Performing Social Change on the Island of Ireland 1972-2014

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Abstract

This dissertation analyses the relationship between moments of significant social change on the island of Ireland and performance practice between 1972-2014. Through investigating the Troubles, Second-Wave Feminism, and the Celtic Tiger primarily, this dissertation argues that key moments of social change on the island of Ireland are captured by a diversification of performance form, which fundamentally re-writes the role of the audience. The investigation charts how moments of social change influence a diversification of performance form such as the proliferation of community, collaborative art practice and collaborative woman-led performance in the 1980s, devised theatre in the 1990s, and immersive performance in the 2010s. The central claims of this dissertation are that *(1)* diverse performance practices emerged adjacent to the more established modern literary theatre to focus on marginalised experiences, illuminating the realities of everyday life for those who experienced violence, oppression, and trauma, and *(2)* that the relationship between the audience and the performance has changed significantly in Irish theatre in recent decades. Consequentially, this dissertation demonstrates a tangible link between shifting paradigms in performance practice and social change on the island of Ireland.

The methodological approach is principally led through the lens of theatre and performance studies, cultural studies, and feminisms. Major critical frameworks that are essential to the analysis include postmodernism, audience reception theory, and feminism. These methodologies and frameworks are fundamental to this research as they provide clear parameters for the analysis of social change and performance practice on the island of Ireland since 1972.

This research contributes to established knowledge within the field by proposing new insights and perspectives on performance practice on the island of Ireland. It focuses on radical theatre and performance practice which lies outside of the dominant literary canon and the single-authored text model. This dissertation presents an all-island study of theatre and performance practices through a forty-year period, illuminating the relationships between theatre and performance practice on both sides of the Irish border. It also presents a multi-paradigm study that analyses the links in performance lineage across political borders to investigate the connections embodied art practices and contemporary Irish theatre practice. Through this study, the research demonstrates how the landscape of theatre and performance practice has altered considerably since 1972. This analysis of the proliferation of radical performance practice fundamentally observes how the role

of the audience has developed and diversified to occur as part of a wide spectrum of participation, and one that is significantly distinct from the traditionally established role of the audience in twentieth century Irish theatre.

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Declaration of Originality

I, Ciara L. Murphy, declare that this thesis is entirely my own work. I have not obtained a degree in this University, or elsewhere, on the basis of this work.

Ciara L. Murphy

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26th August 2019

Introduction

"Are you going to let this happen?" (ANU Productions)

This question, posed by a performer to the single audience member in ANU Productions' 2010 production of *World's End Lane* unintentionally points towards the central concerns of this dissertation.[1] The first is that the nature of the relationship between the audience and performance has changed considerably in Irish theatre in recent decades. The second is that a diversity of performance practices emerged adjacent to the more established modern literary theatre that dominated throughout the twentieth century on the island of Ireland.[2] This diversity of performance forms tends to focus on marginalised historical and contemporary experiences and stories, illuminating the lived realities of everyday life through presenting moments of violence, oppression, and trauma. Thus, this research project begins by asking how performance practice engages with and informs moments of major social change on the island of Ireland through the distinct yet intersecting lenses of place, performance form, gender, and social context from 1972-2014.

This dissertation argues that moments of significant social change on the island of Ireland between 1972-2014, including the Troubles, Second-Wave Feminism, and the Celtic Tiger, are captured by a diversification of performance form. These include community, collaborative art practice and collaborative woman-led performance in the 1980s, devised theatre in the 1990s, and immersive performance in the 2010s. While these forms of theatre and performance-making refer to distinct lineages of practice internationally, there are key parallels that compel a study of their inter-relationality in a specific Irish context. These include a foregrounding of the relationship between the personal and the political in an explicitly embodied capacity, a critical engagement with urban space and the space of cities (moving away from the more traditional focus on the pastoral and rural images of place), and a heightened focus on audience, liveness, and the politics of reception as these major developments in Irish society, politics, culture, religion, and economics unfolded. This rich performance history identifies the experiences of those typically existing at the margins of public discourse and cultural

[1] *World's End Lane* was first produced in 2010 in the Dublin Fringe Festival and was re-produced during the Dublin Theatre Festival in 2011. For more information on both productions see: http://anuproductions.ie/work/worlds-end-lane/

[2] Such as: community and collaborative theatre practice (*The Wedding Community Play Project* and *Convictions*), participatory performance (*Two Roads West* and *The West Awakes*), feminist collaborative performance practice (*Split Britches* and *Lay Up Your Ends*), performances of protest (*Tell Them Everything*), and immersive theatre practice ('The Monto Cycle').

representation, such as women, children, working class, traveller/mincéir, asylum seekers, and minority-ethnic people.[3] In this way, it does not reproduce representations of traditional character tropes and structures, such as leading protagonist versus chorus, or dramaturgical structures of crises-resolution, as one finds in classical theatre history. It does not direct attention to well-established political or public figure(s) in its references to historical and cultural events as one finds in modern Irish theatre history. Rather, these performances mark the cyclical and insidious nature of *everyday experience* for those living under conditions of extreme violence and oppression, by particularly considering the dramaturgy of form as well as content. The performances analysed in this dissertation lie outside of the dominant single-authored literary theatre practice at the time of their production and thus, offer further avenues to consider audience-performance relationships, building on the major insights from scholarship dedicated to modern drama. The performances are also linked through their use of a multiplicity of urban sites which consist of non-theatre spaces, non-institutional theatre spaces, public spaces, and historical sites. The subject matter at the centre of the performances tends to be explicitly political, challenging state-led histories and policies. Thus, this dissertation argues that while distinct in form and content, clear parallels can be drawn in how these performances problematise and challenge the grand national narrative(s) pervading 1972-2014.[4]

[3] The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines the term marginalise as "[t]o render or treat as marginal; to remove from the centre or mainstream; to force (an individual, minority group, etc.) to the periphery of a dominant social group; (*gen.*) to belittle, depreciate, discount, or dismiss" (Oxford English Dictionary). In an Irish context women, children, working-class people, and minority ethnic people have been consistently placed on the margins of Irish life since the establishment of the state. In *Bunreacht na hÉireann*, women's status in public life is consigned to the domestic space, as set out in Article 41.2. Until the end of the 20th century, women who were not consistent with the constitutional definition of womanhood have been systematically incarcerated in Magdalene Laundries, Mother and Baby Homes, and Industrial Schools, as well as suffering sustained erasure in terms of their historical and social contributions. Similarly, children on the island of Ireland have been subjected to physical, mental, and sexual abuse due to a culture of silence (as examined in Chapter Three) that emerged out of the close relationship between the Irish state and the religious orders of the Catholic Church, suffering in industrial, national, and secondary schools. Women and children from working-class, traveller, or minority ethnic backgrounds are more likely to suffer marginalisation and tend to suffer a double-jeopardy of discrimination (a term that will be defined and analysed in Chapter Two). Similarly, those seeking asylum must suffer the inhumane Direct Provision system, and are excluded from fully accessing the benefits of Irish society because of their asylum status. Members of the traveller/mincéir communities suffer some of the worst social deprivation on the island ('About Irish Travellers') and have the highest suicide rates in the country (Mannion, 'Suicide Rates Among Irish Travellers Highlighted'). In the north of Ireland the suicide rates are higher than any other country in the United Kingdom and the legacy of political and violent conflict has had long-lasting and negative impacts on employment, education, and society (Black). Therefore, it is on this basis that this dissertation situates these groups and communities as existing along the margins on the island of Ireland.

[4] Linda Connolly explores the idea of grand national narratives in "The limits of 'Irish Studies': historicism, culturalism, paternalism." (2006) She argues that "[t]he dominance of a top-down political narrative in Irish history has [...] subordinated other political readings of 'the Irish' past" ("The Limits of 'Irish Studies'" 146). Furthermore, she observes that "[t]he challenge posed by a more plural and inclusive interpretation of what history *is* had been dismissed as fetish of the present

Many scholars have undertaken large-scale investigations into the intersections of politics, society, representations of marginalised communities, and performance practice in twentieth and twenty-first century Ireland. This research includes Lisa Fitzpatrick's *Rape on the Contemporary Stage* (2018), Miriam Haughton's *Staging Trauma* (2018), Eamonn Jordan's *Dissident Dramaturgies* (2010), Cathy Leeney's *Irish Women Playwrights, 1900-1939* (2010), Patrick Lonergan's *Irish Drama and Theatre since 1950* (2019), Charlotte McIvor's *Migration and Performance in Contemporary Ireland* (2016), Brian Singleton's *Masculinities and the Contemporary Irish Theatre* (2010), and Fintan Walsh's *Queer Performance and Contemporary Ireland* (2016). My research builds on this scholarship and focuses on performance practice which lies outside of the more dominant literary theatre canon and is distinct from the single-authored literary text model. My research contributes to the wider field of Irish and Northern Irish theatre and performance studies through an acknowledgment of the visible and vital links between performance practice histories on both sides of the border. Most often Northern Irish theatre history is either side-lined in wider studies on Irish and British theatre practice or approached through an isolated analysis of performance practice. Fiona Coleman Coffey's *Political Acts. Women in Northern Irish Theatre, 1922-2012* (2016), Tom Maguire's *Making Theatre in Northern Ireland* (2006), and Eva Urban's *Community Politics and the Peace Process in Contemporary Northern Irish Drama* (2010) all centralise Northern Irish performance practice in their volumes, focusing on theatre emerging out of the Troubles, the community theatre movement, and women's performance practice through a primary analysis of dramatic texts, with further considerations of cultural and performance histories. My dissertation aims to dissect, analyse and interrogate the links between performance practice in both jurisdictions, acknowledging the contributions of Northern Irish theatre practitioners in its wider investigation. This study builds on the previous valuable investigations of Irish and Northern Irish Theatre as presented by Coleman Coffey, Haughton, Lonergan, Maguire, McIvor, Urban, and Walsh by framing this exploration of Irish theatre as an all-island and multi-paradigm study.

by staunch defenders of the grand narrative of Irish history [emphasis original] ("The Limits of 'Irish Studies'" 146). Therefore, anything that exists outside of this masculine, nationalist, and post-colonial perspective on Irish history is outside of the grand national narrative. She gives an example of this marginalisation by referring the subjugation of women's experiences within the discipline, stating that "women's history is designed to support [the grand narrative] rather than challenge it" ("The Limits of 'Irish Studies'"149). Connolly notes that, in the case of Irish Studies, "[t]he dominant postcolonial narrative [...] fails to see the language and the conceptual categories in which the subaltern voice of (Irish) women speaks" ("The Limits of 'Irish Studies'" 154). As such, this research will frame grand national narratives of Irishness along these lines for the purposes of its argument.

Terminology

Defining and Reading Performance

Erika Fisher-Lichte et al. establish four central characteristics of performance (2014): "mediality, materiality, semioticity, and aestheticity" (18). Here, mediality is linked to the innate co-presence between the performer and the audience in performance, defining performance by its transience, which they argue is "integral to the *materiality* of performance" [emphasis original] (18). They argue that the process of creating performance differs from other methods of production and that "a performance does not create a product. It creates itself. It is transitory and ephemeral, even if the performance involves spaces, bodies, and objects that outlast the performance" (18). Similarly, as the performance is only present for a certain amount of time, they contend that meaning is derived from performance in the co-present moment and cannot be re-read in the same manner as images or text. Therefore, they argue that "[h]ow meaning is created in performances through such signs can be termed the *semiotic* dimension, or the *semioticity* of performances" [emphasis original] (19). Returning to the audience-performance relationship they argue that these elements of mediality, materiality, and semioticity contribute to the overall aesthetic experience of a performance (19). This research draws from this definition of performance for its own engagement, situating its definition of performance as that which relies on co-presence, is ephemeral, and co-creates meaning with its participants. In *Professing Performance* (2004) Shannon Jackson acknowledges the interdisciplinary inconsistencies in defining performance practice. Jackson argues that performance "is about doing, and it is about seeing; it is about image, embodiment, space, collectivity, and/or orality; it makes community and it breaks community; it repeats endlessly and it never repeats; it is intentional and it is unintentional, innovative and derivative, more fake and more real" (15). As such, she recognises performance as a series of contradictions that scholarship must try to contend with. She urges scholarship to break the assumptions that interdisciplinary conversations around definitions of performance will be straightforward. This research wishes to acknowledge the contradictions inherent in defining performance, and utilises performance studies frameworks to engage with a broad definition of performance, in line with the multi-paradigm performances that it investigates.

In the introduction to *Performing Feminisms in Contemporary Ireland* (2013) Lisa Fitzpatrick notes her framework for what she denotes as performance in the volume. She states that "this collection uses the term 'performance', to include the performances of everyday life that mark and shape identities, reshape and adorn the body, tell stories and shape our experience and our place in and of the world around us" (1). This chapter follows Fitzpatrick's framework for denoting performance as including the performances of everyday life, as is a staple feature of performance studies. This becomes most relevant in the analysis of Margaretta D'Arcy but is applied to all performances under investigation. However, Jackson acknowledges the blind spots that can occur when treating performance in broad terms. She contests the "myths of origin" (42). She acknowledges that various disciplines and lineages of practice will have "a different notion of what history needs to be honoured and the behaviors to which each refers" (41). She argues that "[i]f a current performance paradigm sees sameness in disciplines that were once different, an historical geneology of performance must also emphasise how different fields were once the same" (42). This dissertation aims to trace the instances of 'sameness' in performance practice across the island of Ireland across a multiplicity of paradigms, while also recognising that there are blind spots inherent in that tracing. In *Performance Art. From Futurism to the Present* (2011) Goldberg acknowledges that from the late 1960s and early 1970s these embodied art forms were eschewing firm definitions, but "reflected conceptual art's rejection of traditional materials of canvas, brush or chisel, with performers turning to their own bodies as art material (*Performance Art* 152). In *Performance Now, Live Art for the 21st Century* (2018) she notes that "performance art is now being inserted into the timeline of a broad range of cultural studies, including theatre and dance history" (*Performance Now* 7). She acknowledges that this move is:

> shifting understandings of 'the live' as a significant visual art form, emphasising among other facets: the way in which performance allows for the layering of ideas and commentary, to reflect the multi-tasking ethics of our times […] including its potential for reaching even broader audiences as a result of the interactive engagement and communal viewing experience that are in this work's very nature." (*Performance Now* 7)

This research acknowledges performance art and Live Art as a medium that developed both outside of and in conjunction with theatre, however a full investigation of the intersections between performance forms is beyond the scope of this project, but warrants further study. However, in line with Goldberg and Jackson, this research is interested in tracing the sameness of live and embodied

practice on the island of Ireland from 1972-2014 in order to investigate how moments of significant social change are captured by a diversification of performance form.

The Politics of Naming Space

The island of Ireland is split into two political jurisdictions, Ireland and Northern Ireland. The naming of these jurisdictions is contentious with different communities referring to these areas by different names. Eilis Rooney in *Gender, Democracy, and Inclusion in Northern Ireland* (2000) justifies her use of "north of Ireland" from a political perspective, arguing that:

> Northern Ireland is a contested designation: '[E]very name has its politics' (Crick, 1993, p. 72). Many nationalists, republicans, socialists, and human rights activists use 'the north of Ireland' or 'the six counties' in order to keep open questions otherwise ostensibly closed by 'Northern Ireland', namely, the legitimacy of the state and the linked question of political equality between unionists and nationalists. (181)

Maguire speaks convincingly on this topic in *Making Theatre in Northern Ireland* stating that "'Northern Ireland' is used to refer to the internationally recognised territory upon which the Troubles have been focused, rather than 'Ulster' or the 'North of Ireland'" (*Making Theatre in Northern Ireland,* 6). He continues by outlining the politics of naming the north by stating "'Ulster' is motivated by a unionist desire to be seen as separate from the rest of Ireland, politically and culturally […] The 'North of Ireland' serves the contrary purpose of asserting that Ireland is one unit, with no more than geographically distinct regions" (*Making Theatre in Northern Ireland,* 6). Although Maguire asserts that the latter is a "nationalist denial of the legitimacy (and to some extent reality) of the border" (*Making Theatre in Northern Ireland,* 6) he also contends that "Northern Ireland has never been hermetically sealed from the rest of the island […] even during the middle decades of the last century when each state sought to insulate itself from the other" (*Making Theatre in Northern Ireland,* 7), causing a bleed of artists, and indeed performance practices, between the two jurisdictions. This study refers to this area of the island of Ireland, and the body of work within it, as being of and from the 'north of Ireland' as opposed to Northern Ireland, or indeed Ulster. I do so with full awareness of the political distinctions assigned to these terms of naming space, but with specific reference to this sharing of performance practices across the two jurisdictions. Furthermore, like Rooney, this study identifies the island as a politically contested space. Similarly, the distinction made between Irish and Northern Irish playwrights tends to be reflected in broad geographical senses. In

many cases throughout this dissertation, this study will refer to the north of Ireland as the broad geographical area, encompassing Ulster generally, as this study is interested in an all-island proliferation of emergent performance forms and social change. Although theatre and performance in Northern Ireland is often viewed separately, or as a smaller part of a wider study on Irish or British theatre, this dissertation analyses the output of performance on the island as unified under certain criteria. The selected performances engage in the proliferation of recently emergent performance practices on the island of Ireland, and focus on marginalised stories. The proliferation of these performance practices are related to and influenced by each other, thus, dividing the island for analysis in this regard would hinder the argument.

Most scholarship which interacts with theatre and performance practice in the north focuses on the dominant literary theatre canon (Maguire, Pilkington, Richards, Walsh). Some focus is directed at performance practices occurring at that time that lie outside of this genre such as performance art, devised theatre practice, and immersive performance practice (Coffey, Coogan, Stitt, Urban). As Maguire states above "[t]here has been a tendency to regard Northern Irish dramatic output as a minor chapter in the canon of Irish dramatic literature" (*Making Theatre in Northern Ireland,* 7). This dissertation acknowledges the links in lineage between both jurisdictions, placing Northern Irish performance practices as a significant and influential chapter of Irish performance practice on the island.

Radical and Alternative Performance

This study refers to the term 'radical' when examining the selected performances. To create a context for this term, the work of performance scholars Baz Kershaw and Jan Cohen-Cruz will be used. In *The Politics of Performance: Radical Theatre as Cultural Intervention* (2015), Kershaw refers to radical theatre as the alternative community-based theatre and performance movements in Britain from the 1960s to the 1990s. Kershaw outlines how this movement of alternative or radical performance relates to the communities that the productions are being performed in or about (31–33). Kershaw's analysis of radical theatre during the 1960s-1990s aligns with the timeline of this study. He argues that the efficacy of radical performance is dependent on the context of the communities therein, and indeed the inter-textuality of those community contexts (21). Kershaw asserts that radical or alternative theatre tends to occur outside of established theatre buildings, that audiences for this form of theatre do not come readymade and must be constructed through engagement, and that there is a clear connection between the form and

content of performances and the cultural, social, and political activity occurring in society at that time (17). The performances under analysis in this dissertation align with these conventions in that they occur in public and community spaces, broadly speak to specific constituencies, and respond to moments of social change and crisis. I also draw from Cohen-Cruz in *Radical Street Performance* (1998) who defines the term radical as referring to "acts that question or re-envision ingrained social arrangements of power" (1). She expands on this by stating that "'[r]adical,' despite its general identification with left-wing projects, can equally refer to right-wing agendas […] though usually considered in terms of mass movements, radical street performance may operate on an individual level, inspired by experimenters like Allan Kaprow" (2). This association with radical performance questioning ingrained social arrangements of power, such as: geographical segregation, male dominance in the public sphere, and the marginalisation of female and working class experience, aligns with the context of the selected performances all of which challenge the grand narrative of the national in their representation.

City as Venue: Urban Dramaturgies

This dissertation follows and builds on Gay McAuley and Christopher Balme's definitions of space.[5] McAuley defines the 'theatre space' as: the theatre "building, as it exists within or outside the urban space, in relation to other buildings and the activities associated with them, the connotations of its past history, its architectural design, and the kind of access it invites or denies" (24). Balme's 'theatrical space' is defined as "'a permanently or temporarily created *ludic* space, a ground for the encounter of spectator and performer' – thus enabling […the inclusion of…] flexible forms, such as street theatre, that do not depend on fixed architectural structures" [emphasis original] (49). As previously stated, this dissertation is analysing performances that take place outside of traditional theatre spaces, and so follow's both McAuley's awareness of the implied contexts of 'theatre space' and also the flexibility afforded by Balme in terms of the ludic space. The frame of the performance has a significant role in building audience expectations and influencing audience production and reception, in terms of the role of the audience and how the site is read. Just as Fisher-Lichte et al. make the case for the semioticity of the live performance, both Balme and McAuley acknowledges the

[5] Since the beginning of the twenty-first century there has been a rise in digital technologies. This has a significant impact on the creation of new virtual spaces and capacities which overlay the physical environment in radical new ways. A full investigation into the impact of digital technologies on performance practice on the island of Ireland is beyond the scope of this study but is a vital avenue for further investigation.

presence of a sign system that influences audience expectations of a performance event. For Balme "[t]his placement [of a performance] in a system of mostly urban signs has a decisive influence on the receptive codes of the audience […] The history of spatio-cultural interaction between spectators and spaces would be a history of how theatrical spaces change under different cultural conditions, owing to factors such as location, size and shape of the theatre space" (58). McAuley, however, describes space as "active agent, it shapes what goes on within it, emits signals about it to the community at large, and is itself affected. The frame constituted by a particular building is not something fixed and immutable but a dynamic and continually evolving social entity" (41). This research is also concerned with how social and urban space has been segregated according to ethno-national and socio-economic backgrounds, like in the case of Belfast and Dublin. As Doreen Massey acknowledges in *Space, Place and Gender*, space is constructed through social relations, that are experienced and interpreted in different ways by different people (Massey). Gender and class, for example play a role not only in determining the structures of space, but also how people experience space. McAuley acknowledges that theatre space is also socially relational, stating that "[g]ender and class are variables that, throughout nearly the whole of theatre's history, have ensured that the theatre experience is very different for different members of the audience even at the same performance in the same theatre" (242). This research acknowledges the social relationality of space (innately theatrical or otherwise), and their contexts and histories, as informing and empowering performance for the audience. Thus, it aims to build on the definitions of space, outlined here by McAuley and Balme, in its interrogation of the site of performance throughout this dissertation.

This research also engages with the idea of the performing body as a space of performance. In *Performance and Place*, Lois Keidan argues that "an essential element of the taxonomy of Live Art […is that] it cannot be held in any singular cultural boundary or place, but occupies many" (9). This is most relevant to this dissertation's analysis of Margaretta D'Arcy and 'The Monto Cycle' but has implications across paradigms and forms. Keidan notes that artists "in a rejection of objects and markets, artists turned to their body as the site and material of their practice" (9). She connects Live Art practice to a sense of displacement rather than place and observes that it is "synonymous with practices and approaches that cannot easily be accommodated or placed […and] that could be understood as being *placeless*, simply because they do not fit or often belong, in the received contexts that art is often understood to occupy" (10). She argues that Live Art often

resists defined cultural spaces that can be controlled and contained (10-11). In an Irish context, performance artists and practitioners engaging with embodiment as part of their practice have engaged with sites and spaces that have previously been under rigorous control or are themselves spaced of containment. For example, *The Wedding Community Play Project* (1999) takes its audiences across the Belfast peace lines that cordon communities off from one another, *Convictions* (2001) is set in a now-disused prison, whereas Margaretta D'Arcy's performative intervention takes place in Armagh Jail.[6]

In "City as Performance" (2014), Imanuel Schipper states that "[i]n the last five to ten [2004-2014] years the number of performances that have taken place in urban environments – mainly in public spaces – has increased dramatically" (18). In expanding on this assertion Schipper also contends that:

> The relations between public and private space and place are among the most discussed concepts in current discourses on urban life and artistic practices. 'Cities' are in many ways the most popular topic of our time, relevant to nearly every culture, population, gender, ethnicity, and nearly every discipline and social group. (21)

Schipper is thus outlining the relevance of urban living in recent times, most especially since the turn of the twenty-first century. This dissertation is focused primarily on cities as a venue for its analysis for several reasons. Firstly, much of what is identified as radical performance interventions take place in the urban public spaces of the north and south of Ireland.[7] This study does not contend that radical performances did not take place in rural areas, but that an investigation into radical performance interventions in rural settings deserves its own study and lies outside of the scope of this research. Secondly, cities like Belfast, Derry, and Dublin are or have been, politically and socially segregated, and as such provide relevant social, political, and cultural contexts upon which to view performance in public space. In Belfast and Derry this can be understood via the tangible geographical segregation of these urban spaces as evidenced by the presence of peace lines, murals, flags, and other identifying insignia that establish communities as being Unionist or Nationalist, Loyalist or Republican, and British or Irish. All of the performances under examination in Chapter One engage with Belfast city as the setting of their artistic encounters and in each case seek to challenge the

[6] Outside of the performances under examination evidence of this in an Irish context can be seen across performance and Live Art practice such as Alistair MacLennan's *Target* (1977) which took place on the streets of Belfast, the 2012 *LABOUR* series that took place in The Lab on Foley Street and *Future Histories* (2016) which took place in Kilmainham Gaol.

[7] However, Catherine Morris's *Alice Milligan and the Irish Cultural Revival* (2013) engages with the radical performance interventions taking place in rural and urban venues across the island of Ireland through an analysis of the work of Alice Milligan from 1891 to the 1940s.

geographical and political segregation of these spaces. They do this through a purposeful crossing of peace lines or challenging of contested space in *The Wedding Community Play Project* (1999) and *Convictions* (2001) and via a problematisation of dark tourism structures which predominately respond to geographical and political segregation in *Two Roads West* (2008) and *The West Awakes* (2010). In Dublin, this segregation emerges more concretely through socio-economic concerns. In the north and south inner city, a historical abundance of social housing resulted in a conglomeration of residents with lower socio-economic means, although recent economic and housing policies is resulting in a mass gentrification of these areas. ANU Productions deliberately trouble this segregation in 'The Monto Cycle' (2010-2014) which, in part, examines a century of spatial relations and tensions in relation to the political, social, and cultural contexts of this area of Dublin's north inner city. Thirdly, according to the UN (2018) 55% of the world's population lives in cities with that number expected to rise to 68% by 2050 (Reuters). According to the OECD large cities are more likely to have income and social inequalities (University of Rochester) and economists are also noticing an increase in the socio-economic divide in European cities (Musterd et al.). Therefore, the city is increasingly becoming a space of social marginalisation and is worthy of further analysis.

The urban dramaturgies of these cities provide a connection between the art and the history of these places. Bertie Ferdman (2015) explores the relationship between the city, artists, and the utilisation of public spaces. Ferdman refers to this as "urban dramaturgy" and defines the term as "the proliferation of both performance *in* cities and the performance *of* cities […] We can think of urban dramaturgies as vanishing *mise-en-scène* taking place in the global city: ephemeral live acts, be they rehearsed scenarios, improvised happenings, impromptu gatherings, organised events, festive encounters" (17). Ferdman's application of this definition is useful because it recognises the city as being both a venue for and subject of performance, acknowledging that sometimes it can act as both simultaneously. Her framing of urban dramaturgy as a "vanishing mise-en-scène" acknowledges performance's ability to capture realities and lived experiences that may no longer exist. The limitation of this approach is Ferdman's framing of urban dramaturgy in a primarily contemporary timeframe. Ferdman acknowledges the prevalence of participatory art in cities at the beginning of the twenty-first century. I am applying this definition more broadly through an acknowledgement that the roots of this move towards participation in cities has firm and clear foundations in the social movements and performance practice of the 1970s and 1980s. However,

Ferdman's definition of urban dramaturgy is valuable and thus will be applied to Irish performance contexts in reference to the performances outlined in this chapter and more broadly in this dissertation.

Mapping the Field

The Evolution of the Spectator: Audience Participation

One of the central contentions of this dissertation is that the relationship between the audience and performance in Irish theatre has diversified since the 1970s. This changing relationship is rendered explicitly visible from the 1960s in Western theatre practice and is widely theorised. Bennett in *Theatre Audiences: A Theory of Production and Reception* (1990) states that "over the last thirty years [1960s to 1990s] many theatres have emerged which speak for dominated and generally marginalised peoples, and the proliferation of these groups demands new definitions of theatre and recognition of new non-traditional theatre audiences" (1). This dissertation furthers Bennett's argument by stating that in an Irish context radical theatre and performance practices, created by those existing on the margins of society, sought to engage with marginalised experiences.[8] These performance practices emerge from and respond to the social contexts that dominate these experiences. One of the central evolutions of the audience-performance relationship is a recognition that the audience possesses the capacity to alter the theatrical event. As previously stated, Bennett outlines the impact of liveness and audience reception, observing that the presence of an audience at the live event constitutes an active action (72). In *The Transformative Power of Performance* (2008), Erika Fisher-Lichte calls for a re-examination of the aesthetics of production and reception. She argues that:

> a performance is ultimately created by everyone present and escapes the control of any one individual. In this sense it is contingent. The concept of contingency emphasizes the involvement of all participants and their influence on the course of the performance, including the interplay between these influences. The participants are co-creators who, to different degrees and in different ways, affect the shape of a performance, while the performance constitutes them as actors and spectators. It is only when they

[8] Although marginalised characters have always achieved some representation, in these performances the forms of performance employed facilitate direct involvement of those represented in crafting these representations. Miriam Haughton and Maria Kurdi's *Radical Contemporary Theatre Practice by Women in Ireland* and Charlotte McIvor and Siobhán O'Gorman's *Devised Performance in Irish Theatre: Histories and Contemporary Practice* explore, in detail, the manifestation of these theatrical forms. The performances investigated in this dissertation do not represent a fully inclusive representation of performances and practitioners that are positioned as ex-centric to social change. Companies such as Brokentalkers, PassionMachine, and THEATREClub demonstrate similar engagements, but are beyond the scope of this study.

> take part in the performance that individuals turn into actors and spectators. (20)

Referring to the work of performance artist Marina Abramovich, Fisher-Lichte argues that "[s]uch a performance eludes the scope of traditional aesthetic theories. It vehemently resists the demands of hermeneutic aesthetics, which aims at understanding the work of art" (16). It also encourages a more phenomenological engagement with the experience than semiotic as it is less about understanding and more about the transformation of the spectator into a co-subject. She argues that:

> Instead of a work of art that existed independently of her [Abramovich] and the recipients, she created an event that involved everyone present. The spectators, too, were not presented with a distinct object to perceive and interpret, rather they were all involved in a common situation of here and now, transforming everyone present into co-subjects." (17)

Therefore, like Bennet, Fisher-Lichte acknowledges the capacity of the audience to alter the theatrical event and situates the audience member as a co-creator of meaning.

This dissertation focuses on the rise of participatory performance as emerging from the Western tradition of modernisms developing from the early twentieth century and culminating in the 1960s. However, this engagement with these modern and postmodern strategies is not intended to ignore the many folk practices of inclusive and participatory performance that have historically proliferated in global theatre traditions. Nor is it intended to overwrite the influence of British and European political theatre influences on the island of Ireland, instead it intends to investigate and present a new history of performance practice on the island of Ireland. Gareth White in *Audience Participation in Theatre* (2013) provides a history of audience participation in applied theatre, stating that:

> it can be traced to early TIE [Theatre in Education] and Augusto Boal's early use of 'simultaneous dramaturgy' in the 1960s; Live Art performance has made use of it at least as far back as Kaprow's 'happenings'; its use in traditional and commercial performance can be traced further back than that, to the nineteenth century music hall and beyond. (14–15)

Denis Kennedy in *The Spectator and The Spectacle* (2009) argues that firm convention in theatrical space has traditionally hindered active participation, noting that "[u]nder the rigours of theatre architecture and the modernist revisions to the actor-audience association, theatre spectators have been deprived of much of the privilege to write themselves into the event" (158). Jacques Ranciére in *The Emancipated Spectator* (2011) queries this linking of 'seeing' and 'passivity' in terms of spectatorship. He states that "spectatorship is not a passivity that must be

turned into an activity. It is our normal situation" (14). Kirsty Sedgman engages with Ranciére's analysis of the dynamics of spectating in *The Reasonable Audience* (2018), noting that "[t]he theoretical ordering of arts spectatorship into an active/passive dichotomy has always served to homogenise audiences, smooth over the complexity of their experiences, and ignore all the distinct kinds of activity that take place within supposed passivity-inducing events" (15). Helen Freshwater in *Theatre & Audience* (2009) argues that "[a]lthough Ranciére's challenge to the ingrained connection between passivity and spectatorship is invaluable, his reading of theatre practice […] presumes a determinism among directors and dramaturgues which has in many ways passed" (17). Freshwater's own analysis signals the need for further engagement with the notion of participation and provides the reader with a comprehensive summary of the field. However, this dissertation will concentrate on the move towards the postmodern in terms of performative engagement and argues that the spectator, in line with the turn towards the postmodern, takes on the role of the co-creator as signalled by Bennett and Fisher-Lichte above. This is representative of a move away from modernism and towards a postdramatic approach to theatre and performance. According to Lehmann "[t]he adjective 'postdramatic' denotes a theatre that feels bound to operate beyond drama, at a time 'after' the authority of the dramatic paradigm in theatre. What it does not mean is an abstract negation and mere looking away from the traditional drama" (27). The performances investigated in this dissertation operate adjacent to the single-authored literary text in theatre but utilise radical performance practice as a means of engaging with everyday experiences, arguably operating beyond drama as Lehmann suggests.

Returning to the roots of this change, this dissertation acknowledges the influence of performance art practice and embodied performance and recognises the body as a potential site of performance. Amelia Jones, in *Body Art. Performing the Subject* (1998), positions performance art (or body art) as that which "does not strive toward a utopian redemption but, rather, places the body/self within the realm of the aesthetic *as political domain* (articulated through the aestheticization of the particularlized body/self, itself embedded in the social) and so unveils the hidden body that secured the authority of modernism" (13-14). She also observes that it is not inherently critical or reactionary but "provides the *possibility* for radical engagements that can transform the way we think about meaning and subjectivity (both the artist's and our own)" (14). Jones argues that body art/performance art does two radical things:

> By surfacing the desires informing interpretation, it encourages a "performance of theory" that "aims to replot the relation between perceiver and object, between self and other," illustrating what is at stake in such claims by encouraging acts of interpretation that themselves are performative. And it opens out subjectivity *as* performative, contingent, and always particularized rather than universal, implicating the interpreter […] within the meanings and cultural values ascribed to the work of art." (14)

Jones' second contention, which situates and implicates the interpreter or artist within the meanings and cultural values of that art is particularly useful when considering Margaretta D'Arcy who positions her own body as the site of interpretation and artistry (which will be argued in Chapter Two). This research therefore, situates the inherent politics of the body as informing the spectrum as it operates as a site of performance. Peggy Phelan, in *Unmarked* (1993), contests the idea that performance art can be documented at all, arguing that "[d]efined by its ephemeral nature, performance art cannot be documented (when it is, it turns into that document – a photograph, a stage design, a videotape – and ceases to be performance art)" (31). Ana Pais, in *Performance in the Public Sphere* (2019), interprets performance art's conventions as "a series of predominately self-reflexive aesthetical strategies" (15). Thus, she argues that "performance art challenges the relationship with the spectator, the boundaries of the artistic object and the very notion of art, radicalizing the modernist premise of the art-life fusion" (15). The emergence of postmodernism in the 1960s, through paradigms such as performance art, allows the audience to write themselves into the performance event more significantly and visibly, thus having greater access to channels of co-creation in its potential meaning and affect. In *A Postmodern Reader* (1993) Joseph Natoli and Linda Hutchenson state that "Postmodernity's assertion of the value of the inclusive "both/and" thinking deliberately contests the exclusive binary "and/or" opposition of modernity. Postmodern paradox, ambiguity, irony, indeterminacy, and contingency are seen to replace modern closure, unity, order, the absolute, and the rational" (ix). In postmodern performance practice this inclusion of the "both/and" can situate the audience as a co-creator of meaning in the work, by placing, as Natoli and Hutchenson state, "hierarchy and system […] into question" (ix). This questioning of hierarchy influences the dynamics of the audience-performance relationship, allowing the audience to engage with performance as potential co-creators of meaning. Thus, further opportunity for audience participation becomes available. Pais argues that:

> Since it systematically occurs at moments of political change, it is possible to detect a lineage in the modes of participation of performance art in the

> public sphere. On the one hand, this approach allows us to weigh the mobilizing power of performance at the various moments of its emergence, and, on the other hand, to think about the way in which each artistic field activates a specific participation in the public sphere via performance. (Pais 16–17)

Like Pais and Martin, the selected performance forms under analysis in this study link with moments of social change, which is evidenced by tracing these lineages within an Irish context.

White notes the shift in performance practices and its effect on the audience-performance relationship in Western theatre practice. He states that:

> As I write [in 2013], fashions for 'immersive' theatre and 'one-to-one' theatre are in the ascendant; the former tends to make use of spatial and architectural interventions, and to ask spectators to involve themselves physically in tracking down or pursuing the performance; the latter seeks a more direct relationship with the individual spectator". (2)

This shift towards the collaborative in the audience-performance relationship has its roots in embodied performance practice, such as performance art, which emerged in the 1960s internationally and in an Irish context in the 1970s (Phillips). This ascendancy of performance practices in which the audience participate can be theorised as being influenced by the emergence of neoliberal economics. Similarly, postmodern performance practice's response to this is to facilitate shared construction of meaning through audience participation in performance. This definition of the active audience as a co-producer of meaning is a central concern for this dissertation's investigation into performance practice on the island of Ireland. However, it is important to chart the spectrum that denotes interpretations and definitions of participation across space and time.

Returning to Bennett who argues that the presence of the audience at an event activates participation and Kennedy who defines the spectator as a passive engager, it is clear that there is a spectrum of participation that is informed and influenced by performance form. White argues that "of course all audiences are participatory. Without participation performance would be nothing but action happening in the presence of other people" (3). He notes that actions such as: laughing, clapping, fidgeting, as well as the act of turning up and buying a ticket constitutes a form of participation (3). He also acknowledges a distinction between "the typical interactions expected [as outlined above] and licensed audience behaviour, and audience participation" (4). He argues that there is a distinction to be made between what he terms "licensed" audience behaviour and audience participation (4). White's argument furthers Bennett's assertion he argues that, "there are procedures through which participation is invited, and there are

processes through which the performances invited become meaningful in a way that is different to other performances. These performances make the audience member into material that is used to compose the performance" (9). Both White and Claire Bishop theorise participation as existing on a spectrum rather than it being a clearly defined action. Bishop argues that "[e]ven if a work of art is not directly participatory, references to community, collectivity (be this lost or actualised) and revolution are sufficient to indicate a critical distance towards the neoliberal new world order" (12). Similarly, White proposes "'horizon of participation', in which audience members perceive the range of behaviours through which they are invited to participate in a performance" (57). This dissertation situates active participation as taking place on a spectrum, framing the active audience member as a co-producer of meaning in this work, building on the work of Bennett, Freshwater, Kennedy, Jones, Pais, Phelan, Rancière, Sedgman and White. This research contributes to this field by analysing participation in specific Irish performances that are informed by social change taking place on the island of Ireland. Therefore, the frame of 'living in Ireland', i.e., the 'everyday experience' that this thesis investigates, informs the nature of participation that is examined as part of a spectrum of participation.[9] This study contends that this spectrum is influenced by social values, the structure of performance, and the spatio-temporality of performance. It acknowledges a move towards the participatory emerging across performance practices since the modernist movements of the twentieth century and this dissertation endeavours to chart the audience-performance relationship along this spectrum of participation through an analysis of its performances.

Performance Practices in the north of Ireland in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries

On the 30th January 1972, the British Army opened fire on unarmed protestors on the streets of Derry, killing fourteen and injuring twelve. This key moment in recent Irish history intensified the political, military, social, and cultural divisions of a conflict that lasted for almost three decades, and contributed to remaining

[9] This spectrum of participation is informed by the methods by which the performances under investigation are created. Drawing once more on Haughton and Kurdi (2018) and McIvor and O'Gorman (2015) this research acknowledges the impact of the means of creating these performances on audience participation. However, an in-depth investigation of the modes of creation under examination here is beyond the scope of this study but have been addressed in wider investigations on community, devised, and applied theatre practice such as those above and by Eva Urban in *Community Politics and the Peace Process in Contemporary Northern Irish Drama* (2011), Helen Nicholson's *Applied Drama* (2015), and widely across *The Palgrave Handbook of Contemporary Irish Theatre and Performance Practice* (2018).

unresolved tensions. Brian Conway argues that Bloody Sunday "became a frame of reference for denoting time – the past as partitioned into that which happened 'before Bloody Sunday' and that which happened 'after Bloody Sunday'" (2). For the purposes of this investigation I denote the period after Bloody Sunday as one of the key points of departure for this study. This dissertation contends that periods of significant social upheaval can intervene to inform and inspire alternative forms of performance practice. Martin, in her theorising of theatre of the real, states that "[a]rguably, some theatre of the real can even be understood as intervening in history – as changing, or trying to change, history itself" (5). She argues that "[h]istory, too, is an act of the imagination. Both the historians and creators of theatre of the real 'select events from an uninterrupted stream and invent meanings that create patterns within that stream […]'. The process involves not only imagination but also traces of evidence that both provide an account and have to be accounted for" (6). To react to and deal with the events of the Troubles, artists undertook the role of memory choreographers to intervene in history as Martin suggests and also in an attempt to navigate, through radical and participatory performance, the civil disorder occurring in the north of Ireland at that time. Conway defines memory choreographers as follows:

> Republican activists, families of the dead, community leaders, academics, journalists and community politicians can all constitute memory choreographers. These choreographers bring values, ideologies and resources to their work and these mediate how they represent the past and negotiate the spaces between local conditions and global contexts, private remembrance and public commemoration, and official memory and vernacular memory. Often they are guided by moral and legal imperatives – to seek truth for the dead and heal the living. (6)

Many of these performances took place in the public spaces of the north and functioned as a significant reclaiming of public space. The dominant theatrical medium was then, and continues to be (although to a lesser degree), the literary dramatic text. This timeframe is also significant when considering the influence of a grand national narrative, created by the British state, to frame the conflict in the north of Ireland in line with a very specific agenda. Following the introduction of internment in 1971 there was a significant increase in violence across the north of Ireland. As Mike Thompson suggests, "British forces found themselves losing the battle for public opinion" ('Britain's Propaganda War During the Troubles'). The introduction of dedicated counterinsurgency groups, dedicated to undermining the IRA, such as the Information Policy Unit (IPU) and the Information Research Department (IRD) dictated a state mandated version of events to the British and

international press ('Britain's Propaganda War during the Troubles').[10] As such, there is a tangible need for an engagement with the events of the Troubles that challenge and problematise this state defined version of events.

Maguire argues that theatre and performance emerging from the north of Ireland tends to be treated as "a minor chapter in the canon of Irish dramatic literature" (*Making Theatre in Northern Ireland*, 7). However, he also states that this opinion is most often held in relation to the dramatic, or literary tradition of theatre output. In the Irish theatrical canon, which is applicable in the north and south, the established text and author is valorised. Maguire argues that "[i]n critical accounts, the priority is given to that which is considered as *readable* has downplayed the spectator's presence within the theatrical event and the structures of performance in interaction with which the spectator's integrated psycho-physical experience is organised" [emphasis original] (*Making Theatre in Northern Ireland*, 10). However, the similarities in theatrical form that existed between the theatrical canons in the north and south began to diverge with the beginning of the Troubles and alongside the increase of embodied performance and Live Art practice.[11] While state structures in the north, as throughout the south of Ireland and in Britain, were struggling to cope with the breadth of this conflict, artists in the north engaged with radical methods to represent it. This alternative or radical form of theatre operated in Britain, according to Kershaw, in the following way: "alternative theatre grew out of and augmented the major oppositional cultural formation of the period" (17). He notes that performances emerging from this alternative theatre were associated with "widespread subversive cultural, social and political activity" (17). The relationship between subversive activity and performance can be clearly seen in Chapter One through the rejection of sectarian division as a challenge to the tensions and divisions pervading urban public space. Similarly, in Chapter Two the women's movement and the activism of D'Arcy demonstrates the link between

[10] Thompson writes that "[c]oncerned that the IRA was using the policy to further its propaganda war, London decided to fight back. It set up what was known as the Information Policy Unit, or IPU, at the Army's headquarters in Lisburn. Its job was to discredit the IRA wherever possible, often by holding special briefings with journalists. This was joined soon after by another group, the Information Research Department or IRD, a behind-the-scenes branch of the Foreign Office created in 1948 to counter communism. Both groups were now to engage in a full-blown propaganda war against the IRA and some other paramilitaries" ('Britain's Propaganda War during the Troubles'). Studies such as Liz Curtis's *Ireland: The Propaganda War* (1998) and David Miller's *Don't Mention the War: Northern Ireland, Propaganda and the Media* (1994) outline the nature of this prolonged media-based warfare and its consequences on the Troubles in the north of Ireland.

[11] André Stitt outlines the timeline for this in his chapter 'Performing Political Acts: Performance Art in Northern Ireland: Ritual, Catharsis, and Transformation' in *Performance Art in Ireland: A History* (2015). In this chapter he analyses performance art interventions that intervened in urban public space by Alistair MacLennan (*Target*, 1977) and Tara Babel (*A Day in the Life Of*...1988). He also foregrounds the contributions of Damien Coyle, Brian Cunningham, Viv Crane, Willie Doherty, James King, Angela McCabe, Declan McGonagle, Rainer Pagel, Philip Roycroft and Martin Wedge among others (Stitt).

subversive political and cultural activity and performance practice. The literary theatre also responded to the conflict, but in the case of the north of Ireland served to further entrench the dominant narrative of sectarian conflict. Maguire, commenting on the role that the theatre has played in this representation, notes that

> Images of bonfires and street riots contribute to a hegemonic narrative of strife between two equally entrenched tribal communities separated by religious and ethnic identity. This narrative has been accepted across the world and internalised by many of the people of Northern Ireland. The theatre has played its part in generating and repeating such images. (*Making Theatre in Northern Ireland*, 2)

These presence of these plays, arguably, served to further concretise (rather than problematise) the sectarian narrative present within state structures at the time.

Urban comments on the parochialism of the canon of Northern Irish theatre by stating "[i]t is remarkable that in the canon of Northern Irish Drama it is extremely rare to find a play not set in Northern Ireland, with the exception perhaps, of plays by Frank McGuinness" (22). This observation by Urban touches on something which is pervasive in much of the literary drama, and indeed the participatory performance, emerging from the north both in the twentieth century and more recently: that 'real' space and place is often a central thematic factor in work made in and about the north of Ireland. They also create phantasmatic spaces by imagining spaces where these tensions no longer control the movement of people in public and private space. An engagement with broad definitions of space can be found in most dramatic and performative output relating to the north of Ireland. The tensions represented through the interpretation of contested space informs and situates the audience within certain spatial and geographical contexts. This is seen most dramatically in Derry and in Belfast where peace walls and an abundance of flags and other identifying insignia can illustrate the identity of the population that reside there. Hill and White contend that "[m]urals have figured as a prominent feature of Northern Ireland from the origins of Northern Ireland in 1922, on through 'the Troubles', to the present period of the peace process" (71). This clear performance of identity is performed in and through public space. This situates these public spaces as simultaneously a venue for and subject of this performance. This follows Ferdman's definition of "urban dramaturgy". This performance of identity through public space is reflected in the performance traditions of the time. The dramatic spaces of theatre originating from and responding to the Troubles privileges engagement with urban and domestic

contested spaces.[12] Chapter One will demonstrate how this dynamic operated in community performance through its investigation of the performance-space relationship.

What Kershaw cites as radical performance practice also engages with space and society. He suggests that these forms of radical performance had a measurable effect on society in Britain at that time, stating "the movement offered a significant challenge to the status quo, and may even have contributed to the modification of dominant ideologies in the 1970s and 1980s" (21). Kershaw foregrounds the connection between these movements and the protest movements which also emerged in British society during this time, arguing "[t]his general efficacy became possible because performance was especially well suited to the styles of celebratory protest and cultural interventionism favoured by the new oppositional cultural formations which emerged between 1965 and 1990" (21). The relationship between the British alternative theatre and arts movement and performance practices in the north of Ireland owe much to the specific influence of individuals and exchanges of practice at that time. For example, Margaretta D'Arcy (in collaboration with John Arden) was one of the main conduits of this.[13]

Given the contested nature of public space in the north of Ireland, the use of public space to host these types of protest is significant. In his seminal text *The Urban Revolution* (2003) social geographer Henri Lefebvre explores the move towards urbanism. When discussing the pros and cons of the street he outlines that streets often have a role to play in revolutionary events, stating that

> Revolutionary events generally take place in the street. […] The urban space of the street is a place for talk, given over as much to the exchange of words and signs as it is to the exchange of things. A place where speech becomes writing. A place where speech can become "savage" and, by escaping rules and institutions, inscribe itself on walls." (19)

The public nature of the urban spaces that host these landmark performance encounters analysed across this dissertation lends itself to revolutionary acts. Kershaw highlights the importance of the context of place (in line with McAuley, Balme, and Massey), and uses the example of Belfast to illustrate his point. He states that "the same performance may meet with vastly different reactions in different ideological contexts: a show celebrating the IRA is one thing on the Falls Road, quite another thing in a British army camp" (33). He also notes that the

[12] Examples of this in the literary tradition can be seen in Brian Friel's *The Freedom of the City* (1973), Christina Reid's *The Belle of Belfast City* (1987), and Gary Mitchell's *Loyal Women* (2003), among many others.

[13] Margaretta D'Arcy and John Arden's joint archive, hosted at NUI Galway can provide further context to this time period and can assist in tracing these links in lineage.

above sentiment "also underlines a crucial notion in the argument of this book: namely that *the context of performance directly affects its perceived ideological meaning*" [emphasis original] (33). Kershaw's argument regarding the context of the performance overlooks the various nuances and intersections of public urban space and identity. In the north of Ireland public urban space is contested in many ways, and there are many subaltern spaces which do not reflect the hegemonic binary of established identity politics. For example, as Massey argues, socio-economic considerations may affect the make-up of public spaces, leading to a diversity in how space is engaged with or categorised. Kershaw's example highlights the problematic associations of space, as it is seen in Belfast, by narrowing down support of the IRA to the geographic location of the nationalist Falls Road and uses a British Army camp as its oppositional example. By creating this binary between these two spaces Kershaw is, in fact, reifying the geographical segregation of the city of Belfast, which many of the radical productions under examination in this dissertation sought to challenge. It is also overlooking the nuances of how class, political background, and religion acts upon this contestation of urban public space. Kershaw's presentation of this point illustrates the importance of challenging the grand national narrative not only in performance practice but also through academic scholarship, something this dissertation aims to achieve.

Building Postmodern Ireland

There are many scholarly works that provide a comprehensive overview of Irish performance practice throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Christopher Morash's *The History of Irish Theatre, 1601-2000* (2002) provides a vastly comprehensive overview of several centuries of Irish theatre. *The Oxford Handbook of Modern Irish Theatre* (2016) and *The Palgrave Handbook of Irish Theatre and Performance Practice* (2018) provide detailed and timely accounts of modern and contemporary Irish theatre and performance practice. Therefore, this dissertation does not attempt to parse the vast lineage of modern and contemporary Irish theatre and performance practice as this is achieved comprehensively elsewhere. Instead, this dissertation interrogates some central thematic concerns for the performances under investigation that emerge from modern and contemporary performance practice.

Morash argues that the advent of Irish "nu-political" theatre arrives in the 1970s on the island of Ireland. He quotes playwright Brian Friel who states that "[i]t requires no great gift of prophecy to foresee that the revolt in Northern Ireland

is going to spread to the Republic; and if you believe that art is an instrument of the revolutionary process, then you can look forward to seeing a spate of committed plays" (*The History of Irish Theatre* 243). Friel's prophecy rings true in the case of the north of Ireland. As Chapter One outlines, a genre of committed Troubles plays emerged out of the civil conflict and dominated literary dramatic output in the north of Ireland for decades. In the south, Friel's prophecy only rings partially true as Morash argues "[a]s a prophecy of the direction Irish theatre would take in the 1970s this was accurate, but only partly so, even in relation to Friel's own work" (*The History of Irish Theatre* 243). In fact, the acceleration of the Troubles at the beginning of the 1970s only served to further artistically silo the north from the south, with a clear thematic divergence taking place between the two political jurisdictions. The Troubles and the stories associated with the conflict dominated artistic output in the north, whereas in the south the literary theatrical canon proceeded in a similar trajectory as the previous decades. During this decade, the literary dramatic text continued to dominate on both sides of the border.

In the south, the 1980s heralded in a new era of Irish theatre and performance practice, influenced by a wave of social change through the women's movement in the 1970s and 1980s but most concretely due to the changes in education. Morash cites the establishment of the Trinity College Dublin School of Drama and Theatre Studies in 1984 as well as the founding of The Gaiety School of Acting in 1986 as a new era of Irish theatre that professionalised and diversified the industry (*The History of Irish Theatre* 254). The community arts movement also became a more significant participator in theatre and performance practice north and south of the border, and this movement "challenged the idea that one theatre might represent the whole island, pushing the wider concept of representation to the breaking point by blurring the lines between artist and audience.[14] Those who were represented were now the same people doing the representing" (*The History of Irish Theatre* 263).[15] This idea is interrogated in Chapter Two through the analysis of Charabanc Theatre Company in Belfast in the 1980s. Shaun Richards in *The Palgrave Handbook of Contemporary Irish Theatre and Performance* argues that the 1980s also provided a challenge to the idea of a

[14] In the north of Ireland the Community Arts Forum (CAF), established in 1993, created significant momentum in the community arts movement in the north. The CAF "is the umbrella organisation for the community arts sector in Northern Ireland. Formed in 1993, CAF aims to develop the sector through a programme of training, information, publications, advice, advocacy, networking and development" ('Community Arts in Northern Ireland').

[15] Once again, the means of creating these forms of performance that encourages self-representation including the broader genealogies of community theatre practice, applied theatre practice, and devised performance practice are interrogated more comprehensively in the work of Haughton and Kurdi, McIvor and O'Gorman, and also in Sandy Fitzgerald's *An Outburst of Frankness: Community Arts in Ireland – A Reader* (2004).

singular, mainstream Irish theatre form. He states that "[a]s traditional sets and themes were progressively disrupted, so too was the idea that Irish Drama had a single point of origin and reception" (38). Richards cites the establishment of Druid Theatre Company in Galway (1975), Field Day in Derry (1980), Red Kettle in Waterford (1985), Corcadorca in Cork (1991), Blue Raincoat in Sligo (1991), and the re-opening of the Lyric Theatre in Belfast (2011) as marking a new departure for Irish theatrical form. This was accompanied, he argues, by an emergent trend towards premiering new writing not in Ireland, but in Britain (38–39). He states that "[a]ll these changes pointed to a range of companies and cities staging original Irish drama that defied narrow definitions of a uniform mainstream" (39). This series of change continued in the 1990s.

