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**THE REPRESENTATION OF THE CITY
IN RECENT IRISH CINEMA**

by Veronica Dooley

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INTRODUCTION

Cinema in Ireland began just over a hundred years ago in 1896 with the first public screening of films in Dan Lowery's "Star of Erin Theatre of Varieties", now known as the Olympia. Since then many historical, social and economical changes have taken place in Ireland. These changes are reflected in the representations of Ireland in the cinema. The responsibility of portraying these images did not rest with the Irish filmmakers. It had fallen into the hands of foreign production companies due to the lack of an indigenous film industry in this country. *"In a situation where Hollywood Cinema has dominated the screens of Ireland unchallenged by an indigenous filmmaking industry, the only cinematic images of Ireland which the Irish were familiar with were the representations that flowed out of the Hollywood industry (and at crucial points when it was productive, the British film industry as well). In other words, 'cinematic Ireland' was entirely a foreign production"* (McCloone : 1994 : 157). By the 1930s a particular image of Ireland had been established by the American filmmakers who saw Ireland as a rural utopia, a land that embraced the traditions of the country and opposed the advances of a modern, urban society. Ireland was picturesque and romantic, the perfect setting for many melodramatic events. *"In cinema generally 'Ireland' has come to stand as a veritable signifier of the pre-modern and the anti-modern. Its landscape a 'magical' one precisely to the degree that it can be made to stand outside of the world of advanced capitalism"* (Cleary : 1995 : 147).

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This image of Ireland as a rural utopia had been reinforced by the nationalist movement towards the end of the nineteenth century. Nationalists became aware that if Ireland was to achieve political independence, a concept of a free Ireland separate from Britain must be created. The notion of Ireland as a once great Gaelic civilisation was presented in Irish culture as a rural utopia with a simple, stable way of life that incorporated beauty and virtue. *"The image of Ireland as a rural, almost pastoral nation...maintained its hold,...a vision of rustic dignity and rural virtue was popularised in speeches, poems, plays and paintings"* (Brown : 1985 : 83). To the cultural nationalists, the city, associated with English oppression, had no place in this pastoral paradise. Cultural nationalists in Ireland believed that traditional values had to be reinstated because they felt they were under threat from the increasing growth of the city. *"Rural life was a condition of virtue in as much as it remained an expression of an ancient civilisation, uncontaminated by commercialism and progress. In doing so they helped to confirm Irish society in a belief that rural life constituted an essential element of an unchanging Irish identity"* (Brown : 1985 : 84). This anti-urban bias is evident in the writings of Pearse, de Valera and in the early poetry of Kavanagh. In the visual arts, the image of Ireland as a rural idyll was also embraced whole-heartedly. This is illustrated in the work of artists such as Paul Henry and Sean O'Sullivan where idealised images and romantic landscapes predominated. Eventually, with the strong support of the cultural nationalists, backed by the conservative Catholic Church, the agrarian myth took hold and held fast into the twentieth century, serving as an integrative symbol of national identity in the early years of independence.

A further and lasting outcome of the agrarian myth has been the tendency to idealise the West of Ireland as the part of the country that is authentically Irish. In an essay entitled 'The Tyranny of Images' by Michael D. Higgins, he believes that *"...the accounts of the West of Ireland have been a systematic*

distortion...". He continues to express concern about the effect of this, "...the distortion of the West has now become less serious than the parallel distortion of the urban experience to which moralists, Catholic intellectuals and hypocritical politicians had contrasted it. We are at the moment in the midst of a violent anti-urbanism" (Higgins : 1984 : 135). Higgins felt that the traditional values of Ireland which remained rural, religious and nationalist encouraged a background of fear and suspicion of city life. The official image of Ireland promoted the West of the country as the 'real' Ireland. A number of 1960s tourist promotional films celebrated the rural traditions of the country. In a tourist promotional film entitled, 'Green for Ireland', "... there is a shot of a sports car leaving Dublin. As it passes a horse and cart on a cliff road the voice-over announces that: 'The city people flock to rural Ireland like pilgrims to Mecca and bring with them a whiff of the very mechanical progress from which they are in flight'. This mythical Ireland is the land so loved by state image builders and foreign film crews". (Wylie : 1994 :15) Although Ireland was developing in the 1960s, it was at a considerably slower pace than that of its western counterparts. It was trying to break free from censorship and the strong influence of the Church.

The image of Ireland as a 'mythical' island needed to be re-examined and re-defined by the new breed of filmmakers that were emerging in the 1970s. They have had a long and hard struggle to shake off these past representations that encouraged a national ideology based on rural traditions. Filmmakers needed to portray Ireland as it was changing. The growth of the city brought about many social and economic changes. There was enormous population movement from rural areas into the cities. The last decade has seen the culmination of thirty years of the city's expansion. "*Dublin was often promoted as the modern face of change. With its new glass and steel structures, modernisation was seen as something intrinsically urban. The values of traditionalist Ireland were to remain basically rural, religious and nationalist*" (Wylie : 1994 : 14). Dublin had evolved into a prosperous city that could compete equally with its European counterparts. Unfortunately, Dublin had also fallen prey to the inevitable social problems that exist in any modern society such as unemployment, poverty, crime and drug addiction.

What was required was "...a confrontation with the modernisation of Irish society as well as an engagement with the conventional image of Ireland in the international cinema" (Rockett : 1987 : 139). Filmmakers wanted to focus on aspects of modern, urban Irish society that had not been seen before. However, this notion of an urban culture did not fit easily into the established Irish national identity. "*Urbanisation and urban problems would not fit strongly with the ethos of independent Ireland*" (Wylie : 1994 15). Filmmakers tried to embrace the modernity of Ireland and at the same time, they have tried to challenge the past set of images that had been produced. "*The body of work that has emerged over the last twenty years or so represents the beginnings of a recognisably indigenous film industry, the tantalising outline to a genuine Irish national cinema, which has begun the process of re-imaging Ireland's relationship with modernity.*" (McCloone : 1994 : 156). Thus, it seems that the main concerns for some filmmakers in recent years have been to establish an alternative set of images to the dominant representations as portrayed by foreign production companies.

