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AN EVALUATION OF THE NATIONAL CINEMA OF WALES AND WHETHER
THIS CINEMA CONSTRUCTS OR REPRESENTS A NATIONAL IDENTITY

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Abstract

The National cinema of Wales is a contested site of representation and identity, which has struggled to overcome systemic and historic obstacles to scholarship, as well as to funding, production, exhibition and distribution of its products, related organizations, agents and services. This study considers Welsh filmic product (produced from 1963-2007), produced by independent producers for prominent broadcasting entities, including Channel Four Films, BBC Wales, S4C, or HTV/ITV Wales; a review of relevant literature regarding Welsh national cinema by Berry, Blandford, Ffrancon and others; the historical context of the Welsh film industry, was followed by an assignment of new aesthetic and industrial categories, including Welsh Coming-of-age genre films, Welsh Magical Realism, Welsh Grotesque cinema, the Welsh Chapel 'Gothic' in cinema, 'Outsider' filmmakers in Wales, and Welsh filmmakers in exile; the use of Welsh myths and legends in films, and how this contributes to a national identity. Consequently this study locates Welsh national cinema in a critical milieu inflected by feminist, Queer, post-colonial and national cinema analysis approaches.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This study seeks to ask whether a national cinema exists for the nation of Wales, and if it does how this cinema might construct or represent a Welsh national identity. Most of the terms in these queries are contested for historically established social, cultural, economic and political reasons. Consequently, we begin by defining the terms that later elucidate the significance of our questions. A review follows of the relevant scholarship which supports these critical definitions, and which situates this research within recognizable historic, aesthetic and cultural discourses. The structure of our review of the relevant scholarships is mixed, containing citations and brief descriptions of almost all of the sources we cite, along with several lengthy reviews of particular works. All of the sources are grouped into thematic clusters that follow research trajectories (within the context of historical timelines) that we identify. In some instances, we cite the works but refer to discussions later in this study where we show the relevance of each source's key arguments. This is especially important in chapters seven and eight where we explore the topic 'Wales the Cinema of Estrangement'. These two chapters contain especially complicated theoretical discussions. This occurs because we are referring to established critical theories, rooted in literary, post-colonial, feminist, and gender studies that are frequently extrapolated to cinema studies in European and American scholarship. This is followed by our new attempt to extrapolate from European, American and Welsh historical, political, cultural, literary, post-colonial, feminist, and gender studies, as we extrapolate and apply the theories to Welsh film products. Because of the paucity of prior research in the case of Wales, using these specific critical approaches, it requires two chapters to adequately develop our arguments, and then apply these concepts in readings of contemporary Welsh cinema. Chapter seven contains both a theoretical discussion, and related film readings. Chapter eight contains film readings and comment that are supported by the critical framework, carefully constructed in Chapter seven. Three works

in particular form foundational arguments, pertinent to this thesis. Consequently, selected chapters of each of the three works are more comprehensively reviewed in the Introduction and in Chapter 2. These works include *Theorizing National Cinema* (Vitali and Willemsen 2006: 24), *Cinema and Nation* (Hjort and MacKenzie 2000), and *Postcolonial Wales* (Aaron and Williams 2005).

Our study also contains six chapters of specific film readings, which examine various dimensions of Welsh film material and which might help us to recognize and better understand Welsh national cinema. The structure of these film readings is patterned after a style of analysis developed by Walter Benjamin and sometimes referred to as 'Benjaminian'. This process might be seen as 'Benjaminian' in that it relies upon the enumerated explorations of the dimensions of various cultural artefacts, which we situate in a historical framework, while 'constellating' various aesthetic 'dimensions' within an industrial milieu, in hopes of finally distilling a filmic 'Welsh idiom' (Bullock and Jennings 1996: 7). There is a precedent for this clustering of aesthetic dimensions within a historical context, *à la* Walter Benjamin, within recent analysis within film studies, which seeks to depart from the earlier paradigms. If we conceive of a national cinema as a genre (an idea we will soon explore)¹ then this departure seems useful in the identification and deconstruction of accepted genres, as Adam Lowenstein also introduces his own opposition within comparative national cinemas, between dimensions of 'Art-House' cinema and the 'disreputable' genre of horror (Lowenstein 2005: 3). Lowenstein's deconstruction of the genres within a nation-specific historical and cultural context becomes the framework for an analysis, offering not only insight into each national cinema he compares, but also into the meaning of this 'indigenizing' of the genres, in a trans-national context

¹ This is a contested but tolerated idea within similar comparative research in film studies, as in Elsaesser 2005: 44-45.

As the meta-critical turn in this last example suggests, Lowenstein views the marginalization of each of these film-makers – and the systematic devaluation of horror films as a genre – as symptoms of larger conceptual fractures within the national imaginaries that have developed around the traumas of twentieth century history. His point is not that these filmmakers should be given pride of place in their respective national cinema histories, but that their work profoundly destabilizes those histories (Rowe 2006: 2).

Within our six chapters of film readings, we will cite similar examples of Lowenstein's clustering or 'Benjaminian' constellating. Our structure of these six chapters introduces various 'dimensions' of Welsh national cinema and of the filmic representations of Welsh identity. These dimensions are 'constellated' and juxtaposed against one another, as we examine their relationships. These dimensions include the conditions of the field of production of Welsh national cinema, its aesthetic categories, its conventions, its trends, and its relation to other film studies and cultural studies.

This study understands cinema to be a cultural artefact, which a culture or society produces, and in turn, is affected by. Our study seeks to discover the national cinema of Wales as a cultural artefact and then to locate it in a critical film studies and historical context. This context will be supported by explorations of industrial conditions. A range of traits regarding Welsh film product and the Welsh field of cinematic production, from the universally experienced to 'particularisms' of the distinctively 'Welsh', will be identified and analyzed. Welsh filmic products, (which are understood to be received within aesthetic and cultural paradigms), will be scrutinized within this study, with critical approaches drawn from film studies, and drawn specifically from the field of national cinema analysis.

Wales has been called a 'small nation.' As is typical for many small nations, Welsh language, culture, identity and national status are all historically contested entities, and the struggles related to the existence, survival and status of each, both inform and are reflected in the national cinema, making Welsh national cinema among the most

politicized and culturally controversial in Europe (Llobera 2004: 18-19). Consequently, this entire consideration of the body of Welsh filmic products will be considered, in the light of formations of individual and collective national identity in Wales. In the face of the forces of 'hegemonic Hollywood' and its global network of cultural and marketing allies, i.e., 'the international audiovisual industry', Welsh national cinema holds a precarious and fragile position. This fragility compels one to write with a certain urgency and sense of strategic, critical purpose about Welsh national cinema and about its impact on the broader topic of Welsh national identity. This study attempts to fulfil our objectives both as a film theorist and a film historian, while indirectly establishing the specific critical field, and contributing to the greater challenges to Welsh national cinema: these challenges include the particular task of maintaining a communicative and industrial space for local, indigenous film-making, in spite of the perceptions and forces which threaten to overwhelm this emerging national cinema.

Although we will examine at length the meanings and connotative intent of 'cinema', to avoid confusion, we will briefly address the meaning of 'cinema' here: This study is largely informed by post-colonial theory which reckons that nations emerging from formerly-colonial experiences must not be compared as equals to nations which have not endured this process. We believe that inequities of comparison between historically independent and formerly colonial nations are frequently unexamined in film studies, and that this lack of questioning is neither efficient nor effective. To summarize, we assert that the criteria for discovering and locating the 'national cinema' is not based upon universally experienced criteria, but must be specific to each nation. In other words, the presumed 'rules' for small nations and post-colonial nations that are historically deprived of equal participation in arenas of cultural expression must be altered to be relevant to the particular national study. In the case of Wales, this is relevant, because, while the Welsh have achieved certain new levels of political autonomy, their cultural and economic

independence in the mass media is contested. Indeed, according to the studies of David Barlow and Philip Mitchell, and of Steve Blandford, in the area of mass media and film, Wales continues to be someone's colony (Barlow, Mitchell et al. 2005: 1-27; Blandford 2005: 8)

Cinema vs television movies and Welsh filmic products:

We mention how we define the use of the term 'cinema', when we say, 'national cinema of Wales', because the body of filmic material considered herein is specific and perhaps unique to Wales. For example, some film studies research traditionally creates a binary opposition between filmic product created for screening in cinemas, and filmic product created for broadcast on television. This dichotomy has roots in the technical division between celluloid product and video products and is becoming increasingly irrelevant because of the functional and technical displacement of these modes of filmic recording. The particulars of this dichotomy, especially as they apply to British film and television, were exhaustively explored by scholars in a work led by John Hill and Martin McLoone (Hill and McLoone 1996). We understand this dichotomy as informing and helpful most of the time, but specifically archaic and obsolete, at least in the case of a post-colonial or colonial Wales. The Welsh, like many other European peoples, have never had the opportunity to produce independently a significant enough body of material, that is, material intended for exhibition. Further, the overwhelming majority of filmic material produced in Wales and other European nations has been produced under the aegis and support of television broadcasters. In order to accumulate an adequate sample of filmic material for this study, it was necessary to be liberal and innovative in our criteria, as to what cultural material to consider. Naturally, we needed to create limitations to our criteria. Generally speaking, we have considered in this study, the filmic material which was available to study, and because there are significant, systemic obstacles to acquiring and viewing this 'filmic product', our study is often limited not by historical or aesthetic

criteria, but by physical and institutional or industrial restraints, issues which we will now consider.

In order to accomplish this research, particular activities were needed —

Acquiring and studying Welsh filmic product:

For several years we studied, analyzed, compared and classified as many samples of Welsh filmic product from the period (1963-2007), as could be acquired or accessed. Our study focused primarily on dramas and documentaries, but was also informed by available archives of sports and news programming. Welsh filmic product is officially located at The National Screen and Sound Archive of Wales, located in Aberystwyth. Known in Welsh as the '*Archif Genedlaethol Sgrîn a Sain Cymru*', it is housed in the lovely seaside college town hugging the Irish Sea, in the same building as the National Library of Wales, or NLW. Locating the National Library and the National Archive on the central coast of West Wales was a politicized and contested decision, but the interests in Aberystwyth won out, since Cardiff seemed to be benefiting disproportionately, in the way of national buildings and national institutions. This was fortunate for the University of Wales at Aberystwyth's Media studies program students and scholars in West Wales, but has since created institutional and physical obstacles for scholars from the rest of Wales and abroad.

It's probably easier for scholars in Dublin, Ireland to reach the Welsh archive, than it is for most of the scholars in Wales, the majority coming from Cardiff and the South Wales Valleys, Swansea and Newport ². This is because the railway and highway systems of

² Birmingham International (BHX) airport has its own railway station with frequent trains to Birmingham New Street (10-15 minutes). From Birmingham New Street, regular direct trains are available to Aberystwyth. Shortest journey time is about 3 hours and 20 minutes. In comparison, Cardiff's airport is not particularly convenient for travelers to Aberystwyth. The earliest daily train leaving Cardiff doesn't arrive in West Wales until after lunch time, and the only train returning to Cardiff leaves a short time later, so traveling by train or bus from South Wales to Aberystwyth always

Wales were not built to serve the Welsh (that is, not necessarily Welsh society or culture), but rather to serve the industrial and commercial and military needs of Wales, as it related to metropolitan London. Consequently, North Wales corresponds with and trades with the northern English cities of Birmingham, Liverpool and Manchester, while the rest of South Wales is attached through transportation and trade infrastructure to the southern English cities of Bristol and London. This physical inaccessibility is compounded by the need to stay overnight in Aberystwyth, which is crowded with college students most of the year, and crowded with English tourists in the summer. As a result, the costs of traveling to London and staying overnight in a college hostel, in order to view Welsh films at the BFI National archives (a tiny number are housed in London), works out to be more productive, less expensive and far less time-consuming than a trip to Aberystwyth.

The mountains and politics, which divide Wales, are not the only obstacles for scholars. In fact, the National archive has about 3,000 films, which is an admirable collection. But the lion's share of filmic product considered in this study is not yet part of the National archive's collection, and it is uncertain when this will occur. Most of the filmic product is held in archives owned by the broadcasters who commissioned the programs. These include BBC Wales located in Llandaf, a part of Cardiff, and the BBC Film and Video Archives in London, S4C archives in Cardiff, and the ITV Wales' film and video archive in Cardiff. The Cardiff-based ITV Wales archive's location and content is actually pictured and featured in a long-running, weekly program, presented by Arfon Haines Davies and produced by John Welch, called, '*Never to be Forgotten*'. Not only is the Welsh filmic product scattered across Wales and the U.K., but there are other problems: the broadcasters do not have a remit to aggressively cooperate with film scholarship, so access to the archives is limited and sporadic, and requests for products languish, are

requires an over-night stay in Aberystwyth. Travel for scholars arriving at London airports and traveling by coach or train to West Wales takes between 6 and 8 eight hours, with multiple coach or station changes.

neglected, or are returned with a request for 'administrative' or 'transfer' fees, into the hundreds of British pounds, per film. An organizing forum is helpful for locating the archives and for examining some of the databases, called the 'UK's Public Sector Moving Image Archives', and is available to scholars online. Additional Welsh filmic product is variously located at the BFI National Archive in London, the South West Film and Television Archive in Plymouth, and even in the Imperial War Museum Film and Video Archive in London. Under pressure from competing American studios, government regulators, and public demand, the BBC has been running pilot programs which are testing prototypes of databases and downloadable filmic product, including the Creative Archive License Group, the BBC Programme Catalogue Prototype, and the soon-to-be-launched pilot, BBC Open Archive, with the module, 'iPlayer'.

Some of these databases mentioned above, organize British or Welsh filmic product in ways, to make it discernable where the product is located, and if it is available for viewing. But none of these databases interfaces with one another, so there is no comprehensive forum or an on-line database, which tells us where all the Welsh archive programming is actually located. Some is at S4C, located in Llanishen, some is in Llandaf, some is in London, and some is in Aberystwyth. For example, a search for the Welsh poet Ann Griffiths shows that a program is currently available on the S4C Digidol portal called 'Ann Griffith', but if you go to the BBC Programme Catalogue Database, there's no trace of the current S4C programme. And if one searches the database of the *Archif Genedlaethol Sgrîn a Sain Cymru*, you find completely unrelated stuff on Ann Griffiths. Nevertheless, it's thrilling that the BBC and S4C are making copyrighted-entertainment-products (paid for by license and taxpayers) finally available to taxpayers, beyond the usual two-broadcast contract of most filmic products. Additionally, some of the films could only be acquired by contacting the libraries, media studies departments of various universities, and individual private parties, who were once affiliated, with now

defunct production companies or Welsh directors. Many of the films we sought for this study had to be purchased at a high ‘collector’s’ premium on E-Bay or other film re-sales portals. Some of the product requested has been lost, because a coordinated effort to place all Welsh filmic products in the National archive, or in other repositories, has never existed, and the initiatives, which did occur, were inadequate to the task. This is not an exaggeration: While we were conducting interviews with Welsh film producers and directors in the course of the study, we were frequently asked by these ‘major players’ as to whether we could help them secure a single copy of their own film! There are several reasons for this, and the Welsh association of independent producers has successfully lobbied BBC and S4C in the past couple of years, to put in place mechanisms which revert both original copies and the legal rights to the films, back to the producers or ‘auteurs’. While there is some improvement, systemic and legal costs and obstacles still prevent many producers from accessing or owning their own films. All of the systemic and institutional obstacles described so far, influenced our eventual conclusion (described in this chapter) by limiting the scope of our research, due to the size of our study sample, although not due to the variety of aesthetic and industrial examples.

Not only is it difficult for Welsh producers to access their own films in some cases, but there is also a problem with filmic product getting lost within the various archives. The BBC has admitted to not knowing completely what is in their vast and unwieldy archives, because only limited attempts to document this product have occurred, until recently. The BBC hopes that attempts to reassess their libraries and collections will re-discover films previously ‘lost somewhere in the vaults’. As a result of these impediments, some decision had to be made regarding what filmic product would be studied, and what could not be accessed within a reasonable amount of time and effort. Consequently, this study reflects not only the aesthetic categories, the dimensions of the Welsh filmic ‘idiom’, and the production conditions, but also reflects the continuing politics, economics, and

physical realities of exhibition, distribution, and archiving. We can speculate that our list of ‘dimensions’ would at least double, if we had access to all of the films we requested from the BBC, S4C, ITV, and the National archives. Fortunately there was sufficient product for our purposes. The other dimensions, which we have postponed, will have to be relegated to ‘future research’. Indeed, as the coming pilot programs of the BBC are successfully expanded, then most of this description of the current difficulty surrounding access to all archived, British, copyrighted-entertainment-products could be made moot by new technological avenues of access.

A ‘body’ of Welsh filmic product rather than a national film ‘canon’:

Our body of Welsh filmic product therefore includes material, which was produced in or which pertains to Wales, which involves the filmic recording of Welsh persons or Welsh topics or themes or places, and which is effected upon by the various aesthetic and industrial dimensions that we will explore in our study. Elsaesser summarizes by calling this circular definition a ‘closed tautology for national cinemas’ (Elsaesser 2005: 36-45). Consequently, our usage of the term ‘cinema’ implies a semantic expansion, which is pragmatic and informed by comparative analysis while tempered by conventions of film scholarship. For example, we do not find it truthful or accurate to select for study, only films which have achieved a box office release, or which have secured an external distribution contract or arrangement. This would neglect the largest number of important Welsh films, which were produced for television. And further complicating this condition, is the frequently occurring phenomenon, where Welsh directors produce a serial drama for television, and then many years later ‘re-package’ a newly edited composite ‘feature’ film, comprised of several episodes, which is broadcast or promoted as a new filmic product. Because of this phenomenon and other reasons, we consider the binary opposition between so-called ‘cinema’ and television to be increasingly artificial and imposed. This is not to say that we completely dispose of the original intent of the

distinction, which sought to differentiate between the aesthetic and production qualities shared and not shared between movie theatres and television.

Having a national cinema is a national aspiration:

At the end of the twentieth century numerous countries have attempted to establish their participation in the cinematic world with indigenous film works, supported with various public, private, governmental and non-governmental initiatives, including the former British 'colonial regions/nations' of Australia/New Zealand, Ireland, Scotland, Canada, Hong Kong, and Wales. Of the first three mentioned, they are effectively English-monolingual countries, while the last three are bilingual, and have been shaped by the presence of two languages in their film industries' development. In some instances bilingualism has helped the expansion of their national cinema, as in the case of Hong Kong, which has both a successful Chinese and a successful English cinema. In Canada the situation is debatable, with acrimony between Anglo-Canadian and Franco-Canadian film interests which is difficult to discern from long traditions of cultural conflict and the political residues of post-colonialism, while in Wales the existence of two languages is a constant source of contention and competition between the perceived interests of each language group. It is possible that in Wales the establishment of a Welsh language broadcaster/film-commissioning corporation (S4C) actually benefited the entire nation, not only Welsh-speakers, (as it is widely-believed in Wales), but that is something we will explore in later chapters. It is generally assumed in every instance that expansion of the national cinema will provide a direct benefit to the expansion of a national identity. With this in mind, our study will explore 'what it means to be Welsh', individually and collectively. This consideration of the individual and the collective attribute of 'Welshness', whether claimed by a native-born or a descendant-of-the-Welsh-Diaspora, a Welsh-speaking or an Anglo-Welsh-speaking party will be considered in light of what markers or indicators of distinctly Welsh cultural artefacts are derived from a national

cinema. We also explore how these notions of Welshness build or reinforce Welsh identities, both individual and national. Another indirect benefit of our research might be the enhanced market-presence and intellectual-awareness of Welsh *copyrighted-entertainment-products* and related merchandise of the Welsh national cinema, and its increased analysis, availability, and consumption. While we consider the nature and influence of a Welsh national cinema on a Welsh national identity, we will also consider the future meaning of that identity:

Given the comparative paucity of survey data relating to Wales, it is difficult to make cross-time generalizations concerning the (changing) nature of Welsh identity. It is unclear, for example, what effect the growing institutionalization of Welsh identity since the late nineteenth century . . . has had on the ways in which people in Wales conceive (consciously or unconsciously) of their national identity. We can posit that such a process will eventually lead to a form of identity that places more stress on civic characteristics in addition to - or in place of - ethnic markers. That is, places and institutions (and the values they embody) will increasingly become the foci of national sentiment rather than simply ancestry and place of birth. (Taylor and Thomson 1999: 102).

This goal of this study is to identify and elucidate the recent elements and processes which create the historical and contemporary phenomenon (1963-2007)³ of Welsh national cinema, and to show how these elements and processes contribute to the existence and establishment, critical interpretation, cultural reinforcement, denigration,

³ The reader will note that this study references films, from as early as the 1920s, but limits our actual film readings and analysis to the period 1963-2007. The 1963 date is related to the production of the John Ormond BBC Wales documentary, *The Desert and the Dream*, which for reasons that we will offer in later chapters holds a key place in the intersection of Welsh audiovisual production, and considerations of Welsh national identity. Consequently, the historic range of our study begins in 1963, because this is the year that one of our 'Welsh auteurs', John Ormond (both a BBC Wales producer and a nationalistic Anglo-Welsh poet), produced this documentary about Patagonian Gauchos in the Argentine. Ormond's pessimistic vision in 1963 of the declining Welsh national identity among the increasingly Spanish-speaking descendants of the 1860s Welsh South American Diaspora brings together (for the first time after Welsh broadcasters became ascendant and politically autonomous, to some degree) all the constellated aspects of representations of Welshness, which we consider in this study. Furthermore, without Ormond's 1963 film as a point-of-reference, which considers gendered, postcolonial, post-modern, post-national and iconic Welsh filmic signifiers and cultural markers, we would not be able to draw a complete line of comparison with pre-Devolution and post-Devolutionary filmic products. For example, Ormond's Patagonian perspective was pessimistic, but it sowed the seeds of a re-constructed Welsh national identity, later referenced and echoed in the films of John Hefin and Endaf Emlyn, especially in Emlyn's *Gaucha*. And the improved vision of Ormond as we observe his personal trajectory of political viewpoints, was first enunciated (pessimistically) in the *Desert and the Dream*, and then articulated with renewed and transformed optimism in his production of *On the Black Hill* in 1981. In 1963 Ormond mourns the cultural demise and isolation of 'failed' Welsh colonial experiments and of Welsh nationalism in general; in 1981 Ormond celebrates the ambiguity of the Welsh and English 'borders' and liminal spaces of contest. And as recent as the 2007 Welsh Assembly elections, the image of the Welsh Patagonian Gaucho was being recalled in Welsh language political speeches, to recall iconic markers of Welsh nationalism.

de-construction, and/or re-invention of a Welsh national identity. The foundations of this body of work can be traced back to the institutionalization of film studies within Welsh academia from the mid 1980s onward, concurring with mounting levels of media-attention caused by cognizance of and funding for Welsh national cinema by both governmental, public corporate, and private corporate film production-investment groups, i.e., the Welsh National Assembly, BBC Wales, S4C-TV, ITV Wales, *Sgrîn*, the Lottery Fund, the British Council, BAFTA Cymru, TAP-Independent Welsh Film Producers' Group, the Welsh National Sound and Screen Archive, etc. The recognition (both academic, journalistic, and political) and support of Welsh national cinema have contributed to a critical mass of commitment and activity which has caused the controversial but undeniable existence of a film culture in Wales, resulting in a significant body of new filmic material, produced in the period directly before and after the formation of the Welsh Film Commission in 1970, until today. Whether this material and activity constitutes a national cinema for Wales, and whether it was caused by or contributed to the concurrent linguistic, political, and cultural movements, and post-Devolutionary establishments of a Welsh national identity, will be the focus of this study.

1) How to judge the outcomes:

This study will address the unique problem of writing about Welsh national cinema as a newly-invented and Wales-specific form of national cinema analysis, (as it describes the real phenomenon of Welsh national cinema);

2) How to see that an improvement has been accomplished:

While this study will address the unique problem of writing about Welsh national cinema as a newly-invented and Wales-specific form of national cinema analysis, it will offer specific observations which will enhance the interpretation of its cinematic and industrial elements, to the benefit of film-

consumers, film critics, policy-makers, and producers, both domestic and external. This study will also offer specific solutions, which might enhance, encourage, and facilitate the film-worker's problem of coordinating production and distribution of Welsh national cinema as a multi-faceted entity. Finally, our research will reflect on the advancement of a Welsh national identity, as it is expanded, altered, or ameliorated by a Welsh national cinema.

A summary of the problem being investigated:

To explore what constitutes a national cinema for newly-devolved Wales, and to answer how this constructs or reflects a national identity is to 'write the story of the nation', at least, of a national identity realized during the last century of cinema's existence. But while applying notions of post-colonial theory to this analysis, John McLeod, in his paper, "*Postcolonialism and Minority Culture*" presented at the conference of *Y Ffwrwm*, introduces us to the idea that (especially in the context of Wales) any answer to these questions is not fixed, (including presumably the establishment of a delimited canon of national films), but must rather emphasize the fluid ambivalence and anachronistic nature of every description, whether cultural, economic, or otherwise:

The postcolonial attempts to conceptualise and articulate the points of view of those often on the receiving end of imperious forms of authority—whether it be the colonial settlement of West African lands over which indigenous peoples have an ancestral claim, or the contemporary subjugation of minority cultures to exclusionary nationalism or globalised capital (McLeod 2003: 2).

McLeod is addressing a conference concerned with the 'minority' status of Welsh language narrations. In consideration of the period of Welsh film history considered in this study (the decade leading up to establishment of the Welsh Film Commission in 1970, beginning approximately in 1963, until Devolution in 1997, and films produced thereafter until the present), questions arise about other 'minorities' in the writing of a Welsh national cinema, including culturally-marginalized, ethnic minorities, i.e., "the

black Welsh,” as described by Charlotte Williams in *‘Passports to Wales? Race, Nation and Identity’* (Fevre and Thompson 1999: 78). Our research will probably produce the anachronistic profile proscribed by MacLeod (as described above), but to the extent that it is possible, we will seek to be generous and liberal and thorough in our considerations, not only of the marginalization of Welsh cinema in regional and global markets, but also of marginalized and dissidents ‘voices’ within the Welsh milieu.

‘Qu’est-ce que le cinéma?’ or perhaps partly in this case, ‘Pa beth mae y sinema?’

“What constitutes a national cinema for Wales, and how does this cinema construct or reflect a Welsh national identity?” This first section introduces Welsh national cinema. In order to explore this topic, it is necessary to define the terms: First of all, as André Bazin first asked, *‘Qu’est-ce que le cinéma?’* or ‘What is cinema?’ (Bazin 2004: 5) There are numerous uses of this term. In this study, we will employ the most general sense, i.e., a semantic basket fashioned for collecting all things related to the art and industry of filmmaking. Conversely, in the interest of isolating and highlighting the original information, which this study unveils, we will simultaneously employ a specific usage of ‘cinema’, e.g., information about a group of selected films, which establishes a relationship between the films within this group. This second usage will also contribute to our understanding of relationships between the selected groups, i.e., between Welsh national cinema and all other individual films or groups of films, i.e., Welsh national cinema as compared to the films of Hollywood, as compared to European films.

At certain points we will briefly employ a third use of cinema which denotes a place where films are exhibited, since discussions of audiences are relevant to later parts of this study. Oddly, several popular lexicons of cinematic terminology are silent when it comes to defining this term ‘cinema’. Both the recent *Film Studies Dictionary* (Blandford, Grant et al. 2001) and Hayward’s *Cinema Studies; The Key Concepts* (Hayward 2000) seem to

assume that 'cinema' is a word to be defined by the dictionary, and that their film students will have a prior understanding of a term used so frequently in modern life. *Film Studies Dictionary* defines 'cinematic,' i.e., a term describing the use of the qualities of cinema in other art forms, and also defines the craft of 'cinematography.' Whereas cinematography (Greek: 'Κινηματογράφος' i.e., kinemato 'motion' + graphos 'writing') usually denotes the art or craft of making motion pictures, cinema both generally and for the purposes of this study, will be described as the historical, cultural, political, and economic discourses about the production and aesthetics of material created by the intentionally-organized and/or enhanced assemblage and transmission of spectacles or narratives through the use of timed, fixed-order, sequentially moving or revealed pictures. Cinema also denotes both the art/craft combined with the business/industry of making motion pictures (Dale 1997: 51), anecdotally referred to as the 'Movie Business' or just the 'Biz' (Goldman 1996: 34). Mast and Kawin summarize this section with a succinct glossary entry:

Cinema. (1) The art of motion pictures; "the movies" in general. (2) A movie theatre. (3) The films of a country or group (Mast and Kawin 2003: 161-162).

Technological implications and the role of functional displacement:

What might have been traditionally-defined as a 'cinema' is being challenged both by the reality of market forces, and by the process of 'functional displacement.' Because of increasing technical advances within the cinematic world, it must be noted that motion pictures, commonly and figuratively referred to as the 'movies,' are generally understood to rely upon some consecutive display of multiple and varied images, which after being enhanced by cinematography, and by post-production editing are presented or revealed in frames which move at a particular rate, creating or approximating a sustained, visual phenomenon commonly understood to be the so-called, 'persistence of vision,' but Bordwell and Thompson tell us that,

‘At present, researchers believe that two psychological processes are involved in cinematic motion: critical flicker fusion and apparent motion’ (Bordwell and Thompson 2001: 24).

The implications of functional-displacement, coupled with the fluidity of global markets, on what can be termed a ‘cinema,’ let alone a ‘national cinema,’ are enormous and endanger any current study, since the rapid escalation of technological changes in mass communication seem to be out-pacing the capabilities of marketing ‘think-groups’ everywhere. A current plaint on Internet media and publishing blogs bemoans the sudden worldwide drop in television viewers (and the loss of accompanying demographically-accessed advertising revenue), migrating to the broadband-driven Internet, where advertisers (as yet) can’t effectively reach these consumers. So whereas Blockbuster Video Stores threatened the existence of the General Cinema and Regal Cinema chains in the 1980s and 1990s, henceforth full-length, pay-per-view and bootlegged feature films, delivered as encapsulated-streaming video via high-speed access per the local IP, form the newest threat to H. Wayne Huizenga’s gritty empire (DeGeorge 1997: 114-115).

An expansive and inclusive ‘film culture’ documents a national cinema:

Film studies scholars acknowledge that motion pictures created on celluloid film have traditionally been distributed to fixed, physical locations which are often purpose-built and established for the exhibition of these films (Sklar 1975: 55; Bordwell and Thompson 2001: 52). These locations and related buildings are generally referred to as cinemas, as well. In addition to referring to the art/craft and business/industry of making motion pictures, and to the buildings or locations where these motion pictures have been traditionally exhibited, there is a more general understanding of cinema which encompasses ‘all things filmic,’ e.g., related to motion pictures (Sklar 1975: 97). This expansive understanding of the term considers the existence of a so-called ‘film culture,’ which can refer to the reviewers, critics, scholars, promoters, detractors, merchandisers and individuals or groups who prepare motion pictures or classes of motions pictures and

related products for consumption, or to other end-user consumers of motion pictures, including audiences. The inclusion of film scholars in this list underscores the importance of this study, since the influence of film scholarship is often over-looked as a contributing force in the discovery and establishing of new cinemas and new cinematic innovations, as well as the influence of film scholars upon market activity and upon various audiences. This is becoming more relevant since film discourses have evolved to include audiences which can exist in any time, dimension, or place, and can be real or imagined, or increasingly, even virtual (Monaco 2000: 36).

Cinema as a rhetorical coupling, the synthesis of art form and industry:

Cinema can be understood as both an art-form (Monaco 2000: 23) and/or as an industry (Moran 1996: 1). Motion pictures can be created as both art and/or a commercial product. Rhetorically, cinema follows the strictures of literature, and while sometimes having overt elements which might even qualify as propaganda, ultimately all ‘cinema’ is meant to be enjoyed at some level. Aristotle posited that ‘all *topoi*’ (Greek: ‘τόπος’), or loci of discourse, ‘are persuasive’, and cinema cannot escape this claim: In cinema, simultaneously, the existence of a film can be compelling, the content of the film can inform this compulsion, the direction or special effects or casting, or popular and scholarly consideration or excitement about a film can be persuasive, reports of box office sales can create a mass compulsion to view a film, and so on.⁴ This manipulation is an integral aspect of the cinema, perhaps in more ways than those found (or admitted to) in any other art form. This manipulation is either implicit or explicit, or both, and includes among its frequently analyzed examples, the organically devised, categorizing

⁴ In other words, the synthesis of final results created by the constantly-varied and then combined choices of any number of agents, i.e., cinema’s unique marriage of aesthetic sensibility with market-savvy, and by agents ranging from conceivers-of-ideas, to financiers, to directors, to editors, to marketers, to statisticians tracking and reporting audience response, etc., (a triptych that hinges development to production, production to post-production), creates a clever manipulation of consumers, including reviewers, scholars, journalists, and audiences, to prefer and therefore consume a particular motion picture or group of motion pictures.

system of genres, and also includes the celebrated interplay of stars, publicists, paparazzi, and fans. Participation in this clever manipulation of audiences also includes the implicit and explicit messages sent by government policies concerning the support (or lack of support) for a national cinema, which influence the production of films as relating to national self-interest. (Gregg 1998: 118; Jusdanis 2001: 43; Day and Thompson 2004: 31) Cinema must be simultaneously understood in its particular meanings mentioned above, and for purposes of analysis the 'film', 'movies', or 'cinema' must be grasped 'in their large sense,' conceived of as 'mass medium of cultural communication' (Sklar 1975: 63).

