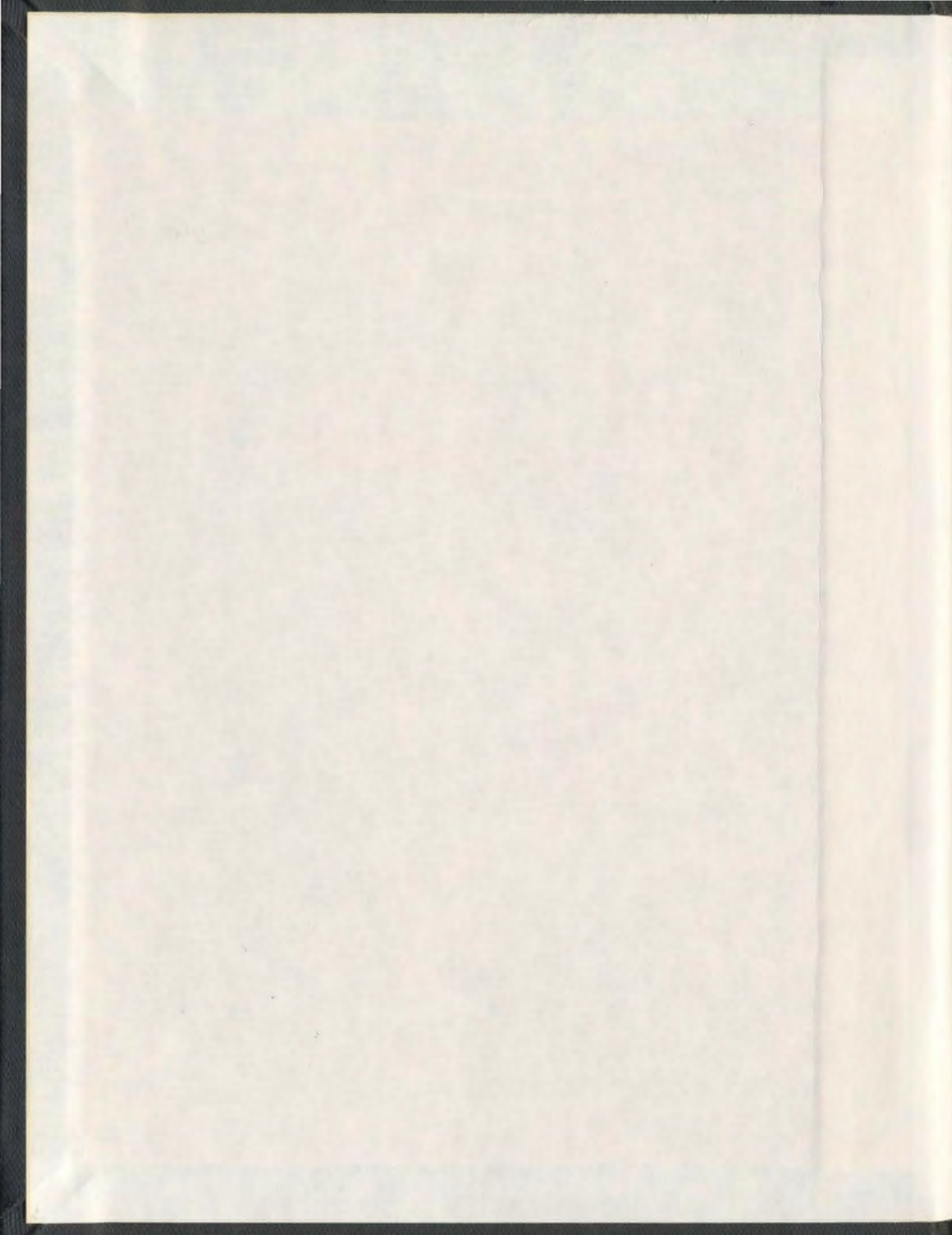


DANCING ON THE HEAD OF A PIN:
IRISHNESS AND VERNACULAR DANCE IN
ST. JOHN'S, NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

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by

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Abstract

This study explores contemporary vernacular dance forms in Newfoundland and Labrador. As a reflection of values and beliefs, vernacular dance in Newfoundland is recontextualized to express cultural identity. This is achieved through analysis of two case studies: Newfoundland set dance and step dance. While some people engage in traditional dance practices purely for enjoyment in today's society, many dance groups recognize the potential for their work to be seen as culturally representative. The dance groups in my case studies actively engage in promoting their identity – to their own members as well as the general public – as being uniquely and distinctly representative of Newfoundland and Labrador culture.

Set dance and step dance groups in the province are inherently linked through an overarching Irishness that permeates Newfoundland cultural identity. In this thesis, I use the concept of Irishness as an internalized and naturalized part of Newfoundland culture, as well as a way for Newfoundlanders to carve out a distinct niche in Canadian culture, primarily through the arts. My chapter on set dance in Newfoundland focuses on Dance Up, a tourist event where the audience becomes the performer. This case study illustrates how echoes of Irishness in the Dance Up event subtly act as a means of attracting tourists and validating cultural identity for locals. My case study on step dance, which focuses on the St. Pat's Dancers, demonstrates how Irishness is overtly manifest in step

dance forms throughout St. John's. Due in part to recent global popularity of Irish step dancing, here, Irishness is used more deliberately and proudly as a way of constructing and maintaining identity.

As Newfoundland and Labrador endeavours to re-define itself in a new and challenging economic climate, so too must its cultural products re-envision what they are and how they fit into a contemporary context. Each case study explores why Irishness is so appealing, and how these dance groups negotiate their identities at the intersection of art and culture.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Rationale

Newfoundland and Labrador is at a crossroads today. A society that for so long relied upon the cod fishery to sustain its small outport economies is facing immense changes. The fabric of rural Newfoundland is being threatened as traditional industries fail and thousands stream from small communities in search of a way to make a living. The province's economic crisis brought on by the cod fishing moratorium of 1992 has had a direct effect on the social and cultural activities of its peoples. There is an increased reliance on tourism as a means of providing work and income to the residents of the province. Moreover, the recent economic upturn as a result of offshore oil production has contributed to the shift from rural to urban in terms of the province's population. Because so many aspects of traditional outport life are changing and/or dying out, there is a strong desire to preserve the arts in Newfoundland as a key identifier of a cohesive Newfoundland culture. As a result, Newfoundland and Labrador's heritage and culture have become increasingly significant not only in the practices of everyday life, but as concrete, marketable products.

Much of the province's present economic challenges are limited to rural Newfoundland, for which the cod fishery was the mainstay for so many years. In contrast, St. John's in 2008 is flourishing. Offshore oil revenues and the resultant influx of technologically-based jobs and industry money have ensured the

prosperity of the capital city, at least until the oil runs dry. As a result, St. John's is booming and the city as a whole is benefiting from unprecedented growth with many of its residents enjoying increased wealth. The financial prosperity emanating from the oil industry means that so-called "luxuries", such as artistic and heritage products, can be indulged in by both public and private sectors. Various areas of Newfoundland culture are therefore being invested in as never before. This cultural focus is linked not only to a philanthropic interest by the provincial government, but also to a realization that culture can have economic benefit. Newfoundland and Labrador's recognition of the economic power of marketable "authentic culture" is quite similar to Ireland's development of the "Celtic Tiger" economic model from the 1990s. But the linking of Newfoundland and Ireland runs deeper than simple finances. It highlights the way provincial arts connect to or reflect the abstract notion of "Irishness" in the Newfoundland consciousness.

My dissertation focuses on how vernacular dance in Newfoundland has benefited from the Irishness that permeates the sense of Newfoundland cultural identity today. I use the term "Irishness" to refer to the overwhelming linking of Newfoundland and Newfoundlanders to Irish culture and identity, regardless of individual cultural roots. This concept will be explored more fully in Chapter Four. Drawing largely on the constructed Irishness that has grown over the years in the Newfoundland and Labrador collective consciousness, vernacular dance in what I. Sheldon Posen refers to as a recontextualized form embodies the larger trend

of shaping Newfoundland cultural identity in general. The dance forms in this study have, after a process of recontextualization, become conflated with the sense of Irishness that has developed in Newfoundland. As such, this study explores vernacular dance forms in their cultural and social contexts in Newfoundland and Labrador today. As an embodiment of cultural norms and practices (Kaepler 200), dance can be considered a mode of "affective culture;" that is, an aspect of culture that reflects its peoples' values and beliefs. This project analyzes vernacular dance as it is performed today in the St. John's area¹ at public venues, such as cultural performances, dance schools, and tourist-targeted Newfoundland "times." More specifically, it addresses notions of revival, commodification and cultural identity through case studies on set dance and step dance. While some people engage in vernacular dance practices purely for enjoyment, in today's society, even recreational dance groups recognize the potential for their work to be seen as a cultural representation of Newfoundland and Labrador, and possibly as a contributor to the economic health of the province as well. They engage quite actively in promoting their identity, to their own members as well as the general public, as being uniquely and distinctly representative of Newfoundland and Labrador culture. Therefore dance groups have a self-consciousness that would not have been present in what Hoerburger calls the "first existence" of traditional dance (30) which in this case would be the informal dancing that was part of social gatherings in Newfoundland

¹ Of course a number of vernacular dance forms exist both within and outside St. John's.

communities. As I will demonstrate through this study, by actively engaging in and promoting Newfoundland culture, these dance groups are also utilizing Irishness as a way of selling their dance events. In some cases, this is done consciously and overtly; in other cases, Irishness is resisted on the surface, while used unconsciously in a latent fashion. Therefore, Irishness is, to varying degrees, an integral layer of the identity of the dance forms in my case studies.

The identities and roles of dance and dancers necessarily change with a shift in context through the social roles of the participants. In his classic work, The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life, Erving Goffman identifies “front” and “back” stages as essential distinctions in how social establishments are structured. Goffman argues, “given a particular performance as the point of reference, we can distinguish three crucial roles on the basis of function: those who perform; those performed to; and outsiders who neither perform in the show nor observe it” (144). In “Staged Authenticity: Arrangements of Social Space in Tourist Settings,” Dean MacCannell builds on Goffman’s notion of the division of social space by linking it to tourism. He states that the back region “functions to sustain the commonsense polarity of social life into what is taken to be intimate and ‘real’ and what is thought to be ‘show’” (591). The roles that Goffman identifies function in very different ways in earlier manifestations of Newfoundland vernacular dance compared to their revival form in contemporary presentations. The more conscious dancers are of their dance form’s cultural identity, the more comfortable they tend to be with the recontextualized form of

the dances they perform. As I will explore, these distinctions as found in Newfoundland vernacular dance today illustrate shifts in context that contribute to understandings of dance, through Irishness, as a marketable resource as much as an art form.

In examining recontextualization, I look at the intersection of tradition, authenticity and revival. In doing so, I draw on Susan Groth's article, "Challenging the Big Words: *Folk Revival Meets Authenticity, Politics and Reflexivity*," which confronts conventional approaches to folk revival, considering inventive approaches that link the related concepts of authenticity, politics and reflexivity. Groth demonstrates how the shifting of these ideas over time complicates their meaning(s). Historically, folkloristic approaches to studying folk and folk revival contribute to the difficulty in tackling the "big words." Groth states:

It appears that at least some folklorists' negative attitudes towards revival stem from the frustrations involved in doing our work: folklorists' ambivalence about folk revival relates as much to disciplinary history as to the nature of revival. (20)

Groth essentially argues in this article that the reticence to engage in discussions of the term "revival" is significant not only because of the concept of revival itself, but also because of how the discipline of folklore has defined "revival" in both its origin and evolution. Groth chooses to examine the concepts of tradition, revival and authenticity as intrinsically linked, enabling the reader to easily see the futility of regarding them as discrete concepts, a limitation in some scholarly

discussions of the “big words.” Her challenge to conventional definitions not only blurs the lines between arbitrary theoretical distinctions, but provides a wide lens through which to view folk revival. It is from this perspective – that the central concepts or “big words” in folklore must be examined holistically – that I present my case studies. Just as Charles L. Briggs argues that verbal performances must be studied within their “spatiotemporal and social relevance [rather than] analyzed in purely general and abstract terms” (6), so must dances be examined within both the social and cultural contexts in which they are practiced and performed, particularly when they have undergone a recontextualization process as with the dance forms discussed in this study.

Related to this study, Groth’s “big words” must necessarily be considered as elements of cultural heritage. Because the dance forms discussed throughout my dissertation are connected through their relationship to the past, it was their “heritage factor” that initially intrigued me. I wondered what exactly it was that permitted – even encouraged – these traditional dance forms to exist in a contemporary setting. Bella Dicks’s book, Culture on Display: The Production of Contemporary Visibility, deals with issues of authenticity in cultural and heritage displays (see also Urry, MacCannell and Lowenthal for other works that have addressed authenticity in this way). Dicks argues that heritage is, among other things, “forms of display that ‘bring history alive’...It is predicated on the idea of making history more authentic, more real, and more immediate” (122). It is

through Dicks's perspective that I have approached the idea of traditional or heritage dance forms.

The popularity of heritage-based events and groups is due in large part not just to their appeal to tourists, but also to the fact that they address cultural memory (see Ben-Amos and Weissberg). In fact, this is very similar to earlier folkloric notions of Romantic Nationalism, which attributed present identity as defined through the past. In terms of dance and cultural memory, Theresa Buckland argues that:

Dance has a particular propensity to foreground cultural memory as embodied practice by virtue of its predominantly somatic modes of transmission. Indeed in traditional forms of danced display, it could be argued that longevity of human memory is publicly enacted, demonstrating the ethereality of human existence and the continuity of human experience, as successive generations re-present the dancing. ("Dance, Authenticity" 1)

It has become evident to me that the success of my case studies as vernacular or heritage dance forms lies not only in shadowing the past. Far more significantly, as Buckland evinces, they foreshadow the future. In order to do this, each group embodies the cultural memory of Newfoundlanders which allows them to be seen as relevant today while acknowledging their historical importance. Vernacular dance in Newfoundland has indeed embodied that collective cultural memory by perpetuating Newfoundland Irishness.

Although my dance groups are embedded within specific sub-cultural groups in Newfoundland and Labrador today, they are inherently linked to each other through an overarching Newfoundland identity that encompasses a notion of Irishness and surpasses each group's historical cultural lineage. In this thesis, I explore the importance of Irishness to Newfoundland culture and identity, how it has developed and why it is so pervasive today. In my case study chapters, I follow this thread as a way of exploring how each dance form has used its Irishness – consciously or unconsciously, overtly or subtly, constructed or assumed – as a means of survival. This continuum of Irishness is addressed specifically in Chapter Four as well as throughout the two case study chapters. I examine this Irish identity in a similar way to McKay's concept of tartanism – the deliberate use of Scottish symbols in Nova Scotian culture – to illustrate how the Irishness of Newfoundland has been internalized and naturalized as a part of Newfoundland culture, and how that Irishness has been utilized by Newfoundlanders to carve out a distinctive niche in Canadian culture, primarily through the arts. Each case study that follows explores how one dance genre has negotiated its way through Newfoundland's Irishness in order to find a place where it can flourish.

Dance in Newfoundland

Newfoundland and Labrador has a long history of both social dance and formalized dance training, the legacy of which my case studies are an amalgam.

The earliest recorded mention of a dance class in Newfoundland is from May 1857 when The Public Ledger, printed an advertisement for social dance classes (Elton "Performance". Lara Maynard's entry in the Newfoundland and Labrador Heritage web site also provides detail on dance in Newfoundland). That legacy can be seen everywhere. Today, St. John's is a veritable hotbed of dance. A city of approximately 100,000 people, it is home to Kittiwake Dance Theatre, a semi-professional modern dance and ballet company; Summerdance, an annual outdoor dance festival; and Neighbourhood Dance Works, a dance collective of local contemporary dance artists. In 2008, there are no fewer than fourteen dance schools in the St. John's area, offering classes in everything from ballet to bellydance, flamenco to hip hop, pilates to yoga. These are just the established schools that have publicly accessible commercial listings. From personal experience (as dance student, dance teacher and researcher), I know that there are also numerous other dance groups and classes that offer both informal and formalized instruction to interested parties so that dance is being taught and learned in greater numbers than even the wealth of dance schools implies. Vernacular Newfoundland dance can be found at annual folk festivals, in church halls and occasionally in pubs. This prevalence of dance in the greater St. John's area can be traced back through a long history of teaching social dance. I have limited my study to the St. John's area in part because of its rich history of dancing in schools, festivals, and organized events. This differs significantly from the more informal "times" where dance would have been regularly learned and

performed in outport communities. As such, this is an urban study of vernacular dance performance groups in Newfoundland.

Vernacular dance forms in Newfoundland thrive today in the local arts and folk communities. When conducting preliminary inquiries in order to unearth my case study groups, I was astounded at the number of groups, events and styles of vernacular dance that were to be found. In a growing, vibrant and increasingly cosmopolitan city, St. John's still houses a significant number of vernacular dance enthusiasts. Perhaps the current interest in vernacular dance forms in Newfoundland and Labrador can be traced back to what Overton, in Making a World of Difference, calls the cultural revival in Newfoundland, beginning in the 1970s. It was at this time that interest in Newfoundland culture was piqued through efforts by Memorial University of Newfoundland as well as a crop of young and influential artists, such as those in the Wonderful Grand Band, Figgy Duff and CODCO, who chose to concentrate their efforts on preserving and furthering the arts in Newfoundland. It was because of this cultural revival that individuals and groups such as Kelly Russell, Jim Payne and Sheilagh's Brush began to recognize the importance of not just preserving Newfoundland dance, but keeping its spirit alive as well.

Today, vernacular dance in Newfoundland is practiced and performed in various contexts, but those contexts have largely shifted from those of the dance forms' first existences. Gone are the days when a family would gather in their kitchen and dance a set dance to pass away an evening. Today, you are far

more likely to see the same dance performed onstage at a folk festival. While some may lament the decline and even the demise of the earlier dance contexts, others see this recontextualization as an opportunity to keep the dances alive. The issue, however, is a contentious one. Add to this the fact that much of Newfoundland's traditional culture is marketed heavily in its tourism industry and the issue becomes even more complex.

The marketing of any culture leads to concerns about its potential "development" away from its authentic earlier self. Today's tourists are increasingly savvy. They arrive with heavy travel itineraries, often inclined to select the most "authentic" and "representative" tourist activities possible. Of course, this trend is fostered by available tourist literature, which practically assures visitors that they will see happy, smiling Newfoundlanders playing the accordion and jigging fish everywhere they turn (see the Newfoundland and Labrador Travel Guide as an example. Each annual issue I have examined during my period of research – from 2001 to 2008 – has promoted such images to tourists). Dance becomes one of many "authentic" products marketed to tourists as a site where they can expect to encounter what Martin Laba, in his article on esoteric and exoteric perspectives of Newfoundland identity, refers to as the "raw" Newfoundlander (see Laba). While pinpointing what is authentic is highly problematic, the issue of authenticity comes into play when merging the new with the vernacular. This issue has been raised with more contemporary

forms of both set and step dancing in Newfoundland and will be discussed in further chapters.

As Newfoundland and Labrador today endeavours to re-define itself in a new and challenging economic climate, so too must its cultural proponents re-envisage who they are and how they fit into a more contemporary context. It is at this juncture that Newfoundland identity, through its Irishness continuum, becomes paramount to the discussion of the role of the arts within the larger culture.

Approaching the Study

My interest in this topic began in 1997. Fresh from a Master's degree in dance history, theory and ethnology, I entered the Folklore program at Memorial University of Newfoundland with the notion that I wanted to pursue dissertation research on a dance topic that I could integrate with folklore theory and approaches. I was brand new to Newfoundland and Labrador, and spent much of my first year acclimatizing myself to the new program and my new geographic and living situation. As happens with many mainlanders who move to this province, I was intrigued by the uniqueness of many traditions in Newfoundland and Labrador, and my background in dance stimulated my interest in the local arts scene. I did not immediately see vernacular dance as being prevalent in contemporary Newfoundland culture, since music, theatre and the visual arts tend to be more squarely situated in the public eye. However, after several years

in St. John's, I was much more aware of dance in the area and had been introduced to some of the dance groups I would later use as the basis for my fieldwork. Once I had taken some folklore courses and read Colin Quigley's work on Newfoundland set dance, I began to realize that research on set dancing in Newfoundland had primarily focused on social context and that performance groups had not been seriously studied. This discovery sparked my dissertation research.

In selecting the groups for my study, I began by looking for a representative sample of dance groups who performed at public events of some kind, and who performed dance that was perceived as being "traditional" or "folk" dance, by the dancers and/or the audience. My intent was to select groups whose manifest function, in part, was to represent Newfoundland culture. The final criterion was that the group had to visibly and consciously be aware of the fact that they performed culture through dance. This was important because while every dance form has a specific cultural lineage, some forms of dance, such as ballet, tap and modern dance, do not emphasize their heritage roots in choreography, costume or performance event. Of my case study groups, some consciously promote Irishness through their dance genre, while others employ it as a latent function of their group. But all the groups featured in this study utilize Irishness to some degree, embedded in their links to Newfoundland heritage.

After some thought and preliminary research, I decided to examine set dance and step dance as two key dance genres in Newfoundland. In each case, I

concentrated on one dance group – Dance Up and St. Pat's Dancers respectively – and conducted fieldwork with analogous dance groups to provide context and add depth to my discussion of the case study groups. Therefore, in addition to the two main groups in each chapter, I also discussed set dance with renowned set dancer, dance teacher and musician Jim Payne, and broadened my knowledge of step dance through fieldwork with Martin Vallee of Dance Studio East. After gaining permission to conduct fieldwork with Dance Up and St. Pat's Dancers, I began a fieldwork, research and writing process that lasted seven years, consolidating my ideas around the notion of Irishness in Newfoundland culture.

Irishness as an integral aspect of Newfoundland identity is a predominant theme in this study. There are innumerable angles from which these dance groups could have been approached, in isolation or together, and some of the supporting arguments in each chapter point to other possibilities for study, which are addressed in the conclusion. Each group differs from the other in significant ways: dance genre, cultural lineage and contemporary context. However, the underlying connections – cultural significance, community status, centre of collective identity – indicate more similarities than differences. Overall, the groups point to the intersection between art and commodification; together they illustrate how, in today's society, the vernacular can be firmly entrenched in the popular as a means of survival.

Outline

The groups I examine here are significant not just as dance groups or folk groups, but as groups that practice and perform vernacular Newfoundland culture. In my dissertation I draw on both field and library/archive research as a basis for my analysis and conclusions. Chapter Two introduces the key theoretical dance and folklore concepts that underline my study. In Chapter Three, I outline my methodological approaches, indicating how they build on both folklore and dance research. I highlight my own experiences and potential biases, as well as my reflections on my role as fieldworker, as participant, as observer, as interpreter, writer and editor. Reflexivity is key when approaching any kind of an ethnographic study, and my purpose in this chapter is to show the reader how and why I conducted the research in the manner I chose.

The heart of the study is contained in Chapters Four, Five and Six. Chapter Four focuses on the concept of Irishness as a key aspect of Newfoundland identity. As such, that chapter provides an overview of Newfoundland culture and society in order to situate the dance groups in their cultural milieu. While Newfoundland history is indeed complex, folklore and dance have flourished in the province as a result of certain events and movements that have helped to shape the Newfoundland identity through both manifest and latent means. From there I draw parallels between Newfoundland and Irish culture in terms of geography, settlement patterns and more intangible cultural products such as custom, belief and identity. Linking the two cultures

provides insight into why Newfoundland's Irishness is evocative in its cultural products. The case studies that follow illustrate the significance of Irishness in a continuum.

The next two chapters present case studies that illustrate the theoretical concepts explored in the foundational chapters. Each examines a selected dance genre in its social and cultural contexts. Chapter Five investigates set dance (also known as square dance) primarily through Tonya Kearley's Dance Up tourist event. In the continuum of Irishness found in Newfoundland cultural products, set dance is more subtle in its approach. In other words, set dance in Newfoundland tends not to *overtly* rely on its Irishness in order to attract dancers and audiences. However, Irishness is indeed a prevalent and significant undercurrent in Newfoundland set dance. First, a number of Newfoundland set dances are of Irish origin. There is therefore a direct link between the dance form and its cultural lineage. In Dance Up, Kearley draws upon many Newfoundland set dances for her event. While she does not specifically promote the Irishness of some Newfoundland set dances, she is aware of their roots. Second, a reading of Newfoundland's tourist literature in Chapter Five alongside the Dance Up event itself reveals links between Newfoundland set dance and the promotion of Irishness in Newfoundland's cultural tourism industry. By connecting dance to tourist promotion in Newfoundland, Kearley tacitly uses Irishness in drawing participants to her Dance Up event. As a tourist event, Dance Up blurs the lines separating tradition, innovation and revival. As an integral part of Newfoundland's

cultural tourism business, Dance Up plays a direct role in promoting the apparent Irishness of Newfoundland culture. By making set dance appealing to both locals and tourists, Kearley sees herself as keeping the spirit of set dance alive. Dance Up represents a deliberate recontextualization of Newfoundland set dance and a conscious commodification of dance as a cultural product, something that has elicited mixed reactions from members of the folk arts community in St. John's. However, Kearley has clearly furthered the idea of Irishness in Newfoundland dance by actively promoting Dance Up in the Irish-laden imagery of Newfoundland tourist literature.

My exploration of step dance highlights the St. Pat's Dancers who perform Irish-Newfoundland step dance, a style of step dancing that comes directly from Ireland through the Christian Brothers in the 1930s. As explored throughout Chapter Six, step dancing is at the other end of the Irishness continuum in Newfoundland culture. Step dancing has become synonymous in popular parlance with Irishness in recent years following the worldwide fame of "Riverdance" as *the* embodiment of Irish culture worldwide. However, the St. Pat's Dancers and Irish-Newfoundland step dance pre-date the "Riverdance" phenomenon and established the prevalence of Irishness in Newfoundland nearly eighty years ago. A children's dance group with a long history in St. John's, St. Pat's Dancers are well known representatives of Newfoundland culture both within and outside the province. The group has adapted over the years by incorporating local choreography to complement their Irish repertoire.

Locally created dances mimic the style of the initial Irish dances that the children learned, thereby perpetuating the Irish aesthetic in both older and newer dances that the group performs. The resultant hybrid dance form is indeed reflective of the moniker “Irish-Newfoundland step dance”; as national and international representatives of Newfoundland culture they export their Irish lineage to many outside the province. Their reliance on informal means of transmission of folklore – the older children teach the dances to the younger children, mentoring them until they have progressed enough to perform with the group – reflects the significance of tradition in transmitting the dance form to new members as well as to the audience.

I flesh out my discussion of the St. Pat’s Dancers by comparing them to two other step dance groups in the St. John’s area, both of which perform Irish step dancing, commonly known as “Riverdance”-style step dancing. Dance Studio East and iDance rely on more formalized classroom instruction. This structure reflects the stringent hierarchical nature of Irish step dance classes, competitions and festivals. While the Irishness of the St. Pat’s Dancers has always been publicly acknowledged through the aesthetic of the dance style itself, “Riverdance” has served to draw additional attention to the group. Although there are differences in transmission and performance between the St. Pat’s Dances and other Irish step dance styles, Irish-Newfoundland step dance is similar in choreography to “Riverdance” style dances. This has further ingrained the place of the St. Pat’s Dancers as “Irish” in the minds of Newfoundlanders –

from their historical links to the Irish Christian Brothers, to the dance style that appears similar to audiences fed on “Riverdance”, “Lord of the Dance” and other spin-offs. Although the St. Pat’s Dancers do not perform exactly the same kind of step dancing as in “Riverdance”, the popularity of the show has had a number of effects on step dancing in Newfoundland today. First, it has encouraged the development of Irish step dancing through new classes at iDance and Dance Studio East. Second, it has revived interest in Irish-Newfoundland step dance by encouraging children to get involved in the St. Pat’s Dancers. The subtle distinctions between the two dance styles are not significant to many dancers or audiences. The explosion in the popularity of Irish dance worldwide has certainly affected step dancing in Newfoundland, and this case study chapter illustrates how a global phenomenon can influence Irishness on a local scale. The two case studies follow the Irishness continuum from subtle, underlying representations of the Irish culture in set dancing, to the overt manifestation of Irishness through step dancing in Newfoundland.

Finally, my interpretations are synthesized in a conclusion that draws together the various elements of my case studies to provide some understanding as to how learning about vernacular dance can aid in understanding Newfoundland culture. After my exploration of the ways in which Irishness is used in creating, maintaining and promoting a Newfoundland collective identity, I now discuss why Irishness is so appealing. I deconstruct the elements of Irishness discussed in the thesis to identify just what it is about Irishness that

makes some Newfoundlanders want to be Irish, and makes many visitors want to buy into that identity while they are here. I then provide insight into future areas for study related to this work.

Underlining this work are several interconnected theoretical concepts. The next chapter explores the meanings of terms such as folk, vernacular, tradition, revival and authenticity. It also reviews key concepts related to dance and community and identity, specifically in regards to dance in the Newfoundland community. After addressing broad theoretical concepts, I discuss relevant library and archival research that illustrates the significance of dance in Newfoundland culture.

Chapter Two: Key Concepts

Approaching the Literature

My aim in this study is to illustrate the inherently interdisciplinary nature of Dance Studies and Folklore Studies, and to demonstrate how common themes and concepts merge in my dissertation within the Newfoundland context. Susan Groth's discussion of folklore's "big words" is relevant to dance just as Joann Kealiinohomoku's exploration of ethnicity in ballet is relevant to other folklore genres. While I am, of course, selecting terms and theories that are vital to this study, it is no coincidence that they have already been addressed in numerous fields, from a variety of scholarly perspectives. Ethnography is at the heart of this research; however, the ethnographic approach must necessarily be grounded in theoretical considerations as a means of analysis. It is here that I discuss those central concepts in the dance and folklore literatures as a precursor to their application to this research.

In this chapter, I introduce a lexicon central to my study. Because of the complexities of some of these terms, it is sometimes essential to present and to problematize already established definitions. In recent years, terms that were once widely accepted have been questioned and deconstructed by various scholars. My goal is to introduce some of these terms and discuss how they have been and may be used. I trace changes in their use, unpack some of their many layers of meaning, and clarify how I intend to use them in this study. Additionally,

I survey existing studies relevant to subsequent chapters, including not only scholarly sources, but archival sources uncovered in several key archives in the St. John's region. As such, I have sought to provide an overview of documentation based on both primary and secondary sources, dealing with dance in both a theoretical and practical sense. Thus the reader is introduced to key concepts that will permeate the dissertation.

Who are the Dancers?

This question highlights the importance of understanding not only the individuals involved in a dance form, but how those individuals are identified by scholars, which in turn affects their eventual treatment in the resultant study. In my dissertation, examining the concepts of folk dance and vernacular dance are essential to understanding who my informants are, their own self-awareness as practitioners of dance forms, and how I have interpreted the dancers and dance forms in subsequent chapters. Shifts in terminology in both Folklore and Dance Studies in the twentieth century indicate not just changes in lexicon; rather, they point to changes in perspectives regarding how dance is studied and who the proponents of a given dance form are.

Dance that is overtly rooted in a particular culture, especially in the heritage of that culture, is often assigned descriptors such as ethnic, traditional, folk, or national. These terms, while certainly evocative and sometimes provocative, are used unselfconsciously in some written sources, while other

research deconstructs them in an attempt to both problematize their meaning and illustrate the sometimes negative images they connote. These early words were useful to distinguish forms of “everyday” dance from so-called “high art” dance, often understood as theatricalized dance forms (such as ballet) that were professionally performed by a small group of highly-trained dancers. However, these terms are not unproblematic and their use has been the source of great debate over the last forty or fifty years. Highlighting shifts over time in uses of “folk” and “ethnic” as descriptors in dance and folklore literature reveals an evolution in thinking of scholars in these fields. It also illustrates how those who create, practice and perform dance are regarded in an academic sense.

“Folk” is a common word in the Folklore lexicon and perhaps the term has also spurred more debate than any other throughout the history of the discipline. The Romantic Nationalist movement in Germany in the eighteenth century was largely responsible for the belief that the folk were rural, illiterate peasants who still performed their tales and songs to pass the time. Those who were part of the Romantic Nationalist movement sought to get beyond their sophisticated society of science and artifice brought on largely by foreign influence through the Renaissance, and move closer to natural and spiritual ideals they felt the folk embodied (Wilson 818-35). This notion of the folk as rural and unlettered persisted until it was challenged by American folklorists in the 1960s and 1970s (see Redfield). Perhaps one of the most significant ideological changes in the study of folklore can be attributed to Alan Dundes when he coined the term “folk

group", meaning a group of people, "who share at least one common factor" (2). The concept of the folk broadened immensely once folklorists considered that everyone is the folk and that everyone has folklore. A term like "folk dance" evolved similarly. Where folk dance would have, for many years, been used to refer solely to dance forms performed by peasants in a rural setting, subsequent meanings of folk and folklore indicate that folk dance belongs to all who participate in various dance forms; therefore, all of those participants would be regarded as folk dancers. That said, folk dance is still seen by some scholars to have limitations and its merits have been extensively debated (e.g. see Ramsey, Kennedy). Perhaps Andriy Nahachewsky summarizes these issues best when he states:

In some cases, notions of "folk dance" are based on the dance environment (folk dance is village dance). In other cases, it is defined based on sender/performer (the dance of members of certain national groups, the dance of commoners, the dance of amateurs as opposed to professionals). In other cases again, it is defined by textual content (derived from ritual, agricultural, martial activities), or by the identity of the recipient of the communicated message (a "communal" dance for the dancers themselves). ("Participatory" 13).

So not only is the term itself loaded as potentially undermining the validity and complexity of the dance form in question, the use of the word "folk dance" is not evenly applied by a particular set of criteria.

Joann Kealiinohomoku, a dance anthropologist, addressed the issue of nomenclature related to folk dance in several written pieces, including her discussion of "Folk Dance", in Richard Dorson's Folklore and Folklife: An Introduction. Here, Kealiinohomoku deconstructs the term "folk dance", asserting that by following Dundes's definition of folk, any dance group constitutes a folk group and thus their dances are logically folk dances. She further argues against the narrow, conventional notion that folk dance is unrefined, requires no formalized training and has some national or ethnic identifying factors ("Folk Dance" 382). Of note in this piece is that Kealiinohomoku pursues her goal of defining folk dance by first examining the artifice of delineations between dance forms that are considered "high art", and those that are not.

In challenging stereotypes of folk dance forms, Kealiinohomoku provides a definition of folk dance of her own that cautions against "accepting the evolutionary categories that are implicit" in much folk dance scholarship (389). She identifies folk dance as having two forms: first and second existence. Here, Kealiinohomoku draws on Hoerburger who argues in his article "Once Again: On the Concept of 'Folk Dance'" that "folk dance" is a term used to mean different things and that one must distinguish between its first and second existence (30).² In its first existence, folk dance can be found as part of calendar customs, or as part of rituals or rites of passage. Folk dance in its second existence belongs

² Hoerburger's theory has also been used by Judith Lynne Hanna in To Dance is Human. Theresa Buckland traces this distinction back to Elise Van der Ven-Ten Bonsel in 1935, arguing that Curt Sach's World History of the Dance epitomizes a three stage "evolution" of dance that can later be found in Hoerburger's work, among others ("Definitions" 316). Recent studies such as Shay's 1999 "Parallel Traditions" utilize Hoerburger's division (32).

within the realm of "revival", as recreation or culturally-driven endeavours ("Folk Dance" 392). Folk dance in its second existence raises questions of tradition and authenticity, terms that are problematic in their own right. The concept of first and second existence in dance is useful as a starting point by which the "evolution" of a dance form may be examined. Contextual shifts in dance forms can be complex and may not always follow a logical chronology from first to second existence with clearly demarcated changes; however, Hoerburger provides a preliminary point of discussion.

As useful as the dichotomy of first and second existence folk dance is, later scholars have described it as an oversimplification. In her article, "Some Musings on Folk Dance", Nancy Lee Chalfa Ruyter points out several instances of dance that may be considered in between first and second existence. One of her examples are the dance forms of individuals who have migrated to urban areas within or outside their country of origin. Whereas these people "perform" their culture (such as dance) in a "first existence" way, having learned growing up in villages, their children learn the same culture in formalized ways and perform it at specific events (271). Using the example of English Morris dance, Nahachewsky offers an alternative to Hoerburger's binary division ("Once Again"). Although Hoerburger's delineation is undoubtedly oversimplified, his identification of first and second existence challenges the high-low distinction of dance forms. Rather, Hoerburger and those like Kealiinohomoku who follow him present folk dance as an art form that should be examined in its own right. It is a

starting point in eradicating artificial validations of one style of dance over another, even if it does privilege earlier versions of a dance form over their later revival forms.

Rather than attempting to delineate dance forms, folklorists often approach dance as cultural performance. This is the view reflected in Adrienne Kaeppler's entry, "Dance," in Richard Bauman's Folklore, Cultural Performances and Popular Entertainments. Kaeppler, a noted dance scholar, discusses dance as a whole, encouraging the neophyte to avoid the trap of distinguishing between various dance genres. By outlining the need to study dance in its cultural context, as well as examining its structure and meaning, Kaeppler's inclusive approach embraces the study of all dance forms as valid avenues of folklore study. While this may be too simplistic an approach for an in-depth analysis of any kind of dance event, it is a more inclusive one, in line with broader contemporary interpretations of what constitutes folklore and who are the participants.

In my study, I approach dance holistically, an effort to explore the multiplicity of views provided by my informants through my own interpretive lens. So while Tonya Kearley does not focus on footwork in her Dance Up event in order to make it more accessible to neophytes, Jim Payne stresses technique to appeal to the long-term dance student. They both identify Newfoundland set dancing as a kind of folk dance, but take very different teaching approaches to fulfill their goals. With an inclusive approach, I examine each dance genre through some of its chief proponents, using these key concepts as a guide.

"Ethnic" is an analogous adjective to "folk" used to describe dance forms although it most often implies dance forms of a non-European, so-called peasant tradition. Audiences often assume that participants in ethnic or folk dance are untrained and unskilled dancers, sometimes inferring incorrect and perhaps inappropriate cultural norms and values from the movement in the dance. To be ethnic is to be marginal, to be Other. However, dance and folklore literature support the view that ethnicity can be positive, prevalent, and actively chosen and represented. In other words, in many ways, ethnicity is constructed. Moreover, studies such as Benedict Anderson's Imagined Communities assert that the very concept of nationhood is a historical invention. Thus, this Other-ness (to parallel Anderson's concept here), positive or negative, may be key to constructions of ethnicity. Joann Kealiinohomoku highlights the significance of Other-ness in ethnic dance. In her article, "An Anthropologist Looks at Ballet as a Form of Ethnic Dance", she dismantles the divide between ballet (a dance form seemingly without ethnicity) and ethnic dance by using accepted definitions of folk/ethnic dance to argue that ballet indeed possesses ethnicity and therefore can be considered ethnic dance. Rather than re-define how we look at ballet, Kealiinohomoku highlights the falsity of arbitrary hierarchy in dance forms. As such, she challenges conventionally-held notions of how we view and value dance forms. She demonstrates that ethnicity is not simply the Other; rather is a quality of all dance forms that is to be recognized and celebrated.

Ethnic dance has a political dimension when it is learned and performed by those representing their own cultural group. In the introduction to his book Choreographic Politics, Anthony Shay initiates a discussion of ethnicity and nationalism in traditional dance. His concentration on state folk dance ensembles is an excellent case study for an examination of ethnicity, nationalism and tradition as they relate to dance. He writes:

Thus, while nationalism is of recent origin, ethnicity seems to always have been with us. Because the core of ethnic identity is not readily available in overtly written texts, dance companies become useful vehicles for the expression of ethnicity and nationalism through the symbolic substitution of movement. The dances, music, and costumes found in dance companies constitute symbols or what Nash (1989, 15) refers to as "surface markers," which in fact represent and stand for the core elements of ethnic identity such as language, religion, and common origins and history. (Choreographic 6)

Shay draws on these terms in his work and takes a fresh approach to ethnic and national dance. He states, "I have found that traditional dance forms a unique lens through which one may enter a world of embodied representation" (Choreographic 7). Rather than simply showcasing various cultural dance groups as a mirror of society, Shay approaches the political, social and representational aspects of state-run folk dance companies. While my work examines differently structured and less formalized dance groups, the broad

strokes of political representation and embodiment are ideas that can be applied to any dance that contains ethnic or national ties.³ And Shay's notion of embodied representation indeed applies to all dance forms. Therefore, Shay defines ethnic and national dance in his own terms by asserting that dance groups "represent on a wide variety of levels – political, historical, ethnic, economic, gender, and aesthetic, among others" (Choreographic 10). While the dances in this study may not have the overt political overtones that Shay is referring to, they certainly reflect political and ideological values as representations of Newfoundland culture, in particular the Irishness that permeates Newfoundland nationalist consciousness.

June A. Vail also approaches folk dance as a means of political expression, firmly rooted in ethnicity. In her article, "Staging 'Sweden': A Typology for Folk Dance in Performance", Vail not only argues that folk dance in Sweden is "staged representations of culturally constructed norms and values," but also that those representations are formed through careful and conscious staging, costumes and choreography (89). Therefore, folk dance is not a quaint, unselfconscious, unfiltered expression of a culture. Vail subverts conventional views that folk dance is what Shuman calls "unmarked culture" in her article "Dismantling Local Culture." Rather, she emphasizes the political and cultural choices that are made when placing folk dance on the stage for public consumption. Finally, Andriy Nahachewsky's article, "Participatory and

³ Of course, as Joann Kealiinohomoku argues, this means every kind of dance.

Presentational Dance and Ethnochoreological Categories", argues against categorizing dance as being classical, folk or popular. Instead, he suggests a new model of participatory and presentational dance. His ideas are similar to those of Catherine Foley's distinction between Irish dance for entertainment and for performance in her study of step dancing in Northern Kerry (Irish 6-8). Nahachewsky provides description and notation of several Ukrainian dances as a means of illustrating these categories. He asserts:

Some readers may imagine that these categories are distinct in practice, creating a dichotomy or division in dance phenomena. Indeed, this is far from true. These two conceptual categories are idealizations, opposite poles on a theoretical continuum. Specific dance traditions may operate within any range on this conceptual axis. (1)

Just as Nahachewsky and Foley reveal that both participatory and presentational dance exist in their chosen dance forms, the same can be said for dance in Newfoundland and Labrador. Nahachewsky's re-visioning of traditional dance categories is one that can easily be applied to this study and the dances that fall at various points on the conceptual spectrum from strictly participatory to strictly presentational. In this way, the dance forms that are presented in this study acknowledge their ethnicity along with their structure, context and function, all as integral aspects of the collective identity of dance and dancers. Ethnicity through dance is represented in different ways by these scholars, but what is significant here is the treatment of ethnicity not as the marginal, but as one of the multiple

voices with which a dance can speak. To appreciate ethnicity is to get closer to a holistic examination of how a cultural product, tangible or intangible, functions in its cultural context.

In attempting to characterize the various dance forms in this study, I found terms such as folk and ethnic to be insufficient for my own purposes. It is evident that these concepts have provided a firm ground upon which contemporary scholars can stand, but in the end they often come with ideological baggage that may lead to misconceptions of what a dance form is about. While each term does satisfy some aspects of my chosen dance styles, none provides a comprehensive framework. Yes, the dance groups here are ethnic in nature, perhaps more than one ethnicity. And by considering Alan Dundes's concept of the folk group as the contemporary criterion for determining who comprises "the folk", then yes, "the folk" do participate in both case studies.

Nonetheless, there are other, stronger commonalities that the case studies share beyond these boundaries. First, they are accessible. Any community member may participate, regardless of ethnic, religious background, dance knowledge or socio-economic circumstances. Dance Up and Irish step dance classes are reasonably affordable events for those who choose to participate and there is no cost involved in joining the St. Pat's Dancers. The only restriction on any of the groups is that the St. Pat's Dancers group is for children only. Otherwise, anyone who is available and interested may participate. Second, they are localized. This localized element is critical to the success of the groups

not just in recruiting dancers, but in their acceptance in the community as well. Not only do they draw local people as dancers and audience members, but all are integral – and locally recognized – as aspects of the cultural fabric of St. John's. Third, they are common. This goes beyond the aspect of localization. In other words, they are groups that not only exist in St. John's and are recognized as being vernacular dance groups in Newfoundland, but they are also seen as an everyday part of life in Newfoundland. It may seem counterintuitive to argue that their "ordinariness" makes them special in the community, but the "common" element of each group means that they are firmly entrenched in their community, thereby validating their place in not only the St. John's dance community, but the overall culture as well. Although each group functions differently in the community, they share these fundamental commonalities.

These qualities – accessible, localized, common – led me to conclude that "vernacular dance" best describes the dance forms that I am discussing. Vernacular now commonly replaces "folk" or "traditional" in many areas of contemporary Folklore Studies. The term dates back to writers such as Margaret Lantis, who in 1960 used the phrase "vernacular culture" to replace what she saw as inadequate terms including mores, folkways, and customs. Lantis reached back to Webster's dictionary, defining vernacular as "common of a locality, region, or, by extension, of a trade or other group: the commonly used or spoken as distinct from the written" (203). Theresa Buckland identifies Stearns as one of the earliest to use the term "vernacular dance" in 1968 to describe jazz dance

("Definitions" 320). Since then, scholars have developed definitions of "vernacular" that are of use to my study. For example, Narváez and Primiano use the term to refer to forms of music and religion. They demonstrate that "vernacular" is more than simply a word replacement. Rather, they adopt vernacular because it is a more inclusive concept than "folk" or "traditional" and points towards a methodological as well as theoretical approach to the subject matter.

In this dissertation, I use "vernacular" to mean styles of dance that are not conventionally considered part of the canon of "high art" dance forms. Here I draw upon Susan Eike Spalding and Jane Harris Woodside in the introduction to their collection of articles, Communities in Motion: Dance, Community and Tradition in America's Southeast and Beyond. Spalding and Woodside define vernacular dance as "dance that is community based and is shaped and perpetuated by the traditional process; it can either be social or performance oriented in character" (2). The dance groups in my study are entrenched in their community, and would lose some of their identity were they to be removed from the local context. Further, my understanding of vernacular dance is also influenced by Peter Narváez's definition of Newfoundland vernacular music when he writes that, "vernacular ... refers to both those traits of culture that people actually make for themselves ... and to its more conventional meaning of indigenous culture, culture that develops in a given locale" ("Newfoundland" 215).

Narváez's approach emphasizes both the common and the local. It is at this intersection that the forms in this study are located.

Outside of music, "vernacular" has been applied to other areas of folklore study. For example, Leonard Norman Primiano adopted "vernacular" in favour of the more common "folk religion". Primiano argues that the Yoder-derived two-tiered model that separates folk or popular religious practices from official religious institutions is one that is inadequate to describe the various religious practices that exist in numerous cultures. He calls for an inductive approach to the study of religion, which, as he states, "balances a scholar's empathetic understanding of the individuals being studied" with the study of religion itself (40). By introducing the expression "vernacular religion", Primiano asserts:

I am not simply substituting the word 'vernacular' to remove the connotations that I do not like in 'folk' or 'popular.' I am, rather, attempting to redress a heritage of scholarly misrepresentation, in what I see as the necessary methodological reflexivity on the ethnographic process.

Understanding religion as 'vernacular religion' does justice to the variety of manifestations and perspectives found within past and present human religiosity. It also provides a methodological tool for studying the conjunction of religion, folklore and folklife studies. (42)

He clarifies, then, that this is more than a shift in terminology; rather, the term reflects Primiano's intention to alter folkloristic perceptions of religion. Since vernacular religion is, "religion as it is lived" (44), every religious experience is a

vernacular one, as each one requires human interpretation and expression. This dovetails nicely with Narváez's definition of vernacular music in that it is the music (or religion, or dance) created by the people for the people. It is the common, the everyday, the local. Finally, this usage is consistent with the last area of folklore study where "vernacular" is widely accepted: architecture. Since R. W. Brunskill used the term in his book, Vernacular Architecture: An Illustrated Handbook in 1971, other material culture scholars, such as Gerald Pocius (Place), Henry Glassie and Richard MacKinnon, have adopted "vernacular" in their studies. For these folklorists, "vernacular" refers to architecture, such as houses and outbuildings, that have been designed and built by those who will use the building themselves. Thus, from music to religion to material, culture, folklorists employ the concept of "vernacular" in similar ways. Although each definition may focus on different aspects of the concept, vernacular is deeply embedded in the local people and/or place in which it is lived and experienced.

Each dance group I examine is not only localized in geography, but is explicitly identified by its members and recognized by the public as a Newfoundland group. Identity is inherently linked to the dance form. The indigenous nature of the vernacular is inherent in my two dance genres. Each of the dance contexts I consider in this thesis, while drawing from a consciousness of the past, has localized its dance form within a normalizing of a common Irish identity throughout Newfoundland cultural practices and products. This leads to the question of how revival recontextualizes a traditional art form. Does

recontextualization affect a dance form's authenticity and its place in the collective consciousness of its culture?

