

# Re-animating the Past: An Irish Animation History

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**Abstract:** In the late 1980s and early 1990s the presence of a large American animation studio in Ireland, under the stewardship of ex-Disney animation director Don Bluth, played a pivotal role in the development of the indigenous Irish animation industry, and constituted a colonial moment in Irish animation history. This paper aims to discuss the nascent Irish animation industry prior to the arrival of the Don Bluth studio, and to consider aspects of indigenous production onto which a global North American industrial model was imposed. Aspects of postcolonial theory are used as a method of describing the historical circumstances that have determined the emergence of an indigenous Irish animation industry in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, and also deployed to illustrate how the social and historical aspects of animation production in Ireland reflect the postcolonial conditions of Irish society itself. In considering the pre- Bluth period of animation production in Ireland this paper offers insights into models of production, aesthetic expression and processes of cultural transmission, and provides commentaries on work of Irish animators overlooked by Irish film studies.

**Keywords:** animation, postcolonialism, Modernism, film studies, identity.