# Waking Patriarchy

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In her now famous and landmark Facebook post on 28 October 2015, set designer and arts manager Lian Bell had simply counted the gender balance in the Abbey Theatre's announcement of its 2016 Decade of Centenary Waking the Nation programme. Lian's tally revealed that the programme included only one female writer to nine male, and two female directors to seven males.[1] In expressing her stunned disbelief at such a disparity, Lian unknowingly started the #WakingtheFeminists movement, which was to become an historic event in Irish theatre, an arena that Christopher Murray once described as a 'long, energetic dispute with a changing audience over the same basic issues: where we from, where we are now, and where we are headed'.[2] This 'energetic dispute' was further revitalised[3] by Lian's shocked response to a programme that further platformed men in a culture where masculine

authority was already naturalised by the iterative sight and sound of men on multiple stages – in pulpits, on punditry panels, and podiums. By aligning with the historical socio-political and cultural de-platforming of women in Ireland, the programme sent strong and unwelcome signals about a woman's place, with Lian's post sounding alarm bells inside and outside the theatre world. If Irish national theatre – represented by the Abbey – is indeed this key space for testing definitions of identities against the shape of the nation, due in part, as Emer O'Toole noted, to its 'central role in the cultural nationalist movement that informed the Easter Rising',[4] then #WakingtheFeminists inadvertently reframed 'cultural nationalism' as 'intersectional cultural internationalism', becoming what Ciara L. Murphy described as the 'most important event of 2015 for Irish theatre',[5] both extending the national stage to include non-hegemonic and hybrid virtual spaces, and changing audiences and representational landscapes.

Feminist scholars had long been documenting how women's writing and creative work has been periodically 'lost'. In 2007, Melissa Sihra noted in the introduction to *Women in Irish Drama: A Century of Authorship and Representation*, how 'striking' it was that so many essays in the collection were 'about the early success of plays written by Irish women, plays that later go missing on the stage and in the canon.'[6] In a review essay of Volumes IV and V of the *Field Day Anthology of Irish Women's Writing*, Margaret Kelleher observed that a 'historical perspective shows how swiftly women's writings may disappear from view', and she showed how waves of 'recovery' of lost women's writings and art have been followed by periods of 'forgetting'.[7] Volumes IV and V had been commissioned as a corrective to the bewildering and extensive underrepresentation of women writers in the first three volumes, the publication of which, in 1991, prompted the same perplexing shock, hurt, and outrage from women, queer and feminist writers, and scholars that was expressed by #WakingTheFeminists activists over 25 years later. #WakingTheFeminists' shock was swiftly mirrored and followed by the dismay of yet another generation of women writers and scholars in what Claire Bracken describes as the 'severe underrepresentation of both women poets and academic contributors'[8] in Gerard Dawe's 2017 book, *The Cambridge Companion to Irish Poets*, and in Nicholas Greene's and Chris Morash's 2016 book, *The Oxford Handbook of Modern Irish Theatre*, 'which included 41 essays on Irish theatre, of which only two chapters were on Irish women and the theatre, and there were no chapters on the many women playwrights but there were specific chapters on Wilde, Yeats, Shaw and others'.[9] Poethead founder Christine Murray,[10] described the *Companion* as 'part of a larger process by which the significance of works by women is attenuated as they become inaccessible or obscured, simply by virtue of their absence from canonical

text books',[11] an attrition she, along with other writers, countered with *Fired! Irish Women Poets and the Canon*,[12] a movement modelled on some of the #WakingTheFeminists actions; while Ailbhe D'Arcy's and David Wheatley's edited collection, *A History of Irish Women's Poetry*,[13] *The Golden Thread: Irish Women Playwrights, 1716–2016,* co-edited by David Clare, Fiona McDonagh and Justine Nakase, and *The Irish Women Playwrights and Theatremakers* Conference in 2017, all also provided much needed correctives.[14]