As stated in the opening section of this introduction, this dissertation acknowledges the roots of contemporary progress and social regression in the movements of the 1970s and 1980s on the island of Ireland. Therefore, the changes wrought in the Irish theatre industry from the 1990s onwards are a vital concern for this dissertation. Morash paints a picture of the Ireland of the 1990s as one of progress and development. Writing in 2002 before the collapse of the Celtic Tiger and the subsequent years of austerity and recession, Morash argues that "[i]nstead of looking like a small, stunted European anomaly, Ireland of the 1990s looked like the paradigm of a certain form of postmodernity, where the local has global significance, and where relations between margins and centres are always in flux" (*The History of Irish Theatre* 265). The realities and intimacies of the relationship between the margins and the centres in the Ireland of the 1990s is analysed in detail in Chapter Three where ANU Productions' 'The Monto Cycle' is analysed as an exemplar of this trend. Richards cites both social and financial contexts for the continued emergence of new writing and performance practice post millennium. He notes:

> In 1997 John Fairleigh noted the financial support for drama enabled by the fact that 'the economy is developing at one of the fastest rates in the European Union' with the result that artists were 'warmly embraced as confirmation of the country's new dynamism and diversity'. Sixteen years later, Fintan Walsh observed that since 2007 Ireland had 'plummeted from the heady heights of neoliberal abundance and excess into political, economic, social and cultural turmoil' as a result of which there had been a 'severance of subsidy' which impacted most severely on the theatre. (39)

Richards then notes that companies such as THISISPOPBABY (2007), ANU Productions (2009), and HotForTheatre (2010) created work despite the limits of economics. They produced innovative theatre and performance "featuring only one

or two performers in bare or stripped-down sets" (39).[16] This dissertation builds on Walsh's argument by acknowledging how these economic and social changes influenced performance form, both in the modes of creation and through the subject matter represented. What is clear from the performance practice that emerged out of the social change of the 1990s is that it, as Morash suggests, presents itself through forms of postmodernity. Walsh outlines what he believes to be several common features of Irish contemporary theatre and performance practice in *That Was Us: Contemporary Irish Theatre and Performance* (2013): "1) a deep engagement with space and place; 2) an insistence on remembering, bearing witness, and questioning responsibility; 3) the use of theatre as a platform for staging marginalised and seemingly minor stories; and 4) harnessing theatre's capacity to process powerful feeling and affect" (10). This dissertation builds on Walsh's argument through its acknowledgement that the roots of this movement can be seen across the island from the 1960s onwards. Haughton (2014) acknowledges the roots of contemporary Irish performance practice and its move towards postmodernism in the 1970s. She argues "elements of a postmodern climate began to creep into Ireland alongside a shift in consciousness when one's desire for personal freedom to manage one's physical and sexual body began to be voiced in public discourse" ("Flirting with the Postmodern" 384). Analyses of the most significant changes to form within Irish theatre and performance practice are analysed in detail in: McIvor and O'Gorman's collection *Devised Performance in Irish Theatre* (2015), Haughton and Kurdi's collection *Radical Contemporary Theatre Practice by Women in Ireland* (2015), Ian R. Walsh's *Experimental Irish Theatre* (2012) and in *The Palgrave Handbook of Contemporary Irish Theatre and Performance*. This dissertation will coalesce and build on these analyses, focusing on how the link between postmodernist performance approaches and changes to Irish social values influenced performance practice from the 1970s. McIvor, O'Gorman, and Walsh all establish an earlier genealogy for feminist and collaborative theatre practices than the 1960s in Irish theatre, however this research builds on this by bringing attention to performance art and performance practice in non-theatre spaces. One of the most prominent movements in terms of theatrical form has been the move away from naturalism and literary drama, what Haughton refers to as "the big new Irish play". She states that "the "big new Irish play" has not disappeared at all; rather, it is no longer the only choice on the performance menu" ("Flirting with the Postmodern" 379). She observes that the variety of

[16] Both ANU Productions and Thisispopbaby have created revenue streams independent of the Arts Council which enables them to produce a significant amount of annual productions.

choices facing contemporary Irish audiences "stem from major ideological and material shifts taking place offstage, which fundamentally and radically revise how theatre and performance are being made, programmed and received" ("Flirting with the Postmodern" 379). Similarly, Richards states that "naturalism is now an option rather than an obligation in a theatre culture which no longer has a single, exclusionary mainstream but is multiple in its forms, themes, and theatre" (41). This dissertation demonstrates the origins of this diversification of form by illustrating how this dynamic shift in Irish theatre and performance practice manifested on both sides of the border. The development of the audience-performance relationship during this time frame is a central thematic concern for this dissertation. Haughton notes the shifting nature of this relationship in contemporary Irish performance, arguing that:

> theatre and performance maintain a power to communicate stories and senses in a mode that is intensely direct, personal and urgent which becomes part of an individual's social experience and memory. By making the audience matter, contemporary theatre and performance in Ireland makes politics visible and accessible, opposing the passive and disorientating spaces of an increasingly postmodern neo-liberal society and culture. ("Flirting with the Postmodern" 388–89)

This politicisation of the audience, through its vital relationship with individual productions, is evident from *The Wedding Community Play Project* in 1999 to ANU Productions' 2014 production *Vardo* and is interrogated throughout this dissertation. These performances invite audiences to reconsider their relationship with space and invite participation from audiences to analyse and interrogate the lives realities of these spaces and their socio-political construction. Through analysis of political jurisdictions, performance form, and social context from 1972-2014, this dissertation demonstrates that performance practice engaged with, was informed by, and informed moments of social change on the island of Ireland.

Research Design and Methodology

At the time of concluding this dissertation, in August 2019, the island of Ireland has, and is, experiencing a period of intense social change. This research is thus firstly framed through the lens of the social change occurring on the island of Ireland between 1972 and 2014 and secondly by the lens of social change occurring at the time of writing (2015-2019). Two recent high-profile referendums in Ireland legalised marriage for same-sex couples in 2015 and abortion in 2018 respectively. These moments, among others, mark this decade as a vital arbiter of change on the island of Ireland. However, not all change has been progressive.

Northern Ireland is due to leave the European Union (EU) as a result of the 2016 Brexit referendum and uncertainty around the inevitable change this will bring on the island abounds. Currently, Ireland is experiencing a crisis in housing resulting in the worst homelessness figures since the establishment of the state with over 10,000 people homeless in March 2019 (Gleeson, "Number of Homeless People Climbs"). Further recent national crises include the CervicalCheck scandal, the Garda Whistle-blower scandals, controversy surrounding the ownership of the National Maternity hospital, the exorbitant and spiralling cost of the new National Children's hospital, and the collapse of the Northern Irish government at Stormont resulting from the fallout of the controversial 'cash-for ash' initiative.[17] These occurrences demonstrate that the political and state structures in both jurisdictions on the island of Ireland are in crisis. According to David Runciman in *Critical Theories of Crisis in Europe* (2016) it is fundamentally difficult to define the scope of a crisis, due to both the ambiguity of the term itself and the tendency to over utilise the term to describe various "political, social and cultural phenomena". In particular, he notes that there is a difficulty in defining the beginnings and the end of a crisis, acknowledging that this is often a matter of perspective (3). However, this research attempts to consider the beginnings and the ends of these moments of crisis and also the contexts in which these crises are examined. But firstly a crisis must be defined. Runciman argues that "[a] crisis might be defined as a situation

[17] The CervicalCheck scandal gained attention in April 2018 when it emerged "that 209 women with cervical cancer had missed scans […] CervicalCheck kept no central register of women who got false negative smears" (Sheehan). It became clear that medical practitioners "all around the country knew that women with cervical cancer were not being told their smears had been missed" (Sheehan). The scandal gained public attention when terminally ill Vicky Phelan won a High Court case against the lab charged with testing her samples, and through her refusal to sign a non-disclosure agreement as part of her settlement. Also, "In 2008 Westmeath-based sergeant Maurice McCabe raised concerns with his superiors about senior Gardaí quashing penalty points. Nothing was done but in December 2012, he was banned from using Pulse, the Garda's communication and data storage computer system through which he had been able to analyse the penalty points system and identify questionable quashing of offences. Controversy over the treatment of Sgt McCabe and a swirl of claims and counter-claims about investigations into his claims led to the resignations of then Garda commissioner Martin Callanan and minister for justice, Alan Shatter" (Gleeson, "Whistleblower Timeline"). In 2018, the Government announced that the new National Maternity Hospital, that was being built and funded by the Irish State, would be given over to a religious order: The Catholic Sisters of Charity, to run. After mass protests and a public scandal the Minister for Health, Simon Harris, assured the public that the hospital would remain in state ownership. Upon writing this in 2019 this scandal has yet to be resolved. In 2019, it came to light that the new National Children's Hospital would go over budget by over €450 million and is expected to rise further. In November 2012 **"**The Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) is set up by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment in a bid to encourage businesses to switch from oil or gas to wood pellet boilers. It is part of Northern Ireland's plan to meet renewable energy targets. At the time, Arlene Foster is the department's minister" (Ryan). In Autumn 2013 "a whistleblower contacts the department, warning of flaws with the RHI, which she claims overpays businesses and does not provide an incentive to be energy efficient. Officials at the department look into her allegations but they are dismissed" (Ryan). It is alleged that Foster knew about the flaws in the scheme, proven to be true, and her unwillingness to step down as First Minister of Northern Ireland causes Deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness to withdraw Sinn Féin's cooperation in the power sharing structures and the government collapses. At the time of writing there is still no government in Stormont.

characterized both by fundamental threat and fundamental choice. Each needs to be present for it to count as a crisis" (4). There is an acknowledgment that notions of threat and choice are often influenced by personal perception, and as such crisis is broadly self-defined. This research follows Runciman's suggestion that "the time frame of any crisis may look very different depending on who is experiencing it" (5) and acknowledges the positionality of the researcher inherent in defining these moments. Like the politics of space, definitions and experiences of crisis are also socially relational. This research is interested in acknowledging the roots of social change and social crisis by focusing on a timeframe of history in Irish society (1972-2014) for its analysis, but also aims to acknowledge the fluidity and porousness of these moments of crisis and change by engaging with social, political, cultural, and artistic events that occurred or are occurring outside of this timeframe.

Currently, Ireland is moving through the largest state-mandated period of commemoration in its history, referred to as The Decade of Centenaries (2012-2022).[18] This predominantly state-funded decade of commemoration facilitates a period of remembrance that highlights selected key moments of change on the island of Ireland during the beginning of the twentieth century. The prominent 'moments' of contemporary crisis and change mentioned above have roots in the social movements of the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s on the island of Ireland and globally. The collapse of Stormont and the impending exit of Northern Ireland from the EU falls almost one hundred years after the partition of the island of Ireland in 1920 and two decades after the ratification of the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement in 1998.[19] The legalisation of gay marriage and abortion in Ireland emerges out of decades of progressive activism with roots in the women's movement, north and south of the border, from the 1970s onwards. This dissertation frames its argument by acknowledging the roots of contemporary progress (and regression) in the seeds sown in the early and mid-twentieth century.[20] As such, this dissertation explores a new history of theatre and performance practice on the island of Ireland that engages with socio-political concerns. This created unique implications for the procedures of gathering research

[18] For more information on this please consult www.decadeofcentenaries.com.

[19] The Good Friday Agreement was "approved in May 1998 in simultaneous referendums in Northern Ireland (by 71%) and the Irish Republic (by 94%) […] The Agreement provides for a devolved power-sharing government in Northern Ireland and cross-border agencies jointly run by the Northern Ireland assembly and the Irish parliament, while leaving the province's sovereign fate to its electoral majority" ("The Good Friday Agreement" 1).

[20] Including, but not exclusively: the partition of the island of Ireland in 1920 via the Government of Ireland Act, the suffrage movement, the establishment of Ireland as a republic in 1948 via the Republic of Ireland Act, and Ireland and the United Kingdom's EEC membership in 1972.

materials, and in terms of the analysis of the data gathered. Due to the timeframe under investigation and the nature of performances under consideration, there was a need to negotiate the lack of primary source material through an engagement with the artists, spaces, and social moments under examination. Due to the links between society and performance a close examination of the sociological implications of events occurring during this timeframe is required and provides the information necessary to inform the tracing of the roots of progress and regression over a broad time period. Similarly, in order to engage comprehensively with the performances under investigation I conducted several interviews with artists and creators involved in the making of the performances analysed in this dissertation.[21] This provides the opportunity for broader insights into the contexts that inform the form, structure, content, and modes of creation for each performance under consideration.

The criteria for the selection of performances and performative interventions is as follows: performances that lie outside of the single-authored literary text structure, engage, via form and content, with moments of social change on the island of Ireland from 1972-2014, and privilege the nature of everyday experience for those living on the margins, thus problematising and challenging the grand narrative of the national. This research begins its investigations in 1972 because this year represents several key social, political, and cultural switch points. In 1972 Ireland and the United Kingdom join the European Economic Community (ECC), heralding in fresh conversations about Ireland's participation in a European network of nations and challenging notions of nation and identity as well as setting the groundwork for a more globalised society and economy. Also, in 1972 the referendum passing the 5th Amendment to Bunreacht na hÉireann formally removes the 'special relationship' that existed between Church and State, creating opportunities for a focus on the implications and the problematics of that relationship from that point forward. Finally, as previously mentioned in 1972 the British Army opens fire on unarmed civilians in Derry, murdering thirteen, in an event that would come to be known as 'Bloody Sunday'. This event was a key moment in northern Irish society that informed, accelerated, and sustained the Troubles for the following three decades. 2014 is established as the end point of this study as it represents the beginning of the Celtic Phoenix and the tentative

[21] I interviewed Paula McFetridge in regards to her production roles in *The Wedding Community Play Project* (1999) and *Convictions* (2001) as well as in her role as Artistic Director of Kabosh Theatre Company. I interviewed Margaretta D'Arcy about her time in the Armagh Gaol, and also the co-Artistic Directors of ANU Productions Owen Boss and Louise Lowe. I made use of published interview materials engaging with Charabanc Theatre Company. The transcripts of these interviews are presented at the end of this dissertation as Appendices 1-3.

emergence of economic recovery, post-recession, in Ireland.[22] However, this research recognises the porousness of this end-point, as is reflected through its methodological approach.

The frameworks for engaging with this methodological approach are primarily led through the lens of theatre and performance studies, cultural studies, sociology and feminisms. Regarding this approach, there is a designated focus on embodiment, space, and audience. Leading theorists in these fields, whose work is fundamental to this study include Susan Bennett, Erika Fisher-Lichte, RoseLee Goldberg, Amelia Jones, Carol Martin, Tom Maguire, Peggy Phelan, Jaques Rancière, and Kirsty Sedgman. Regarding cultural studies, postmodernism as a cultural condition is a central approach to my analysis, as is the role of feminisms and gender studies.[23] Similarly, a feminist approach to sociological scholarship is a vital tenant of my analysis and leading theorists in this field that inform this study include Linda Connolly, Tina O'Toole, and Ailbhe Smyth. Across the chapters I employ several different methodologies due to the range of performances analysed such as: performance analysis, archival research, and textual analysis. However, these correspond to certain aspects of the primary methodology.

This dissertation employs a thematic structure to present its findings. The chapters each correspond to moments of crisis or change on the island of Ireland and encompass an all-island and multi-paradigm analytical approach. This critical analysis is informed by a wider study of Irish performance practice in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Chapter One focuses on the theme of the Troubles in the north of Ireland and follows a chronology of performance that begins post-GFA in 1998 and ends in 2010, twelve years later. Chapter Two concentrates on the Irish Second-Wave Feminist movement drawing from three performances from the early 1980s in the USA and north of Ireland to interrogate the connection between second-wave feminist methodologies and feminist performance practice in each jurisdiction at this time. Chapter Three centres on the period post-Celtic Tiger in

[22] The 'Celtic Phoenix' is a term used by the media and economists to connote Ireland's period of economic recovery post-Celtic Tiger crash.

[23] Postmodernism has several definitions and is difficult to define, however it is most commonly referred to as a cultural condition which emerged in advanced capitalist societies from the 1960s onwards.[23] Auslander reads from Michel Benamou's *Performance in Postmodern Culture* (1977) and states that the essence of postmodernism is that "everything performs: technologies perform; art is no longer content to stay on the museum wall; literary critics see their writings as performances; political and social developments are performed in the public arena – the media, in particular, make political and social developments performative" (99). This study's theoretical employment of postmodernism draws from Benamou's assertions that everything performs, as the performances under analysis demonstrate a consistent commitment to the performance of everyday life, no matter how mundane, ordinary, or extraordinary. This research also aligns itself with Jean François Lyotard's argument in "The Postmodern Condition" (1999) that postmodernism is a movement away from grand narratives (179–80) as each performance examined in this research engages in a challenging of and a movement away from the established grand narrative of the national.

the south of Ireland, presenting a chronological analysis of ANU Productions' 'The Monto Cycle' as a means of examining the modes of radical commemoration in Irish performance practice post-millennium.

One of the central challenges of this project is uncovering sufficient archival and scholarly research on historical productions to complete a thorough investigation. By focusing the analysis on the proliferation of performance practices which speak to marginalised communities, the performances analysed in this dissertation suffer from a certain scholarly invisibility at times, making it difficult in many cases to collect information in the traditional academic route such as a literature review. I engaged in archival research to supplement my knowledge of both the social moment and also the primary performance texts under investigation. The absence of archival material was mitigated in the research process by engaging in personal interviews with relevant artists from each chapter in order to provide an engagement with the primary material. The lack of widespread archiving of women's performance practice (both collaborative and individually created) is a significant methodological challenge to this research. For Chapter Two I consulted the Split Britches Digital Archive and in 2017 Margaretta D'Arcy donated her archive to NUI Galway, which provided this research with access to draft play texts, social ephemera, historical documentation, and other draft writings that were key in situating her work within the context of 1980s Northern Ireland. Similarly, Cahal McLaughlin's Prison's Memory Archive provided much needed context on the everyday experience of women prisoners in the Armagh Gaol.[24]

Secondly, as this dissertation examines live performances, this thesis constitutes an archiving of these works at times. Due to the intimate nature of production and reception in the live event I have framed my critical analysis as a "resistant reader" to this work. In *The Feminist Spectator as Critic* (1988), Dolan outlines her theory on the "ideal spectator":

> all the material aspects of theatre – are manipulated so that the performance's meaning are intelligible to a particular spectator, constructed in a particular way by the terms of its address. Historically in North American culture, this spectator has been assumed to be white, middle class, heterosexual, and male. That theatre creates an ideal spectator carved in the likeness of the dominant culture whose ideology he represents is the motivating assumption behind the discourse of feminist performance criticism. (*The Feminist Spectator as Critic* 1)

[24] For more information, consult: prisonsmemoryarchive.com.

In counterpoint to this "ideal spectator", Dolan raises the idea of the "feminist critic" stating that "the feminist critic can be seen as a "resistant reader," who analyses a performance's meaning by reading against the grain of stereotypes and resisting the manipulation of both the performance text and the cultural text that it helps to shape" (*The Feminist Spectator as Critic* 2). Bennett states that, "unlike the printed text, a theatrical performance is available for its audience only in a fixed time period. Furthermore, the event is not a finished product in the same way as a novel or poem. It is an interactive process, which relies on the presence of spectators to achieve its effects" (72). Therefore, the production of meaning is co-created by the spectator and the creator(s) and the subjectivity of the audience guarantees that there is no neutral state of receiving. Thus, this analysis of live performance is informed by my own perspectives and experiences but is guided by Dolan's concept of the feminist spectator as a "resistant reader". This same resistance is employed in this research's textual and archival analysis. To situate this dissertation's nine performances, I have undertaken comprehensive research into performance practice on the island of Ireland since the beginning of the twentieth century, the significant social movements on the island since 1972, and international contexts and perspectives on these movements as a means of framing the analysis internationally.

Chapter Outlines

Through an analysis of Chapter One's four performances, *The Wedding Community Play Project* (1999), *Convictions* (2000), *Two Roads West* (2008), and *The West Awakes* (2010), this study interrogates how performance practitioners intervene in public space to represent the everyday lived realities of citizens in the north of Ireland. This chapter investigates how performance practitioners respond to the presence of civil conflict and concludes that the selected performances rejected the literary theatre form dominating the north of Ireland at this time. This research explores how these performances interacted with marginalised, non-sectarian narratives by analysing performances from each decade (1990-2010). Consequently, this demonstrates the interconnected relationship between society and performance form, linking the significant moments of change that occurred over the forty-year period that this dissertation investigates. An analysis of *The Wedding Community Play Project* and *Convictions* demonstrates how the performance frame facilitated a clear breaking of the geographical 'rules' of Belfast City via a crossing of the peace lines in *The Wedding Play* and across the

threshold of the Crumlin Road Gaol in *Convictions*, engaging audiences in the shared participation of reconciliation and storytelling. Finally, I analyse the role that dark tourism plays in framing society in the north of Ireland.[25] By analysing Kabosh Theatre Company's *Two Roads West* and *The West Awakes* this chapter demonstrates how Kabosh engage with Troubles Tourism structures in order to challenge the dominant binaries of otherness present in the north of Ireland post-millennium.

Chapter Two interrogates the relationship between the second-wave feminist movement and feminist performance practice in Anglophone production contexts, focusing specifically on Irish performance practice. This dissertation contends that the performances analysed here, *Split Britches* (1983), *Lesbians Who Kill* (1994), *Lay Up Your Ends* (1983), and *Tell Them Everything* (1981), reflect the strategies of the Anglo-American and Irish second-wave feminist movement from the 1970s and 1980s by using similar methodologies in their practice in order to navigate and represent women's marginalised experience. Firstly, by outlining the contexts of second-wave feminism and the women's movement in the United States, the south of Ireland, and the north of Ireland this chapter acknowledges the intersections between Anglo-American feminism and the Irish women's movement. As well as analysing the contexts and methodologies of second-wave feminism in an Anglo-American context, I also interrogate the specific jurisdictional differences between feminisms on the island of Ireland demonstrating the social contexts that influence them. Anglo-American feminism is distinguished by various distinct strands of feminism and is defined by its attention to lesbian rights. I argue that feminism on the island of Ireland is more fluidly defined and in the north of Ireland the focus is on representing the rights of working-class women. This dissertation foregrounds the emergence of the 'feminist spectator' by interrogating the work of Split Britches and the WOW Café through the lens of the US women's movement and situates the impact of US feminisms on Anglo-American feminisms, thus providing a contextual comparator to the Irish performances. This chapter focuses on the intersection between the Troubles and the women's movement in the north of Ireland. It also explores how the Troubles informed, influenced, and hampered feminist progress in the north of Ireland causing what I term a double-jeopardy of discrimination for women through an

[25] Dark tourism or thanatourism is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as "[v]isiting heritage sites such as former battlefields, concentration camps, cemeteries, and other sites association with death and destruction" ("Thanatourism"). The term was first theorised by John Lennon and Malcom Foley in *Dark Tourism. The Attraction of Death and Disaster* (2000). Lennon and Foley contend that "dark tourism is an intimation of postmodernity" (11).

analysis of Belfast-based Charabanc Theatre Company. I demonstrate how their method of employing the 'female gaze' in the creation of women-focused performance demonstrates a connection to the methodologies of the women's movement in the north of Ireland at that time. This section illustrates that Charabanc's non-sectarian focus on working-class stories raised awareness of issues like domestic violence. Finally, this chapter analyses Irish artist, performer, and activist D'Arcy's time in the Armagh Jail during the 'no-wash' protests of 1980, and situates D'Arcy's three-month imprisonment in Armagh Jail as a performance of everyday life. I analyse how D'Arcy embodied second-wave methodologies *as* performance, demonstrating the injustices republican women were facing in jail and highlighting the tensions between the women's movement in the north and south of Ireland, thus furthering the chapter's argument that women in the north of Ireland facing a double-jeopardy of discrimination.

Chapter Three examines performance practice in Ireland that disrupts the marginalisation of female experience by staging women's history in public space through radical commemoration. This research follows on from Chapter Two's investigation of how second-wave feminism centralises women's experiences through performance. This chapter argues that theatre and performance from the 1990s onwards responded to a societal tendency to confess, expose and witness history by drawing from these methodologies in their performance practice. Firstly, I contextualise the period of social change and institutional crisis that Ireland experienced during the 1990s. This frames Ireland's progression from a small inward-looking nation to a globalised international player through an analysis of the breakdown between Church and State, focusing on the emergence of a wide range of Clerical Child Sex Abuse (CCSA) scandals as the beginning of the breakdown of the culture of silence that pervaded Irish social life. This research foregrounds Ailbhe Smyth's contention that moments of crisis and scandal in Ireland tend to crystallise around one individual case as a central contextual concern for the interrogation of this chapter's performances. Secondly, I analyse the diversification of performance form that took place in Ireland from the 1990s onwards, arguing that the rise of devised and postdramatic theatre and performance forms poses a link between moments of social upheaval. This research acknowledges the link between Live Art practices and strategies (set out by Áine Phillips) and the performance practices utilised by ANU Productions' 'The Monto Cycle'. Thirdly, I analyse the shifting relationship between the audience and the performance, analysing the trend towards audience participation in Irish performance practice, siting ANU's work within this frame. 'The Monto Cycle'

(2010-2014) serves as the frame for analysing the audience-performance relationship, the performance-space relationship, and ANU Productions' focus on memory and remembrance. Finally, by developing Smyth's assertion that social crisis crystallises around a single individual in Irish society, this chapter contends that ANU's structured "moments of communion" (Haughton, "From Laundries to Labour Camps" 73) operate in a similar way across the cycle. Drawing on Irish theatre's focus on memory and remembrance this chapter interrogates the impact of site, proximity, and the social moment on the audience-performance relationship.

Conclusion

This research offers new perspectives on the diversification of radical performance practice on the island of Ireland. It focuses on theatre and performance practice which lies outside of the more dominant literary canon and is distinct from the single-authored text model. This research constitutes an all-island study of theatre and performance practices that acknowledges the visible and vital links between theatre performance practice on both sides of the Irish border and traces these lineages across time and political jurisdictions. Similarly, this dissertation is framed not only as an all-island, but also a multi-paradigm study that traces the links in performance lineage across political borders while also investigating the connections between embodied art practices and contemporary Irish theatre practice. This dissertation demonstrates how the landscape of theatre and performance practice has in many ways changed significantly over the past forty years and this is exemplified by the proliferation of radical performance practice. This research will show how the audience-performance relationship has evolved along a spectrum of participation, engaging the audience as a co-creator of meaning. This dissertation investigates what happens when performance intervenes to illuminate the shadowed corners of Irish society and history through performing social change on the island of Ireland

Contested Sites and Troubled Bodies: Performing Social Change in the North of Ireland

Introduction

This chapter argues that the effect of violence on the everyday experience of citizens, space, and society in the north of Ireland is captured, critiqued, and complicated by a selection of performances that took place between 1999 and 2010.[26] This investigation situates its analysis within key temporal moments in Northern Ireland's social and political history namely; post-Good Friday/Belfast Agreement (GFA), and post-millennium. The significance of the post-millennium period in the north of Ireland is marked by several key factors, including the evolution of dark or political tourism in the north of Ireland and several key political, social, and cultural interventions.[27] It argues that these key moments of social change influenced the proliferation of performance practice such as community theatre practice and performance that engages with dark tourism in the north of Ireland from 1998-2010. Carol Martin in *Theatre of the Real* (2015) and Ana Pais in *Performance in the Public Sphere* (2017) contend that periods of significant social upheaval can intervene to create alternative forms of performance practice. This chapter demonstrates and analyses the links between moments of social change and performance practice by tracing these lineages within a northern Irish context.

[26]The Good Friday Agreement (1998) recognises "the birthright of all the people of Northern Ireland to identify themselves and be accepted as Irish or British, or both, as they may so choose, and accordingly confirm that their right to hold both British and Irish citizenship is accepted by both Governments and would not be affected by any future change in the status of Northern Ireland" (*The Good Friday/Belfast Agreement*). Up until this point, citizens in Northern Ireland did not have the right to dual citizenship.

[27]These include the publication of the Saville Inquiry in 2010, which superseded the previous Widgery Report on Bloody Sunday in 1972, noting that the murder of civilians in Derry during Bloody Sunday was the responsibility of the British soldiers and determined that the civilians were unarmed and no threat. Also, 2013 was a significant year for culture in the north of Ireland with Derry becoming the UK City of Culture. This was a significant intervention into the spatial politics and performed imageries of the city and it opened Derry up to new audiences within this frame.

Crucially, these performances[28] do not necessarily speak to the most devastating events that occurred during what became referred to as the Troubles or the associated victims or perpetrators of a single crime.[29] Instead, these performances focus on the wider everyday social experience, evidenced by the intersections between performance and society, in the north of Ireland within this time frame, a social experience which suffered greatly from the events of the Troubles. This chapter analyses performances that demonstrate a hybrid participation of community and professional involvement. This is seen through engagements with both the community arts and the tourism sectors. All four performances occur outside of 'traditional' theatre spaces and seek to challenge the hegemonic narrative of the conflict by representing the reality of everyday life. The 'troubled bodies' of this chapter's title refers to the everyday citizens who became imbricated into various conflicts and crises by entering public space during the timeframe of the Troubles, as well as moments of tension before and that remain ongoing.[30] Each performance form can be considered as emerging during this time in the north of Ireland as an alternative to single-authored dramatic literary text and the grand national narrative of sectarian strife, which dominated public discourse and cultural production at this time.

These performances exemplify the relationship between the social and the performative outlined by Pais and Martin by utilising urban public space in order to engage with the economic, political, and social contexts of these spaces. As such, the city is considered a space of interrogation in this chapter. The performances under investigation in this chapter take place in external civic urban spaces rather than theatre buildings or any end-on indoor staging arrangements more frequently employed by dramatic theatre. At the turn of the century a more community-focused engagement emerged with the ratification of the GFA, one that relied on urban public space to encourage cross-community reconciliation. According to Bertie Ferdman:

[28] I have not attended any of these productions, and therefore my analysis of these performances is thus based on performance scripts, archival records, scholarship, and memories, and interviews with relevant practitioners.

[29] I define the Troubles in accordance with Welsh's and Stewarts's second example, set out here: "the outbreak of violence in Northern Ireland in 1968 following civil-rights demonstrations to the ceasefires of 1994. At the heart of both conflicts lies the question, still unresolved, as to the form or forms the State or States of Ireland should take which would be representative of the differing cultural identities and religious convictions of the people of Ireland, North and South" (Welsh and Stewart).

[30] The term 'troubled bodies' is not an indirect reference to Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble* (1990) or Fintan Walsh's *Male Trouble* (2010).

> the theatricalization of the city as well as all forms of theatrical activity within the city can be understood as forms of urban dramaturgies, collectively revealing individual narratives about where we live, how we live, who is represented, who is excluded, what is privileged, and what power dynamics (historical, social, and economic) are present in any given narrative about the city. (19)

This collective revealing of individual narratives ensured that these alternative performance forms reflect the stories of the marginalised communities in the north of Ireland, focusing on the realities of everyday life in their interventions. The prevalence of dark tourism in the north of Ireland can be understood as one of these forms of urban dramaturgy. Ferdman states that "[i]ndeed, some urban dramaturgies, in particular site-responsive theatre projects that integrate either a piece of architecture or a specific neighbourhood, are often inextricably related to the economic and political interests of the spaces they occupy" (20). The performances represented in this chapter exemplify this by operating in and responding to urban public spaces in conversation with their economic, political, and social contexts. Likewise, the selected performances acknowledge the site as both a subject for and a subject of performance. Ferdman's "vanishing mise-en-scène" is similarly present at these sites as they capture lived experiences that in some cases no longer exist. This dissertation is also interested in interrogating communities, and performances emerging from these communities, that are informed by both the intersection of geography and ideology. In the case of the north of Ireland, this can often be illustrated by one community's opposition to another, and vice versa.

Chapter Outline

This chapter begins with an interrogation of performances that interrogate and challenge the problematic culture of geographical segregation in the city of Belfast post-GFA by analysing *The Wedding Community Play Project* (1999) and *Convictions* (2000). In the aftermath of the GFA, these productions demonstrate a focus on truth and reconciliation, engaging with how the history of the conflict is shared and, thus, not owned by any one community. This focus is maintained through a more community-focused performance approach, which is illuminated in these performances. Communities are physically coming together, crossing borders and peace-lines, to engage in a shared embodied representation of their histories.

Post-GFA these productions are creating space for active response and potential reconciliation between audiences. This chapter recognises that the everyday social experience continues to be commemorated, but in a more unifying and community-focused way. The performances outlined in this section facilitate the breaking of socially imposed rules by actively engaging their audiences in the crossing of spatial boundaries, as both take place in contested public spaces in Belfast city. In *The Wedding Play*, the premise of a mixed-marriage wedding facilitates its mixed-community audience's movement across peace-lines and into areas previously closed off to them through segregation to actively engage in its performance. *Convictions* is situated on the imposing monumental site of the Crumlin Road Courthouse where prisoners from across both communities were held during the Troubles, challenging the spatial rules of Belfast.[31]

Finally, the analysis considers the growing popularity and frequency of political tourism in the north of Ireland, examining how dark tourism operates socially in the urban spaces of the north by analysing Kabosh Theatre Company's *Two Roads West* (2008) and *The West Awakes* (2010). I interrogate how the growth of commercial and political tourism post-Peace Process informed and challenged artists, resulting in a merging of paradigms.[32] As tourism became a central component of the economy in the north of Ireland, artists reacted to, and occasionally challenged, the dominance of political tourism. I argue that as tourism has become central to the economy, artists and forms of cultural production are encouraged to make work that engage with this state-led emphasis on tourism. At various times, and with a wide spectrum of intention and impact, these works can challenge some of the problematic binaries presented through a presentation of complex counter-narratives and an engagement with working-class and women's histories.

[31] According to Sophie Nield in her chapter "Siting the People: Power, Protest, and Public Space" in *Performing Site-Specific Theatre. Politics, Place, Practice*, "monumental space is not just space that contains monuments: it is a space which is in itself monumental, in that it embodies and describes a projection of political realities" (225). The Crumlin Road Courthouse as a site of the Troubles embodies and projects the political realities of that time.

[32] According to Landon E. Hancock, the peace process in Northern Ireland "has different starting points according to different scholars examining the issue. […] Regardless of which starting point one prefers, all acknowledge that a series of discussions and agreements led to the Good Friday Agreement of 1998" (203). Hancock cites the ending of the peace process as taking place with the start of power-sharing in Stormont on May 8th 2007 (204).

A Fresh Start: Challenging Segregation Through Performance post-GFA

Telling Their Own Stories. *The Wedding Community Play Project* (1999) and *Convictions* (2001)

The Wedding Community Play Project was commissioned, conceived and performed in the immediate aftermath of the GFA. The production, performed in the autumn of 1999 in Belfast, is a community arts initiative, bringing its audiences on a four-hour odyssey where it represents the full 'day-of-the-wedding' ritual leading up to and including a mixed-marriage (Catholic-Protestant) wedding ceremony and reception. This chapter argues that both *The Wedding Community Play Project* and *Convictions* are subverting the rules of segregated public space in Belfast. One of the participants, Geraldine Moriarty, comments on the important dynamics of space that informed *The Wedding Play* in *Theatre and Empowerment* (2004):

> In the North of Ireland we know that there are few neutral spaces and even fewer neutral individuals. We carry baggage, we make contracts and allegiances, we make our own choices and endure the choices that are made for us. We know that we can be located within a political, social, emotional and spiritual landscape and we think that we can locate others. (14)

The production, divided into domestic and non-domestic settings makes use of the spatial dynamics outlined by Moriarty, drawing the audience into a rich and intimate landscape where the politics of difference and identity are explored. The audience are cast as guests at this wedding and participate in the day-long ritual of the wedding. A reviewer for the *Irish Times* comments on the audience dynamics at the outset of the production, stating that the audience are divided into groups of about eight and in their case are "bussed across the Lagan to the nationalist enclave of Short Strand, and the home of the Todd family, where preparations are in full swing for the wedding of Margaret Todd's son, Damien Kelly, a Catholic, to Nicola Marshall, a Protestant" ('Flies in the Soap'). Once inside the audience experience the chaos of the house room by room in intervals of about fifteen minutes each. In the kitchen the groom and his groomsmen await the arrival of the cars which will take them to the Church, in an upstairs bedroom the groom's sister is pining over her own recently failed relationship, and in the parlour the groom's

mother and father are preparing for the ceremony ('Flies in the Soap'). Across the city the other half of the group are experiencing the bride's house in much the same manner and once each house is complete the bus loads of audiences swap perspectives. The intimacy and the proximity of this structure is significant as the audience are engaged in breaking the 'rules', in some cases, of political space but also the private boundaries of domestic space, by demonstrating the intimacy of the 'real lives' behind the politics of a cross-community wedding. From the houses *The Wedding Play* moves its audiences onwards to a Presbyterian Church for the enactment of the wedding ceremony itself and onwards to a nearby hotel for the wedding reception. In these non-domestic sections of the production the audience members are no longer divided and thus there is less reliance on intimacy and proximity and more so on ritual for the final sections of this four-hour-long performance.

Convictions was produced in 2000 at the Crumlin Road Courthouse in Belfast City. The performance consists of eleven "Courthouse Journeys" presented as a combination of installation, performance, and maps. Each performance's title stems from its location in the building.[33] This emphasises the production's connection to the courthouse space. The Courthouse and adjoining Gaol experienced intense activity throughout the Troubles, convicting prisoners from both side of the political and paramilitary divide. Like *The Wedding Play* in 1999, *Convictions* is staged in the direct aftermath of the GFA, a politically tumultuous time in the north of Ireland. *Convictions* invites its audience to enter the Crumlin Road Courthouse building, challenging the spatial limitations placed on the public throughout the Troubles by allowing the audience access to spaces previously prohibited. In this production, there is an overlay of form, and as well as the performed Courthouse journeys, the audience also experience several visual art exhibitions that attempt to capture the historical and lived experience of the Courthouse building. These performances draw from the politics and contexts of the post-Good Friday Agreement period, facilitating an opportunity for shared storytelling, demonstrating how performance practice captured and reflected the changing social values in the north of Ireland at that time.

[33] *Court No.* 2 by Marie Jones, *Main Hall* by Martin Lynch, *Court No.1* by Owen McCafferty, *Jury Room* by Nicola McCartney, *Male Toilets* by Daragh Carville, *Judge's Room* by Damian Gorman, *Holding Room* by Gary Mitchell, and *The Crum* by Neil Martin.

The Politics of Reconciliation

The Good Friday/Belfast Agreement was signed on April 10th 1998. This moment was a significant and tangible achievement that demonstrated the culmination of years of peace process talks and a wide-range of cross-community initiatives at local and government level.[34] Similarly, leading up to and emerging from the GFA also saw a wealth of community arts projects in the north of Ireland that emerged out of this dynamic.[35] Once the GFA was signed into law in both jurisdictions on the island of Ireland needed to find a functional way to engage with the ongoing conflict, to commemorate various traditions peacefully and respectfully, and to move forward. The literary theatre canon continued to flourish on the other side of the GFA, however a form of participatory performance began to develop in response to the terms of the GFA. In this period, the artistic community in the north of Ireland engaged in community-based, participatory, and site-specific performance. Productions like *The Wedding Community Play Project* (1999) and *Convictions* (2000) reflect upon and commemorate the events of the past by attempting to challenge the segregation of audiences.

The ratification of the Anglo-Irish Agreement in 1985 was intended as a signal of moving beyond the Troubles and towards conflict resolution.[36] The 1998 GFA solidified this and provided a tangible (though not total) end to paramilitary activity in the north of Ireland. The intention of the GFA was to ensure that the north could begin to address the wounds of the past three decades. Communities began to challenge the restrictions placed on public space in the north, reclaiming it from paramilitaries, state institutions, and each other. However, the city of Belfast is still a difficult city to transect due to remaining peace walls and other means of segregation. Post-GFA, there are attempts to overcome previous community

[34] Including talks between the leaders of the north's two nationalist parties Gerry Adams (Sinn Féin) and John Hume (The SDLP) with the Irish and British governments, the 1994 IRA Ceasefire, and cross-community talks between nationalist and unionist communities.

[35] As McFetridge notes in a personal interview conducted for this research, local and national funding became available during this period to facilitate engagement with communities through art practice. All of Chapter One's performances received some public-funding through community arts initiatives (McFetridge). Therefore, the funding conditions emerging at this time influenced the form and content of community arts practice occurring before and after the Good Friday Agreement.

[36] The 1985 Anglo-Irish Agreement was "signed by British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and Garret Fitzgerald, the Irish [T]aoiseach […this gave] the government of Ireland an official consultative role in the affairs of Northern Ireland […] it outlined cooperation in four areas: political matters; security and related issues; legal matters, including the administration of justice; and the promotion of cross-border cooperation" (Murray).

divides. Performance focusing on community experience proliferated in this context, continuing to promote audience participation but also interrogating theatrical form and structure through an engagement with community art practice. This collaborative structure reflects communal efforts for peace and represents a shift in societal values at that time.[37]

After the Troubles, communities sought to recover from the wounds of the past and acknowledge the trauma and suffering which is part of their everyday social experiences by means of peaceful reconciliation. Practitioners in the north had the momentum to reflect on the previous segregation of public space in their artistic responses and challenge the intent of these spaces through productions like *The Wedding Play* and *Convictions*. Post-GFA disparate communities had the opportunity to witness each other's histories through performance. At the same time, there was a clear move away from individual counter narratives and a movement towards collective remembrance of the past through storytelling in performance, resonating with the emerging and evolving social values of the 1990s. The appetite for truth and reconciliation in the north in the aftermath of the GFA resulted in an artistic interrogation across all communities affected by the ongoing conflict. Stefanie Lehner cites the report of the Consultative Group on the Past (CGP) in the north of Ireland when she writes "[i]n the Northern Irish context, for instance, storytelling has been accused of being strategically used to legitimate and foreground the specific (historical) narrative of one constituency or community (often by recourse to claims for victimhood) while marginalising that of the other" (281). As previously explored, the GFA was the result of years of state and community focused engagement that aimed for reconciliation. In the GFA's declaration of support for participants in the multi-party negotiations, it stated that:

> The tragedies of the past have left a deep and profoundly regrettable legacy of suffering. We must never forget those who have died or been injured, and their families. But we can best honour them through a fresh start, in which we firmly dedicate ourselves to the achievement of reconciliation, tolerance, and mutual trust, and to the protection and vindication of human rights for all. (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade)

[37] This is not to suggest that preceding practices were not engaged in collaborative performance structures. Indeed, the work of both Martin Lynch and Marie Jones (in particular her work with theatre company Dubblejoint) also engaged with similar forms. However, the links between the community and professional artists in terms of this collaboration are of particular concern for this dissertation and as such this is reflected in the choice of performances analysed.

Evident in the performance practice of the time, this formalised move towards reconciliation and remembrance was borne out through collaborative community engagement, centralising the role of urban public space and actively engaging the audience through storytelling. Post-GFA, communities began to focus on a peaceful reconciliation outside of the reach of the political and paramilitary interests. Performance in the north reacted to this and theatre and performance groups begin to take control of the choreography of their own narratives by engaging with, and challenging the social rules of, contested public space.[38]

The Wedding Community Play Project (1999)

The audience in *The Wedding Play* are active participants in the performance of the day-long ritual of a wedding ceremony. The forthcoming analysis of audience participation in this context situates the audience-performance relationship along the spectrum of participation outlined in the Introduction to this dissertation. The significance of active participation in *The Wedding Play* emerges through the emphasis on cross-community participation through the mechanism of shared storytelling. The structure of the performance allows the audience to gain an intimate knowledge of the bride and groom and their families before coming together for the final ceremony and celebration. One of the production's aims, according to Moriarty, is "to create a safe space in which participants from Protestant and Catholic backgrounds could explore difficult issues and emotions, differences and similarities through drama" (15). The communities are provided with the opportunity to become their own memory choreographers, through the sharing of conflicting and contested experience, without political or paramilitary intervention. *The Wedding Play* interacts with the urban dramaturgy of Belfast. The audience are willing participants. This is signalled by the fact that the audience are aware of the nature of the performance before buying their tickets and by being facilitated within the performance to engage with the performers and the wedding ceremony. It informs their entire horizon of expectations, to borrow from Bennett,

[38] Despite the progress made post-GFA in returning to peace, the decades of civil conflict and division have had a significant and negative impact on society in the north of Ireland. More people have died by suicide in Northern Ireland since the GFA than died during the Troubles. According to *The Guardian*, "The statistics on the state of mental health in the region show that since the peace deal about 4,500 suicides were registered in the region" (McDonald). A recent study into suicide rates in Northern Ireland show that the suicide rates in this jurisdiction are significantly higher than any other country in the United Kingdom. It also shows that the rate of suicide is rising in Northern Ireland, which is in direct conflict with England, Scotland, and Wales where suicide rates are falling (L.-A. Black).

who suggests that "[u]ndoubtedly each particular variety of playing space provides the audience with specific expectations and interpretive possibilities" (136). Returning to the spectrum of participation, post-GFA societal values significantly shifted towards a willingness to engage across communities and this is reflected in the participatory nature of the audience-performance relationship in *The Wedding Play*. This performance contributes to the diversification of the audience performance relationship by engaging in this method of participatory performance within the community art structure. Paula McFetridge notes that *The Wedding Play* is "a project that would be very much housed within the community arts movement, so it was about participatory practice at its core. It was about looking at how members of the community could tell their own stories in their own spaces, and how they could reclaim those spaces" (McFetridge).[39] Moriarty notes the ongoing dynamic of participation in the production, stating that it was both "a metaphorical and literal journey" (14). She notes that *The Wedding Play* was a collaboration between "150 community participants (ranging in age from ten to sixty-five), a number of professional arts workers, an audience of 700 and a very much wider audience who read about the project in their newspapers, saw extracts on television programmes and at conferences, and heard about it from friends" (14). This signifies that the impact of the production outlasted the live event, creating a tangible sense of engagement with spatial reconciliation through performance. In the production itself, the audience benefited from the seemingly blurred boundaries between what was real and what was not. McFetridge recalls that "people would arrive dressed up to go to a wedding. It was so funny, people took it on as an experience. People said to us: there's no way audiences are going to go on a four hour theatre experience. They took it on like a mission" (McFetridge). McFetridge's commentary highlights the audience's willingness to participate. The social frame, influenced by the priorities of the GFA assists in creating a space for this kind of engagement.

The Wedding Play sought out an engagement with urban public space as a means of interrogating the lived realities of these places, as well as their socio-political construction. Speaking to the nature of the production's locations Urban states that *The Wedding Play* "subverted the rules of public space in the Belfast

[39] Paula McFetridge was production manager for *The Wedding Community Play Project*, Artistic Director for *Convictions* and is currently the Artistic Director of Kabosh Theatre Company.

interface areas, and undermined the strict segregation of private space on the Protestant and on the Catholic side" (251). This ties in with Moriarty's contention that space in this context is not neutral. It also reinvigorated the potential for the future of the everyday experience through a relationship with space in Belfast. The breaking down of the rules of public space generates hope for the future and the shared experiences negotiated through acts of reconciliation. The framework of the mixed-marriage wedding metaphorically marries the two communities, creating a legitimisation of past experiences and a co-creation of progress going forward. This challenging of the cultural norms of public space in Belfast, which are immediately visible to the observer by means of political murals, painted curb sides, and flags, creates an investment by the audience in their role within the event. Describing her experience of the audience in *The Wedding Play* Urban argues that "[t]he experience was not only 'collective' in the sense of audience members getting to know other audience members better than they would in a conventional theatre, but also in the sense that […] the audience was explicitly written into the play, and each had their own part to play" (257). These contributions, she argues, "literally sweeps away the audience into a new world of redemption from the Troubles, through the sacrament of a healing marriage between the divided communities" (258). Mixed relationships between Catholics and Protestants during the Troubles were particularly contentious. Kareena McAloney contends that the presence of "[t]hese interpersonal relationships […] cross perceived boundaries to social mixing but they can also infringe on other traditionally segregated domains such as housing and education as couples choose where to live, who to associate with, and potentially how to raise and educate any children" (1037). The privileging of the narrative of a mixed-marriage union foregrounded society's focus on reconciliation post-GFA. However, the most effective outcome of *The Wedding Play* for this research is the act of crossing the peace line. By subverting what Urban refers to as the rules of geography in Belfast, this production is actively engaging its audience in doing the same.

In *The Wedding Play* it is not only the audience who must overcome cross-community volatility, but also the performers themselves. Moriarty notes that during the rehearsal period there was controversy among some of the Protestant members of the project who felt that Marie Jones's early script writing represented Protestants as "clichéd, dated and stereotyped" (20). Moriarty adds that "I talked

through the situation with those Protestant members that were most concerned about it. I told them that I believed it was possible for us, through an ensemble approach to acting and through sensitive direction, to develop characters who were not stereotypes but complex individuals living and responding to a changing social context" (20). This experience demonstrates the challenges of collaboration and participation in this context, and illustrates a willingness to subvert the grand narrative of the national that manifests as ingrained. Indeed the *Irish Times* reviewer notes that the productions runs into issues in this regard, nothing the forced nature of "a subplot in which two female friends of the Marshalls discuss Protestant identity over the washing up" ('Flies in the Soap'). They note that this exchange "smacks a little too much of overworkshopped ideology" ('Flies in the Soap'). Despite these representative missteps, the success of this production and its significance lies in the nature of the audience-performer relationship.

In *The Wedding Play* the audience members *willingly* engage in the subversion of these spatial rules, thus are actively engaged in this moment of cross-community reconciliation through the performance. Thus, there is a clear evolution of audience participation along the spectrum of participation that connects to the change in the social values system post-GFA. Here, there is a willingness to participate in acts of reconciliation which is evidenced in performance through collaborative community engagement. *The Wedding Play* responded to key moments of social change and represented the shifting social values through the structure of its performance.

Convictions (2000)

Like *The Wedding Community Play Project*, the emphasis on cross-community healing, remembrance, and the sharing of stories takes a privileged position in *Convictions*. However, despite the differences in intention in terms of the nature of storytelling McFetridge notes that both productions had innate similarities:

> when it came to *Convictions* it was a different kettle of fish [than *The Wedding Play*] because it wasn't about people telling their own stories. It was about […] using the arts to raise questions that neither the media nor politicians were dealing with. So, it was using art as arts activism to challenge what wasn't happening within our mainstream conversations. (McFetridge)

In this way, it also focuses on the subversion of the grand narrative of the national by foregrounding issues that are underrepresented in the media and at government level. McFetridge notes that what unified both productions, however, was that "they were both at a point when, I suppose, questions were starting to be asked about the type of society that we actually wanted to be part of. So, they were very much pieces of their time" (McFetridge). McFetridge's comment highlights the impact of temporality on the work being produced in this context. That these productions are being categorised as being 'of their time' highlights the shared social willingness in both the performance and society to engage in a shared restructuring of society through an engagement with the past.

Like *The Wedding Play* the site-specific nature of *Convictions* has a particular part to play in the performance of memory, and thus, truth telling. Jen Harvie argues in *Staging the UK* (2005) that "[s]ite specific performance can be especially powerful as a vehicle for remembering" (*Staging the UK* 42). She expands on this by suggesting that "[s]ite-specific performance can enact a spatial history, mediating between the past and future, as well as between a sense of nostalgia for the past and a sense of otherness possibly felt in the present and anticipated future" (*Staging the UK* 42). *Convictions* mediates the past and future, as Harvie suggests, by mirroring for its audience the history of the courthouse in its present physical form. McFetridge notes that the success of *Convictions* was the fact that:

> it was a building that people were never going to see inside. So, we got to take an audience into areas of that building that were never open to the public before. And, we were able to reclaim those areas of the building and assist the community to see that building differently because we put theatre in it. (McFetridge)

The presence of a mixed community audience interacts with the feelings of otherness and nostalgia by being present in the space and engaging in the performance. However the structure of the performance has the potential to disrupt the impact of the experience as Michael McKinnie suggests, stating that "[t]he strict time constraints imposed by the audience's movement between rooms […] also meant that spectators could always anticipate the temporal limitations on their encounter with a character's trauma; they knew that, after approximately fifteen minutes, they would be led away" (593). There is a simultaneous safety and risk implicit in this structure as the performance frame is always present and visible,

unlike in *The Wedding Play*. Placing *Convictions* on the spectrum of participation demonstrates that it is the site of the performance, coupled with the form of the performance that encourages a greater participation from its audience. Like *The Wedding Play* it also contributes to the diversification of the audience-performance relationship through its engagement with space.

This space contains histories from both sides of the conflict and from a multitude of characters that inform its history. It is therefore a contested space, a symbol of state power and the justice system to some and an instrument of foreign or domestic oppression for others. Multitudes of Irish, northern Irish, and British histories are represented through the use of this space. Indeed, the scholarly ownership of this production speaks somewhat to the conflicted space that northern Irish theatre inhabits. This production has been claimed by performance scholars as being of and from Northern Ireland, the island of Ireland, and the UK, illustrating the conflicted and conflated sense of identity and nation that is synonymous with performance practice of this kind.[40] Indeed Harvie states that the title of the play "is indicative of the show's persuasive dialogism and its refusal to uphold any dominant version of the history of the courthouse of Belfast, much less to offer its own definitive version" (*Staging the UK* 54). Speaking specifically in reference to *Convictions* she states that it "forced an acknowledgement of its own obsolescence and of the provisional nature of both its particular version of Belfast's memories and, by extension, any remembered version of history, and the nation" (*Staging the UK* 44). By ensuring audiences from both communities experience this site-specific performance simultaneously, *Convictions* encourages a triggering of lived memory in the space and acknowledges the shared history present in this space. This can be seen in the production through a moment that McFetridge describes:

> I had commissioned a series of paper mache spines that all looked liked they were curved over, so you saw the vertebrae of the spine, and there was loads of kitchen knives everywhere. The noise that was being played was like loads of pots steaming and knives chopping. So it was a really intense kind of sound as you walked through the canteen bit. But, on the floor, we put in place maps that we found in the basement of the courthouse. So, you know the kind of maps you find in a court of law where you see the dead body drawn out on the ground and it's a map of the street and it's a

[40] Eva Urban categorises this production as "Northern Irish" in *Community Politics and the Peace Process in Contemporary Northern Irish* Drama. Jen Harvie includes this work as an example of performance in the United Kingdom in *Staging the UK*. In this study, *Convictions* is examined as part of an all-island study.

> charcoal drawing. So, the group are going through [...] and this guy stopped, pointed at one of the maps and said "I put that guy there". (McFetridge)

The frame created through this performance creates a space of safety for sharing. As McFetridge suggests "there was a sense that people felt safe and conversations happened in that really personal micro-level as part of that journeying aspect" (McFetridge). The production illustrates that this site does not belong to any one community but is a collective reminder of a shared history, which is attempting to be reconciled. The storytelling element of this production ensures that it reflects the shared history of both the nationalist and unionist communities broadly through the participation and contribution of writers and artists from a wide range of communities in the north of Ireland.

The audience's participation in this event is less tangible than that of *The Wedding Play* in that "by inviting these participants into the Courthouse, *Convictions* bade them transgress the '*lived* obedience' they had–likely unwittingly–learned to adopt in the face of Belfast's many spatial regulations, including those which enforced the Courthouse's enormous [British] state authority" (Harvie, *Staging the UK* 61). It also bade them to share this contested site with members of historically oppositional communities and to engage in the remembrance and commemoration of this period of Belfast's history via a variety of authorial voices. Commenting on the role of the spectator in *Convictions* Urban maintains that:

> the performance of *Convictions* began when the audience were led into the building of the Crumlin Road Courthouse, after passing through the intimidating fortified entrance, and were guided one after another by actors playing uniformed guards. So the audience, although passive, were not on the outside looking in, but became part of the metaphor of the performance." (78)

McKinnie argues that "the effect was rather like being led on a highly efficient tour of a museum, in which the scenes were vignettes arranged for the purposes of comprehension of the history condensed within the courthouse" (592). This analysis challenges both Urban and McKinnie's contention that the audience are passive in this action. By their presence in the space they themselves could be emotionally, cognitively, and psychologically open to performing in the healing and reconciliation of these histories via the illumination of several decades of lived experience portrayed by this monumental site. Like in *The Wedding Play*, the

audience in *Convictions* are actively and knowingly subverting the rules of Belfast geography by re-claiming this contested space as part of a shared history across communities. McKinnie argues that the production is complicit "in the audience's voyeurism" (593). He argues that "when the ways of seeing and the content seen are as tightly controlled as they were in *Convictions*, surely the play bears at least some responsibility for any spectatorial voyeurism" (593). However, this voyeurism, as McKinnie argues, is positioned as part of a frame of engaging with space in a shared way. The micro-histories and conversations referred to by McFetridge above demonstrate that rather than being voyeuristic, *Convictions* provides an opportunity for shared storytelling. As Harvie states above, this performance encouraged the audience to transgress the "lived obedience" of the rules of public space. Both *The Wedding Play* and *Convictions* engaged with the post-GFA idea that peaceful reconciliation between the two communities could be achieved by engaging with experiences from both sides of the conflict in the same performance frame and space. Both productions tackled the pervasive issue of geographical segregation to enforce a communal, cross-community experience through performance. By actively engaging audiences in the subversion of geographical norms in Belfast at that time, the productions created tangible acts of community reconciliation. This community-focused approach allowed everyday citizens to engage with their own narratives, and their histories, choosing to eschew the political actors operating in the north at that time in favour of an art-led and collective process.

