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Dream Country:

The Ireland text in French Cinema, 1937 to 1978.

Paula Gilligan

Ph.D. Thesis

Trinity College Dublin

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Summary.

This thesis is an exploration of the Ireland text in French cinema, 1937-1977. Less than one hundred feature films have been made by Irish film-makers in Ireland in cinema's first century but more than two thousand fiction films with Irish subjects have been produced outside the country. As a result of this, it could be said that the study of cinema and Ireland necessitates an intercultural approach. While other critics have focused, almost exclusively, on representations of Ireland constructed by the cinema cultures of the United States and of England, I examine the Ireland text in French cinema, a text which has never been studied before. This thesis begins by exploring some of the historical research carried out in the field of relationships between Ireland and France and by noting key representations of Ireland and Irish figures in other texts taken from popular culture where these have high cultural value. My examination of French film production in the twentieth century has yielded five key films produced by France, spanning the period 1937 when the first major French fiction film with an Irish subject was released, to 1978, when the last major film about Ireland appeared.

I argue that Liam O'Flaherty's novel *The Puritan*, set in Ireland of the 1920s, was reconstructed by Jeff Musso's *Le Puritain* (1937) to offer a frighteningly accurate representation of aspects of French culture in the 1930s. I explore how Yves Allégret's *La Jeune folle* (1952), set in the Irish Civil War, created a space in which to deal with the trauma of the Occupation of France in the Second World War. I demonstrate that Louis Malle's *!Viva Maria!* (1965) opens up questions of colonisation and

decolonisation and remains closely connected to the French political context of the 1960s. I suggest that Michel Boisrond's *On est toujours trop bon avec les femmes* (1971) set in the 1916 Rebellion in Dublin uses the Ireland text as a means to explore themes relevant to a French nation in the throes of a conservative backlash against the revolutionary culture of May 1968. I conclude that Yves Boisset's *Le Taxi mauve* (1978) indicates a departure from previous representations and constructs the West of Ireland as a 'dream country' for the French Right, a landscape where nature dominates and where history is subsumed into myth.

There can be a tendency in Irish film studies to look unfavourably upon representations of Ireland from other cinema cultures. This thesis offers a challenge to that point of view. My research demonstrates that the image of the Irish as constructed by French culture is rich, varied and the site of constant struggle and conflict. I conclude that, until the 1980s, Ireland, for France, was a space where its French producers explored anxieties and preoccupations about France in the period in which those films were made, where history was contested and where the Other, in the form of the Irish figure, was deployed to explore the Self.

My approach to each of these films examines the film as text, against its historical and cultural context and with reference to its intertexts. Particular attention was paid to records of audience response to the films. Much of my research was conducted in France where I had access to French newspapers, journals, book reviews, critical and historical publications and filmographies. I viewed many films on video at libraries, on television, and in cinema theatres. My research is presented in a strong theoretical frame, informed to a great extent by the writings of specialists in the fields of interculturalism, of performance theory and of French cinema history.

Dream Country: The Ireland Text in French Cinema, 1937-1977.

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Note to Reader

All translations from French to English are my own unless otherwise specified.

Introduction: The Ireland Text in French Cinema.

The Ireland text is constructed through the range of representations of and discourses about Irish people, Irish culture, history and landscape, available historically and currently in French culture. The composite representation of Ireland may be perceived as a text read by the French; thus the use of the term 'The Ireland text in France'. The extent to which have these representations have been processed by the French people and the resultant reconstructed images of Ireland as expressed by the French, have been a matter for concern for scholars of history and literature. To date, however, no systematic study of the Ireland text in French popular culture has been carried out.

There are, in fact, literally thousands of texts about Ireland circulating in France and available to the French public through music stores, book-shops, libraries, supermarkets, advertising, theatres, newspapers, radio, film and television. A study of all the many different forms the Ireland text in France takes is outside the scope of this thesis. In cultural terms, the media, in particular television, has become a highly significant component of the practice of everyday life.

Television and the Ireland text in France.

Television has also become a primary source of those representations which contribute to our cognitive mapping of our surroundings, France, or Ireland, as the case may be. Content analysis of enacted narrative in the form of television in the French cultural context

reveals that a vast amount of filmic material about Ireland was circulating in France in the 1990s.[1] A survey of the 1994 schedules of the six channels diffused by Hertzian means, TF1, France 2, France 3, Canal Plus, Arte and M6, indicates that Ireland attracted considerable unsolicited attention from the French television media in the period, in addition to the predictable inclusion of Ireland in the continuum of non-local news events. The six Hertzian channels devoted more than twenty-four hours of prime-time television programming to Ireland in the form of fictional and documentary presentations in the year 1994, that is, on average, a feature every fortnight in the prime 8 to 10 p.m. slot.[2] A majority of these programmes was in the form of cinema features. I identified a further sixteen hours of television prime time devoted to Ireland on the cable schedules. There are, however, twenty-five channels so this list is not definitive. The majority of the cable programmes with Irish subjects were also fiction films. Where the programmes were not fiction films, they were most often magazine-type programmes based on cinema texts with Irish subjects.

Ireland as text in France is typified by its representation in the hugely popular adventure travel programme, *Ushuaia*, an important anchor programme for the channel TF1. *Ushuaia* dedicated one programme to Ireland.[3] The programme's promotion on the French television review *Télérama* promised: 'Ireland: the traces of the Celtic soul; The Aran Islands; the swimming elephant in India: Yannet the dolphin, The Mad Chair'.[4] The feature on the Aran Islands was dominated by Robert Flaherty's *Man of Aran* (1934). Other features

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[1] John Ellis, *Visible Fictions; Cinema:Televsion:Video,*, (London: Routledge, 1992), pp.118-20.

[2] In order to establish the attraction of the Ireland text in relation to other countries of 'peripheral' Europe, I also surveyed programs on Denmark. Only two hours of programming were devoted to Denmark in 1994 on the French Hertzian channels.

[3] *Ushuaia* has an average audience of 7-10%.

[4] 'L'Irlande; les vestiges de l'ame celtique. Les Iles Arans; La nage indienne de l'elephant, Yannet le Dauphin, La chaise Folle", *Télérama,*, (Paris: March 12th, 1993),

about Ireland appeared on French television in the same period. Many of these features are influenced by cinematic representations of Ireland such as Flaherty's film. This would appear to confirm that cinema, in spite of many predictions that it would be 'replaced' by television, remains, in Hollis Frampton's memorable words, the last machine.[5]

Television is the prime medium of fiction film/cinema viewing in France.[6] Unlike cinema where texts are analysed as single narrative units, any individual television programme is part of the syntagm formed by the endless flow of images in the Television continuum. The fiction films with Irish subjects form a subset of that syntagm. They can be considered as part of a whole statement on Ireland in which a number of discourses are in operation. The broad paradigm in which this thesis is sited is screen representations of Ireland in France. This broad paradigm consists of screen representations from original French sources –and these will be the key texts of the thesis-, imported screen representations encoded with French subtitles or dubbed French voices, or imported screen representations of Ireland presented in the language of origin, or edited as part of a magazine format. Motifs emerge in the selection of images from the Ireland paradigm for any given film, motifs which connect it to other films in the subset and which serve as an index of a particular discourse. These recurring motifs or patterns in French cinema are the object of my study.

The flow of representations between two culturally defined communities such as Ireland and France is three-fold, consisting of representations generated by the culture of origin, representations generated by the receiver culture and representations mediated, thus

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[5] Cited in Colin Mc Cabe's introduction to Fredric Jameson, *The Geopolitical Aesthetic, Cinema and Space in the World System*, (Bloomington: Indiana Uni. Press, 1995), p. xi.

[6] Jean-Yves Capul, *Les Medias, Cahiers Français*, No. 266, June 1994, (Paris: La Documentation Française, 1994), p.35.

modified, by other cultures.[7] Representations of Ireland available to the French will consist of those representations generated empirically or experientially by the French and representations of Ireland accessible to the French via other cultures, for example British or American culture. The amalgam of representations from these three sources could be described as the Ireland text in France. There has been a vast amount of intercultural exchange between Ireland and France over the centuries and some of this exchange has interesting ramifications for this thesis. My first chapter selectively outlines some of the migratory influences on the Ireland text in France and explores some aspects of the historical research carried out in the field of relationships between Ireland and France relevant to the thesis. It also notes some of the key representations of Ireland and Irish figures in other texts taken from popular culture where these have high cultural value.

The Films.

In this thesis the cinema texts are studied chronologically and are organised according to the political context in which they were produced. The approach to these films examines the film as text, against its historical and cultural context and with reference to its intertexts. Particular attention will be paid to records of audience response to the film both at the moment of its release and afterwards as the film continues to circulate in French culture. The research has yielded five key film produced by France, spanning the period 1937, when the first major French fiction film with an Irish subject was released, to 1978, when the last major film about Ireland appeared. This study thus covers forty years of French history.

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[7]See Denis McQuail and Sven Windhal, *Communication Models*, (London: Longman, 1993), p.89.

Jeff Musso's *Le Puritain* (1937) based on the novel *The Puritan* by Liam O'Flaherty, will be the object of investigation in the Chapter Two. A second film adaptation of an O'Flaherty novel was also directed by Jeff Musso. *Dernière jeunesse*, released in 1939. Unlike *Le Puritain*, *Dernière jeunesse* did not retain any Irish signification and contemporary response to the film reflects the absence of the Ireland text. Thus, while this second O'Flaherty film is explored in Chapter Two, it is not the key focus for the chapter. Yves Allégret's *La Jeune folle* (1952) set in the Irish Civil War, will form the basis of Chapter Three. Louis Malle's *!Viva Maria!* (1965) is the subject of Chapter Four. The last chapter deals with Michel Boisrond's *On est toujours trop bon avec les femmes* (1971) set in the 1916 Rebellion in Dublin and based on the novel by Raymond Queneau and Yves Boisset's *Le Taxi mauve* (1978) set in the West of Ireland. These films are not the sum total of representations of Ireland in French cinema –there are several other films which fall under this category and I will refer to these where relevant.

Although the French list of films with Irish subjects is relatively small when compared to the list of material produced in America, the personnel involved in these productions and the awards these productions received, redress the imbalance somewhat. The films of this thesis were made with the participation of film practitioners whose influence on and contribution to French cinema culture has been immense. Among the personnel listed are: Vivian Romance – a key performer in the Golden Age of French cinema –known for her role in classics such as *La Belle équipe (*Julien Duvivier, 1936); the cinematographer Kurt Courant; the actor and theatre director Jean Louis Barrault – whom Antonin Artaud considered the actor of the avant-garde in France; Pierre Fresnay – the leading actor of the 1930s and star of *La Grande illusion (*Renoir, 1937); the director Yves Allégret – who, with Clouzot – spearheaded post-war French film noir; the set-designer Alexander Trauneur – responsible for *Le Jour se lève* (Marcel Carné, 1939): the actor Danièle Delorme -

favourite actor of feminist filmmaker Jacqueline Audry; the director Louis Malle; the writer Jean-Claude Carrière who worked with Bunuel; the writer, Raymond Queneau. This list is not exhaustive but it gives us some idea of the importance of the subject of the Ireland text in French cinema. We must also take into account the fact that all of the films studied here were released as mainstream films with distribution throughout France and that they enjoyed high profile in the press at the time of their release. The films had a presence in the culture of late twentieth century France in the television schedules and continue to be widely distributed and available in video form as classics of the French cinema.[8]

Ireland, Cinema and Interculturalism.

In 1984, Kieran Hickey lamented that; 'Ireland on film has always been a dream country', constructed by foreigners.[9] In Hickey's view, Ireland as a nation has 'left the world's screen dark'.[10] Less than one hundred feature films have been made by Irish film-makers in Ireland in cinema's first century but more than two thousand fiction films with Irish subjects have been produced outside the country.[11] As a result of this, it could be said that the study of cinema and Ireland necessitates an intercultural approach. Intercultural communication may be described as the flow of representations between culturally defined communities. As we have seen, discourses about Ireland in other cinema cultures have been a matter of some concern for scholars working in the field of cinema

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[8] In 1999 all five of the key films were for sale in the video section of the Virgin megastore at Paris.

[9] Kieran Hickey, quoted in Arthur Gribben, 'Images of Irishness in Commercial Motion Pictures', in *Images of the Irish and Irish-Americans in Commercial & Ethnogrpahic Film*, eds. Arthur Gribben, Thomas Wilson and James MacKillop, (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1987), p. 4.

[10] Ibid., p. 4.

[11] Kevin Rockett, *Still Irish, a Century of the Irish on Film,* (Dublin: Red Mountain Press, 1995), p. 2.

and Ireland. A number of books have dealt with this subject. However, an examination of these reveals that research and critical analysis has concentrated to an overwhelming extent on anglophone films produced by British firms or by Hollywood, although many of the works contain listings of and brief references to French films with Irish subjects. It is remarkable that there is not more written on the subject given that the very first cinema images of Ireland were made by the Lumière brothers. The reel, *Views of O'Connell Street*, screened in Dublin in 1897, is often mentioned in the opening chapters of almost all major studies of the history of Ireland and cinema, including the earliest published profile of Ireland and cinema, Prionsias Ó Conluain's *Scéal na Scannáin* (1953). Ó Conluain places Irish film in context with important European and Hollywood movements and contains a Filmography of films about Ireland. The author's work was based on films he saw in Ireland and therefore serves as an index of which films were actually released in Ireland. He lists Allégret's *La Jeune folle* (1952) for example but not Musso's *Le Puritain* (1938). He offers no analysis of the French films in his filmography.

Rockett in the invaluable *Cinema and Ireland* mentions *Le Puritain* but it is not a primary focus of his essay.[12] He comments that this film, never released in Ireland, would have proved a departure for Irish cinema had it been viewed. This is the only French film referred to in any detail in the book. Rockett, in *Still Irish, A Century of the Irish in Film*, an album of cinema stills, also includes two French film photographs: one from *La Jeune folle* (1952) and one from *Le Puritain* (1938).[13] A comprehensive list of French films about Ireland or with Irish subjects is given in Kevin Rockett's *The Irish Filmography of Fiction Films* and summaries of the films are included. Again, in keeping with

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[12] John Hill, Kevin Rockett, Luke Gibbons, *Cinema and Ireland,* (London: Routledge, UK, 1988), p. 59.
[13]Rockett, (1995), p. 2.

the frame of a filmography, there is little by way of analysis of the Ireland text, although Rockett gives lengthy descriptions of the plot. An Irish -French-Belgian co-production, *Nous étions tous des noms d'arbres* (Armand Gatii, 1988) is noted in the French section but will not be covered in this thesis as it is categorised as documentary film. Rockett and John Caughie in *The Companion to British and Irish Cinema* make reference to the question of intercultural representations of Ireland under the heading 'Ireland and Other Cinemas' but limit their overview to films produced by British and American filmmakers.[14]

Mac Killop et al., in the recently published *Contemporary Irish Cinema: from The Quiet Man to Dancing at Lughnasa,* list *Le Puritain* and *Le Taxi mauve* in their filmography but none of the essays in the volume treat of either of these films.[15] Lance Pettit's *Screening Ireland*, aims 'to examine a selection of screen representations of Ireland in films and television programmes spanning the twentieth century' but this examination is restricted to key films from Irish, British and US cinema.[16] The author examines the question of national cinema and the Ireland text in the frame of United States, Britain and France but does not elaborate on the contribution of French films to the Ireland text. While Pettit comments that the 'political and cultural forms of nationalism expressed in Ireland between 1870 and 1921 drew threads from France, Germany and the USA', of these three, only the cinema of the USA is explored in his book.[17]

In almost all studies of Ireland in cinema, Irish scholars show a consciousness of the problem of national stereotypes in intercultural

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[14] Kevin Rockett and John Caughie, *The Companion to British and Irish Cinema*, (London: BFI, 1996), p.88.

[15] James MacKillop, Ed., *Contemporary Irish Cinema: from The Quiet Man to Dancing at Lughnasa*, (New York: Syracuse Uni. Press, 1999).

[16] Lance Pettit, *Screening Ireland: Film and Television Representations,* (Manchester: Manchester Uni. Press, 2000), p. xiii.

[17] Ibid., p.3.

relations. Most film historians find it important to distinguish between the representation of Ireland generated by English producers and those made by American producers. The colonial relationship between Ireland and England is an important factor in this distinction. There have been investigations into the agendas of the films on Irish history for English producers at a propaganda level and Irish response to these images. In the opinion of many critics, English constructions of the stage-Irishman have found their way into Hollywood repertoires, particularly in the early cinema. Caughie and Rockett contend that 'American cinema has largely constructed Ireland as a bucolic haven free from the rigours of American competitiveness and its capitalist ethos, with a particular celebration of the pre-modern virtues of the West of Ireland, as in *The Quiet Man* (1952)' and that images of the drunken and violent Irish peasant abound in these films.[18] Terry Byrne, in *Power in the Eye*, goes one step further and states that the image of the Irish portrayed by other cultures has been invariably 'rigid and stereotypical'.[19] Byrne also contends that the 'strongest externally generated image' of the Irish came from Britain, although the sheer volume of films about Ireland produced in Hollywood would seem to contradict this view and Byrne discounts non- English language films in his study.[20]

Martin McLoone in his *Irish Film,* published 2000, defines his field as about 'contemporary Ireland and the cinema it both produces and inspires'.[21] A key theme for him is 'the diasporic imagination', an imagination which, in Mc Loone's view, has played a 'key role in the development of cinematic genres and stereotypes in the cinema in general'.[22] The twin figures of Ford and Flaherty and their two films,

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[18]Rockett & Caughie, (1996), p.88.
[19] Terry Byrne, *Power in the Eye*, (London: The Scarecrow Press, 1997), pp.5-7.
[20] Ibid., pp.5-7.
[21]Martin McLoone, *Irish Film, The Emergence Of A Contemporary Cinema*, (London: BFI, 2000), p.3.
[22]Ibid., p.3.

The Quiet Man and *Man of Aran*, are the primary focus of Mc Loone's exploration of the diasporic imagination. Again Mc Loone concentrates on the 'traditions of cinematic representations' produced by British and American film industries and none of the French films about Ireland form part of his study.[23] Nevertheless, Mc Loone's book, like Ó Conluain's, points out the huge influence of French cinema on Irish contemporary film practice, especially in the work of Irish directors working from the periphery such as Pat Murphy. In a very lengthy passage of the chapter headed 'The First Wave: Indigenous Film in the 1970s and 1980s', McLoone compares Murphy's *Maeve* (1981) to Louis Malle's *Atlantic City*, commenting that *Maeve* critiques the portrayal of the woman's sexuality typified by Malle's film.[24] Following his comments on *Atlantic City*, McLoone goes on to compare *Maeve* favourably with Jean-Luc Godard's *Numero Deux* (1975). His emphasis here is on French cinema's avant-garde and he would appear to be drawing on the critical tradition of the 'auteur theory' and thus is not concerned, at least in the case of the French films he discusses, with the kind of issues raised by an intercultural approach. His analysis of Malle's film does not examine *Atlantic City* as a French representation of the American text in 1980.[25]

The Intercultural Text.

A film such as *Atlantic City* demonstrates the problem of dealing with intercultural performance texts. Erika Fischer-Lichte points out that,

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[23] Ibid., p.3.

[24] McLoone refers to a scene where young waitress Sal (Susan Sarandon) is rubbing lemon juice into her breasts, an evening ritual she carries out when alone in her apartment, when she realises she is being watched by the old man, Lou, (Burt Lancaster), and she continues with her toilette in spite of this. McLoone finds that the scene counterpoints the woman's active sexuality with the old man's failing masculinity and that the scene is tinged with 'an ineffable sadness'. Ibid., p.144.

[25] This lack of exploration of intercultural contexts would seem only to apply to Mc Loone's critique of French film and is in contrast to his work on Ford where he is at pains to point out the relevance of *The Quiet Man* to the United States context of the 1950s. Ibid., pp. 33-59.

in order to fully understand such texts and the mode of representation involved in them, a predominantly historical approach is needed.[26] The context of these modes of representation, the conditions on which they are based, their function and meaning must be taken into account. In her view, a predominantly theoretical approach is too limiting. She emphasises that, whatever the approach used, the intercultural text poses the question of boundaries and exchanges.[27] Following Fisher-Lichte, all exchange can be regarded as an attempt to negotiate the limits between film and other cultural domains and an attempt to redefine them. Part of my work in this thesis has been to examine these negotiations in the complex interchange between the Ireland and the France text in French cinema.

The Ireland text as object in France is not something that is wholly the product of Irish marketing nor is it already 'out there' in the world in some primordial naturalistic sense. It is essentially contested and only makes sense as it is developed within a discourse. It is a paradigm of experience, of which film is one element. It could be said, therefore, to be wholly or radically imaginary but it also is real in the sense that it relates to the lived life of its producers. If the Ireland text exists in French culture, it will be as an entity hidden within the movement of a process which does not at first have a distinctive existence as such at all but which, in the continued 'movement' of the process, emerges as an identifiable part of it. It will be a text which is constantly amended. What are these cinematic practices in France? What function has the Ireland text for its French producers? How are issues of time and space dealt with

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26 Fischer-Lichte, Erika, *The Show and the Gaze of Theatre*, (Iowa City: Uni. of Iowa Press, 1997), p.p. 10-12.

27 Erika Fischer-Lichte distinguishes between interculturalism, 'an encounter with a long history which exposed and satisfied varying functions' and the 'international' and 'intercultrual' phenomena as practiced by western theatre directors Peter Brook and Robert Le Page, a practice involving the 'ripping out of elements from their various contexts'. Ibid., pp. 137-40.

in the films and how do they relate to the context of their articulation? What are the key themes and attractions in the Ireland text in France?

The task here consists of no longer treating discourses about Ireland in France only as groups of signs, signifying elements referring to contents or representations, happening at random or in isolation but as practices that systematically form the object of which they speak, the Ireland text as it exists in France. My research will determine what aspects of the Ireland text have been of significant to French audiences and producers in terms of these films. In this thesis I set out to demonstrate that the Ireland text has a significant presence in French cinema culture and that the construction of the Ireland text in these films can offer the student of Ireland and cinema new avenues for exploration.

Chapter One: The 'Dream Country': Ireland and France

"Is sa bhFrainc im' dhœiseacht dom, I nEirinn Chuinn im' chodladh....[1]

This 17th Century Dominican priest, Patrick Hackett, an Irish exile in France, looked forward to sleep because he could be in 'L'Irlande Imaginaire' in his dreams.[2] Today he could find some gratification from watching films on French television. In previous centuries he might have gained some respite from exploring the not inconsiderable outpourings from the many illustrious French writers who chose as Ireland as a subject.[3] Intercultural exchange between Ireland and France has a long history and, while it would not be possible to explore every aspect of that exchange within the boundaries of this thesis, some of the Irish themes found in French cinema had currency in the culture long before the advent of film. For many French commentators, the cultural exchange

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[1] Quote from an epigram by Father Padraigín Hackett. He was one of the most important of the 17th century Irish poets and took refuge in Louvain following the Cromwellian campaign in Ireland. Exile is the great of theme of his work. The rest of the verse runs: Is sa bhFrainc im' dhœiseacht dom, I nEirinn Chuinn im' chodladh: beag ar ngrádh uaidh don fhaire, do thál suain ár síorfhaire'.

[2] 'L'Irlande Imaginaire' as a term was the title of a recent festival of Irish films, literature and music, in 1998. The festival, 'L'Irlande Imaginaire' consisted of exposing the French to Irish representations of Ireland. See Doireann Ní Bhriain & Michel Ricard, *L'Imaginaire irlandais,*, (Paris: Assoc. Française d'Action Artistique, 1996).

[3] See Graham Gargett and Geraldine Sheridan, *Ireland and the French Enlightenment, 1700-1800*, (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999).Graham Gargett's essay, 'Voltaire's view of the Irish' and Eamonn O Ciosáin's *Attitudes towards Ireland and the Irish in Enlightenment France* deal with the subject in depth.

between Ireland and France dates back to the first appearance of the Celts in Ireland. [4]

Mythic Ireland:

Myth, rather than history, would appear to fuel French perceptions of the culture of the 'Gaels', who, as French historian, René Fréchet remarks in his *Histoire d'Irlande*, invaded Ireland from Gaul.[5] This 'common' Celtic heritage constitutes, according to more than one French commentator, an important attraction of the Ireland text for the French. The historian Michelet contended that the 'French people, an immense majority of them, are Celts', and the writer Chateaubriand, calling for a return to source for 'Celtic' France, declared that ' the 'calque' of Latin literature has destroyed in our own literature the originality of French genius'.[6] Henri Hubert, the great French historian and author of the seminal work, *The History of the Celtic People*, takes great pains to deconstruct the Celt of romantic imagination such as may be found in the work of Chateaubriand. Hubert was conscious of the dangers of such myths particularly as they manifested themselves in 1930s German romanticist writing about the 'pure Celtic race'. Hubert argues strongly for a study of the Celtic peoples which emphasises intercultural exchange rather than race. He states categorically that the Celts 'are not a race, but a group of peoples, or to speak more accurately, a group of societies'. [7] He further states that we 'do not know of any human group in Europe, from the Quaternary Period and the age of chipped stone downwards which is

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[4] For a full history of the relationship between the Celts of Ireland and Celts of France, see Henri Hubert, *The History of the Celtic People*, (London, Bracken Books, 1993, from the French original, 1st pub 1934).

[5] Fréchet's book is cited as key reading by several French tour guides to Ireland. See René Fréchet, *Histoire de l'Irlande*, (Paris: Que Sais-je, Presse Universitaires, 1970, revised edition, 1995), p.10.

[6] Hovelaque, H., *Anthologie de la Littérature irlandaise*, (Paris: Collection Pallas/Librairie Delagrave, 1924), p. i.

[7] Hubert, (1993), p.30.

not composed of different anthropological elements'. [8] In his view, the image of the Celts was a performance of collective identity, more habitus than anthropological. The ideal type of Aryan racism, 'the parade of tall fair Celts', was achieved through the visual register of costume and make-up: 'the Gauls dyed or bleached their hair, and with that object invented the prototype of soap, sapo'.[9] Hubert's research demonstrates that, while the social organisation of the Celts has disappeared from Europe, Celtic civilisation resonates in French culture and language in its modes of representation, particularly in the dramatic character of its narration.[10] The literatures of Ireland and Wales thus fascinate the French, who, in Hubert's view, 'jettisoned the whole of their epic tradition for the sake of the more sophisticated culture the Romans brought'. The great sagas and epics offer the only means by which the French can 'catch a glimpse of their (Celtic) doctrine and the soul of Celticism today'.[11]

Fréchet argues that the ancient Gaelic culture, a culture of 'peasants and warriors', demonstrated a sense of 'transcendent authority'. They were a people who 'felt themselves part of a distinct world, the world of the Gods, and thus were in constant anticipation of the marvellous'.[12] This 'other Ireland: ' secret, mystic, unknown, ' l'ile des saints et des héros', 'a Celtic mirage', intrigues French travellers because it is a country not only of enchantment but also of doom and misfortune; thus its romantic appeal.[13] Ireland of mythology is frequently represented

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[8]Ibid., p.30.

[9]Hubert mentions that Caligula assembled a parade of Celtic prisoners in just such a manner: by picking out the tallest Gauls and making them dye their hair red. Ibid., p.82.

[10] Hubert describes post-Independence Ireland as a new society, not Celtic, in spite of the Gaelic revival, and the state in France as Roman and Germanic. Ibid., p. 15.

[11]Ibid., p.14.

[12]'Les fonctions religeuse, guerrière, et paysanne relevaient d'une autorité transcendante; les gaels se sentaient appartenir à un monde distinct de celui des dieux, et s'attendaient toujours au merveilleux'. Fréchet, (1995), p.10.

[13]'Le romanticism a eu beau jeu d'en faire une des terres d'élection des voyageurs du siècle dernier. Montalembert s'enchantait encore de ces images patriarcales. Quel pays offrait alors plus de mystère, plus d'abbayes et de chateaux en ruines, lequel surtout, au

as a woman: indeed older names for Ireland such as Fodhla and Banba had their origin in legends of fairy women and goddesses. Hovelaque, in his introduction to his *Anthologie de la littérature irlandais*, describes 'l'ile enchanteresse' as capable of representing herself as a ravishing young girl endowed with all nature's gifts. This woman, Ireland, however, for Hoveloque, has another, more sinister, face: the face of an old woman succumbed to fate, and flayed with age: the 'shan van vocht'.[14]

Dreaming of Isolde

The Irish woman as sign has fascinated and intrigued French writers, poets, and artists over the centuries. Patrick Rafroidi in 'The Mirror and The Myth', his contribution to the volume, *France Ireland* points out the significance of the romance of the quest, 'l'errance', and of the figure of the Irish woman for French culture, a feature unique to representations of Ireland in France.[15] He demonstrates the persistence of the Tristan and Isolde myth in French writing about Ireland. *Tristan and Isolde*, in his view, is the continental revival of the Irish legend *Diarmaid and Gráinne*. According to Rafroidi, the Isolde myth is an index of how Ireland as legend functions to provide 'a stock of irrational images' upon which the French have 'never ceased drawing'. The figure of Isolde is central for that quest for the dream country. He further contends that French writers cling to the symbol of Isolde, 'blending it at will with other images, heroic ones particularly, thus developing the archetype of the virgin soldier, understandably a favourite one in the country that fostered Joan of Arc'.[16] Rafroidi cites numerous examples of Ireland as myth and

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cours de l'Historie, avait montré une telle vocation pour le malheur?'. Camille Bourniquel, *L'Irlande*, (Paris: Seuil/Petite Planète, 1955), p. 9 & p. 13.

[14] Hovelaque, (1924), p. 2.

[15] Patrick Rafroidi, in 'The Mirror and The Myth', in *France-Ireland*, Patrick Rafroidi, Guy Fehlmann and Maitiu Mac Conamara, eds. (Uni. De Lilles, France, 1973), p. 45.

[16] Ibid. p. 45.

of the Isolde figure in French literature, an index of the power of Irish mythology as a signifying system for the French.

In more recent times both Irish and Welsh mythology have proved an inspiration for one of the most popular cultural media in France: the 'bande desinées' or graphic novels. Hugo Pratt's graphic novels function as an important source of representations of the Irish in contemporary French culture. Pratt, an Italian artist based in France, remains one of the most popular graphic-novelists in France. His hero, *Corto Maltese,* has achieved cult status to the extent that the works created with this character have achieved the "high culture" label. Pratt dedicated one large work to the Irish and Welsh under the title *Les Celtiques (*1975). In this BD, hero Corto Maltese travels to Ireland during the War of Independence and encounters the beautiful Banshee O'Dannan, angel of death and Irish Revolutionary. Of all the women Maltese encounters in his travels, and he encounters many, the Irish revolutionary is the only woman he has ever loved: 'Corto Maltese, himself, is a man who loves only one woman, Banshee O'Dannan, the Irish woman, the only woman whom he asks to accompany him in his wanderings but who refuses, convinced as she is that she brings bad luck and that her love would, for him, prove fatal'.[17] Banshee's surname, a reference to the Tuatha Dé Dannan, clearly positions her in the Celtic goddess myth, and links her to the figure of Isolde. The use of the Isolde sign in the Irish revolutionary context has interesting ramifications for the Ireland text in the twentieth century, and I will elaborate on this subject later.

The Irish Monks in France

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17 'Corto Maltese, lui, est l'homme d'un seul amour: Banshee O'Dannan, l'Irlandaise, la seule femme à laquelle il a proposé de l'accompagner dans son errance mais qui a refusé, persuadée qu'elle porte malheur et que son amour lui serait fatal'. Yves-Marie Labé, 'Les chemins secrets du nomade Hugo Pratt', in *Le Monde radio-télévision,* Sunday, 4th of June, (Paris:1995), p.7.

In Irish history Christianity heralded the end of the overtly Celtic culture, although many of the festivals in the Irish religious calendar are manifestations of ancient Celtic religious practices overlaid with Christian rites. In France too the Celtic religious world was succeeded by the monastic movements. Here, perhaps more than in any other aspect of early French culture, the Irish made their mark and had an important influence on the development of French Catholicism from the Dark to the Middle Ages. The Catholicism text is very significant for the Ireland text in French cinema. For French scholars, the Irish contribution shaped the church in France to a striking degree. An Irishman confronted travel writer Camille Bourniquel, author of the guide book, *L'Irlande*, with the question: 'why do we almost always find in your novelists (Bernanos, Mauriac, Péguy), that call themselves Christians, these sweating agonies, these doubts, these stomach troubles, this diffidence when confronting an atheist, this morbid uncertainty?'[18] He might have found his answer in the writings of Sixth Century Irish missionary to France, Saint Columban.

Born in 543, Columban left Bangor Monastery when he was thirty and travelled to Gaul, where his eloquence captivated Gontran, the king of Burgundy.[19] The saint's ideas sound curiously similar in tone to the novels of the unnamed Irishman's nightmares: 'O mortal life! You flee and you are nothing: you appear and you are nothing but a shadow: you rise and you are nothing but a wisp of smoke: you flee each day and each day you return, and when you come, you come fleetingly, almost on the point of your leaving, different in term, hard on those who are ignorant, bitter to the wise: those who love you do not know you, and only those have no knowledge of you; those who do know you, detest you. One must, oh miserable human life, sound you out, question you, but never

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[18] Bourniquel, (1955), pp.131-2.
[19] Hovelaque, (1924), p 12.

have pride in you!'.[20] As the Irishman said to Bourniquel, there wasn't much joy to be found in it!

Columban had a profound effect on French religious culture. In spite of continuous condemnation from the established French hierarchy, Columban's mission was very influential in the development of the Monastic code, the *Regula Monachum /Regula Coenalisi*. Columban believed in total rejection of the body and the mortification of the flesh. He introduced an element of asceticism into Christian practice in France which persisted well into the Twentieth Century, and manifested itself in the writings of many young men in the inter-war years. Bourniquel's Irishman would have been dismayed by the importance of Georges Bernanos's novels in French cinema – not less than four of French cinema's classics are based on his writings. Historian Le Goff argues that French asceticism stems from Celtic modes of worship. He says that domain where the Celtic influence has been most profound has been in the field of penitence'.[21] The austerity of Columban's creed, especially his *Penitentiels*, an endless list of sins, were the forerunners of the most significant strands of thought in Jansenism, and in the Augustinian theories of predestination and effective grace.[22] Jansenist priests fleeing the revolution were set up in the Catholic College of Maynooth in Ireland and were thought to have heavily influenced Irish Catholicism. Cognet's research, however, would appear to suggest that the asceticism of French religion owes more than a little to the monastic creed of the Irish

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[20]'O vie mortelle! Tu fuis et tu n'es rien: tu apparais et tu n'es qu'une ombre: tu montes et tu n'es qu'une fumée; tu fuis chaque jour et chaque jour tu viens, tu fuis en venant, et tu viens en fuyant, semblable au point de départ, differente au terme: dure aux insensées, amére aux sages: ceux qui t'aiment ne te conassient pas, et ceux-là seuls te connaissent pas, et ceux-là seuls te connaissent qui te méprisent. Il faut donc, o miserable vie humaine, te sonder, t'interroger, mais ne pas se fier à toi'. Saint Columban, 'la vie', Ibid., p. 12.

[21] 'La domaine ou` l'influence celte est la plus profonde est celui de la penitence'. See Jean Le Goff, *L'histoire de la France religieuse*, (Paris: Éd. Seuil, 1988), p. 136.

[22] See Louis Cognet, *Le Jansenisme*, (Paris: Presses Universitaires/ Que Sais-Je?, 1991), pp. 124-26.

missionaries. Thus the Catholic text for Ireland and France truly calls for an intercultural approach and is a key theme in almost all the films of this thesis.

The Irish monks' creed did not always garner them favour with the French State. Columban was exiled from France in 608 as a result of his disputes with the local clergy and nobility concerning the licentiousness of the age. Profoundly anti-materialistic, his *Poetry at Seventy-eight Years* called for a life dedicated to friendship above all things, and not to the accumulation of wealth. This monastic asceticism which was later to find full flowering in the culture of Port Royal, inspired many attacks on Irish monks throughout French history. A very interesting document, written in 1651which had been rescued from the Library of Port Royal, and is now held in the Library at Versailles: *Conclusai Facutatis Theologica. Parisienis 'Pur Les Hybernois : Arrest. M.D.C. L1,* describes the legal process Irish Monks underwent in order to maintain their privileges and entitlements in the University of Paris.[23] The manuscript relates how the Irish priests and students at the Sorbonne had to defend themselves against the accusation that they were Jansenist and that their aim was to 'choquer les droits de la Couronne/to challenge the Rights of the Crown', a serious charge indeed. Allegiance to Jansenisme was considered treason against the French crown of 1651. The monks resisted the injuries and the slander with which the prosecutors wanted to charge the defence.[24] They went on to win their case, and the education of Irish priests in France continued.

Guy Fehlmann, in his essay, 'Franco-Irish relations from François 1er to Napoleon' gives a historical survey which serves to indicate the

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[23]Full title: *Conclusai Facutatis Theologica. Parisienis 'Pur Les Hybernois : Arrest. M.D.C. L1. De la cour de parlement. Donne en faveur des Ecclesiastiques Irlandasi, Graduez ou` étudiants en l'Université de Paris. Pur etre maintenu et garder en leur priveleges.* Manuscript 'Port Royal 8', at the Bibliothèque de Versailles, dated, the 24th of March, 1651,

strength of relations between Ireland and France.[25] Fehlmann describes the close connection between the Irish Catholic Church and the French as very significant to the political culture of Ireland. He tells of how a vast majority of Irish priests were educated in France up to the 19th century, in spite of the illegality of this training under the Penal code in Ireland. The historian Lecky commented on the political and cultural consequences of such an education, the hallmark of which was, in Fehlmann's words, 'a particular brand of Catholicism and a political maturity' that was to play an important part in the revolutionary history of the state.[26] Fehlmann's essay indicates the great extent to which the Catholic cultures of the two countries were connected, but also brings another important theme into the Franco-Irish exchange: the theme of revolution and war.

The Fighting Irish

Le Goff comments that, for Irish monks in France, 'Exile for God -far from their dear Ireland represented the supreme sacrifice'.[27] Another group of exiles had less lofty motivations for their presence in France. Irish mercenary soldiers were an important component of the war machinery of the State in France from Francois 1er to Napoleon. Guy Fehlmann's essay, referred to above, deals mainly with the history of Irish soldiers in military campaigns in this period and with the French intervention in revolts in Ireland.[28] The English brought Irish soldiers, under Lord Power, to fight France at the siege of Boulogne in 1544. These Irish soldiers became legendary for their violence, their courage,

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[24]'Les injuries, calomonies, et le venin noire cabale dont ils veulent charger les appelleants'. Ibid., p. 4.
[25]Guy Fehlmann, ' Franco-Irish relations from Francois 1er to Napoleon' in Rafroidi et al., (1973), p. 14.
[26]Ibid., p. 14.
[27]'L'exil pour Dieu –loin de sa chère irlande apernait au moin celte comme l'ascese suprème'. Le Goff, (1988), p. 136.
[28] Fehlmann, (1973), p. 14.

and their brutality in battle. One French story tells of how one of the Irish, having defied a Frenchman, did not hesitate to swim across the harbour to fight his challenger, and, being victorious, brought back his victim's head in his mouth.[29] Perhaps as a result of the Irish performance in Boulogne, French generals actively recruited the Irish in their wars in the eighteenth century. Irish bards celebrated this history in the form of poetry such as *Valentín Brún* and *The Battle of Fontenoy*, poems recording the success and reputation of Irish mercenaries and officers such as Valentine Brown, Charles O'Brien, Earl of Thomond, and those who took part in the battles like at Fontenoy, and in the French campaigns in Flanders and Alsace in the 17th century. Louis the Fourteenth's emissary, De Rochefort, who assisted at the Battle of the Boyne, described the impressive height and bravery of the Irish troops. The discourse of the ' fighting Irish', the professional soldier, and France, is a key discourse in texts about Ireland, and has been a contentious issue for Irish studies, particularly in film.[30] Fehlmann's comment on the striking contrast between these soldiers and the monks who had been coming to the continent for centuries before them implies that the monks were peaceable and unthreatening, while the soldiers were violent, brutal and uncivilised. Fehlmann qualifies his construction of the Irish soldiers with the statement that, in spite of the fearsome reputation of Irish soldiers serving with the French army, it is a fact that 'not a single act of treason on the part of the Irish troops serving in France has been recorded'. [31]

As for revolution, it is clear that the events in France in 1789 influenced Irish rebels from Wolfe Tone onwards. Events in Ireland following 1916, however, equally had an impact on France, and in

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[29]Ibid. , p. 14.

[30]Kevin Rockett has identified whole genres in American cinema culture which centre on the notion of the 'fighting Irish' – the Irish as boxers, gangsters, and soldiers. Rockett, (1995), pp. 74-118.

particular on the French Empire in the Twentieth Century. Ireland is significant in 'having waged the earliest, and one of the most successful, of the twentieth century 'wars of liberation' or of 'national-self-determination'.[32] The significance of these wars, in turn, lies precisely in the fact that they have been so rare. Since 1900, in fact, only fourteen nations have achieved independence by force, compared with over sixty nations that have done so by peaceful means. Before this success, however, Ireland's history was littered with failed rebellions, repeated attempts at insurgency which led to a construction of the Irish temperament as fatalistically driven to acts of political violence. This discourse has been explored by many Irish critics, especially by those working in the field of cinema.

Caughie and Rockett draw attention to the fact that the main subjects of English films about Ireland have been Irish history (*Captain Boycott*, 1947) and political violence in partitioned Ireland.[33] In these films, Ireland represents not a 'dream country' but a nightmare of irrational violence, fanaticism, and fatalism.[34] This set of negative discourses is not always evident in French writing on the subject, at least before 1916, but makes its appearance afterwards. As for 1916 and the Irish War of Independence, the two major French works of fiction on the subject, Joseph Kessel, *Les Coeurs purs (*1921) and Raymond Queneau, *On est toujours trop bon avec les femmes (*1947) betray mixed feelings

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[31] Fehlmann, (1973), p. 14.

[32] Peter Calvert, *Revolution*, (London: Pall Mall, 1970), p. 99.

[33] Rockett & Caughie, (1996), pp.88-9.

[34] 'Films, such as *The Gentle Gunman* (1952) and *A Prayer for the Dying* (1987) have tended to construct a view of the Irish where historical and political events are dehistoricised and desocialised. To this end, characters such as those played by John Mills in *The Gentle Gunman* or Stephen Rea in *The Crying Game*, (1992), are endorsed, since their humanistic concerns lead them to a rejection of the increasingly irrational violence represented by Dirk Bogarde in *The Gentle Gunman* and Miranda Richardson in *The Crying Game'*. Ibid., pp.88-9.

about the Irish revolutionary, whether man or woman.[35] These two works are key texts for this thesis and will be explored in detail later.

In earlier centuries, graphic descriptions of the 'suffering Irish' under British rule were more often that not the norm in French writing, and in French political discourse, and led to frequent gestures of aid from the French to the Irish. However, as Fehlmann comments, such largesse could not be depended on. He sums up military relations between the two countries thus: 'for various reasons, France never knew exactly what sort of Irishmen it was best for her to help and the Irish often failed to grasp that the French opposition to England was of a very different nature to their own. As a conclusion, one may say that France, in her relations with Ireland, evinced a remarkable gift for doing the right thing at the wrong time, whereas the Irish expected her to use the wrong arguments in the right way'. [36] It is interesting to note that the ambivalence which came from 'not knowing what sort of Irish man was best' increases in French representations of the Ireland text as the twentieth century progresses. The popularity of Hollywood films in France may have played an important role in the appearance of stereotyping more commonly associated with British and American cultures.[37]

Hollywood, Ireland, France: John Ford, 'L'irlandais'.

The figure of the fighting Irish immigrant appeared in two volumes by the Belgian cartoonist team Morris and Goscinny as part of their 1971 *Lucky Luke* series: *Canyon Apache* and *Les Rivaux de Painful Gulch*. *Lucky Luke* is one of the most popular 'bandes desinées' in French culture, and has sales that run to millions. Like the series *Astérix Le Gaul,*

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35 Joseph Kessel, *Les Coeurs Purs,* (Paris: Folio/Gallimard, 1987: 1st pub. 1921), and Raymond Queneau, *On Est toujours trop bon avec les femmes,* (Paris: Gallimard-Folio, 1971, 1st pub. 1947).

36Fehlmann, (1973), p. 28.

37See Rockett & Caughie, (1996), pp.88-9 for a critique of representations of Ireland in British film.

much of the humour is based on national stereotypes but in a western generic context. Morris and Goscinny take a satirical view of the Irish and offer us a combination of the stereotypes current in both Anglo and American cultures. In *Canyon Apache*, the French cowboy hero, Lucky Luke, comes across a troop of Irish soldiers of the American army who are preparing to traverse through a canyon via a narrow gorge guarded by Apache braves. Luke points out that to do so is tantamount to suicide but we find the hardy Irish lads marching on through to their fate, singing: 'Sweet Rose of our Ireland, the Green/ We think of you on going to our destruction/ We think of you, Judy O'Sullivan, as our troop and our caravan goes to our destruction'.[38] As the story progresses we are given representations of the Irish which feed into several myths: Irish martyrdom, the sentimental Irish, Irish drunkenness, the fighting Irish, the Irish against the Scots. The French character, Lucky Luke, is given an interesting role here, as both defender of the Apaches and friend to the Irish emigrants whom he discourages from fighting among themselves. Another volume, *Les Rivaux de Painful Gulch* also deals with the civil war -brother against brother theme, presented as a feud over land between the big-eared O' Haras and the big-nosed Timmins. Once again Lucky Luke acts as peacemaker between these two factions. *Les Rivaux de Painful Gulch* and *Canyon Apache* were written in 1962 and 1971 respectively. The latter story pays homage to John Ford's *The Searchers* (1956), as one of the characters, the Colonel O' Nolan, searches for his son who has been kidnapped by the Indians.

John Ford is undoubtedly one of the most significant figures for the Ireland text in cinema, and this holds true for France as much as for Hollywood and Ireland. His *The Quiet Man* dominates Irish film studies and reviewers differ very widely in their responses to it. In France, Ford's

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[38]'Douce Rose de notre irlande, la verte/ nous pensons à toi en allant à notre perte..Nous pensons à toi, Judy O'Sullivan, tandis qu'à sa perte va notre caravane'. Morris and Goscinny, *Canyon Apache - the Lucky Luke Series*, (Paris: Dargaud, 1971), p. 12.

earlier work, *The Informer* (1935), receives the warmest accolades, not merely as the most important work by the director, but also as one of the great masterpieces of cinema in general. Bourget describes the arc of critical success experienced by *The Informer*. He says that it was celebrated as a masterpiece on its release and has figured for a long time on the lists of the greatest films in cinema history. Under the 'realist' movement spear-headed by André Bazin in the 1950s its expressionist style and its use of the codes and functions of silent-cinema caused a backlash against it. Bourget, however, praises the film's originality, force, and its anti-narrative style, a brave stance in a time when sound and classic realism were the dominant modes.[39] The critic Jean Mitry concludes his piece on *The Quiet Man* with the note that he would give up all of the setting and colour of that film for the 'for the smallest piece of street from *The Informer* and its studio', an index of the importance of this film to France.[40]

The works of John Ford are the object of a very significant proportion of writing on western cinema from the earliest times, particularly in France. This writing reveals a preoccupation with the subject of the 'Irishness' of John Ford. Not less than three major works on John Ford by French critics have been published to date. French film historians invariably refer to Ford's connection with Ireland, and for many of these critics, the Ireland text is the key to understanding Ford's work. Jean Tulard describes him as representative of the Irish school in American cinema. He argues that the Ireland text gave Ford his greatest films, those that are most 'filled with action and with humour'.[41] Caughie and Rockett do not include Ford in the category of Irish directors. James McKillop refers to the problem of Ford's cultural identity, a problem that

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[39] Bourget, Jean-Louis, *John Ford*, (Paris: Rivages, 1990), p. 44.
[40] Jean Mitry, *John Ford, Tome II*, (Paris: classiques du cinéma, Éditions Univeritaires, 1954), p.102.
[41] Jean Tulard, *Dictionnaire du çinéma; les réalisateurs*, (Paris: Laffont, 1991), p.291.

has generated much controversy in assessments of his work. McKillop recounts an anecdote concerning Ford's pitch of *The Quiet Man* to the American producer Yates: 'he [Ford] took Yates to the West of Ireland, and pointed to a thatched, whitewashed cottage, and wept, 'that's the house where I was born'. Although any studio biography could have told Yates that Ford was born in Cape Elizabeth, Maine, he relented'.[42] McKillop then goes on to say that Ford's 'actual' family name was Feeney –in the film the name of Will Danaher's lackey – and that his parents had emigrated from County Galway. [43] Jean-Loup Bourget, French author of *John Ford*, a study of the directors work, also dwelled on Ford's construction of his identity as Irish:

> 'Ford declared, once his notoriety was assured, that his real name was, in fact Sean Aloysius O'Fearna, a name more Irish than natural, more gothic than the prosaic John Martin Feeney of reality. He did not hesitate to declare his knowledge of Gaelic, a language he learned in Ireland where he, in any case, had stayed for long periods at the age of eleven or twelve: in this biography worthy of Otto Rank, we can see the myth of the returning emigrant to the native land or more likely the motherland, a 'terre maternelle' of the imagination'.[44]

Bourget's notion of Ford's 'exile' identity as essentially fabricated has interesting ramifications. The director's representation of his own identity is obviously a source of anxiety to Bourget whose comments are deeply critical and cynical about 'Sean Aloysius O Fearna'.

Ford is not the only mediator of instability of identity in *The Quiet Man*. The actor 'Barry Fitzgerald' playing the part of Micheleen Óg Flynn was in fact a role deployed by the actor William Joseph Shields, who

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[42] James MacKillop, 'The Quiet Man Speaks', in Gribben, et al., (1987), p. 35.
[43] Ibid., p. 36..
[44]'Ford déclare, une fois sa notoriété assise, qu'il s'appelle en fait Sean Aloysius O'Fearna, nom plus irlandais que nature, plus 'gothique' pour ainsi dire que le prosaique John Martin Feeney de la réalité. Il ne manquera pas non plus d'évoquer sa connaissance du gaélique, langue apprise en Irlande ou` il aurait en tout cas longuement séjourné à l'age de onze ou` douze ans: dès cette biographie digne de Otto Rank, on trouve le

adopted this persona for films such as the Walt Disney produced *Darby O'Gill and The Little People*. Under his 'own' name, Shields played the devious judge in René Clair's *And Then There Were None* (1945), a film made by Clair in exile in America during the war. Throughout his work, Ford, in spite of his association with American patriotism and national myths, not only questioned the idea of his being 'American', but the idea of American identity in films like *The Searchers (*1956), and *The Man Who Killed Liberty Valance* (1961). For the French director, Bertrand Tavernier, the alienation of the marginal groups in society, and the crisis of identity produced by this alienation, was the great theme of Ford's life work: 'In attaching himself to the exiled, the rootless, the stateless, these minorities who are endlessly displaced, he (Ford), was one of the first to lay bare this so modern theme of the search for identity which haunts all works today'.[45] In some quarters, such doubts could be regarded with deep suspicion. Charlie Chaplin's retention of his English passport was a primary argument in his trial for 'un-American' activities, and his expulsion from the USA. The problem of the Irishness of Ford for Bourget and for other analysts of the director's work, has its source in Ford's authorship of his own identity. Ford's attachment to all his names – John Ford, Sean Aloysius Ó Fearna, Johnny Martin Feeney, grandson of the Thornton who had fought in the Irish revolution, challenges institutional discourses surrounding identity as fixed by place of birth

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mythe du retour à la patrie ou plutot à une motherland, une terre maternelle de l'imaginaire'. Bourget, (1990), p. 44.

[45]'En tout cas, en se penchant sur ces exilés, ces déracinés, ces apatrides, ces minorités que l'on déplace sans cesse, il a été l'un des premiers à mettre à nu ce thème si moderne de la recherche de l'identité, qui hante tant d'oeuvres d'aujourd'hui. [...] Çinéaste de "l'enfance de la prise de conscience", il en traduit toutes les contradictions. Comme Dickens, (qu'il admirait énormément et dont il avait les méthodes de travail), il a su meler deux emotions en apprance inconciables: en montrant des pauvres et des oprimés, il les a fait intensément malheureux et intensément sympathetiques, afin de nous rendre sensible de leur condition et leur dignité'. Bertrand Tavanier, 'John Ford', in *Les Fiches de Monsieur Cinéma*, (Paris:1972).

within administrative codes.[46] The question of unifxed identity also surfaces as a primary theme for another significant figure of Irish origins in French film culture, Maria Gilbert.

Lola: a Mistress of Artifice.

One of the most important films in the history of French cinema, *Lola Montès* (1955) directed by German born Max Ophuls was included by Kevin Rockett in *The Irish Filmography* but is not dealt with as a key film in this thesis.[47] Its inclusion in Rockett's book is based on the fact that the historical character at the centre of this film's narrative was born and spent her childhood in Ireland.[48] *Lola Montès* was Ophuls' most spectacular attack on the star vehicle costume film which dominated the early 1950s and starred Martine Carol, the genre's female icon.[49] It is set in a circus where Lola's history as a 'scandalous woman' is presented as an erotic entertainment involving trapeze scenes, acrobatics, clowning, strong-man feats, shadow-shows and tight-rope walking. A highlight of the show occurs when Lola is offered to the male audience to touch for a dollar. The circus performs the story of how Montès' reputation leads to a revolution and causes outrage in the kingdom of Bavaria.

French readings of Lola, as she is represented in the film, do not generally refer to the Irish origins of the historical figure at its source. The film could not, therefore, be said to play a major role in the

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[46]All Ford's names, as McKillop points out, surface in *The Quiet Man.* See MacKillop, (1987), p. 36.

[47]Ophuls, in exile in the United States, gave the costume melodrama some of its greatest productions with *The Exile*, (1947), *Letter from an Unknown Woman*, (1948), *Caught*, (1949), and *The Reckless Moment*, (1949). He was, however, in the vanguard of the wave of rupture with the cinema of Autant-Lara and he changed the face of French historical drama forever. As Burch and Sellier contend, 'The evolution of Max Ophuls in French cinema is resolutely counter-current'. See Noel Burch & Genevieve Sellier, *La Drole de guerre des sexes du çinéma français 1930-1956*, (Paris: Nathan, 1996), p. 265.

[48]Written by Max Ophuls with Annette Wadement, co-scenarist with Jacques Becker.

[49] She was the lead of the Empire dramas like *Caroline Cherie*, (Pottier, 1949), *Nana*, (Christian-Jacques, 1954), and *Madame Du Barry*, (Christian-Jacques, 1954). See Jean Tulard, (1991), p. 165.

construction of the Ireland text in French Cinema. Claude Beylie, author of a critical biography of Ophuls, discounts Lola's Irish background as a major factor for the audience in the interpretation of the film.[50] Beylie refers to Lola by her full public title, Maria Dolorés Porriz y Montez and undercuts that title in the footnote: 'In reality Maria-Dolorés-Élisa-Rosanna Gilbert, was born in Limerick, in Ireland, on the 23rd of June 1818. Her pretended Spanish ascendance is therefore pure fantasy'.[51] He goes on to say that that Irish history is of no real interest in terms of the film. On examining the text, it is clear that Beylie has a point: the Irish background of the Lola of history is not a focal point of the narrative and is not referred to within the diegesis of the film. On this basis, the film cannot be seen as a key film in this thesis. That said, however, representations of the history of the original Montès circulating in France in the form of literature and in the background details given to Ophuls' film do make a contribution to the Ireland text in France and I will deal with them here.

An adventurer and a dancer, Lola Montès, originally Maria Gilbert, was born in Limerick in 1818. Between 1837 and 1842 she lived in India as the wife of an officer. On her return to London she began her career in theatre as a dancer. She appeared on the stages of all the major European cities. In 1847 she became the favourite of Louis I of Bavaria. He gave Maria Gilbert the titles of Baroness of Rosenthal and Countess of Landsfield. Thus began her political career. She used her not-inconsiderable influence at the Bavarian court against the Jesuits and the conservative elements in the Government. Her presence sparked a fierce reaction in Bavarian political circles. It was considered that she was the motivation for the Bavarian revolution. She left Munich for Berne in 1848 and, after further romantic adventures, departed for the United

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[50] 'Entre Terre et Ciel'. Claude Beylie, *Max Ophuls*, (Paris: L'Herminier, 1984), p.98.
[51] Ibid., p.98.

States of America. The revolution in Bavaria finished her triumph as a woman of the court and forced her into marketing herself in a very different fashion in the USA, telling her story within the ring of a travelling circus. Her romantic career inspired the French novelist, Cecil Saint-Laurent, a specialist in popular fiction and author of the series *Caroline Cherie* (the film adaptation of which made Martine Carol famous) to write a 'roman de gare' about her life.[52] This book was one of the primary sources for the film's scenario.

Critical response to this Irish born character is extremely varied but shows consistency with other indexes in the Irish woman sign identified earlier. French critical analysis of the films of Max Ophuls focus on the radical treatment of the theme of woman, scandal and culture at its centre. Films like *Caught* and *Letter from an Unknown Woman* are indictments of the marriage market and the culture which forces women into economic dependency and reduces them to objects. The marriage market is also a very strong theme of in the history of Lola Montès. Marriage is the stepping stone out of Ireland and poverty for Lola's mother and it is the only legitimate career open to her daughter. In the film version of this story women have to pay a terrible price for refusing to accept their 'sale' in such contracts by their parents and for failing to keep the contract once signed: 'The force of the film [*Lola Montès*] comes from its demonstration of how this patriarchal society imposes on women the idea that they are frivolous and irresponsible, an idea that cannot function if they become autonomous subjects who are no longer satisfied with the luxury and smiles in which they are surrounded'.[53] The real history of Lola also turns on the dilemma of the woman in a society

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[52] Cecil Saint-Laurent of the Academie française, *La vie extraordinaire de Lola Montès*, (Paris: 1954).

[53]'La force du film est de montrer comment cette société patriarcale, qui impose aux femmes d'etre légères et irresponsables, ne peut plus fonctionner si elles deviennent des sujets autonomes qui ne satisisfont plus du luxe et des sourires dont on les entoure'. Burch & Sellier, (1996), p.266.

where she has value only as object and never as subject, a value she cannot determine herself but which is based on the market-value of her physical appearance. For Maria Gilbert gender issues were not the sole factor - colonial issues had also a part to play in her earlier 'downfall'. As Maria Gilbert, daughter of an Irishwoman, in the English colonial context of India, her remarkable beauty caused resentment and did not lead to a successful marriage contract within that group in spite of her adopted father's position in the English Army.

For some, Lola Montès displays traits associated with the Isolde myth. William Karl Guérin describes the typical admirer of Lola Montès as one who would like to believe in the myth of the inaccessible and magnificent woman, mistress of kings and muse of artists.[54] He talks of how Montès straddles a dream of 'l'amour-passion' and he links this to the old Celtic myths and saga. For Guérin, Lola Montès' body is the axis around which the art of spectacle and mimicry revolves.[55] Montès' identity as the daughter of a poor 'illegitimate' seamstress in Limerick is held as the one of the true identities of Lola Montès. This identity is an index of a problem central to the anxiety generated by Montès as sign-Montès' ability to re-invent herself. G. Gourdon praises the brilliance and endurance of her construction: 'born in 1818 in Ireland, her real name was Marie Dolores Elisa Rosanna Gilbert. Her dream being to make her career in 'modern' dance, she created a Spanish identity and culture that it took a long time to unmask'.[56] An arriviste from a despised colonised culture, Montès presented a challenge to the 'natural' order of class and birth in nineteenth century English colonial and, later, European society and was punished for that challenge by banishment and exile.

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[54] William Karl Guerin, *Max Ophuls*, (Paris: Éd. Cahiers du Cinema, 1988), p. 154.
[55] Ibid., p. 154.
[56]'Née en 1818 en Irlande, elle s'appellait en réalité Marie Dolores Elisa Rosanna Gilbert. Revant de faire carriére dans la danse "moderne", elle s'était forge une ascendance espagnole, qu'on a mis longtemps a démasquer'. G. Gourdon, 'Montès, Lola', in Horvilleur, (1988), p. 296.

The figure of Lola Montès mediates artifice. She is the 'maitresse de l'iréel'.[57] The contradictions of romanticism are played out in her body. Montès for the male public is presented as both the goddess and 'the golden fly', 'la belle dame sans Merci' of nineteenth century romanticism which has its origins in older forms. Montès opposed nineteenth century Puritanical morality with spectacle and in doing so drew from a practice which had its origins in the Baroque, a form closely associated with the story of Lola in both its literary and filmic forms.[58] The Baroque is the art of things seen. As a movement it challenged the denigration of sight as a sense during the Middle Ages.[59] Theoretically, the baroque is the reverse of the stable and the centralised: it has been taken to consist in the mobile, the extravagant, the intricate, the ornate. [60] Philosophically it renders the anguish of men living among changing and uncertain values. Its origins are in a crisis of Catholicism and its attempts to counter the abdication of members of the Church to Lutheran practice. It did this through an appeal to the senses and the sensual. Gourdon argues that the original Lola's theatrical style was demonstrative of a peculiarly modern 'sens médiatique'.[61] This sense of the power of the spectacle allowed the Montès of history to attack the very institutions which sought to exclude her as a 'woman of low birth'.

It is ironic that Lola should have chosen such a weapon because the spectacular is, however, also an instrument of repression. The baroque

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[57]Guerin, (1988), p. 154.

[58]See Jeancolas, (1995), p.70, and Louis Aragon, 'Le décor'. In *Constantes du cinéma français, Le Point, revue artistique et littéraire*, No. LIX, (Mulhouse: Braun & Cie, 1962), p.36.

[59]The baroque label in historical studies refers to a style developed by the Catholic Church, in particular the Jesuit order, as a means of making the Christian story available to hordes of new believers in the sixteenth century. The collapsing of the difference between iconolatry and idolatry led puritans such as John Calvin to take up a hostile stance against the visual. See Martin Jay, *Downcast Eyes, The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth Century French thought*, (Berkeley, London: Uni. Of California Press, 1998), pp.34-45.

[60]Geoffrey Brereton, *A Short History of French Literature*, (London: Penguin, 1968), pp. 190-5.

was not merely sensual. Its overwhelming visualisation was an ideological weapon of a repressive state apparatus, the Catholic Church in the sixteenth century, further compounded through its appropriation by the regime of Louis XIV.[62] Its aim was the seduction of the 'ignorant masses', (particularly women). Jacques Ellul describes the relationship between the church and the baroque thus: 'Precisely when the Church is involved in its worst crisis, it falls back with all its weight on its institutionality which it magnifies and on the utterly idolatrous image utilised for every end'.[63] Lola Montès' performance of her scandalous life at the Bavarian court and in the circus celebrated the disorientating, ecstatic, dazzling implications of the baroque, its subversion of the dominant visual order of reason, the confusing interplay of form and chaos, surface and depth, transparency and obscurity. Resistant to any totalising vision from above, the baroque explores the madness of vision.[64] Lola Montès stands at the centre of this 'madness of vision'.[65]

In the story of Lola Montès, Ireland functions as a signifier of the unfixed identity.[66] The central character represents fracturing and multiple identities, challenging the idea of a unified identity through her transgression and rejection of the subject position foisted on her from the

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[61] Gourdon, (1988), p. 296.

[62]Politicians like Colbert, in the service of the 'Sun-King', were quick to see that the religious style could also be made to subserve autocratic regimes by the glorification of the monarch and the deployment of spectacle as an instrument of domination. See Jay, (1998), pp.34-45

[63] Jacques Ellul cited in Jay, (1998), pp.34-45.

[64] Ibid., p.46.

[65]Ophul's film about a scandalous woman became itself a 'cause celèbre'. The formalism of *Lola Montès* shocked audiences and alienated them leading to poor box returns, prompting the American producer to call for the film to be re-cut and re-edited to a classic narrative structure with the scenes placed in chronological order. See *Les Fiches de Monsieur Cinéma*, (1972), vol. 6, no. 9.

[66]Lola Montès represented an attack from a woman of popular origins on the monarchy of nineteenth century Europe through her deployment of pastiche and parody in her invention of herself as a Spanish noblewoman adept at erotic dancing. Max Ophuls' pastiche of melodrama and theatre in his telling of this Irish woman's story and his use of the spectacular as weapon challenged the dominant of the period to such a degree, that the culture of film is still coming to terms with his legacy.

dominant culture. In Lola's story we are reminded of Edward Said's view of the writing of French playwright Jean Genet. He said that it is challenging precisely because of its 'fierce antinomianism'.[67] Said contends that the Genet experience reflects the consciousness of being a sham, an unstable personality perpetually at the border. Genet's view of his own history suggests much in common with Lola Montès: 'my whole life was made up of unimportant trifles cleverly blown up into acts of daring'. For Said: 'Identity is what we impose on ourselves through our lives as social, historical, political and even spiritual beings. (..) Identity is the process by which the stronger culture and the more developed society imposes itself violently upon those who, by the same identity process, are decreed to be lesser people. Imperialism is the export of identity".[68] Where Lola found that to re-invent herself as Spanish gave her protection and power, another group of exiles, the Irish merchant community in France found it more expedient to vaunt their origins as members of a colonised culture. This group found it more in its own interest to maintain a distinction between the Irish community and the French culture at large.

Exiles: Les Irlandais Réfugiés.

In the beginning of the eighteenth century, the Wild Geese, Ireland's dispossessed nobles, spread 'grey wing upon tide' in search of refuge in continental Europe. They founded vineyards and distilleries and established themselves in the trading posts of Bordeaux, La Rochelle, and Nantes. Such brand names as *Chateau Lynch* and *Hennessy* remain as emblems of this cultural exodus. Irish -French cultural exchange

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[67]Edward Said, 'On Jean Genet's Late Works'. In *Imperialism and Theatre*, ed. J. Ellen Gainor, (New York: Routledge, 1995), p.238.

[68]Said comments that 'the logic of culture and of families doubles the strength of identity which for someone like Genet, who was a victim of the identity forced on him by his delinquency, his isolation, his transgressive talents and delights, is something to

extended thus beyond the boundaries of war and penance. It was often founded firmly on mutual interest, at least in the area of trade. France has a long tradition of enjoying the best of Ireland's natural produce. The trade between the two countries has its origins in a combination of the demands of French cuisine, 'cette science de gueule' to borrow a phrase from the philosopher Montaigne, and Irish passion for cognac. Irish fortunes were built on the heavy demand for Irish beef and butter in French kitchens. The market for these goods rose to the extent that trade with Ireland, even during the French Revolution, far exceeded the volume of trade between France and the rest of the British Isles.[69] Lest we form too romantic a notion of the activities of the Wild Geese in France, many ex-members of the 'suffering, enslaved' nation, were highly successful in the slave trade. Two Irish families, the Clarkes, and Sheils of Nantes owned half the slave trade vessels in that port.[70] The Nantes Irish found it useful to vaunt their status as 'irlandais réfugiés' in France, because it conferred very positive legal advantages in the conduct of their lucrative traffic in human beings. Luke Sheil's son's wealth was estimated in 1753 at 250,000 *livres* all debts paid and not including goods, furniture, ships and credits. It is a nice irony that Irish emigration officers in 2001 have transformed Cherbourg into a citadel, thus preventing any non-'irlandais réfugiés' coming to Ireland to claim asylum and legal status via France.

