Irish Intercultural Cinema: Memory, Identity and Subjectivity

Enda Murray

Sydney, Australia

Abstract

Irish intercultural cinema looks at the development of a cinematic genre which focuses on issues of Irish migrancy but is produced outside of Ireland. This paper has as its focus the cultural landscape of Irish-Australia. The essay uses methodologies of ethnographic and documentary theory plus textual analysis of film and written texts to establish a throughline of Irish intercultural film. The essay begins by contextualising the place of the Irish diaspora within the creation of Irish identity globally. The discussion around migrancy is widened to consider the place of memory and intergenerational tensions within not just the Irish migrant population, but also within the diverse cultures which comprise the contemporary Australian landscape. The historical development of intercultural cinema is then explored internationally within a context of colonial, gender and class struggles in the 1970s and 1980s. The term intercultural cinema has its origins in the Third Cinema of Argentinians Solanas and Getino in the 1970s and covers those films which deal with issues involving two countries or cultures. The term was refined by Laura Marks in 2000 and further developed by Hamid Naficy in 2001 in his discussion of accented cinema which narrows its definition to include the politics of production. The paper then traces the development of Irish intercultural cinema from its beginnings in England in the 1970s with Thaddeus O'Sullivan through to Nicola Bruce and others including Enda Murray in the present day. The essay concludes by bringing these various strands together to see where intercultural film might have a place in today's globalised cultural landscape. Common traits within intercultural film such as the notion of place, autobiographical film and personal identity are explored using examples of intercultural filmmaking from around the globe. These commonalities point to a way forward for the future of a sustainable multicultural film culture.

Keywords: Autobiographical films; Documentary; Memory; Subjectivity; Identity; Multiculturalism.

Introduction: Irish-Australian identity: A cultural perspective

In February 1995, the former president of Ireland, Mary Robinson delivered an address to both Houses of the Oireachtais (Irish Parliament) entitled "Cherishing the Irish diaspora". She promoted the need for the Irish to engage with the diaspora:

> If we expect that the mirror held up to us by Irish communities abroad will show us a single familiar identity, or a pure strain of Irishness, we will be disappointed. We will overlook the

fascinating diversity of culture and choice which looks back at us. Above all we miss the chance to have that dialogue with our own diversity which this reflection offers us.[1]

Robinson's idea of Irish identity is supported in the work of other scholars. For example, Ian Bryson agreed with Mary Robinson, and presented an argument that Irishness is not solely created in Ireland and that there is no single Irish identity.[2]

Irish Australian writer, John O'Carroll has noted that modern Irishness owes more to the memories of the approximately seventy million people around the world who claim Irish descent, than to the activities of the five million who live on the island of Ireland:

> The Dublin of the 'Rare old times' is gone, but not to memory. For migrants, the city exists only in memory: to return is no longer possible because the city that has been left behind is no longer there. Yet this imaginary city is precisely the one that is preserved in song. Again, perhaps, the sense ratios of Ireland are determined by the outer circle, the emigrants.[3]

Thus, the Ireland that survives in the minds of migrants (and that has been passed down to their children) is the Ireland that is crystallised in the memories of the migrants on the day that they left the country. This poses some questions: Will this memory change with time? How will this memory be passed on to the next generation?

Katie Holmes and Stuart Ward, writing about how we engage with history, have asserted that Ireland and Australia are both countries where memory is important:

> Ireland and Australia represent two case studies that are often singled out for their particular brand of bitterly disputed remembrance. The Irish in particular have long been branded a people mired in their primordial rivalries.[4]

Collective memory is a contentious field, and Holmes and Ward have further discussed the pressure of the past in Ireland and Australia:

> The very notion of 'collective memory' is as contested as it is problematic, raising long-standing theoretical debates about how groups remember. The field is vast, unwieldy and marked by a conceptual looseness about how the range of social phenomena that might fall within its ambit.[5]

Crystallised memory

In writing about his grandmother, the second generation Greek Australian writer Christos Tsiolkas has identified the phenomenon wherein the second generation is torn between the culture of the host nation and that of the birth nation.

---

[1] Mary Robinson, "Address by Uachtarán na hEireann Mary Robinson to Joint Sitting of the Houses of the Oireachtas." February 2, 1995, http://www.oireachtas.ie/viewdoc.asp?fn=/documents/addresses/2Feb1995.htm.

[2] Ian Bryson, unpublished PhD proposal *Imagining Ireland*, 1998.

[3] John O'Carroll, *Irish Australia, Irish music: A valediction to vision* (unpublished, 2000): 10.

[4] Katie Holmes, and Stuart Ward, eds. *Exhuming Passions: the Pressure of the Past in Ireland and Australia* (Ireland: Irish Academic Press, 2011), 2.

[5] Ibid., 3.

> One common experience that so many of us who are children of migrants share, is the need to challenge tradition, but also honour the responsibility we feel to our families... to negotiate those questions of honour and obligation.[6]

The migrants feel they must remain true to the attitudes of their birth nation, but they do not realise that the birth nation itself has moved on: this causes them to exist in a kind of cultural bubble, with an increasing disconnection between both host and nation of birth. This phenomenon, which I call "crystallised memory", can cause the migrants to be excessively conservative in their outlook – posing exacerbated problems for the second generation.

