

EURAMERICA Vol. 40, No. 1 (March 2010), 31-64  
http://euramerica.ea.sinica.edu.tw/  
© Institute of European and American Studies, Academia Sinica

## **Ireland on Tour —*Riverdance*, the Irish Diaspora, and the Celtic Tiger\***

Yu-Chen Lin

Department of Foreign Languages and Literature, National Sun Yat-Sen University  
70 Lien-Hai Rd., Kaohsiung 80424, Taiwan  
E-mail: yuchen@mail.nsysu.edu.tw

### **Abstract**

Incorporating a historical perspective into culture studies, this paper contends that, as an emblem of the Celtic Tiger, *Riverdance* is a parable of Ireland's response to the forces of globalization as the nation moved away from preoccupations with its traumatic past toward the economic competition of today. In their early forms, responses to global influences were embedded in Irish culture. Long before what is commonly called the age of globalization, Irish dance was already "proto-global" in its openness to the flow of cultural exchanges generated by people's travel. This flow formed an interesting dialectic with cultural nationalism and endowed Irish dance with a national(ist)

---

Received February 16, 2009; accepted July 3, 2009; last revised August 5, 2009  
Proofreaders: Jeffrey Cuvilier, Yu-ting Lin, Chin-ying Tsai, Ying-tzu Chang

\* This paper is part of a research project (NSC 95-2411-H-110-018-MY3). I am indebted to Sau-ling C. Wong, Yu-cheng Lee, and Te-hsing Shan, whose helpful comments on an earlier draft inspired me at a crucial point in this project. For their insightful suggestions, I am grateful to the two anonymous reviewers. My heartfelt thanks also go to my very able research assistants, Lydia Kuan-hui Liao, Shu-ping Huang and Yen-chi Wu, for invaluable aid in managing copious reading notes and in proofreading my manuscript.

character. Meanwhile, this narrowing of Irish dance was interrogated by dancers in diaspora who began to travel to the home country to participate in dance competitions in the late 1960s. This reversal of migration coincided with a nationwide revision of cultural memory, leading to the emergence of cultural tourism—a marriage between tradition and commerce—along with the emergence of the Celtic Tiger in the 1990s. Adopting cultural tourism studies as my framework of interpretation, I subsequently explore how *Riverdance* renovates tradition to produce a showcase of modern Ireland. In conclusion, I argue that *Riverdance* is interesting in that it compels us to redefine nationalism and its attendant categories in the age of globalization.

**Key Words:** *Riverdance*, the Irish Diaspora, the Celtic Tiger, globalization, cultural tourism

Sixteen years have elapsed since the debut of *Riverdance*, but the significance of its phenomenal success remains open to differing interpretations. Helen Brennan, a folk art historian, recognizes the show's place in the history of Irish dance as "the most successful production using Irish dance as its centerpiece" (1999: 155). Newspaper columnists, for their part, generally understand it as a commercial show, and some characterize it as an "extravaganza" (N. Casey, 2002: 10). *Riverdance*'s success in packaging Irish dance as a spectacular has attracted attention from the field of business management. Barra Ó Cinnéide, to name one, uses it as a case study of marketing and entrepreneurship in his monograph *Riverdance: the Phenomenon* (2002). The show's worldwide popularity makes it of interest to practitioners of Cultural Studies as well. Natasha Casey, for instance, in "*Riverdance: The Importance of Being Irish American*" argues that *Riverdance* (with a focus on *Lord of the Dance*) is Michael Flatley's American Dream writ large, and that this show appeals to the American audience as Irish folk art. This view of the show's formula of success in the American market is consonant with Marion R. Casey's account of Irish step dancing in America, in which she presents *Riverdance* as a product of Irish American dancing masters and dancers.

Natasha Casey's and Marion R. Casey's insight into the contribution of the Irish diaspora introduces an interesting perspective to the *Riverdance* phenomenon, but their approaches elide the role the home country plays in engineering and promoting this show, and oversimplify the multiple dynamic in the mapping of cultural identity. In view of this gap, I will suggest in the first part of this essay that as an emblem of the Celtic Tiger, *Riverdance* is a parable of Ireland's response to forces of globalization as the nation moved away from preoccupations with the traumatic past towards contemporary economic competition. These global influences did not arrive all of a sudden; instead, in their early forms, they were embedded in Irish culture. Indeed, long before what is commonly called the age of globalization, Irish

dance at its early stage was already “proto-global” in its openness to the flow of cultural exchanges generated by people’s travel. This flow formed an interesting dialectic with Irish cultural nationalism, during the Revival era, to endow Irish dance with a national(ist) character. Meanwhile, this narrowing of Irish dance was interrogated by Irish dancers in diaspora, who, preserving Irish dance better than the nation-state did, began to travel to the home country to partake of dancing competitions in the late 1960s. This reverse flow of migration coincided with the nationwide revision of Irish cultural memory, leading to the emergence of cultural tourism—a marriage between tradition and commerce—along with the Celtic Tiger in the 1990s. Adopting cultural tourism studies as my framework of interpretation, I will explore how *Riverdance* renovates traditional dance into a showcase of modern Ireland in Part Two of this essay. In conclusion, I will contend that *Riverdance* is interesting in that it compels us to redefine nationalism and its attendant categories—“tradition,” “authenticity,” and “cultural identity”—in the age of globalization.

## I.

Globalization, as a term frequently adopted in comments on contemporary world, is more elusive than its audience presumes. Indeed, its definition varies with different theories: the capitalist world system, polarization of two major trends (e.g. Benjamin Barber’s “Jihad vs. McWorld”), homogenization (read “Americanization”), to name but a few (Holton, 1998: 2-5). It is beyond the scope of this paper to explore the details of each theory. For the present purpose, I would narrow my focus to a problem consequent upon globalization: is nationalism—and by extension, national culture—still viable under the impact of global forces? In view of its image as a global success made of Irish dance and music, *Riverdance* serves a useful testing ground for responses to this problem. I will begin my attempt at this question by speculating on

the relevance of globalization to the pre-history of *Riverdance*. More specifically, I will focus on one feature of globalization, flow, in consideration of the fact that flows of people, capital and culture have dramatically changed Irish cultural production as well as the Irish people's perceptions of home and national identity (Cf. Appadurai, 2000: 5). Among the many faces of global flow, migration and tourism are the most far-reaching of Irish dance.

Barbara O'Connor delineates the development of Irish dance in three stages: local, national, and global (1998: 53). From the perspective of globalization, however, these phases are always interpenetrated. Indeed, Irish dance in its early stage can be said to anticipate global tourism, since its earliest record bears a resemblance to a touristic advertisement: "Ich am of Irlaunde. Come and daunce with me in Irlaunde." Dating back to the fourteenth century, this poem was probably written by an English visitor (Brennan, 1999: 15). Like modern tourists who are said to be seeking authenticity (MacCannell, 1999: 49), this visitor was so delighted by an encounter with the "authentic" native culture that (s)he invited people to share his or her enjoyment in Irish dance. In addition, the forms of Irish dance at this "local" stage can also be said to be "proto-global": in its receptiveness to influences of the Normans, who were credited with introducing round dances into Ireland, Irish dance was not distinct from its French or Scottish counterparts (Breathnach, 1971: 36-38). Information on dance in Ireland at this stage remained sporadic until the late seventeenth century. These accounts, presumably also provided by English visitors, reveal that dances in Ireland were primarily social and often egalitarian occasions usually held at crossroads or in kitchens, where peasants mingled with aristocrats. They could also be religious in nature, and celebrations of local patron saints' days tended to end in dancing (Brennan, 1999: 18-19). Despite the neutral or marvelous tone often found in travel writing on Irish dance, the festive mood of Irish dancing gave the impression of frivolity, and thus fared ill with the church and English rulers alike.