Tourism as Performance: Moving into a New Millennium

Performing the Legacy of the Past. *Two Roads West* (2008) and *The West Awakes* (2010)

Two Roads West, written by former IRA Hunger Striker Laurence McKeown, takes a literal look at the convention of Troubles tourism. The play is set in the back of a black taxi "during a political tour of the sectarian neighbourhoods of the Falls and Shankill roads" (Owicki 230). Five audience members journey in a black taxi with two performers who converse about how their own personal lives were affected by the realities of the conflict. Rosie is a Belfast woman who has returned to her native city after forty years of living in London. Her taxi driver, Bill, guides her

through the previously war-torn areas of West Belfast, exploring the intense changes that the area has seen in the last four decades. McFetridge considers the premise of this production in our interview, and notes that it emerged from local authority funding for a project that aimed to fund ways to connect the inner city community with the city centre spaces of Belfast. *Two Roads West* was initially produced in Belfast in 2008 for the Cathedral Quarter Arts festival and then the following year in 2009 for the *Féile an Phobail* festival. (Kabosh Theatre Company). Significantly, Kabosh also produced a version of *Two Roads West* in the nationalist Bogside area of Derry during the 2013 Derry City of Culture events, emphasising their connection with nationalist areas in the north.

Each of the Belfast productions touches on significant areas of the nationalist Falls and the unionist Shankill roads, exploring the journey away from conflict and towards reconciliation that both communities undertook during and after the Troubles. Bill regales Rosie with tales of violence and terror as well as hope and progress. *Two Roads West* builds on the structures of *The Wedding Play* and *Convictions* by engaging with the disputed nature of history at a local level. This sentiment is illustrated in *Two Roads West* when Bill states that, "history, even at a local level, is often disputed" (whatsonderrystrabane). In fact, Kabosh's artistic director Paula McFetridge was also involved in producing *The Wedding Play* and was the artistic director of *Convictions*. Therefore, a clear lineage of practice between these performances can be identified through McFetridge's leading role in each of them. *Two Roads West* provides access to spaces previously hidden by utilising established Troubles Tourism structures to do so. By privileging the personal stories of Bill and Rosie (as well as smaller moments of note from the local community) Kabosh are disrupting the victim/perpetrator binary so often present in Troubles Tourism events. The history in *Two Roads West* is local and personal, reflecting on the personal cost of the conflict rather than glorifying or condemning the large-scale violence and events.

The structure of the production comes from McFetridge's own experience of living in West Belfast during the Troubles. She states that "we travelled in London black hackney cabs all our lives, going to and from school and to and from the city centre" (McFetridge). Noting that this mode of transport was the cheapest and safest way to travel, McFetridge also views it as innately theatrical:

> You end up holding people's shopping […] you'd hold babies, people would comment on everything. I always loved the camaraderie of it and anytime you brought anyone to visit you, they always used to laugh their leg off at these taxis. I'd done a voiceover for them back when I was out as an actress way back in 1984 or 1985, and so I was kinda fascinated by it. I thought, that is pure theatre. (McFetridge)

Kabosh utilise the innate theatricality of these experiences in the structure of the performance, engaging the audience in the experience of this aspect of everyday life in Belfast: "People were convinced I had put people standing at bus stops. People were convinced there was a women walking with her daughter up the road and started shouting that we'd staged it. […] They start looking at the world around them" (McFetridge). This demonstrates that in this form the lines between real and performance were often blurred for audiences, encouraging them to reassess and reclaim their surroundings.

Like *Two Roads West, The West Awakes* also employs tourism structures in its performance. The production is framed as a three-hour-long walking tour combining elements of live, unscripted tourism via a tour guide and scripted performance interventions at five sites across West Belfast. These sites, Saint Comgall's Primary School, Conway Mill, An Chultúrlann, the City Cemetery, and Milltown Cemetery all represent key moments of political and social history in Belfast over the last century. *The West Awakes* also emerged from a funding opportunity, this time from the West Belfast tourist board. McFetridge notes that there were concerns regarding the 'quality' of tourism in West Belfast at that time, and noted that the arts were being used as a vehicle to 'clean up' the political tourism on offer in this area. According to McFetridge "the tourist board said that one of their biggest issues was more people were coming here, and they didn't feel that they could put their name to the current political tours unless they were improved, enhanced, cleaned up" (McFetridge). As a result McFetridge and Kabosh decided to engage with Coiste, an ex-republican prisoners group, who were running walking tours in West Belfast for *The West Awakes.* Considering the intention of the piece McFetridge considers the relationship between political tourism and performance:

> I was really interested in how you championed political tourism but improved its quality and articulated its worth […]. I'm also interested in how communities are empowered to tell their own stories. I went on the [Coiste] tour, there were lots of cases where they wanted me to do dramas as part of *The West Awakes*, for example in the Republican plot in

> Milltown Cemetery. I was really clear with them and said I couldn't enhance that site, there's no way. You stand on that site, it's powerful enough. (McFetridge).

The intervention of participatory arts practice into political tourism is significant in terms of both *Two Roads West* and *The West Awakes*. Although dark tourism has had a presence in the north of Ireland since the beginning of the Troubles, the funding structures on offer post-millennium can account for its widespread engagement during this time period. There are numerous examples of a long legacy of participatory and site specific performance practice in the north of Ireland that do not engage with dark tourism practices, such as other work by Kabosh Theatre Company (for example *1916 Our History Our Future* (2016), and *Mabel* (2015)) and work by Big Telly productions.[41] However, both of the performances under investigation here were supported, financially, by state-funded tourism or local authority initiatives as a means of 'cleaning up' the political tours already on offer. This dynamic, and McFetridge's own experience with the West Belfast tourism board points to the ambivalence by state agencies on the forms of political tourism on offer during this time. Because of the interconnectivity of the tourism structures and the productions examined here, this section will analyse dark tourism post-millennium in the north of Ireland as a means of informing its argument.

Dark Tourism. A Thin Engagement?

In the aftermath of the Peace Process, violent paramilitary events become significantly less regular in the north. In the wake of the new millennium there has been a movement towards creating an equitable society. Although many theatre companies continue to engage in cross-community, participatory investigations, a new wave of interactive performance is also developing. It reacts to the increasing dominance of 'Troubles Tourism' developing in the north and the funding streams that were becoming available for artists to engage with this form. As tourism becomes central to the economy, companies such as Kabosh Theatre Company respond to this state-led emphasis on tourism, aiming to challenge some of the problematic binaries presented while also exploring the potential for further audience development that tourism offers. Due to the sectarian nature of society in

[41] Big Telly are the longest running theatre company in Northern Ireland. Established in 1986 the company specialise in participatory and site-responsive performance. A full list of the company's past productions can be found here: https://www.big-telly.com

the north of Ireland, dark tourism may act to reify the existing and historical ethno-national tensions rather than challenge, problematise, or reimagine them. Thus, it may strengthen the already existent insider/outsider binary that exists in the public sphere of the north of Ireland among global perceptions. The societal, cultural, political, and religious divisions present in the north have been embedded into the urban geography of cities such as Belfast and Derry. This transforms everyday public space into something more significant, creating the city as a monumental space and as a site of conflict heritage. These sites, defined by division and conflict, are open to exploitation. Through an analysis of Kabosh Theatre Company's *Two Roads West* and *The West Awakes* this chapter demonstrates how Kabosh attempts to challenge the problematic dynamics of dark tourism through a presentation of counter-narratives and an engagement with working-class and women's histories.

Eleanor Owicki writes that "[i]n the wake of 'the Troubles' […] the city of Belfast has struggled to find a new identity in the face of competing needs and goals" (229). The performances outlined above illustrate this struggle for coherency and for a commemoration of the north's troubled history by actively involving audiences in the telling of their stories and the sharing of their marginalised experiences. However, in the early 2000s tourism became central to the economy of the north of Ireland and performances from companies such as Kabosh have sought to engage with the official emphasis on tourism. Emma Willis in *Theatricality, Dark Tourism and Ethical Spectatorship: Absent Others* (2014) notes that this trend is also proliferating at a global level. She argues that "[t]he twentieth century was marked by a series of social catastrophes that profoundly challenged humanist values. It was also the century of the tourist: economic and technological changes opened the world for viewing" (215). In the north of Ireland this was further encouraged by the IRA disarmament in the summer of 2005. Molly Hurley Dépret states that following the disarmament "a flurry of news articles began to fill newspapers […] These articles homed in on visitors' interest in Belfast's recent history of state and paramilitary violence and Belfast's aura of mystique" (137). She argues that the proliferation of political tours in Belfast has increased since the early 1990s, suggesting that "[s]ince 1994 […] tours of the vivid historical and paramilitary murals painted on the sides of homes, the Crumlin Road jail, and the Peace Wall […] have regularly meandered through working-

class Belfast neighbourhoods" (138). She also comments on how city officials in Belfast attempted to "promote the less sensational 'heritage' sites" (138) in order to combat the proliferation of contentious political touring. Sara McDowell also echoes this timeline, citing 2004 as the advent of what she terms "official" Troubles tourism, but also notes that this was a time that officials began to consider the benefit of political tourism for the northern economy, in particular tourism associated with the Troubles and the Titanic (416). Like Hurley Dépret, McDowell also acknowledges the rise of Troubles Tourism in Belfast and notes the economic benefit of this tourism for West Belfast (416).

This dissertation contends that Troubles Tourism is a form of thanatourism, or dark tourism, which involves "[v]isiting heritage sites such as former battlefields, concentration camps, cemeteries, and other sites associated with death and destruction" ("Thanatourism"). This dissertation does not seek to set up a binary perspective of dark tourism as being singularly negative, as there are many instances and examples of dark tourism acting in a positive light. For example, some of the most popular dark tourism sites in the world, such as Auschwitz Concentration Camp, can teach society important lessons about past atrocities, in the hope that such knowledge will prevent future iterations. However, in some cases, dark tourism can be predicated along binary lines of division, such as in the north of Ireland, at times, where the politics of difference (and a desire to uphold the same) underpins much of the tourism on offer. That is the form of dark tourism that this dissertation seeks to dissect, analyse, and challenge. Philip Stone and Richard Sharpley note the fragility of the theory around dark tourism. They argue that, "a distinction exists between purposefully constructed attractions or experiences that interpret or recreate events or acts associated with death, and 'accidental' sites (sites, such as grave-yards or memorials, that have become attractions 'by accident')" (577). Willis approaches her analysis of dark tourism via an examination into the ethics of spectatorship, focusing on theatre works that are concerned with specific cultural traumas. This dissertation is also interested in representations of cultural trauma and is interested in what happens when performance intersects with intentional heritage sites (such as those in Derry and Belfast) rendering them no longer accidental, and will explore this idea through an

analysis of Kabosh's *Two Roads West* and *The West Awakes*.[42] In the conclusion to their investigation on dark tourism Stone and Sharpley argue that:

> this new social institution (dark tourism) facilitates the reconstruction of a meaning system for individuals in the face of reflexivity, desacralisation and institutional sequesterisation, thus creating an opportunity to confront and contemplate 'mortality moments' from a perceived safe distance and environment. This, in turn, allows for some immunity and reassurance from the actual death or macabre event which has been reproduced by dark tourism. (589)

Dark tourism is an established performance practice of sorts. There is a narrative to be presented to an audience who have usually paid for the privilege. This social institution, as Stone and Sharpley term it, engages in memory choreography and has become (and remains) a significant part of post-Troubles society. They refer to the ability to confront "mortality moments" as being part of the appeal of dark tourism, however, the fact that many of the tourists that partake of Belfast and Derry's political tours come from outside the north of Ireland means that this type of tourism is also open to cultural Othering. McDowell categorises this occurrence as "conflict heritage". She argues that:

> Warfare and conflict […] not only reshape historical and cultural sites but also have the ability to construct new ones. As such, places marked by or commemorating war are transformed from 'everyday mundane spaces', taking on 'heightened symbolic meaning, value and emotional significance', and consequently evolving as 'heritage'. (406)

These sites, defined by division and conflict, are thus open to exploitation. Thus far, the performances analysed in this chapter have resisted the influence of political actors in the choreographing of memory and lived experience. However, the structure of Troubles Tourism (which is largely based on accessing histories in the spaces of those histories) depends on the politics of division for its success. Therefore, it can be seen as a form of cultural Othering which is taking place in

[42] Some consideration must be given to the processes of commemoration and memorialisation in terms of these heritage sites. Sara McDowell and Marie Braniff negotiate the processes of memorialisation and commemoration within conflict communities in the north of Ireland in *Commemoration as Conflict* (2014). They query the authorship of memory in the commemoration of conflict and the politics of geography in terms of memorialisation. McDowell and Braniff state that "Memorial material has the power to bind communities, societies and nations in the present. Yet it can also operate as sites of resistance or points of contestation. It is also argued here that physical commemoration such as memorials, as visual symbols often constitute territorial markers which are strategically placed within and outside a geographic area. As such they demarcate dichotomous boundaries for those who live within controlled or seized territories as well as for those who live outside of the territory" (14). This becomes evident in the north of Ireland and is an important consideration for how tourists and audiences engage with and read heritage and urban spaces in the performances analysed in this chapter.

public space through the structure of Troubles Tourism and is similar to the kind of problematic memory choreography outlined by Conway in the aftermath of Bloody Sunday.

One of the key operational structures of Troubles Tourism is the element of voyeurism and the politics of viewing. John Urry argues in *The Tourist Gaze* (2011) that "[p]eople gaze upon the world through a particular filter of ideas, skills, desires and expectations, framed by social class, gender, nationality, age and education. Gazing is a performance that orders, shapes and classifies, rather than reflects the world" (2). Urry establishes that the 'tourist gaze' is ideological and as Dean MacCannell argues, is deterministic. MacCannell argues that Urry's tourist gaze "is installed by the institutions and practices of commercialized tourism" (35). Whereas, he argues that the "second gaze is always aware that something is being concealed from it; that there is something missing from every picture, from every look or glance" (36). Hurley Dépret engages with Urry's term the "tourist gaze" and analyses its impact on the spaces of the north. Like MacCannell, she foregrounds the presence of the many gazes that can affect tourists, noting that the tourists themselves are "gazed at" (161). She argues that:

> The ethics of tourism of a "troubles" place becomes imbued with multiple problematics — the gender and class identifications of the tourist and tour guide, a community's response to a tour guide — and possibly a tourist — unwelcome in a Republican cemetery, and the guide's own political sentiments and affiliations seeping into his commentary. (161)

Willis states that "ethical dilemmas […] arise from the creation of aestheticized images of suffering from real sources; that is, the idea that the suffering of others may be transformed into a fiction for the 'gazing' subject" (26). In the case of Belfast-based Troubles tourism, the sectarian framing of the venues and places being toured (for both the tourist and the community) increases the instance of this gaze. McDowell also investigates the innate problematics of Othering that emerge out of Troubles tourism. She cites Tunbridge and Ashworth, arguing that "atrocity [is] one of the most marketable of heritages and one of the most powerful instruments for the transference of political and social messages" (406). She continues this idea by arguing that by marketing tourism and troubles sites in a political way, it is inadvertently leading to the legitimisation of sectarian politics and spaces (406). By participating in the divisive structure of Troubles Tourism there is an upholding of the divides in society that it seeks to represent. However,

contrary to McDowell's argument, this form of tourism (though reinforcing community divides) can also be a means of accessing histories, especially histories that are in direct conflict with, or adjacent to, the state mandated version of events. It may also be the case that due to local politics, certain histories have been marginalised and not captured in official books or archives, so performance becomes a method of retrieval. This is part of the argument in Diana Taylor's *The Archive and the Repertoire* (2003). Returning to MacCannell, the presence of the 'second gaze' "turns back onto the gazing subject an ethical responsibility for the construction of its own existence" (36). Therefore, these engagements with tourism provide an access to history and ensure a more phenomenological and sensory engagement with the complexities of the past and those who engage with it. However, this dissertation argues that despite these undeniable advantages, in the case of Troubles Tourism there is a neo-liberal capitalist alignment that supports the hegemonic, monovocal history of one community versus the other. The tourist industry in the north of Ireland brings in a significant amount of revenue, much of this coming from an engagement with Troubles Tourism.[43] As McFetridge notes, both *Two Roads West* and *The West Awakes* were funded by public initiatives that sought to promote a more "improved, enhanced, cleaned up" (McFetridge) version of political tourism. However, the premise of Troubles tourism is that of establishing community difference, and so, there is an economic advantage to promoting this difference through tourism, political and otherwise. Therefore, it does not provide a clear and unproblematic engagement with the past. However, Kabosh purposefully engages with structures of Troubles Tourism through *Two Roads West* and *The West Awakes* in order to trouble the hegemonic version of history upheld by these structures. As will be outlined comprehensively in Chapter Two, the 1980s in the north of Ireland observed the rise of a feminist focus on representing women and working-class experiences as valid and important aspects of recent history. Kabosh's work in *Two Roads West* and *The West Awakes* builds on this awareness. In these productions Kabosh attempt to disrupt the monovocal

[43] A report on tourism revenue from Tourism Northern Ireland demonstrates that tourism revenue during the period under investigation (£540 million in 2008, £529 million in 2009, and £616 million in 2010 or £1.685 billion in total) was the highest on record up until this point. The same report demonstrates that it has increased steadily since then. (Tourism Northern Ireland). The full details of this report can be found here: https://tourismni.com/globalassets/facts-and-figures/research-reports/tourism-trends/trends----trips-and-revenue-1959-2018.pdf Northern Ireland's small economy means that it consistently underperforms in terms of GDP (due to a variety of political factors resulting from its status in the United Kingdom) and so tourism revenue is a significant contributor to its economy.

and patriarchal dynamic of Troubles history by engaging with personal testimony, focusing on women's stories, and by illuminating the experiences of the working-class communities of the north of Ireland at that time. By using structures associated with Troubles Tourism, such as black cab and walking tours, Kabosh are elevating the significance of these histories to the same level of established Troubles histories and events.

Kabosh Theatre Company was founded in 1994 and is "committed to challenging the notion of what theatre is and where it takes place. The company aims to re-invent the ways in which stories are told, commissioning new writing and devising work for site-specific environments and installations" (Kabosh Theatre Company). Owiki notes that in the midst of the popularity of Troubles Tourism such as black cab mural tours, tours along the peace-lines/walls, and visits to historical sites around the north, including the Bogside in Derry City, the Crumlin Road Gaol in Belfast, and areas of East and West Belfast, Kabosh sought to "create more optimistic versions of Belfast for public consumption" (229). The popularity of the forms of dark tourism mentioned above demonstrates the connection to urban public space, reinforcing the idea of cities like Belfast and Derry as monumental sites. In order to create an intentionally less problematic and optimistic engagement with history, Kabosh often partner with "preexisting organization[s] to craft a piece that would be theatrically innovative while also supporting the organization's specific goals" (Owicki 230). It is important to note that Kabosh often focus their explorations of space in the majority nationalist areas of West Belfast and the Derry Bogside. Both performances under analysis here were initially produced in West Belfast.[44] *The West Awakes* involves a partnership with Coiste, "an organization of former republican prisoners" (Owicki 230) and the company produced the play during *Féile an Phobail.* This festival "was established in 1988 as a direct response to the conflict in the north of Ireland. Its purpose was to celebrate the positive side of the community, its creativity, its energy, its passion for the arts, and for sport. It furthermore aimed to provide events and entertainment at a price that the majority of the community could afford" ('History').[45] This

[44] However, the company's 2013 production *Shankill Stories* (in partnership with the Shankill Women's Centre) takes a similar approach to *The West Awakes* by focusing on the histories of that area in a walking tour format. Shankill is a predominately unionist area of Belfast city.

[45] For more information see http://feilebelfast.com. Lorraine Dowler notes that: The organised reclaiming of West Belfast as home to a nonviolent and vibrant community commenced in full force in 1988, with the establishment of the *Féile an Phobail*, known locally as "the people's festival." The

partnership re-affirms the company's links with West Belfast. This link with nationalist history and space in Belfast is most likely due to the breadth of access available to Kabosh in these areas. It echoes tropes present during the Irish Literary Revival where cultural production is used as a means of reimagining place and identity as distinct and separate from the overwhelming realities of the violence, poverty, and despair that forms part of their everyday experiences. Just as the Irish Literary Theatre sought to overthrow stereotypical views of Ireland and Irishness, *Féile an Phobail* sought to challenge the stereotypical views of West Belfast, cultivated during the conflict. However, this focus on majority nationalist spaces has the potential to problematise the accessibility of the work, potentially creating a barrier for participants who come from unionist communities. Mural tours and political tours of sectarian areas are some of the most popular tourist activities in Belfast. Interestingly Hurley Dépret comments on how the presence of this Troubles Tourism has "given some residents of Belfast their only opportunity to see 'the other side' safely" (161), something that McFetridge confirms in our interview (McFetridge). This demonstrates that, however problematic, Troubles Tourism does provide access to histories and public spaces that were previously marginalised or hidden. By participating in this performance the audience are simultaneously engaging with the tourist experience of a political tour. Kabosh's performance seeks to disrupt partially the binaries of difference usually present within Troubles Tourism.

Kabosh's 2010 production of *The West Awakes* takes the form of a "highly theatrical walking tour […focusing…] on the history of the Falls Road, a Catholic neighbourhood in West Belfast" (Owicki 229). She notes that *The West Awakes* "works to counter some of the tour's actual or perceived sectarian biases. In their regular tours, the Coiste guides [who are part of this performance] explicitly acknowledge that their position – as both republicans and ex-prisoners – shapes their understanding of the conflict" (234). Due to the visibility of the audience during this three-hour-long walking tour, the implication of the "tourist gaze" is relevant here in a way that does not apply to *Two Roads West* where the audience were concealed in a black taxi. The tour guide in *The West Awakes* is a former

festival was a direct response to the local media's designation of this area as a violent enclave and is now the site of a large number of tourists who want to understand the complex histories of West Belfast. (787)

republican ex-prisoner, so an analysis of the framing of this production is important. By acknowledging the positionality of the guides in this performance, the audience are being made aware of the lens, or gaze, that they may be viewing this performance through. The Coiste guide's insider status provides the audience with safe access to areas of West Belfast. Gaining access to communities by means of a community insider is at the crux of the success of Troubles Tourism and Kabosh engage with this in *Two Roads West* to ensure safe access to urban public space and the histories being theatricalised. McDowell observes that "[s]ince the paramilitary ceasefires of 1994, West Belfast, like many other areas in Northern Ireland, has been actively marked by the construction of what many local people regard as tangible sites of suffering, hurt and loss. These symbolize the locations where lives were lost and 'actualise' many other deaths which occurred in this area" (411). She notes that the most popular tours in this area are the taxi tours. She observes a performativity about these tours: "Generally the driver belongs to a particular persuasion or has been involved in the Troubles and is thus keen to transmit a personal interpretation of the conflict […]. The driver, therefore, becomes a 'character', narrating and interpreting an elusive and perhaps dangerous past" (411–12). By taking these prevalent forms of popular (and dark) tourism into a theatrical sphere, Kabosh aim to disrupt the binaries often promoted by Troubles Tourism and to shed a more positive light on Belfast communities. Referring to *The West Awakes*, Dowler states that the production "offers a historical narrative that crosses time and place presenting different understandings of class, gender and religious identity, which at first seems to balance the masculinised and militarised understandings embodied by the autonomous prisoners tour" (782–83). She suggests that "[t]his particular tour offers such counter-narratives in that understandings of the contemporary conflict are complicated by the Kabosh performances, which address multiple forms of violence embedded in the historical political, class and gendered differences within this community" (783). Similar to Charabanc Theatre Company's focus on the female, working-class experience (which will be explored in Chapter Two) *The West Awakes* challenges the narrow binaries of identity often upheld and encouraged by Troubles Tourism, and indeed Troubles Theatre, and challenges what Lehner refers to as the more problematic aspects of storytelling whereby participants can legitimise or victimise events in a manner that is uncontested or influenced by ulterior motives (281).

Maguire argues in *Performing Story on the Contemporary Stage* (2015) that "[s]torytelling can be foundational [...] in constructing and maintaining the symbolic orders which create, express and thereby reinforce power relations within any group or society" (*Performing Story*, 134). Therefore, the opportunity to present one's marginalised story through performance can, in many cases, challenge oppressive power structures.[46] Dowler argues that *Two Roads West*:

> by way of its nuanced staging of the area's violent history destabilises not only the visitor's anticipation of a dogmatic view of Irish nationalism, but also allows the tour guide, who was also viewing this performance for the first time, to adapt between his role as a guide and guest as he situates his own life in this broader historical narrative thus minimising the host and visitor binary. (783)

Here, the juxtaposition of site, performance, and walking tour creates a spatio-temporal layering that operates to illustrate a wide variety of Belfast histories across time. A similar layering of time and space can be seen operating in ANU Productions' 'The Monto Cycle' which will be analysed in Chapter Three. Kabosh privilege working-class women's perspectives in *The West Awakes* by representing the fictional story of a woman who suffered sexual violence at the hands of her employer in a Belfast linen mill at the beginning of the twentieth century. This woman foregrounds the connection between motherhood, poverty, and the lack of contraception by stating, "Not since my Johnny got the mumps have I been in the family way and I'm not complaining. Bless them mumps, for he knows we have enough mouths to feed" (NvTv). The link between sexual violence and women's experience is teased out through the scripted performance. The female character accuses her boss of rape and his response – "You're a mad woman. No-one will believe you. No-one." (NvTv) – reflects the lack of power that women had at that time, which also resonates directly with contemporary discourse concerning the treatment of female allegations of sexual assault. Dowler states that:

> What starts out as banter between two mill workers quickly transforms into an exposé about the hierarchical relationship of management to labour and the lack of agency for female mill workers. […] This vignette demonstrates a common experience of women, who regardless of political affiliations were powerless due to poverty. (791–92)

[46] Maguire outlines a number of storytelling projects in *Performing Story on the Contemporary Stage* that analyses the relationship between storytelling and performance in the north of Ireland during the post-conflict period.

These stories are often absent from more dominant approaches to Troubles history but despite the clear representation of marginalised stories in the production, *The West Awakes* occasionally, and unintentionally, reifies some of the problematic tropes of Troubles Tourism that it seeks to disrupt. The very first scene of the production, taking place at St. Comgall's Primary School, presents an exchange between a unionist news reporter from East Belfast and her nationalist cameraman. This exchange relies on stereotype for comic effect. The news reporter asks: "you're not going to give me the whole eight hundred years of oppression bit are you? Remember where I come from, it's eight hundred glorious years" (NvTv). Dowler argues that the reporter "and her cameraman politicise issues as profound as the British presence in Northern Ireland and as banal as eggs and toast demonstrating in their performance an intimate and complicated shared history at the scale of the everyday" (790). However, this presentation is coloured by parody and in the scope of the performance, this opening gambit does a disservice to the production's intention and establishes a frame, at the very beginning of the performance, of otherness.

Audiences engaging with Kabosh's work are straddling the realms of both political tourism and participatory performance. McDowell states that:

> Political tourism places tourists in more politically active roles than traditional forms of tourism permit. Tourists are, as Stein notes, 'staged as political actors whose bodies intervene in an arena of regional conflict'. As such, tourists can, effectively, enter into a highly contested and divisive space as people who are impartial to or, at least, detached from the conflict, thereby exercising the ability to apply moral judgement to the situation and learn from it. (408)

McDowell notes the level of action required from a political tourist, observing that the tourist must move outside of their observational role towards actively "absorbing the environment that they find themselves in" (408). This active participation on the part of the tourist is significant. These political tourists take on the role of the outsider, which awards them certain privileges. McDowell notes that these political tourists "are permitted to share contested spaces and interpret conflict sites because those who control them wish to present themselves and their histories to the outside world in a certain way" (408). Here "[t]ourists are invited to 'see for themselves' the realities of violence, to make a moral judgement about the validity of that narrative and to take it back with them, to share with others" (McDowell 408). However, returning to the focus on nationalist space in Kabosh's

work, it becomes clear that this invitation to participate is not accessible for all audience members. Dowler describes an interaction she experienced at the end of *The West Awakes:* "As part of the tour he [the tour guide] invited everyone to go across the street to the local pub, known as the "Felon's Club". The once restricted club was established in 1948, as a place for former prisoners to foster friendship and conversation in a safe place. Today the pub is a place for tourists to stop by and talk with locals" (796). This performance space is situated in a nationalist stronghold in West Belfast and is well known for its historical links to the IRA. Dowler notes that a young Protestant couple who attended the performance declined the offer to attend this pub and she asked them why they would not enter the venue:

> the young women drew a boundary around what she viewed as appropriate tourist spaces [...] "My husband really wants to go and see it, but for me I feel the tour is over and it is time to go home." As the young couple explained, they would have been uncomfortable walking up the Falls road on their own, but they felt safe participating in the tour. For this couple these tours created a counter-space of hospitality, a place where they could come and as they put it, "learn about the issues that were absent from their history lessons". However, a sense of hesitancy was also evident in this space of hospitality, hence the young women's reluctance to visit the Felon's Club. (796)

The refusal of the couple, described above by Dowler, to participate in the last stop of the performance re-affirms the rules of geographical space in Belfast and demonstrates that the safety provided by the tour guide as community insider does not always overcome what Harvie refers to as the "lived obedience" adopted in the face of public and private spaces (*Staging the UK* 61). However, through the structure of the walking tour, this couple did gain access to histories that, as they stated, were absent from their history books. Therefore, despite some of its problematic aspects, *The West Awakes* does succeed in actively engaging a diverse audience, through participation, with the marginalised histories of West Belfast. Returning to the spectrum of participation it is evident that the utilisation of the tourist structure provides safety through the use of community insiders, and thus creates access through established forms of historical engagement. Though *Two Roads West* and *The West Awakes* audiences are invited to participate in the accessing of local histories and stories through tourist structures dominating in the north of Ireland post-millennium. Kabosh contribute to the diversification of the audience-performance relationship by building on the relationship with space

foregrounded in *The Wedding Play* and *Convictions* by seeking out tourist sites as a means of interrogating the histories and realities of these spaces through performance.

Conclusion

Through the analysis of this chapter's four performances, *The Wedding Community Play Project*, *Convictions*, *Two Roads West*, and *The West Awakes*, I have interrogated how performance intervenes in urban public space to reflect, consider, and critique previously marginalised histories and experiences. This chapter investigates how performance responds to the presence of civil conflict in the north of Ireland, concluding that the selected performances constitute cultural interventions as well as moments of cultural production. They deconstruct problematic binaries by engaging with critical performance strategies related to space, audience, liveness, and embodiment. The performances above interacted with marginalised, non-sectarian narratives and privileged the representation of the everyday realities of life in the north of Ireland. Each performance engaged the audience as a co-producer of meaning, engaging with modes of audience participation in distinct ways. This spectrum of participation is indelibly linked to the social values of the time and is clearly illustrated through the community participation post-GFA and the accessing of and participating in local histories through paradigms of dark tourism post-millennium. To return to Imanuel Schipper who suggests that "'Cities' are in many ways the most popular topic of our time" (21), I suggest that the performances analysed above proliferated in urban public spaces *because* of their connection to the fabric of society at that time. Chapter Two will continue the investigation of the relationship between emergent performance practices and moments of social change in the north of Ireland by focusing on marginalised histories that are adjacent to, or outside of, this binary of experience by focusing on feminist narratives.

Feminism and the Growth of Radical Performance Practice in Ireland

Introduction

This chapter explores the relationship between the second-wave feminist movement and feminist performance practice in Anglophone production contexts. It specifically focuses on Irish performance practice with contextual contributions from feminist performance in the United States (US). It does so as a means of investigating the influence of Anglo-American feminism on the island of Ireland. Although feminism and women's activism on the island of Ireland has a distinctive lineage, which focuses on the intersection of class, labour rights, and bodily autonomy, it is also largely influenced by Anglo-American feminist ideologies. I argue that the performances analysed here, from 1980 to 1994, echo the strategies of both the Anglo-American and the Irish second-wave feminist movement emerging from the 1970s and 1980s by using similar methodologies in their practice to navigate women's marginalised experience. The imprint of these strategies are evident through theatre and performance practice, examples of which will be analysed throughout this chapter. This demonstrates that the fluidity of feminist methodologies is transitional over decades and is visible through theatre and performance practice, even though this may not be the conscious decision of the theatre makers at the time. This feeds into the overall thesis argument by demonstrating that moments of significant social change on the island of Ireland between 1972-2014, including Second-Wave Feminism, are captured by a diversification of performance form. In this chapter, this is examined through an analysis of collaborative, radical, and woman-led performance practice which proliferated on the island of Ireland in the 1980s. This study begins by exploring the emergence of second-wave feminism in the context of the US as this is a major influence on what Linda Connolly terms Anglo-American feminisms during the 1970s and 1980s.[47] The foregrounding of US performance practice demonstrates the links between performance practice and social change internationally, situating Irish performance practice in an international context. This chapter will foreground relevant historical, social, and political contexts across all relevant jurisdictions to highlight the impact of second-wave feminism on the island of Ireland, more

[47] Linda Connolly refers to Anglo-American feminism as the white, western, and middle-class women's movement that emerged out of Britain and North American from the 1960s. A thorough investigation of this term will be provided later in this chapter.

specifically in the north of Ireland. In *The Oxford Handbook of Modern Irish Theatre* Melissa Sihra acknowledges that feminist performance practice in the 1970s and 1980s has roots in the women's movement of the time. She suggests that "[t]his was a period of growth in feminist activism, and looking back, we can see how the emergent histories of women and Irish theatre mirror the complex and changing relationship between women and the feminist movement itself" (545). By identifying and analysing the complexity and intertextuality of the relationship between politics and performance, Sihra links performance practices, which proliferated in the 1980s on the island of Ireland, with feminist activist methods. This chapter will demonstrate how women theatre practitioners engaged with the performance of women's marginalised stories through emergent performance practices.

Chapter Outline

This study begins by acknowledging the influence that Anglo-American feminism had on the Irish women's movement, this section interrogates in detail the contexts and methodologies of second-wave feminism in an Anglo-American context. I foreground the emergence of the 'feminist spectator' by interrogating the work of Split Britches and the WOW Café through the lens of the US women's movement in order to situate the impact of US feminisms on Anglo-American feminisms and to provide contextual comparison to the Irish performances. This section analyses the WOW Cafés 'sweat equity' method of creating work, arguing that echoes the second-wave feminist methodologies emerging at that time.

I then consider the specific jurisdictional differences between feminisms on the island of Ireland by examining the social contexts that influence them, paying particular attention to the intersection between the Troubles and the women's movement in the north of Ireland during the 1970s and 1980s. This section argues that Anglo-American feminism was distinguished by various distinct strands of feminism and is defined by its attention to lesbian rights. Feminism on the island of Ireland is more fluid and does not adhere to firm ideological positions. This is interrogated through an analysis of Belfast based Charabanc Theatre Company's debut production *Lay Up Your Ends* (1983) as a means of analysing their links with the women's movement in the 1980s. This section explores how the Troubles informed, influenced, and hampered feminist progress in the north of Ireland causing what I term a double-jeopardy of discrimination for women. Their method of employing the 'female gaze' in their work is an important focus for this chapter, as it demonstrates a connection to the

methodologies of the women's movement in the north of Ireland at that time. This section argues that Charabanc's non-sectarian focus on working-class stories raised awareness of issues like domestic violence.

Section four analyses Irish artist, performer, and activist D'Arcy's time in the Armagh Jail during the 'no-wash' protests of 1980, and situates her three-month imprisonment in Armagh Jail as a performance of everyday life. This section demonstrates how D'Arcy embodied second-wave methodologies *as* performance, demonstrating the injustices republican women were facing in jail and highlighting the tensions between the women's movement in the north and south of Ireland, further illustrating the argument made in section three about women in the north of Ireland facing a double-jeopardy of discrimination.

This chapter concludes by examining how second-wave feminist methods are still practiced in the contemporary Irish theatre industry, furthering the recent #WakingtheFeminists (2015-2016) intervention which highlighted gender imbalances across the Irish theatre industry, continuing the method established in the 1970s of using performance to highlight marginalised experiences. It concludes that the re-examination of the Irish women's theatre and performance 'canon' should be informed by situating practice within its relevant contexts and acknowledges women practitioners' contribution to dominant and radical performance practice on the island of Ireland since the 19th century.

Sweat Equity and Spaces of Resistance: Split Britches and the WOW Café

Linda Connolly and Tina O'Toole state in the introduction to *Documenting Irish Feminisms: The Second Wave* that they "use the term "second-wave feminism" to refer to the women's movement that emerged internationally in the late 1960s and early 1970s" (1). This dissertation follows Connolly and O'Toole's classification of this timeframe. This section will outline how second-wave feminism functioned in the US and how Anglo-American feminism influenced feminist practice on the island of Ireland, north and south. This correlation is made as Anglo-American feminism, as demonstrated in North American contexts, has a tangible influence on feminism and the women's movement on the island of Ireland, the imprint of which is evident through theatre and performance practice. The performances under investigation are *Split Britches* (1983) and *Lesbians Who Kill* (1994) created, produced and performed by Split Britches Theatre Company.

Split Britches is written and performed by the company, consisting at that time of Peggy Shaw, Lois Weaver, and Deb Margolin. The company describe their debut production as "a tender and ridiculous portrait of three of Weaver's eccentric aunts who lived on their own in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia in the 1930s" ('Split Britches: The True Story (1980)'). It was created by the company through the taping of conversations and oral histories and the subject matter of the play comes from Weaver's family background. In a 1984 performance of the production, hosted in the Split Britches digital archive, the format of the show is most clearly demonstrated (Weaver, *Split Britches*). The show is a conversation between the performance and its audience, with Weaver addressing the auditorium directly throughout the performance. Weaver begins by sharing the process of the performance's development with the audience which includes the rediscovery of her own heritage and ancestry. This section demonstrates the visibility of the performance-making process to the audience. It is focused on the forgotten women of the Gearhart family rather than the family's patriarchal lineage. There is no mention of the Gearhart 'sons' as Weaver consistently reminds the audience. The structure of the piece is an ode to history, the three performers embody live 'photo slides' of the Gearhart women. These live tableaux guide the audience into the scripted performance and the play takes on the structure of a narrated history of the Gearhart sisters. It is both familiar and uncanny. The humour of the play is a very important element of the storytelling in the production (something which is similarly present in Charabanc Theatre Company's *Lay Up Your Ends*) and the wry irony evident in the video footage of the 1984 performance demonstrates how the company play on the assumed social contexts of the time, troubling established hegemonies and hierarchies.

Lesbians Who Kill is also based on real events and loosely takes its subject matter from the Aileen Wuornos case. Wuornos, popularly termed "America's first female serial killer" (K. Pearson 257) was a lesbian sex worker who was charged with the murder of six men between 1989 and 1990. Wuornos testified at her trial that the men she had allegedly murdered "had raped or attempted to rape her" (K. Pearson 257). The play seeks to examine the motivations for a lesbian woman to become a serial killer. Written by Deb Margolin in collaboration with Shaw and Weaver, the structure of this performance differs from *Split Britches* significantly in that it does not utilise a prologue or direct address. Instead, the performance favours a dramatic approach that focuses on plot and characterisation to represent its intentions. This approach demonstrates an evolution of Split Britches's style, as

well as thematic approach, something that will be expanded on throughout this section.

Second-wave feminism in the US is cited as having several starting points and is broadly recognised as emerging in the 1960s. Feminist scholar Judith Evans argues that "[e]arly second-wave feminism was a feminism of two forms of equality. The first began with the Presidential Commission of 1960, and *The Feminine Mystique*; the second emerged from the 1960s New Left, and that decade's movement for black Civil Rights" (13). American historian Allida Black notes that "[b]y 1970 a new international women's movement flourished on college campuses; business and professional communities; as well as within the labour, art, and civil rights communities. Refusing to distinguish between the personal and public sphere, they insisted that 'the personal is political'" (43). This phrase: "the personal is political" became one of the most recognisable slogans of the second-wave feminist movement. The movement was also noted for utilising methods such as consciousness-raising and direct action to engage in liberation for women.

It is important at this juncture to acknowledge the impact of global second-wave feminism on the Irish Women's Liberation Movement (IWLM). Connolly acknowledges that "[a]lthough feminism as theory and activism sprang from within Irish society in distinctive shape and form, it is organically an element of a movement that is global and moves across national borders" (*From Revolution to Devolution* 27). Second-wave feminism in the US had a progressive global impact and this impact reverberated across the West, leaving its mark on the island of Ireland. Ireland has a history of looking towards the US in moments of social progress throughout the twentieth century. For example, the Civil Rights movement in the north of Ireland in the 1960s was directly inspired by the black Civil Rights movement in the US. This link between these movements is reflected in the nationalist street murals of Derry and Belfast (Fig. 1.).

Figure 1: Street mural of John Hume, Martin Luther King, Mother Teresa, and Nelson Mandela in Derry's Bogside. 2016. Photo by Author.

Connolly describes this global influence as part of the Anglo-American feminist movement. Feminism is a transnational movement with a set of principles, ideologies and methodologies that can be employed distinctly in each national or specific context as is required. As such, Irish second-wave feminism will both speak to and yet be distinct from US second-wave feminism. The rise of second-wave feminism in the US has repercussions in Ireland and there is a proliferation of a feminist performance aesthetic in both jurisdictions as a result. Similarly, feminism in the north of Ireland will function differently than in the south due to its intersection with the Troubles and other specificities of everyday life in that region.

Although the work of Split Britches influenced a whole generation of women in the New York WOW Café scene to make work collaboratively, their critical reception was anything but significant. Indeed, scholarly investigations into the work of Split Britches remains limited, with scholars such as Case and Hughes among the first to investigate formally the company's work. This dissertation aims to rectify this lacuna in research by linking the methods of their performance practice to second-wave feminism at this time and to situate their work in an international context.

What unifies the women's movement across the Anglo-American context is the necessity for and increased proliferation of women's' spaces. In society, this creates a momentum for consciousness-raising among female constituencies. In performance it creates a female dominated constituency audience that requires alternative engagements with spectatorship. Returning to feminist performance in the US, Susan Bennett in *Theatre Audiences* states (as above) that "over the last thirty years [1960s to 1990s] many theatres have emerged which speak for dominated and generally marginalised peoples, and the proliferation of these groups demands new definitions of theatre and recognition of new non-traditional audiences" (1). She goes on to state that many of these new theatres focus more on the role of the spectator than their more traditional counterparts. Bennett draws the reader's attention to what she calls 'the feminist spectator' (a term that has been analysed at length in Jill Dolan's seminal *The Feminist Spectator as Critic*) and argues that "alternative performance models were sought and initially this strategy meant, as it did for similarly emergent gay theatre, 'constituency' audiences" (*The Feminist Spectator* 62). This idea of the "constituency audience" is significant in this chapter as all the performances analysed are engaging with their own 'constituencies', whether queer, lesbian, feminist, women, nationalist, republican or unionist or at times a merging of these identities. In *Utopia in Performance* (2005), Dolan states that "[i]n some ways, feminist performance has always been utopian, trying as it does to create new meanings for gender, race, and sexuality through performance" (*Utopia in Performance* 46). Reflecting on a public interview Split Britches member Deb Margolin gave at the University of Austin, Texas, Dolan highlights that "Margolin insisted that passion matters, that "desire is our dramaturgical force." She said that for a woman, standing in front of people is a radical political act, expressing, as it does, the desire to speak" (*Utopia in Performance* 56). Indeed, Dolan augments Margolin's view by stating that "[t]o see women onstage, alone, telling stories is still, for me, a political moment, one I can't (or won't) take for granted" (*Utopia in Performance* 61). This idea that women performing self-determined work onstage constitutes a radical political act during the 1970s and 1980s echoes the second-wave feminist ideal that "the personal is political", thus placing it at the crux of this chapter's central thesis statement, that moments of social change are captured by a diversification of performance practice.

As second-wave feminist methodologies emerged to create social change, feminist performance practice echoed these methodologies in the creation of art. Feminist performers such as Split Britches were developing a collaborative,

activist-based method which reflected the collaborative direct action and consciousness-raising strategies of the feminist movement at the time. Dolan explores how form is examined through a feminist lens. She suggests that:

> One of feminist performance theory's first moves was away from content into an analysis of form. Theorists asked if realism was too proscriptive for new understandings of race, gender, and sexual relations. How might postmodern forms, with less coherent and insistently linear narratives, more fluid fragmented plots and characters and less fixed determinations of location and space, allow spectators to see gender in more expansive, progressive ways? (*Utopia in Performance* 64)

The rise of more collaborative, experimental forms harnessed through postmodernism engage with these questions and prompt a diversification of genre which interacts more collaboratively with contemporary representations of gender and sexuality. This journey through changes of embodied and political agency and form can be seen in one of the most successful women-led collectives of this time, Split Britches. This chapter argues that the company's main constituency audience is lesbian, queer, and feminist women.

Split Britches and *Lesbians Who Kill* exemplify the connection between second-wave feminist strategies and performance practice through their engagement with lesbian identity and representation. *Split Britches* was the first collaboration between Deb Margolin, Peggy Shaw and Lois Weaver. The troupe explain the term 'split britches' in the opening episodes of the play stating that they are "a garment worn in agricultural regions to facilitate peeing while standing" (Shaw et al. 39). In her edited collection of the company's work, Case states that "[r]eferring to the tradition of women's performance art, Weaver as 'Cora as Narrator' [a character in the play] informs us that 'a lot of artists were drawing from autobiographical material. They were going back to their roots. So I decided to go back to my roots" (17). Case acknowledges that *Split Britches* is part of the diversification of form that was taking place at this time. Arguing that although the production "may have derived inspiration in the women's performance tradition at the time, it strays from realism and ironizes the standard elements of the documentary" (18). The piece engages with real-life pictures of Weaver's family and also engages in *tableaux vivants* which integrates the movement of the actors with the backdrop of the slides that show the photos of Weaver's family. The most significant aspect of this production was the presence of a lesbian character onstage, and the way in which this character was created. According to Case "[i]n 1981, with little historical precedent, then, Weaver and Shaw set out to create lesbian on their stage" (19). Case quotes an interview that Rhonda Blair conducted

with Weaver and Shaw, where Weaver states "[w]hen we worked on *Split Britches*, we wanted to create characters that people would identify with and like, and then realise…'Oh, my God, I like a lesbian'" (19). This is a significant acknowledgement as it demonstrates that not only were the company striving to promote lesbian and queer stories in their work, but that in fact they were trying to demonstrate that lesbian and queer stories *belonged* as much as straight stories. The company essentially *con* the audience into liking a lesbian character and this demonstrates how little queer women were represented in popular and artistic cultures at this time. The significant moves towards equality made by lesbian women in the second-wave feminist movement created space in social discourse for these marginalised experiences to be represented, both politically and artistically. In the play, the relationship between Della, Cora, and Emma in terms of the performance of queerness is summarised by Case as follows: "[t]wo different processes are at work here: first, to represent lesbian and second, to represent her to 'others'. Della's role acts lesbian out, while Cora's and Emma's roles reveal how those 'others' find themselves in relation to lesbians and live among them" (19). This is a trope that can be seen chartered over the course of Split Britches' early career. And as society became more accepting of queer people, the amount of time spent in the company's work on how 'others' find themselves in relation to lesbians lessens. The lesbian exchange in *Split Britches* is as simple as a kiss, but the impact this has on the character's lives is life-altering. The story of these Gearhart women takes place in the "late 1930s" (Shaw et al. 36) in a rural and isolated setting. In later productions such as *Lesbians Who Kill* (1996) the representation of lesbian characters and lesbian lives has evolved to be more three-dimensional. Case argues that the "original idea for this script came from Margolin, who had been avidly following the Aileen Wuornos case" (Case 29). The company appeared to be less concerned with how likeable their lesbian characters would be, but instead on making them strong and psychologically rounded characters. *Lesbians Who Kill* focuses on two women who may or may not be serial killers. The setting of the play is the inside of a parked car which is outside the women's house, which the audience learns is prone to be hit by lighting. At various intervals throughout the play the scene is interrupted by a radio announcement. The first of these interruptions signals the potential existence of a serial killer, "[s]omeone sinister may be at work on the highways of North Florida. So far the trail is eight victims long, each signpost along the way a bullet-riddled body of a middle-aged white man" (Margolin et al. 186). The connections that Split Britches are making with the Wuornos case is clear, but this piece actually serves

to subvert the 'feminist-lesbian-as-man-hater' trope that had emerged during the second-wave movement. This play is a celebration of lesbian relationships and a much more focused insight into lesbian life than the earlier *Split Britches*. Case states that, "lesbian, in this play, is everything. It is the sex act between May and June, their intimacy, their social isolation, their mutual trust, and their paranoia" (33). It breaks the fourth wall to demonstrate the damaging and foundational levels of sexism and gender-based violence faced by women, and even more so lesbians. Case argues that the dynamic of lesbian relationship in *Lesbians Who Kill* "is the place from which these women can turn the aggressive violence of sexism back in its own face. This impulse is so strong that it breaks through the frame of the play, as June runs out to the audience, brandishing her gun, yelling 'all you men, up against the wall'" (32). In *Lesbians Who Kill* the lesbian character is no longer functioning as making lesbians likeable, but instead demonstrating the realities of life as a lesbian woman. In her seminal study on the work of Split Britches, Sue-Ellen Case states that "[m]ore than any other group, Split Britches has set the stage of lesbian and feminist performance in the United States" (1). The company formed "at the end of the founding decade of feminism, the 1970s, [and] the troupe created a unique 'postmodern' style that served to embed feminist and lesbian issues of the times" (Case 1). Split Britches created collaborative work in collaborative spaces and became part of a trend-setting performance practice which encouraged women to create performance together and most vitally *for* each other. Crucial to Split Britches' success was the WOW Café, a feminist performance space founded in 1980 in New York City.

The WOW Café is a collaborative, artistic space for women. Established in 1980 as a theatre festival for women it was based in New York City's East Side but has had various homes over its lifetime. The WOW Café is a performance space derived from necessity as it provided women artists with the space and the knowledge that they too could produce art. One of the most significant contributions the WOW Café made at its inception was the ability to provide work for women artists at a time when work was scarce, something which is echoed in the foundation of Charabanc. Dolan writes in the preface of *Memories of the Revolution: The First Ten Years of the WOW Café Theater* (2015), that "[m]any people whose work is collected in this book describe similar foundational experiences" ("Preface" ix). *Split Britches* was a significant moment in the WOW Café's own history. Moe Angelos, an artist associated with the WOW Café is quoted as saying "[s]eeing the show *Split Britches* for the first time, I realised that theatre could be what I wanted it to be; and if I had the pluck, I could even make it

myself. I didn't need some dead guy to have written a play that if I was lucky, some other guy would cast me in" (quoted in Dolan, "Preface" ix). This statement by Angelos reaffirms Dolan's earlier contribution that women performing work onstage is a radical, political act and echoes the politicisation of women's issues that was occurring in the US through second-wave feminism at this time. The establishment of the WOW Café illustrates how women artists and performers were attempting to carve out space both physically and geographically – in terms of the WOW Café building – and figuratively in the male-dominated theatre industry – and psychologically, by realising that they could become agents of their own performance-making.

Holly Hughes states that "[o]ne of WOW's most abiding radical features is the absence of those gatekeepers who demand to see your aesthetic pedigree – time spent at school, a relationship with someone on the inside. You don't have to know anyone to get your foot in this door" ('Introduction" 7). This rejection of the 'old boys network' culture that pervaded, and still pervades the art world, ensured that via the inclusive space of the WOW Café, a woman-friendly space to explore radical and vital art existed in New York city. Ranciére expresses the belief that theatre is "in and of itself, a community site" (16). He continues this point by stating that "[b]ecause living bodies onstage address bodies assembled in the same place, it seems that that is enough to make theatre the vehicle for a sense of community, radically different from the situation of individuals seated in front of a television, or film spectators in front of projected shadows" (16). The WOW Café is by several definitions a community site, not only because living bodies onstage addressed the bodies of those come to experience the performance, but because those gathered and those performing were united by a collective access to the same constituency issues. Dolan explores the idea that when you participate in a performance you become part of the created or designated public of that performance. She argues that "[b]y attending any given performance, I become part of the public it addresses. A public is a 'relation among strangers,' a combination of anonymity and intimacy organised through a laserlike attention in the moment of discursive connection" (*Utopia in Performance* 98). Therefore, the WOW Café served to create a community via the performance structure it offered and paved the way for years of fruitful, feminist collaboration. This creation of a community structure, through feminist performance, is echoed in the emergence and the work of Charabanc Theatre company and reinforces the cross-jurisdictional similarities in feminist performance practice during the 1980s. Interestingly, archival records held at Harvard's Schlesinger Library detail Charabanc's performance at the Boston

Women's Festival in 1988. Though feminist theatre and politics in the north of Ireland clearly maintained its own lineage and concerns, at the same time, the records show that there is some dialogue with American feminisms during this decade.

Dolan states that the WOW Café "which might have begun by 'preaching to the converted', became instead a feminist, lesbian, queer *method*, one that in certain circles remains more foundational and influential than Lee Strasberg's or Stanislavski's" [emphasis original] ("Preface" xi). This method relates to the collaborative mechanism used by these women artists in order to make work, what those involved in the WOW Café refer to as "sweat equity". According to Dolan, "'sweat equity' was the only currency – you work on my show, I'll work on yours or neither of us will last long enough to create another production at WOW" ("Preface" xii). Not only an economic advantage, this sweat equity helped to create and foster the community of women artists that became emblematic of the WOW Café. Dolan states that "[r]elationships formed around the work, around the necessity of serving the common project, around the insistence that anyone who came around should embrace the collective's pride in their homespun work with its can-do spirit, which didn't need outside critical evaluation to underwrite its importance" ("Preface" xii). This inherently collaborative method, defined by Dolan, echoes the structure and formation of Anglo-American second-wave feminist methodologies through the establishment of a community-based women's group that engaged with consciousness-raising on constituency issues.

As a result of this collaborative, but somewhat closed community, the participants of WOW Café avoided being beholden to an arts industry that did not offer them entry routes, career development, or acknowledgment.[48] The challenge for the women in the collective was navigating a theatre and arts culture that their method was at odds with. Dolan states that "[t]he collective decided early on not to apply for grants that would require them to bend their commitments to outside funders […] they fought to sustain their collective work as they navigated a theatre industry that prizes individual artists over intimately connected collaborators" ("Preface" xii–xiii). This illustrates how the industry was functioning for the benefit of the single-author/artist system, most of whom were men at that time. Like the ideals of the US second-wave feminist movements the work of the women in the WOW Café went beyond that of the individual woman or performer and instead became about the collaborative network of women artists who promoted

[48] The participants of the WOW Café were predominantly white, educated, middle-class American women.

women's work. In an interview by Sharon Smith with Carmelita Tropicana (one of the company's founding members), Tropicana states that "[a]t other theatres […] people put up their work and leave; they don't stay to watch other people's performances or to talk to or to labour or to engage with the larger canvas on which the work marks its interventions or just, even, makes sense" (quoted in Dolan, "Preface" xiv). The WOW Café were doing more than providing a space for women to engage with their art, they were building a community where feminist women could come and explore their politics, ideologies, artistic ideas, and sexuality. However, most notably absent from the collective was any significant inclusion of women of colour. Contemporary feminist theorists have many criticisms of second-wave feminism, one of the most consistent being that the second-wave movement lacked an awareness of how women's issues intersected with race and class.[49] The WOW Café, situated in one of the most ethnically diverse cities in the US, New York City, lacked a diversity of representation for women of colour during its emergent decade. Hughes acknowledges that the women involved in the WOW Café in the first ten years of its development were "mostly white, mostly middle-class with some college" ("Introduction" 2), illustrating the scale of racial and class divide in the feminist movement. However, this was something the members of the WOW Café became aware of in later years and the collective attempted to remedy this ("Introduction" 5).