Waking the Nation and parallel omissions were all the more egregious given that by 2015 it was already old news that Irish culture was impoverished by lack of diversity of all kinds, and most especially by the paucity of diverse women's/assigned female at birth (AFAB)'s outlooks and outputs. Intersectional feminist Irish scholarship was embedded in a growing global awareness that not only did the noxious concept of race emerge from racism and not the other way around, but also that the gender binary emerged from, and was an organ of, patriarchy. In 2007, Melissa Sihra had written about 'the persistent institutional and critical gatekeeping that prevents women playwrights and practitioners from making the impact they should, even when their work appears on stage',[15] while earlier in 2003, Kelleher took up Gerardine Meaney's 2002 editorial invitation in *Field Day* IV and V to 'put existing maps into question',[16] arguing that 'a crucial factor' in remapping literary traditions by integrating women's writing was to ensure 'institutional support and recognition'.[17] Yet just over ten years later, Waking the Nation displayed a blatant 'lack of institutional support and recognition' in its significant exclusion of women writers and directors during the most significant time of national cultural reflection in the Abbey Theatre in over a hundred years.[18] A flagship, half a million euro, Government of Ireland-backed and publicly-funded programme, described by O'Toole as 'in many ways anti-hegemonic',[19] and purporting to symbolise and represent the public that was funding it, had 'forgotten' most of the women writers and directors who worked alongside the men writers and directors remembered by the programme – as had the contemporaneous canonical handbooks and companions in theatre and poetry. Arguably, women were acknowledged in The Theatre Of Change, the conference substrate of the Abbey programme, which was in O'Toole's words, 'unmistakably and confrontationally pro-choice'[20]; this however, appears more in keeping with what Anne Fogarty identified in 2002, when she argued that instead of women 'simply being silenced', their being 'invoked in latterday [sic] Irish literary histories as an absent presence … sanctions cultural debates which still remain inveterately male-centred'.[21] How was it then, that despite the years of feminist scholarship and research in the arts, were women still being avowed only to be disavowed?

Psychoanalytically inflected feminist scholarship such as Fogarty's identifies a strong subconscious current at play in these ongoing acts of invoking and forgetting. Bracken's *Irish Feminist Futures*,[22] Meaney's *Race, Sex and Nation*, and Patricia Coughlan's extensive body of work, beginning with the milestone essay 'Bog Queens: The Representation of Women in the poetry of John Montague and Seamus Heaney', all identify the oedipal underpinnings of Irish literary traditions. Harold Bloom, a highly influential scholar in anglophone literatures, used Sophocles' play *Oedipus Rex* as a foundational text for theorising the struggle for primacy or a place in the canon between younger and older male writers, which he called an 'agon', and considered a symbolic conflict between literary sons and fathers. Bloom argued this was essential to the formation of literary traditions and his theories have shaped the understanding of such traditions across the anglophone world. I have argued elsewhere that this model, while obviously privileging masculinist concerns and perspectives structurally restricts women to what philosopher and psychoanalyst Luce Irigaray calls the 'place of the mother',[23] which supports intergenerational legacy between men, but forbids it between women.[24] Playing by patriarchal rules, women can therefore only appear as the 'exception', the one or two 'exceptional' women who appear in the canon, or on the programme, and not as the rule (or ruler) and historical continuity and lineage between generations of women is structurally prohibited. Gerardine Meaney made the case for decentring oedipal structures in a 2011 essay, the title of which foreshadowed #WakingTheFeminists. In 'Waking the Dead: Antigone, Ismene and Anne Enright's Narrators in Mourning', Meaney's analysis of Anne Enright shifts her sights away from oedipal modes of reading to bring sisters, daughters, mothers, and others into focus to produce a model of ongoing cultural continuity and community between women.[25] But the oedipal dynamics shifted by Meaney in scholarship were to prove much more difficult to move in actuality given its entrenchment in all aspects of cultural life.

It was no small irony that the Waking the Nation programme literally adapted and dramatised the Oedipal dynamics underwriting Irish culture for a new century by staging an adaptation of *Oedipus* as part of its 2016 suite. Moreover, the programme was itself explicitly agonistic, with commissioned plays from a new generation of male playwrights staged 'in a conversation' with 'familiar classics from the Abbey's repertoire',[26] all of which were written by men; this was framed as a conflict with legacy and history expressed in the announcement that the programme would 'interrogate and question the legacy of the Easter Rising rather than celebrate the centenary.'[27] Molly Mullin has shown how in Ireland, 'much of the power of the prevailing hegemonic order rests on control over authoritative representations of history, both

