

Stimulating Production Activity in Scotland: Advance Party and the Rule Doctrine

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This article centres on Advance Party – a Dogma-inspired initiative devised by Glasgow-based Sigma Films and Denmark's Zentropa. Two schemes have been launched under the Advance Party banner. The first, announced in 2003, was intended to produce three films, but resulted in two: the debut features of Andrea Arnold (*Red Road*, 2006) and Morag McKinnon (*Donkeys*, 2010). The second, larger scheme, which also involved Dublin-based Subotica Films, was launched six years later in 2009. However five years on (June 2014), as I will discuss, the scheme appears to have floundered.

The motivations underpinning Advance Party are explored in the course of this article. A central idea underpinning Advance Party was collaboration and, particularly in the case of the first scheme, a desire to develop a filmmaking community in Scotland – or perhaps more specifically Glasgow. Arguably however, the goal of collaboration was not achieved. This factor, along with the unrealised status of many of the Advance Party films, suggests that the achievements of Advance Party were minimal, especially when compared to those of Dogma 95, the cinematic movement that inspired Advance Party. Yet, to dismiss the value of Advance Party is perhaps premature, especially as one of the resulting films, *Red Road*, achieved considerable critical acclaim and went on to secure distribution in over twenty-five territories – a feat that, as I discuss in a prior edition of this journal (Hutcheson 2012), is an impressive achievement. As this earlier article also outlines, while Advance Party failed to produce films after *Red Road* and *Donkeys*, many Scotland-based projects fail to enter into production. When framed in this context, Advance Party can be seen as having provided a structure and legitimacy to projects that they might have lacked individually. In this sense, Advance Party can be viewed as a means of stimulating production activity in Scotland. Nonetheless, as becomes apparent, the shortcomings of the schemes are also important and offer insights into Advance Party's wider impact on film production in Scotland.

Advance Party: Origins and Intentions

Inspired by the successes of the Dogma 95 movement, Advance Party similarly adopted a rule-governed approach to filmmaking. A stunt with sincere intentions, Dogma 95 proclaimed itself to be a 'rescue action' (as cited in Hjort & MacKenzie 2003a, p. 199) for cinema. Citing digital technology as a democratising force, the Dogma manifesto presented a set of ten rules, known collectively as the Vow of Chastity, aimed at countering the frivolous plots and unnecessary flashy visuals the Dogma brethren viewed as ubiquitous within cinema. Included in the Vow of Chastity were the stipulations that participating directors must shoot their film on location and use hand-held cameras, available lighting and Academy 35mm film format. Amongst the remaining rules were the conditions that the films must not contain 'superficial action' (e.g. murders, weapons, etc.), belong to a genre, or credit the director (for the full manifesto see Hjort & MacKenzie 2003a, pp. 199-200). The first three Dogma films, *Festen/The Celebration* (Vinterberg 1998), *Idioterne/The Idiots* (von Trier 1999) and *Mifunes sidste sang/Mifune* (Kragh-Jacobsen 1999), successfully secured international distribution and effectively illustrated to the filmmaking community that low budget, innovative films had the potential to sell worldwide. While the first Dogma films were those directed by the Danish Dogma founders, Thomas Vinterberg, Lars von Trier, Søren Kragh-Jacobsen and Kristian Levring (*The King is Alive*, 2000), and with the exception of Vinterberg's film, were produced by von Trier's production company Zentropa, filmmakers in other countries quickly took up the Dogma challenge.¹ Concurrently, the framework continued to prove popular amongst filmmakers and audiences in Denmark.²

Mette Hjort (2010) writes that the initial idea for a partnership between Zentropa and Scotland's Sigma Films was first suggested by Sigma Films co-founder Gillian Berrie at a meeting with John Archer, then Chief Executive of Scottish Screen; Lenny Crooks, then director of Glasgow Film Office (GFO); and a representative from Trust Film Sales, after a showing of von Trier's *Dancer in the Dark* (2000) at the Edinburgh International Film Festival in 2000. This collaboration eventually resulted in the Advance Party initiative. In a deviation from the open-ended scope of Dogma 95, for reasons discussed below, the number of directors participating in Advance Party was capped at three. At the time, the directors chosen by Sigma Films

