

Arts Programming on Irish Public Service
Television: Ideals, Conflicts, and Contradictions

Research Masters Dissertation

By

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Declaration

I hereby certify that the material, which I now submit for assessment on the programmes of study leading to the award of a Master of Research is entirely my own work and has not been taken from the work of others except to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my own work. No portion of the work contained in this thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification to this or any other institution.

Kieran McBride

Signature of Candidate

7/12/10

Date

I hereby certify that all the unreferenced work described in this thesis and submitted for the award of a Master of Research is entirely the work of _____.
No portion of the work contained in this thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification to this or any other institution.

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Abstract

This study explores the historical relationship between public service television and the arts in Ireland and considers how this relationship has influenced the current range and quality of arts programmes on Irish public service television. Pierre Bourdieu's work on cultural consumption and Jürgen Habermas' concept of the public sphere are both employed here to examine issues such as inequalities of access and participation in the arts. The study reveals how the Irish State's nationalist cultural agenda informed and structured the development of both the arts and broadcasting. Whilst Irish public service television gradually acknowledged the cultural needs of diverse publics and moved away from a paternalistic broadcasting model, the Arts Council continued to serve the cultural interests of elite sectors of Irish society. Public service television now competes in a multi-channel environment facilitated by de-regulation and technological developments. This study charts major shifts in cultural policy, highlighting the move towards an instrumental cultural policy from the 1990s onward. Significantly, it demonstrates that the Arts Council and Irish public service broadcasters never developed written policy or research that directly addresses the area of the arts on television.

The study also shows how public service television and the Arts Council continue to operate largely independently of one another and how this has resulted in piecemeal solutions to common problems. At present, it seems that policy statements issued by the Arts Council and Irish public service broadcasters often exist more as rhetoric than as guidelines for practice. In conclusion, it is suggested that the objectives of both public bodies could be achieved more effectively through a greater emphasis on collaboration and communication in relation to policy development and implementation.

Introduction

Chapter Structure

I have organized this thesis into one volume and divided it into three chapters. The historical period I examine is quite broad and begins with the early years of the Irish State and continues nearly up to the present day. This broad historical overview covers both Irish public service broadcasting and the Irish State's arts and cultural policy. This was done in order to gain a better understanding of the contemporary relationships between the Irish State, Irish public service television, and the Arts Council. Without this historical understanding, it would have been difficult to comprehend how these relationships developed, and in particular, how bodies such as the Arts Council and Radio Telefís Éireann (RTÉ) came to operate almost entirely independently of one another, even though both bodies share similar responsibilities for the Irish public's cultural welfare. Irish public service broadcasting and the Arts Council are largely defined according to the ideals under which they were founded, even though they have experienced fundamental legal, political, social, cultural, economic, and technological changes, many of which have worked to undermine such ideals. This thesis charts some of these fundamental changes. The Arts Council and Irish public service broadcast television are funded by the State on the basis that they provide essential public services to all members of the public. This study illustrates how problematic the generic term 'the public' is, and identifies how some sections of public benefit from such services, whilst other members of the public are tacitly excluded. I initially focus on public service broadcasting and follow this with an examination of the Irish State's cultural policy, both before and after the establishment of the Arts Council. These are placed in different chapters due to the fact that the relationship between RTÉ television and the Arts Council has always been distant, disjointed, and conflicted as both bodies operate in different, and often opposing, fields of cultural production. The lack of long term strategic joint action between these two public bodies has influenced the quality and range of arts programming produced on Irish public service television and this is the focus of the final chapter of the thesis. The following is a short summary of each chapter.

Chapter 1

In the first chapter I begin by exploring some of the fundamental principles that underpin the provision of the arts and broadcasting as public services. Although changing circumstances have eroded the foundations on which these ideals were established, what becomes clear is that these ideals have endured and continue to form an integral part of the rationale behind such public support. In this chapter, the emphasis lies more on public service broadcasting than the arts. I begin by looking at the paternalistic model for public service broadcasting established by Lord John Reith for the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), as this model had a major impact on how Irish public service broadcasting was developed. This chapter outlines how the Irish State envisaged and utilized public service broadcasting as a tool to drive forward a Irish nationalist cultural agenda until this narrow agenda was challenged in the 1970s. Although a nationalist cultural agenda was no longer considered appropriate to the cultural needs of the Irish public, for a number of reasons, this did not result in a flowering of arts programming on RTÉ. Finally, I chart how a combination of deregulation and technological developments, fundamentally altered broadcast television in Ireland and around the globe. The chapter explores the impact that such fundamental changes have had in relation to arts programming, as arts programming is primarily provided for by public service broadcasters and is considered a key genre of programming that satisfies the public service remit.

Chapter 2

In this chapter I focus primarily on the Irish State's cultural policy before and after the establishment of the Arts Council and how this influenced the relationship between the Council and RTÉ. I explore why the Irish State neglected the fine arts for several decades and how the State's nationalist cultural agenda was duplicated in its policy for broadcasting and the arts. I then illustrate how, under the influence of Keynesian economic philosophy and a desire to join the international community after decades of cultural, economic, and political isolation, Ireland began to conform to an international consensus of what constituted the arts and established its own Arts Council. The fine

arts, like public service broadcasting, were publicly supported on the grounds that they were public goods providing benefits to all of Irish society. Yet, in this chapter I note how the Council largely supported the cultural interests of elite sectors of Irish society and, by doing so, to some degree reinforced colonial cultural hierarchies. I document how, for several decades, the Council narrowed its definitions of what constituted the fine arts and increasingly lost touch with the broader public's cultural interests. The fact that the Council had not become representative of diverse publics began to be challenged in the 1970s and 1980s. I note how, from this time, the Council increasingly became concerned with being a publicly accountable body, and began to make access and participation an integral part of its arts policy. In the last section of the chapter, I chart how State support for the fine arts dramatically increased throughout the 1990s and during the first decade of the 21st century. During this time, the Council enjoyed massive increases in its funding from the State and an instrumental cultural policy was put into place. Yet despite this major expansion of State involvement with and support for the fine arts, class inflected problems of access were not adequately tackled.

Chapter 3

The results of this lack of coherent television arts policy by both the Arts Council and public service broadcasters is illustrated in the final chapter, by looking at what arts programming exists on Irish public service television. In order to gain a broad overview of arts programming on RTÉ over a five year period, I have included a sample survey of data collected from the *RTÉ Guide* and offer some observations in response to this sample. I give a brief overview of RTÉ's commissioning process and also its arts programming classificatory system, revealing a certain amount of internal incoherence in this regard. This is followed by an examination of specific arts programming on RTÉ, which includes its flagship arts programme *The View* and documentaries broadcast under the *Arts Lives* series. A series of short experimental films, entitled *RTÉ Dance on the Box*, is also reviewed, as this project stands out as a successful example of innovative arts programming resulting from close collaboration between the Arts Council and RTÉ. After this, I examine the approach taken by TG4 to arts programming, and make note of

differences with the approach taken by RTÉ. TG4's staple arts review programme, *Soiscéal Pháraic*, is examined to see in what ways it differs from RTÉ's *The View*, and programmes produced under the *Splanc!* arts documentary scheme are also included.

Research Approach

A number of research strategies were employed for the purpose of this thesis. Due to the varying types of research materials used, which included academic texts from different disciplines, policy and research reports, legislation, television guides, and specific arts programmes, it was necessary to utilize different forms of analysis. For example, a quantitative form of an analysis was used for the data collected from the sample survey of the *RTÉ Guides* in order to gain a snapshot view of arts programming on RTÉ over a five year period. It would be impossible to examine the entire output of arts programmes on public service television within this thesis and so specific examples of programmes were selected on the basis that they were typical of particular strands of arts programming on TG4 and RTÉ. Hence, a more qualitative approach of analysis was applied to my examination of these programmes. Discourse analysis has been used throughout the thesis. Gillian Rose's *Visual Methodologies* was used as an essential guide when deciding on appropriate tools of analysis.¹ A key part of the thesis has been an attempt to understand to what degree statements issued by public institutions such as the Arts Council and RTÉ, have been acted upon and which stand as empty rhetoric. For example, discourse analysis became particularly useful when examining reports such *Audiences, Acquisitions, and Amateurs* and the *Public and the Arts* Reports from 1994 and 2006. Although the Arts Council has, from the 1980s, consistently declared its determination to increase access and participation in the arts, analysis of these reports revealed that there has been little narrowing of the class gap in this regard. The object of enquiry of the thesis is broad and includes an examination of the history of Irish public service broadcasting and the State's cultural policy from the foundation of the State up to the present day. This broad scope of enquiry was undertaken in order to identify certain patterns of decision making in relation to the arts and public service television and to try

¹ Gillian Rose, *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to the Interpretation of Visual Materials*, (London, Sage Publications, 2001)

and understand the rationale behind such decisions. The variety of different forms of research material used in this enquiry demanded a range of research methodologies be employed. This research approach was taken in order to identify how the current state of arts programming on Irish public service television came into being and to what extent this has been historically determined.

Methodological Context

The nature of this study is inter-disciplinary and has entailed research from diverse academic fields including, amongst others, sociology, cultural studies, political philosophy, aesthetics, and media and communications. The work of Jürgen Habermas and Pierre Bourdieu form the theoretical backbone of this study. Both Habermas and Bourdieu identify structural constraints within the field of cultural production that hinder the creation of a more equal society. The ideas of Habermas on the public sphere have been used as part of the wider argument to support public service broadcasting across Europe. Public service broadcasting in the 21st century is ideally meant to provide the public with both a political and cultural public sphere that operate autonomously from the State and commercial interests. This is directly relevant to this thesis as the subject of its enquiry is arts programming on public service television. Hence, Habermas work has been used throughout the thesis as a way of identifying to what extent public service broadcasters in Ireland provide a genuine cultural public sphere. The work of Bourdieu employed in this thesis concerns itself with cultural production and consumption and how cultural inequalities are indicative of broader social inequalities. His analysis of class bound cultural taste has been particularly useful when looking at the selection of content for arts programming on Irish public service television and how this reflects a narrow spectrum of cultural production within Ireland. Both theorists identify the potential of public broadcasting to provide a genuine cultural public sphere for diverse publics, but also recognise how, due to increasing commercial control over broadcasting, this ideal has become increasingly difficult to achieve. The following is a summary of their key ideas that relate to this thesis' object of enquiry.

Jürgen Habermas and the Public Sphere

The concept of the public sphere, as developed by Jürgen Habermas, informs this thesis as it is directly relevant to the debates surrounding the role of public service television and its centrality to the functioning of a healthy democracy. Public service television, if it follows the ideals it was established under, continues to be justified on the basis that it performs similar functions to that of the 18th century public sphere, as described by Habermas.

According to Jürgen Habermas, parliamentary democracy, which is the dominant Western political system today, was only made possible by the development of what he calls ‘the public sphere’. The public sphere originated in the coffee houses, intellectual and literary salons, and print media of the 18th century Europe and came about in tandem with the development of capitalism and bourgeoisie culture. The discursive space of the public sphere and the possibilities it offered to the powerful bourgeoisie was something entirely new. Habermas says, “sociologically speaking, that is to say by reference to institutional criteria, the public sphere in the sense of a separate realm distinguished from the private sphere cannot be shown to have existed in the feudal society of the High Middle Ages.”² In these spaces that constituted the public sphere, rational debate took place on matters of common concern and political importance and the Enlightenment ideals of equality, human rights and justice were promoted. The public sphere acted as a buffer zone between the public, made up of private individuals, and the State and it came into existence as way to curtail abuses of state power and also to protect the interests of civil society. Civil society can be defined as the arena of un-coerced collective action around shared interests, purposes, and values. In theory, its institutional forms are distinct from those of the State, family, and market. In the public sphere, authentic public opinion, unhindered by structural restraints and external pressures, is formulated as result of critical-rational debate. Hence, in the public sphere the cultural and political concerns of the public were expressed, debated, and then acted on politically.

It is important to note that the development of the public sphere in the 18th century was fundamentally tied to the emergence of modern mass media in the form of books,

² Jürgen Habermas, The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere, (Cambridge, Polity Press, 1989) p 7

journals and newspapers. Here the public, “began to make use of the public sphere of informational newspapers, which was officially regulated, against the public power itself, using those papers, along with the morally and critically oriented weeklies, to engage in debate about the general rules governing relations in their own essentially privatised but publicly relevant sphere of commodity exchange and labour.”³ According to Habermas, the existence of an authentically functioning public sphere, which facilitates maximum public participation and debate over key issues, is a necessary condition for the existence of a genuine democracy.

A key component of Habermas’ concept of the public sphere was the literary public sphere which existed as a necessary precursor to the political public sphere. The literary and the political public sphere are not separate from one another but their functions are different. The print revolution that occurred in the 18th century offered the means of producing and disseminating ideas and discourses that were independent of the power of the Crown, the church, or the universities. Alternative and oppositional voices could find an audience through such revolutionary new media. The literary public sphere created a space where, for first time, the public could critically discuss art and literature and also allowed for the expression of concerns of a more intimate, emotional, and private nature. Jim McGuigan argues that, “the literary public sphere was not about transient news – the stuff of journalism – that is, the usual focus of attention for the political public sphere. Typically, complex reflection upon the chronic and persistent problems of life, meaning and representation, which is characteristic of art, works on a different time scale.”⁴ Although debates in the literary public sphere concerned artistic and literary works, and employed affective (emotional) more than cognitive (rational) communication, its discourses were still linked to and influenced the political public sphere. Furthermore, according to Habermas, “disquisition on the social role of literature and philosophical reflection in the broadest sense prepared the ground for legitimate public controversy over current events. The very practice of criticism was literary before

³ Jürgen Habermas, “The Public Sphere”, in Paul Morris and Sue Thornham (eds) *The Media Studies Reader*. (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1996) p 57

⁴ Jim McGuigan, “The Cultural Public Sphere”, *European Journal of Cultural Studies*. Vol 8, November 2005, p 430

it was directly political.”⁵ Art and literature offer insights about and critiques of society and so form an essential part of the broader public sphere.

In *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, Habermas also maps out the decline of the bourgeois public sphere. He says that, “in the course of our century, the bourgeois forms of sociability have found substitutes that have one tendency in common despite their regional and national diversity: abstinence from literary or political debate.”⁶ Habermas blames this decline on the increasing influence of the modernizing forces of economic and administrative rationalization combined with the growth of commercial mass media where media is transformed into a commodity rather than a tool for rational public discourse. The structural transformation and decline of the public sphere came about in tandem with the rise of state capitalism, the culture industries, and the increasing influence of big business and corporate power in public life. By the mid 20th century, the public sphere according to Habermas had become ‘refeudalized’ by increasing State intervention in the private sphere and by an almost complete commercialisation of the media. “The increasing prevalence of the mass media, especially where the commercial logic transforms much of public communication into PR, advertising, and entertainment, erodes the critical functions of the public.”⁷ Commercial media under this view becomes solely an instrument utilised to develop and reinforce the values of corporate capitalism and the culture of mass consumption rather than a space for a plurality of voices to engage in critical-rational discourse and where citizens actively shape the society they live in through becoming part of the decision making process. The necessary link between the sphere of public debate and individual participation became fractured. The public sphere transformed from a space of rational discussion, debate, and public consensus into a media dominated arena where public opinion is manufactured, mass cultural consumption promoted, and the private interests of corporations and dominant elites is expressed.

In later years, Habermas acknowledged that he had presented an idealised picture of the liberal elements of the public sphere. He felt that he should have made it clearer

⁵ Jim McGuigan, “The Cultural Public Sphere”, p 430

⁶ Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, (Cambridge, Polity Press, 1989) p 163

⁷ Peter Dahlgren, *Citizenship, Democracy and the Media*, (London, Sage Publications, 2005) p 8

that he was establishing an 'ideal type' and not a "normative ideal to be resuscitated and brought back to life."⁸ Although Habermas subsequently pointed out such limitations in his own work, his early work on the public sphere has been widely criticised and debated. One of the key criticisms is that he presents the bourgeois public sphere as an open forum of rational debate and discussion, when in fact it was dominated by white property owning males and so participation was limited. The exclusion of the working classes and women challenges his ideal of the public sphere as an arena of diversity, tolerance, and consensus. Due to such exclusion, alternative women's and working class public spheres emerged alongside the bourgeois public sphere. Yet, Habermas takes no account of them or their importance. Mary P. Ryan points out that Habermas marks the moment of the decline of the bourgeois public sphere as occurring at the same historical moment that women began to gain political power.⁹ Another criticism is that it is questionable to believe that democratic politics were ever able to work entirely according to norms of rationality or public opinion formed by rational debate.¹⁰ Politics have always been prone to the influence of special interests as well as discussion and debate. Finally, Habermas confirms the validity of the Frankfurt School's analysis of the culture industries as outlined in Adorno and Horkheimer's *The Dialectics of the Enlightenment*.¹¹ Under this view, private corporations have come to dominate the public sphere and transformed it into a sphere where passive consumers are manipulated, distracted from taking political action, and induced to conform to values that reinforce capitalist ideology. This deterministic and rigid model makes no allowance for the possibility that audiences are potentially active and have varied responses to the media they consume.

Although there are many such criticisms of Habermas' account of the public sphere, it is still arguable that it is worthwhile constructing a model of a 'good society' that can help to realize agreed upon democratic and egalitarian ideals. Dahlgren notes, that Habermas concept of the public sphere was "grounded in a notion of small scale

⁸ Jürgen Habermas, "Further Reflections on the Public Sphere", in Craig Calhoun (ed.) *Habermas and the Public Sphere*. (Cambridge, MIT Press, 1992) p 422

⁹ Mary P. Ryan, "Gender and Public Access: Women's Politics in Nineteenth-Century America", in Craig Calhoun (ed.) *Habermas and the Public Sphere*. (Cambridge, MIT Press, 1992) p 263

¹⁰ Deborah Cook, *The Culture Industry Revisited: Theodor W. Adorno on Mass Culture*, (Oxford, Rowman & Littlefield, 1996) p 95

¹¹ Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception", in Simon During (ed.) *The Cultural Studies Reader*. (London, Routledge, 1993) pp. 29- 43

print media and rational, conversational interaction among a small sector of, at that time, much smaller populations.”¹² From this point, we must observe how radically different social conditions were in the 18th century in contrast to the contemporary world we inhabit. It may be better to envisage a multiplicity of public spheres, which overlap and conflict, rather than a singular idealised public sphere.

Although Habermas held an overtly pessimistic view of the potential for contemporary electronic mass media to form an authentic public sphere, this did not stop others from utilizing his ideas to justify and defend public service broadcasting. As Dahlgren notes, “there was a strong effort from the left to associate public service broadcasting with the realization of the public sphere, and to portray commercial broadcasting and the market model of financing as a serious threat to it.”¹³ Official discourses surrounding public service broadcasting also often reflect the language employed in Habermas’ description of an idealised public sphere. In Ireland, the *Public Service Broadcasting Charter*, published in 2004, states as one of its guiding principles that, “RTÉ shall, at all times, strive to reflect fairly and equally the regional, cultural, and political diversity of Ireland and its peoples.”¹⁴ Public service television, when it operates autonomously from intrusive state or commercial influence, partly justifies its existence by presenting itself as a key and vital component in a contemporary version of the political and cultural public sphere. Jostein Gripsrud contends that:

Broadcast television has been a key structural component in the public spheres of western countries since the 1950s. It is commonly assumed that the mass media in general and broadcasting in particular have contributed greatly to the production of national identity, which fosters a strong inclination to participate in political processes within the nation states of Europe.¹⁵

There is often an emphasis on public service television’s central role in the political public sphere. PSB is ideally meant to provide objective reporting of news and public affairs, and also to provide a broad range of opinions, so that citizens can make informed

¹² Peter Dahlgren, *Citizenship, Democracy and the Media*. (London, Sage, 2005) p 10

¹³ Dahlgren, *Citizenship, Democracy and the Media*, p 13

¹⁴ “Public Service Broadcasting Charter”, Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources, <http://www.rte.ie/about/organisation/psb.pdf>, June 2004, accessed 15/10/08

¹⁵ Jostein Gripsrud, “Television and the European Public Sphere”, *European Journal of Communication*, 22:4, December 2007, p 480

decisions in the political affairs of their society. Yet it is important to stress that the public sphere has both political and cultural components and that they are not mutually exclusive. Aside from the factual genres of television, such as news and current affairs programming which more obviously perform functions of a political public sphere, there are other television genres which perform functions of the cultural public sphere. As McGuigan notes:

In the late-modern world, the cultural public sphere is not confined to a republic of letters – the 18th century’s literary public sphere – and “serious” art, classical, modern, or for that matter, post-modern. It includes the various channels and circuits of mass-popular culture and entertainment, the routinely mediated aesthetic and emotional reflections on how we live and imagine the good life. The concept of a cultural public sphere refers to the articulation of politics, public and personal, as a contested terrain through affective (aesthetic and emotional) modes of communication.¹⁶

Under this definition, television arts programming clearly performs a role within the contemporary cultural public sphere, just as more popular programming genres, such as drama and soap operas, also play their part. McGuigan uses the example of the BBC’s ‘progressive drama’ of the 1960s and 1970s as a space for experimentation and critical argument, yet also points to the importance of melodrama in that it deals with moral dilemmas and the problems of social life.¹⁷ These genres work primarily through ‘affective’ (aesthetic or emotional) modes of communication which can help people to think reflexively about their own immediate situation in life. As McGuigan says, “the cultural public sphere provides vehicles for thought and feeling, for imagination and disputatious argument, which are not necessarily of inherent merit but may be of some consequence.”¹⁸ The political public sphere, which privileges rational (cognitive) communication, plays a central part in the public sphere, yet the cultural public sphere is equally of vital importance.

¹⁶ Jim McGuigan, “The Cultural Public Sphere”, p 435

¹⁷ Jim McGuigan, “The Cultural Public Sphere”, p 432

¹⁸ McGuigan, “The Cultural Public Sphere”, p 435

Pierre Bourdieu and Cultural Capital

This thesis explores and employs some of the ideas and key terms developed by the eminent French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. Bourdieu was deeply critical of established patterns of power and privilege and mapped out how cultural practices and consumption play a decisive role in legitimating, perpetuating, and maintaining social differences and inequalities. A key objective of his work was to reveal the social basis of taste and cultural practices and how these operate in the field of power. His works, *The Love of Art: European Art Museums and their Public* and *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, offer an understanding of how social inequality has a fundamental cultural, as well as economic, foundation. *The Love of Art* is an enquiry into the social, economic, educational, and cultural characteristics of European museum visitors and collates information on visitors' age, educational level, and occupation in order to locate factors which encourage museum visiting. Here Bourdieu found that, "museum visiting increases very strongly with increasing levels of education, and is almost exclusively the domain of the cultivated classes."¹⁹ He would make similar empirical findings throughout his work on cultural consumption. In *Distinction*, Bourdieu goes beyond Marx and reformulates the concept of capital by placing economic, cultural, and symbolic capital within a unified framework. According to this conceptual framework, an individual is not defined by economic class membership alone, but by the amounts of various kinds of capital he or she possesses. Cultural capital is a form of value associated with culturally legitimised taste, consumption, and knowledge. Educational awards and credentials, or other markers that illustrate greater attainment of knowledge or sophisticated taste, contribute to the amount of an individual's cultural capital. Bourdieu contends that cultural capital can be converted into economic power, as those with higher amounts of cultural capital often possess higher amounts of economic capital. Bourdieu contends that the combined amounts of different kinds of capital that an individual possesses largely influences their position in social space and the amount of social power they will be able to wield.

¹⁹ Pierre Bourdieu and Alain Darbel, *The Love of Art: European Art Museums and their Public*, (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1991) p 4

Bourdieu directly challenges the notion that the ownership and display of cultural capital is a 'natural' or inborn attribute and instead, argues that this idea is a key component of bourgeois class domination. Bourdieu says:

It is as if those who speak of culture, for themselves and for others, in other words cultivated people, could not think of cultural salvation in terms other than of the logic of predestination, as their virtues would be devalued if they had been acquired, and as if all their representation of culture was aimed at authorizing them to convince themselves that, in the words of one highly cultivated elderly person, 'education is innate'.²⁰

Bourdieu's aim is to dispute this thinking and argue that everything cultural is 'social' and that nothing is 'innate'. This challenges the Kantian theory of the 'pure aesthetic' which obscures and mystifies the fact that the bourgeois 'love of art' comes as a result of a privileged social position, and contends that artistic taste is not something inherent in the individual. Bourdieu says, "the ideology of natural taste owes it plausibility and efficacy to the fact that, like all ideological strategies generated in the everyday class struggle, it naturalizes real differences, converting differences in the mode of acquisition of culture into differences of nature".²¹ *Distinction* is based on a large survey carried out in France in the late 1960s, where the subjects were asked to specify their tastes in a wide range of items such as art, theatre, home décor, social pastimes, and literature. The results of Bourdieu's study find that, "whereas the ideology of charisma regards taste in legitimate culture as a gift of nature, scientific observation shows that cultural needs are the product of upbringing and education."²² He uses the term 'the habitus' to describe a set of dispositions, internalised at an early age and engendered by objective conditions, as something which guides an individual toward, or away from, particular cultural tastes, behaviours, and social positions. Even when an individual's objective conditions in life change, the acquired schemes of perception, acquired through the habitus, persist. The habitus is seen as crucial to social reproduction as it generates and regulates the practices that make up social life, or in other words, it links actual behaviour to class structure.

²⁰ Bourdieu and Darbel, *The Love of Art*, p 4

²¹ Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, (London, Routledge, 1994) p 68

²² Bourdieu, *Distinction*, p 1

The cognitive structures of the habitus become embodied social structures and become part of what appear to be an individual's natural identity. Bourdieu says that:

The denial of lower, coarse, vulgar, venal, servile – in a word, natural – enjoyment which constitutes the sacred sphere of culture, implies an affirmation of the superiority of those who can be satisfied with the sublimated, refined, disinterested, gratuitous, distinguished pleasures forever closed to the profane. That is why art and cultural consumption are predisposed, consciously and deliberately or not, to fulfil a social function of legitimating social differences.²³

Bourgeois cultural tastes, acquired through the habitus, are universalised as the only legitimate cultural taste, presented as an innate quality, and utilized as a form of class dominance.

Although an appreciation of refined or 'legitimate' culture can be acquired and cultivated through formal education and extended contact, Bourdieu points out the decisive role played by dominant, elite, and cultivated families in the accumulation of legitimate cultural capital. Such families, and the wider class factions they belong to, preserve and pass down across generations the 'pure' tastes of legitimate culture. The acquisition of cultural capital depends heavily on "total, early, imperceptible learning, performed within the family from the earliest days of life."²⁴ These hidden forms of inheritance, or what Bourdieu terms the 'invisible curriculum', contribute to the social privilege and power such groups maintain. Working class families lack adequate economic and cultural capital to hand down to their children and so they lack the inherited privileges and social position enjoyed by the bourgeoisie. Working class cultural tastes are more strongly associated with what Bourdieu terms, the 'popular aesthetic'. He says that the popular aesthetic is based on the "affirmation of continuity between art and life, which implies subordination of form to function, or one might say, on a refusal of the refusal which is the starting point of the high aesthetic."²⁵ Whereas the popular aesthetic is defined as a taste borne out of material necessity, and as barbarous, easily accessible, facile, and a pleasure of the senses, the bourgeois high aesthetic is

²³ Bourdieu, *Distinction*, p 5

²⁴ Bourdieu, *Distinction*, p 66

²⁵ Bourdieu, *Distinction*, p 32

defined by its distance from material necessity, its subordination of function to form, its pure pleasure of the mind, and its qualities of formal refinement. Bourdieu notes:

Formal refinement – which in the literature of the theatre, leads to obscurity – is in the eyes of the working class public, one sign of what is sometimes felt to be a desire to keep the uninitiated at arm's length, or, as one respondent said about certain cultural programmes on TV, to speak to other initiates 'over the viewers' heads'.²⁶

Hence, one of the most valued qualities of legitimate culture is its exclusivity which works to reinforce deeply entrenched cultural and class boundaries.

The bourgeois taste for legitimate culture is founded on a refusal of 'impure' taste and a rejection of the facile or vulgar, which is viewed as more characteristic of working class cultural preferences. Between bourgeois tastes for legitimate high culture, and working class preferences for the popular, Bourdieu identifies petit bourgeois taste as being middle brow and characterized by what he terms 'cultural goodwill'. The petit bourgeoisie respect the sanctity and authority of bourgeois culture and mimic the practices of those above them in the cultural and economic order so as not to reveal their subordinate position. They recognize what is considered legitimate culture but they do not know how to consume it in the appropriate manner as they lack the cultural capital and familial inculcation that is necessary for it to be consumed without self consciousness. According to Bourdieu, in bourgeois life, "banalities about art, literature, or cinema, are inseparable from the steady tone, the slow casual diction, the distant self assured smile, the measured gesture... of the person who announces them."²⁷ In contrast, the petit bourgeoisie "experience of the world starts out from timidity, the embarrassment of someone who is uneasy in his body and his language... giving himself away as much by hyper correction as by clumsiness."²⁸ Under Bourdieu's analysis, the stratification of the cultural field comes to reflect the stratification of society as a whole. The field of culture is seen as a competitive arena where various competing occupational groups and class fractions struggle to maximize and control their control and ownership of limited and desirable resources. Through this conflict over cultural tastes and practices,

²⁶ Bourdieu, *Distinction*, pp 33-34

²⁷ Bourdieu, *Distinction*, p 174

²⁸ Bourdieu, *Distinction*, p 207

not have the status of unchanging physical laws and can't be applied internationally in a universal manner. It is questionable to what degree Bourdieu's work applies to the more heterogeneous societies of today.³⁶ Bourdieu's notion that working class cultural tastes work only as a sign of their continued dominance makes little allowance for working class cultures and creative styles to have their own value, autonomy and dignity. All cultural consumption outside of 'legitimate' culture cannot simply be defined as negative or as second rate. By consigning working class culture to a position of constant inferiority he is ultimately accepting the rules of cultural legitimacy, and becomes caught in a formalist trap of his own making. Giving account of some of the positive aspects of popular culture does not mean denying the persistence of struggle and conflict over cultural legitimacy, power, and dominance, nor does it mean believing in absolute cultural relativism.

Bridgette Fowler notes that Bourdieu has underestimated the capacity for work of artistic power being produced from the expanded field of cultural production, and that his "concern to detail the dynamics of the high low division has failed to consider adequately the nature of popular art..."³⁷ She argues that he ends up being enthralled to and reinforcing the aesthetic ideology he wishes to deconstruct. Similarly, Brian Rigby argues that, "in choosing to describe the culture of the working class by always relating it to the dominant culture which relegates it to a situation of inferiority and barbarism, Bourdieu cannot totally escape the charge that he is merely replicating the view of the dominant classes."³⁸ The disinterested pure pleasures of legitimate culture are important to those who are engaged with it, but for many others it may have little relevance to their lives. This is still the case even though there has been a massive expansion in third level education since the 1960s. The respect and reverence for older established cultural hierarchies is less rigid today, where the value of cultural practices are frequently assessed through the lens of post-modern ideas. Bourdieu's acceptance of a cultural hierarchy that places all cultural practices outside of legitimate culture at a 'disadvantage'

³⁶ Victoria D. Alexander, *Sociology of the Arts: Exploring Fine and Popular Forms* (Oxford, Blackwell Publishers, 2003) p231

³⁷ Bridgette Fowler, *Pierre Bourdieu and Cultural Theory* (London, Sage Publications, 1997) p 94

³⁸ Brian Rigby, "Popular Culture as Barbaric Culture: The Sociology of Pierre Bourdieu" in Derek Robbins (ed.) *Pierre Bourdieu*, (London, Sage Publications, 2000) p 298

means that his work can't account for major changes in the cultural landscape. As John Frow notes:

cultural disadvantage is in fact, operative only *on the grounds of high culture*. Bourdieu assumes that the legitimacy of this ground is still imposed on the dominated classes; but it may well be the case, particularly since the massive growth of television culture in which working class people tend to be fully competent, that it has become largely irrelevant.³⁹

Through his assumption that high culture is the only legitimate culture, Bourdieu manages to almost completely overlook television. The dramatic expansion of television culture over the last few decades poses a serious challenge to Bourdieu's theoretical framework. Bourdieu's work is still useful when looking at how cultural consumption mirrors broader social inequalities, yet it is problematic in that it reinforces a binary logic that rigidly places television and popular culture in opposition to 'legitimate' art.

³⁹ John Frow, "Accounting for Tastes: Some Problems in Bourdieu's Sociology of Culture", in Cultural Studies, Vol. 1, no. 1, 1987, p 50

*The State is wise and the market is stupid.*⁴⁰

Introduction

In this chapter, I begin by exploring ideas around the broad notion of ‘the public’. In democratic societies the public are ideally meant to, through the representatives they elect, dictate the actions of government. This same public, via taxation, also partly funds public services such as public service broadcasting and the arts. Ideally, the public take an active part in the actions of the State and the State provides a series of public services for the common good. The chapter explores difficulties with the ideals of democracy when put into practice, as well as problems with the idea of a uniform and singular public and how these relate to public services. The public is a nebulous and mysterious entity, and rather than being one homogenous mass, is made up of many disparate and conflicting groups with different interests, concerns, and beliefs. This creates conflicts over which public services are provided by the State, how they are funded, and how the bodies that provide such services operate. Ultimately, the decision to provide such public services is justified on the basis that they deliver what is known in economic terms, as ‘external benefits’ to society. This means that, even if there are problems with the ideals, there is still a persistent belief that all the disparate groups that make up the public benefit from the provision of such services.

In the next section of the chapter, I look at the paternalistic model for public service broadcasting (PSB) that was formulated in England by Lord John Reith. This model for public service broadcasting was, with some variations, emulated in many European countries including Ireland. The core ideals of public service broadcasting were that public service broadcasting should inform, educate and entertain the public and that public broadcasters should be able to operate free from commercial and political pressure. I explore some of the problems with the paternalistic model of broadcasting and certain differences between how public broadcasting was developed in the UK and Ireland. In Ireland, public broadcasters have never been free from commercial pressure

⁴⁰ Robert Skidelsky, *John Maynard Keynes: Fighting for Britain, 1937-1946* (New York, Viking Penguin, 2001) p 134

as they have always raised revenue through a combination of license fees and advertising. Also, I point to the fact that public service broadcasting in Ireland was, from the outset, used to further a State driven nationalist cultural agenda that was often at odds with public taste. The paternalistic broadcasting model was imposed as a way of combating the detrimental effects of mass or popular culture and aimed to give the public what they supposedly *needed* as opposed to what they wanted. The chapter also looks at some arguments that see the arena of popular culture as potentially more responsive to the real needs of diverse publics.

Subsequently, I look at how the Irish State's conception of the public began to change in the course of the 1970s. There was recognition at this time that the notion of the public needed to be expanded to account for the complexity of the diverse groups that make up the public. This was reflected in changes to broadcasting legislation that pointed to the need to respect and provide for cultural needs beyond the scope of cultural nationalism. This broadening out of the definition of the public came about during the same era that Ireland joined the European Economic Community (EEC) and more actively sought its place in the international community. I illustrate how Ireland's entry into the EEC (now the European Union or EU) entailed a move toward common political, economic and cultural policy. Under common European cultural policy, public service broadcasting was and continues to be stridently defended. PSB is envisaged as a tool not only to preserve and develop the national cultures of member states, but also to foster a pan European cultural identity. The programming of the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) is used as an example of a broadcasting organisation that most clearly fulfils this agenda within Europe. Ireland's engagement in the European project and its agreed cultural policy is shown to have had a major impact on its national broadcasting environment. As a result, European and Irish legislation have dramatically liberalised broadcasting markets. This has created a contradictory tension where forces are put into operation that undermine PSB, while at the same time it continues to be protected and supported.

Finally, I look at political, economic, and cultural changes that took place from the 1980s onward and which have created further difficulties and challenges for public service broadcasters. Neo-liberal ideology became increasingly dominant over the course

of this decade. Neo-liberals argue that all markets, including broadcasting, should be free as possible from government interference and should be viewed as just another sphere of commercial enterprise. This ideology contrasts sharply with the ideas of both Jürgen Habermas and John Maynard Keynes. I illustrate how this political and economic philosophy, combined with rapid technological changes, engendered fundamental changes to broadcasting environments, not only nationally, but globally. The deregulation of broadcasting that was initiated at this time created intense competition for public service broadcasters and has made it more and more difficult for them to sustain their traditional levels of funding and support. The ideal of public service broadcasting operating as a cotemporary version of a political and cultural public sphere increasingly came under attack. There are now literally hundreds of channels available through cable, digital, and satellite subscription services which illustrates how much has changed since the early days of broadcasting when PSBs held a virtual monopoly of the airwaves. Even though such far-reaching changes have transformed broadcasting, the ideals under which public service broadcasting was established are still espoused today. These ideals are continually reaffirmed as part of a strategy to distinguish the role and function of PSB from that of its commercial competitors, and hence, to justify its financial subsidy from the public.

Section 1: Broadcasting as a Public Good

Irish and European legislation supports public service broadcasting on the basis that it is essential for the achievement of democratic ideals. According to such legislation, public service broadcasting is meant to perform a role similar to the political and literary public sphere, as described by Habermas. One of a democratic society's most defining characteristics is that it is constituted by an actively informed public who cast their votes in order to elect representatives who best serve the general interest of society. But is this how our societies actually do function? Do public service broadcasters adequately inform the public and give equal air time to a wide array of contrasting opinions? When we use the term the public, to whom do we refer? The word public is utilized in a vast array of contexts; public interest, public affairs, public policy, public authority, public opinion, public space, public libraries, public safety, public outrage, public information, public

property and the list goes on. What or who is this ‘public’? In order to discuss public services and public service broadcasting, it is helpful to explore what is meant by “the public” both in reference to ‘the public’ as a group of people, and ‘the public’ in spatial terms. It is important to note that the notion of the public is a political one and tied to membership of some identifiable body politic. For the purposes of this paper I will define ‘the public’ as a social body with a perceived shared identity and interests.

It is useful to move from the idea of a monolithic or homogenous public to the notion of a plurality of publics. The term public comes from the Greek word *polis* which broadly translates as both ‘city’ and ‘city-state’, but also means ‘citizenship’. A Greek city-state or *polis* was not ruled by a king or a small oligarchy, but was a political entity ruled by its body of citizens. The word’s most important meaning came to signify this entire body of citizens.⁴¹ The Greek *poleis* (plural of *polis*) provided a foundational model that continues to influence contemporary ideals about democratic societies. In this model, the public should, in theory, represent all members of society, where each individual has a participatory role in determining the nature of how their society functions, the legislation that governs public and private life, and the common values shared by the people. Yet, if every single person or citizen in a modern state is who we think of when we use term ‘the public,’ then we are, in effect, referring to the vast congregate of private individuals who make up this monolithic ‘public’. This leads one to question how one word can possibly represent the complex variety of individuals that constitute the public in a modern nation state and how this representation can transform a multifarious and variegated citizenry into a homogenous mass. When referring to the public as a group of people who are bound together by common interests, we may start with the idea that it refers to all citizens of the state. Yet it is preferable to envisage the public as a series of overlapping publics, as a plurality of publics, with their own interests, social origins, desires, tastes, abilities, political allegiances, ethnicities, religious beliefs and so on. These various publics have common concerns but also often have conflicting sets of values, beliefs and practices. According to Michael Warner, a public is as much notional as empirical. He says the public, “is also partial, since there could be

⁴¹ Paul Woodruff, *First Democracy: Challenge of an Ancient Idea* (New York, Oxford University Press, 2005) p 18 – 20

an infinite number of publics within the social totality.”⁴² It is important to keep in mind that an individual can belong to a number of different publics simultaneously. Public service broadcasters policy deploys a number of strategies to deal with this plurality of publics. This includes broadcasting popular programming that appeals to large cross sections of the public as well as making repeated statements about PSB’s mission to celebrate cultural diversity as well providing adequate amounts of minority interest programming.