public historical spectacles as well as the more quotidian structuring of time, including notions of what is temporal and what is not; what is ordered into the 'past', 'present', and 'future'.[28] Thus, women writers and directors were categorically placed, in Eavan Boland's words, not only 'Outside History',[29] but also 'outside' the 'present' and 'future' too. Artistic value depends on proof of provenance, and, in literary terms, this is established by a work's citation of, links to, and dialogue with literary precedents that lend it authority and build it a lineage; the 2016 Waking the Nation programme staged no historical work by women playwrights to 'interrogate' or 'celebrate', thus contemporary work by women was structurally precluded – unless patriarchally identified via the 'place of the mother', like Ali White's *Me Mollser*, a monologue for children, or critique, such as was the case with Marina Carr's *On Raftery's Hill*, and the belated addition of Carmel Winters' *The Remains of Maisie Duggan*.[30] Without the possibility of 'citation' we lose what Sarah Browne describes as a 'feminist practice' of 'a successful reproductive technology'.[31]

The cultural reproduction of this patriarchal structure carries a high cost for women/AFABs and other minoritised and feminised people, not only in the arts but across all aspects of intimate, social, and political life. Clara Fischer meditates on 'wave' as a metaphor to evoke 'the peaks and troughs' of the feminist movement across time, or rather, as she also suggests its tidal 'ebb and flow'.[32] Crucially, this 'ebb and flow' is not 'natural', but conditioned by patriarchal pressures that resist feminist change through a complex set of intersections that make up what Patricia Hill Collins calls the 'Matrix of Domination'.[33] Writing in the context of North American black feminist activism and intellectual traditions, she describes how this 'matrix of domination' is 'structured along certain axes – race, gender, class, sexuality, and nation' and notes how 'it operates through interconnected domains of power – structural, interpersonal, disciplinary, and hegemonic' showing how the 'dialectical relationship linking oppression and activism is far more complex than simple models of oppressors and oppressed would suggest'.[34] As Kelleher shows, intentional feminist actions support women's creative work and research, and are crucial to protecting against the periodical deletion of women from historical narratives; removing women's work from view may not be intentional on the part of individuals, but it is not accidental; it is systemically produced by a backlash that has followed every period of increased equality and visibility for women. For instance after the gains of second wave feminism, women were put 'back in their place' by the proliferation of 'punishment porn' that has created a seemingly naturalised confluence between sex and violence that is still intensifying that involved silencing through occupying their mouths and increased levels of degradation.[35] This silencing and shaming also takes other forms, such as excluding, excising, exiling, and incarcerating, specifically

creating in Ireland, as Miriam Haughton has argued, 'a culture of silence and sexual oppression' that was 'facilitated and intensified by the power of ideology, not only promoted by major hegemonic institutions, but reproduced in daily life by communities, families, and individual men and women.'[36]

Delegitimising the concept of 'feminism' is also part of how it operates through forms of violence and coercion to invalidate women's claims to our own authority, self-narration and right to shape the shared public imaginary.[37] The work of #WakingtheFeminists insisted on a comprehensive gender awareness, yet Lian Bell, who became Campaign Director during this historic shift in Irish Theatre, could not have defined feminism when she first posted about stark and shocking gender asymmetries. Musing on the word 'feminist' she recounted that,

> other people say to me that they don't feel comfortable with the use of the word Feminist. Late 2015 hasn't yet seen the full-blown reclamation of that word, and it still has a mildly embarrassing hectoring fustiness about it. I feel it myself but pretend not to.

In this, Lian highlights the importance of words, and how vulnerable we are all to the embarrassment of being mislabelled, misunderstood, and misrepresented by the words we use, or that are used about us. Small wonder that in 2015, after over a century of trivialising and pathologising feminists who revealed and resisted repressive misogynist state policies towards women,[38] as well as over two decades of the use of the term 'feminazi' in some parts of the Irish media, there were women reluctant to identify as feminist, a term that had been untied from its roots in equality and retethered to negative stereotypes of ugly, unlovable, and humourless man-haters. The widespread normalisation of feminist bashing and the use of the term feminazi is but one representation of a 'history of resistance to feminist theory [that] testifies to the impact of ideological power' of patriarchy, as described by Nancy Folbre in *The Rise and Decline of Patriarchal Systems: An Intersectional Political Economy.* Folbre goes on to note that feminist 'efforts to analyse patriarchal institutions have often been and are sometimes still derided by those in positions of authority.'[39] Such derision amounts to what Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak calls 'epistemic violence',[40] which is the delegitimating of the expertise – also identified as a 'subjugated knowledge' – belonging to a group that is opposed to that of the dominant culture. Epistemological violence was enacted by the lack of opportunity for women to add their 'subjugated knowledges', expertise and experience to the 2016 Waking the Nation programme, as well as to the controversial companions and handbooks; to contribute perspectives, narratives and portrayals with potential to reshape national stories of belonging

and human value, and generate cultural capital for those who historically had little or none. The exclusion also enacted an ontological violence that stripped the stage, back and front, of women's self-narrated and directed embodied presence.