James Monaco summarizes:

The 'filmic' is that aspect of the art that concerns its relationship with the world around it; the 'cinematic' deals strictly with the aesthetics and internal structure of the art. In English, we have a third word for 'film' and 'cinema', 'movies', which provides a convenient label for the third facet of the phenomenon: its function as an economic commodity. These three aspects are closely interrelated, of course: one person's 'movie' is another person's 'film.' But in general we use these three names for the art in a way that closely parallels this differentiation: 'movies,' like popcorn, are to be consumed; 'cinema' (at least in American parlance) is high art, redolent of aesthetics; 'film' is the most general term with the fewest connotations. (Monaco 2000: 23)

What is a 'national' cinema?

It is necessary to ask, what is a national cinema? In Film Studies Dictionary we read, under a definition of 'National cinema':

At its simplest the term refers to cinema produced within a particular country, though even here there are often problems of definition: a film might have a British setting, director and cast but major US investment. However, national cinemas have often been promoted on this level alone as a counter to the hegemony of Hollywood in particular, and the US in general, over world cinema. At various historical moments there have been imperatives promoting both film European national cinemas and those of emerging post-colonial countries, and film studies has often used national labels in ways that distort the reality of identity in a given country. (Blandford, Grant et al. 2001: 161-162)

National cinema analysis as a critical approach:

The study of national cinemas has recently developed into a hybrid branch of film studies, which straddles the critical constructs of several other fields, including mass

communication studies, social science, political cultural studies, psychoanalysis, gender studies, post-colonial studies, post-modern studies, and literary studies, among others. (Hjort and MacKenzie 2000: 1) Only a few books specific to this sub-category of film studies, especially those with an emphasis upon critical approaches, have been published, including *Theorising National Cinema*, (Vitali and Willemsen 2006) *An Introduction to World Cinema* (Gazetas 2000), *World Cinema, Critical Approaches* (Hill and Gibson 2000), *Cinema and Nation* (Hjort and MacKenzie 2000), and *The Oxford History of World Cinema* (Nowell-Smith 1997). Most other discourses are found without the introductory chapters of authors examining a specific national cinema (Hayward 1993; Berry 1994; O'Regan 1996; Dale 1997; Soila, Widding et al. 1998; Ashby and Higson 2000; Blandford 2000; Baillieu and Goodchild 2002; Gittings 2002), in order to establish a rationale for their analysis. Students of national cinema analysis have necessarily gleaned theoretical guidelines from these discussions, and one of the most thoroughgoing and systematic approaches can be found in the *Introduction* of Tom O'Regan's '*Australian national cinema*', where he offers us this definition of national cinema:

It is one among a number of national cinemas: British, Japanese, Dutch, French and Indian. A national cinema is made of the films and film production industry of particular nations. National cinemas involve relations between, on the one hand, the national film texts and the national and international film industries and, on the other hand, their various social, political, and cultural contexts. These supply a means of differentiating cinema product in domestic and international circulation: these are the Australian films, directors, actors and these are the French (O'Regan 1996: 14).

Fall-out from Hollywood's cultural neo-colonialism:

O'Regan also mentions the way in which the hegemony of the Hollywood cultural and industrial monolith surrenders 'ne'er an inch of neither mind nor market', calling any film outside of Hollywood a 'foreign film.' This moniker of 'otherness' forces anyone outside the Hollywood system to define themselves in opposition to 'Tinsel Town,' or extra-Hollywood, the antithesis of what folks normally go to the cinema to see, at least, in most

places on earth, India and Hong Kong being the only surviving exceptions to America's cinematic imperialism:

National cinemas also partake of a broader 'conversation' with Hollywood and other national cinemas. They carve a space locally and internationally for themselves in the face of the dominant international cinema, Hollywood. National filmmakers indigenize genres, artistic movements and influences (O'Regan 1996: 15).

O'Regan reminds us that a national cinema combines the official and the obvious,

Like all national cinemas Australian cinema is a collection of films and production strategies. It is a critical category to be explored. It is an industrial reality and a film production milieu for which governments develop policy. It is a marketing category to be exploited. It is an appreciation and consumption category for domestic and international audiences (O'Regan 1996: 16).

And O'Regan reminds us that national cinema combines the variously unrelated,

Australian cinema is a container into which different film and cultural projects, energies, investments and institutions are assembled. It collects a range of elements □ people and things, screen identities, knowledges, strategies, films □ that are loosely related to each other; a raft of different institutions and relations, ranging from the complementary to the combative to the completely unrelated (O'Regan 1996: 17-18).

'An indigenous film industry' versus a national cinema:

The collection of a particular group's cinematic product and production strategies under the label of a national cinema does not necessarily indicate the presence of a previously recognized or industrially sustainable industry. In spite of this reality, there is a tendency to debate whether Wales does not have 'a film industry' (Berry 1994: 26; Blandford 2000: 14; Court 2004: 13; Blandford May 2003: 1). The debate continues on account of various criticisms, as mentioned in Geoff Court's article, i.e., that Wales does not produce adequate numbers of films to sustain the livelihood of its producers, that it does not possess a significant domestic or direct international distribution conduit for its products, that the majority of films produced in Wales are exhibited on television and almost never 'score a screen' in local cinemas, and so on. But these are false arguments that presuppose standards of participation established by Hollywood, and therefore these arguments only serve to reinforce the culturally imperious intimidation tactics of the

American cultural hegemony, again. (Moran 1996: 5-6) A film scholar must define the argument by indicating that, (and probably in the case of Wales) whether the indigenous film industry is sustainable, subsidized, or otherwise flawed (when compared to Hollywood) is an aspect of the qualities and nature of the (Welsh) national cinema, not criteria that should be used to question its existence.

Impossible to resist: Hollywood's seductive allure:

We can assert that any pragmatic discussion of national cinema must recognize that the ultimate goal of the major players in most national cinemas is to win the coveted 'Best Foreign Film' award at the Oscars. Substantial evidence would seem to support this assertion, since the intention is to achieve world recognition, and this becomes a rallying point of national identity and pride. But this focus upon attaining a standard set externally by Hollywood actually serves to directly reinforce the subordination of all cinemas to the hegemony of Hollywood, and would seem to undermine and betray the self-confidence of participating countries, which chase America's imperious approval and prize. What this actually points to is a larger discussion of how national cinemas operate within the industrial systems of cinema. Quentin Tarantino famously boasted at the Cannes Film Festival that

despite all the money, direction, acting and scriptwriting that went into a film, the reality was that audiences "showed up" for one reason: to see "the stars". He said that this was why America, India and Hong Kong - and not Britain - managed to sustain a flourishing domestic film industry. (Davies May 14, 2004)

At the event where Tarantino made this remark British actress Tilda Swinton countered that American cinematic product, similar to what Tarantino is known for, was composed of nothing but 'non-artistic' schlock, and was in fact, an 'industrial cinema' but 'not the only cinema on the map.' Swinton is setting up an artificially constructed, binary conflict, which implies that Hollywood is lowbrow, that other cinemas are highbrow and that audiences are not relevant. This is similar to the controversy mentioned above in Court's

article in the journal, *POV*² (Court 2004). But both of these controversies are created, by asking the wrong question. The question should not be, ‘Does this country have a film industry?’ Instead the question should be, ‘What constitutes a national cinema for this country?’ If, in fact, (as Swinton might have been implying), the majority of British products qualify as highbrow ‘art cinema,’ while most American products could be considered low-brow art, then these are merely aspects or qualities of the individual British and American national cinemas. In reference to Court’s article, whether a nation participates successfully according to criteria created by Hollywood does not necessarily qualify it or disqualify it, as having something, which constitutes a national cinema.

What is ‘Welsh?’

Our exploration leads us to ask, ‘What is Welsh?’ In terms of cinema, one might employ O’Regan’s rules and decide that any films made in that part of Britain, known as the nation of Wales, are Welsh (which is similar to Elsaesser’s ‘closed tautology’). But before analyzing this proposition, we must retreat into history, linguistics, culture, and politics, so that we can deconstruct ‘Welsh.’ Clearly what is ‘Welsh’ is a point of contention. Anecdotally, the three criteria most frequently required to be eligible for film-funding in Wales are that one must either (1) have been born in Wales; (2) have lived in Wales for at least two years; or (3) speak Welsh. Within Wales, there has long been a controversy whether anything produced in the Welsh language, or produced in so-called Anglo-Welsh is really ‘Welsh.’ This could be a historical residue of lingering English colonial or imperial influence, or postcolonial linguistic realities in Wales (Morgan 1981: 129; Smith and Jones 2000: 57; Aaron and Williams 2005: 137). The reference to Wales as an ‘internal colony’ of England highlights the crux of this controversy while this terminology as a useful ‘political metaphor’ has been shown to be ‘inaccurate’ and distorted (Day 2002). Nevertheless, in recent decades, the issue of

language has been divisive among producers and consumers of Welsh cinema (Hannan 1999: 6-7; Blandford 2000: 21).

What is Welsh national cinema?

This part discusses some of differences between what has been called 'British' national cinema and what might be called 'Welsh' national cinema. The hybrid category of film studies called 'national cinema analysis' has been in a state of rapid evolution for at least the past decade. Knowing this, we must temper our appraisal of analyses written during this period. For example, in a book which boasts the title, 'British national cinema' author Sarah Street concludes by mentioning the importance of 'film culture' i.e., 'the power of film criticism . . . influencing both scholarly . . . and popular conceptions about British cinema,' recalling (somewhat ironically, we shall see) that whereas previously American and European film scholarship marginalized British cinema, that

'In the 1980s and 1990s this situation has been in good part rectified, with journals like *Screen* and *Sight and Sound* giving serious attention to questions of British cinema.' (Street 1997: 27)

In 1994 another book by Dave Berry gave us five hundred and sixty-five pages of encyclopaedic accounting of the existence of filmmaking in Wales for over one hundred years (Berry 1994). Remarkably, Wales is never mentioned in Street's book, published in 1997, the same year that Wales and Scotland each voted for devolution by referendum. Street teaches at the University of Bristol, just across the Severn Estuary from Wales. Could she really not be aware of any of the Welsh screen actors, films or filmmakers heralded in Berry's book? The Welsh language film *Hedd Wyn* (1992) comes to mind. Oscar-nominated to represent Britain to the US film industry as Best Foreign Film, why didn't it even receive a mention in Street's book? Scotland registers a few words, with *Trainspotting* (1996) getting Street's attention. But apparently nothing about a distinctively Welsh cinema was interesting or important enough to make it into Street's

book. The culture, language and ethnicity of British cinema for Street are all English, and maybe occasionally Scottish. Street's book on 'British' cinema excludes the existence of ethnically marginalized cinema, in this case the Welsh cinema. This is not unusual or surprising, since a cultural 'myopia-of-the-metropole' pervades not only Street's conception of national identity, but also throughout the journals, *Screen* and *Sight and Sound*, during the 1980s and 1990s.

Things were about to change: In 2000, Andrew Higson writes in a book called, *British cinema, past and present*, that 'In recent years, new types of film-making have embraced multiculturalism, trans-nationalism and devolution.' (Ashby and Higson 2000: 31) Berry's book, *Wales and Cinema: The First Hundred Years*, published by the University of Wales Press and BFI made it into the bibliography of Higson's book. Also in 2000, Steve Blandford edited a book titled *Wales on Screen*, which asked, 'Is it possible to forge a distinctive film industry in the shadow of UK/US cultural domination?' (Blandford 2000: 8) We can see that in addition to the political possibilities promised by the 1997 vote for devolution, a revisionist historiography of what defines 'British' culture and in this case cinema, had begun. In 2001 the *Film Studies Dictionary* examines the elusive definitions of 'National cinema' adding,

At various historical moments there have been imperatives promoting both films of European national cinemas and those of emerging post-colonial countries, and film studies has often used national labels in ways that distort the reality of identity in a given country. The idea of a national cinema has begun to be seen in more complex and problematic ways: for example, it is now extremely difficult to talk of a British national cinema in the face of recent political changes giving a degree of autonomy to Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales and, more directly, in the face of emerging distinctive cinemas in those regions. (Blandford, Grant et al. 2001: 162)

We have explored definitions of the terms of our original questions, which we acknowledged and have demonstrated are contested. Now we will turn to a brief review of the supporting literature for our study.

A Literary Review, to learn the state of scholarship in books, reports, and articles related to a study of Welsh filmic product:

Hollywood, Cinema as Institution, and the International Audiovisual Industry:

The first area of our review is concerned with the broad conceptual framework within film studies of works, a framework that defines and locates cinema, film products, and the film industry and that distinguishes the influence and importance of Hollywood, and which considers a circumspect survey of the ‘international audiovisual industry’. ‘*What is Cinema?*’ by André Bazin is one of the first comprehensive apologies for ‘cinema as institution’. Bazin first wrote some of the concepts in earlier essays in the French film revue, *Les Cahiers du Cinéma*. Bazin’s essays are considered a rudimentary analysis of the cinema, and theoretical basis for modern film criticism (Bazin 2004). ‘*A short history of the movies*’ by Mast and Kawin, along with ‘*Film Art: An Introduction*’ by Bordwell and Thompson extends Bazin’s conceptual foundation with both industrial considerations, elements of production techniques and styles, and introduction of key concepts, including the cinematic usage of ‘genre’ (Bordwell and Thompson 2001; Mast and Kawin 2003). *Film Theory and Criticism, Introductory Readings*, Braudy and Cohen, co-editors, is an edited anthology of essays in film studies, which gives particular emphasis to the symbolic and to the ‘rhetoric’ of film (Braudy and Cohen 1999). Key concepts are explored in depth by the most important scholars of the last century, including genre, the star system, audience reception, semiotic signifiers, traits and markers, and the ‘auteur’ theory. This conceptual foundation, begun by Bazin, is taken to the planes of the existential and the virtual, in the book ‘*The Cinematic Apparatus*’ edited by De Lauretis and Heath (De Lauretis and Heath 1985). This collection holds essays, which deconstruct the camera and the visual gaze of the director and the implied vision of the audience. Several important aspects of cinema are developed by De Lauretis and

Heath including, the relationship of cinema to 'time' and 'place'. *How to Read a Film; The World of Movies, Media, and Multimedia; Language, History, Theory*, by Monaco is indispensable to our study as the systematic approach to the 'reading' of a film, a concept, which Monaco not only defines, but also outlines. This book is particularly important to our study, since in the *Introduction*, Monaco establishes several important tenants of film history, film production and history of aesthetics, upon which our arguments will be built. For example, the concept of 'functional or technical displacement' and its implications for the national cinemas of small nations will be especially important in our concluding chapter. Monaco shows the connection of cinema to the art of photography and the art of writing novels, effectively establishing a theoretical construct for both fictional and factual filmmaking, based upon earlier theories of photojournalism and the structure of narrative. Susan Sontag theorizes on the ideas, which Monaco lists and explains, in her book *On Photography*. Some important discussions by Sontag include her reflections upon the innovations of photographers, and the influence of these artists upon later cinematography, especially as the photographed subject or filmed subject exists in both the aesthetic and social planes. For example, Sontag's observations are important to our study as we read Welsh films that attain to both a verisimilitude of historical accuracy and to a fictive documenting of the artistic subject within a social context. Sontag looks particularly at the work of American photographer Lewis Wickes Hine (1874-1940), who shot scenes of workers building the Empire State Building. Sontag comments on the confluence of artistic trends with political events, and her comments are pertinent to our considerations of the historical Welsh paradigm within which Welsh filmic product is produced. Of Hine, Sontag said,

The aestheticizing tendency of photography is such that the medium, which conveys distress ends by neutralizing it. Cameras miniaturize experience, transform history into spectacle. As much as they create sympathy, photographs cut sympathy, distance the emotions (Sontag 1971: 112).

Sontag seems to conclude that Hine memorialized the common worker as he documented the construction project, or perhaps he documented the worker with an intent to romanticize or memorialize, and asks whether this was a legitimate comment for the documentary photographer to make. We extrapolate from Sontag's reflection upon Hine's subjective 'realism' to deconstruct what we suspect might be the subjectivity of the British social realism film genre that had a great influence upon the Welsh filmmaker Karl Francis. *'Film as social practice'* is a well-known book by Graeme Turner, which does not require an introduction among most film scholars.⁵ *Looks and Frictions: Essays in Cultural Studies and Film Theory*, by Paul Willemen is useful in numerous chapters, as we reflect upon the way in which Willemen applied some of the concepts (implicit in Turner's book) to film criticism and also how he developed this basis for aesthetic criticism, within a contemporary and social context (Willemen 1993).

Barker's *From "Antz" to "Titanic": Reinventing Film Analysis and Seeing Beyond: Movies, Visions, and Values*, edited by Robinson, are examples of the type of comparative, alternative readings, in which we will engage our topic (Barker 2000; Robinson 2001). The essays in Robinson's book are influenced by his theories of textual analysis, which resisted the overwhelming influence of linguistics and semiotics upon film studies in recent decades, and instead invented a path which struck a middle ground with the British School of Cultural Studies and the typically referenced fields of psychology and mass communication theory, as expounded by the Canadian and Cleveland schools, within an aesthetic and rhetorical paradigm. The tension between popular critical approaches within film studies is historically attributed to the institutional realities of the evolution of film schools and film studies in Western countries. The

⁵ Turner's book is relevant to our study at numerous junctures, and Turner makes specific comments about the Welsh people (in the context of his sociological discussion of film and media) and we apply his comments to the effects and influence of film, television, and mass media upon the Welsh national identity and national 'self-concept'.

historical reality (which is thought to have been influential upon the evolution of film schools and film scholarship) is that many film schools have had their origins in art and photography departments of university colleges, and many others had their origins in the English departments of university colleges. The tension created by critical constructs growing out of typically theoretical approaches, specific to art schools and specific to English departments, is generally summarized as a tension between the 'rhetorical' and the 'aesthetic'. There are traditionally thought to be two opposing paradigms, which drive the tropes of film studies theory. We have just described the first, based upon origins of film schools. The second occurs within English departments themselves, which were among the first academic homes to fledgling film schools, and is described in *The Rise and Fall of English: Reconstructing English as a Discipline*, by Scholes (Scholes 1999). For Scholes, the binary opposition in English departments, (which for our study, we will assume influenced the development of schools within film studies), is between the aesthetic ideals of '*Belles Lettres*' and the instructive or persuasive arguments of a 'School of Rhetoric' within literary theory, and the film theory which evolved from it. Scholes understands this divide to be between film schools which evolved out of Schools of Communications, preferring the rhetorical and the persuasive, i.e. the content of filmic product analysed as to its advertising and marketing and trans-national industrial impact, and film schools which evolved out of traditional English and Linguistics departments in universities, and brought along to film studies, 'critical constructs', redolent of literary, language, and drama studies.

Our review continues to follow the conceptual discourses, within a strongly social and cultural paradigm, but becomes more specific and historical with '*Movie-Made America, A Cultural History of American Movies*', by Robert Sklar. Sklar conceptualizes the social and cultural aspects of the dominant world cinema, i.e., the national cinema of America, or Hollywood. Sklar situates his concepts in historical interpretations of events related to

the entire history of cinema. This situates most national cinemas as derivative of or informed by the dominant American cinema, and places these cinemas within a mostly subordinate or sometimes interdependent relationship with Hollywood. The styles and influences that Bordwell and Thompson cited are situated by Sklar, within a social history. This social history implies the next part of our review, which turns to see what scholarship exists regarding both the aesthetic and industrial conditions and fields of production for non-American, national cinemas, including the emerging national cinema of Wales. So to rehearse the trajectory of our review so far, we follow tropes, which tend to go from the general to the specific: we go from the general conceptualizing about the ontology of cinema by Bazin, to the specifically social, cultural, and historical, as seen in Sklar. Similarly, once we have determined what cinema is (the general question), finally we ask how it is significant or contributory to social, economic or political experience (the specific questions). Subsequently, we have to ask, 'Which cinema?'

Our interrogation, 'Which cinema?' implies a parallel trajectory within our literature review, which will begin with the international, then progress to specific nations, then lead to the detailed specificity of the cinema of Wales, and then invert itself for the broader analysis. This circumspect look explores the macro-perspective of informed and comparative meta-criticism, and the field of national cinema analysis, which has become more codified and organized, even during past several years (that is, even during the course of this research project). Baran and Davis's, *Mass Communication Theory: Foundations, ferment, and Future*, provides the broad conceptual foundation for how our study fits into the widest view of the international audiovisual industry. International and intra-national flow of meaning and culture, and the local-to-global transmission and reception (and recycling) of copyrighted entertainment product and other filmic material, as cultural and industrial commodities, is structured in this book. The general discussions of worldwide communications, leads to the specific discourse of 'world cinema.' *The*

Oxford History of World Cinema by Nowell-Smith, *World Cinema, Critical Approaches*, edited by Hill and Gibson, and *An Introduction to World Cinema* by Gazetas, are referenced frequently in this study, in regards to world cinema. The collection edited by Hill and Gibson contains an opening essay by Stephen Crofts, upon which some of our essential arguments about national cinema are built (Nowell-Smith 1997; Gazetas 2000; Hill and Gibson 2000). Two reference sources are particularly helpful: The authors of these books are also film scholars involved in national cinema analysis, and consequently, their definitions are informed by an expansion and integrated industrial perspective, including *Cinema Studies: Key Concepts* by Susan Hayward, and *The Film Studies Dictionary* by Blandford, Grant and Hillier (Hayward 2000; Blandford, Grant et al. 2001).

Various film criticisms of Welsh films or films with a 'Welsh' connection are available from the *New York Times Review of Books* Movies section, and *Film Festival: A Gem From Truffaut*, is exemplary of the articles by Canby and other journalists. In many instances, this is the only source outside of Wales, which considers these films, at all, and the *New York Times* is careful to mention Wales specifically, in every instance, rather than the 'catch all' description of 'British' (Canby 1972). Because the film and television film industry in Wales is essentially an independent producers' project, the theory and history of 'Indie' films is especially helpful in, *Celluloid Mavericks: A History of American Independent Film*, by Merritt (Merritt 2000). A variety of other books consider the 'business' of filmmaking, and offer particular insight into Welsh filmic production, including DeGeorge's *The Making of a Blockbuster: How Wayne Huizenga Built a Sports and Entertainment Empire from Trash, Grit and Videotape*, Gabler's *An Empire of Their Own: How the Jews Invented Hollywood*, Goldman's *Adventures in the Screen Trade*, Litwak's *Dealmaking in the Film and Television Industry: From Negotiations to Final Contracts*, and Michael Medved's *Hollywood vs. America*

(Gabler 1989; Medved 1993; Goldman 1996; DeGeorge 1997; Merritt 2000; Litwak 2002).

National Cinema Analysis

In the essay, “Sociological Scope of ‘National Cinema,’” Philip Schlesinger defines the “scope of ‘national cinema,’”

Film studies’ concern with the role of cinema in the nation is inherently internalist. Its central concern is with how – if at all – the production, circulation, and consumption of the moving image is constitutive of the national collectivity. However, this internalism is necessarily tempered by an awareness of exteriority as a shaping force. Indeed, it is precisely the extra-territorial cultural pressure of Hollywood’s production, imported into the national space, that sets up the contemporary issue of national cinema. This outside challenge to ideas of the national is at once interpreted as cultural, economic, and political as well as ideological. (Hjort and MacKenzie 2000)

To direct this research, we have proposed the questions, “What Constitutes a National Cinema for Wales,” and “How Does Welsh National Cinema Represent or Construct a National Identity for Wales?” While considering literary sources and theoretical discussions of national film analysis relevant to a study of the Welsh national cinema, it’s important to simultaneously monitor the popular film industry journals (*Variety*, *The Hollywood Reporter*, *Screen Daily*) for supporting anecdotal accounts, news of Welsh film successes, etc. These journals carry daily reports of incidents, which illustrate the theoretical points examined in this study. For example, it’s important for a nation to determine what constitutes its national cinema, not only because of the way in which a nation’s cinema speaks to itself about self-concept and identity, or because of how a nation’s cinema speaks to the world about that identity, but also because of the economic impact of successfully “branding” and marketing both national identity, as well as marketing national films. Three recent incidents, reported in the film industry daily, *Screen Daily*, allude to Schlesinger’s ‘outside challenge to ideas of the national,’ while anecdotally framing both the ambiguities of defining a national cinema, and the large

economic interests at stake: According to Adam Minns, writing in the film industry journal *Screen Daily*, 5 December 2002, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences announced that,

Its committee members voted against British film, *The Warrior* (2001), because Hindi was not a language indigenous to the UK and the film was not about the Hindu community in the UK. But such an explanation was dismissed by Faivre, (the producer) who argued that the film was almost all British, apart from being shot in India and having a French producer. 'The writer was British. The director was British. The majority of department heads were British,' Faivre said. 'The post production was British. The money was British. FilmFour was British. The Department for Culture, Media & Sport gave it a certificate of British nationality.' Commenting on the film's entirely Hindi dialogue, Faivre said that more people in the UK spoke Hindi than Welsh, a reference to *The Warrior's* replacement as the UK foreign-language representative for the Oscars, Tim Lyn's Welsh-language coming-of-age tale *Eldra* (2002). Meanwhile, Hong Kong entry *The Touch* (2002), produced by and starring Michelle Yeoh, was rejected because most of the dialogue is in English and not Mandarin. Palestine's acclaimed drama *Divine Intervention* (2002) was not accepted because Palestine is not recognized as a bona fide nation by the Academy despite having a non-voting seat on the United Nations (*Screen Daily*, 5 Dec. 2002).

What are the implications of receiving one's country's nomination for the Oscar's Best Foreign Film, having that nomination contested and removed, and just how large is the 'economic pie' referred to in this article? The Motion Picture Association of America estimates that in the U.S. alone, cinema box offices grossed over 9.5 billion dollars (in 2002-2003), not including DVD sales and pay-per-view. It is more likely that after being nominated, out of the thousands of films made every year, an Oscar-nominated film will be exhibited worldwide with continuing exhibition and distribution contracts. At least within North America, and to a lesser extent in Britain, the nominated director and producer are guaranteed their next project will be made, with enhanced ease of development and financing. Still, in these recent events what constitutes a national cinema for Britain, Hong Kong and Palestine, was contested by members of the 'extra-territorial', Hollywood film industry. Members of the Oscar-nominating committees have seemingly inherent contradictions regarding criteria when determining whether films can represent specific national cinemas, and whether those national cinemas exist,

at all. Scholars of national film analysis attempt to unravel these apparent ambiguities when defining national cinemas, and so avoid the Oscars' perceived contradictions.

Another reason we have included this anecdote about the nominations for Best Foreign Picture Category of the Oscars, is to also introduce the fact that Wales participates in this competition annually. Wales participates, as part of Great Britain, because it recognizes that there is really only one worldwide system of film distribution monopolizing effectually the global cinematic marketplace, that being Hollywood. The Oscars are the most important film-marketing event, connected to the purposes and activities of the most important part of the film industry, the distribution sector.

As an industrial enterprise, film is divided into three interdependent yet separate sectors. Of the three – production, distribution and exhibition – the middle activity is the most crucial, not least because it connects the other sectors . . . Distribution is seen as a distinctly mundane and prosaic activity, perhaps the most commercial part of the film industry; it is not surprising that it receives the least amount of public attention. Yet . . . distribution is the key to the film industry. Production exists to meet the demand created by the mechanism of distribution rather than distribution existing to serve production (Moran 1996: 1).

While it is generally perceived that the production (versus the distribution) of films in Wales contributes initially to the creation of a Welsh national cinema, it is actually recognized by members of the film industry in Wales, that participation in marketing events related to the Hollywood system of global film distribution (in this case, the Oscars) offers the most significant (but not the only existing) entry for products into this system, enhancing their chances for cultural and/or economic relevance and success. The odds against success in this 'Oscar-lottery' are great, and success in the Oscars brings notoriety, but doesn't always ensure financial success, especially outside North American. (This brings into the question the activities and policies of Welsh film producers, Welsh film-commissioning boards and broadcasters, Welsh film commissions, Welsh film schools, and film funding bodies, i.e., The National Assembly for Wales, the British council, the National Lottery, etc., which have focused much of their resources

and energies on film production, with less emphasis on film exhibition, and least-of-all, film distribution. We will consider this question later in this study).

The scope of this study initially considers writings, which address this query: “What generally constitutes a national cinema?” In the last ten years, scholars within film studies have turned their attention to ‘national cinema analysis,’ which has developed as a specialty within film studies, and within the wider field called cultural studies. Film studies first developed as a hybrid of literary studies combined with visual analysis. Cinema as institution has been in a constant state of transformation, as other disciplines have weighed in and influenced what has been called film theory. As Turner describes this syncretistic blend as,

the insertion into film studies of methods taken from other disciplines, including linguistics, psychoanalysis, anthropology, and semiotics. Some of these ‘disciplines’ were themselves hybrids, already crossing traditional disciplinary boundaries (Turner 1988: 46-47).

National cinema analysis can be seen as the hybrid progeny of multiple disciplines including film studies, social and cultural studies, and cinematic history, and more recently, mass communication theory and film policy studies. Film scholars and the theoretical approaches used in the hybrid field of national cinema analysis have evolved in the past thirty years:

In the late 1960s I had reached a point in my work as a historian and critic of twentieth-century American culture when I felt the need to explore the role of movies as an art form, and as an influence on other arts. As I immersed myself in the subject, however, I soon began to see that the approach I was taking would not lead me to the heart of the matter. Its conception of both movies and culture was too narrow. One has to go beyond the handful of major directors and the few dozen classic films, and even beyond the great inchoate mass of movies as a whole, to try to understand motion pictures in their largest sense, as a mass medium of cultural communication . . . In the case of movies, the ability to exercise cultural power was shaped not only by the possession of economic, social or political power but also by such factors as national origin or religious affiliation, not to speak of far more elusive elements, such as celebrity or personal magnetism (Sklar 1975: ix-x).

In *Australian national cinema*, Tom O'Regan defends the necessity of inventing national cinema analysis as a field which simultaneously is derived from and yet straddles multiple disciplines, while successfully systematizing the theories and results produced from this gleaned method-synthesis of approaches, and he describes the resulting birth of this hybrid field and its inclination toward a synthesized-from-multiple-disciplines, as a revisionist-historiography:

National cinema analyses are predisposed in some fashion to local history and sociology, to emphasizing the local as well as (and sometimes at the expense of) the international. National cinema writers have no choice: they must deploy hybrid forms of analysis. The special local, critical, cultural, historical and industrial milieu of each cinema needs to be 'translated' into a form available for various kinds of local and international circulation . . . The study of national cinemas is the proof that it is possible to do things with our recognition of the cinema as a multi-dimensional phenomenon. Multiple and diverse points of view can be the subject of our systematizing attention . . . the task of national cinema studies, therefore, is not only to make sense of the films produced under its aegis, but also to make sense of those dispersed elements strategies and purposes that produce, frame and circulate these films (O'Regan 1996: 4).

During this decade, books have been published which focus on the cinema of specific nations or nation-groups (as in *The Nordic National Cinemas*). There are two sources, which generally discuss the role of 'national cinema.' The first is an essay by Stephen Crofts, 'Concepts of national cinema' from *World Cinema: Critical Approaches*, edited by John Hill Pamela and Church Gibson, 2000. This essay offers a concise listing and proposed integration of various critical theories about national cinema. This essay offers a brief introduction to primary concepts, including problematizing the nation-state, and problematizing prior categories of analysis used in nation-state cinema studies. Crofts argues 'that film scholars' mental maps of world film production are often less than global,' and effectively addresses this under the topic, 'Varieties of nation-state cinema.' In this topic Crofts lists sub-state cinemas, including the Quebecois Cinema of Canada, (and I will probably extend to include the Welsh national Cinema,) or more specifically, 'cinemas of nations-without-a-state,' seemingly antithetical to his label, 'nation-state

cinemas.’ Crofts cites the ‘poor Celtic cinema’ as an example of cultural specificity in recent debates, quoting Colin McArthur,

Given centuries of English othering of Celtic Scotland, Ireland, and Wales as ‘uncivilized’ and ‘backward’, he offers this ‘axiom to Celtic film-makers: the more your films are consciously aimed at an international market, the more their conditions of intelligibility will be bound up with regressive discourses about your own culture’ (Crofts 2000: 118-120)

The next general source on national cinema is the book *Cinema & Nation*, edited by Mette Hjort and Scott Mackenzie. The first half of this book is devoted to sociological discussions of approaches to national cinema, and debates the ways in which various nations use their cinemas to construct national culture. The second half is concerned with diversity of strategy in national film production, and concludes with local and global audience reception of nationalist images. Probably the most useful essay in this book is by Philip Schlesinger, ‘*Sociological Scope of ‘National Cinema,*’ wherein he cites the most prominent scholars in the field of national cinema studies, analyses their main points, and situates their arguments in relationship to each other. Among these arguments is the confusion created by attempting to understand national cinema only through the filter of a single discipline, for example, the tendency to view national cinema through the prism of social and cultural studies, specifically under the inward-looking limitations of ‘Social Communication Theory’ (Schlesinger 2000: 19) Schlesinger liberates national cinema analysis from the dominance of any single discipline, by taking us through each recent debate, noting the flaws and effectiveness of each method, comparing the discipline-biased methods with each other, and then arguing that they each have differing values, while depending upon each other. This emphasizes the new ‘hybridity’ of national cinema analysis as it emerges as a distinct field of study, which might eventually be collected under the umbrella of ‘International Communication Theory.’ Schlesinger enumerates the positions of Deutsch as culturally inward limited, Gellner as akin to Deutsch, stressing the ‘self-contained-ness’ of cultures protected by the nation-state

(Schlesinger 2000: 21) the influence of Marshall McLuhan in suggesting that the media are 'boundary markers' essentially forming the "political roof that caps a culture" (Schlesinger 2000: 22) Schlesinger situates the 'Imagined Communities' (1983) of Benedict Anderson among the theories of Deutsch and Gellner, while calling Anderson's pre-eminence of 'print media' in forming concepts of nationhood 'resolutely Gutenbergian: the impact of the moving image is not addressed' (Schlesinger 2000: 23) and contrasting how Anderson's use of this limited selection of media to theorize that 'the collective consumption of mediated communication serves to create a sense of national community' with Deutsch and Gellner's conceptualizations of media categories and audience. Briefly mentioned is Michael Billig's "banality of nationalism" argument, which asserts that most folks are blind to the ubiquity of nationalist practices which surround them and which are transmitted through media.

