Beyond the Trilogy:
The Urban Repertoire of the Abbey Theatre
(1904-1951)

BEYOND THE TRILOGY:
THE URBAN REPERTOIRE OF THE ABBEY THEATRE
(1904-1951)

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DECLARATION

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Elizabeth E. Mannion

Summary

The methodology employed in the research and writing of this dissertation consisted of the following: reviewing the approximately 370 plays that were staged by the Abbey Theatre from its inception through 1951, isolating those set in urban Ireland, and examining those set in Dublin to consider their relationship with the cultural nationalist movement. This project was very much one of reclamation. With the exception of select plays of Sean O'Casey — specifically *The Shadow of a Gunman*, *Juno and the Paycock* and *The Plough and the Stars* — the Dublin plays have remained largely invisible in the critical examination of the Abbey repertoire. This thesis considers how the historical context of the Abbey's first half century informs the contents of these plays and how the rhetoric of these plays informs the Abbey's first half century.

The objective of the thesis is to examine how Dublin plays in the Abbey's repertoire through July 1951 challenge the tenets of cultural nationalism that permeated the theatre's founding, and to discover: 1) what percentage of the repertoire they comprised; 2) how they responded to dominant tropes of the rural repertoire; 3) how they portrayed those socioeconomic populations largely disenfranchised by the cultural nationalist project; 4) how the dominant internal setting (the tenement) evolved to become the most often staged set of the Dublin repertoire; 5) what those Dublin plays set outside of the home had to say about the city's public institutions and their relationships with the citizenry; and 6) if there was an audience for the Dublin plays.

The principal findings of this study are as follows: a) 15% of the Abbey repertoire through 1951 consisted of play set in urban Ireland, with 11% being set in

Dublin; b) the primary rural icon to which the Dublin plays respond is Cathleen Ní Houlihan, a national trope repeatedly eviscerated; c) the Dublin plays tend to represent the poor and working class in a sympathetic manner; however, they do so while portraying the labour leaders they follow and the overall idea of organized labour with significant criticism; d) the tenement is used in approximately 25% of the Dublin plays and evolves from being the setting for overt tragedy to, briefly, one of farce, to, ultimately, the house of tragicomedy; e) the Dublin plays set outside of the domestic sphere portray how public institutions operate in response to the citizenry they serve; and f) although the Dublin plays comprised only 11% of the repertoire, they were among the plays most often performed and of highest box office receipts; their popular success also had a direct impact on operating policies at the Abbey in terms of length of run and repertoire rotation.

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Introduction

I rely on Dublin. Dublin is true.
What Dublin says today, Ireland will say tomorrow.
—Charles Stewart Parnell, 1890

The modern literature of Ireland, and indeed all that stir of thought which prepared for the Anglo-Irish War, began when Parnell fell from power in 1891.
—W.B. Yeats, 1923 Nobel Lecture

Parnell spoke the above words during a rally in Dublin, not long after the 'Parnell split' and within one year of his death. He was, of course, wrong about Dublin's ability to temper the onslaught of criticism that he was facing in an uphill battle to salvage his political future. But he was absolutely correct in forecasting Dublin's centrality to the nationalist movement that would take on speed in the wake of his efforts on behalf of the Home Rule movement. As is often the case with fallen leaders, sins are forgiven in death, and the city of Dublin welcomed his body's return from Brighton on a rainy October day in 1891, with a public outpouring of grief and tribute that had previously only been witnessed at O'Connell's death some 45 years earlier. The funeral procession traversed the streets of Dublin on its way to Glasnevin Cemetery, and that procession combined with the graveside ceremony lasted from early light until sunset. The stops made by the cortege could be described metaphorically as politicized stations of the cross (the stops included the spots where Robert Emmet had been executed in 1803, and where Lord Edward Fitzgerald had been arrested and mortally wounded in 1798), but there is no denying the theatricality of the event and, in hindsight, its unification of politics and metadrama that would define several key events in twentieth-century Irish nationalism.