and Zentropa, Andrea Arnold, Morag McKinnon and Mikkel Nørgaard, each had successful shorts, but had not yet transitioned into features. Moreover, unlike the Dogma movement, which was not contained within the parameters of any one nation, incorporated in the Advance Party rules was the condition that the directors must set and film their project in Scotland. The rules state: ‘The films take place in Scotland but apart from that the writers are free to place them anywhere according to geography, social setting or ethnic background’ (Scherfig & Jensen 2003, as cited in Verve Pictures, 2006, p. 4). This move was intended to transfer some of the benefits of Dogma 95 to a Scottish milieu, although despite this freedom, *Red Road*, *Donkeys*, and Nørgaard’s unmade project, entitled *The Old Firm*, all ended up being set in Glasgow (for more on the Glasgow setting of Advance Party, see Hutcheson 2013).

Further Advance Party rules stipulated that the three films must be shot on location over a period of six weeks, use digital technology and adhere to a budgetary ceiling of £1.2 million. In a further key divergence from Dogma 95, the three Advance Party films were designed to be united through a means rendered explicitly visible onscreen, as they were each to feature the same group of characters, played by the same actors – a rule that one of the films, *Donkeys*, eventually defied. Zentropa’s Lone Scherfig and Anders Thomas Jensen created sketches for seven characters and together the three participating directors were allowed to create two more (Hjort 2010; for abbreviated character sketches see GFO, n.d.). To date two of the three films have been completed and released: Arnold’s *Red Road* (2006) and McKinnon’s *Donkeys* (2010). Nørgaard’s project, *The Old Firm*, never materialised.

Drawing on interviews with those working at Sigma Films and Zentropa, Hjort (2010) points to the imbalance between the prosperous Danish filmmaking landscape and the comparatively struggling Scottish environment as a way of explaining the intentions that underpinned the scheme. On this difference, Hjort cites Sigma Films’ Gillian Berrie as stating:

In Denmark they have in excess of £25m (about U.S. \$50 million) a year to put into films. They get up and they go to work and they make films every day, whereas filmmakers here get to make one film every three years, if they get to make films at all. (2010, p. 53)

In addition to outlining the disparity in levels of finance, Hjort also quotes Scotland-based director, writer and producer Eleanor Yule in order to outline a difference between the filmmaking culture in Scotland and that in Denmark. Yule states:

When you go to Filmbyen, the film city where Zentropa and other companies are based, you see everyone helping one another out. It means you breed a more collaborative environment, but there's also the expectation that you will be making films for cinema regularly. In Scotland it feels like a lottery at every step of the process. We are not self-sufficient in the same way. (2010, p. 53)

Yule's comments regarding the collaborative ethos of Zentropa and its production complex Filmbyen/Film Town are particularly important to note as they point to the collectivist spirit of the Dogma movement, and the collaborative intentions of the Advance Party scheme. Importantly however, the reformist rhetoric underpinning the collective stance of Dogma was all but absent in the case of Advance Party, which unlike its predecessor, was not accompanied by a manifesto.

Dogma 95, Lars von Trier and the Rule Doctrine

Of all the Dogma brothers (von Trier, Vinterberg, Leving and Kragh-Jacobsen), the manifesto and accompanying Vow of Chastity can most clearly be linked to the work of von Trier. The films in his first trilogy – *Forbrydelsens element/Element of Crime* (1984), *Epidemic* (1987) and *Europa* (1991) – were each accompanied by a manifesto, as were his subsequent films and projects. Dogma marks a shift in von Trier's role from individual filmmaker to collective leader. The latter role extended beyond Dogma to the creation of Film Town (see Hjort, 2006) and other projects including *The World Clock* (see Schepeleern 2003), *The Five Obstructions* (Leth & von Trier 2003; see Hjort 2006) and Advance Party. This notion of collectivism is evident in the rhetoric used in the Dogma manifesto. After describing Dogma 95 as 'a collective of film directors', the manifesto goes on to assert:

In 1960 enough was enough! The movie was dead and called for resurrection. The goal was correct but the means were not! The new wave proved to be a ripple that washed ashore and turned to muck.

Slogans of individualism and freedom created works for a while, but no changes....The auteur concept was bourgeois romanticism from the very start and thereby...false!

