

Introduction

Iconic Superstar

Sean Connery was one of a select few stars who have become an instantly recognisable cultural icon whose image and distinctive voice have penetrated deeply into global popular culture and public consciousness. In part, his iconicity derives from being the ‘original’ James Bond, but one of Connery’s most significant achievements was to reinvent himself as another archetype, the father-mentor, enjoying a second period of superstardom from the mid-1980s onwards. Connery became a much loved ‘screen legend’; the recipient of several ‘lifetime achievement’ awards and was knighted in 2000. Connery was, above all, a Scottish actor, activist and icon, who played an important, if controversial, public role in championing the cause of an independent Scotland. He was by far the most famous and commercially successful post-Second World War British actor, the only one who could command the same salary as the top American stars.¹ Connery appeared in Quigley’s widely cited annual poll of Top Ten Money-Making Stars seven times (Table 1).² Although the first four occasions were for playing Bond, the later listings demonstrate his popularity as the father-mentor. Connery appeared in 65 films and his stardom spanned four decades, from *Dr. No* (1962) to *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen* (2003), a career of exceptional longevity.³

Table 1: Connery’s Appearances in the Quigley Poll of Top Money-Making Stars

Year	Position	Film
1965	1	<i>Goldfinger</i>

1966	2	<i>Thunderball</i>
1967	5	<i>You Only Live Twice</i>
1971	9	<i>Diamonds Are Forever</i>
1989	9	<i>Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade</i>
1990	8	<i>The Hunt for Red October</i>
1996	7	<i>The Rock</i>

Connery was voted the top British star in a 2001 Orange Film Survey of more than 10,000 UK respondents.⁴ In October 2013, ten years after his last screen appearance, he was still first in the prestigious Q Scores of America's favourite British actors. This poll revealed he had strong appeal throughout America and with all ages.⁵ Acutely conscious of his star status throughout his career, Connery emphasised that he had 'a very strong *international* foundation. Outside the United States, there isn't an actor who gets better exposure or success ratios in any country than me.'⁶

Connery's determination to maintain superstar status was often in tension with his equally fierce drive, as his close friend Michael Caine disclosed, 'to be the best actor he can become ... He is absolutely determined to become as good as he can.'⁷ Connery was, throughout his career, a risk-taking actor who fashioned an impressive body of work whose a range and variety is rarely recognised. Bond, I contend, was a great acting creation, as was his street-smart Chicago cop in *The Untouchables* (1987), for which he won an Oscar as best supporting actor. Connery could compose a masterly study in simmering, tightly-bottled resentment as a rebellious coal miner in *The Molly Maguires* (1971); or invest a role with

expansive exuberance and panache – his Arab sheik in *The Wind and the Lion* (1975).

Connery's personal favourite – the one he felt deserved an Oscar – was as the working-class con man in *The Man Who Would Be King* (1975), a highly intelligent and moving portrayal of a character who is naïve and credulous, seduced by his own dreams of greatness. His performance elicited Pauline Kael's enthusiastic judgement: 'With the glorious exception of Brando and Olivier, there's no screen actor I'd rather watch ... His vitality may make him the most richly masculine of all English-speaking actors'.⁸

Aims and Approach

This study is not a biography – there are a dozen of those, another marker of Connery's status – but provides a comprehensive account of his career as a professional actor, explaining how and why he achieved sustained international stardom and iconic status. The labour of acting is generally absent from popular discourse about stars, which 'emphasizes their lives, their loves, their toys, and their tragedies – everything about them except how they go about their professional work as performers'.⁹ My focus on Connery's professional life means there is no attempt in what follows to uncover his 'real' or 'authentic' self – the object of a biographical approach – which assumes, as Paul McDonald argues, that the individual is the source and origin of stardom, star qualities are innate and indefinable and the achievement of stardom somehow preordained.¹⁰ That sense of inevitability is enshrined on Connery's official website: 'His humble beginnings, growing up in a working class neighborhood [*sic*] in Edinburgh, gave no indication of the achievements that were *destined to come*'.¹¹ This discourse permeates oral testimonies that have a, highly suspect, retrospective prescience. Robert Hardy, who played Prince Hal opposite Connery's Hotspur in the BBC's *An Age of Kings* (1960) opined, 'I never had any doubt he was going places.'¹² Such remarks also ascribe a factitious agency to his career. As Michael Billington notes: 'Almost every film-star

interview one sees on television or reads in the press still rests on the precarious belief that actors are totally autonomous creatures royally dictating the state of their career'.¹³ Reflecting on his limited agency even as a major star, Charlton Heston observed, 'It depends on the projects that are brought to you and while a few of us are in the position to, as they say, "put a film together", that's not an infinite possibility. You can put films together that appeal at a certain time to the people in the studios. So I don't think an actor can therefore plan his career goals.'¹⁴

