Abstract
Yeats's famous concluding question from 'Among School Children', 'How can we know the dancer from the dance?', has long been recognised as an invitation to ontological reflection. This paper also interprets the line as an invitation to re-examine the quartet of short plays *Four Plays for Dancers*. In so doing it seeks to consider these theatrical pieces as meta-formal works, which treat the themes of physical presence, knowing, being and representation through the medium most suitable for their exploration: performance. Bringing the text, specific productions of the plays (*At the Hawk's Well, The Dreaming of the Bones, The Only Jealous of Emer/Fighting the Waves, Calvary*), and the contexts of their reception into account, this paper will construe their operation as a modernist exploration of intersubjectivity, between representation and the body as a phenomenological site of resistance to representation. As if in anticipation of that later instruction consider where 'man's glory both begins and ends', these plays/events recalibrate starting points and termini in the dynamics of Irish life and art.

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