To DOGME 95 cinema is not individual! (As cited in Hjort & MacKenzie 2003a, p. 199)

The denunciation of the individualist stance the manifesto associates with the auteur concept – and in particular the work of the New Wave directors – was explicitly prohibited in the Vow of Chastity through rule number ten: ‘The director must not be credited’ (Hjort & MacKenzie 2003a, p. 200). As multiple commentators note, this sentiment and its accompanying rule are juxtaposed by the distinct authorial style of the first wave of Danish Dogma films (*The Celebration*, *The Idiots*, *Mifune* and *The King is Alive*), and the films of the subsequent second wave of Danish directors that took up the Dogma baton (including: *Italiensk for begyndere/Italian for Beginners*, Scherfig 2000; *Et rigtigt menneske/Truly Human*, Sandgren 2001; *En kærlighedshistorie/Kira’s Reason: A Love Story*, Madsen 2001; and, *Elsker dig for evigt/Open Hearts*, Bier 2002).

Additionally, the individual tendencies of the Dogma instigators are reflected in the rules governing the scheme. The rules, as well as constituting a response to Hollywood filmmaking practices insomuch that they prohibited the use of conventional mainstream techniques (sets, props, sound effects, non-diegetic music, complex camera and lighting setups, genre tropes and so on), were also designed to confront the tendencies of the manifesto’s creators. As Hjort (2003) outlines, both von Trier and Vinterberg claim to have devised the rules on one basic principle: ‘Identify the very means of cinematic expression on which you habitually rely and then make the technique or technology in question the object of an interdiction’ (p. 34). In von Trier’s case this led to a ban on lighting (rule number four), and in Vinterberg’s, an abolition of non-diegetic sound (rule number two). The rules however, were also intended as a guide for aspiring filmmakers. They were to enable first-time directors

to take advantage of what the manifesto terms the raging ‘technological storm’ (as cited in Hjort & MacKenzie 2003a, p. 199) in order to produce a low-cost feature.

Advance Party: Underlying Motivations

While similar factors to those outlined in relation to Dogma 95 are evident in the motivations underpinning Advance Party, crucial differences between their impulses also exist. As noted, in her interview-based research, Hjort (2010) points to the disparity between the Scottish and Danish filmmaking environments as instigating the development of Advance Party. Hjort (2010) cites Berrie as identifying two key problems in Scotland: the absence of sufficient training opportunities and a difficulty in transitioning from shorts to features (see also Hutcheson 2012). As a means of combating these issues, Advance Party was aimed at first time filmmakers. This focus helps to explain the ‘practical’ rules governing the scheme: that the projects must be filmed on location, over a period of six weeks, using digital technology and a budget not exceeding £1.2 million. These stipulations reduced production costs and thereby created a relatively low risk environment in which three first time directors could practice their craft. Additionally, the Advance Party framework offered development support to its participating directors. The three filmmakers took part in workshops held at Zentropa’s Film Town. These involved discussions with Scherfig about the Advance Party characters and conversations with von Trier about the philosophy underpinning the initiative, as well as practical workshops with Film Town’s post-production and distribution staff (GFO 2006).

Although Hjort (2010) specifically situates Berrie’s comments in a Scottish context, only one of the three Advance Party directors, McKinnon, was Scotland-based. Arnold and Nørgaard resided in England and Denmark respectively. The Scotland/England/Denmark locale of the three directors reflects the sources of finance utilised in the development and production of the two completed films. Scotland’s former screen agency, Scottish Screen, GFO and the former UK Film Council provided much of the finance to both *Red Road* and *Donkeys*, while Zentropa also provided funding in the case of the former and the Danish Film Institute in that of the latter. The intended and/or eventual writers and producers were also based in Scotland, England or Denmark.³ In part, the limit placed on the number of

participating directors can be connected to the scheme's function as a way for novice filmmakers to gain experience in feature filmmaking. The cap placed at three films ensured that Advance Party remained controllable. It can also be viewed as a way of presenting funders with a manageable and concrete concept. However, whereas funding for the initial Dogma films was secured simultaneously (although admittedly after significant delays), the Advance Party films were largely financed on a project-by-project basis.⁴

The aim at first time filmmakers and the contained nature of the scheme also account for the lack of reformist rhetoric accompanying the framework. This is reinforced in the absence of a manifesto. While the title 'Advance Party,' a term used in the military to refer to a unit that is sent ahead to ensure the unimpeded advancement of the main force, is suggestive of the activism foregrounded in the Dogma manifesto and Vow of Chastity, this connection does not extend further. Analysis of documentation surrounding Advance Party does, however, point to a foregrounding of the collaborative ethos promoted by Dogma, and the collective actions of von Trier and Zentropa more generally.