The depiction of the city in general cultural terms reflects a tendency to portray the city as an unappealing, urban dystopia. This sensibility is also evident in Irish cinema. Filmmakers have again and again sought to seek out the negative aspects of urban life as opposed to any positive images that might be derived from the city. From as early as 1926, with the release of Fritz Lang's 'Metropolis', the city has been used as the perfect backdrop for themes such as alienation, marginalisation and the dehumanisation of the mass populations of the city. In 'Metropolis', the city is "...turned on its side to reveal its implicit hierarchy. Its gilded youth play in Elysian pleasure gardens above the streets and towers of a dehumanised public sphere. Beneath both, sustaining them, is the subterranean world of slave labour" (Donald : 1985 : 91). Indeed, 'Metropolis' defined the way the city was to be seen in cinematic terms. Lang's shots of towering buildings and the circulation of traffic which created a claustrophobic atmosphere is commonplace in many urban films. The influence of Lang's film is obvious in one of the most recent big-budget films depicting the futuristic city, Luc Besson's 'The Fifth Element' (1996). The film contains a variety of scenes that are reminiscent of 'Metropolis' such as the outside scenes which depict the chaotic air-borne traffic and the general feeling of a dysfunctional city. The image of the city as a place of chaos and disruption makes it the perfect backdrop for film genres such as the thriller, the horror and film noir to name but a few. James Donald singles out the horror film, 'Candyman' (Bernard Rose : 1992), as "...a meditation on contemporary perceptions of the city" (Donald : 1995 : 77). He feels that there is a tendency to connect the city with the unpredictable and the unappealing. "*The film is punctuated by aerial shots of Chicago's townscapes: the circulation of traffic on freeways, barrack-like housing, monumental but silent amphitheatres. From that God's-eye view, the city presents a dehumanised geometry...From below, on the streets, the black underclass who live in the projects make sense of the city's irrationality and alienation in terms of myths and subcultural legends...Urban space is concrete, but just as brutally it is fantastic*" (Donald : 1995 : 77). Donald identifies a particular 'unease' that is associated with the city. He sees the city as a place that is fascinating yet dangerous, a place that is full of legends, fears and phobias. In the film, the heroine of the film is "...killed as she destroys the Candyman, dragged down into the dark space urban myth" (Donald : 1995 : 79). This implies that the destruction of the evil character in the film has also resulted in the inevitable end of the heroine of the film. It seems that good can not survive in the city it shares with these undesirable characters.

This sensibility is encouraged with the association made between modernity and all its problems, and the urban space of the city. Modernity and the city have often been associated with each other in the cinema, and generally, they have been viewed with pessimism. The city is seen as the birthplace of many problems associated with modernity. Filmmakers have a tendency to use the city as a metaphor for social, spatial and economic problems even though they affect rural areas also. This sensibility is evident in the representations of the city in Irish cinema. Indeed, there has been an imbalance in Irish cinema between depictions of the city and the country. This is possibly as a result of the idealisation of the West and its rural traditions supported by the cultural nationalists. In Cleary's article entitled 'Into Which West', 1995, he states that "...the corollary of cinema's preoccupation with the magical landscape of the Irish Literary Renaissance has been its comparative lack of interest in urban Ireland...Until very recently at least, the city has been notable in cinematic representations of Ireland mostly by its absence" (Cleary : 1995 : 153). Irish filmmakers, it seems, have begun to address the existence of a modern, urban Irish society. This thesis will look at recent films in Irish cinema which represent the city and whether Irish filmmakers have chosen to depict the city in a similar fashion to their predecessors, that is, with a pessimistic view of things or whether, on the other hand they have accepted the advances of urbanisation and celebrated the city in their films.

CHAPTER ONE

The films in this chapter may be regarded as more personal, intimate films. They were made by committed directors who wanted to comment on contemporary Irish society and, in particular, on the urban experience. While these independent directors were often severely restricted in budgetary terms, their independence allowed them greater freedom and control in regard to what they chose to represent and how they represented it. Generally, the films portrayed the working class of Dublin and were made with small budgets, using relatively unknown actors. They were often filmed on actual locations with many scenes set in run-down, shabby local authority housing estates, factories, bars and dreary back streets. Local accents, swearing and slang became a feature of these films.

These directors sought to produce a cinematic image of Ireland, specifically the city, which would challenge the existing social order rather than provide escapist fantasies for its audiences. These films also demonstrate a commitment to representing Ireland. In their films they have focused on addressing contemporary social realities such as unemployment, crime and drug abuse. *"The modern city would now be viewed as the centre of all evil, a place of violence, low moral values and corruption. This ingrained evil of the city either becomes part of the personality of the inhabitants or influences them to such a degree that to shake them off one must flee to nature and the countryside. This notion is perfect for Ireland's ideal of a national image. The once wild lands beyond Dublin's boundaries have been transformed into an idyllic haven"*. (Wylie : 1994 : 15) The challenge for these new filmmakers was to break away from this method, and also to create alternative images.

DOWN THE CORNER (1977 : Joe Comerford)

'Down the Corner' is a drama-documentary made as a community arts workshop project. The story is centred around a group of young Dublin boys from the southside estate of Ballyfermot. The boys are seen participating in the routines of daily life at home, at relatives and hanging around the local playground. In the film, they decide to rob an orchard in the city. The mission is not successful however, as one of the boys injures himself on some broken glass in the orchard. The boy is taken to the emergency department in hospital. The group's relatively carefree existence on the city streets is shown in comparison to that of the boy's father. The opening shots of the film portray him as he is working in an iron foundry. However, he is soon made redundant and the film records his degeneration from an apparently contented working family man into a rather pathetic drunk. With the loss of his job comes loss of identity and alienation from his family and friends.

The film is set in a totally urban working class milieu and it is more the character's dialogue and accents that identifies the city as Dublin rather than the film's settings. Although the setting is distinctively urban it could be set in any large city. *"'Down the Corner' pricked at Ireland's officially created national ideology by simply placing it in an urban setting"* (Wylie : 1994 :16).

The father in this film represents the problems that urbanisation brings with it, such as unemployment and alienation. When he loses his job he feels that, perhaps, he has failed in his role as a family man. The beginning of the film shows him as a working man who is supporting his family. When he can no longer do this he seems to give up any hope and resigns himself to becoming dependent on social

services. His redundancy in the film and "...his subsequent deterioration into drunkenness and isolation parallels the boy's own idleness"(Rockett : 1987 : 131). The effect of his father's unemployment is seen to have made a direct impression on the boy in a scene in the film in the hospital. While the boy is being treated by a young, foreign doctor, he is asked what he would like to do when he is older. The boy answers that he might go to the 'tech' to train as a mechanic, or he says pessimistically, with his unemployed father in mind, that he will take anything he gets. It seems that he is destined to an uncertain future like his father, because he is of a working class background.

