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Artist/Citizen: Choreographing the Nation Brand

Fearghus Ó Conchúir

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ABSTRACT

This research examines the corporeal experience of dance artists in Ireland implicated in the production and promotion of the nation and in possibilities of citizenship at multiple scales. Dance, as an art-form practised in the formation of individual and collective bodies, is proposed as a valuable resource for imagining, embodying and reflecting on alternative corporealities that make spaces for diverse and contested experiences within and beyond Ireland's borders. As an art form concerned with the organisation of movement in space, dance provides a framework for analysing the spatialities of substantive citizenship, recognising that the nation state is not the only scale at which citizenship operates. Who is permitted to appear where and when is a question that guides the geographical, ethical, political and choreographic perspectives deployed throughout. Also of concern has been how the corporeal knowledge and experience of choreography appears in the written form of a PhD thesis. In a challenge to totalising and deadening accounts of live performance, the thesis draws on the distinctive insights of the choreographer-scholar that nonetheless acknowledges the partial, mobile and emergent quality of its situated knowledge. Using a queer *bricolage* as methodology, the research focuses on my choreography as an example of contemporary dance practice, operating independently of formal structures of incorporation, but nonetheless dependent of multiple networks of support, to ask what agency is available to the individual dance artist in shaping the nation brand and in proposing structures hospitable to the kinds of embodiment disadvantaged by hegemonic conceptions of the national body. The research situates my choreographic practice in the context of cultural policy and practice in the Irish State, as evidenced through The Arts Council, Culture Ireland and, to a lesser extent, Creative Ireland. My recent work, *The Casement Project*, the largest of the Arts Council's projects for the Ireland 2016 commemoration programme, offers valuable material for addressing the relationship between the dance artist and the nation.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---------|---|
| ACLP | Advanced Cultural Leadership Programme |
| CRC | Cultural Relations Committee |
| DACG | Department of Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht |
| DAHG | Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, |
| DAHRRGA | Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs |
| DAST | Department of Arts, Sports and Tourism |
| DFA | Department for Foreign Affairs |
| DTF | Dublin Theatre Festival |
| EAG | Expert Advisory Group |
| GDP | Gross Domestic Product |
| GLEN | Gay and Lesbian Equality Network |
| GPO | General Post Office, Dublin. |
| LIFT | London International Festival of Theatre |
| NCFA | National Campaign for the Arts |
| NRT | Non-Representational Theory |
| PAC | Project Arts Centre |
| RTÉ | Radio Teilifís Éireann |
| TD | Teachta Dála (Member of Parliament) |
| UCD | University College Dublin |
| WHO | World Health Organisation |

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INTRODUCTION

Giving Voice to the Nation: Giving Body to the Nation

Reflecting on the centenary commemorations of the Easter Rising, in a review of the cultural highlights of 2016, journalist and cultural commentator, Fintan O'Toole asserted that 'Fearghus Ó Conchúir and many others showed that it is still artists who give the nation its voice. And the Government actually noticed.'¹ As a choreographer of contemporary dance in Ireland, such recognition alongside other leading artists – poets, visual artists and theatre makers – is not something to be taken for granted. For my art-form to be noticed is already an achievement. I might have preferred that O'Toole had recognized my work as an endeavour to embody rather than simply voice complex and constitutive relationships to the nation.² Nonetheless, that O'Toole noticed, that the Government noticed, suggests that the contemporary dance artist in Ireland could deploy an artistic practice whose impact would be felt on what O'Toole calls 'official Ireland'. Though 'official Ireland' is not by any means the sole audience to which I direct my work, what O'Toole's comments indicate is a complex relationship between artist and nation that acknowledges that it is in the gift of 'official Ireland', including its celebrated journalists, to notice, or not, and that though such recognition may impact on the viability of their existence, artists retain a formative agency in the expression and performance of the nation.

In 2012, in an *Irish Times* article entitled "'Brand Ireland" should be rethought and replaced',³ John Fanning of UCD's Business School, and Tourism Ireland's Mark Henry reflected on Ireland's ranking in the annual Anholt-GfK Roper

¹ Fintan O'Toole, 'In 2016, Official Ireland Trusted Artists. Please Do It Again', *Irish Times*, 29 October 2016, <http://www.irishtimes.com/sponsored/in-2016official-ireland-trusted-artists-please-do-it-again-1.2845647> [accessed 2 March 2017]. O'Toole is described as 'Ireland's leading public intellectual' in Bryan Fanning, *Histories of the Irish Future* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), p. 213.

² Though I don't subscribe to a speech-versus-movement dichotomy, given that voice is as thoroughly a corporeal phenomenon.

³ John Fanning and Mark Henry, "'Brand Ireland" Should Be Rethought and Replaced', *Irish Times*, 27 July 2012.

Nation Brand Index.⁴ In eighteenth place, Ireland, they judged, was in the 'second tier', though it was more positively rated than countries of comparable size and ahead of both Russia and Brazil. Fanning and Henry observed that '[t]he tourist image of Ireland is the one that dominates the perception of the country around the globe' and was responsible for assuring the reasonable ranking. As Fanning suggested elsewhere,⁵ that tourist image of Ireland's natural beauty and hospitable people could be traced back to the efforts of Celtic revivalists and cultural nationalists such as W.B. Yeats and was, according to Roy Foster, a work of deliberate, 'hard-headed marketing'.⁶ Associated with the image's emphasis on romantic rurality was a suggestion that Ireland could be a champion for spiritual values to counter foreign materialism. This image of Ireland endured. It was evident in De Valera's 1936 assertion that 'the Irish genius has always stressed spiritual and intellectual rather than material values.'⁷ It was echoed in Thomas Friedman's 2001 declaration that:

People all over the world are looking to Ireland for its reservoir of spirituality hoping to siphon off what they can feed to their souls which have become hungry for something other than consumption and computers.⁸

Of course, these examples predated the Celtic Tiger boom and the subsequent economic crisis that altered and tarnished Ireland's brand image, giving a lie to the presentation of the Irish as apparently unconcerned with Mammon.⁹ However, in a commentary on the 2012 Index, father of the nation brand concept, Simon Anholt revived the image of Ireland as potentially distinctive in relation to the economic:

⁴ The Anholt-GfK Nation Brands Index assesses the global reputation of fifty countries in six determining categories: people, exports, governance, culture, tourism and immigration/investment. The concept of the Nation Brands Index was developed by Anholt in 2005 and he has worked with GfK, an international research organisation to produce the annual index; GfK Global, 'Anholt-GfK Nation Brands Index', <http://nation-brands.gfk.com> [website], [accessed 15 May 2017].

⁵ John Fanning, 'Branding and Begorrah: The Importance of Ireland's Nation Brand Image', *Irish Marketing Review*, vol. 21, nos. 1&2 (2011), pp. 23-31.

⁶ Roy Foster, *W. B., Yeats: A Life 1: The Apprentice Mage* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 69; quoted in Fanning, 'Branding and Begorrah', p. 24.

⁷ Quoted in Fanning, 'Branding and Begorrah', p. 25.

⁸ Thomas Friedman, 'Op-Ed Article', *New York Times*, 3 August 2001; quoted in Fanning, 'Branding and Begorrah', p. 26.

⁹ Fanning, 'Branding and Begorrah', p. 27; *Irish Times*, 'Culture Ireland', *Irish Times*, 7 March 2012, p. 15. See Roy Foster, *Luck of the Irish: A Brief History of Change from 1970* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), for a perspective on the history of the Celtic Tiger boom. Also Fintan O'Toole, *Enough is Enough: How to Build a New Republic* (London: Faber and Faber, 2010).

One could well imagine Ireland succeeding in 'positioning' itself as the society and the economy that first finds light at the end of the post-Washington Consensus tunnel, the first country to pilot and prove a new form of capitalism – more moral, more fair, more balanced, more human.¹⁰

Responding to Anholt's recommendation, Fanning and Cronin reflected that:

This intriguing proposal would undoubtedly position Ireland in a very different light. But at a time when we are preoccupied with the troika and the continuing perilous state of the euro, it would be asking a lot of a political and administrative elite who have always been more comfortable with the concrete than the conceptual.¹¹

Artists have been among those in the Ireland who have worked at making the country more fair, more balanced and more human and if, in the judgment of Fanning and Cronin, the political class has not been comfortable with the conceptual, it has been the gift and skills of artists to give material form to the imagination of more equitable life-alternatives.

This is true in a particular way of the dance artist whose engagement with and shaping of the psycho-physical performs citizenship across a variety of spaces, places and scales. Concentrating on my work as a choreographer, situated in the field of contemporary dance practice in Ireland and internationally, this research takes up Anholt's suggestion to make more of the values and practices that underpin artistic work in Ireland, even if those values are not by any means the sole province of the arts. The research is predicated on the material and discursive co-constitution of individual, collective and national bodies. It understands dance as a practice of citizenship with the potential to reimagine and embody alternative corporealities that reshape understandings of the national body. These alternative

¹⁰ Quoted in Fanning and Henry, "Brand Ireland" Should Be Rethought and Replaced'. The Washington Consensus refers to austerity measures imposed on South American economies during the 1980s and 1990s by Washington-based institutions such as the World Bank, IMF and the U.S. Treasury Department. See John Williamson, 'What Washington Means by Policy Reform,' in John Williamson (ed.), *Latin American Adjustment: How Much Has Happened?* (Washington: Institute for International Economics, 1990). The bailout conditions imposed by the Troika of the IMF, European Central Bank and European Commission followed the model of structural readjustment and consequent austerity measures seen in South America under the Washington Consensus.

¹¹ Fanning and Henry, "Brand Ireland" Should Be Rethought and Replaced'.

corporealities entail an alternative place-making hospitable to the viability of lives currently disadvantaged in the Irish State. I focus attention not on what dance is, but on what it does, describing and analysing my own choreography as a deliberate structuring of places, relationships, institutions, partnerships and media of communication that enable groups of people to gather, to subsist, to work together and to be appropriately visible to others at multiple scales.

However, the work of reimagining and embodying alternatives takes place in relationship to the constraints of particular contexts. Anholt's recommendation that Ireland should reposition itself in the service of 'a new form of capitalism', raises questions about the co-option of artistic practices to the neo-liberal state. As a result, this research investigates the spatial implications of the specific relationships established through the organisations, agencies and initiatives that mediate between the arts and the Irish State, primarily the Arts Council, Culture Ireland and Creative Ireland.¹² It also pays attention to processes of nation branding explicit and implicit in the State's aspirations for these organisations and in its use of the arts.

Nation branding, as I will discuss in the next section, is revealed not simply as a geopolitical process of economically-driven international competition, externally directed, but also as a mechanism that forms citizens 'at home', orienting them towards the nation's global ambitions. I will use my own choreography as a means of examining the material impact of nation branding in Ireland, as well as a way of analysing the agency available to the dance artist in shaping the nation brand in the service of more inclusive articulations of citizenship. By doing so, I wish to present dance as a practice and process of valuable knowledge production. Therefore, having examined the evolution of nation branding to clarify the basis on which I employ the concept, this Introduction will prepare the ground for the chapters that follow by contextualising my practice as a contemporary dance artist in Ireland, proposing that a situated, embodied perspective is an effective resource

¹² Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon is the national agency for funding, developing and promoting the arts in Ireland. I will discuss it at length in Chapter Two. Culture Ireland supports the promotion of Irish arts abroad and will be the focus of Chapter Four. Creative Ireland is an legacy initiative of the State's Ireland 2016 Commemorative Programme and is discussed in Chapter Four and in the Conclusion.

for challenging fixed articulations of the nation deriving from more limited conceptions of Irish embodiment. Looking at other uses of dance in Geography, I will outline some of the methodological challenges of my position as scholar-choreographer, proposing a less-than-creative, but nonetheless queer approach as a way for the knowledge of dance to register in Geography and in wider scholarship. I will articulate this methodology in relation to ethnography, to autoethnography and to approaches inspired by Non-Representational Theory. Finally in this Introduction, I will set out how a strategic and supple use of the concept of scale helps to organise the research that follows, maintaining a focus throughout on the corporeal as a means of understanding spatial relations.

Citizens and the Nation

As a prelude to an account of the history and development of nation branding, it is important to acknowledge that a focus on nation brand may seem belated among geographers and social scientists who have questioned the relevance of the nation-state in a deterritorialised world of global flows.¹³ In the area of citizenship, especially, James Holston and Arjun Appaduri propose that the nation-state's role as a guarantor of citizens' rights is significantly diminished, superseded by the city as the scale at which effective citizenship can be practised.¹⁴ Similarly, Lynn Staeheli asserts that while nation-states have exercised formal and legal control over the rights, responsibilities and access to membership of their citizenry, substantive citizenship – 'the material and ideological conditions in a society that enable people to function with some degree of autonomy, to formulate political

¹³ David Elkins, *Beyond Sovereignty: Territory and Political Economy in the Twenty- First Century* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995); Kenichi Ohmae, *The End of the Nation State: The Rise of Regional Economies* (New York: Free Press, 1995); Gearóid Ó Tuathail, 'Political geography III: Dealing with deterritorialization', *Progress in Human Geography*, vol. 22, no. 1 (1998), pp. 81-93; David Harvey, *The Limits to Capital* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982); David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1989). For an account of the conceptually and practically distinct entities that are strategically conjoined in the nation-state, see John Tate, 'John Howard's "Nation" and Citizenship Test: Multiculturalism, Citizenship and Identity', *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, vol. 55, no. 1 (2009), pp. 91-126. Also Matthew Sparke, *In the Space of Theory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005).

¹⁴ 'In some places, the nation itself is no longer a successful arbiter of citizenship. As a result, the project of a national society of citizens, especially liberalism's twentieth-century version, appears increasingly exhausted and discredited. In other places, the nation may maintain the envelope of citizenship, but the substance has been so changed or at least challenged that the emerging social morphologies are radically unfamiliar and force a reconsideration of the basic principles of membership'; James Holston and Arjun Appadurai, 'Cities and Citizenship', *Public Culture*, vol. 8, no. 2 (1996), pp. 187-204, p. 188.

ideas, and to act on those ideas'¹⁵ – is now better understood and exercised at other scales.¹⁶ Staeheli's distinction between formal and substantive citizenship is helpful, especially for articulating the rights and agency of those who might not have formal citizenship, however, in this Irish context, it is also important to keep sight of how formal and substantive citizenship remain interdependent. Legal changes to the Irish Constitution, such as the 2015 Marriage Equality referendum, the 2004 Citizenship referendum and the Eighth Amendment in 1983 have had a direct impact on the embodied rights of citizens, on the equality of citizens and on who is permitted the substantive rights of citizenship.¹⁷ Therefore, this research maintains an awareness of the formal frameworks of citizenship provided by the nation-state, while also attending to the differential construction of substantive citizenship at other scales. As Staeheli explains, 'more partial or particular formulations of citizenship [...] may take various forms or expressions at different times, in different places, or for different social groups, all with different implications.'¹⁸ Following Staeheli, therefore, this research looks not only at the national, but also at the interconnected corporeal, local and international scales to examine artistic performances of citizenship.¹⁹

This looking at scales beyond the nation does not suggest that deterritorialisation has rendered the nation-concept obsolete. The resurgence of nationalisms across the world suggests the need for caution against any hasty dismissal of the enduring effect of nation-state thinking. As Staeheli admits:

¹⁵ Lynn A. Staeheli, 'Globalization and the Scales of Citizenship', *Geography Research Forum*, vol. 19 (1999), pp. 60-77, p. 64.

¹⁶ 'Rather, I argue that the possibilities to act as citizens-to bear the rights and responsibilities of citizenship-reflect political opportunity structures in which scales other than the nation-state are significant'; Staeheli, 'Globalization and the Scales of Citizenship', p. 61.

¹⁷ In 1983, the Eight Amendment to the Irish Constitution guaranteed equal right to life to the foetus and to its mother, effectively banning abortion in Ireland. The 2004 Citizenship Referendum restricted entitlement to Irish citizenship by birth to children born to at least one parent who was an Irish citizen or entitled to Irish citizenship. In 2015, the Marriage Equality referendum instituted marriage for same-sex couples in Ireland.

¹⁸ Lynn A. Staeheli, 'Cities and Citizenship', *Urban Geography*, vol. 24, no. 2 (2003), pp. 98-99. See also Nikolas Rose and Thomas Osborne, 'Governing Cities, Governing Citizens', in Engin F. Isin (ed.), *Democracy, Citizenship and the Global City* (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 95-109.

¹⁹ '[C]itizenship is multiscalar in that its legal and substantive components are shaped by conditions, processes, and institutions at the local, national and international scales'; Staeheli, 'Cities and Citizenship', p. 99.

For all the discussion of worlds without borders and the hollowing of the nation-state that has accompanied the strong globalization hypothesis, the nation-state remains the location in which the formal aspects of citizenship are structured.²⁰

Indeed, if globalisation of markets, changes in the spatialisation of production chains, and the flows of capital²¹ have affected the operation of nation states, those very changes have also created a necessity for the branding of nations as distinctive entities that compete with one another for market share, stimulating consumption by differentiating their offer.²² Moreover, while capital flows beyond nation units, it still flows through them as the nation functions as a useful scale and organising principle for facilitating global markets.²³ As O'Tuathail advises:

The problematic of deterritorialization is also the problematic of reterritorialization; it is not the presence or absence of state territoriality but its changing status, power and meaning in relationship to postmodern technological constellations, speed machines and global webs of capitalism.²⁴

To neglect analysis of the 'powerful world-making processes' that the nation-state concept effects would be to hide the operation of power that the materialisation of the nation-state entails. Geographers risk reproducing that power if they underestimate and fail to address it.²⁵ Nation branding emerges in this context as one of the mechanisms producing the nation state at a global scale. However, crucial to this research is the recognition that the performance of the nation and the management of its reputation also have practical, corporeal impacts on the dance artist and other citizens in Ireland and beyond.

²⁰ Staeheli, 'Globalization and the Scales of Citizenship', p. 72.

²¹ Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*; Ó Tuathail, 'Political geography III'.

²² Michael E. Porter, *The Competitive Advantage of Nations* (London: Palgrave, 1998), p. 34. See also Melissa Aronczyk, "'Living the Brand": Nationality, Globality and the Identity Strategies of Nation Branding Consultants', *International Journal of Communication*, vol. 2 (2008), pp. 41-65, p. 44.

²³ Melissa Aronczyk, 'New and Improved Nations: Branding National Identity', in Craig Calhoun and Richard Sennett (eds.), *Practicing Culture* (London: Routledge, 2007), pp. 105-128, p. 121.

²⁴ O'Tuathail, 'Political geography III', p. 82.

²⁵ Sparke, *In the Space of Theory*, p. xii.

Nation Branding

To help frame an analysis of the specific effect of nation branding on my work, this section examines the contested evolution of nation branding, noting how Ireland has featured in that evolution, as well as how the arts are envisaged as part of the branding project. The aim of the survey is to draw out key features of nation branding with a view to recognising their operation in the subsequent account of my work and of contemporary dance in Ireland. While the idea of nation branding has its conceptual origins in a variety of academic literatures concerning country of origin, place branding, public diplomacy and national identity,²⁶ its development in practice owes much to branding consultants and marketeers working with politicians on the assumption that the branding techniques used to distinguish commercial products in a crowded marketplace can be applied to countries or nation states in their effort to attract tourists, increasingly mobile global talent and international investment, as well as to promote the export of goods and services.²⁷ The *practice* of nation branding is of particular concern in the review that follows since it is the influence of brand consultants on governments that has most impact on the citizens subject to nation branding campaigns.

As early as 1993, work such as Kotler, Haider and Rein's on the marketing of cities, states and nations²⁸ prepared the ground for the notion of a nation brand.²⁹ In Geography, place branding at the city scale emerged as a particular focus of scholarly attention with Kearns' and Philo's 1993 *Selling Places* collection examining the strategic deployment of identity in historical and contemporary

²⁶ Ying Fan, 'Branding the Nation: Towards a Better Understanding', *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, vol. 6, no.2 (May 2010), pp. 97-103.

²⁷ Dr Paul Temporal, Managing Director of Temporal Brand Consulting makes bolder claims about the value of nation branding suggesting that it promotes: 'Currency stability, Enhancement of international credibility and investor confidence, Attraction of global capital, Greater international political influence, Increase in the growth of branded exported products and services, Increases in inbound tourism and foreign direct investment, Development of stronger international partnerships, Enhancement of nation building (confidence, pride, harmony, ambition, national resolve), Attraction and retention of talent – the human resource and global knowledge, Greater access to global markets, An improvement in the ability to win against regional and global business competitors, and defend their own markets, And more';

<http://www.temporalbrand.com/team/paul.shtml> [accessed 31/1/2017] and quoted in Keith Dinnie, *Nation Branding: Concepts, Issues, Practice* (Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann, 2008), p. 17.

²⁸ Philip Kotler, Donald Haider and Irving Rein, *Marketing Places: Attracting Investment, Industry, and Tourism to Cities, States And Nations* (New York: Free Press, 1993).

²⁹ See also Nicolas Papadopoulos and Louise Heslop, 'Country Equity and Country Branding: Problems and Prospects', *Journal of Brand Management*, vol. 9, nos. 4-5 (2002), pp. 294-314.

place-making.³⁰ However, it is to Simon Anholt that the credit is given for establishing the significance and leading on the evolution of nation branding. Now an Honorary Professor of Political Science, an independent advisor to governments and a member of the UK's Foreign Office Public Diplomacy Board, Anholt originally coined the term in 1996, going on to edit the Special Issue of the *Journal of Brand Management* dedicated to the subject in 2002,³¹ becoming founder editor of the journal, *Place Branding* in 2004 and, in 2005, instituting what has become the Anholt-GfK Roper Nation Brands Index.³²

Anholt's original contention was that the reputations of countries behaved like corporate brands and were similarly critical to the economic and social success of those countries.³³ From the outset, the idea of branding a nation was greeted with suspicion and animosity, according to Wally Olins, another of nation-branding's professional proponents.³⁴ Anholt admits that branding has been associated with spin and disingenuous superficiality.³⁵ While Olins accepts that branding a nation isn't the same as branding a product or company, he explains how countries have changed their national narratives and in particular how the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century rise of the nation state was built on the deliberate articulation if not the invention of foundational myths, a strategy that might be dubbed branding.³⁶

Interestingly there is nothing particularly novel about the concept of branding the nation. Only the word 'brand' is new. National image, national identity, national reputation are all words traditionally used

³⁰ Gerry Kearns and Chris Philo (eds), *Selling Places: The City as Cultural Capital, Past and Present* (London: Pergamon, 1993). See also Tim Hall and Phil Hubbard, *The Entrepreneurial City: Geographies of Politics, Regime, and Representation* (Chichester UK: John Wiley and Sons, 1998).

³¹ *Journal of Brand Management*, vol. 9, nos. 4-5.

³² <http://nation-brands.gfk.com> [accessed 31/1/2017]. The index ranks 50 countries according to the power of their reputation and image, as assessed by public questionnaire across those 50 countries. It assesses performance under six headings: governance, exports, tourism, investment and immigration, people, culture and heritage.

³³ Simon Anholt, 'Beyond the Nation Brand: The Role of Image and Identity in International Relations', *Exchange: The Journal of Public Diplomacy*, vol. 2, no. 1 (2013), pp. 6-12.

³⁴ Wally Olins, 'Branding the Nation – the Historical Context,' *Journal of Brand Management*, vol. 9, nos. 4-5 (2002), pp. 241-248, p. 241.

³⁵ Simon Anholt, 'Foreword', *Journal of Brand Management*, vol. 9, nos. 4-5 (2002), pp. 229-239, p. 232.

³⁶ 'Branding is simply another means through which the state narrates the nation'; Michael Clancy, *Brand New Ireland: Tourism, Development and National Identity in the Irish Republic* (Routledge: London, 2016, first published Ashgate, 2009), p. 26.

in this arena and they don't seem to provoke the same visceral hostility as the word 'brand.' Although the technologies are new and infinitely more powerful and pervasive than ever before, and the word 'brand' is also new, the concepts which it encompasses are as old as the nation itself.³⁷

As noted above, by pointing to the 'hard-headed marketing' of the Celtic Revivalists as they devised and promoted a new image of Ireland at the end of the nineteenth and start of the twentieth centuries, Foster suggests the validity of Olins' assessment. Nation branding may have a short history under that moniker, but it clearly has a much longer history as a practice of state formation and promotion exercised not only by states, but by those, including artists, who wished to shape new polities.

Within marketing, a brand is understood as a collection of concrete attributes, values and emotions that promise a particular and competitively distinctive relationship between producer, product and consumer.³⁸ This definition acknowledges that the brand exists between a set of messages encoded by the producer in the product and a set of images, experiences and emotions held by consumers that may or may not coincide with the producer's intentions. This distinction between brand identity, generated by the producer, and brand image, held by consumers becomes more complex when the notion of brand is transferred to nations.

A product brand is produced, and to that extent owned, by a single entity. A nation brand has no comparable single owner, and might be better considered as the property of a nation's citizens, though governments often take their electoral mandate as an authorisation to initiate nation branding projects.³⁹ Nonetheless, acknowledging the diversity of the citizenry and the complexity of a nation's history makes it difficult to articulate the 'single proposition' about a nation that nation branding exercises such as the Irish government's Creative Ireland

³⁷ Wally Olins, *On Brand* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2003), p. 152; quoted in Aronczyk, 'Living the Brand', p. 49.

³⁸ Keith Dinnie, *Nation Branding: Concepts, Issues, Practice* (Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann, 2008), p. 13.

³⁹ 'Nations do not belong to brand managers or corporations; indeed, if they 'belong' to anyone, it is to the nation's entire citizenry'; Keith Dinnie, *Nation Branding*, p. 15.

programme aspires to promote, as I will discuss further in Chapter Four.⁴⁰ And when the status of the citizen is in question and dispute exists about who has a public voice and what bodies count in the polity, the issue of ownership over the nation brand necessarily resists the simplification towards which such unified branding aims.

Fan Ying, who comes to the topic from his perspective as lecturer in marketing at Brunel Business School, seeks to distinguish nation brand from national identity, defining the latter as ‘the characteristics of a nation that its people perceive to be central, distinctive, and enduring in a nation when past, present and future is taken into account’, while the former he regards as a ‘a set of associations the brand strategist seeks to create or maintain’.⁴¹ For Fan, the purpose of the national image deliberately created by the strategist is directed at changing the perception of stakeholders external to the nation and not about changing national identity that he regards as ‘enduring’. However, this neat distinction ignores the contested and mutable nature of national identities. As this research investigates, it is the recognition that the practice of nation branding in Ireland is an intervention in the ongoing production of national identities that makes it so important to examine. Moreover, Fan’s suggestion that nation branding is externally focused misses the reality that the nation’s citizens are both audiences of the brand image and its necessary producers, performing and consuming the nation brand in a way that shapes national identity.

There are legitimate and positive reasons why governments would undertake such campaigns for the benefit of their citizens, though all tend to conceive of benefit in economic and trade terms. Referring to public diplomacy, Mark Leonard suggests that what is effectively nation branding is a public good ‘which can create either an enabling or a disabling environment for individual transactions’.⁴² Peter Van Ham argues that nation branding contributes to

⁴⁰ Creative Ireland, ‘Unifying our Global Reputation’, www.creativeireland.ie [website], <http://creativeireland.ie/unifying-our-global-reputation> [accessed 1 February 2017].

⁴¹ Ying Fan, ‘Branding the Nation’, p. 5.

⁴² Mark Leonard, *Public Diplomacy* (London: Foreign Policy Centre, 2002), p.9; quoted in Aronczyk, ‘“Living the Brand”: Nationality, Globality and the Identity Strategies of Nation Branding Consultants’, p. 42.

international peace by allowing countries to develop less chauvinistic and antagonistic articulations of national identity than historical nationalist narratives permitted. International peace is valued in Van Ham's analysis not so much for the relationships it protects but for the trade it enables. His underlying principle is that while nation branding seeks to differentiate countries in a global market,⁴³ the economic aim is to foster business between nations, so that any differentiation is not destructive of potential trading partners.⁴⁴ As Anholt's Nation Brand Index makes clear, and the experience in Ireland will confirm, the nation brand is fundamentally about fitness to trade.⁴⁵

Culture and the Nation Brand

Though nation branding is guided by economic imperatives, from his early work on the subject, Anholt has championed culture as the necessary antidote to simplification and inauthentic marketing campaigns on behalf of the nation:

It is my belief that culture plays an essential role in enriching a country's brand image, in driving a process from the initial shorthand of marketing communications towards a fuller and more durable understanding of a country and its values.⁴⁶

Attending to a country's culture, for Anholt, already guarantees distinctiveness and though his conception of culture is wide, including references to the arts, to popular culture, and to heritage, he lays particular emphasis on innovation and on representations of tradition that permits increasingly multicultural nations to communicate inclusively their predominantly monocultural past.⁴⁷

⁴³ 'The brand state's use of its history, geography, and ethnic motifs to construct its own distinct image is a benign campaign that lacks the deep-rooted and often antagonistic sense of national identity and uniqueness that can accompany nationalism. By marginalizing nationalist chauvinism, the brand state is contributing greatly to the further pacification of Europe'; Peter Van Ham, 'The Rise of the Brand State: The Postmodern Politics of Image and Reputation', *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 80, no. 5 (2001), pp.2-6, p. 3

⁴⁴ Aronczyk, 'New and Improved Nations', p.118. Aronczyk uses Harvey's elucidation of the concept of monopoly rent to explain how brand uniqueness is necessarily limited by the need for it to be sufficiently comprehensible to the market to be tradable.

⁴⁵ 'The nation brand is a clear and simple measure of a country's "licence to trade" in the global marketplace'; Simon Anholt, *Nation Brands Index Special Report: How Has Our World View Changed since 2005?* (2006), p. 13, <http://www.nationbrandindex.com/allreports.phtml> [accessed 25 July 2017]; quoted in Aronczyk, 'Living the Brand', p. 51.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 235.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 236.

Though he is credited with introducing the idea of the nation brand, Anholt has steadily moved away from the concept and from nation branding exercises undertaken 'by naïve governments in willing collusion with ambitious consulting firms'.⁴⁸ His 2007 book, *Competitive Identity: The New Brand Management for Nations, Cities and Regions*, replaces nation branding with a concern for place reputation, a reputation built from the actual policies, achievements and products of a nation.⁴⁹ There is still room for marketing, since the achievements of a nation need to be consciously communicated so as to have an impact on the audiences to be influenced, but Anholt calls on governments to pay attention to actions, to 'new economic, legal, political, social, cultural, and educational activity',⁵⁰ rather than to branding spin.⁵¹

So the last thing, it seems to me, most countries should want is a brand. If a brand image is the catchy reduction of something rich and complex into a simple, naïve, one-dimensional formula, then many of the countries which already have one would probably do better to get rid of it. Nation branding is surely the problem, not the solution: branding is what the media and public opinion do to countries, not what governments should try to do to their own states and populations. What countries need is for people around the world to have a richer, deeper, more complex, more nuanced, more democratic, more chaotic, more human view of their land, their population and their civilisation—not a fabricated stereotype to replace the inherited stereotype.⁵²

Anholt has recently developed a Good Country Index, shifting from how nations can attract resources for their own competitive benefit to ranking countries, relative to size, according to their contribution to global wellbeing,

⁴⁸ Anholt, 'Beyond the Nation Brand,' p. 6.

⁴⁹ Simon Anholt, *Competitive Identity: The New Brand Management for Nations, Cities and Regions* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007). The literature in Geography examines place branding, especially in relation to cities, with varying degrees of assumption that the city has replaced the nation as the significant spatial scale of capitalism. See Hall and Hubbard, *The Entrepreneurial City*; Kearns and Philo, *Selling Places*.

⁵⁰ Anholt, 'Beyond the Nation Brand', p. 8.

⁵¹ 'The message is clear: if a country is serious about enhancing its international image, it should concentrate on product development and marketing rather than chase after the chimera of branding. There are no short cuts. Only a consistent, coordinated, and unbroken stream of useful, noticeable, world-class, and above all *relevant* ideas, products, and policies can, gradually, enhance the reputation of the country that produces them'; *ibid.*, p. 7.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 11.

celebrating the ‘country that serves the interests of its own people, but without harming—and preferably by advancing—the interests of people in other countries too’.⁵³ The first index in 2014 ranked Ireland in premier position, a fact to which John Concannon, Director of the Ireland 2016 Centenary Commemoration programme and of the subsequent Creative Ireland initiative, has referred frequently in his public communications following the launch of Creative Ireland.⁵⁴ In an RTÉ radio interview, he encouraged the listeners to watch online a TED talk by Anholt to overcome what he acknowledged might be a general surprise and doubt at Ireland’s ranking. He stressed that there was evidence and ‘scientific’ data to back up Anholt’s conclusion. In doing so, Concannon invited the listeners to alter their perception of the Irish nation. It was a branding message that was aimed at an Irish constituency. As Fanning makes clear in his account of the Ireland’s nation brand:

The primary task of a more coordinated attempt to capitalise on the inherent assets in Ireland’s national brand will be internal actions designed to align strategy with substance rather than any external communications campaign.⁵⁵

Unfortunately, Concannon’s was also an inaccurate message, since by 2016, Ireland had slipped to eleventh place in the updated Good Country Index, a good ranking, but not quite as noteworthy and compelling as Concannon’s positive nation branding suggested.

⁵³ Simon Anholt, ‘About the Good Country Index’, The Good Country [website], <https://goodcountry.org/index/about-the-index> [accessed 4 February 2017].

⁵⁴ Concannon tweeted the link to a TED talk by Anholt on the Good Country Index (Simon Anholt, ‘Which Country Does the Most Good for the World?’, TED [website], June 2014, https://www.ted.com/talks/simon_anholt_which_country_does_the_most_good_for_the_world [accessed 4 February 2017]) following his appearance on RTÉ’s *The Marian Finucane* show where he spoke about the launch of Creative Ireland earlier that week; Marian Finucane and John Concannon, ‘Marian Finucane: John Concannon - Director of Creative Ireland’, PlayerFM [website], <https://www.podcat.com/podcasts/7hdwyf-rte-marian-finucane/episodes/vnhqf7-john-concannon-director-of-creative-ireland> [accessed 4 February 2017]. His tweet uses the hashtag #CreativeIreland to underline the connection he has in mind; @JCGalway, ‘Here’s the Classic #TEDTalk’, Twitter, 10 December 2016, <https://twitter.com/jcgalway/status/807532931216445441> [accessed 4 February 2017]. According to the 2017 JNLR/Ipsos MRBI report on radio listenership, *The Marian Finucane Show* (broadcast on Saturdays and Sundays) is the country’s third and sixth most-listened-to show, suggesting the potential reach of Concannon’s interview; iLevel, ‘JNLR 2017Q1 Top 30 and Station Programmes’, www.ilevel.ie [blog], www.ilevel.ie/media-blog/radio/102936-jnlr-2017qi-top-30-and-station-programmes [accessed 18 July 2017].

⁵⁵ Fanning, ‘Branding and Begorrah’, p. 29.

Culture remains crucial in Anholt's conception for communicating the lived complexity of a nation, as he argues that effective cultural relations are 'the only demonstrably effective form of nation branding I have ever encountered'.⁵⁶ This isn't simply about cultural exports but, especially in Anholt's most recent work where he seems to move away from competition between nations to global co-operation,⁵⁷ also about cultural exchange and mutual engagement: 'Engagement is invariably more productive than promotion; listening an indispensable adjunct to talking; and if you want something from somebody, it is only reasonable to ask what they want from you.'⁵⁸ From a creative point of view, what is interesting is that this process of engagement creates the risk and opportunity that the both sides will be transformed, that identity will be altered by the encounter. Moreover this kind of engagement replaces a model where governments broadcast a defined, coordinated brand with a less controllable, potentially less coherent alternative generated by a myriad of inter-personal relationships, as I will elaborate in Chapter Four. There remains a hint of competitive economic priorities, even in Anholt's vision for global cooperation. Cultural exchange is seen as a positive precursor to trade relations, and it is still a question of getting what you want from somebody, even if you're responding to what they want from you. That, after all, is trade.

Culture is also considered useful to a country's reputation management because it can provide governments with the kind of symbolic moments that shape the image of a nation. The Centenary Commemorations of the 1916 Easter Rising will be discussed in Chapters Two and Three as such a moment, however, in a recent book, Anholt has referenced, as a notable prior instance of culture's symbolic value, the impact on Ireland's global reputation of the introduction of an exemption from income tax on the sale of original work by artists.⁵⁹ His specific

⁵⁶ Anholt, 'Beyond the Nation Brand', pp. 11-12.

⁵⁷ Anholt has developed the Good Country Index 'to change how our leaders run our countries. To help them understand they're not just responsible for their own citizens, but for every man, woman, child and animal on the planet'; 'What's the Good Country?' <https://goodcountry.org/good-country/the-idea> [accessed 2 February 2017].

⁵⁸ Anholt, 'Beyond the Nation Brand', p. 12.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

example is instructive since it demonstrates unwittingly the kind of simplification and spin that Anholt seeks to avoid. Though Anholt offers the example as a demonstration of the Irish State's 'respect for creative talent',⁶⁰ in reality, the artists' tax exemption does not apply to all of an artist's income and is as likely to be availed of by high profile and already well-off autobiography writers such as former Taoiseach Bertie Ahern (2002-2007) as it is by practising artists.⁶¹ Moreover, it is the Revenue Commissioners – hardly selected for their artistic discrimination – who get to decide what works qualify for the exemption in terms of originality, creativity and cultural merit. Furthermore, the definition of artists who are exempt is narrow, including only writers, composers, sculptors and visual artists but not, for example, choreographers. As Belinda McKeon concludes: '[T]he definitions that frame the exemption scheme – of the artist, of the artwork, of originality and creativity – are no longer relevant to many of the artists who make up that scene.'⁶² In practice, therefore, what Anholt vaunts as a policy that 'prove[s] the state's respect for creative talent' actually discriminates against some artistic practices.⁶³ It is to the practical consequences of policy on artistic practice that this thesis attends, examining the impact of branding and reputation management by the Irish government on the work of independent dance artists in Ireland.

Despite Anholt's discrediting of the term, nation branding remains helpful for naming the efforts of governments to shape national reputations most often with a view to promoting exports and to attracting investment, talent, and positive global attention. Crucially, these branding activities don't simply promote the nation abroad but contribute to shaping the nation 'at home', its conceptual identity and, crucially, the practical possibilities of those who live in it. The difficulty of defining the term that we can encounter in the nation branding literature makes it no less influential in practice, and, consequently, no less important to monitor and

⁶⁰ *Loc. cit.*

⁶¹ The exemption was introduced by Taoiseach Charles Haughey in 1969 and its effectiveness and fairness have been questioned since. In 2014, 2,640 people benefited to the average value of approximately €2,200 each; Ciarán Hancock, 'Artists' Tax Exemption May Be Tweaked', *Irish Times*, 14 October 2016, p. 5.

⁶² Belinda McKeon, 'The Tax Break that Makes Art Possible', *Irish Times*, 21 March 2003, p. 18.

⁶³ Anholt, 'Beyond the Nation Brand', p. 8.

evaluate. This research proposes contemporary dance practice in Ireland, and my work in particular, as material for analysing that influence.

'Contemporary' Dance in Ireland

What distinguishes this research is the starting point of its investigation in the practice of contemporary dance in Ireland and, more specifically, in the situated first-person perspective of an independent choreographer. As dance scholar, Aoife McGrath confirms, 'the documentation of dance practice in Ireland beyond the world of traditional dance can only be described as haphazard (at best).'⁶⁴ While strands of scholarship in Sociology, Irish Studies and Anthropology⁶⁵ have been prompted by the global success of *Riverdance* to understand the evolution of traditional step-dancing in the context of Celtic Tiger Ireland, there are fewer examples of research that engages with the socio-political circumstances of contemporary dance in Ireland. According to McGrath, a great deal of the literature about contemporary dance is in collections of interviews with dance artists or in essays by them about their own work.⁶⁶ McGrath acknowledges that such collections are important because they 'capture some trace of current

⁶⁴ Aoife McGrath, 'Emerging Dance Scholarship in Ireland', *Theatre Research International*, vol. 36, (2011), pp. 289-291, p. 290.

⁶⁵ Barbara O'Connor, "'Come Dance with Me in Ireland': Dance Performance in Tourist Settings', in Barbara O'Connor and Michael Cronin, (eds.), *Irish Tourism: Image, Culture and Identity* (Buffalo, NY: Channel View Publications, 2003), pp. 122-38; Aoife Monks, 'Comely Maidens and Celtic Tigers: "Riverdance" and Global Performance', *Goldsmiths Performance Research Pamphlets*, no. 1 (London: Goldsmiths University of London, 2007); Fintan O'Toole, 'Unsuitable from a Distance: The Politics of Riverdance', in *idem, Ex-Isle of Erin: Images of a Global Ireland* (Dublin: New Island Books, 1997), pp. 143-56; Helen Brennan, *The Story of Irish Dance* (Dingle: Brandon, 1999); Helena Wulff, *Dancing at the Crossroads: Memory and Mobility in Ireland* (Oxford: Berghahn, 2007); Michael Seaver, 'Stepping into Footprints', in Sherry B. Shapiro (ed.), *Dance in a World of Change: Reflections on Globalization and Cultural Difference*, (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, 2008), pp. 3-16; Bernadette Sweeney, *Performing the Body in Irish Theatre*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); Barbara O'Connor, *The Irish Dancing: Cultural Politics and Identities, 1900-2000*, (Cork: Cork University Press, 2013).

⁶⁶ Diana Theodores (ed.), *Dancing on the Edge of Europe: Irish Choreographers in Conversation* (Cork: Institute for Choreography and Dance, 2003); Mary Brady (ed.), *Choreographic Encounters: Vol. I* (Cork: Institute for Choreography and Dance, 2003); Mary Brady (ed.), *Choreographic Encounters: Vol. II* (Cork: Institute for Choreography and Dance, 2005); Deirdre Mulrooney, *Irish Moves: An Illustrated History of Dance and Physical Theatre in Ireland* (Dublin: Liffey Press, 2006). Jennifer Roche, *Multiplicity, Embodiment and the Contemporary Dancer: Moving Identities* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), draws particular attention to the knowledge and experience of the dancer too often overlooked in accounts of dance that focus on the choreographer as author. As choreographer and performer, I recognise with Roche that the roles cannot easily be separated in practice, or in analysis. In this research I acknowledge the agency of both positions and draw upon a creative practice that blurs choreographer/dancer distinctions.

choreographic practice in print',⁶⁷ however she suggests that these practitioner-authored or practitioner-oriented collections lack the socio-cultural analysis which she offers in her book, *Dance Theatre in Ireland: Revolutionary Moves*.⁶⁸ McGrath's is not the only scholarship to situate contemporary dance in Ireland in its socio-political and economic context: Gerry Kearns' recent examination of the six solo performances by female choreographers that comprised the *Embodied* project at the GPO is distinctive for its contextualisation of the work and for its attention to independent dance artists.⁶⁹ However, until recently, the focus of such scholarly attention has been primarily on the work of Ireland's major contemporary dance companies, such as Dublin Contemporary Dance Theatre, CoisCéim Dance Theatre, Fabulous Beast, Irish Modern Dance Theatre, Dance Theatre of Ireland, Daghdha Dance Company and Rex Levitates,⁷⁰ with the work of independent dance artists operating outside of those structures being referred to more briefly. In this respect, the scholarship has mirrored the 'two-tier dance system' that Paul Johnson has suggested was the legacy of the Arts Council's preferential resourcing of

⁶⁷ McGrath, 'Emerging Dance Scholarship in Ireland', p. 290.

⁶⁸ Aoife McGrath, *Dance Theatre in Ireland: Revolutionary Moves*, (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

⁶⁹ Gerry Kearns, 'Artistic Proclamations', *The Irish Review*, vol. 54, no. 2 (2017), forthcoming.

⁷⁰ Dublin Contemporary Dance Theatre was founded by Joan Davis in 1979 and survived ten years until a complete cut in its funding by the Arts Council in 1989. CoisCéim Dance Theatre was founded in 1995 by choreographer David Bolger and has become the best-funded of the Arts Council's regularly funded dance companies; <http://coisceim.com> [accessed 15 May 2017]. Founded in 1997, Fabulous Beast was the company of choreographer Michael Keegan-Dolan whose work has enjoyed notable international success. Having disbanded Fabulous Beast in 2014, Keegan Dolan now creates work under the company title, MKD Dance; <http://fabulousbeast.net> [accessed 15 May 2017]. Irish Modern Dance Theatre is the company of John Scott, founded in 1991. Scott's work has achieved particular scholarly attention because of his work with survivors of torture and asylum seekers. See for example Charlotte McIvor, *Migration and Performance in Contemporary Ireland: Towards a New Interculturalism* (London: Palgrave and MacMillan, 2016); <http://www.irishmodernandancetheatre.com> [accessed 15 May 2017]. Dance Theatre of Ireland was founded in 1989 by Robert Connor and Loreta Yurick after the demise of Dublin Contemporary Dance Theatre, of which they had been co-artistic directors with Davis. The couple have performed, choreographed and commissioned work since then, though the company is now primarily funded to run a dance centre in Dun Laoghaire; <http://www.dancetheatreireland.com> [accessed 15 May 2017]. Rex Levitates was co-founded in 1999 by Liz Roche and her sister, Jenny. It has received regular Arts Council funding since 2003 and was rebranded as Liz Roche Company in 2012; <https://www.lizrochecompany.com> [accessed 15 May 2017]. Daghdha Dance Company, founded in 1988, has been discussed in the literature, more for its early work under founder choreographer, Mary Nunan, than for its work, under subsequent Artistic Director, Michael Klein. The company closed in 2011 when its funding was withdrawn by the Arts Council; <http://www.daghdha.org> [accessed 15 May 2017]. Klein's PhD Thesis 'Choreography as an Aesthetic of Change' describes his choreographic practice during his tenure in Daghdha and situates it as a form of politics; Michael Klein, 'Choreography as an Aesthetics of Change', PhD Thesis, Edinburgh College of Art, September 2008, https://www.academia.edu/3809926/CHOREOGRAPHY_AS_AN_AESTHETICS_OF_CHANGE [accessed 17 May 2017].

companies rather than independent dance artists.⁷¹ More recent policy has attempted to fund individuals (a development that is not without its challenges, and ideological motivations that I will elucidate later), and dance scholarship is beginning to reflect that rebalancing in its recognition of independent dance practice.⁷² As one of those dance artists without a company, who contributed to a number of the early collections McGrath lists, I would like to recognize in them the genesis of a practitioner analysis that is evolved in this thesis, while also pointing to the strategic performance in print that the interviews and artist-authored essays effect, a strategic performance that contributes to the viability and sustainability of lives lived through contemporary dance practice. This performance has, in the spatially sensitive language of Mary Brady, 'begun to delineate a recognizable terrain',⁷³ even if it is a marginal terrain, as the title of the collection, *Dancing at the Edge of Europe: Irish Choreographers in Conversation*, suggests.⁷⁴

Jennifer Roche observes that 'contemporary dance [is] an umbrella description, encapsulating a wide field of operation.'⁷⁵ While it conventionally traces its genealogy to modern dance forms that were developed in the United States and in Germany, 'rather than being a hybrid of fixed dance techniques, contemporary dance is more about a concept of hybridizing systems and methods originating from modern and postmodern dance.'⁷⁶ It has become a way of making dance work rather than a particular style of choreography: 'Contemporary dance therefore is a political field where proposals inside the human capability to move can be explored and connected to the broader social and political reality.'⁷⁷

⁷¹ Paul Johnson, 'Dancing in the Dark', *Irish Theatre Magazine*, vol. 3, no. 12 (Summer, 2002), pp. 34-38, p. 34.

⁷² See for example Aoife McGrath, 'Choreographies of Irish Modernity: Alternative "Ideas of a Nation" in Yeats' *At the Hawk's Well* and Ó Conchúir's *Cure*', in P. Reynolds (ed.), *Modernist Afterlives in Irish Literature and Culture* (London: Anthem Press, 2016), pp. 153-162. Also in the concluding chapter of McGrath, *Dance Theatre in Ireland*, on independent choreographers Fitzgerald and Stapleton, Emma Martin, Muirne Bloomer and Emma O'Kane (as well as Junk Ensemble, founded by sisters Megan and Jessica Kennedy in 2004, and Fidget Feet Aerial Dance Theatre, founded by Chantal McCormick and Jym Daly in 2000). A number of other independent choreographers are mentioned in McGrath's footnotes; see McGrath, *Dance Theatre in Ireland*, footnote 5, p. 171.

⁷³ Brady (ed.), *Choreographic Encounters Volume I*, p. 10.

⁷⁴ Theodores (ed.), *Dancing at the Edge of Europe*.

⁷⁵ Roche, *Multiplicity, Embodiment and the Contemporary Dancer*, p. 8.

⁷⁶ Teresa Heiland, 'One Foot Inside the Circle. Contemporary Dance of Los Angeles Steps Outside Postmodernism and into Neo-Modernism-with-a-Twist,' pp.47-74, p. 48.

⁷⁷ Bojana Kunst, 'Working out Contemporaneity: Dance and Post-Fordism', in Gerald Siegmund and Stefan Holscher (eds.), *Dance Politics and Co-Immunity* (Zurich: Diaphenes, 2013), pp. 59-70, p. 69.

Though it is unlikely that dancing hadn't existed in Ireland before arrival of the Normans, the Irish words for dance – 'damhsa' and 'rince' – are loan words from English and from French respectively, suggesting transnational mobility in the earliest phases of the cultural form and a constitution of the indigenous by the foreign.⁷⁸ Such mobility is still characteristic of 'a successful career in contemporary dance',⁷⁹ even more so in Ireland where, until 2017, the lack of professional training courses has made it a necessity for those who wished to pursue a career in contemporary dance, in ballet or in musical theatre to train abroad.⁸⁰ While one might analyse dance as ritual, as a social activity, as a means to physical fitness, or as a hobby, the terrain of this research is contemporary dance as an art form in Ireland.⁸¹ However, the terms 'contemporary dance' and 'Ireland' presuppose an identifiable activity, taking place in a defined space, when the intention of this research is to investigate the mutual production of national identity and dancing bodies.

Histories of Irish dancing and accounts of contemporary dance practice have contributed to that production of identity and to the visibility and consequent viability of individual and collective dancing bodies. What and who has been included in the archive has reflected, reified and reinforced particular forms of creative practice while it has neglected others. The poor documentation of dance in general has disadvantaged practitioners of contemporary dance.⁸² Such partial histories of the art form in Ireland as do exist, compound the potential for erasure. Among those neglected in practice, and by omission from scholarly attention, have been choreographers working outside of company structures, or more precisely, those choreographers who are not in receipt of regular funding, since a number of such independent choreographers, who rely on intermittent awards and project

⁷⁸ Breandán Breathnach, *Folk Music and Dances of Ireland* (Dublin: Mercier Press, 1971), pp. 35-6.

⁷⁹ Roche, *Multiplicity, Embodiment and the Contemporary Dancer*, p. 8.

⁸⁰ Jenny Roche, *Reshaping the Landscape: A Pathway to Professional Dance Training of International Standing in Ireland: Arts Council Dance and Education Report* (Dublin: Arts Council, 2016), http://www.artscouncil.ie/uploadedFiles/Main_Site/Content/Research_and_Publications/Dance/AC-Dance-and-Education-report.pdf [accessed 25 May 2017].

⁸¹ O'Connor, *The Irish Dancing*, p. 2.

⁸² '[D]ocumentation of choreographers' work was severely neglected until very recently'; McGrath, *Dance Theatre in Ireland*, p. 38.

funding to sustain a practice, use company names to brand their work, when the company has no legal identity or sustained infrastructure.⁸³ Also neglected have been practices of contemporary dance that don't fit into the dance theatre category that has shaped much dance analysis.⁸⁴ A broader geography of contemporary dance practice might notice a variety of work that inhabits spaces other than, or in addition to, the theatre-stage and the particular relationships privileged by that space-technology.

Rather than claim to remedy this neglect by offering a putative comprehensive mapping of contemporary dance in Ireland, this research proceeds from the situated and consequently partial knowledge derived from my practice as a contemporary dance artist and choreographer, making work in Ireland and elsewhere. Because this positioning is important, I will discuss Haraway's elucidation of the concept of situated knowledge at some length. For now, I would like to recognise the need for an ethics of partial perspective to guide the acts of omission and inclusion in my situated account, as well as the exercise of power involved in making a contribution to a field of scholarship that is still in development.

Situated Knowledges

I am arguing for politics and epistemologies of location, positioning, and situating, where partiality and not universality is the condition of being heard to make rational knowledge claims [...]. The view from a body, always a complex, contradictory, structuring and structured body, versus the view from above, from nowhere, from simplicity.⁸⁵

⁸³ For example, Junk Ensemble run by Megan and Jessica Kennedy, United Fall by Emma Martin, Ciotóg by Ríonach Ní Néill, Catapult Dance by Rebecca Walter, Croí Glan Integrated Dance Company by Tara Brandel, Fluxus Dance by Cathy Kennedy, Night Star Dance Company by Ingrid Nachstern, Maya Lila by Joan Davis and the eponymous Catherine Young Dance, Company Phillip Connaughton, Dylan Quinn Dance.

⁸⁴ For example, McGrath, *Dance Theatre in Ireland*.

⁸⁵ Donna Haraway, 'Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective', *Feminist Studies*, vol. 14, no. 3 (Autumn, 1988), pp. 575-599, p. 589.

Donna Haraway's concept of situated knowledges has had a profound impact on the theory and practice of Geography.⁸⁶ The concept has become sufficiently familiar that it can be genuflected to in passing in the introductions of countless papers, but such a cursory reference misses much of the complexity of Haraway's analysis.

The resonance of Haraway's work in Geography is not surprising given the discipline's particular tools for understanding position and location, but Haraway's influential essay⁸⁷ on situated knowledge is also a challenge to the disembodied objectivity of positivist science whose ideals and methodologies have operated and continue to operate in certain geographical research.⁸⁸ Situating Haraway's philosophical contribution in relation to Geography helps to clarify historical and existing tensions, debates and competitions within the discipline, especially since her insights anticipate much of the subsequent discussion on situated, embodied knowledges and the practices of scholarly reflexivity.⁸⁹

Haraway is quick to place herself in her analysis: 'We, the feminists in the debates about science and technology, are the Reagan era's "special-interest groups"'.⁹⁰ She writes in a North American context, a location that, as Doreen Massey reminds us, is not simply spatial but likewise temporal and consequently political.⁹¹ She describes herself in oppositional relation to 'the stripped-down

⁸⁶ For example, see the discussion between Haraway, David Harvey and other geographers from the annual meeting of the Association of American Geographers, Chicago 1994. David Harvey and Donna Haraway, 'Nature, Politics, and Possibilities: A Debate and Discussion with David Harvey and Donna Haraway' *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, vol. 13, no. 5, (1995), pp. 507-527.

⁸⁷ Haraway, 'Situated Knowledges'.

⁸⁸ See Trevor Barnes and Derek Gregory (eds.), *Reading Human Geography: The Poetics and Politics of Inquiry* (London: Arnold, 1997), for an account of hegemony of spatial science in 1960. The current vogue for Geographic Information Systems (GIS) suggests that 'scientific' approaches to spatial analysis remain attractive, often, as Haraway presciently suggested, in military contexts, as well as in social and political planning.

⁸⁹ To identify knowledge as embodied and situated does not dispute the thoroughly relational production of knowledge, embodiment and situation. In this sense, embodied knowledge is not inherent. See Susan Melrose, 'The Eventful Articulation of Singularities - or, "Chasing Angels"', Keynote Address at *New Alignments and Emergent Forms: Dancemaking, Theory and Knowledge*, University of Surrey, 13 December 2003, <http://www.sfmelrose.u-net.com/chasingangels/> [accessed 17 July 2017].

⁹⁰ Haraway, 'Situated Knowledges', p. 575.

⁹¹ 'On this reading neither time nor space is reducible to the other; they are distinct. They are, however, co-implicated. On the side of space, there is the integral temporality of a dynamic

atomism of Star Wars'⁹² and, implicitly, to 'the Christian Right when they discuss the Second Coming'.⁹³ Intellectually, she triangulates herself, along with other feminists, between 'two poles of a tempting dichotomy on the question of objectivity. Certainly I speak for myself here, and I offer the speculation that there is a collective discourse on these matters.'⁹⁴ The two poles are, on the one hand, a social constructionist undermining of universal truth-claims in science and, on the other, Marxist and psychoanalytically informed empiricism that generates 'a better account of the world':

So, I think my problem, and 'our' problem, is how to have *simultaneously* an account of radical historical contingency for all knowledge claims and knowing subjects, a critical practice for recognizing our own 'semiotic technologies' for making meanings, *and* a no-nonsense commitment to faithful accounts of a 'real' world, one that can be partially shared and that is friendly to earthwide projects of finite freedom, adequate material abundance, modest meaning in suffering, and limited happiness.⁹⁵

While she places herself between these two poles of response, Haraway is clear in positioning herself *against* a version of scientific objectivity that acknowledges no position for itself, 'the god trick of seeing everything from nowhere'.⁹⁶ She argues that traditional scientific objectivity hides its embodied and spatialised sources of production and that in doing so it serves particular 'unfettered power'⁹⁷ and knowledge structures.⁹⁸ Challenging a familiar feminist criticism of vision as a mechanism of male domination, Haraway reminds us that the apparently disembodied gaze of masculinist objectivity is the product of

simultaneity. On the side of time, there is the necessary production of change through practices of interrelation' ; Doreen Massey, *For Space* (London: Sage, 2005), p. 55.

⁹²Haraway, 'Situated Knowledges', p. 575.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 577.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 576.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 579.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 581.

⁹⁷ *Loc. cit.*

⁹⁸ See Barnes and Gregory (eds.), *Reading Human Geography*, for an account of the spatial science conception of the 'space-economy': 'Critics charged that these models served to legitimise a particular economic geography that they concealed antagonistic social relations that were enclosed within their spatial templates, and that they obscured the ways in which crisis and contradiction are written into the constitution of capitalist space-economies' (p.18). Michael Brown's critique of the epidemiological modeling of illness (in this instance AIDS) shows the continuing negative impact of the use of objective spatial science techniques that omit and devalue subjective experience. Michael Brown, 'Ironies of Distance: An Ongoing Critique of the Geographies of AIDS', in Barnes and Gregory (eds.), *Reading Human Geography*, pp. 461-489.

particular embodied visual systems, whether those particular bodies are human, animal or technological.⁹⁹ Insisting that all views are a view from somewhere and from somebody (again Haraway's notion of body includes animal, human, technological and hybrids) reverses a political hegemony where embodiment is a trap for the dispossessed.¹⁰⁰ This is of particular relevance to this research that valorizes the insights gained from the embodied practice of contemporary dance, whose corporeal knowledge has been consistently undervalued in cultures that prioritise and disembody the verbal.¹⁰¹ When she does imagine and spatialise universalising objectivity she identifies it with the 'the brilliant space platforms of the powerful'¹⁰² linking scientific 'objectivity' with the flagship military-political project of the Reagan administration. Geographers such as David Livingstone have further documented the geographic specificity of the production of supposedly universal scientific knowledge indicating the topography of scientific styles, the political geography that permits some ideas to flourish and others not, the spatial dissemination of experimental findings and even the spatiality of the laboratory setting.¹⁰³

While Haraway is keen to debunk the god-trick, her call for situated knowledges is wary of acceding to a fully social constructionist account of the scientific method as mere rhetoric, since:

The imagery of force fields, of moves in a fully textualized and coded world, which is the working metaphor in many arguments about socially negotiated reality for the postmodern subject, is, just for starters, an imagery of high-tech military fields, of automated academic battle-fields, where blips of light called players disintegrate

⁹⁹ 'I would like to suggest how our insisting metaphorically on the particularity and embodiment of all vision (though not necessarily organic embodiment and including technological mediation)'; Haraway, 'Situated Knowledges', p. 583.

¹⁰⁰ 'The imagined "we" are the embodied others, who are not allowed not to have a body, a finite point of view, and so an inevitably disqualifying and polluting bias in any discussion of consequence outside our own little circles'; *ibid.*, p. 575.

¹⁰¹ It's worth adding that though Haraway talks primarily about vision, she is aware of the variety of embodied senses from which knowledge is produced: 'What other sensory powers do we wish to cultivate besides vision?'; *ibid.*, p. 587.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 583.

¹⁰³ David N. Livingstone, 'The Spaces of Knowledge: Contributions Towards a Historical Geography of Science', in Barnes and Gregory (eds.), *Reading Human Geography*, pp. 27-48.

(what a metaphor!) each other in order to stay in the knowledge and power game.¹⁰⁴

Such a social constructionist perspective leaves little room 'to talk about *reality*'.¹⁰⁵ This is important since, as Haraway situates herself *against* and *between*, she also situates herself *for*. Her valorisation of situated knowledges is with the hope of initiating:

[A] successor science project that offers a more adequate, richer, better account of a world, in order to live in it well and in critical, reflexive relation to our own as well as others' practices of domination and the unequal parts of privilege and oppression that make up all positions. In traditional philosophical categories, the issue is ethics and politics perhaps more than epistemology.¹⁰⁶

This ethical engagement is noteworthy because by situating herself *for*, as well as *against* and *between*, Haraway introduces motion in a way that suggests that her viewing and knowledge-producing position is not fixed.¹⁰⁷ The mobility of her positioning is a challenge to 'innocent "identity" politics and epistemologies' since such innocent identities assume a self-knowledge that creates a stable subjectivity for knowing others and the world.¹⁰⁸

In her critique of reflexivity as a research strategy for situating knowledge in the context of critical and especially feminist geography, Gillian Rose makes a similar argument against a belief in 'the conscious analysis of situatedness [...] that the researcher's self is understood as transparently visible to analysis, since apparently nothing need remain hidden.'¹⁰⁹ For Rose, this assumption accords the researcher an agency and viewing perspective from which it 'looks outward, to understand its place in the world, to chart its position in the arenas of knowledge

¹⁰⁴ Haraway, 'Situated Knowledges', p. 577.

¹⁰⁵ *Loc. cit.* Emphasis in original.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 579.

¹⁰⁷ 'For' suggests a forward motion towards the desired outcome/future/other. 'Against' does not necessarily have a corresponding 'away from' motion since 'against' suggests the proximity to the unwanted object and the possibility of being locked in a stasis of opposition to it. Paradoxically, equivalent forces pushing against one another remain stuck together.

¹⁰⁸ Haraway, 'Situated Knowledges', p. 585.

¹⁰⁹ Gillian Rose, 'Situating Knowledges: Positionality, Reflexivities and Other Tactics', *Progress in Human Geography*, vol. 21, no. 3 (1997), pp. 305-320, p. 309.

production, to see its own place in the relations of power.'¹¹⁰ Her emphasis on vision, perspective and cartography is deliberate in that she considers that this strategy of reflexivity, despite its intention to oppose masculinist, objective hegemonies of viewing and knowledge production,¹¹¹ nonetheless replicates 'the god-trick' that Haraway has challenged:

This visible landscape of power, external to the researcher, transparently visible and spatially organized through scale and distribution, is a product of a particular kind of reflexivity, what I will call 'transparent reflexivity'. It depends on certain notions of agency (as conscious) and power (as context), and assumes that both are knowable. As a discourse, it produces feminist geographers who claim to know how power works, but who are also themselves powerful, able to see and know both themselves and the world in which they work. In a sense, this is precisely the point of Haraway's situated knowledges. Such knowledges are preferable, says Haraway, because they are more objective; 'there is good reason to believe vision is better from below the brilliant space platforms of the powerful.'¹¹²

While it is true that Haraway does favour 'vision [...] from below', and that Rose's critique indicates how easily that viewing position becomes fixed, repeating the authoritarian certainty it intended to combat, Haraway ultimately offers no such stability: 'We are not immediately present to ourselves.'¹¹³ And it is the lack of self-presence that is enabling and motivating (in the sense of providing motion towards desired change in the world):

The split and contradictory self is the one who can interrogate positionings and be accountable, the one who can construct and join rational conversations and fantastic imaginings that change history [...]. The knowing self is partial in all its guises, never finished, whole,

¹¹⁰ 'The researcher-self that many feminist geographers give themselves to reflect on, then, seems at some level to be a transparently knowable agent whose motivations can be fully known (although I will go on to argue that this is not the only researcher-self produced by this body of work)'; Rose, 'Situating Knowledges', p. 309.

¹¹¹ 'Vision is always a question of the power to see'; Haraway, 'Situating Knowledges', p. 585.

¹¹² Rose, 'Situating Knowledges', p. 311; quoting Haraway, 'Situating Knowledges', p. 583.

¹¹³ Haraway, 'Situating Knowledges', p. 585. Psychoanalysis provides a number of accounts of how the self cannot be fully known to itself with the unconscious 'configured relationally, both intrapsychically and interpersonally' and acting as a disruptive force that interrupts and confounds consciousness'; Liz Bondi, 'Emotional Knowing,' in Rob Kitchin and Nigel Thrift (eds.), *International Encyclopedia of Human Geography* (Oxford: Elsevier, 2009), pp. 446-452, p. 451.

simply there and original; it is always constructed and stitched together.¹¹⁴

The partiality of the individual situated perspective invites conversation and relation with other partial situated perspectives.¹¹⁵ While this joining of partial perspectives produces 'partial, locatable, critical knowledges sustaining the possibility of webs of connections called solidarity in politics and shared conversations in epistemology',¹¹⁶ such situated knowledges provide a basis for a newly defined 'objectivity' that is not, however, the same as certainty. Such is the partial contribution this research aims to offer to dance, to Geography and to mobilized citizenship. Haraway reminds us that combined situated knowledges produce 'unexpected openings' and she underlines the destabilising but also enabling element of surprise that is key to Massey's account of relational space by introducing a figure from a knowledge tradition very different to Western scientific thinking or conventional academic philosophy:

The Coyote or Trickster as embodied in Southwest native American accounts, suggests the situation we are in when we give up mastery but keep searching for fidelity, knowing all the while that we will be hoodwinked.¹¹⁷

This Coyote figure serves a number of purposes: it reminds the reader of multiple knowledge traditions (even within the United States where she has already

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 586. The necessity of partial and relational identities (accountability and conversations imply a relation to an other) to projects of progressive change parallels Massey's insistence on a relational account of space: 'In this open interactional space there are always connections yet to be made, juxtapositions yet to flower into interaction (or not, for not all potential connections have to be established), relations which may or may not be accomplished. Here, then, space is indeed a product of relations (first proposition) and for that to be so there must be multiplicity (second proposition). However, these are not the relations of a coherent, closed system within which, as they say, everything is (already) related to everything else. [...] For the future to be open, space must be open too'; *For Space*, pp. 11-12. Conversation is an important concept for Haraway since it implies according agency to the other and entering into relationship with them: 'Accounts of a "real" world do not, then, depend on a logic of "discovery" but on a power-charged social relation of "conversation"; Haraway, 'Situated Knowledges', p. 593.

¹¹⁵ 'We do not seek partiality for its own sake, but for the sake of the connections and unexpected openings that situated knowledges make possible. The only way to find a larger vision is to be somewhere in particular. The science question in feminism is about objectivity as positioned rationality. Its images are not products of escape and transcendence of limits, i.e. the view from above, but the joining of partial views and halting voices into a collective subject position that promises a vision of the means of ongoing finite embodiment, of living within limits and contradictions, i.e., of views from somewhere'; *ibid.*, p. 590.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 584.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 593-4.

situated herself) and it also provides a key metaphor for a relation with the other that might confound expectations. And part of that confounding of expectations might be for a choreographer of contemporary dance in Ireland to perform the discourse of a geographer.

Situating the Subject/Object of Research

Typically of the always international quality of contemporary dance in Ireland, I first discovered contemporary dance when I was studying literature at university in England. My subsequent training, supported by a scholarship from the Arts Council of Ireland, took place from 1993 to 1996 at London Contemporary Dance School. By that time my dancing body was already influenced by céilí dancing and by the rudiments of Irish dancing learned as a child in the Ring Gaeltacht, by folk dancing from around the world learned during my pre-university studies at an international college in Canada, by musicals and pop videos seen on television, and by my first classes in jazz dance, contemporary dance and ballet when I was a student at university. My professional formation at London Contemporary Dance School was shaped by the school's history as the conduit into the UK for the work of modern dance pioneer, Martha Graham, though by 1993 when I began my training, that influence was waning, eclipsed by the stronger influence of Cunningham technique and increasing amounts of newer Release-based techniques.¹¹⁸ Alongside those modernist and post-modernist techniques of body-training, I also took daily classes in ballet.

As a dancing body, I was not being prepared for a career of replicating the canonical movement-aesthetics of particular auteur-choreographers such as Graham and Cunningham (though a tiny minority of my fellow dancers might still have had the opportunity of performing with those companies). Instead, I was one of what Louppe has called 'hybrid bodies', what Foster has called 'hired bodies', or what Davida has termed 'the body eclectic', made for a diversified market of

¹¹⁸ Marian Horosko, *Martha Graham: The Evolution of Her Dance Theory and Training, 1926-1991*, (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2002); Agnes de Mille, *Martha, the Life and Work of Martha Graham* (New York: Random House, 1991); Carolyn Brown, *Chance and Circumstance: Twenty Years With Cage and Cunningham* (Northwestern University Press, 2007); Roger Copeland, *Merce Cunningham: The Modernising of Modern Dance* (New York: Routledge, 2004).

choreographic practice with a variety of different aesthetics to embody.¹¹⁹ While Louppe and Foster mourn what they consider the lack of specific training for particular choreographic aesthetics, Davida regards the body eclectic as one imbued with more options. What proved particularly enabling for me in having received this variety of dance trainings was the recognition that bodies are shaped by multiple regimes: some of these regimes might be the codified formations of dance, or the complementary body practices of tai chi, yoga and sport, and some of which are the less apparent, but no less influential, formations of social and cultural practices.

In 1997, I worked for the first time in Ireland as a professional dancer. During my subsequent career as a performer and choreographer, I've created and presented over forty choreographies, for stage, for film and for a variety of non-theatrical sites, in rural and in urban contexts, in Ireland, in the UK, across Europe and in the US and China. Though I have continued to live in London and work internationally, my work has been primarily funded and supported by Ireland-based organisations and structures such as the Arts Council, Culture Ireland and Project Arts Centre.¹²⁰ Part of the work of this thesis will be to unpick the complexities of identity and citizenship that result from such a multi-sited experience, identifying 'the necessary spatial, infrastructural and institutional moorings that configure and enable mobilities' and the subjectivities they produce.¹²¹ My dance-making in this variety of contexts has given me a sensitivity to the production and choreography of individuals and groups across spatial scales. And it is from that situated sensitivity and knowledge that this research grows.

¹¹⁹ Laurence Louppe 'Hybrid Bodies', *Writings on Dance*, vol. 15 (1996), pp. 63-7, p. 64; Susan Foster, 'Dancing Bodies', in Jonathan Crary and Sanford Kwinter (eds.), *Incorporations* (New York: Zone, 1992), pp. 480-495; Katja Čičigoj, 'Interview with Susan Foster (on the implicit politics of dance training and choreography)', *Maska*, vol. XXVI, nos. 141-142 (Autumn 2011); Dena Davida, 'Dancing the Body Eclectic: A Dance Curator Reflects on Culture and the "New Dance"', *Canadian Dance Studies*, vol. 2 (1997). See also Roche, *Multiplicity, Embodiment and the Contemporary Dancer*, pp. 9-14.

¹²⁰ Project Arts Centre is Ireland's largest contemporary arts venue, as well as a producer of work by a variety of contemporary performing and visual artists. I am one of Project Arts Centre's associate artists. I will discuss its significance in Chapter 4.

¹²¹ Kevin Hannam, Mimi Sheller and John Urry, 'Mobilities, Immobilities and Moorings', *Mobilities*, vol. 1, no. 1 (2006), pp. 1-22, p. 3

Kobayashi identifies a potential weakness in reflexive research practice, suggesting that by directing the researcher's attention to her/his positioning, the strategy of situating knowledge directs attention away from 'subjects in the field'¹²²:

[Self-reflexivity] tends to 'replace' the focus on the researcher himself or herself, thus privileging the researcher even more by centering knowledge production, albeit with the 'acknowledgment' of the power that the researcher embodies. Reflexivity runs the risk, therefore, of becoming a kind of academic self-indulgence [...].¹²³

In this instance however, I am also the subject in the field, and therefore self-reflexivity is not a turning away of attention from practice, but a more complex manoeuvre where the binary oppositions of inward reflection and outward practice, subject and object, field and academy are set in motion, necessitating a supple and queer methodology to address the complexities of positioning involved.

Choreographer as Scholar

My methodology and its methods are shaped by at least two lines of intention. Firstly, I am concerned to deliver knowledge in a format that is legible as legitimate scholarship. Though I am a choreographer, I have chosen not to pursue a practice-based PhD. Part of the motivation for not doing so has been a reluctance to submit to the evaluation of the academy creative work that is made for a different context, to different standards. When I create, I allow myself misunderstanding, misattribution, copying, prejudice and partiality. What might be a failure in scholarship can be productive, enlightening and compelling in an artistic creation. Therefore, while my own work provides important material for this thesis, I have written only about creative projects that have been completed, whose genesis has not affected by the split-perspectives of scholarly observer and artistic creator. As revealed by *The Casement Project*, which I made during the period of my PhD research and which I will discuss in the Chapters Two and Three especially, this does not mean that academic research did not feed my creative process. The

¹²² Audrey Kobayashi, 'Situated Knowledge, Reflexivity', in Rob Kitchin and Nigel Thrift (eds.), *International Encyclopedia of Human Geography*, (London: Elsevier, 2009), pp. 138-143, p. 139.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p. 140.

boundaries between my artistic and academic enquiries have not been sealed. A common set of values and aspirations has animated both kinds of research in ways that mean that particular elements cannot be assigned solely to one discipline or to another. For instance, the productive relationship with scholars and with academic institutions was evident in my co-convening of a symposium at Maynooth University as the opening event of *The Casement Project* and a further symposium at The British Library. However, where the academic influenced the artistic, it did so as material in a creative practice, accountable only to the generative standards of that practice, rather than to the standards of academic knowledge production. And correspondingly, I have presented the inherently geographic practice of choreography in the relatively familiar discourse of the academy, all the better to intervene in hegemonic forms of knowledge production. In doing so, I hope to play my part in responding to Harriet Hawkins' injunction to geographers:

For it seems that if we are, as a discipline, to engage in any meaningful way with this artistic terrain then we need perhaps, to have a rather better sense of it.¹²⁴

A Less-than-Creative (Somewhat Queer) Turn

Following Diana Taylor, Jenny Roche has pointed out how dance as an embodied practice can enter the archive and hence the academy only as '[written] text, video or photograph' and therefore exists independently of the bodies through which the choreography has a material existence.¹²⁵ While Roche writes in particular against the erasure of the dancers' experience that is often the result of this translation of dance into the academy and the loss of knowledge that such an erasure entails, I remain cautious about protecting the specificity of what can and cannot be translated from one mode of apprehension to another. The counterpart of this protection of my creative practice, is, like Roche and others, a positive intention to champion dance as a site and process of knowledge production in discourse(s)

¹²⁴ Harriet Hawkins, 'Geography and Art. An Expanding Field: Site, the Body and Practice', *Progress in Human Geography*, vol. 37, no. 1 (2013), pp. 52-71, p. 53.

¹²⁵ Roche *Multiplicity, Embodiment and the Contemporary Dancer*, pp. 2-3; quoting Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2003), p. 25.

familiar to the academy. It is a strategic attempt to speak to the academy in its own languages that is different from the creative turn evident in ethnography's Creative Analytic Practices,¹²⁶ or in the more specifically geographic efforts of Derek McCormack and others to evolve a scholarly writing practice inspired by Non-Representational Theory (NRT),¹²⁷ or in those scholars of Creative Geographies who deploy wider artistic methods in their research or collaborate with artists in the development of new forms of reflection.¹²⁸ Such 'experimental "art-full" research', aims to expand the academy's methods.¹²⁹ However, it has been open to accusations that 'the value of sociological or anthropological fieldwork has been translated into a quest for personal fulfillment on the part of the researcher.'¹³⁰ Though I have no wish to determine where and when scholars should be permitted

¹²⁶ See for example the poetry of Sylvie Fortin, Catherine Cyr and Martyne Tremblay, the dialogic storytelling of Ellis and Bochner, Tami Spry's multivocal combination of poetry and academic discourse, and the dance of Karen Nicole Barbour all discussed below. Examples of CAP include the poetry that Sylvie Fortin, Catherine Cyr and Martyne Tremblay write, both to communicate, and as counterpoint to, their more traditional ethnographic research on dance students (S. Fortin, C. Cyr and M. Tremblay, 'The Act of Listening to the Art of Giving Voice: Creative Alternative Practices in Writing about Health in Dance', *Dance Research Journal*, vol. 37, no. 2 (2005), pp. 11-24); the dialogic storytelling of Ellis and Bochner in their response to Leon Anderson's article on Analytic Autoethnography (Carolyn Ellis and Arthur P. Bochner, 'Analyzing Analytic Autoethnography: An Autopsy', *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* vol. 35, no. 4 (2006), pp. 429-449); Tami Spry's multivocal writing strategy that combines a conventional academic register with emotionally charged poetry that she would prefer to speak out loud as an 'autoethnographic performance' (Tami Spry, 'Performing Autoethnography: An Embodied Methodological Praxis', *Qualitative Inquiry*, vol. 7 (2007), pp. 706-732); and the dance of Karen Nicole Barbour designed 'to embody through autoethnographic performance that which I am unable to write on the page' but which she combines with a creative writing practice that includes photographs of performance, instructions for somatic practice, academic references and autobiographical writing strategies; Karen Nicole Barbour, 'Standing Center: Autoethnographic Writing and Solo Dance Performance', *Cultural Studies*, vol. 12, no. 1 (2012), pp. 67-71, p. 67.

¹²⁷ Nigel Thrift, *Non-Representational Theory: Space, Politics, Affect*; Derek McCormack, *Refrains for Moving Bodies: Experience and Experiment in Affective Spaces*, (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2014); Derek McCormack, 'Diagramming Practice and Performance', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, vol. 23, no. 1 (2005), pp. 119-147; David Pinder 'Ghostly footsteps: Voices, Memories and Walks in the City', *Ecumene* vol. 8 (2001), pp. 1-19; John Wylie, 'Landscape, Performance and Dwelling: A Glastonbury Case-Study', in P. Cloke (ed.), *Country Visions* (Harlow UK: Prentice Hall, 2003), pp. 136-158. See also Hawkins, 'Geography and Art'.

¹²⁸ See Harriet Hawkins, 'Creative Geographic Methods: Knowing, Representing, Intervening. On Composing Place and Page', *Cultural Geographies*, vol. 22, no. 2 (2015), pp. 247-268; Hawkins, 'Dialogues and Doings: Sketching the Relationships between Geography and Art', *Geography Compass*, vol. 5, no. 7 (2011), pp. 464-78; Hawkins, 'Geography and Art'; Kate Foster and Hayden Lorimer, 'Some Reflections on Art-Geography as Collaboration', *Cultural Geographies*, 14 (2007), pp. 425-32; Thomas Jellis, 'Spatial Experiments: Art, Geography, Pedagogy', *Cultural Geographies*, vol. 22, no. 2 (2015), pp. 369-374; Catherine Veal, 'A Choreographic Notebook: Methodological Developments in Qualitative Geographical Research', *Cultural Geographies*, vol. 23, no. 2 (2016), pp. 221-245.

¹²⁹ Hawkins, 'Creative Geographic Methods', p. 247.