In a document outlining the history of the Advance Party project, which was submitted to Scottish Screen in an application for development finance, Sigma Films explain:

We decided to initiate a concept for three low-budget digital films. Looking at the huge success of the Dogma films, we wanted to know what were the best lessons learned. We approached Lars von Trier and he identified the key to the success of the Dogma movement as collaboration. He also thought that certain obstacles can become creative challenges. (Sigma Films 2004)⁵

The influence of Dogma 95 and von Trier's signature approach to filmmaking, which sees creativity enhanced through constraints, is made explicit in the extract above. The notion of collaboration, which the document positions as key to the Dogma movement, is evident in the scheme's creative challenge, which involved the use of the same group of characters. Unlike the Dogma films, which although arguably linked at the level of form, were not directly related in terms of content, the Advance Party films were intended to be visibly united by the (re)occurrence of the

same characters, each with their specific background and traits. As noted, seven character sketches were provided to the three directors and together the directors were allowed to create two more (see GFO, n.d.). The decision to allow the filmmakers to create additional characters signals a deviation from the rigid approach to rules that characterises von Trier's involvement with *Dogma*, as well as other rule-driven projects, most notably *The Five Obstructions*. The permissive attitude to rules can be attributed to the absence of a reformist agenda. Rather than being envisioned as a challenge to dominant filmmaking practices, *Advance Party* was designed as a way of instigating filmmaking activity in Scotland in a manner intended to encourage greater dialogue between filmmakers.

Despite its collaborative sentiment, it is important to make clear that *Advance Party*, as the project history submitted to Scottish Screen in application for development funds states, was conceived primarily as 'a director driven concept' (Sigma Films 2004). Conversely, this was not reflected in the central *Advance Party* challenge, which predominantly rests with the writer. This challenge, first and foremost, was a task of incorporating nine characters into one script. As the initial goal was to make three films, it was also implied, without being explicitly stated, that the characters should be of sufficient likeness to their description in the brief, so as to render them recognisable throughout all three films. As *Red Road* producer Carrie Comerford explains: 'If grubby-looking Jane – not that there is a Jane – is always biting her nails, she must carry that character trait. In one movie she may take a cameo role, in another, the lead' (as cited in Thomas 2005). This level of interconnectivity however, did not transpire. Two of the characters, Alfred and Bronwyn, were recast between films, and one character, Avery, did not make even a fleeting appearance in *Donkeys*. While these alterations directly defy the *Advance Party* rules, other permissible factors further diluted the relationship between the two films. Jackie (Kate Dickie) and Stevie (Martin Compston) were prominent in both films, yet other characters that featured in *Red Road*, most notably Clyde (Tony Curran) and April (Natalie Press), had little screen time in *Donkeys*. Moreover, when Jackie appeared in *Donkeys* her character sketch was altered so that her daughter is still alive. As the loss of her child is an important factor that propelled the narrative of *Red Road*, this alteration further distanced the second film from its predecessor.⁶

There are several key factors to note in relation to these observations. The different speeds at which the projects developed, or, in Nørgaard's case, did not develop, made the sustained dialogue between filmmakers needed to achieve the sought-after degree of interconnectivity difficult. While principal photography commenced on Arnold's film in October 2005, it was not until February 2008 that filming started on *Donkeys*. The delay with *Donkeys* is largely attributable to changes in its writing team. The emphasis the rules placed on the role of the writer, conflicted with the scheme's director focus. It was perhaps hoped that the directors would choose to write their project. Whilst both Arnold and McKinnon wrote the treatment for their individual film, and consequently were each responsible for devising its central premise, McKinnon decided not to write her script. Sigma Films' application for development finance for Advance Party notes that in such instances, 'the directors are to work in close collaboration with writers' (Sigma Films 2004). Initially, McKinnon worked with a writer that was suggested to her by Sigma Films, however, after draft scripts were poorly received, there was an amicable parting of the ways, and McKinnon eventually came to work with Colin McLaren, who wrote the script for her short film *Home* (1998), as well as numerous unmade projects (McKinnon, personal communication, January 12, 2012; see Hutcheson 2012). This change in writer, which also resulted in a change in project direction, made extensive collaboration with Arnold during development unfeasible. The delay also had notable implications in terms of casting. By the time McKinnon's project was ready to enter production the characters in her film had considerably changed and were no longer suited to the actors cast in August of 2005, before pre-production started on Arnold's film (GFO 2006).