The Emerald Isle

The food and drink trade between Ireland and France has been complemented in the past fifty years by the promotion of Ireland as a tourist destination for the French. As Patrick Rafroidi comments, Ireland,

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be resolutely opposed. Above all, given Genet's choice of sites like Algeria and Palestine'. Ibid., p.238.

[69]See L. M. Cullen, 'The Irish Merchant Communities of Bordeaux, La Rochelle and Cognac in the Eighteenth century', in *The Journal for Eighteenth Century Studies*, (No. 18, March, 1993), pp.53-62.

for the French, remains 'the land of 'traditional sanctity and loveliness', the source of all idealism.[71] Romanticism of the Irish landscape is an established theme in Irish cinema studies, and it is no less relevant to the study of French film. Ireland has also in recent times come to represent the writer's refuge to numerous French authors. The persistence of this notion of Ireland as a refuge for writers is all the more remarkable given the self-imposed exile of James Joyce, Samuel Beckett, Seán O' Casey, John Millington Synge, and Edna O' Brien, Liam O'Flaherty (although in O'Flaherty's case the exile was imposed by the Dáil Courts), among others. The works of these writers, and many others, including W.B. Yeats, Flann O'Brien, and John McGahern, are widely available in translation in France and have proved hugely popular with French readers.[72] In spite of the often bitter view of the 'Island of Saints and Scholars' expressed by the canon of Irish literature, Michel Déon, Hervé Jaouen, Pierre Benoit, and the French speaking Swiss author, Daniel Odier, among others, have, in their own words, found 'refuge' and 'salvation' in the wild landscapes of the West of Ireland. The work of these writers is an important source of representations of Ireland and they are frequently listed as references in the French tourist guides to Ireland.

The Dream Country

To return to Kevin Hickey's notion of Ireland as a 'dream country', it would seem that this dream has largely been constructed by English and American producers. We have seen, however, that Ireland as a text has long been a dream country for France, and that Irish characters and figures have long functioned to feed the fantasies and imaginings of French poets, scholars, generals, and intellectuals. Hickey insisted that

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[70] See Richard Hayes, *Old Irish Links with France*, (Dublin: McGill & Son, 1949), p.12-21.
[71] Rafroidi, (1973), p. 45.
[72] See Rafroidi et al., (1973).

'we' Irish have countered this *Irlande Imaginaire* with no filmic output of our own and that as a result we must not complain if what film shows of us is not 'real'.[73] While I acknowledge the role of the imaginary in the Ireland text in cinema, I take issue with Hickey's negative view of the relationship between the film and the real. Films, regardless of their origin, have everything to do with reality. It might not be reality as experienced by the film's Irish audience. Nevertheless, every film has a real context, the context in which it is produced, and the context in which it is received. No film, no matter how unique it appears, is without a history and a position within history which relates it to other films and to other texts of the period in which it circulates.[74] Hickey would also appear to take the view that film, as a cultural product, is impermeable to influence from other media. In this brief over-view of work to date on the intercultural exchange between France and Ireland, we find that there is a wealth of material available in France for the public to construct an Ireland text independent of that produced by Hollywood and Britain.[75]

As we have seen, this material has many sources: the exiled Irish in France; the French in Ireland; the texts generated by both these groups; the trade between the two countries; and the shared histories of revolution and war. The material referred to here points to some themes common to the cultures of both countries which provide useful signposts for the mapping of the Ireland text in French cinema. The subject matter of the different films in this study indicates the recurrence of the motifs explored here: a particular brand of Christianity, perhaps Jansenistic in tendency, marked by a profound asceticism and severity in *Le Puritain*; the figure of the virgin warrior woman and a history ruptured with revolutions, rebellions, and civil war in *La Jeune folle* and *!Viva Maria!*;

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[73] Kieran Hickey, quoted in Gribben, (1987), p. 4.
[74]Robert C. Allen & Dougal Gomery, *Film History, Theory and Practice*, (London: Routledge, 1991), p.91.

romanticism of the Celtic mythology and landscape and a notion of Ireland as an enchanted Isle, a refuge from modernity in *Le Taxi mauve*. There are, however, signs also of France as empire looking at the 'other', the figure of the colonised present in the Irish sign, a look which is betrayed by the ambivalence of the Irish identity in French representations. This ambivalence is reflected in the adoption of Anglo-American stereotypes in texts such as *Lucky Luke*, but also in, as Rafroidi points out, the equation of the Ireland text with the irrational, with instability and breakdown. It is, therefore, not entirely surprising that the first feature-length French film with Irish subject matter did not appear until 1937, a period of immense turbulence in French history, and that it told the story of a 'madman'.

Chapter Two: The Politics of Repression: Jeff Musso's *Le Puritain* (1937).

Joseph César Musso's film adaptation of Liam O'Flaherty's novel *The Puritan* took the prestigious Prix Louis Delluc for 1937, a victory over Renoir's famous classic *La Grande illusion*.[1] As a film, *Le Puritain* is resistant to easy historical classification. The film historian Dudley Andrews describes it as one of the most satisfying films of the era, 'a serious and mature experience hardly conceivable earlier in the decade'.[2] While French film analysts Michelle Lagny, Pierre Sorelin and Marie-Claire Ropars have described the film as typical of the 1930s classic realist style, most other commentators have attributed the critical success of *Le Puritain* to its unique genre.[3] Jacques Loucelles, to quote one example, stated that: 'On examination, *Le Puritain* fits in with none of the traditional genre classifications of the 1930s French Cinema'.[4] Neither was Dudley Andrews able to place it in context with other film genres in his study of classic French film in the 1930s, *Mists of Regret and Desire*.[5] In spite of the difficulty in classifying *Le Puritain*, the temporality of the film

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[1]Le Prix Louis Delluc was inaugurated in 1936 in memory of the realist director. It was the first French prize of its kind and is now awarded annually in Cannes.

[2]Dudley Andrews, *Mists of Regret, Culture and Sensibility in Classic French Film,* (Cambridge-MA: Princeton University Press, 1995), p.271.

[3]Michele Lagny, Marie-Claire Ropars, Pierre Sorlin, *Génériques des années 30*, (Paris: Presses Uni. de Vincennes, 1986), p.63.

[4] *Le Puritain* entre à l'evidence dans aucun des genres traditionnels du çinéma français des années 30'. Jacques Lourcelles, *Dictionnaire du çinéma*, (Paris: Laffont 1992),p.1199.

defines it as a 'voyage absolu' through an imagined space in which collective memory and culture converge. Its narrative either reflects or resists the construction and representation of history or histories by the dominant groups of the society in which the film was produced.[6]

The Space of *Le Puritain*

Le Puritain differed in location from all other films of the period and from all other films in the generic elaborated by Lagny *et al.* It was the filmic mediation of an imagined space in an Irish novel, *The Puritan.* However, the film's space is very different from the space of O'Flaherty's novel which is very site specific. Its map is real. It includes names of actual streets and districts in Dublin and often-detailed descriptions of journeys and architecture which can be readily identified today. In *Le Puritain,* however, the outdoor locations are reduced to four exterior shots in the whole film: the street where the eponymous puritan journalist lives [architecturally marked French by the shutters and the doorways of a type unknown in Dublin, not at all the Georgian Gardiner Street of the novel]; a dark alley where he discovers his prostitute-confessor, Molly; the exterior of a baroque church; and a set of steps leading to a bar exterior, the doors of which are fin de siècle stained glass of a type more common to the French brasserie than the Dublin public house. Dudley Andrews describes the opening thus: 'the credits roll over a bleak cul-de-sac reminiscent of *La Rue sans nom.*'[7] The comparison is appropriate. *Le Puritain* takes place in streets with no names. The interiors are darkly lit attic rooms, cold modernist art-deco offices and gothic passageways. The film announces no specific location for its action. It opens with the title 'Dans un ville du monde...': 'In a city of the world'. Dublin, on a purely

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[5]Andrews, (1995), p.271.
[6]Christian Delage, 'Çinéma et histoire: un état des lieux', in *Médiascope*, Vol. 8, (Paris:1994), p.121.
[7]Andrews, (1995), p.271.

denotative level, does not exist in Musso's film. Musso makes no reference to Dublin. In one critic's view, the film's action unfolds: 'in a discrete space, self-contained, without any proper existence, without a coherent frame which would give us a vision of the world, without even a nominal identification or any reference which would establish its setting. The Dublin of *Le Puritain* exists only in O'Flaherty's novel'.[8]

In spite of the absence of a specific location in the enunciation of the film, every single critical and promotional description of the film locates its action in Dublin.[9] The same contradictions are in operation in the film's packaging in video form in 1996. The jacket sleeve of the video edition clearly states that the action unfolds 'Dans un immeuble de Dublin/In a building in Dublin'.[10] Indeed the authors of *Génériques des années 30* go on to place the film firmly in Ireland, however ill defined.[11] Within the diegesis, the film's signification is predominantly French. It was made in France, on French sets, with French actors and with French dialogue. Given that French is the 'natural' language of the target audience, the film could have been read as neutral in the way that American audiences 'ignore' the use of American accents and idioms in science fiction. Not all the signification is French. The names of the characters are Irish. This contradicts an entirely French locale. The use of Irish names for the characters is epiphanised within the French codification of the film and locates the film in Ireland: 'Here, or elsewhere,

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[8]'Dans un espace discret, tout d'abord, sans existance propre, sans cadrage d'ensemble qui en propose une vision globale, sans meme d'identification nominale le situant référentiellement. Le Dublin du *Puritain* n'existe que dans le roman de O'Flaherty'. Lagny, Ropars, Sorelin, (1986), p.63.

[9] 'Le film étant réalisé en France, joué par des acteurs français, le réalisateur a sagement renoncé à évoquer une atmosphère irlandaise, bien que le lieu de l'action soit Dublin et que les personnages soient trop individualisés pour l'ombre d'un doute plane sur leur origine'. Denis Marion, *La Nouvelle Revue Française,* vol. 294, March 1st, (Paris:1938).p.515.

[10]Released as part of their *L'Age d'or du çinéma* collection by Éditions Montparnasse, Paris.

[11]Lagny, Sorelin, Ropars, (1986), p.60.

in a city somewhere in the world and why not in Ireland, given that the names of the characters make one think of that country'.[12]

The effect of the Irish names is 'troublant'[13] and complicates the fixing of the film's space for the spectator but it indicates that it has a definite space, a location in space and time, somewhere between Ireland and France. The French critic Jacques Lourcelles was unhappy with 'the half-measure' chosen by the makers but for different reasons.[14] He argued that the film's ambiguous setting was an act of cowardice by the film's producers: 'The authors did not dare to either totally reconstitute Dublin in the studio as Yves Allégret did for *La Jeune folle* (1952), nor to simply transpose this Irish reality fully to Paris'.[15] There was nothing to stop Musso recreating an 'Irish' environment in the studio. After all *The Informer* (Ford 1935) was shot mainly in studio space. While the 1920's Dublin of Ford's film is, as Jean-Louis Bourget describes it, a typically cinematographic space, neither totally real nor totally imaginary, the decor functions to give the 'quintessence' of the real city.[16] The decision not to encode recognisable indices for Dublin was hardly the result of lack of expertise or lack of local knowledge. Liam O'Flaherty had worked on the sets of several films, including *Le Puritain.*[17] Loucelle's response to the

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[12]'Ici, là ou ailleurs, dans une ville du monde et puorquoi pas en Irlande puisque les noms des personnages font penser à ce pays'. Author not indicated, *'Le Puritain'*, *Les Fiches de Monsieur çinéma, Histoire illustrée du çinéma Mondial*, Vol: 79; no.15.

[13] Jean Tulard, *Dictionnaire du çinéma, les Acteurs*, (Paris: Laffont, 1982), p.575.

[14]'Ils ont choisi la demi-mésure: une abstraction fumeuse [peutetre inspirée du réalisme poétique de Carné] qui n'aide nullement à rendre compte de la complexité psychologique et morale du héros dont l'itinéraire restera totalement opaque'. Loucelles, (1986), p.1199.

[15]'Les auteurs n'ont osé ni reconstituer carrément Dublin en studio comme fera Yves Allégret dans *La Jeune Folle*, 1952, ni transposer cette réalité irlandaise à Paris'. Loucelles, (1986), p.1199.

[16]'Il décline les signes à la fois convenus et authentiques d'une atmopsphère dublinoise, les lettres de style gaélique de l'enseigne Dunboy house, les grilles qui séparent le troittoir du sous sol des immeubles, les portes néo-classique avec leurs marteaux et leurs impostes. De manière plus discrète peut-etre, ces éleméments décoratifs jouent donc le meme role de repères, de notations, exotiques et précises, de couleur locale qui est assigné à la musique'. Jean-Loup Bourget, (1990), p.95.

[17]Andrews, (1995), p.271.

film suggests that *Le Puritain*'s meaning would be more obvious if it were transplanted entirely to Paris. O'Flaherty took this idea one step further. He said the film 'could only have been made in France'.[18]

Le Purtain's message was never intended for an Irish audience. It was not submitted to the Irish censor for distribution in Ireland.[19] Dudley Andrews rightly surmises that the film's audience, regardless of its source, is French: 'The astounding box-office and critical success of *Le Puritain* is the best evidence available to certify the triumph of a new kind of film, filling a different sort of audience expectation in France before the war'.[20] The use of the Dublin meta-narrative both problematises and makes sense of the film's story, but the targeting of the French audience by the film's producers indicates that the film must be read against the historical background in which the film was made, France of the late 1930s.

The Metropolis versus the Wilderness: The City in the Inter-war Cinema.

The decade of 1930s was one of the most unstable periods in French history since the Revolution. Hitler's rise to power in Germany, accompanied by a growth of Communism and Fascism, had quickly cancelled the French political parties' earlier relationships with one another and had changed time-honoured party lines over night. This led to widespread national insecurity on both the Left and the Right. In the early years of the decade France, as a less developed country industrially, seemed immune to the kind of economic crisis striking its neighbours in Europe because it did not feel the immediate effects of the Depression.[21] By 1935, however, production had dropped massively.[22] The cinema industry was one of the first victims of the dilemma posed by the

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[18]Ibid., pp.271-272.
[19] Rockett, (1997), p.32.
[20]Andrews, (1995), pp.271-272.
[21]Maurice Alguhon, *The French Republic 1879-1992*, Antonia Nevin, trans., (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), p.216.

relationship between 'progress' and the problem of economic depression. Technological advances like sound led to increasing costs in an era of reduced budgets. In the mid-1930s the cinema production companies Pathé and Gaumont went to the wall. The economic backlash resulted in a predominance of small-scale productions. No longer possible were the lavish sets and casts of the kind seen in occupied France such as Carné's *Les Enfants du Paradis* (1945), or in American style epics such as Fleming's *Gone With The Wind* (1939).[23]

From 1933 onwards, France entered a recession at a moment when other neighbouring economies began to pull out of it and its recession lasted much longer than it had had for countries such as Germany.[24] Peasant farmers were the worst affected and they became the object of propaganda of both the Fascist and Communist parties in France.[25] The ageing demography, following the losses in the First World War, created further tension. Young men became increasingly alienated through unemployment while older men held on to the posts they had had before the war. The material advantage of the older men over youth was given positive reinforcement in the cinema through a predominance of films in which the older man wins the hand of a much younger woman. Panisse in *Fanny* (Pagnol, 1932) is an example of this kind of characterisation. Musso's second adaptation of an O'Flaherty work, *Dernière jeunesse* (1939), based on the novel *Mr Gilhooley*, differs from Pagnol's work in that it is critical of the empowerment through capital of

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[22]Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism,* (New York: Harcourt Press, 1973), p.263.

[23]Colin Crisp, *The Classic French Cinema 1930-1960*, (Bloomington: Indiana Uni. Press, 1993), pp.1-42.

[24]Alguhon, (1995), p.216.

[25]The year before the film was made, Henri Dorgeus, a butcher's son from Burgundy and of extreme right wing political outlook, had gathered thirty-five thousand followers among the French peasantry under the banner 'Croire, Obeir, Battre'. Dorgeus's manifesto which stated that the farmer as the only sound force in the nation, undefiled by orgies, cocktails or night clubs, reflects the rhetoric common in Germany,

age over youth in male/female relations. The Depression and its effects on the private life and on love, was a theme of Vigo's *L'Atalante* (1934) which showed scenes of long dole queues and hopeless quests for work. The mood of the times was anxiety which, according to commentator Simone Weill, touched and corrupted every aspect of life, every source of activity, of hope, of happiness.[26]

The 1930s in France saw the rise of a number of extreme right-ring movements. Recently, historians have moved to establish the link between French political culture of the post-Popular Front era and the culture of France during the Second World War.[27] A number of events led to the coming to power of these groups. In February 1934 the tensions simmering in French society burst out into the streets. Strident fascist-style youth groups like the Jeunes Patriotes rioted in Paris following the Stavisky affair, a major fraud scandal involving members of the Government. These violent protests from the Right were intended as a condemnation of the decadence and corruption of the Republic. The possibility that Fascist parties would sweep to power, as they had done in Germany and Italy, became real. The anti-republican Right Wing riots backfired. Violent clashes with the police, combined with the uncompromising views of groups such as Action Française, jeopardised the Right's position. Contemporary reports commented on their lack of foresight: 'In the last sixty years a sharp offensive from the reactionaries in France has been followed with mathematical accuracy by a sharp inevitable reaction from the Left'.[28] Left-wing politicians were able to suggest that there was a fascist plot to impose dictatorship on France. The

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Italy and in Ireland at the time. See Richard Overy, *The Road to War*, (London: BBC Books, 1989), pp.121-122.

[26]J. Jackson, *The Politics of Depression in France, 1932-36*, (Cambridge: Cambridge Uni. Press, 1986), p.36.

[27]See the introduction in Robert Soucy, *French Fascism: The Second Wave, 1933-1939*, (Yale: Yale Uni. Press, 1995), for a comprehensive overview.

[28]Alexander Werth, 'French Fascism', *American Quarterly Review*, October 1936-July, Vol.14, No.s 1-4, (New York: 1937), p.56.

result was a new government made up of all the disparate strands of the left wing under Léon Blum: the Popular Front. [29]

A brief period of optimism among left-wing intellectuals and among the workers followed the Popular Front's accession to government. While the films of the period cannot be labelled 'films of the Popular Front', they were different from the music hall and melodrama of previous decades. Their depiction of the worker, even in miserable conditions, hoped to point out the injustice of these conditions in the belief that, with the new Government, some improvements might come about. The optimism of films such as *La Vie est à nous* (Renoir, 1936) was short-lived. In the cinema, the mood shifted to a darker more negative form. The representation of this ideal society and the failure to meet it, is a key theme of the poetic realist films of the late 1930s in France. Both *La Belle équipe* (1936) by the right wing anarchist Duvivier and *La Bete humaine* (1938) by the socialist Renoir, begin with images of the ideal of working-class male solidarity. The action of both films tells the story of the gradual disintegration and failure of this ideal. In these films, the breakdown occurs as the result of the intervention of a female character.

Popular Front ideals did not survive the economic reality of the Depression, a recession aggravated by the transfer of wealth out of the country through fear of a red revolution. By 1937 the Right had returned to power, their position consolidated rather than undermined by the demise of the Third Republic with the invasion of the Nazis in 1940 and the removal of the French Parliament to Vichy.[30] Although extreme Right groups of the period are often represented as revolutionary, their action was counter-revolutionary, primarily concerned with undoing the effects of the Popular Front and feeding on the fears of the middle-class

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[29]Agulhon, (1995), p.241.

[30]See Susan Hayward, *French National Cinema*, (London: Routledge, 1993), p.125.

concerning communism.[31] The history of these groups has a significant part to play in the understanding of how a film like *Le Puritain* was not an exotic story set in another culture but contained figures recognisable to the French cinema audience of 1937.

Le Puritain's narrative unfolds against the historical background of the 1930s. It is set in these years although the novel was set in 1920s post-revolution Ireland. We can see the contemporary references in the 1930s décor of sets such as the newspaper's editor's office. The film tells the story of a young man, Ferriter, played by Jean Louis Barrault, a member of a right-wing Christian extremist group and a journalist of a paper called *L'Étoile du matin,* who murders his neighbour, a young woman, Teresa Burke who, he suspects, has been operating as a prostitute from the house in which they both board. The murder is discovered and an investigation begins in which Ferriter tries to implicate Teresa's lover, one Doctor O'Leary, the son of a prominent member of a Catholic vigilante society. In the course of the investigation we discover that Teresa has had a child by Dr O'Leary. Detective Lavan, played by Pierre Fresnay, refuses to arrest O'Leary for the murder and Ferriter begins to panic. In spite of Lavan's attempt to procure forensic proof, Ferriter's written manifesto, declaring his intention to make a sacrifice of blood in order to condemn the corruption of the world, is the only evidence against him. He tries to confess his crime to a priest and then to Molly, a prostitute played by Viviane Romance, following a journey through an underworld of bars and night-clubs to her attic bedroom. While there he is arrested, confesses to the Commissioner and is imprisoned.

Generically *Le Puritain,* as a story of a murder and its investigation, can be described as belonging to the detective genre.[32] The frame of *Le Puritain* is an unnamed city. The city as labyrinth, made up of

[31]See Soucy, (1995), pp.2- 7.

menacing interiors and alleyways, was the site of 1930s detective films like *Pépé Le Moko* (Duvivier, 1937). There is a homology between the crime story and the industrial urban society. The crime film deals simultaneously with the theme of murder and the sociological connection between acts of violence and the institutions of social control. The city is, on one hand, a designated space produced by the interaction of historical and geographical specific institutions that define and control the city through grids and maps. On the other hand the city as a network of human relations, established through real experience, is impossible to map and therefore to control.[33] The city discourse, therefore, reflects the anxiety of the state in the face of the indefinable mass of strategies and networks which make up the experience of women and men in society. This leads to the discourse of the city, the metropolis, as site of deviance and guilt, a place of sin and damnation, the ideal location of the crime story. The myth of the city as nightmare was mobilised at the beginning of the century by French cinema serials - the police cinema series *Fantomas* (Feuillade, 1913), in particular. This cinema revived the torments of gothic romanticism and films like *Les Vampires* (1914) linked vampirism and science/modernity in the city sign. In later films there was a shift in the representations of the city from the subconscious demonic to the openly criminal and a subsequent idealisation of the countryside.[34]

Left-wing cinema of the 1930s represents 'la campagne' as an ideal of sensual freedom, simplicity and innocent bliss. Access to this leisure space was an impossible luxury for the worker in the inter-war period. François in Carné's *Le Jour se lève* (1939) dreams of bringing his loved one to the countryside and of tying flowers to his bike, but never gets there. The erotic elements of such a view of the countryside is also

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[32]François Guerif, *Le Çinéma Policier Français* (Paris: Veyrier, 1981), p.55.
[33] See Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: Uni. of California, 1992).

represented in Renoir's *Un Partie de campagne*, begun in 1936, the passionate idyll interrupted by the cold reality of the return to the city. In right-wing mythology, the city as a corrupt space functions in binary opposition to nature, the ideal space, uncontaminated by the society, a space from which history is eliminated, innocent but harsh, both pure and purifying.

Discourses of purity and its opposite, contamination, dominate the political rhetoric of France in this period. The function and effects of these ideals were crucial to the political situation in Europe before the Second World War. Susan Sontag comments on the notion of the ideal as a manifestation of fascist desires.[35] The ideal is homogenous and paternalistic. Its origin is not in optimism but in pessimism. Popular philosophy of the period was based on the idea of the return to a world of certainties. Historian Oswald Spengler, who was very influential in the formation of European right-wing opinion before the Second World War, insisted that civilisation in the form of the metropolis represented the ultimate state of degradation for every culture, the state to which western or 'Faustian' culture had attained since 1789. He called for a return to 'eternal values' in order to wipe out the contamination of the ideas of the French Revolution. To achieve this 'effacement' of history and its corrosive influence, he argued, it would be necessary to restore all the elementary laws and values without which, in Spengler's view, man had lost contact with nature, with God and with any hope of constructing real

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[34]Jean Douchet, 'La Ville Tentaculaire', in *Cités-çinés*, Lise Grenier, ed., (Paris: Éditions Ramsay, 1987), p.64.

[35]'National Socialism -- more broadly, fascism, -- also stands for an ideal or rather ideals that are persistent today under other banners: the ideal of life as art, the cult of beauty, the fetishism of courage, the dissolution of alienation in ecstatic feelings of community, the repudiation of the intellect, the family of man'. Susan Sontag, 'Fascinating Fascism', in *The Aesthetics of Fascism*, Jeffrey T. Schnapp, ed., (Stanford: Stanford Uni. Press, 1996), p. 10.

order in the world. Man, he contended, attained the ideal state only under the purifying effect of natural force.[36]

Documentary film representations of 'primitive' man struggling against the elements, most significantly the work of the American Robert Flaherty and of the French Jean Epstein with *Finis Terrae* (1931), were hugely popular in this era. *Le Puritain* reproduces the oppositions of city/nature, purity/impurity and the 1930s notion of the noble peasant in the figure of Teresa Burke's aunt. She presents a very different image from the representation of the aunt in O'Flaherty's novel, where she is portrayed as a sensual, aggressively fat and pragmatic countrywoman who 'did her best for Teresa by procuring an abortion for her'.[37] However, the lighting deployed in this scene on the film –where we see the aunt in a soft-focus with an almost halo effect around her face- suggests that the camera's viewpoint represents Ferriter's vision. The aunt in *Le Puritain* is thus constructed in the 'simple peasant' mode: a woman whose struggle for self-preservation is uncomplicated by notions of social responsibility, but elevated to the status of mythic ideal once set against the unrelenting sea and the enormous sky. As Truffaut once wrote: 'The sky is dangerous because it makes us lose sight of history'.[38] Middle-class identification with the peasant body and physicality echoed anxieties about virility and action popular among the right wing in the 1930s. These discourses are evident in later post-1960s films and I will deal with the theme as it appears in Boisset's *Le Taxi mauve* (1978), in Chapter Six. The aunt, with

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[36]Alistair Hamilton, *The Appeal of Fascism,* (New York : Macmillan, 1971), p.17-83.

[37]The aunt of the novel gives a detailed account of how Teresa's stepfather, a county councillor, cheated her out of her inheritance: ' The old woman began excitedly to enumerate the values of various properties in Killuragh, going into such details that even pennies became important'. Later the old woman tells Ferriter of 'the means by which she tried to procure an abortion for Teresa, with the assistance of a wise-woman from Connemara', in Liam O'Flaherty, *The Puritan,*, (London: Jonathan Cape Ltd., 1932), p.170.

[38]'Le ciel est dangereux, car il fait perdre de vue de l'histoire'. François Truffaut quoted in Serge Davey, 'Ville-Ciné et Télé Banlieu', in Lise Grenier, ed., (1987), p.96.

her plain shawl, her lean figure and fine but worn features, recalls the island woman of Robert Flaherty's *Man of Aran* (1934).

Flaherty's film had a huge impact in the West at the time of its release and continues to be a key film for the Ireland text in France today. *Man of Aran*'s emphasis on man struggling against the elements resonated with the ideology of American pioneer stories, virile white men forging farms from rocks, foraging and hunting. Drieu la Rochelle, one of the most famous fascist intellectuals of the period, wrote in admiration of the pioneering spirit portrayed in American 'wilderness' films of this type: 'The American pioneers left the Middle ages behind ... The road was open to individualism...The most virile qualities emerged again, higher in America than in Europe. How could it be otherwise, living perpetually on guard in the isolated wilderness, waging war against Indians, struggling against Nature'.[39] In spite of the popularity of the wilderness myths in French culture, nature as text is significant by its absence in 1930s fiction films made in France.[40]

This absence reveals the complicated relationship between capital, modernity and the Depression in the inter-war years. The utopian metropolis was the construction of the bourgeois mind. Romantic notions embedded in ideals of nature are disrupted by the real function of the metropolis as site of the activity of capitalism and the location of its accumulation of property. In French films of the inter-war years, a rare representation of the city as service for the market appears in avant-garde director Marcel L'Herbier's *L'Argent* (1927). *L'Argent* contains scenes shot on location in the nerve centre of French capital and of the business of accumulation of material wealth, La Bourse, the stock exchange in

[39]Drieu la Rochelle, 'La Métamorphose du capitalisme', quoted in Soucy, (1995), p.259.
[40]Douchet, (1987), p.64.

Paris.[41] L'Herbier's work includes *L'Inhumaine* (1923), designed by the cubist Fernand Léger, was a sustained attack on the French bourgeois.[42] When making *L'Inhumaine*, L'Herbier experimented with audiences to produce documentary evidence of the anxieties generated by modernity.[43] *L'Argent* captures the moment before the crash and the anxiety about capital which drives La Bourse. The rise of the 'red menace' in the form of the Popular Front as it was perceived by French business interests, posed a very serious threat to La Bourse in the inter-war years. The protection of this site superseded all other interests. The dominant society's drive to protect its interests and the anxiety generated by any threat to those interests is a key theme of *Le Puritain.*

The Crusade against Decadence.

Social psychologist Ron Inglehart has demonstrated that when physiological needs, such as physical and economic security, are threatened, as is the case in times of economic depression, the result is a shift from post-materialist liberalism to a demand for increased law and order, a desire for the reversion to the authoritarian state.[44] French communist propaganda of the 1930s played on this tendency, declaring that, frightened as they were by the democratic and working-class

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[41]Still of *L'Argent* in 'Constantes du Çinéma Français', in Pierre Betz, Pierre Braun, *Le Point, Revue Artistique et Littéraire*, No. lix, (Mulhouse: Braun & Cie, 1962), p.32.

[42]Murphy's *Danse Macabre*, (1922), was a very influential piece for the cubist movement in cinema, noted for its expressive use of colour. See Standish D. Lawder, *The Cubist Cinema, Anthology Film Archives Series,*, (New York: New York Uni. Press, 1975), pp.117-29.

[43]He secretly filmed the French 'arty' set rioting at a performance of George Antheil's radical 'Mechanism' music at the Théatre de Champs-Elysées on October the 4th, 1923 and these sequences can be seen in the film. Léger's most famous contribution to cinema, *Ballet mécanique*, (1924), was made in collaboration with the Irish American cameraman and director, Dudley Murphy. Murphy, director of a film based of Eugene O'Neill's *The Emperor Jones*, (1933), was responsible not only for the photography of *Ballet mécanique*, but also for the editing, a unique feature of the piece. *Ballet mécanique*'s key theme was the spectacle of the city. Ibid. pp.114-5.

movement, the French bourgeoisie would be happy to have a firm-handed regime in the land, even to accept Hitler as policeman.[45] This simplistic analysis does not take account of the various conflicting strands and factions specific to the French right, but is an index to the mood of the time. Siegfried Kracauer posited the theory that fascism operates as a mediator of the modernity/romanticism problem for the bourgeoisie. The ideology of fascism replaced idealised remnants of bourgeois ethics with a far deeper appeal to the repressed 'by-products' of bourgeois socialisation, the fantasies of national, social and sexual domination which formed its 'other' from the beginning.[46] Desire for authoritarianism was translated into an increase in moral pressure groups on the Right. These groups called for suppression of left-wing texts of any description, not only for the liberal attitude to morality found in these texts, but also for their pacifist tendencies. As Robert Soucy has argued, for decadence and corruption in the period, read 'left-wing'.[47] Soucy demonstrates that a key feature of Front fascism in 1930s was its insistence on conservative economics and on the protection of business interests in spite of the radical and fanatical rhetoric concerning corruption and decadence.[48]

Desire for repression was a feature of the realist fiction films of the later 1930s. The real world and historical contexts were repressed. City

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[44]Ron Inglehart, 'Intergenerational Changes in Politics and Culture: The Shift From Material To Post-Material Value Priorities', in *Research in Political Sociology*, R. Braungart and M. Braungart, eds.,Vol.2, (1986), p.81-106.

[45]Agulhon, (1995), p.241.

[46]John Milful, 'Social Psychology and the Aesthetics of the 'Triumph of The Right',', in *The Attractions of Fascism*, John Milful, ed., (New York, Oxford: Berg, 1990), pp.1-7.

[47] Soucy, (1995), p.14.

[48]The same protection of business interests was embedded in the Catholic censorship campaigns in America which began to impose themselves around the same period. Hays, in promoting his censorship code for Hollywood in 1930, sold the idea to the studio moguls by demonstrating that a censorship Code protected business interests. According to Black, 'the legion worked hand in hand with the industry's censorship board, the Production Code Administration, to keep movies from exploring social, political and economic issues that it believed were immoral or a danger to the Catholic

signs, it would seem, generated fear and dread in middle class audiences of the time. Streets, in their rare appearance in films like *Le Puritain*, are ill lit, full of shadows and concealed entrances, decaying facades and narrow passageways. Fear of the street was reflected in the films of the period through an emphasis on the portrayal of the private and the repression of the public and social conditions in classic 'bourgeois' films like *Un Carnet de bal* (Duvivier, 1937). Films of this kind were marked by their representation of a clinical antiseptic world in which dangerous elements are either neutralised or left out entirely. Interior space and the private were privileged, the safe space of the bourgeois home. In the view of the authors of *Génériques des années 30,* the domination of interior scenes in *Le Puritain* suggests that the narrative of the film unfolds in a 'un monde sans surprise'.[49] This closed ahistorical world is temporarily disrupted by the criminal act which allows the invasion of the private home space by the public in the form of the police and the journalists who convert the act into a news event through their mediation of the crime story to society.

Lagny et al. argue that the handling of the criminal figure in *Le Puritain* suggests that the film reproduces conservative ideologies through its narrative structure.[50] *Le Puritain*'s narrative structure fits Todorov's description of the basic structure of narrative schemata in the crime story as it appears in both news reporting and in detective fiction. These structures operate, with variants, on a double logic; (a) the story of the crime, the act (in this case the murder of Teresa Burke): (b) the story of the enquiry which takes up most of the represented narrative space (in the case of *Le Puritain* the enquiry hinges on the admission of guilt as the spectator already knows the identity of the murderer): c) the final effect to

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church'. See Gregory D. Black, *The Catholic Crusade against the Movies, 1940- 1975* (Cambridge: Cambridge Uni. Press, 1998), p.3.

[49]The generic of the 1930's classic French film was established on the basis of a corpus of films dating from 1936 to 1939. See Lagny, Ropars, Sorlin, (1986), p.59.

be produced which is constructed from the outset and which leads to both the resolution and the tension of the 'capture'.[51] *Le Puritain* is often represented as an example of a classic detective story and is classified as one of the earliest examples of the French polar (crime thriller) in Guerif's study of the genre, *Le Çinéma policier français*.[52]

In keeping with the detective story schemata, Ferriter's act, the murder as infraction, introduces instability to a stable situation and causes the initial disequilibrium in the narrative. Final equilibrium must be restored with his capture and punishment. Read through the frame of the 1930s generic, the narrative of *Le Puritain* restores balance and stability, in a society temporarily destabilised by the intervention of the subject, Ferriter as murderer and reaffirms social roles through the effacement of the subject acting for himself in favour of the state figured through the role of the Police Commissioner.[53] The capture of Ferriter should therefore be reassuring and yet all the reviews describe the film as 'troublant', gloomy and pervasively pessimistic.[54] The incarceration of Ferriter is, it is suggested, not an outcome desired by the spectator. In the words of one contemporary reviewer: 'The fanatic is made to kill a defenceless woman and to assault a man smaller than himself; yet even so it is not clear how far these things are actually meant to alienate our sympathy'.[55] Given that Ferriter is technically the 'aggressor' in the narrative, the fact that the spectator is sympathetic to him would seem to imply identification with the murderer, or more likely, identification of Ferriter as familiar and therefore in some way comprehensible. For such an identification to take place there must be recognition of Ferriter's character.

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[50]Ibid, p.78.
[51]Tzvetan Todorov, *The Fantastic*, (Princeton: Cornell, 1975), pp. 163-164.
[52]Guerif, (1981), p.55.
[53]Lagny, Ropars, Sorlin, (1986), p.59.
[54]Andrews, (1995), p.271.

The idea of Ferriter as a recognisable figure for audiences of the period is one of the most exciting aspects of this film and highlights it as a very important film in the history of French cinema. The very peculiarities of Barrault's Ferriter reveal the complexity of the subject and how astonishingly close the film was to the political and social context in which it was made. A structuralist approach such as that deployed by Lagny et al. fails to examine the figure of Ferriter against these historical contexts. It erroneously leads to a classification of *Le Puritain* as part of a generic that represses all history and reproduces right-wing ideology.[56] An examination of those historical contexts, however, demonstrates that, just as Fritz Lang's *M* in Germany represents the local gathering period of Nazism before it achieved national power, *Le Puritain* presents us with a unique portrait of French society in the pre-war period, a society in which elements of home-grown fascism were visible long before the arrival of the Nazis.

The Right-Wing Fanatic and the Catholic Church.

The reviews of *Le Puritain* invariably open with Ferriter's membership of a fanatical Catholic group, a vigilante league: 'Member of a Vigilance League... an apocalyptic declaration': 'A young journalist, a fanatical adherent to a league against vice': 'A young journalist, exalted and fanatical, member of a society of moral vigilantes. Ferriter seems close to a moral and religious breakdown': 'A young journalist, a member of a vigilance society, assassinates his female neighbour'.[57] The extreme-right

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[55]A.V., *The Monthly Film Bulletin of the British Film Industry*, Vol 5, No. 52, April/, (1938), p.112.

[56]Lagny, Ropars, Sorlin, (1986), p.72.

[57](1)Membre d'une ligue de Vigilance...un déclaration apocalyptique.. Lagny, Ropars, Sorlin, (1986), p.59;, (2) 'Un jeune journaliste, fanatique adhérent d'une ligue contre la vice'; Marion, (1938);, (3) 'Un jeune journalist éxalté et fanatique..membre d'une société de vigilance morale..Ferriter semble proie d'un virement moral et religieux'; Lourcelles, (1992), p.1199;, (4) 'Un journaliste membre d'une societe de vigilance assassine sa voisine', Jacques Sicilier, *Le Monde Radio Television* August 27-Sept.2, (Paris,1990), p.5 & p.21.

fanatic was a potent figure in French society of the period. In 1937, Le Croix de Feu, for example, had two million members. The key theme uniting French politicians and intellectuals on the far right and their followers, was the theme of decadence combined with a defence of spirituality. Their point of view was uncannily close to the Ferriter of the start of the film when he calls for blood sacrifices in order to purify the world. Violent means for these groups were justified in the quest to eliminate society of contaminated elements. Historian Robert Soucy contends that fascism took a particular form for the French groups, such as the Parti Populaire Française and the Croix de Feu, combined, as it was, with a particular kind of Catholicism in France. Like Ferriter, they provided their movements with 'moral' reasons for violence. In doing so they helped fuel an ethical fanaticism that became a force of its own, a form of extreme self-righteousness that went beyond simple economic and social self-interest to a so-called spiritual purpose, a revolt against decadence. The type of Catholicism they practised was distinctive to the period and to French culture.[58] As Soucy demonstrates, opposed to left-wing Catholicism, the Catholicism of the Croix de Feu was a politically authoritarian, socially conservative and highly ascetic brand of Catholicism as well as a Catholicism laced with military values.[59] Colonel La Rocque described his followers in religious terms as apostles. The rhetoric attracted thousands of young men of Ferriter's age and type.

The 'recognisibility', to coin a term, of Ferriter for French audiences of 1937, provides evidence of a figure in French history whose

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[58]Although this kind of fanaticism was also to be found in Ireland of the 1930s. Groups such as the Catholic Vigilance Society were very active in book burning, removing of 'offensive material, the stopping of trains and the burning of cargo of publications. See Terence Brown, *Ireland, a Social and Cultural History, 1922-1985*, (Princeton, Cornell Uni. Press, 1985), p.74. See also *The Drogheda Independent*, (22/5/1937, p.8) which reports on a very strident meeting of The Catholic Young Men's Association in The Gresham Hotel, Dublin. The young fanatics pledged to set up vigilance societies aimed at preventing the spread of cheap magazines spreading 'immoral' and 'degrading' tales of illicit love, divorce, sex matters and birth control.

[59]Soucy, (1995), p.195.

presence has been denied for many years: the pre-war French fascist. As Soucy has observed, 'the high point of French fascism during the inter-war period was not in February 1934, the time of Stavisky, but rather between May 1936 and April 1937 when the Popular Front was most threatening to conservative interests'.[60] The fact that such a film should have had as its inspiration an Irish novel, set in the new Irish Free State, suggests additional perspectives from which the question of the Ireland text might usefully be observed in future studies. In the 1930s, the Catholic Church in France felt under threat by the rise of left-wing movements. The Popular Front generated real panic in the Catholic middle classes and in the aristocracy in France who had watched the changes in Russia and remembered the Paris Commune, when the Communards, a socialist group, took over the city for a brief period in 1871. In 1929 the Catholic Church finally gave up hope of retrieval of the Papal States and concluded a concordat with Mussolini, establishing the Vatican City and state. The Church then set out to create a global moral constituency, particularly focussing on traditional strongholds such as Ireland and France whose instability in the political arena had roused fear and anxiety in the middle classes. In America, the Church, although not a majority religion, established a hold on the film industry by presenting itself as safeguarding both business interests and the interests of other conservative Christian institutions.[61]

In France the Catholic Church became implicated in the anti-decadence campaigns through the right-wing brigades whose attacks on and suppression of socialist film, art and literature were given legitimacy

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[60]Ibid., p.35.

[61]The American Hays Code, for example, allocated a great deal of space to crimes of order and property. A key element of the code's restriction was the need to combat representations of criminals which offered social context for crime. It was on this basis that the League moved to ban De Sica's *Bicycle Thieves.* Films with 'sexual' content like Zanuck's *Forever Amber*, (1944), were tolerated as long as they contained messages of punishment for transgression – although this punishment was largely restricted to female characters. See Black, (1998), p.3.

by the moral force of the church. Lavan's interrogations reveal that Ferriter was a member of just such a right-wing religious brigade. As a member of that group, he burned books and plotted assassinations of well-known intellectuals. Books, however, were not the main focus of interest for Catholic pressure groups in France. Right wing groups have consistently identified the image, graphic art and film, as the primary vehicle for ideology in culture. The image works to paradigmatically reduce the signification of the word. The image as syntagm of sign has, therefore, far greater potential to carry ideology. The Catholic Church and the French right-wing parties were quick to recognise the ideological potential of the moving image, the cinema. They also saw the potential risks of the medium as bearer of resistant messages. As early as 1930 Pope Pius XI had given a detailed encyclical *Vigilante Cura*, on the Art of film which elaborated both the use value of the cinema for the propagation of the Faith and the dangers of the cinema of the periphery.[62] Catholic right-wing groups in France focused on elements they saw as detrimental to the ideal society they envisaged. Earlier in the decade the surrealist filmmaker Louis Bunuel had been a target for these groups and cinemas screening his films suffered intimidation in the form of riots and vigils outside their doors.[63] Bunuel did not address the activities of these groups in the inter-war period until he made *Le Journal d'une femme de chambre* (1963). The link between the Catholic extremists and fascism was represented in the film by a scene in which the Nazi agent, the 'hero' of the film, is shown reading *L'Action française.* As a film of the 1930s, *Le Puritain*, therefore, offers, perhaps, a very rare representation on film, albeit in allegorical form, of the pre-war French fascist figure. This makes for a very remarkable film history given that denial of the existence of

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[62]See An tAthair R. Mac Siubhlaigh & Tomas ò Floinn, *Ealaìn an Scannàin*, (Dublin:1938), pp.3-54.

[63]Réné Prédal, *La Soçiété Française à travers le çinéma,*, (Paris: Nathan Paris, 1996), p.285.

fascist movements before the Second World War in France is rife among historians and commentators, who suggest that the Germans imported extreme-right fascism into France.[64] Right-wing censors in France did not react well to *Le Puritain* and banned it when they came to power in 1940.

Censorship

Since the 1920s the Catholic Church in France had begun to introduce moral guidelines and indices of films and of their suitability for viewing by the Catholic public. The Catholic index of moral content of films continues to be used in France in the twenty-first century in the form of the *Christian Media*'s ratings in television listing magazines and on video covers. These moral codes were not framed in French Government legislation until the Vichy era, when a puppet government led by Pétain was installed by the Germans. Until that time, as we can see in *Le Puritain*, censorship was exercised through a network of moral pressure groups, such as the one to which Ferriter belonged, and through the control of the media. Church censorship of the media is represented in *Le Puritain* by the scenes involving the Catholic newspaper editors. In cinema, censorship was also exercised through the take-over of the management of cinema houses in provincial France. By 1936, some 25% of the standard commercial market, including the largest cinemas and some 50% of the smaller cinemas were controlled by Catholic interests.[65] The producers of *Le Puritain* felt the weight of this new moral constituency when the film, on its release in the United States, was banned from cinemas in New York State by the Catholic League of Decency's operation of the Hayes Code.

In Europe extreme right-wing movements were not satisfied with administrative control of the medium but marched on cinema houses showing 'decadent' films and indulged in militant displays in the streets.

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[64]Soucy, (1995), pp.1-24.

These displays were a manifestation of alienation and resentment by young middle-class men faced with the Popular Front's challenge to hierarchies and injustices and privilege in the work place. As Simone Weill recalled, 'For the youth of the bourgeoisie, the shock of 1936 penetrated to irreparable depths. Nobody had done them harm. But they had been afraid, they had been humiliated by those they regarded as their inferiors, in their eyes an unpardonable crime'.[66] Their resentment found a focus in two 'problems'; the problem of immorality – the result of the 'feminisation' of modern life and the problem of Jewish immigrants fleeing Germany. Initially the primary focus was immorality and the targets were women. *Le Puritain* explores the relationship between the media and the ideology of the Catholic bourgeoisie and the extremist movements. The presence of this other institution, the Church, disrupts the police/criminal function in the binary opposition. The co-presence of the institutions of the Catholic Church and the Law sets up a political dynamic which sets the film apart from other crime films of the period such as Marc Allégret's *Gribouille* (1938) where only state institutions such as the police are represented.

O'Flaherty had identified 'symbolic' goods as the object of violent reaction for right wing fanatics of Ferriter's type in his 1926 short story *The Terrorist*. This story tells of a young Irish vigilante who sets out to bomb a theatre during the performance of the play, ostensibly also to make a sacrifice of blood. The Terrorist says, 'somewhere and by some one that sacrifice will be made: even by one man armed with a stone'. [67] The state censors in France focused on control of unrest in the form of protests, introducing censorship and pre-censorship of all material depicting criminal activities, or any representation of confrontations between criminals and the police and the related institutions of social

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[65]Crisp, (1993), pp.259-260.
[66]Soucy, (1995), p.34.
[67]Liam O'Flaherty, *Irish portraits, 14 Short Stories by Liam O'Flaherty*, (London: Sphere, 1970), p.9.

control such as the education establishment. This kind of censorship resulted in the banning of films such as Vigo's *Zéro de conduite* (1932) and Spaak's scenario *Prison sans barreaux*. The censors of the French Catholic Church, however, concentrated largely on sexuality and decadence.[68]

In France too, as the 1930s passed, these two types of repression combined in the extreme right-groups, particularly Colonel De La Rocque's Croix de Feu. As in the society desired by Croix de Feu, sex and religion are inseparable from politics and the state in the society of *Le Puritain*. Sexual, religious and political restrictions, are the actual mechanism of power as well as the condition of its visibility. Sex and religion, figured in Ferriter in the beginning of the film and politics, represented through Lavan as police, are mutually interdependent manifestations of power. They are its pragmatic representation. The unusual combination of the police genre and the Catholic religious frame offers a disturbing picture of a society under the complete domination of the institutions of control of both the state and the Catholic Right. These two institutions can act in conflict with each other's best interests when one or other becomes a source of disorder, although the right-wing riots of 1935 demonstrated that this was more likely to be the Church in relation to the State rather than the reverse.

Ferriter represents the Catholic right and functions as a mediator of Catholic middle-class morality through his work as a journalist in the review section of *L'étoile du matin*. The readership of this fictional paper had, according to its description in O'Flaherty's novel, the same

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[68]In America, Charlie Chaplin demonstrates the priority given to social control in the exercise of censorship by the Breen Office, in refusing him a certificate for *Limelight*, Irishman Breen summed up the problems the Office had with the script thus: 'there are sections of the story in which Verdoux indicts the 'System' and impugns present day social structure'. He further condemns Verdoux's comments that to be shocked by his activities which are a mere 'comedy of murders' in comparison with the legalised mass murders of war, embellished with gold braid by the system, is ridiculous. See Charlie Chaplin, *My Autobiography*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1964), p.436.

demography as the readership of Action Française: the Catholic clergy, manufacturers, small businessmen and students.[69] Ferriter's work as a journalist has peculiar resonance when taken against the political background of France of the 1930s. *L'Étolie du matin*'s newspaper editor retains codes of dress and demeanour of the successful businessman and combines these with conservative attitudes and Catholic morality. The portrait recalls François Coty, a right-wing newspaper man and financial backer of Solidarité Française, one of the largest fascist movements in France before the Croix de Feu.[70] *Le Puritain* links conservative economic and business interests with the fanatical activism, a link established in the visual signs of the film and less evident in O'Flaherty's novel. Ferriter's connection with the dominant class is reinforced by his membership of a powerful middle-class vigilante group led by the father of Dr O'Leary.[71] This group exercised control on cultural products through societies like the 'Comité catholique du cinéma' and the practice of classifying films according to their moral content.[72] The novel *The Puritan* has been described as 'little more than a propagandist assault on censorship'.[73] The film's treatment of the subject, however, departs from the literary in a number of significant ways. The use of indices in the visible sign problematises an easy reading of Ferriter and offers him as a site of constant struggle and conflict. The character is both similar to and different from, the spectator at various times in the film. His relationship with other characters, particularly female characters, can be read against the character's location in history. The strong reaction of the Irish-

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[69]O'Flaherty, (1932), p.73.

[70]Coty was an anti-Semitic and anti-Communist millionaire –he had made his fortune in the perfume and newspaper business. He set up the Solidarité Française with Jean Renaud. It had a massive following in its initial phase but collapsed in 1933. See Soucy, (1995), pp.59-103.

[71]Christopher Faulkner, 'Theory and Practice of Film Reviewing in the 1930's: Eyes Right: Lucien Rebatet and Action Française 1936-1939', in *French Cultural Studies*, Vol. 3, pt2, No. 8, (1986), p.136.

[72]Crisp, (1993), p.259.

[73]Brown, *Ireland,* (1985), p.132.

American Catholic League to *Le Puritain* indicates that the film's representation of Ferriter as Catholic struck a chord with these audiences. Ferriter acts on behalf of this class when he seeks to implicate the new moral order through the elimination of the element most likely to threaten it.

Women, Corruption and the 'Sacrifice du Sang'

In Catholic ideology a major source of moral disintegration is the body, particularly the female body and female sexuality where sexuality operates independent of reproduction. Following the huge losses of life of the First World War, the French State joined forces with the Catholic Church throughout the 1920s and 1930s to combat what they perceived to be a demographic crisis. Both the State and the church combined to promote ideals of motherhood and domesticity for women and when these failed coercive strategies were adopted such as the banning of clinical abortion in 1920 and the banning of contraception in 1923. The pragmatism of the need to renew the French population was couched in repressive discourses of morality and purity. These years also saw the founding of the influential Women's Catholic League, the *Union féminine civique et sociale*.[74] The connection between the Catholic Church and the French State's attitudes to women demonstrates common ground with Irish post-Independence society. As *Le Puritain* unfolds, conflicting discourses about women and women's sexuality centred on women in the period are explored through the figures of the two main female roles, that of Teresa, Ferriter's victim and Molly, the prostitute. For French fascists like Drieu La Rochelle the feminine was equated with weakness and corruption and must be ruthlessly suppressed in order for the virile and pure masculinity to triumph. Barrault's Ferriter comes remarkably close to Drieu La Rochelle's fictional heroes in his inability to achieve relations

with women and in his fear of women of his own class. It is important, at this point, to clarify the term 'sacrifice du sang' as it appears in the film, in order to demonstrate the consistency of the relevance of the film to its time, 1937 and to key figures in the dominant culture.

The words 'blood sacrifice' in Irish culture are strongly connected to the acts of rebellion leading to the foundation of the Irish State: to 1916 and to its leaders. The notion of 'blood sacrifice' is particularly associated with the rebel Padraig Pearse. *Le Puritain* deals with the anxieties generated by themes of purity and rejection of the flesh. Some of these themes are to be found in Pearse's poetry such as *Fornocht Do Chonaic Tú - Naked I Saw you*, a poem in which the poet turns away from his dreams of the sensual life in order to take on the ascetic role of the revolutionary. There is much confusion about Pearse's writings and their meaning. This can be attributed to the fog of agenda-driven re-readings of his work after his death. Against this context, O'Flaherty's treatment of Ferriter's 'blood sacrifice' could be construed as an attack on notions of messianic martyrdom and Catholic nationalism mediated through discourses of Irish republicanism circulating in the post-rebellion period. However, as Declan Kiberd has successfully argued, those representations of the 1916 Rising as a suicide mission have a particular agenda and are not consistent with archive reports and witness accounts of that event nor of the aims and objectives of its leaders. Kiberd has shown that, rather than seeking blood and sacrifice, the Irish rebels rose in the conviction that further involvement of Irish people in the Great War would lead to far more bloodshed than their Rising which they hoped would take Ireland out of the war altogether.[75] Furthermore, the notions

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[74]Claire Duchen, 'Occupation housewife: the domestic ideal in 1950s France', in *French Cultural Studies*, Vol. 2, Pat 1, no. 4, (Feb. 1991), p.3.

[75]Declan Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland,*, (London: Vintage, 1996, 1st pub. Jonathan Cape, 1995), p.199.

of purging and exclusion which drive Ferriter in his mission to redefine society, are not consistent with the ideals of the 1916 revolutionaries.

For the French biographer of Padraig Pearse, Louis N. Le Roux, this kind of fanaticism had little in common with Pearse's vision of society: 'In all his anterior work, one rediscovers the spirit which inspired *Íosagan.* It is not an insular Irish nationalist spirit, with its limitations, its prejudices, the narrowness of its conceptions: it is a modern Irish spirit, wide and perceptive like that of Wolfe Tone and that of Davis'.[76] In *Le Puritain*, Ferriter's 'blood sacrifice' involves murder. There is no question of suicide or martyrdom. The sacrifice is a woman- the bloodshed a purge and an act of provocation. Ferriter's manifesto comes far closer to the manifestos of Drieu La Rochelle than to Pearse. An active member of the Parti Populaire Française and a journalist with their paper *L'Emancipation nationale,* along with Céline, La Rochelle became one of the most important right-wing voices among French intellectuals working at that time.

In *Gilles*, the most famous French fascist novel of the era, Drieu extolled the 'virile male Catholicism of the Middle Ages and complained that modern Catholicism had grown effeminate –it no longer honoured blood sacrifice'.[77] In another of his novels, *Straw Dogs*, Drieu says of his hero Constant: 'Killing would only be interesting if it were a matter of murder, a crime [...] he needed to kill somebody today. [...] Life is a sacrifice. All the ancient religions, that have known this human secret, have taught it and practised it. Life is a reeking slaughterhouse before the gods [...] All that man can do is to recognise that he is made to die; the best thing for him to do is to take death by the hand, to make himself the

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[76]'Dans toutes ses oeuvres anterieures, on retrouve l'esprit qui inspira *Íosagan.* Ce n'est pas un esprit insulaire irlandais, avec ses limites, se préjugés, l'étroitesse de ses conceptions; c'est un esprit irlandais moderne, large et perçant comme celui de Wolfe Tone et celui de Davis'. Louis N. Le Roux, *La Vie de Patrice Pearse*, (Rennes: Imprimerie commericale de Bretagne, 1932), p.137.

[77] Soucy, (1995), p.288.

executioner, to be himself the killer, to take the knife from the hand of God. Abraham wanted to bump off Isaac himself. But the ancient religions have fallen into decadence [...] Decadence, always decadence. Life is perpetual decadence from the beginning [...] people killed rams and no longer men. The true religion is the Mexican religion: it splits a man down the middle and rips out his heart'.[78] Constant considers the Second World War a 'war of religions'. He sees no contradiction between fascist spirituality and fascist violence because the spirituality he believes in is beyond history, the slaughter of bodies being rectified by the resurrection of souls. Like Drieu too, Ferriter sees feminisation and women as a primary source of decadence and they are the targets of his mission.

Initial disequilibrium in *Le Puritain* occurs, not with the murder, but with the representation of woman as independent sexual being, portrayed in Teresa's love life, in her encounter with her lover on the stairs and in her enjoyment of her private self in her bedroom. Power necessitates a seducer and a seduced. This is the necessary context which can then be subverted. In O'Flaherty's novel the subversion of the conventionally male role of seducer by the female Teresa as she toys with Ferriter causes an initial imbalance in power relations. The establishment of such power relationships is not predetermined but happens through the narrative representation of the other, the subject who must then be controlled through either containment or elimination in the mimesis. In narratives of the poetic realist genre women are constructed as being in control of their sexuality and are then punished for it.[79] *La Bete humaine* (Renoir, 1938) reveals the woman as culprit in destroying male solidarity mediated through the machine, the engine. Even when well intentioned, like Line Noro in *Pépé le Moko* (Duvivier, 1936), the woman is the source of the man's downfall. The films are an expression of a deep-seated desire to find a scapegoat, someone to blame for the failure to achieve the

[78] Drieu La Rochelle, quoted in Soucy, (1995), p.288.

ideal 'male' society. Teresa Burke is killed in a moment of 'private' sensuality. She imagines herself alone. The camera presents her, not as Ferriter sees her, but from the privileged viewpoint of the lens. The lassitude of her movements and the eroticism of her carrying out her toilette, is directed at the privileged male gaze.[80] However, unlike Viviane Romance's body image as the prostitute Molly, an echo of her image in Duvivier's *La Belle équipe*, Teresa's body is not on display for purchase at this moment. The woman's sexuality, her own pleasure in herself and her desire, generates anxiety and in the majority of films in this period efforts are made to contain it, usually through her death.[81]

The Woman as Commodity

Ferriter's view of Teresa in this frame is normative and in keeping with the dominant cinematic discourse and with the representation of women in society in general. His view of Teresa in the early part of the film is echoed by his own bourgeois relations and by O'Leary's relations in their refusal to acknowledge Teresa. As a result of this, Ferriter imagines fraternity with Lavan as a fellow 'moral' policeman. The arrogance and contempt of Barrault's expression in the aftermath of the murder reflects Ferriter's feeling of superiority. Teresa's murder is the elimination of visible female sexuality, in his opinion, the element of disruption of the norms of the society in which he lives. In Ferriter's mind, Teresa represents a source of corruption in the house, where the house connotes the private world. She brings the street into the house through her activities as a prostitute –it is not altogether clear whether Teresa is

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[79]Hayward, (1993), p.45.

[80]The description in the novel of this scene is very close to its depiction on film and has the same fetishistic sensuality: 'She laced her fingers and then brought down hands to the back of her neck. Holding her neck between her joined hands, with her elbows close together, she walked swaying towards the table yawning and frowning. She was a beautiful woman, young, with golden hair and a very fair complexion'. O'Flaherty, (1932), p.23.

[81]Hayward, (1993), pp.273-295.

actually a prostitute or whether Ferriter imagines that she is. However, her sexuality as commodity, whether imagined or real, is not really a problem for Ferriter, or, indeed for society. Her real crime is her 'illegitimate' love affair. Again, the lack of condemnation of prostitution by Ferriter is consistent with the fascist intellectual's discourse on women. Drieu La Rochelle wrote that he liked prostitutes 'because they were mute'.[82] The protagonist of one of his novels, *L'homme couvert des femmes* (1925), laments his impotence with bourgeois women, but he has more success with prostitutes, 'anonymous flesh'. Having taken one to bed, he describes how he had 'stuffed her mouth with money so she would not talk anymore. She had a superb body, with calves, ham and breasts that one does not find among the salon bitches. Did she have a head? In my mind I sliced off her head when I first kissed her neck to mark the highest point of my caresses and let it roll into the abyss'.[83] Robert Soucy argues that Drieu's contempt for women was partially driven by a fear of them, especially if they were educated and by the shame that he felt at not being manly enough in his dealings with them. Ferriter also demonstrates a fear of women and an inability to seduce them. Prostitutes are less threatening – Drieu says 'With what good sense I have always feared women. That is why I went to the brothel'.[84] In the film, the completely materialistic Molly, played by Viviane Romance is neither murdered nor arrested. For French film historians, Viviane Romance as sign represented commodified flesh, the wet mouth, a woman whose has 'rid herself of all morality'.[85] The ideal 'pornographic' woman of La Rochelle's dreams, promising 'mute invitation', 'open legs' and 'heavy scent', Romance recalls

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[82] Soucy, (1995), p.293.
[83] Ibid., p.293.
[84] Ibid., p.293.
[85] Olivier Barrat & Raymond Chirat, *Inoubliables: visages de çinéma français, 1930-1950*, (Paris: Almann- Lévy, 1986), p. 190.

the 'mythological whore of French literature'.[86] She has thus been labelled as the archetypal 'whore' of French film. [87]

O'Flaherty's analysis of Irish culture in his essay, 'The Irish censorship', correctly identifies prostitution as an aspect of a puritanical and misogynistic culture. He remarks that 'Bawdy books, bawdy houses and booze' suffered no censorship in Ireland 'even during the Eucharistic Congress' while literature and films were banned and 'wine, love and poetry' were discouraged.[88] This destructive and evil culture, according to the writer, divides men from women, sets brothers against sisters, children against their mothers. In the short story *The Fanatic,* which reads as a sketch for *The Puritan,* there is a terrifying description of one such individual who blames women for the coming of cinema to Ireland: 'Women are responsible for all the foreign filth that comes into this holy country. Women! Women are inclined to sin by nature and a hard discipline is needed to keep them on the right road. Man alive, they are lecherous in the very cradle. Soon after, in any way, they begin to smarten and titivate themselves, getting ready for the debauch'. In horrified reaction to the fanatic's tirade, whose real gripe is the wickedness of his [the fanatic's] sister for marrying a 'foreign fellow', the narrator of the story declares that he has found himself in 'the confessional house of the insane'.[89] In this story, the fanatic's pathological hatred of his sister stems from the moment she begins to seek her independence, to assert her rights as an adult woman and to explore her sexuality. The fanatic identifies the cinema as a source of her liberation because it was a source of ideas and dreams.

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[86] Francoise Ducout, *Seductrices du çinéma français, 1936-1956*, (Paris: Henry Veyrier, 1978), p. 63.

[87]'La putain du çinéma français', Jacques Sicilier, *La Femme dans le çinéma français*, (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1957), p.68.

[88]Liam O'Flaherty, 'The Irish Censorship', in *Banned in Ireland*, ed. Julia Carlson, (London: Routledge, 1990), p.145.

[89]Liam O'Flaherty, 'The Fanatic', in *The Oxford Book of Irish Short Stories*, ed. William Trevor, (Oxford: Oxford Uni. Press, 1989), pp.300-10.

In *Le Puritain*, Teresa Burke is a problem to Ferriter because she actively desires the young Dr O'Leary and she rejects him. Another female, the concierge, played by Mady Bery, colludes in Teresa's infraction (the corruption of the house) and is also seen to be a moral deviant because she is living with a man to whom she is not married, a man she has preferred to her husband. In fact Ferriter's act of murder exposes the moral infractions of the landlady which she is forced to reveal to Lavan. His act, he hopes, will bring new order to society. The camera equates our view and Ferriter's as he waits for his opportunity to gain access to Teresa and to kill her. Ferriter is shown looking down the stairs and then looking at the couple, Dr O'Leary and Teresa, taking leave of each other outside her bedroom door. As Teresa embraces O'Leary, the film cuts to a close-up and the angle and the position of the camera shifts to Ferriter's point of view. We see this kiss as Ferriter sees it. By equating our view with the murderer, Teresa Burke becomes as much a source of anxiety to the spectator as to Ferriter.

The cinematographer of *Le Puritain* was the renowned and deeply influential Kurt Courant.[90] His use of the camera explores the relationship between the spectator and the image. Courant plays with vision in the manner of German expressionism, a style that adds to the troubling effect of the film. His use of special effects, fragmented lens in particular, are employed in the film only when both the camera and Ferriter are looking at women and point out the subjectivity of the medium's construction of the female. Courant's skill can be seen in one remarkable shot, a jarring jump cut, a close up of a woman's thigh in stocking and suspender as Ferriter enters the night-club towards the end of the film. The possible signifier of gratuitous titillation is undercut by the camera's panning of ugly, grey male faces. The effect is less erotic than disturbing and contributes greatly to the impression of a sordid world. The shot is

provocative in the double sense of provoking 'moral' outrage and arousing/exciting the censor as spectator. It has the same effect as Samuel Beckett's description of a kiss in *Murphy* when he writes 'The above passage is carefully calculated to deprave the cultivated reader'.[91] The film's construction of the woman as object and our consumption of her through our look, leads to her suppression through murder within the diegesis of the film and to exterior repression in the form of censorship. Censorship and repression operate a complex metanarrative in *Le Puritain*. The film is both a repressed narrative, the object of censorship, and a narrative about repression and censorship.

The fetishistic thigh, metonymic of the woman's body, is for sale. The only possible physical contact between men and women in the world of the film is through transaction, sex as commodity or sex as contained in the transaction of marriage, with the latter being posited as the ideal. The repression of love and fraternity between men and women in this world is played out through the register of constructed space, the setting of the film. In *Le Puritain* legitimate public places of encounter for men and women are limited to the institutions of the Law and the Church, given concrete representation in the film through the police station and the church building and to the café. For women, however, the space of the café is restricted to women of 'dubious character'. The market place, where sex as commodity can be procured, is represented in the bars and the 'bawdy house'. The danger zone, the illegitimate space, is the street itself and the unstable space of the stairway of the boarding house in which Ferriter lives. Encounters in these areas are not subject to control and are, therefore, highly problematic, i.e. sexualised. Encounters with Teresa in the undefined space of the stairs, an index of the bedroom, leads to the arousal of Ferriter. Ferriter desires Teresa but her social

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[90]Courant was the cinematographer for Carné's *Le jour se lève*. He worked with Pabst and Ophuls in Germany and with Carné and Duvivier in France.

[91]Samuel Beckett quoted in Kiberd, (1998), p.532.

classification as 'damaged goods' prevents his possession of her in marriage. His strategy to obtain legitimate contact with her, misrecognised as 'saving her', is thwarted by Teresa herself who finds his proselytising ridiculous and who does not wish to be 'saved'. The option of paying her is rendered impossible by his role of vigilante and, more importantly, by his inability to make money. Ferriter's incompetence in the material world also prevents him from aspiring to 'respectable' marriage. Ironically Dr O'Leary's new found cultural and symbolic capital, his education, prevents him also from marrying Teresa even though, as he confesses to Lavan, he is in love with her. Teresa, although absent, is central to the film's teasing out of the contradictions in the moral philosophy of the Catholic middle class.