Where it lacked diversity in terms of race, the WOW Café was a bastion of lesbian performance. There was a sense that the WOW Café was at the forefront of a movement of queer feminist performance practice and a reclamation of space for women in the public sphere. Case observes that the WOW Café "was one of the only spaces for openly lesbian material" (8). Returning to Dolan's assertion that women performing their stories onstage constitutes a radical political act, then queer women occupying space in the same vein garners added significance, particularly in terms of what it means to *embody* space onstage as a lesbian woman. Hughes asserts that "[e]very American-raised queer person is a solo performance artist" ("How to Write an Autobiography" 145). She argues that:

> we are expert at body art and durational performances. Our bodies are canvases. We take risks with them in bed and on the street. We find that chopping off your hair is as upsetting as cutting yourself in front of a group of art connoisseurs. We undergo and endure conditions as rigorous as walking the Great Wall of China from one end to the next because we

[49] For example in: bell hooks's *Talking Back, Thinking Feminist, Thinking Black* (1989), Natalie Thomlinson's *Race, Ethnicity and the Women's Movement in England, 1968-1993* (2016), and Harriet Bradley's *Fractured Identities: changing patterns of inequality* (1996).

> are propelled to do so by unruly desires, by something within us that refuses to shut up. ("How to Write an Autobiography" 145–46)

This risk-taking queer performance method drew audiences from venues other than the mainstream theatre scene. bell hooks cites the significance of lesbian feminist activists during the feminist movement, arguing that "[l]esbian feminist thinkers were among the first activists to raise the issue of class in feminist movement expressing their viewpoints in an accessible language" (39). Second-wave feminism at the time was engaging with lesbian identity, and in particular the radical feminist groups encouraged a lesbian lifestyle. Manifestations of this in performance can be seen in the work of Split Britches. The move from the single-authored text model to a more collaborative mode of performance can be seen from the early days of Split Britches' work. Case, who has committed some of Split Britches' best-known works to text for scholarly study, states that "[t]his movement from performance to page is an unusual one in the late twentieth century, when playwrights and directors determine rehearsals" (3). She details that significantly "Split Britches reaches back through history in the tradition of what is called popular theatre, but really means poor people's theatre […] They continue the tradition of the unprinted, ever-changing, improvised, homeless, show" (3). This method of creating work in this challenging economic environment is symptomatic of many feminist performance modes and groups.[50] In Ireland, Charabanc Theatre Company exemplified many of the collaborative structures, emerging from second-wave feminism throughout these vital decades.

'A Bevy of Beauties': Feminism, Double-Jeopardy and Charabanc Theatre Company

Set in Belfast in 1911, *Lay Up Your Ends* (1983) was the newly formed Charabanc Theatre Company's debut production. The play, devised and written by the company in collaboration with Martin Lynch, aptly draws attention to the struggle of working-class women in Belfast in the 1980s by highlighting the historical struggle of their early-twentieth century counterparts. In 1911 the women workers of Belfast's Linen Mills went on strike in the hope of bringing about better working conditions. In *Lay Up Your Ends* the strike highlights the struggles of working-class women (from Unionist and Nationalist backgrounds) by illuminating

[50] Other companies in the US, such as the Five Lesbian Brothers, were engaging in similar interventions at this time. However, the limited scope of the chapter only provides for detailed analysis of one major intervention, however it is important to note that Split Britches' work formed one part of a wider eco-system of queer and politicised performance as social intervention.

the realities of their everyday lives in relation to health, their domestic situations, and their labour conditions. The play, performed entirely by women actors, highlights the realities of everyday life for working-class women on the margins of society in the north of Ireland. By situating the play in the non-sectarian linen mills, the company are rejecting the sectarian narratives and structures exemplified at that time by both the social frame and dramatic output.

To compare the methodologies of second-wave feminism and the methodologies of feminist performance during the same period it is important to be aware of how second-wave feminism functioned in both Irish jurisdictions. In order to frame the methods and differences in the Irish women's movement, a lengthy analysis of the Anglo-American women's movement is necessary. Connolly establishes a context and classifies some key conventions of the Anglo-American women's movement:

1. That the feminist movement was mobilised in two ways. The first, 'women's rights' focused on legal reform and the second 'women's liberation' sought to radically transform Ireland's social institutions.
2. A significant amount of the scholarship on the Anglo-American women's movement has been centred on labelling the movement's constituent groups rather than the broad ideologies of the movement.
3. There is a tendency to disregard the links between the first and second waves of feminism.
4. The promotion of change, emerging through the 'women's rights' arena has been ignored or disregarded as 'conservative activism'. (*From Revolution to Devolution* 92)

This analysis draws attention to point one and two of the above. The women's rights branch set out in point one is evidenced in an Irish context via the large amounts of woman positive legislative changes which took place through the 1970s and the early 1980s promoted by politicians, law makers, and women in positions of power.[51] Connolly states that "[c]hange in the legislature was important in raising consciousness beyond the woman-centred activities of the expanding radical feminism. In addition, these strategies benefit and reach a broader constituency of women who are not proclaimed 'feminists' and may have been 'put off' by the confrontational direct action of 'women's lib' in the early 1970s" (*From Revolution to Devolution* 109). The women's movement in Ireland was no exception. An important strategy for the women's movement during this time was

[51] These legislative changes included: The removal of the Marriage Bar (1973); Introduction of the Unmarried Mothers Allowance (1973); Maintenance Orders Act (1974); The Anti-Discrimination (Pay) Act (1974); Social Welfare Act (1974); Family Home and Protection Act (Supplementary Welfare Allowance) (1975); Family Law (Maintenance of Spouses and Children) Act (1976); Employment Equality Act (1977); Maternity Protection Employees Act (1981).

their active participation in what they termed consciousness-raising. Connolly and O'Toole discuss these connections between Irish feminism and Anglo-American feminism. They state that "[t]heoretical perspectives evolving within Anglo-American feminist activist groups were published and became core reading for feminists in Ireland as in other countries from the 1960s on" (14). They also note that the work of prominent American and British feminists "were read and discussed openly in reading groups, consciousness-raising sessions, political meetings, classrooms, public debates and conferences in Ireland" (14). They demonstrate that there was a tangible link between Irish and American feminist methods, arguing that "[c]onsciousness raising was introduced by activists in the IWLM who had experienced the American women's movement in particular" (27). Connolly argues transformation was brought about in society at grass-roots level and in the social institutions. The women's liberation branch, defined above by Connolly, transformed the social institutions by engaging in media campaigns, direct action, and consciousness-raising to encourage Irish society to transform in tandem with the variety of progressive legislative changes being brought in at government level.

Despite the clear influence of external feminisms on Ireland, Connolly and O'Toole note the difference in structure between the Irish women's movement and the American women's movement:

> A sense of clarity or of distinct lines drawn between particular groups and theoretical perspectives is not really evident in the documents relating to Irish feminist activism. It may have been possible in the larger urban centres of North America to form groups espousing a particular theoretical stance but, given the scale of the Irish movement, there tended to be a lot of fluidity between groups, individuals, and particular political stances. (15)

As such, this chapter is not engaging in a deep analysis of the various feminist ideologies apparent at that time as it is clear that the fluidity of the Irish women's movement, north and south of the border, did not result in clear and defined ideologies of radical, material, socialist, or other feminisms that existed in the US or Britain. Connolly and O'Toole define Irish feminism at that time as an adaptation of Anglo-American feminist methods. They state that "[i]n particular, consciousness-raising brought about collective knowledge of the reality of women's lived experiences, still "invisible" and unexplored in Irish public discourse at this time" (26–27). The performances under analysis in this chapter engage in the same consciousness-raising strategies outlined here. In the case of Split Britches through representation of queer women's lives, in Charabanc

through the visible representation of domestic violence, and through D'Arcy via her embodied representation of the conditions for women prisoners in the Armagh Jail. This representation of marginalised experiences through performance was informed by the consciousness-raising efforts of the broader women's movement. The third convention of the Anglo-American women's movement has a particular relevance to the Irish context. The correlation between feminism and nationalism emerged out of the relationship between Irish feminists and the national movement during the early twentieth century. The lack of analysis of the continuity between the first and the second waves of feminism on the island of Ireland results in a lack of recognition in the gap of progress of women in the south and the north during the second-wave. This will be expanded on more definitively later in this section through an examination of Charabanc Theatre Company's *Lay Up Your Ends* and D'Arcy's *Tell Them Everything*.

Delving more deeply into the specific contexts and conventions of Irish second-wave feminism Connolly cites several stages of transformation which occurred at the beginning of the movement including advancement at national levels for women's organisations and networks, expansion of the activism taking place at grass-roots level, a recognition for the need to analyse the established women's movements of the past, and "new directions" for the movement through the academy via Women's Studies departments in the 1980s and 1990s (*From Revolution to Devolution* 89). The most significant of these initially was the first: the "period of advancement, at the level of national women's organisations and networks" (Connolly, *From Revolution to Devolution* 89). This feminist network "was the direct catalyst for the setting up of the *ad hoc* committee on women's rights in 1968, which resulted in the establishment of the First Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), in 1972" [emphasis original] (*From Revolution to Devolution* 89). The 1972 Commission was the tipping point for the series of positive legislative changes outlined above. The establishment of so many women's groups and networks also illustrates that second-wave feminism in Ireland, as elsewhere, had a collaborative approach. This is something that is mirrored in the emerging feminist performance practice of the time and which will be analysed in further detail below. Connolly's second point regarding the grass-roots radical activism can be seen across the variety of direct action and consciousness-raising events which occurred in the 1970s and 1980s.[52] Connolly

[52] These include but are not limited to: the IWLM appearance on *The Late Late Show* (1971); The Contraception Train (1971); Widows march to Liberty Hall (1972); the campaign against the Abortion Referendum (1983); the establishment of the Women's Studies Forum (1983);

states that "[i]ntense inter-organisational activity included regular consciousness raising and planning confrontational direct action tactics (such as a protest at the Pro-Cathedral in Dublin and the staging of a 'Contraceptive Train' to Belfast)" (*From Revolution to Devolution* 114–15). However, the direct action tactics of the IWLM caused a divergence of opinion among activists at the time. According to Connolly and O'Toole, these actions "had both a positive and a negative effect within the organisation. More moderate activists within the original group felt alienated" (29). This two-tier activism (via protest and direct action or via consciousness-raising to promote legislative changes) is emblematic of what Connolly refers to above as the expansion of grass-roots activism alongside more legitimate women's networks and groups.

The wave of active participation emerging from the grass-roots organisations altered the way in which space was occupied in the public performances of protest. Lefebvre states that "revolutionary events generally take place in the street" (19). Evidence of this can be seen across Irish society during the 1970s and 1980s with moments of protest and direct action becoming more widespread as a result of the Troubles and the women's movement. For example, Connolly highlights a significant event which took place in November 1972 and saw "hundreds of widows from all over Ireland [taking] part in a march to Liberty Hall where a mass meeting was held. This is cited as the first occasion in modern times when the women of Ireland 'took to the streets' to publicise their cause" (*From Revolution to Devolution* 107). 'Taking to the streets' has since become a marker of women's right's movement and organisations as a means of making their causes and themselves visible. This performative strategy is significant on several counts. Firstly, women in Ireland, and indeed across Western traditions, are traditionally conceived as belonging to the domestic space. They usually exist there with the company of children only. Ireland's current constitution (ratified in 1937) reflects this dynamic in Article 41.2 where women are established as having their place in the home or domestic sphere.[53] The article also uses the terms *woman* and *mother* interchangeably, linking them in this domestic space with children. Secondly, in terms of theatre practice, most of Western and Irish theatres up to this point reflect this dynamic. Hanna Scolnicov in *Woman's Theatrical Space* argues that:

consciousness raising around the Ann Lovett (1984) and Kerry Babies (1984) cases, as well as acts of protest during the Kerry Babies Tribunal (1985).

[53] Article 41.2.: "In particular, the State recognises that by her life within the home, woman gives to 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" (The Irish Statute Book).

> Seen from a feminist point of view, the articulation of the theatrical space is an expression of woman's position in society. Her relative confinement in traditional societies to the seclusion of her home puts the onus of the action on the man, thus making him into an active agent of time, and her into an element of space. […] The central thesis of this book is that the changing spatial conventions of the theatre are faithful expressions of the growing awareness of the specifity of gender differences and the changing attitudes to woman and her sexuality. (1)

At a time when women were taking to the streets and thus moving themselves into the public spaces, feminist theatre practice was reflecting similar changes. This chapter's selected performances: *Split Britches* (1980); *Lesbians Who Kill* (1994); *Lay Up Your Ends* (1983); and *Tell Them Everything* (1981) reflect this change by focusing their stories on representations of women in the workplace, in society, and as activists. This echoing of society and art through the methodologies of second-wave feminism is illustrated in the movement of women from being represented solely in the domestic sphere to widely across and within the public sphere, demonstrating that performance on the island of Ireland was capturing moments of social change through performance form and content. This direct action manifest in society and in the performances of the time continues to be a large part of the contemporary feminist movement in Ireland.[54] Lisa Fitzpatrick states that since the advent of the Irish Women's Movement in the 1970s "'performances' of feminism in its many guises have reshaped the cultural and social landscape, working sometimes at the peripheries and the margins and sometimes in the mainstream. This radical reordering is apparent in almost every area of Irish society, albeit as part of an ongoing struggle" (2–3). In terms of performance practice feminist theatre practitioners have experimented with form and method to ensure that the reality of women's lived experiences are presented.

The fourth and final point of transformation focuses on strides being made in academia and the establishment of Women's Studies programmes in UCD and Trinity College Dublin is central to this.[55] Academic scholarship acts as a legitimising force and this trend can also be seen in the US. Prominent feminist scholar bell hooks comments on the rise of Women's Studies departments in the US academe. She argues that the "formation of women's studies programs in

[54] This can be seen in the recent (2018) successful campaign to repeal the Eighth Amendment and in groups such as the Rape Crisis Network, support for women in media through 'Women on Air', support for women running for political office with the non-partisan 'Women for Election' and the continuing flourishing of Women and Gender studies departments in Irish universities.

[55] Connolly and O'Toole also echo the importance of this stating that "[t]he establishment of a women's studies programme at Trinity College Dublin in 1983 and the Women's Studies Forum at University College Dublin in 1987 marked the beginning of a new era in Irish feminist education. Both were integral to the establishment and wider acceptance of women's studies in the Irish third-level education system" (225). The UCD Women's Studies department has since been renamed 'Gender Studies'.

colleges and universities provided institutional legitimation for academic focus on work by women. Following in the wake of black studies, women's studies became the place where one could learn about gender, about women, from a non-biased perspective" (20). However, hooks illustrates that this new wave of women's scholarship was problematic. She states that "[f]eminist theory began to be housed in an academic ghetto with little connection to a world outside. Work was and is produced in the academy that is often times visionary, but these insights rarely reach many people" (22). In the Ireland of the 1980s access to third level education was still the preserve of those with means (and to a lesser extent today) so hooks' argument that the feminist academe was inaccessible has a basis in an Irish context also.[56] However, the establishment of Women's Studies departments by some of Irish feminism's most prominent activists illustrates the link between the academe and the radical activism that pervaded the second-wave feminist movement.[57] This was also an important move towards sustaining feminist progress by placing it within the educational institutions.

In her critique of how gender operates in theatre in the north of Ireland, *Political Acts. Women in Northern Irish Theatre, 1922-2012*, Fiona Coleman Coffey notes a significant difference between how second-wave feminism affected society and art differently in the north and south of Ireland:

> Despite the passing of thirty-five years and significant advances in the peace process, the delay of feminism and the absence of a strong women's movement in the North has arrested the progression of these concerns. Many of today's playwrights are apprehensive about the exact same issues, reluctant to have their work analysed through a feminist or gendered lens or even included in a study of women practitioners. (14–15)

This disparity of experience has deep roots in the early twentieth century with the politics of suffrage and the first wave of feminism. Connolly refers to the effect that partition had on the women's movement of that time, stating that "[n]ationalist-unionist cleavages were already formative in the pre-suffrage Irish women's movement. Partition, however, anchored a splintering of the women's movement into two distinct (often conflicting) but clearly interwoven movements, north/south, from the 1920s onwards" (*From Revolution to Devolution* 80–81). This splintering of the women's movement in the 1920s, and most significantly its

[56] The Free Fees initiative did not come into place until 1995.

[57] Ailbhe Smyth, a prominent feminist campaigner during the 1980s, "was the founding director of the Women's Education, Research and Resource Centre (WERRC) and was head of Women's Studies at UCD (University College Dublin) from 1990 until 2006" (Repeal the Eighth). Smyth continues to be a prominent feminist activist and was a convener of the Coalition to Repeal the Eight Amendment, which later became Together for Yes.

partition into "nationalist-unionist cleavages" (Connolly, *From Revolution to Devolution* 80) ensured that a cultural suspicion of the women's rights movement filtered down to effect second-wave feminism.

Margaret Ward outlines what she terms the four stages of the women's movement in the north of Ireland in *Ireland's Histories*: *Aspects of State, Society, and Ideology* (1995). She identifies the first stage as taking place between 1973 and 1977 and illustrates the importance of the second-wave feminist ideology 'the personal is political' on the women of the north at that time. She argues that this ideology "was a realization prompted by the sexist treatment of women in anti-war movements and the American civil rights movement. To some extent it was a lesson endorsed by Irish women, as many of the earliest members of the new women's groups gained their first political experiences in the northern civil rights movement" (151). Ward places the second stage as taking place between 1977 and 1980. She notes that "external political realities began to affect relationships between the groups – and the national question became overwhelmingly the most important issue" (154). She identifies a defining divisive moment for the women's movement in the north of Ireland as taking place within this stage: the republican no-wash protest and hunger strike in the Armagh women's prison. The Armagh Jail, the setting for D'Arcy's performance of confinement (1980), divided women across the movement and it related to the idea of the 'national question'.[58] Grainne McCoy echoes Ward's (and indeed Connolly's) sentiments on the divisiveness of the 'nationalism' question in the north of Ireland. She argues that "[i]n Northern Ireland feminists, like socialists, remained divided over the issue of nationalism" (*From Revolution to Devolution* 13). The events in the Armagh Jail provided the catalyst to cement that division in the women's movement. Ward argues that "[i]n 1980 the long simmering disagreements reached boiling point over the issue of support for Republican women prisoners of the Armagh Jail. Armagh became a metaphor for everything that has kept Irish women divided from each other" (156). Feminism in the north of Ireland becomes a problematic identification by proxy of its relationship to nationalism, which hampers progress. Connolly and O'Toole argue that due to the historic links between Irish nationalism and the women's movement "there is never a neutral relationship between nationalism and feminism in any given context" (148). Coleman Coffey states that, "many of the women interviewed for this research did not want to be labelled as 'feminists' or be defined as addressing gender issues, although their work often spoke to the

[58] The term 'the national question' often refers to the position of a person or party on the matter of Irish reunification and is a commonly used term to this day.

contrary" (15). This refusal to identify as a feminist stems in part from the divisiveness of the nationalism issue. However, the problematics of nationalism in the women's movement marks it out as a vital point at which to analyse performance via the work of D'Arcy in this dissertation. Ward states that the third stage took place between 1980 and 1984, detailing that "[t]his third stage was characterized by the establishment of a wide range of organizations, all aimed at empowering women to fight back against the worst of the injustices they experienced" (157). These injustices such as abnormally large domestic violence rates, employment issues, discrimination, and lack of access to education play into the reality that women in the north of Ireland are unduly discriminated against, even more so than their counterparts in the republic. This will be expanded more thoroughly below. Ward notes the fourth and final stage of transformation as taking place from 1984 onwards. She argues that this stage was focused on how "[t]he organizational practices of feminism – the emphasis on the breaking down of hierarchical structures, the rotation of tasks, the validity of each woman's individual experience – is reflected within the practice of community based groups and community based activities that have sprung up" (160). Charabanc's community-based performance collective developed during this vital final stage, demonstrating how methods of community activism – created and curated mainly by women in the north – could be echoed in performance practice.

Pervasive societal issues like domestic violence are further negatively impacted by the realities of living in a militarised society. Monica McWilliams (1995) states that:

> One further dimension to the Northern Ireland conflict is the problem which women face when they live in what Cathy Harkin calls an "armed patriarchy". The interaction of militarism and masculinism in Northern Ireland means that there is a much wider tendency to use guns in the control and abuse of women within the context of domestic violence". (15)

A society in conflict may further accentuate the oppression of vulnerable citizens, something which Charabanc approach without fear in their work. Another disconcerting consequence of the Troubles in terms of the progression of the women's movement was the privileging of sectarian concerns over women's issues. As Coleman Coffey astutely outlines, "[w]hen second-wave feminism was welcomed in the Republic in the 1970s, the north was at the pinnacle of intense Troubles fighting. There was little room or energy in the national consciousness to address women's rights. Women were expected to privilege the priorities of the nationalist and unionist fights before those of feminism" (24). As a result, women in the north were not given the same opportunities as their counterparts in the south

to develop a public voice in terms of their own gendered rights and concerns.

According to Coleman Coffey this privileging of sectarian issues ensured that women in the north "had to subvert their needs as females to those of their ethno-nationalist group in order to avoid marginalisation […] In this way, essentialist identity politics have historically prevented minority groups from making advancements, most notably with women and feminist politics" (25). In the north of Ireland, the socio-political realities have impeded feminist progress. Coleman Coffey notes that:

1. The influence of religion on the identity politics those from the Catholic and Protestant tradition have promoted a restrictive view of gender which has hindered women's participation in politics and civic life.
2. The politicised nature of society and socio-political debate.
3. The lack of engagement with theoretical debates that seek to create an inclusive society across communities.
4. The association of feminism on the island of Ireland with the politics of nationalism, thus excluding those from unionist backgrounds. (Coleman Coffey 25).

Eileen Evason interrogates this issue in *Against the Grain: The Contemporary Women's Movement in Northern Ireland* (1991). She challenges the contention that women from the unionist tradition have been absent from the movement. She argues that "[t]he real issue is not that protestant women have not been involved, they have, but that whereas women from the minority community have sought to link up these two aspects of their lives protestant women have not. Clearly, doctrines of ascendancy and dominance cannot be reconciled with feminism" (11). What Evason appears to be arguing here is that a support for imperialism cannot be reconciled with feminist ideologies. Indeed, according to Coleman Coffey "[t]his perception that Irish nationalism and white feminism are linked is so profound that second-wave feminism did not develop within the unionist community altogether until the early 1990s" (26). Thus, it is significant that the *incompatibility* suggested by Evason between unionism and feminism cannot begin to be overturned until the violence of the Troubles wanes in favour of more peaceful times in the early 1990s. However, this divisiveness serves to further highlight that feminism in the north of Ireland is delayed and sullied by the culture of division emerging out of the civil conflict. Women in the north of Ireland are being discriminated against in northern Irish society on several counts. This introduces the intersectional feminist theory of 'double-jeopardy,' the idea that women in a patriarchal society can be doubly discriminated against for their race, religion or other concerns, as well as their

gender.[59] This double-jeopardy has long been the case in the north. Coleman Coffey outlines:

> Although all women in the North experience subjugation to patriarchy, the *ways* in which they experience it differ. Women are oppressed in the North as women but also specifically as Catholic women and as Protestant women, and as Irish women and as British or Anglo-Irish women. For example, the Irish nationalist feminists' tendency to tie their oppression as women to British colonialism excludes unionist feminists from identifying with that cause. (28)

The double-jeopardy of difference present in the north stems from societal realities emerging from the Troubles. I argue that there is an inherent politicisation of daily life in the north of Ireland, which differs substantially from the politicisation of daily life in the south. Ward suggests that this abnormality is responsible in part for the emergence of the women's movement in the north of Ireland. She notes that "[w]omen have left their homes and taken to the streets in increasing numbers over the years" (152). She expands on this by stating that "[s]ome may have returned to the home once family life resumed some normality, but as life in Northern Ireland has become increasingly abnormal, […] the wish for a more comfortable life is accompanied by the realization of its impossibility so long as the political situation remains unresolved" (152). The culture of 'taking to the streets' seen in the broader Irish context in the 1970s has been emblematic of working-class women's experiences since the emergence of the civil rights movement in the north of Ireland at the end of the 1960s. This participation by working-class women created a jurisdictional focus not present in the women's movement in the south, which promoted the visibility of working-class experiences in a community-based context. McWilliams observes the same fluidity inherent in the Irish women's movement in the north of Ireland, stating that "[d]espite the impression that there was a ground swell of women in favour of the women's movement in Northern Ireland, it is more apparent now that there was no such thing as one women's movement but a whole range of movements in which women participated" (17). However, she too notes that the issue of class participation is different in the north: "[t]he movement is not dissimilar to that operating elsewhere though the activism that created it has been generated more by working-class women than has generally been the case elsewhere" (17). This is clearly informed by the presence of community activist structures which emerged during the 1960s. McCoy argues that although "[w]omen have been described as the 'mainstay of community groups'

[59] Francis M. Beal refers to this in terms of race and gender in her article 'Double Jeopardy: To be Black and Female', but this can be used to negotiate intersections across gender; race; class; sexuality; religion; and nationality (Beal).

[…] the Equal Opportunities Commission for Northern Ireland expressed concern that 'the inequality and marginalization suffered by women in the economic, political and social spheres undermine their status as full citizens'" (3). This societal bias ensures the marginalisation of women and further deepens the double-jeopardy experienced by women of different backgrounds.

Despite the individual social and political circumstances that impacted the women's movement in the north of Ireland, there are still clear and tangible links between its manifestation of second-wave feminism and the Anglo-American feminist movement of the same era. Connolly and O'Toole state that "[t]he women's movement in Northern Ireland may have taken a distinct course of its own, but clearly feminists were not entirely insulated from other developments in Anglo-American feminism" (153). They argue that "[w]hile feminist activism in Northern Ireland has a striking regional dimension […] in other respects it followed a similar path to the second-wave women's movement both in the rest of Western Europe and on the island" (153). This is important as it creates a linking methodology that intersects second-wave feminism across the US, Western Europe and in both Irish jurisdictions. These methodologies maintain regional differences that are echoed in performance practice and the links are most evident when considering what they choose to include and exclude from their art. For example, an analysis of this chapter's performances will reveal a focus on lesbian stories in a US context through an examination of the WOW Café and Split Britches, a key concern for the women's movement in that jurisdiction, but arguably a disregard for race and class issues. In the case of Charabanc their performance practice rebels against the sectarian divisiveness of society in the north of Ireland by establishing a working-class women's group with members from both sides of the historic divide. Their work instead focuses on working-class women's concerns, namely the disproportionate impact of domestic violence on women in their society. D'Arcy's radical performative activism in the Armagh Jail gives theatrical form to the divisiveness of the women's movement north and south of the border, illustrating the literal politics of difference enacted through and on her body.

The work of Charabanc Theatre Company is considered here as a means of interrogating feminist theatrical output during this formative time in the north of Ireland. Like the WOW Café in New York, Charabanc also moved away from the single-authored, literary text model and made work collaboratively in community spaces for an alternative constituency audience.[60] Charabanc's cross-community

[60] Although Charabanc did not originally use single-authored texts the company began to engage with this model of creation in later years. This is especially evident in Marie Jones's collaborations with

appeal opened up spaces in the north previously out of bounds for theatre makers. The company themselves refer to the importance of having a cross-community membership in an interview with Carol Martin (1987) where she asks "[h]ow important is it to you that your company consists of both Protestants and Catholics?" and Eleanor Methven responds that is was "[a]bsolutely essential. It wasn't organized that way, it just started that way" ('Charabanc Theatre Company' 99). Sihra argues that Charabanc "epitomized the 'collective' spirit of the feminist movement of the 1980s, where single authorship was often eschewed in favour of plurality and publication did not take place" (550).[61] Charlotte Headrick and John Countryman outline their observations for why women's performance practice is not frequently produced in an Irish context. Of these many observations, two are significant. Firstly, they argue that "[w]omen in Ireland create collective, collaborative or devised pieces that are not the typical scripts generated by a single author" (61). Secondly, they argue that "[w]omen who claim to be 'feminist' are ghettoized. In many cases, women playwrights, whether [or] not they are avowed feminists, are assumed to be, and feminism 'turns off' many audience members, both men and women, and is considered likely to fail at the box office" (62). As mentioned earlier, Coleman Coffey outlines how many of the women she interviewed for her analysis of women in northern Irish theatre rejected the classification of being 'feminist', despite the fact that their work may speak to the contrary. Charabanc themselves rejected this term during their inception and as a result aimed to promote women's issues in a non-divisive way. For the company it was more important that they were classified as 'working-class women'. In the same interview with Martin, Jones argues that "we've been fighting for three and a half years to say we're a working-class theatre company. That's all we are" ('Charabanc Theatre Company' 97). However, Methven notes that the company aren't rejecting the idea of feminism outright, stating that:

> Obviously we're as angry as other women are about things that go on. We deal with political issues. It would be stupid to say we're not 'feminist,' but every time someone says 'feminist' I want them to define it for me. It has a bad ring to it. If we said we were feminist – or socialist or any 'ist' – it would completely alienate people back in the community centres in Northern Ireland. It would alienate them completely. So what's the point of saying it? (Martin, 'Charabanc Theatre Company' 97)

the company between 1988 and 1990 where she authored several plays that were produced by the company such as: *The Terrible Twins' Crazy Christmas* (1988), *Weddin's, Weein's and Wakes* (1989), *The Hamster Wheel* (1990), and *The Blind Fiddler of Glenadauch* (1990).

[61] This dynamic of performance creation is clearly evidenced across the performances analysed in this dissertation.

For the company, maintaining a distance from any ideological categorisation is a means of maintaining openness and accessibility for a broad range of communities and audiences.

Like the WOW Café, Charabanc was formed out of necessity. Due to a lack of work for working-class women actors in the north of Ireland at that time, the members of the company decided to create employment opportunities for themselves.[62] It was also about creating good quality roles for women actors, as Methven notes "when we weren't unemployed, the work we got wasn't good quality – the wife, the mother, the usual sort of role actresses get, or the background for some guy onstage" (Martin, 'Charabanc Theatre Company' 89). However, creating theatre in a climate of civil conflict brought with it its own problems. Coleman Coffey argues that "[f]or working-class audiences of the north, theatre was considered the purview of an educated elite who could afford to attend performances and who could also travel to the theatre at night in safety" (87). Frequent bomb threats in venues in the city prevented patrons from attending the theatre. According to Coleman Coffey, "Charabanc made theatre accessible financially and physically by travelling to community neighbourhoods and performing in safe spaces where families could go without fear of violence" (87). Methven notes that:

> In Belfast there are two theatres where we normally play that have a mixed audience. One is the Arts Theatre, where we usually open. The other theatre is a smaller theatre called The Group Theatre. It's always been known as a community theatre. In the 1960s and early 1970s the theatre was known because the comedian James Young used to play there. Ordinary working-class people got used to going, and they still come. So when we play there, it's Protestant and Catholic working-class people sitting side-by-side watching the play. (Martin, 'Charabanc Theatre Company' 94)

The fact that their audiences were coming from a variety of backgrounds was influenced by the fact that this company, which operated through some of the worst violent conflict of the Troubles "was that the women came from both Protestant and Catholic backgrounds, creating a unique model for an integrated, non-sectarian theatre group" (Coleman Coffey 85). Charabanc's collaborative and non-sectarian approach to performance was integral to the company's success during this time. "Their status as an integrated group allowed them the legitimacy and access to perform in both Catholic and Protestant neighbourhoods and to include stories from both communities in their repertoires" (Coleman Coffey 85). In the main, it

[62] The founding members of Charabanc Theatre Company are: Eleanor Methven, Marie Jones, Carol Scanlan (Moore), Brenda Winter and Maureen McAuley.

gave the company access to an assortment of working class communities in the north whose engagement with theatre was limited by the conditions of the conflict. These audiences experienced their own marginalised stories presented to them in their own communities by Charabanc. Like the makers of *The Wedding Play* and *Convictions,* Charabanc utilised community spaces to represent communities on both sides of the conflict. However, unlike *Convictions* and *The Wedding Play* Charabanc's work promoted working-class women's stories rather than directly encouraging any kind of reconciliation.

Claudia Harris outlines the methods the company used to create their work: "First, company members would identify a time period or an issue or a dramatic event; then they undertook extensive research – recording interviews, finding documents, viewing records of all sorts; finally, they crafted the play itself during the writing, rewriting, and rehearsal spaces" (xi). There are clear parallels with Charabanc's method of creating work and the WOW Café. Like the WOW Café, Charabanc consisted of women only and they decided to cast women to play the male characters in their work. This was significant on two counts: Firstly, "[t]he group had initially wanted to hire men for the male roles; however, they were unable to find enough out-of-work male actors who would qualify for their specific funding scheme" (Coleman Coffey 86). This realisation that their male colleagues were so comparatively successful in gaining employment illustrated the need for Charabanc to diversify the theatre scene in the north of Ireland. Secondly, the decision to cast women in the men's roles "led to the development of what Charabanc has called the *female gaze*: portraying the world (and men) through the eyes and experience of women" [emphasis original] (Coleman Coffey 86). Charabanc created a space and place for women's stories to be heard and recognised in their own right. According to Harris, "[t]his approach allowed them to suggest many characters and attitudes in a fluid, well-crafted way, showing everything from the female point of view – even the men" (xxviii). Contrary to mainstream theatre in both north and south at this time, this method placed Charabanc at the centre of "woman-centred" performance (72). Headrick and Countryman cite several theatrical approaches that constitute their definition of woman-centred performance. A full list of all fifteen approaches can be found in the authors' essay, however this chapter is concerned primarily with the following definitions:

1. "Plays that make the 'assertion that women's personal experience is not trivial, is at least valuable as a public experience" (72).
2. "Plays that 'use the trivial and ordinary details of women's lives as the material'" (72).

3. "Plays that 'envision the audience as female…disregarding the male audience'" (74).

Charabanc's method of making work exemplifies these theatrical approaches by making women's everyday lived reality the focus in their work. Their constituency audience consisted of working-class women. Working-class women in the north of Ireland were, and are still, some of the most marginalised women on the island of Ireland and up to this point their stories had not been widely represented on stage.

As is consistent with the arguments outlined by Connolly, O'Toole, McWilliams, and McCoy, Charabanc demonstrate unusual prescience in engaging with class. The founding members of Charabanc Theatre Company privilege the class perspective because they come from working-class backgrounds. As women, living in the north of Ireland, they are aware of the challenges and everyday lived experiences of women living on the margins of society. The company privilege not only women's experiences but primarily working-class women's experiences through their method of presenting the female gaze. This is what makes Charabanc's work distinctly feminist. The link between Charabanc's method and the women's movement in the north of Ireland at this time cannot be ignored. Coleman Coffey states that, "Charabanc saw 'working class' as a term that could unite […] in creating female characters that both nationalist and unionist women could relate to, Charabanc's plays attempted to create empathy for and identification with the opposing group, and it fiercely repudiated any labels that could potentially threaten this project" (97). Their concentration on working-class women's issues can be seen represented most concretely in their first production *Lay Up Your Ends* (1983).

Lay Up Your Ends (1983)

As the company was established to create opportunities for work for the women involved, Charabanc's first production is significant. "*Lay Up Your Ends* was the newly formed Charabanc Theatre Company's response to underemployment" (Harris xiii). The show garnered diverse interest, with Harris noting that for their opening night performance "people queued down Botanic Avenue that May night and 560 squeezed into the theatre" (xiii). However, not all reaction to Charabanc was positive. Indeed, "Victoria White offers […a] reason why a company like Charabanc was critically dismissed: the woman-focused content of their stories" (Harris xxvii). According to Harris, "White believed that the only real opinion-makers for the Irish theatre are *The Irish Times* and *The Sunday Tribune* reviewers, writing for their white-collar readerships; 'the critics have a fairly reliable

tendency', White says, 'to make short work of feminist or women-orientated plays'" (xxvii). Indeed, despite their successes with audience numbers, the language used to describe the work of the Company reflected an artistic culture that was not ready for female agency. Helen Lojek argues that:

> the ironies of language use were brought richly home by early press reports on *Lay Up Your Ends* […] One reporter, opting to focus on Martin Lynch, the only male involved in the original production, referred to the women who had founded the company, researched the project, devised the action, and wrote most of the script as 'Martin Lynch's Bevy of Beauties'". (107)

Headrick and Countryman, writing briefly on *Lay Up Your Ends*, observe that this performance "reclaims women's history" (68–69). They argue that, far from what the above media reports suggest, that the women of Charabanc 'wrote themselves' (69). However, changes in approach towards analysing Charabanc's work are not only necessary in the media response but also in the academe. Lojek notes the necessity for new critical strategies in the academe to engage with work by Charabanc stating that their "unusual relationship to its community, and its utilization of methods, which, while not without precedent were not the norm in Irish theatre, have demanded that analysts of Charabanc's work develop new critical strategies and more flexible thinking" (102). Writing this article in 1998, Lojek is referring to the rise in non-textual performance practice, something which challenges the dominant authorial theatre form. She notes that:

> Responding effectively requires lessening the preference for text over performance, ceasing to regard plays with single authors as more significant than those developed cooperatively, and ending any assumption that drama with starring roles and traditional plot development is superior to ensemble pieces with relatively equal parts and less 'well-made play' structures. (102)

Indeed, Charabanc's work did lead to scholars such as Lojek employing new critical strategies such as this when examining their work. However, due to the lack of material available to study their work, it is difficult for the company's productions to feature regularly in the classroom. Although performance analysis has become a more established and expansive part of the academe, scholarship still requires a text (whether that be an actual text or a recording of a performance) to assist study. In fact, as Headrick and Countryman note Charabanc's "most celebrated achievement, *Lay Up Your* Ends, took twenty-five years to get in print" (61).[63] Sihra comments on the same fact, stating that "[i]t is clear that lack of

[63] This was due to a disagreement about the publishing rights of the text between Martin Lynch and the company. Patrick Lonergan notes that Charabanc's "first play *Lay Up Your Ends* (1983), was devised with Martin Lynch – and although that approach produced a play that is dynamic and multifaceted, it also meant that the script could not be included in Claudia Harris' collection due to a

publication leads to obscurity, non-canonicity, fewer productions, and occlusion from university drama and literature courses on the island and internationally" (551). As a result of the collaborative form of performance Charabanc engaged with not much of Charabanc's work has been preserved for academic study. However, Claudia Harris's *Four Plays by The Charabanc Theatre Company* (2006) goes some way to addressing this gap. This research, foregrounding Charabanc's contribution to performance on the island of Ireland and their links to the social contexts emerging and proliferating during this time will also enable future scholars to engage with the company's material.

The setting of *Lay Up Your Ends*, a Belfast Linen Mill in 1911, is significant as it reflects a diverse and anti-sectarian, but pro-women, locale. According to Lojek, "[t]hat reshaping of community is evident in *Lay Up Your Ends*, and a 1983 interview with the company indicates that they saw the mills as a place 'that completely crossed all sectarian barriers' and believed this would be an advantage in attracting a diverse audience" (111). Theatre scholar, Maria R. DiCenzo also considers the setting of the play stating that "[t]he Belfast mills (the largest spinning centre in Europe at that time) employed mainly women, and because they were non-sectarian in their hiring policies, had Catholics and Protestants working in the same mill" (178). Lojek states that although "Charabanc's founders may not always have conceived of themselves as political […] their repeated statement that one motivation in forming the company was fatigue at always being cast as 'somebody's wife or mother or sister' is a political statement, however unselfconscious its political nature" (106). Despite rejecting the feminist label Charabanc utilised second-wave feminist actions in their work that maintain a direct dialogue with North American feminist performance practice, such as Split Britches, through their creation of a feminist method – 'the female gaze' – indeed moved beyond the second-wave by demonstrating an awareness of the intersections between class, ethno-national background, and gender in line with advances in the women's movement in the north of Ireland during that time. Charabanc also performed at a Boston women's theatre festival in the 1988. This international encounter is further evidence of how second wave feminism in the US influenced Irish feminism, particularly in terms of theatre-making (Earle).

As previously stated, one of the most prominent actions of the second-wave was that of consciousness-raising. According to hooks, "many hurt and

disagreement about how much credit Lynch should receive (a disagreement that was later resolved, allowing the play to appear in 2008). That problem exemplifies how many of the legal structures surrounding theatre – particularly relating to copyright (and hence royalties) – tend to privilege the work of the lone author over the collaboratively devised text" (*Irish Drama and Theatre* 156).

exploited women used the consciousness-raising group therapeutically. It was the site where they uncovered and openly revealed the depths of their intimate wounds. This confessional aspect served as a healing ritual. Through consciousness-raising women gained the strength to challenge patriarchal forces at work and at home" (8). This chapter argues that Charabanc's performances echoed this idea, and via their representation of women's stories (which were side-lined at the time) served as a confessional for northern women's stories, and indeed a healing ritual for those who attended their productions. hooks expands her argument by stating that "[t]he consciousness-raising session, which usually took place in someone's home (rather than public space that had to be rented or donated), was the meeting place. It was the place where seasoned feminist thinkers and activists could recruit new converts" (8). Charabanc made work in the public sphere, but notably also in community spaces where they could intimately connect with their audiences. The subject matter of *Lay Up Your Ends* echoes the ideas of direct action and consciousness-raising with the women of the mill coming together despite disparate backgrounds to petition for better working conditions. The early twentieth century was a period of fraught workplace relations with the Belfast Linen Mill strikes of 1911 and the Dublin 1913 Lockout.[64] During the 1980s the Troubles in the north of Ireland were at their zenith with unemployment figures standing at 25.5% for Catholics and 11.4% for Protestants (Osborne and Cormack 215). In the South "[t]he period 1980 to 1987 was one of prolonged recession, falling living standards, high unemployment and emigration" (Hogan 124). The company draw the audience's attention to the position of women in the capitalist system, positioning the characters at a rally where leading socialist of the time, James Connolly, states the following, "The worker is the slave of the capitalist society and the female worker is the slave of that slave" (Lynch and Winter 54). Charabanc is thus responding to and informed by the economic challenges of both periods in this production.

Imperative in representing working-class women's experience is a representation of the realities of domestic abuse. Connolly and O'Toole document the crucial role that Irish feminism played in creating discussion on domestic violence and sexual assault. They state that Irish feminism "shattered the traditional view of the idyllic Irish family, by exposing the reality that the family can also be a dangerous place to be" (98). Indeed, this is not just the case in an

[64] It is difficult to find a comprehensive historical investigation of the Belfast Linen Strike by women mill workers in 1911, which indicates the way in which women's contributions to history have been obscured. More information on the 1913 Dublin Lockout can be found in *A Capital in Conflict: Dublin City and the 1913 Lockout* (2013).

Irish context, wider analyses of the global second-wave illustrates that this focus was also present in an Anglo-American context. According to hooks "[b]y far one of the most widespread positive interventions of contemporary feminist movement remains the effort to create and sustain greater cultural awareness of domestic violence as well as the changes that must happen in our thinking and action if we are to see its end" (61). The conflict in the north of Ireland has had a significant impact on the rates of domestic violence across the jurisdiction. Coleman Coffey argues that "during the Troubles, physical attacks on women because of religion or sectarian loyalties were viewed as much more heinous than violence within the domestic sphere. Sectarian attacks on women were seen as breaking the rules of warfare and assaulting those who were considered outside the sphere of acceptable victims" (30). This has led to a significant and disproportionate discrepancy between domestic violence instances in the north and south. For example, in 2016 the reported domestic violence incidents in the south was just under 6,000 (where the population in the 2016 Census was over 4.7 million), whereas in the north the figures stood at almost five times that at just under 29,000 (where the population in the 2011 Census was over 1.8 million) (RTÉ). Coleman Coffey states that:

> Ultimately, the history of conflict in Northern Ireland has made women more susceptible to violence within the private sphere and also left them without many resources to prevent and report the violence. The strong link between militarism and masculinity has prolonged a violent atmosphere in the north, subjugating women through sustained and normalised violence on their bodies. (31)

As can be seen from the figures above, almost twenty years on from The Good Friday Agreement, this still seems to be the case.[65] However, as far back as their very first production in 1983 Charabanc represented the reality of domestic violence for women in the north of Ireland. At several points throughout the *Lay Up Your Ends* the company draw attention to the endemic nature of domestic abuse. Near the start of the play, Ethna talks about how her husband abused her after she told him she would have to stop sleeping with him to ensure they didn't have any more children: "Pig beat me black and blue" (Lynch and Winter 56). She frames this interaction with her husband as a normalised element of everyday life:

> ETHNA I get it that often, I was thinkin' I might as well go the whole hog and take up professional boxin'. Like I'm getting' quare and good at jukin' and jumpin' outta the way. And a can take a punch. That's one thing, a can take a quare punch. (57)

[65] The Good Friday Agreement was "approved in May 1998 in simultaneous referendums in Northern Ireland (by 71%) and the Irish Republic (by 94%) […] The Agreement provides for a devolved power-sharing government in Northern Ireland and cross-border agencies jointly run by the Northern Ireland assembly and the Irish parliament, while leaving the province's sovereign fate to its electoral majority" ('The Good Friday Agreement' 1).

Lay Up Your Ends harshly illustrates a normalised culture of domestic violence, and in this exchange, also draws attention to restrictions on reproductive issues. Charabanc also explores the theme of domestic violence and abuse through the male characters of the play. In a disturbing exchange between a group of customers in the local pub, the following exchange ensues:

> BISCUIT Know what's wrong with you, Henry, you're too soft. See my Sadie, she's gonna get that! *[He smacks his fist into the palm of his hand.]*
>
> CHARLIE Nigh, steady on, Biscuit. If you use the right approach with women, there's no need to bate them.[66] (Lynch and Winter 87)

If we return to Charabanc's method (the female gaze) and apply it to this moment, it returns some interesting considerations. All the actors performing in *Lay Up Your Ends* are women so the performativity of gender-based dominance is accentuated by the fact that women's bodies are performing these interactions. It also potentially adds to the intended humour to the exchange when this scene continues upon the arrival of Sadie who comes looking for her husband Biscuit:

> HENRY *[offstage]*: Aye Sadie love, Biscuit's here all right, but you'd better watch yourself. He says he's gonna bate ye.
>
> SADIE *[entering]*: Oh, is he nigh? We'll soon see about that! Where is the ghett?
>
> CHARLIE Now easy on, Biscuit son. I don't want you batin' Sadie in here, Ginny's just had the place fixed up.
>
> BISCUIT Ah it wasn't me love. Charlie there got me drunk. I'm sorry, love.
>
> SADIE Ah get home, you no-good ghett ye. The childer's running wild in the streets.
>
> BISCUIT I'm sorry love.
>
> SADIE *[grabbing* BISCUIT *and manhandling him out the door]*: Ah, wait'll I get you home!
>
> CHARLIE See that, Alfie? Men like him is givin' us a bad name! (Lynch and Winter 88–89)

This interaction illustrates the casual attitude to domestic violence in a social setting. It highlights, through humour, the reality of domestic violence in everyday life. The casual interventions by Charlie and Henry in this segment illuminate a casual and normalised attitude to domestic abuse. By illustrating domestic violence

[66] 'Bate' is a colloquial term for 'beat'.

in this way Charabanc are putting a mirror up to the everyday lives of women and the difficulties they face, thus demonstrating the link between the performances analysed in Chapter One, where radical performance in the north of Ireland sought to represent the realities of everyday life. Charabanc make a firm statement with their first production *Lay Up Your Ends*, presenting a method for representing women's work and women's experiences which were not only marginalised by the patriarchal status-quo, but by the civil unrest present in their lives.

As well as garnering diverse support across a variety of communities Charabanc were also successful at utilising alternative theatre spaces. Like Split Britches, Charabanc made and performed theatre for their constituency audience. Unlike the women performers in New York's WOW Café in the 1980s, Charabanc did not have a dedicated venue for their work, but they subverted the geographical segregation inherent in social life by playing to cross-community audiences and by bringing community stories into the heart of their own neighbourhoods. The fact that these performances were supremely popular illustrates the demand for performances staged in more local spaces, and as well as the public thirst for stories that question the realities and histories of women's experience.

> Lynda Henderson reported in *Theatre Ireland* in 1983 that, after the 'more than capacity audience' for the first performance at the Arts Theatre, *Lay Up Your Ends* 'went on to tour community and leisure centres as part of Belfast City Festival. On several nights it was attracting larger audiences in those non-theatre spaces than were the two producing theatres in the city combined – proof that this particular "alternative" has both caught the public imagination and its touching new audience.' (Harris xxi)

The fact that a woman-led community theatre group could outsell the two large, commercial producing theatres illustrates the importance, for audiences, of seeing themselves reflected in art and culture. Charabanc were treading new ground in Irish theatre and successfully carving out space for work by women. Charabanc's work, Harris argues, had the potential to change behaviour: "[c]hoosing a play, buying a ticket, and visibly going to a particular venue implies a commitment to listen and that choice is, at times, a political statement in itself" (xxiii). When contemplating the reach theatre has to change behaviours, the focus must return to Bennett, who argues, "a performance can activate a diversity of responses but it is the audience which finally ascribe meaning and usefulness to any cultural product" (167). Therefore, there is a power in being able to access one's stories on stage. The fact that Charabanc's early work was so well attended solidifies Bennett's claim that it is the audiences themselves who ascribe importance to cultural output. Harris also comments on the links between the alternative theatre movement in

Britain in the 1970s and 80s (which this thesis interrogated in Chapter One using Kershaw's framework) and Charabanc, surmising that although they utilised similar structures they had different aims. Harris argues that "[u]nlike many theatre artists in Britain during the 1970s and early 1980s who organised collectives for socialist/feminist reasons, the Charabanc women organised artists to create good theatre work for themselves and for other women. The company was never a collective even though they worked together collaboratively" (xxvi). Indeed, the establishment of this company, and its rejection of the single-authored text, is a radical political act. One of the company's most significant legacies was the framework the company created which served to inspire and sustain collaborative and independent theatre in the north of Ireland. Coleman Coffey argues that companies such as Tinderbox, Kabosh Theatre Company, Big Telly, and Replay were largely influenced by the successful existence of Charabanc, pointing out that these companies "are currently [in 2016] led and managed by women" (Coleman Coffey 100). Thus, Charabanc created sustainable space in northern Irish theatre for women's voices, space that remains today.

'Sojourned in Her Majesty's Prison': The Performative Activism of Margaretta D'Arcy

Thus far, this chapter has explored how second-wave feminist methodologies influenced performance during the 1980s in the US and Ireland, leading to a diversification of performance forms. This section focuses on Irish artist and activist Margaretta D'Arcy to engage with the negotiation of second-wave feminist strategies *as* performance. Performance is defined in this research, through the lens of performance studies (as outlined in the Introduction), as that which engages with everyday life and relies on co-presence in line with both Fisher-Lichte and Fitzpatrick. Therefore, this section will analyse D'Arcy's imprisonment in the Armagh Jail during the 1980 'no-wash' protests[67] as a radical performance, arguing

[67] The 'no-wash' protests were an escalation of the 'blanket-men' protests caused by the removal of the 'special category status' (SCS) of republican prisoners by the British government in 1976. Part of this change in circumstance resulted, among other things, with the removal of the right of SCS prisoners to wear their own clothes. Republican prisoners as a protest against these conditions instead wore their bed blankets instead of clothes as a protest, gaining them the nickname 'Blanket Men'. As a reaction against this protest prison guards "refused them privacy, and humiliated them when they tried to go to the toilet or shower. Requests for toilet visits were often denied or severely limited, and the right to 'slop out' (empty buckets containing bodily waste) was often refused. Access to washing facilities was restricted; and when they did happen, the prisoners' bodies were forced into naked display through the removal of towels, as well as strip and cavity searches. The response by the blanket men was to escalate the situation by refusing to shave or wash, pouring their urine under the doors into the corridor, and throwing faecal matter out of the windows until they were blocked up, at which point the men resorted to smearing it on the walls" (Duggan 448–49).

that this performance constitutes a moment of direct action.[68] This research acknowledges that D'Arcy builds on the experiences and strategies of the women prisoners and the republican movement whose performative strategies were aimed at the disruption of the spectacle of the British state and its systems of justice. However, it focuses on D'Arcy as a conduit for this engagement as a means of examining the link between second-wave feminist methods operating on the island of Ireland at that time which manifests in D'Arcy's very intentional performance of protest. As Fiona McCann writes, "[t]he participation of Irish republican women in the armed struggle within the military ranks of the IRA was at the time, and to a large extent still is, deemed incompatible with the demands of feminism" (503). D'Arcy, who was not a participant in the armed republican struggle purposefully placed herself in the Armagh Prison during this time, stating in her memoir that "I had to get into that prison" (*Tell Them Everything*, 37). I argue that D'Arcy engages in performative activism, which echoes the second wave feminist strategies of consciousness raising and direct action, and therefore this dissertation situates her imprisonment as a performance for the purposes of demonstrating the porousness between society and performance practice. This chapter does not focus on the women prisoners who were a part of the armed republican struggle as the performativity of their imprisonment is dependent on alternative agendas and contexts, however there is an opportunity for engaging with this in future research.

D'Arcy in her memoir on this time in prison, *Tell Them Everything* (1981), states in the preface to this book that "since so few books have been written about Irish women's experiences as political prisoners over the last two centuries, I felt it essential to put down my own small experience with all its limitations" (*Tell Them Everything* 13). D'Arcy's assertion that little scholarship has been done on the experience of women political prisoners on the island of Ireland has been partially rectified since 1981, however as Laura Weinstein argues the manner in which historians have reflected the Armagh women prisoners in many cases undermines the significance of their actions in the overall context of the republican movement (13).[69] This research draws context from D'Arcy's own memoir and archive at NUI

[68] Direct action is defined in this research as an action that is intended to intervene in society, culture, or politics to highlight a perceived injustice or inequality therein. For example Linda Connolly cites the various protests led by women's movement and the 'Contraception Train' as an example of direct action in an Irish context (114-5).

[69] Mary Corcoran's (2006) book *Out of Order* provides a comprehensive history of the political imprisonment of women in the north of Ireland (Corcoran). In 2011 *In the Footsteps of Anne: Stories of Republican Women Ex-Prisoners* was published. This significant publication, lead by the prisoners themselves, focuses on their lived experiences (Brady). Lelia Neti in *Violence and the Body: Race, Gender, and the State* (2003) which addresses the visible sexuality (through the presence of their menstrual blood) of the women prisoners in the Armagh Jail (Neti), Fiona McCann's 'Writing by and about Republican Women Prisoners: 'Willful Subjects'' (2017) negotiates the tensions between the

Galway as well as The Prison's Memory Archive as a means of informing this research.[70] This section analyses D'Arcy's voluntary imprisonment in the Armagh Jail as a radical performative act designed to illuminate the experiences of women political prisoners and the conditions of their imprisonment.[71] The analysis argues that D'Arcy, a prominent feminist artist, utilised her own position as an artist and an outsider to the armed Republican movement to draw attention to the plight of the Armagh women prisoners, incorporating participation from relevant political actors while doing so using her imprisonment as an instance of direct action. In line with the second-wave feminists' contention that 'the personal is political' D'Arcy's own intentions in regard to this series of actions are a vital primary source for this engagement.

Writing in the 1980s D'Arcy considers the divisive debate over whether the women in Armagh Jail demanding political status was to be considered a feminist issue for the women's movement north and south of the border. D'Arcy acknowledges an issue present in the republican movement at that time, that it was male-dominated and steeped in patriarchal values. She illuminates how the Irish Women's Movement were suspicious of interacting with the republican movement (a fact which is affirmed by Loughran, McCann, Neti, and Weinstein) "[w]hy, it has been asked, should the Women's Movement exert itself to assist republican women to obtain allegedly elitist prison conditions, when the Republican Movement itself is male dominated, and has never understood the oppression of women in Irish society?" (*Tell Them Everything* 11) Acknowledging the failure of the republican movement and the promises of the 1916 Proclamation of

Irish women's movement and the Armagh women prisoners (McCann), Christina Loughran's 'Armagh and Feminist Strategy' (1986) demonstrates the influence of the Armagh women on the republican movement as a whole, noting it's significant influence in the movement's evolution on and participation in women's issues (Loughran). Accounts of the performativity of the 'blanket men' and the dirty/no-wash protests of the Maze and Long Kesh prisons have been explored by performance scholars such as Patrick Duggan and Lionel Pilkington, but an investigation of the performativity of the women prisoners of the Armagh Jail who also engaged in this protest are notably absent from performance scholarship.