The eventual disintegration of the central Advance Party rule, and the absence of Nørgaard's project, calls into question the purpose and effectiveness of the Advance Party framework. Nevertheless, it might be argued that completion of two of the three Advance Party films is in fact an impressive achievement in itself. Indeed, as the section that follows explores, Tristan Orpen Lynch, co-founder of Subotica Films, the Dublin-based production company that joined Sigma Films and Zentropa on the second Advance Party scheme, puts forth this argument. It might also be suggested that the content of the rules did not actually matter, and that the primary function of the rules was to provide a cohesive framework and group identity to three individual

projects. Yet, while the rules are essentially arbitrary, this does not necessarily dismiss their content as insignificant. As I have argued elsewhere (Hutcheson 2013), the rules of the first scheme were important inasmuch that they informed the form and content of the resulting films.⁷ In the case of the second initiative, the rules devised made for a needlessly convoluted development process from which not one film emerged.

Advance Party II

In February of 2009, a second Advance Party scheme was announced. Both Sigma Films and Zentropa returned to Advance Party along with Dublin-based Subotica Films. Prior to Advance Party, Subotica Films worked with Zentropa on Ireland-set reformatory school drama *Song for a Raggy Boy* (Walsh 2003), and since the launch of Advance Party II, co-produced David Mackenzie's Glasgow-filmed dystopian drama-romance *Perfect Sense* (2011) with Sigma Films. The second Advance Party involved eight directors and a new set of rules. The eight directors chosen for the scheme were: Rory Bresnihan, Ciarán Foy, Steph Green, Enda Hughes, Adrian McDowall, Daniel Mulloy, Paul Wright and Esther May Campbell. Similar to the first initiative, at the time of their selection, all eight directors had completed successful shorts, but had not transitioned into features. In a deviation from the first scheme, on the second occasion the filmmakers participated in the design of the rules (discussed below).

In relation to Dogma 95, Hjort and MacKenzie (2003b) question the usefulness of the manifesto as a blueprint for the novice filmmaker. The authors convincingly point to the gulf in quality between the Danish Dogma films and those made elsewhere, and attribute this difference to the inexperience of the international directors that accepted the Dogma challenge. Drawing on comments made by Mogens Rukov, who taught at the Danish Film School when von Trier and Vinterberg were both students, the authors observe:

In Jesper Jargil's documentary on Dogma 95, *De lutrede (The Purified, 2002)*, Rukov points out that von Trier was a highly proficient film-maker with proven mastery of most of the technical aspects of his profession when he

initiated Dogma 95. Von Trier's idea, in other words, was precisely to place a ban on the very techniques that he had spent years carefully mastering. Following Rukov, Dogma 95 makes most sense as a challenge to the expert film-maker rather than the novice, who, he argues, should be required to follow an entirely different set of rules. (2003b, p. 8)

Rukov's assertion is also relevant when thinking about the first Advance Party challenge. The task of incorporating nine characters into one narrative was perhaps more suited to the experienced, rather than novice, scriptwriter. In the instance of Advance Party II, the opportunity to participate in the design of the rules provided the directors with the chance to tailor the constraints specifically to their skill level and needs. Unfortunately however, this was not capitalised on, and the rules devised were needlessly complex. This is also an important point to note when considering the potential role such schemes might play in facilitating production activity in Scotland in the future.

Similar to the first scheme, the Advance Party II rules stipulated a budget limit (€1.5 million per film). The remaining rules once again predominantly centred on the writing process. In addition to stating that each project must be 'inspired by a location, a character and a secret' written by one of the other directors and selected at random, the rules detailed that each film should also feature no more than eight characters, make viewers both laugh and cry, provide an uplifting ending and 'in some way, must end as it begins' (as cited in Irish Film Board, 2009). In keeping with the focus on the number eight, the length of each script was limited to 88 pages. Additionally, the projects were to be shot within an eight-mile radius. These rules were considerably more complex than those used in the first Advance Party, and would prove difficult for even an experienced filmmaker to execute. They also lack any underlying drive or unity, and might best be described as rules for rules' sake, rather than carefully chosen restrictions. In particular, the focus on the number eight is essentially a gimmick. Though the rules of both Dogma 95 and Advance Party unquestionably functioned in part as a way of generating publicity, they also served additional purposes. As noted, Dogma 95 critiqued established filmmaking practices (see Hjort & MacKenzie 2003b), while Advance Party, absent of the reformist rhetoric that characterised Dogma 95, was intended to promote a collaborative