Ferriter's beliefs and his lack of means render him impotent and render the possessing of the woman as the man's property through 'normal' capital means, i.e. marriage, as fraught. Given the means to possess Teresa, he cannot guarantee control of her. Teresa's sexuality, unlike the prostitute played by Viviane Romance, is not entirely subject to contract and she exhibits free will in her preference for O'Leary. Hannah Arendt describes the logical outcome of Ferriter's position thus: 'property, by itself, however is subject to use and consumption and therefore diminishes constantly. The most radical and the only secure form of possession is destruction, for only what we have destroyed is safely and forever ours'.[92] This link between murder and possession of the woman as object of desire is more clearly represented in the opening scenes of *Dernière jeunesse*, in which the actor Raimu, an elderly colonel who has offered shelter to a young homeless woman, converts his first gesture of caress towards her sleeping and at this stage entirely 'innocent' figure, into a gesture of strangulation. He has just met her and we know nothing about her other than she is in need of shelter and is hungry. In this way

[92] Arendt, (1973), p.145.

Dernière jeunesse negates any attribution of responsibility to the woman for the murderous action of the man in spite of the narrative's construction of her as selfish, unfaithful and materialistic as the action unfolds. Her infidelity signifies her desire to escape the constraints of the contract by which she earns food and shelter, her concubinage with the Colonel. The heroine of *Dernière jeunesse* acts against her own self-interest, driven by romantic notions of love and escape and mistaken ideas about her power and dies because she has not played the game. However, the man's wish for total control of her through murder exists independently of any action she takes herself. In a similar way, as the film progresses, *Le Puritain* absolves Teresa of any responsibility for Ferriter's act and increasingly displaces notions of culpability on to Ferriter.

Ferriter's second 'murder' of Teresa is the destruction of her image, the photograph. It could be said that Ferriter is destroying evidence by tearing up the photograph. However, he retains his manifesto, the most damning piece of evidence and the one which finally convicts him. His destruction of the photo is symbolic. He flushes the pieces down the sink, an act connoting a purification process. The relationship between the representation and the represented is important. The image of Teresa recalls her physical presence and the attraction and desire Ferriter feels for her. The struggle to control desire generated by Teresa is mediated physically through the body of Barrault. Barrault's performance is an image of energy held in, illustrated by very detailed gestures such as the slight 'flutter' of his hand as he leaves the room. Ferriter's restraint collapses. This is evident in the scene where he takes flight and breaks past a police officer before he destroys the photograph. His action becomes increasingly reactive under the pressure of the Law. Ferriter doubts his ability to retain possession of Teresa's image, the photograph. By destroying her image she becomes totally his. The real woman is effaced and the myth is realised. The tearing up of the photo also eliminates the body of the woman from the narrative and the external

focus of Ferriter's repudiation of the flesh. His accusations then turn in on himself. The struggle is internal. In this phase he truly becomes the puritan in his efforts to reject his body and the temptations of the flesh. Ferriter the puritan's dilemma is constructed through these contradictions in the discourses of moral purity in the Catholic ideology to which he subscribes and the actual practice of the Catholic middle class in his society. He tries to destroy these contradictions first by eliminating Teresa, who unleashes his own repressed sexuality, a sexuality he refuses to acknowledge even at the end of the film and by destroying the mechanism by which these contradictions can operate, hypocrisy. He hopes to achieve the exposure and, therefore, destruction of the hypocrisy/myth by framing O'Leary for the murder and by informing on him to Detective Lavan.

The Informer

Common-sense interpretations of the informer construct informing as an act of betrayal, particularly of community. This kind of informing is represented in *Le Puritain* by the character Tyson, the little police informer, who is given a musical index on the sound track of the film. However in French cinema theory, informing can also be read as an act of denunciation against a particular group. In this view, the informer is more betrayed than betraying and his informing is a form of protest: 'The informer (of cinema), does not betray, he denounces'.[93] The notion of informing as a form of protest against alienation had its first real appearance in cinema in Ford's *The Informer* (1935) and has profound implications for the Ireland text in French cinema.

John Ford's *The Informer* (1935) has, as its subject, the repression of marginal figures who had served their purpose in the revolutionary movement, but whose own needs and desires now pose a threat. While

[93]'Le mouchard [du çinéma] ne trahit pas, il dénonce'. Gilles Horvilleur, 'Le Mouchard', in *Dictionnaire des personnages du çinéma*, (Paris: Bordas, 1988), ed. Gilles Horvilleur, p.297.

Ford sets the film in the time at the end of the War of Independence, O'Flaherty's novel is set in the period of post-Independence. In *The Informer*, Gypo, having served his purpose, is dropped from the revolutionary cell and we find him reminiscing about the fine times he had with his comrade, while in active engagement, in the opening sequences of the film. Being excluded from the cell has a direct effect on Gypo. He loses his identity as revolutionary and, being no longer fed as part of that army, the material conditions of his life deteriorate to such an extent that he is starving.[94] A very real sense of this terrible betrayal is at the heart of the film's tension and the agony of the central character's experience. Like *Le Puritain*, *The Informer* is a representation of alienation from the dominant order and a double alienation not only from the coloniser in the form of the English police but from the new post-revolutionary order. The betrayal is extreme given that the protagonist was once active in the struggle for revolution and the shock of that betrayal reverberates in all of Gypo's actions. This sense of betrayal permeates O'Flaherty's other novel of post-revolutionary Ireland, *The Assassin*, whose central character desires to murder the 'Long Fellow', a nick-name for Eamonn De Valera. This novel contains graphic descriptions of the poverty of Dublin in the 1930s, where homeless young men shelter in the libraries and the only answer to starvation is emigration.

French response to *The Informer* reflects a similarly ambivalent attitude to betrayal and identity in the film. This ambivalence, O'Flaherty's negative view of power as exercised by the state and by newly emerging populist cell in its ruthless elimination of the subject, produces a highly

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[94]'John Ford qui décide contre toute attente de réaliser la nouvelle de son cousin Liam O'Falherty afin de raconter au monde *une geurre irlandaise dont personne n'a entendu parler*. Le résultat est un drame ambigu à plus d'un titre. Prenant parti pour l'action révolutionnaire, Ford dépient cependent le traitre comme un personnage touchant, généreux, qui dépense l'argent de sa délation en offrant à boire à tous les compatriotes qu'il rencontre. Les révolutionnnaires apparaissent au contraire comme des etres intransigeants et sans pitié, vivant à l'écart d'un peuple qu'ils sont pourtant censés de représenter'. Délage, (1989), p.64.

unstable text.[95] Délage also attributes the instability in the text to O'Flaherty: 'John Ford decided to make an adaptation of this novel by his cousin Liam O'Flaherty in order to tell the world about *an Irish war of which no-one speaks*. The result is a drama as ambiguous as its title. Having sided with the revolutionary cause, Ford, nevertheless, paints the traitor as a touching generous character who spends the money of his dishonour on rounds of drinks for all the compatriots he encounters. The revolutionaries appear, in contrast, intransigent and unpitying, living on the exclusion of the people they were supposed to represent'.[96]

Edward Said reads 'the informer' motif' as linked to anti-colonial rebellion. Said, thus, identifies betrayal, imperialism and patriarchal oppression as key elements in the informer sign when placed against the moment of decolonisation. In this context the post-Independence society is engaged in a struggle to control representation of the person defined as a member of the new nation, who is 'in' and who is 'out'.[97] Informing was, in his view, the mark of protest against the values of a society based on exclusion. For playwright and novelist Jean Genet, to betray was to assert that 'exceptional' identity foisted unjustly on him by a society that has found him to be a guilty criminal.[98] It is also to assert his power to elude any attempts to rehabilitate him or reclaim him. Betrayal for him is better if it is mean-spirited, not heroic like Lucifer, but the kind we associate with a police informer or a collaborator. 'It is enough', Genet continues, 'if the betrayer be aware of his betrayal, that he will it, that he be able to break the bonds of love uniting him with man-kind. Indispensable for achieving beauty, love. And cruelty shattering that love. Better the destabilising effects of a permanent will to betray, always

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[95]The film of *The Informer* was banned in Ireland in 1937.

[96]Délage, (1989), p.64.

[97]Carrie Tarr, 'French Cinema and Post-Colonial Minorities', in *Post-Colonial Cultures in France*, Hargreaves and McKinney, eds., (1997), p.65.

[98]Edward Said, 'On Jean Genet's Late Works', in *Imperialism and Theatre*, J. Ellen Gainor, ed., (New York, Routledge, 1995), p.234.

keeping him one step out of everyone's reach, than a permanent identity as a crook who can be punished or forgiven by others'.[99] Genet posits betrayal as the only means available to subaltern classes to resist the identity imposed on them by the dominant patriarchal society.[100]

Ferriter can be read in the frame of an informer who denounces because he feels alienated from those people whose cause he professed to serve and who now cast him off. His object is to denounce O'Leary for his immoral behaviour. However, his real object is O'Leary's father, a board member of a right-wing religious brigade called *Les Chevaliers du croix* from which, Ferriter confesses to Lavan, the young journalist resigned because of O'Leary's refusal to chastise his son for his corruption of Teresa Burke. In fact we learn from O'Leary himself that his father did chastise him for his relationship with Teresa, not out of any sense of responsibility to the child of their union, but because of the potential for scandal. Ferriter realises too late that, by killing Teresa, he has helped the O'Leary family by preventing the realisation of their worst fears, the possibility of their son marrying a fallen woman.

Ferriter's motivation as murderer has its origin in the discourse of his community and his behaviour is, therefore, extreme but normative. However Ferriter as informer begins the journey which leads to his eventual alienation from society. Exclusion of the central character from the society on whose behalf he had acted is a feature of both Ford's *The Informer* and *Le Puritain*. The alienation of the central character prompts Dudley Andrews to compare *Le Puritain* with *Crime et chatiment*, Chenal's hugely successful 1935 film of Dostoievski's novel.[101] This

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[99]Ibid., p.234.

[100]Ibid., p.238.

[101]Like *Le Puritain*, *Crime et Chatiment* did not fit into any particular category and had both an expressionistic and a realist filmic style. As in *Le Puritain,* deep focus was used in order to create an atmosphere, a world of long corridors. See Andrews, (1995), p.271.

parallel was mentioned by Musso himself.[102] In both films, the murderer's deconstruction of his own motives leads him to question the society in which he lives. However, there are considerable differences between these works. The nature of the chase, the policeman and the criminal, is similar, as are the policeman's personal interest in his quarry's point of view, but there are key differences between the female characters, both the murder victims and the prostitute. Sonya is developed as a character. Her prostitution is given a history. Her voice is heard in the novel, along with the hero's sister and his mother. Dostoievski's novel contains multiple voices, a variety of histories within its frame. These other voices, the relationships the hero has with his community, the political and social context of his act, the portrait of the subaltern in the figure of Sonya and her family, are part of the murderer's appeal as a character for the reader and are part of his transformation. These voices present a challenge to the danger of identifying with a character like Dostoievski's murderer.

Ferriter in *Le Puritain* poses a similar problem. Ferriter appeals because he is, in the first instance, the actor, one who acts. However the actor Barrault demonstrates that he is aware of the danger risked by audience identification with Ferriter's viewpoint and offsets it through his performance. Ferriter, the character, is not performed to appeal. There is no question but that this is due to the skill of the performer and not as might be construed from the contrast between his less than regular features and the film-star good looks of Fresnay. In Carné's *Les Enfants du Paradis* (1945), Barrault demonstrated that he could elevate appeal to mythic proportions in the character of Batiste. His Ferriter, however, is the performance of alienation. Ferriter's alienation is a result of his adoption of certain repressive and counter-revolutionary creeds current in his society and the restraints these creeds put on him as a person who takes them seriously. Ferriter upsets the status quo precisely because he

[102]'Il y a, dans l'intrigue, des ressemblances avec *Crime et Chatiment* de Dostoïevski'.

wishes to translate the discourses of his authoritarian Catholicism from myth into history. He has not understood or absorbed the cultural pragmatism of the Catholic middle class.

In his attempts to denounce the world that has corrupted Teresa Burke Ferriter can no longer be contained by society. He must be repressed. His extremism exposes the operation of Catholic ideology as a strategy of power. He is now an object of persecution by the Law and of censorship by the institution of the Church through its sub-institution, the Catholic press. Lavan affirms his point of view in his statement; 'I respect religion but I do not like fanatics'. Ferriter realises that the law is not on his side when Lavan refuses to arrest O'Leary. In his quest to condemn the corruption of society through denouncing O'Leary, Ferriter goes to the editor of his own paper, *L'Étoile du matin* and asks him to accuse O'Leary publicly but the editor, worried about the patronage of the paper, refuses. His attitude echoes Lavan's: 'Ce pays, quelle bande de fanatiques/This country, what a band of fanatics', conveniently forgetting that his paper employed such fanatics as a matter of course.

The Puritan and The Policeman

Ferriter is initially constructed as hero/subject but the film very quickly undermines Ferriter as authority. Lavan is the source of the breakdown of Ferriter's initial perception of himself as 'bon' in the sense of the upright citizen in a decadent world. Ferriter's view of his act as a moral crusade is undercut through ridicule. The landlady's concern that she will be arrested for immoral behaviour is played for laughs in the vaudeville style, a routine based on the comedy of the contrast between the enormous Mady Bery and the tiny actor playing her husband. This burlesque routine refers intertextually to the ridicule of the 'moral police'

Musso quoted in Sicilier, (1990), p.5 & p.21.

in the hugely popular French farces of Georges Feydeau.[103] These farces, however, were the product of happier times, the decadent period of the end of the 19th century. By the 1930s the good times were well and truly over. Moral brigades might have been the butts of French farce in La Belle Époque but by the late 1930s their views had weight. They were the norm. Where Prévert and Renoir and *La Groupe Octobre*, a collective of writers, actors including Barrault and filmmakers which had grown out of the Surrealist movement, had considerable freedom to attack moral censorship, particularly Catholic censorship, with *Le Crime de Monsieur Lange*, in 1935 this was no longer the case. The atmosphere had changed. The censor/critic and the murderer, welded in Ferriter's character, assumed a more threatening significance in the later years. The film's representation of Ferriter's moral crusade links such repressive thinking to murder and the murder to the problem of sexuality and Christian notions of the self:

> 'What was new for the era was the study of the behaviour of a criminal who tries to justify a murder through moral reasoning, when, in reality, he has sexual problems.' [Musso] [104]

While *Le Puritain* resists Ferriter's perception of his act as the act of a normal man driven to revolution, the film represents the killing as the logical outcome of the discourses of the ideology of which Ferriter is initially a wholly integrated subject. The film is not merely an assault on censorship, but in the view of at least one French spectator, an exploration of 'the most abstract and complex themes', the relationship

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[103]The final scene of the second act of *L'Hotel du Libre Échange* by Feydeau involves the arrest of several couples by the 'moral police'. *La Dame de chez Maxims*, one of the most famous of his farces, also ridicules religious fanaticism.

[104]'Ce qui était nouveau pour l'époque, c'etait l'étude du comportement d'un criminel qui essaie de justifier un meurtre par des raisons morales, alors qu'il est en réalité un refoulé sexuel'. Jeff Musso, quoted in Sicilier (1990), p.5, p.21.

between the body and control.[105] This conflict is communicated in the semiotics of the film. Dr O'Leary's figure is encoded with the signs of the sensual world. He is a big man, but the power suggested by his physical bulk is undercut by his drunkenness and his dishevelled appearance. He is a voluptuary. He sweats, drinks, is volatile and emotive. He represents physical appetites, open sensuality. He is linked to Teresa both in the image of their kiss and in the animal sense, as Ferriter sees him, in sweat, lassitude and indulgence. Both Lavan and Ferriter condemn O'Leary. His sensuality and his appetites are represented as weakness, as an absence of control.

Ferriter's austere ascetic appearance sets him apart. This asceticism is further reinforced by the use of cigarettes and smoking in the film. Smoking is represented as populist in French cinema of the 1930s. From *La Belle équipe* (Julien Duvivier, 1936), to *Quai des brumes* (Marcel Carné, 1938), we see the most popular figure in French cinema, Gabin, with a cigarette between his lips. In *Le Puritain* everybody smokes cigarettes except Ferriter. Although the cigarette has a function as an index of Ferriter's construction of his alibi, his refusal to smoke sets him further apart from his fellow men and reinforces the purity ideal of the body as a temple. In these sequences, we are presented with asceticism in the figure of Ferriter combined with military precision mediated by the Detective. His smoking is not decadent. It becomes a statement of his abilities as a detective: he demolishes Ferriter's alibi, his requesting a cigarette from a neighbour. The smoking's possible signified, a working class image, is negated by Lavan's use of the gold cigarette case and the lighter. His slicked-back hair, polka-dot tie and pale suit summons up the urbane chic of a crime boss and separates him from the lower orders of

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[105]Denis Marion goes on to praise the film: 'C'est déjà un mérite d'avoir choise un sujet aussi dur: c'en est un plus grand encore d'avoir réussir à développer par une action qui ne languit jamais..*Le Puritain* démontre qu'il est possible de porter à l'écran

policemen with their badly fitting suits and cloth caps. His image is 'man of the world', metropolitan.

Lavan's appearance suggests control and rationality. He is also associated with modern science connoted by the forensic laboratory. Lavan forces Ferriter to the facts, informing him that he can only technically charge O'Leary with assault. Lavan's Cartesian mode, the rational and logical approach, is pitted against Ferriter's emotion and changeability. Intertextually the film as police film anticipates the *G Men* films of J. Edgar Hoover, in which the deviant figure was located by deductive methodology, trapped by forensic evidence and always killed during arrest.[106] This narrative eliminated the judicial process, specifically the public as jury and transferred all power to the state forces. The judicial process is also absent from *Le Puritain*, however the French police of this period cannot be equated with the FBI. Unlike Hoover's agents, French police officials belong not to one politically right-wing director who was in place for decades but to many ministers of the interior who varied ideologically. The French police detectives acted as agents of these ministers and their actions reflected the dominant politics of their particular social context.

The policeman Lavan *is* not only 'the Law', but the law as representative of the particular historical moment. Lagny et al. argue that Lavan's law is repressive, conservative and counter-history because of its treatment of the subject in the film.[107] They contend that Ferriter can be read as Lavan's double and opposite. In the beginning of the film, Ferriter is posited as the subject. The detective, however, is the hidden subject of

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les thémes les plus abstraits et les plus complexes à condition de les illustrer par une anecdote significative'. Marion, (1938), p.515.

[106]The *G Men* films were propagandist fiction celebrating the USA's Federal Bureau of Investigation, a special unit, set up by Hoover in the 1930s with nation-wide jurisdiction and far greater power than the state police forces. See Richard Powers, *Secrecy and Power, The Life of J. Edgar Hoover*, (London: Hutchinson, 1987), pp.178-90.

[107] Lagny, Ropars, Sorelin, (1986), pp.59-67

the film and emerges as the real actor in the story, forcing Ferriter into reaction. Lavan's character places Ferriter in the role of outsider. Lagny et al. conclude from this that the film's positioning of Lavan as the hidden subject of the film who emerges after the act of murder and who takes control of the action, suggests that the film offers Lavan as hero, the ideal. The film, therefore, like the other films in the 1930s classic realist genre, is itself ideologically repressive. According to Lagny *et al.*'s point of view, the film supports the institution of the police/law through its figurehead, the Commissioner, against Ferriter as Catholic vigilante. This analysis is very useful in that it clearly sees the police-figure as repressive, not liberationist. Lavan is not in opposition to, but an accomplice of, the authoritarian drive of the Catholic Rightist movements represented in Ferriter. In my view, however, it is important not to equate the film's point of view with Lavan. I would argue that Lavan's role is not given positive loading in *Le Puritain*. He is an instrument of the political culture which spawned Ferriter.

The film's representation of contemporary society indicates that the repressive culture of Occupation France was not an import from the Nazis but was very much part of French political culture in the 1930s. Following the collapse of the Popular Front, the State assumed responsibility for the moral order, calling for the sources of corruption in society to be weeded out and increasingly took over the role previously held by the Catholic Church, the mediator of the national moral code. This continued under Vichy until the Government became the sole authorised source of moral discourses. The Church's moral evaluations became subsumed into the state and the organs of Catholic cinema control, *Choisir* and the *Fiches du çinéma*, were closed down. The female body was only one of a number of sources of disruption and contamination in

French cinema tackled by the Far Right.[108] Other repressive undercurrents in French thought were also elevated to the heroic level of state practice in occupied France, particularly anti-Semitism. The review section of the publication the Catholic Right Wing *Action française* had great influence in French culture through the figure of its cinema critic François Vinneuil, alias Lucien Rebatet. According to Rebatet, the Jews, 'having pillaged all the riches of France', move on to the cinema and the theatre because when "you've nothing left to steal, they set about rotting your mind".[109] *Le Puritain*'s cinematographer, Courant, as a German Jew, was the target of critics such as Rebatet and spent the war in exile. All films, including *Le Puritain*, were examined for possible 'contamination' from this source. Right-wing French film criticism in the 1930s and during the Occupation, reveals the relationship between film criticism and power.[110] Their discourse led to exclusion of the object of their examination and, for some, to the ultimate suppression through the concentration camp.[111]

The fusion of the Church as moral authority in Vichy, however, did not mean that all types of Catholicism were given such a role. We must return to the 1930s to see how only one kind of conservative Catholicism was tolerated while some elements among the Catholic extremists of the 1930s found themselves on the side of the resistance in the 1940s. The reasons for these divisions can be found in the problem of instability generated in the Catholic sign not only through anti-materialist tenets of Christianity, but also through notions of the church as a place of

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[108]Rabatet's writings mediated the dominant discourses, Catholic anti-republicanism and anti-Semitism. He had considerable influence on the development of 'auteur' theory in cinema studies. See Christopher Faulkner, 'Theory and Practice of Film Reviewing in the 1930's: Eyes Right: Lucien Rebatet and Action française 1936-1939', in *French Cultural Studies*, Vol. 3, Part 2, No. 8, (1986), p.135.

[109]Lucien Vinneuil quoted in Crisp, (1993), p.187.

[110] The masthead of one of Rabatet's columns, the panoptic *Je suis partout,* is an index of these power relations.

[111]Right-wing film critics were targeting their own citizens, the producers and distributors of films in France who were French Jews and many of the practitioners, technicians and actors who were Russian emigrés. See Faulkner, (1986), p.135.

assembly for the people. The church as space for assembly of the people, administered by local priests, could not always be guaranteed to support political regimes even where recommended by the Vatican or the local bishops. The 'bas-clergé' had a history of protesting on behalf of the people in spite of the risk of brutal repression by their own hierarchy following such an action. In the 1920s in Yugoslavia, for example, the local priests led a campaign for greater democracy in the Church and suffered terrible retribution.[112] The church is also a place of sanctuary. In popular culture, the tradition of sanctuary is celebrated in the cults surrounding French saints such as the ascetic St. Clodoald (born 522), popularly known as St Cloud, who took refuge in a church.[113] The parish church has, therefore, the potential to function as sanctuary in defiance of the state or Crown.[114] Resistance is also resonating in the confessional as a safe space to speak beyond the reach of the law.

The law's invasion of Church territory is given concrete representation in *Le Puritain* when the two police informers follow Ferriter into the Church and blaspheme by smoking and joking within the hallowed ground. They question whether they had not the right to use Ferriter's confession to the priest as evidence. Earlier in this chapter I have suggested that Renoir's *Le Crime de Monsieur Lang*e had a happier passage than *Le Puritain* because it appeared two years earlier in the decade, but the question has also to be asked if the films of the Groupe Octobre were as radical as they have been vaunted. Against the context of the subsuming of all moral systems into the state, *Le Crime de Monsieur*

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[112]Annie Lacroix-Riz, *Le Vatican, l'Europe et le Reich,* (Paris: Armand-Colin, 1996), p.102.

[113] St Cloud was given church sanctuary from his uncles, Childebert, the King of Paris and Clotaire, the King of Soissons, who sought to murder the saint and his two brothers for the throne of Orleans. St Cloud then became a hermit in the Celtic ascetic tradition. See M. Godescard, *Abrégé des vies des pères, des martyrs, et des autres principaux saints (*Paris: Méquignon, 1897), Vol. 3, p.523.

[114]The Church's resistant role as sanctuary can be seen as a problem to Right Wing Government in France in August 1996 when the 'sans papiers', emigrants due for expulsion, took refuge in the Church of St Bernard in Paris.

Lange's satirical view of religion is ambivalent. Rabatet's review of Renoir's film confirms this: 'I have sought in vain the subversive character of this film'.[115] The discourse of the police agents in *Le Puritain* offers a view of the priest as weak, uncertain and unable to deal with Ferriter. Later Ferriter's confession to Lavan will be taken as the true confession on which they can act. In this way, as the action unfolds, Lavan replaces not only the declared subject Ferriter, but also the priest as both author of public morality and confessor. The suppression of the Church's classification of films in the latter part of the decade indicates Catholicism could not be entirely trusted: 'Rational Organisation must thus repress all the physical, mental and political pollutions that would compromise it'.[116] The precarious relationship between the Catholic Church and fascist regimes in Europe was the source of many of the Vatican negotiations and compromises with both Hitler and Mussolini in the period.[117] These negotiations are an index of the complexity of Christianity as a signifying system in France in the inter-war years.

Divisions in the Church: Christian Democracy as Alibi

The film offers a world dominated by the Catholic Right but also represents the splitting and fragmentation of the Church in this period of greatest uncertainty. Many scenes which seem redundant can be explained against this backdrop. Ferriter's appeal to two editors is an example of this apparent redundancy. The first editor represents the Catholic merchant petit bourgeois class and is associated with progressive modernity and with Lavan as modern detective through the art-deco modernist furniture of his office. He reinforces Lavan's refusal to attribute culpability for Teresa's death to O'Leary. Ferriter then goes to another editor of a much

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[115]'Je cherche in vain le caractère subversif de ce film'. Rabatatet quoted in Genévieve Guillaume Grinaud, *Le Cinéma du Front Populaire*, (Paris : Pompidou, 1990), p.55.
[116]De Certeau, (1992), p. 56.

smaller and poorer Catholic press who also refuses to publish Ferriter's statement. The second editor, who appears to be a priest from his black costume, gives the typical Christian Democrat opinion: 'il faut aider ces filles/ we must help these girls'. This response exasperates Ferriter and achieves nothing. The activity of Christian Democrats in pre-Vichy France is often used as a strategy for side-stepping the key role of Catholic Church in the formation of a fascist Europe and is the main argument for the rehabilitation of the Church in histories of France from the post-war Catholic Republican perspective of historians such as Maurice Agulhon.

To counter Marxist representations of the link with the Church and bourgeois fascist interests, forced out into the open by the Civil war in Spain, Alguhon writes that the thirties saw the emergence of a Christian democrat current and that 'for more than a century links of solidarity had been woven between Catholicism and counter-revolution'.[118] Alguhon here takes the term counter-revolution to mean resistance. Christian democracy, however, does not pose a real threat to the dominant group's pursuit of their interests. Catholic asceticism of the type espoused by Ferriter, as he moves further away from the establishment, in particular his efforts to unmask social structures, was much more of a problem. Ferriter's uncompromising views introduce an element into puritanical discourse based on a mastering of the physical appetites in order to achieve a state of grace. This struggle with the physical appetites leads to rejection of material values and of hypocrisy. Idealism has its source in a Catholicism of the periphery, a Catholicism that formed a subculture of the Roman hierarchical Church and was as a result occasionally deemed resistant by the State. Ferriter's ascetic Catholicism reveals him as a modern Jansenist.

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[117]See Lacroix-Riz, (1996), for a thorough examination of the negotiations of the Vatican with these regimes.
[118]Agulhon, (1995), p.241.

Jansenism was a heretical movement in the Catholic Church greatly inspired by the writings of St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas and propounded by the theologian Jansenius in the seventeenth century in France.[119] Jansenism is often confused with puritanical morality. In the popular mind Jansenism is, like Puritanism, a conception of profoundly exacting Christianity without compromise or concession. This Christianity appears anti-humanist, at least in its manifestation in the famous community of Port-Royal.[120] Jansenism was not only associated with Puritanism in the popular sense but also with resistance. The condemnation of the material world and obviously, therefore, the whole market-driven society, alienated the professors of Jansenism from mainstream society. Port Royal is openly acknowledged as a source of some of the 'For The People' ideals of the Rebellion. The early Jansenists espoused pro-monarchy views in the face of the French Revolution. From that period on pro-monarchy tendencies are associated with extreme Catholic right-wing groups, particularly in the early part of the twentieth century, when these groups asserted their right to forge a new identity for France.

Alguhon attempts to associate pre-Vichy Christian Democracy with anti-fascist protest through inclusion of outsiders like Bernanos, among the few Catholics to protest against Nazism and the Fascist movement in Spain, in the post-Second World War Christian Democratic text.[121] Bernanos was a militant Catholic who had been alienated from the political order grown out of the Revolution. He had been a member of L'Action Française, but, following his witnessing of nationalist atrocities in Spain, 'those vast cemeteries under the moon', [122] he moved completely

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[119]Louis Cognet, *Le Jansenisme*, (Paris: Que sais-Je?, 1991), p.11.
[120]Ibid. p.124-26.
[121]He follows this link established in a single page of his text, with a biography of Charles de Gaulle. See Agulhon, (1995), p.241.
[122]'Les grands çimetires sous la lune'. Georges Bernanos quoted in Lacroix-Riz, (1996), p.371.

to a rejection of both the Right in France and the middle ground of Christian democracy.[123] In a similar fashion, Ferriter rejects the road of compromise. He symbolically 'goes away' from the Christian Democrat editor, violently repudiating the editor's counsel. The combination of violent repudiation of compromise/hypocrisy and the asceticism figured in Ferriter as his character develops through the film complicates the fixing of Ferriter as the 'baddie' and opens up the possibility of reading him in the anti-hero mode. It moves him further away from the person who envisaged that the murder of a woman would lead to a purge of corruption.

The writings of the community at Port Royale, particularly the philosopher Blaise Pascal's *Les Pensées*, reveal a preoccupation with the identity and the nature of existence in the material world which appealed to the Existential movement in the post-second world war France and to intellectuals like André Gide and the right-wing Charles Péguy in the inter-war years.[124] Twentieth century re-readings of Pascal's *Pensées* inspired representations of Christ-like outsiders, the alienated heroes of work such as Sartre's *La Nausée* and the work of anti-establishment Catholic writers such as Georges Bernanos. Dudley Andrews compares Ferriter to the hero of Bernanos's *Le Journal d'un curé de campagne,* the priest who struggles to resist the corruption of the material world. In film, adaptations of Bernanos's work, by director Robert Bresson in particular, form a genre and a style of film making labelled Jansenist. The French film theorist Jean Mitry described Bresson as 'The most Jansenist stylist in French cinema. His essential theme is the theme of the spiritual aligned with purity'.[125] Bernanos's novels are famous for their depiction of the self

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[123]Colin Roberts, 'Catholic Representations of Conflict: The Case of Georges Bernanos', in *Violence and Conflict in Modern French Culture*, Renate Gunther & Jan Windebank, eds. (Sheffield, Sheffield Uni. Press, 1994), pp.25-41

[124]Albert Béguin, *Pascale par lui meme*, (Paris: Seuil, 1952), p14.

[125]'Le styliste le plus janséniste du çinéma français. Sa thématique essentielle est le thème spirituel corrélatif de la pureté'. Tulard, (1996), p.111.

in torment, the struggle between the flesh and the spirit. Their anti-materialist stance combined with a rejection of Hitler and German nationalism led the Action Française to adopt a similar policy in relation to the Third Reich as that of the socialist in France, albeit for very different reasons.

In 1926 Pope Pius XI issued a condemnation of L'Action Française. In reply, the heads of the movement issued a famous article entitled *Non Possumus*, declaring its refusal to submit to Rome and the hierarchy while maintaining its undying devotion to the church: 'In the religious domain, the Church has not and will never have more submissive or more devoted sons than us'.[126] The moment was seen as the final betrayal in a long line of bitterness dating from the Dreyfus affair.[127] The Pope's ban was lifted in 1939 when there was no longer any need to suppress these groups, with the Right in full power. According to Annie Lacroix-Riz's 1996 study of Catholicism in the pre-Second-World War period, *Le Vatican, L'Europe et Le Reich*, the Vatican's continuing disapproval of the group was not a reaction to fanaticism, but an attempt to curtail growing nationalistic and anti-German feeling in L'Action Française. Lacroix-Riz's rigorous analysis of all the documents related to the issue of the Vatican's support of Hitler demonstrates the split between the neo-Jansenists figured in L'Action Française and the Catholic hierarchy who actively represented the interests of the dominant bourgeois groups throughout Europe including Ireland and France, but particularly in Spain, in the 1930s. In October 1937 Mussolini's press

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[126]'Sur le terrain réligieux, l'Église n'a pas et n'aura jamais de fils soumis ni plus dévoués que nous'. See J.O. Boudon, J.M. Mayeur, *Les Catholiques en France*, (Paris: Documentation Français, 1992), p. 35.

[127]In 1884, Captain Alfred Dreyfus, of a Jewish Alsation family, was wrongly accused of passing on confidential documents to a potential enemy, Germany, and was court-martialled and sentenced to prison. The family protested and the affair became a source of controversy which split the Left and the Right. It inspired novelist Émile Zola to launch his famous condemnation of the anti-Semitism which had been at the source of Dreyfus' imprisonment, 'J'Accuse'.

denigrated French Catholics: 'The Catholics of France [...], a lot of politics, belligerent politics, red politics'.[128] The opposition between groups like L'Action Française and the Establishment Church was never more extreme than in the inter-war years. George Bernanos, like many other members of L'Action Française, believed that a surgical strike was required to topple the corrupters of the body politic. The writer had hoped that, after the First World War, the sacrifice would lead to change, but if anything society became even more entrenched in materialism. Ferriter's manifesto, the only evidence of his crime, echoes the call of Bernanos for violent action as the only possible means by which the repressive structure of the bourgeois society might change:

> The corruption of materialism has even spread into the Church, giving to the State prerogatives that belong to God's representatives. Sin is treated with courtesy and its freedom is merely curtailed in order to permit the smooth functioning of the State machine. But an end must be put to that by a violent expression of the anger of the faithful. Sinners must be struck down in death, so that we may be redeemed by their blood. We must purify ourselves by pouring out the blood of sinners. We must put an end to sin and corruption by this sacrifice.[129]

However, unlike Bernanos's hero, Ferriter's definition of who should suffer from this action was constructed within the ideology he seeks to attack, resulting in the murder of the innocent Teresa.

Splitting

Dudley Andrews sees alienation as the key theme of *Le Puritain*. Lavan is the ideal self from which Ferriter is alienated, the representative

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[128]'Les catholiques de France [...] beaucoup de politique, une politique belliqueuse, une politique rouge'. The Italian press under Mussolini quoted in Lacroix-Riz, (1996), p.371.

[129]Bernanos quoted in Roberts, (1994), p.27.

of order and the modern. However, I would argue that the film resists the coherence of the self and the alienated as not-self. Ferriter's rejection of the establishment causes him to lose the only stable identity he has, the identity of journalist and vigilante. Ferriter as sign is, therefore, highly unstable. He does not have a fixed identity. The driving force of Puritanism is the mind-body split and the idea that it is possible for such a divide to exist. Ferriter is not monastic. He neither renounces the world nor rejects it. His struggles with the world are based on a notion of himself as the world's saviour and are not compatible with the humility necessary to the monastic code of life. The dissonance this dualism creates has been a feature of bourgeois adoption of the tenets of the Jansenist code without bringing its teachings to their logical conclusion: renunciation of the material world and the abandonment of all accumulated wealth.[130] The emptying out of meaning from extremist Catholic moral philosophy became an increasing feature of the dominant culture in the period leading up to the Second World War. The film recognises the danger of the position adopted by Ferriter through its refusal to construct him in the role of the idealistic hero, mistaken and misguided. His quest for salvation is not given positive loading in the film. In fact it leads him to murder. The murderous impulse stems from splitting.

Theories of 'Splitting' are crucial to understanding the operation of fascism in France. As Robert Soucy comments: 'one of the most striking features of fascist ideology in the 1930s was the sharpness of the dichotomy it drew between the spiritual and decadent, the *absoluteness* (his italics), its separation of the good from the bad'.[131] In this system human behaviour was divided into rigid, impermeable, exclusive categories. A person was either hard, tough, strong and spiritual or soft,

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[130]René Taveneaux, *Le Catholicisme dans la France classique 1610-1715*, Vol.2, (Paris: 1978), pp.312-315.
[131]Soucy, (1995), p. 305.

cowardly, weak and decadent - never a combination of these qualities, at least if that person aspired to the fascist ideal.[132] This approach to human reality has been termed as 'splitting'. Psychologists have described splitting as an unconscious defence mechanism. Splitting alternates between idealisation and expulsion/destruction. Judith Viorst contends that 'splitting is done by parents who choose one son to be Cain and one to be Abel. And by lovers whose women are either madonnas or whores. And by leaders who brook no dissent: you're either for me or against me'.[133] Whereas more psychologically realistic adults tend to accept ambiguity in themselves and others, splitters deny their own imperfections (or if they acknowledge them, feel excessively guilty about them) and mercilessly condemn the imperfections of others. This process is often aided by projection on to a scapegoat. As Soucy points out, French fascist intellectuals were highly prone to splitting but the apparently reassuring simplicity of the 'good-bad, right-wrong, yes-no, on-off universe' led to shame and cruel despair for writers like Drieu la Rochelle who failed to achieve the fascist ideal. These black-white ideals lead the fascist to ever more extreme and destructive discourses and actions.[134] We can see from this notion of splitting, the brilliance of Musso's decision to make *Le Puritain* in 1937. Its central character personified the mood of the time. The casting of Barrault was also a triumph, because it would take an actor of extraordinary ability to translate splitting into performance in a realist mode - and here I am using the term 'realism' to refer to theatrical realism which is not based on illusion but on the terror of the real. It is clear from the reviews of the film that Barrault succeeded in arousing fear and terror in his audience. The most frightening thing of all is, of course, the realisation that this fear was rooted in reality.

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[132]Ibid., p.305.
[133]Judith Viorst, *Necessary Losses*, (New York, Fawcett, 1968), p.42.
[134]Soucy, (1995), p. 307.

Ferriter's realisation of the failure of his mission shifts from a desire to save the world to a desire to save himself through confession. His self has become his enemy: 'It appears that in the place of an exteriorised religion, that he (the bourgeiois), tends to substitute the closed universe of the conscience'.[135] Ferriter is suspicious of his own motives. The puritan is both the accuser of the world as the source of his downfall and the accused, one whose motives were not pure.[136] As the action unfolds, he internalises the suspicion of his motives by the representatives of the Law: Lavan and his informants. In one of the strangest scenes in the film, Musso deploys, through the medium of music, a most unusual and unique break in form to express the state of Ferriter's mind without resorting to the visual techniques of Expressionism.[137] Musso's use of the register of sound as equal to the image and the interaction of the image and sound as an active practice, is fascinating and very rare in a cinema more used to sound as an accessory to the word and the image.[138]

In this scene Ferriter is alone in his room, having just destroyed Teresa's photograph. The film's realist mode is broken initially by the use of the theatrical monologue. Ferriter prays aloud and then announces 'Je vais confesser/I am going to confess'. The music until this point in the film is consistently extra-diegetic, although pieces of music are used as signifiers of certain motifs and as signs of individual characters. A light vaudeville air is played whenever Tyson the police informer appears. At the end of Ferriter's monologue, the spectators hear this tune - a

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[135]'Á l'appareil d'une religion très extériorisée, il, [le bourgeois], tend à substituer l'univers clos de la conscience'. Taveneaux, (1978), p. 314.

[136]William Paden, 'Theatres of Humility and Suspicion, Desert Saints and New England Puritans', in *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault*, Luther H. Martin, Huck Gutman and Patrick H. Hutton, eds. (London: Tavistock, 1988), pp.69-78.

[137]'Excellente Violiniste, bon compositeur', *'Le Puritain', Les Fiches de Monsieur Cinéma, Histoire illustrée du çinéma mondial*, Vol. 79, (1972), No. 15.

[138]Michel Chion, *Sound on Screen,* Claudia Gorbran, ed. (New York: Columbia Uni. Press, 1994), pp.17-23.

metonymic substitution for Tyson. It comes as a complete shock when Barrault as Ferriter reacts to the extra-diegetic tune and emits a cry. In the history of performance 'le cri' represents the voice of the modern, in fact the post modern. 'Le cri' is the verbalisation of the loss of authority, a vocalisation of fear and helplessness, the sound emitted involuntarily by the wounded self.[139] It has been represented visually by Munch in his painting *The Scream.*[140] Barrault was a master of the phonic gesture, the vocalisation of the 'not-written' and *Le Puritain* is an unique record on film of a technique that spearheaded the avant-garde in performance. Artaud describes Barrault's technique thus: 'the theatre which has opened a physical space, demands that one fills that space with gesture, that one makes that space live, magically, that one releases a volley of sounds, that one finds new relationships between sound, gesture and voice, -and, it can be said, that is theatre, that is what Jean Louis Barrault has made of it'.[141] Barrault's performance expresses alienation not as alienation from a presumed essential mode of being, but alienation as 'making strange', as rendering unstable meanings assumed to be fixed. This is the performance: 'of a profound drama, a mystery more profound than souls, of the conflict which tears souls, where all the rest is nothing but a path. There, where man is nothing but a dot'.[142]

Ferriter moves from a position of a belief in absolute truths, the eternal values which dominate the discourse of the fascist movements in Europe, to a position where he is suspicious of everything, including the

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[139]Aslan, (1994), p.309.

[140] Edvard Munch, Norwegian painter, (1863-1944), whose work was considered a forerunner of Expressionism.

[141]'Le théatre qui ouvre un champ physique demande qu'on remplisse ce champ, qu'on en meuble l'espace avec des gestes, qu'on fasse vivre cet espace en lui-meme et magiquement, qu'on dégage une voliére de sons, qu'on trouve des rapports nouveaux entre le son, le geste et la voix, - et l'on peut dire que c'est cela le théatre, ce que Jean-Louis Barrault en a fait'. Antoinin Artaud, *Le Théatre et son double*, (Paris: Éd. Flammarion, 1966), p.220.

idea of the existence of a God. The film forces the spectator to adopt Ferriter's view of relative truth by constantly disrupting the modal fix of the film's realism, a practice which was pointed out in the review of the film by The British Film Board: "The net effect is of grotesqueness rather than complete conviction and this is increased by the vague studio air of some of the sets [...] For no apparent reason, a crippled beggar, of only incidental importance to the action, is shown in one shot as a fake - not a cripple at all".[143] In fact the cripple scene is very important to the theme of Ferriter's doubt. The cripple is a cripple as Ferriter enters the church, having convinced himself that he will find the answers to his doubts and be saved from himself whom he no longer trusts. His disability is revealed to be fake only when Ferriter is refused confession, a refusal Ferriter interprets as the final rejection of him by the Church. Ferriter in fact screams at the beggar that he will get nothing at the Church because there is nothing there. Ferriter's nihilism at this point leads him not to renounce the world but to embrace the underworld.

The Romance of the Mob

Unlike the hero of Bernanos' novel, who renounces the world and becomes a saint, Ferriter's path in the wake of rejection, the path which leads him to the underbelly of society, was the path taken by Bernanos's colleagues in L'Action Française following their condemnation by the Vatican. Romanticism of the mob became an increasing feature of the discourse of the elite in Catholic extremist movements in France in the wake of the Dreyfus affair. As Arendt has pointed out, it is important not to confuse the mob with the people.[144] Hayward in *French National*

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[142]'Du drame profond, le mystére plus profond que les ames, le conflit déchirant des ames où le reste n'est plus qu'un chemin. Là où l'homme n'est plus qu'un point'. Ibid., p.220.

[143]A.V., *The Monthly Film Bulletin of the British Film Industry*, Vol 5, No. 52, (London: BFI, 1938), p.112.

[144]Arendt, (1973), p.139.

Cinema reads the preponderance of representations of criminal groups in 1930s cinema as the fascination of the bourgeois for the working class, the mob, in her view, being merely a negative image of the working class.[145] The criminal underworld, however, can be read as the mirror image not of the people but of bourgeois society. The demography of *Le Puritain* represents only these two social groups, the bourgeoisie and the mob. The police and the criminal are significant to the ideology of the bourgeois, a moral philosophy that asks the State to relieve them of the burden of caring for the poor and at the same time to protect them against criminals. Arendt argues that this ideology liberates those who are excluded from society -- Ferriter as murderer obviously -- from every obligation to society. The philosopher Hobbes, to whom Arendt is indebted for this analysis, foresees and justifies the organisation of the mob into a gang of murderers as happened in Nazi Europe of the 1930s, as the logical outcome of the bourgeoisie's moral philosophy, the never-ending accumulation of property/capital and a never-ending accumulation of power. The absence of social responsibility, the willingness to engage in this accumulation without the lip-service to morality paid by the bourgeois as the price of their own protection, is mistaken for freedom by Ferriter. Here he mirrors the attitude taken by members of the Action Française in the inter-war years; 'these men [Barrès, Maurras and Daudet], who despised the proletariat, saw in the mob a living expression of virile and primitive 'strength'.[146] Ferriter's passport to this freedom is his acquisition of capital in the form of money from his family and his agent is the prostitute Molly.

His intoxication with this new idea is given concrete representation in his drunkenness. He becomes sentimental and emotional, but his emotion is manufactured by the drink and by his mistaken notions

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[145]Hayward, (1993), p. 173..
[146]Ibid., p.112.

of his surroundings and of his company. The camera work translates 'a simplified, degraded, insipid but all the more insinuating romanticism' into image.[147] Ferriter's romanticism of the brothel is communicated through the second expressionistic moment in the film, when we are shown the prostitutes through Ferriter's eyes, refracted in fragmented lenses and soft lighting. However, Ferriter's new view of himself as the friend and lover of the outcast he has murdered, Teresa reincarnated as Molly, is as problematic as his Puritanism. Barrault performs Ferriter's apparent 'release' from the constraints of the ideology of the Catholic Church as a wild and absurd dance. This expression of emotion disrupts the smooth functioning of the night-club and leads to his ejection from the bar. As Arendt comments: 'Every man and every thought which does not serve and does not conform to the ultimate purpose of a machine whose only purpose is the generation and accumulation of power is a dangerous nuisance'.[148] Ferriter's new idealism, the romanticism of his position as social outcast and murderer, combined with his pessimism in the wake of his failure to reform society, leads to his second act of violence, this time an act of pure anarchy, when he attacks the police informer Tyson and almost kills him. This scene is the filmmaker's invention and does not figure in O'Flaherty's novel.

The film, however, does not allow Ferriter the comfort of a new identity as a member of the underclass. He is forced to realise that his relationship with Molly is dependent on his ability to pay. Interestingly the English reviews of the film describe Molly as greedy whereas in fact the film represents her actions as motivated entirely by self-preservation. Ferriter has not impressed the prostitutes with his new virility. Molly's battle with the other prostitutes is not about retaining Ferriter's affections

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[147]Saul Friedlander quoted in Vivian M. Patraka, 'Fascist Ideology and Theatricalization' in *Critical Theory and Performance*, Janelle G. Reinet & Joseph R. Roach, eds. (Ann Arbor: Uni. Of Michigan, 1992), p.337.
[148]Arendt, (1973), p.141.

but about the cash in his pocket. Molly begins to doubt the value of her prize when Ferriter begins to declaim his manifestos of freedom in the second bar, a seedy 'cave'. In this scene, Ferriter's position at the start of the film is turned on its head. Where he had set out to denounce O'Leary as a hypocrite, he finds himself accused of the self-same hypocrisy as he attempts to explain his change of heart. There is no possibility of conversion or any change. Ferriter's continual demand that he wants to know 'si Dieu existe' resonates Nietzsche's madman who 'cried incessantly, 'I seek God! I seek God!'[149] O' Flaherty had referred to Nietzsche in the earlier novel *The Assassin*: 'He [McDara, the assassin] became furiously angry with the force in nature that had doomed him, as a thinking man, to go on thinking, trying to reach the end of a road that only led to the brink of a precipice, hanging on by a single root. And he thought of Nietzsche, who had likened himself to a pine tree, swaying over the precipice, hanging on by a single root'.[150] The film plays on light and dark as a signifier of the shifting state of Ferriter's relation to reality. In his first encounter with Molly, the dark offers him shelter from the searchlight. Later he finds temporary comfort in Molly's arms and in the darkness of her room but at this moment he cries out in fear and pleads for light where light signifies illumination. However, *Le Puritain* refuses the possible signified of Ferriter as misunderstood messianic outsider by locating his speech in a cellar bar and by composing his audience of drunks and sceptics. Ferriter cuts a ridiculous figure as a prophet. The film renders such a position grotesque and confirms O'Flaherty's view of the mysticism implicit in Ferriter's appeal to his fellow men. It constructs his earlier notions of blood sacrifice and his later romanticism, indeed idealism of any kind, as the road to madness, in spite of the currency of such rhetoric in the 1930s.

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[149]Frederich Nietzsche, 'The Madman', *From Modernism to Postmodernism, an Anthology*, Lawrence Cahoone, ed. (Cambridge-MA: Blackwell, 1996), p.102.
[150]Liam O'Flaherty, *The Assassin*, (London: Cape, 1927), p.162.

Ferriter's only hope of understanding his act lies in history. His romanticism of Molly's life is deflated by her actual living conditions and he leaves her all his money when he is arrested. In the world of *Le Puritain* everyone feeds off everyone else. The journalists are also part of the machine. Teresa's murder is converted into capital as it provides them with a story for which they will be paid. It is a further mark of Ferriter's inability to assume a function in the world that he does not gain from his act when all around him do. All profit, rather than lose, from Ferriter's murder: the police who would have no work if there were no crime, the journalists whose role is to effect closure by converting the act of murder into a news event, the newspaper editors who manage the news as product and O'Leary's family now rid of the problem of Teresa Burke who had compromised them in her attachment to their son. Ferriter's confession to Lavan is underscored by the recognition that he has been used by the very institutions that now seek to suppress him but he refuses to attribute blame to anyone but himself for his deed.

The Degeneration of Certainty: Casting and Instability in *Le Puritain*

Ferriter condemns the society which has spawned him and other young fanatics like him, who are led by the dogma of the church and society, to behave as they do and murder their fellow men and women. The society of *Le Puritain* has produced both Ferriter and Lavan, with Lavan in ascendancy at the end of the film. None of the injustices and contradictions dragged out in the open by the madman Ferriter have been changed or resolved. Ferriter's efforts to expose the contradictions in the discourses which led him to murder, have been contained. Their effects have been neutralised by his decision to admit culpability as an individual, an admission which reinforces the ideological process of attribution of the criminal act to internal forces; nature and the individual rather than to the material conditions of society. The incarceration of the murderer restores

the equilibrium of the society that has spawned Ferriter, but does not lead to a transformation of that culture.

Lavan's success in repression of the criminal is not, therefore, promising. Unlike the novel, *Le Puritain* resists Lavan's image of himself as the voice of reason in a world of fanatics. His attempts to dominate the irrational in Ferriter constantly break down in the narrative of the film. In a key scene Lavan goes to find the evidence of the murder in Ferriter's gloves at the forensic laboratory, a clinical white environment with the paraphernalia of test tubes and Bunsen burners, only to be told that there is no evidence, no traces of blood on Ferriter's gloves. Lavan replies: 'Ça m'étonne/that surprises me'. Fresnay's performative representation of Cartesian unity is opposed by Barrault's playing of the splitting self. *Le Puritain* is unique in the way that it creates a narrative space where two styles of acting are set one against the other as a representation of what the cultural theorist Fredric Jameson describes as the great theme of French national cinema, reason against reaction, the unified self against the fragmented. Jameson has commented that the deployment of a repertory of actors is a useful index in determining the relationship of the film to the national. By this criteria he defines the cinema of the 1930s in France as a truly national cinema because of its use of a repertory of familiar French stars.[151] The only actor in *Le Puritain* who could be said to project the national type in this frame is Pierre Fresnay. Colin Crisp names Fresnay as the exemplary 'acteur de composition' in the French canon because of Fresnay's flexibility and self -transformatory powers of roles. Fresnay is most frequently cast in lead non-comic roles such as the

[151]Frederic Jameson, 'Is National Cinema Possible? Remaking the Rules of The Game', (keynote opening address, at 'Projecting the Nation, National Cinema in an International Frame'), *Centenary Conference* at the Irish Film Centre, Dublin, November 15-17, (1996), publication pending.

Officer in Renoir's *La Grande illusion.* He has primary billing on the video cover for *Le Puritain.*[152]

Thierry Jouesse describes the categories of secondary role playing in the hierarchical star system as: 'the obscure roles such as the romantic seconds whose blandness is designed to highlight the leads and the eccentric roles whose job was to give a little spice to the work'. [153] Barrault is only part of a constellation of eccentrics in Carné's *Drole de drame*, a support for Michel Simon, but in *Le Puritain*, the eccentric, Barrault, is in equal opposition to the nominated lead Fresnay and in fact dominates the reviews. In this film Fresnay's method of acting, drawn from certain national theatre traditions, is in a 'duel d'actuers étonnants' with a man who was seen as the foremost actor in the revolution of the theatrical in France spearheaded by Barrault's twin mentors, Charles Dullin and Antonin Artaud. Fresnay, in protest against the degeneration of the certainty of the hierarchy of the star supported by the secondary roles of the 'obscure' and the 'eccentric', said that he could see the profession of the actor as losing its stability, its security, its technique, and the art of the actor as losing its rules.[154]

Apart from Lavan and Molly the prostitute, the demography of *Le Puritain* consists of people who do not fit notions of norms associated with film realism. The men are 'too' short, too skinny, too fat; the women are too tall, too wide and too aggressive. We are shown cripples who are not cripples; a gallery of prostitutes whose adopted personas are overtly theatrical; a police force which has more in common with the Keystone Cops than the menacing police figures of French film noir or of *The Informer. Le Puritain*, through casting, introduces an element missing

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[152]The cover of *Le Puritain,* Collection L'Age D'or Du Çinéma', (Les Éditions Montparnasse), shows a cinema poster of the film with Fresnay as the lead. Lagny, Ropars and Sorelin, (1986), also refer to the top billing of Fresnay although Barrault dominates the reviews of the film.

[153]Jameson, (1996), publication pending.

[154]Ibid.

from the novel: the comic. Elements of vaudeville provide a laughing chorus which undermines Ferriter's 'act of history' but which also challenges the official culture of the ruling classes represented by the Detective genre. The farce with Mady Berry's landlady and her husband undercuts the role of the policeman as he conducts his inquiry. Ferriter himself adopts the role of clown when Barrault performs his outrageous dance in the bar, thereby disrupting the idea of the murderer as anti-hero. Indeed the humour inherent in the masterful performances of Barrault, Viviane Romance and Mady Berry, when combined with the director Musso's impressionistic musical score, frequently lifts the film into anarchy and farce. These elements subvert the detective genre, its narrative and its codes of articulation. What emerges is what Derrida refers to as 'joyous Nietzschean affirmation'.[155] The laughter induced in these moments, to use a Bakhtinian phrase, 'degrades and materialises' the ideological effect of the detective genre.[156] It establishes an unfinalised state of becoming which challenges narrative closure; thus the feeling for the spectator that Ferriter's imprisonment is not the answer he or she wanted but something else, something as yet undiscovered, a new way of dealing with the world.

Barrault's journey as a film actor took him from the representation of the madman Ferriter, who never stops speaking, to the mute Batiste of Carné's *Les Enfants du Paradis*. The story was Barrault's own, offered to Prévert as an idea for a screenplay while they were both refugees from the Vichy rule.[157] Like Batiste, Ferriter also moves from a desperate desire to speak, to denounce, to preach and to convert, to silence. Ferriter refuses

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[155]Jacques Derrida, *Positions*, Alan Bass, trans. (Chicago: Uni. Of Chicago Press, 1981), p.14.

[156]Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World*, Helene Iswolsky, trans. (London: MIT, 1968), p.20.

[157]Barrault insisted that the character of Batisite Debureau be mute. 'I understand [wrote Prévert], you don't want to talk. Never mind, I'll put someone in who talks enough for two. That will restore the balance!'. See Susan Hayward and Ginette Vincendeau, *French Film, Txts and Contexts,* (London: Routledge, 1990), p.123.

to buy his own life in return for incriminating other members of the vigilante society although, as he admits, they had used him. His assumption of personal responsibility for the murder of Teresa and his understanding of his motivation in killing her, because he wanted her and could not win her or control her, resists the role of police informer offered to him by Lavan in return for his life. Ferriter's madness is resistant and works against the order personified in Lavan. As we have seen earlier, Lavan's urbane civilised appearance and style links him visually to the underworld crime boss genre and masks his function as a policeman, responsible for the maintenance of the status quo through force and the threat of incarceration and execution. Lavan shows himself to be quite capable of violence when faced with the 'drole de type', as he calls Ferriter. In the novel, Ferriter points out the real function of Lavan, the maintenance of social inequality through force, declaring to the detective that he indicts 'the Church you defend and the system of society you defend'.[158]

One of the problems of representing extreme right wing societies in pre-World War Two Europe lies in the tendency to over emphasise the earlier 'gathering' period of fanatical right wing groups and to portray the typical fascist as violent and populist. In fact, contemporary descriptions of Colonel de La Rocque, the leader of Le Croix de Feu, indicate that he resembled Fresnay's Lavan much more than Barrault's Ferriter: 'The Colonel is one of the most charming persons on earth; to be a successful fascist leader one perhaps ought to be a ruthless thug with a touch of insanity. La Rocque is sane and balanced and anything but a thug'.[159] Pierre Fresnay was a believer in the right-wing order of Fascist France and

[158]O'Flaherty, (1932), p.193.
[159]Werth, (1937), p.56.

was a convinced Pétainist who stuck to his views after the Occupation.[160] Vivian Patraka, in 'Fascist Ideology and Theatricalization', calls for drama which 'delineates the socio-historical context of fascistic practice by theatricalising how a more established, seemingly 'civilised' fascist bourgeois culture feeds off an earlier, more visibly violent populist form, making it into a kind of covert, respectable industry'.[161] It is significant that this film based on an Irish novel contains the fanatic and the members of bourgeois society who manipulate him for their own ends and cast him off when they have no longer any need for him. O'Flaherty had drawn the relationships between these cultures in an Irish setting, not only in *The Puritan* but also in *The Assassin*, in *The Informer* and in *The Terrorist*.

Barrault's representation of the character of Ferriter replicates in dramatic form many of what Saul Friedlander describes as the aesthetics of fascism generating a spectator response of terror and intensity of emotion.[162] As we have seen Ferriter represents many aspects of these contradictory series of discourses: love of a ritualised, stylised and aestheticised death (accomplished in the film by Ferriter's highly ritualised preparation for the killing of Teresa in the opening sequences and his manifesto declaring the murder a 'blood sacrifice'): nihilism, pessimism, the idea of blind destiny that leads to inevitable destruction (Ferriter repeats that man has 'un destin divin' over and over again at the end of the film): apocalypse and universal conflagration, pseudo-spirituality (Ferriter's kneeling at the feet of the peasant woman). In Ireland, these discourses were current in post-Independence readings of the 1916 Rebellion and they served their purpose until they were no longer necessary to the class who came to power. Lavan represents the seemingly contradictory response of the leader as Everyman representing

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[160]Fresnay was imprisoned for collaboration in the aftermath of the war, a sentence that probably saved his life in the purges following Armistice. See Crisp, (1993), p.456.

[161]Patraka, (1992), p.342.

petit-bourgeois codes of respecting 'the established order'.[163] Lavan has no interest in Teresa Burke's death. He is willing to 'forget' the murder if he can use Ferriter to arrest others in his group who are a problem because of their anti-social practices such as political assassinations. Ferriter is condemned, not for killing Teresa Burke, but for resisting Lavan's efforts to defend him by excusing the murder in return for informing.

A Dangerous History

Le Puritain fulfils Patraka's criterion for a representation of right-wing fascistic tendencies. It offers a dangerous history for its audiences, a history later recognised by Vichy as resistant to the image of society it wished to project. *Le Puritain*'s thesis is depressing. It creates a picture of a society whose moral philosophy produces and legitimises murderous impulses based on a lust for possession such as Ferriter manifests towards Teresa Burke at the opening of the film and represses Ferriter at the very moment when he might challenge such a system. Lavan, the victor, is constructed as the defender of the very institutions which have made a victim of Teresa Burke through their adherence to patriarchy. He is also the defender of the society that used Ferriter as a tool for suppression of resistance in the form of intellectual activity, a culture whose sole drive is materialistic and which has repressed any hope of fraternity between men and women. We are left with the policeman and the informer as the only subject positions open to men and the prostitute, wife or virgin as the only roles for women. Against this background, it is easy to imagine why *Le Puritain* was awarded the Louis Delluc prize and why the reviews of the period refer to the difficult issues the film tackles. Delluc had been one of French cinema's foremost proponents of film not only as art but also as a medium for the exploration of the real.

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[162]Ibid., p.342.

As for the writer, O'Flaherty, one has to be extremely careful when dealing with his work not to confuse the author's view on women with those of his central characters. O'Flaherty took a very strong stand against the authoritarian Catholic culture that had taken control of post-Independence Ireland. He was very perturbed by the currency of these discourses in Irish life. He returned repeatedly to the theme of misogyny, extremism and male violence in his work. Critics of O'Flaherty's work have accused him, questionably, of romanticism in his writing about nature. His nature stories are lyrical but they do not romanticise poverty. Stories like *The Reaping Race* or *Two Calves* are portraits of the hardships resulting from the unequal distribution of means in the countryside and the rise of the Irish middle class. Where O'Flaherty's stories are positive, they involve the celebration of life and birth as in the story *Three Lambs*. In contrast, stories like *The Wren's Nest* demonstrate the callousness and wanton destruction of life.

O'Flaherty wrote that the dirt and squalor of Irish towns filled him with despair and was 'strongly distasteful to him as was 'poverty, ungracious tyranny and ignoble suffering'. He frequently dealt with the hatred and violence towards women bred by the post-Independence culture in Ireland. O'Flaherty railed against it, declaring that men were encouraged to become alcoholics because, in post-Independent Ireland, addiction to alcohol was, to the dominant class, a lesser evil than love and a primary source of income.[164] O'Flaherty saw European capitalism of the 1930s as the ideal culture of the bourgeoisie, maintained by the 'culture of dung, superstition and ignoble poverty among the masses'. He said that, in this culture, censorship was imposed lest the poor might learn that 'ignorance is ignoble and that poverty, instead of being a passport to Heaven, makes this pretty earth a monotonous hell'.[165] In his view, the

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[163]Ibid., p.337.
[164]O'Flaherty, in Carlson, ed., (1992), p.145.
[165]Ibid., p.140.

object of the twin institutions, the State and the Church as we find them in *The Puritan*, was to repress any text that 'might plant the desire for civilisation and freedom'.[166]

The world of the film *Le Puritain* was reconstructed from O'Flaherty's vision of post-Independence Ireland for a French audience. It is not an allegory of France as it actually was, but an allegory of a France which might be if certain types of discourses were to become reality. Within three years of the film being made, France would become a society completely dominated by Catholic moral discourses and by the figure of the policeman controlling every aspect of life. The war years too saw the triumph not only of the policeman, but of the fanatic and of the informer, where informing became the most frequent and potent form of collaboration with the Nazis. Without the Irish meta-narrative, this picture of a France maintained by a culture of mistrust, hidden violence, corruption coupled with repression and rank materialism couched in a puritanical discourse, might have seemed too close to the bone in 1937 and most probably would have led to a total rejection of the film's message. In spite of the 'safe' space provided by the Irish meta-narrative, *Le Puritain* was a brave and courageous film. *Le Puritain* as text resists more than conforms, opens more questions than it closes, disrupts, contradicts, counters and challenges. In my view, Musso and his team succeeded in constructing a film with a 'dangerous history', to borrow Patraka's phrase, in a society dominated by myths. It is one of the few truly avant-garde films of the period described as the heyday of French Classic cinema. Musso began his project during the time of The Popular Front, when there was still a possibility that characters such as Ferriter might be pitied, or laughed at, rather than feared. O'Flaherty, too, had hoped that the militant puritans had 'staged their last parade'. Unfortunately, for France in 1937, their parade was only beginning.

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[166]Ibid., p.140.

Chapter Three: Memory and Forgetting: Yves Allégret's *La Jeune folle* (1952).

Ireland as a subject had disappeared from French screens in the war years but it returned in 1952 with Yves Allégret's *La Jeune folle*.[1] This film has a very different cultural profile from Musso's *Le Puritain*, now a relatively obscure film, although it was a box-office success in 1937. *La Jeune folle* is a French film about the Irish Civil war by a director whose fame stems from his role in the development of French film noir. The film was produced in post-war France but its diegetic time is 1922, Ireland. It also has a strong presence in contemporary French culture of the twenty-first century, largely because of Allégret's association with the work of Georges Clouzot. Yves Allégret's work enjoys a high profile and his films are on sale today in video outlets throughout France as part of *L'Age d'or du çinéma* and *Mémoire du çinéma* collections.

La Jeune folle is shot in black and white. It stars Daniéle Délorme, nominated 'l'ingénue' of French cinema and 'the central figure of the cinematic universe' of Jacqueline Audry, one of the most successful female film directors in cinema history.[2] Délorme plays the role of Catherine, an

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[1]During the Occupation there was a full length feature film on Ireland's struggle for independence released in German cinema and in that of the Occupied territories; *Mein Leben fur Irland/My Life for Ireland*, (1944), directed by M. Kimmich and produced by UFA.

[2]Audry's films include *Gigi* (1948), *Minnie, l'ingenue libertin,* (1950), *Olivia* (1951), *Huis Clos* (1954), with Délorme in the leading role. See Sicilier, (1957), p.134

orphan who has been taken in by the nuns during the Civil War. She has a younger brother, Kevin, a member of an outlawed republican gang, who is shot by the gang-leader as an informer. Catherine runs away to seek Kevin in Dublin where she meets and falls in love with Kevin's killer, Steve. When Catherine learns of her brother's death she sets out to assassinate the chief of Police as vengeance but at the last minute her nerve fails her and she is saved by Steve. Steve reveals to Catherine that he has killed Kevin and she kills him with his own gun. In *Les Cahiers du çinéma,* Allégret's film is heralded by the sobering caption 'De La Rigueur Avant Toute Chose/Rigour before everything'.[3] Severity, not passionate abandon, is its keynote, a reflection of the mood of the times.