The allegations of inappropriate behaviour in Irish theatre, courageously led by Grace Dyas and detailed in Workplace Relations expert, Gaye Cunningham's report,[41] as well as in numerous personal accounts on social media, shows how gatekeeping the authority of patriarchal platforms is supported by deeper issues. Further evidence was shown in the need for Speak Up & Call It Out and Irish Theatre Institute's report,[42] Amplify Women's Harassment Toolkit,[43] the establishment of FairPlé and #MiseFosta,[44] and the eventual creation of Safe To Create Dignity at Work programme managed by Irish Theatre Institute, in partnership with the Arts Council, Screen Ireland, and Minding Creative Minds, on behalf of the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media.[45] For freelancers, which includes most workers in the arts, the lack of an overseeing organisation meant that before #WakingTheFeminists there were few procedures or official pathways that were easily accessible, available or effective to direct complaints about assault, harassment, and abuse linked to exclusion and discrimination. The establishment of these bodies has been crucial for freelancers, who are especially vulnerable given the precarity of creative industries and the cult of male genius and personality that still pervades arts spaces. Cultural epistemic and ontological violence towards women's self-representation is tethered to sexual and gender violence in ecclesiastical, juridical, military, health, political, educational, cultural, public, virtual, and intimate spaces.[46] Gender violence and rape is not, as it is often portrayed, an anomaly in patriarchy, merely the work of a few rogue men, but is fundamental to patriarchy as a system, as Rana M. Jaleel, demonstrates in *The Work of Rape*.[47] Let me very clearly state that this essay in no way suggests that any individuals involved in the exclusion of women from arts programmes have been involved in gender and sexual violence; instead this analysis highlights how systemic gender violence biopolitically underwrites, conditions, and polices women/AFAB's enunciation and embodiment on the social, political and cultural stages of patriarchal systems.[48] This is evidenced by the ongoing pattern of abuse revelations across multiple institutions and organisations: organised religion (regardless of denomination), the police service, the military, education, sport, health, creative industries, government, the paramilitary, organised crime, the media and cultural industries, and various carceral spaces have all perpetuated and covered up systemic gender and sexuality abuses against women, children, feminised, non-conforming, and otherwise vulnerable populations. Investigations, tribunals, and reports treat each scandal as culturally unique, siloed, and specific to the dynamics of

each organisation; commissioned investigations have yet to link an individual body to the larger pattern that a meta-analysis would show – that each has patriarchal structures in common.

Structurally, patriarchal systems are not designed to support, value, and credit women's narration of events. This is not a coincidence but a baked-in feature of how patriarchy works, and invalidation of women's voices happens across multiple representational stages. Research emphatically demonstrates how many rape victims are unwilling to be epistemically violated again in court.[49] For the small number of victims who ever get to court, even with the best legal representation, women consistently report being misrepresented, misread, having their words twisted, not being given the time and space to tell it their own way, and liken the experience to being violated again. Susan McKay's description of how feminists were treated as they sought to address widespread rapist tolerance and to support victims of rapists in the Ireland of the 1970s and 1980s is strikingly similar to that of #WakingTheFeminists activists seeking equality of opportunity and fair play. In a 2007 essay, McKay quotes politician Gemma Hussey's recollection of raising the subject of rape in Ireland at the end of the 1970s: '"[y]ou were up against a strange hostility that gave you a shock each time you encountered it" … Rape was just not spoken about"'.[50] Writing about researching her 2005 book, *Without Fear: 25 Years of the Dublin Rape Crisis Centre*, McKay notes that those seeking to support rape victims had to 'struggle for recognition and they had to struggle for every penny of the funds they needed'. On top of this, they 'were accused of propaganda and lying'.[51] McKay's observations about hostility, forbidden subjects, struggle for recognition and funding, as well as the distortion of evidence and research, maps onto the experiences of the #WakingTheFeminists activists nearly 40 years later, for whom feminist politics and even the word feminist had been polluted.