In contradistinction to a biographical approach, this study understands Connery as a mediated, 'commodity self', a 'creature of signification'.¹⁵ Rather than conceptualise stardom as a single, settled state, it is analysed as a complex, mutating occupation that is both a material entity – a performer who is paid a salary – and a discourse that shapes how that labour was recognised and valued. I pay close attention to how that stardom was fashioned across a variety of different cultural, social and commercial contexts. I examine what is publicly available about Connery's stardom in any medium, encompassing his films and attendant promotion (usually controlled by the production company or studio); publicity (including gossip, magazine and newspaper articles); reviews, criticism and commentary (including career retrospectives); awards and accolades, all of which constitute 'specific positions from which to speak the star'.¹⁶ Rather than trying to determine the factual accuracy of information circulated about Connery, I contextualise and interpret that 'data' as part of the discursive construction of his star persona, that unstable amalgam of the fictional images and public projections of a real person, which changes over time. Connery had certain physical qualities that were the raw material of stardom – height, good looks, a magnificent physique and an attractive voice – but, as Barry King argues, analysis needs to focus on 'the manner in which stars enter popular consciousness as public figures'.¹⁷

Stardom as an Economic Phenomenon

My analysis is centrally concerned with Connery's economic value and his labour as a professional actor, aspects of stardom that have received less attention than the conventional focus on a text-based interpretation of stars' cultural significance. Adrienne McLean notes that this approach erases any sense of the labour involved; stars are not thought to work but to 'be' as a function of their textual representations.¹⁸ In contrast, Paul McDonald advocates a 'pragmatics of star practices' that analyses the meaning of star performances as part of their social, cultural and professional activities as stars.¹⁹ Building on the work of King, McDonald and McLean, alongside Danae Clark's work on the cultural politics of actors' labour, my aim is to contribute to the growing number of star studies that examine stars' working lives, situated within the particular industrial systems in which that work takes place.²⁰ In essence, this study offers what might be called a political economy of stardom as performative labour.

Connery, like all stars, had a basic economic function, defined succinctly as 'a widely practiced strategy for securing and protecting production investments, differentiating movie products, and for ensuring some measure of box-office success'.²¹ Stars help to make the product, the individual film, uniquely differentiated but also stabilise demand through the predictable appeal of their star persona or brand, which promises a range of pleasures that producers hope will entice and satisfy audiences.²² In Marxist terms, stars are 'congealed labour', 'something that is used with further labour (scripting, acting, directing, managing, filming, editing) to produce another commodity, a film'.²³ As labour and the product of labour, commercial assets and hired hands, stars occupy a liminal space between capital and workers, forming an elite cadre of actors with the capacity to attract production investment and sell films, thereby attenuating the inherent costly risks of commercial feature film production.²⁴ Ned Tanen, who worked as an executive for two Hollywood studios, Paramount and Universal, articulates the industry perspective: 'A star has two things an actor doesn't

have: charisma and the ability to sell tickets. Eddie Murphy will sell tickets all around the world to a movie that's not a very good movie. That is a movie star.'²⁵

Although stars' ability to ensure box-office success has been frequently debated, often disputed and defies precise calculations, it is a widely held belief within the industry, buttressed by regular compilations of 'star power' in the trade press and star power polls such as Quigley's.²⁶ As David F. Prindle comments astringently, 'whether or not stars sell a picture (or a television series) is not important. What counts is that producers believe that they do'.²⁷ Connery was preoccupied with his salary throughout his career, not only as the just reward for his labour, but because it acted as a marker of his industry status. In doing so, he contributed to what Alexander Walker describes as a circular and self-fulfilling system in which huge star salaries 'have a significance not entirely financial. High fees were proof of unique talents. Because a star was paid so much, or was said to be paid it, she must be worth it. Money created its own charisma in an industry short on certainties but well provided with shibboleths ... people owning the talents profited in their turn from the mystic aura of being "worth" such colossal amounts'.²⁸ Gerben Bakker contends that stars' principal value 'may have resided not in their power to guarantee a hit, but rather in their ability to guarantee publicity. Stars were giant promotion machines, which in a short-time could create a high brand awareness for a new film.'²⁹

Stars function within particular systems of production, distribution and exhibition in which their relative economic power varies. This study traces how Connery's stardom changes as he navigated different systems from the BBC's ad hoc hiring practices, through an old-fashioned six-picture contract with Eon Productions (the Bond producers) in the 1960s, to becoming a freelance actor from the early 1970s onwards. His contract with Eon covered not only salary and conditions of employment but also ownership or possession of his image as Bond. Connery struggled to gain a share in the merchandising that exploited his image.³⁰ However,

the supposedly enhanced independence and control over his role and image as a freelance star was severely constrained by the majors' unaltered grip over finance and distribution, which ensured stars' continued dependency on executive decision-makers.³¹ The extent and nature of this control varied as the international film industry itself transformed, arguably three times, over the course of his freelance career. In the 'post-studio' system, power shifted from studio to agent and an important concern of this book is Connery's relationship with his agents.³² Analysing that relationship forms part of my exploration of the ways in which Connery attempted to manage his career in these shifting conditions, the efforts he made to extend his creative and financial over his films and their promotion. I detail the ways in which he tried to intervene – with studio executives, producers, directors, writers and fellow actors – in how his part was conceived, often altering or even fundamentally reshaping his character. Through these interventions, Connery fulfilled Patrick McGilligan's definition of the 'auteur' star who is able to alter significantly the style and meaning of a film. However, as McGilligan makes clear, this label does not deny the essentially collaborative nature of film production, but registers a star's importance in that process.³³ I also attend to Connery's accumulation of symbolic capital – the role of awards and other forms of cultural recognition which themselves enhanced his status and salary – thus understanding stars as both symbolic and cultural entities and the 'symbolic commerce of stardom'.³⁴

