

Dr. Martina Cleary – Extract from PhD Dissertation

The Photograph As a Site of Mnemonic Return (2017) (pages 86-109)

CHAPTER 4 – PHASE III/ THE SUITCASE ARCHIVE

They glide like birds, single and in groups over the roads.
(Dorothea Lange's field notes from Ireland 1954)

Starting Points Phase III

In Spring 2015, following my final research trip to Paris, I brought Phase II to completion. I felt I had gained sufficient knowledge of the theories and aesthetic approaches informing my practice, to address the broader scope of my topic, and the potential of the photograph to operate as a site of mnemonic return on a collective level. To do this my pre-existing archive of images and conversational partner would be Dorothea Lange, and a series of images she created in Ireland in 1954. I selected this portfolio by Lange for a number of reasons. Firstly, it was relatively unknown in Lange's overall production and was therefore relevant material for the potential discovery of new knowledge at PhD level. Secondly this work was created within the context of the local community where I currently live, and was therefore both accessible and relevant as material for potential fieldwork. Finally, I saw in Lange's work an archive which bridged the divide between personal and collectively shared ideas of place, memory and identity, invested in the photographic image.

Lange visited Ireland in September 1954 on a six-week assignment for *Life* Magazine. She was fifty-nine years of age, and it was her first trip outside of America. Moving west from Dublin, she based herself at the Old Ground Hotel in Ennis, in County Clare, and hired a car to travel out daily into local villages and townlands to document rural existence as she found it. She was accompanied by her son Daniel Dixon, who was to write a photo essay for her images in the final article. Prior to visiting Ireland, Lange read *The Irish Countryman*, a book written in 1937 by the Harvard academic and anthropologist Conrad Arensberg. His text was based on observations made during a year of field studies in the small village of Lough in North-West Clare. Linda Gordon in her autobiography on Lange, *A Life Beyond Limits*, (2009, p.370) notes that in Ireland Lange was searching for something of the rural unspoiled relationship between people, community and the land that marked her project on Mormon life in America. Her photo-essay on rural Irish existence was the second in a series of four, commissioned for *Life* magazine in the 1950's, beginning with *Three Mormon Towns*, which she completed with Ansel Adams in 1953. However, as Linda Gordon (ibid., p.367) notes, there were a number of problems with her work for *Life*. Two of her four projects were ultimately rejected completely, and a definite sense of nostalgia permeated all of the images selected for publication. As Gordon observes of the article on Ireland, there was a certain "family-farm romance" about it, and the "mawkish captions" written by the magazine staffers, whose writing was selected instead of Dixon's, only added to the problem. Gordon also maintains that Lange's preparation for her Irish visit included devising a list of topical symbolic, descriptive and analytic categories, including emigration, congregations, the temperament, the weather, the church, the creamers and the fair, along with technical specifications including angle of view on her subjects. Lange also found and concentrated on a number of families during her visit, including the O'Hallorans of Inagh, in central County Clare, whose two daughters were about to emigrate to America,

and the inhabitants of the farmstead of Michael Kenneally, who was over time to become the most iconic subject in this body of work. During her six-week stay in Ireland Lange shot 2,400 images, but only nineteen of these were published by *Life Magazine*. The rest of this large portfolio has remained largely unknown, buried in the archives of the Oakland Museum of California. Gerry Mullins, an Irish freelance journalist living in San Francisco, discovered the work by chance while searching for an Irish interest item for the *Gael* newspaper in the early 1990's. His book *Dorothea Lange's Ireland (1998)*, is the first and only comprehensive published collection on Lange's Irish work, and includes one hundred and six images, with accompanying articles by both Mullins and Dixon.

In a recent interview I conducted with Mullins (2014), he described his rationale in selecting and sequencing Lange's images in his book. Starting with Michael Kenneally and his mother, Mullins chose photographs which he felt traced the typical path of many Irish emigrants, from the rural homestead, to the country town, to the big city, whether in Ireland or abroad. He seemed to have a particular attachment to Michael Kenneally and described him as the real embodiment of the Irish Countryman, as described by Arensberg. Kenneally is, according to Mullins, the signifier of something which hasn't changed about life in the West of Ireland, something that can stand apart from the harsh and often soulless corporate-driven environment of contemporary urban existence. While Lange is most renowned as a great documentary photographer, who demonstrated a remarkable ability to quickly empathize with and intimately portray the unique human circumstance of her subjects, Mullins claims that in her Irish work she was also photographing the idea of a place. He concludes that in Ireland she was not searching for the particular in people, rather,

A portrait of the country itself, its population, its customs, its mores, its atmosphere, the texture of its life. In these things you don't approach individuals as individuals. You're thinking on a different level.

(Mullins 1998, p.11)

This idea of setting out to photograph a collectively shared idea of a place and people is of course problematic and complex. If we are indeed seeing in Lange's images of Ireland, the signification of something beyond the particulars of any one individual, fixed in time or place, how does the usual indexical register of the documentary image, which captures the particular so truthfully, become so porous, so infused with abstract qualities such as atmosphere, or notions of the texture of a way of life? This quality, I would argue, is rooted in the mechanisms of memory, where the perception of one individual moment is transcended, to become that of a collectively agreed upon, or felt sense of place, time and subjectivity, usually through retrospective analysis of the image. The photograph becomes a collective projection ground, or mnemonic environment, triggering often unexpected associations. And through the sharing of this expansion of memory, invested in the photographic trace, collective meaning can later be re-constructed.

It is important however to note that Arensberg's work, the starting point for Lange, was not without controversy in its descriptions of the nature of local life. His book about the rural community of Lough caused considerable offence existing right to the present day. This rejection of Arensberg, and the later resistance, silence, even indifference to Lange's Irish work, given her international reputation within the history of documentary photography, is I believe also indicative of certain difficulties met by many

photographers when representing this region of Ireland and its inhabitants. I will discuss this point in more detail in what follows, but begin with the premise that Lange's work in Ireland has become deeply enmeshed in the complexities of post-colonial memory, making it an ideal site to examine how the photograph operates as a site of collective mnemonic return.

Collective Memory and its photographic trace in the Irish Context

Justin Carville who has written extensively on the history of photography in Ireland, and also what he describes as Lange's documentary humanism in her Irish work, describes how the photograph is, in and of itself, outside of language. However, through the very nature of linguistic discourse, the image once subjected to its scrutiny, is drawn into the sphere of interpretation. It is here that the construction of meaning begins to form around familiar tropes, and also where memory influences how we actually see and understand the visual. Referencing Victor Burgin, Justin Carville (2009, p.202) notes that photographs rarely exist outside of language, as it permeates the visual, "through memory and snatches of words and images that continually intermingle and exchange one for the other." This process of exchange, or the circulation of signs through conscious or subconscious repetition is of course more disputed in post-colonial contexts. The visualization of the rural west of Ireland, a place long considered the last authentic stronghold of Irish cultural identity, is a case in point. When remembrance is politically disputed, the denotative quality of the documentary image has additional resonance, because of its illusory promise of providing a convincing version of the truth. As a mnemonic site or trigger, here the photograph also becomes politically useful as material for mnemonic reconstruction, or a possible intermediary ground to discover, even re-imagine what has been erased within dominant historical narratives. Lange's images of Ireland have provoked feelings of not only very deep attachment on a local level, but a strong rejection of their iconographic representation of the rural West in broader cultural circles. Influenced by Arensberg, and consistent thematic interests, her work in Ireland was somewhat predetermined and directed towards the pre-urban and pre industrial and pre-capitalist. As noted, she was searching in Ireland for something that had already vanished in America. Luke Gibbons (1996, p.39) describes such nostalgic evocations of an idealised past as resulting from 'a very distinctive form of longing; nostos, to return home,' caused by the loss of a sense of belonging. Justin Carville (2009, p.206) however sees a danger in anthropological studies such as *The Irish Countryman*, in their objectification of the Irish as the "primitive incarnate of Western Europe", spatially and temporally dislocated from the rest of the Western world. Drawing upon Adrian Peace's (1989, pp.89 -111) critique of this form of study, as collections of odd facts and curiosities which portray the idiosyncratic, irrational and odd attributes of their subjects, Carville describes Lange's photographs of Ireland as being already, "framed by an anthropological discourse", that depicted the Irish as culturally backward in comparison to other Europeans. Linda Gordon's observations would seem to concur with this criticism. She comments that although Lange did develop personal relationships with her subjects in Ireland,

Nothing roughed up her misty, romanticised take, not the arduous labour, the poverty, or the emigration of so many of County Clare's young to the United States.