When referring to the public in spatial terms we may start with the notion of public space being all those spaces that we share in common and that are in collective, not private, ownership and where no individual can be excluded due to economic or social status. These are all spaces that citizens of the state can move through equally and include such spaces as the public streets, public parks, public libraries etc. We can include the space of public service broadcasting (PSB) as a public space according to the above terms, as it is a space collectively owned by the citizens of the state (a Mediapolis) and with each citizen, in theory, having equal access and an equal participatory role in defining the use of this space.⁴³ In some instances, public spaces that we presume to be equally accessible, owned, and shared by all members of the public do not function in that way for a variety of reasons. Some members of the public are discouraged and/or actively removed from public spaces such as parks, or streets and people with certain disabilities may not be able to use public spaces due to lack of suitable facilities. Free public spaces such as free art museums and galleries theoretically allow all members of the public free and equal access yet studies of museum and gallery audiences, such as those carried out by Pierre Bourdieu⁴⁴, reveal that certain sectors of the public, for a number of complex reasons, rarely or never participate in such spaces.

On this basis, it is possible to see public spaces as governed by a variety of restrictions and tensions, both tacit and overt, which include and exclude certain members of the public even though these spaces are collectively owned and claim to be equally

⁴² Michael Warner, “Publics and Counterpublics”, *Public Culture*, 14(1), 2002, p 51

⁴³ It is important here to note the argument that the payment of the license fee excludes some citizens from the use of this public service. Also, to appear more accountable to the public, broadcasters such as RTÉ have undertaken several consultative processes with audiences in the form of audience councils.

⁴⁴ Pierre Bourdieu and Alain Darbel, *The Love of Art: European Art Museums and their Public*, (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1991)

accessible and available to all. Rosalyn Deutsche points to the restoration of Jackson Park in New York, as an example of contested public space. The park which had fallen into disrepair was reconstructed by The Friends of Jackson Park, a group of private individuals who funded the \$1.2 million project. In news reports about Jackson Park, this private group of individuals were continually mistaken for 'the community' and 'the public' and were congratulated on their decision to lock the park at night. Locking the park was meant to restore the harmony of this public space by keeping out 'undesirables' such as homeless people. The homeless person became constructed as an ideological figure that must be kept out of public space so that public order and a more positive atmosphere could be restored to such spaces.⁴⁵ Here we see an example of a public space, the public park, that one presumes is open to all the public, being restricted in its uses by private interests. These private interests, groups of wealthy home owning residents, represented themselves as 'the public' in order to justify their 'ownership' and control of such space. This serves as an example of how a public space can be taken over and controlled by a minority of private interests.

Under examination, the term 'the public' becomes full of conflict and contradictions, and hence, the ideals underpinning democratic societies are problematic when put into practice. Jean-Jacques Rousseau in his highly influential treatise on individual freedom in political society, *The Social Contract*, begins this work with the following note of scepticism: "I wish to enquire, whether, taking men as they are and laws as they can be made, it is possible to establish some just and certain rule of administration in civil affairs."⁴⁶ Although this work has inspired democratic revolutionaries at various points in history, it clearly expresses serious doubt about the possibility of democracy functioning in the best interests of all citizens. Rousseau says of democracy:

Taking the term in its strict sense, there never has existed, and never will exist, any true democracy. It is contrary to the natural order that the majority should govern and the minority should be governed. It is impossible to imagine that the people should remain in perpetual assembly to attend to public affairs... if there

⁴⁵ Rosalyn Deutsche, *Evictions: Art and Spatial Politics*, (Cambridge, MIT Press, 1996) p 276 - 277

⁴⁶ Rousseau, Jean-Jacques, *The Social Contract*, (London, Wordsworth, 1998) pg 3

were a nation of gods, it would be governed democratically. So perfect a government is unsuited to men.⁴⁷

Rousseau was writing in the 18th century, when contemporary models of democratic governments and the nation state were only beginning to be imagined and he shows deep discomfort with the idea of the general public dictating political decision making. There is a sense that the ordinary person does not understand what is in the best interests of society and must be directed by those who know better. Although democratic governments have been widely established over the last two centuries, such ideas still pervade. Paternalistic models of broadcasting and State directed cultural agendas are supported by this line of thinking, which obscures its deep distrust of the public.

In more recent times one of the problems with democracy isn't that the public will unduly influence political decision making, but that the public have lost interest and become apathetic and estranged from the democratic process. On this note, Alastair Hannay says:

yes there is a public, and we are it... but it is a public that eschews politics and pursues private interests, it is a public in a new context, one in which society no longer supports the conditions under which what was once referred to as 'the public' came into being.⁴⁸

Echoing Jürgen Habermas, Hannay argues that what we refer to as the public sphere today is a 'commercialised arena in which debate is hard to distinguish from entertainment, a space which, unlike its modest progenitor, offers not so much ever widening opportunities for serious debate as an expanding bill board on which economic and partisan interests compete with each other for the private individuals' custom."⁴⁹ This is one of the continuing criticisms directed at public service broadcasting as it increasingly operates more and more like commercial broadcasters.

This lack of belief in the ability of participatory democracy to function according to its ideals can be detected also in the work of Walter Lippmann, who questioned theories of popular government. He wrote that such theory "rests upon a belief that there

⁴⁷ Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, p 67- 68

⁴⁸ Alastair Hannay, *On the Public*, (New York, Routledge, 2005), p 25

⁴⁹ Hannay, *On the Public*, p 45

is a public which directs the course of events while this public is a mere 'phantom'... [and] an abstraction."⁵⁰ In other words, according to Lippmann, the ideal of government by and for the people is an impossible ideal. One of the key the problems he sees is the distance in contemporary societies between the governed and those governing.

Lippmann says, 'the private citizen today has come to feel rather like a deaf spectator in the back row, who ought to keep his mind on the mystery off there, but cannot quite manage to keep awake.'⁵¹ He argues that all suggested remedies to this problem presuppose that voters are either inherently competent to direct the course of public affairs or that they are at least making steps toward achieving such an ideal. He contends that this is "a false ideal. I do not mean an undesirable ideal. I mean an unattainable ideal, bad only in the sense that it is bad for a fat man to try to be a ballet dancer."⁵²

Lippmann expresses little faith in the concept of an informed public that is able to function as a directing force in public affairs. The public are viewed as an ignorant mass unable to carry out their idealised function in democratic societies. Similar disparaging notions about the public informed the paternalistic model of broadcasting that dominated during the early days of public service broadcasting.

There are many tensions underlining the actual functioning of democracy and its claim to be a government by the people for the people, yet such ideals continue to inform how governments function in democratic societies. Government provision of public services is continually justified in reference to these ideals. Public services are a range of services delivered by a government to its citizens directly through the public sector but many of these services are increasingly provided by the private sector such as the provision of electricity in the United Kingdom. Theoretically, the method by which certain services become public services as a responsibility of the state is decided as a result of social consensus which is expressed through democratic elections. The rationale behind the state delivery of many public services, such as primary education or a clean water supply, is that certain services should be available to the entire public regardless of income. Even when private interests supply a public service they are usually subject to state regulation in ways that other economic sectors are not. In the U.S., where many

⁵⁰ Walter Lippmann, *The Phantom Public*, (New Brunswick, Transaction Publishers, 2003) p 67

⁵¹ Lippmann, *The Phantom Public*, p 3

⁵² Lippmann, *The Phantom Public*, p 28 - 29

public services are provided privately, services such as electricity and water supply are regulated by the Public Utility Commission, in order to curtail the potential exploitation of such services by private interests. The fact that certain public services are deemed essential to a decent quality of life means their universal provision is often cited as a fundamental human right. For example, Article 21 of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights states, “everyone has the right to equal access to public services in his country.”⁵³

Public services, such as public health services, the arts, and public broadcasting are often termed public goods which can be defined as follows:

Those goods, although they may be provided privately, are unlikely to be provided at socially optimal levels. In contrast, private goods are those for which the benefits accrue entirely to the direct users of the goods.⁵⁴

Public goods resist commodification because in economic terms they are considered non-excludable (i.e. people cannot be prevented from using a good or service because they did not pay for it – e.g. clean air) and non-rival (i.e. consumption by one person does not diminish the amount available to another person – e.g. street lighting) In contrast, private goods are defined as rival (e.g. one person’s consumption of that good denies consumption by another person) and excludable (people can be denied access if they do not pay).⁵⁵ Many goods and services exist somewhere between these two poles, being neither pure public nor pure private goods. The provision of public goods is a key economic and social role of the State. Positive externalities (or spillover benefits) and negative externalities (or spillover costs) “arise from the activities of individuals, firms, organizations and states which results in benefits (e.g. education) or damage (air or river pollution) to society.”⁵⁶ The State plays a crucial role in minimizing negative externalities and promoting positive externalities through taxation, regulation, monitoring and inspection, planning and the provision of activities and services. Public goods often

⁵³ “UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights: Article 21”, The United Nations, <http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html>, December 10, 1948, accessed 15/04/07

⁵⁴ Anwar Sah, *Public Services Delivery*, (Washington D.C., The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank, 2005) p 157

⁵⁵ Dexter Whitfield, *Public Services or Corporate Welfare: Rethinking the Nation State in the Global Economy* (London, Pluto Press, 2001) p 19

⁵⁶ Whitfield, *Public Services or Corporate Welfare*, p 19 - 20

suffer from under-provision. In these instances, the State can intervene to provide public goods for the benefit of all of society. Political and cultural differences effect which services become defined as private goods which means these goods must compete in the market like any other commodity. Public services that are delivered by the state can often include education, transport, road construction and maintenance, energy supplies, fire and police services, refuse management, and water services. The arts and public service television are supported by the State in Ireland on the basis that they are public goods which create positive externalities in society.

Those arguing for state support for public service broadcasting contend public service broadcasting provides what is known in economic terminology as ‘external benefits.’ In economic terms an externality is:

a cost or a benefit arising from an economic transaction which falls on a third party and is not taken into account by either party to the transaction. External costs in the form of pollution and associated environmental problems are quite common and well recognized, but external benefits are less so. Education is an example of a public good that is commonly agreed to provide external benefits.⁵⁷

For a television programme to be seen as providing external benefits, “viewing by one person must generate benefits to other members of society through improved social interaction.”⁵⁸ This logic presumes that television content has a predictable and measurable influence on viewers even though studies in this area tend to be inconclusive. This can be seen in the continuing disagreement over the issue of whether violence on television makes society more violent or desensitizes audiences to violence.⁵⁹ Also, many audience reception studies that have been carried out reveal that the audience’s experience is by no means predictable or homogenous. David Morley’s groundbreaking and influential study, *The Nationwide Audience*, found that a variety of factors, including occupational and educational background, gender, and ethnicity, influence how particular individuals and groups received and interpreted the British current affairs programme *Nationwide*. Morley posits television viewing as an “active process of decoding or

⁵⁷ Adam Finn, Colin Hoskins, and Stuart McFayden, *Global Television and Film: An Introduction to the Economics of the Business*. (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1997) p 81

⁵⁸ Finn, Hoskins, and McFayden, *Global Television and Film*, p 81

⁵⁹ David Trend, *The Myth of Media Violence: A Critical Introduction*. (Oxford, Blackwell Publishing, 2007)

interpretation, not simply a passive process of 'reception' and 'consumption' of messages."⁶⁰ The responses, from diverse 'cultural clusters', to his Nationwide study varied from general agreement to complete opposition that to the programme's editorial viewpoint.⁶¹ Morley argues that:

In order to understand the potential meanings of a given message, we need a 'cultural map' of the audience to whom the message is addressed – a map showing the various cultural repertoires and symbolic resources available to differently placed sub-groups within that audience.⁶²

Regardless of the findings of such studies, there is a persistent notion in popular discourse that what is considered good television content unproblematically creates good effects and that bad content produces bad effects. Such a belief proposes that, for example, indigenously produced drama produces good external benefits in that it can provide an increased sense of national identity. Current affairs and news programming, in this view, can inform citizens of national events and give a home grown perspective on foreign affairs. Educational children's' programming can enlighten the minds of the young whilst arts programming can promote knowledge, access, and participation in arts. While it is very possible that such programming creates external benefits, the broadness of such claims do not take account of the complexity of the audience and their diverse responses and interpretations of such programming. The supposed 'external effects' of experiencing these types of public service programmes justifies support of PSB as these effects match the aims and objectives of the public service remit. If the provision of such programmes is left to private broadcasters, market failure may occur, meaning that such programming may not be adequately provided to the public. The 'external effects' argument is used to justify state funding for a variety of public services, including public service broadcasting and the arts.

Within the context of academic debates about broadcasting and the media, this argument expresses itself in the opinion that competing private stations will excessively duplicate mass appeal popular programming in order to win as large a percentage as

⁶⁰ David Morley, *Television Audiences and Cultural Studies*, (London, Routledge, 1992) p 76

⁶¹ Morley, *Television, Audiences, and Cultural Studies*, p 111 - 118

⁶² Morley, *Television, Audiences, and Cultural Studies*, p 118

possible of the total audience market share.⁶³ It follows that they will not provide programming that is not commercially viable, which is why it is argued that public service programming, not driven purely by the profit motive, provides ‘external benefits’ not provided by programming on private channels. The external benefits argument is persuasive, yet it is always important to remember that a programme can only generate external benefits if it is actually watched by viewers. Good quality public service broadcast programming, like the arts and education, offer private benefits for those who actually do consume them. After such individual benefits are accounted for, is there any additional benefit that could be classified as an external benefit? The answer to this question is ambiguous, as external benefits are diffuse and unobservable. This gives commercial broadcasters added room to argue against public subsidies for PSB as such subsidies provide an unfair advantage in the market. Such challenges to the legitimacy of public service broadcast television did not exist until the era of deregulation began in earnest in the 1980s. In Ireland, this shift occurred with the Radio and Television Act in 1988 which allowed commercial broadcasters to legally compete with public service broadcasters for the first time. This was largely due to the fact that there was no competition from private television broadcasters in most European countries until that time. Hence, there was no need to justify its existence on the basis of the external benefits argument because it was taken for granted that public service programming offered such benefits.

Section 2: The Origins of Irish Public Service Broadcasting

In the UK in the 1920s, Lord John Reith mapped out a model of public service broadcasting for the BBC that subsequently became the model for public service broadcasting in Ireland and in many other European countries. He envisaged the BBC as “an independent British broadcaster able to educate, inform and entertain the whole nation, free from political interference and commercial pressure.”⁶⁴ Reith saw his appointment as head of the BBC as a ‘calling’ from God, and aimed to make

⁶³ Jim McGuigan, *Cultural Populism*, (London, Routledge, 1992) p 187

⁶⁴ “History of the BBC: 1920s”, British Broadcasting Corporation, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/heritage/more/pdfs/1920s.pdf>, accessed 21/06/08

broadcasting a “fit instrument for the divine purpose.”⁶⁵ He viewed broadcasting as carrying out a specific, and high-minded, moral and cultural mission and this involved giving the audience what they supposedly needed, not necessarily what they wanted. The paternalistic broadcasting model he constructed is noticeably at odds with ideals of the public that underpin participatory democracy, and also contradicts Habermas’ notion of an inclusive political and cultural public sphere.

Under Reith, educated and cultural elites were to use broadcasting as a tool to enlighten the public. Reith contended:

As we conceive it, our responsibility is to carry into the greatest possible number of homes everything that is best in every department of human knowledge, endeavour, and achievement, and to avoid the things which are, or may be, hurtful. It is occasionally indicated to us that we are apparently setting out to give the public what we think they need – and not what they want. But few know what they want, and very few what they need. There is often no difference.⁶⁶

Broadcasting was intended to contribute to the public good and that it would *lead* public taste, rather than pander to it. This means that the Reithian model of public service broadcasting was based on the problematic notion that ‘betters’ need to decide what is best for ordinary people. Although public service broadcasting was meant to serve the national public interest, and not cater to particular groups, it still operated for particular interests and not all of society. A former director of the BBC, Stuart Hood, claimed that rather than the ideals of PSB having anything to do with socialism, “it served the interests of those already powerful within capitalist society”⁶⁷ and so helped to maintain the established order where middle class interests dominated over those of the lower ranks. This conflict and tension over deciding what is best for the public, is still evident within discourses surrounding public service broadcasting today. Yet for all its problems, Lord Reith’s original model for public service broadcasting still formed the foundation of many public service broadcasting systems. This model proposed that public service broadcasting should be conceived as ‘public property’ and that it should operate as a monopoly, be operated at arm’s length from government control, serve the interests of the majority of the public but also take account of minority interests, be funded by the license

⁶⁵ James McDonnell, *Public Service Broadcasting*, (London, Routledge, 1991) p 11

⁶⁶ McDonnell, *Public Service Broadcasting*, p 11 – 12

⁶⁷ Stuart Hood cited by Lisa Taylor and Andrew Willis, *Media Studies: Texts, Institutions, and Audiences*, (Oxford, Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1999) p 112

fee, provide a forum for public debate, and finally operate as a ‘universal’ service so that everyone in the country could benefit from it. Public service broadcasters may no longer have a monopoly over the airwaves, and some countries, such as Ireland, do fund their PSBs with a combination of advertising and license fee, but the key ideals of public service broadcasting, as laid out by Lord Reith, are still with us today. Reith was strongly opposed to the idea of broadcasting being a commercial enterprise. He said, “we have done our best to found a tradition of public service rather than public exploitation”⁶⁸ and believed that broadcasting was too powerful an influence over the public, and hence, too significant to leave in the control of private hands. He would most likely despair over the contemporary media landscape with its ever expanding proliferation of commercial competition.

In Ireland, public service broadcasting was established with 2RN, the national radio service under the provisions of the Wireless Telegraphy Act 1926. Television services were legally established under The Broadcasting Authority Act (1960), which set up an independent broadcasting authority made up of government appointees. The television service began broadcasting on New Year’s Eve, 1961. The 1960 Broadcasting Act stated the purpose of RTÉ as “providing a national television and sound broadcasting service”⁶⁹ and from this date on, the functioning of both public service radio and television was legally bound by the terms of this Act. It is important to note here that contemporary public service broadcasters are distinct from state broadcasters in that they must operate at an arms length distance from government control. In Ireland, this distinction has not always been that clear where, for example, the national radio service was run as an extension of the civil service until 1953. Although the RTÉ Authority was established under the terms of the 1960 Broadcasting Act to give Irish public service television the necessary autonomy from state control, the minister directly responsible was still able to fire any member of the authority without stating any reason for doing so. In 1972, Minister Gerry Collins sacked the entire RTÉ authority over an interview carried out with a member of the IRA. This form of heavy handed State intervention was addressed with the 1976 Broadcasting Authority (Amendment) Act, 1976.

⁶⁸ McDonnell, *Public Service Broadcasting*, p 15

⁶⁹ Broadcasting Authority Act 1960, 16.—(1), <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/1960/en/act/pub/0010/index.html>, accessed 03/05/07

This meant that broadcasting in Ireland historically operated more like a State broadcaster than a public service broadcaster. Well known examples of state interference also occurred when, via directives issued by the government minister responsible for broadcasting, RTÉ news teams were prevented from going to Vietnam in 1967 and to Biafra (Nigeria) in 1968.⁷⁰ This serves as another example of how the ideals on which public service broadcasting were founded can be undermined when the arm's length principle is not respected. Separation from State control is intended to allow PSB to be objective in its reporting on news and current affairs and this aspect of PSB is often viewed as essential to the functioning of a healthy democracy. The level of government interference in an earlier era of Irish broadcasting services, including its prescribed culturally nationalist diet of programming, had a serious impact on RTÉ's ability to function as a PSB according to contemporary definitions. A State driven cultural agenda, which focused on the preservation and development of the Irish language and traditional culture, was enshrined in law and imposed on the Irish public. Hence, the artistic and cultural content which was provided as a public good on RTÉ did not come about as a result of consultation or dialogue with the public it was meant serve but was instead, imposed from above.

Following the Reithian model, RTÉ was established with the aim to inform, educate, and entertain the people of Ireland, but the 1960 Broadcasting Authority Act makes one of the aims of RTÉ more explicit. Section 17 of the act states: "In performing its functions, the Authority shall bear constantly in mind the national aims of restoring the Irish language and preserving and developing the national culture and shall endeavor to promote the attainment of those aims."⁷¹ In common with many countries, the Irish Government saw its PSB as a vehicle to develop and preserve national culture and to foster a sense of social cohesion. Broadcasting was hence defined in ways that are characteristically nationalist and in Ireland, conceptions of the Nation and a unified national culture were administered via broadcasting to the people of the State. Benedict Anderson's notion of "imagined communities" is relevant here, not as a synonym for national identity but as a way to define a common feeling or sense of *Irishness*. Anderson

⁷⁰ Farrel Corcoran, *RTÉ and the Globalization of Irish Television* (Bristol, Intellect Books, 2004) p 59 - 60

⁷¹ Broadcasting Authority Act 1960, Section 17,

<http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/1960/en/act/pub/0010/index.html>, accessed 03/05/07

defines the nation as imaginary in the following terms, “it is *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nations will never know most of their fellow members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.”⁷² Broadcasting was used as a powerful tool to unify disparate cultural identities under the umbrella of an imaginary uncontested national Irish culture. The rapid and continual expansion of the mass media since the late 1980s can be seen as factor influencing the weakening of national cultures and the disintegration of national identities. Nonetheless, from the 1920s until the era of deregulation, broadcast media played a decisive role in the formation of a shared imagined nation.

The paternalistic model of broadcasting, where programming content is decided in a top-down fashion by bourgeois elites, dominated the approach taken to broadcasting in many European countries until the era of deregulation in the 1980s. In the early days of the BBC this meant providing a ‘highbrow’ cultural menu for the public that would give every citizen access to what Mathew Arnold termed, “the best which has been thought and said in the world”⁷³, as well as fostering a sense of national cultural unity which would hopefully ‘civilise’ the masses of the ‘great unwashed’. The continuing increase in the production and consumption of popular culture was, in Arnoldian terms, equated with anarchy as it was seen to undermine established cultural hierarchies and the positions of authority that maintained such hierarchies. The cultural content on PSB was intended to counter the degrading effects of these trends through the cultivation of better taste amongst the general public. The BBC’s third national radio network, The Third Programme, founded in 1946 exemplified this approach. It was established with the high minded mission to provide a cultural diet of serious classical music, concerts, contemporary composers, jazz, and radio productions of British and European drama.⁷⁴ It could be claimed today that the digital channel, BBC Four, is attempting to continue this type of high minded mission which is reflected in its programming choices and its catch phrase ‘a place to think’. As stated earlier, Lord Reith did not envisage public service broadcasting to be commercially viable and he was adamantly opposed to

⁷² Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, (London/New York, Verso, 2006) p 6

⁷³ Matthew Arnold, “Culture and Anarchy” in John Storey (ed.) *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: A Reader*, (Essex, Prentice Hall, 1998) p 7

⁷⁴ “A Short History of the BBC”, BBC News: World Edition, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/entertainment/1231593.stm>, published 19/04/02, accessed 15/02/08

commercial intrusion into the broadcasting market. This is why from the outset, BBC radio and television were not financed via advertising revenue. In contrast, the Irish state intended its PSB to provide specified cultural content but planned for its PSB to cost as little as possible to the exchequer. This economic set up in Ireland continues to have an impact on RTÉ's programming choices as it has always had to satisfy the demands of advertisers by offering programmes that attract high audience figures in order to stay afloat. Despite this conflict, as well as the radical social, technological, economic, and political changes of the last four decades, the core ideas of what constitutes a PSB, as defined at the advent of television, are still with us today.

It is interesting to emphasize the distinct nature of the service offered by public service broadcasting in comparison to the delivery of other public services such as health, electricity, or water etc. The service delivered to the people via public service broadcasting entails a state directed delivery of a specific cultural agenda, enshrined in law, and so carries ideologically weight via the cultural content provided. Luke Gibbons argues that there has always been tension in Irish public service broadcasting between the competing forces of the *nation* and the *state* as the Irish "state derived its legitimacy from the antecedent nation, and thus the function of broadcasting was not to establish but to revitalize this nation, releasing the cultural energies which, it was believed, had accumulated over centuries."⁷⁵ This meant the aim of public service broadcasting, from the outset of broadcasting in Ireland, was very different to that in the UK where the "high culture aspirations of public service broadcasting made no secret of the fact that it was in the business of *establishing* a national consensus."⁷⁶ In Ireland this was considered unnecessary as a national consensus and native culture were deemed to already be firmly in place and now only needed to be reflected in the programming content delivered. Gibbons suggests that broadcasting has always had to "adjust itself to the prevailing cultural dynamic and in Ireland this was closely identified with nationalism."⁷⁷ This meant that Irish language and traditional art forms were ideally meant to be the focus of the arts and cultural content transmitted by Irish public service broadcasting.

⁷⁵ Luke Gibbons, *Transformations in Irish Culture*, (Cork University Press, Cork, 1996) p 71

⁷⁶ Gibbons, *Transformations in Irish Culture*, p 70

⁷⁷ Gibbons, *Transformations in Irish Culture*, p 72

Gibbons also argues that it is essential to not view broadcasting as simply *transmitting* content as it actively *transforms* it. He quotes Walter Benjamin in his argument that:

the first casualty of 'the new media technology was precisely *tradition*, the shared experience of a continuous past. The endless proliferation of copies facilitated by mass production dispels any trace of 'authenticity', the 'aura' of the original, which is central to the concept of tradition. To compensate for this liquidation of tradition, the media offers a new form of public identity, the sense of belonging which comes from being a member of a mass audience experiencing a national (or even international) media event.⁷⁸

Gibbons gives the example of the transformative power of the media, in an Irish context, in relation to media coverage of Gaelic games and Irish traditional music. The new electronic media, rather than simply handing down a long established tradition to the people, substantially contributed to the creation of a national audience for Gaelic games and traditional music and also played a major part in the Gaelic Athletic Association becoming a national institution. So rather than just preserving a traditional national culture the media can be instrumental in creating and developing it.

There have always been conflicts between the arbiters of public taste and the interests of popular audiences. The continuing belief that Irish PSB was simply giving back to the people their own native culture informed the decision to make Irish PSB reliant on commercial revenue. It was presumed that there would be adequate public demand for the programming content provided and so there would be little difficulty in attracting advertisers. Yet, the ability of RTÉ to fulfill the stated aims of its public service remit, primarily the preservation and development of the Irish language and culture, has always been undermined by this set of economic circumstances coupled with a misguided notion of what constituted popular taste. Gibbons quotes Seamus Brennan's disappointment at the inability of the new media to carry out its stated mission:

To me, I think the most disappointing aspect of broadcasting in Irish was the apparently complete lack of interest, the indifference, the apathy – call it what you will – of the listeners, so much so that I often wondered whether anyone listened

⁷⁸ Gibbons, *Transformations in Irish Culture*, p 72

to Irish... let the programmes be very good, indifferent or bad... there was complete silence.⁷⁹

This example highlights the difficulty of defining the content to be delivered on public service broadcasting and also of identifying its very function as a 'public service' provided to Irish people. Issues around the delivery of public services such as water or electricity bring up a different set of political questions as they are not bound up, in the same manner, with a state driven cultural agenda. It continues to be an ongoing struggle to define the content delivery on public service broadcasters that manages to satisfy both popular tastes and more 'minority interest' programmes that are more generally associated with the fulfillment of the public service remit.

Popular formats such as soap operas and talk shows have been historically viewed as imported foreign formats and are often not considered to be programmes that fulfill the public service remit. Yet it is these types of programmes that have consistently attracted, and kept, the necessary advertising revenue flowing into RTÉ. Lance Pettitt claims that they are formats which are adapted for an indigenous audience and can effectively challenge the status quo more than hard news, current affairs or other programming genres which more obviously fulfill the remit. *The Late Late Show* and soap operas such as the *Riordans* and *Glenroe* are credited with contributing to tremendous forces for social change in Ireland due to their exploration of issues not raised elsewhere in the mainstream media.⁸⁰ Richard Dyer, in *Entertainment and Utopia*, refers to popular culture not as mere escapism or as something imposed onto the public by executives eager for large audiences and big profits. He contends that it does not simply reproduce capitalist ideology. He says that "entertainment works and is enjoyable precisely because it responds to real needs created by society."⁸¹ Commodity capitalism, according to Dyer, produces social tensions, inadequacies, and lacks, such as poverty, exhaustion, dreariness, manipulation, and fragmentation, which are experienced in modern life. These require the type of utopian solutions often found in popular culture. Popular culture offers

⁷⁹ Gibbons, *Transformations in Irish Culture*, p 76

⁸⁰ Lance Pettitt, *Screening Ireland: Film and TV Representation*, (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2000) p 166 - 168

⁸¹ Richard Dyer, "Entertainment and Utopia" in Simon During (ed.) *The Cultural Studies Reader*, (London, Routledge, 1999) p 376

‘representations of ideal changes, imagined circumstances, of abundance, energy, intensity, transparency and community.’⁸²

Such arguments problematise the belief that only programming, such as news and current affairs or highbrow arts programmes, and not popular entertainment programmes, are definitive of public service broadcasting and acknowledges that over time the remit for PSB must respond to cultural shifts and changes. In the 1970s, in Britain, the idea of what constituted programme ‘quality’ became relativized and there was recognition that public service programming consisted of a broad range of programming. The Annan Report on broadcasting defined and defended public service broadcasting as a “negotiated settlement between elite and popular cultural values”.⁸³ The report stated:

Some programmes should be made for the most exacting intellectual and aesthetic mountaineers who have scaled the cultural heights... But the bulk of programmes should be provided for the majority of people who will never reach these pinnacles. As a group they have paid most towards the broadcasting service.⁸⁴

This points to a dramatic shift in thinking about what constitutes public service broadcasting content. It was now acknowledged that popular, mass appeal programming, such as soap operas, were as important within the remit of public service broadcasting as traditionally defined quality programming, such as arts programming. This illustrates how the rigidity of the paternalistic model was challenged and how popular tastes were increasingly defining the nature of public service broadcasting. This trend in the UK to make public service broadcast television more responsive to popular taste influenced similar changes to broadcasting in Ireland.

Section 3: Cultural Diversity and European Membership

In order to reflect changing Irish political, social and economic realities, there have been many amendments to the Broadcasting Authority Act 1960. Several new pieces of

⁸² Dyer, “Entertainment and Utopia”, p 376

⁸³ James Curran, *Media and Power*, (London, Routledge, 2002) p 196

⁸⁴ “The Annan Report” cited in James Curran, *Media and Power*, (London, Routledge, 2002) p 197

broadcasting legislation have been introduced in the intervening years. The Broadcasting Authority (Amendment) Act 1976 directly addressed problems with section 17 of the 1960 Broadcasting Authority Act (regarding the restoration of the Irish language and preserving and developing the national culture). Conor Cruise O'Brien, the Minister for Posts and Telegraphs, responsible for broadcasting at that time, raised the issue in the Seanad. He said that the aims outlined in the 1960 Broadcasting Act are 'ambiguous in a particular way' and that they:

...assume as obvious and acceptable to all people, certain concepts which are in fact not clear, and which, if understood in a narrow sense, are not acceptable to many people in Ireland....Section 13 of the present bill is intended to reflect a considerably wider consensus, based on the growing recognition of the diverse interests and concerns of the people of Ireland, the paramount need for peace and understanding and the variety and richness of our culture. The Authority are required to have regard to this broad spectrum in their programming while at the same time having special regard for those elements which distinguish our culture from those of other countries and particularly for the Irish language. They are also required to uphold the democratic values enshrined in the constitution. And finally to guard against being too inward looking, the Authority is asked to promote understanding of the values and traditions of other countries.⁸⁵

The intention to utilise RTÉ as a means of restoring and developing the Irish language and the national culture remained in place, yet there was a felt need to acknowledge the complexity of Irish society beyond the narrow scope of cultural nationalism, and to recognize that the Irish public could not be defined as culturally homogenous. This reflected a broader drive to look beyond national borders and to actively promote cultural diversity.

The 1976 Broadcasting Authority (Amendment) Act also extended, to a certain degree, the RTÉ Authority's autonomy from State control by removing the power of the Minister to sack members of the RTÉ authority. After the 1976 amendment, the removal of any member of the RTÉ Authority would have to be passed by both houses of the Oireachtas. In 1976, Minister O'Brien issued a directive which clarified Section 31 of the Act by specifying which particular organizations were banned from being broadcast.

⁸⁵ Dr. Conor Cruise O'Brien, address to the Seanad on proposed Broadcasting Authority (Amendment) Act in 1975

Section 31 was kept in place until 1994 and effectively created a blanket of censorship over coverage of 'the troubles' in Northern Ireland.⁸⁶ Here we have historical evidence of counter tendencies forced to operate within RTÉ. On the one hand we have legislation introduced that increased the RTÉ Authority's autonomy and which also actively sought to broaden its cultural perspective. Both of these objectives fit neatly into the concept of the public service remit and illustrate an element of maturity in the state's relationship to RTÉ. On the other hand, we have a directive which promoted a culture of censorship of current affairs which starkly contravened core notions of the public service remit. These core notions, as stated earlier, are that a public service broadcaster should operate at arm's length from the government in order to be objective in its reporting, to keep the electorate informed on issues of general interest, and to offer as broad a spectrum of opinion as possible. Such contradictory tendencies highlight the ongoing tension between the rhetoric of PSB and the realities of practice, continually influenced as it is, by political as well as economic, social, and technological changes.

In regard to the stated aim that RTÉ should "promote understanding of the values and traditions of other countries," it is noteworthy that Ireland joined the European Economic Community in 1973. This meant that, aside from its own national aims and objectives, Ireland, and its public service broadcaster, became embedded in an historical project with a much broader cultural perspective. The EEC remit contained aims and objectives intended to collectively satisfy all member states. Joining the EEC was a continuation of Irish Government policy instigated in the 1950's, to end decades of economic, cultural, and political isolation. From this period on, the Irish state actively sought to end its insularity and its failed economic policies, and pursued integration into the world capitalist economy. One of its key strategies was to promote direct foreign investment into Ireland in order to boost its consistently depressed economy. Ireland's entrance into the EEC was simply another step in this direction and this continues to bring changes to many aspects of Irish life including its broadcasting environment.

Today, RTÉ is not only subject to Irish and European policy and law, but also to various other international trade agreements. The European Union is an ongoing historical project of increased political, monetary, economic, and social union amongst

⁸⁶ Farrel Corcoran, RTÉ and the Globalisation of Irish Television, (Bristol, Intellect Books, 2004) p 36 – 40

member states. Previously, Ireland had tried to protect its broadcasting environment from 'foreign contamination' but now found itself embracing an internationally agreed cultural agenda which is best expressed in Article 128 of the Maastricht Treaty, which came into force on November 1, 1993. This article states:

1. The Community shall contribute to the flowering of the cultures of the member states, while respecting their national and regional diversity and at the same time bringing the common cultural heritage to the fore.
2. Action by the Community shall be aimed at encouraging co-operation between member states, and if necessary, supporting and supplementing their action in the following areas:
 - improvement of the knowledge and dissemination of the culture and history of the European peoples;
 - conservation and safeguarding of cultural heritage of European significance;
 - non-commercial cultural exchanges;
 - artistic and literary creation, including in the audio-visual sector.⁸⁷

The language employed in this document mirrors statements made in the past by individual national governments throughout Europe. The difference here lies in the emphasis, not only on an individual national culture, but on a pan European 'common cultural heritage.' The EU proposes to foster a sense of social and cultural cohesion, a sense of shared values and beliefs. This aim is reflected in European broadcasting policy and objectives. The Council of Europe lists a European wide mission for public service broadcasting in the following provisions:

- to provide, through their programming, a reference point for all members of the public and a factor for social cohesion and integration of all individuals, groups and communities. In particular, they must reject any cultural, sexual, religious or racial discrimination and any form of social segregation;
- to provide a forum for public discussion in which as broad a spectrum as possible of views and opinions can be expressed;
- to broadcast impartial and independent news, information and comment;

⁸⁷ The Maastricht Treaty, Article 128, <http://www.eurotreaties.com/maastrichteu.pdf>, February 7, 1992, accessed 06/05/07

- to develop pluralistic, innovatory and varied programming which meets high ethical and quality standards and not to sacrifice the pursuit of quality to market forces;
- to develop and structure programme schedules and services of interest to a wide public while being attentive to the needs of minority groups;
- to reflect the different philosophical ideas and religious beliefs in society, with the aim of strengthening mutual understanding and tolerance and promoting community relations in pluriethnic and multicultural societies;
- to contribute actively through their programming to a greater appreciation and dissemination of the diversity of national and European cultural heritage;
- to ensure that the programmes offered contain a significant proportion of original productions, especially feature films, drama and other creative works, and to have regard
- to the need to use independent producers and co-operate with the cinema sector;
- to extend the choice available to viewers and listeners by also offering programme services which are not normally provided by commercial broadcasters.⁸⁸

Documents such as these, as well as countless others, issued from the European Commission, the European Parliament, as well as national governments, reinforce the importance of the ideal of ‘unity in difference.’ The idea is that European public service broadcasters should be used as an essential tool in forging a shared set of beliefs and values that reinforce a distinctly European cultural identity. The Irish were now no longer being conceptualized as being simply Irish, they were Europeans as well. This tied Irish PSB to a European set of policies that continually re-stated the importance of defending broadcasting as a public service.

The European Broadcasting Union (EBU) is an organization that actively carries out work to further these European policy objectives, and RTÉ is one of its many members. The EBU was founded in 1950 and has 75 active members in 56 countries in and around Europe⁸⁹. Although it is independent of the EU, it actively engages in programming exchange between European PSBs, co-productions within Europe, and also offers a range of technical services to national PSBs. It operates the Eurovision Network and Eutelsat satellite which transmit public service programmes such as Euronews and

⁸⁸ “The 4th European Ministerial Conference on Mass Media Policy: The Future of Public Service Broadcasting”, Council of Europe, http://www.ebu.ch/CMSImages/en/leg_ref_coe_mcm_resolution_psb_07_081294_tcm6-4274.pdf, 7–8 December, 1994, accessed 08/10/08, p 3

⁸⁹ Jostein Gripsrud, “Television and the European Public Sphere” *European Journal of Communication*, 22:4, December 2007, p 485

Eurosport. The Eurovision network allowed each European PSB to transmit the Olympic Games, the Tour de France, and the European Football championships. Euronews, launched in 1993, is a 24 hour news channel that “claims to reach 189 million households in 121 countries around the globe, broadcasting simultaneously in seven languages.”⁹⁰ Euronews regularly broadcasts cultural programming that highlights various cultural events such as art exhibits, dance and theatre shows, and musical concerts taking place in various European cities. These tend to focus on the legitimate fine arts and feature short pieces on major arts events across Europe. The Eurovision network has also transmitted the European elections to all member states. The EBU co-produced a documentary on EU enlargement to familiarize EU member states with new states entering the EU which was broadcast on April 30th 2004.

The EBU is also responsible for the live transmission of the annual Eurovision Song Contest which was established in 1956. Its purpose was to encourage fellowship and unity across Europe using the means of popular entertainment and the contest has become something of a cultural phenomenon. Such programmes are transmitted by the EBU across Europe and help to create a symbol of an idealized and culturally unified EU. The work of the EBU assists the fulfillment of European public service broadcasting policy objectives which aim to use broadcasting as a central force in the development of a pan-European cultural and political public sphere. The EU and its member states still stridently defend the need for public service broadcasting even though the media environment in which it operates continues to radically change.

