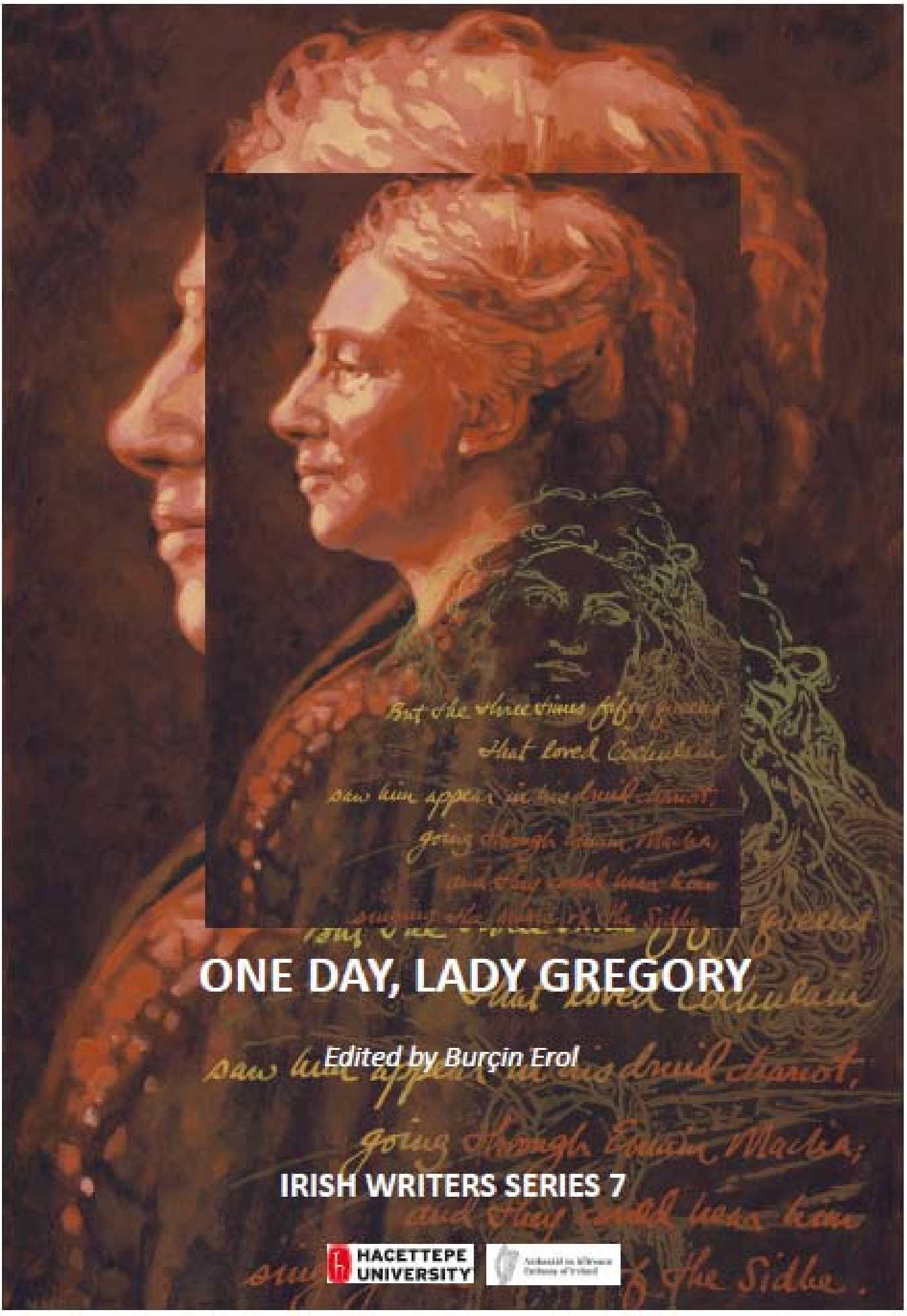

ONE DAY, LADY GREGORY

Edited by Burçin Erol

IRISH WRITERS SERIES 7

HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY

One Day, Lady Gregory

Edited by Burçin Erol

Department of English Language and Literature
Hacettepe University

and

The Embassy of Ireland

Irish Writers Series : 7

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Acknowledgements

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Foreword

The chapters in this volume are based on the papers presented at the "One Day, Lady Gregory Conference" held at Hacettepe University in 2017 with the collaboration of the Embassy of Ireland. This volume intends to bring together the works of the scholars in Turkey who specialise in and have published on the works or have worked on the translations of the works of Lady Gregory.

Lady Gregory who was a dramatist, folklorist, theatre manager, writer had a very important role in the Irish Literary Revival. She was instrumental in the establishment of the Abbey Theatre and the National Irish Theatre.

She was born in County Galway and educated at home. Although she was of Anglo- Irish descent her nanny Mary Sheridan was a Catholic and native Irish speaker, and through her she was introduced to the myths and legends, and the local Irish language (Kiltartanese as she called it). This background seems to have made an important impression on her and later she collected and put into writing these Irish myths and legends.

After her marriage, her home at Cool Park became the centre of artistic and intellectual activity with the visit of prominent figures such as Shaw, Yeats, O'Casey, Synge and contributed to the Irish Literary Theatre Project and and the founding of the Abbey Theatre.

Although Lady Gregory is always mentioned in relation to the Irish Literary Revival and her contributions are stated, and some of her short plays are studied briefly, unfortunately it seems that she has not received the attention and the in-depth study she deserves

although Shaw referred to her as "the greatest living Irish woman." All six of the former One Day, Irish Writers volumes have dealt with male literary Irish figures and this is injustice to the contribution of remarkable Irish women and Irish women writers to the culture and literature of Ireland.

Lady Gregory's works and contributions are not much known outside the literary circles. However, her short dramatic works have received attention and some of them have been translated into Turkish. The first translation of her short play *Spreading the News* (*Kulaktan Kulağa*) in 1961 (De Yayınları) was by Memet Fuat Bengü, a prominent writer, translator, editor and publisher who was a graduate of the Department of English Literature, İstanbul University. The play was also included in an anthology of plays by prominent Western playwrights. It has been reprinted three times, the last one being in 1998. The second translation was of *The Rising of the Moon* (*Ay Doğarken*) in 1963 (De Yayınları) by Akşit Göktürk, a well known scholar, linguist and translator, who was also the graduate and later faculty member of the Department of English Literature, İstanbul University. Nazlı Miraç Ümit, who is a research assistant of the Department of Art Management, İstanbul Kültür University, has translated *Kulaktan Kulağa* (*Spreading the News*), *Cezaevi Kapısı* (*The Gaol Gate*), *Ay Doğarken* (*The Rising of the Moon*), *Ziyaret* (*The Travelling Man*), *Aziz Halvey* (*Hyacinth Halvey*), *Küçük Karga* (*The Jackdaw*), *Kimsesizler* (*The Workhouse Ward*) (Mitos Boyut, 2012) as the second of the Irish Plays series.

As for the staging of Lady Gregory's plays in Turkey *Spreading the News* seems to be quite popular with both state, municipality, conservatoire players and on the amateur level with university and high school drama clubs. There are records of performance for Bursa State Theatre 1963-63, 1983/84-85, Konya State Theatre 2011-12. There are also records of performances by Trabzon Sanat Tiyatrosu, 2009. The play has also been staged by the Konak municipality of İzmir as a "children's play" for young audiences. There are also various records of performances by university and school clubs and municipality drama clubs as recent as 2018. The popularity of the play may be not only due to the characteristics of the play but also to the availability of the Turkish text. With the translation of the seven plays now there may be more choice for the staging of the other plays also.

I hope that this volume will contribute to the studies, understanding and appreciation of Lady Gregory by providing new approaches and ways of reading her works and once more calling attention to her very important role in the development of Irish culture, language and literature.

Burçin Erol
August 2018

Preface

"Time to possess my soul": One Day, Lady Gregory

Melissa Sihra

Throughout her life Lady Gregory was fascinated by the wise-woman Biddy Early (1798-1874) of whom stories thickly swirled. In *Visions and Beliefs in the West of Ireland* (1920) Gregory writes: "In talking to the people I often heard the name of Biddy Early, and I began to gather many stories of her, some calling her a healer and some a witch" (Waters and McDiarmid 57). In 1897 Gregory made the pilgrimage to seek-out Biddy's small peasant holding near the remote village of Feakle in Co. Clare and learnt that she had died only twenty years earlier. Gregory tells us: "I had been told how to find Biddy Early's house 'beyond the little humpy bridge,' and I walked on till I came to it, a poor cottage enough, high up on a mass rock by the roadside" (Waters and McDiarmid 58). In the many folktales gathered by Lady Gregory about Biddy Early she found deeply ingrained narratives of female empowerment. In one story, an Old Man from Kinvara remembers how "Biddy Early beat all women. No one could touch her" (Waters and McDiarmid 67). At the time, Gregory reflected upon Biddy's future legacy:

> I think as time goes on her fame will grow and some of the myths that always hang in the air will gather round her, for I think the first thing I was told of her was, 'There used surely to be enchanters in the old time, magicians and freemasons. Old Biddy Early's power came from the same thing.' (Waters and McDiarmid 58)

However the Irish State refused to buy or preserve Biddy Early's cottage and now, in a
similar fate to Lady Gregory's house at Coole Park, it has almost disappeared. The State did buy Coole Park and sadly it was they who demolished it less than ten years after Lady Gregory's death when the house was sold off brick by brick. Like the wondrous folktales of Biddy Early's healing practice, Gregory has left a remarkable legacy of over forty plays, poetry, essays, journals, autobiography, folklore collections, Irish translations and adaptations as well as co-founding the national theatre of Ireland, The Abbey. While Gregory's extraordinary body of work as the most popular playwright of her day should surely have left a great mark on the Irish cultural landscape she was, like her spiritual predecessor, quickly forgotten and long ignored.

In this exciting and highly significant volume of essays Lady Augusta Gregory's writings are once more evaluated. The essays are from the first international conference dedicated to Lady Gregory's work, "One Day, Lady Gregory," which took place at Hacettepe University, Ankara, in association with the Embassy of Ireland, on 23 November 2017. Each of the contributions presents a rigorous and timely engagement with Lady Gregory's writings, repositioning her as central to the Irish Literary Revival and to modern Irish drama. The collection addresses the lack of acknowledgment of Lady Gregory's contributions to Irish theatre both during her lifetime, such as her elision as co-author of plays with William Butler Yeats, and after her death. In "Remaking Herself: Lady Gregory's Diaries 1892-1902," N. Belgin Elbir looks at how "[t]he privacy of the diary allows for freedom of thought and freedom of expression that make it possible for the writer of the diary to question, to explore and to understand." As a woman seeking freedom and subjectivity in a confining patriarchal world, Elbir identifies how Lady Gregory "expresses the recognition of this need when she writes, in the first entry for the year 1899, 'no time to possess my soul since last I wrote.' "

Lady Gregory's suppression, both by herself and others, as well as her self-sacrifice are explored in this volume. During her life Lady Gregory acquiesced to her own erasure by allowing Yeats to claim sole authorship of *Kathleen Ni Houlihan, The Pot of Broth* and *The Unicorn and the Stars.* She often sacrificed her creative potential for the artistic needs of Yeats or for the personal demands of her husband, her family and others. Indeed, sacrifice and suppression were overarching aspects of Lady Gregory's life. As a young wife to

Sir William Gregory she was expected to leave her newborn baby Robert and to accompany Sir William on travels around Europe and beyond. Of Lady Gregory's marriage, Judith Hill writes that "the price she paid was that she was rarely close to Robert as an infant, and he remained 'baby' or 'baba' for at least two years" (35). Lady Gregory felt internal conflict and resentment towards her husband for the emotional sacrifice that she had to make as a wife and mother, and while she never publicly criticised Sir William she later made the revealing comment: "The weak point in marriage is that it legitimises selfishness" (qtd. in Hill 35). Just as she gave-up precious years of maternal bonding with Robert, Lady Gregory sacrificed her identity as a playwright in favour of the self-serving needs of Yeats to assert himself as single-author of their collaborative works. In her private journal she writes of *Kathleen Ni Houlihan:* "Rather hard on me, not giving my name with Kathleen Ni Houlihan that I wrote all but all of" (qtd. by Foster in Murphy Vol. II 580). Yet throughout all, a sense of loyalty pervaded and Lady Gregory never publically criticised Yeats or her husband.

Lady Gregory was married for twelve years and was forty when Sir William died in 1892. This left her a fecund period of forty years to come as an independent artist. It was only in her (relatively young) widowhood at Coole Park that Lady Gregory began to find an inner sense of freedom and stability where her creative and maternal energies could flow like the surrounding waters. Emphasising this point, N. Belgin Elbir cites Gregory's reflective journal-entry towards the end of her life: "If I had not married, I should not have learned the quick enrichment of sentences that one gets in conversation; had I not been widowed I should not have found the detachment of mind, the leisure for observation, necessary to give insight into character, to express and interpret it. [...] Loneliness made me rich – 'full.' " There was freedom for Lady Gregory in widowhood and even though she was artistically supressed by Yeats in many ways, their relationship greatly enriched them both until her death in 1932. Yet in her autobiography *Seventy Years* she reflects that her achievements were not all due to the influence of Yeats: "If I had not met Yeats I believe I should still have become a writer" (390).

In Gregory's notes on her play *Grania,* she reflects upon how "a question tempts one more than the beaten path of authorised history" (Coxhead 216). If we challenge the "beaten path of authorised history" we find that Gregory is the initiator of Irish folk-drama at the Abbey because she is the genesis of the Hiberno-English literary dialect form. Just seven years after Lady Gregory's death, Una Ellis-Fermor identified the significance of her influence as

the starting-point of the new dramatic movement of the Irish Literary Revival, a fact which managed to become rapidly obscured:

> From her derives the characteristic dialogue which often appears, variously modified by her successors, in one form or another to the present day. The imagery, syntax and vocabulary that she drew from her experience of the Irish speaking peasants of Galway passed on into the hands of Synge, and became for a time the familiar dialect of the folk plays of the Abbey Theatre. [...] The language which she discovered made a deep impression upon the early playwrights and audiences and [...] upon, their descendants. (Ellis-Fermor 161)

The originality, exuberance, comedy, technical skill, popularity and range of Gregory's dramatic writing has predominantly been erased from the repertoire and from Irish theatre history. As Anthony Roche points out: "Whereas during her lifetime and for many decades afterwards Lady Gregory's plays proved extremely popular and were regularly staged, they are now never seen, only read" (111). Her plays were the most commercially successful on the Abbey stage during her lifetime and ensured the theatre's survival:

> Her success with *Spreading the News* had given her a confidence, and in the next few years she would become the most reliable writer for the Abbey. In 1905 and 1906 the theatre produced ten new plays, five of which were Augusta's. [...] She would supply two or three new plays a year until 1912, after which she averaged about one play a year until 1924. Her plays would also be performed more often than those of the other writers. (Hill 192)

At the time Annie Horniman offered the greatest praise: "Lady Gregory's work must be well treated – she is the best 'draw' of the lot of you. I am so proud of her [...] (Hill 187). George Bernard Shaw, famously dismissive of the Celtic Twilight Movement, had high praise for Gregory's plays "They are quite out-of-the-way-good even from a professional point of view" (qtd. in Hill 111).

Many of Lady Gregory's activities and contributions have been erased, forgotten or minimised by the dominant male narratives of Irish theatre history. While much has been written about the inspirational effect of the Aran Islands upon John Millington Synge,

Lady Gregory had travelled to the Aran Islands long before him to collect folklore and to write pieces such as "The Haunted Islands." Gregory was the first of the three future first Abbey Theatre co-directors to visit the Aran Islands. Before she knew either Yeats or Synge she travelled to Aran for a "day trip by yacht in 1887" (Pethica, "A Young Man's Ghost" 4). Recently widowed in 1893 she made a second journey alone searching actively, James Pethica observes, "for a sustained creative focus" ("A Young Man's Ghost" 4). On this trip Gregory crossed unaccompanied except for a fisherman by open currach to Inis Oírr where she spent five days storm-bound in a peasant cottage relishing immersing herself in the remoteness of the culture. Pethica points out that such solitary travelling was "a most unusual undertaking for an Ascendancy woman at that time" (Introduction xx). By this time Gregory was a highly accomplished folklorist, had begun to learn Irish and to collaborate with Yeats on his revised edition of *The Celtic Twilight.* She wrote a now lost article about this visit to the Aran Islands, linking the "wild" culture she had experienced there to the "anti-modern impulse motivating the recently published volume *The Celtic Twilight"* (Pethica, "A Young Man's Ghost" 4), thus placing her folklore-practice at the core of the emergent Celtic Revival Movement. Gregory's third trip to the Aran Islands in 1898, this time to Inis Meáin, is the very first time that she laid eyes on Synge. This was the first year in which Synge had visited Aran. On this trip Gregory records in her journal:

> I first saw J.M. Synge in the North Island of Aran. I was staying there gathering folk-lore, talking to the people, and felt quite angry when I passed another outsider walking here and there, talking also to the people. I was jealous of not being alone on the island among the fishers and seaweed gatherers. I did not speak to the stranger, nor was he inclined to speak to me; he also looked on me as an intruder, I only heard his name. (63)

The emotional power of Gregory's language is revelatory; she was "angry" and "jealous;" she talks of the "stranger" and the "intruder" with an honesty that exposes her frustration at Synge's presence. He too spoke of his "galling jealousy" at anyone else who visited the Aran Islands (Pethica, "A Young Man's Ghost" 7). Gregory's disappointment and resentment that someone else was there with similar intent marks her self-awareness as an artist and her association with the place, the people and the material that she was engaging with. This was also the beginning of her and Synge's professional rivalry. Though history has monumentalised the effect of the Aran Islands upon Synge, Lady Gregory was the first to go there

and, in a poignant symbol of women's erasure from Irish theatre history, has been all but written out.

Much has been made also of the inspirational effect that the landscape of Coole Park had upon Yeats, Synge and other men. In his Foreword to Lady Gregory's *Selected Plays* in 1962, Sean O'Casey passionately laments the loss of Coole Park in terms of Yeats alone: "The house gave him great woods, a fine river, a wide lake, the majestic whirr of wild swans in flight, and evenings of peace full of the linnet's wings" (qtd. in Coxhead 7). But for everything that Coole yielded to the male writers, it offered more to Gregory. Coole was a visionary landscape for Gregory, far beyond the "objective curiosity of the scientist," and a place where "the actual world [is] no more than a shadow of a world of deeper meaning behind" (Feehan and O'Donovan 69). Lady Gregory's intimate connection to the landscape is largely unexplored. The waters and Seven Woods offered Gregory a transcendent site of communion with otherness, particularly Inchy Wood, where she often stayed out late into the evening. She tells us,

> It lies beyond the rock cavern where the water of the lake disappears from us, on its hidden journey to the sea. The water that had known unearthly visitors, heard unearthly sounds at its rising, is not without them as it vanishes from our sight. (Feehan and O'Donovan 33)

Isabella Augusta Persse's earliest influence was her nurse Mary Sheridan who reared the children on "fairy stories" – "European tales, Irish fairy stories" and reminiscences of Fenian heroism (Hill 116). Irish folk-belief is characterised by the presence of a metaphysical realm equal if not more powerful than the everyday world. As a highly accomplished folklorist Gregory learnt of the presence of the "faery-world" as a core element of daily rural life and structures of meaning, which was in contradiction to W.B. Yeats's esoteric quest for symbolic literary source-material, which he interpreted and analysed for image and metaphor. Throughout her practice of "folkloring," Gregory listened intently to the neighbouring country folk for whom the fairies and banshees "were as real as the mountains and sea" (Hill 92). In the early stages of her collecting she observed: "[I] am surprised to find how full of [fairy lore] are the minds of the people - & how strong the belief in the invisible world around us" (Hill 110). She realised that, far from being arcane, folklore was an intrinsic part of their lives, as real as the landscape, "[s]hadows of cloud and rock by day, shadows of thoughts, of dreams, of the dead by night" (Hill 116). Her 1906 essay, "The

Haunted Islands," draws on the well-spring of Aran as a source of pre-Christian imagination, where she universalises the folklore that she gathered on her third visit in 1898: "There are no doubters in the Haunted Islands. The veil between things visible and things invisible has scarcely thickened for them since angels fought in the air for the souls of the dead [...]. They have not been moulded in that dogma which makes belief in the after life an essential (Pethica "A young Man's Ghost" 5). Hill makes the point that, "the writing of folklore gave Augusta a paradigm for the theatre, for she perceived folklore as a continuous tradition to which she was contributing" (199).

Hande Seber's illuminating essay gives a sense of Lady Gregory's determination in all the projects that she chose to undertake, such as her translation and adaptation of the epic Cuchulain Cycle, as well as a moving account of the profound sense of loss her death had upon Yeats. In *Cuchulain of Muirthemne* (1902) Gregory looked to the rhythm of the speech of local Kiltartan. Published just one year after writing her first play, Yeats, in the Introduction to the volume, states: "And now all in a moment, as it seemed, she became the founder of modern dialect literature" (qtd. in Ellis-Fermor 138). Seber explores Gregory's immense contribution to Irish folklore citing Yeats's *Dramatis Personae* in which he says: "She wrote, if my memory does not deceive me, two hundred thousand words, discovering that vivid English she was the first to use upon the stage" (399-400). Here we see not only Yeats's deep admiration for Gregory's achievements but also her central position as the very first dramatist to use Hiberno-English dialect on the stage. The usually self-deprecating Gregory claims her primary position as the creator of the modern Irish literary dialect form in her journal in 1913 when she reflects upon the death of Synge:

> When my *Cuchulain of Muirthemne* came out, [Synge] said to Mr. Yeats he had been amazed to find in it the dialect he had been trying to master. He wrote to me: 'Your *Cuchulain* is a part of my daily bread.' I say this with a little pride, for I was the first to use the Irish idiom as it is spoken, with intention and with belief in it. (qtd. in Coxhead 248)

Margaret J-M Sönmez presents a fascinating comparative analysis of Gregory's and Yeats's writings in order to demonstrate the ways in which Lady Gregory's distinct hand was suppressed by that of Yeats: "The publication history of Augusta Gregory's and W.B. Yeats's co-authored plays is a story of the suppressing of Gregory's name, and this starts very early." Sönmez points out: "There are six

plays that are now understood to have been written in large by Gregory, but which until the 1990s appeared under Yeats's name." These plays are *The Pot of Broth* (1902), *Kathleen Ni Houlihan* (1902), *The Country of the Young* and *Heads or Harps* (both unpublished and unproduced during their lifetime), *When Nothing is Left* (1902/3) and *The Unicorn from the Stars* (1907). In this close study of the writing style, form, aesthetic approach and dramaturgy of both Gregory and Yeats, Sönmez explores many of the complicated and inextricable aspects of their collaborations as well as the very clear individual aspects of each playwright's work. She points out the ambivalences and often deliberate ambiguities that were at play on the part of Yeats who "never pretended that Gregory did not help with his plays, but continued to refer to all the co-authored plays, including *Cathleen,* as his." We learn how Yeats (ironically considering his insistence upon sole-authorship) used the term "dictate" and "dictation" when mentioning that Lady Gregory typed-up the plays, implying that she was purely passive in the process. Sönmez observes that in the Preface to a 1908 volume of three plays including *The Unicorn from the Stars* Yeats states: "About seven years ago I began to dictate the first of these plays to Lady Gregory." Gregory evidently "concurred to the subsuming of her plays under Yeats's name" in an act of internalised suppession which perhaps related to the "Victorian idea of service" in a society of gender power-relations which most definitely favoured men. Although Sönmez concludes her essay with the interesting point that Gregory's and Yeats's combined strength as playwrights to produce plays "in many ways, outstripped in richness the products of their individual efforts" she demonstrates through in-depth linguistic analysis Gregory's "entirely original" Kiltartanese Hiberno-English dialect (syntax, idiom, phrasing and Irish vocabulary) and the extent to which Gregory authored these plays.