(Gordon 2009, p.372)

This perspective on Ireland was reinforced, (granted against Lange's wishes), by the final text which accompanied the photo essay in *Life* magazine, describing the country as a place set apart, outside of time, of pure origin of the seed stock of many modern Americans. This framing of timelessness according to Carville, was symptomatic of an ongoing need to find, even invent a sense of authentic origins among a people displaced.

In his work, *Inauthentic – The Anxiety over Cultural Identity* (2004) Vincent J. Cheng examines some of the problems inherent in this search for authenticity. His analysis provides some important insights into why Lange's Irish work, and similar collections have been either completely ignored, or alternatively harshly critiqued in the broader cultural discourses on photography and identity in the Irish context. Cheng, a Joycean scholar influenced by post-colonial theory, describes the ongoing urgency within Irish cultural discourse to reconstitute a sense of shared collective identity and memory. He observes how certain stereotypical motifs, particularly those related to geographical locations in the West of Ireland have become part of the cultural baggage associated with the region, and one that travellers to Ireland usually carry with them. There are several examples of this in both historical and contemporary travelogues, that represent the people and places of Ireland through certain reoccurring types. Volumes such as Mrs S.C. Hall's *Ireland: Its Scenery Character, etc.* (1841-1843), or Clifton Johnson's *The Isle of the Shamrock* (1901) are typical of the travel journal of the gentleman scholar in Ireland, a trope dating back to the Elizabethan plantation era. Brian O'Dálaigh's *The Strangers Gaze – Travels in County Clare 1534 – 1950* (1998) and Glen Hooper's, *The Tourist's Gaze: Travellers in Ireland 1800-2000* (2001), include numerous examples of travel writing, from William Thackeray to Samuel Reynolds Hole and Heinrich Boll, that represent the rural Irish in a particular light. These texts collectively inform the creation of the memory of place, popularizing certain reoccurring cultural stereotypes, which could be considered racist. Cheng (2004, p.30) observes how Joyce parodies this tradition in the figure of Haines in *Ulysses*, who "reflects one discourse, that of the colonizer, that fashions Irish character and identity as one of otherness". Like other native or indigenous people, within this ethnographic construction, the Irish were viewed as one of the primitive races, wild, defined by alterity and beyond the civilised boundaries of empire. By depicting the local community as innately backward, trapped in time, beyond the social and political space, justifications could be made for the denial of political autonomy and self-governance. As Murray (2006, p. 19) notes,

Justification for the mission of saving the Irish, from themselves, was based on conceptions of barbarism, ignorance, paganism and inferiority. These representations of the uncivilised 'other' were early examples of racialisation and Ireland proved to be no exception. [And] 'Whiteness' equated with a homogeneous way of life without boundaries and exclusions bears some deconstruction in the case of the Irish. It can be problematised, on the basis of religion, where the Protestant migrants to Britain were not subject to the discourses of racism or discrimination that Catholics were.

In addition to initial acts of physical violence during colonization, a secondary form of occupation, through cultural propaganda, insinuated itself at a deeper level, through a psychological disenfranchisement, or alienation from a sense of an authentic self, which included the suppression of

the native language. The psychological implications of this process are of course manifold. They include not only gaps, disassociations and repressions within collective memory narratives, but a split with the individual identity and psyche, alienated from language, place and sense of authentic identity. As Cheng notes, the nationalist agenda was about,

Wresting back the power to define oneself and one's own national identity...in order to combat the pejorative labels of an imperialist English discourse of Irishness, in response to the anxiety of a loss of subjectivity and self-representation.

(Cheng 1995, p. 30)

There was, according to Kiberd (1996), a vested political interest amongst the newly emerging agricultural middle class in particular, in maintaining the status quo, including a pastoral subset that would remain subservient to a new form of ascendancy. In this process the preservation of an ideal of a noble but pure Irish peasant, a suffering but stoic man of the land, of simple faith, in superstitious commune with a quasi-mystical, even other realm, was needed to produce a new variant on an old political hegemony. Kieberd describes how,

...the emerging Irish middle-class installed the landless peasant, the superannuated aristocrat and the urban poor as the bearers of an updated mythology. The notion of a timeless peasant, like the dream of an ahistorical nobility, was a fantasy purveyed by the new élites who had seized the positions of power in towns and cities.

(Kieberd 1996, p. 483)

In this respect, any attempt to romanticise the rural life of the 1950's Irish farmer is contentious, because there is a danger it will either revive pejorative racist tropes, or play into a conservative nationalist agenda. Cheng also notes, that in constructing this new nationalist ideology, with its reinvention of the memory of the rural west, the histories of women and of the labour movement, were carefully excised from the records. When Lange visited Ireland in 1954, she seemed to be looking back nostalgically to a form of rural society described by Arensberg, that many Irish people even then found problematic.

Mac Laughlin (2001) notes how Irish Nationalism, like the nationalist movements of several small European states had its ideological roots in the French Revolution, which led to Romantic revivalist aspirations and the foundation of post-revolutionary democracies. However, in Ireland so geographically close to its colonizing neighbour, nationalism was to take on a particularly separatist nature, defining itself in opposition to a dominant mainland culture. However, it would also be characterised, according to Mac Laughlin by the assimilation or replacement of the British colonial model in Ireland, by an equally stratified class system, serving certain groups rather than collective political aims. He comments, (ibid, p 173)

These social groups reinforced their capacity to survive and prosper by literally sinking deep roots into the very soil of Catholic Ireland. They forged a national and regionally specific historical consciousness which stressed the importance of the family farm, and the centrality of private property, both to the survival of Catholic society and to the future of the nation-state in Ireland.

Mac Laughlin's analysis of the post Famine era, is scathing in pointing out the hypocrisy of this new hegemony, which professed collective nationalist ideals while pursuing highly individualistic, and self-serving goals. He notes how these groups were the first to benefit from the emptying of the land through starvation and mass emigration in the mid 19th Century. Further, in periods where emigration eased,

the threat of both urban and rural unrest, evident in grassroots movements for social reform, which could address ideological principles of nationhood, or nationalism, was something highly undesired by the aforementioned groups. He observes (ibid, p. 178) that while between one-third and one-half of the country's youth were forced to emigrate in the period 1855-1914, this went largely un-addressed from within the rural and professed nationalist communities most impacted.

This sector did not lament the passing of traditional Ireland as a result of emigration but tolerated it because it eased pressure on family farms, halted the drift towards farm fragmentation, and made room for 'graziers and their bullocks' throughout the length and breadth of Catholic Ireland.