Section 4: Deregulation, Globalization, and Technological Expansion

For several decades in Ireland, RTÉ held a complete monopoly on television and radio broadcasting and so faced no competition for license fee and advertising revenue. Yet, it is important to note that there was always competition over *audiences* due to overspill from British TV. Before the establishment of RTÉ in 1961, 30 per cent of all Irish

⁹⁰ Gripsrud, “Television and the European Public Sphere”, p 486

television households were able to receive British television.⁹¹ The scarcity of available spectrum allowed PSBs in Europe to maintain their monopoly over broadcasting. It was primarily due to increased competition for audiences from British broadcasters that the second national television channel, RTÉ Two, was launched in 1978. Today, in a multi-channel and increasingly commercial broadcast environment, continued support for public funding of broadcasting cannot be taken for granted. From the 1950s to the early 1980s, European public service broadcasters had complete control over the airwaves. Only public service broadcasters in the UK and Italy had experience of commercial competition. The situation has radically changed since then as commercial television was introduced in all other Western European countries during the 1980s and early 1990s.⁹²

The compound effect of these changes across European broadcasting environments contributed to a situation where “public broadcasting institutions, and the notions of political and cultural discourse that underpin them, came under serious attack.”⁹³ These changes have also made an impact on television regulatory structures across Europe. RTÉ faced no competition and was self regulated by the RTÉ Authority. This changed with the establishment of the Independent Radio and Television Commission (IRTC) which was set up under the terms of the Radio and Television Act (1988). This act lists the functions of the IRTC “to arrange, in accordance with the provisions of this Act, for the provision of sound broadcasting services (including a national sound broadcasting service) and one television programme service additional to any broadcasting services provided by Radio Telefís Éireann pursuant to the Broadcasting Authority Acts, 1960 to 1979.”⁹⁴ This allowed for commercial television and radio broadcasters to operate in competition with RTÉ for the first time.

Prior to this act, independent and commercial broadcasting was unregulated and illegal, yet a wide number of illegal private radio broadcasters were in operation. The

⁹¹ Ellen Hazelcorn, “Ireland: From Nation Building to Economic Priorities” in Miguel de Moragas Spá and Carmelo Garitaonandía (eds) Decentralization in the Global Era: Television in the Regions, Nationalities and Small Countries of the European Union, (London, John Libbey and Company Ltd., 1995) p 99

⁹² Commercial competition was legally introduced in the following countries: Germany in 1984, France in 1986, Belgium in 1987, Denmark in 1988, Spain in 1989, Netherlands, Greece and Norway in 1990, Portugal and Sweden in 1991.

⁹³ Hoskins, McFayden, and Finn, Global Television and Film, p 90

⁹⁴ Radio and Television Act, 1988, Functions of the Commission, <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/1988/en/act/pub/0020/index.html>, accessed 11/07/07

IRTC was partly established to bring such broadcasters under a regulatory framework and to operate as the regulator for all commercial broadcasters in order that they fulfil the obligations of their licensing contract. In 1989, a commercial television broadcaster, TV3, was awarded a contract as a national television station to broadcast on cable and Micropoint Microwave Distribution Systems (MMDS).⁹⁵ Since that time, a number of private broadcasters now operate in direct competition with Ireland's public service television sector which is comprised of RTÉ 1, RTÉ 2, and TG4. RTÉ 2 was launched on November 2, 1978, and TG4 (formerly known as Teilifis na Gaeilge or TnaG) was launched on October 31, 1996. RTÉ and TG4 were established as self-regulating bodies and were not under the supervision of the IRTC. The Broadcasting Act of 2001 replaced the IRTC with the Broadcasting Commission of Ireland (BCI). The main functions of the Commission include:

the licensing of independent broadcasting services including the additional of television services on digital, cable, MMDS and satellite systems; the development of codes and rules in relation to programming and advertising standards and the monitoring of all licensed services to ensure that licence holders comply with their statutory obligations and terms of their contracts.⁹⁶

Most recently, under the terms of the Broadcasting Bill 2008, the Broadcasting Commission will be abolished and its powers transferred to the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland (BAI). The BAI will be a single content regulator for all commercial, community and public service broadcasters in Ireland and hence, will take over the regulatory powers of the RTÉ Authority and TG4. The BAI will also incorporate the role of the Broadcasting Complaints Commission. At the time of writing, the BAI has not begun to operate, but the fact that it will be the regulatory body for both commercial broadcasters as well as public service broadcasters points to significant shifts in the way the entire broadcasting sector will operate in the future. At present, RTÉ 1, RTÉ 2 and TG4 compete for resources (advertising revenue) and audiences with TV3, Channel 6 and countless other channels available through cable, satellite, and digital services, yet only

⁹⁵ Broadcasting Commission of Ireland, http://www.bci.ie/faqs/faq_about_irtc.html, accessed: 05/04/08

⁹⁶ Broadcasting Commission of Ireland, <http://www.bci.ie>, accessed: 05/04/08

those channels that are broadcast from within Ireland are subject to the regulatory powers of the BCI.

It may seem surprising that amidst all of these changes taking place in the 1980s and 1990s that the Irish government began to seriously consider the establishment of a dedicated Irish language television service. As Cathal Goan notes, the “initial policy decision to establish an independent Irish-language service was taken by the Irish government in 1994.”⁹⁷ The trend toward deregulation and increased commercial competition would appear to make such a service unimaginable. Yet, as outlined earlier, from the outset one of the core aims of Irish public service broadcasting has been to restore the Irish language and to develop the National culture. The difficulties of attracting large audiences to Irish language programming meant that this area of programming was neglected by RTÉ, much to the consternation of the Irish language speaking community. The Council of Europe’s guidelines for public service broadcasting state that broadcasters need to be attentive to the needs of minority groups, to contribute to the greater appreciation of national culture, and also to extend choice by offering programming not normally provided by other channels. This gave a clear policy justification from Europe for the need to produce more dedicated Irish language programming, as it was not being delivered adequately by RTÉ. Goan notes that for years, Irish speakers felt that the stated support for the Irish language was “hypocritical, inadequate, lacks cohesion and is lip service,”⁹⁸ and that throughout the 1960s and 1970s there emerged “a significant pattern of complaint and protest against the insufficient programming in Irish on television.”⁹⁹ The continuing protest culminated in pirate television broadcasts from Rosmuc in Conamara in 1987. Iarfhlaith Watson notes that there was no increase in the percentage of programmes broadcast in Irish on RTÉ between 1985 and 1995.¹⁰⁰ Under such sustained pressure, the Government finally agreed to establish a national Irish language television service to be called *Teilifís na Gaeilge* or TnaG, which would operate under the aegis of RTÉ, with the aim of

⁹⁷ Cathal Goan, “*Teilifís na Gaeilge: Ten Years A-Growing*”, *New Hibernia Review*, 11:2, Summer 2006, p 101

⁹⁸ Goan, “*Teilifís na Gaeilge: Ten Years A-Growing*”, p 103

⁹⁹ Goan, “*Teilifís na Gaeilge: Ten Years A-Growing*”, p 104

¹⁰⁰ Iarfhlaith Watson, “A History of Irish Language Broadcasting: National Ideology, Commercial Interest, and Minority Rights” in Mary Kelly and Barbara O’Connor (eds) *Media Audiences in Ireland*, (Dublin, UCD Press, 1997) p 220

eventually becoming fully independent. Annual funding of ten million Irish pounds was made available and RTÉ was required to provide one hour of Irish language programming in Irish at no additional cost to the new service.¹⁰¹ Although from some quarters there was considerable criticism of the new station, it has proven them wrong through its continued success during the first decade of its operation.

It was decided from the start that TnaG would be a television service broadcasting in Irish, rather than being simply a language initiative, and its slogan, coined by Pádraic Ó Ciardha, became “Súil Eile” which translates as “another way of looking at things.”¹⁰² Instead of being branded as ‘old fashioned’, the new station embraced new technology, was noted for the youth and enthusiasm of its staff, and quickly became noted for the inventiveness and edginess of its programming. Rather than being stuck in the past, the new station revealed itself to be an integral part of Ireland’s broadcasting future. The need to increase its finances meant that over the years more English language programming has slipped into its schedules, yet even this situation was dealt with imaginatively by the station. They bought genre films, such as Westerns, and themed them in such a way so as to attract audiences to their Irish language programmes. They also placed Irish language programmes between two English language programmes, in order to attract larger audiences to their Irish language content.¹⁰³ From the start the station aimed to attract not only native Irish speakers, but a national audience, and has subtitles available for all its Irish language programming. TnaG, now TG4, broadcasts six hours of a day of new Irish language programming throughout the year, and in 2005 it could boast that it was able to attract just under 3 per cent of the audience share. This amount of audience share exceeds the number of people in Ireland who are native speakers or claim to speak Irish on a daily basis.¹⁰⁴ This illustrates the fact that, even in the face of dramatically increased competition, even a small station with limited funding, operating in a minority language, can succeed with inventive programming and scheduling. The station has found that even with a much smaller share of the national audience than RTÉ it can still be financially viable. This is due to the fact that the station

¹⁰¹ Goan, “Teilifís na Gaeilge: Ten Years A-Growing”, p 108

¹⁰² Goan, “Teilifís na Gaeilge: Ten Years A-Growing”, p 109

¹⁰³ Goan, “Teilifís na Gaeilge: Ten Years A-Growing”, p 112

¹⁰⁴ Goan, “Teilifís na Gaeilge: Ten Years A-Growing”, p 112

has greatest appeal for the “upmarket, educated with school going children”¹⁰⁵ illustrating that its not just large audiences that are important to advertisers, but also the level of income that audience has to spend.

For many decades terrestrial spectrum capacity limited the number of channels available in a geographical area to four channels, but with the development of cable, satellite, and digital media there are now literally hundreds of channels available. The result is the ‘multi-channel environment’, an environment where programmes that traditionally fell under the PSB remit, can now often provided by private broadcasters. Some examples of this include the History Channel, which specializes in educational documentaries, and ARTÉ, a dedicated arts channel co-produced by French and German television companies, and available via satellite and cable to audiences in other European countries. Since 2000, the niche arts channel Sky Arts has been available as a digital subscription service offering a diverse menu of arts programming. The expansion in channels has continued since the 1980s when deregulation of broadcasting began in earnest. Since this time, there has been an increased tendency to view all markets, including broadcasting, in neo-liberal economic terms. Television, according to this economic philosophy, is not defined as a collective public resource to be used for the common good, but simply as another market to be exploited for profit. Many governments, following the lead by the European Union, have deregulated their broadcasting markets and signed international trade agreements such as the Television Without Frontiers (TWF)¹⁰⁶ agreement in 1989, and the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS)¹⁰⁷. The specific goal of GATS is to remove barriers to international trade and hence, to support increased globalization. The result of these changes is that, in the course of a decade, most European public service broadcasters moved from being the sole provider of television services, to being just one choice in a sea of constantly increasing channels.

¹⁰⁵ Watson, “A History of Irish Language Broadcasting”, p 225

¹⁰⁶ “Television Without Frontiers Directive”, European Union Audiovisual and Media Policy, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/consleg/1989/L/01989L0552-19970730-en.pdf>, October 3, 1989, accessed 04/07/08

¹⁰⁷ “General Agreement on Trade in Services”. World Trade Organization, http://www.wto.org/english/docs_e/legal_e/26-gats_01_e.htm, January, 1995, accessed 29/08/07

As well as increased channel availability, the international trade in television programmes has expanded dramatically. This compounds the difficulty of PSBs, not only to compete successfully in their own domestic market, but also to sustain their traditional levels of funding from the State. In January 2007, the British government rejected the BBC's traditional claim of setting the license fee above the rate of inflation.¹⁰⁸ More recently, in 2009 the Conservative party leader, David Cameron, announced that he would freeze the license fee for a year if he is elected.¹⁰⁹ If a PSB tries to compete aggressively for audiences by producing popular programming, it is accused of being too similar to commercial stations. On the other hand, if it produces a large amount of distinctive minority interest and public service programmes, such as arts programmes, it is subject to the criticism that these programmes attract smaller audiences. Hence, questions are raised about the relevance and value for money of PSB. This situation places PSB's justification for State support in peril.

PSBs continue to proclaim, with increasing urgency, that their programming fulfills a public service remit that is not satisfactorily catered for by private broadcasters, and that this type of programming provides 'external benefits. Under the intense competition that public service broadcasters now face in the multi-channel environment, it is remarkable that RTÉ still manages to sustain a very high percentage of the total market audience share which it needs in order to keep advertisers on board. In 2000, RTÉ and TG4 managed to sustain 33.4 per cent of the total all day audience television share¹¹⁰ and in 2004, RTÉ claimed that 43.8 per cent of all peak time television viewers were watching RTÉ television.¹¹¹ In 2005, RTÉ's total national share in peak time rose to 44.1 per cent¹¹² and in 2006, its share of national peak time viewing increased to 45 per cent.¹¹³ Although in 2007 its share of peak time viewing dropped to 43.7 per cent RTÉ still held an average of 37.1 per cent share of the national all day audience, which is a

¹⁰⁸ "Jowell Reveals 3% TV License Rise", BBC News Online,

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/entertainment/6274851.stm>, January 18th, 2007, accessed 19/4/2007

¹⁰⁹ "Tories would freeze BBC licence fee, says Cameron", Sam Coates, Times Online,

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/politics/article5917921.ece>, March 16th 2009, accessed 06/05/09

¹¹⁰ RTÉ Annual Report, 2001, p 19

¹¹¹ RTÉ Annual Report, 2004, p 8

¹¹² RTÉ Annual Report, 2005, p 7

¹¹³ RTÉ Annual Report, 2006, p 7

marked increase of its all day average in 2000.¹¹⁴ Yet, with increased competition and new forms of media consumption this situation could change quite dramatically in coming years and leave public support for public service broadcasting as a remnant of the past. Irish and European broadcasting policies continually reaffirm the importance and distinctive nature of public service broadcasting in order to prevent such public support from waning. We only have to glance at commercial television channels currently operating in Ireland to see clear distinctions between the content offered. Channels such as TV3 and Channel 6 create only a limited amount of indigenous programming and would probably not produce any if they were not required to do so by the BCI. TV3 meets this requirement primarily via its news programming and Channel 6 through a series of music and entertainment programmes. There are no indigenously produced arts programmes on these commercial channels, nor are there indigenously produced drama programmes, or educational programmes. Hence, commercial broadcasters only produce a limited amount of public service type programming, as required by their license agreements with the BCI.

RTÉ's and TG4's continuing success in attracting audiences illustrates that forces of globalization have far from eradicated the Irish public's desire for local home grown programming. In 1989, as part of a general trend toward deregulation of all international markets, including that of national broadcasting markets, Ireland along with all other EU member states, signed a European directive entitled Television Without Frontiers (TWF). In Article 2 of this directive it states: "Member states shall ensure freedom of reception and shall not restrict retransmission on their territory of television broadcasts from other member states for reasons which fall within the fields coordinated by this Directive."¹¹⁵ This created a Europe-wide free trade environment in television products, which changed the nature of national broadcasting markets and at the same time matched agreements made by all member states under the terms of the Maastricht Treaty and other European agreements. This agreement is confirmed in the Irish PSB charter as part of its statutory mandate and states that:

¹¹⁴ RTÉ Annual Report, 2007, p 8

¹¹⁵ European Commission, http://ec.europa.eu/comm/avpolicy/reg/tvwf/index_en.htm, accessed 22/2/7

In addition to the obligations provided for in national legislation, RTÉ also has obligations set down under European legislation, most notably the Television Without Frontiers Directive (89/552/EEC as amended), which requires RTÉ to ensure, among other things, that at least 50% of its programming on television, excluding news, sports events and games, is reserved for European works.¹¹⁶

This figure of 50 per cent includes Irish programming in its definition of 'European works' and so is, in essence, a way of ensuring that Irish public service television does not become dominated by imported programming from the North American market. Although this technically means that the Irish television market is open to programming from other European countries, this tends to be limited due to language barriers. Although EU broadcasting policy sees television as a tool to foster a pan-European cultural identity there is little evidence, outside of the programming of the EBU, of television being utilised in this way.

Ireland and other EU member states also signed up and agreed to the terms of General Agreement of Trade in Services (GATS) under the auspices of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade on July 1st 1995, but actively sought, during the Uruguay round of the negotiations, to add a 'cultural specificity clause that would acknowledge the unique aspects of culture in the context of trade and [which] would have the effect of exempting cultural products and services from the market access and national treatment provisions of GATS.'¹¹⁷ When the agreement was signed, a clause of this nature was permitted. European member states, both individually and collectively, could maintain a level of control over the amount of non-European cultural goods and services allowed into their markets. This was done primarily to protect European markets from saturation by imported U.S. films and television programmes. Neo-liberal economic philosophy, which has its strongest support in the U.S., is opposed to government imposed market restrictions and argues that the public is best served by maximum market freedom and minimum intervention by the state. The U.S. has, since the end of WW II, solidified its dominance in the global trade of cultural goods, and so it is their best interest to oppose any restrictions on the free movement of its cultural goods. Historically in the U.S., the

¹¹⁶ "Public Service Broadcasting Charter", Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources, <http://www.rte.ie/about/organisation/psb.pdf>, June 2004, Accessed 15/10/08, p 7

¹¹⁷ Hoskins, McFayden, and Finn, *Global Television and Film*, p 5

entire broadcasting market, from its infancy, has been almost entirely commercial. Its public broadcasting system, the Public Broadcasting System or PBS, is funded by private donations and to some degree by federal funding.

Ireland, through its signing of TWF, its membership of the EU and its negotiations on GATS, has still legally been able to defend its right to put up trade barriers to protect its cultural industries. The European belief that certain cultural products are distinct from other commodities, in terms of their content, effects, and their function in society, is central to the argument that PSB should be protected from completely unregulated market forces. In the face of such radical challenges, there has been an increased need in Europe to defend public service broadcasting and to define its programming as distinct from those offered by private broadcasters. Indigenously produced drama, news and current affairs, serious documentaries and arts programming are often listed as the type of programmes most likely to fulfill the PSB remit. In 2004, the Irish Public Service Broadcasting Charter outlined key genres of public service broadcasting as, “local, national, and international news and current affairs (including coverage of the Oireachtas), arts, business, children’s programmes, drama, education, entertainment, features, history, music, religious, science, technology and sport.”¹¹⁸ An extensive range of programming genres is listed but the fact that arts programming is included indicates its importance as a key genre within the remit of PSB.

Deregulation of broadcasting has clearly and quite dramatically altered the circumstances under which public service broadcasting must operate. Media deregulation “refers mainly to the changes in the role of the state and public administration in regulation, operation and control of the electronic media and telecommunications during the last fifteen to twenty years.”¹¹⁹ The State has not completely lost its control over its broadcasting environment as a result of deregulation, but deregulation has caused some fundamental and lasting changes. This includes the increased privatisation and commercialisation of television which has contributed, along with technological developments, to the dramatic multiplication of television channels

¹¹⁸ “Public Service Broadcasting Charter”, Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources, <http://www.rte.ie/about/organisation/psb.pdf>, June 2004, Accessed 15/10/08, p 4

¹¹⁹ Miguel de Moragas and Bernát Lopez, “Decentralization Processes and ‘Proximate Television’ in Europe”, in Georgette Wang, Jan Servaes, and Anura Goonasekera (eds) *The New Communications Landscape: Demystifying Media Globalization* (New York, Routledge, 2000) p 38

available. As a result, public service broadcasters such as RTÉ face stiff competition for scarce advertising revenue and audiences. This can force PSBs into making more broadly popular programming instead of other programming, such as arts programming, that may be better suited to its role as a public service broadcaster. Such choices encourage PSBs to embrace more commercial standards and practices.

Deregulation has also resulted in a certain amount of regulatory power being transferred to the EU. Moragas and Lopez contend that communication policy in the EU has “assumed an extraordinary leading role in the last ten years, integrating the member states in a new and bigger regulatory setting that involves a transfer of sovereignty from the states to the Union.”¹²⁰ EU communications and audio-visual policy has been formulated as a form of defence against U.S. media dominance in Europe, but it also has pushed for increased liberalization of the internal market which has helped break up national PSB monopolies. Deregulation, combined with technological convergence made possible by digitisation, has also contributed to the rise in power of global media conglomerates such as Bertelsmann, Mediaset, Murdoch’s News Corporation, Disney, Time Warner, Turner Broadcasting, and the Sony Corporation. Such global media companies can transmit their television content into countless nation states but they are not governed by national regulatory structures or public service principles. They are primarily concerned with maximising profit and view their audiences as consumers rather than citizens. Even when a private commercial station is subject to national regulatory structures, it can often take the form of ‘light touch’ regulation, which often supports the increased marketisation of broadcasting. Before the era of deregulation and some of the changes it brought about, broadcasting in Europe was considered a national public resource along similar lines to public libraries. It has now increasingly become treated as just another sphere of industry where television programmes are viewed primarily as commodities to be exchanged in the marketplace.

During the 1980s and 1990s, the neo-liberal promotion of free market ideology worked to erode the social and cultural values that had for decades sustained public service broadcasting ideals. This ideology is what underpinned the drive toward deregulation and privatisation, and argues that increased competition leads to better

¹²⁰ Moragas and Lopez, “Decentralization Processes and ‘Proximate Television’ in Europe”, p 39 - 40

quality and more choice for the consumer. It proposes that broadcasting should be treated simply as another sphere of commercial enterprise and should be free from all but minimal regulation. The market itself would act as a more efficient regulator of the public interest. In Thatcherite Britain of the 1980s, broadcasting regulation was “tacitly equated with ‘censorship’, and setting broadcasting free from regulation was established as the long term objective of public policy.”¹²¹ The Peacock Report on Broadcasting, published in 1986, “argued that broadcasting should ‘maximise consumer appreciation’ in a market system where ‘viewers and listeners are... the best judges of their own interest.’”¹²² To further the campaign against public service broadcasting, neo-liberals also argued that political parties and organised interests held too much influence over broadcasting and that public service broadcasting had an aversion to innovation. A commercialised broadcasting environment would provide more choice for consumers and also create more media pluralism. It was argued in the defence of PSB, that the commercial principle would be incapable of delivering a full diversity of programming. “In the fierce struggle to maximise audiences, informational and educative programming would be quantitatively and qualitatively transformed into ‘infotainment’.”¹²³ It was also argued that the principles of universality, broad and balanced coverage of issues, independence from commercial influences, and respect for diverse cultural needs would be threatened by the increased commercialisation of broadcasting. Although there was and continues to be, strident defence of the public service broadcasting ideal, technological developments played in favour of the neo-liberal agenda. In the 1990s, the rapid development of satellite broadcasting and digitisation went hand in hand with the increased commercialisation of broadcasting. This allowed for the vast increase in channels available and also for many private international broadcasters to evade national regulation.

In the 1980s and 90s, Ireland followed such international media trends driven by neo-liberal thinking and developments in new technology. In 1988, before the IRTC was even established, the Minister of Energy and Communications, Ray Burke, commented

¹²¹ Curran, *Media and Power*, p 196

¹²² Curran, *Media and Power*, p 197

¹²³ Peter J. Humphries, *Mass Media and Media Policy in Western Europe*, (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1996) p 163

that "Ireland was no longer in a situation where the State needs to lay down in detail what the public can have in its radio broadcasting service."¹²⁴ This signalled a shift toward the belief that the invisible hand of the market gives people more choice and more adequately delivers what they really want. A clear attack was launched on public service broadcasting with the Broadcasting Act of 1990. This Act put a cap on the amount of advertising revenue that RTÉ could raise, causing serious problems for RTÉ's finances. Although this decision was reversed with the Broadcasting Authority Amendment Act of 1993, this illustrates how public service broadcasting was increasingly coming under attack in Ireland. The IRTC, in its response to the 1995 Government Green Paper on Broadcasting, even suggested that independent stations, such as TV3, should receive some share of the licence fee.¹²⁵ It was argued that this would assist private broadcasters to produce more public service and non-commercial programming.

TV3 was initially set up under terms of agreement in 1988 that were very different to those it operated under when it began broadcasting in 1998. It was claimed that the new station would "reflect an Irishness... expected of a national television station" and that 70 per cent of the company's share ownership would remain in Irish hands.¹²⁶ Rather than this being the case, the station primarily broadcasts culturally unspecific and cheap imported programming and 90 per cent of it is now owned by CanWest and Granada Media. In order to defend its market share and maintain its advertising revenue, in the face of such commercial competition, RTÉ had to offer more broadly popular programming and RTÉ 2 (rebranded as Network Two from 1988 to 2004) was revamped with programming primarily sourced from U.S. network television. One of the arguments in favour of increased competition was that it would result in more varied and innovative programming. Flynn argues that rather than the situation freeing up "broadcasters to be more innovative and experimental, the commercialisation of broadcasting has had the opposite effect, placing limits on the scope for creativity and risk taking."¹²⁷ He claims that more channels has not meant more choice for Irish

¹²⁴ Roddy Flynn, "Broadcasting and the Celtic Tiger: From Promise to Practice" in Michael Cronin, Luke Gibbons, and Peadar Kirby (eds) Reinventing Ireland: Culture, Society, and the Global Economy. (London, Pluto Press, 2002) p 160

¹²⁵ "Response to the Government Green Paper on Broadcasting", IRTC, 1995

¹²⁶ Flynn, "Broadcasting and the Celtic Tiger: From Promise to Practice", p 166

¹²⁷ Flynn, "Broadcasting and the Celtic Tiger: From Promise to Practice", p 174

audiences as broadcasters increasingly employ imitative scheduling strategies which are reliant on safe, tested, and popular imported programmes.

Ireland's small population and its limited financial resources also have to be taken into account when looking at its position in the global flow of television. It has become increasingly difficult for public service broadcasters in small television economies, such as Ireland's, to compete with private national broadcasters and global media conglomerates. This is made even more difficult by weak regulatory regimes that favour the interests of the advertising industry and the business sector. All this has contributed to the erosion of the idea, in Ireland, that broadcasting is essentially a public good and not just another market to be exploited. Irish PSB always had to face some competition for audiences due to overspill from the BBC, but it now has to face competition for audiences and financial resources from a countless number of competitors that have come about with the expansion of cable, satellite, and digital services.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be noted that although there are serious questions about how democratic societies serve the needs of diverse publics, democracy is still the dominant political system in Western societies. The decisions made in relation to the provision of public services, such as broadcasting, continue to be decided by democratically elected governments. There have always been contradictions, conflicts and tensions inherent in the ability of public service broadcasting to satisfy its remit as a public service and for it to function as an authentic political and cultural public sphere. These problems have become even more pronounced in the last few decades as neo-liberalism became the dominant political and economic philosophy and broadcasting markets were deregulated across Europe. Combined with technological developments, this has fundamentally altered the central safeguarded position that public service broadcasting once unquestionably held. Yet, even in the face of such continuous challenges, there continues to be a belief in the important social role that public service broadcasting performs. It is argued that the distinctive nature of public service programming offers benefits to all of society and continues to be publicly supported on the basis that public service broadcasting is essentially a public good. It is significant that certain forms of television

programming associated with the public service remit, such as arts programming, would not be adequately provided for if left solely in the hands of private broadcasters.

Public service broadcasting in Ireland was shaped from the paternalistic Reithian model so delivery of programming content was decided in a top down fashion without considering the diverse cultural needs of the public. In Ireland, this meant that public service broadcasting was marked by a cultural nationalist agenda. This model began to be challenged during the course of the 1970s when it was recognised that the Irish public was, in fact, made up a plurality of publics. Ireland's participation in the European project has meant a degree of its sovereignty has been lost to Brussels and this has had quite an impact on public service broadcasting. Although Irish and European broadcasting legislation repeatedly defends the need to maintain and support public service broadcast systems, there has been a European wide trend to implement neo-liberal economic policies which erode the foundation on which PSB stands. This highlights quite serious contradictions in broadcasting policy that continue to remain unresolved.

Public service broadcasters now compete in an ever expanding multi-channel environment and are forced into intense competition for advertising revenue and audiences. The use of national public service broadcasting to foster a common national cultural identity is still part of the public service remit, but it is one that seems increasingly difficult to achieve. The success of TG4 stands out as an example of how even in the face of deregulation and increased competition, a small minority language station can thrive. Broadcasting regulatory structures have changed and in Ireland there will soon be one regulator for all public and commercial national broadcasters. It is not possible to enforce regulation on the countless channels that are received, but not broadcast, within Ireland. Also, development of internet broadband services has created a situation where many programmes are now available 'on demand.' This allows members of the public to choose when they want to watch programmes and frees audiences from the constraints of scheduling. Programmes viewed on the internet, including those watched as streamed video or from file sharing programmes, do not usually have advertisements included. In the long run, this move to watching programmes on the net could seriously undermine RTÉ's and other public service broadcasters' ability to raise necessary revenue. From these developments it is possible

to see a grim future for public service broadcasting, yet it is important to note that there is still considerable demand for home grown public service programming and that there is still sustained political and public support for the ideals that govern public service broadcasting.

Undine did not even know that there were any pictures to be seen, much less that 'people' went to see them; and she had read no new book but 'When the Kissing had to Stop' of which Mrs. Fairford seemed not to have heard. On the theatre they were equally at odds, for while Undine had seen 'Oolaloo' fourteen times, and was 'wild' about Ned Norris in 'The Soda Water Fountain,' she had not heard of the famous Berlin comedians who were performing Shakespeare at the German Theatre.¹²⁸

Introduction

In the following chapter I will focus on the approach taken by the Irish State, and its representative public bodies, in relation to publicly supported and institutionally recognized art forms. At different historical moments the Irish State has dramatically changed its approach to the arts in order to adapt to social, political, economic, and cultural changes. The place of the fine arts have moved from a position of almost complete neglect in the early years of the State to occupying a central place in public policy in recent times. Broadcasting was always seen as a powerful tool to further the State's cultural agenda, yet there has never been specific legislation or policy developed that addresses the potential of television to further the State's objectives in relation to the fine arts. In light of this absence by the State, public service broadcasters, or agencies such as the Arts Council, this chapter will focus on shifts in the State's policy on the arts, as well as investigating public documents and legislation concerning the arts, in order to see what official public discourse has circulated in relation to television and the fine arts. The chapter highlights how the relationship between the expanded field of cultural production and the restricted field of cultural production is often uncomfortable as both operate according to contrasting values, conventions, and rules of practice.

The discomfort with and fear of television and other popular cultural forms has had a long history going back to figures such as Mathew Arnold in the late 19th century, the Leavisites in the mid-twentieth century, and most powerfully by the Frankfurt School theorists. Walter Benjamin was unusual amongst these many voices clamouring to condemn the detrimental effects of new forms of mass media. Benjamin argued that social relations are determined by the relations of production, and so the politically

¹²⁸ Edith Wharton, *The Custom of the Country* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000) p 24 - 25

engaged artist should try to revolutionize those relations.¹²⁹ Hence, it is not sufficient for a radical art practice to make politics its subject matter, or for an artist to manifest a correct (left-wing) political tendency in his or her work. The objective must be to change the way art is made, distributed, and seen. Rather than seek the transformation of the social world solely through the production of critical art works available only to a small and elite minority, Benjamin proposed that the potential of the mass media should be employed and developed by artists and intellectuals who genuinely want to alter the relations of production. This chapter will highlight how the ideas of theorists such as Benjamin, which celebrate the potential of the mass media, have largely been ignored by the State and other agencies such as the Arts Council.

In the first section of this chapter, I look at the Irish State's early relationship to the fine arts. For several decades the State was concerned with pushing a nationalist cultural agenda and largely neglected the fine arts. This was primarily done as a defensive strategy in the face of centuries of British colonialism, but also due to lack of finances caused by persistent socio-economic problems. During this time, the fine arts continued to be associated with the cultural tastes of the colonial master and were viewed as a luxury that could not be afforded by the State. The rapid rise in the consumption of popular culture, especially cinema, was also an important factor in the continued neglect of fine arts. In the next section of this chapter, I chart how the Irish State began to change its approach to the fine arts, and how this was linked to broader changes in Irish society. In the late 1940s and 1950s Ireland began to make steps toward ending decades of self imposed political, economic, and cultural isolation from the international community. As Ireland joined various international organizations and began to apply the ideas of the economist John Maynard Keynes, it also began to conform to an international consensus of what constituted 'legitimate' art. Soon after, following trends in the UK and across Europe, Ireland established its State funded Arts Council in 1951. I chart how, over the course of the first few decades of its existence, the Arts Council narrowed its definitions of what constituted legitimate art, and how as a result, the Council increasingly became subject to criticism because it was perceived to represent only the cultural interests of elite sectors of society.

¹²⁹ Walter Benjamin, *Understanding Brecht*, (London: New Left Books, 1973) p 85- 103

I then pinpoint how, in response to mounting public pressure for accountability during the 1970s, the Council made access and participation, as well as the development of high standards of artistic excellence, a key part of its policy. This signaled a shift towards a policy of cultural democratization as the Arts Council aimed to 'bring art to the masses,' publicly recognizing longstanding inequalities of access due to factors such as inadequate arts education and regional disparities in funding. Although television broadcasters have always needed to identify and cater to wide and diverse publics, I illustrate how this concern over audiences was a new departure for the Arts Council. In 1983 it published a research report entitled *Audiences, Acquisitions, and Amateurs*, in order to identify attitudes and behaviours towards the arts and also levels of access and participation. I investigate the findings of this document and several others during this era to see what role television was envisaged as playing in relation to the legitimate fine arts.

The chapter then moves forward to look at other major changes that took place in the relationship between the State and the fine arts from the 1990s onward. Although the State continually pronounced its dedication to the arts, it wasn't until the 1990s that the State dramatically increased its funding to the arts and established a dedicated Department of the Arts. Over the course of the 1990s and into the first decade of the 21st century, large amounts of funding were used to develop an extensive arts infrastructure with arts centres being established in the suburbs of Dublin and in towns nation wide. This chapter explores how the increased centrality of the arts in public policy was part of a larger strategy of cultural instrumentalization, where arts and culture are employed to foster a wide array of social and economic benefits. The development of cultural tourism is focused on as an example of how this strategy was deployed. At the same time as this strategy was put into practice, the State and the Council still continued to argue that the arts were being funded under the banner of cultural welfare, or simply because they are 'good for you'. The chapter then looks at how, during this period, the Council's produced several survey based research reports on the publics' attitudes towards the arts, as well as numerous arts plans. This was done in order for the Council to implement long term planning for the arts and to develop policy that responded more clearly to wide and diverse cultural needs. By investigating these various documents, I illustrate how the

Council was aware of the potential and importance of television in relation to its achieving its objectives.

Section 1: Neglecting the Fine Arts: 1922 -1951

Ireland's history as a colony in the British empire had a fundamental impact on the formation of its cultural policy which was particularly pronounced in the first decades of the State's existence. The Irish State's arts and cultural policy and its forms of support have changed considerably, at different historical moments, since the establishment of the Irish Free State in 1922. Irish politicians, such as Eamon De Valera, stressed the importance of spiritual development over material wealth, yet economic development has always been the dominant political objective of successive Irish governments. A centralized Department of Fine Arts was established at the foundation of the Irish State, but it was disbanded soon after the Treaty was signed in 1922. It would take almost three decades before the Arts Council, a public body with a similar cultural agenda, was established. The newly independent Irish State experienced what is now generally recognized as a period of cultural decline heavily influenced by economic depression and various other factors such as the political and cultural influence of the Catholic Church.¹³⁰ The economic, social, and political conditions of the early Free State fostered a highly insular, conservative, anti-intellectual culture, which was largely homogenous and Catholic. Anne Kelly argues that, "the arts in particular suffered, being considered the preserve of the elite, a luxury which could be done without, but perhaps worst of all as un-Irish and even anti-Irish."¹³¹ Although no centralized State arts policy, addressing the fine arts existed at this time, the Irish State did intervene and play a significant role in cultural matters.

The first State recognition and support of an arts organization came with the establishment of the Garda Síochána band and in 1925 the Abbey Theatre was awarded a grant of £800, making it the first State subsidized theatre in the English speaking world. In 1928, the Department of Education awarded a grant to An Taibhdhearc, an Irish

¹³⁰ Terence Brown, Ireland: A Social and Cultural History, 1922 to the Present, (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1985) p 14

¹³¹ Anne Kelly, Cultural Policy in Ireland, (Kildare, Irish Museums Trust, 1989) p 6

language theatre located in Galway city. Although the Irish State didn't actively take an interest or extensively support the fine arts, it did play a role as the public's cultural guardian. The State introduced the Censorship of films Act in 1923 and this was followed by the Censorship of Publications Act in 1929, illustrating its concern over and its ability to control the public's cultural consumption. The visual arts didn't attract the same attention or censure during this period and were not considered an essential part of education. Drawing was dropped as an obligatory subject on the national curriculum and only awarded half the marks of compulsory subjects such as math and languages.¹³² The primary cultural aim of the Irish Free State, for decades, was to bring the Irish language into everyday usage as vernacular speech and to preserve and develop the arts and cultural forms that combined a nationalist and catholic cultural ideology. This was reflected in the curricular policy for Irish schools where the promotion of the Irish language was a key feature of the State's cultural agenda. Hence, all teaching at primary level was done through Irish.

This agenda was also reproduced in the Irish State's cultural objectives for both public service broadcast radio and television. In the early years of the Free State, other organizations, such as the Catholic Church, and the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA), played an influential and active role in the cultivation of the Irish public's cultural tastes. Although there was some State involvement in the fine arts, politicians and the public gave limited support or interest to State cultural institutions inherited from the era of British colonial dominance. The National Gallery was continually under funded and its audience figures were much lower in the 1930s and 1940s than they were when the gallery first opened in 1864.¹³³ Major cultural events that were endorsed by the State were often religious in character, such as the Pontifical High Mass, attended by over one million people in Phoenix Park in 1932, which took place during the 31st International Eucharistic Congress. This was the largest public spectacle in 20th Century Ireland and created not only a sense of religious, but also, national community.¹³⁴ It was the largest event broadcast in the early years of Irish radio and was an important means of asserting

¹³² Kelly, *Cultural Policy in Ireland*, p 9

¹³³ Kelly, *Cultural Policy in Ireland*, p 37

¹³⁴ John Paul McCarthy and Tomás O'Riordan, "The 31st International Eucharistic Congress, Dublin, 1932", University College Cork Multitext Project in Irish History, http://multitext.ucc.ie/d/The_31st_International_Eucharistic_Congress_Dublin_1932, accessed 05/07/08

the Catholic identity of the Irish Free State. Attendance at such events stand in stark contrast to the falling audience figures at the National Gallery and gives some indication of the cultural tastes of a large section of the Irish public at that time. At this point in Ireland's social history, only a minority of the Irish public were in a position to acquire, via education or the home, the requisite cultural capital necessary to engage and enjoy the fine arts. The division between nationalist and catholic cultural forms, on the one hand, and the fine arts on the other was strengthened by the State's insular cultural policy. The policy for arts in education reproduced a similarly narrow cultural agenda.

There were many contributing factors as to why the Irish State took little sustained interest in developing the arts beyond its promotion of the Irish language and national cultural forms. As a post-colonial nation asserting its newly won independence, it is arguable that the Irish State focused on a narrow nationalist definition of culture in order to distinguish itself culturally from its former colonial master. The fine arts were primarily the preserve of the wealthy 'Anglo-Irish' gentry, whose cultural pursuits included orchestral concerts, dance galas, and opera. Ireland's indigenous cultural forms were placed in an inferior position in the cultural hierarchy during the period of British colonial rule, and the Free State's emphasis in its cultural policy can partly be interpreted as a defensive political and cultural reaction to colonial cultural hierarchies. At this time, in response to this cultural strategy, an interest or lack of interest in the international fine arts, could carry certain political associations. Referring to Eamon De Valera, Mervyn Wall is quoted as saying:

The regrettable thing was that he didn't have the slightest understanding of, or interest in, the arts. He didn't think them important. I remember a public statement of his in which he said that he couldn't see any reason for playing the work of foreign composers in Ireland, as we already have our own beautiful Irish music.¹³⁵

Such quotes may lead one to believe that De Valera had little interest in supporting and developing the arts. In spite of this, under his leadership, the Irish government held extensive discussions about the provision of a new national theatre, a national concert

¹³⁵ Brian P. Kennedy, Dreams and Responsibilities: The State and the Arts in Independent Ireland, (Dublin, The Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon, 1990) p 29

hall, a national cultural centre, schemes for village halls and libraries, and there were efforts to create a national film studio, a new national library and a cultural relations committee to promote Irish culture abroad.¹³⁶ This demonstrates that the post-independence Irish government, although it neglected support for many of the fine arts, did have ambitious cultural aspirations.