Lucy Caldwell's short story, 'Words for Things',[52] explores how feminist sensibility and language was voided for young women coming of age in the backlash culture of the notoriously laddish and rapey media landscape of the 1990s and 2000s. In the story, the speakers reflect on how their younger selves lacked 'words' to name the wrongs being done to women (such as Monica Lewinsky, Tonya Harding, Amy Winehouse, Shannen Doherty, Jade Goody, and Britney Spears) who were victims of highly public misogynist abuse and stalking by the press. Caldwell demonstrates how the speakers, young women navigating a world in which feminism had become a dirty word, instead had their psyches and values structured by the sexist words that had been normalised; chauvinist idioms with which the protagonists reproduced the same judgements against the women being slut-shamed and publicly maltreated. 'Words for Things', shows not only how women

are horizontally pitted against each other – for the favours that patriarchy bestows on the well-behaved women (such as a good marriage or selection as the 'exceptional' woman whose work might get published or staged), it also demonstrates the vertical or intergenerational loss of words that otherwise could have transported feminist consciousness across time. Second wave feminists documented clearly how rapist culture[53] functioned as a weapon of patriarchal dominance, and Caldwell tells the story of the loss of this knowledge and language, and the attendant loss of empowerment.[54]

Self-consciousness about how these operations of language support the architectural arc of national culture is crucial to resisting the epistemological power they wield. Caldwell highlights how her characters' fascination with celebrity scandal disguises how intently they study celebrities in order to avoid the same fate as the young women being 'made a spectacle of' by those who violated them reputationally, photographically, and physically (upskirting). By joining in the slut-shaming, the narrator distanced herself and her friends from the possibility of the same happening to them; victim-blaming by women is a well-documented dissociative fear response intended to create an illusory sense of control in a world in which women and girls live with a pervasive threat of gender violence. 'Words for Things', shows how the speakers' younger complicity with patriarchy was as much an act of survival as it was an act of (self) abuse, also compassionately revealing the personal cost to women and girls of rapist culture, as they learn to blame themselves while seeking to safeguard themselves and resist being victims in a system stacked against their freedom in speech or in public space.[55] Sarah Durcan's and Lian Bell's description of the deep personal cost of internalisation of self-reproach had on the many women who travailed against invisible odds in the world of theatre is strikingly resonant of Caldwell's descriptions; it also recalls the effect books such as *The Feminine Mystique* and *The Women's Room*, *This Bridge that is My Back*, *Sister Outsider*, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, *Against our Will*, and *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens* had on women pivoting from self-condemnation to systemic accountability via exposure to such in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. #WakingTheFeminists activists recount the dawning realisation that the burden of failure and self-condemnation carried by individual women in the theatre was not of their own making, but was instead generated by a flawed and distorted system that was designed to produce feelings of privatised shame and inadequacy in women and other minoritised peoples across the sector. They write:

> For many years, women in Irish theatre had known that opportunities for them were scarcer than for men. If this was acknowledged or spoken about at all, it was in whispered private conversations, not on

> public stages or media platforms. In these conversations women would talk about how they were racked with personal doubts, inadequacies and imposter syndrome; it is clear now that this was internalised misogyny and the result of millennia of systemic inequality and of bias that has profoundly warped our own sense of our abilities. This forced many talented and ambitious women out of theatre. They eventually chose not to compete in this skewed system or left the country to find flourishing careers elsewhere. The theatre industry masqueraded as meritocratic, while privileging men over women season after season, year after year. If you didn't 'make it', it was a personal fault.

Folbre tells us that '[s]ocial structures are not easy to picture or explain', but the #WakingTheFeminists testimony above pictures how, 'their components can be distinguished, their buttresses revealed'.[56] The 'whisper networks', in which women in many institutions have shared information crucial for survival and safety is gendered and trivialised as 'gossip', another form of shaming and quieting women's tongues. When men's voices resonate on public stages and platforms, their discussions are classed as 'debate', 'analysis', 'news', 'politics', 'history', 'objectivity', and 'visionary'. Men's speech acts are not widely depicted as 'underhanded', 'forked-tongued', 'duplicitous', 'stroppy', 'forward', 'emotional', 'irrational', 'subjective', or 'personalised', nor are their voices tone-policed as 'sharp', 'grating', 'shrill', 'whining', 'harsh', 'nagging', 'hectoring', 'bitchy', 'bossy', 'abrasive', or 'strident'.[57] The backstage, offstage spaces into which patriarchy forces women are bound up with the ways in which women's voices are pathologised with judgments about *how* women speak, invalidating *what* we say, with devastating effects for women and children and feminised populations in multiple spheres.[58]