Studying Dance in Context

A genre-based approach to the study of dance commonly categorizes dance into segmented forms such as ballet, jazz, or folk. While this has been a fairly common approach in Dance Studies, a more holistic view provides an examination of dance in a particular community, region or culture. Delineation of forms in this way is seemingly one of the more efficient and simple ways to narrow down research approaches; however, the problem with this approach is that it often isolates one dance form rather than addressing the interconnections among various genres. Further, approaches of this kind may tend towards a historical approach, favouring chronology and "evolution" (or lack thereof) of a dance form over context. In her Introduction to Intercultural Communication and Creative Practice, Laura Lengel cautions about such an approach. She states, "essentializing culture and cultural identity is a limitation of much work in intercultural communication that assumes that culture and cultural identity are synonymous with nation and national identity" (10). Rather than simplistically linked to community or national identity, dance should be seen as a more complex mode of communication that likely embodies personal experience as well as the influences of more than one culture in addition to the shifting of context over time. Based on this increased appreciation of the complexities of

dance, contemporary studies not only illustrate the intricacies of culture and identity, but are also more likely to integrate, self-consciously or otherwise, Dance Studies with other disciplines: folklore, anthropology, sociology and performance studies. Brocker, Kennedy, Mangin, Sughrue and Fine have written works that discuss the significance of folk dance and its revival as the key to understanding community and cultural identity. In this dissertation, I use the cultural fabric of Newfoundland as integral to examining the dance forms themselves. In Chapter Four, I explore the Irishness of Newfoundland culture as a way of providing the historical basis for the evolution of Newfoundland's cultural consciousness. The Irishness is an essential element to my treatment of the dance forms within their social and cultural contexts.

Recognizing the importance of studying dance in context has emerged gradually in Dance Studies, evolving from earlier studies that delineated dance according to style or genre. Genre-based approaches to Dance Studies range from the generalized, where an overall survey of numerous dance forms is provided, to the specific, where the author focuses on one dance form and discusses it in detail. They have their role, but it is a limited one. The former includes texts like Walter Sorrell's The Dance Has Many Faces, Lincoln Kirstein's historical Dance: A Short History of Classic Theatrical Dancing, and Roger Copeland and Marshall Cohen's What is Dance? Works like these are valuable as introductory textbooks for initiates into the world of dance scholarship, and their approach reflects this. Such introductions are designed to prepare those

embarking upon an academic journey in Dance Studies in that they give a generalized overview of the various kinds of dance that exist, in order to provide a broad-based introduction to the world of dance through a survey of various dance genres. Their utility for in-depth research on any kind of dance is limited. Books based on specific genres of dance, such as ballet, modern, jazz, or a number of culturally-specific dance forms have their own value as well, such as A. H. Franks's Social Dance: A Short History.

More so than genre-based studies, works that concentrate on dance in a community or cultural context often provide rich ethnographic and theoretical material to the reader. Communities in Motion: Dance, Community, and Tradition in America's Southeast and Beyond, edited by Susan Eike Spalding and Jane Harris Woodside, examines a number of vernacular dance forms, largely (but not exclusively) from the regional perspective of the south-eastern United States. It is an excellent example of how a community-based book need not be limited by the community it is studying. Communities in Motion ventures beyond the realm of conventional community-based studies of dance, taking a folkloristic approach within the prescribed geographic region. Spalding and Woodside's collection of essays illustrates various themes, such as conserving tradition, invented tradition, documenting dance, and continuity and change, all within a regional focus. Keith Atteck takes a different approach in his community-based approach to teaching dance to children. His short article, "Transmission of Traditions to Children: Developing Suitable Material for a Community Folklore Group", does

not focus on the dance form itself within the community; rather, Atteck explores how a community can further its traditions through the teaching of vernacular dance to children. He examines the structure of the community, the roles played by various members in the community, and the function of tradition and dance within the community, exemplifying this piece as a departure from the much of the related Dance Studies literature.

With the obvious exception of Kealiinohomoku's examination of ballet as an ethnic dance referred to above, in the past forty years dance anthropologists who have focused on context, often research non-Western forms of dance. The development of dance anthropology and ethnology is well documented in Adrienne Kaeppler's 2000 article, "Dance Ethnology and the Anthropology of Dance", where she compares the field's development in North America and Europe, illustrating dance's links with folklore and anthropology while coming into its own as a scholarly field (119). Dance anthropologists such as Judith Lynne Hanna and Joann Kealiinohomoku are considered leaders in the field, with numerous books and articles spanning over four decades. Desmond, Royce and Williams have been other contributors. Joann Kealiinohomoku has been extremely influential in her research on dance and ritual, theatre, play and anthropology, particularly in her collaboration with John Blacking. Her work has been of critical importance in the development of dance study from an anthropological perspective. Judith Lynne Hanna, as mentioned above, has written profusely from an anthropological and sociological perspective, examining

areas such as the performer-audience relation, dance as non-verbal communication, and dance and identity. Her work often encompasses ethnology, cultural anthropology and sociolinguistics (see Hanna's The Performer-Audience Connection, Dance, Sex and Gender and To Dance is Human). She analyzes dance as coded interaction, culturally patterned sequences, and as non-verbal communication with aesthetic value (17-56). The anthropological viewpoint of these dance scholars has been especially invaluable in the development of the field of Dance Studies. They have pushed boundaries and blurred disciplinary lines. Because of the work of these pioneers, the field of Dance Studies has matured into a scholarly field that may be explored from ethnographic and scholarly perspectives. Their research and publication, through works such as those discussed, has especially paved the way for dance to be studied alongside other disciplines such as Folklore and Anthropology.

The inherently corporeal nature of dance has been the focus of much of Dance Anthropology, often using feminist theories and approaches to provide links to Women's Studies as well. Susan Leigh Foster's Corporealities: Dancing Knowledge, Culture and Power and Susan Horton Fraleigh's Dance and the Lived Body: A Descriptive Aesthetics are two key examples of works that focus on the dancing body as the site for anthropological discussion. Aside from books dedicated specifically to the role of the body there are texts that extend the idea of dance and the body as it relates to performance and cultural theory. For example, André Lepecki's book Of the Presence of the Body: Essays on Dance

and Performance Theory and Helen Thomas's The Body, Dance and Cultural Theory and Dance, Modernity and Culture are recent publications that eschew dance as an isolated locus of study and integrate it with cultural and performance studies. Both these books adopt an interdisciplinary approach that undertakes to link dance with feminist theory and cultural studies as well as anthropology.

A helpful concept to emerge from anthropological treatments of dance is "ethnomimesis", Robert Cantwell's term for applying the concept of mimesis to ethnographic theory. As Cantwell explains, "ethno" refers to groups and the forces that constitute them, while "mimesis" refers to imitation, the learning that arises between, among, of and by people in social relations. It is unconscious mimicry through which we take and recognize influence, tradition and culture with others (5). He argues that this impersonation is mostly unconscious, spontaneous and ubiquitous as a vital medium of social and cultural communication. Cantwell finds ethnomimesis in all culture. This is because ethnomimesis informs both our conscious and unconscious life, and is essentially imaginative and is found in social practices and products (5-7). The term can easily be applied to an ethnographic situation, as it is so deeply embedded in any cultural norm. Ethnomimesis is found in many culturally-specific dance forms, especially those that function to reflect or perform culture to their audiences. The concept is especially salient to my exploration of how Kearley takes elements of Newfoundland set dance and re-creates elements of cultural context in the recontextualized setting of *Dance Up*.

Much recent dance scholarship approaches dance from an interdisciplinary perspective. By utilizing methods and theories from anthropology, sociology, psychology, folklore and gender studies, dance scholars are able to provide fresh interpretations of dance forms, thereby furthering the field and helping to validate dance scholarship. For example, the collection of essays dancing bodies, living histories: new writings about dance and culture, is a prime example of the benefits of an interdisciplinary approach. In their beautifully written introduction, editors Lisa Doolittle and Anne Flynn problematize the challenges faced when treating dance as an academic subject. They write:

We believe that the body has been excluded from the academy for too long and hope that this collection will help in some way toward greater inclusion for dance and Dance Studies. Dance does matter to the study of history, and it is no longer revolutionary to expand from writing about dancing into writing dancing into history...Dance is one set of embodied practices that can expand from history, anthropology, women's studies and sociology to include not only the static bodies of symbol and inscription, but the moving bodies of people dancing. This book, while its collected essays all start with dance, takes us from that point all over the disciplinary map. We hope that readers from any particular disciplinary standpoint or intellectual location may dance into another area. (xix)

Doolittle and Flynn use dance as a starting point for a discussion of various topics in the humanities and social sciences. They argue passionately for the inclusion of dance, not just as a fringe arts discipline, but also as one that informs and relates to anthropology, sociology and history. The collection of articles in their book reflects this approach. By organizing the writing of established and emerging dance scholars (many of whom work and write in other disciplines as well) in this way, Doolittle and Flynn illustrate how dance scholarship can and does interact with other disciplines. This model is integral for contemporary scholars approaching dance from an interdisciplinary perspective, as I do in this study. The work of Doolittle and Flynn, Foster, Hanna, Kealiinohomoku and others has significantly shifted the field of Dance Studies in the last fifty years. Dance Studies has been moved from a solely performance-based field on the periphery of academia, to an accepted field of scholarship. Its tendency toward interdisciplinary research illustrates an interconnectedness of Dance Studies to other disciplines, and my own work grows out of the spirit of this scholarship.

Dance in the Newfoundland Context

If studying dance in context is crucial to this study, then an exploration of the complement of studies on dance in the Newfoundland cultural context is necessary as a starting point. Prior to beginning my own study, I familiarized myself with both published and unpublished sources on vernacular dance in Newfoundland. This enabled me to build on what was already done and to

provide insight into areas that have thus far not been extensively researched and written. Overall, I found one significant study at the graduate level, numerous undergraduate student essays, and an assortment of archival sources on various aspects of Newfoundland dance. My discussion of these sources here illustrates not just what exists today, but points to the work that still needs to be done.

Dance Studies as a whole is a rather small field; in Canada there are a small number of academic institutions, archives, and scholarly organizations dedicated to the study of dance. Most people involved in dance do so creatively, as active performers, or as audience members. Furthermore, vernacular dance as a kinesthetic and folkloric art form tends to be passed on via oral transmission rather than in the written form. However, that is not to say that dance has been completely ignored in print. Newspaper and magazine clippings, archives files, and a small number of essays comprise most of the writings on Newfoundland vernacular dance. My study is the second major study of dance in Newfoundland, following Colin Quigley's research on set dance in the 1980s. My work then necessarily builds on a small body of literature specifically centring on Newfoundland dance and dance in Newfoundland. I make a distinction here between the two. Newfoundland dance includes dance forms that are linked with Newfoundland as a culture, such as set dance and step dance. Dance in Newfoundland includes any kind of dance form that is learned and performed in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, including ballet, tap, jazz and

others. Both are significant, but I have limited my study to the former to focus on dance styles that are linked to Newfoundland culture.

The largest and most significant piece of work on folk dance in Newfoundland to date is that of Colin Quigley. Quigley's Master's thesis, "Folk Dance and Dance Events in Rural Newfoundland" was completed in 1981, and the subsequent book based on his thesis Close to the Floor: Folk Dance in Newfoundland, was published in 1985. Quigley has also written articles related to this study. His thesis materials are deposited in MUNFLA. Quigley's major work is the largest single study of traditional dance in Newfoundland and Labrador to date, and because it was published in two formats (thesis and book), it has a broad appeal and has reached both a scholarly and general audience. Its significance cannot be overstated and Quigley truly broke new ground by tackling something that had previously not been written about in such depth. His legacy has become evident in various conversations I have had with informants, many of whom are aware of Close to the Floor.

Quigley focuses primarily on set (or square) dances found in outport settings. While his study focused on the Plate Cove area of Bonavista Bay, many of the dances he discusses are found throughout the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. Quigley's study is important as a template for studying traditional set dance as it existed as a living social and cultural piece of folklore in the twentieth century in outport Newfoundland and Labrador. A distinction must be made here between Quigley's M.A. thesis, "Folk Dance and Dance Events in

Rural Newfoundland", and his subsequent book, Close to the Floor: Folk Dance in Newfoundland. Close to the Floor is obviously aimed at a more general audience, presumably so that all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians would have access to the information gleaned through his research. It is written in an accessible style and discusses the dances largely in context, with some reference to some specific dances. In his M.A. thesis, Quigley delves more deeply into Laban Movement Analysis (LMA) of traditional dance in Newfoundland, as well as detailed descriptions of each dance and its accompanying music. Additionally, Quigley provides notation and diagrams of several dances, thus serving as a means of preservation, something that is difficult with any kind of intangible folklore, especially folk dance.

Quigley's work is crucial in the preservation and understanding of the role of traditional dance in small coastal communities in Newfoundland and Labrador in the early to mid twentieth century. However, it is also important to note its limitations. His research is regionally focused on Bonavista Bay. That said, I would assert that geography is not necessarily a limiting factor, as many of the dances he studied are found in communities throughout the province. Also, he concentrates on set dance as his primary dance form. While that is perhaps the most prevalent kind of Newfoundland folk dance, it is certainly not the only one. Finally, and perhaps most significantly, the context in which Quigley principally examines Newfoundland folk dance is that of outport Newfoundland in the early to mid twentieth century. Even though he conducted his research in the 1970s

and 1980s, the social and cultural contexts described suggest that he drew chiefly from the recollections of his informants from their younger years, rather than examining how the dance forms existed in the present of his collecting.

Beyond Quigley's fieldwork and analysis, much of the written information about vernacular dance in Newfoundland and Labrador can be found in two archives, the Memorial University of Newfoundland Folklore and Language Archive, and the Centre for Newfoundland Studies Archive at Memorial University of Newfoundland. While the archival material consists largely of student papers, brochures and photos of dance groups, it is key to an understanding of how information about dance has been preserved. These archival collections provide some of the few sources of documented materials on dance in Newfoundland and Labrador, especially as it was performed in the past.

Memorial University of Newfoundland's Folklore and Language Archive, or MUNFLA, is a rich resource of folklore related to Newfoundland and Labrador. As with many similar cultural institutions, MUNFLA is pressed for both financial and human resources. This leads to limitations for the researcher. While a search through the holdings of MUNFLA reveals a number of items related to vernacular dance in Newfoundland, there are undoubtedly others in the collection that are inaccessible. MUNFLA's indexes are outdated and limited, arranged largely according to main subject area, so papers that include information on dance in a marginal way do not turn up in a conventional search. As well, a serious backlog of indexed files means that the most recent deposit I found was dated 1994. It is

likely that there are more recent deposits that have simply not been accessioned, and therefore are difficult for the researcher to access. As well, in addition to papers that focused on dance forms, there were a number that included dance in their study on traditional or outport life in Newfoundland, thereby contextualizing dance in a similar way to Quigley. Notwithstanding, my research there indicates that a number of students have written about folk dance in Newfoundland from various perspectives.

Colin Quigley's work documented much of MUNFLA's dance holdings up until the publication of his 1985 book, Close to the Floor (126-127). So, I choose here to focus on those collections deposited after Quigley's writings. Based on my research, I have divided them in two broad categories: collections that mainly consist of student papers specifically about Newfoundland dance, and collections about folklife in Newfoundland that also include dance as a significant component of their content. Papers in the first category tended to focus on set dance, perhaps the dance form considered by many to be the most traditional of Newfoundland dance forms, in that it has existed in similar forms for the longest time. Student papers by Feltham, Crocker and Slaney all discuss set dance through description of both the specific dances, as well as their context. In addition to word-based descriptions of the dances, there are often diagrams or other accompanying notation (created by the authors) to illustrate, in a visual way, the patterns and steps of the dance. I also found two papers on dance forms in Newfoundland that do not fall under the umbrella of what is

conventionally considered traditional Newfoundland dance. Kendall's essay on what he calls folk dance (waltz, jive, polka, etc.) taught through Memorial's Physical Education program, and Tooley's study of highland dance as taught through a St. John's dance school, both illustrate the importance of other dance forms in Newfoundland and Labrador. I also found several papers that included dance as part of an account of the life of an individual or community. Wall, White and Lane all deal with dance events as an integral part of the recreational and social lives of Newfoundlanders in outport communities.

What can be discerned from MUNFLA's dance collection is twofold. First, several dances are documented in written and symbolic form, a method that is quite useful when teaching and learning dance. Second, context-based examinations of folklife in a Newfoundland outport contribute multi-faceted information about the structure and function of Newfoundland vernacular dance.

Another significant – but very different – repository of information about vernacular dance in Newfoundland is in the Centre for Newfoundland Studies Archives, also at Memorial University of Newfoundland. There, I searched the collection of the St. John's Folk Arts Council (SJFAC, now the Newfoundland Folk Arts Society), with materials beginning in 1966. The files of the St. John's Folk Arts Council serve as an important record of the importance of folk dance as a part of the SJFAC's mandate; in other words, the institutional recognition of dance as an essential part of the folk arts culture in St. John's. Based on their records, it is clear that dance has been an integral part of the established folk

arts community in St. John's for almost forty years. That is to say, vernacular dance has existed in both a formalized form (presented by the St. John's Folk Arts Council) and in its more informal context (kitchen parties, community events, weddings and the like) in Newfoundland concurrently, all documented in the SJFAC holdings.

Early files from the St. John's Folk Arts Council illustrate that folk dance was an important part of concerts and festivals. Prominent dance groups in the late 1960s and 1970s included the Mount Cashel Dancers, Avalon Stompers, Scottish Country Dancers, Branch Dancers and the St. Pat's Dancers. In their CNS holdings, the 1977 brochure of the Folk Festival states, "throughout Saturday afternoon you will have the opportunity to learn dancers and square sets from the dancers". It is evident, then, that the teaching of Newfoundland set dance has a long-standing tradition as part of its mandate to, as stated on its website, "promote the Folk Arts in Newfoundland and Labrador and throughout Canada; foster creative expression of those arts; and to further the cause of good intergroup relationships". Today, according to its website, the St. John's Folk Arts Council still includes traditional dance workshops as part of the annual Newfoundland and Labrador Folk Festival.

In 1992, the St. John's Folk Arts Council held a concert, "Celebration of Dance." The evening featured a number of dance groups representing many kinds of vernacular dance. The Concert Crowd, St. John's Folk Arts Council Dancers, Community Square Dancers, St. John's Scottish Dancers and St. Pat's

Pride all participated. The second existence of folk dance, in numerous forms, continued after 1992 with the proliferation and perpetuation of organized vernacular dance groups throughout the province.

One of the most significant moments in the history of vernacular dance and the St. John's Folk Arts Council came in 1989, when Jim Payne, well-known musician and dancer, started weekly dances at the LSPU Hall. As stated in their CNS holdings, the goal of these weekly dances, called "Round the House 'n Mind the Dresser", was to learn the traditional dances from around the province, such as the Square Set, Cotillion, Kissing Dance, Running the Goat, and Old Time Waltzes. These events were the impetus for many residents in the St. John's area to learn traditional Newfoundland dances, and begat other dance events including Tonya Kearley's Dance Up, which is discussed in Chapter Five of this dissertation.

The Research Centre for Music, Media and Place (MMaP) at Memorial University of Newfoundland, has a small collection of materials on traditional dance, deposited by Ruth Matthews, who heads up the renowned Penney Folk Dancers set dance group, located on the Burin Peninsula of Newfoundland and Labrador.⁴ Matthews has videotaped the Penney Folk Dancers performing various Newfoundland set dances and described and notated various dances, including: "American Eight", "Six-Handed Reel", "Lancers", "The Kitty's Rambles", "Running the Goat", and "Traditional Newfoundland Square Set". Her collection

⁴ Dr. Beverley Diamond, Director of MMAP, plans to eventually deposit MMAP collections into MUNFLA, but was very kind to allow me access to her own centre's collection in the meantime.

also includes written descriptions of basic steps involved in Newfoundland set dancing, namely the basic step, pivot swing and side step. Rounding out the MMaP collection are examples of brochures from the Burin Peninsula Festival of Folk Song and Dance over the span of a number of years.

While the Burin Peninsula, and therefore the Penney Folk Dancers, fall outside the geographical parameters I have set for my own study, I make mention of this collection here because the dances discussed are from various communities throughout the province and include many that have been performed in St. John's. Furthermore, Ruth Matthews is seen amongst the Newfoundland and Labrador folk arts community as a force behind the preservation and dissemination of traditional set dance in Newfoundland and Labrador, and the Penney Folk Dancers are renowned as excellent ambassadors of this dance form. In e-mail correspondence, the SJFAC confirmed that Ruth Matthews was awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award from the St. John's Folk Arts Council in 2002 for her efforts in the area of traditional Newfoundland dance. The SJFAC holdings in the CNS Archives and the Matthews collection at MMaP underscore the significance of publicly performed dance as an integral element of Newfoundland folk culture.

In examining the archival holdings on vernacular dance in Newfoundland, several themes emerge. Vernacular dance has been studied and documented in both its first existence (student papers on individuals dancing in traditional contexts in outport settings) and its second existence (folk dance groups

performing in festivals and concerts organized by the St. John's Folk Arts Council). These sparse but noteworthy deposits reflect the parallel continuation of vernacular Newfoundland dance in its first and second existence for many years. Overall they contribute to the understanding of the literature as it pertains to Newfoundland culture and how dance is an essential part of that culture. This dissertation aims to create further breadth and depth in terms of an understanding of the importance of dance to Newfoundland culture, both past and present.

A less documented but equally significant area in which dance is taught is in the elementary and high school systems as well. While dance is admittedly a sporadic inclusion in various elements of school curriculum, its importance is linked to Howard Gardner's revolutionary and multifaceted approach to teaching and learning. Considered to be an effective way for classroom teachers to recognize students' individual learning capabilities, Gardner's work reflects a holistic approach to teaching in any subject area. In his book, Multiple Intelligences: The Theory in Practice, Gardner outlines the seven intelligences as follows: musical intelligence, bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, logical-mathematical intelligence, linguistic intelligence, spatial intelligence, interpersonal intelligence and intrapersonal intelligence (17-26). At first glance, it may seem as though Gardner merely introduces various skills in his definition of intelligence. However, he argues specific criteria as essential for the creation of an operational definition of intelligence. In Multiple Intelligences, he states:

An intelligence entails the ability to solve problems or fashion products that are of consequence in a particular cultural setting or community...the biological proclivity to participate in a particular form of problem solving must also be coupled with the cultural nurturing of that domain...An intelligence must also be susceptible to encoding in a symbol system – a culturally contrived system of meaning, which captures and conveys important forms of information...While it may be possible for an intelligence to proceed without an accompanying symbol system, a primary characteristic of human intelligence may well be its gravitation toward such an embodiment. (15-16)

While Gardner's theories are usually discussed in relation to how children are taught in the K-12 school system, his ideas can be applied far more broadly. In the context of Newfoundland and Labrador, where my case study groups are located, I will situate Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences in the province both through the study of dance in the school system as well as the teaching and learning of dance with my focus dance groups.

Multiple intelligences are often referred to as a tool for teachers in the elementary and secondary school system. Teachers are taught that students should be approached from all seven intelligences, to ensure that whatever their learning tendencies, their needs will be addressed so that they will be engaged with classroom material and learn to the best of their ability. However, this ideal does not often translate into reality. Overcrowded classrooms, overburdened

teachers and underfunded schools often mean that teachers do not have the spatial or temporal luxury to deliver material in all seven intelligences. As such, some of the intelligences are relegated to “specialty” classes, such as music and physical education, rather than integrated as Gardner envisioned for optimal learning for each individual child (Multiple 74). While dance incorporates musical, spatial and bodily-kinesthetic intelligences, I will focus on the latter as it exists in the Newfoundland and Labrador school system.

This problem is not relegated solely to dance. Music and art are also lacking in the school curriculum, often considered “fringe” courses and the first to be deleted when financial cuts are made. In order to help rectify the dearth of the arts in the regular school curriculum, several organizations exist in Newfoundland and Labrador, as in other parts of Canada, to integrate the arts into everyday learning. These programs employ local visual and performance artists to visit schools, engaging the children in sessions that utilize their artistic expertise as a way of learning regular school curriculum. Projects are intended as a springboard for classroom teachers to integrate newly acquired skills into their regular classroom activities.

Although outside my study area of St. John's, an example of this approach is Learning Through the Arts, currently run through the Western School District, located throughout western Newfoundland and Labrador. In 2008, programs were focused largely in and around the Corner Brook area. Learning Through the Arts is a Canada-wide program that was founded by the Royal Conservatory of

Music in Toronto. Their website identifies many program goals directly related to creativity and the arts as a means of active learning (Learning Through the Arts), thereby putting Gardner's theory into action.

Of course, each artist brings their own interpretation of multiple intelligences to classroom activities. However, it is important to note that the use of a number of intelligences is emphasized, as a means of addressing the learning needs of children who do not normally respond to traditional teaching practices. I should indicate here that I worked as a teaching artist with Learning Through the Arts with the Western School District in 2004-2005. My experience convinced me of the significance of Gardner's theories of multiple intelligences as a way to assist students in learning. I created workshops for elementary students in both mathematics and social sciences using dance as the primary mode of information transmission. Sessions were highly successful and teachers commented to me afterwards that incorporating techniques from class into subsequent lessons ensured that students retained and fully comprehended material taught during my sessions. Learning Through the Arts illustrates the effectiveness that bodily-kinesthetic, musical and spatial intelligences can have on the teaching and learning of any material. Katherine Cornell, a dance historian and dance teaching artist in the Toronto chapter of Learning Through the Arts, sees the role of the program as follows:

Learning Through The Arts is the theory of multiple intelligences in practice. As a mentor dance artist in the program, I constantly came across elementary students who had difficulty with concepts in math, science, and language. I would animate the material on the page and transfer it to the body where, for many students, it was much more coherent. My teaching often stimulated the bodily-kinesthetic, musical and spatial intelligences.

Cornell's experience reinforces Gardner's argument for incorporating bodily-kinesthetic, musical and spatial intelligences into any area of school curriculum.

ArtSmarts, a program run in the St. John's area through the Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Council, fulfils a similar function. The ArtSmarts website states, "research has shown that students engaged in artistic activity develop important cognitive and social skills that have a long-term impact on their lives" (Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Council). Through this program, local artists team up with a single classroom, developing long-term artistic projects that link to an aspect of the class's curriculum. The link between the arts, learning, and culture are made evident to students who benefit from participating in this program. Unfortunately, aside from specialty programs such as Learning Through the Arts and ArtSmarts, the variety of possible intelligences tend not to be fully integrated into children's learning and therefore students miss out on significant modes of knowledge transmission.

As mentioned earlier, Gardner asserts that intelligences are necessarily both biologically and culturally significant. I would therefore argue that Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences especially relevant to the link between movement and culture. In each case study, I outline methods of teaching and learning the dance form in question. In order to become proficient in any of my selected dance styles – step dance and set dance – Gardner's bodily-kinesthetic, musical and spatial intelligences are integral to the proper absorption and performance of physiological and aesthetic elements key to executing steps and figures successfully.

Teaching and Learning Dance

When considering recreational and social dance, the "classroom" may be widened to include the pub or the community hall. Literature pertaining to educational and pedagogical approaches to dance largely focuses on training dancers how to dance, as well as studying the field of dance as a whole in a school-based classroom. While my main theoretical approach focuses on notions of identity and community, pedagogical references are useful when discussing how dance is taught or transmitted in each of my case studies. My field research in Newfoundland reveals that different dance groups utilize their own approaches to teaching and learning their chosen dance form. Sometimes these approaches are formally taught or learned; more often, they are passed on informally, as are

the dances themselves. Very often oral and kinesthetic transmission are the primary modes of teaching and learning; texts are supplementary.

Several approaches to teaching vernacular dance forms are especially pertinent to my study. In the following pages, I introduce folk dance publications commonly used by schoolteachers and dance instructors alike to teach basic technique and to increase their repertoire of dances. While these books are useful for providing supplemental information, they often lack context and cannot substitute for personal dance instruction. Second, I briefly review ideological writings that highlight the value of dance within educational philosophy.

Dance is largely transmitted orally, visually and kinesthetically; that is, dancers almost always learn how to dance by watching a teacher, listening to verbal instructions, and then trying out the movements for themselves. Corrections are made both verbally, and oftentimes also by the teacher actually changing the placement of certain body parts on the dancer him/herself. Imagery may also be used to help the dancer visualize the feeling, emotion or image that should be portrayed. Learning dance from a book is almost counter to the inherent physical nature of dance. As such, books describing how to dance are relatively uncommon, particularly for more formal dance forms that are part of the canon of dance art, such as ballet, jazz and modern dance. However, vernacular dance forms seem to be often found in texts. I would argue that this may be because there is an assumption that vernacular dance is easily learned and performed by anyone and that these are suitable dances for the non-dancer to

learn and perform. Vernacular dance is taught in schools, often by physical education teachers who may not necessarily have a dance background. Thus, most books teaching dance styles concentrate on various folk or ethnic dance forms.

Vernacular dance is indeed often taught as part of the physical education curriculum in elementary and high schools throughout North America. Physical education teachers may have no dance training; yet, because vernacular dance is seen to be accessible to the non-specialist, it is seen as an appropriate form of dance to learn from a book and teach. As part of the series *New Designs in Physical Education*, Virgil Morton's The Teaching of Popular Dance and Eleanor Wakefield's Folk Dancing in America are typical examples of how vernacular dance forms (including folk and popular dance) are approached in training manuals. These books, intended for teachers and students in college and high school classes where dance may be taught, give a small amount of contextual information about the dances therein. The focus is on the steps, positioning and music of the selected dances. In order to teach the dances themselves, abbreviations are given to designate body parts and directions, and coded descriptions are given as to what steps occur, how they occur, and in what musical measure. Textbooks such as these, while found in abundance, are usually dated and have limited application. They may be useful for those who aim to teach culturally-specific dances, or who teach a wide variety of relatively simple dances to the previously uninitiated. However, in terms of ethnographic

scholarly information, they provide little beyond brief and generalized facts about the dances themselves or the culture from which the dance is derived.

High/Scope Press, located in the state of Michigan, has published numerous books related to teaching dance and movement, particularly aimed towards teaching children. At the time of this writing, Phyllis S. Weikart's Teaching Movement and Dance is in its fifth edition (2003), and provides a more generalized pedagogical approach to the teaching of dance. Weikart has developed her own instructional model, designed to analyze a student's "beat competence", increase what she calls locomotor movement and encourage students along her "comfort with movement" teaching progression. Her focus is more on modeling for teachers rather than the dances themselves, which find themselves in the second section of the book. Her selected vernacular dances are broken down into steps according to time signature and rhythm, with abbreviated descriptions to accompany the instructions. While this is a useful book for beginning teachers of vernacular dance, or those who wish to develop alternative teaching methods, it does not provide any background or supplementary information on the dances presented. Its goal is strictly pedagogical and training-oriented.

While I have selected a small number of textbooks to discuss, and they span forty years in publication time, they are representative of the bulk of dance teaching texts found in the literature (see Weikart, Ellfeldt, Gough, Lane and Langhout, and Voyer, for examples of dance teaching textbooks). Their goal is to

train dancers and develop technique; little else is mentioned, let alone emphasized.

Peter Brinson takes a different approach in his Dance as Education: Toward a National Dance Culture. Although focusing on dance in Britain, his ideas about national identity and dance are easily generalized. Brinson articulates his position of dance being “a political, social and aesthetic issue” (55). While at times Brinson’s approach is rather philosophical about the place of art in society, he also makes several points that are relevant here. For example, he argues that how any society understands and deals with dance depends largely on its history, religious beliefs, economics, gender attitudes and other socially-determinant factors (58). He also points out that there is often little consideration given by its societal institutions to the aesthetic contributions of dance. While Brinson makes this point in reference to British society, because of the dearth of government funding and the general lack of prominence given to dance in Canada, I would argue that this point holds true in our country also. Perched on the fence between art and sport, dance is often ignored because of the lack of ease in categorizing it. As such, when it comes to educating our children in dance, it is often relegated to physical education programs, taught by instructors who may have no dance background or training of their own (64 ff). Brinson argues for the importance of dance as a necessary part of holistic education. He states:

The realm of dance is education of the body and of the imagination.

Responsibility for educating the imagination should run naturally through the teaching of every subject...The arts, too, comprise an important part of a wider aesthetic education. The bedrock of such an education has to be laid in school and higher or further education, not in abstract but in relation to the past and present aesthetic and artistic development. For this reason there is a strong case to include some arts practice within the foundation courses of all schools and higher and further education institutions as part of the methodology of study. (69)

Brinson's notions of dance and education also form the basis of Judith Lynne Hanna's Partnering Dance and Education: Intelligent Moves for Changing Times. In this text, Hanna emphasizes the significance of dance in education both within and beyond the K-12 school system. Furthermore, she links dance education to citizenship, workplace skills, gender issues, cultural diversity, and how dance can help combat stress, help at-risk youth, and help with children's play.

The groups and individuals presented in this study draw on a variety of approaches in how they teach dance. Depending on their background, they have learned in formal classes from others, from books and videos, from workshops, and from informal social and familial traditions. Their success in continuing dance forms without being able to link them to one mode of transmission illustrates the many approaches that may be used in teaching and learning dance. Overall, the

approach of examining dance through teaching and education can be of benefit in terms of assessing various dance forms and how they are passed on from teacher to student, formally or informally. It may also assist in the practical aspects of teaching and learning dances.

Summary of Key Concepts

Merging any number of fields of study yields an enormity of material to sift through, and this chapter has unearthed an expansive and diverse corpus of sources. The breadth of materials is astounding. The approaches that are reflected in this chapter are of my own demarcation; in my search for relevant materials to my study, I was at times overwhelmed by the variety of sources, and my divisions were the most logical means, to my mind, of making thematic sense of what I found. However, all distinctions are arbitrary to some degree, and much of the research that has been produced uses more than one approach. I have attempted, however, to discuss what I see as key concepts to this study, according to my own interpretation, and to highlight some of the work that has been done through various modes of research. My review of these concepts shows that while dance has not been studied as a "major genre" in folklore as have some forms of narrative or song, many scholars over the years have researched and written about folklore's links to dance. Additionally, those in other fields, anthropologists in particular, have done much folklore-related work

pertaining to dance. I build upon the work of these scholars to develop my own theoretical avenues.

In introducing some of the terminology, concepts and theories that have informed my study, I have indicated that the ways of describing particular kinds of vernacular dance are complex and ever-changing. The terms, including “folk” and “ethnic”, have shifted and in fact are still being debated today. Rather than reduce “folk dance” to a one-dimensional and antiquated notion, however, I want to stress that it is still in use and continues to evolve through scholarly debate. In this chapter, my inclusion of literature related to folk dance, ethnic dance and the vernacular is meant to illustrate the history of terminology that leads to my choice of “vernacular” to describe the dance forms I explore. Both case studies that follow will demonstrate the vernacular in practice as it pertains to questions of authenticity and recontextualization through the Irishness of Newfoundland culture. In taking ideas of dance as they relate to teaching, learning and community, I have highlighted the breadth of writing on these approaches and indicated how they will be used in my two case studies where I apply them to forms of Newfoundland dance. The scholarly and archival sources reviewed above lay the groundwork for my case studies.

Closely linked to literature is methodology. In the next chapter I outline methodological approaches to dance and folklore that I have utilized in this dissertation. There, I discuss dance and folklore field methodology that I have

found most useful in my work and establish how those methods underline subsequent chapters.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Introduction

Research that is positioned at the intersection of two disciplines necessarily integrates theoretical and methodological approaches from both areas of study. This chapter outlines the methods that I have used throughout my dissertation research, illustrating which approaches I have found useful and highlighting the strengths and limitations of each. An interdisciplinary analysis such as this one has greatly benefited from careful consideration of appropriate ethnographic and dance analysis methodology.

Conducting and writing ethnography presents its own host of challenges for the researcher. There are many works that deal with the issues facing an ethnographer, ranging from the theoretical to the practical. My fieldwork concerns lay largely in how I would approach my two case studies in relation to my own dance knowledge and experience. As a dancer who has trained, performed and taught a number of dance styles, I came to approach the study with an understanding of what it is to both learn and teach dance. This experience, coupled with my observation and participant-observation where possible, meant that I felt I gained as close to an emic perspective as possible for an outside researcher. Balancing the roles of fieldworker, participant and scholar is never an easy task. But some of those struggles were eased through an awareness of the power of my position and how I could utilize it best for this study, as well as by

reflecting on how to best give voice to my informants through my analysis of their dance groups.

Fieldwork for the Study

My primary method of data collection was through participant-observation. Interviews were also conducted, although I considered them to be supplemental to the observations I made throughout my fieldwork experiences in addition to informal conversations I had with my informants throughout my time in the field. I also videotaped and photographed dances in rehearsal and/or performance, and have had a number of dances notated in Labanotation. My decision to conduct my fieldwork in this way stemmed largely from the fact that talking about dance in a formalized manner, out of the contextual situation of dancing itself, paled in comparison to comments and discussions that occurred during a dance event. Because of the inherent corporeal nature of dance, the "doing" is by far the most significant aspect of the dance experience. As such, I focused much of my energy on learning by participating and observing. Interviews were conducted with those who were teachers and organizers of my selected dance genres, to provide information about the teaching of these dance forms to complement my experiential knowledge of the student perspective.

My fieldwork was conducted over a period of approximately six years. In the summer of 2001, I attended several Dance Up events in St. John's. One event, the first of the season, was geared primarily at tourism entrepreneurs and

employees of the greater St. John's region, to create interest in the Dance Up event for promotion to tourists throughout the upcoming season. Subsequent visits to Dance Up occurred throughout the summer of 2001, where I was able to observe and participate in the event along with tourists and locals who had been attracted there through referrals and advertising. Videotaping occurred at the second event I attended, and I was able to capture two dances that were taught that evening. From my own observations and discussions with Tonya Kearley, creator, choreographer and dance caller of the Dance Up event, I determined that the dances I videotaped were representative of those taught at any given Dance Up event. At each Dance Up event, I found that participants were somewhat reticent initially, but soon warmed up to each other and eagerly chatted about their experiences amongst themselves and with me. I did not find the videotaping to be overly invasive, perhaps because participants were so involved in learning the dances that they soon ignored my camera. To ensure that I was given the benefit of experiencing the dances myself, a Dance Up veteran insisted that she take over the videotaping for one of the dances so I could fully participate. I left my camera at home during all other Dance Up visits so I could simply dance and chat with other participants. In addition to my initial interview with Kearley in 2001, I conducted several follow-up interviews with her over the next few years to glean further insight into her approaches and attitudes about her event.

Kearley's Dance Up event forms the bulk of my fieldwork on set dance. I chose her group as a case study in part because it differed from most other groups in several ways. Dance Up is an event rather than a dance group; all other set dancing I found in the St. John's region today is comprised of individuals who come together with reasonable regularity in order to learn and perform set dances. Kearley's event revealed the nature of what happens when art and commerce meet in a discrete event. In this way, she exemplifies the underlying issues of many dance groups today, yet differs in terms of delivery and presentation. My interviews with Jim Payne, for example, provide some contrast in set dance performance today, and provide some insight into the issues that Kearley's event illuminates.

My case study on step dancing also follows a continuum, from Irish-Newfoundland step dancing to what I am calling Irish step dancing.⁵ The St. Pat's Dancers – proponents of Irish-Newfoundland step dancing – are the focus of this chapter, but I also discuss Irish step dancing, taught and performed by individuals in Dance Studio East and iDance studios in the St. John's region. The St. Pat's Dancers were observed during the spring of 2004, the fall of 2005 and the fall of 2006. My first fieldwork session with the group occurred in and around St. Patrick's Day celebrations, when Irish-related concerts and events are prevalent throughout St. John's and other regions in Newfoundland and

⁵ It is important to note that what I term "Irish step dancing" is emically called "traditional" Irish step dance in the competitive Irish step dance circuit, and is also what audiences generally know as the "Riverdance" style of step dancing. I will discuss the implications of these terms in Chapter Six.

Labrador. As the pre-eminent Irish-Newfoundland step dance performing group in the province, the St. Pat's Dancers are in great demand during this time. I took advantage of this to speak with Yvonne Steiner, the group's current organizer, and to observe performances by the St. Pat's Dancers for St. Patrick's Day celebrations. I taped one such performance at St. Pat's school in March 2004. My contact with Yvonne Steiner and her husband Jeff continued over the spring, summer and fall of 2005 and throughout 2006. During that time, I conducted several formal interviews with the Steiners about St. Pat's Dancers and the Irish-Newfoundland step dance style, and conducted participant-observation with the group itself as the children learned, practiced and performed dances in the group's repertoire. While observing the St. Pat's Dancers in rehearsal, I spoke to dancers, parents and the Steiners about the activities taking place. This enabled me to gain a sense of how the group operates and how it is viewed by non-dancers, in particular the parents of the young dancers. The place of the St. Pat's Dancers in the community of St. John's at large is well documented in newspaper and magazine articles. While I was unable to participate in the rehearsals myself (by virtue of my age), my related experience with Irish-Newfoundland dance gave me an insider's perspective of the dance genre, if not the group. I resumed fieldwork with the group in the fall of 2006. While my fieldwork with the St. Pat's Dancers occurred in several shorter time periods, I was able to make observations throughout my time in the field regardless of the complement of the group.

My supplementary work with Dance Studio East is in part auto-ethnographic as I trained in the Irish step dancing style with instructor Martin Vallee from 2001 to 2004. I have drawn upon my own experience, informal conversations with students, and formal interviews in 2007 with Vallee and student Paige White to explore notions of Irishness in step dance in Newfoundland. Other contextual information comes from Shawn Silver who runs iDance, an Irish step dancing school in St. John's. This aspect of my fieldwork did not go entirely as expected, as Silver initially agreed to allow me access to his studios to observe classes and conduct interviews. I was unable to arrange an interview or observation with Shawn Silver. Because of the importance of iDance in St. John's, however, I do refer to his website and promotional materials, as well as to public discussions and interviews with other dancers that reference his local influence.

My own dance background is relevant here in terms of my knowledge and approach to both case studies. Because I had varying degrees of comfort and experience at a kinesthetic level with each dance group, I had to consider my own familiarity or ignorance of the dance style prior to my fieldwork. I am focusing in this section on my own skill and experience of each dance style because of the significance of the kinesthetic in dance. It is also worthy of note that I did not have a vast amount of theoretical knowledge of step or set dance prior to embarking upon this project, so that element of my prior knowledge was about the same for each group.

I have more than twenty years of ballet training, which was my primary area of dance skill prior to moving to Newfoundland and Labrador. In 2000, I began taking Irish-Newfoundland step dance classes led by a former St. Pat's dancer. I learned a number of their dances, eventually performing with a dance group at festivals and at a Soirees and Times dinner theatre in the summer of 2001. After that, I switched styles and began training with Dance Studio East, learning the more contemporary Irish step dance style similar to that featured in the popular "Riverdance" show. In the summer of 2007 I embarked on a research trip to Ireland. Two weeks of that trip were devoted to participating in a program at the University of Limerick, Blás. As outlined on the Blás website, the curriculum included three hours each day of Irish step dance master classes, taught by professionals in the field. This greatly enhanced my corporeal understanding of the similarities and differences between Irish-Newfoundland and Irish step dancing, essential to my discussions in Chapter Six. I have also taught Irish-Newfoundland step dance workshops and classes to children and adults, so it is fair to say that I have a depth of knowledge and experience in terms of the steps, dances and music that are involved in Irish-Newfoundland step dancing, which I examine in detail through the St. Pat's Dancers in this study.

I was less familiar with the dances found among set dancers in Newfoundland. I had viewed videos of Newfoundland set dance and knew some of the conventions of square dancing. While there are certain steps and figures

particular to Newfoundland set dance, much of the partnering, figure-making and musicality is similar to square dancing found throughout mainland Canada. Upon beginning my work with Dance Up, I had some ideas of what Newfoundland set dance would look and feel like, although I had not performed the specific dances in the Newfoundland set dance repertoire. Subsequent to writing the chapter, I have had the opportunity to participate in Newfoundland set dancing on occasion, in particular learning how to "run the goat" from Andy Jones at Sir Wilfred Grenfell College in February 2007. In terms of the much debated insider-outsider perspective, I brought varying degrees of each to my fieldwork. Throughout my fieldwork, issues related to reflexivity in ethnography were most significant as I strove to give voice to all my informants (those who were leaders in each dance group and those who were learners). I was always aware of the power inherent in my role as researcher and that I would be the one who made the ultimate decisions in interpretation and presentation of the material.

Ethnographic Methodology

Every fieldworker who approaches a study such as this one necessarily struggles with issues related to power, voice, perspective, and representation of both the informants and the dance event that was observed. Context and sensitivity are key elements of my approach, which I drew from multiple sources that deal with ethnographic approaches to folklore and anthropological fieldwork. While excessive reflection of this nature can result in navel-gazing to the

exclusion of the actual project completion, my aim here is to clarify the methodological approaches that influenced my preparation for the field and my presentation of the material. My own goal was to acknowledge my background and inherent biases, but not to get caught up in them to the detriment of my finished work. I feel that my awareness and care in dealing with people, and subsequently with their words, has allowed me to create fair representations of my informants, my fieldwork situations, and my interpretations of the dance forms and dance groups in context.

Perhaps one of the main concerns for the ethnographer in trying to present an accurate representation of their research is that of voice. When conducting fieldwork amongst a large group of people, such as a dance class, it is impossible to properly represent the voice of each individual present. In the end of course, regardless of the sensitivity of the ethnographer, it is he/she who makes the final decision as to what information is privileged, what is less emphasized, what is discarded completely. Not only does that choice come with the focus of the text itself, but also with the audience. Taking informal culture and formalizing it for academic publication necessarily means a transition in emphasis. This is succinctly stated by Emerson et al. in Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes, when the author states, "because the author controls the text, she takes on an authoritative voice in writing" (209). Further, in Feminist Dilemmas in Fieldwork, Diane Wolf argues that the power of the researcher actually exists in three ways: "power in positionality, power during the research process, and

power in the post-fieldwork stage" (19). As outlined by Diane Wolf (20), I attempted to bridge the gap between fieldworker and informant during the research process by becoming friendly with my informants and attempting not to seem the objective observer at times. For each dance group I documented, my main strategy focused on documenting the dances, spending as much time as possible with each dance group, and shifting my approach depending on whether I was dealing with children, tourists (who I would not see at the next dance event), or those with whom I would see dancing over a period of time. However, I did not attempt to create close friendships or egalitarian relationships with participants because I still wished to maintain my distanced position as someone who was documenting the activities of the event. It also helped that I was learning new dance forms so that my authority as a researcher was always tempered by the authority of the dance teacher and my own lack of authority in the dance classroom. When I dealt with the St. Pat's Dancers, a children's dance group, my age naturally gave me added authority, intended or otherwise.

I feel that this balance achieved a rapport with my informants while still maintaining a distance so I did not get so caught up in the group as to lose sense of my research goals. The power inherent in writing the final product, of course, is a large challenge for the ethnographer. Reflexive ethnography is an approach that attempts to adequately represent informants, give them equal voice, and temper the power of the researcher in the written product. However, relying too heavily on the reflexive can detract from the benefits of a positivist approach; that

is, looking beyond your individual informants for interpretation of the subject matter at hand (see Davies, Goodall, Ellis and Bochner, Watson, Diane Wolf, Naples, and Hollis et al. for discussions on the role of reflexivity to the ethnographic researcher).

While largely concerned with giving voice to my informants, of course it is my own voice that is prevalent throughout this dissertation, evident from the day I conceived of my idea, to the final day of editing the written text. As Margery Wolf states in A Thrice-Told Tale, referring to Clifford and Marcus's Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography, "if the ethnographer can construct a culture in her writings, she can also construct a self" (130). In my representation of dance forms and their social and cultural contexts, I am re-creating the contexts for my readers. Additionally, I am creating a self, one whose voice is heard throughout the written text. I feel that I entered the dance contexts I documented with an open mind, ready and willing to discover dance forms and related individuals who were allowing me access to their world. As such, I feel that my responsibility to them is to present my ideas and findings clearly, ensuring that my scholarly interpretations and personal field experiences are presented fairly alongside their approaches, traditions, and priorities.

Documenting Dance

In addition to my ethnographic approach, dance methodology is complementary to my examination of step dance and set dance in

Newfoundland. This study draws heavily on theories and approaches related to movement as applicable to dance. Movement does not exist in a vacuum and it is necessary at this point to introduce movement theories as they are relevant to the dance groups discussed in this dissertation. While both my case studies are linked as representations of culture in various ways, my approach to each differs significantly. However, they are all linked by several common threads that are reflected in my methodological approaches. First, dance and movement can be recorded through notation. Labanotation is, in this case, the most effective means of recording my chosen dance forms. Labanotation is used to notate many dance forms, and the dances performed by my case study groups are easily notated with the Labanotation system. See Appendix B for notated scores of dances learned and performed by selected dance groups.

In addition to notating the dances, I have elected to utilize Laban Movement Analysis (as described in Dell) to provide written descriptions that are accessible to the layperson while maintaining the integrity of dance theory. This will enhance my discussion of characteristics inherent to each dance style. As mentioned in the last chapter, Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences links movement to learning styles, a significant factor in considering how dance is taught and learned in both formal and informal kinesthetic transmission. Linked to this is a complementary approach to body movement and use of space, the theories of kinesics and proxemics. I utilize these methods in consort and present

the case studies from a blend of relevant Folklore theories and Dance methodologies.

Notation is a means of recording dance that is both a blessing and a curse to choreographers, reconstructors, historians and dancers themselves. A positive aspect of dance notation is that it records a dance for posterity. Similar to music notation, it is a means, ideally, by which anyone could pick up a dance notation score and be able to read the text of the dance, and then translate it into movement. However, there are a number of problems inherent in notation. First, there are a number of notation systems. Second, no notation system has yet been designed that is able to capture every nuance of every dance form. For instance, Indian classical dance contains many intricate hand gestures and facial expressions, which are extremely difficult to capture in notation systems that were developed primarily for western dance forms that focus more on the feet or floor patterns. Further, dance notation is quite difficult to master and is time-intensive in learning and applying.