It was not until the eighteenth century, when the Penal Laws

against Catholics were lifted, that Irish dance became more popular and formal. This relaxation of colonial control resulted in the emergence of dancing masters, who traveled around to offer lessons on solo and group dances, often as supplements to the curriculum of local hedge schools. Deportment was the main concern of these dancing masters (Breathnach, 1971: 50-51), probably in response to the imperial stereotype of unruly Irishmen (Wulff, 2003a: 182). As a result, they emphasized footwork and forbade upper-body movement, thereby inventing step dance. Under this rigorous discipline, a good dancer was said to be able to “dance on eggs without breaking them and hold a pan of water on his head without spilling a drop”; (s)he could also execute intricate solo dance steps on a half door or a table (Breathnach, 1971: 53-54). Translated into the idiom of globalization, the internal flow of the Irish people was quickened by the rise of a new profession, which in turn created a discipline that expedited the dancer’s pedal motion. This hastened the flow of the people and the accelerated speed of their dancing feet often took up the form of competition: not only did dancers themselves compete with one another as part of entertainment, but traveling dancing masters settled disputes over their “territory” by a contest on the nimbleness of footwork (Breathnach, 1971: 50).

The increasing demand for dance thus created an itinerant profession and helped induce the invention of intricate steps of solo and set dances (Breathnach, 1971: 52-53), a significant invention which defined the contours of what was later recognized as Irish dance. This broad contour narrowed drastically, however, to adopt a much more definitive form during the Irish Revival in the late nineteenth century. Aspiring to re-circulate Irish culture, the Gaelic League was most notable for its language revival project. The dance sector, by contrast, was marginal in the League’s agenda before the London branch introduced the “social dimension” into the revivalist activities by promoting Irish dance (Brennan, 1999: 29). Inspired by the Scots *ceilithe* nights in London, Fionán Mac Coluim and J. G. O’Keeffe, organizers of the London Gaelic

League, decided to follow suit by inaugurating the Irish *céilí* (Gaelic for “an evening visit, a friendly call”) in the Bloomsbury Hall, London, in 1897. To keep their *céilí* abreast of the already established Scots event, Mac Coluim and O’Keeffe appointed Patrick D. Reidy, a dancing master in Limerick and in his native Kerry, to teach the London League members group dances. This program was so successful that it triggered a general zeal for native dance in London and Dublin alike. Field trips to Kerry were subsequently organized to pay homage to the “origin” of native dances more than to collect dance repertoires as originally intended, considering the fact that the most important achievement of these trips was probably the publication of *A Handbook of Irish Dances* (1902), which canonized dances in the Munster style (Brennan, 1999: 30-31). This canon suggests that the flow of people tipped back to the homeland in the wake of the nationalist aspiration for cultural continuity and authenticity. In addition to the inward turn of the flow of people, the flow of cultures, out of which Irish dance was made, was further blockaded as “foreign” dances were excluded after the great debate on acceptable dances in the newspapers columns in the early 1900s. Ironically, many of the dances condemned as “un-Irish”—the old group reels, the barndance, the quadrilles, the Highland schottische, to name but a few—had already been so “Irishised” that they were very popular in rural Ireland, where the tradition of Irish dancing was strongest (Brennan, 1999: 31-37). These vernacular dances were thus consigned to obscurity outside the region when Irish dance began to take on a national(ist) character.

The League’s politicization of culture continued well into the post-independence era when the new nation was eager to assert its political autonomy through cultural authenticity. If language joined hands with dance to define the Irish identity during the Revival era, they were now built into state policies to become cultural imperatives. In the 1920s, the first dancing school was established by the Gaelic League, offering classes to young children. Meanwhile, with the new nation taking over its agenda for the

Irish language, the League was restructured as the Irish Dancing Commission in 1929 to resume the project of directing the course of Irish dance. To this end the Commission regulated the dance by publishing a series of guidelines on dance steps included in its repertoires, and by imposing the requirement of a license for dancing masters, who were expected to be Gaelic speakers. By lowering the age group of targeted students and institutionalizing Irish dance, the Commission invested dance with the function of offering “a good education in Irishness” (Wulff, 2005: 50). This training was often more athletic than aesthetic, more disciplinary than enjoyable (Moroney, 2000). As an Irish writer recalls, boys and girls were to dance together, mirthlessly, without any physical contact. Under the church’s influence, this “historic resistance to physical touching” (Theodores, 1996: 204) culminated in the Public Dance Hall Act in 1935, which stipulated that dancing be allowed at licensed halls only. Although the rationale of this act was the prevention of unruly behavior associated with Irish dancing, especially the *sean nos* (“old style” dancing), it inadvertently suppressed the folk nature of Irish dance, which were often held in kitchens and at rural cross-roads. Other than the locale, the dance steps and the repertoire, another residue of this folk culture was also formalized—competition. In 1969, the Irish Dancing Commission held the first World Championship in Irish Dancing, ushering Irish dance to a new phase. Since then competition has become the major motivation of learning Irish dance, and an occasion for American-born young Irish dancers to visit their homeland for the first time, and for their emigrant dancing masters and parents to embark on their annual return (Cullinane, 1994: 195). Michael Flatley and Jean Butler, the leading dancers of the original *Riverdance*, were among those second-generation Irish American dancers to make such a pilgrimage home to participate in the competition, and did so with distinction: in 1976 Michael Flatley was the first Irish American to win the world championship.

The success of Irish American dancers like Michael Flatley

and Jean Butler directs us back to the dynamic of people's flow which had generated Irish dance. First of all, it suggests that, despite the Commission's attempt to assert its authority over Irish dance, the centralization of the dance was at best a façade. Indeed, Irish dance was not confined at home; rather, it had traveled along with dancing masters abroad. John Durang, who went to America in 1789 presumably to pursue better career prospects, was the first emigrant dancing master. He was followed by Barney William, Dan O'Mahony and France X. Hennessy, who left Cork to join the great exodus in the 1840s to America. They established Irish dancing schools in New York and Chicago to tutor second-generation Irish Americans (M. R. Casey, 2006: 417-418). At a time when Irish immigrants suffered from racial discrimination and harsh competition with their counterparts from other cultures, these dancing schools offered an opportunity to make connections with home, if not an alternative to alcoholism, racial politics and gang violence to steer away from mental problems that had plagued many first-generation Irish Americans (Kenny, 2000: 71, 106-108, 230; Miller, 1985: 248, 319-320). As Fintan O'Toole aptly observes, *Riverdance* has an element of desperation in its origin; the show's energy, he suggests, reminds one of "the stock scene in the old western" in which the bad guy shoots at the victim's feet and commands him to dance (O'Toole, 1997a: 144). Considering the long history of the Irish view on emigration as permanent exile of no return calling for "the American wake" (Kenny, 2000: 22, 103; Miller, 1985: 556-559), it is quite understandable that this desperation was often transferred to young children, who were forced by their aspiring parents to take dance lessons in order to learn to be Irish. Indeed when Peter Quinn, an Irish American novelist, was growing up in Bronx in the 1950s, Irish dancing was just as interesting as going to the confession box: "The joke was the kids who took Irish dancing lessons were the ones who couldn't run faster than their parents" (qtd. in Finn, 1997). This desperate need to connect with home explains why at least 200 true *feiseanna* ("festivals with

competitions in dance”) are still held annually in North America, whereas the true *feis* is almost extinct in Ireland (Cullinane, 1994: 199), and more competitions on Irish dance were held in diaspora than at home. It also takes up a more aggressive form in terms of the emigrant community’s influence on the policy of the Irish Dancing Commission.

