

***Up Against the Wall: A Journey in Culture, from  
Resistant to Dynamic, Encountering the Limit in the  
Process***

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2023

Volume One

This thesis represents partial submission for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the  
Royal College of Art.

I confirm that the work presented here is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis. During the period of registered study in which this thesis was prepared the author has not been registered for any other academic award or qualification. The material included in this thesis has not been submitted wholly or in part for any academic award or qualification other than that for which it is now submitted.

## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Dr. Francette Pacteau as my primary supervisor for her guidance and considered conceptual understanding, generosity and support in helping me to shape my research. I would also like to thank my initial supervisor Prof. Nigel Rolfe for his depth of knowledge in performance art practice and his encouragement throughout. I am grateful to Prof. Adrian Heathfield for his insightful and astute feedback as second supervisor. The Fine Art research community at the RCA is a rich and fertile ground, made more so by the research staff. My thanks to Prof. Johnny Golding and the research group 'Entanglement' which opened many new avenues of thinking for me and to Prof. Chantal Faust for her support for my practice and writing.

To my children Emma and Harry, my mum, my dad and my two sisters. Thank you for your patience, support and understanding.

and for kenneth smith who was once

## Abstract

Now is an inauspicious time of changes in Ireland. Boundaries and borders are once again called into question by external policies, rekindling debates about cultural identity. Questions of culture become questions of human survival. Current geopolitics provide the backdrop for an artistic enquiry into the position of women in Irish culture, then and now, with reference to the institutional structures of patriarchal control that shape lived experiences.

The stark vernacular architecture of the Outdoor Handball Alley - designed to accommodate while controlling men's play - will implicitly function as representative, in the Irish landscape, of the rules and boundaries that define women's place under state and religious law. An important feature of the Irish cultural heritage, the Big alleys are primarily free standing, unroofed, structures built between the late nineteenth and late twentieth century in rural and urban areas. These fragile structures, at the edge of decay, are preserved in their community as carriers of a conflicted cultural memory and identity.

I shall be attentive to the voices of women I discern in the cultural histories I traverse in the process. The literature of James Joyce will allow for the dissenting voices of an active feminine sexuality to resonate throughout the project while other women's voices from a more recent troubled past speak of the violence of which women were both objects and subjects.

Our bodies are not our own. The art works, in the form of live performances and photographic works, reflect on the effects of power structures on women's bodies and minds. Evocations of women's experiences of the troubles north and south of the border as well as the neglect and abuse suffered by women under the domination of the church over the procreative female body are an ever-present component of the works. My private body becomes a public body.

The performance work takes the form of encounters with sites and locations. Works unfold in response to the often-toxic alchemy of past events that lingers there. Lucretius's concept of the 'swerve' – the unpredictable movement of atoms – in his poem *De Rerum Natura*, provides a conceptual framework to think about the artist's encounter with a multiplicity of histories. The encounter is not random but contingent upon the nature of the elements at play, always already inclined to swerve in unpredictable ways, therefore always open to a future.

In the process I trace the Lucretian notion of the 'swerve' through several iterations from Albert Camus' absurdist logic, Louis Althusser's re-definition of an indeterminate materialism to a post human conception of an 'agential cut' in Karen Barad's radical articulation of a diffractive 'cutting together apart' (folding) as an 'Agential Realism'. Within the encounter of all these diverse elements - cultural, physical, philosophical - I sensuously inhabit a place, listening closely to the murmur of cultural memory. I trace a path from resistant modalities to dynamic energies, as an entanglement of entanglements.

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## QR codes and URL links to video and sound files

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Alternatively download the following QR code reader:

<<https://apps.apple.com/ie/app/qr-code-reader-qr-generator/id1606717355>>

The relevant files are also available here as URL links:

### ***The Big Alley Archive 2022***

<[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1G471FKZf3bSSgsHow22V3ijXvR\\_7N816/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1G471FKZf3bSSgsHow22V3ijXvR_7N816/view?usp=sharing)>

### ***Voice of Rivers***

*Awake:*

<<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1IANRQxphCFtQUEWh-xYAlahpQk1NzoMT/view?usp=sharing>>

*Siren Siren:*

<[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-jERi7MUc6z-1wUnW6UY9\\_b\\_FbiKhtgo/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-jERi7MUc6z-1wUnW6UY9_b_FbiKhtgo/view?usp=sharing)>

*Surface:*

<<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1XNE3O37Twm7CI7yvvZJDx8LeIrUUtbDx/view?usp=sharing>>

*Deep Water:*

<[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Djsc5izkVvAccYc\\_dk1R46UZwM0DBgki/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Djsc5izkVvAccYc_dk1R46UZwM0DBgki/view?usp=sharing)>

*A Rock A Tree:*

<<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1WF1UP1f-0r-i4VswDNVzaueUq41lo-dw/view?usp=sharing>>

## Prelude

*Since the day I turned eighteen my mother has always insisted that my sisters and I exercise our right to vote. No matter how insignificant a by-election or fruitless a local election or indeed how key a referendum, we were summoned home to cast our opinions to the wind. As she often said, '[...] people fought for your right to vote [...]'].*

In the struggle for Irish Home Rule at the turn of the twentieth century, women could enroll as auxiliary volunteers to the republican army. Women were recognised in the proclamation document of 1916 as equal citizens. '[...] The Republic guarantees religious and civil liberty, equal rights and equal opportunity to all its citizens [...]'.<sup>1</sup> In line with the British suffrage movement, propertied women over the age of thirty gained the right to vote in Ireland in 1918.<sup>2</sup> The signing into law of the new Irish Free State in 1922 brought hope as women gained full voting rights under the new Irish government. Although women theoretically achieved equal rights and were active volunteers in the fight for freedom, their status was slowly revoked in the years that followed. In 'Days of Surrender' a fictionalised memoir set during the week of the Easter Rising in Dublin, Irish artist Jaki Irvine gave voice to the forgotten heroines of the 1916 Irish revolution.<sup>3</sup> Irvine's book and research highlights the frustration of Irish Women in contributing to bringing into existence the new Irish Free State.

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<sup>1</sup> Proclamation of Independence <<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/bfa965-proclamation-of-independence/>> (accessed 18/01/2023).

<sup>2</sup> The *Suffrage* movement in Britain, Europe and North America in the early twentieth Century was a sustained campaign by groups of women that sought to gain the right for women to vote.

<sup>3</sup> Irvine, Jaki. *Days of Surrender* (Isle of Wight: The Copy Press Ltd. 2013).

Had he not read the proclamation at all? *Equal rights and equal opportunities ... oblivious of the differences carefully fostered...* Does he not know what we're fighting for? *Suffrages of all her men and women...* Has he no idea why so many women are fighting? What's he thinking at all? Is that why we've learnt to shoot as good as any of them? For the chance to make a better cup of tea? Captain Rose MacNamara under no illusions. Commands her girls to report to the GPO if for some reason they find themselves unable to fight alongside Commandant de Valera's men. 'Unmanageable', he says of us. And sure doesn't that say it all? Mr Eamon de Valera. It would appear, sir, that we've been fighting for different futures in different Irelands this past week.<sup>4</sup>

The new Irish government soon abdicated control of social and family affairs to the Irish Catholic Church. What emerged was a wealthy Catholic Church with unprecedented control over the daily lives of the majority of the population. By the time the then head of government Eamon de Valera drafted the first Constitution of Ireland in 1937, which declared the sovereignty of the Irish people, he was adamant that he should protect the idea of a natural family unit and confirm the father as the head of that unit. In article 41.2 of the constitution women were again conscribed to the role of home makers discouraged from taking part in social activities or work beyond the home.

41.2.1 [...] 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.<sup>5</sup>

It is clear that in the transition of Ireland from colony of the British Empire to Republican state women lost out on the initial freedom they had gained. In 1932 the marriage bar was introduced forcing women to give up public sector jobs when they got married. In 1935 contraception was made illegal and in 1937 divorce was banned under law. In 1983, the eighth amendment to the constitution recognised the equal right to life of the unborn, effectively banning termination of pregnancy under any circumstances.

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<sup>4</sup> Irvine, 2013, p.62.

<sup>5</sup> Reference to article 41.2 of the Irish Constitution. <<https://www.thejournal.ie/article-41-constitution-womens-place-5667220-Jan2022/>> (accessed 18/01/2023).

The Women's liberation movement in Europe in the 1970s, aligned with the civil rights movement in America, sought again to address equal rights for women with particular attention to working class communities. Northern Irish voices emerged like that of Bernadette Devlin, politician and social activist who became a leading light in the fight against sectarian policing, internment, and for housing rights for working class communities all the while foregrounding gender-based prejudices. Other groups also formed to promote peace. In 1977 local peace activists Betty Williams and Mairead Corrigan Maguire were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize '[...] for the courageous efforts in founding a movement to put an end to the violent conflict in Northern Ireland [...]'. The pair had founded the *Community of Peace People* (originally called *Women for Peace*) with the aim of promoting peace between communities through education.

In the Republic of Ireland, the *Irish Women's Liberation Movement* was formed in 1970. Their manifesto was to fight for equal rights under the law, equal pay, the removal of the marriage bar, and the right to contraception among other issues. One of their most notable initiatives became known as 'The Contraceptive Train'. A group of forty-seven women in 1971, led by Journalists Nell McCafferty and Mary Kenny travelled from Dublin to Belfast to obtain the contraceptive pill. Famously, as McCafferty tells the story, they quickly found out that they could not buy 'the pill' over the counter without a prescription. She recounts that they instead bought large amounts of aspirin, which they removed from its packaging and declared as contraceptives on their return to Dublin.

Other women's organisations emerged, such as *Women's Aid* and the *National Women's Council*. It was not until 1992 when a challenge to the eighth amendment known as '*the X Case*' - led to a landmark high court decision to give women in Ireland the right to seek a termination of pregnancy if there was a risk to the life of the mother, including the risk of suicide. The promotion of equality for women in culture is not a struggle that is unique to Ireland. In fact, many of the initiatives in Ireland were inspired and emboldened by other women's experience throughout the world.

At the heart of this practice-led research, I encounter a few exemplary Irish women – actual and literary – as representations (allegories) of the difficulties faced by women in times of social and political conflicts and changes.

I approach the stories and histories of women in Irish culture as a woman who is a part of that culture and from the perspective of my own encounter with some of its significant constituents. In my research, the outdoor handball alleys, or ‘Big alleys’ become locations for performance works. Now mostly disused and in ruins, they are concrete structures built in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century to accommodate and control men's play. They are unroofed structures and suggest, in their architecture, community buildings like the church or the school. The outdoor handball alley therefore implies its other - the house, the home, the indoors to which women were consigned in the role of care givers and protectors of the family. My research and my work takes place outdoors, in the open landscape. I have stepped outside.

The aim of this project is to reconsider the positions of women in Irish culture as agents in, rather than simply victims of an oppressive patriarchal order. The agency I have in mind can be glimpsed at through the prism of a philosophy of aesthetics encapsulated in a philosophy of encounter. It is not simply that, in the process of making works, I step outside the boundaries of gender roles; rather, I have always already stepped outside those boundaries. But in the process of the performance works, I encounter the boundary, the limit, in a new light.

While Louis Althusser grounded his philosophy of encounter in idealist beginnings, he developed a new aleatory materialism that challenges a Marxist dialectic of oppressor and oppressed. In adapting Lucretius' concept of the ‘swerve’, Althusser gives form to another, non-binary model, that of the chance encounter of contingent forces. In the moment of encounter new paths are formed, themselves open to changes. The encounter provides a conceptual tool with which to take apart romantic narratives of nationalist heroism as well as break free from a logic of oppression for which ‘empowerment’ would be the only answer. To this end, I then turn to Karen Barad's conceptualisation of a non-binary ‘agential realism’ which posits a dynamic intra-activity as an entanglement of entanglements in open-ended processes.

## Research Question

This practice-led project is an enquiry into the conditions of women in present day Irish culture that puts into question persistent traditional modes of gender hierarchy towards a redefinition of our inhabitation of cultural place.

The stark concrete architecture of Irish Outdoor Handball Alleys serve as both physical backdrop for new performance and photographic works and as cultural signifier to explore issues of identity and more specifically the place of women in Irish culture.

In the performance works, the place of woman becomes a '*sense*' of place through the intervention of the artist's own body within the chosen sites. Encountering traces (visible, invisible) of past events and given sensuous, meaningful form in the encounter.

## Research Methods

As a significant part of my research I have travelled to places of cultural and historical importance. Initially to Handball Alleys and now also other sites which bear the traces of the thirty-year ethno-nationalistic conflict known as 'The Troubles' and those of the cultural dominance of the Catholic Church. I pay close attention to cultural signifiers that inform my understanding of histories held there within. I have researched the histories of Ireland from its partition between north and south to the present day.

Along the way, I listen closely to narratives of people's experiences and remain attentive to local social and physical clues that hint at the lives of people and of places. I have encountered the experience of women in the new Irish Free State and how the evolving government abdicated much of the social and cultural responsibility to the Catholic Church with very specific effect on women's lives. I have read about community Handball Alleys as structures designed to accommodate and to control play, mostly that of men, and which have now become symbols of heroic resistance.

I have read the account of a local historian, Catherine Coreless, who brought to light the death records of 796 children whose remains were interred in an underground concrete bunker at a 'Mother and Baby home' in Galway. I have read the stories of Irish women, Bernadette Devlin, Jean McConville and Dolours Price, who played significant political roles, wittingly and tragically unwittingly, during 'The Troubles'. In the writing of James Joyce I have encountered the figures of two women, fictional characters who represent the silenced but outspoken voice of Nora Barnacle, as one of transgressive sexuality in a supremely Catholic culture.

In the third chapter I effect a shift from a linear to a dynamic logic using a methodology of concurrency to present multiple strands of thinking towards a documentation of a philosophy of encounter. This shift allows me to think beyond dialectic modes of thought. In opposition to parallel systems of thinking, concurrent systems use context shifting to progress ideas on multiple levels simultaneously.<sup>6</sup>

I propose that the use of 'context switching' is also evident in James Joyce's system of writing. This method of presentation of distinct strands of thinking and subjects of working, is consistent with Donna Haraway's diffractive methodology (outlined in the introduction of Karen Barad's concept of an Agential Realism) defined in opposition to a reflective one, using difference not sameness as a measure for analysis.

In both writing and in art making I encounter cultural practices with which my work share affinities. The performance works have involved an ephemeral mark making and actioning of the sites visited. I, as the artist, within the performance, bring together contingent forces and in the encounter I am drawn towards the emergence of an idea, not as an art object but in the subtle poetic conditions of being.

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<sup>6</sup> *Concurrency*; In concurrent computing systems and computing language, although an energy source (processor) appears to operate multiple threads at the same time it is in fact switching contexts between threads to progress operations in blocks. This is not to be confused with parallel computing systems in which multiple tasks are processed at exactly the same time by multiple processors or one processor with divided energy. The advantage of concurrent systems is that the full resource of processing energy is not divided; events progress without limitation.

## Research Map

This practice-led research project comprises of a two-volume research submission.

*Volume One* is a written thesis that both supports the practice-led research and responds to the research question as a concurrent strand of thinking in the context of a philosophy of aesthetics. *Volume Two* of the submission is a visual presentation of twelve performance works, in the form of photographic series. These two volumes together are the complete submission that articulates the practice-led research outcomes and the supporting philosophic argument towards addressing the research question outlined.

*The Big Alley Archive* is embedded at the end of the first chapter of *Volume One* as a major outcome of the practice-led research. This archive represents my encounter with the unique structure of the Outdoor Irish Handball Alley, known as 'Big alleys'. It is presented here in the form of a QR link to a video archive of images of over seventy handball alleys that I have visited as a part of my research.

At the start of my research, I set out to question aspects of Irish culture and the relationship of that culture to women's experiences at the beginning of the twentieth century. This video archive and by extension the idea of an archive as a work in itself of experiential memory, is the first step in my journey of research. The performance and photographic works presented in *Volume Two* are part of an ongoing series of performance works that I have made live in the Irish landscape as I travel to places of cultural and historical significance - the handball alleys and also sites where I encounter traces of past conflicts - listening to the stories of women that I have encountered along the way.

The performance works cite customs of mark making as a way to situate the drawings I make in the landscape within a particular culture and history. Embedded at the end of chapter three, *Voice of Rivers* is a sound work in the form of an album comprising of five audio tracks. It is the final outcome of the practice-led research and an articulation of the rivers as they appear in chapter eight of James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*. In this sound work I aim to make manifest an undercurrent of agency I discerned as I listened to the voices of women I encountered on my research journey.



The written thesis consists of three chapters that advocate in form and in content, a shift from a dialectic mode of thinking to a dynamic one. Chapter one provides the different strands that together form the basis of the thesis. It is an account of the political foundation of the Irish Free State under which conditions I first encounter women's experiences of Irish culture. It is a presentation of the physical structure of the Outdoor Irish Handball Alley, and the concept of 'Structures for Behaviour', as a mode of enquiry into the rules and boundaries that informed and formed lived experiences.

I outline and reflect on the experiences of three Irish women and their very different involvement in the politics of partition and subsequent sectarian violence, in a dominant patriarchal political structure. All rebels in their different ways. I turn to Albert Camus' 1951 essay on the rebel, as it relates to a resistance to domination from outside forces, which allows me to think the paradoxical position of the rebel away from a simple dialectic of resistance to an established dominant order. Louis Althusser's philosophy of the encounter gives form to an indeterminate materialism that calls into question the master-servant<sup>7</sup> dialectic, central to Karl Marx's understanding of cultural hegemony.

The initial focus of chapter two is on the uptake of the physical structure of the Big alleys and the game of handball in the life of the community. A community which, following the formation of the new Irish Free State finds itself under the domination of the religious structures of the Catholic Church. In shifting focus from political beginnings I enter the discussion of the influence of the Catholic Church on the lives of citizens in general and women in particular, under the new family unit limitations outlined in the inaugural Irish Constitution. To be outside the rules of marriage and legitimacy was to suffer the pain of shame and penitence.

Testimony to the folly of blind faith come in the investigative work of local Galway historian Catherine Coreless who brought to light the horrific conditions under which residents in the mother and baby home in Tuam lived and died. I return to the figure of the rebel which for Camus is a position taken in the face of the absurdity of existence, to introduce the figure of the silent other in Samuel Beckett's conception of the condition of man as an absurd theatre. Beckett's rebellion is one of intensity, in which waiting itself, in the anticipation of a chance encounter with an unknown other, prevents entropy. In order to ground my

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<sup>7</sup> *diener* in German.

understanding of Beckett's absurd condition and Althusser's aleatory forces, I turn to Lucretius' poem *De Rerum Natura*, in which he introduces the 'swerve' as the basis of all things, always already in motion, counter to a creationist conception. Lucretius' poem contributes to the foundation of an 'ontology of motion'.

In James Joyce's *Ulysses* I listen closely to the sensual feminine voice hiding in plain sight in his text. I examine Hélène Cixous' concept of 'feminine writing' as a mode of expression not determined by gender but articulated from without a dominant culture. Joyce's 'writing women' is of particular interest because of the connection to the silent voice of his lover and wife, Nora Barnacle - a voice that can only be inferred from Joyce's love letters to her, as her letters to him were lost or destroyed.

The third chapter extends an ontology of motion, outlined in the preceding two chapters, by engaging both with a science of entanglement and a poetics of language that emerge concurrently in the early twentieth century. In Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* I encounter Anna Livia Plurabelle, the voice of *The River*, a river that expands to include hundreds of the world's rivers. In this multiplicity of flows, immeasurable, inexhaustible, my voice becomes a flow among them.

At the same time I examine the concept of 'entanglement' as first articulated by Erwin Schrödinger within the field of quantum physics in the 1930s, a concept that informs contemporary thought on alternative modes of human agency in the humanities. The sustained move from a dialectic principle to a dynamic one leads me to Karen Barad's articulation of an 'Agential Realism' that provides a feminist framework in which to rethink both my own experience as an Irish woman and that of the women whose stories I have encountered on my journey.

Chapter three therefore, marks a shift from classical modes of analysis to post human, quantum or dynamic modalities, in order to escape the continued inference of a dialectic or universal truth that holds women in the position of other in a resilient patriarchal order. The journey of this thesis is that of a shift from a culture of opposition to a reading of difference as dynamic.

# Structures for Behaviour

## Introduction

*Whoso lives west of the Barrow, lives west of the law.*<sup>8</sup>

The opening chapter of this thesis will first trace the historic emergence of the Irish Outdoor Handball Alleys and their survival as fragile physical structures at the edge of decay. The forbidding concrete structure of the Irish Outdoor Handball Alley will figure, in this project, as an object encountered in the landscape, as the materialisation of the enclosure of pleasure, as a memory of a culture of resistance. As a place from which women were excluded as players, the handball alley will also be used as a metaphor for the rules and boundaries that define women's experience of culture outside the home. The outdoor handball alley as opposed to the indoor of the home to which women were confined.

I shall give an account of the lives and experiences of three Irish women during the conflicts in Northern Ireland,<sup>9</sup> and reflect on these three dissonant voices. These women are Bernadette Devlin, political activist and MP for mid-Ulster 1969-1974. Jean McConville, Belfast mother of ten, forcibly disappeared by the IRA in 1973 and Dolours Price, member of the IRA *Unknowns* and a republican hunger striker.

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<sup>8</sup> Caesar Litton Falkiner, *Illustrations of Irish History and Topography, mainly of the 17<sup>th</sup> century* (London: Longmans, Green & Co. 1904), p.117. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century the attorney general to Ireland, Sir John Davies is reported to have said 'whoso lives by west of the Barrow, lives west of the law.' From the latin word *pālus*, a Pale is a wooden stake use to make a fence. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century the area fenced off around Dublin was the only area under the control of the King of England. The rest of the Island or the land '*Beyond the Pale*' was subject to the feudal system carved out by the Anglo-Irish Lords and the Gaelic High Kings (Ard-Rí na hÉireann).

<sup>9</sup> The research draws on information published in the public domain about the lived experience of Bernadette Devlin, Jean McConville and Dolours Price, each of whom are in the public eye for very different reasons.

I shall draw connections between these women's experience of Irish culture<sup>10</sup> and the idea of the rebel as a figure of resistance in Irish culture with reference to Albert Camus' 1951 essay *The Rebel*. Camus provides us with a definition of what it might be to resist dominant cultural forces and in doing so to challenge the notion of a fixed destiny by his introduction of 'chance' as a feature of the rebels plight in the form of a reading of Lucretius' *Clinamen* or swerve.

In extending my analysis of a rebel culture, I turn to French philosopher, Louis Althusser's *Philosophy of the Encounter*, which provides a further analysis of Lucretius' Epicurean atomistic swerve. It is Althusser's identification of the absolute contingency of the encounter and its open-endedness that is essential to this research project and which I shall focus on.

The written component of the research project unfolds concurrently with a series of performance and photographic works. I travel to outdoor handball alleys and other historically significant sites across Ireland, north and south of the border, to make live performance works there. The outdoor handball alleys are not only sites for work but also 'Structures for Behaviour',<sup>11</sup> to be understood as structures that contain and define people's behaviour, their interaction with each other and with the space itself.

The works made are conceived as encounters of contingent elements and forces towards transformation. I, as artist, create the conditions for encounters and deviations between tangible and intangible aspects of an indigenous culture.

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<sup>10</sup> In referring to *Irish Culture*, I am talking of the ideas, customs and social behaviour particular to a group of people. Culture is often defined as that which is not Nature. Here I am instead referring to a notion of cultural spread as the spread of ideas distinct from the spread of power relations by conquering forces. An example of this is the difference in the growth of Celtic culture from that of the Roman Empire.

<sup>11</sup> *Structures For Behaviour* was the title of a 1978 exhibition at the Art Gallery of Ontario and accompanying catalogue (written by Roald Nasgaard) of New Sculptures by minimalist sculptors Robert Morris, David Rabinowitch, Richard Serra and George Trakas.

In the uncertain light a few of the more adventurous were to be seen vigorously playing handball in a little side-alley, the smack of the wet ball against the concrete wall of the alley alternating with their lusty shouts.

## The Big Alley

Irish Outdoor Handball Alleys, or the Big alley, as they are locally known, are a type of vernacular architecture, ‘an indigenous style of building that is largely untutored...’, an architecture of and for the people.<sup>12</sup> These fragile physical structures are decaying and may soon be lost. In the people’s up take of the alleys, their preservation is dependent upon those communities who continue to prioritise a collective sense of history.<sup>13</sup>

In the nineteenth and early twentieth century Ireland was predominantly a rural society. Much of the population were tenant farmers who lived on land owned by wealthy (often British) landlords. While there were fine examples of architecturally designed houses, the land was, in the majority populated by a vast number of small cottages built using building traditions handed down from one generation to the next. These are often referred to as ‘Foirgnimh na nDaoine’, translated as ‘Buildings of the People’<sup>14</sup>. Many of these indigenous buildings were isolated and without electricity. Early use of timber frames was later replaced by walls built with rubble stone laid in earthen mortar and sealed with a lime-wash render. Thatched roofing was gradually replaced by slate or corrugated iron. Farmsteads were built as clusters of smaller buildings.<sup>15</sup>

In terms of sports facilities it was not until the late nineteenth and early twentieth century that there was a concerted move to formalise collective sporting activities. Physical structures were built to house activities that had until then taken place on outdoor sites. Initially these were mostly private clubs for exclusive access, such as cricket and lawn tennis clubs. With the establishment of the Gaelic Athletic Association in 1884, known as the GAA, there was a comprehensive increase in facilities and sporting grounds open to the public. The GAA was set up with the aim of preserving and cultivating national pastimes. It also served to ratify national rules for Gaelic games played locally.

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<sup>12</sup> Alan Bullock and Stephan Trombley, (eds.) *The New Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought* (New York: HarperCollins, 1999), p.474.

<sup>13</sup> The term ‘the people’ is used throughout this thesis in accordance with the *OED*’s definition: ‘The ordinary citizens of a country rather than those who govern or have a special position in society’.

<sup>14</sup> Andrew Carpenter et. al., *Art and Architecture of Ireland 1600-2000* (Dublin: Yale University Press, 2014), p.481. In this comprehensive survey of vernacular architecture in Ireland there is a subsection titled ‘Foirgnimh na nDaoine’ or ‘Buildings of the People’. The use of the term ‘people’ in relation to vernacular building types agrees with the definition given above.

<sup>15</sup> Andrew Carpenter et. al., *Art and Architecture of Ireland 1600-2000* (Dublin: Yale University Press, 2014), p.481.

The Gaelic sport of handball consisted of two opposing players or also the possibility of doubles and trebles teams, hitting a ball against a wall, by hand or by fist with the aim of making the ball non-returnable by their opponents. Variations of handball were and are still played all over the world - from wall games in Ancient Egypt to *Eaton fives* in Britain and the Basque game of *Pelota*.<sup>16</sup> The traditional game of handball in Ireland was played with a hardball made from cork or leather known as a mute ball. Later a softball was introduced, a hollow dynamic ball that heats up in play and essentially increased the speed at which the game is played. There were several variations of handball depending on the size of the court, the number of walls (one, three or four walls), the number of players, whether the game was played with a hardball or a softball, in an outdoor concrete alley or in an indoor alley.

Originally handball was a community game played on any gable wall in the village or town, for example the church, school, or pub wall. Games were played after school or mass on a Sunday, or after the pub had closed. While girls and young women may have played handball it is not until the 1960's that women officially played league handball in the GAA. Like so many other activities their involvement would have been secondary to men's as it was seen to involve betting and unruly gatherings.

Although there is recorded evidence that handball was played as early as the sixteenth century in Ireland, most handball alleys were built between the late nineteenth century and the late twentieth century, in both rural and urban areas.<sup>17</sup> The move to build handball alleys was intended to formalise the play of handball and contain its play in purpose-built structures. The Big alleys are carriers of conflicted cultural memory and identity. They function as containers of cultural experience, north and south of the border, providing a significant insight into the way culture developed at the time of the burgeoning Irish Free State.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Galway had trade links with Spain and its Basque regions, where the similar game of Pelota is played.

<sup>17</sup> The earliest known record of the playing of handball in Ireland come from the 1527 Galway by-laws which reads: '*1527: No Gaming, that whoever plays at choitts or stoines, but only to shoot in longe bowes, shorte cross bowes and hurling of darts or speres, to lesse at every time 8d.*'. Brendan McGowan, *By-Laws of Medieval Galway*, "No Gaming", Galway City Museum (2012).

<sup>18</sup> Much of the research into the Irish outdoor concrete handball alleys here has been aided by a research project by Irish Architect Áine Ryan. Ryan states that her aim is to '...instill an appreciation of the indigenous handball alley among both the public and professionals, thereby securing a future for the Big alley as an important aspect of our heritage.'



Native to Ireland and historically an important feature of its cultural heritage the Big alleys were built primarily as free standing, unroofed, stone and concrete<sup>19</sup> structures. They comprised a front wall flanked by two side walls. In some cases a fourth back wall, with an entrance, completed the perimeter. The base dimension or footprint of this structure is thirty foot wide by sixty foot in depth. Service lines were drawn on the ground. More advanced constructions included a viewing platform added as an extension of the back wall. These alleys followed a standard format as laid out by the GAA.

The Big alleys were a focus of the life of the community. They were often built adjoining the gable end wall of a local school, church or public building. There are many local variations. They were built on both private and public land and can be found inside the grounds of schools, hospitals and military institutions. Furthermore, in local communities, they were as likely to be situated at the side of the road, in a field, next to a church or graveyard, at the back of a pub or at a remote crossroads, standing in the middle of the countryside. The Big alleys are now increasingly falling into disuse as the contemporary game of handball is played in purpose built indoor alleys managed by the GAA.<sup>20</sup>

In this research, I consider how the Big alley became manifest as a 'Structure for Behaviour' in Irish culture. My aim is to examine the topography of the remaining Big alleys, and by traveling to their sites, trace their origins and consider them as they are now. Reflecting on their cultural function as structures designed to organise social behaviour and contain play and pleasure but which seem to have been both adopted as and adapted into sites synonymous with a local culture of resistance. Hence, from a structure of containment, the Big alleys remain a vibrant emitter of a dynamic cultural energy.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Although concrete was evident as a construction material in ancient Roman, its use was rediscovered in the 19th century. Early examples of handball alleys use a mixture of traditional building methods and also concrete depending on local skills, funding and available materials. See Fig 2, p.26.

<sup>20</sup> According to a survey by the Architectural Register of Ireland in 2010, there are approximately 350 of these structures still remaining across the country in varying states of repair.

<sup>21</sup> Dalberg, *On homonymy between Proper Name and Appellative*, in Names 33, Vol. 3. Denmark: University of Copenhagen Press, 1985; suggests that rather than consider the appellative place name as a general classification with a fluid boundary between proper and common nouns, it is preferable in contemporary classification to consider common nouns that refer to an 'associated meaning' in which the noun has features associated to its physical nature. 'The Big alley' as a term is used here to refer to the associated architectural features as a classification of a specific type of vernacular structure.