Acting and Performance

Focusing on stars' work as professional performers includes investigating and analysing the training and creativity they bring to their performances, 'the bank of knowledge and experience that actors draw on to produce the gestures, expressions, and intonations that collaborate and combine with other cinematic elements to create meaning'.³⁵ This approach to examining Connery's screen performances foregrounds the process of image making over an exclusive focus on image analysis, embedding the interpretation of Connery's

performances in their conditions of production.³⁶ As argued throughout, Connery's acting skills were the product of long experience and rigorous, if unorthodox, training. The directors Connery worked with considered he was an accomplished and thoroughly professional actor who was also prepared to experiment and take risks. Richard Lester, who directed Connery in *Robin and Marian* (1975) and *Cuba* (1979), admired a star who refused the easy, conventional route of finding 'roles that they can do well, where they can exude that brand of charm and just go through and have a career that way'.³⁷

However, analysing performance as professional labour does not solve the significant problems of interpretation screen acting presents. On one level this reflects the inherent difficulties of identifying how much a performance owes to the actor rather than the professional skilled labour of the other principal creative personnel – writers, directors, cinematographers and set designers – and thus pinpointing her or his specific contribution within the orchestrated costuming, makeup, lighting, framing, editing, set and sound design mobilised to enhance performance. On another there are the problems of describing in prose the meanings derived from the kinetics of acting, the use of facial expressions, voice, gestures, posture and movement.³⁸ Although, in Chapter 1, I discuss the benefits Connery's acting received from attending Yat Malmgren's classes that promoted a particular system through which a character is conceived and executed, I am mindful of the caution expressed by Daniel Smith-Rowsey in his discussion of actors in the Hollywood Renaissance: 'no one can say what technique an actor uses in a given scene ... to suggest a given formula leads directly to an onscreen gesture or expression is usually misleading'.³⁹ Additionally, these performative aspects do not have fixed meanings but take place within the shifting framework as to what constitutes 'good', 'expressive' or 'truthful' acting that is historically contingent.⁴⁰ In Kael's analysis of *The Man Who Would Be King* cited above, Connery's

naturalistic register and contained, reactive rather than overtly expressive style, was trumped by the showier theatricality of Olivier, or the tortured Method acting of Brando.

There is further problem in interpreting stars' performances, 'the tension between story and show, or between the representation of the character and the presentation of the star'.⁴¹

Audiences expect a star to infuse every role with her persona as well as inhabit the specific character required by the narrative and in that process create a correspondence between star and role such that it is impossible to imagine anyone else playing that part.⁴² Viewers' encounter with stars is always informed by the publicity surrounding their casting in particular roles and their transtextual personae, the types of role with which they are associated. As Philip Drake argues, 'Every performance therefore retains traces of earlier roles, histories that are re-mobilised in new textual and cultural contexts. In fact this is actually an economic condition of stardom, which relies on the continuing circulation and accretion of the star image.'⁴³ This expectation creates what Janine Basinger contends is 'an unarticulated dialogue between fans and the star on-screen. It was a high level of non-verbal communication, yet a simple language of sex, desire and pleasure that everyone could speak'.⁴⁴ This combination of character and transtextual persona constitutes the 'presence' of the star, their accumulated weight and force. John Boorman, who directed Connery in *Zardoz* (1974), admired the intelligence and skill he brought to the realisation of Zed, but reflected: 'Sean is always himself and that's the kind of extraordinary thing about a movie star, he can be another person and play another role and yet remain himself. The kind of actor who disappears into a role is a different kind of actor.'⁴⁵

Connery's transtextual persona was, like that of other stars, shaped through association with a particular genre or genres.⁴⁶ Although he starred in eighteen thrillers, Connery was most strongly associated with the twenty-four action-adventure films in which he appeared. These

included the Bond films with their contemporary setting, but, more typically, ones set in a semi-legendary or mythic past such as *The Wind and the Lion*, or *First Knight* (1995) in which he played King Arthur. Yvonne Tasker argues that action-adventure films provide a narrative justification for extended displays of the muscular male body and their generalised settings have a geographical or temporal ‘placelessness’ in which the hero often fights for a community that has rejected him or which is threatened.⁴⁷ In what follows, I explore how, as Connery’s career developed, his athleticism – the grace of movement that elicited so much admiring comment – was combined with wisdom and moral authority in the father-mentor, which became a transtextual and transnational archetype. However, as will be discussed, appearing in action-adventure films militated against Connery being recognised as a major actor because such roles went against the convention of ‘good acting’ as the sustained portrayal of a complex character.⁴⁸

Stardom, Iconicity and National Identity

Film stars have been understood as playing an important role in the development of national cinemas and the projection of national images since the silent era.⁴⁹ Major stars are often seen as representing their nation. John Wayne, for instance, is thought to represent the ‘first American Adam’.⁵⁰ In his analysis of Sophia Loren’s representation of Italy, Stephen Gundle argues that she came to be ‘seen as a timeless symbol of her country’s spirit, someone who stands above fashion and shifts in popular taste’.⁵¹ Discussing European stardom in more general terms, Tytti Soila claims that vernacular stardom has a strong relationship to specific national, cultural and political circumstances and that cultivating home-grown stars became an ‘urgent quest’ for many European countries in proclaiming the strength and distinctiveness of their national film industries.⁵² As I argue elsewhere, British stars incarnated cultural types that were nationally specific and distinct from their Hollywood counterparts.⁵³