If the deep structure of the claim held by members of the diaspora on Irish dance was characterized by a longing for home, this longing was lost on the offspring of first-generation Irish emigrants; Peter Quinn’s account of American-born Irish children’s reluctance to take dance lessons testifies to such a loss. Quinn’s account of unwilling children notwithstanding, it coincides with the rise of mass tourism and media industry, the double agents of modernity which allow Ireland to profit by filling this yearning for home. It is to be noticed that this yearning was bridged in an eccentric method, very often at the expense of its presumed “utility” values. Indeed, unlike most tourist films, practical information for visitors to Ireland was almost absent from promotional films for Irish tourism at this stage. Instead, they were intent on constructing a cinematic narrative of the nation for a specific audience (Rains, 2007: 114). As Stephanie Rains suggests, travelogues produced by Bord Fáilte during this period were primarily aimed at “the Irish-born, and their Irish-American descendants” (2007: 107). *Honeymoon in Ireland* (1963), for instance, mobilizes diasporic memory to imply that Ireland is another home for those emigrants and their descendents who were forced to leave, and a tour to Ireland promises to satisfy their desire for home. In other words, this tourist film appropriates Irish emigrants’ outbound flow into a longing for home by supplying a cultural memory that is most likely not there, in order to induce the return of their offspring as tourists. As a consequence, the journey of the American-born Irish to Ireland is represented already as a return home, even though it is their first tour of their ancestral homeland. Other than taking logical leaps, this cross-generational closure of “the circle of emigration by

completing the journey ‘home’ through tourism” (Rains, 2007: 110) sometimes adopts the form of meta-narrative, perhaps because it is made with a sideward glance to the cinema image of Ireland so familiar in the American film industry. For instance, *The Spell of Ireland*, an American-produced promotional film in the mid-1950s, inserts in its quasi-documentary introduction of Irish culture a direct reference to *The Quiet Man* (1952), a Hollywood film, where Sean Thornton, an Irish American, pays a first visit to his family cottage (Rains, 2007: 115). Addressing Irish Americans who are presumably familiar with this Hollywood film, this unusual practice suggests that diasporic memory is portrayed as collective and “always already fictionalized” (Rains, 2007: 116). This collective unconscious is rooted in the national myth. Indeed, although *Honeymoon in Ireland* and *The Spell of Ireland* were produced in different countries, both films present an idyllic Ireland reminiscent of the “self-sufficient, bucolic, Gaelic utopia” in Eamon de Valera’s 1943 “dream speech” (qtd. in Lee, 1989: 187). By constructing the tourist destination as a source of “authenticity” untouched by the malaises of modernity, these travelogues collude with the rhetoric of Irish nationalism in their appeal to national stereotypes.

Interestingly, this reproduction of diasporic memory for Irish emigrants’ consumption was punctured by a reconstruction of cultural memory at home. Indeed, the tourist films’ conjuration of an aura of authenticity surrounding Ireland ironically registered the eclipse of such an aura in reality. Just about the time when *Honeymoon in Ireland* was produced, there was a general disillusionment with the nationalist dream of a unified Ireland, and a prevalent fear of Ireland’s status as an American economic colony. This loss of self-faith was best observed from the perspective of the Gaelic League’s cultural agenda. Its revival of the Irish language during the colonial era was instrumental in fermenting national longing, which was expected to culminate in Irish independence. This project of language revival became state policy in post-independence Ireland, where proficiency in the national language

was considered the yardstick of Irishness. Under this ethos, Irish was required for a wide variety of state employments; by the early 1930s a pass in the Irish language had been made compulsory for Secondary School Leaving Certificate (Foster, 1988: 518). The status of the Irish language was further entrenched in the 1937 Draft Constitution, which stipulated that Irish was the first official language of the Irish Republic (*Dréacht-Bunreacht/ Draft Constitution*, 1937: 8). But this linguistic benchmark of Irish identity did not flourish despite the state policy to congeal nationalist sentiment through compulsory Irish; instead, it invited resentment of official insistence on a pass in a “‘difficult’ and comparatively ‘useless’ language” (Hindley, 1990: 167). By the fiftieth anniversary of the Easter Rising, this language policy had already proved to be such a disastrous failure that it was not to be redeemed by the 1961 language “preservation” measure (Brown, 1985: 207). Indeed, a national survey in 1975 revealed that only 2.7% of the respondents claimed proficiency as a native speaker, and 10.8% the ability to understand “most conversations” in Gaelic (*Report*, 1975: 118). It also indicated that about 91% of the people considered the Irish language essential to Irish identity, but only about 23% thought it would survive until 2000 (*Report*, 1975: 24). In hindsight, it might not be a coincidence that the shattering of the Irish dream of territorial wholeness through linguistic unity preceded the first World Championship in Irish Dancing by three years only: where language failed, dance, language’s erstwhile marginalized double in the League’s agenda, provided another possibility for restoring the Irish people’s faith in their cultural identity.

This self-confidence did not arise gratuitously; it had to be earned by partaking in the world economy. Paradoxically, this effort was made at the expense of Irish people’s faith in themselves, for the first step toward the economic world stage was surrendering their precarious hold on the double totems of nationhood, language and territory. In 1973, Ireland joined the European Economic Community as the only member not requiring

translation of official documents. About the same time, a pass in Irish was no longer mandatory for Secondary School Leaving Certificate. Indeed, as John Joseph Lee suggests, the adoption of English as the first language by most Irish people is a mixed blessing, for this absence of language barrier between Ireland and the world's economic superpowers probably makes Ireland the first "globalized society" (Lee, 2007). If fear of Ireland's lapse into a "Little America" (O'Toole, 1997b: 89) was the dominant sentiment in the 1960s, this fear gradually lost its grip on the Irish ethos in the 1990s. This era saw the emergence of the Celtic Tiger—Ireland's sudden economic boom induced, among other things,<sup>1</sup> by the state policy to encourage Irish American high-technology entrepreneurs to return to their ancestral home to set up business quarters (MacSharry & White, 2000: 366-367). In other words, the inverse flow of people attracted by early travelogues materialized into a flow of Irish American entrepreneurs and capital. This unprecedented economic success benefited from a new perspective of the Irish diaspora, which in turn entailed a reconsideration of the vexed problem surrounding territorial sovereignty. The 1990s saw the beginning of the Peace Process, which promised to unwind the "unfinished business" of Northern Ireland. Ireland's new focus of interest was best revealed in the first state visit of the President of Ireland to England in 1996. In an interview on the eve of her visit, Mary Robinson diplomatically left the Northern problem to "England and Northern Ireland," and privileged "Irishness" over "the national problem" (Brock, 1996). In the course of this step toward the world stage, not only is Ireland gradually reconfigured, but the very way of this reconfiguration takes up a form harking back to incipient mass tourism forty years ago—heritage industry, *alias* cultural tourism (Cf. Cinnéide, 2002: 171).