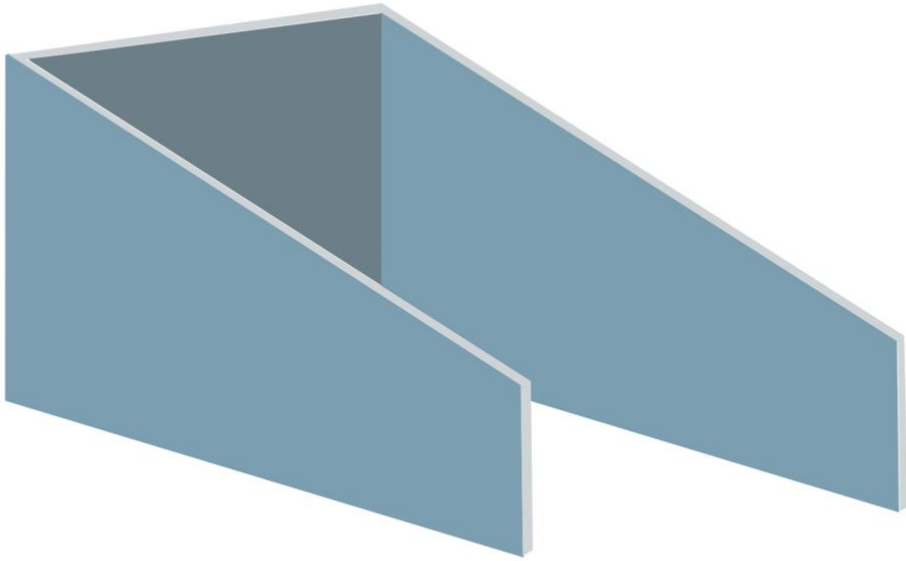


Fig. 2

## The Big Alley as Structures for Behaviour

The idea of 'Structures for Behaviour' is the first step in understanding the social and cultural implications of vernacular architecture in terms of a politics of partition in Ireland. The example that I have taken as central to the research project is the Outdoor Handball Alley or the Big alley. It is also a reference to modernity in the community's uptake of sporting games and leisure. In the second chapter 'Structures for Behaviour' represent the institution of the Catholic Church and its dominance over the general population or the 'people', in the shift from colony of the British Empire to Independent Free State.

Although they can be said to respond to the criteria for vernacular buildings, the Big alleys are unlike the smaller domestic buildings of the vernacular tradition that are evident in the nineteenth Century in Ireland.<sup>22</sup> The Big alleys, have a greater resemblance to the simplified, utilitarian lines of sculpture of the modernist period. They are also defined by their function and people's physical interaction with them. These are not structures to look at but structures specifically designed to facilitate and at the same time contain game play. The Big alleys at the height of their popularity were central to the life of the community.

The expression 'Structures for Behaviour' was coined by Canadian curator Roald Nasgaard, to describe contemporary sculptures that differed from more conventional static minimalist objects in that they were intended for participation and activation by the public. Rather than three-dimensional structures that occupied space to be only looked at by the viewer, those sculptures invited a shift of attention from seeing to doing. '[...] To the action of the eyes must be added that of the body [...]'.<sup>23</sup> I have drawn on Nasgaard's term as a point of reference. The idea of structures that in some way seek to define an interaction with an audience allows me to consider the Big alleys in the Irish landscape as structures that invite active participation by the community.

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<sup>22</sup> Vernacular architecture is said to have features that respond to the local environment and climate. It is adapted to social and communal usage. It utilizes local building materials and skill and focuses on function over beauty.

<sup>23</sup> Roald Nasgaard. *Structures for Behaviour- New sculptures by Robert Morris, David Rabinowitch, Richard Serra and George Trakas* (Art Gallery of Ontario 1978), p.12.

The greater number of these outdated structures have been replaced by indoor handball alleys. The very different levels of care taken to preserve them in their communities is indicative of their ambiguous status in people's memory. In some areas they are well kept, renovated and still in use. In other places they are overgrown or in ruins. Many of the structures used state-of-the-art building techniques at the time of building.<sup>24</sup> All of the remaining Big alleys are open to the elements, to the wind and to the rain and to interpretation.

To put this another way, I borrow the expression 'Structures for Behaviour' to represent both the political and religious orders that defined the lives of the people and the physical structure of the outdoor handball alleys as spaces designed for working men's pleasure that existed in parallel to the home to which women were confined in their role as homemakers. In the opening phase of this research, I have used the Big alley as a metaphor for the rules and boundaries of women's lives and as a backdrop for the performance works. In the performance works, I, 'inhabit' these historically segregated places, not with the intention of claiming them for women through actions that would transform them, but by making ephemeral traces that mark the surface but are not intended to last.

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<sup>24</sup> The Big alley at Iveagh Gardens in Dublin, built by Cramptons for the Guinness Factory, is an example of an alley built using the most recent building techniques - 1930.



## Dissonant Voices

In this section I will look at the stories of three Irish women who were caught up in the conflict in Northern Ireland in the late 1960s. As I encounter conflicting cultures north and south of the border so too emerge dissonant voices. Not just voices of rebellion against the colonial outside but voices that are discordant from the inside. The women described here are not representative of all Irish women but have particular experiences in a time of conflict that mark them out as radically different. It is their resistance in complex situations and their actions and experiences under extreme social unrest that set them apart as rebels.

Fig. 3  
Fig. 4  
Fig. 5

Bernadette Devlin, Belfast (c.1969)  
Jean McConville, with Robert, Helen, Archie and husband Arthur. Belfast (c.1968)  
Dolours Price, Belfast (c.1968)

## Bernadette Devlin

Bernadette Devlin is a political activist and human rights campaigner in Northern Ireland. She is best known as a figurehead in the emerging civil rights movement of the late 1960's and was often to be found, standing at the head of the barricade, loudhailer in hand, directing the volatile embers of community spirit. An active advocate for the (mainly) Catholic working class, in a deeply divided sectarian constituency, she quickly became a leading voice of the community. Devlin was a student of Psychology at Queens University Belfast when she played a prominent role in the student organised, civil rights marches of 1968. She was involved in setting up the radical students civil rights movement, The People's Democracy.

From student to MP, Devlin challenged the old order of abstentionism. Tradition held that Irish Republican MPs abstained from taking up their seat in parliament as a form of protest. However, Devlin gained a seat as MP to Mid Ulster from 1969 to 1974. Her youth, her outspoken ability to galvanise and articulate a socialist struggle together with a preparedness to risk everything, gained her the affectionate title among supporters of 'Our Joan of Arc'. Devlin, in the fight against internment, sectarian policing and in support of housing rights, spent six months in jail for incitement to riot, for her part in the now infamous Battle of the Bogside 1969. Her maiden speech in the House of Commons<sup>25</sup>, was an impassioned response to Lord Chichester-Clark of the Ulster Unionist Party, who complained that the Catholic minority in Northern Ireland just didn't want to join society. Described as 'electrifying' Devlin spoke without script, articulating with great sophistication the notoriously complex political and ethnic dynamics of a community on fire.

I stand here as the youngest woman in Parliament, in the same tradition as the first woman ever to be elected to this Parliament, Constance Markievicz, who was elected on behalf of the Irish people.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> See Appendix 1: Transcript of Devlin's maiden speech to the Houses of Parliament (22/04/1969).

<sup>26</sup> See Appendix 1, p.132.

## Jean McConville

Jean McConville had grown up in a Protestant family living in East Belfast. At fourteen she found a job as a domestic in the house of Mrs. Mary McConville, a catholic lady whose son Arthur had been a soldier serving in the British army. Much to old Mrs. McConville's disapproval, Jean and Arthur, twelve years Jean's senior, eloped to England in 1952. Initially they lived in barracks where Arthur was stationed. They returned to Belfast in 1957 and moved in with Jean's mother. The situation became intolerable, between the cramped living conditions and the sectarian tensions escalating around them.<sup>27</sup> They were eventually forced to abandon this area and secured a flat in Divis St., of the Catholic Falls Road area. One final grounding blow came when Arthur died of cancer in January 1972. Alone, Jean became isolated in her own private troubled world and the worst community betrayal was still to come.

On an evening in December 1972, 38-year-old, widowed mother of ten, McConville was forcefully removed from her Divis St. flat, violently abducted by a gang of people. As she was bundled out the door, McConville's ten children did not realise that this was the last time they would see her. Nor would they have any information about what happened to her for a further thirty years. McConville had been effectively 'Disappeared' by republicans.<sup>28</sup> In 2003, the earth finally gave up McConville's body, buried on a lonely beach, upon which a solitary walker stumbled.

The fact that McConville's body was found by a member of the public had huge significance. The coroner ruled that it had not been found with the help of the IRA and was not included in the amnesty covering the *Disappeared*. The criminal case remained open. In 2019, former IRA member Ivor Bell was acquitted of soliciting the murder of Jean McConville. No one else has been charged in relation to her murder.

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<sup>27</sup> In the 1960's DUP leader and prominent Unionist agitator, Ian Paisley, in his incendiary pulpit sermons, shouted out the door numbers of houses in Protestant areas such as the Shankill road. He would shout that the Pope's men live there and should be driven out. Essentially this encouraged ethnic cleansing and Catholics were forced out and into ghetto's.

<sup>28</sup> The Disappeared: in the 1970's-90's the IRA, aware of British intelligence infiltrating its ranks, developed a counter strategy. This was, to court-martial, kidnap, murder and bury without trace, individuals that they believed to be 'touts'. There are seventeen people known to have been 'Disappeared' by the IRA during *the Troubles* in Northern Ireland.

## Dolours Price

Dolours Price had an early baptism in student marches of the late 1960's and was caught up in the spirit of a radical socialist revolution. Dolours and her younger sister Marion took part in a protest march from Belfast to Derry, organised by the People's Democracy in January 1969. Bernadette Devlin and Eamonn MacCann would have been in attendance and the students agreed that they would maintain a peaceful protest throughout. The marchers were ambushed by loyalist counter-protesters on the fourth day when they approached Burntollet Bridge in Derry. The students were attacked with rocks and projectiles. Many were beaten and forced into the Burntollet river, including Dolours and Marion.

The student protesters modelled themselves on the civil rights movement in America. They studied the marches of Martin Luther King, Che Guevara and showed solidarity with the working classes on both sides of the struggle, Catholic and Protestant. Dolours and her younger sister Marion were further radicalised by an increasing frustration with the futility of peaceful protests in the face of exponentially violent backlash from Unionists, loyalist paramilitaries and the British forces. It was a logical progression for Dolours to join the IRA and with it to demand equal army status with her male counterparts.

Many families would have objected but the Price sisters were in fact joining a family tradition.<sup>29</sup> What set them apart from the rank and file was their preparedness to carry out military operations in a calm and calculated way. Dolours refused to be relegated to 'honey pot' operations and in the early 1970's became an integral part of the IRA's Belfast Brigade and a secret squad called 'the Unknowns'. This squad was notorious for routing out informers from within the organisation.

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<sup>29</sup> Albert, Dolours' father was an active member of the IRA, as was her auntie Bridie, who was blinded and had her hands blown off in a bomb making accident.



## The Rebel

In his collection of essays, *The Myth of Sisyphus* (1942), Albert Camus asserted that the fundamental philosophical question is one of suicide when confronted with the *absurd* nature of life, the absence of any meaning to the existence of man. In the face of an unresponsive universe, man asks: is life worth living at all? Camus rejected any form of escape from the absurd, whether through religion and ultimately, suicide. Camus wants to return man to himself by freeing himself from the consolation of the illusory hope of another life which prevents him from recognising and assuming the absurd as such. Thus, for the *absurd man* to deny hope is not to give into despair or nihilism.<sup>30</sup>

*Absurdism* is associated with Camus' philosophy because of its focus on meaning and action inside the futile question of man's existence. In his use of the example of the futile and hopeless labour of Sisyphus, Camus was clear that the absurd man must face his situation. He concluded that: 'The struggle itself towards the heights is enough to fill a man's heart. One must imagine Sisyphus happy.'<sup>31</sup>

If the accepted definition of suicide is *to end one's own life*, I would suggest, rather, that suicide is *death by self-murder*, for one must plot to end one's own life. In *The Rebel*<sup>32</sup> Camus extended his logic as he attempted to face the unrelenting confrontation of the absurd and a shift in focus from suicide (self-murder) in *Sisyphus* to the murder of another in *The Rebel*. In this moment I encounter the rebel as his dilemma is consolidated. Ireland comes from a history of rebellion in the face of a colonising enterprise. The origin of the Republican movement dates from Wolfe Tones' *United Irishmen* in the 1798 rebellion,<sup>33</sup> to the Proclamation of Independence,<sup>34</sup> in the 1916 Easter Rising.<sup>34</sup> In Camus'

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<sup>30</sup> Albert Camus , *The Myth of Sisyphus* (London/ New York: Penguin Books, (1942) 2005), p.64.

<sup>31</sup> Camus, 1942, p.119.

<sup>32</sup> Albert Camus, *The Rebel* (New York: Vintage International, (1951) 1991).

<sup>33</sup> Theodor Wolfe Tone was a revolutionary Irish leader and founding member of the *United Irishmen*. He led the 1798 revolution in support of the 'men of no property', marking the beginning of the republican movement.

<sup>34</sup> On 24<sup>th</sup> April 1916, Easter Monday, leaders of an Irish rebellion met at Dublin's Liberty Hall before taking over six key locations in the city and declaring an Independent Ireland. By 1pm on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> of May the city was burning but a defiant Patrick Pearce emerged from the GPO to read the Rebels Proclamation. It was the ferocious character of the British response that made martyrs of the rebel leaders in what became known as the Easter Rising.

later philosophical essay *The Rebel* (1951) I first encounter the limit, beyond which the rebel cannot endure, he must act and in doing so join a new game of chance. Whilst Irish Rebels have a history of spectacular moments of revolutionary theatre, it was their willingness to enter the chance encounter that delivered them from the absoluteness of colonial control and opened the possibility for dynamic new orders to take hold.

We seem to have lost; We have not lost. To refuse to fight would have been to lose; To fight is to win. We have kept faith with our past and handed on a tradition to the future.<sup>35</sup>

'*What is a rebel?* A man who says no, but also yes.'<sup>36</sup> The rebel, according to Camus, in his moment of revolt encounters the point beyond which he cannot tolerate further infringement of his rights. Suddenly the rebel finds his own voice and expresses his right not to be controlled by a higher order. In this moment of recognition, the rebel acts and in doing so he simultaneously recognises his own value and makes a commitment to reject intrusion of others. To be silent is no longer possible for the rebel, as to do so is to accept this infringement of his values.

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<sup>35</sup> Richard M. Kain, *Dublin in the Age of William Butler Yeats and James Joyce* (1962) (Dublin: Newton Abbot, David and Charles, 1972), p.121. (Easter Rising leader Padraig Pearse, Dockland speech May 1916).

<sup>36</sup> Camus, 1951, p.13 (Interesting here to note the historical gender bias in language and use of the word 'man' as both representative of mankind and men).

*With rebellion, awareness is born.*<sup>37</sup>

In *The Rebel* Camus expanded his earlier definition of the absurd condition of man as a metaphysical revolution by way of the awareness acquired in the act of revolt. After the liberation of France in World War II, Camus found himself in opposition to those who want to round up and put to death collaborators. He thought that to put to death collaborators is to behave no better than they did. For Camus one must act ethically even in the face of terrible crimes.

From an ancient Greek struggle against nature and Christian ideological domination, to paradises lost and paradigms shifted, *The Rebel* is a dense text full of vibrant examples of the chaotic universe of humans intoxicated by their own crimes in defying moral laws. Camus cites the erotic writings of the 18<sup>th</sup> century philosopher, the *Marquis de Sade* as an attack on the virtues of morality; a moral philosophy from a lifetime unjustly spent in a prison cell, bound to be of extreme negation. De Sade, an expert on torture and vice, saw man as subject to inexhaustible desire and responded with absolute rebellion. He dreamt of revenge in the name of absolute freedom, where 'virtue and vice are indistinguishable in the tomb.'<sup>38</sup> For De Sade to kill a man at the height of passion is understandable, whereas to do so in the cold light of day is indefensible.

For Camus rebellion is different from resentment in the level of passion it inspires. Rebellion leads to action, where resentment implies an inability to act and breeds revenge. To risk everything, the act of rebellion is not a selfish act but one for common dignity. The rebel acts for a community of individuals beyond the absolute values of religion, to become equal and assert new value judgement that is not subservient to any greater ontology. The pain of the rebel is a pain shared among men. In the moment of awareness comes agency and the understanding that the forces of domination and subservience, while intrinsically linked, are not compatible as equals.

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<sup>37</sup> Camus, 1951, p.14.

<sup>38</sup> Camus, 1951, p.25.

Camus adapted the concept of Lucretius' integral bias in the flow of matter.

Lucretius [...] has to admit, however, that atoms do not aggregate of their own accord and rather than believe in a superior law and, finally, in the destiny he wishes to deny, he accepts the concept of a purely fortuitous mutation, the *clinamen*, in which the atoms meet and group themselves together. [...] to rescue man from destiny is to deliver him to chance.<sup>39</sup>

This is the *Swerve* of atoms, expressed as the becoming necessary of contingency.<sup>40</sup> *All things* (matter) in Lucretius, oscillate as an infinite sum of perpetual motion, not random, not causal, but inclined towards habit and without which there would be nothing. In Camus' employ, Lucretius embodies the proud rebel, forming new sensibilities in the encounter. For Camus, man emerged with no one destiny or path to truth, only a multiplicity of possible truths.

Camus' *Rebel* delivered man from destiny to chance, while God provided to be a cruel master, calling for the original murder in the story of Cain's slaying of his brother Abel.<sup>41</sup> The motion of the swerve allows us to think of the rebel as freed from a master/slave dialectic.<sup>42</sup> The rebel not only denied the superiority of God/master but defied a reciprocal dialectic relationship by declaring himself equal. Man is delivered from a pre-destined existence into one of chance encounters.

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<sup>39</sup> Camus, 1951, p.19.

<sup>40</sup> In Epicurean physics, the *Clinamen* (Swerve) is a spontaneous deviation, literally a swerve, so minute it is invisible to the eye, of the atoms from their fall into the void, which allows them to collide. In the modern world we encounter much of Epicurean philosophy through the writing of the Roman poet Titus Lucretius Carus.

<sup>41</sup> Camus, 1951, p.17.

<sup>42</sup> Dialectic is a term used to describe a critical discourse between opposing positions in order to establish a truth. An absolute truth is always already plural. In German philosopher Georg Hegel's (1770-1831) notion of dialectics the thesis, that is everything (matter) is equivalent to its antithesis, which is nothing (the absolute). The synthesis of being and by extension, not being, is becoming, transitioning from the absolute to the concrete.

The slave rebels against the master and man rebels against the universe. For Camus, rebellion opens the possibility to create new paths but does not always lead to constructive change. Not an atheist, the rebel, takes God as an equal. To surpass oppression, one needs to provide a new order as it is not possible to live equally with someone who was a domineering force. The rebel, tempted by power, ultimately realises that with power comes responsibility. The temptation for man is to follow a nihilistic path and absolve themselves of ethical behaviour in response to the futility of man's absurd existence. Camus' rebellion rejects a nihilistic approach and prescribes that new paths require new just laws.<sup>43</sup>

The rebel acts, not only for himself but for all men. Beyond the notion of man's absurd condition Camus invokes the Cartesian moment: 'I rebel, therefore we exist.'<sup>44</sup> The rebel rejects the absolute nature of religion and recognises that we are alone in the universe. In this sense failure to act condemns all men and it is a collective notion of goodwill that steers the rebel forward on his journey.

The artist according to Camus' scheme of rebellion is uniquely positioned to act in a creative way, between realism and abstraction, to impose unity on reality '[...] at the limit of transformation [...]'.<sup>45</sup> The act of rebellion is a creative act, in which man rejects both destiny (God) and nihilist absolutes, suddenly, there is an opening to escape dominant dialectics. The rebel becomes aware and in doing so, demands not just an equal voice but a new order.

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<sup>43</sup> *The Rebel* refers to the master/slave dialectic, but Camus is also interested in the issue of justice in the face of absolute freedom. *The Just Assassins* (1949) is a play in which Camus explores the nature of murder and revolution, and in *The Fall* (1957) it is the judge/penitent relationship that is highlighted.

<sup>44</sup> Camus, 1951, p.54.

<sup>45</sup> Camus, 1951, p.134.

Camus privileged the artist as one who becomes conscious of the possibility to create a new unity, escaping the trap of repeating old order by rejecting both the nihilism of abstraction and totalising affirmation of realism. Camus' rebel rediscovers the refusal to accept his destiny and enacts tensions as a condition of restoring the dignity of man. This gave man an opening to escape the Hegalian master/slave dialectic.<sup>46</sup> Camus tells us that the artist is essential, even if it is just to know that the universe is not made up of a dominant version of history informed solely by man.

For Camus the artist is less useful when it comes to real combat. Without the rule of God, is it possible to kill someone we recognise to be ourselves? In a new world order, the 'we' of rebellion, becomes the 'I' of murder. But rebellion and murder are contradictory. To remove even one man, is to expel oneself from the *community of men*, the rebel has only one choice and that is to accept his own death.<sup>47</sup> Hope is essential, the rebel must continue to hope in the face of the absurd. Not to fall foul of the habit of excess, but to organise on a political level, without terror, if not without violence, in the struggle for truth.

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<sup>46</sup> The master/slave dialectic is a core tenant of Hegel's *Phenomenology of the Spirit*, and his concept of self-consciousness as an encounter between the two orientations of being where self-consciousness arises from the recognition that one can dominate (sublate) the other. *Herrschaft und Knechtschaft*, translated from the original phrase in German as, *Lordship and Bondage* describes the dimensions of conscious being that are in constant dialogue as a process of recognition of the other that informs the whole.

<sup>47</sup> Camus, 1951, p.139.

## Philosophy of the Encounter

In, *Philosophy of the Encounter*<sup>48</sup> Louis Althusser defines a materialism not of a subject but of a process, if his philosophy has an object, it is the 'void'.<sup>49</sup> This is a collection of writings and letters in which Althusser revisited his thoughts on the limits of Marxist material determinism to propose a philosophy of aleatory materialism. In his posthumously published writings, there emerges a metaphysical treatise on the close connection of philosophy, ideology and politics in his re-reading of Marxist ideology, towards a radical new order of materialism. In Althusser's conception of *Encounter*, the world is dominated by an aleatory materialism involving random encounters between contingent forces that take form according to unpredictable bias. This reading of the *Encounter* furthers Camus' reading of the Lucretian swerve and our understanding of the artists relationship to indeterminate materialism.

In this later writing Althusser made a return to the idea that there are only two main tendencies in philosophy; they are idealism<sup>50</sup> and materialism<sup>51</sup>. His concept of an aleatory materialism is grounded in two fundamental principles. Firstly, that matter is all that exists. This places Althusser firmly within a materialist mode of thinking. He adopts a strategy like that of Spinoza who in his *Philosophy of the Void* states that God is nature and in doing so '[...] occupies, in advance, the common fortress.'<sup>52</sup> Secondly, that *chance* is the origin of all worlds, as explained with reference to a Lucretian *Clinamen* or *swerve*.

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<sup>48</sup> Louis Althusser. *Philosophy of the Encounter, Later Writings, 1978-1987* (London, New York: Verso, (1993) 2006).

<sup>49</sup> Althusser, 1993, p.260.

<sup>50</sup> Idealism is the philosophic theory which states that everything that exists is an invention of the mind and there is no material thing that exists independently of the mind. The ancient Greek philosopher Plato held that objects in the external world have a true or essential form that is an ideal form, even though the reality may appear to be quite different. Idealism obeys the principles of reason, the origin and the end are inconceivable without the spirit. In an idealist philosophy the origin anticipates the end.

<sup>51</sup> Materialism is the understanding that everything that exists in the world is physical matter and is possible to be experienced through the senses. The opposite of idealism, a materialist logic sees the universe and everything in it as the consequence of a preceding existence. Materialism is a metaphysical theory of the nature of reality. The theory of materialism denies the existence of mental states including the mind except where it relates to physical function of the brain. Where idealism sees a world of ideas and spirit, materialism is concerned with matter and energy (motion).

<sup>52</sup> Althusser, 1993, p.176.

While patterns can be described, their existence is due to a pre-existing random bias. New worlds and new orders come into existence out of chance encounters between pre-existing material elements. Althusser's *Materialism of the Encounter* is a reading of what he saw to be an underground current of an indeterminate materialism.

Rather than separate the scientific from the political in Marx's writing, Althusser aligned himself with the limits of Marx and supported the notion that although new (political) orders emerge from the encounter of contingent forces, these encounters must be binding in order to last. Elements or matter must group together for new world orders to take hold. History, as we come to know it is after all the story of the winner and is not a prescribed outcome. Althusser rejected Marx and Engels<sup>53</sup> when they said that the proletariat is 'a product of big industry' which suggested for him that the working class was complicit in its own plight. Instead, Althusser, within the structure of the mode of production, saw the owner of the means of production as a producer of a structure of dependence and by extension power and exploitation.<sup>54</sup>

Althusser's thinking on the limit of Marx is relevant to the struggle of the working classes in Northern Ireland in the 1960's, from which an increasingly disenfranchised working-class community began to rise up and demand their basic civil rights. Conditions under which deep unrest and conflict emerged in response to a sense of injustice at the increasingly sectarian social structure that segregated and demoralized those on the lower rungs of society, mainly Catholics but also Protestants.

*The Bogside was once a street, now it's a condition.*<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> German political philosopher Friedrich Engels (1820-1895) collaborated with Karl Marx (1818- 1883) on several key Marxist and Communist texts including the Communist Manifesto (1845).

<sup>54</sup> Louis Althusser, 1993, p.198.

<sup>55</sup> Pringle, Peter and Jacobson, Philip. *Those Are Real Bullets Aren't They* (London: Fourth Estate, 2001), p.29.



Althusser was critical of Engels' view of a human need to unify contradictory forces<sup>56</sup> and rejected Hegelian truth as a unifying absolute. Instead, he adapted a Marxist reading of a *Dialectic Materialism* to the indeterminacy of ideas, articulated as a process or discourse dominated by idealism, as opposed to one system without contradiction.<sup>57</sup> True materialism, for Althusser, was one based on chance, an aleatory materialism.

In Althusser's *Philosophy of Encounter* there are no universal truths as the truths that emerge are contingent and are in competition with a multiplicity of singular truths. With the idea of the aleatory encounter Althusser re-presented a dialectics he saw as radically different. While materialism contains aspects of ideology, aleatory materialism too contains a trace of materialism. Althusser's *materialism of the encounter* is different from Hegel's determinate<sup>58</sup> materialism. In adopting Lucretius' *Clinamen* or swerve<sup>59</sup>, Althusser allowed for the possibility of an indeterminate materialism that necessitates the chance encounter of contingent elements. Indeterminacy, then does not rely only on random moves but puts in place known elements that encounter each other in unpredictable ways.

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<sup>56</sup> Matter in a materialist logic is subject to forces, these are the flows of energy that cause motion.

<sup>57</sup> Hegel's thesis on absolute truth is that we analyse one (which is subsumed by its opposite) to discover the next and the truth itself is not the property of the subject alone but of the whole composite. Hegel saw this as a constant process of questioning to establish new truths. Hegel's *Dialectic Materialism* allowed that the mind is distinct in nature from matter and involves the spirit as a driving force or energy and in this sense embraces mental energies as part of the nature of reality. In Marx's reading of dialectic materialism matter and by extension power are linked to the means of production. A power dynamic perpetuated by both sides of the master/slave dialectic. Marx was determined to apply dialectic materialism to the politics of the class struggle as he saw it.

<sup>58</sup> Determinism relates to the understanding that the world and everything in it is subject to the laws of causality. In general terms relating to the laws of nature; every event has a causing factor. It is also linked to the idea of a necessary or self-evident truth. That we can determine truths based on what we already know to be true.

<sup>59</sup> Althusser, 1993, p.260.

In Althusser's reading of an Epicurean world view;

This implies that before the formation of the world, there was no meaning, neither cause nor end nor reason nor unreason. This is a negation of all teleology, whether rational, moral, political, or aesthetic. I would add that this materialism is the materialism, not of subject (whether God or the proletariat), but of a process - without a subject – which dominates the order of its development, with no assignable end.<sup>60</sup>

While one might not be able to determine universal truths from chance sequences, to be aligned with the lack of ability to predict sequences precisely is to open the possibility to grasp a 'truth' of singularities and conditions for the emergence of new orders within the encounter. The swerve does not cause the world but gives atoms the conditions of their reality. In Althusser's hypothesis, atoms<sup>61</sup> encounter each other in discrete moves, thus opening the possibility for us to recognise the existence of other possible truths, a multiplicity of contingent truths and 'the existence of human freedom in the world of necessity itself.'<sup>62</sup>

In Althusser's scheme of aleatory encounters, necessity is equivalent to the process of 'becoming-necessary of the encounter of contingencies.'<sup>63</sup> Here his focus is not on the random nature of the encounter but on the inclination towards encounter that is always already inclined. This escapes questions of causation and determinate logic. It is the infinitesimal swerve, an inclination to move in random shifts that put in place the conditions for the flow of elements to interrupt each other and open the possibility to recognise other truths. Once enacted, new paths are formed by the aggregation of complex encounters that become open to change in the moment of the encounter. It is not bias or chance as the mode of necessity but intensities that are the result of the contingencies of multiplicities of unpredictable nature. It is in the moment of a truly lasting encounter that worlds come into existence.

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<sup>60</sup> Althusser, 1993, p.260.

<sup>61</sup> Althusser, 1993, p.262.

<sup>62</sup> Althusser, 1993, p.262.

<sup>63</sup> Althusser, 1993, p.261.

Althusser's history is not a dead history of past events, but a history 'in the present', that is a living history open to the uncertain encounter of singular truths. 'Living history obeys only a constant (not a law): the constant of class struggle', one that is not a linear law but is a tendency that can diverge in the event of encounters with other tendencies. In Althusser's world there is nothing but 'cases, situations, things that befall us without warning.'<sup>64</sup>

Tucked into the final pages of Althusser's collection there is a brief allegorical story, a *Portrait of a Materialist Philosopher*<sup>65</sup> in which Althusser seems to evoke Edgar Allen Poe's *Man of the Crowd* or indeed James Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. The philosopher wanders without aim and in the process makes lasting complex encounters. A materialist philosopher is one who can interpret a political order not as a direct reaction but as an open-ended encounter of contingencies, contributing to new orders. In the process of research, I make actions and encounter contexts and materials that are in some ways formative, but it is in the encounter itself that the work of art takes hold.

In the context of this research, *the Encounter*, as a framework for thinking allows me to consider the histories and politics of localities and how the performance works encounter both vernacular architectures in the landscape and the lived experiences of women in Irish culture. In further analysis of a philosophy of the encounter I will reflect on intangible aspects of Irish life, within patriarchal structures in relation to the tangible vernacular architecture of the *Big* alley, evident throughout the physical landscape. In the performance works I encounter complex contingent elements and a fleeting image is somewhere formed in the unfolding moment.

Althusser's *Philosophy of Encounter* articulates the shift not only from destiny to chance, but from random encounters to moments of coherence in the open-ended encounter of contingent forces. In the performance and photographic works, I bring together these diverse forces, that in some moments, emerge as works. Not as ideal objects or images but that the idea coheres somewhere in the subtle poetic conditions of brief moments of becoming.

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<sup>64</sup> Althusser, 1993, p.264-265.

<sup>65</sup> Althusser, 1993, p.290.



Fig. 6

Jack B Yeats

*The Ball Alley* 1927

## Encountering the Vernacular

The Irish diaspora in its spread, has long since lost its claim to an indigenous language. Even Joyce's old woman tells a 'stately, plump Buck Mulligan', '[...] I'm ashamed I don't speak the language myself. I'm told it's a grand language by them that knows.'<sup>66</sup> There are, however, other aspects of culture that provide consistent clues to the lived experience of a colonised people. These aspects are evident in the cultural uptake of the Big alley as a localised response to the formalisation of pleasure in a culture of resistance and containment.<sup>67</sup>

Here I propose to use the *encounter* as a conceptual tool with which to take apart romantic narratives of nationalist heroism ordinarily associated with the Big alley. I travel to places of cultural and historical importance, these include Big alleys and also other sites of interest. In the written thesis I have researched histories of partition and the experiences of three Irish women. I have encountered the rebel as a cultural figure of resistance and as an articulation of the limit of self.

Hence, the Big alley is considered, in its physical, geographical, cultural and political contexts in order to articulate a specifically female cultural experience, under patriarchy, in the writing and in the performance work. Devlin, McConville and Price, are three women whose difference, cultural and social, becomes dissonance, resonant in the moments at which an encounter takes place between physical structure, narrative articulation of experience and my body in the performance works.