Chapter 2: The Review of Relevant Literature

In the last chapter we introduced our thesis question, and situated our exploration of the national cinema of Wales, in a historical, cultural and political milieu, anchoring by prior scholarship on the content and industrial conditions of the Welsh film industry. Our review of the relevant scholarship continues in this chapter. The structure of our literature review merits a new chapter at this point, not only for reasons of length, but also because our focus shifts from a general to more specific focus, that is, from 'cinema and nation' as they exist independently and interact, to theories about this interaction.

Theorizing National Cinema:

There are numerous sources related to national cinema analysis, which this study cites, including Klein's, '*Indigenizing Hollywood: Local Uses of Global Styles*', '*Film Policy*' by Albert Moran, and '*Film & Nationalism*' edited by Alan Williams (Moran 1996; Williams 2002; Klein 2006). Moran's book is especially helpful, as Moran uses the '*Introduction*', to theorize about film policy and national cinema analysis. His definitions for cinema and the film industry are very useful (Moran 1996: 1-36). Three chapters of the new book, '*Theorizing National Cinema*' edited by Willemen and Vitali, have specific relevance to our study. An analysis follows in this section of the first of three chapters in the new book, which are frequently quoted in our study, as they pertain to the study of the national cinema of Wales, including

- 1) *Introduction*, by Valentina Vitali and Paul Willemen,
- 2) *British Cinema as National Cinema*, by John Hill,
- 3) *National Cinema in Ireland*, by Martin McLoone.

Historical obstacles, including political bias and market-availability have limited global consumer access to the filmic product of regional-European cultural groups and polities. The rapid expansion of new technologies, including 'the new media', i.e., digital video,

'prosumer' editing capacities, internet promotion, among others seems poised to remove these obstacles in ways never before within the range of political or economic possibility, especially in the British Isles. This lends urgency and a renewed relevance to critical analyses of filmic products and of production strategies for these regions. Various film scholars, including Dave Berry, Professor Steve Blandford, Dr. Gwenno Ffrancon Jenkins, and Kate Woodward have recently established that the filmic product which might eventually be known as the 'National cinema of Wales' merits independent analysis (Berry 1994; Blandford 2000; Ffrancon-Jenkins 2003; Woodward 2006).

In her recent article in the online *North American Journal of Welsh Studies*, Kate Woodward notes how Wales is sometimes given short-shrift in cultural discourses about the British Isles, a critical afterthought encapsulated by the phrase 'and to a lesser extent, Wales' (Woodward 2006: 1). The strength of the new book, *Theorizing National Cinema*, is that discussions of both 'national', 'British' and 'Irish' or 'Celtic' cinemas tend to give direct consideration to and acknowledgment of the possibility of a Welsh national cinema, as a subject unto itself, and not adjacent to a larger study. This has not always been the case; some studies of 'British' cinema written in the past decade have overlooked the existence of any Welsh contributions to cinema, at all. Steve Blandford has asserted that, while some areas of governance of newly-devolved Wales have achieved a certain level of independence from England, i.e., 'postcolonial Wales', Welsh film and television are still subject to residual colonial controls based in London (Blandford 2005b: 191; Blandford 2007: 91). Dave Barlow confirms that this continuing monopoly of news and copy-righted-entertainment production and marketing in Wales by England and Hollywood is pervasive not only in film and television, but extends throughout other media (Barlow, Mitchell et al. 2005: 34). With consideration of the economic and political circumstances regarding Wales, it is not surprising that scholarly differentiation between what has been called 'British' national cinema and what might be

called 'Welsh' national cinema are lacking. Indeed, there are historical and logical reasons to couple Wales with Scotland, as in the book, *Scotland and Wales: Nations Again?* (Taylor and Thomson 1999)

The *Introduction* to the new book, *Theorizing National Cinema* acknowledges British film scholars' lack of agreement on systematic approaches within national cinema analysis, which one might further posit fostered Street's habit of overlooking Wales:

In the UK this question of *how* to circumscribe the specificity of a national formation did remain on the agenda in political and historio-graphic intellectual circles, but apart from that handful of essays, it was largely ignored by writers about cinema (Vitali and Willemen 2006: 4).

Vitali and Willemen's *Introduction* cogently situates of the status of national cinema analysis within the historical timeline of a critical framework. They explain that updated versions of previous-published articles by Phil Rosen, Stephen Crofts, John Hill, Paul Willemen, and Andrew Higson were included to broaden the breadth of this collection, 'as re-visitations of arguments advanced by the authors between the mid-1980s and the 1990s' (Vitali and Willemen 2006: 7). As an edited collection, which attempts to unify in a comprehensive way the theories and histories of national cinema analysis, *Theorizing National Cinema* echoes another recent effort by Graham Day and Andrew Thompson titled, *Theorizing Nationalism*. Taken together these books might provide scholars in film, media and cultural studies convenient and thoroughgoing critical bookends for both their physical and mental theory libraries. In a style that is readable and lithe, Vitali and Willemen segue from situating the bulk of the articles mentioned above within the critical template introduced in 1983 by Ernest Gellner in *Nations and Nationalism*. According to the editors, Gellner connects inextricably nationalism and the processes of industrialization. The editors explain how, particularly in the case of cinema, Gellner's emphasis on the relationship between the nation and the national project of education becomes a forced and inadequate paradigm when applied beyond print media, and they

quote Perry Anderson's comment on Gellner, 'He theorized nationalism without detecting the spell' (Vitali and Willemen 2006). Vitali and Willemen bring the discussion of national into a general context, to emphasize how an understanding of how 'cinema as a discursive practice constructs national subjects', and to do this they quote Tom Nairn, who might be best known for his comment on the British context, in the 'highly influential *The Break-Up of Britain: Crisis and Neo-Nationalism*':

If, as Tom Nairn also put it (1997), nationalism is an *address*, then Gellner's idea of culture as education leaves no room for an understanding of how cinema as a discursive practice constructs national subjects (Vitali and Willemen 2006: 8).

In the *Introduction* Vitali and Willemen expand the organizing constructs of national cinema analysis and free it from the limits of Gellner, citing how the 'biggest problem' with Gellner's theory is his equating 'culture with education':

Whereas education is a project undertaken by the state and therefore fully instrumentalised by the interest blocs of the ruling coalition, the same has never held for cinema (Vitali and Willemen 2006: 5).

Welsh national cinema occurs within the timeline of historical and political events related to the advancement toward a new, British federalist collection of regionally devolved and semi-autonomous states. This Welsh national cinema emerged simultaneously with important political and cultural events, all relating to a renewed questioning of Welsh national identity (Aaron and Williams 2005: 187). When this timeline is considered with previous economic obstacles and cultural policies regarding Welsh film production, distribution (and regarding the intellectual property rights of Welsh copyrighted-entertainment-products in general) it is possible to imagine that the Welsh national cinema will never transition from films primarily commissioned for television to a full-fledged film industry, that is, into an industry where some critical mass of filmic product is systematically distributed for cinematic release and exhibition. Political will and remit to recover and market the film libraries of television broadcasters in Wales is lacking; the print-transfer, marketing, and distribution costs are prohibitive. Taken together these

impediments restrict any substantive consideration of most Welsh filmic products. It is more likely that once scholarly treatment of these forgotten Welsh films increases visibility of their content, demand will be created in a niche market. ¹

European cinema

Our review moves from the general and broadly analytical to the slightly more specific, with an overview provided by several books on European cinema. As John Hill has said regarding European cinema

Any discussion of European cinema must immediately contend with basic questions of definition: what is the conception of Europe, which is being referred to, and how is the cinema being defined? (Hill, McLoone et al. 1994: 53)

Our review includes, *'The Movie Game; The Film Business in Britain, Europe and America'* by Dale. Dale gives a detailed overview, seemingly written for the non-European, with clear explanations of most of the conventions unique to the European market. Dale's approach is balanced with industrial information and statistics, but does not attain to analysing the content of European films. This is left up to Pierre Sorlin in his book, *'European Cinemas, European Societies'*, and to Thomas Elsaesser in, *'European Cinema: Face to Face with Hollywood'*. Jäckel follows Dale's industrial emphasis in, *'European Film Industries'*. Elsaesser introduces several key concepts in his book on European film, including a binary opposition between Art-House versus genre cinema, or Art-House as genre (Sorlin 1991; Dale 1997; Jackel 2003; Elsaesser 2005: 9-10).

National cinemas:

We must also enumerate some of the books that were relevant to this research because of the methods used and because of similarities between nations they individually study and Wales. Because Schlesinger effectively critiques these discussions, it is important to note

¹ This Welsh 'niche' market eventually might be satisfied by direct online marketing of these films, with streaming-video of trailers and clips and pay-per-view downloads.

each study, and in some cases to mention key ideas unique to that national cinema. As we have mentioned elsewhere, the opportunity to expand the critical theory of national cinema analysis occurs as each writer reflects upon the lessons learned during the process of exploring the cinema of a specific nation. The process is always comparative, and builds upon past analysis, so the commentary is usually also comparative. *'Border Crossing: Film in Ireland, Britain and Europe'* edited by Hainsworth, Hill and McLoone, provides insight into film in the British Isles, and contains some key concepts, enunciated by McLoone, which we build upon in the analysis of Welsh filmic product (Hill, McLoone et al. 1994). The recently published screenplay to the film, *'The Wind that Shakes the Barley, The: A Screenplay'*, by Lavery, is packaged with a new review of Irish filmmaking by Kevin Rockett (Lavery 2006: 153-162). Our study frequently compares Welsh cinema to the cinemas of other English language or of formerly British (and primarily racially English, Welsh, Scottish, or Irish) colonies. Christopher Gittings's *'Canadian National Cinema, Ideology, difference and representation'*, gives many examples, which we compare to Welsh filmic product. Gittings also introduces numerous key concepts about the cinema of post-colonial and 'settler' societies, which also seems to apply to Wales (Gittings 2002). We cite the recent book *'Scotland and Wales: Nations Again?'* by Taylor and Thomson, as we compare Wales to Scotland and refer to *'Scotch Reels: Scotland in Cinema and Television'*, by McArthur. We have also referred to *'National Cinema and Beyond'* edited by Hill and Rockett, and Ruth Barton's, *'Irish National Cinema'*. As we looked for cinematic analogues among former British colonies, we found a rich vein of comparative material and a thoroughgoing analysis in Tom O'Regan's, *'Australian National Cinema'*. O'Regan is so systematic and organized, that his book offers a virtual template for our research.

We considered the *'Italian National Cinema, 1896-1996'* by Sorlin, and our study of Sorlin's historical and cultural paradigm was informed by books which he references,

including, *'Italy: the Enduring Culture'* by White, and Duggan's *'A Concise History of Italy'*. White's discussion of the 'enduring culture' of Italy looks at the durability of local dialects and regional languages and the literature and storytelling cycles indigenous to these provincial pockets, which compares to the remarkable survival of the Welsh language, in the shadow of the monolithic England, as it were. All of the writings of Susan Hayward are informative and helpful in our grasp of the rudiments of national cinema analysis, but the book on *'French National Cinema'*, by Hayward, is probably most useful, because of its considered and comprehensive nature, especially as it deals with filmic representation of the national, and the French linguistic and cultural 'exceptionalism' (Hayward 1993). Neither Hayward or Elsaesser are dealing with so-called 'small nations', comparable to Wales or Scotland, but in *'New German Cinema, A History'*, Elsaesser expands important conceptual elements of national cinema analysis, and importantly, discusses the link between European cinemas and their relative television industries, and the reason for the close dependence of European film upon the small screen's support. Robert Stone has written widely about minority language and small nation cinemas, focusing upon Cuban and Basque in particular, and specifically comparing Wales to the Basque countries. An example of his scholarship, which we quote, is *'Basque Cinema: Julio Medem'*. And finally, the comparison of Wales to Denmark, Norway and other Norse constituencies is useful, as we looked to, *'Nordic National Cinemas'*, edited by Iversen and Widding.

British national cinema:

Durgnat's *'Mirror for England: British Movies from Austerity to Affluence'* (Durgnat 1971), is significant as being among the early books on British cinema, and also among the first to conceive of British cinema specifically as the cinema of 'England', now a cultural, political anachronism, as we have mentioned. Our study refers to a number of important studies of British national cinema, but our reliance upon these works is limited

by the fact that they systematically neglect or ignore the existence of a national or even an ethnic Welsh cinema. There are historic and industrial reasons for this, which we will explore, and we point out that the marginalization of cinemas, as not being 'British' (or not even existing) is not limited to Wales, and indeed, the London-centric English film industry is an 'equal opportunity' discriminator, when it comes to marginalizing any film not produced by a limited group of approved producers within postal code zones particular to London. *'The British Cinema Book'* edited by Murphy, can be noted as the first major work to include a chapter on the 'Celtic periphery' of film production in Britain, as authored by Martin McLoone (Murphy 1998), and added in the second edition. Some of the other books which we have sourced and read include, *'British national cinema'* by Sarah Street (Street 1997), *'British Cinema, Past and Present'* by Ashby and Higson (Ashby and Higson 2000), Ryall's *'Popular British Cinema'* published in *'The Electronic Journal of British Cinema'* (Ryall 1990), *'The British Film Business'* by Baillieu and Goodchild (Baillieu and Goodchild 2002), *'Waving the Flag: Constructing a National Cinema in Britain'* by Andrew Higson (Higson 1997), *'British Cinema in the 1980s, issues and themes'* by John Hill (Hill 1999), *'Big Picture, Small Screen, The Relations Between Film and Television'* by Hill and McLoone (Hill and McLoone 1996), *'British Cultural Studies: Geography, Nationality, and Identity'* by Morley and Robins (Morley and Robins 2001), *'New Questions of British Cinema'* edited by Duncan Petrie (Petrie 1992), Dickinson's *'Rogue Reels: Oppositional Film in Britain, 1945-90'* (Dickinson 1999), Dickinson and Street's *'Cinema and State, The Film Industry and the British Government 1927-84'* (Dickinson and Street 1985), Harvey and Dickinson's report, *'Developing a Sustainable Film Industry: The Role of Film Culture'* (Harvey and Dickinson 2003), and finally, *'A Response to the Call for Evidence on the Topic, "Is There a British Film Industry?"'*, produced for the AHRB Centre for British Film and Television Studies, and moderated by Professor Julian Petley (Petley 2004). *'Films and British National Identity: From Dickens to "Dad's Army"'* by Richards, is distinguished

as providing some useful insights to British film production history, but also as having (possibly) the most insulting, ethnically stereotypical, historically inaccurate and culturally condescending description of Welsh cinema, ever to have been written (Richards 1997: 212-251).

National cinema of Wales:

And now the trajectory of our review has led us from the general Hollywood and European cinema, through British cinema, and finally to sources which consider the national cinema of Wales. *'Cinema & Wales'* by Dave Berry is the consummate reference tool for scholars of Welsh film, with the largest collected source of details and information about Welsh film in one place. If the entire book were combined with the content and writings of the National Welsh Sound and Screen archive, then a true 'Welsh Encyclopaedia of Film' would be almost complete (Berry 1994). Berry's work has a journalistic commitment to detail, which is the strength of this work. *'Wales on Screen'* is the best known book by Steve Blandford, who is considered among the foremost scholars in this field (Blandford 2000). Blandford's extensive writing of the field of Welsh national cinema includes, *"Old Wales is Dead", Film, Theatre and TV Drama in Contemporary Wales* (Blandford 2003), *'Film, Theatre, and TV Drama in Contemporary Wales'* (Blandford 2003a), *'Film, Drama and the Break-Up of Britain'* (Blandford 2005), *'Wales at the Oscars: heritage cinema and Welsh-ness in the 1990s'*. (Blandford 2005a) Blandford is also interviewed in issue number one, of the *'POV² Quarterly Film Journal of Wales's'* article entitled, *'Portrait of an Industry'* (Court 2004: 27) Blandford's most comprehensive work to date, has just been published, entitled, *'Film, Drama and the Break Up of Britain'* (Blandford 2007). Various other studies of mass media and film in Wales are helpful, including *'The Media in Wales, Voices of a Small Nation'*, by Barlow, Mitchell and O'Malley (Barlow, Mitchell et al. 2005), *'A Social History of the Cinema in Wales 1918-1951'* by Miskell (Miskell 2006), *Broadcasting and the BBC in Wales'* by

John Davies (Davies 1994), another article on the mass media by Steve Blandford in *'Wales Today'* edited by Dunkerley and Thompson (Dunkerley and Thompson 1999), *'Defining A Nation: Wales and the BBC'* edited by Grahame Davies and Patrick Hannan (Hannan and Davies 2003), another article by Steve Blandford in *'Popular Television Drama: Critical Perspectives'* edited by Stephen Lacey (Lacey and Bignell 2005), *'Acting Wales, Stars of Stage and Screen'* by Professor Peter Stead (Stead 2002), *'Shadows and Substance, The Development of A Media Policy for Wales'* by Williams (Williams 1997), Dafydd's *'WW and the emergence of Teledu Harlech'*, in the second issue of the *'Cyfrwng Wales Media Journal'* (Dafydd 2005), Jachimiak's *'Gwynfa, Adferiad Gwynfa - Grand Slam, Gwrywdod ac Adennill y Gymru a Gollwyd'* (Jachimiak 2006), Iona Jones's *'Keynote Speech'* at the Celtic Media Festival in 2007 presented at the Isle of Skye, Scotland, and published by the S4C Online Archives (Jones 2007), Kidd's *'Capture Wales: Digital Storytelling at the BBC'* (Kidd 2005), Shail's article, *'Stanley Baker's "Welsh Western": Masculinity and Cultural Identity in Zulu'* (Shail 2002), and numerous news articles by Driscoll, including, *'Lights, camera and non-stop action'* published in the *Western Mail*, Franklin's references to Welsh media in, *'Local Journalism and Local Media'*, Thomas's *'The case for a bilingual S4C'* published in the revue, *'Planet: the Welsh Internationalist'*, Thomas and Lewis's, *'Coming out of a Mid-Life Crisis? The past, present, and future audiences, for Welsh language broadcasting'*.

Finally, there are many articles by Kate Woodward, including, *'Traditions and Transformations: Film in Wales during the 1990s,'* published in the *'North American Journal of Welsh Studies'* (Woodward 2006). Woodward's article naturalizes the concept of a collective Welsh 'imaginary' upon which we build many of our related arguments. Many articles by Kate Woodward, Dr. Gwenno Ffrancon-Jenkins and other Welsh scholars never make their way into English translation, and so there is probably some redundancy, since many English speaking Welsh scholars cannot read Welsh, and

consequently repeat tropes of research and commentary. *'Cyfaredd Y Cysgodion: Delweddu Cymru A'i Phobl Ar Ffilm 1935-1951'* by Dr. Ffrancon-Jenkins, has been partially translated by this writer for the purposes of this study, but it is a prime example of books about Welsh life which still need to be brought into wider English language and into foreign language access (Ffrancon-Jenkins 2003).

Constructions of Identity

At this point, the trajectory of our literary review shifts to include very specific sources, which assist our arguments throughout the study. These references are essentials, since they balance the 'cinematic' side of our critical 'toolbox' of approaches, with critical constructs from psychological and criminology, Welsh historical studies, social, cultural and political studies in individual and collective or national identity, and related literary theory and post-colonial theoretical concepts. Our study is informed by revisionist readings, which we accomplish with the support of prior research into the fields of cinematic representations of gender, sexuality and individual, group and tribal identity, including, *'Masculinities and Culture (Issues in Cultural & Media Studies)'*, by John Beynon (Beynon 2001), *'Imperialism and Gender: Constructions of Masculinity'* by Christopher Gittings (Gittings 1996), Shiels's *'Rawhide comes out of the closet'* (Shiels 2002), Geffner's festival report, wherein Welsh director Sara Sugarman defined herself as a 'Gay filmmaker', entitled, *'If they only knew: Gay Directors & Teen Comedy'* (Geffner 2004), and finally, Vito Russo's watershed apology of the tenants of Queer cinema, entitled, *'The Celluloid Closet: Homosexuality in the Movies'*, which led to the film, *The Celluloid Closet* (1996) (Russo 1981).

National Identity

More general discourses of identity, focusing upon the collective or national, grow out of and are informed by our research into individual identity, listed above. Through the

course of our analysis and film readings, we reference many sources on this topic, since in many ways, and on many levels, the concept of the national in Wales is debated and contested. These sources include *'Rethinking Nationalism'* by Couture, Nielsen and Seymour (Couture, Nielsen et al. 1996), *'Theorizing Nationalism'* edited by Day and Thompson (Day and Thompson 2004), *'Nation, Identity and Social Theory, Perspectives from Wales'* by Fevre and Thompson (Fevre and Thompson 1999), *'The Necessary Nation'* by Gregory Jusdanis (Jusdanis 2001), *'The God of Modernity: The Development of Nationalism in Modern Europe'* and *'Foundations of National Identity'* both books by Professor Josep Llobera (Llobera 1994; Llobera 2004), *'The Break-Up of Britain, Crisis and Neo-Nationalism'* by Nairn (Nairn 1977), *'Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism'*, by Benedict Anderson (Anderson 1991), David Dunkerley's *'Changing Europe: Identities, Nations and Citizens'* (Dunkerley 2002), Giddens's pivotal article entitled, *'The Future of the Nation State'*, presented to the Global Policy Forum entitled, *'States and Their Future'* (Giddens 2001), and finally, Seton-Watson's *'Unsatisfied Nationalisms'* article in the *'Journal of Contemporary History's'* *'Nationalism and Separatism'* issue (Seton-Watson 1971).

Celtic, Roman, Early Christian and Proto-Welsh History & Literature:

There is a proliferation of Welsh, proto-Welsh and Celtic ethnic and linguistic markers, names, place-names, and other indicators, along with a lengthy history of recycled Celtic legends, myths and fairytales, which circulate in modern Welsh society, and which are frequently called upon in contemporary literature, and which are later adapted to film, and in film and television programmes. At times the references are consciously made, with the intention to recall some heroic person, deity, saint, event, place, or other entity, which also has significance and meaning related to individual Welsh identity, tribal, religious and familial identity, and collective regional or national identity. At other times the

references are not purposeful, but occur in ways that suggest an unconscious signifier, or with the case of retrospective revisionist film readings, an ironic meaning. There are also countless references made in both Welsh and English which require a thorough knowledge of obscure cultural signifiers, many of which are based upon legends and folkloric sources, as well as Welsh poetic 'bardic' sources and from religious sources, especially from biographies, hymns and sermons from the three hundred year long Welsh Nonconformist 'Chapel' period, sometimes referred to as the 'Welsh Gothic' (Humphreys 1983: 14). The names, narratives, icons, characters and signifiers range from a period which begins in the Iron Age (Ross 1996: 9-11; Cunliffe 2001: 84-85), straddles Early Christian Roman (Insular British) culture (Chatwick and Cunliffe 1997), on through the Middle Ages, through the Early Modern period, into the modern and finally ending with the contemporary post-modern allusions to Mesolithic warriors, goddesses and cultic practices of the Druids and their Welsh heirs.

For example, Ceri Sherlock's character Branwen in the film *Branwen* (1994) makes statements and actions which are complicated and multilayered. The statements being made by Sherlock are relevant to modern Welsh politics, and they have wider implications for nationalism, racism, and religious prejudice. Simultaneously, there are multiple tiers of meaning attached to the names of characters and their activities in the film. The ability to perceive some of the intended or implied satire in Sherlock's film requires a broad knowledge of Celtic legends, along with Welsh political history. Branwen gets her name from a character in the Welsh Medieval tale called the *Y Mabinogi*, and Branwen is understood to be an incarnation of the warrior princess / goddess Rhiannon, who is considered one of three mythic female protectors of Britain. Rhiannon is derived from an Iron Age myth cycle, which is derived from both an Insular Celtic and continental Celtic cult which worshipped a Goddess named Epona, who frequently appeared and recurs in European myths as a long-haired, blond prophetess who

saves the nation, i.e., 'Lady Godiva' (Eluere 1993: 76). The symbol of the Bronze and Iron Age goddess Epona (almost always mounted on a horse, with an infant male child in arms), has mythic and narrative analogues with the Cult of the Virgin Mary (Brown 1981: 123), which influenced the Celtic Church, which in turn influenced the literary and artistic output of Wales for centuries (Rees 2003: 13-14). The support of the church and of the various courts of the Welsh Princes was so constant and reliable for so long, that for many centuries Wales was a net-producer and net-exporter of cultural product to Europe. By recycling stories from this period the film producers are making hidden statements about their filmic product (and their hopes for its commercial success, possibly beyond Wales).

This period of Wales being the net exporter of cultural artefacts, began in the Late Roman British period in the first to the third centuries, and the first exports included dramatic biographies called the *Vitae Sanctorum*, or the 'Lives of the Saints' (Chatwick and Cunliffe 1997: 135-137). Place-names of Welsh landmarks, which once held pagan names, and later held Saint's names, made their way into the poetry of Dylan Thomas and R.S. Thomas, (and single lines from these poems became iconic titles with concentrated semantic meaning, i.e., 'Do not go gently into the night'), and then the meanings (usually ironic) derived from those layered meanings were later used by BBC Wales and S4C and HTV for titles of radio programmes, dramas and films. It is impossible that the writers and producers could not have understood some of the many nationalistic overtones and meanings conferred by these coded messages, and it is likely that their audiences received them in this way, as well. Frequently these Saints' stories, exported from Wales and the other Insular Celtic regions, were Christianized and recycled tales, about pagan gods and other heroes. Branwen and Merlin and King Arthur all emerged from this period of Welsh literary history (for many centuries transmitted to Europe in written church Latin). From the earliest history of the pan-European Celtic peoples until the modern period,

narratives originating in Wales were transmitted abroad by missionaries, bards, wandering troubadours, Welsh Crusaders and others, throughout Europe and the Middle East. In turn these stories were augmented and altered and then made their way back into Wales.

The best-known example is the continental King Arthur cycles, which Geoffrey of Monmouth recycled and sent on their way, again. There are centuries of mutually informed legends and narrative meaning which travelled out of Wales and back into Welsh culture and literary sources. Sherlock is broadly educated, and when he makes a consciously nationalistic film named *Branwen*, he knows he can layer the film with both implicit and coded Welsh cultural meaning. Another brief example is the Paul Turner film named, *Llyn y Morwynion*, of *The Lake of the Maidens* (1983) (Berry 1994: 332). This Welsh legend, called '*Llyn y Fan Fach*', from the Black Mountains of Llandoverly and Merionethshire which morphed into the '*Lady of the Lake*' found in Arthurian stories, was retold by the '*Physicians of Myddfai*', and has explicit and coded nationalistic markers for Welsh speakers, and for those acquainted with the recycling of this Iron Age story about abducted tribal chieftain's daughters, shows itself to be an example of post-colonial cultural revisionism by its producer at S4C (Pughe and Williams 1861: 5). At first glance, it seems to be a re-telling by S4C of part of the Arthur tale, leaving out the parts added by French Medieval Troubadours. But the signifiers of this tale are loaded with coded meaning, which was later brought back into popular Welsh culture (of the eighteenth through the early twentieth centuries), through the euphoric evangelical and quasi-mystical metaphors used by Welsh chapel hymn-writers including Ann Griffiths, who Tony Conran has called, 'The greatest of Welsh, women poets' (Price 187: 15; Emyr 1987: 3).

To have the circumspection needed to interpret these symbols, we researched widely Celtic, proto-Welsh (Brythonic) and Welsh literature and history, and read widely regarding the transmission and sharing Welsh culture throughout written history and before. Our research included *'The Celts'* by Chatwick with a forward by Cunliffe (Chatwick and Cunliffe 1997), *'Facing the Ocean, The Atlantic and its Peoples 8000 BC -- AD 1500'* by Barry Cunliffe (Cunliffe 2001), *'Celtic Dawn, the dream of Celtic Unity'* by Ellis (Ellis 1993), *'The Celts, First Masters of Europe'* by Eleure (Eluere 1993), *'Pagan Celtic Britain, Studies in Iconography and Tradition'* by Ross (Ross 1996), *'The Cult of the Saints: Brown'* (Brown 1981), *'An essential guide to Celtic Sites and Their Saints'*, Rees (Rees 2003), Giraldus Cambrensis's *'Itinerarium Cambriae et Descriptio Cambriae'*, *'The Journey Through Wales' / 'The Description of Wales'* (Cambrensis 1978), Dr. W. Y. E. Wentz's *'The Fairy Faith in Celtic Countries'* (Wentz 1911), and many other books and related journal articles on Welsh history and culture, including finally, Pughe's partially translated *'Meddygon Myddfai' / 'The Physicians of Myddfai'* (Pughe and Williams 1861).

Structuralism, Post-Structuralism, New Historicism and Post-Colonialism:

This section contains an extended overview and brief analysis of the book *'Postcolonial Wales'*, edited by Jane Aaron and Chris Williams. Many other sources on the subject of post-colonial theory, structuralism and post-structuralism, new historicism, nihilism and post-modern theory, (as these critical approaches apply to filmic representations of national identity to Wales) are cited in this study. A couple of our study's chapters, including the two which focus upon a Welsh 'cinema of the grotesque', depend upon some of the key concepts of post-colonial theory, which we acquired from books and journal articles, including, *'Colonialism/Postcolonialism'* by Loomba (Loomba 1998), *'Post-Colonial Studies, The Key Concepts'* by Griffiths and Tiffin (Ashcroft, Griffiths et al. 2000), *'Post-colonialism Revisited: Writing Wales in English'* by Bohata (Bohata

2004), *'A Hundred Years of Fiction, Writing Wales in English'* by Knight, Ashcroft and Griffiths and others as editors of *'The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures'* (Ashcroft, Griffiths et al. 2002), Barry's *'Beginning Theory, 'An Introduction to literary and cultural theory'* (Barry 2002), Bhabha's famous *'Nation and Narration'*, Denzin's *'Images of Postmodern Society, Social theory and Contemporary Society'* (Denzin 1991), and to the extent that post-structural theory is incorporated into post-colonial theory, we read and cite Derrida's *'The Law of Genre'* (Derrida 1980), Lacan's *'Ecrits: The First Complete Edition in English'*, McLeod's *'Post-colonialism and Minority Culture'* (McLeod 2003), Nietzsche is *'Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy for the Future'* (Nietzsche 1998), and finally, Dai Smith's provocative and antagonistic article, *'Psycho-colonialism'* (Smith 2004).

According to recent research, can Wales be called, 'Post-colonial?'

Welsh historian Geraint H. Jenkins tells us,

Some historians have simply presumed that the political assimilation of Wales by England necessarily meant that the history of this 'internal colony' was no more than a tranquil and uneventful interlude between the rebellions of the fifteenth century and the epoch-making industrial revolution. (Morgan 2001: 74)

Describing Wales as an 'internal colony' of England during this or any period, or variously describing Wales as colony/former colony/neo-colony, etc. of England, raises the question as to whether postcolonial theory is applicable in the case of Wales, which is not without controversy. *'Postcolonial Wales'* is a collection of edited essays derived from a one day conference "exploring aspects of contemporary Welsh cultural & political life from 'Postcolonial' theoretical and critical perspectives" considered this question on 13 July 2002 at the University of Glamorgan, Wales, and the papers from this conference address the question in a recently published book, edited by Jane Aaron and Chris Williams.

Postcolonial theory has emerged as a pan-disciplinary movement which has the potential to refract history's cultural quandaries within a prism of both perceived and projected possibilities: irreverent and iconoclastic, postcolonial theorists thumb their noses at the 'old guard,' and like the overlooked innocent in Anderson's fable, blurt out the historically-ignored, but cloyingly-evident 'but the Emperor is not wearing any clothes.' Postcolonial theory has quickly won world wide academic credibility, and because of the nature of its underlying inclinations toward the qualities of 'expansiveness' and 'inclusiveness', it has been appropriated by many diverse and unrelated disciplines (often to the dismay of critical purists). Within the discussions of postcolonial theory, some of its assertions are historically provable, while others seem culled from an intuitive-hunch on behalf of a formerly-subjugated-group's-collective-conscious, and from folklore, urban legends, Jungian dreams, wives' tales, rumours, and so on. Postcolonial theorists (along with Feminism theorists) claim that history has too long been the purview of the powerful, i.e. a male-dominated elite, and that it is time that 'tales of the hearth' are *at least* considered in the marketplace of ideas. It is this employment of fuzzy storytelling about the *impossible-to-substantiate*, within postcolonial theory that bothers some historians because, while it has captivated the minds of the formerly-marginalized, offering the ability to recall and narrate to the ignored or erased identities of thousands of categories and classes of individuals, those disenfranchised by earlier systems, e.g., cultural, religious, and political, etc., the 'stuff' of its discourses, which occasionally seems to echo tones of *touchy-feely* pop psychology of the 1970s. Within Wales, some notable historians including Dai Smith (New Welsh Review, 2005) and Chris Williams (Aaron and Williams, 2005) seem to think that postcolonial theory lacks the methodology of earlier theoretical systems (which appeared reliable to them, because of some perceived, rigid accuracy), or as Smith facetiously coined it, 'psycho-colonialism' (Smith 2004: 61).