The death of Parnell is often considered the point at which the Literary Revival and the cultural nationalist movements gained momentum; that his absence

created a vacuum of opportunity to be filled by Irish writers who were picking up from where the Young Irelanders began some 50 years earlier (before being largely displaced as a result of Dublin publishers' preference for the political writings that dominated public interest during the years of the Home Rule movement). Following the political demise and subsequent death of Parnell in 1891, the Home Rule movement was effectively stalled. It is this climate of "disenchantment with constitutionalism" (Lyons 1971, 18) that accelerated the cultural nationalist movement and the labour organizing which was part of that larger picture. As F.S.L. Lyons observes:

> There began to appear the faint but unmistakable signs of a [...] steady and relentless emphasis on the need to resurrect the idea of 'Irish Ireland'. As it developed, this new nationalism was to take a variety of forms — part political, part economic, part cultural — but however diverse the manifestations bodied forth in Sinn Féin, the Gaelic League or the industrial movement, the underlying aims were the same: to reawaken in Irishmen a sense of pride in their past, to recover in the present their self-respect, and to work for a future which would not be contained within the parochial boundaries of Home Rule. The burgeoning of this new nationalism [...was] to be a major transformation within the anti-Unionist camp. (1971, 18-19)

There is no denying that key moments of both the Revival and the cultural nationalist movement occurred within the decade of the death of Parnell, including the establishment of the Irish Literary Theatre in 1899, which would ultimately contribute to the founding of the Abbey Theatre in Dublin in 1904.

The primary goal of this dissertation is to establish the existence of an urban repertoire at the Abbey Theatre, specifically the repertoire as it existed during the years the Abbey was housed in its original building on the corner of Marlborough and Abbey Streets (1904-1951). Given the urban drama's existence as a minority genre, the objective evolves into an examination of those plays set in urban Ireland and consideration of their relationship to the Abbey's foundational charter and its

founders' predisposition to a rural repertoire. Establishing Dublin as the dominant Irish urban setting in chapter one, the project then examines (in chapters two through five) those Dublin-set plays that have been hitherto marginalized in examinations of the Abbey's urban repertoire. There is a standard assumption (as evidenced in published scholarship) that dramatic representations of Dublin as staged by the national theatre during these years begin and end with the trilogy of Sean O'Casey (*The Shadow of a Gunman*, *Juno and the Paycock* and *The Plough and the Stars*) that premiered during the 1920s. In studies of the Abbey's urban repertoire, there is seldom a reference to the urban plays that preceded the O'Casey trilogy, and little attention to those that followed, including *Kathleen Listens In* and *Nannie's Night Out*, the Dublin-set one acts by O'Casey that were staged during this time period. This project seeks to redress this absence and, in doing so, to consider the relationship between the Dublin plays and the Abbey's role as a conduit of the cultural nationalist movement. While the Dublin plays represent no unified ideology, they do – when taken as a distinct sub-repertoire — present various undermining challenges to the tenets of the cultural nationalist movement. As will be examined throughout, they are strategic in this regard but varied in the elements of cultural nationalism that their respective representations undermine.

John Hutchinson observes that "cultural and political nationalism represent two quite different conceptions of the nation, and form distinctive organizations and political strategies [...with] cultural nationalists [operating as] primarily educators" (2000, 591) and the political arm focusing on "political autonomy." While the Abbey grew out of the cultural nationalist movement and followed the more community-oriented strategy (which is a 'bottom-up' model rather than the political 'top-down' model), it also, as Lionel Pilkington has argued, straddled both the cultural and

political sides of the nationalist fence. Furthermore, at various times in its early history, the Abbey also taps as much into the "imaginative energies associated with 'constructive' unionism as they do to those energies associated with the struggle for Irish political independence" (Pilkington 2001, 2). The Dublin repertoire, like the Abbey itself, dances with and against multiple partners depending upon the music being played. If one reads the box office success of the Dublin plays and their impact on the theatre's operating methods regarding repertoire rotation (as examined in chapter six) as evidence of their challenging the dominant rural repertoire, then the Dublin plays serve as evidence that, as a cultural movement, nationalism held limited power and had to, in the instance of the Abbey, acknowledge a mutual dependency with the populace in order to survive.

Like most cultural institutions, the Abbey Theatre has undergone many changes over the years. Since it opened, managing directors and artistic directors have come and gone, as audiences have vocally supported or decried its repertoire. Calls for more Irish language offerings have alternated with calls for less of the same (sometimes simultaneously), and the theatre has struggled for financial support and been lambasted for how it appropriates its state funding. Nonetheless, except for the years between July 1951 and July 1966 when it operated out of the Queen's Theatre following the fire of 1951, it has always been based on the same plot of land in Dublin's north inner city. Its location has been one of the theatre's very few constants.