filmmaking culture. Revealingly, press releases issued at the time of the Advance Party II's launch, make no reference to the direct involvement of von Trier on this occasion (e.g. Scottish Screen 2009; Irish Film Board 2009). This suggests an increased emphasis on the role played by the participating directors. In light of *Donkeys'* shunning of the rules, it was perhaps hoped that this more considered involvement would lead to closer engagement with the rules in the development process.

As noted above, the first Advance Party was driven by a desire to develop a more sustainable filmmaking milieu in Scotland. The inclusion of Subotica Films indicated a shift to extend Advance Party to Ireland, though, as is evident from the overview of its rules, the production of the second group of films was not positioned within a marked environment. Indirectly however, a focus on nationality can still be seen. Press releases from the time of Advance Party II's launch featured biographies of each of the eight directors, and central to these biographies was nationality (e.g. Scottish Screen 2009; Irish Film Board 2009). The directors were presented as Irish/Irish-American, Northern Irish, Scottish or English. The absence of Danish directors is notable as it evidences Zentropa's continued role as enabler. Zentropa, along with Scottish Screen, the Irish Film Board and the UKFC, financed the development of the eight films.⁸

In response to questions regarding the reasons that propelled Subotica Films to join the second initiative, co-founder Lynch (personal communication, October 3, 2011) states:

We got involved because we had worked before with Zentropa in Denmark and we had worked before with Sigma in Scotland – they had done the original Advance Party together and created Andrea Arnold's film. And obviously it is a great project, we are always looking to work with new talent and find a way through, it was just an intriguing way to put a structure on how you do that. Also the possibility of funding projects from three territories to take away the restriction and uncertainty about whether the projects will be made or not.

This recalls several of the motivations discussed in relation to the first scheme. The goal of creating an environment in which new talent can transition from shorts to

features is again suggested. So too is the idea of collaboration, which is framed in terms of collaboration between production companies. Importantly, when Lynch makes reference to Zentropa and Sigma Films he also states the country in which each is based. He later cites ‘the possibility of funding projects from three territories’ as a factor propelling his involvement in the scheme, reasoning that this reduces ‘uncertainty about whether the projects will be made’. This suggests that nationality is an important criterion used by public funding agencies when allocating finance, and it foregrounds the importance of cross-border co-productions as a way for small nation production companies to raise finance.⁹

While Hjort (2010) positions the perceived cultural affinity between Zentropa and Sigma Films as central to their partnership, and extends this observation to Danish and Scottish culture more broadly, Lynch’s view of the relationships underpinning *Advance Party II* is more practical. He states:

Making films in Europe at the moment is very hard, so I think anyone who manages to get films made, there is a sense of respect for each other. It is a question of trying to facilitate, and trying to make things easier for each other. (Personal communication, October 3, 2011)

In response to the unrealised fate of Nørgaard’s *The Old Firm*, Lynch argues that the completion of two films is actually quite an achievement, reasoning that the average conversion ratio is much lower. Indeed, a study commissioned by the UKFC and Skillset found on average only 18% of feature films developed in the UK are given the green light, a figure they estimate to be lower than that for Hollywood studios (Attentional, 2007, pp. 42-43).¹⁰ In this light, the completion of two of the three films does appear considerably more impressive.

At the time of writing (June 2014), five years after the launch of *Advance Party II*, not one of the eight films has entered into production. In October of 2011, Lynch stated that most of the projects were in second draft phase and ‘about three or four of them [were] ready to consider the final stages before production’. However, none have proceeded past development and many of the eight directors have since moved on to other projects and made their debut feature through another channel, bringing *Advance Party* to an unofficial close.¹¹ The stalling of the *Advance Party II*

projects can be attributed to factors that frequently halt projects – conflicting schedules, loss of momentum etc. However, it also calls into question the suitability of Advance Party's rule governed structure as a way of providing experience to first time filmmakers. As argued, the rules, particularly of the second scheme, lacked any clear direction or intent, and were not particularly helpful to the novice filmmaker. Nonetheless, it is also important to keep in mind that inclusion in the scheme likely enhanced the directors' CVs, and in turn, aided their future careers.