Numerous forms of dance notation have been developed over the years, each bringing strengths and weaknesses to its system. Ann Hutchinson Guest, for example, chronicles and compares approximately twenty dance notation systems that date as far back as the fifteenth century in her book Choreographics. Some notation systems use floor diagrams, others focus on stick figures. The most common currently used notation system is Labanotation, named after its founder, Rudolf von Laban. Initially created for his own use in

remembering dances, Kinetography Laban, later known as Labanotation, became a highly developed and complex system of symbols representing body parts, direction, and level. Benesh notation is another popular notation system, but is not nearly as widespread as Labanotation. Benesh notation is detailed in Rudolf and Joan Benesh's An Introduction to Benesh Movement-Notation: Dance. In his article, "Foundations for the Analysis of the Structure and Form of Folk Dance: A Syllabus," William C. Reynolds provides a model of structural analysis of folk dance that uses Kinetography-Laban as a "springboard for research" (117). Lisbet Torp also provides a means for structural analysis of folk dances in her book, Chain and Round Dance Patterns.

In Laban's Principles of Dance and Movement Notation, Laban argued for what he called a "readable" notation system for the following reasons:

The necessity for an adequate script is more urgent now even than it was because movement study has come to be recognized as a most important feature in industry, education and therapy...We cannot rely solely upon peoples' memory of movements; nor can the choreographer rely upon his memory, for he might have excellent ideas which he cannot use at the moment, and when the opportunity eventually comes when he can use them, he may find that the ideas have entirely escaped his mind...The introduction of a dance notation system would mean a revolution in production and performance. (5-6)

Laban obviously intended his notation system to be applicable to movement in general, not specifically to dance. However, his system is widely used in the dance world and therefore is relevant to this study as a dance tool.

Acknowledging the link of dance and music is the basic structure of Labanotation, a version of a music staff. Laban's staff, rather than horizontal, is written vertically from the bottom to the top of the page, with the intention that the "reader" of the notation can hold the paper in front of himself/herself, with the staff pointing forward from the body outwards so that the dancer moves as they read up the staff on the page. The staff is also divided into bars that correspond to accompanying music, so the reader immediately has a sense of the rhythmic qualities of the dance, without even listening to the music. However, the challenge to the neophyte is the complexity of the system. In order to decode the labyrinth of shapes on the staff, the reader must be aware of a multitude of symbols. Furthermore, because dance often includes movements of the arms, legs, torso and head (at least), for every beat of music, there may be corresponding directional and level symbols for each of those body parts. Reading a Labanotation score is laborious, and writing one is even more time intensive. For this reason, Labanotation has limited use. It is not practical to assume that even a seasoned notator could immediately pick up a notated dance and immediately begin to perform the dance. It often takes a significant amount of time to kinesthetically translate what is on paper to the body. That said, I have found that the aesthetics of my chosen dance forms lend themselves well to

Labanotation, in that each articulates body parts and utilizes floor patterning in such a way that Labanotation's codification of movement is well-suited to documenting set and step dances.

Another issue with any kind of notation system is which version of the dance is recorded. Different dancers have differing skills, and if one dancer is notated with his/her leg lifted to ninety degrees, then notating that angle would make it a permanent assumption for all future dancers. When dealing with vernacular dance in particular, the issue of "authentic" or "original" versions of a dance can be complicated when one variant is recorded for posterity. The ephemeral nature of dance, some argue, negates the potential for notating one particular performance of a dance that is set on particular dancers. However, the value of using notation as a means of preserving dance has proven invaluable to dance historians, dance reconstructors, choreographers and dancers alike. It must be understood that my notated scores are reflective of the performances that I captured on videotape. Although they attempt to reproduce one specific variant (performance) of each dance, from my research, observation and interviews, I am confident that each notated score accurately represents the essential elements of each dance that has been recorded.

For the purposes of this project, I envisioned Labanotation as one component of recording dances. I chose Labanotation, as I indicated above, because it is the most conventionally used form of dance notation, at least for Western dance forms. Its logic and structure fit well with the figures and

movements found in the dance styles I am studying. My reasons for including Labanotation are analogous to those of Catherine Foley's in her 1988 doctoral dissertation, Irish Traditional Step Dancing in North Kerry: A Contextual and Structural Analysis and Colin Quigley's Master's thesis Folk Dance and Dance Events in Rural Newfoundland, with similar dance forms. And Labanotation is a recognized way to help "bring the concept of dance literacy into contemporary focus" (Nahunck 89). While Labanotation can, and certainly has been used in isolation as the sole method of recording a dance, I see it as part of the puzzle. I have chosen to include notation in conjunction with videotape recordings and written descriptions with Laban Movement Analysis to provide a more comprehensive record of dances. For each of my chosen case studies, I selected two dances to be notated. I am a firm believer in the value of recording dance for future preservation, and this was a significant opportunity for me to preserve the dances I had observed. Further, I did not want readers of this dissertation to attempt to engage in my ideas without the opportunity to visualize the dances for themselves. Thus, I have provided a multiplicity of ways for any interested reader to view the details of each dance.

While my fieldwork entailed observing and/or participating in different dances, I chose to record only two examples of each set and step dance genre. This was guided by practical restraints since the descriptive elements were simply a first step at analyzing the dances; also, each dance form has so many different dances, it would be next to impossible to provide a comprehensive

canon of each dance form in descriptive and notation form. Thus, I selected two dances from each of set dance and step dance as representative of the form to which they belonged. I was fortunate enough to secure funding to hire a notator to assist me in this endeavour. I possess only a cursory ability to read notation, and am only able to write the most basic of moves myself. In fact, for a trained notator, it can easily take ten to twenty hours to notate ten minutes of dance. Additionally, it takes extensive training and practice to become certified as a notator (Heath).⁶ Because of this, it would not have been practical for me to attempt to learn to notate myself. I hired Christine Heath, one of a small number of certified dance notators in Canada, to use my fieldwork videos to create notation scores for my six selected dances. As an intermediate notator, her work is currently checked by Dr. Mary Jane Warner of the Dance Department at York University who has advanced certification. Ms Heath's scores, appended at the end of my thesis, are a permanent recording for the dances I have analyzed.

In his book Frames of Mind, Howard Gardner stresses the significance of observing movement as a means of determining an individual's competence in the bodily-kinesthetic intelligence. Here, he states, "the highly skilled performer has evolved a family of procedures for translating intention into action" (209). This ties into the concept behind Laban Movement Analysis, or LMA. In addition

⁶ A typical notator in North America will acquire his/her certification through the Dance Notation Bureau in New York, or at their extension program at Ohio State University. Intermediate notators are allowed to freelance, so long as their work is checked by a notator with advanced certification. Once advanced certification has been achieved, you can freelance on your own or become a resident notator for a dance company. Regulations in Europe are slightly different, but England provides equivalent programs at Laban, in London, and the Laban Institute in Surrey.

to the scores and the video documentation, I have decided to enhance the descriptive elements of my work through LMA for each of my dance styles. I see LMA as a method of description that is complementary to Labanotation. One is the coded version of the movement; the other is its written description. LMA is especially useful as it uses non dance-specific lexicon to describe the dance; hence, it is accessible to the lay reader. It also allows for some analysis linking the effort-shape elements of the dance style to the dance's functions and context.

As Susan Leigh Foster asserts in her introduction to the volume Choreographing History, movement must be described before it can be understood in its relevant contexts (11). LMA evolved from work by Rudolf Laban and Warren Lamb who developed the concepts of effort and shape, respectively, out of efficiency studies for industry after World War II. As Cecily Dell writes, "effort-shape became a method of describing changes in movement quality in terms of the kinds of exertions and the kinds of body adaptations in space" (7). Effort-shape is a significant component of LMA, but for simplicity's sake, I will refer to this system of movement analysis as LMA throughout my study. These concepts spread and began to be taught in their relation to dance. LMA is now used as a means of description and analysis of movements of all kinds, from body language to choreographed dance.⁷ Of course, considering the complexity of human movement, dance and otherwise, it may seem an impossible task to

⁷ See Nicole Potter's Movement for Actors for a discussion on how LMA can be useful for actors as an example of the applicability of LMA to movement beyond choreographed dance (73-95). Vera Maletic's discusses the theories and utility behind both LMA and Labanotation in Body – Space – Expression.

adequately describe movement in words. However, Dell argues that, when observing movement, certain movement qualities are favoured, and repetition often becomes apparent (8-9). As Adrienne Kaeppler asserts in her discussion of dance anthropology and ethnology, dance anthropologists often, "combine detailed attention to the movement itself with the historical, social and cultural systems in which the movement is embedded" ("Dance Ethnology" 120). Thus, because I am focusing on choreographed dances with specific movements and aesthetics, LMA is indeed an adequate means of providing description of the movement qualities, and enhances my discussions of the social systems in which the dances are found.

LMA focuses on the key concepts of effort and shape to describe movement.⁸ Effort refers to the flow, weight, time and space of movement. The exertion, or the way the mover concentrates his/her movement, is the prime motivation behind shifts in effort (Dell 11-12). Its companion element, shape, is how the body forms itself in space. The concept of shape consists of shape-flow, directional movement and shaping movement. Examining shape is a means by which you can see how the effort takes a certain form (Dell 43-44). Effort and shape are the general concepts in LMA, and each contains its own elements and combinations of elements. While many of these will be used in subsequent chapters as a basis for discussion of the specific dance forms, I examine the introduction of the general concepts will suffice at this point. For further

⁸ Somatotactics is similar to LMA in its approach to the body, movement preferences, etc. See Spiegel and Machotka's Messages of the Body for details (113 ff).

reference, Appendix A provides a glossary of individual aspects of effort and shape.

Aside from the more technical aspects of approaching and studying dance, I endeavoured to analyze the dances in context. Texts that stress contextualizing any element of intangible cultural heritage have been discussed in the previous chapter, however, Frosch's article "Dance Ethnography: Tracing the Weave of Dance in the Fabric of Culture" in Fraleigh and Hanstein's Researching Dance: Evolving Modes of Inquiry bears mention here. Frosch illustrates how the dance scholar can focus on context while developing a methodology to approach dance. She indicates the following objectives, many of which are relevant to this study:

1. To define approaches to the study of dance in culture "on its own terms," examining what and *how* dance means in relation to the context of which it is a part.
2. To examine performance traditions as expressions of values and ways of knowing.
3. To investigate how performance constructs and mediates societal notions of gender, status, spirituality, and agency.
4. To explore the interplay of ethics and aesthetics in performance and society.
5. To examine the relationship of dance to ways or organizing life experience, for example, ritual, courtship, education, recreation, aesthetic expression, healing, rites of passage, work.
6. To examine the dynamics of dance within the tensions of continuity and change.
7. To examine the roles of the performer in society and to explore

the creative process of performance and dance-making. 8. To recognize the role of the researcher in shaping research, and to explore the changing relationships between performer and researcher in a postcolonial world. 9. To chart paths to constructing a movement ethos through a variety of modalities: observation, embodiment, kinesthetic empathy, writing, discussion, collaboration, and performance. 10. To determine whether and how study and participation in performance modes and motivations other than our own awaken new understandings of the forms familiar to us. To determine how the particularities of ethnographic practice can help us develop socially responsible research for the twenty-first century. To determine what role an enhanced intercultural perspective can play for the future in both arts and an increasingly connected, though not unified, world. (Frosch 250-251)

Likening it to the threads woven into a fabric, Frosch's metaphor is applicable as a means of problematizing the complexities associated with a contextual analysis of dance (see Buckland Dancing and Adshead for the importance of context in dance analysis). Because the dance forms that I am studying are deeply rooted in various social, cultural and historical aspects of Newfoundland and Labrador, approaching each in some of the ways outlined by Frosch provides me with a multi-layered approach to vernacular dance in Newfoundland. Each dance form contains particular aesthetic and technical elements, yes, but its contexts and functions provide glimpses into its significance.

Further linking the study of dance into context are the theories of proxemics and kinesics. These theories are frequently used in applicable Folklore Studies, and focus on the use of space and the body in observation and analysis. While these are two different theoretical concepts, their applicability in concert with one another enables a discussion of the use of body in space as well as the body and space, which is salient as an approach to analysis of dance.

While kinesics tends to focus on unchoreographed movement, it can easily be applied to dance forms alongside LMA to provide a more comprehensive analysis. A significant aspect of the study of kinesics is that it is not meant to describe movement on its own; rather, it focuses on movement as reflective of its relevant culture (see Birdwhistell and Morain). Thus, kinesics can be used for this study in two ways. Dance is a coded language, albeit a non-verbal one. Through kinesics, in fact, "the communicative activity of the body is treated as a system in its own right, containing the properties of a precise code of language" (Spiegel and Machotka 5). Thus, dance can be regarded as having culture of its own and a unique language. On another level, kinesics can be used as a means of studying each dance form within its socio-cultural context, particularly here, within the context of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Linked to kinesics for the purposes of this study is the theory of proxemics, "the study of man's perception and use of space...It is much closer...to the behavioral complex of activities and their derivatives" (Edward Hall 51). Proxemics is a means by which scholars can make cultural comparisons

regarding appropriate use of distance and space, and dancers' use of individual, interactional and environmental space through dance is salient to this study. Sociopetal and sociofugal uses of space are especially applicable here. This is how the two terms are defined in Bryan Lawson's chapter on proxemics in his book The Language of Space:

Sociopetal space is that which tends to draw people together, and sociofugal space is that which tends to throw them apart just as centrifugal force throws objects away from the centre of a spinning axis. (140-141)

Initially devised to analyze interpersonal interactions amongst people, sociopetal and sociofugal spatial theory can be useful when analyzing choreographic approaches in certain dance forms. Preferences relating to individual movement, interaction amongst dancers, and use of space through steps and floor patterns all link directly to proxemic methodology. Edward Hall further supports the link between communication and culture (59), thereby supporting kinesic approaches to the use of body in space as being culturally relevant. In each of my case study chapters, I use dance and movement methodology in order to examine the structure, repertoire and aesthetic of each dance group in detail. While LMA is my primary mode of written analysis, and Labanotation is the means of preservation, these other approaches inform my analyses to various degrees. Methodology, as with theory, is never static; my use of approaches from the fields of Folklore and Dance Studies provide a unique analysis of the case study groups.

Summary of Methodology

A challenge in any ethnographic study is to ensure that the people who gave so generously of their time and expertise are fairly and accurately represented, even through the scholarly filters of theory and research. An additional challenge in this dissertation has been the blending of theories and methods from very disparate disciplines. As outlined over this chapter, I draw on ethnographic approaches, dance documentation and educational theory to create a methodological approach that satisfies the interdisciplinarity of my study. I have taken a multifaceted approach to my work: I am analyzing two dance forms with differing histories in contemporary contexts. I am using individual, social and cultural contexts in my discussion. And themes of tradition, commodity, authenticity and identity are undercurrents that run beneath the surface of it all. As such, one method or theory would be insufficient to address the complexities inherent in this study. While not all approaches will be used in the same way or with equal significance in both of my case studies, they are relevant and are present in varying degrees throughout the remainder of this study.

Having outlined the theoretical and methodological perspectives that inform my work, I move now to the two case studies. This is where I move into the last of Diane Wolf's three roles of power in the ethnographic researcher, power in the post-fieldwork stage (19). As I move into the case study chapters, my analysis provides links between the voices of my informants and the voice of

my constructed self as scholar, folklorist and dance ethnographer. These examples illustrate the complexities of traditional and vernacular dance in contemporary society. The social and cultural contexts for these case studies are laid out in the next chapter, which focuses on Irishness as a marker of Newfoundland identity.

Chapter Four:

Understanding Irishness in Newfoundland

Key Moments in Newfoundland's Cultural Identity

Ethnicity is an important element in the formation of cultural identity. As discussed in Chapter Two, scholars such as Kealiinohomoku and Shay have explored ethnicity in dance as active and political, while Anderson has likened ethnicity to nationalism and nationhood. Ethnicity is both inherited and chosen, and Irishness is a crucial ethnic construction at the core of Newfoundland set dance and step dance. As Adrienne Kaeppler notes, it is a common assumption that dance is a "universal language" ("Dance Ethnology" 117), and that it may be interpreted with no understanding of the dance form's cultural context; as she puts it, "without knowing the cultural movement language" (ibid). My discussion of Irishness here contextualizes dance within both historical and contemporary Newfoundland culture and lays the foundation for an understanding of Irish/Newfoundland cultural movement language in my case studies. This chapter will deconstruct the notion of Irishness in Newfoundland culture, and explore why much of Newfoundland society today allies itself with the Irish, even though demographically, Irish descendants are a minority on the island. This discussion highlights the power of suggested identity, and how an implied or desired bond between two cultures may, in fact, be as strong or stronger than actual historical lineage. The dance forms in this study have prevailed, in large part, because of

their inherent Irishness (both perceived and real). This chapter will explore Newfoundland's links to Irish culture and suggest how these connections may have developed both historically and in contemporary Newfoundland society.

Newfoundland history has been ably and thoroughly documented (see, for example, Sider, Tuck, Pastore, Story, Overton, Mannion, Hiller and Neary, Hiller, and McCann, among many others). Rather than provide an exhaustive historical treatment of the province, this section highlights key events in the development of Newfoundland's society and culture. It points to historical influences on Newfoundland culture today, and contextualizes the case studies that will follow. The dance groups in this study practice and perform in St. John's, the provincial capital located on the east coast of the Avalon Peninsula of the island of Newfoundland. While each dance group was formed at a different period in time, they are the legacy of the two main settlement groups in Newfoundland: the English and the Irish. (See Figure 4.1 for a map of the region). Although indigenous groups such as the Maritime Archaic, Paleo Eskimo, Dorset Eskimo and the Beothuk were the first peoples in Newfoundland (see Pastore, and Tuck and Pastore for in-depth discussions of the Beothuk and other early peoples in Newfoundland) and the early migratory fishery saw numerous European peoples fish Newfoundland waters (such as the Basques, French and Portuguese), it was the English and the Irish who were the primary settlers along the coasts of the Avalon Peninsula (Story 10). It is these two groups – the English and the Irish – that I will focus on in this discussion in order to understand more fully how their

contributions to Newfoundland culture have fostered a society in which Newfoundland set dance and step dance have been able to flourish.



Fig 4.1 This map shows the location of St. John's on the island's Avalon Peninsula, as well as outlining the areas where early English and Irish settlers immigrated (Wijayawardhana).

The single most significant element in the historical development of the economy, politics and culture of Newfoundland and Labrador is unquestionably the cod fish (Hiller and Neary 19). Its influence cannot be underestimated and its legacy continues today. Perhaps most significantly, the cod fish was the reason that early fishers came to the island, and eventually settled. Although archaeological research indicates that the Norse likely settled on the Northern Peninsula around 1000, the European "discovery" of Newfoundland is attributed to John Cabot, who likely landed in Bonavista in 1497. After Cabot's voyage, interest spread and this led to further exploration, drawing French, Portuguese,

Spanish and Basque vessels (Story 10). The English soon followed, although in smaller numbers at first. Fishing was significant to European cultures and in the late fifteenth century fishing was second only to farming in terms of occupational numbers. Further, fish was an important food source as it was easy to preserve and to transport. While it took a number of years before settlers began to overwinter in Newfoundland, Sir Humphrey Gilbert claimed Newfoundland as a British Colony in 1583 (Story 10).

The influx of the English and the Irish in both the migratory fishery as well as early settlement in Newfoundland is inextricably linked. By the late sixteenth century, England showed interest in planting colonies throughout North America, Newfoundland included. The earliest colonies on the island's Avalon Peninsula included Cupids and Ferryland which were settled by John Guy and Lord Baltimore respectively, the latter acknowledged as being the oldest continuous settlement in North America (Story 12). At first, the British were not interested in permanent settlement in Newfoundland. They were aiming for control over the fishery, and so the early fishers worked seasonally, leaving their posts each fall to return to the homeland. The planters, fishers employed by the English merchants, were the "middle men" in the occupational structure. Irish involvement in the migratory fishery began in 1675, with Irish fishers overwintering in Newfoundland by 1720 (Hiller and Neary 18). At the time they would often sign up for "two summers and a winter", using the winter months to maintain fishing stages in preparation for the next season's fishing. Fishers –

both Irish and English – began to settle by the end of the late seventeenth century, paving the way for an imminent wave of immigration.

The first English settlers from the Southwestern England regions of Devon, Dorset and Somerset initially formed communities along the coast of Newfoundland from Trepassey along the Southern Shore to the tip of Cape Bonavista. During the first three decades of the eighteenth century, 28,000 Irish arrived, thereby doubling the population of the island (Story 26). Overwhelmingly from Southeast Ireland, including counties Waterford, Wexford, Kilkenny and Tipperary, these settlers established themselves primarily along the Southern Shore, the Cape Shore, Placentia Bay and parts of Conception Bay. Although both the English and the Irish were fishing and settling in large numbers in Newfoundland, cultural and religious divisions that existed in Europe carried over into the new land. Irish migration to Newfoundland was controlled by the British West Country merchants, ship owners and shipmasters. West Country ships would stop in the port of Waterford to pick up salt on their way to Newfoundland. While there, they would recruit young Irish men to bring with them. The men would then be given “bills of exchange” that they could use in Waterford upon their return to Ireland. This system not only influenced who would eventually settle in Newfoundland, but also planted the seeds of the truck or credit system – a cashless system used by fishermen and merchants – that the fishery would use in later years (Story 26). Large scale migration in Newfoundland ended after the 1830s, and population growth recorded after this time was by natural means; in

other words, the birth rate became the primary means by which population grew. The English, in their role as merchants and ship captains, generally held financial power over the subservient Irish, and the cultural divide continued for many years. Clashes between the two groups existed in many ways, from informal disputes between merchants and fishers, to institutionalized divisions such as the creation of the denominational school system, which was created in the mid-nineteenth century and lasted more than one hundred years. This divide allowed, in many ways, for English and Irish traditions to remain separate within Newfoundland. The later Newfoundland Nativist movement fostered the blossoming of a new "Newfoundland culture".

Newfoundland's increased population in the early to mid nineteenth century meant increased expense to the British government, and the reform movement in Newfoundland led first to Representative Government in 1832, then Responsible Government in 1855. The colony of Newfoundland's economy was based on the truck or credit system, in which fishers used their catch to barter with a handful of merchants who then traded their profits in goods. Ideally, the system meant that everyone worked for the overall good, but since the merchants controlled both the worth of the fish and the price of the goods, they continued to exercise significant control over the working lives and financial circumstances of the majority of fishers (see Hiller for an overview of the credit system). Not surprisingly, there was great dissent between merchants and fishers. Gerald Sider has argued that the rise of the family fishery, which

operated under the inequities of the credit system, was the breeding ground for what was perhaps Newfoundland's most popular cultural activity, mummering. Much has been written about this seasonal Christmas custom in Newfoundland, but Sider's interpretation is based on the idea that Antonio Gramsci's concept of hegemony exists not just through economic and political power, but through culture, too (89). Mummering, an illustration of Barbara Babcock's concept of symbolic inversion, was a time when reversal of roles was not only commonplace, but expected. Marginalized fishers were able to enter the homes of the ruling merchants, avail of food and drink, play tricks and generally cause trouble, within the structure of acceptable social behaviour. Mummering (see Szwed) provides an example of how folklore and culture as counter-hegemonic behaviour can protest the economic and political status quo.

The identity of a place can be fostered and affirmed through the ruling group, which tends to create, maintain or disband symbols, rituals and traditions in any given culture. Once Newfoundland was granted Representative Government, officials felt a need to construct a unified "national" consciousness. This move led to increased clashes between the Catholic Irish and the Protestant English social and political circles. After attempting to marginalize the Catholics, the British motherland eventually appointed Sir John Harvey in 1841 as governor, in part, to bring harmony to the colony and to reconstruct its political and cultural life. Harvey's mission was, "to unite all in one common endeavour to advance the general good" (McCann 90); and thus, the move toward a Newfoundland identity

began to take shape. While some of Harvey's enterprises are reminiscent of British cultural imperialism, such as the Education Act in 1843 which saw British teachers imported to Newfoundland to establish the British educational mindset for Newfoundlanders, many of his other initiatives attempted to unite Newfoundlanders. Harvey created the Agricultural Society, which was of great symbolic importance, as he asked both conservative merchants and liberal Catholics to serve, seeing the committee as a means of creating a yeomen class: "brave, hardy, loyal and permanent settlers" and a means of creating a collective identity (McCann 91). At the same time, a number of ethnic societies formed; most relevant to this discussion was the formation of the Natives' Society, which was supported by Harvey. It was dedicated to the formation of a Newfoundland consciousness in opposition to the immigrants from Britain. It was rapidly established as a "third force" – separate from the British and the Irish – in political and cultural life. The Native Society's leaders were drawn mainly from the middle class, including merchants, agents, clerks and children of those who chose Newfoundland as home, thereby creating a native patriotism. The Nativists criticized not the administration, but strangers who were seen as "sucking the vitals of the country", reflecting the stirrings of patriotic consciousness (McCann 93). This appealed to both Protestant and Catholic Newfoundlanders who wanted to commit to their new home. Many of the Native societies created "invented traditions" through symbols and ceremonies, promoting cultural rituals which molded the Newfoundland consciousness. Harvey seized upon the idea of what

Hobsbawm and Ranger later termed “invented traditions” and created a number of celebrations whose intention was to unite Newfoundlanders through cultural events (McCann 94). For example, the annual Regatta at Quidi Vidi, which had initially been run by merchants, became entrenched in the cultural landscape through Harvey’s efforts. Harvey’s work resulted in many regular and annual events becoming Newfoundland tradition, bringing a sense of stability and continuity to life, while at the same time creating a sense of Newfoundland identity within the context of British imperialism. Although the conflict between the Irish Catholics and British Protestants remained, Harvey’s “cultural revolution” from 1841 to 1846 has left a legacy in Newfoundland nationalist sentiments today (McCann 99).

Confederation with Canada in 1949 was a key period in Newfoundland political and economic development, and Joey Smallwood, as the man who led Newfoundland into Confederation and then acted as Newfoundland’s first Premier, affected the “Newfoundland character” throughout this process. The debate about Confederation itself and the resistance by many to joining Canada has resulted in what is now the “Free Newfoundland” or the “Pink, White and Green” movement.⁹ Those who did not want integration into Canadian culture resisted through cultural means, evidenced today through material culture objects created with the image of the pink, white and green as well as other

⁹ “Pink, White and Green” refers to the original Newfoundland flag that pre-dates the flag designed by Christopher Pratt in 1980. The Pink, White and Green was created during the time of the Native Society, in 1843.

folkloric manifestations. Although Smallwood incited mixed feelings among Newfoundlanders, in general he was a unifying force and drove a common Newfoundland identity through a number of measures, notably the concept of the "Come Home Year" and his radio character, The Barrelman. Smallwood attributed his major political achievement of Newfoundland's union with Canada, as well as his twenty-three years as Premier, to his success with his radio program, the Barrelman, which pre-dated his successful political career (see Narváez "Barrelman"). Reminiscent of a man onboard a ship in a barrel at the top of the mast, Smallwood saw his role as the one who could see more than anyone else, and therefore was able to carry out his mandate as "making Newfoundland better known to Newfoundlanders" (Narváez "Barrelman" 47). Through positive narratives about ordinary Newfoundlanders doing wonderful and sometimes extraordinary things, Smallwood brought folklore and mass media together as a means of helping to create a national identity in Newfoundland. On the air, Smallwood encouraged his listeners thus:

Send me stories – true stories – showing how brave are the Newfoundlanders; how hardy they are; how strong they are; what hardships they endure. There are some people, you know, who don't think very much of us Newfoundlanders. Let us prove to them that Newfoundlanders have courage, brains, strength, great powers of endurance. Let us show them that Newfoundlanders are witty and smart. (Narváez "Barrelman" 53).

Amongst Smallwood's other efforts to unite Newfoundland, one additional endeavour merits mention here. Smallwood's creation of the Come Home Year, the first a province-wide event in 1966, was perhaps the first time that expatriate Newfoundlanders were actively encouraged to return to the province, and re-experience the arts and culture of the province together (Overton 30). It was also an opportunity for the arts to be publicly funded, and Newfoundland culture be promoted as a tourist attraction, even if those tourists were Newfoundlanders who had moved away. But displaying and commodifying culture in a systematic way here is key to foreshadowing how culture operates both inside and outside government structure today. The examples of the Barreلمان and Come Home Year illustrate Smallwood's vast influence on Newfoundland identity. These initiatives paved the way for the latest wave in Newfoundland cultural development.

While Confederation with Canada was (and in some ways remains today) a contentious issue, the concept of a national Newfoundland consciousness, and of Newfoundland as a distinct society, prevailed after 1949. James Overton argues that Newfoundland culture today is permeated by a "mystic nationalism", a remnant not only of Harvey's cultural revolution of the nineteenth century, but also of another cultural revolution, this one in the 1970s and 1980s (46). The seeds for this particular cultural wave were planted somewhat earlier, however, with the development of Memorial University of Newfoundland and ISER, the Institute for Social and Economic Research, both of which were instituted to help

foster academic opportunities in Newfoundland and also to increase institutionalized study of Newfoundland and its culture. This helped to develop what Overton calls the "anthropology of locality", epitomized through the creation of Folklore Studies at Memorial in the 1960s as well (48). A regional focus was nurtured both academically and through community development. This was a time for non-Newfoundlanders to arrive to the province in search of an alternative life, as well as Newfoundlanders returning home to the cultural riches they had abandoned. In our interview, noted cultural geographer John Mannion confirmed that the development of Anthropology and Folklore as academic disciplines at Memorial were key in Newfoundlanders' rediscovery of the value of Newfoundland culture, epitomized through the subsequent cultural revival. Artist Gerald Squires, for example, returned to Newfoundland, living most famously in the abandoned Ferryland lighthouse and painting local scenes. Folk musician Jim Payne also returned to Newfoundland after a time on the mainland, utilizing his nationalist sentiment towards the creation of folk song (Harris "Traditional"). The performers of Figgy Duff, CODCO, and the Wonderful Grand Band all epitomize this movement towards Newfoundland identity through the arts during the late twentieth century (Overton 48-49). On her website, founding member of Figgy Duff Pamela Morgan, articulates the significance of Newfoundland culture to herself and other artists during Newfoundland's cultural revival:

The 1970's heralded an era of newfound discovery and pride in Newfoundland culture and identity. The Folklore department at M.U.N. was thriving, people stopped being ashamed of the way they spoke, and rebelled against the newfie joke. We were in sync with a roots movement all over the world, as people began to look inward to their own people for inspiration.

A significant aspect of the Newfoundland revival, of course, is the assumption that there is something distinctive about Newfoundland culture that should be preserved. The Newfoundland cultural revival was a lament for a lost way of life, as Newfoundland urbanized and modernized, and an attempt to preserve and build on that life in contemporary society. Descriptions of the poor, hospitable, hardy, happy Newfoundlander created an image that pervades much of the Newfoundland consciousness today (Overton 52). The irony here is that so much of this revival was in opposition to Smallwood's controversial resettlement program (where entire remote communities were moved to larger centres), Smallwood being the one who had been so instrumental in promoting nationalist pride. Overton states that an "imagined community" was constructed through the idealized and romanticized notions of Newfoundland's regional life and popular culture (60). The role of the imagined community, as defined by Benedict Anderson, in the development of Newfoundland's identity will be explored later in this chapter.

While Newfoundland identity (as with any cultural group) is complex, the development of cultural awareness since the migratory fishery has supported the idea that there *is* a distinct Newfoundland culture, and that Newfoundlanders overwhelmingly prefer to remain in the province when economically feasible. In 2008, Newfoundland and Labrador is again in flux; since the cod moratorium of 1992, outmigration has become an increasingly troubling trend. However, the notion of the resilient Newfoundlander remains, and one could argue that awareness of the significance of Newfoundland culture and its fragility is heightened. For example, in 2006 Premier Danny Williams and his Conservative government pledged a significant investment in the arts as integral to the future of Newfoundland culture through a new Cultural Economic Development program (Department of Tourism Culture and Recreation). This is the point in Newfoundland's cultural development where the dance groups in this study are functioning in 2008. Each has its own chronology in its development as a dance form and as a dance group in Newfoundland. The case study chapters will detail how each dance group operates in twenty-first century Newfoundland and Labrador, within the context of Newfoundland culture today.

Authenticity and Recontextualization

Much of Newfoundland culture has developed organically, in that it has either evolved from traditions brought over by early immigrants, or developed on the island to suit changing social situations. Other aspects of Newfoundland

culture, as in any culture, have been deliberately created. In 2008, contemporary Newfoundland culture is the legacy of both situations. This raises questions amongst scholars and the general populace as to whether all expressions of a culture are valid, and whether some should be privileged over others. The same issues have been raised when discussing both set dance and step dance in Newfoundland, which I will explore in detail in Chapters Five and Six. In order to more fully understand the context in which my case studies have developed, it is necessary to explore the significance of the concepts of authenticity and recontextualization, which will be utilized throughout this study to analyze the formation and development of set dance and step dance as integral aspects of Newfoundland culture. In particular, the idea of authenticity has been debated extensively in folkloristic study, moving from rigid distinctions such as Dorson's concepts of folklore and fakelore to Posen's acceptance of recontextualized forms as a necessary component of the modernization of a folk art form. What is noteworthy here is the move from judging the validity of a vernacular art form to valuing the art itself even as it shifts in form and meaning. My case studies illustrate how this change can, in fact, ensure the survival of the dance form in a changing society while retaining its core identity to both its practitioners and its audience.

Perhaps one of the most common concepts related to the vernacular arts, particularly in a revival form, is that of authenticity. A term once used unselfconsciously, "authenticity" is now recognized as a biased symbolic

construction, highly dependent on context for its interpretation. "Authenticity" is also a means through which a complementary concept, "tradition", may be examined. Both are inherently linked to how each of this study's dance forms is culturally constructed and viewed through the lens of how Newfoundlanders view themselves, their culture, and their cultural products.

Our contemporary notions of cultural authenticity owe much to Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger's foundational text, In the introduction to The Invention of Tradition, Hobsbawm details the term thus:

'Invented tradition' is taken to mean a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. (1)

Initially it may seem that Hobsbawm is simply making a distinction between bona fide traditions and invented traditions. However, he also distinguishes between tradition and custom (as found in traditional societies), as well as between tradition and convention or routine (2-3). Further, his emphasis lies more on those traditions that are implicitly linked with the past when, in actuality, they are a replacement for previous traditions, hastily put in place because of changing social patterns. They become formalized and ritualized because they are deliberately linked to the past, and repeated until that link is firmly entrenched in the psyche of those who belong to the society (Hobsbawm 4).

However, Hobsbawm's vision is somewhat limited in its scope. He argues, "where the old ways are alive, traditions need be neither revived nor invented" (8). While there is often an acknowledgment (either perceived or documented) that any societal modernization leads to a decline in practiced tradition, it is somewhat simplistic to assert that traditions automatically die out when societies progress to a certain point. Therefore, I find Hobsbawm's argument to be useful in terms of acknowledging the fact that traditions do not always exist in a long, unbroken span of generations upon generations. As Ton Otto and Poul Pederson note in the introduction to their collection of essays Tradition and Agency: Tracing Cultural Continuity and Invention, Hobsbawm asserts that social values and norms are embedded in traditions through their repetition. Otto and Pederson further this line of thinking by stressing that since social values are instilled in a given society's traditions, those traditions are a means by which social identities, including imagined communities, are forged (14). Thus traditions – invented or otherwise – surged in number and significance for those who practice them.

In Richard Handler and Jocelyn Linnekin's 1989 article, "Tradition, Genuine or Spurious," the authors very succinctly address the issue of the traditional, and problematize how we view tradition, often to the detriment of the item being examined. By focusing on tradition as a "wholly symbolic construction" (38), Handler and Linnekin note the failures of previous definitions, and encourage a reworking of previous thinking on the subject. They reject the

common “naturalistic” approach to tradition, rather arguing that “tradition resembles less an artifactual assemblage than a process of thought – an ongoing interpretation of the past” (39). Handler and Linnekin argue that the social sciences are turning more to the symbolic rather than the artifactual. I would agree that this more inclusive and symbolic interpretation of tradition is one that fits in with the case studies in this dissertation, as each of them incorporates tradition in various ways but neither is bounded as a static model of the past as previous attitudes about the traditional might suggest.

Within folkloristics, I would argue that the debate over the authentic peaked in Dorson’s coining of the term “fakelore”. At the time quite controversial, Dorson used “fakelore” first as a response to a book published by Benjamin Botkin, which was well received by folklorists but was, according to Dorson, seriously flawed as to content and collection methods. He states, “fakelore is the presentation of spurious and synthetic writings under the claim they are genuine folklore” (9). His controversial writings sparked debate amongst folklorists within and outside the academy, and provided guidelines by which many scholars would review an item of folklore that claimed to be traditional or authentic. However, I would contend that we have largely moved beyond such rigid distinctions and that recontextualization (see Posen), which I will explore shortly, is a far more effective way to study folklore in a contemporary context.

Further to dismantling the rigid confines of authenticity, in her article “The Quest for Authenticity in Tourism and Folklife Studies”, Regina Bendix defines

authenticity as “a way of *experiencing* or *being*” (68). She further argues that because experiences are not concrete, people desire symbols or objective artifacts of the authentic. This leads to what she calls the “cultural objectification of authenticity” (“Quest” 68), a commodification of the authentic experience that is woven into tourism, as well as other areas of folklore study. Cultural tourism is significantly linked to notions of tradition, authenticity and revival. Chapter Five deals specifically with the conflation of tourism, dance and these related issues. However, in dealing with each case study’s performances as offered for public consumption, authenticity and tradition, as linked to the audience and performer, are still significant.¹⁰ Bendix’s example of the commodification of the authentic is a thread that resonates throughout this study.

Bendix’s ideas tie in with Elke Dettmer’s discussion of folklorism. In her piece “Folklorism in Newfoundland”, Dettmer defines folklorism as “an analytical construct indicating the conscious use and misuse of folklore” (169). Dettmer traces “folklorism” back to folklorist Hans Moser in Germany in 1962.

Acknowledging that the term now has negative connotations, Dettmer applies folklorism to the Newfoundland and Labrador situation, especially as it relates to tourism. She states, “the process of folklorism finds its ultimate expression in tourism advertising, which often uses the folklore of an indigenous population as one of the defining characteristics of a vacation destination” (“Folklorism” 173).

¹⁰ An in-depth discussion of tourist literature is beyond the scope of this chapter, but some sources merit mention here. See Ashworth and Goodall, Boniface, Brewer, Dettmer “Moving”, Herbert et al., Leask and Yeoman, Lockhart and Drakakis-Smith, MacCannell, Peckham, Reisinger and Turner, Walle, McKercher and du Cros, Urry, and Weirmair and Mathies as studies of cultural tourism and its links to heritage, tradition and authenticity.

Regional symbols, such as those related to fishing, foodways, traditional music and dance are often utilized, to great effect, in Newfoundland and Labrador.

There is, of course, a fine line between promoting and exploiting a culture and its peoples, and it is a line that many societies walk (see Chambers and Tye, both of whom examine the promotion of culture through their own tourism case studies).

Dettmer also broadens the meaning of folklorism, arguing that it is more than "just a sentimental or commercial, and often embarrassing, use of folklore, but rather a cultural reaction to specific social and economic conditions" ("Folklorism" 174).

Hermann Bausinger also tackles the concept of folklorism in his book, Folk Culture in a World of Technology, translated by Elke Dettmer. In his study, Bausinger, too, discusses folklorism as it relates to tourism and cultural product. His analysis points to the idea that the function of a revival form (a replica of a piece of furniture, his example, or a dance, my examples) may, in fact, serve the same purpose as the "relic" or "genuine" form (128).

Folk traditions do not belong to a historically defined level but to a basically timeless substance. Folklorism changes folklore in its essence, but it is based on this assumption: because the antiquated is thought to be "authentic" and therefore timeless, it is rescued in a time alien to it, necessarily changed, but for all that admired and regarded with amazement. (156)

What Bausinger refers to as the “de-historicizing impulse” (156) problematizes notions of tradition and revival, in a way reminiscent of Toelken’s Twin Laws of dynamism and conservatism (Dynamics 39-40), and the idea that tradition is not static; rather, folk culture lies along a continuum of change over time and space. Folklorism, whether part of a tourist industry or the larger culture industry, not only validates “original” and “authentic” culture, but as Bausinger states, minimizes the ties between culture and industry (160), which legitimizes the resultant cultural product. Bausinger and Dettmer approach folklorism in different ways. However, they both demonstrate that the concept may help provide a means of analysis of who is using folklore, how it is being used, and for what purposes. However, it is limited in that folklorism, while preserving an aspect of traditional or folk culture, may be seen as preventing the normative changes in any item of folklore as a culture changes over time.

I. Sheldon Posen’s reflexive piece, “On Folk Festivals and Kitchens: Questions of Authenticity in the Folksong Revival” further unpacks the idea of authenticity, focusing on folk festivals in the 1960s-1970s. Posen’s discovery of a living tradition of Newfoundland folksongs in outport kitchens across the island caused him to question whether folk festivals and other performance venues were valid outlets for folk music performance. Eventually, he reconciled his experiences through an acknowledgement that context and “how they [contexts] shape the meaning of the activities within them” are key (in Rosenberg Transforming 136). I found this article as a reprint in Rosenberg’s Transforming

Tradition, where there is also an author's reflection, written almost twenty years later. Posen asserts that at the time of reprint (1993) authenticity was no longer the burning issue it was when he originally wrote the article. Also, he admits that contexts mix and intermingle all the time, and recontextualization occurs continually, "both in kitchens and on festival grounds" (127-128). It is the recontextualization of folklore that allows a discussion to move beyond categorizing a folklore item or event in terms of its authenticity and examine it in its own context.

As I will explore in the next two chapters, I have found that authenticity still resonates as an issue within the folk arts community in St. John's, fifteen years after the reprint of Posen's article. For the most part, I found the notion of authenticity to be raised when one dancer made claims about their dance form that another did not believe to be true. The question then would be asked as to whether the dancer, in fact, had an understanding of their dance form and how they were representing their culture. While I did encounter these questions several times during my field research, I do agree with Posen that recontextualization is a far more effective way to analyze the vernacular arts. His understanding of how one must "be aware of precisely what those contexts comprise and how they shape meaning of the activities within them" (Posen in Rosenberg Transforming 136) rather than judge one context as authentic and the other as not authentic is key when examining the contextual shifts in my chosen dance groups.

Irishness and Newfoundland Culture

Through the recontextualization processes that my case study groups have undergone over the years, perhaps the most significant common thread has been their link to the Irish undertones (sometimes overtones) in Newfoundland culture. While the reasons for the influences of English and Irish culture in Newfoundland are evident from an examination of Newfoundland's history, what may not initially be clear is why it is the Irish influence that pervades today, despite the fact that demographics, both historical and contemporary, indicate that the English were the most populous group in Newfoundland.¹¹ Moreover, the English was the group who had the most economic and political power; it may be assumed that they would therefore also have the most cultural influence. But I would argue that the opposite, in fact, is the case. I believe Irish identity, perhaps more than historically accurate identity, is more powerful than mere demographic numbers. It is rooted firmly in ideological links between Irish and Newfoundland cultures and found in both exoteric and esoteric perceptions and stereotypes of the province. It is this complex mass of implied and assumed traits and similarities (both those proudly worn and those unwittingly thrust upon) that has informed Newfoundland's insistent link to Irish culture, manifest in a range of cultural and economic products today. In short, Newfoundlanders have identified

¹¹ According to the Government of Canada's 2001 census data, there were 200,120 Newfoundlanders claiming British origin and 100,260 identifying their roots as Irish. (Government of Canada).

with the Irish because of their common political and social oppression at the hands of the English, which has manifest in internally and externally created stereotypes of both groups as poor, happy, hardy folk. Both islands have fought against and embraced these perceived traits. As John Mannion indicated when I interviewed him, perception is often more powerful than reality. He stated:

When I tell people that "The Wild Rover" is an English ballad [not an Irish ballad], they can't believe it. But fact is one thing and legend is another, and well, if it comes to choosing between fact or legend, you print the legend because it's far more interesting. It's what people want to believe and so it becomes your myth, your folklore. Historians will query and point out that this is not correct but they [general public] don't care.

I will deal specifically with how dance is a communicator of Newfoundland's Irishness in subsequent chapters; here, I wish to draw the parallel between the two cultures to contextualize the cultural landscape in which my dance groups are found and explore part of the ideological basis of Newfoundland culture.

The Irishness in Newfoundland is similar to Ian McKay's concept of tartanism, which is the outward manifestation of symbols of the "supposed Scottish essence of Nova Scotia" ("Tartanism" 6). There are also parallels here with Benedict Anderson's definition of nation as an "imagined political community" (5). While Anderson uses the boundary of nation as a means of delineating loyalties, imagined or otherwise, I understand identity to extend beyond one's country of origin. Newfoundland's Irishness is, in part, the legacy of

the diaspora that exists today as a result of migration and settlement of European groups such as the English and the Irish to Newfoundland, as well as other parts of Canada and the northeastern United States. However, it relies on the notion that identity goes beyond one's actual national affiliation; rather, it is based upon an internalized identity that is manifest in both tangible and intangible cultural products and expressions. In his 2003 article "The Heritage Arts Imperative", Barre Toelken argues that the most intense cultural products are found on the periphery. He states:

In the old homeland, culture and language continue to be modified and naturally change, but out on the margins, among people trying to maintain a cultural identity in new places, arts often become more noticeably conservative and yet, of course, also dynamic and emergent due to their performance in a fresh setting. (199)

As Toelken identifies in this article, all forms of the arts – folk, heritage and fine, as he identifies them – exist along a spectrum of identity with their culture and community (196). The arts therefore form a significant element in the identification of a given culture. This concept is applied to the Irish in Boston in Susan Gedutis's book See You at the Hall: Boston's Golden Era of Irish Music and Dance. Here, she uses the Irish immigrants in Boston as a means of examining identity in the American diaspora, as expressed through the creative arts. Many of the songs that are today considered Irish (such as "Danny Boy", for example) were, in fact, written by Irish Americans living in the United States.

Gedutis argues that music became a significant marker of ethnicity in the Americas more so than it had been in the homeland. She states:

Despite traditional music's dormancy in Ireland, many people's interest was rekindled once they reached America because Irish music represented a taste of home...In effect, the lively dance halls in America played a critical role in preserving traditional music while it suffered a temporary decline in popularity in Ireland (78-9).

Gedutis's study illustrates Toelken's idea that the expressive arts may become more significant on the periphery, becoming a signifier of not just the land that was left, but the people, customs and way of life that some may try to preserve in their new homes. And as the next generation is born and the family moves symbolically further and further away from their homeland, some may cling to these vernacular expressions as a way of safeguarding a vanishing part of their family's identity.

In the case of Newfoundland and Labrador, there is an Irish identity that exists amongst many Newfoundlanders. It seems to permeate beyond individuals and families into the cultural fabric. While certainly not every single Newfoundlander and Labradorian will self-identify with what I am calling Irishness, my argument here is that there is such an overwhelming Irish thread in the province, that I see Irishness as a key part of Newfoundland's overall collective identity and collective consciousness. Historically, this identity derives from the English and Irish settlers who populated the island, combined with the

isolation of an island in the North Atlantic that has been perceived as marginalized socially, economically and politically from European and Canadian cultures for many years. As such, a Newfoundland identity has emerged from the province's history and geography among its population and the resultant culture that has been created. What Posen calls recontextualization of art forms has necessarily happened in Newfoundland to ensure that its cultural products remain relevant and its identity remains strong.

Newfoundland's apparently naturalized Irishness is embedded in the collective Newfoundland sub-conscious much in the same way as McKay asserts that Scottishness is entrenched in the Nova Scotian mindset. Because of this, Newfoundland's identity is manifest in many Irish-based folkloric and cultural products. Some are long-standing customs while others are more readily identifiable as invented traditions.¹² As John Mannion indicates in our interview, Irishness is manifest in everything from the migration patterns of early Newfoundland to the proliferation of Irish music on the radio beginning in the 1950s to the "rediscovery" of Irish roots through the flourishing of Memorial University of Newfoundland, in particular, programs such as Folklore and Newfoundland Studies. The examples that I give here show how ideological links between Ireland and Newfoundland are rooted in a myriad of commonalities, some tangible, others intangible, all highly symbolic. From the landscape to

¹² The Telegram newspaper published an article written by Monica Baird about the perceived Irishness of Newfoundland culture – despite the lack of demographic support for this sentiment – as recently as October 15, 2006.

ethnic stereotype, Ireland and Newfoundland share perceived and real similarities that have enabled and perhaps encouraged Newfoundland culture to model itself after that of Ireland.

Newfoundlanders' belief in the fairies can be traced to Irish heritage, and is documented as being strongest in regions of the province containing descendants of Irish immigrants (see Narváez Good People and Rieti for studies on fairy belief in Newfoundland and Labrador). However, although the active belief tradition may exist in particular areas (such as the Southern Shore and parts of Conception Bay), the cultural identification with fairy belief permeates throughout the province's identity, regardless of the strength or lack of the specific belief tradition in a community or region.¹³

Fairy belief and Newfoundland's link to Ireland is especially pertinent to this discussion given the lack of fairy belief elsewhere in North America. In fact, Richard Dorson argued that, while fairy belief was prevalent in the British Isles and in Ireland, it did not migrate with emigrants to the New World, precisely because the beliefs were too rooted in the landscape and culture to translate to the Americas (in Narváez Good 339). Narváez disputes this claim, using Newfoundland as the anomalous example. In his article "Newfoundland Berry

¹³ The pervasiveness of fairy belief in the mindset of the contemporary Newfoundlander can be seen in a production of a local play, "Butler's Marsh" (Chafe). In the summer of 2007, the play ran its second season. It focuses entirely on a young woman in the woods on Bell Island, Newfoundland, dealing with the fairies as both a supernatural and sociological phenomenon. The play is performed at dark in the middle of Pippy Park in St. John's, to give audience members a sense that they, too, are in fairy grounds. The production of a contemporary play based on folkloric belief, well attended by locals and tourists alike, is a small example illustrating that awareness of fairy lore is prevalent in twenty-first century Newfoundland.