La Jeune folle was launched in a moment of severe rupture and change for France - the breach between the ill-loved Fourth Republic ('La Malaimée') and Vichy.[4] The upheaval experienced in French society as a whole was reflected in the micro-economy of the cinema. Practitioners, seeking desperately to re-establish themselves in the aftermath of the Occupation, scrambled for position as the structures of the old regime were opened up to the 'victors' of the war. 1945 saw the emergence of a new generation of French filmmakers. This group had nothing in common with the big success stories of the Occupation years, directors such as Carné and Ophuls who specialised in elaborate and mythic costume films, nor with the producers of the popular light comedies like Georges Lacombe's risqué *Florence est folle* (1944), or Jean Dréville's *Annette et la dame blonde* (1942).[5] Prior to 1947, the fantastic genre had attracted huge crowds but had rapidly declined in popularity in the years after the war. Film-making teams of the likes of Prévert and Carné, authors of one the most popular films in the history of

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[3]Jean-José Richer, 'De la rigeur avant toute chose', *Cahiers du Çinéma*, 17, November, (1952), p.43 & p.45.

[4]Alguhon, (1995), p.358

[5]Jean-Pierre Bertin-Maghit, *Le Çinéma sous l'Occupation*, (1989), p.179.

French film-making, *Les Enfants du Paradis*, lost their audiences and became redundant.[6] Once more psychological realism, now known as the French Film Noir, came to dominate French screens. Its most famous practitioners were Claude Autant-Lara, Georges Clouzot and Yves Allégret.

Fifteen years of the Thirties.

Allégret is synonymous with film noir in French criticism: "With *Dédé d'Anvers, Une si jolie petite plage* and *Manèges,* the younger brother of Marc Allégret appeared after the war as the best representative of the French film noir'.[7] His films survived on the French market in spite of the overwhelming competition from Hollywood. The French cinema industry had benefited from the peculiarities and restrictions of the Occupation largely through the elimination of its main competitor, Hollywood. All through the war the USA had continued to produce films and the distributors possessed a stock of 1,800 to 2,000 films. These films had already achieved box-office success in America and could now be sold very cheaply to European cinema houses. In spite of quotas and restrictions, public demand for Hollywood films was huge.[8] The French cinema's answer to the deluge of American product was to beat Hollywood at its own game, by producing 'quality' films, naturalist costume dramas that emphasised their Frenchness. In this fashion they continued the project of French cinema in the Vichy years; the establishment of a national cinema, against the American other but constructed within the Hollywood classic discourse. Aesthetically the cinema of the post-war period heralded a return to triumphs of the past

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[6]Alan Williams, *Republic of Images, a History of French Filmmaking,* (Paris, Éd. Olivier Orbar, 1992), p.284.

[7]'Avec *Dédé d'Anvers, Une si jolie petite plage* et *Manèges,* le jeune frère de Marc Allégret apparut après la guerre comme le meilleur représentant du film noir à la française'. Tulard, (1982), p.16.

[8]Jeancolas, 'Le Cadre', in *D'un Çinéma à l'autre,* (Paris: Ed. Passet, 1988), pp.14-16.

and reasserted a style of psychological realism. Technically the films demonstrated a mastery of the medium unsurpassed in the European cinema of the time. The high production values led director Claude Autant-Lara to declare publicly his pride in his role as chief of the Technicians Union. All the elements of performance, script, stars, story, set, combined to construct a product described as of 'astounding quality', thus the label, 'cinéma de qualité'. The lessons learnt during the golden age of the 1930s were brought into play and, indeed, the technical teams of the 1930s found themselves in hot demand as cinema sought to return to the glories of yesteryear. Not only did the structures remain unchanged since before the war but also the leadership of the industry's unions was exactly the same. The absence of real innovation prompted criticism from the Cahiers group. They gave the early 1950s films the mocking label of 'Le cinéma de Papa"[9] an index of their disappointment that the often expressed desire for change in the wake of the Liberation was not translated into actual practice:"The desire for a break with the past, affirmed in the Euphoria of the Liberation, did not succeed in imposing itself on the present, -a victim of the failure of the social revolution so dear to the communists. 1945 merely prolonged Vichy. The legislation of 1946 confirmed the loss of the artisan character of cinema production in 1940'.[10]

The culture of 1950s was, as critic Jean-Pierre Jeancolas famously described it, nothing more than 'fifteen years of the Thirties'. He said: 'the French and in particular, the French of the porvinces, with an astonishing regularity, consumed those films which had changed little since the 1930s,

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[9]Williams, (1992), p.280.

[10]'Voilà la différence avec le çinéma italien de l'après-guerre qui s'est renouvelé à travers le néoréalisme. Cet oubli, qui a limité la portée de leur combat, la concurrence des productions américaines, la pesanteur étatique, le carcan des conventions collectives, sont responsables d'un essouflement de la création. Dix années durant, il condamne le çinéma français à l'exploitaion de ses acquis'. Bertin-Maghit, (1989), p.318.

since cinema had introduced the talkies'.[11] Given the enormity of the historical upheaval in the intervening period between Musso's film, for example, and *La Jeune folle*, it might be expected that there would be some departure in theme. However, the keynote of poetic realism, its profound pessimism, continued to reverberate until the arrival of the New Wave. For French film critics, as for historians, the continuity with the dominant themes of the 1930s in the post-war period is not merely the result of a failure of imagination as Truffaut would seem to suggest, nor the work of Allégret and Dellanoy mere caricatures of Clouzot and Bresson, but is symptomatic of the continuance of a disturbing negative tendency in French culture.

Negativity, History and Post-war Film

Negativity is associated with the avant-garde in film theory. A film's relationship with the dominant in the context within which it is produced is particularly important to the question of innovation and the avant-garde. Culture is not transparent. Its effectiveness to innovate depends on subversion. Both mainstream and avant-garde are the product of the dominant classes, but the avant-garde is articulated through its intention to resist the national drive for consensus. The films of the post-Occupation French film noir are striking for their unrelenting negativity and their pessimistic view of the human condition. They are a continuance of a genre which came to dominate French cinema before the war. As Jeancolas said, the pre-war French cinema was of 'a realism which, for several years, explored a morbid hopeless seam which, until the war, succeeded in offering society a reflection of its collective unconscious, an image which was the inverse and the negative of the optimism of Spring

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[11] 'Les français et plus particulairement les français de province, consomment avec une régularité étonnante, des films qui ont peu changé depuis les années 30, depuis que le çinéma a pris le virage du parlant'. Jean Pierre Jeancolas, *Le Çinéma des français: la Ve République 1958-1978,* (Paris: Stock, 1979), p.98.

1936 and of the nationalist triumphalism of the Winter of 1938-39'.[12] Susan Heyward offers a theory of negativity as critique in her introduction to *French National Cinema.*[13] In her view, positive culture affirms institutional mythologies. Culture subverts these discourses by being negative. The films of this group, by virtue of their pessimism, often were described as avant-garde and politically subversive.[14] Clouzot's films are frequently categorised as unique and ground-breaking in the history of French cinema precisely because of their negativity: ' *Le Corbeau*, one of the masterpieces of the French cinema ...how could one forget it? As if Clouzot had had need of the black years of the Occupation to best express that pessimistic vision of the world which characterises a work placed under the sign of Evil'.[15] Réne Clement also vaunts Allégret as the master of the post-war period precisely because of this 'pitiless' worldview:

> ' Yves [Allégret] made his five master works from 1945 to 1950 under the sign of a certain engagement and an unpitying description of the after-war period. His refusal to conform was evident from the moment that Simone Signoret (*Dedée d'Anvers*, 1947), appeared in a world troubled by crimes, money and passion, when the rain bathed the despair of a generation lost in the world conflict and for whom the post-war world brought no prospect of a future (*Une si jolie petite plage*, 1948), but also in his

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[12]'Un réalisme qui se cherchait depuis plusiers années dans une dimension morbide, désespérée, dont le succès jusqu'à la guerre renvoie de la société, de son inconscient collectif une image qui est l'envers, le négatif à la fois de l'optimisme du printemps 1936 et du triomphalisme nationaliste de l'hiver 1938-39'. Jean-Pierre Jeancolas, *15 Ans d'années trente, le çinéma des français 1929-1944*, (Paris: Stock, 1983), p.268.

[13]Hayward, (1993), p.126.

[14]'These post-war directors had roots in the avant-garde, Claude Autant-Lara and Yves Allégret and made films that were often political as well as artistic'. Sybil Delgaudio, 'Film', *Handbook of French Popular Culture*, Pierre L Horn, ed. (New York: Greenhorn, 1991), p.82.

[15]'*Le Corbeau*, un des chefs d'oeuvre du çinéma français...comment l'oublier? Comme si Clouzot avait eu besoin des années noires de l'Occupation pour mieux exprimer cette

painting of the sordid ways, the cynicism and the cruelty at the core of a family stifled in the cage of *Manéges*, constructed between Von Stroheim and Clouzot'. [16]

In the immediate aftermath of the war the atrocities perpetuated during the Occupation fuelled a sense of despair about humanity and led to increasing anxiety about the future.[17] Although the films of this period had demonstrably much in common with the films of the 1930s, direct transference of the genre such as Carné's *Les Portes de la nuit* (1946) were not popular with audiences because they did not reflect the change wrought by the horror of the actual history of the Nazi project and, by association, of the Occupation itself: 'The anguish no longer emanated from a hopeless and blocked horizon as in 1938. It came from the slow release of news of the horrors and the fear of a future enriched with too many possibilities and too many changes'.[18] The trauma of the Occupation could not be explored openly. Direct references to collaboration were impossible. Only very upbeat stories showing the French united in active resistance in spite of all appearances to the contrary were considered safe. Cinematic representations set in wartime France became the object of fierce scrutiny and virulent censorship.[19] For those who took control of France in the wake of occupation, the representation of the recent past

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vision pessimiste du monde qui caractérise une oeuvre placée sous le signe du Mal'. Tulard, (1982), p.174.

16'Yves [Allégret] réalise ses cinq ouevres maitresses de 1945 à 1950 sous le signe d'un certain engagement et d'une impitoyable description de l'aprés-guerre'....Son refus du conformisme est evident lorsque Simone Signoret évolue dans un monde trouble de crimes, d'argent et de passion, (*Dedée d'Anvers*, 1947), quand la pluie bagne le désespoir de la génération perdue du conflit mondial à laquelle l'aprés-guerre n'apporte aucune perspective d'avenir, (*Une si jolie petite plage*, 1948), mais aussi dans sa peinture du sordide, du cynisme et de la cruaté à l'intérieur de la famille étouffant dans le huis clos de *Manéges* construit entre Stroheim et Clouzot'. Prédal, (1996), p.29.

17A similar pattern can be identified in American movies of the post-war period. See Stuart M. Kaminsky, *American Film Genres,* (Chicago: Nelson Hall, 1985), pp.84-85.

18'L'angoisse ne sourdait plus d'un horizon désésperé et bouché comme en 1938. Elle venait de la lente sortie des horreurs et de la crainte d'un avenir riche de trop de posiblités et de mutations'. J. Douchet and G. Nadeau quoted in Prédal, (1996), p.32.

19René Chateau, *Le Çinéma Français sous l'Occupation 1940-44*, (Paris: Éd. L'Amateur,1994), p.136.

had to be managed carefully. The watchword was unity. On no account must the story of the collaboration in the Occupied territories or the collaborationist attitudes of the so-called 'Zone Libre' be mentioned. Questions of who was allowed to tell this story and what kind of story was told were central to the practice of the French post-war cultural committees in every sphere. It proved extremely difficult to get a script about the Occupation past the censorship board of the post-war state. Melville's *Le Silence de la mer (*1948), considered the classic representation of French resistance, failed to receive certification and had to be made clandestinely, a fact which added to its reputation as a resistance film. Ironically, it was easier for filmmakers who had worked under the Occupation, to continue working than for the banished directors who had found themselves on the Liste Noire in 1940.

French Cinema by the French for the French.

Following the Liberation of France in 1945, exiled filmmakers came back from abroad in anticipation of a return to work, among them Jeff Musso who had been blacklisted by the Gestapo in May 1941.[20] Musso spent the war in Italy making documentary and educational films. When he returned to France, he wanted to make a film about the Resistance. On the 20th of December 1944, at the Studio de Boulogne, Musso became the first director to begin a film with this theme and began shooting *Vive la liberté* with Raymond Bussières and Jean Darcate. Darcarte's reputation had been severely compromised by his performance on the dubbing of the notoriously xenophobic film, *Le Juif Suss* (Veit

[20]The bureau Propaganda Staffle of Paris commanded the COIC to implicate the statue of the 3rd of October, 1940, forbidding all Jewish personnel to work in cinema. Accompanying the order was a list of the names of all cinema workers deemed undesirable. Jeff Musso was on the list along with Max Ophuls and Jean Epstein. See Chateau, (1994), p.136.

Harlan 1941).[21] The author François Mauriac was reluctantly prepared to overlook Decarte's background and supervise the screenplay of *Vive la liberté* but more trouble was on the horizon. The day shooting began, Musso was the object of an attack from René Lefèvre on his radio programme, *Au Carrefour des ondes*. Lefèvre's argument against Musso as director consisted of two main points, that Musso owed him money and should pay his debts and that Musso had no talent, not having made a film in four years. This was an extraordinary condemnation in the light of Musso's status as Liste Noire in Vichy France and his expulsion from the Occupation film industry. Le Fèvre's accusations had their desired effect. Mauriac resigned from the project and after the filming the Cinema Worker's Union, the CGT, withdrew his permit to work on the pretext that the production was badly produced. Musso's career was broken. His last fiction film, *Robinson Crusoe* (1950), with Georges Marckhal, the star of several films by Luis Bunuel, including *La mort en ce jardin* (1957) and *Belle de jour* (1968), was never distributed and was not shown until the Cinémathèque Francaise revived it in 1986.[22]

Implicit in Lefèvre's argument against Musso was the notion that Musso and people like him wanted to exploit the Resistance story for money. Alan Williams, author of *Republic of Images*, points out that a major theme in post-war film culture was the widespread rejection of pre-war filmmaking, still thought by many to have contributed to the country's disastrous defeat. If the filmmaker had been the director of a controversial film from the late 1930s, finding good jobs could be

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[21] *L e Juif suss,* directed by de Veit Harlan, the cult anti-Semitic film of the Third Reich, was screened in French cinema's in 1941 and drew record crowds (1,745) in the audience on its first night in Pathé-Palace at Paris. The critical and box-office success of the film would appear to contradict French cinema historian Georges Sadoul's argument that "les spectateurs français désertaient les salles de çinéma qui projetaient des films allemands pendant l'occupation". See Chateau, (1993), p.119.

[22] See Jean Charles Sabria, *Le Çinéma Français: les années cinquantes*, (Paris: Pompidou, 1987), p.795.

difficult.[23] If the filmmaker's film was a critique of right-wing factions in France before the war, as was the case with Musso, it would be impossible. Furthermore, the link with Lefèvre's accusations about money and Musso's status as an undesirable of Occupied France reflected discourses more often associated with the war years than the Liberation. Anti-Semitism remained unexamined and active in the post-war period.[24] It was implicit in the industry's pronouncements on the war period as the French cinema filmmakers congratulated themselves on the survival of the industry at that time. Little mention was made of the elimination of French and non-French Jews from cinema production. Many filmmakers, in particular the director Claude Autant-Lara, referred to the Vichy Era as the 'Golden Age of French Cinema' because it was a 'French cinema' made by 'all the French' and 'for the French'.[25]

Musso was not alone in finding re-entry into the French film industry difficult. Pierre Chenal, the filmmaker with whom Musso had most in common stylistically and thematically, failed altogether to re-establish himself: "I had the bad taste to come back. I was not cremated, I didn't disappear into thin air, for which the [former] collaborators didn't forgive me".[26] Another filmmaker, Dalio, commented that 'the Germans were gone, but the resistance continued. Against me. Did they (the producers) see me as a living reproach for their work with Continental during the war?'.[27] The filmmaker Max Ophuls also experienced rejection of his work. In this sense, the totalitarian project of the elimination of Jewish film personnel and the blacklisted avant-garde director's influence on society had a measured success in France. Jewish practitioners were

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[23] Williams, (1992), p.295.

[24] Michael Maurras and Morris Paxton, *Vichy France and the Jews,* (New York: Basic Books, 1988), pp.259-70.

[25] The expression 'France to the French' was popular at the time when both French and Foreign Jews were being driven from the industry. See André Pierre Colombat, *The Holocaust in French Film*, (London: Scarecrow Press, 1993), pp.9-12.

[26] Pierre Chenal quoted in Williams, (1992), p.423.

never as visible or prominent in cinema as they had been in the war.[28] The hallmark of the work of Chenal et al., formalist expressionism, was replaced by a different kind of psychological realism evident in the films of Allégret and Clouzot. Critical reading of pessimism as oppositional to the ideology of Vichy permitted the rehabilitation of films made before 1945 by filmmakers like Clouzot. Post-war re-readings not only wiped the slate clean for directors who had worked under the 'enemy' but led to a situation where much of the work became canonical. This process parallels the problem of the collaborationist artist, defining collaborationism as bound by the choice to work within the Occupied system rather than to go into exile or to resist, identified in other fields such as literature and art and theatre.[29]

Many critics commented the films made by Clouzot et al. were the only true representations of France under the Occupation at that time. The argument ran that films like *Le Corbeau* were read by French audiences as veiled attacks on collaborationist France. I will come back to this subject later. It is important for now to point out that in the view of their post-war supporters these apparently non-war tales were embedded with criticism of the culture of Vichy, a reading which led them to the opinion that such works were resistant. This view was held in spite of the fact that many of the most famous directors did not choose exile as Renoir had, but remained to become part of Continental's stable, a production company set up following a mandate by Goebbels. Continental was a new German organisation dedicated to producing films in Occupied France. It was, in the words of Alan Williams, 'an early, carefully crafted result of the process known as Aryanisation, whereby businesses wholly or in part

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[27]Marcel Dalio, *Mes Folles années*, ((Paris: J.C. Lattés, 1986), p.219

[28]Williams, (1992), p.423.

[29] See, for example, Serge Added, *Le Théatre en France dans les années Vichy*, (Paris: Ramsay, 1992), Robert Cardine-Petit, *Les Secrets de la Comédie-Française*, 1936-1945, (Paris: Nouvelles Éditions latines, 1958), for theatre. Also Gilles Ragache,

owned by Jews were seized and sold, at a fraction of their real value, to racially 'pure' buyers. It was financed by the Cautio-Tredangessellschaft, with funds secretly channelled by Goebbels'.[30] There was an opinion that they were there to ensure the survival of French cinema but the fact remains that they did so amid mass deportations of sections of the population including their colleagues from before 1940.

It was in everyone's interest to keep the cinema production going during Vichy, including the German authorities. Propaganda films were not seen to work for occupied audiences. Anti-Semitism was better served by home produced fare such as Henry Décoin's *Les Inconnus dans la maison* (1941), from a scenario by Georges Clouzot adapted from the novel by Georges Simenon.[31] The films of Continental were not subjected to the Vichy Censor but received the stamp of approval from the Reich Censors, Filmprufsteele. Directors with Continental, whatever their privately held political viewpoints, were, therefore, from a purely technical view-point, collaborationist. In spite of this, the idea of a secretly resistant French cinema was a popular one given that it confirmed the post-war myth of almost universal French resistance.[32] This idea is central to the plot of *Le Père tranquille* (Noel-Noel with Réné Clément, 1946). The quiet father of the title appears, in the eyes of his children and of the spectators, to be a coward who spends most of his time tending to his orchids while France is occupied with the Germans. But, as the film unfolds, the spectators and the family realise their error as they learn that

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La Vie quotidienne des écrivains et des artistes sous l'Occupation, 1940-44), (Paris: Hachette, 1988).

[30] Ibid., p.255.

[31] Autant-Lara openly declared his anti-Semitism in 1989 when he supported National Front politician Jean-Marie Le Pen. See Colombat, (1993), p.11.

[32] While this may be true of Carné who employed many Jewish personnel on his set and Cocteau who had frequent clashes with the Reich authorities, other directors did not rock the boat. Both Clouzot and Guitry frequented extreme right wing establishments during the war. See Pierre Darmon, *Le Monde du Çinéma sous L'Occupation*, (Paris Stock, 1997), pp.346-357.

beneath his fuddy-duddy exterior hides the leader of the Resistance for the whole region!

The French against the French

Making sense of the Occupation was fraught with problems. It was unrepresentable. No single story could possibly hope to narrate the trauma of this history. Indeed the hallmark of French work, in contrast to American work about the Holocaust, was the struggle of French filmmakers to find a cinematic form in which to deal with the period. These explorations did not come until very long after the war, in the 1970s. The Cinema of the 1950s did not attempt to explore the events of the war openly as it might have done if it had used epic anti-narrative techniques such as we find in Marcel Ophuls' documentary film *Le Chagrin et la pité* (1971). The strategy was generally to replace description with substitute narratives. The post-war cinema either over-wrote the Occupation story with the Gaullist Resistance story as exemplified in *Le Père tranquillle* or embedded explanations for the most traumatic aspects of collaboration in narratives with no apparent connection to the war years. A useful explanation for the big audience for French film noir in spite of Hollywood can be found in the notion of the substitute narrative.

Robert Buss posits the theory that the gangster text of the film noir, particularly those like Becker's *Touchez pas au grisbi* (1954), were hugely popular because they provided a structure in which to explore the Occupation as civil war, the French against the French.[33] The theme of Gangster law and betrayal are at the heart of the film considered among Yves Allégret's greatest work, *Dedée d'Anvers*. In this classic example of French Film Noir, Dedée, played by Simone Signoret, is the root cause of

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[33] It was not until Louis Malle's film *Lacombe Lucien* that collaboration achieved a fictional representation in French film. See Robert Buss, *French Film Noir*, (London: Boyars, 1988), pp.29-31.

the death of two men, the second and final death a result of summary justice meted out by the paternal 'patron' of the brothel in which Signoret's character works. Post-war gangster films are different from the pre-war genre. Earlier films generally depicted the lone figure of the outlaw doomed by his love for an unworthy woman and eventually either killed or incarcerated by the agents of the state. In the post-war gangster film the figure of the detective is absent while rival gangs battle for power free of restraint. The gangster film presents an ambivalent world where the police are largely ineffectual or corrupt and where the streets are the sites of betrayal, drunkenness and of an army in the shadows.[34] It lends itself easily to the idea that it functions allegorically as a representation of the Occupation.

The space of *La Jeune folle*.

La Jeune folle has as a text even greater potential for allegory. The film straddles both the gangster genre and the civil war genre within the frame of its subset genre, the Irish Revolution and Civil War film.[35] At a purely iconographic level, *La Jeune folle* is in the tradition of the film noir gangster genre. Take away the civil war context and the plot could easily be that of inter-rivalry and betrayal in an Apache gang. The republicans are fitted out in belted Macs and fedoras and armed with automatics, reminiscent of Ford's Irish/American 1930s gangster films. The IRA cell meetings take place in the backrooms of bars and in side-street café's, apache territory. Even the very space of the film echoes the ambiguous and mythic space of 1930s poetic-realist film, the forerunner of film noir, films such as Duvivier's *Pépé Le Moko (*1937).[36] In spite of the fact that

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[34]Ibid., pp.29-31.

[35]While *La Jeune folle*'s theme may appear to be a deviation from his other work, in fact, Allégret's own cinema background was initially in military film. See Jeancolas, (1983), p.335.

[36]'*Pépé le Moko* est un film noir, au sens ou *Scarface* était un film noir....C'est Barthélmy Amengual qui le remarquait, "L'Afrique coloniale n'y est guère plus

some shots of *La Jeune folle* were taken in Dublin the film retains few landmark site-specific scenes. It is difficult to identify the exact location of the film with the exception of the view of Dublin's Halfpenny Bridge. The film's set designer Alexander Trauneur took numerous shots of Dublin and then recreated some of the scenes in the studio in Paris.[37] Although Trauneur is generally known for the hyper-realism of his recreations of street scenes, his description of his methodology in the creation of *La Jeune folle*'s design emphasises atmosphere over reproduction: 'There was no question of shooting on location and we took exterior shots over a week or ten days, long shots with stand-ins, while all the actual acted scenes were set up in the studio in Joinville, with a lot of tricks of décor such as the use of tulle drapes to give the effect of distance in the fog like in *Le Quai de brumes'*.[38] Trauneur's reference to the spatial similarity between *La Jeune folle* and Carné's *Quai des Brumes (*1938) is significant. It confirms Jeancolas's reading of the post-occupation films as a throwback to the poetic realism of the 1930s. Trauneur's masterwork, *Le Jour se lève* (Marcel Carné, 1939), was also a re-presentation rather than reproduction of the imagined essence of another city, Paris:

> '*Le Jour se lève,* emblematic film of the 30s, as a result of the thorough analysis made by André Bazin, was shot entirely in the studio: everything in it a lovely reconstruction of a suburban architecture re-thought out - "quintessenciée" by the set designer Alexander Trauneur. This set is magnified by an artificial light

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historique, plus réaliste, que ne l'est la Grèce de *Phèdre* ou la castille du *Cid*". La Casbah reconstruite par Jacques Krauss a la réalité du mythe, pas celle de la géographie'. Ibid., pp.268-269.

37 Trauneur's stills were published as a book of photographs by Éditions de Lyons, 1953.

38 'Il n'etait pas question de tourner sur place et on a fait une semaine ou dix jours d'exterieurs, de plans éloignés avec des doublures, tandis que toutes les scénes réellement jouées étaient mises en scéne au studio de Joinville, avec beaucoup d'astuces de décoration de tulles pour donner un effet d'éloignement dans le brouillard comme dans *Le Quai de Brumes*'. Jacques Trauneur interviewed by Jean Piere Berthoné, *Trauneur, décors de Çinéma*, (Paris: Flammarion, 1988), p.114.

distributed by the chief-operator Curt Courant...Realism, yes, but without the effect of the real'.[39]

The same sense of artificial realism in *La Jeune folle* was produced by a similar methodology. The sets have detailed touches which almost give them the feel of social documentary and yet are composed as carefully as a painter would a canvas. Stylisation is applied over a naturalistic base so that the decor functions beyond the decorative. In Trauneur's view, the purpose of the set designer was to help the mise-en scène so that the spectator had an immediate grasp of the character's psychology.[40] The preferred reader was obviously French. The logic behind this kind of scenography can be seen in features which appear absurd to an Irish eye, the sight of a harpist sitting with an Irish concert harp in the middle of a reconstructed slum for example.

The use of scenography as an outer reflection of the character's psychological state is a feature of post-war film noir and has its origins in the poetic realism of the 1930s. An emphasis on realism, however, denies the more alienating effect of décors of the expressionist school. Trauneur's set reproduces the signature iconographic space of the film noir in a predominance of badly lit doorways, alleyways and stairwells thus locating the film in that genre. However, as Alan Williams argues, the contemporary reality that serves as a background and context for these tales of deception and betrayal is inevitably associated with and inflected by the extreme neurotic emotion that they generate. He comments that, as a result, the settings do not give an impression of having an existence

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39'*Le Jour se lève,* film emblématique s'il en est de ces années trente depuis les analyses magistrales qu'en a faites André Bazin, est un film entiérement tourné en studio: tout y est reconstruction géniale d'une architecture banlieusarde repensé - "quintessenciée" - par le décorateur Alexandre Trauneur. Ce décor est magnifié par la lumiére artificielle distribueé par le chef-opérateur Curt Courant...Réalisme certes, mais sans effet de réel'. See Jean Jeancolas, *Histoire du Çinéma Français*, (Paris: Nathan, 1995), pp.47-48.

40 Nowell-Smith, (1994), p.350.

independent of the film, despite the real location shots.[41] *La Jeune folle* is not, therefore, as it might appear on first approaching this film, 'about' the Irish Civil War, a departure from Allégret's other work dealing directly with the underworld of 1940s and 1950s France, but a development from that line complicated by the war theme. All three genres: gangster, war and the sub-genre of the Irish Independence story have to be taken into account. Reviews of the film confirm that finally it is not just about the Irish problem but has other French agendas: 'It is because (of these other agendas) that one cannot in truth reproach the authors of *La Jeune folle* with not paying enough attention to the revolutionary party, using it merely as a historic frame. This is not a film on the Sinn Féiner's and given the facts, never was one.[42]

In Allegrét's previous films, *Dedée d'Anvers*, *Manèges*, *Une si jolie petite plage*, the forces of the state were largely absent, as too were the institutions of the church. Justice was meted out within the community. Dedée and the landlord of the bar kill her lover's murderer in *Dedée d'Anvers*. In *Une si jolie petite plage*, the now-grown-up orphan, returning to his foster 'home', avenges his abuse as a child by murdering the landlady of the inn where the children were exploited as slave labour. Nature intervenes in the form of a horse to punish the errant wife of *Manèges*. While this happens in *La Jeune folle*, (the informer Kevin is executed by his own comrades), there is a political context for the story which pits the State and the Gangster against each other within the frame of a war drawn from history rather than fiction. There were plenty of precedents for this kind of film in 1930s. *La Jeune folle* could be seen to be a return to films of the 1930s like Duvivier's *Pépé Le Moko* with its colonial setting. Indeed *La Jeune folle* is set thirty years back in time, in

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41 Williams, (1992), p.280.

42 'C'est pourqui on ne saurait valablement reprocher aux auteurs de *La Jeune folle* d'avoir délaissé la partie révolutionnaire en n'utilisant que comme cadre historique. Ce n'est pas un film sur les Sinnfeiners, et d'aprés les données, n'a pas à en etre un'. Richer, (1952), p. 46.

1921. However, some features of *La Jeune folle* mark it as a post-Second World War film and indicate the uniquely devastating disruption of ordinary life perpetrated as part of that experience.

La Jeune folle's children are constructed as informers and agents of the Government independent of their adult community and are a source of menace reminiscent of the children of Bertolt Brecht's *Fear and Loathing in the Third Reich.* This representation occurs nowhere in any history of the Irish civil war, nor in pre-Second World War France.[43] It is a post-Vichy/Nazi phenomenon and was unknown prior to the Third Reich. The children have a uniform of sorts as they are dressed in Halloween motley, boys dressed as girls and the girls in blackened face-make up. This mask is not accidental. The informer is hidden behind the mask of Everyman. 'Le mouchard' is your neighbour, your spouse, son, daughter, the child of seven watching you with innocent eyes. As Jeancolas describes it, 'we are cowards, we are afraid, we inform'.[44] Under the Occupation, children were used as informers not only by the State but also by the Church in order to regain control of the state schools.[45] In post-war culture, denouncing was not an act of condemnation nor of protest but of petty betrayal whose consequence was nothing less than murder.

The Informer Motif in Occupation and Post-Occupation film.

There is a considerable shift from the representation of informing in pre-war films with Ireland as subject and informing in *La Jeune folle*. The theme of the informer operating within a community, such as we find in the community of *La Jeune folle* had its forerunner in *Le Corbeau* (1943). This film was directed by Georges Henri Clouzot of whom the

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[44]'On est lache, on a peur, on moucharde'. Jeancolas, (1983), p.341.

[45]For a very thorough analysis of the relationship between the Catholic Church and the regimes of the occupied zones during the Second-World War and after see LaCroix- Riz, (1996).

post-Liberation directors Yves Allégret and Duvivier are seen as the 'spiritual and stylistic descendants'.[46] Although Allégret and Clouzot were at opposite ends of the spectrum, Allegrét 'a dangerous and very orthodox Trotskyite' and Clouzot infamous for his association with extreme right-wing elements throughout the war, they are linked in almost every study of French film history.[47] Clouzot is considered the king of French Film noir and *Le Corbeau* the most important film produced in the last years of the Occupation in spite of, or perhaps because of, the reaction it generated. The controversy which raged around *Le Corbeau* is an index of the very real difficulty for French audiences in dealing with the cultural artefacts produced during the war period. As I have indicated earlier, the fact that those artists, writers and directors who had worked in the atmosphere of collaborationism and collaboration continued to produce meaningful work for their culture after the Liberation in a supposedly new France has generated some anxiety on the part of both critics and practitioners. Clouzot's film *Le Corbeau* [1943] was so nihilistic a view of French society that it caused a huge scandal on its release and generated heated debate in the year following the Liberation.

Supporters of *Le Corbeau,* Jacques Prévert, the poet and Henri Jeanson, the dialogist of *Pépé Le Moko* among them, based their defence of the film on a reading of it as an allegory of informing and therefore as an attack on Vichy's active support of informing and as an attack on the hypocrisy of the bourgeoisie.[48] In the case of the poison-pen letter theme in *Le Corbeau* however, representations of informing as an impulse to do wrong and without apparent rational motivation, ultimately deny the essential pragmatism of informing as a means of social control -a key

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[46]Williams, (1992), p.280.

[47]Prédal, (1996), p.29

[48]Hayward, (1993), p.126.

theme of *The Informer* and of *Le Puritain*.[49] Clouzot's representation of informing is contained within the 'huis-clos' of the village and within the realm of the personal. The state is largely absent. Informing in the film functions as means of portraying the base nature of the inhabitants of small-town France and its relationship to economical and political culture remains unexplored. It offers us, in the words of Alan Williams, a 'bleak, paranoid vision of social relations'.[50] A similar treatment of informing and village life can be identified in earlier Irish writing -works such as Brinsley Mac Namara's *Valley of the Squinting Windows* (1918), a very popular book today (it was reprinted in 1996) but which caused huge scandal on its release.

There were many who denounced *Le Corbeau* precisely because of its essentialist view of the baseness of human nature, particularly French human nature. Among its most famous opponents was the writer Joseph Kessel, author of the short story *Mary de Cork*, also set in the Irish Civil War. The issue of censorship was crucial to Kessel's argument. The Nazis did not ban *Le Corbeau* nor did the film incur the Vichy ban. The lack of serious objection to the film from the Third Reich has been attributed to the fact that the film was seen as an attack on the French people and therefore pro-Third Reich.[51] Defenders of the film countered that it attacked the French bourgeois not France *per se* and lauded its depiction of that milieu. In 1954 Truffaut launched a bitter attack on this point of view and on the cinéma de qualité in general in an article entitled: "Une certaine tendance du cinéma français". He said that dominant trait of

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[49] As Annie LaCroix Rix points out in her study of the Gentilly workers' strike, the 9th of February 1942, denunciation was a weapon used by management and government to keep citizens in line. See Annie LaCroix-Riz, *CGT et revendications ouvrières face à l'Etat, de la Libération aux débuts du Plan Marshall, (septembre 1944-décembre 1947)*, Thesis under the direction of J. Bouvier, (Paris I, 1981, vol.4), pp.225-6.

[50] Williams, (1992), p.280.

[51] '*Le Corbeau* fut un film qui consentit à représenter la France comme une nation pourrie, dégénérée, petite bourgeoise, vicieuse et décadente, en concordance avec les assertions de *Mein Kampf*'. Kessel quoted in Georges Sadoul, 'Les Lettres françaises du 1ere Décembre 1945', quoted in Chateau, (1994), p.136.

psychological realism was its anti-bourgeois drive. He challenged this drive: ' Who were Aurenche and Bost, Sigurd, Jeanson, Autant-Lara, Allégret, if not bourgeois? And who were the fifty thousand new readers who never miss a film based on a novel, if not members of the middle class? What was the value of an anti-bourgeois cinema, made by the bourgeois?'.[52]

There are a number of ways of reading the appeal of the anti-bourgeois position beyond the assumption that to be anti-bourgeois is to be Marxist. It is quite clear that many intellectuals from the Far Right in both the pre-war and occupation years were 'anti-bourgeois'. Autant-Lara, Aurenche and Bost have been described by Alan Williams as 'embodying knee-jerk leftism', largely because their films were highly critical of the French and France, particularly the middle-classes and those who profited from the war in black-marketeering.[53] However, as André Pierre Colombat points out, Autant-Lara's films were not particularly liberating for those persecuted in the war, namely Jews.[54] Autant-Lara, it must be recalled, made the opening speech at the European Assembly in Strasbourg as a representative of the extreme right French National Front also called the PFN (Parti Front National) in 1989. Therefore, rather than leftist, it is more likely that the films of these directors dramatise a middle-class tendency for self-hatred and this public's latent masochism.[55] It may also be that the appeal of deeply pessimistic directors like Clouzot is an index of nihilistic tendencies in the elite's rejection of bourgeois values with its correlating desire for apocalyptic change.

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[52]'Le trait dominant du réalisme psychologique est sa volonté anti-bourgeoise. Mais qui sont Aurenche et Bost, Sigurd, Jeanson, Autant-Lara, Allégret, sinon des bourgeois, et qui sont les cinquante mille nouveaux lecteurs que ne manque pas d'amener chaque film tiré d'un roman, sinon des bourgeois? Quelle est donc la valeur d'un cinema anti-bourgeois fait par des bourgeois pour des bourgeois?'. François Truffaut, *Les Cahiers du çinéma*, no.31, January, (Paris:1954).

[53] Williams, (1992), p.290.

[54] Colombat, (1993), p.11.

[55] Patraka, (1992), p. 341.

The importance of the potential erotic gratifications of such films cannot be dismissed in any estimation of arousal of the interest of the public. Hugo Pratt, author of *Les Celtiques*, whose work I have described in Chapter One, describes the attraction of fascism for him as an Judo-Christian adolescent in Italy: "Fascism did not deny beauty, the attractions of the physical .....it paid no attention to the interdiction of the Jewish or Christian religions. I will always thank Mussolini for acquainting me with Fascist pussy! Fascism liberated the youth of my generation from all the taboos, it gave us a certain freedom and the possibility of individual adventure, when before it had been forbidden: adventure had been seen as a break with the past. Fascism had the will to bring change to society, while the bourgeois mentality was conservative and had a horror of change'.[56] Hugo Pratt's comments point out the problem of representing revolution and underlines the appeal of the Irish revolutionary text as disruption of moral order. I will deal with this subject later in the chapter. The difference between fascism as described by Pratt and the dominant ideology of Vichy can be seen in the definition of revolution. For Italy, as Pratt's comments reveal, Mussolini's rise to power indicated sweeping change and a new order. Pétain's National Revolution, however, was underpinned with a desire for 'old' order and was closely associated with the Vatican thinking on social order, focusing primarily on morality. It was a very conservative society.

Post-war readings of films from this period are unstable, however, demonstrating the difficulty of the constant slippage and confusion embedded in films produced within the framework of an authoritarian

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[56]'Le fascisme ne niait pas la beauté des corps, l'attirance physique...il ne pretait pas attention aux interdits judéo-chrétiens. Je remercie toujours Mussolini de m'avoir connaitre la chatte fasciste! Le fascisme a libéré des tabous de la jeunesse de ma genrération, il nous a donné une certaine liberté et la possibilité d'une aventure indivduelle, alors qu'auparavent cela était interdit: l'aventure était vue comme une rupture, on disait qu'elle cassait les lois de la société. Le fascisme avait volonté d'apporter des changements dans la societe, alors que la mentalité bourgeoise est

system when 'resistance' meanings can be attributed to the film where it fulfils 'high culture' criterion, on the basis that censors were blind to the meaning the film could have had for a French audience. An example of this is *Le Ciel est à vous* (Grémillion 1943), a film, according to many commentators, embedded with resistance messages. It is more likely that the ideals of family and aspiration expressed in the film were not particularly deviant in terms of Vichy thinking and that these over-rode any calls to revolution that it may have held for the French audience.[57] The end of the war did not signal the end of all ideals held dear during the National Revolution nor their origin, the public's desire for stability and order. The fact that the generic form of the celebrated French film noir which came from the films of Clouzot among others and from 1930s poetic realism, continued on well into the 1950s in the form of films such as *La Jeune folle* indicates that the discourses and therefore the object, of these films remained unchanged in spite of the Occupation. Understanding the discourses of Vichy, as authoritarian state, is crucial to understanding of the mood in France following Liberation as it is reflected in post-war cinema.

In the Name of the Father: Post-Liberation and the Ireland Text.

Vichy itself was not fascist but fascistic. It was primarily an authoritarian state under the rule of a patriarch. Notions of traditional patriarchal roles were crucial to its ideology, the 'family values' which are very much part of the platform of the Right today in France. In this system, the state, figured in the father, was benevolent and a source of inspirational morality. Under the patriarchal state a primary source of disorder comes from perceptions about society's failure to meet ideals of family. Differences in this agenda from the Nazi project can be seen in

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conservatrice et a horreur du changement'. Hugo Pratt, *Le désir d'etre inutile, souvenirs et réflexions,* ed. Dominique Petitfaux, (Paris: Laffont, 1991), p.26.

difference in censorship practice. The Vichy censors were tormented more by issues of sexuality and morality than by race scrutiny, although anti-semitism was very much part of Vichy's policy. These anxieties reveal much about the close connection between the French Catholic hierarchy and the Pétainist State. Many films like *Le Corbeau,* passed by Filmprufstelle, would never have escaped the wrath of the Zone Libre's censor, Morand, 'already tormented by the torn dress of a cabaret singer'.[58] The re-instatement of patriarchal ideals of the family combined with notions of purity and French identity was advocated as the only possible way to combat degeneration. These ideals were presented as a revolutionary national project to 'save' France. Ideas of corruption and degeneration, however, were not the sole prerogative of the right. We can see the anti-decadence theme in films of the socialist revolution project such as *La Nouvelle Babylon* (Kozincev & Trauberg, 1929), an early Russian film of the Paris Commune. The drive towards ideals of purity, family values and innocence, was counter-revolution represented as revolution.

The notion of counter-revolution opens up a possible explanation for the pessimism of Allegrét's work in the wake of the apparent joy of the Liberation. His negativity is a critical stance and it opposes a culture as such. The culture it counters is none other than the culture of the present, the culture of Liberation. Who had benefited from the war and the Liberation and now needed to be reprimanded? What had changed that now had to be undone? How did French cinema function in this project? The question of women's role in society is crucial to family ideals whether they be of the far left or the far right. Women and the 'women' question were, consequently, of great concern to the makers of French

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[57] See Noel Burch & Genevieve Sellier, *La drole de guerre des sexes du çinéma français 1930-1956*, (1996), pp. 220-4.

[58] 'Déjà tourmentée par la robe déchirée d'une chanteuse de cabaret'. Jeancolas, (1983), p.304.

cultural products in the war years and they remained so after the war was over. Female characters in the leading roles were plentiful on French screens under Vichy and this pattern continued after the war. Catherine, the Irish heroine of *La Jeune Folle,* is an element in the continuum of representations of women in post-war French cinema. An explanation for her presence there can be found only by examining the function of such representations across the genre of the Irish post-independence film. It is important also to take into account the construction of women revealed in the dominant French film culture of the period.

La Jeune folle brings the question of comparative experience with Ireland into French culture. In both Irish and French cultures, liberation was followed by the establishment of the new Republic and the redistribution of power within that frame. For many of those who had taken part in both the Struggle for Independence in Ireland and the Resistance in France, idealism and dreams of freedom had been an important factor in their engagement, at great cost and risk to themselves and their families. This idealism disappeared completely from the politic of the new governing bodies. State strategies consisted in legitimising the newly empowered middle-classes while countering revolutionary aspects of the resistance to the former powers which might threaten the status quo. The Ireland text in French cinema demonstrates a continuous pattern of revolution, failure of revolution, followed by counter-revolution - thus the predominance of texts converting the Irish War of Independence story to Irish Civil War story. Ireland is a space of struggle along this binary opposition, revolution/counter revolution.

We can already identify a distinct pattern in the use of Ireland as subject in French cinema from the first cinematic image of an Irish figure in French cinema, Meliés' shots of the Irish policeman in *Lightening Facial Changes* (1902), to the post-war film of Allegrét.[59] Ireland, as a

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[59]Georges Meliés, *Lightening Facial Changes*, (France, 1902), USA distr., Edison Co.

result of its association with the revolution/counter-revolution axis, is a highly unstable text generating paradigms of order and disorder. The role of the Catholic Church in both French and Irish cultures is important because, for the Catholic hierarchy, disorder-order stems from the oppositions of morality and immorality. These oppositions are centred in the primary axis of male and female. Both *Le Puritain* and *La Jeune folle* use the Ireland text as a frame for an exploration of male and female relationships, set against the context of the patriarchal state figured in the police chief and the Catholic Church (represented in *La Jeune folle* through the convent). Both *Le Puritain* and *La Jeune folle* 'happen' in the same space of after-revolution, *Le Puritain* in the Free State of the post-civil war and *La Jeune folle* in the moment of struggle for power following Independence, the Civil War. Ireland's location in the thematic space of both Catholicism and Revolution has determined its construction in France as a space for the exploration of counter-revolution. In post-war France, as I will explore in more depth later, the primary objects of counter-revolution were women. This was also the case in post-Independence Ireland.

For French commentators, Irish culture is represented as the product of post-colonialism and the Struggle for Independence as one in which the Irish Republic asserts its new identity.[60] Like France after the war, Irish liberation came from failure. The 1916 Rising is crucial in that its 'history', its real act, was immediately converted into myth. The greater its failure as an act, the more quickly it translated into mythology, a mythology which was an effective disguise for the total failure of the Rebellion to bring any real change in the social structures of the state. The feminist and revolutionary Hannah Sheehy-Skeffington summed up the situation when she commented that Michael Collins, in whom she found a

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[60]Pierre Joannan, 'A French perspective on the Irish Identity crisis', in *Ireland and France, A Bountiful Friendship,* Barbara Hayley and Christopher Murray, eds. (Lilles, Uni. De Lilles, 1973), p.45.

'touch of the dictator', desired nothing more than 'a middle-class replica of the English State'.[61] Order is restored not changed. As feminist theorist bell hooks comments, it is a source of sadness to women that male political leaders, who are progressive in other spheres, 'construct a phallocentric paradigm of liberation -wherein freedom and the experience of patriarchal manhood are always linked as though they are one and the same'.[62] The state returns to patriarchy in the form of the founding father of the new nation. In the case of Ireland these 'founding fathers' were Collins, then Cosgrave and presently Eamonn DeValera. In the case of France, this role was taken by Charles de Gaulle. It is not useful to describe the post-war French republic as new. The lack of real change in the cinema industry reflected the lack of change in the State. The Fourth Republic was 'brought back in August 1944, pure and simple, the Republic in the singular, permanent and without number'.[63] The male founders of the new nation are chosen on the basis that they were the nation's liberators. For both Ireland and France, the smooth return to patriarchy as order restored is disrupted by the fact that the role of liberator was not solely a male prerogative. The crisis of war in both countries saw a new actor emerge, the woman as agent of political change.

Irish Women and the Struggle for Independence.

> Dublin's name will be glorious for ever. Men will speak of her as one of the splendid cities, as they speak now of Paris. Dublin! Paris! Down along the quays there are hundreds of women helping us, carrying gelagnite in spite of every danger.

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[61] Hannah Sheehy Skeffington quoted by Kiberd, (1995), p.402.

[62] bell hook, 'Speaking About Paulo Freire- The Man, His Work', in *Paulo Freire, A Critical Encounter*, Peter Mc Laren & Peter Leonard, eds. (London: Routledge, 1993), p.148.

Padraig Pearse, 1916.[64]

Pearse's choice of image, the women running with the gelagnite secreted in their clothing and not the female snipers who drew the attention of the press, is important.[65] His description of the Revolution as he saw it constructs the women as synedocal of the people thereby justifying the Rebellion as a popular revolution. He interprets the women's support as an index of affirmation by the people and not merely by the elite. This is a different point of view from that expressed by Yeats in his homage to the leaders of the rebellion, the poem *Easter 1916*. Faced with the fact of the rebellion and the havoc it wreaked on Dublin life, Pearse looked for affirmation that he had not acted against the will of the people and he found it in the actions of the women. This quotation from Pearse tells a story of liberation which comes not from the actions of a male revolutionary cell, the 'stone in the stream', but from under the skirts of the women of Dublin as they run with their gelagnite to secret munitions dumps in the city. It is a concrete and pragmatic image of the birth of the Republic, a republic brought about through women's labour and pain at the very real risk of death.[66] As the Volunteer Maire Comerford said: 'It was in their blood to suffer in the causes of national, religious and personal freedom. Mothers would face anything if only we could, together, win our present battle. The thought that they were rearing the first generation of children who would live their lives out in a free country was enough to support us. There the issue lay'.[67] Before the War of Independence, Francis Sheehy Skeffington had called for 'Freedom for

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[63]Alguhon, (1995), p.294.

[64]Quoted in Desmond Ryan, *The Rising, the Complete Story of Easter*, (Dublin: Golden Eagle Books, 1966), p. 18.

[65]'Women's Part in The Dublin Rising: Fearlessness under Fire', *The Freeman's Journal*, May 10, (Dublin: 1916), p.1.

[66]A similar image forms the most striking sequence in Gillo Pontecorvo's 1966 docudrama *La Battlagia d'Algeria, The Battle of Algiers.* This film was initially banned in France for inciting unrest.

workers, for women and for the people of Ireland'. At the launching of the Irish Volunteers at the Rotunda on November 1913, Pearse was the only leader to declare that they were there to 'defend the rights common to Irish men and Irish women' but his voice was overwhelmed by the clamouring for affirmation for heroic Irish manhood.[68]

Pearse and Skeffington's aspirations were reflected in the opening lines of the Proclamation of the Republic read by Pearse on the steps of the General Post Office in 1916: "Irish men and Irish Women! In the name of God and of the dead generations from which she receives the old tradition of nationhood, Ireland, through us, summons her children to her flag and strikes for her freedom". The 'us' is inclusive. The birth of the Irish nation is clearly, in Pearse's terms, as much an action of women as of men. In both France and Ireland, the reward the women expected for their work in achieving liberation was the recognition of themselves as citizens by the granting of universal suffrage. In both Ireland and France women were amazed by the reaction to their request for the vote and for equal status to men in the sphere of public life. When the women revolutionaries, led by Hannah Sheehy-Skeffington, looked for suffrage in 1921, it was dismissed by the Dail and when suffrage came in 1922 it was granted with great reluctance.[69]

French women did not get the vote until after the war. The ordinance giving French women the vote was signed by De Gaulle in Algeria ninety-six years after universal suffrage for men had been granted in France. However, no women deputies sat in his government during his years as president in the new Republic in spite of their role in the Resistance. The previous debate on universal suffrage in 1936 had revealed that epoch's attitude to women when the newly elected Senator

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[67]Margaret Ward, *Unmanageable Revolutionaries, Women and Irish Nationalism*, (London: Pluto, 1989), p.149.

[68]Ibid., p.90.

[69]See Lee, (1989), p. 137.

Duplantier had declared: "You are going to give the vote to all the women who have taken up prostitution ...those women want to be deputies. Certainly not! They should stay as they are: whores!'.[70] The message was that women were too immoral to be trusted with politics. The historian Maurice Alguhon acknowledges women's role in the resistance in one brief sentence, but the image selected to illustrate the Occupation's deprivations shows women with handbags full of money queuing for lipstick.[71] This image reinforces the idea of women's lack of social responsibility and of their disinterest in anything other than materialism in spite of the financial crisis. This is exactly the kind of woman portrayed by Simone Signoret in Allégret's *Manèges* (1949).

The Back-Lash

The cinema of post-Occupation France, with some rare and notable exceptions, functions as part of a cultural dynamic, the aim of which was the restoration of the patriarchal republic and a return to the pre-war 'equilibrium' and to the ideals of the Pétainist national revolution, of the woman in the home and the man at work. During the war years women experienced liberation from the strait-jacket of their ideal role in the 'stable' society of the pre-war situation. They moved out of the domestic sphere into the public world of work as they replaced the male population who had been taken prisoner of war or who were in exile. They also achieved a new identity in their function as agents of Liberation through their participation in the Resistance. The years following the Liberation in France heralded the re-establishment of the patriarchal order following the crisis of the Occupation. This project began with the writing

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[70]'Vous allez accorder le droit de vote à toutes les femmes qui se livrent à la prostitution...ces dames voudraient etres députés. Eh bien non! Qu'elles restent ce qu'elles sont: des putains!'. Quoted in Christiane Chombeau, 'Des Sufragettes à l'Isoloir', *Le Monde,* 10-11-April, (Paris: 1994), p.9.

[71]Drawing by Pem, *Salon des humouristes,* (Paris, February 1944), printed in Alguhon, (1995), p.294.

out of women's role in the history of the struggle for Independence. This is not to suggest that all French women were engaged in resistance activities. Like the men under fascism and like women in Germany, only a minority of French women was actively resistant. The definition of resistance here is one of resistance as behaviour that is motivated by the intention to outwit, defy, subvert, thwart or otherwise resist the aims of the oppressor.[72] It is important to clarify this point as post-war representations of resistance are largely confined to male-based armed resistance. Many of the tasks carried out by women were invisible, just as they had been in Ireland during the Irish war of Independence.

The determination to exclude women from public life led to a French patriarchal project which sought not only to actively undermine the women's role but also to wipe the very trace of their engagement from the new nation narrative.[73] This held true even for French-Jewish women in spite of the glaring fact of their massive contribution to the Jewish underground. For the greater part of the war, as the men were rounded up, the Jewish women carried out a huge share of the missions, particularly in the dissemination of information regarding the horror of the camps. Their domestic camouflage made them the best agents for the most dangerous missions. However, following Liberation, they received no representation on the board of the *Conseil représentatif des institutions juives en France* (CRIF), the outgrowth from the Jewish Communist resistance organisations.[74] In the history of rescuing Jews under the Occupation, women, both Jewish and non-Jewish, figured much more often than men. It is most likely that much of this action was concerned with the rescue of children (between 7,500-9,000 children were saved). The histories of the contribution of women to French Resistance,

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[72]Lenore J. Weitzman, 'Living on the Aryan Side', in *Women in The Holocaust*, Dalia Ofer & Lenore J. Weitzman, eds. (Yale: Yale Uni. Press,1998), p.216.

[73]Alguhon, (1995), p.294.

unlike studies of the movement in general, devote much attention to the rescue of Jews because this was a major concern of women resistors.[75] However, in the cinematic representations of the Jews in war-time France of the 1970s and after, it is invariably male figures who are awarded 'le beau role' of rescuing Jews with both Jews and women relegated to the role of victims in need of male protection. This can be seen in films such as Louis Malle's *Au revoir les enfants* (1987) where the priests are the heroes and the female, the nun, betrays the Jewish boys in the infirmary at the moment of crisis. Both Jews and women found that what was desired for youth in the post-war period was 'a return to normalcy, achieved by armed warfare'.[76] Normalcy meant the situation before the war. There was little interest in revolutionising women's status. The dismissal of the role of women is an index of the significance the rescue of Jews had for the Resistance as a whole. The fact that such a project, in spite of the significance it came to have later, was not a major segment of the movement points to another agenda of the 'maquis', the civil war with their compatriots and the struggle for power.

The resistance was understood exclusively as a political and military phenomenon by French historians after the war. In these versions women were reduced to the role of shield bearers, or worse, in a combat waged by men.[77] In a completely different context Irish women's role in the 1916 rebellion was also undermined by many of the male commandants in the aftermath. With the notable exception of Con Colbert, who been trained by Countess Markievicz, the commandants of

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[74]Renée Poznanski, 'Women in the French-Jewish Underground', in Ofer & Weitzman, (1998), pp.239-47.

[75] Margarete L. Rossiter, 'Le role des femmes dans la Résistance en France', *Guerre mondiale et conflits contemporains*, Vol. 155, (Paris:1989), pp.53-62.

[76]September 10, 1944, issue of *Jeune combat*, quoted in Poznanski, (1998), p.247.

[77]The debate about women and war has opened in the wake of the attacks on the Twin Towers in Wall Street on September, 2001. Masculine militarist discourses in Irish journalist Kevin Myers column in the *Irish Times*, (Sept. 15th, 2001), sparked a

the rebels refused to allow the women, whose role as couriers had placed them in the greatest danger, to surrender with their male colleagues. They were let out the back in secret along with the wounded men. The impression given, as the men left the occupied quarters and were paraded past the crowds, was of a male military uprising.[78] In France, cinema was an essential weapon in the civil war between the genders in the aftermath of Liberation. Réné Clément's 1948 film *La Bataille du rail*, considered the most authentic film of the Resistance at the time, portrayed exclusively masculine fighters in spite of having one of the great woman heroes of the Resistance, Colette Audry, as a script-advisor![79] Classic realism in French film noir contributed to the writing out of women from the history of resistance.[80] We do not notice violent cleansing of women from history because of the operation of naturalism in the realist narrative structure. Naturalism derives from the apparent co-presence of signifier and signified and glosses over the temporality of the signification process. There is no sense of "re-presentation". The presence of the real person of the actor is presumed absent, effaced through the signification of the accessories of naturalistic performance, authentic costumes, accent, gestures, setting. The not represented is effaced in this process. The paradigmatic, in the relation of the image to time is effaced, the relations in space, the syntagmatic dominate and the possibility of the other, in the case of a film like *la Bataille du rail,* the woman, is not present in the liberator sign through the masking of the evident difference and 'differance'.

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reaction among many commentators, provoked by his comments on how women rely on men to wage war.

[78]See Ward, (1989), pp. 114-6.

[79]Burch & Sellier, (1996), p 221.

[80]For Irish cinema the process appears to have reach its apotheosis in *Michael Collins* [Jordan, 1996]. Jordan lists only three women in a cast of sixty-two characters: Kitty Kiernan whose only role is as fiancée, a maid named only as Rosie who is prompted by her boyfriend to betray her boss to the Republicans and 'a girl in bed'.

This rewriting of history is facilitated by distance from the event when there is less likely to be eyewitness accounts to contradict the history, although filmmakers frequently offer many justifications for changing details of history for the purposes of cinema production.[81] These disclaimers, through their containment of possibility of total rejection of the film as history, have the effect of legitimising the bigger picture. The act of cleansing of women from the history of the birth of the new republic facilitated their cleansing from the public sphere and their forced retreat back into the home and out of the world of work. This did not mean women were absolved of a duty to patriotism, a patriotism based on male insecurity. For French cinema the women's role in resistance was reduced to a refusal to interact with the 'enemy', basically for remaining 'chaste'. As historian Phillippe wrote, '*La Silence de la mer (*film of the short story by Vercors, directed by Melville 1948), stresses first the dignity of rejection embodied in particular by the girl, who refuses relations of any kind with the man who is the very embodiment of the good Germany, the Germany of thinkers and musicians".[82] The ideal of the chaste French woman obviously implied its opposite. It led to the emergence of another more sinister agenda; the attribution of guilt to women for the humiliation of the Occupation and the demonising of women as the origin of the divisiveness of the Civil war situation during Vichy, brother against brother, the French against the French.[83]

In the narratives of post-occupation films such as *Patrie* (Louis Daquin, 1945), the brothers unite against the scheming women and order is restored. The function of cinema in this project resulted in the most misogynist cinema in the history of the medium in France. Allégret was a

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81 A recent example of the containment effect of these disclaimers occurs in Irish cinema history with Neil Jordan's comments in the introduction to the book of the film, *Michael Collins*, (London: Vintage, 1996).

82Philippe Burrin, *Living with Defeat, France under the German Occupation 1940-44,* Janet Llyod, trans. (London: Arnold, 1996), p.193.

83Burch & Sellier, (1996), pp.221-2.

driving force in this machine. Dudley Andrews has expressed concerns about Allégret's films without underestimating the impact they had on their audience. In his view, 'Yves Allégret is not a likeable director. His long career produced only four powerful films, all of which dwell excessively on human meanness. Yet his genius for making one feel this meanness and his audacious effort to make everything including the plot serve for the unveiling of human motivation make him perhaps the key filmmaker of the immediate post-war period'.[84] While Yves Allegrét's greatest concern may have been the portrayal of human meanness in general, this has somehow translated into female meanness in the majority of his films. French film critics, Noel Burch and Genevieve Sellier state their concerns about Allegrét's representation of women in no uncertain terms in their study of the films of the period. They describe *Manèges* thus:

> "Unquestionably one of the strongest films of its epoch, by virtue of the performance of the actors, the pace of the editing and the direction, the complexity and coherence of the narrative and the accuracy of the dialogue, *Manèges* is also astonishingly revealing of that which is most difficult to support in masculine mentalities of the post-war period, one of those films which frankly leave a bad taste in the mouth (...) a sort of master-piece of ugliness'.[85]

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[84]Dudley Andrews, 'Yves Allegret'. In *The International Dictionary of Film and Filmmakers*, ed. Laurie Hillstrom, (Detroit: James press, 1977), p.6.

[85]'Incontestablement un des films les plus forts de son époque, par le jeu des acteurs, le brio du découpage et de la mise en scène, la complexité et la cohérence du récit et la justesse des dialogues, *Manèges* est aussi un film étonnement révélateur de ce qu'il y avait de moins avouable dans les mentalités masculines de cette aprés-guerre, l'un de ceux qui laissent dans la bouche un gout franchement mauvais, (...), une sorte de chef-d'oeuvre de laideur'. Burch & Sellier, (1996), pp.283.

Images of women in the film noir of both America and France led feminist critics to construct theories of the 'femme fatale' figure central to the genre as an image of castration.[86]

Allegrét's *Manèges* is of particular interest to Irish viewers because it contains in it an earlier version of an image that has come to be associated with Beckett and theatricality. The imagery of the earlier *Manèges*, released while Beckett was in Paris, foreshadows Beckett's play *Not I*. A most striking shot in *Manèges* happens during the moment of the male protagonist's ultimate betrayal by his wife. It shows Signoret in full face speaking. Her words are lost and the camera eye closes until we are left with an image of her mouth speaking while the rest of the screen is blacked out. In 1957, Allégret paid his own compliment to Beckett's work with his 1957 film *Quand la femme s'en mèle*, a film which was also released under the title of *En ne pas attendant Godot* and *Godot*.[87] The film, based on a novel by John Amila, launched Alain Deloin, a star of *la nouvelle vague*. Godot is night-club owner and small time gangster who is betrayed by a woman. The woman's mouth/vagina is the ultimate source of betrayal in the post-occupation film noir. She collaborates through her mouth by informing and through her sex by horizontal collaboration. Women became the scapegoats for collaboration only when it had failed. Following Liberation the 'ideal' women of the cinema of Vichy, its stars, experienced public condemnation at a much more extreme level than that encountered by men who were deemed collaborators. At a local level, women experienced public violence and humiliation through the 'tonsure' system, the balding and parading of women who had 'consorted' with German soldiers. Female film stars' violation was symbolically more extreme. They were condemned and in many cases, raped and publicly beaten, as 'collabratrices charnelles', a term not used for their male

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[86]See Hayward, *Key Concepts in Cinema Studies*, (London: Routledge, 1996), pp.116-21.

colleagues.[88] The aim, therefore, was not solely to punish for collaboration, for logically the men would have suffered as the women did, but to punish in order to attribute culpability and to expiate some of the humiliations.

Official histories of the Occupation consistently reflect this point of view and offer these discourses as fact. French historian Philippe Burrin [*Living with Defeat, France under the German Occupation 1940-44]* dedicates a whole chapter to an account of collaboration as predominately female. The double bind of mouth/sex is reflected in Burrin's view of denunciation as a particularly feminine activity.[89] This accusation is not borne out by fact. In Germany, as well as in the occupied countries, women were in the minority of denouncers.[90] Burrin deals with the fact that a huge majority of those found guilty of collaboration after the War were male by laying the blame on 'the weaker sex', commenting that the men who collaborated had their 'natural' integrity compromised by 'the fear of losing one's partner: suspicion of the weaker sex which is felt to be taking its revenge with the aid of the all too aptly named 'occupying power'..it is not hard to see how relationships of this kind undermined that integrity. In his *Conseils*, the mild Texlier calls for violence solely in this

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[87]Samuel Beckett's play, *En attendant Godot*, was first performed in Paris in 1955.

[88]Mirelle Balin was seized with her German companion Birl Desbok. He was taken away and most likely executed but a different fate was reserved for the 'vedette': She was beaten and raped by the FFI on the 28 of September, an experience not visited on avowed Vichyist such as Fresnay or Sacha Guitry. See Damon, (1997), p.346.

[89]There are social explanations for the imbalance in male/female denunciations. By far the largest group denounced were teachers, specifically lay teachers a profession which is still overwhelmingly female. The reason for this activity was the struggle between the Catholic hierarchy and the lay State inspectorate for control of the schools. Primary schools were particularly targeted, one teacher for example was denounced for allowing her children to play near the church in her village. In fact the Vichy government was forced to call a halt to this type of informing so deluged was it by complaints about teachers. See R. Kedward & R. Austin, *Vichy France and The Resistance: Culture and Ideology,* (London: Croom Helm, 1985), pp. 21-43.

[90]Samples that have been studied to date indicate that in Germany, for example, the proportion of women among the denouncers varies between 12 and 29 percent, the majority of informers being male. See Gisela Bock, 'Ordinary women in Nazi Germany', in Ofer & Weitzman, (1998), p.90.

connection. Such behaviour was no doubt related to these women's weaker sense of national duty and their relative lack of interest in public affairs'.[91]

Manèges's male hero (played by Bernard Blier), is the quintessential 'homme tranquille'. Blier's little man is drawn into corruption and his good nature compromised, through the agency of women.[92] In the film the punishment for Simone Signoret's character is extreme. She becomes a mummy, bandaged, incapacitated, a murmuring mouth, twisted and babbling in pain. She is not even given the grace to die, the usual fate of the femme fatale, but abandoned in a state of incapacity and tortured suspension. His film, *Manèges* (1950) was, according to Melissa E. Biggs, 'one of the films that set the stylistic tone of post-war French filmmaking'. She goes on to describe it as 'a searing condemnation of materialism and greed'. More ominously, she finishes her listing of the film on the triumphant note that the 'critics and the public loved this film noir. She quotes the American magazine *Variety*, for whom it was 'one of the most important social films' to come out of France in 1950.[93] However, the obvious hostility to women in *Manège*'s signals loudly its ideological positioning. The women characters come across as caricatures because they are almost too nasty and do not have the ambivalent attraction of the femme fatale of the American film noir who often appeals to women as much as to men.[94] *Manèges*, with its clearly misogynist agenda, could be seen as somewhat less insidious then the supposedly positive female roles in Clouzot's *Le Corbeau* and of *La Jeune folle*.

Negative images, the 'bad' women of French film noir, pose less problems for analysis than apparently positive representations of the

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[91]Philippe Burrin, (1996), pp.206-207.

[92]He is played by Bernard Blier, the father of Bertrand Blier, director of *Les valseuses* (1974).

[93]Biggs, (1996), p.173.

[94]Hayward cites examples of appealing femme fatales: Fritz Lang's *Woman in the Window* (1944), Charles Vidor's *Gilda* (1946). See Hayward, (1996), p.119.

virtuous female, also very common in the both the Occupation and post-occupation films. These films can be and often are read as a sort of counter-discourse to the femme fatale but, in reality, they are nothing but the flip side of the coin if not worse. Notions of continuance with the social roles and structures of 1930s France, the fifteen years of the thirties referred to earlier, need to be examined because the films which appear to idealise women, such as *Le Ciel est à vous*, do not constitute a return to a previous state. They represent instead a harking back to mythic ideals of women 'before' the crisis of Occupation, before Liberation, finally before the destabilisation of history.

Idealised women appear to take two forms in French culture: the good mother/wife figure and the warrior/virgin. I will return to the latter figure later. Ideals of women as mothers and wives, notions of the woman's body as womb and the elevation of the role of woman as nurturer and carer, dominated the films of Vichy France and continued to dominate women's lives in the post-war period. After the Liberation, French legislation targeting women was based on their role as 'les mamans de France', present or future, firmly placed within the family. As such, the Government of the Fourth Republic continued both pre-war and Pétainist family policy and efforts to increase the birth-rate.[95] Female characters of Vichy films represent women in the service of the patriarch, submissive to the Law of the Father, all resistance suppressed in the name of the nation.[96] The Vichy Government's elevation of the role of motherhood parallels De Valera's constitution in the new Irish Republic.