Laura Marks identified this duality between memory and actuality within screen culture.[7] I carry this idea a step further, by using it in terms of the tensions the duality creates within the emigrant psyche: the remembered country of birth is loved for providing nurture but hated for pushing one out.

Tsiolkas has pointed out that this crystallised memory has an impact on the Greek diaspora, and also – by extension – other migrants who have come to Australia. O'Carroll stated that the personal memories and experiences of migration make a vital contribution to Australia's understanding of itself as a nation. Therefore, history and cultural identity might be lost if these are not documented and acknowledged, however painful these memories might be:

> These yearning [Dublin] cityscapes are not just part of Irish history: they are part of *Australian* postcolonial culture. They bear recalling because the value of migrant memory *itself* comes into view.[8]

It is in the world of the Irish diaspora that these hybrid identities are forged. I intentionally use the hyphen within the term "Irish-Australian" within this paper to denote a new hybrid group. Undoubtedly, there are benefits to exploring identity through cultural and historical perspectives. Holmes and Ward, for example, stated that:

> Creative writers, dramatists and film-makers turn to the past with concerns and preoccupations that transcend the mere 'historical', and often with an acute awareness of the blurred distinctions between 'history', 'memory', and the creative impulse.[9]

Film also has many advantages for exploring personal and subjective stories of identity, as this paper will show.

Irish-Australian identity: A film studies perspective

Given the large Irish diaspora in Australia, surprisingly few documentaries explore the experience of Irish migration and the intercultural and intergenerational issues involved. Only a comparatively small number of productions have been completed to date: these range from low budget travel/tourist shows to history series with high production values.

---

[6] Christos Tsiolkas, "My Greek Grandma," *Sydney Morning Herald,* July 17, 2011, 1.
[7] Laura U. Marks, *The Skin of the Film,* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000).
[8] John O'Carroll, *Irish Australia, Irish music: A valediction to vision*, 11.
[9] Katie Holmes, and Stuart Ward, *Exhuming Passions: the Pressure of the Past in Ireland and Australia*, 2.

The series *Echo of a Distant Drum* provided a lavish history of the Irish in Australia.[10] This project was made in three parts and was produced by the ABC and RTE as part of the Australian bicentennial celebrations in 1988. As befits a production that was funded as part of that celebratory occasion, it painted a traditional picture of Irish-Australian success, using broad strokes. This project falls into the category of interactive documentary, as defined by Nichols, with an emphasis on interview and retrieving history through stock footage.[11]

The Irish Empire was a five part series that explored the history of Irish emigration.[12] It was produced by Hilton Cordell in Australia and Café/Little Bird in the UK and Ireland, and featured some original new angles on the Irish in Australia: for example, concerning the number of Irish Protestants who made the journey. Among the episode directors were Irish iconoclast Alan Gilsenan and newcomer Dearbhla Walsh. This series attempted to uncover previously little known material and adopted an auteur approach to documentary, giving each director more freedom to indulge a personal style. Walsh, for example, examined the contribution of women to the Irish diaspora in one program dedicated to this topic.

Both of the series above were made in a traditional documentary style. They featured an "omniscient" voice-over and relied heavily on interviews and the use of archive material. Although professionally produced, they lacked the personal viewpoint, nuances, and fine detail of stories told at an individual level. Their connection with the viewer was intellectual as opposed to emotional.

Positioned in between these series were a number of one-off documentaries about specific incidents or personalities in Irish-Australian history, such as Alexander Pearce (*The Last Confession of Alexander Pearce*[13]), Ned Kelly (*Ned Kelly: The True Story*[14]), Robert O'Hara Burke (*Craiceann Geal, Croí Marbh* [Bright Skin, Dead Heart][15]) and the story of the Catalpa rescue of the Fenians off Fremantle in 1876 (*The Catalpa rescue*[16]). These films were quite traditional in their approaches, and used combinations of docudrama, archive footage, and narration. They were presented for a television audience.

Siobhan McHugh's radio documentary work, on the other hand, actually explored the nature of memory itself.[17] Her radio documentary, *Marrying out*[18], for example, explored personal experiences of Catholic mixed marriages in Australia. McHugh was brought up in Ireland but now lives in Australia. She made reference to the primacy of oral history within her work.[19]

A final artist of note in the realm of Irish-Australian work is Sydney-based visual artist Kate Murphy. Her *Prayers of a mother*[20] was a video installation that occupied the borders of

[10] *Echo of a Distant Drum*, 3-part series, directed by Richard Dennison, Matthew Flanagan, and Michael Balson (Australia: ABC/RTE, 1988).

[11] Bill Nichols, *Blurred Boundaries,* (USA: Indiana University Press, 1994), 95.

[12] *The Irish Empire*, 5-part series, directed by various directors (Australia/UK/Ireland: Hilton Cordell/Little Bird, 1999).

[13] *The Last Confession of Alexander Pearce,* directed by Michael James Rowland (Australia: Essential Media & Entertainment, 2009).