It is not surprising that Smith and Williams would take these positions for two reasons: First, one might picture postcolonial theory as a ruthless (metaphorical) turn-coat which points the finger at anyone who has *officially* told the story before, i.e., all historians, since postcolonial theory always suspects that tellers of history are somehow in league with the imperial powers of history. In other words, even those who tell a different story, if it is still the colonized (think gendered) story of *any* establishment, i.e., the patriarchy, it is really the story of Empire; as postcolonial writers might say, it remains *his*-‘imperial’ story and not *her*-story. (Gittings, 1996: 119) Consequently, application of postcolonial theory to Wales must seem like an ungrateful, revisionist attack on those Welsh historians who have already composed an independent narration for Wales, e.g., the proudly Industrial, left-leaning ‘junior partner’ in the ‘formerly expanding British empire’ (Aaron and Williams, 2005: 23), which goes beyond the British Imperial ‘party-line’, i.e., exceeding the confines of ‘England writ-large’. However respectful one can be for the constructs of these fine but evanescent Welsh historians, or what Jane Aaron has elsewhere described as the ‘last gasp of the voice of Old Labour’ (New Welsh Review, 2005: 45) it is, nevertheless, an attack upon them, as well.

Second, there’s a prevailing notion within postcolonial theory that individuals within nations long subjugated under colonialism, are inclined to develop coping mechanisms for co-existence with oppression. For example, it is posited that the male members of an emasculated, colonial society seem inclined to displace their anger about chronic deprivation of self-determination, since these individual males within the oppressed groups must still construct their personal and collective constructs of masculinity in order to have functional psychological/social existences. (Gittings, 1996: 7-8). Social scientists embracing postcolonial readings of these groups note that the choices for males under colonialism are limited (Loomba, 1998: 101; McLeod, 2000: 2).

In his discussion of the application of postcolonial theory to Wales, Williams chooses not to expand postcolonial theory for the benefit of a worldwide audience while using Wales as a case study. Instead, Williams makes every effort to discredit postcolonial theory. It is confusing as to why Williams rehashes arguments long ago settled within the methodology of postcolonial theory, especially when he seems to insist that there needs to be a linear historical prerequisite for the application of postcolonial theory to a nation. But Williams is not alone in this criticism of postcolonial theory, and other historians have echoed similar detractions. Williams limits his discussion to early inventors of postcolonial precepts, but does not include later scholarship (Loomba, 1998: 51-60; McLeod, 2000: 1; Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, 2000; Gittings, 1996: 7-8, 17). One might conclude that either Williams has a prior agenda, which is to discredit postcolonial theory, placing it in opposition to historicism; hence Williams's apology for dismissing postcolonial theory comes just short of name-calling, i.e., 'postcolonial gurus'. Williams' article is clearly written and makes some important points about post-imperialism, etc., but does not provide the most positive climate possible for what follows. Williams rightly names 'Utopian' his call for 'leaving behind Welsh-ness' in favour of some amorphous identity within a Welsh state of never-anything-more-than 'partial autonomy'. In fairness, Williams' sensitivity to overlooked issues of class and economics, etc. in Welsh society deserves a fuller airing, as Adamson has previously begun (Adamson, 1991:21-23, 1996: 18).

We must state here that we will later show a connection between the controversy of calling Wales 'post-colonial' and our intention to show parallels between the National cinema of Wales and 'Third cinema'. So our lengthy review will have applications in many areas of Welsh history and culture, which will become evident in our six chapters of film readings and comment. In our conclusion we will show how other postcolonial theorists have sustained a similar controversy in their respective countries, as discussed

by Teshome Gabriel as it applies to national cinemas, in general (Gabriel 1989: 52-64). When we begin to discuss the application of both gender studies and postcolonial studies to specific aesthetic groupings in Welsh filmic product, i.e., a Welsh 'cinema of the grotesque', we will refer back to the Welsh scholars (who contributed to this book, specifically editor Jane Aaron and Stephen Knight) who sustained the detractions and scorn of Dai Smith. Our references to Aaron and Knight will be essential to support our extrapolation from Welsh literary theory to Welsh film studies, the argument that a revisionist reading will see not only the 'socialist realism' cited by Dai Smith and others in Welsh fiction later adapted to film, but also the uncanny, the mutilated and other markers of a Welsh cultural or linguistic 'grotesquery'.

Postcolonial theory is anything but monolithic, but neither is it lacking in systematic and qualified scholarly consideration and construction as is implied in Williams's introductory chapter and in Dai Smith related articles. Perhaps the tension between historical studies and anthropological or cultural studies is really the crux of the antagonism engendered in Williams and Smith by *Postcolonial Wales*. Both anthropology and cultural studies privilege the folkloric and give consideration to 'unofficial histories' and to cultural 'memories', which seem at odds with the scientific and exacting discipline of serious historians. This tension between historians and other less exacting repositories of 'memories' and 'histories' (including psychology and sociology) does imply an opposition against the authority of history, a sometimes polarized conflict which emerges in representations of any history, in music, fiction or film (Gabriel 1989: 53). Film scholars might sometimes seem to be at odds with historians, when historians insist upon 'historical accuracy', while film studies privileges and considers representations of the collective and individual memory, and the way in which the cinematic apparatus and audiences further transform these representations, and why this transformation occurs. It may be that both sides of the controversy (about

applying the term 'postcolonial' to the history and culture of Wales), will eventually be proven right, but not before some new and more Welsh-appropriate descriptor is invented. For example, Wales clearly has attributes, which are comparable to the attributes of other post-colonial societies, including for instance, to its neighbour Ireland. But the historical trajectory of colonialism and post-colonialism is more clearly demarked in Ireland than in Wales, which is the primary reason for the objections of Smith and Williams. The moniker of 'post-colonial' does not quite fit Wales, as well as it does Ireland, so Williams and Smith point out the obvious breaches. But if something post-colonial did not apply to Wales in some way, why would so many scholars (across diverse disciplines), claim a Welsh resonance with non-Welsh qualifiers, i.e., Irish qualifiers, of the post-colonial? Indeed, why would the University of Glamorgan hold a conference called 'Postcolonial Wales', if there was not something to the entire clamour? Perhaps the official British history doesn't fit Wales, and perhaps in some ways, the revisionist Welsh history of Smith and Williams doesn't fit everyone in Wales, but perplexingly, post-colonial theory doesn't perfectly fit the experience of Wales, so perhaps Wales needs time to discern what really did happen to it, during six hundred complicated years of its relationship to England. Perhaps the historians will have to agree to be vexed, but polite for the time being, while Welsh artists and others sort out their reflections on the Welsh national experience. Smith's use of the term 'psycho' toward Aaron and Knight's scholarship is neither respectful nor polite, but should be an indicator as to just how charged this topic is to the various vested political and philosophical camps in the conflicted 'bundle of multicultural contradictions', called modern Wales.

Postcolonial Wales does not significantly expand the theoretical base of postcolonial theory. On the contrary, one of its editors is its theoretical antagonist. Neither do the contributors offer theoretical interpretations of modern Wales, which might augment critical concepts. Their articles employ terminology of the theory, but are effectively

more anecdotal, providing a rich wealth of evidence that Wales is indeed in some condition which is well-served by postcolonial theory. As I have described, Chris Williams delivers as anticipated, the essay '*Problematizing Wales*' but he spends so much time qualifying (or correctly, disqualifying) postcolonial theory. Williams might have used as a more academically pluralistic starting-off point, a succinct simplification of 'postcolonialism', for example:

Postcolonialism describes a critical practice dedicated to addressing the types of cultural marginalization propagated by imperialism. (Gittings 1996)

Richard Wyn Jones balances co-editor Chris Williams' assertions in his article where Jones tell us, 'What gives Wales its distinctiveness is, in many ways, the distinctiveness of England,' (Jones 2005). Compared to Williams (who envisions a 'post-national' Wales as preferable to postcolonial), Jones sees a 'national' Wales 'full of possibilities'. Jones's article challenges Williams' ending argument against Welsh nationalism by pointing out how present realities demonstrate at least a *de facto* Welsh national revival.

Perhaps the most readable essay in '*Postcolonial Wales*' is by Glenn Jordan, in his '*Reflections on Immigrants and Minorities in Wales.*' Jordan's 'collage' style is a post-modern 'intervention' approaching a *montage* of anecdotal storytelling blended with commentary about the 'invisible' Welsh, i.e., non-white minorities. Jordan gives voice to persons-of-colour excluded from what is typically deemed part of the historical record in Wales. His chapter flows with the structure of a documentary film, leaving space for the reader to bring their own conclusions (Jordan 2005). Robert Phillips' article considers education in a post-devolutionary context (Phillips 2005). He emphasizes 'why it is important to place distinctive Welsh experiences within the wider British, European, and world contexts' within the curricula, arguing for a post-devolutionary context, as well, and even for a 'border pedagogy.' Phillips report on education in Wales shows how some arenas of Welsh life are more fully devolved than others, as compared to later chapters by

Blandford and Barlow (Barlow 2005a; Blandford 2005b). For Alys Thomas, the debate turns on political science, with the concept of ‘post-colonial’ or ‘post-independence’ reckoning explicit meaning in this field, “The colonial state had the hybridity of ‘an alien executive instrument of a culturally different community.’” (Aaron and Williams 2005) Thomas’ discussion is refreshingly outward looking for Wales, maybe a reflection of a growing national self-confidence, not solely dependent upon comparisons to England for self-definition. Thomas’ comparisons to the ‘Quiet Revolution’ in Québec are especially insightful. Dylan Phillips makes the point in his article on the *Welsh Language in Wales*, that in Welsh-speaking circles, there has never been any debate: Wales and Welsh culture were and continue to be the subject of English conquest. Phillips sees Devolution as pivotal:

To many Welsh speakers in particular, therefore, the terms ‘post-devolution Wales’ and ‘postcolonial Wales’ are synonymous (Phillips 2005: 112).

In his book on *Imperialism and Gender: Constructions of Masculinities*, Christopher E. Gittings tells us,

Western European imperial projects were predicated on the dominant white patriarchal construction of difference to itself as inferiority. This type of alterity or othering is sexual, gendered, racial and cultural. (Gittings 1996: 7-8)

To follow Gittings’ logic, a reversal of the gendered prejudices of the imperial project might constitute a reasonable measure of decolonization. Paul Chaney offers a refreshing account of the political successes of the pro-devolution group ‘Women Say Yes’ in the structuring of the Welsh Assembly Government, and its implied decolonization (Chaney 2005). This might be the most internationally relevant article in the collection, because of its far-reaching relevance to feminist movements worldwide. While Chaney does not extend postcolonial theory with his article, he offers rich evidence of a Welsh postcolonial exception regarding the rights of women and the use of consensus (vs. the

traditionally *machismo*, winner-takes-all politics of ‘white men in grey suits’), which Chaney implies will attract international attention to Wales. Other than this action by the Welsh Assembly Government, the only other comparable example of a postcolonial government empowering by statute the formerly gender-marginalized might be when post-Apartheid South Africa placed equality for gays and lesbian in their new constitution.

Co-editor Williams decries some of the twentieth century Welsh writer Emyr Humphreys’ ideas as ‘bizarre’, and while Humphreys’ *The Taliesin Tradition* has its fanciful moments, its central theme is echoed and given concrete structure in co-editor Jane Aaron’s *Bardic Anti-colonialism*, recognizing the place in Welsh history, culture, and politics held by poetry, a distinction among world cultures which is, almost, if not unique (Aaron 2005). Stephen Knight’s article on *Welsh Fiction in English as Postcolonial Literature* is a brief distillation of his recent ground-breaking work, ‘*Writing Wales in English: A Hundred Years of Fiction.*’ (Knight 2004; Knight 2005) Knight’s careful reading of a century of Anglo-Welsh writing raises milestones which easily differentiate into ‘colonial’ ‘anti-colonial/industrial’ and ‘post-colonial.’¹ Film and Theatre scholar Steve Blandford discusses whether the hereunto non-devolved area of film can even be described as ‘postcolonial,’ which seems to assume that ‘postcolonial’ could be applied to other already devolved arenas in Welsh culture and politics:

In terms of institutions and public policy, neither film nor television in Wales is post-colonial to even the same limited degree as theatre might be said to be. Broadcasting in Wales remains under the direct control of the UK Department of Culture, Media and Sport. There has been talk of an Assembly-controlled Film Fund for Wales, but, for now, policy-making remains in London (Blandford 2005b: 178).

And if Blandford’s view is pragmatic but bleak, then David M. Barlow’s is bleaker still:

That the vast majority of the media in Wales – press, television and radio – is owned, controlled and accountable to bodies beyond its borders is indisputable. As a result of

such arrangements, it is not surprising to find doubts being raised about the media's ability to represent and fully reflect the nation's cultural diversity. The final articles by Dai Griffiths and Sarah Hill on *Music in Postcolonial Wales*, and by Iwan Bala, *Horizon Wales: Visual Art and the Postcolonial* raise interesting questions about the interplay of commercially-marketed art objects and entertainment products with globalization, and about Welsh branding, which will be of interest even to those not specifically interested in these fields (Bala 205). The article by Griffiths and Hill has pop culture appeal, and demonstrates how nationalism is realized simply by the invention of independent distribution labels not beholden to London or New York (Griffiths and Hill 2005). Bala's erudite discussion raises the question, 'Is there anything this acclaimed artist and 'renaissance man' does not do well?' Bala discusses the role of art in the decolonization of Wales, while asking the poignant question, 'Can Wales become post-provincial?'

Post-colonial Wales: other historical sources:

Kenneth O. Morgan tells us that,

A sense of nationality is as old as the Welsh themselves.' (Morgan, 1981: 110)

But John Edward Lloyd's early assessment of the Welsh, (whom Morgan quotes and calls 'the pioneer of . . . the writing of Welsh history', Morgan: 1981: 151) outlines the history of a nation (but not necessarily of a nationalism) forever altered by the invasion led by Edward I,

Edwardian conquest was a massive tragedy, an imperialist invasion of a small, vigorous, self-conscious nation . . . (Morgan, 1981: 87)

(Morgan's book is titled, '*Rebirth of a Nation*,' and in the chapter called, '*The National Revival*,' Morgan tells us how John Edward Lloyd was Wales' first historian, and a scholar who dedicated forty years of his life to his college at Bangor). Morgan explains how the writings of historians, poets, and scholars, with the aid of chapels, *eisteddfodau*, and popular publishing created an educated elite in Wales in the decades leading up to the

beginning of the twentieth century, which resulted in a sense of national consciousness, which eventually resulted in the establishment of Wales' first national institutions. Geraint H. Jenkins and Kenneth Morgan agree that for much of its history, Wales lacked national institutions. It was during this "National Revival" that the Welsh elevated the *Eisteddfod* to a level of national awareness, they developed a rationale for support of the Welsh language, and they established a national university, national library, and national museum, all typical hallmarks of a nation attempting to asserting its self-conscious nationhood. Morgan says that the momentum created by this 'National Revival' carries into the 1980s, and laid the foundation of the political movement, which resulted in the passing of the Devolution Act (Morgan 1981: 129-135).

There is a need for current Welsh scholars not only to engage in self-reflective discourses, but also to develop models for policy-making, which manifest the goals of this new national self-awareness. Most importantly, it is hoped that *y werin* or 'folks' in the once proud valleys, those laid-off masses left to linger in slums of Merthyr Tudfil, but lately deserted by the industries which permitted their brief complicity in the Imperial project, will not be overlooked. One has to believe that as these modern Welsh scholars in *Postcolonial Wales* take up the self-reflective debate about the Welsh nation, it might again foretell a true and enduring national revival, maybe beyond the success of the first.

Film, Narrative, Literature and Myth

In order to make some sense out of the myths and legends which recur in Welsh filmic products, we looked at a variety of opposing and complementary views, not only considering the presence of myth and mythicization of story, as myths and fairytales are adapted to film, but also looking at the visual process of mythicization, since cinema 'shows' rather than 'tells' a story. In American cinema studies, there is a large group of scholars who embrace many of the ideas of Joseph Campbell, and with such a large group

of supporters, there is naturally an opposing group of detractors. One can generally group the opposing sides into that which sympathizes with Campbell, and the other side, which is often identified with Roland Barthes. Our study takes somewhat of a *'via media'* in that it finds useful many of the analytic conclusions of the Campbell camp, along with many of their methods for constructing narratives, built upon the presence of archetypes. On the other hand, our study also privileges the views of opposing theorists, including Barthes and Jack Zipes, who find the use of archetypes to be an indicator of a classist, or sexist agenda within the storytelling scheme. Zipes's conclusions, based upon the writings of Roland Barthes, are insightful, as Zipes deconstructs fairytales as stories which have been mythicized for the purposes and conservative vision of the *bourgeoisie* (Zipes 1994: 6-7). Zipes is antagonistic to Campbell and Jung, and rejects the models which Campbell developed, related to the analysis of story and myth

whose theories about myths and collective unconscious overlook the specificity of real types of human beings, blur the dynamic interaction between sociogenetic and psychogenetic forces in the civilizing process, and encourage nostalgic longings for atavistic models of the past that never existed in the first place (Zipes 1994: 115,117).

Zipes's points about 'blurring' are interesting and might be true in a general sense, but Zipes seems to be rejecting the theories of Campbell in a 'wholesale' fashion, which does not seem very nuanced or considered, and which might be an over-reaction. Zipes discusses the transition of fairytales to myths, which he interprets *only* as the process of converting an oral folktale to a codified standard of the conservative social order. This seems to be a contextual argument, which overlooks some of the structural aspects of storytelling, which are economized and facilitated by the mythicization of fairytale. Seymour Chatman has an interesting theory about 'existents' and 'events', and about 'non-narrated' and 'covertly narrated' stories (Chatman 1978: 43,96,146,196), which could be argued to make a case, which has nothing to do with the process of hegemonic de-politicization, which Zipes observes, when fairytales are converted to myths. Zipes correctly differentiates between fairytales that are duplicated, and fairytales that are

revised, a differentiation, which is useful to our study, as we look at Welsh filmic representations of adapted or re-invented fairytales and myths. But cinema is a visual medium, which duplicates while it also revises, as discussed by De Lauretis (De Lauretis and Heath 1985: 7-8). There is some difference, though it might not be well-defined, in the way in which cinema uses and creates various forms of 'visual shorthand', and similarly, the way in which the film industry prefers and invents labels and tags which are distilled, concentrated and abbreviated signs of the total image or filmic entity. In other words, the use of archetypes as a labelling system for characters (who assume dominant and recurring narrative functions) might be more suitable for cinema than literary analysis. It seems that Zipes has confused or blurred Campbell's definition of archetypes with the concept of stereotypes, or that Zipes requires too much of Campbell's theories, at least more than this study requires. We see Zipes rejection of the Campbell camp as reactionary and not sufficiently nuanced, and prefer to sample the ideas of Campbell, which suit our study, and to temper our consideration of Campbell and Jung with Zipes's insightful but not universally applicable caveats. Zipes argues that the *only* result of converting fairytales to myths is to suit the purposes of the conservative social order, but Zipes's argument falters when we consider the revisionist production and reception of fairytales in cinema, which subvert the social order, and which have as their coded message a message of anti-hegemonic or subversively gendered or sexualized disruption of the hegemonic order. Zipes argument is especially weak when cinema conflates or inverts fairytale to create Horror genre characters, or to create the hyperbolic and exaggerated grotesques of filmic allegory and melodramas. Films are commonly labelled as both 'feminist' and 'myth', and 'fairytale', which would be antithetical and impossible within Zipes's presuppositions. Our study also notes that producers in Wales who have anti-hegemonic agendas frequently revise fairytales, which have passed into myth, in reaction to the perceived 'theft' of Disney or others, of the post-colonial nation's story-base, before the nation possessed the mass media facilities to produce their own films.

Consequently, the recalling of a national myth or tale, by the Welsh language broadcaster, for example, becomes an act of subversion by definition, whether it is duplicated or revised, simply because it is in the minority language, which subverts the will of the patriarchal. Zipes's conclusions do not adequately explain this use of fairytales, already converted to myth.

Our research has considered the works of Campbell and others, including '*A Short History of Myth*' by Armstrong (Armstrong 2005), and Wendy Doniger's '*The Implied Spider: Politics and Theology in Myth*' (Doniger 1999), which might also offend Zipes and Barthes, but does provide alternative approaches from Campbell's camp, nevertheless. In the Campbell camp, we read, '*Myths to Live By*' by Campbell (Campbell 1972), '*The Hero with a Thousand Faces*' also by Campbell (Campbell 1949), and Campbell's last book, '*The Inner Reaches of Outer Space: Metaphor as Myth and as Religion*' (Campbell 2002), '*The Writer's Journey*' by Vogler (Vogler 1999), '*Myth and the Movies: Discovering the Mythic Structure of Over 50 Unforgettable Films*' by Voytilla with a forward by Vogler (Voytilla and Vogler 1999). A nuanced synthesis of Campbell's ideas, with other theories of myth and narrative structure in film, is found in '*The Mythic Power of Film: The Impact of Cinema on Individuals and Culture*' by Melody Jackson (Jackson 2003), who is, an admitted prodigy of Campbell, but who finds visual and cinematic applications of Campbell's theories, which are not refuted or addressed by Zipe's literary and political arguments. To broaden our understanding of ffairytales, legend, fable, narrative and myth, we also read, Frye's '*Anatomy of Criticism*' (Frye 1957), Frye's '*Fables of Identity Studies in Poetic Mythology*' (Frye 1963), Frye's '*Spiritus Mundi*' (Frye 1977) and Frye's '*Mythologizing Canada: Essays on the Canadian Literary Imagination*' (Frye 1997), along with Marquand's article, '*France's arbiters of high art anoint Walt Disney's "genius"'*' (Marquand 2007), Zipes's '*Fairy Tale as Myth, Myth as Fairy Tale*' (Zipes 1994), and as we earlier mentioned, Seymour

Chatman's *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (Chatman 1978).

Grotesque Literature and Cinema of the Grotesque

The final area of our review lists the sources related to the concept of the literary and cinematic 'grotesque' and to the Welsh narrative 'grotesque'. Our arguments are formed and expanded along with our readings of Welsh filmic product, in the course of two chapters, and some of the sources, which we cite including, Anderson's iconic, *Winesburg, Ohio* (Anderson 1919), Bakhtin's *Rabelais and his World* (Bakhtin 1941), Beard's *The Problem of David Cronenberg for Film Studies in English Canada* (Beard 2002), Bergan's *Eunuchs in a Harem* (Bergan 2004), Collins's *Brazen Brides, Grotesque Daughters, Treacherous Mothers: Women's Funny Business in Australian Cinema from Sweetie to Holy Smoke* (Collins 2002), Foucault's *Madness and Civilization* (Foucault 2001), Harpham's *The Grotesque: First Principles* (Harpham 1976), Hsu's *Post-Nationalism and the Cinematic Apparatus in Minghella's Adaptation of The English Patient* (Hsu 2003), Hugo's *Cromwell* (Hugo 1827), *The Fool's Revenge and Lucretia Borgia: Two Short Plays* also by Hugo (Hugo 2001), Lowenstein's *Shocking Representation: Trauma, National Cinema and Modern Horror Film* (Lowenstein 2005), Presdee's *Cultural Criminology and the Carnival of Crime: Popular Ascendancy of the Anti-Hero* (Presdee 2001), Rowe's book review of Lowenstein's *Shocking Representation: Historical Trauma, National Cinema, and the Modern Horror Film* (Rowe 2006), Mary Russo's *The Female Grotesque: risk, excess, and modernity* (Russo 1994), Sloniowski's *Las Hurdes and the Political Efficacy of the Grotesque*, Tay's *Constructing a Feminist Cinematic Genealogy: The Gothic Woman's Film Beyond Psychoanalysis* (Tay 2004), and finally, Thomson's definitive book on the aesthetic category, *The Grotesque* (Thomson 1972).

Chapter 3: Outsider Images of Wales

(That is, 'Outsiders' who came to Wales to tell their story or to tell a Welsh story)

Albert Moran and Tom O'Regan both remind us that a national cinema is 'not only the films produced', but also the strategies in place to produce, evaluate, institutionalize, promote, distribute and exhibit these films, as well as being the industry which does the producing and usually, the audience which does the primary consuming of this filmic product (Moran 1996: 1; O'Regan 1996: 34). Therefore it is necessary in this initial chapter, to outline the historical, political, cultural, and economic particulars, which shape a national cinema for Wales, before introducing the first films to be studied. Also, the films to be considered in this chapter are being grouped into a category of Welsh filmmaking, which is termed, 'Outsiders' who came to Wales to tell their story or to tell a Welsh story.' The ensuing historical outline will show that a historic, systemic inertia discouraged and continues to discourage film production in Wales, as cited by Steve Blandford in the book, *Wales on Screen* (Blandford 2000: 19). Some of the central causes and nature of this inertia will be described. The causes of the inertia are so daunting to past and present producers that an 'external solution' has been preferred in a sizable percentage of all films which get produced in Wales. This 'external solution' is referred to here as the role of 'Outsiders' in Welsh film production, and the levels of influence said 'Outsiders' might have had upon the selection or synthesis of the stories told in Welsh films. This chapter will therefore focus upon the necessary, catalytic and vitalizing impact of 'Outsiders' upon the national cinema of Wales.

Accordingly, the stories told by 'Outsiders' about Wales and the Welsh in these films, and the way in which they have been told, have variously been popular or not very popular with the Welsh (Ffrancon-Jenkins 2003: 15; Woodward 2006: 1). One of the reasons these stories, told by 'Outsiders' are domestically dissatisfying, is that they fail to

get cultural details, large and small, correct. John Ford's *How Green Was My Valley* (Ford 1941) is the film most often cited, as having this fault. Another reason is that they fail to connect on a conscious or emotional level. The reason for this could be that they improperly employ mythical archetypes, or take place in local venues of symbolic national or mythical significance, not understood or realized by the 'Outsider.' Graeme Turner introduces the idea that nations possess myth systems, that is, a national *mythos*, which serve 'social functions', as well (Turner 1988: 84). That is why one other use of the term 'Outsider' in this discussion will include filmmakers who appropriated Welsh stories and told them with little or no participation of the Welsh, not even as a mere 'location with costumed walk-on actors'(Gazetas 2000: 134). This usage will cross over into the later discussion of Welsh national cinema as a 'European cinema', since the practice referred to here usually involved the appropriation of fairy tales by Hollywood, most famously by Walt Disney (Zipes 1994: 72; Marquand 2007: 1). These stories then went through a process of 'Disney-fication' that sometimes rendered them unrecognizable to the nation of origin (Baran and Davis 2000: vi-v). For better or worse, these animated and live features came to be married to conceptions of Wales. And subsequently the Welsh, like other European nations, have had to live with this caricaturing of their culture and literary heritage (Wentz 1911: 19; Zipes 1994: 10-11). This cultural misunderstanding, coupled with the grumbling about 'not getting details correct', has established a deep dissatisfaction among the Welsh with films made about them, but not by them. This is one of the reasons that a cinema of opposition has arisen, which claims to have thrown off the 'old Wales' and 'dead-end' cultural icons, stereotypes and other arguments, but in fact might also project or represent an identity implied by an inverted focus of this intended opposition (Smith 1984: 46-47; Blandford 2000: 13). This chapter will show that 'Outsiders' might have a survival ken coupled with a commercial sensibility, which enables Welsh 'Outsiders' to embrace, rather than react in opposition to these externally perpetuated stereotypes and caricatures, as an act of

market or career savvy (especially in the cases of the late Dylan Thomas, and Welsh directors Christopher Monger and Sara Sugarman).

Therefore ‘Outsider’¹ as a descriptor in this study, might further reveal, the extent to which a national cinema of Wales is informed by the transnational audiovisual industry’s flow of stories and ideas, and is therefore multicultural (Baran and Davis 2000: 25). Some of this multiculturalism will be introduced by natives of Wales and Britain who are perceived for specific reason to be ‘Outsiders’, including screenwriter/actor/director Emlyn Williams (Berry 1994: 199-212) and more recently, actor/director Sara Sugarman or director Stephen Bayly. Additionally, multiculturalism will be cited as a result of the mutually-informing nature, of the cultural exchange of themes, genres, characters, icons, and narrative structures, of an intra-national exchange mostly manifested between Hollywood and individual national cinemas, and in this case, that of Wales with Hollywood (and to a lesser extent, of Wales with other national cinemas). There is another use of the term ‘Outsider’ mentioned by both Berry and Blandford, which refers to the Welshman who finds themselves ‘*othered*’ within circumstances wherein they had expected to be included (Berry 1994: 201; Blandford 2007: 92).²

When a small nation like Wales cannot directly control the ‘what’ and ‘way’ of stories told about itself in film, the experience is frustrating and offers, at best, a muted national ‘satisfaction’ (Seton-Watson 1971: 1). National cinemas tend to develop an inherently contradictory set of impulses, to first participate in the trans-national dialectic prescribed

¹ It needs to be noted in advance that this discussion, which employs specific ideas about who might be called ‘Outsider’, does not do so to the exclusion of other conceptualizations, which will be useful both in this chapter, and in other related chapters. In fact, it is intended that the moniker ‘Outsider’ be understood as elastic and flexible and mutable.

² Most of the instances mentioned by both Berry and Blandford, refer to filmic moments when Welshmen have attempted what they perceived to be the *rite de passage* for social acceptability in British society, i.e., education, wealth or military service, only to discover that they were still marginalized. Because this usually happens when the Welshman ‘goes abroad,’ this usage will be discussed in another chapter.

by the American-dominated system of filmic storytelling, with all its informed conventions, and secondly to distinguish themselves with films which challenge these international conventions, while privileging filmic depictions of social constructs which are considered to be 'national' (Turner 1988: 23; Gittings 2002: 118). But the social constructs that get selected are problematic, and might seem to be a distraction from our central discussion, as Moran explains

A second conceptual problem with the term 'national cinema' concerns the socially constructed nature of the nation. As, for example, recent historical investigation of the social history of British broadcasting has demonstrated, the 'nation' is an imagined community that attempts to supersede loyalties to other communities such as those based upon class, region or gender and thereby marginalizes and displaces identities based upon those other sources (Moran 1996: 9-10)

Moran warns us that this 'marginalizing' and 'displacing' of identities not only threatens discourses of the 'national' in national cinema, (which might be mistaken for an essentialist or even racist form of nationalism)³ but also can be mistaken for a similar discourse which debates the so-called 'High/Low' culture dichotomy. In fact, as Moran explains, the term 'national cinema' is necessarily elastic enough to serve the purposes of all of these discussions

'National cinema' then is a slippery phrase whose meaning, in practice, will shift between various referents. And, acting as a semantic base, anchoring these various meanings of the phrase is the apparent reality of a domestic film industry (Moran 1996: 2-3).

Moran frames this extended usage of the term 'national' with the caveat that we should not make a fallacy of earlier 'cultural imperialism research' and merely believe that the

presence of a production sector in local culture industries is a necessary and sufficient condition for the cultural expression of a population. (Moran 1996: 5)

³ A related discussion, which employs an additional interpretation of 'Outsider' is the discussion of so-called, 'Black Wales' and the Black Welsh Film Festival, which will be discussed elsewhere in this study. Llwyd, A. and G. Jordan (2005). *Cymru Ddu / Black Wales: A History*. Cardiff, Hughes and Sons Publishers, Ltd.

But Moran's arguments would seem to support the present assertion that discussions which include the 'Outsiders' within (and without) a nation, are probably more realistic and thorough-going when analyzing a national cinema

As two scholars in the field of mass communications research pointed out over twenty years ago, the nation-state is characterized by a heterogeneity of subjects within its national boundaries (Moran 1996: 7).

Supportive of this same argument would be the discussions about a reflective rather than prescriptive view of national cinema and cultural diversity, and about internally-marginalized subcultures within Welsh literary traditions, enunciated recently in various studies, by Jane Aaron, Emyr Humphreys, Meic Stephens, Stephen Knight, Kirsti Bohata, and others (Humphreys 1983; Bohata 2004; Knight 2004; Aaron and Williams 2005; Knight 2005) and similarly within discussions of neglected social histories, as in the writings of Glenn Jordan and Charlotte Williams (Dunkerley and Thompson 1999: 68; Jordan 2005: 55). Moreover, Moran insists that confusion over the notion of 'national cinema,' which is instigated by these discussions, is actually the motivation to have such discourses

The authors in the collection are aware of the conceptual difficulties that surround the notion but they are similarly aware of the potential for the representation of national multiculturalism offered by a national cinema. As John Hill has suggested elsewhere, 'national cinema' is worth defending precisely because it is capable of registering the 'lived complexities' of 'national' life (Moran 1996: 11).

It is in this context, that this chapter considers a recurring phenomenon of so-called 'Outsiders' coming to Wales to either tell the story of Wales, to tell their own stories, or to somehow play a controlling role in the process of storytelling on screen, with films which this study has marked as 'Welsh.' So as a further point of clarification, the term 'Outsiders' will be understood to have broad and diverse meanings, some real, and others figurative. It will mean at certain times, someone who came to Wales and made a film, but had no other social or familial or cultural attachment to Wales, prior to the film. It will mean at other times, someone who was born or raised in Wales and then left Wales,

became famous and powerful elsewhere (usually in Hollywood or London) and then returned to Wales to make a film. It will also mean those who have been born or raised in Wales, but for various personal reasons, brought the perspective and influence of 'Outsider' to a film they subsequently made in Wales. The unifying principle shared by these variations on the theme of 'Outsiders' is that they were able to do something 'filmic' and 'Welsh', by virtue of their status as 'Outsiders', which might not otherwise have been possible to accomplish in Wales.

This chapter is therefore introducing a *de facto* mode of production, which relies upon an analogous dichotomy of storytelling in film, which is summarized by Seymour Chatman

I posit a *what* and a *way*. The *what* of narrative I call its 'story'; the *way* I call its 'discourse' (Chatman 1978: 86) [his italics].

