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For Helen

Thanks to Colm, Bernice, Seamus and Tony.

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INTRODUCTION

The notion of a 'Third Cinema' came out of the films and manifestos of a number of Latin American filmmakers working in the 1960s and '70s. They saw Third Cinema as an alternative to 'Hollywood' cinema (first), and 'Art' or 'Auteur' cinema (second). *'Third Cinema gives an account of reality and history it is also linked to national culture. It is the way in which the world is conceptualised and not the genre nor the explicitly political character of the film which makes it belong to Third Cinema'.* (Fernando Solanas). Through their films and critical theories Third Cinema practitioners achieved a revolutionary cinematic praxis which has influenced filmmakers in Latin America and other developing countries ever since.

From its inception Third Cinema did not see itself as confined to the Third World but saw itself more as an attitude to filmmaking relevant to oppressed peoples anywhere.

In this thesis I intend to study Third Cinema theory by looking at the writings of the main theorists, and by examining its application in some Latin American revolutionary films. Finally, by looking at some recent Irish films (particularly those concerned with the socio/political) in the light of Third Cinema, I want to explore Third Cinema's possible relevance as a critical/cultural practice here in Ireland.

CHAPTER 1: NEW LATIN AMERICAN CINEMA

Introduction to New Latin American Cinema.

In order to understand the Third Cinema debate it is important to read the manifestos of the filmmakers writing in the sixties in Latin America where concepts of a Third Cinema first came from. In some cases these writings seem, if not 'dated' exactly, certainly belonging to a specific period in history and in some cases to the country where they were written. However taken in that context they still provide the basis of ideas which make up theories of Third Cinema and contain many ideas which are still relevant in cinema today.

In a paper written in 1985 Fernando Birri looked back over 25 years of new Latin American Cinema and came up with the following definition:

*'it is a cinema which corresponds to the poetics of transformation of reality. That is to say that it generates a creative energy which throughout cinema aspires to modify the reality on which it is projected.'*¹

The New Latin American Cinema emerged simultaneously in several different Latin American countries in the late 1950's. According to Birri it arose without any confabulation between them because it was in the air. A generation of filmmakers was growing up questioning the politics of the moment, inspired by the writings of Marx, Mao Tse Tung, and Frantz Fanon, and the Cuban revolution. They wanted to create a national identity, something which had been denied them due to years of colonisation and neo-colonisation.

Culturally the bourgeoisie had always looked towards Europe especially in countries like Argentina and Chile which had a high percentage of people of European origin in their populations. Although Mexico, Argentina and Brazil had their own film industries, in the late 50's these came to be dominated by Hollywood due to the increasing exhibition of imported Hollywood movies relative to indigenous ones, and in the adoption of Hollywood format by those which were made at home. Apart from the obviously damaging effect of always looking at North American culture, lifestyle and values on the screen, Latin Americans had to suffer the further indignity of seeing themselves portrayed by Hollywood in a variety of patronising ways. At best the Latin American was an exotic other at worst lazy, ignorant, primitive.

The Argentinian filmmaker Fernando Birri is generally considered to be the grandfather of New Latin American Cinema. He studied film in the Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia in Rome. In Rome he was introduced to Italian neo-realism. Brought up on a diet of Hollywood, Italian neo-realism amazed and inspired him. *'For me the great revelation of the Neo-realist movement was that contrary to Hollywood's tenets and example it was possible to make movies on the same artistic level as a play, a novel, a poem'*². Neo-realism was also a cinema which was concerned with underdevelopment, that, along with the fact that the Italians believed in making their films as cheaply as possible out on the streets and away from expensive studios, inspired Birri to come back and set up his own documentary film school.

His first intention had been to set up a school similar to the Centro Sperimental producing fiction films. But when he saw the conditions in Argentina he decided that such a school would be premature and that what was needed was a school to combine the basics of filmmaking with the basics of sociology, history, geography, and politics. *'The real undertaking at hand was the quest for a national identity that had been alienated by a system of economic and political as well as cultural hegemony established by the dominant classes in concert with the Spanish colonisers, later with British investors, and most recently with agents of the U.S.'* 3. The Escuela Documental de Santa Fe was the first documentary film school in Latin America and marks the birth of New Latin American Cinema.

Third Cinema

There are four theoretical polemics written during the 1960/70's which define the scope of New Latin American Cinema. They are written by filmmakers from as diverse countries and political situations as; Cuba, Argentina, Brazil and Bolivia. The longest and most comprehensive of these is Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino's *'Towards a Third Cinema.'*

Solanas and Getino were members of a group called Cine Liberation. Born in Argentina in the late 60's it was a response to the current movie industry which was comprised of a meaningless and censored mainstream, and a small auteurist movement. Neither of these seemed to address themselves to either the increasing political repression in Argentina itself or the worldwide political situations of the time. (ie. Vietnam, Paris, Cuba)

In an interview which appeared in 'Cine Cubano' in March 1969 the group outlined their objectives which were; *'to form a cinema which would not fall into the trap of trying to engage in a dialogue with those who have no interest in doing so.'* 4. It would be a cinema of aggression, an agit cinema, but this did not mean that filmmakers would take on exclusively political or revolutionary themes, but that films would explore all aspects of life in Latin America. The cinema would be revolutionary in both its form and its consciousness.

Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino made Cine Liberation's first film. Entitled La Hora De Los Fornos/The Hour Of The Furnaces (1968), four hours long and in three parts, they described it as *'an act, before being a film: an act of liberation'* 5. A year after making The Hour Of The Furnaces and based on experiences gained while making it Solanas and Getino wrote their seminal manifesto 'Towards a Third Cinema'. Their main ideological concern was the relationship between coloniliasm/neo-colonialism and underdevelopment particularly in relation to its effect on the psychological as well as physical condition of the colonised people. They recognised this as a problem common to all people in the underdeveloped or third world but also to people living in underdeveloped situations in the first world.