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[95]Claire Duchen, 'Occupation Housewife: the Domestic Ideal in 1950s France', in *French Cultural Studies*, Vol. 2, Pat 1, no. 4, (1991), p.3.

[96]A popular hit song and homage to Pétain, 'Maréchal, nous voila/ Here we are!' captures the spirit of the time with its references to father and children: 'All your children love you/Tous tes enfants qui t'aiment'. The song was written by composer André Montagard, [Copyright: SACEM; 4th February & 4th March, 1941- Éditions du Ver Luisant, Paris], in homage to Pétain following his triumphant visit to Lyons, Monday the 18th of November 1940, where he saluted the military, the civil service and the clergy led by Cardinal Gerlier and a huge and enthusiastic local crowd. See

Indeed, Vichy deputies at the time openly declared their debt to the Irish constitution when the natalist campaign to increase the 'native' French birth rate and to prevent French women from terminating pregnancies, was launched.[97]

This question of the role of motherhood in Vichy France and the drive to increase the French birth-rate, prompts Burch and Sellier to challenge the idea that Clouzot's film, *Le Corbeau*, was a resistant film. In Burch and Sellier's close reading of *Le Corbeau*, the representation of women in the film confirms its ideological positioning within the dominant Vichy discourse. The notion of ideals as basically oppressive is pertinent here.[98] In *Le Corbeau* the heroine is at first shown to be flawed, but attractively dependent, by the handicap of a clubbed foot. She restored to perfection by the doctor and is revealed as the honest woman fit to achieve the highest office available to her, that of motherhood, when paired with the virile representative, 'son' of Vichy, played by Pierre Fresnay.[99] Burch and Sellier identify the idealisation of women, combined with an anti-incest/anti-'unhealthy' couplings, anti-abortion stance and the natalist policy, as the great theme of the Occupation films and they see that, ultimately, Clouzot's film is no exception to this trend.[100] Burch and

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Jean-Christophe Averty, Introduction to the CD, *Les cinglés de la Music-Hall, 1941*, (France; Frémeaux et Associés S.A./Arenthon, 1993), Track 17.

[97]See Miranda Pollard, 'Women and the National Revolution' in Kedward & Austin, (1985), pp. 43-67.

[98] Sontag, (1996), p. 10.

[99]The Doctor, far from his reputation as an abortionist, is revealed in the closing passage of the film, to be a saviour of mothers and babies. Relationships outside the norm, such as the coupling of the older man and younger woman, are shown to be unhealthy -pathological rather than reflecting an imbalance in power such as we find in Musso's *Dernière jeunesse.* Less dependent female characters such as the young girl or the fanatical mother, are represented as deviant and untrustworthy. Only Fresnay's doctor survives the story with his honour intact.

[100]'Paradoxalement donc, ce film réputé en rupture avec tout, ce ferait la forme et la substance du 'çinéma de Vichy' se révèle à l'analyse profondément travaillé par les plus lourdes tendances de l'époque: discrédit du patriarcat, condamnation du couple 'incesteux', idéalistaion des femmes, voire promotion de la natalité. Seul le distingue effectivement de l'ensemble de ce çinéma son 'réalisme noir' qu'on peut, à l'occurence, rattacher, comme l'ont fait, à bon escient, des voix surgies de la clandestinité, à

Sellier also question the much vaunted 'dark realism' of the film, declaring that the negative anti-bourgeois style could be read as merely resonating the anarchic voices of the French Extreme Right with whom Clouzot socialised during the war. *Le Corbeau* and films like it can be seen, therefore, as an example of the operation of contradictory and obscuring dualistic discourse.[101]

Le Corbeau's seemingly 'feminist' agenda' - all the women are 'good', the men, with the exception of the Doctor Germain, bad- is revealed, in Burch Sellier's analysis, to be part of the kitsch idealisation of women. Saul Friedlander, writing about fascist Europe, has commented on the double ideological thrust of regimes which 'push toward the homosexual heightening of homosocial bonds' twinned with 'an equally powerful homophobia'.[102] A parallel discourse can be identified in the idealisation of women based on particular definitions of women within patriarchy as virgins and mothers and on an overwhelming misogyny. This kind of thinking can be seen in the writings of Drieu La Rochelle, who became a member of the Vichy Government during the war. His recently published diaries of 1939-45 continued to demonstrate the combination of both homosocial bonding/homophobia with violent attacks on women while maintaining heterosexuality. La Rochelle's identification with Hitler ('I am at the centre of his will, my work, in its masculine and positive part, incites and illustrates him') is paralleled with an open hatred and repressed fear of women which increases as the Occupation draws to a close: 'I despise the women who are happy with me (...) The only way to possess a woman is to make her suffer (...) The man is alone, he is God, women

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l'anarchisme de droite des milieux 'collabos' que Clouzot fréquenta pendant l'Occupation'. Burch & Sellier, (1996), p 196. The authors give a very thorough analysis of the film in pp.191-196.

101 Interestingly Clouzot, following a long career of misogynistic representations of women, including *Les Diaboliques*, (1955), *Manon,* (1948), and *La Salaire de la Peur*, (1953), was converted to Catholicism.

102Patraka, (1992), p. 322.

have no soul'.[103] Where women were blamed for the leftist decadence of the Popular Front in the 1930s and then for the easy defeat of the German invasion, they were now blamed for both the downfall of fascist France and French collaboration under the Occupation. They were targets of every government from the 1930s to the 1950s because they were considered a primary source of disorder and a threat to the 'male' state.

France of 1952 harboured a desire for the order and stability associated with the authoritarian conservative culture such as that espoused by Vichy. It returned Antoine Pinay to power in the elections of that year. Pinay had voted full powers to Pétain in 1940 and the official religious and conservative ideology of the national revolution was naturally dear to him. His conservative Catholicism combined with liberal capitalism informed his social policies. Pinay was dismissed from his post of Mayor of Saint-Chaymond in the post-war purges but was rehabilitated on the basis that he had rendered services to the resistance. His case serves as an example of the complexity of French cultural politics during the period described.[104] In no sense can we say that Yves Allégret belonged to the extreme right, or flirted with fascism, as had several other film directors. In fact he was known for his socialist views, but the dilemma of patriarchy and its denial of an inclusive liberation remains true for both sides of the political spectrum in the post-war years, just as it had been for the new governors of Ireland following Independence.

Susan Hayward cites *La Jeune folle* rather than *Manèges* as a key example of the patriarchal backlash in French post-colonial national cinema, because unlike *Manèges*, its war setting allows all three strands of the post-Liberation patriarchal agenda to be deployed within a single

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[103]'Je suis au centre de son impulsion, mon ouevre, dans sa partie male et positive, est son incitation et son illustration. Je meprisais les femmes de se contenter de moi, (...), La seule façon de posseder une femme est de la faire souffrir, (...), L'homme est seul parcequ' il est Dieu, les femmes n'ont pas d'ame'. Drieu La Rochelle, *Journal 1939-45*, (Paris: Gallimard, 1992), entries 13th May 1941, 5th January 1943 and the 8th June 1944.

framework.[105] *La Jeune folle*, in the figure of Catherine, contains both sides of the contradictory dualistic patriarchal discourse about women within its narrative, the idealisation of women and misogyny and its Civil War setting openly relates these discourses to the crisis of Occupation and Liberation. The misogyny embedded in ideals misrecognised as positive images pose far greater dangers for women. Their discourses offer less possibility of negotiation and pleasure than the bad women of American 'film noir' and are packaged in such a way that it is hard to define exactly what is repressive in such images. These agendas are further masked by the fact that the Civil War represented in *La Jeune folle* takes place in another country and another time. While audiences may be conscious of the kind of ideology at work in the ideal mother/wife figure, the idealisation of women involved in the warrior/virgin genre poses far more problems. French representations of women in war, including Irish women during the conflict tend to draw on this genre.

Mary of Cork: the Warrior and the Virgin.

In an earlier French text about the Irish Civil War, Joseph Kessel's 1927 short story *Mary de Cork*, the author struggles with the problem generated by the articulated presence of the Irish female revolutionary figure for the male observer.[106] Mary's husband Art has, after the War of Independence, chosen to fight on the Free State side. Mary opposes the Treaty and joins the Republican soldiers who are camped out in the hills of West Cork. Mary meets her husband and learns that he will pass through a certain point in the road on his way to Dublin with the dossier that will break the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB). With the help of her son Mary passes a message to the IRB to wait for her husband at that

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[104] Alguhon, (1995), p.358.
[105] Hayward, (1993), p. 118.

point, where he will be ambushed and killed. Mary, in this narrative, offers us a combination of the revolutionary and the betrayer, common to texts about Ireland and war.[107] Kessel begins his story by underscoring the divisions of the civil war with the earlier struggle for independence, where, as he said, 'the whole of Ireland, openly or secretly, conducted the war. Men and women, all, united against the oppressor'.[108] The setting is Cork, where Kessel, as a war correspondent was posted during the Irish Civil War.

Terence MacSwiney, who had been arrested by the British on charges of counter-insurgency when he was appointed to the position of Lord Mayor of Cork, was on hunger strike while Kessel was in the city. His protest was, in Kessel's view, a key factor in the rejection of the Treaty with England. The memory of the passion and conviction of the Irish women, supporters of MacSwiney, never left him, nor the memory of one particular evening when he saw a majority of that 'melancholic' population, on their knees in the mud and praying before the prison, in which eleven young people 'followed the example of the lord mayor'.[109] Kessel met Mary MacSwiney, Terence's sister, in the office of the solicitor Art O'Brien, whose premises were used for secret meetings of Sinn Fein in London. Mary MacSwiney was known as the most uncompromising of the women in the Republican movement: she refused to endorse any attempt to hold on to monarchic institutions in Ireland, saying that she, like her brother, would not accept the 'King, Lords and Commons of

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[106]Kessel's story on the Irish Civil War, *Mary de Cork* was published in 1927, as part of a collection of short stories entitled *Les Coeurs purs*, (Paris: Folio/Gallimard, 1987. 1st published, 1921).

[107]Examples from other literatures include Jorge Luis Borges' short stories, 'The Shape of the Sword' and 'The theme of the Traitor and the Hero' in the collection *Ficciones*, (1945). See Jorge Luis Borges, *Labyrinths*, Donald A. Yates and James E. Irby, eds. (London: Penguin, 1970).

[108]'L'Irlande entière, ouvertement ou sourdement, menait la guerre. Hommes et femmes, tous étaient unis contre l'oppresseur'. Kessel, (1987), p.10.

Ireland'.[110] Kessel describes MacSwiney thus: 'a small and humble woman. Her carriage was self-effacing, her voice timid. A colourless waterproof coat covered her practically entirely. There was something in her blue eyes, like the glint of a weapon, something which was frightening'.[111] The writer asked her if she couldn't persuade her brother to eat something. She replied: 'Even if he wanted to and by the mercy of God he is resolute, I would stop him'.[112] Kessel realised as the civil war became inevitable that it would be bloody and murderous precisely because what was at stake was not to be taken lightly. On hearing the news of the death of Michael Collins and of Erskine Childers, leaders of the War of Independence who took a pro-treaty with Britain stance in 1921 and who were subsequently assassinated in the Civil War, Kessel recalled the image of this woman, 'gentle and timid, the woman of Cork'.[113]

Mary MacSwiney was highly political and took an active part in the debate about the Treaty with England which led to the partition of Ireland and to the establishment of the Free State in 1921. A key issue for her was the question of how women experience war and how, in spite of their knowledge of war or, perhaps, because of it, they saw a republic as the only acceptable outcome.[114] Kessel in his treatment of his female

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109'Le soir où, avec Henri Béraud, nous vîmes toute la population que compte leur mélancolique cité, agenouillée dans la boue et priant devant la prison, dans la quelle onze jeunes gens suivaient l'exemple de leur lord-maire'. Ibid., p. 10.

110 See Ward, (1989), p. 67.

111'Une femme, petite et humble. La figure était effacée, la voix timide. Un imperméable sans couleur la couvrait presque entièrement. [....] Il y avait dans ses yeux, bleus comme le reflet d'une arme, quelque chose qui faisait peur'. Ibid., p.10.

112'Le voudrait-il, et par la miséricorde de Dieu il est ferme, que je l'en empêcherais'. Ibid., p.10.

113'L'image de la femme effacée, timide et douce, de la femme de Cork'. Ibid., p.10.

114 She gave an impassioned speech, (she spoke in all four and a half hours), against the Treaty in the Dáil, (the Irish House of Parliament), refuting the charge that such a stance was due to the ignorance of women about war. She said, 'You men that talk need not talk to us about war. It is the women who suffer, it is the women who suffer the most of the hardships that war brings. You can go out in the excitement of the fight and it brings its own honour and its own glory. We have to sit at home and work in more humble ways, we have to endure the agony, the sunshines, the torture of misery

character in *Mary de Cork* discards the complexity of such a view-point or indeed the engagement in the political process it signified. He describes the Irish women as anything but emotive, whose coldness and readiness to sacrifice even family ties for the political object is shocking. However, idealism functions in Kessel's treatment of his female characters. Their will is 'pure', instinctive and amoral. They belong to a more primitive order beyond the rational.

Kessel's naming of the central character as Mary not only refers to Mary McSwiney but also carries connotations of the Christian Virgin mythology, in spite of Mary's married status. The warrior and the virgin signs in Kessel's women of Cork, their determination and resolute attachment to a cause, recall myths of the Maid of Orleans, Joan of Arc. As we shall see, Joan of Arc, is a key sign for the Irish woman text in French culture. Catherine in *La Jeune folle* offers us another version of the Joan of Arc sign, in both her innocence and her resolution. She is a maid, a virgin who takes up weapons for a cause but more than that, she hears voices that prompt her to act. She is an illiterate. Her clothes, the woollen shawl in particular, signify the simple peasant girl. She has psychic powers, a gift attributed to Joan during her trial. Catherine finds herself in opposition to the establishment church figured in the old nun who regards her as a heretic. As the old nun tells her, "personne doit aimer que Dieu seul/ no-one should love any human being, only God!" Finally, Catherine, whatever her motives, adopts the role of a revolutionary when she sets out to assassinate the Chief of Police. As we have seen, the Joan of Arc sign recalls the original Celtic goddess figure of Isolde and is connected strongly with the Ireland text.

Joan of Arc

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and the privations which war brings, the horror of nightly visitations to our houses and their consequences'. See Ward, (1989), p.167.

Irish women are frequently represented as 'Joan of Arcs' in French culture. Hugo Pratt's most popular hero Corto Maltese gives the Joan of Arc title to Banshee O'Dannan, an Irish Revolutionary, when her cold-blooded shooting of an English police officer shocks him.[115] This connection persists in cinema culture and not only in France. Charles Chaplin had also made the connection between Irish women in revolution and Joan of Arc. He wrote a film script for a play by Irish playwright Paul Vincent Caroll in 1946, his first script since *The Great Dictator* in 1940.[116] Sinclair Lewis had starred in *Shadow and Substance* and brought it to Chaplin's attention. His friend Cedric Hardwicke described the Irish heroine, Bridget, as 'a modern day Joan of Arc'.[117] At the time Chaplin was under attack from the FBI for his part in campaigning against fascism during the Second World War. Having called for USA engagement in the war against Nazism on the Government's request and for aid to the people of Russia who were fighting the Nazis in Stalingrad, he felt utterly betrayed by the State when it expelled him for 'un-American' views in 1948. As a result of the vicious backlash against him, Chaplin never had the opportunity to film the story of Bridget. The name of the Joan of Arc character in Chaplin's scenario, Bridget, connotes the Celtic Goddess, named now as a saint, honoured in the festival of Imbolc on the first of February. The name is an index of the curious fusion of Celtic mythologies and the story of the Maid of Orléans remarked on by Rafroidi. It would have been interesting to see if Chaplin, who suffered for his liberationist philosophy, would have differed from the pessimistic Allégret in his treatment of Irish 'Joan of Arcs'.

In Ireland the newly empowered male revolutionaries drew on Joan of Arc motifs to dismiss the women who had fought in the War of

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[115]'Écoute Jeanne D'Arc, il y a un gendarme Anglais qui nous suit'. Pratt, (1975), p.94.

[116]Paul Vincent Caroll, *Shadow and Substance*, (1937).

[117]Chaplin, (1964), p.416.

Independence as emotive and hysterical. They denounced their former comrades-in-arms as 'women in men's clothing'.[118] The Irish women revolutionaries tried to turn this link to the Joan of Arc sign to their advantage. They compared themselves to the Maid of Orléans in their reply to the Bishops of Ireland. The hierarchy had singled the women out for condemnation as a result of their support of the Republicans in the Civil War.[119] The women recalled the Maid of Orleans in the hope that they would receive less brutal treatment in prison. In fact the opposite happened. Their appropriation of the male sign of Joan of Arc prompted more active and virulent resentment from their male comrades. The ill treatment of women prisoners reached an infamous climax during what became known North Dublin Union Riots, when women prisoners received vicious beatings at the hands of the Free State soldiers and guards. The women were thrown down staircases and 'subjected to great indignities'.[120] Ironically they paid the price of their linking themselves with Joan of Arc. Their Cumann na mBan uniforms were cut from them and they were stripped and beaten with their own shoes. Their experience demonstrates the danger women run for themselves in trying to negotiate within the parameters of male models of womanhood-ideals such as nationalist versions of Joan of Arc. The new order was only prepared to tolerate women as figureheads, muses and a source of patriotic inspiration, not as activists who had fought and gained the right to citizenship. The reaction to their naming themselves is an index of the ambivalence latent in the Joan of Arc sign.

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[118] Kieberd, (1995), p.403.

[119] 'In an argument with a priest, her (Republican Eithne Coyle's) retort to his contention that the bishops were always right, was that they were hardly right when they burnt Joan of Arc. He was so angry he almost hit her'. Ward, (1989), p.193.

[120] Ibid., p.193.

The Joan of Arc type recurs regularly in twentieth-century texts and has an important place in French and Western cinema history.[121] Representations of the Joan of Arc story during the Occupation period had been interpreted as resistance texts in spite of the fact that they were also appreciated by the Officials of the Third Reich. In post-war France Joan of Arc has become the symbol of the extreme right, the National Front. In 2000, a new version of Joan of Arc by French director Luc Besson, an action adventure version of the story, has proved a huge hit in the USA and in England and has re-opened debate about the function of the figure.[122] Other versions of Joan of Arc can be found in twentieth-century re-readings of Sophocles' *Antigone*. The comparison between the character of Catherine in *La Jeune folle* and Sophocles' *Antigone* was drawn by more than one critic in response to the film in 1952.[123] The response is constructed in the film's iconography. Catherine's brother is killed in disgrace as an informer, just as Antigone's brother is also disgraced. The image we are given shows Kevin's dead body lying on the sand, not buried or covered. Catherine's adherence to her oath to avenge her brother's death at all costs is reminiscent of Antigone and in this point she is implacable. Like Antigone she is an orphan, the child of disgraced parents. Like Antigone she rejects the option of marriage and is instrumental in the death of her intended husband. Representations of the

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[121](1900) *Jeanne D'Arc* by George Meliés; (1910) *Jeanne d'Arc* d'Albert Capellani; (1913) and (1914) two Italian versions by N. Oxilia and F.Wolff; (1917) *Joan of Arc* by Cecil B.De Mille; (1928) *La Merveilleuse vie de Jeanne D'Arc*, dir. Marco de Gastyne; (1928) *La Passion de Jeanne D'Arc*, dir., Carl Theodor Dreyer; (1948) *Joan of Arc*, dr. Victor Fleming; (1954) *Jeanne au Bucher*, dir. Robert Rosselini; (1957) *Saint Joan*, dir Otto Preminger; (1962) *Proçès de Jeanne D'Arc*, Robert Bresson.

[122]Besson's film was released in England on the 10th of March, 2000. Critic Peter Bradshaw, reviewing the film describes Joan of Arc as a Catholic Nationalist symbol: 'Joan agonisingly and conveniently can't remember killing or injuring anyone in battle and the strangely passive-aggressive legend of Joan's martyrdom, traditionally deployed in the service of catholic nationalism, still carries a curious charge in an age in which the present pope is pleased to call modern France the "eldest daughter of the Church". Bradshaw goes on to say that 'ultimately Besson offers us nothing more than a Gallic *Braveheart*: roistering, swashbuckling enjoyable stuff'. See Peter Bradshaw, 'The Guardian Friday Review', *The Guardian*, (London: 10-3-2000), p.5.

Joan of Arc/Antigone type in mainstream cinema and in plays such as Jean Anouilh's *Antigone* (first performed in the Théatre d'Atelier, Paris,1944) foreground the idea of Antigone as incorruptible in the childish sense, the pure, the 'innocent'. The effect is to neutralise women's will to act politically. An essential feature is the rejection of compromise and a chivalric notion of honour. They are reduced to the role of symbol, to show men their duty, 'and a little child shall lead them'. Both the Antigone and the Joan of Arc figures connote virginity: one a fiancée, but not yet married, the other following almost in the tradition of nuns: married to 'France' as nuns marry 'God'. Permutations of this allegory involve a rejection of sexuality, in particular the domestic.

In the Irish woman religious devotion is represented as atavistic, an index of the primitive. Mary recites her prayers as incantation. She and Catherine in *La Jeune folle* are Catholic only in name. Their will to action would appear to be beyond ideology and, becomes, finally, identification with action, action beyond the rational. In this generic, in order to act, the hero must escape the ties of blood, the domestic. The action genre, particularly those narratives involving service to one's country, usually begins with scenes of the hero renouncing family life for the cause. Folk-tales, myths, and the Gospels also include this motif in the narrative. Through her sacrifice of her husband to her political ideals, Kessel's Mary is offered as a male figure. Rational political acts must be accompanied by renunciation of the feminine because the combination of political activism and sexual potency, the 'normal' heroic mode for the male becomes disequilibrium in the female and must be resolved within the narrative frame. The 'virginity' of the Joan of Arc figure opens up the possibility of male spectator identification with the female protagonist.

Such identification is made possible by the unsexing, the denial of the domestic role. This is achieved in the mind of the spectator through

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[123] Richer, (1952), p.45.

the operation of modality, the perceived relationship between a text and reality. For the spectator, underlying every modalised statement there is an un-modalised positive. In fiction, a negative modality operates at the conscious level and a positive modality at a deeper level. This can be described as a modal 'flip', where the very artificiality of a representation recalls the real object represented to such a degree that the spectator responds to it as real. Joan of Arc figures operate at this deeper level in their very remoteness from realistic common-sense representations of what women do. The question of Joan's armour becomes vital to the operation of the sign in the male heroic mode for the reader. By forcing the historic Joan of Arc into women's clothes at the time of her trial, and then into civilian male clothes, the authorities destroyed the operation of the modal flip which allowed Joan as sign to be experienced as male. Joan's female gender, signified by the women's clothing, was experienced as noise (interfered with the message) and lead to rejection of her as symbol or ideal and to her destruction as a witch. As we have seen, women's clothing was also used as an instrument of oppression against the Irish 'Joan of Arcs' in Kilmainham jail, in an successful attempt to destroy their credibility as contributors to the revolutionary action. In his representation of the Maid of Orleans, Shakespeare represented Joan of Arc as pregnant through a romantic adulterous attachment in his 'history' play *Henry VI*, a successful containment of the potency of the sign through the encoding of female sexuality onto the warrior-virgin figure.

In cinema, the destruction of Joan as male symbol is best illustrated by Cecil B. De Mille's aptly titled *Joan the Woman* (1916). Georges Sadoul's description of de Mille's *Joan* demonstrates the director's handling of the female signifiers in the Joan of Arc sign: 'Religion, sex-appeal, feudalism, colossal sets [...], burnings, love scenes, all combine to construct a massive plea in favour of the allied cause. A

slightly sadistic eroticism permeates the film.'[124] Joan experiences disarmament by males as a violation. Her violation legitimises her condemnation as a witch, followed by her public humiliation and burning at the stake. De Mille's point of view on the role of women was summarised by Jacques Lourcelles. Loucelles argued that 'the same plot and the same lesson' is repeated in all de Mille's films: all's well that ends well when the 'woman begins to understand that her destiny and her happiness consists in submission to the man'.[125] This is a lesson which, *La Jeune folle* also teaches.

The Apple of Knowledge: 'Family Values' and War

There are contradictions in the construction of Catherine's 'innocence' in *La Jeune folle*, an index that, while the sequences of Catherine as assassin carry connotations of the warrior-maid, other scenes give us the impression that, in a different context, Catherine naturally would have chosen to fit into the subject position of helpmate, wife, mother, servant. She would not 'by nature' take to the gun. Joan of Arc narratives which emphasise the calling of the girl Joan from the fields rather than the woman who took on the authorities at her trial, also suggest that Joan would not have chosen battle if it were not for divine intervention. Catherine is also 'touched by God', in that she is regarded as a sort of Holy Fool by the inmates of the convent. Catherine, the 'innocent' is represented as an even more ideal mate than most women because she is chronically undeveloped and ignorant and must look to the male to name and mediate the world to her. One of the strangest scenes in *La Jeune folle* happens when Catherine tells Steve she cannot read and he

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[124]'La Religion, le sex-appeal, le féodalism, les décors colossaux, ..les incendies, les scènes d'amour, se combinèrent pour un gigantesque plaidoyer en faveur de la cause alliée....Un érotisme un peu sadique pimentait le film'. Georges Sadoul, *Histoire du çinéma mondial*, (Paris: Flammarion, 1963), p.89.

replies that it is far better that she is illiterate and therefore uncorrupted by knowledge. There is no irony in Allégret's direction of this scene, an index of how acceptable this viewpoint was. The director Max Ophuls ridiculed the patronising attitude of men who find women's ignorance attractive in the film *La Ronde*, 1951, based on a play by Arthur Schnitzler. *La Ronde* tells the story of the sexual connections between various characters in 19th century Vienna. One of the generically named characters, The Poet, is delighted with The Girl, when she replies 'nothing' to the question, 'what are you thinking?'. He declares: 'It's marvellous! Sublime incomprehension! Nothing? Nothing? What freshness on my burning brow!'.[126] The Girl protests, however, that the Poet's pretentious speech style is the source of her incomprehension, not her inability to think. She retorts: 'come off it, why can't you talk like everyone else'. The producers, perhaps wary of its message, cut this dialogue out of the released film. In *La Jeune folle*, however, Catherine does not resist Steve's desire to keep her ignorant: rather she is reassured by the manliness of his position.

La Jeune folle's representation of the ideal woman as ignorant suggests that women are fragile creatures who must be protected from the shock of history as war. The war situation forces women into the role of subject, a position, it is suggested, she would not naturally choose, preferring to remain in the private sphere of the home. Jean Anouilh's *Antigone* (1944) reflects these ideals of the feminine: 'I wanted you to know that I should have been very proud to be your wife - the woman whose shoulder you would put your hand on as you sat down, absent-

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[125]'Le meme schema et la meme leçon: un couple mal assorti devient un couple bien assorti quand la femme commence à comprendre que son destin et son bonheur consistent dans al soumission à l'homme'. Lourcelles, quoted in Tulard, (1991), p.220.

[126]Jacquea Natanson and Max Ophuls from the play *Der Reigin*, (1896), by Arthur Schnitzler, in *Masterworks of the French Cinema*, John Weightman, ed. (London: Faber & Faber,1974), p.201.

mindly, as upon a thing that belonged to you'.[127] This points to another great theme of patriarchy, the idea that war is the madness of men and that women are the harbingers of peace as domestic order, the natural order of things, the woman as home-maker, the man as breadwinner. History in the form of war interrupts this order. But even these discourses are jeopardised by the continual attribution of passivity to the female.

In narratives of this type the woman's desire for peace does not involve active resistance to war in the form of protest but is represented as a disruptive desire for the domestic translated as pettiness and self-obsession, yet another version of the 'lack of interest in the political implications' discourse referred to earlier.[128] This is the theme of John Ford's other work on the Irish War of Independence, *The Plough and The Stars* (1936) which was released in France under the title *Révolte à Dublin*. Although celebrated by many of those who had fought in the Rebellion, Ford's film more frequently generated a negative reaction among the press of the time because of it inclusion of original footage of 1916.[129] There was also criticism that the film appears to be a travesty of Sean O'Casey's play on which it is based. John Hill points out important differences between the play and the film in his analysis of Ford's work:

> By virtue of the manner in which they are presented the scenes of public and political action assume a dignity and

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[127]'Je voulais dire que j'aurais été très fière d'etre ta femme, ta vraie femme, sur qui tu aurais posé ta main, le soir, en t'asseyant, sans penser, comme sur une chose bien à toi'. Jean Anouilh, *Antigone*, (Paris: La table ronde, 1946), p. 45.

[128]Polly Toynbee points out in her essay on women and the USA's 'war on terrorism' in Afghanistan following the events of September the 11th, 2001, that women have every reason to resist war, given that they bear the brunt of it, and that, in the final analysis, the war will never about their liberation or their rights, given that the Taliban's post-Independence backlash against women in Afghanistan was not actively condemned by those super-powers who proclaim themselves Defenders of Freedom. See Polly Toynbee, 'Behind the Burka', *The Guardian*, (London, Friday, September 28, 2001).

[129]Newspaper critics in Ireland reacted strongly to Ford's *The Plough and The Stars*, particularly the inclusion of historical footage of the Rebellion and the introduction of the sequences about James Connolly, the socialist revolutionary, who had been a

> nobility entirely at odds with the presentation in O'Casey's original. As a result the film's ending is able to undercut the tragic pessimism of the play and replace it with political optimism. [...] The family values and virtues which the original drama insist upon have been dealt a damaging blow [...] Family life is largely stripped of its attractions and is clearly no match for political heroism.[130]

In spite of these discrepencies, for French commentators Ford's film was a masterwork and a companion piece to *The Informer*: 'The merciless struggle of the Irish Sinn Féin inspired John Ford to create two characters of the highest stature: the renegade of *The Informer* (1935), Victor McLaglen, a fragile lost giant, admirable, rough and sentimental: the leader of *The Plough and the Stars* (1936), played by Preston Foster, passionate beyond concsicience, refusing to agree with his wife (Barbara Stanwyck) that their love is the only truth'.[131] Ford's casting of Barbara Stanwyck in the role of Nora exposed notions of women and revolution implicit in *The Plough and the Stars,* notions very close to those mediated by *La Jeune folle*. Response at the time reflects this: 'Those grimly tragic utterances about men fighting and women doing the weeping becomes mere mawkish sentiment'.[132] Liam O'Flaherty's and Hannah Sheehy-Skeffington's condemnation of the play *The Plough and The Stars*, has been read as the impulse of Republican Puritanism, a reaction to O'Casey's linking of Pearse and prostitution. However, perhaps Sheehy-Skeffington's reaction could also be taken as a very valid reaction of a

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champion of women's rights in his writings before Easter 1916. Rockett, (1997), p.353.

130 Hill, (1998), p.156.

131'La lutte sans merci du Sinn-féin Irlandais inspiré à John Ford deux personnages de haute stature; le rénégat du *Mouchard,* (1935), Victor McLaglen, géant fragile et perdu, admirable et brute sentimentale; le leader de *Revolte a` Dublin,* (1936), joué par Preston Foster, passionné jusqu'à l'inconscinece, refusant à sa femme, (Barbara Stanwyck), que leur amour soit la seule vérité'. B. Amengual, 'Térroriste', in Horvilleur, (1988), p.421.

132Ibid., p.353.

woman to the complete denial of the women's role in the War of Independence and the limitations of a work which contains female roles within the boundaries of mother/wife/prostitute. O'Casey's female characters serve only as prompts for the male hero to act as in O'Casey's *The Shadow of a Gunman*, or as icons of martyred motherhood in *Juno and the Paycock*.[133] Even where we are offered a heroine, the young Moll in *The Shadow of a Gunman*, her actions are in keeping with a Joan of Arc inspirational mode. The message is clear: male failure to live up to the ideal and act as real men forces women to act where action would not naturally be their choice.

The Irish conflict genre typified by Ford's re-reading of O'Casey's work offers a new opposition, women and war which excludes women from history in spite of an apparently pro-peace stance. In this genre, women do not represent peace but compromise. The woman's domesticity weakens the man, forces him into compromise or embarrassment and distracts him from his purpose. These discourses figure strongly in *La Jeune folle*. A key scene, again apparently incidental to the plot, shows Catherine engaged in tidying the flat and lighting a fire and lamps. Catherine's domestic accomplishments are underscored by her ability to lull and to soothe. Steve returns to the domestic space and is seduced by the image of the hearth and the little woman who will be the instrument of his own destruction. He lets slip his guard, reveals his weariness and abandons his vigilance. Later in the film Catherine uses Steve's impression that he is at home and safe with her to seduce him into sleeping. While he

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[133]This latter play was filmed by Alfred Hitchcock in 1929, released in France under the title *Junon et le paon* in 1930 and in the USA as *The Shame of Mary Boyle*. Hitchcock's version of the play was critically well received in comparison to Ford's work. Hitchcock remarked to François Truffaut that he had photographed the play as imaginatively as possible, but that from a cinema point of view it was not a pleasant experience. He said, 'the film got very good notices, but I was actually ashamed, because it had nothing to do with cinema'. See Truffaut, *Le Çinéma selon Hitchcock* , (Paris : Laffont, 1966), p.48.

is thus neutralised she steals his gun and goes forth to carry out her act of madness, the attempted assassination of the chief of police.

Breakdown: Psychological Realism and the Irish Conflict Genre.

Acts of resistance by women, violent acts towards men in the political sphere, are frequently represented in film as a symptom of emotional insecurity engendered through the loss of virginity and the awakening of the sexual appetite.[134] The significance and threat of such acts of rebellion are contained by reducing the action of violence to madness and self-destruction and by giving it an emotional "soft" childlike motivation which then can be admired as wilful by the male gaze.[135] Historical accounts of women with mental disorders focus on the inherent irrationality, weakness and mysteriousness of the female psyche.[136] This figure is very much a feature of French films from *La Jeune folle* to Beneix's *37° le matin* (1986). Quiet men and mad young women abound in the films of the 1945-55. From Autant-Lara's *Le Diable au corps* (1947) to Decoin's *La Verité sur Bébé Donge* (1952), young, mad, irresponsible and disruptive, are the key images for the female characters of the post-war cinema. In contrast, male heroes of films like Réné Clément/Noel-Noel's *Le Pére tranquille* (1946), present the very picture of reason, integrity and strength of character in the face of extreme wilfulness. The effort to maintain the women as object and never subject

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[134]Hayward, (1993), p.137.

[135]This kind of discourse can be seen in French reviews of Irish singer Sinéad O'Connor's work: 'Sinéad O'Connor, rebelle sceptique et Celte excentrique, ... Une complainte plutôt, où s'entrecroisent tous les thèmes chers à notre Jehane d'outre-Manche....Tout ceci peut sembler terriblement rébarbatif.Il n'en est rien. Sinead n'est ni une croisee illuminée ni une suffragette surexcitée. Juste une femme dans un monde masculin. ..Sinéad O'Connor peut se raser la tête autant qu'elle veut, se deguiser en guerrière bottée et proférer des horreurs dans les médias, elle ne parviendra jamais à dissimuler ce qui fait son principal atout: une féminite bouleversante, une douceur au bord des larmes, emue mais résolue, desespérée mais inflexible'. Philippe Barbot, 'Sinéad O'Connor', *Télérama,* 2333., (28/9/94), p.62.

and agent of action, leads to scenes in *La Jeune folle* which are, in terms of both plot and production, anti-utilitarian but which make sense only in their maintenance of patriarchal perception of the female. One such scene occurs after Catherine has returned to the convent is informed of her brother's death which she swears to avenge. At this point, the male visitor, at the instigation of the Reverend Mother, intervenes and tells Catherine that her brother has died at the hands of the chief of police and that she, having sworn her oath, must avenge their deaths by assignation or be dishonoured. Catherine is demonstrated to be the puppet of the male visitor, who then disappears entirely from the narrative of the film.

The male visitor represents a patriarchal figure who leads youth into death. This theme has been identified in other films of the same era notably Bresson's *Le Journal d'un curé de campagne* (1950). Unlike Bresson's film, there is no real contesting of patriarchy in *La Jeune folle*. Catherine does not reject the ideal of the family. In fact she fails to shoot the Chief of Police because she is literally overwhelmed by his image of 'père de famille' as he carries his little girl in his arms to the echo of the cry 'papa! papa!'. Catherine is disarmed when she is 'saved' from the act of assassination by Steve. He disarms her by embracing her. Her first kiss is forced on her, a rape image. In *La Jeune folle*, the rape of Catherine neutralises her danger as subject 'free' of man. The effect, however, is contradictory because by sexualising Catherine, it jeopardises the allegorical function of the virgin-warrior. Catherine as mother not virgin is also represented in the film through a scene with no obvious connection to the plot. It functions, however, as part of the psychological realism agenda.

In this scene, Catherine successfully nurses a child back to sleep, an action which prompts her to remember her maternal role to her brother

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[136]Pauline Prior, Women, 'Mental Disorder and Crime in 19th Century Ireland', in *Women and Irish Society*, Anne Byrne & Madeleine Leonard, eds. (Belfast: Beyond the Pale, 1997), p.221.

Kevin. The ideal of motherhood becomes threatening because, here, the mother figure is unleashed within a brother/sister binary relationship, outside the normative patriarchal family structure and therefore uncontrolled. Catherine's maternal relationship with Kevin is at the source of her madness and leads her to violence. The brother-sister relationship moves her beyond the repression of the Oedipal/Electra narratives of father-daughter and pushes her into action. However, this position is destructive rather than liberating and the woman remains defined by her relationships with men. In this *La Jeune folle* moves away from the Joan of Arc and the Antigone mode in that Catherine's actions are represented as of no consequence, other than being destructive on a personal level. The brother-sister narrative is a reminder of the Antigone myth but Sophocles's *Antigone* is not destructive, killing neither herself or her betrothed, but presenting such a serious challenge to the state figured in Créon that she must be suppressed. Hers is a political and social action. Catherine hears Kevin's voice in her head. The hearing of voices, an index of Catherine's psychic powers, remind one of the voices of Joan of Arc. Catherine's voices, however, are not represented as empowerment or prompt to act but as an index of breakdown based on common sense views of schizophrenia. We are in a very different territory from the 'splitting' represented by Barrault's Ferriter in *Le Puritain*, but the association of the Irish character with breakdown of identity is consistent with the earlier film and in the films that follow and her gender relates to the context of 1950s France.

Women's madness was erotic as long as it did not involve a challenge to the state or the family but was an act of self-destruction. In nineteenth-century France political activity by women was seen as not only unnatural, but was represented as a symptom of insanity and was

treated as such by psychiatrists.[137] In *La Jeune folle* Catherine's action is explained by a common-sense application of a Freudian narrative in the generic frame of psychological realism the dominant form of the early 1950s: 'the emphasis on a film of the working class was beginning to be replaced by the emphasis on personal expression'.[138] The portrayal of group engagement involving both men and women was a feature of earlier films about revolution. An example of this genre is Vsevold Pudovkin's *The Mother* (1926), one of the great revolutionary films in the history of cinema. *The Mother* has an active female revolutionary at its core, a woman who learns not to merely resign herself to the role of sacrifice as in Pearse's *The Mother,* nor to lament the revolution as in O'Casey's *Juno and The Paycock*, but to become engaged.

The potentially destabilising group action is not a factor in Allégret's films. Even the critique of exploitation of orphans offered by *Une si jolie petite plage* is reduced to the personal, the abuse of the boys being the result of the avarice and cruelty of a woman, the landlady who is eventually murdered. *La Jeune folle* also emphasises the personal. The story is primarily a personal tragedy of two young lovers and the focus is on the couple. No motivation for the resistance is given. Steve himself offers no explanation for his fight. Catherine's struggle is a symptom of misguided revenge for her brother and finally of madness. The practice of using common-sense applications of Freudian theories to explain film narratives where women are represented through the Freudian frame, while ignoring material conditions, was popular in the 1970s. While many of these strategies are useful in introducing the notion of questioning gender representations, the danger of this practice is that it finally reinforces rather than challenges these discourses through its privileging

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[137]Yvonne Ripa, *Women and Madness: The Incarceration of Women in Nineteenth Century France*, (Cambridge: Polity Press,1990), p.25.
[138]Delgaudio, (1991), p.82.

family narratives over social context and history.[139] Motivations which may have other agendas, are repressed through their encoding with the language of the family (like the Oedipus complex), explanations that function as social control.[140] The alienation of women as a social group is experienced as a personal neurosis. Thus we are left with the impossibility of Catherine attempting to assassinate the Chief of the Police as an act of anarchy, anarchy having a political agenda. Women's actions are de-politicised and neutralised through an emphasis on the private and personal. Fraternity in the radical sense of community is entirely absent from these narratives. All wars, therefore, become personal, not social.

Republicanism and Betrayal in Post-Independence texts.

In Ireland of the post-Independence years, the culture of community radicalism and violence necessary to the project of decolonisation was channelled into the state, -many ex-Republicans became police officers, but challenges to the State were ruthlessly suppressed. For many men who had fought in the War of Independence, frustration at the failure to bring change in the distribution of capital and disillusionment with their role in the new state, surfaced in the private sphere of the home. As has become clear in the 1990s, institutionalised violence towards women, children and the disabled was legitimised. Furthermore violence towards women and children was not discouraged in the private sphere because it did not threaten the status quo. Indeed a policy of non-interference in the health and safety of women and children was actively pursued by the Catholic hierarchy in collusion with Ireland's new professional class. This theme surfaces in recent Irish novels, notably

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[139]See Laura Mulvey, 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema', Christian Metz, 'The Imaginary Signifier', Teresa De Lauretis, 'Through the Looking Glass', in *Narrative Apparatus, Ideology, A Film Theory Reader*, Ed. Philip Rosen, (New York: Columbia, 1986), pp.1198-360.

[140]See Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, 'Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia', in Cahoone, (1996), pp.414-16.

Frank McCourt's *Angela's Ashes* (1998) and in John McGahern's *Amongst Women* (1990). This latter work has found an audience in France where it received the Prix Femina in 1996, possibly because those who grew up in the authoritarian climate of post-Liberation Gaullist France identified with its themes.

The misogyny underlying post-Rebellion nationalistic discourse is a theme of the English-produced film version of O'Flaherty's *Shake Hands with the Devil,* released in 1959. The film screenplay was written and directed by Michael Anderson, best known for his sentimental adaptation of Morris West's religious novel, *The Shoes of the Fisherman* (1968). In *Shake Hands with the Devil*, the efforts of the patriot Lenihan, played by James Cagney, to 'make Ireland a fit place to live in', involve a war on women, rather than on the traditional enemy, the British. As a figure of a male Irish Revolutionary, Sean Lenihan's views appear to parallel Drieu la Rochelle's opinion of women. In one English reviewer's view, Cagney's Lenihan would 'like to see all women wiped out in the cause of purity'.[141] However, the film in no sense can be read as a feminist film or an attack on patriarchy. The women in *Shake Hands with the Devil* are not liberated nor do they play any part in the film other than that of offering an opportunity for the voyeuristic sadistic mutilation and humiliation legitimised by their function as prostitutes. As John Hill points out, this reading of the Irish revolutionary as pathological repressed puritan is a reactionary discourse which undermines the political value of the struggle against occupation and the possibility of a social and political explanation for violence.[142] The film, produced in England, links violence with sexual repression and therefore represents it as pathological and neither legitimate nor rational and then links that violence with the anti-treaty stance. In Anderson's *Shake Hands With The Devil*, the real issue is not pathological hatred of women in patriarchy driven to extremes under a

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[141] See Hill, (1988), p.60.

repressive right-wing climate, the theme of O'Flaherty's earlier film, *Le Puritain*, but the representation of Republicanism as pathological.

John Hill argues that the reduction of political contexts and motivations to the personal also poses problems for the audience of Carol Reed's *Odd Man Out*.[143] Set in post-Second World War Belfast, this film, released in 1947, covers similar territory to *La Jeune folle*. Reed's work remains hugely popular in France- *The Third Man* (1949) is currently showing in not less than seven film festivals in France of 2002. This popularity suggests that Reed's 'Irish' film about a manhunt for the wounded leader of republican political organisation had an impact on the Ireland text in French cinema and may have influenced Allégret in the making of *La Jeune folle*.

Odd Man Out tells the story of Johnny McQueen, leader of a clandestine Irish organization. He has been hiding in the house of Kathleen and her mother, planning a hold-up that will provide his group with the funds needed to continue its activities. The hold-up fails: Johnny is wounded, cannot make it back to the hideout, and disappears in the back-alleys of Belfast. Immediately, a large-scale man-hunt is launched, and the city is tightly covered by the constabulary, whose chief is intent on capturing Johnny and the other members of the gang. While on the run, Johnny encounters a variety of characters. Some of them are willing to offer tentative help, but others are quick to exploit his vulnerability. Among the latter is Shell (F.J. McCormick), a petty criminal who wants to 'sell' the hero, another a strange painter of religious subjects, Lukey (Robert Newton). Kathleen sets out in search of Johnny and is given refuge and succour by Johnny's old parish priest. The Priest wishes Johnny to give himself up. Kathleen finds Johnny and, by firing at the Police, she forces them to shoot them both. There are certain similarities of plot and space between *La Jeune folle* and *Odd Man Out*. Both are set

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[142]Ibid., p.60.

in darkened alleyways, abandoned buildings, smoky bars and snugs: the city-scapes associated with French film noir. The Catholic Church is a sub-text of both films. There are similarities of plot: the manhunt, the informers and the woman who represents domesticity but also death for the hero. Both films share a lack of historical detail concerning the political struggles which ostensibly provide the engine for the plot and both films draw on the tragic form in order to impress their message on their public.

Odd Man Out is set in a post-Second World War city, a contemporary space. The film is not, therefore, a representation of the past, although the film contains some nostalgia for an imagined past in the form of references to childhood, particularly in Johnny's final speech in the artist's house. *Odd Man Out*, drawing on European expressionism and poetic realism, offers us a very bleak vision of post-war society. Belfast thus becomes the nightmare space of a city at war. British film historian Penelope Huston argues that Reed, 'in the best tradition of British cinema of quality, prefers truth to the text rather than truth to the film'. She states that Reed when 'interrogated as an artist he has preferred to answer as a craftsman, with that characteristically English suspicion of the pretentious which would prefer us to think that anything we notice which looks like a statement could only have got there by chance'.[144] The narrative of *Odd Man Out* would appear to confirm this suspicion of the artist. Robert Newton's Lukey is revealed to be unscrupulous in the pursuit of his artistic goals. The role of the artist in war is also called into question when Lukey's desire to paint the wounded Johnny over-rides his compassion for his suffering. This moment leads to Johnny's climatic speech when, watched by a surrealistic assembly of painted saints, he calls for a return to Christian values and asks what has happened to 'charity'. He says of the

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143 Ibid., p.60.

144 Penelope Houston, *The Contemporary Cinema, 1945-1963*, (Harmondsworth, Pelican, 1964), p. 37.

priest that 'we drowned out your voice with our shouting - we never listened to you'.

French cinema historian Marc Ferro calls for an intercultural analysis of Reed's *The Third Man* in the fourth part of *Cinéma et histoire*.[145] This section is entitled 'Société qui produit, société qui reçoit'/ Society which produces/society which receives'. Ferro reads the character of Anna in *The Third Man* in the Antigone mode, a reading which suggests that the film draws on myth rather than history in its portrayal of post-war Vienna. Like Hill, Ferro argues that Reed, while playing the mythic card, politicises the film through his designation of nationality in terms of the characters and his transformation of the ending, a revision of Graham Greene's novel. Greene objected strongly to the changes. Ferro maintains that these changes transformed the moral ambiguity of Greene's writing to a work founded on an opposition of good and bad. This opposition, according to Ferro, was driven by Reed's view of Berlin-Moscow-Bucharest and by a vision of history strongly influenced by Reed's identity as a man who is 'truly British, to the tip of his fingernails'.[146] Hill also argues that *Odd Man Out* reveals an ideological stance very similar to that of the British establishment. Ferro sums up the politics of *The Third Man* thus: 'pro-English, anti-Soviet, critical of the Americans, such is the film that Carol Reed, 'Anglais jingo', made against the will of Graham Greene, *substituting a morality based on ambiguity for a moral universe based on the Good and the Bad*', (the italics are Ferro's).[147] Ferro comments that this perspective irked film critics such as Georges Sadoul who was a communist and Crowther the American critic. Ferro deconstructs *The Third Man* in terms of nationality and concludes that the only innocent people in the film are the children and the police.

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145 Marc Ferro, *Çinéma et histoire*, (Paris: Folio Histoire Paris: 1993), pp. 175-211.
146 Tulard, (1982), p. 651.

For both Ferro and Hill, Reed's films do not offer a challenge to the violence of the state figured in the policeman. The treatment of the forces of the state in *Odd Man Out* and in *The Third Man* reveals a crucial difference between the portrayal of a city in war in these films and in *La jeune folle*. As we have seen, the latter film constructs a universe where the police are largely absent. Where *Odd Man Out*, as Huston reads it, represents a community of betrayers and rescuers, the society of *La Jeune folle* is made up solely of betrayers, children included. Ferro also sees the character of Anna in *The Third Man* as possibly 'the only positive hero' of the narrative as filmed by Reed: her implacable will and her refusal to compromise are virtues and do not lead to madness or to the death of the hero. Reed modified the original script in order to allocate these heroic attributions to the nationality deemed 'innocent' in post-war Europe. Thus Anna, a Hungarian and the daughter of a nazi in Greene's novel and Welle's scenario, becomes a Czech who is fleeing the communist regime.

Kathleen in *Odd Man Out* is also a positive character in that, although she represents resistance to the state in her relations with Johnny, she does not descend into madness. She is not the cause of the hero's death in spite of her declaration that she would kill him with her own hands rather than see him face certain death at the hands of the police. The death of Johnny was, as Hill describes, fated as a result of his engagement in 'terrorism'. There are fundamental differences in the treatment of the female characters in *La Jeune folle* and in Reed's films, particularly in the representation of their relationship with the hero. Ferro argues that Anna in *The Third Man* is cast in the Antigone mode but here this mode is given positive loading and the resistance connoted by the female character in the film is a source of death but has moral weight.

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147 'Pro-anglais, anti-soviétique, critique à l'endroit des Americains, tel est le film que Carol Reed, Anglais jingo, fit contre la volonté de Graham Greene, *substiuant à une morale de l'ambiguité une morale du bien et du Mal*'. Ferro, (1993), p. 182.

This can also be said to be true of Kathleen in *Odd Man Out*. Her comments resonate the discourse of resistance and of human will when she says 'I'd kill him, not for revenge-I'd do it out of pity. What I feel is stronger than my religion/stronger than myself. What I intend to do is good'. Kathleen's speeches recall the kind of morality described by Todorov in his study of moral life in the Second World War, *Facing The Extreme*. In this study, Todorov maintains that, in some instances, caring for someone may lead to killing them. He says that in Auschwitz, a young man killed his brother 'to spare him the ride to the death chamber'.[148] Such cases happened where the person was fated to die and constituted acts of resistance. The narrative of *Odd Man Out,* however, does not sanction such acts of resistance. Unlike the Hungarians in Second World War Vienna, anti-state activity by the Irish of *Odd Man Out* is represented as illegitimate and destructive. Both the priest and Johnny admonish Kathleen for the path she has chosen, the priest advising her 'to face her ordeal' and Johnny advising her to 'choose life and peace'. As Hill points out, this message has implications for the political situation in Northern Ireland and is indicative of the problem the Ireland text poses for English film culture.

Much of the dialogue of *Odd Man Out* is centred on the question of morality. In the middle of the manhunt, the priest asks the policeman if he considers the question of a suspect's goodness. The policeman replies that, for the agent of the state, there is 'neither good nor bad, only innocent or guilty'. The narrative of *Odd Man Out* does not contradict this point of view although it does not spell out who are the guilty but only refers to them by implication. The dead lovers are absolved of guilt through the trajectory of the film but it obvious that the film condemns those who carry on political violence in Northern Ireland. As Hill points out, the reviews of the film reflect the ideological position of *Odd Man*

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148 Tzvetan Todorov, *Facing The Extreme, Moral Life in the Concentration Camps*,

Out as that of the British establishment. The tragic end of the film offers us a resolution to the highly unstable Northern Ireland text. The emphasis on fate in the tragic end of the dead lovers leads to the forgetting of political and social origins. We do not have the distance necessary to remind us that, as Bertolt Brecht famously put it, 'these knots are tied by men'.[149] In Hill's view, the effect of the ending of *Odd Man Out* involves nothing less than the legitimisation of the new state of Northern Ireland and the treaty opposed by Republicans. The use of tragedy in *La jeune folle* also prompts forgetting and I will return to this theme later in the chapter.

Catholic, Female and Republican: The Betrayer.

The London Catholic film-board criticised an earlier Irish film in the War of Independence genre, Tom Cooper's *The Dawn*'s (1937), for its openly republican stance. The review positions republicanism as anti-state and anti-Catholic, the Church having been fused into the state discourse. The reading of 'Catholic', however, is complex. Female 'base' Catholicism, church-going and prayer, is not equated with the male culture of the Hierarchy, but represents another often threatening form. One frequently find these two Catholicisms opposed in narratives such as Frank O'Connor's popular short story, *My First Confession* (1947), where the priest is represented as civilised, educated and tolerant, while the active women characters, with the exception of the idealised mother, are represented as violent, vicious and extreme. In post-war French films, the practice of Catholicism is associated with women and therefore as Catholicism became a target in the post-war years, the attack was mediated thorough negative representations of the female.[150] These

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(London: Phoenix, 2000), p. 72.

149 Quoted in Robert Cohen, *Theatre*, (Mountain View, California: Mayfield, 1988), p. 20.

150 Hayward, (1993), p. 179.

figures are generally shown as older women, whose beliefs imply refusal of the rational through superstition, but whose adherence to another belief system is still too threatening to be contained as merely childlike and wilful.

In Ireland of the post-Independence era, women were strongly associated with republicanism, the anti-treaty stance associated with De Valera, who was known for radical Catholic views. The newspapers of the period blamed women for the election of De Valera and therefore for the Irish State's refusal to support Franco in the Spanish Civil War, again associating Republicanism with an anti-Church viewpoint.[151] In spite of this support, De Valera became an enemy of the women who elected him when he came to power. In films of the Irish conflict genre, however, the tropes of republicanism, the female revolutionary and pro-clericalism, were represented as both intertwined and destabilising. This is particularly true of *La Jeune folle.* In *La Jeune folle* the nun, the head-sister of the convent, offers a combination of all three, clericalism, republicanism and the female and it is this figure and not Catherine who is ultimately responsible for the death of the hero, Steve. Thus the irrational and anti-rational are associated with political violence and the death of the hero comes about as a result of these pathologies.[152] This discourse is in operation in *La Jeune folle*. The nuns signify both Jansenism and insanity through the figure of the old nun. The old nun's madness, however, was

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[151]'The late Viviani, a French premier once boasted that he had put out the lights of Heaven in France. Had his Jewish successor, Mr. Blum, not good reason to congratulate himself on the success of the same policy in Ireland? In Viviani's day, Ireland protested vigorously, but today an Irish Government, elected on universal suffrage carries out the dictation of Blum'. Paddy Belton campaigning for Franco quoted in *The Drogheda Independent*, 6 March, (Drogheda: 1937), p.5.

[152]An 1990 example of this kind of discourse can be seen in *Michael Collins*. DeValera is shown both in the role of an altar-boy and then in the escape scene, dressed as a woman by Collins. Jordan said: 'Collins didn't invent guerrilla warfare. He didn't introduce the gun into Irish politics...his uniqueness in Irish history is the fact that having achieved what he could with these tactics, he then tried to put a halt to them. The fact that he was undone in the end by the traditional Irish nationalistic pieties -the ideal of the pure and pristine republic - is what makes him genuinely tragic figure'. Jordan, (1990), p. 11.

read by spectators as the inverse of Catherine's condition: 'the madness of the old nun, maniacal, repressed, vicious, is nothing but the aberration of imagination and sensibility, crazy love, inability to adapt to society (of Catherine), this native sign of primitive purity'.[153] It is only as a result of the machinations of the Mother Superior and the Aged IRB officer that Catherine becomes a threat to the masculine hero Steve and kills him. In post-war genre, such as *La Jeune folle*, the primary friendship between male comrades is betrayed by the corrupt and manipulative father figures, whose instruments are politics and by the woman, who represents the domestic sphere. The man of action is the only reliable figure, uncontaminated and is martyred by the instability in the female sign.

The heroes of the winning side must be represented as martyrs who acted not out of self-interest but for the benefit of the new nation. The pathology of war figured in the woman mystifies material origins of the struggle and misrecognises the civil war as a struggle for power. Revisionism of this kind legitimises the present incumbents as the inheritors of the nation and converts the process by which this happened into the national myth. In *La Jeune folle* the civil war is repeatedly described as 'folle/mad' and the word 'folle' is repeated continuously throughout the film. The idea of war as madness masks the power relations implicit in the occupation/colony sign. It undermines the idea of resistance as a rational act of protest in order to contain the potential to destabilise the new status quo by attacking the new figures in power. As Marcel Ophuls' film *Le Chagrin et la pité* points out, this was very important for De Gaulle because the communists had played such a big part in the Resistance but now posed a threat to Conservative post-war France.

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[153]'La folie de la vielle nonne, maniaque, refoulée, viciuese, qui ne'st qu'abberration de l'imagintaion et de la sensibilité, amour fou, et inadaptaion sociale, ce signe indien de la puréte primitive'. Richer, (1952), p. 45.

Drunken Irish; Blind Frenchmen.

If we read *La Jeune folle* against the post-Occupation context the saturated image of madness has a different agenda to the madness of *Le Puritain*. Where *Le Puritain* investigates the link between fanaticism and murder as products of the dominant conservative ideology and the dilemma of the puritan ascetic, madness in *La Jeune folle* is linked to drunkenness and alcohol. Catherine's parents were alcoholics. Men and women are drunk in the film. The policeman shirks his post outside the Chief of Police's house at the proffering of a bottle. The stationmasters are drunk. The nuns are mad. These tropes reveal anxieties which have little to do with the Irish Civil war. The image of drunkenness is repeated to excess in *La Jeune folle*. One female character, a voluptuous drunkard of no relevance to the functioning of the plot, is shown in a number of apparently redundant scenes admonishing her man for not becoming a 'flic', a collaborator, given that Steve, the outlaw, is the hero of the plot. The message is that the people, or more specifically the men, were not in control of themselves and therefore not responsible for their actions: 'Les Hommes peuvent pas aimer quand ils boivent/men cannot love when they drink'. It follows therefore that whoever made them drink is culpable for their corruption and their inability to die a hero's death. In these texts this role is allotted to the woman.

The pessimism of Allégret's work has been a mainstay of arguments for the greatness of his films. This also holds true of critical reaction to Clouzot. Their films are represented as a cry in the wilderness of vaudeville and propaganda. The much vaunted negativity of the French film noir does not imply the resistant position the celebration of them as canonical would appear to suggest. *Le Puritain* posed problems for Vichy France because of its opposition to the idea of consensus through its representation of instability. Alienation, created by the deployment of theatrical elements of more formalist 1930s film like Chenal's *Crime et chatiment,* is absent from film noir. Following Barthes, the narrative

structure of the classical narrative text is seen as proceeding through a chain of narrative 'enigmas' towards closure.[154]

La Jeune folle has a deceptively open ending. It finishes with Catherine humming, now quite mad, over the body of her dead lover. However, Catherine's arrest implies her eventual diagnosis as a lunatic and incarceration in a hospital presumably will follow. Closure, the locking up of Catherine, occurs in the mind of the spectator through the preferred reading constructed within the narrative and it remains unexamined. The drive to closure and order is, according to Deleuze and Guattari, the instrument of repression, the drive to close off those elements perceived as disorder.[155] This is the problem posed by the representation of war or any traumatic event through classic narrative form.

The narrative form reproduces myth, not history and, in its form, reproduces the totalising impression of the event as too big to think about and thus beyond mastering.[156] Clouzot and Allegrét's bleak vision does not imply a shift from the dominant mood of Vichy in spite of the move away from fantasy films like *Les Visiteurs du soir*. The appetite for the fantastic during Vichy was a reflection of a political culture 'en plein fantasmes', driven by fantasies of leadership in a new European utopia alongside Germany. However, a flip-side of that fantasy was a deep-seated pessimism, a culture of defeat which surfaced in the post-war films.[157] Fatalism is the breeding ground of extreme right-wing thinking in France, both before and during the war. Fatalism was reproduced in the both repressed and repressing narrative of the 1950s French film noir. An ideology of defeatism mediated through cinematic representations of the

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[154]Jane Feuer, *High Theory/Low Culture*, (London: McCabe, 1986), p. 17..

[155]Deleuze and Guattari, in Cahoone, (1996), pp.401-410.

[156]See Janet Staiger, *Interpreting Films, Studies in the Historical Reception of American Cinema,* (Princeton: Princeton Uni. Press, 1992), pp.40-41.

[157]Vichy was created out of defeat not victory. See Julian Jackson, paper in the conference, *The Extreme Right-wing in France* at Trinity College Dublin in April 1998.

baseness of human nature such as we find in *Le Corbeau* and Allégret's *Un si jolie petite plage* fed ideas of a lost France, a France before the corrupting influence of the French revolution. Decadence and notions of decay underpinned the drive for the national revolution in the 1940s and the longing for form focused in the father-figure of the Maréchal, leader of the authoritarian state.[158] In films, absence of a historical context for actions taken leads to a situation where denial of consequences is possible. Lack of knowledge became one of the main arguments for those involved in the French deportations under Vichy. The incessant talk of drunkenness, images of inebriation and sleeping in *La Jeune folle* are suggestive of blindness. *La Jeune folle* is a narrative of blindness. Catherine is blind to Steve's real identity as the murderer of her brother. She is blind to the real reasons behind Kevin's killing, that he is an informer. Steve is blind to the danger of Catherine. He closes his eyes to sleep believing he is safe when Catherine puts both of them in mortal danger. The streets are dark, the alleys blind. The Republicans are blinded by the glaring lights of the State forces as they cross the bridge to their death. The railwaymen at the station where Catherine takes the train to Dublin are blind drunk.

Blind Venus: Memory and Forgetting in Post-Occupation Cinema.

French philosopher Jacques Derrida's *Mémoires d'aveugle* comments on the huge number of different narratives of blindness in western cultures.[159] While image studies in film have concentrated on the image as seen and sight there has been very little study of its opposite not-seeing and blindness as trope in film. For French cinema, these narratives

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158Perrineau, 'Old Wine in New Bottles', Paper for conference on *The Extreme Right in France*, at Trinity College Dublin, May 1998, to be published.

159See Jacques Derrida, *Memoires d'aveugle*, (Paris : Louvre Réunion des Musées Naitonaux, 1990), Chapter One.

are most forcefully present in the Vichy years and after.[160] Vision is linked to memory and self-representation can only happen through memory because it involves looking, looking away and then representing from that remembered vision. The representation of the self depends upon looking and memory. Anarchy results in the rejection of memory because not to remember is not to see, to be blind. Blindness to the self is about a kind of hypocrisy, a failure to face up to one's own culpability. Particularly striking in French post-war films is the theme of the dissipation of human will and responsibility. Derrida's discussion of Western culture's paradigmatic narratives of blindness point to a number of themes, all of which crop up in *La Jeune folle*.[161] The failure to act, in the narrative, is centred on Steve because he fails to tell Catherine of his murder of her brother and then fails to reject her as a distraction to his action as leader of the resistance to the state. She in turn fails to carry out her assassination of the Chief of Police and then she does act and kills Steve at a moment when he reveals himself to her. She finally loses all vision because she becomes mad and thus totally blind to her actions and to the memory of her actions.

For Derrida the failure of the human will is related to a descent into darkness, represented by the labyrinth of decaying cavernous houses into which the couple flee. There is also, according to Derrida, the theme of manipulation, of the blind man being duped by a third party. In religious narratives this is Satan. In other narratives this role is allocated to the woman. In the history of French thought vision is an important concept. Vision is associated with rationality, order and the centred being of the Enlightenment.[162] The camera appears to reproduce Cartesian

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[160]Abel Gance's film, *Venus aveugle* (1942) was this influential director's contribution to the Vichy National Revolution and was dedicated by Gance to the Maréchal. Post-war films in this genre inlcude Chenal's *La foire aux chimères* (1946) and Jean Delannoy's *La Symphonie Pastorale* (1946).

[161]Derrida, (1992), pp.67-69.

[162]See Martin Jay, *Downcast Eyes*, (1998), pp.30-48.

interpretations of vision as disembodied and monocular, particularly in the classic realist film, but in *La Jeune folle* what the camera 'sees' is blindness. However, Derrida resists the monocular and calls for a vision relying on two points of view, two eyes, the fragmented experience mediated by women's film. The feminist philosopher Susan Bordo sees 'twoness' as the image of woman's sexuality and therefore the source of her threat and not 'lack' as it has been represented through Freudian narration of gender.[163] Allégret's women, like Clouzot's, are denied vision but serve to represent a fetishist disability, an erotic disabling of the senses, drunkenness and madness in *La Jeune folle*, blindness to the female indulgence in concealment and masks in *Manèges,* alcoholism and fever in *Les Orgueilleux* (1955, based on the novel by Sartre).[164] This movement from vision to blindness represents a crisis of extreme anguish where despair is the overriding impression. This crisis of vision as logos and the admonition 'know thyself' which had earlier marked the history of thought in Western civilisation was replaced by a period characterised by a radical disillusionment with the self-confidence of reason, the dissolution of all boundaries and the collapse of all authority activated by the feminine sign figuring the anti-rational.[165]

Repression of the material origins of the divided state and of the forgetting of the struggle for power in a civil war situation such as the Occupation through its representation as a symptom of temporary insanity, is mediated within the figure of the woman. This happens at the same moment as the material conditions of her disempowerment and the frustration of her desire for change are mystified and repressed in the madness trope. For many women the end of the struggle for power

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[163]See Susan Bordo, 'The Cartesian Masculinasation of Thought', in *From Modernism to Postmodernism*, ed. Lawrence Cahoone, (1996), pp.638-664.

[164]Jordan has demonstrated a similar theme in his work from *Michael Collins* to his adaptation of Patrick McCabe's *The Butcher Boy,* (1997), depicting insanity and pathology.

officially termed the Civil War is only the beginning of a vicious and dangerous civil war where she finds herself under attack from her male companions. For both Irish and French women it was a source of great despair that the new Republic which they had helped to win, would not only betray their hopes and aspirations but become a more virulent source of persecution than the pre-liberation state. As film historian Marc Ferro recalled, with the exception of 1914, France 'fought no war that was not sooner or later crossbred into civil war'.[166] The Ireland text in *La Jeune folle* provided a space in which that war could be explored.

