management and security

A FOCUS ON EFFICIENCY AND FLEXIBILITY

As one of the first foreign banks in Romania, RBS has built strong relationships with its clients in its 15 years of presence there. Therefore, providing quality products and services is a permanent objective. To maintain high levels of customer service, and to meet compliance requirements, the bank must rely on reliable backup and recovery solutions that minimize impact on IT performance while also maximizing data protection.

CHALLENGE

However, RBS Bank Romania's legacy tape backup systems were facing challenges, including long backup windows that negatively impacted IT performance. "Most of the time, the backup process interfered with working hours and, as a result, it had a negative impact on the majority of crucial services and processes in the bank", says Razvan Potcoava, Infrastructure Manager, RBS Bank Romania. The bank's tape-based backup platform needed up to 5 days of continuous data extraction to copy it to tape. "This resulted in additional workloads that affected operations and damages to our systems that our colleagues work with," Mr. Potcoava adds.

Long backup windows are a major disadvantage of tape-based systems. However, RBS wanted to retain tape as part of its backup processes for security and portability reasons. "The decision taken by RBS was to switch to a hybrid solution that uses both tape and disk backup software, enabling us to benefit from the advantages of both backup methods."

In considering new backup solutions, the bank was also concerned about technological obsolescence. "Technology and IT market trends had a very important role in our selection of the new solution because we aimed to reduce obsolescence. We were also interested in integrating new virtualization technologies, as well as most of our existing architecture. The new solution had to accommodate part of the legacy technologies which we still use, says Mr. Potcoava.

Banks must also have agile solutions for neutralizing risk and ensuring data recovery. "One of the major risks we were confronting was the impossibility of restoring functionalities in case of significant bottlenecks or sudden activity interruptions. Also, the data volume has increased constantly and new solutions required appropriate management tools."

THE SELECTION PROCESS: WHY EMC?

The flaws of the tape system pointed out the problems that needed to be resolved. "We completed a theoretical analysis on the functionality of each platform, comparing the benefits of the current solutions on the market," explains Mr. Potcoava. "The decision was a natural one, as EMC Data Domain had already been successfully deployed inside the group.

"Also, EMC Unified Storage had just been deployed and we wanted high compatibility of our solutions, given the fact that the backup system partially uses the EMC storage solutions."

BENEFITING WITH EMC BACKUP AND RECOVERY SOLUTIONS

To lower backup windows, minimize performance disruption, and protect vital data, RBS Bank Romania deployed an integrated backup and recovery solution including EMC Data Domain, EMC Avamar, and EMC NetWorker. The results have significantly accelerated the bank's backup processes.

"Completing a full backup process without any errors used to be possible on very rare occasions and that was because we were exclusively using tape backup technology which provides a very low writing speed," says Mr. Potcoava. "The main outcome was the significant reduction of the backup window."

"Data is now available anytime, anywhere and the flexibility level has increased. By using EMC Avamar, EMC Data Domain and EMC NetWorker, we have considerably reduced risk and ethe impact on our production systems."

Răzvan Potcoavă
Infrastructure Manager, RBS Bank Romania

EMC solutions also led to a reduction in data loss risk in part due to EMC Data Domain and EMC Avamar data deduplication technologies now deployed in the bank's DR data center. "We locally deduplicate data both on tape and on disk and we now hold 3 data copies in 3 different locations: the headquarters, the Work Area Recovery (WAR) and our DR center in Brasov, which hosts the critical servers and functional systems."

The new EMC solutions also reduce risk-related costs. "One of the results is that the data is now available anytime, anywhere and the flexibility level has increased. We have chosen EMC solutions because they are integrated and their management is centralized," said Mr. Potcoava.

EFFICIENT DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT WITH EMC DOCUMENTUM

RBS banking operations also rely on efficient document management processes. "With EMC Documentum we drove improvement of document management. We identified major gaps within the previous platforms which did not integrate a crisis recovery system. EMC document management solutions diminish risk to documents, while elevating storage performance."

A STRONG PARTNERSHIP WITH EMC

RBS Bank and EMC have a long relationship which has been reinforced through EMC next generation products and support services. "EMC specialists provided great support during the deployment processes. They ensured that tools and special software helped us to scale correctly to our needs and established, in detail, the requirements that we needed to meet."

Appendix Two – How to Write a Business Plan, a Template

The Business Plan of an Irish Film Production Company should include most, if not all, of the elements a standard Business Plan Includes.