Pickers 'In The Fairies': Maintaining Spatial, Temporal, and Moral Boundaries Through Legendry" (See Narváez Good 336-367), Narváez argues that it is in fact the geographical similarities between Ireland and Newfoundland that allowed fairy belief to be transplanted with settlers. More specifically, he states that the prevalence of fairylore in Newfoundland can be attributed to, "the unique history of Newfoundland settlement, environmental factors, and folk theology concerning fairies" (Good 339). In particular, Narváez points out the isolation of outport communities along Newfoundland's coast, interior geographic features indicative of liminal fairy ground (bogs, berry grounds) and what he calls an "interpretive frame" that permitted immigrants to envisage fairies in their new surroundings (Good 340-341). Essentially, fairy belief in Newfoundland in contrast to its dearth in other areas settled by the Irish may be linked directly into the similarities in landscape; significant in the fact that fairy legends are inextricably linked to – indeed are dependent upon –geographic surroundings.

The significance of landscape permeates both cultures to their core. (See Pocius Place for an example of the importance of landscape to history, work, gender and community in his case study of Calvert, Newfoundland). The legacy of both cultures' dependence upon and love for the landscape around them has meant that the terrain has become part of the character of the Irish and Newfoundland people, reflected primarily in its role in the tourist industry. In her article "Power, Knowledge and Tourguiding: The Construction of Irish Identity on

Board County Wicklow Tour Buses", Annette Jorgensen details her journeys on board such bus tours and their resultant representations of Ireland. She states:

First of all, Ireland is presented as a place of unspoilt natural beauty...The guide's narrative focuses our attention on particularly scenic aspects of Ireland we pass through and what is pointed out to us includes trees, lakes, hills and valleys. The guide facilitates us to read what we see as picturesque...Much of the tour presents Ireland as an escape from modernity, to a place, like the Wicklow boglands through which we pass, where 'nothing has changed since the ice age' (guide C). (in Cronin and O'Connor 145)

This is reminiscent of Overton's discussion of Newfoundland culture and tourism in his book Making a World of Difference: Essays on Tourism, Culture and Development in Newfoundland. His discussions of the creation of national parks such as Gros Morne as a means of creating leisure space (171 ff), the appeal of Newfoundland as homeland as a means of bringing expatriates back as tourists (124 ff) and the use of images of rural Newfoundland in the present-day tourist industry (45) all point to what he calls a "mystic nationalism" (46) that evokes comparisons to Ireland's rolling hills and misty shores as detailed in Jorgensen's article (in Cronin and O'Connor).

The links between the two cultures now have an economic element to them as well. In the early twenty-first century, the Irish-Newfoundland connection is being aggressively pursued through government means. Continual reference

in Newfoundland in the early twenty-first century to the Celtic Tiger and suggestions as to how Newfoundland can economically mimic Ireland's success, is at the forefront of the Newfoundland public's consciousness.¹⁴ The Celtic Tiger is given credit for the turnaround of Ireland as an economically depressed nation into one that prospers on a global scale. What is important to recognize is that this has not only shifted the internal financial situation of the country, but it has also shifted esoteric perspectives about Ireland and its culture. A country whose economic claim to fame was a potato famine that led to waves of immigration to North America and devastated its economy has given way to one that is seen as a powerful nation in the European Union in 2008. Beyond numbers, the Celtic Tiger has helped to change stereotypes of the Irish as poor, uneducated, rough-and-tumble drinkers to that of progressive Europeans.

In their chapter "The Creative Scene of "Riverdance": Artrepreneurship and the Celtic Tiger", Carmen Kuhling and Kieran Keohane argue that "Riverdance", Ireland's most profitable artistic export, (77), was the beginning of Ireland's cultural Renaissance. While I will discuss the cultural effects of "Riverdance" later in this study, I mention this article here because of the link the authors make between "Riverdance" and the economic flourishing of the Celtic Tiger. Their argument, that "Riverdance" was "a microcosmic example of some of the most negative and positive dimensions of the social and cultural

¹⁴ Public focus on funding from organizations such as the Ireland-Newfoundland Partnerships and the Ireland Business Partnerships illustrate the links being forged and strengthened, in part, for Newfoundland to model itself after Ireland's recent economic success. Johanne Devlin-Trew outlines the significance of the INP and the IBP in Newfoundland in her article "The Forgotten Irish? Contested Sites and Narratives of Nation in Newfoundland".

transformations accompanying the Celtic Tiger economic boom as well as Ireland's cultural renaissance" (86), denotes the significance of Ireland's economic boom in the recontextualization of Irish step dancing. Without the Celtic Tiger, and the resultant shift in perception of Ireland and the Irish, "Riverdance" would not have held the same appeal to audiences worldwide. Sexy, flashy step dancing set to modernized Irish-inspired music would not have had the same effect had it been performed in a country perceived by the outside world to be poor and culturally backward. With Ireland's revamped image, "Riverdance" could explode onto the world stage as cutting edge performance, dragging a vernacular dance form into the twenty-first century.

Kuhling and Keohane's discussion hints at the shift of Ireland's identity; both imposed from the outside and celebrated within the culture, which is perhaps at the heart of Newfoundland's association with Irish culture. I would argue that Newfoundland and Newfoundlanders both identify with stereotypes of nineteenth and twentieth century Ireland and long for Newfoundland's image to progress to that of Ireland's twenty-first century Celtic Tiger. In fact, in his marketing study, Stephen Brown uses "Riverdance" to illustrate this frustration. He states:

It is nothing short of astonishing that a society which has latterly gone out of its way to emphasize its progressive, egalitarian, business-like, ultra-modern, cutting-edge cosmopolitan credentials, should completely capitulate and willingly participate in this communal, pseudo-Celtic

regression therapy at the first sound of the uilleann pipes and the click-clacking of the high heeled shoe...[this is a] celebration of cod-Irish¹⁵ culture. (166)

Brown identifies the duality of Irish culture in terms of the images it projects to the outside world, from the quaint to the post-modern. Newfoundland is in a similar situation, in that Newfoundland struggles against perception that it is behind the times, yet promotes its quaintness to attract visitors. This results in a complex mix of frustration at outsider perceptions about Newfoundland in addition to promoting some of those very same stereotypes to the outside world, primarily in tourist literature. Further, I would assert that cultural traits are often held nearer and dearer by those in the diaspora than in the homeland as a way to cling to the imagined national community (see Benedict Anderson for example) that their ancestors left.

The economic hardships that both Newfoundland and Ireland have faced are a key link between the two cultures. Ireland and the Celtic Tiger economic boom is often cited anecdotally amongst Newfoundlanders when discussing how Newfoundland might, too, succeed economically. For although Newfoundland in 2008 is enjoying prosperity linked to offshore oil benefits, outmigration – in particular to Alberta – continues to be a problem. Newfoundland has often been a place where people have left in order to find work, with the caveat that they

¹⁵ Discussions with linguist W.J. Kirwin have led me to interpret the term “cod Irish” as meaning foolish or false Irish culture. Brown seems to use the term in a derogatory fashion, in particular by using the phrase “Hiberno-hokum” in the same section of his book.

would one day return. This parallels the waves of emigration that have plagued Ireland throughout its long history. In her article, "Unmasking Irishness: Irish Women, the Irish Nation and the Irish Diaspora", Breda Gray argues that Ireland has suffered from emigration being considered a "naturalised" part of life for the Irish, to the point where a new custom of "leaving parties" became the norm in the 1980s. While individuals may be saddened at their departure, culturally, it is considered common and normal, and part of a cultural tradition of emigration (in Mac Laughlin 214). I would argue that this perceived need to leave, whether because of true economic necessity or due to a perception that sunnier financial climes lie elsewhere, have enabled Newfoundlanders to empathize with the Irish.

The necessity of leaving to make a living elsewhere is one small example that points to the larger ideological issue of esoteric and exoteric perceptions amongst both cultures. Both have been stereotyped in similar ways by the outside world, yet both play upon some of those stereotypes even today as a way of promoting culture, primarily in the tourist industry. I address images of Newfoundland and its tourist industry later; here I wish to examine some of the perceptions of the Irish, from within and outside its culture, and provide some initial connections that will be explored throughout this study.

Essentially, the character of the island's inhabitants and the landscape are at the core of these viewpoints. As illustrated by Narváez's discussion of the migration of fairy legends from Ireland to Newfoundland, much of the two cultures' common identity is rooted in a similar landscape. Orflaith Ní Bhriain

explored the notion of Irish identity in her thesis on ethnicity and dance. She refers to negative stereotypes of the Irish as, "[living in] abject poverty and a lack of hygiene, lack of education, being drunk and disorderly, wild and uncivilized" (62). Her identification of these negative aspects of Irish people and Ireland in general are rooted in what Michael de Nie calls "anti-Irish prejudice in Victorian Britain", referring to the "eternal Paddy" as a pervasive stereotype that has persisted, in no small part due to the religious and political strife that has afflicted Hiberno-Anglo relations throughout history (5). The result, in large part, has been what Ó'Giolláin calls the "Gaelicization" of Irish folklore (114-141). I will detail this deliberate move on the part of the Irish to de-Anglicize Irish culture, in the late nineteenth century, through language, sport and the arts later in this study. However, it is important to note at this point that Ireland did make a conscious effort to create a Gaelic culture that differentiated themselves from the political and religious hegemony of the British. Their relative isolation as an island and their insistence on protecting their culture has significantly affected both the perception and reality of Irish folklore today. Annette Jorgensen notes that these traits of the Irish persona were highlighted in the bus tours that she participated in County Wicklow alongside the natural beauty of the island. She says:

Other messages concern the Irish people who appear friendly, entertaining and talkative...However, other aspects of the Irish stereotype also emerge, as Irish people are shown, through jokes and anecdotes, to be superstitious beings, drinkers of whiskey and stout...This image of the

Irish(man) as a loveable but untrustworthy rogue mirrors what Rolston (1995) has called the paternalistic racism towards the Irish, often found in tourism literature on the country. (in Cronin and O'Connor 145)

Similar qualities have been documented in treatises on Newfoundland culture, in particular Overton's book Making a World of Difference and Pat Byrne's article "Booze, Ritual and the Invention of Tradition: The Phenomenon of the Newfoundland Screech-In." These intangible qualities have been both boom and bane of Newfoundland's identity to outsiders. Laba's article "The Bayman Food Market is the Townie Dump: Identity and the Townie Newfoundlander", although published in 1978, identifies both the pride and shame in the "raw" Newfoundlander that permeates Newfoundland today. Characteristics rightly or wrongly attributed to Newfoundlanders – that they are, as Overton points out, "poor, happy, hardy, religious, proud" (52) – are indeed similar to the qualities of the Irish mentioned in numerous sources on Irish identity. Indeed, in his article, Byrne asserts that, through invented traditions such as the screech-in,¹⁶ Newfoundlanders perpetuate and promote the very stereotypes, the "Newfieland" as Byrne puts it ("Booze" 238), that mainlanders have forced upon them for years. The example of the screech-in, as well as an examination of tourist literature promoted by bodies such as Hospitality Newfoundland and Labrador and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador (which will be discussed in

¹⁶ A screech-in is a welcoming ceremony where outsiders drink a shot of rum (locally known as Screech), say a few words in supposed Newfoundland dialect, and kiss a cod in order to become "honourary Newfoundlanders".

Chapter Five), illustrate how Newfoundland has used those stereotypical qualities to its advantage in drawing tourists, much in the same way as Ireland. Whether this is bastardizing one's culture or a counter-hegemonic response as a marginalized group is debatable. However, the responses of both Newfoundland and Ireland as peripheral, island cultures (Newfoundland to Canada, Ireland to Europe) are remarkably similar.

These representative examples illustrate how prominent Ireland and Irishness is in the Newfoundland consciousness, in customary practices, economic policy development and the arts. The demographics may not reflect the Irishness ingrained in Newfoundland identity, but the collective identification of Newfoundlanders enables a relatively small, still somewhat geographically isolated group, to form an identity around which everyone can focus. The suggested identity ties are far more persuasive than the reality of history and demographics. It is through the lens of Newfoundland's Irishness that my case studies will be examined. The groups that I examine in the next two chapters fall along a continuum of Irishness. They are all woven into the fabric of dance in Newfoundland and have found different ways to survive and claim their niche in Newfoundland's cultural landscape.

Chapter Five:
Irishness Through the Newfoundland Tourist Industry:
Newfoundland Set Dance and the Dance Up Event

Introduction

Newfoundland's intangible cultural heritage, embodied in part through vernacular dance, is of especial interest when examining how Irish culture is performed in the province. This collective identity is seen through many aspects of both historical and present-day Newfoundland and Labrador culture, as illustrated in Chapter Four. Dance takes its place alongside music, language, terrain and stereotypical character traits as a way in which Newfoundland has staked its claim as a place steeped in Irishness. To use the image of a continuum, and to borrow Nahachewsky's categorical delineations of dance ("Participatory and Presentational Dance as Ethnochoreological Categories"), the two main forms of vernacular dance in Newfoundland – set dance and step dance – are at opposite ends of the participatory/presentational spectrum. In this chapter I discuss set dance in Newfoundland, which is still almost exclusively a participatory dance form, even though it is no longer found in its previous social setting. In my discussion of Dance Up, a participatory tourist event, I illustrate that the continued success of Newfoundland set dance, in its recontextualized form, is largely due to its subtle reliance on Irishness in the province's tourist literature.

In the post-Moratorium economic climate, ideas of tradition and revival are a large part of Newfoundland and Labrador's booming tourist industry. As tourism increasingly becomes a staple of the province's economy, examining heritage and the role it plays in contemporary society is critical. The line between promoting culture to its benefit, and selling culture to its detriment, is indeed a fine one. Increased tourism brings heightened cultural awareness, but that must be balanced against the underlying fear that the trend towards cultural tourism will mean the demise of a culture's heritage (see Chambers for a discussion of potential negative effects of cultural tourism on the culture in question). Newfoundland and Labrador's tourism industry is flourishing today; therefore, these concerns are significant when examining any kind of an arts event that is promoted to tourists.

A wealth of literature addresses the many issues related to the links between a culture and its tourism industry (see Chambers, Tye, McKay Quest, Overton for discussions of the role of cultural tourism in Atlantic Canada). In Chapter Four, I outlined some of the moments in Newfoundland's history that have led to the development of Newfoundland culture as we know it today. Those events are the framework on which cultural tourism in Newfoundland has been built, and are key to a discussion of Dance Up as a tourist event. Tourism in Newfoundland has been directly linked to the identity of Newfoundland and Newfoundlanders, expedited by an increasing awareness of the marketability of Newfoundland's natural and cultural resources. For example, tourism as an

industry in Newfoundland and Labrador extends as far back as the construction of the railway. Once the trains began running across the island in 1898, the interior of Newfoundland was opened up for the first time. Foreign, big game hunters were attracted to the interior country of Newfoundland (Pocius "Tourists" 48), resulting in hotels and other tourist amenities being developed in those areas (see Penny and Kennedy for a history of the Reid company and the Newfoundland railway). In the introduction to his book, Making a World of Difference: Essays on Tourism, Culture and Development in Newfoundland, James Overton traces the evolution of cultural tourism in Newfoundland to Joey Smallwood's 1966 "Come Home Year". Overton identifies this pivotal tourist event in post-Confederation Newfoundland (30) as a means of introducing nostalgia as a significant attraction to the province. With the need for diversification of the Newfoundland economy since the traditional means of making a living, through the codfish industry, has sharply declined since the 1992 cod moratorium, the province's natural and cultural resources are of increasing importance. Tourism is one way the province has branched out to improve the overall economic health of Newfoundland and Labrador.¹⁷

As Newfoundland ventures down the path of cultural tourism, its "ambassadors" must be cognizant of the image they are portraying of the province, its heritage, culture and people. Much the same as Annette

¹⁷ According to the provincial government, their 2007 budget reflected spending eleven million dollars on tourism, doubling the amount from 2004 alone. The same document also estimates revenue of 820 million dollars from tourism, and the industry employing 47,000 residents of the province in 2007 (Newfoundland and Labrador "Budget").

Jorgensen's discussion (in Cronin and O'Connor) of coach tours in County Wicklow, Ireland, so are the characteristics of landscape and locals (the similarities of which are discussed in Chapter Four) emphasized in Newfoundland and Labrador's tourist industry. Many of those involved in this industry see the increase in visitors to the island as an opportunity to showcase the traditions that are near and dear to their hearts. Tonya Kearley is one such self-labelled cultural ambassador. Through her Dance Up event, Kearley (also a folklorist) has spread knowledge and increased awareness of set dance forms indigenous to Newfoundland.¹⁸ Rather than worry about preservation and revival, she teaches dances as she herself learned them (which will be discussed later in this chapter), and combines this with new choreography. She is willing to teach these dances to anyone who wants to learn them, visitor or local; she sees teaching as her main goal as a member of the Newfoundland arts community.

Kearley's re-embodiment of Newfoundland set dancing relies on the perceived Irishness of Newfoundland culture as a way of attracting participants. While Kearley states that she does not use Irishness as a way of attracting participants to Dance Up, her intense focus on cultural tourism in Newfoundland, through the creation and promotion of her event, necessarily means that she relies heavily on the promotion of Irishness in Newfoundland culture to outsiders as a way of bringing people in to dance. Therefore, on an underlying level, Kearley uses elements of shared Newfoundland identity as a way of not only

¹⁸ Throughout this chapter, the terms *set* and *square* dance will be used interchangeably. While there are some differences, they essentially fall under the same dance genre.

validating the culture of Newfoundlanders who arrive at Dance Up, but also as an inclusive device for tourists to feel that they have absorbed and are taking home with them an integral aspect of Newfoundland culture and identity. Despite its attempts for broad appeal as a generic yet authentic Newfoundland dance form, Dance Up's reliance on tourists' expectations of Newfoundland and Labrador as a "mini-Ireland" exploits the diasporic Irish identity while claiming not to do so. Although this seems to be an apparent contradiction at first, Kearley manages to balance her integrity at not succumbing to Irishness, while at the same time leaning quite heavily on the concept in covert and perhaps unconscious ways. The dances themselves and their cultural roots are almost immaterial; it is cultural connection to the collective Newfoundland identity that is key to the Dance Up experience.

Where some might be wary of Kearley's changes of context and structure of Newfoundland set dance, she looks at Dance Up as a tourist event and as an opportunity to educate and to entertain participants. In this chapter I do not intend to argue for or against Dance Up, or indeed any aspect of cultural tourism as it stands today in Newfoundland and Labrador; rather, I wish to problematize and contextualize the issues it raises concerning tradition, authenticity and recontextualization through my case study of Kearley's Dance Up event. Hobsbawm and Ranger's concept of invented tradition, as well as Dettmer's discussion of folklorism, are key to this chapter in understanding the issues that arise at the intersection between the arts and tourism.

This chapter is divided into a number of sections to illustrate the various descriptive and analytical components of the Dance Up event in context. To provide background on the “traditional” form of the set dance genre in Newfoundland and Labrador, I provide historical context to depict the structure and function of set dancing as a social activity in both public and private “times” in communities throughout the province. While socializing is an important element of Dance Up as times have changed so has the function of the dance form. Next, I trace the history of the event itself, from Kearley’s own apprenticeship as a set dancer, to Dance Up’s early days as a travelling event where dances were collected as well as executed, to its home in Trinity where it is now “housed” (even though Kearley and her family no longer live there on a full-time basis) and functions largely as a tourist event during the summer season. I then provide a detailed effort-shape analysis of set dancing. To better situate the event in its contemporary cultural context, I explore common themes found in tourist literature as they relate to the tourist situation in Newfoundland and Labrador today, linking Dance Up to the Irishness continuum I discuss throughout this study. As a tourist event, Dance Up is a significant marker of “traditional” and “authentic” Newfoundland folk culture, and challenges Newfoundland’s Irishness while reaffirming it at the same time. I conclude the chapter by looking at how Kearley envisions Dance Up in the future.

Set Dance in Newfoundland

Although Dance Up is not the same as traditional Newfoundland set dance, the history of set dance and its re-contextualization is important in understanding Kearley's motivations and purpose in creating and producing her event. The genesis of Dance Up, and its chief inspiration, is drawn from what is the most well known and considered by many to be the most traditional form of dancing in the province.

While there is a dearth of research on and analysis of dance in Newfoundland in general, set dance is the exception. As outlined in Chapter Two, almost all of the academic writing on Newfoundland dance has focused on set dance. That includes student papers on Newfoundland set dance in addition to articles that deal with the social life of Newfoundlanders, particularly in the outport community setting, of which dancing was a part. As mentioned in Chapter Two, the key work on set dance in Newfoundland is that of Colin Quigley, whose 1981 Master's thesis, "Folk Dance and Dance Events in Rural Newfoundland", and subsequent 1985 book, Close to the Floor: Folk Dance in Newfoundland, are considered central works on this subject.

What makes Quigley's study so compelling is his contextualization of set dance. When focusing on a specific dance genre, there is often the danger of simply describing the dance, rather than situating it in its historical or social context. The strength of Quigley's work (especially the book, which was written more for a general audience than the thesis) is that he not only paints a picture of

the structure of the dances themselves, but also gives the reader a sense of why people danced, and why they danced those particular dances.

Quigley's work emphasizes that set dance in rural Newfoundland was, for the most part, a social event. In our interview, musician and dancer Jim Payne describes the significance of fun to the experience of Newfoundland dance:

So for me above all it's about having fun. It's about enjoying the music so much that you want to be a part of it and that's what dancing is, is to be part of the bigger musical picture and certainly the way I dance, yeah it's about keeping the rhythm, about keeping the footwork, about coming up with different steps but it's about really going where the tune takes you because you dance to a rhythm but it's a melody that inspires you to dance.

In times prior to paved roads, electricity and the distractions of other modern conveniences, socializing among family and community in outport communities involved entertainment that required little more than people and their imaginations. The reality of a cashless economy, lack of popular entertainments prior to World War II, and the influence of American and Canadian soldiers stationed in Newfoundland meant that large, social gatherings in community halls, kitchen parties, and other "times"¹⁹ were the place for drinking, dancing, eating, socializing, fighting, and singing and playing music (see Faris, McCarthy

¹⁹ The Dictionary of Newfoundland English defines a time as, "a party or celebration, especially a communal gathering with dancing, entertainment, etc" (568). It also includes mention of a scoff, defined as, "food; a meal; a cooked meal at sea or ashore, especially at night and often part of an impromptu party" (Story et al. 438-9).

and Lannon, Frampton, and Murray, for examples). James Faris, in his ethnography Cat Harbour, described the significance of what Barbara Babcock dubbed "symbolic inversion" to a Newfoundland time:

People at a time may drink, dance and joke sexually in a manner normally thought to be quite out of order. If this is not achieved, people say, "We didn't really have a time, did we?" Times usually occur seasonally, and this is, in fact, one of the rules governing the license; if drinking, dancing or sexual liberties occur on unsanctioned occasions, they are violations and are regarded as sinful indulgence. (157)

While not all individuals would behave in this way at a time, dances were regarded as contexts where unconventional behaviour would be accepted; and, in some cases, expected. This is why some dances, such as the "Kissing Dance", would be popular among young people in some communities.

In Close to the Floor, Quigley emphasizes the Newfoundland time as an integral aspect of outport social life. Quigley delineates two distinct times: the public time and the private time (59 ff). Public times involved large community gatherings in a public building, and were usually seasonally based. They would include Christmas concerts, garden parties, and other calendar custom cultural performances associated with religious or community organizations. These events would be open to members of a particular institution, or perhaps the entire community. Private times, on the other hand, would be limited to a specific kin, work or friendship group. They may be seasonal (such as kitchen parties

occurring from mummering²⁰ at Christmas time) or spontaneous events. They would commonly occur in the home; hence, the "kitchen party" that is a significant part of the lore of outport Newfoundland.

As Quigley so aptly describes in Close to the Floor, set dancing, whether at a public or private time, was an essential ingredient for socializing and the socialization of community members. Rather than something to be learned and performed, dance was a common aspect of any kind of social gathering in the same vein as food, drink and music. The partnering aspect of the dances, particularly the dances where partners were exchanged several times over the course of the dance, were especially suited to catching up with friends, or investigating potential romantic interests. Quigley writes:

Eventually, someone would announce that the last dance would be the Kissing Dance. As one's choice of partner in the dance was often an indication of a choice of beau, 'some curious old ladies who had heard rumours of possible courtship would wait around all night to see who asked whom out in the Kissing Dance'. (Close 67)

Therefore, dancing was a way for single members of the community, particularly young adults, to court each other under the watchful eye of family and neighbours. It is one example of how dancing then had significant latent functions

²⁰ The Dictionary of Newfoundland English defines a mummer as, "an elaborately costumed and disguised person who participates in various group activities at Christmas" (Story et al. 337); commonly accepted activities as part of mummering or janneying include dressing up, visiting houses, drinking, dancing and pranks, and a guessing game where hosts must guess the identities of the disguised mummers. See Halpert and Story's Christmas Mumming in Newfoundland for a comprehensive collection of essays detailing structure, function and context of mummering customs in Newfoundland and Labrador.

for community members that were completely unrelated to performance and technique.

In I Remember, I Remember...My Gin Cove Boyhood, Reg Frampton describes his experiences with set dancing at a time:

The typical square dance was rather an intricate affair and consisted of a number of "sets" with two opposite sides doing the set, and then they would have a break while the other two sides went through their paces. All of the various parts or sets of the square dance had names, such as "round the house" or "the grand chain." One dance could easily last half an hour, or even an hour, depending on how many couples participated. All the dancers would become extremely warm during this strenuous activity – the men would loosen their ties or take them off, and loosen their shirt collars, and all the windows would be opened. (41)

He then describes the involvement of children in dancing:

Several square dances would be performed in succession, and then during the breaks an adult would supervise what we called a "ring" for the children. All the youngsters would join hands to form a circle, with a boy or a girl in the centre. As the children went around and around, they would sing a song...At the appropriate time during the song, the boy or girl in the centre would choose a child of the opposite sex, and – if they were not too shy – at the end of the song they would kiss each other. Then another boy or girl would get in the centre and the dance would be repeated. (41-42)

Although Frampton's description is more innocent than that of Faris's, symbolic inversion is evident. Even for children, times were set up as an opportunity to explore behaviours that were not necessarily approved of in everyday contexts; as such, set dances performed a highly social function for all members of a community during a time. As I will discuss later, it is this very appeal of symbolic inversion and its related behaviour that lies in Newfoundland's reliance on Irishness as a way to attract tourists and locals to its culture.

A number of specific set dances are largely acknowledged to be "traditional" in the context of Newfoundland culture. By this, I mean that there are a number of dances that seem to have been common in numerous outport communities in their own variants. These are the dances that have been observed and collected by scholars, and are therefore also the dances that have been described, recorded, or written about most frequently (see Crocker, Feltham, Harris "From" and "Tradition", Brookes, Kearley, Kendall, Lane, Matthews, Quigley and Slaney). There is thus a canon of Newfoundland set dances, likely determined by a combination of factors. I would argue that the canon has been determined through both the accident of survival through popularity and memory of those who danced them and the deliberate recordings of dances by dance enthusiasts and scholars alike. It is probable that those two factors have been the chief determinants of which dances have become part of the Newfoundland dance canon, and which ones have faded from kinesthetic memory.

In my own research and fieldwork, similar names of dances were mentioned again and again. The most common dances found in my research, and in the written sources mentioned above, include: "Running the Goat", "Lancers", "Square Dance", "Kissing Dance", "Longways Dances" and the "Reel". While there are likely a number of other dances that were (and perhaps still are) in the repertoire and living memory of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians throughout the province, others probably have not been recorded and may eventually be lost to time. It is important to realize that even those that have been documented in one form or another are not static dances. Variants from community to community are documented, likely due in part to the isolation of communities – even those near to each other – for many years. Lack of electricity and paved roads often separated individuals from each other even if their communities were in relatively close proximity. Thus, while there was some transmission of dances throughout the province, the present-day mass mediation of popular arts simply did not exist. Just as Buchan illustrates with folksong in The Ballad and the Folk, variant dances are passed on kinesthetically and verbally from individual to individual and from generation to generation, variants necessarily occur through addition, subtraction and substitution, intentional or otherwise. Therefore, a dance such as the Lancers will be similar in various communities, but not necessarily identical. There are also dances that are attributed to a particular community for their genesis or development. One of the most commonly known dances of this kind in the province is "Running the Goat",

which is attributed to Great Harbour Deep, a now-resettled community in White Bay (Harris "Traditional"). While this dance has been learned, recorded and performed by numerous individuals and groups not associated with Great Harbour Deep, the link to its origin holds strong.

As with many folkloric or traditional forms of art, it is fair to say that there is a perception that these dances are dying out; this leads, of course, to the notion that they must be preserved. Because of this, revival groups have formed, usually as a means of carrying on the tradition through either teaching or performing these set dances. The main issue I am raising here is that the dances have been taken out of their original social context – a context, it is important to note, that no longer exists in the same way it once did – and have been commodified in a contemporary context. Of course this is a trend that is found throughout the world, as continual societal changes bring a shift in traditional ways (see Thornbury, for example), but it is something that has become a dominant issue, particularly for those in the folk arts community of the province.

Tonya Kearley has created a revival event, although she does not necessarily view it in that way. Through the Dance Up event that she has shaped, Kearley has, from her perspective, taken a number of set dances, chosen from her own repertoire according to personal and aesthetic preferences, and packaged them in such a way that they will be appealing to a large audience. By doing so, she has prolonged the life of traditional dance through her recontextualization. More people are being exposed to set dance because of her

work, often drawn by her catchy advertising that promotes a traditional Newfoundland good time, ready for consumption.

A History of the Dance Up Event

Dance Up originated from Kearley's own experiences with local dances in downtown St. John's. Kearley attributes the beginning of set dance revival to the efforts of John and Ken, members of the St. John's folk arts community who used the music of well-known Newfoundland fiddlers as the basis for these dances.²¹ Kearley's personal involvement with the St. John's Folk Arts Council led her one night to The Loft, a facility located at Haymarket Square in St. John's. Kearley describes her first encounter with set dancing, in 1989, as one that had a profound effect on her:

The place was packed, with a capital "P"... Towards the end of the night we were getting ready to leave, and John announced, "we're going to do one more dance." He had a hard time getting people up on the floor for this one more dance. Connor and I were almost at the door, when someone said "Tonya and Connor, come up, we need another couple." So we went up and John was calling the Harbour Deep dance, "Running the Goat", and it was as if someone had injected me with my first shot of crack. That was all it took. ... I've always been someone who's been really

²¹ Aside from Tonya Kearley, her partner, musician Kelly Russell, and dancer/musician Jim Payne, all names used in this chapter are pseudonyms, because of the delicate nature of some of the comments made.

self-conscious about movement and rhythm; I'm a really clumsy person.

... But when I got up and danced in a group of eight people, I felt part of a puzzle, and it fit and I could maneuver my limbs successfully and it looked really good and I did really well. And I went to many more dances that year. (2001)

That was the beginning of her passion for set dance. As theorized in Judith Lynne Hanna's writing, Kearley experienced the strong connection between dance and emotion, so common among dancers (Performer 182). As she continued participating in John's dances, Tonya became more adept at performance and more involved in bringing dances to various communities:

John started to use some of us keen dancers as pinch hitters. After about a year or so of going to the dances, myself and Frank, and Jane, the three of us started doing occasional dance calling. And then John and I, for short a time about ten years ago, hit a couple of communities with myself and himself and a couple of other dancers. ... We would arrive, and do workshops and he would provide the music and we'd take it from there. And then I hooked up with Kelly ... and by that time I knew half a dozen or more dances really well to call them and instruct them. And that was something that came automatic, was the ability to translate the dances into movement, from theory to movement. (2001)

It was at this point that Kearley began to realize her own potential in terms of taking these dances and teaching them on her own. After a period of “apprenticeship,” she began to venture out on her own.

Kelly had the music and I had quite a number of dances. This was the beginning of Dance Up. We would go from community to community, and we did quite a lot in one year. We billed it as “traditional Newfoundland dancing”. It wasn’t called Dance Up at that time; it was called Close to the Floor, and was a concert with Newfoundland dance and fiddle music.

(2001)

They would arrive at a community, arrange a location, put up notices, and enlist local musicians to play along with Russell on the fiddle, with Kearley calling the dances. The importance of community involvement became paramount to Kearley. As Spalding and Woodside note, “Vernacular dance shows the potential to play a variety of different roles as we move from community to community” (6). These events were extremely successful, which Kearley partly attributes to the fact that she not only taught dances, but also welcomed others in the community to come up and share their dances with her. In her words, that gesture broke the ice, as “we weren’t coming out and saying, ‘this is your tradition and we’re gonna teach it to you’” (2001). She was well aware of her role as an outsider, using that to her advantage to earn the support of the participants as well as learn new dances from them. Her formal education in Folklore (M.A.) also contributed to her interest. She and Russell travelled around for about a year, visiting a number of

outport communities and building their cultural tourism business. They later established Dance Up as a regular event in both Trinity Bay and in St. John's. They also sell the Dance Up event to conventions and conferences. It is largely successful in this realm, as audience members enjoy the participatory aspect of the event.

An Evening at Dance Up

Participants and space are among the factors that influence the shape of a Dance Up event on any given night. However, throughout my participant-observation at the St. John's Dance Up events in the summer of 2001, a number of patterns emerged in my ethnographic data. The schedule and location of Dance Up has changed somewhat since I completed my fieldwork in 2001. At the time, Kearley and her husband owned B&Bs in both St. John's and Trinity, and split their time between the two locales. Several years after my initial fieldwork, they moved out of St. John's and, for a few years thereafter, were based solely in Trinity. Although the Kearley-Russell family now lives on Bell Island, they maintain a second home in Trinity, and spend their summers there where Dance Up events occur on a weekly basis at Rocky's, a local pub in Trinity, during the tourist season. While I acted both as dancer and as ethnographer during these events (at times participating in the dances myself; at other times, videotaping or photographing the other dancers), the following analysis of an evening at Dance Up is provided from the participant's perspective as a means of illustrating

exactly what occurs at this event, as well as qualitative data on the experience of attending and participating in Dance Up.

As I walked in to the main hall of the Masonic Temple in downtown St. John's for my first visit to Dance Up in 2001, I was immediately struck by the vast expanse of the room. It looked somewhat cavernous and I wondered how many people would be participating; whether we would be lost in this large room or whether it would be filled with participants. Just outside the entrance to the main hall was a table; I paid my ten-dollar admission fee and entered, looking around. I came early to set up my video camera and discuss the night with Kearley. We chatted for a bit, I established an area where participants could sign the consent form, and I set up my equipment in as unobtrusive a way as possible. People started to trickle in, Kearley encouraging them to come in and get ready to dance. She kept a head count of how many were there, and told me that she would run the event with as few as eight people – enough to form one set of dancers, and therefore enough to perform a dance. I got the impression that large crowds were not expected, but that she never had to cancel a Dance Up.

On this particular night, a dozen people attended, myself included. Kearley welcomed everyone and made sure that they understood that this was not a show that they were going to watch, but that they were all going to get up and dance. She also introduced me and explained what I was doing; we asked everyone if they were comfortable with me taping them, and asked them to sign the consent form before the night was over. Obviously, this was an added

element to the evening and I wondered whether it would make people apprehensive or nervous about an outsider observing and taping them dance. However, as the night wore on, my concerns were dispelled. The group was made up of a wide variety of individuals; from my initial observation, there were young children and adults of varying ages. In fact, the mother of the youngest child (five years old) asked Kearley if the child could participate. She told us that she was a Newfoundlander living in Ontario, and had brought her two daughters home for the summer to visit her mother. The four of them were all hoping to dance that night. Kearley informed the entire group that she welcomed people of all ages, and that age was rarely an impediment to participating in and enjoying a Dance Up. Others attending that night were tourists who had read about Dance Up in tourist literature or had heard about the event from the hosts of the B&Bs where they were staying. There were also some Newfoundlanders who wanted to attend a Dance Up because they hadn't learned Newfoundland set dances themselves, or had forgotten them and wanted to learn something more about their own culture.

As people were gathering, Kearley mingled with them, showing them where to put coats and bags. Once the group was assembled, she moved to the far end of the room where a small stage was set up, with a microphone and a place for the musician(s) to play. While Kearley sometimes works with a musical group consisting of fiddles, accordions and bodhrans; on this night, her husband, Kelly Russell, who plays the fiddle, was the only musician there. She used the

microphone to address the group. Kearley put everyone at ease by making her points in a humorous way. For example, she stressed participation in the dances; no one sits on the sidelines to watch. She talked about the many Dance Up events that she has run, and used the example of conventions that had hired her to hold a Dance Up for visiting businessmen. She joked about having to coerce men in suits and ties up to the floor to dance, and stressed how much fun they had once they were dancing.

While addressing the participants, I observed that Kearley used distinct Newfoundland vernacular, yet made sure to include seemingly casual explanations of what those words meant. Thus, she made the Newfoundlanders feel a certain sense of pride and connection through her distinct language, and the visitors were gleaning a feel of Newfoundland culture in an informal way. Kearley's methods of utilizing language as a way of both including and excluding (that is, outsiders don't know these words but I'm letting you in on a secret so you'll feel like one of us) was an extremely effective means, when combined with humour, of making participants feel like they were a part of a distinct cultural event that they could not access in any other way.

Once introductions were made, Kearley immediately set about teaching the first dance. She moved from her position at the microphone down to the group so she could demonstrate as well as instruct. Because we were a relatively small group that night, there was actually quite a distance between the dancers and the musician; the positive aspect of that was that we had a large space in

which to move about freely. Kearley also used humour to address the fact that there were far more women than men at the event. Because these were partner dances, and gender sometimes dictated which steps were to be performed, it was necessary to distinguish which women were dancing as women, and which women were dancing as men. Her solution was to distribute a number of men's neckties, giving them to all the women who would be dancing men's roles. Everyone laughed as the ties went on and "gender roles" were established.

Kearley's explanation of the dances tended to be simple and direct. She stressed that Newfoundland set dance was about having fun, and that there was no critical audience who was watching them. She began by teaching simple figures, such as everyone holding hands and walking in a circle (See Figure 5.1), or "side by each", where the men all line up and their partners walk across the floor and circle around them, going back to their original spot, or vice versa. After these figures were mastered and people were obviously becoming more relaxed, she moved on to more complex figures. Her focus on the figures, and her exclusion of specificity in terms of footwork, is conventional in terms of teaching Newfoundland set dance, as confirmed by my interview with Jim Payne. Payne challenged this approach during our interview when he stressed that excluding footwork ignores an integral part of the musicality of dancing – as footwork is the rhythmic basis of dance – and, in fact, is the first thing he teaches when demonstrating a set dance. However, Kearley's focus on figures is in line with most other set dance teachers.



Figure 5.1: Participants walk the circle formation. Video still.

The more intricate figures took more time, but at this point the participants had achieved a level of comfort and confidence, so were ready for the challenge. Kearley maintained a high energy level, interjecting the instruction with humorous comments when possible, and even going so far as to take someone by the hand and walk them through a step if they were unable to conceptualize it on their own. Steps such as “strip the willow” (Figure 5.2) took the longest time to learn. In this figure, the men are lined up on one side, and women on the other, with partners facing each other. The couple at the top of the two lines performs the

figure first, proceeds with the figure, by coming into the middle of the group, linking arms and turning around, then linking arms and turning around the next couple in line. The dancers proceed, couple by couple, until they are at the bottom of the set, at which point the new top couple begins. This figure generated lengthy explanation and demonstration, and much laughter from the group as numerous individuals made mistakes again and again. When an error was made, Kearley laughed along, but was also careful to ensure that the correct step was shown again. Thus, learning was achieved in a very relaxed and informal manner.



Figure 5.2: Participants learn "strip the willow". Video still.

Once it seemed that everyone had a rudimentary understanding of the dance and the steps involved, Kearley introduced the music. Russell began playing, essentially repeating the same tune over and over again. I found this to be useful to the dancers, because the repetition of the same tune meant that the music could be used as a tool to keep rhythm, without the dancers being concerned whether they were at the right part of the dance at the right part of the tune or whether they would finish with the music. Those concerns were not there, so they were able to dance without worrying about the role of the music. Eventually, Kearley accompanied Russell on the bodhran, calling steps through the microphone (see Figure 5.3).

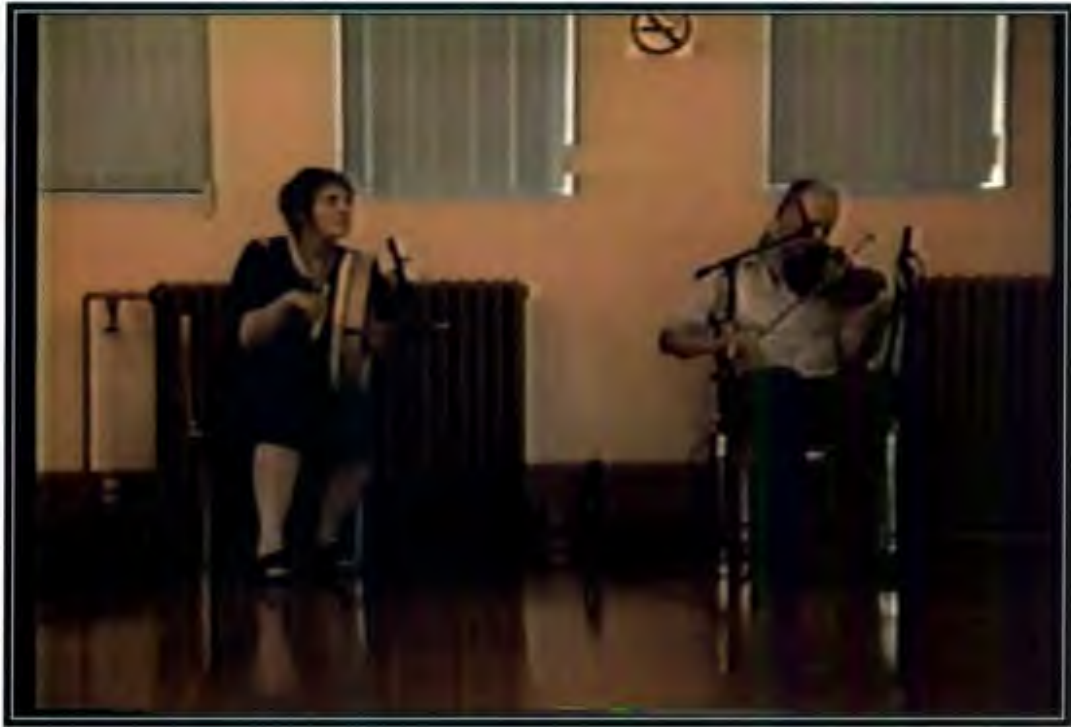


Figure 5.3: Kearley on the bodhran and Russell on the fiddle play at Dance Up. Video still.

The music began, and Kearley waited several bars before starting, so that everyone could hear the tune and the beat. Then she started to call the dances. While this is something that is typically not an element of traditional Newfoundland set dance, Kearley “calls the tunes”, telling dancers which figures are coming up throughout the dance. This is for a purely practical reason. These dances are somewhat lengthy, and Kearley ensures that two or three dances are taught at each Dance Up. Therefore, Kearley’s goal is to teach steps and figures; once those are learned, she can call out their names and dancers can execute them on the spot.

The participants, somewhat hesitant at first, quickly became immersed in the dance. As Kearley called out the figures, the group as a whole began to move and execute the various steps. It took a little time before participants relaxed and began obviously enjoying themselves. As they proceeded through the first simple figures, their bodies loosened up and moved to the rhythm the music provided. Rather than stiffly walking through the steps, as they did in rehearsal, they bounced up and down to the beat, some clapping along as they waited their turn to participate in a figure. There were exclamations of delight when a step was performed well, and there was laughter when someone made a mistake. When a minor error occurred, everyone laughed it off (including the person who made the mistake) and the dance continued; occasionally when a large error happened someone who knew how to fix it helped out. At times, the movements of one couple affected other couples' movements or the dance as a whole. Therefore, some errors influenced the entire action on the dance floor. When necessary, Kearley provided explanation through the microphone, but for the most part the dancers figured it out and the dance continued. By the end of the dance, participants were hollering their appreciation at regular intervals and everyone was obviously having a good time. When the dance ended the music abruptly stopped and everyone clapped and cheered. There was a feeling of success in the air.

After the dance finished, Kearley announced a break. There was a bar in the adjoining room, and participants went to get water, soft drinks, or maybe a

beer. I chatted with the participants and overheard comments indicating their enthusiasm. There was a buzz in the air and any reticence that existed at the beginning of the evening was gone by this point. After a twenty-minute break, Kearley gathered everyone back in the main hall and a second dance was taught. This was a typical evening, taking approximately two to two and a half hours (it depends on the complexity and length of the dances Kearley decides to teach on a given night). By the end of an evening, participants were exhausted yet enthused.

Dance Up Today

The multifunctionality of Dance Up is evident, as the event itself combines elements of education and entertainment in teaching participants how to dance and then providing them the opportunity to perform these dances. In Kearley's words, "my goal is to teach them a dance in under twenty minutes, then get them to perform it in under ten minutes. So, in less than half an hour, they'll be dance masters of one dance. That's my personal guarantee" (2001). She, then, has a deliberate objective to ensure that each and every participant leaves the dance venue feeling as though they have achieved something concrete: the ability to perform at least one Newfoundland set dance.

Josey Petford argues that, "interactivity is the buzzword of the 1990s, and the battle lines have been drawn in the war to woo the consumer with claims of total participation and experience" (14). Indeed, Kearley stressed several times

that just watching set dancing is not adequate. The purpose of Dance Up is for participants to learn dances and to acquire a skill, and therefore to appreciate the cultural background from which set dancing derives. When performing a Dance Up for a convention or conference, Kearley refuses to start until everyone is up and ready to try the dances, ensuring that they understand that the key to the event is participation. This approach addresses contemporary tourist expectations of having an “authentic” Newfoundland experience. By learning the dances, the visitor can take home something intangible yet achievable – the knowledge of how to teach a dance or the memory of mastering the steps to a dance—and, perhaps, the more tangible photograph or video of them performing a dance. Kearley’s idea that “the audience becomes the performer” (2006) is one that is well-suited to the interests of today’s tourist.

For the 2001 tourist season, Dance Up took place in two locations: the Masonic Temple in St. John’s, and Rocky’s Lounge in Trinity, Trinity Bay. Scheduling had become somewhat of a problem in St. John’s; with such a boom in the hospitality industry, tourists are faced with an incredible array of activities from which to choose. Therefore, Dance Up occurred there less frequently and regularly. However, it was held weekly in Trinity, and occurred up to three times a week in St. John’s. Participants ranged in ages, and everyone was welcome. Kearley has taught dances to children as young as three years old, and readily promotes Dance Up as a family event. The only challenge, as she sees it, is the height difference between children and adults, but that is an obstacle that is

easily enough overcome. This attitude differs from the one Kearley adopts as choreographer and dancer for performance groups, and she does see a clear distinction between the two, even though they are in the same dance style. At the public event, anything goes.²²

The popularity of vernacular dance is due, in part, to the fact that it is within reach of most people. While dance is indeed a skill to be learned, as well as an art, set dancing is something that anyone can learn, as epitomized through Kearley's approach. As Linda Tomko has suggested, "Folk dancing's populism inhered in its accessibility, its availability to nearly every moving body. ... Dance was the art activity most capable of execution by the great number of "normal" people, and it met the needs of ... society as a whole in its search for aesthetic expression" (209). In adhering to this philosophy, Kearley achieves her goal of including all interested parties in the learning and performance of set dance.

Each Dance Up begins with an introduction and the invitation for participants to venture out on the floor. Kearley, the self-styled "dance dominatrix", begins at once, organizing participants into pairs and appropriate figures, and begins teaching the dances immediately. She does not relay the history of the dances to participants, as she perceives her clients' primary interest in the actual execution of the sets, rather than in learning the background and variants of them:

²² As of our 2007 interview, Dance Up was still held seasonally in Trinity. At that time, Kearley informed me that although she and Russell had moved to Bell Island, they continued to maintain a second home in Trinity where their family spent their summers (2007).

These are people who want to come out for an entertaining time. Most lingo I give out is the vernacular names of the figures, and the alternate names I've collected from other communities.²³ So that's the lingo I give out, because it's not a lecture series, it's entertainment, where they pay to be the entertainers. (2001)

As part of the teaching of the dances, Kearley assumes a character, which she attributes to her theatrical training and natural inclinations towards acting, and is the embodiment of what Goffman's dramaturgical approach referred to as an interactionist method (Schaefer et al 15) of social interaction (see Figure 5.4). Rather than simply instructing dancers verbally, Kearley immerses herself in the middle of the dancers, using her persona as a means of demonstrating as well as kinesthetically interacting with the dancers in order to concretely illustrate a figure. She teaches with a dramatic, creative, hands-on approach.

²³ For example, "through the woods", "hand over hand", "chain", and "grand chain" are the same move, with variants in terminology originating from different communities.



Figure 5.4: Kearley instructs participants at Dance Up. Video still.

As the event starts, she senses an internal shift, corresponding with Dell Hymes's notion of "breakthrough into performance" (11-14). As she begins to explain the dances and demonstrate them to her participants, Kearley speaks and acts closer and closer, as she puts it, "to the edge" (2001). In fact, to demonstrate the dynamics of this character, Kearley brought out a tressage whip during our 2001 interview which she sometimes uses to playfully prod a dancer into the right stance or floor position. She is careful not to go overboard, but she sees the dance dominatrix persona as a way of putting a contemporary and unusual slant on what may be seen as a staid and old-fashioned art form:

I say some crude, rude things these days when I'm calling dances. You either love her or you hate her. I don't care which, as long as you learn the dance. ... It ties in with reaching a different audience. I know that I've got the square dancing set because they hear anything square dancing, "oh, we've got to consume that; we've got to show them we know how to dance a quadrille." I've got them. ... So I figure once I got them in the door, then I can manipulate them in a way that shows them that this is new, it's not just revival; it's transitioning tradition. (2001)

Therefore, this mode of expression that comes out through the dance dominatrix is Kearley's way of conveying to her dance audience that she is doing something out of the ordinary. It is used not only to attract a younger participant, but also to give the seasoned square dancer a new perspective on a traditional aspect of culture. She uses her persona to send the message that this is not a typical set dance experience, thereby putting an edge on the expected convention of a square dance.