The years which followed the release of *La Jeune folle*, 1955 to 1962, was also a period of revolution: however, the revolution was not conducted within French society but against it. The bloodiest war of Independence from France, the war with Algeria, came from 'within' France itself and could be, given the logic of French discourses surrounding Algeria, described as another 'civil' war. Algeria was considered 'part of France' and was divided into three French 'départements'.[167] Algerian nationalists were described as terrorists and criminals in the same vein as Irish republicans in the North of Ireland, because their attacks were seen as internal strife.[168] Algeria was governed as a region of the French nation but a region in which only a minority (less than a million inhabitants of European extraction in an Algerian population of eight and a half million) enjoyed full citizenship and the right to vote. The Algerian war, in its last few years, constituted not only a struggle for independence but also a war of the French against the French. French ex-patriot settlers in Algeria, known as the pied-noirs, threatened successive French Governments with downfall if there was any

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[165]See Ernst Behler, *Confrontations: Derrida/Heidigger/Nietzsche*, trans. Steven Taubneck, (Connecticut, Stanford, 1991), pp.20-22.

[166]Cited in Colombat, (1993), p.ix.

[167]Alguhon, (1995), p. 367.

[168]See Ian S. Lustick, *Unsettled States, Disputed Lands, -Britain and Ireland, France and Algeria, Israel and the West Bank-Gaza*, (Ithaca: Cornell, 1993), pp. 81-121.

attempt to allow Algerians self-determination.[169] The politicians of the Fourth Republic were driven by the desire to stay in power and to ward off the possibility of a military coup from those who were determined at all costs to maintain French Algeria.

The 1950s were the beginning of a great movement to decolonise by the countries in the French Empire. The French right wing groups saw decolonisation as defeat.[170] Undercurrents of defeatism, stemming from the problems of the Second World War, were a primary source of the virulence of the campaign to keep Algeria in the empire. The decline in France's status in the world, culminating in its collapse in the Second World War and its impotence in the immediate post-war period, added a non-rational force to the belief in the legitimacy and value of France's empire. The movement for colonial liberation was therefore very threatening.[171] France of 1957-61 was a society that had engaged in a vicious and brutal campaign to suppress the Algerian quest for self-determination. In a similar fashion to the American Vietnam movies, 'liberal' French representations and explorations of the Algerian war in the period concentrated on the effects of the Algerian war on the returning conscripts.[172] Algeria remained un-represented. It was a place of mythic and unnamed horror.

The French role in the Algerian war conflicted with French views of themselves as Liberators and resistors of oppression. The public found itself forced to deal with the spectacle of a French militia capable of

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[169]Ibid., pp. 81-121. and pp. 239-302.

[170]Paul Clay Sorum, *Intellectuals and Decolonisation in France*, (Berkeley: Uni. Of California, 1977), pp. 242.

[171]Ibid., pp. 240-5.

[172]Some, like the American films on Vietnam, deal with the theme of lost French youth. A classic of this genre, *Adieu Philippine*, (Jacques Rozier, 1960), offers us a portrait of a young French man before he embarks for Algeria. He experiences the enviable position of having two women in love with him before he is conscripted. Melissa Biggs summarised the film as a 'documentary on film language', the entire story a story of 'a boy between two girls, a cinéaste between two shots'. Biggs, (1996), p. 89.

'inhuman' torture of citizens and persecution of civilians. It brought back memories of their collaborationist past into the public domain where it had been repressed. The nation of the 'Maquis', a nation celebrating myths of its own resistance to the Occupier, was now itself cast in the role of ruthless occupier, terrorising Algerian villagers and using Gestapo methods to extract information. Blindness took on a renewed role in this period: the denial of French activities in Algeria became a national duty during the late 1950s. Cinema historians commonly view this period of French history as practically devoid of any direct reference to Algeria.[173] Instead, the media were preoccupied with Brigitte Bardot, to a degree of frenzy unmatched in French cinema history. Once again, the watchword was unity.

Both the nationalism in whose name France had subjugated Algeria and the nationalism in whose name the Algerians had resisted France since 1830 relied to a very great extent upon a politics of identity.[174] As Genet said to Roger Blin, for the French, 'it was all one big event without beginning or end'. [175] This one big event connected the Dey's coup d'éventail in 1830 and the invention by eight-hundred thousand pieds-noirs of Tixier-Vignancour; the extreme right-wing French lawyer who defended General Raoul Salam in the trials of 1962. It was nothing but 'France, France, France', as in the slogan *Algerie française*. For Genet, 'the opposite and equal reaction of the Algerians was also an affirmation of identity, by which the affiliation between combatants, the suffusing presence of patriotism, even the justified violence of the oppressed, are all mobilised in the single-minded cause of 'Algérie pour les

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[173]Henry Rousso, *The Vichy Syndrome, History and Memory in France since 1944*, Arthur Godhammer, trans. (Cambridge-MA: Harvard Uni., 1991), p.8.

[174]'Identity is what we impose on ourselves through our lives as social, historical, political and even spiritual beings. [...] Identity is the process by which the stronger culture and the more developed society imposes itself violently upon those who, by the same identity process, are decreed to be lesser people. Imperialism is the export of identity'. Said, (1995), p.238.

[175]Ibid., p.236.

Algériens".[176] History had sounded the death-knell on imperialism in the Twentieth Century, beginning with the successful rebellion in Ireland in 1922. By 1961, the cause of Algerian self-determination was won. General De Gaulle conceded defeat in Algeria and began the process of dismantling the French Empire. A different national identity for France would have to be forged and a new role found for the nation on the global stage. This new identity was to be the subject of Louis Malle's next project, the film, *!Viva Maria!*.

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[176]Ibid., p.236.

Chapter Four: Realms of Possibility: The Ireland text, Louis Malle's *!Viva Maria!* (1965) and the South of the Border Western.

Louis Malle's *!Viva Maria!* (1965) opens a new chapter for the Ireland text in French cinema. *!Viva Maria!* introduces a comic note into the dark and pessimistic text of Ireland in French cinema. It represents a celebration of two French personalities of the 'swinging sixties': Brigitte Bardot and Jeanne Moreau. The film, Malle's second comedy following *Zazie dans le Métro* (1960), was not a success according to French film critics, who prefer Malle's darker works. Unlike many of Malle's more acclaimed films, however, *!Viva Maria!* appealed enormously to the French public and continues to attract spectators in the twenty-first century. It was a huge box-office hit in Europe on its release and took the Grand Prix du Cinema Français in 1965. The film continues to appear regularly on Television listings in both Ireland and France. Its popular success can be attributed in no small part to its two stars, iconic female actors of the 1960s. Bardot plays Maria II, the child of a French woman and an Irish revolutionary. Moreau plays a Parisian actress and singer who is travelling with a circus in South America.

At the beginning of the film we see Bardot as a small girl, travelling with her Irish father as he conducts a bombing campaign throughout the British Empire, including Ireland, the Rock of Gibraltar and London. He is killed during an action in South America. Following

the death of her father, Irish Maria finds herself in British Honduras and joins a troupe of wandering players where she meets Maria I. The two women become partners in a circus act. During their first show together Irish Maria accidentally invents striptease. That night, the Marias take part in a huge fiesta where Moreau's Maria meets the revolutionary leader Flores, played by George Hamilton and Irish Maria has her first sexual experience. While travelling, the troupe witnesses a massacre in a village by the agents of the Dictator. Irish Maria intervenes and shoots one of the agents and the troupe is taken prisoner. French Maria meets Flores again and falls in love. The women escape from the dictator but Flores is shot. The circus troupe take him back to the village where he dies in Maria I's arms. The villagers, led by the parish priest, are reluctant to continue their campaign but French Maria declares that she will carry on the revolution. Aided by Irish Maria's military expertise, the local rebels and the circus troupe take on the dictator and have great success. As they gain ground in the war, the pair attract the attention of monks of the Catholic church who are supporting the dictatorship. They are captured and an attempt is made to torture them for blasphemy but the women are liberated by the circus troupe and become national heroes.

!Viva Maria! represents a combination of genres. Firstly it is a burlesque comedy which makes more than a passing reference to surrealism, secondly it is a filmic example of a genre made popular in nineteenth-century French literature, the adventure genre and thirdly it is a parody of a Hollywood genre, the South of the Border film. Spatially, the bulk of *!Viva Maria!*'s narrative unfolds in an unnamed country in South America. In spite of the ambiguity of the location in the enunciation of the film, most viewers read the film as set in Mexico. Some critics do mention that the makers have not given the film a specific location but then go on to refer to 'Mexico' and 'Mexican'

throughout their commentary.[1] Mexico is therefore an important subject of the film and informs much of the viewer's response to its content. Reading *!Viva Maria!* as a story of Mexico suggest that it is set in a space where the French Empire had a colonial history.[2] The space of the film also signifies a departure from previous films about Ireland as it includes, particularly in its opening sequences, representations of other British colonies.

!Viva Maria!'s opening sequence is set in Ireland, 1891. The further the century advances, the further back French cinema looked for its Irish historical settings. Whereas *Le Puritain*, the earliest film, was based on Liam O'Flaherty's fictional account of the stagnant and repressive culture of post-revolutionary Ireland and Yves Allégret's *La Jeune folle* treated of the struggle for power in the Irish Civil War, *!Viva Maria!*'s narrative is set in a time before Independence and the Uprising. *!Viva Maria!*, however, introduces a new theme into the Irish text in France: the international struggle for liberation by colonised peoples. Despite the apparently backward glance at Irish history, the film, therefore, remains relevant to the 1960s context of its production. The Ireland text also functioned to over-ride the comic intent of the film and led, as we shall see, to readings of the film as a serious treatise on revolution. [3]

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[1]Penelope Houston, for example, talks of an 'audience of enchanted Mexicans' in her review of the film. See Houston, '*Viva Maria!*', in *Sight and Sound*, Volume 35, No.2, (London: BFI, Spring 1966)., p.90.

[2]The French under Napoleon III established an empire in Mexico in October 1863 and placed Archduke Ferdinand Maxmillian on the throne. The Mexicans under the Mexican president Zaragosa and directed by General Porfiro Diaz and supported by the USA, fought the occupation. Just four years later the empire was disestablished and the French withdrew from Mexico. Diaz went on to establish the dictatorship which led to the 1910 Mexican Revolution.

1964: A New Vision of France.

As we have seen the late 1950s and early 1960s constituted a period where the French Empire suffered a fatal blow and where French perceptions of their role in their former colonies suffered a major set-back. French films about Algeria did not address the thorny issue of colonisation preferring to focus on the returning conscript tale and this refusal to represent France as a coloniser persists in mainstream film of the middle 60s.[4] Thus, in place of self-examination, the period 1965 to 1968 saw France as nation attempting to reclaim its position as the home of the free, a title adopted by the USA and as a muse for revolution, not of suppression.

France in the period of 1961 –1968 was dominated by the presidency of General De Gaulle who, having returned to power and having ended the French campaign in Algeria, took up the project of returning France to her former glory as one of the leading nations in the new world order. De Gaulle's resumption of the role of Head of State, his creation of a new Republic and his handling of decolonisation in terms of the French electorate, forms the political and cultural backdrop for *!Viva Maria!*. De Gaulle refashioned France as a world leader through a transformation of her role as imperial power to liberator and author of the notion of self-determination for the 'Third World'. Alguhon sums up the policy thus: 'Friendship with the Third World could be cultivated, now

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[3]Malle quoted in French, (1993), p. 52.

[4]Alain Resnais related the experience of the Algerian war to the crisis of Occupation in his work. His film *Muriel,* (1966), referred to the contradictions inherent in cinema's celebration of the Second World War resistance story, the heroic French Maquis against the German militia, in a time of ruthless suppression of the Algerian resistance to France. Two other filmmakers, Yves Boisset and his contemporary, Vautier, also made films that drew obvious parallels with the French military in Algeria and the Occupation. However *R. A. S.*, (Boisset, 1973), and *Avoir vingt ans dans les Aurés,* (Vautier, 1972), were not deemed as successful in provoking a reaction as *Muriel.* Philip Dine suggests that this may have been the result of a tendency towards didacticism in these films. See Philip Dine, *Images of the Algerian War, French Fiction and Film, 1954-1992*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), pp. 224-25.

that France could pride itself on having decolonised'.[5] A 1989 Gaumont film, *Vive De Gaulle*, directed by Gilles Dellanoy and based on news reels of the post-Algerian period, reveals these discourses in the text accompanying the English language video release. The cover carries the phrase 'The Flame of French Resistance must not go out' as part of the title and in a mini-biography of De Gaulle, declares that De Gaulle 'allowed' Algerian Independence in 1962.[6] The film which includes images of Ireland, shows De Gaulle on a spectacular parade around Africa and South America calling for independence and 'participation'.

The film's title is a reference to the battle cry of 'Viva Zapata!' of the 1910 Mexican revolution. Its English language version completes De Gaulle's tour with his visit to Mexico in 1964, a year before the release of *!Viva Maria!*. He spoke to the Mexican people: 'Here is what the French people proposes to the Mexican people! Lets us walk hand in hand! Long Live Mexico!'[7]. His speech, according to the film, blazed a new path for France as defender of the Third World. The film concludes with a quotation from André Frossard, who, in honour of De Gaulle, declared that 'he gave us back the confidence and friendship of dispossessed people. He reconciled France with her own image and spared us the shame of indefinitely putting off the liberation of people to whom we had taught the meaning of freedom'.[8] Frossard's speech contains a reproach to empires who have postponed decolonisation as late as 1970, while the film condemns American repression of liberation by following the sequences of De Gaulle in Mexico with images of American atrocities in the Vietnam war. The inclusion of these scenes is an attempt to contain

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[5]Alguhon, (1995), p. 408.

[6]*Vive De Gaulle – The Flame of French resistance must not go out*', directed by Gilles Delannoy, for Vision 7 -Gaumont, 1988, released in English in 1989 as part of the *War Diary* Series.

[7]'Voici donc –ce que le peuple français propose au people mexicain! Marchons main dans le main. Que viva Mexico!'. De Gaulle in Mexico.

[8]Ibid., end of film.

France's greatest threat to its re-fashioning of itself as champion of oppressed peoples, the USA. In spite of its comic frame, *!Viva Maria!* deals with the complex issues at stake in De Gaulle's geo-political positioning of France in the post-Imperial period and through its generic classification as a South of the Border 'Spaghetti' Western, with the USA's vision of its own role in the new world order. The colonial Ireland text, as we will see, has attractions for both French and American cultures in the second half of the Twentieth century and has an important function in *!Viva Maria!*.

!Viva Maria! and The 'South Of The Border' Genre

The colonial history of the French in Mexico forms a subtext to the French characters engagement with a South American Revolution and opens up a new theme: the notion of France itself as a colonial power. French colonialism and Mexico is not dealt with within the enunciation of *!Viva Maria!* but an examination of that history demonstrates that it forms an integral part of the film's history as genre. Malle's venture into the western genre followed a French tradition dating back to the beginning of cinema. The western was never an exclusively American genre. French production companies had been making westerns and exporting them successful to the United States at least until the First World War, most famously the *Arizona Bill* series starring Joe Hammond (1912-14).[9] European westerns were enjoying a new era when *!Viva Maria!* appeared in 1965. The most famous makers of the European western which emerged in the 1950s and 60s, were the Italians, thus the title 'spaghetti' western. *!Viva Maria!* is, in fact, an Italian/ French co-production. Work in the genre, particularly the films of the Italian Sergio

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[9]Richard Abel, 'Our Country'/Whose Country? The Americanisation Project of Early Westerns', in *Back in the Saddle again*, Edward Buscombe & Roberta E. Pearson, (Bloomington, Indiana Uni. Press, 1998), eds. p. 47.

Leone, attained classic status.[10] The majority of studies of the American Western have identified two key typologies in the genre: civilisation and the open-range of wilderness, -nature/city themes as discussed in Chapter Two. Typologies of this kind focus on order-disorder themes in the form of lawlessness, out-laws and wildness. The focus on law and order in westerns set in the United States served, in the view of certain critics, as a cover-up of how the American West was colonised.[11] Spaghetti westerns also demonstrate a tendency to ignore the violent history of European and USA relations with South America and this remains true of *!Viva Maria!*.

The French occupation of Mexico took shape in the aftermath of the Mexican-American War of 1846-48 when a new Empire was established under Archduke Ferdinand Maximilian of Austria and forms the backdrop to numerous 'South of the Border' westerns. It is most often inter-cut with the theme of the American adventurer crossing the border for active engagement with the armed forces of another culture. This is the plot of Robert Aldrich's *Vera Cruz* (1954). A wide-screen western, it featured Gary Cooper and Burt Lancaster as rival mercenaries in post-civil war Mexico at the time of the French occupation of Mexico. Louis Malle states that the initial idea for *!Viva Maria!* came from *Vera Cruz* and indeed numerous references to Aldrich's work, including a gun that can shoot around corners, are made throughout Malle's film.[12] Malle's introduction of the Irish revolutionary text into the genre, however, was a departure from the narrative of *Vera Cruz* but it had much in common with other films in the 'South of The Border' genre.

Sergio Leone's *Giu La Testa (*1971) (*Die you Sucker/ A Fistful of Dynamite*) for example, features an Irish Revolutionary in Mexico who gets caught up in the revolution and whose expertise is called on by the

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[10] Thomas Weisser, *Spaghetti Westerns - the Good, the Bad and the Violent,* (New York; McFarland, 1992), p.459.

[11] Hayward, (1996), p. 411.

[12] French, (1993), p.51.

local rebels. Peckinpah's *Major Dundee*, made in the same year as *!Viva Maria!,* also features Irish rebels who have turned mercenary and who are hired by the American Major of the title in order to pursue Indian tribesmen south of the Border. Peckinpah' s *Major Dundee* takes place at the time of the French Empire. In this film too, the Irish come to the aid of a local rebellion but this time against the French forces of Maxmillian. A key feature of South of the Border Westerns is their tendency to portray local rebellions South of the Border as part of an 'adventure' for the central character. This adventure ceases as soon as they return over the border and to their normal life in the 'West'. The countries South of the Border are represented as in a state of flux, of upheaval and rebellion, a kind of Alice in Wonderland world where anything might happen.

Adventurism

The brevity of the French intervention in Mexico suggests that both the establishment and loss of the Empire in Mexico was effectively an 'adventure', an unexpected episode. Accounts of its history imply that the whole Mexican experience was, for Archduke Maxmillian, a means to escape powerlessness and boredom in Europe. This was, according to Edward Said, a function the colonies, and, previously the crusades, often had: 'The facts of empire are associated with sustained possession, with far-flung and sometimes unknown spaces, with eccentric or unacceptable human beings, with fortune enhancing or fantasised activities like emigration, money-making and sexual adventure. Disgraced younger sons are sent off to the colonies, shabby older relatives go there to try to recoup lost fortunes - (as in Balzac's *La Cousine Bette*) enterprising young travellers go there to sow wild oats and to collect exotica. The colonial territories are realms of possibility'.[13] The prevalence of this view of the non-western nations can be seen in the comments of Jean-

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[13]Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, (1993), p.75.

Claude Carrière, co-writer of *!Viva Maria!*. He described Mexico as 'a country without faith or law where everything seemed possible, at once both burlesque and tragic, without logic, without sense, without rhyme or reason'.[14] *!Viva Maria!* represents the activities of its French protagonist, Maria 1, in Mexico as the 'adventures' of a less than successful actor in another country and confirms the film's location within this sub-genre of the American Westerns. Furthermore the film narrates an imaginary Irish campaign against colonial England conducted in exotic locations throughout the British Empire at the turn of the twentieth century. The figure of the Irish revolutionary in the context of the 'new world' struggles had an earlier nineteenth-century model in the novel *Les Frères Kip* by Jules Verne.

Verne centred his popular adventure novel on two escaping Irish convicts in Tasmania. Political unrest among transported Irish in Australia during the nineteenth-century informs the novel. The politics of colonised Ireland also serve as the background for another Jules Verne tale, *P'tit bonhomme*, published in 1895. An orphan, a travelling circus, insurgency against the English and agrarian revolt, form narrative strands of this hugely popular Verne adventure novel set in Ireland.[15] Malle and Carrière commented that they had been influenced by nineteenth-century tales of adventure when writing *!Viva Maria!*. It was to be not only a comedy but 'an evocation of childhood fantasies combined with traditional adventure'.[16] Discourses of adventurism are very persistent in western genres as a whole. They also have a marked presence in the popular culture of France. They are to be found in the bande-desinée

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[14]'Le Mexique n'est pas cartésien. A son contact, nous avions oublié que nous l'étions nous-memes'. See Jean-Claude Carrière quoted in Réné Prédal, *Louis Malle,* (Paris: Edillig, 1989), p.67.

[15]*P'tit Bonhomme* tells the varied and exciting adventures of a waif, as he travels around Ireland of the nineteenth-century. It was published in Ireland in 1895 under the title of *Foundling Mick.*

[16]Malle quoted in French, (1993), p. 51.

comic strips of BD artists such as Pratt: 'Hugo Pratt brings to Italian art a rarely visited dimension: adventure. Pratt, with his deep knowledge of the world, brings the vast world into Europe. And he has created an immortal character, romantic hero and vagabond, in love with the horizon, who, in taking up again the strong emotions of adventure propagated by Stevenson (Robert Louis Stevenson, author of treasure island) has incarnated the dreams and desires of the modern man. As Umberto Eco affirmed, 'when I want to relax I read an essay of Engels when I want to read something serious, I read *Corto Maltese*'.[17] The article in which this quote appears is a celebration of a BD novel in which Pratt's hero, Corto Maltese, intervenes in East Timor to aid local resistance against Indonesia. Maltese's popularity as a character is an index of mythic notions of their activities in the destiny of other countries prevalent in the post-colonial cultures and a particular feature of the 'South of the Border' genre where more is at stake than Carrière's and Malle's 'realms of possibilities'.

The Filmmaker as Adventurer.

Adventurism is also embedded in stories telling of the liberal western travellers who find themselves in non-western locations and in situations where they eventually intervene to aid the ailing local populace by becoming their messenger and by broadcasting their plight. Filmmaking in troubled areas can be construed as adventurism of this type. Malle was accused of just this sort of adventurism by the American critic Thomas Weisser who said that, shortly after completing *!Viva*

17'Hugo Pratt apportait dans l'art italien une dimension peu fréquenté: l'aventure. [..] Pratt, avec sa profonde connaissance du monde, amenait le vaste monde en Europe. Et il a créé un personnage immortel, héros romantique et vagabond, amoureux du fil de l'horizon', qui, en reprenant le fort sentiment de l'aventure de Stevenson, incarne les reves et les désirs de l'homme moderne. Umberto Eco a affirmé une fois: "quand je chereche à me détendre, je lis un essai de Engles, quand je veux quelque chose de sérieux, je lis Corto Maltese", '. Antonio Tabucchi, [Italian writer, b.1942], 'Corto Maltese a rendez-vous avec Timor', *Liberation*, Sunday 27 August, (Paris: 1995), p.25.

Maria!, Malle became: 'tired of actors, studios, wife and Paris, in that order. He sold his house, divorced his wife and moved to India where he worked on a series of documentaries, *L'Inde fantome* (1967-69) until the Indian Government, who objected to his exploitative approach, asked him to leave'.[18] Well-meaning social criticism in Western films about other cultures could be described as further examples of western humanism as imperialist practice. Humanist involvement in issues of liberation and oppression often reflected a position which did not involve developing dialogue with the oppressed but proscribing modes of behaviour or interventionist policies in order to save them. Rustom Bharucha sums up the difficulties related to the position of the Other in these situations:

> Our vigilance in non-western societies, therefore, is called for at least two levels: one, at the level of the connections of our otherness by which Orientalism is further consolidated and secondly, at the level of the appropriation of our critiques by which- and I will try to be cynical- the sentiments, humanitarian feelings and guilt pangs of our erstwhile critics are legitimised and empowered through this seeming endorsement and understanding of our positions in non-western cultures. Now our critiques of their representations are also being thrust on us in other voices. It would seem that we have yet to think for ourselves. [...]They cannot represent themselves: they must be represented.[19]

Western critical features on 'Mexican' film illustrated this tendency, a tendency Mexican critics have described as the 'mirada circular', the circular look.

The Circular Look.

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[18] Weisser, (1992), p. 347.

19 Rhostom Bharucha, 'Somebody's Other: Disorientations in the Cultural Politics of Our Times', in *The Intercultural Performance reader,* ed. Patrice Pavis, (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 196.

Only a small number of those Mexican films deemed classics by western critics, were directed by Mexicans. Western critics, for example, categorise Sergei Eisenstein's work in Mexico as Mexican cinema whereas Mexican critics do not.[20] Eisenstein began a project in Mexico in 1930, *!Que Viva Mexico!*, a sort of 'cinematographic mural' and a ' filmic symphony synthesising Mexican history, art and customs and landscape'.[21] Eisenstein's influence has had from various points of view both a beneficial and harmful effect on representations of Mexico. For some, it was harmful because it led to an anti-cinematic hieraticism and folklorism with touristic overtones.[22] The lush landscapes in the film refer to the Mexican classical style began by Eisenstein. For others, Eisenstein was the 'father' of Mexican cinema.[23] The cinematography of *!Viva Maria!* has its origin in the visual style of Eisenstien influenced films such as Emilio Fernandez' *Maria Candelaria* (1943) and Paul Strand's *Los Redes (*1936). *!Viva Maria!*'s cinematographer Henri Decae had had considerable experience in nature and travelogue documentary before he began work on *!Viva Maria!* and was also known for his formalist approach in landscape cinematography. His work has been described as 'richly atmospheric' and is in the tradition of Strand and Fernandez.[24]

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[20]Emilio Garcian Riera, 'Mexique', *Les Çinémas de l'Amerique Latine*, Guy Hennebelle, Alfonso Gumocio-Dagron, eds. (Paris: L'Herminier, 1981), pp. 362-3.

[21]Eisenstein paid homage to the work of Mexican filmmakers of the 1910 uprising such as the brothers Alva, Jesus H. Abita, (*Epoyeas de la revolución mexicana*, filmed 1910, assembled and released 1963), Salvador Toscana and Manuel Becerril, among others. See Paulo Antonio Paranagua, *Mexican Cinema*, (London: BFI, 1992), p. 56.

[22]The film was never finished and its producer Upton Sinclair, in an attempt to recuperate his investment, either sold or used the rushes which then appeared in various forms in European cinema houses. Ibid., p.56.

[23]For an account of Mexican Cinema of the Revolution see Riera, (1981), pp. 362-3.

[24]'His country landscapes are particularly memorable from the documentary notations of village life in *Le Beau Serge* [...] to the rolling Mexican landscapes of *!Viva Maria!* and the beautiful rural compositions of Gilbert's *Seven Nights in Japan'*. R.F. Cousins, 'Henri Decae', in Hillstrom, (1997), p.193.

Strand's masterwork *Los Redes* is listed in *The International Directory of Films* as one of the great classics of Mexican national cinema, a 'progenitor of its visual style' and 'one of the few films to offer social criticism in the history of Mexican cinema'.[25] The fact that *Los Redes* was directed and photographed by foreigners confirms the problem of recognition of the national cinema of non-western nations and reinforces the idea that the people of these cultures cannot speak for themselves. This dilemma was the driving force behind Ireland's attempts to establish a national cinema in the 1930s and in the 1980s. Like the Mexicans, a huge percentage of representations of Ireland on screen has its origin in Hollywood and even those films about national history (such as Neil Jordan's *Michael Collins*) were produced by American companies, were tailored for the American market and starred American actors in the lead roles.[26] Mexican film historians have pointed out the problem that, in the West, an overwhelming amount of the Mexico text in world cinema is mediated through the 'circular look' of the American and European Westerns.[27] In these films, the Mexican revolution becomes the western person's adventure.

France and the United States: the 'Liberators'

American critics of the South of the Border films frequently discard the Mexican context in their analysis of the genre. They maintain that these films are not about Mexico but about Vietnam and American trauma. Michael Coyne, author of *The Crowded Prairie,* posits the theory that 'the Western backdrop most suited to encode parallels of the Vietnam

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[25] John Mraz, '*Los Redés*', in Hillstrom, (1977), p. 845.

[26] See Frederic Jameson, (1996), publication pending.

[27] See Margarita De Orellanas, *La Mirada ciruclar: el cine norteamerican de la Revolucion Mexicana*, (Mexico City: Joaquin Mortiz, 1991).

War was Mexico'.[28] Coyne's critique is consistent with dominant American discourses of their actions as innocent but misguided: 'In its own oblique way, it, [*Major Dundee*], attempts to offer some comment on American hubris on the imperial stage, on U.S. vulnerability in the face of myriad small enemies around the globe and on the tragic futility of trying to wage war against an invisible, indigenous foe'.[29] This approach makes it difficult to see the relevance of the Irish characters to the genre because it ignores the presence of the Irish Independence text in the Ireland sign.

'Vietnam' readings of South of the Border Westerns also discount the persistent appeal of the discourse of interventionism as adventurism, a discourse disguising other agendas such as the protection of capital for American business interests. For Mexican film historian Emilio Garcian Riera, the 1950s was the period when the American imperial project in Mexico began to show its muscle.[30] The American heroes of *Vera Cruz,* for example, are shown to reject their initial function of protection of capital to take on the more idealistic vision of themselves as freedom fighters. Both the films themselves and the response of film critics such as Coyne, reveal an ideological wish that goes further than either 'adventurism' or 'the trauma of war' agendas previously noted. These films cater for American perceptions of the United States as a nation

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[28]Coyne criticises the celebration of arms in films like *Vera Cruz* in the same vein: 'the essence of America's tragedy is that the nation most dedicated to freedom has clearly confused liberty with licence and nowhere is this more clearly evident than in the national love affair with guns'. Michael Coyne, *The Crowded Prairie; American National Identity in the Hollywood Western*, (New York: I. B. Tauris, 1997), p.132.

[29] Ibid., p.131.

[30]'L'hégémonie américaine attient son sommet, [dans les années cinquantes], et se fait sentir sous ses diverses facettes. Il est certain qu'à partir du moment où le Mexique a exproprié les compagnies pétrolières, l'economie a subi une transformation favorable à la bourgeoisie nationale. Il n'en demeure pas moins vrai que meme si l'on a fait passer le capital étranger au second plan, la pénétration impéraliste a commencé à se faire sentir d'une manière plus subtile –à travers des prets de capitaux, le controle du marché, les mythes culturels, etc., - mais aussi plus profonde et plus violente'. Riera, (1981), p.223.

committed to freedom.[31] The 'adventure' involves crossing borders in order to become part of another country's struggle for liberation. This discourse was also very important to Gaullist French International relations in the 1960s and, as we shall see, the Ireland text had an important function in the construction of France's new image as liberator of small countries. This backdrop gives a serious subtext to the burlesque antics of the Marias in *!Viva Maria!*.

The combination of interventionist discourses and the idea of the Irish adventurer cum revolutionary can be found in both *Major Dundee* and *!Viva Maria!*. Although *Major Dundee* was set in the nineteenth-century and *!Viva Maria!* in 1910 in an unspecified South American republic, both films refer to the 1910 Mexican revolution. Dundee, the hero of *Major Dundee*, is amused to discover the words '!Viva Dundee!' scrawled on the walls outside his lodgings. The word 'Viva' openly associates both *Major Dundee* and *!Viva Maria!* with the classic texts of the Mexican revolution: 'At the start of the century Mexico erupted with the revolts of Zapata and of Pancho Villa, the inspiration for the films *!Viva Villa* and *!Viva Zapata!*. This historico-filmic context evidently constitutes the basis for *!Viva Maria!*.[32] In *Major Dundee*, such indices of revolution are linked to the American Major and confirm the American role as liberator. The two female leads of *!Viva Maria!* are given numbers: Maria I for Moreau's character and Maria II for Bardot's. The numbering is important. The characters are not numbered in order of appearance on the screen but according to rank. It is clear that French Maria is of superior rank to Irish Maria. French Republicanism, coming

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[31] These discourses have considerable currency in the USA, to the extent that destruction of the Twin Towers in New York on September the 11th, 2001, prompted endless repetition of the phrase, 'the end of innocence' in media headlines that week.

[32] 'Or c'est au début du siecle que le Mexique fut secoué par les révoltes de Zapata et de Pancho Villa qui inspirérent les films *!Viva Villa* et *!Viva Zapata*. Ce contexte historico-filmique constitue évidemment la base de *!Viva Maria!* dont le titre est ouvertement référential'. Prédal, (1989), p.69.

from the ideals of the French Revolution, is mediated through the Moreau Maria. She inspires the troops, a role consistent with other Joan of Arc cinema representations of women in war. French Maria represents the old tradition of a France as liberal democracy and of the French revolution as the origin of all revolutions.[33] French discourses concerning Ireland as colony also construct France in the role of inspirational leader and liberator, a useful alibi for France intent on misrecognising the true nature of its relationship with its colonies.

Ireland as Alibi: Colonised Ireland and Colonial France.

In French culture references to Ireland's history as a colony can function in a variety of ways. I have dealt formerly with the theme of the post-colonial triumph of bourgeois nationalism mediated in earlier cinema texts about Ireland and post-revolution.[34] Where *Le Puritain* offers a critique of the repressive ideology of the middle class following revolution, the Irish civil war genre of Allègret remains oppositional to a national vision of total liberation, with its restructuring of the division of labour to include subaltern peripheral classes, particularly women. In the case of the earlier films the Irish text does not function as a means to explore notions of French colonisation and empire. These films were largely concerned with French local anxieties. In earlier texts Irish de-colonisation was not, therefore, a source of threat in itself. Perhaps the new Irish Republic mediated the triumph of 'safe' bourgeois nationalism.

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[33]Batriz Pastor, 'Carpentier's Enlightened Revolution', in *Representing the French Revolution*, ed., James A. Heffernan, (Cambridge MA: Uni. Press of New England, 1992), p.275.

[34]Fanon, in his essay on the 'The Pitfalls of National Consciousness', written at the height of the Algerian War of Independence, drew a distinction between two kinds of nationalist ideology in the context of anti-colonialism. One the one hand there was bourgeois nationalism: on the other there was a liberationist anti-imperialist, nationalist internationalism. He described bourgeois nationalism as representing the interest of the elite indigenous classes. It was aimed at the (re)-attainment of nationhood through means of the capture and subsequent appropriation of the colonial state. See Franzt

It may also be that reports of injustice and brutality meted out by imperialist England to little Ireland served to reinforce French perceptions of France as a benevolent force in its own colonies. The view of Irish history in Jules Verne's *Le P'tit bonhomme* was very much in this vein. Stephen J. Brown described Verne's book as 'written in thorough sympathy with Ireland and in particular with the sufferings of the poor under iniquitous Land Laws, though at times with a little exaggeration'.[35] The French were not slow to comment on the colonial tendencies of their neighbours and to see themselves as Liberators against this context.[36] Graphic descriptions of the 'suffering Irish' under British rule were deployed as an attack on English imperialism while masking France's own role in colonising other continents. In one such example, the introduction to a 1924 collection of Irish literature, the author Hoveloque, expounds at length on how France, 'even at the moment of her worst anguish in the Great War', did not hesitate to offer aid to this nation which had 'struggled for eight centuries'. But lest we mistake France's intentions in all this, the author goes on to say that France's solicitude is 'always enlightened and her concern, while eminently moral, is above all intellectual. Knowledge, for her, is primordial'. [37] In his view, the rallying cry of the Irish, 'truth above everything' has been adopted by France and not only because 'she too, being both Breton and Gallic, remains Gaelic'

Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, Constance Farrington, trans. (New York: Grove Press, 1963).

[35]Brown goes on to say that 'the spirit, (of *Le P'tit bonhomme*), is Catholic: 'witness the kindly words on page 8 about Irish priests'. Brown also dedicates his own book thus: 'do chum glóire Dé agus Ónora na h-Éireann', (created for the glory of God and the honour of Ireland). See Stephen J. Brown, S.J., *Ireland in Fiction, -a Guide to Irish Novels, Tales, Romances and folklore*, (1920), p.304.

[36] Sorum, (1977), pp. 243.

[37]'Une nation tout entière qui souffre et qui lutte désesperement depuis huit siécles, peut on décemment se contenter de la plaindre! [...] jamais, à aucun moment, meme au moment de ses pires angoisses, meme aux heures terribles de la Grande guerre, la France n'a été empechée par des préoccupations égoistes ou matérielles de porter aide là ou` il le fallait, de pencher sa tendresse secourable sur les souffrances d'autrui. mais sa solicitude est toujours éclairée, mais ses préoccupations, si éminemment morales qu'elles soient, sont avant tout intellectuelles'. Hovelaque, (1924), pp.3-4.

but also because 'the need for truth is her natural heritage'. Hovelaque concludes his essay with the declaration: 'France is the tribunal of the human conscience'.[38]

Historically, Ireland's woes as a colony attracted considerable sympathy and recognition in France, far more than the woes of those colonised by England in Africa and in Asia where the French themselves had a presence. An unknown French commentator said of the Irish in eighteenth-century France that 'the mind of Ireland was to be found in this colony of refugees', presumably that the Irish culture, suppressed at home, flourished in exile in France. Other French commentators called for the asylum of 'our poor (Irish) fugitives for seventy years past'.[39] The Irish integrated themselves well into French society, rising to posts of archbishops and ambassadors. Their role as refugees from colonialism did not hamper them in their pursuit of fortunes in the slave trade on the Ivory Coast.[40] In the post-Second World War years, championing of Irish rebelliousness against colonial rule was not as persistent, although it surfaces frequently in references to Northern Ireland in post-1970s texts such as the television film, *L'Irlandaise (*Jose Giovanni, 1990). This French-Irish co-production stars the French actor Michel Sardou and the young Irish star, Lorraine Pilkington. Pilkington plays a red-haired republican refugee from Northern Ireland on the run in France. *L'Irlandaise* casts Sardou in the role of a judge 'au grand coeur/of great

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[38]'Savoir , pour elle, est primordial. La bonté, tel un rayon vivifiant de soleil, est faite de douceur certes, mais de clarté non moins de douceur. Voilà pourquoi le cri de ralliement des Irlandais: "La vérité avant tout", ce cri si beau, si magnifique, la France l'a fait sien, et cela, non seulement parcequ'elle est, elle aussi, bretonne, et par là gauloise, c'est à dire gaelique comme l'Irlande, mais parcequ'il n'est pas chez elle de besoin plus ardent que celui qui caractérisait nos ancetres communs, ces Gaels de jadis, habitants de l'Europe entiére, il ya vingt siècles et plus, le besoin irrésistible de la vérité. Cette vérité, il la faut chez nous parce que seul est capable de la fournir lucide notre génie lucide, et, raison non moins impérieuse, parce que la France est le tribunal de la conscience humaine'. Ibid., pp.3-4.

[39]Ronald C. Rosbottom, 'Studies in Eighteenth-century Culture', *American Society for 18th Century Studies*, (Ohio: Uni. Of Wisconsin Press, 1976), Vol. 5, pp.454-456.

[40]See Hayes, (1949), p.12-21.

heart'; a representation consistent with the ideals of France's role in the world embedded in the Hovelaque quote above.[41]

In *!Viva Maria!*, in spite of the comic overtones of the scene, French Maria's right to the leadership of the Mexican peasants, who are too apathetic to fight, is established through her association of herself with traditions of Western world and European leadership. This happens in a scene in the film where French Maria performs of the 'Friends, Romans, countrymen' speech from William Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* to the Mexican peasants following Flores death. In this scene she takes on the role of leader of the peasants. During the Algerian war, discourses about the ability of the colonised to act for themselves emerged from the most liberal elements of French society. Few advocated complete independence for the colonies even as late as the mid-fifties. Intellectuals called for reform but stopped short of independence. They defended their proposals for reform with arguments that were in accord with traditional ideology of French imperialism.[42] There was an idea that fair treatment would solve many of the problems. Moralist critics feared that, because of the immaturity of the colonial peoples, the external threat of other imperialism and the internal threat of under-development, separation from France would be a misfortune for colonial peoples.[43] This view came under serious threat in the 1950s as a result of the wars in Korea and in Algeria in particular. These wars had a considerable effect on views of violent campaigns for independence, including those conducted by Irish nationalists. The rejection of French culture in the rhetoric of the nationalist movements like the Algerian Front Liberation Nationale bred confusion in the hearts of many French liberals who were otherwise critical of their government's military campaign in the colonies. Their humanist principles which inspired their anti-colonialism, prevented them

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41'L'Irlandaise', *Le Monde Radio-Télévision*, France, 25th of February, (1993), p. 13.
42Talbot, quoted in Dine, (1994), p. 143.

from moving to an anti-imperialist position. Underlying this humanist position was the belief that the overseas peoples shared their idealisation of France and its culture and that these peoples would want to maintain that contact.[44] Algeria produced a crisis in this thinking because Algerian Liberation drew on non-Western traditions for the creation of its new nation.

The Terrorist

!Viva Maria! demonstrated a shift in attitude to Ireland from the earlier films. Given that Ireland was one of the first countries to assert its right to self-rule outside the Empire, the figure of the Irish revolutionary took on a new and more disturbing role against the context of post-war France and of its problems with its former colonies.[45] In *!Viva Maria!* the figure of the Irish revolutionary has sinister overtones, at least at the start of the film, as Maria Fitzgerald O'Malley's father conducts a bombing campaign against the English. The opening song of the prologue criticises his efforts as the work of a fanatic and condemns O'Malley's use of the little girl to carry out dynamite attacks. Maria 11 relates the motivation behind the father's actions to French Maria. She tells her that his three brothers were shot by the English in front of Cork Cathedral and that she herself was born in prison. Maria 11 remarks that fighting the British runs in her family, her great-grandfather having fought at Waterloo on the side of the French. She declares, however, that she was coerced into taking part in the bombing and that she had to obey. O'Malley, the father, emerges from her description as a puritanical fanatic.

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[43]Ibid. , p. 146.

[44]Sorum, (1977), pp. 241.

[45]This was also true of post-war American films. Ford's revolutionary heroes of films like *The Plough and The Stars,* (1936), had all but disappeared from Hollywood screens only to surface again in the South of the Border Westerns.

Audience response was generally very negative to O'Malley. In reviews, he is never described as a revolutionary but as 'an anarchist', an 'Irish terrorist' and a 'terroriste irlandais profondément anglophobe'.[46] *!Viva Maria!*'s image of Irish republicans is consistent with tropes of revolt as a pathological act. This notion is furthered by proposal that Maria O'Malley, her family and by extension, the Irish people, are genetically disposed to violent action. We are given a picture of a young woman not naturally inclined to engage in anarchy but led into it by a sinister father figure. Her republican history establishes Maria11's expertise in armed struggle; an expertise of greater significance as the film goes on.[47] There is considerable difference between the labelling of Maria 11's combative actions within the Irish narrative at the start of the film and her engagement with French Maria 1's campaign. It becomes clear that, while the film does not condemn all revolutionary action and indeed celebrates it through its support of the peasant rebellion, it condemns Irish nationalism as espoused by Mr. Fitzgerald and, therefore, nationalism as a driving force in the struggle for revolution. Such contradictions are reflective of ambivalence in the function of Ireland as sign for imperialist cultures. To determine that function, it is necessary to examine the relationship between the Irish as colonised and new 'post-colonial' empires in the western genres of the 1950s and 1960s.

For twentieth century western cinema, the Ireland text generates disturbing paradigms of successful uprising, anti-colonist behaviour and triumphant anti-state campaigns. Irish figures in South of the Border Westerns are indicative of a crisis in identity, a function similar to their signification in French film. Their history as colonised is not always

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[46]See *Les Chiffres de l'Année,* (TV review for 1990, Médiamat, p.v.). O'Malley is also described as a terrorist in the review of *!Viva Maria!* by Stephan Eichenberg on the IdBM database, World Wide Web: http://us.imdb.com, *!Viva Maria!*, p. 2.

[47]'Au cours d'une tournée dans un pays d'Amerique latine fortement agité, Maria 2 apprend à Maria I comment mener une révolution'. Marine Landrot, *!Viva Maria!*, in *Télérama* No.2390 -1-11-95, (Paris:1995), p.151

successfully masked in American pioneer myths and their function as sign straddles borders of anxiety, transgression and deviance as a result. The consistency of this representation is striking. Like the Irish monks in France of the eighteenth-century, unwanted exile is part of the 'Irish Emigrant' sign in America. This sense of loss is a theme of John Ford's *The Searchers* and has its counterpart in the rural idyll of *The Quiet Man.* It is particularly strong where the Ireland text crosses colonial stories in South America. Robert Parrish directed *The Wonderful Country* in 1959, five years before *!Viva Maria!.* The unsettled protagonist, whose surname 'Brady' indicates Irish origins, is forced to travel between two cultures, American and Mexican. The title is ironic as the gun-fighting hero, played by Robert Mitchum, oscillates between desire to identify with Mexico or to succumb to the drive of the dominant American expansionist culture. Eventually he chooses America, 'the wonderful country'. Irish Maria chooses France and not Ireland nor Mexico when she becomes a 'little woman of Paris' but her allegiance is reserved and not always given unconditionally.

Military discourses and the South of the Border Western.

The myth of integrity in America's relationship with Mexico is used to quell, contain and re-channel the colonised's unrest in the South of the Border Westerns. South of the Border narratives, unlike other Westerns and the South American Gangster/Drug genres, rarely encode the Mexican characters with the disruptive rebelliousness of the colonised because such a characterisation would jeopardise paternal notions of Mexicans as victims saved by the strong men of the United States. In *Major Dundee* the rebel role is given to the Irish characters. Like *Vera Cruz,* French colonist troops are cast in the role of 'baddies' in *Major Dundee.* They are given little, if any characterisation - we only see the effect of their presence on the Mexican villagers who are starving to death as a result of French confiscation of their food and supplies. The

role of the French is different in *!Viva Maria!* from their role in both *Vera Cruz* and *Major Dundee* but it is not significantly different from the role of the American heroes of Peckinpah and Aldrich's films. In *!Viva Maria!*, the French have replaced the Americans as saviours of the poor and oppressed. Mexican landlords with Western/European pretensions are the evil dictators. Interestingly, while the Americans feel free to cast the French as villains, Malle does not reverse the position. The American characters in the South of the Border Westerns earn their right to lead the revolution primarily because they are constructed as the 'strong' while the Mexicans are represented as 'weak'. The strength of the Americans is not based on 'brute' force but on technology: their ability to deploy weaponry.

There is a pretty clear-cut association of professional characters in South of the Border Westerns with the military. They either have military backgrounds or they exhibit military behaviour. In *!Viva Maria!* the sequences of Maria's training as a bomber present motifs associated with paratrooper fictions of preparation for 'military manhood' such as we find in American films such as Oliver Stone's *Platoon* (1987) and construct O'Malley in this role. We are shown Irish Maria swimming through water with dynamite, struggling through jungle terrain with bombs and setting up explosions under bridges. These scenes, are, of course, very funny, because Maria II conducts all these activities in a long dress, but they do point to discourses prevalent in the genre. The professionals of the South of the Border Western represent the American military operating outside their national boundaries. Noel Carole hypotheses that these films are about what the Americans want to believe namely, that American military operations abroad are undertaken in the defence of freedom.[48] Freedom gained by revolution is rarely if ever represented as occurring independently of the military or as an advantage gained against them.

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[48]Noel Caroll, 'The Professional Western: South of the Border', in Buscombe & Pearson, (1998), p. 78.

Underlying these films is the presupposition of a principle that the justification of professional prowess rests in its service for freedom and in its stand against tyranny. Talbot identifies a similar wish in the paratrooper myth for France. He remarks on the paratrooper's claimed lack of racism as it is presented in fictional representations of the troops in Algeria. In his argument, he quotes one best-selling novel, *Les Centurions*, (Jean Lartéguy, 1960); 'We are the defenders of a type of freedom and of a new order'.[49] This is the role allocated to the French in *!Viva Maria!*. These are very complex discourses but an examination of the role of the Irish in this genre, including *!Viva Maria!,* is useful in revealing the operation of paratrooper myths for the coloniser. The Irish figures function as a bridge between the colonised and the coloniser: this happens as a result of the historical association of the Irish emigrant with mercenary soldiering. In the nineteenth and twentieth century, the Irish emigrants saw less engagement with wars on the European continent and more and more engagement with the Imperial projects of the super-powers, including the United States.

Guns for Hire: Taming the Fighting Irish.

Films like *Major Dundee* and *!Viva Maria!* implied that, if the Irish revolutionaries were ruled fairly, they could be harnessed to do 'good', not 'evil' where doing 'good' means supporting the new cultural imperialist project. *Major Dundee* narrates a tale where Irish refugees from colonialism become part of aggressive actions of imperialism against the American Indian population, carried over the border to Mexico.[50] Malle was also attracted to the problem of the participation of one group of oppressed peoples in the suppression of another during the

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[49]'Nous sommes les défenseurs d'une liberté et d'un ordre nouveau'. John Talbott in Dine, (1994), p.29.

Occupation. He dealt with that subject in *Lacombe, Lucien*, the only moment he felt was truly Marxist in his work, in spite of the fact that it also contributed to a disturbing ambivalence in that film.[51] The Irish experience is not comparable to Malle's African refugees, trapped in France in the Second World War. [52] Generally Irish roles in the conquest and colonisation of the West remain unquestioned in Irish cinema. Where the Irish Diaspora, recently described- perhaps more accurately- as the Irish Empire, involves the suppression of indigenous cultures at the expense of white colonisation, the escape from oppression in colonised Ireland serves as a justification for this act rather than a contradiction. A magnificent example of how pioneering stories involving Irish characters mask imperialist conquests occurs in Henry King's *Untamed* (1955). Released under the title *Tant que soufflera la tempete* this film was a box-office success.[53]

Untamed opens in Ireland in the famine times, around 1850. Transplanting the pioneer genre to South Africa, it is he story of Katie, an

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[50]Homi K. Bhaba has pointed out the role of the Irish in the Australian colonial project against Aboriginal culture. See Homi K. Bhaba, *The Location of Culture*, (London: Routledge, 1994), p.5.

[51]Malle described how, in his research, he discovered incidences of recruitment by the Gestapo of people from Martinique and Algeria, who, trapped in France, were faced with starvation and death. See Malle quoted in French, (1993), p. 100.

[52]Irish writer John McGahern's 1963 short story *Korea*, (translated into French in 1970), also turns on the participation of the recently de-colonised Irish in the suppression of Korean Independence by the United States. McGahern has a large readership in France. He has received the 1994 Écureuil Prize in Boredeaux, all his work has been translated into French and are available in Folio paperbacks. His novel, *The Barracks,* was a core text of the Aggregation exam in 1998. The Irish screen adaptation of *Korea*, directed by Cathal Black and released in France in 1995, discards the War of Independence setting of the original story and reworks it as a civil war story. The film's use of Vietnam genre iconography closes off the instability and anti-patriarchal elements in McGahern's story in favour of a father-son reconciliation narrative.

[53]Henry King was 'rediscovered' in France in the 1960s. King was famous for his American pioneer stories, driven by nostalgia for the mythic America of vast 'empty' spaces and stalwart pioneers, such as *Jesse James* (1939), and *In Old Chicago* (1938). French director Bertrand Tavernier did not hesitate to award him a place as one of the greatest American film directors of all time in his book, *Cinquante ans de çinéma Américain.* See Gérard Camy, 'Tant que soufflera la tempe^te', *Télérama*, No. 2334, (October 5th, 1994), p.129.

Irish red-haired heroine, who marries Shawn Kildare, a son of the local landed gentry. Before her marriage, Katie falls in love with a dashing Boer, played by screen heart-throb, Tyrone Power but he refuses her and returns to South Africa. As the famine rages, Katie's family emigrates to South Africa. She becomes caught up in achieving her destiny through the wars with the indigenous population and succeeds in gaining the big house for herself. All this happens amidst passionate encounters with her lover. Katie is, above all, a mercenary. This aspect of her character is a departure from previous manifestations of the warrior woman in Irish characters but is consistent with both the role of the Irish in European eighteenth and nineteenth-century military campaigns and in the modern western genre. Her character is further complicated by her adulterous relationship with the Boer. Adultery connotes betrayal and unreliability. The Irish warrior woman needs taming by Paul Van Riebeck, an officer of the army, before she becomes fully part of the colonial project and earns her place in the new nation of Boer South Africa. The French title implies that the characters are blown along by the winds of history –the Irish Famine- into colonialism and, thus, they are absolved of responsibility for the oppression of the colonised and their history is experienced as an adventure.

Malle often used the adventurer theme to explain the participation of his characters in historical events. Lucien in *Lacombe, Lucien*, 'falls' into the Gestapo through a series of 'accidental' events. Claude Berri in his introduction to *Lacombe, Lucien* describes these events as 'un concours de circonstances'.[54] Both Bardot and Moreau engage in the Mexican revolution through a similar series of haphazard incidents and encounters. They experience the revolution as an adventure much in the way that they experience striptease as an enjoyable consequence of an

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[54]Claude Barri & Jean-François Davy, *Les Films de ma vie: Lacombe, Lucien*, (Dust-jacket, video edition Fil à Film, 1973).

accident. This theme of chance in history has created some problems for Malle, particularly in the case of *Lacombe, Lucien* where Lucien's lack of motivation for joining the Gestapo has potential as an excuse for collaboration. For André Pierre Colombat, a troubling aspect of Malle's films comes from the feeling that key actions of his heroes are only the result of circumstances. In Colombat's view, this poses serious problems when it comes to confronting actions of the Resistance, victims, or bystanders with actions of Collaboration.[55] On the other side of the coin, Maria O'Malley's participation in resistance in *Viva Maria!* is presented as much an accident of place as Lucien's collaboration. This has curious implications for the function of the Ireland revolutionary text in the film. These two elements, the conversion of the Irish figure from terrorist to soldier and the 'bystander' idea of accidental participation historical events, are played out in the representation of Maria O'Malley in *Viva Maria!*. This representation is a two-edged sword. It has the effect of absolving the characters from blame, -and this has been a criticism lobbied against *Lacombe, Lucien.* It also of robs the characters of self-determination: they are not responsible for the actions. They are thus cast in the role of minors where the representatives of the dominant culture are teachers, father figures and leaders.

In *Major Dundee* the Irish characters are portrayed as mercenaries and dissidents of the American Civil war, alienated not only from their old country by virtue of its continued colonisation by the English but from the new Northern-led American nation which emerged following the Civil War.[56] They are difficult and unpredictable at the beginning of the film but are converted to useful soldiers through American leadership and finally become heroes of the American action. The South of The

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[55]See Colombat, (1993), pp. 270-287.

[56]Myths of the Old South are also confused in the Ireland text in the western genre. The linking of the Irish to the South's anti-abolitionist campaign serves to address the

Border films of the 1960s, like *Major Dundee,* develop the theme of the colonised as betrayer. The Irish in this film are deserters from the civil war in the States. Maria O'Malley in *!Viva Maria!* is also technically a deserter, having run from her father's war with the British. The motif of betrayal linked to the position of the colonised reflects the imperialists real difficulty in understanding their rejection by the colonised that they are trying to save in their 'civilising mission'.[57] In *Major Dundee* the relationship between the Major and his Irish soldiers shifts from their guns-for-hire attitude, driven by need, to heroic loyalty. These sequences posit the idea that unrest in the colonised, connoted by the headstrong and wilful behaviour of the Irish characters in *Major Dundee,* could be tamed and harnessed by just leadership and by military discipline. The narrative of *Major Dundee* never reveals the Irish characters as capable of leadership. When left to their own devices, they fight among themselves. Only Dundee can lead them.

Their role echoes Bardot's role for the French in *!Viva Maria!.* In both films the Irish 'terrorist' expertise is deployed in battle but the integrity, general trustworthiness and reliability of the Irish figure is consistently called into question. On hearing the revolution declared following the death of the rebel leader, Flores, Maria 11 sums up the position of the Irish figure in the genre, 'Don't count on me!'.[58] However, as the narrative progresses, she becomes trustworthy through the influence of French Maria. Irish Maria's position shifts from acting out of self-interest and survival to loyalty to her French leader, Maria I. The Irish figures play a very complex role in the South of the Border Western, both French and American. They offer the new 'emperors' possibilities of an alliance with the colonised –the Irish as victims of English 'old

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southern desire to maintain feudal relationships, based on racial exploitation, as revolutionary where such a desire is obviously counter-revolutionary.

[57]Carrie Tarr, 'French Cinema and Post-Colonial Minorities', *Post-Colonial Cultures in France*, ed. Hargreaves and McKinney, (London: Routledge, 1997), p.65.

Europe' colonisation- and mask imperialist drives in the New World context.

A lengthy section of *!Viva Maria!* deals with the rehabilitation of the terrorist character, Maria 11 and the conversion of her national allegiance from the Irish Republican text connoting fanaticism, savagery and irrational violence, to France connoting sensuality and civilisation. Maria 11 acquires French identity legitimately as part of the inheritance of her French mother who, she says, died in prison as a result of a campaign in Glasgow. Thus traditions of French and Irish republicanism are fused in Maria 11. As the narrative of the film unfolds, Maria 11's anti-colonialism figured in her Irish father's action against the Empire is neutralised and channelled into a French action against a dictatorship and the Catholic church. Maria 11's is transformed from daughter of Irish bomber to 'French' stripper. The circus part of the film functions as a containment of the instability of the rebellious colonised figure unleashed in the *!Viva Maria!*'s opening sequence. She is now a Parisian in Mexico and becomes part of a French package of femininity to be consumed eagerly by all but she maintains her military skills and repays her transformation by supporting French Maria's cause.

The transformation of the Irish Maria character and the unveiling of her body in the public arena through striptease unleash BB, Bardot's body, as sign. Bardot cuts an interesting figure for the Irish spectator. As the film progresses she moves from partnering her father in his activities as a anti-colonist bomber, to partnering French Maria 1 in a circus act, to 'accidental' stripper to explosives expert and crack-shot aide-de-camp to Maria 1's new role as the leader of a revolution. *!Viva Maria!* has been described by several reviews as Bardot's finest hour on film.[59] There are two key moments cited in the reviews as perfect examples of Bardot's

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[58]'Ne compte–pas sur moi!'.

power on screen. The first occurs during French Maria's partner's suicide when we see Bardot sticking her fingers in her ears to block out the noise of the gun as the performer kills herself and the second the moment when Bardot returns having spent a night having sex with three Mexican gentlemen. In *!Viva Maria!* the Irish character encounters sexual liberation through the influence of a representative of first world culture, the Parisian artiste, Moreau. This is a role Moreau had in French cinema culture following her performance in Louis Malle's *Les Amants* (1958). In this film, Moreau's housewife spends her days enclosed in the banal and oppressive surrounding of the bourgeois country-house and, following a roadside encounter, abandons child and husband to go with a new young lover. The reaction to *Les Amants* was very strong. It was considered scandalous. In America it was banned in several states and was the subject of an appeal at the Supreme Court.[60] Its eroticism caused a sensation in French cinema because it narrated a woman's discovery of the physical aspect of love, sex: 'Immoral, the film was also audacious. As a bourgeois woman from Dijon, Jeanne Moreau, in one night, breaks with everything. She chooses passion, a passion not only lyrical but destructive of all the values of her class but also of those designated as sex (sexed and sexual)'.[61] For the cinema industry of the 1960s in France, Jeanne Moreau came to represent an agent of the sensual world and liberation from the bourgeois notions of sexuality.[62] Alain Siritzkey,

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[59]See for example, Gordon Gow, '*!Viva Maria!*', in *Films and Filming*, (London, BFI, April 1966), p.6.

[60]Malle quoted in French, (1993), p.22.

[61]'Immoral, le film était aussi irrespectueux. Bourgeoise dijonnaise, Jeanne Moreau, en une nuit rompait avec tout. Elle choissisait la passion, une passion non seulement lyrique et destructrice des valeurs de sa classe, mais aussi désignée comme sexe, (sexuée/sexuelle)'. Audé, (1981), p.60.

[62]Moreau states that Bunuel cast her in his films as a result of seeing her in Malle's *Ascenseur pour l'échaufaud.* She said: 'J'aime la violence du surréalisme, son climat passionel en rupture avec les règles, avec ces gens désavouées, chassés. [...] Il, (Bunuel), avait le sens de la bizarrerie variée, de l'érotisme des etres humains, mais ne donnait aucune indication pour obtentir se effets'. Jeanne Moreau quoted in Marine Landort, 'Viva Moreau!', in *Télérama*, Vol. No.2390, (1st November, 1995), p. 88.

producer of the *Emmanuelle* series, recalled seeing *Les Amants* for the first time: ' I still remember the huge 'ooh!' from the entire audience when Jean-Marc Bory's head went down Jeanne Moreau's nude body and disappeared off the screen'.[63] Her role, as this quotation illustrates, was more than an agent of sexual liberation. It was also an 'initiatrice' for French spectators, a role she repeated in her relationship with Maria O'Malley in *!Viva Maria!*.

Under Maria I's tutelage, Maria O'Malley Fitzgerald takes to sex with gusto. Her conversion to French culture is not just mental but physical as well. As one critic points out, in the film 'Jeanne was not merely content to play the role of intellectual mentor (to Maria II) but also teaches her to be more physical'.[64] Uninhibited sexual appetites encoded into an Irish revolutionary figure might strike an Irish spectator as farcical. This particular contradiction however is not pointed out in any of the reviews, whether French, English, or American.[65] In other comic representations of Irish women like Ford's *The Quiet Man* (1952) and *Darby O'Gill and the Little People* (Robert Stevenson, 1959) the women are feisty and aggressive. They are, however, defined within the parameters of ordinary female sexuality in that they withhold their favours and the men must fight for them. Maria II's sexuality signifies a completely new departure in the construction of the Irish female figure.

Bardot goes to War: The Pin-Up and the Paratrooper

For the spectator, the play on discourses centring on Brigitte Bardot in 1960s French culture is one of the most attractive features of *!Viva Maria!*. The circus setting and the casting of Bardot recalled the

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[63]Mariane Gray, *La Moreau, a Biography of Jeanne Moreau*, (New York: Warner USA, 1994), p.37.

[64]'Jeanne ne se contente pas de jouer les intiatrices intellectuelles, mais apprend aussi à etre beaucoup plus physique'. Landrot, '*!Viva Maria!*', in *Télérama* No.2390 -1-11-95, (France 1995), p.151.

[65]Rockett, (1997), p. 113.

earlier *Lola Montès* in at least one review of *!Viva Maria!,* a reference to the scandal industry surrounding Bardot in the early 1960s.[66] However, by the time *!Viva Maria!* appeared, Bardot's relationship with the French public had changed considerably. Readings of Brigitte Bardot as cinema icon vary greatly. In Susan Heyward's view, representations of women transmitted through Bardot are repressive because of the way they construct femininity. Heyward concludes that Bardot's primary function in films is to be speculated and to function as object of the male gaze. Heyward reads the film which made Bardot a star, Vadim's *Et Dieu créa la femme (*1956) as an example of how dominant patriarchal ideology punishes women's attempts at agencing.[67] Malle, as a director who worked with Bardot on two films, had a different agenda from Vadim. Where Vadim saw himself as a God who created Bardot, Malle was more interested in seeing how the Bardot myth operated. Brigitte Bardot on the set of *Viva Maria!* commented on the difference between Moreau and herself: 'Jeanne is an actress, I am a phenomenon'.[68]

Nationalist discourses centre on Bardot as the incarnation of a certain kind of 'Frenchness'. Pierre De Cornes, for example, declares that: 'fortunately, there is Brigitte Bardot and there France wins hands down. No other country can boast of possessing such a pretty person'.[69] Heyward's analysis does not take into account nationalist discourses centred on Bardot. She celebrates Bardot's early retirement in 1973 as a true act of female agency against a repressive patriarchal system.[70]

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[66]Houston, (1966), p.90.

[67]Hayward, (1993), p. 177-178.

[68]Gray, (1994), p.101

[69]'Heureusement, il ya Brigitte Bardot, et là, la France gagne sur tous les tableaux. Je ne plaisante pas; aucun pays ne peut se vanter de posséder une aussi jolie personne'. Doniol-valcroze of *France-Observateur*, quoted in Pierre de Cornes, *Le çinéma français 1960-1985*, (Paris: Ed. Atlas, 1985), p.52.

[70]'Brilliant Bardot, (BB), was very clever to respond by retiring early, (in 1973), and taking all her "man-made" millions to bestow on animal welfare. What a snub, indeed'. Hayward, (1993), p.198.

Heyward concludes that thus 'Bardot BB Body Beautiful' becomes 'Bardot the Brilliant' through her actions off-screen as the saviour of animals.[71] Heyward however neglects to mention another role Bardot has in French public life following her retirement from the screen, her role as an anti-Arab campaigner and her connections with the Far Right in France.[72]

To return to *Et Dieu créa la femme,* gendered readings did not generally explore other themes in the film- the presence of the figure of the colonised in the text for example. The French woman's double-positioning as an inferior gender but superior race and as desirable within the frame of the film leads Bardot's biographer, Sean French, to interpret the final scene of the film where Bardot's character dances 'with' black musicians' as a reference to the Algerian war:

> It was in this context of anti-colonist revolt, that Bardot tormented her weak husband by flirting with an African. Yet even this shallow bigotry can be taken as a further example of Brigitte Bardot's uncompromising power, embodying the untameable sexual instinct in all its enticing excitement but, also, its unheeding cruelty and its perversity, its forbidden fantasies. If she had started a revolution, she took no responsibility for where it would lead.[73]

Three important discourses, colonialism, the sexual revolution and nature -'the untameable'- thus centre on one body: Bardot.

Bardot as star of *Et Dieu créa la femme* embodies fantasies of power, action, virility and cruelty. She is represented as aware of but unrestricted by, conventions of morality and plays on her power as a white French woman in contact with subaltern man. The black musicians are not encoded with personality and are there to heighten Bardot's

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[71]Ibid., p.198.

[72]Seán French, *Brigitte Bardot*, (London: Pavilion, 1994), p.33.

[73]Seán French, (1994), p. 53.

association with primitive appetites and freedom from conventional morality. Bardot dances with her reflection in the mirror and the black musicians are mere 'circular mirrors' of her exotic personality. The word 'revolution' for Bardot in these films means sexual revolution but never implies revolt of the colonised represented by the African in the Vadim scene referred to above, nor indeed women. The woman's temporary liberation in this scene ends with Bardot slapped back into her place. The African figure is thus not only subjugated by Bardot's body but also by her subject role as French woman, the property of a French man and France.

Bardot's Irish Maria could be seen to be yet another example of an over-active sexualised 'nymphette' whose awakening appetite is only satisfied by three colonial male figures [three Mexicans] and who discovers 'by accident' the material advantage of stripping off and revealing the Body Beautiful to the male audience. In spite of the setting, this uninhibited sexuality is more in tune with the swinging 1960s than with the turn of the century. There is also the suggestion that the sexualised behaviour is more permissible among the 'naturally libidinous' non-western cultures of Orientalist discourse, a theme that also resonates in Bardot's dance with the black musicians at the end of *Et Dieu créa la femme.* In *!Viva Maria!,* Bardot, 'la salope', is presented as the amateur who 'accidentally' discovers the enjoyment of taking clothes off for an audience. The striptease sequence of *!Viva Maria!* is invariably highlighted as an attraction in the reviews of the film.[74] In spite of the Mexican setting, the striptease in the film is essentially French striptease, performed against a painted backdrop of Paris. O'Malley's Irish identity is not discarded here, however, as it signifies naivete and ignorance. She is

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[74]Typical of the kind of response the film generates is this review: 'Initially, the two Marias are a song-and -dance team travelling with a circus throughout Central America. During one of their performances, Maria 2's skirt accidentally tears, turning their

briefly 'tamed' through her adoption of the female apparel of the showgirl but she is stripped ceremoniously and publicly of this clothing. Roland Barthes in his famous essay on the subject comments that French striptease is based on a contradiction: 'woman is desexualised at the very moment she is stripped naked'.[75] The accidental invention of striptease unveils Bardot as sign and serves to desexualise the character.