[14] *Ned Kelly: The True Story*, directed by Barry Dowdall (Australia/Ireland: Telwell Productions, 2003).

[15] *Craiceann Geal, Croí Marbh* [Bright skin, dead heart], directed by Dermot Somers (Ireland: Crossing the Line, 2009).

[16] *The Catalpa Rescue,* directed by Lisa Sabina Harney *(*Australia /Ireland/UK: Essential Media and Entertainment, 2007).

[17] Siobhan McHugh, "Oral History and the Radio Documentary/Feature: Intersections and Synergies" (DCA diss., University of Wollongong, 2010), 221, http://ro.uow.edu.au/theses/3194.

[18] *Marrying Out,* radio documentary, directed by Siobhan McHugh (Australia: ABC, 2010).

[19] Siobhan McHugh, "Oral History and the Radio Documentary/Feature: Intersections and Synergies," 53.

[20] *Prayers of a Mother,* multimedia installation, directed by Kate Murphy (Australia, 2003).

contemporary documentary practice. In a five-screen display, Kate's mother took up the centre screen talking about her eight children and her hopes and prayers that they would come back to their Catholic faith. On the surrounding four screens the (sometimes tearful) reactions of her children fade in and out, reacting to their mother's invocations. This performative work tapped into a rich vein of Catholic guilt and pity, as exposed through family relationships. It demonstrated the power of the performative in creating a sense of common experience and emotional intensity for an Irish-Australian audience.

Murphy (2012, personal interview) has a strong connection with her Irish heritage. Her self-portrait video *Cry me a future* [21] focused on discovering and understanding her Irish background. In the course of producing this work (while on a residency in Ireland) Murphy spoke of the process of closing the geographical distance that had separated her from her Irish ancestors. Murphy is interested in popular culture and television, and she explores how documentary, in its many forms, surrounds and influences the audience. Her work often features her own performances and those of her family and people who are close to her in life. This style of domestic ethnography can convey complex emotional and cultural experiences in ways that are lacking in more traditional documentary forms. In Nichols' classic categorisation of the modes of documentary, the above documentary would fall into the "Performative mode" of documentary where the work examines the subjective nature of knowledge and the appeal to the audience is emotional rather than an objective search for truth. [22] This dichotomy within documentary between the personally subjective and the intellectually objective is explored in more detail below in the section "Personal and Political Identity". This distinction is important in terms of using documentary as a research tool in the space between ethnographic and documentary practices.

Murphy's work therefore differs from the above-mentioned Irish-Australian documentaries not only because it places her character as central to the work, but also because it challenges and critiques the very nature of the documentary form.

Third Cinema and intercultural cinema

The term "intercultural cinema" describes a particular subsection of films that are produced in the space that exists between two overlapping cultural regimes and that counter the Hollywood model of cinema.

Argentinian filmmakers Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino together created a manifesto, *Toward a Third Cinema*, which sought to demarcate a space for cinema within developing countries that could support the articulation of issues of gender, identity, and politics. [23] This area of film was dubbed "Third Cinema" to distinguish it from Hollywood ("First Cinema") and European art cinema ("Second Cinema"). This categorisation of films along geographical parameters gained traction as the impacts of globalisation increased, and as a result this developed into theories about "national cinema" [24] and "transnational cinema" [25].

Laura Marks (2000, p. 24) further delineated a space for films that are produced in the intersecting areas between cultures, when she defined intercultural cinema as:

[21] *Cry Me a Future,* directed by Kate Murphy (Ireland/Australia, 2008).

[22] Bill Nichols, *Blurred Boundaries*.

[23] Fernando Solanas, and Octavio Getin, "Toward a Third Cinema," *Cinéaste* 4, no. 3 (1970): 1.

[24] Valentina Vitali, and Paul Willemen, *Theorising national cinema* (London: British Film Institute, 2006).

[25] Elizabeth Ezra, and Terry Rowden, *Transnational Cinema: The Film Reader* (London: Routledge, 2006).

> Operating at the intersections of two or more cultural regimes of knowledge. These films and videos must deal with the issue of where meaningful knowledge is located, in the awareness that it is between cultures and so can never be fully verified in the terms of one regime or the other.[26]

Trinh T Minh-ha (cited in Marks) identified that within intercultural cinema cinematic form cultivates a politics and poetics by which to represent the experience of racial minorities and diasporic peoples.[27] Hamid Naficy went a step further when he added the concept of "accented cinema".[28] Naficy made a distinction between dominant cinema (which he considered to be universal and without accent) and accented cinema, where the "accent" emanates not so much by the speech of the characters as from the displacement of the filmmakers and their "artisanal production modes".

Based on my own filmmaking experience, I argue that it is important to consider the mode of production in this analysis. The sheer cost of producing film makes it, structurally, a medium which is exclusive to those with considerable financial resources. To ignore the high cost of making film is to ignore the fact that, because of its cost, filmmaking has always been the preserve of the wealthy. By considering the economic aspect of production, the discussion also moves into a debate about social production: a debate about access and power. Many of the following initiatives adopted a co-operative approach in order to overcome the financial problems associated with the high cost of filmmaking.