The fate of the second scheme is also useful to consider in relation to the idea of collaboration, which as noted, was integral to Dogma 95 and the first Advance Party. As is apparent in the shared task of creating the rules, collaboration was retained in Advance Party II. It was also reflected in the strategic partnerships of Zentropa, Sigma Films and Subotica Films. Nonetheless, there is again evidence – beyond the unrealised fates of the eight films – that suggests collaboration was not as prominent as one might expect. During the Berlin International Film Festival in 2009, the eight directors took part in a series of workshops designed to create 'the 'Advance Party' [sic] community' (Scottish Screen 2009, para. 8). At this time the directors also participated in a series of seminars on the 'business elements of filmmaking' (Scottish Screen 2009, para. 8). This involved talks with 'visiting directors, writers and actors as well as lawyers, sales agents, distributors and development gurus, with the aim of arming the eight filmmakers with as much information and inspiration as possible' (Scottish Screen 2009, para. 8). Revealingly, Lynch notes that neither Arnold nor McKinnon were involved in these workshops. Given that a central goal of the first Advance Party was to foster a collective environment similar to that at Zentropa, the absence of dialogue between the first and second group of directors indicates this aim was not achieved to the degree anticipated.

Conclusion

Advance Party, it has been argued, functioned, at least in part, as an innovative attempt to stimulate production activity in Scotland, or more specifically Glasgow. While the goal of creating a sustainable collaborative filmmaking hub did not transpire to the extent envisioned at the outset of the project, the Advance Party banner did facilitate the production of the debut features of two filmmakers: Andrea

Arnold and Morag McKinnon. Both filmmakers have gone on to direct subsequent films: Arnold the realist drama *Fish Tank* (2009) and adaptation of Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* (2011), and McKinnon, the brave documentary *I Am Breathing* (Davie & McKinnon 2013) that follows the life of Neil Platt, a man with Motor Neurone Disease, in the final months of his life. Yet, neither has utilised the relationships formed through Advance Party, and in the case of Arnold, her subsequent films have been set and produced outside Scotland.¹² Efforts to interview the eight Advance Party II directors for this article were unsuccessful. Nonetheless, as suggested above, it is reasonable to assume that selection for the scheme, and in turn, the experience of developing a feature film, likely provided the novice filmmakers with the opportunity to develop their skills. This suggests that what Scottish filmmaking perhaps needs is an environment in which aspiring filmmakers can develop their talent, ideally without the financial risk associated with the feature film industry. In other words, this highlights the need for, if not a film school as such, training ground for filmmakers to practice and gain experience.

Given the impressive role Dogma 95 played in reinvigorating the Danish production landscape of the late 1990s and early 2000s, it was always perhaps unrealistic, and what is more unfair, to expect Advance Party to produce results on a comparable scale. Nonetheless, given the emphasis placed on collaboration, both in the rules of the two schemes and their surrounding documentation, it can be inferred that it was at least hoped that Advance Party had the potential to contribute to the development of a more sustainable collaborative filmmaking milieu. This, it has been argued, was not achieved, and instead Advance Party's successes are best measured in terms of the successful production and completion of two of its films. This points to the continued individual and fragmented nature of film production in Scotland, and to perhaps the fundamental difference between Dogma 95 and Advance Party. While the filmmakers that devised Dogma 95, then went on to produce the first Dogma films, Advance Party was conceived as a kind of makeshift film school, or training ground for first-time filmmakers. As such, Advance Party lacked the direct connection between instigator, facilitator and creative practitioner that was central to Dogma 95. Put alternatively, the collaborative ethos exhibited in the creation of the Dogma 95 manifesto and rules was *given to* the Advance Party directors, rather than occurring as a direct result of their actions or beliefs.

Endnotes:

¹ Countries from which Dogma films emerged include: Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Chile, France, Germany, Hungary, Macedonia, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States.

² Lone Scherfig's *Italiensk for begyndere/Italian for Beginners* (2000) and Susanne Bier's *Elsker dig for evigt/Open Hearts* (2002), in particular, achieved critical and commercial success.