As Kearley explains the dances, she employs a "hands-on" teaching approach, thus enabling participants to incorporate mimetic learning techniques along with verbal instruction. She breaks down the metaphoric wall that stands between performer and audience, moving away from her post at the front of the room and venturing onto the floor to demonstrate a move or correct a figure. In this way, she does not simply call the dance. Her role constantly shifts, yet she maintains authority over what transpires on the floor. The pace is brisk, and

participants move fairly quickly towards learning the first dance. Kearley stresses that anyone can learn these dances. She starts the evening off with what she calls an "introductory dance" which usually involves a sequence of an intricate chorus, a promenade, another chorus, and finally thread the needle. Thread the needle is a move where participants line up in a circular shape, and duck and weave under each others' joined hands, thereby creating a continually moving spiral. It is fairly simple to execute yet looks far more complicated to the observer. Rather than using a "singsong" style, which she attributes to the American and mainland Canadian square dance style, Kearley calls the dance by using simple keywords and phrases that she shouts out in a "clipped" fashion. This periodically reminds the dancers what moves should be executed throughout the dance and reduces the need for participants to memorize the order of the dance steps.

As mentioned above, the practice of calling a dance is at odds with traditional Newfoundland set dancing. As Quigley states, "as long as dancers knew what to do, and the musicians knew what to play, which was usually learned primarily by observation and imitation, there was little need for a descriptive systematic terminology" (19). Kearley describes the more traditional way of learning square dancing:

In the traditional context there would be no calling. We'd just get up; you'd probably dance with someone who wasn't a novice. It would be the community dance. By the end of the night, you were able to teach

somebody else. I've learned a number of dances through that method.

(2001)

However, she doesn't see that as a feasible method for teaching these dances to those who may be unfamiliar with the conventions. Kearley feels that if she is to teach a number of dances to strangers in a short period of time, it is simply not acceptable to "throw them to the wolves," so to speak, and let them figure it out on their own. Of course, the fact that people are paying to learn the dances means that Kearley's approach must allow a maximum amount of teaching to occur in the few hours' time allotted. She feels that her instructional approach "makes the locals feel some sense of pride, that, 'oh yeah, that's my tradition and I don't mind her teaching me, even though I know some of it,' and the CFAs – [meaning "come from away", a term used by Newfoundlanders for tourists or other non-Newfoundlanders visiting or living in Newfoundland] – feel comfortable too that they're going to get the instruction they need and not look like idiots when they're doing it" (2001). She attributes her style of teaching and calling the dances to John, from whom she first learned set dancing. She feels that his method, while breaking with custom, is a far more effective way to teach the dances and has aided her greatly in her own development as a dance caller. By calling the dances, she sees them as being more accessible to a wider audience.

In terms of integrating her own personal style with that of vernacular dances, Kearley sees a negative moment in her own life as a dancer to have been the impetus for a personal shift in philosophy. Her desire to broaden her

dance repertoire and teach it to a wide audience conflicted with a local square dance revival group, which preferred a more limited and performance-based repertoire. Kearley states that when she made her intentions known to this group, friction ensued and she was excluded from their functions. She sees her mandate as that of learning and creating many new dances in order to further disseminate the Newfoundland set dance style. While this break from the group was a blow to Kearley personally and professionally; as a dancer, she took advantage of the split from strict tradition and began to choreograph her own dances. This is in direct contrast to what many practitioners of vernacular art forms believe: in order to keep a traditional art form alive, you must preserve it as much as possible. The ephemerality of dance, especially contributes to this belief. Kearley's assertion that altering vernacular dance keeps it vital and popular is one that put her at odds with her peers in this area. She is quite proud of her own choreography, and sees no problem with inserting her own creativity into what others see as something that needs to be so carefully guarded:

Perhaps I am an upstart. What I do know is a shitload of dances. And I know how to teach them to people and I know how to share them. And that's what I want to do. And I know how to make up dances but it seems to me, I have a natural aesthetic for picking and choosing figures that go well together and then making something new. And there are moves that are entirely brand new in Newfoundland but probably exist somewhere

else, I don't know. Who cares, really? I'm not telling people that I own them, that they owe me royalty fees to do them. (2001)

Kearley sees this creative input as part of her contribution to an art form that she feels should be dynamic and innovative in order to attract new enthusiasts as well as retain those who are already involved: "revival still has, for me, the idea of dredging something up from the bottom of the dormant, sludgy pond. And I don't think that dance is being revived. I think it has been kept going in a lot of communities" (2006), of which she has anecdotal evidence from her travels across the province. This attitude is illustrated through the smallest of details, including the 2001 Dance Up poster (see Figure 5.5).



Figure 5.5: Dance Up Poster, courtesy Tonya Kearley.

Her self-styling as a dance dominatrix, as well as the billing of the musicians as Kelly Russell and Fiends, rather than the more conventional terming of "Kelly Russell and Friends", assists in this effort:

So the whole mandate was to move the Dance Up into a juxtaposition from old fashioned Newfoundland square dancing, which is what our poster used to say, to Dance Up, Newfoundland set dancing. Just concise, nothing old-fashioned about it, here it is, this is the tradition, come do it. (2001)

However, Kearley has not created new dances within a vacuum. Aside from her personal experience in set dancing, she has also benefitted from the knowledge of her husband, Kelly Russell. Russell draws upon years of experience playing for dancers and Kearley has conducted research on English and Irish dance styles, in order to familiarize herself with the forerunners of Newfoundland set dancing as she knew it. This idea of creation within the boundaries of a traditional style corresponds to Regina Bendix's discussion of Moser's definition of folklorism. There, Bendix argues that Moser intended the term to be "an objective, non-judgmental characterization" and that Moser's interpretation of the concept included "playful imitations" of folk motifs, and creating and performing culturally-based activities outside one's own culture (In Search 177). Kearley uses elements of folklorism in Dance Up in a very deliberate way; her integration of folk motifs (in the form of vernacular dance steps) into new dance pieces, as

well as taking the set dance style out of the kitchen and placing it in a bar or a hall, is her way of altering and revitalizing a vernacular art.

Movement Preferences at Dance Up

The dances that are taught by Kearley at the Dance Up event are a mixture of traditional Newfoundland set dances as she learned them, and set dances that she has created from different dances put together and interspersed with her own choreography. Thus, her repertoire is varied and ever-increasing, as she choreographs whenever she wishes to teach another dance. I have chosen not to discuss specific dances in this section. First, this is because of the variety of dances that Kearley uses at Dance Up. Second, Quigley has discussed common Newfoundland set dances in detail in both Close to the Floor and especially “Folk Dance and Dance Events in Rural Newfoundland”. My intention is to describe the movement preferences of dancers who perform these dances, and analyze the predominant kinesthetic and spatial patterns that are found in Newfoundland set dances as a whole, linking these to the contextual and functional elements of the dance form described earlier in this chapter. I will then provide analysis of the Dance Up event as linked to how Kearley utilizes Irishness to promote her event. A glossary of LMA terms can be found in Appendix A, and Labanotation scores dances from Dance Up can be found in Appendix B.

In this dance style, the body is held in a fairly neutral position. Other than an individual's preferences, unrelated to the dance itself, the body has no held

spots and does not require a specific posture. Thus, dancers generally look relaxed and move according to their natural movement patterns. The trunk is kept as a solid unit as dancers are more or less completely upright throughout set dances. With this, there is vertical stress on the body through the dances. Because of these general features, as well as the lack of complex kinesthetic technique in the dances themselves, as noted above, almost anyone can easily learn and perform these dances. This is one reason why set dances may have held such appeal in their heyday; no specialized equipment, clothing or footwear is required, and the steps are easily learned by anyone. The neutrally held body positions ensure comfort of the participants, key to a dance form that is social and relaxed in tenor.

Movements themselves are relatively simple. Rather than a focus on bodily technique, the complexity and challenge in Newfoundland set dance relies on the ability to remember and execute simple steps in complicated floor patterns (see Figure 5.6). Because of this, dancers need not be technically proficient in order to dance the dance; they need a keen memory (aided by Kearley calling the dances) rather than dance training in order to execute the dances.



Figure 5.6: Top couple dances through a "tunnel". Video still.

Endurance is also an important feature, as set dances are often performed at a lively pace, and can easily last half an hour or more, depending on how many dancers are participating and how much repetition occurs in a particular dance. For example, it is not uncommon for one combination to be danced three times in a row for each couple, thereby lengthening the dance itself while keeping the number of new steps to a minimum. But the floor patterns are key. Kearley does not teach choreography, per se, for the feet themselves. Dancers tend to move to the rhythm of the music, in a stepping or shuffling step. This is done both on the spot (when other dancers are performing the figures) and in motion, when the dancers are executing the figures themselves. Arm choreography tends to

consist almost exclusively of grasping and letting go of others' hands, either above the head, out in front, or close to one another (see Figure 5.7). Figures dictate whether dancers' hands are clasped together or not; otherwise, arms tend to hang loosely at the dancer's side, or may clap along to the music. Because of the relatively simple nature of kinesthetic requirements (in direct contrast to the step dance styles I examine in the next chapter), dancers are able to focus on the intricacies of the figures and floor patterns. The arm choreography enhances the social nature of the dance form. Set dance is a dance form that requires continual interaction with numerous partners, which is an inherent aspect of the socialization of Newfoundland set dance. Because of this movement quality, physically linking with one's partner is the essential embodiment of the social nature of set dancing.



Figure 5.7: Relaxed body posture is found on all dancers; typically, only the moving couple(s) use arm choreography. Video still.

For the most part, dancers use near and intermediate reach space within their kinesphere. Dancers are often interconnected with one another, with partners often holding hands. Concomitant with the social function of Newfoundland set dancing, many of these dances involve the entire group holding hands with one another (that is, dancing within a large circle), or steps like thread the needle, which involves dancers "shaking hands" with one another as they pass by, until they reach their original partner once again. Thus, dancers move from their near reach space to intermediate reach space to interact with

other dancers as they follow various patterns (see Figure 5.8). This means that body movement is largely gestural rather than postural, and movements are generally simultaneous, with foot and arm movements occurring at the same time.



Figure 5.8: Near and intermediate reach space is used in the dancer's kinesphere. Video still.

The directional movement of the body consists mostly of spoke movements, since legs move forward around the room, and arms reach out to grab others' hands, and then drop them to their sides. In examining the floor patterning, however, the directional movements follow a combination of arc and

spoke patterns, since dancers both cross their squares over a diagonal and move in a circle in many of the dances.

Because there are few constraints on dancers in terms of technique, it is more difficult to distinguish some effort trends in this dance form; however, there are some similar tendencies, regardless of dance or dancer. The relaxed nature of the dances themselves means that effort tends to be free rather than bound, and sustained rather than quick. Use of space is direct. Even when floor patterns take a seemingly meandering pattern, dancers are moving deliberately from one point to another, and do so in a very precise way. Weight effort is a little more difficult to predict, as skilled dancers are seen to be light on their feet, yet the dances themselves are lively and often rambunctious, hardly what would typically be considered light. Therefore set dancing in Newfoundland requires a combination of both light and strong weight qualities in order to be aesthetically pleasing and executed successfully. In examining the effort-shape qualities found in Newfoundland set dance as a genre, the dances can be seen as having press, glide and float qualities. All three of these combinations are evident in various dances, and can shift depending on the dancers involved, as well as the actual figure being executed at any one time in a dance.

For example, the video of "Running the Goat" shows skilled set dancers performing that dance seamlessly. They are obviously experienced dancers who are performing for the camera. While performing many of the same figures as at Dance Up, the experienced dancers in "Running the Goat" dance with lighter,

neater, and tidier steps, closer to the aesthetic documented by Quigley as vital for skilled set dancers. The use of space in "Running the Goat" also reflects the reality of a kitchen or small community space; the dancers perform closer together and thus necessarily interact with each other more, providing a very social yet tightly-danced performance. This illustrates different effort-shape qualities from beginners at a Dance Up event, who may perform the same dance with a different purpose – to have a good time and try to learn a dance – and may have very different visual and kinesthetic results. Neither is superior or more authentic than the other; as a living, breathing tradition, the same dance can take many forms and be equally interesting, entertaining and significant. What is clear from an LMA reading of set dance (whether it comes in the form of Dance Up or in its earlier counterparts) is that there is a direct connection between the movement preferences and the social aspect inherent in set dance. Set dancing requires interaction among its participants, which results in the spatial usage described above. Further, the difference between experienced and new dancers can be seen in the lightness or weight of their movement, in particular, their foot movement. But a dance form that did not require intermingling with other dancers results in very different aesthetic and kinesthetic choices.

Tourism, Irishness, Tradition and Authenticity

The push towards tourism in the new Newfoundland economy sometimes challenges those in the heritage industry who must find the line between

promoting and exploiting culture and choose how they plan to attract visitors. Brochures and other literature aimed at tourists exemplify the folklorism that is discussed by Dettmer in "Folklorism in Newfoundland". The Newfoundland and Labrador 2001 Travel Guide lists a seemingly endless number of folk festivals and other cultural events, in particular the provincially sponsored Soirees and Times. It proclaims, "We'll sweep you off your feet. With jigs and reels and festivals and the world's most friendly folk. Dance away your cares at a Newfoundland Soiree. ... Sit yourself to the table for a scoff, then hit the dance floor for a scuff" (30). The similarities between these images and the Irish stereotypes discussed in Chapter Four – the fun, carefree, artistic, quaint people and place – are undeniable. The most recent 2008 online Travel Guide is awash in Irish imagery, promising the tourist a quaint, folkloric trip, again reminiscent of what you might find in Ireland. The few excerpts that follow give a sense of what the tourist might expect during their travels to the province:

Sit down and have a chat and a cup of tea and you'll wonder where the time has flown. Like many other visitors, you'll give in to the urge to linger just a little while longer. Keep an ear tuned for stories of faeries. ...

[People] Renowned for our poetry, humour, song, and creativity. Our hospitality, quick wit, and charm. We're the first to show you a good time, in a place where you'll see the first sunrise in North America. And the last to send you home at night. ... [Music] from lively jigs and reels creating human metronomes of clapping hands and stomping feet, to old Irish

laments that creep into your subconscious, often unannounced. It's what continues to live in you and in your memory of the place. Verses of love and hardship and better times, passed down from generation to generation. And infectious rhythms of fiddle, accordion, and bodhran drum. The kind that reign supreme throughout spontaneous kitchen parties and long-running folk festivals alike, held in special honour of blueberries, squid and mussel beds, and sometimes just for sunny days, all year long. [Stories] From hypnotizing yarns with nail-biting climaxes to little ditties about nothing in particular. All passed down from our mothers and fathers, who lived for the evenings, huddled around the wood stove, recounting the events of the day, drinking mugs of tea and dunking slabs of bread into hearty moose stew. Adding generous dashes of embellishment. Perhaps it's all that salty sea air that makes us who we are. Genuine and uncomplicated. Creative and spontaneous. With a language and humour that's funny, right down to our bones. And, above all, honest to goodness true.

These images of Newfoundland's "mystic nationalism" discussed by Overton (46), in fact, invite the tourist to share in the elements that promulgate Newfoundland's Irishness, as discussed in Chapter Four. Although the idea of Irishness is wrapped up in Newfoundland's collective self-identity as a people, its tourist industry convinces visitors that they, too, can become honorary Newfoundlanders through experiencing various aspects of "traditional"

Newfoundland life and lore. Dance is part of this. While some may lament the demise of the "traditional scuff in the kitchen", I. Sheldon Posen asserts that the move from kitchen to stage is a valid recontextualization of the group to which these community members already belong (128) and, in fact, vernacular Newfoundland dance in the twenty-first century is more likely to be found on a festival stage than it is in someone's home at a kitchen party. By aiming *Dance Up* at both local and visiting populations, Kearley strives for that happy medium that recontextualizes the event in another time and venue. Audience participation, which she sees as so integral to the event, seems to be the key in bridging the two concepts.

Elke Dettmer has noted that Newfoundland has increasingly turned towards tourism as a means of economic diversification. Taking what Dell Hymes calls the contemporary manifestations of "known traditional material" (13), it is evident that the tourism industry in Newfoundland and Labrador uses folklorism, especially that of the folk arts, to promote the province to outsiders. Moreover, not only is there an ideological return to past cultural riches, as illustrated by the resurgence of vernacular music and dance, but the indigenous characteristics of Newfoundland and Newfoundlanders are being marketed as part of the tourist literature (Dettmer "Folklorism" 173). This cultural revival has developed from a predominant notion that Newfoundland has its own distinct culture that needs preservation (Overton 56). McKay argues that the impact of our post-modern reality:

...intensifies and multiplies the demand for folk images, for rustic hideaways, for rural authenticity. Postmodernity intensifies what Lears called the crisis of selfhood and jeopardizes the very concept of authenticity; it induces a kind of cultural panic and enhances the attraction of old, traditional forms. (Quest 278)

From a glance at the print and online resources offered to visitors, it is immediately apparent that materials published by the government of Newfoundland and Labrador and Hospitality Newfoundland and Labrador play upon these fears of losing culture in an increasingly technological and impersonal society. Yet, when it comes down to an art form such as dance, abstract notions such as authenticity and tradition become extremely difficult to define. Anything that is passed on through oral (or on this case, kinesthetic) transmission will be altered, simply through different personalities, bodies and memories involved. Kearley acknowledges this challenge. She states:

Oh sure, I'm selling the Newfoundlandishness and they paid their five dollars to see a high diving act and they are going to see a high diving act. ... There are people who arrive and say we came to Newfoundland for a good time and we hear you Newfies like to party and where's the kitchen party and this whole idea that oh my God have we ever created a monster with this kitchen party. (2007)

While Kearley laments the promulgation of these images through tourist literature, it is important to realize that she also relies on those very promotional

materials to sell her event. In fact, alongside the text exuding Newfoundland mystic nationalism in the Travel Guide mentioned above is a video using Dance Up as a way to invite tourists to come to the province. This video was also shown commercially on television during the 2008 summer season. Tagged with the line, "Isn't it time you got all that Top 40 out of your system?" the opening shot shows a young girl and an old man playing Newfoundland tune "Mussels in the Corner" on the fiddle together through the doorway of an old house. The camera pans and the scene shifts, eventually revealing a full room of dancers and musicians having a Newfoundland scuff. Kearley and Russell are prominently displayed in the ad (Newfoundland and Labrador [Video Gallery](#)). While Dance Up is not explicitly advertised, Kearley agreeing to use her event for a tourist commercial (and she mentioned the forthcoming ad to me in our 2007 interview) illustrates her acceptance of and, indeed, reliance on such imagery to promote Dance Up and draw potential dancers to her event.

The case study of Tonya Kearley illustrates that there may be more than one way to utilize folklore as a means of drawing attention to one's culture. By using a vernacular form, and approaching it in a contemporary way, she is making new meaning of culture and tradition. As she put it, she is "transitioning tradition" (2001), ensuring that participants feel as though they, too, have shared in the collective identity of the province's intangible cultural experience.

In his text on Canadian culture, Tom Henighan asserts that, "culture is the most inspiring, the most provocative and creative form of national defence, that

one can imagine" (91). On a provincial scale, the same can be said for Newfoundland heritage and culture, and Newfoundland's Irishness draws heavily on the notion that culture re-affirms Newfoundland's ideological nationhood, its difference. Newfoundland's heritage forms the bulk of its identity. While Kearley is personally conflicted about the role of Irishness in Newfoundland cultural products, she does see the value in it, and in fact links her Dance Up event to Irishness.

It always struck me that outside of St. John's and the Southern Shore; I know the stats on exactly how much Irish is out there and how little it actually is compared to the perception. It's the "squeaky wheel gets the grease" syndrome. Now don't get me wrong, I have a great regard for Irish culture. I have less of a regard for this syndrome "we're a little bit of Ireland cracked off and floated over". That doesn't hold water with me. People who are Irish in Newfoundland need to decide. Are they Irish or are they Newfoundlanders? To me there's never been a choice. I'm a Newfoundlander, period. And English and Irish roots don't come into it unless someone presses me for it but this whole idea of the Irish culture is just so beautifully and wonderfully expressive, poetic and flamboyantly culturally in tune. I love that about the Irish people. ... Then you have Lord of the Dance and I suppose Dance Up is exactly the same thing only on a less grand scale. It's taking something that is fun, people like to look at it, it's stylistically valuable and turning it into a marketable commodity. I hate

Lord of the Dance but yet somehow I can justify Dance Up. I know I'm a hypocrite. That's the beauty, I know I'm a hypocrite. I don't dress up Dance Up to be anything pretentious and that's why I see what I'm doing as not just perceived but real. (2007)

Kearley's comments exemplify the complexity of Irishness in Newfoundland, especially as she is someone who is not of Irish heritage, but teaches dances that are, in part, Irish. Kearley states that several of the Newfoundland dances she knows, including the well-known Lancers, have Irish roots (2007). This is how set dancing fits into the Irishness continuum in Newfoundland. While Kearley, or other teachers such as Jim Payne, do not promote Irishness as a means of attracting tourists, many of them expect Irishness as part of the Newfoundland culture they consume and that they hold out for others to also consume. Further, some of the dances do, in fact, derive (at least in part) from Ireland, lending credibility – albeit unspoken or underlying – to this claim to Irishness. In our interview, Jim Payne articulated the heritage of set dance and how it has shifted through cultural changes over the years.

Those dances, in order to survive, would have had to change in the communities in which they evolve because when you look at them, now, I can see elements of the English country dance and elements of the Irish dance and so on. So those dances in the way we know them and the way they were danced in Newfoundland say one hundred years ago or fifty years ago, they're not danced the same way as they were, say, by the

early settlers who came to Newfoundland from Ireland and England or France. They just aren't. Those things change. For the dancing perhaps even more so than the songs for instance because the song in many ways is sort of an individual kind of a thing, but with a group, with dancers the whole community is involved in many ways. So part of it depends on the musician first of all; and then if you've got settlers in a place that came from more than one region, even of more than one region of England, for instance, let's say if you had so many people from Devon and so many people from Dorset and they got together to dance, that dance is going to be different ultimately than what either one of them brought from Devon or Dorset and then if you throw a couple Irish people in the mix it's going to be different again. (2007)

The blending of heritages, primarily English and Irish, assist in the polysemic understanding of set dancing in Newfoundland. In Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's article, "Theorizing Heritage," she illustrates how heritage studies have expanded from examining museums and other cultural institutions to intangible forums, such as festivals and other events. The intangibility of Dance Up is relevant as Kirshenblatt-Gimblett states:

Heritage is a mode of cultural production in the present that has recourse to the past; heritage is a "value added" industry; heritage produces the local for export; a hallmark of heritage is the problematic relationship of its objects to its instruments; and a key to heritage is its virtuality, whether in the presence or absence of actualities. ("Theorizing Heritage" 369)

Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's reconceptualizations encourage a rethinking of precisely what heritage is, and therefore, how it can be presented. Heritage industry products are not simply "survivals" from the past. The importance of the present as part of the past is an important concept. By looking at a dance tradition as simply a relic of the past, there is no room for the dynamic elements that naturally exist in dance as an art form. Kearley asserts that it is important to recognize that the present plays a role in looking to the past. Her perspective contrasts with that of other vernacular dance groups who may look simply towards preservation as their mandate. Kearley's emphasis on the experience of dancing Newfoundland set dancing reflects her understanding of the tourist experience. The tourist will feel as though they have gained an "authentic" Newfoundland experience if their tourist activities are able to tap into the cultural products that comprise the feeling of Irishness that pervades the Newfoundland consciousness.

As a "value added" industry, heritage sites and events take cultural elements that are dying out and place emphasis on them, thereby giving them a value that may not have been in place before. In the same way that certain old homes are declared "heritage buildings" so that they will be restored or at least

not torn down, the declaration of set dancing as part of Newfoundland heritage places new value upon it. Although set dance was earlier danced in both public and private times, it was performed in the domain of a family or community. As a social event, it was not normally displayed for audience approval, nor was it commodified in terms of charging admission to watch or participate. With the new value invested in set dancing, through festivals and other performances such as Dance Up, the family or community ownership of the dance event has shifted and the dance is positioned now solely in the provincial realm.

By placing an emphasis on teaching and dancing this particular form, cultural entrepreneurs make set dance more valuable in the eyes of local and tourist alike. It becomes a product for sale and export, a fact which some Newfoundlanders applaud and others dislike. Regardless of personal opinion, the teaching of this dance style to both local and foreign populations does disseminate the knowledge and appreciation of Newfoundland dancing to an increasingly large group of people. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's fourth element of heritage ("Theorizing Heritage" 369) highlights the conflict between an object and its instrument. There is a tendency to emphasize the importance of the object, and ignore the instrument that promotes it. In this case, the object would be the dances themselves, and the instrument would be the Dance Up event, where people learn the dances. However, Dance Up reflects the interface between the two, and in fact promotes the instrument through its posters and other ways of creating its own meaning.

The virtuality of Dance Up as a heritage event is evident through its rethinking of authenticity, heritage and tradition. It navigates the virtual and actual in terms of its representation of the dance form in its teaching and execution. Dance Up falls into the latter part of Hobsbawm and Ranger's explication of invented tradition. While Dance Up does rely chiefly on traditional Newfoundland set dancing, it has become a recognizable event in its own right, particularly in the last ten years. While their ideas have been deemed problematic by some in terms of privileging some traditions over others; with the term "invented tradition," Hobsbawm and Ranger have labelled a new kind of cultural tourist event that falls somewhere between what was conventionally considered folklore and fakelore, which can be defined as, "a synthetic product claiming to be authentic oral tradition but actually tailored for mass edification" (Davey 45). Hobsbawm and Ranger created a new category of analysis, one that allows for the problematizing of culture in a way that was not previously possible. The resulting notion of "formalization and ritualization" of the past accurately describes the impetus behind the creation of Dance Up (Hobsbawm and Ranger 4). Kearley has taken the kitchen dances of "old time" Newfoundland and created a means for formal instruction in a new context. She has attempted to add glamour to the dances by adding contemporary elements (such as the dance dominatrix persona) and enticing participants to partake and take home an "authentic" part of Newfoundland's intangible cultural heritage, as described in Newfoundland and Labrador official tourist literature. By taking the dances out of the kitchen and

putting them on the stage, to paraphrase Posen, Kearley has shifted the context to suit the dances' primary functional change from social event to heritage event. Kearley has developed new formalized elements of set dancing, through her creation of the Dance Up event, that also reflect changes brought on by the new context.

While Kearley does invent tradition, according to Hobsbawm and Ranger, the question is, why? When there are so many square dances that already exist in the canon, why bother to create new ones, particularly if that may be to the detriment of your place in a rather small arts community? Bendix argues that:

Appeal to a touristic audience constitutes only a surface rationale for inventing traditions. Economic motivations are one part of the story, perhaps an important rhetorical argument in the process of creating display events. But wished-for economic benefits do not sufficiently explain why such events are continued for decades or even centuries. A close examination of the motivations and choices of originators, performers, and audiences of new, traditionalized displays points instead towards an affirmation of local and national cultural identity in the face of seasonal mass foreign invasion. ("Tourism" 132)

Reflecting Bendix's arguments, Kearley does not state that she creates new dances solely for the benefit of participants. In fact, she realizes that this may alienate more "hard core" square dancing enthusiasts, leaving her with a smaller base from which to attract participants. According to Kearley, she creates new

dances for several reasons. First of all, she enjoys choreography, and loves being able to put existing steps together into new figures, and combining these figures into new dances. Also, she stresses the need to appeal to a younger generation of potential dancers, and has shifted her focus to try and attract that market to her event. Finally, she runs this as a business. The economic gains, while perhaps not the primary motivation behind the creation of new dances, are a factor here. Kearley is in the cultural tourism business, and therefore wants to attract as many people as possible to Dance Up, as well as to her related cultural tourism businesses. If she cannot make money on it, she cannot afford to continue running it and spreading her knowledge and enthusiasm about Newfoundland set dancing. She sees new forms of set dancing as her primary way of helping to perpetuate her business and teach others about Newfoundland culture. This parallels Frank Hall's discussion of creativity within the strict confines of competitive Irish step dancing. He writes:

Dancers create with the very stuff of the form: body movement, timing, spatial path and orientation. Creativity is a matter of generating options and making selections according to principles of aesthetics. Options generated are not produced through some sort of absolute freedom, but through rearrangements of structural pieces understood through mastery of the form. (86)

Hall's reference to dancers in competition means that they have little creative freedom if they are to remain in both the aesthetic of the dance form as well as

the judge's strict criteria. However, the point parallels Kearley's creative approach within the confines of the genre. She creates and changes within the aesthetic of the form, for what she sees as specific purposes. Kearley has endeavoured to keep set dancing attractive in several ways: shortening lengthier dances so they're easier to learn, teaching the dances in a fun, hands-on way, holding a set dance event in a bar or hall, and taking what she sees as the most interesting aspects of dances and putting them together in innovative ways. With these efforts, Kearley is taking elements that she feels will keep the event attractive and promoting them as a means of bringing people in, and keeping the tradition of set dancing alive.

As a heritage-based event, Dance Up is mimetic in form. It relies on what Kirshenblatt-Gimblett refers to as "in situ"; that, "the object is a part that stands in a contiguous relation to an absent whole that may or may not be re-created" (Destination 19). While Kirshenblatt-Gimblett here is referring specifically to museum pieces, the same idea may be applied to an intangible heritage event. An in situ installation piece in a museum may include replicas of what would have existed in and around the object in question, prior to the object being taken out of its normative context and placed in the museum. By adding these contextual pieces, the installation tries to complete the whole picture as much as possible, attempting a high level of mimesis. As a public display event, Dance Up takes the idea of Newfoundland set dancing in situ and recontextualizes it. Kearley does not mimetically attempt to re-create a kitchen scene in order to replicate the

setting in which these dances originally occurred. However, she does provide contextual information to participants, so they are aware of the history of the dances, and so that they understand how their movements will somewhat differ due to the alternate locale. For example, by dancing in a large hall, there is much more room. Therefore, participants may dance further apart, and use space in a less efficient way than those who were forced to dance in a small room in someone's home. There is a certain level of mimesis present; however, a full recreation is not the intention in this particular event. While a distinction should be made between conscious mimesis in performance, and less deliberate ethnomimesis, both may be found in an event such as Dance Up that both intentionally incorporates Newfoundland set dance in a new way, and instinctively includes elements of vernacular Newfoundland culture at the same time. Kearley does not hide the fact that she does this. At one of the Dance Ups I attended, she announced that she had created and workshopped one of the dances a few months ago. No one seemed to object. The mimetic and ethnomimetic elements are clear, yet exist in tandem with one another through Dance Up. However, the notion of authenticity is one that may be raised when discussing the changes in set dancing through the Dance Up event.

The discussion of what is authentic relates to Dorson's coining of the term "fakelore". While fakelore does seem to be prevalent in many tourist attractions all over the world, Dance Up is not one of these. In fact, Dance Up is an event that subverts the artificial line between what is authentic and what is not. It

makes no claims to be anything other than a means by which people can learn to dance. While it does bill itself as a way of participating in a Newfoundland tradition, it certainly makes no claims that it represents something that has been unaltered. While Kearley asserts that the dances date back at least three hundred years in Newfoundland, she is quite upfront about the fact that each community may have its own version of a particular dance: i.e., the Portugal Cove "Lancers" may be different from the Peter's River "Lancers". Additionally, Kearley is clear with participants that she has altered some of these dances herself and has also created new ones.

Although tourists are often in search of an authentic event, Bendix writes that, "no matter how far into the everyday domain a tourist is allowed to peek, the authenticity remains staged by the very fact that the tourist is looking at it" ("Tourism" 133). Kearley does not try and convince participants that the dance form they are learning is authentic in the conventional sense of the word. She explains what aspects of the dances are traditional and what elements are new, and allows participants to make up their own minds about its status. Through this approach, Kearley subverts Erik Cohen's model of "tourist scenes." Cohen differentiates between authentic and inauthentic people and environments, distinguishing between what Goffman refers to as "frontstage" and "backstage" people and regions. Frontstage refers to people and things consciously creating a display for tourism purposes, and backstage refers to people and things not in the "tourist spotlight" (Pearce and Moscardo 124-125).

While Cohen's theory draws distinct lines between what is acceptable and unacceptable in terms of tourism and authenticity, he fails to acknowledge the recontextualization that exists in numerous tourist activities, including Dance Up. Kearley's event blurs the lines between these different purposes (Figure 5.9 illustrates the social nature of Dance Up, similar to a prime function of traditional Newfoundland set dance).



Figure 5.9: Partner dances retain an original purpose of Newfoundland set dancing – socialization – as the audience becomes the participant. Video still.

By including the audience as part of the tourist spectacle, as well as mixing the old and the new, she challenges the notion that there are distinctions between elements of a tourist event that are revealed to the tourist, and others that are concealed.

Conclusion

In reflecting upon the Dance Up event, there are several elements that involve Kearley's event with Newfoundland identity, in particular, its Irishness. The most significant is related to how Kearley weaves tradition and innovation throughout the evening. The event is successful because Kearley is able to present a cultural product as authentic, but she has packaged it in a contemporary way. She has altered and created new dances that she sees as a way of continuing the tradition of set dancing in Newfoundland culture. The slogan she uses in the St. John's 2005 tourist literature is "take your place in a Newfoundland dance" (Relax 20). While Kearley does not use the word "traditional" in her advertising, the implication is that vernacular dance will be featured. Her marketing is carefully crafted so that participants will come with the notion that they will participate in a traditional element of Newfoundland culture; yet Kearley has clearly altered both the dances and their context. She has done so through a conscious attempt to create and conform to Newfoundland's collective identity. She takes elements of Irishness in Newfoundland – the artistic, the quaint, the dialect and accent, the humour, the storytelling, a drink for those who wish to imbibe, the promise of a good time – and integrates it seamlessly

into her event. As such, she attempts to appeal to the dancer, the proud Newfoundlander, and the curious tourist alike.

Dance Up is a fascinating case study of the intersection of the arts and tourism. Kearley has taken a vernacular dance form, and recontextualized it to suit changing times, hoping its appeal will continue in its new appearance and that participants will continue to want to consume it. What is significant, here, is that the “look” of her dances is apparently the same as that of those that were performed in outport Newfoundland kitchens years ago. In other words the untrained eye would not be able to distinguish a dance performed in Newfoundland for centuries from one that Kearley has created. This is a key point in examining what Kearley is doing; she is trying to modernize set dancing in Newfoundland largely through re-fashioning older dances and presenting them in a different light. As Payne stated in our interview, all folklore – using his examples of music and dance – necessarily changes over the years. To presume that a dance is the same today as it was fifty years ago would be preposterous. Changes happen for many reasons, from the space available to dancers to cultural shifts in a community. Kearley’s example is salient here because she has deliberately created new dances and changed others. However, the result is little different from the contextual changes that have occurred over time and space in Newfoundland’s history.

Further, it is important to realize that art has never been static. As part of culture, dances change all the time. It is something of a luxury to the

contemporary scholar or artist to “preserve” a dance in its “original form,” especially since we have no idea if the form we are seeing is actually unchanged. One would hazard a guess that it is not. Therefore, is all this discussion about authenticity and origin arbitrary? Is it, in fact, simply a moot point? Kearley has obviously thought through these issues and made a deliberate decision how she wants to teach dance. She creates where necessary and uses the vernacular in her business, which ultimately benefits the consumer, and presumably, Newfoundland culture as a whole by its promotion. While Dance Up is a relatively small event, in that it is now held in one small location on a seasonal basis, its effects cannot be underestimated. While it may only directly affect a small number of people each year, it is still one of the few participatory set dance events that are open to the public. And that means that, for the interested consumer, Dance Up is likely where they will discover vernacular dance themselves. Where Kearley’s ideals and reality seem to differ, somewhat, is in the usage of Irishness in Newfoundland culture through the Dance Up event. In our discussions, Kearley was emphatic in her stance that she did not agree with the “Newfie” image, closely intertwined with the Irish stereotype that many tourists expected. However, in order to promote her event, she actively avails of government tourist advertising that so heavily relies on those images. While she may denounce the notion of Newfoundlanders being pigeonholed as nothing more than displaced Irish, the nature of her particular beast means that she has chosen, reluctantly or unintentionally, to place her work along with those very

images. The result is a complex web of identity, personal, collective and cultural, ingrained in this event.

It is evident that Dance Up is a *mélange* of forms. It is a celebration of vernacular Newfoundland dance, it is the result of a unique artistic vision, it is a tourist event, and it is also a means by which locals can rediscover something familiar to them. This may lead to the impression that Dance Up is intended to satisfy too many different audiences, an effort that can result in not pleasing any. However, conversation with Kearley leaves the distinct impression that this is not the case. She follows her head and her heart; as a folklorist by education and a cultural ambassador by trade, she has created an event that satisfies her own needs. In doing so, she has found that Dance Up also satisfies the needs of others. If we use Heidegger's definition of authenticity as "meaning to be most appropriately what one is," then Kearley's Dance Up event clearly possesses its own authenticity (in Pearce and Moscardo 124).

The next chapter follows along the continuum of Irishness in its discussion of step dancing in Newfoundland. Whereas set dancing utilizes its Irishness in a subtle manner, perhaps most overt in the representation of Newfoundland in tourist literature, step dancing not only embraces its Irishness, but uses it as a means of drawing in dancers and audiences alike. The discussion of St. Pat's Dancers, drawing on examples of Dance Studio West and iDance, epitomizes the significance of perceived and real Irishness in Newfoundland culture.

Chapter Six:

How Irish is Irish? Step Dance in Newfoundland

Introduction

Irish step dancing is a worldwide phenomenon today. With the advent of “Riverdance” in the 1990s, step dancing spread all over the world, bringing what was a vernacular dance form crashing into the twenty-first century, complete with flashy costumes and electrified Celtic music (see Casey and Tomell-Presto for discussion of the theatricalized nature of “Riverdance”). However, not only is “Riverdance” a stylized form of modern Irish step dancing, it is very different from other forms of vernacular step dancing, even those that are derivatives from the earlier form. As much as the influence of “Riverdance” resonates in Newfoundland and Labrador in 2008, it is by no means the earliest or longest-standing form of step dance in Newfoundland culture. Newfoundland and Labrador has seen several forms of step dancing evolve over the years, enjoying parallel development with the recontextualization of dance from participatory to performance activity, and the cultural revival that occurred starting in the 1970s. My research shows that today, three main forms of step dancing exist in the province: vernacular Newfoundland step dance, Irish-Newfoundland step dance, and Irish step dance.

This chapter examines the latter two styles, Irish-Newfoundland step dance and Irish step dance, within the changing context of step dancing as a

whole over the years. By looking at the dance form in Newfoundland and Labrador, this chapter seeks to situate step dance in an historical and contextual framework. After an examination of the dissemination of step dancing in the province, I provide background information on the St. Pat's Dancers, the most prominent group performing Irish-Newfoundland step dance. I give an ethnographic analysis of the group today, its repertoire and mode of transmitting dances, and provide an LMA study of the Irish-Newfoundland style. I then compare Irish-Newfoundland step dancing to Irish step dancing, and analyze the dance styles within the collective identity of the Irishness of Newfoundland culture, its historical links and its connections – actual and perceived – today. Just as Frank Hall asserts that his use of the term “Irish step dancing” means that he takes “the nationalist claim seriously, i.e. that competitive step dancing represents Ireland itself” (137), so do I use the classifications of Irish-Newfoundland and Irish step dance to reflect the significance of the Irish influence on the Newfoundland national identity, as outlined in Chapter Four. This Irish characteristic pervades Newfoundland culture, especially the arts, and I position step dance in the midst of that Irish-Newfoundland identity to suggest some reasons for the enduring popularity of related dance forms.

Development of Irish Step Dance

The history of step dancing in Ireland is one that encompasses the performative and the social, the competitive and the collaborative. It is lengthy

and complex, and here I characterize the significant moments in the development of Irish dance from a localized form to a global phenomenon. There is some debate regarding some of the terminology used to describe different types of Irish step dancing; these will be discussed and clarified in this chapter. The multiplicity of terms points to the complexity of the style, the legacy of which is evident primarily in Shawn Silver's dance school, iDance, and Martin Vallee and Jennifer Foley's school, Dance Studio East, both located in the greater St. John's area in the province. Throughout this study, I use the term "Irish-Newfoundland step dance" to refer to the style performed by the St. Pat's Dancers, and "Irish step dance" when discussing the "Riverdance"-influenced style practiced throughout the competitive circuit in Ireland and abroad, that aligns itself with the style that Vallee and Silver teach and perform.

The origins of step dancing in Ireland are unclear, although scholars all agree that dance was popular in Ireland from the sixteenth century onward. Irish dancer and dance scholar John Cullinane argues that there is conflicting evidence as to whether group dances from the sixteenth century originated in Ireland and spread elsewhere in Europe, or vice-versa. He says that whatever their origins, "they are by now well and truly Irish. They are alive and flourishing here in Ireland" (Aspects 12). It was in the eighteenth century that Irish dance flourished throughout the country and quickly became a significant aspect of Irish identity. The introduction of the dancing master to Ireland meant that Irish set and step dance was taught in an organized fashion, by individuals in authority, and

was given status as a recreational activity in both urban and rural areas. (For detailed discussion of Irish dancing masters, please see the histories written by Cullinane, Foley, Brennan and Flynn, for example). Eventually, the dancing master was replaced by the institution of the Gaelic League, an organization deliberately created in 1893 for the purpose of reviving Irish language, music and dance, primarily as a defense against English influences (Cullinane Aspects 16). Cullinane argues that the creation of Conradh Na Gaeilge, the Gaelic League, led to a cultural revival in Ireland and refers to Douglas Hyde, co-founder of the Gaelic League, who thought that, "the way to recognition of distinct nationality was through distinct cultural identity" (in Cullinane Irish 60). The Gaelic League wished to focus on those aspects of Irish culture that they felt expressed Irish nationalism best, while at the same time discarding anything that they did not consider to be "truly Irish". For example, they changed using red as a colour for what they considered the more "nationalistic" green. They also attempted to adopt and dance only "true Irish figure dances" (Cullinane Further 18). Not only did the Gaelic League revive the notion of dance as a means of expressing nationalist sentiment, but they were also instrumental in the creation and rise in prominence of a body known as An Coimisiún Le Rincí Gaelacha, the Irish Dancing Commission.²⁴ Founded in the late 1920s, An Coimisiún's purpose was to promote Irish dance (both ceili group dancing and step dancing), and to establish rules and central control over teachers and dancers through a set of

²⁴ Today, the organization is commonly referred to as "An Coimisiún", or, "The Commission".

guidelines (Cullinane Aspects 1). In our interview, Cullinane explained that this was achieved by establishing feiseanna,²⁵ the precursor to today's elaborate, international competitive step dance circuit. Irish dance historian Catherine Foley argues (and Frank Hall agrees) that it was the establishment of both the Gaelic Athletic Association and the Gaelic League, dealing with Irish sports and language respectively, that imprinted the importance of Irish cultural products in the collective consciousness of its people (Irish 81-82). Foley states:

The League's objective was to create a cultural Irish nation which would establish Ireland in the eyes of the world as being a separate nation with its own national identity...dance [was] a part of the Gaelic League and functioned as a tool in projecting the Irish image. (Irish 82)

The creation of the Irish Dancing Commission (An Coimisiún le Rincí Gaelachn) in 1929 has largely influenced the competitive nature of Irish dancing in the Irish diaspora worldwide (Foley Irish 89). While the competitive system does not (yet) exist in Newfoundland, the influence from both the Commission and "Riverdance" is felt in the popularity of Irish culture through dance in the province today. An Coimisiún remains the governing body of Irish step dancing, governing competition regulations from choreography to costumes, teacher training and student exams (An Coimisiún). Nowadays, what was initially a localized attempt to nationalize Irish culture has become a worldwide phenomenon, venturing beyond the Irish diaspora into numerous cultures across the globe.

²⁵ A feis (plural feiseanna) is an Irish dance competition. An oireachtas is a large-scale (regional, national or international) feis.

Coming directly out of An Coimisiún and the feis system is the innovative show, "Riverdance". In 1994, "Riverdance" exploded onto the world stage, revolutionizing perceptions of both Ireland and Irish dancing. Not coincidentally, this occurred on the cusp of Ireland's economic boom and subsequent branding as the "Celtic Tiger." Originally a brief dance piece during an intermission of "Eurovision," a musical contest held in a different European nation each year, "Riverdance" was eventually developed into a full-length music and dance extravaganza, touring the world and creating spin-off shows such as "Lord of the Dance," "Feet of Flames," and numerous others (Skinner Sawyers 59). Central to these shows is the step dancing, a slick, high-energy hybrid form of dance that is a stylized form of Irish step dancing. And "Riverdance" is largely credited with not only giving Irish step dancing sex appeal, but also spurring interest in the dance form across the globe, including Newfoundland.

Step Dancing in Newfoundland and Labrador

Newfoundland step dancing was not a distinct dance genre in the context of what Hoerburger would call its first existence. Rather, it was usually a part of a number of set dances found in the Newfoundland repertoire, and therefore is best explored within the context of set dancing. While the social aspect of set dancing is widely acknowledged to be its prominent function within the outport Newfoundland context, aesthetics and skills of individual dancers were also important. Because set dancing emphasizes homogeneity as dancers move in

tandem, those dances that allowed for step dancing provided a means for the talented to shine, and on occasion for male prowess to be expressed. Some of the most common set dances contain several bars of music reserved for individuals (usually the male halves of the couples) to improvise step dancing within the confines of the set. For example, "Running the Goat" contains such a section. Within each set of four couples, the middle of the dance provides music that is specifically for the men of the set to enter the middle of the square, step dance, then move back to their original spot and swing their partners. Thus, although stepping was not always performed as a complete dance on its own, it is an integral part of a number of set dances that are firmly entrenched in the vernacular arts of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Additionally, step dancing was also performed in the context of friendly competitions between renowned dancers within a family or community. Dancers would perform individually, usually improvising their steps (Quigley Close 26). The lack of choreography would, in fact, encourage experimentation, allowing dancers to explore their different steps and rhythms and provide a means for innovation. It is important to note that, while dancing was improvised, it would still be performed within an aesthetic framework of vernacular step dance vocabulary; that is, dancers would take what they knew and what was conventional, and build upon that. While aesthetics are important in any kind of vernacular step dancing, it is crucial in its solo manifestation as the beauty of the movement reflects directly on the dancer. Quigley notes that a skilled dancer was

one who was light on their feet and could dance consistently within a small space on the floor, an ideal that pervades today. Quigley refers to an interview conducted by Herbert Halpert in which an informant indicated that someone “could dance on a tea-plate” (Close 20), a compliment to a dancer’s light-footedness. This is similar to the aesthetic of Irish step dancing at the time of the nineteenth-century dancing masters. Breandán Breathnach refers to “The good dancer, it was said, [who] could dance on eggs without breaking them and hold a pan of water on his head without spilling a drop” (55). Interestingly, although lightness was prized, Elton states that dancers in Newfoundland differed from their English and Irish counterparts in that Newfoundlanders used their heels and toes in dancing, whereas Europeans danced almost exclusively on the balls of their feet (“Folk Dance”). Today, it is acknowledged among both dancers and non-dancers that this particular style of Newfoundland step dance is becoming rarer and rarer. It has not been passed down on a large scale and the dance style is dying out along with its practitioners. However, that is not to say that it is completely gone. During our interview, Jim Payne noted an exception in an older gentleman named who dances regularly on weekends in the various Irish-themed bars that dot George Street in downtown St. John’s. He is something of a fixture on the downtown bar scene, well-known to many of the bands who play there on a regular basis. His improvised, “shuffling” style is reminiscent of earlier vernacular Newfoundland step dancing. Further, anecdotal conversations with individuals both inside and outside the dance community in Newfoundland over

the years have revealed that many communities do still have particular individuals who are known for their ability to dance a step or two when a social occasion arises. However, they are becoming the exception rather than the rule.

Irish step dancing, most notably in the style of "Riverdance" and its spin-off shows, has become more prevalent in Newfoundland and Labrador since the 1990s, and bears mentioning as a newer form of step dancing in this province. The effects of "Riverdance" have been felt worldwide; here, in Newfoundland, the show has renewed interest in step dancing among dancers and dance students, and studios have responded in kind. Although on a small scale, local step dancing has been integrated into recent musical shows and cultural events. According to his website, Shawn Silver's iDance studio caters exclusively to those who wish to learn Irish-style step dancing. Other dance schools such as Dance Studio East, in Manuels (Conception Bay South), have incorporated Irish step dancing into their regular offerings alongside ballet, jazz, modern, hip hop, pilates, yoga and flamenco (Vallee Dance Studio East). The annual shows produced by these schools replicate "Riverdance" choreography and technique. For example, when Dance Studio East performed its Celtic Explosion show in 2003, the entire second half of the show was devoted to "Riverdance" style stepping, in a range of performances from children to adult classes. The sheer numbers involved in this show – approximately one hundred students at the time – are significant enough to illustrate the surge in popularity of this style of step

dancing within the last ten years. Silver's iDance and Vallee's Dance Studio East classes and performances will be explored further in this chapter.