What are the possible outcomes of the encounter at this juncture? The Big alley itself, within the Irish landscape is representative of a multiplicity in both its physical structure and its effect on the organisation of pleasure and social activity. In the event of the Big alley, there exists an articulation of pluralities that cohere into an aleatory materialism of gameplay contained in the encounter of complex contingent forces. These relate to the game, the people, the design, the skills, the materials used and desire to engage.

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<sup>66</sup> James Joyce, *Ulysses* (1922) (London: Wordsworth Editions Ltd. 2010), p.14.

<sup>67</sup> See Fig. 6, p.44. *The Ball Alley* 1927, a painting by Jack B Yeats, in the collection of the Hugh Lane Gallery in Dublin, depict scenes of youths playing Handball.

The Big alley, known as 'building of the people', becomes a monument of the people, its physical structure speaking to the politics of poverty and loss. The harsh lights of universal truths shine down on its unyielding surface. As was stated in the rules of the game, it is by hand or by fist that these men must render the ball beyond return. Up against the wall, a game of service and return, opponents in the encounter face the same direction. The Big alley remains an object that invokes an idealised past, untouched by its encounter with a history of conflict. It still looms large in the landscape and yet it is broken as if it were a remnant of itself. The Big alleys are fading fast into the reminiscences of a bygone era.

The people in the context of an Irish diaspora hold on to a memory of struggle, an act of mourning a shared action of resistance to imperial rule. Memory does not agree with an officially sanctioned, universally agreed notion of history, i.e. what happened, when and how. In the gregarious game of handball and in the Gaelic revival of the early twentieth century it is a refusal to be oppressed that is expressed. It is an unofficial but lasting account, shared and protected from person to person.

The game that unfolds within the confines of patriarchal control is tested to the limit in the politics of sexual identity. In the Big alley, my body encounters the formality of a structure for my behaviour, where it is possible to inhabit the organisation of male pleasure with the excess of female experience. In my mind I bring into play the testimonies of the women's lived experience and the actions of public representatives.

In the *Big Alley Archive*, I have made a record of my encounter with the remnants of these structures as they are now. As I encounter them in the landscape they are fragments of a once vital cultural identity. Like Roland Barthes' search for that which is lost, 'My sadness belongs to that fringe of melancholy where the loss of the loved being remains abstract.'<sup>68</sup> I inhabit this residual space, not to provide the evidence of a historic relic. Instead, I appear inside the photographic representation as a sort of transient marker, as a moving through, as a haunting.

On 30<sup>th</sup> January 1972, the Catholic residents of the Bogside area of Derry held a civil rights march, protesting housing, internment and the sectarian nature of policing. This event became known as the Bogside Massacre or Bloody Sunday and stands out as one

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<sup>68</sup> Barthes, Roland. *A lover's Discourse, Fragments*. Trans. by Richard Howard. (Penguin Books, England, 1977), p.107.

of the bloodiest events in a period of many violent incidents as military forces opened fire, killing 13 unarmed civilians.

On Jan 31st 1972, the day after Bloody Sunday, Bernadette Devlin leaped across the floor of the House of Commons and slapped the Home Secretary, Reginald Maudling, shouting 'murderous hypocrite'. She swung into action on behalf of the people to protest the use of military force on a civilian population. Devlin's action was in response to Maudling's claim to the house that paratroopers had fired on civilians in self-defense. When asked by reporters outside Westminster if her actions could be considered unladylike, she quickly retorted 'Unladylike? There's a young girl who was shot in the back by the paratroopers [...] they did not ask her if she was a lady.'<sup>69</sup> Devlin was then frustrated by continuously not being given the floor to speak by the speaker Selwyn Lloyd, about Bloody Sunday, despite or perhaps because she had been present at the event.

Devlin had the courage of her convictions and made progress in bringing to the fore the needs and the human rights of people she sought to represent. Beyond her career in politics, she received a lot of attention from the press with regard to her private life and her marital status. Devlin's error was not to go against the establishment or loyalist paramilitaries<sup>70</sup> but, that she lost favour with the Catholic community she represented after giving birth to a child out of wedlock. Devlin did not lose her fire but ultimately, she lost her seat as their MP and representative in Westminster.

Jean McConville rebelled against the dominant social structure and risked everything to marry for love. McConville, a Protestant, married into a Catholic family. She had a large family outside her own religious community in a deeply sectarian society at a time of violent conflict between Catholics and Protestants. McConville and her children paid a huge price for being a family of mixed religious background living in Belfast, and where ultimately use as political pawns by very calculating entities on both sides.

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<sup>69</sup> Bernadette Devlin was interviewed on camera directly after she assaulted Home Secretary Reginald Maudling in the House of Commons.

<sup>70</sup> McKittrick and McVea, *Making Sense of the Troubles* (London: Viking Press, 2012), p.319. In an attempted assassination Bernadette Devlin and her husband were shot by loyalist gunmen at her home in Co. Tyrone in 1981.

In a grueling encounter with the Catholic community in which she lived, Jean McConville may or may not have made a low-level trade with the British forces. However, the British military were not her main enemy, for she had already been cast out by the local community and fell victim to the will of that community. There is a lot of misinformation about the actions and events that led to McConville's death.<sup>71</sup> It is thought to have served the interests of the IRA that the local community understood that she was punished for being involved, in some way, with the occupying British forces. Effectively, her disappearance was intended as a deterrent, warning people they too would be punished if they intervened.

There is inconclusive evidence that suggests Jean had been given a radio transmitter by British army intelligence and supplied information to them on IRA activity in the Divis flats. Whatever the details, both the British intelligence agents who put her at risk and the IRA commander who decided her destiny, established a ruthless trend to advance and serve their respective political agendas.

The republican path, for all its excitement, proved to be one that would have a lasting effect on Dolours Price and her sister Marion. Her rebellious spirit took her to many places, including across the water to Britain, where she ultimately faced a heavy toll for her part in rebel actions. Dolours and Marion, faced life prison sentences for their part in the bombing of the Old Bailey on 8th Mar 1973. The sisters were both considerably changed by their hunger strike protest. The sisters were force fed for 167 days under government policy, after which time it was a clinical decision to stop force feeding rather than a political one<sup>72</sup>.

According to Camus' interpretation of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's idea of general will<sup>73</sup>, it was a requirement that men support the whole (unity), while to act separately therefore threatening this unity was to become a traitor and punishable by death. In the *Rebel*, the killing of traitors is considered a creative act in the advent of the Republic. This is hauntingly echoed by Prices' assertion that 'informers' should be killed and their bodies

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<sup>71</sup> A story circulated that Jean had gone to the aid of a British soldier shot outside her door, after which graffiti was sprayed on her wall that read 'Brit Lover'. Another that she had abandoned her children and run off to England with a British Soldier.

<sup>72</sup> Radden Keefe, Patrick. *Say Anything* (Britain: William Collins 2018), p.170.

<sup>73</sup> Camus, 1951, p.61.



thrown out on the street, '[...] to put the fear of God and the Irish Republican Movement into anybody who would choose that form of life.[...]'.<sup>74</sup>

In Prices' understanding, the Republican Movement, that to her meant the unity of men, was equal to God. In later years, whether out of remorse or revenge Dolours participated in a series of interviews, in Boston University, in which she revealed key information about the operations of the IRA.<sup>75</sup> This included an admission of her involvement in the murder of Jean McConville. In the Boston tapes, Price described a game of roulette among three members of the paramilitary *Unknowns*. In Patrick Radden Keefe's book *Say Nothing*, the journalist pieces together the clues and comes up with the supposition that it was Marion Price who fired the shot that killed Jean McConville. Dolours has admitted in a taped interview (subsequent to the Boston Tapes) with Journalist Ed. Maloney that she and Pat McClure and an unidentified person each fired a shot.<sup>76</sup>

In her struggle against patriarchy, Devlin encountered pure political force and, in the process, lost the power of her voice. McConville came up against a formidable opponent, in the collective will of the people. In that moment she failed to become aware and in a cruel outcome lost the battle. Instead, she became a collateral victim of chance encounters. Price in her struggle for self-actualisation and with the energy of the rebel, in the end also paid the price. Seduced by the power of oppression she acted outside herself and for all men but ultimately felt betrayed on all levels by the rebel organisation. Dolours Price was found dead at her home in Dublin in 2013 from an overdose of prescription drugs.

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<sup>74</sup> Dolours Price was the subject of a film titled '*I, Dolours*' (2018).

<sup>75</sup> The Boston Tapes: A series of interviews with paramilitaries on both sides of the Northern Irish conflict, recorded as oral histories and instigated by Writer and Journalist, Ed Maloney and in conjunction with Boston University. These tapes have been discredited as unreliable subsequently.

<sup>76</sup> Patrick Radden Keefe. *Say Nothing* (London: William Collins, 2018), p.350.

*Over the past few years, driving through towns and villages in Ireland, speaking to local people north and south of the border, I have gathered a sense of the Island as it is now. In 2016, as I passed through a village called Nurney, I encountered an imposing concrete unroofed structure which, unlike the nearby school and church, I failed to recognise, to which I could not attribute a function. It was only later that I discovered that the concrete structure was a handball alley, known locally as the Big alley and that it played a central role in community life.*

*I returned to photograph the alley at Nurney and as I pulled up next to it, I noticed a gathering of people in the adjacent cemetery. A funeral was in progress. Sitting in my car, I contemplated how to get into the alley. From my right, a figure jumped over the cemetery wall, jogged lightly across the road, passed in front of my car and entered through a doorway at the rear of the alley. I waited and a couple of minutes later the same figure, a young man, skipped out of the alley, again crossed the road and vaulted with ease over the wall to re-join the funeral party. When I stepped through the doorway of the alley the acrid smell of fresh urine hung in the air. I looked around and saw that the concrete walls were long daubed with a predictable mix of sex and politics. Out of sight, out of sight, covert action hidden in plain view. I have since travelled to over seventy Big alleys across Ireland and have provided here a link to a video archive that documents my journey*

### **THE *BIG ALLEY* ARCHIVE<sup>77</sup>**



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<sup>77</sup> Scan QR code to gain access to Video Archive of the Big Alley 2016 – 2022 (URL links on p.9).

## **Faith of our Mothers**

## Introduction

In this second chapter I shall look at the effect of emergent religious structures on the newly independent *Irish Free State* and the institution of family as a mode of social control.<sup>78</sup> A new order that had a profound influence on the lives of the people in general and the sexuality of women in particular. I take a prescribed notion of the *Faith of Our Mothers*<sup>79</sup> as one that imposed a climate of shame and penitence on the lives of women at the hands of both Church and State and take into account my own encounter with women's experience. The notion of *faith* in the Catholic Church refers to a belief in the teachings of God passed down from caregiver to child. If we listen closely to the lyrics of the hymns the father's role is to protect to death our right to faith, while it is the mother's role to pass on the faith to her children.

I will consider Irish culture as a creative force that produced a dynamic flow consistent with an ontology of motion. A becoming self at the edge of the wild. Here I look at the American academic writer Thomas Nail's detailed analysis of Lucretius' epic poem *De Rerum Natura*, to extend my understanding of an ontology of motion in which all things are born of continuous motion - from one to the next, matter is continuous and infinite.

Shifting focus from *north and south*, to *east and west*, and from the political to the domination of the Catholic Church, I introduce the voices of four women - actual and fictional. Catherine Corless is a local Galway historian who uncovered the unlawful burial of 796 babies on the grounds of the Tuam Mother and Baby Home run by the Bon Secours Sisters (1925-61). Gerty MacDowell and Molly Bloom are the two agents of an outspoken sexuality in James Joyce's *Ulysses*. Their voices, I propose, is inspired by the silent voice of another, the voice of exiled Nora Barnacle, in the now lost or destroyed love letters she wrote to James Joyce when he traveled to Ireland in 1909.

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<sup>78</sup> Under the Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1922 Ireland became an Independent Free State. The Republic of Ireland Act came into effect in 1949.

<sup>79</sup> The hymn 'Faith of Our Fathers' dates from 1849, written by Fredrick William Faber, it is a popular Catholic hymn paying tribute to Christian Martyrs. (It is also adapted and sung in Protestant services). An alternative hymn is 'Faith of our Mothers' written in 1920 by Arthur Bardwell Pattern (US Congregational Church) is a hymn giving thanks to mothers who give care and pass on their faith.

I shall reflect on the emergence of an independent Irish culture by firstly considering the shift that took place in the early part of the twentieth century as a patriarchal leadership sought to declare an independent nation with its own sovereign governance. Secondly by proceeding from the existential dilemma of Camus' *Rebel* to the absurd theatre of Samuel Beckett, an Irish man in search of a silent other, beyond expression. In Beckett's absurd circumstance I encounter not a limit but an expression of intensity. 'Not, I... her'. In my performance works I inhabit the landscape as intensity, not drifting by chance from one location to the next, but communicating as an entangled entity at a distance, across the years.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Entanglement in Quantum physics is the phenomenon by which two objects maintain an unexplained connection even at great distance.

## Structures of Faith

From the late Bronze age and into the Iron age<sup>81</sup>, like much of western Europe and the British Isles, the early influence of European Celts brought Gallic language, materials, crafts, tools and social systems to the Island of Ireland.<sup>82</sup> This Celtic influence is often conflated with the earlier cultural practices of Megalithic monuments, stone carvings, passage graves and burial mounds which were in evidence in Ireland from 2500b.c.e (until 200c.e). Instead the Gallics or Celts were contemporaries of Greek and Roman civilisations. It is not possible here to outline in detail pre-historic developments that influenced culture, but it is instructive to briefly mark out several significant shifts that shaped the lay of the land in a contemporary context.

By the time the Romans invaded Britain and Hadrian had built his wall<sup>83</sup>, delineating its territory between Scotland and England, the Romans did not view Ireland as a threat.<sup>84</sup> Celtic culture flourished and although creative and skilled as workers they did not record their society in writing. What is known of their lifestyle is understood mainly through folklore and through the ring-fort settlements known as *Raths* and the artefacts that they left behind. Celtic religion is thought to have been a non-Christian polytheism. Druids were powerful *high priests* and nobility of Celtic society. They were well educated but as they relied on oral traditions and cultural spread as there is little evidence of their experiences in written histories. However, stories of the Druids and Celtic culture filter down through Roman and Greek mythology.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> c.500b.c.e The end of the Bronze age is signaled by the introduction to Ireland of iron and the newly sophisticated methods of making weaponry, tools and jewellery by Gallic settlers. Celtic culture was defined by Breton law, each area was ruled by its own High King (Ard Rí na hÉireann). It is unclear how the Celts had such a widespread and enduring effect on the indigenous way of life in Ireland, particularly as they were perceived to be a cultural spread and not an invading force.

<sup>82</sup> Celtic language is also still evident cultures across Europe where different dialects appeared and are still recorded in the native languages of Brittonic (Breton), spoken in Britain and France and Goidlic (Gaelic), spoken in Ireland and Scotland.

<sup>83</sup> The Roman Emperor Hadrian oversaw the construction of an 80-mile wall in 122c.e along the border between Scotland and Britain to separate the Romans from the Barbarians beyond.

<sup>84</sup> Hadrian at this same time was distracted by his construction *The Temple of Venus and Roma*, in Rome (Construction 121-141c.e). Thought to be the largest temple in Ancient Rome, it is dedicated to both the Goddess *Venus*, mother of Aeneas, bringer of fertility and good fortune.

<sup>85</sup> Julius Cesar in his account of *the Celtic Wars* writes of Druids that they were well respected members of Celtic society that held both religious and social office.

It was not until the fifth century that Christianity came to Ireland. Often the misleading view that St. Patrick<sup>86</sup> brought Christianity to Ireland prevails but while his form of episcopal governance did eventually take hold, Monastic settlements by Abbots and Monks were already well established on Irish soil. Unlike the Druids, monasteries in the pursuit of knowledge produced manuscripts of great beauty and precious objects of great skill in gold and silver. At this time Ogham script began to appear in the Irish landscape.<sup>87</sup>

Over the following centuries the monks gained wealth through gifts of land and property. They became more powerful and were increasingly involved in local disputes, they built fortified dwellings and created armies to support local Kings. By the eighth century, as Norse Vikings invaded Irish shores, the monasteries were regularly ransacked and burned in order to plunder their wealth, eventually causing them to retreat and return to isolated areas and ascetic means. In the early part of the twelfth century the *Synod of Ráth Breasail* marked the switch from a monastic religious system to a diocesan and parish-based church. This church assembly was convened to re-organise the church and establish clear structure for diocesan lines.

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<sup>86</sup> Having been originally kidnapped from his home in Britain and brought as a slave to Ireland, Patrick later returned (c.432c.e) to bring Christian teaching to the people of Ireland. What we know of Patrick is mainly told as a Confession (a telling of the greatness of God) which was published, among other places in the *Book of Armagh* (in Trinity College Dublin.).

<sup>87</sup> Ogham script appeared as the first written language of Ireland in the fifth century at the same time as Christianity arrived on the Island. Ogham is formed of linear markings carved on the corners of standing stones, each arrangement of lines and dashes represented a letter of the latin alphabet. These were thought to provide further evidence of the introduction of Latin culture by the Church. Ogham was contemporary with Cuneiform, a logo- symbolic script in Mesopotamia (ancient Iraq) and also ancient Greek Hiero-glyphs.



Fig. 7 Eamon de Valera (as President of the Executive Council of Ireland) kisses the ring of Edward Joseph Byrne, Archbishop of Dublin (1933)



*My mother had often told me that having a child outside marriage was not always considered to be a sin in Ireland. In fact, she told me, it was quite the opposite for farming communities. She spoke of a practice of proof of fertility that required that any bride marrying into a farming family must be with child before the nuptials took place in order to ensure that the family line continued.*

In Estyn Evans 1957 book *Irish Folk Ways*, I found reference to such a practice. After the Great Famine (1845 - 52) the subdivision of farmland on death or marriage was prohibited. This meant that the eldest son must inherit the whole farm and with this came new local customs that sought to ensure the lineage of the family. In a practical sense, a childless marriage among peasants was also seen as an economic tragedy. Matchmaking was a serious business and the fertility of any prospective match was reputedly tested by a practice of bed-fellowship called 'bundling', a trial marriage period, to guarantee that the bride was pregnant before the marriage.<sup>88</sup>

From pagan beginnings the *folk ways* of Irish peasants were an enduring feature of cultural life well into the twentieth century. With a particular emphasis on rites of passage through birth, marriage and death many of the rituals and games that communities engaged in were leftovers from the superstitions of pagan religious practices, '... Christian missionaries found it very difficult to suppress the rituals enacted between death and burial.'<sup>89</sup> One example was the hiring of professional mourners in the funeral procession. 'The keening of the corpse likewise carries us through time to the earliest emotions of human societies faced with the mystery of death.'<sup>90</sup>

In the early part of the twentieth century the Catholic Church took hold of community life, and all pagan rites and practices were banned. An encroaching Catholic hierarchy sought to suppress these practices by *discrete* moves of social dominance, but it was not until they had a clear mandate from the incoming Free State Government in 1922 that the Catholic Church gained the power to enforce its vision of life and family in Ireland. While it is difficult to condense huge shifts in the Church and State politics it is with the partition of

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<sup>88</sup> Estyn Evans, *Irish Folk Ways*. (London: Routledge Paperback, 1957), p.283.

<sup>89</sup> Evans, 1957, p.291.

<sup>90</sup> Evans, 1957, p.291.

Ireland that the Catholic Church played an increased role in the organisation of social and cultural affairs.

The Catholic Church was given the mandate to take over the management of schools and the poor law institutions.<sup>91</sup> Over the years following the introduction of the new Irish Constitution in 1937, divorce, contraception, abortion and pornography, were all banned.<sup>92</sup> The personal freedoms of the individual were subject to coercive control by public structures. What emerged was a wealthy church with unprecedented control over the daily lives of the majority of the population. The entire focus of the Catholic Church provision of what it saw as charity was based on shame and penitence.

The close relationship of the Church and State was further galvanised by the personal relationship between the Taoiseach<sup>93</sup> Eamon De Valera and the primate of Ireland Archbishop John McQuaid from the 1940's. Such was the power of the Catholic Church over social and family matters that the government under Eamon De Valera allowed the archbishop a huge hand in advising the government and writing legislation, particularly in relation to the Adoption Act of 1952.

It was not until Vatican II<sup>94</sup> that the Roman Catholic Church was assimilated into the Modern World. However, change was slow and Ireland was not an easy place to live if you fell outside the prescribed order. The Catholic Church remained a key manipulator of the social fabric of Irish society. Gender specific punishment and retribution were metered out to women deemed to have strayed from their assigned role and responsibility within the Catholic family.

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<sup>91</sup> A significant aspect of this relationship was that the State funded Church run institutions without sufficiently auditing their financial spending or regulating the conditions at these institutions.

<sup>92</sup> From the 1920's on women and girls who found themselves to be pregnant outside of marriage were sent to Mother and Baby homes. Women and girls who were poor and could not return to their families after having a child out of wedlock were sent to Magdalene Laundries.

<sup>93</sup> (*An*) *Taoiseach* (Chief) is the Irish language title given to the head of the Irish Government.

<sup>94</sup> *Vatican II* was introduced (1962-65) as the second ecumenical council of the Roman Catholic Church, presided over by Pope John XXIII.

When Eamon de Valera established the *Constitution of Ireland* he was adamant that the idea of a *natural family unit* as expressed in the Proclamation should be protected. Women were dissuaded from working outside the home, a practice deemed to be contrary to their natural function in the home. Under Catholic teaching children born outside marriage were viewed as inferior and were legally and socially excluded in many ways. The abuse of moral and spiritual privilege of the Catholic Church and the systemic, cruel, and criminal abuse of power by all levels of those involved in the organisation of the Catholic Church is only now coming fully into light.<sup>95</sup>

This continued into current influence on the bodies of women. As outlined in the prelude to this thesis, the eighth amendment to the Constitution of Ireland was a subsection that recognized the right to life of the unborn as equal to that of the pregnant woman. This criminalized the termination of a pregnancy even in medical emergencies. The total ban was lifted in 1992 but it was not until 2018 that, due to public pressure the amendment was repealed.

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<sup>95</sup> *The Mother and Baby Homes Commission of Investigation Report* was released in October 2020. The report is the long-awaited response of the commission on the births, deaths and living conditions of women and children resident in the homes as well as the unregulated system of adoption that became a profitable enterprise for the religious orders involved.

## Many Feminine Voices

As I research the condition of women in Ireland at the turn of the twentieth century, I encounter the writings of James Joyce, an unorthodox secular voice pitched from the outside. James Joyce left Ireland in 1904 with Nora Barnacle to live in Europe and escape the pervasive religious rule and conservative establishment. Although exiled from his home (that would not accept his writing), he made Dublin city and the people of Dublin the subject of his work for the rest of his life.

In the French writer Hélène Cixous, I encounter another exile, from Algeria to France, who like Joyce, took her departure into 'the world of the book' and found a voice of the outside in 'the limitless spaces of art'.<sup>96</sup> In her seminal 1975 essay *The Laugh of the Medusa*, Cixous argues for an *écriture féminine* or 'feminine writing' as a rallying call to woman to put herself into writing '[...] as into the world and into history - by her own movement [...]'.<sup>97</sup> In an essay titled 'Derrida, Cixous, and Feminine Writing', the Spanish writer and philologist Marta Segarra reminds the reader that Cixous' *écriture féminine* does not refer to a 'style' of writing that holds a particular feminine truth. It is instead a practice of 'writing (with) the body' as a 'libidinal' position of the body that stands *outside* that which is 'phallogocentric'.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> Moynahan, Julian. 'The Exile of James Joyce', in New York Times. (11/02/1973) <<https://www.nytimes.com/1973/02/11/archives/the-exile-of-james-joyce-by-helene-cixous-translated-from-the.html>> (accessed 18/03/2023).

<sup>97</sup> Cixous, Hélène. trans. by Keith Cohen and Paula Cohen, 'The Laugh of The Medusa', *Signs*, Vol.1, No.4, (The University of Chicago Press, Summer, 1976), p.875.

<sup>98</sup> *Phallogocentrism* is a neologism coined by the French philosopher Jacques Derrida (and close working companion of Cixous) which combines logocentrism - a system of thought centered on reason which derives from language - and phallogocentrism - the designation of the 'phallus' as a priori signifier. Derrida's philosophy turned away from ideas of universal truth to a de-structuralist indeterminate logic.

*Écriture féminine* in this sense is a performed writing not restricted exclusively to women, but a writing with the body that metaphorically and physically, in the very act of writing becomes an alternative to the dominant libidinal economy of mainstream writing.<sup>99</sup> In conversation with British writer Adrian Heathfield, in 2013, Cixous discusses what writing (*écriture*) is for her.<sup>100</sup> It is an event by which she has been moved. It is a multiplicity of different voices. It is an opening of the text which is as yet formless, and always unfinished; the writer is always arriving and never arrives. Cixous asserts that, in writing, one is always 'other' and never 'self' in the sense of being self-possessed or knowing.

Again, in a 2020 interview with German publisher Peter Engelmann, Cixous revisits the misunderstanding that remains regarding the enunciation 'feminine writing'. She insists on maintaining the inverted commas with which she framed the expression 'feminine writing'. It remains as it was then 'an economical way of talking about certain traits in certain texts, which have an almost physiological economy of fluidity, of flight – traits that one finds in texts written by men as well as women'. Although she adds that today she would talk of a 'feline writing', further distancing herself from the delineation of gender as the marker of *écriture féminine*.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Marta Segarra. 'Derrida, Cixous, and Feminine Writing', Jean-Michel Rabaté, *Understanding Derrida, Understanding Modernism* (Bloomsbury 2019), pg. 226-239. <<https://hal.lscience/hal-03299582>> (p.228)(accessed 17/03/2023).

<sup>100</sup> Heathfield, Adrian. *Writing Not Yet Thought: Hélène Cixous* (2013) <<https://vimeo.com/ondemand/writingnotyetthought>> (accessed 23/02/2023).

<sup>101</sup> Hélène Cixous and Peter Engelmann, discussion on the theme of *écriture* (2020) <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UcMI-TZdK34&t=1s>> (00:36:25) (accessed 17/03/2023).

So too Cixous mentions Jacques Derrida's writing as possessing traits of 'feminine writing'. She berated the lack of female writers in the twentieth century but found in the texts of Jean Genet, Marcel Proust and James Joyce 'the channels of "excess" and violation, accidents of meaning and perversities of signification [...] texts that inscribe a feminine writing that goes beyond and escapes a masculine economy of texts [...] a repressive patterning'.<sup>102</sup> Cixous writes that it is through 'writing the other' that there is the possibility for difference and multiplicity to come into being. 'Woman' is this other. When she calls upon 'woman to write woman', it is an 'other' that does not yet exist that she calls into existence in writing, not as materialisation of an essence but of multiplicities.<sup>103</sup>

In Joyce's Dublin I encounter the city, its wide carriage streets and back alleys, as the place in which I have grown up, that I know well. In his writing I also hear voices of women that are familiar to me in all their inflections. Joyce writes women rather than write about women. Gerty McDowell, Molly Bloom become manifest, embodied voices, in the very forms of his writing. In Joyce's writing, I hear Cixous' voice when she writes: '[...] I, too, overflow; my desires have invented new desires, my body knows unheard of songs [...]'.<sup>104</sup> I also hear echoes of the silent voice of Nora Barnacle between the lines of the erotic love letters Joyce wrote to her.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> *The John Hopkins Guide to Literary Theory and Criticism*. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), p.206-208.

<sup>103</sup> In 1970 Irish artist Brian O'Doherty as the new editor of *Art in America* covertly took on the 'nom de plume' Mary Josephson. For O'Doherty this character was not a physical manifestation but in embracing this female alter ego he '[...] wanted to write from a female persona, to free myself from limiting malehood [...]'. O'Doherty, 2019, (Back Cover).

<sup>104</sup> Cixous, 1976, p.876.

<sup>105</sup> See Appendix 2, p.138.



## Other Voices

Gerty Mc Dowell and Molly Bloom, although fictional women, are included here for their radical embodiment of an active female sexuality, two characters who speak in the voice of Nora, released from the silence imposed by patriarchal culture.

In my encounter with religious aspects of Irish culture other voices emerge. As I travel from the east to the west coast there is a fourth voice, that of a local historian whose tireless campaign led to the uncovering of the Catholic Church's systematic ill treatment of unwed mothers and their children - a dark and shameful inheritance for generations to come.

Fig. 8  
Fig. 9

Catherine Corless, Tuam, Co Galway (2014)  
Nora Barnacle, London (c.1931)

## Catherine Coreless

Catherine Corless is a Galway woman who had an interest in local history and in 2012 published an article for *The Journal of The Old Tuam Society* (JOTS), a local historical society founded in 1942 to study antiquities of Tuam and the surrounding district. The article was simply titled 'The Home' and details the living conditions of women and children resident in the Mother and Baby Home in Tuam. The article outlines the testimonies of a number of adults who had been child residents of the Tuam Mother and Baby home. This was journalistically significant in a culture that relied on the shame and stigma of illegitimacy to maintain a blanket of silence on conditions inside institutions across the whole Poor Law system.

This article began Corless's painstaking investigation into the experiences of the women and children and the role the church played in their systemic abuse. In her research Corless came across several advertisements issuing tenders for small coffins placed in the local press by the Home sporadically over the years. This piqued her interest. Although the national infant mortality rate was high, these seemed to suggest that deaths at the home were a regular occurrence.<sup>106</sup> Subsequent to the article Corless traced the death record of all the children from the ages of 36 gestational weeks to 3 years, who died between the years of 1925 and 1961 when in the care of the Tuam Mother and Baby Home run by the Bon Secours Sisters.<sup>107</sup>

In total Corless uncovered the death records of 796 children. She tracked, ordered and paid to obtain a copy of the death certificate of each child.<sup>108</sup> This enabled her to collate the record of names, ages, place of birth and cause of death of each of these children. The next stage of the research was to confirm where the remains of the children were interred. According to stories told locally they were buried on the land of the Mother and Baby Home but the graves were not marked. 'I just wanted those children to be remembered and for their names to go up on a plaque.' She continued to focus on the whereabouts of the children and interviewed locals about the possibility of an unofficial burial ground.

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<sup>106</sup> Catherine Corless, 'The Home', *Journal of the Old Tuam Society*. JOTS. 9 (2012), p.81.

<sup>107</sup> Corless, JOTS. 9, 2012, p.69-82.

<sup>108</sup> At €4.00 euro per certificate Corless bore the total cost of €3,184.00.





What shocked the nation most, was that the remains of these children were buried in an underground concrete sewage bunker. Unceremoniously abandoned in unconsecrated ground. Corless's discovery instigated an investigation into the Tuam Home and all thirteen Mother and Baby Homes in the Irish state. This led to the publication of the *Mother and Baby Homes Commission Report* in 2020 and is the subject of an ongoing campaign for redress and recognition for those affected by the abuse of power in state and church controlled institutions. After many delays and interim reports, there remain difficulties with the published report as the sealing of records, the redaction of vital information from survivors and adoptees, and the delay of publication have hampered the efforts of survivors to obtain information about their birth parents and to access compensation funds.

Fig. 10

Tuam Mother and Baby Home, Dublin Rd., Co Galway (c.1950)

## Gerty McDowell

In what the Irish author Edna O'Brien<sup>109</sup> describes as *Ulysses*' most seductive chapter, Leopold Bloom happens upon the vision of three girls all in flower on Sandymount Strand.<sup>110</sup> While two of the girls are busy watching after their charges, Bloom's fancy is taken by the sight of Gerty MacDowell. Joyce provides a catalogue of titillating details for Leopold, who, from a distance elaborates on the great lengths to which Gerty had gone to take care of her looks. While Leopold and Gerty never make physical contact, he surreptitiously masturbates and she aids him medically from *Tumescence to Detumescence* or as Bloom so delicately puts it 'up like a rocket, down like a stick'.<sup>111</sup> Nausicaa's parting glass to Odysseus was 'never forget me for I gave you life' like mother to son. Leopold shed his seed and perhaps here Joyce was also making a reference to Stephan Dedalus as Bloom's near surrogate son.<sup>112</sup>

Gerty, among the other girls, is full of detail spilling forth her lovely charms, and at the same time she is somehow destined to fail. The epiphany comes when she is no longer of any interest to Bloom. Her fall from grace comes as all the girls run to see the fireworks erupting on the beach, she is left behind. Trying in her own quiet dignified way to join the party.