The Template for Irish Film Production Companies:

Business Plan for (Name of your Company)
Name of your Company: here
Title or Working Title of your Film: here
The period of the Business plan (as an example, from 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2024)
Total Estimated Budget of your Film Project: here
Primary Objective: here, here, here, here, here (that is something like: "To Distribute this Feature Film to a Global audience within the smaller independent filmmaker budget above. To achieve this objective, our sub-objectives include attracting outside investors to first greenlight our film and then to help us market and distribute our film; to provide all investors and stakeholders with a high ROI, our expectation being ten times any investment; to provide all investors with their original financial stake and returns within 2 years of opening and / or Global Streaming Distribution.

Research:
- About your market including the size of your markets in every company you hope to Distribute into
- The Market Value of your film (in U.S. dollars or EU euro)
- SWOT Analysis – list of you and your Competitors strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.
- Positioning Statement – per the examples in earlier sections of this book

Sources of Finance – list what your company (or you as an individual) have already spent on your project and plan to throughout the duration of the Production Cycle. Then list:
- All potential sources of outside investors including Grants, Soft Loans, the countries that could offer you grants and / or soft loans (Ireland, Germany and England are but a few); a complete list of Financial organisations (such as Banks or Investment companies) who will help to finance your project or give your project gap funding.
- A list of Individuals you know personally who would be able to take a risk on your project with cash they don't mind risking (High Net Worth people)
- Free Finance – a list of all people who could help to save you and your project with 'free help'. These could include a Producer, Director, Writer, Talent or others
- Subtract the above 'estimates' from the Total Production Costs. This is what you still require to finance and market your Project. If this is a small difference, you may qualify for Gap Funding from your local bank.
- Section 481 – make certain to apply for this as soon as you can. Section 481, if you qualify, could help to fund over 30 percent of your film's budget.

A Marketing Plan – look at the examples in the book, above. Employ 'clever' Gorilla Tactics. Pay for marketing only when you can afford to. Use Social Media as a free communications tool from you (and about your Project) to all of your friends, relatives and colleagues. Use 'free' help to increase the number of people viewing your Memes or other content.

- Fiverr – use talented people on fiverr.com to help you pay for a low-cost Feature Film website, help increase your reach across many social media Platforms.

- Create a low-cost Trailer – again using people from fiverr.com (a few years ago when I was promoting the Novel Dolphin Song, I used a man from New York City. I paid $350 for a 5 minute Mood Movie. That small film had very high production values and could be shared on all of my many social media platforms. That small cost pushed the Novel to the No One Position in all of its many categories. Within 3 weeks of publication, the Novel rocketed to Global No One.

- Explore the cost of Paid For advertising on certain social Media channels – the ones you are confident will reach your target market. If you can afford it then include this effective low cost form of advertising in your Business Plan

- Product Placement – determine if a large sized company would be interested in making a financial contribution to your company. Their 'stake' is not an investment. Rather, it is part of your marketing plan and theirs. Any cash paid for in-brand entertainment and product placement is a 'contribution' to your Production and does not have to be repaid.

Estimated Total Marketing Costs – having planned and budgeted all of the above line items, determine how much your Marketing Plan (a separate important document) will cost your project. Be certain it fits within your Total Production Budget.

Cost of Cast, Crew, Sets, and Related Expenses – often, a screenwriting programme will provide some sense of total locations and, depending on the programme, the estimated costs. Use those if you can. If you don't have such a programme, then estimate the Shooting Costs of your Project, the Below the Line costs.

- Cost of Post-Production – again estimate these costs.
- Cost of Distribution – estimate these costs where possible.
- Misc Post-Production Costs – estimate these costs (Transport, food, hotel accommodation, flights, rental cars, costs of renting film equipment)
  Add together all Post-Production Costs.

Total Budget
All of the above costs are your Film's Above and Below the Line costs which are also the total costs of your film's budget. Until you hire a Line Producer to finalise your budget (using an agreed screenplay), use these costs as part of any application to investors, grant and soft loan providers or anyone interested in taking a financial stake in your film.

Other 'Partners – list these as part of your Business plan. These could include potential co-producers, Executive Producers including a Line Producer and many others.

Appendix Three – How to Write a Marketing Plan for Irish Feature Films, a Template

Your marketing plan is one, if not the most critical parts of any project's Business Plan, particularly for smaller production companies. Below is a template, designed for a startup or smaller Production Company:

Marketing Plan for (Name of Project)
Duration: 3 months (e.g. 1st Quarter, 2026)
Budget: $2000 (or 2000 euro)

Objective: something like: To increase the footprint of all social media; to increase the number of visitor's to our film's website; to identify more potential investors; to continue to minimise all expenses to our company.