Artists in the 1970s were conscious of the politics of gender, race, and liberation struggles. Film workshops such as Sankofa and Black Audio Film Collective flourished in London and spearheaded a new wave of political and experimental filmmaking to give a voice to the second generation Afro-Caribbean and Asian populations. These workshops set about reclaiming and owning their – often hidden – cultural histories, and would frequently counter the "official" colonial version of their cultural stories. The very structures of their film workshops reflected this new ethos:

> Workshops aimed to develop structures radically different from those of the film and broadcasting mainstream. Principles widely shared were collective management, integration of production, distribution, and exhibition, flexible division of labour as opposed to rigid specialisms, continuity of employment as opposed to freelance working and non-hierarchical working relations, including relations between filmmakers, their subjects and audiences.[29]

The passion of remembrance, directed by Isaac Julien and Maureen Blackwood (from the Sankofa filmmaking collective), dealt with themes such as sexuality, racism, and black history.[30] This film was remarkable for its use of family history onscreen to trace the history of a black British family from the 1950s to the 1980s.[31]

---

[26] Laura U. Marks, *The Skin of the Film* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), 24.

[27] Ibid., 11.

[28] Hamid Naficy, *An Accented Cinema: Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 4.

[29] Margaret Dickinson, "Film as an ideological weapon." *BFI ScreenOnline*, Accessed December 6, 2012. http://www.screenonline.org.uk/film/id/976967/index.html.

[30] *The Passion of Remembrance,* directed by Isaac Julien, and Maureen Blackwood (UK: Sankofa Film Collective, 1986).

[31] "Works: The Passion of Remembrance," Luxonline, accessed November 25, 2011, http://www.luxonline.org.uk/artists/isaac_julien/the_passion_of_remembrance.html

Irish Intercultural Cinema

Irish intercultural filmmaking (i.e. production of films outside of Ireland but with Irish focused content) also had its origins in the UK in this period. At this time, London was the prime destination for many young Irish forced to emigrate in the 1970s and 1980s. The sons and daughters of earlier migrants (particularly in the 1950s) had received their free education in England, and the 1970s saw a new wave of filmmaking that mirrored the film initiatives of the second generation Afro-Caribbean and Asian populations. The Irish Video Project, which was based in Ladbroke Grove and founded by Ken Lynam and Don McGee, played an important role in supporting new Irish filmmakers at a grassroots level. Their seminal series *People to People*[32] looked at the lives of the Irish who had emigrated in the 1950s. *Suspect Community*[33] examined the impact of the Prevention of Terrorism Act, which was very much in use in England at the time. The program interviewed several people, including Annie Maguire of the "Maguire 7", who had been wrongly imprisoned by the English courts for terrorist bombings. Annie's brother-in-law Giuseppe Conlon was later to find unfortunate and posthumous fame as the "father" in the 1993 Jim Sheridan film *In the Name of the Father* about the "Guildford 4". [34]

The British Film Institute was instrumental in contributing funding to many of the important Irish films of this period. One of these films was Thaddeus O'Sullivan's *A Pint of Plain.*[35] O'Sullivan had emigrated from Ireland in 1966 and studied at the Royal College of Art before producing this experimental film about emigration. O'Sullivan continued on this theme of emigration with *On a Paving Stone Mounted*, which was notable for its treatment of memory.[36] In this film, images of present day England were mixed with memories of Ireland, mimicking the conflict between the present and the past in the mind of the aged Irish building labourer who was the subject of the piece. Formally experimental, this film managed to capture the tone of the London Irish experience: it gave voice to working class migrants and reflected the concerns of its Irish audience in a time of high emigration.

In 1987 John Fleming and Mark Stewart produced a film called *Guests of Another Nation* which focused on the lives of young Irish migrants in London.[37] Stewart and Fleming wanted to explore the true nature of Irish migration to England in the 1980s and Fleming (2013) said of his film that it portrayed the young migrant as a "lost and lonely outsider driven by something other than economics".[38]

A later Irish/UK film*, I Could Read the Sky* also explored the memories of an Irish labourer in London using poetic voice-over and heavily treated digital images.[39] This mixing of images from Ireland (denoting memory) with images of present day London (denoting

---

[32] *People to People*, 4-part series, directed by Ken Lynam, Don McGee, and Andy Porter (UK: Irish Video Project, 1984).

[33] *Suspect Community,* directed by Ken Lynam, and Don McGee (UK: Irish Video Project, 1986).

[34] *In the Name of the Father*, directed by Jim Sheridan (Ireland /UK /USA: Hell's Kitchen Films /Universal Pictures, 1993).

[35] *A Pint of Plain,* directed by Thaddeus O'Sullivan (UK: BFI Production Unit, 1974).

[36] *On a Paving Stone Mounted,* directed by Thaddeus O'Sullivan (UK: BFI Production Unit, 1978).

[37] *Guests of Another Nation*, directed by John Fleming, and Mark Stewart (Ireland /UK: Demon Swift Productions, 1987), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I4t6QfQUhkM.