¹³⁰ Paul Atkinson, 'Rescuing Autoethnography', *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, vol. 35, no. 4 (August 2006), pp. 400-404, p. 402.

personal fulfillment, it is clear to me that my need for artistic self-fulfillment is satisfied outside the academy and that scholarly research serves a different purpose. And once again, while a situated reflexivity is at the heart of my research, my choice not to present this research to the academy in a creative form, distinguishes it from the creative turn instanced above. I nonetheless claim a stubborn queerness for this less-than-creative approach. As Warner argues, 'queer takes on its critical edge by defining itself against the normal rather than the heterosexual, and the normal includes the normal business of the academy.'¹³¹ However, disruption of normal business might take many forms. And when disruptiveness is expected, what might be more surprising is a performance of competence and familiarity that is queer because of the position from which it emanates.

I recognise in creative geographies and in the more-than-representational approaches of other geographers a critically motivated desire to evolve alternative accounts of space and place that bring 'critical and reflexive attention to the presence or absence of certain voices, practices, or ways of knowing and being in the discipline of geography'.¹³² I align with that aspiration of inclusion and remain cautious, nonetheless, of any expectation that, as an artist, the only mode in which I may appear in the academy is as joker and provocateur, since such an expectation inoculates the academy from the real potential for transformative surprise that the work of dance artist might offer.¹³³

¹³¹ Michael Warner, 'Introduction', in Michael Warner (ed.), *Fear of a Queer Planet: Queer Politics and Social Theory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), pp. vii-xxxi, p. xxvi; quoted in Catherine J. Nash, 'Queer Conversations: Old-time Lesbians, Transmen and the Politics of Queer Research', in Kath Browne and Catherine J. Nash (eds.), *Queer Methods and Methodologies: Intersecting Queer Theories and Social Science Research* (London: Routledge, 2016), pp. 129-142, p. 133.

¹³² Sarah de Leeuw and Harriet Hawkins, 'Critical Geographies and Geography's Creative Re/ Turn: Poetics and Practices for New Disciplinary Spaces', *Gender, Place & Culture*, vol. 24, no. 3 (2017), pp. 303-324, p. 305.

¹³³ 'Looking beyond Geography, in particular to studies of art-science collaborations, we find a figure of art emerging as a "novel" form of knowledge and practice, enabling "cycles of knowing and unknowing", with techniques such as play, hoax and serendipity being brought into critical proximity with normative assumptions about scientific method and spaces (Baker, 2009; Barry and Kimbell, 2005). A similar caricature of art is found within Geography too where under the register of the "experimental" it is understood to unsettle the practices, knowledge and spaces of scientific-cum-geographical communities (Davies, 2010). Such perspectives reinforce the need for further investigation into the practices, technologies and knowledge operationalised within creative geographies, and for careful reflection on how we characterise these disciplinary interrelations';

This separation of the creative and the academic betrays also my own history – a spatial shift from the library to the dance studio, from Oxford to London, from the cramped embodiment of reading and writing to a more expansive physicality in the studio, a shift from a particular tutorial academic training that encouraged forensic analysis and the *pulling apart* of ideas, to a creative practice that is also forensic, but that works primarily by *building* movement and ideas. My protection of the creative process has also been a defence of the embodied life that my hard-won transformation from budding academic to dance artist allowed. And this transformation does not presume that the academic and the creative might not be differently aligned and mobilised for others.

Dance and Geography

Dance has achieved a notable visibility as a subject of geographical research particularly in the wake of the discipline's engagement with bodies and performativity. Already in the seventies, dance's influence on Geographical imagination was evident in the choreographic metaphors used by Hägerstrand to describe the time-space pathways of everyday life, and in the notion of place ballet deployed by Seamon in his humanistic description of lifeworlds.¹³⁴ However, their reference points for and consequent understanding of dance suggests a limited appreciation of the artform as a sociocultural and political phenomenon productive of different kinds of embodiment according to the ideologies it performs. Seamon and Nordin's use of ballet to describe the patterns of Swedish market reveals no appreciation of the ideological origins of the classical dance form in the power relations of European courts in the seventeenth century.¹³⁵ From its inception ballet has been a body practice that shapes bodies and minds

Hawkins, 'Geography and Art', pp. 64-5; referencing: Steve Baker, 'Tangible and Real and Vivid and Meaningful: Lucy Kimbell's Not-Knowing about Rats', in Tom Tyler and Manuela Rossini (eds.), *Animal Encounters* (London: Brill, 2009), pp. 197-218; Andrew Barry and Lucy Kimbell, 'Pindices', in Bruno Latour and Peter Weibel (eds.), *Making Things Public: Atmospheres of Democracy* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 2005), pp. 872-873; Gail Davies, 'Where do Experiments End?', *Geoforum* vol. 41, no. 5 (2010), pp. 667-670.

¹³⁴ Derek McCormack, 'Geographies for Moving Bodies: Thinking, Dancing, Spaces', *Geography Compass*, vol. 2, no. 6 (2008), pp. 1822-1836, p. 1824.

¹³⁵ David Seamon and Christina Nordin, 'Marketplace as Place Ballet: A Swedish Example', *Landscape* vol. 2, (1980), pp. 35-41.

according to externally imposed ideals.¹³⁶ Bodies are selected and trained through repetition to conform to those ideals and to display and reinforce them through spectacle. Traditionally and still most commonly, classical ballet is presented and practised with a strong notion of front, the audience beyond the footlights viewing through the frame of a proscenium arch. The form implies and endorses a single viewing position and the body is disciplined to satisfy that viewing angle. As a choreographic form, classical ballet has, until the late twentieth at least, demonstrated an adherence to line – both in the body and in space – that leaves little room for surprise or heterogeneity. Classical ballet reinforces tradition, its gradations of company roles still mirroring on- and off-stage the aristocratic rankings of the seventeenth century French court. In many ballet companies, the introduction of non-white dancers to the corps de ballet has been a challenge as it is considered to compromise the aesthetic homogeneity of the line.¹³⁷ When Seamon and Nordin use ballet as a metaphor, they take on also an ideology of body and place that is, to some, reassuringly, decorously ordered and to others, exclusive and repressive. Therefore it is not surprising, in their description of Varberg market as place ballet, that Seamon and Nordin inevitably stress harmony and continuity, a harmony and continuity that is inadequate to address the specific historical conditions in which the market emerged and the changing conditions in which it continues to operate.¹³⁸ The particular conception of corporeal regulation that Seamon and Nordin borrow from dance prevents a more dynamic understanding of the production of place.¹³⁹

Other scholars in feminist geography,¹⁴⁰ humanistic geography,¹⁴¹ Marxist geography,¹⁴² and cultural geography¹⁴³ have recognised bodies not only as

¹³⁶ Geraldine Morris, 'Problems with Ballet: Steps, Style and Training', *Research in Dance Education*, vol. 4, no. 1 (2010), pp. 17-30.

¹³⁷ Jane Onyanga-Omara, 'Classical Ballet Has a Diversity Problem and its Stars Know How to Fix it', *USA Today*, 15 March 2017.

¹³⁸ Seamon and Nordin, 'Marketplace as Place Ballet', p. 35 and p. 40.

¹³⁹ For a more dynamic account of lifeworlds that recognises greater human agency see Gerry Kearns and Karen Till, "'The Wrath of the Rain": Culture and the Lifeworld', in Nessa Cronin and Tim Collins (eds), *Lifeworlds: Space, Place and Irish Culture* (Cork: Cork University Press, forthcoming).

¹⁴⁰ Robin Longhurst, '(Dis)embodied Geographies', *Progress in Human Geography*, vol. 21 (1997), pp. 486-501; Longhurst, 'Situating Bodies', in Lise Nelson and Joni Seager (eds.), *A Companion to Feminist Geography* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), pp. 337-349; Gillian Rose, *Feminism*

entities that occupy and traverse space, but whose corporeality is productive of spaces at multiple scales.¹⁴⁴ Dance, as a diverse embodied cultural practice has provided such geographers with a rich variety of material for investigation, including studies of flamenco and globalisation,¹⁴⁵ Irish dancing and identity,¹⁴⁶ affect and dance movement therapy,¹⁴⁷ trance dance and theories of cultural diffusion,¹⁴⁸ and the place of the contemporary in traditional dance forms.¹⁴⁹ It has also helped scholars to evolve geographical thinking.¹⁵⁰ In Ireland, productive encounters between Art and Geography have proved hospitable to dance, with alliances forged between Ireland-based iterations of the international Mapping Spectral Traces project,¹⁵¹ The Space&Place Research Collaborative based at

and *Geography: The Limits of Geographical Knowledge* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1993).

¹⁴¹ Yi Fu Tuan, *Space and Place*. (London: Arnold, 1997); Tuan, *The Good Life* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1986).

¹⁴² David Harvey, 'The Body as an Accumulation Strategy', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, vol. 16, no. 4 (1998), pp. 401-421.

¹⁴³ Tim Cresswell, *On the Move: Mobility in the Modern Western World* (London: Routledge, 2006); Derek McCormack, 'Body-Shopping: Reconfiguring Geographies of Fitness', *Gender, Place and Culture*, vol. 6, no. 2 (1999), pp. 155-177; McCormack, 'Geographies for Moving Bodies'.

¹⁴⁴ McCormack, 'Geographies for Moving Bodies', p. 1823. Also Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, D. Nicholson-Smith (trans.) (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1991); Adam Pine and Olaf Kuhlke (eds.), *Geographies of Dance: Body, Movement, and Corporeal Negotiations* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2014), p. viii.

¹⁴⁵ Yuko Aoyama, 'The Role of Consumption and Globalization in a Cultural Industry: The Case of Flamenco', *Geoforum* vol. 38, no. 1 (2007), pp. 103-113.

¹⁴⁶ Marion Leonard, 'Performing Identities: Music and Dance in the Irish communities of Coventry and Liverpool', *Social and Cultural Geography*, vol. 6, no. 4 (2005), pp. 515-529.

¹⁴⁷ Derek P. McCormack, 'An Event of Geographical Ethics in Spaces of Affect', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, vol. 28 (2003), pp. 488-507.

¹⁴⁸ Arun Saldanha, *Psychedelic White: Goa Trance and the Viscosity of Race* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2007).

¹⁴⁹ Peter Dunbar Hall, 'Tradisi and Turisme: Music, Dance, and Cultural Transformation at the Ubud Palace, Bali, Indonesia', *Australian Geographical Studies*, vol. 41, no. 1 (2003), pp. 3-16.

¹⁵⁰ John David Dewsbury, 'Dancing: The Secret Slowness of the Fast', in T. Cresswell (ed.), *Geographies of Mobility: Practices, Spaces, Subjects* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), pp. 51-68; McCormack, 'Geographies for Moving Bodies'. See Peter Merriman, 'Architecture/Dance: Choreographing and Inhabiting Spaces with Anne and Lawrence Halprin', *Cultural Geographies*, vol. 17, no. 4 (2010), pp. 427-49; Catherine Nash, 'Performativity in Practice, Some Recent Work in Cultural Geography', *Progress in Human Geography*, vol. 24, no. 4 (2000), pp. 653-64.

¹⁵¹ 'Mapping Spectral Traces is a trans-disciplinary, international group of scholars, practitioners, community leaders and artists who work with and in traumatized communities, contested lands and diverse environments'; Karen Till, 'About The Mapping Spectral Traces Network', [website], <http://www.mappingspectraltraces.org/about-us.html> [accessed 15 May 2017]. Directed by Prof. Karen Till, 'The Space&Place Research Collaborative is a translocal scholarly and creative network, based in the Department of Geography at the Maynooth University'; Space&Place Research Collaborative, 'About Space&Place', [website], <https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/geography/about-spaceplace> [accessed 10 August 2017].

Directed by Dr. Nessa Cronin and Dr. Tim Collins, 'Ómós Áite: Space/Place Research Group was established in 2009 to promote the interdisciplinary study of issues relating to the social, cultural and political production of space and place in modern society'; Ómós Áite, Ómós Áite - Space/Place

Maynooth University, Omós Áite – Space/Place Research Network based at NUI Galway, and the Galway Dancing Days Festival. Equally hospitable to dance, as part of a collaboration between artists and academics, has been the work of The Geographical Turn project.¹⁵² And it is the openness of Maynooth University's Geography Department to dance, among other art-forms, that has enabled my research. This geographical interest in dance remains important in Ireland where a distinct discipline of dance studies is institutionally weak, with only the Irish Academy of Dance and Music at the University of Limerick recently emerging as an institution providing a dance-specific context for academic research. The rest of the academic scholarship engaging with dance comes from departments of English, Drama, Anthropology, Communications and of course, Geography,¹⁵³ and, according to McCormack, this cross-disciplinary focus on dance as a diverse and ubiquitous cultural practice is part of its attraction to geographers.¹⁵⁴ Dance gets the geographers moving and mingling, even if there's an occasional hint of the reluctance to join in, prompted by a perception of dance as regulatory and disciplining: 'Pushed in the appropriate direction there is no reason why these ["painfully accumulated" methods of traditional geographical research] cannot be made to dance a little.'¹⁵⁵ I hope to combine the spatially-sensitive insights of Geography and choreography to produce a more enthusiastic movement of bodies and ideas.

Research Network' [website], <http://www.nuigalway.ie/colleges-and-schools/arts-social-sciences-and-celtic-studies/humanities/irish-studies/omos-aite/> [accessed 15 May 2017]. 'Galway Dance Days/Corp-Real International Symposium is the public programme of Ríonach Ní Néill's Galway Dance Artist in Residence'; Ríonach Ní Néill, 'Galway Dance Days Festival & Corp-Real International Symposium 2015', <http://www.ciotog.ie/index.php/2014-01-27-18-55-43/about> [accessed 15 May 2017]. Since 2012, Karen Till of Maynooth University, Nessa Cronin of NUI Galway and geographer and dance artist, Ríonach Ní Néill have created fora for productive dialogue between geography and dance, and my own research owes everything to the encounters their work has established.

¹⁵² Convened by Gerry Kearns, '[t]he Geographical Turn asks how geographers and artists might learn from their separate exploration of the common themes of space, place, and environment'; Gerry Kearns, 'The Geographical Turn', [website], <https://geographicalturn.wordpress.com> [accessed 15 May 2017].

¹⁵³ For an account of dance scholarship in Ireland see McGrath, 'Emerging Dance Scholarship in Ireland'. Also Aoife McGrath, 'The Irish Dancing: Cultural Politics and Identities, 1900-2000 by Barbara O'Connor (review)', *Dance Research Journal*, vol. 46, no. 3 (2013), pp. 129-132.

¹⁵⁴ McCormack, 'Geographies for Moving Bodies', p. 1823.

¹⁵⁵ Alan Latham, 'Research, Performance, and Doing Human Geography: Some Reflections on the Diary-Photograph Diary-Interview Method', *Environment and Planning A*, vol. 35 (2003), pp. 1993-2017, p. 2000.

Dance and Non-Representational Theory

While dance, as a discursive practice, has facilitated an understanding of the operation of governmentality and discipline, geographers inspired by Nigel Thrift have used dance to develop non-representational or more-than-representational accounts of embodiment.¹⁵⁶ Thrift's influential essay, 'The Still Point', rejects social constructivist accounts of the body, that he identifies in particular with Foucauldian-inspired analysis, in favour of an attention to the expressive, affective, and ludic dimensions of corporeality that he asserts 'eludes the grasp of power'.¹⁵⁷ According to Lorimer, in a review of debates around NRT:

Dance has been identified as an activity useful for introducing geographers to the new language of performance, and as a guard against the urge to make judgments based solely on the outputs of practice.¹⁵⁸

Thrift uses dance to illustrate NRT because he thinks it exceeds signification, because dance permits him to discuss embodiment and because dance studies provides a useful collection of performance experiments to sustain geographical enquiry.¹⁵⁹ However his universalising alignment of dance with the immature, the irrational and the transient risks reinforcing traditional prejudice against dance as juvenile in its predominantly pre/non-verbal articulation. This characterisation of dance, and the theory that results from it, is not helpful for my purposes as a

¹⁵⁶ Hayden Lorimer, 'Cultural Geography: The Busyness of Being "More-Than-Representational"', *Progress in Human Geography*, vol. 29, no. 1 (2005), pp. 83–94; McCormack, *Refrains for Moving Bodies*; Katrinka Somdahl-Sands, 'At Home in Motion: Networks, Nodes, and Navigation the Varied Flight Paths of Bird Brain Dance', in Pine and Kuhlke, *Geographies of Dance*, pp. 175-190; Ben Anderson and Paul Harrison (eds.), *Taking-Place: Non-Representational Theories and Geography* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010).

¹⁵⁷ Alan Radley, 'The Elusory Body and Social Constructionist Theory', *Body and Society*, vol. 1 (1995), pp. 2-24, p. 9; quoted in Nigel Thrift, 'The Still Point: Resistance, Expressive Embodiment and Dance', in Steve Pile and Michael Keith (eds.), *Geographies of Resistance* (London: Routledge, 1997), pp. 124-151, p. 150. See also Nigel Thrift, *Non-Representational Theory: Space, Politics, Affect* (London: Routledge, 2008); Ben Anderson and Paul Harrison, 'The Promise of Non-Representational Theories', in *idem* (eds.), *Taking-place*, pp. 1-36.

¹⁵⁸ Lorimer, 'Cultural Geography', p. 91, footnote 1.

¹⁵⁹ See Nigel Thrift, 'Afterwords', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, vol. 19 (2000), pp. 213-255; referred to in Matthew Kurtz, 'Mimetic Moves: Dance and Learning to Learn in Northwest Alaska', in Pine and Kuhlke (eds.), *Geographies of Dance*, pp.137-158, p. 158, footnote 4.

contemporary dance artist working to have the art form, and the knowledge it produces, taken seriously in twenty-first-century Ireland.¹⁶⁰

Criticised as apolitical, ethnocentric and inattentive to gender,¹⁶¹ NRT has evolved into a more nuanced, more-than-representational approach that professes to avoid the binaries of socially-constructed versus playfully expressive body that Thrift established. As Lorimer concludes: 'Notably, it is the insistences of just such a cultural-feminist programme that has nudged the more-than-representational debate out of a predominantly white, western orbit.'¹⁶² And his language indicates that it is dance that supports this productive evolution in geographical thinking about 'familiar knotty issues that geographers are now finding ways of recasting, and intervening in, through a critical engagement with ideas of performance as variously choreographed, citational or improvisational.'¹⁶³ According to Pine and Kuhlke, following dance writer Jane Desmond, the dual identity of dance as process and product enables this movement beyond Thrift's binary.

On the one hand dance continually navigates between the intentionality of choreography, the scripted and inscribed portrayal of meaning that intends to deliver a message to the viewer and the dancers themselves, to be perceived and read within a social context and given geographical context. On the other [...] [d]ance and dancer can intentionally or spontaneously work against choreography, against or outside a social context, and most importantly, utilize geographical environments, landscapes, and sites not only to represent a meaningful message, but instead create community and communion by immersion in a non-discursive, tactile and audible environment.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶⁰ Thrift embraces NRT as 'purposefully immature ... to throw off some of the weight of "adult" expectations, by privileging renewal and challenging limits' (cited in Lorimer, 'Cultural Geography', p. 84) and regards dance as play, fantasy and 'an exaggeration of everyday embodied joint action' in a way that fails to recognise the 'everyday' performance of subjectivity, embodiment and citizenship that the practice of dance entails. See Thrift, 'The Still Point', p. 149.

¹⁶¹ Nash, 'Performativity in Practice'; Divya P. Tolia-Kelly, 'Affect - An Ethnocentric Encounter? Exploring the "Universalist" Imperative of Emotional/Affectual Geographies', *Area* vol. 38, no. 2 (2006), pp. 213-217; Deborah Thien, 'After or Beyond Feeling? A Consideration of Affect and Emotion in Geography', *Area*, vol. 37, no. 4 (2005), pp. 450-454.

¹⁶² Lorimer, 'Cultural Geography', p. 89.

¹⁶³ *Loc. cit.*

¹⁶⁴ Pine and Kuhlke, *Geographies of Dance*, p. xviii. Dance is 'both a product (particular dances are realised in production) and a process (dancing, the historical conditions of possibility for the production and reception of such texts and processes, as well as the articulations of systems of value); Jane C. Desmond (ed.), *Meaning in Motion: New Cultural Studies of Dance*, (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 1997) p. 2, quoted in Pine and Kuhlke, *Geographies of Dance*, p. vii.

However, even though they assert for dance a complex status as both a discursive and a material practice, and organise their collection on the geographies of dance in a way that acknowledges this complexity, it is difficult not to read in their analysis above an abiding privileging of dance's apparently liberating work of resistance against social scripts that is familiar from Thrift. Pine and Kuhlke conclude their collection with an optimistic assertion that echoes Thrift's flattering account of dance, in 'The Still Point',¹⁶⁵ as eluding the operation of power:

[R]ather than being a controlled by discourse, power, and ideology, the body at dance is a body at play, meaning that the power of movement lies in showing feelings and identity that word cannot nor should not name, yet simultaneously making these visible.¹⁶⁶

In this research, I work to respect the aspects of dance that exceed verbal expression, without figuring dance as the ludic 'other' to the discourse of the academy and without pursuing a creative method to supplement for academic consumption the artistic practice that NRT-inspired geographers profess to value for its resistance to appropriation. To do so, this research adopts what Halberstam calls a:

[S]cavenger methodology that uses different methods to collect and produce information on subjects who have been deliberately or accidentally excluded from traditional studies of human behavior.¹⁶⁷

In my case, this scavenger approach combines ethnography, auto-ethnography, expert interviews and textual analysis of my archive of notes, blog posts, videos, funding applications and public communication, in a strategy of Derridean *bricolage*. It deploys a variety of methods and modes of analysis while recognising their limitations. Following Halberstam, it serves to make visible in the academy an experience of the dance practice that hasn't been adequately accounted for:

¹⁶⁵ Thrift, 'The Still Point', p. 149.

¹⁶⁶ Pine and Kuhlke, *Geographies of Dance*, p. 201.

¹⁶⁷ Judith Halberstam, *Female Masculinity* (Durham NC: Duke University 1998), p. 13.

The *bricoleur*, says Levi-Strauss, is someone who uses ‘the means at hand’, that is, the instruments he finds at his disposition around him, those which are already there, which had not been especially conceived with an eye to the operation for which they are to be used and to which one tries by trial and error to adapt them, not hesitating to change them whenever it appears necessary, or to try several of them at once, even if their form and their origin are heterogeneous—and so forth.¹⁶⁸

This methodological *bricolage* is particularly appropriate to a research project that both argues for danced identities that are mobile, fluid, relational and embodied and that also knows the strategic necessity of making such identities and experiences ‘recognisable and understandable’ to sustain the possibility of particular ways of living in the world.¹⁶⁹

Ethnography and Autoethnography

Human geographers have been attracted to ethnography as a research method precisely because of the emphasis it places on the lived experience of others and because of the consequent potential for greater justice in knowledge production this increased human focus offers.¹⁷⁰ Traditional ethnography proposes itself as a methodology whose ‘goal is’, according to early 20th century anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski, ‘to grasp the native’s point of view, his relation to life, to realise *his* vision of *his* world’.¹⁷¹ Of course, Malinowski’s male-centric language and the implied colonising acquisition of native resources involved in his definition (‘grasp the native’s point of view’) suggests the apparent other-focus of this ethnographic method does not escape the ideological perspective of the ethnographer, nor the ideologies that have shaped the practice of ethnography in a variety of social sciences.

¹⁶⁸ Jacques Derrida, ‘Structure, Sign, and Play’ in Richard Macksey and Eugenio Donato (eds.), *The Structuralist Controversy: The Languages of Criticism and the Sciences of Man*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 2007 (1966)), pp. 247-264, p. 255.

¹⁶⁹ Judith Butler, *Giving an Account of Oneself*, (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005) p. 37, quoted in Stacy Holman Jones and Tony E. Adams, ‘Autoethnography as a Queer Method’, in Kath Browne and Catherine J. Nash (eds.), *Queer Methods and Methodologies: Intersecting Queer Theories and Social Science Research*, (London: Routledge, 2016), pp.195-214, p. 212.

¹⁷⁰ Annette Watson and Karen E. Till, ‘Ethnography and Participant Observation’, in Dydia DeLyser, Steve Herbert, Stuart Aitken, Mike Crang, and Linda McDowell (eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Geography* (London: Sage, 2010), pp. 121-137.

¹⁷¹ Bronislaw Malinowski, *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (London: Routledge, 1922), p. 25, quoted in Harry F. Wolcott, *Ethnography: A Way of Seeing* (Lanham MD: AltaMira Press, 2008), p. 145 (emphasis added by Wolcott).

Traditional ethnography is predicated on the separation between the spatially distinct field-site, with its temporally delimited period of immersive fieldwork, and the subsequent phase of writing up and analysis assumed to take place back 'at home' in the academy.¹⁷² In my research, however, the field of contemporary dance in Ireland is more readily called my home than the academy, especially if one acknowledges that home is not necessarily a place of comfort, safety and familiarity,¹⁷³ and that the boundaries of a home place – in this instance a multiplicity of practices extending across several scales, in virtual and real space – are not neatly defined in spatial nor in temporal terms.¹⁷⁴ Indeed, my experience of coming to dance at a relatively late age and to an art-form that, in Ireland, is not a cultural given conveys that this 'home' of contemporary dance is one achieved, as opposed to one assumed. As a choreographer, performer, facilitator, curator, board-member, writer, speaker, mentor and coach, I have been made by the field/home of contemporary dance in Ireland and have also helped to shape that field/home. My research is a further intervention in that field/home as much as it is a report and analysis of it: I have not exited it to write up. I do not pretend to the spatial distance and apparent objectivity such an exit implies. The situated knowledge I offer is one derived from perception in motion, from a dancing body

¹⁷² "The distinction between "field" and "home" rests on their spatial separation. The separation is manifested in two central anthropological contrasts. The first differentiates between the site where data are collected from the place where analysis is conducted and the ethnography is "written up." [...] [T]he two forms of activity are not only distinct, but sequential. The second place the sharp contrast between "field" and "home" is expressed is in the standard anthropological tropes of entry and exit from "the field"; Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson, 'Discipline and Practice: "The Field" as Site, Method and Location in Anthropology', in Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson (eds.), *Anthropological Locations: Boundaries and Grounds of a Field Science*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), pp. 1-46, p. 12. See also Karen E. Till, 'Returning Home and to the Field', *Geographical Review* vol. 91, no. 1-2 (2001), pp. 46-56.

¹⁷³ Bidy Martin and Chandra Talpade Mohanty, 'Feminist Politics: What's Home Got To Do With It?' in Teresa de Laurentis (ed.), *Feminist/Textual Politics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), pp. 191-212. 'Feminist theory and gay/lesbian studies have, perhaps most sharply, showed home to be a site of unrestful differences'; James Clifford, 'Spatial Practices: Fieldwork, Travel and the Disciplining of Anthropology', in Gupta and Ferguson (eds.), *Anthropological Locations*, pp. 185-222, p. 213. Ulrika Dahl, 'Femme on Femme: Reflections on Collaborative Methods and Queer Femme-inist Ethnography', in Browne and Nash (eds.), *Queer Methodologies*, pp.142-166.

¹⁷⁴ Rooke argues that a reflexive approach requires that we understand that "the field" has fluid and flexible boundaries (to which the ethnographer is emotionally (inter)connected [...]); Kath Browne and Catherine J. Nash, 'Queer Methods and Methodologies: An Introduction', in Browne and Nash (eds.), *Queer Methods and Methodologies*, pp. 1-23, p. 16.

whose choreography of mobility and positioning speaks to contemporary experiences of citizenship and subjectivity.¹⁷⁵

This less orthodox approach to ethnography has some precedents in the work of the indigenous or native anthropologist ‘whose research travel leads out and back from a home base, “travel” understood as a detour through university or other site that provides analytic or comparative perspective on the place of dwelling/research’.¹⁷⁶ However, the assumption of ‘at homeness’ and of uncomplicated dwelling in the characterisation misses the performative, place-, self- and practice-making processes that the dance artist undertakes in her/his work in Ireland. There is not (yet) a mechanism for being a native to contemporary dance in Ireland, in the sense of being born into it as a cultural practice and consequent identity, but those place-, self- and practice-making processes that the contemporary dance artist needs to perform provide valuable material for ‘(re)conceptualizing how normative ontological systems of meaning might constitute places and, through that constitution, both enable and constrain the possibilities and limitations of lived experience in place.’¹⁷⁷

The practices of autoethnography provide further points of reference for my situated research methodology. Ethnographers such as Ellis, Bochner, Spry and Denzin propose autoethnography as a research method ‘that critiques the situatedness of self with others in social contexts.’¹⁷⁸ Much of their energy has been devoted to the situating of the researcher-self in opposition to research practices deemed to exhibit:

¹⁷⁵ ‘Therefore, the term “progress” does not mean a simple change of position where an agent advances from A to B. In its essence, the only “step” that is progressive is the one that leads to an increase in the “ability to step”. Thus, the formula of modernizing processes is as follows: Progress is movement toward movement, movement toward increased movement, movement toward an increased mobility’; Peter Sloterdijk and Heidi Ziegler, ‘Mobilization of the Planet from the Spirit of Self-Intensification’, *The Drama Review*, vol. 50, no. 4 (2006), pp. 36-43, p. 37. Drawing on Sloterdijk’s diagnosis, dance theorist, André Lepecki proposes that the only critical dance is one that resists motion, offering stillness as an alternative; André Lepecki, *Exhausting Dance: Performance and the Politics of Movement* (London: Routledge, 2006).

¹⁷⁶ See Clifford, ‘Spatial Practices’, p. 206.

¹⁷⁷ Nash, ‘Queer Conversations’, p. 132.

¹⁷⁸ Spry, ‘Performing Autoethnography’, p. 710.

[C]olonialist, sterile research impulses of authoritatively entering a culture, exploiting cultural members, and then recklessly leaving to write about the culture for monetary and/or professional gain, while disregarding relational ties to cultural members.¹⁷⁹

Denzin also criticizes 'realist' ethnographies 'which privilege the researcher over the subject, method over subject matter, and maintain commitments to outmoded conceptions of validity, truth, and generalizability'.¹⁸⁰ In contrast, autoethnographers claim their reflexive practice to be more humane:

Caring and empathizing is for us what abstracting and controlling is for them. As you just said, we want to dwell in the flux of lived experience; they want to appropriate lived experience for the purpose of abstracting something they call knowledge or theory.¹⁸¹

The binary hostility evidenced above suggests that care and empathy is not universally offered, as it certainly does not extend towards practitioners of realist ethnography.¹⁸² Ironically, the power game exemplified in this hostility, with its concern for influence over new generations of ethnographers and access to publication, recapitulates in the academy, the kind of territorial appropriation that realist ethnography is accused of sustaining.¹⁸³ This highly charged self-

¹⁷⁹ Carolyn Ellis, Tony E. Adams and Arthur P. Bochner, 'Autoethnography: An Overview', *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, vol. 12, no. 1, Art. 10 (2010), <http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0114-> [accessed 19 April 2014].

¹⁸⁰ Denzin quoted in Spry, 'Performing Autoethnography', p. 710.

¹⁸¹ Ellis and Bochner, 'Analyzing Analytic Autoethnography', p. 431.

¹⁸² Denzin is happy to advocate the termination of the realist ethnographic tradition and presumably the careers of colleagues who work within it: 'I want a new qualitative research tradition focused on the themes that come from this commitment [to a more just, democratic, egalitarian society]. It is time to close the door on the Chicago School and all of its variations'; Norman K. Denzin, 'Analytic Autoethnography, or Déjà Vu all Over Again', *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, vol. 35, no. 4 (August 2006), pp. 419-428, p. 422.

¹⁸³ The power-game works both ways: Ellis and Bochner 'fear that Leon Anderson's elucidation of an analytic ethnography' (Leon Anderson, 'Analytic Autoethnography', *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* vol. 35, no. 4 (August 2006), pp. 373-95) 'may be an unconscious attempt by realists to appropriate autoethnography and turn it into mainstream ethnography' ('Analyzing Analytic Autoethnography', p.433), referring specifically to the risk that then 'journals such as *Contemporary Ethnography* can feel justified rejecting autoethnographic work' (*ibid.*) However, Anderson's original article, addressed to 'ethnographic practices at the realist end of the continuum' ('On Apples, Oranges, and Autopsies: A Response to Commentators', *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* vol. 35, no. 4 (August 2006), pp. 450-465, p. 452), reads like a warning to realist ethnographers not to let autoethnographers gain too much territory: 'One of the strengths of the contributions by these [autoethnographic] scholars is that they have not just produced discourse about evocative autoethnography. They have also modeled autoethnographic scholarship and mentored students and colleagues. In the past decade, evocative autoethnographers have published fairly extensively, especially (although not exclusively) on topics related to emotionally wrenching

positioning of autoethnographers *against* realist ethnography misses some of the *for* and forward mobility that Haraway's situated knowledge manages. It's helpful to contrast the vitriol in positioning described above with the healthy self-irony and useful reflexivity in Haraway's acknowledgement that:

We have used a lot of toxic ink and trees processed into paper decrying what *they* have meant and how it hurts *us*. The imagined "they" constitute a kind of invisible conspiracy of masculinist scientists and philosophers replete with grants and laboratories. The imagined "we" are the embodied others, who are not allowed not to have a body, a finite point of view, and so an inevitably disqualifying and polluting bias in any discussion of consequence outside our own little circles, where a "mass"-subscription journal might reach a few thousand readers composed mostly of science haters. At least, I confess to these paranoid fantasies and academic resentments lurking underneath some convoluted reflections in print under my name in the feminist literature in the history and philosophy of science.¹⁸⁴

Haraway's version of reflexivity does not diminish the potency of the negative emotions she communicates (anger, paranoia, resentment), but it does make it available for discussion while acknowledging the element of imagination and fantasy that comes into play. This approach seems more productive in its recognition of the emotional and affective power-play at work in research, without assuming that recognition simply neutralizes or puts in quarantine emotional and affective impulses.

Emotion is privileged in much autoethnographic practice and is often deployed as a weapon of distinction in disciplinary debate:

[A]utoethnography is one of the approaches that acknowledges and accommodates subjectivity, emotionality, and the researcher's

experiences, such as illness, death, victimization, and divorce. They remain largely marginalised in mainstream social science venues, due to their rejection of traditional social science values and styles of writing. But they have gained entrée into many traditionally realist qualitative-research journals (e.g., *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, *Symbolic Interaction*, and *Qualitative Sociology*) and have been influential in the creation of newer postmodern-friendly journals (e.g., *Qualitative Inquiry*), handbooks (e.g., Denzin and Lincoln's *Handbook of Qualitative Inquiry*), and even book series (e.g., the AltaMira Press series on "Ethnographic Alternatives")' Anderson, 'Analytic Autoethnography', p. 377; referencing Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln (eds.), *Handbook for Qualitative Research* (London: Sage, 2000).

¹⁸⁴ Haraway, 'Situated Knowledges', p. 575.

influence on research, rather than hiding from these matters or assuming they don't exist.¹⁸⁵

This acknowledgement of the significance of emotion in human experience is not just about recognising its role in the lives of the subjects of research, but also in the way the researcher produces knowledge. Autoethnographers write about emotion, but also *with* emotion and *to evoke* emotion. This approach is a deliberate challenge to a rationalist research project that pretends a universalising detachment, free of the embodied partiality an individual's emotion might introduce. Consequently, autoethnographers regard the use of emotion as a progressive ethical stance:

Autoethnography wants the reader to care, to feel, to empathize, and to do something, to act. It needs the researcher to be vulnerable and intimate. Intimacy is a way of being, a mode of caring, and it shouldn't be used as a vehicle to produce distanced theorizing.¹⁸⁶

However, such an approach risks its own universalizing assumptions when it counts on the transparency of emotional self-knowledge to the autoethnographer, on the emotional similarity between autoethnographer and his/her reader/receiver, and on the rhetorical skill of the autoethnographer to provoke a pre-determined response in the reader/receiver. It fails to foreground the power differentials that might limit or enhance 'capacities for affecting and being affected'.¹⁸⁷

There is a further danger that evocative autoethnographic practices, for all their insistence on multiplicity and the self-declared progressiveness of decentred subject positions end up endorsing and underwriting stable, 'authentic' subject positions for the autoethnographer.¹⁸⁸ Spry writes of 'creating a self in and out of

¹⁸⁵ Ellis *et al*, 'Autoethnography: An Overview' (no pagination).

¹⁸⁶ Ellis and Bochner, 'Analyzing Analytic Autoethnography', p. 433. For Ellis and Bochner and for Laurel Richardson writing about Creative Analytic Practices the impact on moving the reader/audience for the ethnographic research is fundamental to its 'success' or validity; Laurel Richardson, 'Writing: A Method of Inquiry', in Denzin and Lincoln (eds.), *Handbook for Qualitative Research*, pp. 923-948.

¹⁸⁷ Tolia-Kelly, 'Affect-An Ethnocentric Encounter?', p. 216.

¹⁸⁸ 'Informed by recent work in autobiography, autoethnographic methods recognize the reflections and refractions of multiple selves in contexts that arguably transform the authorial "I" to an

academe that allows expression of passion and spirit I have long suppressed', and while 'creating' suggests a project of self-fashioning, the idea of a 'true' self suppressed is endorsed by her later image of rejecting the power suits, panty hose and high heels of conventional academic success: 'Success meant grafting the skins of patriarchy on my body,'¹⁸⁹ implying an authentic body that precedes the encounter with patriarchy.¹⁹⁰ So while Spry considers her autoethnographic performance as 'emancipatory',¹⁹¹ reinforcing the sense of an enslaved and pre-existing self, I find it more helpful to read in her work a performance of strategic essentialism effected in what she regards as a hostile or restrictive academic and cultural environment¹⁹²:

Performing autoethnography has allowed me to position myself as active agent with narrative authority over many hegemonizing dominant cultural myths that restricted my social freedom and personal development.¹⁹³

This approach adopts a temporary strategy of essentialism as one of the tools-to-hand to claim ground for a set of experiences rendered otherwise invisible and invalid. For Spry, it is her female and feminist perspective that she wishes to make legible in the academy. For me, it is the questions of embodiment raised by contemporary dance practice in Ireland that I wish to bring into focus through a queer autoethnography that:

existential "we"; Spry, 'Performing Autoethnography', p. 711. 'I am more comfortable with my self as other'; *ibid.*, p. 721. 'This is a reflexive, performative ethnography. It privileges multiple subject positions, questions its own authority, and doubts those narratives that privilege one set of historical processes and sequences over another'; Norman K. Denzin, *Performance Ethnography. Critical Pedagogy and the Politics of Culture* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2003), p. 234, quoted in Barbour, 'Standing Center: Autoethnographic Writing and Solo Dance Performance', p. 69.

¹⁸⁹ Ellis and Bochner, 'Performing Autoethnography', p.721

¹⁹⁰Barbour also, despite being 'motivated to spotlight embodied ways of knowing, validating epistemological alternatives to those traditionally accepted within Western academies', nonetheless ends up endorsing a conservative view of a reliable body and coherent selfhood as she privileges the reassuring notion of a centred body from which she experiences a comforting notion of home; Barbour, 'Standing Center', p. 67.

¹⁹¹ 'I articulate the personally/politically emancipatory potential of autoethnographic performance'; Spry, 'Performing Autoethnography', p. 709.

¹⁹² '[O]ne can self-consciously use this moment of essentialism as part of one's strategy'; Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, 'Practical Politics of the Open End', in Sarah Haraysm (ed.), *The Post-Colonial Critic: Interviews, Strategies, Dialogues* (London: Routledge, 1990), pp. 95-112, p. 109.

¹⁹³ Spry, 'Performing Autoethnography', p. 711.

[E]mbraces fluidity, resists definitional and conceptual fixity, looks to self and structures as relational accomplishments and takes seriously the need to create more livable, equitable and just ways of living 'a form that intervenes in social reality through deploying an action that re-creates the agent even as the agent is creating the action'.¹⁹⁴

Such a perspective recognizes that my research performs both its subject and object, taking up the tools and institutional forms necessary to appear while asserting the provisional, partial, but powerful nature of that appearance.¹⁹⁵

Returning to Haraway, '[a]ll knowledge is a condensed node in an agonistic power field',¹⁹⁶ and therefore:

Feminist embodiment, then, is not about fixed location in a reified body, female or otherwise, but about nodes in fields, inflections in orientations, and responsibility for difference in material-semiotic fields of meaning.¹⁹⁷

Conducting research from the position of the mobile, partial, situated individual requires some (always partial) understanding of the vectors of power that operate in the field through those very processes of understanding and self-situation and through the differential relationships with others that already define self-positioning. It acknowledges the blindnesses, deafness and insensitivity of partiality, but assumes nonetheless the responsibility to research, to learn and to act from that moving place.

Scale

With a view to outlining the structure of this thesis, I wish to attend to one of Geography's significant concepts for the organisation of perception and knowledge production: the concept of scale. Despite disagreement about its precise

¹⁹⁴ Holman Jones and Adams, 'Autoethnography as a Queer Method', p. 213.

¹⁹⁵ '[W]e are made through our research as much as we make our own knowledge, and that this process is complex, uncertain and incomplete. Complex, because our position is a very particular mediation of class and gender and race and sexuality and so on; uncertain, because our performances of them always carry the risk of misperforming an assigned identity (Butler, 1990); and incomplete because it is only in their repetition that identities are sustained.' 'Rose, Situating Knowledges', p. 316, referencing Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble* (London: Routledge, 1990).

¹⁹⁶ Haraway, 'Situated Knowledges', p. 577.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 588.

definition¹⁹⁸ and an established theoretical opposition to its foundational ordering of space, the conception of scale retains a discursive and material force that impacts on the individual dance artist.¹⁹⁹ The effort here is not to adopt an ontology of scale that posits the local, the national or the global as pre-existing entities that act in world. It is rather to see 'scale as a category of practice performed by actors/actants' and, in regarding scale as an epistemology, to attend to the specificity of the representational practices carried by particular actor/actants in the strategic operation of scalar imaginaries.²⁰⁰ In line with Jessop *et al.*, I want to use the notion of scale to provide different entry points into a nuanced account of the production of citizenship through the work of the contemporary dance artist.²⁰¹ The nation brand and its production and promotion of the nation scale provides an important point of departure since it situates the nation competitively among others in a global arena, but it is also predicated on the orientation of the local to nation's global ambitions.

Marston *et al.* have suggested that the implied hierarchy of traditional nested, Matrushka doll or ladder metaphors of scale creates an imaginary in which the amorphous, unlocated global scale governs the local. Following Gibson-Graham, Marston *et al.* assert that such an imaginary naturalises globalisation and disempowers 'the local as a site of significant practices that have the potential to

¹⁹⁸ Marston *et al.* point out that conceptions of scale as size and as level are often confused with each other; Sallie A. Marston, John Paul Jones III and Keith Woodward, 'Human Geography Without Scale', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, New Series, vol. 30, no. 4 (2005), pp. 416-432, p. 420.

¹⁹⁹ For an account of competing perspectives see Marston *et al.*, 'Human Geography Without Scale'. See also John Paul Jones III, Keith Woodward and Sallie A. Marston, 'Situating Flatness', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, New Series, vol. 32, no. 2 (2007), pp. 264-276; Warwick E. Murray, *Geographies of Globalization* (London: Routledge: 2006); David Delaney and Helga Leitner, 'The Political Construction of Scale', *Political Geography*, vol. 16, no. 2 (1997), pp. 93-97; Susan Hanson, 'Scale in Geography', in N. J. Smelser and P. B. Baltes (eds.), *International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 2001), pp. 13501-13504.

²⁰⁰ Robert Kaiser and Elena Nikiforova, 'The Performativity of Scale: The Social Construction of Scale Effects in Narva, Estonia', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, vol. 26, no. 3 (2008), pp. 537-562, p. 541. See also Katherine Jones, 'Scale as Epistemology', *Political Geography*, vol. 17, no. 1 (1998), pp. 25-28.

²⁰¹ Bob Jessop, Neil Brenner, and Martin Jones, 'Theorizing Sociospatial Relations', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, vol. 26, no. 3 (2008), pp. 389-401. Jessop *et al.* caution that '[f]ocusing on a single dimension may be justified as a simple entry point into a more complex inquiry but this requires reflexive attention to combining different dimensions of sociospatial analysis with other features of the research object in question'; p. 392. Without adopting Jessop *et al.*'s Territory, Place, Scale and Network (TPSN) framework, I hope to apply the reflexive attention they advocate with an attention to the corporeal that doesn't feature in their model.

upset the “capitalocentric discourse of globalization”.²⁰² Their promotion of a flat ontology, conceiving not of a vertically organized hierarchy of scales, but of a horizontally connected multiplicity of sites, is in the service of a progressive politics that affords greater agency to non-hegemonic forces.²⁰³ However, though their critique of scale is important in revealing the concept’s attendant power geometries, and while there is great value in their Deleuze-inspired attention to the emergent nature of sites as assemblages of human and non-human, actualised and virtual relations, they risk missing in their account the agency of the *bricoleur* who uses scalar geometry strategically.²⁰⁴ As Leitner and Miller observe, even a hierarchical arrangement of scalar categories need not imply a top-down flow of power.²⁰⁵ Moreover, while they criticise the tendency of scalar hierarchies to resolve into a global versus local binary, Marston *et al.*’s recommendation to jettison scale closes down some of the productive force of mobilizing the corporeal scale as a means to challenge that binary. In the Irish context of this research, the neglect of corporeal potential is precisely what needs to be addressed.

This research is distinguished by its attention to the implications of the production and promotion of the nation at the scale of bodies and it places the production and performance of bodies in relation to other scales. As Staeheli asserts:

Rather than analyzing scales as fixed, a more useful approach is to consider the ways in which processes operating at different scales interact to create conditions, opportunities and constraints that political agents confront and use.²⁰⁶

Therefore I have organised this research with the body, the nation, the local and the international as mutually constitutive, inter-related scales which in turn shape the analysis of each chapter. Though a particular scale provides the holding frame

²⁰² Marston *et al.*, ‘Flat ontologies’, p. 427.

²⁰³ *Loc. cit.*

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 425.

²⁰⁵ Helga Leitner and Byron Miller, ‘Scale and the Limitations of Ontological Debate: A Commentary on Marston, Jones and Woodward’, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, New Series, vol. 30, no. 4 (2005), pp. 116-125. See also Knopp and Brown on the multi-directional possibilities of counterflows within spatial hierarchies, Larry Knopp and Michael Brown, ‘Queer Diffusions’, *Environment and Planning D*, vol. 21, no. 4 (2003), pp. 409-424, p. 414.

²⁰⁶ Staeheli, ‘Globalization and the Scales of Citizenship’, p. 66.

for each chapter, in practice, the analysis follows lines of relation that link the frame to other relevant scales, with an attention to the corporeal as a constant throughout. As Longhurst notes, 'Questions of the body – its materiality, discursive construction, regulation and representation – are absolutely crucial to understanding spatial relations at every scale.'²⁰⁷ The research is grounded in accounts of the circumstances of production of my creative work, with a view to finding where that work, its context and the embodied citizen-subjects it enables produce one another.²⁰⁸

Chapter One situates subsequent discussions of contemporary dance in Ireland and of my work in relation to the production of 'the Irish body'. The chapter complicates reductive and universalising accounts of embodiment in Ireland, and situates a contemporary account of the corporeal in relation to a variety of historical, political, social and ideological contexts which bodies produce and perform. It also introduces examples of contemporary dance practice, including my own choreography, as indices of the complexities of embodiment that dance artists have been enacting in relation to some of the socio-cultural contexts and political ideologies of embodiment in operation in Ireland. These ideologies sustain and are sustained by interrelated conceptions of the national body and of the bodies of its citizens and non-citizens.

Chapter Two addresses the relationship of the dance artist to the production of the nation-state in Ireland. Focusing on the centenary commemorations of the Easter Rising as a moment for re-defining the contemporary nation-state in Ireland, the chapter examines the creation of *The Casement Project*, a choreography of bodies and ideas that was the largest of the Arts Council's special projects for the commemorative programme. As choreographer of *The Casement Project*, I provide a situated insight into the development of the project that explicitly choreographed the historical, political and social contexts of its making across national boundaries and with particular corporeal effects.

²⁰⁷ Robyn Longhurst, 'The Body', in David Atkinson, Peter Jackson, David Sibley, and Neil Washbourne (eds.), *Cultural Geography: A Critical Dictionary of Key Concepts* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2005), pp. 91-6, p. 94.

²⁰⁸ Bojana Kunst, *Artist at Work: The Proximity of Art and Capitalism* (Alresford, Hants: Zero Books, 2015), p. 145.

Chapter Three focuses on the preparation and realisation of one element of *The Casement Project: Féile Fáilte* was a day of dance on Banna Strand, a beach in Kerry where Roger Casement was captured on Good Friday 1916.²⁰⁹ The chapter produces Banna as an instance of the local in a national and international project and unpicks the differential politics of corporeal visibility that attended this production of the local. While the associated notions of local and community are often predicated on assumptions of permanence and on the patriarchal family, *Féile Fáilte* queered the family to propose an alternative choreography of affiliation.²¹⁰

Chapter Four is simultaneously the most global and intimate in scope. It sets the context for the promotion of Irish arts abroad through Culture Ireland, the state body tasked with such promotion, and through Creative Ireland, a government initiative that includes ‘co-ordination’ of the nation brand as part of its legacy programme of the Centenary Commemorations. Having set this context, the chapter concludes with a detailed reflection on the Culture Ireland-supported presentation of my solo, *Cure*, in Hong Kong. My account of the experience provides material for an elucidation of the ethics and politics of agency in the artist-citizen’s relationship to state policy. Articulated from the partial and fluid subject-position of the dance artist/citizen, the chapter examines the ethics of borders and the choreographic limits of fluidity.

Scale is used throughout as a category shaped by ‘sociohistorical contexts that work to naturalise and sediment scales in the popular imagination and thus give the representational practices of scale/scaling their power.’²¹¹ The *bricolage* of this research adopts the scalar imaginary that brings the nation and its brand identity into existence while revealing the processes that produce, perform and alter that existence.²¹² Following the lines of mutual interaction between scales,

²⁰⁹ The dating of the event by a Christian calendar already suggests some of the context by which the event is understood.

²¹⁰ Dahl, ‘Femme on Femme’, p. 152.

²¹¹ Kaiser and Nikiforova, ‘The Performativity of Scale’, p. 541.

²¹² This strategy is mindful of Rose’s critique of feminists’ use of scale as a way to situate themselves outside of power: ‘This visible landscape of power, external to the researcher,

and crucially finding the place of individual (interdependent) embodiment in that interaction, the research questions what agency means for the choreographer-citizen and for the 'ways of living and modes of action within the existing real' that contemporary dance practice in Ireland enacts.²¹³ As a research into what choreography does, rather than what it is, '[t]hese are investigations that geographers' re-imaginings of site and politics are well positioned both to benefit from and to contribute to.'²¹⁴

transparently visible and spatially organised through scale and distribution, is a product of a particular kind of reflexivity, what I will call 'transparent reflexivity'. It depends on certain notions of agency (as conscious) and power (as context), and assumes that both are knowable. As a discourse, it produces feminist geographers who claim to know how power works, but who are also themselves powerful, able to see and know both themselves and the world in which they work'; Rose, 'Situating Knowledges', p. 311.

²¹³ Nicholas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics* (Paris: Les Presses du Réel, 2002), p. 13; quoted in Hawkins, 'Geography and Art', p. 59.

²¹⁴ Hawkins, 'Geography and Art', p. 57.

CHAPTER ONE

Producing Bodies in Twenty First Century Ireland

'Stilled' Bodies

In her 1990 essay that 'reaches toward a new Irish studies',²¹⁵ Cheryl Herr notes the omission of 'any kind of Irish body' from formulations of Irish identity:

Ireland has literally eroded, in the sphere of representations that constitute social identity, a comfortable sense of the body; in traditional as well as in colonial and postcolonial Ireland, the body has frequently been associated representationally with danger and has been scrutinized with an intensity that *stills*.²¹⁶

Her contention is that a legacy of colonial and post-colonial censorship has produced a repressed conception of the Irish body as immobile, as well as 'a reflexive and widespread resistance to *seeing* movement, to recognizing its necessity, and ultimately to sanctioning radical changes of posture.'²¹⁷ Herr doesn't elaborate a mechanism that might link the failure to acknowledge movement with the repression, in particular bodies, of movement and of the possibility for change. She doesn't question the normative assumption that embodiment should always be comfortable. She does not examine stillness as a necessary part of a movement repertoire. Her attention to what she considers a distinctive 'collective Irish body text, composed of repeated descriptions and received ideas' is content to literally consign to the footnotes 'the actual physical experience of any individual in Ireland'.²¹⁸ Nonetheless, for this choreographer who works in Ireland with a sense that 'Irish-based dance practice has a long history of being culturally undervalued, underfunded and marginalized',²¹⁹ there is something seductive in Herr's confident essentialising of 'Ireland' and of 'the Irish body', something that 'feels' right about her diagnosis of the neglect of dynamic corporeality in dominant linguistic representational modes. It fits with McGrath's pro-dance account of Ireland as 'a society in which postcolonial formations of an "Irish body" have led to the oppression of corporealities that do not fit hegemonic

²¹⁵Cheryl Herr, 'The Erotics of Irishness', *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 17, no. 1 (1990), pp. 1-34, p. 2.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 6-7.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 6, footnote 13.

²¹⁹ Mc Grath, 'Emerging Dance Scholarship in Ireland', p. 289.

norms',²²⁰ and with assessments of Irish theatre practice by Bernadette Sweeney²²¹ and by Miriam Haughton²²² that underline Irish theatre's predominantly linguistic rather than bodily focus.²²³

For McGrath, Sweeney and Haughton, contemporary Irish dance challenges the privileged position of the linguistic, deploying moving bodies as agents of represented and actual change. However, in Herr and in much of the academic literature on the 'Irish body' that I will discuss in this chapter, narratives of bodily repression – by colonialist racism,²²⁴ by conservative nationalism,²²⁵ by Catholicism,²²⁶ and, latterly, by neo-liberal capitalism²²⁷ – have tended to

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, p.290.

²²¹ Sweeney, *Performing the Body in Irish*.

²²² Miriam Haughton, 'Flirting with the Postmodern: Moments of Change in Contemporary Irish Theatre, Performance and Culture', *Irish Studies Review*, vol. 22, no. 3 (2014), pp. 374–392.

²²³ 'Brilliance in the theatre, has for Irish dramatists, been linguistic'; Seamus Deane quoted in Sweeney, *Performing the Body in Irish Theatre*, p. 1.

²²⁴ See for example Liam Clarke, 'Mental Illness and Irish people: Stereotypes, Determinants and Changing Perspectives', *Journal of Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing* vol. 5, no. 4 (1998), pp. 309-316 (reprinted vol. 5, no. 6, pp. 555-562), who examines the prevalence of diagnoses of schizophrenia in Ireland and among the Irish in Britain and proposes that it is symptomatic of loss self-esteem induced by famine and emigration as the legacies of colonialism. His remedy is that Irish people should 'claw back, value and assert their Irishness within the societies they inhabit' (p. 561). However, Clarke offers no account of what this assertive Irishness might be and concludes with the recognition that Irish identity is being re-defined by being in 'a changing Europe' (p. 561). The implied malleability of Irishness challenges the premise on which his reductive account of Irish corporeal history is based. See also Susan Cannon Harris, 'Invasive Procedures: Imperial Medicine and Population Control in *Ulysses* and *The Satanic Verses*', *James Joyce Quarterly* vol. 35, nos. 2 and 3 (1998), pp. 373-399. Harris argues that through the technology of the Rotunda maternity hospital in Dublin, imperial control of female bodies presumed to be inadequate to the task of natural childbirth, was a means of controlling the nation.

²²⁵ See for example Angela K. Martin, 'Death of a Nation: Transnationalism, Bodies and Abortion in Late Twentieth-Century Ireland', in Tamar Mayer (ed.), *Gender Ironies of Nationalism: Sexing the Nation* (New York: Routledge, 2000), pp. 65-86. 'The solidification and maintenance of both real and imagined national boundaries involves a disciplining of those bodies onto which the image of the nation has been projected. I show here that conservative discourses deployed around the abortion and divorce controversies in Ireland between 1992 and 1995 symbolically equate Irish women with the nation, and construct their bodies as Other' (p. 66).

²²⁶ See for example Tom Inglis, 'The Struggle for Control of the Irish Body: State, Church, and Society in Nineteenth-Century Ireland', in Eric R. Wolf and Adrianus Koster (eds.), *Religious Regimes and State-Formation: Perspectives from European Ethnology* (New York: SUNY Press, 1991), pp. 55-72. 'The rigorism which with the new physical growth and discipline of the institutional Church began to be disseminated throughout Ireland in the nineteenth century, was based on a systematic discipline, surveillance, and sexualization of the body' (p. 64).

²²⁷ See for example John A. Harrington, 'Citizenship and the Biopolitics of Post-nationalist Ireland', *Journal of Law and Society*, vol. 32, no. 3 (2005), pp. 424-449. 'Along with recent jurisprudence of the Irish Supreme Court, the amendment betokens a distinctive biopolitics orchestrated according to neo-liberal themes consonant with Ireland's membership of the European Union and its foreign direct investment strategy' (p. 2). For a discussion of the specific materialisation of neo-liberalism in Ireland and a recognition of the legacies of colonialism that conditioned its form, see Rob Kitchin,

characterise the body as passive material for subjugation and exploitation. Herr's representation of Ireland and its body operates a stilling of its own, fixing the dynamics of an always disputed national history in a temporality that conflates 'traditional', 'colonial' and 'post-colonial' timeframes. Her temporally homogenized Ireland is then contrasted to an equally essentialised, but more 'advanced', American experience²²⁸ whose definitional hegemony in the Irish context is suggested in her reference to Bono's statement: 'I didn't know I was Irish until I went to America.'²²⁹ It is from the perspective of America – Herr's position – that Irish identity comes into being. Herr does not address the neo-colonial aspect of the Irish-American relationship and how her negative picture (in its stillest sense) of representations of body in Ireland reinforces that neo-colonial perspective:

Although my comparison of Irish and American body images sometimes affirms the critique of institutionalized gender relations advanced by Irish feminists, my primary aim is not to criticize the pattern of relations in Ireland nor to promote the erotics of American society [...]. I am much more interested in enhancing for international students of Irish studies the differences between the two cultures as a way of valuing the distinctiveness of Ireland and of the people who live there.²³⁰

What is distinctive about Ireland for Herr is the country's failure to represent corporeal experience, an experience which as the essay progresses and despite Herr's explicit intention to separate the feminine and the corporeal, becomes more and more identified with the female through an association of neolithic tombs with the breast/wombs that induce corporeal awareness in the male archaeologist, and also through her use of 'different frames of reference to draw forth Ireland's Dominatrix-Body-as arkhein, as Kathleen Ni Houlihan, as Queen Medb, as the formidably misunderstood Irish Mother.'²³¹ However the impact of her argument about the repression of corporeality relies on its own

Cian O'Callaghan, Mark Boyle, Justin Gleeson, 'Placing Neoliberalism: the Rise and Fall of Ireland's Celtic Tiger', *Environment and Planning A*, vol. 44, no. 6 (2012), pp. 1302-1326.

²²⁸ 'My inquiry targets some fundamental differences between American and Irish appropriations of the body'; Herr, 'The Erotics of Irishness', p. 2.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 6, from Paul Hewson, 'Bono: The White Nigger', in Richard Kearney (ed.), *Across the Frontiers: Ireland in the 1990s* (Dublin: Wolfhound Press, 1989), p. 188.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 5, footnote 6.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

repression, ironically of Irish women. Her reference to Irish feminists betrays an existing, but otherwise unacknowledged, discourse in Ireland that has opposed the patriarchal censoring system of representation, but whose challenge does not quite fit the narrative that Herr is advancing, since it communicates a greater complexity of Irishness than she admits.²³²

Moreover, Herr uses Nancy Scheper-Hughes's controversial ethnography²³³ to convey 'that in rural areas the Irish body is or was construed as worthless, endangering, and constantly threatened.'²³⁴ Yet even as Scheper-Hughes' account of a rural Irish community reveals instances of bodily repression and control, it also acknowledges the body and, in addition, communicates bodily resistance in the punished and incarcerated form of schizophrenia, or in emigration, notably for women in Scheper-Hughes's analysis, where bodies are taken elsewhere. In her preface to the twentieth-anniversary edition of the book,²³⁵ Scheper-Hughes describes her return to the community where she conducted her research and the disappointed and hostile reaction she faced due to the fact, as one local pointed out: 'You said nothing about our fine musicians and poets, and our step dancers who move through the air with the grace of a silk thread.'²³⁶ The graceful, moving body (a codified and socio-historically determined body) is something Scheper-Hughes has omitted. Herr perpetuates this omission in the service of making a generalisation about the representation of the Irish body that is implicated in a narrative of global economic progress: Ireland is construed as distinct from America, with a 'third-world politico-economics' and an 'old cycle of poverty and emigration [...] at but definitely outside the threshold of postindustrial

²³² 'Although my comparison of Irish and American body images sometimes affirms the critique of institutionalized gender relations advanced by Irish feminists, my primary aim is not to criticize the pattern of relations in Ireland nor to promote the erotics of American society. I am much more interested in enhancing for international students of Irish studies the differences between the two cultures as a way of valuing the distinctiveness of Ireland and of the people who live there'; *ibid.*, p. 5, footnote 6. That Irish feminists should have made the critique on which this article's account of Irish embodiment rests undermines Herr's definitive binary contrast between Ireland and America.

²³³ Nancy Scheper-Hughes, *Saints, Scholars, and Schizophrenics: Mental Illness in Rural Ireland*. 20th Anniversary Edition (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001, first published 1979).

²³⁴ Herr, 'The Erotics of Irishness', p. 22.

²³⁵ Also published as Nancy Scheper-Hughes, 'Ire in Ireland', *Ethnography* vol. 1, no. 1 (2000), pp. 117-140.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 119.

posthumanism'.²³⁷ If Herr can be forgiven for considering Ireland in 1990 belated in terms of digital technology, the fact that the country has since become the most globalised economy in the world and a hub in Europe for major American internet and digital technology companies, whose hardware and software are part of the most intimate experiences of transnationally mediated 'Irish' embodiment, demonstrates how her analysis and its account of Irish bodies needs updating.²³⁸

To offer a contemporary account of Irish bodies requires a sensitivity to how bodies have been constructed and represented, but also, a sensitivity to how they are experienced. This is not an attempt to privilege a phenomenological account of the corporeal over a social-constructionist or representational model. It is rather to follow the implications of a useful line of post-humanist thinking developed by Karen Barad and by Rosa Braidotti, that proposes how the material and the discursive are in a relationship of 'mutual entailment'.²³⁹ Barad uses the work of Nobel physicist Neils Bohr who asserts that the basic epistemological unit of scientific enquiry is not the determinate object, but phenomena that are produced by relations between intra-active components. Intra-activity, unlike interactivity, implies that the components do not pre-exist the phenomenon: 'A phenomenon is a dynamic relationality that is locally determinate in its matter and meaning as mutually determined (within a particular phenomenon) through specific causal intra-actions.'²⁴⁰ This point of departure permits Barad to recognize that:

Materiality is discursive (i.e., material phenomena are inseparable from the apparatuses of bodily production: matter emerges out of and includes as part of its being the ongoing reconfiguring of boundaries), just as discursive practices are always already material (i.e., they are ongoing material (re)configurings of the world).²⁴¹

²³⁷ Herr, 'The Erotics of Irishness', p. 5.

²³⁸ Foster, *Luck and the Irish*, p. 27.

²³⁹ Karen Barad, 'Posthumanist Performativity: Toward an Understanding of How Matter Comes to Matter', *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, vol. 28, no. 3 (2003), pp. 801-831, p. 820. There are antecedents in Barad's thinking in the Haraway's concept of situated knowledges and also in the Marxian notion of internal relations explained in Bertel Ollman, *Alienation: Marx's Conception of Man in Capitalist Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977). David Harvey's *Justice, Nature and the Geography of Difference* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996) returns to Leibnitz as a source for Marx's understanding of internal relations and its connection to material dialectics.

²⁴⁰ Barad, 'Posthumanist Performativity', p. 820.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 822.

Barad's argument is useful for an account of Irish embodiment that is open to the potential of bodies and to the mobility that such potential implies. It does not assume the pre-existence of human bodies but regards "[h]umans" [as] neither pure cause nor pure effect but part of the world in its open-ended becoming.²⁴² This approach does not dismiss the human body, but provides a framework for 'a genealogical analysis of the discursive emergence of the "human."²⁴³ By marginalising the 'actual physical experience of any individual in Ireland' in favour of a purely discursive account of an essentialised Irish body, Herr misses an opportunity to consider the complexity of specific embodiments in Ireland and, as a result she obscures how bodies, collective and individual, metaphorical and material, are produced, how they act and interact. The 'radical relationality' of bodily matter requires an analysis that is supple enough to travel between matter and discourse, from micro and to macro scales of perspective, deploying insights strategically rather than programmatically, to recognise, account for and enable the dynamic potential of embodiment.²⁴⁴

A recognition of the potential of bodies also requires a framework for understanding the relationship of bodies to power. As Foucault proposes, power is not a commodity held and exercised by one entity over another:

Power is exercised through networks, and individuals do not simply circulate in those networks; they are in a position to both submit to and exercise this power [...]. We can also say, 'We all have some element of power in our bodies.' And power does—at least to some extent—pass or migrate through our bodies.²⁴⁵

Though Foucault may seem to envisage discrete bodies, it is more helpful to my analysis to build on his conception of networked corporealities, produced by and producing power. Therefore while I will draw on Foucault to highlight the

²⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 821.

²⁴³ *Loc. cit.*

²⁴⁴ 'I propose to reinscribe posthuman bodies into radical relationality, including webs of power relations at the social, psychic, ecological and micro-biological or cellular levels'; Rosa Braidotti, *The Posthuman* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013), p. 102.

²⁴⁵ Michel Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975–1976*, Mauro Bertani and Alessandro Fontana (eds.), David Macey (trans.) (New York: Picador, 2003), pp. 29-30.

potential for resistance in an individual body that comes from its involvement in the networks of power, I also acknowledge that '[o]ne of the effects of power is that it allows bodies, gestures, discourses, and desires to be identified and constituted as something individual.'²⁴⁶ Therefore, in this chapter, to help elucidate what is going on in the practice of contemporary dance in Ireland, I will be balancing an account of Irish bodies as particular manifestations of power relations, shaped by histories, discourses and ideologies, with an attention to the potential for bodies to act and, by acting, to alter the possibilities of substantive citizenship. Some of the potential to act will be examined in deliberate confrontations with existing representations of various kinds of bodily possibilities, for example representations of women and of family. Another area of agency will be in perspectives and practices that propose alternative corporealities and for this, I will bring the wider discussion of embodiment to focus on instances of contemporary dance practice in Ireland and on the bodily potential dance explores and models.

Obesity and Irish bodies

On May 6th 2015, newspapers in the Irish Republic featured headlines that reported the unexpected and mostly unwelcome distinctiveness of the statistically defined Irish body (a future body, in fact, operating as a threat in the present): 'Ireland at fore of Europe's obesity crisis';²⁴⁷ 'Ireland set to be most obese country in Europe, WHO says'.²⁴⁸ The headlines referred to unpublished figures produced for the World Health Organisation's Modeling Obesity Project that forecast that by 2030, 85% of women in Ireland would be overweight and 57% would be obese, while 89% cent of men in Ireland would be overweight and nearly 50% obese.²⁴⁹

²⁴⁶ *Loc. cit.*

²⁴⁷ John Von Radowitz, 'Ireland at Fore of Europe's Obesity Crisis', *Irish Examiner*, 6 May 2015. <http://www.irishexaminer.com/ireland/ireland-at-fore-of-europes-obesity-crisis-328949.html> [accessed 7 May 2015].

²⁴⁸ Rachel Flaherty, 'Ireland set to be most obese country in Europe, WHO says', *The Irish Times*, 6 May 2015, <http://www.irishtimes.com/news/health/ireland-set-to-be-most-obese-country-in-europe-who-says-1.2201731> [accessed 7 May 2015].

²⁴⁹ 'The presentation was based on the WHO Global Status Report on Noncommunicable Diseases 2014 as well as hitherto unpublished modelling projections based on the work of the UK Health Forum to show overweight and obesity projections to 2030'; Dr Muris Houston, 'Ireland's Label as Future "Fat-Man » of Europe Comes as Shock', *Irish Times*, 6 May 2015,

The projections would put Irish men at the top of a league table of 53 countries, and make Ireland, what one headline called ‘the most obese country in Europe’. To understand the potential of embodiment performed by contemporary dance practice in Ireland, it is important to recognise the statistically predominant corporeality in relation to which it performs. For a country whose National Tourism Development Authority, Fáilte Ireland, declared that, ‘[n]o event in history has had a more profound effect on Ireland and the worldwide Irish Community than that of the Great Irish Famine (1845-1849)’, the predicted league-topping growth in Irish bodies challenged the still-resonant images of the Irish Famine body depicted in the etiolated Famine Statues attracting tourists to Custom House Quay in Dublin.²⁵⁰ And though it didn’t depict the horrors of the Irish Famine, *Riverdance* nonetheless combined the resonance of that trauma with a more neo-liberal efficiency in its vision of contemporary Irish bodies as lean, disciplined and vigorous.²⁵¹ The politics and economics of poor nutrition link historical famine and contemporary obesity, and some scientists have postulated genetic predispositions to obesity in populations that have experienced food scarcity.²⁵² Nonetheless, the disparity between a historical image of the emaciated body that still connects Ireland to its diaspora and the statistical average body of future Irish people reminds us that whatever the ‘Irish body’ is, it is not fixed over time.²⁵³ Commenting on the forecasts, Prof. Dónal O’Shea, co-chair of the Royal

<http://www.irishtimes.com/news/health/ireland-s-label-as-future-fat-man-of-europe-comes-as-shock-1.2202330> [accessed 7 May 2015]. Overweight is defined as having a Body Mass Index (BMI) of 25 to 29.9 and obese, a BMI of 30 and above.

²⁵⁰ Discover Ireland, ‘Public Sculpture: Famine memorial’, www.discoverireland.ie [website], <http://www.discoverireland.ie/Arts-Culture-Heritage/famine-memorial/31500> [accessed 7 May 2015].

²⁵¹ Jeanette Marie Herman, *Empire’s bodies: Images of suffering in nineteenth- and twentieth-century India and Ireland*, unpublished PhD thesis, University of Texas at Austin, 2004, pp. 246-348, <https://www.lib.utexas.edu/etd/d/2004/hermanjm85934/hermanjm85934.pdf>; Melissa Fegan, ‘The Great Famine in Literature, 1846-1896,’ in Julia M. Wright (ed.), *A Companion to Irish Literature, Vol. I* (Oxford UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010) pp. 444-459; Stuart McLean, ‘Hungry Ghosts and Hungry Women,’ in *idem.*, *The Event and its Terrors: Ireland, Famine, Modernity* (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 2004), pp. 129-150.

²⁵² Barry M. Popkin, ‘The World is Fat’, *Scientific American*, vol. 297, no. 3 (September 2007), pp. 88-95. While Popkin, a professor of nutrition epidemiology, explores the genetic hypothesis, he also makes clear that obesity ‘has become predominantly a problem of the poor’ (p. 91).

²⁵³ The Famine Memorial by sculptor Rowan Gillespie was presented to Dublin City in 1997. It was commissioned by Norma Smurfit. In 2007 a second series of Famine statues by Gillespie was unveiled in Toronto’s Ireland Park to mark the arrival of Irish Famine emigrants to Canada. The figurative statues use a particular image of abject bodies to create a material link between Ireland and its diaspora. The siting of a replica of the World Poverty Stone near The Famine Memorial in Dublin also suggests how Ireland’s Famine history permits it a unique moral privilege among

College of Physicians of Ireland obesity policy group, asserted that while '[w]e've never had a population where we've had more super-fit people, it's a small percentage, 15 to 20 per cent are super-fit, 80 per cent are inactive or overweight.'²⁵⁴ Irish bodies are evidently not homogenous and according to Prof. O'Shea, socioeconomic factors play a part in how they are manifest: 'We have just an environment of unregulated, I would say, poisoning of our kids, especially in the lower socio-economic groups with high fat, high salt and high sugar foods.'²⁵⁵ Prof. O'Shea's comments recognised that bodies are not autonomous. They are produced by a regulatory as well as a material environment. Though, as Staeheli argues,²⁵⁶ legislation does not define the full substantive capacities of embodied citizenship, legal frameworks and regulations are crucial factors that enable or disable different possibilities for embodiment, whether in the legislation that denies women bodily autonomy by curtailing their reproductive rights, or in the threats of censorship to dance artists exploring and presenting publicly the conventionally hidden movements of corporeality.²⁵⁷

Of course, the WHO figures on obesity are projections. They refer to a virtual body, a potential future Irish body rather than an actuality. However, research published in *The Lancet* in 2014 reported that the proportion of obese or overweight Irish men and women over the age of 20 was already well above the average in Western Europe.²⁵⁸ Though the WHO's forecasts were challenged by

developed Western European economies in their dealings with the physical consequences of poverty in post-colonial countries of the developing world. Dublin Docklands Development Authority, 'Enjoy Docklands-The Famine Memorial and The World Poverty Stone', www.ddda.ie [website], <http://www.ddda.ie/text/index.jsp?p=112&n=640> [accessed 7 May 2015].

²⁵⁴ Rachel Flaherty, 'Obesity in Ireland "worse than HIV/AIDS in the 1980s"', *Irish Times*, 6 May 2015, <http://www.irishtimes.com/news/health/obesity-in-ireland-worse-than-hiv-aids-in-the-1980s-1.2201783> [accessed 7 May 2015].

²⁵⁵ *Loc. cit.*

²⁵⁶ Staeheli, 'Globalization and the Scales of Citizenship'.

²⁵⁷ In 2002, the International Dance Festival (since renamed Dublin Dance Festival) was brought to court by an audience member who accused the festival of failing to give sufficient warning about the nudity and urination on stage, as part of a performance of *Jérôme Bel*. The choreography, by Jérôme Bel, was dubbed obscene and indecent. Though the case was not successful, the festival was not awarded costs and had to pay its own substantial legal bill. In that instance the regulatory framework didn't prevent the performance of the work, but its operation had a material impact on the festival's ability to support similar dance in the future; Deirdre Falvey, 'Patron Sues over Show's "Obscenity"', *Irish Times*, 7 July 2004, p. 5. Michael Seaver, 'The Creeping Threat of Censorship', *Irish Times*, 15 April 2006, p. 6.

²⁵⁸ 66% of Irish men over 20 and 50.9% of Irish women over 20 are overweight or obese. The Western European average is 47.6%. RTÉ, 'Ireland's Obesity Levels Above EU Average', www.rte.ie

Ireland's (then) Health Minister, Leo Varadkar, who pointed to studies that suggested that childhood obesity in Ireland had plateaued, Varadkar's defensive intervention on behalf of the Irish government acknowledged that the size, mobility and health of future Irish bodies were nonetheless a matter for State control.²⁵⁹ While obesity is linked to increased incidence of type-2 diabetes, heart disease and certain cancers, as well as to joint pain, breathlessness and consequent challenges to mobility, it was not only those embodied individual experiences of excess body weight that were the government's concern, but the cumulative economic cost of an estimated €1.3 billion per annum in the treatment of obesity-related illness, as well as lost productivity and the particular strain obesity placed on an already under-resourced public health system.²⁶⁰ Consultant endocrinologist at University Hospital Galway, Francis Finucane, endorsed the State's role in controlling expanding Irish bodies and illustrated the coming together of politics, economics and health in what Foucault calls the exercise of biopolitical power:

And it's going to be the legislators in this country who change the obesity epidemic.²⁶¹

By the time the WHO forecasts were published, actual rather than projected statistics for overweight and obesity in Ireland had already prompted the government to propose legislation for the display of calories on menus, to establish a special action group to advise the government on obesity, and to draft a National

[website], <http://www.rte.ie/news/ireland/2014/0529/620368-irelands-obesity-levels-above-eu-average/> [accessed 7 May 2015]. See also Marie Ng *et al.*, 'Global, Regional, and National Prevalence of Overweight and Obesity in Children and Adults during 1980–2013: A Systematic Analysis for the Global Burden of Disease Study 2013', *Lancet*, vol. 384, no. 9945 (2014), pp. 766–781.

²⁵⁹ Kelly O'Brien, 'Varadkar Rejects Claims of Lack of Action on Obesity', *Irish Examiner*, 7 May 2015, <http://www.irishexaminer.com/ireland/varadkar-rejects-claims-of-lack-of-action-on-obesity-329087.html> [accessed 7 May, 2015]. Varadkar became Taoiseach in June 2017.

²⁶⁰ Kathy Donaghy, 'The Shape We're In: 10 Facts About Irish Obesity', *Irish Independent*, 23 July 2014, <http://www.independent.ie/life/health-wellbeing/healthy-eating/the-shape-were-in-10-facts-about-irish-obesity-30451586.html> [accessed 7 May 2015]. See also Safe Food Ireland, 'The Cost of Overweight and Obesity on the Island of Ireland: Executive Summary', www.safefood.eu [website], p. 11, <https://www.safefood.eu/SafeFood/media/SafeFoodLibrary/Documents/Publications/Research%20Reports/Final-Exec-Summary-The-Economic-Cost-of-Obesity.pdf> [accessed 7 May 2015].

²⁶¹ O'Brien, 'Varadkar Rejects Claims of Lack of Action on Obesity'.

Physical Activity Plan.²⁶² An understanding of this national context confirms the significance of dance as a physical activity that might propose and materialise alternative body-futures to the one predicted by the WHO. It reveals that the territory in which dance operates and the corporeality through which it appears are already areas where the political stakes are high.

Biopolitics: Colonialism, Catholicism and Neo-liberalism

In his final lecture of the series 'Society Must Be Defended', Foucault makes a distinction between disciplinary technologies of power that operate on the level of the individual body,²⁶³ and the technologies of biopolitics which operate on the general populace *qua* generality:

To be more specific, I would say that discipline tries to rule a multiplicity of men to the extent that their multiplicity can and must be dissolved into individual bodies that can be kept under surveillance, trained, used, and, if need be, punished. And that the new technology that is being established is addressed to a multiplicity of men, not to the extent that they are nothing more than their individual bodies, but to the extent that they form, on the contrary, a global mass that is affected by overall processes characteristic of birth, death, production, illness and so on.²⁶⁴

In his earlier work, *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault articulates how the operation of the sovereign's disciplinary power produces the individual bodies it regulates;²⁶⁵ likewise the new biopolitics produces its object of control, the population, conceived as a multi-headed body that isn't quite the homogeneous social body of political philosophy.²⁶⁶ The eighteenth-century focus of biopolitics becomes,

²⁶² Department of Health, 'Press Release: WHO Obesity Forecasting Study Results', [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au/blog/press-release/who-obesity-forecasting-study-results/) [website], 5 May 2015, <http://health.gov.au/blog/press-release/who-obesity-forecasting-study-results/> [accessed 7 May 2015].

²⁶³ 'They included all devices that were used to ensure the spatial distribution of individual bodies (their separation, their alignment, their serialization, and their surveillance) and the organisation around these individuals of a whole field of visibility. They were also techniques that could be used to take control over bodies. Attempts were made to increase their productive force through exercise, drill, and so on'; Foucault, *"Society Must Be Defended"*, p. 242.

²⁶⁴ *Loc. cit.*

²⁶⁵ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1977).

