

IN AMERICA

Jim Sheridan (2002)

written by Jim, Naomi, and Kirsten Sheridan

CONTEXTS: EMIGRATION

1841 (the Famine) – 1961: Irish population decreases from 6.5 million to 2.8 million

Post-WWII: Ireland, unlike NI, was neutral, so no Marshall Plan aid

Late 1950s: peak emigration, especially among creative people in film

1970s: inflation; young university graduates and professionals especially

Late 1990s–early 2000s: The Celtic Tiger; immigration into Ireland increases

Late 2000s: death of the Celtic Tiger → renewed emigration

AMERICAN INFLUENCE IN IRELAND

Eamon De Valera

The Troubles: IRA support

US investment in Ireland; branches
of American multinational
corporations

The Good Friday Accords



THE IRISH IN DIASPORA

The “American Wake”

Diaspora, the Irish Empire, and the idea of Home

Films as “history” as major source of information about Ireland

“East American” identity versus Irish **difference** from America

Irish-American influences on film: traditional, rural, nostalgic

JIM
SHERIDAN



SHERIDAN'S IRISH FILMS

- *My Left Foot* (1989)
- *The Field* (1990)
- *In the Name of the Father* (1993)
- *The Boxer* (1997)
- *In America* (2002)
- *The Secret Scripture* (2016)
- *Peter O'Toole: Along the Sky Road to Aqaba* (2022): documentary

KEY CHARACTERS (AND THE ACTORS WHO PLAY THEM)

- Johnny (*Paddy Considine*)
- Sarah (*Samantha Morton*)
- Christy (*Sarah Bolger*)
- Ariel (*Emma Bolger*)
- Frankie (*Ciaran Cronin*)
- Mateo (*Djimon Hounsou*)
- Papo, the landlord (*Juan Hernandez*)
- Steve, the junkie (*Rene Millan*)

KEY ELEMENTS IN *IN AMERICA*

In America is semi-autobiographical, written with Sheridan's two daughters

In America is set in 1982, the year the *E.T.* was released.

Christy's VO, like Francie's in *The Butcher Boy*, is addressed directly to **us**.

Christy as a seanchaí = a traditional Irish storyteller

Christy's camcorder: pictures of dead people; all films are pictures of dead people

Magic; folklore; three wishes

Going to the movies for the A/C; see *E.T.* with the clip from *The Quiet Man* about the protagonist's return to Ireland; Sarah watches *The Grapes of Wrath* made by the Irishman John Ford



LET'S WATCH THE MOVIE

THEMES

Memory, pain, loss, grief, the Irish past versus the American present

Personal qualities keyed as Irish

Stages in assimilation

Connections to Mateo, Papo, and Steve