Research

- Continued Research – on the feature film industry as a whole. What live action and animated films are coming out within the next 3 months? What is their target audience? What is the anticipated Value (in US dollars or euro) from those films?
- Genre – what is the most popular genre right now? Animated adventures? Animated films for families? Live Action animated sequels from Disney / Marvel / and similar?
- Access – how does my production company and this project 'climb on the back' of the success of these global success stories?

Positioning

This is the key part of your Marketing Plan. How do you position your film (and small Irish production company) against stiff Global Competition? See the section on the 4Ps in the book where this writer discusses at length the importance of this part of the Plan. Most or all of the elements below should reinforce this Positioning Strategy.

Planning

With answers to the above research questions, you can begin planning your short-term marketing plan:

- Create low-cost website specific to your Film – use Fiverr.com for great prices on the development of a website with only a few pages. Use still photos (if you do not yet have a Trailer). Use a small synopsis of your story and rewrite that to be as compelling to your site's visitors as you can. The Headline must be COMMANDING in order to grab reader's attention. The other pages can be more about the film with more pictures. The last page is about the cast, the production team, and key personnel involved in the film production.
- Continuing use of social media – use all global platforms related to your project's target market. Ask your small team (or friends) to post out any memes you create (and deliver to them) at least 2 times per week.
- Create Memes – two for my project including a link to my Trailer (if you've not yet done a Trailer, hire someone from Fiverr.com. They will create a great Trailer (Mood Movie) for far less than you can). Content should continue to discuss the Premise of your film. Use the Logline as part of your headline. Capture the immediate attention of those seeing

your Memes with a large photo of your main characters or a photo that grabs the attention of all viewers. Make a Headline ALL IN CAPS as big as the Meme will allow, leaving room for One Photo and content about your film's story. At the bottom, ALWAYS include an Action Item (many forget to include this). It can be very simple, such as:

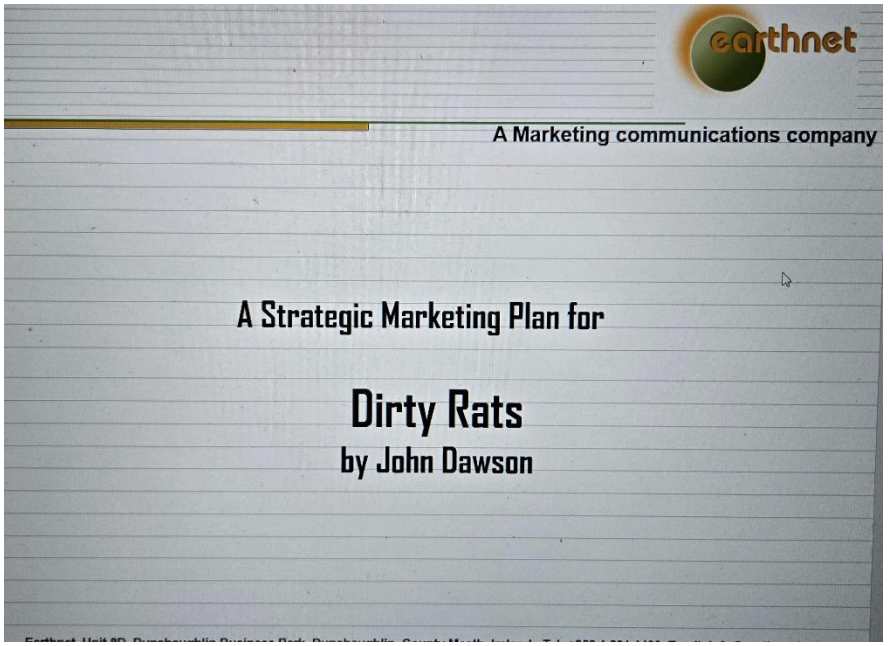
> For more information about (name of Project) visit our website: www.filmname.com. Always remember to include an email address. If someone uses that to contact your company, create a data base of every first name, last name and any other information they give you. You can then email them later with a series of updates on your film.

- Database Competition – buy very inexpensive items to run a competition to those on your Database. Perhaps buy a few caps with your film's title on them or T-shirts. These can be posted anywhere on earth for very little money. The competition could be very simple, such as: Email us back with the name of our main characters. To find out those names, visit our film's website. If you win one of 10 prizes, ask one of your friends, family or colleagues to email us. They may win a similar cap or other prize which will take place next month.
- Conduct Paid For Advertising – on some of the social media channels. Ensure that this part of your marketing plan stays within budget.
- Go to any Film Festival near you – to make contacts in our business, find potential investors, make new friends in the business, pitch your project to potential investors.