This heritage industry is part of what Michel Peillon calls the

---

<sup>1</sup> Ireland's presence in the European Economic Community was also an important factor for the rise of the Celtic Tiger (Goodman, 2000: 73-79).

post-industrial economy, which tallies with Fredric Jameson's "de-differentiation" of culture and economics characteristic of postmodernity (2002: 70). Peillon suggests that culture is implicated in such economy as a means of both production and consumption: not only does the economy produce more cultural products which assume the form of a commodity, but all commodities are invested with a cultural content, to be consumed as markers for individual and collective identities. In this new economy of Ireland, the state becomes "the public face of Irish enterprise" since it sees itself as the guardian for Irish business on the world market (Peillon, 2002: 50-51). Mary Robinson, President of Ireland from 1990-1997, perfectly filled this role as a "global superstar" who aspired to sell modern Ireland (Brock, 1996). Perhaps not incidentally, she began her global sales pitch with Irish dance, tactfully sidestepping language—formerly dance's more privileged twin marker of national identity—which had failed to sell Ireland even to the Irish people. In her inaugural address in 1990, she quoted from "Come and Daunce with Me in Irlande." In so doing, she popularized the poem and at the same time consolidated the time-honored association between tourism and Irish dance (O'Connor, 2003: 122). If Irish tourism in the 1950s turned diasporic memory into a commodity primarily for Irish Americans to consume, Robinson's cultural tourism promoted dance as the new token of nationhood targeting audiences both internal and worldwide. It is to be noted that Ireland was not alone in mobilizing national culture to attract visitors. As John Urry suggests, a global public stage has recently emerged, on which almost all nations have to appear, most particularly through international events such as Olympics, World Cups and Expos (2002: 158). Urry's observation was anticipated by Eric Hobsbawm's discussion of the Olympics. Hobsbawm suggests that sports events arose as "invented traditions" in conjunction with nationalist sentiments, the attendant phenomenon of the nation which is itself also a "historical innovation" (Hobsbawm, 1992a: 13). Among these events, the Olympics stand out as a salient

example in that they have become an occasion that provides “vicarious national identification” (Hobsbawm, 1992b: 301).<sup>2</sup> In the light of Urry’s and Hobsbawm’s observations on the connection between tradition, world events and national identification, *Riverdance* at its embryonic stage can be said to be a “spectacular national showpiece for an international audience” (Cinnéide, 2002: 75) as well as an appeal to national belonging.<sup>3</sup>

## II.

In observation of the Eurovision Song Contest’s convention, Ireland, winner of the previous year, was to host the 1994 contest at the Point Theatre in Dublin. A seven-minute interval act was required for the judges to make their decision on the year’s winner. To meet this demand, Radio Television of Ireland (RTÉ) approached Moya Doherty. Considering the fact that the contest was already replete with songs, Doherty decided on dance (Barbash, 1996). But what she had in mind was not exactly traditional Irish step dance—“the gab in Irish dancing feet” in sharp contrast with “the stony silence of the Irish dancing body” (Theodores, 1996: 202). In fact, born into a Gaelic-speaking family where English was

---

<sup>2</sup> Hobsbawm would have been delighted by the extravagant, fireworks-noisy opening ceremony of Olympics 2008 in Beijing even though he did not deal with this aspect of world events. Despite its theme of “one world, one dream,” this ceremony’s ambitious scope reveals the director Zhang Yi-mou’s aspiration to arouse national pride in his showcase of the nation, which includes dominant features of Chinese culture—calligraphy, printing, fine arts, Confucian thoughts, to name just a few.

<sup>3</sup> Perhaps not incidentally, Michael Flatley also likened his performance to international sports events. He said of his appearance in the original *Riverdance*: “I was dancing for Ireland, for my parents, for my fellow dancers, and for myself. When I finished it felt like scoring the winning goal in the World Cup.” A similar analogy was drawn three years later in his pep talk to his dancers shortly before they appeared in the 1997 Academy Award show in Hollywood: “This is like our Olympic Games. You’re dancing tonight for Ireland” (Flatley & Thompson, 2006: 103, 203).

introduced by the nanny (Barbash, 1996), and fleeing to England in rebellion against her parents' expectations, Doherty was tired of the " cliché images" of Ireland. Instead, she wanted to show "the Ireland I know and love, that is modern and in step"(qtd. in Marks, 1996a). In this regard Doherty is the very product of the Celtic Tiger spirit articulated in Robinson's 1990 speech and her state policy. In particular, Doherty's love for a modern Ireland with reservations for nationalist obsessions with the tormented Irish past accords with the revised national memory, calling for a redefinition of nationalism into what John Urry calls "national pride" (2002: 135) devoid of national trauma. Indeed, she did not hesitate to call herself "a nationalist" (Cowley, 1996), but this position also involved an aversion to violence. This sentiment explains why she was sympathetic to the Peace Process, a pacifist position which would have offended post-independence sensibilities. Her progressive-nationalist outlook allows her to imagine a new identity that is respectable and marketable, to be constructed out of dynamic dancing feet instead of a dying language in which she is proficient. Given her aspiration to market modern Ireland through a new form of Irish dance, it is not surprising that she turned her searching eyes to events similar to her commission in nature, and discovered her dream dancers in "The Spirit of Mayo" in Dublin, June 1993, a dance festival which was itself a product of Ireland's heritage industry. She was tremendously impressed by the performance of Michael Flatley and Jean Butler. Flatley, in particular, struck her as "a cross between Michael Jackson and traditional Irish dance" (qtd. in Barbash, 1996), a striking combination of traditional Irish dancing and international dances: "When I saw Michael I thought, Wow. You could see bits of flamenco, bits of tap, bits of Irish. . ." (qtd. in Smyth, 1996: 30). In other words, in her search for dancers who matched her vision of modern Irishness, she inadvertently duplicated the state policy, which induced the Celtic Tiger phenomenon, by completing the circle of Irish emigration that previous travelogues aspired for.

In her exultation over Irish immigrants' facile absorption of

new elements into a traditional cultural form, Doherty was actually witnessing a reversal in the flow of cultural exchange. As is suggested, this cultural mobility has allowed Irish dance to move from the “local” stage to the “national” phase and now enables a renovation of traditional Irish dance, which is part of what Doherty calls the “cliché images” of Ireland or John Urry’s “national stereotypes,” into an epitome of “national pride” (Urry, 2002: 135-136). By so doing, it ushers Irish dancing into what Barbara O’Connor calls the “global” stage. By no means is the evolution of Irish dance an isolated case in world culture. Rather, it might have delighted the historians who contributed to *The Invention of Tradition* (1983) in that it coincides with the numerous cultures they analyzed in its renewal of the past. It is thus not surprising that Bill Whelan, the composer of *Riverdance*, unwittingly echoed these historians’ perspective in an interview in 1996: “Tradition is not something that you just pull out on national holidays and then put back into a glass case. It’s something that’s living.” He went on to suggest that tradition is living in that, on its journey along with the native, it constantly regenerates itself in its interchanges with traditions from other cultures, leading to a “commonality” between Irish music and Bulgarian-Macedonian folk songs (qtd. in Mitchell, 1996). Whelan’s notion of tradition-on-journey converged with Doherty’s; his renewed Irish music timely served her purpose of packaging Irish dance into an icon of the nation to be displayed in the Eurovision, a lesser world event whose purpose is comparable to that of world fairs. John Urry suggests that world fairs are a “micro-version of international tourism,” operating as a “technology of nationhood” to construct a “national brand” which provides a window to the national culture (2002: 136). Urry’s view sheds light on Whelan’s musical formula for the “national brand” in Doherty’s showcase of Ireland: his music for *Riverdance* was “not traditional music. It’s new music using traditional music as an inspiration.” Ranging from “ancient Celtic drumbeats . . . uilleann pipes . . . to . . . modern electric violins and guitars” and incorporating “Eastern European, Spanish,

Russian and American idiom as well” (qtd. in Mitchell, 1996), this music perfectly encapsulates the theme of the full show, the journey.