²⁶⁶ 'What we are dealing with in this new technology of power is not exactly society (or at least not the social body, as defined by the jurists), nor is it the individual-as-body. It is a new body, a multiple body, a body with so many heads that, while they might not be infinite in number, cannot necessarily be counted. Biopolitics deals with the population, with the population as political

according to Foucault, 'the birth rate, the mortality rate, longevity, and so on – together with a whole series of related economic and political problems.'²⁶⁷ Of particular concern are the endemic illnesses that 'sapped the population's strength, shortened the working week, wasted energy, and cost money, both because they led to a fall in production and because treating them was expensive.'²⁶⁸ Though Haraway criticises Foucault's biopolitics as no longer adequate to the task of accounting for contemporary technological advances and a new informatics of domination, her criticisms predate the publishing of the "*Society Must Be Defended*" lecture series.²⁶⁹ Foucault's analysis of the techniques and alliances of control in the emergence of biopolitics in the eighteenth century is still relevant in an assessment of the response to the obesity of the twenty-first century Irish population: 'The mechanisms introduced by biopolitics include forecasts, statistical estimates, and overall measures.'²⁷⁰ Demography, medicine in its guise of public health, hygiene and even urban planning were and continue to be developed and co-opted to biopolitical ends. As swamps of poor sanitation in cities were regarded in the early nineteenth century as threats to the population, so obesogenic environments, such as cities that discourage walking, or 'food deserts' that have high concentrations of fast food outlets, are now the focus of biopolitical attention.²⁷¹

While the late eighteenth century, in Foucault's account, inaugurated a new regime of biopolitics it did not herald the end of disciplinary procedures operating at the level of individualised bodies: '[T]he two sets of mechanisms...are not mutually exclusive and can be articulated with each other.'²⁷² This is evident in the police that function as a disciplinary mechanism, but also as a state apparatus, and also in model towns whose urban planning organises the displacement and

problem, as a problem that is at once scientific and political, as a biological problem and as power's problem'; Foucault, "*Society Must Be Defended*", p. 245.

²⁶⁷ *ibid.*, p. 243.

²⁶⁸ *ibid.*, p. 244.

²⁶⁹ Donna Haraway, 'A Manifesto for Cyborgs' (1985), in *The Haraway Reader* (London: Routledge 2004), pp. 7-46, p. 22. Also Haraway, *Modest_Witness@Second_Millennium.FemaleMan@_Meets_OncoMouse™* (London: Routledge, 1997).

²⁷⁰ Foucault, "*Society Must Be Defended*", p. 246.

²⁷¹ Hillary J. Shaw, *The Consuming Geographies of Food: Diet, Food Deserts and Obesity* (London: Routledge, 2014).

²⁷² Foucault, "*Society Must Be Defended*", p. 250.

arrangement of particular bodies, and also, through sanitation systems and social insurance schemes, intervene at the level of population.²⁷³ However, for Foucault, it is 'sexuality [that] represents the precise point where the disciplinary and the regulatory, the body and the population, are articulated.'²⁷⁴ This not only about controlling the sexual debauchee, but, through the mechanisms of reproduction, attending to the life and death of populations,²⁷⁵ making it possible to extract maximum time and labour from them.²⁷⁶

As Harrington, in his analysis of citizenship in post-nationalist Ireland makes clear, from its foundation, '[t]he developmental tasks of the Irish state have routinely been posed and reposed as biopolitical problems', with acute attention directed by the constitutionally conjoined forces of Church and State to the regulation of sexuality, families and health.²⁷⁷ The 1937 Constitution accords privileged status to the Catholic Church whose influence over the disciplining of Irish bodies was, according to Tom Inglis, as much a legacy of colonialism as it was of conservative nationalism.²⁷⁸ And from the outset, the conjoined biopolitical and disciplinary control had economic aims, since after the famine periods of the mid-nineteenth century, the wealth of tenant farmers depended on controlling fertility,²⁷⁹ as did the drive towards self-sufficiency of the new Irish state in the

²⁷³ *Ibid.*, pp. 250-51.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 252.

²⁷⁵ On the one hand, sexuality, being an eminently corporeal mode of behavior, is a matter for individualizing disciplinary controls that take the form of permanent surveillance (and the famous controls that were, from the late eighteenth to the twentieth century, placed both at home and at school on children who masturbated represent precisely this aspect of the disciplinary control of sexuality. But because it also has procreative effects, sexuality is also inscribed, takes effect, in broad biological processes that concern not the bodies of individuals but the element, the multiple unity of the population'; *ibid.*, p. 251.

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

²⁷⁷ Harrington, 'Citizenship and the Biopolitics of Post-nationalist Ireland', p. 428.

²⁷⁸ 'The Catholic church first emerged as a power bloc in Irish society during the last century when the English state recognising the failure of political and economic repression, gradually changed its policy and sought to pacify and control the Irish population'; Inglis, 'The Struggle for Control of the Irish Body', p. 58.

²⁷⁹ 'It was therefore crucial to maintain the economic dominance of the new order that all thoughts of marriage in Ireland should be banished from minds of the majority of Irish youth [...]. Sex posed a far more severe threat than the landlord to the security and status of the family'; J. J. Lee, 'Women and the Church since the Famine', in Margaret MacCurtain and Donncha Ó Corráin (eds.), *Women in Irish Society: The Historical Dimension* (Dublin: Arlen House, 1978), p. 39, quoted in Tom Inglis, 'Origins and Legacies of Irish Prudery: Sexuality and Social Control in Modern Ireland', *Éire-Ireland*, vol. 40, nos 3-4 (2005), pp. 9-37, p. 10.

twentieth century, and as does the ongoing control of evolving bodies in the neo-liberalised Irish economy of the twenty-first century.²⁸⁰

The bodily implications of this control are most readily identifiable in the 1937 Constitution's conflation of women and motherhood, recognising females only for their role in reproducing and raising the population, while limiting their sphere of activity to the home.²⁸¹ This founding constitutional control was supplemented by legislation restricting contraception, banning divorce and, strengthening the existing law proscribing abortion, a constitutional amendment in 1983 protecting the rights of the unborn child, and further legal judgments restricting and threatening to restrict women's rights to travel for abortion – all of which have denied Irish women autonomy over the use and displacement of their own bodies and sexuality, in ways that have had deadly consequences, as the cases of Ann Lovett and, more recently, Savita Halappanavar made apparent.²⁸² The labour of representing the nation state which women's bodies have been made to perform is not exclusive to the Irish context,²⁸³ however it has a long history and material consequences, whether women conform to the assigned representation or not.²⁸⁴ As Gerry Kearns observes:

²⁸⁰ Kitchin *et al* argue that neo-liberalism in Ireland has specific local characteristics 'perhaps best characterised as ideologically concealed, piecemeal, serendipitous, pragmatic, and commonsensical'; Kitchin *et al*, 'Placing Neoliberalism', p. 1304.

²⁸¹ 'In particular, the State recognises that by her life within the home, woman gives the State a support without which the common good cannot be achieved. [...] The State shall, therefore, endeavour to ensure that mothers shall not be obliged by economic necessity to engage in labour to the neglect of their duties in the home'; *Bunreacht na hÉireann/Constitution of Ireland* (Dublin: The Stationery Office, 2012), Art 41/2/1, p. 162.

²⁸² Ann Lovett was a 15-year-old schoolgirl who died in 1984, having given birth on her own in a grotto dedicated to the Virgin Mary. Coming soon after the divisive abortion referendum, her death after an apparently concealed pregnancy reignited debate about right to life of mothers. The abiding regulatory power of the Catholic church is evident the case of Savita Halappanavar who in 2012 was told by the hospital's midwife that she could not have a termination of her life-threatening and unviable pregnancy 'because Ireland is a Catholic country'; Bruno Waterfield, 'Irish Abortion Law Key Factor in Death of Savita Halappanavar, Official Report Finds', *Telegraph*, 13 June 2013.

²⁸³ Nira Yuval-Davis, *Gender and Nation* (London: Sage, 1997).

²⁸⁴ It is also important to remain sensitive to the experience of women under this biopolitical regime who could not or chose not to be mothers. The trade off which some women – nuns – made between the sexual abstinence of the convent and the opportunities for education and female autonomy (albeit within priest and bishop-sanctioned parameters, see Stuart McLean, 'Hungry Ghosts and Hungry Women', in *idem*, *The Event and its Terrors: Ireland, Famine, Modernity* (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 2004), pp. 129-150, p. 146) is not often addressed. There is a more nuanced account of female embodiment under Catholicism to be elucidated that takes into account the mechanisms for power gained by these particular females, in light of the control exercised by nuns in Magdalene laundries and in Mother and Baby homes, over the bodies of other women who

Symbolic representations of Ireland as woman not only promote certain visions of woman as the exemplar that living women must follow, they can also make the status of women the measure of national progress. Living women can also themselves become symbols either by embodying or challenging the exemplar.²⁸⁵

Kearns' account of politically active female nationalists in the period before and after the foundation of the Irish state, illustrates the challenges experienced by particular women in negotiating the representation of women in the prevailing nationalist discourse. However, Kearns points out that the symbols weren't exclusively debilitating:

Even though many of the symbols of Ireland as woman would seem to reinforce the proscriptions their experience denied, in fact these women took great comfort from some of the gendered images of Ireland which they took as speaking both to men and women.²⁸⁶

Complicating assumed narratives of domination to uncover the potential for resistance implied by networks of power is important in historical accounts of the Irish body. Inglis's account of the repression of Irish sexuality bemoans a lack of resistance to the forces of repression. Yet, he mentions several instances of resistance – the explicit sexuality of Joyce's work, the Wilde scandal and the remarkably unscandalous homosexuality of actor and producer, Mícheál Mac Liammóir – that he then discounts:

But resistances to power are mostly irregular, spontaneous, and solitary. It is only when these resistances become integrated and codified that they can form the basis of a revolution.²⁸⁷

Many of the instances of resistance he admits are neutralised by Inglis because he judges them 'exotic' or associated with foreignness or with a conception of the urban that is linked to the foreign:

were considered to have transgressed moral and social codes, and over children in schools and reformatories.

²⁸⁵ Gerry Kearns, 'Mother Ireland and the Revolutionary Sisters', *Cultural Geographies*, vol. 11, no. 4 (2004), pp. 459-483, p. 446.

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 463.

²⁸⁷ Inglis, 'The Origins and Legacies of Irish Prudery', p. 4.

There were of course exceptions. Yet when these are examined, they emerge from an exotic urban, literary, and intellectual class, many of whose members were Anglo-Irish, and many of whom had emigrated.²⁸⁸

Though Inglis' work is helpful for historicizing the operation of Catholic power in Ireland, there is a strain of nostalgic essentialism in his account of Irish bodies under regimes of religious repression that 'was above all a transformation from open, passionate bodies to closed, moral bodies'.²⁸⁹ This kind of analysis dismisses bodies that did not conform to the author's thesis, even if such representational sidelining of bodily potential is the target of his critique.

The failure of De Valera's project of economic self-sufficiency and the State's later embrace of neo-liberalism necessitated an evolved biopolitical agenda to produce a flexible and internationally competitive workforce.²⁹⁰ While this economic liberalisation permitted, indeed required, a release of women from the domestic sphere, reproductive female bodies still carried a labour of representing the nation in competing nationalist and post-nationalist discourses. This was clear in the reference to 'the abortion mills of England'²⁹¹ by pro-amendment campaigners in the 1983 referendum to give constitutional protection to the foetus. It was also evident in the 1992 campaign against the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty, a treaty whose promised closer integration into the European Union would compromise what anti-treaty campaigners regarded as the distinctive 'Irish' morality evidenced in the country's anti-abortion legislation.²⁹²

The evolution from discourses of nationalist independence to post-nationalist (inter)dependence in a global and especially European economy, has

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

²⁸⁹ Inglis, *The Struggle for Control of the Irish Body*, p. 65.

²⁹⁰ Foster, *Luck of the Irish*.

²⁹¹ Ruth Fletcher, 'Post-colonial Fragments. Representation of Abortion in Irish Law and Politics', *Journal of Law and Society*, vol. 28, no. 4 (2001), pp. 569-89, p. 577, quoted in Harrington, 'Citizenship and the Biopolitics of Post-nationalist Ireland', p. 433.

²⁹² Martin, 'Death of a Nation', p. 71.

seen a consequent change in the exercise of biopower by the Irish nation state,²⁹³ as Irish citizenship has entailed European citizenship and the borders of Europe, though still geographic have also extended into the maternity wards of Irish hospitals.²⁹⁴ In the Good Friday Agreement, the European Union provided the common context for what Richard Kearney regards as a post-nationalist, Hegelian *Aufhebung* of the competing Republican and Unionist identities. The resulting amendment to the Irish constitution made Irish citizenship available (by constitution rather than solely by statute) to anyone in Northern Ireland who wished to claim it, as a compensation for the State's relinquishing of its constitutional claim to the whole island of Ireland.²⁹⁵ The guarantee of citizenship to anyone born on the island of Ireland meant the children born to Ireland's immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees, whose numbers increased significantly at the turn of the twenty-first century,²⁹⁶ were entitled to Irish and consequently European citizenship. With the further constitutional protection of family life, such children and, more importantly, their immigrant families could expect permission to stay in Ireland, and settle elsewhere in Europe. However in the 2003 *Lobe v. Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform* case, where families of Nigerian and

²⁹³ 'As such, we hold with the view that, far from disappearing under the impact of a reified globalization, states remain indispensable to the political management of global capitalism. Through law and welfare systems, states ensure an orderly regime of accumulation. They also mobilise consent to the new economic order, bolstering the local hegemony of global capital through national narratives of competitiveness and progress. To this effect, Ireland's political establishment has had conspicuous success in presenting its liberalizing course as a renewed fulfilment of the state's developmental destiny. That this destiny is now nested within a shared "European project" can only augment its symbolic force'; Harrington, 'Citizenship and the Biopolitics of Post-nationalist Ireland', p. 428. I am indebted to Harrington in the account that follows for his detailed exposition of Irish law and biopolitics in relation to citizenship.

²⁹⁴ 'In a sense, the border that matters is no longer the line separating North from South. It is instead the barrier between Europe and its others which runs through the ports and the airports, right into the maternity wards of the state. This is the fuzzy line which constantly threatens to isolate the non-European incomer from the host community' (p. 439). Harrington points out the Hegel's conception of Europe is based on an othering of Africa, revealing, as Said and Fanon have also done, the racism at the inception of the European project.

²⁹⁵ 'It is the entitlement and birthright of every person born in the island of Ireland, which includes its islands and seas to be part of the Irish nation. That is also the entitlement of all persons otherwise qualified in accordance with law to be citizens of Ireland. Furthermore the Irish nation cherishes its special affinity with people of Irish ancestry living abroad who share its cultural identity and heritage'; quoted in *ibid.*, p. 439. The amendment effectively acknowledged multiple Irish/British identities, and further complicated conceptions of Irishness by its embrace of the Irish diaspora. Irishness as a global brand and international signifier was activated in this 1998 amendment, even as subsequent legislation restricted who could benefit from it.

²⁹⁶ In 2004, the population of the Republic of Ireland reached 4.04 million, a level not witnessed since 1870s. Reversing historical emigration trends, the country had become the focus of inward migration (50,000 in 2004, of which a third were returning Irish emigrants.) Applications for asylum increased from 39 in 1992 to 10,325 in 2001. *Ibid.*, p. 436.

Roma origin that each included Irish-born citizens sought judicial review of their deportation orders, the government successfully argued that the constitutional protection of family life did not need to be exercised within the State. The effect of the ruling was to sanction the removal from the country of certain Irish children to uncertain conditions until they should be capable of independent living. In 2004, an amendment to Article 9 of the Constitution restored to the government the power to assign citizenship to children born to non-national parents and a subsequent Irish Nationality and Citizenship Act (2004) specified that citizenship would be accorded to children at least one of whose parents was a legal Irish resident three out of the four years before the child's birth.

When Foucault investigates where the murderous disciplinary power of the omnipotent sovereign goes in the regimes of biopower, he clarifies that:

When I say 'killing', I obviously do not mean simply murder as such, but also every form of indirect murder: the fact of exposing someone to death, increasing the risk of death for some people, or quite simply, political death, expulsion, rejection and so on.²⁹⁷

Campaigners for the 2004 constitutional amendment denied that it was racist. Indeed the government claimed that the curtailment of citizenship rights would *prevent* the resentment and racism that alleged 'citizenship tourism' risked provoking.²⁹⁸ The Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform at the time claimed that the amendment had been prompted by reports from Dublin's maternity hospitals that the medical system was under stress, with particular concern raised by the Master of the Rotunda about the number of pregnant African women presenting with HIV.²⁹⁹ Immigrant female bodies and (in a surprisingly post-human, but abidingly biopolitical, turn) their threatening viral and uterine

²⁹⁷ Foucault, "*The Society Must Be Defended*", p. 256.

²⁹⁸ 'Citizenship tourism' was the name given to the alleged practice of pregnant foreigners coming to Ireland as tourists or temporary visitors to give birth, thereby guaranteeing their children Irish and European citizenship, and, at the time, the right of the child's family to reside with her/him in Europe. The phrase was used by the Minister for Justice, Michael McDowell during the 2004 Citizenship Referendum campaign; Economist, 'Citizenship Tourists', *Economist*, 3 June 2004.

²⁹⁹ Harrington, 'Citizenship and the Biopolitics of Post-nationalist Ireland', pp. 444-5. For an account of The Rotunda's role in colonial regulation exercised through the bodies of women, see Susan Harris, 'The Tender Mother and the Faithful Wife: Theater, Charity, and Female Subjectivity in Eighteenth-Century Ireland', *Éire-Ireland: A Journal of Irish Studies*, vol. 37, nos. 3-4 (2002), pp. 207-230. Also Harris, 'Invasive Procedures'.

loads became the focus of a contemporary biopolitical order that preserved the integrity of an abstract, post-national, European body as much as it did the Irish national body; and that abstraction was protected at the cost of particular delegitimised, precaritised and racialised bodies.³⁰⁰

Galway Dance Days: Female Alternatives

In analysing the impact of biopolitical forces in Ireland, it is important not to lose sight of particular embodiments and to attend to them and to the networked places that support them as sites of potential. As outlined above, women have been pressed into a distinctive representational labour in the performance of the nation, a labour with deep material implications that continue to be played out in the Irish State's post-nationalist articulation. At the Galway Dancing Days Festival in 2014, four Irish-born, female artists spoke about and presented their work in a programme curated and organized by Ríonach Ní Néill, Galway's Dance Artist in Residence. A lecturer in Geography at UCD before building a successful career as a performer, choreographer, curator and activist, Ní Néill established the festival to bring together artists and academics to perform and discuss practices of the body.³⁰¹ Through an affiliation to the Ómós Áite: Space/Place Research Network, at the Centre for Irish Studies, NUI Galway, as well as through collaborations with the Space&Place Collaborative, at the Department of Geography, Maynooth University, and the international Mapping Spectral Traces Network, the festival has created alliances with academic geographers engaged in transdisciplinary research. Indeed it was through presenting my work at the 2012 iteration of the festival that I began the dialogue with academic Geography that has resulted in this research.

³⁰⁰ 'Neo-liberal post-nationalist developmentalism takes as its exemplary *homo sacer* the immigrant mother of an Irish-born child'; Harrington, 'Citizenship and the Biopolitics of Post-nationalist Ireland', p. 449. Harrington follows Agamben's account of bare life and agrees with his observation that: 'The refugee, formerly regarded as a marginal figure, has become now the decisive factor of the modern nation-state by breaking the nexus between human being and citizen'; Giorgio Agamben, *Means Without End: Notes on Politics* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), p. x.

³⁰¹ Ciotóg, 'Galway Dance Days Festival & Corp_Real International Symposium 2015', www.ciotog.ie, <http://www.ciotog.ie/index.php/2014-01-27-18-55-43/about> [accessed 22 June 2017].

Ní Néill and I share a long history. We first met as dancers for choreographer, Adrienne Browne, in a project based at Firkin Crane in Cork. Our shared Irish language backgrounds, our late arrival to dance after diversions from academia, and a certain shared physicality (muscular, angular, tough) brought us together. Our trajectories have remained intertwined, as Ní Néill took over my role as Curator of the Artistic Programme at Firkin Crane in 2015. My first choreography in Ireland was performed by Ríonach and from then, we danced in each other's work. Along with American-born choreographer, Rebecca Walter, we felt like a particular cohort of Irish dancer-choreographers – what Ní Néill called a 'gang' – who supported each other's work in different ways.³⁰² The mutual support that our informal alliance offered was not exclusive but, according to Ní Néill, meant that networks established by any one of us benefited the others and expanded the gang. For instance, Ní Néill's pioneering Macushla Dance Club, a dance group for non-professionals over the age of fifty, drew Walter and me into collaboration with older bodies in a way that influenced our subsequent choreography.³⁰³ Ní Néill's location of the Dancing Days Festival in Galway was the result of several factors that included a desire to bring up her family in the Irish-speaking communities of nearby Connemara, opportunities to partner with researchers at the National University of Ireland, Galway, as well as the funding structure offered by the Arts Council's Dance Artist Residency scheme, developed 'to stabilise and support a network of dance artists in residence across the country.'³⁰⁴ A desire to make visible and acknowledge the practice of a new generation of dance artists was also a motivation. She wanted to tell them: 'feicim an rud atá á dhéanamh agat', ['I see what you're doing'].³⁰⁵

In this context, Ní Néill's programming of the 2014 festival gave visibility to the work of female choreographers. A panel discussion, *Choreographing Feminist Politics in Ireland*, chaired by Dr. Aoife McGrath and with contributions by

³⁰² Interview with Dr. Ríonach Ní Néill, Choreographer and Curator, 8 October 2015. This interview was conducted in Irish and translated by me for the purposes of this research.

³⁰³ See below for an example of the influence of the shared networks, an account of *Mo Mhórchoir Féin*, a dance film that featured one of the Macushla performers I'd met when working with the group and whom I wouldn't have encountered otherwise.

³⁰⁴ Arts Council, 'Dance Artist Residency Scheme', www.artscouncil.ie, <http://www.artscouncil.ie/Funds/Dance-artist-residency-scheme/> [accessed 24 June 2017].

³⁰⁵ Ní Néill, interview.

choreographers/dance artists Emma Fitzgerald, Aoife McAtamney and Emma Martin,³⁰⁶ as well as by performance artist Michelle Browne, began by asking these women to comment on how useful the feminist label was to them. Both Fitzgerald and McAtamney acknowledged that they were feminists, the latter recalling the moment when she recognised her feminism and immediately phoned Fitzgerald to share her discovery, suggesting solidarity and complicity in the shared perspective. Neither Martin nor Browne embraced the label so readily. Martin said she ‘would not call myself a feminist’, but that she was interested in addressing ‘social inequality’ rather than gender. Browne said she was ‘never really called a female visual artist’ and that her work was not about her experience of being female until she became a mother.³⁰⁷ For that reason, when Martin and Browne were commissioned to collaborate on new work for the festival, it was their experiences of motherhood that they focused on. Their performance, *My Methyl*, was informed by ‘research carried out by scientists looking at mutations in genetic material, which found that mothers’ behaviour could alter the genetic function of their offspring and of further generations.’³⁰⁸ This research in epigenetics complicated the nature/nurture debate that had, in its simplified versions, suggested that genes were a material/corporeal inheritance whose expression environmental factors might shape, enhance or curtail, but that were largely immutable or at least only mutable over many generations. *My Methyl*, therefore, introduced the notion of a body whose constituent material was altered by environment, where other bodies – particularly that of the mother – were part of that shaping environment. While neither Browne nor Martin expressed it explicitly, the research in epigenetics had potentially biopolitical implications for the bodies of mothers, in so far as it provided further scientific support for the surveillance of that gendered body particularly responsible for the wellbeing and development of her foetus and of its future.

My Methyl was presented in Fairgreen House, an unfinished retail and office space adjoining Galway Coach Station. It opened with Martin and Browne in

³⁰⁶ McAtamney and Martin are noted in Houghton’s ‘Flirting with the Postmodern’ as examples of the increased presence of women as theatre/performance-makers in Ireland. There are many other female dance artists that could be added to the list.

³⁰⁷ Michelle Browne [website], www.michellebrowne.net [accessed 12 July 2017].

³⁰⁸ Ríonach Ní Néill, Galway Dance Days, ‘Galway Dance Days, Festival Programme’, 28 March 2014.

matching outfits of white blouses and long, full white plastic skirts with wide elasticated black belts. In the later panel discussion, Browne told us that the outfits were inspired by 19th century images of Parisian women because her interest in female navigation of urban space had led her to research that period. Martin and Browne also spoke of being inspired by the difference between Muybridge's images of active, athletic, pugilistic and gymnastic males and more passive females whose exertion is confined to descending steps or skipping. The pair performed in very high heels and incongruous short socks with day-glo detailing. The high heels on the bare concrete floor, the rustling plastic skirts and the performers' sometimes laboured breathing provided a distinctive sound for the otherwise silent performance. These body-produced sounds underlined the effort of the physical encounter between bodies and their material environment. Martin and Browne also wore very similar haircuts and styling so that the initial effect was one of doubling. This initially homogenizing effect, with its repeated signifiers of apparently conventional femininity, was reinforced by the symmetry of their movements, advancing towards and retreating from one another in choreography that suggested combat, display and challenge.

As the performance continued, it seemed to me that Martin was more contained than Browne.³⁰⁹ Browne wore a conventional bra to support her breasts. Martin wore a lycra sports-bra that flattened her chest. Browne squatted in wide positions that suggested birth and sexual display. She took off her high-heeled shoes and leapt over a chair with an increasing vigour and disregard for danger. At the same moment Martin tried to run along beside Browne, but still in high heels, she didn't quite keep up. I sensed that she was being cautious. Or perhaps I projected cautiousness, my own experience of dancing on concrete floors conditioning how I felt as I watch the performances in Fairlawn House. I imagined feeling in my own body the impact of dancing in such an environment. In China, in particular, I had accepted to dance in less than ideal conditions, in unfinished gallery spaces, in studio spaces made for visual artists, in exhibition spaces, all with concrete floors and often cold. I did so with the intention of bringing dance to

³⁰⁹ Finola Cronin called Martin one of Ireland's most elegant dancers and I think of the restraint that embodying elegance might require, particularly for someone whose body training is primarily classical ballet, as Martin's is. Finola Cronin, in conversation, 29 March 2014.

people who might otherwise be unfamiliar with it. However, as I will detail in Chapter Four, having torn a meniscus during my last stint of performing on concrete in China, I was more cautious about the cost of such generosity and more questioning of the circumstances that would demand such a cost of dance artists. For Browne, the performance artist, the authenticity of the moment required her body to be pushed to extremes, but with a knowledge that there would no expectation to repeat that moment. Performance events for the performance artist are usually unique. The dancer, on the other hand, learns repeatability. Her body is trained to deliver that repeatability, but it is usually resourced to achieve it, with warm ups, classes, sprung floors, heated rooms – an architecture of support that was not available in the unfinished retail space of this performance at the festival. Repeatability of the choreography, or even of the dancer's ability to perform in other choreography, is an economic necessity. Therefore, risks that would compromise the body are minimized and mitigated against. I sensed in or projected on Martin a cautiousness that protected her bodily asset as she ran on the concrete floor in dangerously high heels. Browne's performance did not suggest to me a similar caution about her corporeal resource.

In the subsequent panel discussion, Martin and Browne reinforced my impression that their engagement with the female body was deliberately communicated through familiar tropes and depictions of women: in high heels, in long skirts, in bra tops. That is not to say that their mobilisation of these representations endorsed such tropes. On the contrary, as I watched Browne and Martin in their stylised glamour and choreography, I was struck that their performance was a kind of drag act where women challenged conventional/patriarchal depictions of the female by caricature.

High Heels and Other Families

While the body in high heels is more restricted in terms of speed and athleticism, a month before this performance in Galway, Panti, a male body in high heels and wearing other parodic paraphernalia of female glamour, delivered a speech about homophobia on the stage of the Abbey Theatre, Ireland's National Theatre. The speech attracted global media attention and turned the marginal figure of an Irish

drag-queen into an international celebrity, what Panti called ‘a national fucking treasure’³¹⁰ and unofficial Queen of Ireland.³¹¹ Panti, the alter ego of Ruairi O’Neill, became a leading spokesperson for the Yes Equality campaign in favour of same-sex marriage in Ireland. Passage of the referendum in 2015 made Ireland the first country in the world to enshrine equal marriage in its constitution after popular vote, legislating for new expressions of the embodiment of Irish citizens. How legacies of homophobia impact on the substantive rights of queer minorities in Ireland following this legislative change remains in question, and will be discussed in Chapter Three. Pre-referendum, Panti’s Noble Call speech identified the prevailing homophobia in Irish society and how that homophobia was internalised even by gays and lesbians:

Have you ever been on a crowded train with your gay friend and a small part of you is cringing because he is being SO gay and you find yourself trying to compensate by butching up or nudging the conversation onto ‘straighter’ territory? This is you who have spent 35 years trying to be the best gay possible and yet still a small part of you is embarrassed by his gayness. And I hate myself for that. And that feels oppressive.³¹²

The self-policing of gay embodiment, the ‘butching up’ was a response to the perceived threat of a homophobic environment that Marriage Equality legislation and the first openly gay Taoiseach hasn’t suddenly transformed.³¹³ Research at the end of 2016 by the National Anti-Bullying Research and Resource Centre at Dublin City University showed that half of all primary school teachers had dealt with incidents of homophobic bullying.³¹⁴ In 2015, before the success of the Marriage Equality referendum, Panti described how as Ruairí, he had:

³¹⁰ Panti Bliss, *Panti-High Heels in Low Places*, Soho Theatre, London [performance], 22 April 2015.

³¹¹ In 2015, Panti delivered an alternative Christmas Day Queen’s Speech on TV3, one of Ireland’s national terrestrial channels; Panti Bliss, ‘Queen of Ireland’s Alternative Christmas Message’, *Irish Times* [video], 25 December 2015, <http://www.irishtimes.com/culture/queen-of-ireland-s-alternative-christmas-message-1.2477458> [accessed 14 June 2017].

³¹² Panti’s Noble Call at The Abbey Theatre. Full Transcript in Shaun Connolly, ‘Buttimer and Panti Drown out Empty Rhetoric in Homophobia Debate’, *Irish Examiner*, 8 February 2015, <http://www.irishexaminer.com/viewpoints/columnists/shaun-connolly/buttimer-and-panti-drown-out-empty-rhetoric-in-homophobia-debate-258117.html> [12 May 2015].

³¹³ The Irish electorate voted for Marriage Equality in a referendum held on 22 May 2015. Leo Varadkar was elected Taoiseach on 14 June 2017. The significance of both developments for the potential of embodiment in Ireland is discussed below.

³¹⁴ Gerard Farrelly, James O’Higgins Norman, and Michael O’Leary, ‘Custodians of Silences? School Principal Perspectives on the Incidence and Nature of Homophobic Bullying in Primary Schools in

[B]een standing at a pedestrian crossing when a car drives by and in it are a bunch of lads, and they lean out the window and they shout 'Fag!' and throw a milk carton ... Now it doesn't really hurt. It's just a wet carton and anyway they're right – I am a fag. But it feels oppressive. When it really does hurt, is afterwards. Afterwards I wonder and worry and obsess over what was it about me, what was it they saw in me? What was it that gave me away? And I hate myself for wondering that. It feels oppressive and the next time I'm at a pedestrian crossing I check myself to see what is it about me that 'gives the gay away' and I check myself to make sure I'm not doing it this time.³¹⁵

This checking and self-surveillance followed the disciplinary order of homophobia and was no less corrosive for the protective self-awareness with which it was and is carried out. O'Neill reported that he hated himself for his self-oppression. However, appropriating the costume of female glamour, its body-shaping corsetry and exaggerated prosthetics of high heels, wigs and false eyelashes, allowed O'Neill as Panti, to challenge his homophobic environment. As with Martin and Browne, the engagement with and assumption of stereotypes of femininity could be, in specific contexts, progressive.³¹⁶

Some opponents of the Marriage Equality referendum attributed their stance to a desire to protect the traditionally conceived family-unit of mother, father and child, with the implication inspired by Catholic theology that the purpose of marriage was procreation.³¹⁷ According to Kathryn Conrad, this conception of the traditional family unit with its mother-father and parent-children axes, 'shapes both normative heterosexuality and that which falls outside

Ireland', *Irish Educational Studies* (October 2016), pp. 1-17, online first, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03323315.2016.1246258> [accessed 26 July 2017].

³¹⁵ Connolly, 'Buttimer and Panti Drown out Empty Rhetoric in Homophobia Debate'.

³¹⁶ That drag, like blackface, might be regressive has also been a source of controversy. See for example Alisa Solomon, 'It's Never Too Late to Switch: Crossing toward Power', in Lesley Ferris (ed.), *Crossing the Stage: Controversies on Cross-Dressing* (London, 1993), pp. 144-54. See also Leo Bersani, 'Is the Rectum a Grave?', in *idem., Is the Rectum a Grave? And Other Essays* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), pp. 3-30.

The increasing number of cisgender and transgender women who now perform drag further complicates the politics and ethics involved.

³¹⁷ Iona Institute, 'How Mothers and Fathers Complement Each Other', www.ionainstitute.ie [blog], 5 June 2015, <http://www.ionainstitute.ie/index.php?id=3930> [accessed 15 June 2017]. For a further discussion of families and embodiment, see Chapter Three.

of it.’³¹⁸ Conrad explains how the family unit has particular force in Ireland as result of the constitutional primacy accorded to it as ‘the natural primary and fundamental unit group of Society.’³¹⁹

The State, therefore guarantees to protect the Family in its constitution and authority, as the necessary basis for social order and as indispensable to the welfare of the Nation and the State.³²⁰

Conrad makes clear the impact this privileging of a child-focused family unit has on women and on homosexuals whose sexuality:

[T]hreatens the stability of the nation and state for at least two major reasons. First, the very instability and specific historical contingency of the concept of homosexuality makes the category more fluid than most and this brings into question the coherence of all identity categories. Second, homosexuality does not fit neatly with the discourse of bourgeois nationalism, since it threatens the reproduction of the heterosexual family cell that serves as the foundation of the nation-state.³²¹

Panti parodied the family-focus of No campaigners with a Facebook photograph of herself with two younger drag queens, Shirley Temple Bar and Mary Temple Bar. Her accompanying status update read: “‘Fierce Families First” (Shirley Temple Bar deserves a mother and a father)’.³²² Though there was humour in Panti’s picture, it also pointed to the expanded notions of family that some LGBTQ people have developed.³²³ The notion of a drag mother begetting her drag family is particularly strong in the gay and gender non-conforming,

³¹⁸ Kathryn A. Conrad, *Locked in the Family Cell: Gender, Sexuality, and Political Agency in Irish National Discourse* (Madison WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004), p. 4.

³¹⁹ *Bunreacht na hÉireann*, Art 41/1/1, p. 160.

³²⁰ *Bunreacht na hÉireann*, Art 41/1/2, p. 162.

³²¹ Conrad, *Locked in the Family Cell*, p. 21.

³²² Panti Bliss/PantiBar, “‘Fierce Families First” (Shirley Temple Bar deserves a mother and a father)’, Facebook, 11 May 2015, <https://www.facebook.com/panti/photos/a.117330124943911.19325.117109094966014/983522448324670/?type=1&theater> [accessed 15 June 2017].

³²³ Panti’s stage show *High Heels in Low Places*, revealed how she is not above exploiting the family unit for pleasure. She described an opportunity to appear in an American TV show that depended on her bringing a sister who wanted to see her drag-queen brother made over as a man. Panti and a friend of hers pretended to be siblings to get an all expenses trip to New York and appeared on the show as brother and sister, spinning stories to the American host about their mother’s response to Panti’s childhood cross-dressing. Alongside this willingness to parody the family, Panti spoke warmly of his biological family and concluded the show with a tribute to his mother and to how she is now proud of her gay sons.

primarily African-American and Latino ballroom culture. In that scene, competing houses become families for those LGBTQ children whose biological families have rejected them.³²⁴ While the drag mother does not reproduce biologically, there is a bodily replication from mother to child in the sharing of make-up tips and training in physical comportment and voguing that goes with ball and drag culture.³²⁵ Those 'chosen' families (chosen at least to the extent that biological family alternatives are not hospitable) open up alternatives to the traditional family cell and in doing so, in the context of the Irish referendum on equal marriage, implied the possibility for a variety of family units to be valued. In contrast, the No campaign's assertion that marriage should be for procreation and that children should have a mother and a father devalued not only same-sex parents and their families, but also heterosexual couples who didn't have children, one-parent families, and the children of the Mother and Baby homes effectively orphaned or sold into adoption.³²⁶ Panti's family photo suggested that, like the stereotypes of femininity, the oppressive structure of the heteronormative family cell could be repurposed to support formerly marginalised or expelled bodies.

However, Jasbir Puar's more recent work on homonationalism challenges the perception of the homosexual as automatically outlaw to the state. She exposes a historical shift in how, post 9/11 and especially in the U.S., the extension of LGBTQ rights to certain homosexual bodies has reformulated 'the relationship between the state, capitalism, and sexuality',³²⁷ as the homosexual has gone from being a figure associated with threat and with death, 'to becoming tied to ideas of life and productivity (i.e., gay marriage and families).'³²⁸ The shift, which Puar analyses

³²⁴ See Emily A. Arnold and Marlon M. Bailey, 'Constructing Home and Family: How the Ballroom Community Supports African American GLBTQ Youth in the Face of HIV/AIDS', *Journal of Gay and Lesbian Social Services*, vol. 21, no. 2 (2009), pp. 171-188.

³²⁵ Voguing is a dance style that evolved initially in the ballroom scene in New York. Its name derives from the *Vogue* fashion magazine, because of the model-like poses performed in the dance. See Jonathan David Jackson, 'The Social World of Voguing', *Journal for the Anthropological Study of Human Movement*, vol. 12, no. 2 (2002), pp. 26-42.

³²⁶ Though the Yes campaign has argued against linking the equal marriage referendum and the separate issue of families, it has had to respond to the No campaign's shifting of the argument to that ground. In the 2011 census, married couples accounted for 69.5 per cent of all family units, a significant majority that leaves a substantial minority of other family models.

³²⁷ Jasbir K. Puar, 'Rethinking Homonationalism', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 45 (2013), pp. 336-9, p. 337.

³²⁸ Jasbir K. Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times* (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2007), p. xii.

under the category of homonationalism, has seen the homosexual produced and deployed in ways that bolster the nation state and a neo-liberal capitalism that still works through the nation state. This reinforcement of the nation has happened through demands for equal marriage that nonetheless embed the societal structures supported by heterosexual marriage and its norms. It has happened through the commodification of gay identities that anchor the homosexual in the normative production and consumption cycles of neo-liberalism; and it has happened through the division of countries into progressively gay-friendly and regressively not-gay friendly, a division that has justified American aggression in the Muslim-majority states of the Middle East, as well as American support of a pinkwashed Israeli regime.³²⁹ Puar's analysis provides an important corrective to the assumption in Conrad that the homosexual is automatically subversive of the state. On the day after the passage of the Marriage Equality referendum, Tourism Ireland, launched its 'Ireland says I do campaign', to attract gay and lesbian couples to Ireland as a wedding and honeymoon destination. It even offered single gays The Outing, the world's first gay matchmaking festival. The Outing would be modeled on the Lisdoonvarna Bachelor Festival (for heterosexuals) and hosted by the now internationally-recognised and celebrity-endorsed Panti, who appeared in the climax of the campaign's promotional video.³³⁰ Clearly a nexus of state, capitalism and sexuality could operate in Ireland just as effectively as in the U.S.

Poz-itive Reproduction

As Puar suggests, not all LGBTQ-identifying people have benefited from the extension of rights that co-opt the homosexual to the state: "The homosexuals seen as being treated properly by the nation-state are not "gender queer"". ³³¹ Therefore while Equal Marriage is an important guarantor of safety in the body politic for many gays and lesbians, to others it represents a domestication of the radical and dissenting potential of same-sex sexuality.³³² In its MANifesto, *Homo Magazine*,

³²⁹ *ibid.*, p. 50.

³³⁰ Tourism Ireland, 'Ireland says "I Do"!', www.tourismireland.com [website], 24 May, 2015, <https://www.tourismireland.com/Press-Releases/2015/May/Ireland-says-I-Do> [accessed 12 June 2017].

³³¹ Jasbir K. Puar, 'Homonationalism As Assemblage: Viral Travels, Affective Sexualities', *Jindal Global Law Review*, vol. 4, no. 2 (2013), pp. 23-43, p. 35.

³³² See Derek Byrne, 'Marriage is Not a Good Fit for Gay People's Lifestyles', *Irish Times*, 9 October 2014, p. 14. Byrne criticizes an assimilationist 'gay establishment' based on Catholic guilt.

which styles itself as an 'intelligent and radical inquiry into living as a pervy homosexual today',³³³ asserts that '[i]n the welter of late history, we have lost our way, straying from time-honored customs and traditions into garish wedding pictures, suburban block parties and mind-deadening box stores' and advocates an eschewal of 'marriage, monogamy, religion (most especially monotheism), and the traditional family'.³³⁴ The MANifesto proclaims instead that

[We] are unreservedly hedonistic and pro-sex. We are men who are shamelessly man-loving sluts; we are unrepentant, joyous and filthy perverts. We revile the pathetic currency in sex-panic and its deleterious and pervasive affect on our getting laid.³³⁵

This embrace of the sexual outlaw status resists the acquisition of in-laws that the respectability of same-sex marriage confers. For Tim Dean this resistance to heteronormativity explains the rise in bareback culture where gay men have penetrative sex without condoms and deliberately seek HIV infection³³⁶: 'Now I believe in exchanging bodily fluids, not wedding rings.'³³⁷ Dean describes how barebacking culture establishes kinship ties between men, who seek to become brothers, but also incubating mothers and inseminating fathers of a virus that connects them genetically to their gay ancestors.³³⁸ Dean notes the language of 'breeding', used to describe the infecting sex that permits men to bond and 'reproduce' without the mediation of female bodies. While he does not condone the practice, and prefaces his article with an account of his own refusal to 'breed' a

³³³ Homo, 'About', www.homo-online.com [website], <http://homo-online.com/about> [accessed 12 May 2015].

³³⁴ Homo, 'MANifesto', www.homo-online.com [website], <http://homo-online.com/MANifesto> [accessed 12 May 2015].

³³⁵ *Loc. cit.*

³³⁶ This deliberate search for infection is different from men who have unprotected sex in the hope or belief that they won't be infected, or couples who have unprotected sex under conditions of negotiated safety. See Leo Bersani and Adam Phillips, *Intimacies* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), p. 43.

³³⁷ Scott O'Hara, 'Viral Communion: There's Life beyond Condoms', *Poz* (November 1997), p. 69, quoted in Tim Dean, 'Breeding Culture: Barebacking, Bugchasing, Giftgiving', *The Massachusetts Review*, vol. 49, nos. 1-2 (2008), pp. 80-94, p. 82.

³³⁸ 'For some people, reproducing the culture takes precedence over their own survival as individuals; these people are willing to sacrifice their lives so that something vitally important to their lives on. Just as a nation-state perpetuates itself through the ideology of patriotism, by convincing its members that the life of their country may be worth dying for, so one dimension of gay subculture survives through the sacrifices of barebackers. These men are not simply enjoying sex, they are also suffering it on behalf of others. From a certain perspective, their sex is altruistic rather than merely self-indulgent'; *ibid.*, p. 89.

sexual partner, Dean strives to present barebacking as a meaningful activity for its participants, conducted in opposition to a drive for same-sex marriage and same-sex parenting and as an alternative life-long commitment and responsibility. In contrast, Leo Bersani, despite early work that seems more in line with Dean's perspective³³⁹ focuses on the life-limiting aspect of the culture and on the loneliness of the barebacker and his internalisation of a viral community rather than his participation in a social or political community:

Barebacking does nothing to further the political goals of a minority community (on the contrary!), and it does nothing to transmit the presumed values of that community to future generations. The barebacker is the lonely carrier of the lethal and stigmatised remains of all those to whom his infection might be traced. He may continue to move and to act socially, but that which constitutes his most profound sociality isolates him, makes his life like that in a desert.³⁴⁰

Bersani does not justify his description of the lonely HIV positive barebacker, whose diagnosis, at the very least, enmeshes him or her in the institutional relations of a medical and pharmaceutical system that manages such notifiable diseases. Moreover, as medication, in Western countries and for most socioeconomic and racial groups at least, has made HIV more of a manageable rather than life-limiting illness, it is difficult to not to read Bersani's negative depiction of barebacking in the light of his admission that he finds 'bug-chasing and gift-giving sexually repellent and staggeringly irresponsible behavior.'³⁴¹ He does, however, acknowledge in barebacking, 'a ritual of sacrificial love' which he regards as a critique of 'the prideful exclusiveness of the family as a socially blessed, closed unit of reproductive intimacy, and even to the at once violently aggressive and self-shattering ego-hyperbolizing of racial, national, ethnic and gendered identities.'³⁴² However, because it is self-destructive, he considers this critique inadequate as resistance. In an Irish context, where there is a history of the advancement of republican political objectives through the bodily self-sacrifice

³³⁹ 'Gay men's "obsession" with sex, far from being denied, should be celebrated[...]. Male homosexuality advertises the risk of the sexual itself as the risk of self-dismissal, of *losing sight* of the self, and in so doing it proposes and dangerously represents *jouissance* as a mode of asceticism'; Bersani, 'Is the Rectum a Grave?', p. 30.

³⁴⁰ Bersani and Phillips, *Intimacies*, p. 50.

³⁴¹ *Ibid*, p. 55.

³⁴² *Loc. cit.*

of hunger strikes, and where the State religion is founded on the notion of the sacrifice of a body, Bersani's confidence in the ineffectiveness of the barebackers' critique is less secure.³⁴³ Indeed, it is because there has existed in Ireland discourses that have conflated homosexual sex with disease that threatens the nation, both metaphorically and materially, that one can question Bersani's judgement that the sexual choices of barebackers have no political force. In 1984, David Norris' bid to overturn legislation criminalising same-sex activity was rejected because:

Chief Justice C.J. O'Higgins stated in the majority opinion that 'on the ground of the Christian nature of our State and on the grounds that the deliberate practice of homosexuality is morally wrong, that it is damaging to the health both of individuals and the public, that it is potentially harmful to the institution of marriage, I can find no inconsistency with the Constitution in the laws which make such conduct criminal.'³⁴⁴

The Chief Justice also noted that 'male homosexual conduct has resulted, in other countries, in the spread of all forms of venereal disease and this has now become a significant public-health problem in England'.³⁴⁵ As previously noted, the perceived threat to the health of the national body has provoked biopolitical vigilance not only of homosexuals, but of other marginalised bodies such as those of pregnant HIV positive African women in Irish maternity wards. The argument here is not that state intervention in healthcare isn't important. The rise in new HIV diagnoses in Ireland since 2011³⁴⁶ has prompted activists to demand more state support to deal with the crisis, with ACT UP Dublin declaring in its mission

³⁴³ For accounts of the religiously inflected political use of self-sacrifice and physical abnegation in Irish republican nationalism, see Ruczaj Maciej, 'Liturgy of Nation-Formation: Patrick Pearse and the Theological Background of the Easter Rising of 1916', *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism*, vol. 13, no. 3 (2013), pp. 412-428. See also George Sweeney, 'Irish Hunger Strikes and the Cult of Self-Sacrifice', *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 28, no. 3 (1993), pp. 421-437. Also Jeanette Marie Herman, *Empire's Bodies: Images of Suffering in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century India and Ireland*, unpublished PhD thesis, University of Texas at Austin, 2004, pp. 246-348; <https://www.lib.utexas.edu/etd/d/2004/hermanjm85934/hermanjm85934.pdf> [accessed 6 May 2015].

³⁴⁴ *Norris v the Attorney General* [1984] I.R. 36, quoted in Conrad, *Locked in the Family Cell*, pp. 48-49.

³⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

³⁴⁶ Health Protection Surveillance Centre, 'HIV Infection in Ireland', www.hpsc.ie [website], 21 June 2017, <http://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/hivstis/hivandaids/> [accessed 20 July 2017].

statement that: 'We recognise that the HIV epidemic is a political crisis.'³⁴⁷ It is precisely the political nature of the corporeal tactics of barebackers and of immigrant mothers, some with HIV, discussed above, that I wish to underline. Barebacking as an erotic and ethical choice offers profound challenges to conventional thinking about bodies, families and polities, challenges that not even the campaign for marriage equality could address. As No campaigners such as the Alliance for the Defence of the Family and Marriage distributed leaflets that linked homosexuality to AIDS and, in lesbians, to increased risks of cancer,³⁴⁸ this radically alternative gay embodiment was strategically omitted.³⁴⁹ In considering the potential of Irish bodies, however, such exceptional alternatives require acknowledgment and attention.

Dancing Dissensus

Returning to the Galway Dancing Days Festival, it was apparent from the contribution of dance artist, Emma Fitzgerald, to the *Choreographing Feminist Politics in Ireland* panel, that individual bodies are in constant strategic negotiation with disciplinary and biopolitical power, produced in dynamic relation to that power, but embodying alternatives to its dominant modes. Fitzgerald spoke of contemporary dance as a form that is 'empowering for women': 'I feel empowered as a choreographer to tell stories that I want to tell ... choreography gives me a space to rebel'. However telling the stories she wanted to tell did not involve engaging with conventional depictions of women, as Martin and Browne had done. Instead, in performance, she was 'trying to look at myself as a body interacting'. Because in her work with Áine Stapleton, as Fitzgerald and Stapleton, she had often performed naked, she described being aware of the 'social choreography' of her body. By social choreography, I understood her to mean how her body was viewed and shaped in that viewing by a dominant culture. She illustrated her

³⁴⁷ ACT UP Dublin, 'Mission Statement', www.actupdublin.com [website], <http://www.actupdublin.com/mission-statement/> [accessed 20 July 2017].

³⁴⁸ Alliance for the Defence of the Family and Marriage (ADFAM), 'Why It Isn't Compassionate to Vote for Same-Sex "Marriage"', www.adfam.ie [website], <http://www.adfam.ie/sites/default/files/Why%20It%20Isn't%20Compassionate%20to%20Vote%20for%20Same.pdf> [accessed 12 May 2015].

³⁴⁹ In her stage show, Panti/ Ruairi O'Neill spoke of being HIV positive and of the challenges of having sex when you're a 'fucking national treasure'. His show also included a frank discussion with the audience about the gay dating/sex app, Grindr, and about other 'hook-up' websites that facilitate casual sex among men who have sex with men.

understanding of social choreography by mentioning how if she was naked and improvising movement in performance, that she might become conscious of whether her legs were spread to reveal her genitalia in a way that couldn't easily be recuperated into the decorous aesthetic frame of the female nude. She acknowledged that she herself could adopt and impose that dominant perspective on and judgment of her own body. She recognized herself as a spectator of her own embodiment and risked censoring her movement, or adjusting her self-presentation *vis-à-vis* an audience, as a result. Her practice deliberately anticipated this public performance by rehearsing a process of noticing and of registering those moments of potential self-censorship under the internalised gaze of the social choreography. Therefore Fitzgerald's recognition that she might, at some moments, be censoring the unfolding of her body, and her realisation that such a censoring was enacted to conform to social norms about the permissible presentation of her body, did not mean that she tried to resist self-censorship in that moment. However her practice of noticing informed what possibilities were available to her in the next moment of her improvised performance. Her awareness of the restrictions encountered in particular moments did not prevent her from imagining the potential that something different might emerge in the next moment.

For Jacques Rancière, 'if there exists a connection between art and politics, it should be cast in terms of dissensus.'³⁵⁰ Rancière distinguishes between *police*, 'organised as a set of procedures whereby the aggregation and consent of collectivities is achieved, the organisation of powers, the distribution of the places and roles, and the system of legitimising this distribution',³⁵¹ and *politics*, which is 'a conflict regarding the scene in common, regarding the existence and status of those who are present there.'³⁵² Dissent, therefore – the unwillingness to participate in and accept the agreed terms and fixed subjectivities of 'the scene in common' – becomes the defining position in politics for Rancière and it is this dissent that he identifies also as the defining quality of art. Rancière's distinction

³⁵⁰ Jacques Rancière and Steve Corcoran, *Dissensus: on Politics and Aesthetics* (London & New York: Continuum, 2010), p. 140.

³⁵¹ Jacques Rancière, *Disagreement: Politics and Philosophy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), p. 28.

³⁵² Jacques Rancière, *Aesthetics and its Discontents* (Cambridge: Polity, 2009), p. 24.

between the police and politics is similar to Chantal Mouffe's separation of *politics* from *the political*, where, somewhat confusingly, the former term is closer to Rancière's police in that it describes the forces of habitual order, while the political is closer to Rancière's politics in that it suggests an account of society that is constituted and renewed by conflict rather than on metaphysical foundations.

What is at a given moment accepted as the 'natural order', jointly with the common sense that accompanies it, is the result of sedimented hegemonic practices; it is never the manifestation of a deeper objectivity exterior to the practices that bring it into being. Every hegemonic order is susceptible of being challenged by counter-hegemonic practices which attempt to disarticulate it in order to install another form of hegemony.³⁵³

If citizenship for artists implies a right and duty to participate in a political community, Rancière's and Mouffe's theories open up at least three possible modes of participation. Firstly, there is the realm of Rancière's police or Mouffe's politics, a political participation that reinforces the existing order. As Franco Barrionuevo Anzaldi points out, 'political moments might be affirmative as well and not just dissensual.'³⁵⁴ Many artists have consciously accepted this affirmative role as cheerleaders or propagandists for the State. Soviet Russia, Nazi Germany, Imperial Britain all provide examples of regime-endorsing artists who have been, in return, recognised as good citizens.

A second mode of participation is suggested by Mouffe's understanding of the political, where an artist's engagement is oppositional and dissenting. Richard Bellamy's acknowledgement that an aspect of civic participation is 'speaking out' implies that this kind of oppositional engagement has a place in citizenship also.³⁵⁵ Though oppositional, this second mode of engagement does imply an acceptance of the constituents of the prevailing order: 'A properly political intervention is always

³⁵³ Chantal Mouffe, 'Critique as a Counter-Hegemonic Intervention', www.eipcp.net [website], 19 July 2012, <http://eipcp.net/transversal/0808/mouffe/en> [accessed 22 June 2017].

³⁵⁴ Franco Barrionuevo Anzaldi, 'Pitfalls of "The Political"', in Gabriele Brandstetter and Gabriele Klein (eds), *Dance[and]Theory* (Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2010), pp.159-165, pp. 163-4.

³⁵⁵ Richard Bellamy and Antonino Palumbo (eds.), *Citizenship* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2010), p. xii.

one that engages with a certain aspect of the existing hegemony in order to disarticulate/re-articulate its constitutive elements.’³⁵⁶

A third possible mode for artists to participate is offered by Rancière’s dissensual politics and his understanding of the political community not as a shared nor even a competing terrain of discourses articulated from equally constituted subject-positions:

The police is thus first an order of bodies that defines the allocation of ways of doing, ways of being, and ways of saying, and sees that those bodies are assigned by name to a particular place and task; it is an order of the visible and the sayable that sees that a particular activity is visible and another is not, that this speech is understood as discourse and another as noise.³⁵⁷

Because the police limits the sphere of intelligible discourse and acceptable subject-positions, artists who manage to articulate the contingency of that limitation and express or embody what Judith Butler calls the excluded but necessary abject, are, in Rancière’s reckoning, radically political:

Political activity is whatever shifts a body from the place assigned to it or changes a place’s destination. It makes visible what has no business being seen, and makes heard a discourse where once there was only place for noise; it makes understood as discourse what was once only heard as noise.³⁵⁸

This attending to and making visible of the abject, the excluded and the marginal, places some artists apparently outside the community of shared intelligibility and risks creating the division between artists and a wider public. However what Rancière’s argument points to, as does Butler’s work on the necessity of the

³⁵⁶ *Loc. cit.*

³⁵⁷ Rancière, *Disagreement: Politics and Philosophy*, p. 29. See also Butler (and Kristeva) on abject bodies: ‘This exclusionary matrix by which subjects are formed thus requires the simultaneous production of a domain of abject beings, those who are not yet “subjects”, but who form the constitutive outside to the domain of the subject. The abject designates here precisely those “unlivable” and “uninhabitable” zones of social life which are nevertheless densely populated by those who do not enjoy the status of the subject, but whose living under the sign of the “unlivable” is required to circumscribe the domain of the subject’; Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 3.

³⁵⁸ Rancière, *Disagreement: Politics and Philosophy*, p.162.

excluded abject in the constitution of the normative subject, is that 'outside' the community is not disconnected from 'inside', that the margins and beyond the margins define a centre ground. As a result, those artists who are placed or place themselves at a remove to the consensus and who are reluctant to engage with the material of the status quo, nonetheless participate in the antagonistic processes from which the prevailing sense of political community emerges and re-emerges. This kind of political participation is also an exercise of citizenship, albeit one that redefines who can be included in the community and therefore what citizenship might mean.³⁵⁹

It is worth noting the resolutely spatial quality of Rancière's conception of politics as dissensus, a quality that is geographic and choreographic. Politics moves bodies from the locations assigned by the police. This alteration of place and destination is a choreography that counters the normative formation of bodies, displacing them from conventional routines. In doing so, it transgresses borders, particularly the borders that define what counts as politics:

It should be clear therefore that there is politics when there is a disagreement about what is politics, when the boundary separating the political from the social or the public from the domestic is put into question. Politics is a way of re-partitioning the political from the non-political. This is why it generally occurs 'out of place', in a place which was not supposed to be political.³⁶⁰

Consequently, Rancière's account of politics is useful for an analysis of the political impact of contemporary dance practice in Ireland, since it reminds the scholar to be attentive to the unexpected places in which such an impact might show up and to the strategic work of artists in crossing and in shifting the boundaries between the political and non-political.

³⁵⁹ Anzaldi ('Pitfalls of "The Political"', p.162) objects to Rancière's argument on the grounds that there is no mechanism for saying the unsayable or making visible the intelligible without an already shared language that determines what can be intelligible and communicated between people who share that language. Butler's account of performativity as the necessary but unstable repetition of norms opens a space, in its inaccurate repetitions, for the abject to emerge. See *Bodies that Matter*, p.10.

³⁶⁰ Jacques Rancière, 'The Thinking of Dissensus: Politics and Aesthetics', in Paul Bowman and Richard Stamps (eds.), *Reading Rancière* (London and New York: Continuum, 2011), pp. 1-17, p. 1.



Plate 1.1 Promotional image for Emma Fitzgerald's *The Sea and the Shape of my Heart*.
Photo: Ewa Figaszewska.

In her solo for the Galway Dancing Days Festival, Emma Fitzgerald explored the possibilities of her body and challenged dominant conceptions of what is permissible for a body in Ireland. She engaged less with interrogating existing images of the female body and more with presenting articulations of her body that proposed and modeled its less familiar potential. In her solo, *The Sea and the Shape of My Heart*, she performed a body that was physically articulate, playful and also voiced: she talked and she sang, challenging the stereotype of the dancer's mute materiality. The fact that the performance was improvised made her body appear spontaneous, though its physical capacities also signaled her trained skill, a history of practice. It followed patterns (a movement flow that traveled anti-

clockwise around the space), but its every articulation did not appear scripted. The programme told us that the solo was '[i]nspired by her research into female biography and the social pressures which censor the telling of women's lives.' It started with her inviting us to sit around the dance floor that has been laid out in the middle of the Fairgreen House. She told us not to be worried about our proximity: 'I won't dance on you. I'm a highly trained dancer.' We laughed and were drawn in to complicity, even more so when she announced with faux-portentousness that 'I will enter performance mode now', turning her back to the audience before dancing a movement phrase the length of the performance area. She sang a public service announcement about how not all crisis pregnancy support services were the same and then, gradually reducing her movement, told a story of her experience of being in an artistic residency in Paris on New Year's Eve. She recalled dancing happily on her own when a technician at the residency approached her and wanted to spend time with her. She told of being raped by him that evening and of her phoning helplines to try to understand what had happened to her. She told of the distance her experience created between her and friends who had not had that experience of sexual violence and who were consequently more carefree in nightclubs than she could be as a result of her being attacked. She finished with 'a little broken hearted dance across the floor' that she announced as such, and then executed. The solo suggested a confrontation between dance as an exploration and expression of bodily potential – the 'empowerment' Fitzgerald mentioned in the panel discussion – and an encounter with a repressive, coercive force that violently assigned a role to that body, in this instance, ascribing to Fitzgerald the role of sexually available female body. While she did not perform naked in this solo, wearing instead a dark long-sleeved top, thick tights and a thigh-length skirt, I noticed that Fitzgerald still offered arrangements of her body that, in many aesthetic regimes, might be considered awkward, unseemly, or ugly. Her challenge to prevailing aesthetics imposed on female bodies was deliberate. Speaking of performing as part of Fitzgerald and Stapleton, she observed that: 'Our nakedness is a protest against the pornographised, photoshopped, dissected, airbrushed, sexually objectified, passive images of women which we're constantly being fed.'³⁶¹ The experience of attack

³⁶¹ Michael Seaver, 'The Naked Truth about Dance', *Irish Times*, 14 May 2013, p. 10.

that she described in her solo did not seem to curtail her exploration of physical potential. Yet, it signalled dangers that materially threaten bodies read in particular ways by dominant ideologies, bodies whose function and meaning are determined by an outside gaze rather than by individual somatic experience. Though Fitzgerald in her own work and as part of Fitzgerald and Stapleton has proposed a dissensual rearrangement of how her body might appear, her dissensual choreography has been vulnerable to reappropriation by a misogynist police. An online video of Fitzgerald and Stapleton, used to promote their performances in New York, had to be taken down when it was used on porn sites.³⁶²



Plate 1.2 Promotional image for Aoife McAtamney's *Softer Swells*. Photo: Giacomo Corvaia.

Aoife McAtamney – Reaching Beyond Gender

The fourth contributor to the *Choreographing Feminist Politics in Ireland* panel was dance artist, Aoife McAtamney who shared with Fitzgerald a desire to explore the body as potential. 'I don't want to let gender limit my choreography, control the

³⁶² *Loc. cit.* This may also explain why the image of Fitzgerald and Stapleton used in the print edition of Seaver's article (with text covering the performer's breasts and genitalia), was replaced in the online version by an image of my naked, male, body. Ahead of my premiere of *Cure* in 2013 Dublin Dance Festival, Seaver had also interviewed me for the article.

kind of work I'm making.' She described her interests as being the spatial and the abstract, wanting to make work as 'a person in the world', 'maybe an animal'. McAtamney's aspirations for her dance and life practice recalled Haraway's concept of the cyborg body, a body made of a hybridisation of technology and the human, but also of a mixture of human and non-human animal.³⁶³ However, McAtamney recognised that her desire to explore the unfamiliar, posthuman potential of her body was curtailed by context and by her internalisation of that context. She reported that it was 'not until I came home [to Ireland] that I started making work about gender', prompted by 'an energy about what it means to be a woman in Ireland.' Her aspiration to be a 'person in the world', unencumbered by gender 'maybe an animal', was curtailed not just by the Irish context but by her own conditioned gaze: 'I see my hand and the softness of my breast and that reminds me I'm a woman.' McAtamney's acknowledgement of the regulatory gaze that she carried as a socialised human placed her as a female body. However that acknowledgement did not cover the entirety of her corporeal potential. Haraway's insistence on the 'embodiment of all vision (though not necessarily organic embodiment and including technological mediation)'³⁶⁴ helps to highlight a relationality between bodies that are seen and bodies that are seeing, a relationality that challenges the 'view from nowhere' of apparent objectivity. It also, as Erin Manning develops in her work, restores sight to its corporeal status as one of the senses of a dynamic perceiving body, and it is notable that what McAtamney saw was 'softness', a quality of touch, in fact, that vision only guesses at: 'When the body is figured simply as discursive, it is held in a place where it can signify but not sense: sense is not something tha[t] can easily be captured linguistically.'³⁶⁵ Though McAtamney might at first have appeared to have limited the potential of her embodiment by seeing herself, just as Fitzgerald acknowledged noticing the unplanned provocation of her bodily arrangement, this reminder of the corporeality and consequent situatedness of vision suggests a more complex relational embodiment. In performance, both dance artists produced and exceeded themselves in relation to the bodily matter they bodily observed.

³⁶³ Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, Women*.

³⁶⁴ Haraway, 'Situated Knowledges', p. 189.

³⁶⁵ Erin Manning, *Politics of Touch: Sense, Movement, Sovereignty* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007).

Mo Mhórchoir Féin – A Prayer: Situating this Irish Body

To conclude this chapter, I would like to recognise the somatic in the discursive and the discursive in the somatic by focusing on a work of my own – *Mo Mhórchoir Féin: A Prayer* – a dance film commissioned for broadcast on RTÉ as part of the Dance on the Box series in 2010.³⁶⁶ The work is readily accessible online, so I can see digital images of my body then and recognise in a body seven years older, the sensations of the movement it has repeatedly performed in the intervening years. I can sense in my body where the weight of my elbow knocks the front of my ribcage, tipping it back and causing a ripple in my spine that goes through my pelvis and legs and back up again to raise the elbow to repeat the movement. It's a gesture whose pelvic freedom energises my body with a sense of genital sexuality, but that is also a physical echo of the self-mortifying chest beating that traditionally accompanies the words of the Confiteor, referred to in the film's title: 'Trí mo choir féin, trí mo choir féin, trí mo mhórchoir féin', 'Through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault.'

These sensations in my body are complicated by the fact that since I made the film, I have taught this solo to the five performers in *Tabernacle*, a work framed in its promotional material and in its reception as addressing Catholicism and the Irish body, and to many other dancers as part of the development and international dissemination of *Tabernacle*: from MA students at the University of Limerick to a group of 30 amateur adult dance enthusiasts in Ljubljana.³⁶⁷ The direct engagement of multiple others in the creation and ongoing dissemination of my work is a choice I have made to acknowledge and enable the openness and responsive capacity of my choreography. It is a choice that has involved the mobilisation of personal and institutional resources in the service of such an engaged practice that is not necessarily the norm. I also know that most of the movement sequence that comprised the solo was developed in an artist's studio in

³⁶⁶ Fearghus Ó Conchúir, 'Mo Mhórchoir Féin', www.fearghus.net [website], <http://www.fearghus.net/projects/mo-mhorchoir-fein---a-prayer/> [accessed 24 June 2017].

³⁶⁷ Fearghus Ó Conchúir, 'Tabernacle', www.fearghus.net [website], <http://www.fearghus.net/projects/tabernacle/> [accessed 24 June 2017].

Feijiacun in the north of Beijing, where I undertook a residency in 2009.³⁶⁸ When I made it, I had no intention for it to become the *Mo Mhórchoir Féin* solo. Therefore, when I see my body in the film, in a church in Ireland, I sense the resonances of all the places the movement has been performed and the people who have performed it. As Edward Casey observes: ‘We are still, even many years later, *in the places to which we are subject* because (and to the exact extent that) *they are in us*. They are in us – indeed, *are us*.’³⁶⁹ The set of movements that coalesced in me at a particular moment with a particular local effect conditioned by its physical, spatial, socio-political and interpersonal context, has since been dispersed and developed through the bodies of others. This process of subsequent dispersal, that makes and remakes place, is not only bound up in my review of *Mo Mhórchoir Féin* here: it is a dissemination that is already immanent in the process of creating the film, a process which cannot, moreover, be considered ordinary given the work's emergence from an existing context and ongoing development of a relational creative practice.



Plate 1.3 Film still Fearghus Ó Conchúir *Mo Mhórchoir Féin – A Prayer*. Photo: Jonathan Mitchell.

³⁶⁸ Fearghus Ó Conchúir, ‘Bei Gao Studios’, www.feargus.net [website and artist’s blog], <http://www.feargus.net/bei-gao-studios/> [accessed 24 June 2017]. Subsequent blog posts reveal the variety of material, personal and political conditions at play during the residency.

³⁶⁹ Edward S. Casey, ‘Between Geography and Philosophy: What Does It Mean to Be in the Place-World?’, *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, vol. 91, no. 4 (2001), pp. 683-693, p. 688.

The film is set in a Catholic church and features a man dancing between the sanctuary and the pews, as an altar boy clears away the accoutrements of Mass. Both are watched by an older woman. I chose the setting deliberately and with some effort. The question I am most frequently asked when I show the film is how difficult it was to get permission to film in a church. Producer Maggie Breathnach and I spent some time locating a suitable church. Because of the film budget, it needed to be readily accessible to Dublin, but I wanted it to look like a church in a big town rather than a city. In retrospect, I think I was looking for a church similar to ones in which I'd grown up. If I was going to dance in a church, I wanted to engage with something of the history that had produced my body. Our approach to individual priests met with no direct refusal, if occasional caution. Ultimately the priest in Our Lady of Dolours Church, Dolphins Barn, where the film was shot, couldn't have been more obliging, loaning us liturgical items and preparing the church for the shoot. This contrast between individual welcome and the presumed institutional lack of hospitality that prompts the question about ease of access to churches, has always been part of my religious formation and provides an important reference point for the ambiguity of the film. Unlike Inglis who dismisses individual exceptions to institutional hegemony, I want to build on the subjugated knowledges in exceptions and find in them routes to an embodiment that feels more like flourishing. Besides, by 2010, the institutional authority of the Catholic Church in Ireland was significantly reduced. By then, the scandals of the Magdalene laundries and the abuse of children that took place in Catholic institutions and by individual priests and others religious, protected by an obfuscating Church hierarchy, had already been documented in multiple literary forms, most notably the Ryan and Murphy Reports, in the media, in public conversation and in the individual testimonies of survivors.³⁷⁰ For the most part, this abuse was perpetrated and suffered bodily, but my sense was that multi-

³⁷⁰ A report on the Magdalene Laundries was still to come, abuse in them had already been acknowledged by the government and in the 2009 Murphy Report. The Ryan Report was the shorthand given to the findings of the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse, chaired by Mr. Justice Sean Ryan. Child Abuse Commission, 'Publications', www.childabusecommission.ie [website], <http://www.childabusecommission.ie/rpt/pdfs/> [accessed 20 July 2017]. The Murphy Report was the shorthand for the findings of the Commission of Investigation into Catholic Archdiocese of Dublin, released by Judge Yvonne Murphy. Department of Justice and Equality, 'Report by Commission of Investigation into Catholic Archdiocese of Dublin', www.justice.ie [website], <http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Pages/PB09000504> [accessed 20 July 2017].

sensory bodies, as distinct from speaking bodies, had not been invited to articulate a response to what had happened.

I was aware that I had not suffered physical or sexual abuse myself, but I felt, nonetheless, that my body had been trained and formed by the same religious culture that permitted and perhaps, facilitated abuse. For Inglis, that religious culture was one that 'has limited Irish discourse and practice, that is, the general range of possibilities of what Irish people could do or say', and it has done so by conflating the body with a sexuality that has to be controlled for economic, as much as for moral reasons.³⁷¹ What I hoped to achieve in *Mo Mhórchóir Féin* was to make visible the already present body in Catholic discourse and the resistant ambiguity of bodies within that setting. When I proposed to RTÉ that to display a body in its fleshiness, I would only wear underwear in the film, they asked me to consider more clothed options, though exercised no ultimate censorship. I reminded them that the church already has an unclothed man at the centre of its architectural and liturgical focus. The male Christ figure on the cross has always been a reminder of embodiment that hasn't been necessarily foregrounded in Catholicism, even as divine incarnation and the materiality of resurrection are crucial theological elements of the faith. The film makes a visual link between my body and the crucifix in its final frames, panning from one to the other. There is a history of the martyred male body in Irish nationalist discourse, from Pearse to Bobby Sands, but while those bodies emphasise a self-destructive physical control, what I recall from performing in the church is pleasure that I had been able to make my movement possible there.³⁷² This movement does not come down the vertical axis of the church, as it was constrained to do when I was an altar boy or a member of the congregation. It crosses the church horizontally, having been discovered by the camera at the side, and ranges in a space neither congregational nor sacerdotal. While the crucified Christ presides in stillness over the scene, my body moves.

³⁷¹ Inglis, 'The Struggle for Control of the Irish Body', p. 57.

³⁷² Female bodies have subjected themselves to the same militant self-mortification, but through the Christ figure, the martyrdom of men has often cast women in the role of the Piéta mother.

It is still a disciplined body. I see that I am not the overweight body of the statistically average middle-aged man. Through a combination of deliberate regular exercise and self-regulated eating I maintain a lean body, though seeing myself in 2010, I am aware that I am no longer so lean. Religion (fasting an hour before communion and on Good Friday, denying oneself chocolate at Lent) and dance have taught me self-discipline. And vanity must play a part too. Though mine has never been the heavily muscled body of the gay gym bunny, I've wanted my body to be desirable. That too is in the film, as are the choices I've made about how to prepare and present my body: I've practised the movement, familiarising it with the sequence, though the church layout and its surfaces required that I adapt to them on the day. I haven't shaved my chest as I often did at the time – it was a fashion for gay men after I came out – and I removed my nipple piercing – piercing was another gay rite of passage when I was younger.

However even as I see and respond to my own body in the film, I am also aware that what I sense now is mediated. It is mediated by the ways in which the director, Dearbhla Walsh, director of photography, Kate Mc Cullough and editor, Úna Ní Dhonghaile, – all women – have framed and cut my body and movement in the film, a process enabled by the technologies of the digital camera and editing suite, as well as a series of tracks and artificial lighting on the shoot. The first shot after the titles is an especially embodied duet between me and McCullough, whose own body steadies the camera and its focus, perilously and challengingly freehand, as it leads the viewer in extreme close up along my body. Hers is the physical virtuosity in this shot, as she anticipates my movement and performs her own. My body does not express itself without her in the film. I remember trying to offer my surfaces to her lens as we danced together. I have some awareness of the mediating technologies, but not complete control. The edit is also a negotiation between Dearbhla, Úna and me, and the strict time constraints of RTÉ whose limits we pushed to achieve what we wanted in the film.



Plate 1.4 Marie Curtin and film crew, *Mo Mhórchoir Féin – A Prayer*. Photo: Jonathan Mitchell

The framing of my body by others is already within the choreography to the extent that the film is not a solo performance. A woman watches. I deliberately called her Woman in the credits, but others are quick to assign her the role of mother or grandmother. Marie Curtin is not a biological mother, though she and her husband fostered scores of children. I met her, when I was commissioned to make a piece for the Macushla Dance Club. During the process I discovered that Marie had grown up in a family of boys and had enjoyed risky physicality, riding bareback through the forest and climbing on to roofs. Though vertigo had made her less adventurous with age, her daring inspired me and when I thought about having a woman in the film, I asked her. While Angela Martin's account of the power of Mariolatry in Ireland in shaping female embodiment seems outdated in an age when Olympic boxer, Katie Taylor and reality television star, Kim Kardashian are as likely to be role-models, Marie, as her Marian name suggests, grew up in a different era and remains an observant Catholic.³⁷³ However, that does not preclude a memory of physical abandon and willingness to reconnect

³⁷³ 'Individual women are mimetic of Mary. It is through mimetic performance that Irish women come to embody femininity and, by extension, the Irish nation'; Martin, 'Death of a Nation', p. 69. Irish sportswoman, Katie Taylor has won gold medals for boxing at the Olympic Games and World Championships. Kim Kardashian is an American reality TV star and global celebrity.

with it in her older body. Indeed, the determined stamina of sitting for a day during the filming was its own kind of physical durational performance for Marie.

Over the film, as another prosthetic, Iarla Ó Lionáird sings an old Irish hymn, 'Caoineadh na dTrí Mhuire'. The song describes Mary's discovery of her crucified son, having not recognised him at first, but only 'an fear breá sin', 'that fine man', – an unexpected acknowledgement of male physical attractiveness at the heart of the Passion and a hint of the desire it provokes. Angela de Búrca's comprehensive account of the evolution of the hymn notes the transformation of Mary, who in earlier versions retains the supernatural physicality of a Celtic goddess capable of leaping over walls and soldiers, into a more decorous, physically contained and passive mother in later versions.³⁷⁴ By using the hymn, I did not aim to recover the supposed Celtic openness, whose loss Inglis mourns, but rather proposed to exploit and inhabit where the space of expressing such physicality existed within the contemporary discourse. The film finds the body inside the church, not outside, and it is that strategy of finding the apparently excluded already inside that frequently guides my work.³⁷⁵ Though the Catholic Church might have pretended to exercise the comprehensive exclusionary control that Inglis describes, I demonstrate that its power over bodies was never absolute. I see a kinship in this approach to the strategy adopted by David Norris and others in the campaign to decriminalise homosexuality in Ireland. While opponents of legalisation characterised the campaign as the introduction of an unhealthy element associated with foreignness,³⁷⁶ Norris made an appeal to what he construed as an Irish anti-colonial exceptionalism and sense of fairness to legitimise the campaign:

By effectively wiping out the lingering shame of British imperial statute from the record of Irish law our colleagues in the Dáil have done a good days work [...]. As the great apostle of Catholic emancipation Daniel O'Connell said in pleading his case at the bar of British public opinion, human dignity and freedom are not finite resources. By extending these freedoms to others one's own

³⁷⁴ Angela de Búrca, *Caoineadh na dTrí Muire* (Baile Átha Cliath: An Clóchomhar, 1983).

³⁷⁵ See for example, *The Casement Project*, discussed in the next chapters.

³⁷⁶ See for example the Chief Justice's comments accompanying his refusal to overturn the law in the initial Norris case, quoted above in footnote 94.

freedom is itself enhanced and not diminished. This is the kind of Irish solution to an Irish problem of which we as Irish men and women can feel justly proud.³⁷⁷

Does such an appeal entrench a hegemonic discourse of nationalism, or does it 'infect' the discourse with alterity? For the marginalised, deploying a strategy of queer *bricolage*, it's often necessary to use whatever impure tools are to hand.

The third body in the film is that of the altar boy, Sean Meleady, who exits the church carrying a hurley and helmet. The GAA reference was suggested by Dearbhla Walsh and links to the first *Dance on the Box* film we made together in 2005.³⁷⁸ *Match* was a dance film set on the pitch in Croke Park, the spiritual home of Ireland's national games. I made that film because I knew it was an arena in which men's bodies were permitted to be visible, expressive, excessive and emotional. I wanted the huge Irish audience that regularly watches GAA sports to recognise that they already knew how to read dance, that it was already familiar, even if recognising it as such revealed corporeal affinities between men that hadn't been readily acknowledged in the past:

Ashis Nandy has famously suggested that the discourse of European colonialism, by describing the colonized as feminine (and thus as disorderly, weak, and in need of masculine rule), encourages a response of 'hypermasculinity' on the part of the colonized, a kind of masculinity or 'manliness'.³⁷⁹

Match anticipates the coming out as gay of Cork star hurler, Donal Óg Cusack and the GAA's ability to assimilate his sexuality as something unremarkable.³⁸⁰ The more recent coming out of Cusack's brother, Conor, also a former county hurler, and of Cork ladies football star, Valerie Mulcahy, demonstrates how Irish bodies that once could not be visible can now occupy privileged public territory. It was

³⁷⁷ Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Bill 1993, Second Stage Speech, 29 June 1993, 14, quoted in Conrad, *Locked in the Family Cell*, p. 52. In this strategy Norris was building on an approach already implemented by GLEN in the decriminalisation campaign.

³⁷⁸ Fearghus Ó Conchúir, 'Match-Film version', www.fearghus.net [website], <http://www.fearghus.net/projects/match---film-version/> [accessed 24 June 2017].