³ While Arnold both wrote and directed *Red Road*, McKinnon and Nørgaard opted to work with writers. McKinnon initially teamed up with one writer, but eventually decided to work with Colin McLaren (*Home*, 1998) and Nørgaard worked with screenwriter Jack Lothian (*Late Night Shopping*, Metzstein 2001).

⁴ As Hjort and MacKenzie (2003b) explain, Jytte Hilden, the Danish Minister of Culture in 1995, verbally promised to fund Dogma 95 to the sum of 15 million DKK. However, in Denmark, the Danish Film Institute awards state funding for film, and applicants are required to make individual applications for finance. As such, 'a grant following directly from the Ministry of Culture to the Dogma project would have violated the very mandate of the Danish Film Institute' (p. 2). The Dogma filmmakers were invited to apply for funding for their projects individually, but considering this to go against the collaborative spirit of the movement, they declined. Several years later, the Dogma brothers reached a funding deal with the Danish Broadcasting Corporation (for more, see Hjort & MacKenzie 2003b, pp. 2-3).

⁵ This document was kindly supplied by Creative Scotland as a result of a Freedom of Information request.

⁶ The character sketch for Jackie reads as follows:

'JACKIE, 34.

The world has been insanely unfair to her. She has lost her only brother, her husband, and their child.

Jackie is a bit aloof and cool. Habitually, she maintains a relationship with a married man, whom she meets with afternoons, fortnightly. He can't quite bring himself to part with her full bosom and she gets just enough intimacy to avoid shutting herself off from the world.

Jackie used to be a lot funnier and crazier than she is now. Little details give away this trait: Maybe she has a flight certificate, speaks French, or plays the banjo –she just hasn't used her skills for some years.' (Scherfig & Jensen 2003, as cited in Sigma Films, 2004)

⁷ Although it is beyond the scope of this article to consider the implications of the Advance Party framework and rules in relation to the marketing and reception of the completed films, it is important to be aware that the Advance Party rules are relevant to consider in relation to these activities. The doctoral research on which this article is based considers these aspects in greater depth.

⁸ In March of 2008, Sigma Films was one of eight companies awarded money through Scottish Screen's Slate Fund. Funding to the sum of £112,500 was provided to assist in the development of twelve films, eight of which fall under the Advance Party II banner (Scottish Screen 2009, p. 10). In September the same year, Sigma Films was one of ten companies to receive the UKFC Vision Award of £75,000 (UKFC, n.d.). Several months later, in November of 2008, the Irish Film Board awarded Subotica €85,000 towards the development of the Advance Party II films (Irish Film Board, n.d.).

⁹ The importance of nationality in the funding process is explored in the doctoral research from which this article emerged (Hutcheson 2013).

¹⁰ On the conversion rate of Hollywood studios, the report states: 'After discussions with three US studio executives, who preferred to remain unnamed, there was a consensus that internal studio estimates for conversion rates in the US sector fell between 20% and 30%. However, a UK development executive with experience at a US Studio informed us that conversion rates in the US are generally lower. The higher estimates may be explained by early-stage projects not being acknowledged' (Attentional, 2007, p. 43). For more on unmade projects in the Scottish context, see 'Completion and distribution of Scottish Screen-funded films', which was published in an earlier volume of this journal (Hutcheson, 2012).

¹¹ Paul Wright's debut feature film *For Those in Peril*, produced by Warp Films with funding from Film4, was selected for the Critics' Week strand of the 2013 Cannes International Film Festival. Steph

Green's debut *Run and Jump*, co-produced by Dublin-based Samson Films and Munich-based Bavaria Pictures, premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival in 2013. Esther May Campbell's *Light Years* received development finance from the BFI in 2012 and in April 2013, the agency announced its intention to award the project production finance (BFI, 2013). Ciarán Foy's debut *Citadel*, produced by Dublin's Blinder Films and Sigma Films, premiered at the South by Southwest Film Festival in 2012. Despite Sigma Film's involvement, Foy's debut feature was realised outwith *Advance Party II*. Alternatively, Rory Bresnihan moved into documentary filmmaking. At present (January 2014), his debut *Lola Ya Bonobo*, produced by Dublin-based Park Films, is in post-production.

¹² Arnold has, however, continued to work with several of the crew members she worked with on her Academy Award winning short film *Wasp* (2003): editor Nicholas Chauderge, cinematographer Robbie Ryan and production designer Helen Scott.

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