Chatman goes on to describe what constitutes a 'story' and aspects of its discursive 'telling.' This chapter will posit as to 'what' might be generally called, a 'Welsh story,' and whose responsibility it is, to make this determination. This will be complicated and expanded with ideas about the 'way' in which these stories got told on film, and why. But before we can understand the 'what' and the 'way' of Welsh filmic storytelling, it is important to understand the historical context.

The history of Welsh filmmaking is not dissimilar to many other small nations. In fact, Wales compares quite favorably to other nations, contrary to popular perception within Wales (Court 2004: 15). Albert Moran reminds us that,

No cinema has escaped its force field and historically Hollywood has to a large extent defined the range of options for other cinemas in both economic and cultural terms. (Moran 1996: 7-8)

A summary of the circumstances surrounding Welsh filmmaking might follow this abbreviated time-line: During much of the history of cinema, Wales was unable to participate significantly (in terms of national market share) as a nation (Blandford 2005:

2; Blandford 2007: 101). The reason for this was Wales' relatively small size as a nation, impacted by its political and economic relationship to England, as a state-less and subordinate part of the British Empire/former British Empire and of its London-centered government (Nairn 1977: 35). While Wales has always possessed the resources of cheap, well-trained labor, coupled with a dynamic literary, theatrical and musical 'national culture of performance,' (an equation which is well-suited to supplying an indigenous film industry), Wales has never had control over sufficient capital needed to sustain an industry for the long-term. Not only has Wales been deprived of self-determination as a state-less, geographical-ethnicity or nation, but decision-making and control of the purse-strings for all forms of mass communication in Wales still remain subject to approval from London, with a few important exceptions (Barlow, Mitchell et al. 2005: 27). There was a 'mini-boom', as Dave Berry calls it, of films produced for television, which appeared in Wales in the early 1950s

The television era, which began in Wales in 1952/53, soon led to the demise of the B movies. By the sixties many of the cinemas themselves had disappeared. Nothing quite compensated for the shutdown of picture palaces (or the creative impoverishment of British films in a declining industry through the fifties) but there were a few obvious benefits in TV's arrival. Indigenous drama, plays written by the Welsh for the Welsh, at last reached the screen (Berry 1994: 115).

So, while Wales did not initially have a chance to tell her own story on cinema screens, the advent of television opened the door to both new expressions of Welsh-ness and Welsh nationalism. Very quickly, having the newly invented 'status symbol' of an indigenous television broadcaster, along with the cultural and political autonomy it implied, became a priority for many small nations, in the 1950s, including Wales

TWW (Television Wales and West) with studios at Pontcanna, Cardiff, had a mere eight hours of programming for Wales each week (some in Welsh) when it went on air in 1958, though this had increased to 11 or 12 hours by the mid-sixties (Berry 1994: 237).

Indeed, as television stations became more ubiquitous, having a local broadcast station was seen as a political vehicle and possession, a new type of 'national institution.'

Accordingly, the politics of Welsh nationalism and language preservation became mixed up with the expansion of Welsh media

The language lobby had grown increasingly vociferous after a TV conference in Cardiff in 1959 created the momentum leading to the launch in 1962 of a short-lived Welsh-language channel, *Teledu Cymru* (Wales, West and North), based in purpose-built studios at Western Avenue, Cardiff (Berry 1994: 238).

For the purposes of this chapter, the final portion of the timeline can be summarized with the noting of several key events: In 1970, a Welsh Film Board was established, the first of several ensuing governmental or quasi-governmental agencies to assert a new self-confidence in national production of filmic material. This is followed in 1974 by First Welsh Arts Council Film sub-committee being formed – which leads to creation of WAC Film panel (1975-6). The next pivotal event, was creation of *Sianel Pedwar Cymru* (or S4C – the Welsh Fourth Channel), launched after a dramatic ‘fast to the death’ hunger-strike threat by *Plaid Cymru* leader Gwynfor Evans. Once S4C was established and had worked out its relationship to HTV and BBC Wales, a 1982-92 Wales independent film production company mini-boom occurred. Because the discourses surrounding expansion of an audiovisual industry in Wales were intertwined with arguments of national identity and language, the most-recent ‘mini-boom’, was plagued by the simmering subterfuge of ‘culture wars’, mostly divided along ‘linguistic’ lines (Blandford 2000: 13).

Margaret Dickinson summarizes the struggle of Independent producers

Independents in Wales were divided between those for whom Welsh films meant Welsh-speaking films and those who worked only, or primarily, in English. The former initially looked for support to the Welsh Film Board, set up in 1970, and in the 80s to S4C, and by 1987 there were two Welsh-language workshops (Dickinson 1999: 1).

The eventual ‘winner’ of this struggle, at least in financial terms or the number of films made, was the Welsh or *Cymraeg* side, rather than the Anglo-Welsh faction. This is because the creation of S4C created a reliable channel of film funding, privileged by a Welsh language remit, while a parallel channel of funding for Anglo-Welsh production was not clearly supported by any legislative action. This in turn is an important

development for the theme of this chapter, since this linguistic bias has played a role in which stories were chosen as ‘Welsh’ stories, solely upon their perceived cultural ‘authenticity’, that is, having been written in Welsh. Suffice it to say, this postcolonial linguistic ‘divide’ often dissipated whatever effectiveness might have been realized from an industry not divided by the politics of a language debate (Aaron and Williams 2005: 150). Some cooperation did occur, and in 1992 the Welsh TV and Film Archive was permanently established at Aberystwyth, although not without typically postcolonial, ‘typically Welsh’ (Hannan 1999: 85), internecine acrimony, regarding the location. Steve Blandford offers a lengthier discussion of the role of S4C

In terms of the establishment of a genuinely separate and distinctive national screen culture, Wales’s situation within the UK is unique, principally because of the remarkable story of S4C (Sianel Pedwar Cymru) (Blandford 2007: 89).

Blandford discusses the implications of controversies, which accompanied the establishment of S4C, primarily wrapped up with the language debate. Blandford discusses a brief period during which Welsh films (mostly made by director Karl Francis) were produced for the British Channel Four Films (although to some extent, Channel Four Films would constitute an ‘Outsider’).⁴ But regarding the contribution of S4C to Welsh cinema, Blandford concludes

On the whole, though, S4C’s contribution to the development of a contemporary film culture in Wales has not been anywhere near as sustained as the ‘moment’ of 1986 briefly suggested. With one or two exceptions its investment in feature film production has tended to concentrate on films set in the past, often with literary sources and, ironically, in the period since devolution itself, its contribution to feature film production and its relationship to the new nation has tended to be small (Blandford 2007: 90).

Some of the reasons why S4C tended to use literary adaptations are mentioned in this chapter, in the parts that examine the role of the television commissioning editors, which examine the lack of self-confidence in postcolonial cinemas, and which examine the influence of ‘Outsiders’ on story selection. Blandford’s characterization of the

⁴ These films have been left out of this timeline, since they have already been discussed Berry 1997: 375-389.

circumstances regarding S4C's role in the development or suppression of a sustainable national cinema industry and film culture for Wales is accurate. As it pertains to this chapter, it must also be remembered that Blandford is basing his conclusion about S4C's 'contribution', upon what films qualified as 'features', a descriptor which this study expanded upon in the first chapter, as it rejects the traditional usages of 'feature film' and 'made for television film' as unfair to discussions of 'national cinemas' especially within formerly subordinated nations, (including Wales), which might be considered 'postcolonial.'

A 'national' Welsh Film Agency called *Sgrîn Cymru* Wales came into being in 1997, with the stated purpose to 'formulate a strategic vision for the development of the economic and cultural aspects of film, television and new media in Wales'. *Sgrîn* closed in 2006 to be followed by another agency, this time called 'The Film Agency for Wales'. These key events as listed here, point to general realities about the national cinema of Wales:

- 1) That it was chronically under-funded (Berry 1994: 34);
- 2) That it relied upon the impetus of television production and program broadcasts to overcome the economic, political and cultural impediments to film production in Wales (Davies 1994: 78; Hill and McLoone 1996: 196-197; Hannan and Davies 2003: 11; Dafydd 2005: 17);
- 3) That this encouraged the indigenous Welsh film industry to organize in a way which could be termed mostly 'Independent', that is, not studio-centric, in the Classic Hollywood sense (Goldman 1996: 111; Merritt 2000: 59; Bordwell and Thompson 2001: 29-30), with a close relationship between several monopolizing broadcasters and a select group of pre-approved independent producers (Berry 1994: 334; Blandford 2007: 90);

- 4) That the audiovisual industries within Wales existed for many decades in a benign state, and then eventually came under the 'intrigue' of politicized discourses regarding national identity and language, resulting in the usual support and/or interference in the production, funding and exhibition schemes by governmental and quasi-governmental agencies in Wales (Morgan 1981: 210; Williams 1997: 19; Blandford 2005: 4-5).

Moran's discussion of 'national cinemas' in general, reminds us that the Welsh national cinema, with its marriage to television production, has been following an industry trajectory, which both satisfies the market and cultural objectives of the ever-expanding U.S. 'national cinema' and, of America's appetite to co-opt and subordinate colonized 'client' markets, with a two-sector industry division (public/private), which is always formed in opposition to and in complement to the Hollywood-dominant hegemony

The state has historically been intimately involved in television broadcasting and although the 1980s and the 1990s have seen the emergence of private, commercial television in many parts of world where hitherto there was only direct state control or public-service broadcasting, nevertheless the state continues to play an important role in the audio-visual industries. In other words, the public/private structure of national film industries seems well nigh universal (Moran 1996: 4).

A small number of significant films did get produced in Wales after 1992, and several were acknowledged with Oscar nominations and other industry and festival awards. But in general, a malaise took hold of film production in Britain in the 1990s and early 2000s, which was also realized (if not more acutely) in Wales and other disadvantaged regions of the U.K. (Harvey and Dickinson 2003: 1-2). Film production in other parts of Britain adapted to the market conditions and found new ways to forge ahead. But instead of adapting, Wales was caught, at this time, in the continuing Welsh vs. Anglo-Welsh controversy, which Blandford's research describes. One good thing that did emerge: this market weakness allowed the independent producers (who survived bankruptcy, personal problems related to chronic unemployment, or economic displacement, whichever came first), to rally their collective influence in a coalition that in 2002 and onward, began to

leverage more effective self-determination for the fate of the independent producers and their products. *Teledwyr Annibynnol Cymru* or simply ‘TAC’ was formed as the trade association for Welsh Independent Producers, and by July of 2002 was representing about ninety members, mostly centered in greater Cardiff (South Wales) and Caerarvon (North Wales), both boasting locations of studios for BBC Wales.⁵ The Welsh film Agency *Sgrîn Cymru* Wales, had varied success during its tenure in the late 1990s and early 21st century, but was dissolved in a wave of governmental re-structuring in Wales, which was concurrent with the new powers realized or re-assigned by a nascent Welsh Assembly Government (WAG). It is important here to observe that, just as TAC realized a major victory for Welsh producers, their (production development, funding and exhibition) support agency *Sgrîn* became redundant, a demise which was partly related to a political event, popularly termed, the ‘bonfire of the *quangos*’ (Hannan 2002: 78). A new ‘Film Agency for Wales’ was quickly re-composed, with the remit to promote (mostly traditional and soon-to-be obsolete) analogue/celluloid film production, simultaneous with announcements by the British Communications directive body OFCOM, that the transition to ‘a fully digital Britain was imminent’.⁶

‘Outsiders’ implies a global context. To place the chronic problems of funding and producing Welsh films into a global context, we need to remember that the financial state and cultural success of almost every national cinema (excepting Hollywood and India’s

⁵ The primary activity of TAC was to address a legal conundrum, wherein, because most Welsh films had been produced with money from broadcasters, these broadcasters retained ownership of replication and distribution/exhibition rights to the individual films. The broadcasters, in most instances, had neither remit nor motivation, nor funds to promote this archive of Welsh films, once they had satisfied their broadcast contracts in Britain. TAC successfully lobbied for most of these rights to be restored to the original producer or directors.

⁶ So ironically, a simplified version of this brief history for Welsh national cinema could pessimistically be titled, ‘too little, too late’ since, just as Wales readied itself to be a devolved democracy, European nation-states raced toward hemispheric federalism, and just as Wales readied itself for producing indigenous celluloid reels, the entire world went digital, and just as TAC secured the first hint of self-determined existence for the Welsh producers, by acquiring for the first time as a body of producers, full exhibition rights to their own films, the majority of Hollywood studios and the BBC concurrently announced plans to sell fully-replicate-able DVD downloads of their entire film libraries through purpose-designed and freely-distributed peer-to-peer server software arrangements BBC-News-Online (2006). BBC vows to reinvent web services, BBC/NewsOnline.

'*Bollywood*') is problematic. It requires an enormous amount of financial support and industrial cooperation to produce a film (in comparison to almost any other art-form or industry). Consequently, it is remarkable that the films of most nations (outside of Hollywood and India) get made. The struggle is always against the overtly or implicitly recognized hegemonic stranglehold, which the national cinema of the United States wields, as a type of worldwide industrial and cultural suzerainty, or against the national cinemas of Hollywood's cinematic producer 'client states.' In the article, '*Australian Cinema as a National Cinema*', Tom O'Regan succinctly confirms this, while providing a nearly complete outline of criteria describing a national cinema

Like all national cinemas, the Australian cinema contends with Hollywood dominance, it is simultaneously a local and international form, it is a producer of festival cinema, it has a significant relation with the nation and the state, and it is constitutionally fuzzy. National cinemas are simultaneously an aesthetic and production movement, a critical technology, a civic project of state, an industrial strategy and an international project formed in response to the dominant international cinemas (particularly but not exclusively Hollywood cinema). Australian cinema is formed as a relation to Hollywood and other national cinemas (Williams 2002: 89-136).

In the context of industrial strategies, national cinemas are at once both domestic and international projects. Generally speaking, the producers of filmic material for national cinemas depend upon the support of their domestic marketplace.⁷ O'Regan, explains this

While most national cinema producers face difficulties in their home market, this same domestic box-office is generally crucial to all national cinemas (even Hollywood relied upon 45 percent to 75 percent of its revenues from its domestic market) (Williams 2002: 134).

The ways in which this dependence occurs in Wales, and indeed, how it might play itself out in any national cinema, are the simple mathematics of industrial pragmatism: Any

⁷ In the case of Wales, the domestic cinema's box-office ownership, content and revenue, are overwhelmingly controlled by American and European corporate entities. Contribution to the cinema screens in Wales by Welsh producers, or even British producers, for that matter, is sporadic and miniscule or non-existent. As discussed earlier, one must consider the total filmic output of all Welsh producers, including the lion's share produced for television, if there is going to be a body of material sufficient for study. In the context of a domestic market for Wales (and for reasons already mentioned, this study focuses upon films made prior to the 1960s only as a point of comparison), that is, a market constituting all filmic material produced within Wales, there is a dependence upon the Welsh domestic film & television market, a dependence which O'Regan has told us is typical of all national cinemas, including Hollywood.

single, regional market can only sustain its base of industry tradesmen and other essential production workers (that is, those possessing the necessary skill-sets to produce filmic material for screen or television), by a dependence upon the so-called '*bread-and-butter*' work projects constantly required by their respective domestic market. In simple terms, almost all specialists attached to a national cinema, must sustain themselves and their careers with work not directly related to the 'aesthetic and production movement' (O'Regan 1996: 45) of their national cinema, usually with parallel vocations in the local film and television market. And this industrial condition of the domestic side of national cinemas is not limited to the actors, cameramen and others. Because the domestic producers, which in the case of Wales, Britain, and most of Europe, are overwhelmingly television producers (Dale 1997: 27-31), and because these television producers are 'in the loop' of production, of industry contacts, of distribution contacts, and most importantly, of reliable excess cash-flow (derived from established state funding, license fees, and advertising revenues), the commissioning editors of regional and national television drama departments wield enormous influence upon what films get made in Wales.

The preceding discussion has briefly outlined the industrial conditions of national cinemas and the historic particulars of a national cinema in Wales. These particulars have a causal relationship to what constitutes a 'Welsh' story. This was not meant to be a complete survey of filmmaking in Wales, but rather an attempt to frame a historical perspective and context in which to discuss selected 'Outsider' films. In the period leading up to the advent of television, the decision as to what constituted a 'Welsh' story would have to be made almost entirely by 'Outsider' parties, since little or no significant feature film production projects originated in Wales. After television arrived in Wales, the involvement of producers with broadcasters almost always became unavoidable. For example, as we have noted above in the case of Wales, from about 1952 onward (Berry

1994: 332), it is the influence of the nation's television drama department's commissioning editors upon the funding process that usually determines which films will get made in Wales. It is at this point that the determination of what constitutes a 'Welsh' story is probably made. Commissioning editors know their local markets, and they fund films, which they eventually plan to exhibit in that same market.

There is a related case to be made, that the national cinemas of smaller nations tend to support essentially 'independent film' industries. In other words, a corral of 'Indie' producers receive approval to submit a pre-agreed upon slate of films each year to the commissioning editors, and their likelihood of being funded is enhanced by the enduring relationship of the pre-approved producer, to the broadcaster. This industrial arrangement (which has the insidious side-effect of bringing into question the commercial viability of any subsidized industry) is not significantly different from the relationship which American 'Indie' producers play in recent though varying industrial organizations of Hollywood, although the risks to the regular producers within the Welsh national cinema are reduced by production grants and commissioning guarantees, and reliable disbursements of pre-production 'development' funding, which is unheard of in the U.S. industry (Merritt 2000: 12). Albert Moran indicates that the condition of a national cinema in Wales, as just described, is typical

So far as national cinemas are concerned, the early pattern, evident from the time of the First World War onwards, was for American dominance of local distribution and exhibition leading to a situation where the local production industry languished, facing the possibility of complete extinction (Moran 1996: 1).

Regarding the industrial arrangement which prevails in Wales (as part of the United Kingdom), and throughout most of Europe (Elsaesser 1989: 132; Dale 1997: 54), is some controversy surrounding the objectivity of the commissioning editors and their associates, since the editors have a primary obligation to satisfy the tastes and appetites of their

domestic market, while being pressured by outside influences to win the coveted ‘Oscar’ or its local equivalent. Because of the pervasive influence of the Hollywood system upon all other national cinemas, (effectively ‘vassal’ enterprises to Hollywood, if we follow O’Regan’s implied metaphors of historic geopolitics to cinema), there is always some hope (whether stated, acknowledged or denied) that the films commissioned, even for the domestic market, will lead to recognition and approval from the guardians of industry standards, namely the award-granting bodies, which in the case of Wales, include BAFTA Cymru, BAFTA, The Celtic Film and Television Awards, on up to the Academy Awards, themselves. Film production criteria in Wales has been multi-layered and complicated by issues of political remit related to language, since the early 1960s (Berry 1994: 412; Davies 1994: 113; Blandford 2000: 21-22). Additionally, when you add the bilingual question to the production paradigm in Wales, a labyrinthine matrix of program funding is strung together in ways, which might actually be uniquely ‘Welsh,’ wherein, for example, the BBC produces Welsh language programs which are to be screened on S4C, or prior to S4C there was a similar relationship between BBC Wales and HTV, etc. Therefore, criteria to get a film produced in Wales can be described as complicated and a ‘steep climb’; in a ‘perfect world’, a Welsh film will have to:

- 1) Get past the monopolizing triumvirate (BBC/S4C/ITV) of broadcasting ‘monoliths’ commissioning editors, who screen films for purposes and appetites of their domestic markets. The demographics for each of the three broadcasters is defined differently, and is inherently contradictory, at times (for example, S4C must appeal to Welsh-speaking rural viewers who range from being ultra-liberal to conservative, with trends tending toward the religious and elderly, while simultaneously attracting a Welsh-speaking urban sector which is secular, middle-class, younger, and liberal to moderate).
- 2) Have some chance of improving the ‘career standing’ of the commissioning editors and their associates, by achieving at least a local BAFTA *Cymru* award,

etc. (this might seem cynical, but nevertheless, it is a likely and plausible prerequisite in many bids).

- 3) With minimal funding, maintain or exceed high production values established by the publicly-funded BBC, which is respected worldwide as setting standards for film and television production, or exceeding norms established by North American Film and broadcast qualities boards, i.e., Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the FCC, NTSC.

Within the contexts of these conflicting remits, agents within the production and funding apparatus of these regional/national drama departments serve as ‘gatekeepers’ for the larger trans-national cinema industry. To further complicate the ‘stew,’ national cinemas might be said to suffer from a chronic lack of self-confidence (Gittings 2002: 91). There is a simultaneous pressure to consider how a program produced for domestic consumption-only might play in the international market, should the commissioning editors ‘get lucky’ with the particular project in question. The commissioning editor might ask first, within the context of available funding, how will this proposed film serve the domestic market – will it satisfy only a uniquely domestic aesthetic, and/or will it also have regional or international appeal? In Wales, possibly because of its postcolonial status, or as Steve Blandford would assert, its lack of ‘post-colonial’ status (Blandford 2005b: 177-214), at least in film and television, this condition (of lacking self-confidence) is intensified: this erstwhile and devolving small nation displays endemic self-doubt, similar to other ‘Settler’ nations, or postcolonial peoples, including Australia, Canada and Ireland (Hill, McLoone et al. 1994: 126-127; O’Regan 1996: 19; Gittings 2002: 25).

And so, for the sake of contextualizing the historical development of Welsh cinema, this primary emphasis has been upon the interplay of cinema with the domestic, or ‘internal.’

Philip Schlesinger defines the scope of national cinema

Film studies’ concern with the role of cinema in the nation is inherently internalist. Its central concern is with how – if at all – the production, circulation, and consumption of the moving image, is constitutive of the national collectivity. However, this internalism is necessarily tempered by an awareness of exteriority as a shaping force. Indeed, it is precisely the extra-territorial cultural pressure of Hollywood’s production, imported into the national space, that sets up the contemporary issue of national cinema. This outside challenge to ideas of the national is at once interpreted as cultural, economic, and political as well as ideological (Schlesinger 2000: 35).

Within the climate this ‘internalist’ struggle as it manifests itself in the national cinema of Wales, we can recapitulate the point from which we launched this historical outline, with four important generalizations:

- 1) Getting a film made in Wales is difficult, complicated, and unlikely;
- 2) Various ‘gatekeepers’ of the production system, as it exists, will consider criteria at once domestic and international, when deciding whether to ‘green-light’ a film.
- 3) Films made in Wales are likely to have a ‘Welsh’ story, that is, made with themes, codes, symbols, and characters familiar to the Welsh, for the Welsh, by the Welsh.
- 4) Even when a story meets these criteria, there will persist a chronic second-guessing of the choices, and further steps are often taken by the ‘gatekeeper’ to banish the lingering doubt, which plagues their collective and individual consciousness. This ‘further step’ usually involves adapting an older literary source, or employing some iconic personality, a ‘star’ of both Welsh-ness and Hollywood, to preempt doubt and criticism, real and imagined.

Which leads to the point of this chapter, which is the role of so-called ‘Outsiders’ in the making of films in Wales. An ‘Outsider’ can satisfy each of the circumstances above:

- 1) An 'Outsider' can finance and drive the production of a film that would be otherwise caught and jammed, as it were, in the cogs of normal Welsh film production and funding machinery. The 'Outsider' must have star-power that will overcome many systemic obstacles to producing a film in Wales.
- 2) An 'Outsider' will bring the production 'packaging' needed to promote a film both domestically and internationally. 'Packaging' is both real and imagined value which overcomes the doubts and reticence of both investors, production participants, and audiences (Goldman 1996: 103).
- 3) An 'Outsider' will re-write, cast, and interpret a Welsh story according to the sensibilities of the 'Outsider', Hollywood, and maybe even Wales (Litwak 2002: 15; McLeod 2003: 1). If all else fails, the fact that an exalted 'Outsider' deigned to grace the frames of a film of a Welsh story should abate all after-anxiety. Just to be sure, against all other possible self-doubt, the 'Outsider' can elect to interpret a classic novel, poem, mythical character, or theme from the towering pantheon of Welsh literary or historical 'greats.'⁸ This is a ploy typical of postcolonial nations, who gradually gain self-confidence in one area (in the case of Wales, a recovered national literary tradition) and then share the 'insurance tokens' of literary credibility to shore up filmic credibility against all real and imagined, present and future critics (McLeod 2000: 56).

Welsh 'Outsider' filmic products:

The entire discussion to this point has been dominated by an examination of the conditions of film production in Wales, and a historic perspective on those conditions. It is been necessary to give some in-depth details about the complications of getting a film

⁸ The prevalence of literary adaptations in films commissioned by broadcasters are not only a safeguard against lapses in self-confidence, but a self-defence 'insurance policy' in the uniquely television rating mechanism, a competition which provides almost immediate feedback from the audiences. Adaptations are therefore assumed to bring an already established literary audience to the ratings game.

produced in Wales, that is, a film without 'outside help'. This is a usual 'set-up' used by scholars of other national cinemas (Elsaesser 1989: 131; Hayward 1993: 5-6; Gittings 2002: 118). O'Regan tells us that the circumstances we find in Wales are also typical, 'National cinemas are structurally marginal, fragile and dependent on outside help' (O'Regan 1996: 43). But now that we have established that it is difficult to make films in Wales, and consequently, it is inviting to accept an 'external solution', i.e., 'Outsiders,' it is also time to examine some of the films that we are referring to. The first film is mentioned, mostly because it is a story by François Truffaut that is unknown or ignored by the Welsh. It is about two Welsh girls who invite a Frenchman home to visit their Welsh coastal village and family, and it is called, *Les Deux Anglaises et Le Continent* (1971) and the film is commonly referred to as 'Two English Girls' in the American press. New York *Times* Movie Reviewer, Vincent Canby tells us that

The source material is "*Les Deux Anglaises et Le Continent*," the second novel by Henri-Pierre Roché, who didn't get around to writing his first until he was 74. That was "*Jules et Jim*," which Truffaut adapted into his finest film in 1961 (Canby 1972: 1).

Canby situates this film in the body of work from 'French New Wave' famous Truffaut

Among the great François Truffaut films, *Two English Girls* is likely the least known. Its story of a romantic triangle inevitably invites comparison to Truffaut's *Jules and Jim*, and not surprisingly, as both are based on novels by Henri-Pierre Roche (the only two novels Roche authored). Truffaut regular Jean-Pierre L aud is Claude, the Frenchman who on a turn-of-the-century trip to Wales with his mother meets the Brown sisters, Anne (Kika Markham) and Muriel (Stacey Tendeter) (Canby 1972: 1).

But film reviewer Canby, as is usual for American, French and English film scholars, acknowledges the film is set in Wales, but then immediately lapses into calling the Welshwomen, 'Englishwomen' as if the two are synonymous

The new film, like the earlier one, is set largely in an undefined past — that is, sometime in pre-World War I Paris, though the exact time is left fuzzy, as times usually are in fables. Instead of two young men, the victims (who are in great measure the mistresses of their fates) are two proper English girls, sisters, who share a profound attachment for the same young Frenchman (Canby 1972: 1).

A more correct French title might have been '*Deux Galloises et le continent*,' since Wales

'contributes' the setting, the title female characters, and since the Shakespearean *'Romeo and Juliet'*-like recalcitrance of the Welsh family toward the youthful Cymro-Gallic romance provides the plot's central complication. But original novel author Roche and director Truffaut treat the Welsh as some generic 'other' essential to their needs, solely based upon the exotic and foreign qualities of some nondescript 'British-ness.' The Welsh 'contribute' to the story their ethnic differences (as different from the Parisian French), but being brute and exotic foreigners, however well spoken they might be, they still don't deserve to be identified correctly. This treatment of the Welsh in similar English and European literature, or literature meant for consumption outside of Wales, is referred to as 'First Contact' literature by Stephen Knight in *'Welsh Writing in English, A Hundred Years of Fiction.'* According to Knight's definition, Truffaut's usage of the Welsh merely as narrative 'contributors' follows a long tradition of postcolonial exploitation of the Welsh for story ideas and characters in English novels and romances

This means more than a tale about boy-meets-girl and the aftermath. Romance is also romantic in the early nineteenth century sense, in that it privileges the feelings of individual characters in a stirring setting, a pattern that meshes easily with the individualist heroics of early capitalism (Knight 2004: 68).

Understanding this notion of 'First Contact' literature, as Knight describes its function in English and Anglo-Welsh and literature, might prove very helpful in assessing the filmic purposes of 'Outsiders' like Truffaut, who purport to tell a Welsh story or a story set in Wales. A narrative pattern quickly emerges, and we will see it recurring in almost all Welsh films made by 'Outsiders'

The poetry and prose of the Romantic period, from Wordsworth to Byron, are also heavily involved with an imaginative domination of new territory, though the thrust of the possession is personal rather than political. Those two possibilities of romantic appropriation are combined in the early 'land-taking' fictions of the American, Canadian and Australian settlements. They routinely condense the romance of a man and a woman, and the enriching of their romantic sensibilities, with the relocation of land into safe colonizing hands (Knight 2004: 69).

It might be useful to consider Wales as the first, primitive 'Wild West' in British literary

and filmic terms, for purposes of our discussion. Nineteenth century English scholar Matthew Arnold might have been the first to make famous this literary idea of taming the savage 'Celtic' in his cultural criticism, '*On the Study of Celtic Literature*' (Morgan 1981: 153). The Welsh setting and character can be beautiful and untamed, and its inhabitants must be wild, primitive, savage, and prime for colonization at the hands of civilized Frenchmen, Englishmen, and Americans. In this way, Wales as the narrative locus and shooting location for film stories, might serve purposes similar to the Far West in American Western genre films (Sklar 1975: 87), the Outback in Australian films (O'Regan 1996: 56), the Far Northern Territories, Yukon Klondike or impenetrably forested French Québec in Canadian films (Gittings 2002: 231), the Russian border or Laplander homelands in Nordic films (Soila, Widding et al. 1998: 6-7), the newly-commercially-exploitable, formerly Communist East in German films (Elsaesser 1989: 130) and so on. Christopher Gittings introduces this postcolonial phenomenon in Canadian filmmaking, describing a typical film wherein the

film suggests that when women are without men they are subject to rape. In the colonizing and settling of wild territory the challenges others present to white Anglo-Protestant authority must be pacified, therefore the Asian is murdered, the Inuit woman is transformed into a sex slave, the wild dog is tamed and the independent gun-wielding white woman is re-domesticated to produce more white settlers, thereby perpetuating the fictive whiteness of Canada (Gittings 2002: 39).

Truffaut might be sophisticated and modern in other films, but in *Deux Anglaises* we see a young Frenchman's fantasy of having two 'foreign' Welsh females fight over him (with all their latent sexuality to be conquered or rebuffed), and one of the lovesick Welsh sisters is so uncontrollably sexual that she finally admits to the flaw of being a chronic, serial 'masturbation-addict', which is only a minor smokescreen meant to distract us from the real narcissist, the colonizing young Frenchman. It is also important to note that the proper but 'primitive' Welshwomen have come to Mother France to be educated, i.e., civilized. So in this respect, Truffaut's film might be judged at one level, as just an extension of late twentieth century, French cultural post-World War II, post-imperialistic

malaise, which in this instance satisfies the Parisian *metropole*'s appetite for colonizing the distant exotic 'Celtic' *other*, but also gets a second nationalistic 'pay-back' by doubling this 'othering,' using a pair of so-called 'English' (England being the historic nemesis of French imperial masculinity), as lovesick supplicants to the 'fuzzy filmic,' Franco-phallic rehearsal of youthful *ennui* mixed with *machismo*.

Another recent 'Outsider' film, which is mostly forgotten in Wales, but is popular in America, is the coming of age tale, *Carrie's War* (2004). This story was first told as an adaptation of a novel to a television series in *Carrie's War* (1974). Both the film, and to a greater extent the series depicted wonderfully rich portrayals of Welsh mining village life during World War II. The protagonists are London children sent to live among the 'narrow-minded' chapel Welsh during the German air raids. Wales serves as a setting for the story, and so 'contributes' to a story meant for London's, and later Hollywood's consumption. The characters are stereotypically eccentric and 'primitive', with adherence to 'orthodoxies' of chapel Nonconformist dogma being the most pronounced marker of Welsh-ness, and therefore antagonism to the inherently 'civilized' qualities of the transplanted English children. The Welsh villagers are weird and wacky, which is typical of films made by 'Outsiders' about the Welsh. The Welsh shopkeeper, Mr. Evans, a 'Welsh Grottesque' character, is stern and stupid, but can be redeemed by showing compassion toward the English children. Needless to say, *Carrie's War* is satisfying to homesick Welshmen seeking a nostalgic travelogue, but unsatisfying to the Welshman seeking accurate reflections of Welsh-ness on the film. Consequently, Wales is again appropriated for her characters and settings, but not for a truly 'Welsh' story. *Carrie's War* was written to criteria of English, BBC Television drama editors in London and directed by Paul Stone, making it a mostly 'foreign' film about Wales, produced on Welsh soil. *Carrie's War* (2004) has later been re-packaged by PBS Films' 'Masterpiece

Theatre' in America, and has been stripped of its characteristics, thought to be too 'English' for more egalitarian American tastes. The stereotypes about the Welsh, however, remain.