'In order to impose itself, neo-colonialism needs to convince the people of a dependant country of their own inferiority.....Inhibitions, uprootedness, escapism, cultural cosmopolitanism, artistic imitations, metaphysical exhaustion, betrayal of country, all find fertile land on which to grow' 6

*'Culture becomes bilingual, one is national that of the people and the other is the estranging, that of the classes subordinated to outside forces. The admiration of the upper classes for the U.S and Europe is the highest expression of their subjection.'*⁷

The role of art then as far as Solanas and Gatino could see was to liberate or decolonise the people. They felt that ideas such as "all art is revolutionary" did not take into account the neo-colonial process. It also assumes a universality to art and culture which is questionable since much of what is accepted as universal art comes from a European-North American axis and is therefore loaded with bourgeois, imperialist values.

The media, they felt, did nothing to alleviate this condition but rather added to the normalising effects of colonial oppression.

*'Mass communications are more effective for neo-colonialism than napalm. What is real, true, and rational is to be found in the margin of the law, just as are the people, violence, crime, and destruction, come to be peace, order, and normality'.*⁸

Film, a very powerful tool of communication, had been given over to spectacle, entertainment, another consumer product. Among intellectuals the question had always been, "is it possible to have revolutionary cinema before the revolution?" or "can truly revolutionary cinema only be made in liberated countries like Cuba?" Solanas and Getino maintained that far from waiting for the revolution to happen, film should be used as a tool of the revolution. *"The use of artistic means, together with political militancy, prepares the terrain for the revolution to become reality and facilitates the solution of the problems that will arise with the taking of power"*⁹.

Film should be used to show reality to the people, to claim back their culture and to decolonise them. This concept of agit cinema Solanas and Getino saw as differing radically from the two existing forms of cinema (ie Hollywood and Art/Auteur). It was a new concept in cinema they called it Third Cinema.¹⁰

Hollywood cinema they felt fell into the same category as mass communications in its neo-colonising effects on the people. It was a cinema of mystification which hid the truth rather than revealing or analysing it. Solanas and Getino are quite clear that these properties lie not only in the ideologies present in Hollywood cinema but also in its more formal aspects, therefore even films not made in the USA but made in the Hollywood form still carry underlying imperialist messages.

"The placing of cinema within US models, even in the formal aspect, in language, leads to the adoption of the ideological forms that gave rise to precisely that language and no other. Even the models which appear to be only technical, industrial, scientific etc. leads to a conceptual dependancy situation due to the fact that cinema is an industry, but differs from other industries in that it has been created and organised in order to generate certain ideologies. The 35mm camera, 24 frames per second, arc lights and a commercial place of exhibition for audiences were conceived not to gratuitously transmit an ideology, but to satisfy, in the first place the cultural and surplus value needs of a specific world view, that of US finance capital." 11.

So what about art cinema? or cinema which is critical of US/Western society? While respecting art/auteur cinema's attempts to break from Hollywood format-expression in non-standard language is an attempt at cultural decolonization, they felt that Art cinema falls short of being truly critical or revolutionary for the following reasons:

(Within capitalist society) 'any dispute no matter how virulent, which does not serve to mobilize, agitate, and politicize sectors of the people to arm them rationally and perceptibly, in one way or another for the struggle, is recieved with pleasure, Virulence non-conformism, plain rebelliousness, and discontent are just so many more products on the capitalist market. they are consumer goods. This is especially true where the bourgeoisie is in need of shock and exciting elements of controlled violence daily,.....examples are the works of socialist tinged

painting and sculpture which are greedily sought after by the new bourgeois to decorate their apartments and mansions.....which give an air of broadminded democracy.'12.

The role of Third Cinema then is to make films that the system cannot assimilate and which are foreign to its needs, or that set out directly to fight the system. Within Third Cinema it is not enough to expose and condemn. Underlying causes, reasons must be revealed and if possible alternatives, amelioration offered.

Even if Solanas and Getino had wanted to, it would have been impossible for them to show Hour commercially due to it's political content. So they set up an alternative distribution system based in town halls, trade union offices, private homes and showed to groups of less than 25 people. Apart from the very real need to keep these screenings clandestine, the strategy of showing to small groups allowed for discussion and made it into a participatory event rather than passive entertainment. However Solanas and Getino state that people should pay the going commercial rate because the film must be self supporting and that the exchange of money shows and appreciation of the part of the audience and keeps the filmmaker faithful to his audience.

*Aesthetics of Hunger * Form and Content * Imperfect Cinema*

The other three major manifestos cover much of the same ground as 'Towards Third Cinema' so I will only go over the aspects which were not already mentioned.

'The Aesthetics of Hunger' is a seething polemic from Glauber Rocha a member of the Brazilian 'Cinema Novo' Group. In it he describes an aesthetic which represents Brazil's political instability, underdevelopment and imbalance of material wealth, while also drawing on popular ideas of resistance and incorporating their structures of perception into the work. *'For the European (hunger) it is a strange tropical surrealism, for the Brazilian it is a national shame. He does not eat but is ashamed to say so and yet he does not know where the hunger comes from.'* 13.

This hunger, according to Rocha, can not be assuaged by moderate government reforms. Therefore only a culture of hunger can qualitatively surpass its own structures by undermining them and destroying them. The most noble cultural manifestation of hunger is violence. 'Cinema Novo' teaches that the aesthetics of violence is the moment when the coloniser becomes aware of the colonised. Cinema Novo is an ongoing process of exploration that is *'making our thinking clearer freeing us from the debilitating delirium of hunger'*. 14.

Sanjines a Bolivian director and author of 'Problems between Form and Content' states that revolutionary cinema must seek beauty not as an end but as a means. By its nature the primary aim of revolutionary art must be communication but that communication must be pursued through the stimulation of reflection. Communicability must not give way to facile simplicity however. Sanjines believes that 'the profoundest sources of sensibility are required to communicate ideas in all their depth and substance, and to align the finest artistic resources with the audiences own cultural reference points, in order to capture the internal rhythms of the peoples own mental life, sensibility and the vision of reality'¹⁵.