Reminiscent of the tourist films in the 1950s and 1960s, *Riverdance: the Show* mobilizes cultural memory of emigration, but tailors it for audiences both national and international. It traces the Irish diaspora back to the prehistoric Irish people’s internal journey, in order to mythologize this journey as an archetype of the human race. As the *Riverdance* program notes suggest: “We are one kind. We are one people now, our voices blended, our music, a great world in which we feel everywhere at home. *Ni neart go chur le cheile*: together we are strong” (Riverdance Finale, n.d.). As a choreographic prehistory of the Irish-cum-universal diaspora, Act One stages the ancient Irish people’s coming to terms with the elements as they roamed over the island: sun (“Reel Around the Sun”), fire (“Firedance”), thunder (“Thunderstorm”), water (“Cloudsong”), and earth (“Earthrise”). In the course of taming the elements (“Slip into Spring—The Harvest” and “*Riverdance*”), these people also cultivated their spirituality and developed human relationships; these experiences accumulate into Irish myths. “The Heart’s Cry” celebrates love as the key to life, followed by the “Women of Ireland” sequence—“The Countess Cathleen” and “Women of Sidhe” (“The Fairy Women”). This representation of Irish womanhood is balanced by sagas of mythic heroes—“*Caoineadh Cu Chulainn*” (“the Lament for Cuchulainn”) and “Shiva,” a pagan chieftain cursed by a saint to spend his life in the woods.

Act One universalizes the internal journey of the people of mythic Ireland. Act Two, by contrast, engages other cultures to represent the Irish people’s outbound journey, an experience common to many peoples forced into exile and trying to find a niche in the host country. Evoking the Great Famine of the 1840s, which triggered the traumatic exodus that depleted the Irish population by two million (Miller, 1985: 291), the opener “American Wake” stages the rite of passage to the New World

popular in the Irish countryside. The poignancy of this rite is reiterated in “Lift the Wings,” a song articulating the prospective emigrant’s lament on the eve of departure. What awaits the Irish immigrants in the new world is presented in “Harbor of the New World.” This five-piece suite dramatizes immigrants’ shared identity in the host country by blending music and dance from different cultures. “Heal Their Hearts—Freedom” is an African American gospel song about the common experience of the dispossessed who come to the new land seeking freedom and equality. The plaintive tone of this song shifts to the upbeat spirit in “Trading Taps,” where American-born Irish young men and African American boys playfully challenge one another in a competition of dance. This choreographic melting pot also includes newcomers from east Europe (“Morning in Macedonia” and “Russian Dervish”), Celtic nations (“Mouth Music”) and Spain (“Heartbeat of the World—Andalucia”). Echoing the closure of migratory circle in *Honeymoon in Ireland* and *The Spell of Ireland*, this outbound journey culminates in “Home and Heartland,” which celebrates the homecoming of the prosperous Irish immigrants with a confidence in their tradition. Moreover, like *The Spell of Ireland*, which adopts a meta-narrative structure in its allusion to a popular film, this narrative conclusion is sealed by a meta-closure in “Riverdance International,” where all the dancers appear on stage to signify Ireland’s assumption of its place in the world (Smyth, 1996: 87-90). In other words, moving beyond mass tourism’s goal of promoting Ireland to attract Irish American tourists, the whole show takes a step further, commenting on its status as a spectacular parable of modern Ireland on the world stage. This self-conscious gesture suggests that the show not only caters to an international audience’s desire for cultured entertainment (or brings “a new consciousness of Irish culture . . . for friends abroad” in the words of Mary Robinson), but also seeks to uplift national pride, a double purpose perfectly summarized in the President’s remark on the program notes of the live show (qtd. in Sherlock, 1999: 214).

In this way national pride also completes its circle, along with *Riverdance*'s thematic closure of migratory circle, since it is also the moving cause in the show's technology of "national brand." In addition to music and themes, spectacular aspects—dance style, stage design and costume—also fuse national pride and national stereotypes to assume a global form in this technology of nationhood as delineated by Urry (2002: 135-136). Similar to early travelogues, rural Irishness is evoked from the beginning of the full show. The dance "Reel Around the Sun" has the appearance of a traditional Irish dance style, but is elaborated into an international style as Flatley leads the dancers in a reel in praise of the sun's great power. This style includes higher jumps and leaps, open arms, and a more upward movement like ballet. Justified by its thematic development, it later goes all out to cover American tap dance and acrobatic dancing drawn from Slavic folk traditions, culminating in a hot Flamenco-inspired duet between Maria Pages and Flatley in "Firedance." As the dance style in *Riverdance* fuses native and international, so do costume and hair design mix national and global elements. Instead of the heavily embroidered long dresses required in dance competitions, or a hood and a scarf on the shoulders in traditional jigs, female dancers in this show wear short velvet dresses with minimum Celtic designs, giving a generous display of shoulders, thighs, and sometimes arms. This sexy costume goes along with flowing, permed long hair in lieu of the curly wig in Irish dance contests. As for male dancers, a shirt along with tight-fitting trousers replaces the jacket-and-kilt<sup>4</sup> in dance competitions. The simplicity of this dance costume serves as a foil for the shiny shirt with puff sleeves and a belt with a large Celtic design for Michael Flatley in the original *Riverdance*. This costume design later evolves, in *Lord of the Dance*, into leotard tank tops and short trousers for female dancers, semi-transparent Lycra tops for male dancers, and studded leather trousers for Michael Flatley,

---

<sup>4</sup> The kilt was adopted as the national dress for Irish men during the Irish Revival (Cinnéide, 2002: 32).

whose muscular chest was barely covered by a flashy jacket open in the front. In other words, both male and female bodies are sexualized (O'Connor, 1998: 57-58).

Indeed, the constrained energy and sexuality of traditional Irish dance is emancipated in the spectacle of *Riverdance*. In contrast with traditional Irish dancing, which prohibits physical contact, Michael Flatley and Jean Butler dance closely in the original *Riverdance* and their duet is often characterized as “sexy,” anticipating Flatley-Page’s erotic execution in “Firedance” in the full show. This spectacle of energy is further magnified by sound effects, as microphones are attached to the dancers’ shoes. In this way the dancers’ bodily movements are technologized as spectacle (O'Connor, 1998: 59; Wulff, 2003b: 198). To maximize the spectacular effect already translated into sounds, *Riverdance* enlists a large group of dancers (O'Connor, 1998: 56), leading to the show’s “signature” chorus line that concludes each dance in the Broadway style on the one hand, and in a choreographic parade which creates a resonant “imagined community” to seal the “national brand” on the other. Other than resorting to group dance to fill the large stage, the lead dancers often traverse the stage rather than dancing on a limited space as did traditional Irish dancers. Michael Flatley, especially, often characterizes himself as “flying” on stage (Flatley & Thompson, 2006: 103, 203, *sic passim*).

### III.

In packaging itself as a “new respectable Irishness” with global and spectacular appeal for the world audience to consume and for the Irish people to adopt, *Riverdance* is remarkably sanitized in that it is devoid of political signifiers (N. Casey, 2002: 12), or the negative aspects of national stereotypes. Indeed, despite its celebration of Irish emigrants’ suffering and triumph, the show never explores the hostility Irish migrants found in the New World.