This collection of essays positions Lady Gregory as central to the Irish Literary Revival. Sönmez rightly states: "[S]he was perhaps the very first modern writer of dialect plays (plays written predominantly in a localised dialect) in the English language." Although it was previously thought to have been D.H. Lawrence, Sönmez points out that his first Nottinghamshire dialect play did not come out until 1909. For Sönmez, "[t]he English Irish dialect that Gregory presented was an entirely new language for the stage, and a serious attempt at representing the real, day-to-day language of dialect speakers in the Galway area." Synge's "attempts at dialect were published a little later; he sent his early plays to Gregory and Yeats for their approval, because they were already establishing the Abbey Theatre and producing plays. D.E.S. Maxwell points out in *A*

Critical History of Modern Irish Drama 1891-1980 that: "Her stage adaptation of the Kiltartan dialect, Kiltartanese as she called it, is said to have been admired by her contemporaries, unlike the more stylized attempts of an Irish dialect presented in Synge's plays" (5).

Elsewhere in this volume A. Deniz Bozer considers nationalistic sentiments in one of Lady Gregory's most famous plays *The Rising of the Moon* and how the conflict between the "Raggedy Man" (or Fenian hero) and the policeman are in fact two sides of the same coin, reflecting Gregory's own inner conflict "between her allegiance to the Ascendancy and her feelings of nationalism."

In 1962 O'Casey made an impassioned call a for a place for Lady Gregory to be "engraved deep on the everlasting tablets of Irish History":

> Lady Gregory, mother of many books, Daughter of Ireland, daughter of wise words, of good deeds, of great humour, lover of tree and sweet herb, of beast and bird, we hail thee still! We do not wish, nor can we afford, to murmur farewell to thee for a long, long time to come. Since she died, there has been no whisper or remembrance given, as far as I know, to Lady Gregory. (qtd. in Ellis-Fermor 5)

Now through the illuminating essays in this collection, a light shines once more upon the legacy of Lady Gregory; One Day, now, Lady Gregory's great work lives amongst us again.

Melissa Sihra,
Trinity College,
Dublin 2018

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1

The Endorsement of Nationalistic Sentiments in Lady Gregory's *The Rising of the Moon*

A. Deniz Bozer

It has always been more challenging for women to produce in the field of dramatic writing compared to writing in other genres. Lady Augusta Gregory (1852-1932) is unique in this sense for she penned not only twenty-seven original plays until her death but she accomplished this as a Protestant and a member of the Ascendancy – a powerful and wealthy yet minority class in Ireland.

Lady Augusta Persse Gregory was born in the family home Roxborough House in County Galway in the west of Ireland in 1852 to an Anglo-Irish Protestant land-owning family representing the affluent elite. In 1880, at twenty-eight years of age, she married a widower, Sir William Gregory,[1] thirty-five years her senior. Sir William, an Anglo-Irish member of Parliament and once governor of Ceylon (today's Sri Lanka), owned the nearby estate Coole Park which became their home especially during the summers. Thus, Lady Gregory can be recognised as a member of the Protestant Ascendancy by both birth and marriage.

[1] Their son Robert, born in 1881 was killed while serving as a pilot during the First World War in 1918 at the age of thirty-seven. This incident inspired Yeats to write his poems "An Irish Airman Forsees His Death" and "In Memory of Major Robert Gregory."

The Ascendancy, known as the Anglo-Irish landowning class, was considered not much different than the colonial British who had colonised Ireland in the twelfth century in their oppression of the Irish Catholics and their foregrounding of English education and culture as opposed to Irish culture and history - henceforth dominating the political and cultural scene of Ireland. Although the Ascendancy were "Irish by birth and circumstances, they lived in a cultural atmosphere that was essentially English" (Watson 59). Therefore, along these lines, Lady Gregory received an English education at home by an English governess (Coxhead 10).

In 1831, with the establishment of the National Education System, "English culture and history became core elements of the national curriculum, which paid no heed to the Irish language or to the nation's history (Kibard and Matthews 271). Thus, not only the land but the language and culture of Ireland was suppressed and as a result the development of Irish identity was hindered. Instead of being taught about the accomplishments of the Irish legendary hero Cuchulain in Gaelic, people were familiarised with the British legend of King Arthur in English. Within the National School System, in the 1830s English was imposed as the vernacular and using Irish was discouraged and even penalised by the colonial authorities.[2] Thereby, most Irish engaged in mastering English and the Irish language came to be "mainly spoken by small farmers and fisher-folk in the poorest parts of west Ireland" (Kiberd and Mathews 110). It was not only the language that suffered in the hands of the colonisers. As Anglicisation pressed forward in the early half of the nineteenth century, along with the Irish language, Irish values and Catholicism, too, "were pushed to the periphery and those who practised them were punished severely" (Hechter 109-10). Henceforth, the laws were beneficial in securing the prerogatives of the politically, economically and socially advantaged Ascendancy who had been the ruling class in Ireland since the seventeenth century.

However, it was through her Irish-speaking nanny, Mary Sheridan, that Lady Gregory as a child developed an interest in the Irish language, culture and folklore. Her interest can be observed to have continued in her adult years as she states that after her marriage in 1880 she "bought a grammar and worked at it for a while with the help of a gardener." She continues: "But it was difficult and my teacher was languid, suspecting it may be some hidden mockery,

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[2] The National School System prohibited Irish until 1871.

for those were the days before Irish became the fashion" (Gregory *The Kiltartan Poetry Book* 9). Several years later, after her husband's death in 1892, she kept on studying Irish, employed tutors to teach her the language, and practised it by talking with her tenants. Like Synge, in 1893 she travelled to the Aran Islands, visiting Inisheer where her interest in the Irish language and culture was awakened. In the meantime, Lady Gregory's nationalistic stance became apparent with her starting to collect, translate and subsequently publish Irish myths and legends such as *Cuchulain of Muirthemne* (1902), *A Book of Saints and Wonders* (1906) and *Visions and Beliefs in the West of Ireland* (1920) among others, hence significantly contributing to the revival of rural folk culture. In her dedication in the first edition of *Cuchulain of Muirthemne*, revealing her resentment of male authors and folklorists, she complains that "[...] if there were more respect for things Irish among learned men that live in the college at Dublin, [...] this work would not have been left to a woman of the house, that has to be minding the place, and listening to complaints, and dividing her share of food" (vi). Lady Gregory, translated these myths and legends into English, or more precisely "Kiltartanese" as she named it, a form of Hiberno-English. This language and peasant dialect which she named after the district "Kiltartan" around Coole involved subverting the rules of the Queen's English and employing Irish syntax, idioms and expressions. She used this Hiberno-English style in almost all her plays and translations. However, some critics find Kiltartanese "condescendingly quaint" (Frazier 41), while others argue that it is "by no means merely quaint. It is alive, strong, and penetrating" (Murray 46). In any case, through her use of Kiltartan, in her own way, Lady Gregory was striving to legitimise nationalism through language.

During this rise of nationalism, by the end of the nineteenth century, the power of the Ascendancy seemed to wane with the Catholic majority now gaining political and economic power. In the due course of events the Anglo-Irish Protestant Ascendancy gradually lost its strong hold on Irish politics, economy and cultural life. Thus, "[t]he construction of an Irish cultural identity emerged at the end of the nineteenth century within the context of colonialism. For the nationalist movement in Ireland, a cultural representation was needed to establish an Irishness that was positive and different from Englishness" (Foley 35).

Henceforth, Lady Gregory became involved in the Irish Literary Revival.[3] Upon her husband's death in 1892 Coole Park[4] became the centre of the Irish Renaissance as prominent writers, artists and intellectuals of the time like W.B. Yeats, J.M. Synge, Sean O'Casey, Jack Yeats, George Russell (AE) and Douglas Hyde visited and shared their views on literature and art. The objective of the Irish Revival was to resist cultural imperialism and draw attention to the ancient Irish myths and epics in order to establish that Ireland had a long and rich tradition of literature and therefore was a civilisation in its own right. For this reason, those who were involved in this national movement drew upon their own cultural heritage and used the Irish language and myths to promote Irish nationalism. Rejecting an English identity, they aimed at recovering their own Irish identity. Therefore, establishing Irishness meant "disestablishing Britishness" since "being 'Irish' is about not being British"
(Smythe 1122).

It was at this time that Lady Gregory made the acquaintance of Douglas Hyde, the prominent folklorist. She was inspired by Hyde's translations of Irish folk songs, with the aim of raising national consciousness through legends and myths. Foregrounding their folkloric and lingual significance Kearney states that myths and legends "[e]xpress [...] a genuine need for collective rootedness and identity" (109). When in 1893 Douglas Hyde, a dissident intellectual from a Protestant family and an Irish language scholar who was to become the first president of the Irish Free State, and his associates founded the Gaelic League,[5] their main objective was to keep the Irish language alive in Ireland, to render it a medium of oral and written communication. Hyde did not wish to involve politics in the Gaelic League but desired only to awaken an awareness of the Irish language in the Irish people, regardless of class. A year before, in 1892, in an article Hyde wrote he states that "[w]hen we speak of 'The Necessity for De-Anglicising the Irish Nation,' we mean it, not as

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3 The Irish Literary Revival initiated by Yeats, Synge and Lady Gregory was discredited by the Catholic middle classes, the Gaelic Leaguers and some republican nationalists who were mainly sceptical of the sincerity of their efforts.

4 The house at Coole Park was demolished in 1941, that is nine years after Lady Gregory's death. Only the garden walls and ruins of the stable block are left. However, the grounds are open to public (Pilkington 104).

5 At the time "there were only six books in print in Irish" (Kiberd and Mathews 110).

a protest against imitating what is best in the people, for that would be absurd, but rather to show the folly of neglecting what is Irish, and hastening to adopt, pell-mell, and indiscriminately, everything that is English, simply" (2). However, some academics and scholars including a few professors at Trinity College Dublin, "denounced the leaders of the League as nostalgists, bent on returning Ireland to a medieval mindset just when it seemed about to become modern" (Kiberd and Mathews 111). It is thought-provoking that while Anglo-Irish Protestant writers like Lady Gregory, Yeats and Synge supported the translations of Irish myths into English, Irish Catholic Patrick Pearse, who was a republican and an embodiment of the Easter Rising, favoured Gaelic.

Interestingly, Lady Gregory's concerning herself with politics seems to have begun not in Ireland but in Egypt where she and her husband Sir William visited in 1881. There they met the English poet and writer Wilfrid Scawen Blunt[6] and his wife Lady Anne. At the time, Egypt was undergoing political turmoil as Ahmed Arabi Pasha, a colonel in the Egyptian army, was stirring a nationalistic movement in the country. Meeting Blunt, who was known for his anti-imperialist views and his support of Egypts's liberation from Ottomon rule, can be said to have ignited not only an emotional flame in Lady Gregory for she engaged in an adulterous affair with him there, but also triggered her own liberal feelings and paved the way to her career as a writer in 1882 with the publication of "Arabi and his Household."

"Arabi and his Household," was originally published under her own name as a letter in *The Times*, on 23 October, and later published as a pamphlet. It is about Ahmed Arabi (also written Ourabi, Urabi, Orabi) Pasha who initiated a short-winded Egyptian nationalist movement in 1879, known as the Arabi Revolt, against the Ottoman *khedive* (viceroy). For his uprising, Arabi was under attack in the British media for being a rebel leader. In this pamphlet which revealed her anti-colonialist views, Lady Gregory aimed to defend Arabi Pasha against these negative British depictions for she obviously sympathised with the Egyptians who were – like the Irish - under foreign rule. Nevertheless, despite her sympathy for Egyptian independence, she remained firmly opposed to independence or home rule in Ireland for about two more decades.

[6] Blunt was in Egypt with his wife, Lady Anne Noel, the granddaughter of Lord Byron, in the business of breeding pure-blooded Arabian horses (Archer and Fleming 11).

Following the introduction of the Second Home Rule Bill in 1893 by the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, William E. Gladstone, who was supported by the leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party, Charles Stewart Parnell, Lady Gregory anonymously published an anti-Home Rule pamphlet entitled *A Phantom's Pilgrimage, or Home Ruin*. Pethica argues that Lady Gregory chose to publish this work anonymously, "for in withholding her name from the publication she clearly remained unwilling to commit herself publicly to anti-Nationalism, the cause of Landlords' rights, or indeed to any constituency espousing the kind of partisanship that might undermine her hopes for a solution fair to all the Irish people" (*Lady Gregory's Diaries* xviii). On the other hand, as Hill posits, as an explicit unionist, she wished "to see Home Rule killed with kindness. 'Home Rule is knocked to pieces for some time to come,' she told" (80). The eventual defeat of the bill in 1893 by the Westminster Parliament, however, demoralised the Irish nationalists.

In *A Phantom's Pilgrimage, or Home Ruin*, which presents a dystopic Ireland under Home Rule, Gladstone is portrayed as the Phantom who is allowed to choose from among his many doings in the world and return to the world for one day to evaluate the significance of that particular act. The Phantom chooses Home Rule for Ireland. However, as he wanders in the country he realises that landowners, tenants, Catholics, every one in the land has been negatively affected by Home Rule. Being a member of the Ascendancy and with both her own family, the Persses, and her husband being strong unionists,[7] it was only natural for Lady Gregory to compose this anti-nationalistic pamphlet opposing Home Rule.

Yet, in time Lady Gregory drifted away from her unionist bearing. Following her husband's death in 1892 and her visit to Inisheer in the Aran Islands in 1893, her interest in the Irish language and folk tales, hence Irish nationalism, was awakened.

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[7] Because of their political stance, the Persses house in Roxborough was burnt down in 1922 by the Irish Volunteers who were the precursor of the Irish Republican Brotherhood and the Irish Republican Army. Lady Gregory has recorded in her journals that buildings were burnt down, men beaten or shot and livestock killed. Moreover, in the chapter titled "Rising" of *Seventy Years*, Lady Gregory refers to the rioteers threatening her neighborhood as "village tyrants" and "armed bullies" (546).

Correspondingly, she states: "My imagination was aroused. I was becoming aware of a world I was ignorant of" (*The Kiltartan Poetry Book* 11-12). After editing her husband's autobiography, *An Autobiography of Sir William Gregory* (1894), she engaged in preparing selections from Sir William Gregory's grandfather's correspondence for publication. This work which was published with the title *Mr Gregory's Letter-Box 1813–30* (1898) reveals her researching Irish history and developing an interest in Irishness. She marks that her great-grandfather who, unlike the other family members, valued Irish nationalism and had been a Volunteer; she further notes: as children, "we were not taught Irish history, and I used to puzzle over the meaning of the words: 'This bridge was erected by William Persse Esquire, Col. of the Roxborough Volunteers in the year 1783, in memory of Ireland's Emancipation from Foreign Jurisdiction'" (*Mr. Gregory's Letter-Box* 19).

Concerned about her family image, her husband's respectability in his social milieu and her son's expectations for the future, Lady Gregory seemed reluctant to make an open nationalistic statement before 1892. Correspondingly, it can be said that she often chose to make private comments in her correspondence while maintaining a neutral stance in public. Her nationalist affinities became explicit after 1892 for now she had buried both son and husband and had no one left to be concerned about. Now being known as a Freestater could not matter. Nevertheless, her nationalistic views came as a surprise to her family and friends who failed to understand her interest in folklore and her support of organisations such as the Gaelic League and became gradually alienated (Hill 129).

After 1900 Lady Gregory claimed to be merely "preparing for" rather than "working for Home Rule" (*Diaries* 259). She became committed to cultural nationalism as displayed in her essay "The Felons of Our Land" in which she can be observed to declare her nationalististic feelings. In this essay which appeared in *Comhill Magazine* in May 1900, she argues that in Ireland "a 'felon' has come to mean one who has gone to death or to prison for the sake of a principle or a cause, someone who has committed a crime in the eyes of the law, not in the eyes of the people" (Gregory, *Selected Writings* 255). In "Felons of Our Land" Lady Gregory explains how the talent for storytelling serves the cause of Irish nationalism and how the ballad tradition is an alternative to historiography: "Irish history, being forbidden in the schools, has lifted up its voice in the streets, and has sung the memory of each new movement, and of the men

who guided it, into the memory of each new generation" (*Selected Writings* 268-9). Thus, Lady Gregory was underlining the role of ballads in honouring the names of "the 'felons' themselves, 'the men who loved the cause that never dies'" (Gregory *Selected Writings* 257-258). Nevertheless, she later writes in her diary: "I had already determined not to go so far towards political nationalism in anything I write again as in the 'Felons' partly because I wish to keep out of politics and work only for literature" (Gregory, *Diaries* 267). A year later, she edited *Ideals in Ireland* (1901) which is a collection of essays on Irish nationalism including D.P. Moran's "The Battle of Two Civilizations" and George Moore's "Literature and the Irish Language."

The change in her politics was slow and intermittent. For instance, after the riots which followed the opening performance of Synge's *Playboy of the Western World* (1907) at the Abbey, Lady Gregory, in a letter she wrote to Yeats, haughtily scorned the nationalists who found the play an insult to Irishness: "It is the old battle, between those who use a toothbrush and those who don't" (qtd. in Toibin 65). On the other hand, two years later the same woman displayed a different attitude in the incident in 1909 when George Bernard Shaw's one-act melodramatic sermon *The Shewing-up of Blanco Posnet* was to be performed at the Abbey. Set in America, it was about Blanco - a horse thief – who harboured unorthodox views about God and religion. In London, the Lord Chamberlain had already banned the play for its blasphemous content and use of foul language. However, since the Chamberlain's ban was not valid in Dublin, Shaw asked Lady Gregory to produce the play at the Abbey. She was willing to see the play of another compatriot, though an Anglo-Irish dramatist whose family belonged to the Protestant Ascendancy, staged at the Abbey. Therefore, she did not hesitate to confront a British authority albeit in a style suitably befitting her distinguished class and fair sex. On 20 August 1909 Lady Gregory and Yeats met with the Viceroy of Ireland at his house where they negotiated the possibility of the play to be staged at the Abbey. In the meantime, the Viceroy offered them tea and although Lady Gregory had a "consuming desire" for the tea, she states in a humorous manner that their "heroic refusal" (Gregory, *Our Irish Theatre* 161) of the tea must have had some effect on the Viceroy as the play was eventually staged at the Abbey, directed by Lady Gregory herself (Murray 38).

Later in 1913, she displays a more convincing nationalist stance in a letter she writes to answer a friend who accuses her of supporting Home Rule. She now explicitly exhibits an anti-British attitude as she contends: "I defy anyone to study Irish history without getting a dislike and distrust of the English" (*Our Irish Theatre* 55).

Her variable political behaviour can be yet again observed in relation to the 1916 Easter Rising, which is often considered "as the climactic point of the political and cultural reaffirmation of Irishness" (O'Brien 15), when she denigrates those who fought for Irishness as "rabble" in a letter she writes to Yeats: "[I]t is terrible to think of the executions and killings that are sure to come [...] yet it must be so [...] we had been at the mercy of a rabble for a long time, both here and in Dublin, with no apparent policy [...]" (Gregory, *Journals* I.588-89). In the wake of the executions of the sixteen men who were the leaders during the Rising, however, the change in her attitude is apparent as she is now "filled with sorrow at the Dublin Tragedy" (Gregory, *Seventy Years* 544). Moreover, she emphasises that the execution of Major John MacBride was "the best event that could come to him, giving him dignity" (Gregory, *Seventy Years* 544).

On the other hand, once more she questions the Irish freedom fighters in her letter dated 27 April 1916 to John Quinn:[8] "I'm afraid a great many foolish young lads have been drawn in, believing they were doing something for the country" (qtd. in Pethica, "Easter, 1916" 46 n.12). Yet again changing her political outlook, in September 1919, following an incident Lady Gregory tells the police that "the country would never be all right until there is a national government that honest people will support" (*Journals* I: 90), hence openly revealing her nationalistic stance.

The culmination of Lady Gregory's ideological transformation from a unionist to a supporter of Irish nationalism that took place within roughly two decades can be observed in her adding a section entitled "Some Broadsheet Ballads of the Wars" to the 1926 edition of *The Kiltartan History Book* (Partington 157) - which was originally published in 1919 - where, without making any comments, she prints the lyrics to eighteen nationalist ballads, including "The Croppy Boy," "which has its origins in the 1798 Rebellion in Wexford.

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[8] An Irish-American lawyer living in New York, who financially supported some Irish writers like James Joyce. See Janis Londraville, Richard Londraville, John Quinn. *John Quinn: Selected Irish Writers from His Library.* West Cornwall, CT: Locust Hill P, 2001.

The term 'croppy' refers to the rebels who cropped their hair in the French revolutionary style" (Regan 487). Another ballad included in this edition is "Father Murphy" – also known as "Boulavogue" – which is about a parish priest in Boulavogue in County Wexford during the 1798 Rebellion, "who campaigned against the British militia [...] and was eventually killed in battle by the British yeomanry" (Regan 486). Another ballad, "The Men of Easter Week" celebrates the heroes who fought for freedom during the Easter Rising and were eventually shot to death while "Kevin Barry" recounts the death of an IRA member who was imprisoned in 1920 at Mountjoy Jail in Dublin and hanged at eighteen years of age. In this way Lady Gregory sets out to honour those who have died for Ireland's freedom from foreign rule.

To sum up, having chronologically looked into Lady Gregory's letters, essays or actions, her ambiguous political attitude can clearly be observed as she at times presents herself as a unionist and at times a republican, at times subscribes to an anti-colonialist stance and yet at times appears as a unionist. Due to her complicated identity, some who were sceptical of her sincerity in political matters, considered her as a unionist presenting herself as a nationalist.[9] Accordingly, Toibin commented on the contradictory aspects of Lady Gregory's political stance, "her doubleness," as she "managed to inhabit two ideologies – that of the landlord and that of the nationalist – at the same time" (120). Yet, Lionel Pilkington argued that Lady Gregory never relinquished her unionist loyalties (qtd. in Fogarty x).

In addition to having met the folklorist Douglas Hyde around 1892, another significant encounter in Lady Gregory's life was her meeting in 1894 William Butler Yeats albeit first casually in London as she noted (Gregory *Diaries* xxv). Later in 1897, however, in Duras House in County Clare the dramatist Edward Martyn, a Catholic

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9 Some were not only doubtful about Lady Gregory's political stance but also about the Literary Revival. Irish poet and novelist Patrick Kavanagh in *Self-Portrait* (1962) saw the Literary Revival "as a trap sprung by the 'Celtic Twilighters.' The Ireland 'patented by Yeats, Lady Gregory and Synge' was, he declared, 'a thorough-going English-bred lie'" (qtd. in Kearney 124). One of the reasons for this may be that Yeats, Synge, and Lady Gregory supported the translations of Irish myths into English, that is the coloniser's language, as opposed to the views of nationalist Patrick Pearse, one of the leaders of the Easter Rising, who favoured Gaelic.

nationalist and the first president of Sinn Fein - the Irish republican political party - brought them together to discuss founding of an Irish theatre (Sternlicht 49; Coxhead 48). Yeats, Lady Gregory and Edward Martyn inaugurated the Irish Literary Theatre in 1899 which in time became the Abbey Theatre. The patent was issued in Lady Gregory's name (Murray 38). After Edward Martyn, the only one of the founders who was not connected to the Ascendancy, was later replaced by Synge as a managing director the Abbey, the National Theatre of Ireland ironically became a complete Anglo-Irish institution. In addition, Lady Gregory was "the only one of the Abbey playwrights who knew Irish well" (Owens and Radner 13).