Sanjines spent much time working with Indian communities in remote parts of Bolivia. His main concern was to give them a voice, to allow them to speak and bring their problems out into the open. From working in this way he learnt a lot about difficulties of language and communication. He felt that the more space left for interpretation or improvisation the more successful the film was in terms of its ultimate communicability with its audience.

He cites as an example of language problems, that Indian people see themselves quite differently: they do not have an individualistic way of life, they understand reality through their integration with others. This was quite at odds with how the filmmakers saw themselves.

Along with problems of language Sanjines talks of formal techniques which he feels allow for more objective communication. For example long shots allow the audience freedom to think, and allows for the development of the collective protagonist within the film, though he qualifies this by saying that such sequences of long shots should not fall into the immobility of theatre but should contain multiple possibilities for interpreting internal and external drama.

Julio Garcia Espinoza wrote his much quoted polemic ten years into the Cuban revolution. It differs from the others in that it is not only a manifesto for revolutionary cinema but a much larger attempt to analyse the place of art in the post revolutionary society. He calls for an *imperfect cinema* which will first be imperfect because it will have a specific aim, to further the cause of the revolution. He believes that ultimately, all things being equal, art will be available to everybody and will be able to revert again to being an uncommitted 'impartial' activity. Until this time time cinema will be imperfect. The goal of imperfect cinema is to eventually disappear. The other point he makes is that Cinema should remain imperfect in terms of production qualities also. He is afraid that in the rush to produce 'perfect looking' films the original revolutionary aims might be lost. He also emphasises that film can use any aesthetic or strategy that it wants, to achieve revolutionary ends.

He calls for a popular art, one that is made for many, by many, unlike mass art which is seen by many but made by few, or traditional high art which is elitist and which imposes the aesthetic of the few on culture. 'Art he says will not disappear into nothingness; it will disappear into everything.' 16.

Nationalist, Critical, Realist, Popular, Active

Birri, in summing up the main tendencies in his own work and the work of his fellow Latin American filmmakers over the last 25 years, isolates four keys to expression and analysis. These keys are that cinema should be nationalist, realist, critical, and popular. He also points out that New Latin American Cinema has always aspired towards being active. By this he means that it is a cinema which is generated within reality, it becomes concrete on the screen, and from the screen returns to reality, aspiring to transform it. It is an active cinema for an active spectator, one who does not consume passively; and it is a cinema of liberation; for economic, political and cultural liberation and also the liberation of the image and the imagination.

CHAPTER 2 : THREE REVOLUTIONARY FILMS

Documentary

La Hora De Los Hornos - The Hour Of The Furnaces (1968)

The Hour of the furnaces is Solanas and Getinos four hour epic on which they based their theories of third cinema. It is divided into three parts. The first section entitled 'Neo-Colonialism and violence' is subdivided under different headings which explore the history, causes, and effects of neo-colonialism. Part Two 'an act for liberation', is subdivided into two parts: 'chronicle of Peronism' covering Peron's rule from 1945 to his deposition by a coup in 1955, and 'chronicle of resistance' which looks at the opposition struggle during the period of Peron's exile. The final section 'violence and liberation', consists of an open-ended series of interviews concerning the best path to a revolutionary future for Latin America.

The Hour is probably the most experimental of the three films discussed in this chapter. Robert Stam, writing about this film, maintained that if there are two avant-guards, a political and an artistic, then this film represents the perfect union of the two.¹⁷

Solanas and Getino used everything they could get their hands on from outdoor cinema verite-style shots, to fictional reconstructions, interviews, together with archival footage, stills and even pieces from other Latin American films. These are cut together with a variety of different techniques, though with a large homage to Russian directors like Eisenstein and Vertov. Intercut between the images are titles which apart from introducing each new topic, also give information, statistics as well as calling for revolution. These titles move around the screen repeating themselves or growing larger for emphasis.

The soundtrack is similarly montaged: a mixture of voiceovers, dislocated sounds and music. The clanking of a 'clocking in' machine accompanies images of workers while the titles talk of wage slaves. Voiceovers often used ironically, the bourgeoisie talking of difficulties finding good domestic staff, or discussing international art movements, while the titles speak of neo-colonialism and poverty. In a stunning scene set in the graveyard of the rich people of Buenos Aires, (where the tombs are larger than the houses of families seen earlier in the film), the camera moves from tomb to tomb, eventually focusing in on angelic statues and the tops of each tomb cutting from one to another. The background music is from an Argentinian opera, the lyrics of which include 'I will bring down the rebel flag in blood', a reminder of the aristocracy's involvement with brutal regimes. Later in the film, a scene about the importation of popular culture from abroad, in which a Ray Charles soundtrack accompanies images of the youth of Buenos Aires, looks like early pop-video.

Visually it is a difficult film to describe, the overriding impression is of a series of compelling images edited together very quickly, sometimes similar to each other with expressionistic uses of light to denote violence or poverty, sometimes contrasting images montaged together for ironic effect. These pieces are then followed by slower more narrative pieces to give the viewer a chance to catch up. This is not a film to fall asleep to.

The Hour has an open structure, it asks questions, literally. The film was devised so that it could be stopped in the projector while questions posed on the screen could be discussed by the audience. Why did Peron fall without a struggle? Should he have armed the people? and at the end of the film 'now it is up to you to draw conclusions, to continue the film, you have the floor'. This challenge was not rhetorical but was taken up by the audiences. Shown as it was in small groups the film became a participatory event, this feeling added to by the fact that the audience had put themselves in grave danger by being there. The film was referred to as a 'film act' and the screenings turned into 'decolonised spaces.'

The film's critique is very incisive and clear-sighted. It begins with a history lesson how Argentina having obtained liberation from the Spanish then proceeded to sell herself to British banks ending up the agrarian branch of British Industry. Step by step it explains how this affects the economy and created enormous wealth for the ruling oligarchy and enormous poverty for the proletariat despite Argentina's ample natural resources.