70 In particular the testimony of Josie Dowds who speaks on her experience of pregnancy while imprisoned in the Armagh Jail. Dowds recalls the positive, community-building experience of having her newborn son, Kevin, present on her prison wing and the difficulty for both her and the wider prison community when he was old enough to leave the prison. Dowd's recalls that "I was actually trying to cheer them up" (*Josie Dowds*). Similarly Mary McConville's recollection of being an absent mother to her son while imprisoned in the Armagh Gaol echoes Dowds's testimony. McConville's testimony notes the camaraderie among the women in the Jail and also highlights the socio-economic conditions that led to many republicans fighting for the "cause". McConville states that "there's people lying in that graveyard for to give all the young ones and all the future generations the comfort that they have" (*Mary McConville*). Both women's testimonies align with D'Arcy's own assertions around segregation and conditions within the prison and provide an overarching context for the experience of being a woman prisoner during this time.

71 D'Arcy was sentenced to pay a fine for her actions on International Women's Day. Her refusal to do so, on principle, resulted in a three-month prison sentence, one she insisted on serving.

Independence at the beginning of the twentieth century.[72] D'Arcy asks "[w]hat guarantee is there that the 'New Ireland' will be any different in this respect from the Ireland that produced the notorious 26 County Constitution of 1937?" (*Tell Them Everything* 11–12). Connolly's acknowledgement of the difficulties between the first and second waves of feminism, explored earlier in this chapter, are visible here in D'Arcy's mistrust in the first and second waves of the twentieth century republican movements. They have a track record of proving in both Irish jurisdictions that they cannot be counted on to ensure women achieve equal status as citizens and participants in society. Despite this mistrust, the potential for a unified feminist-led Women's Movement was present at this time, illustrated by the events of International Women's Day in 1979 where there was a picket to oppose imperial domination in Ireland. D'Arcy explains how:

> it was the first time that women in the North were joining the international women's movement against repression and imperialism, and the first public statement to feminists all over the world that solidarity with the Armagh prisoners and a commitments to oppose British rule were central issues for women's liberation. (*Tell Them Everything* 18–19)

D'Arcy attended this picket as part of the group Women Against Imperialism. During the picket, D'Arcy as well as ten other women were arrested by the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) and brought to a police station. The women refused to be examined, fingerprinted, or cooperative beyond providing their names and addresses (D'Arcy, *Tell Them Everything* 21). After the women were released from the police station they decided to use their treatment as a means of promoting their cause. D'Arcy states that "[w]e decided to use the occasion to publicise what happened and to call on women, north and south, to come back the following month to challenge the right of the RUC to clear us off the streets. If we were charged we should stand together as feminists" (*Tell Them Everything* 22). The events of International Women's Day 1979 were the catalysts for the series of events which lead to the imprisonment of D'Arcy. D'Arcy's own position in these events locates the struggle of the Armagh women in a broader Irish context, as opposed to it being another northern or Troubles issue.

This project's argument that women in the north of Ireland suffer from a double-jeopardy of discrimination stands in the context of the Armagh women who found themselves both outside of the Republican agenda (because they were

[72] Poblacht na hÉireann, or the Irish Proclamation of Independence, was read out by Patrick Pearse in front of the GPO on Easter Monday 1916 and set in motion the events of the 1916 Rising. This document outlined what was possible for an independent Ireland and is widely considered to be a socially inclusive document.

women) and outside of the Irish Women's Movement (because they were northern).[73] Laura Lyons interrogates the significance of the 'Broadcasting Ban' in terms of this marginalisation of women's voices in the republican movement at that time.[74] Lyons argues that as a result of this ban "for republican women, many of whom work for greater recognition of women's rights in alliance or coalition with other women's groups, the effects of such a 'blanket ban' perpetrate the misconception that republicanism is an ideology controlled exclusively by and for men" (183). She continues by stating that "[a]s colonised women they are forced to exist outside of public discourse. They are neither allowed to represent a political ideology or be represented by one" (183). In a personal interview conducted with D'Arcy for this dissertation, she outlines the difficulty in persuading male republican activists to support the Armagh prisoners: "I don't know if I mention it in the book, at the beginning it was just H Block. The men of the H Block. And we really had to fight hard to get them to add the Armagh Women as well" (*Personal Interview*). D'Arcy seeks to insert herself into these events, locating herself and the Armagh women in the broader context of Irish women activists. Lyons suggests that "such a historical contextualisation of both the Armagh protest and the resistance of 'ordinary women' is important to the on-going project of recovering the often unrecognisable roles that women have historically played and continued to play in the struggle for the liberation of Ireland" (188). Indeed, the recent centenary commemoration of the 1916 Rising differentiated itself from the commemorative events of 1966 and 1991 by focusing on women's involvement in the establishment of the Irish state and the partial overthrow of colonial control. However, the many histories of republican women are still waiting to be told. Cahal McLaughlin's Prisons Memory Archive and *In the Footsteps of Anne* (2011) goes some of the way to rectifying this by its placement of women prisoners as a prominent part of the narrative of the Troubles.

D'Arcy herself performs the part of a historian in this regard. Her archive located at NUI Galway contains significant material of value on the Irish Women's Movement north and south of the border. The archive contains dozens of pamphlets, newspaper clippings, ephemera, and letters that provide a snapshot of the contexts of the experiences of women prisoners at that time. However, D'Arcy's archive clearly frames events from her own personal and subjective

[73] This is affirmed by the women prisoners own experiences as outlined in *In the Footsteps of Anne: Stories of Republican Women Ex-Prisoners* (2011).

[74] "Under Section 31 of the Republic of Ireland's Broadcasting Act, it was forbidden to broadcast interviews or reports of interviews or statements by anyone speaking on behalf of a number of organisations, the most prominent of which was Sinn Féin. It was introduced by Fianna Fail Minister for Posts and Telegraphs Gerry Collins in 1971" (BBC News).

position and as such is a supplement to the history of these events rather than a comprehensive overview. Similarly, D'Arcy's interview responses and her memory of the events she recalls could be informed by subsequent politics and events. Or, she may have been concerned with how her legacy is being recorded through this research. Thus, D'Arcy's archive and interview materials can constitute an extended performance of her memoir and should be considered as such. Connolly and O'Toole state the importance of archives in the Irish second-wave feminist movement. They cite Curnoe (1989) who argues "[a]rchives are political entities and collecting and preserving archival material is a political act" (quoted in Connolly and O'Toole 4). Indeed, D'Arcy herself concedes that this is the case when she comments on her contribution to archiving the women's movement and formalising that by donating her archive to NUI Galway. She states:

> I think it's very important because, what am I meant to be? A theatre activist? It's important to put it into the university, because all of these other ones […] will all be about all the letters they get and all the plays and what have you, so I think it is important, because, in the end and the way Ireland is changing, it is this change that is actually really taking place. (*Personal Interview*)

Therefore, D'Arcy's archive and interview materials provides this chapter with significant insights (albeit subjective) into her experience of the Armagh Jail and the women there with her, but the information collected by D'Arcy during the Irish women's movement, north and south of the border, also provides significant historical insights into Irish society at that time.

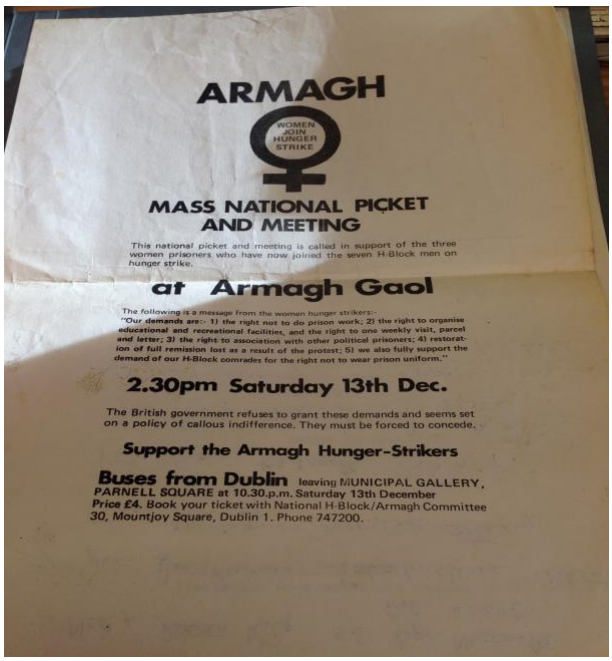

Figure 2: Image of the poster outlining details for a picket to support the women on hunger strike, 1981. Photo taken by author in Margaretta D'Arcy's archive at NUI Galway. Reproduced courtesy of the James Hardiman Library Archives, NUI Galway.

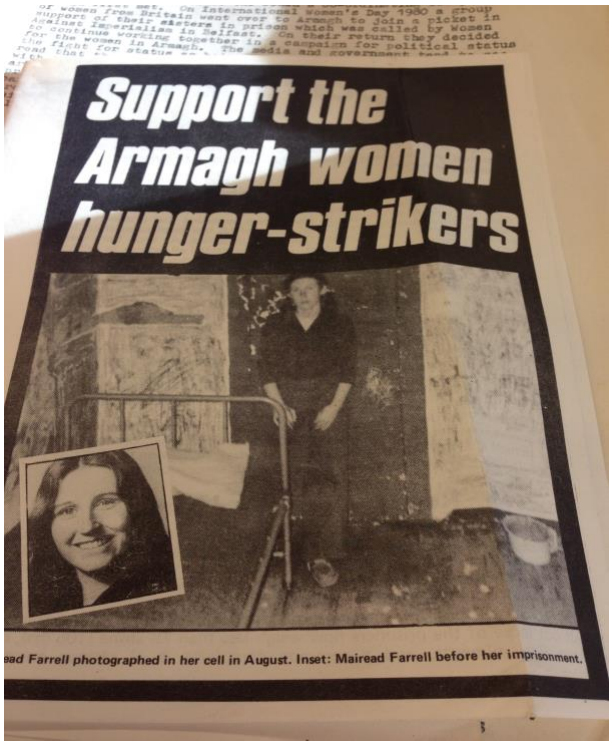

Figure 3: Image of the cover of a pamphlet outlining the conditions for the Armagh women's hunger strike, 1981. Photo taken by author in Margaretta D'Arcy's archive at NUI Galway. Reproduced courtesy of the James Hardiman Library Archives, NUI Galway.

Amy Washburn makes the connection between feminist scholar bell hooks and feminist activist and artist D'Arcy. She argues that D'Arcy"

> uses writing as a form of cultural resistance. She uses language as a medium to "talk back", in bell hooks' definition of the concept, to resist colonial, racial and patriarchal domination. She sees herself as remembering both individual and collective prison experiences and rewriting inaccurate histories recorded by mainstream media, colonial powers, and masculinist comrades." (977)

She adds that for D'Arcy "activism is a social response – not a natural characteristic – to British occupying forces that uphold colonial, racial, and patriarchal violence" (978). D'Arcy uses imprisonment as a performance, something that has been a consistent factor in D'Arcy's activism over her career.[75] Washburn notes that "[f]or D'Arcy incarceration becomes a metaphor for a colonized country that resists colonialism in her work" (979). D'Arcy's initial act

[75] D'Arcy has been imprisoned several times on the island of Ireland in Limerick Prison, Mountjoy Prison, and Armagh Jail. She has been arrested numerous times in her life, stemming from her activism and participation in protests.

of vandalism in the Ulster Museum (where she drew the H Block on the wall in red marker) "merged art and activism for D'Arcy in a salient way: the symbolism of the red records what she saw as a bloody history. It became her impetus to align politically with Women Against Imperialism" (979). D'Arcy's reaction against what she perceived as the hypocrisy of her colleagues at the Belfast Arts Festival in 1978 is outlined at the opening of *Tell Them Everything*. D'Arcy states that at a poetry reading she was invited to in the Ulster Museum she was disappointed with what she believed to be the complicity of the poets with the repression and censorship of the state (D'Arcy, *Tell Them Everything* 16). She states "[i]t was hypocrisy; it was disgusting. I leant against the wall, took out a red marker and wrote H Block" (*Tell Them Everything* 16). D'Arcy's act of vandalism stemmed from a rejection of British censorship on republican issues. Even in *Tell Them Everything* she battles against the reality of British libel laws. Washburn states that "[i]n her preface, D'Arcy also notes the British government's usage of covert censorship, and explains that rather than axing her project altogether, she strategically used her outsider location as a white, Southern, working-class woman to 'tell them everything', or as much as she could given the censored conditions" (982). D'Arcy acknowledges that she had to omit significant portions of her recollections of her time in the Armagh Gaol. She states that "[i]t is not in fact possible to 'tell them everything' because in Britain the intimidating and expensive laws of libel and criminal libel are used by the vested interest of the state as a means of covert censorship" (*Tell Them Everything* 9). However, D'Arcy also reveals that she was fighting to self-censor due to resistance she was incurring from the republican movement. A comprehensive examination of her archives demonstrates that D'Arcy was cautious about how she represented her experience and the experiences of those in the Armagh Jail in her published memoir. Many contentious issues, such as the apparent misogyny of the republican movement, are removed from later drafts of the transcripts and eventually the published text. When asked about the censorship she faced she states that "it was kind of more self-censorship. I mean, what I didn't want to talk about in the book was to talk about what we're talking about now: the total misogyny of the republican movement. I mean that kind of thing, it really wasn't very suitable at that time" (*Personal Interview*). Expanding on why she decided to self-censor, D'Arcy comments that, for her, the stories of the women were more important than representing the true dynamics of the movement at that time. She states that she was not willing to put their experiences at risk: "The book was there to support the women. And if one was then to diverge and suddenly bring in the misogyny of the

IRA, can you just imagine?" (*Personal Interview*). According to D'Arcy there was a consistent and palpable tension between male and female republican activists at that time, especially around the idea of women's involvement in the political prisoner protests. She argues that "the idea of women, independently making their own choice about what they should do […] the men could not accept that" (*Personal Interview*). This dissertation illuminates some of these necessary omissions by including material present in the archived typescripts of *Tell Them Everything* which were not included in the published version and also by interviewing D'Arcy directly about her experiences of the women's movement in the north of Ireland to capture this significant dynamic that could not be entered into public discourse at the time.

Tim Prentki contemplates the position of radicalism in D'Arcy and John Arden's work. He states that "[t]heir work at once qualifies under the popular definition of radical since it advocates social change through revolutionary action, as endorsed by Michael Etherton's unequivocal statement that "they not only write difficult and radical works: they see them into radical performance" (76). In terms of D'Arcy's art and activism this chapter argues that D'Arcy advocates social change through performative revolutionary action, focusing on her time spent in the Armagh Jail. Washburn connects D'Arcy's politics with art in her essay by stating that "[l]ife is political and therefore, art is political" (986). This statement echoes the second-wave feminist slogan that 'the personal is political'. D'Arcy's awareness of the theatricality of her experiences is echoed in her writings. In *Tell Them Everything* each chapter is treated like a dramatic episode, bringing the reader through D'Arcy's memories, experiences, and introducing them to the vibrant cast of characters. In her book, *Ireland's Guantanamo Granny* (2015), D'Arcy includes a list of Dramatis Personae and arranges the book, based on her activism around Shannon Airport, into three acts, a prologue, and an epilogue. Washburn too observes these "overlaps within literary genres" (Washburn 986). D'Arcy in the same interview notes that, "*Tell Them Everything* is written in a very theatrical way. It can be taken as a play, so I'm in the play as a character. In many ways, it is about women already in prison. I'm not just writing about my experience, but theirs, as well" (Washburn 986). Even without this acknowledgment from D'Arcy, the performative nature of her imprisonment is clearly demarcated. D'Arcy continued to perform her activism as part of public life even from within the prison (her own version of 'taking to the streets'), as evidenced by her constant stream of letters and messages designed to raise awareness of the plight of the Armagh women, which can be found in her archives.

The title of her memoir, *Tell Them Everything*, emerges from what D'Arcy presents as an instruction from her fellow prisoners, that she should leave Armagh Jail and tell the outside world about the conditions and demands of the women in Armagh Jail. However, this is disputed by Síle Darragh, a former prisoner of the Armagh Jail, who states that "no such plea was ever made, and that D'Arcy invented some aspects in her book" (McCann, 507). Regardless of the authenticity of D'Arcy's claim, her participation in the prison protests places her body as a site of performance in order to interrogate the impact of the Troubles on the lives of republican women prisoners, women who are doubly marginalised by their State and the republican movement. Neti notes that in Armagh, "[t]he woman's body, then, was both the means of organized resistance and the subject of repulsion and condemnation" (83). I argue that the women's' bodies become the site of that protest also. D'Arcy's voluntary position in the gaol situates her body as a site of performance that makes visible the conditions and contexts of the Armagh Jail and its prisoners. In this instance the spectrum of participation manifests as an act of consciousness-raising which is extended to the audience/reader who participates in the learning of this new knowledge along with D'Arcy through an engagement with her memoir and her archival materials.

Although she was not a member of the IRA, D'Arcy was still classed as being sympathetic to the republican cause and was assigned to the republican A Wing. To be a republican woman on A Wing meant a commitment to the no-wash protest. D'Arcy illustrates her fear at the prospect of smearing her excrement on the walls of her cell. She describes how the other women prisoners asked her "[a]ny decorating done yet?" (D'Arcy, *Tell Them Everything* 50) and her fear at the inevitable, "I am not shaking and I am not sweating; but I am tired. I cannot think: I am numb. My concentration is on my bowels, on my stomach. Move, I think, move. I am passive, like in a hospital waiting for childbirth, waiting for deeper connections, the birth of my shit" (*Tell Them Everything* 51). D'Arcy's comparison between defecating and giving birth draws interesting gendered lines across this political act and highlights the inevitability of nature taking its course. Delving into the radical artistry of this act, Washburn argues that "[d]espite the unfathomable unhygienic realities of faeces and the flies that buzzed atop it, they produced art out of shitty conditions, literally. They swirled and inked the walls with their words of survival with their excrement and menstrual blood instead of using the coloniser's bathroom facilities" (987). D'Arcy and the women prisoners are using the only tool at their disposal, their own bodies, to defy British imperialism in the prison system. D'Arcy's first time decorating her cell produces a vivid connection between her

faeces and art. She talks about being 'proud' of her first shit, stating that "[t]he next time I shit I am going to draw pictures. My drawing is lousy. I will practice" (*Tell Them Everything* 51). Patrick Duggan compares the application of excrement by male no-wash prisoners to their cell walls with Live Art practices. Comparing this action to "Piero Manzoni Artist's Shit (1961), Vito Acconci's Seedbed (1971), Carolee Schneemann's Interio Scroll (1975), or Coco Fusco and Guillermo Gómez-Peña's Two Undiscovered Amerindians Visit Buenos Aires (1992)" (450), Duggan states that "[r]ead in the light of Marcuse, the artistic responses to the events within the prison represent another practice, with a different but no less 'revolutionary' potential" (450). The no-wash protest and the decorating of the cells are not intended to be private acts, but instead a live performance of resistance in the public sphere. As the prisoners that D'Arcy is referring to are women, this increases the political impact of the act. Considering the context of the Irish Women's Movement at this time and the methodologies emerging from the movement, this can be seen as a simultaneous instance of direct action and an act of consciousness-raising. The women in Armagh were being obscured because they were women, their stories unpalatable because of their gender and considered too extreme to promote the republican movement. Returning to Lefebvre, who argues that the street is the space where revolutionary events take place and where speech becomes writing, D'Arcy's act of writing on the prison wall with her menstrual blood and her faeces not only highlights the women prisoners own revolutionary act, but is a revolutionary act in itself.

The success (and indeed controversy) of D'Arcy's performative intervention here is the fact that she is an outsider in this context. Lyon's notes a significant exchange between D'Arcy and her fellow prisoners, where D'Arcy outlines how she is careful not to ask about IRA activity lest the other prisoners think she is a spy. Lyons states that, "that D'Arcy's companions consider her 'fancy-free' suggests that they recognise the element of 'tourism' which shapes D'Arcy's 'sojourn' in Armagh" (190). Lyons dips into this theory of D'Arcy as tourist several times in her own investigation of D'Arcy's work and it is important to note that she positions D'Arcy as a responsible tourist in this situation.[76] She

[76] The link between the performances of everyday life and dark-tourism or tourism-as-performance emerges across all three chapters, demonstrating the significance of the insider/outsider dynamic when it comes to the representation of marginalised experiences. In Chapter One Alistair MacLennan's outsider status provided him with an opportunity to engage with the politics of the Troubles as enacted on bodies in public space, whereas Kabosh Theatre Company's insider status ensured that they had to tread more carefully with their utilisation of dark-tourism forms in their performance practice. Similarly, in Chapter Three, this dissertation will examine the dynamics of representation between ANU Productions' 'The Monto Cycle' and the working-class, inner city communities that they engage with.

points out that D'Arcy "did not simply find herself in Armagh, but acted on an itinerary shaped by her role as a feminist intellectual. Her 'sojourn' in Armagh prison, then, is a kind of 'tour of duty'" (192). Lyons's characterization of D'Arcy as being on a 'tour of duty' activates D'Arcy's role in her own imprisonment, accentuating the performative nature of D'Arcy's activism. D'Arcy recognises that she was essentially a tourist in this situation and notes the difficulty this caused for the other women prisoners. She states that:

> It was more difficult for them. Whether they would accept someone like me. I mean, you've got to see it from their point of view. So, someone comes in who they really don't know anything about, who's kind of like a tourist – you know just going in for three months. So, it was quite astonishing that Mairead [Farrell] actually accepted me because I mean that's the other funny thing, you can't just go into jail. You then have to be accepted by the prisoners who you want to be with. I mean it's bizarre isn't it really? I mean I think that's the other bit of theatre: the theatre that takes place inside the jail. (*Personal Interview*)

D'Arcy's outsider status places her in a privileged position as a receiver and observer of information, information that she is entrusted with to convey to the outside world. Being from the south, D'Arcy is in the unique position of being both part of and outside of the politics of the situation in the north of Ireland. She is a liminal figure in the Northern Ireland prison system. She acknowledges this herself by noting that her outsider status made the inmates and the prison guards wary of her. She states that "there are very few people from the 26 counties in jail in the North of Ireland: and in all probability I was the only one that the screws here had ever had the opportunity of meeting. In a way I was their bogey, the reason for their fear" (*Tell Them Everything* 44). As an outsider, D'Arcy was unsure of the 'rules' of life as a republican prisoner in Armagh Jail, "The question as to whether I should co-operate in a dignified way with the preliminaries of entry into the jail [...] had not been discussed before I gave myself up. I had to be very careful not to outdo the militancy of the other prisoners" (*Tell Them Everything* 44). D'Arcy acknowledges that she was required to walk a fine line in terms of how she behaved, accepting that she had never personally experienced the brutality of everyday life as a Republican in the north of Ireland. She stated that, "I think it's very, very difficult for the individual woman, when you're not part of anything to actually – I'm not going to say to be appreciated – but to be accepted for what you do" (*Personal Interview*). Because of her observer's position D'Arcy was in a unique position to document the dynamics and rituals of everyday life in the prison. However, other published account of the conditions in the Armagh Jail have emerged since 1981 that provide a fuller and more critical engagement with

the political prisoners' experiences. However, D'Arcy's memoir was written at a time when the Irish republican movement was being strategically undermined by the British state and media (through the aforementioned IPU, IRD, and the Broadcasting Ban), something which D'Arcy refers to in the prologue of the published memoir.[77] Therefore D'Arcy's writing and perspectives are informed and influenced by the social, political, and cultural conditions and realities of the time. The evolution of these contexts perhaps allowing for future accounts of women prisoners in the north of Ireland to be presented more holistically and critically. Despite the challenges, D'Arcy documents the experiences of the other women with care and consideration. In fact, many of the amendments and adjustments that she makes to her original drafts of *Tell Them Everything* are to remove herself from the story. In one segment in an early draft of the text D'Arcy removes a section in which she details how she attempted to clean a wound she received while on the no-wash protest, making the story more focused on the women's experiences of brutality and abuse at the hands of Her Majesty's Prison Service than her own pains and struggles. D'Arcy talks about the scorn the women felt about members of the medical profession operating in the jail. She states that "they did not receive the heavy-handed male medical jokes in the spirit with which they were presumably offered – of reassurance and jollying-along. 'Honeymoon disease', 'get pregnant to clear up your skin', 'nerves, your mind is fighting your body' etcetera" (*Tell Them Everything* 86). D'Arcy notes the significance of these comments, stating that they implied that "women are physically and mentally too weak to defy the government, and therefore they should give in, respond like 'ordinary women criminals' and avail themselves of the selection of tranquilisers and such-like always ready in the surgery (*Tell Them Everything* 86). The extent of the brutality experienced by the women prisoners in Armagh by the medical professionals charged with their care is not present in the published version of the text, but is comprehensively and meticulously detailed in D'Arcy's earlier drafts. For example, she notes the condition of a prisoner named Pauline McLaughlin: "She weighed nine-and-a-half-stone when she came in. Now four-and-a-half-stone. She is now in such a weak and desperate condition that they can only inject fluid into her feet. Toothless, bald. The physical condition of a ninety-year-old woman.

[77] D'Arcy states that "[a]ny truthful book about the oppressive intransigence of the British government's jail policy in the North of Ireland is likely to imperish its publishers and authors" (*Tell Them Everything*, 9).

Diagnosis and cure: Pauline is a malingerer, and is in control of her own weight. She must give up resistance to criminalisation" (D'Arcy, *Typescript of Memoir*).[78]

As well as aiming to expose abuse, she also protects many of the women, in one instance removing a reference to Armagh O.C., Mairead Farrell, advising Pauline McLaughlin (the woman referred to above) to come off the no-wash protest for health reasons. If this information had been released at the time it may have undermined Farrell's authority as a woman Operating Commander in the IRA. However, this omission, now interrogated and questioned, demonstrates the uniqueness of the women republican prisoners in the context of the greater struggle against imperialism. D'Arcy reflects on this reality stating:

> I think the extraordinary thing about the women in Armagh was their solidarity to each other. And their solidarity was far greater than the men had in the H Blocks. And I think that's something that hasn't been brought out either. I mean as, I think on the second time, when we were talking, so it didn't matter if some of the women had submitted under interrogation, it didn't matter if some of the women had done nothing, it didn't matter if some had done things. We were all united in the same thing, you know. (*Personal Interview*)

It is her efforts to engage in this level of consciousness-raising that marks this 'sojourn' as performance. D'Arcy engages with the performance of the everyday, representing the experiences, politics, and revolutionary action of the Armagh women prisoners. The ephemera present in her archive demonstrates that she continued and contributed to this campaign long after she was released from Armagh Gail. The fact that she preserves these memories in her memoir, and now her archives (released in 2017) ensures that this performance of history and revolution is an ongoing and performative act. In summary, this chapter has demonstrated how methodologies of second-wave feminism made themselves manifest *as* performance in the activism of D'Arcy as opposed to being activated in the process of *making* theatre in the cases of Split Britches and Charabanc Theatre Company.

Conclusion

In October 2015 Ireland's National Theatre, The Abbey, released the details of its centenary 'Waking the Nation' commemorative programme. This programme intended to commemorate one hundred years of Irish history (beginning with the 1916 Easter Rising) by staging ten plays that represented a broad spectrum of Irishness. However, only one of these productions was written by a woman

[78] Weinstein notes that Pauline McLoughlin's health was used by the republican movement, the Catholic Church, and the media as a means of highlighting conditions in the jail (Weinstein).

playwright and only three productions listed had a woman director. There was outrage from the theatre community and shortly after the announcement the #WakingtheFeminists hashtag began trending on Twitter. Women within the industry began to share their stories, raising awareness of the realities of women's experiences in the Irish theatre industry. An open public meeting held at the Abbey Theatre (ironically their fastest selling event ever) was a large moment of direct action where women in Irish theatre made it clear that this was no longer acceptable practice.[79] The events arising from this movement (which resulted in two public meetings, an Arts Council funded report into gender representation in the Irish theatre industry, and concrete policy for gender equality) demonstrate that second-wave feminist methods are still present in Ireland's theatre industry.[80] Haughton argues that the 2015-2016 #WakingtheFeminists (#WTF) movement also mirrored strategies of second-wave feminism. She states that "[t]he Women's Liberation Movement from the 1970s found support in 'speak outs': #WTF is utilising 'speak-ups'" ("Them the Breaks" 16). She continues by asserting that "[i]t is striking that the strategies most commonly found from second-wave feminism in the US in the 1970s are being employed in Ireland in 2016" ("Them the Breaks" 16). She asks, "[i]s feminism in Ireland comparable to that of the US from the 1970s? Perhaps a more useful question could be, is gender equality in Ireland comparative to that of the US from the 1970s?" ("Them the Breaks 16). These are all vitally important questions, and Haughton's comparison between the current state of women's rights in Ireland (where it remained a criminal offence to obtain an abortion until 1st January 2019) and the state of women's rights in the United States in the 1970s is a valid one. Recent progress in Ireland has overturned some of these concerns,[81] however Irish women living north of the border are still fighting for reproductive rights, thus demonstrating the relevance of this research.[82] This chapter analyses how the feminist movement has been stalled on the island of Ireland for decades, and how feminism in Ireland is informed by the separation of the north from the south. In the case of the north of Ireland, the stalling of feminist progress has been harder felt, demonstrating that a double-jeopardy of discrimination is still present for women and establishes the relevance of this

[79] The 450 free tickets sold out in less than seven minutes (Bell, "Still Waiting for the Abbey").

[80] The report 'Gender Counts: An analysis of gender in Irish theatre 2006-2015' is available to download:https://www.dropbox.com/s/enznau2g2eousaa/WTF_Gender_Counts_2017_2ndEd_WEB.pdf?dl=0

[81] On the 25th May 2018 the 36th amendment to the Irish Constitution/Bunreacht na hÉireann passed by referendum, making abortion legal in Ireland.

[82] However, in July 2019 the British parliament at Westminster voted to extend equal marriage and abortion rights to Northern Ireland if a government at Stormont is not formed before the 21st October 2019. At the time of writing Stormont has been without a devolved government for more than 900 days (Walker and Carroll).

research. Likewise, one of the outcomes of the #WTF movement and report is a recent commitment, by ten Irish theatre companies, to strive (through formalised gender equality policies) for better representation for women in the Irish theatre industry (#WakingtheFeminists). One of the focuses of these companies is to re-explore the canon of women writers in Irish theatre. To do so, it is important to examine critically the original impact and potential of women's performance practice.

This chapter has examined the links between second-wave feminist methods and feminist performance practice in an Anglophone context by illustrating how feminist practitioners utilised consciousness-raising, direct action, the locating of constituency audiences and privileging of women's experiences in their performances and in the structures of their woman-led organisations. This analysis situated Irish (north and south) second-wave feminism in the context of Anglo-American feminism and by exploring the implications of second-wave feminism in the jurisdictions of the island of Ireland and the US. It demonstrated how second-wave feminist methods made themselves manifest *as* performance in the activism of D'Arcy as opposed to being activated in the process of *making* theatre in the case of Charabanc Theatre Company and Split Britches. Across the performances analysed in this Chapter, artists invite their constituency audiences to participate in interrogating the lived realities of women who exist along the margins. This participation positions this feminist practice during on the spectrum of participation theorized across this dissertation as it invites the audience to participate in reconsidering their relationship with the conditions of the broader society and states on the island of Ireland, highlighting through consciousness-raising the issues facing women in the north of Ireland. Charabanc place women's labour rights and the persistent issue of domestic violence at the forefront of their first production *Lay Up Your Ends* (1983). D'Arcy's memoir *Tell Them Everything* (1981) exposes abuses in the prison system. Both performances demonstrate the double-jeopardy experienced by women in the north of Ireland in the 1980s. By contextualising the state of feminism in the north of Ireland alongside an investigation of feminist performance practice at the time, this essay observes how the 1980s in the north of Ireland was a vital moment for women theatre practitioners.

Prominent women practitioners such as Charabanc, D'Arcy, Christina Reid, and many more, are sure to be re-explored in the coming years by scholars and it is important to examine the feminist context they emerged from. Even today, women's theatrical contributions in the north of Ireland continue to be

marginalised, an indication that the double-jeopardy of women's experience still exists in the north in 2019. By re-framing the lineage of second-wave feminist performance practice in the north this dissertation aims to contribute to the representation of feminist progress, and feminist performance practice, on the island of Ireland. It begs the question, how far has feminism come? This will be explored in greater detail in the dissertation's concluding chapter. My analysis between emergent performance practices and the representation of marginalised women's stories is continued in Chapter Three with an investigation of how the emergence and collapse of the Celtic Tiger created space for radical commemoration through performance practice.

Radical Commemoration: Reclaiming Public Space and Personal Histories Through Immersive Performance

Introduction

This chapter contends that ANU Productions' 'The Monto Cycle' (2010-2014) illuminates a century of vulnerable women's marginalised histories by interrogating the relationship between site, memory, and performance.[83] The company deploy techniques in order to invite audiences to participate in their performances intimately and intensely. As a result, ANU facilitate engagement with historical narratives that have not been strategically centralised as dominant national historic events, such as the 1916 Easter Rising and other prominent state-funded commemorations as part of the Decade of Centenaries programme. This chapter argues that the marginalisation of women's histories is disrupted via a diversification of performance form that took place in the south of Ireland post-millennium. These performance practices draw from the distinct lineage of performance art practice already evident on the island of Ireland, such as the work of Alistar MacLennan, Nigel Rolfe, André Stitt, Amanda Coogan, and Áine Phillips among many others.[84] Significantly Amanda Coogan's own performance practice had a tangible influence on Louise Lowe the co-Artistic Director of ANU Productions, something which will be analysed later on in this chapter. This investigation situates its analysis in relation to key moments of social change that took place during the 1990s and argues that these moments influenced the emergence of performance practices that actively engaged the audience, intensely and intimately, through immersive theatre practices in public space. Following on from arguments made in Chapter One and Chapter Two, Chapter Three demonstrates the link between changing social values in Ireland during the 1990s and changes in performance practice post-millennium by tracing these lineages through the work of ANU Productions' in the 'The Monto Cycle'.

This chapter largely focuses on analysing the representation of vulnerable female histories as these are most often consigned to the margins. This is

83 The four productions that form 'The Monto Cycle' are: *World's End Lane* (2010 & 2011), *Laundry* (2011), *The Boys of Foley Street* (2012), and *Vardo* (2014). The Artistic Directors of ANU Productions are Louise Lowe and Owen Boss.

84 An overview of these practices can be engaged with in Kate Antosik-Parson, Amanda Coogan, and André Stitt's contributions to *Performance Art in Ireland: A History*. Both Coogan and Stitt outline the of Irish performance art practice in the north of Ireland since 1972 and Antosik-Parsons analyses the impact the social climate and the women's movement had during the 1980s and 1990s on the proliferation of feminist performance art practice by women on the island of Ireland.

something that Haughton observes in *Staging Trauma* (2018), maintaining "[m]ultiple paradigms of female histories, experiences and narratives become conditioned to exist at the margins and lurk along the periphery of social consciousness, cultural practice, and political policy. These are the shadowed spaces of public discourse" (*Staging Trauma* 25). In ANU's 'The Monto Cycle,' women's experience is represented adjacent to larger significant moments in Irish national history.[85] For example, *World's End Lane* (2010) is informed by the Catholic Church's dominance over moral concerns in Irish society, especially in relation to the prevalence of sex work in The Monto area. *Laundry* (2011) concerns Ireland's focus on religious morality post-Independence and foregrounds the historical and recent institutionalisation that was a key part of the machinery of the state. *The Boys of Foley Street* (2012) is situated alongside the Troubles through its representation of the Dublin-Monaghan bombings, and also alongside the beginning of Ireland's heroin epidemic in the 1980s. Finally, *Vardo* (2014) focuses on the impact of globalisation in an Irish context, and on the societal changes wrought by the Celtic Tiger and the function of sex work in the neoliberal climate. This chapter examines 'The Monto Cycle' and Dublin specifically but it also presents histories and narratives that are relevant to both the urban and rural Irish experience. In *The Boys of Foley Street* it is so-called 'country girls' that are the subject of rape, in *Laundry* women and girls from both urban and rural backgrounds are sent to the Magdalene Laundries, and of course sex trafficking and sex work are not only consigned to Dublin.[86] So, while the scope of this chapter only allows for an in depth analysis of 'The Monto Cycle' and its inextricable links to Dublin's north inner city, the problems and politics represented in the cycle and in this analysis apply more widely across the island of Ireland. Similarly, these productions exemplify the tendency in Irish society to confess, expose, and witness as dramaturgical strategies for navigating recent histories that are not fully resolved at the national level, and may still function as a source of shame on the personal level.

This research argues that a diversification of performance form in Ireland took place during a time of social, political, and cultural upheaval and responded to moments of social crisis in Irish society throughout the twentieth century. In this

[85] ANU Productions are not the only Irish theatre company to engage in radical commemoration. My article 'Reflecting Irishness, Mirroring Histories: Performing Commemoration in Irish Theater in 2015' outlines many other artists and companies doing similar work on the island of Ireland (Murphy), however due to the limitations of the scope of this dissertation I will focus on 'The Monto Cycle' and ANU Productions to exemplify this.

[86] A comprehensive overview of the history of sex work can be found in Mac, Juno and Molly Smith. *Revolting Prostitutes. The Fight for Sex Workers Rights*. Verso, 2018.

chapter my methodological approach is led through the lens of performance studies as this chapter analyses the performance *of* Ireland as well as Irish performance practice. This approach ties in with this dissertation's broader performance studies methodology and will specifically draw from the performance analysis and semiotic analysis proposed by theatre scholars Brian Singleton, Charlotte McIvor, and Siobhán O'Gorman.

I argue that, like the performances examined in Chapter One, socially engaged community-based and site-responsive theatre practice attempts to disrupt the established social narrative dichotomies by presenting moments of crisis and trauma that complicate, destabilise and texture these problematic binaries. The performances under examination here focus on the experience of everyday life for those marginalised by interlinking histories of poverty, institutional incarceration, social status, and geographical location. ANU engage the audience in active participation in the public spaces of the histories that they are representing. This radical approach challenges the patriarchal and nationalist narratives of history which dominates public discourse and cultural production for much of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. These performances exemplify the relationship between the social and the performative, outlined by Pais and Martin investigated in Chapter One, by utilising urban public space as a means of engaging with the economic, political, and social histories and contexts of these spaces.

Irish performance's relationship with memory, remembrance, and commemoration will be charted in this chapter through an analysis of 'The Monto Cycle' by furthering critical theories by Emilie Pine, Brian Singleton, Miriam Haughton, and Fintan Walsh. This chapter builds on their work by arguing that ANU facilitate the interrogation of Irish histories that have not been part of the dominant national narrative throughout the twentieth century. They do so by using the body of the performer as an alternative site of commemoration and by framing the audience-performance relationship as an active engagement that is embroiled with both agency and complicity within this mode of radical commemoration. 'The Monto Cycle' coincides with the beginning of the Decade of Centenaries (2012-2022), which manifests as a state-mandated drive for a singular national narrative and unifying national image promoted through engagements with the past.[87]

[87] "The Decade of Centenaries programme commenced in 2012 and will focus initially on the many significant centenaries occurring over the period 1912–1916. The Programme will complement the ongoing programme of annual commemorations with special centenary commemorative events on the anniversaries of key events" (Decade of Centenaries).

Chapter One illustrates a progression of participatory art practice that took place in urban public spaces in the north of Ireland from 1998-2010. It details how the presence of an alternative form of performative engagement with the events of the Troubles emerged, founding a participatory relationship with audiences and a responsive relationship to urban, public space. Chapter Two explores how second-wave feminist methodologies were incorporated into performance practice, resulting in a diversification of performance form in favour of a feminist and collaborative approach. Chapter Two also focuses on performances in the north of Ireland in its investigation as this terrain provides rich performances that offer insights into the nuances of this complex political and performative time and space. This chapter reflects on how performance practices in the south of Ireland also experienced diversification due to a period of significant social change. It demonstrates how performance echoes society's focus on remembrance, commemoration, and engagement with crisis through personal stories. The relationship between the form of performance, the active, immersed audience and the public spaces of performance are key theoretical concerns for this chapter.

Chapter Outline

Firstly, this chapter contextualises the period of social change and institutional crisis that Ireland confronted during the 1990s. This moment captures Ireland's progression, arguably, from a small inward-looking nation to a globalised international player through an analysis of the breakdown between Church and State and economic boom and bust. It focuses on the emergence of a wide range of Clerical Child Sex Abuse (CCSA) scandals as one of the main instigators of the crisis of faith in the institution and operation of the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland. It explores the breakdown of the culture of silence that pervades Irish social life, acknowledging Ailbhe Smyth's contention that moments of crisis and scandal tended to crystallise, in Ireland, around one individual case (25). This relationship is a crucial contextual concern for how Irish performance and society navigates memory and remembrance.

This study then analyses the diversification of performance form that took place from the 1990s onwards. This is exemplified by the rise of devised and postdramatic theatre and performance forms, which has been charted in recent scholarship by Singleton, McIvor, O'Gorman, and Haughton. This section builds on this scholarship and poses a link between this moment of social upheaval and the diversification of performance form. It also acknowledges the link between Live Art practices and strategies, as elucidated by Áine Phillips, and as

demonstrated in performance practices utilised in ANU's productions. This section parses the foregrounding of audience participation in contemporary urban Irish performance practice, situating ANU's work within this frame.

The third section analyses the link between Irish performance practice and a societal focus post-millennium to remember and commemorate the past. It outlines how 'The Monto Cycle' renders visible marginalised histories previously underrepresented by the state.[88] It argues that the state-mandated focus on memory and commemoration is subverted in 'The Monto Cycle' through what I term radical commemoration. ANU's 'radical commemoration' utilises performance forms, previously demonstrated in performance art practice, and presents marginalised histories that are distinct from and adjacent to the mainstream grand national narrative.

This chapter also analyses how ANU engage with public space and the body of the performer in their representation of history, arguing that they engage an active performance-audience relationship in order to create a visceral intimacy and a close proximity to the sites of these histories. The active audience-performance relationship is facilitated through an immersive theatre frame, resulting in 'moments of communion' (Haughton 'From Laundries to Labour Camps' 73) which facilitate a heightened engagement via the active audience member. Following on from Smyth's contention that social crisis crystallises around a single individual in Irish society, this chapter argues that ANU's structured 'moments of communion' operate in a similar way across the cycle.

Finally, this chapter demonstrates that 'The Monto Cycle' engages in radical commemoration by illuminating a century of vulnerable women's marginalised experiences. By analysing contemporary Irish theatre's focus on memory and remembrance, its relationship with public space, its engagement with marginalised and hidden histories, and its facilitation of active participation by the audience, this chapter argues that ANU engage in a radical mode of commemoration through immersive practice.

The State in Microcosm – ANU Productions' 'The Monto Cycle'

ANU Productions' quadrology 'The Monto Cycle' comprises four productions, staged over five years (2010-2014). The productions: *World's End Lane* (2010), *Laundry* (2011), *The Boys of Foley Street* (2012), and *Vardo* (2014) were intended

[88] My analysis is partially based upon seeing *World's End Lane* and *Laundry* in October 2012 and *Vardo* in November 2015 as part of the Dublin Theatre Festivals.

by the company to "represent the state in microcosm" by focusing on a quarter-mile of Dublin's north inner city (Boss and Lowe). The company use the area around Foley Street and James Joyce Street not only as the site of performance but also as the historical space from which their productions derive their stories. The area, previously known as 'The Monto' (an abbreviation of its historical name Montgomery Street), was one of Europe's most notorious red light districts during the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century. Its notoriety is immortalised in James Joyce's 'Nighttown' or 'Circe' chapter in the 1922 novel *Ulysses* and also in the song 'Take Her Up to Monto' (1958) made popular by popular Irish folk band The Dubliners. The four 'Monto Cycle' productions combine artistic forms and present audiences with a combination of visual art and performance structures. This reflects the backgrounds of the company's two Artistic Directors: Owen Boss, a visual artist, and Louise Lowe, a theatre director. Together Boss and Lowe create hyper-real, often immersive, performances that focus on urban public space, the female body, and marginalised Irish histories that often reflect broader national issues through intimate encounters. The four productions in 'The Monto Cycle' focus on interactions with the single audience member, creating an intimate audience-performance relationship across the cycle. The audiences (of approximately three or four people) experience each performance as a cyclical event. As audiences move through each performance there are visible echoes of the previous and future elements of each performance, with other audience members visible for fleeting moments throughout. Due to the small audience numbers, these performances were performed durationally, often with upwards of eight performances per day as part of the Dublin Theatre Festival (or the Dublin Fringe Festival in 2010) programme.

World's End Lane was originally presented as part of the 2010 Dublin Fringe Festival. Installed in The LAB (on James Joyce Street) and the surrounding area, the production interrogated the lives and conditions of sex workers in the 'Monto' area at the beginning of the twentieth century, at a time when the religious order, The Legion of Mary, was undertaking Catholic missions in the area to coax the working women out of sin and into morality (Delaney). *Laundry*, presented as part of the 2011 Dublin Theatre Festival, utilises the former Sean McDermott Street Magdalene Laundry as a means of engaging with the hidden histories of the women who were incarcerated within its walls. The production illuminates and examines the structures of secrecy and silence which allowed for the incarceration of Ireland's 'fallen women'. Like *World's End Lane*, it has strong visual art elements present in its design. *The Boys of Foley* Street, (presented as part of the

2012 Dublin Theatre Festival) examines the impact of the 1980s-heroin epidemic on Dublin's north inner city. It takes its name (and recreates some of its content) from a now well-known interview by broadcaster Pat Kenny with four young 'Boot Boys' from the Foley Street area in 1975 (Cassidy).[89] As well as the heroin epidemic, the production negotiates themes of socio-economic deprivation exploring, in many cases, the hidden darkness of women's domestic situations. Interestingly, the production also represents, through an embodied performance installation, the 1979 Dublin-Monaghan bombings, highlighting the broader political context influencing the island of Ireland at that time. There is a link here between the performances analysed in Chapters One and Two, that also negotiate the events of the Troubles by focusing on the experiences of communities on the margins.

In 2014 the company presented *Vardo* (once again at the Dublin Theatre Festival), the final production in the cycle. *Vardo* examines the conditions of contemporary sex work in the former 'Monto' area, creating a thematically cyclical end to 'The Monto Cycle'. However, the company noted the changed dynamics of this area of Dublin city since the previous iteration of the cycle (*The Boys of Foley Street*) in 2012, reflecting the dynamics of a changing Ireland. The relationship that the company maintained with the community during the creation of 'The Monto Cycle' waned near the cycle's conclusion. Noting the gap of two years between *The Boys of Foley Street* (2012) and *Vardo* (2014), Singleton illustrates how ANU's connection with the community they were representing faded somewhat over this time, leading to a marked difference in the methods of developing the 2014 production. The historical issues previously addressed by 'The Monto Cycle' in *World's End Lane* and *The Boys of Foley Street* had returned with an increase in drug crime, gang violence, and sex-work in the area (*ANU Productions* 78). Singleton argues that "this time they found it impossible to conduct any research about this new community from within it. As Lowe herself said, 'Nobody was interested in telling the story'" (*ANU Productions* 79). Because of this difficulty, *Vardo* was aware of its own position as a piece of performance in this increasingly globalised Ireland. By engaging with the new realities of the space throughout the performance ANU engage in the process of attempting to make visible the city, but are in many cases impeded by the power dynamics they seek to uncover. These four performances reflect, in their form and structure, the social change evident in Ireland since the 1990s.

[89] "Boot boys were gangs of youths who shaved their heads and wore nailed boots" (Cassidy).

"Like Snow off a Ditch"[90] – The Disappearance of Blind Faith and Silent Acquiescence

Reflecting on what she calls a period of significance in Irish life, Ailbhe Smyth states that in the 1990s "[a]s imbroglio followed scandal in surreal sequence, the only certainty was that Ireland was in a state of great volatility. The depth-charges of change embedded in Irish society in the late 1950s were now erupting" (25). The 1990s in Ireland were marred by a series of scandals which diluted public trust in two of the key pillars of authority in the Irish state, the Roman Catholic Church (RCC), and the government. A collapse of faith in the financial institutions would also follow a decade later. One of the most significant shifts in Irish society concerned the RCC, an organisation that up until the 1990s was rarely, if ever, publicly scrutinised by civil society. This situation changed after it emerged that members of the Catholic clergy were accused of perpetrating multiple instances of child sex abuse, and involved in covering up the abuse, later proven to be widespread throughout the RCC.[91] There were also many examples of the clergy breaking the rules laid down by the RCC to the Catholic laity, such as the discovery in 1992 that Bishop Eamonn Casey had fathered a son with American woman Annie Murphy, a scandal that was given significant airing by Ireland's national broadcaster, RTÉ.[92] Smyth observes a shift in the power dynamics around this time between the RCC and the state which had existed, mostly unchallenged, for several decades. As she observes, "[p]riests had lost their sacred status and would have to pay the price of their criminal actions, like everyone else. The Church was just another institution within the state, and just as accountable" (32). In the 1990s amid a period of Church involvement in legislation including several divisive social referendums,[93] Smyth argues that "[f]ollowing on from other

[90] Smyth, Ailbhe. 'States of Change: Reflections on Ireland in Several Uncertain Parts'. *Feminist Review*, vol. 50, no. 1, July 1995, pp. 24-43. *Crossref*, doi:10.1057/fr.1995.20. Pg. 34

[91] An overview of child sexual abuse and the Catholic Church can be found in: Keenan, Marie. *Child Sexual Abuse and the Catholic Church*, OUP, 2012.

[92] Presenter Gay Byrne interviewed Murphy on *The Late Late Show* in 1993. Murphy spoke about her son, her affair with Casey, and also her book *Forbidden Fruit: The True Story of My Secret Love for the Bishop of Galway*. During the interview Byrne ended the interview by stating "if your son is half as good a man as his father, he won't be doing too badly" to which Murphy responded "I'm not so bad either Mr. Byrne" (*Revelations About Eamonn Casey*) The tone and conduct of Byrne during this interview is viewed to be one of the major missteps of his career.

[93] Such as: opposing the introduction of Divorce in Ireland in 1986 and 1995, their opposition to referendums liberalising access to information on abortion, and the right to travel for abortions, through the thirteenth and fourteenth amendments in 1992. The Thirteenth and Fourteenth amendments to the Irish Constitution were ratified on the same day, 23rd December 1992. The Thirteenth amendment "[p]rovided that Article 40.3.3 (the right to life of the unborn) would not limit

scandals and the Church's attempt to prescribe 'acceptable' behaviour (and legislation) in respect of divorce and abortion, this latest scandal seriously eroded people's willingness to accept the Church as the prime arbiter of morality" (32).[94] This shift against the Church's authority was set in motion by revelations made against Fr. Brendan Smyth, who was accused and found guilty of Clerical Child Sex Abuse (CCSA). Smyth argues that "[i]t emerges plainly from the Smyth affair that Irish people are no longer prepared to accept without question the diktats [sic] of either Church or State. Either, or both, may be right or wrong, and each is equally liable to scrutiny by civil society. The days of blind faith and silent acquiescence are disappearing 'like snow off a ditch'" (34). This level of control by the RCC across the Irish state existed and thrived because the Church was embedded in almost every aspect of Irish political and social life. This relationship is demonstrated through their patronage and ownership over the majority of the State's schools, hospitals, and charitable organisations as well as their considerable influence over politicians and political parties. This demonstrates how the Church's influence and power was exercised both directly and indirectly across society and social life in Ireland. In Althusser's *On the Reproduction of Capitalism* (2014) he argues that state institutions are designed to purport the ideology most suited to supporting the state. In Ireland, this ideology evolves from the Church teachings. Althusser asks "do we not in fact daily see the institutions we know (the Church, the schools, the political parties, and so on) 'producing', precisely, the ideologies that 'corresponds to them' because they need it?" (82). In Ireland, the Church and State's correlation ensured that the ideology being espoused by one corresponded to and benefited the other, thus resulting in an overwhelming influence on society. This opening up of the RCC to scrutiny by civil society and the media signalled the end of the RCC's immunity from criticism in Ireland. However, the RCC has not, as Smyth suggests, paid the price for their misconduct. The reparations granted to victims of Church-run institutions (such as the Magdalene Laundries) have yet to

freedom to travel between Ireland and another state" and the Fourteenth amendment "[p]rovided that Article 40.3.3 (the right to life of the unborn) would not limit freedom to obtain or make available information relating to services lawfully available in another state" (*Bunreacht Na hÉireann/Constitution of Ireland*).

94 Smyth notes a pattern within Irish society between 'crises' and attempts by the Church or State to exercise 'socio-sexual' control over its citizens. She argues that "[a]bortion and divorce have been the most hotly contested (and internationally mediatized) issues, although they are by no means the only ones. Other serious controversies have erupted over the feminist exposure and condemnation of men's violence against women and children, exemplified in the Lavinia Kerwick rape case and the Kilkenny incest tribunal in 1993 [...] During the 1980s, there had been a series of painfully controversial cases exemplifying the brutal misogyny of Irish culture (the cases of Sheila Hodgers, Joanne Hayes, Anne Lovett, and Eileen Flynn)" (34).

be paid in full.[95] Over ninety per cent of Ireland's National Schools are still under the control and patronage of the RCC.[96] In 2017, amid announcements that the Irish government would be building a new National Maternity Hospital, the government declared that they would be handing over ownership of this hospital to the Sisters of Charity, a RCC organisation, in a move that caused outrage and backlash from the general public.[97]

The slippage of the RCC's hold on Irish society in the 1990s did not erupt without precedent, however. Prior to the CCSA scandals and the resulting backlash against the Church, the indelible link between Church and State in *Bunreacht na hÉireann* had already been challenged, via referendum, in 1972. This referendum saw the removal of the Fifth Amendment: that being the "special position" of the RCC from the Irish constitution.[98] Ireland in the twentieth century had a close relationship with the Catholic Church. However, in the latter part of the twentieth century, the special relationship between Church and State was being called into question. This was due, in no small part, to the public reaction to several public scandals that emerged as a result of the Church's interference in society such as Ann Lovett's death in Granard, Co. Longford and the Kerry Babies Scandal in 1984.[99] As Diarmuid Ferriter notes in *Occasions of Sin* (2010), "[f]ifty years after Irish independence, some were looking for solutions that involved neither side losing face" (7). Ferriter continues by stating that "Patrick Cogan, a former TD,

[95] "In 2002, an Indemnity Agreement was reached by the then-Government and the religious congregations, which offered €128 million towards addressing the historical abuse. The C&AG report found that €112.9 million of this has been realised. Following the publication of the Ryan report in 2009, religious groups offered €352.6 million towards the abuse costs. This was later reduced to €192.8 million. Of this, so far €96.1 million has been realised. This means that of the entire costs of the abuse, religious organisations have so far paid just under 14%" (C. Fitzgerald).

[96] "While the State provides for free primary education, schools are established by patron bodies who define the ethos of the school and appoint the board of management to run the school on a day to day basis. The vast majority (96%) of primary schools in Ireland are owned and under the patronage of religious denominations and approximately 90% of these schools are owned and under the patronage of the Catholic Church" (Department of Education and Skills).

[97] In 2017 it was announced that the new Irish National Maternity Hospital was to be solely owned by the Sisters of Charity, a Roman Catholic organisation (McGarry). There was much uproar and controversy surrounding this decision, with protests against the decision taking place in Dublin ('Protest in Dublin over Ownership of New NMH'). Subsequent to this public outcry, the Sisters of Charity took the decision to end their involvement with the National Maternity Hospital (Cullen).

[98] The Fifth Amendment to the Irish Constitution "Removed from the Constitution the special position of the Catholic Church and the recognition of other named religious denominations" (Elections Ireland).