Therefore, the foundations for an increasingly isolationist, conservative, provincial nation-state, based on Catholic values and church control, which idealised a rural way of life, governed by increasingly puritanical views, was put into place in the formative years of the Irish Free State. The growing disillusionment of writers such as W.B Yeats, who led the Celtic Revival as a literary nationalist movement, is palpable in poems such as *September 2013*, or the later *Easter 2016*, where the sombre realization of the disparity between ideological aims and political reality dawns. Yeats railed against what the dream of nationhood in Ireland was becoming, under the leadership of what Mac Laughlin refers to as the 'shopocracy', the church and a class of middle men (teachers, guards, clerks) that were gaining political foothold and often extending this based upon the disenfranchisement of those forced off the land, while also absorbing the redistribution of landed gentry estates in the first years of Irish government. It was into this context that Lange arrived in 1954. The Ireland she sought was already contested ground, but her uncritical search for representations of the rural farmer, his pure existence on the land, his religious Catholic devotion, and the centrality of the family homestead, tapped into problematic iconographic tropes, tainted by a growing disillusionment with new state. Works such as Patrick Kavanagh's *The Great Hunger* (1942), or Myles na gCopaleen's, *An Béal Bocht* (1941) rather than Conrad Arensberg's *The Irish Countryman*, would perhaps have been more appropriate places to gain insight into the contemporary socio-political situation with regard to rural Irish existence. In this light, Lange's work could be seen as perpetuating a questionable symbolic economy. Edward Said (1990, p 74), in discussing the dilemma of nationalism in relation to post-colonial politics in Ireland, also observes in his writings on W.B. Yeats that,

For all its success in ridding many countries and territories of colonial overlords, nationalism has remained, in my opinion, a deeply problematic ideological, as well as socio-political, enterprise. At some stage in the anti-resistance phase of nationalism there is a sort of dependence between the two sides of the contest, since after all many of the nationalist struggles were led by bourgeoisies that were partly formed and to some degree produced by the colonial power; these are the national bourgeoisies of which Fanon spoke so ominously. These bourgeoisies in effect have often replaced the colonial force with a new class-based and ultimately exploitative force; instead of liberation after decolonization one simply gets the old colonial structures replicated in new national terms.

David Lloyd (2001) in his analysis of post-colonialism in Ireland, also recommends the use of two concepts from the recent theories of Homi Bhabha, in particular the ideas of hybridity and temporality. Here, history according to Lloyd should not be viewed as one linear progression, rather as a complexity of often parallel events heading at different rates towards significant convergence points. As an illustrative example of this in the Irish context, Lloyd (ibid. p 15) draws upon Margaret Mac Curtain's discussion of the Irish Revolutionary Nationalist Countess Markievicz, who discussed how several influencing factors

informed the 1916 uprising. These included the efforts of decolonization, the women's movement and industrialization. However, the latter two were as Lloyd points out, "superseded almost entirely by the subordination of a narrow version of the nationalist project", by the political forces that would found the Free State. This process is described as one of occlusion, or a falling out of visibility and representation, of certain groups and interests, who were denied access to the emergent systems of political power, and subsequently excluded or written out of historiography. Importantly, Lloyd states that (ibid, p 16),

The work of postcolonial projects is to split apart the conjunction between the nation-state and its history, opening space for the recovery and articulation of alternative narratives.

In this respect it is crucial to challenge stage propaganda in all its forms. Drawing upon the theories of Fanon, Lloyd also notes how the drive towards individualistic gain of the emerging middle class only arrested the true revolutionary spirit of nationalism, becoming instead an early facilitator of global capitalist mechanisms in Ireland. Geraldine Moane in her article on 'Colonialism and the Celtic Tiger' (2017) concurs on this point, describing how native elites in the early days of the Free State, simply replaced the older colonial structures, perpetuating a system of social inequalities and economic exclusion that evidences itself right to the present day in the most extreme forms of the Celtic Tiger excesses, a phenomenon caused and exacerbated by global capitalism. Interestingly Moane also focuses on the psychological legacy of colonial history in Ireland, noting how unresolved trauma has formed a prevalent culture of 'doublethink'. This has allowed for both individual and collective blindness to several forms of abuse, denial and silencing, including financial, physical and sexual abuse perpetuated by state and religious institutions right to the present day. Moane also identifies a range of pathologies, which she maintains directly relate to the legacy of colonialism. Among these she lists; the loss of the native language, with implications for consciousness, creativity and identity; very high levels of drug and alcohol consumption; distortions of sexuality due to oppressive interference of the church in state politics, which also includes an obsessional need to control the female body, and the displacement of anger through horizontal hostility mechanisms, manifested as passive aggression, non-cooperation and racism. Drawing upon recent writing by Fintan O'Toole (1996) Moane also discusses how an ongoing sense of individual alienation from the State, has led to a disregard for common laws and rules, which manifests in everything from common disregard for road safety regulations to littering the natural environment. As the system is still viewed as external, or rule from outside, it is not fully accepted as our own. A more effective strategy would perhaps be, as Lloyd recommends (2001, p 17), to apply post-colonial analysis as a means to interrogate collusion between colonial forms of control and nationalism as a State mechanism,

For it is not simply a question of the extent to which nationalism replicates the political and institutional forms of the imperial state, enabling its continuity in the forms of a 'neo-colonialism', as has been noted by Reynaldo Ileto (1997) of the Philippines, or by Partha Chatterjee (1986) on India, or by many scholars working on Ireland. It is, moreover, that the work of decolonization itself is interrupted in the occlusion of the multiple modes of resistance that emerged and continue to merge on the interfaces of domination and insurgence.

Nationalism is here distrusted, as potentially yet another mechanism of a conservative state, and post-colonial projects are viewed as a critical position from which to examine modes of memory, and the memorialization transmitted by historical account, including resistances to what is officially sanctioned,

supported or silenced. A final point here on the persistence of silences within memory and its narration in the Irish context. These are acknowledged by Lloyd as often being intrinsically linked to political necessity, sectarianism, and the ongoing threat of violence, particularly in the Northern Irish context. As Moane also observes (2001, p 114), the silence around the traumatic legacy of colonialism in Ireland is an ongoing issue, for example collective discussion of the Irish Famine, only began to enter public discourse and rituals of commemoration in the 1990's, and memories of the Irish Civil War (1922-23), are still relatively untouched.

Justin Carville (2011) also draws our attention to the fact that claims to photographically represent the Irish as a collective identity or race is also contentious. This is because photography in Ireland was linked to social class, status and mechanisms of post-colonial control. Apart from being an expensive hobby of the landed gentry, photography was rarely accessible to the ordinary people. It was also routinely used to record prisoners, rebels and agitators and as Carville notices, it came to be distrusted because it was used as a tool to serve a colonial agenda whereby,

The photographic documentation of the Irish face thus required supplementary characteristics to emphasize visible difference from the Anglo-Saxon. Compiled in different types of albums to those crafted in the Big Houses, photographs turned the deviancy of the Irish face in on itself in an attempt to discipline the unruly appearance of Irish physiognomy. The deviant face was photographically transformed into the face of the deviant.

(Carville 2011, p. 94)

By the early 20th century a catalogue of Irish types had also evolved to serve a growing tourist industry. Here certain favourites were consistently repeated, including the Irish Fisherman, Spinning Woman and Colleen (ibid, p99). This form of ethnographic tourism is evident in even the earliest colour photographs taken in Ireland by Marguerite Mespoulet and Madeline Mignon-Alba, who recorded life in the Claddagh district of Galway. More systematically and forensically, it was applied by Charles R. Browne, in his quantitative analysis of the phrenology of inhabitants of the Aran Islands, and western counties, where photography was used as empirical evidence to support an idea of racial types. The technical and aesthetic conventions of this form of photography, are easily recognizable. The objective, and objectifying gaze of the camera is used to set the subject apart from context, classifying them as something other than the civilised norm of polite cultured society. There are recognizably similar conventions in operation in Charcot's visual Iconography of the Salpêtrière, (referenced in Phase II above), and the construction of racial/ethnic typologies. The subject is centrally placed, parallel to the camera, often in full body composition and evenly light against a neutral backdrop. Whether the gaze of the subject looks out directly to engage or avoid the camera, and thereby the gaze of the viewer was often used, along with an analysis of facial features, to categorize the subjects psychological or moral disposition. Many images in this style are also labelled with generic rather than personal labels.