The Irish State distanced itself from the responsibility of supporting the fine arts on the basis that it could not afford to support the arts in the face of other more pressing social concerns. In Irish towns, overcrowding and death rates were high. The census of 1926 showed that in Dublin 43.5 per cent of households were occupied at a rate of two persons or more per room, and in Limerick, Cork and Waterford the figures were 36.8 per cent, 29.2 per cent and 28.6 percent respectively.¹³⁷ In 1943, the Minister of Finance withdrew funding for the Abbey theatre on the grounds that:

In view of the vast amounts which will be required for purposes such as housing (in both town and country), family allowances and other social services, not to mention arterial drainage, the scientific development of agriculture – it seems likely that an artistic luxury such as a national theatre will have to take a low place in financial priorities.¹³⁸

From 1946 to 1951, approximately 24,000 Irish citizens were emigrating each year. Unemployment figures were high and poor housing and sanitary conditions persisted for a large number of people. In Dublin, 61% of dwellings had no piped water supply, 62%, no fixed bath, and 62%, no flush lavatory.¹³⁹ In this context it is understandable that funding the arts, considered the provenance of Anglo Irish elites, was not considered a priority by the Irish State.

Another factor that contributed to the lack of development of the fine arts in Ireland was the growth in new forms of popular culture, such as the cinema and popular music. In 1935, the estimated number of admissions to the cinema was 18,250,000, averaging 6 visits per annum for every citizen in the state, and nearly 80 per cent of the

¹³⁶ Kennedy, *Dreams and Responsibilities*, p 38

¹³⁷ Cathal O'Connell, *The State and Housing in Ireland*, (New York, Nova Science Publishers, 2007) p 20

¹³⁸ Kennedy, *Dreams and Responsibilities*, p 48 - 49

¹³⁹ Kennedy, *Dreams and Responsibilities*, p 68

films watched were produced in the U.S.¹⁴⁰ There were conflicting responses to the increased availability and interest in popular forms of entertainment. In 1937, the Minister of Finance argued against the view that an interest in the fine arts should be cultivated in order to counter the influence of popular culture. He objected to plans for a National Concert Hall and Symphony Orchestra on the basis that the new mass media offered much greater potential for broad public access to musical culture. He contended that:

Thirty years ago or more a case might possibly have been made for State subsidization of public musical performances. At that time a piano in a drawing room or a squeaky phonograph in the parlour supplied the only satisfaction for the musical yearning of the common man, unless he got the chance to see the occasional concert. Nowadays, musical films can be attended every night in the week in all parts of the country; wireless sets and gramophones are widely distributed; even as he drives, a motorist can listen to the best music on his radio set.¹⁴¹

This line of reasoning proposes that there is limited need for State support for the arts where cultural needs of the public can potentially be provided for by popular culture.

Yet, as in other countries, the increasing popularity of mass media cultural forms created its own set of cultural anxieties. In 1944, B.G. MacCarthy, a lecturer in education at University College Cork expressed this in the following terms:

The cinema nowadays occupies man's leisure to the exclusion of former interests and pursuits. It has brought him some knowledge; it has deprived him of some hitherto unquestioned convictions. It has affected his standards of aesthetic taste. Despite censorship, it has loosened his moral fibres. It has confirmed the unthinking in their lack of thought, and has filled their lives with a colourful and varied vacuity.¹⁴²

This line of thinking echoes ongoing contemporary concerns over the effects of popular culture on the public's aesthetic tastes, and also contributes to a longstanding justification

¹⁴⁰ T. J. Beere, "Cinema Statistics in Saorstát Eireann"
http://webird.tcd.ie/bitstream/2262/4920/1/jssisiVolXV83_110.pdf, published May 25th, 1936, accessed 14/12/08, p 24

¹⁴¹ Kennedy, *Dreams and Responsibilities*, p 43

¹⁴² Kennedy, *Dreams and Responsibilities*, p 51

for State support of the fine arts.¹⁴³ Gibbons notes that in the early 1940s the Minister for Posts and Telegraphs tried to ban 'jazz and crooning' from the airwaves, "as it was only the false allure of popular music that was preventing people from appreciating their true heritage."¹⁴⁴ This attempt was unsuccessful and rather than stemming the trend toward popular culture, the gap widened between the increased participation in popular cultural pursuits and participation in the fine arts. Furthermore, as noted, the fine arts remained closely associated with British cultural dominance. Consuming popular culture constituted an act of resistance not only to the former colonizer, but also to insular and puritanical local culture. All of these factors created a situation where the fine arts became further marginalized within State cultural policy at the time.

Section 2: Coming out from behind the Green Curtain: 1951 - 1973

In 1948, Ireland elected a new government which began to adopt some of the ideas of the economist John Maynard Keynes, who in 1945 became the first director of the Arts Council of Great Britain. According to Keynesian economic philosophy, the State is expected to compensate for inequalities generated from market failure within the capitalist system in a wide range of areas of life. This included state provision in areas such as housing, health services, education, and also included the arts.¹⁴⁵ Under the influence of Keynesianism, the Irish Government intentionally did not balance its budget and borrowed millions in order to fund major capital projects, which were intended to encourage economic growth. Keynes argued that the arts were as important as economics and claimed that starving the arts was actually bad for the economy. Keynes claimed that, "from the early 18th century, a new view of the functions of state and society developed and that this view advanced the 'utilitarian and economic – one might almost say financial – ideal, as the sole, respectable purpose of the community as whole; the

¹⁴³ The discussion in the previous chapter of public goods and external benefits is relevant here. Popular culture is not subsidized by the State as a public good as it is provided by the market. On the other hand, the legitimate fine arts are considered to suffer from market failure and hence, need to be subsidized by the State on the grounds that they are public goods which provide external benefits.

¹⁴⁴ Gibbons, *Transformations in Irish Culture*, p 75

¹⁴⁵ Peter Clarke, *The Keynesian Revolution in the Making: 1924 – 1936*, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988) p 234

most dreadful heresy, perhaps, which has ever gained the ear of a civilized people.”¹⁴⁶

Keynesian economic and political policy was instrumental in establishing the Irish Arts Council. The Minister for Posts and Telegraphs in the 1948 government, Paddy Little, who held responsibility for the broadcasting service, watched developments in the UK with interest and pushed for something along the lines of the Arts Council of Great Britain to be established in Ireland. Little commented that:

My connection with Broadcasting and the efforts that are being made through Radio Éireann to raise cultural standards has brought to my notice the existence of many problems that cannot readily be solved through the agency of any existing organization... The range and interaction of the problems have convinced me that some central directive body, such as the memorandum outlines, is a real national need; otherwise the problems will be left unsolved to the detriment of the country or they will be dealt with only in part or disjointedly and always in an unsatisfactory fashion...¹⁴⁷

It is interesting that as early as the 1940s, Paddy Little proposed the idea of forging strategic links between public institutional bodies concerned with arts and culture provision. He envisaged the Arts Council, as a body that would operate in direct communication with public service broadcasters, as both would ultimately share the same state supported cultural aims and objectives. It is important to remember that the movement toward setting up an Irish Arts Council took place at a time when Ireland was consciously ending its self-imposed isolation from the international community. The State joined a series of international bodies including the World Health Organization and the organization for European Economic Co-operation in 1948, the Council of Europe in 1949, and the United Nations in 1955. As early as 1961 Ireland applied for membership EEC, the precursor to the European Union. The calls made toward establishing an Arts Council, along similar lines to the one recently established in the U.K., point to Ireland's desire to end its decades of cultural isolationism, and by doing so, to conform to an international consensus of what constituted the 'legitimate arts'. It is significant that in

¹⁴⁶ John Maynard Keynes, "Art and the State", The Listener, 26th August, 1936, p 371-374

¹⁴⁷ Kennedy, Dreams and Responsibilities, p 55

setting up both the Arts Council and RTÉ, the Irish State drew its inspiration from the British model.

Finally in 1951, following international trends and pressure from individuals such as Thomas Bodkin and Paddy Little, the Irish Arts Council was established. This meant the Irish State formally recognized the importance of developing not only Irish and traditional art forms, but also the fine or 'high' arts. In *Towards a New Framework for the Arts*, published in 2000, it notes that the publication of the Bodkin Report in 1949 officially made the arts the subject of public policy for the first time and marked the Irish state's acknowledgement of its "collective, if partial responsibility for the arts."¹⁴⁸ In the 1949 Bodkin report, Bodkin argued that no other country in Western Europe cared less about the cultivation of the arts than Ireland, and supported his argument by drawing attention to the fact that there was no adequate arts education available at any level within the State. Bodkin's report played a major role in the development of the first Irish Arts Act of 1951, which legally established the An Chomhairle Ealaíon/The Arts Council as an autonomous independent agency to be operated at arm's length from the government and with terms of reference which have not undergone substantial modification over the years. The 1951 Arts Act lists the functions of the Arts Council as follows to:

- (a) stimulate public interest in the arts,
- (b) promote the knowledge, appreciation and practice of the arts,
- (c) assist in improving the standards of the arts,
- (d) organise or assist in the organising of exhibitions (within or without the State) of works of art and artistic craftsmanship¹⁴⁹

Its secondary role was to "advise the government or a member of government on any matter (being a matter on which knowledge and experience of the arts has a bearing) on

¹⁴⁸ "The Bodkin Report" cited in "Towards a New Framework for the Arts: A Review of Arts Legislation", Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht, and the Islands, http://www.arts-sport-tourism.gov.ie/pdfs/towards%20a%20new%20framework%20for%20the%20arts_3.pdf, 2000, accessed 10/11/07, p 9

¹⁴⁹ Arts Act 1951, Article 1: 3. – (1), <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/1951/en/act/pub/0009/index.html>, accessed 12/06/08

which their advice is requested.”¹⁵⁰ Under the aegis of the 1951 Act, the arts were specifically defined as “painting, sculpture, architecture, music, the drama, literature, design in industry and the fine and applied arts”.¹⁵¹ The terms of reference of the Arts Council made a clear distinction between the function of the Arts Council, in the context of cultural practices in Ireland, and the function of the public broadcasting service. Given that Gaelic League was the only organization to lobby the Taoiseach about the Arts Bill, and that the preservation and development of the Irish language was still one of the State’s primary cultural concerns, it is remarkable that responsibility for drama, literature, or music through the medium of the Irish language, was not made a statutory responsibility for the newly formed Arts Council.¹⁵² Thus, the Arts Act 1951 marginalized Irish traditional art forms and Irish language cultural practices from public arts policy. In 1953, Gael Linn was established to promote the Irish language as a living language and to encourage Irish language activity as an expression of cultural identity at policy and community level.¹⁵³ It is interesting to observe that this took place soon after the Arts Council was established. The formation of the Arts Council clearly marked the beginning of a new era of State support for the fine arts, but its formation also highlighted interesting ideological conflicts.

The definition of the arts enshrined in legislation signaled a fundamental shift in what the State included under the banner of the arts. Under this new definition, the fine arts were recognized alongside national and more traditional art forms. The Government’s decision to remove Irish language art forms from a focus of the Council’s remit was interpreted very literally by the Arts Council, who took the opportunity to discard Irish traditional culture in its promotion of the arts. In the early years of the Council at that time, applications by artists working in the Irish language were largely rejected.¹⁵⁴ Although the need to open up Ireland to international cultural influences was undoubtedly necessary after decades behind ‘the green curtain’, the removal of Irish language drama, literature, and music from the remit of the Arts Council generated a

¹⁵⁰ Arts Act 1951, Article 1: 3. – (2), <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/1951/en/act/pub/0009/index.html>, accessed 12/06/08

¹⁵¹ Arts Act 1951, Article 1: 1, , <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/1951/en/act/pub/0009/index.html>, accessed 12/06/08

¹⁵² Kennedy, *Dreams and Responsibilities*, p 88

¹⁵³ Gael Linn, <http://www.gael-linn.ie/glinn/ir/>, accessed 21/11/08

¹⁵⁴ Kennedy, *Dreams and Responsibilities*, p 104

number of difficulties. By removing Irish and traditional arts from the core remit of the Arts Council, the Irish State, to a certain degree, sanctioned a reaffirmation of British colonial cultural hierarchies. The lack of Arts Council support was justified on the basis that other government departments and private organizations were supporting Irish language arts activity and hence, putting them under the Arts Council's responsibility would result in a crossover in the allocation of resources.

Although this would seem to make sense on the basis of efficient bureaucratic organization, it may have contributed to a certain antagonism towards the Arts Council from the Irish speaking community. This relegation of Irish and traditional art forms to a status inferior to that of legitimate art forms was grating to some. Thomas Derrig, of Fianna Fáil, argued that the lack of 'progress' with Irish art forms was due to historical circumstances and that:

Those of us who have been associated with the movement that brought about Irish independence have a right to be annoyed when we frequently see denigrations of Irish culture and a pretence that there was, in fact, no culture ever there; that there was no background to which we could look back; that we had no traditions of our own and that we were entirely thrown upon the resources of this Anglo-Irish school.¹⁵⁵

Prior to the establishment of the Arts Council, the Irish State's exclusive support of nationalist art forms undoubtedly narrowed the possibilities of artists within the state, yet the Arts Council's policy of excluding traditional Irish language art forms can also be read as an indicator of anxiety over Irish cultural identity. At this time, Ireland was intent on joining the international community and conforming to an international consensus of what constituted the legitimate fine arts. This exclusion of Irish traditional art forms was finally recognized and addressed by the Council in its 2005 *Traditional Arts Report*. A meeting on *the Traditional Arts Report* was used by those in attendance to:

¹⁵⁵ Kennedy, *Dreams and Responsibilities*, p 89

outline their disappointment, anger, disillusionment, frustration and lack of confidence in the way in which The Arts Council has engaged with the traditional arts community in the past and whether this can change in the future.¹⁵⁶

This longstanding neglect and exclusion of traditional art forms contributed to the production of a narrow understanding of the arts as ‘somehow not Gaelic’.

It is worth giving a brief overview of the approach taken by the Council’s first directors to illustrate how certain cultural practices became neglected whilst the fine arts became the primary concern for the Council. The first director of the Arts Council, Paddy Little, took a somewhat more populist approach to arts policy than his successors as he focused on participation and local enterprise. His promotion of the arts, in a regional context, entailed sending small sums of money to various groups across of the country. Under his directorship, amateur drama groups as well as professionals were given Arts Council support. This approach was strongly criticized by his successor, Séan O Faoláin, a short story writer and editor of the Irish literary magazine *The Bell*, who took up his position as Director in 1956. He said: “I am (odd thing for me to say in my present condition) not at all sympathetic to the principle of State support for artists, except on a really grand scale.”¹⁵⁷ His objective was to direct arts policy away from local enterprise and community driven arts activity toward a policy that supported higher standards of artistic excellence.

This rationale was partly justified on the basis that the Council had extremely limited financial resources and that it was wasteful to fritter away such resources amongst so many varied groups across the country. From 1960 to 1973 the Council director was Fr. Donal O’Sullivan, S.J., a Jesuit priest whose policy emphasized support for the visual arts over other art forms. Under his tenure, the wording of the Council’s standing orders removed the need to offer support for ‘local enterprise’. It was adjusted to read simply that “the council’s main function is to maintain and encourage high standards in the arts.”¹⁵⁸ This shift in policy meant the Council would, in future, reject funding applications for such things as amateur dramatic activity, the building of local halls used

¹⁵⁶ “Meeting on Traditional Arts Report”,

http://www.artscouncil.ie/Publications/traditionalarts_190405.pdf, April 19, 2005, accessed 29/03/08, p 2

¹⁵⁷ Kennedy, *Dreams and Responsibilities*, p 121

¹⁵⁸ Kennedy, *Dreams and Responsibilities*, p 136

for community purposes, or festivals where traditional music, dancing, or storytelling were extensively featured. The exclusion of amateur arts activity and Irish language art forms points to a Council that was increasingly focusing on professional fine art and legitimate cultural practices. The problem with this approach is that it potentially alienated large numbers of the public to whom such practices had little or no relevance to their lives. This created a situation where the Arts Council was seen to represent the cultural interests and tastes of elite classes.

In order to back up such decisions the Council looked to arts policy decisions made in the U.K. There, folk dancing was removed on the basis that, “folk dancing is not one of the fine arts... because such dancing is for the enjoyment of those practicing it, as opposed to a form of artistic expression given to those perceiving it”.¹⁵⁹ This means that the Arts Council was promoting a definition of the arts that broadly conformed to Kantian notions of aesthetic ‘disinterest’.¹⁶⁰ The disinterested pure pleasures of bourgeois culture were to be actively supported and developed, whilst other cultural practices that did not match such definitions of art were dismissed and ignored by the Council. The ideal of the arts being provided for as a public service comes into question here as public services are ideally meant to be equally available to all citizens. If large numbers of the public didn’t participate in or access Arts Council supported art forms then it is not surprising that the Arts Council came to be seen as a public service provider for elite sectors of society.

The Council spent its time tightening increasingly narrow definitions of legitimate cultural activity rather than working on opening up the arts to greater numbers of the public. This approach was out of sync in the populist spirit of the 1960’s internationally, when access to, and participation in, the arts was being conceptualized as a fundamental civil right, and not just as leisure pursuits for the privileged. More importantly, The Arts Council’s disdain for popular culture created direct conflict with other institutional bodies, most notably with the nascent RTÉ. The Arts Council was not invited to the launch of RTÉ television on January 1st 1961 because the Arts Council publicly refused

¹⁵⁹ Kennedy, *Dreams and Responsibilities*, p 137

¹⁶⁰ Christian Helmut Wenzel, *An Introduction to Kant's Aesthetics: Core Concepts and Problems*, (Oxford, Blackwell Publishing, 2005) p 19-21

to lend support to the government's efforts to establish a public television service. The Council argued that it opposed the establishment of RTÉ on the grounds that would it would be economically reliant on commercial sponsorship. The Council argued that such reliance on commercial interests would lead to "vulgarization of public taste by attempting to appeal to mass audiences and that the £1.5 million required as initial capital input to launch the service, could, in the Council's opinion, have been better spent on direct subsidy of artistic activities".¹⁶¹ The Arts Council's disavowal of commercial popular culture, as the general public increasingly and enthusiastically consumed popular television, film, and music, illustrates how out of touch the Council was in terms of the realities of public taste. This approach by the Council was a defensive strategy designed to strengthen public support for maintaining 'autonomy' in the sphere of the legitimate arts. It was also a means of protecting the interests of professional artists working within the sphere of restricted cultural production. However, as the primary function of the Council is to increase access and participation in the arts, its dismissal of public service television meant that it missed a great opportunity to reach out and communicate to a mass public audience. By adopting this policy in relation to RTÉ, the Council created antagonism between two public bodies responsible for public cultural provision. Rather than seeing the great potential of working together with RTÉ to carry out its functions, as defined by law, the Council established a certain divide between the legitimate fine arts and public service broadcast television. The result of this was a lack of joint policy formation and action in relation to the fine arts which is still largely in evidence today.

The claim that the Council was serving the general Irish public, and not primarily Dublin elites, appeared somewhat disingenuous. For example, the Council recognized that there was increased interest in traditional music partly as a result of increased coverage by RTÉ.¹⁶² Despite this, traditional music was given no support or funding due to the Council's strict adherence to definitions of legitimate art forms. Also, regional inequalities in the provision of resources continued to be a noted problem. In 1965-6 seven counties in the republic received no arts funding from the council.¹⁶³ Under such

¹⁶¹ Kennedy, *Dreams and Responsibilities*, p 142

¹⁶² J.M. Richards, *Provision for the Arts* (Dublin, The Arts Council and The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 1976) p 30

¹⁶³ Kennedy, *Dreams and Responsibilities*, p 151

conditions, it is understandable how the fine arts in Ireland continued to be viewed as the minority culture of the urban bourgeoisie. This line of thinking appears to have even permeated the Department of Finance, which held responsibility for the allocation of funds to the Arts Council. Kennedy cites a Department of Finance official at the time as saying:

While I'm not totally on the side of the angels, I favour support for the arts. But I, like everyone else in the department, I should think, had little respect for the Arts council. They established a coterie or clique around themselves. The Irish arts world was too in grown and in-bred.¹⁶⁴

The Independent Artists Group accused the Dublin art world of 'symptoms of class bigotry, racial prejudice, and pernicious art snobbery',¹⁶⁵ making it clear that the Arts Council's elitism was beginning to be challenged. These challenges heavily influenced the subsequent shift in its policy formation toward a policy of cultural democratization. Television, free education, and increased opportunities for travel also contributed to a further opening up of Irish society and increased demands for more equitable arts provision.

Section 3: Art for the Masses: 1973 - 1993

During the 1970s and 80s there were various attempts to address some of these longstanding concerns over inequalities in provision of the 'legitimate' fine arts. The 1951 Arts Act was amended by the Arts Act 1973 in order to tackle some of these concerns. The amended Arts Act not only added film on to the list of legitimate art forms, but also expanded the number of members on the council from six to sixteen in order to adequately represent the broadening variety of art forms under its remit.¹⁶⁶ It also allowed local authorities to become actively engaged in the arts and five regional arts committees, each with its own arts officer, were established. This was done in order to

¹⁶⁴ Kennedy, *Dreams and Responsibilities*, p 167 .

¹⁶⁵ Bruce Arnold, "Class Bigotry in Dublin Art", *Irish Independent*, 8th August, 1970

¹⁶⁶ Arts Act, 1973, Article 2. - (1.), <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/1973/en/act/pub/0033/index.html>, accessed 01/02/09

address core-periphery inequalities in arts provision with Dublin at the centre and rural Ireland at the periphery. The Council was clearly attempting to be a more accountable and representative public body. Yet, even though it recognized that other institutional bodies, such as the Department of Education and RTÉ, played central roles in the public's cultural development, there was still no co-coordinated institutional links between these various bodies. This resulted in piecemeal solutions to common problems.

As early as 1969, the Devlin Report suggested a possible remedy to this lack of cross body coherence in cultural policy. The report recommended the establishment of a 'Department of National Culture.' It was envisaged that this body would be responsible for "the Irish Language and the Gaeltacht as well as matters concerning the national heritage, recreation, physical culture, and for all the main cultural institutions, including the Arts Council and the broadcasting services."¹⁶⁷ This was followed by the J.M. Richards's Report, *Provision for the Arts*, in 1976 which also suggested more direct links between the various ministries responsible for arts and cultural matters. The report directly addressed the public broadcasting service in its recommendation that, "a permanent channel of communication is needed between RTÉ and the Arts Council with the specialist staff of both regularly exchanging ideas."¹⁶⁸ Although the report recognized the importance of RTÉ to the arts and recommended creating such institutional links, it also noted that arts legislation was limited in this regard as it did not:

lay down any machinery whereby the many Government departments concerned with the arts, and the Government sponsored bodies similarly concerned, can have regular and formal meetings to discuss matters of mutual concern, nor does it require them to do so, nor constitute the Arts Council as a coordinating body.¹⁶⁹

Richard's report illustrates that the Council was made aware of the need to work strategically with other public bodies concerned with arts and cultural provision, such as RTÉ, but that this objective was difficult to achieve due to a lack of coherent co-ordination and legislative restrictions. Furthermore, in 1978, the Arts Council Annual Report pinpointed the lack of adequate arts education as a fundamental problem as "an

¹⁶⁷ Kelly, *Cultural Policy in Ireland*, p 54

¹⁶⁸ Richards, *Provision for the Arts*, p 11

¹⁶⁹ Richards, *Provision for the Arts*, p 11

increase in arts activity cannot be sustained unless it can rely on a public that has learned how to enjoy, appreciate, and participate in the experience.”¹⁷⁰ In 1979 the Council then published the report *The Place of the Arts in Irish Education*, which made over 100 recommendations to improve arts education in Ireland. This included the recommendation that the “Council should establish liaison with all bodies interested in or involved in the arts in education,”¹⁷¹ which included RTÉ. This report argued that, “the scope and benefits of a well-developed Irish educational broadcasting service for the arts in education are vast,”¹⁷² but that the potential for this had been largely unexploited. In order to rectify this situation it proposed that, “Radio Telefís Éireann should include a range of arts programmes as an integral part of their educational broadcasting,”¹⁷³ and that this service should be extended to primary schools. The Department of Education itself recognized serious problems with arts education and published two papers, in 1980 and 1985, which contributed to the arts in education debate. These various efforts and policy recommendations point to a concerted desire to address longstanding problems and conflicts about public provision of the arts in Ireland, yet they also make it clear that the various public bodies concerned were attempting to achieve their similar objectives largely independent of one another.

As noted in the preceding chapter, RTÉ’s cultural agenda was driven by the Broadcasting Authority Act 1960, which stated that, “in performing its functions, the Authority shall bear constantly in mind the national aims of restoring the Irish language and preserving and developing the national culture and shall endeavor to promote the attainment of those aims.”¹⁷⁴ Therefore RTÉ, established ten years after the Arts Council, was legislatively directed to pursue and implement cultural policy at odds with that of the Arts Council. The Arts Council, as we have seen, focused on the promotion and development of the legitimate fine arts and until it began to be challenged in the 1970s and 80s, showed little concern for issues of access to the arts or responding to the

¹⁷⁰ Arts Council Annual Report 1978, p 9

¹⁷¹ Ciarán Benson, “The Place of the Arts in Irish Education”, http://www.artscouncil.ie/Publications/The_Place_of_the_Arts_in_Irish_Education.pdf, 1979, accessed 06/02/09, p 137

¹⁷² Ciarán Benson, “The Place of the Arts in Irish Education”, p 61

¹⁷³ Ciarán Benson, “The Place of the Arts in Irish Education”, p 134

¹⁷⁴ *Broadcasting Authority Act*, 1960, Section 17, <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/1960/en/act/pub/0010/index.html>, accessed 03/05/07

art and cultural interests of the majority of the Irish public. In contrast, RTÉ has always had to respond to the cultural interests of broad sections of the Irish public in order to attract large popular audiences to the bulk of its programming. Without this consideration for attracting large audiences, RTÉ would not be able to secure the necessary advertising revenue to cover its considerable operating costs, which are only partly covered by the license fee. Programming produced for minority cultural interests has always been produced by RTÉ, but this programming remains minimal, largely due to the commercial pressures of the expanded field of cultural production.¹⁷⁵ As part of its strategic framework, RTÉ states that part of its mission is to, “nurture and reflect the cultural and regional diversity of all the people of Ireland”¹⁷⁶, yet it has never specifically developed any coherent, publicly available, policy in relation to the fine arts. Nonetheless, it does offer some support the fine arts and it has engaged in debates about the place of the arts on public service television.¹⁷⁷

In 1979, the RTÉ Annual Review focused on the challenge of broadcasting the legitimate fine arts on television, meaning that RTÉ were visibly and publicly engaged with the issue at the time. In order to highlight the long held belief that the fields of art and the mass media are incompatible, the Review quoted the Postmaster General, Mr. J.J. Walsh, who in 1924, held the opinion that, “the people want amusement through broadcasting, they want nothing else and will have nothing else. If you make amusement subsidiary, then you will have no broadcasting.”¹⁷⁸ The 1979 RTÉ Annual Review consists of different articles from a variety of contributors. In his article, Micheal Ó hAodha argues that broadcasting can bring the “best of the new, the avant-garde to the people” and can help “set standards of excellence because of its special place in relation to the whole world of art and entertainment.”¹⁷⁹ This ‘special place’ is maintained because broadcasting addresses all of society, not just the elite. Yet ultimately, the fear of

¹⁷⁵ Legislation governing public broadcasting has always stated that it is necessary to provide programming for minorities and to respect cultural diversity.

¹⁷⁶ “RTE’s Strategic Framework”, Radio Telefís Éireann, http://www.rte.ie/about/pdfs/vision_mission_values_english.pdf, accessed 10/11/08

¹⁷⁷ RTÉ supports five performing music groups: the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra, RTÉ Concert Orchestra, RTÉ Vanburgh Quartet, RTÉ Philharmonic Choir, and RTÉ Cór na nÓg.

¹⁷⁸ RTE Broadcasting Review, *Broadcasting and the Arts*, (Dublin, Radio Telefís Éireann, 1979), p 5

¹⁷⁹ Micheal Ó hAodha, “A Bridge Between Artist and Society”, *RTE Broadcasting Review*, (Dublin, Radio Telefís Éireann, 1979), p 9

the commercial and the popular is raised when he registers concern that Beckett and Beethoven will be packaged and promoted with the 'razzle dazzle' of show business. Ciarán Benson, in his contribution to the Review, recognizes that the fine arts have been neglected by the education system, but fears that although broadcasting could be used as a tool to broaden access to the legitimate arts that "its efforts to please many panders to uncultivated tastes."¹⁸⁰ Once again, the popular nature of broadcast television stirred up a host of anxieties over cultural standards. Benson contended that improved arts education is a necessary precursor to successful arts programming as this would create a public with adequate cultural capital and appropriate aesthetic tastes. He refers to an Arts Council report which stated:

If every effort is not made to develop critical perspectives in the young then the Irish public may be characterized by a uniform mediocrity of taste controlled by commercial interests. The best in the arts, because they are less popular and more difficult to appreciate, will become less available.¹⁸¹

These contributors to the Review repeatedly reinforce the divide between popular media and culture and the legitimate fine arts. Michael Garvey, is unusual amongst all the contributors to the Review in that he offers quite a radical alternative to the discourses discussed above. He considers broadcast television itself as a potential art form and identifies the influence the growth of broadcasting technology plays in changing man's methods of perception and means of expression. Garvey compares broadcast television with photography's struggle to be recognized as a legitimate art form and contends that all new systems of seeing go through a well known pattern before society chooses to validate them. He proposed that broadcast television could follow this pattern and eventually take its place as a legitimate art form, in its own right.¹⁸² This Review was published thirty years ago, and since that time, it is clear that Garvey's vision for broadcast television has not taken root. The restricted and expanded fields of cultural production are still largely defined and operate independently of one another. We can see

¹⁸⁰ Ciarán Benson, "Broadcasting, Education, and the Arts", RTE Broadcasting Review, (Dublin, Radio Telefís Éireann, 1979) p 16

¹⁸¹ Benson, "Broadcasting, Education, and the Arts", p 18

¹⁸² Michael, Garvey, "Broadcasting as an Art Form," RTE Broadcasting Review, (Dublin, Radio Telefís Éireann, 1979) p 12

that both the Arts Council and RTÉ were aware of the possibilities and potential of using broadcast television to expand audiences and increase interest and participation in the fine arts. Although the potential and importance of television in relation to the arts was recognized, neither body developed any specific or strategic policy addressing the issue.

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the Council attempted to address the ongoing problems of regional disparities in arts provision, lack of satisfactory arts education, insufficient State funding, and continuing class barriers to access and participation. One of its largest obstacles was transforming its public image as an institution serving the cultural tastes of elite sections of society into one that served wide and diverse publics. In 1975 Colm O'Briain, a television producer and director, was appointed Director of the Council and placed such issues at the forefront of Council policy. Brian Boydell described O'Briain as someone who, "used his socialist views to argue for arts for the masses, bringing art to all the people."¹⁸³ The Council was increasingly aware of its position as a publicly funded institution in a climate increasingly dominated by discourses of access, accountability and service provision. In 1983, the Council undertook its first survey of public participation in and attitudes towards the arts entitled, *Audiences, Acquisitions, and Amateurs: Participation in the Arts in Ireland*.

This report was a milestone because, for the first time, it acknowledged class-inflected problems of attitude and access as the greatest obstacles to greater participation in the arts, and tried to analyse participation across various demographic, social, and regional characteristics. Ambitiously, the Council committed itself to breaking down barriers and creating "the greatest possible participation in the arts in Ireland to the benefit of the individual, the community, and the country as whole."¹⁸⁴ This demonstrates that access to the arts was becoming a central concern of the Council during this time and that it was attempting to articulate and to qualify its role as a public service provider. The report found that 71 per cent of the respondents to the survey claimed to have participated, at least to some minimal degree, in the arts in the year immediately

¹⁸³ Brian Boydell cited in Kennedy, *Dreams and Responsibilities*, p 183

¹⁸⁴ *Arts Council Annual Report*, 1983, p 6

preceding this survey.¹⁸⁵ This figure appeared surprisingly high, but the report noted that its definition of both the arts and of participation was broadly interpreted so that attendance at a commercial film or popular music event was included in the figures for participation.

The report found that when looking at “individual categories of live events, the best attendance figure is only in the region of 20 percent of the adult population.”¹⁸⁶ This indicated that a large amount of the public surveyed were taking an active interest in popular culture pursuits, yet were still not engaged with the publicly supported fine arts. The report cites data from the Joint National Media Research which suggested that rates of attendance had “been static in Ireland over the decade 1972 – 81.”¹⁸⁷ These findings clearly presented challenges for a Council that was trying to redefine itself as a public body concerned with providing access to the fine arts across class, age, and regional boundaries. The report suggested that differences in access to the legitimate fine arts could be thought of as inequalities and as such, “they must be of considerable concern to policy makers concerned with the arts.”¹⁸⁸ The mission by the Council to be a more representative public body continued throughout the decade, and in 1987, the Council’s principal standing order was reformulated to recognize that whilst the primary function of the Council was to maintain and encourage ‘artistic excellence’, it must at the same time make every effort to increase audiences and participation in artistic activities.¹⁸⁹ In 1987, the Council began receiving funding from the National Lottery as well as the Exchequer and *Access and Opportunity*, a government White Paper on Cultural Policy, was published. The White Paper underlined the necessity of concentrating on developing greater access to, and participation in the arts, and proposed a doubling of the Council’s funding by 1990.¹⁹⁰ This gives some indication of the growing trend to support the fine arts as a central part of national life. A major objective of *Audiences, Acquisitions, and Amateurs* was to identify the obstacles to increased participation and found that

¹⁸⁵ “Audiences, Acquisitions, and Amateurs: Participation in the Arts in Ireland”, The Arts Council, http://www.artscouncil.ie/Publications/Audiences_Acquisitions_and_Amateurs.pdf, 1983, accessed 11/11/08, p 23

¹⁸⁶ “Audiences, Acquisitions, and Amateurs”, p 23

¹⁸⁷ “Audiences, Acquisitions, and Amateurs”, p 24

¹⁸⁸ “Audiences, Acquisitions, and Amateurs”, p 24

¹⁸⁹ Kennedy, *Dreams and Responsibilities*, p 222

¹⁹⁰ *Arts Council Annual Report*, 1987, p 9

“considerable effort still needs to be invested in educational programmes in the broadest sense with a view to bringing about a more positive orientation to the arts at all levels of society.”¹⁹¹ Although the report once again identified improving arts education as a means of improving access to the legitimate fine arts, it makes no recommendation regarding the use of public service television to meet such objectives. This is a strange oversight, as several reports mentioned earlier pinpointed the importance of public service television in this regard.

Section 4: The Arts Explosion: From the 1990s into the 21st Century

The Arts Council’s focus not only on improving standards of artistic excellence, but also on increasing audiences and participation in artistic activities, across boundaries of social class, age, and location, continued throughout the 1990s. The historical context of the 1990s brought about many initiatives to achieve such aims. As Ireland moved out of decades of economic recession, the State increasingly became directly involved in arts policy. In 1994, a Fine Gael, Labour, and Democratic Left coalition government came to power and established the Department of Arts, Culture, and the Gaeltacht. This new Department held responsibility for arts and culture, as well as film and broadcasting, and this marked a fundamental shift in the State’s approach to arts policy. Michael D. Higgins, T.D. was the first Minister of such a department in the history of the State. The objective of the department was to provide a resource, policy, and legislative framework to support the stimulation and development of the arts. The 1995 Arts Council Annual report notes that three full sessions of the Dail were dedicated to debates on the arts and that a debate on the arts had not taken place in the Dail since 1973.¹⁹² Such developments signaled a more consolidated, organized and centralized approach by the State in relation to the arts and underpinned a radically different perspective from the early days of the State where the arts barely registered within public policy. This indicated recognition by the State of the increasing importance and centrality assigned to the legitimate fine arts as a distinct sector in need of sustained and coherent support. This

¹⁹¹ “Audiences, Acquisitions, and Amateurs”, p 24

¹⁹² Arts Council Annual Report, 1995, p 5

trend for increased State involvement and support for the arts, coupled with a move toward multiple sources of policy intervention, has continued unabated up to current times.

Over the course of the 1990s the Department dramatically increased funding to the Arts Council and also commissioned the Council to develop and implement a series of Arts Plans. There was an increase of almost 70 per cent in the Arts Council's State funding from 1988 to 1993.¹⁹³ In 1993 the Council received 10 million pounds funding, but by 1998 this figure had jumped to 26 million pounds (33 million euro).¹⁹⁴ By 2003, the Council was receiving 44 million Euro in funding.¹⁹⁵ The first Arts plan issued was the Arts Plan 1995-97, followed by the Arts Plan 1999-2001, and then, most recently, the Arts plan 2002 – 2006.¹⁹⁶ The establishment of a dedicated Department of the Arts, with its own cabinet minister, the development and implementation of national arts plans, and significant increases in financial support to the arts points to major shifts in the Irish State's arts and cultural policy over the last two decades. As noted earlier, in 1994, a Fine Gael, Labour, and Democratic Left coalition was government came to power and established the Department of Arts, Culture, and the Gaeltacht. In 1997, a Fianna Fáil and Progressive Democrat coalition government was formed and changed the name of the Department to the Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands. The Fianna Fáil and the Progressive Democrat coalition government was reelected in 2002 and changed the name of the Department to the Department of Arts, Sport, and Tourism. Developing and investing in the legitimate fine arts moved from the margins to being a strategic objective of State cultural and economic policy.

The State's rationale for supporting the arts does not remain static, but changes over time to meet different historical, economic, and social circumstances. This chapter has outlined several points where major shifts occurred in the State's cultural policy in response to moments of historical change. In 1994, the Council published the results of a survey of attitudes towards the arts amongst the Irish public entitled, *The Public and the Arts*. In this document it identified the Irish State's increased support for the arts as the

¹⁹³ Arts Council Annual Report, 1992, p 8

¹⁹⁴ Arts Council Annual Report, 1997, p 3

¹⁹⁵ Arts Council Annual Report, 2003, p 4

¹⁹⁶ The original Arts Plan 1995 - 1997 was extended to 1999.

adoption of what can be defined as an 'instrumental' cultural policy. An instrumental cultural policy is described in this document as:

using cultural ventures and investments as a means to obtain goals in areas other than the cultural. Such goals can relate to investment and profit, attracting tourism, creating employment, or urban renewal and their instrumental aspect lies in emphasising culture and cultural ventures as means rather than ends in themselves. These policies generally involve partnerships between the public and private sectors. New alliances between the arts, public administration and private financial interests are emerging both in Europe and the U.S.A. where such partnerships are involved in revitalising inner cities, stimulating economic growth and supporting the arts.¹⁹⁷

This 'instrumental' approach is reflected in policy suggestions made in *Succeeding Better*, the first independent review of the Arts Plan 1995-97, where it recommended "developing international markets for Irish art should be given a higher priority."¹⁹⁸ In the context of the EU, the arts and cultural industries have served as a form of cultural and economic regeneration of cities. The European City of Culture (renamed European Capital of Culture in 1999), is a city designated by the European Union which, for one year, "is given a chance to showcase its cultural life and cultural development. A number of European cities have used the City of Culture year to transform completely their cultural base and, in doing so, the way in which they are viewed internationally."¹⁹⁹ It was conceived as a way of bringing EU citizens closer together but it also was argued to have growing cultural and socio-economic benefits. This is indicative of the link between urban renewal and cultural development in 'instrumental' cultural policy. In relation to using the arts as a tool for the cultural and economic regeneration of cities, the *Public and the Arts* notes that, "the British experience has been that the cultural benefit is largely to

¹⁹⁷ Teresa Brannick et al., *The Public and the Arts: A Survey of Behaviours and Attitudes in Ireland*. Commissioned by the Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon, from the Business Research Programme, Graduate School of Business, UCD, 1994,

http://www.artscouncil.ie/Publications/The_Public_and_The_Arts.pdf, p 31, accessed 11/04/07

¹⁹⁸ The Arts Council, *Succeeding Better: A Review of the First Arts Plan, 1995 – 1998*. (Dublin, The Arts Council, 1998) p 4

¹⁹⁹ "European Capital of Culture", University Network of the European Capitals of Culture, , <http://www.uneec.org/htmls/history1.html>, accessed 14/7/8

those with a high level of economic and cultural capital.²⁰⁰ The implication is that there is no parallel increase in participation in the arts by the ‘culturally disenfranchised’.