³⁷⁹ Conrad, *Inside the Family Cell*, p.24

³⁸⁰ Donal Óg Cusack, *Come What May: The Autobiography* (Dublin: Penguin, 2009).

only in 1982 that Declan Flynn was murdered in Fairview Park, not far from Croke Park stadium, and his killers received suspended sentences.³⁸¹



Plate 1.5 Matthew Morris and Fearghus Ó Conchúir in *Match*. Photo: Aidan Kelly

Match is performed by two men who identify as gay, and though it has been judged ‘homoerotically charged’, it shows a range of male physical expression from tenderness to aggression.³⁸² No one has sex. In this respect, it differs from the pornographic video that emerged in April 2014 and circulated rapidly on social media, featuring Tyrone county footballer, Cathal McCarron, penetrating and being penetrated by another man. That McCarron has been welcomed back to inter-county football suggests how the policed borders of Irish embodiment have become more porous, for some at least. And yet the fact that the 2016 *LGBTIreland Report* revealed that among LGBTI young people between the ages of 14 and 18, a

³⁸¹ Maggie O’Kane, ‘The Night They Killed Declan Flynn’, www.politico.ie [website], 31 March 1983, <http://politico.ie/archive/night-they-killed-declan-flynn> [accessed 24 June 2017].

³⁸² Fintan Walsh, *Queer Performance and Contemporary Ireland: Dissent and Disorientation* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), p. 5. *Match* is performed by me and by Matthew Morris, who after this first experience of working together, has become a regular performer in my work.

third had attempted suicide and six out of ten had self-harmed, confirms the abiding differential vulnerability of other(ed) bodies.³⁸³

Conclusion

Human embodiment and subjectivity are currently undergoing a profound mutation. Like all people living in an age of transition, we are not always lucid or clear about where we are going, or even capable of explaining what exactly is happening to and around us.³⁸⁴

On 14 June 2017, Leo Varadkar was confirmed as Taoiseach. At 38, he was the youngest person to accede to the prime ministerial office, however, it was the fact that he was gay and the son of an immigrant that captured the attention of international press³⁸⁵ with the BBC among those conflating the new Taoiseach and the country he governs by suggesting that Varadkar had come 'to personify the liberalisation of a country which was once regarded as one of Europe's most socially conservative nations'.³⁸⁶ While international media was keen to underline Varadkar's sexuality, commentators in Ireland welcomed the fact that being gay had not been a factor during his election campaign: 'It is a sign of how much Ireland has changed and moved on that no one really cares if he is gay here.'³⁸⁷ What was of concern to those with socially progressive aspirations in Ireland was Varadkar's record of demonising those on social welfare, of declaring himself pro-life, and of poor support for refugees and asylum seekers. At his campaign launch, Varadkar declared that he wanted to lead for 'people who get up early in the morning',³⁸⁸ and one of the photo opportunities arranged during the campaign was of his participation in a 5km run through Dublin.³⁸⁹ No single body represents the nation, however what Varadkar's self-disciplined and mobile body suggests is that

³⁸³ GLEN, *LGBTIreland Report*, www.glen.ie [website], 18 March 2016, http://www.glen.ie/attachments/The_LGBTIreland_Report.pdf [accessed 30 June 2017].

³⁸⁴ Braidotti, *The Posthuman*, p. 196.

³⁸⁵ Ed O'Loughlin, 'Gay Lawmaker, Leo Varadkar, Is in Line to Be Ireland's Prime Minister', *New York Times*, 2 June 2017; Henry McDonald, 'Leo Varadkar, Gay Son of Indian Immigrant, to be Next Irish PM', *Guardian*, 19 June 2017; Reuters, 'Indian-Origin Leo Varadkar to be Next Ireland PM', *Times of India*, 3 June 2017.

³⁸⁶ BBC News, 'Leo Varadkar: Ireland Set to Have First Gay PM', www.bbc.co.uk [website], 3 June 2017, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-40139428> [accessed 30 June 2017].

³⁸⁷ Brian Finnegan, editor of Gay Community News, quoted in McDonald, 'Leo Varadkar'.

³⁸⁸ Sarah Bardon, 'Varadkar Wants to Lead Party for "People Who Get Up Early in the Morning"', *Irish Times*, 22 May 2017, p. 2.

³⁸⁹ Kevin Doyle, 'Early Riser Leo is Setting the Pace—but Simon's Race is Not Run Just Yet', *Irish Independent*, 22 May 2017, p. 5.

what was presumed to be deviant, challenging and exceptional in Ireland could become relatively unremarkable. And yet those that proclaim this unremarkability as progress risk missing the regressive impact on female, migrant and poor bodies that Varadkar's politics threatens and the further disabling threat to the visibility of queer embodiment that unremarkability poses. That Varadkar's mother compared watching her son become Taoiseach to seeing him take his First Holy Communion, reveals the abiding discourses that shape our understanding of corporeal flourishing in Ireland.³⁹⁰ Her recollection also brought to light that Varadkar had fallen, dirtying the knees of his 'John Travolta' communion trousers, allowing into the narrative of a Taoiseach's accession to office, an account of surprising, vulnerable and internationally shared physicality, that reminds us that traditional discourses aren't, and never have been, definitive of the possibilities of embodiment in Ireland.

In this chapter, I have sought to open up lines of thought about Irish bodies that build on familiar themes and approaches in existing accounts in a variety of disciplines. In starting with the corporeal scale, I have been guided by a sense that these often essentialising accounts of Irish bodies are no longer adequate to the task of addressing embodiment in its increasingly posthuman, material-discursive manifestations. My efforts have been aimed at revealing complexity and at resisting simplification. I have looked to the work of Irish dance artists, including my own embodied experience, for guidance, sharing the uncertainty, to which Braidotti alludes above, about how far this approach is up to the task. And yet, I propose that it, in its relational, mediated and dynamic multifariousness, where 'a complex feedback relation in which neither the body nor its environment can be assumed to form an organically unified ecosystem', this situated, embodied perspective is a valuable resource to challenge fixed articulations of the nation that derive from limited conceptions of the Irish body.³⁹¹

³⁹⁰ Miriam Lord, 'Leo's Election Prompts Communion Recollection: Election Brings Back Memories of Taoiseach's John Travolta Trousers', *Irish Times*, 14 June 2017, p. 5.

³⁹¹ Elizabeth Grosz, 'Bodies/Cities', in Beatriz Colomina (ed.), *Sexuality and Space* (Princeton NJ: Princeton Architectural Press, 1992), pp. 241-254, p. 242.

At this point in our collective history, we simply do not know what our en fleshed selves, minds and bodies as one, can actually do. We need to find out.³⁹²

³⁹² *Ibid.*, p.190.

CHAPTER TWO

Choreographies of Commemoration

The Casement Project

'Chief Signifiers of the State'

How the story of 1916 is commemorated and remembered in years to come will no doubt reflect a complex intermingling of political, social, cultural, economic, and technological forces intersecting at a variety of spatial scales – from the household to the parish and from the region to the nation (and beyond).³⁹³

In December 2016, reflecting on the Arts Council's programme commemorating the centenary of the Easter Rising, Arts Council Director, Orlaith McBride proposed that: 'It would be a lasting tribute to the memory of those who dreamed of a different Ireland in 1916 that our artists and image makers of 2016 become the chief signifiers of the State.'³⁹⁴ McBride's unusual linking of 'artists' and not-clearly-defined 'image makers' pointed to the defining role that The Arts Council envisaged for artists as shapers of national identity in 2016. McBride and others, such as then Taoiseach Enda Kenny, justified the call for a contemporary centrality of artists with reference to the historical significance of their antecedents in the Easter Rising:

Our Arts were central to the revolutionary generation. The poets and playwrights, the revivalists and the writers, had a vision that was as much about cultural freedom as political independence.³⁹⁵

Also drawing on that precedent of conjoined artistic and political radicalism, Fintan O'Toole judged the centenary commemorations to have been a success precisely because of the willingness of the State to allow artists to shape the commemorations, permitting irreverence, challenge and complexity of perspective to sit alongside the more conventional military parades and official ceremonies of wreath-laying.³⁹⁶ If such conventional commemorative practices prescribed acceptable choreographies for citizens to perform in sanctioned locations at

³⁹³ Mark McCarthy, *Ireland's 1916 Rising. Explorations of History-Making, Commemoration and Heritage in Modern Times* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), p. 443.

³⁹⁴ Orlaith McBride, 'Art: 2016–The Year That Was', www.artscouncil.ie [website], 22 December 2016, http://www.artscouncil.ie/generic_content.aspx?id=28119 [accessed 3 March 2017].

³⁹⁵ Enda Kenny, 'Speech by An Taoiseach at the National Academic Conference 1916-2016, NUI Galway, 10 November 2016', Roinn an Taoisigh [website], http://www.taoiseach.gov.ie/eng/News/Taoiseach's_Speeches/Speech_by_An_Taoiseach_at_the_National_Academic_Conference_1916-2016_NUI_Galway_10_November_2016.html [accessed 3 March 2017].

³⁹⁶ O'Toole, 'In 2016, Official Ireland Trusted Artists'.

appropriate times, the opportunity for artists, and especially for dance artists, to alter those choreographies was a chance to reveal, propose and embody alternative citizen movements and the spaces entailed in such movements.³⁹⁷ As Nuala Johnson has proposed, the nation-building thrust of official commemoration naturalises and stabilises contested histories. While Johnson sets up a dialectic between seemingly fixed official history and the counter-narratives of public memory, the Ireland 2016 invitation to artists created a less clear categorisation, as the State made space for the denaturalising engagement of artists with commemoration, bringing contest and official sanction together.³⁹⁸ Given the inauspicious start to the government's 2016 commemorations programme, when its 2014 launch video was criticized by one of its own commemoration advisers as 'embarrassing, unhistorical shit', the eventual success of the programme is notable and the role of the arts in it worth examining.³⁹⁹

Quite how artists, and in particular dance artists, navigated the parameters and possibilities of state commemoration and the implications of their navigation of images of Ireland, Irish identities and citizenship will be the subject of this chapter. There is a rich body of literature in Geography that examines the identity- and place-making impact of commemoration. From David Harvey's seminal account of the class politics implicit in the Basilica of Sacré-Coeur, geographers have noted how memorial sites reveal and conceal the social conditions of their creation and maintenance.⁴⁰⁰ However the geography of commemoration is not

³⁹⁷ Karen E. Till, 'Staging the Past: Landscape Designs, Cultural Identity and Erinnerungspolitik at Berlin's Neue Wache', *Cultural Geographies*, vol. 6, no. 3 (1999), pp. 251-283, p. 254.

³⁹⁸ Nuala C. Johnson, *Ireland, the Great War and the Geography of Remembrance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

³⁹⁹ Ruadhán Mac Cormaic, 'Gathering-Style Initiative for 1916 Centenary Rejected', *Irish Times*, 26 January 2015, p. 2.

⁴⁰⁰ David Harvey, 'Monument and Myth', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, vol. 69, no. 3 (1979), pp. 362-81. See also Johnson, *Ireland, the Great War*, p. 9; Nuala Johnson, 'Cast in Stone: Monuments, Geography and Nationalism', *Environment and Planning D*, vol. 13, no. 1 (1995), pp. 51-66; David Atkinson and Denis Cosgrove, 'Urban Rhetoric and Embodied Identities: City, Nation, and Empire at the Vittorio Emanuele II Monument in Rome, 1870-1945', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, vol. 88, no. 1 (1998), pp. 28-49; Charles W. J. Withers, 'Place, Memory, Monument: Memorialising the Past in Contemporary Highland Scotland', *Ecumene*, vol. 3, no. 3 (1996), pp. 325-44; Martin Auster, 'Monument in a Landscape: The Question of "Meaning"', *Australian Geographer*, vol. 28, no. 2 (1997), pp. 219-227; Owen J. Dwyer, 'Symbolic Accretion and Commemoration', *Social and Cultural Geography*, vol. 5, no. 3 (2004), pp. 419-435; Dydia DeLyser, *Ramona Memories: Tourism and the Shaping of Southern California* (Minneapolis: University of

confined to legibility of landscape and the built environment, nor to the consequent site biographies that are typical of much geographical engagement with commemoration.⁴⁰¹ The mutual entailment of people and places should remind geographers of the corporeality of commemoration.⁴⁰² Therefore, I will focus on my own multi-platform work, *The Casement Project* and on the Arts Council, 'the national agency for funding, developing and promoting the arts in Ireland', as a significant mediating agency between artists and the state. Because *The Casement Project* was the largest project in the Arts Council's commemorative programme for 2016, it provides valuable material for investigating the geography of the production of the nation in the twenty-first century and the relationship that production entails between dance artists and the State.⁴⁰³ The analysis builds on the previous chapter's material-discursive articulation of Irish bodies and draws on my perspective as both choreographer and scholar to offer a knowledge situated not only in my own subjectivity, but in relation to national cultural policy and to global economic forces expressed in a specific Irish context. The focus of the chapter moves from geographical, historical and political perspectives at the nation scale to the detail of embodiment in the conception and realisation of *The Casement Project*. As a result, it reveals forces at multiple scales that shape the production of citizen bodies and the imagined collective body of the nation, as well as suggesting the possibilities for alternative bodies, subjectivities and citizenship that emerge from the choreographic practice.

Commemoration Politics

[W]hilst commemorative practices appear to be about the past, they are actually about the present and the future. [...] Consequently, the nature of contemporary acts of commemoration is better understood by exploring the relationship between identity and contemporary politics than by examining the event being 'remembered'.⁴⁰⁴

Minnesota Press, 2005); Yvonne Whelan, *Reinventing Modern Dublin: Streetscape, Iconography and the Politics of Identity* (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2003).

⁴⁰¹ Karen E. Till, 'Memory Studies', *History Workshop Journal*, vol. 62 (2006), pp. 325-341, p. 327.

⁴⁰² Karen E. Till, 'Wounded Cities: Memory-Work and a Place-Based Ethics of Care', *Political Geography*, vol. 31, no. 1 (2012), pp. 3-14.

⁴⁰³ Fintan O'Toole, 'Fintan O'Toole's Cultural Highlights: "A Great Year for the Elderly"', *Irish Times*, 24 December 2016, Weekend Section, p. 8.

⁴⁰⁴ Dominic Bryan, 'Ritual, Identity and Nation: When the Historian becomes the High Priest of Commemoration', in Richard S. Grayson and Fearghal McGarry (eds), *Remembering 1916: The*

The one hundred year history of commemorating the Easter Rising in Ireland illustrates how contemporary politics has shaped the nature of the events, people and experiences of 1916 that have been remembered. For instance, how and where the connections between the Easter Rising and the Battle of the Somme have been acknowledged has indicated the state of ideological differences and political relations between British and Irish governments and the unionist and nationalist traditions across the island of Ireland. With an initial narrow focus on the Easter Rising, successive Irish governments used commemoration to bolster the legitimacy of the republic that the Rising proclaimed, with the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Easter Rising affirming Irish sovereign neutrality in the Second World War, the fiftieth anniversary expressing the modernising impulses of the then Taoiseach Seán Lemass, and the 1991 commemorations muted by the prevailing climate of sectarian violence in Northern Ireland.⁴⁰⁵ The ‘deep-seated national reluctance [to] “celebrate”’ the Rising in a context where militant republicanism referred to 1916 to legitimise armed struggle was altered by the success of the 1998 Good Friday Agreement and the resulting changes to the historical claim to the sovereignty over the whole island of Ireland that had existed in the Irish constitution.⁴⁰⁶ As a result, the official ninetieth anniversary commemorations, which came at a time of unprecedented economic prosperity in the country,⁴⁰⁷ saw the reinstatement of a military parade in front of the GPO, witnessed by 100,000 people, with the British ambassador and Sinn Féin TDs in attendance, as a mark of the new inclusivity of the Irish state.⁴⁰⁸ There was a

Easter Rising, the Somme and the Politics of Memory in Ireland (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), pp. 24-42, p. 22.

⁴⁰⁵ Richard S. Grayson and Fearghal McGarry, ‘Introduction’, in Grayson and McGarry (eds), *Remembering 1916*, pp. 1-12, p. 3. See also Mary E. Daly and Margaret O’Callaghan, *1916 in 1966: Commemorating the Easter Rising* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2014); Roisín Higgins, *Transforming 1916: Meaning, Memory and the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Easter Rising* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2012); McCarthy, *Ireland’s 1916 Rising*.

⁴⁰⁶ Garret Fitzgerald, *Reflections on the Irish State* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2003), p. 5, quoted in Kevin Bean, ‘New Roads to the Rising: Irish Politics of Commemoration since 1994’, in Grayson and McGarry (eds.), *Remembering 1916*, pp.224-240, p. 227.

⁴⁰⁷ Economic prosperity was not enjoyed by all: ‘Certainly the *CIA World Factbook 2000* surveying inequality in ten European countries, put Ireland in the unenviable top place. The UN’s *Human Development Programme Report* in 2003 concurred, and other authorities have stressed that, though absolute poverty has clearly decreased over the last thirty years in Ireland, relative poverty has increased’, Foster, *Luck and the Irish*, p. 12.

⁴⁰⁸ Unionist representatives had been invited but declined to attend; Bean, ‘New Roads to the Rising’, p. 233-4. Others estimate up to 120,000 for the parade; McCarthy, *Ireland’s 1916 Rising*, p.

political appetite on the part of the reigning Fianna Fáil government to reclaim the 1916 history, especially in the context of the growing electoral threat of Sinn Féin in the Republic, but it was an appetite that was primarily focused on the future. As Taoiseach Bertie Ahern asserted in a speech to mark the commemoration, using a metaphor of purposeful corporeality: ‘The potential for progress has never been greater. Independent Ireland is now in full stride and beginning to fill the hopes and expectations that all patriots of the past knew we possessed.’⁴⁰⁹ The Celtic Tiger was being presented as part of the Rising’s legacy and it was a legacy conceived as physical activity, striding forward. It is unsurprising therefore that the subsequent economic crisis, which saw the Irish state accept a bailout with stringent terms from the Troika of the European Central Bank, the European Union and the International Monetary Fund, was understood as a loss of the cherished independence fought for in 1916. Parodying the Proclamation of the Republic, the *Irish Examiner* featured a ‘Proclamation of Dependence’ on its cover in the wake of the November 2010 bailout,⁴¹⁰ while an *Irish Times* editorial asked ‘whether this is what that the men of 1916 died for: a bailout from the German chancellor with a few shillings of sympathy from the British chancellor on the side.’⁴¹¹

Against a backdrop of rising unemployment and economic hardship, the Taoiseach Brian Cowen, invoked the Rising as a model of the kind of self-sacrifice that would be necessary to rescue Ireland’s reputation and fiscal autonomy. Imagining the centenary commemorations, he asserted:

Yes, we can say in 2016 when we get to O’Connell Street and look up at those men and women of idealism that gave us the chance to be the country that we are that ‘Yes, we did not fail our children, but we did not fail our country either.’⁴¹²

1. See McCarthy, *Ireland’s 1916 Rising*, p. 416, for an analysis of the party-political gain by the governing Fianna Fáil party from the reinstatement of the parade.

⁴⁰⁹ Stephen Collins, ‘We Remember with Gratitude the Great Sacrifices They Made for Us’, *Irish Times*, 17 April 2006, quoted in Bean, ‘New Roads to the Rising’, p. 233.

⁴¹⁰ ‘Proclamation of Dependence’, *Irish Examiner*, 19 November 2010, quoted in McCarthy, *Ireland’s 1916 Rising*, p. 2.

⁴¹¹ ‘Was it for This?’, *The Irish Times*, 18 November 2010, p. 17, quoted in Bean, ‘New Roads to the Rising’, p.237, and quoted in McCarthy, *Ireland’s 1916 Rising*, p. 442.

⁴¹² Harry McGee, ‘Cowen Calls for Economic “Sacrifices”’, *Irish Times*, 4 February 2010, quoted in Bean, ‘New Roads to the Rising’, p. 238.

Cowen's reference to the protection of children may have been prompted by the Proclamation of the Republic's commitment to cherish all the Republic's children equally. It may also have been an acknowledgment of the publication in the previous year of the Ryan Report by the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse, which detailed the abuse of children by Catholic clergy and exposed the concealment of that abuse by the Church hierarchy.⁴¹³ In addition to losing trust in the Irish economy and in the politicians and bankers who had presided over it, Irish people also had reason to lose faith in the country's established church. Against this backdrop of the failure of Ireland's institutional leadership and a sense of the reprehensible complicity of the general populace in the 'mad consumerism' of the Celtic Tiger era, the Rising provided a reference point for renewal.⁴¹⁴ Fintan O'Toole observed that:

In the second decade of the twentieth century, many Irish people decided that a republic was worth dying for. In the second decade of the twenty-first century, many more can decide that a republic is worth living for.⁴¹⁵

In 2011, as part of his successful election campaign to become President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins published his *Renewing the Republic* which looked to the 2016 centenary year as a deadline 'to reassert the possibility and turn our collective efforts to the creation of a real republic [...] based on a recognition of the dignity of every citizen irrespective of gender, capacity, orientation or means.'⁴¹⁶ 'Inclusion' was also one of themes in the National Commemoration Programme: Decade of Centenaries, 2012-22, as the government appointed an Expert Advisory Group (EAG) of historians to provide what the Taoiseach called, 'assistance in the development of the comprehensive and inclusive programme of commemorations that is appropriate on the Centenary anniversary of the defining period of our

⁴¹³ Child Abuse Commission, 'Publications'.

⁴¹⁴ Fintan O'Toole, *Enough is Enough: How to Build a New Republic* (London: Faber and Faber, 2010), p. 3.

⁴¹⁵ O'Toole, *Enough is Enough*, p. 237. O'Toole controversially included Irish theatre among the failed institutions in Ireland, suggesting in a television documentary that playwrights had not reflected accurately the realities of the Celtic Tiger era nor anticipated its implosion. O'Toole's ignorance or neglect of artists who offered precisely this reflection and challenge in their work was pointed out by many. See Pat Cooke, 'The Artist and the State in Ireland: Artist Autonomy and the Arm's Length Principle in a Time of Crisis', *The Canadian Journal of Irish Studies*, vol. 37, nos. 1-2 (2011), pp. 98-119, pp. 104-5.

⁴¹⁶ Michael D. Higgins, *Renewing the Republic* (Dublin: Liberties Press, 2011), p. 18.

modern history.’⁴¹⁷ The EAG’s Chair, Dr. Maurice Manning, confirmed that the group would ‘seek to set a tone that is inclusive and non-triumphalist’.⁴¹⁸

However, while the emphasis of Higgins and O’Toole may have been more on socialist legacy of the Rising, with Higgins proposing ‘a non-negotiable floor of citizenship below which people will not be allowed to fall’,⁴¹⁹ much of the government’s approach to the 1916 centenary, and to its contextualisation as part of a wider decade of centenaries, was initially influenced by positive Anglo-Irish relations, particularly in the wake of the Queen’s visit to Dublin in 2011.⁴²⁰ A joint statement in March 2012 by Taoiseach Enda Kenny and British Prime Minister David Cameron positioned the decade of centenaries as the commemoration ‘of events that helped shape our political destinies.’ But while it acknowledged the need for inclusive, respectful and accurate remembrance, it moved to a future focus that was more economic in ambition, conditioned by the need of both countries to pursue economic recovery: ‘The UK and Ireland both have open and globalised economies and we share a commitment to boosting growth as the cornerstone of economic recovery and job creation.’⁴²¹ Though the official Ireland 2016 programme made no mention of this economic imperative, except for a single reference to ‘economic storms that caused untold damage to our communities’, it is important to note the placement of Ireland within the global economy that the 2016 commemorations enacted and of the impact of that placement on the

⁴¹⁷ Government Press Office, ‘National Commemorations Programme: Decade of Centenaries, 2012-2022’, Roinn an Taoisigh [website], http://www.taoiseach.gov.ie/eng/News/Archives/2012/Government_Press_Releases_2012/National_Commemorations_Programme_Decade_of_Centenaries_2012-2022.html [accessed 25 April 2017].

⁴¹⁸ Government Press Office, ‘National Commemorations Programme’.

⁴¹⁹ Higgins, *Renewing the Republic*, p. 13.

⁴²⁰ The official Ireland 2016 programme ultimately pointed to the limits of inclusion when commemorating revolution: ‘Official events must within reason be inclusive and non-partisan, but the State should not be expected to be neutral about its own existence. The aim should be to broaden sympathies’; Ireland 2016, *Clár Comórtha Céad Bliain. Centenary Programme*, www.ireland2016.gov.ie [website], March 2015, http://www.ireland2016.gov.ie/sites/default/files/final_version_1_5_15.pdf [accessed 26 April 2017], p. 62/63.

⁴²¹ Government Press Office, ‘Joint Statement by the Prime Minister, David Cameron and the Taoiseach, Enda Kenny’, Roinn an Taoisigh [website], 12 March 2012, http://taoiseach.gov.ie/eng/News/Archives/2012/Taoiseach's_Press_Releases_2012/Joint_Statement_by_the_Prime_Minister,_David_Cameron_and_the_Taoiseach,_Enda_Kenny.html [accessed 25 April 2017].

exercise of citizenship in the country.⁴²² Before his secondment from Fáilte Ireland to direct the Ireland 2016 programme, John Concannon, submitted a proposal to the government that the centenary should be marked by a trade and tourism initiative whose value would include ‘increased revenue, jobs, investment and visitors’.⁴²³ Titled ‘Celebrating our Past, Shaping the Future’, the proposal’s explicit economic aim was rejected as not reflective of the Minister for Arts’ vision for 2016. Nonetheless, its language and approach influenced the ultimate programme. Moreover Concannon’s linking of entrepreneurial and artistic creativity in the service of economic development has since emerged as a defining feature of the Ireland 2016 legacy.⁴²⁴ Of course the storm metaphor in the *Centenary Programme* implied Ireland’s economic crisis was beyond the control of its government and people. It was a natural disaster that tested and proved the resilience of the nation: ‘We have survived each crisis, and emerged ever stronger.’⁴²⁵ For all the headline calls to active citizen participation in the programme, it retained, in relation to the economy at least, a version of citizenship that was passive.⁴²⁶

When the *Centenary Programme* was first announced, its vision for Ireland 2016 was shaped by five themes: ‘Remembering, Reconciling, Presenting, Imagining and Celebrating’. It was under the theme of ‘Celebrating’ that the arts and artists made their first appearance: ‘We will use the creativity of our artists and the imagination of all our people to celebrate the idealism of the Proclamation.’ The language implied an instrumentalisation of the artist in the service of unquestioning celebration at odds with the nuanced acknowledgment of

⁴²² In an article ostensibly focused on pluralism and respect for different traditions in the 1916 centenary commemorations, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Charlie Flanagan, nonetheless turned to a global audience and especially the global markets: ‘Ireland 2016 will take place in a global context, as the Rising itself did, and it will provide the opportunity to present to a global audience a profile of Ireland’s achievements. [...] We also have a good story to tell about our economic recovery, which is now taking hold and which has been hard-won’; Charlie Flanagan, ‘Commemoration of 1916 a Time to Respect Pluralism: The Centenary is an Opportunity to Respect the Island’s Different Traditions’, *Irish Times*, 23 March 2015, p. 14.

⁴²³ Mac Cormaic, ‘Gathering-Style Initiative for 1916 Centenary Rejected’, p. 2.

⁴²⁴ See Chapter Four for an account of the Creative Ireland programme.

⁴²⁵ Ireland 2016, *Clár Comórtha Céad Bliain. Centenary Programme*, p. 4/5.

⁴²⁶ The *Clár Comórtha Céad Bliain. Centenary Programme* declared ‘Ireland 2016, as a year of reflection and engagement for everyone on this island’ (p. 8/9), ‘[e]ncouraging widespread citizen engagement’ (p. 16/17). ‘The Ireland 2016 Centenary Programme represents the broadest possible invitation to co-create and to become involved in commemorative events throughout the whole of 2016, across the entire country, and indeed globally’ (p. 12/13).

complexities in the history elsewhere in the document, while it was the purview of 'our young people, at home and overseas, to challenge our assumptions and to *re-imagine* our legacy for future generations.'⁴²⁷ The slippage from the 'Imagining' of the headline theme to the 're-imagining' of the more detailed explanation revealed the 2016 commemorations as the latest in a line of efforts to renew the national project.⁴²⁸ It is worth noting that the language of re-imagining was a vestige of Concannon's 'Celebrating our Past, Shaping the Future' 'call to action' for Irish people 'to reflect on the past 100 years and to re-imagine our future' and ultimately, as the programme's five themes were narrowed into a more tightly focused invitation to 'Remember, Reflect and Reimagine', it was to the third territory of re-imagining that the arts and artists made the strongest contribution.⁴²⁹

The Arts Council and the Ireland 2016 Programme

For 2016, the Irish State, through the Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (DAHRRGA), provided €48 million for the programme of commemoration, €31 million of which was allocated to capital projects.⁴³⁰ Though this research concentrates on the embodied commemoration, the differential allocation of State funds confirms a stronger commitment to paying for built infrastructure than to resourcing artists, regardless of the government's pro-artist rhetoric.⁴³¹ In December 2014, Minister for the Arts, Heather Humphreys had announced a supplementary grant of €2 million to The Arts Council, specifically to fund artistic projects as part of the Ireland 2016.⁴³² In making the announcement

⁴²⁷ Ireland 2016, *Clár Comórtha Céad Bliain. Centenary Programme*, p. 8/9.

⁴²⁸ Fanning, *Histories of the Irish Future*.

⁴²⁹ Ireland 2016, 'Ireland 2016 invites you to Remember, Reflect & Reimagine', www.ireland2016.gov.ie [website], <http://www.ireland2016.gov.ie/news/ireland-2016-invites-you-remember-reflect-reimagine> [accessed 26 April 2017].

⁴³⁰ These capital works included refurbishments at the National Concert Hall, new developments at the National Archives, the GPO, Teach an Phiarsaigh, a Tenement Museum, as well as the controversial acquisition of buildings on Moore Street related to the Easter Rising. Government Press Office, 'Minister Humphreys announces €300m capital investment package for heritage and culture', DAHRRGA [website], 29 September 2015, <http://www.ahrrga.gov.ie/minister-humphreys-announces-e300m-capital-investment-package-for-heritage-and-culture/> [accessed 3 March 2017].

⁴³¹ 'We need money to go towards people, programmes and projects'; Willie White, Artistic Director of Dublin Theatre Festival, quoted in Kirsty Blake-Knox, 'Centenary Celebrations take Centre Stage as Arts Council Blasts Funding as a "Real Blow" to Crafts', *Irish Independent*, 14 October 2015, p. 15.

⁴³² This maintenance of its 2015 allocation at €56.9 million, the same level as in 2014, was the first time since 2007 that the Arts Council's allocation had not been cut. Arts Council, 'Funding

Humphreys identified the significance of The Arts Council ‘in supporting the arts in towns and villages across the country’,⁴³³ an emphasis that anchored the national in the local, a not-quite-rural (she had yet to accrue Rural Affairs to her portfolio⁴³⁴), but definitely not-metropolitan vision of the nation. It was a making of national breadth out of local specificity that Arts Council Chair, Sheila Pratschke, echoed in her response that: ‘One of the big things we [Arts Council] would like to do is get everyone talking and reach into every corner of Ireland.’⁴³⁵ There was a potentially challenging edge to the ambition to ‘get everyone talking’,⁴³⁶ just as there was an image of extension from the central ‘we’ of the Arts Council into those corners, rather than a sense that artistic activity might be emanating from those places regarded as peripheries. The Arts Council’s 2016 message was firmly about ‘placing the artist and the arts at the centre of how it responds to the centenary of the 1916 Easter Rising’,⁴³⁷ but that language of singular artist at a singular centre wasn’t necessarily helpful for understanding the multiple artistic perspectives and the distributed spatial choreography evident in a work like *The Casement Project*. As I will outline, *The Casement Project* imagined a different way of choreographing the national space by coming into formation through rehearsals, performances and relationships conducted outside the national borders, beyond the nation’s capital and in virtual as well as material spaces. If the Arts Council proposed putting artists at the centre of the commemoration, *The Casement Project* deliberately

Decisions’, www.artscouncil.ie [website], 8 January 2015, <http://www.artscouncil.ie/news-details.aspx?id=15994> [accessed March 5 2017].

⁴³³ Laurence Mackin, ‘Arts Council Gets €2m Extra Towards 1916 centenary’, *Irish Times*, 12 December 2014, p. 4.

⁴³⁴ The Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (DAHG) became Department of Arts, Heritage, Rural, Regional and Gaeltacht affairs (DAHRRGA) in a Cabinet reshuffle in May 2016. Heather Humphreys became Minister of the expanded department, dubbed a Frankenstein department of incompatible elements by TD Peadar Tóibín (Marie O’Halloran, ‘Government has Created a “Frankenstein” Department, TD Claims’, *Irish Times*, 22 June 2016). The expansion was greeted with dismay by members of the arts community, who regarded it as a downgrading of the arts portfolio within government, a downgrading that undermined the government’s rhetoric about the centrality of the arts in the Centenary Commemorations. The National Campaign for the Arts, discussed further below, organised a petition and, with the support of opposition parties happy to see the minority Fine Gael government under pressure, unsuccessfully lobbied Minister Humphreys for a separate Arts, Culture and Heritage Department (National Campaign for the Arts, ‘Over 7,000 Sign Petition for Dedicated Arts, Culture and Heritage Department’, [www.ncfa.ie](http://ncfa.ie) [website], 12 May 2016, <http://ncfa.ie/news/over-7000-sign-petition-for-dedicated-arts-culture-heritage-department> [accessed 8 March 2017].

⁴³⁵ Mackin, ‘Arts Council Gets €2m extra’.

⁴³⁶ See Chapter 4 for an account of how *The Casement Project* provoked debate in local and national media.

⁴³⁷ Arts Council. ‘ART:2016. An Open Call to the Irish Imagination’, ART:2016 [website], <http://www.artscouncil.ie/Art-2016/About/#> [accessed 10 March 2017].

distributed the spatiality of that centre. It also choreographed a structure where the civic connections between artists and other citizens and non-citizens was subject and outcome of the work.

Though Pratschke made clear that the Arts Council had not completed its planning for Ireland 2016 programme when the €2 million grant was announced, she did indicate that Arts Council intended ‘big commissions across the art forms, in visual arts, dance, theatre and music to really mark the occasion’.⁴³⁸ Scale and the commissioning of artists were already part of the aspiration in a way that wasn’t necessarily aligned with the Minister’s early vision of arts in towns and villages and her concern with the respectful continuity of existing historical narratives expressed in the injunction that ‘[t]he stories of heroic efforts need to be passed from generation to generation with pride and wonder’.⁴³⁹ The Arts Council’s programme of commemoration, announced in August 2015 and eventually branded as ART:2016, invited artistic responses that, as O’Toole recognised, were less about reverential pride and wonder and more about ‘playfulness and ambiguity and challenging exploration’.⁴⁴⁰ If the Ireland 2016 official programme was encapsulated as a process of remembering, reflecting and reimagining, the Minister was clearly more comfortable in the first two categories, while the Arts Council made possible for artists a concentration on the creative reimagining of the national identities, embodiments and citizenship. In a telling compression of timespaces, the Arts Council’s ART:2016 website asserted that the work of artists ‘has been the enduring imagination of what Ireland can become.’ Past and continuous present were directed towards the imagined future, as images of Ireland, through the work of artists, were to be generated not from what the country had been, but what it *might* be. And perhaps more than that, what the Arts Council claimed was that the country had always been (at least since its founding

⁴³⁸ Mackin, ‘Arts Council Gets €2m extra’.

⁴³⁹ Government Press Office, ‘Speech by the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Heather Humphreys TD’, DAHRRGA [website], 12 November 2014, <http://www.ahrrga.gov.ie/speech/speech-by-the-minister-for-arts-heritage-and-the-gaeltacht-heather-humphreys-td-3/> [accessed 8 March 2017].

⁴⁴⁰ O’Toole, ‘In 2016, Official Ireland Trusted Artists’.

by radical artists⁴⁴¹) an imagined future. Though commemoration is acknowledged as act of contemporary politics, it is also important to recognise the strategic force of imagined futures and therefore the contemporary impact of the artists' propositions enabled by the ART:2016 programme.

The Arts Council and Cultural Policy Context

Before examining in detail the ART:2016 programme and the conditions created by the Arts Council for the work in 2016 of artists in general and dance artists in particular, it is worth outlining the political conditions under which the Arts Council itself has operated. These conditions matter since their impact on the Arts Council has affected in turn how the Arts Council has worked with artists. As indicated above, the Arts Council is directly dependent on government funding and has been since its foundation under the 1951 Arts Act when it was charged with 'stimulating public interest; with promoting knowledge, appreciation and practice; and with assisting in improving standards in the arts.'⁴⁴² The 2003 Arts Act, the most recent relevant legislation, reiterated these purposes, underlining the Arts Council's advisory role to the Minister for the Arts. Crucially, it also set out the autonomy of the Arts Council in its disbursement of funding.⁴⁴³ This 'arm's-length' principle has operated with a view to 'protecting' artistic activity from direct governmental interference and from politically-motivated favouritism. As the corporeal metaphor suggests, an arm's-length is not quite out of reach, and this has proved to be the case: some of the Arts Council's client-organisations have cultivated direct relationships with the Department of Arts and its presiding ministers. In a recent controversial instance, following its failure to secure an Open Call Award, the Abbey Theatre (the Arts Council's single largest client), received €500,000 directly from the Department of Arts after what was reported as a 'a series of "verbal discussions between the director [Fiach Mac Conghail of the

⁴⁴¹ 'The role of artists in the Celtic Revival and in the events leading up to the Rising cannot be underestimated. They challenged and provoked a different narrative that sought to imagine a new, culturally defined Ireland.' Arts Council, 'ART:2016. An open call to the Irish imagination'.

⁴⁴² *Making Great Art Work*, p.10. For a comprehensive history of how the Arts Council came into being and negotiated its relationship with government until the late eighties, see Brian P. Kennedy, *Dreams and Responsibilities: The State and The Arts in Independent Ireland* (Dublin: Arts Council, 1990).

⁴⁴³ Arts Act 2003, section 24 (2)

<http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2003/act/24/section/24/enacted/en/html#sec24> [accessed 9 March 2017].

Abbey] and senior officials [in the Department] over a period of months.”⁴⁴⁴ By funding directly the Abbey’s centenary programme, the Department effectively meddled in what should have been Arts Council’s territory, denying the Arts Council the chance to allocate the unexpectedly available €500,000, especially following a year when the Abbey had made a healthy box office profit of €1 million.⁴⁴⁵

As holders of the purse strings, with the power to make extraordinary gifts, the Department of Arts, its Minister and its officials have exercised significant control over how the Arts Council works. However, the size of that purse has been at the mercy of wider political and economic forces. The 2008 economic crisis in Ireland had a huge impact on public funding for the arts. The Arts Council’s budget was cut from a Celtic Tiger high-point of €83 million in 2007 to a 2014 low of €56.7 million⁴⁴⁶. It shouldn’t be assumed that cuts to arts’ budgets were an inevitable result of economic recession.⁴⁴⁷ While it is true that ten out of twenty-five European countries cut their cultural funding in response to the global economic crisis, five countries maintained funding levels and the remaining ten countries increased their public subsidy for culture. Funding cuts were a political choice. In Ireland, in 2009, the *McCarthy Report* could recommend a reduction of €6.1 million in the Arts Council’s budget, the merging of the country’s major visual arts’ institutions, as well as the abolition of Culture Ireland, of the Irish Film Board and even of the dedicated Ministry for the Arts.⁴⁴⁸ The report suggested that these

⁴⁴⁴ Laurence Mackin, ‘Abbey Had Good Year in 2014 with €1m Profit,’ *Irish Times*, 13 November 2015, p. 5. MacConghail’s familiarity with departmental officials from his experience as Arts Adviser to the Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism (2002-2005) is likely to have facilitated those direct discussions.

⁴⁴⁵ ‘Plays and Protest’, [editorial], *Irish Times*, 14 November 2015, p. 17.

⁴⁴⁶ Journal of Irish Music, ‘4% Increase for Arts Council in Budget 2016’, *Journal of Irish Music*, 14 October 2015, <http://journalofmusic.com/news/4-increase-arts-council-budget-2016> [accessed 20 March 2017].

⁴⁴⁷ Alexandra Slaby, ‘Whither Cultural Policy in Post Celtic Tiger Ireland?’, *The Canadian Journal of Irish Studies*, vol. 37, nos. 1-2 (2011), pp. 76-97, p. 80.

⁴⁴⁸ Properly titled *Report of the Special Group on Public Service Numbers and Expenditure Programmes*. The report followed the work of an advisory group established by the Minister of Finance under UCD economist, Colm McCarthy with a view to making savings in public sector expenditure. It identified a potential €5.3 billion in savings. Colm McCarthy, et al., *Report of the Special Group on Public Service Numbers and Expenditure Programmes*, vols. I and II (Dublin: Government Publications, 2009), pp. 17-20.

areas of activity were ‘not affordable’, ‘not financially feasible’, and ‘cannot be sustained given other public expenditure priorities.’⁴⁴⁹

The focus on purely financial imperatives represented a radical shift from what Alexandra Slaby regards as the presiding climate of cultural policy instituted by Michael D. Higgins, when he became the first Minister of the Department of the Arts, Culture and Gaeltacht (DAHG) in 1994. In contrast to the economically-driven focus that would follow, for Higgins, the arts and culture were not about entertainment, but part of a vision of inclusive citizenship and contributors to the creation of shared cultural space where dissent, critical consciousness and creativity could be fostered:

[Y]ou should in fact be investing in the arts at a time of non-growth if you were to prevent racism, if you were to prevent marginalisation, and also, if you were to avoid the double dividend of losing on citizenship twice over: you lost because you hadn’t a job, and then you lost participation and so on.⁴⁵⁰

While the social benefits of the arts were foregrounded in Higgins’ vision, he avoided dirigiste instrumentalism, since the critical society he wished to foster required the autonomy of cultural institutions such as the Arts Council. This was autonomy he considered himself to have protected from officials at the Department of Finance who would have preferred to retain oversight of arts and culture in the Department of the Taoiseach as a way to curb the potential of the arts sector as a ‘source of intelligence and dissent and creativity in the society’. Higgins’ vision for cultural policy in Ireland was nonetheless forced to acknowledge the increasing marketising pressures of neo-liberalism. Though he ‘argued that the cultural space was wider than the economic space’, by 1994, he nonetheless promoted the message that ‘the cultural space and its creativity could

⁴⁴⁹ Mc Carthy et al, *Report of the Special Group*, vol. II, p. 18.

⁴⁵⁰ Alexandra Dilys-Slaby and Michael D. Higgins, ‘Interview with Michael D. Higgins, Minister of Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht between 1993 and 1997, Dáil Éireann, Dublin, Ireland 15th May 2001’, *Revue LISA/LISA e-journal*, vol. II, no. 4 (2004), <http://lisa.revues.org/892> [accessed 14 March 2017].

revivify the economic space rather than the other way round', an argument that would become familiar again in the wake of the economic crash.⁴⁵¹

Alexandra Slaby identifies 2009 as the moment when 'Irish cultural policy became explicitly economized, in that it was not just encouraged to contribute to economic growth but was to acquire an active role in leading the economy to a new stage.'⁴⁵² However it is clear from Higgins' reflections on his time in Ministerial office, that the market forces of neo-liberalism were already in play long before the crisis. Higgins himself noted that the 'more corporatist' vision of his successor in the Department of Arts, Síle de Valera, resulted in the appointment to the boards of cultural institutions such as the Arts Council, representatives of the corporate sector who had more interest in the market place than the cultural space.⁴⁵³ Slaby accepts that already in the early 2000s Ireland was following international trends in cultural policy by beginning to quantify the economic benefit of the arts.⁴⁵⁴ In fact, the Arts Council had been involved in the commissioning of a report on the economic impact of 'the Cultural Industries' in 1994 and a further report on the financial significance of music as an industry was commissioned by Higgins' Department of Arts in 1997.⁴⁵⁵ The Arts Council's 2000 Everitt report on support for the individual artist in Ireland also acknowledged that 'a new interest is being shown in the external impacts of the arts. Broadly defined, they are a significant economic and financial sector and create jobs. They contribute to urban regeneration. They generate overseas earnings.'⁴⁵⁶ If the 2009 financial crisis intensified the pressure on the arts and culture to demonstrate their economic value, the neo-liberal trend was already well established before the crisis.

⁴⁵² Slaby, 'Whither Cultural Policy in Post Celtic Tiger Ireland?', p. 84

⁴⁵³ Slaby and Higgins, 'Interview with Michael D.Higgins'.

⁴⁵⁴ Slaby, 'Whither Cultural Policy in Post Celtic Tiger Ireland?', p. 83.

⁴⁵⁵ Temple Bar Properties and Coopers & Lybrand, *The Employment and Economic Significance of the Cultural Industries in Ireland*, with assistance from An Comhairle Ealaíon/Arts Council, the Department of Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht (DACG), An Bórd Trachtála, Dublin Corporation and FÁS (Dublin: Temple Bar Properties, 1994); Forte Task Force, *Access All Areas-Irish Music an International Industry, Report to the Minister of Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht* (Dublin: The Stationery Office, 1997).

⁴⁵⁶ Anthony Everitt, *The Creative Imperative: A Report on Support for the Individual Artist in Ireland* (Dublin: Arts Council, 2000), p. 16.

After the crash, the Global Economic Fora convened by the Irish government in 2009 and 2011, gathered business leaders and celebrities of the Irish diaspora to discuss how Ireland should position itself in the global market to recover from the crisis it had experienced.⁴⁵⁷ ‘Participants strongly argued that the arts are no longer a luxury or a charity, but are a hugely important part of the economy.’⁴⁵⁸ As *Riverdance* composer Bill Whelan mordantly described it: ‘When the doors of the first Farmleigh economic forum burst open, dizzy industrialists waving flags with The arts will save us emblazoned on them emerged.’⁴⁵⁹ The association of arts and creativity with the distinctiveness of what was being called ‘Brand Ireland’ was something the then Taoiseach, Brian Cowen noted as a source of ‘competitive advantage in a globalised world’.⁴⁶⁰ While I will examine the global aspect of the nation brand in Chapter Four, it is important to note here how the government’s stress on the economic value of the arts had an apparently international focus that nonetheless began to shape the way in which the arts sector described and defended itself at a national level. For example, in 2009, the Arts Council commissioned an *Assessment of the Economic Impact of the Arts in Ireland* with an update in 2011. In greeting the report, the Arts Council’s Chair, Pat Moylan, accepted that an economic argument for public subsidy of the arts had to be made, but she stressed that the arts should not be judged solely by economic criteria.⁴⁶¹ Just a year later, celebrating the sixtieth anniversary of the Arts Council, those economic criteria had moved into primary position:

This Indecon report shows that the arts are now a major employer and contributor to economic output and that with smart investment the arts are capable of stimulating job creation and economic activity

⁴⁵⁷ Laura Slattery, ‘Irish Business Diaspora to Attend Dublin Forum’, *Irish Times*, 2 September 2009, p. 17.

⁴⁵⁸ Department of Foreign Affairs, *Global Irish Economic Forum 18-20 September 2009 Report*. (Dublin: Department of Foreign Affairs, 2009), p. 21.

⁴⁵⁹ Bill Whelan, ‘Balancing the Arts and Politics’, *Irish Times*, 23 November 2011, p. 15. For further discussion of ‘Brand Ireland’, see Chapter Four.

⁴⁶⁰ Brian Cowen, ‘Speech by the Taoiseach, Mr. Brian Cowen, T.D., at the Announcement of Ireland’s Next Professor of Poetry - Harry Clifton - Newman House, Wednesday, 30 June, 2010 at 6.30pm’, quoted in Rosemary Meade, ‘“Our country’s calling card”: Culture as the Brand in Recessionary Ireland’, *Variant*, vol. 43 (2012), <http://www.variant.org.uk/43texts/Variant43.html#L8> [accessed 18 March 2017]. Cowen referred to Ireland as Brand in that speech. And an *Irish Times* editorial on the Global Economic Forum also uses Brand Ireland as its title. *Irish Times*, ‘Brand Ireland’ [editorial], *Irish Times*, 3 July 2010, p. 15.

⁴⁶¹ Arminta Wallace, ‘Arts Sector Raised €306.8m in Tax Revenues Last Year’, *Irish Times*, 17 November 2011, p. 3.

at a time we need it most [...]. Our achievements in the arts give us a deep credibility when we tell the world of our flexible, creative, innovative work force and the Arts Council is proud of the role the arts play in attracting inward investment.⁴⁶²

And it wasn't just the Arts Council that learned to mobilise economic arguments in favour of public subsidy (now rebranded as investment) in the arts.⁴⁶³ The National Campaign for the Arts (NCFA), a lobby group founded in response to the threat of the *McCarthy Report*, was quick to deploy economic arguments in defence of arts funding. While its campaign message for the 2011 election was headed by the declaration that 'The arts enrich our lives', its further four messages stressed economic benefits through cultural tourism, employment and nation branding – claims supported by economic facts and figures in its campaign document.⁴⁶⁴ While NCFA has been credited with lobbying successfully to help stave off the worst of threatened cuts, it has done so, to a significant extent, by seeming to adopt economic justifications. It could be argued that, as a result, NCFA has relinquished the primacy of Higgins' argument for the value of the arts as part of a cultural space in which a dynamic and critical experience of citizenship can be fostered. Pat Cooke has given space to criticisms of the NCFA's tactics, relating them to a perceived failure of artists to expose and criticise the concern for increased wealth and its signifiers that precipitated the economic crisis in Ireland.⁴⁶⁵ Cooke's criticism of NCFA and of artists in general fails to take into account how the tactical appropriation of economic justifications had preserved a level of cultural activity and artistic livelihoods that might otherwise have been eradicated. It is worth noting that the *McCarthy Report's* recommendation of a cut to the Arts Council budget was predicated on the conclusion that 'it is not financially feasible to provide for a full range of arts activities in every local area', making clear that financial considerations had priority over cultural inclusion for

⁴⁶² Arts Council, 'Arts More Important Than Ever says Arts Council', www.artscouncil.ie [website], 16 November 2012, <http://www.artscouncil.ie/News/Arts-more-important-than-ever-says-Arts-Council/> [accessed 25 March 2017].

⁴⁶³ Slaby, 'Whither Cultural Policy in Post Celtic Tiger Ireland?', p. 84.

⁴⁶⁴ 'The arts enrich our lives. The arts enhance Ireland's image and reputation on the world stage. The arts are a stimulant of and contributor to the smart economy. The arts are a significant employer. The arts drive cultural tourism.' National Campaign for the Arts, 'Election 2011', www.ncfa.ie [website], www.ncfa.ie/files/2011-messages.doc [accessed 24 March 2017]. Since 2016, I have been part of a group of strategic thinkers supporting the NCFA's policy developments.

⁴⁶⁵ Pat Cooke, 'The Artist and the State in Ireland', pp. 103-4.

everyone across the country. Safeguarding an idea of national financial security required the sacrifice of actual national provision.⁴⁶⁶ By lobbying against such cuts, albeit in predominantly economic terms, the NCFA and the artistic community that constitutes it have protected the possibility of a cultural space that Higgins proposed. Despite the ‘economization’ that Slaby and Cooke identified, the possibility of a cultural inclusion has not disappeared and the Arts Council’s programme for Ireland 2016 has enabled artists to foreground again artistic practices that critically engage with and support inclusive articulations of citizenship. However, the ‘economization’ of the arts as a symptom of wider changes in working practices under neo-liberalism as practised in and through Ireland, has impacted on how artists can work towards those new models of citizenship.⁴⁶⁷

Making Great Art Work – The Arts Council Strategy

Though the commemoration provided the Arts Council with exceptional additional funding, its response to the additional resource evolved alongside a review of its remit, activities and outcomes.⁴⁶⁸ Conducted in consultation with the arts sector in 2014 and early 2015, the review resulted in its *Making Great Art Work* strategy for 2016-2025, launched in September 2015. The next month, the Budget revealed that The Arts Council had received an increase of €2.5 million in its 2016 allocation from the Department, bringing its budget to €59.1 million.⁴⁶⁹ However, the Arts Council was not happy. While the allocation represented a 4% increase from the previous year, the Department itself had benefited from a 12% increase.⁴⁷⁰ Pratschke was not slow to criticize the comparatively small increase as ‘a devastating blow to artists and arts organisations already struggling to survive and

⁴⁶⁶ Mc Carthy et al, *Report of the Special Group on Public Service Numbers and Expenditure Programmes*, vol II, p. 18.

⁴⁶⁷ As Clare Croft notes, ‘dance history must attend to the role economics plays in creating artistic hierarchies and canons’. Clare Croft, *Dancers as Diplomats: American Choreography in Cultural Exchange* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), p. 16.

⁴⁶⁸ Arts Council, ‘Arts Council Strategic Review 2014 Terms of Reference Announced’, www.artscouncil.ie [website], 12 February 2014, <http://www.artscouncil.ie/News/Arts-Council-strategic-review-2014-terms-of-reference-announced/> [accessed 4 March 2017].

⁴⁶⁹ Blake-Knox, ‘Centenary Celebrations Take Centre Stage’.

⁴⁷⁰ Journal of Music, ‘4% Increase for Arts Council in Budget 2016’..

present work of the highest quality to people across Ireland.⁴⁷¹ Her public criticism of the allocation signaled a stance of independence from the Department of Arts that would be a hallmark of the Arts Council's positioning during the commemorations.⁴⁷²

Pratschke's October 2015 response to the Budget made no reference to the forthcoming centenary commemorations, but focused instead on the ambitions of the Arts Council's *Making Great Art Work* strategy.⁴⁷³ The strategy set out two main policy priorities in its ten-year vision: proper resourcing of 'the artist' and a focus on public engagement in the arts. An accompanying diagram depicted these two policy priorities as yin and yang halves of a circle surrounded by three additional planning and decision making-priorities: 'Investment Strategy', 'Spatial and Demographic Planning', and 'Developing Capacity'.⁴⁷⁴ There was continuity from the previous Arts Council Strategic Statement, published in 2013, where four goals were outlined that included enabling 'more people to engage in the arts in more places' and the support of artists and arts organisations.⁴⁷⁵ The elision of arts organisations from headline priority and foregrounding of 'The Artist' was notable in *Making Great Art Work*.

Given that the strategy document recognised the varied categories of emerging, mid- and late-career artists in its considerations, as well as the different

⁴⁷¹ Arts Council, 'Arts Council Statement on Budget Allocation', www.artscouncil.ie [website], 19 October 2015, <http://www.artscouncil.ie/News/Arts-Council-statement-re-budget-allocation/> [accessed 8 March 2017].

⁴⁷² The relationships between Pratschke and Minister Humphreys was reported as being 'mutually antagonistic' in the wake of Pratschke's public criticism of the budget allocation. Sarah Bardon, 'Arts Council and Minister have "Antagonistic" Relationship', *Irish Times*, 13 November 2015, p. 5.

⁴⁷³ Arts Council, 'Arts Council Strategy 2016-2025', www.artscouncil.ie [website], <http://www.artscouncil.ie/arts-council-strategy/> [accessed 3 March 2017]. Arts Council received a top-up of €1 million to its allocation from the Department in December 2015, a top-up welcomed by Pratschke as an endorsement of the *Making Great Art Work* Strategy (Arts Council, 'Arts Council Welcomes Additional €1m Allocation', www.artscouncil.ie [website], 17 December 2015, <http://www.artscouncil.ie/News/Arts-Council-welcomes-additional-€1m-allocation/> [accessed 8 March 2017]).

⁴⁷⁴ Arts Council, *Making Great Art Work, Leading the Development of the Arts in Ireland, Arts Council Strategy (2016-2025)*, September 2015, www.artscouncil.ie [website], http://www.artscouncil.ie/uploadedFiles/Making_Great_Art_Work.pdf [accessed 8 March 2017], p. 15, 20.

⁴⁷⁵ Arts Council, *Developing the Arts: Arts Council Strategic Statement*, November 2013, www.artscouncil.ie [website], <http://www.artscouncil.ie/uploadedFiles/Developing-the-arts-strategic-statement-2013-english.pdf> [accessed 9 March 2017], p. 7.

ways and contexts in which artists work,⁴⁷⁶ the use of the capitalised abstract and lonely singular Artist to designate the variety of people engaged in artistic practice risked reinforcing a familiar, unhelpful dichotomy between individual, isolated artists and the generalised, public mass.⁴⁷⁷ The strategy posed the dichotomy despite its inclusion of a quotation from former President Mary Robinson, enjoining us to ‘talk about the arts not as something separate from ourselves but as an integral part of our lives’.⁴⁷⁸ By positing such a dichotomy, The Arts Council seemed to create for itself the crucial role, as presented in its diagram of priorities, of holding together these separate entities of Artist and Public with its wrap-around circle of investment, capacity-building and attention to spatial and demographic distribution.⁴⁷⁹

Dance Policy in Ireland – a Brief History of Neglect

The policy framework for contemporary dance in Ireland has a relatively short history and one characterised by neglect. The 1951 and 1973 Arts Acts failed to mention dance in their list of the arts and it wasn’t until the 2003 Arts Act that dance was specifically included.⁴⁸⁰ As outlined in the Introduction, the work of choreographers was not recognised either in the 1969 legislation granting tax-free status to the original creations of composers, writers and visual artists. Choreography was not regarded as being of sufficient cultural merit to warrant inclusion.⁴⁸¹ Nor were choreographers included in the Arts Council’s 1981 formation of Aosdána – a group of 250 artists honoured by the state for their ‘outstanding contribution to the creative arts in Ireland’ and given a cnuas or stipend ‘to enable them to devote their energies fully to their work.’⁴⁸² It took until 2007, and the shifting of a mindset which considered choreography as merely

⁴⁷⁶ ‘We acknowledge that artists work as lone practitioners and as collaborators in a wide range of contexts’, *Making Great Art Work*, p. 18 .

⁴⁷⁷ See Cooke, ‘The Artist and the State in Ireland’, for a discussion of the historical tension in Irish cultural policy between support for artists and for public participation in the arts.

⁴⁷⁸ *Making Great Art Work*, p.27

⁴⁷⁹ Arts Council reports on its funding distribution by local authority.

⁴⁸⁰ “[A]rts” means any creative or interpretative expression (whether traditional or contemporary) in whatever form, and includes, in particular, visual arts, theatre, literature, music, dance, opera, film, circus and architecture, and includes any medium when used for those purposes;’ Arts Act 2003, Part 1, 2(1), <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2003/act/24/section/2/enacted/en/html> [accessed 28 March 2017]

⁴⁸¹ Michael Seaver, ‘Points Scored for Artistic Merit’, *Irish Times*, 19 May 2005, p. 14.

⁴⁸² Aosdána, ‘Aosdána: An Affiliation of Creative Artists in Ireland’, www.aosdana.artscouncil.ie [website], <http://aosdana.artscouncil.ie> [accessed 25 March 2017.]

interpretive of music rather than genuinely creative, for two choreographers to be elected to Aosdána. It took until 2017 for the next choreographer to be admitted.⁴⁸³ It wasn't until 1998 that a Council member with specific dance expertise was appointed.⁴⁸⁴

The Arts Council has been the main source of funding for 'artistic' dance in Ireland and as a result the art form has been especially vulnerable to the Arts Council's shifting policies and omissions.⁴⁸⁵ Until the publication in 1985 of Peter Brinson's report *The Dancer and the Dance: Developing Theatre Dance in Ireland*, the Arts Council's funding of dance had been concentrated on ballet.⁴⁸⁶ Brinson's recommendations created a climate more favourable to contemporary dance, as part of an effort to develop an 'indigenous Irish theatrical dance'.⁴⁸⁷ However, in 1989, the Arts Council withdrew all funding for professional theatre dance, instilling a sense of vulnerability that is still prevalent in the dance community today.⁴⁸⁸ Unsurprisingly, ten years after Brinson's report, the Arts Council still had to admit that 'dance as an art form has suffered severe neglect in Ireland.'⁴⁸⁹

There were positive advances for dance during the Celtic Tiger boom, including the opening in 2007 of DanceHouse, a six-studio building dedicated to dance, and the expansion of dancer-in-residence and dance-artist-in-residence

⁴⁸³ Seaver, 'Points Scored for Artistic Merit'. The elected choreographers were David Bolger, Artistic Director of *CoisCéim Dance Theatre*, Ireland's biggest, regularly-funded contemporary dance company, and Cindy Cummings, an independent choreographer. Fiona Quilligan, founder of Rubato Ballet, was elected to Aosdána in April 2017. Arts Council, 'Aosdána Elects 7 New Members at its General Assembly', www.artscouncil.ie [website], 25 April 2017, <http://www.artscouncil.ie/News/Aosdana-elects-7-new-members-at-its-General-Assembly/> [accessed 12 May 2017].

⁴⁸⁴ Mary Brady, Artistic Director of the Firkin Crane Centre for Dance in Cork; The Irish Film and Television Network, 'Sile deValera Announces Arts Council', www.iftn.ie [website], 19 June 1998, <http://www.iftn.ie/?act1=record&aid=73&rid=90&sr=1&only=1&hl=rdi&tpl=archnews> [accessed 14 May 2017].

⁴⁸⁵ See for example a 2002 article by then choreographer, Paul Johnson about the impact of the Arts Council's 'fickle' funding of contemporary dance; Johnson, 'Dancing in the Dark'. Johnson subsequently joined the Arts Council's staff, before becoming Chief Executive of Dance Ireland in 2006. He was a member of the Arts Council from 2008 until 2013.

⁴⁸⁶ Aoife McGrath, Derek Parnell, Victoria O'Brien, *Arts Council Ballet Policy Review* (Dublin: Arts Council, 2013), p. 9.

⁴⁸⁷ Peter Brinson with Andy Ormston, *The Dancer and the Dance: Developing Theatre Dance in Ireland* (Dublin: Arts Council, 1985), p. 17.

⁴⁸⁸ Jennifer Roche, *Moving Identities: Multiplicity, Embodiment and the Contemporary Dancer*, PhD Thesis, School of Arts, Roehampton University, 2009, p. 16.

⁴⁸⁹ Arts Council, *Annual Report 1995* (Dublin: Arts Council, 1995), p. 61.

schemes around the country.⁴⁹⁰ However, the first post-crisis cut to the Arts Council's budget in 2008 was again passed on disproportionately to dance: while the Arts Council reduced its overall funding by 8.2%, dance suffered cuts of 11.12%, the highest reduction imposed on any art-form.⁴⁹¹ From 2008 to 2013, the Arts Council's support for dance was reduced by 41%, while the Arts Council's overall budget was reduced by approximately 27% in the same timeframe. Research by Dance Ireland on the state of the sector in 2012 and 2013, revealed the impact of those cuts with the numbers employed in the dance sector falling 74% between 2010 and 2012.⁴⁹²

Dance policy in the Arts Council has operated without an updated art-form strategy since 2012. The Dance section of the Arts Council website suggests that the Arts Council's 2013 Strategic Statement provides the current guiding principles for its policy. However the Integrated Dance Strategy of 2010-2012 is the most up to date dance-specific policy document publicly available. It is not clear yet how the overall *Making Great Art Work* strategy will be parsed to generate the specific priorities of a dance strategy. The 2010-2012 Integrated Dance Strategy has a focus on individual artists that is consistent with *Making Great Art Work*, but it leads with a less-aligned emphasis on an infrastructure of 'geographically well-positioned', primarily building-based resource organisations as a means of delivering the support to individuals as well as serving a wider community. It acknowledges the value of established companies for their artistic vision. Independent dance artists are recognised for their flexibility and mobility, and though the 'international renown' of some is referred to, it is their potential 'to play a key role in decentralising dance activities to regional centres' that stands out in the Integrated Strategy. The language of decentralisation seems like a hangover

⁴⁹⁰ Geographical distribution of dance resources conditions life and working possibilities of dance artists and the opportunities for others to engage with dance as participants and audience. Despite the development of healthy dance resource organisations in Limerick (Dance Limerick) and Cork (Firkin Crane), as well as clusters of activity in Galway and Shawbrook, the concentration of dance resources and consequent activity in Dublin is a source of frustration for artists based outside of the capital. See Madeline Boughton, 'Dance Ireland Research Project Online Survey Results', 2017, www.danceireland.ie [website], http://www.danceireland.ie/content/pubs/Dance_Ireland_Research_Project_Survey_web.pdf [accessed 19 April 2017].

⁴⁹¹ Deirdre Falvey, 'Funding for Arts Organisations Will Fall 8.2% Next Year', *Irish Times*, 2 December 2008, p. 3.

⁴⁹² Boughton, 'Dance Ireland Research Project', p. 1.

from 2003 when the Fianna Fáil and Progressive Democrat coalition government announced a controversial programme of dispersing government departments and semi-state bodies from the capital to 53 towns and cities across Ireland.⁴⁹³ It was withdrawn in 2011 having dispersed less than a third of the planned 10,300 public servants.⁴⁹⁴ Though its failure was acknowledged by the time the Integrated Dance Strategy was being written, the currency of the concept still appears to have coloured the Arts Council's vision for dance and especially for individual dance artists. In 2016, there were eight awards under the Arts Council Dance Artist Residency Scheme whose purpose is 'to stabilise and support a network of dance artists in residence across the country'. Those residencies were in Tipperary, Limerick, Cork, Dingle, Galway, West Cork, Carlow and Bray, with previous residencies under the scheme having taken place also in Donegal, Navan, Sligo and Birr.⁴⁹⁵ Despite the apparent policy commitment to individual artists, awards to individual dance artists in 2016, which included Project Awards for the creation of new work, Bursary awards for research and professional development, and dance artist in residence awards totaled €58,1748, while the amount of awards to dance organisations through the Annual Funding Award, Annual Programming Grants and as Regularly Funded Organisations totaled €2,059,500. Of course a proportion of the funded organisations were resource organisations for dance whose activities benefit individual artists. In addition, the work of regularly-funded dance companies who employ performers is also essential in ensuring viable careers for dance artists.

However, despite the Art's Council's policy commitment to the resourcing of individual artists, and thanks to a general sense that artistic activity is being funded on a precarious project-to-project basis, funding for the independent dance sector has remained comparatively low in an already poorly resourced sector.⁴⁹⁶ A

⁴⁹³ 'Department of Finance, The Decentralisation Website', www.decentralisation.gov.ie [accessed 9 March 2017].

⁴⁹⁴ Frank McDonald, 'The Decentralisation Debacle', *Irish Times*, 4 September 2010, p. 1.

⁴⁹⁵ Arts Council, 'Dance Artist Residency Scheme' and Arts Council, 'Who We've Funded', www.artscouncil.ie [website], <http://www.artscouncil.ie/funding-decisions/> [accessed 23 April 2017].

⁴⁹⁶ Lian Bell, 'An Overview of the Performing Arts Scene in Ireland', IETM [website], 2015, https://www.ietm.org/sites/default/files/ireland-mapping_may2015.pdf [accessed 12 December 2016], p. 9.

comparison between the project funding available in 2017 to independent dance artists and the funding available to independent theatre artists reveals the particular challenges faced by the former. While the maximum amount that a dance project could apply for was €50,000, the maximum for a theatre production was €150,000. Moreover, to comply with ‘strategic priorities for support’, dance applications had the additional onus of ‘securing a broad range of performance venues within the finite parameters of the project’, while theatre had no such extra stipulation.⁴⁹⁷ Indeed a successful theatre production might also have benefitted from prior additional development funding of up to €25,000, bringing the total resources available to a theatre production to €175,000.⁴⁹⁸ The consequence of this differential funding, for individual dance artists and for dance companies, has been what research by Dance Ireland has called:

[A] sense of weariness with the struggle to find the resources to continue making work in the face of reduced funding support. There is a strong sense of insecurity across the sector with the move to project funding and the consequent lack of continuity and growth with the pressure to constantly create new work.⁴⁹⁹

It is in this context that the Arts Council’s 2015 ‘Open Call to the Irish Imagination for ambitious projects in any art form to commemorate the Centenary of the Easter Rising’ represented such an important opportunity for an individual dance artist.⁵⁰⁰

⁴⁹⁷Arts Council, ‘Dance Project Award 2017’, www.artsCouncil.ie [website], http://www.artsCouncil.ie/uploadedFiles/Main_Site/Content/Funds/DanceProjects_Guidelines_Rd2%202017pdf.pdf, p. 2 [accessed 12 April 2017].

⁴⁹⁸Theatre Project Awards are available in four strands: Strand 1–Play Development (up to €10,000), Strand 2–Theatre Creation (up to €25,000), Strand 3–Theatre Presentation (up to €75,000), Strand 4–Theatre Production (up to €150,000). Arts Council, ‘Theatre Project Award’, www.artsCouncil.ie [website], <http://www.artsCouncil.ie/Funds/Theatre-project-award/>, p. 2 [accessed 12 April 2017].

⁴⁹⁹Boughton, ‘Dance Ireland Research Project’, p. 1. Project funding is distinguished from regular funding in that it is awarded for limited time-limited projects. Unlike regular funding which permits an arts organisation to plan a sustainable programme over extended periods of time, project funding obviates the Arts Council from long-term relationships with award recipients and consequently gives the latter no security.

⁵⁰⁰Arts Council, ‘Open Call’, www.artsCouncil.ie [website], <http://www.artsCouncil.ie/Art-2016/Open-Call/> [accessed 23 April 2017].

Dancing the Rising: 'Be Irish and You'll be Alright'

As indicated above, during the centenary commemorations, politicians, historians and cultural commentators foregrounded the artistic credentials of those involved in the Easter Rising, but their reference points in the poetry and playwriting of Plunkett, McDonagh, and Pearse, and the piping of Ceannt didn't provide obvious purchase for a focus on dance.⁵⁰¹ The branding of the rebellion as a Poet's Rising⁵⁰² reinforced the hegemony of the literary arts in the Irish cultural imagination and risked hiding from attention once more the corporeality and choreography that was inevitably part of the 1916 Rising.⁵⁰³ Therefore, for dance artists engaging with the commemorative programme, to reveal the corporeal and the choreographic at the genesis of the Irish Republic was an opportunity to redefine the self-conception of the nation and, in doing so, to redress the neglect of dance in cultural policy and public discourse. My applications to the Arts Council concluded with the claim that *The Casement Project* would be 'a choreography of citizenship that demonstrates dance as valuable resource in national life.'⁵⁰⁴

⁵⁰¹ For the significance of theatre for many involved in the Easter Rising see chapter on 'Playing' in Roy Foster, *Vivid Faces: The Revolutionary Generation in Ireland 1890-1923* (London: Penguin Books, 2015).

⁵⁰² Frances Ledwidge's 'Lament for the Poets: 1916', written after the execution of the Rising's leaders makes the connection between the revolutionaries and their literary skills. One of the other ART:2016 projects, proposed by the Irish Writers' Centre, was titled *A Poet's Rising*, and featured the poetic response of six contemporary poets to the 1916 Rising. 'A Poet's Rising', Irish Writers' Centre [website], <https://irishwriterscentre.ie/pages/a-poets-rising> [accessed 24 April 2017].

⁵⁰³ Historiographical engagement with the 1916 legacy has foregrounded how the '[c]ultural memory of 1916 is ubiquitous in Irish poetry from W. B. Yeats to Michael Longley, prose fiction from Pádraic Ó Conaire and Eimar O'Duffy to Roddy Doyle and Sebastian Barry, and drama from Sean O'Casey to Frank McGuinness. To this could be added painting, sculpture, as well as the more modern media of radio and film, television documentaries'. But no mention is made of dance. Guy Beiner, 'Making sense of memory: coming to terms with conceptualisations of historical remembrance' in Grayson and McGarry (eds.), *Remembering 1916*, pp. 13-23, pp. 19-20. In the same collection, Nicholas Allen asserts: 'For some decades now, the cultural history of Ireland has been the subject of sophisticated literary analysis, with more sporadic attention given to the visual arts and music.' The artistic hierarchy is clear with 'sophisticated' literature, followed by reprehensibly 'sporadic' visual arts and music. Dance merits no mention whatsoever. Nicholas Allen, 'Cultural Representations in 1916', Grayson and McGarry (eds.), *Remembering 1916*, pp.168-180, p. 168. Barbara O'Connor also confirms that 'Dance has been relatively neglected in scholarship of the Irish Revival'; 'Taking the Floor: Dance, Nation and Gender in the Irish Revival', *UCDscholarcast Series* no. 12 (2015), p. 2, http://www.ucd.ie/scholarcast/transcripts/Taking_the_floor.pdf [accessed 16 May 2017].

⁵⁰⁴ Fearghus Ó Conchúir, 'FOCONCHUIR AC2016 Detailed Proposal-The Casement Project', p. 18. See Appendix Five. There were multiple applications to the Arts Council involved in resourcing *The Casement Project* since the Open Call was a two-stage process and I submitted an almost contemporaneous application for Dance Project Award.

Of course there was dancing at the start of the twentieth century in Ireland, dancing that was already part of political movement to form independent Irish bodies.⁵⁰⁵ Indeed, according to Meyer ‘one might well view dance as the gunpowder of the Irish Revolution.’⁵⁰⁶ Conradh na Gaeilge was set up in 1893 primarily to promote the Irish language, as part of a larger movement of cultural nationalism that developed for some into revolutionary politics.⁵⁰⁷ In 1897, in an effort to add to the social dimension of their Irish classes, the London chapter of Conradh na Gaeilge held the first céilí and began a process of inventing a ‘traditional’ Irish dance form that came to be taught at Conradh na Gaeilge meetings all over Ireland. The form was not uncontroversial. A performance of reels by the London Gaels at the 1901 Oireachtas was criticized as foreign in influence, and vigilance around supposed national authenticity was evident in the development of Irish dancing at the start of the twentieth century, even when the sanctioned national dance form was actually the product of a homogenising of regional variations and an ignoring of the ‘foreign’ social dances that were commonly practised in Ireland at the time.⁵⁰⁸ The céilí repertoire favoured the physical restraint of Munster dance styles over what was regarded as the more full-bodied exuberance of their Connaught counterparts. Since céilís were more likely to be held in the formality of public halls rather than in the unregulated settings of crossroads, private houses and outhouses, they met the approval of Catholic priests, despite the non-sectarian nature of Conradh na Gaeilge’s activities.⁵⁰⁹ J. J. Sheehan’s 1902 *A Guide to Irish Dancing* linked foreignness and immorality in its caution that men should not hold their female partners ‘round the waist English fashion’, and also advised against ‘any straining after “deportment”. Leave that to the Seoinini [socially ambitious imitators of the English]. In short be

⁵⁰⁵ Three weeks before the Easter Rising, Yeats’ experimental dance play *At the Hawk’s Well* was rehearsed in London, attempting to give artistic and acutely corporeal form to his vision of a decolonised Ireland. McGrath, *Dance Theatre in Ireland*, p. 37.

⁵⁰⁶ Moe Meyer, ‘Mapping the Body Politic’, *Performance Research*, vol. 6, no. 2 (2001), pp. 67-74, p. 69.

⁵⁰⁷ Proclamation signatories Padraig Pearse, Éamonn Ceannt and Séan MacDiarmada served on Conradh na Gaeilge’s Management Committee, while Joseph Plunkett, Thomas MacDonagh and Thomas Clarke were also active in the movement; Conradh na Gaeilge, ‘Stair Chonradh na Gaeilge’, www.cnag.ie [website], <https://www.cnag.ie/ga/eolas/an-ghaeilge/stair-chonradh-na-gaeilge.html> [accessed 13 April 2017].

⁵⁰⁸ Helen Brennan, ‘Reinventing Tradition: the Boundaries of Irish Dance’, *History Ireland*, vol. 2, no. 2 (1994), pp. 22-24.

⁵⁰⁹ Brennan, ‘Reinventing Tradition’, p. 23.

natural, unaffected, easy – be Irish and you’ll be alright.’⁵¹⁰ The bodies performing the sanctioned choreographies of Conradh na Gaeilge had to exhibit restraint without displaying strain, a sophisticated and demanding physical embodiment designed to produce the appearance of ‘natural’ Irishness. However, this regulation of bodies in the invention of a national body did not suppress subversion. Kathleen Clarke, one of the founders of Cumann na mBan, described the use of a céilí on the Sunday preceding the Rising as a cover for a meeting of Irish Volunteers from around the country. A concern for probity was expressed in a question if it was appropriate to have a dance during Lent, but Clarke observed that given that some of them might soon be dancing ‘at the end of a rope’, that they might as well dance on Palm Sunday.⁵¹¹ While political and religious affiliations were not entirely aligned in the Lenten céilí, a rebellious indulgence in corporeal pleasure was a factor. Roy Foster has also provided evidence that for all the choreography of restraint, the céilís nonetheless were experienced as opportunities for pleasurable physical contact between men and women, reminding us how bodies perform, exploit and deform their ascribed choreographies.⁵¹²

There is much to be gained by paying attention to the creation of national identity at the inception of the Irish Republic through the formation of ‘natural’ Irish bodies and the invention of ‘traditional’ Irish dancing. However, it has not been common, or possible, to think of the Proclamation signatories nor their revolutionary comrades as dance artists, nor to pay attention to the choreography of Irish identity in which they participated. Indeed the initial aim of the invention of Irish dancing, as articulated by Sheehan, seemed to have been the creation of a physical artlessness, however artfully achieved, that has withheld corporeality from consideration. Therefore as a contemporary dance artist I have looked elsewhere in the 1916 legacy – in the life and afterlife of Roger Casement – to refocus attention on Irish bodies and on the art form that provides the best resource for articulating their complex potential.

⁵¹⁰ Quoted in Foster, *Vivid Faces*, p. 122.

⁵¹¹ Lucy McDiarmid, *At Home in the Revolution: What Women Said and Did in 1916* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2015), pp. 85-86. See *ibid.*, footnote 45, p. 213.

⁵¹² Foster, *Vivid Faces*, pp. 122-3.