Its arguments are still completely relevant. The film then talks about the ruling classes capacity for violence 'no social order commits suicide', and goes on to outline the many forms of violence open to the neo-colonist. 'The Hour' introduces reality to the audience describing how things are. (the alienated indian population, high infant mortality among the working classes, the huge shanty towns outside Buenos Aires and other cities), then explains why things are that way.

The film calls for a revolution and espouses the use of violence, quoting from Fanon, Césaire, and Ho Chi Min the first section ends with the titles 'to choose ones death is to choose ones life' followed by full five minutes of the death mask of Che Guevara to whom the film is dedicated.

The fact that Solanas and Getino espoused Peron is a bit confusing while 'The Hour' calls for a socialist revolution it none the less seems to see Peron as the answer to Argentinas problems. While Peron was certainly nationalist and populist he could not be described as socialist, however what this does point to is the films popular base. Solanas and Getino had originally set out to make a half hour documentary on workers. While making the film and due to pressures and criticisms from the working class people they were working with the film underwent a mutation process which developed in to it's final form, not in this case due to authorial whims but from pressure of a proletarian critique. Despite the clandestine nature of the viewings it was seen by 400,000 people in Argentina.

Despite its espousal of a populist politician The Hour's form is not populist. It does not underestimate its audience but expects them to be able to grasp meaning from a montage of images and sounds, it gives its audience visual and linguistic experimentation. It respects its audience by offering quality, proposing as it does a cinema which is a tool for consciousness raising, an instrument for analyses and a catalyst for action.

Many critics have placed alot of emphasis on The Hour's being dependant on an certain time and place in history the conditions of which may never be reproduced and therefore questioning its relevance.¹⁶ While this may be true and while it may also be true that many of their political predictions in the film did not happen, 'The Hou'r provided and still provides he model for a body of revolutionary film making all over Latin America and indeed the world. Not only does it provide an endless source of inspiration for formal strategies, it is also the definative guide to revolutionary cinematic praxis.

Documentary/Fiction

El Chacal De Nahueltoro = The Jackel Of Nahueltoro (1969)

Miguel Litten believes that there is no such thing as a film which is revolutionary in itself. It becomes revolutionary through the contact it establishes with its public, and principally through its influence towards revolutionary action.

He based the script for 'El Chacal' on an actual incident which had caused public outrage in Chile. This way he felt he would be able to reach a wide audience who would not be passive to the issues raised in the film. It concerns the story of Jorge Del Carmen Velenzuela, an illiterate peasant who murdered a woman and her five children. He was caught, imprisoned and finally executed. Litten avoids giving the crime a psychological explanation but concentrates on a more Marxist approach. In a series of flashbacks we are introduced to Jorge's background. It points to a culture which lacks not only education and employment but also lacks a strong family network.

The poverty of the victims' life is also pointed out. The woman, a widow, has been evicted by a landlord who wants to keep her house for the family of a working man. When the policeman asks Jorge why did he do it, Jorge replies "so they will not suffer". Alcohol is seen as another problem when Jorge commits the crime he is drunk, we see him drinking from a wicker covered wine bottle. Later in prison he is seen weaving these wicker baskets, the implication being that he has become part of a slave labour force for the industry that was responsible in part for his crime in the first place.

Throughout the film we see Jorge interacting with various "nice" people. When he was young and ran away from home people took him in, and much later when he is in prison we see him being helped by a priest and a teacher. Litten wanted to make the point clear that it was not a case of good or bad

individuals but of a decaying system. 'the parish priest, the teacher who teaches the official colonised culture they all prepare and tame men and then, with their consent, the system comes down on them. Alcohol, religion, smiles, law, gentleness - all are part of the system's tools to train and subdue men,.'19

Structurally the element of surprise in the narrative is removed in El Chacal by the use of titles before each episode so that the film appeals to the audiences critical faculties rather than emotional identification. Littins theoretical concerns were well demonstrated in this film. El Chacal De Nahueltoro was the most well attended film in the history of Chilean cinema (it was made under the Frei administration, shortly before Allende came to power) It served as a common cultural reference among Chileans and became a catalyst for discussion on the wide range of issues it raised.20.

Fiction

Memorias De Subdesarrollo = Memories of Underdevelopment (1968)

In Cuba the ICAIC (Cuban Institute of Cinematographic Art and Industry) was set up in 1959 shortly after the revolution. Castro ranked cinema and television, in that order, as the most important forms of artistic expression. Before the revolution Cuba did not have a film industry but was an offshore research laboratory for US film companies to test Latin American markets. Two of the founding members of the ICAIC were Julio

Garcia Espinoza and Tomas Gutierrez Alea both of whom had studied in the Centro Sperimental in Italy and both of whom had been involved in the Cuban Cine Club movement before the revolution. Over the first ten years the ICAIC built up a very healthy output of films of very high quality and sensitivity. Starting with stories from the revolution and historical reconstructions, they placed a lot of energy into documentaries and newsreel, eventually branching into fiction.

Memories of Underdevelopment directed by Alea is one of the best known fiction films of that period. It is an amazing film in many ways not least for its level of sophistication both ideologically and formally. To have been produced by a state-backed film institute in a socialist country whose revolution was under severe threat from all sides, and whose film industry was barely one decade old is an incredible achievement and says a lot for the levels of cultural development in Cuba at that time.

It concerns a main protagonist Sergio and his difficulty in relating to post-revolutionary Cuba. Although it is constructed as a sort of European Modernist style study of bourgeois alienation it subverts this form by ultimately becoming a severe critique on his inability to escape from his outmoded ideologies.

In the beginning of the film we see an airport, titles come up 'HAVANA 1961 MANY PEOPLE ARE LEAVING THE COUNTRY'. Sergio is there saying goodbye to his wife, his parents are already gone. Sergio drives back into Havana, he is going to throw his lot in with the revolution and the audience is fooled

into identifying with him. When we cut to his apartment and see him playing fetishistically with his wives remaining underclothes and makeup we begin to suspect that he may not be the nice guy we assumed. A taped argument that he had, had with his wife which leaves us in no doubt as to his patronising attitude to women something which is underlined several times throughout the film. His alienation from women perhaps echoes his alienation from the revolution and from the underdeveloped people of the revolution.