Execute

Execute this quarterly plan to budget. Hire low cost staff using Fiverr.com who can help you with many parts of this marketing plan.

Appendix Four - Marketing Strategy and Pitch Deck for Dirty Rats

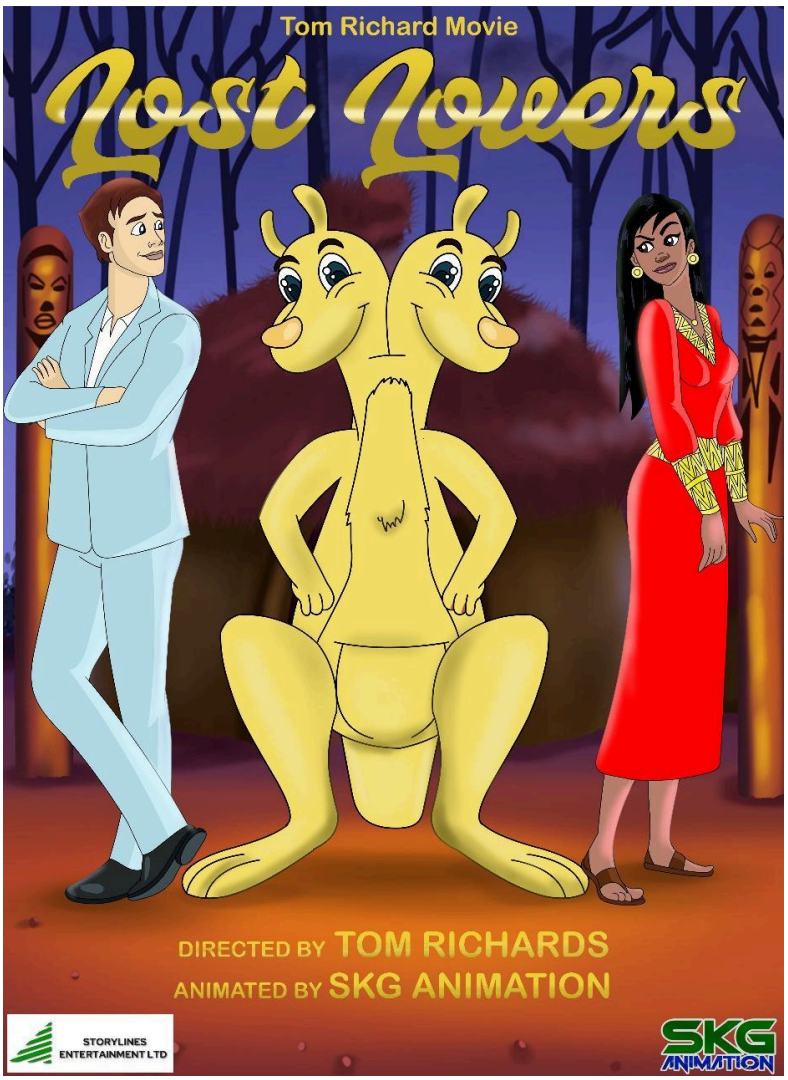


https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1SDT_Wq410sNLPLQnoxDKF-GdKIafP02g/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=106979493427031874908&rtpof=true&sd=true

Appendix Five: Lost Lovers Marketing Materials

Posters

For use at Film Festivals, reworked for Online Emails, Memes, Raising Small Amounts of Money by Distributing Posters on Busy Streetcorners and / or Placing them in Windows with Appropriate Websites and Q-Squares which Take Those Interested to Kickstarter, GoFundMe or Similar.



Four Page Flyer

Used for any meeting with Investors, Film Festivals and other Events

STORYLINES ENTERTAINMENT LLC
PRESENTS OUR FIRST ANIMATED FEATURE FILM



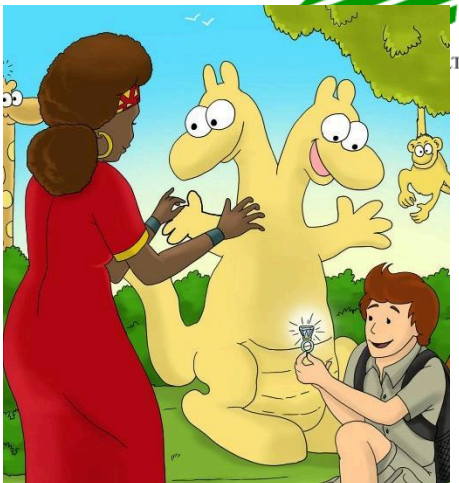
Lost Lovers…or How My Fiancé Lost Me 3 Times on My *Wild* Journey Around the World!