The original theatre was a "derelict vaudeville hall and morgue that were put together to give Dublin its best known and most criticized establishment outside the Catholic Church" (McCann 53). Anybody interested in the Abbey's history would be hard-pressed to argue with the less quantitative portion of that statement. The space on which the old Abbey stood did have a theatrical history and, ironically, both real

and potential fire hazards played key roles in its structural evolution. Originally, the Theatre Royal Opera House was built on the plot in 1820, but it burned down a few years later. The Mechanics' Institute[1] purchased the site in 1849. When the Mechanics' Institute purchased the space, they constructed a multi-purpose building that included concert rooms. The Institute eventually decided to convert the concert rooms into a theatre, but their patent application was denied when other Dublin theatre patent holders (whose permission was part of the process) vetoed the application. It operated as various entertainment venues in fairly quick succession:

> As the Princess's Theatre the building entered a new phase and later, under the management of a Dublin comedian, Pat Langan, became The People's Music Hall [...] Over the years its status gradually declined to that of a penny-gaff and at one time the hall was used as a boxing arena. Finally, in 1901, J.B. Carrickford and Madame Louise Grafton, forbears of several generations of touring 'fit-up' actors, reopened the hall as The National Theatre. They generally employed English stock actors but, as the theatre did not have a patent, their repertoire was confined to one-act pieces. The rival theatre, the Queen's, objected to Carrickford's procedure and, under threat of fines [...] the repertoire was changed to vaudeville and music hall. (Robinson and Ó hAodha 15-16)

The National Theatre eventually closed in 1903, due to a combination of poor attendance at variety shows and notice from the fire department that improvements would need to be made in order to address potential fire hazards. The building was still derelict when Annie Horniman leased it for the Irish National Theatre Society in 1904. At the same time, she also purchased an adjacent building, the Penny Bank (previously a city morgue), at Two Marlborough Street, giving the original Abbey its L-shaped structure. Like her predecessors, Horniman faced patent permission before the Abbey could open as a theatre.

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[1] Mechanics' Institutes were widespread throughout the British Isles in the 19th century. These institutes of education focused on technical training and adult education for the working classes, with particular attention paid to the sciences. The Dublin Mechanics' Institute operated from various inner-city locations during the years 1824-1919.

> It was [...] necessary for Miss Horniman and Yeats to apply to the courts for this patent. All the other theatres in the city objected in court to the application because they thought the new theatre would be competing with them. Yeats' statement that the new theatre would be strictly non-commercial did not satisfy them. When they saw that the patent was likely to be granted, they agreed only on condition that a provision be inserted to the effect that the new theatre be permitted to produce only plays by Irish authors in the Irish or English language and all standard works in any language written not less than fifty years before the date of the patent. (Kavanagh 46)

These creative restraints on the patent were contributing factors to the shape the Abbey repertoire took during its early years.[2]

Since neither Horniman nor Yeats were residents of Ireland in 1904, the patent was issued in the name of Lady Gregory who, with Yeats and Synge, would become a leading director of the Abbey. Together, they gave a rurally dominated emphasis to the theatre's repertoire, an emphasis that would keep the urban marginalized on a stage dominated by Dublin actors and Dublin-based writers, and for a particularly urban domestic audience. Although marginalized, the urban repertoire would become a significant popular force at the national theatre.

The paradox of a rural repertoire dominating an urban space is reflected in Declan Kiberd's assertion that "Dublin was in 1904 [the year the Abbey opened] a classic example of a periphery-dominated-centre, that is to say, a conurbation dominated by the values and mores of the surrounding countryside" (484). This paradox applies as well to the cultural nationalist movement, a movement based primarily in Dublin and devoted to positioning Ireland as a rural nation. This rural

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[2] The first patent was for a six-year period. Upon the departure of Horniman in 1911, a new patent was issued (for the standard 21-year period) that altered these creative restraints considerably. They were now allowed to produce "all acknowledged masterpieces of English dramatic literature of the eighteenth century and earlier" and to produce such plays "as shall be selected by the Board of Directors of the National Theatre Society" (qtd. in Kavanagh 79). The third and final patent, issued in 1932 again for 21 years, loosed the creative restraints further. The patentees (Gregory and Yeats) could now perform plays by Irish authors "and works by authors of any nationality on Irish subjects and works by foreign (not including English) authors" (qtd. in Kavanagh 154).

positioning was in deep contrast to the reality that the majority of Irish citizens, even at the turn of the century, were already living in urban areas.