The formal language of this kind of photography is echoed in early documentary photography, and Lange worked in a time when objective and objectifying modes of practice were the norm, even the mark of competence within the medium. However, what is different in the Irish work I would argue is its historical context. Lange's style, technique and thematic interest, trigger very uncomfortable mnemonic associations. Her image of the young girl Bridie O'Halloran was one which caused the most unease

within the local community when first published by Mullins. In my interview with him in (2014), he recounted how the fact the little girl was wearing a potato sack, sewn into a simple dress, was a point of local shame as recently as 1998. Inspired by his publication, the American filmmaker Deirdre Lynch in her award winning film *Photos to Send* (2002), also documented some of the contemporary reactions to Lange's work. Through revisiting and interviewing surviving subjects or their descendants, Lynch uncovered autobiographical memories, which were then overlaid with original recordings from interviews with both Lange and Dixon. In one sequence of Lynch's film, we hear Lange describe a particular man she encountered on an Irish country road. The sentimentality of her expression in this audio recording is remarkably patronizing, showing little understanding of the reality of Irish rural existence in the 1950's. It is as though she is in love with an idea but luckily her camera documents the reality. I would argue that several of Lange's images also trigger what Marianne Hirsch (2012) has termed post memory, because they mnemonically resonate, even echo visual photographic typologies. Whether these were constructed under the colonial agenda to deliberately and systematically misrepresent the rural Irish as innately backward, ignorant, and deserving of their lot, or the later nationalist propaganda, which eulogized the noble peasant, they still provoke strong critique. The work I believe also captures a certain performance of identity to camera, or an idea of Irish identity, as staged or parodied, for the outsider's gaze. Cheng, in his analysis of the inter-relationship between the visitor Haines, and the native Duck Mulligan, in Joyce's *Ulysses*, notes how,

Mulligan understands the paradoxes of commodification and the ethnographic mentality, as he entertains the Englishman.... he understands what the ethnographic discourse is looking for (and its structural indistinguishability from reproducible parody).

(Cheng 2004, p. 34)

The performance of identity to camera in the rural Irish context, is often exactly this, a performance which is so well remembered and internalised, it can be difficult to distinguish performance from reality. There is a sense though in these moments, both from behind and in front of the camera, from one Irish subject to another that something is not quite real in the moment. It's usually when the performance ends that glimpses of something else can be seen.

Practice Based Research in Phase III

During initial work in Phase III, I began by re-visiting and re-photographing many of Lange's themes and places. In doing this I found the influence of memory was ever present, in how subjects were presenting themselves to the camera, and also in my own decision making processes on what and how to photograph. I decided quite early that I wasn't interested in reconstructing scenes with surviving subjects or their descendants, as this had been done, by photographers such as Chris Wallis, John Kelly and of course Deirdre Lynch. Instead I began to consider her choice of sites and events and using similar strategies to those applied to Breton and Boiffard began a form of psychogeographical wandering, using what was available to me in Gerry Mullin's book, along with copies of original contact sheets Mullins had given to the Clare County Archives. I appropriated certain formal and aesthetic strategies from Lange's work, to aesthetically push my practice towards conventional documentary modes. I realised at this stage that Lange's images were in a real way becoming sites of personal

mnemonic return, because they held traces of a time and way of life existing at the threshold of my awareness, through first memories of place, of home, of family, of stories attached to fragments of photos kept in family albums. As an emigrant recently returned to Ireland, the pathos of her work was strengthened by a sense of personal exile. There was something in Lange work which reminded me of origins, but at the same time this nostalgia was problematic.

Gaston Bachelard, in *The Poetics of Space* (1958) connects the formation of identity to early kinaesthetic memories of the first place of dwelling. The first home he believed is imprinted within us, through the memory of the material fabric of the intimate spaces of our personal lives. The sights, sounds, smells, and even spatial layout of our first home is something we carry within us, as a foundation for deep memory and a rootedness within individual being in the world. Here the first home functions as the shelter for the development of individuality, memory and the ability to dream. The more securely our memories are attached to this first shelter according to Bachelard, the more stable or permanent they are. Bachelard's metaphysics of being therefore, links the formation of self, consciousness and memory, to the physical attributes of the first home, as a definitive site. He describes this phenomenon:

Something closed must retain our memories while leaving them their original value as images. Memories of the outside world will never have the same tonality as those of home and, by recalling these memories, we add to our store of dreams; we are never real historians, but always near poets, and our emotion is perhaps nothing but an expression of a poetry that was lost.

(Bachelard 1958, p.6)

He uses the term topoanalysis to describe a process whereby our psychological self, (including imagination, and creativity) become imbricated with memories of home, as a place part real, part reconstruction, within which we may dwell, establishing a secure sense of identity. Edward Casey in his work *Remembering, A Phenomenological Study* also discusses how memory and being are linked to place. He states that,

As embodied existence opens onto place, indeed takes place in place and nowhere else, so our memory of what we experience in place is likewise place-specific: it is bound to place as to its own basis.

(Casey 2000, p.182)

Both Casey and Bachelard return to early classical theories on the connection between memory and place, and the importance of using this link in remembering what is essential. Casey discusses Aristotle's idea of place as a container (*perichon*), which prevents division and dispersal, noting:

It is the stabilizing persistence of place as a container of experiences that contributes so powerfully to its intrinsic memorability. An alert and alive memory connects spontaneously with place, finding in it features that favour and parallel its own activities. We might say that memory is naturally place-orientated.... Unlike site and time, memory does not thrive on the indifferently dispersed. It thrives, rather, on the persistent particularities of what is properly *in place*: held fast there and made one's own.

(Casey 2000, pp.186-87)

As I ventured out to search for the sites of Lange's Irish work, in the hope of also finding a form of psychological return in the process, I soon realised this would be impossible. Certain photographs evoked a longing for something which could never be reached. Bachelard describes this in terms of that place of "motionless childhood", the memory of home as a state of mind or reverie, rather than a

geographical location on a map. In searching for certain places or situations, I was in fact trying to re-enter spaces of memory associated with my grandparent's village, where I spent part of my childhood. There were visual references to the housing, clothing, daily existence of that time in Lange's images. My attempts to return to that time through a camera, were futile. As I travelled from event to event, documenting what I found, my sense of alienation only increased. I was the outsider, the wanderer, who never fully belonged to that rural way of life to begin with. I also had no interest in perpetuating the anthropological or ethnographic gaze, and realised I would have to find alternative methods in dealing with this material. Images of the stranger, or wanderer with a suitcase that reoccur in Phase III are a reference to this state of being, and also inspired the title for the final exhibition and prototype photobook *The Suitcase Archive*, Appendix (iv).

However, by the spring of 2015 I realised a different approach would be needed if I wanted to get closer to the people and place in Lange's images. I applied for a new stream of funding from the local County Clare Arts Office, the *Creating Space Grant* to do this. My project proposal stated that I aimed to *Create Space* for a community-based project in my local parish of Kilkeedy. The thematic focus of this project would be *Memory, Place, Identity and the Photographic Image*. The project was designed for adult participants, with an interest in photography, storytelling, mapping, local history and heritage. The aim was to offer a programme of art related activities (practical workshops, talks, a community led exhibition) through which participants could creatively combine visual and narrative materials to tell stories of place, memory and daily life within the community. Participants would work with photography, simple bookmaking techniques, mapping and narrative storytelling to explore these topics. This could include working with pre-existing photographs e.g. archival or personal collections, as well as creating new images of daily life on the land. Outcomes from the workshops were to be presented through a public exhibition at Tubber Hall at the end of the project in December 2015. I also stated that the thematic focus of the project was influenced by my on-going PhD research into the work created by American photographer Dorothea Lange in County Clare, and that my particular interest was in discovering how her themes, especially the images she took in Tubber and Kilkeedy, (the parish where I now live) can be photographically revisited and reinterpreted today. I was hoping to discover what ideas of family, place, community and tradition mean within this community today. And further, how does photography become an important site and trigger for the preservation of both individual and collective memories of these issues. My hope was that through creating this space for creative exploration from within the local community, that I could also open a forum for relational discussion around Lange's work, which would help me find a new way to approach this thematic content within my own practice. I also stated that as a contemporary documentary photographer, I wanted to incorporate the voices and perspectives of the subjects I am investigating, rather than simply representing them from a distance. I added that in addition to exhibiting outcomes at Tubber Hall, I also planned to show selected material from this project alongside my own work, at two solo shows at Glór Ennis and The Courthouse Gallery Ennistymon in 2016. I was successful in this grant application, and also in securing funding to visit The Lange Archives of The Oakland Museum of California in advance of beginning the workshops.