In a highly competitive globalised world where cultural tourism is a major economic player, cities and regions compete with each other to offer the most attractive cultural amenities. The placing of the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao is an ideal example of regional government investment in the arts intended to attract new investment into the region, as well as well-heeled tourists with cash to spend. Guggenheim is now an internationally recognizable art brand, with franchises in various cities around the world, including Berlin, Venice, and Las Vegas. In Bilbao the regional government paid to conceive, design, build, and run the celebrated building designed by Frank Gehry. They also gave the Guggenheim foundation a \$50 million dollar acquisition fund to purchase work that would *not* become the property of the regional government, but that would continue to be owned by the Guggenheim organization. On top of this they also gave the Guggenheim a \$20 million dollar tax-free fee for loan access to the rest of the Guggenheim collection and for the use of the Guggenheim brand name.²⁰¹ It is likely that the development of the Guggenheim contributed to Bilbao being firmly placed onto the European tourist map. This justified the huge capital investment by local government, but also advertised the potential of cultural tourism investment to other cities and regions. Only recently it was announced that Guggenheim will open another art museum in Vilnius, Lithuania, in association with the Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg.²⁰² The proliferation of art biennials over the last two decades could be viewed as part of a wider trend, where arts and culture events are employed to bring international attention to a particular place. This has the added bonus that such events carry ‘high status’ for those who attend and participate, while also stimulating the local economy through the provision of ancillary services.

Within the Irish context, the change in name, from the Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands to the Department of Arts, Sport, and Tourism in 2002 is reflective of this trend for increased emphasis on the economic benefits of arts

²⁰⁰ *The Public and the Arts*, 1994, p 30

²⁰¹ Julian Stallabrass, *Art Incorporated: The Story of Contemporary Art*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2004) p 143

²⁰² “Coming Soon: Guggenheim Vilnius”, *The New York Sun*, <http://www.nysun.com/arts/coming-soon-guggenheim-vilnius/79897/>, June 13, 2008, Accessed 20/06/08

and culture. Tourism, according to the Report of the Tourism Policy Review Group of 2003, is the most successful sector of Irish owned enterprise since the foundation of the State. It accounts for €4 billion in annual foreign earnings with employment in this sector growing faster than any other sector, increasing by 70% from 1990-2002.²⁰³ The Policy Review Report states the aim of increasing the annual overseas visitor spend to €6 billion by 2012 and recognizes that changing customer profiles are driven by “technology, demographics, and societal changes such as better education, increasing interest in cultural experiences, and increased leisure time.”²⁰⁴ This report makes explicit the desire to create more consistent links and partnerships with other sectors in the economy that are tied to tourist development, including the arts and cultural sectors. It says that the ‘artistic and cultural infrastructure of Dublin needs to be upgraded to compete with other European capital cities and specifically recommends the redevelopment of the Abbey Theatre and the re-location of the National concert hall.’²⁰⁵

The Arts Council also sees the development of cultural tourism as a key strategic aim. In a statement issued by the Arts Council on August 13, 2007, Olive Braiden, the chair of the Arts Council, supported the use of the arts as a strategic link in the development of cultural tourism and even employs this ‘strategic link’ as grounds for increased financial support for the Arts Council. Braiden stated that,

We strongly support significant further investment in cultural tourism for this country. This is the fastest growth area in tourism and cities such as New York and many Spanish and Italian towns and cities thrive on it. It is under-developed here and needs more focal points to attract greater numbers... Ireland is known the world over for its artists and it is reasonable that tourists expect to see a manifestation of that reputation when on holiday here... The additional €20 million would be an excellent investment in tourism, in the arts sector which needs the funding and in Ireland inc. as the arts are the stimulant for the Republic to find new ways to succeed.²⁰⁶

It is apparent that arts and culture are viewed as powerful and important allies in the

²⁰³ “New Horizons for Irish Tourism: An Agenda for Action”, Department of Arts, Sport, and Tourism, <http://www.tourismreview.ie/Tourism%20Review%20Report.pdf>, September 2003, accessed 05/10/07

²⁰⁴ “New Horizons for Irish Tourism: An Agenda for Action”, accessed 05/01/07

²⁰⁵ “New Horizons for Irish Tourism: An Agenda for Action”, accessed 05/01/07

²⁰⁶ “Ireland Needs to Invest in Weather-Independent Experiences Says Arts Council Chair,” The Arts Council, <http://www.artscouncil.ie/en/news/news.aspx?article=57a91867-b6af-44ce-82b3-ad0be3a2fe66>, 08/13/07, accessed 8/14/07

development and expansion of the tourist industry. The logic of supporting the arts as a stimulus in the development of cultural tourism and urban regeneration is increasingly prevalent in discourses surrounding the arts. This reflects the increasing prevalence of instrumental cultural policy which has clearly played its part in securing dramatically increased funding for the arts.

Aside from the supposed benefits that result from the implementation of instrumental cultural policy, one of the most often repeated and seemingly unquestionable reasons for State involvement in the fine arts is that they are simply ‘good for us.’ In *Towards a New Framework for the Arts*, it contends that “the arts continue to play an increasingly important role in the development and well being of our modern society so that access to arts provision of the highest excellence for all citizens, whatever their income or situation or wherever they live, must be a key objective.”²⁰⁷ A similar statement is made in the Arts Plan 1999-2001, which says that, “the richness and distinctiveness of our culture rests on our recognition of the intrinsic and irreplaceable role of the arts in our lives...”²⁰⁸ This vision of the arts playing a central, necessary, and important role in everyday life is outlined in a UNESCO proclamation stating:

the right to culture to be a human right, both in terms of justice and because culture was seen to be a fundamental human need. Man’s cultural welfare can be regarded as another aspect of his social well being... the right to culture implies responsibility on the part of governments to ensure that individuals have the means of exercising this right.²⁰⁹

Statements such as these, which celebrate the ineffable qualities and benefits of the arts, are continuously used as a key part of the rationale for State support. They present the arts, without defining them, as something that the whole of society benefits from and hence, define them as public goods in need of sustained and committed support. What many of these documents usually lack are concrete details on ‘how’ the arts are good for us,

²⁰⁷ “Towards a New Framework for the Arts: A Review of Arts Legislation”, Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht, and the Islands, http://www.arts-sport-tourism.gov.ie/pdfs/towards%20a%20new%20framework%20for%20the%20arts_3.pdf, 2000, accessed 10/11/07, p 5 - 6

²⁰⁸ “The Arts Plan 1999-2001”, The Arts Council, <http://www.artscouncil.ie/Publications/ArtsPlan.pdf>, 1999, accessed 11/06/07, p 5

²⁰⁹ Kelly, *Cultural Policy in Ireland*, p 16

‘what’ arts they are speaking of, and also ‘who’ the audiences are for the arts that accrue such benefits. Obliqueness about such matters, and arguing for arts support on quasi-spiritual grounds, leans toward increased mystification around the arts. A similarly vague rationale for State support of the arts was recently championed in a pamphlet published by the Arts Council, entitled *In Pursuit of Glorious Failure*, written by the journalist John Waters. Waters claims that:

Art has always had one purpose: to remind us of what we are, to take us beyond the landscaped, prefabricated reality in which we have chosen to live, and kneel us before the mystery of our existence. Art speaks to us through the clamour of our social lives, reminding us to look beyond what we *know* to what is implicit in our existence and our natures, to what is wild, untamable, and free.²¹⁰

Although it is not explicitly stated, the arts commonly referred to in such statements published by the Arts Council or State bodies, are the legitimate fine arts sanctioned and funded by the State. This implies that such art forms provide a certain indescribable ‘something’ to the public which other art forms, not supported by the State, are incapable of providing. This means that a crucial reason offered as to why the State, and its various institutional bodies, support and promote the fine arts is out of a sense of responsibility over the public’s cultural welfare. Once again we are back to the argument that the fine arts are funded on the basis that they are public goods that all of society can access and benefit from. These kind of claims side-step the difficult issue of access to culture, which is driven, according to theorists such as Bourdieu, by factors such as an individual’s social background and level of education. Also, many art forms such as literature, are primarily produced in the private sector through commercial, profit driven enterprises, yet it would seem strange to argue that literature does not offer similar benefits to those art forms that are publicly funded.

The Arts Council and the Department of Education have long been aware that inadequate arts education is one of the greatest obstacles to access and participation in the arts. To give some idea of how seriously the Council has taken the issue of arts and education, in 2007 it published a report entitled, *Arts, Education, and Other Learning*

²¹⁰ John Waters, “The Value of the Arts: The Pursuit of Glorious Failure”, The Arts Council, <http://www.artscouncil.ie/Publications/John%20Waters%20FINAL.pdf>, April 2007, accessed 12/12/08, p 5

Settings: A Research Digest, which contains information on 72 research reports published in relation to the arts in education in Ireland between 1979 and mid-2007.²¹¹ It is worth noting that in all of these 72 reports, spanning three decades, the issue of arts education and broadcasting is only mentioned once.²¹² It cites the report, *The Place of the Arts in Irish Education*, published in 1979, which is referred to earlier in this chapter. This appears as a strange omission, as the Council must surely have been aware that the key mission of public service broadcasting is to inform, educate, and entertain. Television broadcasting has access to a mass national audience that cuts across boundaries of class, education, and location, and so would appear to be an obvious ally in the strategic aim of improving arts education and increasing participation and access to the arts.

Looking through the Arts Council Annual Reports from 1987 to 2006, and Annual Reviews in 2002 and 2005, there is also almost no mention of television being used as a developmental tool to increase access and participation in the arts, or as part of the Council's wider policy on improving arts education. In 1994, the Council recognized,

that although it is the primary agency for the development of the arts, it is not the only one. Local Authorities, the Departments of Labour, Environment, Education, and Foreign Affairs and of course, Arts, Culture, and the Gaeltacht, the business community, RTÉ, the press and the public all have contributions of great value to make. But if those contributions are to have their maximum effect co-ordinated planning is needed.²¹³

The Annual Reports over this period repeatedly refer to the Council's work forging partnerships with a variety of other agencies. In 1996, the Council celebrates the fact that it has forged such partnerships in areas such as, "education, disability, the Gaeltacht, poverty eradication, local authority, tourism, urban and rural renewal as well as with international bodies."²¹⁴ There are countless statements about the Council's dedication to forging partnerships with other public agencies that share responsibility for arts and

²¹¹ Martin Drury with Hibernian Consulting, , "Arts, Education and Other Learning Settings: A Research Digest", The Arts Council, http://www.artscouncil.ie/Publications/Research_Digest.pdf, October 2008, accessed 07/03/09, p 6

²¹² Drury, "Arts, Education and Other Learning Settings: A Research Digest", p 6

²¹³ *Arts Council Annual Report*, 1994, p 6

²¹⁴ *Arts Council Annual Report*, 1996, p 6

cultural provision, yet next to nothing addressing, or outlining in any detail, its partnerships with Irish public service broadcast television.

There are a few rare exceptions to this rule. In 1998, the Council observed that one of the “outstanding developments illustrating the Council’s partnership approach to advancing particular needs and opportunities included: the creation of a new fund in association with Telefís na Gaeilge (TnaG), to support the making of new and innovative programmes on the arts in Ireland.”²¹⁵ It follows this in 2000 by stating that, “we provided funding for 6 Irish language publishers, for the joint Irish language documentary fund with TG4.”²¹⁶ These references to its partnership work with TG4 are the most specific relating to public service television I could locate. Yet in 2002, the Council claimed that the “Arts Council and its parent department have established an operational structure involving cross departmental cooperation and expert artistic advice.”²¹⁷ It would appear that this cross departmental cooperation does not include any coherent or strategic work with the Department of Communications or with public service broadcasters. Looking at the Arts Plans 1995 to 1999, 1999 to 2001, and 2002 to 2006 it is once again striking to see almost no mention of public service television broadcasting, with the exception that they are included in lists of partnerships.

Throughout these documents the Council repeatedly announces its success in securing increased State funding, the expansion in the role of local authorities and the enlarged number of arts officers across the country, the development of a national arts infrastructure, the need to improve arts education, and also that it is dedicated to increasing access and participation in the arts. The Council does acknowledge that arts audiences are “typically well educated and affluent” and that this “social composition has remained largely unchanged over the years.”²¹⁸ In order to rectify this, the Arts Plan recommends “arts organizations experiment with new methods of broadening and diversifying the social reach of audiences.”²¹⁹ It would appear that the use of television was not seriously considered as tool to achieve such objectives.

²¹⁵ *Arts Council Annual Report*, 1998, p 4

²¹⁶ *Arts Council Annual Report*, 2000, p 12

²¹⁷ *Arts Council Annual Review*, 2002, p 13

²¹⁸ “The Arts Plan 2002 – 2006”, The Arts Council, <http://www.artscouncil.ie/Publications/ArtsPlan2002-6.pdf>, 2002, accessed 14/06/07, p 18

²¹⁹ “The Arts Plan 2002 – 2006”, p 19

Even in the Council's report, *Partnership for the Arts*, which states that the Council can only achieve its goals by working with a wide range of other interested agencies, there is only one negligible reference to broadcasting. In its commitment to support artists in reaching wider audiences for their work it includes broadcasting as a tool for disseminating artists work, but that is the extent of it. These documents show that the Council has lacked any serious or sustained engagement with the possibility that television could be utilized to meet its objectives, and also illustrate that it has made no concerted attempts to explore such possibilities. Although it has issued a variety of research reports on arts and education, youth arts, community arts, arts and disability etc., it has never developed any research reports or policies that specifically address television and the arts.

This state of affairs must, to some degree, illustrate how the expanded field of television and the restricted field of legitimate fine art still often operate independently of one another, and continue to function according to conflicting sets of values, conventions, and rules. The rapid changes to broadcast television from the 1980s onward, detailed in the previous chapter, have often compelled public service television broadcasters to operate more and more like commercial broadcasters in order to stay competitive. This means that developing arts programming as a central part of scheduling or as a key area of expansion and experimentation would be a difficult goal to achieve, especially if large audiences cannot regularly be attracted to such programming. Yet, if the Arts Council, the primary developmental body for the arts, offers no coherent policy relating to television or publishes no research on the issue, it is even less likely to happen. From the reports listed above it may appear that the Council remained unaware of this link between television viewing and its potential to increase access and participation in the arts, but this is not the case. The 1994 report, *The Public and the Arts*, which entailed a survey of the public's attitudes and behaviours in relation to the arts, specifically highlights this link between television and increased access to the arts. In this report, Arts Council Chairperson Ciarán Benson says that he firmly believes that the "symbiotic relationship of empirical research and active policy formulation is a most productive model for

developing policy on the arts in Ireland.”²²⁰ It would appear that television did not become included in this vision for ‘active policy formation.’

One of the main objectives of *the Public and the Arts* was to provide a comparison with the data collected in the 1983 survey *Audiences, Acquisitions and Amateurs*, and also for the Council to present itself as being more inclusive and responsive to the cultural needs of a broad general public. This report employed the work of Bourdieu by using his concept of ‘cultural capital’ to “indicate the interdependence of access to culture with social, economic and, political position [...recognizing that...] works of art only exist for those who have the means of appropriating or deciphering them.”²²¹ This points to the Council’s continuing need to address educational and class inflected problems of access and participation in the arts. The report asserts that an “analysis of attendances at the more comprehensive range of arts events measured in 1994 shows that 83% of the population surveyed attended an event during the last twelve months.”²²² This figure presents a noted increase on the 1981 survey, and seems to be an incredibly large figure until one realizes that very broad definitions of arts events have been applied in the survey to include events such as mainstream films and popular and country and western music. When this larger figure is broken down it reveals that whilst, for example, 54 per cent of respondents had attended a mainstream film in the previous year, only 7 per cent had attended the opera.²²³ This indicates that the Council, regardless of its mission from the 1970s onward to bring the fine arts to the masses, continued to have problems attracting large cross sections of the public to ‘high’ art forms. The report proposed that that there was very little room for complacency as far as redistribution of access goes because, “when the attendance patterns for each of the social groups is compared with aggregate attendance by the population as a whole it can be seen that by 1994 there has been relatively little closing of the gaps which were apparent in 1981.”²²⁴ Increasing and improving television arts programming is not the sole answer to these complex problems, but it could undoubtedly play a much larger role in achieving

²²⁰ *The Public and the Arts*, 1994, p 11

²²¹ *The Public and the Arts*, 1994, p 18

²²² *The Public and the Arts*, 1994, p 13

²²³ *The Public and the Arts*, 1994, p 13

²²⁴ *The Public and the Arts*, 1994, p 42

the Council's objectives of improved arts education, and increased access and participation.

It is significant that *The Public and the Arts* observed the increasing importance of what it termed 'home based technology', which refers to television, radio, video, and hi-fi, finding 100 per cent of the respondents in the survey had access to television and 82 per cent watched television on a daily basis.²²⁵ It charts the use of 'home based' technology for experiencing categories of popular, traditional, and fine arts, and for example, found that 32 per cent of those surveyed watched mainstream films on television, 9 per cent watched art house films, 25 per cent watched plays, 22 per cent watched arts review programmes, 6 per cent watched ballet, and 8 per cent watched opera.²²⁶ The report noticeably shows that the public surveyed do have an interest in experiencing the arts on television, and from these figures makes the analysis that whilst the "home based audience for any given art form is greater than the audiences at a live event, it is also clear that for the majority of people who attend live events of a particular art form, home-based technology is used as an additional medium rather than as a replacement for actual attendance."²²⁷ The increased use of home based technology, such as television, did not reduce attendance at live events as the *Public and the Arts* argues that attendance for virtually all art forms increased, and so "access to these art forms on television may in fact act as a stimulant to a broader interest in the arts."²²⁸ The report highlighted the persistent divide between 'high' art and popular art forms by revealing that 'higher' art forms, such as opera, ballet, and classical music still continued to be of minority interest. This demonstrated that arts consumption still tended to mirror rather than bridge wider class divisions, yet the report still presents a strong argument that television can play an important role in arousing and exciting interest in a broad spectrum of the arts.

The Council commissions reports such as the 1994 *Public and the Arts* because it believes that the, "symbiotic relationship of empirical research and active policy

²²⁵ *The Public and the Arts*, 1994, p 59

²²⁶ *The Public and the Arts*, 1994, p 61

²²⁷ *The Public and the Arts*, 1994, p 62

²²⁸ *The Public and the Arts*, 1994, p 106

formulation is a most productive model for developing policy on the arts in Ireland.”²²⁹ It is clear that this report identified the increasing importance of television and other home-based technologies as potential stimulants for broadening access and participation in the arts. Yet, as I have shown, there is almost no mention of television in the Arts Council’s Annual Reports over a twenty year period, very little mention of television in any of its Arts Plans developed from 1995 onward, or in its report, *Partnership for the Arts*, which specifically outlined the Council’s commitment to forging strategic partnerships with other public bodies concerned with arts and cultural provision. In 2006, the Council commissioned another survey-based report also entitled *The Public and the Arts*, which compared data and analysis from both the 1994 and 2006 reports. The 2006 report observes that during the period 1994 to 2006 there have major advances in technology and that a related development is, “the central role of the broadcast media in disseminating the arts to extensive and diverse audiences.”²³⁰ The 1994 report already came to similar conclusions so it is interesting to look at the 2006 report to note what changes took place in the intervening decade in response to the 1994 report.

The Public and the Arts 2006 found that in the previous 12 months, 85 per cent of the respondents had attended at least one arts event in the previous year, pointing to an increase in 2 per cent in attendance figures since 1994.²³¹ Once again a broad definition of the arts was employed in the 2006 report, which included both the legitimate fine arts and also more popular and commercial art forms, and found that two of the top three items which people attended were mainstream films and rock/pop music events. When breaking down attendance figures by distinct art forms, the report actually found a fall in attendance for a range of type of events. This included a drop to 8 per cent attendance at art exhibitions and to 7 percent in attendance at plays.²³² The report argues that, based on its an analysis of attendance figures, “there is some evidence of a move in attendance from conventional or subsidized art forms and genres toward more popular and commercial art forms and genres.”²³³ The report found that attendance at any arts event

²²⁹ *The Public and the Arts*, 1994, p 11

²³⁰ Martin Drury with Hibernian Consulting, and Insight Statistical Consulting, “The Public and the Arts 2006”, The Arts Council, 2006, <http://www.artscouncil.ie/Publications/PublicandtheArts2006.pdf>, p 7

²³¹ *The Public and the Arts* 2006, p 14

²³² *The Public and the Arts*, 2006, p 14

²³³ *The Public and the Arts* 2006, p 20

for the middle classes appeared to be at a plateau level, and that there are still strong class variations in attendance at some kind of events such as going to see a play or art exhibition or attending a classical music concert.

This is all quite remarkable in light of the huge increases in funding for the Council and its repeated claims from the 1980s that it was dedicated to increasing access to the arts. It is worth looking at other findings from the 2006 survey to illustrate how the Council continues to ignore the public's responses. In 2006, respondents were asked which areas of arts funding should be prioritized and found that that "the public's top three priorities, representing 62 per cent of the population, are in fact areas of arts provision in receipt of relatively modest support from the State."²³⁴ Despite finding that four out of five people found no obstacles or difficulties in attending or taking part in arts activities, the 2006 report shows attendance and participation levels at about the same levels as 1994.²³⁵ The fine arts in Ireland, after decades of work on access and participation, continue to be a mark of social exclusiveness rather than being an instrument of social inclusion. Given the fact that, in the intervening decade, the Council's budget was trebled, a dedicated government department was established, and increased access and participation became a central objective of the Council and the State, these findings must have been disappointing.

The 2006 report on *Public and the Arts* remarks that the period 1994 – 2006 was characterized by access to more television channels, both Irish and non-Irish and that between 2003 and 2006 the number of subscribers to cable and satellite digital television increased by 145 per cent.²³⁶ The report notes that TG4, TV3, Channel 6, and City Channel also began broadcasting during this period and that for 39 per cent of the survey's respondents, television was the main method for getting information about the arts.²³⁷ It even found that 96 per cent, or 19 out of every 20 people surveyed, used television to watch arts events.²³⁸ This suggests a very large engagement by the public with the arts on television during the same period when broadcast television was de-regulated and increasingly commercialized. The report acknowledges RTÉ's critical

²³⁴ *The Public and the Arts 2006*, p 107

²³⁵ *The Public and the Arts 2006*, p 93

²³⁶ *The Public and the Arts 2006*, p 39

²³⁷ *The Public and the Arts 2006*, p 23

²³⁸ *The Public and the Arts 2006*, p 87

role in relation to arts programming and remarks that, “RTÉ’s televised arts output since 1994 has been characterized by greater consistency in the broadcasting of arts review and magazine programmes; the commissioning and exhibition of arts documentaries, the development of independent programming with attendant arts benefits; and indigenous television drama.”²³⁹

This all seems to indicate quite a healthy state of affairs for the arts on television and paints a picture of a large amount of the public engaging with the arts through the medium of television. Yet with further analysis, a different picture emerges. It seems that aside from the areas of rock and popular music, there has been a downward trend in watching the arts on television. Between 1994 and 2006, there was a decline from 40 per cent to 22 per cent watching plays on television and a decline from 30 per cent to 10 percent in watching an arts related programme (e.g. a review or documentary programme) in a decade where many more such programmes have been broadcast by RTÉ.²⁴⁰ This is partly explained by the vast increase in the number of television channels available, giving audiences a much wider choice in the programming they watch. Yet ultimately the report finds that in 2006 “the public is not consuming more art, as least as traditionally defined.”²⁴¹ In response to these findings, it is recommended that RTÉ and the Arts Council engage in new collaborative research and joint action. As I noted earlier, the Council was aware of the importance and potential of television from its finding in the 1994 *Public and the Arts* report, yet over the course of the decade developed no specific research or policy in relation to television and the arts. The 2006 *Public and the Arts* notes that the boost in figures for traditional Irish and folk music may have been due to the fact that TG4 broadcasts a number of Irish music programmes.²⁴² This is a clear indication of television’s potential to increase access and interest in particular art forms. Yet, if the Council didn’t utilise the findings from the 1994 report to inform ‘active policy formulation’ about broadcast television and the arts, then it is possible that the findings from the 2006 report will also have limited influence.

²³⁹ *The Public and the Arts 2006*, p 52

²⁴⁰ *The Public and the Arts 2006*, p 111

²⁴¹ *The Public and the Arts 2006*, p 111

²⁴² *The Public and the Arts 2006*, p 20

It is significant that *Audiences, Acquisitions, and Amateurs* and both *Public and the Arts* reports employed such broad definitions of the arts. The inclusion of art forms that clearly fall into the expanded field of cultural production gives the impression of much larger access to and participation in the arts. It would appear that the Council accepts quite flexible definitions of the arts when it suits their needs. In the case of the *Public and the Arts*, it was attempting to present itself as a body concerned with wide and diverse publics and responding to their needs and preferences, as voiced in their responses to the survey. The fact that the public's priorities for arts spending were in direct opposition to the Council's priorities, both in 1994 and 2006, illustrate that the Council is not actually representative of large amounts of the Irish public. Rather than acknowledge this directly, the 2006 report uses the term 'contradictions in response' to explain this gap between the Council's activities and the public's priorities. These 'contradictions in response' are based on factors such as the public's possible "lack of understanding about the role of artists and the nature of their work."²⁴³ This problem with the public's 'lack of understanding' is, to some degree dismissed, by the claim that the Department of the Arts and the Council are experts in the area and so understand these issues in a way that the public do not. It is suggested that the Council must work to inform the public about their "under-developed understanding of what artists do and how central their work is to the acknowledged 'common good' that are the arts."²⁴⁴

Yet, it would be surprising if the Council was to make arguments for the common good or external benefits of popular music or mainstream films, even though they do include them in their expanded definitions of the arts in the reports discussed. What ultimately is revealed by the analysis of these various reports is that after several decades of expressing concern over inclusion, access, and participation, the Council still largely remains a public body that provides for the arts and cultural interests and preferences of highly educated and economically privileged sectors of the public. The State funding of the fine arts remain, to a large degree, a subsidy for the cultural and leisure interests of educated middle and upper classes. This is particularly worrying as a large portion of the Arts Council's funding is raised through the National Lottery, and academic studies

²⁴³ *The Public and the Arts 2006*, p 108

²⁴⁴ *The Public and the Arts 2006*, p 108

carried out on lottery ticket purchasing reveal that the finance raised via lotteries is drawn disproportionately from the more disadvantaged members of society.²⁴⁵ Such inequalities do not seem to concern commentators such as the journalist and Arts Council member Emer O’Kelly. In *The Case for Elitism*, she argues against the increasing focus on access and participation in the arts and contends it ultimately prevents people from accessing truly great art. She says:

the improvement in educational provision and what has come to be called ‘lifelong learning’ has created an arrogance of achievement. The work produced in a Senior Citizens’ Painting group is so lauded that nobody sees the necessity of looking at the work in the National Gallery, the Museum of Modern Art, or the better commercial galleries. The Amateur Drama Group plays to a rapturous audience of friends and relations, and those on both sides of the curtain feel that their cultural requirements have been met. It’s easy, it’s enjoyable, it makes no demands, and it is sociologically valuable. But it is not art; indeed it discourages those participating from exploring the world of art. It ends up making art a branch of the social services.²⁴⁶

O’Kelly’s article was written as part of a series of pamphlets published by the Arts Council under the title *The Value of the Arts*. O’Kelly’s opinions, as a member of the Arts Council, are surprising as *The Value of the Arts* pamphlets were written as a response to the *Public and the Arts 2006*, which acknowledges and employs the work on cultural practices carried out by Pierre Bourdieu. It would appear that O’Kelly is not aware of this or the complexity of class inflected problems of access to the arts.

In 2007, The National Economic and Social Forum (NESF) published a report entitled *The Arts, Cultural Inclusion, and Social Cohesion*, which carried out further analysis of the Arts Council’s 2006 report, *The Public and the Arts*. The NESF report confirms, perhaps unsurprisingly, that people of lower educational attainment, lower social class or lower income are less likely to be involved in the arts. The NESF report does acknowledge the various initiatives to increase inclusion in the arts, and makes note of the role of local authority services, the Department of Education and Science, and various programmes which are indirectly funded by the State (e.g. the Per Cent for Art and Fás community employment Schemes). Yet it also highlights the fact that:

²⁴⁵ Timothy Bledsoe and Mary Herring, “A Model of Lottery Participation: Demographics, Context, and Attitudes”, *Policy Studies Journal*, Vol. 22, 1994, p 245 - 257

²⁴⁶ Emer O’Kelly, “The Value of the Arts: The Case for Elitism”, The Arts Council, <http://www.artscouncil.ie/Publications/EmerOKellyFINAL.pdf>, June 2007, Accessed 06/02/09, p 3

key policy documents such as the *Strategy Statement of the Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism*, and the *National Action Plan Against Poverty and Social Exclusion*, do not have a clear policy to broaden participation by all in the arts. Although this is referred to in these documents, follow-through in terms of concrete actions and targets is lacking.²⁴⁷

In order to help address and rectify these ongoing problems, the report recommends better policy co-ordination at national level, in local authorities, between local arts groups, between national and local arts organizations, and among arts offices.²⁴⁸ It outlines how the lack of access and participation in the arts mirrors broader social inequalities, yet it also lacks any recommendation that public service television be employed to further the work of the Council and the various other public bodies concerned with the cultural welfare of the Irish public. Television's potential role in broadening access and participation in the arts once again seems to have been overlooked.

Conclusion

This chapter makes it clear that long term strategic links or coherent policy regarding the arts and public service broadcast television has not been developed by the Arts Council or other public bodies concerned with arts and cultural provision. As outlined in the previous chapter public service broadcasters have always been expected to carry out a State directed cultural agenda. In the early years this involved challenging and curtailing the influence of British television which was widely accessible in Ireland. The access to British television provoked fears of further erosion of Irish cultural independence, as well as creating a danger to Irish morals emanating from such foreign broadcasts. Such fears were expressed by the secretary of the Department of Posts and Telegraphs at the time, León O'Broin, who thought that some of these foreign television programmes were:

Brazen, some 'frank' in sex matters, some merely inspired by the desire to exalt the British Royal family and the British way of life... there is constant emphasis

²⁴⁷ "The Arts, Cultural Inclusion and Social Cohesion: Summary", National Economic and Social Forum, <http://www.nesf.ie/dynamic/pdfs/k.%20No%2035a%20Summary%20The%20Arts.%20Cultural%20Inclusion%20and%20Social%20Cohesion.pdf>, January 2007, Accessed 02/03/09, p 4

²⁴⁸ "The Arts, Cultural Inclusion and Social Cohesion: Summary", p 7

on the British view of world affairs, and the British (including Six County) achievements.²⁴⁹

Hence, in the early days of RTÉ, arts programming was meant to focus on Irish language and traditional art forms, even though this was at odds with popular taste. The 1976 Broadcasting Act recognized the limitations of this narrow nationalist cultural agenda and hence, public broadcasters programming was meant to reflect a more pluralistic definition of Irish society and culture. Public broadcasters, RTÉ and TG4, are both dedicated to creating arts programming as one of their programming genres, and are bound to produce such programming under the terms of the public broadcasting charter, the public service broadcasting remit, and also by their own mission statements which declare their commitments to the arts. Yet, outside of vague and broadly stated commitment to the arts, neither RTÉ nor TG4 have ever developed any written and publicly available policy on the arts.

In the absence of any written arts policy I looked through RTÉ's annual reports from 1995 to 2006.²⁵⁰ There are many references in these Annual Reports to RTÉ's commitment to the arts and cultural diversity and also occasional references to specific arts programmes produced and broadcast. For example, in RTÉ's 2001 annual report it specifically refers to its arts programming with the following statement:

Broadcasting must address our common concerns, but our television and radio should also serve a diversity of interests and audiences. In 2001, we saw the completion of the Beckett project, when, for the first time, all the plays were filmed for television broadcast, cinema exhibition, and distribution on DVD. This was a prestige series in which RTÉ took the creative initiative, joined with independent producers and other public broadcasters, and produced a resource of lasting importance. It is an example of the distinctive contribution RTÉ can make to Irish cultural life as well as an encouragement to develop an appropriate media celebration of James Joyce's "Ulysses" for the centenary of Bloomsday in 2004.²⁵¹

²⁴⁹ O'Broin cited by John Horgan, *Irish Media: A Critical History Since 1922*, (London, Routledge, 2001) p 79

²⁵⁰ In 2007, TG4 was transformed into an independent statutory body, making it completely independent of RTÉ. Due to the fact that TG4 operated under the auspices of RTÉ from 1997, it did not produce its own annual reports. Annual reports for TG4 are only available from 2006.

²⁵¹ *RTÉ Annual Report*, 2001, p 14

This kind of statement celebrates RTÉ's arts programming production, but doesn't make it any clearer what policy shaped the decision to make such programmes. In RTÉ's Annual Report in 2004, it highlights the fact that RTÉ has commissioned innovative and radio and television programming to mark the centenaries of Bloomsday, the Abbey Theatre, and Patrick Kavanagh, and also notes that, "for a second year running the Arts Lives series commanded peak time viewing with its mix of diverse biographical arts portraits."²⁵² These various statements indicate specific instances of arts programming but nowhere in the Annual Reports is an actual policy on arts programming outlined.

The authors of the RTÉ 2001 Annual Report state that, "over the last ten years, we have pointed to RTÉ's growing reliance on commercial revenue."²⁵³ As a result of this reliance on commercial revenue it is argued that it was difficult for RTÉ to fulfill its obligations as a public service broadcaster. The 2004 Annual Report acknowledged the increase in public revenue brought about by increases to the license fee, and states that, "RTÉ has been able to strengthen its investment in distinctive public service programming."²⁵⁴ This increase in public revenue doesn't seem to have influenced the amount of arts programming broadcast during peak times by RTÉ, as can be seen in the Annual Reports breakdown of hours broadcast by genre at peak time.²⁵⁵ An analysis of the graphs in Appendix A, which are only available from 2003, indicates that arts programming, as a genre, accounts for a miniscule amount of peak time broadcasting on RTÉ. This means that although RTÉ repeatedly announces its commitment to arts programming, in the absence of any policy or strategic objectives, arts programming remains marginal. This indicates a disjuncture between RTÉ's public statements and the realities of what it actually broadcasts.

Ultimately, without coherent or strategic policy being implemented by RTÉ, the Arts Council, and other public bodies responsible for the arts, it is likely that the arts will continue to occupy an insignificant place on Irish public service television. Unless the situation changes, the Arts Council and RTÉ will continue to function as an 'odd couple' unable to recognise their mutual dependencies. The Arts Council must find broad

²⁵² RTÉ Annual Report, 2004, pp 9 – 10

²⁵³ RTÉ Annual Report, 2001, p 4

²⁵⁴ RTÉ Annual Report 2004, p 5

²⁵⁵ See Appendix A for breakdown of programmes broadcast by genre

audiences for minority cultural practices in order to account for its public funding, and RTÉ must promote minority cultural practices in order to secure public funding to continue to serve its broad audience. Although there seems to be no systematic attempt to bring this odd couple together at a policy level, an examination of arts programming on RTÉ demonstrates that the two bodies do have a relationship and do work together, albeit in a piecemeal fashion. The next chapter will examine the interaction between the interests of the art world, as promoted by the Arts Council, and the mediation of high art on RTÉ.

*All art is quite useless.*²⁵⁶

Introduction

Discourses about the arts on public service television are constructed through the range of representations of and about the arts available historically and currently on Irish PSB. There are, in fact, countless discourses about the arts circulating in Ireland, available to the Irish public through not only television, but also through specialist journals, book shops, libraries, advertising, theatres, newspapers, radio, and film. In cultural terms, the media, and television in particular, have become a highly significant component of everyday life. Arts programmes can be considered as part of a whole statement about the arts in which a number of discourses are in operation. Although representations of the arts can be found across a variety of TV formats (including talk shows such as the *Late Late Show* where artists are occasionally interviewed, dramas which have artists as central characters, and news broadcasts which announce record sale prices of well known artists), it is beyond the scope of this thesis to analyse such a broad spectrum of representations of the arts on television.

Hence, I will focus on programmes that fall under institutional definitions of arts programming, contain content that conforms to conventional definitions of the fine arts, or purport to offer a representation of the arts. As noted in the previous chapter, television is considered to be an important source of information about the arts, and as a powerful potential tool to increase access and participation in the arts. In its 2003 Annual Report, RTÉ claims that it maintains its position as Ireland's premier broadcaster through its "concentration on programming in those areas not covered by any other broadcaster or cultural institution."²⁵⁷ In the first chapter, I outlined how, according to the public service remit of PSB, public broadcasters are required to provide arts programming, especially as it is a genre of television that is not adequately supplied by commercially driven private broadcasters.

²⁵⁶ Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Grey*, (Radford, Wilder Publications, 2007) p 5

²⁵⁷ RTÉ Annual Report, 2003, p 9

This chapter begins with a sample survey of the schedules taken from the RTÉ guide. The sample covers a five year period and was undertaken to give some indication of the amount of arts programming on RTÉ and to identify if there were any noticeable changes during this time period. I then look at how RTÉ's commissioning process operates in order to see how arts programmes come to be made. It becomes clear that there is no strategic link with other agencies such as the Arts Council in the decision-making process, and that what is produced and broadcast nationally on RTÉ largely comes about as the result of the choices of a few individuals. Also this chapter identifies that there is internal incoherence within RTÉ as to how to define arts programming.

I then look at some specific examples of RTÉ arts programming, starting first with a look at its flagship arts programme *The View*. This is followed by an overview of its arts documentary series *Arts Lives* and then a look at two documentaries broadcast in the series. I also highlight the series of films broadcast as *RTÉ Dance on the Box* as an example of exciting and innovative arts programming. After looking at RTÉ, I consider TG4's approach to arts programming. In the absence of any written policy in this regard, I contacted TG4 Deputy CEO Pádraic Ó Ciardha to see if he could shed some light on how decisions about TG4 arts programming are made. His response (cited below) makes it quite clear that TG4 employs definitions of the arts that are much broader than RTÉ and that TG4 schedules its arts programming with the intention of not putting them into a scheduling 'ghetto'. I then follow this with an examination of some examples of arts programming broadcast on TG4 including work produced under TG4's arts documentary scheme entitled *Splanc!*

Section 1: Sample Survey of Arts Programming

In the previous chapter I identified how the Arts Council and Irish public service television channels have largely operated independently of one another. The lack of coherent joint policy, over a period of several decades, is partially due to fundamental differences between these two, often oppositional, fields of cultural production. In the absence of joint strategic policy, arts programming continues to be a marginalized genre. In order to gain a broad overview of the prevalence of arts programming on RTÉ, I

undertook a sample survey of arts programmes listed in the schedules of the *RTÉ Guide* over a five year period from 2001 to 2005.²⁵⁸ For the purpose of the survey, I broke the year into the following four television seasons, using one week in the middle of each season for the sample as follows:

1. Spring: from mid January to early June - sample week March 15th
2. Summer: from early June to mid September - sample week July 15th
3. Autumn: from mid September to mid December - sample week October 15th
4. Christmas: from mid December to mid January - sample week December 15th

The RTÉ schedules for these weeks were examined in the *RTÉ Guide* to locate what type of arts programmes were broadcast and at what times during this period. I identified relevant programmes primarily on the basis of their titles but also on the basis of descriptions given in the *RTÉ Guide*. Although the sample is not exhaustive, it does offer a general picture of arts programming on RTÉ over a five year period. The sample weeks employed begin on Saturday, and finish on Friday, as this is the way the weekly calendar is mapped out in the *RTÉ Guide*. The main television season begins in the autumn and continues until the end of spring with a break during the Christmas period. The Christmas period is not officially a separate season, but a lot of the ordinary programming is suspended over this four week period and for this reason I have, for the sake of this survey, identified it as a distinct season. The summer season is off-season as most programming, outside of news, takes a break until autumn. This means that programmes like *The View* and many others that feature during the year are not broadcast during the summer months.