[38] John Fleming, Notes from *Guests of Another Nation,* published April 2, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I4t6QfQUhkM.

[39] *I Could Read the Sky,* directed by Nicola Bruce (Ireland/UK/France: Hot Property, 1999).

reality) is a recurring feature of these films. Marks spoke about two types of images within intercultural cinema:

> What Deleuze, following Bergson, refers to as the actual image and the virtual image are the two aspects of time as it splits. The actual image corresponding to the present that passes, the virtual image to the past that is preserved.[40]

This theory makes sense of the notion of crystallised memory (introduced above), where the migrants' view of the world is "snap-frozen" the moment they step on the boat such that they do not bind with the host nation and so retain the attitudes of their birth-nation at the time that they left. Their vision of their homeland is frozen in time, as in Deleuze's virtual image. They feel they are remaining true to the attitudes of their birth nation, but they do not realise that the birth nation itself has moved on. This brings about an increasing disconnection of the individual from both the host nation and the nation of birth.

Accented film

As noted above, Naficy made a distinction between dominant cinema, which he considered to be universal and without accent, and what he coined "accented cinema", where the accent emanates not so much from the speech of the characters as from the displacement of the filmmakers and their "artisanal production modes".[41] He stated that "accented filmmakers not only act in their own films but also perform multiple other functions".[42]

Sydney-based Irish filmmaker, Enda Murray categorises several of his documentaries as accented films.[43] *Reel Irish*, for example, is built around the narrative backbone of a third generation Irish, ten-year-old girl, as she competes in her first Feis (dancing competition) in London.[44] Intercut with this narrative are interviews with dancers, family groups and individuals, covering four generations of Irish women in Britain. The focus was on the women in the Irish dancing scene and the film emphasised their role in passing on cultural traditions within the family as a counter to the dominant English culture within which they were bringing up their families.

---

[40] Marks, *The Skin of the Film*, 40.
[41] Naficy, *An Accented Cinema: Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking*, 4.
[42] Ibid., 49.
[43] Enda V. Murray, "A personal filmic exploration of Irish-Australian identity" (DCA diss., Western Sydney University, 2012), 76. http://researchdirect.uws.edu.au/islandora/object /uws%3A19121/datastream/PDF/view.
[44] *Reel Irish,* directed by Enda Murray (UK: Virus Media, 1998). http://vimeo.com/36518230.

Figure 1.   *Dancers backstage during the filming of Reel Irish in London in 1998.*

Enda Murray's film *Gaelic Girls* is also relevant in this context. This film looked at the lives of four young Irish women who immigrated to Australia.[45] The women were members of a ladies' Gaelic (Irish rules) football team and the football season provided a narrative backbone to the film. However, the personal experiences of emigration and the hopes and aspirations of the four subjects provided the main focus of the film. The film has similarities with *Reel Irish* in that it looks at personal experiences against a background of an Irish cultural pursuit (football and dancing, respectively) in opposition to the dominant cultural codes in order to provide a context for a discussion of "otherness". Naficy suggested that intercultural cinema is evidenced when "every story is both a private story of an individual and a social and public story of exile and diaspora".[46] Murray says, "this work is part of an ongoing attempt to make sense of where I am and who I am, in relation to the new environments in which I found myself."[47] Citron has noted the role of autobiographical films in attempting to trace lineages that allow the filmmaker to live in the present.[48] The primacy of establishing identity is supported by Renov (cited in Austin & de Jong): "The assertion of 'who we are'...is a vital expression of agency."[49]

---

[45] *Gaelic Girls,* directed by Enda Murray (Australia: Virus Media, 1998). http://vimeo.com/35870188.

[46] Naficy, *An Accented Cinema: Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking*, 31.

[47] Murray, "A personal filmic exploration of Irish-Australian identity," 77.

[48] Michelle Citron, "Fleeing from Documentary: Autobiographical Film/Video and the Ethics Of Responsibility," in *Feminism and Documentary, Visible Evidence,* vol. 5 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999).

[49] T. Austin, and W. de Jong, *Rethinking Documentary: New Perspectives and Practises* (UK: Open University Press, 2008), 48.

Figure 2.   Flyer for Gaelic girls *documentary produced in Sydney in 1996.*

Naficy also introduced a framework by which to examine intercultural cinema by placing the characters along a sliding scale of national consciousness depending on their metaphysical proximity to home. He noted three categories in Atom Egoyan's film *Calendar*[50], for example:

> Those who are born in Armenia... those Armenians born in diaspora who have grown up with a strong sense of affiliation and commitment to Armenia... and those born in the diaspora who are assimilated into the host society.[51]

In this film, Egoyan mixes documentary and fiction to examine his own Armenian/Canadian identity. Egoyan (assimilated) physically travels back to his ancestral home of Armenia with his wife (a strong sense of affiliation) where she meets and has an affair with their driver (born in Armenia). Naficy regards this process as a "performance of identity". In Enda Murray's 2012 film, *Secret Family Recipes,* it is possible to identify the characters in the film along the same lines: Enda Murray's mother (born in Ireland), himself (a strong sense of affiliation to Ireland), and his children (assimilated within Australia).[52]