Instead, historical conflict with other ethnic groups, most notably African Americans (Kenny, 2000: 66-67), is subsumed into worldly multiculturalism and a solidarity between the Irish and the blacks (Eagan, 2006: 30). Long-standing domestic problems such as sectarian violence, colonial rule and internecine division are also absent from the show, even though they are central to Irish history. The farthest the more politically adamant *The Celtic Tiger* (Michael Flatley's production in 2005) can go are "The Bloody Sunday" and "Easter Rising." These two traumatic events, however, wistfully lead to "A Nation Once Again," which totally circumvents the "unfinished business" which has disturbed the Irish people for nearly eighty years.

Given the show's inclination to subsume historical trauma to satisfy the demands of a global, cultural tourism market, it is tempting to characterize *Riverdance* as a product operating in the "logic of the market" (Sherlock, 1999: 214). Indeed, the show's rapid rise to world renown could be understood, in Anthony Giddens's terms, as expansionist and competitive typical of capitalist enterprises (qtd. in Foley, 2001: 40). Expanding from a seven-minute interval act in the Eurovision Song Contest in Dublin in 1994, *Riverdance* became such an enormous success in 1995 that by the time it opened in the Radio City in 1996, it was declared "officially a phenomenon" (Marks, 1996b). In the meantime, it cloned itself into two major "brand-name" companies, when Michael Flatley left the original *Riverdance* in 1995 for "complete artistic control" (qtd. in Cowley, 1996) and set up his own "brand" *Lord of the Dance*, and numerous "counterfeit" dancing groups arose to compete in the market (Cinnéide, 2002: 133-134). This split subsequently spawned six "flying squads" which went on global tours—three (reduced to two from 2002 through 2007) from the original *Riverdance* (Help, n.d.), and three from *Lord of the Dance*. Within four years of its debut, more than 2,000 shows were staged worldwide to an audience exceeding 6.2 million (N. Casey, 2002: 11). Today 18 million people have seen *Riverdance* live in 30 countries across four continents (Did you know, n.d.),

and *Lord of the Dance* has entertained 50 million people in 60 "countries on five continents (Facts, n.d.). In addition, more than 19 million copies of CDs, DVDs and video tapes of *Riverdance* and *Lord of the Dance* have been sold (Did you know, n.d.; Touring history, n.d.)

All these statistics indicate that *Lord of the Dance* has won the competition in the world market, but it is the original company that enjoys state sanction. As I have suggested, *Riverdance*'s self-conscious intention to be a showcase of Irish culture accords with President Robinson's policy of promoting modern Ireland by cultural tourism. The president's endorsement goes some way toward explaining why *Riverdance*'s achievement was officially measured by its contribution to tourism and the nation's role in world economy: it received a subsidy from Bord Fáilte in 1998 (Dunne, 1998), was invited to perform live at the opening of the European Central Bank in Frankfurt in July in the same year, and won the third annual Dublin Tourism Business Award in 2000 for having created "unprecedented international publicity for Dublin," whose "ripple effect" the city was still feeling (Business this week 1, 2000). Michael Flatley, on the other hand, seemed to be less well received by the Irish people for all his tremendous success in the world market in general, and in North America in particular. Indeed, despite his competitive cultural expression as well as strong embodiment of the Irish emigrant's triumphant homecoming, Irish critics considered his rendition of Irish culture to be more American than Irish, more egoistic than national, more commercial than cultural (Dezell, 2002: 190). Natasha Casey, for instance, in her 1997 review for *Daily Telegraph* characterizes her experience of watching *Lord of the Dance* as "a perverse if ignoble" pleasure, indeed an "embarrassing" delight at viewing "a monster ego run riot" (1997). In the same year Fintan O'Toole condemned *Lord the Dance* as "a cultural idiocy" derived from "a knowing, post-modern Irishness tip[ping] over to the packaged, de-politicised, de-contextualised Celticism," which becomes an attractive product "selling Ireland-without-tears" (O'Toole, 1997a:

153).

The castigation on *Lord of the Dance* suggests that, in the presence of a spectacle which tends to “subvert the system and formulate alternatives” (Manning, 1992: 294), the system will not yield ground readily to alternatives; instead, it takes on the form of cultural orthodoxy to reassert its rightful place by interrogating the show’s authenticity. In this regard *Riverdance*, as *Lord of the Dance*’s contesting cultural performance (Wilson & Donnan, 2006: 92), did not fare much better even though it received official sanction. Indeed, many Irish critics worried about the erosion of tradition in view of *Riverdance*’s race against time and money. As early as 1995, in advance of the Eurovision, “lobby groups” expressed concerns to RTE that Moya Doherty’s interval piece would spawn a form of “dirty dancing” (qtd. in Cinnéide, 2002: 151). Taking stock of Irish culture as the new millennium approached, Robert O’Byrne, in turn, was apprehensive about Ireland’s future. He took to task *Riverdance* for “toy[ing] with Irish cultural history” in a “carefully homogenized format which avoids any real engagement with the subject.” In taking the past as “a comfort blanket,” he suggested, *Riverdance* was “rooted in pastiche” (O’Byrne, 1999). These critiques of *Riverdance*’s “kitsch content and presentation” call attention to the show’s association with tourism: glitz and postcard (Rains, 2007: 134), as a 1997 review comments: “The hugely popular dance show billed as a celebration of Irish culture drowns in glitz, flashing lights, skimpy costumes, postcard projections of lurid sunsets, a ludicrous narration” (*Riverdance—More glitz than green*, 1997). Echoing Jameson’s postmodern “de-differentiation” of culture and economics, O’Connor describes *Riverdance* as part of “a discourse which sees culture as becoming increasingly commodified,” but only to side with the show’s harsh reviewers by examining the dire consequences of its design for global consumption: “Within this scenario, local cultural expression is appropriated by cultural entrepreneurs for the global marketplace and in the process loses its authenticity” (O’Connor, 1998: 52). This loss of cultural

authenticity is probably the cause of Fintan O'Toole's lament that nostalgia is impossible in the era of global culture, where memory is saturated with globalized media images. So is return, as the homeland has become an "ex-isle, a place gone forever" (O'Toole, 1997b: 90-91). This is exactly the sentiment of Peter Quinn, who is dismayed to find his homeland peopled by gibberish (qtd. in Finn, 1997). In view of the gap between reality and its representation, *Riverdance's* staged closure of immigration with homecoming is at best "naïve optimism" provided by popular culture (Gibbons, 2002: 92-94).

This concern with authenticity, or what Arjun Appadurai would have called the "anxieties of the global" (2000: 3), is not unproblematic. For one thing, it conflates authenticity with tradition, totally eliding the fact that authenticity is arbitrary, since tradition is always invented, a fact testified by the evolution of Irish dancing. For another, there is a poignant Irish need to recover kitsch despite its superficiality. As David Lloyd suggests, the deracinating and alienating effects of capitalism is most felt in Irish communities, whose history is punctuated by colonialism, dislocation and immigration. In this context, kitsch articulates both a desire for connection, and the impossibility of restoring or maintaining such connection. Therefore, kitsch becomes "the congealed memory of traumas too intimate and too profound to live over without stylization and attitude" (Lloyd, 1999: 92). The overinvestment of ubiquitous kitsch, in this regard, registers a "surfeit of memory" against "the fear of forgetting" to constitute what Andrea Huyssen calls "memory discourses" (2000: 22, 28). This desire for connection and need to live over trauma explains why kitsch, along with other cultural tourist products, is always consumed with sincerity by the Irish people. It also explains why Irish heritage industry manages to restore the later-generation Irish immigrants' connection with the motherland by mobilizing "usable pasts," in spite of its "shallow" stylization and global appeal, to create "productive memory" (Huyssen, 2000: 22). To use the idioms of tourism studies, national "icons" on the "front stage" of

the tourist site might be superficial, but then the so-called “back-stage authenticity” is to be defined by the tourist (Cohen, 1988; Edelheim, 2005: 258), in the present case, the Irish people in diaspora.