She walked with a certain quite dignity characteristic of her but with care and very slowly because - because Gerty MacDowell was...

Tight boots? NO. She's lame! O!

Mr Bloom watched her as she limped away. Poor girl! That's why she's left on the shelf...<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> Edna O'Brien, *James Joyce* (Great Britain: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1999), p.118.

<sup>110</sup> James Joyce's novel *Ulysses* was published in Paris in 1922 and was presented in the form of three books, that comprised eighteen episodes that echo the books and struggle of Homer's epic poem *The Odyssey*. Ten years become twenty-four hours as Bloom's journey was mapped out in Dublin city over one day tracing a similar path of moral dilemmas faced by Odysseus. The depth and breadth of Joyce's literary ambition marked not a reductive simplification but offered narrative formation of a new order.

<sup>111</sup> James Joyce, *Ulysses* (1922) (Paris/ London: Wordsworth Editions Ltd. 2010), p.335.

<sup>112</sup> Joyce's Dublin must also have been influenced by Baudelaire's *Tableaux Parisiens* (1861)- 18 poems set over 24 hours. As an addition to *Les Fleurs du Mal* (1857), it was a sharp criticism of 19th Century modernisation of Paris, a process of gentrification. Baudelaire rails against the cleaning up of a subculture of shadow characters, rich in the creative possibility, and full of light and shade.

<sup>113</sup> Joyce, 1922, p.332.

## Molly Bloom

*'yes he came somewhere Im sure by his appetite anyway love its not or hed be off his feed thinking of her'*<sup>114</sup> Ulysses ends on a monologue from Leopold Bloom's wife, who is lying in bed beside him, top to tail, as he sleeps the sleep of a man returned home. In Molly Bloom we meet a character who, on the surface, seems self-centered; but as she speaks, no longer in dialogue with her husband who has fallen asleep but in the freedom of what comes to mind, her voice changes. We hear compassion as well as selfishness, the capacity for depth and nuance. In their relationship she is self-aware, is open to the pleasures of her own body and is insightful to the goings on of the male psyche and physical drive.

Like Leopold Bloom, her character is flawed and, in some moments, deluded, but overall Molly has a good understanding of her relationship to Bloom and an ability to reflect on the situations of others, of her friends. In her musings she concludes that Bloom is not so bad as he might be.

Society was so shocked by Molly's frank and vulgar outpourings about sex and her own sexual desire, that early readings of Molly's character repudiated her as wholly disreputable, a whore. Molly's thoughts are peppered with references to flesh, from pork chops consumed to quietly rolling over and squeezing out a fart. She reflects on past suitors, her afternoon of sex with Blazes Boylan and contemplates the disparity between female breasts and male genitalia.

they are so beautiful of course compared with what a man looks like with his two bags full and his other thing hanging down out of him or sticking up at you like a hatrack<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> Joyce, 1922, p.672.

<sup>115</sup> Joyce, 1922, p.654.

## The Silent Other

In the first chapter I encountered the rebel at the limit, as he challenged his destiny in search of a new order. But wait, what is it that this absurd theatre offered Irish men? Here I encounter the rebel not by chance from stochastic outposts, but as an inherent inclination that is always already questioning the limit. It is this intrinsic turbulence that enables the rebel to traverse the absurd paradox of perpetual damnation or suicide and inhabit the world intensely beyond the measure of human debts and credits.

In three sparse dialogues on contemporary art with the French art historian and critic George Duthuit, we catch a glimpse of Irish writer and playwright Samuel Beckett's wariness at the enterprise of creative expression and the idea of the artist's inner struggle.<sup>116</sup>

For Duthuit it is 'the tyranny of the discreet overthrown', that has to be overcome to allow for the expression of the 'fleeting instant of sensation'.<sup>117</sup> To the contrary Beckett declared that the struggle towards self-expression, whether through violence or submission, is in vain because its 'tendency and accomplishment' are but attempts to enlarge existing discussions, not discover new ones. Beckett's emphasis is on supporting the artist from the position of that which he *must* do. Although unable to act, the artist must act, an absurd position of the inexpressive bereft of expression.

The expression that there is nothing to express, nothing with which to express, nothing from which to express, no power to express, no desire to express, together with the obligation to express.<sup>118</sup>

In Beckett's plays waiting is not stasis but a flow without measure. A flow that becomes turbulent whirlpool before it resumes its course. If I listen closely to the dialogue, back and forth, I hear it emulate the eddying of music hall banter. An absurd theatre where action and language contradict each other to form a concrete poetry that emerged not as an

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<sup>116</sup> Samuel Beckett and Georges Duthuit (1949) 1987. '*Three Dialogues*', *Proust and three Dialogues with Georges Duthuit* (London: John Calder Publishers, 1999).

<sup>117</sup> Beckett, Samuel. *Proust and three Dialogues with Georges Duthuit* (1931) 1999, p.101.

<sup>118</sup> Beckett, (1931) 1999, p.103.

interpretation of meaning but as image itself. A *Theatre of the Absurd* that rejected what Beckett called the foreshortened view of tragic propositions staged in classical theatre and renounced the act of arguing about the absurd nature of the human condition. This radical theatre abandoned the elegant logic of philosophic argument that Camus and Sartre had used in favour of a new mode, not just of thinking but of being.

I will put to work Beckett's radical inhabitation of an absurd structure as a shift from thinking to being. I adopt Martin Esslin's definition of a *Theatre of the Absurd* in order to trace the willingness of artists such as Beckett to abandon all rational logic.<sup>119</sup> Esslin highlighted a number of artists who contested the absurd condition of man's situation in the rational philosophic argument of classical thinkers as well as others who sought to inhabit an impossible position within a radicalised language. It was Samuel Beckett's willingness to thwart all logical sense of traditional theatre that I propose delivered his characters not from destiny to chance, but this time from reason to indeterminacy.

Beckett's book on the French writer Marcel Proust<sup>120</sup> revealed some of his own pre-occupations, such as the rejection of writing as a realistic art form.<sup>121</sup> In Proust's hypothesis memory is governed by the laws of habit. Beckett tells the reader that for Proust, memory dies a small death in the act of forgetting, its finest detail stored inside ourselves to re-emerge from a succession of habits, which have become ineffectual through circumstance; in Beckett's words habit, become 'a minister of dullness'.<sup>122</sup> Proust used involuntary memory to travel beyond the limit of rational intelligence and in Beckett's view the whole epic structure of the *Search* was a monument to the past that thrust the reader through time in violent loops.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> Esslin, Martin. *The Theatre of the Absurd*. London: Methuen, (1961) 2001. In 1962 Hungarian writer and producer Martin Esslin wrote a book titled *The Theatre of the Absurd* (an expression he coined) in which he asserts that a generation of playwrights were in fact coherent in rejecting all logical argument of classical theatre and instead inhabit a new position of absurd proportions. They were not content to put forward rational logic arguments about the absurd nature of the human condition, instead they presented radically transformed theatre that demonstrated this new condition rather than try to interpret or explain it. In his argument Esslin included the plays of Samuel Beckett, Arthur Adamov, Eugene Ionesco, Jean Genet and Harold Pinter among others.

<sup>120</sup> Beckett, Samuel. *Proust* (London: John Calder, (1931) 1999).

<sup>121</sup> '*In Search of Lost Time*' also translated as '*Remembrance of Things Past*' by French writer Marcel Proust (1871-1922), consists of seven books. Originally the first four volumes were published 1913-1922 with the final three volumes published posthumously 1923-1927.

<sup>122</sup> Beckett, (1931) 1999, p.21.

<sup>123</sup> Beckett, (1931) 1999, p.35.

Even so the body resists the death of habit and the pain becomes greater in the knowledge that soon Proust's protagonist will no longer feel the pain since '...our life is a succession of Paradises successively denied, the only true Paradise is the Paradise that has been lost', where death is both the cure and renewal.<sup>124</sup>

Writing was for Beckett not a calculated enterprise but one that requires a willingness to abandon all linear logic or *habit* to occupy the absurd condition of man as intensity. In his later works there is a physical attempt to separate the body from time and frustrate its ability to occupy space. The audience is placed in an increasingly uncomfortable position, there is no easy vantage point.

In his 1972 play '*Not, I*' it is only a mouth that is visible, suspended in midair. A relentless mouth without body, without organs. A mouth after a lifetime of silence, now moving. Compulsively telling its story, a mouth as an outpouring of something, aware but not aware, intense, afraid, '[...] not I [...] her'. From its opening line this mouth articulates the experience of women and children in *the Home*, well known in Irish culture. The British actor Billie Whitelaw described it as an inner scream, spilling out. This mouth, a tiny, illuminated mouth in a dark theatre abstracted from its familiar features so disturbed the audience they tried to escape. Whitelaw said 'Plenty of writers can write a play about a state of mind but he actually put that state of mind on the stage in front of your eyes.'<sup>125</sup>

MOUTH: . . . . out . . . into this world . . . this world . . . tiny little thing . . . before its time . . . in a godfor— . . . what? . . girl? . . yes . . . tiny little girl . . . into this . . . out into this . . . before her time . . . godforsaken hole called . . . called . . . no matter . . . parents unknown . . . unheard of . . . he having vanished . . . thin air . . . no sooner buttoned up his breeches . . . she similarly . . . eight months later . . . almost to the tick . . . so no love . . . spared that . . . no love such as normally vented on the . . . speechless infant . . . in the home . . . no . . . nor indeed for that matter any of any kind . . . no love of any kind . . . at any subsequent stage . . . so typical affair . . .<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> Beckett, (1931) 1999, p.26.

<sup>125</sup> Billie Whitelaw BBC interview, in a series titled 'A Wake for Sam', Billie Whitelaw introduces a video of her performance of *Not I*. First performed at the Royal Court Theatre in 1973, directed by Samuel Beckett.

<sup>126</sup> Samuel Beckett, *Not I*, (London, Faber and Faber 1973), p.1.

From compulsive talking to silence, Beckett's other favourite disposition was to say nothing at all. According to Esslin's research the figure of Godot could have referred to a character in Balzac's play *Le Faiseur*<sup>127</sup> in which the action is centred around a character called 'Godeau', the former partner of a financial speculator who has absconded with a lot of money.<sup>128</sup> The hope of Godeau's eventual return to save the situation is dangled and thwarted throughout the play, an unknown other that in fact never appeared and has no voice. A silent other, but one who was central to the events unfolding.

Waiting, in Esslin's understanding of Beckett's work is experienced as 'the ebb and flow' of uncertainty. Oscillating between hope and disappointment in a repeated attempt to discover the identity of Godot. For Beckett it was not possible to extrapolate the meaning of a work from the work as the meaning of the work is the work itself.<sup>129</sup> The work in this sense is not reducible to linear statements that plot a graph towards enlightenment, instead it communicates its meaning intensively. Esslin quotes Beckett's own words, "Waiting for Godot does not tell a story, it explores a static situation, 'nothing happens, nobody comes, nobody goes, it's awful,'"<sup>130</sup> The two characters on stage are in the same situation at the end as at the beginning but a set of repeated actions from act to act somehow prevents entropy. The subject of Beckett's play in this sense was not Godot as a silent other but *waiting* itself.

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<sup>127</sup> *Le Faiseur* (Mercadet) 1840 by French writer Honoré de Balzac (1799- 1850).

<sup>128</sup> Esslin, 1962, p.50.

<sup>129</sup> In his writing in support of James Joyce's 'Work in Progress', Beckett emphasizes that form and structure cannot be separated from meaning. 'Libraries have been filled with attempts to reduce the meaning of a play like Hamlet to a few short simple lines and yet the play itself remains the clearest and most concise statement of its meaning and message, precisely because its uncertainties and irreducible ambiguities are an essential element of its total impact.' Esslin, 1962, p.44.

<sup>130</sup> Esslin, 1962, p.46.

## Ontology of Motion

Titus Lucretius Carus was a first century Roman poet of the late Roman period. He is better known for his six volume Latin hexameter poem *De Rerum Natura* (On the Nature of Things) that is thought to follow the teaching of Epicurus the ancient Greek philosopher in his thirty-six book philosophic treaty *De Natura* (On Nature). As most of Epicurus' work has been destroyed over centuries it is primarily through Lucretius' poem *De Rerum Natura* that the modern world has access to Epicurus' philosophy.

In the six volumes of *De Rerum Natura* Lucretius considers the nature of the permanent constituents of the universe. He presents an alternative to divine causation, as well as a confirmation of free will. Many contemporary thinkers have put to work Epicurean thought and the notion of the *Clinamen* (or Swerve) as read through *De Rerum Natura*.

The fiery force falls commonly to earth.

In this matter there is this, too, that I want you to understand,  
that when the first bodies are moving straight downward through the void  
by their own weight, at times completely undetermined  
and in undetermined places they swerve a little from their course,  
but only so much as you could call a change of motion.

Because unless they were accustomed to swerving, all would fall  
downwards like drops of rain through the deep void,  
nor would a collision occur, nor would a blow be produced  
by first beginnings.<sup>131</sup>

In Chapter one of this thesis I examined Albert Camus' adaptation of the *Clinamen* to the rebels cause that delivered him from destiny to chance. Further to this Louis Althusser's underground current of materialism focused on the contingent truth of aleatory encounters as a mechanism to reflect on the limit of Marx and a politicised mode of social order. Here I will take into account a contemporary reading of Lucretius by American writer and

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<sup>131</sup> Walter Englert, *Lucretius: On The Nature of Things* (USA: Hackett Publishing Company, 2003), p.36-37 (l. 2.215- 224).



philosopher Thomas Nail who in 2018 published three books that analyse in detail Lucretius' full work *De Rerum Natura*.<sup>132</sup>

For centuries it has been thought that Lucretius faithfully rendered Epicurus's original text without innovation. Nail's radically different reading challenges the assumption that Lucretius was a straightforward disciple of Epicurus. He proposes that Lucretius was neither an atomist<sup>133</sup> nor merely a follower.<sup>134</sup> Lucretius presented his poem in Latin, the language and voice of common people. Nail highlights that Lucretius adapted Homer's epic style to deliver his message in a form that would be understood by many. This gregarious style was in itself at odds with Epicurus's abstemious temperament.

Nail gives a comprehensive reading of *De Rerum Natura* centred on motion or movement. He takes into account being as matter in motion and offers a new reading of Lucretius as an original voice whose primary innovation was to identify matter as continuous and not discrete. The focus from the beginning of the poem is not on things but on the 'nature' of things. Nail questions the assumption that Lucretius was talking about atoms but instead focuses on seeds as the primary condition of nature of the material world. Not seeds as irreducible discreet objects but seeds as a process of regeneration.

Venus is the natural condition, the mother of all things represented by her son of Aeneas. The primary condition then is continual renewal through regeneration. Matter is in constant flux and continuous with itself. Matter then is not moved by an original external force but by itself, it is generative. According to Nail's hypothesis Lucretius' materialism of motion would be to a certain degree compatible with contemporary science and certain aspects of quantum physics.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> In particular this thesis references; Thomas Nail, *Lucretius I: An Ontology of Motion* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018), which analyses the first two books of *De Rerum Natura*.

<sup>133</sup> In ancient Greece the Atomists believed that everything could be reduced to a tiny indivisible particle that they called an *atom*. The atomists thought that everything could be reduced to an infinite number of atoms that existed in a constant state of motion in empty space. They referred to this space as the *void*. They rejected the creationist explanation of a divine beginning and avoided the question of what caused the original motion, by focusing on the action of the atoms. This philosophy is the closest to particle physics, given the understanding now that the atom is the smallest particle that is detectable without the release of energy, i.e. nuclear fusion.

<sup>134</sup> David Sedley in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* also recognises that Lucretius never uses the word atom to describe the primary particles of the universe but instead refers to seeds and matter (from mother) as the origin of all things or 'first beginnings'.

<sup>135</sup> Nail highlights that advances in quantum physics change our understanding of atomist thinking. In the third chapter of this thesis I look in more detail on developments in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century that inform

For Nail, *De Rerum Natura* questioned the central premise of western philosophy by proposing motion before stasis as the origin of all things. The world does not begin from a static moment acted upon, but all things are *pedetic* and always already in motion.<sup>136</sup> Lucretius (as Epicurus) challenged religion as the cornerstone of society in order to establish a kinetic matter as the seed of all things and generator of corporeal bodies. In Lucretian materialism matter flows, nothing comes from nothing and nothing is dissolved into nothing.

Matter is unseen by the eye, all things come from seeds, where flows are not isolated but interrelated and mutually influenced. Empty space exists as a void where all things are an accident of first beginnings and the void. This incorporates *folding* as a characteristic of the behaviour of matter.<sup>137</sup> The invocation of Venus as the mother of all things in the proem<sup>138</sup> of *De Rerum Natura*'s book 1 provides a theory of ontological materialism that flows and folds as a self-perpetuating process without the need for divine intervention. Venus is both mother and matter itself.

The *Minima* according to Lucretius are the smallest possible different topological regions of the corporeal flows that are in constant motion. Stochastic, random, motion at the level of minima<sup>139</sup> does not constitute discontinuity of the flow but is an undetectable curve that

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contemporary thinking on Quantum physics. I specifically look to Karen Barad's reading of Quantum Entanglement as a phenomenon and as presented within Barad's articulation of an *Agential Realist* approach to how we inhabit the world.

<sup>136</sup> Pedetic, relating to *Brownian Motion*, is the random movement of particles that are suspended in a medium such as a fluid or gas. Nail argues that it is Lucretius who discovers that the movement of matter is pedetic. In his example Lucretius reflects that rays of light shining through the window highlight dust particles in motion, corpora that are not discrete as *rerum* (things) are discrete but matter (corpora) must be seen as self-perpetuating matter that folds into larger and smaller folds. This was later credited to Scottish botanist Robert Brown in 1827.

<sup>137</sup> In Lucretius' conception *folding* is influenced by two distinct processes; firstly, an ability for multiple flows to converge creating junctions, *confluences*. Secondly the ability of the flow to fold back on itself and touch itself at another point in the flow, thus creating a *nexus*; a discrete loop or fold. Together these processes characterize the behaviour of matter. In this sense matter can create smaller or larger folds, creating loops and junctions that weave together, bind in lasting connections or break apart. It is the continuous motion of corporeal flows that allow it to repeat the process of folding and unfolding. The fold is open and continuous, to unfold is to continue into the void.

<sup>138</sup> Proem, from the Greek meaning *Prelude*, Lucretius uses a preamble in the form of the story of the birth of Venus to introduce book 1.

<sup>139</sup> Nail, 2018, p.127. The corporeal here refers to matter, but that is not independent of the flow. Not that the corporeal flows unfold in straight lines but that they are in a constant stochastic motion, (bending, twisting, swerving) which produces different densities and regions of the smallest possible continuous flows. Minima are not discreet particles or parts of a whole since they do not exist independently of the flow.

encounters itself within the corporeal flow, thus although matter is a continuous flow it is turbulent and pedetic according to the turbulent motion of minima.

And next if every motion is always linked,  
 and a new one always arises from an old one in sure succession,  
 and if by declining the primary bodies do not make  
 a certain beginning of motion to burst the laws of fate,  
 so that cause does not follow cause from infinity,  
 from where does there arise for living creatures throughout the world,  
 from where, I say, is this free will, torn from fate,  
 by which we go wherever pleasure leads each of us,  
 and likewise decline our motions at no fixed time  
 or fixed region of space, but where the mind itself carries us?<sup>140</sup>

This focus on the *inclination* of primary bodies as a desire to continue as opposed to fixed beginnings, is a central proof for Lucretius that motion itself is a tendency rather than a free will. In his interpretation of free will or *numen*<sup>141</sup> Lucretius refers to '*numen mentis*' translated as an 'impulse of the mind'.<sup>142</sup> Not a divine impulse but a simply human will or bidding of the mind. Desire in this sense is not understood as indicating a lack but as the *act* of desiring, a self-perpetuating motion in constant flux. The act of folding, in the conception of the conflux and nexus of corporeal flows creates an excess. It is dynamic and expansive as opposed to being in a constant state of deferral of other.<sup>143</sup> Matter mixes with space, folding and in the process creating new spaces in which to continue and flow. In this perpetual motion desire folding is porous and continuous, to unfold is to continue. One must align not with how to fill a lack but with how to distribute nourishment of the excess. Desire does not cause the movement of matter but desire *is* the movement of matter.

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<sup>140</sup> Englert, 2003, p.37-38 (2.251-60).

<sup>141</sup> Numen is the Latin word for a divine will.

<sup>142</sup> Englert, 2003, p.67 (3.144).

<sup>143</sup> In contemporary psychoanalytic terms *desire* is viewed as a continual force. Desire is structured by lack, its fulfilment perpetually deferred. It is always dynamic and a feature of the unconscious mind.

Thomas Nail's re-presentation of *De Rerum Natura* uncovers a Lucretius that openly rejected atomist teaching and religion as the origin of all things and challenged the fear of death. Lucretius' innovation from Epicurean thought was to focus on the sensuous nature of corporeal flows as they flux and fold in order to put in place motion towards that which can *affect* change and create space that allowed all things to continue infinitely.<sup>144</sup>

Sensation in Lucretius's flow is the auto-affection, the moment of intersection between two points in the continuous movement of the flow. Affect is always expressed in action. Without flow there would be no sensation only stasis.

In Lucretius' view of the flow of matter, the *event* is a specific point at which multiple flows meet. An event is a fleeting moment, unpredictable encounters with other flows. In these moments different trajectories become possible, but only in ephemeral motion.<sup>145</sup> From chance encounters to becoming self in the midst of flux. In the experience of women in the context of Irish culture past and present I encounter an alternative *current* of materialism as a framework for thinking. Different to the process of making art objects, in the performance works there is the possibility for *events* to occur, fleeting moments that open the possibility for new paths.

In the performance works there is a shift from the concrete to the poetic. In the process I have become aware not only of the things around me but of the *Nature* of things around me. I encounter the *swerve* as a framework for thinking that opens the possibility to encapsulate the contingent nature of performance art as a mode of working and also to articulate new works that emerge in the process of doing. I inhabit these places to gain back a 'sense' of place through the intervention of the artist's body, her body, my body, in an immaterial act of remembering. Not permanent monuments to past events but moments of resonance shared in a continuous cycle, always already inclined to encounter the other in unpredictable ways. The performance works, live or in their photographic extension actuate a point of entry for an audience that may (or may not) 'cross the threshold'. New paths open in the event, a point of encounter with the 'other', in which all elements are exposed to the possibility for change.

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<sup>144</sup> Nail, 2018, p.86 - 'affect is the ambiguity between sensibility and the sensed.'

<sup>145</sup> Events do not produce objects in the same sense as the foldings of corporeal flows but in the encounter between flows provide the conditions for new paths, born in flux.

## Encounters of the Flesh

Indigenous cultures of the world, throughout history have migrated from place to place. Irish culture is no exception. At the time of the Irish Famine people travelled far and wide in search of new beginnings. Bringing with them a culture of sporting game play, storytelling, literature, art, dancing and music as they relate to rituals and rites of birth, marriage and death. One may reflect that sociality in this sense is a cultural tendency towards encounters of the flesh, not only to violently conquer the other but an openness towards the sensuous pleasures of the other. From early pre-historic Megalithic societies there was evidence of an attention to ritual, a fascination with and perhaps fear of death. Marking the landscape and creating rituals to that which is beyond comprehension, *discrete* moves aimed at mitigating the unknown journey into death.

The flow of matter is a self-generating force, it is both object and process. While matter is infinite, things have a finite span in time '[...] in which they are able to attain the flower of their life[...]'<sup>146</sup> It is possible to shift focus from discrete histories to the essential flow of cultural experience. Here articulated in Beckett's play, a thwarted encounter as essential force. His subject was not Godot, the silent other, because this other is not measurable in real time or in our time. The audience is resigned to understand (or not understand) that the subject of the play is *waiting* itself.

Beckett conceived of *Time* in Proust's writing as 'that double headed monster of damnation and salvation'<sup>147</sup>, that which we cannot escape; we are corrupted by the habits of days gone by.

There is no escape from yesterday because yesterday has deformed us, or been deformed by us. The mood is of no importance. Deformation has taken place. Yesterday is not a milestone that has been passed, but a daystone on the beaten track of the years, and irremediably part of us, within us.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>146</sup> Englert, 2003, p.15 (1.564).

<sup>147</sup> Beckett, (1931), 1999, p.11.

<sup>148</sup> Beckett, (1931), 1999, p.13.

In Beckett's play the theme of uncertainty relates to that which is beyond our control. Nature is more powerful, the characters are interchangeable, they cannot determine the future and all attempts to do so are futile. We remain ignorant and future time remains indeterminate, at least to us. Loops of time, creating intensities, meaning out of the flow and passage of time mixing, folding and unfolding. Godot as '[...] an event, a thing, a person, death.'<sup>149</sup> It is in this action of waiting that we are changed by the constant flux, it is beyond our grasp and Godot is nature itself, the flow of all things. In *Waiting for Godot* nothing changes, nothing stays the same, one day is like the next, so much so that Pozzo exclaims 'They give birth astride of a grave, the light gleams an instant, then it's night once more.' To which Vladimir adds 'Astride of a grave and a difficult birth. Down in the hole, lingeringly, the gravedigger puts on the forceps.'<sup>150</sup>

My understanding of the encounter as a framework has shifted from first beginnings of chance encounters. The *swerve* for Lucretius does not cause the world but gives primary elements the conditions of their reality. The continuous nature of the corporeal flow and folding of matter is necessary for matter to mix with the void in order to continue. According to Lucretius *Religio*, in its discrete schema fails to transform. It seals itself off from the circulation of corporeal flows. When I encounter the Catholic Church in Irish culture, while not completely unmoving, it imprisons the human body, and particularly that of women and children, in an inescapable system of debt and exchange.

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<sup>149</sup> Esslin, 1962, p.50.

<sup>150</sup> Samuel Beckett, *Waiting for Godot: A Tragicomedy in Two Acts/ By Samuel Beckett* (First English edition. London: Faber and Faber, 1956), p.48.

*[...] for you earth the artificer  
sends up her sweet flowers [...]*<sup>151</sup>

Lucretius as he calls on Venus compares the earth to a female Daedalus, inciting the creativity of Gaia, earth Goddess.<sup>152</sup> In Joyce's letters I hear invocations to the silent voice of Nora Barnacle, like the invocation to Venus in Lucretius's proem to the mother of all things. It is in response to Barnacle's letters that Joyce writes an outpouring of desire, nourished by the excess of her dark corners.<sup>153</sup>

It is immediately apparent that the content of Barnacle's letters was aimed directly at provoking an intense response to keep the home fires burning. Joyce was quick to take up the challenge and filled his letters with an abundance of explicit details. While the correspondence certainly seemed to physically work, there is also the sense that Joyce was trying to penetrate not only in a sexual sense the body of woman but also to experience the intensity of women's desire. To inhabit a polymorphous experience as excess of desire. The sight of the 'dirty' words on the page excites him as much as the detailed images they stimulate before his eyes.

My sweet naughty little fuckbird,  
[...] You seem anxious to know how I received your letter which you say is worse than mine. How is it worse than mine, love? Yes, it is worse in one part or two. I mean the part where you say what you will do with your tongue (I don't mean sucking me off) and in that lovely word you write so big and underline, you little blackguard. It is thrilling to hear that word (and one or two others you have not written) on a girl's lips [...] <sup>154</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> Lucretius in Englert, 2003, p.1 (1.7).

<sup>152</sup> Nail, 2018, p.33.

<sup>153</sup> James Joyce and Nora Barnacle famously became unconventional (by Irish Catholic standards) lovers on 16th June 1904. The date Joyce later chose as the day during which the events in *Ulysses* unfold. These letters were written when Joyce returned to Dublin alone for the first time, in 1909, in an attempt to get his book *Dubliners* published. See Appendix 2, p.138: Letters to Nora.

<sup>154</sup> Richard Ellemann, *Selected Letters of James Joyce* (London: Faber and Faber (1975) 1992) p.186.

And for the silent Barnacle, there is much affection in the overall tone of Joyce's letters to her.<sup>155</sup> Evidence perhaps that it was possible to have a liberal sense of self and an expressive sense of body as an Irish woman at the turn of the twentieth century, (all be it living in a self-imposed exile in Europe). Barnacle in the extent of her desire openly shared her inclination to pleasure of the body. Desire as excess.

A freedom of expression of being and a sexuality of body that was not afforded unmarried women under the rule of Cannon law in Ireland at that time. Local historian Catherine Corless brought to light the sad legacy of one particular group of women, marked out as beyond the law, and gave a voice to the children and babies who are now forever silent. The residents of Tuam's Mother and Baby Home (1925-1961) experienced a living hell at the hands of the Bon Secours Sisters. The mothers confined in these homes were subjected to a ruthless system of punishment and retribution. Religion here reigned supreme implementing to the letter a systemic abuse of power over the vulnerable and helpless in their care. Ultimately this particular branch of the Irish poor law system was facilitated by a patriarchal society and put into operation by women of faith. An order of nuns who in their religious vows played judge and jury over other women.

A woman who, having become pregnant outside wedlock, would not have been able to return to her family and would have been penniless and without support. To the community and to the nuns she was a 'fallen woman', beyond redemption. And for the children born in the institutions of Mother and Baby Homes as is evident in Catherine Corless's account those who survived the brutal neglect were either boarded out to foster homes or adopted by Catholic families of any sort, at home and abroad. In a report on the conditions of children boarded out, presented to Galway County Council (1956) the inspector remarks;

Neglect seems to be quite the common thing in some cases, and in others it borders on cruelty. Farm animals, or certain valuable species of dog, are better treated than humans, and there is an urgent need to review this whole system of boarding out children who by accident of birth have neither home nor family.<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> Maddox, Brenda. 'Ah yes - but what ever happened to Nora's side of the correspondence?' in *The Guardian* (09/07/2004) <<https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2004/jul/09/books.booksnews>> (accessed 07/04/2023).

<sup>156</sup> Corless, JOTS 9, 2012, p.78.



*On a visit to a cultural site in the midlands of Co Longford I happened to mention my research to a man who had grown up in the locality. He said to me, 'you do know that there is a Big alley out past Newtowncashel.' I didn't. And so he gave me directions with the promise that I would drive that way home. I followed his directions but could not get on the right road or find the alley he spoke of. I stopped outside a church. I could see three people talking. A gardener was leaning on his shovel and talking to two women, one older, one younger.*

*I asked them did they know of a nearby handball alley. The gardener laughed and said 'you'll never find it, let alone get a game in there'. I explained my project and the ladies said they would drive me up there if I waited for a minute while the younger woman went in to say a prayer. I agreed and she promptly entered the church only to emerge a minute later. She said, 'I just had to say a quick Hail Mary for my daughter. She's doing an exam.' True to their word, they drove their car in front of mine and at a random point some way out the road they stopped. The driver jumped out and shouted back to me, 'It's in there.' They were gone before I had a chance to realise that they were pointing to the mess of trees and brambles and a barely visible wall at the edge of the road. When I walked around the side of the wall, there it was, a perfectly preserved, if overgrown, Big alley, lay hidden in the undergrowth, untouched for decades.*

## ***An Uisce Beatha (The Water of Life)***

## Introduction

As I enter into the *Water of Life* I encounter two washerwomen at the edge of the river as they scrub away the day's gossip and grime. As the story goes the image fades, the women fade and these sensuous creatures dissolve into the night and leave behind only a rock and a tree. The work for this chapter is to consider ways one might fathom our existence, way out beyond the 'he says, she says' of our day-to-day experience.