However, Connery's relationship to national identity, specifically Britishness, is complex and problematic. From the outset of his career, Connery was determined to preserve a close affinity with his Scottish working-class roots which he considered essential to his success: 'My strength as an actor, I think, is that I've stayed close to the core of myself, which has something to do with a voice, a music, a tune that's very much tied up with my background experience'.⁵⁴ This commitment to retaining an aural marker of his origins coloured the remainder of his career and his distinctive voice with its unmistakable Edinburgh burr formed an indelible and much-imitated facet of his persona. I discuss the various ways in which this strong connection with his native Scotland was an important anchor when Connery's success as Bond made him part of the nomadic 'mobile elite' of global capitalism.⁵⁵ Connery was both an *international star* whose image was circulated and consumed globally and a *transnational star* who worked across the British, American and European film industries.⁵⁶ Although his stardom forms part of a much longer historical migration of European stars to Hollywood, which offered the possibility of stardom on a scale unavailable in their indigenous film industries, Connery's rugged working-class Scottishness made his image, even as Bond, decisively different from the hegemonic middle-class Englishness that had been the dominant international image of Britishness heretofore.⁵⁷ Bond's cosmopolitan internationalism and the father-mentor's placelessness incorporated Connery's Scottish-inflected Britishness into a transnational identity that challenged the congruence of star and nation. Connery was not a British star, nor a typical European émigré star, or an ersatz American one. Analysing his anomalous status, which eludes and unsettles these existing categories, thereby contributing to an emergent body of work that examines the complex, contradictory and unstable nature of transnational stardom and of the ways in which these mobile figures challenge concepts of the national and the nature of 'belonging'.⁵⁸

A Note on Methodology and Sources

This is an empirical study informed by the theoretical approaches adumbrated above. The focus on the labour of stardom necessitates describing and interpreting the precise nature of Connery's economic and cultural agency, which requires finding sources that provide verifiable, or, at least, reasonably sound, information about budgets, contracts, conditions of employment, and the nature of his relationship with production companies, producers, agents, screenwriters and directors. Ideally, this would be based on archival documentation. Alas, there is no Sean Connery archive. Connery was, by his own admission, someone who did not retain memorabilia from his acting career: 'I don't have one script of the movies I made, and I don't have any photographs'.⁵⁹ On another occasion Connery stated that he was temperamentally averse to 'hoarding' and therefore had not kept any correspondence nor written diaries, 'I've never kept a record of anything, I gave everything away', which he attributed to his Romany heritage.⁶⁰ Connery did not provide commentaries on DVD versions of his films, the nearest he came was appearing on Mark Cousins' series *Scene by Scene* in which he commented on a few selected moments from some of his most famous films.⁶¹ *Being a Scot* (2008), which Connery co-wrote with Murray Grigor, contains a vivid account of his early life but is not a conventional autobiography, with little information about the making of his films. Its engagement with Scots history, politics and culture is itself revealing about the identity Connery wished to project as someone more concerned with Scotland's traditions and aspirations than his own life story.⁶² I have consulted what archival material exists, principally at the BBC's written archives, the British Film Institute Library and the Margaret Herrick Library, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, Los Angeles, supplemented by studio documentation – mainly in the form of production notes – and the trade press. Particular frustrations were the absence of contractual documentation and the lack of material about Connery's relationship with his agents and detailed information about Fountainbridge Films.⁶³

Jane Gaines is quite right to observe that whereas a contract ‘contains confidential information about the real conditions under which the star works’, autobiographies, interviews and personal appearances ‘promise indexicality but deliver only myth’.⁶⁴ However, in addition to documenting Connery’s professional career, it is precisely his ‘star myth’ that forms the other principal concern of this study. To understand the Connery ‘myth’ requires scrutiny of a huge volume of publicity and promotional material alongside the numerous interviews and personal appearances he gave, despite being characterised as the ‘one of the world’s most private star since Garbo’.⁶⁵ Unsurprisingly, Connery is the object of extensive attention in other autobiographies – nowhere more suspect than when they attempt to be fair and balanced – as with ‘Cubby’ Broccoli’s *When the Snow Melts* (1998) – all of which contributes to the myth’s construction and reconstruction, understood not as falsehood but as an operative discourse with material effects.