Despite their being associated with the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy and their Protestant background, with their efforts at the Irish Literary Theatre and the Abbey, Lady Gregory and Yeats can be observed as an inseparable part of the Irish nationalistic movement. The Irish Literary Theatre was meant to be a popular theater, with the objective of building upon a national dramatic literature, raising national consciousness and educating the mostly Catholic middle and lower classes about their history and culture. Thus, Yeats and Gregory both aspired to "restore dignity to Ireland, so long vulgarised on the stage as well as in romance" (Gregory, *Diaries* 153). At the time in the theatres of Dublin and the rest of Ireland mainly touring melodramas from England were staged. Their mission, however, was to present Irish plays. This was, indeed, a challenging attempt for the "existing theatres in Dublin refused to stage entirely Irish plays, which had not first been approved by a London audience" (Grote 19).

Lady Gregory provided the playwrights who aspired to write plays for the Abbey with some principles by foregrounding the characteristics of the types of plays they wished to stage there: "A play to be suitable for performance at the Abbey should contain some criticism of life, [...] of Irish life by preference, important from its beauty or from some excellence of style" and she further underlined: "We do not desire propagandist plays, nor plays written mainly to serve some obvious moral purpose" (*Our Irish Theatre* 101). They intended to remain apolitical, and as Lady Gregory states: "[O]utside all the political questions that divide us" (*Our Irish Theatre* 8).

Although in 1900 Lady Gregory further contends that "[they] must try and keep politics out of plays" (*Diaries* 247), the directors at the Abbey were not at all happy with the image of the Stage Irishman, a belittling image of the Irish as lazy, foolish and lacking intelligence. The Stage Irishman was popularised through London comedies and melodramas. Unlike the touring companies from

London and a few Dublin theatres which endorsed this image, the Abbey objected to it. The playwrights and directors at the Abbey intended to deconstruct the negative stereotyping of the Stage Irishman and reconstruct an Irish national identity. Henceforth, "[i]n April 1902, the Irish National Theatre Society staged their first plays under the slogan 'we are out to kill the Stage Irishman'" (Richmond 185). Correspondingly, Lady Gregory famously states their opposition to the "Stage Irishman" in their determination "to show that Ireland is not the home of buffoonery and easy sentiment, as it has been represented, but the home of an ancient idealism. We are confident of the support of all Irish people, who are weary of misrepresentation" (Gregory, *Our Irish Theatre* 9). That is to say, they aimed at making the audience proud of their Irish national identity.

Lady Gregory's playwriting career began with her helping Yeats writing his own plays such as *Cathleen ni Houlihan* (1902), *Where There is Nothing* (1902) and *The Pot of Broth* (1904). Gregory especially wrote the peasant dialogues in these plays. In fact, her contribution is believed to be so extensive that today she is considered as a co-writer of these plays.[10] She started writing her own plays at quite a late time in life; she was fifty when she wrote her first play, *Twenty-Five* (1903) and *The Rising of the Moon* in the same year. By the the time of her death Lady Gregory had written and translated[11] forty-four plays, twenty-seven of which were original (Sternlicht 35). Lady Gregory not only translated Irish myths and legends from Gaelic but she also translated plays, such as *Casadh an tSúgáin* by Hyde as *The Twisting of a Rope* (1903) which was performed at the Gaiety Theatre in Dublin.

Lady Gregory mainly wrote comedies. The reason for this may be to balance Yeats's serious tragedies in verse, hence to appeal to the less sophisticated country folk (Sternlicht 36). Most of her comedies set in the fictitious town of Cloone which is believed to be the real town of Gort, near Lady Gregory's estate, Coole Park, reflect the life and language of country people whose lives and characters she does not idealise. On the contrary, she presents these Irish folk as gullible, scandalmongers, and simpleminded. Although they are

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10 For instance, in *Lady Gregory: Selected Writings*. Eds. Lucy McDiarmid and Maureen Waters. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1995, she is presented as the co-writer of *Cathleen ni Houlihan* together with Yeats.

11 Four of the plays she translated were by Molière: *The Doctor in Spite of Himself, The Miser, The Rogueries of Scapin* and *The Would-Be Gentleman*.

sympathetic presentations, it still may be questioned whether Lady Gregory was laughing at her characters or was laughing with them. Nevertheless, it should be borne in mind that she often did depict agents of imperial authority like the Magistrate in *Spreading the News* (1904) in a negative light. She also wrote tragedies like *Gaol Gate* (1906) where refusing to be an informant and subsequently being set free, an imprisoned man sacrifices himself by choosing to be hung, in this way bringing pride to his family since informers were hated by Irish nationalists for working for the British. Moreover, Lady Gregory penned tragi-comedies as well. For instance, *The Canavans* (1906), which is set in a small Irish village in the Elizabethan times, is about a miller named Peter Canavan who is troubled with the return of his brother, a deserter from the Queen's army, and struggles not to be hanged for the former's wrongdoing. Another of her tragicomedies, *The Deliverer* (1911), is a biblical allegory about Charles Stuart Parnell, which identifies this Irish hero with Moses as his people forsake him thereby depicting the inability of the Irish people to unite in the face of their common enemy. Lady Gregory also wrote historical plays like *Kincora* (1905), *Dervorgilla* (1907) and *Grania* (1912) which are not of much significance today. These plays are based on the Fionn cycle, and are a re-telling of the Diarmuid and Gráinne legend through the adulterous affairs of three passionate women, which resonates Lady Gregory's own eight-month affair between 1882 and 1883 with Wilfred Blunt at a time when they were both married. These historic plays stand out in providing the theatre with significant woman's roles. Lady Gregory is known to have also dramatised fairy tales mainly for children, referring to these plays as "wonder plays" among which are *The Jester* (1918) written following the death of her son and foregrounding the significance of helping each other out in difficult times, and *The Dragon* (1919) set in the wake of the Easter Rising where the hero of the play succeeds in bringing order and harmony to a world threatened by chaos. As Pethica Marks, "[t]he transforming spirit of laughter sweeps through these plays, which celebrate the possibility of redemption and unexpected triumph in the face of despair" ("Lady Gregory's Abbey Theatre Drama" 75). Furthermore, it can be observed that Lady Gregory makes use of religious metaphors in her final plays. For instance, in *The Story Brought by Brigit* (1924) she recounts the story of a seventh-century Irish saint along with that of a pagan goddess of pre-Christian Ireland, positing a bright future for Ireland. Lady Gregory's last two plays are *Sancho's Master* (production date 14 March 1927) and *Dave* (production date 9 May 1927). In the latter play she continues to make use of religious imagery as she tells the story of a young materialist boy who eventually commits himself to helping the poor. On the other hand,

the former play which is a loose adaptation of Cervantes's *Don Quixote* which aptly ends with the following lines foregrounding Lady Gregory's political stance: "Freedom is best. It is one of the best gifts heaven has bestowed upon men" (115). Thus, it can be observed that Lady Gregory was a versatile dramatist who tries her hand in plays – some of which contain politican motifs - written in different dramatic genres.

However, setting genre aside and focusing on content, it can be stated that Lady Gregory wrote three political plays: *The Rising of the Moon* (1903), *The Gaol Gate* (1906) and *The Deliverer* (1911). *The Rising of the Moon* a one-act play, lasting about 17 minutes in performance, in which Lady Gregory's developing nationalist sentiments can be observed, is one of her early plays, written in 1903 – almost a decade before the Easter Rising which was an important stage in breaking away from British oppression and moving towards a political affirmation of Irishness. The play was first published in 1904 in the theatrical magazine *Samhain* produced by the Irish Literary Theatre (later the Abbey) between 1 October 1901 and 1 December 1908 to encourage new playwriting; it was edited by Yeats. *The Rising of the Moon* was first staged in 1907 at the Abbey. Yeats states the reason for the belated staging of the play as "political hostility" and continues as follows: "The players would not perform it because they said it was an unpatriotic act to admit that a policeman was capable of patriotism" (414). Murray refers to the same incident as follows: "In 1907 extreme nationalists objected because the play showed a policeman in too kindly a light, while unionists because it showed a policeman as a traitor" (51). As Yeats further recounts, due to the political nature of the play "[t]he chief Unionist Dublin newspaper denounced us for slandering His Majesty's forces and Dublin Castle denied to us a privilege we shared with the other Dublin theatres of buying for stage purposes the cast off clothes of the police" (414). Despite categorised as a comedy by some sources it is a short serious play, with occasional humourous moments. There is minimal action, and the play is largely based on talk.

The Rising of the Moon is set in the present and at a quay in an unidentified seaport town. Lady Gregory may be employing this vague setting with a historical backdrop in mind for she states: "I may look on *The Rising of the Moon* as a history play, as my history goes, for the scene is laid in the historical time of the rising of the Fenians in the sixties" (*Our Irish Theatre* 96). Henceforth, the time and place could be anywhere in Ireland before an imminet rising.

There are only four characters, a sergeant, two policemen and a fugitive they are looking for. The plot which is quite simple begins in *medias res* with a political prisoner having escaped from jail and the police who are working for the Royal Irish Constabulary acting in the interest of England striving to capture him. Hereby, a political atmosphere is established right from the onset. The action takes place at night in a seemingly isolated place after the moon has risen, thus creating an uneasy atmosphere and a sense of lurking danger. The Sergeant and the two policemen, Policeman B and Policeman X, agents of the colonial British, are putting up placards announcing that the fugitive is "Wanted" by the law, meaning the British authorities, and that there is a hundred pound reward on his head. They are all looking forward to capturing the escapee before he leaves town and claiming the reward – and maybe even a promotion that might well accompany it. The Sergeant safely assumes that to have been able to escape, the fugitive "must have had some friends amongst the gaolers" (*The Rising* 78), which hints at the fact that the freedom fighters were everywhere, even working in a jail run by the British, and ready to help each other out. After a while, the Sergeant sends the two policemen to put up notices elsewhere, and starts keeping watch for the fugitive by himself. At this time a man comes out from the dark. A ragged man, disguised wearing a wig and a hat, however, this is the escapee himself. The Man claims that he is "Jimmy Walsh," a ballad singer who has come to the quay with the hope of selling ballads to sailors. As Policeman B has marked earlier it is "assize time" (*The Rising* 79) and the Man has come "in the one train with the judges" (*The Rising* 80). Being higher courts before 1924, the assizes had jurisdiction outside Dublin and "dealt with the most serious civil and criminal matters [...] such as murder and treason" ("History of the law"). They also, of course, dealt with the Irish militia who fought for Ireland's freedom from British oppression by often sentencing them to imprisonment or death. Therefore, this is an ironic situation indeed. Not recognising that the Man is the very one he is looking for, the Sergeant asks the Man to leave upon which the Man starts to sing from the ballad "Johnny Hart," about a rich farmer whose daughter fell in love with a Scottish soldier. This ballad is referred to as "a political" allegory" (Roche n.p.). As the Sergeant insists that he move on, the Man makes his way to the top of the steps by the water to sit and supposedly wait for sailors to come by. He notices the placard and claims that he knows the wanted person. Suddenly, the Sergeant is interested and reluctant to be all by himself in the dark and lets the Man stay, insisting that the Man provide him with information about the fugitive. Enjoying the oppurtunity, and characteristically displaying the Irish knack for storytelling, the Man starts describing the fugitive in epic proportions

- bringing about a comic instance. He says that the wanted man is muscular, strong, dangerous and an expert in using many weapons. In addition, he does not refrain from hinting at the man's previous murders of police officers on moonlit nights like the present one. The man is believed to have killed a sergeant from the town of Bally Vaughan, attacked police barracks in Limerick and kidnapped a policeman from the barracks. The Sergeant quickly infers that the dangerous fugitive can kill him too, grows uneasy and insists that the Man stay. They sit "*back to back*" on a barrell yet "*look [...] different ways*" (*The Rising* 84).They may have come together physically, but not ideologically – at least yet. This powerful visual image, however, underscores the need for solidarity in the fight for freedom. They start having a conversation and light a pipe to calm their nerves. The Sergeant admits that his job is a dangerous one which needs him to spend long hours on missions. Moreover, it upsets him that sometimes the people hate the police for turning over nationalists to the British authorities. To set the mood for the Sergeant's sorry tone, the Man starts singing another ballad, "Granuaile." Granuaile is the nickname of Grace O'Malley (Gráinne ni Mhaille) who is a well-known figure symbolising suffering Ireland in Irish folklore. She is believed to have lived as a pirate between 1530-1600 (Regan 487). As the Pirate Queen of Connacht and head of the O'Malley clan, Granuaile fought against not only Spanish and Turkish pirates but also with the British, opposing their political and economic interests ("Granuaile"). Therefore the Sergeant stops the Man, protesting that it is inappropriate to sing such nationalistic songs when tension is high between the Irish and the British. The Man replies that he is simply singing to keep up his morale but actually he has made a sly attempt at stirring nationalistic feelings in the Sergeant. The Man also wants to make the Sergeant realise that they share a historical and cultural heritage. As he sings Granuaile, however, the Man intentionally leaves out a line which the Sergeant is quick to provide: "Her gown she wore was stained with gore" (*The Rising* 85). The line the Man missed is about Mother Ireland's blood stained gown which is a reference to Irish martyrs. Thus, the Man manipulates the Sergeant in revealing his knowledge of such patriotic ballads. The Man suggests that the Sergeant must also have sung ballads like "Shan Bhean Bhoct" or "Green on the Cape" (*The Rising* 86). The Sergeant admits that he sung such ballads in his youth before becoming a family man and having to work for the British for economic reasons. Due to personal reasons, and more importantly the poor economic state of Ireland and lack of jobs, he was obliged to put his patriotic feelings behind himself. The Man

correctly assumes that the Sergeant was a nationalist in the past and he states, "Sergeant, I am thinking it was with the people you were, and not with the law you were, when you were a young man" (*The Rising* 88). Both to rekindle the nationalistic sentiments the Sergeant had in his youth and signaling his friends to approach, the Man starts singing "The Rising of the Moon." Someone in a boat coming up the quay whistles repeating the same melody. It is at this moment that the Sergeant realises that they are signalling each other and the Man is not a ballad singer but the escapee he had been looking for. As the Man takes off his hat and wig and reveals his true identity, he asks the Sergeant to let him pass but knowing his duties the latter refuses. The two other policemen who have come to check whether the Sergeant is alright are heard walking up to them. The Man hides behind the barrell, asking the Sergeant not to betray him - "the friend of the Granuail" (*The Rising* 90). This is the climactic moment as the suspense grows and the reader/audience wonders what the Sergeant will do. Policeman B asks the Sergeant: "Did anyone come this way?" After a moment's pause the Sergeant answers: "No one." (*The Rising* 90). During that pause, having experienced an internal conflict, the Sergeant faces his conflicting loyalties, duty versus patriotism. He choses not to hand over the Man to the law but to allow him to escape. Eventually, he puts patriotism over duty and monetary reward. The Man has succeeded in convincing him that duty to one's nation is above all other duty. Although they insist on staying, the Sergeant sends the other two policemen away. As he makes way to join his comrades, the Man expresses his gratitude for being allowed to escape as he remarks: "You did me a good turn to-night, and I'm obliged to you. Maybe I'll be able to do as much for you when the small rise up and the big fall down... when we all change places at the Rising [...] of the Moon" (*The Rising* 91). Hence, the reader/audience is made to think that the Sergeant's patriotic act will contribute to the materialisation of a revolution in the near future. At the end, it is stressed that national unity and solidarity are a major weapon against British yoke. The fact that without unity among the Irish, British oppression cannot be stamped down. After he has let the fugitive go, the Sergeant contemplates whether he has acted like a fool in turning his back on the reward in these times of economic difficulty. Although the political prisoner has been allowed to escape, the play can still be considered open-ended in the sense that it is not known whether the Sergeant will stop working for the British oppressors, whether he will join the freedom fighters after the sense of rebellion has been reawakened in him or whether his present act is simply a transient show of patriotism? Whatever the answer may be, Lady Gregory uncovers her nationalistic sentiments through *The Rising of the Moon*

which is believed to have "made more rebels in Ireland than a thousand political speeches or a hundred books" (Lennox Robinson qtd. in Grene 69-70).

The ballads sung by the Man are actual popular ballads which the audience would recognise. Such nationalistic ballads were known to be inseparable from the revolutionary spirit among the Fenians. In *The Rising of the Moon*, through the Man's singing of these ballads Lady Gregory not only attempts at evoking nationalistic feeling in the Sergeant but also in the reader/audience who is made aware that a similar act is expected of them.

The Sergeant represents the British oppressors while the Man is an anti-British nationalist. It can be observed that the Sergeant and the Man are on opposite sides of the law as the Sergeant represents law and order and the British; on the other hand the Man stands for rebellion, and the Irish. Although the two seem antogonists, as the play draws to its end the Man, through the nationalistic ballads he sings, succeeds in manipulating the Sergeant into remembering the revolutionary vein he once possessed. In this manner, Lady Gregory suggests that an Irishman in the service of the British government and a Fenian could unite through their cultural heritage. Even though this may seem difficult, as the Man marks, "[i]t's a queer world" where anything is possible (*The Rising* 86). Hereby, Lady Gregory emphasises the need for solidarity among the Irish people in order to accomplish a change in the socio-political structure, hence establish a free Ireland.

As for the names in the play, there are none. The Sergeant, referred through his job, in an abstract way represents the coloniser's authority. Similarly, the Man who claims that he is "Jimmy Walsh" (*The Rising* 80) only assumes that name to get by the police. Actually, he does not have a name either as he stands for the Irish freedom fighters on the whole. Moreover, as a ballad singer he presents himself as the voice of the people. Similarly, the Man's physical features described on the wanted notice are functional in their vagueness: "Dark hair—dark eyes—smooth face, height five feet five—there's not much to take hold of in that" says, the Sergeant upon reading the Man's wanted notice" (*The Rising* 78). This general depiction, which becomes comical as a result of its inexplicitness, is provided purposefully to suggest that most men in Ireland were fighting for the independence of their country and that the Man could be any one of them. As for the adjective "ragged" preceeding

"Man," it is significant in that it underlines his unkempt and disorderly appearance which metaphorically alludes to the state of these disadvantaged partisans and the nationalistic Irish in general and is in sharp contrast to the affluent and well-ordered position of the imperialist.

The title of Lady Gregory's play, *The Rising of the Moon*, is also the title of an Irish folk ballad recounting a battle between the United Irishmen and the British Army during the Irish Rebellion of 1798. The ballad was written by John Keegan Casey (1846-1870) who "was arrested for his Fenian activities and imprisoned in Mountjoy Jail. An estimated 50.000 people followed his funeral (Regan 487). The rising of the moon allegorically stands for the awakening of nationalistic sentiments in the Irish people and the rising of the people. For this reason, the singing of this ballad and other patriotic songs indicate the nationalistic nature of the play.

As John Hutchinson points out, nationalism is generally considered as either a political or cultural phenomenon (39-63). When nationalism is viewed culturally, literature can be regarded a significant element in nation-building. Despite the fact that, at first Lady Gregory may have been caught between her divided loyalties to the Ascendancy and patriotism, eventually her nationalistic sentiments came forward. Subsequently, as elements of nation-building, Lady Gregory's plays, along with her other work, have played a significant part with regard to restoring Ireland's dignity and a sense of Irishness.

By 1925, Gregory's major works had all been published and the Irish Free State had been established. Her plays were once among the most popular at the Abbey and "received over 600 performances between 1904-1912 – twice as many as Yeats's and nearly three times as many as Synge's (Sprangler 173). However, after Lady Gregory's death, her plays fell out of favour and are now rarely performed. As Murray notes, they "have disappeared from the repertoire of the modern Abbey" (37). In addition, at present, there is no summer school in her name as there are in the names of Yeats's and Synge's, albeit there is the annual conference, Lady Gregory Autumn Gathering in Coole Park and Gort since 1995. Today, Lady Gregory continues to live in Ireland not so much as a literary figure but as a national icon.

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2

Remaking Herself: *Lady Gregory's Diaries 1892-1902*

N.Belgin Elbir

Lady Gregory wrote in her *Journals* towards the end of her life, "If I had not married, I should not have learned the quick enrichment of sentences that one gets in conversation; had I not been widowed I should not have found the detachment of mind, the leisure for observation, necessary to give insight into character, to express and interpret it" (qtd. in Coxhead 35). She added, "[l]oneliness made me rich –"full", as Bacon says. Company gave me swiftness in putting thought into a word, a sentence" (qtd. in Coxhead 35). This study engages with the implications and significance of this process of becoming "rich and full" that Lady Gregory records in her diaries covering the period from her husband's death in 1892 until the end of 1902, with some few retrospective entries for 1903, 1904 and then one last for the year 1909.

Augusta Gregory's marriage in 1880, at the age of twenty-eight, to Sir William Gregory, thirty-five years her senior, gave her, as the editor of her diaries James Pethica puts it, "the considerable status of mistress at Coole Park and broadened her intellectual and social horizons dramatically" (x). Sir William had served several terms in Parliament and retired as Governor of Ceylon in 1877. At the time of their marriage, he was spending much of his time in London, "where he was highly regarded in artistic and social as well as political circles for his personality and cultivation" (Pethica xi). Elizabeth Coxhead, in her *Lady Gregory: A Literary Portrait* says that when Sir William took notice of Augusta, "the shy bookish mouse," it was "her eager longings after the world of literature and culture, of which he was a part and of which she knew so little" that touched him (14). He had a fine library at Coole, and "gave her the run of it" (Coxhead 14).

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They were married soon after. The life that Sir Gregory gave her offered her the opportunity to become part of a wide and rich social circle, and as Pethica points out, to the end of her life, she would remain "grateful for the social skills and tolerant political and religious views she soon learned from Sir William, for the position and good standing his name and title conferred on her, and for the intellectual and artistic milieu to which he had introduced her" (xi). In her diaries, the large cast of friends and acquaintances with whom she socialised in London before she formed other friendships as her interests and concerns began to change, is evidence of this wide social circle. For "the Cinderella of Roxborough," as Elizabeth Coxhead describes her (23), the marriage "was liberation indeed. It was fulfilment not only as a woman but as an intelligence [...] She had the best company in the social sense, too" (Coxhead 23). Among this company, Lady Gregory was able to receive "an education in talking" (qtd. in Fogarty 107), as she would later acknowledge in her *Seventy Years*.

As Lady Gregory implies in the quotations from her *Journals* and *Seventy Years*, although her twelve years of marriage were a significant education, they were also, in Pethica's words, "confiningly conventional in many respects" (xi). She was expected to fulfil her role as a dutiful wife, and this meant she had to leave her only child, her son Robert born in 1881 at home while travelling with her husband, and "the extensive diaries she kept during those married years are powerfully indicative of the extent of her self-suppression" (Pethica xii). She noted in these diaries, her reading, her visits to the poor and social events she attended, but she was "reticent as to any of the private opinions and aspirations she harboured" (Pethica xii). Her silence concerning her early writings, "Arabi and his Household," "An Emigrant's Notebook," and a group of short stories, is, according to Pethica, "a significant index of the extent to which she continued to subordinate her interests to his" (xii). While marriage gave her the opportunity to participate in a world of intellect and social activity that prepared her for her later achievement as writer and patron, it was her husband's death, and the challenges and demands of widowhood that provided her with the independence she required for developing her creative talents. The diaries that she wrote in the years following Sir William's death show that she responded to these challenges and demands in ways that led to a gradual, difficult but also resolute remaking of herself and her life. As the daughter of a landowning family, widow of a landlord, and mother of a future landlord, with a powerful sense of belonging to the aristocratic landowning class, becoming an Irish nationalist and one of the leaders and major contributors of a cultural and literary movement

certainly involved complexities, divisions and contradictions in her beliefs, loyalties and attitudes. The diaries become a narrative of the course of this remaking in her own words. They portray Lady Gregory, widowed at the age of forty, "with a London social circle composed mainly of her husband's elderly friends, broadly Unionist in her political views, and with only a few minor publications to her name" (Pethica xiii), having become "by her fiftieth year an ardent Nationalist" and "on the threshold of lasting literary prominence (Pethica xiii). The diaries also reveal that she transformed not only herself but Coole, the ancestral estate of her husband, by remaking the Big House into a "literary workshop and cultural center of Ireland" (Winston 205). Through this transformation, as her biographer Elizabeth Coxhead claims, "she made for herself, largely by her own initiative, a position more interesting than that of any other woman in Ireland" (51).