Irish step dancing utilizes tightly choreographed sequences that often integrate both soft shoe and hard shoe dancing; of interest here is the hard shoe style. Soloists are upstaged by the chorus, large numbers of dancers who perform intricate step combinations in conjunction with floor patterns, to stylized "celtic" music. Emphasis is on the beauty of conformity among dancers, as well as the impression of lightness combined with strong, hard, loud stepping sounds of the feet. While the dancers jump in the air and kick their legs high, contrast is achieved with the downward striking of the feet, and the resultant rhythmic tapping that is heard. Floor patterning usually consists of the dancers moving in lines, circles, and cross shapes, simple patterns that are striking when cleanly and accurately executed.

There is evidence of renewed interest in all kinds of step dancing in Newfoundland because of the proliferation of modern step dancing in popular culture. In a newspaper interview in 1997, Francie Gow, then fiddle player for the St. Pat's Dancers, stated:

Maybe "Riverdance" is doing for step dancing what many groups are doing for traditional culture. It's moving the traditional into popular culture with a nice smooth transition, without losing any of the traditional merits... Younger generations, people like myself and my friends are really enjoying it without any embarrassment. (Vaughn-Jackson)

As discussed in Chapter Five, Tonya Kearley has attempted to revitalize set dancing through a recontextualization. In this interview, Gow remarked upon a different effort, though providing a similar result. When “Riverdance” brought step dancing into the popular realm, it not only brought it to a wider audience, it made it appealing to watch, practice and perform. Because of this, Gow states that there is a renewed interest in the more traditional forms of step dance, thereby merging the vernacular and the popular and allowing both to exist comfortably within the same cultural space. As Peter Narváez and Martin Laba assert in the introduction to their book Media Sense, there need not necessarily be a dichotomy between folklore and popular culture. Rather, a continuum exists that allows for both dynamism and conservatism to exert influence over the most traditional and the most mass-mediated cultural products (1-2). Thus the positive effects of “Riverdance” on awareness of step dancing in Newfoundland culture reflects the continuum asserted by Narváez and Laba in their study of folklore and popular culture.

Vernacular dancing may have declined in Newfoundland as a social event, but as a result of the cultural revival in the late twentieth century, great pains have been taken to preserve, revive, and continue the dance form. Its recontextualization is the reason it is still danced and seen. While the dances are not passed on from generation to generation through oral and kinesthetic transmission, the more formalized teaching and performances have allowed the dances to exist in a contemporary form. And while improvised step dancing again

may not be performed regularly in kitchens and community halls, a variant is found in the clubs where Irish-inspired and Irish-Newfoundland music is played. Just as present-day audiences have embraced updated jigs and reels, so have they taken vernacular step dancing and incorporated it in spontaneous social dancing in the club scene. Although it has changed somewhat, the spirit of vernacular Newfoundland step dance continues.

Several other forms of step dancing exist in the province today. Informal “stepping” is indeed found in clubs as a contemporary form of social dance to varying styles of Irish and Newfoundland music. As mentioned above, modern Irish or “Riverdance” style step dance is being taught at several dance schools in the St. John’s area in 2008. There is one other style of step dancing in Newfoundland that enjoys a certain prominence and history. That is the Irish-Newfoundland step dance style, brought to Newfoundland and Labrador by the Christian Brothers and continued over the years by the St. Pat’s Dancers. Although the dance style is generally known as Irish-Newfoundland step dance, Jeff Steiner, head of the St. Pat’s Dancers, refers to it as Irish-Newfoundland tap. By doing so he distinguishes the hard shoe work of the St. Pat’s Dancers from soft-shoe Irish dancing (Vaughn-Jackson). I will use the common terminology, Irish-Newfoundland step dancing, to describe the work of the St. Pat’s Dancers. However, it is important to note that all the work they do is with hard shoes. Before moving into the dance style itself, a brief history of the St. Pat’s Dancers and the Irish-Newfoundland step dance style follows.

A History of the St. Pat's Dancers

There seems to be an accepted oral history of the dance group, published through materials produced by the St. Pat's Dancers and newspaper articles on the group. In my interviews with Yvonne and Jeff Steiner, current leaders of the St. Pat's Dancers, the same details were given to me on several occasions. While references to written sources are noted in this chapter, all points were corroborated during my interviews (Y. Steiner and J. Steiner) and were supplemented with my interview with Brother John Shea, a Christian Brother familiar with the history of the order in Newfoundland. The St. Pat's Dancers have enjoyed a prominent place in the St. John's community for more than seventy years, and are indeed one of the most recognized dance groups, traditional or otherwise, in the province. They are also considered to be the oldest dance group in Atlantic Canada ("The St. Pat's Dancers Summary Information"). Harkening back to the 1930s, the St. Pat's Dancers has undergone several small but significant changes since its original formation. It is currently billed as "a non-profit, school-based organization made up of school aged children who perform a variety of Irish/Newfoundland tap dances to traditional Newfoundland music" ("St. Pat's Dancers – General Information"). The St. Pat's Dancers' purpose and functions today are fairly similar to those found throughout the group's history.

The St. Pat's Dancers and the Irish-Newfoundland step dance style find their roots in Ireland. This style of step dancing was brought to Newfoundland along with the Christian Brothers, who initially arrived in St. John's in 1876, to teach in the Catholic school system. However, it took a number of years for step dancing to become a part of the Brothers' curriculum in St. John's. In the 1930s, at St. Patrick's School, Brother Samuel Murphy founded the St. Pat's Dancers. The small group – consisting of five boys from the school – was taught a number of Irish step dances, and they began to perform these dances throughout St. John's at a variety of events, a precedent that carries through to the group today (Innes). Brother Max Murray brought dances from New York in the 1940s, broadening the repertoire of the group and furthering their dance knowledge ("St. Pat's Dancers").²⁶ Having studied with Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers, Brother Murray brought a flair for performance along with dances learned in the American-Irish communities in New York ("The St. Pat's Dancers" Monitor). Thus cross-cultural influences have affected the Irish-Newfoundland dance style since its inception in Newfoundland. Initially, the boys at St. Pat's were taught step dancing after school on an occasional basis; essentially, when school concerts or fundraisers were being held, the boys would perform as part of the event. It wasn't until that first generation of student dancers grew up, and some of them became Brothers, that they insisted that step dancing become a regular part of

²⁶ According to Brother John Shea during our interview, it was common for Christian Brothers to rotate among various locations over the course of their time of service, so it was not unusual for someone like Brother Murray to transfer from New York to Newfoundland.

the after-school activities for boys at the school (Shea). That was the beginning of the St. Pat's Dancers as a regular performance group.

Over the years, the group has flourished under the tutelage of a number of Christian Brothers, the last being Brother Pike. At the end of his time with the group, it looked as though the St. Pat's Dancers was going to close down, and so spousal team Yvonne and Jeff Steiner, the current leaders whose children were dancing in the group, took over. They are now in their eighteenth year and have a healthy complement of children under their wing. In 2005, at the time of my fieldwork, the group enjoyed membership of approximately fifty children, boys and girls, aged five to sixteen. The senior group consisted of approximately thirteen or fourteen children with the remainder acting as apprentices of sorts as they learned the dances and prepared for future performances (Y. Steiner).

In recent years, the St. Pat's Dancers has performed at numerous events, most notably at Canada Day on Parliament Hill and at the Cabot 500 Opening Ceremonies in St. John's, both in 1997 ("The St. Pat's Dancers Performance Highlights"). They regularly perform at community events, seniors' homes, festivals and many other venues and events. For those performances, the group asks for an honorarium (the amount depends on the event) that ensures that the St. Pat's Dancers can continue to function without charging fees to its dancers (J. and Y. Steiner). Thus the community enables the group to function, while the dancers contribute to numerous community events through their performances.

An Afternoon With the St. Pat's Dancers

After school on a mid-September afternoon in 2005, I entered the multipurpose room at St. Bonaventure's School, commonly referred to as "St. Bon's". School had just been let out, so St. Bon's students were milling about, gathering school bags and meeting parents who were waiting outside, either on foot or in the long line-up of cars that stretched out the long driveway to the road. During the exodus from school to home, another group of students was crowding into the room in order to start a new season of dancing with the St. Pat's Dancers.

The room itself was large and spacious, typical of a school gymnasium or auditorium. It had the large, echoing feeling of a gym, and at its front was a small stage with steps, a piano, and a microphone. Along the sides of the room were stacked plastic chairs and long tables; some of these were empty and some were filled with objects pertaining to the dance group. A large banner for the St. Pat's Dancers was draped across one end of the room, immediately opposite the doorway (see Figure 6.1). It was easily seen by all who entered the room.



Figure 6.1: The banner for the St. Pat's Dancers is prominently displayed in the multipurpose room at St. Bon's.

As I walked in, I was immediately struck by the sheer number of children who had come to dance. I had seen the St. Pat's Dancers perform a number of times in previous years, and the performance group was small compared to the number of children who train with the group. There are two likely reasons for this; first, as with any activity, numbers may taper off as the year wears on and children decide on other activities, or simply withdraw from this one. In fact, I overheard one young girl, aged six or seven, complain to her mother that she was tired and wanted to go home – and this was even before the first practice had begun. They left soon after. Second, students must learn a number of dances – and learn them well – before they can perform publicly with the group. Yvonne Steiner noted, “dancers must learn five dances to be able to dance with the senior group. That usually takes a few years, sometimes less” (2004). Therefore, at any one time, the overall group consists of both apprentices (my term) and performers. Even with these two factors taken into consideration, I was

impressed by the number of children who were willing to try the activity. While the group was overwhelmingly female, there was a small handful of boys; out of the group of approximately fifty children, perhaps one dozen boys attended. Gender is significant, as the St. Pat's Dancers was originally restricted to students at St. Pat's – an all-boys' school. Therefore, while early alumni of the St. Pat's Dancers are all men, today all children are welcome – boys and girls from any school (see McGuire for a study on gender in competitive tap dancing events). Ages range from four years old to sixteen years old. While most children begin with the St. Pat's Dancers at the age of six or seven, the Steiners are loath to turn interested youngsters away. In our interview, Yvonne Steiner stated, "we get them as young as four or five sometimes. Those are the children who have older brothers or sisters in the group. We don't like to turn anyone away" (2004).

On that Friday afternoon, the atmosphere in the room was one of barely controlled chaos. The energy was palpable. Children milled about, looking for school friends and greeting dance friends from the previous year. Some of the new dancers hovered near their parents, unsure of what was going to happen and struck with shyness at the new situation. The previous week had been registration week, so this was the first actual practice session.

At one side of the room were several tables that were set up with boxes of tap shoes, some new, some used (see Figure 6.2). The Steiners have a system whereby children can borrow shoes for use with the St. Pat's Dancers, and trade them in for another size when they grow out of their current pair. That means that

there is constant flux of shoes that are available, and parents are freed from financial concerns of continually outfitting growing feet with expensive dance shoes. Jeff Steiner tells me that a local shoe store always supplied the Steiners with pairs of tap shoes that hadn't sold; when the shop closed down in 2004, all remaining pairs were donated to the group. While they were delighted that there is an influx of shoes, it may be that the donations are at an end. The Steiners asserted that they want to make sure that St. Pat's Dancers is available to any child who wants to participate; as Jeff Steiner said in our interview, "with the shoe exchange, parents don't need to worry about [outfitting their constantly growing children with] new tap shoes" (2005).



Figure 6.2: Boxes of donated new and second-hand tap shoes for St. Pat's Dancers.

I observed the returning of previously worn shoes, and parents helping their children on with their next pair. Yvonne and Jeff moved through the packs of parents and children, helping to find sizes, and greeting the newcomers. For some of the brand new dancers, this was the first time they put a pair of tap shoes on their feet (see Figure 6.3). One style of shoe, made from patent leather and fastened with a black ribbon tied into a bow, was pleasing to some of the younger girls, who seemed as interested in looking at their new shoes as hearing the sound. As the new dancers tried out their shoes, they were delighted with the sound that they made. As such, many of the children (beginner and advanced) were running, jumping, and tapping all over the room in anticipation of what was to come. Some of the experienced dancers already began showing younger siblings and friends some of the basic steps.



Figure 6.3: A father helps his daughter try on shoes for size.

Once everyone had a pair of shoes, Yvonne moved to the microphone to welcome children and parents, and to get the children started with their first practice. At this point, parents moved to the stage area and sat on the steps in front. They chatted with each other, keeping an eye on younger children they brought with them.

The children gathered in the centre of the large room, and were divided into groups of approximately five children. Each group was assigned a senior dancer, who led the group in learning their first dance. The dance, "Turkey in the Straw", is the simplest dance in the repertoire of the St. Pat's Dancers, and is based on a marching step in a steady rhythm. I learned this dance as "The March," from a former St. Pat's dancer. The dance is nearly identical, but some

small differences were observed between the variant I learned in my own dance class, and the variant now taught to the St. Pat's group. The dance is usually performed to the tune of "Turkey in the Straw," following an apparent convention that Irish-Newfoundland step dances are often named after their accompanying tune. I watched as the different leaders showed their charges the dance. Rather than formalized classroom instruction by a certified teacher, the norm in dance schools, here, dances are passed along through more informal oral and kinesthetic transmission. The leader showed the new dancers the steps and talked them through each one, guiding and correcting where necessary (see Figure 6.4). I was struck overall by the enthusiasm and patience shown by the group leaders (who were in their early to mid- teens), especially with some very young and some uncoordinated children.



Figure 6.4: Two senior dancers teach "Turkey in the Straw" to some new dancers. Note that one dancer faces the front and one faces the opposite way, so that newcomers can see both the front and rear views of the dance.

I moved from group to group, listening and capturing the events on paper and in photographs. The dancers barely noticed me; the advantage of the energy and sheer number of people in the large room meant that an outsider like myself was far less intrusive than would be the case in a conventional dance class. Each group leader had their own style of teaching, but all had a similar goal. They wanted to teach the basics of "Turkey in the Straw" to this new group before the rehearsal was over. This was no small feat, as the age and skill range was significant enough that it was indeed a challenge to keep all the children

interested. I was surprised at how quickly many of the children began to learn the dances. Yvonne Steiner told me that some children pick it up very quickly, and move into the performing group within a year. Others may take several years to achieve that level. Group leaders persevered, demonstrating the sequences over and over again, providing verbal correction when they deemed it necessary, a combination of oral and kinesthetic transmission. I noticed that a few break-off groups formed, where intermediate dancers (not new dancers, not group leaders) organized themselves into pairs or groups of three, to work on more advanced dances. They worked collaboratively, reminding each other of the order of steps, and helping each other out with the more difficult combinations (see Figure 6.5). Yvonne Steiner told me that this was common because the dancers learned from older dancers to begin with. She said, "they're used to learning from each other and helping each other. That's how the St. Pat's Dancers work" (2005). The peer teaching sets the St. Pat's Dancers apart from other dance schools and groups.



Figure 6.5: Two senior dancers review some steps.

Yvonne and Jeff Steiner explained to me the approach taken with the St. Pat's Dancers. They see themselves largely as facilitators, ensuring that the group has a place to practice, performances to give, and an organizational structure. However, the Steiners do not teach the dances themselves. They obviously know the dances inside out, having led the St. Pat's Dancers for fifteen

years, but they leave the bulk of the teaching to the older students. As the practice moves along, Jeff and Yvonne observed all the groups, and ensured that all was well and there were no concerns. Every now and then, they were called upon to show a step or make a correction, but that was left almost exclusively to the senior dancers (see Figure 6.6). Their aim is to assist where necessary, but take a back seat to the dance itself. This is how the St. Pat's Dancers has operated for years, and it seems to work. The apprenticeship from senior to junior dancer is one that empowers the children, enabling them to learn from their peers.



Figure 6.6: Jeff Steiner helps out some senior dancers with their choreography.

I chatted with parents about their reasons for placing their children in the St. Pat's Dancers. Some of the children had friends who were in the group, and were enthusiastic about joining for that reason. Others had older siblings in the group, and for the most part that meant that they were anxious to join in an activity that their sibling enjoyed. Some parents told me that having one child in the group meant that placing the other one there was a logical choice, rather than involve the kids in different after-school activities. Finally, and a prevailing reason, was that many of the parents had seen or heard of the St. Pat's Dancers, and wanted their children to participate not just for the health and artistic benefits of learning how to dance, but because of the heritage factor of the group as well. As Longden argues, "cultural movement material" must be made relevant to children so that they will incorporate it into their intellectual and creative lives, rather than relegating it as simply a part of their physical education in school" (10-11). While the children may not appreciate the cultural significance of a dance form they learned at a young age, their enjoyment of the dancing itself was a key reason for them continuing to learn and perform. The reputation of the group as not only an excellent dance group but a symbol of Newfoundland and Labrador culture was one that seemed to be prevalent amongst this parental group in St. John's.

An hour into the session, and half an hour after the children started to practice, Yvonne Steiner called all the dancers to the centre of the room. She

asked the senior group to demonstrate the dance that had been practiced, so that the new dancers were able to see the finished product. This is another aspect of the mentoring process. Yvonne Steiner told me, “when the younger kids get to see the senior group perform, it makes them want to learn more” (2004). By this point, the accordionist arrived, a staple at both practices and performances. He led the senior dancers through “Turkey in the Straw” by playing the tune of the same name, a standard piece for this particular dance (see Figure 6.7). The senior group performed well, and the younger dancers were delighted. Several more dances were performed, so that the new dancers could see what they will eventually learn. Finally, all the dancers – including the brand new ones – were called to try and dance “Turkey in the Straw”. The senior group stood in front of the junior group to lead the sequence of steps. While they were at varying early stages of learning the dance, they all attempted it and some of them were able to complete it. The seeds had been planted, and the entire group of children left that afternoon, anticipating future practices.



Figure 6.7: Discussing a tune.

I entered the same room at St. Bon's School for a St. Patrick's Day celebration in 2004. The St. Pat's Dancers were to perform for students at St. Bon's as part of their Paddy's Day celebrations, and I came to document the dancers in performance. A performance by the St. Pat's Dancers is a different experience from that of a rehearsal. In part, this is because the performers are advanced dancers, part of the senior performing group. They are used to audiences and conduct themselves accordingly on the stage. The St. Pat's

Dancers perform throughout the year at numerous events: festivals, Irish cultural events, and performances at schools and senior citizens' centres. They rehearse on a separate day from the larger group, where rehearsals, according to Yvonne Steiner, "are more intense" (2005). They work more closely on technique, perfecting their performances for the stage. The room was filled to capacity with children from the school; they were seated on the floor and in chairs according to class. Teachers tried to quiet the children in anticipation of the show to come. In the midst of the chaos, I set up my camera and tried not to block the view of any of the students. A school official came to the podium, and introduced Yvonne, who announced each dance before it is performed. Yvonne took the microphone, welcoming the students to the show, and told them a little about the St. Pat's Dancers and the type of dancing they perform. Her comments were brief and to the point. The group was introduced and they moved to the stage. The dancers wore the St. Pat's Dancers uniform: white blouses, black tap shoes, and skirts and sashes made out of the Newfoundland tartan. The Newfoundland tartan has gold, brown, white and red accents on a green background. Developed in 1955 by St. John's clothing businessman Sam Wilansky (Churchill et al), it has become highly symbolic of Newfoundland culture to Newfoundlanders and to outsiders, and therefore an appropriate costume choice for the St. Pat's Dancers.

Just as there is uniformity in the uniform, so there is in the dances. There were approximately ten dancers on the stage; Yvonne told me afterwards that this was a fairly small performance group. Because this was a weekday

afternoon concert, not all students were able to get away from their own schools for the performance. While a few of the dancers looked somewhat nervous, that apprehension dissipated as soon as the music began.

The introductory bars of music started and, on cue, the dancers burst into movement. They executed the intricacies of the steps and the basic movement patterns flawlessly, and began to relax as they performed. The smiles became more evident as the dance was performed well. It was evident on many faces how seriously they took the performance. At the moment the music started, a hush immediately fell over the crowd. They watched the dancers with rapt attention, which was only broken with the end of the dance. When the music and dancers stopped, the audience burst into applause, enthusiastically cheering the performers. The dancers took a bow, huge grins on their faces at a dance well danced. As the show progressed, Yvonne introduced five or six more dances, all of which were performed with the same skill and grace. At the end of the act, the dancers took one final bow and exited the stage.

The Dances of the St. Pat's Dancers

In the Irish-Newfoundland style of step dance, the St. Pat's Dancers perform approximately fourteen dances (Y. and J. Steiner). Three of these dances were brought over by the Christian Brothers from Ireland and many others have been created over the years by various children in the dance group itself (Vaughan-Jackson). One dance, "Blackbird," was choreographed by

Michael Flatley and set on the group during his visit to Newfoundland in 1991 ("St. Pat's Dancers"). The St. Pat's Dancers encourages innovation in terms of choreography from their dancers, and from time to time, new dances, in the vein of the older dances, are added to the repertoire (Y. and J. Steiner).

It is important to note that the Irish-Newfoundland step dance style differs from vernacular Newfoundland step dancing, and the "Riverdance"-style step dance style, both of which have some currency in Newfoundland culture today. Earlier in this chapter, the development of these dance styles in the Newfoundland and Labrador context was discussed; the stylistic differences are of note here. The three step dance styles differ mainly in body posture and choreography. One of the most significant differences is that the Irish-Newfoundland step dance style consists of complete dances that are learned and performed from beginning to end, with a particular sequence of steps that has barely changed over the sixty-plus years of the St. Pat's Dancers' existence. As such, there is no improvisation during a performance, nor is there interaction between dancers or an element of competition, both of which are found in other step dance styles. According to my interviews with the Steiners, the dances are fairly static in that they have not undergone significant changes over the years; it is the repertoire itself that has grown with the group.

Step dancing concentrates its attention on the feet; they are the main focus of all step dance styles. The inherent beauty of group step dancing comes from a complement of dancers flawlessly executing the same steps in tandem.

While step dancing may look extremely complicated, the actual number of distinct steps is small. Its intrinsic complexity comes from the speed, accuracy, and difficult combinations in which these steps are arranged. Well-performed step dancing also produces strong, rhythmic noises with the shoes; the single sound produced by multiple dancers stepping together adds to the aesthetic quality of the dances and is unique in some ways to this dance style.

Colin Quigley describes Newfoundland step dancing thus:

Dancers generally perform in an upright posture with little torso movement. Movement articulation is primarily in the legs and feet, with which the dancers perform complex stepping, tapping out the musical rhythms with their heels and toes. The feet are, nonetheless, usually kept directly under the body. The arms and hands hang naturally at the dancer's sides or may be slightly raised with a flexed elbow. Arm and hand gestures are not considered a significant part of the dance, and too much movement of them is usually thought to detract from the performance. (Close 19)

In this passage, Quigley is referring to vernacular Newfoundland step dancing (which is discussed earlier in this chapter), but parallels can be drawn to Irish-Newfoundland step dancing from his description. It is interesting to note that the body posture of the Irish-Newfoundland style is analogous to the vernacular Newfoundland step dance style, likely because of the longevity of both genres in Newfoundland culture. Perhaps one notable exception is that of the torso, which,

in the Irish-Newfoundland style, would be somewhat more relaxed than Quigley's description indicates.²⁷ While the torso is indeed upright when performing the Irish-Newfoundland dance style, it is rather relaxed, and some torso movement would not be considered unusual. Quigley's description implies a degree of torso boundedness somewhere in between Irish-Newfoundland and Irish step dance, the latter of which is typified by a rigid, upright body posture. The arms of the Irish-Newfoundland step dancer also hang loosely most of the time; very occasionally, arm choreography is used, but for the most part, arms hang as they would naturally, with little movement. This is a somewhat intermediary style between the rigidity of the modern Irish step dance style and the loose, flowing style of American tap dancing.

The focus on the feet is paramount, and step dancing of any style showcases the speed, strength and flexibility of the foot. Step dance technique reflects the significance of the foot as the primary articulation of dance steps. Shoes enhance the aesthetics of the style and enable dancers to highlight the foot while dancing. The use of a special dance shoe is something that differentiates the more performative style of Irish-Newfoundland step dancing from vernacular Newfoundland step dancing, which would be danced in street shoes. The St. Pat's Dancers wear standard tap shoes while dancing. Their shoes resemble a lace-up street shoe, with a few exceptions. The shoes are

²⁷ Irish-Newfoundland step dancing torso, posture and general body aesthetic corresponds most closely to Sean-nós step dancing, the Irish step dance style most analogous to vernacular Newfoundland step dance. Like vernacular Newfoundland step dance, Sean-nós is rarely practiced in Ireland any more, with the exception of the Gaeltacht (Gaelic speaking) regions such as Connemara and Donegal.

made of soft, supple and thin leather; this makes them durable while remaining flexible for the foot. Some of the shoes for younger children are made of patent leather, which is somewhat heavier, providing extra support for young feet. All tap shoes have metal "taps", or plates, screwed on to the bottom of the toe and heel. Irish step dance shoes are similar to tap shoes, except they have a higher heel and a higher arch. Instead of the metal taps, the toes and heels are made of fiberglass, which gives a richer tap sound, while enabling more difficult steps such as dancing on the tips of the toes, which are not possible in tap shoes. The aesthetic of the modern-day tap or Irish step dance shoe is derived from earlier practices which required dancers to modify regular street shoes. Dancers would attach leather tips on the toes of their shoes and fasten a tack or a nail to the leather strip, thereby enabling the dancer to create a functional, if rudimentary tap on the toes (Foley Irish 12). While many Irish dance schools across North America require beginner students to wear soft shoes before they can "graduate" to hard shoes (Long and Howard), the St. Pat's Dancers only use tap shoes, and the Irish-Newfoundland step dance style consists solely of steps that can be performed in tap shoes. This, of course, produces the distinctive sounds that are the rhythmic and technical basis of the dance form.

There are several basic steps in the Irish-Newfoundland step dance style which are often also found in other dance styles such as tap or ballet. However, the aesthetics and music of the Irish-Newfoundland step dance style are what make it a unique genre unto its own. As Catherine Foley asserts in her study of

step dancing in North Kerry, "from both learning and performing, the step dance performer is consciously aware of the structural layers which constitute the different step dance types" (Irish 193). The basic steps are at the heart of this multi-layered approach to the dance style. Stamping, tapping the toe and heel, and jumps are typical of many dance styles. One of the most used steps in step dancing is the shuffle, the basic "out-in" flicking movement by one foot that provides a quick tapping sound. Shuffles, in combination with other steps, form the vast majority of the combinations in the repertoire of the St. Pat's Dancers, and provide the complex rhythmic sounds produced by the tap shoes.

Of the dances in the current repertoire of the St. Pat's Dancers, only three were originally brought over from Ireland. One of the oldest dances in the Irish-Newfoundland step dance style is the "Double Batter", played to a lively jig (see Appendix B for notation of the Double Batter). Today, it is almost always played to the tune of the well-known Newfoundland song, "I's Da B'y." While there is indeed variation in tempo, speed, rhythm and step composition in Irish-Newfoundland step dancing, the "Double Batter" can be seen as a fairly typical example of the dance style.

The "Double Batter" consists of six combinations of steps. Each combination can be divided into two parts, for our purposes, referred to as a "call" and an "answer". The call is the same for each step, providing repetition that makes it easier for the dancer to learn the entire dance, and gives a sense of familiarity to the audience throughout the dance. The answer is the part that

differs, providing variety in the dance. The dance is performed almost entirely on the spot – the dancer executes all steps in one place – with a few small exceptions. One combination requires the dancer to dance forward and back over one line of music; another requires the dancer to dance in a circle over the same musical line. Other than those two instances, the dance is rather stationary; therefore, it is the vertical movement, and the illusion of travel, that gives the dance an aesthetic quality over and above the sound and sight of the feet. But the feet are of paramount significance. As a fast-paced dance, the “Double Batter” is impressive to watch. Moreover, it is impressive to listen to. These reasons may all contribute to why this particular dance has survived the full history of the St. Pat’s Dancers, and is a popular performance piece for the group today (see Figure 6.8).



Figure 6.8: The senior group performs the "Double Batter" for the junior dancers.

While performing Irish-Newfoundland step dance, the body lies on the vertical axis. The torso is not held as rigidly as in other step dance styles and so the emphasis is on the vertical, primarily heightening the body. Because step dancing requires much vertical movement, it is necessary for the body to be held somewhat in order to facilitate jumping and tapping with as little stress on the knees and ankles as possible. Not only is the torso held, the steps themselves contain vertical stress. The continual up and down motion is evident as the dancer continuously jumps in the air, and stamps his/her feet through various step combinations. Arms in Irish-Newfoundland step dance are loosely held at

the sides of the dancer, with a few exceptions, usually clasping hands behind the back. But arms are usually less rigid than the body, and often sway along with the stride of the dancer in time to the music. Because steps and body correspond with the vertical, the door plane is almost exclusively found. And although the trunk is relatively relaxed, it remains a solid unit with no bending or breaking of the vertical line in any of the dances.

The dancer, in this style, operates well within the kinesphere. The dancer seldom reaches out with the hands or arms, as they are rarely choreographed. The feet almost always move directly underneath the dancer, therefore using near reach space. However, with some steps – such as shuffles and tapping the toe – intermediate reach space is used. When the dancer kicks, far reach space is observed, but that is one of the few steps that utilizes the far reaches of the dancer's kinesphere. The lack of arm choreography here is markedly different from the other two dance styles explored earlier. In my opinion, the function of the dance forms provides insight into why. Set dance is social in that the dances themselves force the constant interaction between partners. Of course, this leads to the socialization of dancers themselves both on and off the dance floor. Step dancing is more isolating in many regards. The dancers do perform synchronously on stage together. However, they almost never interact with one another. The aesthetic lies in the conformity of movement by individual dancers. The lack of dancer interaction, as a largely individual dance form, means that the movement preferences need not include wide use of kinesphere or gestural

movements that would facilitate interaction amongst the dancers. Initiation of body parts tends to be simultaneous. While performing the steps and sequences, the step dancer primarily moves the feet; however, the knees, hips, and ankles all move at the same time, in order for the step to be properly executed. While the trunk is solid, the legs and feet (and occasionally the arms) move seemingly independently, in a gestural way. Postural movement is not prevalent, primarily because of the disconnect between the middle of the body and its extremities.

Effort qualities for step dancing are especially interesting when considering the reality of the dancer versus the aesthetic of the dance. To the performer, Irish-Newfoundland step dancing appears to be loose and free flowing, yet the feet appear to be tight and controlled. In fact, the reality for the dancer is quite the opposite. The body, while somewhat relaxed, is still held in order to maintain the verticality of the dance. Most dancers "pull up" in order to shift their weight so that they can perform steps more quickly and flawlessly. "Pulling up" is a term used in many dance forms to refer to the practice of pulling up the muscles in the legs in order for the dancer to look and feel taller, and be lighter on his/her feet. The term is used both for the physical act of lengthening the muscles, as well as the imagery that can assist in the physical act. By pulling up, the step dancer moves his/her weight up and forward, enabling footwork to be quicker. And while the feet seem as though they must be tightened in order to execute fast steps, doing so actually slows the feet down. In order to achieve speed and lightness, the foot must be relaxed within the shoe, so that it can

move quickly. The leg muscles work in conjunction with the hip and ankle joints, to ensure that the step can be performed while leaving the foot relaxed. The loose foot also enables a powerful tapping sound to occur; this sound, too, will suffer and be muffled if the foot is clenched. So a combination of free and bounded flow is found, depending on the body part, and the audience-dancer perspective.

Further, use of weight is a debatable point in this dance style. The technique and aesthetic of Irish-Newfoundland step dancing mean that the dance seems to contain both lightness and strength. While lightness is a desirable quality in step dancers, at the same time, strength must be seen in the feet. If the foot is not strong, then the taps will not sound clear, and the dancer will not be able to dance quickly and rhythmically. The inherent verticality of the dance style, in its constant up-and-down motion, reflects the dual qualities of light and strong. Time is almost exclusively quick. There are some dances that promote sustained time, but that is only in the overall aesthetic effect. By its very nature, step dancing utilizes quick steps as the basis of its technique. In a similar vein, direct use of space occurs. Feet move deliberately from one point to the next, often in this vertical plane. Because of the speed required to perform the steps, the foot must move in the most direct way possible to its next position; otherwise, time will be lost and the dancer will get behind on the music.

There are several effort combinations that can be seen in Irish-Newfoundland step dancing. As an overall movement preference, dab and punch

are the two most common. The punching movement preference combines direct, strong, quick movement. The majority of steps, as performed by the foot, combine these movement characteristics. The spoking motions by the foot are done to a quick pace, tapping the musical rhythms out with great force. Even if the dancer is not using a great deal of physical force, the tap shoes ensure that a clear, loud sound is made when a skilled dancer performs a stamp or a hop. As such, the continual vertical movement ensures that the punching combination is predominant. However, other common steps, like the ubiquitous shuffle, have a lightness that connotes dab – direct, light, quick movement – that is the other prevailing step in dance after dance. The verticality of the dance means that shape movement is almost exclusively rising and sinking, as the dancer's body moves up and down. When examining dance choreography, it is evident that very little floor patterning or movement is used. However, some dances contain choreography where the dancers move either forward or back, from one side to the other, or around in an individual circle. In those cases, other shape preferences such as advancing and retreating, or gathering and scattering, may be observed. However, rising and sinking are the overwhelmingly predominant movement shape preferences.

Irish Step Dance in Newfoundland

Irish step dance is a relative newcomer to the dance scene in Newfoundland and is taught and performed mainly in two dance studios in the St.

John's area, iDance, run by Shawn Silver in St. John's, and Dance Studio East, taught by Martin Vallee in the nearby community of Conception Bay South.²⁸ I provide some comparison here to the history of the St. Pat's Dancers in order to more fully contextualize the two styles of dance in the province, and foreground the issues of Irishness discussed both in Chapter Four and further in this chapter. Irish step dance is in its infancy in Newfoundland and Labrador, and so its teachers and practitioners are in the process of negotiating what it is, who should be teaching it, what it represents and its overall place in the culture of Newfoundland and Labrador. Although there is contention among some of the dancers in the province about this dance form (particularly related to some of Shawn Silver's comments about step dance in Newfoundland, which will be discussed later), it is important to note that Irish step dancing has become a force in the Newfoundland arts scene in the past ten years.

Irish step dancing refers to the style of dance popularized by "Riverdance". While it may not seem traditional in its aesthetic of high kicks, flashy costumes and theatricalized choreography, it is important to note that it is termed Irish step dancing because it derives directly from the competitive Irish step dance circuit. As discussed earlier, this style of step dance harkens back to the late nineteenth century when the Gaelic League codified the dancing masters' techniques and created syllabi and feiseanna to promote a cohesive and consistent aesthetic. In

²⁸ Conception Bay South, or CBS, is located approximately 15 minutes from St. John's, and is considered by many to be a "bedroom community", housing daily commuters to work in St. John's.

our interview, Cullinane stated the style is referred to as “traditional” even though, over the years, kicks have become higher, clicks have become quicker and choreography has become more intricate as the dance style has become more athleticized and complex in execution. However, the moniker has stuck and thus creates a challenge to what “traditional” means when examining a modern, stylized dance form.

Martin Vallee has used his early dance training as a foundation to learning and teaching Irish step dance. Vallee’s professional dance career began in the genres of ballet and folk dance, the latter of which he credits with helping him eventually understand technique and aesthetic of Irish step dance. According to their website, Montrealese Vallee and his wife, Newfoundlander Jennifer Foley, opened up Dance Studio East just outside St. John’s in 1996, focusing on making dance accessible and enjoyable for all while providing more serious dancers with the opportunity to train in Newfoundland for as far into their career as possible. Vallee incorporated Irish step dancing into his school essentially because of the demand from students, something he attributes to the success of “Riverdance”. While the popularity of his step dance classes has grown over the years, Vallee stated in our interview that it has levelled off in the last year or so, in 2008 comprising approximately one eighth of all the classes taught at the studio. Vallee makes a clear distinction between Irish step dancing and step dancing that has been going on in Newfoundland for generations. In our interview, he stated:

Basically it is more of a style once you get into the "Riverdance" stuff. It just pulls up more and it becomes more technical which is very similar to what ballet would be like... The bottom line is, what was really interesting to me is for example when I was seeing old footage or pictures or stuff from some guy on Bell Island or Uncle Mike, who is Jennifer Foley's uncle. He was showing me some steps and you realize where a step that I would teach which is very technical and very stylized, where it comes from exactly and what it was supposed to be really from the beginning and you can actually kind of start seeing where all that, why it came that way... I think that's why it's important to know where it's coming from is that the soul of it is not the technique of it.

Vallee is very conscious of the use of technique as integral in teaching dance, but stresses that the spirit of dancing must be present, or classes and performances become hollow and simply "style with no substance." As such, he sees his role to not just teach the steps to students, but to inspire a love of dance as well. However, he does not see himself in the role of cultural ambassador, and not just because he is neither Irish nor a Newfoundlander. It is chiefly because he distinguishes between stylized "Riverdance" technique and traditional Newfoundland dance. He says in our interview:

You see it [technique] once and then you're done with technique because it's the inside, what moves you. And I think that's what's great about dance. To me, anyway, to call it dance, it has to have a celebration of

movement in it. No matter what form it's in. ...One thing I can tell you is that Newfoundland culture is not going to be carried on by me. The dance culture? I will carry it on. For sure, I can make people want to dance.

While Vallee does not see himself as a tradition bearer in any sense of the word, he is upfront about what he is teaching and his motivations for doing so. In this way he feels that he is serving the needs of dancers in the St. John's area, by teaching a popular dance style as a dance professional. His students appreciate the work he does, too. In the four years I trained with Vallee, his skill, talent and enthusiasm was infectious in his adult classes. In my interview with long-time student Paige White, she expressed similar sentiment:

I really enjoy learning from Martin. He is professionally trained and I appreciate learning from someone who is so knowledgeable in the field of dance. He draws from knowledge, experience, dance shows, videos and other kinds of dance in his classes.

White was not concerned that Vallee is not Irish, not a Newfoundlander, and not trained specifically as an Irish dancer. What mattered to her is precisely what Vallee articulated as one of his goals; that is, that he did not just teach technique (which, as a trained dancer, he is able to learn and teach accurately and clearly), but that he was able to instill in his students a love of dancing and dance culture, regardless of the style of dance they are learning.

Shawn Silver's iDance studio is the only studio dedicated solely to Irish dance in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador.²⁹ His mission statement is articulated on his website: "to promote, preserve and strengthen the traditional form of Irish dance in Newfoundland and Labrador". Indeed, Silver is one of only two dance schools, at the time of writing, who feature Irish step dance as part of their curriculum. However, Silver conflates Irish culture with Newfoundland culture throughout his promotional materials. Also on his website, his motto, "Get in touch with your inner Celt!" summarizes his goal of, "invite[ing] you to share in the Celtic heritage that continues to contribute so much to this province".

Irish step dancing is similar at heart to Irish-Newfoundland step dancing. As Vallee articulated in his comments about his Uncle Mike's dancing compared to his own, it is evident that the root of all these step dance forms is a small complement of basic steps, namely taps, hops, shuffles, kicks, toe and heel touching. The vocabulary is the same, yet the techniques differ in terms of the height of the kick, the turnout of the thigh, or the speed at which the taps are performed. Body posture and other kinesthetic elements are other sources for difference. Earlier in this chapter, an LMA analysis was provided in order to more fully understand the movement preferences seen in the Irish-Newfoundland step dance style as performed by the St. Pat's Dancers. I see the St. Pat's Dancers as

²⁹ As discussed in Chapter Three, I was unable to conduct fieldwork with Shawn Silver. It was not for lack of trying. After extensive attempts to organize interviews and participant-observation sessions, he referred me to his website and promotional materials, upon which I was forced to rely – he assured me that this would more than adequately represent his ideas. Because of the public statements that he has made about his philosophy, training and dance style, I was able to ask other professional dancers about his work.

part of Andriy Nahachewsky's presentational-participatory continuum. Perhaps vernacular Newfoundland step dance, largely participatory, is at one end, whereas the St. Pat's Dancers falls closer to the presentation end, with Irish step dancing at the far performance end of the continuum. The analogy can then be drawn that the more Irishness is implied or understood within the dance form, the less it becomes participatory and the more it becomes performative and stylized. This results in greater emphasis on costume, choreography, and upright, held body postures in order to achieve a particular aesthetic that has recently become not only accepted, but expected from audiences seeking "Irish step dance". Practitioners such as Silver emphasize these elements of Irishness as key to the dance form, insinuating that this kind of dance is, indeed, as "native" to Newfoundland as other commonly held aspects of Newfoundland culture. The numerous media reports and interviews archived on his website illustrate his insistence that Irish step dance is part of Newfoundland culture. In one article, written by travel writers Doug Long and Morri Mostow, Silver is quoted as saying:

Dancing is part of Newfoundland's Celtic culture...In smaller Newfoundland communities, everyone knows Irish rhythms. That's their entertainment...People can compare what we do with what they've seen in their grandpa's living room...People were starved for this. They love it because it's part of their cultural upbringing...[Tourists] can take home with them an intangible piece of 'the Rock'...a piece that connects them to our Newfoundland culture. (Long and Mostow)

Silver's website is filled with such testimonials, from himself, site visitors and media coverage. His insistence that he has revived part of Newfoundland culture plays into the perception of Irishness across the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. Silver's his own media savvy has served, in the past five years, to convince the public of that very fact. In many ways it seems to be working, as Silver is prominent in the public eye and has quickly established himself as a "traditional" dancer and dance teacher, much in the same way that Hobsbawm and Ranger illustrate how an invented tradition can easily become an accepted aspect of a given culture. However, his public comments have angered and upset other dancers, such as Martin Vallee, Jim Payne and Tonya Kearley, who go on record later in this chapter about how they feel about Silver's approach and promotion of his dance style, illustrating the complexity of Irish-Newfoundland identity that seems to be glossed over in much of the media coverage and popular opinion. It is important to realize that Silver's dance school is extremely popular as of 2008, and he is in demand across the island for teaching workshops and promoting the dance form. However, I would argue that his popularity stems far more from the success of "Riverdance" than a desire from the general public to learn what they think is a vernacular dance form.

Vallee and Silver teach very similar technique, emulating the Irish step dance style and passing a love for the art form on to their students, both children and adults. They learn technique in different ways – Valle primarily through video and Silver from his funded trips to Ireland – but the end result seems to be

remarkably similar. However, their underlying philosophies differ significantly. Vallee does not seek the spotlight, content to teach his classes and rely on word of mouth for students. In contrast, Silver is constantly in local media, expanding his dance empire into various communities across the island.³⁰ He conflates Irish step dance with Newfoundland step dance, something that has angered other dancers. Two very different teachers and two completely divergent attitudes towards the same dance style in a small arts community means that Irish step dancing has become fraught with controversy in the past few years. This primarily is related to the notion of Irishness in Newfoundland, and how valid those links are seen to be by various dancers in the province.

Step Dance and Irishness in Newfoundland

Over the years, step dance in Newfoundland and Labrador has undergone significant changes in context and therefore function as well. Stepping in this province evolved from a social event into a performance genre primarily through the influence of Irish culture to Newfoundland: through immigration in the 1930s, through popular culture in the 1990s. While the dance-specific influences arrived in these two waves, it is because of the established prevalence of Irish culture in Newfoundland and Labrador society that these dance forms flourished. As discussed in Chapter Four; although a majority of the population of

³⁰ According to conversations I had with Silver, in addition to information on his website, he spent much of the summer of 2007 establishing the Exploits River Dancers while juggling his St. John's studio and teaching workshops in various communities, such as Ferryland and Holyrood.

Newfoundland and Labrador is of English descent, it is arguable that Irish popular entertainments have had more staying power (and certainly more consumer appeal, especially in the tourist industry) in Newfoundland and Labrador culture. Because step dancing is intrinsically linked to its Irish roots, Irish identity is found here. Today, performances dominate as the primary mode of step dance presentation, in both vernacular and contemporary forms. Of course, contextual shifts in performance are evident in any vernacular genre in the performing arts. What sets the Newfoundland example of vernacular dance apart, then, is that the shift arrived rather markedly through the changing context from the kitchen to the stage.

Perhaps the most commonly accepted reason for the shift in context of much of Newfoundland and Labrador's folklife traditions is modernization. As communities' isolation became less marked, as electricity and its resultant inventions (such as television) became household staples, it is generally acknowledged that so-called traditional activities, such as storytelling and dancing, began to decline. The revitalization of vernacular dance, along with music, was actively pursued by proponents of what Overton has documented as Newfoundland's cultural revival beginning in the 1970s. In recent years, tourism can be seen as a significant push towards the promotion of vernacular performing genres. Irish identity has been popularized in Newfoundland and Labrador culture through the years, influenced not only by immigration and settlement patterns of early Newfoundland, but by traditional and popular arts as

well (see Johnson for an outline of the influence of Irish music and dance on Irish-American communities). Music, in particular, is key to Irish identity in this regard. From the McNulty Family, to the Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem, to Ryan's Fancy and the Sons of Erin, popular Irish music has been at the forefront of Newfoundlanders' consciousness for many years (see Pat Byrne's article, "'Stage Irish' in Britain's Oldest Colony: Introductory Remarks Towards an Analysis of the Influence of the McNulty Family on Newfoundland Music", for a discussion of popular Irish music in Newfoundland). In his study of Newfoundland folk song, Terry McDonald postulates that the Irishness of Newfoundland folk song has crowded out earlier English influence, particularly from the West Country of England (180). He concludes that, from viewing folksong as a glimpse into a culture's past, "I find both disappointing and disturbing the promotion of a body of music that purports to be an 'authentic' manifestation of Newfoundland's past but in fact is a modern creation" (190). Traditional and contemporary music created by Newfoundlanders has also been significantly paralleled to the Irish example, enabling an Irishness to pervade Newfoundland cultural identity and pave the way for other Irish art forms such as dance to become more prevalent and popular throughout the province.

Add to this Newfoundland's cultural revolution and there is a logical commingling of the arts and the Irish identity. Overton identifies this cultural revolution as the time when Memorial University of Newfoundland's Extension Services, Folklore Department and the Institute for Social and Economic

Research. Overton argues that Newfoundland's cultural revolution was based on "the assumption that Newfoundland has a distinctive culture, way of life, soul, identity" (56) and that the cultural lens of the romanticized view of Newfoundland life and culture informed the worldview of Newfoundlanders. The arts, then, came to the forefront of Newfoundland consciousness. As John G. Robb argues in his article "A Geography of Celtic Appropriations", in the book Celtic Geographies: Old Culture, New Times, the "Celtic" can be read through its links to "language, folklore, history, music, dance, art and design" (in Harvey et al. 233). While Robb is discussing the Celtic phenomenon throughout Europe, through his concept of what he calls Europe's new "Celtomania", he acknowledges the pervasiveness of the Celtic culture, particularly the arts, beyond Atlantic Europe (Harvey et al. 229). In her article "*Riverdance*': The Importance of Being Irish American", Natasha Casey identifies the significance of the "Celtic" in American culture, through her study of "Riverdance", as connoting:

...the requisite "folkness" and "tradition" that render accuracy irrelevant.

The culture and impact of "Riverdance" in the United States has produced and embraced an eager consumerist audience that considers Irish music authentic, historical and traditional. (22)

"Riverdance" here is used as the most prominent contemporary example of popular Irish cultural products that have further cemented the historical lineage (perceived and real) that pervades the Newfoundland consciousness. Other examples were discussed in Chapter Four. The current popularity of the "Irish"

(often colloquially used interchangeably with "Celtic", although the two are not the same) in Newfoundland along with Newfoundland's cultural revolution has resulted in a tendency towards an Irishness that Newfoundlanders as a people have tended to naturalize and internalize, regardless of an individual's personal ancestry. As with Reginald Byron's discussion of social propinquity in terms of Irish identity among children adopted by Irish-American parents (222), Newfoundlanders don't necessarily need to be of Irish lineage themselves in order to conform to the collective Irish identity among the Newfoundland culture as a whole.

There are numerous ways in which this Irish identity has been popularized through the arts. Much vernacular music in Newfoundland today is Irish-inspired, with a number of Newfoundland musicians singing traditional and contemporary Irish songs, touring through Ireland and writing original pieces about Ireland as the motherland. Further, in 2008, this identity is also evidenced in part through economic and cultural ties between Newfoundland and Ireland: the Ireland-Newfoundland Partnership, the Irish Business Partnerships, the Irish and Newfoundland government funded Festival of the Sea, and university funding such as the Ireland-Canada University Foundation (which is tied to Newfoundland through its founder, the late Craig Dobbin) and the Coracle Fellowship, administered through Memorial University of Newfoundland, to name a few. Through these funding agencies, creative and scholarly exchanges are occurring between the two societies on a continual basis, further cementing the

Irish identity in the Newfoundland consciousness as these projects become spread widely through the media. Of course, this identity then replicates itself through the proliferation of more creative product. It is the fact that this common construction of identity is used as a means of indicating Newfoundland's distinct cultural place within Canada that Irish-Newfoundland dance becomes a significant means of analyzing Newfoundland identity.

As Jessica Tomell-Presto argues in her dissertation *Performing Irish Identities Through Irish Dance*, those of Irish descent (in her case study, Irish-Americans) will often individualize Irish dance to suit local factors within the confines of the created Irish identity (169). The pervasiveness of the Irish influence on the arts in Newfoundland and Labrador has led to some confusion as to what kinds of step dancing are, in fact, vernacular in the Newfoundland context. In her article, "Perceptions of Irish Step Dance: National, Global, Local," Catherine Foley discusses the issue of identity in Ireland as reflected in "Riverdance". She uses the case study of "Riverdance" to illustrate how forms of cultural representation tend to become homogenized; she argues, that, "*Riverdance*' theatricalized Irish step dance from a Western perspective" (39). The homogeneous nature of "Riverdance" is one reason for its appeal; its implication of Irishness may be one reason why it has been easily integrated into Newfoundland culture and, in fact, is considered by some to actually be traditional Irish – or Newfoundland – step dancing. As step dancer Paige White

asserts in our correspondence, regardless of the linkage of the dance form to Newfoundland, Irish step dancing is popular with audiences:

In the right setting, people love to see dancers, be it the Irish step stuff or the St. Pat's stuff when Irish music is played. And it's fun being able to do that part for them. We were all over Irish step for a few years thanks to "Riverdance"! Put Newfoundland music on anywhere – a dance or a wedding – and there will be people out, doing Irish step or Newfoundland step, or just trying to do any kind of step.