Paul Rotha's documentary film *The Cradle of Genius* (1961) is shot largely amid the ruins of the old Abbey, before demolition cleared the site so construction could begin on the new theatre. In the film, Frank O'Connor pays homage to Yeats when he comments that "a theatre isn't just a building, but it is an idea in a man's mind." However, the numerous Abbey players and playwrights who speak of the intimacy and spirit of that particular building undermine O'Connor's assertion. Regardless, for almost 48 years (longer than the current Abbey has been in operation), that old building stood on Abbey Street and housed the National Theatre of Ireland. Since the primary consideration of this dissertation is to examine the urban plays of the Abbey repertoire in relation to the theatre's institutional embodiment of the cultural nationalist movement, it is fitting that those plays being addressed be those that were staged within the original building that served as the National Theatre's home for all productions staged from 26 December 1904 through 17 July 1951.

At the approximate centre of the years during which the Abbey Theatre staged works in its original home lie the Abbey years of Sean O'Casey, beginning with his 1923 debut of *The Shadow of a Gunman* and ending with the theatre's rejection of *The Silver Tassie* in 1928. In examining the urban-set plays of the Abbey that transcend these pivotal works, it is apt that he and his trilogy serve as a fulcrum of sorts. While one cannot argue with O'Casey as a benchmark, the years in question provide ample evidence both that he did not emerge from a vacuum and that Irish urban dramas continued after his emigration to England. Prior to the launch of his Dublin trilogy, roughly 7% of the Abbey plays were set in urban Ireland (including Belfast, Cork City and Dublin), and after his debut the urban portion of the Abbey

repertoire through 1951 increased to 15% (now, also including the city of Galway). There is no arguing with the fact that he was and remains the most canonical urban playwright of the Abbey Theatre. However, this dissertation seeks to prove that the O'Casey trilogy is only one part of the story of the Abbey's urban repertoire; to examine its whole, one must place the trilogy aside and see what lies in its deservedly dominating shadow (pun intended).

When the entirety of the Irish urban repertoire is laid bare, it reveals a treasure trove of commentary on both the state of Ireland in the times the various plays premiered and on urban reactions to national events. But it also shows that there was a significant body of work that deserves to be identified as the Abbey's urban repertoire and, within that, a Dublin repertoire. Although in a minority, this portion of the repertoire is significant enough that one can consider a Dublin quotient (DQ) alongside the peasant quotient (PQ) that was so often scrutinized. Of what would a DQ consist? The standard would certainly be O'Casey's Dublin trilogy, with the use of tenement sets, Dublin vernacular and historical backdrops. But it should also include Fred Ryan's *The Laying of the Foundations* (1902), which, although never staged at the Abbey, was the first play of the Abbey repertoire to be set in Dublin.[3] The issues addressed in this play — including corruption by municipal government, its complicity in ghettoizing the city's poor, and the link between organized labour and mobilization of the tenements — would all go on to be revisited in other works as the Dublin repertoire grew. It should also include the two plays authored by W.F. Casey, *The Man Who Missed the Tide* (1908) and *The Suburban Groove* (1908), both of which helped keep the Abbey finances afloat as the directors prepared to wean the

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[3] As will be discussed more fully in chapter one, *The Laying of the Foundations* was first staged by the Irish National Dramatic Company at the Antient Concert Rooms in 1902 and was also a part of Yeats' fundraising efforts in London in 1903. It was retained as part of the Abbey repertoire, even though it was not staged at the Abbey (due to failed efforts at locating the script).

theatre's operation from dependency on the Horniman subsidy. Although the conformist and conservative Dublin portrayed in these plays was not often revisited in the rest of the Dublin repertoire, it did occasionally appear in the form of minor characters who attempt to reign in those protagonists who strive for individuality. The DQ should also acknowledge the historical. Beginning with Conal O'Riordan's *An Imaginary Conversation* (1909), in which Robert Emmet took centre stage, historical figures and events dominate the Dublin works. Apart from the trilogy, which had as its backdrops the Anglo-Irish War (*The Shadow of a Gunman*, 1923), Civil War (*Juno and the Paycock*, 1924) and the Easter Rising (*The Plough and the Stars*, 1926), this is seen in G. Sidney Paternoster's *The Dean of St. Patrick's Cathedral* (1913), Arthur Power's *The Drapier Letters* (1927) and Yeats' *The Words Upon the Window-Pane* (1930), all of which are homages to the life and times of Jonathan Swift; Lennox Robinson's *The Dreamers* (1915), another biodrama on the life of Emmet; A. Patrick Wilson's *The Slough* (1914) and J.A. O'Brennan's *Scrap* (1931), both of which are thinly disguised dramatizations of the impact of the 1913 Dublin lockout; Denis Johnston's *Blind Man's Buff* (1936) and Roger McHugh's *Trial at Green Street Courthouse* (1941), which were both based on a celebrated Dublin trials; Louis D'Alton's *The Man in the Cloak* (1937), based on the writer James Clarence Mangan; Hugh Hunt and Frank O'Connor's *The Invincibles* (1937), based on the Phoenix Park murders; Paul Vincent Carroll's *Coggerers* (1937), set against the backdrop of the Easter Rising; and Roger McHugh's *Rossa* (1945), a biodrama on the life of Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa. Although the DQ has never been measured previously, this project seeks to assert that it should, and could, be measured based on the body of work produced by those Abbey playwrights who put Dublin forward on the national stage.