[99] Ann Lovett, a fifteen year old girl who had concealed her pregnancy, gave birth alone in front of a Grotto in Granard, Co. Longford. Lovett and her child died of exposure at the scene. The Kerry Babies Scandal concerned Joanne Hayes, a 25-year-old local woman who had been known to be pregnant, and was soon arrested by gardaí as part of their investigation" (Barry). Speaking about the treatment of Hayes, who was *falsely* accused of the murder of this child, Moira J. Maguire states that "[a]lthough forensic evidence confirmed that Hayes was not the mother of the baby discovered at Cahirciveen, nor was there evidence that she had murdered her own baby, nonetheless she was vilified by a government tribunal as a woman of loose morals and as a baby killer." (338) The treatment of Joanne Hayes cements the assertion that Irish society at that time was participating in advancing a moralising approach to sex, sexuality, and the conduct of women.

told the Taoiseach Jack Lynch in 1971, two things 'have got to be avoided. […] 1. The Catholic church must not appear to overrule the state. 2. The Catholic Church must not appear to be defeated" (7). It is clear from this interaction that the government and Church powers both needed to maintain appearances and maintain the control that they had previously been accustomed to.

The Irish media's willingness to challenge the RCC on matters of abuse and scandal opened the discussion of the abuses up to a wider audience, educating the public about the scale of the misconduct. Susie Donnelly and Tom Inglis note that during the 1990s "the media began to investigate and interrogate religious personnel and, in playing its role as the Fourth Estate, replaced the Catholic Church as the social conscience and moral guardian of Irish society" (1–2). They continue by stating that "[m]edia coverage of sex scandals in the Irish Catholic Church, particularly the way it dealt with Clerical Child Sex Abuse (CCSA), highlights the dramatic change in the balance of power" (2). Donnelly and Inglis state that:

> Within a short number of years, CCSA went from being a story that could not be told to one that had to be reported and, indeed, was covered in significant detail. The Church and many of its priests and religious order brothers quickly went from being represented as paragons of virtue, as self-sacrificing national heroes, to being depicted as self-serving masters of evil.[100] (2)

However, "[f]rom the early 1980s, […] Much of the content of the media messages were in direct contradiction to a family and community life based on the virtues of humility, piety, chastity, and self-denial" (Donnelly and Inglis 2). The level of control the RCC had over the media until the passing of the 1972 referendum cannot be overstated, and it is crucial to understanding the significance of the breaking of the silence around Church powers. This can be seen most strongly in the changing relationship between the Church and the media. This dissertation begins its investigation in the aftermath of Bloody Sunday in 1972. Across the island of Ireland 1972 is a significant year in terms of forecasting social change. It heralds an acceleration of the Troubles in the north of Ireland and the re-emergence

[100] An incident in Wexford Town, highlighted by the authors, demonstrates the change of public opinion towards reports of CCSA in the media. They state that, "In 1990, a regional newspaper within the Ferns diocese, *The Wexford People*, carried a front page story of a CCSA case which led to the conviction of a local priest, Fr James Doyle. Doyle pled guilty to the charges and received a suspended sentence. An hour after the newspaper had been published, the office of *The Wexford People* was inundated with calls protesting against the story. By that evening, the townspeople had gathered in front of the office building in Wexford's main street and burnt copies of the newspaper in a mass demonstration" (8). Five years later, the authors note, "the case of another local priest, Fr Séan Fortune, accused of child sex abuse, was carried by the newspaper. On this occasion, there were no public demonstrations or threats to boycott advertisers" (9). The authors observe that "[w]ithin the space of five years, the notion that a priest could be a paedophile had changed from an idea beyond the realm of possibility, provoking defiantly aggressive reaction, to something that could be contemplated" (9).

of the 'national question' post-Bloody Sunday (as examined in Chapter One);[101] the 1970s across the island sees the beginnings of second-wave feminism (as examined in Chapter Two); and as examined above, it also brings about the beginning of the end of the RCC's power over the state via the 5th amendment to the constitution of Ireland. The relaxation of censorship laws in the 1970s also allowed artists to respond more critically to the relationship between the RCC and Ireland. Donnelly and Inglis note that:

> until the 1970s, the Church was able to ensure that the media printed and broadcast stories and programmes that were in accordance with its teachings and that they did not print or broadcast stories that were contrary to its interests. Up until the 1950s, there was a determined effort through various movements 'to make Ireland more totally Catholic' […] A very strict censorship of books and films operated up to the 1970s. (5)

This level of Church control over the Irish media ensured that the RCC's actions remained unchallenged for decades. 'The Rule of Silence' perpetrated by the Church in its Magdalene Laundries and Industrial Schools was echoed in the mainstream media, over which they had immense control.[102] Donnelly and Inglis state that "Matt Cooper, former editor of *The Sunday Tribune*, noted in 1997 that the Church had 'got it too soft for too long" (5). They continue by stating that "[i]t was not until the 1990s that the media were able to undertake the type of investigative journalism that forced the Church into explaining and justifying its actions and policies" (5). The culmination of this investigative approach to Church matters resulted in the eruption of the Church scandals in the 1990s. The CCSA cases, the sexual and physical abuse in industrial schools, and the realities of life within the Magdalene Laundries and the Mother and Baby Homes were all broadcast and printed via national media outlets. These scandals have been investigated or are currently under investigation by the Irish state, however there is still a tendency to silence and underplay these histories.[103] In 2019, the decision was made to seal The Ryan Report survivors' testimonies for seventy-five years, a move which has been widely criticised by historians and archivists (Ó Fátharta).

[101] The uneasy relationship with republicanism that this dynamic created between the south and the north of Ireland also contributed to the fracturing of the homogeneity of the laity and the clergy's authority in Ireland.

[102] 'The Rule of Silence' outlined in *Do Penance or Perish* was "a major feature of the women's lives" in the Laundries and was implemented "to ensure quick discipline and order, and to subject the women intermittently, to greater measures of control" (Finnegan 24).

[103] In 2015 a Commission of Investigation into the Irish Mother and Baby Homes was ordered by the Irish government. This is still underway (Mother and Baby Homes Commission). The McAleese Report, which investigated the Irish State's involvement in the Magdalen Laundries was published in 2013 (Department of Justuce and Equality). The Ryan Report, which investigated the prevalence of child abuse in state run institutions, was published in 2009.

Smyth acknowledges that "[v]irtually all of these crises and controversies have crystallized, and been concretized, around an individual case" (35). This tendency for controversy and crisis to crystallise around an individual case remains evident even at the time of writing. The rise of the recent Abortion Rights Campaign (ARC) in Ireland stemmed from the controversial death of Savita Halappanavar in Galway University Hospital in 2012.[104] The 2018 CervicalCheck Scandal was brought to public attention by one woman, Vicky Phelan, who went public with her experience of the screening system.[105] Smyth interrogates the reasons behind this cultural phenomenon, stating:

> It is difficult to say precisely why the expression of crisis in contemporary Ireland should be so intensely personalized. While it may have something to do with smallness of scale, it is intricately bound up with deep-rooted notions of sex-as-sin and sin-as-sex, and the concept of sin as an individual matter which none the less springs from and reflects back on the community as a whole. Sin is thus purged by the sacrifice of named individuals who are made to stand as the bearers of collective shame and guilt. (35)

Predominantly, these collective bearers of guilt and shame are women. Ferriter refers to the social habit of hiding sexuality in Ireland, stating that "[h]iding evidence of sexuality or sexual activity was the norm in Ireland, as elsewhere, in the early twentieth century. This was particularly true in relation to women, particularly 'fallen women' – prostitutes and unmarried mothers – some of whom ended up in the Magdalen asylums" (16). These asylums and institutions concealed those women who were deemed shameful by the social standards of the time, and although the infrastructure of these institutions dates back centuries, as Caelainn Hogan suggests in *Republic of Shame* (2019) "independent Catholic Ireland brought them to a sort of dark perfection" (29). It is important to note the gendered distinction regarding sexual activity in Ireland at this time. Men who engaged in the premarital sex (leading to a pregnancy) were not punished in the same manner

[104] "Ms Halappanavar presented at Galway University Hospital with severe back pain on October 21st, 2012, and was found to be miscarrying her 17-week pregnancy. After a day in "agony" and distress, she asked for a termination but was refused because there was a foetal heartbeat. She was again refused the next day because of the heartbeat. Doctors checked for the heartbeat several times a day, as Savita grew increasingly ill. On the third day she spontaneously delivered a female foetus and went into a coma, before being transferred to the high-dependency unit and then intensive care, where she deteriorated into septic shock, multiple organ failure and died of cardiac arrest at 1.09am on October 28th, 2012" (Holland, "Death of Savita"). Savita Halappanavar's death is widely considered as being one of the main catalysts for change in regard to Ireland's restrictive abortion regime.

[105] The CervicalCheck scandal emerged in April 2018 when it emerged "that 209 women with cervical cancer had missed scans […] CervicalCheck kept no central register of women who got false negative smears." It became clear that medical practitioners "all around the country knew that women with cervical cancer were not being told their smears had been missed." The scandal gained public attention when terminally ill Vicky Phelan won a High Court case against the lab charged with testing her samples, and through her refusal to sign a non-disclosure agreement as part of her settlement (Sheehan).

as women (Ferriter, Hogan). This created a culture where female victims of rape ended up in asylums, while the perpetrators of the rape were not prosecuted. Women (and children's) personal stories have been the catalysts for major changes in Irish society, since their widespread presence in the public sphere since the 1990s.[106] However, there is something problematic about *requiring* this performance of personal trauma in order to make or engage in social change. Smyth argues that "[i]t is highly significant that it is invariably women who perform penance imposed through this process of public 'confession'. Women are the source of sin (and change), so women must be made to pay the sacrificial price" (35). Emilie Pine recently asked "what do we do with silence once it is broken?" ('Thinking about Breaking and Silence: Staging Testimony') In 'The Monto Cycle', ANU make manifest the moment when the silence is broken and engage, through immersive performance practice, in a radical mode of commemoration. Through engaging the audience in an intimate representation of histories, ANU echo the social change present in Irish society, taking place since the mid-1990s. The idea of the single individual as a confessor can be seen illustrated in the performance structure of 'The Monto Cycle' and Pine's question can be asked of the active audience member. The success of 'The Monto Cycle' can be partly attributed to the embracing of the participatory by Irish audiences, manifesting via a change in Irish society. Irish society is now an active participant in the performance of protest, confession, and witnessing. The decades of tribunals, commissions, and reports into misconduct and abuse by the RCC and the state have created a space in which Irish society can be active, whereas historically Irish society understood public space to be that in which the rules were already predetermined and absolute.[107] Through an analysis of 'The Monto Cycle' this chapter will demonstrate that theatre and performance, during the late 1990s and 2000s, responds to this social tendency to confess, expose, and to witness by engaging audiences in active, alternative commemoration.

[106] Such as: Ann Lovett, Joanne Hayes, the X Case, Savita Halappanavar, Vicky Phelan and the hundreds of anonymous contributors to the Ryan Report and McAleese Reports.

[107] Post-millennium and post-Celtic Tiger the Irish public have staged several efficacious large scale protests and activist movements that have led to legislative and social change. These include the 'Right to Water' protests, the annual Marches for Choice, and protests against the RCC's involvement with the National Maternity Hospital among many others. Irish society has also been called on more regularly in recent decades to vote on substantial changes to the Irish Constitution/Bunreacht na hÉireann through referendums. Since 1990 the Irish electorate have voted in twenty-nine referendums. Fifteen of these referendums have been on social issues such as regulations on: reproductive rights (1992, 2002, and 2018), divorce (1986, 1995, and 2019), marriage equality (2015), children's rights (2012) and citizenship rights (2004) among others. The evolution of social thinking beyond that of the grand national narrative ratified in the 1937 Constitution is thereby being reflected through active democracy. The roots of these changes lie in the social movements of the 1970s and 1980s.

Performance for a Changing Republic

The link between performance and Live Art practices and the emergent theatre practices in Ireland demonstrates a move towards postmodern aesthetics in contemporary Irish theatre practice. Phillips observes, "[t]heatre and dance forms in Ireland have been influenced profoundly by performance and Live Art in recent years" (13). She states that Irish theatre companies, such as Pan Pan and ANU, along with technical supplements to performance also use performative processes that are most commonly associated with performance and 'Live Art' practice, such as "extended durations, the use of improvised script and action, real actions (as opposed to simulated, 'acted' gestures), nudity, expanded reality and identity, site-specific performance, real life testimony and audience participation." (13). Philips notes that "[a]ll of these strategies were employed by performance artists from the 1970s onwards while theatre in Ireland was still bound to the literary text and to the often rigid historical conventions of drama, acting, and characterisation" (13). This observation is clearly demonstrated in this dissertation, which charts the proliferation of these performative processes on the island of Ireland. Similarly, Margaretta D'Arcy's durational performance of imprisonment in the Armagh Gaol in 1980, analysed as performance in Chapter Two, also illustrates these practices. This chapter argues that ANU often place the female body at the centre of their artistic interventions, rendering the body as a site of performance.[108] Louise Lowe, co-artistic director of the company, is reluctant to classify ANU's work solely as theatre and acknowledges the influence of performance artist Amanda Coogan on her work. Lowe states that *World's End Lane* "was an experiment in relation to Amanda's work in terms of the audience being there mattering. Amanda was actually mentoring me at the time, and going 'what would happen if you made it for one person?'" (Boss and Lowe). She describes *World's End Lane* as "an installation. It's a Live Art piece. I don't know if it's an actual theatre piece. I think it encompasses and cross pollinates lots of art forms […] It's certainly theatrical, obviously it's part of the Fringe Festival and there's live actors performing in it" (ANU Productions). All the performances in 'The Monto Cycle' employ a combination of visual arts, dance, and theatre, thus illustrating Phillips's analysis. The beginnings of this can be seen in the feminist performance practice that emerged out of the 1980s (explored in Chapter Two) and in terms of the influence

[108] This research acknowledges the many definitions of the term 'female' as encompassing female cisgender and female transgender bodies. However, in relation to the work of ANU Productions, the representations of the 'female body' in 'The Monto Cycle' are cisgender.

on performance and visual art practice on both Lowe and Boss (Boss and Lowe). 'The Monto Cycle' is one of the most visible examples of Irish theatre's move towards postmodern and postdramatic aesthetics and strategies, however there are many more companies engaging with these aesthetics in an Irish context.[109] In 'The Monto Cycle' the place and space of the performance becomes a place of confrontation and commemoration, engaging the audience as an active participant in the representation of the marginalised stories presented. The proliferation of performance responding to social crisis in the south, post-millennium was largely informed by the economic boom (and subsequent bust), which was known as the Celtic Tiger. Writing on postmodern performance in contemporary Ireland, Haughton acknowledges the rise in postmodern performance form during the Celtic Tiger period, contending that "[c]ontemporary Ireland has witnessed a paradigm shift in modes of theatre-making in the Celtic Tiger and post-Celtic Tiger eras, such as the increasing volume of site-specific performances or offsite performances, verbatim theatre, and works which request or demand active participation from their audiences" ('Flirting with the Postmodern' 375). Haughton is careful to note that she is not suggesting that these modes of performance simply did not exist pre-Celtic Tiger (in fact, this dissertation's previous performances prove her point), she instead asserts that "in the present moment, there is a noticeable simultaneous wave of overtly politicised theatrical form and content challenging the ideologies and expectations of theatre audiences" ('Flirting with the Postmodern' 375). Writing on *Laundry*, Haughton argues that the:

> present critique of a particular post-dramatic Irish performance shows how it continues in that Irish theatrical tradition of the twentieth-century canon by responding to social crisis. Yet, the performance is motivated not by the need to imagine or represent an Irish state but by the need to interrogate the functioning of a state and society that was brought into being less than one-hundred years ago. ('From Laundries to Labour Camps' 90)

This tendency, in performance, echoes the move in Irish society to acknowledge corruption and expose scandals through a series of tribunals, commissions, and reports that took aim at the state, the RCC, and several prominent politicians, particularly the Moriarty and Mahon Tribunals.[110] In 2012 the Decade of

[109] For example: Brokentalkers' *The Blue Boy* (2011) and *Have I No Mouth* (2012), THEATREclub's *It's Not Over* (2016), and Company SJ's *Beckett in the City* (2009-2012).

[110] The Mahon Tribunal or "The Tribunal of Inquiry into Certain Planning Matters and Payments was a public enquiry "established by minister for the environment and local government, Noel Dempsey in November 1997, and has held 917 days of public hearings with 400 witnesses. […] Following allegations that he had received payments from developer Owen O'Callaghan, the tribunal investigated the finances of former Taoiseach Bertie Ahern. […] The tribunal also investigated the financial dealings of former Fianna Fáil government press secretary Frank Dunlop, former EU commissioner Pádraig Flynn, and the controversial Fianna Fáil TD Liam Lawlor" (E. B. Kennedy). The Moriarty Tribunal, also established in 1997, was a similar enquiry commissioned to investigate

Centenaries encourages a state focus on remembrance which interrogates the roots of contemporary society through a reflection on the past.

The south of Ireland experienced a diversification of performance form from the middle of the 1990s which responded in part to the social changes taking place in Irish society, as outlined above, but also responded to Ireland's globalisation and its embracing of the neoliberal economy. This diversification was part of a wider European context of performance form expansion.[111] Ireland's participation in developing neo-liberal political structures is more visible and prevalent through the Celtic Tiger era (though roots were sewn prior to this) and Irish performance practice responds to the stark changes manifesting in Irish society. Harvie suggests the audiences of these emergent theatrical forms are "encouraged to interact with each other, for example through looking at one another or moving or speaking together, in a trend which art curator and critic Nicolas Bourriard has famously termed socially 'relational' […] and art theorist Claire Bishop has called 'the social turn' in contemporary art" (*Fair Play* 1). Post-millennium, the shift in social values away from a culture of silence and towards a culture of silence-breaking manifests in performance through a focus on memory and remembrance.

O'Gorman and McIvor have also commented on this shift away from the valorisation of the single author in Irish theatre, arguing in *Devised Performance in Irish Theatre: Histories and Contemporary Practice* that Irish theatre practice is shifting in order to incorporate the needs of a changing republic.[112] They state that "[t]his contemporary surge of work has influenced not only the evolving needs of Irish theatre and performance criticism but the very pedagogy of theatre training in Ireland with institutions […] now offering practical courses that incorporate devised performance technique at BA and MA levels" (1). Singleton also

the financial affairs of former Taoiseach Charles Haughey and Fine Gael minister Michael Lowry (Moriarty Tribunal). Both tribunals uncovered illegal and irregular financial dealings in the highest roles of the Irish government.

111 For context, in *Fair Play* (2013) Jen Harvie acknowledges Britain's place in this European diversification of form, noting the creation of space for a more expansive performance model that operated adjacent to the dominant literary dramatic text model most common in the mainstream. Harvie also charts the beginning of a British expansion and acceptance of new and emergent theatrical forms as taking place initially in the late 1970s and early 1980s, at a time when the rise of neoliberalism was being firmly felt, under the stewardship of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.

112 This volume acknowledges that "[t]he current wave of devised performance builds on a physical and dance theatre movement in Irish theatre that began to coalesce in the 1990s through the work of companies like Barrabas, Macnas, Blue Raincoat, Corn Exchange, Pan Pan, and Corcadorca which was influenced by earlier genealogies of Irish European and international arts practice" (1). McIvor and O'Gorman also acknowledge that the body of practice under examination in the volume and referred to above "built on [...] the cross-border Irish community arts movement emerging throughout the island of Ireland from the 1970s" (1).

acknowledges this diversification, noting the rise of devised theatre practice in Ireland as beginning in the 1990s. He states that:

> eleven decades after the establishment of one of the world's leading 'writer's theatres' of the historical avant-garde (the Abbey Theatre) it is fair to say that most of the innovative, provocative, political, and interdisciplinary work that stands on the front rank of Irish theatre is devised performance: some of it verbal, some non-verbal; some in theatres, some of it not; some of it realistic, some highly stylized. It's impact, though, is not predicated on a challenge to the written work per se, but on its challenge to the hierarchies of theatre process, theatre production, and theatre reception. ('Irish Theatre Devised' 560)

This rise in the challenging of theatre processes is due in significant part to access to theatre scholarship becoming more widespread from the mid-1990s when the Free Fees Initiative (1995) made third-level education widely accessible.[113] This initiative allowed students and artists from a wide range of backgrounds unprecedented access to the industry and into a lineage of performance practice from outside of Ireland. Similarly, the Arts Council's expansion of funding to allow for artists to see work and access training outside of Ireland via the Travel and Training Award also impacts on a diversification of form (The Arts Council). EU cultural programmes, such as Creative Europe also place a major emphasis on international collaboration and networking, which offers huge scope for Irish artists to reflect on their own practice and be informed by European trends. The influences of external companies at both the Dublin Theatre Festival and Belfast Festival may also have influenced performance practice during this time as the opportunity to see international work increased. As well as devised performance, there has been a clear rise in participatory performance practices across Ireland, including a significant rise in what is termed immersive performance, which will be explored in greater detail further on in this chapter. As noted in the Introduction, this dissertation situates active participation as taking place on a spectrum. This spectrum is influenced by the social values present at the time of the performance, the structure and form of the performance, and the spatio-temporality of the performance. In this chapter I will investigate how 'The Monto Cycle', in

[113] Similarly, and significantly, theatre and performance aimed at children in primary and secondary education was also developing in Ireland, thus opening up new and younger audiences to theatre and performance in schools. In 1978 TEAM THEATRE, a group of professional actors began to tour original plays to tour schools, youth groups, and community centres ('Team Educational Theatre Company 1978'). According to Irish Playography "TEAM Educational Theatre Company was one of Ireland's longest established theatre in education companies and earned national acclaim over 38 years working within the primary and post-primary system. The company produced work for children and young people to high artistic standards, primarily in their own formal learning environment, that: provided an authentic experience which resonated with their own lives; challenged them to feel, think, interact and do within the dramatic context; and opened them to the potential of theatre" ('TEAM Educational Theatre Company').

particular, relies on an active, immersed audience in order to create moments of communion for the active spectator through a radical form of commemoration.

Memory, Remembrance and Commemoration in Irish Performance Practice

Writing on the performance of memory in recent Irish theatre and culture, Pine has argued that a prevalent desire to remember emerged in the plays and performances of the late 1990s and early 2000s.[114] She particularly highlights the response to Sebastian Barry's 1996 play *The Steward of Christendom*. The reactions to this play (which illustrated the realities of life in Ireland's institutions) highlight the historical significance of the play. Then-President of Ireland Mary Robinson noted how the play represented the shared experience of secrecy and shame felt by Irish people who experienced these traumas. However, Lowe challenges the nature of these representations especially in relation to Barry's representation of the working-class Irish. She states, "when I look at the work of Sebastian Barry and it's beautiful and it's brilliant and I argue with him and he just comes back with the same argument 'at the end of the day it's only a play'. But it's not right, it's not real. The syntax is wrong, the grammar is wrong and yet he's presenting me on that stage" (Boss and Lowe). This tradition of silencing those topics and experiences that were deemed shameful or sinful has consistently been challenged by Irish artists for decades, however the emergent paradigms that this study is analysing, I argue, are focused on representing marginalised stories; from women, children, members of the working class, and ethnic minorities. This is a movement away from the male-dominated and single-authored system that although occasionally subversive in terms of class, post-colonial politics, and issues of Irish masculinity, is broadly under representative of national communities, such as those listed above. The move towards this twenty-first century social turn contrasts with the monologue plays of Brian Friel and Conor McPherson, single issue Troubles plays, and the over-reliance on male-character driven 'state of the nation plays' such as *The Hanging Gardens* (2013) by Frank McGuinness, and *Cyprus Avenue* (2016) by David Ireland. Pine reflects on the problematic ways which many fictional works have framed memory, stating that "the tendency for fictional works to edge towards anti-nostalgic melo-drama thus turns the history of institutional abuse into a dichotomy of evil and good, the past and the present, rather than illuminating the

[114] Some noteworthy plays include Tom Murphy's *Bailegangaire* (1985) and Brian Friel's *Faith Healer* (1979).

failures of the system and the routine destructiveness of large institutions" (*The Politics of Irish Memory* 45). In Chapter One the subversion of problematic binaries can be seen in work such as *The Wedding Community Play Project* and *Convictions*. In this chapter I contend that 'The Monto Cycle' productions are part of a paradigm of Irish performance that sought to respond to social crisis and interrupt the problematic societal dichotomies through commemorating histories (from marginalised groups) which exist adjacent to the mainstream. In 'The Monto Cycle' these dichotomies include the binaries of virgin/whore, poor/middle class, clergy/lay people, men/women. In an Irish context, socially turned art in the 1990s becomes a response to social issues and an attempt to process, challenge, understand, and most pressingly, acknowledge and remember the histories of those who have been previously marginalised. Victor Turner argues that "[t]o look at itself a society must cut out a piece of itself for inspection. To do this it must set up a frame within which images and symbols of what has been sectioned off can be scrutinised, assessed, and if needs be, remodelled and rearranged" (468). As indicated in the previous section, Irish society was undergoing a period of intense scrutiny following multiple scandals which undermined faith in the government and the RCC. Performance practice responded to this, echoing the drive to reflect and remember by co-opting the audience as a co-creator of meaning and a co-participant in the representation of marginalised histories.

Smyth's assertion that scandal and sin manifests through individuals (most often women) in the public sphere is significant in terms of how visible these experiences are to the public. By making their trauma visible, the silence around the abuse is fractured. Irish performance practice represents a version of these histories, through the individual performer. This structure echoes the nature of 'silence breaking' in post-millennium Ireland. Walsh notes that the diversification of form in performance practice in fact made its purpose to illuminate the failures of the established system of state institutions. Reflecting on the role of Irish audiences in contemporary Irish performance, Walsh notes the heightened focus on remembrance: "intense political, economic, and social disturbance over the past number of years has given rise to a sharp impulse to remember. On the one hand this is about dignifying past hurts and injustices, but it is also motivated by a desire not to repeat the same mistakes again" (Walsh, 'The Power of the Powerless' 13). Haughton considers 'theatres of truth' in the Dublin Fringe Festival, claiming they emerge from a "milieu of truth". According to former Artistic Director of the Dublin Fringe Festival (DFF), Roise Goan this milieu of truth pervaded the work proposed to and produced by the Dublin Fringe Festival during her five-year

directorship between 2008 and 2012. Haughton argues that she "employs the phrase 'milieu of truth' to acknowledge the general climate of exposure dominating contemporary Irish public and political life, rather than to insinuate that there is a 'truth' to be discovered or declared" ('A Theatre of Truth?' 128). Haughton's assertion, once again, echoes Smyth's previous analysis of the single individual as confessor and demonstrates that theatre and performance, during this time, was responding to this social tendency to confess, expose, and witness. According to Pine, "[m]emory can […] function as an ethical act, a moral duty that we exercise" (*The Politics of Irish Memory* 13). By representing these hidden injustices, through performance, there is a reframing of these histories. This preoccupation with memory and commemoration is profoundly affecting the emerging paradigms of Irish theatre and performance, contributing to a canon of socially turned art practice which can be illustrated in output of the Cork Midsummer Festival, Dublin Fringe Festival, Dublin Theatre Festivals, the Galway International Arts Festival (GIAF), and the Kilkenny Arts Festival since 2010.[115]

'The Monto Cycle' performances engage the audience either one-on-one or in small groups of two-to-four in the actual spaces of the histories they represent. Returning to Jill Dolan's assertion that "[t]o see women onstage, alone, telling stories is still, for me, a political moment, one I can't (or won't) take for granted" (Dolan, *Utopia in Performance* 61), ANU particularly privilege and highlight the stories, testimonies, and narratives of working class Irish-based women and girls, whether they be citizens or immigrants, whether they be Magdalene inmates or sex workers. Significantly, ANU link these marginalised histories to larger moments of state reflection thus linking these histories to the grand national narrative and asserting their absence. *World's End Lane* premiered at the Fringe Festival in 2010, two years before the Decade of Centenaries programme commenced. *Vardo*, the final production in the cycle, premiered in 2014, two years prior to the 1916 centenary year, a period of commemoration that prompted significant discourse on grand national narratives and definitions of Irishness.[116] The beginning and conclusion of 'The Monto Cycle' corresponds with this era of major state-led commemoration and general enquiry into the state of the nation, and ANU's performance strategies provided a fresh means of examining these histories for

[115] More information about these festivals and recent programming can be found at: https://www.corkmidsummer.com, http://www.fringefest.com, https://dublintheatrefestival.ie, https://www.giaf.ie, and https://www.kilkennyarts.ie.

[116] "Aim[ing] to commemorate each step that Ireland took between 1912 and 1922 in a tolerant, inclusive and respectful way," the Decade of Centenaries programme has involved hundreds of events held across the country all acknowledging and commemorating significant moments in Ireland's past (Decade of Centenaries).

audiences, something which the company continued to build on in subsequent productions.[117] Lowe acknowledges that although the beginning of 'The Monto Cycle' predates the Decade of Centenaries, that their application for funding to produce *World's End Lane* and the rest of the cycle stated that they wanted to use "a quarter mile to explore the state in microcosm" (Boss and Lowe). This demonstrates the link, in 'The Monto Cycle', between representation, commemoration, and site.

McIvor also links a shift in ANU's work with the timing of the Decade of Centenaries, arguing that "[c]rucially, ANU's thematic focus on the ethics of memory as a lived experience of the present has collided with the most sustained period of official state-level reflection in modern and contemporary Irish history on Irish history itself: the Decade of Centenaries" (479). She notes ANU's division of their own performance practice into clearly delineated categories: "theatre, gallery installation, and museum interpretation/commemoration" (478) and argues that this division "emerged around the time of the *Pals* (2015) premiere" (480). The majority of ANU's work post-'The Monto Cycle' falls into the museum interpretation/commemoration category.[118] However their focus on memory, commemoration, and the representation of marginalised histories is evident in their earlier work. In the cycle's four performances the spaces of performance can be considered as the leading character in their works. These four performances engage the audience in a radical form of commemoration during this period of official remembrance. The importance of memory and remembrance on a national level prompts a deeper analysis of how and what the state chooses to remember. Pine provides an example of the cognitive dissonance that the Irish state engages with during official commemorative events. Referring to the ninetieth anniversary celebrations of the 1916 Easter Rising in 2006 she states that:

> To launch the commemorative season, Taoiseach Bertie Ahern gave a speech at the opening of an art exhibition on 1916 at the National Museum, extolling the high points of the Irish past that should be remembered proudly. Ahern's speech, however, only mentioned those events that his own party, Fianna Fail, had presided over. The omission of crucial moments, such as the declaration of the republic in 1949, illustrates Ahern's politically strategic shaping of the past, as pointed out at the time by Enda Kenny, leader of the opposition Fine Gael party. (*The Politics of Irish Memory* 224)

[117] These productions include: *Pals: The Irish at Gallipoli* (2015), *Sunder* (2016), and *These Rooms* (2016). Further study on these productions is warranted but is beyond the scope of this dissertation.
[118] Including: *Pals – The Irish at Gallipoli* (2015), *Glorious Madness* (2015), *Somme* (2016), *Hornet's Nest* (2016), *Beyond Barricades* (2016), *Rebel Rebel* (2016), *Reflecting the Rising* (2016), *Into the Sun* (2016), *Last Words, Proclaiming a Republic* (2016), *Falling Out of Standing* (2016), *Sunder* (2016), *These Rooms* (2016), *Hentown* (2017), *Zero Hour* (2018), and *The Lost O'Casey* (2018).

Ahern was choreographing his own version of history, which omitted many aspects of the events to suit his own political agenda. The act of choreographing memory, explored in the Introduction in relation to the events of Bloody Sunday (1972), can be seen echoed in previous and recent attempts to commemorate the past and is actively subverted in 'The Monto Cycle'. Like the performances examined in Chapter One, ANU's four productions challenge and problematise narrative and historical binaries to reflect and represent the realities of everyday life as they sit adjacent to the grand national narrative. Brian Conway states that memory choreographers are "[o]ften guided by moral and legal imperatives – to seek truth for the dead and heal the living" (6). This truth-seeking becomes, in the post-Celtic Tiger era, silence-breaking. ANU's 'The Monto Cycle' stages histories that have been marginalised alongside the mainstream and well-known histories that frame them. For example, *World's End Lane* is deliberately situated within the prolific history of Dublin's red-light district: The Monto, where ANU intentionally draw on James Joyce's immortalisation of the area. Similarly, *Laundry* is situated against the fraught politics of the new Irish state which was controlled and dominated by the Catholic Church. *The Boys of Foley Street* is situated alongside the Dublin-Monaghan bombings in 1974, and *Vardo* engages with the post-2008 economic downturn. The limited representation of history, presented since the creation of the Irish state, has consistently ignored the violent abuses that women, children, the poor, and marginalised have been subjected to. ANU, through their performative interactions with history and space, choreograph a space for these histories to be represented, acknowledged, and remembered.

Public and Embodied Sites of Practice

'The Monto Cycle' engages with public space and the body of the performer in their representation of marginalised histories. By so doing, these productions create a visceral intimacy within the performance-audience relationship through a close proximity with historical site. This research recognises that proximity and intimacy are not always directly correlated. In performance proximity and intimacy are influenced by issues of attention and reciprocity. This dissertation connects proximity and intimacy by examining its relationship through the spatial relations created across 'The Monto Cycle'. The site-specific engagement with site in 'The Monto Cycle' creates an intimacy between the audience and the performer/performance. The proximity to performance site and the subject matter

of the performances creates an opportunity for the audience to intimately engage with the hidden or obscured histories of these spaces and places. Lauren Berlant in 'Intimacy: A Special Issue' (1998) argues that "intimacy refers to more than that which takes place within the purview of institutions, the state, and an idea of publicness" (284). ANU create 'moment of communion' which will be examined in detail further on in this dissertation that challenges what Berlant refers to as the "public/private taxonomy" in order to engage audiences in the strata of histories being represented and commemorated through performance. In these performances, the female body in performance also constitutes a historical site upon which the traumas of the state have been enacted. The placement of the body (of both the performer and the audience) is central to the live experience of ANU's work. Phillips previously acknowledges the privileged position the performer's body inhabits in Irish performance practice. In 'The Monto Cycle' the female body is presented as a site of performance and radical commemoration. John R. Gillis contends that historically "[t]he role of women in national commemoration was largely allegorical", using the example of the Statue of Liberty coming "to stand in both France and the United States as a symbol of national identity, but the history of real women was systematically forgotten" (10). Evidence of this same relationship can be seen in an Irish context whereby the feminised 'mother Ireland' figure, made famous in a twentieth-century theatrical context by W.B. Yeats and Lady Gregory's *Cathleen Ni Houlihan* promotes an idealised feminine version of a 'free Ireland'. Ironically once this idealised 'free' Ireland was partially achieved with the establishment of the 26 county Irish Free State in 1922, women's roles in achieving this were largely removed from the dominant historical narrative. Indeed, women were relegated from positions in social, political, and commercial life to a domestic setting with the instigation of the 1937 Bunreacht na hÉireann/The Irish Constitution.[119] However, as Gillis notes it is not just women who have their roles in national history obfuscated, citing that minorities were often subjected to the same fate. He argues that, "Women and minorities often serve as symbols of a 'lost' past, nostalgically perceived and romantically constructed, but their actual lives are most readily forgotten" (10). In *Theatre of the Oppressed*, Boal acknowledges the impact of both physical and psychological oppressions on the body. In an Irish context the idealised image of the female body as feminine, free, maternal and representative of nationhood is contrasted by the reality of the female body oppressed by the state both psychologically and

[119] An overview of Irish women's social history can be found in: Cullen Owens, Rosemary. *A Social History of Women in Ireland 1870-1970.* Gill & Macmillan, 2014.

physically. Boal acknowledges that 'freedom' does not necessarily carry physical connotations and uses the example of Prometheus to argue that despite physical confinement, "Prometheus' freedom consists in his being able to end his own torment the moment he chooses, but he decides, freely, not to do it" (75-76). Women in Irish society, although not (always) physically restricted in terms of their freedom, remained (and in many cases remain) second-class citizens by proxy of Irish law. Their confinement across the twentieth century is not (always) physical but they lack the freedom of self-determinacy through a lack of ability to work freely and equally, express their sexual desires, control or end pregnancies, or gain access to the upper tiers of civic and political structures in the State. They are restricted, in the main, to the domestic space. Boal also acknowledges the physical oppression of the body, however, and this too is applicable in an Irish context. Boal considers the idea of 'muscular alienation' whereby he compares the physical musculature of a typist and a night watchman. He notes the differences between the occupations and therefore the physicality of the two fictitious men or women in question. He argues that their "bodies both become alienated in accordance with their respective kinds of work" (104). When considering the Irish female body and her relationship with domestic space this becomes significant as it demonstrates a physical oppression. This is accentuated when one considers the systematic institutionalisation of women in Ireland throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries who did not conform to the ideal representation of woman. A woman incarcerated in a Magdalene Laundry will embody the conditions of her confinement and her labour. Therefore, there is a clear distinction between the idealised image of the (female) Irish body and the material body conditioned and distorted by its spatial setting and associated labour. By placing the female body at the centre of their commemorations, ANU trouble this historical norm and refute this nostalgic perception of the past. It should be noted however that these performances primarily represent the white Irish female body, which reflects an engagement with second-wave feminist methodologies rather than an intersectional strategy. It also reflects the timescale of the histories represented. *Worlds End Lane*, *Laundry*, and *The Boys of Foley Street* represent moments during the twentieth century were the population of Ireland was predominantly white, Irish, and Catholic.[120] *Vardo* represents a twenty-first century Ireland that is more ethnically diverse. By the time that *Vardo* is produced in 2014, a larger proportion

[120] The census figures for the years 1996, 2002, and 2006 demonstrate that the majority of residents in Ireland are white and Irish, with the dominant religion as Roman Catholic. The full reports on each census are available here: https://www.cso.ie/en/census/census20062002and1996/

of the communities living in the 'Monto' area (encompassing Foley Street, Talbot Street, and James Joyce Street) are minority ethnic people than in previous decades. As the cycle evolves, more women and men of colour are represented in the productions. These performances illuminate, through the representation of previously marginalised histories, what has been hidden for decades behind a patriarchal grand national narrative.

Placement of Bodies in Public Spaces

These site-responsive performances take place in public spaces, namely the 'monumental' site of the Séan McDermott Street Laundry, and the streets, civic buildings, and shops in and around Foley Street.[121] Sophie Nield argues:

> Monumental space is not just space that contains monuments: it is a space which is itself monumental, in that it embodies and describes a projection of political realities. It is designed to be legible; to produce a readable surface which will appear to be the whole 'message' and work of the space. […] Monumental space not only mystifies, it makes the individual tiny in relation to the architectural grandeur, the scale of the ceremonial avenue or building, the soaring ceilings of the cathedral. And in this way, it becomes much more than a text whose signs can be read, like architecture. Monumental space makes power *felt*. (225)

These sites embody what Nield refers to as a 'projection of political realities' and this is intensified via each performance's relation to mainstream histories and historical sites. In *Performing Site-Specific Theatre: Politics, Place, and Practice* Mike Pearson refers to the host and ghost connection in reference to his work with designer Cliff McLucas during his time at Brith Gof. He refers to the characterisation of "site-specific performance as the coexistence and overlay of two basic sets of architectures: those of the extant building or […] the *host*, that which is *at* site – and those of the constructed scenography and performance, or the *ghost*, that which is temporarily brought *to* site" (70). The idea of the 'host' and 'ghost' is present in the cycle and is accentuated by the fact that The Monto area itself is a space of historical significance. In the Séan McDermott Street site the stories and histories represented by *Laundry* are significantly set against a backdrop of a space which has seen several generations of failure in terms of the Irish Government and the RCC, and now sits as a testament to those past failures. Recent attempts to turn the site into a hotel were challenged by public response that

[121] Drawing from Fiona Wilkie's survey of site-specific performance in Britain in 'Mapping the terrain: a survey of site-specific performance in Britain' (2002), as well as Joanne Tompkins and Anna Birch's *Performing Site-Specific Theatre. Politics, Place, Practice* (2012) I argue that site-responsive performance responds to the particulars of a site in terms of its history, location, its social, political, and historical contexts. This dynamic is considered in greater detail later in this chapter.

the site should be redeveloped as a museum to remember the state's institutional past (McMahon). In 2019 it was announced that the site will be developed as a 'site of conscience' (Santry). This public response to the redevelopment of the Magdalene site is significant and emblematic of the mobilisation of the public in Irish society in recent decades. For almost a century, the Séan McDermott Street Laundry operated for the economic benefit of the few while systematically oppressing, abusing, and incarcerating women. Despite this, the public did not protest its existence, due to the power of the RCC in national affairs, largely supported by the state. This particular laundry was the last Magdalene laundry to cease operations in 1996, with the final women admitted in 1995 (O'Loughlin). The proposal to redevelop the site as a hotel also situated the site as a space which would operate for the economic benefit of the few while erasing the history of the space. However, in recent decades the public have achievement momentum by staging large scale protests leading to legislative change in recent years. The recent overturning of water charges via the unprecedentedly large 'Right to Water Protests', as well as the successful and prominent March for Choice protests, Pride marches, and protests against the Church ownership of the National Maternity Hospital, among many others, evidence the meaningful conversation that can be maintained between the state and society in Ireland, something made possible by a modest population that is well educated, social media-literate, and in dialogue with transnational peers and activist groups. Like the revolutionary period of Ireland's history currently being commemorated through the Decade of Centenaries, Irish audiences are renegotiating the nature of their participation in Irish society in line with a desire for greater transparency in the public sphere and are becoming increasingly active in relation to the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. Irish society is fostering ground-up, grassroots politics that is responsive to participatory performance. The widespread austerity and hardship caused by the financial collapse post-Celtic Tiger remains affective for many strata of Irish society. The financial collapse was not consigned to working-class, low-income, or marginalised communities, but destabilised, and destroyed to a certain extent, middle-class and high-income communities also. This trauma galvanised activist communities, visibly manifest in this recent culture of protest marches. Returning to *Laundry*, the trauma enacted in this space, and at the hands of the state and the RCC becomes more significant when entombed in this monumental site. Similarly, with *World's End Lane, The Boys of Foley Street*, and *Vardo*, the interaction with individual histories, which ANU garnered from testimonies of people living in these communities, becomes more significant when considering the politics of the

Foley Street area which has returned to a hub of sex work and drug dealing (Crawley, 'Monto Is Back').

The traditional roles of women and children occupying private domestic spaces while men occupying the public sphere is upheld across these four performances, mirroring women's lived experience as broadly absent in public discourse since the establishment of the Irish state. Throughout Ireland's history women were excluded from the workplace, imprisoned in Magdalene Laundries, Mother and Baby Homes, and other institutions used to hide unwanted women. By essentially 'interring' the women performers in both productions in the dominant and monumental sites, 'The Monto Cycle' is drawing attention to this dominant historical binary of woman as synonymous with home. In *World's End Lane* the female characters remain inside the brothel walls. In *Laundry*, it is only the male characters who have the right and ability to leave the Laundry building without assistance or fear. In *The Boys of Foley Street* most of the interactions between the audience and the female characters are presented in a family home, whereas the male characters' engagements with the audience transect the Foley street area. In *Vardo* women are presented in the public sphere – whether it is in Busáras, a local pub, or outside Store Street Garda Station – with much more frequency than the three previous productions. This perhaps reflects the contemporary setting of the production, which is designed to sit alongside the present moment for the audience member. It also suggests that public space may be equally as dangerous as the domestic space for those who sell sex. Across 'The Monto Cycle' the audience are aware that women's bodies are required to generate business, whether that labour takes place inside a laundry or on a street corner, and often times without any inference or protection from the law.

In his study of the 'The Monto Cycle', Singleton notes that by working "exclusively with the social history of the sites and outside of the grand narratives of the national, ANU's work is hugely political" (*ANU Productions* 6). In the years 2015 and 2016 many artists working within the commemorative theme (and with state funding marked for commemoration) decided to work outside of the grand narrative of the national to do so.[122] Singleton frames ANU's representation of the past as in direct contrast to the aims of the State. He states that "the political power of ANU Productions' performative acts in their productions stands as a direct challenge to the nation's desire to remember the past through an act of forgetting,

[122] More detail on this relationship between official commemoration and performance during the Decade of Centenaries can be seen in my article 'Reflecting Irishness, Mirroring Histories: Performing Commemoration in Irish Theater in 2015' (Murphy).

through the creation of these environments of memory" (*ANU Productions* 39). He suggests that ANU creates encounters with the past through their performances to share a collective memory with their audiences, formed through moments of communion. Singleton argues that "[e]ach iteration of this practice for the most part was inscribed through an individual performative encounter, leaving individual spectators no possibility of escaping the practice, but instead invoking in them a desire to connect with other individuals to share what they had experienced. From an individual memory to a collective memory" (*ANU Productions* 39). Interestingly, both Lowe and Boss acknowledge the importance of making work for the individual audience member but note that it was their own lack of budget that allowed them the freedom to attain this. Boss states that:

> The audience's presence is vitally important and what was really important for *World's End Lane* specifically is that we had no money and box office didn't necessarily matter too much. […] We knew that we wanted to make it for one person at a time. So, we were able to do that because there was no expectation to actually deliver back on that, I think. (Boss and Lowe)

As the company's popularity grew over subsequent years and post-'The Monto Cycle' the audience numbers increased. Structurally, the individual and one-on-one encounters still exist in the company's later work such as *These Rooms* (2016) and *Faultline* (2019) but this occurs as adjacent to the broader group encounters rather than as the dominant performance structure. Over the last decade, the company have curated a strong connection with the spaces of Dublin's north inner city. McIvor argues that "the move of Irish artists, companies and festivals into non-theatre spaces – from the early twentieth century to the present – constitutes varying but directed political manoeuvres that call into question the meaning and political efficacy of theatre as a communal act in Irish society" (465). The relationship that ANU curate between public spaces and their productions adds to the politics of the work as it reinforces the idea of these performances as being a kind of public confessional and a radical form of commemoration. In site-specific theatre, the audience takes on the ownership of the space during the performance. Morash notes the significance of this in relation to ANU's work, stating that in 'The Monto Cycle' "the transformation of an otherwise anonymous space in to theatre exists only for the duration of the performance; when the performance is complete the space either simply blows away or lapses once again into the urban flow of the city" (426).

The site-specific form of 'The Monto Cycle' encourages engagement with the urban communities that reside in these spaces and the memories and histories

associated with their life experiences.[123] Lowe comments on the importance of working with the community during 'The Monto Cycle' stating that it "takes years of negotiation, and I mean years, of working with that community to tell their story the way they want it told" (Boss and Lowe). Recalling the company's interaction with the community during *The Boys of Foley Street* Lowe recalls how she knocked on every door in the community to ask permission to stage the show. She recalls how, in many instances, the production had to work around the community:

> I remember arriving at [community member's house] and he said 'my uncle is dying of cancer and you're right under us'. Bollocks! So, we agreed that we would use a blackout once it went past a certain time in the evening so that the uncle could get rest, so that our work could change to accommodate him being sick above us. (Boss and Lowe)

Lowe notes the "tender negotiation" that this kind of work requires and that is in fact embodied by the work in its content, structures, and audience-performance relationship (Boss and Lowe). There is also a significant negotiation of memory within that community and for the audience member. Site-specific theatre has a particular part to play in the performance of memory. Harvie outlines two reasons why site-specific performance can enhance memory. Firstly, she argues that "its location can work as a potent mnemonic trigger, helping to evoke specific past times related to the place and time of performances and facilitating negotiation between the meaning of those times" (*Staging the UK* 42). The use of site to trigger collective memory can be seen clearly across 'The Monto Cycle', where the impact of the public and historical spaces of these performances evokes the histories of the past in the work. For example, experiencing the physical spaces of the Séan McDermott Street Laundry in *Laundry*, being guided through the public and private areas of Foley Street in *The Boys of Foley Street*, and interacting with the public and private spaces of the Monto area through *World's End Lane* and *Vardo*. The second facet of Harvie's argument is that

> by being materially and spatially formed and located in ways which differ from performance practice in conventional theatre buildings and spaces, site-specific performance can be especially effective at remembering and

[123] Fiona Wilkie states that "site-specific theatre privileges place. It suggests that the act of dividing the activity labelled 'theatre' from the building labelled 'theatre' holds possibilities for responding to and interrogating a range of current spatial concerns, and for investigating the spatial dimension of contemporary identities" (21). Joanne Tompkins argues that "[s]ite-specific performances are conceived for, mounted within and conditioned by the particulars of found spaces, existing social situations or locations, both used and disused […]. They rely, for their conception and their interpretation, upon the complex coexistence, superimposition and impetration of a number of narratives and architectures, historical and contemporary, of two basic orders: that which is of the site, the performance and its scenography: of that which pre exists the work and that which is of the work: of the past and of the present" (2). I define site-responsive as performance which responds to site, but is not bound by the same specificity of site, situation, or location. The site-responsive performance does not have the same reliance on the combining histories, narratives, and architectures of site-specific theatre.

> constituting identities that are significantly determined by their materiality and spatiality, identities to do with, for example, class, occupation, and gender. (*Staging the UK* 42)

The proximity of the performance to their audiences and to the public spaces of The Monto frames the characters and the site of performance in a historical context which invites the audience to remember. Haughton argues that the "Monto Cycle […] set in motion a train of critically artistic explorative impulses, designed initially to reveal the stories of this place, which are not well documented in official histories and rarely included in contemporary cultural discourse, except when focus is turned to urban disadvantage or crime" (*Staging Trauma* 135). In these four productions the link between representations of history and public space is indelible. Haughton argues that in *Laundry* "[w]hen ANU opened the doors of the building, they opened the doors of Magdalene history, Irish politics, Roman Catholic rule, and some kind of suppressed yearning for those histories to be accounted for, acknowledged and released; to be known" (*Staging Trauma* 135). This relationship between history, space, and audience is also evident across the other three productions. In *World's End Lane* and *Vardo* the company illuminate the realities of historical and modern sex work including interventions by the RCC in the case of the former and the impact of human trafficking in the red light area of Dublin city centre in the case of the latter. In *The Boys of Foley Street*, the intimate realities of Dublin's heroin epidemic in the 1980s is exposed as the audience visit the places most ravaged by heroin addiction. This situates 'The Monto Cycle' as a mode of radical commemoration that engages with histories undermined and underrepresented by the state.

'You Had to Be There' – Audience Participation in 'The Monto Cycle'

Josephine Machon's *Immersive Theatres* (2013) explores the relationship between participatory and immersive performance forms and the audience. Although not all ANU's work can be considered immersive theatre, much of what she posits applies to 'The Monto Cycle'. There is often mention, when referring to immersive theatre, of it being non-traditional or not conventional. Tradition and convention are fluid and subjective terms, inevitably varying depending on era and location. However, Machon outlines the conventions of what she argues to be traditional theatre and contrasts that with her own definition of immersive theatre. Machon states that in traditional theatre the "audience/actor (us/them) relationship is defined by the delineation of space (auditorium/stage) and role (static-passive observer/active-

moving performer) where the audience is viewing the action ahead of them" (27). Machon notes that in traditional performance "it does not matter if you are there or not; the audience could get up and walk out and it would carry on" (27). Machon contrasts this with what she describes as the conventions for immersive theatre. She argues that in this form:

> the audience is thrown (sometimes even literally) into a totally new environment and context from the everyday world from which it has come. These environments are seemingly outside of 'everyday' rules and regulations and always have expectations of physical interaction. All elements of theatre are in the mix, establishing a multidimensional medium in which the participant is submerged, blurring spaces and roles. (27)

In contrast to Machon's focus on the physicality of immersion, Royona Mitra in her article 'Decolonizing Immersion' seeks to contest this notion. Mitra states that her analysis of British contemporary dance, focusing on the tradition of *rasa*, "decolonizes hitherto primarily Anglophobic theorizing of such 'full sensorium immersion' by disassociating the phenomenon from the participatory nature of immersive theatre practices." (89) She contends that the "emphasis Machon places on the relationship between audience agency and physical navigation of a performance creates a problematic binary between (inter)active spectatorship and passive and embodied spectatorship." (91) Considering the spectrum of participation that underlies this dissertation's argument this dissertation also intends to problematise binary representations of audience participation as being passive or active. As such, I will apply Machon's definition of immersion to ANU Productions while asserting that the manner of participation in 'The Monto Cycle' is linked to the social values, performance form, and spatio-temporality of Irish performance practice. Machon is suggesting that not only is the performance live but that it is being lived as an experience rather than something removed from the audience member. It is actively experienced rather than passively observed. However, observation is not always 'passive'. Lowe, outlining the intentions behind creating *World's End Lane* asserted that, "we decided we wanted to create an encounter rather than a particular play where people would come in and passively sit" (ANU Productions). Lowe's statement here demonstrates that the relationship curated between the audience and the performances in 'The Monto Cycle' is intended as an active rather than a passive one, though interpretations of 'active' and 'passive' can vary and are not necessarily qualified in her statement. Both Boss and Lowe confirm the importance of the audience being able to participate in the way that they choose to. Lowe states that "I don't want the audiences to feel exposed, or vulnerable, or scared and so the offer is made in a

more general, more generic type way. so that you can choose to respond or not respond or just be a voyeur in this world" (Boss and Lowe). Expanding on the role of the audience member in immersive performance, Machon further argues that the "physical insertion and direct participation of the audience member in the work *must* be a vital component and is a defining feature of this particular strand of visceral practice (57). Acknowledging the significance of liveness when dealing with audience reception, Haughton argues that "[l]ive performance is one of the most potent, political, personal, public, and private experiences of 'imagined communities'" (*Staging Trauma* 108). Una Mannion also comments on the impact of proximity in work which utilises the above conventions, suggesting that "[t]here is a visceral immediacy in the space of performance art as the spectator experiences the smell, the heat, the body and the pain of the performer in durational action" (94). In these instances, she argues that "[t]he performance demands something different from the spectator, who is implicated in the action through the experiential space that generates some level of inter-subjectivity or empathy" (94). In the case of ANU's demands on the spectator, Lowe emphasises that "it should matter that you are there" ('You Had to Be There' 57). Thus, from her perspective and dramaturgical intent, the active audience member is a co-producer of meaning.