One other aspect of accented cinema, according to Naficy, is the "inscription of the biographical... (dis)location of the filmmakers."[53] In Marilu Mallet's *Unfinished Diary*, what begins as a film about exile becomes a film about divorce.[54] The Chilean filmmaker was exiled in Canada, and her isolation from her country of birth is embodied in the physical distance that evolves onscreen with her partner. One could interpret the mother's character in

---

[50] *Calendar,* directed by Atom Egoyan (Canada/Germany: The Armenian National Cinematheque, 1993).
[51] Naficy, *An Accented Cinema: Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking*, 283.
[52] *Secret Family Recipes,* directed by Enda Murray (Australia: Virus Media, 2012).
[53] Naficy, *An Accented Cinema: Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking*, 4.
[54] *Unfinished Diary,* directed by Marilu Mallet (Canada/Chile: Marilu Mallet Production, 1986).

Secret Family Recipes as representative of the Ireland that he is missing and his children's characters as Australia, the young country that he is struggling to come to terms with.

Home, community, and a sense of place

One of the issues that Enda Murray explores in *Secret Family Recipes* and a topic that is regularly explored in intercultural cinema is the question of what "home" means for the author.

Naficy spoke about home as that place that "is a segment of space that people imbue with special meanings and value."[55] David Morley investigated the meaning of home at the junction of the family versus national identity in an essay where he attempted an analysis of the domestic realm "that can effectively be integrated with contemporary macro debates about the nation, community, and cultural identities." To make this connection, it was necessary for him to draw on sources from media studies, cultural geography, and anthropology. He made the point that the notion of home "cannot be understood except in relation to its outside(s)."[56]

Doreen Massey (cited in Morley) stated that "any search for 'a sense of place' must of necessity be reactionary", and she argued "for a sense of place to be progressive, not self-enclosing and defensive, but outward-looking."[57] Massey's argument explains some of the sensitivity to place for Irish filmmakers, having themselves come from a former outpost of the British Empire. Morley quoted Massey further in noting that:

> From the point of view of the colonized periphery (for whom "the security of the boundaries of the place one called home must have dissolved long ago" in the wake of imperialism's conquests of other people's homes), it is perhaps "centuries since time and distance provided much protective insulation from the outside."[58]

Turkish writer Pelin Aytemiz commented on this duality between home and exile and stated that stories about home in transnational cinema are usually a way of "questioning belonging to a nation, to an identity... in this sense, home is closely linked with displacement, transnational places and therefore to exilic experience."[59] This tension between home and exile is articulated by use of the hyphen in the term "Irish-Australian", introduced above. Naficy has spoken of the importance of the "politics of the hyphen" within accented cinema:

> Identity cinema's adoption of the hyphen is seen as a marker of resistance to the homogenizing and hegemonizing power of the American melting pot ideology... the hyphen may also suggest a divided mind, an irrevocably split identity, or a type of paralysis between two cultures or nations.[60]

Here, Naficy is referring to the hyphen in "-American". However, this analysis of the hyphen could also be applied to other hybridised nationalities, particularly Irish-Australian.

---

[55] Naficy, *An Accented Cinema: Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking*, 152.
[56] David Morley, "Bounded Realms: Household, Family, Community, and Nation," in *Home, Exile, Homeland*, ed. Hamid Naficy (USA: Routledge, 1999), 152-3.
[57] Ibid., 156.
[58] Ibid., 157.
[59] Pelin Aytemiz, "The Uncanny Homes of Fatih Akin's Head-on in Relation to Transnational Cinema," *Academia,* accessed January 9, 2013: 1. http://academia.edu/895617 the_uncanny_homes_of_fatih_akins_head-on_in_relation_to_transnational_cinema.
[60] Naficy, *An Accented Cinema: Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking*, 15.

There could, however, be another explanation for this journey home in search of the intercultural filmmakers' roots. Naficy's mention of paralysis in the above quote could be equated to the theory of crystallised memory introduced above (i.e., when the migrant's worldview is frozen at the point at which they leave their country of origin).

Amy Villarejo writing on the use of home movie in cinema, commented on Juan Carlos Zaldivar's film *90 miles* (2001), where the director returns to Cuba to explore personal history and collective identity. Vallarejo wrote of images "with a notion of a time embalmed... it is the life of a collective people whose lives seem halted or frozen at a particular time."[61] In this case, Villarejo suggested that the director, Zaldivar, sought within the family photos for a mimetic substitute of himself:

> In his return to Cuba, then, Zaldivar rediscovers his past as an image, actively produced in the present through composite editing; elements of Cuban life, recorded by his Super 8mm camera, mesh with images of memory supplied through home movies and still photographs.[62]

Mention was made above of Laura Marks' comments about visual representations of memory: the actual and the virtual image in intercultural film. Zaldivar, for example, used Super 8 mm film and photographs to represent the virtual or crystallised image of the emigrant that is frozen in time. This image is contrasted with the present, as represented by live video images. It is proposed that this crystallisation or paralysis, the disconnect of the individual from place of birth *and* place of adoption produces a stasis – a "time bubble" – that the emigrant inhabits. This time bubble results in a cultural and political conservatism amongst many older migrants regardless of where they come from and where they settle.