The question of identity is also raised in terms of the film's attitude to Irish history and culture. The account of an incident during the struggle for Irish independence is presented in a black and white flashback sequence, thus illustrating what little relevance Ireland's historical past has for the young boys in the film. A further incident which emphasises this takes place in their classroom. Their 'Culchie' teacher begins talking to them in Irish, however, it is obvious that the language he speaks is not understood. Furthermore, it shows that both the teacher and the Irish language are far removed from the reality of the boy's daily lives. *"However, the lives of the boys allows for a naturalistic and sympathetic portrayal of the community and its institutions: school, hospitals and homes, where pressures of space and money confine the inhabitants".* (Rockett : 1987 :131) The representations of these institutions portrays the city as claustrophobic.

PIGS (1984 : Cathal Black)

A squat in Dublin's northside provides the setting for this film which centres around the lives of a group of social outcasts. The main character, Jimmy (Jimmy Brennan), seeks shelter in a disused tenement house. He is joined by a number of disparate individuals which include George (George Shane), who maintains a pretence of being a respectable business-man, Tom (Maurice O'Donoghue), a psychiatric patient, Ronnie (Liam Halligan), a drug dealer, Mary (Joan Harper), a prostitute and her black, Jamaican pimp, Orwell (Kwesi Kay). The film is set in a run-down Georgian house and follows the alternative society that evolves in the squat. Jimmy is a loner who sought anonymity in the squat and he is wary of the intrusion by some of his housemates. Nevertheless, he is sympathetic to George's pipe-dreams and is concerned for Tom's mental welfare. Jimmy is seen leaving a gay night-club with another man and is consequently beaten up in his bedroom by four tough teenage clients of Ronnie, the drug dealer from the squat. The reality of their social circumstances leads to the breakdown of the community almost as quickly as it formed. Ronnie is leaving to return to his parent's home, Orwell and Mary move into a new flat, Tom is going to a clinic with a more humane regiment than the last one, George has acquired a flat in a Ballymun tower block and urges Jimmy to join him. Jimmy refuses the invitation and remains, as at the beginning of the film, alone in the squat. However, Jimmy is soon arrested by two policemen (Pat Laffen and Johnny Murphy) on a charge of defrauding the social services. He is claiming on behalf of his absent wife.

The opening shots of the film depict Dublin as a place of decay. It is nighttime and a fire burns in a derelict building, paint peels from the walls and a car has been set alight. Children stare at the blaze while youths on horseback ride by. *"This view of Dublin and Ireland was new to the cinema screen, where a mother asks her child to sit down and 'let Mammy enjoy her joint, won't you?'"* (Wylie : 1994 : 15) In the wider context of the city (beyond that of the tenement squat), decay, degradation and squalor are everywhere. In the film Jimmy visits friends of his on a ship in the docklands where he once worked. His

friend, a cook, has found alternative work on land because the docklands have not escaped the deterioration of the city and they are seen as a dying industry. In another scene, Jimmy visits a high-rise flat in the Ballymun estate. The sad and degenerated lives of a drug-addicted couple are depicted. Jimmy's own travels around the city demonstrate how the city is home to the seedy underlife of prostitution, violence and drug abuse.

Jimmy's own home "*is like the city itself, the inhabitants of the squat have diverse backgrounds. The house becomes a spatial setting which supports the marginal classes*". (Wylie : 1994 : 15). The group of people in the squat seem to form an 'alternative' family, with Jimmy taking on the role of the mother. He has reluctantly become the arbitrator of the 'family' by cooking for the group and by trying to settle any arguments that arise within the group. Jimmy's appearance throughout the film reinforces this alternative role. He is often shown wearing a towel wrapped around him like a skirt instead of trousers. George takes on the role of the father as he appears to leave for work each day. The remaining people in the squat assume the role of the unruly children. On an allegorical level, they represent a variety of Ireland's social problems. In the group we have a prostitute and her pimp, a drug-dealer, and someone who has suffered from marital breakdown and all of them are unemployed. These people are lower than the working classes represented in previous films, they are social outcasts and marginalised people. The film spares the viewer nothing of the dirt and squalor in which they live. The title of the film comes from the policeman who remarks on seeing the squat that these people lived like 'Pigs'.

BOOM BABIES (1987 : Siobhan Twomey)

This film tells of the parallel lives of Aisling (Aisling Tobin) and Andrew (Andrew Connelly). Both of them are unemployed. Aisling is from a middle-class background and has ambitions to train as a mechanic and Andrew, in contrast, lives in Ballymun and has just left a dead-end job in the hope of a better one. However, both of them are unsuccessful and the film contrasts their different attitudes to their unemployment. Aisling is supported by her friends and family in her decision to channel her time and energy into restoring an old car. Andrew wastes his time watching television and playing computer games. He seems to have given up hope of finding work and is consequently dropped by his girlfriend. The two characters' paths cross when an intoxicated Andrew steals Aisling's beloved car. Aisling eventually discovers her car with Andrew still inside it. Her anger and frustration is met with the feeble excuses and apologies from Andrew. The end of the film shows Aisling reluctantly working as a petrol-pump attendant while Andrew is still unemployed. He is left watching a plane fly over the estate, maybe he is considering the idea of emigration, which has long been one of the possible solutions to the problem of unemployment.

One of the problems with the representation of the city is the tendency to depict only the working-class. "*Ireland's urban-based films have tended to concentrate on the world of the working or non-working classes. It is essential that we see portrayals of the city's other groups and classes*" (Wylie : 1994 :16). 'Boom Babies' tries to respond to this challenge by depicting the lives of both the working and the middle classes. The class difference is emphasised by the contrasting terms of each of the youngsters' different situations. Aisling's family home, in the tree-lined suburban street is in direct contrast with the dark, dreary Ballymun high-rise complex. Their family's lives are also very different to each other. Aisling's mother and sister are immersed in wedding plans and cannot understand her ambition to become a mechanic. Her father is very supportive of her and sympathises with her situation. Andrew's sister is a

single mother and is struggling to bring up her family. She is supportive of Andrew, unlike his girlfriend, who drops him when she sees that he has little or no prospects. This shows that there is no approval from the working class people for Andrew's life as a recipient of social welfare and as such their attitudes are not markedly different from those of the middle classes.