The significance of the Irish identity as related to dance harkens back prior to the days of "Riverdance", as discussed earlier in this chapter. In Catherine Foley's dissertation on step dancing in North Kerry, she identifies the construction of identity as being crucial to the linking of Irish dancing to the culture. As Frank Hall observes in his dissertation on competitive Irish step dancing, this linking of dance to culture in Ireland was intrinsically politicized, as was the nature of creating an Irish identity at the time (139-142). So nationalist sentiment as expressed through dance is something that has existed in Ireland since the late nineteenth century, and with the links between Ireland and Newfoundland, it is no surprise that step dance in Newfoundland is a creative means by which that critical link is maintained and promoted.

The misconception that modern Irish step dance is, in fact, the same thing as vernacular step dancing, is one that is found in Ireland and Newfoundland. As discussed earlier in this chapter, Shawn Silver has used Newfoundland and Irish

step dance as interchangeable terms to describe what he is doing, that is essentially the stylized form of Irish step dance that can be found in countries worldwide, with or without connections to Ireland the motherland. As a place where some citizens do have Irish roots, Newfoundland does see the Irish as near and dear to its collective heart. Catherine Foley argues that Irish step dance has existed in marginal communities that have better survived cultural modernization than their urban counterparts ("Perceptions" 41). In Newfoundland and Labrador, vernacular step dancing has undergone recontextualization, and Irish-Newfoundland step dancing endures through the efforts of the St. Pat's Dancers. Irish ("Riverdance") step dance is at an embryonic stage in the early twenty-first century, finding its place amongst its two sister traditions.

While it is wonderful that a complementary style can find a place in Newfoundland culture, this particular dance style has caused some controversy in recent years. Musician and set dancer Jim Payne, and Dance Studio East owner and instructor Martin Vallee, have both written letters to the editor of The Telegram newspaper in 2002 and 2004 respectively, challenging published articles that implied that "Riverdance" style step dance is the first kind of step dancing to exist in this province. The controversy stems from two separate articles on Shawn Silver, on his dance school and on an ACOA (Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency) grant he received to study step dancing in Ireland. The two letters to the editor refuted statements that Silver made about Irish step dance being the first kind of step dancing in the province. Both articulated the

heritage of vernacular and Irish-Newfoundland step dancing, stressing the fact that modern Irish step is a recent phenomenon in Newfoundland, not a long-standing tradition (Payne "Not from Here" and Vallee "Nothing New"). Because of the degree to which this dance style is integrated into popular culture, it enjoys a very different status from other kinds of step dancing in the province. Its connection to Irish culture, however tenuous, is significant to its popularity in Newfoundland today. Many of my informants expressed concern over Silver's approach and what it meant for an understanding of Newfoundland culture and Newfoundland dance among the general public. Jim Payne likened the propensity of Newfoundlanders to cling to Irish culture as the legacy of what he called "Newfoundland's perpetual identity crisis". In our interview, he says:

There's a whole paragraph in his [Silver's] brochure about how this is steeped in [Newfoundland] history and culture and tradition and to me it's all bullshit, really. So I guess it's neither here nor there in a sense if that's what he's got to do to get people to come to his dance classes. My objection is it kind of besmirches the authenticity of the culture and it's not just a matter of Irish dance. You see that on George Street every night of the week. All the Irish drinking songs that are composed by nostalgia-ridden Irish-Americans in the pubs of Boston and New York. But I mean that's something that we've been dealing with in the last fifty years probably anyway in Newfoundland, and I suppose it's really only in the last twenty to thirty years that anybody's bothered to speak up about it.

In our interview, Payne recalled Newfoundlanders' earlier feeling of inferiority in terms of claiming their culture, and how that has shifted over the years. In our interview, while he acknowledged the importance of the historical links between Newfoundland and Ireland, Payne feels strongly that contemporary links are largely about people jumping on a bandwagon that has little to do with the collective experience of Newfoundlanders. Vallee's thoughts, as someone who was not born into Newfoundland culture, are analogous to Payne's. Vallee is adamant that professional dancers who hold structured classes are not the valid tradition bearers of Newfoundland culture, even though they have a key role to play in transmitting a love of dance to those who want to learn. He feels that he must be upfront that he is teaching a stylized, technique-oriented dance form and has a problem with Silver drawing a link from what he is teaching to Newfoundland dance and culture in general. In our interview, Vallee states:

It's just unfortunate. Irish step dancing is a thing in Ireland and Newfoundland step dancing is a different thing. It came from the same place, but – it's the same way as French Canadians are not Parisians and the dancing is not the same and the way we speak is not the same. And the same with Newfoundland people now. They don't speak like Irish people, they speak like Newfoundland people. So it would be unfortunate to think that, there was such a culture of dance here. That stuff, like you can learn it from those guys [like his Uncle Mike] what it was and then carry on and then make something out of it and that's what tradition I think

is. [What I do] is more stylized. I gear it more to performance, so it's not social. I'm still a dance school and so it's more technical that way. ...

[Shawn Silver's letter] in the paper really got me going because basically he said he was going to bring dance culture to Newfoundland. And I was like 'come on, you're not going to do that, it's already been done'. So it was just blowing hot air like advertising, so that's why I had to say it, that no, you didn't bring dancing culture to Newfoundland and there is something to be said about real traditional dance. And it exists and it's there and it's not because all of a sudden you make it more technical and stylized that it's more accurate.

None of my informants had a problem with Silver's dance school, nor his success, nor the fact that he has been instrumental in enabling Newfoundlanders – primarily in St. John's but in many other communities across the island as well – to learn and enjoy, on an impressive scale, a dance form that has taken the world by storm. The issue that came up time and time again was Silver's insistence, in the public realm, that he was somehow reviving an aspect of Newfoundland culture that had been neglected. Unfortunately, Silver passed on several opportunities to sit down for an interview, and therefore I did not have the opportunity to ask him this question myself. But with his referral to his website as the place where I could learn about his goals and mission statement for his dance school, it was evident that he does promote his dance school as something that is intrinsically linked to Newfoundland culture, past and present.

The success of his dance school may be attributed, I believe, in part to the common acceptance of Irishness as integral to Newfoundland culture, as well as the novelty of "Riverdance" in the public eye. For whatever reasons, Silver's iDance studio has certainly, in recent years, taken its place as a force to be reckoned with in Newfoundland's dance community.

The richness of step dance traditions has resulted in some confusion both within and outside the dance community in Newfoundland and Labrador. Nonetheless, step dancing and its Irish connection is firmly embedded in the collective consciousness of this province. And, as a well-known and highly respected dance group, and the first and arguably the highest profile step dance group in the province, the St. Pat's Dancers are then the very embodiment of the Irish-Newfoundland style so entrenched in Newfoundland culture. The Steiners, and the dancers, take this role very seriously. Jeff Steiner says this about tradition and the St. Pat's Dancers in an interview for The Evening Telegram in 1997:

We haven't officially developed a mission statement for the group itself, but what we try to stress to the kids is that this is a 65-year old tradition that a lot of people have put a lot of work into over 65 years. When they come into the troupe they're made aware of that and they do try to carry that tradition because we are trying to preserve part of the culture, too.

(Vaughn-Jackson)

Thus the dancers are aware of the lineage of the group, and the pride that comes from carrying on a tradition such as this. The Steiners take great pains, then, to allow not only for the flourishing of the dance form, but also for the children to form an identity as a St. Pat's Dancer, and its corresponding heritage, as well as with Irish-Newfoundland step dancing, and the cultures that it is tied to (see Figure 6.9).



Figure 6.9: Yvonne Steiner always wears this shirt to rehearsals and performances. It reads "Tap into Newfoundland Culture with the St. Pat's Dancers, St. John's, Newfoundland." Note the Newfoundland tartan on the sleeve and lettering.

In her introduction to Cultural Memory and the Construction of Identity, Liliane Weissberg discusses the link between culture and the collective social group. She argues that cultural memory is linked not only to the past, but also frames the present (Ben-Amos and Weissberg 16-18). It is the perceived cultural

link to Ireland that informs Newfoundland's identity to a large extent, even if the Irish were not the only, or even the most predominant settlers to the province. To draw a parallel to all the step dancing groups in Newfoundland today, the cultural background of the dancer is not relevant here; it is the cultural memory of Newfoundland as Irish, and the dance style's Irish roots, that are important. That is what enables all forms of step dance to not only continue, but to remain a prevalent force in the folk arts community in Newfoundland and Labrador, and allow the St. Pat's Dancers, Shawn Silver's iDance, and Martin Vallee's Dance Studio East prominence in Newfoundland culture today.

Conclusion

The St. Pat's Dancers, while performing steps that are Irish in origin, have created dances over the years in Newfoundland and consider their stepping to be intrinsically linked to Newfoundland culture. Irish step dance, taught by Martin Vallee and Shawn Silver, leans even more heavily on Irishness, as their dance schools teach a style that not only boasts direct Irish lineage, but is also a living, breathing tradition in Ireland and the Irish diaspora today. It is a recent import to Newfoundland but has been embraced by Newfoundlanders, in part, because of the perceived Irishness that envelops the province's culture overall. The influence of Ireland over step dance, in particular, in Newfoundland and Labrador cannot be underestimated, but it remains to be seen how long that influence will last.

Over their almost eighty year existence, the St. Pat's Dancers has become prominent in both artistic communities and in the consciousness of the general public of the province. Starting as part of the education system in one school, the group has spread in numbers and has therefore acclimatized itself in its Newfoundland home. By allowing the children to teach each other, to choreograph new pieces and set them to local tunes (Y. and J. Steiner), the St. Pat's Dancers truly embraced the hybrid nature of Irish-Newfoundland step dance. The heritage of the group is perhaps expressed best by Jeff and Yvonne Steiner in 1996:

[We] remain committed because it allows the students to take pride in an organization that has been around for more than 60 years. Not only are the students fashioning a stronger character for themselves, but they are making Newfoundlanders proud while dancing into the hearts of fans everywhere. (Green 11)

As a group for children, the St. Pat's Dancers is significant in that it provides many of the physical and emotional benefits of dancing: physical fitness, coordination, rhythm, and a sense of accomplishment at mastering new skills. Further, as children become senior members of the group, there are some very significant rewards, namely, that they become part of the performance group, and they are permitted to become instructors to the new recruits. Perhaps one of the most significant gifts – at least for some – is the cultural link to Newfoundland past and present. While it may not overtly be a part of every

rehearsal, the heritage of the group and its roots with Irish dance is gently incorporated into the activities of the group, from their considerable involvement in St. Patrick's Day celebrations to the Newfoundland tartan that the children wear in a show. Thus a feeling of pride is instilled in the children, enabling in both the dancer and the public they entertain, the collective memory of Newfoundland's Irish heritage to continue.

Irish step dancing takes its place most recently alongside the St. Pat's Dancers, primarily through iDance and Dance Studio East. Both groups, along with other dancers and dance aficionados, are currently negotiating the minefield of culture and tradition that has been at the forefront of this dance style in the past five years. Seemingly, as with invented traditions, many Newfoundlanders are embracing Irish step dance as part of their Newfoundland heritage, accepting Silver's assertions as such and accepting Irish step dance as yet another example of the Irishness of Newfoundland culture. As of 2008, this debate is ongoing and where Irish step dancing will end up in the canon of Newfoundland dance remains to be seen. However, the complex negotiations among dancers and audiences alike regarding what comprises Newfoundland culture is ongoing, and continues to be debated.

Just as McKay has identified tartanism with Nova Scotian culture (including Scottish performative culture such as the Highland Fling), so has Irishness, in part through cultural products such as traditional Irish and Irish-Newfoundland step dance, pervaded the Newfoundland sensibility. Step dancing

itself in Newfoundland and Labrador has endured a significant contextual shift in order to remain relevant as both cultural piece and performance genre and it continues to evolve in context and function today, while adhering to the Newfoundland collective identity. The final chapter of this dissertation links the case studies through the concept of Irishness as it relates to dance. It provides some conclusions about the dance forms as a whole, identifies further areas for study, and offers the reader some food for thought regarding how dance in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, reflects and addresses the larger philosophical questions of authenticity, heritage and revival.

Chapter Seven: Conclusions

Why Irishness?

Throughout this study, I have examined how Irishness is manifest in vernacular dance in Newfoundland. In Chapter Four, I discussed some of the historical moments in the development of Newfoundland culture that have led to the perception that Newfoundland is Irish, and that Newfoundlanders are analogous to their Irish compatriots. And while there are definite linkages between the two places, in migration, landscape, and a number of folk traditions, the same can be said for many other places across the globe. As I outlined in Chapter Six, the globalization of Irish culture, in large part due to the success of "Riverdance", has hastened the dissemination of Irish culture and has emphasized, even perhaps legitimized, Hiberno-Newfoundland tendencies. The question that remains, then, is why? We know that Irishness is popular. We know that there are ties between Ireland and Newfoundland. But since the same may be said for England, Scotland, and other cultures, the reasons for Newfoundland leaning on the symbolism of the Emerald Isle must run deeper. They are linked to the internalized identity of Newfoundlanders as well as the important role that tourism has played in creating that identity. And those concepts underlie the dance groups in my case studies.

I would argue that Irishness, more than symbols of shamrocks, Guinness and fairies, is a state of mind, analogous to the collective cultural memory that

Liliane Weissberg discusses in her introduction to Cultural Memory and the Construction of Identity (see Ben-Amos and Weissberg). Even though Guinness and fairy images are stereotypical, perhaps even merely simulacra, they are a strong semiotic link to place and culture. Simulacra are often considered merely a shadow of the real. According to Baudrillard, however, the simulacrum moves away from being a copy of the real, and becomes real in its own right (1-3).

Perhaps one of the most ubiquitous images of Ireland is that of the Irish pub, which is inextricably linked to the stereotype of the fun-loving Irish drunkard. So popular is the concept of the Irish pub, that it has been exported worldwide. In addition to a wide variety of local envisagements of the Irish pub, those who wish to re-create an "authentic" Irish pub can acquire one, made to order. As Cian Molloy notes in his history, The Story of the Irish Pub, companies such as the Guinness-owned Irish Pub Company and the Irish Pub Design and Development Company will assemble your Irish pub anywhere in the world, the latter of which offers six stylistic choices: cottage pub, old brewing house, the shop pub, the Gaelic pub, the Victorian pub and the contemporary pub (91). The meticulous re-creation of the Irish pub and its ambience encapsulates everything stereotypically Irish: charm, rowdiness, relaxation, quaintness, laughter, and overall fun. In sum, the Irish pub as a symbol of the country and its people represents the very things that people look for in a vacation. In other words, the simulacra become the hyper-real, which is then what people expect and desire in their leisure time activities, similar to the symbolic inversion that Barbara Babcock describes in

The Reversible World. As much as the Irish pub does not equate the reality of Ireland and its people, the stereotype is highly symbolic of the freedom to act in ways in which individuals normally do not act, enabling themselves to use their leisure time to pursue activities related to the hyper-reality of Ireland and the Irish.

And this is important to my study since my case study groups are firmly embedded in the realm of leisure. Dance Up, my chief example of Newfoundland set dance, is participatory for tourists and locals, relying on the paying audience members to become the dancers, essentially what Kernan and Domzal refer to as action leisure (92ff). Set dance's recontextualized form, Dance Up, still retains that first existence feel for the social, the active, the recreational. Step dancing, while more presentational rather than participatory, is leisure activity for both dancer and audience member. For the dancers, it provides exercise and camaraderie in the form of recreation; and for the audience member it provides spectacle to watch, enjoy, and perhaps dance vicariously through the performers onstage. There is no doubt that these are leisure activities for all involved.

Kernan and Domzal argue that leisure, in their case action leisure, can be used as a means of examining real life. They state that leisure activities are a reversed version of quotidian life, and so studying action leisure activities can illuminate more about the identity of those individuals during their non-leisure life (91-92). They use Urry's concept of the tourist leisure gaze – which reflects what people sense and how they perceive, appreciate and anticipate leisure activities

– as key to understanding how societies have constructed appropriate ways to conduct leisure activities, and how to enjoy them (93). The gaze that tourists cast upon Newfoundland, therefore, is soaked in the Irish stereotypes that Newfoundland has played upon in its external tourism branding, which has then been internalized by the province's residents. Newfoundlanders – as a collective – want to be seen as friendly, artistic, hard-working and funny. In her study on symbolism in Irish marketing, Signifying Place: The Semiotic Realisation of Place in Irish Product Marketing, Sheila Gaffey refers to Urry's concept of the "end of tourism", stating that people consume tourist images and practices constantly, regardless of whether they are actually travelling or not (5). Newfoundland's tourist images (such as 2008 televised encouragements for Newfoundlanders to be a tourist at home) are constantly flouted throughout the province through visual media. Moreover, they have become so ingrained in the Newfoundland collective consciousness, they are experienced by Newfoundlanders through events such as the George Street festival (an annual festival celebrating a street chock-a-block with bars and live Irish music), products such as Newfoundland Screech (rum associated with the Screech-In ceremony) and folk festivals throughout the summer (where local musicians abound).

As much as some lament the reliance on the tourist dollar to stay afloat, there is no denying that without tourism, the province's economy as a whole would suffer. As much as offshore oil is booming in 2008, the benefits are largely confined to the capital city, and much of the remainder of the province struggles

to entice more and more visitors to the island in the face of increasing fuel costs and rising airline prices. Therefore Newfoundland and Labrador as a whole continues to push its most popular images to the world – and to itself. And because of those historical and ideological ties, Irishness – which in itself is a highly saleable concept – is a logical way to promote Newfoundland culture. And through the passage of time, the simulacra that are symbolic of the Irish, and adopted by Newfoundland to epitomize the province as the penultimate leisure destination, become the hyper-real. Newfoundland believes its own press, which further cements these symbols into the Newfoundland collective consciousness. And that lends further credence to dance forms that are “Irish” that are already established in their own right as intangible artistic expressions of the province’s cultural identity.

Why Do People Dance?

It is clear that Irishness is a key piece to the discussion of the importance of set dance and step dance in Newfoundland culture. However, dance as an action leisure pursuit is significant not only to the consumer of the dance, but to the producer of dance as well. As with any study of an aesthetic or creative activity, the choice to practice that pursuit is optional, in that it is not necessary for physical survival. So, of all the possible activities to fill one’s professional or recreational time, why dance? This is neither a rhetorical question nor one with a simple answer. Throughout this dissertation I have moved toward some of the many answers that I heard from dancers and dance teachers who I observed

through my fieldwork, that I read in the scholarly literature, and that I myself have experienced as a dancer. In his work The Dialogic Imagination, Mikhail Bakhtin identified social heteroglossia as a means by which people can engage in multiple social discourses. Although a core understanding of language is necessary, variety in language use and understanding results in multiple meanings and understandings (291). In the same way, people may interpret dance and reasons for dancing in different ways. The dance form may be the same, but the reasons may differ from person to person and situation to situation. While no one reason satisfies every dancer in any given dance form, there are some that bear mention here as a move toward some concluding thoughts on this study.

People dance to practice and share culture. This may not be a conscious choice, however, that should not negate its importance. Perhaps this is the reason that dance lends itself the most to an ethnographic study. Its scholarly utility aside, culture is ingrained in all dance forms. Just as Joann Kealiinohomoku asserted about ballet, all dance has ethnicity, and therefore all dance is ethnic dance ("An Anthropologist"). The dance forms in this study have overt ethnic ties. Each is rooted in an Irish heritage, yet exists in (and performs) contemporary Newfoundland culture. Therefore the dance forms studied here are the embodiment of both the past and the present, allowing their participants to not only experience an intangible cultural product from their Irish roots, but the current manifestation of that product in Newfoundland today. At the heart of the

connection between these dance groups is the notion of Irishness that in Newfoundland was forged through years of migration patterns coupled with geographic isolation and a move towards national sentiment. Regardless of the extent to which they embrace and promote their Irishness, the dance groups are part of the fabric of Newfoundland culture. So those who choose to dance in these dance groups form a bond that links them not only with perceived and real Irishness of the dance form, but with the importance of the dance form in Newfoundland culture today.

People dance to create community. I would argue that it is not important whether that community is consciously or deliberately created, or whether it happens organically from the activity itself. Aside from cultural ties, dancing bonds people together as dancers, whether they identify themselves as such or not. As Victor Turner states in his work on ritual, a liminal experience brings people together in *communitas*, or a community, through what Turner calls the "modality of social relationship" (96). To draw a parallel, dance classes may be considered liminal experiences as they exist in the threshold between banal everyday experiences and artistic expression. To be in a dance class is to explore movement, the body, music and creativity. Such socially liminal action may result in the feeling of *communitas*, thereby bringing dancers together in a way that is distinct from their other relationships. This was particularly evident in observing neophyte dancers become more comfortable with the movement in question. While at first they were hesitant and even somewhat awkward, as they

moved (and interacted with other dancers), their corporeal ease led to emotional openness, too. I observed *communitas* develop in two ways. First, by the end of every dance session in each group, dancers were relaxed, laughing and chatting more so than they were at the beginning of the practice. Second, over my period of observation, I noticed that the St. Pat's Dancers as a whole became more cohesive through their dancing and socializing, epitomizing *communitas*. This was not possible at Dance Up, as the complement of the group changed with every event. However, because of the brevity of experience, Kearley worked to create the feeling of community with every group on each occasion for the event. That bonding, that community feeling, fosters enthusiasm and enjoyment and commitment to the dancing at hand.

To parallel Bahktin's studies on linguistics, people engage in activities – such as dance – for many reasons. They may not be aware of all the reasons at any one time, and their reasons may change from day to day. Therefore dance groups must be open to providing such possibilities to their dancers on an ongoing basis. While no one group can be all things to all people, a successful dance form will be complex enough and flexible enough so that, while it retains a core identity, it is open to individual interpretation to satisfy its dancers. One of the reasons that the dance groups used in these two case studies have succeeded is that, through Irishness as an essential aspect of Newfoundland culture, they have managed to retain a central, communal identity. Shifting their

contexts means that they have changed through the continuum of dynamic and conservative forces while preserving their cultural appeal.

The Case Studies

Interdisciplinarity has become a significant way for scholars to traverse boundaries in their work, revealing and forging new and intriguing previously unexplored links between disciplines. As discussed in Chapter Two, there is a stable and growing group of dance scholars who work in folklore, anthropology and community studies as the basis of their research. As such, I am far from the first to tackle these two disciplines and bring them together through theory and practice. I have sought, rather, to build on the work of scholars such as Colin Quigley, Andriy Nahachewsky and Joann Kealiinohomoku, who have provided theoretical paths upon which to tread in linking dance forms to their social and cultural contexts. Aside from this most obvious contribution to scholarship of tackling a previously under-studied subject – in this case, Newfoundland dance – it is my hope that this study contributes in more subtle and complex matters not only to each disparate discipline, but as a means of fostering interdisciplinary studies to bring my fields of study together through my case studies.

In my dissertation, I selected case studies as a means by which I would examine issues related to vernacular dance in Newfoundland and Labrador. I chose to link together my case studies through geography and issues. The geographic proximity for my case studies came about for several reasons. First,

although I had a greater amount of choice in terms of locating and choosing dance groups who would be amenable to participating in my study, St. John's is certainly the population, economic, and arguably the cultural centre of the province. Second, this was the most accessible location, providing me with plenty of fieldwork opportunities that I could engage in over a period of time. Therefore I was dealing, consciously, with dance groups who were based in an urban, comparatively wealthy part of the province. But the most significant reason for my selection of these groups is the issues that connect them.

When first choosing my case studies in 1997, I looked for a representative sample of the main vernacular dance genres in Newfoundland and Labrador. That led me to the selection of set dance and step dance, each practiced and performed by a number of groups. I was as yet unsure of the "big question," or underlying issue that would connect both, other than the fact that they were based on vernacular dance forms and maintain Newfoundland heritage. As I moved through my field, archival and library research, it became evident that there were several theoretical concepts that were applicable to both dance genres, namely, recontextualization and folklorism. However, none of the theoretical concepts that I came across fully explained why each dance group, with its distinct historical lineage, its particular dance style and its specific place in contemporary Newfoundland society, fit in with the other groups within the collective Newfoundland consciousness. Not only had each group survived as a vernacular dance form, but each had remained relevant to Newfoundland and

Labrador culture today. The dance groups are well known and highly respected not only in the folk and dance communities in the province, but are known to others outside the dance and folk arts communities. These groups are in demand at performances and events of various kinds throughout the year, both within and outside the province. I was intrigued, then, that such a typically under-funded and sometimes marginalized art form, vernacular at that, had emerged a survivor, intact, in a contemporary setting.

It was then that I began to problematize the concept of Newfoundland identity through the real and perceived Irishness that is evident in so much of Newfoundland cultural expression. Although my case study groups fulfill different functions both historically and in the present, they are integrated in the Newfoundland collective consciousness as cultural products. Once I had established this significant commonality, I was able to explore how Irishness fit with each group, satisfying my desire to understand how groups with such disparate heritage and artistic backgrounds were able to share a significant place in the larger Newfoundland culture context. It is that underlying theme that ultimately informed the writing of this thesis.

Chapter One introduced my study and laid out the motivations behind my topic, case studies, and approach. This chapter situated vernacular dance in Newfoundland and Labrador today, providing cultural context to my study. I introduced some of the issues that are related to vernacular dance in

Newfoundland and Labrador today, and how my case studies reflect the reality of these issues in practice.

The theoretical and methodological approaches underlying my study were outlined in Chapters Two and Three. In Chapter Two, I reviewed the existing dance and folklore literature relevant to my thesis, identifying key concepts that were central to my study. By defining terms such as “folk”, “vernacular”, “traditional”, “folk dance” and “vernacular dance”, in the early part of this chapter I unpacked some of the positive and negative aspects of existing definitions, and discuss how I intended to use these terms in this study. From there, other theories were explored through examination of the corpus of published and archival research used in my case studies. Chapter Three summarized the methodological approaches used in field and research methods. A discussion of fieldwork methods, as well as practical methodological approaches determined how the research was completed. Chapter Four focused on Irishness in Newfoundland, how that has developed historically, and how that concept is manifest in Newfoundland today. That chapter laid out the significant theoretical thread in this study, laying out the map for the case study chapters that followed.

Through the analysis of each of the case studies, I examined the nature of the vernacular within the group today, underscored by the concept of recontextualization. The contextual approach was balanced with consideration of LMA elements of each dance style, thereby enabling the reader to envision the qualities of the dance style thus linking the theoretical and the performance, key

to any dance study. Each chapter focused on one dance group, using further field research with complementary groups to highlight the issues of recontextualization and Irishness that are found in both set dance and step dance in Newfoundland today.

Chapter Five, on set dance, illustrated what lies at the intersection between arts and commerce, through various lenses. Tonya Kearley has forced the recontextualization of Newfoundland set dance through her participatory event, and commodified it in a concrete way by making it a paid event. By extending the participation to tourists, as well as locals, Kearley has completely shifted the previous context-specific dance form into a far more open and accessible event. While Kearley initially denies the importance of Irishness in the Dance Up event, it is manifest in several ways. First, Dance Up is unabashedly a tourist event. The tourist industry in Newfoundland parallels that in Ireland by focusing on similarities in terms of history, landscape, the arts and qualities or characteristics of the locals. Thus, whether Dance Up is explicitly advertised as having Irish roots or not, using it as a tourist event, part of the richness of Newfoundland's arts community, means that participants often automatically make that linkage, which Kearley acknowledges is common. Second, many of the dances in the Newfoundland repertoire (and therefore many of the dances upon which Kearley alters and creates her own dances) have Irish roots (in part or completely), and so there is also a real Irish link to the dances. While I have

situated set dancing at the far end of the Irishness continuum of Newfoundland culture, the links – though subtle – are undeniable.

The case study on step dancing is at the other end of the continuum, overtly proclaiming its Irishness. While the Irish were significant in terms of the historical and cultural development of Newfoundland society historically, they are not, demographically, the largest cultural group in the province today. However, in the arts – especially the vernacular arts – the Irishness of Newfoundland culture is emphasized, sometimes to the marginalization or exclusion of other links. It is in this light that the St. Pat's Dancers, performing a hybrid of Irish-Newfoundland step dancing, is discussed. Although the St. Pat's Dancers group does have strong Irish roots, many of the dances were later created in Newfoundland, thereby firmly establishing the vernacular nature of the group in Newfoundland and Labrador. Thus, its recontextualization has occurred on a local cultural level, while espousing its Irish and Newfoundland heritages through choreography, costume and performance venues. The other two dance groups discussed in this chapter, Shawn Silver's iDance and Martin Vallee's Dance Studio East, are even further embedded in this Irish identity. Both those dance schools teach Irish step dance which has become popular in Newfoundland in the last ten years, primarily because of the global impact that "Riverdance" has had. Because of the Irishness that has been embraced in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, perhaps it has been easy for these two dance schools to offer classes in Irish step dance and to maintain high enrollment and

enthusiasm among dancers of all ages. Perhaps Irishness is also the reason why Shawn Silver's contention, that he is teaching a dance style that is as much traditional Newfoundland culture as it is Irish culture, has been widely accepted by the public. While some of his statements have been controversial and upsetting to other dancers, he has obviously struck a chord with his dance classes and the success of his school may, in part, be attributed to the ties that Newfoundlanders often feel towards Ireland.

Taken together, the case studies can be viewed in several ways. They provide an overview of some of the major performance groups/venues in Newfoundland and Labrador in 2008. They are evidence of the significance of vernacular dance in the present, through their historical past. They can also be viewed as examples of how a shift in context – in function, geography, venue – can permit not only the survival of a vernacular arts genre, but allow for its popularization. Posen's idea of recontextualization is one that becomes increasingly significant in an examination of vernacular dance in a contemporary context. And of course through changes over time and space, each group has utilized – sometimes consciously, sometimes unconsciously – Irishness in terms of Newfoundland's collective identity in order to retain its core. It is because of this strong link to identity, coupled with a contextual shift, that each dance genre has remained relevant in Newfoundland and Labrador today.

Areas for Future Study

Any study that aims at a focused analysis is, by necessity, limited in scope. It is my hope that this dissertation will function in several ways. First, I see it as complementary to Quigley's work on vernacular dance in Newfoundland. Where Quigley concentrated on social dance in rural Newfoundland, primarily set dance, my attention was on presentational dance in an urban setting. I also selected dance genres that were linked together not simply by virtue of geographic proximity, but because of their interwoven issues of tradition, heritage, and revival. Most striking was the fact that each genre ascribed to the notion of Irishness as a means of not only surviving as a vernacular dance genre in Newfoundland and Labrador, but also to remain relevant as a part of the collective Newfoundland consciousness. These main reasons for my selection of genres, groups and location informed my study as a whole.

While this is by no means meant to be an exhaustive study of all vernacular dance in Newfoundland and Labrador, or performance dance for that matter, I hope that my selection is representative of some of the most significant genres of dance in this province, as well as case studies that are symbolic of the issues, positive and negative, that confront the folk arts in many cultures today. I also hope to broaden understanding of how dance and folklore are inherently related to one another, and how the theoretical approaches from one discipline can be applied to the other. In the end, it is my hope that this is a truly

interdisciplinary study that fully integrates both dance and folklore through the lens of dance in Newfoundland.

There were many choices that I made throughout the research, writing and editing processes that have informed this final version. Just as Quigley's work inspired my own, I am hoping that my dissertation will prompt future work on vernacular dance in Newfoundland. For example, music is integral to the success of most dance styles, and is certainly an essential component of both my case studies. I made a conscious decision to only touch upon music in my own discussions where necessary. Including lengthy discussions of the music involved for each genre would have drawn attention away from the dance itself. Because I wanted to focus on both kinesthetic movement analysis and the social/cultural contexts of each dance form, music could not also be at the forefront. However, I would like to stress that analysis of the integration of music and dance would be beneficial to furthering the understanding of each of these dance genres.

My intent with this dissertation was to examine each case study in the present; that is, to illustrate how each case study was entrenched in contemporary Newfoundland culture, and how the group remained relevant. In order to do so, a brief historical examination of each genre was in order; however, I elected not to provide overly detailed historical data. Again, my focus was on the vernacular in contemporary settings, so the past was a backdrop against which the present could be explored. Further study could trace the

history of any of my groups back to its mother country, and conduct a parallel investigation into how that particular dance form has evolved over the years in its country of origin.

Finally, there are numerous dance forms in St. John's today, as in the rest of Newfoundland and Labrador. The teaching, learning and performing of dance ventures beyond the vernacular. Dance schools have flourished particularly in St. John's in recent years, dance is taught in some schools, and programs such as Learning Through the Arts and ArtSmarts may include dance in their program activities. Children and adults alike learn ballet, jazz, modern, hip hop, flamenco, and many other kinds of dance in various contexts in a number of settings. Arts policy is also significant in terms of how much dance is seen and learned. A thorough examination of all dance genres in the multiplicity of settings, would surely give a more complete picture of the status of dance in Newfoundland and Labrador today.

These are just a few examples of other avenues that could be explored further to this dissertation. Because the arts are so integral to the underlying values and symbols of any society, I see this as opportunity for greater understanding of how tradition and culture are inherently connected to identity through the arts in Newfoundland and Labrador.

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Appendix A : Glossary of Effort-Shape Concepts
From Cecily Dell, A Primer for Movement Description

Effort

Flow: free – bound

Weight: light – strong

Time: sustained – quick

Space: direct – indirect

Combinations of Effort Elements

Float: indirect, light, sustained

Wring: indirect, strong, sustained

Press: direct, strong, sustained

Glide: direct, light, sustained

Dab: direct, light, quick

Flick: indirect, light, quick

Slash: indirect, strong, quick

Punch: direct, strong, quick

Shape

Shape Flow: grow – shrink, folding – unfolding

Directional Movement: spoke – arc

Shaping Movement: gathering – scattering, rising – narrowing, sinking – advancing, widening – retreating

Other relevant concepts

Reach Space: near reach – intermediate reach – far reach (within an individual's kinesphere)

Planes: door plane (vertical cycle) – table plane (horizontal cycle) – wheel plane (somersault cycle)

Body part movement initiation: simultaneous – sequential

Bodily involvement: postural – gestural

Use of trunk: solid unit – midline division – two units – four quadrants

Spatial stress: body axis held – vertical stress – width stress – vertical with diagonal stress

Appendix B: Notation Scores

Set Dance: Strip the Willow

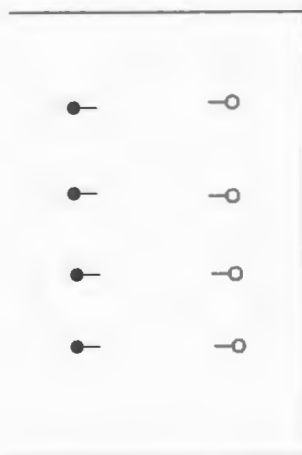
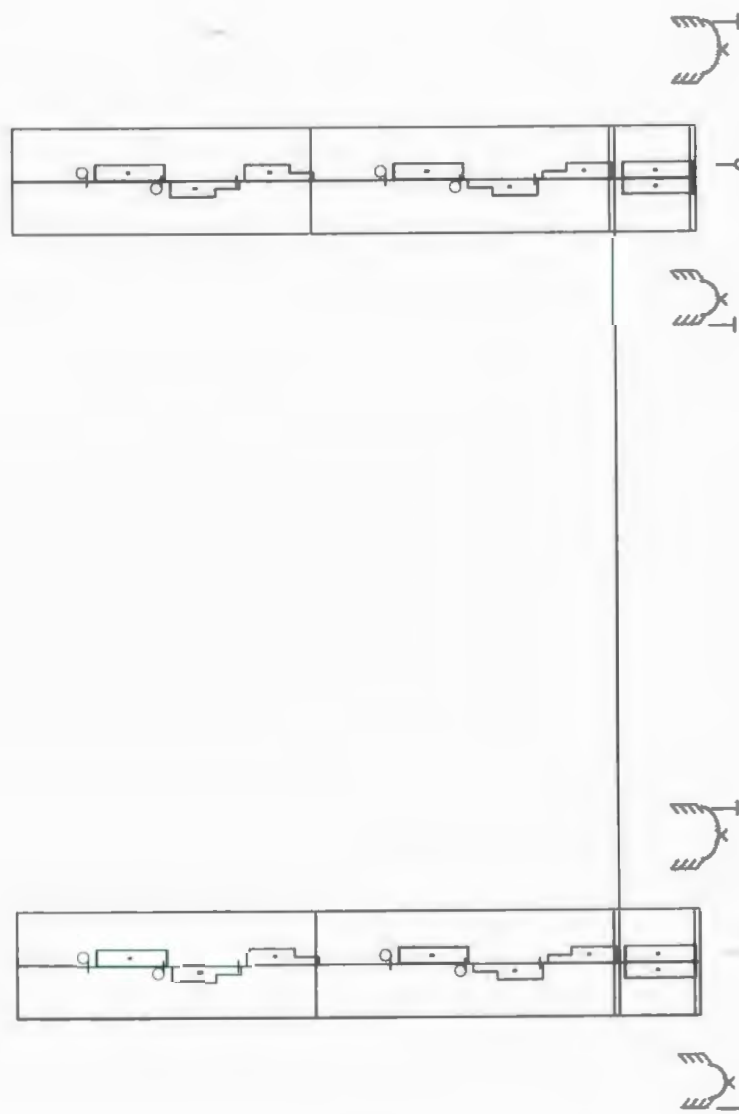
Set Dance: Six-Handed Reel

Irish-Newfoundland Step Dance: Double Batter

Irish-Newfoundland Step Dance: Merchant Durkin

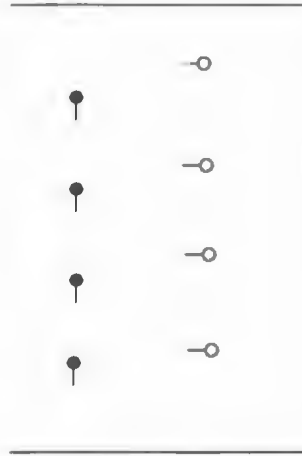
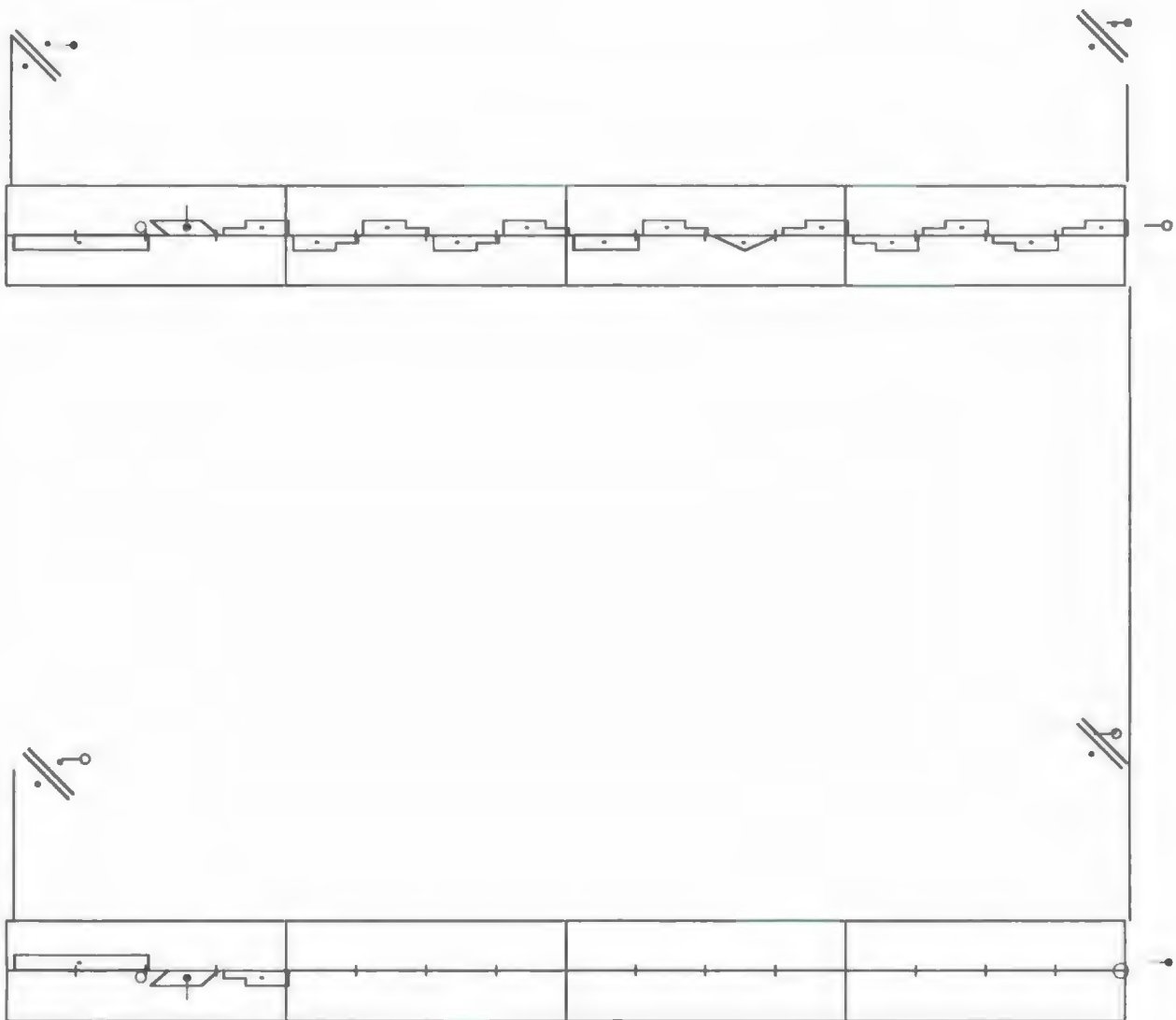
Newfoundland Set Dance

Strip the Willow

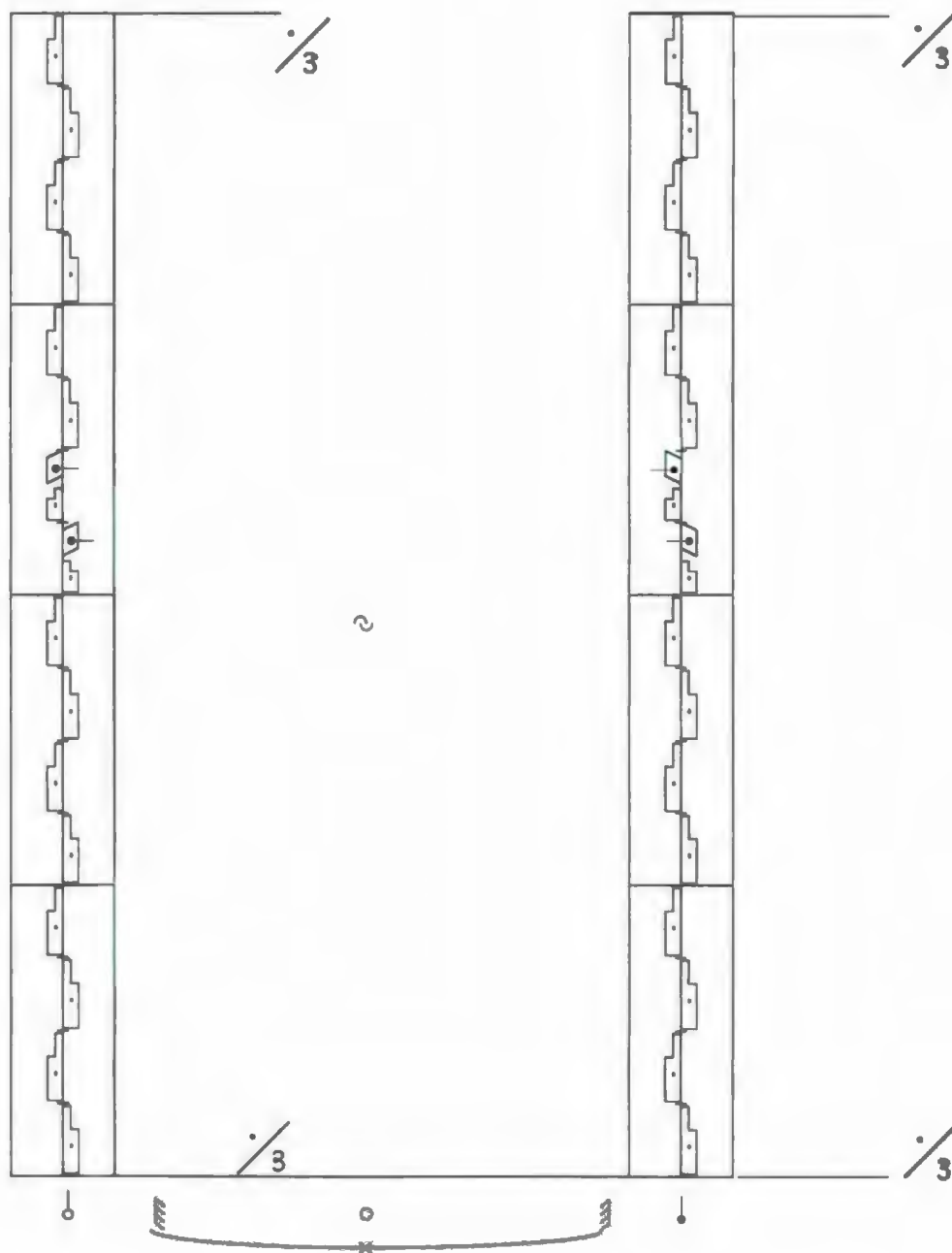


Hold the hand of
the person next to
you

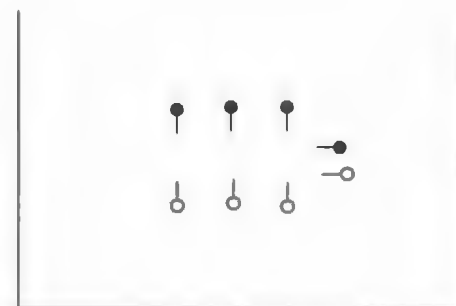
Side By Each



Bridge
lead couple



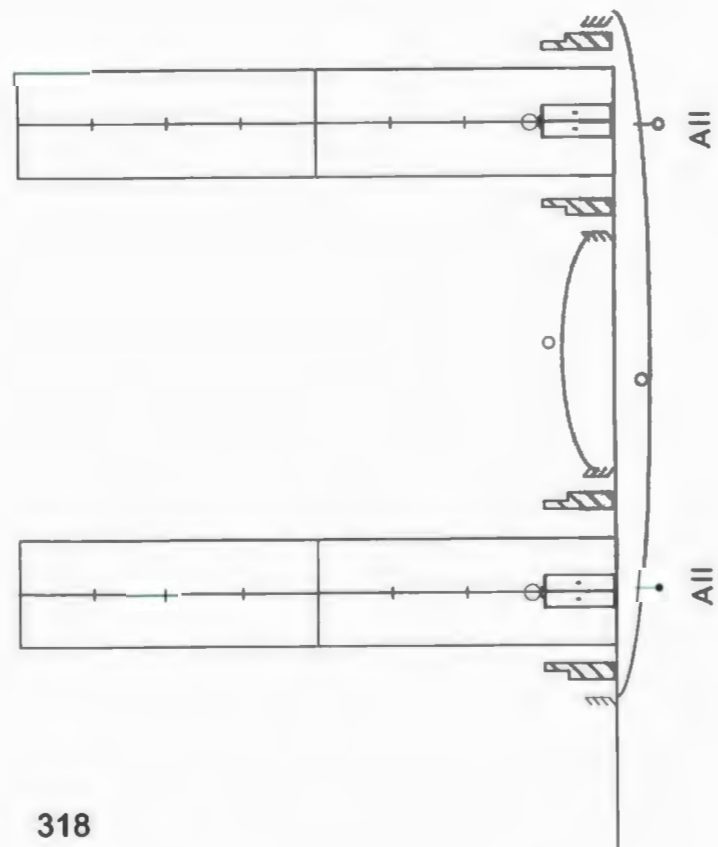
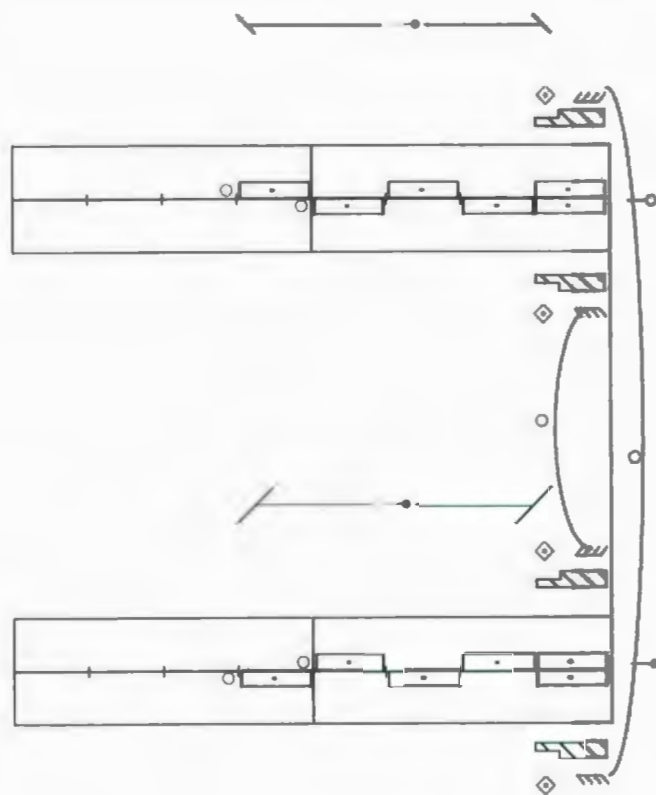
After the third pass under
the bridge the lead couple
moves to bottom of line and
next couple becomes lead.