Although I discuss the genesis and production of all of Connery’s films, the nature of my attention is selective. Detailed analysis is reserved for those that were significant in establishing, maintaining or reconfiguring his stardom and those in which his acting accomplishments are best displayed, even if not commercially successful. I pay careful attention to the films’ reception, both at the box-office and in contemporaneous reviews in newspapers and the trade press. Although any significant differences between the American and British reception of his films are commented on, I do not attempt to analyse the reception of Connery’s films and perceptions of his stardom in other countries or cultures, beyond acknowledging his global reach. It would be extremely interesting to understand how Connery was understood and appreciated in Europe and in Asia but this would, I suggest, constitute a separate study, organised in another way and based on a different body of research.⁶⁶ Analysis of the contemporaneous critical reception of his films is not to advance the idea that these reviews had a material effect on a film’s success. If they were uniformly

bad that might have been a contributory factor, but critics' assessment is often at odds with a film's box-office performance and thus, if anything, constitutes an index of critical taste rather than being a proxy for audiences' views. However, the value of reviews often lies in critics' often wide-ranging knowledge of Connery's previous films and their assessment of the ways in which a particular film does, or does not, add to the meaning and currency of his stardom at particular moments, thus representing another mode through which the Connery myth is constructed and reconstructed. Reviews also provide what are often astute analyses of a star's performance, most valuably for films that have attracted little, if any, academic analysis. The length of my own analyses are constrained by the need to provide a career-length study rather than an exhaustive account of particular films, and my attention to these films is focused entirely on Connery's role and influence rather than attempting a comprehensive interpretation.

Organisation of the Study

Chapters 1-6 are organised chronologically, tracing the vicissitudes of Connery's professional acting career as he moves through a range of changing industrial and cultural contexts. They explore how these systems shaped the nature of Connery's stardom and the extent of the creative and economic agency he was able to exercise in the development of his star persona. Only through such a linear ordering can one understand why his career developed in the way that it did, the choices he made, their repercussions and their relationship to broader social and economic change. Each chapter takes a roughly ten-year period, divided not by arbitrary decade boundaries, but by the moment at which his stardom changed significantly. As a theoretical counterpoint, each chapter raises a significant problematic associated with stardom. Chapters 7 and 8 focus more on the cultural and public dimensions of Connery's stardom, exploring his role as an iconic archetype.

Chapter 1 explores the significance of the particular social conditions from which Connery emerged and the importance of physical display in his cultural formation. Its principal focus is on his haphazard development as a professional actor, the significance of his unorthodox training and the ways in which he negotiated the three interlocking but separate production contexts of theatre, television and film. My intention throughout this chapter is to give this formative phase of his career its proper attention and *integrity* rather than adopt the conventional stance of interpreting every element as an anticipation of becoming James Bond, which, I argue could not have been predicted nor was something towards which Connery worked.

Chapter 2 focuses on Connery's international stardom playing James Bond, emphasising its nature as a *particular form* of stardom, the 'serial star', the product of an industrial form of authorship in which the producers regarded Connery as a replaceable component in the franchise, claiming it was the character, not the actor, which generated the series' extraordinary success. I argue that this produced an intensified form of typecasting, commodification and entrapment, the usual hazards of the successful star. The scale of the 'Bond phenomenon' threatened to engulf Connery's whole identity, and his complete identification with a fictional figure did not allow him to develop a separate star persona, nor was his acting achievement in creating the screen Bond recognised.

How Connery tried to deal with these frustrations is the subject of Chapter 3, which examines the same period from the reverse perspective, exploring Connery's attempts to gain recognition as a talented actor capable of playing a variety of roles. I demonstrate that although Connery had considerable success in winning critical recognition for his thespian accomplishments, they failed to interest the cinemagoing public, thereby illustrating the

profound difficulties stars have in altering their persona – in Connery’s case his persona *as Bond* – and of gaining audience acceptance in different roles.

The shift from contract to freelance stardom is the conceptual focus of Chapter 4, the types of role Connery was able to negotiate during the 1970s as a transnational star working principally in Hollywood. I argue that He was more successful in the first half of the decade working with directors – John Boorman (*Zardoz*), John Milius (*The Wind and the Lion*), John Huston (*The Man Who Would Be King*) and Richard Lester (*Robin and Marian*) – who had the autonomy and the intelligence to sense his possibilities as a particular kind of star best suited to playing archetypal, mythical roles in which the Bond persona could be reworked. However, in the second half of the decade, Connery struggled to find appropriate roles as the studios reasserted their control. The chapter concludes with a detailed discussion of his under-rated return as Bond in *Never Say Never Again* (1983) as his career seemed to circle back on itself.

Connery may have returned to Bond, but it was as an ageing superspy. Chapter 5 explores the cultural politics of the ageing star, analysing why Connery managed that notoriously difficult transition so successfully. Central to his success, I contend, was his development of a coherent new persona, the father-mentor, which started fortuitously in *Highlander* (1986) but gained industry traction as the ‘Connery role’ for which he won an Oscar as Best Supporting Actor in *The Untouchables* (1987), which also restored him to A-list stardom.

Although the discussion of ageing stars and the cultural politics of the father-mentor continues in Chapter 6, its core concern returns to stars’ agency. Its principal focus is on how he tried to extend his economic and creative control role by becoming an executive producer and by founding a production company, Fountainbridge Films, in 1992. The chapter concludes with a careful scrutiny of his final two films – *Finding Forrester* (2000) and *The*

League of Extraordinary Gentlemen (2003) – as representing the twin main drivers of his career the search for challenging roles and the desire to be a major star.