To this end I look at the phenomenon of Entanglement in physics and its implications for a contemporary interpretation of an ontology of motion. Here multiple strands of thinking are juxtaposed within a system of 'context shifting' consistent with modes of quantum computing. Unlike parallel systems of thinking, *concurrent* systems use context shifting to progress ideas on multiple levels simultaneously. This methodology is consistent with a shift in thinking from a dialectic modality used in the first two chapters, to a dynamic system that is articulated in the form and content of this chapter.<sup>157</sup>

Karen Barad rethinks Niels Bohr's 'indeterminate' interpretation of quantum physics away from a metaphysics of the individual towards a new 'process driven' understanding of encounter, that Barad names 'Agential Realism'.<sup>144</sup> This re-interpretation of a system of ontological motion paves the way in this chapter to an understanding of the dynamic features of Irish culture and the social phenomena of the Big alleys. I will look at the topology of the Big alley through the prism of this dynamic ontology of motion conceived as entanglement and consider its entangled state. In doing so I recognise this architectural and social phenomenon as an expression of a culture not only of resistance, but of dynamic creativity.

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<sup>157</sup> *Concurrency*, a definition of *concurrency* in relation to computing systems proposed here and *context shifting* is given in the opening section of methodological approach to research.

## Encountering *An Uisce Beatha*<sup>158</sup> (The Water of Life)

In 1929, twelve writers referring to themselves as *the twelve apostles* wrote a series of essays under the title *Our Exagmination Round his Factification for Incamination of Work in Progress*<sup>159</sup>. These essays were written in support of writings by James Joyce which had been in part serialized by Mr. Eugene Jolas in his weekly review *Transitions* under the title 'Work in Progress'. The writing was to become Joyce's notoriously complex work *Finnegans Wake* which was published in 1939 by Sylvia Beach at *Shakespeare and Company*, in Paris. Among the twelve supporters of Joyce was Stuart Gilbert<sup>160</sup> who wrote an essay titled 'Prolegomena to Work in Progress', which began,

Great poets are obscure for two opposite reasons; now, because they're talking about something too large for anyone to understand and now, again, because they're talking about something too small for anyone to see.<sup>161</sup>

With a gaze fixed in the direction of God, the artist/poet needs to step beyond the ordinary. In Joyce's case one language in any ordinary terms was literally not enough. Gilbert's advice to readers of Joyce's new and complex work, was to look to Giambattista Vico's *The New Science*<sup>162</sup>, for clues to make sense of Joyce's attempt at 'a new synthesis of disparate phenomena'.<sup>163</sup> Histories, in Gilbert's reflection on Vico's philosophy of history with reference to Joyce's *Work in Progress (Finnegans Wake)*, were created by men in 'a recurrent cycle in human 'progress''<sup>164</sup> to 'illustrate the fundamental unity of history'.<sup>165</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> *An Uisce Beatha* literally translates from Irish language to English as 'The Water of Life'. This phrase is also understood in the vernacular as 'Irish Water' or 'Irish Whiskey' a locally distilled alcoholic drink.

<sup>159</sup> Beckett, Samuel (ed.) et al. *Our Exagmination Round his Factification for Incamination of Work in Progress* (Paris/ London: Faber and Faber (1929)1972). In the 1972 edition Silva Beach wrote a short note about the circumstances of the publication of the book of essays which was titled by Joyce himself.

<sup>160</sup> English writer and translator, Stuart Gilbert (1883-1969) became one of the first Joycean scholars publishing a number of books, keys and translations of Joyce's work.

<sup>161</sup> Gilbert, Stuart. *Prolegomena to Work in Progress*, (47-75) in Beckett, Samuel (et al) (1929) 1972. Gilbert quoted G.K. Chesterson talking about the British writer of 'The Hounds of Hell' Francis Thomas.

<sup>162</sup> Vico, Giambattista, *The New Science of Giambattista Vico. (Ithaca/ New York: Cornell University Press, (1744) 1948.)*

<sup>163</sup> Beckett (et al.) (1929) 1972, p.51.

<sup>164</sup> Beckett (et al.) (1929) 1972, p.51.

<sup>165</sup> Beckett (et al.) (1929) 1972, p.52.

Joyce's book is constructed in four parts that mirror the structure of the Italian political philosopher and scientific historian Giambattista Vico in *The New Science*.<sup>166</sup> Joyce, like Vico, adopts the configuration of the cycle of birth, maturity, death and regeneration.<sup>167</sup>

This history of human ideas is strikingly confirmed by the history of philosophy itself. For the first kind of crude philosophy used by men was *autopsia* or the evidence of the senses. It was later made use of by Epicurus, for he, as a philosopher of the senses, was satisfied with the mere exhibition of things to the evidence of the senses. And the senses of the first poetic nations were extremely lively, as we have seen in our account of the origins of poetry.<sup>168</sup>

Joyce's final book took its name from a traditional Irish Ballad that tells the tale of the fall and rise of a Dublin builder by the name of Tim Finnegan. In the final verse of the ballad a fight breaks out and whiskey is spilled on the corpse. Suddenly revived, Finnegan bolts upright and shouts 'Thunderin' Jaysus, D'ye think I'm dead.'<sup>169</sup> Joyce's vastly complicated *slice of life* draws on the comic resurrection of Finnegan, while calling into question the whole theological structure of divine causation and social deference to an ecclesiastic hierarchy that was a fundamental requirement of Irish society at that time.

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<sup>166</sup> Vico, in his vision for the principles of a new science was one in which the world was transformed from the dark ages, (uncertain, unformed and obscure) by means of a divine light that provided a true reflection of what was to come. The age of the gods gave way to an age of informed men, full of the wisdom of poetry, the source from which all principles and methods of man's communities were derived. In deference to the need to satisfy social mores of religious belief, Vico's work was marked by divine causation, but one in which men recognized themselves as equal to nature. He proposed that the foundation of the world was first a world defined by poetry, a poetry not simply of imitation, where all things are the invention of man, but a real poetry of the senses.

<sup>167</sup> Vico's *New Science*, in which social change becomes equivalent to cultural change, is divided into five books, the first of which establishes principles and method. The second book looks to a poetic wisdom as the origin of a poetic logic. In his view the people of nations evolve languages that act as poetic histories that resonate with the commonwealth of nations. The third section finds a *true* Homer in his '... matchless faculty for heroic poetry' (p. xiii). Section four follows the course of nature and natural laws. The final book is 'the recurrence of human things in the resurgence of the nations' where 'one needs piety in order to gain wisdom'. Vico, (1744) 1948, p.383.

<sup>168</sup> Vico, (1744) 1948, p.150.

<sup>169</sup> See Appendix 3, p.146: *Finnegan's Wake* (1864), is a traditional Irish Ballad by an unknown author, that has been adopted and adapted in Irish culture, most famously by the Irish band, *The Dubliners*.

Where *Ulysses* was Joyce's book of the day, *Finnegans Wake* was his *book of the night*, as the ordinary lives of its central characters take on fluid multiplicities in the dream world that infiltrates their darkest corners. Joyce specifically leaves out the apostrophe in *Finnegans Wake* leading to speculation about the double meaning of his title. Again for Joyce, *Finnegans Wake* is a journey through Dublin city, this time from the rise of the river Liffey to the point it meets the Irish sea at the mouth of Dublin Bay.

*Finnegans Wake* followed the fortunes of Mr Porter, a pub landlord of Chaplizod, his wife and their children, sons Kevin and Jerry and daughter Isobel (Issy). Each of these characters inhabit multiple iterations of themselves throughout the text. Mr Porter becomes Humphrey Chimpden Earwicker or Here Comes Everybody (HCE) and is designated by up to one thousand names over the course of the book. Mrs Porter is also known as Anna Livia Plurabella (ALP), a universal wife-mother, who, in the dream world becomes the voice of the river Liffey which runs from the Wicklow Mountains through the city of Dublin, dividing it north and south as it flows on its journey towards the Irish sea.<sup>170</sup>

Kevin and Jerry become Shaun the Postman and Shem the Penman. In *Finnegans Wake*, Shaun and Shem are always represented in a dialectical relation, binary opposites in a continuous search for truth. As such they often represent opposing meanings carried in different regional dialects. At every moment of the text the structure of language(s), historical details of the development of language(s) and the play of language between characters drawn as cultural examples are tested to the limit.

To return momentarily to Vico's narrative, civilization begins with a crash of thunder, that causes the people, terrified, to lift their heads and gaze at the sky. In this fearful moment the first God emerges in the minds of men and a poetic wisdom is born. For Vico, it was not only the voice of *Thunder* that inspired notions of the gods who implemented ideas of 'shame and justice' on men, but also fear that caused men to 'ejaculate' the first word, *Pa* and so all Gods were called father.<sup>171</sup>

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<sup>170</sup> 'Dante... Bruno. Vico... Joyce'. In Beckett's defence of Joyce's *Work in Progress* he accused audiences of only wanting to skim over 'the scant cream of sense'. He vigorously defends Joyce's linguistic gymnastics by referring to Vico's structure of the origin of language that puts poetic wisdom first. There is nothing that we make into words that we do not sense first. Of *Work in Progress* (the initial title under which fragments of *Finnegans Wake* were published), Beckett states 'Here is direct expression - pages and pages of it,' (Beckett (1929)1972, p.13).

<sup>171</sup> Vico, (1744) 1948, p.153.

In *Work in Progress (Finnegans Wake)* Joyce devised new linguistic solutions – mixing different languages, inventing words – in order to ‘[...] reflect the kaleidoscopic permutations of the temporal, physical and spatial attributes of the hero.’<sup>172</sup> Gilbert addressed criticisms of style and content in *Finnegans Wake* by highlighting the diligent process in Joyce’s writings, from conception to emergence, fully formed and ready to play out on the ears of readers. Intentional in all its stylistic modalities, shape shifting from the tones of a Baroque Fugue to iterations of the earliest languages, from signs, symbols and markings, to naming systems, and further to abstract conceptions.

In carefully adapting his words to his subject-matter, Mr. Joyce is not performing a mere conjuring trick with the immense vocabulary he has at his command but is going back to the original and natural methods of human speech.<sup>173</sup>

Gilbert thought that critics confused Joyce’s originality of form and content with the vivisection of form and content as a ‘constructive metabolism of the primal matter of language’.<sup>174</sup> He understood Joyce’s manipulation of languages on multiple concurrent layers to be consistent with a unique contribution to literature that challenged the notion of a universal application of language. Gilbert saw Joyce’s movement through language as concurrent with an idea of contingent truths, not oblivious to a jokey side of life and ‘An electrical undercurrent’ of the ‘flash and crash days’ alluded to in Vico’s thunder-cap beginnings.<sup>175</sup>

In *Finnegans Wake*, there is an almost unfathomable expansion of the boundaries of language. Sounds and syllables carry double/ triple meanings and references denoting a range of other languages, dialects, characters, historic events, folklore and atmospheric tensions. Meaning is sensuous and ephemeral, moving and mixing through a linguistic multiverse. That which is poetic, inhabits language fleetingly as it reaches the ear. It operates independently and somehow dances on the airwaves like sounds in the night.

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<sup>172</sup> Stuart Gilbert, *Prolegomena to Work in Progress*, (47-75) in Beckett, Samuel (et al). ‘Our Examination Round his Factification for Inclamination of Work in Progress’ (Paris/ London: Faber and Faber (1929) 1972), p.54.

<sup>173</sup> Beckett (et al.) (1929) 1972, p.56.

<sup>174</sup> Beckett (et al.) (1929) 1972, p.57.

<sup>175</sup> Beckett (et al.) (1929) 1972, p.59.

In Joyce's text, words are not tied to one fixed established lexicon, but instead move through multiple languages and dialects with fluid attachments to meaning.

We Durbalanars, theeadjure. A way, the Margan, from our astamite, through dimdom done till light kindling light has led we hopas but hunt me the journeyon, iteritinerant, the kal his course, amid the semitary of Somnionia.<sup>176</sup>

In this case, the narrator, identified as 'Pu Nuseht'<sup>177</sup> (the Sunup written in reverse) thanks *Agni*, the Hindu god of fire, for lighting the pathway of sleep. Edmund Lloyd Epstein translates the passage in *A Guide Through Finnegans Wake* as follows;

Amid a spate of Sanskrit words, we weak Dubliners ("durdala", "of little strength" (M)) address a prayer to the Hindu god of fire, Agni (594.2). We have been led by his kindly light through the pathways of sleep, "the semitary of Somnionia" (Latin *semita*, "pathway") and are approaching "Heliotropolis, the castellated, the enchanting" (594.8-9), which is itself one of the most enchanting phrases in the book.<sup>178</sup>

In other instances, words sound like other words or words are spelled phonetically according to how they are spoken in a particular dialect or with a particular accent. For example, '[...] weary I go back to you, my cold father, my cold mad father, my cold mad feary father, till the near sight of the mere size of him, the moyles and moyles of it [...]'<sup>179</sup> *Moyles and moyles*, is spelt to sound like 'miles and miles' when spoken with a Dublin accent. 'Moyles' also refers to the Northern Channel, the sea between Ireland and Scotland, known at its narrowest point as 'Sruth na Maoile' or the Straights of Moyle.

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<sup>176</sup> Joyce, 1939, p.594 (l. 4-8).

<sup>177</sup> Joyce, 1939, p.593 (l. 23).

<sup>178</sup> Edmund Lloyd Epstein, *A Guide Through Finnegans Wake* (USA: University Press Florida 2009), p. 250.

<sup>179</sup> Joyce, 1939, p.628 (l. 1-3).



In addition, Joyce may be referring to Robert Frost's 1923 poem *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening* and the repetition of the sentiment in the word *miles*. 'And miles to go before I sleep, and miles to go before I sleep.'<sup>180</sup> Likewise individual words, word collocations and short anecdotes may refer to one or more languages or make obscure or ambiguous reference to cultural or historical events, places or characters.

Joyce makes specific references to the politics of the day. 'Quake up, dim dusky, wook doom for husky!' While the words 'wook' sounding like 'wake' and 'doom' might suggest one is doomed or done for, the reference is to a note left on the grave of Irish rebel leader, Michael Collins in 1922 and subsequently written on the walls around the country.<sup>181</sup> The word 'husky' in this instance is connected to a large bulky figure, specifically to 'the big fellow', the affectionate nickname for Michael Collins. It is a warning to Richard Mulcahy, who took over the leadership of the rebel forces, that he could be assassinated next.

What is clear is that each sentence, each phrase, each syllable carries multiple layers of meaning, some obvious, many obscure and ambiguous. While I cannot begin to scratch the surface of meaning it is possible here to listen to some of the voices that I have encountered. As the story goes, HCE is accused of exposing himself to two young women in the Phoenix Park, an act for which he must stand trial. Here I encounter two washerwomen in chapter eight of *Finnegans Wake*, in the fading light they chat back and forth as they labour over the days washing. The giddy flow of rumours and gossip, spread and tall tales of this dark deed travel far and fast.

The two washerwomen share gossip on opposite banks of the river, like a pair of babbling brooks they roll up their sleeves and get scrubbing. Going into all the dirty details of HCE and ALP's private affairs. They don't hold back on the dirty linen. 'He has all my water black on me'.<sup>182</sup> While they are trashing the dirt out of the undergarments of local poets they remember together the song that Anna Livia sang to comfort herself as she was waiting for her husband to wake.

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<sup>180</sup> Robert Frost, 'Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening', in the *The Poetry of Robert Frost*, (ed) Edward Connery Lathem (London: Henry Holt and Company, Inc. (1923) 1969).

<sup>181</sup> Joyce, 1939, p.593 (l.14) The message was 'Move over Mick, make room for Dick.'

<sup>182</sup> Joyce, 1939, p.196 (l.12.) The word black here refers to Dublin or Dubh Linn, translated from Irish as Dark Pool.

The scene for this chapter shows two banks of the Liffey with two washer women, one on each bank. On the left bank there is a tree, on the right bank there is a stone. The two washerwomen become the tree and the stone at the end of the chapter, as the dusk deepens<sup>183</sup>

In, *A Guide Through Finnegans Wake*, Edmund Lloyd Epstein writes that the voice of ALP is heard only in a few scattered moments.<sup>184</sup> So central to the development of every aspect of the story and yet we hear her speak only briefly. In the first reference the washerwomen recount to us the song of the river. APL in verse, lamenting as she waits for her husband (HCE) to arise and make love to her as he had done in the past.<sup>185</sup> As the river, she is held back, waiting for this *husbandson* and it is only because of the comfort of the banks she is lying in, made warm by her stay, that she does not leap into the waters of 'troublin bay'<sup>186</sup>.

By earth and the cloudy but I badly want a brand-new bankside, bedamp and I do, and a plumber at that! [...] Only for my short Brittas bed made's as snug as it smells it's out I'd lep and off with me to the slobbs della Tolka or the plage au Clontarf to feale the gay aire of my salt troublin bay and the race of the saywint up me ambushure.<sup>187</sup>

Joyce gives a detailed description of what she wore to seduce her husband back to her. The washerwomen list all of the gifts ALP has given to her children and what a bagful of a life she has led. Layers and layers of gossip and chat washed down the river.

Anna was, Livia is, Plurabelle's to be. Northmen's thing made southfolks place but howmulty plurators made eachonein person? Latin me that, my trinity scholar, out of eure sanscreed into oure eryan. *Hircus Civis Eblanensis!* He had a bucketgoat paps

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<sup>183</sup> Epstein, 2009, p.93.

<sup>184</sup> Similarly, Molly Bloom in *Ulysses*, although a character central to the plot, we do not hear her speak. That is until the last moment, ALP has the final monologue, as the voice of the river returning to the sea.

<sup>185</sup> Joyce, 1939, p.201 (l.5 – 20).

<sup>186</sup> Dublin Bay, 'troublin bay'. Joyce, 1939, p.201 (l.19).

<sup>187</sup> Joyce, 1939, p.201 (l.18 – 19).

on him, soft ones for orphans. Ho, Lord! Twins of his bosom. Lord save us! And ho! Hey? What all men. Hot? His tittering daughters of. Whawk?<sup>188</sup>

For Epstein, Joyce's greatest skill was in describing twilight. In the final section of chapter eight the washerwomen fade into the night. As the sound of the water rises and the light dims, they turn into *the* tree and *the* stone on the banks of the Liffey.

Can't hear with the waters of. The chittering waters of. Flittering bats, fieldmice bawk talk. Ho! Are you gone ahome? What Thom Malone? Can't hear with bawk of bats, all thim liffeying waters of. Ho, talk save us! My foos won't moos. I feel as old as yonder elm. A tale told of Shaun and Shem? All Livia's daughter-sons. Dark hawks hear us. Night! Night! My ho head halls. I feel as heavy as yonder stone<sup>189</sup>

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<sup>188</sup> Joyce, 1939, p.215 (l.24 -30).

<sup>189</sup> Joyce, 1939, p.215 (l.31) – p.216 (l.1).

## Matter and the Immaterial

The three most significant materials to my performance art practice, are not to be explained solely in terms of their physical constituents or my use of them as drawing materials in the performance works and sited drawings, or in terms of the gender bias they may suggest. Instead these materials are a means to articulate an encounter with a non-binary flow of matter. That is to shift from a story of women to a story of the movement of matter within the context of an Ontology of Motion as I have encountered it in the process of writing so far.

In modernist thinking the notion of a 'truth to materials' implies that materials should be used in a way that is faithful to their physical constituents. For example, steel is strong, wood is natural, paper is torn, wool is woven. In a visual arts context *form* in this sense follows *function* and design should be congruent with the purpose of the work made.

However, subsequent approaches in art, from Dada to Fluxus and other performance-based movements embraced failure, indeterminacy, and disturbance of expectation as integral to the work process. In dialogue with a contemporary performance art practice, somewhere between the fixed and the broken, materials are used for other purposes than their common usage. What's wrong becomes right and materials are often neither appropriate nor expected and seek to undermine or contradict expectations.

In this practice-led research I have considered art works which are impermanent, transient, immaterial, such as fountains that make liquid sculptural forms that disappear when the water supply is turned off, work that are time sensitive and whose existence is fragile; works that draw one into the process of doing and not in the contemplation of what is left behind. The materials I use have particular physical attributes and carry ready connotations that are transformed beyond their intended use and meaning in the performance works. In the performance and photographic works I have developed a working understanding of and relationship to, three materials in particular: orchids, foam, dust.

I have collected and used Orchids over several years and have learned the process of drying them. I have discovered that although they appear to be very delicate, they are much more robust than one may imagine. The orchids are harvested and dried lingering on in an afterlife under which conditions they maintain their beauty; they are fragile, but not, they are vulnerable, but not, they are dead, but not. It is this ambiguous status that draws me to them.

Foam is a material that is continually changing as you work with it. Foam expands and continues to expand until a moment of collapse. It is in effect a chemical astringent, a cleaning agent and a substance that is ephemerally cohesive, that adheres to different surfaces and creates a stark contrasting drawing material. However, to draw with foam is a very direct challenge as its release is contingent on temperature and under changing atmospheric conditions its physical properties are hard to manage. The magic of foam is that each time, the conversation is unexpected.

Dust is a powdered mass with the ability to become airborne and hang in the air. White Dust is a material genus that describes substances such as flour, talcum powder and powdered chalk (*magnesium carbonate*). I have used dust as a drawing and performance material for its ability to gather on surfaces upon which I make marks. Dust in this way is a horizontal agent whilst foam is a vertical agent. I have used each accordingly in the performance and drawing works to define a space of inhabitation somewhere between the wall and the floor.



## Immaterial Voices

I am interested in the physical properties of the materials and the alchemy of those materials activated within the live performance. I have an ongoing dialogue with materials and with how materials behave. I may choose to use materials counter to their prescribed use and resist the expectation of what the material should do.

The use of Orchids, Foam and Dust specifically, have over the journey of this research become central to the expression of 'sense' experience through matter (materials) towards the immaterial, in both the performance and photographic works. That is art works that are fleeting and disappear over time. I activated the materials in the process of the performance work as it unfolds. Nothing changes but is transformed by the flow of all things, as Joyce's river runs. '[...] Yet is no body present here which was not there before. Only is order othered. Nought is nulled. Fuitfiat! [...]'<sup>190</sup>

Fig.11 Materials activated within the performances; Orchids, Foam, Dust (2018-2022)

<sup>190</sup> James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake*, (Wordsworth Editions Ltd. (1939) 2012), p.613 (l.13-14).

## Orchids

Orchids were harvested from distant shores and shipped to the West, for their exotic beauty and unique features. As such they belong to the history of western imperialism.

*The proliferation of orchids sheds light on the imperialist practice of affectionate appropriation: colonial imagination and desire drive humans to seize natural objects and to endow them with new values.*<sup>191</sup>

The name of the Orchid flower comes from 'Orchis' (ὄρχις), the Greek word for testicle. In ancient Greek mythology the Demi-God *Orchis* was born of a Satyr and a Nymph<sup>192</sup> and was a figure in the court of Dionysus.<sup>193</sup> Orchis was sentenced to be torn apart by wild beasts as a punishment for attempting to rape a priestess. Orchids appeared where the blood of Orchis was spilled.<sup>194</sup> Orchis in this sense is viewed as the *Naughty Boy* of the court of Dionysus. He is always already errant in his immature sexuality.

I have used orchids in the works to inhabit the sensuous folds of wild fables. Each flower becomes a *remember me* in the moment of doing. A reminder of the tall tales told to children before they go to sleep; kneeling beside my bed, I whispered softly, '[...] and now I lay me down to sleep and if I die before I wake, I pray the Lord my soul to take.' In the newly Independent Irish Free State, children born out of wed lock were always already outside the protection of the state and left in the charge of religious orders that invoked divine retribution in the form of neglect and physical abuse.

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<sup>191</sup> Weishun Lu, Behind the beauty of Orchids, Centuries of Violence. < <https://edgeeffects.net/orchids/>> (accessed 23/01/2023).

<sup>192</sup> In Greek mythology a Satyr is a male nature spirit with a human torso and the lower limbs of a horse, goat or donkey. They frequent the court of Dionysus (Bacchus) where they play the flute or pipes at festivities and are known for their boisterous behaviour. Nymphs were thought of as a personification of beautiful female nature spirits. 'They bring fertility and fortune.' Hesiod, *Theogony*, p.68 (l.346).

<sup>193</sup> Dionysus (also referred to as Bacchus in Roman adaptation of earlier mythology) son of Zeus, was the god of fruitfulness, plenty and excess.

<sup>194</sup> Orchidaceae or Orchis is first referred to in the writings of Ancient Greek Botanist and philosopher, Theophrastus, in his 'Enquiry into Plants' (vol. 2), as a plant with medicinal qualities. Anecdotally, in ancient Greece, eating the centre of the Orchid during pregnancy was thought to bring a boy child.

## Foam

Hesiod<sup>195</sup>, in Ancient Greek Mythology, tells us that it is out of the *Chasm*<sup>196</sup> that humans came into being and through storytelling as ‘mythos’, that the truth and wisdom of the community are conveyed. In Hesiod’s *Theogony*, the earth and our earthly concerns came out of the ‘Chasm’ as a representation of *the Void* and not a manifestation of confusion or chaos. In this way cultural concepts and wisdom spread by means of oral storytelling in the form of myths and legends. Venus (Aphrodite) is the fecund outcome of the castration of Uranus, King of the Titans, by his son Cronus.

As for the genitals, just as he (Cronos) first cut them off with his instrument of adamant and threw them from the land into the surging sea, even so they were carried on the waves for a long time. And about them a white foam grew from the immortal flesh, and in it a girl formed. And out stepped a modest and beautiful goddess, and the grass began to grow all around beneath her slender feet. Gods and men called her Aphrodite, because she was formed in foam [...] <sup>197</sup>

For Lucretius, Venus (Aphrodite) was the primary source of continual renewal, the natural condition of all things. Venus was born from the union between Gaia Goddess of the earth and Tethys Goddess of the sea. The sea laps onto the earth’s shore and foam forms around the castrated genitalia of Uranus, that have been cast into the sea. In this process of cross-fertilisation Venus emerges from the sea as the ultimate symbol of feminine beauty. In Thomas Nail’s reading of Lucretius’ poem, there are several examples where ‘Castration is actually a symbol of fertility. Instead of the god-king being sacrificed; his fertile organ was sacrificed in order to make the world fertile again’.<sup>198</sup> Foam in this sense becomes a symbol of regeneration and regrowth.

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<sup>195</sup> The ancient Greek poet Hesiod (c.750 - 650bce), like Homer, although not as prolific, wrote in a meter informed by the popular tradition of oral poetry. Both Hesiod and Homer took advantage of the written form and so their works have lasted. Two of Hesiod’s works have survived, *Theogony* (concerning the genealogy of the Gods) and *Works and Days* (about peasant life) as well as a number of shorter works and descriptions of life at that time, such as ‘The Shield of Heracles’ and ‘The Catalogue of Women’.

<sup>196</sup> Hesiod, *Theogony and Works and Days*. trans. by M.L.West, (Oxford/ New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), p.6 (l.116). ‘First came the Chasm; and then broad-breasted Earth [...]’.

<sup>197</sup> Hesiod, *Theogony* (1988), p.8-9 (l. 191-200).

<sup>198</sup> Nail, 2007, p.238.



Foam, from which Venus emerged, is continuous and dynamic. As we have understood within an ontology of motion, always already in motion. The foam used becomes an active and dynamic force within the performance works. Transformed by the alchemy of diverse elements, tangible and intangible, from the edge of failure and decay. The works do not culminate in the creation of an art object, but rather unfold in a sustained engagement with the place and the traces of its past, with reference to the surface of all things.

## Dust

Dust to dust, *memento mori*, like all things, remember you must die. The death spirit *Akhlys*, mournful and pale, was thought to have been among the Keres, born of Nyx (Night) she personified dust as the death-mist. Represented in the 'Shield of Heracles' an embodied mystery with shoulders covered in tear strewn dust.

By them stood Darkness of Death, mournful and fearful, pale, shrivelled, shrunk with hunger, swollen-kneed. Long nails tipped her hands, and she dribbled at the nose, and from her cheeks blood dripped down to the ground. She stood leering hideously, and much dust sodden with tears lay upon her shoulders.<sup>199</sup>

There is no secret to the thick layer of dust that eventually forms on everything and in every nook and cranny. That is until I settle myself in to redistribute the wealth of it all, I mark a path from the dry to the wet. As the last breath is exhaled, Anna Livia Plurabella, last gasp, '[...] Finn, again! Take. Bussoftlhee, mememormee! Till thousandsthee. Lps. The keys to. Given! A way a lone a last a loved along the'.<sup>200</sup> It is the 'mememormee!' that is both a goodbye and a reminder, that is a *memento mori*.

From inside the performance works I have traced a pattern in fine dust as an ephemeral language. The art works made tread a sensuous path, hiding in plain sight of a multiplicity of cultural markers. The poetic shift of language, from mouth to ear and wall to floor. It is with your own eyes you must lift up the crumbs of sense and find your response, quick as lightening. A thunder flash and these works are washed away, into drain or gutter or along the canal bank.

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<sup>199</sup> Hesiod, 'Shield of Heracles', (l. 264-269). Taking its lead from the *Shield of Achilles* in Homers Iliad, Hesiod's poem follows the exploits of Heracles into battle.

<sup>200</sup> Joyce, 1922, p.628 (l.15-16).

## Quantum Entanglements



At the opening of this inquiry into the condition of Irish women within a hegemonic system of control and resistance, I examined Althusser's philosophy of encounter which undermined the notion of universal truths and proposed an indeterminate materialism governed by all things necessitated by chance encounters of contingent truths. This framework for thinking was extended by reference to Thomas Nail's re-reading of universal concepts of truth and matter in the poetics of Lucretius'. To the discrete logic of ancient atomists, Nail opposes a materialism consistent with the continuous nature of matter always already in constant flux. A materialism that redefined questions of causality in ancient times.

Fig. 12. Eamonn de Valera (front row 4<sup>th</sup> from left), Erwin Schrödinger (front row 2<sup>nd</sup> from right) at a meeting of the *Dublin Institute of Advanced Studies* in 1942 in Trinity College Dublin

I will now look at scientific developments of the early twentieth century that changed how we understand the physics of our world and led to a new formulation of an ontology of motion. While Joyce was developing his stream of consciousness, Albert Einstein discovered the equivalence ( $E=mc^2$ ) between energies in flux that redefined our understanding of the relationship between energy and matter.<sup>201</sup> In the diffractive patterns of queer theorist and physicist Karen Barad, I encounter the phenomena of quantum entanglements.<sup>202</sup> Barad re-thinks Niels Bohr's 'indeterminate' interpretation of quantum physics away from a metaphysics of the individual towards a new 'process driven' understanding of encounter, that Barad names 'Agential Realism'.<sup>203</sup>

In 1939 Eamonn de Valera invited Erwin Schrödinger to Dublin to head the new Dublin Institute of Advanced Studies at Trinity College Dublin. Schrödinger gave a lecture series titled '*What is Life?*' in 1943. This is ironic not because of Schrödinger's well documented reputation for sexual misconduct, but because of the misalignment of the religious and scientific views on divine causation and of de Valera's relationship with the Irish Catholic Church and his inscription of family values into the new Irish Constitution.<sup>204</sup> Here I look closely at developments that lead to the discovery of quantum entanglements and I will put to work this concept towards a re-interpretation of the spread of Irish sociality and game play, in the example of the Big alley.

While quantum physics did not replace classical theories, at the turn of the twentieth century several key scientific discoveries informed new directions in physics. In this research I have utilized a conception of an aleatory materialism to articulate the journey of the rebel. I propose that a shift to quantum theory can give new dynamic insight into how histories have unfolded and offer a new perspective on how Irish culture has developed.

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<sup>201</sup> In 1905 the German Theoretical Physicist Albert Einstein published four scientific papers that became the basis of modern physics. These are called the *Annus Mirabilis Papers*, and cover; 'Photoelectric Effect', 'Brownian Motion', 'The Theory of Special Relativity' and the equation for 'Mass-Energy Equivalence'.

<sup>202</sup> Karen Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning* (Durham/London: Duke University Press, 2007).

<sup>203</sup> Barad, 2007, p.97-131.