It is as a form of narrative that the diaries are relevant to an understanding of Lady Gregory's life and work. In fact, as Alice Van Wart notes, historically women were drawn to diaries because in them they were able to express themselves in times when they were not encouraged to practice other forms of expression (22). Valerie Sanders, in *The Private Lives of Nineteenth Century Women*, regards the diary, along with the letter, the travel memoir and the novel, as one of the four modes preeminently the province of women in the nineteenth century (12). Sanders notes that the diary, "unlike the autobiography, is private and unstructured. It registers the smallest changes of feeling, and is written blindly, without foreknowledge of the future" (12). The privacy of the diary allows for freedom of thought and freedom of expression that make it possible for the writer of the diary to question, to explore and to understand. As Van Wart puts it, "in their diaries women begin to analyse the development of their thoughts" (22). In other words, they take stock of their lives, they make sense of their selves and their lives. This was, in fact, what Lady Gregory needed to do at a time when she had to deal with the prospect of starting a new life on her own. She herself expresses the recognition of this need when she writes, in the first entry for the year 1899, "no time to possess my soul since I last wrote" (198). The writing of the diary helped her to do just that. Because the diary is not a framed and closed form, "it is well suited to encompassing the multifarious nature of women's lives" (Van Wart 22), and "diary-writing is one way in which women have made coherent their experiential lives" (Lensink 42). In Lady Gregory's case, the nature of her life and various roles as widow of Sir William Gregory, mistress of Coole, mother, daughter, sister, friend, and later on social hostess, literary patron and professional writer go a long

way toward explaining why the form of the diary suited her need to "possess her soul." Another feature of the diary highly relevant to Lady Gregory's practice of diary-writing is the "private and short-term retrospect" (Sanders 19) provided by the form, since a substantial number of her entries present retrospective accounts of her activities, and mental and emotional states. Actually, she did not always write regularly, sometimes not for several months, and then gave accounts of what had happened in the intervals, thus bringing the diary, and herself, up to date. Viewed from the perspectives of the above-mentioned critics, Lady Gregory is typical of the vast majority of nineteenth-century women who needed to tell their own story as it developed. Her diaries, thus, present an expression of the concerns that shaped her life and informed her writings. As such, they open up a way of reassessing her contributions as a public figure and a literary voice.

When Lady Gregory recommences on 8th January 1893 the diary that she abandoned during Sir William's last illness, she gives a detailed retrospective account of the unrecorded thirteen months. The first entry registers her sense of loss, but at the same time shows her determination to meet the challenges she faced, at least on a practical level: "More than a year since I have written & how sad that year has been" (3) she says, and goes back to the Christmas of 1891, dwells on Sir William's last meeting with his son and his last hours of life, and finally his death on March 6, 1892 (6). The entry records vividly remembered moments as she recounts his death and funeral: "Snow was falling & there were few able to come from a distance- but all the poor were there" (7). After the funeral she goes to London, "trying to get rid of the house [...] It took patience but at last I sold the house & some furniture" (7). She then goes "back to Coole, [...] getting things into order and beginning life on a smaller scale" (7).

In fact, as Coxhead notes, she was not left a rich woman (35). Besides facing the immediate challenges of taking practical charge at Coole and assuming sole responsibility for Robert, then ten years old, she discovered that her financial prospects were considerably less robust than she must have anticipated (Pethica xiii). And she realised that she had to be careful with money, as "the Coole rent-roll had dropped since the 1880s, and a mortgage her husband had taken out in 1867 remained unpaid (Pethica xiii). She was allowed her marriage jointure of £ 8000 a year from the estate income but Coole & the rents would pass to Robert when he was of age, and "it was her business to act as careful steward in the meantime"(Coxhead 35). Coxhead's comment is illuminating in

relation to the diaries, for throughout the entries, one clearly expressed theme is Lady Gregory's desire and determination to take care of Coole for her son; a recurrent concern is her role as a mother. The diaries make it clear that one very important aspect of her role as the landowner of Coole was, in fact, her awareness that she held the estate for Robert, for it was his heritage.

In the same entry Lady Gregory writes that she let Coole for the winter and went to her family's place, Roxborough. But "this retreat to her childhood home, and the listlessness it symptomized" (Pethica xiv) ended suddenly and unexpectedly when her brother, suffering from alcoholism, ordered her off the estate. The first entry thus ends with a self-pitying remark: "On the last night of the saddest year of my life, in bitter cold, Robert and I left my old home [...] there is a terrible difference in my life-" (9). The entry for January 18 reveals her restlessness: "- to London with Robert, very glad to get away [...] my own sad thoughts and sleepless nights" (9). She writes that she spent time in London, having been given the use of a town house by close friends, the Layards, and saw friends who restored her self-respect after the incident with her brother (10). She then returned to her mother's place in February, where she writes she was never well or content (12). In her retrospective entry for June 17, she mentions, casually, "I brought out the little pamphlet I had written in Galway, "A Phantom's Pilgrimage" anonymously- & as far as appreciative words go, from those who know me to be the writer it has been a success -Randolph Churchill, Lecky, Billy Russell, Sir Henry Layard, Sir F. Burton particularly commend it-" (13-14). Again in the same entry, after recording a long list of her social activities, she refers, rather casually to another work, "I had a pastel portrait taken by Lisa Stillman -paying for it with money gained by 'A Philanthropist' " (15). Her mention of spending her own money gained by her literary endeavours can be seen as a sign of her sense of achievement, and of her intention to earn money by her writings. This early entry is noteworthy also in showing that her sense of duty and responsibility was, at that point, in conflict with her reluctance to go back to Coole: "I think it right to go back to Coole, I have been so much away -but my heart rather fails me at the idea of six weeks alone there-" (15). However, she does go back at the end of June 1893, and stays till late October. She notes in one entry, that the weather was dry, "farmers looking woefully at hayfields -but potatoes are doing well & pigs dear- Rents being well paid" (16). She continues with her philanthropic work: "[H]ad school feast & Workhouse party & took Robert a little amongst the people & tried to do my duty" (17). She mentions in this entry, for September 25, that she spent the summer working "at Wm's Memoir & have sent it to be type written" (16). The

earlier reference to "A Phantom's Pilgrimage," and this remark about "Wm's Memoir" tell us that in less than two years after her husband's death, Lady Gregory completed two literary projects. The first, "A Phantom's Pilgrimage," is, critics note, an essentially pro-Unionist essay (Pethica xv, Fogarty 109), in which Gladstone returns from the grave ten years after Home Rule, to find that all classes in Ireland have suffered terrible consequences. According to Fogarty, the essay is important in terms of Lady Gregory's approach to political questions, and gives "an insight into the divided political domains that she inhabited" (109). While Lady Gregory, in her identity as landowner, "dismisses and indicts the cause of Irish Home Rule" in the essay, "she emphasizes the necessity for politicians to imagine and visit the communities that they control" (Fogarty 109). Lady Gregory's concern is, in Fogarty's opinion, "with the human and social repercussions of seemingly abstract political decisions" (110), and "Gladstone is taught a moral lesson by being made to occupy the role of outsider on his ghostly Irish tour" (110). Pethica seems to agree with Fogarty when he asserts that despite "its seemingly party-line arguments," the essay "sympathetically considers the prospects for Irish people of all classes" (Pethica xvi).

Greg Winston observes that while Lady Gregory's entries for the first years of her widowhood express a steady adjustment to her new life, they are not without some anxiety over the precarious position of her class (216). An entry for the summer of 1893 articulates this anxiety explicitly. In this particular entry, referring to Home Rule, she says: "[A]ll loyalists and all possessors of property tremble" (12). It is difficult not to agree with Winston's remark that "Lady Gregory trembled as well, since she of course benefited from a role in estate-owning families" (216), and that "it is no coincidence that soon after Lady Gregory anonymously published "A Phantom's Pilgrimage" (216). Her publication of the essay and beginning another literary project very soon after the first was completed can, at the same time, be regarded as signs of a deliberate search for creative work to focus on. Her entry for January 30, 1894 that gives a summary of the period from late September states that her "chief work for some time was the editing of the Memoir" (17). She says "Sir H. Layard has sent me the letters to him & it was hard & sad work reading thru them & copying out a passage here & there- At last it was accomplished and I sent the MS to Murray" (17). She goes on to say Murray would publish at his own expense. "I was anxious," she writes, "for Robert's sake, to publish, that his father's name might be kept a little longer- but the risk & expense would have been an anxiety for me- though a good name is better than riches' & I would if necessary have laid the money out" (18). It is significant that she is reluctant to acknowledge

her ambitions as a writer, and is careful to define her aim in publishing the Memoir solely in terms of her concern for Robert, and to stress the importance of the work as part of her endeavour to leave "a good name." Sir William had left his autobiography incomplete at his death. So Lady Gregory had to complete a narrative covering the last portion of his life (Pethica xviii). As Greg Winston notes, "her own introductory and concluding sections, as well as some general issues of editorial selection display a concern with presenting Coole as an exemplary estate and the Gregorys as perennially good landlords in otherwise tumultuous times" (210-211). In other words, it was a task of duty and an evidence of her concern in keeping the family's reputation as good landlords in public view for her son's benefit, while at the same time "shaping the future of landlord-tenant relations at Coole" (Winston 212). Pethica, on the other hand, describes Sir William's autobiography as "an elliptical exercise in writing a chapter in her own autobiography, for the unfinished portion of the book [...] was precisely the period of the marriage" (xvii). In that portion, after drawing attention to herself by extracting from a letter in which Sir William expresses his pleasure in his marriage, her selections from the twelve years of his correspondence admit her only as an implied presence, and then as a figure of the grieving widow (Pethica xix). Pethica regards the autobiography as representing a tension between "the need to assert herself creatively and the imperatives of her upbringing which upheld womanly self-abnegation as the ideal," and concludes that in the autobiography of Sir William, Lady Gregory discovered for herself a "protected middle ground that she would occupy in her future work, defining her creative ambitions in terms of work for Yeats, for Ireland, for the Abbey, for the country people or for her son" (xix). This attitude can be observed, in fact, in a number of entries where she refers to her work. For instance, in 1898 when she is recording her depressed state after the death of her brother Gerald, she writes that she "thought of Aran, where I could learn Irish for RG & pick up folk lore for WBY" (185). This was not her first visit to Aran, however. In the entry for January 30, 1894 there is a brief reference to a visit to Aran Islands. She says, "I wrote out my notes on Arran -they ought to make a good magazine article" (18). Pethica points out that she had made this visit alone, "a most unusual undertaking for an Ascendancy woman at that time" (xx).

In making the visit to Aran, Lady Gregory was probably inspired by Emily Lawless's novel *Grania*, set on the islands, and Jane Barlow's *Irish Idylls*, stories of Irish peasant life (Pethica xx). The reference to the visit in the diary confirms that she collected material during her stay there, and that she was already beginning

to discover for herself the subject matter that would become central to her literary life, namely Irish lore and customs. In the meantime, her social life in London remained active. She writes in the same retrospective entry: "Friends were kind [...] I even gave one or two little dinners myself [...] It gives me a feel of independence and power being able to give a dinner [...] I had also little tea parties -Emily Lawless, Henry James [...]" (19-20). At the end of the entry, she notes with pleasure and satisfaction, "[s]o I left London, my last evening a pleasant one, dinner at Lady Lindsay's [...] I felt I had done a good deal" (22). A sense of accomplishment in these remarks also betrays a continuing concern as to what she should do, in other words, an anxiety about not doing enough. On leaving London, she spends some time at Roxborough with some members of her family but "after the good, the high minded society, I had enjoyed in London, they seemed so empty, trivial & common," she writes in her diary (23). Her account of her time at Coole later, reflects a noticeable change in her attitude to the place· "In spite of the stormy weather I enjoy the free & silent life here, have elbow room to write & liberty of thought" (24). She continues, "I read of 'the loneliness of the selfish man' -I must try to avoid that, & am likely to do so, for already the poor are at my door, and my hand in my pocket [...] I am planting some larch & silvers in the nutwood to see if the rabbits are more merciful to them than those we plant in autumn" (24). She adds, "I have been getting the house arranged, correcting proof sheets of "Autobiography" & outside planting [...]" (25). It is possible to detect in these entries a sense of connection with the place and the people, yet she is still a seasonal landlord. In the spring of 1894 she decides "to find a little independent abode" in London (26) and keep her friends. She thinks "[i]t would be unwise to give up London [...] I should lose sight of William's friends by staying away & they might in 8 or 9 years' time be of great use to Robert [...] Then I had found it impossible to pass the winters alone at Coole" (26). So she leases a small flat in Queen Anne's Mansions and writes, "I set up house & liked the independence & the absence of housekeeping & servant troubles" (27). Her entries reveal that her new home in London became a meeting place between Sir William's friends. While pursuing an active social course and meeting people at social events in the spring of 1894, she records, "[a]t a literary tea at Lady Lindsay's I met Coventry Patmore, I thought he was a bygone generation -At the Morrises I met Yates, looking every inch a poet, though I think his prose "Celtic Twilight" is the best thing he has done" (32). Apparently, Lady Gregory had already read the "Celtic Twilight" which was first published in December 1893, and other works by Yeats since she singles out the "Celtic Twilight" as the best. In the meantime, she does not neglect her philanthropic works in London

but "my Coole poor as first charge" are not forgotten either and she is worried about the money she spends on her "good works" in London (33).

Lady Gregory's diary entries for 1894 reflect a continuing effort in creative work. She says she wrote "as an occupation, a short story 'Dies Irae' [...] an article on the Disestablished Church & on 'Our boys in India', none yet published" (36). Returning to Coole in July 1894, she again enjoys "complete solitude & freedom" (38) and looks after "woods, gates & fences," being anxious "to keep the place in good repair for Robert" (38). She is no longer depressed at the idea of being there alone and sounds determined to take care of the property for Robert. She writes "God help me to be good woman & to bring him up well -it is now all I wish him" (38).

Her next visit to London is to ensure the success of the "Autobiography," soon to be published. When she reads the favourable reviews she is relieved: "So I felt a load roll off me, I should have taken it to heart so terribly if the book had fallen flat" (42). She writes that when somebody asked her if she did not feel 3 inches taller at the success of the book she replied, "no, but 10 years younger" (42), but she also records being depressed and suffering from a headache, which she says is "the reaction from excitement of last week" (44). One of her friends, Mr. Lecky "prophecies I shall go on writing, says it is 'like drink' " (55). She sounds elated at being acknowledged as a successful writer and is obviously very proud. Nevertheless, the feelings of depression and the headache are probably signs of the strains she was experiencing as she tried to adjust to the demands of her new life and work.

A new project, meanwhile, was the editing of a selection of letters to and from Mr. Gregory, Sir William's grandfather, who had been Under-Secretary of State for Ireland for nineteen years (Coxhead 16). Critics agree that this work and the historical research and reading needed for it led to Lady Gregory's "open conversion to Nationalism" (Pethica xxii), and "turned her into a Home Ruler" (Coxhead 37). As Coxhead observes, it was a task which made heavy demands on her powers as editor, for it was necessary to link the documents into a coherent story (36). To be able to do that she did research into late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Irish history and was forced to "confront the contradictions and tensions in her political views" (Pethica xxii). She states in the entry for March 11, 1895, the first for that year and another retrospective one, "I have been reading Froude's 'English in Ireland' which has opened my eyes to the failings of landlords, & I may say of all classes in Ireland

in the past & makes me very anxious to do my duty and to bring Robert up to do his" (65). After coming back to Coole in April 1895, "delighted to be at home & free again -the House in good order" (66), she writes on April 8, "I feel that this Land Bill is the last of 'Dobson's Three Warnings' & am thankful that we landowners have been given even a little time to prepare & to work while it is day – It is necessary that as democracy gains power our power should go – & God knows many of our ancestors & forerunners have eaten or planted sour grapes" (68). She then goes on to add, in a typical remark about her concern for her son's future: "I would like to leave a good memory & not a "monument of champagne bottles" - & with all that, I hope to save the *home* -the house and woods at least for Robert" (68). The Land Bill Lady Gregory is referring to was a forthcoming one which promised to increase tenant rights (Pethica xxii). Lady Gregory's view expressed in the above remarks, "barely resembles that of the landlord apologist and conservative pamphleteer of just two years earlier" (Winston 220). In Winston's words, Lady Gregory "sounds clearly convinced of the need for the Ascendancy class to mend its ways or else face the inevitable end to its way of life" (220). Pethica has a similar comment: "The completion here of a shift [...] hinted at beneath the formulaically Unionist anxieties of 'A Phantom's Pilgrimage' written just two years before is striking. The final eclipse of landlord power is not merely accepted as inevitable, but is seen in part as an appropriate consequence of past abuses of privilege" (xxiii). It is important to note, however, as Pethica observes, "the passage is not yet a profession of allegiance with Nationalist aims, for the acceptance and resignation it embodies in the face of the coming changes are far from signalling enthusiasm, but it marks a pivotal moment of self-conscious departure from the orthodoxies she had hitherto tried to uphold" (xxiii). It is also noteworthy that her hopes for her son and estate reveal that her feelings about Coole had undergone a change, the place had become the focus of her life.

The fact that although she clearly sympathised with the tenants and their rights she was not yet very enthusiastic about Home Rule is shown in her record of the summer of 1895: "The summer in Ireland went off well -The Tories having swept the country at the elections, Home Rule has disappeared and the Nationalist leaders when heard of at all, are heard of as fighting with each other- Our own people were very nice and amicable, bringing little presents for Robert and paying their rent" (78). Greg Winston comments that this entry shows Lady Gregory "continuing to balance a growing understanding of tenant issues with familial self-interest. She still judges the political climate of the summer of 1845 from the typically conservative stance of her class" (220). At the same time, however,

the diaries reflect a growing concern with her people. In London, for instance, she increases her efforts to promote Irish manufacturers and crafts. She goes to "Kensington Infirmary to try and learn if there is any work our old paupers at Gort could be taught to do -but my heart rather failed at the sight of the beautiful knitting, iron work etc.- but perhaps patch work and coarse crochet or knitting would be possible" (95). The entries also show a growing satisfaction in spending time at Coole. She no longer dreads the solitude of life there. In the entry for 22 January 1896, written after the holidays, she says "I am glad to be alone for a time –to 'possess my soul' and look life in the face- and I want to plant outside- and to arrange and copy letters within" (107). Concerning her plans for the workhouse she says, "the more difficulties appear, the more I see that if I don't surmount them nobody else will" (108). Her increasing confidence in her capacity for hard work and her ability to overcome difficulties, as well as her enthusiasm for her Irish home are made clear in such remarks. She takes pleasure in her life at Coole, she even notes "a larch coming out in the woods -Farrell cutting ivy merrily" (109), and when she has to leave in order to visit her mother at Croft, she writes, "I had meant to stay here all the spring, peacefully" (109). Her confidence and pride in the life she had created for herself at Coole are further illustrated in her comments on a visit to Italy. She visits an Italian country estate and meets Countess Pisani, a rural aristocrat like herself. She admires the Countess's energy in "looking after every detail on the farm" (114), but she is critical of the way the Countess interacts with the local people. She writes, "I think love is lacking, she has no good word to say of the people she lives amongst. We are happier at Kiltartan" (114).

It was in the August of 1896 that Lady Gregory's second meeting with Yeats occurred, this time in Ireland, while Yeats was staying at the house of Edward Martyn, Lady Gregory's friend and neighbour. In her retrospective entry for December 14, 1896, she describes the meeting in the following words: "E. Martyn had also poets staying with him, Symonds and Yeats -the latter full of charm and interest and the Celtic revival -I have been collecting folklore since his visit -am surprised to find how full of it are the minds of the people -and how strong the belief in the invisible world around us" (118). As Pethica asserts, Lady Gregory was, at this point already well advanced on the road to Irish Nationalism, and had read widely in the Works of the new generation of Irish writers, such as Emily Lawless, Jane Barlow and Yeats himself (xxiv-xxv). Although she did not choose to mention it in her diary, she invited Symons and Yeats to lunch at Coole (Coxhead 45, Pethica xxv), and Yeats later said that she asked him "if I could set her to some work for our intellectual

movement" (qtd. in Pethica xxv). It is interesting that she gave only a brief record of the meeting in August and said she began to collect fairy lore only after Yeats's visit, for as she wrote many years later, she had actually begun collecting after she had read "The Celtic Twilight," before she met him (Pethica xxvi). With Lady Gregory's return to London in early 1897, the acquaintance began to develop into friendship. The entries for 1897 reveal that it was Lady Gregory's deliberate efforts that strengthened their connection. She records that before she invited Yeats to dine at her London apartment, she borrowed Lady Layard's typewriter and began copying her fairy lore (120), which she would later give to him. As her entries show, other invitations followed, and after one dinner to which she had also invited Mrs. O'Brien, George Russell and Sir H. Cunningham she writes, "Yeats very charming, I feel quite proud of my young countryman" (131). "This emerging note of personal investment" (Pethica xxvii) is also apparent in her account of a dinner party she held on 21 March 1897. Her guests at this dinner were leaders of the Irish cooperative movement, Horace Plunkett, Nationalist MP Barry O'Brien and Yeats, all Irish men, "three prominent Irish activists from different spheres" (Pethica xxvii). Lady Gregory's long and detailed record of the evening shows her contributing actively to the conversation. The style of the diary is also indicative of her awareness of the importance of the events in which she was participating: "I ask Mr. O'Brien what he would do at this moment in Ireland if he had power there -He says 'I would make Mr. Horace Plunkett our leader and follow him' -Yeats agrees enthusiastically and says 'we all want it' -Mr. Plunkett reddens [...] Yeats asks him how far he would go -he says [...] not yet Home Rule, they are not ready for it" (136). She continues, "[w]e urge him to make his speech strong [...]. We come down and have coffee, and I give them cigarettes and we talk finance" (136). Her use of the present tense in this account is a sign of her sense of the extent of her involvement and her wish to have a vivid recreation of the conversation in order to mark its continuing significance after it was over. She then goes on the record how the evening ended: "I gave him [HP] my Froude notes -and Mr. O'Brien his agricultural pamphlet [...] and I gave Yeats my folklore pages -so I think I did my best for them all" (136-137), justifying her exhilaration by describing her part in the evening in terms of service to others. Lady Gregory's last entry before she returns to Coole expresses her recognition of the contrasts between her active involvement in the Nationalist cause and her social life in London. On the 12th of April, she writes about her lunch at Lord Morrises: "Lord Morris disdainful of Horace Plunkett's schemes – 'cods' or humbug he calls them [...] of the Irish Literary Society –'a set of schemes'- I did not like to say I have just been elected to it!-

but very full of his swell friends [...]. No, I Think my poor literary society friends know more of the things that are more excellent" (146). She then writes that back at Coole she refused to light a bonfire for Queen Victoria's jubilee: "After the long and marked neglect shown by the Queen to Ireland I thought it right to preserve an attitude of respectful disapproval" (148). Her attitude to the Queen would, however, become more openly hostile, as evidenced by an entry for March 1900: "If I were in politics, which I try to keep out of, I wd certainly show no welcome to the head of the English state, or to a woman who has been callous to the failing & the famines in Ireland during a long reign" (255).