Chapters 7 and 8 are less concerned with the economic aspects of Connery's career than its cultural significance, exploring the processes through which he became an iconic star. In chapter 7 I argue that very few stars achieve iconic status, building on Edgar Morin's explanation of film stars' mythic function.⁶⁷ Although I consider Connery's whole career, the main focus of this chapter is on the 1990s when critics and fellow professionals acknowledged Connery's legendary status; *DragonHeart* (1996) was a full-length filmic homage. I demonstrate how a succession of public accolades – including three 'lifetime achievement' awards, tributes, *festschrifts* and hagiographic documentaries – all contributed to this construction, which was noticeable for its elegiac quality. I suggest reasons why Connery was thought of as the 'last star of Hollywood's Golden Age', despite its obvious factual inaccuracy. Connery's role as Scottish icon was a component of his iconicity, but is treated separately in Chapter 8 because it was the result of different processes. The chapter brings together the various elements – actor, activist and icon – that constituted Connery's identity as a Scot in a coherent analysis. I examine in detail Connery's very public and sustained activism for the cause of an independent Scotland.

These chapters provide the most extended discussion of a theme of the whole study: the evolution of the 'Connery Myth', how this came into being, what it has come to mean, what purposes it serves, how it has been carefully staged and managed and the ways in which it is constantly being reimagined. The myth embodied many admirable qualities but, as I discuss, was patriarchal and one that had a darker side in apparently condoning male violence. The conclusion attempts a provisional assessment of Connery's significance and summarises what

his career reveals about the nature of stardom as an economic and cultural phenomenon and its complex relationship to national identity.

¹ Arguably Charlie Chaplin and Cary Grant were more famous and successful, hence the qualification.

² This poll has appeared annually in the *International Motion Picture Almanac* since 1932. The Quigley rating has long been regarded as one of the most reliable barometers of a film star's box-office power because it is based on a poll of exhibitors asked to name the ten stars guaranteed to bring patrons to the cinema.

³ In 'Hail the Connery Hero', *Hollywood Reporter*, 5 May 1997, Ray Bennett argued that 'Any career as a genuine leading man that lasts more than ten years is astonishing'. He noted that Connery's stardom had outlasted those of the great Hollywood male stars of the 'Golden Age' – he mentions Gary Cooper, Clark Gable, Cary Grant, Burt Lancaster, Gregory Peck, James Stewart and John Wayne. He might have included Cagney: see Robert Sklar, *City Boys: Cagney, Bogart, Garfield*, Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992, pp. 271-72.

⁴ Anthony Barnes, 'Survey Ranks Sir Sean as Top British Star', *Independent*, 29 January 2001, p. 9.

⁵ See <http://www.theguardian.com/film/2013/oct/28/sean-connery-poll-favourite-british-actor>, accessed September 2015. Q scores were created by Market Evaluations Inc with Q standing for 'quotient' – an established measure based on familiarity, appeal, likeability and popularity; see Barrie Gunter, *Celebrity Capital: Assessing the Value of Fame*, London: Bloomsbury, 2014, pp. 20-21.

⁶ Quoted in Lee Pfeiffer and Philip Lisa, *The Films of Sean Connery*, New York: The Citadel Press, 2001, p. 25, original emphasis.

⁷ Andrew Rissik, *The James Bond Man: The Films of Sean Connery*, London: Elm Tree Books, 1983, p. 121.

⁸ *New Yorker*, 5 January 1976.

⁹ Sklar, *City Boys*, p. ix.

¹⁰ *Hollywood Stardom*, Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013, pp. 12-13. For the impulse of conventional accounts to reveal the star's 'authentic self', see Richard Dyer, *Heavenly Bodies: Film Stars and Society*, London: Macmillan, 1986, p. 2.

¹¹ <https://www.seanconnery.com/>, accessed 24 August 2020, my emphasis.

¹² Quoted in Andrew Yule, *Sean Connery: Neither Shaken Nor Stirred*, London: Sphere, 2008, p. 68.

¹³ *The Modern Actor*, London: Hamish Hamilton, 1973, p. 96.

¹⁴ Quoted in Jeff Rovin, *The Films of Charlton Heston*, Secaucus, NJ: Citadel Press, 1977, p. 21.

¹⁵ Barry King, *Taking Fame to Market: On the Pre-History and Post-History of Hollywood Stardom*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, p. 12.

¹⁶ Richard DeCordova, *Picture Personalities: The Emergence of the Star System in America*, Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2001, p. 12.

¹⁷ 'Stardom as an Occupation', in Paul Kerr (ed.), *The Hollywood Film Industry*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986, p. 159.

¹⁸ *Being Rita Hayworth: Labor, Identity, and Hollywood Stardom*, New Brunswick, NJ and London: Rutgers University Press, 2005, p. 85.

¹⁹ 'Supplementary Chapter: Reconceptualising Stardom', in Richard Dyer, *Stars*, rev. ed., London: BFI Publishing, 1998, p. 200.

²⁰ King, 'Stardom as an Occupation'; McDonald, *Hollywood Stardom*; McLean, *Being Rita Hayworth*; Danae Clark, *Negotiating Hollywood: The Cultural Politics of Actors' Labor*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995; see also Sean P. Holmes, 'The Hollywood Star System and the Regulation of Actors' Labour, 1916-1934', *Film History*, 12 (2000), pp. 97-114.

²¹ Gorham Kindem, 'Hollywood's Movie Star System: A Historical Overview', in Kindem (ed.), *The American Movie Industry: The Business of Motion Pictures*, Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1982, p. 79.

²² Cathy Klaprat, 'The Star as Market Strategy: Bette Davis in Another Light', in Tino Balio (ed.), *The American Film Industry*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1976, p. 354; McDonald, *Hollywood Stardom*, p. 18.