The two different classes in this film are depicted in contrasting terms. Aisling's family home is comfortable and safe, whereas Andrew's home is suggestive of the ghetto areas of North America, with its images of break-dancing youths. Familiar shots of the Ballymun tower-blocks are used to emphasise the cramped living conditions of the working class. The film also contains an almost dream-like view of the city centre in comparison to the Ballymun estate. Aisling is shown driving her newly-restored Humber car through the inner city in the early hours of the morning. What is presented is reminiscent of the promotional tourist films of the city. A view of historical buildings like St. Patrick's Cathedral, Christchurch Cathedral and the Ha'penny Bridge is portrayed in contrast to the redeveloped areas of the inner city, where large public notices offer incentives to private developers to renew these city areas.

THE COURIER (1987 : Frank Deasy/ Joe Lee)

Mark (Padraigh O'Linsigh) is the motorcycle courier of the title, who realises that he has been unwillingly used to ferry drugs and drug money for a Dublin criminal, Val (Gabriel Byrne). One of Mark's friends, Danny (Andrew Connelly), dies after taking poisoned heroin supplied by Val. Mark, who is dating Danny's sister becomes determined to get revenge on Val by infiltrating his criminal gang and planting drugs on him. His plan is unsuccessful and Mark returns home to get Colette (Cait O'Riordan) out of their home. One of the criminal gang, Christy (Patrick Bergin), is already there and he accidentally shoots a friend of Mark's. The film concludes when Val is shot during an attempted robbery and kidnapping in the bank where Colette works. Mark and Colette leave the city to find peace and happiness elsewhere.

"The film's declared purpose was to make a commercial thriller which was also about life in modern Ireland. The thriller/ gangster genre is one that needs the city as a location. The film projects Dublin as a modern urban city with commuter trains, heavy traffic, the leafy suburbs of the middle-class, tower-blocks, banks and pollution...It unveils the seedier side of urban life: violent crime, massage parlours, rent boys and drug addiction, at a time when Dublin was Europe's heroin capital" (Wylie : 1994 : 16). The film attempts to tell a story that is set in an urban, contemporary Irish society. The city in the film is readily identifiable as Dublin with its images of Ballymun and the city centre but it serves more as a background to the criminal activities that are occurring there. It is portrayed as an undesirable place to live with armed crime and drug addiction an inevitable problem of urbanisation. Indeed, it seems that the only escape to the problems of the city is to leave it. The final shot in the film shows Mark and Colette united on a beach outside the city as they begin their new life away from the degraded city. *"Dublin is again seen as rigidly delineated in space as if the dark side ceases to manifest itself beyond some arbitrary boundary line between the city and the country"* (Wylie : 1994 : 16).

The intention of the film's choice of representing the different class division was presumably to demonstrate how crime and drugs can infiltrate any class. However, as a consequence, the characters never seem capable of taking on the tough criminal class of the inner city. Mark, the courier who plans to avenge his friend's death is not convincing as a lone vigilante or an avenger. This may be attributed to his middle class protected background. *"Despite the standard elements of violence, the love angle and the lone*

vigilante, Mark, the film's central character, is little more than a pawn and lacks strength or credence"
(Wylie : 1994 :16).

JOYRIDERS (1988 : Aisling Walsh)

This film tells the story of Mary (Patricia Kerrigan), who, with her two young daughters, is forced out of her home by her violent husband. She is forced to abandon her children in a railway station as she has no money and nowhere to go. She alerts the police to their whereabouts and they are then taken into care. In a cafe she is rescued from the unwanted advances of two American sailors by Perky (Andrew Connelly). The pair strike up a relationship and decide to leave the city for the country. Perky needs to leave the city because of his failed drug deals. In Kilkee, Mary finds work in a dancehall, however she is subjected once more to the unsolicited advances of the dancehall owner, and again is rescued by Perky. The pair move on and eventually find work with a widowed farmer. The couple believe that this is their chance for happiness in the future and return to Dublin for Mary's children. The city is more hostile than ever when they return and they are forced to break into a children's home to rescue the children. The final scene of the film shows Perky and Mary and the children heading west out of the city to the solitude of the farm.

'Joyriders' again illustrates the urban/ rural divide that exists in Ireland. The cultural differences are examined in the film. The city is portrayed in a very negative way whereas the country is seen to have the peace and tranquillity that the couple are seeking. The city is a grim and depressing place where Mary is the victim of many social problems: domestic violence, homelessness and poverty. The inhabitants of the city are hostile and unsympathetic towards her and the city itself is portrayed as a overcrowded, dirty and noisy place. Burnt-out cars and desolate wastelands represent the city landscape. This film attempts to highlight the city's problems but it fails to offer any solution, instead it reverts to the solutions offered in previous promotional images of Ireland: that all of the problems associated with an urban society can be resolved with a return to the traditions of the country. This is a simplistic solution to a complex social problem, which is never fully explored. *"When Perky and Mary, and the children drive off into the landscape, the modern countryside is replaced with a mythical rural viewpoint which consign society's problems to the city"* (Wylie : 1994 : 15). The film's ending is unconvincing. The couple are seeking anonymity in the country, a chance for a fresh start. However, this does not seem possible in a country where the inhabitants are often highly suspicious of newcomers. It is an *"...unrealistically upbeat finale, as if Perky and Mary would settle down with the children on the farm and elude the social services, the education system, income tax, Perky's criminal associates, Mary's violent husband and the police"* (Newman : 1989 : 139).

CHAPTER 2

The films in this chapter may be regarded as more commercial films than those in the previous chapter. These films were produced with an international audience in mind. The filmmakers have had to overcome a different set of problems to achieve this desire. They had neither the support of a native film industry nor large domestic film audiences in their home country. In general, the makers of these films had to depend on financial support from foreign backers and on foreign attendances for return on investments. Filmmakers have also been faced with the problem of satisfying foreign backers and audiences, whose

expectations of what constituted an Irish film are frequently based on out-moded views of Ireland, created originally by non-Irish filmmakers. Kevin Rockett raises the issue of the lack of directors' and writers' control in an article entitled 'From Atlanta to Dublin' when he states that "*...as a result of depending for finance on sources outside Ireland, crucial decisions about form and content have often been taken from Irish filmmakers' control.*" (Rockett : 1992 : 29) The films in this chapter demonstrate the filmmakers' desires to portray the Irish experience of modernity within an international context. Irish filmmakers have been given the task of trying "*...to establish a core set of characteristics, an essence, which defines the nation.*" (McCloone : 1994 : 146) These films show that within the film industry, there is a new and growing concern to represent the urban, as opposed to the rural experience.