<sup>204</sup> Kevin O'Sullivan, 'Erwin Schrödinger in Dublin: Physicist, Womaniser, Fugitive.' in *The Irish Times*, (01/09/2018).

In 1900 German physicist Max Planck circumvented ‘the ultraviolet catastrophe’ by deducing that energy comes in discrete packages or light bundles which he named ‘Quanta’.<sup>205</sup> Subsequently, Albert Einstein used quanta to explain previously observed experiments of light-induced emission of electrons using the photoelectric effect<sup>206</sup> and thus observed the nature of particles as packages or ‘quanta’. The implications for the development of an alternative system to Classical Physics and the study of matter in motion informed a new *Quantum* interpretation of the world at a microscopic level.<sup>207</sup>

Danish physicist Niels Bohr furthered the understanding of atomic structure in 1913 with his model of atoms that had at its centre a nucleus around which electrons travel in definite circular orbits.<sup>208</sup> He noticed that these electrons could leap between orbits depending on the amount of energy they had absorbed. The difficulty was that these ‘quantum leaps’ required indeterminate results as part of the mechanism of the measurement that defied all the rules of classical physics, which defined point for point linear equations.

Werner Heisenberg, a student of Bohr, took up the challenge in 1925 and designed a matrix mathematics that shifted focus from the *movement* of the electron to the light emitted. He calculated all the possible points of origin of the electron and the points of destination of the electrons that describe the leap. At the same time as Bohr, Heisenberg and Pascual Jordan were working on what later became known as *the Copenhagen Interpretation* of quantum mechanics, Austrian physicist Erwin Schrödinger published an

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<sup>205</sup> The ultraviolet catastrophe was a problem of classical physics in which it was estimated that a black body (which theoretically absorb light and radiate energy that is called black body radiation), would emit an infinite quantity of energy at higher frequencies. Rather than viewing increased frequency as causing exponentially higher intensity, Max Planck re-framed electromagnetic energy as travelling in bundles he named ‘Quanta’. Planck’s constant ( $h$ ) represents the smallest measurement possible of light bundles.

<sup>206</sup> Photoelectric effect: A surface hit by electromagnetic radiation – e.g. light, will emit electrons. One of the four *Annus Mirabilis Papers* published by Albert Einstein in 1905.

<sup>207</sup> The laws of motion in Classical physics/mechanics, in which energy is treated as a continuous quantity, is the study of motion in macroscopic bodies. Newtonian mechanics focuses on measurements of velocity, displacement and acceleration of point for point vector graphics. Lagrangian mechanics measures velocity and rates of change in energy equations. Hamiltonian mechanics switched focus of measurement from velocity to a generalised momentum. In other words, Hamiltonian is the sum of kinetic and potential energy as the total energy of a system as opposed to Lagrangian which is the difference between kinetic (motion) energy and potential (location) energy.

<sup>208</sup> Bohr’s model of the atom has been superseded with more accurate descriptions.

equation that drew on Louis de Broglie's<sup>209</sup> observation that electrons could be thought to have wave like behaviour. Schrödinger's much simpler equation used quantum mechanics to predict (but not yet measure) the particle as a wavefunction.<sup>210</sup> Both descriptions of quantum fields could predict the behaviour of quantum systems on a small scale, but only until the moment of measurement.

Several experiments were devised and adapted to test the probability distribution of wavefunctions. The Double-slit experiment<sup>211</sup> was originally designed to detect observable interference patterns of light waves. According to classical physics, waves produce interference or diffraction patterns as an inherent feature of waves as they spread out in space, first observed by Thomas Young in the double-slit experiment. Niels Bohr's application of the double-slit experiment allowed him to observe that particles also exhibit diffraction patterns even when distributed individually. This result is consistent with the wave behaviour of particles. However, when each individual particle was measured as they go through the slits, they return to the expected distribution of individual particles.

Schrödinger's equation facilitated the observation of the wave behaviour of particles that can also form superpositions. Superposition is the ability of systems (in this case both wave and particle systems) to be in multiple states at the same time.<sup>212</sup> All particles exist in superposition when they are not measured. The particle in this sense has potentially dual attributes at once.<sup>213</sup> The English physicist Paul Dirac defined these dynamic systems or

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<sup>209</sup> In 1924 the French aristocrat Louis de Broglie published his PhD thesis at the University of Paris about what he observed as the wave nature of particles.

<sup>210</sup> The Schrödinger equation is a differential equation that describes a quantum mechanical system as a three-dimensional wavefunction. Waves in physics are disturbances traveling from one location to another. The wavefunction relates to the probability distribution of a particle.

$$i\hbar \frac{\partial}{\partial t} |\Psi(t)\rangle = \hat{H} |\Psi(t)\rangle$$

<sup>211</sup> The double-slit experiment was first performed by British physicist Thomas Young in 1801. The experiment projects beams of light through a plate that has two lateral slits. The test records the interference or diffraction pattern marked on the receiving plate on the other side.

<sup>212</sup> Like water waves, Schrödinger's wavefunctions can be added together, one superimposed on the other and the result is a composite of the two. That is until the moment of measurement. A superposition is not the same as the mixing of two discrete particles as it leaves a different discernible trace.

<sup>213</sup> In Schrödinger's famous thought experiment the cat was potentially both alive and dead at the same time.

states as indeterminate and dynamic variables.<sup>214</sup> The amplitudes of particle wavefunctions form interference patterns but, while particles could be shown to behave like ‘disturbances’ in the same way that waves can, Schrödinger found that as soon as he measured the position of the particle, the wavefunction appeared to collapse.<sup>215</sup> This is known as the wave-particle duality complex.

Different to the double-slit experiment, the Stern-Gerlach<sup>216</sup> apparatus was devised to observe quantum phenomena in a quantum mechanical (as opposed to classical) way. The apparatus magnetized heated silver atoms<sup>217</sup> and directed them through a slit or a grid. As the atoms enter the apparatus with a random spin direction<sup>218</sup> the classical expectation would be for the resulting interference pattern to be spread out evenly. However, what emerged was that the particles displayed only one of two spin directions. That is either up or down. Further complex expansions and iterations of this experiment were calibrated to accurately measure the attributes of a particle that could successfully predict the direction of spin of the particle up to a certain probability. While it is not possible here to fully describe the complex aspects of this experiment, it is important to note its impact on an understanding of the probability distribution of particles and effect on mapping the particle.<sup>219</sup>

Heisenberg’s uncertainty principle stated that we cannot know the position and the momentum of the particle at the same time because of the significant difference in the scale and velocity between the particle and the wave, that causes one measurement to be displaced by the other. It was not uncertain because of inaccuracy of the measuring

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<sup>214</sup> Dirac introduced new notation for vectors that can be added together and denotes vectors as state of a system in quantum mechanics. Paul Dirac, *The Principles of Quantum Mechanics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press (1929) 1958), p.10-18.

<sup>215</sup> The wavefunction doesn’t actually collapse, rather the manner in which the measurement is performed caused the knowledge to become determined.

<sup>216</sup> The Stern-Gerlach apparatus was designed by German physicists Otto Stern and Walther Gerlach in 1921-22 at the university of Frankfurt. It was the first real-time device designed to test the quantisation of the atom and realise physical experiments that had previously only been theoretical.

<sup>217</sup> Silver is heated and the individual particles that come off the surface are directed through a single slit, thus creating individual silver atoms.

<sup>218</sup> In the classical example a ball travelling through the air spins in random directions depending on a range of forces.

<sup>219</sup> There are many applications of the spin of an electron, from fridge magnets which operate using the magnetized spin of an electron to examples of complex quantum computing.

apparatus but because detecting one modifies the features of the other in such a way as to render it undetectable. Heisenberg thought the 'uncertainty' in the location of the particle was because the three variables (space, time, matter) could not be simultaneously knowable but for Bohr it was because they do not have simultaneously determinant values. In Bohr's indeterminant hypothesis the values are not predetermined or discrete and in this way are not simultaneously knowable.

Schrödinger published an article in 1935 coining the term *Entanglement* to describe the entangled states of particles at a distance. Einstein rejected this notion of entanglement and concluded that Schrödinger's theory was incomplete. Einstein's attempt to counter Schrödinger's unstable differential equation and Bohr's indeterminant solution, came in the form of the Einstein Podolsky Rosen Paradox.<sup>220</sup> The EPR paradox, proposed that the only solution to this uncertainty was either that there was an instantaneous communication between correlated pairs of electrons or alternatively that quantum mechanics was incomplete and required a pre-existing communication between the two particles, called hidden variables. As the notion of instantaneous communication was inconsistent with Einstein's theory of special relativity and violated locality<sup>221</sup>, the Einstein group concluded that quantum mechanics could only be incomplete and needed hidden variables to restore the question of locality and causation.

In his 1964 paper titled '*On the Einstein Podolsky Rosen Paradox*'<sup>222</sup>, Northern Irish physicist John Bell put into question the argument that quantum mechanics was not a complete theory and should be supplemented by hidden variables. Bell in his paper, set out to test mathematically the EPR paradox's assumption that locality required measurements of a system to be understood as unrelated or discrete from other systems and prove that no 'hidden variables' are required to coordinate any connection between systems. Instead, Bell proved that by measuring the spin of any given correlated particle

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<sup>220</sup> Albert Einstein, Boris Podolsky and Nathan Rose published a paper in 1935 (in a journal called *The Physical Review*), that sought to test the rigour of Schrodinger's Equation and the increasingly popular *Copenhagen Interpretation* put forward by Bohr and Heisenberg.

<sup>221</sup> Einstein put forward the theory of 'Special relativity' in 1905, a proof of the constancy of speed and light traveling in a vacuum. That is, in all equal systems, from all vantage points, the speed of light or the speed that light travels is the same. This means that any mass traveling through space cannot travel faster than the speed of light because all physical systems share the same conditions. See reference to the *Annus Mirabilis Papers* (1905).

<sup>222</sup> *Physics* Vol. 1, No. 3. (USA: Physics Publishing Co.1964), p.195-200.

pair (entangled pair), one can learn things about the second particle by measuring the first. No hidden variables are necessary to find things out.

Bell concluded that,

In a theory in which parameters are added to quantum mechanics to determine the results of individual measurements, without changing the statistic goal predictions, there must be a mechanism whereby the setting of one measuring device can influence the reading of another instrument, however remote.<sup>223</sup>

Further, he stated that these predictions of quantum mechanics are not predetermined, as to admits such would be incompatible with the conditions locality within special relativity.<sup>224</sup> That is to say, Bell proved mathematically that the particle pair must in fact be one system of entangled states in order to comply with the conditions of quantum mechanics and this is not to contradict classical laws of physics but by extension to prove a completely new set of laws i.e. quantum mechanics itself. *Bell's Inequality* did this by mapping out mathematically all the possible hidden variables and proving that they are statistically incompatible with the prediction of a predetermined result. Bell's very concise paper provided a mathematical proof of the entangled state of systems that undermined the idea of a determinate locality of Einstein's 'hidden variable' solution in the measurement of systems that are in-fact continuous, indeterminate non-localities. The impact of Bell's paper was to challenge the materialism of the individual and open the way for a new materialism in which we are continuous with each other.<sup>225</sup>

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<sup>223</sup> Bell, 1964, p.199.

<sup>224</sup> In a relativistic physics, *Lorenzo* force or symmetry is an equivalence of observation due to special relativity i.e., application of special relativity, that is nothing can travel faster than the speed of light.

<sup>225</sup> In 2022 Austrian physicist Anton Zeilinger was one of the recipients of the Nobel prize for physics for his work on the teleportation of quantum information. Teleportation in quantum computing systems is a means to teleport (communicate) information from the output of one quantum computer to the input of another, physical proof of Bell's theory. <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ct2uWbl2vF8> > (accessed 04/02/2023).



## **An Agential Realism as Ontology of Motion**

In a contemporary context, I encounter the work of Karen Barad, *'Meeting the Universe Halfway'*<sup>226</sup> as an interpretation of a dynamic limit between quantum states within an ethical framework for change.<sup>227</sup> Barad's *'Agential Realist'* account of the practical applications of quantum entanglement, re-interprets and extends Niels Bohr's indeterminate ontology of motion, as a mode of complementarity in which all phenomena are active forces and not mutually exclusive entities. Barad intentionally moved away from a metaphysics of individualism, towards a performative process of 'intra-action' with phenomena.<sup>228</sup> It is important to recognise Barad's reading of quantum entanglements as belonging to a discussion within the humanities. From an outspoken queer perspective, Barad advocates the use of an *Agential Realism* as a comprehensive framework that is applicable to our lived experiences.<sup>229</sup>

The subject within Barad's *Agential Realist* approach is not isolated from the thought experiment but instead is an active agent with power to influence outcomes. A force among the flow of concurrent complimentary phenomena. In this way the individual is not the result of their environment, but instead is an active agent within dynamic relations.<sup>230</sup>

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<sup>226</sup> Barad, 2007.

<sup>227</sup> In the process of research at the Royal College of Art, School of Arts and Humanities, I have worked in part with a research cluster led by Professor Johnny Golding under the heading *Entanglement*. In this context I have come across many texts and links concerning post-humanism and quantum philosophy that have informed my understanding of applications of Quantum Physics to contemporary questions of arts and humanities.

<sup>228</sup> It is important to note that Particle Physicist, Karen Barad's interpretation of Quantum Entanglements is one of many current interpretations of Quantum Phenomenon and their applications in the real world. Barad's approach is most immediately relevant to the specific cultural application of an ontology of motion shifting from a classical to a quantum focus. Other examples include looped quantum gravity fields, many worlds theory and other approaches such as one published by Carlo Rovelli in 2021 which draws conclusions from Heisenberg's uncertainty principle to inform a 'Relational' interpretation of Quantum entanglements.

<sup>229</sup> Barad references Leela Fernandes's book *Producing Workers* (1999) as an example in which power relations are not only produced through the conditions of capitalism but are manifest 'through the politics of gender, community, and class and daily contests over the relations of power by those very subjects...' In this process, they do not merely use pre-existing 'gendered ideologies but also actively manufacture gender through the creation of particular notions of masculinity and femininity.' Barad applies an intra-active approach to contemporary problems.

Barad, 2007, p.237-238.

<sup>230</sup> This bears some similarity to Althusser's assertion (Chapter one) that the proletariat is not the product of capitalist society but emerges as a condition of its encounter with governing forces.

Barad adopts Donna Haraway's interpretation of optical phenomena of observation as a *diffractive* methodology born of difference as opposed to a metaphor of reflection, '[...] a diffraction pattern does not map where differences appear, but rather maps where the effects of difference appear[...]'<sup>231</sup> A diffractive methodology in Barad's account becomes a means to synthesize the social and the natural worlds together as a method to analyse information between and through a range of subjects, disciplines and systems. Insights from one system can influence other distinct systems, such as mapping insights from the social sciences, political systems or the arts.

Diffraction in Barad's adaption of Haraway's methodology allows difference to be asserted as an integral part of the model of understanding and analysis. It is a metric opposite to traditional scientific modes of using sameness as the system of measurement and knowledge. It is also a system that has the capacity to embrace the complex nature of phenomena in the contemporary world and gain agency as a part of the unfolding process of articulating that complexity. Insights from the microscopic world of particle physics extend to a macroscopic world view of complex political, sensory and thought phenomena. Barad's process of making connections across difference opens the possibility for a wider view of the effects of research as an integral part of the process.<sup>232</sup>

Barad is careful then to mark the difference between Bohr's principle of 'indeterminacy' and Heisenberg's principle of 'uncertainty' that changed our understanding of Bohr's influence on the *Copenhagen interpretation* and the general uptake of the uncertainty principle as the primary means to understand quantum mechanics in the contemporary. For Barad, Heisenberg's uncertainty stemmed from the fact that one can only truly know oneself at the moment of encounter with the other.<sup>233</sup> It was not Bohr's response to the question of uncertainty that caused Heisenberg to recognise a need to matriculate a limit

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<sup>231</sup> Barad, 2007, p.72.

<sup>232</sup> Barad, 2007, p.72.

<sup>233</sup> Barad, 2007, p.7- 12. Barad quotes directly from Michael Frayn's 1998 play *Copenhagen*, which presents Werner Heisenberg, Niels Bohr and Margrethe Bohr on the evening of 4 June 1941 in Bohr's home in Copenhagen. In Frayn's play the three speak their minds, literally they speak their thoughts out loud as external dialogues. For Barad 'Heisenberg can glimpse his intentions, but only through the horror Bohr's face reflects as he gazes back at Heisenberg.' (Barad 2007, p.12) It is Bohr who eventually works on an atomic bomb in the US after he escaped the Nazis in 1943. Bohr and Wheeler who discover Nuclear Fission in 1939.

of all possible parameters, but that at the encounter with *other*, Heisenberg became aware of himself as an agent within the process of measurement.

In this sense, the individual is not an entity that is entirely independent but is formed in a dynamic relationship to other. Not that one can equate the microscopic *other* of physics with the *other* of macroscopic human relations, but that the sudden awareness of other inspired Heisenberg to shift his gaze from the destination (measurement) to the potential energy or agency (light) emitted in mid flow. The difference between the uncertainty in the moment of measurement, articulated as the perceived collapse of the wavefunction, and the need to take the whole experimental arrangement into account where the apparatus was impossibly entangled with the phenomena themselves, gave Barad an opening to propose a new definition of the limit as continuous with an indeterminate other.

Further defining the idea of agency, Barad replaces the pre-fix 'inter' (meaning mixing discrete objects) with 'intra' as an articulation of observable phenomena. Put in another way, phenomena that are intra-active can be said to fulfill the definition for the entanglement of entanglements as '[...] phenomena are the ontological inseparability of agentially intra-acting components.'<sup>234</sup>

In Barad's *Agential Realist* concept, there is a shift from an object-oriented ontology to a decentered posthumanist ontology as a shared agency among phenomena. Intra-actions that arise from encounters between observer and observed, phenomena, are described as 'ontological entanglements.' Barad advocates a shift from thought experiments articulated by Michel Foucault's switch from linguistic representation to that of *discursive practices* as those which place an emphasis on active engagement or dynamic material processes towards (re)definitions of power relations.

In this sense to oppose an idea of phenomena that emerge not as an effect of representational politics but systems that produce those they come to represent.<sup>235</sup> Barad draws on Judith Butler's theory of performativity in terms of social and political agency and identity formation, where subjects 'perform' a gender in variance with their sexed bodies. Barad sees the limit to Butler's theory as its exclusive focus on bodies and consistent with

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<sup>234</sup> Barad, 2007, p.33.

<sup>235</sup> Barad, 2007, p.47.

a diffractive methodology, applies Butler's idea to nonhuman bodies as a posthuman performativity.

Barad separates discursive practices from a linguistic framework of meaning making that assumes meaning to be the property of words.<sup>236</sup> According to an *Agential Realist* approach meaning is a process of intra-action that is 'an ongoing performance of the world in its differential intelligibility.'<sup>237</sup> A dynamic and responsive system in which humans do not exist prior to physical reality but are themselves 'natural phenomena'.<sup>238</sup>

The concept of an '*agential cut*' is Barad's solution to the problem of perceived collapse of the wavefunction on measurement in any quantum system. While reading a Bohrian ontology as an indeterminant ontology that rejects Einstein's determinism or determinant individualism and Heisenberg's uncertainty, the deterministic inseparability of entangled phenomena in Barad's hypothesis is extended by introducing the notion of an edit, or 'cut' within the continuous current of unfolding intra-actions.<sup>239</sup>

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<sup>236</sup> It is important to mention that there are parallels between Barad's description of intra-action as a discursive practice and *Structural Linguistics* as a theory of intra-action between linguistic units that form meaning. In 1916 Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure first published 'Course in General Linguistics' that introduced the idea of language as a system of interconnected linguistic units whose meaning are defined in relation to each other. This theory was furthered in the 20th century by both Jacques Lacan in the fundamental notion of the sliding of the signified under the signifier under the pressure of unconscious processes, and in Jacques Derrida's concept of *différance*, a neologism that contains both 'deferral' and 'difference'. Each word takes its meaning in difference from other words and so its meaning is never fully present but endlessly deferred.

<sup>237</sup> Barad, 2007, p.335.

<sup>238</sup> Barad, 2007, p.336.

<sup>239</sup> Barad's theory of an agential cut seems to be consistent with Lucretius' concept of folding (chapter two). In conflux folds as the ability for multiple material flows to fold and create junctions that weave together or as flows that fold back on themselves, creating nexus or discrete loops of smaller or larger folds. The fold in Lucretius' ontology of motion is the continuous motion of corporeal flows in a repeated process of folding.

In this moment of the cut, although nothing is permanently excluded, contingent relational limits articulate new emerging phenomena. Observation in Barad's scheme is an active element of phenomena where the 'agential cut' forms a contingent and dynamic limit put to work to reconceptualize our understanding of subjectivity and the nature of being in the universe as a process of reflection-in-action. Although it is significant to note that for Barad, '[...] The agential cut does not disentangle the phenomena into independent subsystems. [...] What the agential cut does provide is a contingent resolution of the ontological inseparability [...]'<sup>240</sup>

An *Agential Realist* system shifts our understanding of causality by a process of intra-action of phenomena at the boundaries of each other to enact an 'agential cut' in which phenomena become meaningful in direct proximity to each other, as a 'relate-within-phenomena'. Communication between phenomena do not come before relations, Foucault's 'words and things' as apparatus in Barad's scheme are not separate instruments but instead dynamic discursive practices through which concepts are communicated.<sup>241</sup>

Barad defines 'discourse' as 'that which constrains and enables what can be said' drawing on Foucault's definition of the apparatus or *dispositif*, as part of discursive practices of social control through power relations and the material production of meaning.<sup>242</sup> Barad sees apparatus '[...] as open-ended and dynamic material-discursive practices through which specific "concepts" and "things" are articulated[...]'<sup>243</sup> Not to reduce the outcome of intra-actions to observable reflections but to extend the reading of the phenomena beyond the laboratory and consider the social and philosophical implications of measurements as causal intra-actions and therefore entanglements.

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<sup>240</sup> Barad, 2007, p.348.

<sup>241</sup> Barad, 2007, p.46.

<sup>242</sup> Barad, 2007, p.146.

<sup>243</sup> Barad, 2007, p.334.

For Barad,

Believing something is true doesn't make it true. But phenomena – whether lizards, electrons, or humans – exist only as a result of, and as part of, the world's ongoing intra-activity, its dynamic and contingent differentiation into specific relationalities. “We humans” don't make it so, not by dint of our own will, and not on our own. But through our advances, we participate in bringing forth the world in its specificity, including ourselves. We have to meet the universe halfway, to move toward what may come to be in ways that are accountable for our part in the world's differential becoming. All real living is meeting. And each meeting matters.<sup>244</sup>

In an *Agential Realist* approach, we (humans) are intra-locutors among a diverse array of co-locutors. The application of an *Agential Realist* approach in the context of the condition of women in Irish culture and persistent modes of gender hierarchy, allows me to think of culture not just as a hegemonic system of control in a linear historical trajectory but as a complex intra-active meeting of continuous singularities with the possibility and responsibility to contribute to change.

This approach also allows me to consider the Big alley as a cultural phenomenon and to alter my focus from architectural features as a determinate materialism, to the energy of entangled states as those that have a dynamic relation to each other.

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<sup>244</sup> Barad, 2007, p.353.

## A 'Sense' of Place: The Big Alley as an Entangled State

At the outset of this project I encountered the Irish Outdoor Handball Alley (the Big alley) as representative of Gaelic games and popular culture of a particular period in Ireland. Their architecture was transformed from structures designed to formalise social behaviour into a social and cultural phenomenon. This was due to its adoption and adaption by the Irish people into their lives and their imaginations. In this way Irish people can be said to have inhabited the space of the Big alleys with all the sensory outpourings of heads and hearts and hands.

In a contemporary world of instant communication and constant consumption, the nature of games and gaming has changed beyond recognition. It is easy to forget that at one time transport was slow, communication came for the most part by word of mouth and entertainment was reliant on the imagination. In the process of this research I have travelled to places and sites of the Big Alleys as they are now. What is evident is more complex than the remnants of a fallen architecture, proudly maintained in some places, derelict and forgotten in others. Part of the journey has been to feel the ground under foot and to listen closely to the clues that underpin a dynamic creativity evident in Irish culture indissociable from a strong 'sense' of place.

One of the unique features of the Big alley and its proliferation is the consistency of its topological features across unusual circumstances that can be described as communicating cultural messages at a distance. The building of the Big alleys took place outside the formal institutions of education and administration, without planning permission, using vernacular construction knowledge. The Big alley remained an informal, unroofed structure, which was not subjected to the usual level of official rules and regulations.

It is possible to view the Big alley (both as structure and as cultural gathering place) as an architecture that represents a topological phenomenon that is particular to a time and place. This phenomenon as it has emerged can be thought of as an *entangled state*.<sup>245</sup> In shifting our gaze from the measure of bricks and mortar to the dynamic energy of culture it

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<sup>245</sup> In their entangled state such structures as the Big alleys can be said to be topologically correlated even at a distance.

is possible to re-evaluate an understanding of Irish culture as a dynamic agent of creative cultural activities. In a contemporary context, this small gesture opens the possibility to release Irish culture from a resistant past, still locked in romantic notions of heroism, repeating stereotypes of failed histories of conflict, patriarchy and repression.

In order to define a topology for the Big alleys it is necessary to consider the topological features of the physical structure as homoeomorphic.<sup>246</sup> A significant part of this project has been to encounter and record the Big alleys first hand. As outlined in chapter one, the Big alley is primarily a freestanding, unroofed, stone or concrete structure that has three or four walls.<sup>247</sup> The walls were usually one high gable or back wall, two flanking side walls that taper down in height and additionally sometimes a fourth wall that closed in the structure with a doorway or point of entry. The floor of the alley officially measured 30 ft x 60 ft. Although dimensions were often adapted to available space and scale of the alley. Many of the alley courts were laid with concrete or stone, but some remain as dirt floors.

The topological properties of an object don't change when an object or structure is stretched or distorted. Although the topology of the Big alley meets the criteria for homeomorphism and can be said to be topologically stable, there is one other way in which we might view the Big alleys as connected with each other. If I adapt Karen Barad's diffractive methodology, I can consider the dynamic features of the Big alley as an *entangled state* within the thought of intra-action of the physical structure and the people who play the game, watch the game and the communities that are involved in every aspect of these alleys. An entanglement of entanglements.

The emergence, proliferation, and transformation of the Big alley as material structure and cultural phenomenon are characterised by the *people's* uptake of a sporting game. The *people* here refers to the general population, organised in a traditional sense of vernacular culture, independently of any changing administration or political organization. It was the *people* who played the game of handball and adapted the physical structure of the Big alley for their own use and function. It is through this entangled energy, the physical intensity of the people's bodies, hearts and minds of people, that we can observe the

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<sup>246</sup> Homeomorphism describes a topological space that is continuous with itself, that is a shape or surface that can withstand deformation, without cutting or sticking elements together. A classic example of two shapes that are homoeomorphic are a mug and a donut.

<sup>247</sup> See Fig.2, p.17.



effect of a cultural 'sense' of place in a moment of agential 'cut'. In the event of recognition, the community of people, through their desire, realise a sense of place, no longer as victims but as author-agents of circumstance. In this way the *people* can be understood as dynamic emitters of a cultural energy. It is possible to evoke an Agential Realist framework to better understand the implications of thinking about the Big alleys as *an entangled state*;

Questions of size and shape (geometrical concerns) must be supplemented by, and reevaluated in terms of, questions of boundary, connectivity, interiority and exteriority (topological concerns).<sup>248</sup>

The Big alleys as structures of containment draw windows onto the sky. Like an inside-out-church, the Big alley contains to set free. Not that the structure spread across the country, repeated from one community to the next, but that the game, its structures and its players proliferated in an open-ended process of intra-action. Local cultures informed and spread by a dynamic, generative and causal relationship to each other. Entanglement not of phenomena-as-object but an entanglement as a quantized dynamic state-of-play, of and through the people and their desire to continue.

It is not that the structure of the Big alleys emerged as discrete objects individuated in their architectural singularity. Rather it is through the people's physical and creative investment, to embrace the architecture and the game, that they become manifest as a dynamic flow of action as intra-action. The Irish people in the example of the Big alley can be more distinctly viewed as entangled from locality to locality at a distance through the dynamic relations of the people in a shared 'sense' of agency.

The popularity of the game of handball and the proliferation of Big alleys across the land, allows me to consider Irish people not as victims of a colonial past but as agents of change exposed to extreme conditions. That is, to view Irish culture as a sophisticated and poetic culture that emerged despite political and religious patriarchies not because of them. It is not to say that one can retroactively change histories, but one can embrace a wider and multiple understanding of how histories have unfolded and continue to unfold. To shift our perspective from that of resistance is to escape narratives of colonial pasts and not to fall into the trap of nationalist heroism.

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<sup>248</sup> Barad, 2007, p.244.

The Big alley I encounter in the landscape, bears traces, visible and invisible, of its introduction as a structure of containment. It is part of the growth of a different poetic response to occupation by a colonial force that has allowed me to re-evaluate my understanding of Irish social customs, games and behaviour. By looking at the Big alley not only as a cultural entity but as a dynamic phenomenon, through the lens of Barad's conception of an Agential Realist approach, the emergence of the game of handball can be seen not as a discrete move to distinguish an individualism or free will but a continuous move towards a collective idea of the self, individuated in the moment of the encounter.

## Voice of Rivers

*Maybe that's why you hold your hodd as if. And people thinks you missed the scaffold.*<sup>249</sup>

Hidden in the last breath of the river is Anna Livia's question to Finnegan, a return to the incident that started the whole episode? She asks him why he carried his stack of bricks<sup>250</sup> so carelessly and if that is what made him lose his footing and fall? People think that you did it deliberately, she warns. There was much speculation as to why Joyce omitted the requisite apostrophe in his title '*Finnegans Wake*'. Referring to the *Wake* or vigil held beside the body of the newly deceased particular to Irish culture, there is some consensus that he wanted *Finnegans* to be read as a plural as well as a singular subject.

In this sense, Tim Finnegan encounters Mr and Mrs Porter of Chaplized and possibly, by extension, all Irish men and women as they wake up to a newly independent Ireland. In such a moment the word *wake* changes its meaning from the *wake* as a gathering after death to an encounter at the edge of consciousness. The *Finnegans*, *wake up*, that is, transition from the dream world to the daylight. The missing apostrophe, this moment of absence, is a moment of encounter.

As the incestuous doubling back onto the originator, James Joyce writes against the flow of binary relations and a staunchly Catholic culture. This is the moment of return from ending to recirculation, '[...] from swerve of shore to bend of bay [...]'.<sup>251</sup> At the opening of Book I, chapter eight I listened in on the conversation of the washerwomen at the River Liffey. Hidden in the undercurrent of chat and gossip, Joyce planted layer upon layer of references to cultural places. Specifically in chapter eight this takes the form of over 535 covert references to rivers of the world.<sup>252</sup> In the work of articulating the voice of women in Irish culture, it has been relevant to focus on one section of '*Finnegans Wake*' as a point of

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<sup>249</sup> Joyce, 1939, p.621 (l.27-29).

<sup>250</sup> A *hodd* is a traditional corner box on a stick, used by builders for stacking and carrying bricks.

<sup>251</sup> Joyce, 1939, p.1 (l.1).

<sup>252</sup> *Finwake.com* website. There are a huge range of resources and guides to the text of *Finnegans Wake* that scholars have had nearly 100 years to pour over. This website gives an interactive guide to the meanings behind the references of Joyce. This includes reference to 535 rivers in Chapter eight, hidden the text.

entry to the poetic narrative of rivers: the voice of Anna Livia<sup>253</sup> Plurabella (ALP) in Book IV begins to flow back on itself as a time of reflection.

As the river flows between the right bank as Shaun and the left bank as Shem, the sound of the water gurgles on its journey to the mouth as it meets the sea. 'O' the first sound of Anna Livia Plurabella, a tidal rhythm, builds like a climatic return as the tide turns to produce the world. Like Molly Bloom in *Ulysses*, ALP is a voice of continuity, but it is not until the monologue that she finds her true voice. It is she who gets the last word. As the 'soft' misty morning creeps in and the old woman river slips away, out into the wide mouth of Dublin bay. To meet her *fatherhusbandson*.