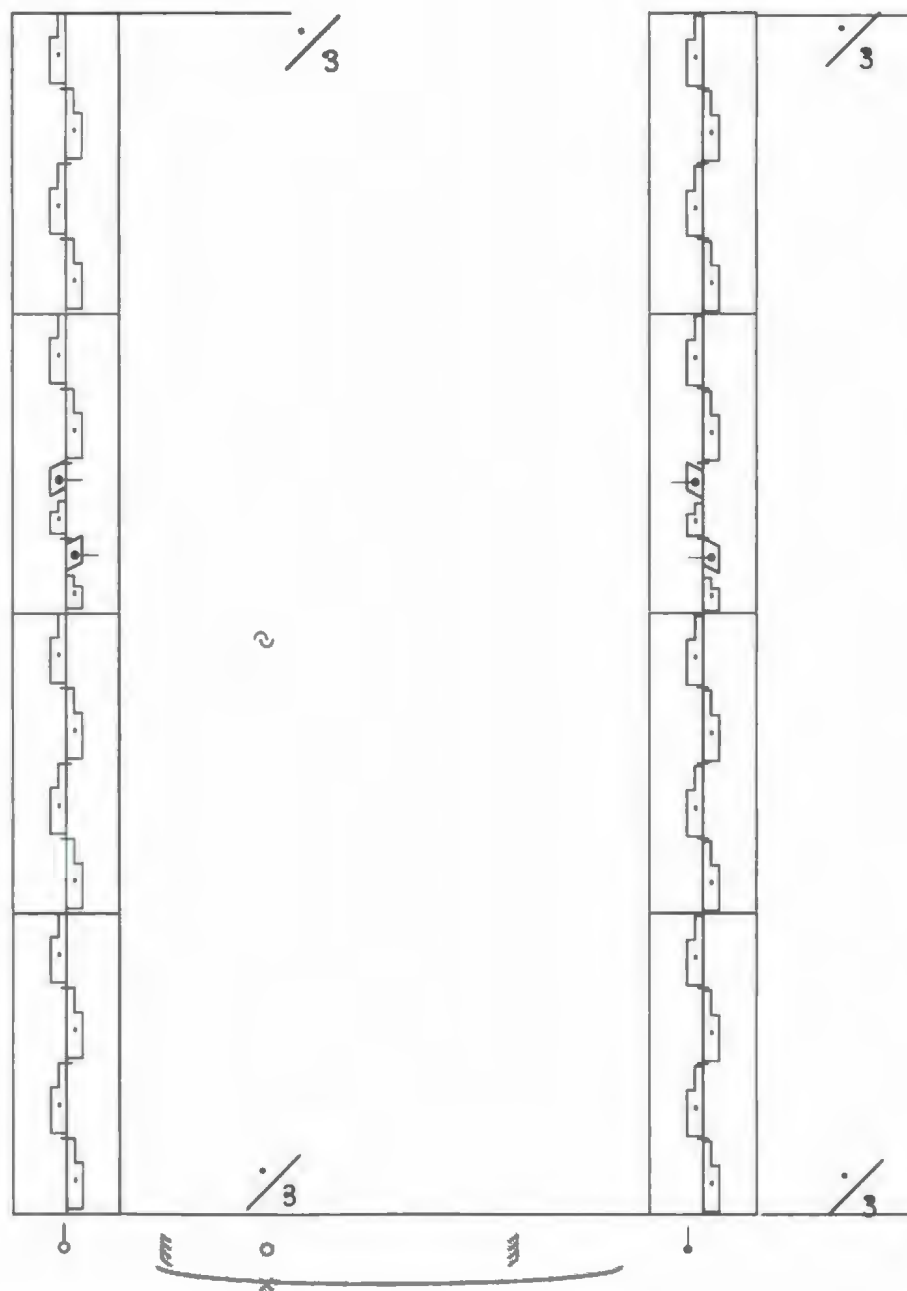
Bridge

Line formation

As lead couple passes each
couple in line turns under
their own arms

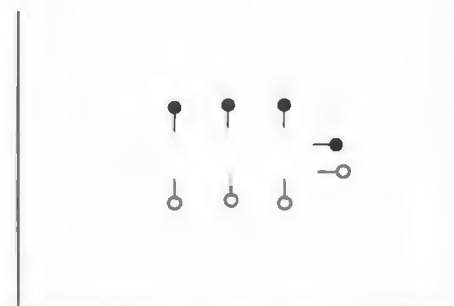


Line Promenade lead couple



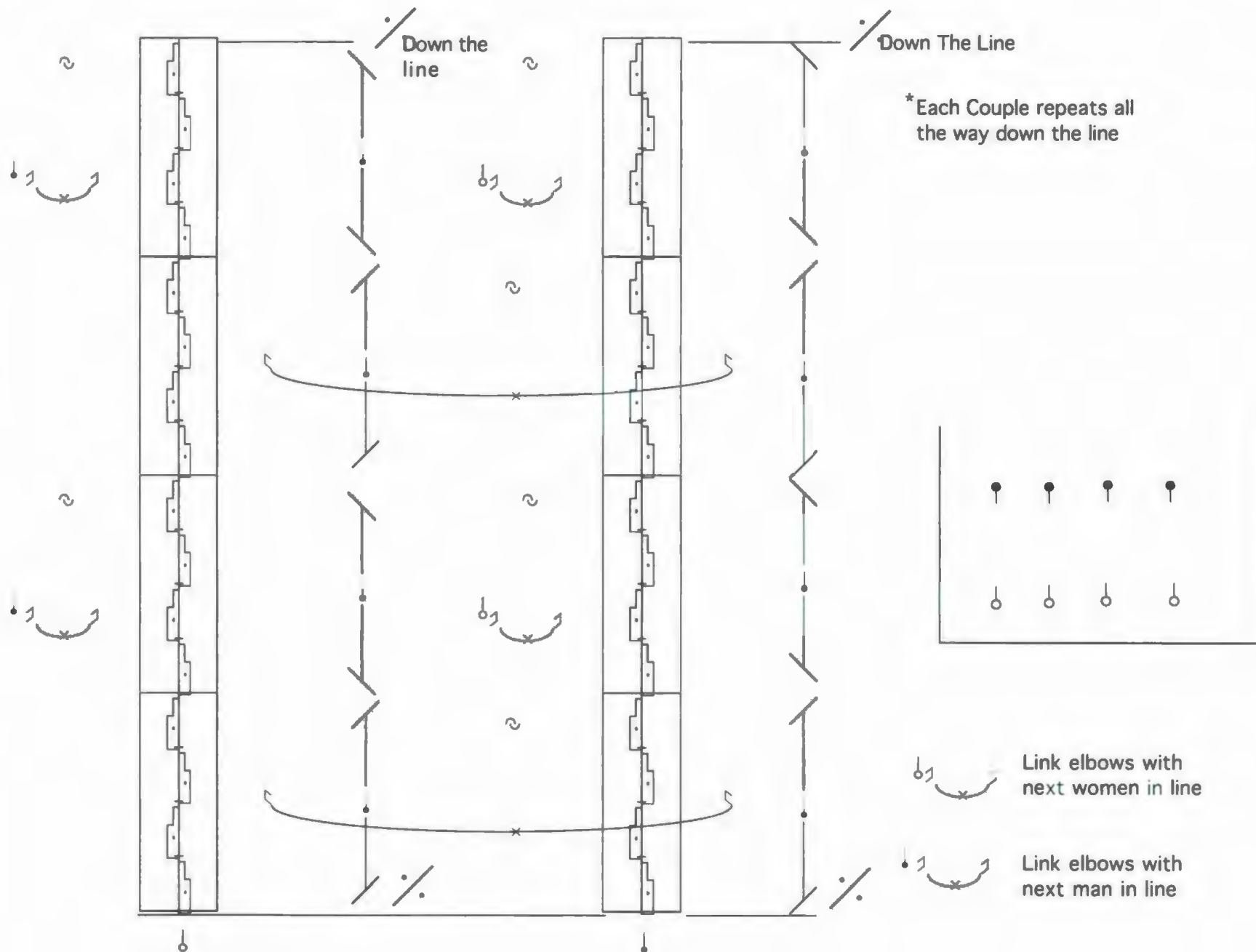
As the lead couple goes back round the outside, all other couples step toward each other and back out again.

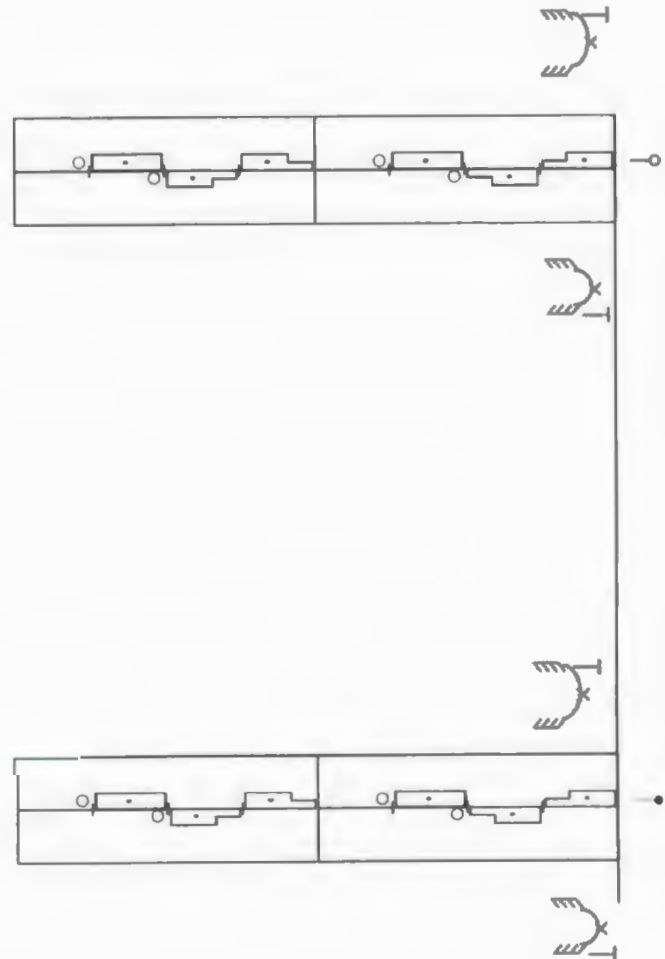
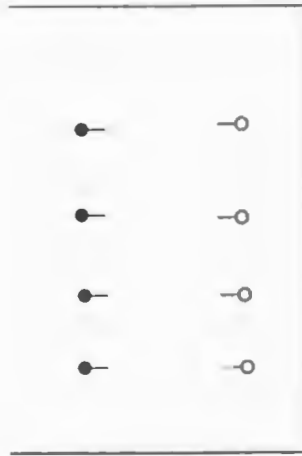
After the third repeat the lead couple goes to the bottom of the line allowing a new lead couple

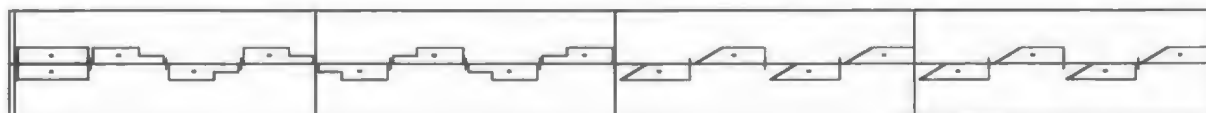


Promenade

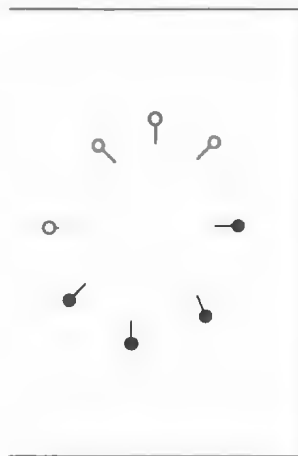
320





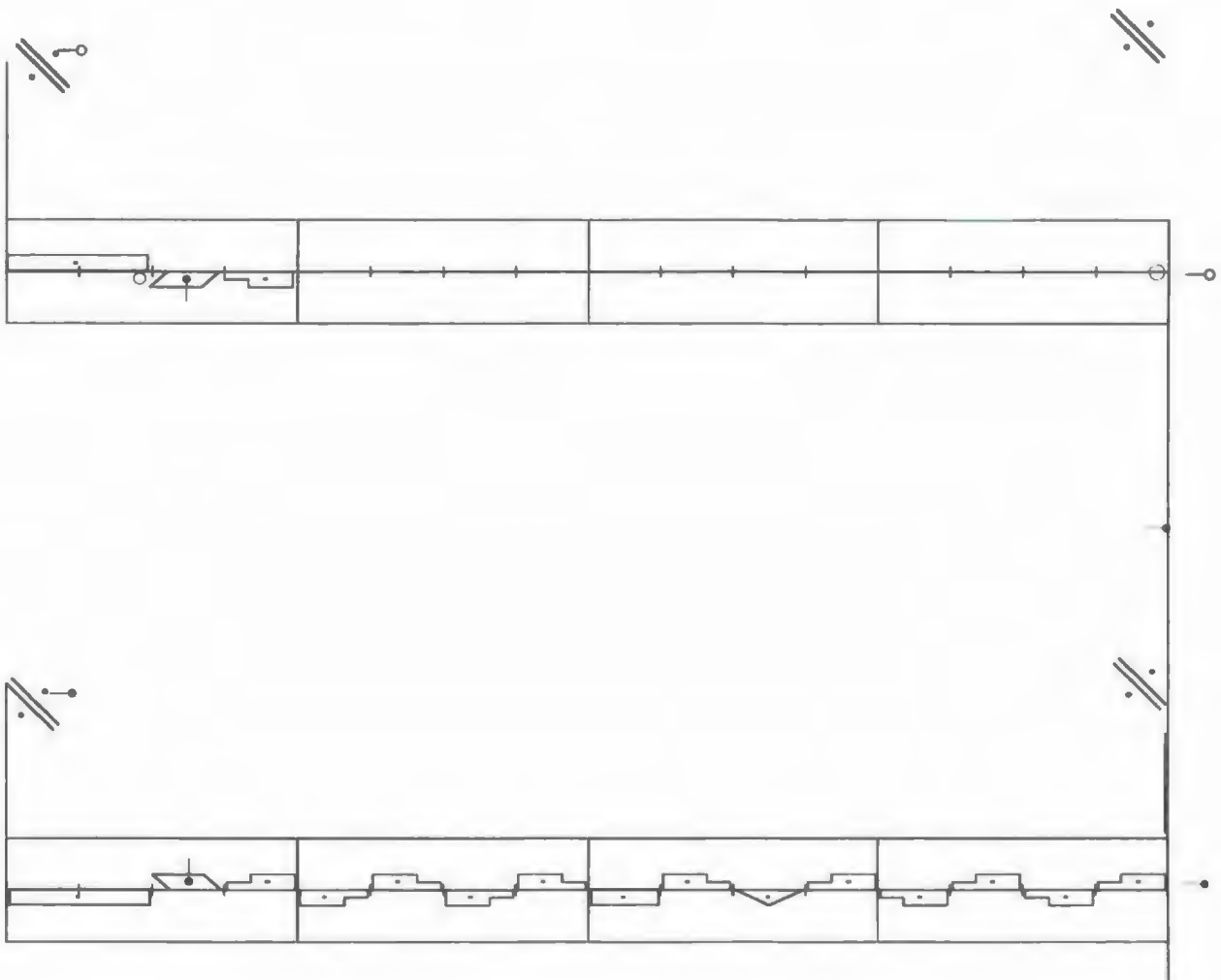
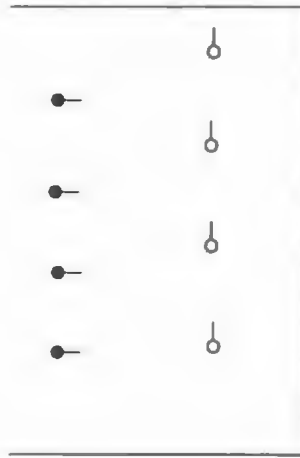


All



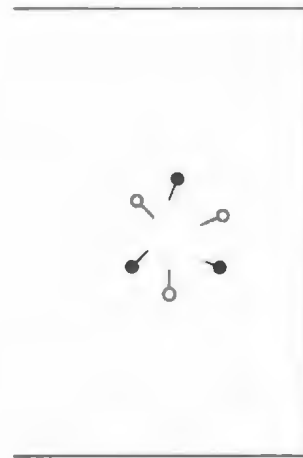
Form a circle holding hands

C = centre of circle

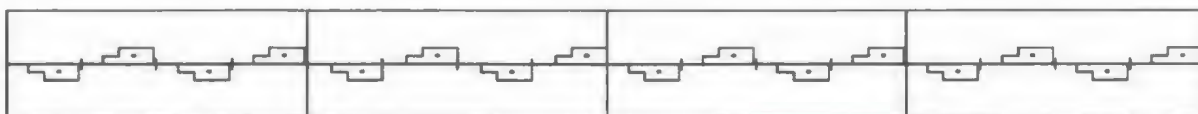


Newfoundland Set Dance

Six-Handed Reel

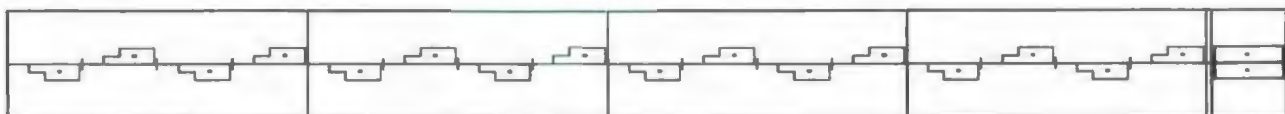


2m



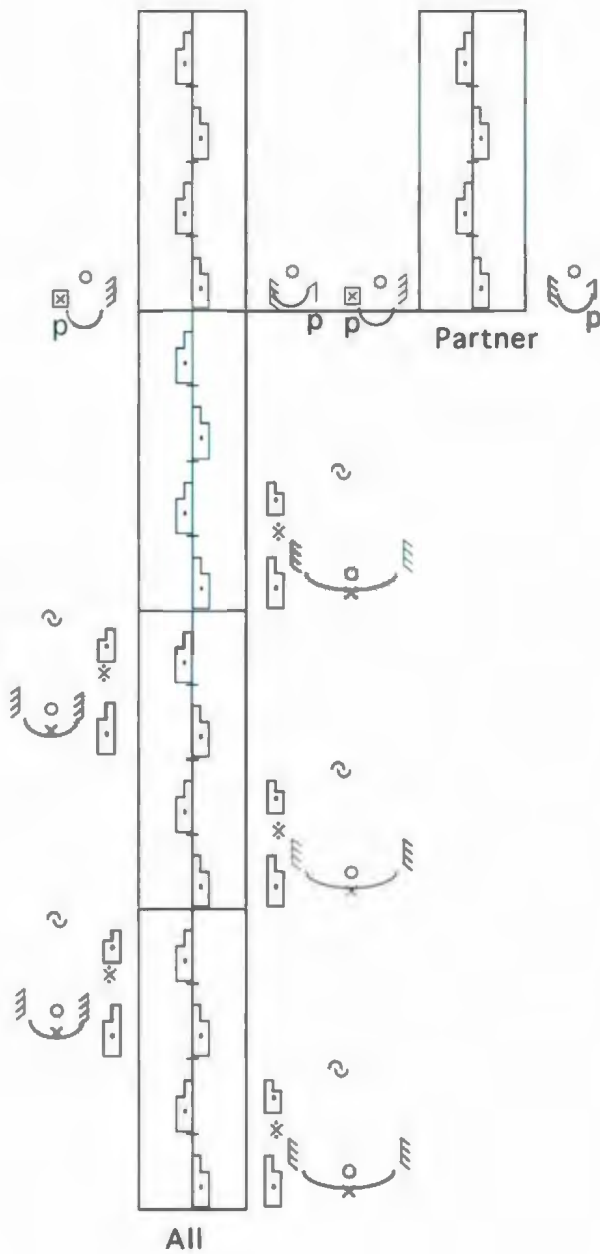
2m

Holding hands to form
a circle

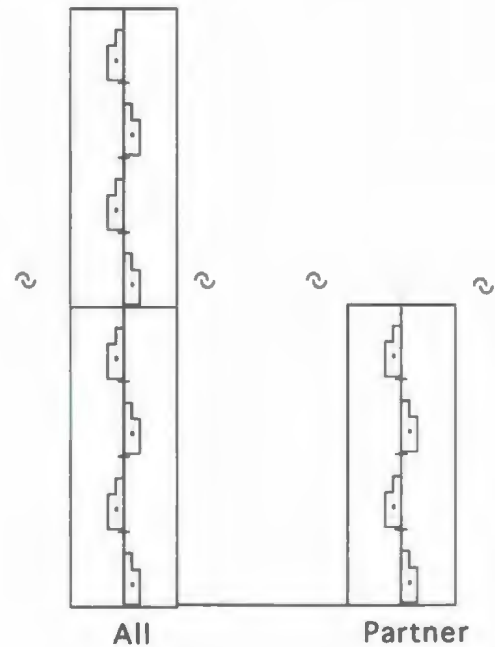


All

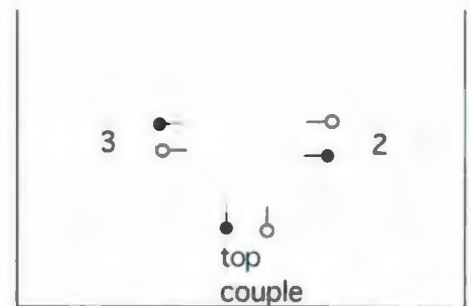
4 4



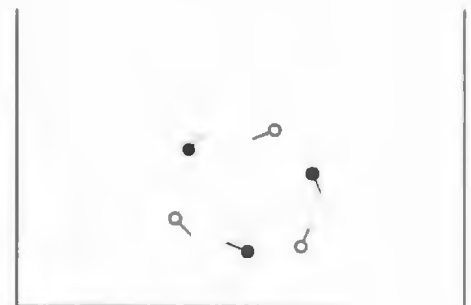
Swing



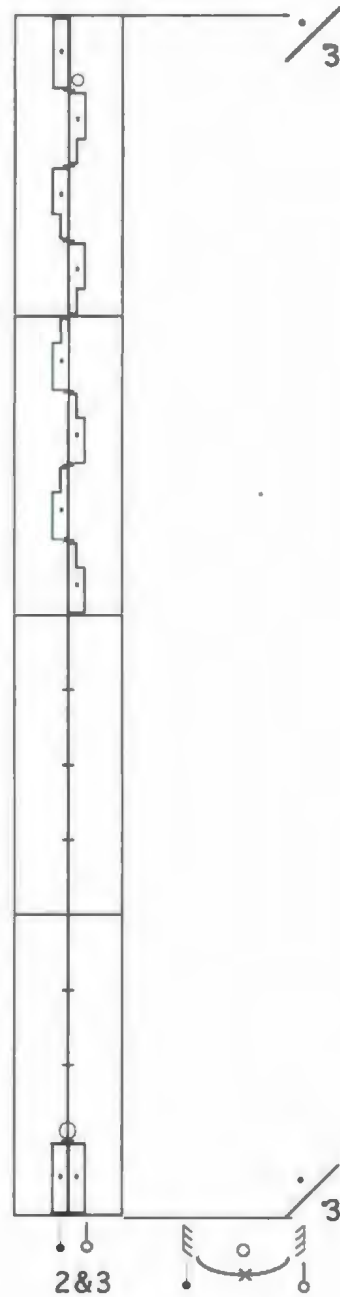
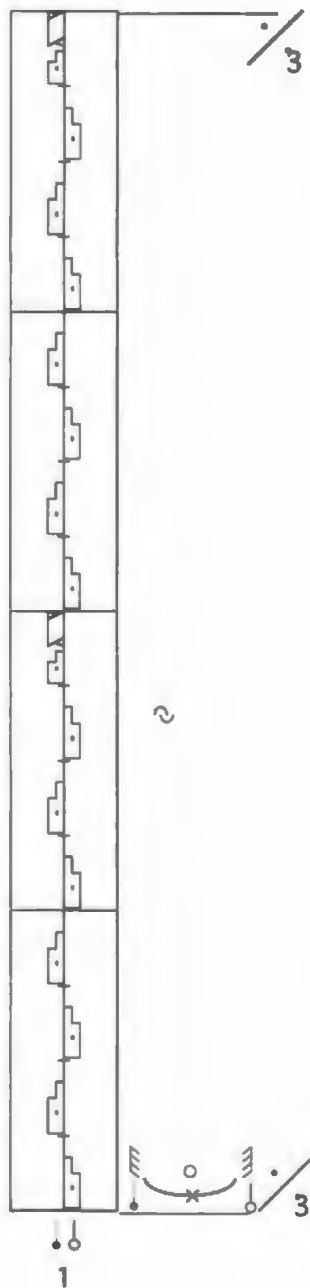
*Pass by each person until
you reach your partner
then swing your partner
twice to end in formation



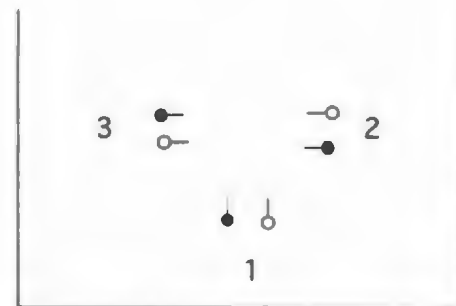
End Swing



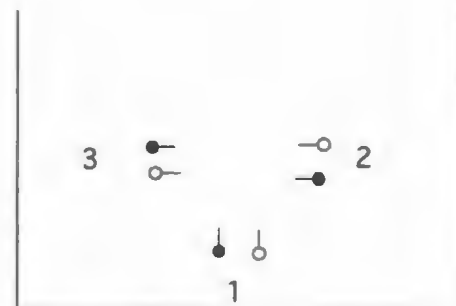
Pass



Top couple
Promenades three
times, Other couples
move to centre and
away after top couple
passes through.



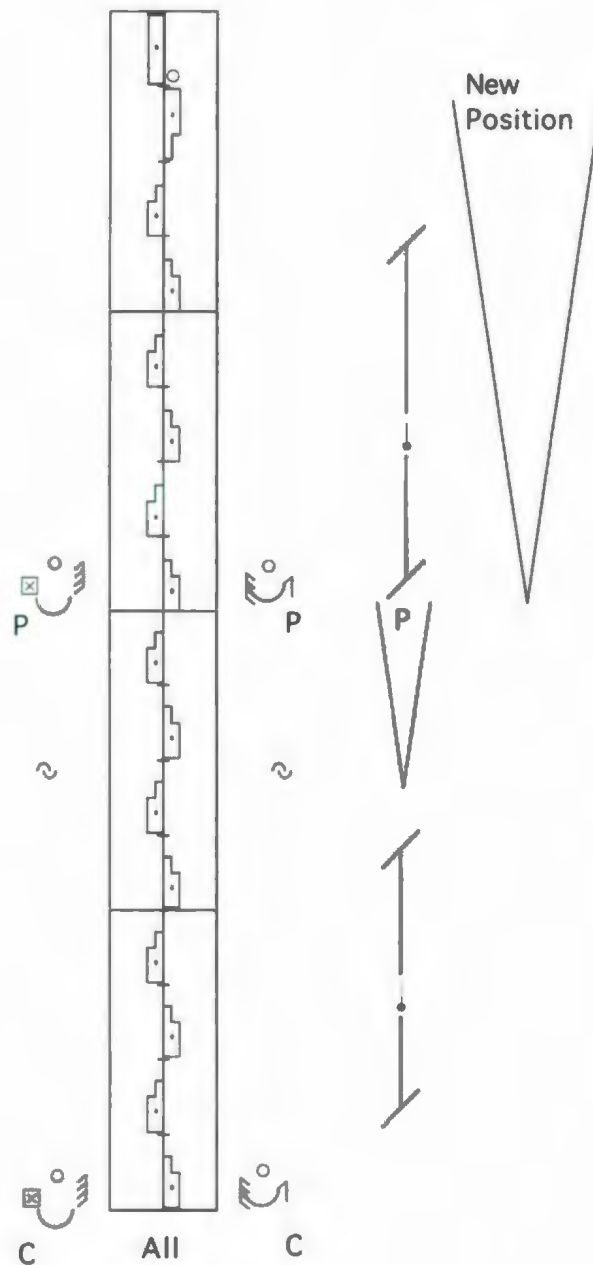
Couple 2 & 3



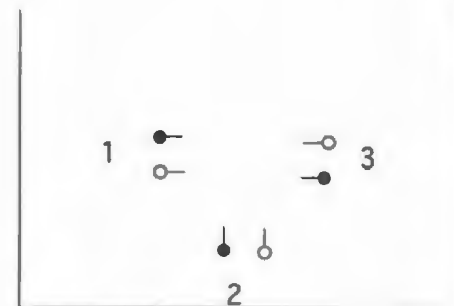
Couple 1

Swing Your Corner

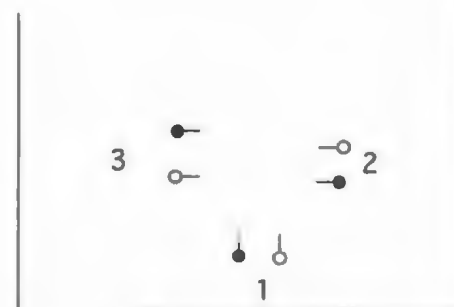
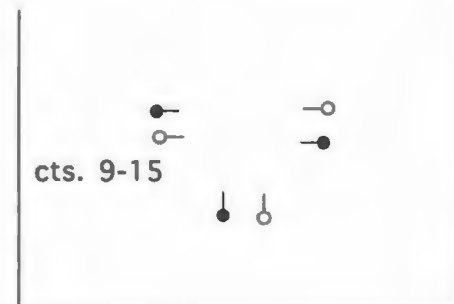
Swing your corner, then
Swing your partner to move
around so that there is a new
lead couple. New lead couple
repeats Promenade. This
whole sequence is repeated
until couple #1 is the lead
couple again.



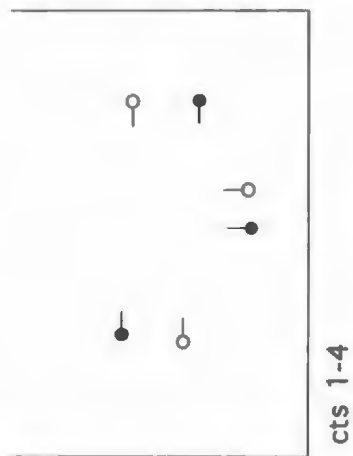
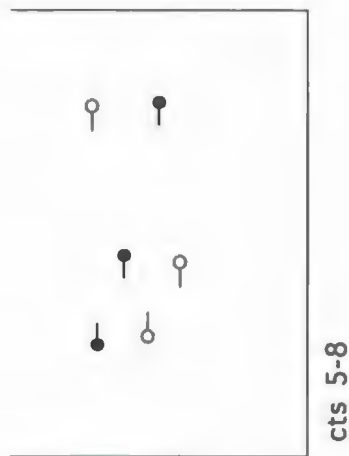
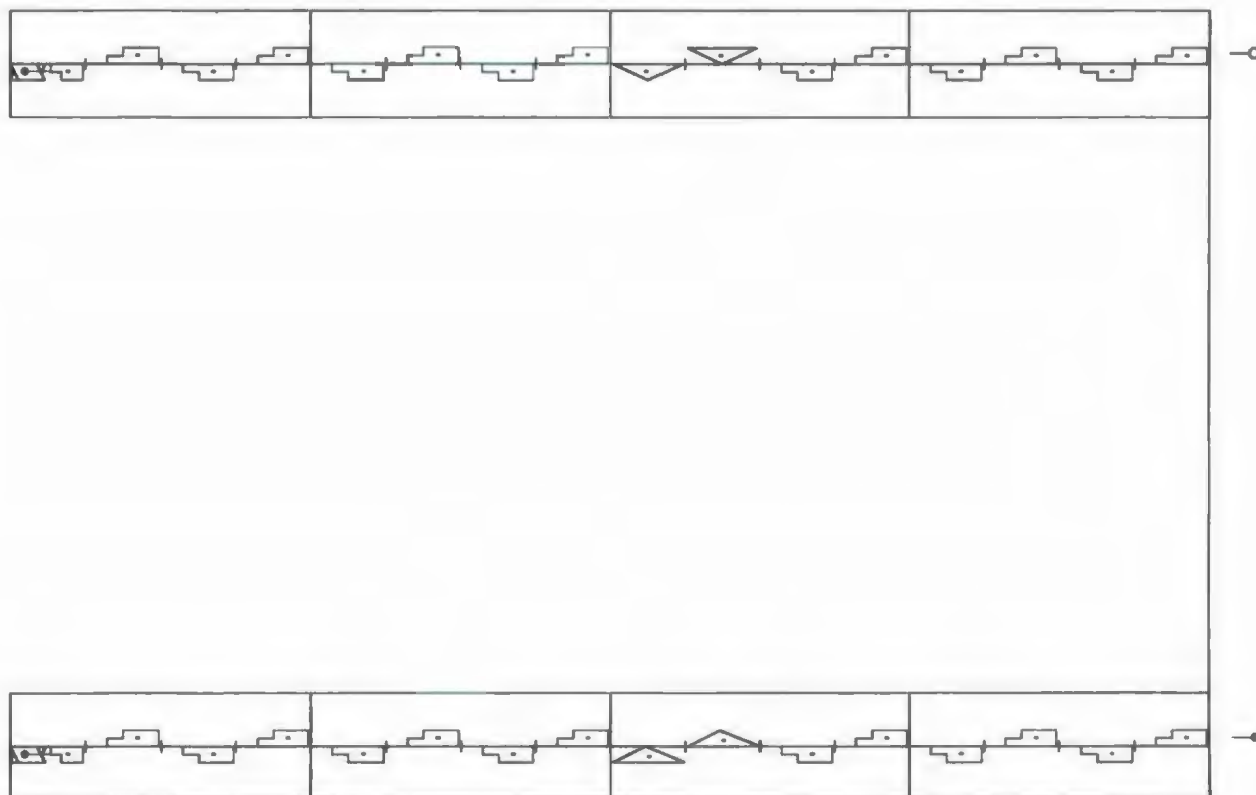
* C = Corner



New Position

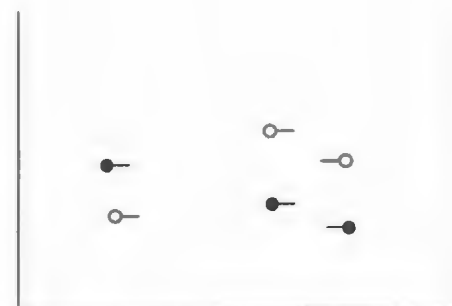
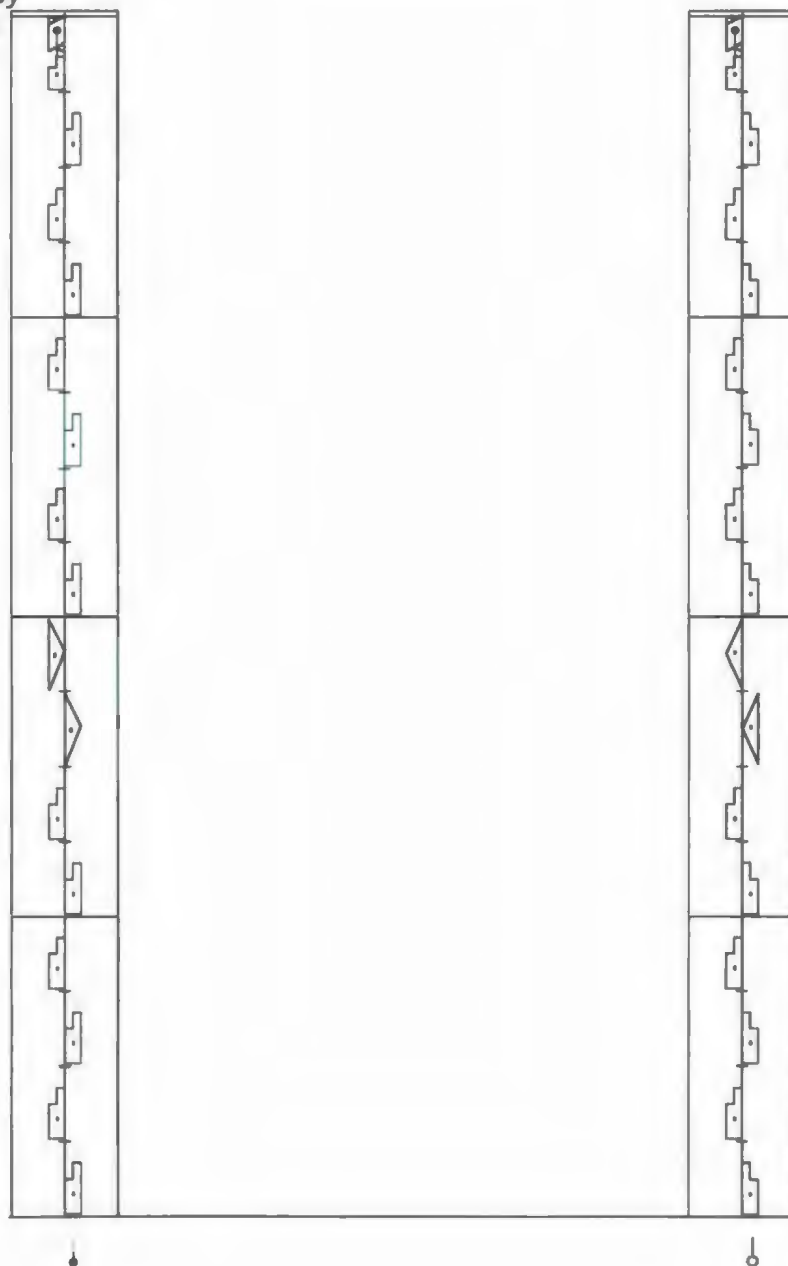


cts. 1 - 8

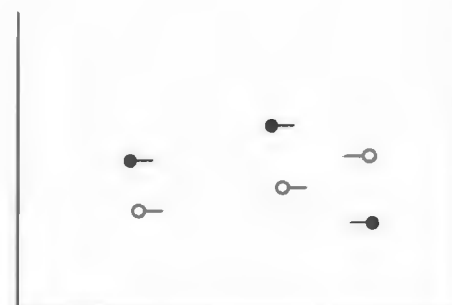


Repeat Swing Your
Corner, then new lead
couple does this Side by
Each -repeat until all
three couples have
finished

330



cts 5-8



cts 1-4

Irish-Newfoundland Step Dance

Double Batter

4

3

2

1

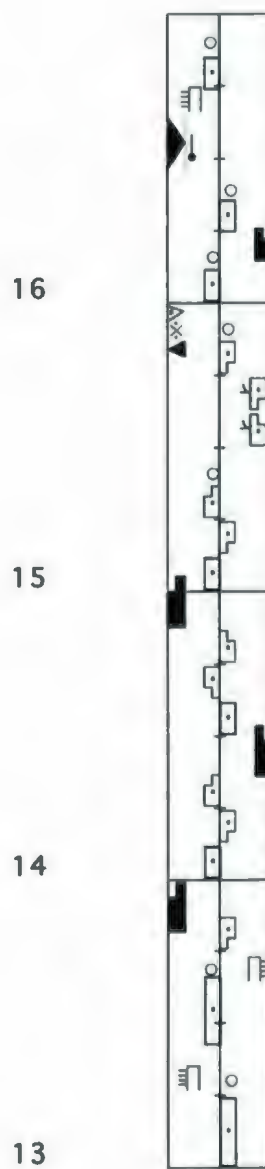
8

7

6

5

Step Dance 1



20

19

18

17

This block contains the musical notation for measures 17 through 20 of Step Dance 1. The notation is written on a single staff with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a common time signature (C). Measure 17 begins with a treble clef and a key signature change to one flat. It contains a half note G4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note Bb4. Measure 18 contains a half note C5, a quarter note D5, and a quarter note E5. Measure 19 contains a half note F5, a quarter note G5, and a quarter note A5. Measure 20 contains a half note Bb5, a quarter note C6, and a quarter note D6. The notation includes various musical symbols such as stems, beams, and accidentals.

24

23

22

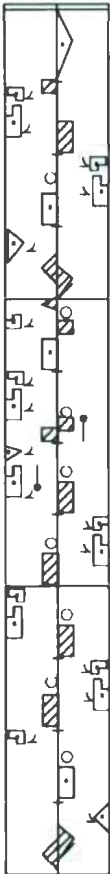
21

This block contains the musical notation for measures 21 through 24 of Step Dance 1. The notation is written on a single staff with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a common time signature (C). Measure 21 begins with a treble clef and a key signature change to one flat. It contains a half note G4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note Bb4. Measure 22 contains a half note C5, a quarter note D5, and a quarter note E5. Measure 23 contains a half note F5, a quarter note G5, and a quarter note A5. Measure 24 contains a half note Bb5, a quarter note C6, and a quarter note D6. The notation includes various musical symbols such as stems, beams, and accidentals.

27

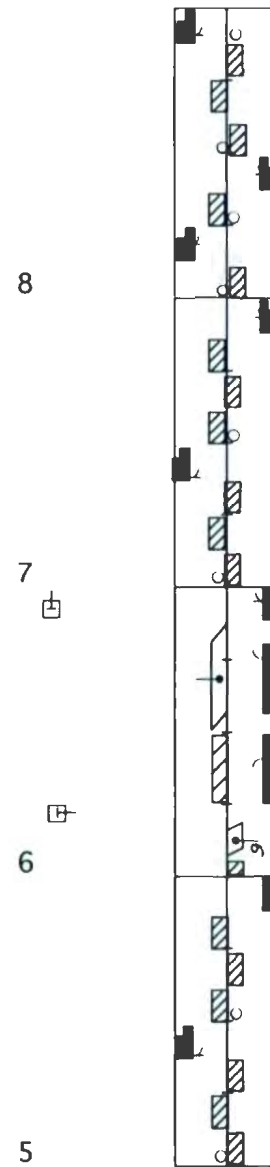
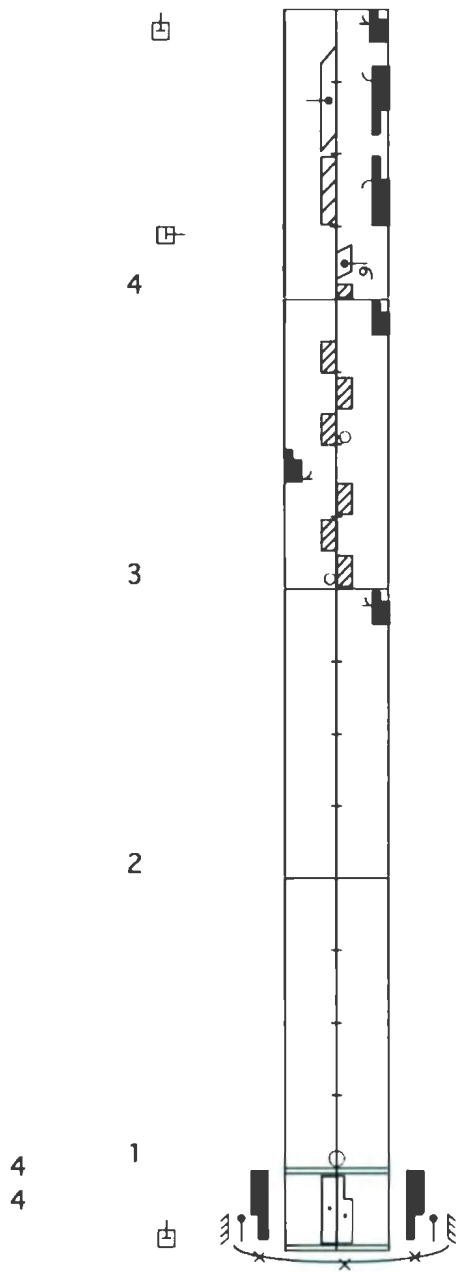
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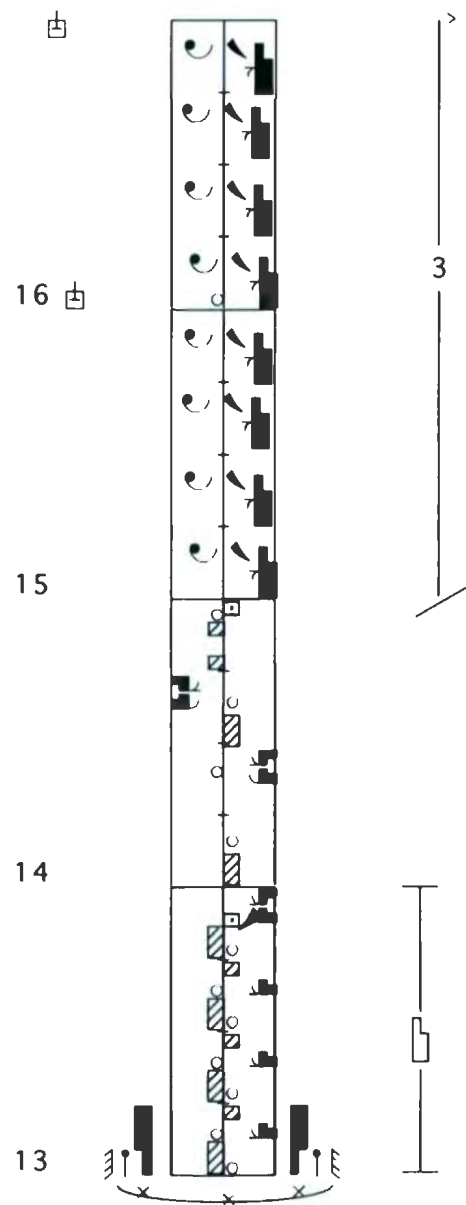
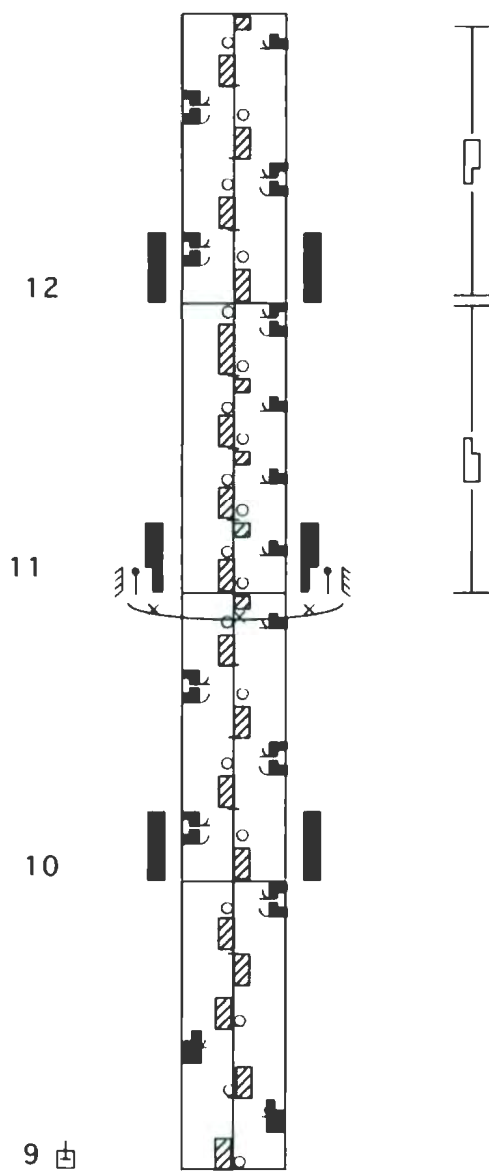
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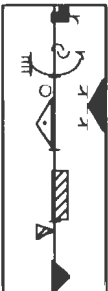
Irish-Newfoundland Step Dance

Merchant Durkin

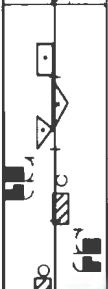




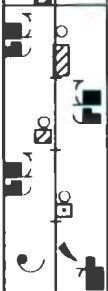
20



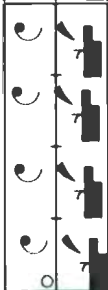
19



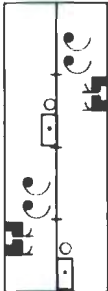
18 由



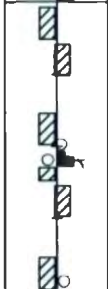
17



24



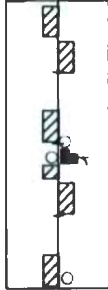
23



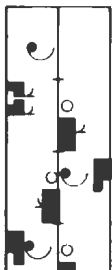
22



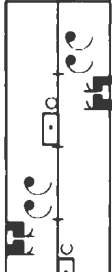
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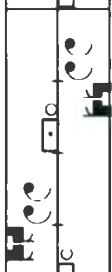
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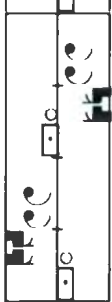
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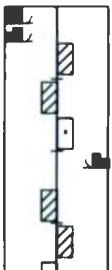
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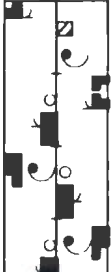
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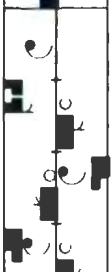
32 ㄅ



31



30



29