Looking at the data from the sample, it becomes immediately clear that besides *The View*, there were no other regular arts programmes on RTÉ over the five years surveyed. *Arts Lives*, a series of arts documentaries was introduced in 2003 but as these are only broadcast for approximately six to ten weeks during the year, they do not constitute a part of regular annual programming. *The View* is screened near to or after 11 p.m., which according to RTÉ's definitions, is technically off peak time. There are 36

²⁵⁸ See Appendix B: Sample survey of arts programming on RTÉ

episodes of *The View* broadcast per year, and *The View Presents* and *Arts Lives* are also broadcast on RTÉ, which means that RTÉ 1 broadcasts the most hours of arts programming per year. Together, these programmes form the bulk of RTÉ's regular arts programming. Arts programmes, as defined by RTÉ, that are broadcast during peak times tend to be biographical profiles, such as most of the documentaries produced in the *Arts Lives* series. Occasionally, RTÉ broadcasts arts documentaries outside of the *Arts Lives* series such as *The Life and Times of Jackson Pollock* broadcast at 8:40 p.m. on RTÉ 1 on Dec 19, 2001. In general, very few arts programmes are broadcast at peak times. Over the course of the five years there seems to be very few shifts in the pattern of scheduling, although the launch of *Arts Lives* and *The View Presents* in 2003 does mark a significant increase in the amount of arts programming produced and broadcast on RTÉ. Otherwise, the general picture remains the same. This gives an indication of how limited the amount of arts programming is on RTÉ and how it tends to be marginalized late in the schedules.

If I were to use the broader definitions of the arts employed by the Arts Council's report *The Public and the Arts* (1994 and 2006), a much larger number of programmes could be included, such as broadcasts of films and popular music. RTÉ broadcasts some educational 'how to draw and paint' programmes aimed at children in the afternoon and these tend to be short, usually between ten to thirty minutes in duration (e.g. *The Art of Don, Don't Just Draw - Animate*, and *SmART*). Programmes broadcast in the early morning tend to also be in the 'how to paint' format but these are aimed at adult viewers (e.g. *Simply Painting* and *Crawshaw's' Water Colour Cruise*). Some are hybrids of travel and art-hobbyist programmes such as *Sister Wendy's Big Tour*. According to RTÉ's internal classificatory system, outlined later in the chapter, such programmes are not defined as arts programmes. This signals that RTÉ, primarily brackets off its arts programming following quite narrow definitions of the arts. If RTÉ were to employ broader definitions of arts programming, then its annual reports could illustrate quite a large amount of arts programming. Rather than being alarmed, bodies such as the Arts Council could celebrate that the arts are flourishing on Irish public service television. Definitions attached to the arts and arts programming are flexible and are underpinned by ideological and pragmatic considerations for the institutions involved. The fact remains

that the various institutions operate according to different definitions, depending on how they wish to represent their engagement with the arts. RTÉ still primarily defines arts programmes as those programmes that address the fine arts. This may be done in order to foreground RTÉ's commitment to its public service remit, as a provider of programming not adequately provided by commercial broadcasters. It could be argued that the Arts Council employed broad definitions of the arts in its *Public and the Arts* reports specifically because it wanted to present a picture of broad public engagement with the arts. This presented an image of the Council as a public body engaged with wide and diverse publics, which is necessary if the Council wishes to sustain its levels of State financial support.²⁵⁹ Here we have an odd and conflicting situation. While the Arts Council deems it in its best interest to broaden the definition of the arts in recent times, the opposite is the case with RTÉ. Both institutions employ definitions of the arts that are best suited to them sustaining continued public support. It is now worthwhile to have a look at the process surrounding how arts programmes, under such narrow definitions, come into being on RTÉ.

Section 2: RTÉ's Arts Programming and Commissioning Process

RTÉ's definition of the arts can, to a limited degree, be gleaned by examining its internal classification system and its commissioning process. There are currently three models for the development and production of arts programming on RTÉ, although there is some degree of overlap. The first is the in-house production, which includes programmes such as *The View* and *The View Presents*, as well as an occasional documentary by an in-house producer. The second model consists of commissions from independent producers. These are mainly documentaries but also include programmes such as the song-writing series, *This Note's For You* in 2006. The third model involves 'acquired' programmes which are mostly documentaries, sometimes for the *Arts Lives* strand and also stand-alone broadcasts. Some programmes which at first may appear to be under the banner of

²⁵⁹ The Arts Act 2003 expanded the definition of the arts to include circus, in both its traditional and contemporary forms. This indicates how what is defined as legitimate art changes in response to shifts in cultural trends. The Council is bound by this legislation to expand its remit to include support of circus as an art form.

arts programming, such as *Drawing with Don* are commissioned by ‘Young People’s Programming’. Programmes that instruct viewers on painting or drawing techniques, or travel programmes that include arts content, are not defined as arts programmes as such by RTÉ. This, once again, draws attention to how definitions of the arts by RTÉ are both extremely narrow and are primarily applied to programming that covers the ‘legitimate’ fine arts.

In relation to the commissioning process, arts programming comes under the category of factual programming, for which Kevin Dawson, Commissioning Editor Factual, is responsible to Clare Duignan, Director of TV programmes. The commissioning process works as follows.²⁶⁰ RTÉ holds an annual commissioning round for arts programming, both single documentaries and series. The call for arts submissions (as in other genres) identifies areas of interest, themes, and the type of programming (documentaries, series, durations etc.) which RTÉ wishes to commission. This brief will have been produced as a result of discussions involving senior editorial and programming strategy groups including the Commissioning Editor Factual, Director of Programmes TV and the Managing Director of TV, Noel Curran. All these discussions contain an awareness of RTÉ’s public service broadcasting responsibilities in relation to the arts and culture as well as other areas. Arts programming submissions are considered by the Commissioning Editor Factual, the Executive Producer Arts and Cross-Media, David McKenna, and a third reader with TV production experience in the area of the arts. Their recommendations result in a shortlist which is brought forward by the Commissioning Editor Factual to the Director of Programmes TV for discussion and final decisions on commissioning.²⁶¹

In response to email queries about this process, David McKenna (Executive Producer Arts and Cross-Media) informed me that arts programmes are classified as either, in-house, commissions, or acquired. Yet, Joseph Hoban, RTÉ’s Senior Press and Publicity Officer, painted another picture of how arts programming are classified within RTÉ. Joseph Hoban said that under RTÉ’s internal classification system, for a programme to fall under the official RTÉ ‘arts superstrand banner’, it must be either

²⁶⁰ David McKenna, “RTÉ’s commissioning process”, E-mail to the author, September 14, 2007

²⁶¹ David McKenna, “arts and broadcasting information”, E-mail to the author, September 17, 2007

wholly or partly commissioned by RTÉ, or produced by RTÉ in house.²⁶² Programmes not made by RTÉ or not funded by the Independent Productions Unit (IPU) are categorised internally as ‘acquired programmes’. According to these criteria, acquired programmes such as *Simply Painting*, *Sister Wendy’s Grand Tour*, *Let’s Animate*, and *Crawshaw’s Watercolour Cruise* are not RTÉ arts programmes as they were not commissioned by RTÉ or funded by the IPU.

This seems to contradict David McKenna’s classificatory system on two counts. First David McKenna included acquired programming as arts programming. Secondly, David McKenna said arts programming fell under the banner of ‘factual programming’ whereas Joseph said arts programming falls under the superstrand of ‘RTÉ Arts’. This would mean that certain programmes are internally defined as RTÉ arts programmes, whilst programmes that are acquired are not technically considered arts programmes. This indicates that arts programming is not a neat package that is clearly defined across the institution of RTÉ. When using narrow definition of arts programming we find that it accounts for an insignificant amount of total programming when compared to other genres such as news, current affairs, sport, or drama. What also becomes clear is that there is internal confusion within RTÉ as to how it classifies and quantifies arts programming. Also, from looking at the commissioning process it is revealed that choices made about arts programming on RTÉ is the responsibility of only a few individuals who apparently rely on conventional definitions of the arts, and that specialists from organizations such as the Arts Council are not usually involved in this process.

Yet, even though arts programming accounts for such a minimal amount of total broadcasting output on RTÉ, as stated above, it is in RTÉ’s best interests to represent itself to the public as an institution with an extensive commitment to the arts. The predominantly ‘public relations’ aspect of this stated commitment becomes more apparent when looking at the RTÉ Supporting the Arts Scheme. Whilst the title of this scheme may give the impression that RTÉ, as an institution, operates as a direct patron of the arts, it does not function in this manner. The support offered by the RTÉ under this

²⁶² Joseph Hoban, “questions regarding arts programming on RTE”, E-mail to the author, September 19, 2007

scheme comes in the form of either free advertising or matching advertising for either arts venues, festivals, or one off events. RTÉ allocates its 'Supporting the Arts' airtime on a quarterly basis and this form of advertising support is decided on by a four-person committee comprising the Managing Director of RTÉ Television, the Managing Director of RTÉ Radio and the Director of Communications or their nominees.²⁶³ All of the advertising presented under the RTÉ Supporting the Arts Scheme is accompanied by a banner of text advertising the scheme itself. There is no other form of support aside from the advertising for the arts venue, festival, or event. Yet RTÉ receives a major return on this form of support as it is closely and publicly linked to a wide variety of arts events and institutions across the country throughout the year. This means that although it actually produces a very small amount of arts programming, its public profile in relation to the arts, can appear much more extensive than it actually is. This helps consolidate RTÉ's public image as a body with a serious commitment to the arts, even if in actuality, it produces and broadcasts a very small amount of arts programming according to its own definitions. Following this, it is now worth taking a closer look at some samples of arts programmes broadcast by RTÉ.

The View: Controlled Casual Conversation and Dublin Middle Class Taste Preferences

The View, launched on the 9th of January 2001, is a weekly magazine style arts review programme which is broadcast on Tuesday evenings on RTÉ 1. It is broadcast at various starting times ranging from as early as 10:15 p.m. to as late as 11:25 p.m., is forty minutes in length, and has no ad break. RTÉ is restricted to an average of 6 minutes of advertising per hour, with a maximum of 7.5 minutes in any one hour. In order to maximize revenue, they broadcast 7.5 minutes of advertising during peak time. *The View* is generally broadcast after 11 p.m., which is after peak-time. Hence, RTÉ has chosen to broadcast it without any advertising break, and have done so for several years.²⁶⁴ The series runs from the beginning of the autumn season until the end of the spring season, is

²⁶³ "Supporting the Arts – Advertising Support", Radio Telefís Éireann, http://www.rte.ie/about/supporting_arts.html, accessed 06/05/08

²⁶⁴ Peter Feeney, RTÉ Head of Broadcast Compliance, "the View and Advertising", E-mail to the author, May 20, 2009

an RTÉ in house production produced by Betty Purcell, and is hosted by the well known Irish radio DJ John Kelly. *The View* falls into the broad genre categorization of a television talk show, but can be categorised more specifically within the sub-genre of the magazine style arts review programme. As with all television genres and sub genres, the magazine style arts review programme is recognizable by some standardized features (repertoires of elements/conventions) which define it as distinct from other genres, and which depend on the audiences' prior knowledge and expectations of the genre. Like many talk shows the magazine style arts review programme shares key elements such as a host/mediator, guests and a shared focus for discussion.

The View unlike many other genres of talk shows, such as current affairs talk shows like *Question and Answers*, celebrity chat shows such as *The Late Late Show*, and daytime 'issue based' talk shows such as *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, does not feature a live studio audience. On programmes, such as *Questions and Answers*, the live studio audience is invited to ask questions and hence, to participate directly in the discussion. On such programmes, where the audience is a key element within the programme's proceedings, they can come to represent a cross section of 'the general public'. The lack of a studio audience on *The View* creates a more intimate, exclusive and orderly atmosphere. There are no interruptions or distractions which leaves the focus of discussion solely on the opinions of the guests and the host.

Magazine style arts review programmes most often review a variety of different arts events ranging from the world of film, theatre, art and literature. The focus of the reviews often tend to be on arts items that fall outside of the domain of popular culture, but occasionally mainstream films, television programmes and pop music are included. The inclusion of more populist items can give such arts review programmes a broader based, more populist feel. The guests invited onto *The View*, as on other magazine style arts review programmes, hail from variety of professional backgrounds that usually have some direct contact with the arts as a central part of their professional life (e.g. journalists, film critics, writers, artists, theatre directors). Therefore, such guests lend an air of authority and credibility to the proceedings and through their appearance on shows such as *The View* perform a function as 'cultural intermediaries'. The tone of delivery on *The View* is casual and polite. It is also, to a certain degree intellectual, as the

programme is constructed around the performance of talk that displays a certain level of critical acuity. However, the language employed is not overtly intellectual, erudite or specialised as the discussion is not intended to alienate the audience at home or to create tension amongst the guests. At the same time, the guests are expected to provide comment outside their area of expertise, and although many of these guests appear repeatedly, none of them have status as fixed or regular reviewers on the show.

Each week on *The View*, the host John Kelly sits between three invited guests around a large table. Through the manner in which it is filmed and edited, *The View* initially appears to be live and unedited, and that the guests engage in a free flow of casual conversation. However, looking at the programme more closely reveals that it operates according to a highly regulated and formulaic structure. The show opens with John Kelly's voiceover giving a short overview of all the items to be reviewed. This is followed by an introduction of each of the guests. Subsequently, each individual arts item under review is introduced by John Kelly in a 'direct to camera' address. He then shows a pre-recorded video clip of the first item under review (e.g. publicity clip of film, an author reading an excerpt from their novel, a pre-recorded clip surveying an art exhibition etc.) and directly asks each guest their opinion of the item. Each guest takes their turn in giving their opinion, with some interjections by the host, and this is followed by a brief open discussion of the item under review. John Kelly cues the end of the discussion and introduces the next item to be reviewed via another 'direct to camera address'. Once again a short video clip is played on screen and this is followed by the same pattern of guests giving their opinions, a short group discussion, and a closing of the discussion by John Kelly where he gives further details about the item. This pattern is repeated for each item under review until the end of the show where John Kelly thanks the invited guests and then introduces a performance of a musical act recorded live in studio. The musical act is performed until the credits scroll at the end.

This means that the 'talk' produced on a programme such as *The View*, is highly regulated by technical and time constraints, and also by the host who directs the proceedings. Each guest is given a limited amount of time to state their opinion and then is cued to finish up by an interjection by the host. Whilst a guest is giving their individual opinion they are presented alone on screen in a 'mid shot'. John Kelly guides

the conversation to another guest and this is inter-cut with wider shots of all the guests, creating the illusion of freely flowing discussion. After each guest has given their individual opinion, an open discussion is performed briefly comprising of more wide shots, reaction shots, and over the shoulder shots. No cameras or technical equipment appear on screen, yet John Kelly introduces each new item by speaking directly to camera and hence, to the audience at home. The guests never look directly into the camera which strengthens the programme's artifice of open unregulated discussion. Control is exerted over the proceedings via the manner in which John Kelly opens, frames, and closes the discussion. *The View* is a highly constructed and constrained discursive event yet one that presents itself as part of the contemporary cultural public sphere, an arena of open discussion and debate.

Although the 'talk' on talk shows has certain affinities with verbal interaction found in everyday life, it must be understood as institutional, as it is 'talk' produced in an institutional setting. This means that the order of who takes turns at speaking is institutionally predetermined. The 'talk' on *The View* is produced for an 'overhearing audience' watching from home, invisible and unheard, and is always, in a sense, 'performed' in a style that is presumed to be acceptable to that audience. There is a certain co-operative principle in operation, where all parties agree not to break the rules. On *The View*, discussion never becomes heated to the point of serious conflict and guests never break the programmes conventions such as looking into the camera, standing up or walking around the table.²⁶⁵ There is a convergence between topics, kinds of participants, and communicative styles on *The View*. The host and the guests constitute a type of social microcosm which embodies a particular configuration of personal and institutional expectations. Within this frame, certain kinds of discursive acts are considered appropriate, whilst others, such as shouting and swearing, would be considered unacceptable. It is interesting to note that the producer of *The View* rings each guest, prior to their appearance on the show, in order to obtain their opinions of the arts

²⁶⁵ The Channel Four talk show *After Dark* was unusual in that it did not follow the usual conventions of the talk show format. It had no ad breaks and the conversation was unregulated and unedited. This caused quite a controversy in 1991 when the actor Oliver Reed appeared on the programme, became intoxicated, and insulted a fellow guest.

items under review.²⁶⁶ Therefore, the guests' opinions are known to the presenter John Kelly before the programme is filmed and are used as a guide for Kelly's conversation with each guest. The producer informs each guest in what order they will be asked questions and also encourages them not to discuss their opinions amongst each other. Consequently, it can be said that the discussion and conversation on *The View* is regulated and does not operate according to the ideals of the cultural public sphere.

The View fulfils certain aspects of RTÉ's public service remit as it delivers a substantial amount of arts programming content. Yet, it also fulfils other functions. Through the selection and exclusion of particular arts events, it enacts a certain gate keeping function, not least because of the fact that it is RTÉ's only arts review programme.²⁶⁷ *The View* brings national attention and critical evaluation to certain types of arts activity which, in general, conform to the conventions of the magazine style arts review programme. *The View* generally tends to support 'expert' or institutionally based knowledge. Its reviews of Irish arts items primarily highlights institutionally recognized fine art forms, many of which have been realized with direct or indirect support of the Arts Council. Hence, *The View* constructs a sense of its own authority over contemporary arts practice in Ireland. It also provides a form of free advertising for the arts items reviewed. The majority of theatrical productions and art exhibitions covered on *The View* take place in Dublin and also tend to be those institutionally legitimate art forms that match the Arts Council's definition of the arts.²⁶⁸ This means that when it is discussing a theatre production or art exhibition it is mainly discussing work taking place in Dublin in a select number of establishment theatre venues. This creates a sense that arts activity in Ireland, if you were taking *The View* as an indicator, takes place almost entirely in Dublin and in a very limited number of spaces which cater to the tastes of Dublin's professional, educated, middle classes. This would seem to be at odds with the expansion of arts funding and activity around Ireland over the last decade. The audience may wonder what is going on in Cork, Galway or other smaller places or venues in Ireland, but will not be able to access this type of information on *The View*.

²⁶⁶ Finnegan, Brian, editor of Gay Community News and guest on *The View*, Telephone INTERVIEW, October 10th, 2008

²⁶⁷ See Appendix C: a list of items reviewed on *The View* during the 2004/2005 season.

²⁶⁸ See Appendix C

The manner in which the shots are organised on *The View* further increases this sense of identification with the material reviewed and the social class position it reflects. Although the programme is interspersed with a series of wide shots giving the audience a chance to survey the discussion from the outside, these wide shots are cut with a series of over the shoulder and reaction shots. This gives the viewer at home the sense that they are sitting around the table in the middle of the discussion. But it is possible that audiences who don't identify with the choice of items under review, the guests, or the style of communication feel excluded from this discussion. . This is not necessarily a problem as television programmes cater for target audiences. Yet this illustrates a certain disjunction between RTÉ's presentation of the arts on *The View* and Arts Council policy, which repeatedly states aims of accessibility and participation in the arts as a primary goal.

In an analysis of RTÉ Radio 1's *Arts Show* conducted in 1997, Brian O'Neill notes that elitist, middlebrow, and populist discourses are used as 'interpretive repertoires' by listeners to describe and evaluate an arts programme. These discourses are also employed by the audience of *The View*. He shows that those employing an elitist discourse describe arts programmes such as *The Arts Show* as "important, intelligent, informative, essential listening for those interested in the arts"²⁶⁹, although some complained that the programme was too light and should include more in depth intellectual and cultural debate. From an elitist standpoint similar criticisms could be made at *The View*. Yet seen from a more populist position, *The View* may be celebrated as it includes the occasional review of television shows and popular literature and films. Although the bulk of what *The View* gives coverage to is primarily within the realm of institutionally recognised fine art, it does try to satisfy a somewhat middlebrow aesthetic. O'Neill describes middlebrow contemporary mass media cultural intermediaries as those who are always "cautious in their taste and resolutely avoid vulgarity."²⁷⁰ This description applies to the positions taken on *The View*, highlighting how it continually performs acts of cultural goodwill toward fine art and legitimate culture.

²⁶⁹ Brian O'Neill, "*The Arts Show* Audience: Cultural Confidence and Middlebrow Arts Consumption", in Mary J. Kelly and Barbara O'Connor (eds) *Media Audiences in Ireland*, (Dublin, UCD Press, 1997) p 53

²⁷⁰ O'Neill, "*The Arts Show* Audience", p 58

Arts Lives: The ‘Citizen’s’ Arts Show

As we have seen, *The View* is aimed at a niche urban, high-income, highly educated audience and its late-night slot, and minimum promotion, reflects this. It is clear from its prime-viewing slot, and from the heavy promotional material attached to it, that RTÉ’s other flagship arts program, *Arts Lives*, has a different remit from *The View*. It is significant that many of the documentaries in the *Arts Lives* strand are partly funded by the Arts Council and Bord Scannán na hÉireann/the Irish Film Board. *Arts Lives*, launched in 2003, is a series of arts related documentaries which form a central part of RTÉ’s arts programming.²⁷¹ The range of subject material covered on *Arts Lives* is very broad and as Cathal Goan, Director General of RTÉ says, “here distinctive voices call out from a wide range of disciplines, from the play to the poem, the song to the picture, universalizing disparate and diverse traditions.”²⁷² RTÉ promotes the *Arts Lives* season in autumn 2007 as part of ‘RTÉ’s contribution to the mosaic of the contemporary arts world in Ireland. It make the case that RTÉ’s *Arts Lives* forms a central part of this tapestry: “Sung, told, written and painted; reappraising, reliving, and retelling, the programmes that make up *Arts Lives* 2007 echo the creativity, cultural diversity, and values of our community.”²⁷³ Yet, RTÉ primarily adopts the narrow definition of the arts used by the Arts Council prior to the 1980s in its brochure. Documentaries in the series primarily focus on writers of serious literature and painters, and ignore a vast range of cultural production.²⁷⁴ By presenting *Arts Lives* in this way, it bolsters the case that RTÉ is fulfilling key aspects of its public remit. The brochure makes the following claim: ‘Exciting, stimulating, and engaging, these programmes address the audience as citizens, not just as consumers. It is with particular satisfaction that I invite all our viewers to join us on a journey of learning with RTÉ *Arts Lives* 2007.’²⁷⁵ This statement foregrounds RTÉ’s role as a public service broadcaster in contrast to its commercial rivals.

²⁷¹ See Appendix D: List of *Arts Lives* documentaries broadcast between 2003 to 2007

²⁷² Cathal Goan, *Arts Lives 07 Brochure*, (Dublin, The RTE Press Office (Television), 2007) p 2

²⁷³ Cathal Goan, *Arts Lives 07 Brochure*, p 2

²⁷⁴ See appendix D

²⁷⁵ Cathal Goan cited in “New Programmes for Arts Lives 07”, Radio Telefís Éireann, <http://www.rte.ie/tv/artslives/artslivesscreenbrochure.pdf>, (Dublin, The RTE Press Office (Television), 2007), accessed 10/11/08, p 2

Arts Lives differs from RTÉ's other main arts programming series, *The View*, in that the majority of the documentaries are not in-house productions. Funding for each documentary in the series comes indirectly from RTÉ through its commissioning process but some are made from funds made available through the Irish Film Board and the Arts Council's 'Documenting the Arts' Scheme. This means that different producers, directors, and production teams make each documentary and give each one its own distinctive style and voice. Many of the documentaries in the series are portraits of individual artists which explore both their artistic process and personal history. The documentaries broadcast under the banner of *Arts Lives* are not only bio-pic documentaries, and have included episodes such as *Art for Sale*, a documentary looking at the contemporary art market in Ireland, *Pop Fiction* which investigated the phenomena of 'Chick Lit', and *The Abbey Theatre: 100 Years*, which offered a historical overview of the work of Ireland's National Theatre. In general, the documentaries produced under the banner of *Arts Lives*, tend to celebrate their subjects in an uncritical fashion. A similar criticism was made by Stephanie McBride in relation to the RTÉ series on photography entitled *The Look of the Irish*. McBride notes that, in general, *The Look of the Irish* came across, "not so much as a sustained investigation into photography as a challenging artform, more as a comfortable bubblewrap packaging to make photography more TV-friendly."²⁷⁶ I will now take a closer look at *Charles Haughey: Patronising the Arts*, and *One Hundred to One* as examples of documentaries broadcast as part of the *Arts Lives* series.

Charles Haughey: Patronising the Arts

Charles Haughey: Patronising the Arts, was directed by Charlie McCarthy for Icebox Films and was broadcast on RTÉ 1 on Tuesday February 13th, 2007 at 10:15 p.m. The documentary focuses on former Taoiseach Charles Haughey's relationship to the sphere of the arts in Ireland. The documentary comprises a series of interviews and combines these with archival footage and dramatic reconstructions to celebrate Haughey's role in highlighting the importance of art and artists in Irish society. It also gives details of

²⁷⁶ Stephanie McBride, "The Look of the Irish: David Farrell", *Circa*, No. 130, Winter 2009, p78

specific arts related political initiatives that Haughey has been given credit for. This included tax breaks for artists on their earnings from art, the establishment of Aosdana, and the redevelopment of Temple Bar as a cultural quarter. The documentary opens with a montage of close up shots of a bronze statue of Haughey, set against a score of slightly bombastic classical music. Haughey is represented as a patron of the arts, culture vulture extraordinaire, and as a 'modern day Medici.' Although some acknowledgement is given to his now well known political corruption, including the embezzlement of large amounts of money, it largely focuses on his positive contribution to the arts.

A number of well known people are interviewed for their personal views on Haughey. They include the art critic Maedb Ruane, writer Gerry Stembridge, magazine editor Eamon Delaney, painter Robert Ballagh, cultural and artistic advisor to the Taoiseach Anthony Cronin, journalist John Waters, writer Leland Bardwell, and many others. The painter Robert Ballagh states that, up until Haughey, if an Irish politician interfered with the cultural sector it was always negative. Eamon Delaney claims that if it wasn't for Charlie Haughey all Irish artists would be living in America now. Another interviewee compares Haughey's concern over the arts to the Anglo-Irish sense of social responsibility. He says that although Haughey may have occupied 'the big house' he felt he had to do something for the arts for the cultural well being of the country. Leland Bardwell notes that she couldn't afford to go out for a meal with friends until the introduction of the tax breaks for artists. These flattering eulogies to the now deceased Taoiseach are combined with a number of painted portraits and archive footage representing Haughey as powerful and important, somewhat like an emperor or a king. Other footage shows him with celebrities such as Grace Kelly, Nelson Mandela, and U2, and also includes images of his Gandon designed mansion in Kinsealy and his island holiday home, Inishvickillane. He is represented as the only Irish politician who showed any real concern for art and the living conditions of artists.

The documentary is interesting in that it highlights how Haughey's support for the arts was used both to garner political advantage and to legitimise his social status as a man with large amounts of economic, cultural and symbolic capital. Yet, the documentary largely divorced his concern and involvement with the arts from other less savoury aspects of his political career. In many ways the documentary seems to glorify

aspirational fantasies of conspicuous consumption rather than offer any sort of critique of Haughey or inequalities in Irish society. The manner in which Haughey was able to acquire the necessary funds to live such a luxurious lifestyle surrounded by his art collection in Abbeville house is glossed over and his dubious political tactics are treated in a light humorous way or countered with more adulation. The final portrait of Haughey shown in the documentary depicts him in traditional English hunting garb, with a top hat sitting astride a horse in front of Abbeville. The portrait appears to represent a man of the Anglo-Irish ascendancy enjoying his wealth, privilege and status.

One Hundred to One

One Hundred to One was directed by Dearbhla Glynn, produced by Comet films, and broadcast on RTÉ One on March 21st 2006 at 10:15 pm, and was co-financed by the Irish Film Board, RTÉ and the Arts Council. Rather than focus on the work or life of one individual artist this documentary explores the artistic process surrounding an unusual theatrical event entitled *One - Healing With Theatre*, produced by Pan Pan Theatre Company which was performed in July 2005. This project involved one hundred actors performing in one hundred specially built cubicles to one hundred individual audience members. Each isolated performance entailed an actor revealing why they became an actor and a performance of their first audition piece. The performances ended with each actor administering a form of light therapy on their individual audience member. Pan Pan also produced a 14 hour film documenting the actor's reasons for becoming an actor and a performance of their first audition piece. A book of photographic stills of the actors involved in the project was also produced. These details give some indication of the scale of the project and also the difficulty in simply categorising it under conventional definitions of a theatrical production.

One Hundred to One employs a number of different documentary techniques and styles making it a hybrid of different documentary genres. These techniques include behind the scenes fly on the wall sequences, interviews with the cast and the director, archive footage, and narration. The growing excitement and tension building up to the opening night of the performance provide the central driving force of the documentary's

narrative. Yet alongside this a number of other narrative threads are woven into the documentary. The documentary uses photographic stills, some archive footage, as well as interviews with some of the actors to present mini-portraits of their professional and personal lives. It also creates a portrait of the director Gavin Quinn as the mastermind and visionary artist behind the project who developed the ‘concept’ behind the show. Strangely, he is presented as only person who seems to understand what the project is meant to be about and what’s its purpose is. The most repeated and forceful statement made by the documentary about the production is that it was a very important ground breaking event and that it was much more akin to an art show or exhibition than a theatrical play.

In *Theorizing Documentary* Michael Renov outlines a number of potential purposes for the documentary film. He provokes the reader to ask if a documentary aims to record, reveal or preserve, to persuade or promote, to analyze or interrogate, or to express.²⁷⁷ *One Hundred to One* aims to fulfil a number of these purposes. It records the unfolding of a theatrical event from rehearsal to opening night as well as recording participants’ thoughts and reflections on the event. Through chronologically presenting the production process it expresses an increasing sense of expectation and excitement about the event’s opening night. The excitement circulating around the event is compounded by shots of an RTÉ news crew coming into the rehearsal space to interview the director and an audience members comments that she had read about the event in the Irish Times, signaling a high level of media interest in the project. Much of the film, outside of the interviews, appears to be shot with a hand held camera giving the impression of untainted, unmanipulated reality. The film includes behind the scenes footage which create the sense that this particular production provides some insight into the contemporary theatre production process. But through the use of narration and interviews with cast, director and audience it also persistently aims to convince and persuade the audience at home that *Healing – One with Theatre* was a seriously important ground breaking piece of theatre.

Yet, *One Hundred to One* does not aim to analyze or interrogate its subject matter. From the narrator’s description of the event, interviews with the cast and director,

²⁷⁷ Michael Renov, *Theorizing Documentary*, (London, Routledge, 1993) pp 12 - 36

and shots of the set, it is made clear from the outset, that *Healing - One with Theatre* broke many standard conventions of theatrical practice. The show does not appear to have anything resembling a traditional dramatic narrative, the event does not take place in a theatre but in a disused warehouse, the audience is broken up into individuals who take their seats within the cubicles inside the set itself, and the distance between performer and audience is eliminated. All the trappings of an experimental avant-garde type theatrical event are shown to be in place but at no point in the documentary is a discussion offered examining what the show is about or why it is so important. The claims made about the show are meant to be taken at face value and the documentary itself is constructed so that critique or analysis is left out. When one actress is asked what the show is about she replies “I don’t know really. It’s one with healing, healing with theatre (she laughs)...I don’t really know what it’s about.” Another says, “It’s going to be something else. I don’t think anyone knows what effect it’s going to have.” Another actor says “theatre should be breaking boundaries and that’s what this is going to do. This is what theatre is supposed to do.” Just in case the audience at home was in any doubt about this, members of the audience from the live event are interviewed. One audience member describes the event as “uplifting, exhilarating, a totally new experience” whilst another says it was, “fascinating on all sorts of levels, very relaxing, the best performance I’ve been at in a very long time.”

One may think that the director Gavin Quinn would be able to offer something more substantial. When he is asked by an actor about what the actors are meant to achieve in the production, Quinn says that the actors aim is to “give the audience twenty minutes where you can specially concentrate on one person and that’s what you are trying to do.” He says that each actor is meeting their audience member as a living portrait and that “you have to think of it as an exhibition, it’s sort of like a show, but really it’s an exhibition, like a live exhibition.” He says he doesn’t want actors to *add* to the show as ‘it’s already so complex.’ When an RTÉ news crew appears to interview him, Quinn says that he’ll have to explain the piece “which is always difficult.” The event is continuously presented as something with a complex visionary idea behind it, but what exactly this is, is kept secret, vague and unclear.

Ultimately *One Hundred to One* charts and documents an event as it unfolds and presents it as an exciting and intriguing process, yet never goes further than simple adulation of the project. At a certain point in the film, various actors read out what benefits the colours employed in light therapy purportedly bring, so for example, it is stated that ruby light promotes “deep healing, moving out of denial and into inner truth.” Perhaps this statement, like the subject of the documentary, is intended to be received without any question marks hanging over it. Perhaps, it is meant to be funny. During another interview an actor says “all great drama is about the revelation of the soul. It wakes people up to realizations about what’s really important.” Statements such as this infer that *Healing - One with Theatre* is great theatre that wakes its audience up to realizations about what is really important. Yet, it would be difficult for an audience member at home to draw such conclusions because the documentary, although it gives the audience at home a chance to vicariously experience elements of a live theatrical event, doesn’t offer much space for critical engagement with the subject being documented. What is most unusual is the fact that a piece of theatre that is presented as radically breaking conventions is represented by a documentary that breaks none.

Dance on the Box

Aside from regular arts programmes such as *The View* and documentaries broadcast as part of the *Arts Lives* series, there are occasional instances of genuinely innovative arts programmes produced directly as a result of collaborative initiatives set up between the Arts Council and public service broadcasters. A recent example of this type of collaborative work is the *RTÉ Dance on the Box* project. *RTÉ Dance on the Box* was launched in 2006 and consisted of four experimental short films that were developed as a unique partnership between filmmakers and contemporary dance practitioners. RTÉ and the Arts Council’s film department were the key players in the project and the results of this type of strategic liaison were extremely interesting. *Dance on the Box* stands out as an ideal example of ground breaking arts programming on RTÉ. The films also illustrate how television can effectively be used to highlight a particular art form, in this case contemporary dance, and by doing so access wide and diverse publics who may not come into contact with such art forms in their everyday lives. The *RTÉ Dance on the Box*

series showed that RTÉ has the capacity to occasionally take risks with how its art programming content is represented and scheduled. The completed films were premiered during the International Dance Festival Ireland, which took place from April 21st to May 7th 2006, and broadcast on a special showcase edition of *The View Presents... RTÉ Dance on the Box*, on Monday April 24th at 11:30 on RTÉ 1. Each of the four films was then subsequently broadcast independently on RTÉ 2, and were also screened at festivals around the world. Over 600,000 television audience members viewed the films.²⁷⁸ The four films were considered so successful that in 2008, a second series of *RTÉ Dance on the Box* films was produced. The following is an overview of the first four films in the series.

The film, *Why the Irish Dance that Way*, was directed by Nick Kelly, choreographed by Rónán Ó Riagáin, produced by Seamus Byrne, and was 5 minutes and 13 seconds in duration. It is described by RTÉ as, “a witty take on sean-nós dance, shot in the Rathcairn Gaeltacht.”²⁷⁹ The film is set in a small Irish country post office and opens with a lone female post office worker looking bored, finding an ad for a hair salon, and then closing the post office presumably to get her hair done. Soon after, a series of different characters, such as an impatient businessman, a jogger, a harassed looking woman and her two daughters, and a young man and woman who flirt with each other in the queue, appear in front of the post office. Each one of these separate characters begin to make movements and sounds with their feet that express the emotions they are experiencing as they wait for the post office to re-open. What begins as a subtle variety of tapping noises becomes a cacophony of sound that forms its own rhythm, bringing the disparate group of dancers together. The tempo of this sequence builds up to a point where the dancers break out of the orderly queue and transform into a disorderly and raucous chorus line. There is no musical score in the film and for the most part, the only sound besides the characters various tapping noises, is the atmospheric sound of the wind howling around them. The group is suddenly brought back into line when the female post office worker, who has a new hairstyle, returns to the post office. She walks along the front of the queue until she gets to the front where she stomps her feet, in a fashion

²⁷⁸ *RTÉ Dance on the Box Review*, Public Press Release, 2006, p 2

²⁷⁹ “RTÉ Dance On The Box”, Radio Telefís Éireann, <http://www.rte.ie/danceonthebox/>, accessed 08/01/09

similar to that of a military drill, and the group stand to attention and stop tapping. The post office worker opens the door to the office and the group quickly follows her in. The film had a light and humorous style and managed to convey, without dialogue, how the physicality of our bodies expresses our character, emotions, and complexity of our relationships to others.

The film *Buail*, directed by Steve Woods, choreographed by John Scott, and produced by Catherine Lyons, was 6 minutes and 15 seconds in duration. This film was shot in Dublin's civic office and was the most conventional in the series, in its representation of contemporary dance. The film opens in a wide shot of an office corridor as two men in business suits frantically pull and struggle against each other. They then move into an office and furiously circle two desks where two women seated at desks jerk up and down in a frenzy. The film then moves around various points in the office building from the inside of lifts, to the top of stairwells, down corridors, and across the front foyer, and introduces a number of different dancers at different points. *Buail* also lacks dialogue, but does have a musical score which is a mix of stringed instruments and abstracted female vocals that conjure up the feeling of a horror film. The shots of the various characters frenetically dancing are cut with a series of more slow moving shots of various parts of the building, making the building as much of a character in the film as the dancers. I read the film as an exploration of the body and its relationship to architecture, which in this case was the oppressive form of the office block. The dancers appear to be flailing around incoherently as if they have finally been freed from some sort of prison but don't know where to go or what to do. The film captures the physical excitement and energy that is produced by the art form of dance and combines this with an abstracted narrative exploring how the architecture that surrounds us can restrict and cage us in.

The film *Match*, directed by Dearbhla Walsh, choreographed by Fearghus Ó Conchúir, and produced by Willie White, was 6 minutes 29 seconds in duration. This film consisted of two bare-chested male dancers playing the part of two opposing football players, and was shot in Croke Park, Dublin. The film begins with a shot of the two dancers' legs as they enter the stadium and begin the match, yet it is soon revealed that there are no other players and no football. There is no dialogue between the dancers and

the score primarily consists of the sounds of the two men breathing heavily, grunting, and slapping each other's bare skin. The narrative of the film is driven by the tension, struggle, and drama of football as a sport, and many of the dancers moves mimic the balletic moves of footballers engaged in competition. Yet the subtext of the film *Match*, was quite explicit in its articulation of the homoerotic undertones that surround the game of football. The dancers' movements at several points involved the two of them locked in aggressive battle, broken up by slower moments where the two dancers caress each other intimately. During these more intimate moments there are several shots of the men's bodies and exposed skin sliding up against each other, and at various points the two men gently stroke each other's heads and fall into erotically charged poses. The sexual tension between the two is suddenly broken up as they resume 'the match', and move across the football pitch toward the goal. There is no crowd of spectators and several of the shots, including some shot from overhead, highlight the emptiness of the stadium and the isolation of the dancers. The film ends with one of the dancers performing a ritual of triumph, jumping in the air with his hands outstretched, that is often performed by footballers when they score a goal. The triumphant dancer walks into the distance across the pitch, leaving the other dancer defeated, exhausted and alone. The camera work in *Match* consists of various mid shots, overhead shots, and extreme close ups, which are edited together to create both a sense of the physical dynamic of football and the homoeroticism that underlines it. It uses the form of contemporary dance to both celebrate and subvert a sport well known for its excessive machismo.