In the Latina context, the 'liberated' white bodies of the French women on stage triumph over the local women. In the next sequence a new Bardot behaves as a sexual predator, a liberty Bardot has conferred on the western woman through her sexual revolution. The fusion of the Irish revolutionary cum professional soldier and the body of Bardot as sign signal new horizons in the Ireland text for French cinema. These contradictions are closely aligned to the Irish women revolutionary text identified in Chapter Three. As Malle pointed out, in France, Bardot was 'a Joan of Arc for some, a slut for most'.[76] In *!Viva Maria!*, the Joan of Arc mode dominates the second part of the film when Maria II reverts to her warrior past. Bardot is offered primarily as a masculine figure in the film.[77] Bardot not only dresses but acts like a man in her sexual behaviour, a specialist in one night stands, chalking up her conquests as notches in her belt.

Bardot as icon mediates 'man as animal', an absence of rational motivation, creature of 'pure' instinct. When she breaks into French Maria's caravan, Bardot as Maria O'Malley eats like a wild cat, dribbling her milk down her chin while warding off any approach with a knife.[78]

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performance into a successful striptease routine. Of course they become notorious strippers and people come from miles to see their show'. Weisser, (1992), p. 347.

[75]Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, Annette Lavers, trans. (London: Paladin UK, 1972, first published Paris: Éd. De Seuil, 1957), p.88.

[76]Quoted in French, (1993), p. 33.

[77]'Bardot disguises herself as a man just as Jeanne Moreau did in her comic performance on the Iron Bridge in Jules and Jim'. Landrot, (1995), p.151.

[78]'The Bardot figure here is all animal, instinct, a creature of action unimpeded by conscience'. Gow, (1966), p. 6.

Jeanne Moreau, interviewed on set, described her co-actress as an animal, a different species to herself.[79] Many reviews of *!Viva Maria!* reflect this celebration of Bardot as action, as pure will, as animal instinct. She is more often referred to as 'child' than woman. Vadim talks of her in these terms: 'When we were together I noticed that she had a natural gift for lying. Not in a malicious way but in a simple and logical way, like a child which was designed to make life correspond to her wishes. That part of her which is a child is another example of her total egoism. But it is the innocent ego of an infant'.[80] This absence of informed political will is frequently exercised as an apology for Bardot's later engagement with the far-right and has the double-thrust of generating paradigms of freedom as freedom from social responsibility and immunity from the burden of guilt and consequences. In the French media, Bardot's sexuality was represented as male: 'she was not political but she had decided to live her life as a man might: to be the equal of men on every level'.[81] By 1965 Bardot seemed to have succeeded achieving in the old counter-culture dream of pure will undiluted by civilisation, an idea mediated through the animal imagery used to describe the actress in French culture. Her relationship with the press involves a particular interpretation of freedom as freedom from moral obligation and social responsibility, the kind of freedom Arendt described as the secret dream of the middle-classes.[82]

General de Bardot.

Bardot embodied a 'new' France. She and not Moreau, became Marianne, the figurehead. By the 1960s, 'la salope' had become a symbol of the Fifth Republic and the icon of a new and vital France led by its

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[79]Moreau quoted in Gray, (1994), p.101.

[80]Roger Vadim quoted in Jeffrey Robinson, *Bardot – Two Lives,* (London: Simon & Schuster, 1994), p.341.

[81]Ibid., p. 341.

[82]Arendt, (1973), p.193.

'founding father', De Gaulle. De Cornes, an avid fan, enthused that: 'The myth Bardot incarnated, founded on a sort of liberating innocence, was more profound because it prepared the ground for the sociological revolution of the end of the 1960s'.[83] In his view, the Bardot myth gained 'official consecration' when the illustrator Aslan was contracted to replace the Mariannes adorning the Town Halls of France with new models based on Bardot's face. De Cornes quotes De Gaulle who, on being asked his opinion of the new Marianne, declared: 'This young person has the simplicity of good faith'.[84] The encoding of Maria II with revolution and with sexual liberation are indices of new meanings for Bardot as sign in 1960s France. Andy Martin, in *Waiting for Bardot*, compares Bardot to De Gaulle in a very questionable analogy:

> 'General De Gaulle was the French man who had evicted the invader and liberated France from Nazi oppression. Bardot [...] stood for another liberation, this time sexual, from centuries, from millenia, of repression. In a sense BB was the natural successor to De Gaulle. In *Babette s'en va-t-en guerre*, she turns soldier to save England from a German invasion by seducing the Nazi High command. It was inevitable that she should be the model for a new bust of Marianne, the symbol of the republic which adorns town halls throughout France, presiding over every marriage in the country'.[85]

The discourse of Bardot as the Marianne of the Fifth republic constructs an image of Liberty transformed into nation.

A very popular eighteenth-century print of 'Republican France' (at the Musée Carnavalet) offering her breast to all Frenchmen is a forerunner of the Marianne as pin-up. However, as Madelyn Gutwirth points out in her analysis of this earlier image: 'despite such consecrated symbols of equality as the level she wears between her breast, her

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[83]De Cornes, (1985), p.52.

[84]'Le Géneral de Gaulle lui-meme, prié de donner son avis, fit cette déclaration somme toute d'une affecteuse clairvoyance: "cette jeune personne a une simplicité de bon aloi",'. Ibid., p.52.

[85]Martin's book is based on his own quest for a meeting with Bardot. Andy Martin, *Waiting for Bardot*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1996), p. 49.

cockaded bonnet and the national rooster, her supremely vapid facial expression and her eloquent bosom convey their charge of sexual invitation which pruriently mocks even as it celebrates the very symbols she wears. Her carpenter's level signifying equality is not for her: rather it represents the sharing of her. We can rest assured that this Marianne is not thinking of her rights'.[86] Gutwirth writes that the pin-up Marianne contains 'nothing of the complex sibylline otherness' of the revolutionary women feared by the newly empowered male establishment following the French revolution. Bardot as Maria O'Malley also contains nothing of the troubling otherness signified by figures of Irish women revolutionaries, or by the women of the French Resistance in the Second World War. In spite of the Irish cap and the sticks of dynamite, she remains the ideal of 'hourglass womanhood'.[87] Bardot as Marianne is, to adopt Gutwirth's phrase, 'France as a pure object of male desire'. [88] Andy Martin gives Bardot this status of the sublime and unattainable ideal: 'Of course she had married a fascist. Were not all men, one way or another, fascists? And was it not her destiny to marry all men? Therefore her marriage was an exemplary one, an abbreviation, a synopsis. The one stood for many'.[89] This Marianne is very different from allegorical stateliness and indeed represses the complexity of allegory, advocating a 'natural' symbolism. The result, in terms of the Ireland text in *!Viva Maria!,* is the submergence of Irish history and of female sexuality in favour of a highly ambivalent military prowess combined with male desire.

Bardot's Irish terrorist credentials in *!Viva Maria!* links military action with raw physicality and sexuality. In cinema, this combination is usually embodied by male figures, such as in American films of Vietnam.

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[86]Madelyn Gurtwith, 'The Rights and Wrongs of Women', in *Representing the French Revolution*, James A. Heffernan, ed. (Cambridge, MA: Uni. Press of New England, 1992), p.164.

[87]Martin, (1996), p. 59.

[88]Gurtwith, (1992), p.164.

The primary function of the Irish figure is to provide expertise on the art of war for Moreau's French Maria's campaign. Bardot's character does not offer any reflection on the revolution and is not politicised in any way in spite of the political background of de-colonisation. This is a decided weakness in the film. As we have seen, the absence of political motivations for the central character's actions has generated problems for Malle in other films, particularly with *Lacombe, Lucien*. Colombat describes Malle as a filmmaker who leaves dangerous gaps in his representation of figures in historical events of whom he had had no direct experience: the young peasant in *Lacombe, Lucien* and here, the figure of the Irish woman revolutionary in *!Viva Maria!*.[90] These gaps have left his work open to accusations that they are dangerously close to right wing discourses.

The absence of any real political motivation for the Bardot character's action contradicts Philip French's comparison of *!Viva Maria!* to Sergio Leone's *Giu La Testa!* (1971).[91] French describes the plot of Leone's film as a story 'about an IRA explosive's expert politicising a Mexican during the revolution' and goes on to say that the relationship described in *Giu La Testa* is 'like the Bardot figure with Jeanne Moreau'.[92] Réne Prédal frames his description of the two women characters in these oppositions, 'two complimentary images of women, the instinctive and the cerebral'.[93] Moreau's Maria is not Mexican but French and it is she who persuades Bardot's Maria to engage with the Revolution when the Irish Maria would prefer to drop the campaign. Some of the old problem of the denial of women's ability to conduct war is reflected in *!Viva Maria!*. Moreau as French woman has never

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[89]Martin, (1996), p. 170.
[90]Colombat, (1993), p.286.
[91]French, (1993), p. 50.
[92]Ibid., p. 50.

conducted war and therefore needs the legitimacy of the Irish female revolutionary's experience. The Irish Maria is part of the revolution but at no stage do we get the impression that she is engaged in the revolution as anything other than a professional soldier and as an accident of joining the circus.

The role of Bardot and Moreau in *!Viva Maria!* was read as two approaches to Revolution by European audiences. Malle commented that: 'in socialist countries, the picture was incredibly well received. It was taken as a metaphor for Stalinism: Fassbinder explained to me once that at Berlin University they were fascinated by the film. It was at the time of those radical student movements and they saw in the heroines the two different approaches to revolution. Bardot is action -'Let's do it', armed struggle, terrorism. The other one, Moreau tries to achieve her goals legally, to change society without violence'. [94] In *!Viva Maria!*, the masculine encoding of Bardot's character over-rides the connotations of her as 'slut' and gives it a new meaning of virility and vitality. These aspects of the Ireland text connect into reactionary views of history and action.

Bardot's Maria has the 'real credentials' as a revolutionary because she had taken part in the Irish fight for decolonisation. The female character's ability as a soldier is made credible by her previous training. Publicity for her film *Babette s'en va en guerre* (Christian-Jacque, 1960) showed her in paratrooper uniform, with a helmet, camouflage and full metal jacket. John Talbot, in his essay, 'The Myth and Reality of the Paratrooper in the Algerian War', compares the French paratrooper to Bardot: 'Indeed in the France of the 1950s, the paratrooper was as celebrated a figure as Brigitte Bardot. Like Bardot, he fulfilled escapist fantasies. As the retreat from the empire created deep divisions in French

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[93]'Les deux images complémentaires de la femme, l'instinctive et la cérébrale'. Prédal, (1989), p.67.

politics and society, the paratrooper became as much a political symbol as one of sex, violence and adventure'.[95] Many of the paratrooper myths in the time of the Algerian war could be attached to Bardot's character in *!Viva Maria!*. The film celebrates Bardot's sexual exploits, a triumph of her virility. Like Bardot, paratroopers are imaged as animals: panthers, wild cats: ' whether he be a wild animal or an avenging angel, or both, the Para is clearly not like lesser mortals'.[96] Bardot said she felt more at home in Mexico than in France because it was, in her words, a wilderness, a country without history.[97] Her statements to the French press while on the set of *!Viva Maria!* echo the paratrooper rejection of Western civilisation as corrupt. Like the paratroopers, she is represented as indifferent to fashion and to social convention, almost ascetic.

The index of primitivism in her sign resonates what Freud has described as anti-culture. Civilisation should, in Freud's view, be driven by fraternity not patriarchy. The ideal of society is not liberty of the kind represented by Bardot but equality of treatment for all members of society- in a word, justice. For Freud hostility against the obligations of society, the restraint of a culture and civilisation on self-interest, expresses itself in envying primitive people who appear to be happier than civilised man (but who really are not, says Freud –they are probably worse off) and in a desire to regress to this imaginary state. Interestingly he also comments that resentment against civilisation also manifests itself in the other worldliness of religion, as well as many other forms, notably crime and anti-social actions.[98] As we have seen with Musso's *Le*

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[94]Malle quoted in French, (1993), p. 52.

[95]See Dine, (1994), p. 29.

[96]Ibid., p.29.

[97]Jean-Claude Carrière quoted in Prédal, (1989), p.67.

[98]Freud was preoccupied with questions of society in his later work, a move away from the concentration on sexuality and the private sphere of his early writings. It is at this point he began to run foul of Nazi Germany. His analysis constructs a resistance to many fascist discourses. See Sigmund Freud, *Civilisation and its Discontents/ Das*

Puritain, Ferriter's relationship with the world runs along these lines. The romance of the primitive was very virulent in right-wing cultures of the 1930s. The key text linking Ireland to the primitive is Robert Flaherty's 1935 film *Man of Aran*. This fantasy of primitive Ireland will also surface in Boisset's *Taxi Mauve* in post-1968 France. In French fiction about Algeria, the representation of the paratrooper as anti-civilisation functions to prevent attribution of culpability to the paratroopers for their actions in the field of battle. It also assists their construction as martyrs of civilisation/home if the action is a failure as it was for the Americans in Vietnam. In these oppositions, for civilisation/home read female and for primitive/wilderness read male. In the American South of the Border films this opposition resonates in the negative portrayal of rebellion. Inevitably in this genre the revolutionary impulse is drowned in a sea of blood and the military engagement only serves to heighten the paratrooper character's profound disgust for humanity. The negative representation of revolution in the paratrooper genre is consistent with representations of revolution in cinema in general. This remains as true of the Irish Rebellion text in cinema as of other revolutions. Does *!Viva Maria!*, a film which plays on the Bardot-paratrooper link through its deployment of the Ireland text in the South of the Border genre, function as a sort of cultural paratrooper for conservative fantasies of France's relationship with recently decolonised countries? The answer to this question lies in the film's treatment of the theme of revolution.

Who are the Good Guys?

The fact that revolutions are not even conceivable outside the domain of violence is enough to set them apart from all other political phenomena.[99] Arendt contends that the primary feature of revolutions, the

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Unbehagen in der Kultur, (Vienna, 1932, English version, London: Hogarth press, 1950).

[99]Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution*, (London: Faber & Faber, 1963), p.9.

element that distinguishes them from war, is they are always concerned with freedom. The paucity of films of international origin which deal with the Irish 1916 revolution itself and the struggle for independence which followed it is surprising. One might suspect that this absence is to be expected in the case of English cinema. The fact remains, however, that, in the United States too, the Irish War of Independence, in contrast to the Civil War or the war of partition has not been found to be a substantial theme in the many 'Irish' films produced by Hollywood. There are only three box-office films on the subject produced in America, two works by John Ford, and the recent *Michael Collins* by Neil Jordan (1990). Representations of Ireland's War of Independence are relatively rare in American culture. Eleven films were made about earlier Irish rebellions set further back to the land wars of the nineteenth-century. In terms of attempts at revolution, the films deal with 1798 or with the story of Robert Emmett. These revolutions could be described as failures and this pattern continued in the post-Independence period. Representations of the Irish rebellions, if they appear at all, in both British and American films, with the exception of John Ford, condemn the violence of the revolutionary impulse and call for the rationalism of parlimentarianism. This remains true, as John Hill has argued, of recent mainstream Irish films as much as for 'foreign' films.[100] In Hill's view, Irish filmmakers, in particular Pat O'Connor in *Cal (*1984) and Niall Jordan in *Angel* (1985) have carried this British tradition into contemporary Irish cinema.

In Irish culture in general, political scientists have noted that the post-revolution leaders were equally slow to vaunt the violent origins of self-determination or the revolutionary elements of the 1916 rebellion. These were played down to the extent that Irish leaders were able to play

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[100]Hill, (1998), p.156.

an important role in the politics of the League of Nations, perhaps the high point in the acceptance of the Irish revolution as 'acceptable'.[101] Arendt has this to say on the problem of revolutions and national cultures: 'national sovereignty, that is the majesty of the public realm itself as it had come to be understood in the long centuries of absolute kingship, seemed in contradiction to the establishment of a republic. In other words, it is as though the nation-state, so much older than any revolutions, had defeated the revolution in Europe even before it had made its appearance'.[102] In *Cinéma et histoire,* Ferro's critique of western film echoes Arendt's theory of the nation-state and revolution, in particular in the cinema of the French Revolution. He underscores the tendency of western cinema to either represent this revolution in a negative light or, as was more often the case, to avoid depicting it altogether: 'In the first place one observes that the Soviet film industry has not produced one film on the French revolution. Secondly one observes, in the case of French revolution, the almost total absence- apart from *La Marseillaise* by Jean Renoir- of films which are for the most part favourable to it'.[103] German commentators on the French Revolution at the time it was unfolding in France feared most the link between the march of the metaphorical slaves in Paris, women and the lower classes and the rebellion of actual slaves in the colonies as a threat to World order.[104] The revolutionary text is, therefore, a threatening text, one dominant cultures make every effort to contain or avoid. The evidence of that avoidance, for Marc Ferro, can be found in the very small number of films dedicated even to the American Revolution itself. He argues that

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[101] Katherine Chorley cited in Peter Calvert, *Revolution*, (London: Pall Mall, 1970), p.99.

[102] Arendt, (1963), p.16.

[103] 'En premier lieu on observe que le çinéma soviétique n'a réalisé aucun film sur la Révoluiton franc5aise. [...] Une deuxième observation concernant la Révolution française est l'absence totale – sauf *La Marseillaise* de Jean Renoir – de films qui lui soient globalement favorables'. Ferro, (1993), p. 255.

the reason for this discredit in the cinema not only stems from arguments about definitions, -1783 as War of Independence but not Revolution- but also from America's relationship with England: 'A film on the Revolution of 1783 should evoke the war against England. But this act of birth does not please the Americans, who prefer to do treatments of the War of Secession, their civil war. The reason could be subconscious, that the ruling class of America, the W.A.S.P. (white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant) does not want to break its filial relations with England: if it does so, the non-W.A.S.P (Italians, Jews, Slaves, Blacks, etc.) will affirm with greater force their right not to be second class communities'.[105] Ferro further states that the theme of a film has less importance than its treatment and that the filmmakers who, in their treatment of the revolutionary phenomenon, valorise it rather than cast doubts on it, could be counted on the fingers of one hand. By this criterion, *!Viva Maria!*, although comic in tone, is an unusual film in that it ends on a note of optimism.

!Viva Maria!'s treatment of the revolutionary theme demonstrates a marked departure from the South of the Border genre. While it offers us a version of the paratrooper myth in Maria O'Malley and while the film's opening sequences condemn the actions of Maria O'Malley's nationalist father, the closing sequences of the film offer the spectator a celebration of revolution. The revolution led by the circus troupe is a positive action. *!Viva Maria!* contains a counter-discourse to the fatalism which marks paratrooper narratives. It does this through a shift in form in the second part of the film and through its deployment of theatrical themes in the narrative. *!Viva Maria!* differs markedly from other films in the genre in

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104 See Heffernan, (1992).

105'Un film sur la Révolution de 1783 devrait évoquer la guerre contre l'Angleterre. Or cet acte de naissance-là ne plait pas aux Americains –qui préfèrent traiter de la guerre de Sécession, leur guerre civile. La raison pourrait etre inconsciente, que la classe dirigeante américaine, les W.A.S.P. ne veut pas rompre ses liens filiaux avec l'Angleterre: si elle le faisait, les non-WASP, (Italiens, Juifs, Slaves, Noirs, Etc.), affirmerait avec plus de force leurs droits à ne pas etre des communautés de deuxième classe'. Ferro, 1993), p. 245.

its treatment of human relationships. The narrative of South of the Border Western is based on the binary opposition of good/bad. This good and bad reproduces the unacknowledged violence inherent in the binary thinking that positions the coloniser against the colonised. The Americans are represented as the good, the noble speakers and the Mexican peasant is positioned as loyal servant to the American master, incapable of making action-guiding judgements of their own. The genre reflects the romance of the marginal which leads to a Manichean universe of absolute opposites, barely responsive to the actual complexities and over-determination of the situation under determination.[106] Lancaster as the professional gunslinger Dolworth in another South of the Border Western, *The Professionals* (Richard Brooks, 1966) sums up the ideological opposition of good and bad as he attempts to answer the question, 'what were the Americans doing in a Mexican revolution anyway?'. He replies; 'Maybe there's only one revolution, since the beginning. The good guys against the bad guys. Question is: who are the good guys?'. The answer is the Americans. They save the day and restore order in the closure of the film.

Coyne in *The Crowded Prairie* quotes this dialogue as an example of how this film opposed the dominant thinking of its time, however, the quotation is indicative of a disquieting trend in the genre.[107] The reduction of the Mexican revolution, a real historical event, into simply one component of a mythic and continuous battle against evil waged by the good Americans recalls what Frederic Jameson has termed the ideological confusion between nature and history which surfaces at certain interfaces of contemporary culture. Slippage in the Lancaster character's comment is indicative of a not-yet-articulated contradiction between politics and metaphysics: 'between the 'nightmare of history' –

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[106]Steven Connor, *Postmodern Culture*, (Oxford: Oxford Uni Press, 1989), pp.236-7.
[107]Coyne, (1997), p. 121.

still attributable to the cruelty of other people –and some more ontological vision of an implacable nature in which 'God is the first criminal, since he created us mortal'.[108] Jameson points out the danger of reading such articulations as radical. *The Professionals'* confusion of the word revolution mutates the potential of a representation of the Mexican Revolution as an analysis which might be capable of energising its spectators for praxis and change, into an ultimately complacent vision of the meaninglessness of organic life. In Jameson's view, the only response to this mutation can be some private 'ethical' stoicism of 'a myth of Sisyphus'. [109] Indeed reviews of *The Professionals* comment that 'the scenery is clearly more profound than the script and the sense of magnitude in the environment more engrossing than that in the plot'.[110] We can see the stoicism and fatalism perpetuated in the end of *The Professionals* when Dolworth [Lancaster] comments: 'the revolution? When the shooting stops and the dead are buried and the politicians take over, it all adds up to one thing, a lost cause'. Aldrich's *Vera Cruz* is similarly pessimistic. It offers a generally cynical view of human nature. Burt Lancaster represents the bad, while Cooper is the good guy. Cooper's goodness, however, cannot be presumed to save society. The characters of *Vera Cruz* are predominately bad: 'Vera Cruz introduces an ironic distance between two people who are living the same adventure but driven by different values. The setting up of the mirror image of good and bad -of Gary Cooper and of Burt Lancaster -transforms the history of the gold convoy across Mexico by two adventurers (...) into a mortal game in which each one searches the negation of his own choices in the other'.[111]

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[108] Jameson, (1992), p. 135.

[109] Ibid., p. 135.

[110] Bosley Crowther, quoted in Coyne, (1997), p.133.

[111] '*Vera Cruz* introduit une ironique distance entre deux personnages qui vivent la meme aventure selon des valeurs opposées. La mise en miroir du bon et du méchant –de Gary Cooper et de Burt lancaster – transforme l'histoire du convoi d'or escroté à travers le mexique par deux aventuriers en proie aux memes convoitisés que ceux dont ils

Thus, in the film, the revolution becomes a duel between two personalities and the revolutionary action as a communal struggle for liberty loses its meaning.

The genre's binary opposition of good and evil is not reproduced in *!Viva Maria!*. In many of Malle's more celebrated films, the central characters progress through a desire to conform, to be with the group, through to self-awareness to resistance.[112] The characters are alienated but collaborate in evil through an absence of knowledge. *!Viva Maria!* constructs Irish Maria's assistance of her father in his fanatical bombing campaign as another example of how people might behave in an 'immoral' fashion through ignorance. The lyrics of the opening song of *!Viva Maria!* would seem to imply that the Irish Maria's attack on the British posts is the action of someone who does not know any better, someone who has no particular perspective on her actions. The characters of Malle's film are not particularly evil but fall into evil by following the dominant culture. While this position is problematic, as we have seen, there are redeeming aspects to Malle's attitude because it resists fatalism. Evil in Malle's terms is banal and comes from class-based politics of selfishness. It is not an apocalyptic organic evil but definitely man-made. There is therefore the possibility of choosing to do good. Furthermore, the 1910 revolution itself as a product of histories of oppression and as an agent for change is celebrated in *!Viva Maria!* where in an overwhelming majority of American films, it is represented as catastrophe. Unlike *Vera Cruz*, *!Viva Maria!*'s revolution is worthwhile. Much of the humour of the film stems from the idea of women taking over the 'male' role of leadership. *!Viva Maria!* imagines how a revolution might succeed and

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doivent le protéger, en un jeu mortel ou` chacun cherche en l'autre le négatif de ses choix'. Olivier-René Veillon, *Le Çinéma Américain*, 1945-1960, (Paris: Éd. De Seuil, 1984), p.18.

112'Pour moi, faire un film consiste à prendre un personnage à un certain moment de son existence, à le suivre un temps alors qu'il lui arrive quelque chose qui le change et le

how a female French presence might be one of solidarity with another oppressed group. We are inclined to accept this quite radical point of view because the film makes us laugh.

Counter Discourse in *!Viva Maria!*: Performing the Revolution

!Viva Maria! is not simply a comic re-make of *Vera Cruz* with women instead of men. It is a pastiche of the former film. Maria I is not playing the professional soldier role. Moreau's Maria is primarily an actor and circus performer. These skills, her theatrical background, become part of the spectacle of revolution constructed by the film. She is a 'a ham', thus the film lampoons the liberator role, so readily adopted by De Gaulle in his visits to 'the developing' countries.[113] Bardot's power as an actor stems from the public perception that she is not acting. Her screen persona and her private self are one. She is not acting and therefore 'real'.[114] De Cornes saw Moreau's theatricality as a problem: 'In *!Viva Maria!*, the unfortunate Jeanne Moreau submits to a harsh test: alongside a woman who **lives**, an actress who performs cannot escape appearing ridiculous and counterfeit, the truth of one unpityingly denounces the lie of the other'.[115] The circus theme serves to counter and to poke fun at the ideology latent in the paratrooper/professional soldier myth. Not only does *!Viva Maria!* parody Bardot as paratrooper, but it turns nationalist ideals of Irish womanhood on its head by having its heroine a sensualist, a stripper, and a philanderer to boot.

The film's revolution is performed as a circus with doves emerging from hats to carry bombs and trapeze artists mounting pyramids

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force à se reconsidere et puis je le quitte là, tout a coup'. Louis Malle quoted in Prédal, (1989), p.71.

113 Malle quoted in French, (1993), p. 53.

114 De Cornes, (1985), p.51.

115 'Dans *!Viva Maria!*, (1965), de Louis Malle, la malheureuse Jeanne Moreau fut soumise à une rude épreuve: à coté d'une femme qui **vit,** une actrice qui joue parait

to scale walls. Where there is weaponry, unlike *Vera Cruz*, it belongs to the people and emerges hidden under hens and buried in floorboards. These scenes are in the tradition of representations of revolutions. The early scenes of the film *Shake Hands with the Devil* also refer to the subterfuge of a people in revolt and show how, during the Irish war of Independence, guns were hidden in coffins and transported through the staging of mock funerals. In *!Viva Maria!* the combination of striptease, circus song, burlesque and revolution are not only celebrations of the carnivalesque as liberty, a feature of the French Revolution but have a real connection with the 'Mexican' setting of the film.

The *Zarzuela* was the most popular Mexican form of entertainment at the time of the revolution in 1910. In *Zarzuela*, the players performed obscene pastiche of classic theatre and melodramatic stories interspersed with ribald routines and erotic dance numbers. The modern Mexican playwright Usigli argued that the *Zarzuela* became the theatre of revolution for Mexicans at the turn of the century. For him, representatives of Mexico's complex cultures of the periphery found here a space in which they could perform, a space the popularity of which challenged the mainstream theatrical space where they were invisible. In 1935 Usigli wrote that the Zarzuela presented: 'lacquers, costumes from Michoacan and Oaxaca, half-breed girls from Yucatan, girls from Tehuantepec, cowboys from Tanaulipas, songs and dances from four Huastec provinces, adulterated, concocted and stylised'. He described it as a 'torrid animalistic theatre which could be more clearly defined as the national theatre of sex'. He connected this 'proverbial and nationalistic' expression with revolution. He said, 'it is a secular and vertiginous action which precedes the way of thinking which it is preparing and the thought which understands, like a blow to the face, that in the fist not just thirty years of peace but four centuries of cobwebs and subjection are

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nécessairement ridicule et contrefaite, la vérité de l'une dénoncant impitoyablement le

lurking'.[116] Maria 1's hamming up of Shakespeare in order to rouse the populace of the village to rebel brings the European theatre into this space. For Mexico at the time of Shakespeare, the European theatre exhibited a more or less uniform movement in its collective protest against medieval literature. Mexican performances of renaissance theatre were considered a major offence to the religious authorities. The author of a Mexican version of the play *The Deceiver of Seville*, the principal character of which was a Jew, was subjected to an auto da fé in 1649 under the rule of Marcos Torres y Rueda, Bishop of Yucatan and twentieth viceroy of new Spain.[117] In a much milder fashion than the Zarzuela, *!Viva Maria!* draws on the tradition of the carnivalesque and the revue to build its revolution.

The simple fact of switching genders, an old vaudeville favourite and the comic machine operating in many of cinema's most popular comedies, succeeds in breaking essentially conservative and patriarchal constructions of female sexuality deployed through the person of Bardot in her earlier films and within the frame of western genre in general. The cartoon-like character of *!Viva Maria!* receives significant attention in reviews of the film. Marine Landrot points out how such an approach contradicts the significance of its stars in 1960s French society. She states that Louis Malle takes the two most popular female stars of the day and turns them into 'comic strip floozies parachuted into a western'.[118] Women spectators enjoyed the reversal of having 'the absurdly handsome' Harrison treated as sexual object: 'helplessly chained and pinioned, half naked, to a rack in prison'.[119] The role of the French as leaders of the

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mensonge de l'autre'. De Cornes, (1985), p.51.

[116]Rodolfo Usigli, *Mexico in the Theatre,* P. Scott Wilder, trans. (Missouri: Uni. Of Missouri Press, 1976), p.118.

[117]Ibid., p.93.

[118]'Des louloutes de bandes dessinées parachutées dans un western échevelé'. Landrot, (1995), p.151.

[119]Gray, (1994), p.99.

revolution in the film is undercut by their gender but the film has not been received as misogynist by French feminist critique.[120] Gender is used to deconstruct the masculine values of the South of the Border Western typified by *Vera Cruz* and *Major Dundee*. The code of costume attached to the gender of the two 'heroes' makes their activities absurd. If the makers of the film had wished us to take the Marias seriously as leaders of the rebellion, then they would not have left Bardot in Edwardian costume, long skirts and pretty bows, as she conducts war. She would have returned, Joan of Arc like, to her male military apparel. The costume code, in the early part of the film is part of a colonial discourse that idealises France.

Created by Bernard Évein, Bardot and Moreau's costumes constitute a forceful visual statement. The clothes connote at once ultra-feminine, Parisian sophistication and, at the same time 'new' frontier costumes of the New World generically associated with the Western. The women are displayed in vivid colours of red, candy-yellow and electric pastel blues. These shades are contrasted with the Mexican peasant uniform and the dun black of the monks' costumes. *!Viva Maria!*'s costumes were instant hits on the market and generated income in spin-off sales. Evein's costumes connoted Parisian 'femininity' and the 'Cinéma des Jeunes' through Evein's association with New Wave films. He was the definitive designer of 'La Nouvelle Vague'.[121] On one level these costumes serve to emphasise the female characters as objects of desire. However 'les petites femmes de Paris' are not simply fetish objects but have a further significance as sign in the context of France's changing relationship with the world in the 1960s, particularly in terms of the cultural markets. 'La mode' is one of France's greatest cultural goods and

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[120]'Malle reste toujours interessant. Je n'y lis pas de misogynie, pas meme d'enfermement absolu dans la sphere de pensée de sa classe'. Audé, (1981), p.60.

signifies the best of French culture and civilisation. *!Viva Maria!* was a huge undertaking destined to be very commercial. The budget was two million dollars and its spin-off potential was maximised.[122] Both Moreau and Bardot's costumes were triumphantly French.

French chic in these costumes is an aggressive statement. One of the most famous photographs in the history of the fashion magazine Vogue shows a woman dressed in a design by the couturier Christian Dior standing at the foot of a the magnificent but ruined staircase of a bombed French mansion.[123] The message of the photo is clear. French fashion and thus French civilisation itself endures. It embodies both a tradition of quality and the arrogance of the avant-garde. French civilisation is, therefore, a desirable commodity. The audience of *!Viva Maria!* responded enthusiastically to this message.[124] However, the code is disrupted in the second half by the fact that the clothes the girls wear are completely unsuited to the environment and the action. The costumes become part of a playfulness which contributes to the effect of surrealism. Surrealism in the film in the register of colour, the circus elements, the music, the flowers offers a dream most reminiscent of the child's storybook or fairy-tale.[125]

Surrealism in *!Viva Maria!*

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[121]He was the creator of costumes for *Une femme est une femme,* (Godard, 1961), *Cléo de cinq à sept,* (Varda, 1961), and *L'Année derniére à Marienbad,* (Resnais, 1961), *Les Parapluies de Cherbourg,* (Demy, 1964).

[122]'No fewer than 80 licences had been granted to exploit the 1910 *!Viva Maria!* frilly pastel look in blouses, bras, knitwear, skirts, belts, swimsuits and even handbags'. Gray, (1996), p.100

[123]Jane Mulvagh, *Vogue, A History,* (London: Viking, 1988), p. 178.

[124]'Fresh and impish in turn-of-the century shirtwaists, radiating a pervasive blend of creamy femininity, amusement, healthy conceit and expert professionalism [...] Malle's script is peopled with heroes in jodhpurs wearing chequered caps and bravura moustaches'. Joanne Stang, 'Viva 'les Marias' from Paris down Mexico Way', *New York Times,* (February 14, 1965), p.17.

[125]See French, (1993), p. 53.

!Viva Maria! does not reproduce the classic narrative of a western like *Vera Cruz* but deliberately disrupts the genre and opposes reductionism and closure through parody, pastiche and surrealism. The second part of *!Viva Maria!* mocks military attachment to new technologies and superior weaponry in the professional western and in doing so, the Fifth Republic's obsession with weaponry in the form of nuclear war-heads. The celebration of new arms had been a feature of *Vera Cruz* particularly in the overlong sequence in which the Americans demonstrate their firearms skill to the French court and where Maxmillian is forced to admire the American acquisition of the latest technology. In *!Viva Maria!*, Bardot's Edwardian lady costume and her gender render her cry of 'Oh c'est la nouvelle Vickers!' farcical. For many reviewers this was one of the best gags in the film. The satire continues with Bardot carrying a cartoon like bomb to take out a fully manned canon. Bees halt the train, the ultimate symbol of progress in Western films.

!Viva Maria!'s form in the second part of the film further divides it from the ideology of *Vera Cruz*. *!Viva Maria!* is not a reworking of the genre, nor is it mere parody because it does not seek to discredit the western genre but rather to fashion something new from its style and narrative. Adorno first used the term pastiche to describe this strategy.[126] The transmission of a genre's ideology is dependent on redundancy, the predictability of the message in the text. Pastiche plays on the patterns essential to genre. James Joyce was its champion. He offered a challenge to the over-emphasis and over-evaluation of the uniqueness and individuality of style itself and in doing so challenged the idea of a unique world of English literature. The writer Raymond Queneau, of whom more in Chapter Six, points out this challenge in a comment from his heroine Zazie in *Zazie dans le Métro*: 'After all, whether it's cinema or

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[126]T. W. Adorno paraphrased in Jameson, (1992), p.82.

literature, there are not thirty-six ways of saying 'my arse'!'.[127] Malle attempted, with *!Viva Maria!* and with his earlier adaptation of *Zazie dans le métro*, a cinematic equivalent to such practices. One such example occurs in the 'crossing the border' scene referred to earlier as the circus moves from British Honduras into the mythic Republic. This last sequence also refers to British Africa through its surrealist presentation of the British guards as blacks dressed in colonial uniforms with upper class English accents engaged in outworn exaggerated English rituals of 'afternoon tea'. The scene recalls Genet's *Les Nègres* and suggests the absurdity of the continuation of such imperial behaviour. This scene is the first important indication of form-break in the film. Anti-narrative techniques in *!Viva Maria!* occur mainly in the scenes where the women encounter the representatives of patriarchy, the Dictator who desires to possess them and the Catholic priests who support him. In one of the most attractive scenes in the whole film, the two Marias are faced with the possibility of rape by the dictator, having been captured and convicted for their part in the uprising. The image literally splits, offering a duality of vision which overwhelms the dictator. The women use magic to resist, turning in circles and generating confusion, as their song, 'les petites femmes de Paris', becomes an anthem drowning out the oppressors' music. In the background skulks a collaborator, a Catholic priest.

Common Ground: Catholicism, Genre and Film History

While the denial of French history and French colonialism implicit in *!Viva Maria!* operates in a similar way to the American films in this genre, its inclusion of the Inquisition opens up common ground between French, Mexican and Irish cultures in the form of the Catholic Church text. *!Viva Maria!*'s scenes of the Inquisition introduce an anti-

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127 'Après tout, qu'il s'agisse de çinéma ou` de littérature, il n'y a pas trente-six façons de dire "mon cul"!'. Raymond Queneau, *Zazie Dans le Métro,* (Paris: Gallimard - Folio, 1991, First Published: 1939).

clerical theme not found in the 'border/Mexican adventure genre, neither of the American variety nor in the more irony-driven spaghetti western.[128] In *!Viva Maria!* the church is a target whether it is satirised through the person of the stock comic rural cleric of the local tyrant or through the encounter between the Marias and the Catholic hierarchy. The fact that the women are pitted against the Jesuits in the latter part of the film further reinforces the idea that the film has agendas at odds with Gaullist notions of France- De Gaulle was a product of a Jesuit education and a practising Christian. This new theme moves the film into the territory of the surreal and culminates in the image of a headless inquisitor walking and carrying his head under his arm. The Inquisition scenes contain sequences of surrealism of the kind most famously associated with the Spanish surrealist, Luis Bunuel. The connection between *!Viva Maria!* and Bunuel's work is commented on in several of the reviews. Malle worked with Jean-Claude Carrière, Bunuel's screenwriter on many of his most famous films, including *!Viva Maria!*, *Les Amants* and *Le Souffle au coeur*. It is interesting to look at the common concerns of these two directors, Malle and Bunuel. Both demonstrate an interest in Mexico as a location for their films and both have on one occasion or another aroused the French audience to react strongly to their highly critical representation of French society. Malle, like Bunuel, is known for the anti-clericalism of his earlier films. In spite of Réné Prédal's insistence on Malle's classicism he has also frequently included elements of surrealism in his work.[129]

There has been a tendency to describe only those texts whose central subject is a priest or a saint as 'Catholic' texts. Colin Crisp comments that it is curious that in 'a Catholic country so few directors are

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[128]Having surveyed the 600 spaghetti westerns listed by Thomas Weisser, I found no other example of the anti-clerical theme although frequently monasteries appear as sanctuaries and the occasional nun appears needing protection by the hero. See Weisser, (1992).

associated with religious themes. In Crisp's view, Bresson stands out as 'the only consistent explorer of moral and religious themes for French cinema'. He further states that of all those directors from a strongly Protestant background (the Allegrét brothers, whose father was a clergyman, Becker, Clouzot and Delannoy) only Delannoy consistently returns to an examination of religious subjects'.[130] Crisp is not here referring to the theme of Church as institution, although he deals very thoroughly with the function of the church apparatus in the chapter about the formation of audiences.[131] His definition of moral and religious themes in cinematic presentations is limited to the religious subject and his definition of Catholic directors to Bresson. This very strict definition ignores the work of filmmakers like the Spanish Bunuel -many of whose films were set in France- and Louis Malle.

Jean Claude Carrière describes Bunuel as 'an atheist nurtured on Catholicism, an anti-bourgeois yet a discreetly and charmingly bourgeois'.[132] It could be a description of Louis Malle. The recurring themes of Malle's work resonate the anxieties of the 1950s but also deal with these undercurrents in a way that is very relevant to the preoccupations of the 1960s. For these filmmakers, the late 1950s and the early 1960s was a time of liberation from the restrictions, hypocrisy and contradictions of middle-class Catholicism and its institutions. The middle class and Catholicism as subjects dominate the films of these two directors, Bunuel in particular.[133] By this time Catholicism was losing its

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[129]See Colombat, (1993), p.286.

[130]Crisp, (1993), p.319.

[131]Ibid., pp.213-66.

[132]Jean-Claude Carrière, *The Secret Language of Film,* (London: Faber & Faber, UK), p.209.

[133]He directed Moreau in *Le Journal d'une femme de chambre*, an attack on all his favourite targets, a film where, according to one French critic, Bunuel rejoiced in putting all the representatives 'd'une societé qui'il exécre' in one box: 'les bourgeois incapables de connaitre le plaisir, les gens de l'église, mielleux et frustrés et surtout, le petit peuple d'extreme droite, visqueux et cruel'. Landrot, (1995), p.151.

grip as the dominant culture of the French Republic but still remained an important influence within it, not least because of the avowed Catholicism of its head of state. For directors like Malle and Bunuel, their often-negative attitude to Catholicism was dictated by their encounters with the Church in earlier years. Their anti-Catholicism therefore stems from their personal experience as the product of a Catholic upbringing.[134]

Crisp's definition fails to account for this element in the work of these directors who, for many, are among the consistently maverick voices in French cinema. These two directors are not merely anti-clerical. Their work examines how the asceticism of the church translated into Puritanism can function as an instrument of oppression and how it twists and distorts ordinary human contact through its repressive puerile morality. As we have seen, Catholicism is closely linked with the Ireland text in France and *!Viva Maria!* is no exception to this trend. However the film demonstrates a departure in its treatment of the subject from earlier cinema presentations. This departure coincides with a shift in attitudes to the Catholic Church in France itself. A great part of the Surrealist genre as it was developed by Bunuel deals with the subject of Catholicism as a repressive state apparatus. 1960s cinema saw the emergence of a new subject: the church as part of the repressive machinery of the state under dictatorship such as we find in Bunuel's *Viridiana*. *!Viva Maria!* also combines the theme of dictatorship with the church. *!Viva Maria!* is an encounter between religious and secular cultures mediated within the boundaries of the relationship between the two Marias and secondly the encounter between the 'now-liberated' Marias and the Catholic Church as Inquisition in Mexico. There are thus two separate kinds of Catholicism dealt with in *!Viva Maria!*. The first,

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134'Louis Malle fut élève au lycée catholique d'Avon, (dirigé par les péres carmes), qui formait les enfants de l'aristocratie et de la grande bougeoisie'. Véronique Cauhapé, 'A la recherche de trois gamins déportés', *Le Monde radio/télévision'*, (Paris: Sat. 15th September, 1997), p. 19.

mediated by Irish Maria involves 'European' Catholicism and an abandonment of that Catholicism's moral code.

It might be assumed, given the earlier function of the Irish text to explore particular themes around Catholicism common to both cultures, that these later films might cast a cold eye on a now lost France, a nation where Catholicism was a major force. The anti-clericalism films of the post-war period represent Catholicism as an adherence to an out-moded primarily primitive belief system. This adherence, often mediated through the female characters, is then set in opposition to the civilised and liberating humanism of the representatives of more 'developed' modern culture. Resistance to the liberation offered by this humanism is represented as idealistic but ulitmately absurd. Notions of purity are ridiculed by the more sophisticated 'look' of the superior culture mediated as French humanism. This is a very dominant theme in modern French representations of Irish culture and recurs repeatedly in television texts, newspaper articles and literature.

In the first part of *!Viva Maria!*, Irish Maria's Catholicism is suggested not only by her association with Irish colonial struggles, the references to the cathedral in Cork but also through her innocence of sexual matters.[135] Her 'naive' Catholicism is thus set against French Maria's liberalism. When the question is put to Bardot's Maria if she has known men, she answers with a child's response: 'Bien sur que non/Certainly not!!'. Maria II's Irishness makes sense of the possibility of a naive attachment to the morality of Catholicism as a dominant cultural institution without the problem of Catholicism as a belief system held on to through choice within a predominately secular society much as it

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[135]'In short it was a matter of seeing how an 'experience' came to be constituted in modern western societies, an experience that caused individuals to recognise themselves as subjects of a 'sexuality' which was accessible to very diverse fields of knowledge, types of normativity and forms of subjectivity in a particular culture'. Michel Foucault; *The Uses Of Pleasure, Vol.2, The History of Sexuality*, Trans. Robert Hurley, (London: Viking Press, 1986), p.4.

might had Bardot's character been French. This is the theme of Eric Rohmer's film, *Ma nuit chez Maud* (1969). In this film a young man's adherence to the Catholic belief system is challenged by his encounter with a liberal woman with whom he falls in love. In *!Viva Maria!*, the possible signified of Catholicism as a philosophical and political counter-position is contained by the Irish text and given primitive connotations through the references to Catholic idolatry within the film.

The Devils: Sexuality, Catholicism and Dictatorship.

In post-1950s French film Irish Catholicism is represented as an irrational, misguided and a simplistic attachment to an out-moded cult of a under-developed people. This is far from the thinking underpinning the complex figure of Barrault's Ferriter in *Le Puritain.* The name Maria in *!Viva Maria!* connotes the cult of the Virgin central to Catholicism. The Catholicism of Bardot's Maria is loaded with the erotic charge of 'pudeur' (modesty) accentuated by her Irishness. The newspaper *Le Monde* offered a perfect example of the connection between 'pudeur' and Irish culture in an article entitled *Communauté érotique européene:* 'The tastes of the different peoples are examined in detail: from religious repression in Ireland (six months in prison for indecent assault) to sado-masochistic sessions in a hypocritical, secretive and perverse England'.[136] The modesty connoted by O'Malley's Catholic Irish upbringing is ridiculed by the animal appetites demonstrated by Bardot once initiated sexually by French Maria. Not satisfied with losing her maidenly blushes to one man, her first adventure is with three men in a carriage. She returns with her dress torn and sits legs apart and declares, 'c'est merveillieux, l'amour/ Love is marvellous!'.

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[136]'Les gouts des differents peuples sont passés au peigne fin; de la repression religieuse en Irlande, (six mois de prison ferme pour un attentat à la pudeur), aux séances sado-maso dans une Angleterre hypocrite, sécrète et perverse'. Anne Magnien et

The erotic elements of Malle's cinema have attracted the attention of more than one critic.[137] It is a mark of Malle's style that his films retain their erotic appeal to filmgoers in the twenty-first century. McLoone writes that the USA produced *Empire Magazine* chose another of Malle's films, *Atlantic City,* as containing one of the twenty-five 'hottest sex-scenes in the movies' for all time.[138] Throughout *!Viva Maria!* there are references to Catholicism as cult and to the erotica of Catholicism. The film uses religious images to heighten the eroticism of scenes such as when Maria I makes love to George Hamilton who is strung up like Christ on the cross. Some reviewers interest was particularly aroused by the sight of: 'Moreau's hand falling eloquently open on the sheet in *Les Amants* as she accepts the joy of cunnilingus is precisely echoed in her genuflection to fellate a yoked George Hamilton in *!Viva Maria!*!'.[139] The film plays on the significance of the two female leads as women and as Mary, the Mother of Jesus.

The Maria and Maria 'prayers' of the local population sets up a new chain of events where the women run foul of the Catholic Church and are arrested by the Inquisition. Both the church and the dictator persecute the girls as representatives of the people's revolution. The sequence of the Marias' encounter with the Catholic Church is the sequence that most troubles the critics. It is also the most surreal part of the film and contains direct references to the films of Luis Bunuel with whom Carrière had collaborated on many scripts. It is suggestive of the history of Mexico as Spanish colony. The alienating effect of this history creates problems in reading the film. Indeed reviewers generally tend

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Christian Blachas, 'Europe, l'Amour a Douze' in *Le Monde Radio/Télévision,* (Paris: Feb. 8-14, 1993), p.20-21.

137'Malle created a personal style, sexual and emotional which was to sustain him while flashier colleagues failed. Of the new wave survivors, he is the most old-fashioned, the most erotic and arguably, the most-widely successful'. Hillstrom, (1997), p. 643.

138McLoone, (2000), p.144.

139John Baxter, & Rob Edelman, ' Louis Malle', in Sarris, (1998), p. 315.

towards the opinion that the inclusion of this sequence interfered with their enjoyment of the film as pure entertainment and introduced a disturbing element into an otherwise 'delightfully frothy' farce.[140] The Inquisition sequence in *!Viva Maria!* represents a performance, however farcical, of the opposition between the people and the Church in South America. This representation recalls an older rebellion in South American history that challenges the idea of 'barbaric' Latin American dependency on 'civilised' European revolutionary ideas and processes.[141] Philip French considered that the scene undercut the basically serious part of the film dealing with the oppression of the people under the dictatorship. However the Inquisition in South America is a serious story. Its history is one of suppression of the local culture.[142] The very fact of its existence betrays a hidden history, the history of Mexican resistance to Europe. Performance of the Inquisition has become an important component in the recovery and reinterpretation of colonial history for the Mayan peoples in contemporary Mexico. The Mayans re-enact the infamous 1562 *Auto da Fé de Mani* conducted by Diego de Landa, Spanish Franciscan Provincial of Guatemala and Yucatan. Landa's objective was not only to destroy Mayan leadership and assert the power of the Franciscans but also to effect a religious and cultural holocaust, a

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[140]'He [Malle] throws in some torture in a monastery which could be interpreted as a homage to Luis Bunuel'. Gow, (1966), p.6.

[141]Beatriz Pastor, 'Carpentier's Enlightened Revolution', *Representing the French Revolution*, ed., James A. Heffernan, (Uni. Press of New England, USA, 1992).

[142]'The Holy Office of the Inquisition in Mexico had as its purpose the defense of Spanish Religion and the Spanish-Catholic culture against individuals who held heretical views and people who showed lack of respect for religious principles. The way in which social institutions react to the rebel, the non-conformist, the argumentative and the intellectually combative yields all manner of data on heresy and tradition and the reaction helps to measure social and ideological change'. Richard E. Greenleaf, *The Mexican Inquisition of the Sixteenth-century*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1969), p. 7.

campaign which was carried out with the approval of the Spanish civil authorities.[143]

The Inquisition scene in *!Viva Maria!* is troubling for the viewer because it functions as an epic element in the western narrative. The girls are captured by the Church because of the practice of the newly liberated peasants of amending the 'Hail Mary' to 'Hail Maria and Maria', a heresy under church law. Maria I and II undergo a *legajo*, the term for Inquisitions trials for heresy and are brought to the Inquisition torture chamber. According to the historian Greenleaf, for the *legajos*, common profanity indicates a familiar dichotomy of reverence and mocking of belief and agnosticism, of subservience and resentment, of conformity and alienation of the individual.[144] Religious syncretism was thus the Catholic Church's primary concern in South America.[145] The trials were an index of a religion which was Catholic in form but pagan in substance.[146] The new prayer 'Santa Maria y Maria' refers to this colonial history and gives the film a dimension beyond that of civil war. It also calls into question of the role of the institution of Church in the oppression of the people and the connection between the interests of the property owners and the interests of the hierarchy.

Surrealism as a genre has continuously offered the most serious challenge to the notion of both Church and State authority in the history of film and this is why surrealism as a form has suffered censorship from

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[143]Frischmann, Donald H., 'Contemporary Mayan Theatre and Ethnic Conflict', in *Imperialism and Theatre*, ed. J. Ellen Gainor, (New York: Routledge, 1995), p.74-5.

[144]Greenleaf, (1969), pp.7-8.

[145]Ibid., p. 7.

[146]Religious syncretism was also a preoccupation of the Church in its early conquest of Ireland and France where folk practices and remnants of older religions were the object of censure until mediaeval times when the eradication of other religions was deemed successful, in 452, the Second Council of Arles in France dedicated itself to this issue: 'If, in the territory of a bishop, infidels light torches or venerate trees, fountains or stones and he neglects to abolish this usage, he must know he is guilty of sacrilege'. As late as the twelfth century edicts banning the continuance of pagan practice in the guise of christen patterns were issued. See Janet & Colin Bord, *Sacred Waters, Holy Wells and Waterlore in Britain and Ireland*, (London: Paladin, 1986), pp. 31-40.

these bodies to a degree that no other form has experienced. The playful and farcical aspect of surrealism, recalling the long tradition of the carnivalesque as resistance constitutes the biggest threat to the bodies who would suppress it: 'Film is a magnificent and dangerous weapon if it is wielded by a free mind' (Luis Bunuel at the University of Mexico, 1953).[147] Bunuel was not, by any means, an expert on Mexican society. He had little knowledge of the people and the culture but his own attempts to tackle issues relating to Spanish society had relevance to Mexican problems and, while his films were not massive box-office hits, they maintained a steady audience in Mexico.[148] The problems of a society where the church functions hand in glove with the state, as it had in Bunuel's childhood, was a problem easily recognisable for any society which had felt the yoke of a particular brand of authoritarian Catholicism. Bunuel's *Viridiana (*1961) was Mexican-Spanish co-production and won the prize for the best film in Cannes in 1961. Considered Bunuel's masterpiece, it 'concealed a bomb which made it impossible for him ever to return to his native land, Spain'.[149] It was read as a message of betrayal of youthful idealism of the Spanish civil war by the representatives of the church. The long sequence of the parody of the Last Supper, a beggar's banquet, generated outrage.[150] Bunuel commented that the sense of the film was that 'we do not live in the best of all possible worlds'.[151] His co-scenarist Carrière has also consistently dealt with this theme and it surfaces again in his films with Louis Malle. Surrealism of the kind espoused by Bunuel attacks the institutions of a culture which constructs

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147Quoted in Jean-Claude Carrière, *The Secret Language of Film,* (London: Faber & Faber, 1994), p.90.

148Turrent, (1992), pp.202-207.

149Bodeen De Witt, 'Viridiana', in Sarris, (1998), p.1068.

150Bunuel's rejection of middle-class Catholicism as social control is also the source of controversy in his French films: 'En tournant *Le Journal d'une femme de chambre,* Luis Bunuel faisait justement un acte politique puisqu'il reglait ses comptes avec le droite françaises qui avait interdit *l'Age d'Or*'. Landort, (1995), p. 88.

151 De Witt, in Sarris, (1998), p.1068.

the marginal and reduces the disenfranchised to reproducing the savagery and oppression underlying the veneer of civilisation among the ruling-classes. Malle's use of surrealism in *!Viva Maria!*, however light and amusing it may be, draws on the inter-text of Bunuel's work and links the two in the mind of the spectator.

Given that its public was primarily French, it is unlikely, however, that the colonial history of the Inquisition was an important consideration for the makers of *!Viva Maria!*. Rather the colonial context provided an acceptable frame for the re-appearance of this seventeenth-century institution at the turn of twentieth century. There is a strong sado-masochistic element to the torture scene as we watch the girls blindfolded, manacled and shackled while the men in black produce whips and chains. Such scenes recall aspects of the Inquisition's history in France. We are reminded of the exorcist scenes from the history of 'the Devils of Loudon' when Urbain Grandier was burned at the stake in Loudon, France, in April 1634. He was charged with the possession by devils of a whole convent of nuns who fell into paroxysms of obscene and heretical frenzies. Eyewitness reports from the public scenes of exorcism indicate that there was a strong sexual element to the exorcisms. The lewd discourse of the nuns, the deployment of instruments such as enemas and whips, the relationship between the priests and the possessed, the torture of Grandier led more than one spectator to the conclusion that spectacle provided the officers of the church with an outlet for perverse sexual pleasures. There was a political agenda too. Aldous Huxley, in his book on the Loudon case, suggests that Cardinal Richelieu used the incident in an attempt to construct a dictatorship by the church in France and compares Richelieu's strategy with those of the fascists in the twentieth century.[152] The Irish text, as we have seen, also functions as a

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[152]See Aldous Huxley, *The Devils of Loudon*, (London: Penguin, 1953). A film based on the book was made: Ken Russell, *The Devils*, (1970).

frame in which the church could be shown to wield power over a superstitious and unquestioning congregation. Without O'Malley as unreconstructed Catholic, the scene between the women and the monks would lose much of its erotic charge and its humour. In *!Viva Maria!*, the torture is reduced to farce as the monks are unable to 'work' their instruments and the girls are rescued. The potency of the Church, initially challenged by O'Malley's uninhibited sexual education under the guidance of Maria I, is thus further undermined in the classic carnivalesque manner. The Church is literally decapitated by the end of the film.

Counter-Memory: A Call for History

For both Malle and Bunuel the form of their films generates disruption, particularly through their use of the open text and their resistance to closure. In their films we find 'the summation of the clash between instincts, impulse of friendship, love, desire, enjoyment of life and the appeal of freedom and the agents of their repression (the church, the police, bourgeois morality, society)'.[153] This clash is played out in the opposition of the Marias to the institutions of the repressive state as dictatorship and the Catholic church as state apparatus. The presence of the Irish figure, with its colonial encoding, within the frame of a 'magical' adventure, does not present an escape from history but rather a picture of history with holes, a history which empowers us. Carrière said of his work with Malle that the suggestion of history 'takes them [the characters in their films] to the edge, to the limits of their own selves'. He commented that, although history often seems no more than a fiction, 'it can sometimes stir in us the most powerful of our dreams, our joys, our desires and our fears'.[154] In his essay 'On Magic Realism in Film' Fredric

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[153]Turrent, (1992), pp.202-207.

[154]Jean-Claude Carrière, *Milou in May*, (London: Faber & Faber, 1990), p.vii –viii.

Jameson draws parallels with the South American form of magic realism and European surrealism.[155] The question of history is crucial to both forms. Magic realism is more often associated with South American literature and with writers such as Garcia Marquez who has strong links with Mexico.

For the Mexican film audience, this is the space in which Bunuel and Malle speak to Mexican culture. In the view of Tomàs Pérez Turrent, all twenty of Bunuel's Mexican films deal with the opposition of feelings of love and the dictates of religion, nationalism and capital. Love serves as a revolutionary catalyst. Although love is always threatened by the social and human pettiness engendered by values, it can still become an agent for revolt. *!Viva Maria!* can be read as a celebration of human love and sexuality as a counter discourse against the institutions which would seek to control it. The Catholic Church text offers a shared history between France, Ireland and South America, a common ground of struggle which lifts the film beyond the oppressive culture of *Vera Cruz.* The love between people in both Malle and Bunuel's work is not the sexless adoration Frederic Jameson noted as a feature of the first post-modern French film, Beneix's *Diva,* but a physical love and a force for change.

Counter-memory has been described in South American theory as 'women's time', the time of oppressed and marginal groups. Counter-memory, as 'women's time', celebrates the subversive visions and stubborn jouissance of monumental time while still insisting on relating local oppositional practices to macro-social causes and consequences [cursive time].[156] *!Viva Maria!* represents a fantasy of France on the side of the oppressors, a wished for France at odds with the reality. *!Viva Maria!*'s utopian vision of a new relationship between the French and its

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[155]Jameson, (1992), p. 135.

[156]See McLaren & Leonard, (1993), Introduction.

former colonies, a story in which the French support the struggle for independence, has important differences from its source text, *Vera Cruz*. The reviews of the time most often describe the women as two versions of goodness.[157] *!Viva Maria!* offered a sort of counter-memory in which magic and surrealism are played against repressive realism in order to point out new ways people might relate to each other in the world. In *!Viva Maria!* the two women come from the margins into the male space of battle. As we have seen, this vision apparently supports a Gaullist view of France's role, recalling an image of the French revolution as the author of all revolutions, including those of South America and of Ireland. However, the gender of the protagonists, combined with the figure of the colonised in the form of the Irish woman and the figures of the Mexican peasantry, causes problems for that vision. It is an index of the dangers run by references to revolution as text.

The words 'Que Viva Mexico', appropriated by General De Gaulle in order to re-establish France as a super-power, has become at the turn of the twentieth century, the battle-cry of a revolutionary impulse the target of which today is the global culture of capitalism instrumented by the GATT and the NTA agreements and the militarism so beloved by De Gaulle. The words 'Viva!' recall Zapata, the leader of the 1910 Mexican revolution. As Ronnie Burk phrased it: 'The Mexican revolution of 1910, although emphatically anti-imperialist in spirit, capitulated early on to its petit-bourgeois leadership. But the face of the revolution would remain an indigenous one. At the time when Europe was preparing for the First World war, in contrast to the prevailing oppressive forces of international militarism and Western capitalist degradation, Mexico's revolution cleared the way for the historic possibility of masses of people to

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[157]'Behind it all (*!Viva Maria!*) lies a [...] serious conception of the two Marias as complementary halves of a single whole; two kinds of love, two kinds of skill, (oratorical and practical), which when put together bring about a brave new world'.

collectively participate in the spirit of 'tierra y libertad".[158] A similar impulse in the Irish Rebellion of 1916 was ruthlessly suppressed by the newly empowered Irish middle class in the years following Independence. Culturally, those who did not accept the new order in Ireland, approved by both the Irish Republic and by Britain, became outlaws of the State. A similar process can be seen in the western representations of revolutionary movements in South America. The Zapatista army, emerging from the jungle on New Year's day, 1994, provoked a national crisis in Mexico.[159] The mythic drug war has become the engine whereby the USA supported militia conduct the slaughter of those groups opposed to privatisation and global capital in Columbia, among other regions of South America. In the twenty-first century discourses of international terrorism are presently being deployed to suppress resistance to global economic politics and of colonialism in the East.

!Viva Maria! belongs within a cinema culture of support for resistance on a trans-national basis, a cinema which will become undoubtedly more and more rare in the present climate. However naive its optimism, *!Viva Maria!*'s positive representation of a people's revolution sets it apart from the American South of the Border Westerns, regardless of the limitations of its humanist view. De Gaulle was to live to regret his revolutionary rhetoric in South America. It was converted to what Alguhon cynically labels 'revolutionary romanticism' at home when France erupted in 1968, the masses calling for the 'participation' De

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Reviewer T.M., *The British Film Institute Monthly Film Bulletin*, No. 386, Vol.33, (London: March 1966), p. 40.

[158]Ronnie Burk, 'Que Viva México', *First World, ha ha ha!*, Ed. Elaine Katzenberger, (San Francisco: City Lights, 1995), p. 219.

[159] The Chiapas uprising is a milestone in the continuing history of indigenous resistance to the New World Order in the Americas and an inspiration to the growing world-wide struggle against global policies of economic colonisation. Garcia de Leon, (1995), pp. 211-216.

Gaulle had promised but had failed to deliver in any real terms.[160] *!Viva Maria!* anticipates the hopes of French activists in France of May, 1968.[161] 1968 France would be for many a moment of real optimism and belief in change. Jean-Claude Carrière remembered the excitement of the period, of how 'a party mood took over –a real celebration, a conversation without end. We were obsessed with the notion that the world could be re-made –and re-made immediately. We were drunk with Spring and with the subtle sense of Utopia'.[162] It is significant that, in *!Viva Maria!*, the Irish revolutionary figure, Maria O'Malley, is represented as part of that dream.

For De Gaulle, 1968 was not Utopia but betrayal. By a curious irony, De Gaulle's escape from the 'scandal, chaos and violence' of the 1968 Revolution in France took him to Ireland, forsaking the New World for, to quote Alguhon, 'the old country'.[163] Around this period, Bardot too disappeared from the French cinema scene. She made only one film after 1968 –*Don Juan* with Roger Vadim (1972). Andy Martin, in the third part of *Waiting for Bardot*, a section entitled 'Betrayal', ends his search for her by walking on a cold beach in the West of Ireland.[164] De Gaulle went to County Kerry in the Southwest. *Viva De Gaulle*, concludes with a famous film reel of the General during his exile, walking on the beaches of Kerry, the 'ungovernable sea' before him. These images mark a profound change in the Ireland text in French cinema. Although the Irish

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[160] Alguhon, (1995), p. 420.

[161] A full account of May 1968 is outside the scope of this thesis. For a bibliography of May '68 and cinema, see Prédal, (1996), pp. 285-317.

[162] Carrière, (1990), p.v.ii –viii.

[163] Alguhon, (1995), p. 431.

[164] 'It was only when we got out of the battered Lada estate and walked along the sand that I realised that it had taken us over twenty-four years to make it to the beach. [...] The sand on the strip between Galway and Kinvara on the West Coast of Ireland was black. There was no-one else for miles, not a soul, just the two of us and some frozen fish. A wind with teeth nipped at our exposed parts which were few. The sea, beneath the iron-clad sky, echoed the colour of the sand. General de Gaulle was dead. [...]We

Revolutionary text, so significant in *!Viva Maria!* and in the earlier films, was to have one last brief appearance in Boisrond's *On est toujours trop bon avec les femmes*, it was soon to be washed away by the overwhelming land and seascapes of the West.

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skimmed stones across the water and fell to talking about Brigitte Bardot'. Martin, (1996), p.166.

Chapter Five: From Chaos to Haven: Boisrond's *On est toujours trop bon avec les femmes* (1971) and Yves Boisset's *Le Taxi mauve* (1977).

The shock of 1968 reverberated in the cinema aisles. For the cinema historian Prédal, the change in French cinema was announced when Malle showed *Calcutta* at Cannes in 1969. A second more important rupture came with the screening of Marcel Ophuls' film, *Le Chagrin et la pitié*, released in 1971. The passage of this documentary about French collaboration in the deportation of Jews in the Clermont-Ferrand area, has been well documented.[1] *Le Chagrin et la pitié* was the beginning of a movement to deal openly with France's immediate past on film. This movement had a profound effect on the function of the Ireland text in France. In fiction film, Malle's *Lacombe, Lucien* was a turning point because it was based on meticulous research into the history of collaboration and because its central character was a member of the Gestapo. Another important change in French culture of the 1970s was the push for the status of women to be improved and for full citizenship to be awarded to them. In some ways this movement caused more controversy than the campaign to open up the history of collaboration.

Following May 1968, Women's organisations in France began to push for the right to work, the right of a married woman to her own income, for changes in marital law, changes in laws concerning rape and

domestic violence. In Easter 1971 an extraordinary document appeared in *Le Nouvel observateur* (week of the 5th to the 11th of April). It was a short text signed by three hundred and forty-three women who, in proclaiming that they had had an abortion, took the risk of being heavily fined or condemned to prison sentences of six-months to up to two years. One out of ten of these women were working in cinema and in drama. The list included writers and directors. Maguerite Duras, Arianne Mnouchkine, Mareceline Loridan, Agnès Varda and Françoise Sagan had signed the text. More courageous still were the actors who made this declaration at the risk of their livelihoods: Catherine Deneuve, Brigitte Arnoul, Françoise Fabian, Annie Fargue, Claude Génia, Micheline Presle, Alexandra Stewart and Jeanne Moreau, among others. A challenge was launched to the Law should it choose to put the signatories to the test: 'We demand a collective and public trial and we will put clandestine abortion on trial in return'.[2] The document, unimaginable even now in Ireland of 2001, had the same effect as Zola's famous 'J'accuse' (title of an open letter to the president published in *L'Aurore*, 13th of January 1898) had on the Dreyfus Affair. It unleashed one of the fiercest battles fought for the rights of women in France.