Carrie's War (2004) compares with another recent production of a Welsh film made by Irish 'Outsider' director, Martin Duffy, who adapted the novel by Rhidian Brook, first called *The Testimony of Taliesin Jones* (2000). *Taliesin Jones* has a title, which conjures up fiercely nationalistic and intensely Welsh literary and historical ideas (related to the legendary sixth century, bard, 'warrior king' hero and military scribe 'Taliesin') (Humphreys 1983: 8), and so it is assumed that the title indicates strong, inherent markers of Welsh-ness within the film. The film is more satisfying in this respect, especially when compared to both productions of *Carrie's War*. Reasons for this might be that the novel's author was Welsh, the lead and supporting cast was Welsh (Jonathan Pryce and Matthew Rhys), and the film was directed by an Irishman whose prior significant film was an exploration of uniquely Irish religious identities in *St. Patrick: The Irish Legend* (2000). While *Taliesin Jones* is indeed, more modern, more authentically Welsh, and less stereotypical in its portrayal of Welsh village life, it does not tell a story which the Welsh themselves might recognize (especially a post-industrial, secular Wales) as uniquely 'Welsh'. Instead *Taliesin Jones* succeeds as another travelogue of a nostalgic Welsh summer in the life of a village boy who just happens to be Welsh. *Taliesin Jones* avoids pandering to stereotypes of both Welsh-ness and youth. This is his personal *Bildungsroman*, and the story is so 'universal,' that it was later stripped of its Welsh title, and renamed '*Small Wonders*' for DVD sales in America. Consequently, a film directed by an 'Outsider' and made by Welshmen is another example of Wales 'contributing' (in the postcolonial sense of 'contributing') to the hegemony of Hollywood, rather than telling her own story.

The next question raised here is whether this notion of ‘First contact’ literature, and its analogous (and similarly unsatisfying for the Welsh) occurrences in film, have been identified in prior writings about the national cinema of Wales. In her recent book, *Cyfaredd y Cysgodion - Delweddu Cymru a'i Phobl ar Ffilm, 1935 – 1951*, film scholar Gwenno Ffrancon Jenkins points to the ‘othering’ of the Welsh by director John Ford in the film *How Green was My Valley* (1941). Ford adapted an indigenous Welsh novel by author Richard Llewellyn, but directed and cast the script in such a way to create not a Welsh story, but an Irish story in a Welsh motif, what Berry has called ‘an Irish *Shangra-La*’ (Berry 1994: 17). Ffrancon Jenkins reflects this in her statement

mai ffilm am Gymru drwy lygaid a lleisiau Gwyddelig a gynhyrchwyd yn y diwedd . . . A dyma un o'i diffygion pennaf.

It is a film on Wales through the Irish eyes and voices and direction right to the end. (Ffrancon-Jenkins 2003: 18) [all Welsh to English translations by the author of this study, unless otherwise noted].

So in Ffrancon Jenkins’ opinion, Ford has rendered the Welsh as ‘contributors’ to his Irish fable, similarly to the ‘primitive’ but proper Welshwomen-known-as-Englishwomen in ‘Outsider’ Truffaut’s film, and she writes about ‘Outsider’ Ford’s characterization of the Welsh people

Y canlyniad yw ‘darluniau afreal’ o'r Cymry fel ‘simple, primitive people’.

Consequently it is an ‘unreal portrayal’ of the Welsh as ‘simple, primitive people.’ (Ffrancon-Jenkins 2003: 19)

Ford based his film upon Llewellyn’s novel. Llewellyn was a Welshman born into the London Welsh Diaspora, and he did sufficient ‘cultural tourism’ while visiting his grandfather in the South Wales mining community of *Gilfach-goch*, to base his novel on this village. So while Ford and Llewellyn are both ‘Outsiders’ to varying degrees, Llewellyn is an important type of ‘Insider’ who went away from Wales and became an ‘Outsider’ (as a scriptwriter for the American studio, MGM), which permitted him to peddle his narrative wares to the global, cinematic imperial powers in Hollywood, in this

case the iconic John Ford best known for his Hollywood Westerns (and whose ‘Irishness’ admittedly complicates this reading).

The Welsh ‘Insider’ who becomes an ‘Outsider’:

And so another pattern emerges here, where some form of ‘Insider’ Welshman goes abroad, usually to Hollywood, and comes back as the ‘Outsider’ financier or motivating agent or impetus behind production of a Welsh film. The next person to serve this role was Emlyn Williams and Dave Berry actually introduced this concept of a dual identity, with a chapter entitled, ‘Emlyn Williams: Insider/Outsider’ (Berry 1994: 199). Another great Welsh actor who made it to Hollywood, prior to Emlyn Williams and Richard Llewellyn, was Ifor Novello. Cardiff-born Novello was thought of as having ‘betrayed’ his Welshness when he re-trained his speaking voice for ‘talkies’ and ‘lost’ his Welsh accent (Stead 2002: 194-195). But unlike other Welshmen who began as ‘Insiders’ morphing into ‘Outsiders’, Novello is not famous for coming back to Wales to make a Welsh story. He is indirectly associated with the Welsh film *‘Valley of Song’* (1953), written and directed by another ‘Insider’ Welshman, Cliff Gordon, who went to Hollywood, became the ‘Outsider’ and then returned to produce a Welsh film. Novello only participated in the radio version of *Valley of Song*, but Peter Stead tells us

‘The evidence suggests that he [Novello] might have had a hand in the way this idea had originally emerged’ (Stead 2002: 195).

Emlyn Williams is ‘outstanding’ among our list of ‘Outsiders’ because he took this moniker to its absurd conclusion, in several ways. He started as a Welsh-speaking ‘Insider’ in the small village of *Pen-y-Ffordd, Mostyn*, Flintshire, in North Wales. Then he became the ‘Outsider’ when he excelled at ‘French, Latin, Greek and Italian’ and won a scholarship to Oxford. Then as an ‘Outsider’ at Oxford (being Nonconformist chapel Welshman among Anglican Englishmen) he became even more intensified as an ‘Outsider’ by neglecting his studies to become a Thespian, and then becoming an ultimate

'Outsider' by being gay — a series of rapid transformations, which temporarily took its toll on his provincially constructed, self-concept of masculinity

In his last term, 1926, a month before final exams, he suffered a nervous breakdown precipitated by an emotional friendship with another undergraduate (Williams 1973: 23).

Williams then becomes an 'Outsider' to academia by going on the London West End stage, followed by becoming the 'Brit abroad' on Broadway's 'Great White Way.' Williams then migrates to Hollywood, where he parleys his talents into Hollywood 'connections,' which allow him to produce his semi-autobiographical film, *The Corn is Green* (1945) starring Welsh-American screen star, Bette Davis. Williams held a pivotal role in the life and career of actor Richard Burton. Together they launched Burton's screen career, with a potentially nationalistic Welsh film, about a dowager who fights to prevent her Welsh village from being flooded as a reservoir, called, *The Last Days of Dolwyn* (1949). Williams later returns to London and to Wales, and convinces Hollywood's towering director, George Cukor to come to Wales to produce a television version of *The Corn is Green* (1979).

But we need to examine the nature of the film's story, which catapulted Williams' career, based on his play, *The Corn is Green*. With wiles of a young Welsh boy, raised in the mines, Morgan Evans has evident mental 'treasures' poking through the rough shell covering of his peasant miner's life. He submits to the civilizing process of learning to read and write English, encouraged by the English schoolteacher Miss Moffat, played by Katherine Hepburn. Moffat is the symbol of the imperial standard bearer, which 'knows better,' as she 'mines' and shapes Evans for his own good, his 'own good' being activities that are manifested when he conforms to the gentlemanly purposes of the British social and political hierarchy. Evans is orphaned, which is a metaphor for the impotence of Welsh culture to 'parent' imperial British 'adults'. Moffat is an enlightened pre-feminist character, someone who helps the bumbling Squire to see the 'investment' potential of

helping Evans be something other than a miner; in the same way that one might invest in a 'champion race horse'.

Morgan's Salvation from 'dangerously' pregnant Welshwomen:

Evans is not a 'man', i.e., Englishman, but instead one of those 'gibberish-speaking villagers', and therefore not fully human or adult, until he becomes a learned gentleman. Evans is almost seduced by demands of marital responsibility toward the sexually wayward Welsh girl Bessie Watty, who tricks Evans into sex on the eve of his departure to Oxford, and then threatens to sabotage his success with the surprise of a bastard child. Bessie and Morgan's bastard child is symbolic of the non-Englishness and therefore the 'non-white-ness' of the Welsh. This serves to reinforce all the other English and American stereotypes about the Welsh and similar 'dangerous, backwater' mountain people, as in *Deliverance* (1972), and one can draw cinematic similarities with Hollywood biopic genre films including Loretta Lynn's escape from Kentucky to the fame (and civilizing ways) of Nashville in *Coalminer's Daughter* (1980). Bessie Watty has all the immoral attributes which English officials falsely accused Welsh chapel women of having (made famous by the '*Betrayal of the Blue Books*' event) (Morgan 1981: 96). Fortunately for Morgan, he is 'saved' from the consequences of his more 'primitive' Welsh impulses, as Moffat bribes the promiscuous Welsh girl and adopts the young infant. All this symbolism points us to the Englishwoman, who has no choice but to impose her self upon ordinary Welsh life, and 'save' the day. There is a missionary quality about Moffat, which satisfies various imperial models of 'Settler' societies, also seen in Canada, pioneer America, and Australia. Gittings tell us

Those represented in the ethnographic film are meant to be seen as 'exotic' as people who until only too recently were categorized as Savage and Primitive, of an earlier evolutionary stage in the overall history of humankind: people without a history, without writing, without civilization, without technology, without archives (Gittings 2002: 143).

Moffat is rational and modern, contrasted with the noble-but-religious-extremism of Bessie's mother, Mrs. Watty, who displays moments of evangelical ecstasy through the film and finally joins the tambourine-brandishing Salvation Army. Moffat is the moderator of the 'wacky Welsh' extremes. So while Moffat seems to be asserting a feminist ideal, which is radical and liberating, she is also simultaneously satisfying the values of a male hierarchy. Gittings points out repeatedly, how this subtle but effective privileging of hierarchies of imperial 'whiteness' occurs in Canadian films,

By placing white first, I do not mean to privilege whiteness as a marker of Canadian nation, but rather to denaturalize it so that we can understand white representation of otherness (Gittings 2002: 43).

Gitting states how this is not be a 'privileging' of the whiteness itself, but rather a distinction which contrasts and reveals the implicit cultural and political ideals, that is the civilized, white, Anglicized and enlightened female-but-male-approved protagonist against the demonized, scorned and pitiable gritty grotto of the uncivilized 'Welsh grotesque', preferably in the form of an unwashed, unrepentant and 'dangerously' pregnant Welshwoman. Bessie Watty can move away to London and wear fancy clothes, but they only serve to emphasize her inherent inadequacies and animalistic attributes. With his constantly alternating status as 'Outsider'/'Insider', Emlyn Williams' sensibilities about Hollywood 'packaging' have matured a bit more, by the time he allows Cukor to recast sensible Hepburn in the role, created earlier by glamorous Bette Davis. Hepburn has already created the role of Moffat in the John Huston film *African Queen* (1951). In *African Queen* the benevolent missionary woman participates in a pure 'First contact' romance, with parallel love affairs and land acquisitions. But Cukor, the so-called 'Woman's Director'(Braudy and Cohen 1999: 23, 65), has made almost a dozen films with Hepburn by the time he directs *The Corn is Green*, and so (built upon audience assumptions regarding the 'star' personality of Hepburn) Moffat's 'missionary' character can be liberated by Williams and Cukor, to a tempered and still subordinate but thoroughly modern American (that is, reinvented British imperial) construction of

masculinities versus 'othered' femininities (Gittings 1996: 9-10; Beynon 2001: 11). Hepburn has more credibility than Bette Davis as a modern, postwar woman, even though there are inherent incongruities in her relationship to the Squire and to the peasant boy, Morgan. For example, Hepburn puts on the frilly hat to visit the Squire, which is more powerful with Hepburn than Davis; nevertheless, the point of Moffat's visit is reconciliation to the existing power structure, to the witless Squire. Hepburn as the 'packaging-bearing' star, has a reputation in films for being melodramatic, rich, eccentric, and wacky, while not really disturbing the social order of a male-dominated culturally/politically 'imperial' order, although we should note as one exception, Hepburn had already made the iconoclastic *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* (1967), but as Sklar notes

That was the point: improbability and incongruity were never allowed to disturb the social order but rather, to show how well it worked (Sklar 1975: 112).

It is interesting that Emlyn Williams begins his film career as 'Outsider' from Hollywood, creating a story *The Corn is Green* (1945), which is satisfying for the Welsh on some levels, at least when compared to Ford's '*How Green in My Valley*,' but is nonetheless a story which reinforces stereotypes about the Welsh and their relationship to imperial British constructs of identity (Gittings 2002: 46; Ffrancon-Jenkins 2003: 11). Then we see Williams launching the screen career of fellow Welshman Richard Burton with a much more purposefully nationalistic script in *The Last Days of Dolwyn* (1949). But Williams doesn't exploit this watershed opportunity, that is, to leverage his status as a well-connected to Hollywood 'Outsider' in order to tell a Welsh story, i.e., of the Welsh, for the Welsh, and by the Welsh, which Berry describes as a 'lost opportunity' (Berry 1994: 205) and Stead confirms

Emlyn was altogether too concerned with dark gothic atmosphere and with creating a romantic personal 'once upon a time' type of community to worry much about any real political issues. The flooding of a Welsh valley is treated melodramatically without any of the contemporary allusions which even the Ealing comedies managed to fit in (Stead 2002: 180).

Even with Williams' reticence to make a political statement, the implications of the film's plot, upon closer reading are powerful. Here we have Welshwomen, the despised imperial British *other*, rising up against the prevailing social order. Stead argues that *Dolwyn* actors Burton and Hugh Griffith both wanted Williams to seize the chance to make a film for Wales, but to no avail

One can almost sense Burton and Griffith, in particular, yearning for stronger material and for fuller opportunities (Stead 2002: 181).

The presupposition behind Stead's argument, is that Novello, Williams, Burton, Griffith and other Welshmen have gone abroad and succeeded, and therefore naturally crave the chance to return and to tell a truly 'Welsh' story. Indeed, the conclusion of Stead's book asserts that this might be a patriotic obligation of successfully returning, expatriate 'Outsiders.' Williams' participation in television films made in Wales from 1960 onward provides the nascent industry an official 'imprimatur' of both Welsh authenticity and a token presence to ward off uncertainties of matching Hollywood's 'high production values' (Bordwell and Thompson 2001: 27), that is, to banish endemic 'hobgoblins' of self-doubt, so typical of minority national cinemas. When compared to the risk-taking of 'Insider' BBC Wales director and producer, John Ormond, 'Insider/Outsider' Williams seems at times a tacit totem of 'Tinsel Town's' high production values in local television: Even when offered almost complete artistic license, Williams cannot abandon his preconceived constructions of both Welsh masculinities and femininities: his Welsh men are noble or dastardly, and his Welsh women are impulsive and impressionable. Ironically, later film marketers in the U.S. actually focused on the inherent nationalist and feminist in Williams' *The Last Days of Dolywn*, and renamed it *Women of Dolwyn*.

Dylan Thomas, Richard Burton and Anthony Hopkins as 'Outsiders':

While Berry can rightfully argue that Williams ‘lost’ an opportunity to exploit fully his status as an ‘Outsider,’ the ultimate squandering of talent and opportunity is reserved for Dylan Thomas, who in some part, is famous for being derelict. Thomas created poems and scripts that captured the world’s attention, and then self-destructed while abroad. Thomas not only created characters of a ‘Welsh Grotesque,’ he also died ignominiously, in order to always be remembered as one. This left those other successfully returning heroes, ‘Outsiders’ Richard Burton and Anthony Hopkins, wedged somewhere between the gothic obsessions mixed with political reticence of Williams, and the towering shadow of Thomas’ work. So both Burton and Hopkins opted to honour Thomas, firstly Burton with his *Under Milk Wood* (1971), also starring Elizabeth Taylor, and then Hopkins directed *Dylan Thomas: Return Journey* (1990). Numerous productions of Thomas’ works were made from his death, onward, culminating in films like *A Child's Christmas in Wales* (2005). Indeed, for returning Welsh ‘Outsiders,’ an artistic homage to Dylan Thomas became almost culturally obligatory, as we see with Williams’ *Oed yr Addewid* (2000) and Dave Berry’s HTV documentary *The Dream that Kicks* (1986), the titles, ‘Do not go gently’ and ‘The Dream that kicks’ both intentionally lifted from the famous Thomas poems. All of these films wrapped up in the characters and images created by Thomas, suggest a specific treatment of what this study calls the ‘Welsh Grotesque,’ examined in other chapters. But suffice it to say, Burton’s *Under Milk Wood* production could not resist the same Hollywood ‘packaging’ that drove the casting of Ford’s *How Green was my Valley*, where we endure the otherwise talented Peter O’Toole in the cartoon role of a grizzled Welsh sea captain. Burton, Taylor and O’Toole give fine performances within the narrative strictures of a script, based upon poems which were meant to be hyperbolic caricatures of Welsh village life. There is an element of truth to the ‘Welsh Grotesque,’ which can be satisfying to audiences, including domestic, since the concept of the ‘grotesque’ is built upon an absurd stretching of an evident truth in each personality, to expose its humanity (Thomson 1972: 5-7; Russo 1994: 13).

But domestic reactions (to the tendency to draw stale stereotypes from this filmic dabbling in the local literary ‘grotesques,’) can instigate a cinema of reaction, which is exactly what happened in 1990s Welsh cinema. Consequently, the body of work is acknowledged but ultimately ignored or rejected as ‘culturally obsolete.’ And in *Under Milk Wood*, the artistic strictures implied by adapting a collection of poems, binds the director to merely creating a series of collages, of either a quirky antiquarian or of a ‘postcard’ variety, instead of giving us a film which maximizes the full scope of cinema’s potential. One feels as if the scenes are constantly trying to keep pace with the highly ornamental language, and there are points where the clash of the visual ‘pageant’ with the Thomas’s poetry becomes unintelligible. Those ‘Outsiders’ contemporary to Thomas (Burton, Hopkins, Siân Phillips, Emlyn Williams) were understandably intimidated by the worldwide response to Thomas’s genius, and consequently couldn’t be expected to editorialize as aggressively as might be needed to produce a good cinematic adaptation of Thomas’s life or work. It is hoped that recent Welsh ‘Outsider’ director Marc Evans, having just ensured his Hollywood credentials with a film starring Sigourney Weaver, *Snowcake* (2006), will bring a more cinematically pleasing treatment to the biopic of Thomas’s wife in *Caitlin* (2007), which is currently in pre-production, with the added ‘star-power’ of ‘Outsider’ actor Pierce Brosnan of *James Bond 007: Everything or Nothing* (2003) fame. At least Evans has resisted the trend, and hired a Welsh actor, Michael Sheen, to portray Thomas. Irish actor Brosnan will play the Canadian-American literary critic John Malcolm Brinnin.⁹

Accordingly, contemporary Welsh ‘Outsiders,’ who followed Hopkins and Burton (up until the exception of Evans’ new film), similarly have not been able to resist the artistic

⁹ Bizarrely, the casting of Evans’s film *Caitlin* might be as good an indicator as any other that things are improving for Welsh filmmaking: Whereas previously, as with John Ford’s *How Green is My Valley*, we had an American director hiring Irishmen to portray Welshmen, now we have a Welsh director hiring an Irishman to portray an American.

conditions imposed upon them by their external financiers. *The Englishman Who Went Up a Hill and Came Down a Mountain* (1994) could be cited as a ‘case study,’ in how a returning Welsh celebrity ‘Outsider’ can create a film with a ‘Welsh’ story, while satisfying both international and domestic audiences, on several levels. Monger leveraged his success with his film *Waiting for the Light* (1990) starring Shirley MacLaine and Teri Garr, to bring on board Miramax as producer of *The Englishman*. But unlike Dylan Thomas’ scripts, poems and speeches (as invented by Emyln Williams, Burton, and Hopkins), which interpreted the ‘Welsh Grotesque’ as an filmic indigenizing of the national literary folk genre, in the tradition of American writers, i.e., Thornton Wilder’s ‘*Our Town*,’ William Faulkner’s, ‘*As I Lay Dying*,’ and Sherwood Anderson’s ‘*Winesburg, Ohio*,’ Monger indulges the indicators of the Welsh Grotesque, i.e., recurring characters with names like *Morgan the Goat*, etc., without allowing the caricatures to collapse the film’s narrative. Ford cast Irish actors as Welshmen, and Burton’s production of *Under Milk Wood* casts Peter O’Toole as Welsh, and Monger makes the same concession, but with better effect: Irish actors Tara Fitzgerald and Colm Meaney play the Welsh leads. Monger is savvy and satisfies the expectations of his Hollywood investors, while slipping in under the American hegemonic ‘radar’ a truly Welsh subplot. Monger’s overall story is not a significantly nationalistic affront to the prevailing social order, and seems, at least from the title, to focus on the change that takes place in the bumbling Englishman, played by Hugh Grant. And the elements of colonial ‘First Contact’ literature are still present in this Victorian-Edwardian romance, which includes an acquisition of Welsh ‘land’ symbolized by Tara Fitzgerald, whose character *Betty from Cardiff* represents the feminine earth, the fertile Cambria, awaiting her meaning, which will be derived from culminating an embrace with England, represented by Grant’s character. Indeed, the metaphor of Englishmen roaming the wild countryside and ‘measuring’ its hills is tantamount to colony ‘shopping’, and the meaning of the villagers’ resistance to this intrusion would not be lost on modern Welsh audiences. The villagers

are satisfyingly 'grotesque' according to American and British stereotypes, but the audiences inevitably 'roots' for the tattered Welsh mob, as the collective 'gwerin' village folk, of both chapel and tavern alike, unite in the bit of persistent 'peasant' mischief, which thwarts the technological superiority of the English. This fairy tale narrative device, of having the decent folk prevail is 'Disney-esque' of Monger, directing, as it were, under the commercially adept eye of Miramax's Harvey Weinstein. The English mapmakers are thwarted, but Monger cannot thwart the exploitation of Welsh land (and women) by wealthy or handsome London gentlemen, and so *The Englishman* does not aggressively seek to overturn the prevailing order of the British imperial power structure, and Monger adds a cinematic postscript which places the possibility of Welsh independence from external interference, in the distant future. And so Monger situates his narrative in the long tradition of European folk tales, as described at length by Zipes (Zipes 1994: 17-48), which have been rehearsed in European cinemas, where a romantic, 'grassroots' nationalism wins the day (Sorlin 1991: 31).¹⁰ There are also analogues in American culture, as it represents on film the clashes between modernity and the primitive, which was best parodied in the sitcom starring Eddie Albert and Eva Gabor called *Green Acres* (1965). This discussion is not intended to be conclusive, but rather a listing of the most important examples of 'Outsiders' coming to or returning to Wales to make a film. *Zulu* (1964) is an example of a British studio film with Welsh-born actor Stanley Baker starring in this military tale of 139 Welsh regiments last stand in South Africa. In some ways, *Zulu* fits our criteria for this discussion, but we will analyze it more in another chapter focusing on the construction of masculinities and their representation in Welsh films. *Zulu* may be the all-time, most successful and 'satisfying' film made by 'Outsiders' about the Welsh, in both international and domestic audiences (Shail 2002: 23).

¹⁰ Representations of nationalism within the cinema of the Welsh Grotesque will be discussed in another chapter, including the attributes of machismo, anti-intellectualism, and the pre-eminence of homespun 'common sense.'

Borders and Interlopers:

Finally, this chapter needs to touch upon several variations on the theme of 'Outsider' and their role in Welsh cinema: Bruce Chatwin was an enigmatic, bisexual English consort to British rock stars and aristocrats, who tragically died of AIDS in the early 1980s. Poignantly, Chatwin never acknowledged his illness, prior to his death, perhaps indicative of a more protracted struggle with his own sexuality. He is famous for the 'cultural tourism' aspect of his writing, since he visited Patagonia in South America, site of a famous Welsh colony *in diaspora*, and he visited the blended Anglo-Welsh communities in the Marches border country along the English and Welsh borders, after which he wrote two novels. His novel on the borders, *On the Black Hill* (Chatwin 1982) was produced by 'Insider' Welsh director John Ormond and directed by Cardiff-born Andrew Grieve as a BBC special event film, *On the Black Hill* (1987). So beguiling and convincing was the chameleon-like narrative voice of Chatwin within his novels, that even though he was the 'Outsider,' his story was remarkably 'Welsh' in its perspective and scope. *On the Black Hill* is firstly a metaphorical *Bildungsroman* for Chatwin, whose unresolved sexual ambiguity is symbolized by the Anglo-Welsh twins; one is heterosexual, the other homosexual. The tension of the internal conflict (in Chatwin's own personality) is projected and intensified in the twins as they internalize and manifest the dichotomies of their parent's natures: Anglican/Chapel, Rural/Town, Well-travelled/Provincial, Educated/Anti-intellectual, Rational/Religious fanaticism, and so on. *On the Black Hill* explored conflicting Welsh and British constructions of masculinity, elements of the Welsh Grotesque, gender roles and a treasure trove of familial psychodramas in one film, while always holding out questions regarding the ambiguous, dual identity of Welshmen as both 'Welsh' and 'British.' *On the Black Hill* satisfies all of the external funding and cultural stereotype expectations, and then turns them on their heads. In this respect, *On the Black Hill* may be one of the most 'European' of Welsh films (Elsaesser 1989: 17;

Sorlin 1991: 21). Two other fairly successful Welsh films, which qualify for the 'Outsider' status, with characteristics similar to *On the Black Hill*, are *Solomon and Gaenor* (1999) and *Very Annie Mary* (2001). The director of Oscar-nominated *Solomon and Gaenor*, Paul Morrison is a Jewish-descended Englishman who went to great lengths to ensure the historical accuracy of his story. *Solomon and Gaenor* was produced internally in Wales, but in interviews Morrison admits bringing to his film the perspective of someone made an 'Outsider' by virtue of his own family's experience as culturally marginalized British Jews. Nevertheless, Morrison succeeds with *Solomon and Gaenor*, and the film received national accolades as well as domestic acceptance.

Sara Sugarman is a Welsh born 'Outsider' with celebrity status in Hollywood, who is returning this year with another Welsh actor 'Outsider', Catherine Zeta Jones. Jones, Sugarman and Jones's gay brother David Jones will produce a new film, which explores Welsh identity through the eyes of a gay rugby player, entitled *Coming Out* (2007). Zeta Jones qualifies as a returning 'Outsider' since she is, along with her famous husband Mike Douglas, one-half of arguably the most popular couple in Hollywood today, and David A. Jones qualifies for both his Hollywood credentials and for his homosexuality. Sara Sugarman is usually hailed as a recently successful 'Insider,' a product of the contemporary Welsh media culture, but like David Jones, she is also dual-qualified, or better, triple-qualified as an 'Outsider.' BBC News writes (of Sugarman) that

A film director has swapped the Hollywood hills to return home to the seaside town of Rhyl (BBC-News 2005: 1).

This is realized in her film *Very Annie Mary*, which has been tagged 'the Welsh and female version of' *Billy Eliot* (2000). The film was marketed to the Welsh domestic market, with a local preview in Cardiff attracting a packed house. Disappointed attendees of the event told of the 'deadly silence' that came over the audience as the credits ran at the end. Apparently, the Welsh audience was expecting an 'Insider' story with 'Outsider'

production values, set in a *picturesque* Welsh village in rural Wales, a place loosely based upon Sugarman's birthplace in Rhyl, Denbighshire, North Wales. Sugarman's treatment of the usually exaggerated 'gwerin' characters, typical of the Welsh Grotesque, is over the top, so that the villagers can only be described as 'crazy capers' of those 'weird and wacky Welsh!' This is clearly the sensibility of a social 'Outsider.' Sugarman's qualifications as an 'Outsider' returning to Wales, begin with her Hollywood credentials, secondly with being of Jewish descent, and thirdly as an openly gay, 'Out' director (Geffner 2004: 1-2). *Very Annie Mary* is a personal *Bildungsroman* for Sugarman, hence the pall of silence over an audience (as described to us by audience members who request to remain anonymous) anticipating some vague, existential vindication of the perennial Welsh rural/town antagonisms. Sugarman sets up a 'Disney-esque' fictive place 'somewhere between Europe and America' where the hyperbolic caricatures of her cartoon-like Welsh village life can play out her Americanized fable. The film actually ends with a Welsh cottage re-made into a suburban, American Dream homestead, replete with white picket fence, an implausible, architectural, fairy tale *faux pas* in the land of obstinately grey stone pasture walls! This is Sugarman's career-driven love letter to the ghost of Walt Disney (and presumably to the personnel department of Viacom)

Yet Disney's concept, forged on a farm in Missouri and in Kansas City, is finally one of the decency of ordinary people striving to surmount difficulties, much as he did. It is a vision, the French note, that has traveled all over the world - most recently to Asia in the form of a Hong Kong Disney (Marquand 2007: 1).

All of the villagers over twenty-one years old (it is a teenager drama) are larger-than-life, which is a suitable processing of Annie's reaction to her whimsically named hometown of *Ogw* and its funky cast of eccentrics, which one comes to expect in typical literary scenarios of the Welsh Grotesque. She is a motherless daughter of a bakery owner who fancies himself the reincarnation of Italian operatic tenor, Pavarotti. The Italian identity is code for Jewish, that lingering image in this cinematic rear-view mirror of life which Sugarman implies, similar to the integrated-yet-isolated Welsh-Yiddish perspective of a

'*Jew in the Mirror*' described by Dannie Abse (Davies 2002: 257). Annie, herself, can only be read as a lesbian on the edge of a nervous break down. She suffers through *milquetoast* kisses from the hunky Welsh farm boy she rebuffs, and then finds solace sleeping with her father and with her terminally ill girlfriend, symbols hinting of a sexually-fractured, Freudian place, which the film doesn't have time to visit. Wales merely 'contributes' to Sugarman's story, and once the bothersome female source of her joy and affection has melodramatically passed away, she can render an aria from *La Scala* in a final build-up to the dream-like ending of a perfect life envisioned, not too unlike the saccharine sweet '*Somewhere that's green*' and '*Suddenly Seymour*' songs in *Little Shop of Horrors* (1986), directed by Frank Oz. It is no small wonder that this giggling *raison-d'être* apology of the misfit, lesbian, post-pubescent Jewess-in-a-Welsh-Wonderland, didn't resonate domestically (except with fifteen year old Welsh girls). As a teenage comedy genre film director, Sugarman excels, and of course, American audiences loved it! — Which then helped launch Sugarman's career abroad with Disney Studios, and which will allow her to return now as a conquering heroine, 'Outsider.' Having got *Very Annie Mary* off her chest, it will be interesting to see what recollected images of strange juxtapositions a Sugarman/Zeta Jones/David A. Jones team will render. *Coming Out* (2007), currently in pre-production, with its irreverent mixing of iconic, Welsh nationalistic, macho rugby icons and gay-friendly heroes is overwhelmingly an 'Outsider' film in Wales, since this most improbable narrative mix might have made it across a daring drama editor's desk at BBC Wales or S4C, but getting the international investment from London's financiers likely would have floundered. Basically, Zeta Jones can make any film she pleases.

To wrap up this examination of variations in the 'Outsider' theme, it is important to give an example of how, if a traditional Welsh story is repeatedly mishandled by 'Outsiders,' it then becomes necessary for the postcolonial nation to 'recover' control of their own

narration (Bhabha 1990: 101). The Arthurian literary cycles most likely originate in Wales, with Geoffrey of Monmouth being the first (albeit in Latin) to articulate in prose (Ford 1977: 11), particles of legends shrouded in the quasi-religious texts of the medieval Welsh myths, *Y Mabinogi* (Matthews 2002). The contemporary socio-political importance of these legends and their ownership by a current Welsh populace is actively witnessed in cultural trivia, that is, in the enduring choice of both famous and obscure Celtic baby names, lifted directly from the pages of Arthur and Merlin tales — Where else but modern Wales does a mother willingly name her son ‘*Myrddin*’ or her daughter ‘*Mathonwy*’? (Pryce and Hume 1986: 53) Walt Disney roamed Europe in 1935 and appropriated the folk tales which were already established from the canons of ‘fairy tale as institution’ including those of Wales (Zipes 1994: 140-141). Dr. Grahame Davies produced a documentary for the BBC in the 1990s, which tracked the activities of Disney, and showed that Disney returned to Wales in the 1950s, to produce a travelogue of Wales. Whether Disney was cognizant of the political impact of his use of traditional nationalistic symbols and fables cannot be doubted, since in his travelogue Disney captured rare footage of a nationalistic play written and performed by Saunders Lewis, the founder of Plaid Cymru (Davies 1994: 43; Hannan and Davies 2003: 21). Disney is only today being recognized for his genius, as a culturally imperial ‘master appropriator’ of these ancient stories, which he then filtered through his famous Disney animation machine to create tales, which by contemporary audiences, are attributed to him as ‘author’

Americans may be unaware that Disney - unable to enlist in World War I because he was only 16 - joined the Red Cross and was sent overseas, arriving after the armistice. He spent a year in France soaking up the culture. He and his wife, Lillian, returned in 1935, and brought back some 350 books of illustrations - romantic castles, royal ceremonies, woodland sprites, evil witches, anthropomorphized animals (Marquand 2007: 1).

Disney adapted the *Mabinogi* tales of King Arthur and Merlin, by acquiring the rights to Lloyd Alexander’s book, ‘*The Black Cauldron*’ (Alexander 2004), which resulted in the

film *The Black Cauldron* (1985). This rendering of the *Mabinogian* by Disney the ‘Outsider’ clearly did not ‘satisfy’ a budding, Welsh, nationalistic (albeit contested) self-concept, and the reaction was decisive: S4C-TV immediately invested heavily in their rendering of an original script for the animated feature *Otherworld* (2003), which remains a flagship production in their international film portfolio. This recycling of medieval heroics for purposes of Welsh nationalism, rather than inventing new symbols of nationalism, seems to support the thesis of Josep R. Llobera

The idea that nationalism is invented, so dear to Hobsbawm, Gellner and other contemporary observers, is patently untrue. Modern nationalisms are recreations of medieval realities; in fact, they can only be successful if they are rooted in the medieval past, even if the links with it may often be tortuous and twisted (Llobera 1994: 85-86).