Lady Gregory invited Yeats to stay at Coole during the summer of 1897, as a long-term guest, the first of stays that would continue until his marriage in 1917 (Pethica xxix). "At the end of July, a week before the holidays Mr. Yeats came to stay with me, bringing his friend George Russell 'AE' [...] Poor boy has had a hard struggle" she writes in her diary (150). She notes that they searched for folklore, and adds, "I gave him over all I had collected and took him about for looking more" (151). During the same summer, other people come to stay at Coole, including Horace Plunkett, "another of my best countrymen" (152). She says in her diaries, "the result of this little national-literary stir was that Robert, near the end of the holidays said he would give anything to learn Irish" (152). This was, in fact, the beginning of Lady Gregory's efforts to learn Irish, and the diaries show that she pursued her studies conscientiously. The entries dating from the summer of 1897 trace the strengthening of her friendship with Yeats, the founding of the Irish Literary Theatre, and the visits of leading literary figures such as Hyde, George Russell AE, George Moore, Synge and several others to Coole. One rainy afternoon at the home of a neighbour, Count de Basterot, Lady Gregory and Yeats have a talk about whether Edward Martyn's and Yeats's plays could be acted in Dublin instead of London. In her diaries she explains the aim of the Literary Theatre in words that express her enthusiasm: "It would be a development of the literary movement & help to restore dignity to Ireland, so long vulgarised on the stage as well as in romance - & we talked until we saw Dublin as the Mecca of the Celt -this was the beginning of our movement -A day or two after Yeats came to see me at Coole - & it began to take practical shape" (152).

Meanwhile Lady Gregory had sent "Mr. Gregory's Letter-Box" to a publishing house: "I think it will be for Robert's advantage to publish [...] I am anxious about it, having no money to throw away, but I think I am doing right" (155). The publication of the "Letter-

Box" in March 1898 leads her friend Sir Frederick Burton to remark, as she records, "I see a tendency to Home Rule on your part" (175). She quotes herself replying, "[n]o, not to Home Rule, but I defy anyone to study Irish history without getting a dislike & distrust of England" (175). Later on, in a December 1898 entry she says Sir Burton "reproved me for having become a red hot Nationalist & declared I had no Irish blood in my veins but I convinced him I have -both Irish & French" (195). Also, she is more openly critical of "fashionable people" and more indignant about their attitude to her people. In her entry for 17 March 1898 for instance, she gives an account of a sale for Gort and writes: "but I feel it ignominious, all this talk & professions about helping the poor Irish -& then fashionable people come & buy from other fashionable people [...] & the extravagance of their dress makes one think of the poor workers at home!" (180). The first entry for 1899 shows her making an assessment of the previous year: "We are still on good terms with our people – [...] I have advanced in Irish & I hope in power of thought -& I have been able to help some- chiefly WY on their way -His friendship has been a great good to me -& that of AE also & has led me to think less of the things that are seen & more of these that are unseen" (199).

Another retrospective entry, on March 6, the anniversary of her husband's death records her recognition of the change in her prospects and hopes for future work:

> This day seven years ago my husband died -the years have gone more happily than I could have expected- No serious cause for anxiety about Robert [...] Coole peaceful, & we are I think on closer & more sympathetic terms with the people -Here in London friends are still kind [...] In Ireland I have found much happiness and given some help -new interests joining with old, the agricultural organization, the folk lore, -the idealising, or revealing the ideal side of our people's life, the language- I feel if there are still some years before me there is work to do in these- and I think Robert, in spite of his young enthusiasm for Imperialism will always understand & care for his own people. (21)

The above remarks are evidence of Lady Gregory's willingness to continue work for her new interest, one of the most important of which was her work for the Literary Theatre. The meaning and significance of this work for Lady Gregory emerges in the few entries

in which there are direct and explicit references to the Theatre. In fact, considering the extent of her contributions to the founding of the Theatre, her entries concerning its activities are surprisingly few, and yet illuminating as to the position she wished to maintain with regard to the Nationalist movement. She writes in July 1899, "there was so much to say that I have never said it -The Literary Theatre- it is in the newscutting books" (221). The last entry for 1899 includes a brief remark: "The Literary Theatre was successful" (224). Later in February 1900, she records briefly her sense of the importance and urgency of the work for the Theatre when she writes, "I see that the Theatre is the work in hand and our immediate duty" (236). What she meant by "our immediate duty" is explained in a later entry, written after the second season of the Theatre opened on February 19, 1900, "[t]he week over & well over, for tho' there is financial loss we have gained rather than lost credit, have justified our existence & come into touch with national feeling on its best side, the side one wants to develop" (247). "Coming into touch with national feeling on its best side," is, obviously, "the immediate duty" she had referred to earlier, and the side that Lady Gregory and her friends wanted to develop. Her remark in another February entry for 1900, "[w]e are not working for Home Rule, we are preparing for it" (259) identifies "the immediate duty" with a specific nationalist goal. While this remark enables Lady Gregory to underline, on the one hand, her allegiance to Irish nationalism it also helps her, on the other, to dissociate herself from revolutionary acts that "work for Home Rule." Thus, she is able to place herself both inside and outside the Nationalist cause, without becoming involved in political nationalism which she apparently felt would not be compatible with, and would indeed compromise, her position as mother of a future landlord.

Lady Gregory's determination to avoid politics is stated explicitly in an entry for April 1900, when she writes that Count de Basterot gave her "a talking to" concerning an article she had written to celebrate the heroes of Irish rebellions, "Felons of our Land," and she told him that she was convinced her husband would have been with her in all she had done so far, but that she had already determined not to go so far towards political nationalism in anything she wrote again as in the "Felons," partly because, as she put it,"I wish to keep out of politics & work only for literature, & partly because if R. is Imperialist I don't want to separate myself from him" (267). Lady Gregory was eventually able to undertake substantial creative work for literature, through which she could continue to appeal to the "best side of national feeling" and as she had asserted in an earlier entry, "help to restore dignity to Ireland." On November 20, 1900, she wrote, "I have had an idea floating in my mind for

some time that I might put together the Irish legends, into a sort of Morte D'Arthur [...] I consulted Yeats & after a short hesitation, he thinks the idea very good, so I will try & carry it out, & am provided with work for the rest of my life" (290). This project was completed by late 1901 as *Cuchulain of Muirthemne* and published in 1902. During this time, she continued doing translation, writing articles and carrying out her work as mistress of the Big House, "the poor at the door & my hand in my pocket -Then Workhouse, Xmas tree - presents to nephews and nieces & letters- Yeats sent me "Shadowy Waters," which is dedicated to me" (294), her different roles as writer and landowner merging into one another. She went to London to work at "Cuchulain" at the British Museum, and gave up her rooms at Queen Anne's Mansions. "Although people are kind," she says in one entry, "somehow I have lost my interest in society for the present" (303), and then "I don't think I shall set up in London again -tho' I will come for 2 years more, till Robert is started" (304). There are very few entries for the year 1902, and on January 4, 1903 she writes, "I can only comfort myself for not having written here till now for a whole year by thinking it is perhaps when one is doing least & so has least to tell, one has more time for writing it down" (311), and gives a brief account of 1902. On 21 Feb., 1904, she regrets that she had not written regularly, "[y]es, I will begin to write this again [...] I have some hope never to be in a hurry again" (314). She was wrong, however, for there are only two more entries, one for 1904 and then a last one for 1909, five years later, giving a very brief list of the plays she had written, mentioning Robert's marriage, the birth of Robert's son and a few notes about the Theatre. As Pethica remarks, for Lady Gregory, the various roles which had defined her life since 1880 had by 1902 been, for the most part, ended or left behind (xxxii). Lady Gregory was ready for a productive period of her career, during which she would be in a hurry, fulfilling the new duties she had discovered as she remade herself. Her diaries are witness to this process of discovery and remaking.

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3

Lady Gregory: Celtic Myths, Folklore and W. B. Yeats

Hande Seber

The Danish writer Signe Toksvig and her novelist husband lived in Ireland for ten years. Signe Toksvig's *Irish Diaries* give a detailed account of her memories about people, places, events and the time ("Signe Toksvig's"). In her "A Visit to Lady Gregory" she narrates her visit with vivid details of Lady Gregory's house, Coole, the woods, the wild swans, their conversations, their journey to Galway and Lady Gregory's telling them stories about these places, but most significantly her attempts to revive Irish culture:

> I realized how it is that she has become a recorder of the withdrawn songs and legends of the "thatched houses," and how it is that she learned their speech, not only Gaelic, but their cadenced, colored English, "the Gaelic construction, the Elizabethan phrases," the quick turn and fresh invention. I felt – as farmers, stone-cutters, workhouse wards, beggars must have felt – that there was a woman without mockery, a human being in whom there was the safety of kindness, and a keen simplicity of interest that warranted understanding. Those who have read her own creative works and compilations of Irish poetry, history and legend, and who know the Irish peasant, will know how faithfully and beautifully she has preserved this amazingly imaginative language. Synge knew it, and learned from her "the dialect he had been trying to master." Yeats knew it, and she collaborated

with him writing of most of his plays, especially *Cathleen ni Houlihan.* (196-197)

Toksvig also talks about Lady Gregory reading them her writing about the life of her nephew Sir Hugh Lane, the renowned collector of Irish myths. She was so much impressed not only with the adventurous and tragic life of Sir Hugh Lane, but also the way how Lady Gregory read it "so beautifully" (198). For Toksvig, Lady Gregory "was a woman who loved Ireland of the present as well as Ireland of the past. She, also, will have helped make possible the Ireland of the future" (200).

Lady Gregory was born in 1852 to a family of sixteen children, ten of them were boys. Stevenson states that "[a]s a female member of the landowning class she had been taught that her role was to serve, first of all her family (the male members of her family), and those less fortunate than herself" and "had always performed charitable duties among the tenants on her family and her husband's estates" (66). Stevenson also argues that "she needed something more to do, in the early 1890's, she realised that her dutiful and boring service to the people could be expanded dramatically into something more meaningful to her personally and valuable to the country as a whole" (66). Therefore, she began collecting folkloric material.

1880s and 1890s were important dates that mark the Irish Literary Revival and as Vejvoda suggests, it "was largely inspired by an interest in folklore" and Douglas Hyde, W. B. Yeats and Lady Augusta Gregory were the prominent figures in reviving "the popular appetite for Irish folklore" (41). Vejvoda sees Lady Gregory as "a noteworthy exception to the predominance of male folklore collectors" and thinks that "without the vast amount of material she collected among the rural peasantry, much of which she freely offered to Yeats to supplement his own, the Literary Revival would have been greatly impoverished" (42). Innes talks about three important cultural, nationalist movements in Ireland: The Gaelic Athletic Association (1884), organized by Michale Cusack aimed at reviving traditional Irish sports; the Gaelic League (1893) aimed at the revival of spoken and written Irish, which was also associated with a campaign that encouraged poeple to buy the products of the Irish cottage industry; "The Irish Literary Society held its first meeting in London 1891," the following year in Dublin, "and then supplanted by the National Literary Society, which played a central part in the Anglo-Irish Literary Revival and the establishment of an Irish theatrical base and tradition" (43).

These years were very prolific in the revival of Irish traditions and culture. Coxhead briefly states the reason of the emergence of the Irish Renaissance at this particular period by referring to the explanations given by Yeats, Lady Gregory and the historians:

> [...] the nationalist urge, disappointed by the overthrow of Parnell, converted itself into an imaginative and creative urge; that people turned to art and literature because they were sickened of politics. (40)

It is "a matter of luck," thinks Coxhead that all these talented people and researches could come together, influence each other and revive the dying folk tradition (41). Lady Gregory's realisation of the value and importance of folklore begins with her reading of "Douglas Hyde's *Beside the Fire* and *Love Songs of Connacht,* the first a retelling of Gaelic folk tales, the second a translation of Gaelic poetry, and Yeats's *Celtic Twilight*" (Stevenson 66-67). Stevenson thinks that both Hyde and Yeats were aware of the value of this folk knowledge and also they had a deep concern about "the eminent possibility of its being lost forever through the encroachments of the English language and English ways of thinking" (67). Lady Gregory similarly saw the importance of folklore and she began to collect it, and "[d]uring the remaining thirty-five years of her life, she published eight volumes of folklore, some of them very large, and most of them very popular (Stevenson 67).

Her person and her house brought together people who worked for reviving the Irish culture. Coole became the "working house of thought for the writers of the renaissance" (O'Connor 196). Coxhead points out that "as a late-Victorian Irish county lady" it was impossible for her to go into the places like clubs where men met and discussed matters about the revival (44-45). Therefore, she made her country house the gathering place for the writers and the poets of the time which made the Irish Literary revival possible. However, Coole "was not a free poets' hotel" says Coxhed, and these gatherings were of great importance for Lady Gregory because it "was her principal opportunity of sharing in what was going on" (45). Among these visitors, Douglas Hyde was an important figure who helped Lady Gregory's interest in Irish folklore to develop more. He was collecting folkloric material from Irish speaking labourers and peasants. At that time Lady Gregory was already learning Irish, but it was Hyde who "helped to give Augusta confidence in her use of Irish" (O'Connor 197-198). He was cycling all around the place – with a broken bicycle – to find evidence about "the early nineteenth-century itinerant poet,

Anthony Raftery (1779-1835)" and he also became one of her visitors at Coole (Hill 180).

Later, with Yeats, Lady Gregory began collecting folkloric material for her *Visions and Beliefs in the West of Ireland.* Yeats in his *Dramatis Personae* refers to those days:

> Lady Gregory brought me from cottage to cottage collecting folk-lore. Every night she wrote out what we had heard in the dialect of the cottages. She wrote, if my memory does not deceive me, two hundred thousand words, discovering that vivid English she was the first to use upon the stage. (399-400)

Lady Gregory's method in collecting this valuable folkloric material is indeed very loyal to the way these tales survived throughout centuries in the minds and the words of the storytellers. O'Connor talks about how she gathered them, that is, she "would listen and then write her account afterwards" and "that she had trained her memory till she could hardly make a mistake" (201). Coxhead underlines her great talent in keeping in mind all these stories and how she became a precursor for the ones who like her will collect folkloric material:

> The mother of folklore – so Dr Thomas Wall of the Irish Folklore Commission has called her, and he finds in her a reliability which made her almost a human tape-recorder. And in fact her modern successor, the Commission's Galway field researcher, does not use a tape-recorder. His equipment is still what she listed as hers, patience, reverence, a good memory. (58)

Although Lady Gregory worked together with Yeats in collecting this folkloric material, she indeed evidently had a much active role. During their visits to the cottages, Hill states that Yeats usually stayed outside while Lady Gregory entered in alone. She further argues that Lady Gregory was "downplaying her role" and said that she was assisting Yeats, but indeed the case was just the opposite, because he was deeply frustrated with his love affair, therefore emotionally and physically weary (Hill 173-174). She told all these stories to Yeats and "was aware that he regarded them merely as raw material to be hammered into shape by his poetic insight" and this was the beginning of her friendship with Yeats, or poet/patron relationship, that was to last for thirty five years, and she became a

"patron, mother figure, collaborator and confidante" for him (Hill 174-175).

Lady Gregory was definitely a literary patron for Yeats, and their collaboration enabled her to enter into the literary and cultural world that was not an open domain for women. Her collecting stories with Yeats, her improvement in Irish with the help of Hyde encouraged Lady Gregory to make translations, and as O'Connor states "[s]he showed she had a gift for rendering Gaelic into English and retaining the original metre and the quality of the language" (215). Five of her translations were later included in the *Oxford Book of Modern Verse* by Yeats and there were many others (O'Connor 215). Lady Gregory provided Yeats with quite a lot of folkloric material, and while supporting him with all this material, she was also expecting him to write poems as a literary patron would expect. Hill asserts that she was well aware of her role as "[t]he patron, like the landlord, gives generously and requests carefully. Power should never press, unless debts are not being repaid" (183). However, Hill also underlines a significant aspect of this relationship and says that when Lady Gregory "gave Yeats her folklore material she did not anticipate that she was giving away an opportunity to publish under her own name" (183). However, it happened. In 1897 she was asked to write a folkloric article to a prestigious journal, *The Nineteenth Century*, but she could not do it as she gave all her material to Yeats:

> But when Yeats's second article was turned down by *The New Review* she offered it to Knowles instead of hers, and he took it. 'So all was for the best,' here was an income for Yeats, entry for him into an influential literary circle, and, 'He is pleased.' (Hill 183)

The article and definitely the material were hers, Yeats only shaped it, says Hill, and indeed Lady Gregory "was happy to sacrifice" her material, thinking that Yeats would spend the money he earned from it for his poetic accomplishments, but she was very angry when she learned that some amount of this money was spent "on a journey made at the bidding of Maud Gonne" (183).

The Irish myths and legends of the pre-Christian period are put together in two collections *Gods and Fighting Men* and *Cuchulain of Muirthemne.*[1]The stories about the coming of the Tuatha de Danaan, the Irish gods and goddesses, and the Fianna are extensively given in *Gods and Fighting Men* (1904) which is dedicated to the Irish Society

[1] The references to these works are from *Lady Gregory's Complete Irish Mythology*.

of New York in the year of its birth. Its preface is written by Yeats who gives the whole picture of Lady Gregory's efforts to collect and put these stories together. He says that in reading this book, one "must not confuse these kings, as did the mediæval chroniclers, with those half-divine kings of Almhuin" as they added some historical and Christian elements to these tales (Preface *Gods* 1). Lady Gregory in the Notes she added to the tales, points out that historical accuracy is a problematic issue. She states that she could not form a chronological sequence because there was no reliable historical account of the events. It is for this reason that in the stories she avoided using historical names or names and titles that suggest historical characters (314). Yeats tells that the stories in this collection are far from "mediæval pedantry," and they are older and transmitted from generation to generation "in the mouths of professed story-tellers" (Preface *Gods* 2). He also emphasises the importance of being able to know the past with all its history and stories, and being able to read them in a language that people are using. As these stories long survived in Irish, only the older generation currently knew them, therefore, this book is a chance for the younger generation to learn all these stories about the Irish past.

The language that Lady Gregory uses is another distinctive aspect of this collection reflecting her deep concern and respect for the nature of these tales that long survived in oral tradition. "Such books should not be commended by written words but by spoken words" says Yeats pointing out this distinctive quality of her works (Preface *Gods* 9). In the notes to the book, in "The Apology" part, Lady Gregory explains how she had to compare different translations of the stories to combine them together with few connecting sentences of her own in order not to distort the original story and to provide coherence. She says:

> I have found it more natural to tell the stories in the manner of the thatched houses, where I have heard so many legends of Finn and his friends, and Oisin and Patrick, and the Ever-Living Ones, and the Country of the Young, rather than in the manner of the slated houses, where I have not heard them. (*Gods* 309)

She also talks about the necessity to give eminence to these tales. She refers to Dr. Atkinson's views about Irish literature, who was a professor at Trinity College and submitted his comments to the Commission of Intermediate Education. He thinks that Irish literature is low in tone, and it was not touched by the great literatures, namely classical literature. Moreover, he claims that

there is little idealism – none indeed, little imagination, but there is only "the untrained popular feeling" (qtd. in *Gods* 309). Lady Gregory was sad that he not only despised Irish literature but his ideas influenced some fellow-professors and students in Trinity (*Gods* 309). However, it was not the only harsh criticism directed to Irish literature. O'Connor refers to another negative remark by Mahaffy that made Lady Gregory do something about the matter. He believes that doing "something practical about the matter," to channel her anger was very typical of Lady Gregory, so she worked in the library of the Royal Irish Academy for about two years on "the transcripts of the saga tales copied down by Eugene O'Curry" as her Irish was fluent enough to translate them as well as understanding the commentaries by German scholars due to her excellent knowledge of German. She also checked the other manuscripts preserved in the British Museum and the result of this hard work was *Cuchulain of Muirthemne* (O'Connor 216).

Lady Gregory's intention was to make many people read these tales, and make them judge the "lowness" and "want of imagination" in them. Moreover, she believed that her collection would lead learned people to further research by going back to the original manuscripts in Gaelic, and they would translate the "uncatalogued and untranslated" ones. She talks about an instance:

> A day or two ago I had a letter from one of the best Greek scholars and translators in England, who says of my "Cuchulain": "It opened up a great world of beautiful legend which, though accounting myself as an Irishman, I had never known at all. I am sending out copies to Irish friends in Australia who, I am sure, will receive the same sort of impression, almost an impression of pride in the beauty of the Irish mind, as I received myself." And President Roosevelt wrote to me a little time ago that after he had read "Cuchulain of Muirthemne," he had sent for all the other translations from the Irish he could get, to take on his journey to the Western States. (*Complete Irish Mythology* 310)

She says that these words are not from vanity because she underlines the fact that the praise she receives is not to her person but to the material.

O'Connor states that *Cuchulain of Muirthemne* "is a seminal book for the writers of the literary renaissance. It showed how the

folk speech first put on paper by Douglas Hyde could be used to create a literary style" and it is from this book that Yeats and Synge borrowed material for their plays about the heroic figures (217). *Cuchulain of Muirthemne* (1902), which is about the life, deeds and accomplishments of the great Irish hero, is dedicated to the "People of Kiltartan," whom Lady Gregory addresses as her "Dear Friends." She says that she is thinking of them, and she translated these stories for them to read. These stories are forgotten in time and few people know about them as they are in Irish. Stating that they survived in different versions, she tried to fit them together perfectly, offer this worthy gift to her friends in a simple and clear language, "the language of Ireland," as her old nurse Mary Sheridan told her long time ago (*Complete Irish Mythology* 329-330). Her nurse played a very important role in her growing interest in folklore. For forty years she worked as a nurse in the family, she was a Catholic, and as Coxhead states she was "a walking library of fairytales and folklore" (8). Lady Gregory was a Protestant but she learned a lot from her nurse and "could yet enter imaginatively into the minds of Catholic peasant characters, and transpose the gentleness of Irish saintly legend into religious plays acceptable to Catholic and Protestant alike" (Coxhead 8).

In giving an overview of the history of the revival, Leerssen refers to two "contradictory modes of national consciousness-raising" and briefly defines them as follows:

> One, to tap into old springs of inspiration and to escape from contemporary drabness, the other to borrow energy and youth from them. One harks back to the past, the other remains in the present; one goes for high culture of yore and ancient important figures, the other emphasizes the Plain People now living in their rustic cottages; one tends to opt for the literary prestige of a high tragic mode (the melancholy Celticism common to Macpherson and young Yeats), the other is more comic and vitalistic [...] There is, then, a dual, indeed contradictory, way for Anglo-Irish authors and nationalists to place their endeavours under Irish auspices: the antiquarian and the folklorish. (195-196)

Therefore, Leerssen argues that the literary figures of the revival were faced with this dilemma, and also whether they should use classical Irish, or the living one, stating that Lady Gregory followed the folkloric tradition and turned the peasants' language into a "medium

of literary expression" (198). Moreover, for Leerssen what Lady Gregory had done is also to bring the ancient aristocratic epic to the lives of common people, and with her attempts in relating them to a heroic past, she provided the peasants with dignity. However, he also thinks that despite the fact that this book is dedicated to her "friends," the Kiltartan people, it was published in London, she did not freely distribute it to them and the introduction written by Yeats "obviously appeals to a wholly different market" (206-207).