Passing through the city for this final journey, the reader accompanies ALP, encountering together all her childhood memories one last time. We are reminded of all the nursery rhymes long past, the leaves of pages turning, lisp rasping. She calls to her husband hero (HCE), to rise up, he has slept long enough, but it is with a sadness he will and she remembers dressing him in all his fine detail. 'With a taste of roly polony from Blugpuddels after. To bring out the tang of the tay.' (p.621, l.12-14) She remembers days out together and all the fine times they have had. 'Sft! It is the softest morning that ever I can ever remember me.' (p.621, l.8) This is the river seeping through her aging mind losing its banks, short of breath.

As the river gets weaker, her voice grows breathless. 'The childer are still fast. There is no school today. Them boys is so contrary. Galliver and Gellover.' (p.620, l.11) She remembers her children, her sons at home still tucked up in bed, as different as two can be but both made of their father. 'You were pleased as Punch, recitating war exploits and pearse orations to them jackeen gapers.' (p.620, l.23) And then her thoughts turn to Issy her daughter, who she knows will take over from her. 'If she had only more matcher's wit.' (p.620, l.29)

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<sup>253</sup> The name Anna Livia coming from the river Liffey as it is known, sometimes Anna Liffey, from *Abhainn* the Irish word for river.

She remembers making love with HCE when they were their younger selves. 'I was the pet of everyone then. A princeable girl. And you were the pantymammy's Vulking Corsegoth [...]' (p.626, l.27) she feels him changing. She recalls the wetland and the turf underfoot. 'Only turf, wick dear. Clane turf.' (p.625, l.17) Or is it she who is changing, fading. She feels the cold currents of the fresh water. 'I pity your oldself I was used to. Now a younger's there. Try not to part. Be happy, dear ones! May I be wrong! For she'll be sweet for you as I was sweet when I came down out of me mother.' (p.627, l.6-9) She is slipping away and all her life is passing before her, and on this last page, this last leaf, this soft morning. 'Yes. Carry me along, taddy, like you done through the toy fair [...]' (p.628, l.8)

## Tide Rising

Here I present a sound performance titled *Voice of Rivers*.<sup>254</sup> This work forms an album of five tracks that reflect the five sections of the washerwomen's conversation in Chapter eight of *Finnegans Wake*. It is an articulation of the rivers as the washerwomen scrub their laundry, the water flows and I enter it as intensity. I inhabit the *Voice of Rivers*. As luck would have it the last year of my research coincides with the 100-year anniversary of the first publication of *Ulysses* by Sylvia Beach at Shakespeare and Company in 1922. Trinity College in Dublin held a Symposium to celebrate this milestone and to bring together researchers and academic scholars, actors and artists from around the world who maintain an interest in studying the work of James Joyce. In June 2022 I had the opportunity to make a live performance of my work *Voice of Rivers* at this symposium.

*On the morning of 14<sup>th</sup> June 2022 I made my way into Dublin city to pick up a musician friend of mine who would accompany my performance. We had arranged to meet outside Kilmainham Gaol at 8am. Traffic was heavy. As I turned the corner onto the Inchicore Road, I saw my friend standing on the curb, loaded down with a mountain of sound equipment. Then disaster, my car, that had transported me to all corners of Ireland, now, in this crucial moment, collapsed. I had just enough sway to pull up at the roadside, while the loud screeching noise had already announced my predicament. The clutch reneged control and no manner of foot pedaling could revive what was now completely broken.*

*So close and yet how to get through the center of the city. The panel was not meeting at the Swift theatre, in Trinity college until 9:30. There was still time. We stood at the top of the road beside the high stone wall that surrounds Bully's Acre, the old pauper's graveyard, backing onto the Royal Kilmainham Hospital. Now reflected in the high glass facade of the Hilton Hotel, not too long before we hailed a taxi as it spilled out its tourists.*

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<sup>254</sup> See Appendix 4, p.148: *Voice of Rivers*.

*A brief discussion on the best way to tackle the traffic and the new one-way system that steers occupants along the river Liffey at a crawl. Swinging around the face of Huston station, and over to the other side, past Croppies Memorial Park and Anna Livia Plurabella's final resting place. A pint of stout distracts the crowds at Guinness's chimney stacks, but it is not the time to see the sights. The house of the Dead at Ushers Island remains fallen in a dark gaunt state of repair. The Four Courts, home of Justice and of Appeal, on Inns Quay come before The Civic offices on the southside. They courteously buried the Viking city.*

*Further down the Bachelor's walk people mill over the Ha'penny Bridge, some two hundred years older than the newly titled Millennium Bridge. The pressure is on to pass out all the green bus's clogging up O'Connell's Bridge. We are not going to the docklands; we are aimed bang up to the gates at Trinity College. But that is wishful thinking and a couple of idle Gardai eye up the taxi as we slink around the side to the Nassau Street entrance. A rolling job of emptying out and reloading with more tourists hot off the trail at Trinity's book of Kell's. Our Taxi disappears down the railings towards Merrion Square and we have arrived, a mountain of sound equipment transplanted. Now all that remains is the performance, somehow to find the Voice of Rivers in a time when poetry is tested to the limit. I have gone out to the edge of myself and there I encounter the river as the flow of all things.*

**VOICE OF RIVERS<sup>255</sup>**

**AWAKE**



**SIREN SIREN**



**SURFACE**



**DEEP WATER**



**A ROCK A TREE**



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<sup>255</sup> Scan QR codes to gain access the five sound files of Voice of Rivers. (URL links on p.6).



## **Situating Practice**

## Situating My Art Practice

[...] It is a mistake to think that the painter works on a white surface. [...] But such is not the case. [...] Now everything he has in his head or around him is already in the canvas, more or less virtually, more or less actually, before he begins his work. They are all present in the canvas as so many images, actual or virtual, so that the painter does not have to cover a blank surface, but rather would have to empty it out, clear it, clean it.[...] <sup>256</sup>

As I began working on this research project I was surrounded by other artists' works which intersect with my own interests and aesthetic. I am mindful of past and contemporary works, I reflect only on that which is necessary to express an idea and then to move through a process of clearing that is essential to the elaboration of my own works. This process is not a deliberate strategy but is inherent to the way I work.

In order to situate my practice, I include here reference to visual art works that respond firstly to the Big alleys and then to the condition of women in Irish (and other) culture. There are several artists who have made art works inside the Big alleys. In *Chiasm* (1999), the Irish artist Dorothy Cross, projected footage of an open water sea pool (wormhole) situated on the Aran Islands, onto the floor of the double handball alley at St Enda's school in Galway.

The live performance of *Chiasm* featured two singers (A soprano and a tenor) performing disconnected fragments from several operas that Cross states depicted 'extreme love and extreme loss'. Their movement-was unchoreographed and as they moved on each side of the concrete partition, they might find themselves close to the wall, almost meeting but inescapably separated by the wall. The audience could view this live performance from the viewing platform at the back of the handball alley. Their movements on each side of the concrete partition may be interpreted as representing separation in love or perhaps refer to partition in an Irish political context.

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<sup>256</sup> Deleuze, Giles. *Frances Bacon The Logic of Sense*. trans. by Daniel W. Smith (Continuum, London/ New York 1981), p.86.

*Pace* by Andrew Duggan (2013) is a short video actor Paul Galvin playing handball in an indoor handball alley. It is a work intended for projected outdoors. Galvin's clothes, the traditional shirt and trousers, cite those worn by the players in Jack Butler Yeats 1927 painting, *The Ball Alley*. The opening sequence establishes the player within the structure of the game and the architecture of the handball alley, his body motionless in the frame, further framed by the service lines on the grounds and the wall of the alley. As the activity begins short sequences give way to longer sequences. Jump cuts between extreme close ups, close ups, medium and long shots, coincide with the percussive accents of the soundtrack, emphasizing the dynamism and rhythm of the game.

Here I find a succinct representation of the handball alley as structure for behaviour. In the opening credits *Old Walls* (1945), painted by Yeats in his later years is also mentioned. It is a depiction of the standing figure of an old man with a walking stick, alone in what appears to be a handball alley, his shadow cast on the wall. He is like a ghost visiting a past now emptied of life. He reminds me of my own haunting of these old walls.

*The Handball Alley* by Photographer Kenneth O'Halloran (2014) is photographic survey of Outdoor Handball Alleys. In O'Halloran's approach to the topology of the handball alley one cannot help but be reminded of the architectural photographic work of German artists Hilla and Bernd Becher. O'Halloran's colour photographs show the Big alleys as they are now, un-managed and un-cared for. Some stand out starkly derelict. Others are almost swallowed by vegetation, or framed by vegetation, reminiscent of late 18th and mid 19<sup>th</sup> century paintings of romantic ruins. Some are repurposed as a car park or storage facility. They echo my own experience of the Big alleys as I found them in the landscape.

Also inspired by features of the Irish cultural landscape, the Irish artist Brian O'Doherty began ongoing works informed by Ogham script (c.1971–1990), which comprise elements of drawing, sculpture, installation and performance. O'Doherty's early performance works, a number of which were situated in the Irish landscape, involved large scale grids marked on the ground with white tape and upon which figures moved around and shouted Ogham vowels according to his instructions.

In painting and print works O'Doherty used what he referred to as vowel sequences of Ogham alphabet as dash like inscriptions in bright colours, rotated, in grids or in random sequences of individual letters. These works were also adapted as wall installation reminiscent of the abstract geometry of Dutch painter Piet Mondrian. They were sometimes articulated with cords as drawings that fractured the space of the 'White Cube' while providing framings for the colour panels on the wall.<sup>257</sup> It is O'Doherty's sustained use of the early Ogham alphabet and specifically its inscription on the land in his earlier works, that is of interest to me. Whereas O'Doherty's use of the Ogham script became part of his wider ongoing reflection on the space of the gallery, my own freehand inscriptions of the alphabet in the landscape situate them in the history and place of their origins.

On issues of partition and the role of women, Irish artist and writer Jaki Irvine, developed a multi-screen video and sound installation, titled *If the ground should open* in commemoration of the 1916 Easter Rising in Ireland. This work is based on Irvine's 2013 novel *Days of Surrender* which uses fabricated memories of the forgotten heroines of the 1916 Irish revolution to highlight the contribution of Irish Women to bringing into existence the new Irish Free State.

In this installation work Irvine places video monitors on their black cases on the floor. We hear fragments of vocal narratives, we hear and see women speaking, vocalising, playing musical instruments according to a musical score that is based on an oral score for bagpipes that Irvine drew from. Irvine talks of the lyrical nature and sounds of the women's names written out of the history of the 1916 Rising. Irvine juxtaposes this with text transcriptions of taped conversations of bankers from the 2008 Irish banking crisis. The music and voice scores together build layers of sounds and remembered histories passed on through storytelling. Irvine insists on articulating her own sense of truth in a time when truths are multiple.<sup>258</sup> It is the use of multiple layered narratives as fragments that are interesting to this research.

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<sup>257</sup> Brian O'Doherty, 'Inside the White Cube' in Artforum, 1976.  
<<https://www.artforum.com/print/197603/inside-the-white-cube-notes-on-the-gallery-space-part-i-38508>> *The White Cube* was a concept coined by O'Doherty to deal with the abstraction of art objects inside the 'white cube' of the art gallery.

<sup>258</sup> Irvine, Jaki. *If the ground should open up* (IMMA and Frith Street Gallery London 2016)  
<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iAWhg7Qojno>> (accessed 28/04/2023).

In her 2003 work *Who Will Erase the Traces?*, Guatemalan performance artist Regina Jose Galindo walked from the Court of Constitutionality to the National Palace of Guatemala, intermittently dipping her bare feet into a bowl of blood and leaving a trail of footprints in memory of the victims of armed conflict in Guatemala. She talks of her work as emerging from a fear for her country and people, burdened with social injustice and political oppression as well as natural disasters, and from an inner rage at the government's complacency towards their plight. Her works are inhabited actions that act as calls to action. Although she is working in a different political context Galindo's visceral and poetic actions as a means to highlight cultural atrocities are pertinent to this research for her use of personal and political histories.

Northern Irish artist Willie Doherty, responded to the 1988 (-1994) British Government ban on broadcasting the voices of republicans and loyalists, with a chilling photographic installation titled *Same Difference* (1990). Two slide projectors show the same still image of a woman's face photographed from a TV news broadcast, overlaid with different words: Savage, Romantic, Aggressive, Murderer, Volunteer, Tempestuous, etc. This work demonstrates the function played by language to anchor an image to a particular meaning, here the image of a woman's face which, according to popular constructions, is the more subjective and emotive sex. But more importantly, it calls into question dominant representations of women as victims, whose role in 'the Troubles' was largely confined to advocating for nonviolent protest rather than participating in violence.

In stark contrast British artist Helen Cammock's 2018 film *The Long Note* celebrates the role of women in the civil rights movement in Northern Ireland and particularly in Derry in the 1960s. Drawing on present day interviews and archival footage she re-presents the voices and histories of women often brushed over or lost in the broader dialogues of the troubles.

My work aims to unsettle such assumptions left unchallenged by disavowal, as to women's role in political and cultural life. Irvine, Galindo, Doherty and Cammock's works considered together, offer different reflections on and articulations of a female agency, no longer trapped in gender binarism, but multiple, to which my work aims to contribute.

The voice-based sound performance work, *Voice of Rivers*, developed out of my growing awareness of the *sound* of Joyce's writing in *Finnegans Wake* and my acquaintance with the works by artists, musicians, and composers such as John Cage, Meredith Monk, Pauline Oliveros and Steve Reich. Meredith Monk conceives of her voice as an instrument with which she creates a dynamic range of effects, beyond traditional musical techniques, in what is now called 'extended vocal technique'. Monk's work is at the intersection of art, music and theatre, where she often uses the spoken word in the form of lists.

In 1979 John Cage produced *Roaratorio - an Irish Circus on Finnegans wake*, a realisation of sections of *Finnegans Wake* by means of applying Cage's score '\_\_\_\_,\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ circus on \_\_\_\_', a set of instructions by which to translate any book into a performance. Cage produced the work using several Irish musicians, among them Fiddle player, Paddy Glackin and Uilleann Pipe player, Séamus Ennis. Cage uses his own voice to read sections of *the Wake*. Both Monk's vocalisations and Cage's sensitivity to the indeterminacy of meaning in language, in his use of spoken words, are of particular interest to me in the development of the sound work *Voice of Rivers*.

Another example of work that foregrounds the voice of Irish women is *One Breath* (1993) a recording by artist Alanna O'Kelly, described as a contemporary keening for the dead of North. The track is a 45 second wail, an adaptation of the form of 'keening' often performed during the burial ritual as an expression of grief. Also, in 2014 Breton/ Irish actor Olwen Fouéré, co-produced and featured in a one-woman monologue titled, *Riverrun*. It is an adaptation of the final section of *Finnegans Wake*, given over to the voice of the rivers, that is the voice of Anna Livia Plurabella. Fouéré is inspiring in her ability to perform and inhabit the notoriously difficult text of Joyce's river. It is the intensity of her performance that carries the complexity of Joyce's language and feeds it to the air between us.

## Performance Practice and Works

*Driving through Kildare, in a place called Moone, 200 meters past the Big alley on the left, I came across a small shrine. A stone plaque at the site of the local public phone box that reads 'What happened to her?' This spot is the last known whereabouts of JoJo Dullard, missing since 9<sup>th</sup> November 1995. The 21 year old is known to have phoned a friend late in the evening as she tried to make her way home from a night out in Dublin. She had missed the last direct bus. Her family, and in particular her sister Mary have continuously campaigned for Gardai (the Irish police) to investigate her disappearance. Mary is solely responsible for the setting up of a cold case unit with the Gardai in 2007 to investigate missing persons and in particular the large number of missing women in the area of Leinster in the 1990's. Jo Jo has not been found to this day, nor is there any knowledge of her movements after she made her phone call.*

The origin of my own project is in a series of encounters with places and texts that give its digressive and associative form to both performance works and writings. The photographic series presented in *Volume Two* refers to twelve performance works that took place over five years, realised as a part of an ongoing performance practice. While photography of the performances can offer an audience a way into the work, I consider the realisation of the work to be contingent on a complex weave of local circumstance and physical actions and materials, made live in their moment of doing. However, rather than simply providing a document of past performances, I conceive of these photographic series as works in themselves that can be viewed independently. They are at once representative of the live performance as well as articulating something different, from their conception to their exhibition in galleries and books.

Although I am aware of other artists working in this field, I aim not to internalize references, consciously or unconsciously. Influences or inspirations often come from other discourses and practices beyond the visual arts and are generated by a place, a cultural event, a sound or something that occurs in the moment of the live performance which is physical as well as intellectual. In my experience of performance art practice, 'making', at best, is neither consciously comparative or metaphorical and may be fleeting, obsessive, repetitive, intense, irrational, and sensuously seemingly without ground and even without narrative or logic.

These works, made of actions and ephemeral mark makings, are responses to the stories of women's lives I have encountered through my research. My body becomes their body in defiance. The materials I use – orchids, foam, dust - function as ephemeral inscriptions and fragile presence in the landscape, as well as carriers of myths around death and sexuality. As materials their temporality is different, foam and flour disperse according to local conditions and action of the work. Orchids, on the other hand, which have undergone a long process of drying to preserve them, do not lose their consistency so rapidly, and linger after the performance as fragile, irresolute presences, fixed in the photographs.

The works aim at generating meaningful resonances and dissonances. I conceive of the performance and photographic works as interpretations of the poetic potential of an existing culture shaped by conflict and devotion. As I travel from place to place, I come across traces, vestiges of past histories - the ruined Big alleys, abandoned concrete roadblocks, disused core steel panels, ancient burial mounds. Passage-tomb sites bearing carved ritual markings that are detailed and must have taken considerable time and skill to complete.

The drawings I make with foam take inspiration from these ancient carvings - thus evoking an ancient vernacular - but unlike them are realised in a gentle, unbroken, silent gesture and will rapidly disappear. In some cases, the sited drawings last only as long as the physical residue of materials is rubbed out by the scouring agent of wind and rain. My aim is to take nothing away, these are drawings and actions made live. Holding close that which may be lost to us.

In the live performance works, as I activate the materials, orchids, foam, dust, new paths open at the confluence of multiple contingent forces and sensuous flows. Matter in the process becoming immaterial. A key text that has informed my understanding of the artist body in performance art is Peggy Phelan's *Unmarked: the politics of performance*.<sup>259</sup> Phelan says of the body in performance that it is metonymic<sup>260</sup> rather than metaphoric.

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<sup>259</sup> I have written more extensively about the artist in the context of the body in pain and performance art for my MA dissertation at the RCA in 2015. This thesis is available on request from the RCA library. Title: *Pain in the Fold: Tracing and Emergence of Dark Harmonies*.

<sup>260</sup> Metonymy, the substitution of an attribute to mean the thing. Phelan 1993, pg. 150 "The Kettle is boiling" is a sentence which assumes that water is contiguous with the kettle'.



While the metaphoric works by negating difference, turning two into one, metonymy works by displacement. Phelan shifts the focus from what she calls the grammar of words to the grammar of the body, not that the artist in performance chooses to make the body a metaphor for the absent object turning one into the other but the artist in the metonymic sense disappears and the body of the artist becomes contiguous with the attribute itself, its aim not to reproduce but to discover.<sup>261</sup>

Extending my understanding of my performance practice from a metonymy of the body to an entanglement theory, like the shift from binary modes to dynamic encounters, encapsulates an alternative way of seeing. A becoming intense that is beyond the measure of similitude. The works, as they progress, come to constitute a complex response to the politics of place and memories held within the histories of partition and informed by the stories of singular women. In these works, I also use words to sign and seal landscapes of loss. These sites are not memorials to past events. They are forgotten, decaying sites, that function as reminders of all that is beyond repair. If, in the moment of the performance, a dormant or forgotten history is invoked, it is never to erect a monument to it, but to release it again into the past. I dwell not on that which is preserved but on that which has disappeared attentive to the affect that results from that disappearance.

In the process I have made ephemeral interventions both on the wall and on the floor that draw on a multiplicity of art historical points of reference and yet seek to emulate none. I have referred to specific stories of women that I have encountered as I travel and in the histories that I have read. I have used references to the poetics of language and the marks of Ogham script.

I have chosen sites that sometimes bear traces of significant events or are poignant for the layers of cultural decay that are clearly visible. The use of burned-out cars and stone barriers as a canvas for drawings inspired by kerbstones are a statement that puts into question issues of political and environmental decay and yet maintains an ambiguity consistent with an indeterminate continuity of all things. These are not heroic objects but instead fleeting images.

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<sup>261</sup> Phelan, 1993, p.150.

To reiterate, in the performance works I activate the materials in the live action beyond that which is metaphoric. Orchids become a memory trace; they will retain their form for a long while before they decompose. Foam is in constant motion, expanding until a moment of collapse. Dust in its airborne state becomes pervasive. In the moment of the performance with my body as witness to the inside of the work, I become intense. In these works my body and my thought are responsive to all the complex elements convened. The physical as well as the cultural landscape are the site of these works where my body inside the live performance becomes an instrument activating the work, not a discrete move but a shift towards that which is continuous.

If we are to step outside a resistant culture shaped by features of conflict and devotion, in order to generate meaningful progress, we must turn our attention to face the limit. In the game of handball all sides face the same direction, mixing and interacting in a dynamic process at the limit. A dynamic limit. *Up Against the Wall*; It is not that we control the outcome but that we are part of an unfolding process.

One of the key works of this research is 'Voice of Rivers'. This work inhabits the voice of Anna Livia Plurabella in *Finnegans Wake* as an articulation of rivers of the world in chapter eight of *the Wake*. This outcome is a poetic response to the persistent modes of gender hierarchy in the history of Irish independence and to the verbose sexuality and indeed agency evident in Joyce's 'writing Irish women'. As artist, as researcher, as thinker, I try to maintain a poetic barometer. I am moved by actions. Complex. Consequent. Multi-layered. Actions. Entering into the flow of all things as a dynamic encounter. I cannot fathom where I end and you begin. I encounter the boundary. The edge. The limit. Ever shifting



**Bernadette Devlin**  
**Maiden Speech to the House of Commons 22/04/1969**

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<sup>262</sup> Transcript from *Hansard*, British House of Commons transcriptions

4.37 p.m.

Miss Bernadette Devlin (Mid-Ulster)

I understand that in making my maiden speech on the day of my arrival in Parliament and in making it on a controversial issue I flaunt the unwritten traditions of the House, but I think that the situation of my people merits the flaunting of such traditions.

I remind the hon. Member for Londonderry (Mr. Chichester-Clark) that I, too, was in the Bogside area on the night that he was there. As the hon. Gentleman rightly said, there never was born an Englishman who understands the Irish people. Thus a man who is alien to the ordinary working Irish people cannot understand them, and I therefore respectfully suggest that the hon. Gentleman has no understanding of my people, because Catholics and Protestants are the ordinary people, the oppressed people from whom I come and whom I represent. I stand here as the youngest woman in Parliament, in the same tradition as the first woman ever to be elected to this Parliament, Constance Markievicz, who was elected on behalf of the Irish people.

This debate comes much too late for the people of Ireland, since it concerns itself particularly with the action in Derry last weekend. I will do my best to dwell on the action in Derry last weekend. However, it is impossible to consider the activity of one weekend in a city such as Derry without considering the reasons why these things happen.

The hon. Member for Londonderry said that he stood in Bogside. I wonder whether he could name the streets through which he walked in the Bogside so that we might establish just how well acquainted he became with the area. I had never hoped to see the day when I might agree with someone who represents the bigoted and sectarian Unionist Party, which uses a deliberate policy of dividing the people in order to keep the ruling minority in power and to keep the oppressed people of Ulster oppressed. I never thought that I should see the day when I should agree with any phrase uttered by the representative of such a party, but the hon. Gentleman summed up the situation "to a t". He referred to stark, human misery. That is what I saw in Bogside. It has not been there just for one night. It has been there for 50 years—and that same stark human misery is to be found in the Protestant Fountain area, which the hon. Gentleman would claim to represent.

These are the people the hon. Gentleman would claim do want to join society. Because they are equally poverty-stricken they are equally excluded from the society which the Unionist Party represents—the society of landlords who, by ancient charter of Charles II, still hold the rights of the ordinary people of Northern Ireland over such things as fishing and as paying the most ridiculous and exorbitant rents, although families have lived for generations on their land. But this is the ruling minority of landlords who, for generations, have claimed to represent one section of the people and, in order to maintain their claim, divide the people into two sections and stand up in this House and say that there are those who do not wish to join the society.

The people in my country who do not wish to join the society which is represented by the hon. Member for Londonderry are by far the majority. There is no place in society for us, the ordinary "peasants" of Northern Ireland. There is no place for us in the society of landlords because we are the "have-nots" and they are the "haves".

We came to the situation in Derry when the people had had enough. Since 5th October, it has been the unashamed and deliberate policy of the Unionist Government to try to force an image on the civil rights movement that it was nothing more than a Catholic uprising. The people in the movement have struggled desperately to overcome that image, but it is impossible when the ruling minority are the Government and control not only political matters but the so-called impartial forces of law and order. It is impossible then for us to state quite fairly where we stand.

How can we say that we are a nonsectarian movement and are for the rights of both Catholics and Protestants when, clearly, we are beaten into the Catholic areas? Never have we been beaten into the Protestant areas. When the students marched from Belfast to Derry, there was a predominant number of Protestants. The number of non-Catholics was greater than the number of Catholics. Nevertheless, we were still beaten into the Catholic area because it was in the interests of the minority and the Unionist Party to establish that we were nothing more than a Catholic uprising—just as it is in the interest of the hon. Member for Londonderry to come up with all this tripe about the I.R.A.

I assure the hon. Member that his was quite an interesting interpretation of the facts, but I should like to put an equally interesting interpretation. There is a fine gentleman known among ordinary Irish people as the Squire of Ahoghill. He happens to be the Prime Minister, Captain Terence O'Neill. He is the "white liberal" of Northern Ireland. He is the man who went on television and said to his people, "There are a lot of nasty people going around and if you are not careful you will all end up in the I.R.A. What kind of Ulster do you want? Come with me and I will give you an Ulster you can be proud to live in".

Captain O'Neill listed a number of reforms which came nowhere near satisfying the needs of the people. Had he even had the courage of his convictions—had he even convictions—to carry out the so-called reforms he promised, we might have got somewhere. But none of his so-called reforms was carried out. He suggested a points system for the allocation of houses until such time that the Tory Party could see its way to introducing a crash housing programme. He suggested that a points system should be introduced, but he did nothing to force the majority of Unionist-controlled councils to introduce it. He thought that his suggestion would be quite sufficient to make everyone doff their caps, touch their forelocks and say, "Yes, Captain O'Neill. We will introduce it." But the local councils of Northern Ireland do not work like that.

We come to the question of what can be done about incidents like that in Derry at the weekend. Captain O'Neill has thought of a bright idea—that tomorrow we shall be given one man, one vote. Does he think that, from 5th October until today, events have not driven it into the minds of the people that there are two ideals which are incompatible—the ideal of social justice and the ideal and existence of the Unionist Party? Both cannot exist in the same society. This has been proved time and again throughout Northern Ireland by the actions of the Unionist Party.

In the General Election, Captain O'Neill had the big idea of dividing and conquering. Captain O'Neill, the "liberal" Unionist, said, "Do not vote for Protestant Unionists because they are nasty Fascist people". When the election was over, he had no qualms about taking the number of so-called "Fascist" Unionist votes and the "liberal" Unionist votes together, adding them up and saying, "Look how many people voted Unionist".

We, the people of Ulster, are no longer to be fooled, because there are always those of us who can see no difference between the Paisleyite faction and the O'Neill faction, except that the unfortunate Paisleyite faction do not have hyphenated surnames. So we are faced with the situation that Captain O'Neill may, in the morning, say, "You now have one man, one vote". What will it mean to the people? Why do the people ask for one man, one vote, with each vote of equal value to the next?

The Unionist policy has always been to divide the people who are dependent upon them. The question of voting is tied up mainly with the question of housing, and this is something which the House has failed to understand. The people of Northern Ireland want votes not for the sake of voting but for the sake of being able to exercise democratic rights over the controlling powers of their own areas. The present system operates in such a way that Unionist-controlled councils and even Nationalist-controlled councils discriminate against those in their areas who are in the minority. The policy of segregated housing is to be clearly seen in the smallest villages of Ulster. The people of Ulster want the right to vote and for each vote to be of equal value so that, when it comes to the question of building more houses, we do not have the situation which we already have in Derry and in Dungannon.

In Dungannon, the Catholic ward already has too many houses in it. There is no room to build any more in that ward. It would appear logical that houses should be built, therefore, in what is traditionally known as the Protestant ward or, euphemistically, the "Nationalist" or "Unionist" ward, where there is space. But this would give rise to the nasty situation of building new houses in the Unionist or Protestant ward and thus letting in a lot of Fenians who might outvote the others.

I wish to make it clear that in an area such as Omagh the same corruption is carried on because Protestants need houses and the only place for them is in a Catholic area. The one point that these two forms of activity have in common is that whether they are green or orange, both are Tory. The people of Northern Ireland have been forced into this situation.

I was in the Bogside on the same evening as the hon. Member for Londonderry. I assure you, Mr. Speaker—and I make no apology for the fact—that I was not strutting around with my hands behind my back examining the area and saying "tut-tut" every time a policeman had his head scratched. I was going around building barricades because I knew that it was not safe for the police to come in.

I saw with my own eyes 1,000 policemen come in military formation into an oppressed, and socially and economically depressed area—in formation of six abreast, joining up to form 12 abreast like wild Indians, screaming their heads off to terrorise the inhabitants of that area so that they could beat them off the streets and into their houses.

I also accept that policemen are human and that if someone throws a stone at a man and injures him, whether he be in uniform or out of uniform, if he is human he is likely to lift another stone and, either in self-defence or in sheer anger, to hurl it back. Therefore when people on either side lose control, this kind of fighting breaks out.

An unfortunate policeman with whom I came into contact did not know who was in charge in a particular area. I wanted to get children out of the area and I asked the policeman who was in charge. He said, "I don't know who is running this lot." I well understand this kind of situation at individual level, but when a police force are acting under orders—presumably from the top, and the top invariably is the Unionist Party—and form themselves into military formation with the deliberate intention of terrorising the inhabitants of an area, I can have no sympathy for them as a body. So I organised the civilians in that area to make sure that they wasted not one solitary stone in anger. [Laughter.]

Hon. Members may find this amusing and in the comfortable surroundings of this honourable House it may seem amusing, but at two o'clock in the morning on the Bogside there was something horrifying about the fact that someone such as I, who believes in non-violence, had to settle for the least violent method, which was to build barricades and to say to the police, "We can threaten you."

The hon. Member for Londonderry said that the situation has got out of hand under the "so-called civil rights people". The one thing which saved Derry from possibly going up in flames was the fact that they had John Hume, Member of Parliament for Foyle, Eamonn McCann, and Ivan Cooper, Member of Parliament for Mid-Derry, there. They went to the Bogside and said, "Fair enough; the police have occupied your area, not in the interests of law and order but for revenge, not by the police themselves but because the Unionist Party have lost a few square yards of Derry and people have put up a sign on the wall saying 'Free Derry'". The Unionist Party was wounded because nothing can be morally or spiritually free under a Unionist Government. They were determined that there should be no second Free Derry. That is why the police invaded that area. The people had the confidence of those living in that area to cause a mass evacuation and to leave it to the police alone, and then to say, "We are marching back in and you have two hours to get out". The police got out.

The situation with which we are faced in Northern Ireland is one in which I feel I can no longer say to the people "Don't worry about it. Westminster is looking after you". Westminster cannot condone the existence of this situation. It has on its benches Members of that party who by deliberate policy keep down the ordinary people. The fact that I sit on the Labour benches and am likely to make myself unpopular with everyone on these benches—[HON. MEMBERS: "No."] Any Socialist Government worth its guts would have got rid of them long ago.