Staging these performances in the Monto area, now renamed Talbot Street and Foley Street, ANU literally bring their theatre audiences to this area of Dublin City to participate in the representation of histories that have been previously marginalised. In ANU's work the audience is encouraged to engage in meaning-making. As Haughton explains in relation to *Laundry*:

> By placing the spectator at the centre of the work and encouraging each spectator to engage with the performance, this post-dramatic style ensures that each experience is unique. Each audience participant has the opportunity to participate in the writing of the performance. The event relies on the fundamental act of presence as each audience participant experiences each performance independently. ('From Laundries to Labour Camps' 73)

Aligning with Haughton, Singleton states that "[w]hile operating in many instances site-responsively, the four performances were played in intimate settings, often to individual spectators who at times were invited to engage, respond and interact with the stories unfolding around them" (*ANU Productions* 2). This activating of the non-performer is exemplary of the relationship between the performance/performer and the audience in the work of ANU and is not only

specific to 'The Monto Cycle', but the company's other works as well.[124] In ANU's work the position of the audience is of watching, but also of being watched. Singleton describes his experience of being watched during *World's End Lane*: "I was a voyeur being watched; I was the spectacle of someone else's spectacle. I was the subject of a peepshow and I could not see who was behind the holes and eyes" (*ANU Productions* 20). He notes that this gaze which he was subjected to many times over the course of the performance, echoed the themes being represented in the production, "I was the subject of another character's gaze, conscious of my to-be-looked-at-ness in performance, mirroring that of the real-life subjects of representation, sex workers" (*ANU Productions* 21). Here I return to Urry and Hurley Dépret's analysis of the 'tourist gaze' noting the importance of framing in terms of the tourist gaze (Urry 2), and the idea that "tourists themselves are *gazed at* in their travels" (Hurley Dépret 161). In 'The Monto Cycle' the audience is also 'gazed at'. However, it can also be argued that ANU's work, particularly 'The Monto Cycle' also repeats some of the problems associated with the middle-class reification and objectification of the working classes. Maguire observes that "a growing acceptance of a trend to perform mocking versions of working class life" ("The State We're In", 165) in Irish cultural output is proliferating in recent years, he cites popular RTÉ television series *Love/Hate* as an example of voyeuristic approaches to watching representations of working class life. In 'The Monto Cycle' a predominantly middle-class theatre festival audience visit spaces of low socio-economic privilege, participate in the performed realities of everyday life as experienced by these communities, and then when the productions conclude, they leave. This could be argued as a reinforcement of these spaces as marginal, rather than a challenging of state histories. In 'The Monto Cycle' the working-class experience could be classified as, in Lyn Gardner's words, "poverty porn" for middle-class theatre goers to consume. (Gardner). In an article for the *Guardian* newspaper, chief theatre critic Lyn Gardner analyses a perceived problematic portrayal of working class experiences in contemporary British theatre, specifically in plays such as Anna Jordan's *Yen* (2015), Leo Butler's *Boy* (2016), and Offstage Theatre's *Re:Home* (2016). She writes that "there is a vast difference between offering some kind of exotic cultural safari into poverty or disenfranchisement and reminding us that poverty is all around. Even if that makes us feel uncomfortable because those are not the stories that regularly get told on stage" (Gardner). In considering this in relation to ANU, I argue that far from a performative dark

[124] For a list of the company's other works, and for more information, please see www.anuproductions.ie

tourism, ANU's activation of the audience through site-specific and immersive theatre practices challenges this idea. Rather than creating a spectacle of otherness their productions invite audiences to question the reasons *why* these situations exist. Returning once again to Walsh, productions like 'The Monto Cycle' are about ensuring that past mistakes are acknowledged and made visible, not about further disenfranchising the communities and stories that are represented. Maguire argues that "[r]estoring [working-class women's] stories to the public sphere may be also a powerful social function for the theatre, functioning as a form of agitational propaganda in its consciousness-raising efforts" ("The State We're In", 171). Throughout 'The Monto Cycle' (and indeed across all of the performances under investigation across this dissertation) the realities of working-class lives and working-class women's lives, in particular, are situated alongside larger national issues, events, and concerns. This situates these smaller, more domestic (in many cases) issues, as a symptom of the larger social moment making them visible on a larger scale. Lowe comments on the impact of ANU Productions' productions on the community members:

> For example, I just think back to the [previous community participant] and I ran into her the other day and she started a new job. There's an aftermath of care that has to go on. That's two years ago. That's two years ago Ciara, so you're still meeting the same community people that you're working with then! And my communication with Safety Net and Street Medicine and GP Care is still ongoing six years on. So, *The Lost O'Casey* took six years to make and it's still happening and I'm still meeting with Austin and the GPs and still going to do the workshops and working with homeless service users. Because, you can't go 'oh I've made my show now and I'm fecking off, thanks very much'. So, our duty of care and our ethics are in the right ways for the right reasons. (Boss and Lowe)

The representation of these stories in the spaces that these communities live is part of what prevents the objectification of the working-class experience in 'The Monto Cycle'. Both Lowe and Boss acknowledge that cultural tourism can be problematic and that they work to counter that in their own art. Lowe states that "[m]ost artists make work about what they know. I make work about what I know. The places that we've been in we've lived. So we're not coming at it with an outside objective, and we wouldn't have gotten away with it! Cultural tourism in that way, we would have been [*laughs*] driven off the blocks in a heartbeat!" (Boss and Lowe). Spectators in ANU's work are the central meaning-makers here and this impacts on the experience of the audience's body in performance. The experience of being watched, of performing, affects the audience experience. According to Singleton, "[s]pectators make meaning in this production not simply from the subjects of representations and their actions, but from the physical, physiological and

psychological experience of their body in the performance, and their body in the real world" (*ANU Productions* 29). As Harvie argues, the audience or prosumer creates "what they want to consume" (*Fair Play* 50). The power and agency that contemporary participatory audiences experience in work like 'The Monto Cycle' involves a transaction. In participatory performance such as this, the audience member must provide their labour. Using the example of a Punchdrunk show, Harvie explores the experience of the participatory audience member. She states that "[e]very audience member's experience was uniquely composed by him or her, and though commentators often reported failing to gather a strong sense of the performance's overarching narrative, they also reported that the show produced a palpable sense of excitement, engagement and opportunity" (*Fair Play* 31). So, although the audience are losing the benefit of a well-made narrative, they are gaining an experience and a sense of agency in the production. They have become, to use a term that Harvie introduces: a prosumer. According to Harvie "[p]rosumers are combined producers and consumers who do for themselves what would formerly have been done for them by others (more specifically, other workers) and who fulfil their own needs of producing what they want to consume, whether that be a commodity or a service" (*Fair Play* 50). This dynamic manifests itself most clearly in the 'moments of communion' structured into each iteration of 'The Monto Cycle'.

Moments of Communion

Smyth notes, in reference to the tendency for crisis moments in Ireland to crystallise around an individual experience, that it is almost always women who must "perform penance imposed through this process of public 'confession'" (35). This idea is echoed through the structure of 'The Monto Cycle'. The one-on-one intimate and intense audience-performance ensures that the stories represented in 'The Monto Cycle' crystallise around one individual experience, creating the opportunity for the audience to participate in these stories, leading to what Lowe refers to as "moments of communion".[125] These 'moments of communion' are described by Lowe as "ethical encounters" (Haughton, 'From Laundries to Labour Camps' 73). These one-on-one moments between a single performer and audience

[125] The use of the one-to-one audience encounter can be seen across modern and contemporary theatre and performance practice. This is particularly visible in the work of Adrian Howells. A comprehensive overview of Howell's work is beyond the scope of this project, however Howells's work is engaged with comprehensively in *It's All Allowed. The Performances of Adrian Howells* (2016), edited by Deirdre Heddon and Dominic Johnson. Similarly, Boal's invisible theatre is a precursor to the consciousness-raising elements of 'The Monto Cycle' where oppressions are foregrounded through the hyper-real (Boal).

member are a large part of the experience of being an audience member in an ANU show. These 'moments of communion' connect to the idea of 'communitas' in performance. In *Communitas. The Anthropology of Collective Joy* (2012) Edith Turner defines communitas as "a group's pleasure in sharing common experiences with one's fellows. This may come into existence anywhere (2). Dolan argues that "Communitas […] describes the moments in a theatre event or a ritual in which audiences or participants become part of the whole in an organic, nearly spiritual way; spectator's individuality becomes finely attuned to those around them, and a cohesive, if fleeting feeling of belonging to the group bathes the audience" (*Utopia in Performance* 11). Coupled with 'The Monto Cycle's proximity to historical site, this sense of communion or communitas encourages participation from the audience as they become attuned to the performance space and the nature of the audience-performance relationship encouraged here.

The performance of penance that Smyth outlines in her article is echoed in the confessional aspects of the cycle as performance is used as a means to reflect on the position of vulnerable women in Irish society. This relationship creates intimacy and empathy within the performative encounter that facilitates the audience's engagement with large-scale issues and histories, provoking questions and tensions rather than offering conclusions or resolutions. This confession has the opposite affect that it is designed to produce in a traditionally Catholic context, which is about power and submission. In a traditionally Catholic context the penitent is on their knees and is offering up their crimes to a higher power for forgiveness. Here the assumption is that the higher power is perfect and has the power to forgive. The type of performance-confession presented in 'The Monto Cycle' subverts the power-dynamics of a Catholic confessional by illuminating and pushing against the power dynamics that it is interrogating. At the time of their occurrences, Irish society could not connect with the traumas and offences being committed by the RCC and the Irish State. However, by encouraging a personal engagement between the audience and the performer in the site of these histories, ANU facilitate an affective response from the audience member. ANU's creation of a safe intimacy allows the audience to engage with traumatic histories in a way that encourages empathy and remembrance. Just like Charabanc and D'Arcy echo second-wave feminist methodologies in their representation of women's' lived realities in the north of Ireland, ANU echo the personalised dynamic that scandals seem to take in contemporary Ireland.

In *World's End Lane,* the lives of sex workers at the beginning of the twentieth century are under the spotlight, analysing the hostile relationship between

the sellers of sex and the Legion of Mary order of the Catholic Church who sought to impose Catholic moral values in The Monto. Lowe describes the three roles that the audience member plays in *World's End Lane*: "One part they're a tourist and they are given a tour of the area. In another part, they are kind of put into the position of being a punter in the district. And, in a third part they are kind of like complicit workers for the most notorious Madam of all" (ANU Productions). Here, the audience's role moves along the spectrum of participation from passive voyeur to complicit participant with agency to respond to a direct address. The invitation to respond is a moment of communion. It also allows the audience to co-create what they want to consume. At one point in the performance the solo audience member witnesses a choreographed movement scene between two performers, a male punter and a female sex worker. The physicalised movement scene is aggressive and sexual. Both performers maintain occasional but intense eye contact with the audience member throughout. This episode evolves when the punter begins physically assaulting the sex worker. During this moment of aggression, the punter asks the audience member: "are you going to let this happen?" (*World's End Lane*) It is an invitation to act, a moment of communion between the performer and the spectator. This direct question marks the audience member as complicit in this moment. We must ask ourselves *are* we going to let this happen? In my experience of this performance, I do not intervene. I allow it to happen, but I can no longer deny my complicity. I am an active spectator.

In *Laundry,* the spectator is activated from the very first moments of the performance, when they are asked to remember a series of names – in her analysis of *Laundry*, Haughton echoes that same request, addressing the reader to do the same: "Margaret Blanney, Gertrude Craigh, Mary Fagan, Christina Green" ('From Laundries to Labour Camps' 65). Haughton states that these names were:

> selected at random from the 1911 Irish Census. The women to whom these names belonged resided, according to the census, at the Magdalene Laundry, run by the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity of Refuge on Seán McDermott street (formerly Gloucester Street) in Dublin's north city centre until 1996. It was at this address that these women, and hundreds of others, were finally given a voice during Anu Productions' site-specific performance *Laundry*, directed by Louise Lowe in 2011, a century after that census was held." ('From Laundries to Labour Camps' 65)

This act of remembering the women's names enacts Smyth's idea that in Ireland there is a personalisation of crisis. Haughton also reminds us that "[t]he recent problematic state report finds that approximately ten-thousand women entered the laundries between 1922 and 1996" ('From Laundries to Labour Camps' 67). The sheer scale of the abuse and incarceration that occurred in the laundries means that

any production which seeks to represent this history *must* create conditions to facilitate more interpersonal critical reflection as a means of engaging the audience as participants in the remembrance. Due to the sheer scale of information pertaining to institutional abuse in Ireland that has emerged since the mid-1990s the personalisation of this experience, both in terms of those represented and those receiving the information, is of key importance. In 'The Monto Cycle', individual characters are constructed as points of intersubjective relationships and empathy for audiences. Also, the form and structure of the performance means that audiences are being asked to perform their own personalised labour in the co-creation of meaning within the performance.[126] The personalisation that occurs here is not just a symptom of a cultural response to a crisis, it is a vital component in the representation of these histories. Of course, ANU's *Laundry* is not the first artistic response to the Magdalene Laundries. Haughton notes Máiréad Ní Ghráda's Irish language play *An Triail* (1964), Patricia Burke Brogan's play *Eclipsed* (1992) and Peter Mullan's film *The Magdalene Sisters* (2002) as some of the most notable artistic responses to the Laundries ('From Laundries to Labour Camps' 69). However, she also observes that:

> with each of these significant works, there remains a sense of distance between the production and the audience. They were stimulated by history, but history was fictionalized for performance on the stage or screen, and there was a physical separation between the performers and the audience, in their seats, in the theatre or observing a film." ('From Laundries to Labour Camps' 69)

The proximity of the audience to the events in *Laundry*, coupled with the fact that the performance is taking place in the site of these histories, and with stories inspired by real women, lifts that physical separation. McAuley acknowledges the "fragile boundaries between the stage and the auditorium, and between stage and offstage", arguing that these dynamics "reveal a great deal about the processes of representation involved" (37). Without the coded frame of a traditional theatre building, the licensed behaviour of the 'real world' becomes merged with the world of the performance. As both Mannion and Lowe argue, the visceral intimacy of the audience and the performers demands participation from the audience (Mannion 94), ensuring that the audience's presence in the event is one of the key relationships of the production (Lowe, 'You Had to Be There' 57). During *Laundry*

[126] This emphasis on personalising the experience (in terms of the character being represented and the audience who is co-creating meaning) is in contrast with socially engaged work that depends on the reiteration of the theatrical frame such as: Bertolt Brecht's Epic Theatre and documentary and verbatim theatre makers such as: Alecky Blythe (*London Road* 2011) Anna Deavere-Smith (*Fires in the Mirror* (1992), Moisés Kaufman (*The Laramie Project* 2000), and Richard Norton-Taylor (*The Colour of Justice* 1999).

there are several moments where the audience is in very close proximity to the performers. The audience is placed in a very small room with performers, in a bathroom where a woman is in a bath, and in a moving taxi. The proximity and small audience numbers allow for moments of communion to take place. Like in *World's End Lane* this constitutes a kind of moral quandary. At one point the audience member is approached by a laundry inmate (played by Laura Murray), pleading: "I have to get out of here. I have to get out of here now. Will you help me?" (*Laundry*) As in *World's End Lane*, this moment is posed as a direct question to the audience member. The performer makes direct eye contact. She asks, "How would you get out of this place?" (*Laundry*) The use of direct address to implicate the spectator is a common structure across 'The Monto Cycle'. This method also has a long history in political theatre.[127] In *Laundry* this question draws attention to the freedom of the audience member to simply leave the performance, reinforcing the reality that these women could not leave of their own free will. In fact, it is the power of the audience member to leave that is drawn on in this moment. The inmate presses a pile of clothes into the hands of the audience member, stating, "Take these. I'll say I'm helping you with the laundry. Whatever you do, just act natural" (*Laundry*). As the audience member and the inmate walk through the Laundry building they walk past other audience members at various, and sometimes earlier, stages of the performance. The audience member is walking through the ghosts of the story they have just experienced, aware of what is at stake by helping the inmate escape the building. At the door, the audience member is challenged by another inmate, who asks the audience member and the original inmate "Where are you going?" (*Laundry*) When the inmate replies that she is helping the audience member bring out the laundry, the woman at the door asks the audience member "Is that true?" (*Laundry*) At this moment the audience member has the opportunity to confirm, or deny, the inmate's assertion. At the 'NOW-THEN-NOW: Witnessing Future History' symposium that took place in 2014, Lowe revealed that most audience members lied for the inmate, but that some did not. This is a clear moment of active participation where the audience has the power to intervene in the making of meaning in the performance.

In *The Boys of Foley Street* this moment of communion is evidenced through one character's experience of gang-rape, and again takes the form of a

[127] To notable examples include *Sergeant Musgrave's Dance* (1959) by John Arden, where a machine gun is pointed at the audience, and in *Madame de Markievicz on Trial* (2016) by Ann Matthews the audience is consistently addressed as a jury throughout.

direct question. The published version of the text represents the following exchange:

> *The four have walked on past* **Bernie** *into the flat.* **Bernie** *follows closing the door behind her and standing with back to door.* **Kathleen** *has brought the* **Audience Member 1** *in to the living room, shutting the door behind her.* **Denis** *in the hall with* **Audience Member 2** *who shows them into a small bathroom.*
>
> **Denis** Get in there, go on get in. Have a look at that. (*He points the* **Audience Member** *towards peep holes in the wall which show a video of* **Maeve** *being gang raped by three men*). Knock yerself out.
>
> **Maeve** *is sitting on the toilet, she is undressed and is dishevelled.*
> **Maeve** *looks at* **Audience.**
>
> **Maeve** Am I allowed to wash myself? (Lowe, 'The Boys of Foley Street' 363)

Maeve renders the audience member complicit in what they have just witnessed through this exchange. The intensity of the small bathroom increases the discomfort and the visceral reality of what Maeve has just experienced. Proximity informs the efficacy of my own experience of a moment of communion in *Vardo*, the last iteration of The Monto Cycle.

I attended *Vardo* (2014) as part of that year's Dublin Theatre Festival. During this performance, the audience of four people are split up, experiencing the encounter as individual audience members. During one episode, the audience member is taken to the public seating area inside Busáras bus station (the main bus terminus in Dublin City), where an actor (Kunle Animashaun), playing a Nigerian man who is in Ireland illegally, begins a conversation with them. During my own experience of this episode, an elderly, white, Irish man intervened in this exchange. This man expressed concern that I was being taken advantage of by Animashaun, and asked me if I needed some help. In this case, the direct question comes from a participant outside of the performance. Animashaun stayed in character, leaving it to the audience member (me) to decide what to do in this moment. In my role as active participant I explained to the person who had intervened in this exchange that I was taking part in a performance and was not in any danger. Other audience members reported a comparable experience to mine during *Vardo*'s run. Singleton states that:

> as Kunle explained to me in a personal interview, his blackness and his repeated actions with individual spectators, many of whom were women, rendered him subject to the gaze of daily life in a performance that was meant to be invisible. At one point early in the run the police almost arrested him, and on another occasion a man tried to pick a fight with him. (Singleton, *ANU Productions* 89)

The invisibility of the broader performance of *Vardo* lead to the increased *visibility* of the raced, gendered, and classed dynamics of public space. The proximity of the audience member to the performance, being *within* it, allows for the audience to intervene in this errant moment. Singleton notes his own experience with Animashaun stating that:

> While I was with Kunle as a spectator, I could see clearly him being subjected to the gaze of others who were racially profiling. Sensing this very quickly, I became protective, and turned to the point where I was shielding him with my body from their suspicious looks. All the while I was listening to his distressing story, I was embodying also the racial tension all around me, and that served in my identification with his plight. (*ANU Productions* 89)

The structure of ANU's work encourages collision between what is outside of the performance and what is inside it. There is a porous boundary between the performance and the public in *Vardo*. The invasions by members of the public into the audience's experience of the performance renders the audience member culpable within the performative encounter.

Echoing Haughton in *Staging Trauma,* I could no longer claim that I did not *know* about the prominence of racial profiling in Dublin after this encounter. This experience can be referred to, in Haughton's words, as a 'jolt'. Haughton observes that "[s]ometimes it can take a jolt to 'know', following a long period of 'not knowing' that one has acted as a witness to torture, slavery, incarceration, abuse, kidnapping and human trafficking" (*Staging Trauma* 127). This jolt as Haughton theorises it specially in relation to traumatic events, can take the form of small individual action (such as attending a show where you are forced to witness histories in shadow) or larger societal scandals. The structures of Irish society, since independence, has led to a culture of silence and shame. Although as Caelainn Hogan correctly suggests in *Republic of Shame* (2019) "[t]he beliefs and stigmas that underpinned the mother-and-baby homes and the Magdalen laundries all existed in Ireland long before the creation of the independent Irish state" (29), the influence of the RCC on state structures and through their participation in healthcare, social services, and education created a culture based on Catholic morality and respectability. This dynamic, which prevailed throughout the twentieth century, had the dual impact of suppressing the allegations of those who did speak out and creating a culture whereby many victims and bystanders did not feel that they could speak out about abuses across the system. The scandals

emerging from this problematic relationship 'jolt' society into an engagement with the past through formal structures such as the Redress Board (2002), and the various institutional enquiries, including those in the north of Ireland, and activism through consciousness-raising through the media or at grassroots level.[128] ANU firmly place their audience into the action of their work. Lowe states that, "my work is often defined by an active, physical relationship between audience and production. I feel that how I connect with an audience is critical in terms of how I keep myself relevant as an artist" ('You Had to Be There' 57). Lowe states that "[t]he communion between the viewer and the performer in the space is the final piece of each production that I make and one that I consider deeply throughout all aspects of the build and development ('You Had to Be There' 57). In the case of *Vardo* this evolves and the audience member becomes involved in a moment of involuntary errant immersion. Adam Alston coins the term 'errant spectator or audience', defining the term as:

> an errant audience member – one who strays away from an intended course – 'mis-takes' their environment as a designed or planned feature of an immersive world […] The errantly immersed audience member plots her own path through a physically dispersed forest of things, acts and signs that are provided and that can be wandered through and at times interacted with, but they also extend the borders of this forest beyond those intended by the theatre maker. (65)

Alston also highlights the difference between errant and errantly immersed, citing "Ridout's useful identification of the 'mis-spectator', an 'in-expert' spectator who accidently reads against the grain […] errant immersion is the result of a surplus in expertise, reading too well and taking too far an invitation to get involved" (67). Returning to the urban spaces of immersive theatre, Alston states that "the city introduces factors that elude the possibility for an 'otherworldly-world' to be navigated 'according to its own rules of logic', in Josephine Machon's terms […] as the logic of an immersive theatre performance is forced to forge some kind of pact with the uncertain and volatile happenstances that unfold on a city's streets" (67). This errant immersion applies in a metatheatrical level in ANU's work and impacts the nature of participation in the performance. The presence of the work in public space ensures that both the intended audience member and the accidental audience member has room for errant behaviour. In *Vardo* it is not the audience members' surplus in expertise that results in the errant immersion, but the public who intervenes in the performance, believing it to be real life. Without the active audience member participating in the co-production of meaning, the errant

[128] More information on this commission of investigation can be found at: https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmdfence/1064/106404.htm

assumption of the accidental audience member remains uncorrected. By engaging with this moment of errant immersion, one engages with the histories presented over four years through 'The Monto Cycle'. Through engaging with memory, space, histories, and intimate moments of communion, audiences may be 'jolted' into a response informed by one hundred years of history and four years of experiencing the cycle. Across this performance quadrology repeat audiences and repeat encounters may influence the quality of immersion or engagement with the hyper real. Errant immersion becomes more likely as audiences become increasingly familiar with not only the form of ANU performances but also the spaces that serve as the site of 'The Monto Cycle'. These spaces undoubtedly become more familiar to audiences who attended more than one of the cycle's four performances. When questioned about the impact of 'repeat audiences' on the way that the company make work, and in terms of the possibility of this 'errant immersion', Boss and Lowe stated that it does not necessarily impact the performance making, stating that "it's just about how to tell the story best. That really is the main challenge. I suppose placing the audience at the centre of it is vital still" (Boss and Lowe). The audience's participation, is informed by the social values that inform their lives, and which they are reliant on in this hyper-real space. The audience are invited to engage with the space of Dublin's north inner city and participate in the interrogation of the lived realities of those who live there.

Conclusion

This chapter has interrogated how ANU Productions illuminate a century of vulnerable women's marginalised experience by interrogating the relationship between site, memory, and performance in 'The Monto Cycle'. Through 'The Monto Cycle' (predominately working-class) women's hidden histories have been explored, contextualised, commemorated, and legitimised. In 'The Monto Cycle' these moments of personal crisis and trauma are connected to moments of *national* crisis and trauma. Evidence of this dynamic has been illustrated through this chapter's analysis of 'The Monto Cycle', as ANU traverse one hundred years of Dublin's north inner-city history, centralising experiences of poverty, corruption, slavery, sex work and human trafficking that occurred throughout the island, largely invisible in official records and public discourse. By bringing the audience into close encounters with these stories and lived experiences, and intimately acquainting audiences with the histories and stories of this area, 'The Monto Cycle' debunks the grand national narrative as a nation led by Christian compassion,

morals, or claims of equality. They intimately acquaint their audiences with the histories and stories of this area.

'The Monto Cycle', as a whole, subverted the tendency to obfuscate that which is deemed to be shameful or unacceptable within Irish society and attempts to remove the barrier of history through their performative interactions with the site's histories. By bringing active audiences to these sites to participate in representations of the events that occurred there the company also challenge the dismissal or invisibility of those events, thus linking history, space, and memory in intense and intimate performance encounters.

Conclusion: Theatres of Crisis and Change

Summary

This research began by querying the relationship between performance practice and moments of social change on the island of Ireland between 1972-2014 and established that moments of social change are captured by a diversification of performance form. The central contentions of this dissertation are that *(1)* diverse performance practices emerged adjacent to the more established literary theatre that focused on marginalised experiences and illuminated the realities of everyday life for those who experienced violence, oppression, and trauma, and *(2)* the relationship between the audience and the performance has changed in Irish theatre in recent decades. As a result, this dissertation demonstrates a concrete link between changing paradigms in both society and performance practice on the island of Ireland.

By employing a methodological approach that is primarily led through the lens of theatre studies, performance studies and cultural studies, with further insights drawn from sociology and feminisms, these frameworks allow for an analysis of various aspects of performance such as audience, embodiment, and space. This approach revealed that while the forms of theatre and performance-making under analysis in this dissertation refer to distinct lineages of practice internationally, their emergence in an Irish context foreground the links between key moments of social change on the island of Ireland and the form of performance practice presented. Similarly, this research undertook archival analysis as a means of accessing and contextualising the performance practice analysed throughout. I also interviewed key practitioners to inform the perspective of this research and to foreground the artist's voice in this research. Both of these methodologies created opportunities for broader insights into the social contexts informing, not only the subject matter and form of the performances under investigation, but also the impact on dynamics of performance making. The engagement with Irish theatre and performance history over a period of forty years identified that radical performance practice emerging adjacent to The Troubles, Second-Wave Feminism, and the Celtic Tiger identifies and represents the experiences of those typically existing on the margins of public discourse and cultural representation. These performances privilege representations of the everyday lived experiences of those existing on the margins, subverting and rejecting the traditional theatre and performance tropes and dramaturgies of protagonist and chorus; dramaturgical

structures of crises and resolutions; and does not direct attention to well-established public or political figure(s) in their references to historical or cultural events.

In Chapter One *The Wedding Community Play Project* (1999), *Convictions* (2000), *Two Roads West* (2008), and *The West Awakes* (2010) eschewing the traditional modes of sectarian representation that categorise communities in the north of Ireland as being: Irish or British; Nationalist or Unionist; or Green or Orange by representing the intricacies of everyday life for citizens existing on the margins of a traumatised state. These performances engage the audience as a co-producer of meaning and facilitate audience participation. This spectrum of participation demonstrated in these performances evidences a link between the changing social values in the north of Ireland of between 1998 and 2010.

Chapter Two outlines the links between second-wave feminist methodologies on the island of Ireland and their emergence in performance practice during the 1980s on both sides of the border, as well as the influence of Anglo-American feminisms at that time. Feminist practitioners across various jurisdictions utilised consciousness-raising, direct action, and privileging of women's experiences in their performances and in the structures of their woman-led organisations. *Split Britches* (1983), *Lesbians Who Kill* (1994), *Lay Up Your Ends* (1983) and *Tell Them Everything* (1981), echo the strategies of the second-wave feminist movement in their jurisdictions by using similar methods of direct action and consciousness-raising in their performance practice as well as speaking directly to their own constituency audiences. Second-wave feminist methods also made themselves manifest *as* performance in the activism of Margaretta D'Arcy as opposed to being activated in the process of *making* theatre in the case of Charabanc Theatre Company and Split Britches. Both Charabanc and D'Arcy use their performance practices to illuminate the issues facing women in the north of Ireland exposing the persistent double-jeopardy that they experienced in the 1980s. This spectrum of participation exhibited in these performances signals a correlation between the methodologies of feminist politics and performance practice in the 1980s.

Chapter Three demonstrates how ANU Productions illuminate a century of women's experience that had previously been marginalised by interrogating the relationship between site, memory, and performance in their four-part production 'The Monto Cycle' (2010-2014). In these performances, women's experience is represented adjacent to larger significant moments in Irish national history and consists of a form of radical commemoration. As presented in Chapter One, this performance demonstrates that socially engaged theatre practice attempts to disrupt

established social dichotomies by presenting moments of crisis and trauma to unveil the nuances, complexities and paradoxes that can be found in the realities of lived experience. The performances under examination focus on the experience of everyday life for those marginalised by poverty, institutional incarceration, social status, and geographical location. By engaging audiences with the public and embodied spaces of these histories through active participation, ANU emerge as an alternative to mainstream performance practices and challenge the patriarchal narrative of history which dominated public discourse and cultural production during this time. The spectrum of participation established across 'The Monto Cycle' suggests a connection between the culture of silence breaking in the 1990s and the lived realities represented across these productions.

Insights

This research reveals that the audience-performance relationship across these studies and forms was inherently participatory and constitutes a 'spectrum of participation' in contemporary Irish performance practice. This spectrum of participation maintains a dialogue with the spectrum of social agency that shifts and changes over decades in response to moments of social change on the island of Ireland. This dissertation thus argues that this spectrum of participation is influenced by social values, the structure of performance, and the spatio-temporality of performance. Thus, it contends that each performance presented as part of this dissertation has a place along this spectrum: from the community participants in *The Wedding Community Play Project* (1999) to the actively immersed audience member in *Vardo* (2014). This research also argues that the radical modes of practice under investigation are often embodied forms of practice that draw from lineages of Live Art and performance art practice in their representations of lived experiences. In the performances investigated in Chapter Two, emerging during second-wave feminism across the island engage with the idea that the 'personal is political' and embody the politics being enacted across the island at that time. D'Arcy literally embodies the struggle faced by republican women prisoners in the Armagh Gaol during the 1980s through her performance of protest. In 'The Monto Cycle' performers embody the tensions of a century of Irish history in The Monto, subverting the grand national narrative by presenting these histories as adjacent to more established histories. In all of the performances, the artists engaged in creating them subvert the mainstream representation of history

and experience at national level by raising awareness of the reality of everyday life at the margins of experience.

All of the performances analysed in this dissertation are solely or jointly created by women. As recent research by the #WakingtheFeminists research group has evidenced, this is not the usual breakdown of representation in Irish theatre and performance practice (Donohue et al.). This selection of performances which favour women's contribution to theatre and performance practice is not intentional, but a symptom of the states of change that this research is in direct conversation with. Historically, women in Irish society are most likely to exist along the margins and as such tend to engage in radical performance modes adjacent and in opposition to the mainstream in order to produce more resonant representations. Thus, it is not surprising that the works under analysis would be dominated by women. Artists tend to represent themselves onstage and this is why a diverse representation of genders, ethnic backgrounds, sexual orientations, and class backgrounds is vital to the success and development of theatre and performance practice on the island. However, the identities and experience that are represented across this study, although certainly existing along the margins at the time of production, do not represent the full range of marginalised voices and experiences across the island of Ireland during this time frame, something which warrants further study. Across this dissertation the performances analysed demonstrate an opening up of established histories to re-presentation, drawing from and pointing to marginal experiences and how they are represented and presented. Through the subversion of the 'victim versus perpetrator' binary, the performances examined across this research project promotes an engagement with histories that are underrepresented or intentionally obfuscated.

Limitations and Potential for Further Research

One of the limitations of this dissertation's investigation is a lack of analysis of the everyday experience of rural communities across the island of Ireland. A deeper investigation of radical performance practice in rural areas on the island of Ireland warrants deeper investigations and is another fitting avenue for this research at a later date. Similarly, the performances under investigation in this dissertation almost exclusively engage with white Irish identities with very limited engagement with persons of colour, persons seeking asylum, members of the traveller/mincéir communities, or people with disabilities. There are several scholars engaging with the work of these communities in Irish performance such as Mary Burke, Emma

Creedon, Jose Lanters, Charlotte McIvor, Rachel Parry, and Justine Nakase. By building on the work of these scholars, future research will benefit from furthering its engagement with ethnically diverse and marginalised communities on the island of Ireland.

Since I began researching this project in September of 2015 Ireland has undergone significant social change. The two recent referendums (in the south) legalising same-sex marriage in 2015 and legalising abortion in 2018 were won through grassroots activism and active political participation from communities often marginalised from mainstream politics. In both referendums, the voices and experiences of those impacted by the proposed legislation changes became centralised. Unlike previous referendums in the twenty-first century, both the 2015 Yes Equality and 2018 Together for Yes campaigns focused on representing the everyday lived experiences of those affected by the restrictive legislation that both groups were seeking to change. The performativity of these experiences manifested in private, through one-to-one conversations with family and friends and in the public sphere through concentrated social media campaigns such as 'In Her Shoes,' and through the mainstream media and prominent political figures.[129] In the 2018 Together for Yes campaign this method encouraged progressive conversation and discourse, which ultimately influenced the outcome of the referendum in May 2018. The #WakingtheFeminists protest, the Michael Colgan allegations, and 2015/2018 referendums demonstrate that politics, society, and cultural engagement is changing on the island of Ireland.[130] They also reveal that there is a significant amount of unfinished business left to resolve, if such crises and issues can be resolved in a conclusive way. Or, is resolution a misguided or unfitting concept for contemporary politics, inherited from Classical Greek Drama that we have yet to interrogate radically? Feminism on the island of Ireland has moved away from the Anglo-American model of the second wave and embraced the momentum of intersectional feminism that is manifesting in Western society globally. The re-

[129] "In Her Shoes - Women of the Eighth is a grassroots movement started by Erin Darcy on January 14th, 2018. In its run up to the referendum to Repeal the 8th amendment on May 25th, 2018 - the page grew to a following of 115k people, and an organic reader reach of 4 million people per week. This movement is changing the conversation, bringing the focus back to the central person at hand - those that need access to safe terminations. This movement has been a major driving force in changing the way people are talking about taboo subjects, from abortion to domestic violence and rape. 43% of people cited that reading personal stories in the media influenced them to vote for decriminalization of abortion. More over, storytelling has been healing for those that have shared, and those yet unready to share - but take comfort in the comradre [sic] of support shown" (In Her Shoes – Women of the Eighth).

[130] In October 2017, Grace Dyas, a theatre maker with THEATREclub, published an article on her website entitled 'I've Been Thinking About Michael Colgan A Lot Lately…'. This article outlined allegations of sexual harassment and bullying by the former Gate Director. In the following weeks, several more women who had worked with Colgan came forward to make allegations about their experiences of his alleged misconduct while working at the Gate Theatre (Dyas).

emergence of 'the national question' in relation to the north of Ireland post-Brexit and the slow erosion of Anglo-Irish relations is re-framing debates on national identity in the north of Ireland and across these islands. Political change is manifesting through grassroots activism, rather than broad party politics in the south of Ireland and has generated progressive social change. However, in the south homelessness figures are the highest recorded since the establishment of the state, the housing crisis in Ireland is leaving an entire generation of potential home-owners and renters at an unprecedented disadvantage, and the rise of neo-liberal politics have generated a labour market overly reliant on precarious labour and the 'gig economy'. This has resulted in the slippage of ethical and responsible labour practices and employment rights over several decades. In the north of Ireland similar concerns about precarity and labour persist and the suicide rates post-GFA are higher than any other country in the UK. The last four decades on the island of Ireland have been mired in scandal, civil war, and many instances of irresponsible governance. The island has also experienced periods of wealth, economic growth, and social progression. The performances under investigation in this dissertation represent the everyday lived realities of those who exist and have existed on the margins of society throughout this period of intense change on the island of Ireland. This research project can contribute to and inform scholarship engaging with performance practice on the island of Ireland by providing a methodology that can be applied to society and performance on the island of Ireland post-2014 and internationally.

New Perspectives

This research offers new perspectives on performance practice on the island of Ireland by demonstrating that changes in Irish society provoked responses in performance form that emphasised the embodied nature of performance practice on the island of Ireland. These embodied performances sought out new sites of performance as a means of interrogating the lived realities these places and their socio-political construction. These performances invited audience participation, taking place on a spectrum (influenced by social values, the structures of performance, and the spatio-temporality of performance) to reconsider their relationship to these sites and to the broader society and states on the island of Ireland. This dissertation focuses on theatre and performance practice that lie outside of the more dominant literary canon, a canon that has been dominated by men, and is distinct from the single-authored text model. Instead it engages with

performances that are generated by distinctive processes and which are often devised collectively, situating women as key agents in their construction. Likewise, the focus on social and political contexts demonstrates that these performances are not just reflections of the contexts of their production, but are engaged in inducing such changes.

This research also engages an all-island study of theatre and performance practices, thus acknowledging the visible and vital links between theatre performance practice on both sides of the Irish border and traces these lineages across time and political jurisdictions. Through its archival research and interviews with practitioners, provides rich new materials for the development of scholarship in this area. Finally, this dissertation is framed not only as an all-island, but also a multi-paradigm study which not only traces the links in performance lineage across political borders but also investigates the connections between Live Art and performance art practices and contemporary Irish theatre practice.

The Power of Performance

This dissertation begins with a quotation from ANU Productions' *World's End Lane*: "Are you going to let this happen?" (ANU Productions) My personal experience of this moment, during *World's End Lane*'s 2012 run as part of the Dublin Theatre Festival, constitutes the tentative beginnings of this dissertation. This direct question posed to me during this performance, occurred at the culmination of my MA in Drama, Theatre and Performance Studies at UCD. This moment in performance foregrounded my self-awareness as an active spectator and my position and visibility in the public space of this event. *World's End Lane* and ANU Productions' 'The Monto Cycle' introduced many contemporary Irish audiences to a mode of active audience participation that had been largely unprecedented in Irish performance practice. My research into 'The Monto Cycle' matured into a broader investigation of audience participation in Irish theatre practice which in turn has evolved into this study on performing social change on the island of Ireland. The landscape of theatre and performance practice has changed vastly during this time but certain cornerstones remain. The main venues of production such as The Abbey Theatre, The Lyric, The Gate, Druid Theatre and the Dublin Theatre Festival still engage with the single-authored dramatic literary text as the primary medium for which to present performance. However, the shift in the audience-performance relationship has made its way into the mainstream. In fact, ANU Productions are now one of the foremost production companies in

Ireland, with almost annual feature in the Dublin Theatre Festival, as well as major international festivals and producing houses. In 2018 and 2019 they have been programmed and produced at both the Abbey Theatre and the Gate Theatre, and commissioned by different venues in the UK.

In my article 'Reflecting Irishness, Mirroring Histories: Performing Commemoration in Irish Theatre in 2015' I conclude that the #WakingtheFeminists campaign and the "reaction against engendered inequalities proves that theatre can indeed effect social change" (124). Bell, the campaign director for #WakingtheFeminists, stated in the introduction to the 'Gender Counts' report that "the power of the campaign took on a life of its own, touching not only the theatre, but affecting the whole cultural community, as we asked things like – what stories does our culture tell about us, whose stories get told, and who chooses those stories?" (Donohue et al. 5) This dissertation's investigation into the relationship between theatre and society sought to create a framework that would allow for an analysis of those questions. This research analyses how marginalised experiences are presented and articulated in Irish performance practice and advocates for their inclusion into the larger and more established narratives that they are often presented in adjacent to. As such, this investigation into performing social change on the island of Ireland seeks to analyse what is happening when performance intervenes to illuminate the shadowed corners of Irish society and history and to add to scholarship on the recent histories of Irish theatre and performance practice.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Interview with Paula McFetridge and Ciara L Murphy on 11th February 2020.

C = Ciara L. Murphy (interviewer)
P = Paula McFetridge (interviewee)

C: **I'm trying to fill in some gaps, in terms of the case studies that I'm looking at. So, I look at *Convictions,* I look at *The Wedding Community Play Project,* I look at *Two Roads West* and *The West Awakes*. So I wasn't at any of those. I have my own secondary material in regards to that, and I obviously encountered Kabosh's work more recently. I suppose, I'm going to start with *Convictions* and *The Wedding Play* if that's okay?**

P: Yeah

C: **Is it okay if I record this, so that I can write my notes up afterwards?**

P: Yeah, absolutely.

C: **In terms of both *Convictions* and *The Wedding Play*, they both kind of strike me as two productions that engage with community, and engaging with community that's subverting the rules of public space, in terms of where certain people are allowed to go and the geographical segregation of Belfast in particular. I'm just wondering, I suppose, about the intentions of some of those projects in terms of engaging with community, in terms of engaging with crossing geographical barriers. What do you feel were the aims of those two works to engage with community and to subvert the rules of geography?**

P: Okay. Both in my head are very different projects with very different objectives, and obviously both of those were not Kabosh projects. I was brought into *The Wedding Community Play Project* as a production manager of sorts, to kind of look at the logistics of it. It would be a project that would be very much housed within the community arts movement, so it was about participatory practice at its core. It was about looking at how members of the community could tell their own stories in their own spaces, and how they could reclaim those spaces. What I suppose captured people's imaginations about that project was the logistical magnitude of it. Because, if you think about it at the time, in 1999, that to move an audience across Belfast like that, and to move an audience on that scale, and to allow them to be up close and personal with amateur actors, actors who didn't have the trappings of any kind of theatrical structure, you know as regards: lights, sound, all that kind of stuff. That, the demands it placed on community performers was huge and there was a rawness to it, that because we had a very strong community arts sector in the north, we were well versed in the experience of that. You know, it was expected to be raw, it was expected to be dangerous, it was expected to be in your face and probably quite emotional. Now, when it came to *Convictions*, it was a different kettle of fish because it wasn't about people telling their own stories. It was about people – well – we were trying to use the arts to raise questions that neither the media nor politicians were dealing with. So, it was using art as arts activism to challenge what wasn't happening within our mainstream conversations. So, while *The Wedding Community Play* could be perceived to be

dangerous because of its structure, and because it was taking people into communities that they felt alien to, and also while it was dangerous, in that it got people to tell unknown stories that were part of very volatile situations – for example one of the cast members in *The Wedding Community Play* their husband was attacked during the project and it was felt that that happened because of the project. You know, interestingly one of the things that happened with *Convictions* was that whenever we started to try and gather the stories of those individuals that had gone through the courthouse and/or worked there – as some of the oral archive that's included within the publication – that we were warned off it. So, we had to bring in an independent journalist to do that because Belfast was exceptionally volatile during that period. But, as artists because of our perceived neutrality on *Convictions*, we could ask difficult questions. We could challenge the norm, and geographically what was interesting about *Convictions* was it was a building that people were never going to see inside. So, we got to take an audience into areas of that building that were never open to the public before. And, we were able to reclaim those areas of the building and assist the community to see that building differently because we put theatre in it. So, oddly they were both very different, but yet, inevitably the logistics of one allowed me to distil it better and, I suppose, tighten it when it came to *Convictions*, as regards geographical spread. But also it is worth saying that where the courthouse is, where we staged *Convictions*, that whole area became very violent. There was internal riots going on in the Shankill on to which the courthouse backed on to. So, we had to bus audiences in and out, we couldn't leave any cars there, there was a lot of violence in the area, so both pieces were done against the backdrop of very volatile community conflict. They were both at a point when, I suppose, questions were starting to be asked about the type of society that we actually wanted to be part of. So, they were very much pieces of their time.

C: And do you think, I suppose, because obviously the courthouse in particular is interesting because it's right at that intersection of these two very segregated spaces – at the time post- Good Friday Agreement – where storytelling is becoming so much a part of the decision on how to move forward in society. In terms of the audience and their participation in that, so I know it's more participatory obviously in the idea of *The Wedding Play*, but how do you feel that audiences from a variety of backgrounds actually responded to that work then, to that intention?

P: It was unbelievable. Like, there was no way we could have necessarily imagined that it was going to work the way it worked. With *The Wedding Community Play*, we had two huge busses and they were completely sold out. People would arrive dressed up to go to a wedding. It was so funny, people took it on as an experience. People said to us: there's no way audiences are going to go on a four-hour theatre experience. They took it on like a mission. They really did. It was kind of championed as this event that you had to go to. So yes of course some people were going to see their own family members and peers, they wanted to see their own areas, they wanted to see how you would animate their areas, so all that was going on. With *Convictions*, the incredible thing is – and I've learned this more and more with this type of promenade work – when you divide an audience when they arrive at a location, for starters, a lot of the people who will go to an event like this tend to be people who wouldn't necessarily go to theatre a lot. They're going because it is an event. They're going because they're curious about space. They're going because they're curious about

how you're going to tell their story. And, so they're a bit kind of going on the defensive. They're not really there to receive. But that creates an energy that is always very interesting. So, the audience arrive, you then divide them up into groups. What happens then is that very quickly, you get this kind of tribal mentality, where they all think that their group is the best group. They all start defending the colour red because that's their group. They all think that the journey their group goes on is going to be the best journey. Like, it is really interesting. Also, they are instantly more comfortable, because they're part of a gang. A really odd kind of gang mentality happens. I witnessed this in *The Wedding Community Play*, and I witnessed it in other community arts projects that I've done. But, in *Convictions*, you were dealing with quite personal, very difficult subject matter in a very difficult space, some of which was inevitably really personal. But you have audience members – for example there was one area (it's a story I tell often) there's one area of the journey that went through the old canteen, and the old canteen witnessed an awful lot of riots and major fights during big key court trials. Because, you would have people coming out of the criminal court, people coming out of the civil court, two different communities, two different families, two different causes, fights would always break out. On different days within the canteen they had different menus, and people think I make it up. On one day you would have mince and potatoes and the next day you'd have Irish stew. You wouldn't have Irish stew if there was going to be a big Loyalist trial. It was things as simple as that. They realised that one particular event, like one of the ladies in the canteen talks about when they ran out of Lucozade. They ran out of Lucozade because everyone was stockpiling Lucozade, the ladies were filling their handbags with them, they were waiting on the defence coming out of the criminal court and a riot broke out with all the ladies and the Lucozade bottles in their bags, bashing the living daylights out of the women from the other group. So they used to censor what they served. So, in the canteen – it was an installation in there. It was a sound and visual art installation, it wasn't a play – I had commissioned a series of paper mache spines that all looked like they were curved over, so you saw the vertebra of the spine, and there was loads of kitchen knives everywhere. The noise that was being played was like loads of pots steaming and knives chopping. So it was a really intense kind of sound as you walked through the canteen bit. But, on the floor, we put in place maps that we found in the basement of the courthouse. So, you know the kind of maps you find in a court of law where you see the dead body drawn out on the ground and it's a map of the street and it's a charcoal drawing. So, the group are going through – how many were in a group? Might have been fifteen, twelve to fifteen – and they were going through. And this guy stopped, pointed at one of the maps and said "I put that guy there". So, that would happen. This sense that people felt safe and conversations happened in that really personal micro-level as part of that journeying aspect. Happened a lot. Or people would have an instant response to a recording, or a drama, and they'd turn to the person beside them and they'd have those personal conversations. Often the guides in the group, we would do a report back every day and they would tell us about things that people had been saying to them. So, those type of things that happened with those shows were very much of their time and meant that audience's felt safe and had an ownership of it. But also, as part of that, we had a huge package of care. For example, with the courthouse piece, I knew we were appealing to a very broad demographic so we could have anything from ex-combatants to judges, to widows, to

police, and so on a couple of occasions as an audience member would arrive, I would turn to the front-of-house manager, and say "don't put that person in green". Because I knew who was already in green. Or, don't put that person in Blue, because I felt that would have not allowed for a holistic experience and it might have led to self-censorship, or it might have created an imbalance in the group. Now, I did it very rarely, and I only did it when I thought it was for the good of the audience and/or the good of the project.

C: That makes sense. And that's fascinating to think of the safety of that and that experience. I think something that strikes me as interesting about all of the productions, so moving forward now into Kabosh's own work, to *Two Roads West* and *The West Awakes*, is kind of the element – and not to minimise it – but nosiness, people wanting to see things. I mean, Irish people are just great for that. But, in *Two Roads West* and *The West Awakes* – this section is focused on the rise of dark tourism or political tourism in the north – and Kabosh through both of those productions take on the actual structures of a walking tour or a black cab tour, in order to examine that. I'm just wondering, I suppose, why did you pick those structures to engage with in terms of *Two Roads West* and *The West Awakes*. What was it about that dark tourism structure? To me, it kind of reads like you're problematising that a little bit in the work and you're opening up those kind of binaries, that those political tours often engage in? I'm just wondering why those structures were so fruitful for Kabosh in terms of those productions?

P: It's funny, again both of those projects to me are really different, but logistically similar. […] *Two Roads West* was a really specific project. What happened was – and this sometimes happens – there was a funding opportunity that came up. Belfast City Council had realised that one of the legacies of the conflict is that the inner city communities in Belfast have no relationship with the city centre, because the city centre shuts down. […] So this funding opportunity came up, and it basically was to try and find a way of connecting the inner city areas with the city centre. The city centre really had no city centre living because of the conflict the city centre shut down at night time and there was no means of getting from one side of the city to the other, you have to circumnavigate. And so, I was always interested in that idea. Secondly, the other things is, that I grew up in West Belfast and we travelled in London black hackney cabs all our lives, going to and from school and to and from the city centre. Because, when the conflict started in 1969, public transport got taken out of areas like the Falls Road and in order to get their kids to school, one man brought in a black taxi, and that then developed into a community transport system and then it grew and grew and grew. It used to operate every day, from five in the morning until two in the morning. It was the safest way to travel, it was the cheapest way to travel, if there were any riots on the road then they knew how to get you to and from your house. There were about six different routes, and what makes it unique is that you all travel in it together. So, there's a sign on the front that says where it is going and you're going to Andersonstown, so you get into the Andersonstown taxi along with six other people in the back and one other person in the front and the driver. So, you can imagine? You end up holding people's shopping, now you hear people on the phone, you'd hold babies, people would comment on everything. I always loved the camaraderie of it and anytime you brought anybody to visit you, they always used to laugh their leg off at these taxis. I'd done a voiceover for them way back when I

was out as an actress way back in 1984 or 1985, and so I kinda was fascinated by it. I thought, that is pure theatre. The play originally was going to be about an animal that escaped from the zoo that had to be handed over on the peace line. I had done work with Lawrence McKeown, we had done pop up stuff for conferences, and I was interested in the way that he writes, and I was interested in what happens to you as an individual, when you go from one side of the peace wall to the other. Because the Shankill Road and the Falls Road are so close to each other and yet so few people would journey from one to the other. I really wanted to create a play where you could cross the peace line […] I felt that the funders were ignoring the fact that there was an interest in those that were coming here to hear the stories as told by the people, to see the city warts and all, and to find a way of engaging with the legacy of the conflict, so that's how the show came about. We worked with the West Belfast Taxi Association and that was it. Now, with it as a project, no matter how often, no matter how often we told people they were going on a show, they would just forget. The audience would get picked up at the taxi depot, they'd get into the taxi and what was beautiful about that as a piece of work was the audience very quickly became voyeurs. The same thing happened in *The Wedding Community Play*. People were convinced I had put people standing at bus stops. People were convinced there was a woman walking with her daughter up the road and started shouting at her that we'd staged it. That difference between reality and unreality is really interesting. Also, when you put people in a moving vehicle, they start not to look at the actors. They start treating it as a radio play. They start looking at the world around them. I'm really interested in that idea, in how you see your surroundings with fresh eyes, how you reclaim your city, and how the arts can do that. They give you a different narrative or they make you reassess. Those thoughts all came out of *Convictions* and *The Wedding Community Play*. But also, you can't have it both ways. What happened with *Two Roads West*, and what happened with all these projects is that what you haven't curated is live. So, one day a taxi got stuck behind a funeral and the show lasted an hour and a half instead of forty five minutes. One day a taxi broke down in the middle of the Shankill Road and we had to send in a fleet of taxis to get everybody out of there. One day the taxi went on fire. The maddest things happened with that show, and yet it almost felt (really weirdly) like a bit of therapy. There's one moment where we switch the taxi off and the audience sit in no man's land – actually at the back of the Courthouse – in a really dangerous area of the Shankill, that's now completely changed and they sat there and they listened to the big speeches the two character's make: where he tells the story about going to London and being perceived to be a 'paddy' and she talks about her relationship with her husband. This real sense of calm used to come over the audience and everyone just sat and just listened to this. But also what would happen is people would forget that the girl in the back was an actress. The number of times that audience members would tell her to shut up, or ask her was she drunk, or tell her to stop interrupting the driver. All those mad things were, you're playing around with that idea of 'what is theatre'? So, audiences loved it, loved it! So then, after that, we'd worked with the taxi depot and that, we got a taxi, we got the license approved, we'd back up taxis and all that. So, we started to work with a company, and we really liked them. West Belfast tourism and the tourism board approached us, because we do a food and drink tour and they said would we be interested in doing other work like that? The tourist board said that one of their biggest issues was more people were coming here,

and they didn't feel that they could put their name to the current political tours unless they were improved, enhanced, cleaned up – all of those kinds of terminologies – and I already knew the work of Coiste (the republican ex-prisoners) and I knew what they were doing with their tours and so I went on that tour, that walking tour – it's a three hour walking tour – and you can do that tour on foot with Coiste or you can do it in a taxi with Taxi Tracks. When we created *The West Awakes* the idea was that we would try and – I was very clear with the tourism, and again tourism offered us the money – it was going to be a multi-partner project and I was really interested in how you championed political tourism, but improved its quality and articulated its worth, was basically the big thing. I'm also interested in how communities are empowered to tell their own stories. I went on the tour, there were lots of cases where they wanted me to do dramas as part of *The West Awakes*, for example in the Republican plot in Milltown Cemetery. I was really clear with them and said I couldn't enhance that site, there's no way. You stand on that site, it's powerful enough. There's nothing any artist can bring to that location, that makes you think differently about it, that makes you see it in a different way. That's how the show initially came about and the audience were given the option of doing it in a walking tour or in a taxi. Out of that again, tourism again came back to us and said you've now done *The West Awakes* on the Falls Road, we need you to look at the Shankill, and then we created *Shankill Stories*. We worked with the Shankill area social history group and we formed Shankill stories using the same methodology as *The West Awakes*, which was a two-person team go ahead of the audience and they do ten minute plays in locations as part of the tour that puts the contemporary tour into context. It helps an audience understand, to a better degree, why the contemporary conflict arose and why it lasted for as long as it did. It was also to enhance the skills of those who were delivering the tours, so that all became part of it.

C: I'm wondering about your own opinion on political tourism? About that idea – because I know myself because this is my research area I've been to Derry and Belfast a lot and I've done a lot of these tours. It's always interesting from my perspective because I get read immediately because I have a southern Irish accent, so everyone knows how to aim the tour at you and American friends of mine have different accesses than I do, for example one day I ended up on the Shankill Road because the satnav sent me the wrong way and it was an experience as you can imagine – so I'm wondering about the awareness from an artist's perspective of beaming in audiences from the south, or from Britain or America into these areas of conflict and the idea of this 'othering' that can possibly occur, where people are telling their stories but we're being beamed in to have a wee look and then we're going away again. There can be problematics in that.

P: Hugely, hugely problematic. I think that was one of the things that Laurence dealt with very effectively in *Two Roads West*. The Arts Council in the north created this scheme called Re-imagining Belfast, and what they did as part of Re-imagining Belfast was – and I completely disagreed with it, and I've been very vocal about this (obviously being careful that I don't annoy them too much) – they painted over murals in working-class areas. Yes, a lot of those murals shouldn't be there, they are sectarian, they are bigoted, they enhance the cycle of violence, but simply painting over them and putting something else on that gable wall that is considered neutral and safe, isn't effective. All that does is that it gives you a thin engagement, that just papers over the cracks. There's no sense of going,

why was the previous there? What culture does it represent? What narrative is it associated with? I do have a problem with people being jettisoned in [intelligible] that is problematic. I really do think it would be worth looking at if you get a chance – Belfast Exposed had the most incredible open air exhibition on the peace wall, just off Harrod street in West Belfast that was huge, I mean absolutely massive life size photographs of peace walls all around the world with a description of where the photograph was taken. Now if you need information on it, I can link you in with the artist and stuff, but it was a really interesting thing to look at. The scale of peace walls. Where they exist. How ours fits into that context. Sorry, that was a bit of a tangent. What I find important is that, too often when it comes to City of Culture things, when it comes to "where do we say we want to be in fifteen years' time", the first thing that is always mentioned is we need to pull down the peace walls. The communities aren't ready for the peace walls to come down. There's still division that exists within their communities. There still are narratives and stories that need to be tapped into and shared. There needs to be investment within that story gathering. We need to look at the legacy of the past, and the legacy of the past is about giving people a voice or facilitating the means whereby people listen to that voice. Tourists are going to come and hear it anyway. They want to hear. It's how we consider the mechanisms whereby people can tell their own stories, how the stories are provocations, not simply neutralised so that it's the acceptable face of conflict. That drives me up the walls. I find that more dangerous. I think this whole idea of terror tourism – whenever that broke during *The West Awakes* I get asked a lot about how I felt about it – it was a section of a course that was taught at Warwick University at the time, they felt they'd kind of invented this idea. But when you look at some of the terminology that's been used for pop-up theatre for years is this idea of guerrilla theatre.

C: It's such a political word.