In July 2015 I travelled to the Archives with the hope of finding additional materials related to Lange's visit to Ireland, including any additional images from Kilkeedy or personal writings and artefacts from her visit which could provide a way for me to create a meta-textual reading, in a manner similar to that used in Phase II with Breton's *Nadja*. I knew that like Gerry Mullins, I would be influenced by personal memory in how I selected any new materials from Lange, so I decided to consciously allow this to become part of the process, in line with the autobiographical methods used in both Phase I and II. I also realised from Phase II, that I needed to find something which would allow me to move beyond a purely documentary approach in photographic results. In this respect mistakes, experiments, anomalies and technical accidents were of particular interest, as they could allow for chance to reveal lesser known, unconscious or previously un-noticed facts on how Lange worked. Of the one hundred and six images selected for publication by Gerry Mullins, fifty-three percent of these portray male subjects. These outnumber the images of women in his publication on a ratio of almost 3:1 so I was also interested in discovering any additional materials on Irish women's lives. I spent two weeks in the archives, systematically examining all the contact sheets, field notes, personal letters and relevant articles. Due to the quantity of materials available, I decided to limit my selection to previously unseen photographs of Lange's female subjects in particular. This included alternative shots of women Mullin's had included in his publication. My choices of certain photographs above others, were guided by different criteria. I identified four distinct categories, including: images of women's working life, of psychological spaces or autonomy, of moments of inter-relationship or spaces between women, and finally images of women who are usually forgotten or erased from history. My hope was to bring forty of these original photographs back to Ireland, with several examples for each of these categories included. Due to the cost however, I had to eventually reduce this amount to the purchase of ten prints. These were supplemented by a generous donation of thirty-five additional prints from Gerry Mullins, for my final exhibition. I will discuss individual images selected in relation to practice-based outcomes below. An additional important discovery at the archives were Lange's unpublished Irish field notes. These included quick observations on the context of subjects, logistical and house-keeping reminders such as how to group photos, and personal observations about certain people and places. Some even included names and addresses of people she was told to visit in 1954. From these field notes, I then selected what I found particularly poetic or poignant, using this to prompt my own written responses, in the same way as I had worked with Breton's text in Phase II. On returning I knew I would also begin the community based project in Kilkeedy, to run from September to December 2015.

The Road Through Kilkeedy

The project in Kilkeedy was launched in early September, after being advertised in the *Parish Newsletter*, and announced at Sunday Mass by the local priests. I also gave an introductory talk on the work of Dorothea Lange in County Clare at Tubber Hall, including a brief overview of the aims of the *Creating Space* project in the community, which was attended by over 30 local people. It was explained here that the project was structured around a series of workshops to be offered once per week for 12 weeks. These workshops would be designed around three focus areas, with four weeks for each, to include photography, visual storytelling and simple photo-bookmaking techniques. Workshops would

be open to 12 participants, with the option available of attending all or selected sessions to allow flexibility and further outreach within the community. Each workshop would be three hours in duration. In addition to these 36 hours of direct workshop contact, I was also available for site/context specific visits, to allow input from individuals who would like to contribute, but might not be able to attend the workshop evenings. I could visit and meet people on a one-to-one basis, if they had photographic materials they would like to share or contribute to the project. I also made it clear at the outset that a collaborative exhibition of participant's work would be presented at Tubber Hall at the end of the project, that the project was happening within the context of broader PhD research, and that selected negotiated outcomes could potentially be included in my own PhD exhibitions in 2016 in Ennis and Ennistymon.

Of the twelve participants that joined the weekly workshops four were female and eight male, ranging in age from (38 – 81 years). Nine of these were born in the area of Kilkeedy or its neighbouring townland, two came from Irish urban contexts, one was from the UK. Seven of the twelve made their living directly from agriculture, or had an agricultural background. All were familiar with and had an interest in the work of Dorothea Lange in County Clare, and its thematic focus. Starting with an image by Lange of a local man, Patch Flanagan (Fig. 50), we began conversations about the potential of the photograph to preserve memory, to communicate ideas of place and identity, and to tell stories or histories, both individual and collective. During this process I also invited participants to gather archival materials if available, as well as taking their own images of their daily life in response to Lange's themes. Aesthetically and conceptually projects such as Deirdre O'Mahony's *XPO*, Martina Mullaney's *Turn In*, Melanie Friend's *Border Country*, Ruby Wallis's *Autowalks*, and *21 Grams* by Seamus McGuinness were important influences in my methods here. In *Conversation Pieces, Community + Communication in Modern Art*, Kester (2004) observes how certain strategies can be actively used to redefine stereotypical representations of communities of place. He advocates forms of "creative facilitation of dialogue and exchange", noting that,

While it is common for a work of art to provoke dialogue among viewers, this typically occurs in response to a finished object. In these projects, on the other hand, conversation becomes an integral part of the work itself. It is reframed as an active, generative process that can help us speak and imagine beyond the limits of fixed identities, official discourse, and the perceived inevitability of partisan political conflict.

(Kester 2004, p.8)

In this respect, participants became conversational partners to address the mnemonic content triggered by Lange's work, exchanges which allowed me new insights and ideas on how to reimagine ways of simultaneously referring to Lange, while also visualizing similar content as it is today. Kester also discusses issues such as the changing position of the artist as author, within these inter-subjective generative processes, and also the different aesthetic paradigm of relational or dialogical forms of art. Having worked previously on community based projects, I was aware of some of these issues in advance, such as for example, shared authorship and process driven aesthetic outcomes. It is important to state here, that there were three distinct stages or tiers of engagement within this relational project. In the first workshop driven stage, I took a secondary role. I did not take photographs myself, but facilitated and helped participants to find and compile their own memory narratives using photographic and textual materials, as we worked towards producing a group exhibition of participant work in December 2015. My intention here was to create a space for participants to generate their own

response, to find their own solutions to what was being introduced visually, technically, aesthetically and conceptually. These outcomes were also specifically for the *Creating Space* project, which was participant driven and centred. Of the twelve workshop members, ten completed a series of images for this group exhibition. During the process, nine out of these ten became actively engaged in learning more about the photographic process, and took on the challenge of tackling a theme of their own choosing, inspired by Lange's work. One relied completely on archival family album material.

The broader themes of participant driven content included images of; harvesting turf, hurling, market gardening, the environment and landscape, local life on the land and activities at the community hall, ironworking, family portraits, and historical as well as contemporary farming practices. Examining participant responses in greater depth, it is important to also consider if, and in which instances the photographic or textual materials created, functioned as environments of mnemonic return, for the individuals concerned, or for the group as a whole. Of the ten participants, four became particularly engaged in using the photograph to access autobiographical memory, which included using materials from family albums, photographic archives, or re-photographing the family, or family home as it is today. For Ann O' Donnell, this involved revisiting her childhood home several times to photograph certain objects, or locations within the house or its grounds. Images of what remained, including childhood toys or household utensils from over seventy years ago, were then brought to the group for discussion. Her photographs referenced for example, the way the household was once run, or shared childhood pastimes. Ann also gathered archival photographs where these objects, including a dolls pram, a communion purse, herself at the front door of the house, or standing with her brother on the front lawn, could be compared to her own shots of the same items, places or people in the present (Fig. 51). It was especially poignant during group discussions, when she spoke about these two sets of images, comparing, contrasting and remembering all that had changed or disappeared. It was very clear that throughout the project, Ann engaged deeply in the process and the photographic journey also became a very powerful means for her to remember, and discuss her recollections. Another participant that concentrated on the family, and the home was Bernie O'Grady. She began with several visits to the now derelict cottage of a woman she remembered from childhood. Bernie documented what she found on site, and used the images to piece together her recollection of this woman's life. This prompted her to also search for and find photographs to supplement absences in the narrative. This was another example of where the inter-relationship between image, narrative recollection and revisiting, or re-photographing a particular place was very effective in evoking memory. For the public exhibition however, Bernie chose to concentrate on portraits of her own family (Fig. 52). We had discussed the simplicity and formal composition of several of Lange's portraits, and this influenced how Bernie photographed her own daughter, sons and husband, at work on the family farm in Kilkeedy today. Tess Diviney chose to document the route to the bog to harvest turf with her daughter, an activity which led to recollections of farming traditions from her childhood growing up in the midlands. Tess also photographed her participation in the local County Clare tradition of attending mass on Inis Cealtra, an island on Lough Derg (Fig. 53).