Plate 2.1 Roger Casement portrait. Photo: Call number: CAS_3C. With permission of the National Library of Ireland

Roger Casement

Roger Casement first came to international prominence in 1904 on the publication of *The Casement Report*, which exposed exploitation and abuse of indigenous people in the rubber trade of the Congo Free State.⁵¹³ He published a similar report on rubber slavery in the Putamayo region of the Amazon. In 1911, he was knighted for his reports and for the humanitarian campaigning he undertook in their aftermath. Already by 1911, Casement was involved in the Irish nationalist cause and at the outbreak of the First World War, sought Germany's help for an Irish rebellion against British rule. He was captured on Banna Strand, Co.Kerry on Good Friday, 1916, on his way to intercept a rebellion that he believed to be futile, given that he had been unsuccessful in persuading the Germans to give sufficient weapons and support to guarantee military success. He was found guilty of treason in the Old Bailey in London and despite a high profile campaign for reprieve, he was hanged at Pentonville Prison in August 1916, the last of the rebels executed in the aftermath of the Rising. Given Casement's international prominence and the recognition that the executions of the leaders of the Easter Rising had generated more sympathy for the nationalist cause than had been prevalent at the time of the rebellion, a reprieve for Casement might have seemed possible. However, the British Secret Service circulated extracts of Casement's prolific diaries in which he detailed his enthusiastic sex with men. Shown to the press and to influential supporters in America, high profile political pressure for clemency evaporated.⁵¹⁴ The so-called *Black Diaries* are a continuing source of

⁵¹³ For the account of Casement's life and afterlife that follows see Jeffrey Dudgeon, *Roger Casement: The Black Diaries. With a Study of his Background, Sexuality, and Irish Political Life* (Belfast: Belfast Press, 2002); Angus Mitchell, *Roger Casement: 16 Lives* (Dublin: The O'Brien Press, 2014); Brian Lewis, 'The Queer Life and Afterlife of Roger Casement', *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, vol. 14, no. 4 (October 2005), pp.363-382; Colm Tóibín, 'A Whale of a Time', *London Review of Books*, vol. 19, no. 19 (2 October 1997), pp. 24-27; Colm Tóibín, 'The Tragedy of Roger Casement', *New York Review of Books*, vol. 51, no. 9 (27 May 2004); Fintan O'Toole, 'The Multiple Hero', *The New Republic*, 2 August 2012, p. 36; Roger Sawyer (ed.), *Roger Casement's Diaries: 1910: The Black and the White* (London: Pimlico, 1997); Patrick R. Mullen, *The Poor Bugger's Tool: Irish Modernism, Queer Labor, and Postcolonial History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); Michael Taussig, *Shamanism, Colonialism and the Wild Man: A Study in Terror and Healing* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

⁵¹⁴ While extracts of the diaries were shown to the American ambassador and according to Elizabeth Jaeger were seen by Washington society, Jeffrey Dudgeon adds that President Wilson was swayed more by Casement's links with German-funded sabotage in America than by the diaries in his refraining to call for Casement's reprieve. See Jeffrey Dudgeon, 'Casement Wars', *Dublin Review of Books*, no. 36, 4 June 2013, <http://www.drb.ie/essays/casement-wars> [accessed 6 December 2015].

controversy as a vocal minority of historians maintain that they were forgeries concocted to smear Casement's reputation.⁵¹⁵

Casement is acknowledged as a powerful and inveterate writer. During his Amazon investigations he appears to have maintained two diaries and gathered testimonies, from which he wrote an official account of his findings there, as well as letters. He also wrote poetry and newspaper articles.⁵¹⁶ However, it is as a politicised body with a notable sensitivity to the corporeal that Casement provided me with such a useful resource for a dance-led re-evaluation of the body in Irish national identity. Casement's body was often remarked upon for his exceptional height and his notable good looks. John Clarke described him as 'a man of splendid physique, well-built, towering conspicuously over many of average height.'⁵¹⁷ Jesse Conrad, wife of Joseph Conrad, wrote of him being 'a very handsome man with a thick, dark beard and piercing, restless eyes.'⁵¹⁸ This attractive body was always in motion. Described at his trial as being of no-fixed abode, his life was one of constant international mobility. His family moved frequently in his early childhood and after the death of both his parents, Casement continued that travel, initially in Africa and subsequently in South America, North America and Europe. His mobility was facilitated by and followed the already global flows of colonial capitalism and its politics. His travel also suited Casement to the advocacy role he assumed on behalf of Irish nationalism in the United States and Germany. Furthermore, mobility facilitated the illicit sexual liaisons described in Casement's diaries, a movement that never settled into the conventional choreographies of a geographically settled nuclear family (even if circumstances of his own birth-family illustrated that not all families functioned with spatial stability). Letters exchanged with his foreign sexual partners, as well as Casement's anticipation of reconnecting with them, as detailed in his diaries, suggests that travel beyond the

⁵¹⁵ See for example, Angus Mitchell, 'Phases of a Dishonourable Phantasy', *Field Day Review*, vol. 8 (2012) and Mitchell, *Roger Casement: 16 Lives*. The *Black Diaries* received their name from a book of that title, edited by Peter Singleton-Gates and Maurice Girodias, *The Black Diaries: An Account of Roger Casement's Life and Times with a Collection of his Diaries and Public Writings* (Grove Press: New York, 1959).

⁵¹⁶ 'Some poems of Roger Casement', National Library of Ireland, MS 49,154 /3 and 'Essays by Roger Casement, including Newspaper Cuttings Relating to His Life and Death, 1907-1922', National Library of Ireland, MS 49,154 /9 (both in *Roger Casement Papers (2012 Release) 1882-1934*).

⁵¹⁷ John Clarke cited in Dudgeon, *Roger Casement: The Black Diaries*, p. 170.

⁵¹⁸ Jesse Conrad cited in Tóibín, 'A Whale of a Time', p. 24.

patterns of the heterosexual family unit were not rudderless, not entirely without points of recurring reference and physical anchoring. In this, Casement anticipated the experience of the independent contemporary dance artist in 2016, even managing a return-trip between London and Belfast on the same day, long before market deregulation and consequent cheap international flights made such business travel a commonplace for some, including myself.

In addition to being relentlessly mobile, Casement was sensitive to bodies. He detailed the physical attributes, most notably the penis-size ('Huge & curved')⁵¹⁹ of the men to whom he was attracted. He also described the uninhibited physicality of his sexual encounters:

X Deep to Hilt,
Breathed and quick enormous push. Loved mightily. To Hilt Deep. X.,
First time after so many years and so deep mutual longing. Rode
gloriously – splendid steed.⁵²⁰

While homosexuality was criminal in Edwardian Britain and would in itself have attracted official opprobrium, the frequency, zest and unabashed minutiae of description of Casement's sexual encounters were noted, in advice to Cabinet as evidence of Casement's degeneracy. Because Casement enjoyed being the receptive partner in penetrative sex, his physical desire was also gendered in that jaundiced advice. In a passage that begins by asserting that '[i]t is difficult to imagine a worse case of high treason than Casement's,' legal advisor to the Home Office, Sir Ernley Blackwell goes on to observe that 'Of late, he seems to have completed the full cycle of sexual degeneracy, and a pervert has become an invert – a woman or pathic who derives satisfaction from attracting men and inducing them to use him.'⁵²¹ The conflation of treason and homosexuality conveys a patriarchal aversion to bodily penetration and its misogyny is evident in the characterisation of women, 'inducing men to use' them.⁵²² It is not difficult to imagine that Casement's physical receptiveness to non-white colonized males was

⁵¹⁹ Dudgeon, *Roger Casement: The Black Diaries*, p. 213. Emphasis in original.

⁵²⁰ Dudgeon, *Roger Casement: The Black Diaries*, p. 207, p. 208, p. 215. Emphasis in original.

⁵²¹ Ernley Blackwell, 'Cabinet Papers on the Case of Sir Roger Casement, Jul 1916', British Library, Mss Eur F112/177.

⁵²² Angus Mitchell, *Casement* (London: Haus Publishing, 2003), p. 148.

particularly offensive to the sexual politics of imperial domination. The discussion of Casement's body and its desires at the highest levels of British government continued after his death with a report to the Home Office on a post-mortem rectal examination to determine if Casement had the sexual activity described in diaries:

I made the examination which was the subject of our conversation at the Home Office on Tuesday, after the conclusion of the inquest today, and found unmistakable evidence of the practices to which it was alleged the prisoner in question had been addicted. The anus was at a glance seen to be dilated and on making a digital examination (rubber gloves) I found that the lower part of the bowel was dilated as far as the fingers could reach.⁵²³

Whether or not the medical examination had any validity in determining pre-mortem sexual activity, the reporting of this intimate examination highlights the political import of ostensibly private bodies. As Colm Tóibín mordantly expressed it:

In all the images we have of Anglo-Irish relations over the centuries, perhaps this one is the saddest and the most stark: a prison doctor examining Casement's arsehole a short time after he had been hanged, on the orders of the British Government.⁵²⁴

Casement's body remained a source of controversy for fifty years after his death, as the British and Irish governments discussed whether his remains could be repatriated to Ireland from their burial place in Pentonville Prison.⁵²⁵ In advance of the fiftieth anniversary of the Easter Rising and mindful of Irish votes, British Prime Minister Harold Wilson agreed to the return of Casement's remains. Casement had expressed a wish to be buried at Murlough Bay in Northern Ireland, but such a burial would not have constituted repatriation since the altered political

⁵²³ Percy Mander, 'Post-Mortem Description of Casement's Body', National Archives, Kew, PRO HO 144/1637/141.

⁵²⁴ Colm Tóibín, *Love In A Dark Time: Gay Lives from Wilde to Almodóvar* (London: Picador, 2002), p. 109.

⁵²⁵ For an argument that Human Geography should pay closer attention to the surprising agency and political significance of corpses, see Craig Young and Duncan Light, 'Corpses, Dead Body Politics and Agency in Human Geography: Following the Corpse of Dr Petru Groza', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, vol. 38, no. 1 (January 2013), pp. 135–148. See also Katherine Verdery, *The Political Lives of Dead Bodies* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).

realities meant that Northern Ireland was still part of the United Kingdom.⁵²⁶ Moreover, the British government was unwilling to risk inflaming tensions in Northern Ireland in 1965 and as a result, Casement was reinterred in Glasnevin, alongside the State's other founding heroes. Making a connection between Casement's body and the political reunification of Ireland, the British Government received assurances that 'any question of the further removal of the remains should not be considered until the unity of Ireland was restored'.⁵²⁷ In life and in death, where Casement's body went and what it did proved politically sensitive and instructive of the prevailing body and national politics.

In addition to this sexual corporeality, Casement read on bodies the abuse suffered by the indigenous people enslaved to the rubber trade in the Congo and in the Putamayo. He described their starved bodies, as well as the scars of violence inflicted in them. He documented 'highly instructive backsides', eloquent and informative bodies, that he imagined rubbing in the faces of those responsible for the whippings that marked the buttocks.⁵²⁸ His response to what he saw suggested an ability to respond in a variety of physical registers:

The sick woman groaned all night, and some of the other women came for medicine and help. I gave them what I had in the shape of relief, and then the big me, seeing this, came round me wit their bruised buttocks and scarified limbs. One big splendid-looking Boras young man – with a broad good humoured face like an Irishman – had a fearful cut on his left buttock. [...] The flesh for the size of a saucer was black and scarred, and this crown of sore flesh was the size of a florin. I put lanoline and a pad of cotton wool over it. Many more came for the same treatment.⁵²⁹

Casement linked here a corporeally-aware desire ('splendid-looking Boras young man') with an active physical care for the young man, for the sick woman whom he protected all night and for the 'many more [who] came for the same

⁵²⁶ Benjamin L. Reid, *The Lives of Roger Casement* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1976), p. 434, quoted in Lucy McDiarmid, *The Irish Art of Controversy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), p. 186.

⁵²⁷ Uinsionn Mac Dubhghaill, 'Casement Burial Plan Kept Secret', *Irish Times*, 2 January 1996, p. 7.

⁵²⁸ Angus Mitchell, *The Amazon Journal of Roger Casement* (London: Anaconda Editions, 1997), p. 198.

⁵²⁹ Mitchell, *The Amazon Journal of Roger Casement*, p. 271.

treatment'. Also at play was a conception of Irish identity that could include the oppressed non-Irish he encountered: 'It was only because I was an Irishman that I could understand *fully*, the whole scheme of wrongdoing at work on the Congo'. 'I realised I was looking at this tragedy', he wrote of the slavery he witnessed in the Congo, 'with the eyes of another race of people once hunted themselves.'⁵³⁰ And the identification operated in the other direction also, allowing him to call the Irish 'White Indians' and to recognise in the impoverished bodies of children in the West of Ireland the consequences of the same colonial capitalism he had witnessed in South America, leading him to dub Galway an 'Irish Putamayo'.⁵³¹ Casement's version of Irish national identity created lines of solidarity and empathic identification that extended beyond geographical borders and family heritage. Some have suggested that his illegal sexuality, expressed in desire across class and ethnic boundaries, as well as his sensitivity to the experience of being socially marginalised may have prompted this empathy and the humanitarian action that followed.⁵³²

Casement's ability to read the complexities of embodiment is particularly evident in his response to the dances he attended during his investigations in the Putamayo. He described in his diaries large tribal gatherings with dancing as their organising focus. He was aware that the gathering was in part a performance, a display ordered by the overseers to give the impression to the investigating commission that relations with the indigenous people were benevolent. Casement learned that 'this is not an ordinary dance',⁵³³ since what he calls 'balls' were often occasions for further physical and sexual violence by the company overseers. He also learned that the dances were controlled by the company overseers who

⁵³⁰ Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror and Heroism in Colonial Africa* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1999), pp. 267-8. Emphasis in original.

⁵³¹ Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost*, p. 270.

⁵³² 'Perhaps it was his very homosexuality, and his deep interest in "a certain portion of their anatomy", to quote Eamon Duggan, which made him into the humanitarian he was, made him so appalled'; Colm Tóibín, *Love in a Dark Time*, p. 105. See also 'it was precisely Casement's homosexuality that sensitised him to the continuing oppression, exploitation, enslavement and destruction, across the borders of social class and race, of those who were furthest from the centers of power'; W.G. Sebald, *The Rings of Saturn* (New York: New Directions, 1998), p. 134. Gerry Kearns made a similar argument about the origins of Casement's ability to empathise across ethnic and class borders in his lecture 'The Casement Project and the Empathic Body', paper presented at *Hospitable Bodies: The Casement Project*, British Library, 3 June 2016 [unpublished].

⁵³³ Mitchell, *The Amazon Journal of Roger Casement*, p. 143.

limited their number to four a year and curtailed their duration 'because they [the indigenous people] would not be able to work caucho (rubber) tomorrow if they danced'.⁵³⁴ Despite the intentions of the company overseers, the ball also provided Casement with an opportunity to see and photograph the lash-wounds inflicted on the people: 'We photographed many – Gielgud and I. We visited the Indians' house (the Muchachos' house) where the Indians were dancing both in afternoon and evening. I saw many men, and boys too, covered with scars, and often drew the attention of the others to this.'⁵³⁵ Dance, as Casement described it, could be both a choreography of oppression and a threat to the efficiency of colonial capitalism, a performance demanded, as well as a resistant pleasure experienced.

Dance also provided an opportunity for solidarity, as Casement noted how one of the investigating team was 'highly popular [with the indigenous people], dancing with them, keeping step and playing with the children.'⁵³⁶ Such keeping step implied an empathic corporeal attentiveness facilitated by the dancing. And it was an involvement that Casement had experienced himself as part of the nascent nationalist movement in Ulster in the early twentieth-century: 'We tried to revive Irish dancing, and Roger took his place in the fourhanded reels. He strode about the roads, hatless, encouraging and working up interest in the movement.'⁵³⁷ Whether it was in the physical or in the political 'movement' that Casement was rousing interest is ambiguous, perhaps appropriately so, since Casement's analysis of the politics of dancing in the oppressive conditions of the Putamayo did not focus on the aesthetics of the dance form, but recognised the complexity of social, economic and political forces activated and resisted through the form that also expressed pleasure, empathy, community-reinforcement and self-expression. Added to an understanding of Casement as a political and erotic body in motion, this Putamayo material proved Casement to be a rich resource for a contemporary dance artist, such as me, wishing to validate the knowledge of dance, as an art-form expert in the formation of individual and collective bodies, in addressing the

⁵³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 144.

⁵³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 142.

⁵³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 143.

⁵³⁷ Ada O'Neill cited in Dudgeon, *Roger Casement: The Black Diaries*, p. 170.

origins of the nation-state in Ireland.⁵³⁸ It is also important to acknowledge that articulating dance as a valuable source and form of knowledge for understanding the genesis of the Irish state and its subsequent development was a bold claim on behalf of an art-form that we have seen to be economically and culturally marginal in Ireland.

The Labour of Applications

Despite that history of economic marginalisation, *The Casement Project* was ultimately the recipient of the largest award made to the ART:2016 projects. However in March 2015, there was no guarantee that my application to the Arts Council's Open Call for National Projects would be successful. Therefore, alongside the Open Call application, I also prepared a proposal for the Arts Council's Project Awards for Dance and it is discouragingly instructive to recognise how much of the ambition of the Open Call proposal, with its request for funding of €286,867.85, was squeezed into the Project Award application, despite its €40,000 maximum award. In retrospect, the overpromising seems less an index of burgeoning ambition than an anxious escalation of promised activity on unrealistically limited resources designed to appear impressive and to secure funding in a competitive environment. In my Project Award submission, I proposed, for less than a third of the budget, to do a significant proportion of the activity that ultimately cost €370,000 to deliver.⁵³⁹ This particular pressure on dance to deliver extra activity with fewer resources has been evidenced above in the comparison between project funding available to dance artists and to theatre artists. These differentials

⁵³⁸ 'It does not seem at all accidental that it is the most ambiguous figure of the Rising, Roger Casement, who has been of most interest to artists this year. Colm Tóibín and Donnacha Dennehy's *The Dark Places*, the Hugh Lane Gallery's fine exhibition centring on John Lavery's long-neglected painting of Casement's trial, Owen Roe's reading of Bernard Shaw's unused speech for Casement to deliver to the jury, and Fearghus Ó Conchúir's *The Casement Project*—as well as works by others, including myself and Una Mullally of this parish—explored the multifaceted nature of Casement's personality and legacy, from his homosexuality to his pioneering human rights investigations, from the body politic to the politicised body. If Casement symbolically replaced Patrick Pearse as the most magnetic figure of the Rising, it is because his doubleness is deeply attractive to a culture that has become more comfortable with, and more interested in, mixed feelings'; O'Toole, 'In 2016, Official Ireland Trusted Artists'. O'Toole may not be entirely fair to Pearse whose poetry betrays a sublimated homoeroticism suggestive of a similarly complex internal life. See Foster, *Vivid Faces*, p 135.

⁵³⁹ The projected total budget for *The Casement Project* activity submitted for the Dance Project Award was €119,130. Fearghus Ó Conchúir, 'Dance Project Award—Fearghus Ó Conchúir—The Casement Project', p. 20 [unpublished]. See Appendix Two.

in resourcing and expectations are important because they illustrate the funding conditions under which contemporary dance artists operated and explain why the Open Call for 2016, with its upper limit of awards of €500,000, represented such a significant opportunity to dance artists to resource the imagination and ambition that the Arts Council called for.

Though the Arts Council's language of an 'Open Call to the Irish Imagination' might have appeared to suggest a single national imagination and a consequently simplified notion of national identity, in practice, the national and international were interdependent in the operation of the award, perhaps unsurprising in the most globalised nation in the world.⁵⁴⁰ The Arts Council's communications around the award-process underlined that it would be adjudicated by an 'international jury', with a specific press release introducing the jury and the professional credentials of its members, all of whom had experience in programming large scale artistic events, often in unusual locations and with national and international significance.⁵⁴¹ Orlaith McBride, Arts Council director, also framed the national award in an international context, envisaging projects that would exceed the borders of the nation state: 'This is an open call to the Irish imagination. Its response will be shared with the world.'⁵⁴² Though the particular imagination in question was that of artists and organisations resident in '(the

⁵⁴⁰ According to KOF Index of Globalization <http://globalization.kof.ethz.ch/query/> [website], Ireland was the most globalised country in the world according to its 2015 and 2016 indexes. The indexes refer to data from three years before, and revised figures in 2016 suggest that in 2015, Ireland was the second most globalised country behind the Netherlands. Whether first or second, there is no doubt about the country's involvement in, contribution to and dependence on the global economy and international influences. See Journal.ie, 'FactCheck: Is Ireland Actually the World's "Most Globalised" Country?' [www.thejournal.ie](http://www.thejournal.ie/ireland-worlds-most-globalised-country-fact-check-2954572-Aug2016/) [website], 30 August 2016, <http://www.thejournal.ie/ireland-worlds-most-globalised-country-fact-check-2954572-Aug2016/> [accessed 30 April 2017]

⁵⁴¹The panel comprised Ruth McKenzie, Artistic Director of the Holland Festival and former programmer of the London 2012 Cultural Olympiad, Laurie Sansom, then Artistic Director of the National Theatre of Scotland, and Annie Fletcher, Chief Curator at the Van Abbemuseum and former curator of the 2012 *eva* International Biennial of Visual Art in Limerick. Arts Council, 'Major International Figures to Judge Arts Council's 2016 "Open Call" proposals', www.arts council.ie [website], 1 May 2015, <http://www.arts council.ie/News/Major-international-figures-to-judge-Arts-Council's-2016-'Open-Call'-proposals/> [accessed 1 February 2016]. Also Ronan McGreevy, 'Arts Council to Provide €1m Funding to Mark the Centenary of the Easter Rising', *Irish Times*, 6 March 2015 <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/arts-council-to-provide-1m-funding-to-mark-the-centenary-of-the-easter-rising-1.2129592> [accessed 4 July 2017].

⁵⁴²Arts Council, 'Arts Council to Invest €1 million in "Ambitious and Inspiring" 2016 Commissions', www.arts council.ie [website], 5 March 2015, http://www.arts council.ie/News/Arts-Council-to-invest-€1-million-in-_ambitious-and-inspiring_-2016-commissions/ [accessed 15 December 2016].

Republic of) Ireland', the application guidelines suggested that exceptions would be made for applicants based outside of the country whose project would 'benefit the arts in (the Republic of) Ireland.'⁵⁴³ In the bracketing of the Irish Republic, the Arts Council's language acceded to the complexity of national identity in Ireland, particularly after the 1998 and 2004 Referenda,⁵⁴⁴ suggesting the possibility of a simultaneously inside and outside identity, both visible and suspended. This complexity of positioning was particularly important to me as an Irish-born artist, working frequently in Ireland, employed in Ireland and also living in London. It was also aligned to the Ireland 2016 activation of the Irish diaspora, figured as a national resource existing beyond the nation's borders.⁵⁴⁵

My framing of the Dance Project Award proposal '[i]n the context of the centenary commemorations of the 1916 Easter Rising and of the First World War against which the Rising took place', already relied on trans-national partnerships. These included, at that point, London International Festival of Theatre, which proposed to present the premiere of *The Casement Project* stage-show in its festival of international performing arts, as well as The Place Theatre in London, as a rehearsal space, performance venue and producing partner. 14-18NOW, an arts commissioning programme instigated by the British government as part of its commemorations of the First World War, was mooted as a potential supporter in the accompanying notes to the Project Award application, but my discussions with the organisation were too preliminary at that time to foreground its involvement. The Dance Project Award Proposal was deliberate in adopting a perspective on the Easter Rising through these international partners, while using Casement as a historical precedent for this boundary-crossing, transgressive identity formation. However, in the Dance Project Award application, I was obliged to create and claim a context. With the Open Call for National Projects, the official frame of centenary commemorations in Ireland, the national platform, the invitation to engage with the foundation of the state and to imagine 'that things can be different', as well as the significant resources available, provided a set of contextual choreographic

⁵⁴³ Arts Council, 'Guidelines_2016OpenCall_11Mar2015.doc', www.arts council.ie [website], p. 2, www.arts council.ie/uploadedFiles/Main.../Guidelines_2016OpenCall_11Mar2015.doc [accessed 29 April 2017].

⁵⁴⁴ See Chapter 1 for more detail on the citizenship referenda.

⁵⁴⁵ Ireland 2016, *Clár Comórtha Céad Bliain. Centenary Programme*, p. 54/55.

material for the embodied citizenship I hoped the project would reflect on and create.⁵⁴⁶ Moreover by the time of the submission of the Open Call application, I was in a position to name 14-18NOW as a commissioning partner (contributing cash resources) and thereby create in *The Casement Project* complicated connections between the commemorative programmes in Ireland and the UK, with Casement as a legitimisation of the link.

The Open Call provided a particular platform for artists to make bold claims. For dance, historically undervalued in economic and cultural terms, as the previous analysis of dance policy in Ireland has demonstrated, my ability to get beyond the small funding pot and consequently limited room for manoeuvre of the Dance department in the Arts Council, was also an important step in positioning the art-form more prominently as a resource for rethinking Irish identity. Instead of a Dance Project Award application, assessed by a panel of Ireland-based dance experts, *The Casement Project* took its place alongside the proposals of 257 respected artists from other art-forms and from arts organisations, including the largest in the country – the Abbey Theatre – in a competition judged by an international panel (without specific dance expertise), with an upper-limit over twelve-times that available in the Dance Project Award.

The Open Call Application: Imagining *The Casement Project*

In many ways, *The Casement Project* application to the Open Call already fulfilled the brief of responding to the Arts Council's appeal to the Irish imagination. The application was prospective, written in a combination of present and future tenses, using the resources of the past in the service of an imagined future. It offered a vision of a project, while also reassuring its assessors of the viability of realising that vision. The occasional use of the present tense (*'The Casement Project is an innovative and ambitious choreography of bodies and ideas that takes place across multiple platforms and national boundaries.'*⁵⁴⁷) tactically posed the project as a *fait accompli*, inviting the assessing jury to believe it into existence. The application promised that *The Casement Project* would be a choreography that would take

⁵⁴⁶ Arts Council, 'Arts Council to Invest €1 Million in "Ambitious and Onspiring" 2016 Commissions'.

⁵⁴⁷ Fearghus Ó Conchúir, 'FOCONCHUIROpenCall_2016Phase2 Application Form', p. 2 [unpublished]. See Appendix Six.

place across five platforms, providing opportunities for a diversity of people to see, to make and to join in different aspects of the work. The five interconnected platforms would be:

1. *The Casement Project*, a choreography for stage that would be presented at the Dublin Theatre Festival (DTF), London International Festival of Theatre (LIFT) and Belfast Arts Festival. Made with six experienced performers and an award-winning creative team, the work's presentation in high-profile international festivals was highlighted as a deliberate situating of the commemoration of 1916 in a global context.
2. *Féile Fáilte*, a day of dance on Banna Strand, Co. Kerry, would celebrate through curated and spontaneous dance the welcoming national body that Casement might have dreamt of when he came ashore in 1916. The beach-festival would include performances by a variety of Irish choreographers, participatory projects, and a céilí or rave.
3. *Fáilte*, a short dance-film with Emmy-award winning director, Dearbhla Walsh, for broadcast on RTÉ, and for international distribution online. The film would be shot on Banna Strand, distilling the choreography from the stage performance and creating an accessible legacy of the whole project.
4. A cross-disciplinary academic symposium reflecting on *The Casement Project* convened with Maynooth University and Project Arts Centre. The symposium would bring together artists and academics in lectures, discussions and performances to combine discourse and movement in mutually transformative ways.
5. An engagement process informing the creation and dissemination of the work, starting with a series of workshops with LGBTI refugees in Ireland and the UK whose contemporary experience of sexuality, border-crossing and incorporation resonated with Casement's history and might shed new light of the 1916 legacy a hundred years later.
6. A final element to add to these five manifestations of the work would be a communications' strategy that would make evident and accessible the connections between the five components. The strategy, which would include the creation of a framing website for all the activities, would be coordinated with project partners to ensure an on-going campaign across traditional print, broadcast and new media.⁵⁴⁸

Invited by the Arts Council's application form to '[p]rovide details of the explicit connection of this project to the centenary of the 1916 Rising', I referred to

⁵⁴⁸ Ó Conchúir, 'FOCONCHUIROpenCall_2016Phase2 Application Form', p. 3.

the Proclamation of the Irish Republic, another act of imagination, and as many others did during the centenary commemorations, drew specific attention to the promise that the new Republic would guarantee 'religious and civil liberty, equal rights and equal opportunities of all its citizens'.⁵⁴⁹ *The Casement Project* would reexamine, through the lens of choreography, the formation and subsequent development of the Irish national body, by using as source material the resonant life and bodily experience of Roger Casement, by connecting the Easter Rising through Casement to its British, European and global context, and by foregrounding the aspirations of The Proclamation of the Republic to offer equality to all.

Drawing on the research on Irish bodies that I have outlined in the last chapter, the application referred to the isolationist tendency of the early Irish Free State, and the homogenous Irish body it purported to establish that together created an impression of Irish nationalism that was inward-looking and that policed assiduously its internal and external borders. The application contended that the impact of that rigid policing of bodily borders was evident in the treatment of women, sexual minorities and, more recently, refugees and asylum-seekers. However, it suggested that such isolationist nationalism, joined with Catholic conservatism, disguised the more complex, permeable and outward-looking vision of nationalism that Casement's story offered. Casement's 'radicalisation' as an Irish nationalist was intensified by his experience of colonial exploitation in the Congo and in the Amazon.⁵⁵⁰ His physical intimacy with the colonised was challenging to the imperial order not only because it was a criminal relationship of homosexuality, but also, as suggested above in Blackwell's advisory note to Cabinet, because it seemed to invert the 'proper' relationship of dominance

⁵⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

The Proclamation became a focus of official Ireland 2016 programme as schools were invited to develop their own Proclamation for a New Generation. See Ireland 2016, 'Proclamation Day 2016', www.ireland2016.gov.ie [website], <http://www.ireland2016.gov.ie/events/proclamation-day-2016> [accessed 15 April 2017]. It also inspired artistic projects such as *Embodied*, six solos performed in the GPO by female dance artists invited to respond to the Proclamation. (Dublin Dance Festival, 'Embodied at the GPO', www.dublindancefestival.ie [website], <http://www.dublindancefestival.ie/archive-2016/performance/embodied-at-the-gpo> [accessed 15 April 2017]). See also Kearns, 'Artistic Proclamations'.

⁵⁵⁰ Dudgeon disputes that it was prompted by the experience, showing evidence of Casement's boyhood nationalist tendencies. Dudgeon, *Roger Casement: The Black Diaries*, pp. 72-3.

between masculine coloniser and feminine colonised.⁵⁵¹ The application asserted that it was precisely this challenge to the rigidity of traditional identities that made Casement's story so relevant to a contemporary Ireland that had begun to acknowledge its historically excluded others. Acknowledging, in the wake of the then very recent Marriage Equality Referendum, the Irish state's progress in including the alternative embodiments of sexual minorities in its national body, the application pointed to the still unresolved questions of female bodily autonomy, circumscribed by the Eight Amendment to the Irish Constitution, and to rights of refugees trapped in the spatial and social exclusion of Direct Provision. For *The Casement Project*, Casement's porous body would offer a mechanism for finding in 1916 a template for a more progressive conception of the body that would be worth commemorating and continuing in 2016.⁵⁵²

The fact that the application was a work of imagination is borne out by the subsequent alterations to *The Casement Project* during its realisation: at the simplest level, I changed the proposed titles of the stage-show, which became *Butterflies and Bones: The Casement Project*, and of the film, which became *I'm Roger Casement*. We presented the stage-show as part of 14-18NOW's programme in London and as part of Project Arts Centre's 50th Anniversary programme in Dublin, rather than in LIFT and the DTF, since both festivals decided not to include the work in their seasons. We added a second symposium, with the British Library, as well as a club night, *A Wake for Roger Casement*, at Kilkenny Arts Festival. At *Féile Fáilte*, we had a céilí and a disco, but Iarla Ó Lionáird wasn't free to perform. The proposal imagined a future choreography, but it is important to make apparent how it was already constituted by choreography and corporeal labour. Its vision emerged from and was directed towards practices of embodiment.

⁵⁵¹ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978). Casement's sexual relationship with the colonised offers an alternative to Said's gendered account of the West's relationship with 'the Orient'.

⁵⁵² Ó Conchúir, 'FOCONCHUIROpenCall_2016Phase2 Application Form', p. 5.

The Labour of Choreography

The choreography of *The Casement Project* did not begin when the Arts Council award was made. On the contrary, the process of imagination relied on the careful and strategic mobilisation of personal and professional relationships, with the dancers and creative team,⁵⁵³ with production partners in the UK and Ireland,⁵⁵⁴ with funders and commissioners,⁵⁵⁵ with festivals and programmers,⁵⁵⁶ with a local authority,⁵⁵⁷ with third-sector support organisations⁵⁵⁸ and with academics.⁵⁵⁹ The scale of *The Casement Project* involved a particularly complex positioning and repositioning of partners, as for example the support of a festival like LIFT strengthened the appeal of the proposal to 14-18NOW, whose potential commissioning endorsed my claim to the Arts Council and to Culture Ireland of the

⁵⁵³ At the time of the application the dancers were named as Mikel Aristegui, Theo Clinkard, Philip Connaughton, Bernadette Iglisch, Aoife McAtamney and Matthew Morris, with Ciaran O'Melia as designer and Alma Kelliher as sound designer. Dearbhla Walsh was named as director for the short film and a number of artists, including Iarla Ó Lionáird were listed as participants in *Féile Fáilte*. Matthew Morris, Bernadette Iglisch and Mikel Aristegui were all long-time performers in my work and had also contributed to the creation of *Cure*, a work in which I invited the performers to create solo material for me. Aoife McAtamney had danced with me in *Ré* (2012), a work I created for the Irish language literature festival, IMRAM. Though Theo Clinkard, and Philip Connaughton had not performed in my work before, I had danced with them in the work of other choreographers. Both Alma Kelliher and Ciaran O'Melia had contributed to the creation of previous works of mine – *Rhythm of Fierce* (2015), *Cure* (2013), *Porous* (2013), *Starlight* (2012), *Ré* (2012). Dearbhla Walsh was director of previous dance films *Match* (2006) and *Mo Mhórchoir Féin* (2010). Iarla Ó Lionáird had contributed music to a number of works including *Mo Mhórchoir Féin* (2010) and *Tabernacle* (2011).

⁵⁵⁴ Project Arts Centre, Dublin, especially Artistic Director, Cian O'Brien with whom I served as board member of PAC before his appointment as Artistic Director; Dance Ireland, in particular its director, Paul Johnson (I served on the board of Dance Ireland that appointed Johnson); The Place, London, in particular Producer, Ellie Beedham through whom I had previously made and presented work at the venue; COCO Television, a new relationship brokered by Dearbhla Walsh; Annette Nugent, communications' consultant, who was Chair of Project Arts Centre's board when I served on it.

⁵⁵⁵ Arts Council, Ireland; Culture Ireland; 14-18NOW, whose senior producer, Nigel Hinds, I had met thanks to an invitation to attend a LIFT event. I also knew 14-18NOW's Chair Vicki Heywood through our delivery of the Advanced Cultural Leadership Programme in Hong Kong.

⁵⁵⁶ LIFT whose Artistic Director, Mark Ball was a fellow Clore Fellow; Dublin Theatre Festival whose Artistic Director, Willie White, had been Artistic Director of Project Arts Centre and supported by work over many years there. I was also a board member of PAC during White's tenure; Belfast International Arts Festival whose Artistic Director, Richard Wakely had produced and programmed my work in a variety of other settings; RTÉ, whose Executive Producer Arts Sarah Ryder I'd met before.

⁵⁵⁷ Kerry County Council, in particular the Arts Officer Kate Kennelly who had supported previous dance projects I'd been involved with in Kerry.

⁵⁵⁸ BeLong To (a LGBT support service in Ireland) and Micro-Rainbow International (an international LGBT support service focused in the UK on helping LGBT refugees and asylum seekers). I made contacts with these organisations without prior connections to them.

⁵⁵⁹ Prof. Gerry Kearns (Maynooth University) my PhD supervisor; Prof. Karen Till (Maynooth University), part of my supervision team; Prof Roy Foster (Oxford University), a tutor of mine during my M.Phil. study and a subsequent supervisor of AHRC-funded research I undertook as part of the Clore Fellowship.

international context I would create for the work. I had to create a structure from these interdependent but contingent positions, knowing that any particular support might fail. But the ability to create structures from contingent resources was a familiar strategy to me, both from the studio and from previous application processes.

While I notice here that I am concerned to have this graceful yet demanding alignment of bodies and energies acknowledged as part of the choreographic labour, Bojana Kunst in her account of post-Fordist working conditions has a bleaker view of what she regards as the displacement of making art works by the affective and relational labour of the artist's work to get art works made. Drawing on Virno, and on Boltanski and Chiapello, Kunst suggests that the artist and particularly the mobile dance artist has become the model subjectivity of a post-Fordist worker – creative, flexible, communicative, 'incessantly active in all its possible forms and in the realisation of its potentiality'.⁵⁶⁰ There is no doubt that to even propose *The Casement Project* in an application required the activation of existing personal and professional relationships and skilful communication to build new relationships – the kind of 'affective labor of human contact and interaction' that Michael Hardt describes as producing 'a feeling of ease, well-being, satisfaction, excitement, passion – even a sense of connectedness or community.'⁵⁶¹ Building a community of support necessitated a management of emotions and affects in the service of generating (financially and creatively) enabling partnerships that Hochschild identified in her account of emotional labour of flight attendants.⁵⁶² And through the whole process of conceiving and planning *The Casement Project* to submit the Open Call application, my labour was not paid for, even though much of the process was conducted in dialogue with organisations whose representatives were paid full-time salaries. This situation is not untypical.⁵⁶³

⁵⁶⁰ Kunst, *Artist at Work*, p.139. See also: Paolo Virno, *A Grammar of the Multitude* (Los Angeles, New York: Semiotext(e), 2004) and Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello, *The New Spirit of Capitalism* (London: Verso, 2007).

⁵⁶¹ Michael Hardt, 'Affective Labor', *boundary 2*, vol. 26, no. 2 (Summer 1999), pp. 89-100, pp. 95-6.

⁵⁶² Arlie Russell Hochschild, *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979).

⁵⁶³ See for example a talk by Agnes Quackels, Director of the BUDA Arts Center, Belgium, where she acknowledges that 'the unpaid labour of the artists, what we commonly called "the blind spot of our

Therefore in wanting to have acknowledged the affective, relational and communicative labour as an essential part of my choreographic project, I am arguing for a recognition of all that is involved in the artistic process, in particular of the relational aspect that remains mostly invisible and consequently undervalued. By making explicit all of the work involved in the choreography, I am also making a claim that all of that work needs to be resourced for artists to have sustainable careers. The consequence of not resourcing all of the work is evident in what Kunst calls:

[T]he neurotic symptoms that fit well with the ways artistic subjectivity is understood and felt today: vulnerability (the feeling of flexibility without any form of security), hyperactivity (the imperative to keep up with constant accessibility), simultaneity (the ability to keep up the various rhythms and speed of various simultaneous

sector”, has become a huge black hole, right the middle of our beautiful theatres’. She describes the typical meeting between herself as representative of an arts institution, and an artist, such as myself proposing a creative project. I quote it at length because of it resonates with my experience of preparing *The Casement Project*:

Usually these conversations take place in one of those nice coffee bars we are now having all around Europe. So there I am, having a coffee; and the artist who’s sitting in front of me is telling me about her next project. I’ve seen many of her previous shows and the project she’s describing to me now sounds just amazing: it will fit perfectly with my next thematic festival about climate change... or gender or discrimination or money or participation or post-colonialism (here you can just insert what ever topic you prefer). So I’m promising her to support this project with a residency, a co-production and a presentation—She’s very happy with my proposal, I’m very happy with her project and I know the audience will soon be very happy too. And I’m thinking: “Who could dream of a better job?”

From the outside, this encounter seems to be quite relaxed. It looks like an equal and open conversation between two professionals. But the agency behind our nice coffee moment is not that simple. Even if we are discussing all the details of our exciting collaboration, there is one point we are surely not talking about. It’s the fact that of the two of us sitting here, she will be the one responsible for delivering the artwork, the very content of my socially or politically engaged festival; but of the two of us, I am the only one who is getting paid?! I mean really paid. Of course she can make applications every three months, and beg for co-productions all around Flanders and Europe, but chances are she won’t get paid for half of the time she will be working on this amazing project.

Now wait, that’s not exactly true; I’m actually not the only one who’s being paid. All the dedicated people who are working with me, in the back offices of the theatres, are also paid. And the reason why we are all paid (sometimes we tend to forget) is to support, and protect the making of artworks.

Agnes Quackels, ‘The Blauwdruk Statement by Agnes Quackels’, www.vooruit.be [website], 14 March 2017, http://vooruit.be/en/magazine/detail/2361/The_BLAUWDRUK_statement_by_Agnes_Quackels [accessed 18 April 2017].

activities), recombination (transgressing between different networks/social spaces), post-sexuality and fluent intimacy (the bodily production of indeterminate sexual relations), anxiousness (connected to communication and interaction overload), cunningness (the ability to employ opportunism and tricks) and affective exhaustion (emotional exploitation).⁵⁶⁴

Because I claim this labour, both preparatory and constitutive, as part of the choreography, I claim to implicate it and the conditions of neo-liberalism that shape affective labour into my choreographic process and into the openness to surprise and transformation that the choreographic process entails. While Hardt recognises that affective labour is corporeal, acknowledging how feminist research has revealed the somatic aspect of, in particular, female or feminised caring labour, he nonetheless asserts that the outcome of that labour is immaterial, 'its products are intangible'.⁵⁶⁵ I, on the other hand, want to insist on the materiality of the individual and collective bodies that enabled and were produced by the whole choreographic process, including its affective aspects. I could conceive the Open Call application with conviction not only because it built on existing 'producing partnerships to ensure feasibility',⁵⁶⁶ on friendships, and on positive professional relationships built over time, but also because I had had an opportunity to research and embody the ideas I proposed, with others, in the studio. And it is through that process of embodiment that I could research with others alternative models of citizenship.

Bursary Award: Embodied Research

In 2014 I applied successfully for an Arts Council Bursary Award, designed to provide 'artists with the time and resources to think, research, reflect and critically

⁵⁶⁴ Kunst, *Artist at Work*, pp. 143-4; referring to Vassilis Tsianos and Dimitris Papadopoulos, 'Precarity: A Savage Journey to the Heart of Embodied Capitalism', www.eipcp.net [website], 2006, <http://eipcp.net/transversal/1106/tsianospapadopoulos/en> [accessed 20 April 2017].

⁵⁶⁵ Hardt, 'Affective Labor', p. 96. Kathi Weeks takes up Hardt's and Hardt and Negri's work on affective labour from a feminist perspective and finds the concept of affective labour useful for going beyond traditional binary divisions of gender in an analysis of increasingly overlapping contemporary working conditions for men and women; Kathi Weeks, 'Life Within and Against Work: Affective Labor, Feminist Critique, and Post-Fordist Politics,' *Ephemera: Theory & Politics in Organization*, vol. 7, no. 1 (2007), pp. 233-49, pp. 238-9.

⁵⁶⁶ Ó Conchúir, 'FOCONCHUIR AC2016 Detailed Proposal-The Casement Project', p. 21.

engage with their art practice.⁵⁶⁷ Having articulated the bursary as the beginnings of exploratory research on ‘the relationship between nationalism and the Irish body’, I had invited Aoife McAtamney to work with me as part of a residency at Dance Ireland.⁵⁶⁸ I’d witnessed Aoife’s performance at the Corp_Real festival discussed in the Chapter 1 and was drawn to work with her, a talented Irish dance artist of a younger generation. Prior to working with Aoife, I’d worked mostly with professional dancers who were older, most of whom were not Irish. Therefore working with Aoife was a conscious exploration of whether age and citizenship made any difference. The research with Aoife would be one part of a bigger international project that included additional residencies in Riga, Barcelona, London and Hong Kong. The international network was intended as both a ‘support and stimulus’ to my practice, as content and medium for creation, even as I proposed to interrogate relationships between the nation and bodies.⁵⁶⁹ Though I had specified Aoife as a female performer in the Bursary application, in practice our research was informed by the more fluid, trans-human attitude to gender and embodiment I have described in Aoife’s own work.⁵⁷⁰

⁵⁶⁷ Arts Council, ‘Dance Bursary Award’, www.artscouncil.ie [website],

<http://www.artscouncil.ie/Funds/Dance-bursary-award/> [accessed 14 March 2017].

⁵⁶⁸ Fearghus Ó Conchúir, ‘Porous Bursary Application’, p. 4 [unpublished]. See Appendix One

⁵⁶⁹ ‘Porous Bursary Application’, p. 3.

⁵⁷⁰ See Chapter One.



Plate 2.2 Fearghus Ó Conchúir, *Cosán Dearg*, Beijing. Photo Shu Yang.

In preparation for our rehearsals together, I had asked Aoife to learn the *Cosán Dearg* solo that I had created for myself in 2005.⁵⁷¹ Though it was not important for me that she would replicate exactly my movement, in this first encounter between us, I wanted her to experience the energies and pathways that had animated my body. To learn the solo, I sent her a video of my performance of the work recorded in 2007 at the 798 Art Space in Beijing, where I was performing as part of the Dadao Live Art Festival. Though her primary task was to learn the movement of the solo, the specificity of the context – my naked body dancing in front of a group of mostly Chinese spectators, in a former munitions factory repurposed as an art space in a rapidly globalising China – conditioned the body

⁵⁷¹ The solo was extracted from a duet of the same title, performed with Bernadette Iglich and made in collaboration with director, Jason Byrne and composer Julie Feeney. The title, literally 'red path', references 'an expression that describes ground worn by frequent traffic. It is a metaphor for compulsion, repetition, and attachment'; Fearghus Ó Conchúir, 'Cosán Dearg', www.fearghus.net [website], <http://www.fearghus.net/projects/cosan-dearg/> [accessed 19 April 2017]. I have performed the solo in many different contexts, most notably across China as part of the Dadao Live Art Festival in 2007, including on Wanfujing Shopping Street in Beijing, as well as on a hotel ballroom floor for Féasta 100, in a performance in front of President Higgins in 2016.

she saw and therefore what she could learn from it dancing. Aoife later emailed me to explain her experience of learning the solo:

Very thrilling - the idea of performing this!
Some how, for me today while I was learning it, my body felt like your body - I mean I was copying it from the video, but somehow the fact that you were naked gave me a real image of the male body and form so it was very interesting to catch myself in some movements feeling like the male form and energy but realising I am in the female form. Also to see your muscles gave me a greater muscular sense in my own body and I was also using that somehow as a reference. Sometimes I would catch myself also noticing in the movements that I was imitating your body by trying to be as big and as muscle'y. Very interesting indeed! What we understand by learning from a video. Very interesting internal and external process.⁵⁷²

Aoife had already explored in her own choreography a sense of a variety of gendered identities flowing through her performing body. In learning my movement, responding to the image of a tall, relatively muscular visibly male body on screen, Aoife experienced an attempt at imitation that was challenged by her 'female form' but that nonetheless afforded her possibilities of transformation, 'catching myself in some movements feeling like the male form and energy', 'a greater muscular sense in my own body'. The transformation seemed to be noticed rather than controlled.

When we came to working together in the studio, though we danced the solo side by side on several occasions, I was more interested in seeing how Aoife, consciously and unconsciously, transformed the material. I invited that transformation by asking her to build a movement phrase from the residue and memory of the solo in her body and watched her bring a softer energy to the movement pathways I'd carved out with more visible effort and muscularity, making connections between parts of the solo that I hadn't, opening up new pathways. The process, which is not an unusual choreographic tool, suggested the individual and structural conditions for how a dancing body might creatively engage with movement inherited from another body, how bodies might be formed in relation to human and non-human others, material and discursive.

⁵⁷² Aoife McAtamney, Email to Fearghus Ó Conchúir, 21 June 2014.

Alongside the movement we generated together from my historical solo, I also introduced Aoife to aspects of the Casement narrative, using in particular photographs that Casement had taken during his investigations in South America. The photographs included apparently ethnographic images of indigenous people (men with spears, lines of intricately painted women photographed from the front and behind), as well as photographs of young men encountered in the cities. Casement's diaries described how the ethnographic photographs provided him with an excuse to document the abuse suffered by indigenous people in the Amazon at the hands of the rubber traders. A different but not unrelated motivation framed the images of bare-torsoed young men who displayed their bodies for Casement's lens.

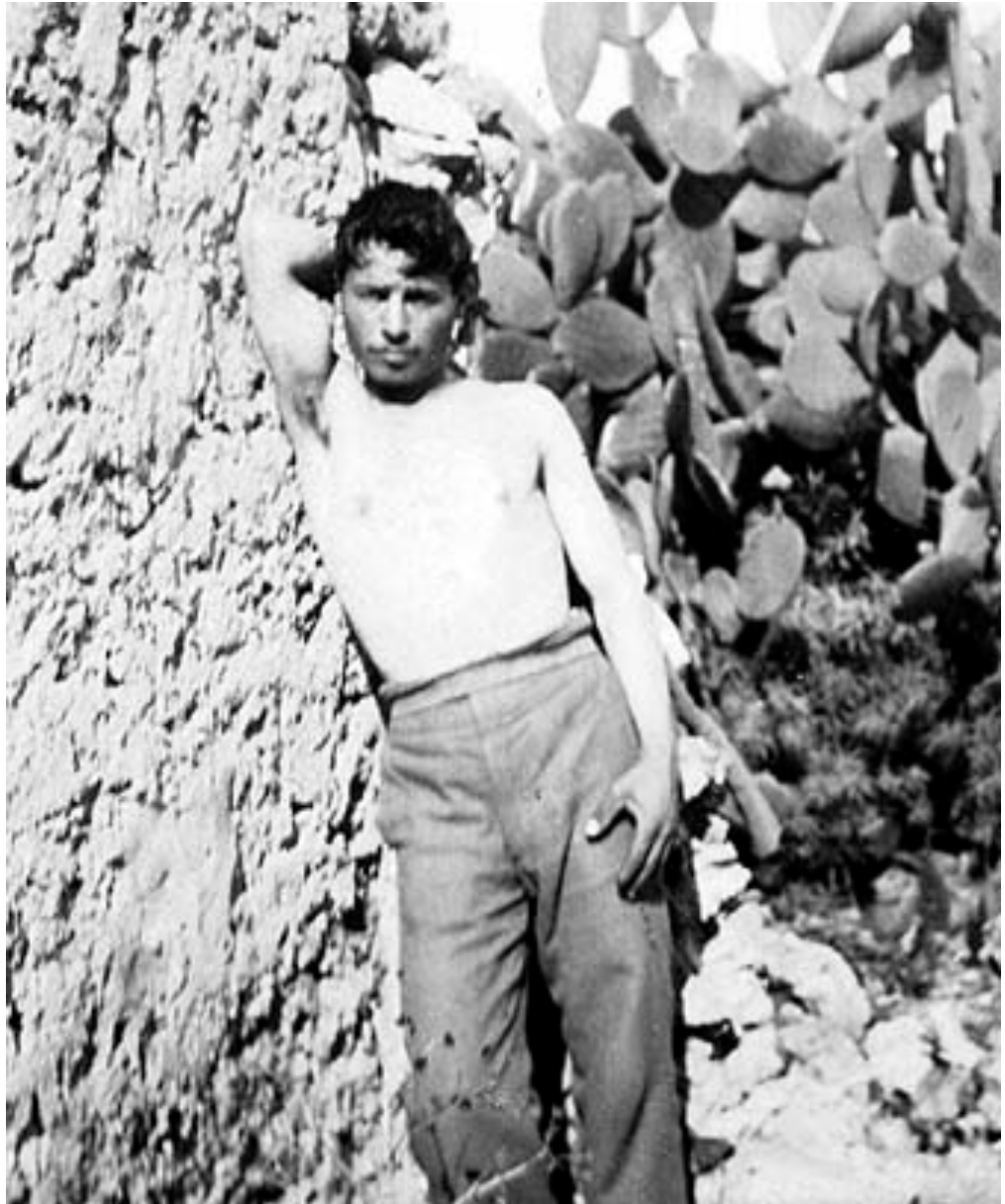


Plate 2.3 Unidentified Man Standing in Front of Stone Wall [José Gonzalez]. Photo: Roger Casement, Roger Casement Photographic Collection, CAS42D. With permission of the National Library of Ireland.



Plate 2.4 Girl from the Putumayo region of Peru/Columbia. Photo: Roger Casement, Roger Casement Photographic Collection, CAS17A. With permission of the National Library of Ireland.

I set Aoife and myself the task of responding to the forms we saw in the images. Some of that response involved a replication of the bodily arrangements in the photographs – the suggestively raised arm of a young man, the backward glance of a young woman, the interlinked arms of a trio of dancers – but equally I proposed that we might be inspired by the texture of cactus or the imagined susurrations of the grass used to thatch a dwelling or the formal arrangement of light and shade in the images. It was important for me that however we responded, it was in our bodies and with movement, an experiment for us to sense what imaginative, emotional and physical resonance those references could have in us. As Johnson has pointed out:

[The P]rocess of collective commemoration builds symbolic significance around particular material forms (such as statues, shrines, monuments or street names) and embodied activities (rituals, performances, or parades) that can ‘immobilize’ and preserve common recollections of past events for a certain group of people.⁵⁷³

In contrast, I understood our task as an engagement with fixed historical images in a way that set them and us in motion, releasing potential for living contemporary bodies and for remembering the potential of the archive before it became arrested in authorised history.

This process of using archival photographs – some by Casement, some of Casement – to generate movement material became an important choreographic device during the subsequent development of *The Casement Project*. In the later rehearsals in 2016, I blue-tacked a line of the source images I’d begun to gather for the research with Aoife on the wall of our studio. The effect of the row of images that helped define the geography of the rehearsal space was influential enough for

⁵⁷³ Tamara M. Johnson, ‘Some Dance to Remember: The Emotional Politics of Marginality, Reinvention, Embodied Memory, and All That (Cape) Jazz’ in Pine and Kuhlke, *Geographies of Dance*, pp. 75-100, p. 79. See also Matthew Allen and Steve Brown, ‘Embodiment and Living Memorials: The Affective Labour of Remembering the 2005 London Bombings’, *Memory Studies*, vol. 4, no. 3 (2011), pp. 312-327.

me to have contemplated replicating that arrangement in the stage-design for *Butterflies and Bones: The Casement Project*. Many artists in different art-forms use a similar scrapbook, mood-board approach in their creative process. What seemed different in my linear arrangement of images, that recalled perhaps the long line of indigenous women photographed by Casement in the Putamayo, is that the choreography of the images, their particular placement in space, had an impact that was more than what the looser formation of images in a scrapbook might usually provide. While I wished to create a choreography that allowed the generative potential of bodies to be experienced by an audience, the framing of those bodies within particular historical narratives – the Easter Rising, the Casement story, the abuse of bodies under colonialism and capitalism, etc. – was a legacy to be acknowledged rather than avoided, a point of reference from which transformation could be registered. Therefore, as well as informing the movement, literal vestiges of those archival photographs were present in the show: a t-shirt bore the image of one of Casement’s bare-chested young men, while other clothing had printed on it phrases from the Black diaries such as ‘Deep to the Hilt’, ‘Very Deep Thrusts’ and ‘X’ (the mark used in the diaries to denote the occurrence of sexual activity). However, as the source images were transformed in the living bodies of the performers and repurposed by new juxtapositions, energies and mobilisations, so the quotations and photos were altered in typography and positioning by their reproduction on contemporary club wear. This strategy of engaging with national history and national archives accorded with Till’s understanding of how artists and activists might ‘animate the multiple spacetimes of memory’ to offer such alternative futures and new possibilities liberated from Herr’s ‘stilled’ conception of Irish individual and collective corporeality.⁵⁷⁴ The aim was in no way narrative or representational. The focus was always on the contemporary bodies, animated by a relationship to the archival images and to the experiences that generated them, but not claiming a totalising comprehension of those experiences to authorise representation.

⁵⁷⁴ Karen E. Till, ‘Artistic and Activist Memory-Work: Approaching Place-based Practice’, *Memory Studies*, vol. 1, no. 1 (2008), pp. 99-113, p. 103. This creative memory-work also entails a necessary forgetting, a process of editing that is creative at conscious, unconscious, social and personal levels. See Hamzah Muzaini, ‘On the Matter of Forgetting and “Memory Returns”’, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, vol. 40, no. 1 (2015), pp. 102-112.

Conclusion

Ultimately Aoife did not perform in *The Casement Project*, but she remained part of its generative history. Her movement material, passed on to and transformed by the other dancers, became part of the choreography. Even at the stage of the Open Call application, photographic and video documentation of the physical research with Aoife provided material support for the imagination to which the Arts Council called. It validated, challenged and generated ideas that I could then, with confidence, authenticity and detail, assert in the application. The imagined future of a permeable national body depended on the experience of the imaginatively permeable bodies we became in our research studio. When I substituted for one of the dancers, Theo Clinkard, in the performance of *Butterflies and Bones: The Casement Project* at *Féile Fáilte*,⁵⁷⁵ I danced material that was an echo of my *Cosán Dearg* solo, transmuted by Aoife and re-shaped again by Theo before it came back to me, shaping my body anew. The experience underlined how a choreographic process could facilitate an experience of corporeal transformation through others, enacting a kind of creative commemoration that embodied how this conceptualisation of a permeable individual body could reshape understandings of the body of a nation. Therefore by elucidating the national context for the creation of *The Casement Project*, the historical context of commemoration, the cultural context for dance funding in Ireland and the global economic trends that have impacted on those contexts, I am not proposing a pessimistic determinism of the conditions of creation. The transformation by dancers' bodies of Casement's story, diaries, photographs, butterflies and the other items he collected, modeled both the formation of bodies by oppressive historical legacies and the ability of bodies, individually and collectively, to find positive resources for creativity in such an inheritance. The deliberate placement of those dancing bodies in relation to the complex and changing performances of national identity, as conditioned by cultural policy, commemoration and economics, represented a strategic claim for and a materialisation of the value of dance. It demonstrated a choreography of bodies, relationships and resources that operated at scales and in modes beyond

⁵⁷⁵ Due to prior commitments, Clinkard, was unavailable for the *Féile Fáilte* event and for the filming of *I'm Roger Casement* that followed immediately afterwards.

the theatrical stage and outside the dance studio. And, as noted in the Introduction, though the judgment of cultural commentators does not make it a reality, O'Toole's inclusion of *The Casement Project* alongside important work by respected poets, visual artists and theatre-makers, in his review of the cultural highlights of 2016, suggests that the strategy had some merit:

Paul Muldoon, Rita Duffy, Anu, Fearghus Ó Conchúir and many others showed that it is still artists who give the nation its voice. And the Government actually noticed.⁵⁷⁶

⁵⁷⁶ O'Toole, 'In 2016, Official Ireland Trusted Artists.'

CHAPTER THREE

Féile Fáilte: Dancing Out of Place

April 1916: Landing on Banna

When I landed in Ireland that morning [...] swamped and swimming ashore on an unknown strand, I was happy for the first time for over a year. Although I knew that this fate waited on me, I was for one brief spell happy and smiling once more. I cannot tell you what I felt. The sandhills were full of skylarks rising in the dawn, the first I had heard for years – the first sound I heard through the surf was their song as I waded in through the breakers, and they were rising all the time up to the old rath [...] and all round were primroses and wild violets and the singing of the skylarks in the air, and I was back in Ireland again.⁵⁷⁷

On Good Friday, 21 April 1916, Casement, together with Robert Monteith and Daniel Bailey, was delivered by a German U boat to Banna Strand, in the Tralee Bay, Co. Kerry. Though Casement came with German arms to support the Easter Rising (arms lost when the *Aud* was scuttled that same day), he believed their quantity to be insufficient and wanted to prevent what he considered a futile Rising. Casement was subsequently captured by the local RIC as he hid in a nearby fairy fort, too exhausted and ill to continue with his companions. That capture led him, via a brief detention in Dublin's Arbour Hill and an overnight train, to the Tower of London, to trial, to conviction and to his eventual hanging at Pentonville Prison. His fate reminds us how well-connected were the western peripheries of the British Empire and its punitive centre.

In a final letter to his sister, written from Pentonville Prison, Casement remembered his nauseous landing on Banna, not as a catastrophe that initiated the journey to his execution, but as a moment of happiness, 'one brief spell happy and smiling once more'. This happiness was connected to a sensual immersion in nature, and Casement emphasised plenitude ('full of skylarks', 'all the time', 'all around'), elevation ('skylarks rising', 'they were rising'), and the beauty of local flora and fauna. The physical effort of arrival ('swamped and swimming ashore',

⁵⁷⁷ Roger Casement. 'Letter from Roger Casement to Nina Casement, 25 July 1916', in Susan Schreibman (ed.), *Letters of 1916* [website], Maynooth University: 2016, <http://letters1916.maynoothuniversity.ie/explore/letters/1092> [accessed 3 November 2016].

‘waded in’) culminated in a return that went beyond the immediacy of the local natural environment to identify that local as part of a national unit: ‘I was back in Ireland again’. And when he landed in Ireland, he brought a wider world with him. His ears may have been full of the sounds of local birds, but his pockets carried an incriminating ticket stub for a train from Berlin to Wilhelmshaven. Along with maps and guns, a copy of *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyám* was discovered buried in the fort where Casement was captured.⁵⁷⁸ When he arrived in Kerry, something of Persia, ‘transmogrified’ by Victorian Britain, landed with him.⁵⁷⁹

This chapter imagines a local scale in the form of Banna Strand in North County Kerry, the location of Casement’s landing in 1916 and the place where I situated, *Féile Fáilte*, an important element of *The Casement Project*. Though not addressing dance specifically, Hawkins’ recognition of the twentieth century’s shift of artistic practice beyond the spaces of the museum, the gallery, the studio and, one might add, the theatre, has necessitated of geographers a greater focus ‘towards art’s relationship with “site” and the critical, often political interventions that can be developed.’⁵⁸⁰ This chapter takes up that challenge by attending to the corporeal politics enacted through the preparation and performance of *Féile Fáilte*. Following Casey and Till, it also aims to go beyond a conception of site as purely location-based to consider a richer place-sensitive and place-making performance.⁵⁸¹ It pays attention to the specificities of a politics that derive from the perspective of a local scale, while recognising that local scale is thoroughly formed by national and international relations.

⁵⁷⁸ Hochschild, *King Leopold’s Ghost*, p. 285.

⁵⁷⁹ Explaining that his translation of *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyám* was not particularly literal, Edward Fitzgerald asserted: ‘Better a live Sparrow than a stuffed Eagle’ (Edward Fitzgerald, ‘Letter to E. B. Cowell,’ 27 April 1859, in William Aldis Wright (ed.), *The Letters of Edward FitzGerald in Two Volumes. Volume II* (New York: Macmillan, 1901 [1894], p. 5).

⁵⁸⁰ Hawkins, ‘Geography and Art’, p. 56.

⁵⁸¹ For Casey, ‘site is an exsanguinated place’; Edward S. Casey, ‘How to Get from Space to Place in a Fairly Short Stretch of Time: Phenomenological Prolegomena’, in *Senses of Place*, Steven Feld and Keith Basso (eds.), (Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 1996), pp. 13-52, p. 26. Till builds on this notion of site as a version of place emptied of vitality, relations and memory to acknowledge the work of artists who resist the reduction of place to passive site by their imaginative involvement with the pasts, presents and futures of places; Till, ‘Artist and Activist Memory-Work’.

Arts Council Open Call: Planning *Féile Fáilte*

As outlined in Chapter 2, when I submitted my application to the Arts Council Open Call for National Projects in April 2015, the defining outlines of what was to become *Féile Fáilte* were clear, even if many of the practicalities weren't. Though I hadn't yet researched Casement's time in Kerry in detail, the application signalled that *The Casement Project* would comprise five interconnected manifestations, one of which would be:

A large-scale participatory performance event on Banna Strand connecting Casement's 1916 landing, the resonance of the shore/border and the liberation of bodies on the beach in a celebration of curated and spontaneous dance.⁵⁸²

The Open Call was explicit in prioritising works that 'are large in ambition, irrespective of physical, temporal, or quantitative scale' and that 'engage with the public, as audience members and/or as participants.'⁵⁸³ The idea to host a day of dance on Banna responded to that call for ambition, scale and engagement.⁵⁸⁴ The brief outline in *The Casement Project* application hinted at the connections between a crucial and localised moment in the Casement history – his landing on Banna – and the coming ashore of refugees on the southern borders of Europe, tragic images of whom were already a regular appearance in the media in April 2015. Casement's commitment to international human rights provided cover for this bold linkage. His then criminal and still controversial sexual adventures opened up some ground for me to propose an event that celebrated the capacity

⁵⁸² Fearghus Ó Conchúir, 'Fearghus Ó Conchúir ApplicationForm_OpenCallNationalProjects_2016', p. 4 [unpublished]. See Appendix Four.

⁵⁸³ Arts Council, 'Guidelines_2016OpenCall_11Mar2015.doc', p. 2.

⁵⁸⁴ My first time to imagine an event of this scale, but drawing on curatorial experience at Firkin Crane and more importantly, my work on *Pick'n'Mix: The Dance Selection*, a day of dance I organised in 2009 in an empty Woolworths in East London to bring high quality contemporary dance to audiences unfamiliar with the art form. The participating artists were all 'local' – defined expediently as people living or born in the Borough of Waltham Forest – and many of them were also internationally recognised choreographers and performers. I was aware that the work of these significant dance artists was never seen in the borough where they lived, primarily because of a lack of infrastructure to support presentation. At a time when the council was developing a cultural strategy, largely oblivious to the rich artistic talent in the borough, I wanted to bring local artists to local audiences where 'local' could be of the highest quality. I said at the time that 'local didn't have to mean shit.' Like *Féile Fáilte*, the event was free and therefore potentially available to everyone who passed by that street. Also, I felt that the recently closed Woolworths' chain was remembered with fondness by many, and that it was a retail space that had attracted people of different socio-economic backgrounds. It was a place intended to include, even if the collapse of Woolworths as a business signals that potential customers had excluded themselves from shopping there.

and potential of bodies, particularly bodies in Ireland, where campaigning in the Marriage Equality Referendum was still acrimoniously active. At the moment of its submission, the Open Call application deployed the historical and geographical specificity of a defined location to address national and international concerns.

The significance of Kerry in the official programme of commemoration also made it an important location for this choreographic intervention. An alertness to socio-political spatiality has characterised my work since the bodies and buildings research I began as Artist in Residence for Dublin City Council in 2007. Placing dancing bodies in relation to rapid urban change, in Dublin's boom and post-boom Docklands, in pre-Olympics Beijing and in pre-Expo Shanghai, has been a conscious effort to draw attention to the macro-social, political and economic choreography that shapes the formation and movement of bodies in those conditions.⁵⁸⁵ A work like *Match*, (as discussed in Chapter One), set in Croke Park, also makes clear that the kind of choreography I create is place-based, implicating location, environment, history and fantasy in the making and performance of the dance.

Apart from the 'Easter Monday Regional Synchronised Wreath-laying Ceremony',⁵⁸⁶ Kerry hosted the only State Ceremonial events that took place outside of Dublin for the 2016 Centenary Programme. At this official level at least, Kerry in general and Banna in particular functioned metonymically for an Ireland outside the capital, though it is clear that Kerry County Council was keen that the county's role would not be perceived as spatially and historically peripheral. The Kerry 2016 website began its overview of the county's commemorative programme with the words: 'From 1915 Kerry was central to plans for the

⁵⁸⁵ For an interview with me on the Bodies and Buildings work that came from my Dublin City Council residency, see Michael Seaver, 'Dancing through the Wasteland', *Irish Times*, 28 July 2008, p. 14.

⁵⁸⁶ Ireland 2016, 'Easter Monday Synchronised Wreath-Laying Ceremonies in Dublin', www.ireland2016.gov.ie [website], <http://www.ireland2016.gov.ie/events/easter-monday-synchronised-wreath-laying-ceremonies-dublin> [accessed 22 November 2017]. The Ireland 2016 website refers only to the Dublin locations of the wreath-laying but the website of An Taoiseach lists Cork, Ashbourne, Enniscorthy and Athenry as the other places where wreaths were laid on Easter Monday, 28 March 2016. Roinn an Taoisigh, 'Centenary Programme 2016 - List of State Ceremonial Events', www.taoiseach.gov.ie [website], http://www.taoiseach.gov.ie/eng/Historical_Information/State_Commemorations/1916_Centenary_Events/ [accessed 5 July 2017].

Rising'⁵⁸⁷ and elucidated the integral part played by Kerry county and by Kerry people in the rebellion. Kate Kennelly, Kerry County Council Arts Officer and coordinator of Kerry 2016, reiterated that message in a press release ahead of the President's official visit to Banna on 21 April 2016 to commemorate Casement's landing there⁵⁸⁸:

The iconic arrival of Casement at Banna in the early hours of Good Friday and his subsequent arrest are pivotal events. It is appropriate that we acknowledge what happened in Kerry in those fateful days. Kerry's story is central to the Rising story and we are honoured to have the president with us today for this commemoration.⁵⁸⁹

From the earliest stages of preparing the Open Call application, I was in contact with Kennelly, under whose stewardship Kerry had the longest-running Dancer in Residence Programme in the country, and through whom I'd undertaken a number of dance-based projects in the area. That long-term relationship and a trust in Kennelly's commitment to developing dance made it possible to propose the idea of a day of dance on Banna, knowing that she would be an important ally in securing County Council and other local approval of the event. The First Round application Brief Supporting Information Document acknowledged Kerry County Council's Arts Office as a 'key partner in the success of the Banna participatory festival that forms a key manifestation of this project.'⁵⁹⁰ When *The Casement Project* made it through to the Second Round, Kennelly provided an artistically positive if tellingly risk-averse letter of support on behalf of the County Arts Office:

Fearghus's proposal would certainly add a new dimension to the telling of the Kerry 1916 commemorations and Sir Roger Casement's

⁵⁸⁷Kerry 2016, 'Program', www.kerry2016.ie [website], http://kerry2016.ie/?page_id=72 [accessed 5 July 2017].

⁵⁸⁸ Roinn an Taoisigh, 'Centenary Programme 2016'. The event was called 'State Commemoration for Sir Roger Casement' on the Taoiseach's website. Casement was stripped of his knighthood before his execution and therefore it is both inaccurate and odd that the Irish State should seem to restore the honours bestowed by an empire against whose political domination the state and Casement struggled for existence. The restoration suggests that there is some weight still in the title.

⁵⁸⁹ DAHRRGA, 'State Commemoration for Sir Roger Casement Takes Place at Historic Landing Site on Banna Strand', www.arrrga.gov.ie [website], 21 April 2016, <http://www.arrrga.gov.ie/state-commemoration-for-sir-roger-casement-takes-place-at-historic-landing-site-on-banna-strand/> [accessed 5 July 2017].

⁵⁹⁰ Fearghus Ó Conchúir, 'Brief Supporting info-The Casement Project' [unpublished]. See Appendix Three.

time in Tralee. It will afford the public an opportunity to use movement as a means of questioning the ideals of the proclamation.

Creative expression is a legacy of 1916, the Banna proposal brings focus on creative expression through dance. Whilst I cannot comment on the logistics of using the strand and any restrictions that may apply to the proposal, in terms of the Arts Service we will endeavour to assist Fearghus to ensure the artistic merit and opportunities offered through his vision become part of our 2016 program.⁵⁹¹

For this second stage of the application process, I had developed a more detailed outline of what *Féile Fáilte* might be. The newly-minted title for the event, signalled a deliberate harnessing of festive celebration with the notion of welcome. The fact that Fáilte appears in the title of the national tourism development authority, *Fáilte Ireland*, suggests that the national brand embraces the concept of welcome – Céad Míle Fáilte – as part of its identity, and a strategic consciousness of that national branding influenced my appropriation of its language for different ends:

The key qualities of the *Féile Fáilte* are inclusivity and welcome. The beach setting has been chosen because it is an environment that is open to all, that mutates with the ebb and flow of the tide to accommodate use by daytime families and nighttime ravers. It is a space where the body is more likely to be revealed and its sensuality indulged. In addition to the celebration of the body that this location can support, it also represents the nation's geographical border. Welcoming the other across that border, is the ultimate aim and climax of this day of celebratory and inclusive movement.⁵⁹²

The proposal emphasised inclusion of alterity, using, what seems, in retrospect, a naturalising strategy that linked tidal rhythms, seaside corporeal sensuality⁵⁹³ and the regular passage of day into night to render unthreatening a re-imagining of

⁵⁹¹ Kate Kennelly, Email to Fearghus Ó Conchúir, 1 July 2015, included in Open Call Round 2 application.

⁵⁹² Ó Conchúir, 'FOCONCHUIR AC2016 Detailed Proposal-The Casement Project', p.12.

⁵⁹³ Ronan Foley's account of the therapeutic benefits of immersion in outdoor blue spaces acknowledges the performed cultural and emotional significance of such spaces. His discussion also underscores that places such as the sea and its beaches are 'simultaneously capable of being joyful, open and healing, yet risky, terrifying and unhealthy', reminding us of that place is experienced and performed differently by different people in different circumstances; Ronan Foley, 'Swimming in Ireland: Immersions in Therapeutic Blue Space', *Health & Place*, no. 35 (2015), pp. 218-225, p. 218.

Banna as a space of transformation geographically and socially generous enough to welcome the unfamiliar, to be 'open to all'.

In her recent work on the embodied politics of assembly, Butler asserts the paradoxical necessity and impossibility of achieving absolute inclusion:

The body politic is posited as a unity it can never be. Yet, that does not have to be a cynical conclusion. Those who in a spirit of realpolitik reckon that since every formation of "the people" is partial, we should simply accept that partiality as a fact of politics, are clearly opposed by those who seek to expose and oppose those forms of exclusion, often knowing quite well that full inclusiveness is not possible, but for whom the struggle is ongoing.⁵⁹⁴

Butler links inclusion to an attempt to define 'the people' and is sensitive to the 'constitutive exclusion' of those that do not count as 'the people' in any such definition.⁵⁹⁵ The distinction in the 1916 Proclamation of the Irish Republic between 'the people of Ireland' whom the Proclamation accords 'the right ... to the ownership of Ireland', and a contrasting 'foreign people' who have usurped that right, illustrates this exclusionary principle. My Open Call application didn't use this language of exclusion but it did mobilise the metaphorical use of the body to signify the nation, in a way that was open to questions rather than declarative of answers: 'this choreography reflects on the relationship between nationalism and the body: Who gets to be in the national body? Whose body represents the nation? How does the national body move? How permeable are its borders?'⁵⁹⁶ This aspirational permeability and dynamism was reiterated throughout the application,⁵⁹⁷ explicitly linking inclusion at the level of the metaphoric national body to the scandalous permeability to penetration of Casement's body.⁵⁹⁸

⁵⁹⁴ Judith Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015), p. 4.

⁵⁹⁵ *Ibid.*; discussing Chantal Mouffe and Ernesto Laclau, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (London: Verso, 1986).

⁵⁹⁶ Ó Conchúir, 'FOCONCHUIR AC2016 Detailed Proposal-The Casement Project', p. 3. These issues are also raised in works on the relations between body and map in national metaphor: Claire Rasmussen and Michael Brown, 'The Body Politic as Spatial Metaphor', *Citizenship Studies* vol. 9, no. 5 (2005), pp. 469-484.

⁵⁹⁷ Through [Casement's] already international profile, exposing human rights abuses in the Congo and the Amazon, it becomes possible to connect the aspirations of the 1916 Rising with global questions of justice and to explore the possibilities of a national body that is inclusive, dynamic and

The application also drew attention to how *The Casement Project* would not only engage with inclusion and permeability as content but would embody, enact, and, in Butler's sense, perform a body politic whose shifting borders would be open to crossing. For instance, the inclusion of *The Casement Project* in the ART:2016 and 14-18NOW commemorative programmes, as well as the engagement with asylum seekers and refugees at multiple levels of the work turned it into transnational choreography that traversed national borders, and through the dynamism of movement, opened to question the stability of those borders. In doing so, the project addressed corporeally and choreographically a matter that other geographers have questioned theoretically.⁵⁹⁹ As I will describe, this transgression of corporeal, social, geographic and ultimately, political borders was a challenge for some of the project's public.

Holding the Line: Space for Surprise

But it is also true that every determination of 'the people' involves an act of demarcation that draws a line, usually on the basis of nationality or against the background of the nation-state, and that line immediately becomes a contentious border. In other words, there is no possibility of 'the people' without a discursive border drawn somewhere, either traced along the lines of existing nation-states, racial or linguistic communities, or political affiliation. The discursive move to establish 'the people' in one way or another is a bid to have a certain border recognized, whether we understand that as a border of

permeable to otherness'; Ó Conchúir, 'FOCONCHUIR AC2016 Detailed Proposal-The Casement Project', p. 8.

⁵⁹⁸ Judith Butler draws attention to the ongoing imbrication of gender and the geopolitics of corporeal permeability and the control of national borders it supports: 'The tactical deployment of the distinction between the vulnerable and the invulnerable depends as well on the differential allocation of permeability. The language of permeability became rather important in the United States after 9/11, referring to the permeability of national borders, drawing upon the anxieties of being entered against one's will, the invasion of bodily boundaries. Both sexual interdictions and gender norms are at work in such language, to be sure—the fear of rape, the prerogative to rape, to name but a few ways in which gendered differences are established through the political problems raised by the permeability of the body, a condition that can only be managed, but not escaped (since all bodies have orifices, or can be pierced by instruments). And yet the impossible project goes on by which one gender is regarded as permeable and the other not'; Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, footnote 11, p. 226.

⁵⁹⁹ Anssi Paasi, 'Bounded Spaces in a "Borderless World": Border Studies, Power and the Anatomy of Territory,' *Journal of Power*, vol. 2, no. 2 (2009), pp. 213-234.

a nation or as the frontier of that class of people to be considered 'recognisable' as a people.⁶⁰⁰



Plate 3.1 Group of Tribesmen from the Putumayo Region of Peru/Columbia performing a ritual dance in costume. Photo: Roger Casement, Roger Casement Photographic Collection, CAS16D. With permission of the National Library of Ireland

While Butler suggests that the formation of 'the people' institutes fixed lines, as a choreographic undertaking, *The Casement Project* put lines in motion. In doing so, it also proposed alternative formations of space since as Gunnar Olsson asks: 'what is geography, if it is not the drawing and interpretation of lines?'⁶⁰¹ One of the key underpinning structures of the whole project and the headline image for the whole project came to be called 'The line'.⁶⁰² The choreographic structure derived from a

⁶⁰⁰ Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, p.5

⁶⁰¹ Gunnar Olsson, *Lines of Power/Limits of Language* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), p. 181, quoted in McCormack, 'Geographies for Moving Bodies', p. 1831.

⁶⁰² Matthew Thompson's photograph of the line heads the homepage of www.thecasementproject.ie, the project's website and the image was used in much of the publicity for the project, including the 1418NOW website (1418NOW, 'The Casement Project', www.1418now.org.uk [website], <https://www.1418now.org.uk/commissions/the-casement-project/> [accessed 5 July 2017].) 'I am careful about how different sections of movement or elements of the choreography are named. I need to find a shorthand that enables everyone in the studio to communicate verbally about what particular movements we want to practice. That language has to be specific, but it is important that the titles do not colour or fix the performance of

photograph taken by Casement in the Putamayo that shows three hooded men, interlinked at the elbow, engaged in dancing.⁶⁰³ As described in Chapter Two, the image inspired movement in the earliest phases of research with Aoife McAtamney, that pre-dated the Open Call. It began in a transfer of the two-dimensional image of three bodies, mediated by Casement's lens, into a three-dimensional embodiment in two bodies. In August 2016, the transfer expanded to the bodies of the five performers – three men and two women – who were part of the research and development of the work in London.⁶⁰⁴ That was when the image became a line of bodies, linked at the elbows, a choreographic structure that despite its significance in the *Butterflies and Bones* stage performance and in the *I am Roger Casement* dance-film, was never fixed, neither in particular performances, nor over the lifetime of the whole project. Instead the choreographic structure was a practised, collective body made from in-the-moment choices of the individual bodies that formed it. These were choices of agreement and disagreement, of assent and refusal, where the impact of a decision in one body was transmitted through multiple bodies, not necessarily adjacent. The effect for me as choreographer-viewer was of seeing images of solidarity, danger, exhilaration, and resistance in rapidly changing, unpredictable succession. One reviewer interpreted in 'the desperate charge of bodies linked arm-in-arm', an echo of Casement's gun-running.⁶⁰⁵

the material. 'Line' is a helpful name since it describes the arrangement of bodies without imposing an a priori emotional or psychological narrative on that arrangement.

⁶⁰³Roger Casement, 'Group of tribesmen from the Putamayo region of Peru/Columbia performing a ritual dance in costume', *Roger Casement Photographic Collection*, National Library of Ireland, <http://catalogue.nli.ie/Record/vtls000248600> [accessed 29 November 2016]. See Plate 2.

⁶⁰⁴Mikel Aristegui, Philip Connaughton, Bernadette Iglich, Aoife McAtamney, and Matthew Morris. By the time of performances in 2016, McAtamney had chosen not to continue in the project. Liv O'Donoghue and Theo Clinkard completed the cast. Clinkard's other projects clashed with some of the performances of *Butterflies and Bones* (notably at *Féile Fáilte*) and with the filming of *I am Roger Casement*. I replaced him when he was not available. As a result, the line has been a choreography that needed to be able to be resilient and flexible enough to accommodate this changing constitution.