The film *Joyride*, directed by Margaret Corkery, choreographed by James Hosty, and produced by Dave Doran, was 6 minutes 53 seconds in duration. RTÉ describes the narrative of this film as, "a portrayal of the dark fantasies of a teenage Saturday night,"²⁸⁰ and although it is an interesting film in its own right, it appears to be the one film in the series that is least informed by contemporary dance. The film takes place at night on an empty road, with a menacing young man driving a car whilst a teenage girl drinks in the backseat. The car stops and another couple are revealed in a darkened doorway kissing each other. The young man driving the car gets out and starts to bang

²⁸⁰ "RTÉ Dance On The Box", Radio Telefís Éireann, <http://www.rte.ie/danceonthebox/films.html>, accessed 08/01/09

the front of his car and at one point stands on the car's roof and begins to shake the car back and forth. His aggression and the teenage girl's vulnerability are contrasted with the other young couple, who although they are shrouded in darkness, do not appear to be engaged in any sort of violent struggle or tension. The teenage girl gets out of the back of the car crawling onto the road and reveals herself to be extremely drunk. She rolls on the ground covering herself in muck, whilst the young man who drove the car restrains her with his legs. The film primarily seems to express the sexual frustration and anger of an adolescent male whose intense sexual desires are misunderstood and thwarted. The atmosphere created by the film is eerie and unsettling, as no clear motive is given for the young man's anger and aggression and rather than being a fantasy of a teenager's Saturday night it would appear to be more akin to a nightmare.

The four films in the first series of *RTÉ Dance on the Box* were also given public screenings in Dublin's Meeting House Square in Temple Bar and formed the impetus for a day-long workshop exploring the imaginative possibilities and practical demands of making dance films. The aim of the project was to stimulate Irish dance film production and also, according to RTÉ Director of Communications Bride Rosney, to bring "the energy and imagination of contemporary dance in Ireland to the public."²⁸¹ The success of the project both in terms of the films produced and the large numbers of television viewers who saw the films is a testament to how effective partnerships between the Council and RTÉ can be in relation to the production of innovative arts programming. Whilst there is undoubtedly a place for the more conventional strands of arts programming such as *The View* and *Arts Lives*, *RTÉ Dance on the Box* illustrates how, with the right initiative, new forms of arts programming can be created that lie outside conventional expectations. Unlike other strands of arts programming on RTÉ, the series of *Dance on the Box* films were not produced to fit into a conventional half hour or hour of television scheduling. Most of the films are five or six minutes in length, which means such programmes can be slotted around other programmes and access viewers who may not normally view arts programming. The films were also unusual in that they were produced using both the expertise of filmmakers and contemporary dancers and each film in the series is a unique result of this experimental form of collaboration. *RTÉ Dance on*

²⁸¹ *RTÉ Dance on the Box Review*, RTE Public Press Release, 2006, p 2

the Box has avoided producing standard arts documentaries and successfully created a series of innovative dance films. Rather than alienate audiences who have little contact with contemporary dance, the films large audience figures indicate that the series sparked interest around contemporary dance amongst wide and diverse publics. As mentioned earlier, the Council partly credited an increased interest in traditional music with increased coverage of it on television. Hence, RTÉ and TG4's access to national audiences makes them ideal partners to further the Council's aims. Although improving standards in arts education, is clearly an important and integral part of arts policy, due to issues surrounding inequalities in cultural capital, projects such as *RTÉ Dance on the Box* give clear justification for the increased utilization of television to broaden access and participation in the arts.

Section 3: TG4 - The Irish Language, the Arts, and Public Service Broadcasting

On January 1st, 1926 at the launch of 2RN, the precursor to RTÉ radio, Douglas Hyde announced:

The young and the old should know that Eire is standing on her own two feet; the Irish language being one and her culture, music, and sport being the other... It is a sign to the world that times have changed when we can take our place amongst the nations and use wireless in our own language.²⁸²

Statements such as this highlight not only the central importance placed around Irish traditional cultural forms as a dominant source of developing and strengthening an Irish national cultural identity, but also indicates the State's understanding of the potential cultural influence of the mass media. Irish national radio was, from its inception, mobilized to bolster and fortify a distinctly Irish post-colonial cultural identity. Public service radio was employed as an important purveyor of State supported arts and culture and although the cultural menu on offer was highly conservative, consisting mainly of concerts, lectures, interviews, and plays, the establishment of 2RN also led to the creation of the RTÉ Concert Orchestra, the National Symphony Orchestra, and the

²⁸² Kennedy, *Dreams and Responsibilities*, p 16

Vanbrugh String Quartet.²⁸³ As outlined earlier, the promotion of Irish language and traditional arts dominated the Irish State's cultural agenda during the first decades of its existence until the establishment of the Arts Council.

After the Arts Council was established Irish language and traditional arts forms were placed outside the boundaries of what was considered legitimate art and were relatively neglected by the Council, until recent years. This neglect of Irish language and traditional art forms was also prevalent on RTÉ, much to the consternation of many artists working with these art forms. The establishment of TG4 in 1997 was partly given justification on the grounds of this continual neglect, and as a way to redress this imbalance in television coverage. In order to understand how TG4 arts programming policy has developed I contacted TG4's Deputy CEO, Pádhraic Ó Ciardha, who made it clear to me that TG4 has never developed any specific arts policy and that TG4 views the development of its arts programming as something that occurs organically. In response to my enquiries about TG4's arts programming Ó Ciardha referred to the Broadcasting Act 2001, which laid down the statutory basis for TG4 in Section VI. This section of the Act states that TG4's duties and functions are to:

- (a) provide a comprehensive range of programmes, primarily in the Irish language, that reflect the cultural diversity of the whole island of Ireland and include programmes that entertain, inform and educate, provide coverage of sporting, religious and cultural activities and cater for the expectations of those of all age groups in the community whose preferred spoken language is Irish or who otherwise have an interest in Irish,
- (b) provide programmes, primarily in the Irish language, of news and current affairs,
- (c) provide coverage of proceedings in the Houses of the Oireachtas and the European Parliament, and
- (d) facilitate or assist contemporary cultural expression and encourage or promote innovation and experimentation in broadcasting.²⁸⁴

²⁸³ These musical groups are still in operation today and exist under the umbrella title of RTÉ Performing Groups.

²⁸⁴ Broadcasting Authority Act 2001, Section VI. 45.—(4), <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/2001/en/act/pub/0004/index.html>, accessed 12/12/07

This statement from the Broadcasting Act 2001 is similar to many other similarly vague statements made across broadcasting legislation and which also appear in broadcaster's annual reports and policy documents. Although it does not give any specifics in relation to arts programming, it does make it clear that TG4 has a statutory obligation to focus on programming in the Irish language. This means that its arts programming reflects this obligation to the Irish language.

Pádraic Ó Ciardha stated that TG4's arts programming policy is not a piece of text but something that has evolved over the years. In his email he says:

Given that our remit is to provide a service primarily in the Irish language, our channel has, from the outset, paid particular attention to celebrating the distinctive aspects of Irish culture - traditional music, singing, TV drama, short film and literature. One of the great achievements of the channel has been in creating and developing an indigenous Irish television drama sector, almost from scratch. Our drama series *Ros na Rún* is probably the single biggest development in Irish language drama, ever. The full range of TG4 output across all the arts would take too long to cover in a short email like this. Suffice to say that we take a very broad view of arts programming and would consider that much of our Irish language output falls into that category, alongside our regular weekly arts review programme *Soiscéal Pháraic*, presented by Páraic Breathnach.²⁸⁵

Ó Ciardha's correspondence illustrates that TG4 views Irish language and traditional arts as a key area of its arts programming. The fact that Ó Ciardha includes TG4's soap opera, *Ros na Rún*, in his response to my enquiries about arts programmes indicates that TG4 employs a much more flexible definition of the arts than TG4. The approach taken by TG4 to the production and scheduling of arts programming was outlined to me through correspondence with Proinsias Ni Ghrainne. Aside from *Splanc!*, which is a joint initiative between TG4 and the Arts Council to produce arts documentaries, TG4 also occasionally commissions documentaries with an artistic theme under its *Anamocht* and *Cogar* series. They have also commissioned biographic documentaries on all the big Irish language writers including Ó Flatharta, Synge, Direáin, Ó Riardáin, and Ó Cadhain, a plethora of traditional arts documentaries, as well as 35 programmes broadcast in their Sunday music slot. They also sprinkle many more arts programmes throughout the

²⁸⁵ Pádraic Ó Ciardha, "TG4 Arts Programming", E-mail to the author, October 10th, 2007

schedule and intentionally do not brand them as 'arts' as TG4 believes that this can isolate a mainstream audience.

This is done so that the arts do not end up in a scheduling ghetto as TG4 does not believe its arts programming should be presented in this way. An example of their innovative approach to scheduling arts programming can be illustrated with the series entitled *Spléachadh* which consisted of a series of one minute films on different artists in each county in Ireland. Each county specific film was broadcast during GAA games that the same counties were playing in, meaning that the 'arts' were being watched by sports audiences who may not normally choose arts programming in a TV schedule. TG4 also produced and broadcast the books programme *Imprint* and its sister show, *Writers in Profile*, both of which ran for three seasons and included films on and interviews with writers such as Doris Lessing, Gore Vidal, JG Ballard, Maeve Binchy, Richard Ford, Eavan Boland, Brendan Kennelly and Edward Said. Taking this overview into account, I will now look at specific examples of arts programming broadcast on TG4.

Soiscéal Pháraic: Distinction ar an mBosca

Martina Durac is the series producer of *Soiscéal Pháraic*²⁸⁶, the 35 part weekly arts and cultural affairs show running on TG4, which has become an important feature of Irish language arts programming. *Soiscéal Pháraic* is a magazine style arts review programme that is broadcast weekly from the beginning of the autumn season to the end of the spring season. It is produced by Loopline films for TG4 and is broadcast on Wednesday evenings on TG4 at 9 p.m. and is 30 minutes in length. The programme is hosted by Páraic Breathnach. He is a founding member of the street theatre group Macnas, was involved in the establishment of the Galway Arts festival, and has been the Director of the Galway Arts Centre since 2007. Every week on *Soiscéal Pháraic* three invited guests sit around a table, with the host Páraic Breathnach acting as a mediator, and primarily discuss theatre productions, films, art exhibitions, and literature. The host speaks directly to the camera, and hence to the audience at home, to announce each item under review

²⁸⁶ In 2008 *Soisceal Pharaic* was replaced by the 35 episode arts magazine programme *IMEALL*, which combines in-studio discussion of arts and cultural events with two location reports from around the country.

and this is followed by a video clip or a series of stills. The host then cues each guest to give their opinion, makes some interjections allowing a more open general discussion, and then cues closure of the discussion.

The way the programme is constructed is similar to *The View* and is organized and constrained by the same conventions of the genre. Yet, it also differs in some important respects. It has an advertising break and is shown at the peak viewing time of 9 p.m. pitting it against much stiffer competition. This suggests a choice made by scheduling in TG4 to place its weekly arts review programme in a more prominent position where a larger share of its audience may be exposed to it. Considering that in 2005 TG4 held only 3.2% of the national television viewing share, this choice highlights that TG4 is willing to risk placing its weekly arts review programme in a more central location on its schedules than RTÉ.²⁸⁷

One way in which *Soiscéal Pháraitic* distinguishes itself from *The View* is through its emphasis on Irish language arts activity outside of Dublin. The episode of *Soiscéal Pháraitic* broadcast on TG4 on October 24th, 2007 from 9 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. focused on Gradam Uí Shuilleabháin, an Irish language literary prize organized by Bord na Leabhar Gaeilge, and the Oireachtas, an annual festival celebrating Gaelic culture. The guests on this episode were the writer, artist, and producer, Darach O Scolaí, singer and broadcaster, Máirtín Tom Sheánín Mac Donnacha, and singer Aine O Cheallaigh. This contrasts with the guests on programmes such *The View*, who tend to come from the world of arts and culture centred around Dublin. As an arts review programme, *Soiscéal Pháraitic* does share certain television conventions with *The View* and other arts review programmes. However, one crucial difference is that the host and the guests speak in Irish. Superficially one could surmise that this fact is simply a reflection of TG4's remit as an Irish language station. The programme caters to the Irish speaking community but does not exclude non-Irish speakers through its use of subtitles. As we have seen in Chapter 2, the Arts Council has primarily been representative of Anglophone art, whilst other agencies such as Bord na Gaeilge have represented the marginalized area Irish language culture. RTÉ and TG4 mirror this division. There is one other significant difference between RTÉ's *The View*, and *Soiscéal Pháraitic*. As part of its coverage of

²⁸⁷ TG4 website, <http://www.tg4.ie/Bearla/Scan/F2005.pdf>, accessed 10/10/07

the arts *Soiscéal Pháraic* reviews a wide range of traditional art forms and also occasionally includes reviews of amateur and community drama. For example, the episode of *Soiscéal Pháraic* mentioned above reviews the Oireachtas na Gaeilge, a festival of Irish culture that has been in existence since the 1890s. The festival includes competitions around art forms such as ‘Sean Nós’ singing, a form of sung poetry known as ‘Lúibín’, Irish step dancing, and ‘Agallamh Beirte’, a traditional form of dialogue written for two in rhyming verse. Such art forms are not given any coverage on *The View*. *Soiscéal Pháraic* also includes practitioners from crafts, popular, and traditional arts as panelists. This gives a clear indication that TG4’s approach to arts programming employs broader definitions than RTÉ and that it gives more emphasis and focus to Irish language and traditional art forms.

Splanc!

Since 1999, TG4 has also produced and broadcast a series documentary films on the arts, and on making art in the Irish language under a scheme called *Splanc!*, which is co-financed by the Arts Council and The Irish Film Board. Since 2007, films produced under the *Splanc!* scheme have focused on one particular art form and in 2007 this focus was on contemporary literature in the Irish language.²⁸⁸ Prior to 2007, the documentaries produced under *Splanc!* were quite varied in subject matter.²⁸⁹ *Splanc!* has included documentaries on tattooing and body piercing, calligraphy, busking, the drag artist Shirley Temple Bar, as well as episodes covering sculpture, dance and painters such as Robert Ballagh and Elizabeth O’Reilly. The 32 part series, *Spléachadh*, which was scheduled around football matches, was also produced under the *Splanc!* scheme. The variety of art forms covered by *Splanc!* and the fact that TG4 consciously try to be inventive with how they schedule their programmes, illustrates that TG4 employs a broader notion of the artist, what constitutes the arts, and who the audience for the arts

²⁸⁸ “Léiriúchán - Splanc! - Scéal ar scáileán”, <http://www.tg4.ie/Bearla/leir/spl.asp>, accessed 15/02/09

²⁸⁹ See Appendix E for list of *Splanc!* documentaries

potentially is.²⁹⁰ I will now take a closer look at a series of programmes produced under the *Splanc!* scheme.

Nead an Dreoilín

Nead an Dreoilín is a series of six four minute length films, produced by Feenish productions and directed by James Kelly, that explore the poetry of six living Irish language poets. Each of the films includes a short audio interview with the poets concerned who discuss aspects of their working process and how relevant the Irish language is to their work. This is followed by a voice over recital of one poem interwoven with a series of images taken from archive and contemporary footage. The poets covered in the series included Gearóid Mac Lochlainn, Louis de Paor, Máire Mhac an tSaoi, Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill, Biddy Jenkinson, and Mícheál Ó Cuaig. Rather than have talking head footage of a poet reciting poetry, or having contemporary poetry reviewed by critics, *Nead an Dreoilín* attempts to find a different way of presenting poetry to broad and diverse audiences. One of the short films in the series entitled *The Wren's Nest*, explores the poem *Ar Eití* (On the Wing) by Gearóid Mac Lochlainn. The first part of the film comprises a series of still photos of the poet himself cut with images of the poet walking along the horizon line in the middle of the empty countryside. The poet, in voice over, discusses aspects of his work where he compares the empty rhetoric of politicians to the deep personal connection that poetry can make. He says he enjoys using humour and irony in his work and uses a character called 'Mo Chara' in his poems to allow him to say things he wouldn't say himself. The second part of the film entails the poet reciting the poem *Ar Eití*, in the voice of Mo Chara, at various places on the street. Mo Chara is dressed in anarchist style garb with sunglasses and a bandana pulled up over his face and jokes that he will never speak Irish again as it's becoming too trendy. Soon he says, everyone will speak Irish, in the same way everyone has a mobile phone and cable television. The shots of the poet are intercut with shots of people standing on

²⁹⁰ A film entitled *Abhar Machnaimh*, produced under the *Splanc!* scheme, focused on the work of the press photographer Coleman Doyle. This illustrates how TG4's definition of the artist is quite broad as the work of press photographers is not conventionally defined as 'art'.

the side of the road holding handwritten signs saying things such as ‘Béal Feirste’ and ‘B’fhéidir’. These films present poetry in the Irish language in an imaginative and novel way, and illustrate that there are many alternative ways to representing the arts on television that stand outside magazine review programmes or full length documentaries. The short length of each piece also allows TG4 to be inventive with where they are placed within the schedule.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued that while RTÉ repeatedly proclaims its commitment to the arts in its annual reports and other documents, it actually produces a negligible amount of arts programming when compared to other programming genres. This conclusion is made following RTÉ’s own internal classification system, which employs a narrow definition of the arts. If a broader definition was employed that was more reflective of the contemporary cultural landscape, then the amount of arts programming on its schedules would appear much larger. I also found that, within RTÉ, there appears to be internal confusion over how arts programming is categorised. I then looked at specific instances of arts programming on RTÉ such as its weekly series *The View*, and found that rather than this programme being an open forum for discussion, along the lines of Habermas’s cultural public sphere, the conversation on the programme is highly regulated and constrained. An examination of the list of arts events covered by the programme over one season demonstrates that although it occasionally covers art forms that fall within the realm of popular culture, it primarily focuses on the fine arts, albeit in a style that is accessible and middlebrow. I then looked at two examples from the *Arts Lives* series and found that neither of the documentaries offered serious critical analysis of their subject matter, and that in general the documentaries broadcast under *Arts Lives* tend to conform to conventional and narrow definitions of the arts.

In the remainder of the chapter, I focused on arts programming on TG4. I found that TG4 has a much broader notion of what constitutes the arts, and also that the station is more innovative, imaginative, and risky in its approach to the scheduling of arts programming. Its magazine style arts review programme *Soiscéal Pháraitic* is broadcast at the peak time of 9 p.m. The 32 part series *Spléachadh* serves as another example of

TG4's novel approach to scheduling its arts programming. Although RTÉ's *Dance on the Box* offers a comparable example of innovative arts programming on RTÉ, the series was shown late at night in the schedules rather than throughout the schedule, where audiences may have encountered it unexpectedly. TG4's documentary scheme *Splanc!* further illustrates that TG4 is willing to include both traditionally defined art forms as well as those that fall outside such definitions, signalling that it takes a more inclusive approach than RTÉ. Both RTÉ and TG4 now operate under a broader European policy and legislative framework which promotes inclusiveness and cultural diversity. A recommendation made by the EU Committee of Ministers states that:

In their programming and content, public service media should reflect the increasingly multiethnic and multicultural societies in which they operate, protecting the cultural heritage of different minorities and communities, providing possibilities for cultural expression and exchange, and promoting closer integration, without obliterating cultural diversity at the national level.²⁹¹

As noted in Chapter 1, the Council of Europe has a European wide mission for public service broadcasting. According to this criteria, Irish public service broadcasters should:

- provide, through their programming, a reference point for all members of the public and a factor for social cohesion and integration of all individuals, groups and communities.
- develop pluralistic, innovatory and varied programming which meets high ethical and quality standards and not to sacrifice the pursuit of quality to market forces;
- develop and structure programme schedules and services of interest to a wide public while being attentive to the needs of minority groups;²⁹²

Irish public service broadcasting must follow such recommendations set out by the EU and see cultural diversity as an asset and not as an obstacle. Arts programming on Irish public service television would greatly benefit from following such guidelines as such provisions are the criteria for the development of a genuine cultural public sphere.

²⁹¹ Recommendation Rec(2007)3 of the Committee of Ministers to Member States on the Remit of Public Service Media in the Information Society, 31 January 2007, Preamble., <https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1089759>, accessed 30/05/10

²⁹² "The 4th European Ministerial Conference on Mass Media Policy: The Future of Public Service Broadcasting", Council of Europe, http://www.ebu.ch/CMSimages/en/leg_ref_coe_mcm_resolution_psb_07_081294_tcm6-4274.pdf, 7–8 December, 1994, accessed 08/10/08, p 3

Conclusion

This study has yielded various research findings. In Chapter One, I noted how public service broadcasters have always found it difficult to fully live up to the ideals under which they were established, and how such difficulties have become increasingly more pronounced due to deregulation and technological developments. In order to justify receiving the license fee, public service broadcasters are meant to provide programming that creates ‘external benefits’ in society and to offer a service that is distinct from its commercial rivals. Hence, it is in the best interests of public broadcasters, such as RTÉ, to foreground their delivery of arts programming as it is a genre of programming that clearly satisfies the public service remit and is an area of programming that is not provided for by private television channels in Ireland. In Chapter Two, I outlined key shifts in the Irish State’s cultural policy and found that after decades of support for an Irish nationalist cultural agenda, the State conformed to an international consensus of what constituted the legitimate arts and founded the Irish Arts Council. The Council quickly employed narrow definitions of the arts and came to be seen as a public body representative of the cultural interests of educated and privileged sectors of Irish society. The Council publicly objected to the establishment of RTÉ and lost an opportunity to work together with the broadcaster to access and cultivate a broad national audience for the arts. From the 1970s onward, due to increasing criticism, the Council began to make access and participation by diverse publics one of its key objectives. Although several reports recommended that the Council work in closer liaison with RTÉ to achieve such aims, this did not occur. After nearly two decades of dramatically increased budgets and an awareness of the power and potential of television to increase access and participation, the Council still has not developed any policy that addresses television. In the early 21st century, the consumption of publicly supported art forms in Ireland continues to mirror, rather than bridge, broader social inequalities. Finally in Chapter Three, I found that there continues to be a very limited amount of arts programming on Irish public service television, and that it often tends to be marginalized on RTÉ’s schedules. The Council and public broadcasters do work together on specific initiatives but this is done only occasionally and in a piecemeal fashion. Neither RTÉ nor TG4 have developed any

written policy about the arts on television, but I found that the two broadcasters have developed quite different approaches to arts programming. RTÉ continues to employ narrow definitions of the arts and largely produce conventional and dull arts programming, whereas TG4's approach to the arts is broader, more inclusive, and is more reflective of the diversity of contemporary cultural practices.

A key conclusion of the study is that there has been a long standing and enduring historical divide between State bodies responsible for the Irish public's cultural welfare. Both the Arts Council and Irish public service television broadcasters have developed their approach to public arts provision independently of one another due to a number of factors. One of the most influential factors that has kept these two bodies from working together on shared concerns, is the fact that the values and practices of the restricted field of cultural production, represented by the Arts Council, continue to work largely in opposition to the expanded field of cultural production, which is the arena that Irish public service television operates and competes within. This lack of coherence between these public bodies has resulted in limited joint action which has helped perpetuate an untenable binary division that places the fine arts on one side, and television on the other. Public service broadcasters such as RTÉ continue to display 'cultural goodwill' towards the fine arts by the fact that they only recognise arts programmes as those programmes that conform to and maintain conventional definitions of what constitutes the arts. On the other hand, the Arts Council has never developed any research or policy that directly addresses the potential for television to further its own objectives, even though it has long been aware of such potential.

Television has long been recognised as one of the most powerful educational tools ever invented, and the core remit for public broadcasters has, from the start, been to inform, educate, and entertain. One of the greatest obstacles to increasing access and participation in the arts is a lack of adequate arts education, as the Council has made clear through the 72 reports it has published on the subject of arts education. Hence, it appears to be an incredible oversight that neither the Arts Council, RTÉ, or TG4 have developed any distinct policy or research papers, either jointly nor independently, that directly address the powerful potential of using television to cultivate an interest in the arts amongst new and diverse publics. On 27th June, 2006, the Council issues a press release

announcing that it was going to commission a report on the arts and broadcasting in Ireland. Olive Braiden, the Chair of the Council, stated that:

the full recognition of the place of the arts in Irish society must be reflected in our radio and television output. In the changing ecology of broadcasting, the Arts Council wishes to lead the debate on how the arts and artists are best profiled in our electronic media.²⁹³

This research was never carried out by the Council, which indicates that the Council continues to overlook the importance and potential of television. In November 2008 the Council organised a conference entitled, *New Media, New Audience?* which brought together experts from the arts, social media, and broadcasting.²⁹⁴ This perhaps indicates that the Council is shifting the focus of its enquiry towards new media. This does not mean that no relationship exists between the Council and broadcasters such as RTÉ and TG4. They do occasionally work together on initiatives such as Splanc! and Documenting the Arts. Yet, the result of this lack of long term strategic action is that the bulk of arts programming on RTÉ takes few risks, is bland and predictable, and exists largely on the margins of the schedule in off peak time. Decisions about which arts programmes get commissioned and produced, and hence what the public has access to, are made by a small number of employees within RTÉ. TG4 is different from RTÉ, in that it applies a wider and more contemporary definition of the arts to its programming output. It also places its key arts programming within the prime time schedule and experiments with weaving its arts programmes at different times in order to attract new audiences. If the Council, RTÉ, and TG4 are seriously committed to more fully satisfying their public service remit in relation to the arts, they need to work closer together. If this were the case, RTÉ and TG4 could benefit from the Council's expertise in a wide variety of artistic disciplines, whilst the Council could benefit from television's access to a mass national audience that cuts across regional and class boundaries.

²⁹³ "Arts Council to Lead on New Arts and Broadcasting Initiative", Arts Council Press Release, 27/06/06

²⁹⁴ "New Media, New Audience?", The Arts Council,

<http://www.artscouncil.ie/en/news/news.aspx?article=0edb0095-e87c-4760-8135-c8b084391e8d>,

November 11, 2008, accessed 02/04/09

Bourdieu's studies on cultural consumption and its relationship to wider social inequalities have informed my research, but it's important to note, once again, that his most influential work was based on surveys he carried out in France in the 1960s. Extensive research by Tony Bennett and his colleagues at the Centre for Research on Social Change has been carried out that maps out how complex cultural consumption patterns have become.²⁹⁵ Bennett challenges Bourdieu's theory that there is a systematic unity across all aspects of an individual's or group's tastes, and presents more recent data from the UK which illustrates how dissonant taste profiles are more common than consonant ones when looking at different occupational classes' cultural consumption. This work opens up many questions and possibilities for further research. Although Bennett makes a forceful argument against the notion that homologies of taste are rigid, it does not discount the continuing problem of class barriers to certain forms of art, as evidenced by the Arts Council's own research. One of the important conclusions of this thesis is that the Council's policies that have been implemented to address this problem have been largely unsuccessful, and so it is important for the Council to address this problem in new ways. The Council's oversight in relation to television broadcasting over several decades has possibly contributed to this continuing problem of barriers to access and participation, and so if possible, it should undertake a more extensive study concerning the arts and television and include television's important role in its future policy statements.

Although there has been a lack of regular and consistent cross body work between the Arts Council and Irish public service television, there has been some notable exceptions to this trend, namely initiatives such as Documenting the Arts and Splanc!. Surprisingly, as neo liberal market philosophy increasingly influenced public policy, there was a notable increase in the amount of arts programming produced and broadcast on public service television. Such increases may have been small, but they do illustrate that effort was being made to improve the quality and range of television arts programming, even if such programming was, by and large, predictable and dull. As part of the global economic crisis, Ireland is now undergoing a period of steep and sudden

²⁹⁵ See Tony Bennet, "Habitus Clivé: Aesthetics and Politics in the Work of Pierre Bourdieu", New Literary History, 2007, 38: 201-228

economic decline, which has already had a serious impact on the arts and public service television. In 2009, the Arts Council's budget was reduced by nearly 10 per cent from the previous year.²⁹⁶ At around the same time, it was announced that RTÉ was going to have to cut €50 million from its budget for the following year, in order to prevent a major deficit.²⁹⁷ This situation raises important questions about the future of arts programming on television. It is possible that financial resources that have been earmarked for arts programming will now be under threat. The production costs of arts documentaries, such as those produced under the *Arts Lives* scheme, are extremely high when compared to less expensive programming formats. There is also the possibility that, in times of recession, public policy will revert to the notion that the arts are a luxury that the State cannot afford in the face of other more pressing social concerns such as education and health care. That said, this doesn't necessarily have to be the case. Although State support is necessary, both for the Arts Council and public service television, it is equally necessary for these bodies to have imagination, to take risks, and to be open to new possibilities. None of these cost anything. There are currently countless numbers of contemporary artists working in film and video in Ireland whose work could be accessed by a national television audience through inventive programming initiatives on RTÉ and TG4. Festivals such as the Darklight Digital Film Festival and the Dublin Electronic Arts Festival have already created an extensive network of artists working in this area. Sourcing such work for public service television could be an area for greater collaboration or partnership with organisations such as Visual Artists Ireland. Rather than see the current economic downturn as entirely negative, it could bring about unexpected changes of initiative and result in a flowering of inventive, yet less costly, arts programming.

Since the 1980s, public service television has felt the impact of both deregulation and rapid technological development. The availability of cable, satellite, and digital services have forced public service television to operate more and more like their

²⁹⁶ "Arts Council Comments on its Budget Allocation", Arts Council, <http://www.artscouncil.ie/en/news/news.aspx?article=551b16e7-5fe9-48d1-9498-8bbb4be3c41b>, October 14, 2008. Accessed: 04/06/09

²⁹⁷ Fiona Gartland, "RTÉ Set to Cut €50m from Wages and Spending", *The Irish Times*, <http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/ireland/2008/1106/1225893546896.html>, November 6, 2008, Accessed: 02/03/09

commercial rivals due to dramatically increased competition for advertising revenue and audiences. In the face of this, it is significant that RTÉ has managed to maintain such a large percentage of the national audience share, and that TG4 has increased its audience share each year. Yet, it is important to note the importance of new developments in technology, most notably the rapid increases in internet usage. At the moment Channel 4, BBC, and ITV offer television on demand, which makes programmes available anytime on cable or internet services. Both RTÉ and TG4 now offer the possibility of watching some programmes via programme archives accessible on their websites, but these services are undeveloped and limited. In the future, it is likely that larger numbers of the television audience will access their television programming via the internet. This will not only make the job of scheduling largely redundant, it will also have a major impact on how advertising revenue is secured. It is absolutely essential for RTÉ and TG4 to develop their internet presence so that they do not lose touch with a younger generation that engages with the media in radical new ways. The competition is aware of this and is making their services readily available. RTÉ and TG4 must confront these realities with long term internet development, and employ extensive national advertising to make viewers aware of these new services as they become available. It is even possible that both RTÉ and TG4 could develop cost effective digital arts channels that compete with private channels such as Sky Arts.

Aside from technological developments, a number of other factors have had an important impact on both the arts and broadcast television. Whilst PSB once enjoyed a monopoly of the airwaves and was highly regulated at a national level, it now exists in a highly deregulated global market. The arts have moved from the margins to the centre of public policy. The economic boom of the last two decades has resulted in massive increases in government support for the arts which was partly the result of the implementation of an instrumentalised cultural policy. The situation in which both the Council and public service broadcasters operate has fundamentally changed, yet they are both still publicly financed on the basis of the ideals under which they were founded. The argument that the arts and public service broadcasting are public goods that bring external benefits to society and should therefore be publicly funded as they suffer from market failure still forms the core rationale for public support. This study shows that

although the ideals on which the Council and PSBs were founded are full of conflict and contradiction, they are still relevant today.

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Appendices

Appendix A: RTÉ Annual Reports: Indigenous Hours Broadcast in Peak Time by Genre

Appendix B: Sample Survey of RTÉ Guide Schedules 2001 to 2005

Appendix C: The View: List of Arts Items Reviewed during 2004/2005 Season

Appendix D: Arts Lives: List of Documentaries Produced from 2003 – 2007

Appendix E: List of Documentaries Produced under TG4's Splanc! Scheme

Appendix F: Overview of Arts programming produced by RTÉ from 2003 to 2007

Appendix A: Indigenous Hours Broadcast in Peak Time by Genre - 2003 to 2006

(Annual reports before 2003 do not offer graphic illustration of the amount of arts programming broadcast in comparison to other programming genres.)

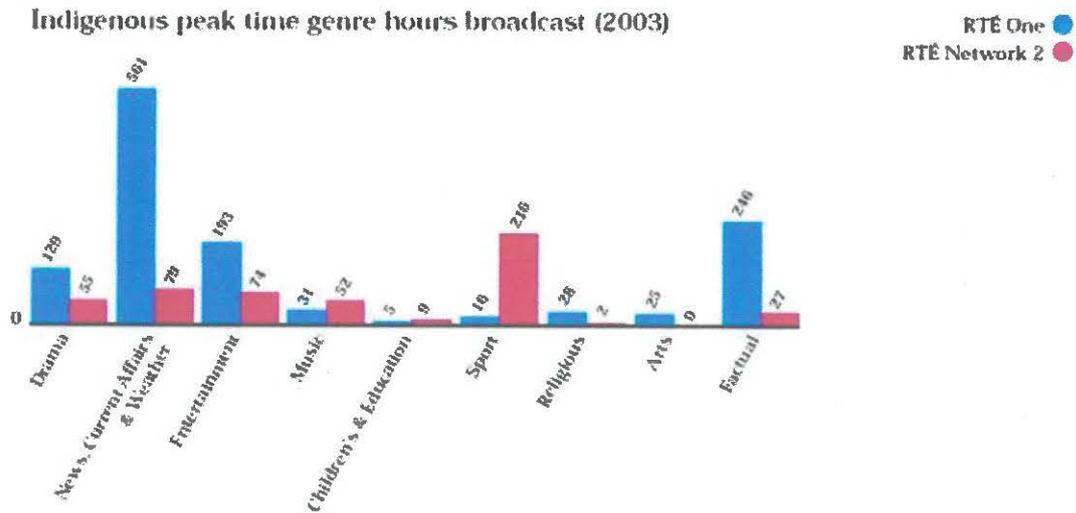


Figure 1.²⁹⁸

²⁹⁸ RTÉ Annual Report, 2003, page 22

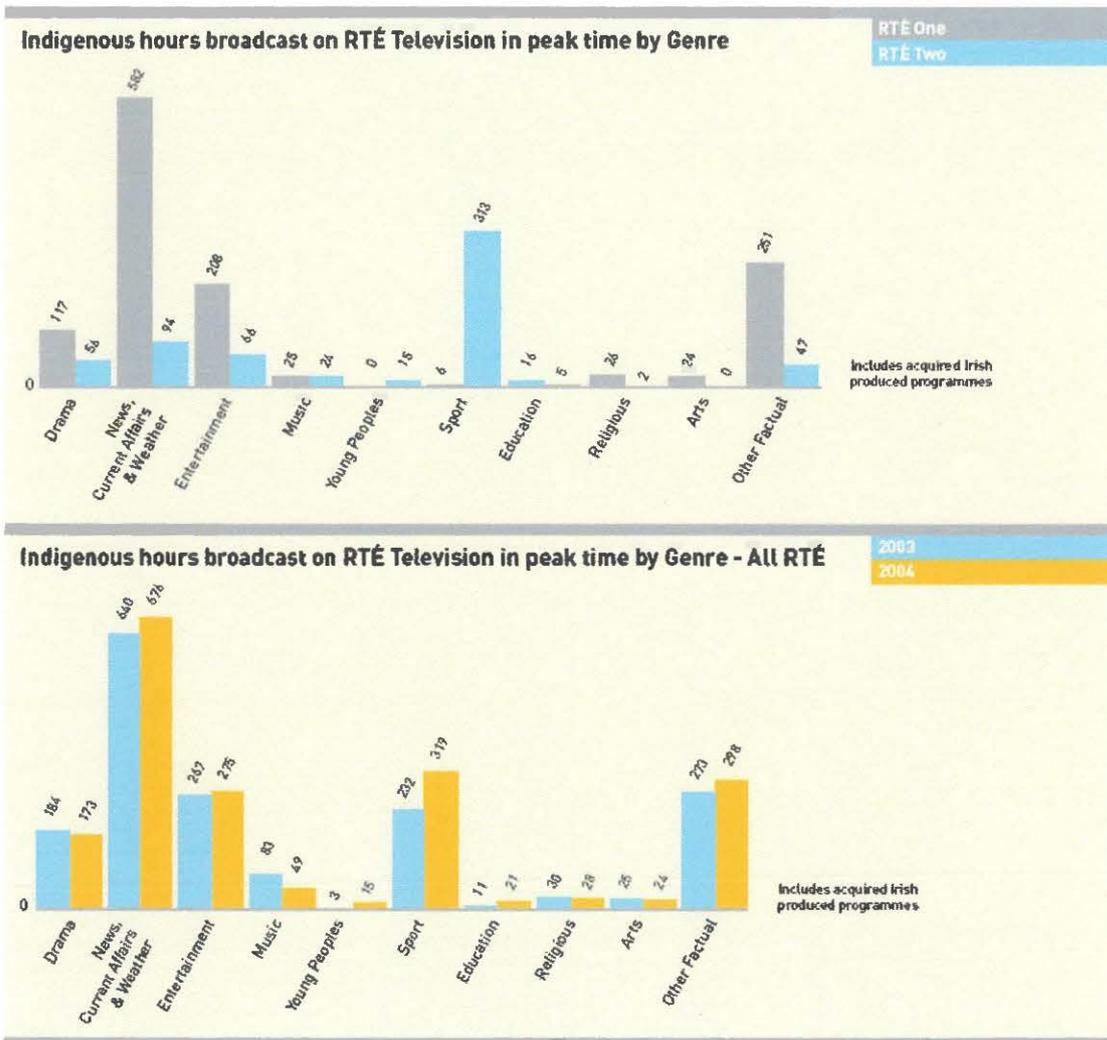


Figure 2.²⁹⁹

²⁹⁹ RTÉ Annual Report, 2004, page 43

**Indigenous hours broadcast on RTÉ Television in peak time
by Genre - All RTÉ**

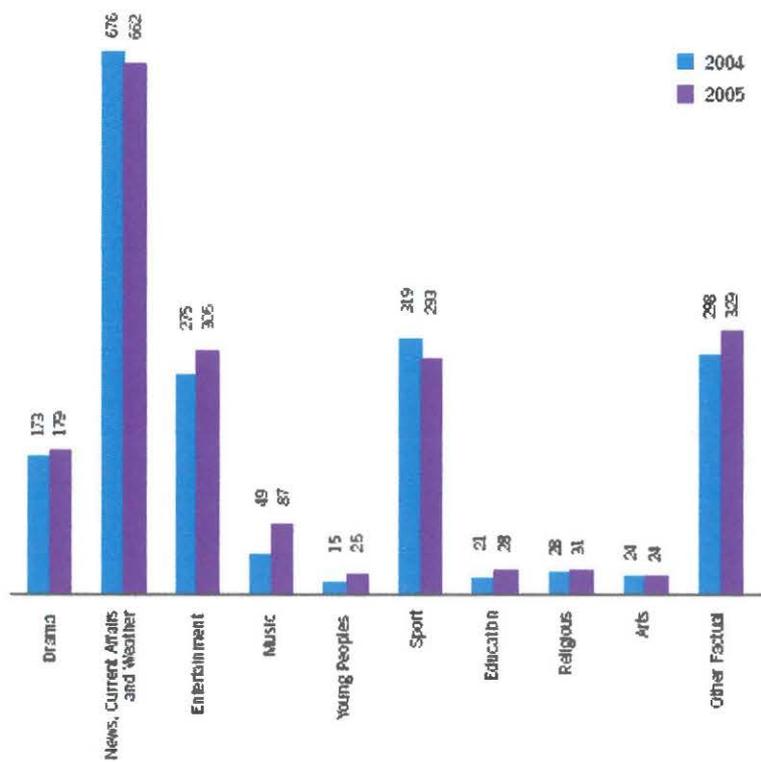
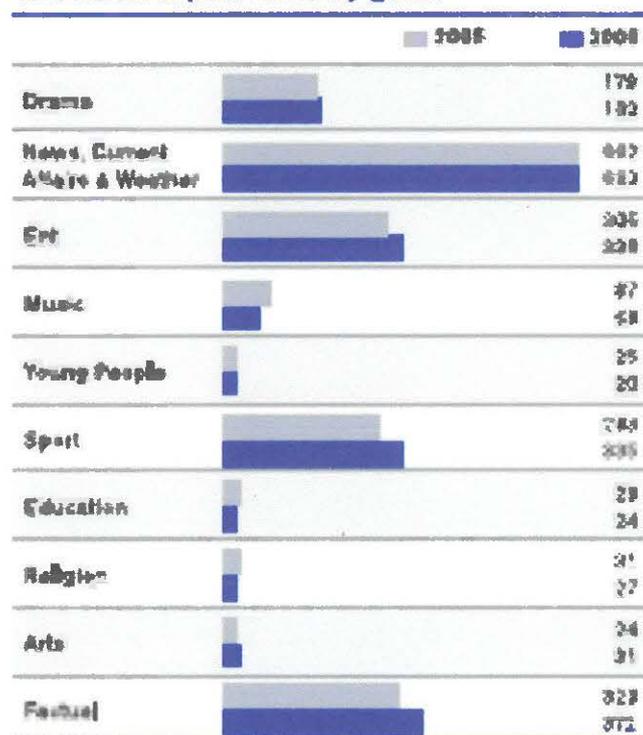


Figure 3.³⁰⁰

³⁰⁰ RTÉ Annual Report, 2005, page 9

**Indigenous hours broadcast on RTÉ
Television in peak time by genre**



Source: RTÉ

RTÉ Television peak time content analysis

■ Indigenous production ■ Acquisitions ■ Other

Figure 4.³⁰¹

³⁰¹ RTÉ Annual Report, 2006, page 11

Appendix B: Sample Survey of RTÉ Guide Schedules 2001 to 2005

2001

Spring 2001 sample week: Saturday March 10th - Friday, March 16th

Date	Channel	Programme	Broadcast time
Saturday 10/03/01	RTÉ 1	<i>The View</i>	4:15 a.m. to 4:45 a.m.
Tuesday 13/03/01	RTÉ 1	<i>The View</i>	11:05 p.m. to 11:35 p.m.
Thursday 15/03/01	RTÉ 1	<i>The View</i> (repeat)	2:50 a.m. to 3:25 a.m.
Friday 16/03/01	RTÉ 1	<i>Gala from Berlin: Salute to Carmen</i>	8:10 a.m. to 9:35 a.m.