Given this sincerity of consumption on the part of Irish Americans, it is premature to dismiss *Riverdance* along with Irish cultural tourism altogether. If Ireland has become an “ex-isle” gone forever as O’Toole laments, it is also recognized that the map of Ireland has been reconfigured, along with the emergence of global Irishness, from “the map of a place” to “a map of the journey of its people” (O’Toole, 1997b: 93). Following O’Toole’s line of argument, I would suggest that Ireland can be said to have returned in a transformed shape, together with cultural tourist products such as *Riverdance*, which bears an uncanny resemblance to its early form harbored by nationalist ideal. In its effort to cater to cultural tourists’ desire for authenticity, *Riverdance* stages authenticity by mobilizing tradition and technology into a globalized spectacle. This staged authenticity in turn triggers a new wave of quest for cultural authenticity. Indeed, learning Irish dance is fashionable after the show’s sudden popularity: not only do the Irish and Irish Americans partake of this trend, but students from other cultural backgrounds leap onto this bandwagon as well (M. R. Casey, 2006: 422-423). Along with this enthusiasm for Irish dance there is a revived interest in the Irish language; proficiency in the language is even required for admission to many Irish universities. This is ironic since Gaelic was pronounced dead by Reg Hindley in 1990 despite the state policy to incorporate it into secondary education. What is more, there is an upsurge in Irish studies in American universities, and those in Ireland are following suit (Burns, 1995; Finn, 1997). In other words, despite the risk of creating internal divisions, *Riverdance* also promises to induce “creative responses” (Greenwood, 1989: 184-185) to produce an “emergent authenticity” (Cohen, 1988: 380) of Irish culture. All these signs indicate that Ireland is making a detour, through what Appadurai delineates as “grassroots globalization” (2000: 6-8),

toward a national longing that has been thwarted in the 1960s. This detour testifies to Anthony Smith's observation that national culture, whose nature is changing notwithstanding, is not to be absorbed by the homogenizing forces of globalization (1990: 188). For *Riverdance*'s showcase of Ireland on tour is probably no less authentic than "traditional Ireland," if we recognize that tradition and cultural identity are invented and reinvented all the time by people who traveled to and/or from Ireland, making the very notion of "authenticity" problematic in the first place.

## References

- Appadurai, A. (2000). Grassroots globalization and the research imagination. *Globalization*. Special Issue. *Public Culture*, 12, 1: 1-19.
- Barbash, F. (1996, March 3). An Irish spring in their steps: "Riverdance," the toast of London, comes to the U.S. *Washington Post*, p. G5.
- Breathnach, B. (1971). *Folk music and dances of Ireland*. Cork, Ireland: Mercier.
- Brennan, H. (1999). *The story of Irish dance*. Dingle, Ireland: Brandon.
- Brock, G. (1996, June 3). Ireland's "Queen Mary" seeks common ground in Britain—Interview. *The Times*, p. 6.
- Brown, T. (1985). *Ireland: A social and cultural history, 1922 to the present*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Burns, J. (1995, May 28). Troubled waters—Riverdance. *The Sunday Times*, p. 9/4.
- Business this week 1 (tourism): Tourism award for *Riverdance*. (2000, October 13). *Irish Times*. Retrieved August 21, 2007, from *NewsBank: Access U. K. & Ireland Newspapers*.
- Casey, M. R. (2006). Before *Riverdance*: A brief history of Irish step dancing in America. In J. J. Lee & M. R. Casey (Eds.), *Making the Irish American: History and heritage of the Irish in the United States* (pp. 417-425). New York: New York University Press.
- Casey, N. (1997, October 14). Irishness with nimble feet and an overblown ego. *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, p. B11.
- Casey, N. (2002). *Riverdance*: The importance of being Irish American. *New Hibernia Review*, 6, 4: 9-25.
- Cinnéide, B. Ó. (2002). *Riverdance: The phenomenon*. Dublin, Ireland: Blackhall.
- Cohen, E. (1988). Authenticity and commoditization in tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 15: 371-386.
- Cowley, J. (1996, October 1). Why I sacked Michael Flatley—interview. *The Times*, p. 15.

- Cullinane, J. P. (1994). Irish dance world-wide: Irish migrants and the shaping of traditional Irish dance. In P. O'Sullivan (Ed.), *The creative migrant* (pp. 192-220). London: Leicester University Press.
- Devlin, D. (Director). (1954). *The spell of Ireland*. New York: Celtic Films.
- Dezell, M. (2002). *Irish America: Coming into clover*. New York: Anchor.
- Did you know. (n.d.) *Riverdance*. Retrieved August 3, 2009, from <http://www.riverdance.com>
- Dréacht-Bunreacht/Draft Constitution*. (1937). Dublin, Ireland: Stationery Office.
- Dunne, J. (1998, January 13). Record pounds 40m is allocated to promote tourism in 1998: Bord Fáilte forecasts 9% in revenue after breaking pounds 2bn target last year. *Irish Times*. Retrieved August 21, 2007, from *NewsBank: Access U. K. & Ireland Newspapers*.
- Eagan, C. M. (2006). Still “black” and “proud”: Irish America and the racial politics of hibernophilia. In D. Negra (Ed.), *The Irish in us* (pp. 21-63). Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Edelheim, J. R. (2005). To experience the “real” Australia—A liminal authentic cultural experience. In C. Ryan & M. Aiken (Eds.), *Indigenous tourism: The commodification and management of culture* (pp. 247-259). Amsterdam: Elsevier.
- Facts. (n.d.). *Michael Flatley's Lord of the Dance* (unicorn entertainments). Retrieved August 3, 2009, from <http://www.lordofthedance.com>
- Finn, P. (1997, June 29). “Riverdance” and the Eire sensation: How America got its Irish up. *Washington Post*, p. G1.
- Flatley, M., & Thompson, D. (2006). *My story: Lord of the dance*. New York: Touchstone.
- Foley, C. (2001). Perception of Irish step dance: National, global, and local. *Dance Research Journal*, 33, 1: 34-45.
- Ford, J. (Director). (1952). *The quiet man*. Los Angeles: Republic