⁶⁰⁵Chris McCormack, 'Review: Butterflies and Bones at Project Arts Centre', www.exeuntmagazine.com [website], 22 October 2016, <http://exeuntmagazine.com/reviews/review-butterflies-bones-project-arts-centre/> [accessed 5 July 2017].



Plate 3.2 *The Casement Project* poster image. Photo: Matthew Thompson.



Plate 3.3 Lecture Demonstration at the IWAMD, University of Limerick. Photo: Maurice Gunning.

This structure, as a putative model for one kind of community building, was something I asked many different kinds of participants to experience when I introduced *The Casement Project* at lectures and presentations throughout 2016.

We made the line in workshops with MicroRainbow International, with the participants at *Bodies Politic* Symposium at Maynooth University, at the Dance Research Forum Ireland conference in New York, at the Tocht Festival at Siamsa Tíre in Tralee and at the Irish World Academy in Limerick.⁶⁰⁶ The line as choreographic structure could include the practised, professionally-skilled cast of *Butterflies and Bones* and it could also bring together different groups of people in different geographical locations, not necessarily requiring them to have prior dance experience. So while, Butler posits the line as a restrictive demarcation that creates exclusion in its moment of indicating inclusion, the dynamic line of *The Casement Project* attempted a structure that was more evasive of determination, less clear in the territory it assigned and in the bodies it created. The spatial fluidity and the openness to surprising relationships that such fluidity entails has been conceptualised by Doreen Massey in a way that describes well the choreographic ethics of the line:

For such a space entails the unexpected. The specifically spatial within time-space is produced by that – sometimes happenstance, sometimes not – arrangement-in-relation-to-each-other that is the result of there being a multiplicity of trajectories. In spatial configurations, otherwise unconnected narratives may be brought into contact, or previously connected ones may be wrenched apart. There is always an element of 'chaos'. This is the chance of space; the accidental neighbour is one figure for it. Space as the closed system of the essential section presupposes (guarantees) the singular universal. But in this other spatiality different temporalities and different voices must work out

⁶⁰⁶ On the morning of *Féile Fáilte*, the dancers of *Butterflies and Bones* (who included me for that event, but didn't include one of the performers whose recent illness made him reluctant to be available for a photocall at 11am when we weren't performing until after 9pm that evening) performed the line for the official, Arts Council, photocall on Banna Beach. The aim of the photocall was to take an image that would attract press coverage of the event and that aim required an uncomfortable corralling of the line's possibilities to produce an effect for camera. It also meant the addition of our gold lamé fabric to the image to create attractive billowy shapes in an image that didn't really relate to the expression of the line as we had created it. We had used the line on another beach in a December 2015 photoshoot with Matthew Thompson to create the iconic promotional image of *The Casement Project*, however, even though there were marks to hit on that occasion to catch the artificial light, that photoshoot didn't compromise the fluid unpredictability of the line. On Banna, the experience of the line was more contained by the pressure to get a good image for promotion without using up the energy of the dancers on a day that would demand their stamina. A dancer was missing from both photoshoots, which suggests that the structure was capable of adaptation despite the constraints imposed upon it by the conventions of mass communication.

means of accommodation. The chance of space must be responded to.⁶⁰⁷

Repeated and distributed movement research in the studio, responding to archival material, brought about ‘the line’ as a potential structure for experiencing and reconfiguring the kind of relational conception of space and place that Massey regards as necessary for progressive politics. Engaging with the mutable shoreline of Banna, with its daily and seasonal tidal variations, its vulnerability to re-shaping by wind, by storms and by human activities, extended and challenged the choreographic enquiry further. After the success of the Open Call application and the confirmation that we would go ahead with the project, *The Casement Project’s* core team⁶⁰⁸ gave lengthy consideration to how *Féile Fáilte* would happen in practice, where ‘in practice’ often meant ‘in that place, in those conditions’. The aspirations of an application had to be given a material form, one that could respond to the needs of human performers, participants and passers-by on the day of the event, but also one that could accommodate the non-human variations of the environment and weather. In addition to research on relatively predictable tide and sunset times, frequent site visits were necessary to gain an embodied understanding of how the environment changed over the course of a day. ‘Banna’ – its changing temperatures, tides and wind levels – became a kind of performer whose behaviour had to be factored in to the choreography of the event. As Massey underlined: ‘The nonhuman has its trajectories also and the event of place demands, no less than with the human, a politics of negotiation.’⁶⁰⁹

The difference between high and low tides had an impact on where we could put a performance platform and how we could prepare a climactic-fire display on the foreshore in coordination with the receding high tide.⁶¹⁰ The fragility of the protected sand-dunes also influenced our decision-making and the sanction of the

⁶⁰⁷ Massey, *For Space*, p. 111.

⁶⁰⁸ Cian O’Brien as Executive Producer, Lian Bell as Project Manager, Annette Nugent and Kate O’Sullivan as Communications, Marcus Costello as Production Manager, Ciaran O’Melia as Designer, Fearghus Ó Conchúir as Artistic Director and Choreographer

⁶⁰⁹ Massey. *For Space*, p.160.

⁶¹⁰ Ultimately the pyrotechnical company that took responsibility for the fire-display performed a concealed choreography while performances took place on the main-platform, timing their work on the beach with the ebb of the tide and the scheduled climax of the programme. Theirs was a skilled improvisation, relying on extensive experience but not specific knowledge since budget didn’t permit us to rehearse this part of the performance in advance, and besides the combination of high-tide and sunset were unique.

County Council Environment Officer. Weather proved to be a source of anxiety for *The Casement Project's* production team who needed me to propose contingency plans for heavy rain. We monitored long range forecasts, seeing promised windows of dry weather shift from and towards our 23 July target. Three days before the event, Kennelly advised me to cover our stage so as to mitigate against 'the main uncontrollable factor – the weather'.⁶¹¹ She expressed concern for the safety of performers and suggested we replicate the stage-cover that had been used for the State Commemoration of Casement on Banna the previous April. Having attended that State event, I was aware of the negative visual impact of having a plastic dome over the stage area. I was reluctant to invite people to a beautiful location and prevent them from being able to read the performances in direct relation to that environment. I was also clear that while we, relying in particular on the expertise of our Production Manager and Project Manager, would put in place a plan that would support the effective and safe realisation of *Féile Fáilte* (even making strategic use of the County Council's experience of seeing the State Commemoration at Banna work smoothly so as to reassure them that our event could happen), unlike the State Commemoration, I wanted our strong structure to be one that could support variation and surprise, rather than one that built defences against the unexpected. Had I wanted to have performances in an environment where weather didn't matter, it would have been easier to present the event indoors. The challenge was not to eliminate the risk of the unpredictable, but to build an event and environment that could respond positively to whatever happened. This unpredictability is, as Massey recognised, a particular political and ethical resource provided by imagining and working with space thus conceived: 'And yet it is important to emphasise that the element of surprise, the unexpected, the other, is crucial to what space gives us.'⁶¹²

Solidarities of Resilience and Inclusion: Curating *Féile Fáilte*

As Massey recognises, 'Place as an ever-shifting constellation of trajectories poses the question of our throwntogetherness.... The chance of space may set us down

⁶¹¹ Kate Kennelly, Email to Fearghus Ó Conchúir, 20 July 2016.

⁶¹² Massey, *For Space*, p.62. See also p. 116.

next to the unexpected neighbour.⁶¹³ Similarly Elizabeth Grosz, in her elaboration of geopower asserts that:

If dynamism is a quality of the earth as a whole, if the very framework of life, its literal grounds, are never fully stable – or rather, are functionally metastable – then all our conceptions of life, and the human, acquire a kind of unstable, potentially transforming ground.⁶¹⁴

While transformation may be an exciting prospect for some, especially for those disadvantaged by the *status quo*, the conceptualisation of space and place as relational, mutable and in process, requires a resilience of the humans who are prepared to engage under those conditions of instability and throwntogetherness. Therefore, I invited choreographers and performers ‘selected because of their commitment to and embodiment of inclusivity and diversity’⁶¹⁵ and also because of their ability and willingness to present meaningful performances without the protection and framing of a theatre.

From the Open Call Detailed Proposal, these performances were planned to be from Siamsa Tíre, Croí Glan Integrated Dance Company, John Scott’s Irish Modern Dance Company and new work by Catherine Young to be commissioned by *The Casement Project*. In addition, I proposed from the outset to have a céilí,⁶¹⁶ ultimately led by a well-known local céilí master, Paddy Hanafin, and a disco/rave, which DJ Proud Mary (Mary Nugent, also a performer with Croí Glan) deejayed on the night and which was hosted by drag queen, Mangina Jones.⁶¹⁷ The Open Call Detailed Proposal promised a climactic spectacle of light to welcome ashore the

⁶¹³ *Ibid.*, p.151.

⁶¹⁴ Elizabeth Grosz, Kathryn Yusoff and Nigel Clark, ‘Interview with Elizabeth Grosz: Geopower, Inhumanism and the Biopolitical’, *Theory, Culture & Society*, vol. 34, nos. 2-3 (2017), pp. 129-146, p. 132.

⁶¹⁵ Ó Conchúir, ‘FOCONCHUIR AC2016 Detailed Proposal-The Casement Project’, p. 11.

⁶¹⁶ In her account of the politics of traditional Irish dance, Barbara O’Connor suggests that the céilí and its set-dancing has been a dance form associated with rural Ireland, with a nostalgic attachment to supposed ‘cultural stability and continuity’ and with the reinforcement of traditionally conceived communities of place, understood as ‘more local and traditional’. However, she also interprets set-dancing’s community orientation as a resistance to the pervasive individualism of neo-liberalism, and though it refers to the antecedents of rural community, she asserts that set-dancing offers ‘a community in which individual agency and choice were combined with collective demands’; O’Connor, *The Irish Dancing*, p. 81, p. 97, p. 101. See also Catherine Foley, ‘The Irish Céilí: A Site for Constructing, Experiencing, and Negotiating a Sense of Community and Identity’, *Dance Research: The Journal of the Society for Dance Research*, vol. 29, no. 1 (2011), pp. 43-60.

⁶¹⁷ Mangina Jones, aka Cian O’Brien, Artistic Director of Project Arts Centre, won the Alternative Miss Ireland competition in 2011. She came out of retirement for *Féile Fáilte* and performed also as part of the *Wake for Roger Casement* at Kilkenny Arts Festival in August 2016.

stranger with a performance from renowned traditional Irish singer, Iarla Ó Lionáird. In the end, Ó Lionáird's schedule prevented him from participating, though we did have the fire spectacle regardless, and his willingness to lend his name to the application suggested the artistic capital on which the event could draw.

Though the Open Call Detailed Proposal offered a clear outline of what the day would entail, it also had sufficient flexibility to adapt to obstacles and opportunities that presented themselves once the Open Call Award had been secured and *The Casement Project* was going ahead. Having been made aware of their performances in Liverpool Irish Festival in October 2015, in which I also performed, I invited west-of-Ireland-based hip hop trio, Rusangano Family, to perform at *Féile Fáilte*.⁶¹⁸ The trio's members come from Togo, Zimbabwe and Clare and make music consciously '[e]xploring issues such as identity and belonging'⁶¹⁹ that expresses experiences of migration: 'What we try to do is be a voice for the unheard.'⁶²⁰ The group's explicit concern to reflect an Irish identity in flux,⁶²¹ to oppose vestiges of misogyny and homophobia that their musical genre has sometimes manifested, as well as to give its audiences a dynamic and physically rousing experience made it a ideal element to include in the line-up for *Féile Fáilte*. Moreover their equal enthusiasm to play to children or to adult aficionados demonstrated an openness to diversity with which I wanted to ally *The Casement Project*.⁶²² That I invited Rusangano Family to perform without having attended their gigs was a risk, but it didn't feel like a risk having researched the group online, consulted with friends who had seen them live and, more importantly, communicated with the group in a way that gave them every opportunity to withdraw from the invitation if the spirit and values of the event I was describing didn't resonate with them. An email from the group a week before

⁶¹⁸ Rusangano Family, 'Artist Bio', www.rusanganofamily.com [website], <http://www.rusanganofamily.com/artist/bio> [accessed 5 July 2017].

⁶¹⁹ *Loc. cit.*

⁶²⁰ MuRli, one of the Rusangano Family, quoted in Ian Maleny, 'A Voice for the Unheard', *Irish Times*, 15 April 2016, p. 5.

⁶²¹ 'But I think we're at a point where things are shifting. Today, what makes an Irish person is a mix of a lot of things'; *ibid.*

⁶²² 'Last week, we were in Texas at South By Southwest and people were going wild at these hardcore performances. Next week, I have to go into a school and sing songs with five- and seven-year-olds. To me, that's good because one day, I'd like to have a family'; *ibid.*

the performance confirmed the trio's robust embrace of whatever the event might involve: in an exchange to discuss how they would respond to heavy rain and strong wind on the beach, they proposed using two megaphones, if the speakers couldn't function. Such resilience and resourcefulness felt entirely aligned with the values of *Féile Fáilte*.

Siamsa Tíre



Plate 3.4 Siamsa Tíre at *Féile Fáilte*. Photo: Ste Murray.

As home of the National Folk Theatre of Ireland, Siamsa Tíre is a repository of local folk culture, presented onstage in music and dance performances. Through its distinctive Munnix style of step-dancing, the company is strongly identified with its North Kerry location, despite its national title. In addition, it has a history of inviting contemporary choreographers and visual artists to work with the company.⁶²³ Since 2010, I have presented my own work in the Siamsa Tíre theatre, as well as collaborating in 2010 with dancers from the core company on *Open*

⁶²³ On collaborations between Siamsa and contemporary choreographers and artists see Seaver, 'Stepping into Footprints', pp. 11-12; Finola Cronin, 'Up Close and Personal: Siamsa Tíre's What the Folk! Bodies, Memory, Space', Conference Paper, Irish Society for Theatre Research Annual Conference 2015; McGrath, *Dance Theatre in Ireland*, p. 92; Catherine Foley, *Step Dancing in Ireland: Culture and History* (London: Routledge, 2013) p. 215, p. 225 *passim*.

Niche,⁶²⁴ a performance that integrated their dancing into a choreographic structure, *Niche*, I'd created two years before with contemporary dancers. In a blog post at the time, I noted how:

The performance at Siamsa Tíre and the collaboration it allowed between my work and that of the National Folk Theatre was illuminating because of the ready connections that could be made between the extracts from the Siamsa repertoire that we used and some of the sections of *Niche*. Of course I knew that I'd used Eastern European folk dance forms in the creation of *Niche* but the weaving, spinning and interlinking made perfect sense in the Siamsa context. [...] The relationship between the iconic súgán chairs from Siamsa's rep and the metal and plastic *Niche* chairs (from Dancehouse) made for a neat reflection on tradition and modernity too. I still carry with me the idea from Siamsa that 'Folk' is what the people do and so *Niche*, which was intended to be some kind of reflection of elements of contemporary Ireland, could be regarded as a folk piece too.⁶²⁵

The connection I recognised and underlined then between my contemporary work and an older folk tradition is perhaps relevant for an understanding of why programming Siamsa's performance as part of *Féile Fáilte* was appropriate and resonant. While Wulff and Seaver associate Siamsa with rurality as opposed to the globalised urbanity of *Riverdance*,⁶²⁶ Siamsa had already demonstrated that it carried a tradition that could be hospitable to the kind of contemporary work I wanted to present.⁶²⁷ It demonstrated hospitality in very practical terms, by providing free space for me and for the new work I commissioned from Catherine Young to rehearse in preparation for *Féile Fáilte*. It promoted the event and it helped me source a céilí master that would have the credibility to attract local set-dancing enthusiasts to dance on Banna beach. And by doing all of this, Siamsa provided a kind of legitimacy for the event in the locality: Siamsa, after all, had sung at the Official State Commemoration at Banna, having recently become

⁶²⁴ See Fearghus Ó Conchúir, 'Open Niche', www.feorghus.net [website], <http://www.feorghus.net/projects/open-niche/> for an overview of the project and Fearghus Ó Conchúir, 'Open Niche: Rehearsals at Dancehouse', www.feorghu.net [blog post], 14 March 2010, <http://www.feorghus.net/open-niche-rehearsals-at-dancehouse/> for detail on Siamsa Tíre's involvement [both accessed 22 November 2016].

⁶²⁵ Fearghus Ó Conchúir, 'Open Niche: Siamsa and Cork, the End for Now', www.feorghus.net [blog post], 15 April 2010, <http://www.feorghus.net/open-niche-siamsa-and-cork-the-end-for-now/> [accessed 6 December 2016].

⁶²⁶ Wulff, *Dancing at the Crossroads*, p. 115.

⁶²⁷ For a discussion of the ethics of hospitality see Chapter Four.

directly funded by the DAHRRGA, foregoing arm's-length support via the Arts Council for a more direct relationship to the State. As *Open Niche* had demonstrated the connections between my contemporary work and their traditional repertoire, so I wanted again to draw lines of relation, solidarity, perhaps kinship between what Siamsa would present at Banna and the other work I would programme there.

Croí Glan Integrated Dance Company



Plate 3.5 Croí Glan at *Féile Fáilte*. Photo: Ste Murray.

Croí Glan Integrated Dance Company is a professional dance company based in Cork that performs work that includes disabled and non-disabled dancers. In February 2015, the company premiered *The Rhythm of Fierce*, a work that they commissioned me to choreograph for a quartet of dancers, two of whom regularly use wheelchairs or walking canes. An interview with Cork-based arts broadcaster, Ellie O'Byrne, highlighted that the interest in exploring what it meant to welcome the stranger was part of *The Rhythm of Fierce* from its inception, in a way that consciously prepared for *The Casement Project*.⁶²⁸ Creating a platform in Banna for

⁶²⁸ Ellie O'Byrne, 'Croí Glan', www.soundcloud.com [website], <https://soundcloud.com/ellie-obyrne/croi-glan> [accessed 6 July 2017]. I asked sound designer, Alma Kelliher and stage designer, Ciaran O'Melia, who were also to be part of the creative team for *The Casement Project*, to think of *The Rhythm of Fierce* as research for the later work. Certain sound elements, such as the use of club

a diversity of embodiment to be visible was both informed by my experience with Croí Glan, as well as an opportunity to reinforce the relationships and values that the experience with them fostered. Working with Croí Glan influenced my concern to create a performance platform that could support dancing by wheel-chair users. While I had considered the beach a place that could be inclusive, in fact sand is not always easy for a wheel-chair user to move in. Butler's concern that we pay attention to the conditions and supports that make it possible for a body to appear in public, as part of 'the people' are helpful in recognising the political significance of caring about the height and surface of a performance platform on Banna. This is the sort of attention required when we normalise doing things differently,⁶²⁹ for, as Butler recognises:

Human action depends on all sorts of supports – it is always supported action. We know from disability studies that the capacity to move depends upon instruments and surfaces that make movements possible, and that bodily movement is supported and facilitated by nonhuman objects and their particular capacity for agency.⁶³⁰

Butler is critical of what she reads as Arendt's dismissal of those with acknowledged corporeal needs from the realm of active citizenship and participation in the polity. For Arendt, according to Butler, the necessities of bodies are signals of a lack of independence, and independence is what distinguishes the legitimate active citizen.⁶³¹ Against this relegation of the corporeal and its needs to the realm of the private, Butler proposes that all bodies require support, even those of the free male citizens of the Greek and Roman states to which Arendt refers, whose appearance in the public realm is also dependent on care and nourishment provided in the private realm by disenfranchised, feminised others.⁶³² Although Arendt recognises that 'man cannot be free if he does not

music, transferred into the design of *Butterflies and Bones*, as did the use of lamé fabric and, less obviously, the experience of working with wheelchairs that informed the use of rolling trucks in the performance.

⁶²⁹Nancy Hansen and Chris Philo, 'The Normality of Doing Things Differently: Bodies, Spaces and Disability Geography', *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie*, vol. 98, no. 4 (2007) pp. 493-506.

⁶³⁰ Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, p. 72.

⁶³¹ *Ibid.*, p.44-45.

⁶³² *Ibid.*, pp. 45-46.

know that he is subject to necessity',⁶³³ the struggle towards freedom that she envisages for man is against that corporeal dependence. In contrast, Butler asserts that it is:

Only as creatures who recognise the conditions of interdependency that ensure our persistence and flourishing can any of us struggle for the realization of any of those important political goals during times in which the very social conditions of existence have come under economic and political assault.⁶³⁴

What Butler makes clear however, is that under current neo-liberal conditions there is less support for some bodies to participate in the achievement of 'important political goals' than others: 'we are faced in a new way with the idea that some populations are considered disposable.'⁶³⁵ Under these conditions, supporting systemically disadvantaged bodies to appear and participate in public, to claim the support that enables them to appear even prior to any further articulation of demands is already political. Furthermore, in recognising that 'forms of assembly already signify prior to, and apart from, any particular demands they make', Butler asserts the potential political force of the corporeal and the choreographed.⁶³⁶ However, Butler is cautious that a sociological observation about those figured as bodies – because under particular regimes of power their corporeal needs are not being met – does not become ontological, 'a new norm of description', that traps those disadvantaged in a *particular* regime of power in a *universalised* foundational disadvantage. They are merely the bodies that under current conditions, are exposed while other bodies are privileged to appear incorporeal because their basic needs are met and their interdependence hidden.⁶³⁷

⁶³³ Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 2nd edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), p. 121. See also Linda M. G. Zerilli, 'The Arendtian Body', in Bonnie Honig (ed.), *Feminist Interpretations of Hannah Arendt*, (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), pp. 167-194. Zerilli reads more ambiguity in Arendt's response to the corporeal.

⁶³⁴ Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, p. 45.

⁶³⁵ *Ibid.*, p.11

⁶³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8. See also 'Asserting that a group of people is still existing, taking up space and obdurately living, is already an expressive action, a politically significant event, and that can happen wordlessly in the course of an unpredictable and transitory gathering.' *ibid.*, p.18.

⁶³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 139.

It is in this context that *Féile Fáilte* mobilised the resources of the State in Ireland (and in the UK) to literally prepare the ground for a diversity of bodies to participate in the event. The 9.6m x 14.4 wooden stage, covered in a vinyl dance floor, was erected to be comfortable for dancing on and wide enough to be safe for the wheelchairs in *The Rhythm of Fierce* and the rolling trucks of *Butterflies and Bones* to move freely without worry about going over the edge (Plate 3.5). At 40cm high, it was low enough to allow for a gentle wheelchair ramp access. But also this low platform meant that the stage was accessible to all who attended. Instead of immobilizing spectators in a viewing role that excluded them from the privileged platform of performance, the low stage invited spectators to participate.⁶³⁸ At the end of *The Rhythm of Fierce*, for the céilí, for the rousing performance of Rusangano Family, and for the climactic disco, the people who had been watching became dancers on stage. The borders of the stage, while maintaining a specificity and distinctness, were not designed to exclude but to be a space to which all were ultimately invited. Attending to the platform was not simply an accommodating adjustment of a space tacitly formed as non-disabled. It was not a grudging concession to access requirements.⁶³⁹ Instead, it created a new kind of space where many different bodies could participate comfortably and be visible, choreographed in a different kind of assembly.

Attentive not only to the conditions that would support the participation of wheelchair users, we provided free buses from Tralee to and from the event so that owning a car or having enough money to pay for a taxi were not tacit pre-conditions of participation. In a more targeted curation of the audience, I also allocated some of *The Casement Project's* budget to pay for LGBTI refugees that had come together for the first time to participate in Dublin Pride in 2016, to attend *Féile Fáilte*. My experience of working with the LGBTI refugees of MicroRainbow International in London had taught me that it is not enough to 'generously' offer an event, ostensibly free for all, if some people don't have the money to travel to the event or the resources to feed themselves during the day.

⁶³⁸ Viewing is already a kind of physical activity necessary to the performance of those who take the stage. In *Féile Fáilte*, the platform made it possible to cross between modes of physicality, from viewer, to participant, to performer with an ease that challenged the usual power differentials associated with those roles.

⁶³⁹ Hansen and Philo, 'The Normality of Doing Things Differently', p. 499.

Catherine Young: 'Welcoming the Stranger'



Plate 3.6 'Welcoming the Stranger' by Catherine Young at *Féile Fáilte*. Photo: Ste Murray.

In addition to welcoming LGBTI refugees from around Ireland, I commissioned Catherine Young to create a new work for *Féile Fáilte* with local participants among whom were migrants and refugees from Syria, Gaza, Iraq and a variety of African countries who had recently made Kerry their home.⁶⁴⁰ I invited Young because she had been *Dancer in Residence* with Kerry County Council and *Dancer/Choreographer in Residence* with Siamsa Tíre since 2006. In presenting a day of dance, it was important for me to acknowledge her long experience of developing contemporary dance in the county and to build on her networks to develop local solidarities. However, it was also important that the conception of local that would be performed would acknowledge the diversity and

⁶⁴⁰ In July 2016, Tralee, the closest town to Banna Strand, had 167 asylum seekers in Direct Provision accommodation centres. Gavin O'Connor, '272 Asylum Seekers In Four Kerry Direct Provision Centres', [www.traleetoday.ie](http://traleetoday.ie) [website], 27 July 2016, <http://traleetoday.ie/272-asylum-seekers-four-kerry-direct-provision-centres/> [accessed 6 July 2017]. The Direct Provision Scheme was introduced in 1999, dispersing asylum seekers to communal living in former holiday camps, hotels, army barracks, convents etc. around Ireland. As Vukasin Nedeljkovic has pointed out, '[m]ost of the centres are situated outside of the cities on the periphery of this society. That decision significantly reduced integration with the local population leaving asylum seekers to dwell in a ghettoised environment'; Vukasin Nedeljkovic, 'Direct Provision Centres as Manifestations of Resistance', www.asylumarchive.com [website], <http://www.asylumarchive.com/essays.html> [accessed 6 July 2017].

internationally networked nature of any local scale. Young's work was already distinguished by its multi-cultural influences, in particular a movement vocabulary drawn from African dance, and a commitment to giving a platform to ethnic diversity. For the commission, titled 'Welcoming the Stranger', she combined a multi-ethnic cast and a variety of different movement traditions and music, including contemporary dance, step-dancing in the local Munnix style, African dance and dabke – a folk dance of Arab origin. As well as delighting the audience at *Féile Fáilte*, 'Welcoming the Stranger' was invited to be performed again on the stage at Siamsa Tíre in September 2016, and as the opening performance of the 2017 Ramallah Contemporary Dance Festival in Palestine.⁶⁴¹ It also featured as an example of best practice of partnership working between Arts Council and local authorities at the Places Matter conference, where it was described as '[o]ne of the best examples of real inclusion'.⁶⁴² Though the ongoing success and impact of 'Welcoming the Stranger' is due to Young's work, *The Casement Project* provided the inspiration, context, platform and resources that supported the surprising embodiment of locality that her work performed.

A further hidden choreography of inclusion operated on the level of the dancers in *Butterflies and Bones: The Casement Project*. One of the performers of the original cast had a prior commitment so I danced in his place for the Banna performance. Another performer had the opportunity to earn a significant fee for a short-term job in Paris that would mean his late arrival for rehearsals in Tralee prior to *Féile Fáilte*. I could have insisted that he keep to his contractual obligations to be at my rehearsals, but knowing the significance of a large fee in the precarious income stream of a freelance dance artist and trusting the ability of that performer and of the rest of the cast to adapt to his late arrival to rehearsals, I assented. In the end, his late arrival wasn't necessary, but illness meant that I had to adapt both rehearsals and travel plans to enable another of the dancers to arrive

⁶⁴¹ Rob Reynolds, 'Performers flock to Palestine dance festival', Aljazeera [website], 23 April 2017, <http://www.aljazeera.com/video/news/2017/04/performers-flock-palestine-dance-festival-170423052821590.html> [accessed 14 August 2017].

⁶⁴² Ann O'Dwyer, CEO, Kerry Education and Training Board, quoted in Arts Council, *Places Matter: What Happens When We Invest in the Arts. Conference Programme*, www.artscouncil.ie [website], p. 11, http://www.artscouncil.ie/uploadedFiles/English%20Places_Matter_Prog-web.pdf [accessed 6 July 2017]. The conference took place on 12 January 2017 as part of the Arts Council/Local Government agreement, *A Framework for Collaboration*.

later than contracted. While these decisions required a predisposition to flexibility on my part, that predisposition was made effective when supported by material resources. And ultimately, the channeling of resources towards economically and socially precarious bodies is an ethical and political choice:

[N]one of us acts without the conditions to act, even though sometimes we must act to install and preserve those very conditions.⁶⁴³

Making Bodies Visible: John Scott's Irish Modern Dance Theatre



Plate 3.7 Irish Modern Dance Theatre at *Féile Fáilte*. Photo: Ste Murray.

John Scott has made work for his company, Irish Modern Dance Theatre since its creation in 1991. In recent years, the company's abstract choreographies brought highly-trained dancers who have performed with internationally renowned contemporary dance companies together with non-professional performers, many of whom are refugees and asylum-seekers. Writing of a work he created in 2004, having been approached by the Centre for Care for Torture Survivors in Ireland to give classes to its clients, Scott articulated the politics of visibility implicit in his choreography:

⁶⁴³ Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, p.16

Performing FALL AND RECOVER has become a political act of defiance – Showing Refugees, asylum seekers – not officially part of our society, without passports or status or state protection – performing, present, speaking, dancing – forces the audience to confront and acknowledge a part of society they do not normally see.⁶⁴⁴

Scott's political choreography has extended beyond the stage into practical support of his performers in their efforts to secure permanent residency in Ireland and to leave the Direct Provision system. As Butler's recognition of the need for corporeal support makes clear, there can be no choreography on stage or in the studio, if the dancers can't get there, and Scott has worked outside the studio to ensure that people could gather to dance. The imminence of the threat is attested to by the fact that, during the development of *Fall and Recover*, one of the group was deported.⁶⁴⁵

My company rehearses, performs, tours, chases funding, make grant applications, meet presenters, journalists – like any non profit dance company. But I also go to court houses – call lawyers and sometimes write affidavits to appeal Deportation orders. Sometimes I go to the Irish Garda National Immigration Bureau (immigration police) and wait with a dancer with a Deportation Order – waiting for it to be stamped. And watching to check they aren't taken inside and snatched away to the airport.⁶⁴⁶

Charlotte McIvor's description of Scott's process in the creation of *Fall and Recover* points to an ethics that avoided the retraumatisation of those that had experienced and fled torture. Following Jeffers, she outlines how the asylum seeker is frequently under bureaucratic pressure to perform 'the "right" kind of refugee story in which complexities are smoothed out to create a simple linear

⁶⁴⁴ Daphné Romy-Masliah, "Fall and Recover" and the Irish Modern Dance Theatre Narrative by John Scott', www.cosmopolitique.org [blog], 29 September 2013, <https://cosmopolitique.org/2013/09/29/fall-and-recover-and-the-irish-modern-dance-theatre-narrative-by-john-scott/> [accessed 6 July 2017]. See also John Scott, 'Making Dance to Survive Torture', *Movement Research Performance Journal*, no. 35 (Fall 2009) [no pagination].

⁶⁴⁵ McIvor, *Migration and Performance in Contemporary Ireland*, p. 137. It should be recognised how the recording and discussion of Scott's choreography in academic contexts makes his work available for further record and discussion, such as here. The persistence and impact of the work benefits from such inclusion even as it is transformed by it.

⁶⁴⁶ Romy-Masliah, 'Fall and Recover'.

narrative of individual crisis and flight.⁶⁴⁷ The asylum seeker must perfect and perform on multiple occasions this 'right' kind of story since the stakes of failure are high. For this reason, following Balfour and Woodrow, McIvor approves of Scott's avoidance of asking the clients of the Centre for the Survivors of Torture to rehearse their traumatic stories.⁶⁴⁸ Instead Scott embarked on a process of engagement that foregrounded abstract movement as an ethical alternative to the compulsion to narrate:

I said my work did not tell stories but was abstract, that we would experiment with dance and movement and they could say and do as much or as little as they wanted to say or could say. They nodded. This marked the beginning of our 'deal': They don't necessarily tell me what they are doing in their dance. It's part of our pact. No questions asked, no information needed. Just the work.⁶⁴⁹

Again Butler permits us to read the politics of this choreographed assembly of bodies, even if they do not speak their political demands. However, if Scott didn't require the performers of *Fall and Recover* to explain their stories, they were not silenced either. Fragments and layers of twelve different languages energised the performance without providing a stable narrative.⁶⁵⁰ This challenged, McIvor suggests, the authority of the language-based interview system through which the asylum process operates.⁶⁵¹ And more than not silent, these migrant bodies were visible, challenging what Vukasin Nedeljkovic, a former asylum seeker, artist, activist and scholar, regards as the 'disciplinary and exclusionary forms of spatial and social closure that separate and conceal asylum seekers from mainstream society and ultimately prevent their long-term integration or inclusion.'⁶⁵² Scott's

⁶⁴⁷ Alison Jeffers, *Refugees Theatre and Crisis: Performing Global Identities* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), quoted in McIvor, *Migration and Performance in Contemporary Ireland*, p. 134.

⁶⁴⁸ Scott was specifically advised by Development Manager at the Centre for the Survivors of Torture not to ask the clients about their personal histories at the risk of reactivating their trauma. (*ibid.*, p. 135.) I received similar advice from Jill Power, Director for Social and Economic Inclusion at MicroRainbow International before, as part of *The Casement Project*, I began to work with the LGBTI asylum seekers and refugees that the organization supports in the UK.

⁶⁴⁹ Romy-Masliah, 'Fall and Recover'.

⁶⁵⁰ McIvor, *Migration and Performance in Contemporary Ireland*, p. 136.

⁶⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 137.

⁶⁵² Vukasin Nedeljkovic, 'Asylum Archive', www.asylumarchive.com [website], <http://www.asylumarchive.com/essays.html> [accessed 6 July 2017]. See also Steven Loyal, *Understanding Immigration in Ireland: State, Capital and Labour in a Global Age* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), pp. 101-122; Mary Gilmartin, *Ireland and Migration in the Twenty-First Century* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015).

commitment to support these institutionally precarious and wounded bodies performed a counter-community to the spatial exclusion and the racialised denial of visibility experienced by asylum seekers in the Direct Provision system. Moreover, Scott's commitment to inclusion has extended beyond this initial encounter with clients of the Centre for Torture Survivors and the choreography they performed in *Fall and Recover*. Scott has continued to cast some of those non-professional performers in his subsequent works.

While Scott's abstract choreography sidestepped the reductive pressure of unified narrative, helping to make visible bodies that had been institutionally and spatially marginalised,⁶⁵³ there was a risk that the language that he used to describe his work could reinforce the marginalisation of his performers. Reviews of a 2011 revival of *Fall and Recover* in New York, drew attention to the fact that the piece was 'a plotless dance', 'no terrible stories are told or re-enacted.'⁶⁵⁴ The *New York Times* review was headlined: 'For Healing, Not Words but Bodies in Motion'.⁶⁵⁵ However, it was clear that, thanks to pre-show publicity and a post-show discussion, the work had also been framed so as to make the reviewers aware that, apart from the two professional dancers, the bodies they saw on stage were those of survivors of torture. The reviewers passed on that frame to their readers. Moreover, on its website, Scott's Irish Modern Dance Theatre describes itself as a 'physically/culturally diverse ensemble ranging from Virtuoso Cunningham dancers to African Torture survivors.'⁶⁵⁶ Though the description stresses diversity, it also reduces a multiplicity of individual difference to sensationalist, capitalised essentials. While Scott did not expect his performers to repeat their stories on stage, he was not averse to sharing some of the graphic detail of those stories himself:

⁶⁵³ The fact that some of those performers now have refugee status or leave to remain does not diminish the work of reparative inclusion that Scott's choreography embodies.

⁶⁵⁴ Deborah Jowitt, 'Juilliard Revives Nijinska's Les Noces; the Irish Modern Dance Theatre Brings Fall and Recover to La MaMa' *Village Voice*, 30 March 2011, <http://www.villagevoice.com/arts/juilliard-revives-nijinskas-les-noces-the-irish-modern-dance-theatre-brings-fall-and-recover-to-la-mama-7161842> [accessed 6 July 2017].

⁶⁵⁵ 'In "Fall and Recover" the brutalities experienced by many in the cast, which includes 10 survivors of torture who came from 9 countries to seek asylum in Ireland, are left unspoken'; Gia Kourlas, 'For Healing, Not Words but Bodies in Motion', *New York Times*, 4 April 2011, p. 7.

⁶⁵⁶ Irish Modern Dance Theatre, 'About Us', www.irishmoderncetheatre.com [website], <http://www.irishmoderncetheatre.com/IMDT/About.html> [accessed 6 July 2017].

There is Sylvia, serially raped in jail by several guards – one of whom ate part of her back. She receives weekly medical dressings for the still open wound but has been refused Refugee status because she did not explain her situation clearly enough – she has lots of psychological evaluation from the Rape Crisis Center but it doesn't satisfy the Refugee commissioner. Then there's Lamine from Guinea – medicated to keep the memories overcoming him. His Father has been in jail since 1988, his Mother is dead and he doesn't know if he will receive Refugee status – despite 5 appeals by his lawyers. He could be deported and sent back. There used to be a Kurdish guy with a great movement talent and flexible back. But he would not point his left foot in the exercises. When I corrected him, he lifted his track suit pants and showed me his leg from above the ankle to below the knee was just bone and burnt flesh from being hung upside down. He couldn't take the uncertainty of waiting for a decision on his asylum anymore and went back to Iraq. He promised to phone me when he arrived back. That was August 2003. He hasn't called me yet – I can't bring myself to delete his number from my phone.⁶⁵⁷

Scott writes with pathos and passion about these experiences and his narrative elicits sympathy for the people he describes. In addition, however, Scott's own capital as a choreographer is advanced by his account of these traumas and he gains authority by being in a position to share the stories. Through language, and the need to account for his work in publicity and the legitimising discourses of the academy, he is drawn to expose bodies in a way that he avoided onstage. For instance, the description of torture above comes from a paper Scott was invited to give at the cross-disciplinary Dublin Interdependence Celebration and Forum organised by Trinity College Dublin in Dublin Castle in 2013. He has also written about this material in the *Movement Research Journal*⁶⁵⁸ and divulged much of the creation process of *Fall and Recover* in an interview with *Staging Intercultural Ireland: Plays and Practitioner Perspectives*.⁶⁵⁹ This is not to blame Scott: those that dance with the company publicly declare the value of doing so: 'I guess the dance kind of liberated me.'⁶⁶⁰ Moreover, a number of the original participants

⁶⁵⁷ Romy-Masliah, "Fall and Recover" and the Irish Modern Dance Theatre narrative by John Scott'.

⁶⁵⁸ Scott, 'Making Dance to Survive Torture'.

⁶⁵⁹ John Scott and Matthew Spangler, 'Interview with John Scott', in Charlotte McIvor and Matthew Spangler (eds.), *Staging Intercultural Ireland: Plays and Practitioner Perspectives* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2014) pp. 350-358.

⁶⁶⁰ Kiribu quoted in Arminta Wallace, 'Making Moves to Survive Torture', *Irish Times*, 12 May 2009, p. 18.

from the 2004 workshop continue to perform in Scott's work, even in *Precious Magic*, at *Féile Fáilte*.⁶⁶¹

What I want to underline here, however, is a complexity in the dynamics of making visible bodies at risk of being excluded from 'the public', when exclusion might be the result of institutionalised invisibility, but also the result of racialised hyper-visibility. Scott's observation that some of the participants in his projects 'respond with quiet dignity when someone shouts "Dirty Nigger" at them in the street' makes clear that on occasion these excluded bodies are already vulnerably visible.⁶⁶² It is incumbent on me to recognise the power implied in the notion of 'making visible' and for me to acknowledge that the complexity identifiable in Scott's work applies to *The Casement Project* and to this research where I wish to identify artistic agency and value. Ultimately, it is imperative to point to what the work of abstract dance enables and what the framing of language – academic, press, marketing – does not express and risks curtailing. As Butler asserts, 'it matters that bodies assemble, and that the political meanings enacted by demonstrations are not only those that are enacted by discourse, whether written or vocalised.'⁶⁶³ Where Butler has the choreography of mass demonstration in mind, I also offer the unconventional gathering to dance that *Féile Fáilte* enacted as a significant and signifying politics quite apart from any of the language that framed the day.⁶⁶⁴ The nature of that politics became clear in the negative response of some to the event.

⁶⁶¹ For *Féile Fáilte*, Scott's featured two professional dancers and three dancers who had come to his work through the 2004 workshop at the Centre for Torture Survivors however the group was presented as Scott's 'international company of dancing souls' and no mention of torture survivors was made in any of the publicity. The visible diversity of the cast in terms of age, gender, ethnicity and movement language was embodied without further explanation.

⁶⁶² Romy-Masliah, 'Fall and Recover'.

⁶⁶³ Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, p.7-8

⁶⁶⁴ Though Butler goes on to discuss how 'forms of assembly already signify prior to, and apart from, any particular demands they make' (*ibid.*), I am reluctant to stress the apparent material 'priority' of the embodied in her remarks as it risks re-instating the body as a prediscursive essence which would be at odds with her ongoing work on performativity.

Bare Bottoms on Banna



Plate 3.8 *Butterflies and Bones: The Casement Project at Féile Fáilte*. Photo: Ste Murray.

Over two thousand people attended *Féile Fáilte* and a combination of audience-surveys, informal face-to-face feedback and social media monitoring revealed an overwhelmingly positive reaction to the day:

Just Don't know where to Start with my Thanks for the Best Performance of the Year [...] the setting the talent the staff it went off without a hitch [...] This is a must see show but it will not compare to today it was just Spectacular [...]. you guys are Genius.
– *The Casement Project* Facebook page.

Please can ye do it again next year, it was a wonderful wonderful day. Thank you.
– *The Casement Project* Facebook page.⁶⁶⁵

⁶⁶⁵ Annette Nugent and Kate O'Sullivan, 'Audience Feedback Feile Failte', *The Casement Project*, 26 September 2016 [unpublished document]. Annette Nugent and Kate O'Sullivan were responsible for *The Casement's Project's* communications and for monitoring the response to its events. They compiled and analysed an audience satisfaction survey, as well as gathering responses to the event on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook, using #FeileFailte as a search term to track responses. We erected a large, shimmering sign saying '#FéileFáilte' near the stage to encourage social media engagement with the event.

However, by the Monday morning after *Féile Fáilte*, it was clear that the event had also provoked controversy. An item on Radio Kerry acknowledged the positive response of many ('Unbelievable. It's mindboggling to see the fireworks and everything. The weather and everything is so good. It's brilliant altogether'; 'Amazing. We have a lovely time'; 'Great, it's just great to see things like this happen. May they have many more'),⁶⁶⁶ but also included the objections of some of the audience to *Butterflies and Bones*:

I have absolutely no idea what they are doing or on about, for a family night out with children with fellas with their arses hanging out, I think it is ridiculous. We're just hoping it will be finished soon, that's the honest [truth].⁶⁶⁷

The negative reaction continued the following day on Radio Kerry when a letter from 'A Tralee Family who would rather remain anonymous' contrasted the 'great public pride among Kerry and Irish people' generated by the State Commemoration at Banna with their disappointment at *Féile Fáilte*.⁶⁶⁸ Though anonymous, the letter-writers identified themselves as local – from the local town – and a particular kind of social unit that needed no further explication – a family. From this position they constructed an opposition between their conception of the State and the alternative space proposed by *Féile Fáilte* on Banna, recommending that 'future events that have local authority and state backing need to be vetted carefully.' The state and local government were conceived as potentially vetoing, censoring agencies deployed to protect local pride, order and a heroic conception of Casement that the letter writers connected with the infrastructure of schools, railway stations and housing estates in the county that bear his name.⁶⁶⁹ As Till

⁶⁶⁶ Kerry Today, 'Bottoms and Other Bits on Banna', www.player.fm [website], 25 July 2016, <https://player.fm/series/kerry-today/bottoms-and-other-bits-on-banna-july-25th-2016> [accessed 11 November 2016].

⁶⁶⁷ *Loc. cit.*

⁶⁶⁸ Kerry Today, 'Banna Event Organisers React to Complaints About Nudity and Sexual Content' www.player.fm [website], 26 July 2016 <https://player.fm/series/kerry-today/banna-event-organisers-react-to-complaints-about-nudity-and-sexual-content-july-26th-2016> [accessed 11 November 2016].

⁶⁶⁹ Even though it was happy to include *Féile Fáilte*, in its Commemorative Programme, Kerry County Council Arts Office distanced itself from the event once negative public reactions were expressed, insisting it had no part in the programming. However, Sinn Féin County Councillor, Toiréasa Ferris who attended the event with her own children was reported in the press as not having found the performance offensive: 'The dancers were wearing full brief underpants with two

notes, ‘the image of permanence projected by a landscape feature is often more important than historically accurate information about the place in legitimating a group’s sense of self.’⁶⁷⁰ By using the historically accurate, actual words from the report on Casement’s post-mortem, with their emphasis on his bodily permeability, it is as if *Féile Fáilte* threatened the physical and social integrity of Kerry and the related self-conception of those people who claimed to speak for the county.⁶⁷¹ Lucy McDiarmid suggests that the failure of people of North Kerry to save Casement when he landed there has resulted in an ongoing compensatory protection of a version of Casement as martyr. This protection has extended to a near veneration of the material relics associated with him, such as the boat in which he was reputed to have come ashore and a meat platter from which he was reputed to have eaten: ‘In local memory, the narrative of Casement’s landing has been revised from that unhappy story to foreground the reciprocity – spiritual, emotional, political – between Casement and the people of Kerry.’⁶⁷² If a local failure to welcome Casement in 1916 had been subsequently revised to stress the myriad ways in which people had been friendly to Casement during his thirty-one hours in the area, *Féile Fáilte*, – a festival of welcome – seemed to call on and challenge Kerry’s capacity for hospitality once more.

While *Féile Fáilte* took place after the 2015 Marriage Equality Referendum which offered same-sex couples in Ireland the mechanism for integration into the state-sanctioned norms of matrimony, and the social and economic stability such a union provides, the referendum was secured as a result of a tightly run Yes campaign that focused on love and did not include references to the physical

holes cut out on the backside. It wasn’t so uncomfortable that I felt I should take my kids away,’ Amy Reidy, ‘Butterflies and Bones Bares All at Banna Beach’, *Irish Independent*, 30 July 2016., <http://www.independent.ie/regionals/kerryman/news/butterflies-and-bones-bares-all-at-banna-beach-34914993.html> [accessed 13 December 2016].

⁶⁷⁰ Till, ‘Staging the Past’, p. 255; drawing upon Maurice Halbwach’s discussion of ‘The Legendary Topographies of the Gospels in the Holy Land’ [1941] in Maurice Halbwach, *On Collective Memory*, Lewis A. Coser (ed., trans.) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992). See also Stephen Daniels, ‘Marxism, Culture, and the Duplicity of Landscape’, in Richard Peet and Nigel Thrift (eds.) *New Models in Geography: The Political-Economy Perspective* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989), pp. 196–220.

⁶⁷¹ The letter complained that ‘with long extracts being read aloud from what appeared to be an autopsy of Casement’s body. The intention was to highlight Casement’s homosexuality and references to “anus”, [...]. It was not family friendly’; Kerry Today, ‘Banna Event Organisers React’.

⁶⁷² Lucy McDiarmid, ‘Secular Relics: Casement’s Boat, Casement’s Dish’, *Textual Practice*, vol. 16, no. 2 (2002), pp. 277–302, p. 279.

expression of same-sex desire.⁶⁷³ What bodies, particularly queer bodies, might do together had to be strategically sidelined.⁶⁷⁴

What the family objected to most strongly was the content of *Butterflies and Bones*, my choreography for *The Casement Project*:

This dance routine by Fearghus Ó Conchúir began quite innocently with six dancers on stage. However after about 15 minutes one male dancer took off his pink and black lycra leggings and top to reveal his completely tattooed body – which we could clearly see from his ‘underwear’ which had the word “addicted” written on the back and had two large holes cut out to reveal his bare buttocks. Is this what they see as ‘family friendly’? It was highly sexualised and in the majority aimed at a homosexual audience with long extracts being read aloud from what appeared to be an autopsy of Casement’s body. The intention was to highlight Casement’s homosexuality and references to ‘anus’, riding, deep to the hilt, etc as well as men dancing and groping with each other on stage. This was totally inappropriate for an audience with young children. It was not family friendly and you could sense the unease of people watching.⁶⁷⁵

While subsequent reporting alleged that nudity was the problem,⁶⁷⁶ the letter made clear that the performer in question was not naked. Its attention focused instead on the nexus of sexuality, homosexuality, family and children. The letter considered that visible homosexuality – adduced by signifiers such as men dancing together, a tattooed body and perhaps black and pink lycra – was not appropriate for children and could not be included in the conception of families that this ‘Tralee family’ understood. In its assumption that the performance was ‘aimed at a homosexual audience’ and consequently, ‘not family friendly’, the letter implied that it did not conceive of homosexuals as being part of, or of forming families.

⁶⁷³ Gráinne Healy, Brian Sheehan and Noel Whelan, *Ireland Says Yes: The Inside Story of How the Vote for Marriage Equality Was Won* (Kildare: Merrion Press, 2016).

⁶⁷⁴ James Beggan, ‘Guerilla Gays In Ireland’, www.rabble.ie [website], 31 August 2016, <http://www.rabble.ie/2016/08/31/guerilla-gays-in-ireland/> [accessed 13 March 2017].

⁶⁷⁵ Kerry Today, ‘Bottoms and Other Bits on Banna’.

⁶⁷⁶ Amy Reidy, ‘Shock Over “Nudity” During Performance at 1916 Commemoration Event’, *Irish Independent*, 2 August 2016, <http://www.independent.ie/entertainment/festivals/shock-over-nudity-during-performance-at-1916-commemoration-event-34931477.html> [accessed 7 July 2017];

Radio Kerry, ‘Controversy Over Nudity in Public Dance Event at Banna Strand’, www.radiokerry.ie [website], <https://www.radiokerry.ie/news/controversy-over-nudity-in-public-dance-event-at-banna-strand/> [accessed 14 December 2016].

Queer Families and Queer Children

As examined in Chapter One, the family retains foundational significance for the Irish state and that legislated significance is matched by a social valorisation. In 2012, 62 per cent of Irish people surveyed identified family and home as the most significant influence on their thinking.⁶⁷⁷ However, the legalisation of divorce and of same-sex marriage, as well as the economic pressures of the financial crisis have resulted in statistically-visible changes to the Irish family, with decreased family sizes, blended families, more adults living at home and more single-parent family units.⁶⁷⁸ In this context, while homosexual unions queer the nuclear family, they can also appropriate and repurpose an already changing realisation of the family concept to more inclusive ends. One of the reference-points for the flamboyant, presentational movement in *Butterflies and Bones* was derived from voguing, with its competing houses headed by 'mothers' and 'fathers' – queer parents who mentor and take care of a chosen family of queer children, many of whom have been ostracised by their birth families because of their sexuality or gender non-conformity.⁶⁷⁹ This re-choreography of the family cell and the attendant forging of hospitable spaces makes particular lives livable as well as a particular dancing possible on the dancefloor.⁶⁸⁰ By making a dancefloor on Banna, *The Casement Project* proposed to perform such hospitable socio-spatial possibilities of inclusive civic participation.

⁶⁷⁷ Ipsos MRBI, 'Changing Ireland: Attitudes And Values Survey', published in *Irish Times*, 26 November 2012, p. 10.

⁶⁷⁸ Central Statistics Office, 'Households and Families' [Census 2016], www.cso.ie [website], 6 April 2017, http://www.cso.ie/en/media/csoie/releasespublications/documents/population/2017/Chapter_4_Households_and_families.pdf [accessed 7 July 2017].

⁶⁷⁹ Brenda Dixon Gottschild, *The Black Dancing Body: A Geography From Coon to Cool* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003). See also Chapter One.

⁶⁸⁰ Marlon M. Bailey, 'Engendering Space: Ballroom Culture and the Spatial Practice of Possibility in Detroit', *Gender, Place & Culture*, vol. 21, no. 4 (2014), pp. 489-507.



Plate 3.9 Rusangano Family at *Féile Fáilte*. Photo: Ste Murray.

Rusangano Family also activated the concept of family around their music as a way to create space for another kind of diversity.

I suppose from the way that we're approaching the music. We're trying to keep it very natural, very organic, to have a sense of collectiveness in the music. It's kind of when you think of all those ideas and you go like, is there a word that can encompass all those feelings, and when you think about that you think 'family'. And we're all quite family orientated in terms of we're based in Clare, we all live close together, we're all quite good friends. And it's also maybe hinting at the fact that it's not just uniquely the three of us. When you see us on stage you think that there's just three people in Rusangano Family but we feel that there are an awful lot of people who help us, that are part of the crew and who join in on recording sessions and stuff, whatever, so it's kind of a nod to the bigger collective.⁶⁸¹

While they linked the 'natural' and 'organic' quality of their music to a conception of family based on geographical proximity, and did not explicitly address non-normative sexualities, Rusangano Family naturalised a conception of Irishness of African origin that the 2004 Citizenship Referendum had stigmatised with its panic

⁶⁸¹ mynameisjOhn, 'Rusangano Family', [www.facebook.com/Rusangano Family](https://www.facebook.com/RusanganoFamily/), [Video interview on Rusangano Family Facebook Page], 2:39pm 4 December 2016, <https://www.facebook.com/RusanganoFamily/?fref=ts> [accessed 12 December 2016].

about maternity hospitals being inundated with African asylum-seekers and citizenship tourists.⁶⁸² In the process, they made an energetic argument for a reimagined Irish identity and for a consequently expanded notion of family that embraces diversity beyond the self-interest of the nuclear family unit.⁶⁸³

Some of the opposition to marriage equality was directed less at the union of two same-sex adults and more at the potential families, including children such unions would produce.⁶⁸⁴ As Edelman observes, Catholicism has branded such unions as ‘caricatures’ of genuine families, incapable of guaranteeing the future of the nation, and equally threatened by the many mechanisms where same-sex units do support future generations.⁶⁸⁵ Though Kerry passed the Marriage Referendum by 55% to 44%,⁶⁸⁶ one of its notable, dynastic TDs, Danny Healy-Rae, declared that he was against adoption by gay couples:

What was I very worried about – and still am – is that two men, or two women, could adopt a little baby girl or a little baby boy and these babies would have no say in it. And that wouldn’t be a natural family for me. I felt that was wrong. Going back, it was always a man and a woman who produced a baby and brought them up, and that’s the way I felt it should continue.⁶⁸⁷

While Healy-Rae went backwards to locate his heteronormative ideal of a ‘natural family’ unit, his appeal to tradition was in the service of guaranteeing a particular kind of future, ‘the way I felt it should continue.’ According to Edelman, the figure of the Child anchors that particular conception of the family and is invoked to police contemporary behaviour in the service of a conservative future, a future

⁶⁸² Loyal, *Understanding Immigration in Ireland*, pp. 140-149.

⁶⁸³ Since *Féile Fáilte*, the group has won the Choice Award and press coverage of their success acknowledges their impact in reshaping images of Irishness. See Irish Times, ‘Ireland Now: the music that defines who we are as a nation’, *Irish Times*, 14 March 2017.

⁶⁸⁴ Thomas Finegan, ‘Constitutional Equality, the Right to Procreate, and the Marriage Referendum: a Reply to Dr. O’Mahony’, www.mothersandfathersmatter.org [website], <http://mothersandfathersmatter.org/resources/> [accessed 13 March 2017].

⁶⁸⁵ Lee Edelman. *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), p. 29.

⁶⁸⁶ Journal.ie, ‘How did your constituency vote in the marriage referendum?’, www.thejournal.ie, [website], 23 May 2015, <http://www.thejournal.ie/constituency-count-same-sex-marriage-referendum-2120378-May2015/> [accessed 6 July 2017].

⁶⁸⁷ Jason O’Toole, ‘Danny Healy-Rae TD Says: Noah’s Ark is "Fact"’, *Hot Press*, no. 40-14, 17 August 2016.

conserved for the Child who will never accede to that future since all real children will become adults whose behavior will need to be regulated for the sake of the future Child: 'That Child remains the perpetual horizon of every acknowledged politics, the fantasmatic beneficiary of every political intervention.'⁶⁸⁸ It is notable that when Kerry Radio first raised the controversy on 25 July, the anchor, Jerry O'Sullivan, laughed at the description of 'fellas [...] dancing with their arses hanging out',⁶⁸⁹ but by the next day, he had taken on a more serious tone, urging listeners to protect 'younger ears' from the details of what happened at Banna.⁶⁹⁰ The implication was that children were at threat from the mere discussion of what had happened, an implication that attributed a surprising power to the performance.



Plate 3.10 *Butterflies and Bones: The Casement Project at Féile Fáilte*. Photo: Ste Murray.

There is no public record of actual children expressing unhappiness or otherwise at the corporeal possibilities expressed and explored in *Butterflies and Bones*. Instead there is some anecdotal evidence that I recorded at the time that in detailing now, I strategically submit to public record. When we danced on the night, children lined the sides of the stage-platform, vocalising their immediate responses to what they saw. Two of the dancers remarked that they had heard one

⁶⁸⁸ Edelman. *No Future*, p. 3.

⁶⁸⁹ Kerry Today, 'Bottoms and Other Bits on Banna'.

⁶⁹⁰ Kerry Today, 'Banna Event Organisers React'.

child say that the advance of the dancers waving their arms was ‘scary’. An audience member commented on how some children echoed the word ‘death’ as it was repeated in the soundtrack in a rollcall of those executed after the 1916 Rising. Two other audience members mentioned how one boy had declared at the end of the performance that it was ‘the best thing I ever saw’. These anecdotal impressions of how some children reacted suggest an alternative to the anxious imaginings of the woman who told the Kerry Radio reporter: ‘you have a guy there undressed down to his bare bottom, you know, and I don’t have a problem with that but a lot of people might with smaller kids or whatever.’⁶⁹¹ This woman didn’t take offence on her own behalf, but she imagined offence in others with ‘smaller kids or whatever’ and objected on the basis of that imagined family with children. As Edelman proposes, ‘the disciplinary image of the ‘innocent’ Child’⁶⁹² and a particular definition of family operates to regulate the behavior, experiences and potential of both of adults and actual children.⁶⁹³

I had suggested in the ART:2016 Detailed Proposal that the beach could be an environment where ‘where the body is more likely to be revealed and its sensuality indulged’,⁶⁹⁴ a place where undress was potentially less contentious. In the days leading up to *Féile Fáilte*, I’d taken the decision that the male performer who was completely naked for part of the stage version of *Butterflies and Bones* would wear his jockstrap in the version we performed at Banna. Though I bridled at the element of self-censorship in that decision, the fact that Project Arts Centre, my producing partner and anchor support, was under attack in print and social media for its hosting of a ‘Repeal the 8th’ mural,⁶⁹⁵ meant that I was persuaded not to add to its vulnerability by provoking controversy over public nudity on Banna.

⁶⁹¹ Kerry Today, ‘Bottoms and Other Bits on Banna’.

⁶⁹² Edelman, *No Future*, p. 19.

⁶⁹³ For an account of the Irish state’s involvement in child protection see Caroline Skehill, ‘Child Protection and Welfare Social Work in the Republic of Ireland: Continuities and Discontinuities Between Past and Present’, in Noreen Kearney and Caroline Skehill (eds.), *Social Work in Ireland: Historical Perspectives* (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 2005), pp. 127-145. For a Foucauldian account of surveillance of the family see Jacques Donzelot, *Policing of Families* (New York: Random House, 1979).

⁶⁹⁴ Ó Conchúir, ‘FOCONCHUIR AC2016 Detailed Proposal-The Casement Project’, p. 12.

⁶⁹⁵ Repeal the 8th is a campaign to repeal the Eighth Amendment to the Irish Constitution that guarantees the right to life of the foetus and gives the foetus equal protection to the mother. The Eight Amendment effectively bans abortion in Ireland. Joyce Fegan, ‘Complaints over “Repeal the 8th” art in Temple Bar’, *Irish Examiner*, 19 July 2016; Catherine Devine, ‘Formal Complaints Made Over ‘Repeal the 8th’ Mural in Temple Bar’, *Irish Independent*, 19 July 2016.

Protection of the innocent Child curbed part of my impulse to claim a public forum for varieties of embodiment that *Butterflies and Bones* could add to the diversity of the *Féile Fáilte* programme. Or at least, it required a compromise.

Bodies Out of Place

Butler affirms that the policing of sexuality has spatial implications as it strives for normative spatial regulation: 'Gender norms have everything to do with how and in what way we can appear in public space, how and in what way the public and private are distinguished'.⁶⁹⁶ It was the visibility, in a place assigned to families, of male bodies figured as 'homosexual' and physically sexualised that provoked 'disgust' in some.⁶⁹⁷ The two female performers went unremarked, as did the queer women who had danced on the stage throughout the day. This lack of response to female bodies may suggest that their visibility in public was less contentious or that the particular kind of female embodiment in *Butterflies and Bones* remained invisible in the public domain, not accorded the right to be visible. One London reviewer of *Butterflies and Bones* contended that 'the women, Iglich and Liv O'Donoghue are underused. There's little for women to empathise with in the way the topic is communicated.'⁶⁹⁸ While this critical judgment was not universal,⁶⁹⁹ it might also be that by not being presented as objects of male heterosexual desire in the choreography, these women became more difficult to 'see', difficult to place within a conventional viewing framework.⁷⁰⁰ Instead of assigning the performers heteronormative gender roles, the choreography distributed movement material promiscuously, virally, between the performers' bodies, without regard for gender. Liv O'Donoghue replicated solo material first performed by Matthew Morris, Mikel Aristegui stood in the place of Bernadette Iglich, Bernadette copied the vogue-inspired dance I performed, and each performer said out loud, 'I'm Roger Casement'. This fluid sharing of movement

⁶⁹⁶ Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, p. 34.

⁶⁹⁷ *Loc. cit.*

⁶⁹⁸ Josephine Leask, 'REVIEW: FEARGHUS Ó CONCHÚIR - THE CASEMENT PROJECT: BUTTERFLIES AND BONES - THE PLACE', londondance.com, 13 June 2016, <http://londondance.com/articles/reviews/the-casement-project/> [accessed 12 December 2016].

⁶⁹⁹ 'The mercurial Liv O'Donoghue halts to form her ponytail, in this dance's celebration of not just men's homosexuality but also, seemingly, femininity'; Christ McCormack, 'Review: Butterflies and Bones at Project Arts Centre', 22 October 2016, <http://exeuntmagazine.com/reviews/review-butterflies-bones-project-arts-centre/> [accessed 4 May 2017].

⁷⁰⁰ Emilyn Claid, *Yes? No! Maybe: Seductive Ambiguity in Dance* (London: Routledge, 2006).

danced beyond essentialised identities in a way that was discomfiting for some. In this context, following Kath Browne, it is possible to read criticism of *Butterflies and Bones* because of its alleged ‘promotion’ of homosexual sex, as merely policing ‘the normativity of boundaries of sexuality or fixed assumptions of sex.’⁷⁰¹ In Browne’s reading, such criticism could be seen to assimilate *Butterflies and Bones* as an instance of ‘transgressions [that] express the oppressed or abjected side (homosexuality) of a dichotomous, oppositional normative model of sexuality based on heterosexuality/homosexuality.’⁷⁰² Under this recuperative model, the performance of bodies read as female went unremarked.



Plate 3.11 *Butterflies and Bones: The Casement Project at Féile Fáilte*. Photo: Ste Murray.

If a concentration on the scandal of homosexuality tacitly underwrites the order of heteronormativity, then the Tralee family’s insistence on the proper regulation of bodies and space becomes more resonant. The family appreciated the parking and security arrangements at *Féile Fáilte*, as they had the ‘well-organised’ State event. In this respect, *Féile Fáilte* was in proper alignment with the State and, in consequence, bodies were stewarded to their proper locations. The family also reported ‘a wonderful experience in the afternoon with hundreds

⁷⁰¹ Kath Browne, ‘Challenging Queer Geographies’, *Antipode*, vol. 38, no. 5 (2006), pp.885-93, p. 887. Emphasis in original.

⁷⁰² *Loc. cit.*

of Irish, French, Arabic and African people all enjoying the dancing and singing from the wonderful Siamsa Tíre and watched how young and old got involved in the big céilí.’ Though this family stressed its pride in ‘the Irish and its diverse culture’, it was the traditional performance of Siamsa and the céilí that met their notable approval, as well as the perceived integration of the multinational audience into that familiar, local tradition. However, alongside these elements, deliberately familiar to the local context, *Féile Fáilte*, as a considered macro-choreography, also performed a dissonant, queer excess that, in exceeding its assigned space and time, proved challenging. Even in viewers who did not profess distaste at *Butterflies and Bones* on their own behalf, there was a sense that this kind of embodiment, though possibly tolerable in principle, should be relegated to a marginal space: ‘Have it on a side stage where people who wanted to watch it could go but have whatever entertainment, it’s not general entertainment.’⁷⁰³ The impulse here was to bracket the queer challenge of *Butterflies and Bones* from other parts of the event. What *Féile Fáilte* proposed was a space in which no such bracketing and containment was in-built.

As outlined in Chapter One, Puar reminds us that the queering of the family concept does not necessarily promote progressive outcomes:

The notion of queer family – “families we choose” – may well invite new and validate different objects into the discourse of family, but the directionality of familial affect and psychic reproduction may well be the same. That is to say, the objects and subjects of family might alter, but the problems with heteronormative reproduction – and in these cases, homonormative reproduction – don’t simply dissipate with a switch in object choice, as we have seen time and again with the limits of gay equality agendas.⁷⁰⁴

⁷⁰³ Kerry Today, ‘Bottoms and Other Bits on Banna’

⁷⁰⁴ Puar, ‘Homonationalism As Assemblage’, p. 31. Though the notion of assemblage introduces the possibility of place-based specificity into her analysis, she continues to envisage a dichotomy between ‘[t]he homosexuals seen as being treated properly by the nation-state’ and the gender queer. For her the former ‘are rather the ones re-creating gendered norms through, rather than despite, homosexual identity’; Puar, ‘Homonationalism as Assemblage’, p. 35. See also Nast’s suggestion that the geographically-fixed nuclear family is disadvantaged by pressures of mobility entailed in global capitalism and that the gay white male has become instead the new ideal of capitalist heteropatriarchy, reproducing through the market; Heidi J. Nast, ‘Queer Patriarchies, Queer Racisms, International’, *Antipode*, vol. 34, no. 5 (2002), pp. 874-909. Her account is criticised for its failure to attend to the different experiences of gay men that do not conform to the

However, Puar's caution against assuming that the homosexual queers the heteronormative nation state, emanating from a predominantly North American context, should not blind us to the specific and local combination of resistance and welcome offered and encountered by the affective bonds between queer bodies on a beach in North Kerry in 2016. While Puar has often created a dichotomy between an 'out-of-control, untetherable queernesses' and an 'upright, domesticable queerness' that is readily recuperated to the heteronormative order of the neo-liberal nation state, I question if the difference she identifies is really a difference of kind and not a difference of place.⁷⁰⁵ The 'out-of-control' queerness that Puar suggests is a challenge to heteronormative order, is one that appears to have slipped beyond the borders of its sanctioned location, beyond the side stage. Puar's more recent elaboration of homonationalism-as-assemblage has begun to move away from her earlier dichotomy to consider homonationalism as the product of multiple forces including the geopolitical.⁷⁰⁶ Though she doesn't interrogate the local specificities of the geo, and for the moment, has applied her analysis primarily to homonationalism, it is evident that a place-based and out-of-place-based sense of the queer might offer a better understanding of the challenges it proposes to heteronormative order.

In an interview with *Gai Pied* from the early 1980s, Foucault's suggested that the idea of 'two young men meeting in the street, seducing each other with a look, grabbing each other's asses and getting each other off in a quarter of an hour' presents 'a kind of neat image of homosexuality without any possibility of generating unease'.⁷⁰⁷ Foucault, interestingly, imagined the sexual encounter being initiated on the public street, reminding us that historically in many Western cultures, criminalised same-sex activity between men, while needing to be secret and private, nonetheless took place in public spaces such as parks, public toilets, wharves and beaches, a fact that complicates the clear spatial distinctions that the

stereotypes she portrays in Matthew Sothorn, '(Un)Queer Patriarchies: Or, "What We Think When We Fuck"', *Antipode*, vol. 36 (2004), pp. 183–191.

⁷⁰⁵ Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages*, p. 47.

⁷⁰⁶ Puar, 'Homonationalism as Assemblage'.

⁷⁰⁷ Michel Foucault, 'Friendship as a Way of Life' in Paul Rabinow (ed.), *Ethics, Subjectivity and Truth*, Robert Hurley and others (trans.) (New York: The New Press, 1997), pp. 135-140, p. 136.

Tralee family's letter of complaint tried to enforce.⁷⁰⁸ For Foucault what is more threatening than gay sex is the 'formation of new alliances and the tying together of unforeseen lines of force' that his conception of homosexuality enables.⁷⁰⁹ It is important to recognise that Foucault, is not positing homosexuality as an essential identity, but rather as a proto-queer process of formation whose outcomes are multiple and undetermined:

Homosexuality is a historic occasion to reopen affective and relational virtualities, not so much through the intrinsic qualities of the homosexual but because the 'slantwise' position of the latter, as it were, the diagonal lines he can lay out in the social fabric allow these virtualities to come to light.⁷¹⁰

In this conception of a non-essentialised homosexuality, the queer capacity to lay down new pathways is transgressive of existing spatialities, mobilities and corporeal assemblies and it is generative of new possibilities. The homosexual's diagonal lines exceed sanctioned routes. Updated to Halberstam's description of queer as 'nonnormative logics of organizations and community, sexual identity, embodiment and activity in space and time',⁷¹¹ the alternatives embodied by *Féile Fáilte's* slantwise spatial and community-forming choreography can be recognised.

Foucault introduced the concept of heterotopias as the countersites where such alternative choreographies could take place.⁷¹² Though not a concept that Foucault developed extensively in his own work, it has had a lasting influence in the English-speaking social sciences, especially thanks to Edward Soja's

⁷⁰⁸ Geography's evolving understanding of the spatiality of gay lives is one increasingly articulated from the position of 'us' rather than 'them'. Compare, for example, the challenge of mapping gay spaces, especially spaces of sexual activity, envisaged by Weightman in 1981, with the richer geography described by Caudwell and Browne in their introduction to the Sexy Spaces special edition of the *Journal of Cultural Geography* in 2011: Barbara A. Weightman, 'Commentary: Towards a Geography of the Gay Community,' *Journal of Cultural Geography*, vol. 1, no. 2 (1981) pp. 106-112; Jayne Caudwell and Kath Browne, 'Sexy Spaces: Geography and Leisure Intersectionalities,' *Leisure Studies*, vol. 30, no. 2 (2011), pp. 117-122.

⁷⁰⁹ Foucault, 'Friendship as a Way of Life', p. 136.

⁷¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.138.

⁷¹¹ Judith Halberstam, *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives* (New York: New York University Press, 2005), p. 6.

⁷¹² Foucault's first introduced the concept of heterotopia in two radio broadcasts in 1966, the notes for which were represented in a lecture in 1967 as 'Des Espaces Autres'. The unedited lecture was published in 1984 and translated into English as 'Of Other Spaces' for publication in *diacritics* [Michel Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces', Jay Miskowiec (trans.), *diacritics*, vol. 6, no. 1 (Spring 1986), pp. 22-27] and in *Lotus International*.

Postmodern Geographies.⁷¹³ Arun Saldanha identifies two understandings of heterotopia in Foucault's thinking: one which sees heterotopia as a space that is internally contradictory (and Saldanha goes on to show how all spaces might be considered heterotopic in this reading), and a second which regards heterotopia as a space other than or outside of what can only then be considered as 'normal', 'conventional' but also dominant spaces.⁷¹⁴ It is this inevitable privileging of a prior hegemony that Saldanha finds problematic in the notion of heterotopia and which *Féile Fáilte* resisted in its refusal to bracket the space of alternative possibilities on a heterotopic side-stage.

That brevity was the hallmark of the gay encounter that Foucault posited as untroubling is an additional factor to consider in an understanding of the disquiet at the not only spatial but temporal excess of *Butterflies and Bones*: 'We're just hoping it will be finished soon.'⁷¹⁵ Whatever it was doing, in addition to being out of place, *Butterflies and Bones* was not comfortably contained in duration. It was beyond the viewers' control. It persisted.⁷¹⁶ Moreover, it was not clear:

I have absolutely no idea what they are doing or on about.

It didn't make sense, they were just dancing around like, it didn't make sense. At least we didn't have to pay for what we saw cos it was crazy, you know.⁷¹⁷

⁷¹³ Edward Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (London and New York: Verso, 1989).

⁷¹⁴ Briefly, Foucault defined heterotopias as "countersites", standing in an ambivalent, though mostly oppositional, relation to a society's mainstream. Unlike utopias, heterotopias are locatable in physical spacetime; but like utopias, heterotopias also exist "outside" society insofar as they work differently from the way that society is used to'; Arun Saldanha, 'Heterotopia and Structuralism', *Environment and Planning A*, vol. 40 (2008), pp. 2080-2096, p. 2081. See also Mitch Rose, 'The Seductions of Resistance: Power, Politics, and a Performative Style of Systems', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, vol. 20 (2002), pp. 383-400 and Nicholas Jon Crane, 'Are "Other Spaces" Necessary? Associative Power at the Dumpster', *ACME: An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies*, vol. 11, no. 3 (2012), pp. 352-372.

⁷¹⁵ Kerry Today, 'Bottoms and Other Bits on Banna'.

⁷¹⁶ This is not to privilege duration over transience, since as much of what a queer conception of Timespace offers according to Halberstam is a recognition of intensities of duration that do not conform to the heteronormative Timespans of reproduction, family and inheritance, Timespans which privilege longevity over lives lived by choice or necessity in rapid bursts. See Halberstam, *In a Queer Time and Place*, p. 4.

⁷¹⁷ Kerry Today, 'Bottoms and Other Bits on Banna'.

This indeterminacy, this presentation of bodies, objects and relations, that displayed and enacted the possibility to transform, was a deliberate characteristic of the choreography. As Hannah Macpherson observes, ‘Art that leaves the audience disorientated or lost for words forces people to acknowledge (rather than always or necessarily recognise, identify or discursively locate) the claim of other to this world.’⁷¹⁸ As an ethical strategy of embodiment, *Féile Fáilte* was part of what Foucault called the ‘work at becoming homosexuals’, where we might take his understanding of ‘the homosexual’ to figure the proto-queer possibility of a multiplicity of alternative relations, capable of the ‘formation of new alliances and the tying together of unforeseen lines of force’, rather than the homosexual as the fixed but abject identity position in the normative binary of hetero/homo sexuality.⁷¹⁹ It was part of Butler’s ‘insistent form of appearing precisely when and where we are effaced’ to make ‘the sphere of appearance break and open in new ways.’⁷²⁰ And there was indeed work, insistence, rehearsal, repetition, physical, emotional and mental investment as well as a considered curation and the mobilisation of economic resources that the whole team of *The Casement Project* made to create *Féile Fáilte* as a place of queer possibility.⁷²¹ The ongoing exploration of the potential of individual and collective bodies challenged fixed normative embodiments, fixed spatialities of normative embodiments and exceeded the borders of convention policed by appropriateness and respectability. Following Rancière, for whom political subjectivity is constituted by such

⁷¹⁸ Hannah Macpherson (with Jon Adams), ‘Biostratigraphy and Disability Art: An Introduction to the Work of Jon Adams’, in Harriet Hawkins and Elizabeth Straughan (eds.), *Geographical Aesthetics: Imagining Space, Staging Encounters* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), pp. 165-179, p. 176.

⁷¹⁹ Foucault, ‘Friendship as a Way of Life’, p. 136. To recognise that Foucault, interviewed in 1997 is not positing homosexuality as an essential identity but rather as a proto-queer process of formation whose outcomes are multiple and undetermined, see: ‘Homosexuality is a historic occasion to reopen affective and relational virtualities, not so much through the intrinsic qualities of the homosexual but because the “slantwise” position of the latter, as it were, the diagonal lines he can lay out in the social fabric allow these virtualities to come to light’; *ibid.*, p. 138.

⁷²⁰ Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, p. 37.

⁷²¹ In stressing this work, this attention to the conditions and choreographic structures that support possibility, I am following Butler’s focus on ‘what are the conditions according to which a body can do anything at all?’ which she regards as different and possibly preceding the Spinozan recognition, rearticulated by Deleuze that ‘We never know in advance what a body can do. We never know how we’re organized and how the modes of existence are enveloped in somebody’; Gilles Deleuze, *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*, Martin Loughin (trans.) (New York: Zone Books, 1992), pp. 217-234, quoted in Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, p.73, footnote 5.

excessiveness, *Féile Fáilte* danced a politics.⁷²² In the process, it proposed Banna, not as a site, but as *place* of complex and enduring human and non-human, historical and prospective relations. Building on Casey's notion of place as event, it choreographed, performed and enacted a place of relations where marginalisation of the queer, the unfamiliar, the stranger was not necessary, where the general was not assumed to exclude and where the notion of 'family-friendly', in my words 'for all the family and for families of all kinds', was actualised.⁷²³ It formed place for and from out of placeness.

Conclusion

There is politics because the common is divided.⁷²⁴

Though one could dwell on the resistance to *Féile Fáilte*, it is important to underline that it took place successfully, creating a sense of what some described as a 'utopia'.⁷²⁵ Though utopian is a positive description, this chapter illustrates that, instead of being a no-place, *Féile Fáilte* was a choreographed timespace, precisely localised, that continues to resonate through the positive and negative press coverage that followed it and through the online documentation of the event.⁷²⁶ Though the complaining Tralee family demanded more official vetting, thereby threatening what might be possible for future events, the prospective censorship did not shut down the choreography of bodies that *Féile Fáilte* performed and that was welcomed by a majority of those who attended. Kerry County Council distanced itself from responsibility for the content of *Féile Fáilte* in the aftermath of the complaints, but it asked to include the event in its review publication of commemorative activities in Kerry. The Arts Council and Ireland 2016 programmes also continued to recognise and promote all aspects of *The Casement Project*. Dissent was held together, at least until the moment ten minutes

⁷²² Mustafa Dikeç, 'Beginners and Equals: Political Subjectivity in Arendt and Rancière', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, vol. 38, no. 1 (2013), pp. 78-90, p. 88.

⁷²³ Casey, 'How to Get from Space to Place', p. 26.

⁷²⁴ Rancière, 'The Thinking of Dissensus', p. 1.

⁷²⁵ Nugent and O'Sullivan, 'Audience Feedback Feile Failte'

⁷²⁶ As Butler notes, 'the media does not merely report the scene, but it is part of the scene and the action.[...] [T]he media constitutes the scene in a time and place that includes and exceeds its local institution.[...] And yet, there remains something localized that cannot and does not travel in that way'. Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, pp. 91-92.

before the end of *Butterflies and Bones* when the Tralee family left. And even this departure was not disruptive of the choreographic structure. The event was free, with free transportation and a freedom for people to leave when they wanted. People could choose the level of engagement and annoyance they wished to experience, perhaps making calculations, as the Tralee family suggested, between the pleasure of a prospective pyro-display and the challenge of watching bodies in transformation. This offer of agency to all involved was part of choreography of citizenship the event proposed. The choreography of possibility, including the possibility for dissent, disagreement and difference, invited the public it created to experience the discomfort and the delight of the unfamiliar and in doing so, it performed politics and an attendant conception of space open to the coevalness of discordant perspectives.⁷²⁷

⁷²⁷ Massey, *For Space*, p. 71.