There is no denying that the problem and the reason for this situation in Northern Ireland is social and economic, because the people of Northern Ireland are being oppressed not only by a Tory Government, a misruling Tory Government and an absolutely corrupt, bigoted and self-interested Tory Government, but by a Tory Government of whom even the Tories in this House ought to be ashamed and from which they should dissociate themselves.

Therefore I ask that in the interests of the ordinary people there should be no tinkering with the kind of capitalist methods used by both the Northern Ireland Unionist Party and Mr. Jack Lynch's Fianna Fail Party. It was with no amusement but with a great deal of horror that I heard the somewhat peculiar statement by the right hon. Member for Belper (Mr. George Brown) about an O'Neill-Lynch United Party. This brings home to me that hon. Members of this House do not understand what is going on. Of all the possible solutions of our problem the least popular would be an agreement between the two arch-Tories of Ireland.



I should like in conclusion to take a brief look at the future. This is where the question of British troops arises. The question before this House, in view of the apathy, neglect and lack of understanding which this House has shown to these people in Ulster which it claims to represent, is how in the shortest space it can make up for 50 years of neglect, apathy and lack of understanding. Short of producing miracles such as factories overnight in Derry and homes overnight in practically every area in the North of Ireland, what can we do? If British troops are sent in I should not like to be either the mother or sister of an unfortunate soldier stationed there. The hon. Member for Antrim, North (Mr. Henry Clark) may talk till Domesday about "Our boys in khaki", but it has to be recognised that the one point in common among Ulstermen is that they are not very fond of Englishmen who tell them what to do.

Possibly the most extreme solution, since there can be no justice while there is a Unionist Party, because while there is a Unionist Party they will by their gerrymandering control Northern Ireland and be the Government of Northern Ireland, is to consider the possibility of abolishing Stormont and ruling from Westminster. Then we should have the ironical situation in which the people who once shouted "Home rule is Rome rule" were screaming their heads off for home rule, so dare anyone take Stormont away? They would have to ship every Government Member out of the country for his own safety—because only the "rank" defends, such as the Prime Minister and the Minister of Agriculture.

Another solution which the Government may decide to adopt is to do nothing but serve notice on the Unionist Government that they will impose economic sanctions on them if true reforms are not carried out. The interesting point is that the Unionist Government cannot carry out reforms. If they introduce the human rights Bill and outlaw sectarianism and discrimination, what will the party which is based on, and survives on, discrimination do? By introducing the human rights Bill, it signs its own death warrant. Therefore, the Government can impose economic sanctions but the Unionist Party will not yield. I assure you, Mr. Speaker, that one cannot impose economic sanctions on the dead.

**James Joyce letters to Nora Barnacle,  
2<sup>nd</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> December 1909**

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<sup>263</sup> Ellmann, (1975) 1992, p.180-192.

**2 December 1909: 44 Fontenoy Street, Dublin.**

My darling I ought to begin by begging your pardon, perhaps, for the extraordinary letter I wrote you last night. While I was writing it your letter was lying in front of me and my eyes were fixed, as they are even now, on a certain word of it. There is something obscene and lecherous in the very look of the letters. The sound of it too is like the act itself, brief, brutal, irresistible and devilish.

Darling, do not be offended at what I wrote. You thank me for the beautiful name I gave you. Yes, dear, it is a nice name 'My beautiful wild flower of the hedges! My dark-blue, rain-drenched flower!'. You see I am a little of the poet still. I am giving you a lovely book for a present too: and it is a poet's present for the woman he loves. But, side by side and inside this spiritual love I have for you there is also a wild beast-like craving for every inch of your body, for every secret and shameful part of it, for every odour and act of it. My love for you allows me to pray to the spirit of eternal beauty and tenderness mirrored in your eyes or to fling you down under me on that soft belly of yours and fuck you up behind, like a hog riding a sow, glorying in the open shame of your upturned dress and white girlish drawers and in the confusion of your flushed cheeks and tangled hair. It allows me to burst into tears of pity and love at some slight word, to tremble with love for you at the sounding of some chord or cadence of music or to lie heads and tails with you feeling your fingers fondling and tickling my ballocks or stuck up in me behind and your hot lips sucking off my cock while my head is wedged in between your fat thighs, my hands clutching the round cushions of your bum and my tongue licking ravenously up your rank red cunt. I have taught you almost to swoon at the hearing of my voice singing or murmuring to your soul the passion and sorrow and mystery of life and at the same time have taught you to make filthy signs to me with your lips and tongue, to provoke me by obscene touches and noises, and even to do in my presence the most shameful and filthy act of the body. You remember the day you pulled up your clothes and let me lie under you looking up at you as you did it? Then you were ashamed even to meet my eyes.

You are mine, darling, mine! I love you. All I have written above is only a moment or two of brutal madness. The last drop of seed has hardly been squirted up your cunt before it is over and my true love for you, the love of my verses, the love of my eyes for your strange luring eyes, comes blowing over my soul like a wind of spices. My prick is still hot and stiff and quivering from the last brutal drive it has given you when a faint hymn is heard rising in tender pitiful worship of you from the dim cloisters of my heart.

Nora, my faithful darling, my sweet-eyed blackguard schoolgirl, be my whore, my mistress, as much as you like (my little frigging mistress! my little fucking whore!) you are always my beautiful wild flower of the hedges, my dark-blue rain-drenched flower.

JIM

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**3 December 1909: 44 Fontenoy Street, Dublin**

My darling little convent-girl,

There is some star too near the earth for I am still in a fever-fit of animal desire. Today I stopped short often in the street with an exclamation whenever I thought of the letters I wrote you last night and the night before. They must read awful in the cold light of day. Perhaps their coarseness has disgusted you. I know you are a much finer nature than your extraordinary lover and though it was you yourself, you hot little girl, who first wrote to me saying that you were longing to be fucked by me yet I suppose the wild filth and obscenity of my reply went beyond all bounds of modesty. When I got your express letter this morning and saw how careful you are of your worthless Jim I felt ashamed of what I had written. Yet now, night, secret sinful night, has come down again on the world and I am alone again writing to you and your letter is again folded before me on the table. Do not ask me to go to bed, dear. Let me write to you, dear.

As you know, dearest, I never use obscene phrases in speaking. You have never heard me, have you, utter an unfit word before others. When men tell in my presence here filthy or lecherous stories I hardly smile. Yet you seem to turn me into a beast. It was you yourself, you naughty shameless girl who first led the way. It was not I who first touched you long ago down at Ringsend. It was you who slid your hand down inside my trousers and pulled my shirt softly aside and touched my prick with your long tickling fingers, and gradually took it all, fat and stiff as it was, into your hand and friggged me slowly until I came off through your fingers, all the time bending over me and gazing at me out of your quiet saintlike eyes. It was your lips too which first uttered an obscene word. I remember well that night in bed in Pola. Tired of lying under a man one night you tore off your chemise violently and began to ride me up and down. Perhaps the horn I had was not big enough for you for I remember that you bent down to my face and murmured tenderly 'Fuck up, love! fuck up, love!'

Nora dear, I am dying all day to ask you one or two questions. Let me, dear, for I have told you everything I ever did and so I can ask you in turn. I wonder will you answer them. When that person whose heart I long to stop with the click of a revolver put his hand or hands under your skirts did he only tickle you outside or did he put his finger or fingers up into you? If he did, did they go far enough to touch that little cock at the end of your cunt? Did he touch you behind? Was he a long time tickling you and did you come? Did he ask you to touch him and did you do so? If you did not touch him did he come against you and did you feel it?

Another question, Nora. I know that I was the first man that blocked you but did any man ever frig you? Did that boy you were fond of ever do it? Tell me now, Nora, truth for truth, honesty for honesty. When you were with him in the dark at night did your fingers never, never unbutton his trousers and slip inside like mice? Did you ever frig him, dear, tell me truly or anyone else? Did you never never, never feel a man's or a boy's prick in your fingers until you unbuttoned me? If you are not offended do not be afraid to tell me the truth. Darling, darling, tonight I have such a wild lust for your body that if you were here beside me and even if you told me with your own lips that half the red-headed louts of Galway had had a fuck at you before me I would still rush at you with desire.

God Almighty, what kind of language is this I am writing to my proud blue-eyed queen! Will she refuse to answer my coarse insulting questions? I know I am risking a good deal in writing this way, but if she loves me really she will feel that I am mad with lust and that I must be told all.

Sweetheart, answer me. Even if I learn that you too have sinned perhaps it would bind me closer to you. In any case I love you. I have written and said things to you that my pride would never again allow me to say to any woman.

My darling Nora, I am panting with eagerness to get your replies to these filthy letters of mine. I write to you openly because I feel now that I can keep my word with you.

Don't be angry, dear, dear, Nora, my little wild-flower of the hedges. I love your body, long for it, dream of it.

Speak to me, dear lips that I have kissed in tears. If this filth I have written insults you bring me to my senses again with the lash as you have done before. God help me!

I love you, Nora, and it seems that this too is part of my love. Forgive me! forgive me!

JIM

**6 December 1909: 44 Fontenoy Street, Dublin.**

Noretta mia!

I got your pitiful letter this evening telling me you were going about without underclothes. I did not get 200 crowns on the 25th but only 50 crowns and 50 again on the 1st. Enough about money. I send you a little banknote and hope you may be able to buy a pretty frilly pair of drawers at least for yourself out of it and will send you more when I am paid again. I would like you to wear drawers with three or four frills one over the other at the knees and up the thighs and great crimson bows in them, I mean not the schoolgirls 'drawers with a thin shabby lace border, tight round the legs and so thin that the flesh shows between them but women's (or if you prefer the word) ladies 'drawers will a full loose bottom and wide legs, all frills and lace and ribbons, and heavy with perfume so that whenever you show them, whether in pulling up your clothes hastily to do something or in cuddling yourself up prettily to be blocked, I can see only a swelling mass of white stuff and frills and so that when I bend down over you to open them and give you a burning lustful kiss on your naughty bare bum I can smell the perfume of your drawers as well as the warm odour of your cunt and the heavy smell of your behind.

Have I shocked you by the dirty things I wrote to you. You think perhaps that my love is a filthy thing. It is, darling, at some moments. I dream of you in filthy poses sometimes. I imagine things so very dirty that I will not write them until I see how you write yourself. The smallest things give me a great cockstand- a whorish movement of your mouth, a little brown stain on the seat of your white drawers, a sudden dirty word spluttered out by your wet lips, a sudden immodest noise made by you behind and then a bad smell slowly curling up out of your backside. At such moments I feel mad to do it in some filthy way, to feel your hot lecherous lips sucking away at me, to fuck between your two rosy-tipped bobbies, to come on your face and squirt it over your hot cheeks and eyes, to stick it up between the cheeks of your rump and bugger you.

Basta per stasera!

I hope you got my telegram and understood it.

Goodbye, my darling whom I am trying to degrade and deprave. How on God's earth can you possibly love a thing like me?

O, I am so anxious to get your reply, darling!

JIM

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### 8 December 1909: 44 Fontenoy Street, Dublin

My sweet little whorish Nora,

I did as you told me, you dirty little girl, and pulled myself off twice when I read your letter. I am delighted to see that you do like being fucked arseways. Yes, now I can remember that night when I fucked you for so long backwards. It was the dirtiest fucking I ever gave you, darling. My prick was stuck up in you for hours, fucking in and out under your upturned rump. I felt your fat sweaty buttocks under my belly and saw your flushed face and mad eyes. At every fuck I gave you your shameless tongue come bursting out through your lips and if I gave you a bigger stronger fuck than usual fat dirty farts came spluttering out of your backside. You had an arse full of farts that night, darling, and I fucked them out of you, big fat fellows, long windy ones, quick little merry cracks and a lot of tiny little naughty farties ending in a long gush from your hole. It is wonderful to fuck a farting woman when every fuck drives one out of her. I think I would know Nora's fart anywhere. I think I could pick hers out in a roomful of farting women. It is a rather girlish noise not like the wet windy fart which I imagine fat wives have. It is sudden and dry and dirty like what a bold girl would let off in fun in a school dormitory at night. I hope Nora will let off no end of her farts in my face so that I may know their smell also.

You say when I go back you will suck me off and you want me to lick your cunt, you little depraved blackguard. I hope you will surprise me some time when I am asleep dressed, steal over me with a whore's glow in your slumbrous eyes, gently undo button after button in the fly of my trousers and gently take out your lover's fat mickey, lap it up in your moist mouth and suck away at it till it gets fatter and stiffer and comes off in your mouth. Sometime too I shall surprise you asleep, lift up your skirts and open your hot drawers gently, then lie down gently by you and begin to lick lazily round your bush. You will begin to stir uneasily then I will lick the lips of my darling's cunt. You will begin to groan and grunt and sigh and fart with lust in your sleep. Then I will lick up faster and faster like a ravenous dog until your cunt is a mass of slime and your body wriggling wildly.

Goodnight, my little farting Nora, my dirty little fuckbird! There is one lovely word, darling, you have underlined to make me pull myself off better. Write me more about that and yourself, sweetly, dirtier, dirtier.

JIM

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**9 December 1909: 44 Fontenoy Street, Dublin.**

My sweet naughty little fuckbird,

Here is another note to buy pretty drawers or stockings or garters. Buy whorish drawers, love, and be sure you sprinkle the legs of them with some nice scent and also discolour them just a little behind.

You seem anxious to know how I received your letter which you say is worse than mine. How is it worse than mine, love? Yes, it is worse in one part or two. I mean the part where you say what you will do with your tongue (I don't mean sucking me off) and in that lovely word you write so big and underline, you little blackguard. It is thrilling to hear that word (and one or two others you have not written) on a girl's lips. But I wish you spoke of yourself and not of me. Write me a long long letter, full of that and other things, about yourself, darling. You know now how to give me a cockstand. Tell me the smallest things about yourself so long as they are obscene and secret and filthy. Write nothing else. Let every sentence be full of dirty immodest words and sounds. They are all lovely to hear and to see on paper even but the dirtiest are the most beautiful.

The two parts of your body which do dirty things are the loveliest to me. I prefer your arse, darling, to your bobbies because it does such a dirty thing. I love your cunt not so much because it is the part I block but because it does another dirty thing. I could lie frigging all day looking at the divine word you wrote and at the thing you said you would do with your tongue. I wish I could hear your lips spluttering those heavenly exciting filthy words, see your mouth making dirty sounds and noises, feel your body wriggling under me, hear and smell the dirty fat girlish farts going pop pop out of your pretty bare girlish bum and fuck fuck fuck my naughty little hot fuckbird's cunt for ever.

I am happy now, because my little whore tells me she wants me to roger her arseways and wants me to fuck her mouth and wants to unbutton me and pull out my mickey and suck it off like a teat. More and dirtier than this she wants to do, my little naked fucker, my naughty wriggling little frigger, my sweet dirty little farter.

Goodnight, my little cuntie I am going to lie down and pull at myself till I come. Write more and dirtier, darling. Tickle your little cockey while you write to make you say worse and worse. Write the dirty words big and underline them and kiss them and hold them for a moment to your sweet hot cunt, darling, and also pull up your dress a moment and hold them in under your dear little farting bum. Do more if you wish and send the letter then to me, my darling brown-arsed fuckbird.

JIM

**16 December 1909: 44 Fontenoy Street, Dublin**

My sweet darling girl,

At last you write to me! You must have given that naughty little cunt of yours a most ferocious frigging to write me such a disjointed letter. As for me, darling, I am so played out that you would have to lick me for a good hour before I could get a horn stiff enough even

to put into you, to say nothing of blocking you. I have done so much and so often that I am afraid to look to see how that thing I had is after all I have done to myself. Darling, please don't fuck me too much when I go back. Fuck all you can out of me for the first night or so but make me get myself cured. The fucking must all be done by you, darling, as I am so soft and small now that no girl in Europe except yourself would waste her time trying the job. Fuck me, darling, in as many ways as your lust will suggest. Fuck me dressed in your full outdoor costume with your hat and veil on, your face flushed with the cold and wind and rain and your boots muddy, either straddling across my legs when I am sitting in a chair and riding me up and down with the frills of your drawers showing and my cock sticking up stiff in your cunt or riding me over the back of the sofa. Fuck me naked with your hat and stockings on only flat on the floor with a crimson flower in your hole behind, riding me like a man with your thighs between mine and your rump very fat. Fuck me in your dressing gown (I hope you have that nice one) with nothing on under it, opening it suddenly and showing me your belly and thighs and back and pulling me on top of you on the kitchen table. Fuck me into you arseways, lying on your face on the bed, your hair flying loose naked but with a lovely scented pair of pink drawers opened shamelessly behind and half slipping down over your peeping bum. Fuck me if you can squatting in the closet, with your clothes up, grunting like a young sow doing her dung, and a big fat dirty snaking thing coming slowly out of your backside. Fuck me on the stairs in the dark, like a nursery-maid fucking her soldier, unbuttoning his trousers gently and slipping her hand into his fly and fiddling with his shirt and feeling it getting wet and then pulling it gently up and fiddling with his two bursting balls and at last pulling out boldly the mickey she loves to handle and frigging it for him softly, murmuring into his ear dirty words and dirty stories that other girls told her and dirty things she said, and all the time pissing her drawers with pleasure and letting off soft warm quiet little farts behind until her own girlish cockey is as stiff as his and suddenly sticking him up in her and riding him.

Basta! Basta per Dio!

I have come now and the foolery is over. Now for your questions!

We are not open yet. I send you some posters. We hope to open on the 20th or 21st. Count 14 days from that and 3 1/2 days for the voyage and I am in Trieste.

Get ready. Put some warm-brown-linoleum on the kitchen and hang a pair of red common curtains on the windows at night. Get some kind of a cheap common comfortable armchair for your lazy lover. Do this above all, darling, as I shall not quit the kitchen for a whole week after I arrive, reading, lolling, smoking, and watching you get ready the meals and talking, talking, talking, talking to you. O how supremely happy I shall be! God in heaven, I shall be happy there! I figlioli, il fuoco, una bona mangiata, un caffè nero, un Brasil, il Piccolo della Sera, e Nora, Nora mia, Norina, Noretta, Norella, Noruccia ecc ecc...

Eva and Eileen must sleep together. Get some place for Georgie. I wish Nora and I had two beds for night-work. I am keeping and shall keep my promise, love. Time fly on, fly on quickly! I want to go back to my love, my life, my star, my little strange-eyed Ireland!

A hundred thousand kisses, darling!

JIM

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**20 December 1909: 44 Fontenoy Street, Dublin**

My sweet naughty girl

I got your hot letter tonight and have been trying to picture you frigging your cunt in the closet. How do you do it? Do you stand against the wall with your hand tickling up under your clothes or do you squat down on the hole with your skirts up and your hand hard at work in through the slit of your drawers? Does it give you the horn now to shit? I wonder how you can do it. Do you come in the act of shitting or do you frig yourself off first and then shit? It must be a fearfully lecherous thing to see a girl with her clothes up frigging furiously at her cunt, to see her pretty white drawers pulled open behind and her bum sticking out and a fat brown thing stuck half-way out of her hole. You say you will shit your drawers, dear, and let me fuck you then. I would like to hear you shit them, dear, first and then fuck you. Some night when we are somewhere in the dark and talking dirty and you feel your shite ready to fall put your arms around my neck in shame and shit it down softly. The sound will madden me and when I pull up your dress

No use continuing! You can guess why!

The cinematograph opened today. I leave for Trieste on Sunday 2 January. I hope you have done what I said about the kitchen, linoleum and armchair and curtains. By the way don't be sewing those drawers before anybody. Is your dress made. I hope so- with a long coat, belted and cuffed with leather etc. How I am to manage Eileen's [note: his sister] fare I don't know. For God's sake arrange that you and I can have comfortable bed. I have no great wish to do anything to you, dear. All I want is your company. You may rest easy about my going with \_\_\_\_\_ [note: a word is omitted by Joyce in the original, presumably "whores" or similar. His infidelities with prostitutes had upset Nora] You understand. That won't happen, dear.

O, I am hungry now. The day I arrive get Eva to make one of the threepenny puddings and make some kind of vanilla sauce without wine. I would like roast beef, rice-soup, capuzzi garbi, mashed potatoes, pudding and black coffee. No, no I would like stracotto di maccheroni, a mixed salad, stewed prunes, torroni, tea and presnitz. Or no I would stewed eels or polenta with...

Excuse me, dear, I am hungry tonight.

Nora darling, I hope we will pass a happy year together. Am writing Stannie [note: his brother, Stanislaus] tomorrow about cinematograph.

I am so glad I am now in sight of Miramar. The only thing I hope is that I haven't brought on that cursed thing again by what I did. Pray for me, dearest.

Addio, addio, addio, addio!

JIM

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***Finnegan's Wake***  
**Lyrics**

Tim Finnegan lived in Watling Street  
 A gentleman Irish, mighty odd;  
 He'd a beautiful brogue so rich and sweet  
 And to rise in the world he carried a hod.  
 Now Tim had a sort o' the tipplin' way  
 With a love of the liquor poor Tim was born  
 And to help him on with his work each day  
 He'd a drop of the craythur ev'ry morn.

*Chorus*

Whack fol the dah now dance to your partner  
 Welt the flure, your trotters shake;  
 Wasn't it the truth I told you  
 Lots of fun at Finnegan's wake!

One mornin' Tim was rather full  
 His head felt heavy which made him shake,  
 He fell from the ladder and broke his skull  
 And they carried him home his corpse to wake.  
 They wrapped him up in a nice clean sheet  
 And laid him out across the bed,  
 With a gallon of whiskey at his feet  
 And a barrel of porter at his head.

His friends assembled at the wake  
 And Mrs. Finnegan called for lunch,  
 First they brought in tea and cake  
 Then pipes, tobacco and whiskey punch.  
 Biddy O'Brien began to cry  
 'Such a nice clean corpse, did you ever see?'  
 'Arrah, Tim, mavourneen, why did you die?'  
 'Ah, shut your gob' said Paddy McGee!

Then Maggy O'Connor took up the job  
 'O Biddy,' says she, 'You're wrong, I'm sure':  
 Biddy gave her a belt in the gob  
 And left her sprawlin' on the floor.  
 And then the war did soon engage  
 'Twas woman to woman and man to man,  
 Shillelagh law was all the rage  
 And the row and the ruction soon began.

Then Mickey Maloney ducked his head  
 When a flagon of whiskey flew at him,  
 It missed, and fallin' on the bed  
 The liquor scattered over Tim.  
 Tim revives! See how he rises!  
 Timothy rising from the bed  
 Sayin': 'Whirl your liquor around like blazes!  
 Thanam o'n Dhou! D'ye think I'm dead?'  
 ('Thunderin' Jaysus, D'ye think I'm dead?')

## **VOICE OF RIVERS**

An Interpretation of the Rivers as they appear in Chapter  
eight of *Finnegans Wake*

**AWAKE**

SAALE  
 VITAVA  
 MOULDAW  
 NEEPERS  
 GANGRES  
 NEAGH  
 ELSTER  
 CONCORD  
 MERRIMAKE  
 BANNS  
 OXUS

---

AMU DARIA  
 TIBER  
 DON  
 SABRINE  
 SEVERN  
 DEVIOUS DELTS  
 QUAGGY  
 OKEAN  
 PILCOMAYO  
 SUCHCAUGHTAWAN

---

PARAGUAY  
 ADDA  
 RUHRING  
 SPREE  
 RHINE  
 ERNE  
 MIN  
 BOJANA  
 BUAH  
 BADHER  
 WASSERBOURNE  
 SHYR  
 SALS  
 CHOO

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AISY-OISY  
 GOTA  
 YSSEL (EYESAL)  
 LIMMAT  
 EL NEGRO  
 LA PLATA  
 CONEYWINK

EMME  
 REUSSISCHER  
 JARKON  
 SHAREE

---

EBRO  
 WINDAUG  
 COXYT  
 BOTLETTLE  
 AVON  
 SALSO  
 HONDDU

---

LOA  
 MEUSIC  
 RIBBLE  
 REEDY  
 DERG  
 BOGANS  
 DEE  
 TISTA  
 SUCK  
 HUMBER  
 OUSE

---

TRENT  
 GLOMMEN  
 NERA  
 FUNGLUS  
 BARROW  
 SITTANG  
 SAMBRE  
 DRAMMEN  
 SETT  
 DROMMEN

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USKING  
 THAMES  
 DROME  
 ZWARTE (SVARTY)  
 WILLEBROEK  
 DURMED  
 DURANCE  
 VAAL

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ORANGE  
 DARENT  
 AMAZON  
 ISHIM

IRTYSH (ERRTISH)  
 EUPHRATES  
 MAGGIAS  
 KAFFUE  
 ZAMBEZI  
 COFFER  
 MAKAU (MACOW)  
 SABLE  
 SIKIANG

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PEARL  
 SUKRY  
 SHINKO  
 PYRENEES  
 GOYT  
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 METAURUS  
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STOUR  
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 ROYA  
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AVOOSTOOKRAT  
 NIVE  
 SENSE  
 SAANE  
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 PYRIPHLEGETHON  
 PIRRYPHLICKATHIMS  
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HOLMAN  
 SOAY  
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UMFOLOZI  
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SNUBENCADIE  
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### SIREN SIREN

WYERYE  
ODET  
PIENA

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LERRYN (LERYAN)  
FOWEY  
REDE  
TUMMEL  
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OUSE  
ESSONNA  
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DODDER  
IRWELL  
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### SURFACE

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### JAGSTHOLE

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VESLES  
MAHUN  
LODDON  
HEIGH HO  
MESSAMISERY  
TOSS  
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CAMLIN  
NECKER  
TAPTING  
JUTTY  
CLYDE  
WAIHOW  
THUR  
WHUEBRA  
PIEMAN

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POLISTAMAN  
LOVAT  
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EVINOS  
NIEMEN  
NIGER  
NIHIL

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NUANCEE  
ALBERN  
VICTORIA  
THELON  
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BLYTH  
JUMPNAD  
SANKH

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ANACHERONISTIC  
CORRIBLY  
TIGRIS  
LIFFEY  
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DUNAS  
WASUT  
SARTHIN

### SUIR FINN

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MOURNE  
NORE  
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MOY  
CULLIN  
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NONNI  
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YSTWYTH  
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DALE  
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BUG  
VOWCLOSE  
DAPHDAPH

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SORGUES  
MAAS  
THURSO  
BAISE  
LIPPES  
KISOKUSHK  
NIVER  
NEVAR  
AISNE  
LEADA

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VARTRY  
FINDHORN  
FLENDERS  
ROTHER  
ARUN  
RANCING  
ARRAN  
VESDRE  
COLO  
ORDER  
MAGRA

BAPTISTE

OLD  
WELLAND  
ANNAN  
ELLIS  
EXE  
KEOWN  
AMSTEL  
GARONNE  
MARITSA  
ZINDEH-RIID  
(RIVER OF LIFE)  
SAVA  
SAVUTO

ERRIFF  
ARVER  
NANNY WATER  
VARTRY  
ETSCH  
CAMMOCKING  
PEIHOS  
UBANGI  
CONGO  
MAUDLIN

STYX  
NIEVER  
DUNGU  
MEURTHER  
BOCQ  
DARGLE  
GLENGREE  
CHANZA  
ARVIARY  
SLANEY

DEEL  
TOUNGUE  
THOUET  
SCHELDT  
LYND  
OWER MORE  
FAL  
WIESE  
TEVIOT  
WUPPER

LAUAR  
GREESE  
WARTES  
ODER  
WEAR  
MOLE  
SERPENTINE  
ESLA  
DUN  
PEEL

RICHMOND  
REHR  
RHINERSTONES  
LIPPELEENS  
STRAWBIRRY  
BOUDLOIRE  
MISSIS SEEPY  
MISSIS SEWERY  
ZAMBOSY  
BASSEIN

IRTHING  
LOMBA  
MOSEL  
OGOWE  
ISHIKARRY  
WASHEMESKAD  
CARISHY  
CARATIMANEY  
BON A VENTURA  
MALAGARASSY

LIDDEL  
OUD  
AMNIS  
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TANGUS  
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EPTÉ  
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GAUDYQUIVIRY

ARNOMENT  
GUILDERED  
FISHNETZE  
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GALLIGO  
VAIPAR  
TINTO  
JOSEPH  
SEQUAN  
LEADOWN  
CODROY  
ALPHEUBETT  
JOKI

SOMMETHING  
RRREKE  
GAWAN  
SIOULER'S  
LUNGAR  
GUMTPTYUM  
PODDLE  
CHARRED  
MULLET'S  
RECKNITZ  
WHARFORE  
MURRAYED  
MERSEY ME  
KOROS

WAAL  
JUCAR  
AVONDALE  
CLARENCE  
ANABAR

**DEEP WATER**

BHAGGYRHATTY  
AUBETTE  
SPEY  
PRUTH  
ARUND  
GIRONDE

WAVENEY  
LYNE

GAROUMA  
NARROWA  
CURARA  
MEDWAY  
WESER  
EDEREIDER  
CHATTAHOOCHEE  
AIN

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CREE  
NISTLING  
ISOLABELLA  
LECH  
DART  
AISCH  
FLEETLY  
GLASHABOYS  
VIVI VIENNE  
SULA

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TAMBRE  
CHIR  
JARY  
DIVE  
NEB  
SACCO  
WABBASH  
RAABED  
MAUNDY  
A RING A RUNG

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DRIBBLE-DERRY  
BANN  
BARROW  
MACFARLANE  
SHINS  
WALKER BEG  
TOMBIGBY  
BULLY HAYES  
MACKENZIE

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REIZ  
APPLE TWEED  
MOBBLEY  
SAARA  
JORDAN  
TEAR ORNE  
NIESTER  
TIBERTINE'S  
CONGOSWOOD

BRIAN THE BRAVO

SANKURU  
OLONA  
LENA  
MAGDALENA  
DROMILLA  
SHANNON  
DORA RIPARIA  
PO  
VOLGAR  
MISSA PRO MESSA

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TAFF DE TAFF  
TYNE  
AMoor  
OAKANKNEE  
MUSQUODOBOIT  
SCOTT  
SWILLY

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YENNESSY  
LAAGEN  
NIGER  
KING  
OB  
O'DELAWARR  
SUSQUEHANNA  
BROSNA  
MELISSA  
BRADOGUE

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LEYTHA  
LIANE  
SOHAN  
UNA  
IRMAK  
FOYLE  
MACLEAY  
WARDHA  
MARNE  
MARCED

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MULDE  
LOHAN  
CRASNA  
DVINA  
WINDERMERE  
ALTMUEHLER

ISKER  
SUDA  
HOANGHO

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GIHON  
LOVAT  
MORAVAR

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## **A ROCK A TREE**

KENNET  
CHER  
ASHLEY  
SAON  
SENNE  
CLOUGH  
PING

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GODAVARI  
VERT  
THAYA  
AMAN  
CHURN  
DER WENT  
JOSSIPH  
WHARNOW  
ALLE  
SHANNONS

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BRENDAN'S SEA  
YANGSEE  
HISTER EVE  
MANZ IN A HURRIES  
LOUP  
ORARA  
ANIMAS  
ULLA  
UMBAS  
MEZHE

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UFA  
IRRAWADDYNG  
AARS  
LETHEST  
ORONOKO  
JOAKIMONO  
HORSE



OTTER  
YONNE  
ISSET

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I SONHT ZO  
SOCA  
AMMAN  
LIMPOPO  
BARROW  
SCAMANDER  
I SAR  
ICIS  
ZEZERE

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HAMBLE  
MENAM  
DRAVE  
PHAR PHAR  
NYAR  
KRISHTNA  
INDES  
LUNE  
BUBYE

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EVENLODE  
JURNA  
SOW  
TOWY  
SUDDS  
LIMONY  
SEIM  
EURE  
HO  
LIFFEY  
MOOSE  
RIVERING  
HITHER AND  
THITHERING  
WATERS OF  
NIGHT

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