- Studios.
- Foster, R. F. (1988). *Modern Ireland: 1600-1972*. New York: Penguin.
- Gibbons, L. (2002). The global cure? History, therapy and the Celtic Tiger. In P. Kirby, L. Gibbons, & M. Cronin (Eds.), *Reinventing Ireland: Culture, society and the global economy* (pp. 89-106). London: Pluto.
- Goodman, J. (2000). *Single Europe, single Ireland?: Uneven development in process*. Dublin, Ireland: Irish Academic Press.
- Greenwood, D. J. (1989). Culture by the pound: An anthropological perspective on tourism as cultural commodification. In V. Smith (Ed.), *Hosts and guests: The anthropology of tourism* (2nd ed., pp. 171-185). Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Help. (n.d.). *Riverdance*. Retrieved August 3, 2009, from <http://www.riverdance.com/htm/nonsectional/faqs.php>
- Hindley, R. (1990). *The death of the Irish language: A qualified obituary*. London: Routledge.
- Hobsbawm, E. (1992a). Introduction. In E. Hobsbawm & T. Ranger (Eds.), *The invention of tradition* (pp. 1-14). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Hobsbawm, E. (1992b). Mass-producing traditions: Europe, 1870-1914. In E. Hobsbawm & T. Ranger (Eds.), *The invention of tradition* (pp. 263-307). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Honeymoon in Ireland*. (1959). N.p., Ireland: Rank Organization.
- Holton, R. J. (1998). *Globalization and the nation-state*. London: Macmillan.
- Huyssen, A. (2000). *Present pasts: Media, politics, amnesia*. *Globalization* (Special issue). *Public Culture*, 12, 1: 21-38.
- Jameson, F. (1998). Globalization as philosophical issue. In F. Jameson & M. Miyoshi (Eds.), *The cultures of globalization* (pp. 54-77). Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

- Kenny, K. (2000). *The American Irish: A history*. Harlow, UK: Longman.
- Lee, J. J. (1989). *Ireland 1912-1985: Politics and society*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Lee, J. J. (2007, June 13). Ireland—the first globalized society? Lecture at the Institute of European and American Studies, Academia Sinica, Taipei.
- Lloyd, D. (1999). The recovery of kitsch. In S. Deane (Ed.), *Ireland after history* (pp. 89-100). Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press.
- MacCannell, D. (1999). *The tourist*. New York: Schocken.
- MacSharry, R., & P. White. (2000). *The making of the Celtic Tiger: The inside story of Ireland's boom economy*. Cork, Ireland: Mercier.
- Manning, F. E. (1992). Spectacle. In R. Bauman (Ed.), *Folklore, cultural performances, and popular entertainments: A communications-centered handbook* (pp. 290-299). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Marks, P. (1996a, February 16). On stage and off—Ireland without clichés. *New York Times*, p. C2.
- Marks, P. (1996b, June 21). Radio city reprise for “Riverdance”. *New York Times*, p. C2.
- Miller, K. A. (1985). *Emigrants and exiles: Ireland and the Irish exodus to North America*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Mitchell, S. (1996, November 3). The jig is up. *Los Angeles Times*, p. 4.
- Moroney, M. (2000, September 2). After *Riverdance*: Tapping the motherlode: Documentary film-maker Alan Gilsonan found the world of Irish dancing a cold, cold place. *Irish Times*. Retrieved August 21, 2007, from *NewsBank: Access U. K. & Ireland Newspapers*.
- O’Byrne, R. (1999, January 2). IRT weekend: Backing into the future—In Ireland we haven’t even come to terms with the present, not to mention the new millennium. *Irish Times*.

- Retrieved August 21, 2007, from *NewsBank: Access U. K. & Ireland Newspapers*.
- O'Connor, B. (1998). "Riverdance." In M. Peillon & E. Slater (Eds.), *Encounters with modern Ireland* (pp. 51-60). Dublin, Ireland: Institute of Public Administration.
- O'Connor, B. (2003). "Come and daunce with me in Irland": Tourism, dance and globalisation. In M. Cronin & B. O'Connor (Eds.), *Irish tourism* (pp. 122-138). Clevedon, UK: Channel View.
- O'Toole, F. (1997a). *The ex-isle of Erin*. Dublin, Ireland: New Island.
- O'Toole, F. (1997b). Perpetual motion. In P. Brennan & C. de Saint Phalle (Eds.), *Arguing at the crossroads: Essays on a changing Ireland* (pp. 77-97). Dublin, Ireland: New Island.
- Peillon, M. (2002). Culture and state in Ireland's new economy. In P. Kirby, L. Gibbons, & M. Cronin (Eds.), *Reinventing Ireland: Culture, society and the global economy* (pp. 38-53). London: Pluto.
- Rains, S. (2007). *The Irish-American in popular culture 1945-2000*. Dublin, Ireland: Irish Academic Press.
- Report of the committee on Irish language attitudes and research*. (1975). Dublin, Ireland: CILAR.
- Riverdance Finale. (n.d.). *Riverdance*. Retrieved August 3, 2009, from [http://www.riverdance.com/html/theshow/scene\\_scene/riverdance\\_finale.htm](http://www.riverdance.com/html/theshow/scene_scene/riverdance_finale.htm)
- Riverdance*—More glitz than green. (1997, January 13). *Boston Globe*, p. 7.
- Sherlock, J. I. (1999). Globalisation, western culture and *Riverdance*. In A. Brah, M. J. Hickman, & M. M. an Ghail (Eds.), *Thinking identities: Ethnicity, racism and culture* (pp. 205-218). Basingstoke, UK: Macmillan.
- Smith, A. D. (1990). Towards a global culture? *Theory, Culture & Society*, 7, 2-3: 171-191.
- Smyth, S. (1996). *Riverdance: The story*. London: Andre Deutsch.

- Theodores, D. (1996). Report: A dance critic in Ireland. *Dance Chronicle*, 19, 2: 191-211.
- Touring history. (n.d.). *Michael Flatley's Lord of the Dance* (unicorn entertainments, 4 pars.). Retrieved August 3, 2009, from <http://www.lordofthedance.com>
- Urry, J. (2002). *The tourist gaze* (2nd ed.). London: Sage.
- Wilson, T. M., & H. Donnan. (2006). *The anthropology of Ireland*. Oxford, UK: Berg.
- Wulff, H. (2003a). The Irish body in motion: Moral politics, national identity and dance. In N. Dyck & E. P. Archetti (Eds.), *Sport, dance and embodied identities* (pp. 179-196). Oxford, UK: Berg.
- Wulff, H. (2003b). Steps on screen: Technoscapes, visualization and globalization in dance. In C. Garsten & H. Wulff (Eds.), *New technologies at work: People, screens and social virtuality* (pp. 187-204). Oxford, UK: Berg.
- Wulff, H. (2005). Memories in motion: The Irish dancing body. *Body & Society*, 11, 4: 45-62.

行旅天下愛爾蘭：  
〈大河之舞〉、愛爾蘭離散經驗、克爾特之虎

林玉珍

國立中山大學外國語文學系  
80424 高雄市鼓山區蓮海路70號  
E-mail: yuchen@mail.nsysu.edu.tw

摘 要

本文結合歷史觀點與文化研究，將〈大河之舞〉視為克爾特之虎現象的表徵，其內容與形式，在在呼應愛爾蘭揮別國族創傷、邁向經濟競爭、以因應全球化的國策。值得注意的是，全球化的原始形式深植於愛爾蘭文化之中。遠在當今所謂全球化時代之前，愛爾蘭舞蹈即因人口流動而廣為吸納外來形式，後來更在境內外文化國族主義活動交互激盪之餘，開始帶有國族色彩。在此時期移民舞者不僅在移居國推廣愛爾蘭舞蹈、與主導舞蹈走向的國內官方分庭抗禮，更在一九六〇年末期開始返國參加舞蹈競技。此時愛爾蘭正值文化記憶修訂，繼而結合傳統與商業，打造文化觀光業，〈大河之舞〉即為箇中翹楚，將傳統舞蹈包裝為現代愛爾蘭的展示櫥窗。以此觀點，〈大河之舞〉最發人深省之處，在於全球化風潮下，國族主義現象該如何重新界定。

**關鍵詞：**〈大河之舞〉、愛爾蘭離散經驗、克爾特之虎、全球化、文化觀光