CHAPTER FOUR

In the Wings: Culture Ireland and the Dance Artist Abroad

Creative Ireland and the Work of Nation Branding

The Creative Ireland programme was launched by An Taoiseach Enda Kenny on 8 December 2016, as a legacy of the Ireland 2016 Commemorative Programme.⁷²⁸ Speaking at the launch, the Taoiseach acknowledged that the arts and heritage had played a crucial role in the centenary commemorations, giving positive expression to ‘contested histories’ and helping to avoid an inward-focused and exclusive nationalism:

Even as we commemorated the iconic event of our modern nationhood we became more outward-looking, less insular and more compassionate. That counterintuitive outcome is entirely due to broad cultural participation being front and centre of the year.⁷²⁹

The victories for anti-globalisation and popular nationalism in Britain’s vote to leave the European Union and in the election of Donald Trump were part of the implied background to Kenny’s comments. Though Creative Ireland’s activity would be in large part aimed at promoting cultural participation in Ireland – a laudable return to the aspirations outlined by Michael D. Higgins in his vision as Ireland’s first Minister for the Arts – that activity has to be seen also for the differentiating, nation branding project that it entailed.⁷³⁰ For instance, in the Creative Ireland launch video, filmmaker Lenny Abrahamson alluded to the same international political context that Kenny had, and stressed the value of creativity and inclusivity as a distinguishing feature for Ireland.

I just would love it if this country would, while everybody else seems to be tearing themselves apart, if we had the sense to invest in ourselves as a community, as a culture, as a society, with that notion of creativity at the centre and build something that others would envy, and is inclusive and empowering, all those things we know that are better than the alternative.⁷³¹

⁷²⁸ For an account of the adoption of the language of creativity in cultural policy see Slaby, ‘Whither Cultural Policy in Post Celtic Tiger Ireland?’, pp.81-86.

⁷²⁹ Enda Kenny, ‘We are putting culture and creativity at the heart of public policy’, *Irish Times*, 12 December 2016, p. 12.

⁷³⁰ For Higgins’ vision, see Chapter 2.

⁷³¹ Creative Ireland, ‘Creative Ireland’ [video], Youtube[website], 8 December 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7G8EF1bTWxM> [accessed 1 May 2017]. In an interview soon after the Creative Ireland launch, Abrahamson was explicit in naming Brexit and the election of

Abrahamson's hope for 'this country' implied 'the alternative', those countries 'tearing themselves apart'. His spatialisation of an inclusive 'here' was predicated on the exclusion of an envious 'there'. The video also featured Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, Pascal Donohoe who framed Creative Ireland as an initiative developed 'at a time when there's potential for national identities to narrow'. As an alternative to that spatially constricted nationalism, he proposed that 'we want to reflect on the breadth of our national identity and also on the depth of its foundation.'⁷³² In an international context, where Brexit and the election of Trump were parsed as popular rejections of globalisation and of the transnational flow of capital and people, Creative Ireland seemed keen to assert openness to and readiness for international investment and consumption. For some at least, the focus on national cultural participation had an international audience in mind, making Ireland an attractive destination for tourists, students and foreign business people. As the Irish Development Authority's CEO, Martin Shanahan, deploying an argument familiar from the work of Richard Florida,⁷³³ made clear: 'The depth of culture we have here in Ireland makes Ireland an extremely attractive place to live and work and hence attract investment.'⁷³⁴

While one could imagine a tension between a focus on cultural participation at the national scale and a focus on global competitiveness, it could be argued that the stress on fostering creativity would be in the service of training Irish people to be creatively fit for participation in that global market. Kenny underlined the 'transformative potential of arts, culture and heritage', for individuals and for society, and therefore, the importance of widespread public engagement in those

Trump as reasons for his choosing to make films that challenge the ideologies that brought about those political victories. RTÉ, 'Lenny Abrahamson Says New Film Will 'Deeply Offend' Some', 16 December 2016, <https://www.rte.ie/entertainment/2016/1214/838790-lenny-abrahamson/> [accessed 3 May 2017].

⁷³² 'Creative Ireland', 8 December 2016.

⁷³³ Richard Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class* (New York: Basic Books, 2002).

Richard Florida, 'Bohemia and Economic Geography', *Journal of Economic Geography*, vol. 2 (2002), pp. 55-71. For a challenge to Florida's analysis, see Jim McGuigan, 'Doing a Florida Thing: The Creative Class Thesis and Cultural Policy', *International Journal of Cultural Policy* vol. 15, no. 3 (2009), pp. 291-300; Cian O'Callaghan, 'Let's Audit Bohemia: A Review of Richard Florida's "Creative Class" Thesis and its Impact on Urban Policy', *Geography Compass*, vol. 4, no. 11 (2010), pp. 1606-1617.

⁷³⁴ 'Creative Ireland', 8 December 2016, p.12.

cultural activities. The Creative Ireland programme, he announced, would ‘put culture and creativity at the heart of public policy, and [...] share the outcomes with the world.’⁷³⁵ In short, the transformation of the Irish public would be for global consumption. The fact that the Taoiseach was accompanied at the launch not only by the Minister for Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, Heather Humphreys, but also by the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, Pascal Donohoe signaled an unprecedented cross-departmental commitment to the programme. The Taoiseach would chair a committee overseeing the delivery of the five-year plan, his Secretary General, Martin Fraser, would lead a group of senior civil servants from relevant departments⁷³⁶ and a dedicated project office would be headed by former director of Ireland 2016, John Concannon,⁷³⁷ situated within the Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (DAHRRGA).⁷³⁸ The combined machinery of government would be mobilised to shape this creative training of the nation actualised by the participation of its citizenry.

Understood as a mechanism of transforming the Irish people, it is not surprising that the majority of the Creative Ireland programme would focus on the development of creativity and cultural participation within Ireland. Continuing the architectural analogy of the Ireland 2016 programme, Creative Ireland would be built on five pillars:

- Enabling Creativity in Every Community,
- Enabling the Creative Potential of Every Child,
- Investing in our Creative and Cultural Infrastructure,
- Ireland as a Centre of Excellence in Media Production,
- Unifying our Global Reputation

⁷³⁵ Kenny, ‘We are Putting Culture and Creativity at the Heart of Public Policy’.

⁷³⁶ ‘Critically, the official group supporting the initiative will be headed by the secretary general of An Taoiseach’s department, Martin Fraser. In terms of system, that’s heft and potentially more of it than any official cultural programme has had for a long time’; Gerard Howlin, ‘Recognising that Only Culture Can Credibly Define the Country’, *Irish Examiner*, 7 December 2016.

⁷³⁷ Concannon was seconded to the DA to be director of the Ireland:2016 programme. He was previously Director of Market Development at Fáilte Ireland and headed initiatives such as The Gathering and the Wild Atlantic Way. John Concannon with Ray Darcy, ‘John Concannon–Wild Atlantic Way, The Gathering and 1916 Commemorations’, Radio interview with Ray Darcy, 21 July 2016, <https://www.rte.ie/entertainment/av/21025347-john-concannon-wild-atlantic-way-the-gathering-and-1916-commemorations/> [accessed 3 February 2017].

⁷³⁸ Hugh Linehan, ‘Government’s “Creative Ireland” Plan Outlined’, *Irish Times*, 8 December 2016.

Some headline initiatives were announced as part of the launch and included a commitment that all children in Ireland would have access to lessons in drama, music, art and coding;⁷³⁹ a pilot scheme to provide social welfare support to low-earning self-employed artists; the creation of an annual *Cruinniú na Cásca* event similar to the existing Culture Night, and the creation of local authority Culture Teams to support the development of and engagement in arts and heritage activity in each county.

At the time of its launch, much of the programme was welcomed by artists and others working in the cultural sector.⁷⁴⁰ This was despite suggestions in a speech by Minister Humphreys at the launch of Creative Ireland in New York, that artists were less important to the programme than was a broader public:

At the heart of Creative Ireland is participation: an approach that says it isn't enough to provide additional supports for the arts and artists: we must devise and implement strategies to radically increase public participation in creative cultural activity.⁷⁴¹

The National Campaign for the Arts (NCFA) responded that 'the stated ambition of putting arts, culture and creativity at the heart of Government decision-making for the first time has the potential – if delivered – to realise a sea change for the cultural sector but also for the well-being of Irish society.' However the NCFA and others questioned the small financial commitment to Creative Ireland – just €5 million for 2017 – when Ireland remained at the bottom of the European league table of investment in the arts and culture as a percentage of GDP.⁷⁴²

⁷³⁹ That dance does not feature on the list of creative activities, was a disappointment. It may be explained by the fact that dance was already included in the curriculum as part of Physical Education, however a higher profile for dance as a creative art-form would be welcome in the Creative Ireland strategy.

⁷⁴⁰ Laurence Mackin, 'Creative Ireland – Artists Respond', *Irish Times*, 8 December 2016.

⁷⁴¹ Heather Humphreys, 'Remarks by Minister Heather Humphreys at the Launch of Creative Ireland in the US, the Five Year Arts & Culture Initiative and Culture Ireland's US Programme for the Year Ahead', <https://www.dfa.ie/irish-consulate/sanfrancisco/news-and-events/2017/us-launch-creative-ireland/> [accessed 23 April 2017].

⁷⁴² Joan Burton, 'Creative Ireland Fails to Build on 1916 Commemoration Capital Fund', <https://www.labour.ie/news/2016/12/08/creative-ireland-fails-to-build-on-1916-commemorat/>. As an opposition politician, Burton cannot be considered an impartial observer.

In addition to this financial concern, one of the pillars provoked particular disquiet. The aim to ‘unify’ Ireland’s global reputation signaled a direction of Creative Ireland’s activity not only at the people of Ireland, but also at a global audience. Kenny’s speech was tentative in its idealistic suggestion:

Perhaps we have discovered something else that we can offer the world – an understanding of the power of creative and participative cultural engagement to break down barriers and lead us to a deeper sense of our shared humanity.⁷⁴³

The Creative Ireland website was much more assertive about its role in following New Zealand’s nation branding exercise ‘to create a single proposition based on Irish culture and creativity that represents a considered, compelling and imaginative view of how we wish to be seen by the outside world.’⁷⁴⁴ The economic imperative to make Ireland attractive to foreign investment, tourism and markets framed this drive towards nation branding in a way that was more competitive than the language of ‘shared humanity’ first suggested.⁷⁴⁵ The implications of the singularity of this coordinated nation brand provoked disquiet.⁷⁴⁶ Despite its claims that one of its core values would be ‘cultural diversity, informed by the many traditions and social backgrounds now in Ireland’,⁷⁴⁷ this unifying drive risked prescribing the kind of image and experience of Ireland that artistic activity would be resourced to convey abroad. The sense of disquiet was not allayed by the launch video that failed to include any non-white or

⁷⁴³ Kenny, ‘We are Putting Culture and Creativity’.

⁷⁴⁴ Creative Ireland, ‘Unifying Our Global Reputation’.

⁷⁴⁵ ‘Amid increasingly fierce global competition for investment, tourism and export markets, a clear articulation of a country’s values, capabilities and beliefs about itself is increasingly important’; *loc. cit.*

⁷⁴⁶ Rob Farhat, ‘Exploring the Positives & Flaws in the Creative Ireland Programme’, *District Magazine*, 14 December 2016, <http://districtmagazine.ie/exploring-the-positives-flaws-in-the-creative-ireland-programme/> [accessed 4 February 2017]. See also ‘But arts funding should never be given the agenda of projecting a positive image of its country of origin. The only way this could be achieved is by controlling what gets created’; Victoria White, ‘Marketing is Not Business of Art, So Let’s Get Creative on How We Treat Arts’, *Irish Examiner* 15 December 2016.

⁷⁴⁷ Creative Ireland, ‘Creative Ireland Programme–Culture, Wellbeing and the Creative Society’, www.creativeireland.ie [website], <http://creative.ireland.ie/#programme> ‘ [accessed 4 February 2017].

visibly disabled bodies, nor by a similarly homogenous subsequent video with its totalising title of 'This is Ireland'.⁷⁴⁸

The Creative Ireland website promised a coordination of multiple departments, semi-state bodies and other state agencies in the service of this unified nation brand, with no discussion of the arm's length principle that intended to separate State funding of the arts from interference in the work that artists produce.⁷⁴⁹ The centrality of the Taoiseach's office in monitoring Creative Ireland's programme might also create conditions for direct lines of state intervention in the kind of art, artists and other citizens that would be resourced to flourish in the country and outside of it.

Creative Ireland is in its infancy. The Taoiseach who championed it has been replaced and it is unknown how much of a priority the programme will be under Taoiseach Varadkar. It is beyond the scope of this research, therefore, to investigate in detail the operation and impact of Creative Ireland. However this is not the first initiative to press Irish creativity and artistic reputation into service on behalf of the Irish State and its economic survival. As the previous chapter outlined, during the economic crises, the government turned to the arts as a mechanism for restoring Ireland's tarnished brand. Its initial vehicle for doing so was Culture Ireland, the semi-autonomous body established in 2005 to promote Irish arts abroad. This chapter addresses Culture Ireland as mediator between artists from Ireland and the global scale, showing that the conditions of national

⁷⁴⁸ 'This is Ireland', Youtube, 15 March 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rk8VibKA4Ws> [accessed 4 May 2017]. Critical reactions on social media included: 'Seems a significant oversight that a celebration of myriad culture should be so, well, monocultural #creativeireland #IrelandSoWhite', @k8heffernan, 'Seems a significant oversight', Twitter, 16 March 2017, <https://twitter.com/k8heffernan/status/842552361574973442> [accessed 17 July 2017]. See also the comments section for the video on the Creative Ireland Facebook page: "'Capturing the rich diversity of our culture" - no this video, while beautiful, does not represent the rich diversity within Ireland right now. The "New Irish" are not represented at all. 12% of the population are from 199 different nations. (Census 2011). In these Times the comment about DNA is best left to one side. "Irishness" is not limited to genetic code. Again- lovely video, beautifully shot, very moving but please edit it to include all of us'; Kate McAlister, 'Capturing the diversity of our rich culture', Facebook, 16 March 2017, https://www.facebook.com/pg/CreativeIrl/videos/?ref=page_internal [accessed 3 May 2017].

⁷⁴⁹ 'This pillar will involve many Government Departments, including the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, the Department of Tourism, Transport and Sport, IDA Ireland, and relevant State agencies that operate at international level.' Creative Ireland, 'Unifying our Global Reputation'.

politics and international economics shaped how that mediation took place. Moreover it aims to connect the formation of the State's institutional mechanisms for cultural diplomacy to the materialisation of collective and individual citizen bodies. As Butler recognises:

As an intentionally organized materiality, the body is always an embodying of possibilities both conditioned and circumscribed by historical convention. In other words, the body is a historical situation, as Beauvoir has claimed, and is a manner of doing, dramatizing, and reproducing a historical situation.⁷⁵⁰

In asserting that the body reproduces a historical situation, it is important to recognise, following Foucault, that each historical situation is heterogeneous, a product of conflicting discourses in which some are temporarily dominant, but which are nonetheless vulnerable to challenge by non-hegemonic discourses. Therefore to see bodies as 'conditioned and circumscribed' by a particular historical situation – for example, the instrumentalising pressures of nation branding in the wake of Ireland's economic crisis – does not erase 'possibilities' for what Foucault would call 'subjugated knowledges' or 'subjugated local discursivities' to be expressed:

Archaeology is the method specific to the analysis of local discursivities, and genealogy is the tactic which, once it has described these local discursivities, brings into play the desubjugated knowledges that have been released from them.⁷⁵¹

However, neither for Foucault nor for Butler, is this space of possibility the freedom of a sovereign subjectivity to choose its destiny. As Butler concludes: 'This is not freedom, but a question of how to work the trap that one is inevitably in.'⁷⁵² Part of working the trap is to recognise that the trap of a prevailing order is

⁷⁵⁰ Butler, 'Performative Acts and Gender Constitution', p. 521.

⁷⁵¹ Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended*, pp. 10-11.

⁷⁵² Butler and Kotz, 'The Body You Want', p. 84. The formulation raises the rhetorical temperature but is not significantly different from Marx's often-quoted observation that 'Men make their own

itself 'arbitrary' and 'internally discontinuous' and that these internal contradictions make the authority of a particular hegemony vulnerable. Consequently, to understand the complexities, contradictions and constitutive tensions of the State, of the nation brand, and of the mechanisms such as Culture Ireland through which State and nation brand materialise, provides artists with resources to exercise agency, albeit in circumscribed conditions. What follows is an archaeology and genealogy of Culture Ireland that pays detailed attention to its contradictions, to its internal and external tensions and ultimately, to the possibilities its structures afforded a contemporary dance artist to re-articulate what Irish citizen embodiment might be.

From Cultural Relations Committee to Culture Ireland⁷⁵³

In February 2007, the Irish Government agreed to propose legislation that would establish Culture Ireland as an independent statutory body. Culture Ireland had already existed since 2005 as a unit of the Department of Arts, Sports and Tourism (DAST) with responsibility for 'the promotion and advancement of Irish arts and artists in the international arena'.⁷⁵⁴ Culture Ireland's function within DAST replaced the Cultural Relations Committee (CRC) that had been transferred to DAST in January 2002 from under the aegis of the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA). The CRC had been established in 1949 to advise the then Minister for External Affairs, Seán McBride, on support for cultural projects. Its purpose was to

history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances'; Karl Marx, *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (1852), ch. 1, trans. Saul K. Padover (1971), marxists.org [website] (2006), <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1852/18th-brumaire/ch01.htm> (accessed 29 July 2017).

⁷⁵³ The material in this section draws on four phases of research. The first originates in unpublished work, 'The Artist Abroad: Contemporary Cultural Diplomacy in Ireland and the UK', that I produced in 2007 while Ireland Fellow on The Clore Leadership Programme. The research was supervised by Prof. Roy Foster, Carroll Professor of Irish History at Herford College, Oxford and drew on expert interviews with key figures involved in the development of the then nascent Culture Ireland. A small minority of the experts preferred to contribute anonymously, while most are named. The second set is a series of follow-up expert interviews with those involved, in particular with Eugene Downes, Chief Executive of Culture Ireland (2007-2012) (interviewed 23 January 2014). The third set derives from my discussions with government officials while involved in international cultural diplomacy, supported by Culture Ireland, in China, Hong Kong, the United States, the United Kingdom, and across mainland Europe (2007-2016). The final source of research is a review of official publications and press reports relating to the development of the Irish government's cultural institutions over the past three-quarters of a century (2012-2017).

⁷⁵⁴ Culture Ireland website, <http://www.cultureireland.ie/about> [accessed 14 May 2017].

further certain broad objectives of foreign policy.⁷⁵⁵ Tracing the genealogy of Culture Ireland from the Department of External Affairs to Foreign Affairs to the Department of the Arts, Sports, Media and Tourism and in 2017, to the Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs suggests a smooth transition over time from the use of art 'to further certain broad objectives of foreign policy' under Seán McBride, Minister for External Affairs, to the seemingly art-focused prioritisation of promoting Irish arts abroad.⁷⁵⁶ The reality is more complex and it has profound but sometimes hidden consequences for artistic practice that moves between the national and international, shaping a geography that is at once cultural and political.

On one level, the evolution of the mechanisms of cultural diplomacy in Ireland can be analysed in terms of competition for control between the secretariats of different departments of state. The 2002 transfer of CRC from DFA to the then Department of Arts, Heritage and Gaeltacht had the effect of halving the staff and budget of the Cultural Division of the DFA that lost influence and, more significantly, the capital of cultural contacts with the move. The trauma of the transfer was suggested in the language of the 2000-2002 Expenditure Review of Cultural Relations activity:

Given the fact that the CRC had been part of the DFA for so long, the change was bound to be a wrench [...]. The staffing losses represent a significant weakening of the resource base which has implications for the continuing effectiveness of the programme.⁷⁵⁷

However, the move wasn't only contested by civil servants. Members of the ministerially-appointed CRC Board were reluctant to move their meetings from the plush and prestigious surroundings of DFA's Iveagh House, to the pleasant, but less prestigiously-located Board Room of the Irish Museum of Modern Art.⁷⁵⁸ Such

⁷⁵⁵ Department of Foreign Affairs, *Cultural Relations with Other Countries, Department of Foreign Affairs, Expenditure Review 2000 to 2002*, August 2004, p. 9, <http://193.178.1.205/information/culture/documents/ERIReport.pdf> [accessed 23 March 2007].

⁷⁵⁶ Culture Ireland website, <http://www.cultureireland.ie/about> [accessed 14 May 2017].

⁷⁵⁷ DFA, *Cultural Relations with Other Countries*, p.9

⁷⁵⁸ Interview with senior official, Culture Ireland, 29 June 2007.

apparently trivial resistance reminds us of the complexities of relations that shape the policy landscape in which artists operate.

If the CRC was not working effectively within the DFA structure, part of the failure was due to an under-resourcing that conveyed ongoing State disregard for cultural diplomacy. Though at its inception the CRC received a healthy annual grant of £10,000 – the same as the Arts Council’s grant when it was established two years later – its funding was generally precarious and never kept pace with the funding increases won by the Arts Council. By 2004, the CRC had a budget of €700,000 in comparison to the Arts Council’s €52 million. Such was the parlous state of its resourcing that at one time the CRC was drawing its funds from proceeds of the National Lottery. This meagre funding for the promotion of Irish arts abroad was both a symptom and cause of disaffection with the CRC. Following an Irish Marketing Survey on the Status of the Artist in Ireland, commissioned in 1980, the Arts Council criticised the CRC for a lack of commitment and focus: ‘A dynamic approach was necessary if Irish creative and interpretive talent were to be promoted abroad effectively.’⁷⁵⁹ According to the First Secretary of the Cultural Division of the DFA, ‘there was a growing feeling from the arts community that the CRC should be more autonomous so that it could attract more money.’⁷⁶⁰

By 1996, a White Paper on Foreign Policy acknowledged the proposals of the Arts Council’s 1995-1997 Arts Plan to develop a ‘partnership project for the promotion of Irish art abroad with the Cultural Relations Committee’.⁷⁶¹ Though nothing came of the Arts Council’s ambition to assume the functions of the CRC, it was clear that the status quo was unsatisfactory. In 1998, a further internal review of the DFA’s cultural function identified ‘a strong consensus within the Department that culture was a key instrument in promoting Ireland abroad and that its long-standing neglect should be reversed.’⁷⁶² Given that the CRC had been a significant

⁷⁵⁹Everitt, *The Creative Imperative*, p. 13.

⁷⁶⁰ Interview with Francis O’Donoghue, First Secretary of the Cultural Division of the DFA, 1 June 2007.

⁷⁶¹ Arts Council, *1995-1997 Arts Plan*, http://www.artscouncil.ie/Publications/The_Arts_Plan_midtern_review.pdf [accessed 4 June 2007].

⁷⁶² Eugene Downes, *Towards an International Arts and Cultural Strategy for 21st Century Ireland* [unpublished], July 2004, p. 64. Emphasis in original.

element in the DFA's cultural activity, the implied failure in 'neglect' was an indictment. Further research by the DFA in 2001 provided the rationale for a new solution that would involve other departments. Since the inception of the DACG in 1993, some of its officials regarded it as inevitable that the CRC should come under its authority. Rebuffed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs at the time, the transfer did not happen during the reign of Michael D. Higgins who, as discussed in Chapter Three, was bogged down in other interdepartmental turf-wars about what functions his new Arts ministry could assume. Instead, the transfer happened under the ministerial tenure of Síle de Valera whose perceived 'softer' style made the departmental acquisition a 'logistical'⁷⁶³ rather than an egotistical move.⁷⁶⁴ De Valera's success followed a trip to China in January 2001 that established the significance of cultural exchange in building the positive relationship with China that were key to the government's Asia Strategy for foreign investment and trade.⁷⁶⁵ The trip was organised with the collaboration of DFA, because of its greater experience in working with China, and it was facilitated by Eugene Downes, then working as consultant for DFA, and eventually to become Chief Executive of Culture Ireland. The ministerial visit gave tactical advantage and increased appetite to the Department of the Arts to assume a cultural diplomacy function, a function which the then Minister of Foreign Affairs, Brian Cowen, ceded with an ease that took his officials by surprise.⁷⁶⁶ It is worth underlining the combination of international, national, local and inter-personal relations at play in this significant shift in cultural politics. Also notable is the transformation of national possibilities within Ireland wrought by activity undertaken beyond its borders.

⁷⁶³ DFA, *Cultural Relations with other countries*, Annex 1, p .2.

<http://193.178.1.205/information/culture/documents/ERIAnnex1.pdf> [accessed 23 March 2007].

⁷⁶⁴ Interview Senior Official, Culture Ireland.

⁷⁶⁵ The first Asia Strategy was established in 1999, following Taoiseach Bertie Ahern's visit to China the previous year. The Strategy was renewed for a further five years in 2005 with '[t]he objective of the Government to be realised within the next five years [...] to intensify the levels of political, business and other forms of interaction with the priority Asian countries so that Ireland benefits to a significantly greater extent from the trade and other benefits that successful trading with the region can confer'; Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 'A Decade of the Asia Strategy, 1999-2009', p. 3 <https://www.dfa.ie/media/dfa/alldfawebsitemedia/newspress/publications/English-Version-31-Mar-05.pdf> [accessed 17 May 2006].

⁷⁶⁶ Downes, Interview.

When Fianna Fáil failed to gain an overall majority in the 2002 election and entered in coalition with the Progressive Democrats, Síle De Valera was replaced by John O'Donoghue as Minister for Arts, Sports and Tourism. By July of the following year, O'Donoghue had introduced the 2003 Arts Act, which, following a wider review of arts legislation, gave the Minister for Arts responsibility for the promotion of the arts 'both inside the State and outside the State'. If O'Donoghue's appointment to the DAST was regarded at the time as a demotion from his previous Justice portfolio, he set about strengthening his new department, perhaps in compensation. This extra-territorial responsibility was an increase in the remit of DAST, formalising the shift that had occurred with the move of CRC under its aegis. According to Fiach MacConghail, Arts Adviser to the Minister from 2002 to 2005, O'Donoghue took a particular interest in the international arts agenda, seeing in it potential to link together the wider interests of his portfolio, which included tourism and sports: 'He joined the dots'.⁷⁶⁷

However, the move of the CRC created potential areas of conflict, as it extended DAST's scope into territory for which DFA had traditional responsibility. Among the objectives listed in the DFA's Strategy Statement at the time were ambitions to 'raise the profile of Ireland by promoting its arts, literature and design', to 'strengthen bilateral relations with other countries through cultural links' and 'to promote greater mutual understanding through culture'.⁷⁶⁸ DFA's focus on culture as an instrument for achieving other policy objectives (raising Ireland's profile, strengthening bilateral relations, promoting mutual understanding) gave it an investment in the operation of Irish arts abroad that had the potential to conflict with DAST's alternative priorities in this area. In 2004, the DFA's internal review of its cultural relations laid down a clear marker of what it considered to be its strategic primacy in international cultural relations, regardless of the loss of the CRC:

⁷⁶⁷ Interview with Fiach Mac Conghail, former arts adviser to Minister for Arts, Sports and Tourism John O'Donoghue, 26 July 2007.

⁷⁶⁸ Department of Foreign Affairs, *Department of Foreign Affairs Strategy Statement 2005-2007*, p. 46 <http://www.dfa.ie/uploads/documents/dfa%20sos%20english.pdf> [accessed 15 June 2007].

The CRC's role was to act as an *advisory mechanism*, and it is of its nature reactive. Therefore, in practical terms the transfer of the CRC to DAST had only limited ramifications for the aims of the Cultural Division *per se* and for DFA's strategic role in the international cultural arena.⁷⁶⁹

In a letter in 2003, DAST recognised DFA's ongoing role vis-à-vis broader foreign policy/international relations considerations.⁷⁷⁰ For good measure, the review included in its Annex a copy of the letter from Barry Murphy, Principal of the Arts Division at DAST, as proof of DFA's acknowledged primacy. This delineation of territory was perhaps pre-emptive as the internal review was conducted with an awareness that following the 2003 Arts Act, DAST was investigating new mechanisms for attending to its increased international remit: 'It has been suggested that the CRC may even be wound up shortly to be replaced by structures as yet unknown.'⁷⁷¹

'Towards an International Arts and Culture Strategy for the 21st Century'

The 'structures as yet unknown', alluded to above, were to be Culture Ireland, that came into being in 2005 following the recommendations of a report by arts consultant and former attaché, Eugene Downes.⁷⁷² The report 'Towards an International Arts and Cultural Strategy for 21st Century Ireland', formed the basis of a 2006-2010 Strategy Document which the Culture Ireland Board submitted for approval to the Minister for Arts, Sports and Tourism.⁷⁷³ In April 2007, Downes

⁷⁶⁹ DFA, *Cultural Relations with Other Countries*, p. 8.

⁷⁷⁰*Ibid.*, p. 10.

⁷⁷¹*Loc. cit.*

⁷⁷² 'Since 2000 Eugene Downes has run a consultancy advising Irish Government bodies on international arts strategy and managing cultural events abroad. From Dublin, Eugene (35) has programmed and produced showcase concerts in twenty countries across Europe, Asia and South America for State Visits and Trade Missions by the President and Taoiseach. Previously he worked as an Irish diplomat, including a spell as Cultural Attaché in Russia, and as a music and opera broadcaster on RTÉ Lyric fm. He has served on the Boards of leading arts organisations in Ireland and abroad'; Culture Ireland, 'Culture Ireland Announces Decision on New Chief Executive', [website], www.cultureireland.gov.ie/pdfs/pressreleaseceo.pdf [accessed 12 June 2007].

⁷⁷³ The Culture Ireland website is keen to underline the fact that the strategy document was 'made available online for consultation. Our approach to consultation was broad, and included an open invitation for responses from the public. At the same time, discussions were held between Board members and a number of organisations representing artists and arts/cultural issues'; Culture Ireland, 'Strategic Plan', [website], http://www.cultureireland.gov.ie/aboutus/strategic_plan.html [accessed 12 June 2007.] However even a cursory examination of the Downes report and the strategy document reveal the over-riding influence of the former on the latter.

was appointed the first Chief Executive of Culture Ireland, having worked with the board as a consultant on the evolution of his report into their 2006-2010 Strategy. There are good reasons, therefore, for a careful analysis of Downes's recommendations as a means of understanding in it the context of the establishment of Culture Ireland already outlined and of comprehending the guiding principles and competing pressures that determined the agency's operation.

The significance of the negotiation of responsibilities between DFA and DAST were made apparent in Downes' very first recommendation that:

DAST and DFA should agree a joint policy framework for international arts and culture with clearly articulated goals:

- Goal A: Assist Irish artists, arts organisations and cultural life to develop through international opportunities and exchange
- Goal B: Promote Irish arts and culture abroad, gaining new audiences and markets and developing cultural and heritage tourism
- Goal C: Promote and generate awareness, goodwill, access and influence for Ireland
- Goal D: Promote shared understanding between Ireland and other peoples and cultures
- Goal E: Address key foreign policy issues which have an important cultural dimension
- Goal F: Celebrate and enhance key international events and relationships⁷⁷⁴

The neatness of the bullet-point format did not disguise the potential, but unarticulated, incompatibility between the art- and artist-focused assistance of Goal A and the foreign policy pragmatics of Goal E. Nonetheless the inclusion of artists in the prospectus was noteworthy. When Downes elucidated his opening recommendations on a joint DAST/DFA policy framework later in the report he stressed that:

⁷⁷⁴ Downes, *Towards an International Arts and Cultural Strategy*, p. 4. Emphasis in original.

The sustained input of artists and other cultural practitioners will be vital to ensure that the new system is practical, workable, respectful of artistic process and responsive to the needs of the sector on the ground.⁷⁷⁵

Downes proposed that instead of arts and culture being simply an instrument for achieving other policy objectives, '[t]he pursuit of a shared policy vision [...] offers international arts and culture the chance not just to deliver the *Ireland Inc* strategic agenda, but to shape it.'⁷⁷⁶ Though *Ireland Inc* did not name an existing strategy, Downes could refer to a generally understood agenda of nation branding with an undeniably corporate moniker that artists might influence. Similarly, when Downes came to recommending the structure for the cultural agency that would 'give visible form to the progressive development of a shared policy agenda between DAST and DFA', he envisaged an organisation that would be closely connected to the artistic community:

This structure would be in effect a network of agents, i.e. a networked agency or virtual agency, able to engage with a globalised and networked international environment on its own terms. It would be a model capable of evolution and adaptation. Most important, it would be investing directly in the sector, growing the core capacity and expertise of arts organisations, bringing the funding as close as possible to the artist and practitioner, and giving the arts and cultural community a sense of ownership in the new body.⁷⁷⁷

In the first three years of its operation Culture Ireland contributed almost €8million to the arts sector in Ireland.⁷⁷⁸ A proportion of that money would have been spent on flights and accommodation for artists traveling abroad, but the additional resource funded artistic activity that might not have taken place otherwise, sustaining creative practice, creating employment and facilitating opportunities for practice to develop, as I will exemplify through my own experience of presenting work abroad. Typically, despite a grant for Ballet Ireland being the largest to any art form in the very first round of awards made in March 2005, dance received less than four per cent of the total budget in the first year of

⁷⁷⁵ *Ibid*, p. 16.

⁷⁷⁶ *Loc. cit.*

⁷⁷⁷ *Ibid*, p. 21. Emphasis in original.

⁷⁷⁸ Culture Ireland, 'Funding Downloads', www.cultureireland.ie, <http://www.cultureireland.ie/funding> [accessed 30 July 2017].

Culture Ireland's operation.⁷⁷⁹ That proportion increased to almost eighteen per cent in 2007, though again, typically, it was regularly funded companies such as CoisCéim, Fabulous Beast, Irish Modern Dance Theatre, Daghdha and Rex Levitates that benefited most from the new funding opportunities, with independent dance artists receiving no more than six per cent of the allocation to dance in the first three years. However, even this small increase in available resources was valuable to independent artists such as myself. In addition, something of Downes's aspiration for Culture Ireland to be virtual, flexible and facilitative chimed with my choreographic values. Perhaps I identified in Downes another individual choreographing the structures of state to produce surprise and hospitality, albeit at closer proximity to those institutional structures.

What is also striking for an artist to notice in Downes' recommendation is that it envisaged a mechanism for the knowledge and insight gained from international artistic engagement to pass through Culture Ireland and, because of Culture Ireland's remit 'to advise the Minister on international arts and cultural affairs', to inform political decision-making.⁷⁸⁰ As a former official at the Consulate General of Ireland in Shanghai acknowledged, through the work of artists, consular officials could gain different kinds of insights and establish new networks that infiltrated where official inter-governmental relations could not: 'Through informal chats with artists you'd hear about experiences and contacts that we wouldn't make in the usual course of other work and get different views of Shanghai.'⁷⁸¹ However, she also acknowledged that at embassy or consulate level there was no formal mechanism for eliciting or recording artist feedback and insight. What interaction there was relied mainly on the interest and empathy of particular embassy staff, and even where such interest existed, there was no formal process for communicating knowledge gained through artistic engagement back to DFA in a way that would have any impact on policy formation. What reports were written after DFA-sponsored events tended to record only

⁷⁷⁹ *Loc. cit.*

⁷⁸⁰ Downes, *Towards an International Arts and Cultural Strategy*, p. 21.

⁷⁸¹ Interview with Cairíona Ingoldsby, former Vice Consul with the Consulate General of Ireland in Shanghai, 30 July 2007.

attendance figures, costs and a perfunctory evaluation of success.⁷⁸² Culture Ireland appeared to offer instead an opportunity for Irish artists to debrief following their travel abroad. Such opportunities would see Culture Ireland ensure that the flow of influence could be from artists to policy-makers, as much as from policy-makers to artists. Indeed, what Knopp and Brown might consider a counterflow, challenging the hierarchical spatiality that would have the individual artist subject to State authority, could deliver on Downes' aspiration for the arts to shape *Ireland Inc.* strategy.⁷⁸³ As Downes' report proposed, a model for such influence could be found in the influence of Irish missionaries and NGOs whose development work abroad preceded and shaped governmental activity in international development – though it was less the prosletysing than the responsive humanitarianism of the development work that was the inspiration.⁷⁸⁴

Of course, Culture Ireland could only be a useful conduit for communication if it had something different to pass on – ‘experience and contacts we wouldn't make in the usual course of work’.⁷⁸⁵ If Culture Ireland were to adopt and transmit existing governmental targets, in terms of regional priorities or economic development opportunities, it would end up supporting artistic projects that reflected back to policy-makers what they already knew. For Culture Ireland, Downes argued, its curatorial independence and the independence of the artists it supported would be defining assets *and* what would be most beneficial to the State. Curatorial independence:

⁷⁸² *Loc. cit.*

⁷⁸³ Knopp and Brown, ‘Queer Diffusions’, p. 414.

⁷⁸⁴ ‘Irish Missionaries and NGOs have helped to lay the foundations of our national programme of development assistance. It was they who took the fight against poverty to Africa. Many years before the Government began to fund development assistance, they were actively working with the poorest populations in developing countries. They have fostered public interest in development and have helped to create the climate of sympathy, understanding and solidarity which underpins our ODA. They remain intensively engaged in some of the most difficult and hostile environments on earth - taking care of the sick, dealing with refugees and those made homeless through natural disaster and helping local communities to pull themselves out of extreme poverty. NGOs and Missionaries will continue to be indispensable partners of Ireland Aid. As the Government increases ODA funding, our relationship and dialogue with them must deepen and become more strategic’; Department of Foreign Affairs, ‘Address by Minister of State at the Annual Christmas Lecture on International Relations, DCU,’ 18 December 2001, <http://www.dfa.ie/home/index.aspx?id=26331> [accessed 18 June 2007].

⁷⁸⁵ Ingoldsby, Interview.

[R]epresents a substantial guarantee to respect the independence of artistic judgement and the artistic process, which ultimately is a protection for the Government as well. By allowing artists the space to do their work and embracing subversion and questioning as a part of that, greater energies, greater credibility, greater impact and greater understanding will be generated in the long term.⁷⁸⁶

Such curatorial autonomy, and the space for subversion and questioning it entailed, would distinguish Culture Ireland from its CRC predecessor. Decisions by the latter were subject to direct Ministerial approval and successive Ministers for Foreign Affairs did vary and override the committee's recommendations.⁷⁸⁷ Though Culture Ireland might easily have been subject to similar control, albeit from the Minister for Arts rather than the Minister for Foreign Affairs, there were grounds to be optimistic about the extent of Culture Ireland's independence when it was first established. In his speech at the launch of Culture Ireland, Minister for the Arts, John O'Donoghue acknowledged that 'the remit of Culture Ireland is written to allow the Board to plan its own way forward' and he commended the 'excellent independent chairman', Micheál Ó Súilleabháin.⁷⁸⁸ Ó Súilleabháin's own comments declared not only Culture Ireland's independence but that of artists, though his jocular exchange with the *Irish Times*, didn't quite disguise the moment of anxious censorship of 'Irish warts' which preceded his distancing of Culture Ireland from State culture:

'Culture Ireland recognises the subversive qualities of art,' he says. In other words, it will show Ireland to the world, warts and all? 'Well, it would be the world, warts and all, from an Irish perspective,' he says, with a chuckle. 'I don't think we're just in the business of showing Irish warts. If we do, perhaps we should show them in the context of global wartage, or some such. But', he adds, 'we're not dealing with "State" culture here. In many other countries art has to go abroad through a critical filter – which, essentially, is people's hesitancy as to how their country might be portrayed. You don't have to go back too far in Irish history to find that our own lack of self-esteem in the past made us very nervous about how we were portrayed.'⁷⁸⁹

⁷⁸⁶ Downes, *Towards an International Arts and Cultural Strategy*, p. 32. Emphasis in original.

⁷⁸⁷ Downes, Interview.

⁷⁸⁸ 'That was a very courageous and unusual move by an Irish government minister'; *loc. cit.*

⁷⁸⁹ Arminta Wallace, 'Ticket to Take On the World', *Irish Times*, 26 Jan 2006, p. 16. See also Yeats reported in *Irish Times*, 25 February 1926: 'The moment a nation reached intellectual maturity, it became exceedingly proud and ceased to be vain and when it became exceedingly proud it did not disguise its faults, because it was satisfied to know what were its qualities and powers; but when it

The autonomy of Culture Ireland was further enhanced by the recruitment in 2007 of Downes as Chief Executive of the agency and the consequent devolution of authority from the board to the executive, both at a further remove from ministerial oversight, though also staffed primarily by a secretariat of departmental officials. This meant that though the agency was administered by civil servants, it was led by someone who wasn't part of the civil service. In addition, from 2008 to 2012, the communications role in the organisation was filled by someone who wasn't a civil servant.

The independence of Culture Ireland's decision-making from DFA preferences was quickly evident. While the perspective of embassies was still sought by Culture Ireland in assessing applications for funding, as a DFA official observed, 'there is no longer certainty that an ambassador's approval will guarantee the success of Culture Ireland application'.⁷⁹⁰ 'No longer' hinted at an *ancien regime* where the endorsement of artists by embassies weighed heavily in the CRC's decision-making process. This new approach caused annoyance, particularly from embassy staff who wondered why their opinions on projects were sought if Culture Ireland ultimately ignored them.⁷⁹¹ From Culture Ireland's point of view, what was required of embassies was local information on venues and partners, but, according to Culture Ireland, 'embassies tend to exceed their remit and want to endorse particular artists.'⁷⁹² Given the admission by embassy staff that 'we would give positive observations on proposed projects on the basis that something is better than nothing', Culture Ireland's maintenance of artistic quality seemed justified.⁷⁹³ There was a sense in the DFA that Culture Ireland was 'more selective' with a stronger focus on the artistic merit of what was being

was immature it was exceedingly vain, and did not believe in itself, and so long as it did not believe in itself and it wanted other people to think well of it, in order that it might get a little reflected confidence'; Roy Foster, *W. B. Yeats: A Life, II, The Arch-Poet, 1915-1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 309. As Foster argues, the narratives of transformation in Ireland are not without historical precedent.

⁷⁹⁰ O'Donoghue, Interview.

⁷⁹¹ O'Donoghue, Interview.

⁷⁹² Culture Ireland official, Interview

⁷⁹³ Ingoldsby, Interview.

supported than on its local popular appeal: 'what might be acceptable to the populace might not be acceptable to the practitioners'.⁷⁹⁴

Even where the artistic merit of proposals was not in question, Culture Ireland steered away from purely diplomatic uses of the arts. Early in Downes' tenure, Culture Ireland turned down a request from DFA to fund a concert associated with the Presidential visit to New York because it was a purely diplomatic exercise that had no wider public audience. It was a brave refusal given that before he became Chief Executive of Culture Ireland, Downes had been responsible for programming the cultural component of previous Presidential visits.⁷⁹⁵ What this signalled again was the determination of Culture Ireland to assert its curatorial autonomy by implementing programming led by artistic rather than diplomatic priorities. Assumed gradually, and played out in its formation, structure and decisions, this independence promised artists – selected artists, at least – a mechanism for shaping the nation brand by claiming a space for them to question and to subvert.

⁷⁹⁴ O'Donoghue, Interview.

⁷⁹⁵ Downes, Interview.



Plate 4.1 *Match*, live performance, Bassano del Grappa. Photo Antonella Travascio.

My initial interaction with Culture Ireland in this early phase came with two successful applications in its June 2007 funding rounds. Culture Ireland supported my participation in the Dadao Live Art festival in China – a vestige of which became part of *The Casement Project's* physical archive, underlining the significance of Culture Ireland in the evolution of my practice – as well as a performance of *Match* at the Operaestate Festival in Bassano del Grappa, Italy. Presenting *Match*, on a soccer pitch in Northern Italy, was the first time the piece, originally conceived for film and for Croke Park, was presented live. Culture Ireland's support permitted the film that had deliberately inserted dance into the 'sancified' space of national embodiment, revealing homosocial desire and gay bodies there, to slip from that national context. Beyond the memories of dancing in Croke Park that we carried in our bodies, and the GAA shorts and boots that we wore, we did not try to represent that Irish origin to the Italian audience on a sunny summer's evening on local soccer pitch in Bassano. Therefore, the performance in Bassano was less a promotion or distribution of Irish significance abroad than an opportunity to discover what the choreography might be in a new setting and who we might become in the process. The transformation required for this live performance

demanding of us, the dancers, a stamina that was different from the stop/start rhythm of filming. Instead, having doubled the length of the choreography, we had to maintain its tough physicality and find the energy to travel the whole length of the pitch. Though the Operaestate festival paid the fees for our participation, Culture Ireland's €1,500 grant covered the costs of food, travel and accommodation in our own rooms, rather than in shared dormitories. If the choreography demanded strength and stamina to sustain it, Culture Ireland's funding ensured that the physical resilience was resourced by corporeal comfort.

'Operationally Semi-Autonomous Division of the Department'

From the point of view of state institutions, Culture Ireland's autonomy was *de facto* rather than legislated, permitted by the Minister O'Donoghue, but not secured by statute. There were pragmatic benefits to this position as an 'operationally semi-autonomous Division of the Department' in that Culture Ireland didn't have to pay for separate premises or for the costs of most of its staff.⁷⁹⁶ It also benefited, in terms of ease of access to departmental officials, from being housed in the same building.⁷⁹⁷ Evidently, despite being envisaged as a networked, virtual agency, Culture Ireland's specific geographical placement was a factor in how the organisation could function.⁷⁹⁸ In addition, not being a statutory entity allowed the agency greater leeway to develop its own remit.⁷⁹⁹ However, Culture Ireland's board, resisting advice from the Secretary General of the Civil Service, pushed for the drafting of legislation that would establish Culture Ireland as a statutory agency. In 2007, a Heads of Bill was in the advanced stages of preparation for proposal to government when, as the economic downturn loomed, political pressure came to bear on the civil service to curtail public sector expenditure and to cut back on quangos. The response of the civil service was tactical. Recognising that every department would need to sacrifice something, the

⁷⁹⁶ Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, *Public Service Reform Plan. Government Decision to Critically Review Culture Ireland With a View to Its Functions Being Merged into the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht*, June 2012, p. 11.

⁷⁹⁷ 'I certainly found it in the early years very handy, not just the office themselves, the location, but also that you could drop down to the ministerial corridor at any point and really see who you needed to see and it allowed me to build a good relationship with a whole range of ministers and the senior officials on a more informal basis'; Downes, Interview.

⁷⁹⁸ Downes, *Towards an International Arts and Cultural Strategy*, p. 21.

⁷⁹⁹ Culture Ireland official, Interview.

Department of Arts, offered to sacrifice Culture Ireland's statutory independence – an independence agreed in principle, but not yet legislated for, and consequently an easy concession to make. The tactic secured Culture Ireland's survival, but it was faced with a more explicit threat when, in 2009, the *McCarthy Report* proposed the agency's abolition as part of recommendations to government on public sector savings necessary to respond to the financial crisis.⁸⁰⁰ It was notable that the considerable public defence of the organisation focused on its instrumental value in promoting of a positive Irish brand as an antidote to the reputational damage that Ireland's spectacular financial crisis had inflicted. Even the writer Colm Tóibín asserted that 'Culture Ireland is the only game in town if you are an ambassador for Ireland in any country and if you are seeing there is any way of representing our country positively in the next five years.'⁸⁰¹ Stuart McLaughlin, chief executive of Business2Arts, made a similar observation that 'An Bord Snip Nua has recommended the withdrawal of Culture Ireland funding despite the fact that the organisation is a beacon of efficiency with a clear link to core messages about the recovery of "brand Ireland" internationally.'⁸⁰²

The aligning of Culture Ireland and, by extension, the arts it supported, with the promotion of brand Ireland appeared to have ensured Culture Ireland's survival once more. Even as the *McCarthy Report* was proposing Culture Ireland's abolition, the organisation was responding to a request from Taoiseach Brian Cowen to develop a major programme of promoting Irish arts in the United States, in the context of a *Strategic Review of Ireland-US Relations* that he launched in Washington in March 2009.⁸⁰³ At the very same time, I was performing *Match* again, this time as part of a Culture Ireland-funded triple bill of contemporary dance from Ireland, dubbed *Irish Cream*, as part of the St. Patrick's Day festivities in Holyoke, Massachusetts. Unlike the presentation of *Match* in Bassano two

⁸⁰⁰ McCarthy et al, *Report of the Special Group on Public Service Numbers and Expenditure Programmes*, vol. II, p. 18.

⁸⁰¹ Ronan McGreevy, 'Tóibín Says Proposed Arts Cuts are Cynical', *Irish Times*, 11 August 2009, p. 3.

⁸⁰² Stuart McLaughlin, 'How Much is Enough?', *Irish Times*, 17 September 2009, p. 20. An Bord Snip Nua was the humorous moniker for the Special Group on Public Service Numbers and Expenditure Programmes that produced the *McCarthy Report*.

⁸⁰³ Lara Marlowe, 'Ambitious Display of Creative Talent Asks US audiences to Imagine a Better Ireland', *Irish Times*, 8 January 2011, p. 3; Department of Foreign Affairs, *Global Irish Economic Forum, 18-20 September, Report*, p. 20, <https://global.irish/2009ForumReports.aspx> [accessed 8 June 2017].

years earlier, at a very different time in Ireland's economic narrative, the insistent contextualisation of the presentation in America as 'Irish' felt restrictive, literally restrictive in the case of *Match*, that was being performed in a theatre, on a stage not big enough to contain the choreography's ambition to travel. Though the choreography adapted to the context, just as it had in Bassano, the rigidity of the Irish frame curtailed the opportunities for surprise. While my body still recalls the heat, sweat, light and ground of the Bassano football pitch, I find it harder to revive sensations of the Holyoke performance on stage. I was not penetrated and altered by place as I had been on Croke Park or in Italy.

It is perhaps accidental that my discomfort at performing *Match* for the American market and for its share of the Irish diaspora should have anticipated so neatly the growing pressure to perform the nation brand. In 2009, one of the main themes to emerge from the Global Irish Economic Forum was a '[r]ecognition of the importance of culture in promoting Ireland abroad and developing a unique brand for the country in new markets.'⁸⁰⁴ A panel at the Forum entitled 'Ireland and its Diaspora: Harnessing a Unique Resource' concluded that Ireland's culture should be its 'key tool' in engaging the diaspora.⁸⁰⁵ Another panel, 'Promoting Brand Ireland through our Global Cultural Profile', whose discussions were reported to be 'frank, eloquent and often passionate', declared that arts and culture in Ireland 'should be harnessed as a unique brand identifier, a significant employer and selling point for Ireland abroad.' '[S]peakers were united in agreement on the importance of arts and culture, not merely for arts sake.'⁸⁰⁶ That Culture Ireland acquiesced to these economic and brand-rescuing aspirations of the government was evident in its framing of its *Imagine Ireland* programme in 2011. *Imagine Ireland* was a year-long programme of Irish arts in the U.S., with actor Gabriel Byrne as its high profile cultural ambassador.⁸⁰⁷ According to the *Imagine Ireland* website:

⁸⁰⁴ *Global Irish Economic Forum, 18-20 September, Report*, p. 7.

⁸⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

⁸⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

⁸⁰⁷ *Imagine Ireland* [website], <http://imagineireland.ie> [accessed 16 May 2017]. Credit for the title of the programme was given to Byrne for whom '[i]magine is a provocative word. It's a call to action [...]. There has never been a better time to imagine a new Ireland. Our time is now'; quoted in Arminta Wallace. 'Gabriel Byrne Launches Imagine Ireland's New Cultural Programme', *Irish Times*, 28 May 2011, p. 7.

These initiatives followed on the Global Irish Economic Forum at Farmleigh, Dublin, in September 2009, which placed a new strategic priority on culture as a unique long-term strength for Ireland, a vital door-opener for Irish business, and the most effective means of strengthening links with the global Irish community.⁸⁰⁸

However, while the *Imagine Ireland* project responded pragmatically to the prevailing political winds, its programme nonetheless presented a diversity of artistic perspectives and performances that could not easily be instrumentalised for nation branding purposes. Acknowledging the predominant expectation in the U.S. that dance from Ireland would be traditional, *Imagine Ireland* offered instead a programme of contemporary dance performances, strategically marketed as relatives of America's modern dance tradition.⁸⁰⁹ These performances included work by Croí Glan Integrated Dance Company of disabled and non-disabled performers and by John Scott's Irish Modern Dance Theatre that included survivors of torture, both of whose explorations of embodiment were discussed as contributors to the *Féile Fáilte* event in Chapter 3. *Imagine Ireland* also included work by Fitzgerald and Stapleton whose 'use of nudity as a critical response to the portrayal of female bodies in the media' had proved provocative and challenging, as described in Chapter One.⁸¹⁰ One of the presenting theatres in New York refused to display Fitzgerald and Stapleton's publicity photographs because of concern about possible complaints from parents who wished to protect their children from the female nipples in their images.⁸¹¹ The willingness of Culture Ireland to support such challenging (at least in particular contexts) contemporary dance suggested a determination on the part of the agency to maintain curatorial independence, to protect a space for artists to dissent, and to provide a more nuanced response to the view expressed by the Minister for the Arts, Heritage and

⁸⁰⁸ Imagine Ireland, 'How Imagine Ireland Came About', Imagine Ireland [website], <http://imagineireland.ie/imagine-ireland-about/> [accessed 8 June 2017]. A review of Culture Ireland by the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht characterised *Imagine Ireland* as 'a key step in delivering the priorities identified at the Forum'; DAHG, *Public Service Reform Plan. Government Decision to Critically Review Culture Ireland*, p. 6.

⁸⁰⁹ 'For decades, many Irish dancers and choreographers have trained with US teachers. The impact of eminent American choreographers such as Merce Cunningham and Deborah Hay can be seen on many Irish artists'; Imagine Ireland, 'Imagine Dance', Imagine Ireland [website], <http://imagineireland.ie/imagine-ireland-programme-296/> [accessed 16 May 2017].

⁸¹⁰ McGrath, *Dance Theatre in Ireland*, p. 168.

⁸¹¹ Seaver, 'The Naked Truth About Dance'.

Gaeltacht, Jimmy Deenihan, expressed during one of the *Imagine Ireland* launches, that there was 'a major onus on the arts to repair the damage' done to Ireland's brand.⁸¹²

Culture Ireland and *Imagine Ireland* were judged a success by the participants in the second Global Irish Economic Forum in October 2011, with recommendations that the *Imagine Ireland* model be 'sustained and rolled out in other markets such as Asia.'⁸¹³ However delving beyond the headline recommendations that advocated for continued reputational rescue through Culture Ireland's promotion of the arts abroad, there was some disquiet about the impact on artistic practice of such instrumentalisation of the arts in the service of nation branding. In a report on one of the Forum's panel discussions – 'Promoting Irish Culture: Building on the Progress since Farmleigh' – it was noted that:

Artists must be true to the creative forces which drive them; art that is contrived with the aim of promoting Ireland will lack sincerity and authenticity. To succeed as an export, Irish art must have succeeded with domestic Irish audiences. The State should aid art and culture but not interfere in its process or delivery.⁸¹⁴

Because Culture Ireland played a part in the delivery of work by Irish artists, facilitating not only performances abroad, but also brokering partnerships that could support an artist's work being made, its anomalous status as both part of the State, yet with an independent board was crucial. As the contemporary dance programmed in *Imagine Ireland* revealed, Culture Ireland did manage to support a diversity of choreography that offered alternative images of Ireland to the *Riverdance* brand of dynamic, homogenous and regimented fitness. However the effective independence that Culture Ireland enjoyed and that it could offer to the artists it supported, was not institutionally guaranteed. Its approximation of the condition of the independent artist – flexible, networked, exploiting the spaces between formality – rendered it vulnerable as such artists are when institutions

⁸¹² Wallace, 'Gabriel Byrne Launches'.

⁸¹³ Department of Foreign Affairs, 'The Report of the Second Global Irish Economic Forum Dublin Castle, 7- 8 October, 2011', 22 November 2011, p. 10, <https://global.irish/2011ForumReports.aspx> [accessed 8 June 2017].

⁸¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

protect themselves. As a result, in November 2011, just as the value of Culture Ireland was being celebrated after the Global Irish Economic Forum, the government announced a Public Service Reform Plan that determined to merge the functions of Culture Ireland into DAHG. Despite public outcry in the cultural sector and supportive media, Minister Deenihan did not contest the recommendation.⁸¹⁵ The fixed-term contract of Chief Executive, Eugene Downes was not renewed, a decision that was impossible for the board to resist since, without legal existence, the board was not Downes' employer. It was a decision for the DAHG, whose officials, in negotiation with a Department for Public Expenditure keen on savings, protected their civil service colleagues rather than an external appointee, no matter how highly regarded. Culture Ireland's independent board of arts experts was disbanded and replaced 'by a focused interagency committee, the appointment of which would seek to ensure complementarities and a whole of Government approach.'⁸¹⁶ The committee would comprise *ex officio* representatives of Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Arts Council, the Industrial Development Authority, An Bord Bia, Tourism Ireland and the Irish Film Board to ensure that '[t]he business of Culture Ireland will need to be aligned more with our international trade, export and diplomacy endeavour.'⁸¹⁷ In a clear signal of the de-prioritisation of artistic independence, a DAHG review of Culture Ireland's mandate concluded that:

The programme will need to be adjusted to link with both the harder sell of cultural and artistic enterprise, as well as the more subtle persuasion business of cultural diplomacy.⁸¹⁸

The language of 'harder sell', 'enterprise' and 'business' made clear the internationally-focused economic priorities that were in the ascendant. The review also concluded that 'the arm's length provisions applied statutorily to the Arts Council do not apply to Culture Ireland or to the Department.'⁸¹⁹ The

⁸¹⁵ Irish Times, 'Culture Ireland'; Fintan O'Toole, 'Getting Rid of Culture Ireland Could Turn a Vibrant Artistic Vision into the Land of Bland', *Irish Times*, 17 March 2012, p. B8; Gerry Godley, 'Future of Culture Ireland', *Irish Times*, 4 May 2012, p. 15; Garry Hynes, 'Reviewing Culture Ireland', *Irish Times*, 2 April 2012, p. 15.

⁸¹⁶ DAHG, *Public Service Reform Plan. Government Decision to Critically Review Culture Ireland*, p. 11.

⁸¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

⁸¹⁸ *Loc. cit.*

⁸¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

autonomy of the agency and of the artists it had supported was no longer a consideration.

However, in addition to that international perspective, there was a more local factor in what Downes regards as his 'defenestration'. The absorption of Culture Ireland back into DAHG permitted the Minister to assume the power and recognition for Culture Ireland's activity that the agency's autonomy denied him. In a clientist political system such as Ireland's, that power of a minister to sign-off on the expenditure of a department's resources remains an important means of securing and rewarding political support, often at the local constituency level.⁸²⁰ It is also not a coincidence that Culture Ireland's independence was curtailed during the brief secondment of the Arts Council's Director of Public Affairs as special adviser to Minister Deenihan, since a weaker Culture Ireland might make way for the Arts Council to assume the cultural promotion function in the longer term.⁸²¹ So while Public Sector Reform, required to satisfy the conditions of Ireland's bailout by the Troika of foreign institutions, was the official reason for the assumption back into DAHG of Culture Ireland, a more complex nexus of personal, local and national politics was also at play.

With a remit to promote Irish arts abroad, from its inception Culture Ireland played a fundamental role in the articulation of the nation brand. Its aspirations to place artistic rather than diplomatic priorities to the fore, and in the process, to provide a mechanism for the international experience of artists to shape State policy and the nation brand, have been curtailed by the instrumentalising pressure of successive post-crisis governments desperate to restore to 'health' Ireland's national finances. Such desperation has shaped the articulation of an economically-driven nation brand to which Culture Ireland and Irish artists have been directed. In the case of Culture Ireland that direction has been evident in the reshaped structures and limited independence described above and in the attendant effort to reinstate a top-down spatiality of diffusion. However, it is also

⁸²⁰ Indeed, though Minister Deenihan became Minister for the Diaspora in 2014, it was to him, as the most senior local politician, that I paid a pragmatic courtesy visit in late 2015 when *The Casement Project* team was planning *Féile Fáilte* in his Kerry constituency.

⁸²¹ Downes, Interview.

important to acknowledge that, in addition to the national political and international economic pressures that have affected Culture Ireland, more local and interpersonal factors have also contributed to its current diminished, but not irrelevant state. The next section will examine how the nexus of competing pressures described above was experienced at the corporeal level of the individual dance artist, supported by Culture Ireland to work internationally. It is predicated on the assumption that policy has material effects, that bodies are traversed by relations that extend in local, national and international scales and that 'a certain spatial tacking back and forth between different scales and environments is very common in the ongoing process of constructing queer subjectivities, cultures, and forms of resistance.'⁸²² It examines also what agency might be available to the artist in shaping the nation-based identities produced by the promotion of Irish arts abroad. Finally, acknowledging the partial, fluid and vulnerable subject-position of the dance artist/citizen, this final section examines the ethics of borders and the choreographic limits of fluidity.

⁸²²Knopp and Brown, 'Queer Diffusions', p. 417.

Performing *Cure* in Hong Kong, 2014



Plate 4.2 Production image *Cure*. Photo Marcin Lewandowski.

It's 11 December 2013, in the wings of the Studio Theatre of the Hong Kong Cultural Centre. I'm waiting to start the dress rehearsal of *Cure* and suddenly I'm aware that I have to counter the feelings of anger, hurt, weariness, loneliness and disappointment that are threatening to distract me from the work I want to achieve.⁸²³ I recognise this combination of feelings. I felt something similar performing in the Irish Pavilion at the 2010 Shanghai World Expo – the last time I danced in China – and I see how many of the same forces have converged again in 2014. In retrospect, I've learned that *Dialogue*, the performance I created with Chinese dance artist, Xiao Ke, and that we re-made with a team of Chinese musicians and designers for the Expo platform, was subsequently recognised in a valedictory review of Culture Ireland's achievements.⁸²⁴ Unlike much of the other work presented at the award-winning Irish Pavilion, ours was the result of collaboration between an Irish and a Chinese artist rather than a showcase of Irish cultural talent. It embodied my desire to be permeable to and transformed by the

⁸²³ Fearghus Ó Conchúir, 'Cure', www.feorghus.net [website], <http://www.feorghus.net/projects/cure/> [accessed 8 June 2017].

⁸²⁴ DAHG, *Public Service Reform Plan*, p. 7.

relations of intercultural exchange rather than to simply transmit a fixed vision of the Irish nation brand. Through our exchange, I experienced and absorbed aspects of Xiao Ke's very different movement language and of the culture from which it grew. We became friends and the emotional pull of our friendship has had corporeal implications, directing our subsequent global itineraries to ensure that we stay in touch even when we are not working together. Culture Ireland's significant investment in the presentation at the Expo made clear that Downes and his deputy, Christine Sisk, understood what was at stake in our collaboration. Thanks to them, Irish resources effectively supported an independent dance artist in China to present her work as much as it supported mine. They facilitated a process of corporeal transformation by resourcing Xiao Ke and me to rehearse and develop, rather than just present, the piece.⁸²⁵

Though Culture Ireland was responsible for the artistic programme presented at the Irish Pavilion, the Taoiseach's office had ultimate oversight in that high profile international setting and the tensions outlined above between the instrumentalising nation branding agendas of the latter and the curatorial autonomy of former were materialised in our experience at the Expo. Expectations about where and when our dance should happen became a source of conflict. We used video projections in our performance and therefore needed to perform in the evenings when they would be visible in the outdoor setting. The Pavilion's team tried to persuade us to perform during the daytime. While I had made clear that we would need a large space for our performance and had cleared with Culture Ireland where in the Pavilion this might happen, the Pavilion team tried to get us to dance on the small wooden stage that they had erected, telling me that it had been suitable for the traditional Irish dance and music performances and so should be adequate to our needs. I resisted this effort to contain our dance within the frame offered by tradition and ultimately prevailed, but not without the stress of conflict and the worry it entailed. It was a worry compounded by the fact that my Chinese friends were not entirely comfortable with performing in the Expo since they regarded it as a government PR campaign, designed to promote a positive image of

⁸²⁵ Fearghus Ó Conchúir, [website], 'Dialogue', <http://www.fearghus.net/projects/dialogue---a-dance-for-a-tall-irish-man-and-a-shorter-chinese-woman/> [accessed 8 June 2017].

China at odds with their experience of life. On the other hand, they appreciated the fact that Western states, like Ireland, supported artists. In an interview at the time, Xiao Ke noted that while she could perform in collaborations at the Irish, German and British pavilions at the Expo, and be invited to show her own work abroad:

‘Most of my works can’t be shown in my home country due to the sensitive subjects they encompass,’ she said. ‘I think it’s pathetic that the art someone creates is not supported by their homeland. I can only perform overseas.’⁸²⁶

Xiao Ke and I, along with the other Chinese artists with whom we worked, agreed to our presentation at the Irish Pavilion because we understood that it enabled a series of additional semi-official and unofficial performances in Shanghai that avoided formal sanction and connected with genuinely engaged local audiences.⁸²⁷ Culture Ireland was aware and supportive of this additional programme. However, the compromise and the challenge of dealing with the politics encoded in the Expo environment had its costs for my Chinese collaborators and for me: it was in Shanghai that I tore the meniscus in my knee so that I had to stop dancing for a year. That hiatus ultimately provoked the reflections on recovery that resulted in the making of *Cure*. In the wings of the Hong Kong Cultural Centre, I’m aware that during the week of improvisation research that has preceded my presentation of *Cure* in Hong Kong, my knee has felt swollen, reminding me that there are limits to how open I can be to unexpected input that improvised movement implies, particularly with eighteen unfamiliar bodies of different cultural and aesthetic backgrounds. Despite the training, self-

⁸²⁶ Shi Yingying, ‘Dancing to a Different Tune’, *China Daily*, 30 July 2010, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2010expo/2010-07/30/content_11071401.htm [accessed 6 June 2017].

⁸²⁷ For a contemporaneous account of our experiences at the Expo see my blog posts: Fearghus Ó Conchúir, ‘Expo Visit: Niche at the Irish Pavilion’, www.fearghus.net, [blog], 4 June 2010, <http://www.fearghus.net/expo-visit-niche-at-the-irish-pavilion/> [accessed 8 June 2017]; Fearghus Ó Conchúir, ‘Expo Visit: Match at the Irish Pavilion’, www.fearghus.net, [blog], 3 June 2010, <http://www.fearghus.net/expo-visit-match-at-the-irish-pavilion/> [accessed 8 June 2017]; Fearghus Ó Conchúir, ‘Dialogue in Shanghai: Irish Pavilion in the World Expo’, www.fearghus.net, [blog], 28 May 2010, <http://www.fearghus.net/dialogue-in-shanghai-irish-pavilion-in-the-world-expo/> [accessed 8 June 2017]; Fearghus Ó Conchúir, ‘Dialogue in Shanghai: Downstream Garage’, www.fearghus.net, [blog], 28 May 2010, <http://www.fearghus.net/dialogue-in-shanghai-downstream-garage/> [accessed 8 June 2017]; Fearghus Ó Conchúir, ‘Expo Visit: Rehearsals in Beijing’, www.fearghus.net, [blog], 4 May 2010, <http://www.fearghus.net/expo-visit-rehearsals-in-beijing/> [accessed 8 June 2017]; Fearghus Ó Conchúir, ‘Expo Visit: Arriving’, www.fearghus.net, [blog], 29 April 2010, <http://www.fearghus.net/expo-visit-arriving/> [accessed 8 June 2017].

discipline, careful resting and nourishing of my body, it is vulnerable. I am vulnerable physically and emotionally. I am not a resource that can be exploited, that can self-exploit endlessly. There are limits to my resilience. In addition to the negative feelings and to the sense that I have to get myself beyond them, there is also a calculating analysis that this moment is a resource that I can exploit for my PhD research. Part of the analysis is a recognition that being in the wings, the hidden place that precedes or follows the visibility of the main stage, the space of preparation, recovery, but also of fiction (it is the place of offstage where it is possible to imagine that anything can happen) is unfamiliar to me. The original design for *Cure* and previous performances of the piece, had no wings, nor does any of my work, but in the Studio Theatre at the Hong Kong Cultural Centre, the wings are given, and perhaps this spatial imposition prompts the off-stage analysis and calculation that favours the scholarly mode.

I'm not in the wings of the Studio Theatre of the Hong Kong Cultural Centre as I write, but this present tense isn't just a gesture towards the literary convention of the historical present: it's also an acknowledgement that as I write this memory of a moment, I am constructing it, connecting the darkness of that place on the side of the stage to the illumination of my laptop, the enlightenment of reconstruction and analysis as I write and rewrite in London, three and four years later.

I'm in the wings of the Studio Theatre of the Hong Kong Cultural Centre on the southern tip of Kowloon, on 11 December. I'm presenting *Cure* as part of the 'Solo & Improv' week of the i-dance Festival. I've already been in Hong Kong since 29 November, having flown directly from Barcelona where I took part in another week of studio research with fellow choreographers in another EU-funded project to support artists' transnational mobility.⁸²⁸ I have already tested my openness to the unfamiliar. I have secured this performance of *Cure* in Hong Kong through the intervention of a Hong Kong dance producer whom I'm met when she was a participant in the Advanced Cultural Leadership Programme that I have helped

⁸²⁸ Modul Dance was a multi-annual project by the European Dancehouse Network, funded by the European Commission's Culture Programme, which supported 52 selected dance artists to research, develop, create and present work across Europe. Its main aim was 'to support development, mobility and exchange for dance artists'; Modul Dance, 'Project' [website], <http://www.modul-dance.eu/project/> [accessed 12 June 2017].

run.⁸²⁹ Good networks are important. As a regular contributor to this programme, I have met many people in Hong Kong's cultural sector and she, having seen a video of *Cure*, suggested that it was a work that would make sense in Hong Kong. Having presented my work in contexts where it didn't feel that there was any connection with an audience, I am no longer excited about having a performance just for the sake of having a performance. I've learned that it's the opportunity to connect with, be influenced by and grow a community of interest around the work that constitutes the wider choreography in which I'm engaged. For the premiere of *Cure* in the Dublin Dance Festival for instance, I curated a supper for a group of twenty people who applied to attend.⁸³⁰ I knew some of those who attended well. Others were strangers to me and to each other. I used the format of sharing food with the guests as an opportunity to foster conversation about the topic of recovery and I adopted variations on this food-based conviviality when I toured the work around Ireland. Such investment in the fostering and formation of communities of interest makes worthwhile for me the considerable energy, time and resources required in touring. The Hong Kong producer recognised this motivation and negotiated with Victor Ma, Artistic Director of the i-dance Festival, to include *Cure* in their programme.

The negotiation itself was complicated for a number of reasons, not least because it was mediated by email, between three people, and in English, which, though spoken very well by my Hong Kong colleagues, wasn't their first language. Trying to interpret the nuances of cultural expression, given that none of us knew each other in this situation of business negotiation, took time and many emails.

⁸²⁹ The Advanced Cultural Leadership Programme (ACLP) (Advanced Cultural Leadership Programme, 'About Us', ACLP, [website], <http://www.culture.hku.hk/about.html> [accessed 10 June 2017]) Asia's first leadership programme for the cultural sector, was established in 2010 as a partnership between Hong Kong University and the UK-based Clore Leadership Programme ([website], <http://www.cloreleadership.org> [accessed 10 June 2017]). I was the first Ireland Fellow on the Clore Leadership Programme in 2005, supported by the Art Council of Ireland, and have, since finishing my Fellowship, worked with the programme on a freelance basis as a facilitator, speaker and coach. My prior experience in China earned me an invitation to be part of the delivery team on the first ACLP and I continued to be part of that team until the programme's conclusion in 2017. ACLP attracted participants from across the cultural sector in Hong Kong and neighbouring countries, introducing me to a network of established and emerging leaders who gave me an insight into the culture and politics of Hong Kong that enabled and informed my performance there.

⁸³⁰ Fearghus Ó Conchúir, 'Cure: Supper, 2 May as part of Dublin Dance Festival in partnership with Create', Vimeo [video], <https://vimeo.com/76523793> [accessed 20 July 2017].

With limited financial resources between us, building up and drawing on the capital of interpersonal harmony was essential. Ma was happy to include *Cure*: the question was where in the programme and what fee the festival could offer. However that transnational negotiation depended on a history and network relationships established not only in Hong Kong, but also in Ireland.

Project Arts Centre as Home

Back in Dublin, I was, and continue to be, an Associate Artist at Project Arts Centre (PAC), Ireland's leading venue for the presentation of contemporary performing and visual arts. As seen in previous chapters, in 2016, this relationship underpinned the practical realisation of *The Casement Project*. Though it is a venue, PAC had recognised that a lack of producing infrastructure was holding back the development of artists who didn't have the resources or the inclination to operate their own company structures. Consequently in 2005, it began formalising its *ad hoc* administrative and producing support for such artists to evolve an associate artist programme, called Project Catalyst and later, Project Artists. According to Niamh O'Donnell, former General Manager of PAC (2003-2013) and Executive Producer of the Catalysts, the programme developed in response to needs of artists and theatre-makers:

Ultimately it was born out of you [Fearghus Ó Conchúir] and, in a way, Gary and Feidlim in Brokentalkers really,⁸³¹ being around and asking for help. So it was not something that was really, I would say properly planned. It was organic. It was Willie [White],⁸³² and I initially feeling that we would do whatever we could with the people who were asking for help. My feeling would be is that the reason it was as successful as it was (though it isn't without its flaws, some of which would have benefitted if they'd been dealt with at all and or earlier), is that it was always something that tried to maintain that it was the artists' needs rather than the political needs of the organisation that drove it. So it started literally with artists that felt that Project was their home or at least the right place for them to make.... It was, I believe you that suggested we call it an Associate Artist programme – between yourself

⁸³¹ Brokentalkers are a Dublin-based theatre company. Brokentalkers [website], <http://www.brokentalkers.ie> [accessed 7 June 2017].

⁸³² Willie White, now Director of the Dublin Theatre Festival, was Artistic Director of Project Arts Centre from 2002-2011. In 2004, he invited me to be a board member of PAC.

and Willie; and for me it was looking at whatever we felt we could do.⁸³³

It is important to note my implication in the evolution of the Associate Artist programme, both as artist and as board member of PAC from 2005-2013, an involvement that meant combining strategic and artistic experiences of the programme, and that can be read alongside O'Donnell's concept of PAC as 'home, or at least the right place [...] to make'.⁸³⁴ O'Donnell points out that the connection some artists feel to PAC is not necessarily dependent on physical location, and as a result PAC becomes a 'home' or anchoring 'place' that is more about shared values than shared space: 'it was about trying to anchor people because if they feel they have a place, whether it be... you and the likes of Dee Roycroft⁸³⁵ and even some other artists, where they weren't even around the building but they still felt that the affiliation anchored them.'⁸³⁶ The spatiality and corporeality envisaged here is quite different from the comforting home-place offered in Tuan's phenomenologically-inspired geography. First of all, for Tuan the notion of home derives from a co-presence that produces affective bonds of support and interdependence. However, the support of PAC was designed to function over distance, extending the notion of presence and the sharing of place, in my case, across national borders. Secondly, for Tuan: 'Unique to human beings among primates is the sense of the home as a place where the sick and the injured can recover under solicitous care.'⁸³⁷ Place, for Tuan, is made meaningful through the body, but it is a particular kind of body – a body in repose: 'Place is a pause in movement [...]. The pause makes it possible for a locality to become a center of felt value.'⁸³⁸ Tuan's conception of place is not one of adventure, but of a recuperation

⁸³³ Interview with Niamh O'Donnell, General Manager and Producer Project Arts Centre, 7 January 2014.

⁸³⁴ This self-implication is not designed to displace the 'proper' object of study with scholarly self-reflexivity, against which Kobayashi cautions, since, as O'Donnell communicates, my involvement in the field, alongside others, is constitutive of that field; Kobayashi, 'Situated Knowledge, Reflexivity'.

⁸³⁵ Dee Roycroft is an independent writer, theatre-maker and performer.

⁸³⁶ O'Donnell, Interview.

⁸³⁷ Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1977), p. 137. Tuan's exceptionalist account of the human primate is also highly contestable.

⁸³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 138.

that suggests a regression to the state of cared-for infant.⁸³⁹ In contrast, the place that PAC performs as a result of the relationships established through the Catalyst associate artist programme is a home that is both 'anchor' and 'spur', a grounding weight and a motivational force. It is also a place chosen by the artists who gravitate towards it, rather than one inherited or assigned:

In Project [the community] was self-made. It didn't really have to be built too much. It was really about standing there waiting until somebody came through the door and saying 'Yes of course, yes of course.'⁸⁴⁰

However, when I was negotiating with i-dance about the presentation of *Cure*, the associate artist programme was in flux. O'Donnell had recently left the organisation and a replacement had not yet come into post. In consultation with the outgoing producer, I had calculated that a fee of €3,500, in addition to the support from Culture Ireland to meet the specific costs of travel and accommodation, would be necessary to bring the *Cure* team to Hong Kong.⁸⁴¹ That fee was more than the festival was willing to pay. Ma proposed that if I participated in an additional week of group improvisation research and related activities that preceded the week of the performance the festival could pay €3,000.⁸⁴² I accepted this compromise, having assessed with the outgoing producer at PAC that the budget could work, provided I didn't pay myself a full fee for performing.⁸⁴³

⁸³⁹ The contestable assumptions of Tuan's thinking are that all infants are cared for by their parents and that all homes are safe.

⁸⁴⁰ O'Donnell, Interview.

⁸⁴¹ For previous tours of *Cure* we had toured Stephen Dodd as Production Manager, Margarita Corsadden as Stage Manager and Daniel Egan as Lighting Technician. For this performance, to save money, Stephen agreed to take on the dual roles of Production Manager and Lighting Technician, since he was also an experienced lighting designer.

⁸⁴² The additional activities included participation in three hour-long public improvisation performances; teaching a three-hour professional workshop and a three-hour workshop for the public; participating in a public dialogue with a Hong Kong writer on the topic of body; acting as respondent in a conference on orientalism and the body.

⁸⁴³ Unfortunately, subsequent revision of my budget by a new producer at PAC, unfamiliar with my work and with the relationship I'd established with PAC, meant that in the end, I couldn't draw any fee for myself after all this activity, including the rehearsal, presentation and performance of *Cure*.

Choreographies of Relation

I agreed to the compromise with i-dance for a number of reasons. Firstly, working hard didn't discourage me. As Kunst has made clear, the constant working and self-exploitation of the contemporary artist is a familiar discipline.⁸⁴⁴ Moreover, I valued in this programme of activity proposed by the festival an opportunity to build further relationships in Hong Kong. It would be a time to share with and learn from others, in the daily practice of improvisation, in performance and in critical exchanges, as well as in the attendant social interaction. This additional time in Hong Kong would make it possible for me to activate existing networks there, in particular those I'd built through the ACLP and the Clore Leadership Programme, even if 'activating', in that first busy week, meant getting in contact with people on Facebook and reminding them that I would be performing and that we might meet socially after that performance. It also allowed me to get to know the other artists in the festival, to figure out where aesthetic and personal sympathies might align for future collaborations or opportunities for performing. And I valued the extra time to get a sense of the environment in which I would perform. As it turned out, to be in Hong Kong as the last Occupy encampments of the pro-democracy Umbrella movement were being cleared away had a strong impact on how I thought of *Cure* and how I thought about future work in the city.⁸⁴⁵

I said yes to this package also, because continuing to perform *Cure* mattered to me and impacted on my matter in a way I welcomed. What was distinctive about *Cure* is that it was a solo that was made by my commissioning the six artists with whom I'd worked on a previous choreography, *Tabernacle*, to each choreograph through and for my body ten minutes of movement material on the subject of cure.⁸⁴⁶ Five of the commissioned choreographers were dancers in *Tabernacle* – Mikel Aristegui, Elena Giannotti, Stéphane Hisler, Bernadette Iglich, and Matthew Morris – and one was the visual artist, Sarah Browne, who also

⁸⁴⁴ Kunst, *Artist at Work*, p. 139.