Michael O' Donohue was another participant who worked between images from personal archives. As a local farmer whose family has been in the area for over six generations, Michael had also served for decades as the regional president of the IFA (Irish Farmers Association) in County Clare, and proved a wealth of information on local agricultural life and history. He chose to concentrate on the unique way in which farmers over the centuries have built and partitioned the land in this region. He documented different features in the stone walls on his own land, that show how livestock were herded and kept, including traditional building and penning methods. As a farmer who had been actively engaged in local agricultural policy and politics, Michael's shared memories of a more public, rather than the private nature. He did however bring one very personal image, of himself at a famous demonstration against government changes to agricultural policies in the 1960's. This marked an important memory he could share with great pride, through the agency of the image (Fig. 54). Michael Keane, also concentrated on photographing aspects of his life as a farmer. This included images of the changing seasons on his land, and differences between natural plant species and those he cultivated himself. Michael also collaborated with Colm Mac Lochlainn on a series of images including local place names in Irish. Where Michael identified sites on his land retaining older Irish names, Colm documented each, and working together they transcribes the written form of the spoken dialect (Fig. 55). Having worked for Gael Linn, an organisation dedicated to the preservation and promotion of the Irish language, Colm had a lot of knowledge to share on this topic.

The everyday use of the Irish language in the naming of places, objects and routine agricultural practices was something that was discussed on a number of occasions in the group. It is important to note that Irish was the main language in many parts of County Clare until the mid 1950's. The Irish names for places often hold additional layers of meaning and memory, communicating facts about natural, seasonal, or environmental changes to the land over time, which have been lost or are disappearing as the language fades from everyday usage. There was a definite awareness of this within the group, perhaps due to the age of participants. Tess Diviney for example, who used Irish words naturally intermingled with English to describe harvesting turf or hay, commenting on the need to preserve and remember this material. There was also some discussion on which language to use when selecting a title for the group exhibition, but in the final democratic vote, an English title was chosen. While not explicitly stated, the reason for this may have been because most people in the group, while having an understanding of Irish, are no longer fluent speakers. There may also have been a feeling of not wanting to alienate those who have no understanding of Irish at all, either within the group or the broader community.

Undoubtedly the issue of memory as it is preserved by the native language of a people and a region is very relevant here. But it is also very complex in the Irish context, where speaking the mother tongue was something either forbidden, enforced, avoided or promoted, to varying degrees, and for differing political or socio-economic reasons from the 17th century onwards. As Murray (2006, p. 22) describes it,

As a colonising tool, the deliberate process of the removal of the mother tongue, Gaelic, probably represents one of the most brutal and decisive acts by an Imperial power. The 18th century Penal laws forbade the use of Irish. As a result, the use of English, led to the creation of an English elite so that anyone wishing to advance their education, their economic, or political futures, could not do so by using their mother tongue. This language shift was further institutionalised with the introduction of the National School system, which established English as the required medium of instruction in schools. The final blow was dealt by the onset of the Famine in 1846 which killed off one in three of the population and provided an economic and pragmatic incentive to the Irish people to learn English.

This decline and disappearance of Irish is a well-researched topic, Hindley (1991), Palmer (2001), Allen and Regan (2008), Mac Siomoin (2014), and beyond the scope of this dissertation. However, slippages between what can be known or remembered of place and identity, as language itself changes, or is forced to change by external circumstances, is an important issue when considering relationships between memory and its expression in narrative form. Elizabeth Palmer (2001, p. 173) likens the disappearance of the Irish language to the development of a “clamorous silence”. Contrasting the colonization of Ireland to the Spanish conquest of America, she describes the latter as a situation where the indigenous experience was utterly silenced and frozen out of language. In the New World silence signified “the death of a people”. In Ireland however, something different occurred, as Palmer defines it (ibid, p. 175),

The English imagined that to silence Irish was to silence dissent and excise memory; they envisaged English as an instrument of control and its imposition a way of instilling attitudes felt to be native to their civil tongue. They dreamed of a univocal Ireland; the reality, however, was more complex and equivocal.... Bardic poetry picked up intimations of the silence that would, in time, overtake the Gaelic world. But Irish was vigorously resistant, discomfiting the state and raiding its texts with incursion. Moreover, it was part of a polyphonic pattern of native contestation.

This I would argue is evident right up to the present moment, in the way Irish continues to be integrated into, or transforms the way English is spoken, particularly in more rural contexts. The inflections, intonations, accent and structures of speech often echo that of native Irish, as though it exists beneath consciousness, like a memory, still held in the body or on the tongue. It seeps into and invades English, often very directly in the naming of things and places, causing ongoing debate at both regional and national level. Richard Pine (2014) provides an overview of the influence and importance of Irish on writers from Oscar Wilde, to James Joyce, and more recently Brian Friel who launched *Field Day Review* (1980), to address exactly this topic. Pine details (ibid, p. 29) how Wilde linked the colonization of Ireland as a place, with a reciprocal counter-colonization by Irish writers, of the English language. Wilde commented,

I do not know anything more wonderful or more characteristic of the Celtic genius, than the quick artistic spirit in which we adapted ourselves to the English tongue. The Saxon took our lands from us and left them desolate – we took their language and added new beauties to it.

Pine also describes how Joyce (ibid, p. 52) created a “Hiberno-English idiom”, to express this Irish experience. But as his alter-ego Stephen Daedalus portrays it in *A Portrait of The Artist as A Young Man* (1914), his “soul frets in the shadow of his (the invaders) language”. For Pine the importance of reclaiming personal and collective history, which includes a conscious awareness of language, in the postcolonial context is essential because,

When a person or a society loses its memory, its connection with its past, it ceases to have a history, and with that loss comes the incapacity to conceive of the future, since the future depends for its volition and validity on a sense of the past, a sense of origins.

Pine (2001 p. 35)

For Pine, the work of the artist in this situation becomes one of recovering, rewriting, and rebuilding memory links between past and present, with imagination becoming a key and important factor in envisioning the future. He lists writing by Brian Friel, in particular *Translations* (1980), *Making History* (1989) and *Dancing at Lughnasa* (1990) as examples of where memory and the imaginary are intermingled to find a place beyond the literal or the real, to discover, or discern from history what has been buried under the weight of colonialism. He notes how (ibid, p. 235),

Many post-colonial writers have found it expedient – and perhaps necessary – to employ the imaginary as a place where value can be attributed without reference to the realities of colonial experience, and at the same time to validate the imaginary as a “real” topos.... The invention of memory – or the use of an invented memory – constitutes a necessary lie to confront the untruths experienced at the hands of the coloniser.

There is definitely potential material here for post-doctoral work on the inter-relationship between, memory, image and the Irish language, however, returning to the fieldwork and the topic of this research, I will mention the contributions of one final participant Michael O’ Conor, whose approach was different in that he worked with archival materials only. These were photographs taken by a family relative, a great-uncle, who was an amateur photographer within the local community at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century. Unusually for the time, he had his own camera and documented many of the local people (Fig. 56). Unfortunately many glass plate negatives from this archive have been lost, but Michael was able to construct a partial visual history of family and place from what had survived. As noted previously, photography at this time in Ireland was generally confined to the landed gentry class, so finding any images taken by local people, from within their own community is always significant. These provided visual triggers for Michael to reconstruct autobiographical memories, which could then be shared within the group, initiating collective recollection of history as told by those who lived it.