Now in Production with an anticipated Global launch date in Summer 2026, our Animated Comedy for the entire Family could prove *Controversial*! This 3-Act Hysterically Funny Film is about Strong Black African Women, rather Weak White American males, a Budding Romance between our Two Leads (Grace, a Black woman from a small Swahili Village) and Sean (a young white American man who asks Grace to marry him 3 times and almost loses her until he finally wins her heart).



As a story of Faith, it is also highly Inclusive, supporting all those of any faith, colour, or sexual persuasion! In short, those seeing this often-Ironic Film will ask Questions of themselves about their own thinking, the bigotry they may have against people who are very different than themselves, and current silly politics all across our *Wild* World.

Logline: Grace, a strong, free-spirited Black African woman from a rural Swahili Village and Sean, her persistent white fiancé from the United States, navigate time travel, talking animals, and historical chaos in India during the English Raj. Losing her 3 times on their magical quest across three continents, he finally wins her heart on a Magical, Uncharted Island off the coast of Australia.



Why this Film Will become so Popular: the story not only focuses on the Romance between Grace and Sean but is also a story of Adventure! Adults of all nationalities, their children and grandchildren will also love it. Kids will fall in love with our many Talking Animals and Insects, including one of our Major Stars, the always-flying wife and husband team, Sue the Two-Headed Kangaroo!



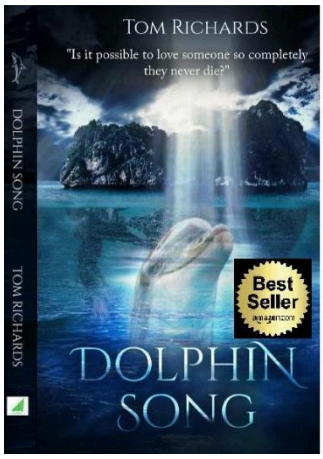
If you love Shakespeare, our story also features a really fun take-off of the Mechanicals in Shakespeare's Midsummer Night's Dream! It is at this Live Performance (by Animated animals, insects and human beings) that Sean (disguised as a Hairy Black Spider) finally 'pins' Grace to her Theatre Seat. Asking her to marry him again, she accepts and finally agrees to wear the Diamond Engagement Ring Sean bought her many months before.

This Riot of a Magical Story includes Romance, Adventure, Faith, Comedy and much more! We hope you'll tell all your friends and family about our very Funny Animated Feature Film which will have anyone watching it falling off their seats as they laugh uncontrollably.

About Our Global Team

Like any Independent Production Company small startup, we have kept the size of our Global Team to a minimum. Most of us work part time. Tom Richards is the Screenwriter, Producer and Director. Harsha Ganatra, originally from Mumbai India, works as our Marketing Manager with responsibility for all of Asia and Australia. Larry Power is based in Ireland and works fulltime as our Financial Director. Frank McQuaid also lives in Ireland and is our Sales and Marketing Director for Ireland, the UK and all of Europe. Sami is our reliable website designer while we have two gentlemen working as part-time illustrators for our Novels and other travel books (Toqueer and Usama). Ahmed works as our Paid-for and Free Advertising Manager using a wide range of Global Social Media Platforms. Sami, Toqueer, Usama and Ahmed are based most of the time in Pakistan. SKG Animation (Delhi India) works as our Animation partner and also advises our company on marketing and advertising in India, Pakistan and across the Arabian nations.

About Tom Richards – Tom has a wide-range of skills in the Production and Directing of Feature Films. His Film credits include (in part): *Merlin, the Magic Begins* (starring Jason Connery, produced by Seagull Entertainment), *Missing* (RAI Italy), *Gotcha* (RTE National Television, Ireland), B-Rolls for a number of Feature Films produced by Ireland's Paradox Pictures (Liam O'Neill Managing Director) and a number of Corporate Films shot and edited for Sage (Ireland and UK) and EMC (now Dell EMC Technologies). Tom has also written over Twenty Novels and Travel books / Memoirs. His Bestselling Novels include *Dolphin Song, Lost Lovers, Hotfoot! The Lost Scrolls of Newgrange* and more. His latest Travel Guide (*A Survivor's Guide to Living in Ireland*) has also become a bestselling 'How To' Guide as well as a Memoir). He is currently completing his PhD Book about Irish Cinema.