MY LEFT FOOT (1989 : Director Jim Sheridan)

This film tells the life-story of Christy Brown (Daniel Day-Lewis) , who suffered from a severe case of cerebral palsy from birth. Christy managed to overcome his illness and achieved success and critical acclaim as an artist and author. Christy was born in 1932 to a Dublin working-class family. Christy's mother (Brenda Fricker), plays an important role in Christy's life, supporting and praising his achievements. Christy's father (Ray McAnally), however, is not convinced of his son's abilities. It is only after Christy has spelt out the word 'Mother' on the floor that his father celebrates his achievements with a visit to the local pub. Mrs. Brown enlists the help of a therapist, Dr.Cole (Fiona Shaw), to help in Christy's development. Dr.Cole improves Christy's speech and mobility through visiting him at his house. In order to bring Christy out of a bout of depression, Christy's family rally round and build him his own room in the back yard of the house. The death of Christy's father stimulates him to write his autobiography, painstakingly tapping out the words on a typewriter, letter by letter. At the fund-raising gala where Christy is to be awarded for his achievements, he badgers the nurse Mary Carr (Ruth McCabe) who is his future wife, into spending the evening with him. She accepts and is struck by his indomitable spirit and his wicked sense of humour. The film concludes as they launch their lives together with champagne, watching the dawn break over Dublin.

The film is set in working-class Dublin in the 1940s and the 1950s. Outside of the opening shots of some of Dublin's best-known landmarks, the city is represented in terms of the small community in which Christy and his family live. Despite poverty and overcrowding the film presents us with an image of a warm and happy family life. Christy's family are shown to be cheerful and supportive. Amidst the obvious poverty, Sheridan chooses to portray the life in this community in a comic manner. "*Sheridan and co-writer, Shane Connaughton...go out of their way to avoid pools of tears, continually stressing young Christy's impish sense of fun and lively participation in neighbourhood games. The ploy works well in the scene where Christy's home-made wooden 'chariot' is used to steal from a delivery lorry.*" (Brown : 1989 : 279) The relationship the father has with his disabled son is often strained but is essentially a loving one. The sudden death of his father has a dramatic effect on Christy's life . Sheridan, however, allows the father to fall into the image of a stereotypical Irishman so often seen in foreign productions. Paddy Brown is portrayed as a hot-head man who is partial to a drink, and is unable to control his temper making him quick to engage in fighting. Indeed, it was this lack of control which led to the dismissal from his job as a bricklayer. The pub also plays an important role within the community. It serves as a meeting place where social intercourse takes place-where sorrows are drowned, the dead are mourned, achievements are

celebrated and problems are discussed. The influence of the Church is also commented upon in the film, when in one scene Christy's mother seeks the help of a priest. She has found a number of supposedly pornographic literature in Christy's 'chariot' and hopes that the priest will chastise him. The authority of the Church is illustrated by the fact that a strong, independent woman, who is completely in tune with her son's needs, should have to require the help from a priest who has not got the ability to communicate or relate to the child any level.

THE BARRYTOWN TRILOGY

THE COMMITMENTS (Alan Parker : 1991)

THE SNAPPER (Stephen Frears : 1993)

THE VAN (Stephen Frears : 1996)

The next three films shall be dealt with as a complete body of work. They were all based on the novels of Roddy Doyle, who intended them to be a trilogy. There are common factors throughout the three films-they are all set in the fictional area of Barrytown, they are also all set within the working-class of Dublin's northside. Each film, however, tells a different story about the people's experiences in northside Dublin.

THE COMMITMENTS (Alan Parker : 1991)

This is the first part of 'The Barrytown Trilogy', and follows the story of a group of young northsiders as they try to form a soul band. The young connoisseur behind the band's formation is Jimmy Rabbitte (Robert Arkins). Jimmy is driven by a desire that stems from his admiration for the great black American singers like Otis Reading and Aretha Franklin. Jimmy gathers the support of various people who are interested in forming the band as an escape from their apparently mundane existence, either on the dole or in dead-end jobs. Derek, for example, works in a meat-packing factory and Natalie in a fish factory. The piano player, who is a student, is the exception here. The film charts the rise and fall of the band which is initially the subject of much amusement for the small community in which they live. In the climax of the film they are promised by Jimmy that they are to be seen performing by his hero, Wilson Pickett. However, Jimmy's promise seemingly never materialises and the band break up and go their separate ways, possibly returning to their previous boring lives. Jimmy is left disillusioned by the whole experience, especially with the failure of Wilson Pickett to appear, that is however, until he meets a chauffeur-driven limousine whose driver asks him for directions. Jimmy is now left wondering what could have been if things had turned out differently.

The rise and fall of the Dublin soul band is presented as a universal theme. This version is all-singing and all-dancing and has obviously been influenced by films such as 'The Blues Brothers' (1980 : John Landis). The city in 'The Commitments' is represented as a degraded, urban dystopia. It is home to derelict buildings and burnt-out cars. "*The city's physical appearance is dominated by drab colours. The blacks and greys of the buildings are matched by the dark shades of the people's clothing. The film's overall appearance fits neatly with its rock 'n' roll image*". (Wylie : 1994 : 16) The film also draws comparisons between Dublin and Third World countries. This is further illustrated in a 'lecture' given by Jimmy Rabbitte on Irish identity to the rest of the band. 'The Irish are the blacks of Europe', Jimmy states,

'...and the Dubliners are the blacks of Ireland, and the northside Dubliners are the blacks of Dublin'. "*The script's explicit reference to Ireland as a Third World country is reinforced by many visual cues*". (Rockett : 1992 : 28) An example in the film is Jimmy's choice of location for a photo-shoot for the band. He wants 'urban decay', and the band are consequently photographed in front of derelict buildings in the city.

There are two characters in the film, which are not in the novel, who add very little to the story. They fulfil the expectations of foreign audiences by offering them stereotypical characters. Joey Fagan's mother Mrs. Fagan (Maura O'Malley), is an elderly woman who is devoted to her religion which is obviously, Roman Catholicism. In one scene in the film, she is singing hymns whilst accompanying herself on the violin, seemingly oblivious to her son's participation in carnal pursuits in the upstairs room of the house. The second character is an 'up-dated' version of the stereotype of the Roman Catholic Church. The young priest, Father Molloy (Mark O'Regan), is trying to be in tune with the young generation. His attempts to impress the young parishioners with his prodigious grasp of pop trivia fails to do so.