²³ Dyer, *Heavenly Bodies*, p. 5.

²⁴ See King, 'The Star and the Commodity: Towards a Performance Theory of Stardom', *Cultural Studies*, 1: 2 (1987), pp. 145-61.

²⁵ Quoted in Richard Maltby, *Hollywood Cinema: An Introduction*, London: Wiley-Blackwell, 1995, p. 252.

²⁶ *Variety* and *The Hollywood Reporter* regularly compile (subscription-only) 'Star Power' information detailing the economic muscle wielded by Hollywood's acting elite and publish an annual ranking – see Philip Drake, 'Jim Carrey: the Cultural Politics of Dumbing Down', in Andy Willis (ed.), *Film Stars: Hollywood and Beyond*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004, p. 77. For economic perspectives on the power of stars to ensure box-office success, see for instance, Sherwin Rosen, 'The Economics of Superstars', *The American Economic Review*, 71: 5 (December 1981), pp. 845-58; W. Timothy Wallace, Alan Seigerman and Morris B. Holbrook 'The Role of Actors and Actresses in the Success of Films: How Much Is a Movie Star Worth?', *Journal of Cultural Economics*, 17: 1 (1993), pp. 1-27; Arthur S. De Vany and W. David Walls 'Uncertainty in the Movie Industry: Does Star Power Reduce the Terror of the Box Office?', *Journal of Cultural Economics*, 23: 4 (1999), pp. 285-318; Randy S. Nelson and Robert Glotfelty, 'Movie Stars and Box Office Revenue: An Empirical Analysis', *Journal of Cultural Economics*, 36 (2012), pp. 141-66.

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²⁸ *Stardom: The Hollywood Phenomenon*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1974, p. 32.

²⁹ 'Stars and Stories: How Films Became Branded Products', in John Sedgwick and Michael Pokorny (eds), *An Economic History of Film*, London: Routledge, 2005, p. 71.

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³² There are two book-length overviews of Hollywood talent agents: Tom Kemper, *Hidden Talent: The Emergence of Hollywood Agents*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008; and Violaine Roussel, *Representing Talent: Hollywood Agents and the Making of Movies*, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2017; see also David Zelenski, 'Talent Agents, Personal Managers, and their Conflicts in the New Hollywood', *Southern California Law Review*, 76: 4 (May 2003), pp. 979-1002. A study of talent agents in the UK is yet to appear; at present there are only gossipy accounts such as Michael Whitehall's *Shark-Infested Waters*, London: Timewell Press, 2007.

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- ³³ McGilligan, *Cagney: The Actor as Auteur*, London: Tantivy Press, 1975. James Cagney was one of the stars who battled most consistently and effectively against the constraints of the Hollywood studio system; see also Sklar, *City Boys* and Emily Carman, *Independent Stardom: Freelance Women in the Hollywood Studio System*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 2016.
- ³⁴ McDonald, *Hollywood Stardom*, pp. 5-6.
- ³⁵ Cynthia Baron and Sharon M. Carnicke, *Reframing Screen Performance*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008, pp. 7, 17.
- ³⁶ Dyer, *Heavenly Bodies*, p. 97; Clark, *Negotiating Hollywood*, pp. 7-8.
- ³⁷ Quoted in Rissik, *The James Bond Man*, p. 120.
- ³⁸ James Naremore's seminal *Acting in the Cinema*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press (1988), provides a general framework alongside sophisticated analyses of individual star performances; see also the essays in Aaron Taylor (ed.), *Theorizing Film Acting*, New York and Oxford: Routledge, 2012; Philip Drake, 'Reconceptualising Screen Performance', *Journal of Film and Video*, 58: 1-2 (2006), pp. 84-94; and Baron and Carnicke, *Reframing Screen Performance*.
- ³⁹ *Star Actors in the Hollywood Renaissance: Representing Rough Rebels*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, p. 27.
- ⁴⁰ Julie Levinson, 'The Auteur Renaissance', in Claudia Springer and Julie Levinson (eds), *Acting*, London: I.B. Tauris, 2015, p. 116. Levinson analyses the 1960s and 1970s but the other essays in this collection, which spans the history of American screen acting, show the different valuations that are operative in particular periods.
- ⁴¹ Paul McDonald, 'Story and Show: The Basic Contradictions of Film Star Acting', in Taylor (ed.), *Theorizing Film Acting*, p. 170.
- ⁴² Maltby, *Hollywood Cinema*, pp. 250-55.
- ⁴³ Drake, 'Jim Carrey', p. 77.
- ⁴⁴ *The Star Machine*, New York: Vintage Books, 2009, pp. 75-6.
- ⁴⁵ 'Introduction', in Michael Feeley Callan, *Sean Connery: His Life and Films*, London: W.H. Allen, 1984, p. 1; see also Boorman's DVD commentary on *Zardoz*, Twentieth Century-Fox Home Entertainment, F1-SGB 01208.
- ⁴⁶ For general discussion see Andrew Britton, 'Stars and Genre', in Christine Gledhill (ed.), *Stardom: Industry of Desire*, London: Routledge, 1991, pp. 198-206; Richard DeCordova, 'Genre and Performance: An Overview', in Jeremy Butler (ed.) *Star Texts*, Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1991, pp. 115-24; Christine Cornea, 'Introduction', in Cornea (ed.), *Genre and Performance: Film and Television*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010, pp. 1-17.
- ⁴⁷ Yvonne Tasker, *The Hollywood Action and Adventure Film*, Chichester: John Wiley, 2015. See also her *Spectacular Bodies: Gender, Genre and the Action Cinema*, London: Routledge, 1993 and Steve Neale, *Genre and Hollywood*, London: Routledge, 2005, pp. 46-54.
- ⁴⁸ Tasker, *The Hollywood Action and Adventure Film*, p. 75.
- ⁴⁹ Petrie, 'The Eclipse of Scottish Cinema', *Scottish Affairs*, 23: 2 (2014), p. 220.
- ⁵⁰ Gary Wills, *John Wayne's America: The Politics of Celebrity*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997.
- ⁵¹ 'Sophia Loren: Italian Icon', *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, 15: 3 (August 1995), pp. 367-86.
- ⁵² 'Introduction', in Soila (ed.), *Stellar Encounters: Stardom in Popular European Cinema*, New Barnet, Herts: John Libbey, 2009, pp. 4-5, 9.
- ⁵³ Andrew Spicer, *Typical Men: The Representation of Masculinity in Popular British Cinema*, London: I.B. Tauris 2001; see also Geoffrey Macnab, *Searching for Stars: Stardom and Screen Acting in the British Cinema*, London: Cassell 2000; and Bruce Babington,