Personal and political identity

The use of documentary as a research tool to examine identity has been problematic because of its subjective nature. Keith Beattie wrote thus: "the assertion of subjective and personal points of view and the representation of one's self, family, and culture, forces a significant revision of an objective, externalising, documentary practise."[63] Siobhan McHugh has also supported the strength of subjective oral documentary. She uses this quote by Portelli (cited in McHugh) to support her argument:

> Subjectivity is itself a fact, an essential ingredient of our humanity. Rather than exclude it from our field of observation because it is too difficult to handle, we need to seek methods and guidelines for its use and interpretation.[64]

Beattie has supported the value of autobiographical documentary, as "autobiographical texts attempt to represent, and thereby contribute to the construction of, an author's identity."[65] He quoted Paul Eakin in stating the "constitution of identity...[to be] the genre's characteristic,

---

[61] Amy Villarejo, "90 Miles: The Politics and Aesthetics of Personal Documentary," in *Mining the Home Movie*, eds. K. Ishizuka, and P. Zimmerman (California: University of California Press, 2008), 89.

[62] Ibid.

[63] Keith Beattie, *Documentary Screens Non-Fiction Film and Television*, (England: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004), 107.

[64] Siobhan McHugh, "Oral History and the Radio Documentary/Feature: Intersections and Synergies," 57.

[65] Beattie, *Documentary Screens Non-Fiction Film and Television*, 106.

even defining goal."[66] Canadian Lisa Steele (cited in Citron) also shared this view: "To convert one's life into a process is the process of autobiography."[67] By turning one's life into such a process, new possibilities for self-understanding open up. Citron noted this when discussing Francoise Lionnet:

> The narrator's process of reflection, narration, and self-integration within [film] is bound to unveil patterns of self-definition... which may seem new and strange and with which we are not always familiar... The narrative text epitomises this duality in its splitting of the subject of discourse into a narrating self and an experience of self which can never coincide exactly. Lionnet calls the gap created by this split a "space of possibility" where the subject of history and the agent of discourse can engage in dialogue with each other.[68]

Technical developments in recording equipment that have occurred since the development of the camcorder in the 1980s have placed broadcast quality video cameras within reach of the individual. These developments have enabled the emergence of a cohort of films where the filmmaker turns the camera onto themselves. In the words of documentary filmmaker Tony Dowmunt:

> The arrival of the camcorder enabled an explosion of a new kind of work in which the video camera became an analogous tool to the pen or computer of the diarist or "life-writer".[69]

Recent technical developments such as the ability to shoot 4K video on the new Apple iPhone 6 (Apple Inc., 2015) will relieve financial production pressures on future intercultural filmmakers.[70]

Conclusion

This paper traces the importance of a creative Irish diaspora in shaping ideas about Irish identity.

The paper introduces the concept of a "crystallised memory" and demonstrates how this might impact on migrant populations. The paper shows that the process of exile accentuates an attachment to place. The importance of memory is emphasised, but the idea of a crystallised memory is also raised as an aspect of experience that can have a negative impact on the migrant psyche.

The paper traces the emergence of "Third Cinema", accented film and intercultural cinema and identifies examples of intercultural film in England and Australia.

---

[66] Ibid.
[67] Citron, "Fleeing from Documentary," 281.
[68] Ibid.
[69] Tony Dowmunt, "First Impressions/Video Confession," *Life Writing* 2, no. 2 (2005):171.
[70] http://www.apple.com/iphone-6s/.

The paper explores the documentary work of Enda Murray and places it within the arc of Irish intercultural cinema and more specifically, as an example of accented film.

References

Austin, T., and W. de Jong. *Rethinking Documentary: New Perspectives and Practises.* UK: Open University Press, 2008.

Aytemiz, Pelin. "The Uncanny Homes of Fatih Akin's Head-on in Relation to Transnational Cinema." *Academia.* Accessed January 9, 2013. http://academia.edu/895617/the_uncanny_homes_of_fatih_akins_head-on_in_relation_to_transnational_cinema

Beattie, Keith. *Documentary Screens Non-Fiction Film and Television*. England: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004.

Calendar. Directed by Atom Egoyan. Canada/Germany: The Armenian National Cinematheque, 1993.

The Catalpa Rescue. Directed by Lisa Sabina Harney. Australia /Ireland/UK: Essential Media and Entertainment, 2007.

Citron, Michelle. "Fleeing from Documentary: Autobiographical Film/Video and the Ethics Of Responsibility." In *Feminism and Documentary, Visible Evidence,* vol. 5, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999.

Craiceann Geal, Croí Marbh [Bright skin, dead heart]. Directed by Dermot Somers. Ireland: Crossing the Line, 2009.

Cry Me a Future. Directed by Kate Murphy. Ireland/Australia, 2008.

Daughter Rite. Directed by Michelle Citron. USA: Iris Films, 1980.