December 2015 marked the end of the group work, and the official *Creating Space* project. It had provided me with valuable insights, from a more authentically insider position into the community and context of my broader PhD research topic. Following this, I then invited a number of the participants to engage with me on a one-to-one basis, through interviews and collaborations, more explicitly related to the PhD research. My selection here was based on what emerged for exhibition, and individual interest. I began this next stage with a structured interview, to gather more focussed narrative responses.

Transcripts of these interviews are included in Appendix(v). From what was gathered I was then able to suggest creating collaborative visual responses to the Lange's images. As noted previously, I was also particularly interested in addressing the experience of Irish women living on the land today, to correspond with the images I had discovered at The Lange Archives. I therefore interviewed all of the female participants first, including Bernie O'Grady, Tess Diviney and Ann O' Donnell. In addition to these women, I also invited Elaine D'Alton, Coordinator of The Clare Women's Network to respond to the same set of research questions, to provide additional broader socio-political insights into issues faced by contemporary women in this region today. Participants were informed that these interviews were conducted within the context of PhD research, and that the resulting collaborative visual materials created, along with extracts from their initial work for the Kilkeedy exhibition would be included as part of my own exhibitions at Glór Ennis, and the final PhD show at The Courthouse Gallery Ennistymon. Participants were also invited to both events, including the public talks for each, in which their contributions were acknowledged and discussed.

Based upon these interviews, examples of the collaborative portraits made include those with Tess Diviney and her Husband Tony on their farm near Gort (Fig. 57). This was prompted by Lange's image of Patch Flanagan at Tubber Fair (Fig. 50). Tess remembered Patch Flanagan from childhood, and in her interview recalls specific memories related to him, his brother and the fair at Tubber. In another collaborative portrait made with Colm Mac Lochlainn and his granddaughters, the staging of the image was also very consciously negotiated between us. In interview Colm selected a number of photographs by Lange, discussing how they evoked personal memory, but decided to include his granddaughters Róise and Rhiannon in an image which emphasised the gesture of the hand, recalling an original image by Lange which appeared in Gerry Mullin's (1998) publication (Fig. 58 & 59). On the day, both girls also responded to Lange's image of Catherine and Anne O' Halloran (Fig. 60), who were about to emigrate forever to America. While they stood at a very similar dresser in their grandmother's kitchen in (2016), we talked about emigration from the West of Ireland, and the different opportunities available to young women in Ireland today (Fig. 61).

The topic of emigration was also discussed with Bernie O'Grady, who chose the image of Annie O' Halloran and her two daughters, as the starting point for a collaborative portrait including her own daughter Ruth (Fig. 62). Bernie responded to one of the unpublished photographs by Lange that I brought back for exhibition. In Lange's image, the women have been caught with their eyes closed, as if sleeping, dreaming or already departed, while the mother maintains a fixed gaze directly to camera (Fig. 63). An offshoot perhaps, due to the cut off in the composition, it could naturally be overlooked as a mistake. However, for me there is something here which transcends the documentary, suggesting a turning inward, to memory, the subconscious, and what is not immediately apparent in the external reality of the moment. Working with Bernie and her daughter, I used compositional mirroring to suggest alternating subject positions between mother and daughter, in response to this photograph. Double exposure, is again used to bring two moments into one; a before and after, of presence and absence, as the subject appears then disappears from memory. The inter-relationship between both is held, as

though through reciprocal remembrance. An undertow of presence and absence, of loss and departure was something evident in the sequencing of several images within Lange's contact sheets. For example, in (Fig. 64) a woman stands at the open door of the house, facing into the light, and then in the next frame she is gone. Lange repeated this scenario in several shots at the O'Halloran farm, changing the subject, and his/her going out from the door of the house. I would argue that she was constructing images here to express something of the emotional or psychological impact of emigration. Lange's field notes, provide additional insights into her thoughts while on location. There is a poignancy, even inevitability, regarding the topic of emigration in these texts.

In working with Ann O' Donnell, now in her mid-seventies, and an emigrant who returned after decades abroad, the lived experience of what Lange witnessed was given voice. In many respects, Ann became for me *The Irish Countrywoman*, a complimentary counterpoint to Gerry Mullins's identification of Michael Kenneally (Fig. 66) as the main subject in Lange's Irish portfolio. I visited Ann's home several times, and she also invited me to a number of community events. In her kitchen in Kilkeedy, we discussed her memories of life in the 1950's, of her own experiences of forced emigration, and of her return in later-life to the local farming community where her brother inherited the land. I took several portraits of Ann (Fig. 65,67&68). Our collaboration inspired me to reflect upon and include my own memories of emigration into the narrative of Phase III. For both Ann O' Donnell and Michael O'Donohue, I had considerably more input gathered, and created two larger pieces *Storylines no. 1 & 2* (Fig. 69 - 72) for the final exhibition. These large works consist of a compilation of materials on one printed surface. In the upper section of each, there is a draft layout for a photobook. This prototype, which was also exhibited on a shelf underneath, includes a combination of the participants own images from the *Creating Space* project and textual extracts from the interviews conducted in the Spring of 2016, which I compiled into narrative sequences. In the lower section of the *Storylines* prints, my own photographic response to what I was hearing runs parallel to this. This was a third stage or final tier within the relational work, and it is here that I began to independently respond to Lange's themes in the contemporary context, based upon insights gained from these conversational partners. Selected original prints by Lange, relevant to participant's stories were also installed beside these materials where appropriate. As in previous phases of the research, the book format was a means to synthesise and bring order to often complex and disparate sequences of recollection. Four handmade prototype photobooks were made in total, for Ann O'Donnell, Michael O' Donohue, Tess Diviney and Colm Mac Lochlainn (Fig. 73). I used these to experiment with layout, sequencing, visual relationships between participant images, archival materials, and textual strands within the content. These books, along with the collaborative portraits were given to participants as an acknowledgment and appreciation of their contributions to the research, at after the exhibitions. Based upon these prototypes, a final photobook was also compiled for all participants, to document the *Creating Space* project.

With regard to my use of original works by Lange, I purchased ten previously unpublished prints from the Oakland Museum of California, for use in both the interim and final exhibitions. In addition to this, Gerry Mullins kindly allowed me to borrow thirty of the original prints, used in his 1998 book. Lange's

works were embedded within the narrative flow of all components for Phase III. They were placed alongside my own images, those made in collaboration with fieldwork participants, and in some instances were also hung alone to give context to place and time within the overall installation (Fig. 74 - 76). My intention was to create an immersive environment for the viewer, that would include and emphasise the different mnemonic layers within the project. As noted earlier in choosing previously unseen images from the Lange Archives, I was searching for materials which offered a potentially different reading of her work, and therefore new knowledge or insights. This included using extracts from her field notes in Ireland alongside the photographs. I felt many of these read like short poems, and I presented them under glass as part of the final exhibition (Fig. 77). They are also included in the prototype photobook *The Suitcase Archive* (Appendix iv), becoming a conversational partner for the generation of my own texts, in a manner similar to how I responded to Breton in Phase II. As part of the PhD exhibition, I also gave a talk with Gerry Mullins on the topic of *Photography, Memory and Place in Dorothea Lange's Images of County Clare*. This was presented in the gallery space, on Culture Night 2016. The audience included several members of the O' Halloran family, directly related to the subjects in Lange's images. All three public exhibitions presented in Phase III of the research, were well attended and supported within the local community, reaching an audience of several hundred directly through the talks and openings, and potentially two thousand upwards through the durational run of the exhibitions. Both the interim and final exhibition were also featured in the local media, widening public awareness of the project.

The potential of the research to influence collective memory, with regards to the work of Dorothea Lange, what is known of the work, and also its potential to influence ideas of shared memory or history is therefore promising. My emphasis on selecting and emphasising new materials about the lives, experiences and memories of women within this, was certainly a new angle on the reading and discussion of Lange's Irish work. In this respect, the research has the potential to expand what is included in future records of collective memory and history in the area. The generative approach taken in using Lange and other archival sources as a means to connect to individual and collective memories of place, during the Kilkeedy group work, also provides a template for future projects, exploring the spaces between private and collective accounts of history.