‘Introduction: British Stars and Stardom’, in Babington (ed.), *British Stars and Stardom: From Alma Taylor to Sean Connery*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001, pp. 1-28; Jonathan Stubbs, *Hollywood and the Invention of England: Projecting the Past in American Cinema, 1930-2017*, New York and London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019, pp. 5-6.

⁵⁴ Quoted in Benedick Nightingale, ‘Bottled in Bond, He’s Vintage Connery’, *New York Times*, 13 June 1987, p. 24.

⁵⁵ Zygmunt Bauman, *Globalization: The Human Consequences*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998, p. 19.

⁵⁶ Connery’s stardom had certain similarities to that of Alain Delon, at once French and an international cosmopolite: see Mark Gallagher, ‘Alain Delon, International Man of Mystery’, in Nick Rees-Roberts and Darren Waldron (eds), *Alain Delon: Style, Stardom, and Masculinity*, New York and London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015, pp. 91-109.

⁵⁷ See Alastair Phillips and Ginette Vincendeau, ‘Film Trade, Global Culture and Transnational Cinema: An Introduction’, in Phillips and Vincendeau (eds), *Journeys of Desire: European Actors in Hollywood*, London: BFI Publishing, 2006, pp. 3-18.

⁵⁸ See Vanessa R. Schwartz, *It’s So French! Hollywood, Paris, and the Making of Cosmopolitan Film Culture*, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2007; and Russell Meeuf and Raphael Raphael (eds), *Transnational Stardom: International Celebrity in Film and Popular Culture*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013. Valuable studies of single stars that discuss their transnational dimensions include: Sarah Thomas, *Peter Lorre: Face Maker – Stardom and Performance Between Hollywood and Europe*, Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2012; Russell Meeuf, *John Wayne’s World: Transnational Masculinity in the Fifties*, Austin TX: University of Texas Press, 2013; and Agata Frymus, *Damsels and Divas: European Stardom in Silent Hollywood*, New Brunswick, NJ and London: Rutgers University Press, 2020.

⁵⁹ Quoted in the Hollywood Pictures Production Notes for *Medicine Man*, British Film Institute Library, London (hereafter BFI), microfiche, p. 3.

⁶⁰ Quoted in Geoffrey Macnab, ‘I Had Drive from the Beginning’, *Guardian*, 13 December 2004, p. 2; see also Michael Feeley Callan, *Sean Connery*, London: Virgin, 2002, p. 16.

⁶¹ *Scene by Scene: Sean Connery*, 1997.

⁶² *Being a Scot*, London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2008.

⁶³ There is almost nothing on Connery’s British agents, Richard Hatton then Denis Selinger, beyond a few autobiographical anecdotes. Several accounts of his American agent Michael Ovitz and the Creative Artists Associates (CAA) exist, including Ovitz’s autobiography, but they lack the specific detail that could provide a detailed account of Ovitz’s relationship with Connery and decision-making processes. I have used the trade press for information about Fountainbridge Films in the absence of any company records.

⁶⁴ Gaines, *Contested Culture*, p. 146.

⁶⁵ George Feiffer, ‘Hard Man Behind the Tough Image’, *Sunday Telegraph Magazine*, 12 April 1981.

⁶⁶ It would be particularly interesting to trace Connery’s reception in Eastern cultures, given the different conceptions of masculinity and muscularity that obtain in that region – see Mark Gallagher, *Tony Leung Chiu-Wai*, London: BFI/Palgrave, 2018, especially pp. 24-6. In his study *Chow Yun-fat and Territories of Hong Kong Stardom*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017, Lin Feng discusses the way Yun-fat’s star image differs across local, regional and international markets (pp. 108-21), providing a methodology through which to explore these issues.

⁶⁷ *The Stars*, London: John Calder, 1960.