Still, the Preface written by Yeats includes notable details about how much effort is given to this work. He says that these stories are already translated, but what distinguishes this "best book that has ever come out of Ireland" is that Lady Gregory managed to give the Irish spirit and the Irish imagination, and she took the best parts from the manuscripts – that the translators could not do. Lady Gregory cleared them of the unnecessary ornamentation, and made "compression" and "selection:"

> She has already put a great mass of stories, in which the ancient heart of Ireland still lives, into a shape at once harmonious and characteristic; and without writing more than a very few sentences of her own to link together incidents or thoughts taken from different manuscripts, without adding more indeed than the story-teller must often have added to amend the hesitation of a moment. Perhaps more than all she has discovered a fitting dialect to tell them in. (Preface *Cuchulain* 331)

Yeats also believes that while gathering these stories, Lady Gregory "moved about among her people she learned to love the beautiful speech of those who think in Irish" (Preface *Cuchulain* 332). He also underlines another distinctive aspect of these stories. These stories that date back to the pre-Christian period were able to teach moral realities to people just like the church in the following centuries did (Preface *Cuchulain* 332). Moreover, they are an inseparable part of the land that they are living in, and to know and remember them will make the Irish people give more value to their country:

> To us Irish these personages should be more important than all others, for they lived in the places where we ride and go marketing, and sometimes they have met one another on the hills that cast their shadows upon our doors at evening. If we but tell these stories to our children the Land will begin again

> to be a Holy Land, as it was before men gave their hearts to Greece and Rome and Judea. (Preface *Cuchulain* 336)

Visions and Beliefs in the West of Ireland is another substantial book which is Lady Gregory's contribution to the folkloric tradition. Ettlinger points out that "in the Aran Isles and later near her estate of Coole, Lady Gregory collected the material for this 'big book on folklore' " (171). It is indeed the product of many years devoted to collecting material prior to its publication in 1920 (Vejvoda 42). Coxhead argues that, the writing of this work was very much influenced by W. B. Yeats's the *Celtic Twilight* and Douglas Hyde's *Love Songs of Connacht* published in 1893 – though it is not certain when she read them after their publication (42). The book is the result of almost twenty years devoted to collecting stories and it is an invaluable source for folk beliefs concerning supernatural beings and events, charms, evil eye, and also about seers and healers. Hill states that Yeats indeed offered her to collaborate on this book in December 1898, but Lady Gregory refused it because he gave himself "the more important task of structuring and writing, and Augusta the passages to be written in dialect" and moreover, "[h]e was also reluctant to give her equal acknowledgement" (184).

Lady Gregory's method in collecting the stories, as mentioned earlier, is to keep them in mind in the way the storyteller tells it to her. Hill thinks that after realising that her notebook was an "impediment when she asked people for stories" she "consciously trained her memory" and wrote down the stories later and she could even keep the rhythms and expressions in mind (171). In the process of collecting folkloric material, her loyalty to the storytellers' style has always been the most distinctive feature of all her work, and indeed a great contribution to keep alive all these tales in the way they survived in the mouths of the storytellers for ages. Lady Gregory in 1920 said: "Even when I began to gather these stories [...] I cared less for the evidence given in them than for the beautiful rhythmic sentences in which they were told" (qtd. in Hill 171). Moreover, she developed more intimate relations with the storytellers to make them more comfortable about her social status, and therefore, her intention is remarkably different from that of Yeats:

> [...] she saw herself as holding up a 'clean mirror to tradition,' a transparent medium between the people and the literary world. She was here comparing herself to Yeats who approached the stories with theories and, above all, his poetry in mind, whereas she had no

> theories. The awareness of context would be something that later folklorists would be more attuned to. (Hill 172)

In the Preface, Lady Gregory gives a detailed account of the Sidhe; who they are, where they live, what they do, what they eat, how they look and how they get involved in the ordinary lives of people sometimes causing trouble sometimes helping them. At times the real world and their world touch each other. Before she begins with "Sea-Stories" she says that *The Celtic Twilight* was the first book that she had read about the Sidhe. She read them before meeting Yeats, and says that his stories were about Sligo and her intention is to collect stories of Galway. She adds that, as these stories are regarded as fancy and superstition, they are not at all given importance in her social class. However, now in collecting them she thinks that she is holding "a clean mirror to tradition" (3). She also points out how ancient these stories are. They date back to the pre-Christian period, and indeed are the earliest belief system and an invaluable element of the past:

> I believe that if Christianity could be blotted out and forgotten tomorrow, our people would not be moved at all from the belief in a spiritual world and an unending life; it has been with them since the Druids taught what Lucan called "the happy error of the immortality of the soul." I think we found nothing so trivial in our search but it may have been worth the lifting; a clue, a thread, leading through the maze to that mountain top where things visible and invisible meet. (4)

She also makes a final note on collecting folklore before she begins with the first story, that one needs "leisure, patience, reverence, and a good memory" (4) and being loyal to the way the story is told. She says sometimes she goes listening to these stories with Yeats, who serves as a witness that she does not include any comment of her own, and adds that she writes each story down in the way she heard it (3). The main difference between Yeats's and Lady Gregory's ways of dealing with these stories according to Fogliani is that Yeats's stories are more like "editorialized versions of Irish legends" and he "appears more interested in his prestige as a writer [...]. On the contrary, Lady Gregory wrote the narrations as first person experiences grounded in reality, in less glorifying prose, leaving the reader to imagine they are receiving testimony from actual witnesses rather than narrators of fiction" ("Lady Gregory").

Extensive notes to the stories are added by Yeats, along with two informative essays under the title "Witches and Wizards and Irish Folk-Lore." Ettlinger argues that "Yeats's notes and essays reveal his primary interest in spiritualism and occultism," however, Lady Gregory gives "the whole range of folk stories current at her time" (171). Acknowledging the great value of the work, Ettlinger talks about one missing aspect of the collection, that is, "[a]n index would have been as great a help as some up-to-date notes on folklore. It is regrettable that Lady Gregory did not give the real names of those who were living or who had left living relatives" (171).

It is evidently observed that Yeats is a close witness of and an active participant in all these cultural, literary and folkloric accomplishments. Yeats's friendship with Lady Gregory has a significant role in the Irish literary renaissance not only in terms of this immense contribution to the folkloric tradition but it is also a motivating and an inspiring factor in Yeats's own poetic accomplishments. Stevenson states that "[f]rom 1896 when Yeats was thirty-two until his marriage in 1917, he spent every summer resting and writing poetry at Coole Park" (63). She also asserts that:

> [E]motionally and sexually, Lady Gregory and Yeats were a completely "safe" combination. Yeats was and continued to be infatuated with Maude Gonne. Lady Gregory was not interested in marriage. (She wore mourning for the last forty years of her life, a fairly strong declaration that she was not on the marriage market.) [...] in balancing her need for freedom and achievement against her need for emotional cover, she unconsciously realized she needed a man to whom she was superior in order to maintain her freedom of action and to whom she was inferior in order for him to be of any benefit to her. She was both superior and inferior to Yeats. (68)

Lady Gregory's patronage and his long stays at Coole are the major constituents of inspiration for Yeats. After the death of Lady Gregory, Yeats was planning to do something after her, and the result was "an autobiographical sketch of his and her part in the founding of the literary movement," *Dramatis Personae* published in 1936 (Coxhead 218). This work is significant because it gives a very detailed account of his friendship with Lady Gregory, how they worked together in collecting folkloric material but above all, how Coole became the centre for all these studies and a secure haven for Yeats.

With her patronage Yeats found himself an inspiring place where he could write, without getting involved with the difficulties of life. However, as indicated in his *Dramatis Personae*, Lady Gregory was not simply a patron, but a literary figure who actively participated in the revival:

> During these first years Lady Gregory was friend and hostess, a centre of peace, an adviser who never overestimated or underestimated trouble, but neither she nor we thought her a possible creator. And now all in a moment, as it seemed, she became the founder of modern Irish dialect literature. (455)

Foster asserts that her fatal illness and her death had a great effect on his works. His loss of a friend and his second home, that is Coole, negatively effected Yeats and "made him fear that his poetic inspiration had disappeared along with the world of Coole" and all this lead Yeats to search for new means of inspiration (109). Yeats has a number of poems about Lady Gregory and Coole, all of which are about the importance that they both have in his artistic life.

He wrote some poems on Lady Gregory's last days and her fatal illness, but the significant thing about these poems is that his bitter realisation that with the death of Lady Gregory, his life at Coole, her patronage and all the security, peace, hospitality and friendship would no longer be with him. Moreover, in her last days it became evident that the house where she was to spend her last days would no longer be in the family (Foster 109-110). In "Coole Park, 1929"[2] while sadly lamenting about the imminent feeling of loss – a patron, a friend, all the security, tranquility, inspiration she and her house offered – Yeats meditates on life and death, giving a brief account of what Coole means to him:

> I meditate upon a swallow's flight,
> Upon an aged woman and her house,
> A sycamore and lime-tree lost in night
> Although that western cloud is luminous,
> Great works constructed there in nature's spite
> For scholars and for poets after us,
> Thoughts long knitted into a single thought,
> A dance-like glory that those walls begot.
> (*Yeats's Poems* 357-58)

Meditating on the flight of a swallow, a migratory bird like which he is to fly away soon, he is aware that he will no longer have the same house to nestle on his return. Other writers such as Synge, Hugh Lane like him stayed there and enjoyed her "excellent company" (358). She was the power holding them together:

> They came like swallows and like swallows went,
> And yet a woman's powerful character
> Could keep a swallow to its first intent
> (*Yeats's Poems* 358)

Another poem that illustrates this loss is "Coole Park and Ballylee, 1931" and Foster notes that Yeats "had written her elegy before she died" (113). The poem was first published as "Coole Park and Ballylee, 1932" and appears as a poem on her death; however, Yeats was working on the poem three months before she died, and therefore he changed the year to "1931" to make the poem on Lady Gregory's "decline and illness, rather than her death" (Foster 113). Perloff points out that Yeats intended to put it as "an introductory piece to the Cuala Press edition of Lady Gregory's Coole, a book of personal reminiscences about the great house and its meadows, lakes, and woods" but as it was not finished in time of publication, the other poem "Coole Park, 1929" was put instead of it (223). Like the swallow image in the former poem, "Coole Park and Ballylee, 1931" is dominated by the swan image that stands for "inspiration" as Yeats himself suggested (qtd. in Perloff 223). It also represents the desire to attain immortality leaving behind what is temporal – a theme that is recurrently used by Yeats:

> At sudden thunder of the mounting swan
> I turned about and looked where branches break
> The glittering reaches of the flooded lake.
> (*Yeats's Poems* 359)

The beautiful description of the landscape is interrupted by this sudden sight of the swan. In estate poetry, Perloff argues that it is a convention to mythologise the landscape, however, no such thing is observed in the poem (234). She finds the poem as "one of Yeats's most pessimistic poems" and that "[t]he poem records the experience of a man who tries to read spiritual meanings into the landscape but fails" (234). The feeling of loss dominates the lines and the poet laments not only the lost landscape but also all what it means for him. In the end of the poem, the landscape is "now seen through disenchanted eyes" (Perloff 234).

We were the last romantics - chose for theme
Traditional sanctity and loveliness;
Whatever's written in what poets name
The book of the people; whatever most can bless
The mind of man or elevate a rhyme;
But all is changed, that high horse riderless,
Though mounted in that saddle Homer rode
Where the swan drifts upon a darkening flood.
(*Yeats's Poems* 360)

"Weighed down by the knowledge of Lady Gregory's illness, the demise of her estate, and his own old age, the poet has tried to find a religious consolation, a blessedness whether 'secular' or supernatural" (Perloff 232). The poem is a highly suggestive and symbolic one like Yeats's other poems and is open to various levels of interpretation. However, when his anguish about Lady Gregory's approaching death and the imminent possibility of losing all the care he had for long years in her house is taken into consideration, it appears as his poetic farewell to the house that will no longer host him after the death of its owner. It is, therefore, a lament to the years he spent there. Like the mounting swan, he will go away into the darkness, into the unknown, and can no longer return there.

Foster believes that "Gregory's death provoked one of Yeats's most severe periods of writer's block" (112). "I have lost the one who has been to me for nearly forty years my strength and my conscience" said Yeats after her death, because for him Coole was "the only place where I have ever had unbroken heath" (qtd. in Coxhead 217). Moreover, referring to a note written by Yeats in 1934 – in which he says that he did not write any poem for two years and is worried that his poetic inspiration might have died with the death of Lady Gregory and her house where he managed to escape from the pressing realities of life – Perloff argues that the darkness that the swan in the poem flies represents "a moment of crisis in Yeats's poetic career" when he worried that "imaginative life" would end – which did not happen (240).

His worry about Lady Gregory's old age and her death is indeed his main concern in most of the poems. In "Beautiful Lofty Things" he talks about a threat made against Lady Gregory:

Augusta Gregory seated at her great ormolu table,
Her eightieth winter approaching:
[Yesterday he threatened my life.

> I told him that nightly from six to seven I sat at this table,
> The blinds drawn up' (*Yeats's Poems* 421)

Although the poem seems to depict a scene from a day at Coole, referring to the information provided by Mrs. Yeats, Jeffares notes there is an exaggeration about Lady Gregory's age saying that "her age could not have exceeded, at most, seventy-three" (351). Thinking that the poem shows Yeats's deep concern about her growing old, Jeffares refers to other two poems that are about the approaching death of Lady Gregory: "A Friend's Illness" and "These are the Clouds" (351-353). In "These are the Clouds," Yeats in a poignant tone talks about an approaching storm as the clouds begin to gather about the sun, covering up its brightness. The poem is not about an actual storm, but about its imminent possibility and destruction, sadly expressing at the same time on how the weak ones could lay their hands on the accomplishments of the strong ones:

> The weak lay hand on what the strong has done,
> Till that be tumbled that was lifted high
> And discord follow upon unison,
> And all things at one common level lie.
> (*Yeats's Poems* 191)

The poem is highly significant as it refers to a greater loss, and as Jeffares states "[i]n these lines Yeats was not so much concerned with Lady Gregory's ultimate death as with the danger that the Land agitation might bring about the downfall of Coole, and the long continuity of culture that it represented" (353).

Another poem that should be evaluated within this context is "The New Faces." Jeffares argues that although it is commonly agreed that the poem is about Yeats's love for Maud Gonne, it is indeed written to Lady Gregory because "[t]he references to the catalpa tree, the limes, and the garden gravel show that the house described is Coole" and Lady Gregory particularly liked this tree (349).

> If you, that have grown old, were the first dead,
> Neither catalpa tree nor scented lime
> Should hear my living feet, nor would I tread
> Where we wrought that shall break the teeth of Time.
> (*Yeats's Poems* 318)

Jeffares argues that "[w]hen he wrote 'The New Faces' he was forty-seven, and, viewed from his middle age, Lady Gregory now seemed old" (351). His haunting worry about losing Lady Gregory and Coole is evidently observed in the poem, and he sadly expresses that after her death he will not be able to be at Coole any more. Perloff states that Yeats's prophecy in the poem came true because "after Lady Gregory's death in April, the house which had been sold to the Forestry Department in 1927, was in fact pulled down" (223).

"The Municipal Gallery Revisited" in a way summarises what Lady Gregory, Coole and the days that they all worked together for the Irish Literary Revival means to Yeats. Innes states that the poem "reiterates Yeats's equation of her house with the person of Lady Gregory" (146). In the poem, Yeats visits the public gallery and the paintings that he sees remind him of the thirty years with all its great events. What he has seen in the paintings is that

> [...] 'This is not,' I say,
> 'The dead Ireland of my youth, but an Ireland
> The poets have imagined, terrible and gay.'
> (*Yeats's Poems* 438)

He also sees the portrait of Maud Gonne which makes him feel "[h]eart smitten with emotion" (438), and he sits down to recover. These paintings, as indicated in the poem, are collected by Hugh Lane. Among the portraits, Lady Gregory's portrait by Mancini is very special for him. Although it is a great portrait by Manchini, it fails in representing the great qualities of Lady Gregory, her pride and humility that he for so long closely witnessed. As an old man now, Yeats, with difficulty kneels before the portrait in reverence:

> My mediaeval knees lack health until they bend,
> But in that woman, in that household where
> Honour had lived so long, all lacking found.
> Childless I thought, 'My children may find here
> Deep-rooted things,' but never foresaw its end,
> And now that end has come I have not wept [...]
> (*Yeats's Poems* 439)

The poet goes back to his youth and remembers how much he admired the hospitality he received at Coole. He hoped and wished that one day in future his children would find such a household where the values of the past, culture and tradition are so well preserved, respected and honoured. But now it all ended, and the

poet is left even without tears indicating the impossibility of living such a great experience again.

Stevenson points out that both Lady Gregory and Yeats benefited from this relationship that lasted for thirty five years; however "there was much enthusiasm, much intellectual interest, many shared hopes and fears, but little intimacy and little love. Yet within their limitations, it allowed them both to develop their abilities to the fullest" (77). To conclude, the result of this long relationship is their immense contribution to the cultural, historical and literary life of Ireland. Both of them established a path that was to inspire the poets and writers coming after them. Yeats's words in his *Dramatis Personae* clearly summarise Lady Gregory's distinguished place, along with what Coole and Lady Gregory meant to him, how they all shaped his poetic accomplishments, but above all how worthy they are for the revival of Irish culture:

> She knew Ireland always in its permanent relationships, associations—violence but a brief interruption—, never lost her sense of feudal responsibility, not of duty as the word is generally understood, but of burdens laid upon her by her station and her character, a choice constantly renewed in solitude. "She has been," said an old man to me, "like a serving-maid among us. She is plain and simple, like the Mother of God, and that was the greatest lady that ever lived." When in later years her literary style became in my ears the best written by woman, she had made the people a part of her soul; a phrase of Aristotle's had become her motto: "To think like a wise man, but to express oneself like the common people." (395)

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4

Lady Gregory's Distinct Hand in Two Plays Written with W. B. Yeats: *Cathleen Ni Houlihan* and *The Unicorn from the Stars*

Margaret J-M Sönmez

The publication history of Augusta Gregory's and W. B. Yeats's co-authored plays is a story of the suppressing of Gregory's name, and this starts very early. Since the late 1980s,[1] attempts have been made to identify the extent to which Gregory was a genuine co-writer in the creation of these plays. This essay traces the history of the suppression of her name before surveying the distinct characteristics of the playwrights' sole-authored plays. Characteristics of these playwrights' language are then used to examine the extent of Gregory's contribution in two of the co-authored plays.

Attribution and Ascription of *Cathleen* and *Unicorn*

There are six plays that are now understood to have been written in large part by Gregory, but which until the 1990s appeared under Yeats's name. These are *Cathleen ni Houlihan* (1902)[2] (henceforth *Cathleen*) (as spelt in most of the printed versions),[3] *The Pot of Broth*[4]

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[1] James Pethica's studies of Gregory's and Yeats's writings seems to have been the first to examine her work in this respect. Most unfortunately none of these publications are available to me at present.

[2] First produced April 1902 by W.G. Fay's National Dramatic Society, in Clarendon Street, Dublin. First published in *Samhain* (October 1902); first separate publication, London: A. H. Bullen, 1902.

[3] Always spelt Kathleen in Gregory's hand and sometimes in Yeats's, but rarely found in this form in print (Kohfeldt 144).

(1902), *The Country of the Young* and *Heads or Harps* (both unpublished and unproduced in their lifetimes),[5] *When Nothing is Left* (1902)[6] and *The Unicorn from the Stars* (1907) (henceforth *Unicorn*).

Cathleen and *The Pot of Broth* appeared in a 1904 volume called *The Hour-Glass, Cathleen ni Houlihan, The Pot of Broth. Being Volume Two of Plays for an Irish Theatre: By W. B. Yeats*, and *Unicorn* (alongside *The Time Piece*) appeared in the 1908 *Unicorn from the Stars and Other Plays by William B. Yeats and Lady Gregory* which, in spite of its title, identifies only *Unicorn* as co-written, and presents the other plays under only Yeats's name, although he explains in the Preface that she helped, to varying degrees, with *Cathleen*, *The Hour Glass*, *The Pot of Broth* and *Where There is Nothing* which is acknowledged as "the first version of *The Unicorn*" (3).[7] There is plentiful and convincing scholarly, biographical and historical evidence, that Gregory's contribution was far more extensive and significant than he acknowledged or implied in this preface, including Gregory's diaries, the recorded memories of family members, and more recent studies. As Yeats's fame grew, and collected editions of his works were published, these plays all continued to appear under his sole name, usually with a prefatorial sentence acknowledging some degree of help from Gregory with the dialect, and sometimes a note about her greater participation in the writing of *Unicorn* is found, too.

Acknowledgement of Gregory's part in both plays was never sufficiently explicit or fulsome; her contributions to these plays were

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[4] First produced October 1902 by the Irish National Dramatic Company, in Dublin. First published in *The Gael* (September 1903); first book publication in *The House-Glass and Other Plays* (New York and London: The Macmillan Co., 1904) (Murphy, Paul: *Hegemony and Fantasy in Irish Drama*, 219 n. 38).

[5] Unpublished until the Cornell Yeats Series' publication *Collaborative One-Act Plays, 1901-1903* (Ithaca and London: Cornell UP, 2007).

[6] See van Mierlo (19) for details of the first journal and private editions of an early version. It appeared in book form in 1903 (*Collaborative One-Act Plays, 1901-1903*, Ithaca and London: Cornell UP, 2007).

[7] This is disingenuous. The plays are very diferent: van Mierlo states that "one can barely call *The Unicorn from the Stars* a new version of *Where There Is Nothing at all.*" (13). Claiming that *Unicorn* is a new version of the earlier play may be another of Yeats's attempts to reaffirm, this time retrospectively, his claim on the plot over Moore's for *Where There is Nothing* was from the start a play of disputed authorship (most bitterly with Moore, but both Gregory and Hyde contributed to it, neither of them being credited; had they been credited surely Moore should have been too).

variably downplayed in the early printed editions, and further obscured after her death through such publications as Yeats's 1934 *Collected Plays* (second edition 1982) where *Cathleen* (75-90) and *The Pot of Broth* (91-106) are chronologically integrated with Yeats's other plays, with no mention of Gregory in the title or contents pages (only in Yeats's Preface [v] and on the title page of *Unicorn* [327] is there acknowledgement that Gregory had a "great" "share in it"). Yeats never pretended that Gregory did not help with his plays, but he continued to refer to all the co-authored plays, including *Cathleen*, as his. His notes and prefaces are never clear about the extent of her contributions to the final forms of the plays, nor did he specify the extent to which Gregory's work influenced his entire oeuvre. The nearest he got to showing an understanding of this overall influence was in his Nobel Prize acceptance speech, when he acknowledged the essential role in the forming of his lyric poetry of his plays and the "quality of their speech practised upon the stage," – much of which he had learned from Gregory. Taking away with one hand what is given with the other, he continues that this is why "a living woman sinking into the infirmity of age" (i.e. Gregory) should be sharing the prize with him, or at least the accolade (qtd. in La Rhee 42-43). Anyone who makes a close study of Gregory's plays and who works on Irish myths can find resonances in Yeats's plays and in his poetry too; this broader spread of influence has still not been sufficiently acknowledged.