In concluding this discussion of outcomes from Phase III, I will also mention my own response to Lange's photographs, inspired in particular by my conversations with Ann O' Donnell. By including myself within the field of inquiry in Phase III, I was incorporating and following through with the autobiographical strand within my methodology, from Phases I and II above. This had followed an arc, moving from the highly personal, to the personal as part of cultural discourse, to finally the personal as part of a community or collective experience. By including myself as a subject of inquiry, answering the same questions and undertaking a similar visual process, I was also integrating an autoethnographic reflexivity into my methodology, to gain insight into the impact of the fieldwork as a participant myself. I realised that for me the image which triggered the greatest personal memory, was taken at the O'Halloran farm in Inagh (Fig. 78). It captures two figures standing outside the door of the house. The

woman turns away, her features fading into the light. We seem to be witnessing a film still, something I would argue that Lange has directed, rather than objectively observed. The woman is Catherine O' Halloran, who is about to permanently emigrate to America. Her hand reaches backward towards her father, whose gesture could be read as either holding onto, or letting go of the young woman. While Lange is using one of her own consistent motifs: the gesture of the hand, to express all that can be said in a simple touch, we see something unusual here in the Irish context. It is a rarely depicted moment in the father daughter relationship, and I believe an attempt to communicate something of the psychological complexity of the loss involved in emigration. There are few pictures of this kind of inter-relationship, especially through the gesture of an adult woman holding her father's hand as a form of familial relationship in Irish photography, particularly from the era of the 1950's. This suggests a certain staging of the image on the part of Lange, a repetition perhaps of the expressive language of the body, evident in some of her most famous portraits in America, where the hand is an important indicator of human emotion. I identified with Catherine's experience the most, and Lange's image triggered autobiographical memory of having to emigrate from Ireland in my early twenties .

My response *The Road Through Kilkeedy* (Fig.79), shows a female subject between two roads. The road on the right, stretching through the townland of Kilkeedy, was the historical route taken by emigrants to America. The local crossroads as the meeting point for those taking the ships from Galway Bay to Boston America, was eventually also named Boston. On the left is Bothár Na Minne, - The Road of the Corn/Maize. This road runs almost parallel through the land to the other route, and was built by the starving during the Great Famine of (1845-1852). Through walking the land with participants in Phase III, gathering stories of place, I found myself connecting to deeper memory located in these places. The young woman in my image sits on a rock, between two memory roads through the landscape. One stretches towards a future that is elsewhere, the other backward into a time of unresolved traumatic loss. Her choices in the present are overshadowed by memories of both roads, a fact I believe influences many Irish people right up to the present day. I met this young woman by chance during my wandering for the research, and asked her to become part of the project. The suitcase as an object also found by chance, in a second hand store in North London during the course of this research, became an uncannily synchronistic find. It already had well-worn travel labels for journeys between London, Paris, and Ireland, which could easily have been my own, it was the perfect signifier of myself, my memory and journey within the work (Fig.80). It became a device to visually represent my wandering, and sense of displacement. Images of this journey, including the people I met along the way, or sometimes only the suitcase itself, as an indicator of my presence, were included in the final piece. For the final exhibition these images, along with autobiographical texts printed on travel labels, were displayed either in or around the suitcase, as a personal memory archive. My thoughts were tied to stones from the local landscape with string, to suggest an almost obsessive but futile need to ground them again in place. Some of the thoughts on the stones were displayed on a shelf above the suitcase, like a mantel piece of mementos, including images of people who had interacted with the suitcase during my journey (Fig. 81). I also decided to print several of my larger works and the images taken during my first journeys out into the land, in (10x15cm) format at a local two-hour photo store, as a reminder

of how I once also carried all of my personal belongings, including snapshots from my life, in such a temporary way. The suitcase also contained a notebook recording impressions from many of these journeys. In a final handmade artist book (Fig. 82), images, maps and thoughts from the journey were shredded, as a way of bringing closure to some of the memories I didn't want to reveal.

Conclusions For Phase III

In Phase III fieldwork I applied strategies and techniques developed in Phases I & II, for collective purposes. This included using Langford's speaking the album, as a means to elicit memories related to the personal photographic materials brought by participants during fieldwork. Lange's work as a shared archive, or memory ground, became the point of both departure and return, guiding the emerging content of collaborative interactions. The fact that her work is collectively remembered by many in this area, made it a powerful starting point to move from the collective, towards individual material. Where individual narratives lapsed into silence, or there were natural resistances to making the personal public, Lange's work operated as an intermediary ground, to initiate discussion. Through the process the personal could be reconnected to the broader context of collective life in the community, and context today. Conversations developed between two participants in particular, relating to the use of the Irish language, attached to sites within the local environment. This led to some broader discussion on memory, meaning and language usage. These moments were interesting in that they demonstrated the ongoing relevance of post-colonial history, and its lingering effect on both private and collective memory in the area. Discussion of women's lives and experience on the land, including land ownership and political representation, was met with some silences, or resistances in the group context. This may have been due to the age of participants, and certain reserve on this within a group context. This question was later addressed on a one-to-one basis through interview questions.

My main discoveries in Phase III included:

- Through the fieldwork, I discovered reoccurring thoughts and experiences, which helped me understand how Lange's work was so mnemonically powerful. Gerry Mullins described this as how she composed her images, which are so cleverly constructed, that they can tell a life narrative in one frame. Mullins referred to one image of Michael Keneally in particular, how Lange had set him against the mountain, in a field, with the backdrop of turf stacked for the winter. Every aspect of his life and survival according to Mullins could be read in that simple composition. Colm Mac Lochlainn repeated some of these thoughts, commenting on how important it was for the image to tell a story. This ability to construct a narrative from the photograph, and in the process infer, retrieve or remember details, supports the idea of the photograph being a mnemonic space which can be psychologically entered. Through the process the viewer can gather clues to trigger memory. This importance of place is mentioned by the majority of respondents here, with many referring to places of childhood.

- Colm Mac Lochlainn, Ann O' Donnell and Michael O'Donohue all commented on the importance of material details, particularly in articles of clothing, furniture, household or farm objects. There were names for certain things Tess knew only in Irish, as they had now vanished from common usage, especially through the development of mechanical farming processes. Visual references to working life on the land, were also very important for Ann O'Donnell and Michael O' Donohue.

The living connection to the people depicted in Lange's Irish work continues to guarantee its importance in this area, if not within the broader Irish cultural context. This was evident in the overwhelming support received for both the exhibition at Tubber Community Hall in Kilkeedy, and also my final show at The Courthouse Gallery Ennistymon. In both instances there was a large, inter-generational audience, with many attending in search of that connection through the work, to memories of family, former friends or neighbours. Sean O'Halloran, the young boy captured in Lange's images of the family, along with several members of the extended family also visited the PhD exhibition on Culture Night 2016. This event drew in a very large audience, and in itself became a sort of clan gathering for several people. Beyond this particular context however, knowledge and appreciation of Lange's Irish portfolio fades. I believe this is related to ongoing divisions between rural and urban life in Ireland, and persistent difficulties in re-imagining the former.

- On a personal level, I felt that the fieldwork did bring me closer to my subjects, providing better insights into Lange's thematic focus while in Ireland. As an Irish photographer however, I did experience significant inner struggle in tackling this material, related to personal memory, and a knowledge of the social, historical and political context on a level Lange wouldn't have had to deal with. I did use Lange's documentary approach in a separate commission completed during the research, and found working within an unknown context infinitely easier. That said, persisting through Phase III, was a definite personal journey of mnemonic return, like the completion of a journey begun when I left Ireland in 1995. For future fieldwork of this kind, I would aim to introduce text as a generative tool from the outset. I expected participants would find the writing of individual texts to accompany their photographs as a relatively easy task, which it wasn't. Some felt uncomfortable with this in the latter stages and didn't write anything at all. I would also integrate more workshops on narrative building, and techniques for combining text and image, archival and new visual sources. The larger *Storylines #1&2* made with both Ann O' Donnell and Michael O'Donohue, have provided templates for future collaborations of this kind.