S4C was not always so self-confident. With their initial feature productions, the first series, *Joni Jones* (1982) adapted from beloved ‘coming of age’ stories *Gwarded y Gwirion*, by Welsh novelist R. Garallt Jones, and the next two features, *And Pigs May Fly* (1984) and *Coming Up Roses* (1986), were produced by Stephen Bayly (Blandford 2007: 99), an American ‘Outsider’ director with ‘Hollywood’ credentials through his connections with Ridley Scott in London. *Joni Jones* was acquired by mogul Harvey Weinstein at Miramax and re-released as a full-length feature. Hollywood is clearly ‘*Six Degrees of Separation* (1993)’ hegemonic (to the point of being necessarily incestuous (Sklar 1975: 127; Goldman 1996: 23), even in the evolving histories of national cinemas, and that is true as well in Wales. The mutually informed, cultural exchange between Hollywood ‘Outsiders and localized, domestic, post-industrial, post-modern audiences was lovingly mocked in Bayly’s “left-field, quirky, ‘Ealing Studios-derivative comedy” (Berry 1994: 9, 12, 321), *Coming Up Roses*, a point that Pierre Sorlin emphasizes when he tires to explain why Italy, with its otherwise resiliently ‘enduring culture’ (White 2000: 9) sacrificed its formerly prestigious, indigenous film industry to produce Clint Eastwood’s spaghetti Westerns (Sorlin 1996: 11), a point that was memorialized cinematically a couple years later in Guiseppe Tornatore’s, *Nuovo cinema Paradiso*

(1988). Bayly's film, co-produced by his Welsh partner Linda James, 'satisfied' a domestic sensibility, the sensibility of an audience which to some degree, still does not understand to what extent it is informed by a long interaction with Hollywood. *Coming Up Roses* deftly deals with an underlying discussion of economic politics in post-Thatcher Britain, while also weaving, for the benefit of less domestic, less-political global audiences, a 'First contact' romance. *Coming Up Roses* is prescient of the insight attributed to Tornatore's '*Nuovo cinema Paradiso*' regarding a universal reckoning by indigenous populations outside of North America – whose myth systems and historic, indigenous legends have been replaced by formulaic Hollywood generic fare – that is, of the secular, post-industrial cultural displacement predicated by the cultural imperialism of the U.S., (however entertaining it might be), as film scholar Aristides Gazetas illustrates the Welsh predicament, with a haunting description (of the mentioned 'universal reckoning') by the main character in the German film, *Kings of the Road* (1976),

The central character is a post-modern hero, a wanderer and a dreamer caught in an "illusion of reality." The history of his past was created by American motion pictures. As he uncovers this alleged history of Germany through cinematic representations made after the rise of Hitler, he realizes that "the Yankees have colonized our subconscious." The amnesia that befalls this man is visually depicted as a constant disruption between the contemporary social conditions and the film representations of past lives (Gazetas 2000: 164).

Additionally, Ruth Carter, the scriptwriter for the first three Bayly-directed S4C productions, mentioned in a recent interview that her storytelling possibly 'resonates with formerly marginalized Welsh populations', because she is 'by-the-way, a British Jew'. As we mentioned at the beginning of this chapter,

'The unifying principle shared by these variations on the theme of 'Outsiders' is that they were able to do something 'filmic' and 'Welsh', by virtue of their status as 'Outsiders', which was not otherwise possible to accomplish in Wales.'

National cinemas cannot rely upon the success of local productions to ensure their place in the vast trans-national audiovisual industry's exchange of ideas, stories and symbols — the stakes (cultural survival) are too high. The implicit hope of every national cinema, is

to have one or two big successes, crowned by an Oscar, and led by a native born *Wunderkind*, who in turn, returns a moneyed, well-connected 'Outsider' producer of indigenous (Welsh) film, what Kevin Rockett, in describing the success of Irish film in attracting American investors in recent years (Lavery 2006: 153) as well as of Scottish film investment schemes (McArthur 1982: 17-18; Petrie 1992: 24) calls, 'leveraging the Diaspora'. Stead's writing echoes this hope for future 'Outsiders' of Wales

There is no doubt that our contemporary actors must find their own place in the world whether that be London or Los Angeles, but if we are content merely to export our talent then a golden opportunity will have been lost (Stead 2002: 194).

Chapter 4: Coming-of-age in Wales —

The Benign *Bildungsroman* and its Political Subversions in Wales

In the previous chapter we established how industrial conditions, coupled with historical and political conditions, influenced who got to make Welsh films, and which films got to be made. We described the phenomenon of ‘Outsiders’ and the various roles they played in seeing that particular representations of Wales and that ‘specific visions’ of Welsh life ever got produced or screened. In this chapter we consider the Welsh fondness for Coming-of-age genre films. It seems that almost every major Welsh film producer has tried their hand at this genre, and several seem to have a specialization in this genre. A careful scan of the available scholarship on British film in general shows a remarkable dearth of Coming-of-age genre films. Sarah Street refers only to the 1950s ‘youth problems’ films but not to any specific focus upon the Coming-of-age genre, although she does note the production of Charles Dicken’s adaptations, including *Great Expectations* (1946) and *Scrooge* (1951), and indirectly refers to the popularity of films based upon ‘Boy’s Novels’ that are categorized as ‘Empire Stories’ (Street 1997: 43). Higson does not note any significant contribution of Coming-of-age films as a genre of British films (Higson 1997), so it eventually might be asserted that the Welsh film industry’s national preference for Coming-of-age films could be a distinguishing element of cinematic ‘Welsh-ness’.

It should be noted that the worldwide success of *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone* (2001) has caused a renewed interest in children’s literature and that has led to scholarly discussions in the United Kingdom as to why the youthful protagonist in both the new girl’s (called ‘Teen’ or ‘Diary’ novels) and the new Boy’s Action/Adventure novels, as well as the older ‘Empire Stories’ mentioned by Street, served as both children’s

entertainment products and simultaneously as metaphors for the individual and national identity within the British Empire (and post-Empire). The 'Boy Bond' series that followed the Alex Rider series by Anthony Horowitz seems to indicate a trend that this Coming-of-age action novel and others like it are rapidly being adapted to television and feature film, exemplified by *Stormbreaker* (2006). In spite of recent interest in children's stories and the Coming-of-age genre in London and in other parts of Britain, it does not approach the historic tendency toward this genre in Welsh filmmaking.

Aesthetic and Narrative Categories of Welsh Coming-of-age genre films:

Because there is such a proliferation of Coming-of-age films in the body of Welsh films under consideration in this study, it is useful to divide them temporarily into three categories: stories about neurotic young adults who finally grow up, stories about a child of a dysfunctional family in a mood piece film, and stories about children in idyllic settings who learn about magic. We will refer to and further define these categories, as we examine specific Welsh films. Before we examine the specific films, let us consider some possible reasons for the privileging of this genre among Welsh filmic product. We have agreed that the emerging national 'cinema' of Wales, which we are examining, is necessarily collected from as many available sources of filmic material that could be fitted together for this study. The reasons for this we have discussed elsewhere, but in summary we can say that, in order to have a body of material worth examining and comparing, one must accept that the majority of filmic material produced in Wales is commissioned by television producers, and the largest percentage of commissions (in the period which we are examining) are in the Welsh language. The broadcasters in Wales depend upon a coalition of known independent producers, mostly organized around the talents of one or more Welsh 'auteur' director/producers. Almost all Welsh films under consideration, were commissioned by the broadcasters (ITV Wales, BBC Wales, S4C and Channel Four Films) often as part of an annual slate of films that each producer is

allocated. The production choices of these Welsh independent producers, who must still receive individual film approval of the respective commissioning editors, would naturally reflect the combined individual styles and tastes of the producer, the 'auteur' director, the broadcast editor, and others. Either before or after a film is commissioned, other funding board committees would evaluate the idea for development and production grants, so this added another tier of decision makers, as to which films got made in Wales. Of course, the demands of the domestic audiences influenced the choice, and together with the other influences cited, the 'Coming-of-age' genre film was produced in significant numbers. Television audience demographics and production economics probably influenced some production choices, and the films we are discussing in this chapter probably got made because a Coming-of-age film is by definition 'suitable for all ages and for all audiences'.

Television and Welsh Coming-of-age genre films:

Each of the Welsh 'auteur' producer/directors we mentioned were also considering the trajectory of their individual careers, and the Coming-of-age feature film genre was probably accepted by the 'auteurs' for its universal appeal in the trans-national marketplace, just in case their film made it 'out of Wales' and somehow got noticed in London or Hollywood. This 'artistic compromise' is not an isolated phenomenon to Wales, but instead typifies a regional condition of the European film industry, of which Wales is a part.

Insofar as some filmmakers who had been identified with political, avant-garde or independent cinema were able to secure state funding or with the co-production of television, they were able to continue to make films, but perhaps at a price (Elsaesser 2005: 468).

Elsaesser calls this the 'Vernacular Force of Television' upon cinema, and tells us that these 'auteurs' made compromises and adjustments in order to get their films made, albeit with the clunky label of national 'pastiche' in the hope of transcending the limits of their locally-funded, small screen benefactors

Though under contract to Britain's Channel Four, Italy's RAI, France's *Antenne Deux* or Germany's ZDF *Das Kleine Fernsehspiel*, they could upgrade their television co-productions via film festivals to the status of (art) cinema (Elsaesser 2005: 468).

In other words, Welsh independent producers, like their European colleagues, were making films which attracted funding from local broadcasters, but almost always in the hopes that their film would somehow make it 'out of Wales' into the festival circuit, and consequently into the awards queues, or as Welsh director Marc Evans recently said in an interview with the *Western Mail* newspaper, not end up being 'one of those heroic, nearly-was films' (Driscoll 2006).

Politics of the Benign *Bildungsroman*:

We must also consider how the Coming-of-age genre is generally more privileged in a politicized cinema. European cinema has been historically more politicized than Hollywood. This is for reasons tied primarily to the sources of film funding (overwhelmingly supported by governmental and publicly-subsidized broadcaster grants and tenders) and to the oppositional positioning of European cinemas as 'national institutions', which have the mixed remits of not only entertaining their domestic audiences in the native language, locations, and customs, but also participating to some degree in the project of promoting or defining the national identity (Dale 1997: 97-101). Furthermore, it does not seem imprudent speculation to postulate that the cinemas of small, contested nations would have even more intensely (if not compulsively) politicized cinemas. For example, Robert Stone and others have written widely about the Basque Cinema as being among the 'most politicized of European cinemas' (Stone 2007), and small nations theorist, Josep R. Llobera, whose primary filmic focus is upon Catalonian Cinema, frequently lists Wales among other small nations whose struggle to represent themselves through mass media has progressed in fits and starts (Llobera 2004: 14-15). In the atmosphere of highly-politicized cinemas of small nations, especially those constantly forced to defend a minority language, one has to wonder if the producers might

crave a filmic context and a structure which, as a story about and for children and which (seemingly) avoids political and social controversy, satisfies the inevitable mixed bag of remits, while producing a film with potentially global 'legs'. In the case of Wales, this frequently might have been the case.

A brief history of the Coming-of-age genre film:

It is possible that the film industry in both the U.S. and in Europe understand Coming-of-age genre film as a benign genre that is reliably popular with general audiences, and this could have contributed to the frequent 'green-lighting' of Coming-of-age products for Welsh film and television. The introduction of children or childlike protagonists really got going in cinema with stars like *'Spanky and Our Gang'* in the Little Rascals films, beginning with *Our Gang* (1922), Shirley Temple in films like *Poor Little Rich Girl* (1936) or *The Little Princess* (1939). Christmas films invariably involved Coming-of-age themes and child stars, as in the *Miracle on 34th Street* (1947), but Walt Disney is best known for creating childlike characters who embark on heroic adventures, which teach valuable growing up lessons, from the earliest Mickey Mouse cartoons, his first feature *Little Red Riding Hood* (1922), through *Pinocchio* (1940), along with countless others, perhaps the most famous being the Mickey Mouse as the Wizard's apprentice in *Fantasia* (1940) and later on with *Mary Poppins* (1964). To some extent, scholars like Robert Sklar have attributed enormous influence to Disney, and a case could be made that almost all of the Welsh filmic product under discussion in this chapter, is in some way derivative of Disney's cinematic innovations (Sklar 1975: 195). Disney invented a model for adapting folkloric children's stories and fairy tales into screenplays, and this is widely discussed by scholars, including Jack Zipes (Zipes 1994). The propensity to rely upon literary adaptations, as outlined by Berry in his description of the nascent Welsh television markets in the late 1950s (Berry 1994: 219-220), along with the frequent commissioning of Coming-of-age films in Wales, allowed the model introduced by

Disney (Maltin and Beck 1987: 29; Watts 2001) to function well in Welsh filmic product, which the individual Welsh 'auteurs' adapted to their styles and visions. In the context of the last chapter, which discussed 'Outsiders', Disney used this model to adapt a Welsh story in *The Black Cauldron* (1985) and George Cukor produced a remake of Emlyn Williams's classic Welsh Coming-of-age story, *The Corn is Green* (1979), previously produced by Irving Rapper, starring Bette Davis, *The Corn is Green* (1945).

***Bildungsroman* as Political Metaphor:**

Revisionist film theorists frequently cite the Coming-of-age feature film as a metaphor, for the growth, struggles, and transitions of the nation. The literary descriptor of '*Bildungsroman*', is used by these film theorists to describe the Coming-of-age tale which functions on many levels, transcending its benign surface plot to eventually symbolize (perhaps somewhat aggressively, in fact), presumptions which nationalists would like to assert in their films

One of the models used to narrativise the nation and its culture as a given is the *Bildungsroman* – a rhetoric that recounts the birth and maturation of some intangible aspects of an assumed 'national' cultural essence (Vitali and Willemsen 2006: 2).

So in other words, Welsh 'auteurs' might have been contriving and pitching new film commissions guaranteed to please the 'prime time' crowd, which seems innocent enough, and promised to offend no one in the contested Welsh minefield of language, politics and social history. In fact, the films we will look at in this chapter served these purposes, while also functioning in many cases, as benign cinematic shells for overt nationalist statements. Additionally, the popular genre served as a springboard for many Welsh directors to launch their careers at home and abroad. The film that springs immediately to mind is the Coming-of-age hit, *Very Annie Mary* (2001), which really launched the career of Welsh director Sara Sugarman. *Very Annie Mary* leads the pack of 'stories about neurotic young adults who finally grow up'. Sugarman is currently co-screenwriter for a

new Welsh film, *Coming Out* (2008, in pre-production), which is the brainchild of producer David A. Jones, the brother of Catherine Zeta-Jones, who also stars in the new film. *Coming Out* is a zany comedy about a gay cabaret singer who grows up when he's forced to lead a rugby team to victory. This film's plot encapsulates the important points about Sugarman's life and career: since *Very Annie Mary*, Sugarman has distinguished herself successfully with Teenage, Coming-of-age films, including *Mad Cows* (1999), and *Confessions of a Teenage Drama Queen* (2004). The distribution success of *Very Annie Mary* in the states seemed to help Sugarman develop a cosy relationship with Walt Disney Films, although she might have been slightly pigeonholed as a teenage film director. Sugarman has also become very vocal and supportive of gay and lesbian film production in North America, and *Coming Out* will be no less than cutting edge as it attempts to marry Hollywood mainstream comedy with popular Welsh national sports, and the hyper-masculine post-Industrial mindsets of unemployed coalminers and factory workers of 'Tinopolis' Llanelli, Carmarthenshire (where the film is being shot) with contemporary gay (civil) rights in Wales.

While *Very Annie Mary* was relatively successful for Sugarman, it was generally unsatisfying for the Welsh, who anticipated a film, which would show a sympathetic view of rural Welsh life. Pierre Sorlin describes the rudiments of what makes a film a 'national film'

A first criterion might be the display of institutions, habits and values characteristic of the country (Sorlin 1996: 5).

In the *Very Annie Mary* DVD 'extra interview clips' actors Ioan Gruffudd and Matthew Rhys, who play the village gay couple 'Hob and Nob' (presumably named for the British oat biscuit), comment on how the film offers 'something for everybody' in a 'multi-layered plot'. Wales is a multi-cultural society, and many of its interest groups are competing and non-corresponding constituencies. Sorlin describes all nations this way

All nations are probably fractured, self-contradictory structures, they have been always better conceived as masses of interests groups than as single entities and, in our days, many of them are tottering on the edge of dissolution (Sorlin 1996: 5).

If Sugarman was attempting to offer 'something for everyone', and if the Coming-of-age genre is so popular, we have to ask, why did *Very Annie Mary* not succeed with a Welsh audience? Annie Mary is a thirty-three year old daughter of a 'chapel-strict' father, played by Jonathan Pryce. Annie Mary has sacrificed her dreams, having declined an opera bursary in Milan, and has become the neurotic daughter of the village's philandering Welsh 'Casanova' who fancies himself an incarnation of Pavarotti. Her father the baker is very Welsh, and there are lots of cameo nods to Welsh-ness (according to the first criteria of a 'national film' listed by Sorlin), which build throughout the film in a rapid preponderance, which might be understood as the alternating takes on 'those Wacky Welsh'. For example, the obligatory 'phantom funeral' scene which appears in many Celtic folktales and myths and recurs in Welsh films and fiction (Wentz 1911: 97), becomes the comic efforts of a trio of exaggerated rural bumpkins and a half-blind clergyman to get a cadaver out of a crumbling Welsh stone cottage. Since the (obviously) thick headed Welshmen couldn't find a Welsh collie cart, so they decided to use a bicycle instead, to balance the teetering coffin across the clods and cobbles. American audiences no doubt saw the clever homage to Charlie Chaplin and Laurel & Hardy comedies, in this and other scenes, and probably compared the bumbling Welsh to stock Appalachian 'side kicks' in Hollywood films and 1960s-1990s American television sitcoms. But during the 'by invitation only' Welsh cinematic premier of the film, audiences entered the theatres, 'lively and excited' to see many of their favourite, internationally famous Welsh stars perform in a 'Welsh' movie, but reportedly left in 'stunned silence'. Welsh director Emlyn Williams (not to be confused with the other Emlyn Williams who authored *The Corn is Green*) tapped the same Welsh 'vein of rural nostalgia (Berry 1994: 335) as Sugarman did with her script, and had a nasty gravedigger named *Dic y Farw* (Dick the

Death) in his Coming-of-age drama, *Gwynfyd* 'Paradise' (1992), and Dylan Thomas's script included a grave digger, 'Evans the Death', who taunted Richard Burton in *Under Milk Wood* (1972), so why did not Sugarman's gentle mockery of the Welsh village *gwerin* (folk) amuse the *gwerin*? It seems that the varied reception of the film has something to do with the fact that Welsh audiences read codes and statements that external audiences would overlook in a more generous way, preferring to embrace the plot, which is fairly universal in appeal. In a country where national identity is contested, and where cultural relevance is politicized and legislated, it is likely that Sugarman didn't read how incapable the Welsh (as perhaps typical of fractured and internally conflicted, post-colonial audiences) are at laughing at hyperbolic filmic images of themselves. The grotesquely comedic characters may be accurate and true, but their comic value is a matter of perspective and reception.

Marketing the Welsh Coming-of-age film abroad:

Very Annie Mary succeeds in trans-national markets as a good, teenage Coming-of-age genre comedy, but it is also multi-layered. Sugarman had either the intuition or savvy to understand that the way to market one's film at festivals is to guarantee your screening by including a token character from each interest group. This will give your fledgling film a chance with programmers looking for a niche demarcation label for the film. In this case the film could be labelled of 'gay' interest, of 'Jewish' interest, of 'teen' interest, of 'Celtic' interest, of 'European' interest. The openly gay and flamboyantly camp performance of Welsh heterosexual heartthrobs Ioan Gruffudd and his real-life best friend and London flatmate, the robustly sexy Matthew Rhys, was a one-way ticket for Sugarman into every gay and lesbian film festival program from Jerusalem to Miami Beach. The fact that Sugarman is a budding, self-identified 'Jewish' director would get her film screened in many Jewish film festivals, as well. On the other hand, another way to read *Very Annie Mary* is to see it as an employment application / love letter from

Sugarman to the commercial heirs of Walt Disney, i.e., Buena Vista Films, Walt Disney Films, including the 'Indies' distribution arms of Miramax and Viacom, with their subsidiary relationships to the Disney Corporation: Sugarman was building her career and being true to her story, which was (what seems to be) a semi-autobiographical story of a young gay, Welsh-Jewish girl, with worldly aspirations and a claustrophobic father, who gets stuck in her personality development, stuck in her musical education, and stuck in a quirky Welsh village named Ogw (pronounced Ahhh-Gooo, and clearly chosen for comic effect). This issue of sub-textual ethnicity and sexuality is pertinent, since as we mentioned, Sugarman is self-identified as a 'gay, British-Jewish director of Welsh extraction'. Annie Mary is the merry 'fag hag' to the village gays, Hob and Nob, and she befriends a terminally ill teenage girlfriend named Bethan Bevan, whose only wish is to go to Disney World before she dies. *Very Annie Mary* is a coded lesbian Coming-of-age story, for the 'thirty-something' woman who sleeps on the foot of her father's bed, and who writhes when she has to kiss her very handsome Welsh male suitor in a country lane. Canadian filmmaker Patricia Rozema created a similar type of Coming-of-age story in *I've Heard the Mermaids Singing* (1987), with the gawky and scatterbrained Polly, who is a wannabe artist in a latent lesbian teenager girl's body, stuck in her lack-of-self-esteem thirty-something adventure. The folkloric basis for this narrative theme in films can be traced back to fairy tales, including the well-known *Ugly Duckling* by Hans Christian Andersen. Annie Mary can also be compared to the current American television hit called, *Ugly Betty* (2006), whose title plays upon the Andersen children's story.

When a Welsh film is not received as 'Welsh':

We've considered the reasons why *Very Annie Mary* succeeded abroad, but we need to understand as to why it was rejected by various Welsh audiences.¹ Kate Woodward tells us

Likewise, in *Very Annie Mary* the Welsh are treated as innocent idiots, and the opening sequence, an exceptionally long drive to the village, reiterates the idea presented in *A Run for Your Money*, that Wales is remote and far away from civilization (Woodward 2006: 2)

So beyond the fact that Welsh audiences might be less-than-impressed to see themselves presented as 'idiots', other related reasons might exist. Some of the reasons why the Welsh audience might have been disappointed relate to the fact, that most Welsh rural communities are very homogenous racially. *Very Annie Mary* is a thinly veiled story about a Jewish girl who does not fit in, and as a film, has more in common with *My Big Fat Greek Wedding* (2002) than *How Green Was My Valley* (1941). The film purports to be about a Welsh man who is 'chapel-strict', but this supposed pinnacle of local Nonconformist propriety is lascivious and exotic. Rather than disdaining flashy or flamboyant behaviour, like any *yn hoffi parchus* (respectability-craving) Congregationalist or Presbyterian, he drives around with a bullhorn on his truck, singing opera in Italian. Jonathan Pryce as the father is tall, gaunt, and resembles the stereotypic look of the austere chapel 'Welsh Gothic' deacon or minister, but he actively recruits women for his 'harem' of attention-givers, which is hardly in keeping with the historic reality and mores of rural Welsh Protestant society. Italian for both Annie Mary and her father are code switching, which points to the sub-textual 'alien' status, which reveals this film to be about Jewish-ness, rather than Welsh-ness. The Welsh are weird and quirky, and Annie Mary is not one of them. She craves to go to Milan, where she can sing in Italian. Milan symbolizes a mythical Jerusalem, and Italian symbolizes Hebrew. Her

¹ We would like to mention that several members of the audience at the Cardiff premier of *Very Annie Mary* have confirmed that the audience included a significant number of invited guests, counting among them prominent members of the Welsh language media. Our informal polling of more than a dozen members of this audience several years later, revealed a generally negative response, with 'disappointed' being the most frequently mentioned word. One audience member who gave us permission to quote, but who prefers to remain anonymous, said that the 'audience left the cinema in a sort of stunned silence'. 'We could feel a sense of embarrassment among some of the audience about the film', this member later told us.

girlfriend Bethan Bevan seems real, but within this interpretation of the narrative does not exist at all, but is Annie Mary's imaginary alter ego, and that's why, once Annie Mary 'grows up', i.e., she escapes her tyrannical father and comes out as a lesbian, then Bethan has to die. The Oedipal overtones of Annie Mary's inverted 'dog-like' relationship to her father make this film a mild, Freudian sideshow; accordingly, the desire to 'fulfil Bethan's dying wish' gets more Jungian, as Annie Mary seems to want to merge her personality with her invented 'Shadow' albeit 'ideal' girlfriend (Annie Mary sleeps with two characters only: her father and Bethan). Once Annie Mary has merged with Bethan and reached Walt Disney World, she will have 'grown up'. This denouement of the film seems all too analogous to Sugarman's enhanced public image, not as a 'British director' but as a 'out gay' director in Los Angeles, once she had her secure employment on a Disney production. What we are asserting here is that the Coming-of-age story in *Very Annie Mary* is probably an autobiographical fantasy of the writer/director Sugarman. In order to get made, it needed to show that it met the mixed and competing remits of appealing to the British domestic television audience, that it displayed the 'institutions, habits and values' of the Welsh, that it offered a platform for influential Welsh film stars to work, and that it offended as small a demographic as possible. In a BBC Online Film Review article by critic Tim Watts aptly entitled, '*Very Annie Mary but not that good: Annie Mary fails to engage the audience's sympathies*' we are told

The rest of the film is an embarrassing and desperate attempt to create a heart-warming comedy out of a collection of ancient clichés, outrageous stereotypes and slapstick humour. The film has some of the ingredients of the offbeat comedy it clearly wants to be. But its main trouble is simply its remorseless quirkiness, which seems afraid to let scarcely any of the characters be anything less than full-on eccentrics, all the time. The effect is to distance rather than to engage the audience (Watts 2001: 1).

On the continuum of Welsh audiences, the urban, non-Welsh speaking audiences seemed most to appreciate the film, rural audiences were offended by the stereotypical mockery of country folks, and Welsh-speakers were the most offended. Most of us can identify

coded linguistic messages when they are pointed out to us, but the Welsh might have historic reasons to suspect coded messages, so it might be safe to say that the Welsh speakers are experts at reading coded linguistic messages, and so they probably understood quickly that this film was about an alienated, gay, Jewish girl who sought to escape her familial and cultural Welsh prison. The ending of the film is particularly revealing, which is derivative of the ‘Somewhere That’s Green’ musical sequence in *Little Shop of Horrors* (1986): The telling vision of Annie Mary’s fantasy dream house is a suburban, American style homestead, complete with the cliché white-picket fence, a clashing, Yankee-consumerism contrast with the understated dignity of a grey stone cottage in rural Wales (a description, which we reiterate from the last chapter).

A Welsh *Bildungsroman*’s clash with multicultural modernity:

Our next Coming-of-age film is Tim Lyn’s *Eldra* (2001) produced for S4C. *Eldra* was a script written by Manon Eames, after she interviewed the late, Welsh-Romany writer, Eldra Jarman. The film is a reworking of Jarman’s memoirs. *Eldra* fits the category of ‘stories about children in idyllic settings who learn about magic’. Similarly to *Very Annie Mary*, *Eldra* deals with issues of growing up as the ‘alien’. *Eldra* is in fact, a minority-within-a-minority story. Gittings would refer to this as a ‘Settler Society’ story, since a previously colonized people antagonize or oppress a more oppressed minority sub-group (Gittings 2002). It takes place in Bethesda, which is symbolic as a place in Welsh Medieval and later chapel (Christian) mythology. It also carries the baggage of other emotional stories and dramas. Bethesda is often the setting for tales that reflect the hyper-masculine slate-quarry trade with its stark and harsh rural life, and the incestuously inward-looking communities. It is a *Bildungsroman* for Eldra herself, while it is a *Bildungsroman* for the complexity of evolving Welsh attitudes, formerly of latent xenophobia and jingoism, and lately into a modern Welsh, multi-cultural and pluralistic society.

The *Bildungsroman* as Welsh ‘Magical Realism’ fable:

The young Gypsy girl Eldra is generally accepted at the Welsh medium school that she attends, but her Welsh boyfriend gets taunted and bullied by the other boys for befriending a Romany girl. *Eldra* has a universal appeal based on the Romeo and Juliet ill-fated lover expectations. There is a mystical quality to it, and the entire story is framed as a fairytale. In this respect it has a pan-European feel, in that it has a naturalistic rural setting for the revival of themes common to folkloric sources or assumptions. The story goes beyond this pastoral and magical framing as it addresses ethnic marginalization and race relations. *Eldra* might be the best example of the tendency within this collection of Welsh Coming-of-age films toward a form of Welsh ‘Magical Realism’. *Eldra* would be generally dismissed as a local attempt at a British Heritage piece, but this is an over-simplification of the multilayered aspects of this Welsh filmic product. For *Eldra* exists in a splendidly idyllic setting, which seems to almost transcend the naturalistic reality of the rural Welsh countryside in which the story takes place. *Eldra* has a natural aspect, which seems to lack artifice, but this is a clever illusion by the director Tim Lyn. Lyn seduces us into thinking we are watching a European Art-House film with a charming child lead. This is confirmed with painterly establishing shots of vivid bright sunlight on village lanes and lush, green fields, with almost science documentary-style inclusion of birdsongs and crickets. But the viewer is teased with ever more magical and intriguing treatments of the woods, the exotic and bewitching Romany ‘Gypsy’ camps, and the seemingly intuitive reactions of Eldra’s menagerie of owls, foxes, and other animal friends. The story seems to be a true, almost historical re-telling of the childhood of Eldra Jarman, but Lyn has a greater vision and is masterful at drawing us into a world as complex and invented as the world of Harry Potter.

The ‘Magical-but-Real’ reveals a crisis of identity:

Unlike Harry Potter, the connection with the received 'real-world' of *Eldra*, with its confrontation with racism and with pessimism, situates its problems in a cinematic ontology, which cannot be solved with an elixir or a new wand. But the magic is still there, since the presupposition behind the film's plot is that optimism and love and kindness will prevail and transcend the cruelty of life. Herein lies the sense of a Welsh 'Magical Realism'. Rather than relying upon a denouement common to British Social Realism, where some paradoxical dilemma is explored through a series of dramatic crises but never fully resolved, the Welsh Magical Realism acknowledges this aspect of British filmmaking, but moves toward a middle ground, perhaps located somewhere between the total artifice of *Harry Potter and The Sorcerer's Stone* (2001) and the film based upon Meera Syal's comic novel, *Anita and Me* (2002), which is also about a young, ethnically different girl growing up in the U.K. Harry Potter is divorced from real, historic issues, and any metaphorical lessons must be drawn from distant extrapolations based upon vague plot lines, where, for example, one house at Hogwart's is prejudiced against another house. *Eldra* is confrontational with social issues and historical issues, which plague both recent and contemporary Wales, of language, race, and social constructs. This is the 'Realism', which tells the story of the 'other'. For example, there is a subplot wherein the Gypsy Father serves the English-educated Squire, which might be seen as a turncoat job, only suited for Jews, Romany and other despised 'others'. In this respect the film compares to *Solomon and Gaenor*, since Morrison's film is also a Romeo & Juliet story, and includes examination of marginalized Welsh Jews, rather than Romany.

Is it 'ethnifiable' because it's 'Magical' and 'Real'?

Eldra could also compare to the sub-textual reading that this study just assigned to *Very Annie Mary* (as a story of social and ethnic alienation). The conflict that arises for Eldra occurs when her father is asked to be loyal to his Welsh Squire landlord, for whom the father works as a resident gamekeeper on the manor. The father has given Eldra a pet fox

but he is later forced to shoot the fox in the head after it kills a domestic chicken and ‘gets the taste of blood’. In other Coming-of-age films this might be a crucial ‘growing up’ moment, when the child is forced to face apparent betrayal from a parent and to reckon themselves as an individual with conflicted desires which must be negotiated on adult terms, however confusing and painful they might be. But in the context of a specifically Welsh political, social, and historical milieu, the implications of this event in Eldra’s life are fraught with more ‘baggage’: The Welsh Squire (whom the father is honouring when he kills the fox) represents a residual English colonial power, which was traditionally opposed and subverted by the Welsh peasantry or *gwerin*. The fox represents a commitment to nature and a mystical connection to the earth, which is among the values enshrined in the Welsh *Eisteddfod* tradition. Consequently, Lyn has the audience rooting for Eldra and the fox, which together represent a transcendent and romantic ideal, aligned with traditional Welsh sympathies. But being accepted as *yn dangos parch*, or as ‘respectable’, is a more highly privileged value to the *gwerin*, and it is clear that Eldra’s Romany family is careful to emphasize their loyalty first to the local *gwerin*, in this case to the working class slate quarry workers (Morgan 1967: 25-27). Ironically, when the father kills the fox, he is honouring the Squire who represents the colonial patriarchy, but in doing so he betrays the trust of his daughter and also positions himself in political opposition to the miners, who will eventually strike against this same Squire, who history will reveal to be among the most ruthless English overlords to the Welsh. The father is mildly complicit in suppressing the Welsh, by his paid service to the Squire. This point would be lost on external audiences but would resonate with Welsh nationalists, and so constitutes a linguistically and culturally coded statement to specific Welsh audiences. There are clear parallels with the socio-political complications of this seemingly benign Coming-of-age story set in the idyllic Welsh countryside, and with other postcolonial and even self-identified ‘Third cinemas’. For example, the mixed race French Canadian Trappers who in turn oppress various new settlers, including Chinese railroad workers,

feature in films discussed throughout Gittings's work on Canadian cinema, which poses the question, 'Who is ethnifiable?'² In the case of *Eldra*, the Romany migrants would represent the more 'othered' class by the already 'English-othered' Welsh *gwerin* (Gittings 2002: 34).