P: Exactly, and it happens the world over. Whether it is this idea where you create those happenings, I think it's the language that we attach to it that makes it feel more threatening than it actually is. I do think it needs to be managed properly. I do think that the notion of voyeurs being brought in who have no sense of responsibility or no sense of connection with the narratives that they're hearing, I do think it's difficult. For example, we created digital apps of *The West Awakes*, *Shankill Stories* and *Belfast Bred*, and partly why we did that was to capture that community at that time. Every time we've revived *The West Awakes*, the environmental setting for the project has changed. The murals have changed. There's additional housing. There's now bus lanes. They've pulled down half the Divis flats. So that fabric of the community is altered. So, whenever we created the projects, it was as much about archiving the community at this time so that you can look at how far you've come. I see that as a role of the artist, where, how do we celebrate and promote change if we don't know what the base point was? Look, it's still going to happen and unless we have artists at the core of creating cultural tourism I think it's going to get more and more problematic. I think it becomes commercialised, when it becomes commercialised then it doesn't have a heart or a soul. When you hear the legacy of conflict and you hear an individual from a community take you on a tour around their community, and they feel their voice is being listened to, the impact of that is incredible. Actually what tends to happen is, more so, with all of these projects, the projects sold out because of the citizens booking it. It wasn't tourists. Tourists couldn't get a bloody look in! Because, all the citizens were going "I want to hear how

you tell my story". I want to take my best friend who is over for the weekend up the Falls Road to see what you're going to do. It made it a way into each of those communities.

C: It's seeing the other side safely in a way isn't it?

P: Exactly.

Appendix 2: Interview with Margaretta D'Arcy and Ciara L. Murphy on 31st October 2018.

CM = Ciara L. Murphy (Interviewer)
MD = Margaretta D'Arcy (Interviewee)

CM: So the phone will be the main one but the computer is just a backup.
MD: Okay.
CM: So I just have to ask for research purposes, Margaretta is it okay that I record you?
MD: Yes.
CM: And some of the stuff we talk about might go into my PhD, but I'll send you –
MD: I don't mind.
CM: - I'll send you on anything I'm going to put in anyway –
MD: Okay.
CM: - and I'll send you the recording afterwards just for your own sake.
MD: And if it's stuff, will you acknowledge me?
CM: Oh of course, yes, yes, absolutely. Yeah of course, no, no I'll quote you directly. But I'll let you know what I'm going to do first. Yeah, because I kind of believe in that.
Okay, I'm hoping to have a bit of a chat but I do have some kind of questions. My take on your work, in my PhD, just so you know and you're okay with it, is that you can read your memoir *Tell Them Everything,* as a performance. That you are performing essentially in Armagh Gaol. My Chapter is looking at second wave feminist methods and how they are used. So, my previous case study looks at Charabanc Theatre Company and how they engage in second wave feminist methods in terms of what they represent in their plays. Whereas you engage in second-wave feminist methods actually as performance. You are actually kind of embodying those.
MD: Okay.
CM: So, I don't know whether you think that's an accurate representation of yourself or not?
MD: I don't mind. I mean it's up to you. Now, I did make a few notes.
CM: Oh great!
MD: That I hoped…because I think that you said, you know, was there anything that I felt that had not been broadened on. If we talk about performance, we also have to talk about the performance of the British Army. Because during that time, three terrible things happened really. And so, the performance of the British Army, and the performance of the British Government was to absolutely terrorise the population, in particular women. Because as you know from my book, is that they raided all these houses and they took all these young women in, many of them who had not been involved at all. And I think that this is something which I don't think has been properly analysed, is the performance art of the British Army. Like, they would go into houses, they would take these young girls out.
And then as a celebration, and I can't remember what it was, was that they came and they slaughtered all these children. At the same time, is that they were slaughtering the intellectuals and people like Mary Daly, and various people, and that kind of thing. And so therefore the other performance which is on our side – and I don't think this has been properly brought to light – was the support of women from England, in particular the lesbians. Because they had never come to Belfast before. And so therefore, the shock and horror, in particular for the men of all the lesbians and all the

various rows that were going on – boy children should be allowed at meetings and things. So, there isn't just the performance going on amongst the women, the performance of those of us who weren't in – but the other performances, and I think that would be very interesting, because it's never been analysed. Of course the British Army performed!

CM: Oh, absolutely.

MD: Because they are trained in drama, and they do all these little things. So therefore, by coming in, and really slaughtering the children, and I don't think even that the IRA understand that. So, I would very much like you to explore all those things.

CM: And in an earlier chapter of my PhD I look at a performance artist, Alistair MacLennan who wore a target on himself and he walked through a lot of the British Army checkpoints in Belfast and he kind of argues, and I would agree, that, you know, their performance kind of became formalised through that process. But what I suppose interested me about your work, was, like you're really telling a story that never got to be told because women's involvement in anything to do with the republican movement, from what I can see, was very much marginalised and not talked about.

MD: Absolutely. Because you know, it wasn't to the benefit of Sinn Féin to actually say that in many ways, that they themselves had been intimidated and did not come out to support the women. So, it was the women from outside who actually came in, in particular the lesbians. Because in that time, in 1981, you had Mary Daly's book and you had the upsurge of women who were lesbians who themselves were persecuted. So naturally enough they then identify with what is happening with women in Armagh.

CM: And why do you think it was lesbians from Britain who had to identify with the movement? Because as far as I can see in Ireland, throughout the entire second-wave of feminism lesbian women got very little of a look in. So, I suppose why do you feel that what you were doing in Belfast resonated with British lesbians?

MD: Because I think the British lesbians were suddenly coming up – if you take the publications of people like Mary Daly, you had a lot of those early writings that women in England actually took up. As well as that, you've got to remember, at the same time that what was coming up was the Greenham Common women.

CM: Yes.

MD: And once again that was led by lesbians, to a certain degree. So that lesbians they were marginalised in the mainstream and they were suddenly creating their own land, you might say, and their own kind of world.

CM: So I mean, were you aware of what you were doing – of course you were aware – but were you aware I suppose of the impact that your actions were going to have in the Ulster Museum, and not paying your fine and going to prison, or was that something that gained more resonance after the fact?

MD: Well, my first indications of it, first of all was that the press. So therefore, in the North of Ireland press, they publicised what was happening. The British press didn't publicise what was happening, neither did the Irish press. So that when I had been invited to Belfast, for the em, what was it –

CM: The poetry thing wasn't it?

MD: - Yes, but I think that was part of the festival, because 784 were part of that. So, it was when I put the words on the wall. Now that had an some of the young girls, and they said that they really thought I was about sixty foot tall or something. That was the first time that somebody from outside had actually come in and done something like that. And it

was Women Against Imperialism, they supported my court case on that first time. So that subsequently all the things that happened was really in relation to what happened that first time, because I was in. And, the republican movement were not very happy.

CM: Why?

MD: Because it was taking away from their…Because the funny thing about the North is that each side looks after themselves and they really don't like outsiders coming in, and suddenly doing something like that which they themselves had not done.

CM: But your role as an outsider allowed for this story to be told in a way though? Because you weren't a female member of the IRA, you got to come out and tell your story and tell the story of the women. So, you make quite a lot of your outsider status in a lot of your books, but in particular in *Tell Them Everything*. I feel like that's kind of the function that allowed you to be able to put forward that story.

MD: Except we didn't know what the effect was. The interesting thing is that 784 was the company that was doing our plays. Now, they did not support me. They went on their tour, but they never mentioned me or the fact that I was in jail.

CM: And why do you think that was?

MD: Because they were frightened.

CM: They were frightened? Yeah.

MD: Because I think at that time, you've got to understand, in particular theatre people, if it looked in any way as if they were supporting the IRA, they wouldn't get jobs, you know? But I think that that's the most extraordinary thing. So, there I do a play and the company just leave me there. And so that wasn't…I don't think in England at that time, I had received any publicity about my little outrageous act in the Ulster Museum, except in West Belfast. And the IRA were not very happy about it either because I was told by John McGovern that I should pay the fine and get out.

CM: And, why didn't you?

MD: I did pay the fine!

CM: The second time. When you went into jail, you obviously –

MD: Oh yes! On the second time, because I was part of something. So, this was Women Against Imperialism who had supported me when I was there the first time. And then when I was told that there was going to be a demo, with Women Against Imperialism, then I joined them. But then inside, when we were all arrested, and I don't think this is something that has really been explored, the eleven of us got arrested. So, the pressure on some of those women, like from the People's Democracy – they did not want the women to go into jail. Because you get terrible competitiveness about who went to jail and who didn't go to jail. And so, the pressure was put upon them not to go to jail. And the of course the pressure then was put on us that we shouldn't go to jail. And from Sinn Féin's point of view, which was very weak at that time, because of their domestic situation. Like Eileen and Mary Enright, because they had children. So it, it's not the most pleasant thing to actually go to jail, because of the pressures that are on outside you. I remember Eamonn McCann writing an article about Bridget Rose Dugdale, when she dropped the canisters. And he was making fun of her. So, the idea of women, independently making their own choice about what they should do is that the men could not accept that.

CM: Do you think that they thought that…the republican movement reads to me in that moment in time as being like dominated with misogyny and this whole idea that women's actions were too extreme to actually

represent the republican movement. So, do you feel there was a bit, I suppose, of like, there was actually misogyny behind a lot of it?

MD: Well of course there was, because at the beginning, when the male warders were brought in, and the women refused to leave the room the republican movement did not want to talk about the women. They didn't want to talk about the women because (a) they had periods – the whole business of periods and internal searches was so anathema to the male, who didn't know anything about these things anyway – and so therefore they had seen women, basically as kind of mothers who would come along and go to the jail and bring the clean clothes. Because actually some of the letters that Mary Enright's husband had written were very funny letters. They were all about: "oh could you bring me in some cream crackers".

CM: That's the mind-set!

MD: And you know: "I want to have my shirts washed" and all this kind of stuff. So, the men were complaining all the time, because you know at the time the men had political status, so they were quite comfortable. And when I say 'comfortable' you know what I mean.

CM: Relatively?

MD: Relatively speaking. But just to kind of moan about the cream crackers…

CM: I find it fascinating that, you know, I'm very interested in the North in general aside from my research. And I've always wanted to know more about the women prisoners and the women hunger strikers and you know there's no big studies on that. No historian has really tackled that and even in our own discipline, like in theatre and performance, anyone doing research on this is doing it from the male perspective, not the women's perspective. And I wonder…there seems to be a double-jeopardy. Women in the North seem to suffer because, you know, they're unionists and nationalist but also because they're women. And I think women in the Republican movement seemed to suffer the same fate: they're republican, and that's bad for one reason if you're a unionist but also, you're a woman, so you can't win.

MD: Yes, because a very interesting thing happened. At one time, we in Women Against Imperialism, we decided that we would talk to Loyalist women, who also had their husbands in jail. And we wanted a meeting with them. And a meeting was set up. There was a very good priest at the time, I can't remember his name. But anyway, we were told no. So, it's as if the males did not want women to actually cross over the divide. They wanted to keep us firmly in…in the same way, I don't know if I mention it in the book, at the beginning it was just H Block. The men of the H Block. And we really had to fight hard to get them to add the Armagh Women as well. I think I mention in the book that we went to see Jim McGibney and we said, about the fact that they were not highlighting what was happening to the women in jail. And we said that then we'd have our own Army.

CM: And what did they say to that?

MD: Well you see this is the thing, they took it seriously!

CM: I'd say they were terrified!

MD: Absolutely terrified! And as well as that, the women in jail – is that then they thought that we were the women's army. But also, what's interesting about the interviews with the women in Armagh is that we were only in there for a very short time. And I don't know if they knew what was happening outside, or they understood the way women really came and highlighted what was happening. Because there's no mention of that in their interviews.

CM: Yes, and talk to me about the censorship that you had to fight against? Because in the foreword of your book you talk about how it's not

possible to tell them everything due to the British libel laws. And I've gone through all of your draft copies of *Tell Them Everything* and you do take a lot out obviously because you have to, but like you know what were you up against?

MD: Well I don't think that…it was kind of more self-censorship. I mean, what I didn't want to talk about in the book was to talk about what we're talking about now: the total misogyny of the republican movement. I mean that kind of thing, it really wasn't very suitable at that time.

CM: Okay, and why was that? I'm obviously not familiar with that time, having obviously not been there, but why would that have been a negative?

MD: Well because the book was there to support the women. And if one was then to diverge and suddenly bring in about the misogyny of the IRA, can you just imagine? That immediately would be kind of leapt on.

CM: Yes, and I mean, something that struck me in reading through – I mean your archive is a treasure trove and I really enjoyed going through your drafts. It strikes me that, you know, as you kind of progress with the drafts, you take yourself out of it and put more of them in. What was that decision process like? Why did you do decide to foreground their stories and remove some of the elements of your own experience?

MD: Well because they had said "tell them everything". They had wanted their stories…and I might say that the reception of my book was not very favourably received in the North either.

CM: Really?

MD: Oh no.

CM: From the republican community?

MD: Well from various elements, in particular I think [Twinbrooks]. So once again there was this kind of thing: "Who am I to come in?" I had really no right to be there.

CM: Yeah, I mean you talk in your book about how you had to be careful not to be more militant than them –

MD: - Well no. No I didn't say not to be more militant, I don't think so.

CM: But just that you were aware of your own position I suppose?

MD: Absolutely.

CM: And the careful line you have to tread?

MD: Because they were in there for years. You know? And it's very easy for an outsider to come in and to really upset the whole thing.

CM: But you didn't do that did you? You got on with everybody quite well?

MD: Well I don't know because you should talk to Niall Farrell. And he said I behaved abominably when I was in jail!

CM: But how does he know? He was hardly there was he?

MD: But I'm just saying, there's still this kind of residue of feeling you know that "who am I?" And I think that's also something that you might bring out. So, the individual woman who doesn't belong to anything and yet who feels that something is wrong, she on the whole is not welcome.

CM: That's kind of the whole point of my argument about you Margaretta, in my PhD, is that because you are this outsider character in terms that you're on A Wing, but you're not in the IRA, yet no one could doubt that you have republican sentimentalities, it doesn't matter. You even say you're the only person from the twenty-six counties in there. But because you don't *have* to be in there.

MD: Yes. This was the other thing. They kept on saying I didn't have to be there. So, they did not understand the principle of you have the right to actively decide whether you want to go along with them. So, to a lot of the

outsiders, I didn't have to be there. But then on the other hand, why should I pay? And that's something that they didn't understand. You know I think it's very, very difficult for the individual woman, when you're not part of anything to actually – I'm not going to say to be appreciated – but to be accepted for what you do.

CM: And did you feel that you had to participate in the no-wash protest in order to gain an element of being accepted then? Did you feel like there was an option for you not to partake in that?

MD: Well the option, if I didn't want to it was to be with the ordinary prisoners. I mean one knew what was expected of one.

CM: But I'd imagine that was a very difficult couple of months?

MD: No, it wasn't. It was more difficult for them. Whether they would accept someone like me. I mean, you've got to see it from their point of view. So, someone comes in who they really don't know anything about, who's kind of like a tourist – you know just going in for three months. So, it was quite astonishing that Mairead actually accepted me because I mean that's the other funny thing, you can't just go into jail. You then have to be accepted by the prisoners who you want to be with. I mean it's bizarre isn't it really? I mean I think that's the other bit of theatre: the theatre that takes place inside the jail.

CM: And you parse the ritual of daily life very well, but I do get the sense that of a warm relationship between yourself and Mairead Farrell in the jail?

MD: No there wasn't, because I had nothing to do with her.

CM: Really?

MD: No. Because she was the OC. And remember that we were all really separated from each other, so I was in a cell with another woman but we never went out together in the yard until the very end. I mean I have nothing to do with Mairead. She just accepted me as what was happening.

CM: Okay. Because there's an interesting omission from the final published document, where I think Mairead is telling Pauline (I can't remember her surname) that she should probably go off the no wash because she was becoming so unwell. That's not in the final volume and I wondered is that an element – I mean Mairead is a female OC of the IRA – so her telling another republican woman to come off the no wash protest because it was detrimental to her health wouldn't have been received well at that time?

MD: I don't know, I can't remember that bit. But certainly, Mairead as an OC was incredible. About the way that she was able to negotiate with the governor about what we should have. I mean, should we have sheets? And she said no. Because if it got out that we had sheets it would undermine the whole things. So, all of these things she had to negotiate. And she would call us and we would have meetings about these things, saying outsiders you won't have sheets and I can't remember what the other concessions were. That we were allowed.

CM: Talk to me about how you use the word tourist there. And that does come up. People will attribute that word to your stay in Armagh.

MD: Remember now I was twice in Armagh.

CM: Yes.

MD: Because the first time is very interesting. Because they were all on remand, so they hadn't been sentenced, and I think I had to be accepted by them. So, the second time wouldn't have been so difficult, the first time would have been difficult, perhaps because I was an outsider, and coming in. And, the support they gave me – because we had these classes that I put in

– and you know the teachers were very sweet. They asked what would I like to do, and I said about the puppets and I'd like material for this puppet and that puppet and she said yes. And then, must have been the Governor decided, we're not going to have her in there. So, she now has to be separated from the other women. I was not allowed to go to the mass, I wasn't allowed to go to the training. Now, it wasn't Mairead at that time, I can't remember who it was, that was the OC. And she absolutely insisted that I should not be isolated. Because it's very easy to isolate the potential trouble maker. And they didn't do that. I mean, I think the extraordinary thing about the women in Armagh was their solidarity to each other. And their solidarity was far greater than the men had in the H Blocks. And I think that's something that hasn't been brought out either. I mean as, I think on the second time, when we were talking, so it didn't matter if some of the women had submitted under interrogation, it didn't matter if some of the women had done nothing, it didn't matter if some had done things. We were all united in the same thing, you know. And also, the effect of all this, because when I came out, we had public meetings at corners and things, even the parents didn't come out to support them. You know there was real terror about the whole thing. And it was the persistence of women who were really on their own then, I mean really in relation to what was happening in relation to what was happening in the North.

CM: And do you think there was an awareness of what was happening in Armagh when you were in there of the feminist movement broadly?

MD: Well not at that time.

[phone rings – break]

CM: We were talking about?

MD: You were talking about feminism.

CM: Feminism, yes. And was there an awareness?

MD: Certainly, the women outside like Women Against Imperialism: Mary and Eileen. They were aware of feminism because they had read Mary Daly, but also there was an important bookshop called Just Books, and that was Dave Hyneman(?) and Marilyn. So Just Books was kind of a revolutionary bookshop. So, a lot of it came out of that. That would be an interesting one for you to do, in the same way as they were helping with the posters. And they were kind of non-partisan really. They were not part of the IRA but they were for prisoners and all of the things. So, they were a kind of pivot. And actually, I wouldn't have known anything about what was happening in the North if it hadn't been for Just Books. Because we'd put the *Nonstop Connolly Show* on in 1975 wasn't it? And we'd met at that time Dave Hyneman then, when I put on *Vandaleur's Folly* and they were very supportive of me when I was in jail.

CM: You got a lot of letters of support from politicians and artists and people. There's a lot of letters in that part of the archive from people.

MD: But that wasn't from when I was in jail, that was from when I was in jail in Limerick.

CM: Okay.

MD: No that was a big difference.

CM: So, tell me about that difference then. Why was Limerick okay and Armagh wasn't?

MD: Well the heavy…I mean you have no idea what it was like in the North then. If you had any way of supporting the IRA…I mean we had the forcible entry bill, we had the total censorship on the media and everything. So, no one in the South would really talk about anything.

CM: Yeah, because we had the broadcast ban at that time as well, of course.

MD: Yes, Section 31. And so that when I went to jail you might say the support I got was the beginning. Because we had the water protest later, so you might say that people now are not frightened of going to jail.

CM: And obviously going to jail is something that you've done quite a lot, so what does it achieve from your own activist point of view? Like what is the advantage – I mean it must be unpleasant – but what's the advantage from a protest point of view or a performative point of view?

MD: Well because the advantage is…because don't forget I had long experience at Greenham. You know we had long experience at Greenham you know where were performed all the time. And we performed at court, we performed in the jails, we performed…so that you become a different kind of, you become your own tribe. And there isn't that fear. I mean I'm not saying that all…I mean a lot of the women didn't go to jail. But at Greenham you know thousands of women went to jail and that has been hidden.

CM: Why is women's activism hidden do you think?

MD: Because the bloody jealousy of men. I'm afraid it's old fashioned jealousy. And also, because men keep on saying, and they say "oh well it's alright for you, you're a woman you can go to jail. You don't know what it would be like for us if we were in jail. We will be raped. We will be this." They are…men are terrified of other men.

CM: Yes…but women aren't terrified of other women?

MD: No.

CM: I wonder why that is!

MD: Well because we know how to speak to each other and I think that men do not know how to speak to each other, and certainly I think that - I don't want to be clichéd – but your university educated man has no idea how to talk to some of those 21 year old – I'll call them venture capitalists – they just don't know how to talk to them, and they're terrified of being beaten up, you know. But it is very interesting about how men, because I know, you know Shannon, once a month we go down there. One time we had a 24 hour thing. So, Ed Horgan and I were the only ones who stayed out. And this retired, sensitive, university lecturer said he couldn't possibly stay the night there, it was too uncomfortable. He stayed in a hotel. So he came in the morning with his own cup of coffee and no cups of coffee for anyone else. And he had a little leaflet and I said you know go into the airport and distribute your leaflet. He said, "don't you talk to me like that, you remind me of my mother!"

CM: Oh God. We've got Freud in the mix as well!

MD: But I think that because really, I mean when I think about Greenham, it's an awful thing to say this…I don't know whether or not you want to put this on…but I notice that quite a lot of men who are against war are really pretty awful to women.

CM: Yeah, there's massive problems in left wing movements with quite horrible men. And it's something that people don't want to talk about.

MD: And they don't want to talk about it at all and they are just terrified. And I think it's because, men always want to win. And so therefore men in the anti-war movement feel like they are going to beat their opponents, which they're not going to do. But I think that would be a very interesting thesis to do, about men in the anti-war movement. Because if you take Greenham, which was an incredible achievement when you think about it. I mean, 19 years you know living in tents and going to jail and being

certified and god knows what else. So, you'd think that would be a major thing in the anti-war movement wouldn't you?

CM: Yeah, but because it was woman lead it wasn't.

MD: Absolutely not.

CM: But that's your own position too, I mean I have to admit to ignorance as well. I hadn't heard of you until I came to Galway and because of the work that I'm looking at, it would have made complete sense to have come across you before. So where are women like you in the broader literature. I mean they're not there. So how do you feel that your own work practice has been received then in comparison to some of your male counterparts and colleagues?

MD: Well as I said about Greenham, you make your own tribe. I live in my own world. And I don't bother about what the other lot are doing, honestly. And yet the other lot, I would say are aware of what I'm doing, but then they're not going to say that because they copy it.

CM: It's a difficult position to hold isn't it?

MD: No not really. Don't forget now I'm a member of Aosdána, I get my money. And the only reason why I'm a member of Aosdána is because having come out of…when I came out of Armagh, everything had changed in the South. Conor Cruz O' Brien kept talking about creativity and so therefore the Arts Council began to put money into things like – this is before Macnas – so they were all busy doing their creativity and something or other. So, the idea of being in jail, that was not considered creative.

CM: And I mean, but it's such a large part of your own activism. And would you consider your activism as being performance?

MD: Absolutely. I know but that's not…that's not known you see. Because once again the male way of doing things – you're always protesting – you know but they're like: you have to have your mass struggle and things are changing now. I think since the water charges things are becoming much, much looser. Because in – when I sat outside the Arts Council for two months – I don't know if you know about that?

CM: No I don't.

MD: Oh!

CM: Tell me!

MD: Okay so when Aosdána was set up, we all had our meetings. Now I thought the one thing that we should not do is have anything to do with politicians. I'd hoped Aosdána was something on its own.

CM: Apolitical in a way?

MD: I wouldn't say it was apolitical, but we weren't going to become partisan.

CM: Yeah, okay.

MD: You know, there was going to be a luncheon, and Charlie Haughey was going to be there, and I said I wasn't going to be there. So, then I noticed – you've really got to look up Aosdána, I've written quite a lot about it – so Aosdána at the beginning was meant to be that if you were an artist, and had done your work and you got the endorsement from another artist, you then became a member of Aosdána. And Aosdána was set up because in France they had the Royal Academy and in England. In Ireland, they had nothing. It was Tony Cronin that decided then that there should be some kind of not only honour but that there should be money so that the Irish artists didn't have to go. So, because of having been in jail and because when I came out of jail, I had to become a cleaning woman for the Arts Council office next door…

CM: I mean the irony is unbelievable isn't it?

MD: Colm O'Brian who was head of the Arts Council used to go there, and because of John Arden, and what was happening in the Soviet Union, you

know people like Tom Stoppard were going on about how artists were treated in the Soviet Union and I think that they thought if the press got out that John Arden – who at that time had been nominated for the Booker Prize – was actually cleaning out the toilets of the Irish Arts Council, it would have made a scandal.

CM: And it would have, I would imagine.

MD: Well I don't know it would have or not. But I became a member of Aosdána.

CM: And do you think that that organisation has remained non-partisan.

MD: Oh, no they're terrified. I mean because you haven't been following it…last year the Arts Council…first of all I discovered, the Aosdána is not separate from the Arts Council. The Arts Council actually controls us. So, the Arts Council, the board then decided to look at the members of Aosdána and decided that we were not up to speed with our creativity.

CM: And the criteria for satisfying that is what exactly?

MD: They were going to bring in an international body to come along and look at our work. And that those who were over 80, who were not producing the art, is that our Cnuas, which is what it was called, was going to be taken away from us and we would have to go away and apply to the usual old age pension, or there was something called the Colmcille case. And those artists who were not over 80, who were not producing the work fast enough for them, and might have a nervous breakdown, they could go on disability money.

CM: That's disgraceful!

MD: Absolutely. So, Colm Toibin he wrote a big article in the paper. It's absolutely dreadful because at the beginning they honoured our work and we were given our little handful of nuts which was meant to be secure. There was a notorious case of Patrick Pi, who was a very venerated artists, he was 89. He said that because he was blind, he was using an assistant to help him with his painting, and they took his money away.

CM: That's ridiculous, do you not think that in your 80s you're entitled to retire?

MD: No, they said you can't retire. There's no such thing as retirement if you're an artist. And also, because the Arts Council – you know all these festivals now – so therefore the idea is that you then have to produce all the time for these festivals. It was productivity and they were treating us just like that. So anyway, the Aosdána, everyone is pretty furious about it and this debate is still going on.

CM: I'm going to look into this, because I find it interesting.

MD: Oh do! That's absolutely I mean if we talk about the kind of philistine of Ireland to actually tell artists that they have to produce every year. Every year we have to produce a list of the things we've been doing.

CM: What a ludicrous way of cataloguing contributions.

MD: But especially as the Aosdána was set up because of this great heritage, of people like Brendan Behan who all had to go…so then they decided we're going to honour the artist. But they don't honour us anymore. I mean we are part of production team, and if we don't produce, we're out.

CM: I am going to look into that because I mean, when you look at the way everything is going now. It's so neoliberalised. Everything has a market place value. I mean you see it in the University as well. You see it everywhere.

MD: So, when you talk about me going to jail, I'd prefer to go to bloody jail, than actually what happened. So anyway, to go back to my story, I then wouldn't have anything to do with Charlie Haughey at our meeting thing, and then I discovered that the men had used women to endorse them to

become members of the Aosdána, but the men had not endorsed the women. There was meant to be about 100 of us, so then you might say there are about 75 men and about 15 women. So, I then decided to expose that, at our general assembly meetings. I mean I have all of this documentation done. So that the handle that I was able to get them on, it was decided to have this…so the top artists would be called a Saoi, they would be venerated and they would be given a special kind of thing [indicated badge or brooch]. So, then I wondered if the gold thing that they were going to be giving to the artists, had it been made in South Africa, because at that time the Dunnes Stores working were protesting. So, I then asked them that. I wrote an article about it, and then the whole business of the motions, that you could only get a motion through if you got the support of someone else. Which actually meant that we were not free to talk ourselves. So, I then decided that I was going to sit outside the Arts Council for two months to be able to discuss all these sorts of things. Then we had our General Meeting and I was very fortunate to have got the support of a very good cartoonists that were in there. So, I wrote off to all sorts of them and I got support, so when I then made my announcement – I was going to sit outside the Arts Council for two months – they all shouted and screamed that they couldn't hear me. Fortunately, I had given it to the press.

CM: You were a step ahead!

MD: So, I was outside the Arts Council for two months.

CM: Okay, I'm going to look into that.

MD: Oh, do. And also, because there's a video of it.

CM: Okay, so obviously you've written plays and everything yourself, so what -

MD: No, so what I'm saying is. What I'm just saying is that the pay of actually being, not only heckled, but the viciousness of my fellow artists to me is greater than any viciousness that ever happened to me in jail.

CM: And do you feel like you're a bit of an outsider figure in general? In terms of like the artistic community then?

MD: I think I'm normal, I think the others are outsiders.

CM: And why do put your body on the line so much?

MD: I don't put my body on the line!

CM: I don't know, I think going to prison seems to be a strenuous enough activity?

MD: Excuse me! Facing the artists and the Aosdána, that is more difficult than anything.

CM: But sitting outside the Arts Council, that doesn't take a toll?

MD: No, no that was all great fun. Because fortunately I had a friend who lived in – who just lived up the road – so I was able to stay with them and put all my stuff there and everything. So, it was just like office hours. And I was outside there. Oh, and do watch the film.

CM: I will because I'd like to see that.

MD: Because at the end the Arts Council couldn't even use its own door, and they all had to sneak outside and then the problem came that they wanted to remove me. But what happened is, is that the Arts Council do not own the premises.

CM: So, they couldn't remove you?

MD: They couldn't remove me. So, they brought the owner of the property, or the agent, and the property belonged to one of these Italian car people…can you think of any…and he wasn't able to remove me. And the council couldn't remove me because it wasn't their property. So we had a wonderful two months.

CM: I would imagine that while they were all running around like headless chickens trying to get rid of you…

MD: And various people like Tony Cronin came along, it's all in the film. And Monnelly, the head of the Arts Council: "remove this rubbish". And one bit of the rubbish was a Dorothy Cross chair! So, all these experiences, you're not putting your body on the line because if you're an artist there's no such thing as not putting your body on the line. Or if you're a performer, because it's all experience isn't it? Which actually makes one understand about the – I wouldn't say hypocrisy – I would say the misunderstanding of what art it, I guess.

CM: And do you feel, I suppose that the archive that you donated to NUIG will help in bringing some of your more marginalised work and experiences to the fore?

MD: I think it's very important because, what am I meant to be? A theatre activist? It's important to put it into the university, because all of these other ones like Tom Kilroy will all be about all the letters they get and all the plays and what have you, so I think it is important, because, in the end and the way Ireland is changing, it is this change that is actually really taking place. But do look up the whole business of the Aosdána thing.

CM: I will.

Appendix 3: Interview with Owen Boss, Louise Lowe and Ciara L Murphy on 5th March 2020

C = Ciara L. Murphy (interviewer)
O = Owen Boss (interviewee)
L = Louise Lowe (interviewee)

C: The first thing I want to ask, if possible, is the that the idea of radical commemoration is how I have approached your work. In that it's these marginalised stories that are often adjacent to bigger social issues and the work kind of brings out those hidden stories and those hidden agendas that allows the audience to tease through it in many kind of cogent ways. I was wondering if that was something that you agree with or was that ever the intention of the work or how would you respond to that?

L: I do agree with it, I don't know if that was our intention. I think it's a by-product of it rather than – well later on it has been intentional – but I suppose for The Monto Cycle I don't think it was.

O: No it wasn't.

L: It was very personal and I think it was more about looking – I remember talking about even wanting to make it when we were in New York and going it's about understanding who we are and why we are rather than going 'oh we're going to make social change'. I think if I was ever thinking about making something to effect social change I'd be paralysed by the weight of pressure.

O: Also, if you look at when we started to make it, which was, 2009/2010, this was pre-the Decade of Commemorations. It wasn't in the zeitgeist. It wasn't in the ether. So, we were just doing it because that was what we wanted to do…

L: We were eleven years younger with lots of energy…

O: Yeah, but it wasn't informed by a culture of commemoration around us. It was almost setting that, well not setting that but setting it for ourselves.

L: But we did state in our application that it was to look at the state in microcosm as we approach the centenary.

O: Did we?

L: We did. I remember the sentence, I'll find it again and show you!

C: Because it does kind of foreground the Decade of Centenaries in a way, and you know your work has kind of evolved to merge and kind of respond to that as well? The Decade of Centenaries is a complex beast I think…

L: Absolutely.

C: Problematic.

L: And much more so in the upcoming ones –

O: - Was that for *World's End Lane*?

L: It was.

C: So you're setting the trends!

L: It was to use a quarter square mile to explore the state in microcosm.

O: I don't remember us actually placing it in that way.

C: So, it did end up doing that?

L: Yeah.

C: But really I suppose for me, and I did engage with all of the cycle, I remember the first time I went to see *World's End Lane* I didn't know what was happening to me. But, then I got better at going to ANU shows as ANU audiences tend to do over time. In terms of the particulars of that audience-performance relationship in The Monto Cycle and the fact that you're kind of collapsing time and space, and that the audience are often on their own, and there's a merging of paradigms, so it's not just performance obviously there's visual art elements and there's all these community-based engagements. For that audience member – for you as artists sitting there thinking I want my audience to walk out of *World's End Lane* a certain way – that relationship is obviously important. I'm just wondering what led you to that immersive…

L: It's years before that you see. I suppose in order to go back to that, we both started working together in 2004. So, that was six years into making work that way. It wasn't just a little, well, 'we'll try it for this one'. So, I suppose *Tumbledowntown* originally in Ballymun was where we kind of looked at that hybrid of visual art and theatre and immersive – even though I don't think we even had those words -

O: Yeah, we didn't.

L: - In fact, I would hazard a guess that we didn't.

O: I think yeah, like that original piece called *Tumbledowntown* was just that we knew we wanted to make something about the past, present, and future in Ballymun with a group of people from Ballymun on sites.

L: Who had kind of spent their formative years on a building site then been part of the largest regeneration site in Europe.

O: All around the age of 14/15 and we wanted to mix the art forms. That's how we entered into it. What came out, became almost a blueprint maybe or an out of focus blueprint really.

C: What kept you going on it then?

O: We won a commission.

L: We won an award! I don't know that we would have made a second show left to our own devices of getting it together… You know, I think we probably would have, but it wouldn't have, oh…I dunno!

O: I think we would have. I think we would have.

L: But I suppose in terms of that, it won Spirit of the Fringe that year which meant it came with an award for the next year. And then, we knew that we would do that. I suppose we would have actually done it. But, in between that happening and coming back to make The Monto Cycle we both went off back to college. Which was a strange point of departure really, you know we were still working. You had gone to NCD and I had gone to Central.

C: Did that have an impact on the work?

L: Hugely, for me. Did it have for you?

O: Yeah absolutely.

C: It becomes academic after a while doesn't it? Like, when you don't have the terms immersive or site-specific initially, but then obviously people like me come along and they place those words or like the canon grows up around you in a way? But there's obviously a connection. I dunno, I felt addicted to The Monto Cycle…

O: I think *World's End Lane* did something different. You [Louise] had been looking at Amanda Coogan and durational performance and also –

L: - the idea of the audience being there –

O: - I think that was a real eureka moment for yourself.

L: It was.

O: The audience's presence is vitally important and what was really important for *World's End Lane* specifically is that we had no money and box office didn't necessarily matter too much.

L: We had a sum total budget of 800 euro.

O: So, we wanted to make… we just wanted to make it to make it to be honest.

L: And, a lot of goodwill from people involved.

O: We knew that we wanted to make it for one person at a time. So, we were able to do that because there was no expectation to actually deliver back on that, I think.

C: Because you had so much freedom?

O: Yeah.

L: Well there was no expectation, from anyone really.

O: And we kind of said, well this is what we want to do, so let's try it and see what happens you know? And, we had done something g previously that

had, I dunno, an audience of forty in *Basin* or something like that? Forty or fifty, like twenty/ twenty-five each half of *Basin*. So this was like, let's actually do this for one.

L: It really was an experiment in relation to Amanda's work in terms of the audience being there mattering. Amanda was actually mentoring me at the time, and going 'what would happen if you made it for one person?'

O: I remember specifically, having worked on it, and going through for the first act and coming through in the early days and going 'something has just happened to my head'. And being really discombobulated by it. How I was viewing Dublin, and I came out the other end. It hasn't happened since then. It was a really kind of special moment, well, for me anyway to go through that. It was probably different for you?

L: I just remember standing on Talbot Street looking at my bank balance of €12.73 and realising that [my child] needed tights and oranges as props and going well, if I do that I'll have no dinner. That level. I'd already moved out of the flats and everything to do it. Like, the personal sacrifice on us at that point was huge even though there was no expectation from audiences. But, actually to make it – what we had to give up to make it – was huge.

C: And the audience's response to *World's End Lane* then? Was that something that you expected?

L: No. I think we just…no…I don't think so.

C: Because that was the beginning of the rising star of ANU…

L: Ah Jesus I dunno…I don't even think we still think that way Ciara!

C: Come on!

L: No Ciara, seriously…

C: Selling out Dublin Theatre Festival shows all the time, people logging on at 10 o clock in the morning poised and waiting to get their ANU ticket?

O: I think, for me, something happened in *Basin*. When we started working in the [unintelligible] house and dance started to play a key role in that. Something started to fizzle, for me anyway. Something really is happening here and I think there's a further exploration of that through *World's End Lane* and a refining of that. I think we started to kind of refine more and more throughout the years…a certain knowledge or learning through experience in terms of actually just doing it and making it and what's the next challenge we want to look at, let's make it for one person and what does that mean?

L: Now let's make it for big audience's and what does that mean?

O: How does that impact what we're doing? So I suppose it was kind of learning by doing I suppose.

C: I think there's such an intimacy in the exchange. So, I can remember them all. I talk about it when I'm teaching the whole time that, it's the 'moments of communion' thing. It's that idea that there's a moral quandary or something? I can still remember in *Beautiful Dreamers* someone coming up to me and asks me a question or holds my hand, or the moment in *Vardo* where I gave the passport back to yer man. All of these things, or when I was talking to Kunle and yer man started giving out to him because he thought he was harassing me…

O: Have you seen everything we've done?

C: **Yes…I think so? Yeah, everything after The Monto Cycle. But that's the connection? Because it's intimate. So you're there, and there's people looking at you and it's like they want something from you and even though you know you're in the performative frame in the moment, you kind of don't as well. But I have noticed that, after attending everything, that there's an 'ANU audience' in a way, that there's people willing to push the frame a little bit more? Or, to come to things with certain expectations? So, I went to *Faultline* recently (which I loved by the way) and I just felt that that was a real – I was really pleasantly surprised in a way – because I was thinking, you know 'I've been to so many shows and they have had so many audience's like me, what's that dynamic going to be like?' I felt like it was a real pushing onwards and a real honouring of that. But obviously from *World's End Lane* onwards, when you start getting repeat audiences in that really, like trackable way, does the way you make those intimate encounters change? Because people are expecting them more?**

L: No. I think it's just about how to tell the story best. That really is the main challenge. I suppose placing the audience at the centre of it is vital still. I have this fictitious audience member in my head, who is a Spanish Granny. So, I make work for the Spanish Granny all the time, where English is not necessarily her first language and she's elderly so she can't move very fast. Those two things dictate everything, you know? It used to be my Mam, t hen I changed it because I thought 'that's getting creepy now'. So, I put the Spanish Granny in instead of my mam. I think the weirdest thing I've noticed for myself during rehearsal is that I talk about '…and then I'. I talk about myself as the audience in the first person all the time. I think new actors don't know what I'm talking about, for ages. […] So I see myself as the audience. Now, I only become a bad audience member after a while in rehearsal but I think that's what happens and I don't like audience participation.

O: Neither do I.

L: If someone was to ask me something in front of someone I would die a million deaths, so I suppose what it has made is where there's multiple audience members we haven't pushed it as far. I call it kind of a 'vanilla' version of stuff. Because I don't want the audiences to feel exposed, or vulnerable, or scared and so the offer is made in a more general, more generic type way. so that you can choose to respond or not respond or just be a voyeur in this world. As you wish. Without any pressure, because I would hate that. All the way through *Faultline* I never ever did the conga line.

C: Did you not?

O: Did you not? Oh, I loved it!

L: I pretended to do it. Every. Single. Time.

O: I gave it socks.

L: I touched nobody! I danced out and I was delighted when I started dancing and then I'd have a little waving hand but I didn't touch anyone and I thought, 'oh that's really interesting'. I didn't mind someone else touching me, but I didn't want to be the one. Especially if it was an audience member, and I just didn't want to do that.

C: Can I ask about something that is kind of tangential, but it's something I talk about in class all the time with my students. I'm noticing that my students – because I use your work quite a lot in teaching – and I notice that they say to me, when I explain things that have happened to me in shows like the kiss on the mouth in *The Boys of Foley Street* and all that sort of stuff and everyone's kind of like 'what? Oh my god!'. Because, you know like there's all these things and there's content warnings and it's a great thing that we're kind of like talking about this in the rehearsal room and in terms of actually physically touching audiences, it's kind of like mutual consent all the time. I wonder how work like yours lives in a moment like that where it's obviously something that we kind of have to consider as makers.

L: I've had long conversations with Sue Mythen recently about it. The idea of intimacy and consent and especially in relation to our work and we've had massive conversations about it in the last three months I'd say in particular. But ultimately it all boils down to somebody will always make the offer and it's up to you to decide to accept it. That's really where for me it's okay. However, I also say to performers just because you are comfortable with that today doesn't mean that you might be comfortable with that tomorrow or later or in an hour's time and we will absolutely respect what your feeling is in that moment in time.

C: Or with a certain audience member?

L: Exactly. They just might have the heebie jeebies for any number of reasons or they remind them of their granny and they just don't want to touch them. I think that has to be okay, from the performer's end, to go I'm alright with this today, but you check in with them again tomorrow. Are you alright with this today? And, the next day and if you're not then let's change it. So, they have forked outcomes which they can use so they can decide in this moment, 'yeah I'm just really not feeling this right now'. It's up to them, really, to make the offer or not. So, for me, there's really clear boundaries on that. But, I would think backwards and think, I dunno if we fully thought it all out properly.

C: But, it wasn't the conversation that was being had at the time.

L: Exactly and it's changed now.

C: Yeah, because I think about *The Boys of Foley Street* all the time. I went to college with Caitriona Ennis, so when I'm in the taxi and she comes up to me and asks 'do you want to go to a party?', I'm like 'what's going on'. It's obviously a very intimate encounter.

L: And the first thing that she says is 'move your feet'.

C: It's all this collapsing. My partner Peter doesn't like audience participation and I brought him to *Vardo* with me and I really didn't give him the run down on what to expect. He ended up in the room with Una, shooting the bell.

L: Is he still talking to you?

C: **Yeah! And…the dancing around the cornflakes and stuff. But again, I was full on into it, thinking 'this is brilliant' and going down every route I can but he was able to have his own experience where he was, like awkward, but he was still able to navigate his own experience and get something back from the show.**

L: And I think the performers have gotten more sophisticated in terms of just dealing with that. Dealing with energy of whatever somebody brings, is the right energy. Regardless of what they bring. To know that that's what it is in that moment.

O: And it's actually minding that audience and it's actually really caring for that audience.

C: What about site? I mean site is obviously something that's really important. That's actually what drew me to the work the first time, was this idea that I was coming into this area of Dublin that I knew of but didn't know. There was part of me, I suppose, that felt that I was almost a bit of a tourist and maybe sometimes problematically so in that regard. I think that ANU deal with this quite well but there have been people who have made the accusations that it's kind of a 'poverty porn' enterprise and that there's a question mark. Especially when you enter the Dublin Theatre Festival category and you look at the stats and demographic of audiences. You're bring a certain kind of audience into a certain kind of place for them to have a look around and then go away again. Now, I don't think it's as simple as that, but I just wonder what your response would be to people who sort of level that kind of accusations?

L: Most artists make work about what they know. I make work about what I know. The places that we've been in we've lived. So we're not coming at it with an outside objective, and we wouldn't have gotten away with it! Cultural tourism in that way, we would have been [*laughs*] driven off the blocks in a heartbeat! That takes years of negotiation, and I mean years, of working with that community to tell their story the way they want it told. Because they've been represented on our national stages as tropes or jokes for too long! So, I think it's more about actually – there's been so many other artists that have been brought in to make work about it. Even when I look at the work of Sebastian Barry and it's beautiful and it's brilliant and I argue with him and he just comes back with the same

argument 'at the end of the day it's only a play'. But it's not right, it's not real. The syntax is wrong, the grammar is wrong and yet he's presenting me on that stage. So, for me it's about whose stories get to be told. There's an underrepresentation of class in theatre. Hugely. For me I think it's important that we allow those stories to be shared and learned and forged. But, it's vital that that community has bought into what that will mean. That means that they're participant within it. That they are part of the studio making of that work. So, for example I just think back to the [previous community participant] and I ran into her the other day and she started a new job. There's an aftermath of care that has to go on. That's two years ago. That's two years ago Ciara, so you're still meeting the same community people that you're working with then! And my communication with Safety Net and Street Medicine and GP Care is still ongoing six years on. So, *The Lost O'Casey* took six years to make and it's still happening and I'm still meeting with Austin and the GPs and still going to do the workshops and working with homeless service users. Because, you can't go 'oh I've made my show now and I'm fecking off, thanks very much'. So, our duty of care and our ethics are in the right ways for the right reasons. Soilte and Saol helped me make *The Lost O'Casey*. They didn't trust me at the beginning. They were going 'what the fuck are you doing? How are you going to tell my story? What is it about?'

O: What did they call you? Blackrock bourgeoisie?

L: 'Just what are you going to be doing? Blackrock bourgeoisie coming in here picking stories about me and my addiction'. And you're like, 'well you can think that, but let's talk about it'. There's something, I think, really fundamental. I remember *The Boys of Foley Street* in particular, knocking on [community member's] door and I'd asked them all for permission. Every single house. That took doing.

C: And time?

L: And time. I deliberately went – and I don't know what I would have done if they'd said no – and I remember arriving at [community member's house] and he said 'my uncle is dying of cancer and you're right under us'. Bollocks! So, we agreed that we would use a blackout once it went past a certain time in the evening so that the uncle could get rest, so that our work could change to accommodate him being sick above us. Similarly, the neighbour's next door had this dog. What was the dog's name? I used to call it Sausages, but that wasn't the dog's name. I think it was like 'don't feed it sausages' that's why I called it Sausages. The dog would come in and sit in the house as well or the golf would always come on and Louise Matthews loved golf. They would come in during the show and give her the results of the open or ask 'do you want anything in the shop?' Caitriona talks about it very fondly as the first time that she moved out of home. But there is a care to that community. So, they will tell you very fucking fast, 'no way is somebody coming in here!' There are rules. We have to not do it a certain amount of times during the day because we knew drug drops were happening and we're respecting the social order or disorder. Then you become part of that social disorder very fast as well. So, there's loads of things that you are having to negotiate and navigate really, really tenderly, I think.

O: No, I agree.

L: D'ya know? But if you think about [person] in *The Lost O'Casey* leaving us the cooker! 'I'm going to leave you me cooker. I'll leave yous all a place'. She's moving out of her house during this piece that we're making about moving out of your home. We're in her home. And it was really mad, she was like 'I'm going to leave you that, and that, and that '. And she had bits of furniture and I remember going 'before you move can I keep that bit or that table' and her going 'yeah, alright'. So you're really operating in a very different position.

O: But also not to change the house overly much. I think we put in a couple of bits of new furniture.

L: Because we wanted to challenge what you thought it would look like when you go inside.

O: Because as a – and now this could be a mass generalisation – but as a theatre going audience to go and see a flat represented on stage it's a very particular type of thing, in general. So, when an audience -

L: - or a tenement

O: Yeah. So, when an audience's walk into that that – a real space – they very often commentated that 'I wasn't expecting this'.

L: Yeah. It's clean and it smells good. And the washing machine was on all the time.

O: Fuck you. To be honest, if that's your assumption.

L: Or sometimes I would lose a lot of rehearsals because I'm chatting with [person] outside and we're having breakfast on the block. You just have to go, that's more important.

O: That's the groundwork.

L: And you've got six actors waiting. But myself and [person] only met [above person] the other day and she's like 'oh I love my new job and it's great'. So, you get to know people in a very different way. So, yes there is an element of bringing audiences in that would never in a gazillion years know those blocks, but for me actually *The Lost O'Casey* was the difficult one. It's the block that I spent my whole life in and I'm coming back up thinking 'Jesus this is the flat that I said to everyone I'm going to leave my husband from'. There was huge things in my personal life. I remember [person] saying to me when I was ten, 'you have it really hard'. That acknowledgement, from an adult, that I was really struggling and in trouble. I mean, all those things had happened for me in that block. And actually being back in it, and I remember the last day thinking 'this is the last time I'll probably ever walk these stairs'. It was deeply emotional on so many levels.

O: There was also a realness to it, to bring people that don't know that area into it.

L: And there was a danger. I mean, we had to have a security budget. And the lads said 'we'll leave you alone while the show is on' and the day the show ended they broke in and wrecked it.

O: And it is, like it's negotiated. It's negotiated on their terms. But, if you think of the converse of that. You think okay we're going to take that and we're going to put it in the theatre, we're going to put it on our national stage, it's a very safe space to put that in you know?

C: You kind of need to have that collapse of the real world. That's what I've always found in ANU shows. Was it *Sunder*? No, the one that was in the Central Library?

L & O: *Sunder*

C: I had a really weird experience in that show –

L: - You and lots of people! The real world was just colliding with it.

C: But it was! I remember coming out of the Ilac centre at the end and there was one of those weird [racist] marches going down Moore Street at the time and I was like 'this is really weird, am I still in the show and have they actually put a march on the street?' But then, this man was coming along and was selling like black market cigarettes and you know how you're kind of riled up after it [the show]? And he was a man of colour and this man came up to him from the march and started racially abusing him and I actually intervened – which is not something that I'd actually do usually because I wouldn't feel safe – because I still felt like I was almost in the show! Because all those themes, were kind of happening.

L: I think it was Peter Crawley who first said of *World's End Lane* – and it's stayed true for some of our audiences – that he'd left the show but the show doesn't leave him. You know, even walking back around by Garden of Remembrance last night, I was coming down towards The Gate and I was thinking 'ah Boxty'. Because they're real people in The Salvation Army. We know who those people are. It wasn't just made up.

O: It does show that there's a hyper-realness to the work and this is what happened me after *World's End Lane* the first time: that this hyper-realness that's intersecting real life it just does something to how you're reading the whole mise-en-scene. As Peter Crawley says, it doesn't leave you. If we've done our work properly and right –

L: - and sometimes we fail spectacularly

O: I was just about to say that sometimes we don't! That, when you're on your way home, maybe for an hour, maybe two hours – probably an hour – that your brain is still tuned into that –

L: - I don't even think it's that. I think it's more that there's a hyper-awareness of the city. Because if we all went and stood outside of Parnell Square and said 'we're watching a play' we would find things to watch. And, semiotically –

O: - well that's what I mean

L: Your brain's just in that place, but you're just looking at the real world.

C: *Thirteen* did that for me because I saw them all.

L: You saw more than I did!

O: Jesus, you saw more than I did!

C: I saw thirteen of them in ten days.

L: I didn't see most of them.

C: And I saw twenty one shows in the Fringe during that time as well because I was doing this documentary and I felt like I was always in the show, do you know what I mean, because there was so many things happening all the time!

[…]

One thing I'd like to kind of finish on and talk about is, I had this experience, and I don't think I was the only one with Kunle Animishaun during *Vardo* where someone intervened into my exchange because of the assumptions that they had made about him, because of his race. I think I remember talking to you about it then during the 'Now Then Now' symposium or someone spoke about how Store Street Garda Station would be rung quite regularly about him –

L: - and Rebecca

C: - and Rebecca. So I just wonder, for me at that moment Kunle really stepped back in that and let me guide it. Because yer man just put his hand across us and looked at me and said 'are you okay?' For a moment I was just like – because you're in the play – and I was like 'is this happening?' and then I was like 'oh no he's just profiling' and I said 'oh no I'm grand I'm in a play' and then he just wouldn't stop intervening –

L: - In fairness it's a bit strange to say 'I'm in a play'! He was probably like 'is that alright? Is this a code?'

C: Yeah! I think Kunle – whatever kind of relationship we'd created I was able to kind of negotiate that for myself and that was interesting – but I suppose for me I really got an insight into racial profiling in Dublin it was one of those moments where I thought 'okay, I can never un-see this now because I know exactly what was going on'. So I suppose, was that something that happened quite a lot? Where members of the public would actually intervene.

L: To Kunle yes.

O: To Kunle.

L: And yet, you'd make a similar piece of work. I'm just thinking of the work last year in the UK: *Torch Again*. But actually MIF – not a notion. So, it depends where you are. That's the sad truth of it. Like, in Manchester and London no. At all.

C: Dublin yes?

L: Dublin yes. And St. Helen's, absolutely. I was worried for Nandy, Etta, and Sammy. And especially three women. Unfortunately, Dublin is a racist place. [Person's] pal got a whack of a brick at a Luas stop the other day. So…

C: Do you think it's the durational aspect of it as well? I was kind of thinking, I suppose he's sitting there –

L: - I think what people were watching was that it was a repeated event. I think if you'd been sitting there waiting on a bus and you saw this man having a conversation – or potentially the same conversation – my attention might be piqued enough to go 'is that a scam?' Regardless of colour, I might go, actually 'what's the suss on him?'

C: Because probably the demographic –

L: - Is white, middle class, DTF audiences.

C: And women, mostly.

L: And mostly female. I reckon that was a great deal to do with it.

C: Why is it mostly women that go to your work? I only have my anecdotal evidence for this, but every time I'm at an ANU show – so say like *Pals* and stuff it tends to be more equally split –

L: *Pals* was an equal split. *Hentown* was an equal split. Anything that deals mostly with very localised history or commemorative history in a very explicit way tends to be more demographically split.

C: I think of *Faultline*. I think of 'The Monto Cycle'. I think of *Sunder, These Rooms* –

L: - although I was at a *Faultline* audience and it struck me that I was the only woman.

C: Really?

L: Everybody else was male. It happened once. So much so that I went 'oh, that's an unusual thing, that's a really unusual thing'.

C: Why is that I wonder? What is it that brings women to that sort of like intimate work?

L: Versus the bus, or *Hentown* or *Living the Lockout* or *Pals* no it was much more gendered.

O: Where do you get that information? I never thought of that?

L: Did you not?

O: No.

L: Where have you been?

O: What? Audience?

L: Yeah? I think about the audience all the time.

O: I don't think about them in terms of gender. I think about them in general terms.

L: I often think about the gender of an audience, especially in relation to what you're asking them to do. You go, 'would this be a different experience if I were a man versus a different experience if I were a woman?' [Person] did not want to go into the flat in *The Lost O'Casey* – into the boys – she was freaked because she knew them all and she couldn't understand what it was in her that was like 'I don't want to be – as a woman – I don't want to be in that flat with all men'. And she said the weirdest thing was that they're her friends. Some of them had been to dinner in her house the previous week! She knew everybody in it.

C**:** **But it's the dynamic.**

L: But it was the dynamic.

O: No, I understand that but –

L: - and she didn't go in which was really interesting because her husband was in the show.

O: - but that's looking at gender before they go in. I'm talking about looking at gender after and trying to understand why male and why female go

L: I mean, it doesn't matter.

C: I just find that myself. Even in terms of when I brought Peter to *Vardo* and in the kitchen and when they're dancing at me – and I know how ANU shows work and that it's kind of cyclical and that he may have the same experience I'm having and I'm thinking how am I going to feel when these girls are dancing all over him – but I'm thinking that looks different and probably is different for them

L: Yeah it is different and they may not dance the same way.

C: Exactly. I think our bodies are political and you read things off them like race, like gender and class, I think, obviously as well.

L: Class is my big one.