The film is narrated through Sergio's internal monologue which tells us that he is well aware of the aims and needs of the revolution and up to a point agrees with them, he certainly has a loathing for his own class. In a scene called Pablo we see him talking to his old friend also due to depart for the US. Pablo says 'I never got involved with politics, I have a clear conscience'. Cut to documentary footage from a newsreel of the CIA invasion at Playa Giron. Titles appear 'THE TRUTH OF THE GROUP IS IN THE MURDERER'. Captured mercenaries are being questioned in relation to one of their group who was reknowned for the vicious tortures he had preformed. The other members of the group deny responsibility for him. One says 'I have never been political, it's your personal behavior that frees you from responsibility.' Sergio wonders about the dialectical relationship between the individuals and the group, we know that he is too intelligent not to read this in relation to his own situation.

He hates his own class but he can not find empathy with the proletariat either. He has an affair with a young girl but finds her not as

interesting as he had hoped 'One of the things that really gets me about people is their inability to sustain a feeling, an idea, without falling apart. Elena proved to be totally inconsistent.....That's one of the signs of underdevelopment: the inability to relate things, to accumulate experience and to develop'.²¹

A visit to Hemingway's house in an effort to educate Elena, shows them being led around by the guide who informs them that he used to be Hemingway's servant. Sergio thinks 'he moulded him to his needs, faithful servant and the great lord, the colonist and Gunga Din. Hemingway must have been unbearable.' Yet as he goes through Hemingway's library we know that he identifies with the writer in his castle (we know from earlier on of Sergio's literary aspirations) and not with whatever sort of new writer the revolution will provide.

It emerges that the only woman he ever respected was a European woman called Hanna with whom he was in love when he was young. He was to go to New York with her to become a writer but instead he let her go alone while he stayed and ran his father's furniture business. Another clue into his moral cowardice which made him stay in the safety of his family rather than facing his love for Hanna and his possible failure as a writer.

Ultimately he ends up alone in his apartment alienated from his own people who are outside preparing for the events of the 1962 missile crisis.

The film is built around narrative sequences introduced by titles, and intercut with documentary footage and old photographs. This form serves to show the subjective feeling of Sergio in contrast to the reality which is coming in from the outside. As the film progresses we begin to perceive not only the vision that Sergio has of himself but also the vision that reality gives us. Quite apart from that, this type of structure distances the viewer from the film and allows him to analyse what he is watching rather than be seduced by it.

In one sense Sergio represents the ideal of what all men would like to have been: rich, good-looking, intelligent, with access to the upper social strata, and to beautiful women who are willing to go to bed with him.

This is important because the intention is that the audience should identify with him somewhat and it is not directed at a bourgeois audience.

The tragedy of Sergio is that his irony, his intelligence is a defense mechanism which prevents him from becoming involved in the reality.

In contrast to the bourgeois mentality represented by the protagonist, the film reveals an entire people in the process of being born, with all the problems and difficulties that involves but with enormous vitality as well. This new world devours the protagonist.

Alex said his intention was *'not to reflect reality but to detect a problem, not to soften reality but to bring it alive, even aggressively, even so to speak, to disturb the peace.'*²² He achieves just that by persuading the audience to identify at least in part with Sergio, then

turning it into a major critique of him and by implication those who identify with him. People are forced to question their own outdated hopes and aspirations. According to Alea people went back to see Memories again and again which made him feel at least that he had hit the mark.

CHAPTER 3: THIRD CINEMA AND CONTEMPORARY IRISH FILMMAKING

A New Avant-Garde ?

In the last thirty or so years, 'cinemas of liberation' have emerged and continue to be practiced all over the developing world with varying degrees of success. Some of the original theorists were exiled from their countries during periods of political repression, or felt they needed to adopt to a more commercial style to reach their audience. 23. Some of the arguments that arise around contemporary Third Cinema practice relate to their degree of militancy,; how to maintain popularity without falling foul of traditional narrative codes; where Third Cinema ends and Second Cinema begins. For example, a film might be Third Cinema in its country of origin but become art cinema when seen abroad. Does this matter? or does it mean a necessary universalisation of theme?

In spite of these difficulties the tenets of the original manifestos remain largely intact as the basis for third cinema practice and in recent years film theorists like Teshome Gabriel have attempted to define a third world cinema aesthetic in terms of Third Cinema theory. 24. Furthermore film theorists from developed countries are beginning to look at third theory as the basis for a socialist critical/cultural practice in their own countries. This is seen to be of particular relevance to: feminist, black, gay as well as working class film practice. As Ireland also has the dubious distinction of being the only post-colonial country in Europe these theories become particularly pertinent to our own film culture.

Reading the Latin American manifestos on the neo-colonial condition, one becomes horrifyingly aware of their continuing relevance to Irish culture. In Ireland our film culture has been so dominated by Britain and the U.S. that in the past even films made in Ireland have been full of stereotypes and fictions.²⁵ Because of this and because of the continuing sparsity of indigenous film the mere fact of seeing ourselves on the screen portrayed with some semblance of reality almost becomes an act of decolonisation, but of course this is not enough. While it is great to see Dublin on the screen, films like The Courier (1986) made in the traditional thriller mode, may uncover a seamy side of Irish society but do little to promote an understanding of that society which in this case produces a working class ghetto like Ballymun and all that implies, in a relatively wealthy country. Fortunately there are a handful of filmmakers working in Ireland who are attempting to question and analyse the social, cultural and political reality that we live in.

In 1984 an article by Paul Willeman appeared in *Framework* entitled an 'Avant Garde For the '80s in which he highlights the emergence of a new type of socially conscious film. These new films get away from the realist/modernist or postmodernist axis of filmmaking. 'Instead of starting from the question "how to speak?" the new avant garde-starts from the question "how to understand social existence?".²⁶ He goes on to explain that while 'avant garde' and 'modernism' have become synonymous this is largely a misnomer since 'avant garde' implies 'a symbiotic relation between artistic and political radicalness' while modernism, (he quotes Greenberg)

is designed 'to maintain or restore continuity with the highest aesthetic standards of the past... (to restore) levels of quality which are in turn to be preserved by constant renewal and invocation.' 27.