Sara Ahmed underscores this in *Complaint!* when she shows how 'if it takes time to make a complaint, it takes time to reach a complaint'.[59] *Complaint!*, Ahmed's archive of 'subjected knowledge' of sexual harassment in third level education, represents the transformation from backstage fear and intimidation to centre stage analysis of how patriarchy is actively invested in invalidating women's testimony and resisting equality actions. *Complaint!* reveals how the system works 'by stopping those who are trying to transform the system'.[60] The self-blame that #WakingTheFeminists activists recount maps onto similar accounts Ahmed has archived; below Ahmed recounts the internal monologue of a student who tried to talk herself out of her own experience of being sexually harassed by her male supervisor:

> She tells herself off, even; she gives herself a talking to; she tells herself to stop being paranoid, to stop being a feminazi, to stop being

> a feminist, perhaps. It is striking how in questioning herself, she also exercised familiar stereotypes of feminists as feminazis, with the implication that gender is a judgment that is imposed upon a situation from the outside. External judgments can be given voice as internal doubt.[61]

Ahmed cites many such examples of how women and other minoritised people are atomised via internalisation of self-doubt and blame across multiple intersectional registers, to give, as Folbre observes, 'mature heterosexual men power over others'.[62] Such power is maintained, as Hill Collins described, not only through hegemonic, structural, and disciplinary actions, but also through interconnection with the interpersonal, and #WakingTheFeminists activists recount their fear of betraying the Irish theatre community, which has historically welcomed diverse and/or marginalised or minoritised people, challenged neoliberalism and the instrumentalisation of the arts, and is strongly bonded by its collective belief in speaking, staging, and dramatising 'truth to power'. But, as became all too clear with Waking the Nation, without intersectional awareness, 'unity' premised on the priorities of the larger group and often 'uncritical rallying around misogynist politics and patriarchal values',[63] results in women and AFABs being further marginalised in their originary group. Kimberlé Crenshaw's pioneering work in intersectionality demonstrates how black women remain marginalised in discourses of anti-racism that do not also take gender into account:

> Although collective opposition to racist practice has been and continues to be crucially important in protecting black interests, an empowered Black feminist sensibility would require that the terms of unity no longer reflect priorities premised upon the continued marginalization of Black women.[64]

Women workers in Irish theatre learned this lesson far too cruelly, along with the shock of absorbing how the financial scales were weighted against them for the benefits of those for whom reproducing masculinist narratives paid. Folbre reminds us that while power 'is multidimensional … its impact on policies (including laws), ideologies (including norms), and the ownership and control of resources (including people) can be assessed by a direct question: "who benefits?"'[65] The 2015 reveal of the Abbey programme mirrored Irish society in microcosm in which the ongoing reproduction of masculinist perspectives benefitted women little, even though their labour, support, trust, and goodwill was presumed, thus replicating the pattern that used but didn't credit the women political activists before and during the Easter Rising.[66]

Published in the same month that Waking the Nation was announced, Fearghal McGarry's *The Abbey Rebels of 1916: A Lost Revolution*, which extensively drew on the Abbey archives, provided a detailed study of Abbey Theatre employees usher Ellen Bushnell, leading actress and Abbey founder Máire Nic Shiubhlaigh, and actress Helena Molony, who were also active in fighting during Easter week, but whose lives were not commemorated by the 1916 programme.[67] The accounts of #WakingTheFeminists activists during the campaign show how frightening and dangerous it felt to speak up and out, and how it risked not only retaliative pushback in the form of loss of future work in an already precarious sector, but speaking out also crucially jeopardised cherished and important personal and professional relationships; while many feminist men became stalwart allies for #WakingTheFeminists and equality and diversity in Irish creative sectors, some previously close working relationships more broadly for women in Irish Theatre and the culture sector remain strained to this day; this a common pattern replicated in other fields when steps are taken to achieve parity of access for women and other minoritised people.