Examining what we know of the origins of these two plays from their first compositions to their early printed editions has shown how Yeats's ambiguous phrases about his work with Gregory could be both true and misleading at the same time. A strong indication that *Cathleen* was in large part the brain-child of Yeats is provided by Yeats's 1903 statement that he "had a very vivid dream one night, and [I] made *Cathleen Ni Houlihan* out of this dream" (Yeats 1922, [epigraph to *Cathleen*] n.p.) further, Gregory's autobiography stated that the play was already written by Yeats when she decided to stage it – that is, before she had made her corrections and additions to it, Yeats's 1903 epigraph further acknowledged, however, that it needed her to enable the writer to "get down out of that high window of dramatic verse" and "turn [his] dream into the little play, *Cathleen Ni Houlihan.*" (Yeats 1922, [epigraph to *Cathleen*] n.p.). This indicates that the visionary and main plot of the story were (as he claims) his, while the form was (largely) Gregory's. As for his "dictating" it to her, this is simply explained by the fact that she typed their scripts. As Cave notes, it is in Yeats's claim of "dictating" the play to her that "lies the crux of the issue of authorship" (van Mierlo qtd. in Cave 282). These important details of what it means to "write" a play were

set aside in print, however, where *Cathleen* was assertively presented as Yeats's from the start, and in this Yeats never wavered, even when Gregory's role in "helping with the language" was acknowledged elsewhere in the same edition. In the 1905 issue of *Samhain* Yeats referred to "my own Cathleen ni Houlihan" (4), and wholly his it remained, for nearly a hundred years.

Acknowledgement of Gregory's hand in *Unicorn* is far less hard to find. Nevertheless, it is modified: somewhat confusingly, Yeats's Preface to the 1908 volume claims both that Gregory's hand in the three plays of that volume was formative, and that "[a]bout seven years ago I began to dictate the first of these plays to Lady Gregory" (v). The ambiguity of the word "dictation" is at play here again. We can hardly blame subsequent editors and scholars for having the wool pulled over their eyes about these plays, if Yeats, presumably with Gregory's permission, is giving such mixed messages about their, and especially *Unicorn*'s, genesis;[8] for we have Yeats's own avowal within the same Preface that *Unicorn* was more Gregory's than his, especially the language (and without language there is little enough left of such a play, and nothing left of a script). In addition we know that their separate contributions were likely to have been inextricably mixed in the long process of talking, writing, rehearsing and then printing, and to this we should add that both Gregory and Yeats were great revisers of their plays before, during and after they were performed and printed, and this includes Yeats's practice with his single-authored plays and his poems too (Alspach xvi); he presented new editions that were prepared with no reference to earlier editions of the same works (Alspach xiv). Alspach's *Variorum Edition of the Plays of W. B. Yeats* proved particularly difficult to compile under these conditions; where, one particular "editorial and bibliographical problem-[... was] met constantly when studying editions of the plays, as well as of the poems [and this is] Yeats's habit of revising for one edition and ignoring another though the printing dates might very nearly coincide" (Alspach xiv).[9]

We have to assume as others have done that Gregory concurred to the subsuming of her plays under Yeats's name when

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[8] The other play in this volume was *The Hour Glass* [first performed 1903], which has not, to my knowledge, been ascribed to Gregory.

[9] He further notes that the problem is particularly acute when the American editions are compared with the others. This observation warns us that the comments I make in this essay about many of the plays are based on editions from a variety of sources, for there was no choice in sources, so few being available.

they were first produced and in public thereafter. This sacrifice was an act of generosity related to her "Victorian idea of service" that other essays in this volume refer to. It may also have been prompted by the "deference" (alongside Yeats's "fear of [legal] consequences") that van Mierlo (8, 4 n.8) suggests, kept her from claiming co-authorship for *When There is Nothing*. In her mind, perhaps, service was due to this younger man, because she always believed that Yeats was a genius, even when her friends and family disagreed. She also told her family that she had agreed to plays like *Cathleen* and *The Pot of Broth* appearing under his name because "his was the name that would sell" (Sihra 6), but this does not entirely hold, for she was well known as an independent contributor to the Irish Theatre Movement, had already published pamphlets and prose works under her own name, and apparently had no qualms about also publishing single-authored plays at the same time as ones she had worked on with Yeats (the opening playbill for the Abbey Theatre [1904)]is headed by her play *Spreading the News*, followed by two plays in Yeats's name: *On Baile's Strand* and *Cathleen*, and Synge's *Playboy of the Western World*). Her plays were soon to be more frequently found on the Abbey Theatre's stage, and were more popular than Yeats's (Owens and Radner 14). Positioning her name more prominently in published volumes, even on the title pages, would not have been a matter of public curiosity or speculation unless Yeats were to make trouble about it. But Gregory understood Yeats very well, and when talking together about these plays it is more than likely he referred to them as his, and she understood that in his mind the fact that the germ of the first composition came from him made them entirely and irrevocably belong to him, however little of that germ remained in the final versions. It may be possible, also, that Gregory was aware of the political power these plays, *Cathleen* in particular, could wield, and that she wished to allow this potential to be fulfilled, and for that reason she may have had the practical insight to recognising that a male writer's artistic statement about political action was more likely to be effective than a female's within the politics of the day—in spite of the fact that the protagonist, who is a manifestation of Eire, is female. Another reason Gregory gives for agreeing to and even participating in the fiction that *Cathleen* was entirely written by Yeats in the early days was that this play was at that time Yeats's "only popular success," as she told her family (Kohfeldt 151, Stelmach Artuso 33, Stevenson 69-70). She was still maintaining silence on these matters when she spoke of "Mr Yeats's Cathleen Ni Houlihan" in her "Autobiographical Sketch" but this silence hid bitter feelings. Van Mierlo reports on "an early draft sketch [...] that is entirely in her hand, with indications of what she wrote by herself ('All this mine alone') and what together with Yeats" (6 n. 15), and

she would have had no need to make these clear statements if she had not particularly wished to record- perhaps for posterity- her own part in the creation of this play. In July 1928 she expostulated in her diary: "Rather hard on me, not giving my name with Kathleen ni Houlihan that I wrote all but all of" (Stevenson 72, Sihra 6).

As for *Unicorn*, in and after its publication (1908) a note to the effect that the play was written with Lady Gregory appeared on the first page, or as a footnote. It acknowledged her contribution less vaguely and more emphatically than the "help with the dialect" phrases he wrote in editions of other plays. This was at least in part a response to Horniman telling him how "hurt and angered" Gregory was by his not properly acknowledging her major contribution (Cave 382). Yeats's acknowledgment that Gregory's involvement in *Unicorn* was far more extensive than what he admitted to for the other plays may have been unavoidable – many people knew or would learn that *Unicorn* was an entirely rewritten play based upon their co-written *Where There is Nothing* (1902), which Yeats (who appears as sole playwright) had acknowledged as "in part" Gregory's. Furthermore, this earlier play had both caused a Catholic outcry and been critically derided as a composition, so having Gregory's name attached to its rewriting was a way of advertising that *Unicorn* was a completely different play, while halving his responsibility should this one also prove unsuccessful.

As van Mierlo shows, *Unicorn* was Gregory's radical rewriting of Yeats's *Where There is Nothing.* Her new version contained little of the earlier play's language and plot elements and was given a social and political subplot and rootedness that were all Gregory's. There is a holograph of this play (in her hand) that shows her own work in development, not just a copy of Yeats's ideas (van Mierlo qtd. in Cave 282). As with many of the plays they considered for the Abbey Theatre, she and Yeats conferred, discussed and made further alterations to this and before sending it to print, and there was a time when Yeats (whose eyesight was notoriously bad, and who could not type anyway) read the latest version out loud to her as she typed it. Yeats then made corrections to the printer's proofs before the final printing of that edition (van Mierlo qtd. in Cave 282). How much of the pre-typescript play included Yeats's ideas and words alongside Gregory's is hidden in this process. There could have been any amount of and any type of contribution by either of them at any stage, and therefore the final assessment of which parts belong to whom (which will always be tentative) has to rest upon a broader

field of investigation that includes the larger context of each writer's own plays as well as on their language and staging preferences.

In 1934 Yeats stated about *Unicorn*, and perhaps the other plays, that in other collections of plays he had explained [his] indebtedness to Lady Gregory," adding: "She had generally some part wherever there is dialect, *and often where there is not*" (v, my emphasis). I understand this sentence to refer to many parts of all of Yeats's plays and not just to *Unicorn*, although this play, in all the respects touched upon in this essay, undoubtedly shows Gregory's hand to a much greater extent than any other of the plays written under Yeats's name, even more than does *Cathleen* and certainly more than does *Pot of Broth*. Upon examination *Unicorn* is seen to be, in so many respects, such a very different piece of work from the single-authored plays of Yeats that it is hard to understand how it can have been placed in volumes of Yeats's works at all, and he seems to have known this and to have (eventually) indicated some degree of unease with placing his name on this play, an unease he does not show for the other co-authored plays. He writes in one of the editions: "If I could have persuaded her, she would have signed *The Unicorn from the Stars*, her share in it is so great" (Preface v).

The seventy-year-long lack of debate about the degree and extent of Gregory's contribution to Yeats's plays can be understood as related to the fact that attribution of authorship is a matter of concern primarily to philologists, and of relatively little interest to theatre directors, newspaper reviewers, general readers and audiences. There are no records of their collaboration having been a matter of public or printed controversy at the time, no printed works to champion Gregory's position, and Gregory's works have anyway not attracted the attention of philologists and literary scholars until the last thirty years or so. Prompted by comments in Gregory's diary and letters and on a draft of *Cathleen*, and perhaps given some support by Yeats's almost-acknowledgment of Gregory's co-authorship of *Unicorn*, nascent curiosity about her involvement in his plays grew after Pethica's publications of her diaries and her involvement in the construction of these plays revealed the extent of her previously forgotten contributions to Yeats's plays.

Before the 1990s, then, Gregory's part in the writing of some plays formerly ascribed to Yeats was scarcely recognised. Because Yeats himself frequently acknowledged a degree of her authorship for *Unicorn*, it has more easily been accepted as hers in the new re-thinking of this period. One may also consider whether gender politics and the attractions of (Yeats's) international fame have

influenced the relative ease with which Gregory's authorship of *Unicorn* was and has been accepted, for Irish nationalism has never singled it out as important for either its poetic or its symbolic significance; to illustrate this point we have only to compare the treatment of *Unicorn*'s attribution with the comparative difficulties or reluctance encountered in the re-attribution of the influential Nationalist play *Cathleen*, even to this day.

Sekine's 1987 edited collection of essays, and Owen's and Radner's 1990 anthology contains both failure to acknowledge her part in Yeats's output for the stage and a degree of recognition of it. The comments that ignore her part include references to "Yeats's play" *Cathleen* (Sekine 4), and Owen and Radnor's omission of any mention of Gregory in their section of Yeats's plays (39) while in the same editors' introduction to their anthology's Gregory section they note that she "generously co-author[ed] this and two other plays (14). Welch acknowledges Lady Gregory's contribution to *Cathleen* as being the fact that she "brought Yeats back to the countryside by going on walks with him [...] collecting folklore together" (212) - which patronising dismissal of this important playwright and doyenne is so bad (frankly) as to be almost comic. As Murray was to say elsewhere, "a pat on the laurelled head [even] from Yeats does not do Gregory justice"(37). Today more consistent acknowledgement is made of Gregory's contributions to all of Yeats's plays, without any firm conclusions being reachable: different scholars and sources have ceased to ignore her hand in these works, for there is a slowly growing acceptance that the Irish plays so often called Yeats's were in fact dependent upon her in a variety of ways and to a variety of degrees.[10] Murray is perhaps representative of the rather confused acknowledgement that continues to be found in scholarship since the mid 1990s, saying that Gregory wrote some of Yeats's plays "in part or in more than part,"and acknowledging that "her contribution to his art [...] remains even yet not fully measured" while giving Yeats credit for writing (not co-writing) *Cathleen* (with some language help) on one page (20), and then nineteen pages later claiming that "it was she who wrote most of *Cathleen* [...]" (39). Stephen Regan's 2004 anthology places it firmly under the joint authorship of "W. B. Yeats and Augusta Gregory," while in 2008 an M.A. thesis took the co-authorship of this play as established and uncontroversial (O'Malley Bell 3). By 2013 Stelmach Artuso (32) was indicating not only that

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10 The undated web site classicirishplays.com says "[f]or decades, her contributions to his drama, including her co-writing of the important Nationalist play *Cathleen ni Houlihan* (1902), were suppressed; now, however, her contributions are fully acknowledged" (n.p.).

some of Yeats's plays were written with Gregory, but that his poems were also in some way indebted to her, although the writer was here perhaps referring to Gregory's support in financially enabling him to dedicate himself to a literary career, rather than to details of composition. The 2018 "Yeats and Drama" page of the Yeats Society web site, however, places both *Unicorn* and *Cathleen* (also *The Pot of Broth* and *The Hour Glass*) in their list of his plays, and no mention of Gregory is made there at all. After reading several of Gregory's other plays, and also all of Yeats's plays that were written in her lifetime, and after studying variant printings in the Yeats Variorum edition of his complete plays, while also using a variety of sources about Hiberno-English to identify both Yeats's and Gregory's separate usages of dialect, I partially adopt Murray's more confident assertion that Gregory wrote most of *Cathleen*;[11] as Cave points out in his review of van Mierlo, we cannot be sure about unwritten stages or composition and discussions, nor about lost early drafts and rehearsals and performances that may have been part of the revisions and changes that were influential in the shaping of the typescripts and printed versions that are all that now exist.

Overarching Differences Manifested in the Single-authored Plays

All the early Abbey Theatre playwrights aimed "to bring modernist theatre aesthetics to Irish stages in the service of cultural nationalism" (Trotter 90), and they were written from the shared understanding that their new drama was their "way or speaking to [them]selves about [the] central paradox" of "being involved with life" through "being apart from it" (Welch 211). Such a double vision would be exploited in plays that aimed to be "revelatory" (Welch 211). That is, to awaken a consciousness or new perception of the essential Irishness within the people, the plays would "reactivate old codes old sources of power, once again" (Welch 211), while "build[ing] up a Celtic and Irish school of dramatic literature" (Gregory, *Our Irish Theatre*[12], qtd. in Trotter 90).

The necessity for such plays to be "elaborately coded" (Welch 209) could be satisfied in a variety of ways. The encoding of national consciousness within Gregory's plays was quite different from Yeats's, being less a matter of mythic symbols and formal

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[11] Murray not only acknowledged that *Cathleen* was mostly Gregory's, but he extended this dominant position to her writing of *The Pot of Broth*, noting that these were "two of [Yeats'] most popular plays. [But that only *Cathleen*] has now been included under her name by the editors of *Lady Gregory: Selected Writings*" (39).

[12] Letter to solicit funds for the Irish Literary Theatre.

experimentation and more a matter of the social and political interpretation of plots which were realistically staged even if their stories included folkloric persons and some supernatural elements. Formally, then, Gregory's plays as a whole differ most from Yeats's in not subscribing to Yeats's overt and almost entire removal of character and plot from common, lived experience. In particular, Yeats wrote verse dramas that were usually set against a rather "generic" and rural Irish background, using highly stylised and non-realistic theatre and staging, such as choric dancing, chanting or incantation, and singing of prophecies, all in a poetic English that occasionally includes Irish turns of phrase but very rarely includes Irish words beyond names of places and folkloric creatures. Gregory's single authored plays do things very differently. She encodes her Nationalist theatrical project through plots rooted in recognisable and often domestic settings, usually in specified times and places, and using a believable but consistently Irish English (a dialect of Irish English she called "Kiltartanese") in prose dialogue that was not afraid to depart greatly from standard British English, often including Irish words and expressions from daily usage, and including traditional Irish songs.

Stevenson refers to this fundamental difference of outlook by saying that Yeats's plays create a world of their own and "usually [...] reveal a mind trying to live on its own involutions," whereas Gregory's plays stem from and are embedded in the people, the history and the homes of Ireland, and she was preoccupied with service to these real people in this real place (71). She was better placed and, perhaps, better conditioned to do this than was Yeats, as Kiberd noted. He finds that although Yeats and Gregory (and Synge) were "deliberately aligning themselves with the Gaelic tradition of *dinnsheanchas* (knowledge of the lore of places)," Gregory was the only one to have lived all her life in this land, and to have studied its lore so deeply, consistently and for so long (Kiberd 107). This comes out in her plays in the forms of far more down-to-earth and realistic representations of their language and of their physical settings than those of Yeats (and, more debatably, of Synge), and in an integration of local beliefs with settings and socio-political situations that is not found in these other playwrights' sole-authored works.

Both Gregory and Yeats encoded the nationalist message through national myth, political allegory, and some symbolism, but even in plays set in the mythical past, and even where her characters sing or recite verse, Gregory does not bring in the mystical, bardic or visionary incantations that characterise Yeats's single-authored

plays, and she does not attempt theatrical grandeur. Gregory's plays are thus quite different from Yeats's in providing concrete, localised and shared references to lived Irish experience, within which the surprising elements of plot intrude. Yeats, in stark contrast, staged avant-garde plays that *overtly* show their encoding, confronting audiences with "life taking a form that it has [very definitely] not taken before" (Welch 209). He was working towards a re-visited "ancient theatre that can be made by unrolling a carpet or marking out a place with a stick or setting a screen against the wall" (qtd. in McGreevy 28) and, when influenced by Noh, his plays became even further removed from reality, becoming unrealities presented within other unrealities; the dreams of dreams.

It is in the difference between Gregory's plays' communication to the audience of a shared world and Yeats's plays' purposeful distance from such communal involvement, and especially in the techniques that he uses for this artistic remove, that the source of the formal differences between their plays lies. For unlike Gregory's down-to-earth characters with their every-day appearance, in their kitchens and workshops, with their universal concerns of physical welfare and socio-economic stability, and her plays' general (though not invariable)[13] rejection of the reality of spiritual or mystical visions, Yeats's plays defamiliarise even familiar heroes and stories through their highly stylised staging of "Celtic visions" and in general through their insistence upon the presentation of a distinctly uncommon life which always features other-worldly characters and would-be shamans.[14] Perhaps the most evident displays of these attempts lies in Yeats's increasingly frequent use of symbolic rather than realistic stage properties and settings, and especially in his use of masks and dance, neither of the latter appearing in the two co-authored plays that concern us here.

Gregory's plays directly reflected her literary genesis as rooted in a characteristically Victorian approach to knowledge: that is in "collecting," documenting, learning and even translating the speech, dialect, myths and folkloric stories of local communities, and also a typically late nineteenth century promotion of this type of information as part of a movement to strengthen national identity. She translated Irish writings (at least one of the plays of Hyde, for instance), and published her folkloric and language research in non-

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[13] Her play *Shanwalla* (1914) gives an essential role to a ghost.

[14] These formal aspects of the drama were characteristic of his personal attempts to develop a "modernist Irish idiom" for the stage (Trotter 89), and their stylization and symbolic insistence were direct products of the European Symbolist movement on the younger man (Trotter 89).

literary form.[15] Her plays included and relied upon stories and dialect features found in her research, but they were not subsumed by these and other areas of accumulated knowledge; she transformed them into her own style of literary production.[16]

The content of Yeats's plays usually included figures and settings from rural Ireland, and sometimes local beliefs and superstitions - "stories about spirits and ghosts that he had heard from country people" and published in the first edition of *Celtic Twilight* (1893) (Stevenson 67), and perhaps some also from his earlier volumes of Irish tales (1888, 1890, 1891)[17] before he accompanied Gregory on her story-collecting trips. He must have used Gregory's book *Cuchulain of Muirthemne* (1902) directly or indirectly "the best that has come out of Ireland in my time," he said in his preface (vii), and perhaps *Gods and Fighting Men* (1904). Food for artistic visions also came from stories and beliefs, newly encountered during their joint collecting trips, during which Gregory elicited and recorded and transcribed what was said; he included several in the revised 1902 edition *Celtic Twilight*, without indicating that these stories were the products of her work.[18] In spite of sometimes taking their inspiration from real people and places, in their dramatised forms most of his stories had no specific place or time. As mentioned before, beyond being set in a usually imprecise Irish space and time, they were pervaded by a timeless and dreamy quality that came from their exclusion of any recognisable reality,

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[15] Stevenson suggests that her sense of decorum and service might not have allowed her – a mere female - to publish the results of her folklore collection if it had not been for Yeats acting as an "intermediate" "emotional shield between her and her fear of putting herself before the public in a straightforward bid for attention and admiration" (67, 69).

[16] The Victorian "collecting" approach to knowledge lies under many other language-and myth-compiling ventures. The following large-scale collections of language-based information are all, more or less directly, explorations of national identity that were published in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: the work of the Grimm brothers in Germany, the many publications of The Early English Text Society, the *Oxford English Dictionary* project, and the work of Joseph Wright who collected and documented the "real" language of England in his great *English Dialect Dictionary*. Like the Grimms, Gregory published folkloric material, but she took this further: as Tolkein was to do (in a different genre) from 1914, Gregory published literary creations of nationalist tenor, that were based on language and folklore research but that were completely original.

[17] See Raine n.p.

[18] For these additions Gregory was given no public or printed credit (Stevenson 70).

from their incantatory verse, their insistence upon including a shamanistic bard figure, their stylised staging and, in short, their "total remoteness from ordinary life and everyday concerns" (Murray 13).

As time went on, Yeats's way was to move even further in a direction different from that of Gregory's development, even though both continued to use Irish settings. He never ceased to give images and symbols to certain aspects of nationalist, or at least Irish, feeling, while gradually moving into increasingly metaphysical, aesthetic and esoteric realms. Quite early, his staging explorations seem to have reached a point beyond which he could explore no more, although he continued to write plays and claimed to consider himself primarily a playwright; but the plays single-authored by him were never great theatre successes. Unlike Gregory's,his legacy to theatre and drama is not strictly connected to his plays' Irish settings or political context. As reported by Maxwell, some scholars like Worth see his experimental and non-realistic use of "song, instrumentation, stylized movement and lighting" as anticipating much subsequent "modernist-contemporary stage" (4).[19] The explorations into the specific nature of artistic encoded-ness that were carried out in these early (and later) plays may also be understood as part of his artistic development in more general terms, for his poetry continued to be enriched by life-long explorations of this nature, which produced some of the most highly treasured and avowedly non-realistic, modernist poetry in English.

In contrast, the characteristically down-to-earth settings and language of Gregory's plays may be seen to point to the "realist theatre and everyday matter" of the Abbey Theatre's later plays. These brought in a degree of realism that Yeats (with his increasing tendency to become unearthly) derided (Maxwell 5). It may be counter-intuitive to say this of one who later turned her attention to magical beasts and her own brand of comedy, or "farce" as she called it, but Gregory's plays all include a focus on believable Irish people living down-to-earth lives with normal physical and social concerns, who are concerned with matters of survival against harsh odds, which contrasts greatly with Yeats's plays' focus on other-worldly characters, performance, staging and visions.

[19] Maxwell disagrees, deeming Yeats's plays sketchy "verse drama[s] that never attained full being" and that do not "warrant this enthusiastic discipleship" (4).

Specific Differences between Yeats's Single-authored Plays, and *Cathleen* and *Unicorn*

Cathleen and *Unicorn* differ from Yeats's single-authored plays in significant ways. Following the observations made earlier about Yeats's and Gregory's single-authored works, it can be shown that each of these two co-authored plays shows at least three, and possibly all four of the following points: (1) Representation of an evident political and social world; characters whose concerns are economically and socially embedded in practical daily life; (2) Settings that are geographically and materially specific, usually populated or inhabited, and often domestic spaces; realistic scenery, stage properties, costumes and make-up; (3) No characters presented as genuine shamans or bards;[20] (4) Language: A robust, consistent and convincing use of Kiltartanese; the inclusion of traditional songs.