THE SNAPPER (Stephen Frears : 1993)

This is the second part of Doyle's trilogy. Again it features the same urban landscape that appeared in its predecessor. It is set in a lower middle-class background and features the same view of Dublin as a community fallen prey to the social problems such as unemployment and crime. The film is in fact based on one of the country's biggest social problems, that of unplanned teenage pregnancy. It follows the life of Sharon Curley (Tina Kellegher) as she falls pregnant. Like her counterparts from 'The Commitments', Sharon is stuck in a boring, dead-end job as a check-out girl in the local supermarket. Sharon's family home is overcrowded with her father Dessie (Colm Meany), her mother (Ruth McCabe), and her brothers and sisters. The story follows the family's reaction to the news of Sharon's unplanned pregnancy and her initial reluctance to reveal the identity of the child's father. The secrecy revolving the identity of the father is understandable as it was the result of a drunken liaison with an unappealing, middle-aged neighbour called George Burgess (Pat Laffon). The truth is told when Burgess proclaims his love for Sharon and leaves his wife and family for her. Dessie decides to take an active role in his daughter's pregnancy, feeling that he has been inadequate as a father to his own children. He is determined to make amends by becoming so involved in his grandchild's welfare. When the baby finally arrives, she is welcomed into the family, and Sharon, much to the family's amusement, decides to call the baby Georgina.

In its portrayal of an urban community, 'The Snapper' paints an unflattering picture. While the children of the Curley family continually argue and fight amongst themselves within the confines of their small house, they present to the outside world a united front in support of their sister. The family eventually get used to the idea of a new baby in the house and make plans to welcome the child. "*Despite the closing scenes of the united Curley family and their new addition, baby Georgina, there is no attempt to hide the numerous frictions which do exist within the family*". (Rockett : 1994 : 16) This contrasts with some of the neighbours who mock and jeer her in the street, the pub and the dole queue. Earlier representations of this theme, the 'unplanned' pregnancy, generally involved the girl's condemnation by family and neighbours for bringing disgrace on them and her eventually being forced out of the area. The 'Ireland' of 'The Snapper' is much more tolerant of her condition, although it is still viewed primarily as a social problem. In the film, the experience of this lower class family are presented as Irish, but with a universal problem. Apart from their accents and some shots of the Dublin landscape, there is nothing distinctly Irish about them. Indeed,

this is reflected in the interests pursued by the other members of the Curley family. Darren, the youngest brother, has a keen interest in cycling which is an international sport and Kimberly is intensely interested in majorette routines and uniforms, which have their origins in American high-school and college culture. Craig's horizons have been broadened by a tour of duty with the United Nations peace keeping tour. The overall look to the film 'The Snapper' is quite different to its predecessor in the Barrytown trilogy. Where 'The Commitments' was drab and dark, this film is much more colourful and brighter. *"The interiors of the Curley home, the disco bar, and the large suburban pub all use bright, garish reds, yellows and greens. Even the characters' physical appearance is brighter, from the heavily made up faces of Sharon and her friends to Dessie's Barrytown Wheelers tracksuit"*. (Wylie : 1994 : 16)

THE VAN (Stephen Frears : 1996)

This film completes the Barrytown trilogy. It tells the story of the lives of two men, Larry (Colm Meany) and Bimbo (Donal O'Kelly). Bimbo has just been made redundant whereas Larry has been unemployed for some time. Bimbo is eager to be working and invests his money in an old food van. He asks Larry to be his partner in the business venture. Larry employs his daughter, Kerrie (Jennie O'Gorman) in the business as she is an unemployed, unmarried mother. The three of them make a success of the business feeding the Irish football supporters. When Kerrie decides to leave and is replaced with yet another of Larry's siblings, Bimbo feels that he must enforce his authority over Larry. Relationships between the two men become strained as Bimbo decides to give Larry a weekly wage instead of splitting the profits equally. The van is inspected by a representative of the food authorities and is consequently closed down. Bimbo accuses Larry of setting him up and the two men fight, then they go to the pub to try and resolve their problems. Bimbo thinks that the van is causing all the problems and abandons it to the sea.

As in the other parts of the trilogy, representations of the city are limited to some shots of the local DART station and local pubs. No wider exploration is offered. The city in 'The Commitments' is a bleak, hopeless place with many of the country's social problems in abundance. The city in both 'The Snapper' and 'The Van' is brighter and more colourful. This can be accounted by the fact that there is a distinctive class difference between the films. The last two films from the trilogy stick closer to the novels on which they are based and are set in a lower middle class, whereas 'The Commitments' is working class. In 'The Van', the interiors of the homes and pubs and the food van of the title inject the film with bright, gaudy colours.

The relationship between the two men is one of the main themes of the film. One of the first differences between them is how they deal with being unemployed. Bimbo is devastated at the news of his redundancy and is desperate to find work. Larry, on the other hand, seems resigned to life as a recipient of social services. Difficulties arise in the relationship when Bimbo establishes his superiority in the business. In this film, as with many past representations, the local pub becomes an essential part of the community. The two men proceed in getting quite drunk at the end of the film when they are trying to solve their problems. Eventually Bimbo comes to the conclusion that it is the van that is at the root of all his problems. In a dramatic final scene, they drive the van into the sea. Bimbo relinquishes his superiority over Larry and the two men are once again unemployed. Their friendship seems to have been saved because of this action.

INTO THE WEST (Mike Newell : 1992)

'Into the West' is set partly in the city and partly in the country in the West of Ireland. It is a modern fairytale and tells the story of two young brothers, Tito (Ruaraidh Conroy) and Ossie (Ciaran Fitzgerald), who live in the large northside housing estate of Ballymun. Their father, Papa Reilly (Gabriel Byrne) was once known and respected as the 'King of the Travellers', until the tragic death of his wife during the birth of his youngest son, Ossie. Due to the grief he felt after her death, he decided to bring his two sons to Dublin to live in a settled community. Grandpa Ward (David Kelly), visits the young boys in Ballymun, bringing with him a mysterious white horse whom Ossie develops an instant attachment for. The two boys declare ownership of the white horse and decide to keep it in their already cramped council home in the 'Towers'. Consequently, the police authorities are called in to take the horse away. The two brothers decide to recapture the horse and proceed on a race across the country into the West. Their father seeks help from the travelling community after he is refused any help from the police officials in the city. The travelling community welcome his return to their ways and set off in search of his sons. The story ends as the boys reach their destination which is the coastline on the West of Ireland, near to their mother's grave. As the police advance on the horse which is carrying young Ossie on her back, she turns and gallops into the sea. Ossie is finally granted a vision of the mother he has never seen when he is underneath the water. Papa Reilly rescues Ossie from beneath the waves just in time and Tir na nOg disappears just as mysteriously as she appeared. Tir na nOg's image is seen symbolically in the flames of the fire as she gallops away.