⁸⁴⁵ The Umbrella Movement and Occupy Central with Love and Peace were two names used to describe the pro-democracy protests that took over parts of Hong Kong in 2014; Jonathan Kaiman, 'Hong Kong's Umbrella Revolution-The Guardian Briefing', *Guardian*, 30 September 2014; Lauren Hilgers, 'Hong Kong's Umbrella Revolution Isn't Over Yet Over', *New York Times Magazine*, 18 February 2015.

⁸⁴⁶ Ó Conchúir, 'Tabernacle'.

contributed to the production.⁸⁴⁷ It was important to me, particularly in relation to the dancers, to experiment with a choreographic process that distributed power. According to Roche, in traditional conceptions of choreography, and in scholarly engagement with dance, '[d]ancers can be reduced to passive receptacles of the movement, puppets in the process, whose bodies are given over to the demands of the choreography.'⁸⁴⁸ This hierarchical relationship of creator-choreographer and dancer as mute material was something I had striven to avoid in my choreographic process with a view to embodying a different ethics of social organisation.⁸⁴⁹ Rather than assume the role of choreographic dictator, I rarely gave dancers particular steps to execute or demanded homogeneity. What I'd valued always was the individuality and idiosyncrasy of that diverse group of performers and what I might learn from them. Consequently, I worked to find choreographic structures that would permit them to flourish and share that flourishing with an audience, individually and together. I'd never held an audition to select dancers, preferring them as autonomous agents to choose to work with me. Therefore, inviting them to choreograph a solo for me was a way to share authority and authorship with them, to devolve responsibility and facilitate their creative expression while putting myself to the test as a performer. Of course, I was the initiator of the project. I'd gathered the resources to make it possible and was responsible for sharing them. I selected the choreographers. And the process put me centre stage, though not with exclusive self-control. There was a risk in this approach in that it required of me an openness to whatever they chose to pursue. I'd proposed a theme, but how they each responded to that theme was up to them. I trusted that these six very different solos could be assembled into a single meaningful performance. In that assembly, I counted myself as choreographer of *Cure* alongside the others and was credited accordingly. My main choreography in this instance was to have created a structure that held together difference, a

⁸⁴⁷ Aristegui, Iglich and Morris performed in *The Casement Project* and Sarah Browne contributed to the *Bodies Politic* symposium that was also part of the project.

⁸⁴⁸ Roche, *Multiplicity, Embodiment and the Contemporary Dancer*, p. ix.

⁸⁴⁹ I am not alone in seeking to express alternative values through an alternative choreographic process: 'Depending of the choreographic process they engage in, dancers could be considered to be choreographic instruments or the choreographer's canvas; or, on the other end of the scale, as French choreographer Boris Charmatz describes, the "substance of the process itself"; Roche, *Multiplicity, Embodiment and the Contemporary Dancer*, p. 1.

structure that resided in the choreographic text of *Cure*, but that also resided in my body performing the text and in the networks of support that enabled the text to be realised in particular locations at particular times. Because *Cure* was motivated by and operated with (to varying degrees of success depending on the circumstances) a set of values that shared authority and housed difference, and because it also required and generated a particular embodiment in me that felt like flourishing, I was not, in 2014, ready to stop expending considerable personal energy and time in finding opportunities to perform it. The physical preparation that *Cure* required of me, the history of relationships that it honoured, and the new relationships that it built permitted me a kind of being-in-the-world, a way of being an artist, a citizen, a human that mattered to me.

Doing My Body

At play in this articulation of choreographing and investing in a process that produces a desired or valued embodiment are some of the paradoxes familiar from Butler's account of the body in performativity.

The body is not a self-identical or merely factic materiality; it is a materiality that bears meaning, if nothing else, and the manner of this bearing is fundamentally dramatic. By dramatic I mean only that the body is not merely matter but a continual and incessant materializing of possibilities. One is not simply a body, but, in some very key sense, one does one's body and, indeed, one does one's body differently from one's contemporaries and from one's embodied predecessors and successors as well.⁸⁵⁰

The notion of doing one's body might seem to suggest a subjectivity that precedes and chooses the embodiment. Even though as embodied subject, I was made in a particular way by *Cure*, a way that I did not anticipate even as I conceptualised the whole project and facilitated its realisation, I chose to pursue its continuation and repeated performance. Initially, I wanted to be open to the possibilities that the process I'd instigated would materialise. However, as I invested energy to create the personal, physical, relational and structural conditions that enabled me to perform the piece, I did, *to some extent*, choose to

⁸⁵⁰ Judith Butler, 'Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory', *Theatre Journal*, vol. 40, no. 4 (December 1988), pp. 519-531, p. 521.

reinforce the particular embodiment of me that it had produced. As Grosz insists, a body is 'marked by its disciplinary history, by its habitual patterns of movement, by the corporeal commitments it has undertaken in day-to-day life' – though, following Butler, I regard my body not only as marked, but, in part at least, made by these commitments willingly undertaken.⁸⁵¹ Age, physical fitness, amount of time to rehearse before the performance (which is affected by the availability of economic resources), illness, tiredness, socio-political context, all have an impact on how I manage to embody anew the choreographic proposition. And how that proposition changes permits me to reflect on the specificities of place in which I encounter and manifest these shifting conditions. For Butler, the possibilities of altering prescribed and repressive social scripts exist in the moments of failure to perform perfectly, and in Hong Kong, my performance of *Cure* was not an exact repetition of previous performances. But with *Cure*, there is no ur-text to authorise performances as accurate or inaccurate, only an approach and a process that must be danced in the moment. In her account of the use of modern and contemporary dance in American cultural diplomacy, Clare Croft recognises that: 'Place, as well as time, has a huge impact here, too, as sites on the tours infuse and recalibrate meanings within choreography.'⁸⁵² What I would like to stress is that the place-based impact of the choreography that is evident when a work is on tour applies to its 'original' performance also. The origin, or home is just one place among others.

Occupy Central with Love and Peace

In Hong Kong, the day before the performance, I visited the Occupy encampment at Admiralty where protesters against the Chinese government's decision to allow only two or three vetted candidates to stand for the next Chief Executive election, had blocked a major arterial route in the city since 28 September. It had been announced, that on the 11 December, the day of the performance of *Cure*, the police would clear away the barricades, the encampment of tents, flags, art works, makeshift study area for students, first aid centres, gardens, Lennon Wall of support messages etc. and would arrest any protesters who impeded the clearance. Visiting on the final day of the camp, I photographed repeated versions

⁸⁵¹ Elizabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1994), p. 142.

⁸⁵² Croft, *Dancers as Diplomats*, p. 7.

of the slogan 'We will be back' and carried this memory of resistance and solidarity into the performance of *Cure* the following day. During Bernadette's section in the performance, which already sampled the sound of protest in its soundtrack, suddenly open to the recollection of the Admiralty clearances, I felt I was filled with an explosive energy that made me move with vigour and effort. I followed that impulse until it exhausted me so that when I continued the performance I was aware that I didn't have the same power as I often did for the physical exigencies of the later sections. My body could not reproduce a previous embodiment of the choreographic script, but that chosen script is one that survives regardless of these apparent 'failures'. The structure of the performance sustains generously the vulnerability of the performer's body as he dances his way through it, because it is made with generosity, care and an openness to vulnerability.

While Butler's early articulations of performativity use theatrical comparisons, in addition to the linguistic antecedents of Austin and Searle, her later accounts shy away from the theatrical as she attempts to distinguish performativity from 'a view such as Erving Goffman's which posits a self which assumes and exchanges various "roles" within the complex social expectations of the "game" of modern life.'⁸⁵³ For Butler there is no self prior to embodiment and she continues to oppose what she regards as a misreading of her account of gender performance as reassuringly humanist Goffmanesque role play:

JB: There is a bad reading [of *Gender Trouble*⁸⁵⁴], which unfortunately is the most popular one. The bad reading goes something like this: I can get up in the morning, look in my closet, and decide which gender I want to be today. I can take out a piece of clothing and change my gender: stylize it, and then that evening I can change it again and be something radically other, so that what you get is something like the commodification of gender, and the understanding of taking on a gender as a kind of consumerism.

LK: And also as a totally volitional act

JB: ...on the part of a subject who treats gender quite deliberately, as if it's an object out there, when my whole point was that the very formation of subjects, the very formation of persons, presupposes

⁸⁵³ Butler, 'Performative Acts and Gender Constitution', p. 528; referencing Erving Goffmann, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1959).

⁸⁵⁴ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990).

gender in a certain way—that gender is not to be chosen and that ‘performativity’ is not radical choice and it’s not voluntarism.⁸⁵⁵

Performing *Cure* is not a choice to take on a role for the duration of the performance, like dancing the part of the prince or peasant in a classical narrative ballet. In fact even classical dancers do not assume and divest themselves of those roles with the kind of ease of which Butler is suspicious. The roles are assigned to particular bodies that have been crafted and that have crafted themselves to take on the demands of the choreography. The repeated performance of that choreography, in turn, shapes and conditions the embodied subjectivities of those who perform the role. They may not become Giselle, if we think of Giselle as the tragic heroine of a romantic ballet; but those dancers are formed by the demands of a canonical choreographic script, and that formation isn’t relinquished when they slip from their tights or tutus. In my case, there is a choice to practise a particular kind of embodiment to which I assent physically and ethically, a script whose creation I have helped to shape and yet whose outcome I can’t determine. The script does not exist without my embodying it, but I do not exist either, in Butler’s terms, until I embody it.⁸⁵⁶

One of the questions that Foucault poses to Geography in a response to his 1976 interview with *Hérodote* is: ‘In particular, do you think one can reply to the question: who has power?’⁸⁵⁷ When Foucault asserts that power is everywhere, Thrift objects to what appears hopeless in that assertion for those who want to effect progressive change and oppose regressive domination. Thrift wants to sketch out ‘a rather more optimistic view of the word, one in which power is

⁸⁵⁵ Judith Butler and Liz Kotz, ‘The Body You Want: Liz Kotz interviews Judith Butler’, *Artforum*, vol. 31, no. 3 (November 1992), pp. 82-89, p. 83.

⁸⁵⁶ In fact, the script cannot really be said to pre-exist: ‘But here again the grammar of the formulation misleads, for the possibilities that are embodied are not fundamentally exterior or antecedent to the process of embodying itself’; Butler, ‘Performative Acts and Gender Constitution’, p. 521.

⁸⁵⁷ Michel Foucault, ‘Des Questions de Michel Foucault à «Hérodote».’ *Hérodote*, No. 3, juillet-septembre 1976, pp. 9-10; reprinted in Daniel Defert and François Ewald (eds.), *Dits et Écrits 1954–1988 vol. III* (Paris: Gallimard, 1994), pp. 94-5. The questions appear for the first time in an English translation as Chapter One of Jeremy Crampton and Stuart Elden (eds.), *Space, Knowledge and Power Foucault and Geography* (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2007), pp.19-20, and shape that collection of essays and writings that focus on Geography’s engagement with Foucault. This is not quite the same as Crampton and Elden’s more summary version of the question: ‘What do geographers understand by power?’

undoubtedly present and hurts but is neither everywhere nor all-pervasive.⁸⁵⁸

However, Thrift's objection is based on an assumption that power is a commodity that is possessed, whereas, I reiterate, for Foucault power is something that circulates:

Do not regard power as a phenomenon of mass and homogeneous domination – the domination of one individual over others, of one group over others, or of one class over others; keep it clearly in mind that, unless we are looking at it from a great height and from a very great distance, power is not something that is divided between those who have it and hold it exclusively, and those who do not have it and are subject to it. Power must, I think, be analyzed as something that circulates, or rather as something that functions only when it is part of a chain. It is never localized here or there, it is never in the hands of some, and it is never appropriated in the way that wealth or a commodity can be appropriated. Power functions. Power is exercised through networks, and individuals do not simply circulate in those networks; they are in a position to both submit to and exercise this power.⁸⁵⁹

If individuals 'are in a position to both submit to and exercise this power', power implies an existing contest between interconnected discursivities, so that the very pervasiveness of power is the source of the potential resistance to domination.⁸⁶⁰

Culture Ireland and *Cure*

This formulation of power and of the articulation of 'possibilities' within the 'conditioned and circumscribed' historical situation provides a useful framework for reflecting on the practical work of negotiation, compromise, effort and challenge that an individual dance artist might need to operate in her/his interaction with institutional power exercised at various scales. In the instance at hand, having agreed the performance fee with the i-dance festival, I also had to secure the support of Culture Ireland to cover the substantial costs of flights and accommodation for the *Cure* team. The reduction of Culture Ireland's funding that accompanied the downgrading of the organisation from semi-autonomous agency

⁸⁵⁸Nigel Thrift, 'Entanglements of Power: Shadows?' in Joanne P. Sharp, Paul Routledge, Chris Philo and Ronan Paddison (eds.), *Entanglements of Power: Geographies of Domination/Resistance* (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 269-278, p. 269.

⁸⁵⁹ Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended*, p. 29.

⁸⁶⁰ '[O]rdinary people may come to effect change not in spite but because of entanglement in power relations'; Crane, 'Are "Other Spaces" Necessary?', p. 356.

to a civil-servant-led division of DAHG, meant it was no longer in a position to fund as comprehensively as it had in the past. A particular challenge for me in relation to this presentation of *Cure* was that the invitation to perform had come after the relevant deadline for applications. The next funding round related to activity that would happen from January 2015 and therefore my activity in December 2014 was ineligible. However, I was aware that there was some limited scope for discretion, as the website indicated:

Applications are not accepted outside of the regular grants round, unless an exceptional case can be made that the event is high profile and could not have been known by the deadline, for example a film to be screened in a major international festival.⁸⁶¹

To facilitate such an exceptional application, I contacted the Director of Culture Ireland, Christine Sisk. A senior civil servant, Sisk has been part of Culture Ireland since its 2005 and was Director of Grant Programmes before she was appointed to replace Downes as Director in the 2012 absorption of the agency back into the DAHG. As well as meeting her at international events such as the American Performing Arts Platform showcases in New York, and at Culture Ireland events at the Edinburgh Festival, she was Culture Ireland's point of liaison when I was invited to present my work in the Irish Pavilion at the Shanghai Expo. My first email to her on the subject of *Cure* in Hong Kong, asked for her advice about applying, reminding her of my history of working in China and her previous connection to that work, as well as pointing to the opportunity for further work in Asia that this exposure might afford. I deployed a balance of the personal and the strategic in my appeal.

Her response was positive, equally friendly in tone, but also professionally correct in saying that she could arrange for an application to be considered if I

⁸⁶¹ On the Move, 'Culture Ireland: Grant Applications', www.on-the-move.org [website], <http://on-the-move.org/news/topic/article/15824/culture-ireland-grant-applications/?category=41> [accessed 9 June 2017]. In a sign of increased bureaucratization, the guidelines have since been updated and appear more discouraging of exceptions with the capitalised and bold typography: 'Applications are **NOT** accepted outside of the above regular grant rounds except in **EXCEPTIONAL** circumstances. For further information, please read Culture Ireland funding criteria'; Culture Ireland, 'Regular', Culture Ireland [website], <http://www.cultureireland.ie/funding/schemes/regular> [accessed 9 June 2017]. Emphasis in original.

could prove that the invitation to present the work came after the deadline for the previous round of funding and that it was 'a high profile opportunity which could not be duplicated at a later time.'⁸⁶² My resulting application to Culture Ireland stressed the quality of *Cure*, as evidenced by press reviews, detailed my experience of presenting work in China, which remained a priority area for the Irish government and for Culture Ireland,⁸⁶³ indicated the track record of the festival in presenting international work and demonstrated the profile of the Hong Kong Cultural Centre as a venue for the presentation. The application also exploited the strength and strategic value of my cultural network in Hong Kong, referring to the ACLP and to the Clore Leadership Programme, and demonstrated that beyond the status in Hong Kong such a 'high-value' network conferred, there was a practical benefit in terms of the press contacts and local intelligence that my network opened up. Finally, the application made clear my awareness that the Irish Consulate was recently established in Hong Kong, and that by supporting *Cure*, Culture Ireland would support an opportunity for the consulate to introduce itself to a range of influential cultural leaders in the city.⁸⁶⁴ By communicating that I had already met with the consulate, I also conveyed that I was aware of Culture Ireland's role in 'working with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade to ensure that cultural affairs are effectively promoted whilst strengthening Ireland's cultural networks abroad.'⁸⁶⁵ In short, I tried to make the application irresistible on artistic and on strategic grounds. I had to make it irresistible because without Culture Ireland's support I wouldn't be able to afford to present *Cure*.

As outlined above, Culture Ireland had lost its curatorial and artist-focused independence in 2012. As a result, my engaging with it and with the Irish Consulate as proxies for the DAHG and DFA might have seemed like a risk for the 'independent thought, free expression and provocative imagining' in my work that

⁸⁶²Christine Sisk, Email to Fearghus Ó Conchúir, 2 September 2014.

⁸⁶³ 'Culture Ireland prioritises major English-language markets (US, UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand) and major developing markets (China, India, Russia, Brazil and Turkey) and global cultural centres (e.g. Paris, Berlin)'; Culture Ireland, 'Purpose of the Award', www.cultureireland.ie [website], <http://www.cultureireland.ie/about/purpose-of-awards> last [accessed 5 January 2015].

⁸⁶⁴ Fearghus Ó Conchúir, 'Covering Letter CI HK', unpublished application to Culture Ireland, 13 October 2014.

⁸⁶⁵Culture Ireland, 'About Culture Ireland', www.cultureireland.ie [website], <http://www.cultureireland.ie/about/about-culture-ireland> [accessed 5 January 2015].

O'Toole feared would be lost with the reining in of Culture Ireland.⁸⁶⁶ However, the success of my application, which was immediately processed by Culture Ireland, meant that the engagement was for the most part enabling and positive. It illustrated how, even as an independent artist, I was networked in various relationships to hegemonic power, whose terms and structures I understood sufficiently to be able to carve out a space for 'exceptional activity', and through that activity, for an embodiment in relation to others that I wanted to achieve and share.

Even if Peter Ryan, Ireland's Consul General in Hong Kong, spoke in a language that was typically corporate and economic, mentioning in the first meeting I arranged with him the significance of the Chinese 'market' and of 'converting' leads into concrete business, he was also helpful and enthusiastic about the consulate supporting culture, telling me, 'you'll be our guinea pig', as their first cultural event.⁸⁶⁷ At a reception hosted by the consulate after the performance of *Cure*, Mr. Ryan told me of his intention to organise, in 2015, the first St Patrick's Day Parade in Hong Kong and that his ambition was that the majority of participants would be Chinese. In addition he wanted to support Irish artistic activity in Hong Kong that would engage a local audience, rather than entertain an expatriate Irish community. The Irish brand he was keen to promote was one that was sufficiently robust to be permeable to alternative embodiments. For that reason, he expressed great satisfaction that the audience for *Cure* was overwhelmingly 'Chinese' and he tweeted a photograph he took of me with a group of ACLP and Clore colleagues who had attended the show, all of whom were Hong Kong Chinese. He was willing to be led by the community established by the choreography, because the choreography created the cross-cultural connections he wanted to achieve.

Chapter Two has traced the impact of the economisation of the arts on dance practice in Ireland. As that chapter suggests on the national scale, so my experience in Hong Kong indicates at a global scale that there were spaces of

⁸⁶⁶ O'Toole, 'Getting Rid of Culture Ireland', p. B8.

⁸⁶⁷ Interview with Peter Ryan, Ireland's Consul General to Hong Kong and Macau, 12 September 2014.

possibility to be negotiated in dealings with state funding, power and policy that were hospitable to the relationships and values my choreography performs. However, creating those hospitable spaces required a mobilisation of lines of connection to the hegemonic power, with the aim of understanding how it worked and of responding to it with strategic choreographic skill. In Foucault's terms, it involved acknowledging my place in the operation of power and raising the question of what choreography was possible for me and for others within that operation. In this respect, I was resisting again Thrift's characterisation of dance as a playful activity that 'eludes rather than simply confronts or subverts power through its "capacity to hint at different experiential frames".'⁸⁶⁸ As Nash details, Thrift's NRT risks repeating familiar tropes of dance as preverbal and instinctive. Drawing on the work of Janet Wolff, Susan Leigh Foster, Jane Desmond and Sandra Kemp, Nash emphasises that:

Only by considering dance outside any social realm, by imagining dance as a free-floating realm of the experiential above the social and cultural world and by ignoring the relational nature of dancing can dance be thought of as a prelinguistic and presocial bodily experience.⁸⁶⁹

I, on the other hand, wanted to emphasise and choreograph with the material of dance's socio-cultural, political and economic enmeshment.

Dance Democracy

As part of the i-dance Festival I participated in a public conversation with the writer and activist, Cally Yu. She had been a regular participant in the protest for democracy in Hong Kong, somewhat surprisingly (for a writer) introducing improvisational dance as an activity on the fringes of the protest sites. In our conversation on 1 December (before the clearance of the Admiralty Occupy site, but after the police clearance of a similar encampment in Mong Kok, a popular shopping district), I noted the contrast between the fixed structure of the Admiralty site and the fluid choreography of protest that had emerged in Mong Kok after the Occupy site was abolished there. Since protest was banned in Mong Kok, protesters would gather to 'shop' instead, a subversion of Chief Executive CY Leung's exhortation to Hong Kong citizens to continue shopping to combat the

⁸⁶⁸ Nash, 'Performativity in Practice', p. 656.

⁸⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 658.

economic damage he alleged that the protest was inflicting on Hong Kong. Despite reported annoyance from shops and businesses near the protest sites, subsequent sales figures didn't endorse the government's accusation that the protests damaged Hong Kong's precious economic activity.⁸⁷⁰ By gathering to 'shop' and, as Christmas approached, to 'carol sing', protesters defied police control of public gathering. Rather than take up fixed positions of opposition, the protesters in Mong Kok could gather and dissipate fluidly, challenging police attempts to contain and eradicate the protest. The appropriation of 'shopping' as a tactic of dissidence represented a choreography of citizen movement that deliberately engaged with hegemonic power, but in a way that could:

[P]roduce alternative modalities of power, to establish a kind of political contestation that is not a pure opposition, a transcendence of contemporary relations of power, but a difficult labour of forging a future from resources relatively impure.⁸⁷¹

By framing and articulating Occupy resistance as choreography, I want to indicate a continuity between dance, the kind of exploration and expression of embodiment that it entails, and the political and personal corporeal commitment of protesters in Hong Kong. As Foucault asserts:

I think it somewhat arbitrary to dissociate the effective practice of freedom by people, the practice of social relations, and the spatial distributions in which they find themselves. If they are separated, they

⁸⁷⁰ 'Hong Kong's retail sales improved during the second month of a 79-day long street occupation by pro-democracy demonstrators, defying naysayers. According to official government figures, Hong Kong's November retail sales value rose 4.1 percent year-on-year to HK\$41.3 billion (\$5.3 billion), contrary to the expected 0.2 percent contraction from 1.4 percent in October. The increased retail sales came at a time when the Occupy pro-democracy protests were in full swing'; Larry Ong, 'Hong Kong: Retail Sales Up Despite Occupy Protests', *The Epoch Times*, 31 December 2014, <http://m.theepochtimes.com/n3/1171515-hong-kong-retail-sales-up-despite-occupy-protests/> [accessed 6 January 2015]. See also Businessweek, 'Hong Kong Retail Sales Rise as iPhone Outweighs Occupy Protests', www.businessweek.com, [website], <http://www.businessweek.com/news/2014-12-01/hong-kong-retail-sales-rise-as-iphone-outweighs-occupy-protests> [accessed 6 January 2015]; Sijia Jiang, 'World Bank says Occupy Protests Fail to Impact Hong Kong's Business Climate', *South China Morning Post*, 29 October 2014, <http://www.scmp.com/business/economy/article/1627626/world-bank-says-occupy-protests-fail-impact-hks-business-climate?page=all> [accessed 6 January 2015].

⁸⁷¹ Butler, *Bodies that Matter*, p. 241.

become impossible to understand. Each can only be understood through the other.⁸⁷²

A review of *Cure* entitled 'Dance Democratization', acknowledged the continuity:

'Democracy' is Hong Kong's keyword of the year 2014. 'Democracy' is a fragile word because it dies with attempts on its own definition. It is also a slippery word because it invites imagination and interpretation of all sorts. To me, one can almost place 'democracy' and 'dance' in the same cognitive bucket, the former being an idea and the latter being its expression. If democracy absolves standard of practice from one single source of authority, if it requires courage to openness and admission of differences to propagate, I propose that 'dance democratization' has been diligently put into action in two works shown during i-Dance (HK) 2014 in December.⁸⁷³

To propose the insights of choreographic art as both a practice and a way of understanding the spatial and social distributions of people who are negotiating (and embodying) power, I am also opposing a temptation to think of dance performance and the Occupy encampments as a kind of Soja version of Foucauldian heterotopia, separated from hegemonic power (Occupy Admiralty had dedicated student study areas, indicating that alongside political challenge, some of the protesters nonetheless had conventional educational progress as a priority). As seen in relation to *Féile Fáilte*, in the previous chapter, Saldanha's challenge to the celebration of heterotopia explains that the separation of the heterotopian alternative from a space of supposed dominant power leaves that dominance unchallenged. Crane, quoting Massey and drawing on De Certeau's distinction between the strategies of dominance and the tactics of resistance, observes: "The other spaces (of tactics) are thereby robbed of political potential because space allows "only one history, one voice, one speaking position," that of the strategist."⁸⁷⁴ Rather than present my work as outside the space of strategies, I prefer to recognise in it the exercise of strategic engagements to achieve an

⁸⁷² Michel Foucault, 'Space, Knowledge and Power', in James D. Faubion and Paul Rabinow (eds.), *Power—The Essential Works of Michel Foucault 1954–1984* (New York: The New Press, 2000), pp. 349–64; quoted in Mathew Coleman and John A. Agnew, 'The Problem with Empire', in Crampton and Elden (eds.), *Space, Knowledge and Power*, pp. 317–340, p. 320 footnote 2.

⁸⁷³ Joanna Lee, 'Dance Democratization', *The Stand News*, 20 January 2015, <https://thestandnews.com/art/dance-democratization/> [accessed 24 February 2015].

⁸⁷⁴ Crane, 'Are "Other Spaces" Necessary?', p. 358.

outcome less familiar. As outlined above, in this instance, the strategic engagement with Culture Ireland, with the Irish Consulate in Hong Kong and through those State entities, with the commingling of cultural, trade and foreign policy that directed their operation, was not noticeably disabling for me. Surprisingly, the institutions that offered the most challenge were those artistic structures I expected to be most supportive.

Taking Care of Breakfast

Project Arts Centre has produced my choreography since 2005 and through my involvement with the organisation as board member, artist and friend, I have contributed to the development of an associate artist programme that now produces the work of a wide range of contemporary artists in Ireland. However, for the current Artistic Director, Cian O'Brien, the flexible, bespoke support that PAC provided to its Catalyst Artists has been difficult to explain to internal and external stakeholders and he has set about clarifying and, in practice, formalising the structures of support that are available.⁸⁷⁵ The departure of Niamh O'Donnell in 2013 from her long-held position as General Manager and Producer at PAC, allowed the organisation to split the considerable responsibility of the role she had evolved into two separate posts: a General Manager and a dedicated Producer for the Catalyst programme. A new producer was appointed in 2014, however she did not take up her role until the end of August 2014 at which time I had already agreed a fee and the date of performance with the i-dance Festival. The fee was determined with PAC's help, based on my previous experience of touring work abroad and with the help of the person who had been part-time producer for the Catalyst programme when Niamh O'Donnell was in post. With the interim producer, a continuity of institutional knowledge and familiarity with my work was maintained. With the arrival of the new producer in the middle of organising this presentation of *Cure* in Hong Kong, continuity and familiarity were lost.

⁸⁷⁵ 'The challenge that I always felt for the board, I didn't think that Project really knew what it was, the Catalyst programme. The executive were never clearly defining or I felt were never clearly defining what it was, what the role the Catalyst programme played within the context of Project's programme as a whole. I still think that's an issue which were addressing but, so I think the need for it has always been clearly articulated, but what it is and how the relationships work is something I always felt was the difficult part about it'; Interview with Cian O'Brien, Artistic Director Project Arts Centre, 17 January 2014.

Instead of regarding PAC as a champion and support of my work, as an enabling 'home', I felt stymied and disappointed by the producer's unfamiliarity with how my budgets had been put together in the past, and with her consequent revision of the fees that I had already agreed with the touring team. Her positive desire to increase fees for me and for the Stage and Production Managers meant changes to the budget that would result in my incurring a personal loss of up to €2000. Each suggestion of change seemed to involve a cost to me rather than a saving or gain. Because my relationship with PAC had evolved over time and because no formal agreements were in place about what PAC and I could expect from each other, my discomfort at what I perceived as a change in that relationship was difficult to express. Had PAC's previous support been a favour granted by individuals? Or an institutional assistance that I could properly expect to survive the departure of individuals from the organisation? My experience suggested that the place of PAC as a home that could support artists over distance and time depended on a complex and not readily communicable combination of institutional and personal relations, evolved through shared history.

Whereas PAC, in the form of the General Manager, Artistic Director and former assistant producer had often helped with funding applications I made to the Arts Council or to Culture Ireland, the 'extraordinary' application I made to Culture Ireland to support the presentation of *Cure* in Hong Kong was one I had to make on my own, since the new producer had no experience of applying to Culture Ireland. This contributed to a sense that I could no longer rely on PAC as I had before. It became in that period an institution to be managed, rather than a place of reliable comfort. The notion of comfort and care is crucial here since the work of strategic engagement with institutional structures, the effort to be open to challenging circumstances, the hard physical work of training my body, of traveling, of performing all take their toll. Not having counterbalancing, restorative sources of comfort, particularly ones that I had come to rely on, was doubly draining.

This was manifest in a seemingly trivial oversight by the producer in booking hotel accommodation. I had suggested suitably priced hotels in Hong Kong but the

producer chose a relatively expensive hotel on the admirable grounds that she wanted to be sure that the Production Manager, Stage Manager and I would be comfortable. Because I was working in Hong Kong for such an extended period, for the i-dance improvisation research week I stayed in a basic but adequate apartment on the top of a residential building for predominantly local Hong Kong Chinese in the Tai Kok Choi area of Kowloon. I did this to reduce the costs for which I would ultimately be responsible. Knowing it would be basic, I decided for the week of the performance to join the others in the hotel accommodation proposed by the producer, looking forward to the additional physical comfort it would provide for a period when I needed to focus my energy on *Cure*. It also appealed to me to be in the same place as my familiar team after a week of improvisation research in direct physical interaction with so many unfamiliar bodies. However, when I moved to the hotel, I discovered that, contrary to normal practice for a company on tour, the producer had booked a room-rate only rather than a bed and breakfast rate. The cost of having breakfast in this four star hotel was prohibitive when paid for separately, and so we had to forego some of the anticipated comfort. Apart from a personal disappointment, I also felt guilt towards the Production and Stage Managers for not providing the touring conditions they had a right to expect. I hoped PAC might rectify the oversight, but the solution that the producer offered was that I should incur the considerable additional cost of covering the hotel breakfasts. Again, the interaction with PAC was one that threatened my resources rather than one that added to them. By the time I was by the stage before the dress rehearsal, I recognised that it was not only the economic impact and the loss of material comfort that bothered me, but a sense of the loss of an emotional support on which I had relied to counterbalance the expenditure of mental and physical energy my work required. Whereas in the past, O'Donnell would have called, emailed or texted me before and after performances on tour to check I was okay, I received no such communication from PAC before or immediately after the performance in Hong Kong. In contrast, I did receive from the outgoing producer, who no longer worked for PAC and had no institutional responsibility to 'care', a good-luck card containing several miniature origami cranes that referenced the thousand cranes I'd folded as part of the

choreography of *Cure*.⁸⁷⁶ The card, with its cranes and good wishes, had passed from the hand of its maker in Dublin to the production manager who accompanied me to Hong Kong where he put it in my hands. It traveled across the globe while maintaining an intimacy in its extended connections. What made the card and cranes so significant and supportive was that they acknowledged and reinforced a history of caring and a network of understanding that on the side of the stage before the dress rehearsal I mourned as no longer available to me.⁸⁷⁷

This experience that mixed the personal and the professional, the apparently trivial detail and the acknowledged 'heart' of the work, illustrates the familiar conditions of labour under neo-liberal capitalism.⁸⁷⁸ As Kunst has articulated:

The movement of the individual which throughout the 20th century was celebrated as the discovery of the potential of freedom stands at the centre of appropriation, of exploitation of its affective, linguistic and desirable aspects.⁸⁷⁹

⁸⁷⁶ The origami cranes were made at the behest of one of the choreographers, Elena Giannotti and reference among other things Froebel's belief in the value of origami in the development of a child's brain and also the Japanese tradition of making a thousand cranes to gain a wish for good health. Making a thousand cranes took several months and was an activity I undertook during my work across Europe and Asia leading up to the premiere. The cranes were displayed in the foyer of PAC for the premiere of *Cure* and made material in Dublin a labour of attention, care and discipline effected in multiple locations across the globe. Indeed, I made many of the cranes in transit, on planes. They were a neuromuscular formation made in motion.

⁸⁷⁷ While I give names to individuals whose actions, absences, and omissions affected me in Hong Kong, it is important to acknowledge that the continuing impact of fiscal austerity in Ireland, the consequent reduction of funding to the arts in general and to PAC in particular, as well diminishing box office receipts have meant that PAC is an organisation that is under-pressure and over-stretched. Macro financial policy is experienced on the micro-scale of my individual body (among others), even at the most intimate level of emotion. However, as my engagement with Culture Ireland and the Consulate suggests, it is not simply a matter of the micro-scale hopelessly enduring the macro influence. The macro influence is not an abstract given but rather constituted by a series of specifically located interaction between individuals.

⁸⁷⁸ This is not to hide the fact that Western capitalism still relies on the experience of those in developing countries who work in factory conditions that regiment the body in forms of mass, co-ordinated labour. Indeed, the discovery of illegal sweatshops in Western European capitals, illustrates that the mobile, flexible worker is not the sole model of labour on which capitalism depends.

⁸⁷⁹ Bojana Kunst, 'Dance and Work: The Aesthetic and Political Potential of Dance', in Gabriele Klein and Sandra Noeth (eds.), *Emerging Bodies: The Performance of Worldmaking in Dance and Choreography* (Bielefeld: transcript, 2011), pp. 47-59, p. 54.

For Kunst, following Virno, neo-liberal capitalism's appropriation of flexibility, and of the worker's time 'beyond the factory gates'⁸⁸⁰ means that contemporary dance's relationship of challenge to hegemonic power:

[N]o longer has anything to do with resistance to rigid and disciplinary modes of production....The autonomy of creativity and aesthetic experience which was so important when resistance to the rationalization of labor first emerged, now represents an important source of producing value. What we thus observe are relationships between contemporary dance and new modes of production, in which movement and constant flexibility play a central role, together with individual expression and spontaneous creativity.⁸⁸¹

In this scenario, the comfort of a hotel breakfast, of solicitous phone-calls from a producer and of origami cranes are part of the labour of performing *Cure*. As a result, the absence of what might appear as superfluous comforts reveals them as supplements, simultaneously additional and essential to the labour they enable.⁸⁸² The emotionally-felt lack of these comforts also revealed that my solo performance depended upon others in a way that was not part of the neo-liberal ideal: 'Production encourages ceaseless collaboration, which must be temporary, but not too affective, otherwise it can become ill-timed and destructive'.⁸⁸³ By feeling loneliness and the absence of a system of emotional support from PAC that had been built over time and with sustained engagement, my experience at the side of the stage in Hong Kong revealed my shortcomings as an endlessly flexible, self-authored and self-sustaining creative worker under neo-liberal capitalism. But recognising this failure to measure up, according to Till, offers insight and the seeds of an alternative way of being: '[C]are challenges the Western Enlightenment assumption that individuals are autonomous and self-supporting, forcing us to recognise that not all humans are treated equally in society.'⁸⁸⁴

⁸⁸⁰ The regimentation of factory work did at least designate a period of non-work that the worker could spend as s/he wished. Rancière's *The Nights of Labour: The Workers' Dream in Nineteenth Century France*, John Drury (trans.) (Philadelphia: Temple University Press 1989) details how workers used their non-work time not simply to restore their physical energy for the next day's labour but also in aesthetic, intellectual and ultimately dissensual activity.

⁸⁸¹ Kunst, 'Dance and Work', p. 56-7.

⁸⁸² Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, Gayatri Spivak (trans.) (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1976).

⁸⁸³ *Ibid.*, p.57

⁸⁸⁴ Till, 'Wounded Cities', p. 12; referring to Joan C. Tronto, *Moral Boundaries: A Political Argument for an Ethic of Care* (New York: Routledge, 1993).

Corporeal Vulnerability and Hospitality

The ethical implications of corporeal vulnerability are drawn out by Paul Harrison in his insistence on the place of the body in the work of Levinas.⁸⁸⁵ While Harrison welcomes the focus of multiple strands of geographical research on the significance of embodiment,⁸⁸⁶ he identifies that the body considered in much of this research is one that is capable, that accomplishes. Vulnerability is therefore a weakness, a failure or at best a temporary state to be overcome. Harrison challenges this conception of the body by positing that: 'Vulnerability... describes the inherent and continuous susceptibility of corporeal life to the unchosen and the unforeseen – its inherent openness to what exceeds its abilities to contain and absorb.'⁸⁸⁷ Consequently vulnerability (tiredness, illness, jetlag, emotional distress) is not a temporary lapse in corporeal capability 'but rather an intrinsic and noneliminable aspect of corporeal existence.'⁸⁸⁸ This vulnerability forms the basis of the ethical relation between self and other that Harrison draws from his reading of Levinas.⁸⁸⁹ On one level, this relation is one of 'extreme or radical passivity' before the claims of the Other, a constitutive condition of corporeality that precedes the Other's claim. As a consequence, '[t]he subject does not form itself; it is incapable of folding in on itself or pulling itself together. Rather, it is closed from the outside by the touch of the other.'⁸⁹⁰

However, on another level, this extreme vulnerability to the other that appears to undo a sovereign self-authored and self-contained subjectivity ends up, as Derrida makes clear of Levinas' ethical embrace of alterity,⁸⁹¹ reinforcing the plenitude of the subject: "The "passivity of exposure" responds to the assignation

⁸⁸⁵ Paul Harrison, 'Corporeal Remains: Vulnerability, Proximity, and Living on after the End of the World', *Environment and Planning A*, vol. 40 (2008), pp. 423-445.

⁸⁸⁶ 'Recent journal special issues on the themes of "performing", "enacting", and "emotional" geographies demonstrate the ongoing and growing interest in the nature and politics of existence as a distinctly lively and corporeal affair'; *ibid.*, p. 423.

⁸⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 427.

⁸⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 436.

⁸⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 440.

⁸⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 438.

⁸⁹¹ Jacques Derrida, 'Violence and Metaphysics' in *Writing and Difference*, Alan Bass (trans.) (London: Routledge, 2005), pp. 97-192.

that identifies me as the unique one'.⁸⁹² The clustering of identity, 'me', 'unique' and 'one' at the end of the Levinas quotation belies the openness and hospitality to alterity that Harrison wants the quotation to support. Recent post-colonial critiques have revealed the implicit Eurocentrism in Levinas' philosophy as well as an explicit racism against the Arab Other expressed in interviews, confirming that he could not escape the metaphysical violence towards the Other he diagnosed as constitutive of Western philosophy, even as he articulated the ethical necessity of countering that violence.⁸⁹³ In his later work on hospitality, Derrida picks through the paradoxical hostility and welcome in Levinas's analysis:

[A]bsolute hospitality requires that I open up my home and that I give not only to the foreigner (provided with a family name, with the social status of being a foreigner, etc.), but to the absolute, unknown, anonymous other, and that I give place to them, that I let them come, that I let them arrive, and take place in the place I offer them, without asking of them either reciprocity (entering into a pact) or even their name.⁸⁹⁴

However, he also recognises that hospitality should be addressed to a particular other to be effective. He moves thus from the kind of Kantian interrogation of the visiting stranger that requests proper documents and authorised leave to stay, to a request that names in a spirit of love the individuality of the visitor:

Does hospitality consist in interrogating the new arrival? Does it begin with the question addressed to the newcomer (which seems very human and sometimes loving, assuming that hospitality should be linked to love—an enigma that we will leave in reserve for the moment): what is your name? tell me your name, what should I call you, I who am calling on you, I who want to call you by your name? - What am I going to call you? It is also what we sometimes tenderly ask children and those we love.⁸⁹⁵

⁸⁹²Emmanuel Levinas, *Otherwise Than Being Or Beyond Essence* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1991), p. 49; quoted in Harrison, 'Corporeal Remains', p. 440.

⁸⁹³Elizabeth J. Bellamy, *Affective Genealogies: Psychoanalysis, Postmodernity, and the 'Jewish Question' after Auschwitz* (Lincoln NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1997). Brenda Hofmeyr, 'Levinas Meets the Postcolonial: Rethinking the Ethics of the Other', in Elvis Imafidon (ed.), *The Ethics of Subjectivity: Perspectives since the Dawn of Modernity*, (Houndmills UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp. 280-295.

⁸⁹⁴Anne Dufourmantelle invites Jacques Derrida to respond, *Of Hospitality*, Rachel Bowlby (trans.) (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000), p. 25.

⁸⁹⁵*Ibid.*, p. 27.

This naming of the specific other is not a tainted conditional hospitality of justice that Levinas regrets is a practical necessity in contrast to the purity of the ethical claims of unconditional hospitality. For Derrida, it is unconditional hospitality that paradoxically requires both the anonymity and the identification of the guest.⁸⁹⁶ He elaborates further to show how '[f]rom a deconstructive perspective, hospitality is necessarily "contaminated" by law, system, and calculation, and this contamination is emphatically not understood as an unfortunate loss of ideal purity.'⁸⁹⁷ The notion of hospitality already implies that the host has the power and the dominion over territory and property to offer hospitality. And were the guest to seize property without acknowledging the host's ownership, the conditions of hospitality would no longer apply. Therefore, the borders that separate self and other, familiar and stranger are also a necessity to the ethical relationship of hospitality. Indeed, it is the arrival of the stranger that creates the border in so far as the limit is not apparent until it is crossed. This necessary boundary is already part of Levinas's legacy insofar as he maintains the absolute, unknowable alterity of the other against the appropriating tendency of the self, even at the level of the apparent intimacy of touch.⁸⁹⁸ This assertion of the ethical value of borders challenges:

In contemporary critical theory, and in particular in work inflected by poststructuralism, [...] an axiomatic understanding of the ethics of identity and difference. [...] This understanding presents identity-formation as a process of controlling boundaries and maintaining the territorial integrity of communities or selves [...]. First, notions of moral agency and ethical autonomy apparently depend on the 'othering' of certain categories of person – on the grounds of class,

⁸⁹⁶ See Michael Naas, *Taking on the Tradition: Derrida and the Legacies of Deconstruction* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002).

⁸⁹⁷ Mustafa Dikeç, Nigel Clark, and Clive Barnett, 'Extending Hospitality: Giving Space, Taking Time', *Paragraph* vol. 32, no. 1 (2009), pp. 1-14, p. 9.

⁸⁹⁸ 'By way of illustration, we may turn to a short essay by Levinas dedicated to the concepts of intersubjectivity and intercorporeality in the work of Merleau-Ponty. Here, Levinas comments that for him the image of two hands touching, an image central to Merleau-Ponty's understanding of corporeality and sensibility, does not indicate a conjoining or a mutual understanding but, rather, a "radical separation between the two hands" (1993, page 102, original emphasis). For Levinas, this "radical separation" tells of a "sociality" outside or independent of any putatively "lost" unity" or hermeneutically recoverable origin, essence, or meaning; of the relation of one to another, outside of the "great traditional idea of the excellence of unit" (1998, page 112)'; Harrison, 'Corporeal Remains', p. 439; referring to Emmanuel Levinas, 'On Intersubjectivity: Notes on Merleau-Ponty', in *Outside the Subject*, Michael B. Smith (trans.) (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 1993), pp 96-103.

gender, race, sexuality and so on [...]. Secondly, it is argued that the identity/difference, self/other relation is organized in fundamentally spatialized ways – around tropes of here and there, inclusion and exclusion, presence and absence, in-place and out-of-place. These two axioms of poststructuralist theory suppose that, to develop values of mutuality, inclusion and responsibility, it is necessary to bridge distance or extend the scope of recognition.⁸⁹⁹

Against this axiomatic suspicion of border-control, Derrida follows Levinas in proposing that it is the radical separation between self and other that enables an ethical relationship of hospitality.⁹⁰⁰

Asserting the Borders of *Cure*

Standing by the stage in Hong Kong, I recognised the limits to my corporeal openness. I had spent over a week contributing to the i-dance Festival, as a performer, teacher, speaker and mentor. I had stayed alone in a part of the city where Cantonese was the predominant language and where I was an anomaly as a Caucasian Westerner. Without internet access in the room, I had stood outside a local Café de Coral at midnight so that I could receive some emotional sustenance by skypeing home via the café's free wifi. I had managed jetlag and remained permeable to the daily intimacy of unfamiliar bodies from many different countries that was an expected part of the research week in improvisation. After all that flux of uncertainty and vulnerability to the unanticipated, I found in myself a determination to respect the specificity of *Cure*, to fight for its borders to be acknowledged and respected, to give it its proper name and through doing so to assert its value as a distinct entity. When Derrida recognises the need for hospitality to be directed to named and specific individuals, I draw the implication that hospitality is also to be offered by named and specific individuals. Therefore to be open in Hong Kong, ultimately it was necessary to assert the distinctness of the structure that I was offering there. In practice, this meant persuading the

⁸⁹⁹ Clive Barnett, 'Ways of Relating: Hospitality and the Acknowledgement of Otherness', *Progress in Human Geography* vol. 29, no. 1 (2005), pp. 5-21, pp. 6-7.

⁹⁰⁰ The encounter at the border, as Pickles points out following Étienne Balibar, is constitutive of the experience at the national centre and that encounter, according to Balibar, is producing in the European context, new identities. This suggests that the radical separation between self and other that Levinas and Derrida propose is not maintained or at least not a hygienically sealed separation. Perhaps the openness to alterity, to the unexpected future is allowing new futures to come in to being. See John Pickles, 'New Cartographies' and the Decolonization of European Geographies', *Area*, vol. 37, no. 4 (2005), pp. 355-364, p. 362.

festival to allocate the technical time the performance required to ensure its presentation conveyed care, respect and thoughtfulness. It also meant resisting pressure from the festival director to perform in an improvisation immediately after my performance of *Cure*. It wasn't that I was concerned about having the energy to dance for a further 20 minutes after the 65-minute presentation of *Cure*. Rather it was a realisation that I didn't want to compromise the integrity of the relationship I would build with an audience in *Cure*, by reappearing with dancers I had just met in an improvised performance to which less care and attention had been given.



Plate 4.3 Production image *Cure*. Photo: Jonathan Mitchell.

Despite the discomfort of disappointing and even offending my host, it was clear that I had a territory to protect, for myself and for the others that had helped make *Cure*. And it was clear that unless I protected *Cure's* defining borders, then I would have nothing of value to offer those I wished to invite into that territory. To offer hospitality I needed to assume the responsibility and also the situated subjectivity of being the host. This choreographic positioning is not absolute. It was an ethic relative to the expectation now articulated through the Creative Ireland agenda and through its nation branding antecedents that artists should be

open for business and endlessly, optimistically innovative. My assertion of the corporeal limit, of the need for care, resisted that expectation and asked instead for the resources that made it viable and sustainable for choreographies and citizens to be open, fluid and partial. As Butler proposes:

Such a strategy, I suggest, is crucial to creating the kind of community in which surviving with AIDS becomes more possible, in which queer lives become legible, valuable, worthy of support, in which passion, injury, grief, aspiration become recognized without fixing the terms of that recognition in yet another conceptual order of lifelessness and rigid exclusion. If there is a 'normative' dimension to this work, it consists precisely in assisting a radical resignification of the symbolic domain, deviating the citational chain toward a more possible future to expand the very meaning of what counts as a valued and valuable body in the world.⁹⁰¹

Having seen my performance of *Cure*, the festival director said he understood my decision not to perform in the improvisation. Besides I hadn't quite refused to participate in the extra dance: having dressed in my outdoor clothes, I stood by the side of the stage as the improvisation proceeded and made three yellow origami cranes, in honour of the paper cranes that I had seen at the Admiralty Occupy site the day before and which, by that time, had been removed, along with the protesters, by Hong Kong's police.

Conclusion

The wings of the Studio Theatre of the Hong Kong Cultural Centre could be conceptualised as a threshold, a vantage point, like this research, not in the full glare of lights on stage, nor in politicised city streets beyond the building. This account of the experience of presenting *Cure* reveals that the wings, just as much as the stage and the streets, are a place enmeshed in a myriad of material-discursive relationships manifest corporeally. And yet, though enmeshed in and constituent of the stage and its context, the wings are not quite stage or street. They are a place of pause, a place to recuperate before or after the intense expenditure of energy that the performance and all that was required to enable the performance has taken place. This pause is different from Tuan's home place of recuperation

⁹⁰¹ Butler, *Bodies that Matter*, pp. 21-22.

because the wings are made, not given, achieved and not originary. They mark a limit, a refusal that paradoxically is and enables participation. In this respect the wings have proved for me a surprising space of unanticipated discovery. From such imagined wings, it is clear that the economisation of the arts, exacerbated by Ireland's economic crisis, and the concomitant direction of artistic promotion abroad to the service of rescuing the Irish nation brand, clipped Culture Ireland's aspirations to curatorial autonomy and stymied the potentially direct mechanisms it promised for artistic influence to shape State policy. These conditions have effected Irish artists, but it has still been possible for a dance artist to direct State support to the presentation abroad of queerly transformative, non-normative Irish embodiment, and at the same time, to assert the limits of this dance artist's corporeal capacity, to insist on a corporeal need for care, rest, and support that resists a State-celebrated promotion of self-exploiting mobility, magically un-resourced creativity and desperate openness to doing business.⁹⁰² Neither movement nor immobility guarantee counterhegemonic effects. It is the practice of discerning the choreography of what movement and what rests are effective when, and in what particular locations, that is the lifework of the dance artist as citizen.

⁹⁰² Knopp and Brown, 'Queer Diffusions', p. 413.

CONCLUSION

On Reflection

This research has examined the corporeal experience of dance artists in Ireland implicated in the production and promotion of the nation and in the possibilities of citizenship at multiple scales. Dance, as an art-form practised in the formation of individual and collective bodies, has been proposed as a valuable resource for imagining, embodying and reflecting on alternative corporealities that make spaces for diverse and contested experiences within and beyond Ireland's borders. As an art form concerned with the organisation of movement in space, dance has also provided a framework for analysing the spatialities of substantive citizenship, recognising that the nation state is not the only scale at which citizenship operates. Who is permitted to appear where and when has been a question that has united the geographical, ethical, political and choreographic perspectives deployed throughout. The research has focused in particular on my choreography as an example of contemporary dance practice, operating independently of formal structures of incorporation, but nonetheless dependent of multiple networks of support, to ask what agency is available to the individual dance artist in shaping the nation brand and in proposing structures hospitable to the kinds of embodiment disadvantaged by hegemonic conceptions of the national body.

As discussed in the Introduction, though the conceptual validity and pragmatic efficacy of nation branding has been challenged by many, including by Anholt – the originator of the term and of much of the subsequent State practice of nation branding – the fact that successive Irish governments have referred and continue to refer to the importance of nation branding has made it a useful concept to track. The 2008 economic crisis tarnished Ireland's global reputation, its financial collapse parsed as a political and moral failure. The Irish government turned to the promotion of Irish arts abroad as a mechanism for burnishing the nation brand, intensifying an instrumentalisation of artistic activity in the service of government economic agendas that had already been in evidence since the start of the millennium. As outlined in Chapters Two and Four, the effect of what Slaby calls the 'economization' of the arts was also legible in the recent histories of the Arts Council and of Culture Ireland. And through these variably autonomous State organisations and the resources and policy they have operated, the research has

demonstrated how artists have experienced the impediments and possibilities afforded by the economic and political climate. This has not been a simple case of global forces played out at the individual scale. A key insight for this research has been Foucault's assertion that power is not a commodity held by some and not by others. Power circulates and all are implicated in its networks. This pervasiveness of power is the source of potential resistance to domination since the connections by which domination operates are available to counterflows of influence. Therefore, if artists in Ireland have experienced a cultural policy landscape primarily, but not exclusively, shaped by a neo-liberal agenda operating at the national and international scales, close attention to the histories of the Arts Council and of Culture Ireland has indicated examples of where and how artists have been able to enact alternatives. In particular, Ireland's emergence from a period of diminished sovereignty imposed by the Troika bailout has corresponded with the centenary commemorations of the 1916 Rising, a foundational moment of the State's short history. The Irish State has looked to artists again to provide an articulation of national identity after so much economic, political and social turmoil. And artists have taken the challenge to imagine what contemporary citizenship of the Irish Republic could be.

As choreographer of the largest of the commissions supported by the Arts Council for the centenary programme – an unprecedented State investment in a dance-based project by an independent artist – I have provided a distinctive perspective in Chapters Two and Three on how a dance artist responded to the opportunity to choreograph and perform a national body. Throughout I have drawn attention to dance not as a representation of ideas but as a practice of embodying possibilities. As a result, the research has addressed the choreographic labour of dance artists as more than a matter of steps performed on the stage. My choreography has included as material the socio-political, spatial and historical circumstances of its production, as well as prevailing representations of bodies and of the body politic. Choreography has been revealed to be the complex and deliberate structuring of places, relationships, institutions, partnerships and media of communication that enable groups of people to gather, to subsist, to work together and to be appropriately visible to others. As a result the focus of the

research has been less on what dance is and more on what it does. And part of what the dance work does is the labour of writing applications, building networks of support, booking flights and hotel rooms, etc., all of which have been revealed as having a material impact on corporeal sustainability of the dance artist and on those with whom the artist works.

To understand the material and discursive context in which my choreography took place, in Chapter One, I revisited accounts of embodiment in Ireland, many of which stressed the occlusion of the corporeal in the formation of Irish identity, and the apparent 'stilling' of Irish embodiment that resulted from colonial, nationalist and Catholic ideologies. The pernicious effect of those legacies on the embodied possibilities of numerous people in Ireland is still evident. Legislation inherited from Victorian Britain criminalising sex between men remained on the Irish statute book until 1993. Its repeal has been followed relatively quickly by the first Marriage Equality legislation in the world introduced by plebiscite. The possibilities and protections of queer corporeal and affective assemblies have been strengthened by these legal changes, but, as the queer visibility of *Féile Fáilte* demonstrated in Chapter Three, these new possibilities remain a challenge to the traditional conceptions of family on which the Irish State is constitutionally established. The legacies of Catholic influence on the State continue to be evident in areas such as the restricted rights of women to bodily autonomy, and in the still unresolved trauma of abuse historically visited on unmarried mothers, their babies and children in religious-run institutions. Though these legacies of Catholicism, colonialism and nationalism endure in contemporary Irish bodies in ways that require reparative attention, it has been important for this research to counter an essentialising trend in previous literature that has conceptualised a monolithic Irish body at the expense of the alternative embodiments that have always existed. These alternative embodiments have offered resistance to dominant modes of corporeality through their very endurance in inhospitable circumstances. Consequently, accounts of the Irish body that leave out or downplay these instances of non-hegemonic embodiment risk reinforcing the very hegemony they criticise. Furthermore, such narrow, essentialising accounts of the Irish body are inadequate to the multiple

experiences of contemporary corporeality in Ireland developed under the conditions of neo-liberal capitalism and its attendant technological, demographic and social change. The kinds of corporeal diversity and the change in socio-political relations signalled by the rise of obesity, the impact of inward migration on the Irish DNA, the gay sub-culture of barebacking and the embrace of a drag queen as alternative national sovereign have illustrated that a more supple conception of Irish embodiment is necessary, a conception more adequate to the task of addressing embodiment in its increasingly posthuman, material-discursive manifestations.

Disadvantaged by a historical devaluing of bodies in Ireland, dance as an art form has not figured as prominently as literature, theatre or music in the presentation of Irish cultural identity. However, the global success of *Riverdance*, recognised as a confident cultural adjunct to Ireland's Celtic Tiger economic success has provided one model of what a State and commercially approved choreography of Irish bodies could look like: disciplined, homogenous, young, talented, arranged in opposite-sex partnerships, able-bodied, white, traditional, yet open to the world. The research has examined how contemporary dance artists in Ireland, despite a legacy of poor State resourcing and inadequate policy frameworks of support, have performed alternatives to this restricted version of Irish embodiment projected abroad. I have introduced the work of other Irish dance artists to indicate alignments of solidarity between their body politics and mine. In the work of dance artists such as Aoife McAtamney and Emma Fitzgerald, discussed in Chapter One, explorations of what bodies could be beyond gender have nonetheless confronted the internalisation of hegemonic gender perspectives in a way that acknowledged both corporeal potential and the discursive limitations that already constrain that potential. In a State that polices differentially bodies assigned as female and whose Constitution envisages a social order founded on that differential policing, the performance of bodily alternatives by these artists asserts the viability of counter possibilities, as well as the challenges of maintaining them. As detailed in Chapter Three, the work of John Scott with immigrant survivors of torture and of Catherine Young with refugees has supported the visibility of bodies stigmatised and hidden by State and social

systems of exclusion. Rancière and Butler have provided useful reference points for recognising the politics in this making ‘visible what has no business being seen’ and in the assembling of bodies, even prior to their speaking.⁹⁰³

As seen in Chapters Two and Three, this political and spatial strategy of moving bodies beyond the borders of their assigned marginal places was one supported by *The Casement Project*, particularly in the presentation of a diversity of bodies – disabled, queer, migrant, of different ethnicities, young and old – on an equal platform at *Féile Fáilte*. More challenging, in that context, than a simple movement out of place of non-standard but nonetheless clearly labelled bodies was the presentation of a corporeality with a queer capacity to transform that made the spatial and temporal placement of such bodies difficult to label and fix. The research revealed the choreographic labour required to support this diverse embodiment at multiple levels, a labour, Butler suggests, that is structurally and spatially implicit when it comes to the appearance of privileged bodies in public space. This labour must be recognised to create more just structures for inclusive appearance and participation. The costs and care necessary to support corporeal vulnerability and the performance of non-hegemonic embodiments were also demonstrated in my account in Chapter Four of the presentation of *Cure* in Hong Kong. That presentation, performed through my Irish body, but made from the choreographies of an international group of artists, and influenced by the political strategies of Hong Kong’s pro-democracy movement, as well as by the circumstances in Ireland and in Hong Kong that affected my body physically and emotionally, made clear that the presentation of ‘Irish’ work abroad is not a broadcast of brand, but a complex interplay of influences shared and received at multiple levels.

The research has shown how my work on *The Casement Project* and elsewhere has brought together a mobilisation of the transformative potential of bodies with a recognition of the material and discursive contexts that condition the performance of corporeality. The practice of imaginative bodily engagement with Roger Casement has offered a mechanism for understanding how bodies are

⁹⁰³ Rancière, *Disagreement: Politics and Philosophy*, p. 162.

shaped by historical legacies and institutional structures. However, as Foucault has suggested, these legacies and structures are riven with internal contradictions and inconsistencies, and through a daily practice of creative work with them, the dance artists in *The Casement Project* embodied alternative possibilities latent in those legacies. Drawing on the potential for deviation in Butler's account of the citational in performativity, we both took on and took elsewhere the corporeal information available in the Casement archive. In this way, following the Arts Council's invitation to artists to reimagine the Irish nation as part of the centenary commemorations in 2016, the Casement archive became a positive resource for performing individual and collective bodies more hospitable to difference, more open to the surprise of embodiment, and more capable of the transformation necessary to create solidarity in the moment. In doing so, it offered new perspectives on the choreography of the nation's body politic. However the resilient flexibility capable of responding to the moment required practice, skill, judgement and the resources of time, money and care that support these skills to be sustainable. Throughout this research, attention to the precarisation of artistic practice under neo-liberalism has illustrated the costs to bodies, my own included, of the lack of structures of sustained support. The centenary commemorations afforded me both the resources and the official platform with which to claim and embody the value of dance in shaping the national narrative. My previous work such as *Match* and *Mo Mhórchoir Féin* had prepared me for the opportunity, both illustrating that the placement of particular bodies within the hegemonic spaces of Irish embodiment – a football stadium and a church – could have prospective and retroactive force, embodying what could be, but also, and perhaps more subversively, claiming that these alternative possibilities had always been there. If the commissioners of *Mo Mhórchoir Féin* were anxious that I was introducing an unclothed man into the church, my work reminded viewers that, in the Christ figure on the cross, the unclothed male body was already central to the Christian architecture. And if *Féile Fáilte* performed a place capable of welcoming the stranger, it also inserted that need for hospitality to otherness into the local history of Banna beach and of North Kerry. The performance of queer embodiment offered not only new futures, but proposed that the past could be seen differently also.

The queer fluidity of embodiment revealed in *The Casement Project* performed mobility as a counter to fixed and stilling articulations of Irish corporeality and to the control exercised by the nation state in the legislation of formal citizenship. However, as Sloterdijk has proposed, mobility has become the hallmark of modernity and an essential ingredient of neo-liberal capitalism.⁹⁰⁴ Therefore, the research has tried to identify the tensions of promoting queer mobility in the Irish context, revealing what particular instances of mobility and spatial displacement are freeing for whom. *The Casement Project* has been seen to build a space of possibility through a mobility that links dance studios, stages, a beach, lecture rooms, national institutions, meeting rooms, airports and editing suites in multiple countries, as well as the virtual locations of the internet and social media. It has also indicated however, the cost of hyper-mobility expected of the independent dance artist seeking to survive. As a result, the research has identified the limits of hospitality, proposing that the choreographer's recognition of what movement and what recuperative or reflective stillness is required in what place, at what moment and with whom, becomes the necessary skill for exercising agency for a more just and hospitable world.

Reflecting on this research at empirical, methodological and theoretical levels, the key contribution it makes derives from my distinctive position as artist and scholar. The challenges of the research can be attributed to the same situated knowledge. On an empirical level, this research has been significant because it contributes to the recording of a contemporary dance practice in Ireland that has not been studied in great detail, not even in dance scholarship and particularly not in Geography. The research has been distinctive because it has not sought to interpret choreography as a representation of ideas. I in no way wanted to provide a maker's assertion of the 'true' meaning of my own work. Instead, I have offered an insight into the complexities of making choreography in a way that I hope will be useful to scholars who are interested in using dance as a resource to think about the geographies of embodiment, of assembly and of citizenship. By focusing on what the dance practice does rather than what it is or what it is about, at an

⁹⁰⁴ Sloterdijk and Ziegler, 'Mobilization of the Planet from the Spirit of Self-Intensification'.

empirical level, the research has admitted into consideration the wider labour of choreography that goes into the practice of the art form. Geography has proved a discipline attuned to the significance of specificity. As a result, I have been able to contribute to record and analysis a privileged access to the research, applications, emails and other material that have gone to the making of my creative work. My place within the cultural sector in Ireland and internationally has also afforded me access to relevant experts whose insights and perspectives are gathered here and have been of particular value in elucidating the histories of the Arts Council and of Culture Ireland. This empirical information offers artists and others a mechanism by which to understand the structures of power at play in the cultural field in Ireland, and with that knowledge to make choices about how to act.

At a theoretical level, the research has proposed an alternative to increasing prevalence of NRT and its more-than-representational descendants as a mode for valuing the contribution of dance to the academy. As outlined in the research, the tendency of an approach guided by NRT is to envisage dance as pre- or extra-discursive. While its insistence on the value of embodiment and affect is helpful, NRT's failure to recognise dance's serious engagement with the discursive is not. This research has shown how I choreograph with bodies conceived as material-discursive assemblages enmeshed in and performing social, historical, political and economic contexts that they also transform. As a result, context is theorised not as external to the dance, but materialised in the bodies that perform and subject to transformation through those bodily performances. The labour, discipline, creativity, instinct and committed practice of the dance artist in performing embodiment offers a model for conceptualising the agency available to individuals shaped by and shaping complex and internally discontinuous lines of power. The research has also indicated the need for a more nuanced, spatially- and contextually-specific theorisation of mobility. The flows and counterflows of power need to be conceptualised as having different forces and speeds without implying that hegemonic strength follows from the magnitude of force and speed. Consequently the research offers the practised skill of the choreographer as a model for the judicious deployment of movement and arrest, flexibility and stillness, activity and repose to articulate alternative modes of being and becoming.

At a methodological level, my position as artist and scholar has necessitated a supple and queer methodology that might prove of use to artist scholars and others. Though I've followed Haraway's approach to situated knowledge, the methodological *bricolage* I've deployed has not been in the service of anchoring a fixed subject position. Instead, tacking between scales, between the autoethnographic and the analytical, the 'I' of this research has moved between foreground and background, always implied but not always drawing attention to itself, partial in every sense. This approach offers another template for queer situated scholarship. Nonetheless, it was my intention, at the outset, to ensure that this research appeared in the academy in a way that would be institutionally legible and that did not reinforce preconceptions about what a dance artist's contribution to knowledge might need to be. This methodological *bricolage* has afforded me an approach that is consistent with the research, authentic to the artistic practice it investigates and yet, I hope, sufficiently familiar to the academy and to the discipline of Geography for its efforts to be legible. Above all, this methodology, with its focus on the labour and practice of making choreography, on the embodied implications of that practice for dance artists and for those with whom they engage, does not threaten the art work with the kind of essentialising and reductive interpretation too often apparent in the use of dance performance in academic research.

As I complete this research, it is to creative practice that my attention returns, albeit a creative practice that is enmeshed in the scholarly enquiry evidenced here and more importantly, a creative practice enriched by the solidarities forged with geographers who are committed to spatial and social justice and supportive of the knowledge that artists bring to the embodiment of spatiality. The research has focused on the agency of the individual artist in shaping the nation brand in the service of more inclusive and dynamic articulations of citizenship. It has illustrated the scope of such agency for the dance artist specifically, but in doing so, the research implies a similar agency available to artists and to all citizens, albeit differentially distributed. Though the research has attended to individual bodies, corporeality throughout has been

understood as relational, with individual embodiments enmeshed in spatially extended networks of restriction and of support. As I return to my artistic practice, it is on these networks of solidarity, now extended in the academy, that I hope my work can build. Within the academy there remains further research to be conducted that renders visible the knowledge of dance artists. This work is a work of recording, of attention to specificity and of the development of methodologies that respect the modes of knowledge production evidenced in the dance practice under consideration. It may be a work of supporting practitioner scholars to evolve these methodologies and the theories that they help produce. It may be a work of practical institutional support and resources for such dance artist scholars.⁹⁰⁵

Postscript: Dancing into Creative Ireland

As part of ART:2016, *The Casement Project* benefited from the promotion and profile that came as part of its contextualisation in the overall Ireland 2016 commemorative programme. In addition, it meant that when the director and other staff involved with Ireland 2016 migrated to the Creative Ireland project-team, they brought with them an awareness of *The Casement Project*. I'd been introduced to John Concannon at a private lunch organised by the Irish Embassy to brief the visiting Ireland 2016 team on the commemorative activity in the UK. Concannon and I subsequently followed each other on Twitter. As discussed in Chapter Four, Ireland 2016's promotion of *The Casement Project* did not translate into a significant profile for dance in Creative Ireland's initial discourse and communications. The laudable commitment to provide lessons in the art, drama, music and coding made no mention of dance. In response, in a series of tweets about the value of dance that pointedly tagged Creative Ireland, I aimed to insinuate dance into Creative Ireland's thinking as much as into its social media stream: its likes and retweets of my suggestions indicated that I'd made some inroads.⁹⁰⁶

⁹⁰⁵ The creative hacking of the inaugural IRC Employment-based PhD programme to support not only this research but the viability of my creative practice over the past four years remains an untold element of this research.

⁹⁰⁶ 'Creative&cultural participation #1 factor for older age. #2 is physical activity. Let's dance @creativeirl <http://www.ageuk.org.uk/professional-resources-home/research/reports/health-wellbeing/wellbeing->

Invited, in February 2017, to attend the London launch of Creative Ireland, at the Irish Embassy, I was encouraged to see images from *The Casement Project* appear as part of Minister Humphreys' presentation.⁹⁰⁷ Even if unnamed, the visual inclusion marked an enduring impact for the project and its entry into the official archive, further confirmed by the National Library's digital archiving of *The Casement Project's* website. The particular image used in the Humphrey's presentation was of the line of interlocking dancers on the beach in Banna, taken on the morning of *Féile Fáilte*. It linked to Casement's photographs in the Amazon, to each line enacted with the performers during the process of creation and performance, to the participants of the MicroRainbow workshops, to the attendees at conferences in Maynooth University, NYU and University of Limerick. It showed dancing bodies exploring solidarity, connection and a coming together made from difference. Seeing the image reactivated in me this history of embodied connections, as we sat in the gilded receptions rooms of the embassy. I didn't miss the opportunity to underline the insertion of *The Casement Project* into this State initiative by sharing on social media a screen-grab of the appearance of the image behind the Minister.⁹⁰⁸

At the Embassy event, Concannon introduced me to the Minister and I used the opportunity to talk with her about the importance of supporting a greater articulacy with and about bodies in Ireland. My direct contact with ministerial power was brief. More useful was the chance to meet Concannon in person, who, acknowledging my campaign on behalf of dance, invited me to be part of the video Creative Ireland was preparing for the re-launch of ireland.ie. The website was to

[research/?utm_source=Social&utm_campaign=WellbeingIndex&utm_medium=Organic ...](#); @followfearghus, 'Creative&cultural participation #1 factor', Twitter, 11 February 2017, www.twitter.com/followfearghus [accessed 13 July 2017];

'For a more @creativeirl it's time for more dance in theatre and beyond @Independent_ie @ChrisMacCormack'; @followfearghus, 'For a more @creativeirl', Twitter, 26 February 2017, www.twitter.com/followfearghus [accessed 13 July 2017].

⁹⁰⁷ The London launch was preceded by the launch of the initiative at the Consulate of Ireland in New York, on 13 January 2017. Though Creative Ireland is an initiative with ambitions to promote cultural engagement and inclusion in Ireland, the international launches convey the global reputation management that is a strong part of its mission.

⁹⁰⁸ @followfearghus, 'Proud to see #TheCasementProject dancers', Twitter, 28 February 2017, www.twitter.com/followfearghus [accessed 13 July 2017].

be rebranded as the portal for Irish creativity, what then Taoiseach Kenny called ‘a gateway to discovery of who we are, what we believe and what we do’.⁹⁰⁹ It would be the access point and articulation of the nation brand. The video, with the title ‘This is Ireland’, featured award-winning Irish scientists, chefs, designers, filmmakers, poets, theatre-makers, composers and musicians. In the recording for the video, I was invited to talk about what creativity meant to me. I was anxious to avoid any jingoistic celebration of Irishness and to stress the value of diversity to my understanding of creativity. Though only a few lines of my long interview were included in the final video, I was glad that, as part of my vision of Irish creativity, the editors included my proposition of the importance of a ‘willingness to be surprised’ and my encouragement that people would ‘stretch themselves further than they thought they would go before, so that we create something new together’.⁹¹⁰ In my mind, at the time, was the language of *Féile Fáilte*, the willingness to welcome the stranger from the ‘outside’, beyond the border, as well as the strangeness already ‘inside’. My contribution was of an embodiment practised through *The Casement Project*. I was proud to be a voice and a body for dance among the other artists and creatives. I was proud to see excerpts from our ‘I am Roger Casement’ dance film used in the video, gratified to have been asked to feature in the video myself, knowing that dance had gained a visibility and profile to warrant its inclusion in this initiative of State-supported national self-definition, and knowing its visibility and profile would be strengthened by this inclusion in a video viewed over a million times on social media.⁹¹¹

And yet, I was disappointed to find myself in a video that didn’t quite match the inclusiveness I’d choreographed *The Casement Project* to perform. For example, despite the claim of the video’s title that ‘This is Ireland’, its bodies were homogenously white and not visibly different in terms of physical disability. The corporeal possibilities it presented were narrow. Its editors and commissioners didn’t include any footage of bodies from ‘I’m Roger Casement’ that might trouble the feel-good atmosphere of the promotional video – no shivering bodies, no

⁹⁰⁹ Hugh Linehan, ‘ireland.ie Website Showcasing Irish Creativity Launched’, *Irish Times*, 15 March 2017.

⁹¹⁰ Creative Ireland, ‘This is Ireland’.

⁹¹¹ As of July 2017, the ‘This is Ireland’ video has been viewed 747,000 times on Facebook and 410,724 times on Youtube.

bodies in ecstasy, no bodies exhausted. Moreover, the video also included footage of Michael Keegan Dolan's *Rian* that had a visibly diverse cast of dancers from around the world, in a work explicitly exploring cultural hybridity.⁹¹² Yet the excerpt used in the video managed to avoid showing any of the non-white dancers. My disappointment made me question if I had compromised the values of *The Casement Project* in my determination to make visible a culturally neglected art form and the potential of embodiment it could activate within the frame of this newly articulated nation brand.

'This is Ireland' was also shown at the formal launch of *Cruinniú na Cásca* at Dublin Castle on 23 March 2017. Because I had been in contact with John Concannon and the Creative Ireland team to discuss the place of dance in their evolving programme, I was invited to the launch. *Cruinniú na Cásca* would be an annual event, for the next five years, presented by RTÉ as part of Creative Ireland. Unlike the Dublin-focused Easter Monday 2016 activities that were its template, *Cruinniú na Cásca* would take place across the country and

see the streets and public spaces of our nation's cities, towns and villages come to life with an enormous range of live music and dance, theatre, art and coding workshops, talks and tastings, readings and screenings, special events and more.⁹¹³

The spatial diversity of its reach was to be matched by an explicit focus on cultural diversity. The day would be a 'a spirited celebration of contemporary Irish life, multiculturalism and creativity.'⁹¹⁴ RTÉ's promotional video for *Cruinniú na Cásca* was notably different from the earlier Creative Ireland videos in that the diverse bodies of multicultural Ireland were prominently in evidence. Also notable was a foregrounding of dance, both in the strapline for the event ('Meet, Make, Dance,

⁹¹² 'In *Rian*, eight dancers from around the world and four of Ireland's top musicians unite with Michael Keegan-Dolan and Liam Ó Maonlaí to create an expressive cultural hybrid. *Rian* taps into healthy life-enhancing traditions with influences from faraway places to evoke a timeless vision of the real indescribable nature of things'; Fabulous Beast, 'Fabulous Beast', [website] <http://fabulousbeast.net/about> [accessed 5 May 2017].

⁹¹³ Ireland.ie, 'Be Part of the First-ever Cruinniú na Cásca Festival this Easter Monday 2017', www.ireland.ie [website], 23 March 2017, <http://www.ireland.ie/en/stories/be-part-first-ever-cruinniu-na-casca-festival-easter-monday-2017> [accessed 5 May 2017].

⁹¹⁴ Ireland.ie, 'Be Part of the First-ever Cruinniú na Cásca'.

Sing, Play'⁹¹⁵), subsequently visible on banners, websites and brochures about the event all over the country, and in the prominent footage of dancing, albeit primarily social, in its promotional video. Even the Taoiseach and the Minister for Arts were seen dancing together and with a selection of variously enthusiastic partners on the day of the *Cruinniú*.⁹¹⁶

Cruinniú na Cásca was launched by An Taoiseach, Enda Kenny, who had recently used the annual St Patrick's Day event at the White House to deliver to President Trump what the New York Times called a 'lecture' on the value of immigration. Though primarily aimed at securing the position of the non-documented Irish in the U.S., its overall message of the welcome contribution of immigrants was greeted positively as a diplomatic criticism of President Trump's anti-immigrant policies.⁹¹⁷ In his speech at the launch of *Cruinniú na Cásca*, Kenny reflected on the success of the 2016 commemorations in language that combined a notable corporeality with an expanded conception of citizenship.

Last year we found ways to talk about our identity, the meaning of citizenship, the importance of community. It was a year of debate without division and argument without rancour. We all walked a little taller as a consequence. We belonged and we were proud to belong.[...] [W]e were our best and danced our best and sang our best.⁹¹⁸

Announcing that the theme for the first *Cruinniú na Cásca* would be diversity and inclusion, Kenny stressed that Irishness could now include the Travellers, who had recently received the long-campaigned-for recognition as a distinct ethnic

⁹¹⁵ RTÉ, 'Cruinniú na Cásca', [website], <https://cruinniu.rte.ie> [accessed 5 May 2017].

⁹¹⁶ Ryan Nugent and Kevin Doyle, 'WATCH: Enda Kenny thrills crowd with dance moves at Cruinniú na Cásca', www.independent.ie [website], 17 April 2017, <http://www.independent.ie/videos/irish-news/watch-enda-kenny-thrills-crowd-with-dance-moves-at-cruinni-na-casca-35629202.html> [accessed 13 July 2017].

⁹¹⁷ Ronan McGreevy, 'Kenny's Speech Goes Viral', *Irish Times*, 20 March 2017, p. 7; Conor Pope, 'Why Was the Irish Response to Enda Kenny's Stirring "Trump Lecture" so Muted?', *Irish Times*, 20 March 2017.

⁹¹⁸ Roinn an Taoisigh, 'Speech by the Taoiseach Mr. Enda Kenny T.D at the Launch of Cruinniú na Cásca, St. Patrick's Hall, Dublin Castle, 23 March 2017', www.taoiseach.gov.ie [website], 23 March 2017, http://taoiseach.gov.ie/eng/News/Taoiseach's_Speeches/Speech_by_the_Taoiseach_Mr_Enda_Kenny_T_D_at_the_launch_of_Cruinniu_na_Casca_St_Patrick's_Hall_Dublin_Castle_23_March_2017.html [accessed 13 July 2017].

group. It could also extend to the Syrian refugees that were soon to arrive in the town of Ballaghaderreen in Co. Roscommon. Including refugees in the experience of Irishness and Irishness in the experience of seeking refuge, Kenny reminded the audience that 'We were those people in the past.'⁹¹⁹ Kenny's branding of the Irish nation as inclusive and diverse did not omit the abiding economic pressure to attract inward investment. However, he did propose that what would make Ireland attractive was not only the economic 'bottom line':

But if we fail to appeal to those men and women in the totality of the island we are, in our words, our theatre, our painting, our music, our dance, our culture, we diminish them and diminish ourselves.⁹²⁰

That Kenny could envisage an Ireland enriched not only by literature, theatre, visual arts and music, but also by dance, represented a significant shift in the status of dance in the formation of the nation brand. That its new status should have emerged in the articulation of a national body more diverse, complex and inclusive provides hope for the work of embodied citizenship undertaken through *The Casement Project* and through the practices of many contemporary dance artists in Ireland. That my dancing body and those of the performers of *The Casement Project* appeared in the context of this launch conveyed once more the personal, professional and institutional networks that connect artists to the State, and the surprising possibilities for influence and change that such connections enable.

⁹¹⁹ *Loc. cit.*

⁹²⁰ *Loc. cit.*

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