This new avant-garde, however, seeks to 'mobilise and transform' the cultural knowledge and experience of the audience it addresses. It tries to explain the socio-cultural dynamic and traces the political within a situation.

In 1986 the Edinburgh Film festival hosted a seminar on Third Cinema, the aim of which was 'partly to re-pose the relations between the cultural and the political, and partly to discuss wheather there is indeed a kind of international cinematic tradition which exceeds the limits of both the national industrial cinemas and those of Euro-American as well as English otherness' 28. In a paper written for the conference Willeman expands on some of the ideas raised in 'a new avant garde' and places them in the context of Third Cinema.

He argues that the 'Latin Americans' had used aspects of various European cultural theories and practices ranging from early Soviet filmmaking, Grierson's social documentary, Italian Neo-Realism, Marxist Aesthetics and Brecht. Brecht's ideas on theatre are very similar to central ideas of Third Cinema, especially in relation to the cognitive potential of theatre on the audience. 'The question of choice of artistic means can only be of how we playwrights give a social stimulus to our audience (get them moving).

To this end we should try out every conceivable artistic method which assists that end, whether it is old or new' 29. Here Brecht also forshadow's Third Cinema's openness to different filmic strategies as in Espinza's concept of 'Imperfect Cinema'.

Willeman feels that the 'Latin Americans' fused these cultural practices into a new, more powerful, programme of the political practice of cinema. More powerful 'in the sense that it is able to conceptualise the connections between more areas of socio-cultural practice than contemporary European ideologies' 30. He isolates the two most lasting characteristics of the original Third Cinema theories as; its attempt to speak a socially pertinent discourse, and its insistence on flexibility and reluctance to adopt an aesthetic. I feel here that Willeman is in danger of forgetting the central point of the original manifestos, which is that Third Cinema is to be a tool of revolutionary social change 31. However, since Third Cinema always insisted on its flexibility as regards different social situations, there is a case for drawing on some of its more applicable aspects to throw light on contemporary film practice here.

Maeve (1981) * Anne Devlin (1984) * Hush A Bye Baby (1989) * Our Boys (1980)

In Cinema and Ireland, Luke Gibbons states that some of the most important developments in Irish Cinema at the present 'derive their impetus from an attempt to engage critically with, rather than simply to disown the often diffiguring legacy of the past, landscape, history, family, community, escapism, oppression,' 32. Pat Murphy and John Davis' Maeve is a good

example of this, and of Willeman's 'avant-garde'.

Maeve deals with the very complicated themes of feminism and republicanism. Maeve the female protagonist returns to her family in Belfast from a self imposed exile in Britain. Maeve left Belfast to escape from politics, in particular what she feels to be "patriarchal republicanism" which was stifling her development as a woman/feminist. The film has a complex, many layered narrative structure. In the main narrative Maeve returns an outsider. The immediacy of the political situation renders her feminist discourse and critique of republicanism meaningless and difficult to identify with. However a series of flashbacks present a personalised subjective view of her childhood and development as a feminist which demand spectator identification.

Maeve's father is a storyteller and through his stories presents the nationalist folk memory. In Maeve's flashbacks we see him as possessor of Maeve's reality, even claiming the landscape with his stories. The narrative structure is abandoned in a series of arguments which Maeve has with her boyfriend Liam. In these sequences Maeve and Liam represent the two ideologies of republicanism and feminism. Liam represents a rejection of the nationalist ideas of Maeve's father for a more progressive form of politics. He sees Maeve's arguments as fundamentally depoliticising, but Maeve is wary and feels that men possess women the way Britain possesses Ireland, and is worried about the fate of women in relation to the republican movement which has not always been enlightened in its position on women.

Another aspect of the experimental nature of the narrative is the use of landscape, which is sometimes used to recall events which add to the debate rather than just act as a backdrop. Maeve and Liam have their political discussion on a place called Cave Hill, which is the site where Wolf Tone and the United Irishmen signed their treaty in 1791 to rid Ireland of the British. Wolf Tone was a protestant working closely with Catholic groups, thus the landscape makes reference to a specific non sectarian type of politics to add to the debate.

Maeve is not an easy film. It raises many complex issues in a very direct way and forces the viewer to think about them, not allowing the viewer to get lost in a saccharine plot. It is unique not only in its handling of feminist issues, but in its attempts to deal with republican politics in a direct and serious way, - very unusual in Irish Cinema. It also goes a long way to examining the socio/political aspects of reality in the North of Ireland.

Returning to questions of Nationalism and Feminism in her next film, Anne Devlin. Pat Murphy uses a more traditional form of narrative. This time her film revolves around a woman called Anne Devlin who was associated with Robert Emmet and the 1803 rebellion. When she was captured by the British she refused to speak despite protracted torture and maltreatment, refusing to betray Emmet and the Nationalist cause. Traditionally seen as a love-sick maid who suffered passively for her master, Murphy set out to question this, and the assumption that silence equals passivity.

In Anne's case silence turns out to be her source of strength. In his article on the subject, Luke Gibbons suggests that Anne Devlin points to a political position in which the silent bearers of history, whether it be women or the working class, cease to be instruments of social order worked out by others, but actively intervene to bring about thier own emancipation. *'Annes silence is not a given it is an achievement it is the silence which comes from holding something back not from having nothing to say.'*³³.

Derry Film and Videos' Hush a Bye Baby is committed to examening the realities of everyday life but putting them in a political context. It concerns the story of Goretti Friel, who finds herself pregant in a society which *'values the sanctity of conception over the rights of the mother, while at the same time frowning upon pregnancy outside marriage'* ³⁴. It is a film about oppression. Set in Derry, Goretti and her boyfriend are from the Catholic community. Suffering oppression at the hands of the British Army (Goretti's boyfriend is eventually 'detained' for something we are given to believe he didn't do, possibly a routine harassment). Their religion and identification with nationalism and the republic is part of their resistance.