Resistance involves empowerment through reclamation of language, information sharing, and rebuilding bonds that are deliberately divided by patriarchy; Hill Collins reminds us that just 'as oppression is complex, so must resistance aimed at fostering empowerment demonstrate a similar complexity'.[68] An ideological focus on atomised individualism and independence in neurocapitalism,[69] as the metric for participation in the social body or workplace, health, or well-being, also negatively impacts women whose social roles are constructed interdependently via parenting and care that is unsupported in policy or practice, with especially negative effects for women in the creative industries, as the MAMs group highlighted as part of the #WakingTheFeminists actions.[70] Folbre describes how an ongoing 'lack of structural supports for interdependence and care in patriarchal economies' means that 'women's creative lives and outputs' cannot be 'supported across a lifetime'.[71] Further, reproductive and care work is either unpaid or underpaid, constituting an invisible workforce upon which, as Silvia Federici shows, patriarchal capitalism depends to reproduce its current asymmetries.[72] Research has shown that in the creative industries, which depend largely on a 'grace and favour' model of funding, and are linked to informal reputational networks, the 'maternal wall' is a serious obstacle to women's participation.[73] Structural lack of supports – such as funding bodies not including childcare as a legitimate budgetary cost – contribute, along with presumptions that women upon motherhood will no longer be available for gigs, to what Joanne Cusack refers to as the 'disappearing act' in the careers of women in traditional music and dance. This tracks with what Folbre describes as the 'three somewhat overlapping categories' of 'patriarchal political institutions':

> property rights over women and children; explicit restrictions on the individual rights of women, children, and sexually nonconforming individuals (often including limits on access to productive physical assets such as land or financial wealth); and rules of remuneration for time, effort, and resources devoted to the care of others, especially dependents.[74]

Enacting care was central to the #WakingTheFeminists group as they faced into the enormity of the task they had set themselves and it became ever more crucial as they fast learned about institutions work from the 'wear and tear of coming up against them'.[75] Awareness of interdependence and the importance of sustainability informed the prescient wisdom that propelled #WakingTheFeminists to set a deadline of a year to achieve their outcomes. Complaint work is, as Ahmed reminds us, above all, 'embodied work'[76]; and bodies cannot continue to push themselves against an apparatus that works 'by stopping those who are trying to transform the system',[77] without incurring significant physical or mental health costs, that may take the form of serious and even life-threatening disease and illness, or that can also potentially translate into wearied fractures among otherwise like-minded and supportive campaigners. Equality actions that address gender and other intersectional oppressions are exhausting – both by virtue of the David and Goliath struggle involved in challenging the matrix of dominations already outlined – and because of the process which is designed to be attritional and deplete people out of the juridical and complaint system as Ahmed observes: 'we can be worn down as well as worn out by what we have to do when we go through a complaints process'.[78] #WakingTheFeminists built in measures to counter the debilitating 'wear and tear' of taking on powerful interlocking systems; Sarah Durcan and Lian Bell recount with warmth and wit how #WakingTheFeminists' core group responded with differing degrees of engagement, ambivalence, and scepticism to practices of 'self-care'. For all the self-consciousness and playfulness of narrating this aspect of their activist work, it seems clear that insisting on care as a core value played a central and crucial part in the extraordinary efficacy and success of #WakingTheFeminists as a movement.

#WakingTheFeminists' collective wisdom in defining a year's worth of highly focussed activist work, along with key strategic goals linked to limits on the investment of individual time in order to respect health and other commitments distinguished #WakingTheFeminists from other social media moments, as Claire Keogh has observed: '[w]ith origins on social media, #WakingTheFeminists could have been another flash of online outrage, but what unfolded in late 2015 and throughout 2016 was a strategic campaign for gender equality that has had an impressive impact on Irish culture.'[79]