Dickinson, Margaret. "Film as an ideological weapon." *BFI ScreenOnline*. Accessed December 6, 2012. http://www.screenonline.org.uk/film/id/976967/index.html

Dowmunt, Tony. "First Impressions/Video Confession." *Life Writing* 2, no. 2 (2005):169-85.

Echo of a Distant Drum, 3-part series. Directed by Richard Dennison, Matthew Flanagan, and Michael Balson. Australia: ABC/RTE, 1988.

Ezra, Elizabeth, and Terry Rowden. *Transnational Cinema: The Film Reader*. London: Routledge, 2006.

Fleming, John. Notes from *Guests of Another Nation*. Published April 2, 2013. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I4t6QfQUhkM

Gaelic Girls. Directed by Enda Murray. Australia: Virus Media, 1998. http://vimeo.com/35870188

Guests of Another Nation. Directed by John Fleming, and Mark Stewart. Ireland /UK: Demon Swift Productions, 1987. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I4t6QfQUhkM

Holmes, Katie, and Stuart Ward, eds. *Exhuming Passions: the Pressure of the Past in Ireland and Australia.* Ireland: Irish Academic Press, 2011.

I Could Read the Sky. Directed by Nicola Bruce. Ireland/UK/France: Hot Property, 1999.

The Irish Empire, 5-part series. Directed by various directors. Australia/UK/Ireland: Hilton Cordell/Little Bird, 1999.

The Last Confession of Alexander Pearce. Directed by Michael James Rowland. Australia: Essential Media & Entertainment, 2009.

Luxonline, "Works: The Passion of Remembrance." Accessed November 25, 2011. http://www.luxonline.org.uk/artists/isaac_julien/the_passion_of_remembrance.html

Marks, Laura, U. *The Skin of the Film*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2000.

Marrying Out, radio documentary. Directed by Siobhan McHugh. Australia: ABC, 2010.

McHugh, Siobhan, "Not in Front of the Altar." *History Australia* 6, no. 2 (2009):42.1–42.22.

———. "Oral History and the Radio Documentary/Feature: Intersections and Synergies." DCA diss., University of Wollongong, 2010. http://ro.uow.edu.au/theses/3194

Morley, David. "Bounded Realms: Household, Family, Community, and Nation." In *Home, Exile, Homeland*, edited by Hamid Naficy. USA: Routledge, 1999.

Murray, Enda, V. "A personal filmic exploration of Irish-Australian identity." DCA diss., Western Sydney University, 2012. http://researchdirect.uws.edu.au/islandora/object/uws%3A19121/datastream/PDF/view

Naficy, Hamid. *An Accented Cinema: Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001.

In the Name of the Father. Directed by Jim Sheridan. Ireland /UK /USA: Hell's Kitchen Films /Universal Pictures, 1993.

Ned Kelly: The True Story. Directed by Barry Dowdall. Australia/Ireland: Telwell Productions, 2003.

Nichols, Bill. *Blurred Boundaries.* USA: Indiana University Press, 1994.

———. *Introduction to Documentary.* USA: Indiana University Press, 2001.

90 Miles. Directed by Juan Carlos Zaldivar. USA: 90 Miles LLC, 2001.

O'Carroll, John. *Irish Australia, Irish music: A valediction to vision*. Unpublished: 2000.

On a Paving Stone Mounted. Directed by Thaddeus O'Sullivan. UK: BFI Production Unit, 1978.

The Passion of Remembrance. Directed by Isaac Julien, and Maureen Blackwood. UK: Sankofa Film Collective, 1986.

People to People, 4-part series. Directed by Ken Lynam, Don McGee, and Andy Porter. UK: Irish Video Project, 1984.

A Pint of Plain. Directed by Thaddeus O'Sullivan. UK: BFI Production Unit, 1974.

Prayers of a Mother, multimedia installation. Directed by Kate Murphy. Australia, 2003.

Reel Irish. Directed by Enda Murray. UK: Virus Media, 1998. http://vimeo.com/36518230

Robinson, Mary. "Address by Uachtarán na hEireann Mary Robinson to Joint Sitting of the Houses of the Oireachtas." February 2, 1995. http://www.oireachtas.ie/viewdoc.asp?fn=/documents/addresses/2Feb1995.htm

Secret Family Recipes. Directed by Enda Murray. Australia: Virus Media, 2012.

Solanas, Fernando, and Octavio Getin. "Toward a Third Cinema." *Cinéaste* 4, no. 3 (1970).

Suspect Community. Directed by Ken Lynam, and Don McGee. UK: Irish Video Project, 1986.

Tsiolkas, Christos. "My Greek Grandma." *Sydney Morning Herald,* July 17, 2011.

Unfinished Diary. Directed by Marilu Mallet. Canada/Chile: Marilu Mallet Production, 1986.

Vitali, Valentina, and Paul Willemen. *Theorising national cinema.* London: British Film Institute, 2006.

Villarejo, Amy. "90 Miles: The Politics and Aesthetics of Personal Documentary." In *Mining the Home Movie*, edited by K. Ishizuka, and P. Zimmerman, 78–92. California: University of California Press, 2008.