A distinctively Welsh Ethic denounces Anti-Intellectualism:

The fact that this is an original script written by Manon Eames, which relies upon interviews and re-writings of memoirs and letters of the real-life 'Eldra' allows the uncomfortable parts of this story to be told. This story functions at many levels, and is part of the Welsh language market's attempts to indigenize the genre of *Bildungsroman* while instructing the xenophobic among the rural Welsh to be more tolerant of their increasingly multi-racial communities, or at least to support their homogenous communities' increased participation with the multi-cultural outside world and economies. Eames seems to have inserted a strong argument against anti-intellectualism, which is another Welsh value enshrined in the ethics of the *Eisteddfod*. The historical timing of *Eldra* is sometime before the so-called 'Betrayal of the Blue Books' which precipitated the Welsh urban legends of the 'Welsh not' persecutions in Welsh schools. This legend was based upon actual facts related to the culture shock that occurred when the Welsh were intimidated into trying to 'Anglicize' their already exemplary educational system. The 'Betrayal of the Blue Books' created a sense of collective shame about being Welsh and speaking Welsh, which is always stirred up or alluded to when schools appear in Welsh literature or films. The opening scene of *Eldra* is in a schoolroom where Eldra is meant to feel different not for being Romany but for being a 'dreamer'. This is a

² By this question Gittings raises the point that so-called 'Settler' groups, who themselves might have migrated because of social discrimination, can become the perpetrators of similar discrimination toward subjugated minorities within the newly settled territories, and so the formerly oppressed become the oppressors, without being aware of the irony of these activities. A lack of consistency seems to plague these activities, and so we observe the arbitrary circumstances where a Welsh-speaking rural community might object to an English-speaking 'Incomer' who is Caucasian, but might overlook the English-speaking Indian immigrant (perceived as non-Caucasian or 'Black') with the rationale that having easy access to a curry take-away trumps nationalistic or linguistic concerns.

romantic view of the world esteemed in Welsh values, where the dreamer and the poet are equally valued with the hard working labourer, merchant or functionary. This is part of a larger sub-text to many of these Welsh Coming-of-age films, wherein the mood is more of the Welsh version of 'Magical Realism' stories, than the usual categorization as 'British Heritage' genre films. They are indeed Heritage genre films, but they depart from the implicit worldview of the Heritage genre, in that they privilege a vision which is inherently anti-conservative, and which subtly subverts what the Welsh have traditionally resisted as the will of the colonial English patriarchy. There is a Welsh value which attempts to distinguish itself in a nuanced manner (perceptible perhaps, only to the Welsh) away from the perceived 'English' Protestant work ethic. That is, the English esteem hard work, while the Welsh esteem the paradox of hard work that also co-exists with a transcendent religious, creative and performative impulse. Consequently, the Welsh miners represent a hyper-masculine construction, which is paradoxically tempered by their compulsive harmonizing and rehearsing of remarkably romantic and transcendent verse, set in complicated antiphonal hymns and anthems.

The Anti-Intellectual argument and the Ethic of the Eisteddfod:

This anti-intellectual argument continues as Eldra's Welsh boyfriend becomes heroic by standing up to his bullying classmates. They despise him for not conforming, which is understood to be normal childlike group behaviour, but also mock him for preferring poetry to fishing. Paul Turner's *Hedd Wyn* is similarly built around the crisis a national poet must face, when forced to choose between loyalty to his brother and loyalty to verse. Even today, Welsh children are possibly exposed on a daily basis to more poetry than any other European culture, maybe even in the world. This uniquely Welsh value is cherished in this film, as Eames positions her male protagonist (Eldra's Welsh boyfriend, who represents Eldra Jarman's real husband, who became a highly-honoured Welsh academic), as the multi-cultural lover and poet. Again we see the Welsh privileging a

construction of maleness, which is inherently-conflicted and nuanced, where a distinctly heterosexual and macho young boy's masculinity is not compromised in Welsh society but instead esteemed, when he rejects the brutality of his peers and seeks a middle path to maleness, embracing the Welsh male paradox of the rough-external farmer/miner who is also a gentle and romantic poet. This Welsh Chapel-driven and *Eisteddfodau*-enforced Welsh value that privileges education and art, contributed to the Welsh National Revival, which occurred at the end of the nineteenth century (Morgan 1981: 191). With generous grassroots funding, raised entirely by the Welsh Chapels, this National Revival created the national institutions of the national library, national archives and museum, and the national university system. All of these national institutions contributed to the secularization of the formerly fiercely religious Welsh society, which ironically led to the demise of the chapel culture, politically and socially, as part of the Industrial and post-Industrial developments of Wales. Eames and Lyn are Welsh speakers whose families and lives are rooted in this history. With their understanding of their audience, they imbedded coded 'Welsh-isms' in the script, implicit in the plot and characters.

Welsh Magical Realism naturalizes the 'alien':

The benignly romantic Coming-of-age tale in *Eldra* is a fairy tale with universal market appeal. But the highly politicized cinema of Wales is incapable of not addressing political and social issues, even in a children's story. The 'Magical Realism' aspect of this story lies in the fact that all of the solutions to Eldra's problems are romantic and magical: as the owl winks and flies across the room, as Eldra seems incarnated by every Welsh princess who ever lived. For example, as she plays the harp and fends the family from the encroachment of the harsh outside, as Eldra escapes into her fantasies in the twisted oak groves and mossy knolls and bogs. And as she is taught by wise old Romany 'wizards' that her respite in these enchanted places will be her *raison d'être* and sanity, later in life, rather than by overcoming the implacable political system which assigns both

her family and the fox the role of exotic 'outsiders' in life. *Eldra* might be compared to the French 'Magical Realism' comedy, *Amélie* (2001), which is also a Coming-of-age film. In an important way, the character of Eldra can be seen as representative of the Welsh nation, since female protagonists are often used symbolically in this way. Eldra meets all the requirements of Welsh-ness by speaking Welsh and playing the harp, and the helplessness of Eldra is metaphoric for the way in which the Welsh seem resolved at times, to accept their fate as neighbours to a political and cultural monolith. In the same ways that Eldra is perplexed and forced to negotiate with the seemingly contradictory and fickle will of the adults in her world, the stateless nation of Wales has historically struggled to be more than reactionary to the will and actions of Westminster. This sub-text may not be directly intended by Welsh filmmakers, but it operates as a plausible sub-text, given the political commitment to Welsh nationalism implied by the implicitly political act of making a 'Welsh' film, rather than a 'regional British' film.

When the 'Ordinary World' is twisted and dark:

Welsh director Karl Francis created a similar political sub-text in the Coming-of-age film, *Morphine and Dolly Mixtures* (1990), produced for the BBC. This film fits the category 'stories about a child of a dysfunctional family in a mood piece film', which could be used as a description for many of Francis's gritty, social realism pieces. *Morphine and Dolly Mixtures* is based upon an English language novel, which despite not being subsidized as Welsh language novels are by the Welsh Literary Academi was commercially successful. The novel is an autobiographical account of the author, Carol-Ann Courtney, who in turn calls her heroine, Caroline. Francis shows us in his films another hopeless situation where the protagonist is trapped in a horrendous nightmare. The particulars of this familial grotesque involve a dead mother, the drug-addicted, verbally abusive, physically and psychologically abusive alcoholic father, and the daughter Caroline, who is left to care for her three younger brothers and a baby sister.

The story is set in a really rough slum area of Cardiff, and the situation is hardly idyllic. Because the sub-economic conditions match almost any impoverished area of the U.K., the story could be transplanted to London and still resonate. The father is an advanced alcoholic who becomes addicted to morphine while being treated for lung cancer illness. Caroline 'walks on eggshells' and is shaped by the torment of constant terror from her father. She does not know if one day he'll be sweet and gentle or the next day have a tremendous mood swing and become violent or absent. This is a case study in being the child of an addicted parent. Worse still, her father fills her eleven-year old mind with the supposed 'guilt' of murdering her mother. Caroline had accidentally bumped her mother's head the day before she died and the father uses this in a patently evil way to convince Caroline that she has actually killed her mother. The father ends up in the hospital and this gives Caroline a break from the insanity. But the insanity continues in her head, until years later, as an adult, she tracks down her mother's death certificate and realizes that she has not only internalized her father's lies about who she is but she has shaped her life around this deception.

Francis is often compared to Ken Loach, who is also at his best with films exploring the social dilemma of chronic impoverishment, addictions, dysfunctional families, and inadequate social responses, as seen in *My Name is Joe* (1998). But Francis is giving us a decidedly Welsh story, with its urban, English speaking location in the forgotten beat-up streets of a few parts of Cardiff. The film is somewhat anachronistic, since recent economic development has erased a lot of the areas like the one seen in the film. But the unusual Cardiff accent and dialect is present in this film, true to Courtney's novel, which attempts to render the Ely Housing Estates, Tiger Bay or Grangetown dialects and accent. Lloyd Robson will later master this phonic rendering of the Cardiff accent in his book, *Cardiff Cut*, but Francis also has an ear for this, and the film is true to the location and culture. Its distinctively Welsh setting and cultural flavour stirs up retrospective

questions about the analogy of the helpless child with a moody father, comparing the child to the nation of Wales, and Wales's relationship to England. This metaphor is strongest when, the painful reflections of Caroline upon the way in which her internalized self-concept, built upon lies told to her by her abusive father, leads her to realize how deceived she was. While the focus of Caroline has been upon the erratic violence of her father, she begins as an adult to realize that she played a part in perpetuating the lies and the self-deception. This is her 'growing up' moment, and if extrapolated to the Welsh political sphere could have several meanings related to political or nationalistic awakenings.

When Welsh Magical Realism is sly and self-reflective:

Paul Turner gives us a less tormented view of the world, somewhere between Tim Lyn's *Eldra* fairytale and Paul Turner's childhood nightmare in *Porc Pei (Pork Pie)* (1998) produced for S4C. This film fits the category 'stories about children in idyllic settings who learn about magic'. The idyllic setting in *Porc Pei* is a rural Welsh village of Llanllewyn, set sometime in the 1960s when folks in rural Wales were still calling radio 'the wireless'. The film is somewhat self-reflective, given that Turner produced many BBC productions, and the butt of the jokes and folksy humour in this film are the exaggeratedly self-important BBC executives. The lushly filmed scenes would place this film in the category of Heritage genre, and in this study we will further designate it as a Coming-of-age comedy. All of the 'institutions, habits and values' of the Welsh are on display, and some stock European characters appear, including the village idiot, *Dafydd Bach*. Kenneth Robert Parry plays the son of the Rev. and Mrs. Donald Parry, and the plot revolves around the mischief that seems to follow Kenneth everywhere. The 'just when you thought it couldn't get worse' bombardment of worsening predicaments reminds one of the Swedish film *Mitt liv som hund (My Life as a Dog)* (1985), especially since urinating boys played such a large part in both films. The most popular film that

compares is Bob Clark's *A Christmas Story* (1983). *Porc Pei* is a joy to watch. The film does not seem to have any sub-textual layering, except for the self-reflective jabs at the BBC. Otherwise, *Porc Pei* is a deliciously rich mini-masterpiece of period details and quirky village 'grotesques'. But Turner treats everything in such a matter-of-fact and caring way, that the personalities and extreme characters (no one in this film is not quirky) do not distract from the fast-paced but fun comedy.

In a Welsh Utopia, *Eisteddfodau* are inevitable and ubiquitous:

The plot is not complicated, and the protagonist simply lives his young life for a week in this little village, where the markers of Welsh-ness are unavoidable. He begins by singing in the local *Eisteddfod*, which he ruins by forgetting his song, urinating on the stage and then wrecking his father's car in a chicken coop. The *Eisteddfod* is populated with gossiping church ladies and the village idiot *Dafydd Bach* makes his first appearance, when he's thrown out of the chapel for refusing to remove his favourite chicken from within his shirt. *Dafydd Bach* is also thrown out of Kenneth's fastidiously tidy *Mam's* immaculate parsonage front room, another Welsh cliché, and he is almost completely mute, but mysteriously has the ability to accompany Kenneth on the piano and read music, which must be because he's Welsh. (Everyone in the village seems to be singing or playing an instrument at some time.) The current mini-*Eisteddfod* is preparation for another coming *Eisteddfod*, and the entire week revolves around going to school, eating, going to chapel, and practicing for either *Eisteddfodau* or appearances on the Radio Cymru broadcasted *Eisteddfod* competition. In spite of 'peeing on the stage', Kenneth still wins the BBC competition, and is going to have to appear on the radio. A mysterious but wise old woman named 'Miss World' plays the archetypal role of the 'Wise Wizard', consoling Kenneth, making him endless cuppas and offering him momentary respite from his daily battle with the dragons of calamity, which he simply cannot avoid. A stereotypically stern, tall and gaunt chapel preacher turned schoolmaster

is the bane of Kenneth's life, when he's not being bullied. The images of the schoolmaster scolding Kenneth are everything anyone could ever imagine as the worse day in school one could have, as the old man in a curt bow tie and dapper vest uses flights of elegiac rhetoric to let Kenneth know how much suffering he causes the school, and especially its teacher. With every view by the camera in the village and countryside, Turner uses the same painterly style that might have helped him get nominated for an Oscar in *Hedd Wyn*. Turner loves the Welsh stone buildings and the cobbles and oak-shrouded lanes, which serve as European travelogues and would satisfy the Art-House crowd. The ending is comic and incendiary, to say the least, as Kenneth succeeds at blowing up the parsonage and sending the entire BBC production crew to hospital. The effect of the entire film is the sense of clever whimsy, which *Amélie* is known for. Kenneth is alone, except for his rescuing princess, Helen, a neighbourhood playmate. Of course, Helen is more serious and expects that Kenneth wants to say something romantic when he tells her he wants to say something 'serious'. Kenneth's big 'growing up' lesson is that he needs to tell the truth, and the end of the film begins with him about to do so. The film satisfies because it provides a sympathetic view of Welsh life, which establishes the confidence of the audience, before it begins to mildly jest about the local *gwerin*. So while *Very Annie Mary* is a more popular film because of its teenage format and screwball antics (not to mention a better distribution contract with Buena Vista), *Porc Pei* would be more satisfying, especially to a Welsh speaking audiences with mostly rural roots, since *Porc Pei* gives all the reassuring markers of Welsh-ness without mockery or condescension.

Welsh Magical Realism as dark, brooding and melancholic:

Angela Roberts directed *Y Mynydd Grug (The Heather Mountain)* (1997) for S4C. This film fits the category 'stories about children in idyllic settings who learn about magic'. *Y Mynydd Grug* is a literary adaptation of Dr. Kate Robert's book, *Te yn y Grug*. Dr Kate

Roberts is loved as one of Wales's greatest storywriters. *Y Mynydd Grug* deals with Welsh *gwerin* and a rural perspective. As a *Bildungsroman*, *Y Mynydd Grug* might also compare to *Eldra*, and *Joni Jones, The Testimony of Talesin Jones*, and *Y Mapiwr*. *Y Mynydd Grug* focuses on the life of little Welsh girl living in the same area as *Eldra*, near the slate quarry mines. There is a lot of tension in the home where the little girl named Begw lives, and also in her chapel and community. The tension is tied to the declining fortunes of the slate industry, and the constant pay freezes and lay-offs from the quarries. The collective frustration level leads Begw's father to drown her cat, when he learns that his wife is pregnant again, and he reasons that the cat will eat too much. This element of hunger and poverty in Wales is important, since these factors have often been a reality for rural people in Wales, along with those who migrated to industrial centres in hopes of less upheaval. But the social and emotional upheaval is the backdrop against which Roberts writes her novels, and *Y Mynydd Grug* is a semi-autobiographical account of a little girl who copes with the stress of herself and everyone around her by writing fictional stories. The cinematography in this film is very intimate at times, and the *mise en scène* is remarkable for its ability to frame the family inside the interiors of the small cottage, without creating a claustrophobic ambiance. The story is told from the third person visually, but Begw's perspective is carefully preserved.

The Useful Element of Madness in the Welsh narrative:

The element of madness enters this story, as it appears in many Welsh films and pieces of literature, as the chapel minister seems to be losing his mind, and there is an acceptance of this behaviour as the reasonable way to cope with the stress of living in that part of Wales, as if it is just another odd idiosyncrasy in the village. If the Coming-of-age genre is conceived as analogous to the transitions of nation, and if we see the entrance to adolescence as a metaphor for the nation's entry into enhanced degrees of self-determination, then the presence of madness in the family unit or village is a fascinating

narrative device. If we consider madness in the light of Michel Foucault's essay on *Madness and Civilization*, then madness becomes a 'relief valve' for tensions; in the Coming-of-age narrative it is the 'carnival' scheduled for relieving tensions in the family, or tensions between the child and community, and madness as metaphor could seem a rationalizing by the formerly colonized or proto-national, wherein the newly 'national' attempts to explain the residual damages of prior governments' excesses or neglect (Foucault 2001: 1). *Y Mynydd Grug* also introduces the recurring Welsh theme of *yn eisiau ymwarded* or 'desiring relief or deliverance'. Begw quizzes her mother as to the concept of 'relief', and in response, the mad minister's ranting is held up to the children as a reasonable motivation to go mad, in order to achieve some level of 'relief' in life. This concept of the momentary 'relief' supports some of our discussions elsewhere in this study, especially examples we cite of the *carnavalesque* being used to reduce repressed emotional stress in Welsh characters, and this being a metaphor for coping with political tensions.

Representing lost topographies of innocence:

Stephen Bayly directed *Joni Jones (1982)* as a well-received television series for S4C, an adaptation based upon the well-known children's stories by R. Garallt Jones entitled *Gwarded y Gwirion* or 'Redemption of the Innocents'. It is often the case in Wales that directors will create a series which is actually suited to be converted into a feature film at a later date, should the funding and political will be present to effect the re-formatting. This reinforces Elsaesser's theory that European filmmakers are pragmatists who unwillingly relinquish their dreams of entering the festival circuit and eventually acquiring the coveted BAFTA, Palme d'Or, Oscar or some relative industry equivalent. This film fits the category 'stories about children in idyllic settings who learn about magic'. *Joni Jones y ffilm (Joni Jones the film) (1988)* is breathtakingly beautiful, and allows the director, cinematographer and editor to show off their penchants for

juxtaposing their tiny child characters into sweeping landscapes, alternated with intricate establishing shots of architectural intrigue, which is a Bayly signature style. While the film's story is set during World War II and revolves around the effects of the world war on Joni's family life, the ever-present 'un-credited character' of the Welsh landscape enters again and again in almost lyrical patterns, which Bayly uses to underscore a post-modern sense of lingering futility, a sense which exists as part of the overall dramatic tension. Joni lives a mostly a solitary life, since his father is off fighting and his mother is busy mending his short trousers and attending to elderly boarders, who serve as symbols of some ancient, silent chorus or as reminders of the audience's presence, although not in any self-reflective way. Joni is being watched, and the story seems to be being told from a first person point-of-view, but Bayly emphasizes that this is not the case. For example, when Joni is confronted (by his mother) the over-the-shoulder shots privilege his small stature in relationship to his mother, by using a sharp upward angle, pointed at his mother. But the camera always includes the back of Joni's head and his mother's face, so it is clear that we are present in the room, observers of this individual's life and development.

The film's episodes are narrated by an older Joni, (with retrospective reflection), but this explicatory discourse was added to smooth over the rough edges left by cobbling together the weekly series into a feature, not to expand the plot. Nonetheless, the narration in the feature film, along with the existing camera angles reinforce the distance that the audience experiences as they look into intimate moments of this little boy's life. While many of the great number of Welsh Coming-of-age films have the benignly non-offensive 'made for all audiences' packaging which we discussed earlier, the extent to which they also hold a sub-textual metaphoric or analogical relationship to some intended message about nationalism is debatable, seems to occur in degrees, and might be more apparent in revisionist analysis, than would be present in retrospective readings, which are informed

by accurate historical attitudes at the times of production and broadcast.³ *Joni Jones* has a lively musical soundtrack, which is definitely based on acoustic Celtic gigues or folksongs, and yet is boldly interjected as an audio device to link the quickly alternating scenes, with the feel of a European country-dance sequence, notably used to great effect in *Chocolat* (2000) and *Babette's Feast* (1987). Although Bayly is American born, his marriage to Welsh-speaking producer Linda James led them to form Red Rooster Productions, and later Sly Fox Films. Consequently, Bayly worked in Welsh with translation as he directed, but nothing is lost in his films, as the style, restraint and finesse seen in *Joni Jones* located Welsh filmmaking equally among its British and European peers, without sacrificing any sense of Welsh-ness. The first scene in the film informs us that Joni as a tiny child, is a mere particle located in this vast, sweeping and rugged, ocean side beauty of the Welsh landscape. The signature style of Bayly is avoidable as he gives us distinctively Welsh signifiers of place, created by combining architectural indicators, which result in establishing shots and segues that are undeniably Welsh. The arches and entry ways and stone façades can be found throughout Britain and indeed, most of Europe, but Bayly has a keen eye for including foliage, topographical angles and geographical idiosyncrasies, which recall the Welsh landscape and situate the edifices and scenes no where else but in Wales. Bayly's use of the wide-lens shots was probably influenced by the fact that *Joni Jones*, along with *Coming Up Roses*, were among the first feature films commissioned by the then newly established Welsh language station, S4C. Consequently, one suspects that there is some obligatory 'showing off' of the Welsh countryside, in an act of national pride, and also to reinforce the sense of place, implied in the sort of films S4C might be expected by its early audiences to produce.

³ While we seem to be contradicting the thrust of our argument in the most recent section prior to this statement, we note that both positions could be true, and we are attempting an informed speculation in some places, since the dearth of earlier journalism or scholarship around these films and their production does not allow us to be entirely certain about these retrospective readings, at this point.

An analogous trope with the national:

The selection of *Joni Jones* so early in the history of S4C is significant, since this literary source is among more conciliatory Welsh sources, albeit with a strong nationalistic message. And because the storyline of *Joni Jones* actually confronts Joni's struggles to acclimate (after moving from Wales to London), adjusting his language to get along as a Welshman in an English speaking society, and other directly stated conflicts, it is not as necessary to look for a sub-textual reading, in order to see how *Joni Jones* has an analogous trope with the national. One scene, which opens the feature film, shows Joni hiding and then burying a soccer ball that his mother has resourcefully 'crocheted' for him much to his chagrin among the unforgiving bullies. This must be seen as a metaphor for the recurring sense of collective shame that shaped and formed the attitudes of the *gwerin*, traceable back to the perceived national embarrassment caused by the '*Betrayal of the Blue Books*'. Only a slight shift in the reading is needed to see how Joni is simultaneously ashamed, not only of his mother's homespun handicraft, but also of his quirky native tongue and culture. Joni is challenged with a 'growing up' moment after he discovers and offers aid to an escaped Italian prisoner of war named Giovanni. After Giovanni is recaptured, Joni must 'keep secrets' which signals the first time he acts as an adult and acknowledges 'keeping his own counsel'. Of course, he has already exercised adult-like autonomy by sheltering the escapee, but he did this with the motivation to assist a soldier, any soldier, since the soldier he discovered represented to him his distant, fighting father. Whether his choice to not turn Giovanni in to the authorities is tied to his sense of Welsh-ness, that is, as having slightly different loyalties than the English, is not clear, but it is still an act of subversion, however innocent, and the audience is left rooting for the Welshman who assists the enemy of the English, which is at least a conflicted message, and probably a sophisticated message to come out of S4C, at the time.

Representing the elusive and the enigmatic:

The enigmatic Endaf Emlyn directed numerous films for S4C and BBC Cymru under his production company called Gaucho Films. Most of Emlyn's films were Coming-of-age films that seem to be his specialty. Emlyn directed *Y Mapiwr (The Making of Maps)* (1996) for S4C and BBC Cymru. This film seems to fit the category 'stories about children in idyllic settings who learn about magic', but in the course of the film, falls better into the category of 'stories about a child of a dysfunctional family in a mood piece film'. The film falls into some kind of 'Magical Realism' camp, clearly Welsh, but more related to bizarre child films, which almost approach Horror genre, as in the suspense thriller, *Flowers in the Attic* (1987). The adults are all mad in this film, although some are nuanced as benevolently mad. Consequently, the idyllic, Oceanside setting of the boyhood home of Griff, is disturbed as it becomes clear that self-government based upon murder and deception, is the only choice for the children in this film. Emlyn has tapped a rich cult concept here (that is, the obsession with anarchy wrought by otherwise innocent mobs of children) that pushed a failed novel in America to become required college reading for two decades and resulted in no less than two successful feature films, *Lord of the Flies* (1963) *Lord of the Flies* (1990). Emlyn may be the best filmmaker of the all the quirky Welsh 'auteurs' (at least cinematographically), as he outdoes Bayly with his exploitation of the astounding beauty of the sublime Gower Peninsula. While we are again drawn into a well-made period Heritage genre film, set during the Cold War, the genre of Coming-of-age is more appropriate in our analysis. The vision of the film is not conservative, but subversive, although the political co-existence with British soldiers is tolerated as an annoyance and even a final, useful sentinel of childhood 'secrets'. Griff is fourteen years old, and he and his sister Ruth live with their mother and father near the sea. The father works in the nearby munitions factory, and Griff and Ruth witness their father having sex with most of the young women in the village. Unfortunately, Griff's mother was the ballet teacher to most of these young girls, and when one of the girls mysteriously disappears during a picnic in honour of Griff's mother, the ballet teacher is

stricken with a 'hysteria-induced' paralysis and retreats into her darkened Edwardian mansion's shuttered bedroom for more than a year. The film opens as Griff is seeking to cope with his father's philandering and his mother's neuroses, which occurs precisely while Griff is discovering that he is gay. Of course, he's a fourteen year old boy, so his remarks lead us to believe that he would settle for sex with anyone, which probably won't happen, because he is a handsome but pale mother's boy, 'the witch's son', who does not fit in.

Understanding *Y Mapiwr* as a closed ontology of Welshness:

Again, as we saw in *Very Annie Mary*, this film is probably slightly autobiographical to some degree, since Endaf Emlyn is known as an 'out' gay man among Welsh film producers, and repeatedly introduces the theme of a gay boy Coming-of-age in his filmic products. The contrast of the remarkably beautiful landscape and idyllic life of fun-filled sunny days, in which Griff seems to set his own daily agenda, with the Oedipal plot, which reels into worse and worse Freudian complications, is intense. Insanity is naturalized in the world of Griff, who exists in a closed ontology of Welsh-ness, a boy's country summer camp 'Paradise', disturbed only by local bullies and the distraction of British soldiers, from time to time. To cope with all the family and village madness, Griff regularly strips down to his vulnerable clean white underwear and, once comfortable, sequesters himself in the family manor's attic. Up there he authors complex hand-coloured maps, hence the film's title. Emlyn's creation of lyrical rain-taps, haunting flutes mixed with wind and other ambient events is one of his signature styles, which together entice the audience to want to spend the day with Griff in the cubby holes. The repeated attic scenes remind one of the impenetrable refuges of the children in *Never Ending Story* (1984). He populates his maps with markers of events, significant to a young boy, including landmarks like the place where his friend Alis might have been murdered or committed suicide by jumping or falling off the cliff into the sea. He indicates on the

map a sign telling us about the day she disappeared from picturesque Penrhyn, and all the lovely wooded places where he watches his father undress young girls and then watches, as the father sometimes forcefully rapes the teenagers. After he observes and carefully documents his father's public sex acts, Griff matter-of-factly retreats to the attic to draw maps, until his mother's brass table bell summons him to race to his mother's bedroom, where Griff dutifully reports to his mother the explicit details of his father's sexual acts, or re-reads letters of romance (written during their wartime courtship) and sent to Griff's mother by his now unfaithful Tad. When Griff isn't indulging his mother in this way, she invites him to lie next to her in bed and play 'kissing games'. Griff's sister Ruth and his token girlfriend hang out with the local bully, who 'for kicks' covers Griff's face with huge live snails, or holds Griff's head to a delicatessen salami slicing blade, until Griff promises not to 'rat' on the chief bully for calling Griff a 'pansy'.

In the film *Y Mapiwr*, protagonist Griff comes-of-age sexually, too:

The archetypal 'Wise Wizard' who appears along the way is a strange Slavic fellow who lives in a caravan shack on the dunes. Griff aggressively befriends this fellow, and discover that he is a Polish Jew who fled Poland during the Nazi '*Krystal Nacht*' persecutions, losing his wife and only daughter, Yaga. Yaga is memorialized next to the Polish 'crazy man's' goat pens with a sacred driftwood tree, which hold bells, charms and a lone, surviving picture of Yaga, and as Griff observes, the ballerina pendant which was on Alis's neck the night she disappeared. In spite of the elaborate Jewish Menorah in the caravan's living room, Griff asks his Polish friend 'why there is no cross' on the Yaga memorial, signalling Griff's cultural isolation. Griff and his Polish friend become vodka-drinking buddies, and in the course of a set of shared shots, Griff reveals to the Polish fellow that he fears that he is gay. The Polish fellow admits that he is also gay, 'You and I are alike, Griff', and then the scene almost culminates in sex, as Griff tearfully pushes his head into the Polish guy's chest and the Polish fellow slowly massages Griff's hair,

lips and neck. Even though Griff is fourteen and the Polish refugee must be in his thirties, there is no sense of violation or of paedophilic interest, only an innocent, mutual recognition of their shared sexuality and their mutual loneliness, along with a moment of interrupted erotic interest.

Emlyn punctuates the Cold War ‘drumbeats of mass destruction’ with the absurdity of incest:

Y Mapiwr is unpredictably bizarre and also enticingly sweet. Griff’s father leaves home, and then Griff copes by internalizing radio reports about the Bay of Pig’s Cuban Weapons Crisis. Emlyn distracts the audience with radio reports and interspersed stock newsreels and television clips, all about the Atomic bomb build-up and the nonchalant 1950s treatment of ‘home fall-out shelter marketing’, which creates a constant dramatic relief from the stressful family dysfunctions that Griff faces each day. The approaching possibility of world cataclysm seems dwarfed by the grotesque family ‘chains’ and ‘secrets’, which Griff is increasingly asked to bear. Griff runs away from the sexual overtures of his older Polish hermit, would-be lover, only to discover that his token girlfriend’s father has lost his mind and is off in the woods shooting the Queen’s swans with shotguns, while nearby the madman’s daughter is being raped by Griff’s lecherous and violent Tad. Somehow, with all the chaos, Griff has found time to construct a fully stocked fall-out shelter in the sand. Next, his erstwhile girlfriend who was having the violent fling with his Tad (and who eventually rapes her) decides she can’t go home to face her angry mother or insane father, so she’ll impose on Griff, by fleeing to the fall-out shelter for refuge. Meanwhile, it is revealed that out of jealousy for their mother’s affection, sister Ruth admits to being the real murderer of Alis. When sister Ruth goes to take a plate of breakfast to Griff’s token girlfriend, hidden in the fall-out shelter, the girlfriend and sister quarrel, and the sister accidentally brings the fall-out shelter down upon the girlfriend, killing her, along with Griff’s collection of caged seabirds, needed by

Griff in case of a nuclear war. Just when you think things can't get worse, Griff's father commits suicide by blowing up the family car on the nearby beach. Griff and his sister resign themselves to living in the family manor, patiently waiting until their mad mother completely loses her mind and eventually dies. While they await this event, they agree to blissfully engage in more afternoon incest, or as mother taught them both to call their activities, in joyful 'kissing games.'

Carnival of the Siblings — when foreboding becomes delicious and forbidden:

Emlyn's tale in *Y Mapiwr* is Oedipal on several levels, and killing off the father at the end reinforces this reading. The political agreement between Griff and his sister Ruth, which comes at the end of the film, might be symbolic of distasteful political compromises that the nation has to make for reasons of pragmatism and even survival. *Y Mapiwr* has numerous 'growing up' moments, however regressive and ultimately neurotic the outcome might be. The least neurotic moment is when Griff admits to his Polish friend that he's gay. Griff has selected this friendship without the interference or approval of his family or village that interfere with every other aspect of Griff's attempts for self-construction and individual identity. The emotional and physical incest with his mother and sister are not at all distasteful but functional and pragmatic, and each has its own twisted beauty, which Griff accepts as a possibly durable arrangement in his psychologically and socially thwarted childhood. The audience might be disappointed with the denouement, which leaves Griff and his incestuous sister spending the afternoon in bed, blithely 'acting out' sexually. Meanwhile, Daddy's corpse smoulders on the beach and the pale, Gothic silhouette of *Mam*'s anorexic face lingers in the shadows of her dusty boarded up dance rehearsal hall. Worse still, *Mam* ignores the children having sex upstairs, so she can fully contemplate being a 'Dying Swan'. But the metaphor of political pragmatism, conflated with the obvious compromise that Griff is willing to make about his true identity (he's choosing incest over gay sex with attractive older men) has a

truthfulness about it that resonates. Emlyn is offering his Welsh domestic audience an entertaining mood piece that might satisfy any suppressed collective anger, as the villainous father is incinerated. The incendiary ‘carnival’ ‘levels’ the emotional and political ‘playing fields’ in Welsh films, and it is significant that many Welsh films include an obligatory arson, fire or explosive beginning or ending (*Cwm Hyfryd*, *Penyberth*, *Porc Pei*, *Branwen*, *Darklands*, *Joni Jones*, *Y Mapiwr*, to name a few). We end this chapter by concluding that the Coming-of-age genre is important to Welsh filmic product. The reasons for this genre’s popularity seem to be both economic and political. *Y Mynydd Grug* and *Y Mapiwr* have shown us that the usual categories we listed at the beginning of this chapter are often subverted or altered for purposes of the individual director’s careers, or to convey coded linguistic, moral or nationalistic statements. In the next chapter we will continue our readings of this large collection of Coming-of-age films, and see how other important dimensions influence the “Welsh-ness” of these films.