Goretti leaves Derry to spent some time in the Donegal Gaeltacht. Here, away from political oppression she is faced with another oppression: the oppression of her sexuality by a repressive Catholic state. Reference is made to Anne Lovett the schoolgirl, who actually died giving birth in a field in Ireland some years ago. Further reference is made to the position of women in Irish society through the Virgin Mary statue by the side of the road. Unfortunately for Goretti, the very state where she is oppressed for being Catholic (Northern Ireland) is likely to be more sympathetic in terms of information and counselling on the various options relating to her personal predicament than to so called 'Free State' where this information censored by law.

The Catholic Church once again is the subject of criticism in Cathal Black's Our Boys. It is semi-drama and semi-documentary, a complex structure which deals with the Christian Brothers and their detrimental effects on generations of school boys. Classroom scenes are dramatised to demonstrate the 'brothers' tough corporal punishment approach. This is verified by cinema-verite style interviews with ex-pupils. Newsreel from the 1932 Catholic Eucharistic Congress in Dublin gives clues to the type of Irish Catholic nationalist perspective which formed 'the brothers' psyche. It is one of a very few films which deals directly with the Catholic Church and since the Christian Brothers ran most of the Catholic boys National schools in Ireland until recently it provides a critique of the education system undergone by most of the male population. Although it seems innocent enough it was shown on Irish television for the first time this year. Ten years after it was made.

Documentary

Mother Ireland(1988)* Trouble The Calm(1989)* WhitefriarSt. Serenade(1990)

Of the documentaries made in recent years I want to mention three. The first is Derry Film and Video's Mother Ireland. Mother Ireland (which is shot on video) starts as a fascinating account of the traditional representation of women within cultural nationalism and shows how Mother Ireland herself performs an important ideological function by ascribing an essentially traditional and secondary role to women. It then goes on to trace the history of women within the nationalist struggle, using footage and interviews with women who were in Cumann na mBan. Finally it deals with contemporary feminists and women involved in the Republican Movement. 35. It emerges from the interviews that when the feminist movement in Ireland began, women felt that they should stay away from the national question for fear of dividing the movement, North/South or Catholic/Protestant, but most felt that in view of the repressive nature of the Six Counties this could no longer be ignored.

Trouble The Calm starts with the line '*When raking in the pounds what dark thoughts trouble the calm*'. Centered around an Irish Management Institute conference which represents Ireland's capitalist interests. It examines Ireland's attempts to sell itself as a base for foreign investment while seemingly ignoring the fact that there is a war going on. Director David Fox brings in a number of diverse ideas to contrast with "the calm"

including: extradition, emigration, nationalist history, repression of individuals by the Special Branch.

Ultimately he takes far too much on board and fails to get any kind of lucid point across, partly due to his failure to analyse the nationalist struggle, and partly because he doesn't deal with the question of poverty in the South itself. Structurally it is interesting, with footage from the IMI conference showing where the interests of those in power really lie. Also interesting is an voice over monologue by the filmmaker throughout the film, commenting on what he is filming and adding to the sinister feeling which he is attempting to apply to the State. It also represents a brave attempt to look at current economic/political reality.

Whitefriar St. Serenade is more successful in that it takes on far less but deals with its subject more completely. It concerns the residents of the Whitefriar Street area, a working class community living in close proximity to the wealthy Grafton Street area of Dublin. When the St. Stephen's Green Centre (an enormous shopping mall representing Dublin's wealth) was built next door, the community discovered that not only did it not provide any jobs for locals (either in the building or after it had opened) but often their children were run out of the place by over-zealous security men.

Whitefriar St. Serenade deals with the growing politicisation of the community through the efforts of its residents' association. Made in close contact with the community and representing their ideas, Whitefriar St. Serenade has a tight circular structure. Taking place over a day it shows

the residents getting on with their lives, highlighting through use of montage the differences in wealth in the same small area of the city. The film does not have a narration but uses voiceovers of seven members of the community to carry on the discussion. Outdoor footage is cut with interviews with residents' association committee members, and titles which hammer the ideas home. The film finishes in the evening with a meeting of the residents association. Rather than ending on an optimistic note, the residents/film admits that inspite of efforts made by the association they still have to deal with apathy within the community.

Bob Quinn

Finally a word must be said about Bob Quinn whose films may not be as political as the ones discussed above but whose determination to bring a different kind of image of Ireland to the screen cannot be ignored, and whose ideas on low cost filmmaking somewhat echo those of Third Cinema. Bob Quinn started up an independent film company in the west of Ireland in 1973. In an interview with Brian Mc Elroy he explains that his original goal was to combat the image of ourselves as presented by RTE. He began by making video documentaries and travelling to halls and pubs to show people to themselves on television.

His film Poitin(1976), a narrative about a poitin maker and his two agents, was made in Irish, which he says is no big thing after all: 'Ray makes them in Indian, and Bergman in Swedish'; also 'you can write or print anything in the Irish language in this country and get away with it.' 36.

In the more recent Budawanny(1987) a priest has a child with his housekeeper and goes on saying mass much to the confusion of his parish. It is a ironic look at some of the hypocrisies present in Irish society. Shot in black and white on 16mm it is also a silent film. He feels that 16mm gives him the freedom to shoot what he wants, if he went up to 35mm he would have to look for funding. He is also mainly interested in his films being seen in Ireland not concerned with international recognition and goes to some effort to bring his films to the communities where they were made rather than depending on commercial release.

CONCLUSION

All these films are concerned with explaining and analysing aspects of the social, cultural and political in Ireland, acting with the viewer to create a better knowledge of ourselves and to a certain extent decolonising ourselves. To confuse them with Third Cinema however would be to ignore the militancy of Third Cinema. Gabriel lists the main characteristics of Third Cinema as follows:

1. Decolonise Minds
2. Contribute to the development of a radical consciousness.
3. Lead to a revolutionary transformation of society
4. Develop a new film language to achieve these goals. 37.

