

List III MT

HIU33111, The Repatriation of Roger Casement (Georgina Laragy)

Assessment: Creative option plus reflective essay

Roger Casement (1864-1916) is a key figure in the nationalist pantheon having been executed for treason in Pentonville Prison in England. A sustained campaign for the return of his body to Ireland began in the 1930s and came to fruition in 1965 a year before the 50th Anniversary of the 1916 Rising. He was finally laid to rest, not in the location of his choice on the North Antrim coast, but in Glasnevin Cemetery in Dublin. The campaign for his repatriation reflected the vagaries of the Anglo-Irish relationship in the post-independence period. It also speaks to the importance of the dead body in western culture for commemorative purposes.

This List III module will explore firstly, who was Roger Casement, his role as an early campaigner for indigenous rights across European imperial territories in Africa and South America. We will explore the 'Casement Report' (1904), the material recorded during his time in Putamayo (1911) and his speech from the Dock of the Old Bailey in 1916 after he was found guilty of treason. Irish attitudes to Casement are conflicted however because his identity as a gay man mark him as a problematic iteration of Irish sexuality while being a key figure in Irish LGBTQI+ history.

We will examine Casement's legacy in Irish memory; an investigation into the authenticity of his diaries was initiated by Taoiseach Bertie Ahern in in 2000, he was recently commemorated in statue form in Dun Laoghaire, and he was mentioned in Dáil debates as recently as 2021.

Each week we will examine a different source related to the life, death, and afterlife of Roger Casement.