In a manner similar to how the word 'feminism' has been voided for many women, 'self-care' is yet another phrase that has removed from the lexicon of realistic resistance, because it has to resist both the patriarchally defined narrative of self-sacrifice as a measure of feminine worth, as well as a neoliberal mediatised distortion of feminism into an easily trivialised form of 'I'm worth it' individualism.[80] #WakingTheFeminists bypassed this to connect via an ethics of care for each other and those to whom they felt responsible to a much deeper history of feminist resistance and an aspect of care-economies that has feminist anti-racist and anti-capitalist potential. For the concept of 'self-care' had its roots in the collective and community actions of North American black women activists seeking to heal the ongoing 'wear and tear' of racism, sexism and the trauma and epigenetic legacy of the Middle Passage, chattel slavery, and Jim Crow and Jane Crow.[81] Audre Lorde in her 1988 collection of essays, *A Burst of Light*,[82] outlined how her body was working not only to counter intersectional oppressions but also to survive breast cancer; taking her own energetic regulation as a model for healthy engagement with social justice work, Lorde recognised how minding her body-mind was not a luxury but represented a baseline model for wider community healing work.[83] Lorde identifies 'self-care' as self-preservation, a political act, and crucially, yet anti-intuitively, fundamentally a collective practice, linking with Folbre's analysis about how 'collective empowerment and mobilization' have 'played a particularly large part in global efforts to combat violence against women'.[84] #WakingTheFeminists' collective work resulting in its data-led policy changes and legacy, evidence-based dissemination, and awareness-raising through multiple media (including this book) represents urgent historiographical acts; #WakingTheFeminists' documentation of the campaign colours in some of the missing 'half of the picture' of humanity, to borrow the phrase Guerrilla Girls used to describe the incompleteness of culture because of the loss of women's arts.[85] Equally, connectivity has been what enabled #WakingTheFeminists to cope with the pushback and the benign agreement couched in assurances and sympathy linked with inaction, tracking with what Ahmed called 'non-performativity,' which describes 'institutional speech acts that do not bring into effect what they name'.[86]

Much of their frustration at this form of attritional organisational stonewalling was processed privately within the group. A related issue was how to negotiate actions that have a double effect due to extent structures that protect existing gender asymmetries. #WakingTheFeminists intentionally strategised for sustainable solutions by respecting privacy and creating diplomatic and safe spaces in which to manage the difficult conversations that would promote positive change; however, by virtue of how patriarchal power operates through epistemological shut down, vouchsafing privacy, although

crucial as well as psychologically wise, necessarily also aligns with how patriarchy manages disruptive feminist discourse through recourse to privacy laws and NDAs,[87] demonstrating Elizabeth M. Schneider's argument that the concept of privacy can be weaponised to protect patriarchal interests because, 'the rationale of privacy legitimates and supports violence against women; woman-abuse reveals the violence of privacy'.[88] From multiple key angles the work of #WakingTheFeminists found 'the methodical in the unofficial' and in doing so 'reveal[ed] something about institutions'[89]; showing the obduracy of patriarchy's multiple informal resistances to the sharing of resources and power. Further, it asks us to rethink what knowledge is, how it is built, and where it resides by highlighting the deep organisational and operational expertise developed by #WakingTheFeminists activists during the campaign; Ahmed notes that 'thinking about complaint as institutional mechanics (and the complainer as an institutional mechanic) is a way to show what those who make complaints come to know about how institutions are working'.[90] This book dramatises the mechanics of patriarchy at work in the creative industries, and through narrating #WakingTheFeminists' experience of pushback, and #WakingTheFeminists' expertise in navigating barriers and obstacles it sends a clear invitation to men and male-identified folk to become more active participants in dismantling patriarchy and resisting its active distortions, prohibitions, and punishments for women, non-binary, trans, and queer folk, as well as other minoritised populations.[91] #WakingTheFeminists woke many folk, revitalised yet others already woke and weary, and made unprecedented inroads in equality during an intense and focused year, creating a roadmap for other equality activists.[92] As #WakingTheFeminists describes in this roadmap, although already saturated with cyberbullying, revenge porn, and gender violence threats, the internet in 2015 was not yet the increasingly punitive place it has since become.[93] As what Laura Bates and Debbie Ging have identified as the 'manosphere' has pervaded the internet making both virtual and physical spaces even more toxic and unsafe for girls, women, trans, and queer folk, male-identified allies are ever more urgently needed to ensure equality actions continue. Feminists have been doing equality heavy lifting for long enough – seeking change that has benefits for all across multiple social justice registers. What #WakingTheFeminists found out during the campaign was that women were not the problem nor in need of 'fixing' – instead the problematic system needed fixing. As #WakingTheFeminists is showing us, the feminists are already woke in all of the most positive registers of this term; deep systemic changes means waking everyone *up to* the patriarchy so it can finally be buried.