In this film the city is represented as crowded shopping streets where the boys beg for money. Ballymun appears as a squalid, shabby place where the children play alongside abandoned, burnt-out cars that surround the estate. Two humorous scenes take place in the city, and show how the travelling community manipulate situations for their own needs. At the beginning of the film, a social welfare officer calls on a travelling family to establish the number of children they have in regards to their application for children's allowances. A large number of children from other families in the estate gather around in order to be counted as members of the family, thus allowing the travelling family to claim a lot more than they are in fact entitled to. Another scene takes place in the busy shopping areas of the city while Tito and Ossie are on the streets begging for money. Tito tells Ossie that they would get more money if his attempts at singing were accompanied with exaggerated asthmatic breathing.

'Into the West' portrays a very obvious urban/rural divide with the city represented as a dismal, decrepit place to be. *"The Dublin of the film is very much the degraded urban landscape of a romantic convention. It is a decrepit high-rise dystopia where Papa Reilly...has abandoned the old nomadic ways of his people for the sedentary life of the city"* (Cleary : 1995 : 153). The character of Papa Reilly in this film illustrates the relationship between masculinity and urbanisation. Papa Reilly was once known as the 'King of the Travellers', and as this title suggests he was respected and admired by the travelling community. He loses any sense of self-esteem or confidence when he moves to the Towers. Indeed, he also conforms some of the pre-established stereotypes of past films in his lifestyle within the city. He falls prey to bouts of depression and heavy drinking due to his being unemployed. When he returns to his previous lifestyle of the travelling people, he returns to his former personality, that of 'King of the Travellers'. *"Both father and sons are taken back into the embrace of the 'unfallen' travelling community and Papa promises his sons that there will be no returning to their previous life in the city ('I won't bring ye back to the Towers again, I swear. I swear')"* (Cleary : 1995 : 155).

The Dublin in this film represents the problems associated with Ireland's position in an advanced urban, industrialised society. As the title suggests, these problems can only be solved with a journey 'Into

the West', in a sense, it urges that the answer lie in the rural , 'romantic', traditions of the West. The title also refers to the boys journey back to their original home in the West of Ireland but it is also a reference to the American West of the cowboy films, which are watched fanatically by the two boys. 'Into the West' draws a comparison between the nomadic lifestyle of the travelling community, with their love of open spaces, the broad expanses and unlimited vistas of the Old West and their settled life in the squalid, claustrophobic home in the Ballymun Towers.

I WENT DOWN (Paddy Breatnach : 1997)

This is one of the more recent films of the thesis, having only been released in Ireland last year. It has a combination of film genres including the road-movie, the comedy and the thriller. It tells the story of an unlikely couple-Git (Peter McDonald), who could only be described as an 'accidental' criminal and Bunny (Brendan Gleeson). Git has just come out of prison for theft. He reveals at a later stage of the film that he was merely taking the blame for his father, who was the real culprit. He realises after coming out of prison that relationships, among other things, have changed. Git is involved in a pub brawl with his best friend before realising that his friend is involved in something a lot deeper. He inadvertently becomes involved in the criminal underlife of Dublin. The head of this particular gang, Tom French (Tony Boyle), believes that Git now owes him something and pairs him up with Bunny on a 'rescue' mission to Cork. Bunny is an extremely likeable character who is basically a buffoon with a habit of stealing cars. The story follows the pair through the midlands to Cork where they must locate and 'rescue' Frank Grogan (Peter Caffery). The film follows their journey back to a desolate area somewhere in the midlands. It is revealed that Frank and French were involved in a dispute over counterfeit plates several years ago, however, the two of them end up dead as a result of this dispute. Bunny and Git realise the opportunity that lies before them in the shape of the counterfeit plates, and decide to leave the country for America with the plates.

This film won critical acclaim for its achievements in challenging the past representations of the Irish and also, its portrayal of Ireland as a modern society. Gerry McCarthy deems it a major achievement *"...a funny, brilliantly-paced, complex but totally accessible, mature and highly entertaining mobster movie, set in Ireland but undistracted by the usual feeble efforts to explain the essential essence of Irishness"*(McCarthy : 1997 : 34). The film's characters and the storyline are basic and formulaic, and are presented as a universal theme. *"...A central character leaving prison, finding that relationships have changed, and getting drawn against his will into a caper where he is apparently out of his depth. What was next...is predictable: some gangsters, a few 'characters', a dodgy quest, and a chase across the Irish countryside that mimics in potholed microcosm the form of the great American road movies"* (McCarthy : 1997 : 34). The physical appearance of the city in the film is not unlike the depictions in previous films. The housing estate in which Bunny's wife lives is run-down, shabby and full of crowds of children. Public houses appear several times in the film. It seems that quite a lot of criminal business is undertaken in these unappealing pubs. A successful aspect of the film is the obvious distinction made between two urban societies, Dublin and Cork. *"Each has an accent, an appearance, an urban culture and a criminal style that is uniquely its own...This isn't a Dublin-versus-the-rest, Jackeen/ Culchie thing"* (McCarthy : 1997 : 34). The city in this film is represented by both Dublin and Cork. Dublin is not necessarily the main focal point in the film. *"Neither of them is central: each is an autonomous node, a point on the map. Of course, the urban/rural cultural divide crops up in all kinds of ways-our two heroes' bewilderment in the middle of*

the bog, or a hilarious encounter with a country Garda who cheerily enquires after Git's imaginary relatives". (McCarthy : 1997 :34)

The film illustrates the tendency to see violence and modernity as inseparable from each other. Foreign productions often attributed violence to the "*...ancient stereotype of the inexplicably violent and demonic Irish*" (Hill : 1987 : 174). However, this film challenges this stereotype and offers urbanisation and modernity as a possible reason for violence. "*It is violence which helps forward drives and ambitions, establishes character and identity, resolves problems and conflicts and ultimately affirms an ideology of advancement and development*" (Hill :1987 : 151).