ANNOUNCING OUR FIRST <u>LIVE ACTION FEATURE FILM NOW IN PREP</u>

D*olphin Song* (based on the Number One Bestselling Novel written by Tom Richards (with major editing by Carmel Murray and Liam O'Neill)
This Live Action Film, located in Ireland and Boston, Massachusetts, is also a story of Faith. Scheduled to be Greenlit sometime in 2027, we have created a Mood Movie illustrating the horrors of a Fishing Trawler going down in the Wild North Atlantic Ocean.

Logline: "Is it possible to love someone so completely they never die?" says Dawn McCarthy, our Protagonist, to her local priest. Overwhelmed by the horrifying death of her husband and soulmate, a bitter young American is forced to reconnect with life's mysteries. Finally learning that love truly is forever, she is at last able to heal her traumatized son – and herself. The Mood Movie is below to give you some idea of the visuals which include tragedy, romance, a journey of faith and Irish mystery and legend.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KeXyeg6-wGI

For more information on our Upcoming Feature Films go to: www.featurefilmsstoryent.com HERE

For More Information on our Novels, Anthologies and Travel Guides / Memoirs: Go to our website, https://storylinesent.com. (Our New Feature Film Website is coming Soon!

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STORYLINES ENTERTAINMENT LTD

<u>Meme 1</u>

<u>Used online to create a data based of those who may be interested in receiving our Monthly Newsletter. All email addresses receive will be placed into a Database. Soon, we will offer a Competition for very light low-cost items which will target our Global Audience.</u>



Oyez! Oyez! Annoucing the almost Pending Launch of the Animated Feature Film: LOST LOVERS... or How My Fiance Lost Me 3 Times on My *WILD* Journey Around the World !

IT IS ALMOST HERE, FOLKS! Have a Rollicking Good Time in the Soon to be Screened Animated Comedy for Families! You can Stay Tuned by sending your Email address to: tomjrichards1955@yahoo.com. If you do, we'll send you a FREE NEWSLETTER every month or so. That is, if the DUMB Writer gets any time!

Appendix Five: Waves of Irish Cinema — Historical and Industrial Overview

Wave	Approx. Years	Representative Films*	Key Themes	Industry / Institutional Context
Pre-Wave / Early Indigenous Period	1916 – 1960s	*Irish Destiny* (1926); *Guests of the Nation* (1935); *Cradle of Genius* (1961)	Nation-building; post-colonial identity; moral authority of Church and State	Sporadic indigenous production; little or no state support; reliance on British distribution and exhibition systems
First Wave	1970 – early 1990s	*The Ballroom of Romance* (1978); *Poitin* (1981); *Ryan's Daughter(1970*)	Reclaiming Irish identity; challenging stereotypes; rural vs. urban tension	Small-scale independent production; political and cultural reaction to British/American depictions; led to re-establishment of the Irish Film Board (IFB) in 1993
Second Wave	1993 – early 2000s	*In the name of the Father (1993), The Butcher Boy* (1997); *The Snapper* (1993)	Post-Troubles trauma; Church and family; sexual identity	IFB revitalization; emergence of indigenous auteur directors (Neil Jordan, Jim Sheridan); EU funding through MEDIA programme
Third Wave	2000 – 2010 (Celtic Tiger era)	*Intermission* (2003); *Once* (2007); *Garage* (2007)	Economic optimism; globalization; shifting morality	Expansion of production infrastructure; Section 481 tax incentive; co-productions with UK/US; rise of Irish urban narratives

Wave	Approx. Years	Representative Films*	Key Themes	Industry / Institutional Context
Fourth Wave	2010 – 2016	*Brooklyn* (2015); *Room* (2015); *Calvary* (2014)	Migration, diaspora, female subjectivity; loss and belonging	Screen Ireland (successor to IFB) professionalized funding; festival recognition; strong collaboration with international studios
Fifth Wave / New Age	Late 2015 – present	*The Quiet Girl* (2022); *Wolfwalkers* (2020); *The Banshees of Inisherin* (2022); *Kneecap* (2024)	Global Irishness; hybrid aesthetics; technological innovation; multilingual identity	Streaming platforms and digital distribution; transnational co-production models; Irish cinema positioned as both national and global brand

***** This Student analyses only some of these films. There are so many Irish Films in each Wave it is impossible to use each Film above or this Book would be far too long.