These are fairly all-encompassing and significant factors in playwriting: if the language, settings, political engagement, style of staging, characters and types in *Cathleen* and *Unicorn* are overridingly typical of Gregory, and not of Yeats - and they are-, then what is left will not be enough to identify Yeats as the main author. In practice, though, there will always been some level of overlap and similarity, such as in their shared use of Irish myth and legend, and plots that include or are based on characters who are slow to act in situations that require immediate action. Examination of *Cathleen* and *Unicorn* shows that it is in their language that Gregory's hand can be seen most clearly and most consistently, even though the other features are equally significant markers of Gregory's hand.

Language

Gregory

In addition to following Ibsen's practice of using the vernacular (Norwegian) language in his innovative realism for the theatre, Gregory's Kiltartanese was an entirely original part of her attempt at creating a genuinely Irish Theatre, at a time when the language was dying out from many places, for members of her audiences who understood this dialect where many of them would have been unable

[20] Cathleen and Martin could be interpreted as variants of the Yeatsian seer, bard or poetic dreamer.

to follow an Irish language play. Hyde's Irish language plays had needed to be translated into English for a wider Irish public, for instance,[21] and other Irish language plays were a minority interest and sometimes remained unstaged (for instance Séamus Ó Dubhghaill (Beirt Fhear)'s 1903 work *The People of Cillmhuire, or a Cow in a Hole*) (O'Leary n.p.). It should also be remembered that Gregory was writing primarily for an audience who could scarcely have tolerated an unconvincing rendition of their (Hiberno-English) language. Indeed, in *Our Irish Theatre* she opens her discussion with a comment on just how sensitive Irish audiences were to this particular form of public caricature, and therefore one may assume that she was at some pains not to offend in this respect. Gregory's Kiltartanese was not considered embarrassing or patronising at the time and we should not criticise her for being able to anticipate neither the Irish dialects nor the attitudes or her audiences of one hundred years later.

Gregory attempted to give her characters speech that was grounded in the Irish usages she had been studying and that she heard around her. Even in her magical *Wonder Plays* (1922), all her lay Irish characters use the Kiltartan (Galway) dialect or the Irish language in their every utterance (although it may be modified in characters allied with the English): - she was perhaps the very first modern writer of dialect plays (plays written predominantly in a localised dialect) in the English language.[22] As a serious student of and researcher into the Irish language and of an Irish-English dialect,[23] she was able to recognise and reproduce the grammatical features that moulded the Irish English dialect she heard around her, and these were the real-life bases of her staged Kiltartanese.[24] The English Irish dialect that Gregory presented was an entirely new language for the stage,[25] and a serious attempt at representing the

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[21] Hyde's *Casad-an-Sugan* (*The Twisting of the Rope*) was the first Irish play ever to be performed in a theatre (Gregory, *Our Irish Theatre* 29).

[22] D. H. Lawrence is usually granted that recognition, but his first Nottinghamshire dialect play came out in 1909.

[23] Gergory sought out and published eight substantial volumes of folklore. It was, in fact, by accompanying her on some of her material-gathering visits that Yeats learned the folklore he adapted and used in his own plays and poems (Stevenson 67, 69).

[24] They have been clearly set out in Murray's chapter on Lady Gregory's plays and there is no need to go into linguistic details here.

[25] Synge's attempts at dialect were published a little later; he sent his early plays to Gregory and Yeats for their approval, because they were already establishing the Abbey Theatre and had produced plays. He based his upon the dialect of the Aran Islands and produced a "consciously-hightened literary dialect" that came in for a fair amount of criticism, but also praise

real, day-to-day language of dialect speakers in the Galway area. This dialect forms almost every sentence uttered by all Gregory's Irish characters, whether they be commoners or Kings (*The Dragon*[26]), learned people (Conan in *Aristotle's Bellows*), or magical beasts (the eponymous *Dragon*, the fiddle-playing cats in *Aristotle's Bellows*).

Her stage adaptation of the Kiltartan dialect, Kiltartanese as she called it, is said to have been admired by her Irish contemporaries, unlike the more stylised attempts of an Irish dialect presented in Synge's plays (Maxwell 5). It was certainly a far cry from the demeaning caricature of a language given to the stage Irishmen of English theatre.[27] The Irish idiom is far more widespread and evident in Kiltartanese than in the Irish dialect so lightly touched upon in Yeats's plays. Given that she paid far greater attention to Irish language matters than Yeats, it is cruelly ironic that while Yeats's plays' less realistic language remains uncontroversial, Gregory's Kiltartanese has not dated well, according to Murray who says that today her language is most likely "a major reason for her unpopularity in Ireland" (46).

Almost every line of dialogue in Gregory's plays provides an example of Hiberno- English. From the first few pages of *The Image* (1909), for instance, among many other instances we find vocabulary and expressions like "springing" (for dancing), and "[t]hat's a whip of money!" and grammatical usages like "to be talking they do be," "give in to my asking and bring me away to the States," "[t]here doesn't be so many wakes as there was," and "Have you my boots cleaned, Mary?" An example of how different from Standard British English this variety can appear (in contrast to the diluted dialect characteristic of Yeats's plays) is found at the start of Act II, where

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from other quarters (classicirishplays.com. n.p.). Douglas Hyde and other writers for the Irish League, including I think Gregory, were writing plays in the Irish language already but these were not continued on stage in spite of some success (classicirishplays.com. np). I believe a serious attempt to represent the people's real use of Anglo-Irish, or Irish dialect of English, had not been consistently put on stage before Gregory.

[26] *The Dragon* was written in 1917 ("Author's Note" in *Wonder* 131).

[27] She was able to recognise and reproduce the grammar and vocabulary that moulded the dialect around Kiltartan, and thus formed the language uttered by her characters. These linguistic features have been clearly set out in Murray's chapter on Lady Gregory's plays. The features of the linguistic caricature known as Stage Irish are discussed and parodied in G. B. Shaw's *John Bull's Other Island* (1904, written for the new Abbey Theatre group, but never staged there).

we find "[w]ord I have to send them by the post-car will be passing at break of day." Some exclamations are frequently found in Gregory's other plays and rarely or never in Yeats's: "bad cess" (bad luck), "Whisht!" (also in *The Image*) and "Ochone," for instance.

Some of Gregory's later single-authored plays (unlike Yeats's) are also notable for the inclusion of untranslated passages, sentences or words in the Irish language, most frequently found in songs. The plays she called *Wonder Plays* display this practice plentifully. The use of this language is not found in every play by Gregory, nor is it present in *Cathleen* or *Unicorn*, however; this feature is therefore not further discussed here.

Gregory's longstanding interest and research into the language and folklore of Ireland is very evident in many different manifestations within her plays. In addition to her linguistic acuity, she displays a particular love and effective use of traditional songs, some of which she appears to have adapted or composed herself. Verse appears in many if not most of Gregory's plays, but they appear as songs in themselves, not as the artificial device of representing speech in this fashion. In the collection *The Image and Other Plays* (1922), for instance, all three of the plays contain (traditional or made-up) popular or political songs. These and her other songs or lines of songs are sung by characters in much the way that people might sing in everyday life. In her plays Gregory shows a great love for Irish songs, for they are in most of her plays, and although they may only sometimes be traditional songs, her compositions or adaptations are made to appear as if they are traditional or communal, because they are known to the other characters on the stage, and take the forms of airs or ballads. They are sometimes presented, in whole or in part, in the Irish language. *Aristotle's Bellows*, for example, has a rebellious daughter intermittently singing verses of an Irish song throughout.

Yeats

Yeats many times acknowledged that Gregory helped him with the language of most of his plays. In his Nobel acceptance speech he repeated this, explaining that his plays were otherwise "written without dialect and in English blank verse" (qtd. in La Rhee, 43). Even though her hand is present in all his plays, to the extent that she contributed to their language, one of the most evident differences between Gregory's and Yeats's single-authored plays remains the difference between Gregory's prose plays that highlight Irish speechways, and Yeats's English verse dramas that less evidently

include an Irish turn of phrase. The different degree and extent of inclusion of dialect and Irish language in these plays is related to the artists' aims for their works. Unlike Gregory's single-authored and (in many ways) more realistic prose compositions,- that were commited to developing a wholly Irish theatre, Yeats's verse plays were consciously referring to the highly stylised forms of Ancient Greek choric drama.[28] His plays usually contain originally composed songs, chants, or mystical utterances presented poetically; these instances of heightened register used a poetic idiom that seems to contain almost no Hiberian influences beyond a certain and typical imagery that approximates a "Celtic" symbolic system, and perhaps a certain pacing that may come from Irish airs, or it may be Yeats's own contribution to creating the sense of an Irish melody in English poems. The performativity (movement, dancing, chanting) of these stylised plays is pared down to one character, who may also be the protagonist. These unrealistic and defamiliarising uses of language and movement are all one of a piece with other aspects of the evidently encoded surface that he was striving to develop in his drama, as discussed a few pages above. They have nothing to do with realism or, directly, with the Irish nationalist message.

Yeats's single-authored plays' reliance on folklore and local mythology is evident (even if somewhat modified), but the input of Lady Gregory to their language seems limited in comparison to what we find in her own plays, comparatively sporadic within the scripts, and to have been done with a light touch, so that it is all but impossible to know whether she put in all the Irish usages, or whether Yeats had included some of them himself, although his notes in various prefaces indicate that she may have indeed advised him (or corrected manuscripts and reprintings) with all Irish expressions in all his plays of her lifetime. Nevertheless, there is very little of this dialect in Yeats's plays compared to hers: in contrast to Gregory's consistently dialect-speaking Irish characters, in Yeats's sole-authored plays the majority of characters speak a language that is at all times very close to standard, if poetic, English, regardless of how rural and unschooled they may be. Irish expressions are mostly confined to the names of places and people and some objects ("the quicken stick," for instance). There is also the tricky matter of turns of phrase that may not be recognised as Irish because they fall into the overall idiom of speech so naturally that they do not seem particularly dialectal: when something is called "grand," for instance, is this always a reference to a particularly Irish use that means

[28] After the writing of the plays we are studying, from 1914 he adopted elements from Noh Theatre, see Armstrong.

"fine," or is it a general approval such as may now be used in many other English dialects?

In the Yeats plays, while references to local beliefs and supernatural elements are rife, there is no attempt to explore the richness of an Irish dialect. These compositions' characteristically Irish English usages do not extend to vocabulary or expressions that differ very greatly from Standard British English usage, and at all times his plays avoid constructions or vocabulary that would not be easily understood by an English audience. These are Yeats's and Gregory's attempts at a very modified version of the Gaelic-patterned English spoken by many or most of the people in the West of Ireland at that time (Murray 43). This light touch of Irish idiom may be Yeats's way of avoiding the awful and derided Stage Irishman's lingo, and present-day readers are likely to find these few Irish dialect features less dated and less easily caricatured than the written version of Gregory's Kiltartan. Some of the more heavy-handed insertions of Irish dialect usage, few though they be ("blarney" in *Land of Heart's Desire*, for instance), are open to criticism as somehow quaint or inserted from an authorial position of linguistic superiority, which (*pace* the criticisms from audiences referred to above) is not the case with Gregory's. This is because the genuine and overall speech-ways that Gregory so scrupulously attempted to include in her plays are in Yeats's plays silenced by a standard and often highly artificial literary and poetic English, and therefore one or two words become contrasting intrusions; the richness of the idiom remains unexplored, the Irish dialect of his characters is (in such cases) decontextualised and made into quaint accessories to the matrix of a dominantly British English variety.

Cathleen

Excluding her songs from the discussion at this point, we may find that the language of *Cathleen* seems to position itself closer to Gregory's than to Yeats's characteristic practice. The farmers regularly and invariably, in their every sentence, use Irish constructions; most are familiar to English audiences, like "It must be down in the town the cheering is," and "They do be cheering [...];" others are slightly less familiar to English ears and eyes, although still very understandable: the Old Woman says "It's long I'm on the roads since I first went wandering." The difference between this language and that of Yeats's single- authored plays is mostly one of extent: in *Cathleen* a more noticeable Irish dialect is used most of the time; in Yeats's other plays it is scarce. However, there are in *Cathleen* no Kiltartanese expressions that differ very radically from

Standard British English, nor are there any Irish language words or exclamations in this play, and when the Old Woman starts to reveal herself as a figure with all the characteristics of an Aristotelian tragic protagonist she speaks in a far more standardised English idiom with no recognisable "Irishisms" in it, thus abiding by the classical rules of the noble characters using a heightened language (the demotic being conventionally considered a "lower" of language). Overall, then, we find that the permeation of Irish-English and Irish language locutions throughout the play is far less evident than elsewhere in Gregory's dramatic work. Critics at the time approved of this play's idiom: Stephen Gwynn, writing for the *Irish Times* in 1936, said "no doubt but that Lady Gregory had helped him to get the peasant speech so perfect" (qtd. in La Rhee 47). The version of an Irish-English dialect that we find in this play is as pervasive as in many of Gregory's plays but far less adventurous in the types of expression and grammar used: there are none that an English audience could not easily understand. The total absence of the Irish language is also a significant difference.

Songs in Gregory's single-authored plays are airs or ballads known to the other characters on stage, either made-up for the play or traditional Irish songs, or adaptations of traditional Irish songs and some of these songs or parts of songs are in the Irish language. Songs in Yeats's plays, by contrast, are the one-off creations of bardic characters on the stage, and they are not communal, nor do they include any Irish words. The first song in *Cathleen* shows elements of both playwrights' practices, while the second song has only an indirect marker of Gergory's presence. It is consistent with the lamenting content and theme of the first song, and conforms closely to the traditional Irish laments and ballads that Gregory would have been more familiar with than Yeats, but there is no clear and direct evidence of Gregory's hand in it. I see the two songs as illustrating different levels of Gregory's (and Yeats's) involvement in this piece, the first being a direct contribution, the second indirect.

Thus both songs have dual functions in the play. They act firstly as songs that the Old Woman/Cathleen sings when resting in, then departing from a simple cottage and while reminded of the past and then looking to the future; secondly they function as the song of Eire (Ireland), being living memorials to, and archives of, the spirit of Irish history and continuing political struggle.

Cathleen's two songs embody the double vision of Nationalist Theatre, showing her and all she stands for as both insider and

outsider, both literal as a weary visitor to the cottage and figurative as a personification[29] encoding the reinvigorated identity of Irish freedom. They have a doubled temporal meaning too, being both memorialising and prophetic, archival and inspirational. The political message of *Cathleen* cannot be considered ambiguous, nor can the figure of Cathleen—Ireland herself—be doubted. As explained before, foregrounding of the geo-politically specified aspects of the play is far more characteristic of Gregory's plays than of most of Yeats's, while the prophetic supernatural dimension is closer to Yeats's dramatic tendencies. The realistic embedding of both of these songs within the primary story-line of the play, and the first song being traditional and not primarily visionary, are also indications of Gregory's hand in their positioning and content.

While not including any language that is distinctively Irish-English, both songs are uniquely Irish in their provenance, content and imagery. An understanding of why the language of these two very Irish-seeming songs should have abandoned the Hiberno English dialect takes us away from Gregory's habits, however, and back to Yeats's interests in the formal aspects of playwriting, especially when considering the second of these songs. In both of them, though, Cathleen's shift away from an emphatically Irish speechway to a Standardised British poetic grammar and lexicon is evidence of Yeats's moving into what I would call his "high bardic" mode, a characteristic tone, the cadence of which is also found in the famous last lines of this play:

> Peter] Did you see an old woman going down the path?
> Patrick] I did not, but I saw a young girl, and she had the walk of a
> queen. (167)

The first of these songs is placed centrally where it marks the beginning of the shift from the Old Woman presenting herself as an unfortunate traveller (the rising action) to her taking on a more uncanny aspect. It is is made of translated verses of an eighteenth century Irish lament, "The Lament for Yellow-Haired Donough"[30] quietly murmured and then more loudly sung by the Old Woman (*The Mudcat Café*). We know that Gregory studied the Irish language

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[29] Referring also to the mythological goddess Eriu.

[30] The Irish original is called *Donncha Bán*. *The Mud Café* web page also explains that with this song "Yeats" most likely inspired Frank O'Connor in his translation from the Irish (a translation made later than the date of the play).

for many years and made her own translations too, and since it does not appear to have been translated by anyone else at this time – it is not included in either of Hyde's collections of Irish songs[31] — it is probably an original translation of hers. It is *not* the same as any part of the longer "Lament of Fair Haired Donough that was Hanged Galway," which was included in her collection of translations titled *The Kiltartan Poetry Book* (1919). Established and older scholarship, of course, attributes the song to Yeats, although one web-page contributor ascribes it to Gregory.[32] As previously mentioned, songs that are versions of existing Irish songs are characteristic of Gregory's single-authored plays, and songs that are presented as part of social practice rather than utterances of bardic instruction are fully *un*characteristic of Yeats's plays. Here Cathleen sings a traditional Irish lament for a man, in memory of the many young men who have died for her.

Cathleen's second song bears few or no marks of Gregory's direct intervention. It is an original composition, widely admired as one of Yeats's poetic achievements, and bearing several of the characteristics of his second phase of lyrical poetry, as well as elements from Irish practice and folklore, such as keening, "white-scarved riders" and wakes. It is sung as the final part of her revealing her timeless identity, when she is leaving the house, all the while luring another young man to her following (ll.88-295). It marks a co-occurrence of the climax of the plot and the play's recognition (*anagnorisis*),[33] a feature of the most perfectly constructed Aristotelian tragic plot, and identifies her as a ghostly seer and a siren.[34] Further, it is a moment of doubled recognition and

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31 *Love Songs of Connaght* (1895) and *Religious Songs of Connacht* (1906).

32 Guest "Philippa" writes on *The Mudcat Café* that it is "likely [that] Augusta Gregory did the English language version," including its "yellow-haired Donough" title.

33 This is a possible indication of Yeats's structuring, since he was consciously and strenuously aiming at Ancient Greek dramatic form in his verse dramas.

34 Do not make a great keening
When the graves have been dug to-morrow.
Do not call the white-scarved riders
To the burying that shall be tomorrow.
[...]
Do not spread food to call strangers
To the wakes that shall be tomorrow
Do not give Money for prayers
Fort he dead that shall die tomorrow

revelation, for as the visitor reveals herself, so do the young men recognise their identities and duties to her cause. The song identifies, prophesises and memorialises Cathleen (Eire) herself, her following and her cause as an act of self-sacrifice, it being a song about herself, as she says.

Now that she has (effectively) manifested her true nobility and outstanding position within the play, it is suitable to the Aristotelian dictates that she should be given an original and authoritative poetic utterance and that it should avoid all local speech characteristics, in emulation of the highest register of a poetic declamation.

Unicorn

Even if Yeats had not acknowledged Gregory's major contribution to *Unicorn*, the more consistent use of its noticeable degree of dialect could have alerted readers and audiences to her involvement, as it should have done in *Cathleen.* The language of this later play is very like that of her single-authored plays, and it is a more evidently Hiberno-English dialect than found in Yeats's plays. Far from being integrated into a predominantly standardised English dialogue with a light and sometimes indiscernible touch, some of the characters' lines vary hugely from the Standard British English equivalents. Hiberno-English is found in almost every line of all the characters, although less frequently in Martin's utterances, and through the whole play. Examples from the first act are Father John's opening lines in the play (second sentence) "I can find no move in him yet" (7), Andrew's "there might no bad thing be on the lad at all" (24), and Thomas's "[l]etting on people do be to make the world wonder the time they think well to rise up" (25). Even more than the other characters, the beggars are given to a densely Hiberno-English language: "Look at the grease on your frock yet with the dint of the dabs you put in your pocket," says Nanny to Biddy, in Act II (64). Irish vocal sounds and exclamations like "pup, pup, pup," "Whisht!" and "Bad cess!" also find their way into the script, alongside other Irish words like "raths."

Martin's dreams are mostly related in fragments, in unfinished sentences that nevertheless resemble a more Standard British English than the language of other characters. A few Irish expressions are found here, though comparatively rarely. This is closer to the form of Hiberno-Engish that is found in Yeats's single-authored plays. Examples of an Irish English turn of phrase in Martin's utterances include the following: "I thought it *to be* one of

the town-lands of heaven," "shining people used to laugh around me *and I a little lad* in a bib," "[t]o live seventy years *it may be*," (29, 33, 60 my emphases). When Martin speaks at greater length, and when he and Father John are talking together they both speak in what seems to be an entirely Standard British English; the actors would no doubt be expected to use Irish pronunciation and intonation, but on the page these speeches are not notably Irish in appearance. Both characters are better educated than any of the other characters in the play and when speaking together they are speaking about their knowledge and Martin's dreams or visions; this may account for their conversations being given in the "higher" register of a standardised British English. The idea of changing dialect to affect a higher (and specifically heroic) register that was found in Cathleen's song is therefore also found in dialogue in this play, and that it may here also be connected to the idea of the elaborated speech of a tragic hero is supported by the fact that, at what he clearly imagines to be his apotheosis, Martin calls out in Latin "*Et calix meus inebrians quam praeclarus est!*" (128) (popularly if somewhat loosely translated, in Psalm 23, as "and my cup overflows").

Songs and scraps of songs are inserted into the dialogue, being ballads of a popular type with criminal or topical themes, and they provide an earthy contrast to the airy visions of Martin; the beggar and thief Johnny Bacach is the singer of the first "[c]ome, all ye airy bachelors, / A warning take by me" (twelve lines of this ballad are give in the play) (68), another beggar, Paudeen, sings two lines of good wishes to the absent Johnny Gibbon (71) and later another two lines in praise of him (perhaps a continuation of the same song) (100), when the beggars seize Thomas in Act II they join in four lines of a nationalist song that begins "[w]hen the Lion shall lose his strength" (90) and, finally, when the beggars carry Martin's body away, they sing two lines, ad lib, bewailing the loss of Martin and of their misplaced dreams: "Our hope and our darling, our heart dies with you. / You have failed us we are foals astray!" (132). These songs may be communal songs or sung as part of a group activity but they are not sung in a notably Irish dialect, not do they include any Irish words.

The language of *Unicorn*, as described above, is then very like that of *Cathleen*, being in large part closer to the usages of Gregory than of Yeats, but nevertheless showing in other parts missed opportunities (Irish songs) that Gregory would most likely have availed herself of, had she been consistent with her practice elsewhere. There is also the matter of Martin's and Father John's

moving into a standard or closer-to-Standard British English speech when talking to each other about matters relating to Martin's visions and Father John's readings into old religious books about dreams and visions. These parts are closer in language to Yeats than to Gregory.

Conclusion

This essay has found in the language of both *Cathleen* and *Unicorn* a genuine mixing and merging of characteristics of the two writers. The open ascription of *Unicorn* to Gregory by Yeats has been shown to be justified and even a little ungenerous, but judging by the language alone, there is more of Yeats in the details of the printed script than his own ascription may lead us to believe. It is quite the other way around with the case of *Cathleen*, however, for this play which was never given Gregory's name shows almost as much of her language patterns as is found in *Unicorn*, and far less of his than is in that later play. For a more complete assessment, though, it must be borne in mind that language is only one part of the characteristic details that may help readers to discern the hands of Gregory and of Yeats in these plays, and the other dimensions that were mentioned but not pursued in this essay may provide a different balance of evidence. There is a large part of each writer in both plays, ensuring that no definitive ruling can be made about the issue of main authorship for the plays as wholes: the intermingling of these two writers' efforts, and the degree of interaction they had at every level of the composing and producing of these plays would have made it impossible even for them to have known it. The two writers inspired each other to produce plays that, in many ways, outstripped in richness the products of their individual efforts. For, as Stevenson wrote, "their relationship enabled each to develop their abilities to the fullest" (64).

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