Summer 2001 Sample Week: Saturday, July 14th - Friday, July 20th

Date	Channel	Programme	Broadcast time
		No Arts Programmes Scheduled	

Autumn 2001 Sample Week: Saturday, October 13th - Friday, October 19th

Date	Channel	Programme	Broadcast time
Tuesday 15/11/01	RTÉ 1	<i>The View</i>	11:20 to 11:55 a.m.

Christmas 2001 sample week: Saturday, December 15th – Friday, December 21st

Date	Channel	Programme	Broadcast time
Sunday 16/12/01	RTÉ 1	<i>Portrait of the Artist</i>	10:20 to 11:30 p.m.
Tuesday 18/12/01	RTÉ 1	<i>The View</i>	11:10 p.m. to 11:55 p.m.
Wednesday 19/12/01	RTÉ 1	<i>Jackson Pollock: Love and Death on Long Island</i>	4:40 p.m. to 4:50 p.m.

2002

Spring 2002 sample week: Saturday March 9th - Friday, March 15th

Date	Channel	Programme	Broadcast time
Tuesday 12/03/02	RTE 1	<i>The View</i>	11:05 p.m. to 11:45 p.m.

Summer 2002 Sample Week: Saturday, July 13th - Friday, July 19th

Date	Channel	Programme	Broadcast time
		No arts programmes scheduled	

Autumn 2002 Sample Week: Saturday, October 12th - Friday, October 18th

Date	Channel	Programme	Broadcast time
Tuesday 15/10/02	RTE 2	<i>The View</i>	4:00 to 4:15 p.m.

Christmas 2002 sample week: Saturday, December 14th – Friday, December 20th

Date	Channel	Programme	Broadcast time
Tuesday 17/12/02	RTE 1	<i>The View</i>	11:10 p.m. to 12:00 p.m.

2003

Spring 2003 sample week: Saturday March 15th - Friday, March 21st

Date	Channel	Programme	Broadcast time
Tuesday 18/03/03	RTÉ 1	<i>The View</i>	11:10 p.m. to 11:55 p.m.

Summer 2003 Sample Week: Saturday, July 12th - Friday, July 18th

Date	Channel	Programme	Broadcast time
		No arts programmes scheduled	

Autumn 2003 Sample Week: Saturday, October 11th - Friday, October 17th

Date	Channel	Programme	Broadcast time
Tuesday 14/10/03	RTÉ 1	<i>The View</i>	11:10 p.m. to 11:55 p.m.

Christmas 2003 sample week: Saturday, December 13th - Friday, December 19th

Date	Channel	Programme	Broadcast time
Tuesday 16/12/03	RTÉ 1	<i>The View</i>	11:10 p.m. to 11:55 p.m.

2004

Spring 2004 sample week: Saturday March 13th - Friday, March 19th

Date	Channel	Programme	Broadcast time
Tuesday 16/03/04	RTE 1	<i>The View</i>	11:15 p.m. to 11:55 p.m.

Summer 2004 Sample Week: Saturday, July 10th - Friday, July 16th

Date	Channel	Programme	Broadcast time
		No arts programmes scheduled	

Autumn 2004 Sample Week: Saturday, October 9th - Friday, October 15th

Date	Channel	Programme	Broadcast time
Tuesday 12/10/04	RTE 1	<i>The View</i>	11:15 p.m. to 11:55 p.m.

Christmas 2004 sample week: Saturday, December 11th – Friday, December 17th

Date	Channel	Programme	Broadcast time
Tuesday 14/12/04	RTE 1	<i>The View</i>	11:10 p.m. to 11:50 p.m.
Thursday 16/12/04	RTE 1	<i>Arts Lives</i>	10:45 p.m. to 11:35

2005

Spring 2005 sample week: Saturday March 12th - Friday, March 18th

Date	Channel	Programme	Broadcast time
Tuesday 15/03/05	RTE 1	<i>The View</i>	11:15 p.m. to 11:55 p.m.

Summer 2005 Sample Week: Saturday, July 16th - Friday, July 22nd

Date	Channel	Programme	Broadcast time
		<u>No Arts Programmes Scheduled</u>	

Autumn 2005 Sample Week: Saturday, October 15th - Friday, October 21st

Date	Channel	Programme	Broadcast time
Sunday 09/10/04	RTE 1	<i>Happy Birthday Oscar Wilde</i>	11:45 p.m. to 12:50 p.m.
Tuesday 10/10/04	RTE 1	<i>The View</i>	11:15 p.m. to 11:55 p.m.

RTÉ GUIDES USED IN SAMPLE

RTÉ Guide, March 12th – 18th 2005, RTÉ Publishing, 2005
RTÉ Guide, July 16th – 22nd 2005, RTÉ Publishing, 2005
RTÉ Guide, October 15th – 21st 2005, RTÉ Publishing, 2005
RTÉ Guide, December 10th – 16th 2005, RTÉ Publishing, 2005

RTÉ Guide, March 13th – 19th 2004, RTÉ Publishing, 2004
RTÉ Guide, July 10th – 16th 2004, RTÉ Publishing, 2004
RTÉ Guide, October 9th – 15th 2004, RTÉ Publishing, 2004
RTÉ Guide, December 11th – 17th 2004, RTÉ Publishing, 2004

RTÉ Guide, March 15th – 21st 2003, RTÉ Publishing, 2003
RTÉ Guide, July 12th – 18th 2003, RTÉ Publishing, 2003
RTÉ Guide, October 11th – 17th 2003 RTÉ Publishing, 2003
RTÉ Guide, December 13th – 18th 2003, RTÉ Publishing, 2003

RTÉ Guide, March 9th – 15th 2002, RTÉ Publishing, 2002
RTÉ Guide, July 13th – 19th 2002, RTÉ Publishing, 2002
RTÉ Guide, October 12th – 18th 2002, RTÉ Publishing, 2002
RTÉ Guide, December 14th – 20th 2002, RTÉ Publishing, 2002

RTÉ Guide, March 10th – 16th 2001, RTÉ Publishing, 2001
RTÉ Guide, July 14th – 20th 2001, RTÉ Publishing, 2001
RTÉ Guide, October 13th – 19th 2001, RTÉ Publishing, 2001
RTÉ Guide, December 15th – 21st 2001, RTÉ Publishing, 2001

Appendix C³⁰²

The View: List of Arts Items Reviewed during 2004/2005 Season

1. September 7th 2004 – guests - Peter Sheridan, Shalinhi Sinha and Evelyn Conlon
Items Reviewed:
Film - *A Fond Kiss* by Ken Loach
Drama – *Fair City*
Theatre: *Boston Marriage* by David Mamet at the Project, Dublin
Book: *Havoc, in its Third Year* by Ronan Bennet (short listed for the Booker Prize)
The performance: Niall Vallely, Irish music, concertina player, singer
2. September 14th, 2004 – guests: Emily O'Reilly, Kevin Gildea and Ita Daly
Items Reviewed:
Film – *Code 46* by Michael Winterbottom
Book – *Making Babies* by Anne Enright
Exhibition – *Acting Normal* – photos by Joe Sterling at the Gallery of photography
Pick of the week section where guests pick their favourite arts events of the week
The discussion: The Abbey Theatre developments are discussed
The performance: The Frames
3. September 21, 2004, guests: Camille O'Sullivan, Ferdia Mac Anna and Noel Sheridan
Items Reviewed:
Film – *Man About Dog*, from the maker's of *I Went Down*
Book – *Oh Play that Thing* by Roddy Doyle
Theatre – *Master Harold and the Boys* by Athol Fugard, by Calypso at the Dublin Fringe at The Helix
Exhibition: Martin Gale: realist painter at the RAH
The performance - Ríonach Ní Néill – dance piece at the Project Upstairs
4. September 28, 2004 – Guests: Emer O'Kelly, Fintan O'Toole and Ger Philpott
Items Reviewed:
The Play: *Death of a Salesman* by Arthur Millar directed by Joe Dowling at the Gaiety theatre, Dublin, Dublin Theatre Festival
The Play: *The Tinker's Wedding & The Well of the Saints* by J.M. Synge, directed by Garry Hynes, Druid at the Tivoli as part of Dublin Theatre Festival
The Play: *Improbably Frequency* by Arthur Riordan, directed by Lynn Parker for Rough Magic at O'Reilly Theatre, Dublin, Dublin Theatre Festival
The Event: *AbbeyOneHundred*, panel discusses Abbey Centenary programme

³⁰² RTÉ Television, <http://www.rte.ie/tv/theview/>, accessed 04/07/08

The Film: *Outfoxed*, part of the Stranger than Fiction documentary festival at the IFI.

The Performance: Headgear, electronic music

5. October 5, 2004, Guests: Theo Dorgan, Alice Barry and Catherine Anne Cullen
Items Reviewed:
The book 1: *Patrick Kavanagh, Collected Poems*
The book 2: *Dancing with Kitty Stobling*. Poetry anthology
The book 3: *Poems to Last a Lifetime*, Poetry anthology edited by Daisy Goodwin
The Film: *Bride and Prejudice* by Gurinder Chadha
The Play: *Twelfth Night* by William Shakespeare, directed by Declan Donnellan at the Olympia theatre, Dublin
The exhibition: *Sculpture In Context* at the Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin Dublin
THE performance: Mandalla, fusion of world music
6. October 12, 2004, Guests: Amanda Coogan, Declan Hughes and Eileen Battersby
Items Reviewed:
Film: *Inside I'm Dancing*, directed by Damien O'Donnell
Book: *Jonathan Strange and Mr. Norrell* by Susanna Clarke
Exhibition: *Eithne Jordan*, painter at the Rubicon, Dublin
Picks of the Week: Nick Cave's new album 'Abattoir Blues/The Lyre of Orpheus', the Jack Donovan Retrospective at the LCGA in Limerick and Hilary Hahn, the Grammy Award-Winning American violinist who is coming to Ireland soon.
Performance: Kila, Irish modern trad
7. October 18th,
THE VIEW PRESENTS: A Fringe Festival Diary
The View asked Feenish Productions to take a whirl through this year's international showcase which ended just last weekend. The cast of characters includes festival judge Marina Rafter (what will win the prize for Sexiest Production?) and theatre director Jimmy Fay, still a believer but also an independent voice, commenting frankly on the festival he helped found.
8. October 19th: Guests include: David Norris, Katie Moylan and Brian Trench
Items Reviewed:
Film: *A home at the End of the World* based on novel by Michael Cunningham, starring Colin Farrel, nationwide release
The Play: *Trad* by Mark Doherty, for Druid, Dublin Theatre Festival, Andrew's Lane Theatre, Dublin
Book: *Revolutions* by Lory Manrique Hyland
The Festival: *The Guinness Cork Jazz Festival*
Performance: Habitude Lea Quartet, afro Caribbean Jazz
9. October 26, 2004, Guests: Man nix Flynn, Med Rune and Loaf Tyrone
Items Reviewed:

- Film: *Alfa* (remake) directed by Charles Shyer
 Play: *A Number* by Carol Churchill by Prime Cut Productions at the Project Arts Centre
 Book: *The Body of Jonah Boyd* by David Leavitt
 Exhibition: *A German Dream*, 59 Masterpieces from Berlin's National Gallery at the National Gallery, Dublin
 Performance: Rufus Wainwright
10. November 2, 2004, Guests: Susan McKay, Eamon Delaney and Cait O'Riordan
 Book: *Nell*, autobiography by Nell McCafferty
 Film: *Hero* by Chinese filmmaker, Zhang Yimou
 Exhibition: *Dreaming of the Dragon's Nation: Contemporary Art from China*, 50 contemporary Chinese artists at IMMA, Dublin
 Play: *Dublin by Lamplight* by Michael West, Directed by Annie Ryan, produced The Corn Exchange, at The Project Dublin
 Performance: Maria Doyle Kennedy
11. November 9th, 2004, Guests: Katie Verling, Ivana Bacik and Harry Browne
 Items Reviewed
 Film: *Birth* directed by Jonathan Glazer, (starring Nicole Kidman)
 Book: *Four Quarters of Light: An Alaskan Journey*, Travel writing by Brian Keenan
 TV Series: *The Clinic*, RTÉ 1 medical drama
 Film: *Hereafter* by Paddy Jolley, collaborated with German Artist Rebecca Trost and Norwegian artist Inger Lise Hansen, about Ballymun Flats, screened at Meeting House Square, Temple Bar, Dublin
 Performance: The Shanghai Percussion Ensemble, graduates of the Shanghai Conservatory of music
12. November 16, 2004, Guests: Robert Ballagh, Belinda McKeon and Hilary Orpen
 Items Reviewed:
 Film: *The Manchurian Candidate* (remake) by Jonathan Demme
 Play: *Pilgrims in the Park*, by Jim O'Hanlon directed by Jim Culleton for Fishamble Theatre Company, at the Pavillion Theatre, Dun Laoghaire, Dublin
 The Book: *Sean O'Casey: Writer at Work*, biography by Christopher Murray
 Exhibiton: *Mary Burke and Joyce Duffy*, photography at Draíocht in Blanchardstown, Dublin
 Performance: Sean Millar, Irish singer songwriter
13. November 23, 2004, Guests: Fiona Looney, Sally Anne O'Reilly and Tony O'Dalaigh
 Items Reviewed:
 Film: *Enduring Love* by Roger Michell based on novel by Ian McEwan
 Opera: *Orfeo and Eurydice* directed by Christoph Gluck, for Opera Ireland at the Gaiety Theatre, Dublin
 Film: *The Halo Effect*, film by Lance Daly, starring Stephen Ray (Irish Film)

- Novel: *Herotown* by Brian MacMahon, Irish Writer
 Performance: The Trio Turner, French Chamber music
14. November 30, 2004, Guests: Pat Coyle, Jack Lukeman and Paul Clancy
 Items Reviewed:
 Film: *Beyond the Sea*, biopic of Bobby Darin
 Book: *Only Say the Word*, novel by Niall Williams (Irish Writer)
 Dance Show: *(like)Silver* by Irish Modern Dance Theatre, Choreographed by John Scott at The Project, Dublin
 Exhibition: *Homme à Femmes*, by Gerard Byrne at Green on Red gallery, Dublin
 Performance: The Radiators Plan 9, 70's reformed punk band from Dublin
15. December 7, 2004, Guests: Lee Dunne, Mary Coughlan and Peter Murphy
 Items Reviewed:
 Book: *Bob Dylan's Lyrics 1962 – 2001* by Bob Dylan
 The Artist: Harry Clarke focus on Stained glass windows he designed for Bewley's Café, Dublin
 Films: *Jim Jarmusch season*. At the IFI, Dublin – American independent
 Shows: Pantomime in Ireland. Review of panto season in Dublin
 Performance: Katell Keineg, Welsh singer songwriter
16. December 14, 2004, Guests: Joe Duffy, Róisín Boyd and Brian D'Arcy
 Items Reviewed:
 Film: *Phantom of the Opera*, (Andrew Lloyd Webber) directed by Joel Schumacher
 Book: *Something Beginning with P*, an illustrated anthology for the younger reader edited by Seamus Cashman (Irish?)
 Exhibition: *Edward Delaney*, Irish Sculpture, series of Bronzes from 1960's exhibited at RHA Dublin
 Magazine: *The Village* – Irish current affairs magazine
 Performance: Juno Falls, Dublin Trio
17. December 21, 2004,
 The View Presents: *Moving Pictures*, Documentary celebrating 150 years of the Irish National Gallery, Dublin
 Guests: curator and writer Declan McGonagle, author and broadcaster Fintan O'Toole and art historian Yvonne Scott.
18. January 4, 2005
 The View Presents:
 A special programme featuring some of the musical highlights from the current series. Performances from, among others, The Frames, Rufus Wainwright, Zoe Conway, The Trio Turner, Babatunde Lea and his quartet, Maria Doyle Kennedy, Kila, Headgear, The Shanghai Percussion Ensemble, Paul Burch and Tychonaut

19. January 11, 2005, Guests: Gina Moxley, Gerry Stembridge and Anne Daly
 Items Reviewed:
 Film: *Alexander the Great*, Directed by Oliver Stone, starring Colin Farrel and Angelina Jolie
 Exhibition: *IWITNESS*, Photographs by Tom Stoddart, at the Gallery of Photography, Dublin (photos of humanitarian disasters)
 Culture: Choice Arts Events for 2005, panel discuss upcoming arts events and discuss Cork European Capital of Culture
 Book: *The Broken Cedar* by Martin Malone (Irish)
 Performance: *Dust Defying Gravity* by Grace Wier from the Tír na nÓg exhibition at IMMA, Dublin
20. January 18, 2005, Guests: Susan McKay, Kate Thompson and Thomas McLaughlin
 Items reviewed:
 Film: *Vera Drake* directed by Mike Leigh
 Film 2: *Aviator*, directed by Martin Scorsese starring Leonardo DiCaprio
 Book: *Heaven Lies About Us*, by Eugene McCabe (Irish)
 Play: *Swansong* written by Conor Mcdermottroe at Andrew's Lane Theatre, Dublin
 Performance: Mairéad Ní Mhaonaigh -- member of Altan, Irish trad music
21. January 25, 2005, Guests: Colm O'Briain, Alanna Gallagher and Belinda McKeon
 Items reviewed:
 Film: *Closer*, directed by Mike Nichols starring Julia Roberts and Jude Law
 Play: *King Lear*, by William Shakespeare, Directed by Alan Stanford, at The SFX in Dublin
 Exhibition: *Communism*, group show of ten international artists at the Project Arts Centre, Dublin
 Book: *Viking: Odinn's Child* by Tim Severin
 Performance: Mundy, Irish singer songwriter, on to promote Tsunami charity concert at Vicar St., Dublin
22. February 1, 2005, Guests not listed
 Film: *Ray*, directed by Taylor Hackford – biopic about Ray Charles
 Show: *The Nutcracker*, CoisCéim Dance Theatre, Dublin (doesn't list venue)
 Exhibiton: *The Seven Sacraments*, work by Abigail O'Brien, at the RHA, Dublin
 Book: *Saturday* by Ian McEwan
 Performance: Nick Kelly, Irish singer
23. February 8, 2005, guests not listed
 Play: *The Home Place*, written by Brian Friel, at The Gate Theatre, Dublin
 TV Series: *Desperate Housewives*, U.S. programme
 Film: *Holy Girl*, directed by Argentinian Lucrecia Martel
 Book: *Winter Bayou*, written by Kelly Sullivan, from Pennsylvania but now lives in Ireland

- Film: *Winterreise Made* by Mariele Neudecker, at the Temple Bar Gallery, Dublin
24. February 14th, 2005, Guests not listed
The View Presents
Highlights of the Irish Times/ESB Irish Theatre Awards, which were held in Dublin on Sunday 13 February
25. February 15, 2005, Guests not listed
Items reviewed:
Film: *Melinda and Melinda* directed by Woody Allen
Film: *Nine Songs*, Directed by Michael Winterbottom
Exhibition: *Jasper Johns Since 1983*, at IMMA, Dublin
Book: *Runway* by Alice Munro
The Performance: The Graham Ashton Brass Ensemble
26. February 22, 2005, Guests not listed
Items reviewed:
Play: *The Life of Galileo*, by Bertolt Brecht, directed by Lynne Parker, Rough Magic Theatre Company, at the Project Arts Centre, Dublin
Film: *The Woodsman* directed by Nicole Kassell, starring Kevin Bacon
Exhibition: *The Record of the Time*, Laurie Anderson at IMMA, Dublin
Book: *Down a Road all Rebels Run*, by Mogue Doyle
Performance: Paul Tiernan (from band interference)
27. March 1, 2005, Guests not listed
Items reviewed:
Film: *Kinsey*, directed by Bill Condon, starring Liam Neeson
Book: *We Need to Talk About Kevin*, by Lionel Shriver
Picks of the week: "Every now and again we like to ask our reviewers to give us a steer on what's going on in the jungles of culture and give us a few of their own favourites - what's ringing their bells at the moment."
Exhibition: *The Irish Architectural Archive*, Merrion Square, Dublin
Performance: Savina Yannatou, Greek singer
28. March 8, 2005, Guests not listed
Items reviewed:
Book: *Grace and Truth*, by Jennifer Johnston
Film: *Somersault* directed by Cate Shortland, Australian
The show: *The Drowned World*, written by Gary Owen, at the Project Arts Centre, Dublin
Exhibitions: *Dirty Pretty Things* by Felicity Clear at the Rubicon, Dublin and *Women in Rock* at Rockarchive gallery, Temple Bar, Dublin
Performance: Kathleen Edwards, Canadian musician
29. March 15, 2005, Guests: George Seremba, Peter Sheridan and Anne Enright
Items reviewed:

- Film: *Hotel Rwanda* directed by Terry George
 Book: *Never Let Me Go* by Kazuo Ishiguro
 Play: *Enlightenment* written by Shelagh Stephenson, directed by Ben Barnes, at The Peacock, Dublin
 Exhibition: *Spatial Notions* by Dermot Seymor at Kevin Kavanagh Gallery, Dublin
 Performance: Donal Lunny, Róisín Elsafty and Máirtín O Connor, part of Ceol ESB festival at the National Concert Hall, Dublin
30. March 22, 2005, Guests: guests not listed
 The shortlist: Irish Times Poetry Now Award,
 A series of 13 poetry books, at the rate of about one per month. In each book, a poet from Cork translates a collection of poems by a contemporary European poet.
 Film: *5X2*, directed by French director François Ozon
 Exhibition: *Monsters of Paradise*, by New York based Fred Tomaselli
 At IMMA, Dublin
 Show: *Lost in a Flurry of Cherry Blossoms*, performed by The Tokyo Engeki Ensemble, Samuel Beckett Theatre, Dublin (on tour in Cork and other places?)
 Performance: Jeff Martin, singer songwriter
31. April 5th, 2005, Guests not listed
 Film: *Garden State*, written and directed by Zach Braff (from Scrubs)
 Book: *G.A.A.Y.* by Jarlath Gregory (Irish)
 Exhibition: *Jack Donovan retrospective*, Irish Artist at Draóicht in Blanchardstown, Dublin
 Play: *Dream of A Summer Day*, Directed by Liam Halligan, Storyteller's Theatre Company, at the Civic Theatre, Dublin (tours the country)
 Performance: Philippe Cassard and The Parisii String Quartet at the National Concert Hall, Dublin
32. April 12, 2005, Guests not listed
 Film: *The Interpreter*, Directed by Sydney Pollack, Nicole Kidman/Sean Penn star, nationwide release
 Book: *A Long Way*, by Sebastian Barry (Irish)
 Play: *The Sugar Wife*, written by Elizabeth Kuti, produced by Rough Magic Theatre Company at the Project Arts Centre, Dublin
 Film: *The Chorus*, directed by Christophe Barratier, (French) selected cinemas
 Picks of the Week: The View's reviewers talk about their up-coming cultural highlights, which include the Cúirt International Festival of Literature in Galway, the Belfast Film Festival, 'The Stretford Enders' by Trevor Colgan and Bruce Springsteen's new album
 Performance: Bell X1 (Irish)
33. April 19th, 2005, Guests not listed
 Film: *Cursed* directed by Wes Craven, nationwide release

- Play: *Monged*, Written by Gary Duggan and directed by Jim Culleton, produced by Fishamble Theatre Company, at Project Arts Centre and Draíocht, Blanchardstown, Dublin
 Dance Show: *Between You and Me*, Dance Theatre of Ireland, at Draíocht, Blanchardstown, Dublin & Mermaid Arts Centre, Bray, then British tour
 Book: *The Family on Paradise Pier* by Dermot Bolger (Irish)
 Performance: Torleif Thedéen, Music Network in association with The Irish Times and RTÉ Lyric FM, as part of their 2005 Spring Season, present the acclaimed Swedish cellist Torleif Thedéen at various venues around the country
34. April 26, 2005, Guests not listed
 Play: *A Dolls House*, by Henrik Ibsen, adaptation by Frank McGuinness, directed by Hungarian theatre director László Marton. At the Abbey Theatre, Dublin
 Film: *Trouble with Sex*, by Irish Filmmaker Fintan Connolly
 Book: *Gilead* by Marilynne Robinson's (U.S.)
 Performance: Argentinean flamenco guitarist Ariel Hernandez and Irish classical accordionist Dermot Dunne, part of Bray Jazz Festival
35. May 3, 2005, guests not listed
 Film: *Kingdom of Heaven*, directed by Ridley Scott, Nationwide release
 Play: *What Happened Bridgie Cleary*, by Tom MacIntyre, Directed by Alan Gilsenan at the Peacock, Dublin It then goes to Galway, Longford, Cavan, Monaghan, Dundalk, Bray and finishes up in Letterkenny
 Book: *Utterly Monkey* by Nick Laird
 Exhibition: *Requiem*, by Dublin artist Eoin MacLochlainn, at Kilmainham Gaol, Dublin
 Performance: Norma Waterson and Eliza Carthy, at Cork Opera House as part of Cork 2005
36. May 10, 2005, Guests not listed
 Film: *The Jacket*, directed by John Maybury
 Series: *Naked Camera*, produced by RTÉ, Written and performed by Patrick McDonnell and PJ Gallagher
 Play: *The Goat or Who is Sylvia*, written by Edward Albee, Landmark productions, at the Project Arts Centre, Dublin
 Book: *A Game with Sharpened Knives*, by Neil Belton (Irish)
 Performance: Pierce Turner (wexford based musician)
37. May 15, 2005
 The View Presents
 Interview with Christy Moore, Irish Traditional Musician
38. May 17, 2005, Guests not listed
 Film: *Star Wars Episode III, Revenge of the Sith*, by George Lucas (nationwide release)
 Show: *The Wireman*, written by Shay Healy at the Gaiety Theatre, Dublin

Book: *A Long Way Down*, by Nick Hornby
Exhibition: *Clarke and McDevitt Present*, show curated by Declan Clarke and Paul McDevitt at the Hugh Lane Gallery, Dublin
Performance: Karan Casey, Waterford Musician

39. May 24, 2005, guests not listed
Exhibition: *William Orpen*, at the National Gallery, Dublin
Film: *It's All Gone Pete Tong*, written and directed by Michael Dowse (UK), nationwide release
Book: *Desertion* by Abdulrazak Gurnah (African Writer)
Play: *No Exit* at Andrew's Lane Theatre, Dublin (no production details listed)
Performance: Mono Band
40. May 31st, 2005, Guests not listed
Exhibition: *Dorothy Cross*, work from the 1980's to the present, IMMA, Dublin
Film: *Headrush* by Shimmy Marcus, (Irish filmmaker)
Book: *Notes from A Coma*, by Mike McCormack (Irish)
Exhibition: *The Garden of Earthly Delights* - 39 Irish and international artists were invited to explore the library's collection and use it as the inspiration for their work. At the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin.
Preview: Ten of the Best This Summer, a brief look at some of the highlights the summer has to offer.
Performance: Impromptu

Appendix D

Arts Lives: List of Documentaries Produced from 2003 – 2007 ³⁰³

2007

<i>Charles Haughey: Patronising the Arts</i>	Icebox films
<i>Donal Lunny: Follow the Music</i>	Hummingbird Productions
<i>P♀p Ficti♀n</i>	Independent Pictures
<i>Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill: Taibhsí I mBéal na Gaoithe</i>	Sibéal Teo
<i>Thomas Lynch: Learning Gravity</i>	Gravity Productions
<i>Invitation to a Voyage: Eileen Gray</i>	Kick Films
<i>Waiting for Colgan</i>	Blueprint Pictures
<i>Paul Durcan: Self-Portrait</i>	Yellow Asylum Films
<i>Soul of Ireland: The Landscape Painter</i>	Araby Productions
<i>Jinx Lennon: Noisemaker</i>	Midas Productions
<i>Hiding in Plain Sight: Sheila Wingfield</i>	RTE
<i>Fergus Bourke: In His Own Words</i>	Moving Still Productions

2006

<i>Art for Sale</i>	Independent Pictures
<i>All about Anna</i>	Icebox Films
<i>In Search of Mozart</i>	Seventh Art Productions
<i>Mighty Talk: A Journey with Druid Synge</i>	Wildfire Films
<i>Michael Scott: A Changing Man</i>	Mad Mac Productions
<i>Louis Le Brocquy: The Inner Human Reality</i>	Joyce Productions
<i>The Legend of Liam Clancy</i>	Crossing the Line Films
<i>One Hundred to One</i>	Comet Films
<i>Flann O'Brien: The Lives of Brian</i>	Mint Productions
<i>The Man Who Shot Beckett</i>	Alchemy Electronic Arts

2005

<i>Sean O'Casey: Under a Coloured Cap</i>	Green Crow Productions
<i>A Private World: John McGahern</i>	Hummingbird Productions
<i>Stealing Beauty</i>	Independent Pictures
<i>The Colours of Ireland: Jack Yeats</i>	Green Crow Productions
<i>Olwen Fouéré: Theatre of the Flesh</i>	Midas Productions
<i>Spike Milligan: Told You I Was Ill</i>	Hatching Productions
<i>Horslips: Return of the Dancehall Sweethearts</i>	Long Grass Productions

³⁰³ "New Programmes for Arts Lives 07", Radio Telefís Éireann, <http://www.rte.ie/tv/artslives/artslivesscreenbrochure.pdf>, (Dublin, The RTE Press Office (Television), 2007) pp 22 - 24

2004

The Abbey Theatre: The First 100 years
It's All Good: Damien Dempsey
Waiting for Houlihan
Patrick Scott: Golden Boy
Pulling Strings: Eugene Lambert
Maeve Brennan: Traveller in Exile

Subotica
Midas Productions
Imagine Ltd
Mermaid films
Liberty Films
Araby Productions

2003

Sing on Forever: Tom Murphy
The Shadow of Mary Poppins
Dark Room: Harry Thuillier Jnr
Estella
Flirting with the Light
7 Reece Mews
Dracula's Bram Stoker
The Piano: King of Instruments

Parzival Productions
Hilton Cordell Productions
Pixel8 Productions
Paradox Pictures
Dreamchaser productions
Gold Hat Productions
Ferndale Films
Araby Productions

Appendix E

List of Documentaries Produced under TG4's Splanc! Scheme

Splanc 2008

Splanc! 2008 also focuses on one art form: the art of filmmaking

Splanc 2007

Splanc! commissioned programming on one art form - contemporary literature in the Irish language: *An Litríocht Bheo - Rince ar Phár'*

Splanc 2006

1. *Abhar Machnaimh – Coleman Doyle*
Griangrafadóir ata ag glacadh grianfhraif de shaol na héireann le trí scóir bliain. Ghlac Coleman grianfhraif de gach gné de shaol na heireann agus tá an t-athrú a tháinig ar saol sin le feiceáil go suntasach ina shaothar. Páirteach sa chlár beidh Bob Quinn, John Hume, Michael D Higgins agus Paidí Ó Sé.

Splanc 2005

1. *Cosan Dearg*

Splanc 2002

1. *Craiceann*
Using the human skin as a canvass, the art and design of tattooing and body piercing. Léiriú le Prazonik Productions.
2. *Ag togail Grianain*
Léiriú le Smirsh Teo. Mid the megalith strewn hills of rural Sligo a giant latterday cairn aligned to both winter and summer solstice sundowns is planned. A troop of people from all corners of the world set out to build this sun temple between the mist and the rain in time for Winter Solstice 2001. This programme follows the enterprise and their determination that in a time of interpretive heritage centres new wonders need building.
3. *Ealaíotóir thar saille*
Elizabeth O'Reilly, the renound Irish American artist paints the skyscrapers of Brooklyn and sea scapes of Mayo. This is trul trans-Atlantic art. Léiriú le Pollux Pictures.

4. *Ar imeall an Domhain*
Michael Flaherty, the Dingle artist is best known for his landscapes of the wild west Kerry landscape. His style and use of impasto and colour is unique to him. Léiriú le McNamara Films.
5. *Robert Ballagh*
'A day in the life of the artist' who designed our stamps, our money and the most Irish of symbols 'The Riverdance' stage set! Léiriú le Igloo
6. *Beochán*
Twelve of the most talented, young Irish animators have gathered together to form 'The Cartoon Saloon' in Kilkenny. This film follows their work from e cards to their first animation feature film. Léiriú le Lemon House Production.
7. *Binneas an airgid*
Master craftsman Don O'Mahonys obsession with silverware began as a young delivery boy in Cork. Today he has recreated pages from the Book of Kells in monochrome and many shades of silver. Léiriú le The Media Factory.

Splane 2000

1. *Damhsa I mblath*
Documentary following the conception & performance of a sensuous dance piece reflecting the theme of women & fertility, performed by dancers from the award-winning Rubato Ballet. Léiriú le Aka Java.
2. *An Bealach 'na Bealtaine*
Léargas ar fhorbairt & insealbhú píosa ealaíne de chuid an ealaíontóra Ian Joyce. I 1998 fuair sé coimisiún píosa ealaíne póiblí a chruthú d'Amharclann an Ghrianáin i Leitir Ceanainn. Leanann an clár seo scéal an obair ealaíne sin. Tá an píosa ealaíne féin déanta as lámhscríbhneoireacht priontáilte ar 365 lth. de ríspháipéar seapánach & cruthú an Earagail air.....Léiriú le Scannán Dobharchu.
3. *Shirley Temple Bar*
Declan Buckley-who is he? When he came back from London 5 yrs. ago, he was a business student with a twinkle in his eye. His family life is unusual in that his parents are deaf & he was brought up with signing as his first language. His first taste of fame beckoned in 1996, when his friends entered him into the Alternative Miss Ireland Competition. Much to his amazement he walked away with First Prize. Léiriú le Igloo Productions
4. *An Saol Daite*

1. *Scriobhaí*
Scriobhaí tells the story of calligraphy, an ancient Irish craft & contemporary art form. This half hour programme takes a look at the history, techniques, cultural variations & modern applications of calligraphy. At Clonmacnoise & Marsh's Library, Tim O'Neill creates a picture of the young monk learning how to clean hides for vellum, mix inks & prepare parchments & quills before visiting the Chester Beatty library to take a closer look at the beautiful manuscripts produced..
2. *Clós Imeartha na mBuachaillí*
3. *Buille níos sine*
Clár faoi dealbhadóirí atá ag obair leis an gcloch. Páirteach san gclár tá: Séamus Dunbar, Leitrim Sculptures Centre, Manorhamilton, Co. Leitrim. Frankie Ní Dhonncha as Loch Conaortha, Cill Chiaráin. Léiritheoir/Stiúrthóir: Barra de Bhadráithe. Fís Chois Fharraige Teo.
4. *Spiorad na Sráide*
Spiorad na Sráide is half an hour documentary film that takes us into the world of Irish Buskers both past & present. We take a look into the worlds of those that came from the streets; those that are content to stay there & make their living & those whose motivations have taken them on to much bigger things. Featuring The Hothouse Flowers, The Frames, Kila and many others....

Appendix F

Overview of Arts programming produced by RTÉ from 2003 to 2007³⁰⁴

2007

- *The View* continues to be broadcast for 36 weeks of the year.
- *The View Presents* included an interview with Pianist Barry Douglas as well as coverage of The Irish Times/ESB theatre awards.
- *Playboy 100* was a theme night marking The 100th anniversary of the Playboy riots on RTÉ 2 on 27 January. The night was hosted by John Kelly and included a specially commissioned documentary by Robert Quinn called *Playboys and Rebels* and also included the TV premiere of Druid's production of *The Playboy of the Western World*.

2006

- *The View* was broadcast for 36 weeks.
- *The View Presents* consisted of 8 programmes with interviews with Seamus Heaney, Steve Reich, Robert Ballagh, and Pat McCabe as well as highlights of The Irish Times Theatre Awards.
- *Beckett 100* included a special theme night on RTÉ 2, including the restored *Beginning to End* starring Jack MacGowran.
- RTÉ screened most of the *Beckett on Film* series in addition to a specially commissioned Arts Lives Beckett documentary and an edition of *The View Presents*.

³⁰⁴ "New Programmes for Arts Lives 07", Radio Telefís Éireann, <http://www.rte.ie/tv/artslives/artslivesscreenbrochure.pdf>, (Dublin, The RTE Press Office (Television), 2007) pp 22 - 24

- *RTÉ Dance on the Box*, made in collaboration with the Arts Council, commissioned four short dance films for TV as part of the International Dance Festival Ireland.
- *Anne Madden: Painter and Muse* (Mind the Gap for RTÉ) looked at the life of the painter and her love for her husband Louis Le Brocquy.
- *This Note's For You*, a six part series on songwriting, presented by Tom Dunne featured interviews with Paul Brady, Delcan O'Rourke, Pete St. John, Gemma Hayes, and Neil Hannon.

2005

- *The View* was broadcast for 36 weeks in the year.
- *The View Presents* featured an interview with Christy Moore and also covered the Irish Times/ESB Theatre Awards.
- *The Legend of Benedict Kiely* explored the life and work of Benedict Kiely.

2004

- *RTÉ Moving Pictures* was made in collaboration with the National Gallery of Ireland to celebrate the gallery's 150th anniversary.
- *The View* was broadcast for 36 weeks of the year.
- *The View Presents* featured interviews with Martin Hayes, Noel Sheridan's personal view of the National Gallery, a Dublin Fringe Festival Diary, and the Irish Times/ESB theatre awards.
- RTÉ *Bloomsday 100* was a season of programming marking the 100th anniversary of the publication of James Joyce's *Ulysses*.
- *Imagining Ulysses* was a specially commissioned documentary by RTÉ forming a key part of its Bloomsday programming.

- *The View* was broadcast for 36 weeks.
- *The View Presents* (The View's sister programme) began broadcasting in 2003 with highlights of the Irish Times/ESB Theatre Awards. John Kelly interviewed Neil Jordan, Damien O'Donnel, Aisling Walshe, Peter Sheridan, and John Hurt for the new series.