Feminism and the events of May 1968 had a considerable effect on cinema.[3] While some filmmakers were attracted to the subject of the suffering of women under patriarchy – Jean Eustache, Agnès Varda to name two, they were rare. The response by some of the most successful male film-directors of the 1970s verged on hysteria. As part of that battle a new movement for militant cinema began in 1968. *Histoire d'A*, a film dealing with different aspects of the women's movement and directed by Marielle Issartel and Charles Belmont, was launched in 1973. The filmmakers attempted to get their film past the censor without success.

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[1]See Colombat, (1993); Jeancolas, (1979); Prédal, (1996).

[2]See Audé, (1981), p.105.

Meanwhile filmmakers like Bertrand Blier found little difficulty in turning out films of extreme misogyny. Bertrand Blier, son of the star of *Manèges*, was a worthy successor to Allègret. His film, *Les Valseuses* (1973), considered a cult film of its generation and a box office smash, was a 1970s version of erotic buddy movies and features men 'who are exasperated by the opposite sex'.[4] It starred Jeanne Moreau. As we have seen, she, more than any other star of the 1960s, embodied the celebration of female sexuality. Moreau's character, a newly released convict, is accosted by the two young heroes of the film, played by Depardieu and Dewaere and she spends the night with them. In the morning Moreau's character shoots herself in the vagina and they find her, the gun between her hips, the blood spreading out from her body, as she lies dying. Her mutilation and death form a high point in a spree of rape, harassment and torture. In one scene, the men burn a woman with cigarettes and rape her repeatedly supposedly to bring her to orgasm. Later in the film, the girl, having happily gone along to keep house for the 'valseuses' in the country, achieves orgasm when seduced by a psychopathic convict. In this film and in others in the genre, brutal violence, ritual humiliation and rape, are presented as the secret desire of women regardless of how they might protest.

'We are Always Too Good to Women'.

Themes of masochism, self-mutilation and madness in films about women in 1970s and 1980s French cinema have been well documented by Susan Heyward, among others and reach their zenith in the hugely successful *37° le matin* (1986, *Betty Blue*), directed by Beineix. This last film was based on a novel by Dijann, a writer who centres one of his later novels, a tale of madness and murder, on a red-haired sexually voracious

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[3]See Hayward & Vincendeau, (1989).

[4]Baxter & Edelman, in Sarris, (1998), p. 315.

Irish woman. Boisrond's *On est toujours trop bon avec les femmes* set in Dublin in 1916 was just one film in a flood of misogyny stemming from fear of women's liberation movements in the late 1960s. In the course of the novel, the female character, locked up in the General Post Office with the 1916 Rebels, is raped by one then the other, has oral sex with the Captain of the unit and is then forcibly buggered by the remaining revolutionaries, homosexuals converted to heterosexuality by the beauty of Gertie's breasts. The woman is responsible for the men's violence to her and indeed enjoys it. Finally she turns traitor and the men are killed by the army.

The film *On est toujours trop bon avec les femmes* signified a return to preoccupations addressed in other chapters. The film's 1930s text of origin, Queneau's novel, represented something different: a form-breaking Joycean moment in literature. Raymond Queneau (1903-76) avant-garde novelist, mathematician, philosopher, poet and editor of the *Pléaide encyclopedia,* was hugely popular in the late 1950s in France and remains a top-seller in the 1990s. An early associate of the Surrealists, he carried on the tradition of Alfred Jarry, the author of *Ubu roi* (1896), as a creator of the college of Pata-physicians. Louis Malle was later inducted into this group.[5] Queneau was passionately interested in Ireland. He wrote the French translation of Muiris Ó Suilleabháin's classic tale of growing up on the Blasket Islands off the South coast of Ireland, *Fiche Blian ag Fás.*[6] Queneau wrote two 'detective' novels set in Ireland under the penname of 'Sally Mara'. In 1950s France, he used Sally Mara and Dublin 1934, 'une irlande de convention', as a fictional space from which to examine the turbulence of French history.[7] Queneau's penchant for

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[5]French, (1993), p. 46.

[6]Muiris Ó Suilleabháin, *Fiche Blian ag Fás/ Vingt ans de jeunesse*, Raymond Queneau, trans., (Reprinted, Rennes: Terre de Brume, 1997, 1ST pub. 1937).

[7]Gilbert Pestereau, 'Raymond Queneau; le moi et l'histoire', *French Cultural Studies*, Vol. 7, part 2, no. 20, Brian Rigby, ed., (1996), p.134.

pastiche echoes the practice of the Irish writer, James Joyce, in novels such as *Ulysses*, where Joyce relates one whole episode of the book, Bloom masturbating as he watches girls on the strand, in the style of romantic novelettes. In France, according to one commentator, 'common opinion' judges Joyce as 'the most scandalous and the most provocative' of all modern writers.[8]

Joyce's effect on French writing was striking. Larbaud, Mauriac, Céline, Robbe-Grillet, Butor, all fell under the spell of *Ulysses*. Mauriac declared that from the moment he read *Ulysses*, he was convinced that one must start 'from there'.[9] For the French writers who were inspired by him, Joyce's work in popular Dublin argot, pastiche and parody led to an attack on another 'monarchical' institution, the French language. Language in France has been the site of an ideological struggle which reached a crisis in the time of the French Revolution. The battle for control of language in France really emerged in the seventeenth century as part of a deliberate, conscious and remarkably modern campaign to consolidate the absolute monarchy. The result was the inordinate power invested in French discourse, a consequence of the money and time put into the project by Richelieu. In doing so he institutionalised monararchial authority over both written and spoken French through the Académie Française, repudiating words alien to the ideal of Versailles, words evoking 'le village, le vieux et le bas'. Punishment for soiling the purity of French language was extreme and its very use required the permission of the king. The penalty for speaking was 'amputation of the incorrigible tongue'.[10] This linguistic dictatorship was contested by the leaders of the French revolution who wanted to break with the language of the past. Counter-revolutionaries envisioned this past language

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[8] François Granon, 'Un Siécle d'écrivains', in *Télérama*, no. 2359, 29th of March, (1995), p.121.

[9] Vivian Mercier, 'James Joyce and French Literature', in Rafroidi, et al., (1973), p.223.

[10] Carol Blum, 'Representing the Body Politic', in Heffernan, (1992), p. 125.

preserving values which are passed down to posterity, hereditary 'classical' language embodying tradition and continuity, enabling the dead to speak to the living.[11] This was Edmund Burke's point of view and indeed it became the vision of Gaelic language revivalists in post-independence Ireland and of the English-speaking authors of the new national culture, leading to the banishment of writers like Joyce and O'Flaherty. The revolutionaries in the eighteenth-century France, however, sought their own linguistic dictatorship, this time against the dialects and patois of regional France. Central to both revolutionary and counter-revolutionary agendas was the notion of unity of language representing unity of nation. Other voices contested that unity and were ruthlessly suppressed. At the heart of the question lies the desire to control reality through its representations. The Gaelic Revival, initially revolutionary, became a discourse of unity in post-independence Ireland. At the beginning of the twentieth century Joyce's writings posed a challenge to that control not only for literature but more particularly for the newly empowered Catholic middle-class in Ireland. For French culture in the early part of the twentieth century, Joyce's texts opened up a new space in which to contest the French discourse.

Queneau, inspired by the use of language in *Ulysses*, wrote *Le Chien-dent* in 1933. He hoped that the novel would be the first work to employ spoken French in place of the more formal written language for a literary purpose. He was anticipated by the fascist novelist Louis-Ferdinand Céline who published *Voyage au bout de la nuit* in 1932. This very pessimistic novel was narrated by a fictional character, Bardamu who used a highly colloquial spoken French full of argot and obscenities. Queneau also translated the beginning of one of his books, *Gueule de Pierre* into 'Joycien', a French based equivalent of the synthetic, English-

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[11] See Steven Blakemore, 'Revolution in Language', in Heffernan, (1992), p. 125.

based language of *Finegan's Wake*.[12] His most successful attack on the discourse of French language as institution came with *Zazie dans le Métro* where he introduced a myriad of voices based on the languages of Paris into fiction and launched the phrase 'mon cul/my arse' into literary culture. Philip French, author of *Malle on Malle*, describes *Zazie dans le Métro* as full of 'linguistic invention and verbal games of a Joycean kind'.[13]

Queneau's work is notoriously difficult to translate into image, although there have been many stage performances of his *Exercices de style,* a novel which tells the same story in dozens of different styles; pastiche, parody, genre. In spite of these difficulties Malle succeeded in 1961 in successfully adapting Queneau's *Zazie dans le Métro* in 1958. *Zazie dans le Métro* was not initially a box-office success but developed an audience later in the century. It is now one of Malle's most popular works both in France and abroad. *Zazie dans le Métro* is a tale of a little girl who goes to Paris with her mother during a Métro strike and who spends a holiday with her uncle while her mother visits her lover. Rather than simply taking the story and extracting the dialogue, Malle looked for a new way of expressing a story through film to match the inventiveness of the literary work.[14] He combined the techniques of the silent cinema, the cartoon, accelerated images, jump cuts, slow motion and trick effects to create a frenetic pace and a bewildering but hugely enjoyable experience. *Zazie dans le Métro* translates Queneau's anarchic literary style to the big screen: 'With his third film, Louis Malle goes even further

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[12]For a full account of Queneau's debts to Joyce, see Vivian Mercier, *The New Novel: from Queneau to Pinget, (*New York; Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, 1971).

[13]Phillip French, (1993), p. 46.

[14]'Ce qui m'avait passioné dans *Zazie dans le Métro*, c'était cette crtitique interne de la littérature et du langage. J'ai tenté à mon tour de fonder mon film sur un autocritique, celle du langage cinématographique, avec l'idée de raconter un faux récit..au comique de langage littéraire, j'ai donc essayer de substituer un comique de langage cinématographique'. Louis Malle quoted in Marine Landrot, 'Zaziféduciné', *Télérama* no. 2399, 3rd January, (1996), p.47.

in being anti-conformist. He attempts and succeeds the task of recreating Queneau's work on screen. Bracing and superbly impertinent, *Zazie dans le Métro* remains the greatest achievement of the director'.[15] For Audé, Malle's sense of play and comedy, first seen in *Zazie dans le Métro,* is exhilarating, evidence of a disrespectful and liberating humour.[16] He resists the fatalism of French culture in the late 50s through his use of form. 'I believe in rupture', he declared.[17] American response to the film voiced concern about the anarchic elements in *Zazie dans le Métro.* Bosley Crowther writing in the *New York Times* in 1960, said that there was 'something not quite innocent or healthy about this film'.[18] The film has found its own audience in France. Biggs, writing in 1996, remarked that it continued to be shown every week in Paris at one of the revival theatres.[19]

Form is crucial to the ideological effect of Queneau's work. The style of the Sally Mara novels, including *On est toujours trop bon avec les femmes*, was also a homage to Joyce: 'adopting the mask of Sally Mara, Queneau reread James Joyce, *Ullysses* in particular, some readings from the national library, specifically the erotic novel, *Thérese philosophe* (La Haye, 1748)'.[20] Queneau uses the 'stream of consciousness' technique, developed by Joyce, to produce a 'stream' from the anti-heroine', Gertie [Gertie is another reference to Joyce - Gertie is the girl who aroused Bloom's interest on the strand in *Ullysses*] while she

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[15]'Avec son troisième film, Louis Malle allait encore plus loin dans l'anticonformisme. [...] Malle tente et réussit la gageure de récréer à l'écran, l'ouevre de Queneau. Tonique, et d'une superbe impertinence, *Zazie dans le Métro* reste à ce jour la plus belle réussite du cinéaste'. De Cornes, (1985), p.49.

[16]'D'un rire tout à fait irrespecueux et libérateur'. Audé, (1981), p.61.

[17]'Je crois à la vertu de la rupture', Louis Malle quoted in Landrot, 'Zaziféduciné', (1996), p.47.

[18]Quoted in Biggs, (1996), p.294.

[19]Ibid., p.294.

[20]'Prenant le masque de Sally Mara, Queneau rélut James Joyce, *Ullysses* en particular, quelques lectures à l'Enfer de la bibliothèque nationale, dont le roman érotique, *Thérese Philosophe*, (La Haye, 1748)'. Pestereau, (1996), p.139.

is trapped in the lavatories of the General Post Office in Dublin during the 1916 Rising: 'Nothing. Nothing. Nothing more. It is time I left. So why do I not leave? Will I not leave? There. I have done everything I had to do here. Now this silence'.[21] Misogyny in the narrative is countered somewhat in the playfulness of book's style. For many critics, Boisrond's filmed 1971 version of the novel, *On est toujours trop bon avec les femmes*, was a failure because it was not form breaking in style. Critics considered it too heavy and lacking the pace and verve of the novel.[22]

Boisrond took the narrative of *On est toujours trop bons avec les femmes* but did not translate the experimental form into a cinematic equivalent. The message of the film retained misogynistic overtones in the novel and did not contest the anti-woman agenda of the title through the anti-narrative form-break, exemplified by *Zazie dans le Métro*. The result was a film which, while it has the comic humour of the boulevard style for which Boisrond is famous, does not offer a critique of the message, 'we are always too good to women', but reproduces the anti-women position of the male protagonists. Boisrond as a director contributed to the backlash against the 'women's liberation' movement with such titles as *Faibles femmes* (1958) released in the USA as *Three Murderesses* and a whole series on *Casanova*. Francois Truffaut was a fan of Boisrond's work.[23] His praise of Boisrond implies that Boisrond demonstrated a return to the Hollywood quality film and as such constituted a triumph. He said: 'Michel Boisrond with *Cette sacrée gamine* (which starred Brigitte Bardot) and *Aux environs d'Aden* brings, in terms of French cinema, a little of this Hollywood 'skill' to the solidity one finds in square movies, qualities that won't become sheer habit if

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[21]'Plus. Plus. Plus rien. Il est temps que je sorte. Pourquoi-donc ne sorté-je pas. Ne sorté-je pas? Pourquoi donc? Voilà. J'ai fait tout ce que j'avais à faire ici. Maintentant ce silence'. Raymond Queneau, *On est toujours trop bon avec les femmes*, (1971, 1st published 1947), p. 20.

[22]Tulard, (1991), p. 178.

[23]Dixon, (1993), p.10.

Boisrond, in his next films, manages to get closer to his characters'.[24] This celebration of Boisrond would not come as any great surprise to critics of Truffaut's attitude to women. Jacqueline Audé devotes a whole chapter of her study of women in French film to Truffaut's misogyny, commenting that in Truffaut's films, women fall into three categories: betraying mothers, killers or 'les inoffensives'.[25] Truffaut's questionable stance has not only troubled female critics but also his male biographers. Wheeler Winston Dixon, to name one example, describes Truffaut as 'sexist' in his introduction to the book, *The Early Film Criticism of François Truffaut*.[26] Boisrond's films are throwbacks to the post-war genre exemplified by *La Jeune folle* and constitute an attack on women's attempt to achieve change in 1968. While Queneau's novel has remained a best-seller in the year 2000 and his work has attained classic status, Boisrond's *On est toujours trop bon avec les femmes* has, perhaps mercifully, lost its audience. It is not available to rent. The video version is not on sale in any major outlets nor, unlike all the other films of this thesis, did the film appear on television in the period I surveyed. It had nowhere near the impact nor the commercial success of the last film of my study, Yves Boisset's *Le Taxi mauve*.

Le Taxi mauve

Resistance to the current of history sparked by 1968 was taken to a new degree in Michel Déon's novel, *Le Taxi mauve*. The cinema version of *Le Taxi mauve* was released under the stewardship of director Boisset in 1977. *Le Taxi mauve* was the last French full-length fiction film to be set in the Irish Republic. It marks both a beginning and an end for my thesis. This film, for Irish spectators, is the most famous of French films about Ireland - perhaps because it has the distinction of being the only

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[24]Truffaut, quoted ibid., p.124.
[25]See Audé, (1981), pp.49-52.

film about of this study filmed entirely on location in the Republic. *Le Taxi mauve* did not do well on its release in Dublin– the figures may be attributable to local film distribution in Ireland and the fact that the film was in French. The film had a different reception in France where it was a box-office hit. *Le Taxi mauve* was among the top three highest grossing French films for the year, attracting audiences of more than three and a half hundred thousand in Paris and the eleven principal towns alone. It was also in the top twenty-three of the total film release that year, competing with block-busters such as Kubrick's *Barry Lyndon* (also filmed in Ireland), *Marathon Man*, *King Kong* and *200 000 Leagues under the Sea*. *Le Taxi mauve*'s importance for the Ireland text in France cannot be underestimated. Its construction of the Irish space has influenced its French audience to the point where French visitors to Connemara base their itinerary entirely on the film.[27] I will explore this phenomenon later in the chapter. *Le Taxi mauve* demonstrates a rupture with the previous films in this thesis and marks a different phase for the Ireland text in France, a phase which has continued until the present day.

Le Taxi mauve opens with the arrival of journalist Phillippe Marchal (Philippe Noiret), in Connemara, Ireland, following the death of his son. He takes a room with Mrs Colleen, a pious and stout Irish landlady played by Mairín O'Sullivan. He falls ill and is treated by Doctor Skully (Fred Astaire). Skully drives the purple taxi of the title. Marchal meets a young American Jerry Keane, played by Edward Albert who, having disgraced his wealthy family in the States, has been sent to Ireland to reform himself. They make the acquaintance of Taubleman, a Russian exile of somewhat dubious character. Taubleman lives with a young girl named Anne. Taubleman presents Anne as his daughter, although there is some mystery about that and there is more than a hint of

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[26]Dixon, (1993), p.5.

a sexual relationship between these two. Jerry's sister, the titled wife of an extremely wealthy European, turns up in Connemara with her servant, an Asian woman, played by Loan Do Huu. They install themselves in the magnificent castle hotel -the exterior shots are of Kylemore Abbey near Renvyle. Sharon strikes up a relationship with Philippe and Jerry with Anne Taubleman. As these relationships develop the couples are shown driving about the country, hunting, fishing, dining and visiting ruins. Taubleman holds a dinner party. During the evening he cheats at cards, is violent and drinks heavily. The group goes to the local pub and set up a brawl designed to frighten two English tourists from the pub who are, it is suggested, homosexual. Jerry is becoming more and more in love with Anne. She runs away one night. They find her on a beach with her horse. It is a strand in Kerry. She falls and is taken to hospital. Taubleman, distraught, sets fire to the stables attached to his house. His Irish ostler, an idiot whom Skully says should not drink and to whom Taubleman gives alcohol, runs into the flames to save the horses. Anne turns up and comforts Taubleman. Jerry elects to stay in Ireland, Sharon goes back to her life in Europe and Phillippe decides to return to France.

Le Taxi mauve was a surprising departure for Boisset who had made his name as a director of thrillers, particularly with *Cran-d'arret* (1970), thrillers ranked by critics as among the best of the period. He then moved to directing action films on contemporary political subjects. He made *L'Attentat* in 1972, based on a controversial Ben Barka scandal in 1965; *R.A.S.* in 1973; and *Dupont-lajoie* in 1974, a critique of the racism of middle-France. In 1976 he directed the film considered his greatest critical success in this genre, *Juge Fayard dit le shérif,* concerning the assassination of a judge in Lyons. Critics were surprised when he suddenly 'lurched', to borrow a phrase from Tulard, into big-budget film

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[27]Johnathan Farren, 'L'homme tranquille dans un taxi mauve', *Le Monde/Terres d'Irlande*, Saturday 16th of March, (1996), p.11.

making with *Le Taxi mauve*.[28] For most French reviewers of the film it was a mistake for Boisset to direct Déon's book: 'A quality adaptation of a novel by Michel Déon. Beautiful images, complex narrative structure, international actors: it is missing, however, the subtlety of the literary version'.[29] It would seem that Boisset failed to capture the essence of Déon's writing because, if the reviews are to be believed, Boisset displayed a troubling propensity to look for rationale and explanations for the story in his screenplay where Déon gave none. Marie Steinberg complained that Boisset had offered an explanation for Marchal's flight to Ireland.[30] He presented Noiret's character as a man grieving for the death of his son. In Steinberg's view melancholy and the search for solitude are sufficient reasons to come to Ireland. She bemoans the director's attempts to rationalise actions in the narrative and his construction of 'pasts' for his characters in the film.

It is important to note that, unlike the previous films in this study, not one of the major characters in the narrative is Irish. *Le Taxi mauve* is more an international film than a national one for either France or Ireland. The biggest stars are English and American: Charlotte Rampling as Sharon and Fred Astaire as the Doctor Skully and Peter Ustinov as Taubleman. The brother and sister are American millionaires, returning to the site of their great-grandfather's house; the Taublemans are Russian exiles; Phillip is a French travel writer; the Irishness of Fred Astaire's character is over-ridden by Astaire as Hollywood icon. Only one French actor, Phillipe Noiret who was the star of Louis Malle's *Zazie dans le*

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[28]Tulard, (1982), p.92.

[29]'Adaptation "de qualité" du roman de Michel Déon. Belles images, construction fignolée du récit, acteurs internationaux, il y manque pourtant la subtilité du style litteraire'. Review, *Le Monde: Radio/ Television*, (July 30-August 5, 1990), p. 5 & p. 13.

[30]Marie Steinberg, '*Le Taxi mauve*', in *Lumière du çinéma*, Vol. 6, July/August, (France: 1977).

Métro, has a part of any note in the film.[31] It has no Irish actors in key roles although a gallery of peasants was assembled from local talent. This is surprising given that it was the only film in this study financed with a cash investment from Irish sources. They were granted monies by the National Film Studios of Ireland who then received a seven- percent stake in the profits of the film from anglophone countries.

It is evident from this narrative that the representation of Irish characters is very different from the previous films I have examined. Unlike all the other films the problem of instability connoted by the Irish figure is not a primary issue. The Irish of *Le Taxi mauve* are simply part of the landscape. In responses to the film it becomes clear that this landscape, an Ireland fabricated from images of Connemara, Wicklow and Kerry, is not a negligible kingdom. For Irish critic Ultan Macken, to give but one example, Irish scenery is the 'real star of the show'.[32] With Déon's novel and Boisset's film we are back in the Ireland of Pierre Benoit, author of *La Chaussée des Géants* (1922) who wrote: 'Erin, Erin, sacred land of saints and giants. Erin, island of the golden harp, of grey rocks on pale sand, of blue skies and green meadows, brown streams and black bogs. To understand you, Erin and to love, one must have contemplated the purple Loire or the green Rhine and not the abject waters of the Thames'.[33] The idea that it takes a certain kind of person to embrace this landscape, French or German as suggested by Benoit, becomes reality in French culture following *Le Taxi mauve*. These people are not ordinary people - not 'the merchant's clerk, from the City', the

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[31]The cast included Mairín D. O'Sullivan, Niall Buggy, Brendan Doyle, Michael Duffy, David Kelly and Eamonn Morrissey. Loan Do Huu played the part of the indo-Chinese servant.

[32]Ultan Macken, 'Taxi!', in the *RTE Guide*, November 20th, (Dublin: RTE, 1981), p.18.

[33]'Erin, Erin, terre sacreé des géants et des saints. Erin, ile à harpe d'or, aux rochers gris sur le sable pale, au ciel bleu velouté, aux prairies vertes, aux torrents bruns, aux marais noirs. Pour te comprendre Erin, et pour t'aimer, il faut avoir contemplé la Loire violette et le Rhin vert, et non pas [...] les eaux abjectes de la Tamise'. Bourget quoted in Rafroidi, (1973), p. 37.

target of Benoit's satire, 'who is content to spend a few hours fishing on Sunday at Maidenhead or Woolwich',[34] nor the family spending a day on in the country of Renoir's '*Une Partie de campagne*' (1936). They are the elite.

Ireland: 'L'Ile refuge' for the happy few.

The gatekeeper to 'this sacred earth' in post-*Taxi mauve* culture is the author Michel Déon. He has had a very successful career in France and his name on the billing of the film was an important draw for French audiences. Certain French people were repeatedly selected in 1990s French culture as commentators on aspects of the Irish scene. Michel Déon, the author of *Le Taxi mauve*, held this role in television, while Pierre Colombat, author of *L'Age de pierre,* a novel set in Dingle, has been called upon as to represent his views of Ireland in travel magazines such as *Geo*. Both these authors present a romantic view of Ireland. They are qualified to do so by the image of Ireland as the island of the writers. The real texts of the Irish writer have in recent times been converted to icons of Ireland as 'island of culture'. There are no Irish authors listed in the bibliographies published with articles about Ireland as refuge in the magazines *Prima*, [35] or *Iles*.[36] 'Irish writers', along with Irish sheep or Irish pubs, have become part of Ireland as product. This association of writers with tourism is not always successful as a strategy because the words of the writers themselves sometimes cannot be contained or stabilised by the cultural tourism industry. Irish people interviewed in one French tourist article about Brendan Behan quote him with effect: 'Their Irish accents give weight and force to their words; their cry, "Irish people

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[34]Ibid., p. 37.

[35]Dominique Le Brun, 'Balade irlandaise au coeur du Connemara', in *Prima*, no. 143, August, (Paris, 1994), p. 128.

[36]Agnès Frumann, 'Spécial Irlande', in *Iles, le magazine de toutes les iles*, No. 27, April, (France, 1993).

do not love those who think". [...] Behan has written a lot, lived a lot and drank a lot'.[37] This may not exactly have been the kind of thinking desired by the Irish Tourist Board who, in the same, issue ran an advertisement with the words: 'On parle philosophie dans un pub Irlandais/ One speaks philosophy in an Irish pub'.

Philosophy of the kind espoused by Behan might also appear far too urban to Pierre Colombat and Michel Déon. These writers represent Ireland as a refuge from modernity and, for modernity, we may read France. Déon is quoted on the cover of Hervé Jaouen's book on his travels in Ireland, *Journal d'Irlande, 1977-1983/1984-1989*.[38] In this quotation, Déon's construction of 'les happy few' who truly understand Ireland recalls Pierre Benoit. Déon writes: 'Your book gives me much pleasure. Do you know that here the first glance is always the right one. It is a waste of time to think of correcting it afterwards. *Journal d'Irlande* is a perfect introduction to the best of this country. And you write beautiful pages on the waters, on the sky. I love that you are not indifferent to the eyes of the girls. Be content. Your book is reserved for the happy few, those who really understand, -not the tourists'.[39] The quote is signed – Michel Déon 'de l'Academie française'. The jacket cover of Jaouen's book further reinforces the notion of Ireland as escape because, in its biography of the writer, it uses this exact term: Ireland is 'l'ile refuge/ the isle of refuge'. The women's magazine *Prima* cites these two authorities- authors

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[37]'Leur accent irlandais donne force et frappe a ces paroles; le cri "Les Irlandais n'aiment pas ceux qui pensent"... Behan a beaucoup ecrit, vecu, bu'. *Telérama*, No.2337, (France, 26-10-94), p. 23.

[38]Jaouen is considered a master of the 'roman noir' in France. He has written several novels in this genre: *La mariée rouge*, *Quai de la fosse*. He won Le Grand prix de littérature policière for his fourth novel, *L'Hopital souterrain*.

[39]'Votre livre me plai^t beaucoup. Savez-vous qu'ici le premier coup-d'oeil est toujours le bon? C'est en vain qu'on pense corriger ensuite. *Journal d'Irlande* est une approche parfaite du meilleur de ce pays. Et vous écrivez de belles pages sur les eaux, le ciel. J'aime que vous soyez sensible aux yeux des filles ...Soyez content. Votre livre reste en effet pour les 'happy few", ceux qui comprennent, pas les touristes'. Michel Déon, quoted on the jacket note, Hervé Jaouen, *Journal d'Irlande, 1977-1983/1984-1989*, (Brest: Éditions Ouest-France, 1990).

of Ireland, l'ile refuge', as essential reading for the French traveller about to embark on a voyage to Ireland. The title page of the feature, 'Balade irlandaise au coeur du Connemara/ an Irish walk in the heart of Connemara ' states that this region, 'sheltered from influence, has known how to keep its taste for wild nature. And its Celtic soul'.[40] The magazine *Iles* in its special on Ireland further takes up the theme. Its cover describes Ireland as 'a country of rediscovered authenticity'.[41] Where did this idea of Ireland as a refuge come from? It is not just a product of Irish tourist board. Notions of escape in these discourses are very complex – it is not merely respite from work, the usual meaning for holiday. *Le Taxi mauve* demonstrates a movement away from the function of the Ireland text as a space for exploring themes of revolution, unrest, repression, poverty and madness, so evident in the previous films on the subject, up to and including Boisrond's *On est toujours trop bons avec les femmes*. It has become a space of refuge.

The images of De Gaulle on the beach at Sneem have, without a doubt, played an important role in the construction of Ireland as an escape from the modern world. De Gaulle's trip to Ireland has become emblematic and mythical. Very few commentators refer only to his post-1968 trip to Kerry but generally refer to Connemara when they write of De Gaulle and Ireland. Following 1968, the general quit the political stage. He travelled in the 'old countries, Ireland in 1969 and Spain in 1970, where his presence bore scant risk of giving rise to wrong interpretations or political movements'.[42] Alguhon speculates that De Gaulle 'vanished' to Colombey-les-Deux-Églises and later to Ireland. He concludes that this was indeed the case for two reasons: firstly his aide-de-camp General Massau commented that the General wanted to opt for resignation and exile. De Gaulle was disappointed in what he saw as

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[40]Le Brun, (1994), p. 128.

[41]'Un pays de l'authenticité retrouvée '. Frumann, (1993), cover.

national ingratitude. Alguhon states that 'The psychology of a man of De Gaulle's importance is not irrelevant to the history of France, or superfluous in its narration'.[43] Following Alguhon, if De Gaulle's psychology affected the history of France, what could it not do to the history of the Ireland text in France? De Gaulle was returning to 'the old countries", to paraphrase Alguhon. He was escaping May 1968. In that sense he was fleeing from a history. He went to Ireland and in doing so constructed a refuge from this history, a refuge labelled 'the West of Ireland'. This Ireland, 'the old country', offered a space of recuperation, a return to source and to visions of Europe from the past and of a shared republican history stretching back to 1798 and the landing of the French off the Cork coast. It is to this history François Mitterand refers in his essay in honour of Garret Fitzgerald in 1986:

> Ireland, "the island of saints and heroes", is rediscovering a multi-secular tradition. A distant country, the westernmost cape of the Ancient World, it flooded Medieval Europe with its learning. The repository of knowledge during the dark ages, it welcomed to its shores students, clerics and doctors. Its monks founded monasteries throughout Europe. [...] its sons were counsellors of princes, the greatest of whom, Charlemagne, surrounded himself with wise men -Alcuin and Irish scholars to the fore -to govern an area which prefigured Europe.[44]

Histories of De Gaulle, Ireland and Colombey-les-Deux-Églises, the place where he wrote his memoirs, are linked. De Gaulle and De Valera are strongly associated in the narrative of De Gaulle in Ireland.[45] Pierre Joannaon comments that both shared: 'the visionary temperament

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[42]Alguhon, (1990), p.431.

[43]Ibid., p.428.

[44]Francois Mitterand, 'Ireland and Europe', in *Ireland in the Contemporary World*, James Dooge, ed., (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1986), p. 5.

restrained by an acute sense of reality which is the hallmark of great statesmen, a haughty sense of the destiny of their nations, a devotion to public liberties which are best guaranteed by the sovereign state and the charismatic authority of those providential men who sometimes spring from people confronted with great historical tragedies'.[46] In spite of the fact that both statesman indulged in the romance of the 'simple' life, neither was, according to Joannon, a 'bourgeois'. [47] De Gaulle declared that he never felt bound to the interests and aspirations of that class, while, De Valera, in waging economic war with England and in condemning the actions of Franco in the Spanish Civil War, alienated the middle classes of Ireland to such a degree that they were prepared to adopt fascistic style politics to protect employers' interests in the 1930s.[48] In this sense, at least, De Gaulle has little in common with the main characters of *Le Taxi mauve*, but I will return to this issue later.

Joannon describes De Gaulle 'trudging heavily over the sand dunes of Derrynane, County Kerry, as 'more King Lear than ever'. [49] In that remark lies the essential difference between De Gaulle's Ireland and Déon's. Joannon says of Déon that the writer sees Ireland as the place where 'the last myth of Europe, the gaullian legend, culminating in ingratitude and defeat, was itself sublimated into myth'.[50] *King Lear*, the play, however, is not about myth but about history, the recognition of the self as subject and the cause of change and the anguish of that recognition. In some ways, the General's sojourn recalls the West as the perfect site for the ascetic reflection on life, the point of view expressed

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[45]See B. de Faragorce, "Charles De Gaulle et Eamon de Valera", in *Études irlandaises* VIII, (Rennes: Uni. De Rennes, 1983), pp. 257-261.

[46]Pierre Joannon, 'Charles De Gaulle and Ireland: a Return to Sources', in *De Gaulle and Ireland*, ed. Joannon, (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1991), p. 11.

[47]Ibid.,p. 11.

[48]See Lee, (1989), Chapter 3, pp. 175-258.

[49]Joannon, (1991), p. 1.

[50]Ibid., p. 1.

in Saint Columban's treatise, 'O Vie Mortelle, tu fuis, et tu n'es rien'. *Le Monde* headlined an article on travelling in Ireland in the west with the banner: 'L'homme tranquille dans un taxi mauve/ The Quiet Man in the Purple Taxi'. Johnathan Farren in this article makes a strong link between *Le Taxi mauve* and De Gaulle. The Ireland space in the world of De Gaulle and *Le Taxi mauve* becomes Ireland as empty space, a frame 'which lends itself to introspection'. De Gaulle said that he found what he was looking for in Connemara: 'etre en face de moi-meme/ to be face to face with myself'.[51] Rest, not action, is privileged in those 'private' moments. *Le Taxi mauve*, on the other hand, has other agendas besides representing Ireland as a space of recuperation. The image suggested by De Gaulle on the beach, staring at the grey sea, suggests weariness with the world. It does not connote adventure and action. In contrast *Le Taxi mauve* is filled with action: shooting, chasing down roads; horse-riding; climbing; almost drowning.

Man of Action.

Perhaps it is no accident that Boisset, famous for action films, would direct this film, because the film is a film essentially about hunting. The hunting scenes in *Le Taxi mauve* recall discourses of struggling for survival popularised in cinema by Flaherty with films like *Nanook of the North* and the shark hunt in *Man of Aran*. As I have pointed out in Chapter Two, *Man of Aran*'s appeal lies in its mediation of wilderness myths: 'In the literal, moral and metaphysical sense, the megalopolis, the city, is the place of damnation. The cinema director who has pushed this conflict as subtext (city versus nature) is Robert Flaherty. He eliminates one of the two terms: the city is not only absent but forgotten in his films. It is simply unimaginable. In *Man of Aran* (1932), as much as in *Nanouk* (1922), Flaherty films paradise lost: man alone

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[51] Charles De Gaulle quoted in Farren, (1996), p.11.

face to face with nature'.[52] The impact of these films was enormous at the time and they continue to enjoy a large audience. Flaherty's films have undergone a revival in France and the 1990s have seen whole festivals dedicated to his work in Paris. The phrase 'man alone face to face with nature' underscores the difference between the West of these films and the west of De Gaulle's visit. On that occasion, the man at the centre of the narrative was face to face with himself, not nature.

The landscape represented in *Le Taxi mauve* and its scenes of brawling peasants have led many commentators to compare the film with Ford's *The Quiet Man*. Indeed the article in *Le Monde* quote above fuses the two films into one title. Another French critic Claude Benoit also compares the two, commenting that 'Boisset films the Irish landscape as well as John Ford'.[53] I would take issue with this view. Close analysis of *The Quiet Man* reveals crucial differences between the two films. Caughie and Rockett have argued that *The Quiet Man* (1952) celebrates the 'pre-modern virtues of the West of Ireland and constructs the country as a bucolic haven free from the rigours of American competitiveness and its capitalist ethos'.[54] It is important to note that *The Quiet Man* is not merely a bucolic haven but unleashes the 'scandal, chaos and violence' found in French films with Irish subjects.[55] Luke Gibbons's study of *The Quiet Man* establishes that film's construction of Ireland as a pastoral idyll and a romanticised view of the village but whose sexual politics are

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[52]'Au sens literal, moral, metaphysique, la ville mégapole est le lieu de perdition. Le çinéaste qui a poussé le plus loin le conflit susdit [cité contre nature] est Flaherty [Robert]. Il en élimine un des deux termes: la ville n'est pas seulement absente mais oubliée dans ses films. Elle est simplement impensable. Aussi bien dans *Nanouk*, (1922), que dans *Man of Aran* [1932], Flaherty filme le paradis perdu: l'homme seul face à la nature., (...), L'impact de ses films fut énorme à l'époque'. Grenier, (1987), p.64.

[53]Claude Benoit, '*Le Taxi mauve*', in *Jeune çinéma*, ed. Jean Delmas, Vol. 104, (Paris: Fedération Jean Vigo, July 1977), p. 22.

[54]Rockett & Caughie, (1996), p.88.

[55]In one scene in *!Viva Maria!* the abbot of the Jesuit monastery says of the 'revolting' public 'That's all they want, scandal, chaos and violence'.

exciting in terms of Irish cinema of the time.[56] The instability of *The Quiet Man*'s address is reflected in the response of Gibbons to the film who says: 'It is difficult to think of any way of reconciling opposing extremes in a film which moves rapidly from sunshine to thunderstorm, from personal love to communal violence and in which scenes of comedy and intimacy are frequently offset by ominous undertones of death'.[57] In spite of these undertones of death Luke Gibbons contrasts Ford's view of Ireland and Irish history with the view of English director David Lean in *Ryan's Daughter* (UK, 1971). He concludes that where Lean's film mediates fatalism, Ford's comes down on the side of optimism. Perhaps this accounts for its lack of popularity among English film critics. English film enthusiast like the director Lindsay Anderson and Andrew Sarris are adamant in their rejection of Ford's Irish films as masterpieces. Anderson pleads for the supremacy of Ford's westerns in *About John Ford* (1981).

Jean Tulard, who describes Ford as the Irish school in American cinema, argues that the Ireland text gave Ford his greatest films, those that are most 'filled with action and with humour'. Tulard says that *The Quiet Man*, although not his masterpiece, is 'the most representative of the Fordian universe'.[58] Jean Mitry also celebrates *The Quiet Man*. He describes the film as a dramatic comedy which allies grace and power in a 'romance as happy as it is likeable'.[59] Mitry's critique of the film foreshadows Luke Gibbons's essay in *Cinema and Ireland*. He was charmed by the eroticism of the film, 'healthy but flagrant': an 'écologue' both violent and delicate where poetry and brutality are entwined in a rhythm closer to dance than anything else. [60] He remarks on the tonality, vibrancy and colour of the film. Ford said of his own point of view: 'I am

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[56]Gibbons, (1988), pp.221-226.

[57]Ibid., p. 239.

[58]Tulard, (1991), p.293.

[59]'Romance heureuse autant qu'amiable'. Jean Mitry, *John Ford, Tome II*, (Paris: Classiques du çinéma, Éditions Univeritaires, 1954), p.101.

often reproached for my idealism. I don't deny it. It is true that I believe in many things that it has become a habit to mock: love, friendship and even in justice, when it is fitting. I love people and I have confidence in them'.[61]

This is not a view of people shared by the authors of *Le Taxi mauve*. None of the relationships between men and women succeed in this film. Only male friendship, between the father figure of Dr. Skully and the young American, remains intact. Indeed *Le Taxi mauve* questions the value of all human relationships. Marchal advises Jerry at the end of the film, that, having found his roots, he should stick with breeding horses and forget about Anne. This is very much a reflection of Déon's point of view. Déon was the presenter of *Histoires naturelles, la chasse au vert*, a documentary about hunting in Ireland, shown on TF1 in March. Déon has made no secret of his right-wing views, his empathy with intellectuals such as Maurras and his engagement with the Action Française. Déon chose to retire to Galway and in a recent documentary on his life, part of the *Siècle d'écrivains* series screened by F3 in 1995, it was in Ireland, not France, that the cameras filmed 'le dernier des hussards/the last of the hussards'. Déon's attitude to history is extreme. His experience of the Second World War inspired in him more than ever 'a repulsion for those forms of government that are the Republic and Democracy'.[62] In *Le Taxi mauve* France is presented as a source of trauma for Marchal, a 'lost' place, hopelessly contaminated in comparison with the simplicity and purity of the sky and the sea and nature of Ireland. Jaouen recounts an anecdote suggestive of this kind of opposition in post-1968 discourse about Ireland. He tells of a French man travelling in Connemara who

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60 Ibid., p.102.

61 John Ford quoted by Philippe Haudiguet, *John Ford; çinéma d' aujourd'hui*, 46, (France; Editions Seghers, 1974), p. 100.

62 'Une répulsion pour ces formes de gouvernement que sont la République et la démocratie'. Déon, quoted in *Télérama*, No 2390, 1-11-95.

meets an elderly Irish man on the road. The Irish man asks him his country of origin. On his replying, 'France', the old man goes down on his knees and tells him he will pray for him.[63]

The Irish tourist Board's 1995 campaign attempted to reinforce notions of an Ireland of purity and simple Christianity in their 1995 advertising campaign in France but obviously feared the dangers posed by the instability of the Irish people as sign and replaced them by sheep. The caption to an image of a flock of sheep against the sky and the sea is accompanied by this text: 'To visit Ireland, one must do as the Irish sheep do: wander on the roads of Connemara, gallop over the fields and the mountains of Mayo and Donegal, go from creek to creek in Kerry. Happy the simple in spirit'.[64] The anguish of the French bourgeois in *Le Taxi mauve* is 'healed' in Ireland by the return to the values of a mythic past. The Ireland text in *Le Taxi mauve* summons up images of feudalism, of castles and little stone cottages, quaint peasants and the sea against the sky. It offers a back ground in which the middle-class play out their anguished and complex lives against a chorus of local simpletons and atavistically Catholic matrons.[65] The Ireland text in this film functions as uncontaminated nature.

With *Le Taxi mauve* we have come full circle, back to the sea, the sky and the stone of Flaherty's *Man of Aran* but with a new twist. The bourgeois man of action of Drieu La Rochelle –the hunter and sportsman- is now present in this landscape. Here he finds refuge in a country where the old values are intact and the natural order is restored. Revivals of that myth such as we find in *Le Taxi mauve* have replaced the peasant with

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63 Jaouen, (1990), pp. 116-7.

64'Pour visiter l'Irlande, il faut faire comme les moutons irlandais: vagabonder sur les routes du Connemara, galoper dans les landes et les montagnes du Mayo et du Donegal, aller de crique en crique dans le Kerry. Heureux les simples d'esprit'. Advertisement for Ireland, published by Office National du Tourisme Irlandais, in *Télérama*, No 2390, (Paris,1-11-95).

the bourgeois in the same mode. A curious version of these myths was to be found in the French travel programme, *Ushuaia*. *Ushuaia* is a hybrid travel / water sports / exotic location / adventure programme. The unifying theme is the sea although the brief can be far wider than that. It is very eclectic, perhaps an example of a truly post-modern programme. In this particular programme, dedicated to Ireland, clips of *Man of Aran* are combined with images of the sporty presenters also on the Aran Islands.[66] Where *Man of Aran* had islanders battling in currachs against a raging sea, *Ushuaia* had the presenters in gliders battling against a gale force wind determined to drive them against the cliffs and galloping bareback over rocks.

These discourses have their origins in 1930s thinking. The fascist intellectual, Drieu La Rochelle, in challenging Marxist ideas of workers and revolution in that period, constructed the bourgeois in the virile imagery of struggle and hardship of the peasants in Flaherty's *Man of Aran*:

> The worker has a more demanding economic life? The worker has a harder physical life? But how many bourgeois have an undemanding economic life from the top to the bottom of the ladder? The comfort which the bourgeois has, is always threatened with ruin. As for the hardness of work, it varies radically from worker to worker depending on his trade. The machine tends more and more in a number of cases to make the worker into a seated and inert figure like the bourgeois. For the bourgeois, however, sports restore his physical force.[67]

The peasant, not the worker, embodies ideals of simplicity and energy, because the peasant, with his smallholding and his struggle to maintain

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[65]Noiret's Marchal is described as 'un grand bourgeois' by French reviewers of the film. See Benoit, , (1977), p. 22.

[66]*Ushuaia*, screened TF1, Paris: March 12th, 1993.

[67]Drieu La Rochelle quoted in Soucy, (1995), p. 257.

his patch, offers a possibility of class collaboration not struggle. At the heart of these representations is a longing for the old feudal 'caste' system where everyone had his place and that place was not challenged. This brings us to another troubling feature of *Le Taxi mauve*, its recourse to images of feudalism.

One critic, Farren describes the hero of *Le Taxi mauve*, Marchal, in an attempt to forget the death of his son, as wrapping himself in a cocoon in Connemara beside an old castle in ruin.[68] The mention of the castle introduces a new theme into *Le Taxi mauve.* This theme which sounds a different note from De Gaulle's visit, 'the retreat of the general', and the romantic landscape of Ford's *The Quiet Man.* It is the theme of a desire to return to old order, blood-lines, ancestry and nobility. In Boisset's version of Déon's *Le Taxi mauve*, Sharon stays at a castle-hotel, where, although it is obvious she is wealthy, no mention of money is made. The fact of the Asian maidservant connotes past colonial relationships but is never challenged. Sharon enjoys breakfast at the cottage of Mrs Colleen as a delightfully quaint diversion, an escape from the decadence of the old European aristocracy represented through the suggestion of incest and lesbianism at the house of Taubleman. In *Le Taxi mauve* the Irish are a source of reassurance- the threat to the moral order comes from the remnants of a decaying aristocracy. These corrupt remnants are replaced by a new aristocracy of stars in the form of Fred Astaire and of earnest young men like Jerry whose right to the landscape is established through the purity of their peasant heritage. Jaouen's journal recreates the feudal landscape of *Le Taxi mauve,* an Ireland where castles converted to hotels recreate notions of timeless feudal relationships for visitors. Just as in *Le Taxi mauve*, money is not mentioned in Jaouen's description of his visit to Ashford Castle Hotel where he says that, in the 'soul of these ancient grey stones, the telephone,

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[68]Farren, (1996), p.11.

the alarm clock and the kettle, are the only concessions to modernity'. He finds himself sitting down to dinner alone in this vast hotel-castle with a family of three generations of Americans and is invited to take his place at the right hand of the family's patriarch whom he is asked to call grandfather.[69] In another castle, another time, he is addressed by the stable-hand as 'milord' and is amused. *Prima* picked up on these 'attractions', devoting a page, decorated with images of Kylemore Abbey, to these aristocratic hotels.

The Ireland text in French cinema, as my research indicates, has been marked by its close connection with themes linked with the Right in France. In the majority of the films, before the 1970s, the Ireland text functions as a space in which to contest those discourses; the authoritarian Catholicism, the repressive ideology of the Law, the splitting in rightist ideas. This can be contrasted with *Le Taxi mauve* where the Ireland text is re-appropriated as the text of the Right - an Ireland of primitive landscape, natural unchanging structures, feudal glories, pure of capital and immune to history. The passage to this mythic Ireland is the purple taxi. This taxi is not the index of modernity it might seem at first glance. It anticipates the car in *Diva*. Henry Jameson declares that French postmodernism begins with the film *Diva (*Beneix, 1978). The use of the Citroen in *Diva*, Jameson argues, shows a curious mixture of old and new that is post-modern. The image of the 'powerful elegant white Citroen', its 'extraordinary luminosity', emits messages of the primacy of the image and of the world's transformation into visual commodities, a celebration of the scoptic libido. [70] Louis Malle deconstructed such celebratory discourses in motor publicity, the combination of classical music with gleaming dream-machines, in *Humain, trop humain.* This film is a documentary about the manufacture

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[69]Jaouen, (1990), pp. 55-57.

[70]Jameson, (1992), p.60.

of an automobile on the production line at the Citroen factory at Rennes, Brittany in July 1972 and its presentation to the public at a Paris Motor show in October. The first part observes the workers operating as a team to choral music, a ballet of motor technology. The second part looks at the same process but this time demonstrates the tedium, discomfort, oppressive noise and grinding hard work of the line for the workers. In *Le Taxi mauve*, there are no such reminders of the human cost of technology and of industry as capital. The horse-less carriage, the purple dream machine, belongs in the same mythic landscape as the horse and the heather. The taxi connotes nostalgia generated by the reassuring presence of Fred Astaire. The image of the Citroen in *Diva* leads ultimately, in Jameson's view, to the disappearance of 'affect' and the sudden unexpected absence of anxiety and the effacement of negative impulses.[71] This is also the miraculous effect of Skully and his car which takes us on a trip to a country inoculated against society.

Perhaps those arguing against refugees in the year 2000 are drawing their objections from the fact that the body of the refugee inscribed with history will disrupt and shatter this image for their biggest market- the kind of tourist personified by Michel Déon. The original net of undesirables has extended beyond people of non-Irish origins. Ireland has now arrived at a stage where any initiative to introduce people perceived as falling short of the ideal, 'the white middle-class tourist', into the rural landscape is resisted violently. This article appeared in the *Irish Times* on July 2000: 'Local residents living near an East Clare village are opposing plans to house (six) disadvantaged children in a residential home in the area. They said that the proposed children's residential home is not in keeping with the farming and family nature of the residents in the immediate area. They further state that the location of the home on a tourist route is flawed and cannot be in keeping with Clare County

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[71] Ibid., p.60.

Council's plans for tourist walks in the area. They also expressed concern that the proposal will hinder the preservation of an existing fishing amenity used by the residents'.[72] It would be, perhaps, preferable to remove any traces of humanity altogether and have done with the pretence. Bord Fáilte obviously had Déon in mind when they ran this advertisement in France: 'Ireland has 5 million citizens of whom 1,250,000 are horses'.[73] In the dream country constructed by the culture of *Le Taxi mauve*, the Irish figures and with them, Irish history, have disappeared completely: they have been replaced by horses.

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[72]Gordon Deegan, (reporter), *The Irish Times*, Tuesday, July 11, 2000, p. 5.

[73]'L'Irlande compte 5 million de citoyens dont 1.250.000 chevaux'. Bord Fáilte advertisement, in *Télerama* No.2316, (1-6- 1994), p. 8

Conclusion.

The work of this thesis has demonstrated that the Ireland text has a significant presence in French cinema culture and that that presence reveals a unique relationship between the culture of the French producers and the culture of Ireland. As a result of this relationship, the construction of the Ireland text in the films studied here frequently shows a marked departure from themes identified in the cinemas of England, America and on occasion, of Ireland itself. The treatment of the 'Catholic' text is the most striking example. Another is the persistent connection of Ireland as subject to texts dealing with right-wing cultures. Other differences are to be found in the treatment of themes of colonisation and decolonisation in these films. My research has also shown that the study of French cinema has much to offer researchers in the field of Irish women and cultural politics.

The Ireland text in French cinema has consistently revealed itself as the opposite of rigid – it is an index of an unstable and fluid identity, capable of provoking the strongest response, -riots, suppression, accolades, fear- from its audience. Far from rigid and stereotypical, the image of the Irish as constructed by French culture is rich, varied and the site of constant struggle and conflict. Given the amount of films about Ireland made in the USA and in Britain, one would imagine that the strongest externally generated image of the Irish came from these two

countries.[1] There is scant evidence that this is the case in France. As I have shown, in the period 1895-1968, the primary external source of representations of the Irish in modern French culture came from Irish writing and literature, -O'Flaherty, Joyce, O'Casey, Beckett and so on- and from Hollywood, in particular the work of John Ford. I found little reference to English texts in the response to these films and, indeed, in response to the Ireland text in French culture up to the 1990s, apart from some scathing references to representations of the conflict in Northern Ireland in English television drama.

Critics of intercultural representations of Ireland in film have argued that such representations were the result of an attempt to 'alter reality to suit someone's specific agenda'.[2] It is clear from this thesis that the intercultural was not simply to alter reality, and for reality we might read the Irish construction of the Ireland text, but to explore particular realities, consistently French, and that Ireland as text functions as a tool of that exploration. It is precisely because the flow of representations is intercultural, that French cinema has so much to bring Ireland. The fact that, as I have demonstrated, the French found meaning in the Ireland text which they were able to relate to their own culture at a particular time is an index of shared experience for Ireland and France. The themes and issues explored in these films reflect on their source as much as on their object. They give us new ways of seeing Ireland. Far from denying contexts and realities, they bring forgotten, repressed, ignored and denied histories into the cinema space. We have seen this in the case of *La Jeune folle*, *Le Puritain* and *!Viva Maria!*. One outcome of this thesis will be to open up these themes for Irish film studies where the field of exploration has been confined to texts from American and British cinema. Perhaps too the methodology of this thesis can offer a new way of looking at films

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[1]Ibid., pp.5-7.
[2]Ibid., pp.5-7.

with Irish subjects from Britain and the United States. The exploration of the function of the Ireland text in the South of the Border westerns in Chapter Four is a demonstration of how such films can be approached in this way.

The Ireland text's primary function in the earlier films was as allegory: a space in which issues about France's past and present were explored in environments where to speak openly about such matters was difficult. There were many reason for this - among them, external censorship from the State, internal censorship driven by fear of poor returns, fear of the state censors, pressure from the Catholic Church and the active collaboration by certain cinema producers in the revisionism, nationalism and misogyny. By the 1970s, however, a change came. The Ireland of struggle, revolution and history dominates in the pre-1968 texts but it no longer holds the same attraction in the years after. Where it appears at all, it surfaces as a civil war text and is relocated to Northern Ireland. Two factors might explain the decline in the choice of Ireland as subject for French cinema producers. The first is the recent growth of an indigenous Irish film industry. The second is connected to the change in attitude to the representation of French history in the 1970s.

As far as I can determine, apart from a small scene in Eric Rohmer's *Le Rayon Vert (*1986) no major feature French cinema film had Irish subjects from 1978 to this date.[3] There were a number of co-productions for television; predominately set in Northern Ireland. I have found that Northern Ireland as subject did not receive fictional cinematic representation before 1978 and since then, it has appeared only in television drama and in EC funded co-productions such as *On est tous des arbres* and *L'Irlandaise* (1993). Until the 1970s Ireland, for France at least, was a source of light, a space where its French producers explored

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[3]This film contains a sequence where a couple discuss their love of horse drawn caravan holidays in Ireland and how they go there every year in spite of the constant rain.

anxieties and preoccupations about France in the period in which those films were produced. This was true for all of the films with no exception. The Irish space where it was represented functioned as a space where history was contested and where the Other, in the form of the Irish figure, was deployed to explore the Self. Liam O'Flaherty's novel *The Puritan*, set in Ireland of the 1920s, was reconstructed by the French producers of *Le Puritain* to offer a frighteningly accurate representation of aspects of French culture in the 1930s. The Ireland text in this instance served to unleash a unique and highly disturbing portrait of murderous fanaticism fuelled by a lethal combination of romanticism, negativity and authoritarian Catholicism in a repressive and economically conservative environment – perhaps the only cinema representation of French fascism before the war available to us. I have explored how Yves Allégret's *La Jeune folle* opened up a space in which to deal with the trauma of the Occupation and the war of the French against the French. In this film the Irish Independence text, connoting revolution, was subsumed into the Irish Civil war genre. In this film also the figure of the Irish warrior woman, whose attraction for the French dates back to the Isolde myth and which has found new form in the Joan of Arc discourse, was constructed by Allégret in a manner consistent with the period. The Ireland text was thus harnessed in the post-Second World War cultural project to deny women a role in the government of the new nation, to wipe women from the history of Liberation, to return her to the domestic sphere and to absolve French men from blame for collaboration and for civil war. As we have seen, however, not all representations of Irish women had the same agenda as *La Jeune folle*.

Viva Maria! demonstrated a shift from previous representations and opened up questions of colonisation and decolonisation not overtly mentioned in the previous films. In spite of moving the Irish figure to the new spaces of Mexico and, through genre, to the United Sates, *!Viva Maria!* remained closely connected to the French political context of the

1960s. In all five of these films, the Ireland text connoted 'revolution' and was used as a means to explore the theme of revolution and counter-revolution. In all four films released prior to *Le Taxi mauve* the figure associated with the Ireland text launched an attack on the established order: Ferriter with his murderous blood sacrifice; Catherine who attempts to assassinate the chief of police; Maria O' Malley, daughter of an Irish rebel, who becomes the military officer of a revolt in South America; the characters of Boisrond's *On est toujours trop bons avec les Femmes,* who are in active combat in the 1916 rebellion in the General Post Office, O'Connell Street. This function of the Irish figure, however, underwent a radical change between *!Viva Maria!* in 1965 and *Le Taxi mauve* in 1978.

As I have demonstrated in Chapter Five, the latter film constructed Ireland as the 'dream country'. This mythic view of Ireland as nature was rightly feared by Kevin Hickey. It is a country where history is subsumed into myth and where Ireland as cultural product for tourism, has become already an alibi for racism, exclusionary policies, repressive kitsch idealisation of the Irish character and a virulent nationalism based on Ireland's new-found status as a key component in the culture of global capitalism in Europe. Perhaps a cinema that will contest this vision of Ireland will find inspiration from among the films brought to light by this thesis. Perhaps, too, given continued funding and support for film bodies and for local commissioning bodies, the greatest challenge to *Le Taxi mauve*'s reactionary dream of Connemara will come from the West itself!

Filmography

Adieu Phillipine (Jacques Rozier, 1960).

Amants, Les (Louis Malle).

Annette et la Dame blonde (Jean Dréville, 1942).

Argent, l' (Marcel L'Herbier, 1927).

Ascenseur pour l'Échaffaud, L' (Louis Malle, 1952).

Atalante, L' (Jean Vigo, 1934).

Attentat, L' (Yves Boisset, 1972).

Avoir Vingt Ans dans les Aurés (Vautier 1972).

Bataille du rail, la, (Réné Clément, 1948).

Battlagia d'Algeria , La, / The Battle of Algiers (Gillo Pontecorvo, 1966).

Belle de jour (Luis Bunuel, 1968).

Belle équipe, La (Julien Duvivier, 1936).

Bete humaine, La (Jean Renoir, 1938).

Camisards, Les (René Allio, 1970).

Carnet de Bal, Un (Julien Duvivier, 1937).

Caroline Chérie (Pottier, 1949).

Caught (Max Ophuls, 1949).

Chagrin et La Pité, Le (Marcel Ophuls, 1971).

Ciel est A` Vous, Le (Grémillion 1943).

Corbeau, Le (Georges Henri Clouzot, 1943).

Cran-d'Arret (Yves Boisset, 1970).

Crime de Monsieur Lange, Le (Jean Renoir, 1935).

Crime et Chatiment (Pierre Chenal, 1935).

Crying Game, The (Neil Jordan, 1992).

Darby O'Gill (Robert Stevenson, 1959).

Dawn, The (Tom Coopers, 1937).

Dedée D'Anvers (Yves Allégret, 1947).

Derniére Jeunesse (Jeff Musso, 1939).

Diable au corps, Le (Claude Autant-Lara, 1947).

Die Verkaufte, Braut (Max Ophuls, 1932).

Dupont-lajoie (Yves Boisset, 1974).

En ne pas attendant Godot (Yves Allégret, 1957).

Enfants du paradis, Les (Marcel Carné, 1945).

Et Dieu créa la femme (Roger Vadim, 1956).

Exile, The (Max Ophuls, 1947).

Faibles femmes (Michel Boisrond, 1958).

Fanny (Marcel Pagnol 1932).

Fantomas (Louis Feuillade, 1913).

***Feu follet, Le* (Louis Malle, 1963).**

Finis Terrae (Jean Epstein, 1931).

Florence est folle (Georges Lacombe, 1944).

Foire aux chimères, La (Pierre Chenal, 1946).

Gigi (Jacqueline Audry, 1948).,

Gilda (Charles Vidor, 1946).

Gone With The Wind (Victor Fleming, 1939).

Grande illusion, La (Jean Renoir, 1937).

Gribouille (Marc Allegrét, 1938).

Guerre des Boutons, La (Yves Robert, 1961).

Huis Clos (Jacqueline Audry, 1954).

Inconnus dans la maison, Les (Henry Decoin1941).

Informer, The (John Ford, 1935).

Jeanne au Bucher (Robert Rosselini, 1954).

Jeanne d'Arc (Albert Capellani, 1910).

Jeanne d'Arc (F.Wolff, 1914).

Jeanne d'Arc (George Meliés, 1900).

Jeanne d'Arc (N. Oxilia, 1913).

Jeune folle, La (Yves Allégret, 1952).

Joan of Arc (Cecil B. De Mille, 1917).

Joan of Arc (Victor Fleming, 1948).

Joan the Woman (Cecil B. De Mille, 1916).

Jour se lève, Le (Marcel Carné, 1939).

Journal d'un curé de campagne, Le (Robert Bresson, 1951).

Journal d'une femme de chambre, Le (Luis Bunuel, 1963).

Juge Fayard, dit le shérif (Yves Boisset, 1976).

Juif Suss, Le (Veit Harlan, 1941).

Juno and the Paycock (Alfred Hitchcock, 1929).

La Passion de Jeanne D'Arc (Carl Theodor Dreyer; 1928).

Lacombe Lucien (Louis Malle, 1974).

Letter from an Unknown Woman (Max Ophuls, 1948).

Libelli (Max Ophuls, 1932).

Lightening Facial Changes (Georges Meliés, 1902).

***Lola Montès* (Max Ophuls, 1955).**

Madame de (Max Ophuls, 1953).

Madame Du Barry (Christian-Jacques, 1954).

Man of Aran (Robert Flaherty, 1934).

Manèges (Yves Allégret, 1949).

Marriage de Chiffon, Le (Claude Autant-Lara, 1942).

Mein Leben fur Irland / My Life for Ireland (M. Kimmich, 1944).

Merveilleuse vie de Jeanne D'Arc, La (Marco de Gastyne, 1928).

Michael Collins (Neil Jordan, 1990).

Minnie, l'ingénue libertine (Jacqueline Audry, 1950).

Mort en ce jardin, La (Luis Bunuel, 1957).

Mother, The (Vsevold Pudovkin, 1926).

Muriel (Alain Resnais 1966).

Nana (Christian-Jacques, 1954).

Neige était sale, La (Luis Saslavsky, 1953).

Nouvelle Babylon, La (Kozincev & Trauberg, 1929).

Odd Man Out, (Carol Reed, 1947).

Olivia (Jacqueline Audry, 1951).

***On est toujours trop bon avec les femmes* (Michel Boisrond, 1971).**

Orgueilleux, Les (Yves Allégret, 1955).

Partie de campagne, Un (Jean Renoir, began in 1936).

Patrie (Louis Daquin, 1945).

Père tranquille, Le (Noel-Noel with Réné Clément, 1946).

Pépé Le Moko (Duvivier, 1937).

Petite, La (Louis Malle, 1978).

Plaisir, Le (Max Ophuls, 1952).

Playtime (Jacques Tati, 1967).

Plough and The Stars, The / Révolte A` Dublin (John Ford, 1936).

Portes de la nuit, Les (Marcel Carné, 1946).

Pretty Woman (Gary Marshall, 1990).

Procès de Jeanne D'Arc (Robert Bresson, 1962).

Puritain, Le (Jeff Musso, 1937).

Quai des brumes (Marcel Carné, 1938).

Quand la femme s'en mèle (Yves Allégret, 1957).

Quiet Man, The / L'Homme tranquille (John Ford, 1952).

R. A. S. (Yves Boisset, 1973).

Reckless Moment, The (Max Ophuls, 1949).

Robinson Crusoe (Musso, 1950).

Roman du jeune Werther, Le (Max Ophuls, 1938).

Ronde, La (Max Ophuls, 1950).

Saint Joan, Otto Preminger, 1957).

Searchers, The (John Ford, 1956).

Shake Hands with the Devil (Michael Anderson, 1959).

Silence de la mer, La (Melville, 1948).

Souffle au coeur, Le (Louis Malle, 1971).

Symphonie Pastorale, La (Jean Delannoy, 1946).

***Taxi ,auve, Le,*(Yves Boisset, 1978).**

Touchez pas au grisbi (Jacques Becker, 1954).

Trente, 37° le matin (Jean-Jacques Beneix, 1986).

Untamed / Tant que soufflera la tempete (Henry King, 1955).

Valseuses, Les (Bertrand Blier, 1974).

Vampires, Les (Louis Feuillade, 1914).

Venus Aveugle (Abel Gance,1942).

Verité sur Bébé Donge, La (Henri Décoin, 1952).

Vie est à nous, La (Jean Renoir, 1936).

Vie Privée (Louis Malle, 1961).

Vive la liberté (Jeff Musso, 1944).

***War of the Buttons, The* (David Puttnam, 1989).**

Woman in the Window (Fritz Lang, 1944).

Wonderful Country, The (Robert Parrish, 1959).

Zazie dans le Métro (Louis Malle, 1960).

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Abstract.

Dream Country: The Ireland Text in French Cinema, 1937-1977.

Paula Gilligan, Ph.D. Thesis, Trinity College Dublin, 2002.

This thesis is an exploration of the Ireland text in French cinema, 1937-1977. Less than one hundred feature films have been made by Irish film-makers in Ireland in cinema's first century but more than two thousand fiction films with Irish subjects have been produced outside the country. As a result of this, it could be said that the study of cinema and Ireland necessitates an intercultural approach. Studies in the field have so far focussed almost entirely on British and Hollywood texts. The Ireland text in French cinema has never been studied before. It is constructed through the range of representations of and discourses about Irish people, culture, history and landscape, available historically and currently in French culture. This thesis examines in general terms the cinema element of the Ireland text in France, the cinema text, and in specific terms five key French films in which the Ireland text manifests itself. These films are *Le Puritain* (Jeff Musso,1937), *La Jeune Folle* (Yves Allégret,1952), Louis Malle's *Viva Maria!* (1965), Michel Boisrond's *On est toujours trop bons avec les femmes* (1971) and Yves Boisset's *Le Taxi mauve* (1977).

There can be a tendency in Irish film studies to look unfavourably upon representations of Ireland from other cinema cultures. This thesis offers a challenge to that point of view. The image of the Irish as constructed by French culture is rich, varied and the site of constant struggle and conflict. In order to fully understand intercultural texts and the mode of representation involved in them, a predominantly historical approach is needed. The cinema texts, their intertexts and contexts, audience and critical response to the films thus feature prominently in the thesis. Until the 1970s, Ireland, for France was a space where its French producers explored anxieties and preoccupations about France in the period in which those films were made, where history was contested and where the Other, in the form of the Irish figure, was deployed to explore the Self. My research indicates that ultimately these cinema texts tell us more about France than about Ireland, but that they also indicate shared experience for Ireland and France. These films give us new ways of seeing Ireland. They bring forgotten, repressed, ignored and denied histories into the cinema space.

This thesis can be seen to provide a model for examining accessible French perceptions of Ireland in cinema and other media, and by extension for examining accessible representations any cultural entity may construct of another cultural entity. The methodology will have applications in historical and cultural studies and in commercial and political contexts.