While all of the films above possess at least some of the above characteristics, none of them can claim to have all four; particularly the third point concerning the revolutionary transformation of society.

However the real reason to study Third Cinema in relation to Irish cinema is not only to throw some light on existing cinema but to propose an alternative cinema practice.

Third Cinema formulates in theory and practice a sophisticated approach to questions of: domination/subordination, centre/periphery and resistance/hegemony, and recognises the dialectical relationship between social existence and cultural practice. In doing so it provides an

alternative to both dominant Hollywood cinema, and current theories of counter cinema which are based on deconstruction, and limited by an obsession with dominant regimes of signification.

Third Cinema theory provides a model for a socialist cinematic praxis and creates a critical space for an anti-colonial, socialist, cultural practice in Ireland.

FOOTNOTES

1. Fernando Birri, 'For a Nationalist, Realist, Critical and Popular Cinema' in Peter Barnard (ed.) Argentine Cinema (Toronto: Nightwood Editions, 1986) p. 31
2. Fernando Birri, 'The Roots of Documentary Realism' in (same as above) p. 67
3. *ibid* p. 69
4. Octavio Getino 'Notes on a Concept of Third Cinema' in (as above) p. 100
5. Michael Chanan, Twenty Five Years of New Latin American Cinema (London: BFI, 1985) p. 3
6. Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino 'Towards a Third Cinema' in (as above) p. 18
7. *ibid* p. 18
8. *ibid* p. 19
9. *ibid* p. 20
10. 'Third' here while obviously referring to 'Third World', may also refer to Peron's 'Third Way' an intermediary between socialism and capitalism.
11. *ibid* p. 20
12. *ibid* p. 20
13. Glauber Rocha, 'The Aesthetics of Hunger' in Michael Chanan (as above) p. 13
14. *ibid* p. 13
15. Jorge Sanjines 'Problems of Form and Content In Revolutionary Cinema', in Michael Chanan (as above) p. 34
16. Julio Espinoza, 'Towards an Imperfect Cinema' in Michael Chanan (as above)
17. Robert Stam, 'The Hour of the Furnaces and the Two Avant-Gardes', in Coco Fusco (ed.) Selections From New Latin American Cinema (N.Y.: Halliwell's, 1987) p. 90
18. At that time in Argentinian history the petty bourgeoisie were united with an organised (in terms of trade unions etc.) working class, against a repressive military dictatorship.

19. Miguel Littin 'Filmmaking in Chile' in Don Georgiakas and Lenny Rubinstein ed., The Cineaste Interviews, Art, Politics and Cinema (London: Pluto Press, 1985) p.27
20. After the 1973 coup in which president Allende was murdered and Pinchet came to power Littin was exiled. He returned once during Pinochet's regime, disguised as a Uruguayan businessman. He shot reams of footage which was smuggled out and made into a documentary about Pinchet's Chile. For a fascinating account of all this see Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Clandestine in Chile (Cambridge: Granta, 1989)
21. Two central themes run through all Cuban Cinema; History and Underdevelopment. Cubans interpret underdevelopment as the economic and technological heritage of colonial dependence, which has more stubborn manifestations in individual and collective psychology, ideology and culture.
22. Michael Channan, The Cuban Image (London : BFI, 1985)
23. Solanas and Getino are a case in point. In an interview in 1984 Getino admitted that he didn't fully realise at the time the extent to which Argentinian reality of the 60's defined the content of their work and it's parallel theoretical elaboration. Solanas returned to Argentina in the early '80's from exile since then he has made Tangos, El Exilio de Gardel (1985) and Sur (1987). These two films represent an attempt to make entertaining mainstream films that combine social criticism and popular national culture.
24. Teshome H. Gabriel, Third Cinema in the Third World (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1982)
25. For a detailed discussion of this see Brigitte Fitzgerald, The Colonial Mentality in Irish Culture, Irish Cinema a Case in Point (Dublin: NCAD Degree Thesis, 1986)
26. Paul Willeman, 'An Avant-Garde for the '80s', Framework No.24 (1984)p. 53
27. *ibid.* p53
28. Jim Pines and Paul Willeman, Questions of Third Cinema (London: BFI, 1981) p 3
29. John Willett (ed.), Brecht on Theatre (London, Eyre Methuen 1978) p229
30. Jim Pines and Paul Willeman, (as above) p. 5

31. This point was also raised at the Edinburgh Conference where some of the Third World delegates were worried about 'incursions from first world chauvinism' the most reliable characteristic of which is, 'denunciation of Third World postures of struggle for their particulars ie. ethnicity, nationalism, populism etc.. (from Pines etc. as above, p.xii)
32. Rockett et al. Cinema and Ireland (London: Croom Helm, 1987) p246
33. Luke Gibbons, 'The Politics of Silence, Anne Devlin, Women in Irish Cinema' Framework Nos. 30/31 (1986). He might also have said that the most interesting films being made in Ireland today are by women and centered on feminist issues. Whether this is because feminist theory provides a strong critical framework for filmmakers to work within, or whether the issues it raises demand a socio/political explanation is not clear. It is probably a combination of the two.
34. Martin Mc Loone, 'Lears Fool and Goyas dilemma'. Circa No.50 (1990)p.55
35. This documentary includes an interesting interview with Máiread Farrell on the position of women in the Republican Movement. Máiread was since shot by British Security forces in Gibraltar. Mother Ireland was not shown on either British or Irish television due to laws concerning censorship of people who are members of paramilitary organisations.
36. 'Interview with Bob Quinn' in Brian McIlroy, Irish Cinema an Illustrated History. (Dublin: Anna Livia Press, 1985) p.145.
37. Teshome H. Gabriel, Third Cinema in the Third World (Ann Arbor MI: UMI Research Press, 1982) p. 8.

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Dir. Miguel Littin (Chile)

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Dir. Margo Harkin (Ireland)

La Hora de los Hornos/The Hour of the Furnaces (1968)
Dir. Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino (Argentina)

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