CONCLUSION

The last twenty years or so of filmmaking in Ireland has shifted from the rurified and romantic image of foreign productions and promotional films that preferred to portray the mystical West of Ireland. This image of Ireland with its simple, rural way of life was also encouraged and reinforced by the cultural nationalists. Until recently, this was also reflected in the cinematic image of Ireland. The city represented the undesirable and indeed, the often unwanted advances of urbanisation. "*Capitalism is seen as an irreversible phenomenon which makes it impossible to go back to the pre-industrial past*" (Cleary : 1995 : 158). In recent Irish cinema young Irish filmmakers have shown a desire to redress the imbalance of films that existed between rural and urban representations. The city that has been portrayed on screen, however, leaves a lot to be desired. Although other cities have been used there has been a tendency to concentrate on Dublin as a setting for these films. "*On screen, Dublin has become the setting for highlighting many of modern Ireland's social problems: unemployment, marginalisation, drugs and teenage pregnancy*" (Wylie : 1994 : 16). There is also a tendency to represent a remarkably small area of Dublin. Many of the films have been set in the north-east side of the city in an area which extends as far as Ballymun, Darndale and Kilbarrack. Ballymun, as Ireland's only large-scale, high-rise housing complex is grossly overused as a setting and features in 'The Courier', 'The Commitments' and also in 'Into the West' to name a few. With regards to the physical appearance of the city on screen, these Irish films provide a sad visual record of the neglected and degraded areas of Dublin. 'Pigs', for example, spares the viewer nothing of the dirt and squalor of the squat in which the people live. 'The Commitments' goes one step further and compares Dublin to Third World countries. Indeed, the city in this film is dark and depressing. The film makes use of derelict buildings and burnt-out cars to convey its image of a degraded city. Certain images have become associated with Dublin such as the DART Rail System, images of "*...hordes of milling children and that Dublin phenomenon, the urban horseman*" (Wylie : 1994 : 16).

There are other problems in regards to the decisions filmmakers have made in their representations of Dublin people. There is a tendency to concentrate on the working class or unemployed in Irish films that are concerned with representing Irish urban life. Cathal Black's 'Pigs', goes one step further and represents the outcasts of society, that is, the homeless. There are of course some exceptions such as the film 'Boom Babies', with its glimpse of middle class life. The characters in Irish films seem to display a degree of passivity, of resignation in the face of adversity. The father in 'Down the Corner' succumbs to alcoholism when he is made redundant. In 'Pigs', the unlikely group who squat in the tenement appear to have accepted their marginalised lifestyles without question or indeed, without any effort to alter their situations. When Andrew in 'Boom Babies' cannot find a job he sinks into apathy, while Aisling makes an effort to realise her dream of working as a mechanic, however she is defeated and is forced to take a menial job instead. 'The Van' explores the struggle between masculinity and modernity. In this film it seems that the two are not compatible. It looks at the different attitudes two friends have towards unemployment. Larry has been unemployed for some time and appears to have accepted it as his fate. Bimbo, on the other refuses to resign himself to his situation and tries to set up his own business. However he is defeated and the end of the film shows the two men unemployed again.

Although recent Irish films have striven to portray Ireland as a modern, urban society some of them still succumb to the myth of the west of Ireland as being the 'real', authentic Ireland. Many films have depicted Dublin as being the home of many of the country's social problems, but they offer no new solution

to this problem. Instead filmmakers have fallen prey to the myth of the west. In 'Joyriders', Mary finds herself homeless, abused and alone in a hostile city, seemingly without hope. That is until she meets petty criminal, Perky and they desert the city in a search for happiness in the countryside. The film depicts urban society's problems in a negative way yet "*...it turns directly to a cliched structure to solve them*" (Wylie : 1994 : 16). 'Into the West' is perhaps the best example of this celebration of the agrarian myth. The film illustrates the many downfalls associated with life in the city, with its claustrophobic Ballymun Towers that are contrasted to the wide open spaces of the West of Ireland. It seems that the country's social and economic problems are confined to the city and do not seem to affect the rest of the country, least of all the West of Ireland. Indeed "*...the problems of a socio-economic character that clearly affect Ireland as a whole are spatially mapped in terms of a geographical division between a mundane, urban east (Dublin) and a magical, rural west*" (Cleary : 1995 : 158). The solution that the film offers is an abandonment of degradation and poverty of the city in favour of the rural traditions of the country. The film closes with Papa Reilly reunited with the travelling community as he swears never to return to the Towers again. "*A more rigorous and dialectical critique of the shortcomings of capitalist modernity must necessarily be articulated, however, by measuring capitalism not against the ruins of the past, but against the demands and the as-yet-unrealised possibilities of the future*" (Cleary : 1995 : 165).

The films selected for discussion in this thesis illustrate the problems associated with the representation of the city in Irish cinema. The tendency to focus on the working classes and the unemployed of northside Dublin must be addressed. There is a necessity to broaden the depictions of city dwellers to include other classes and groups of the city's suburbs, north and south. Furthermore, filmmakers should reconsider locating films in areas of Dublin that have become cliched through overuse. The suburbs of Dublin, for example, have only been glanced at in films such as 'Boom Babies'. The city has also become the centre for Ireland's social problems. In many Irish films rural Ireland acts as a safe haven to those who decide to abandon the hostile city. In 'Joyriders', for example, "*...when Perky, Mary and children drive off into the landscape, the modern countryside is replaced with a mythical rural viewpoint which consigns society's problems to the city*" (Wylie : 1994 : 16). 'I Went Down' attempts to re-address this imbalance. Firstly, it depicts another city as an equal to Dublin. Cork, in this film is seen to possess its own distinct urban culture and criminal underworld that has been represented as exclusive to Dublin so many times.

Finally, there is an understandable inclination on the part of filmmakers in Ireland to adopt stereotypical images of Irish images to enhance the commercial appeal of their films for an international audience. However, the challenge for young filmmakers in this country is to create new images of Ireland that can convey the historical, political and social intricacies of modern Irish life in the most effective manner possible.

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| 3. | 1987 | THE COURIER | <i>Frank Deasy/Joe Lee</i> |
| 4. | 1987 | BOOM BABIES | <i>Siobhan Twomey</i> |
| 5. | 1988 | JOYRIDERS | <i>Aisling Walsh</i> |
| 6. | 1989 | MY LEFT FOOT | <i>Jim Sheridan</i> |
| 7. | 1991 | THE COMMITMENTS | <i>Alan Parker</i> |
| 8. | 1993 | THE SNAPPER | <i>Stephen Frears</i> |
| 9. | 1996 | THE VAN | <i>Stephen Frears</i> |
| 10. | 1992 | INTO THE WEST | <i>Mike Newell</i> |
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