The notion of a DQ notwithstanding, the volume of plays set in part or entirely in Dublin, 43 in all, stand as evidence that the Irish urban experience was not absent from the Abbey stage. Interpreting these plays and determining their place as cultural artefacts within the Abbey repertoire requires, to quote Stephen Greenblatt, a "desire to speak with the dead" (1988, 1). With the directors and playwrights long gone and a very limited body of scholarship or memoir left in their place, this desire must be tempered with perseverance. The inconsistent publishing record of many of these works makes it difficult to obtain them for examination. When the Abbey burned in July 1951, many scripts were saved, but some were not. Thankfully, the Abbey deposited many of the surviving scripts at the National Library of Ireland (NLI). Others were donated by the playwrights, or by actors and directors who took part in the productions, but they were donated under many names; this can make locating them a time-consuming task. Once found, the plays themselves provide only part of the story of the repertoire. To speak with the authors and directors in an effort to comprehend the climate in which these plays were initially staged, one returns to the Abbey itself. All of the programs survived the fire, and many of them are as rich in content as the plays themselves. Authors' notes abound in these programs, and often provide insight into the playwrights' motivations that complement the analysis of the plays themselves. Like the plays, the programs are historically self-reflexive.

Other explanations for omission are that they neither fit easily into the Abbey story nor into the dominant modes of critical analysis that have been applied to examination of the repertoire. The O'Casey trilogy is the only exception to this pattern. There seems no end to curiosity about these three plays or the man himself. It is difficult to determine if this is solely the result of his greatness as a dramatist as opposed to a desire to feed the canon. In either case, the proliferation of trilogy

scholarship is one of the reasons the balance of the Abbey's urban repertoire has been marginalized. This canon fodder influences the study of Irish drama at undergraduate and graduate level, where students (including this former student) are given no indication that there was a Dublin presence on the Abbey stage before or after O'Casey's three pivotal works. It is as though he emerged from a vacuum and then took Dublin away with him to England, leaving the trilogy to be played on in perpetuity on the Abbey stage as the only evidence of early and mid-twentieth century Dublin. Examination of the Dublin plays shows this was very much not the case.

The project of reclaiming these plays is archival. The history of the Abbey, of Ireland's years as a part of Great Britain and then Free State, of the first two years of the Republic of Ireland, and key moments in Dublin's history all become relevant. The historical context is used to interpret the texts and the productions, and the rhetoric contained in the plays informs the history. It is a project of reciprocity that, it is hoped, will open Abbey scholarship to see that the PQ had a counterpart and that the city of Dublin was not only present on the Abbey stage, but that the plays set in Dublin and the climate in which they premiered provide insight into how the theatre operated during key decades in the emergence of the Irish nation.

Chapter 1
Fifteen Percent

The identification in the Gaelic revival of Irishness with peasant culture [...] served to confuse attitudes towards the city. Urbanization and urban problems fitted uneasily with the strongly rural ethos. —Mary E. Daly

All we had to do was make the town think as the country felt; yet we soon discovered that the town could only think town thought.
—W.B. Yeats, 1923 Nobel Lecture

Raymond Willams once wrote that "the pull of the idea of the country is towards old ways, human ways, natural ways [and] the pull of the idea of the city is towards progress, modernization, development" (1973, 357). This notion bears consideration in examination of the Abbey's early repertoire. During the first decades of the twentieth century, when the political and cultural nationalist movements were dictating a significant amount of Anglo-Irish dramatic output, the "idea of the country" held true. In this time period, it was an impulse predicated upon a goal of reclamation and a notion of authenticity, a "pull" toward that which differentiates the desired nation-to-be from industrialized, developed England. As such, there is a detraction from the idea of the modern, developed city. For this and other reasons, representations of urban Ireland held less attraction to those who developed the founding repertoire of the National Theatre amidst a highly charged cultural nationalist climate.

Publishing histories attest that the most anthologized plays of the Anglo-Irish dramatic canon are those by J.M. Synge, W.B. Yeats, Lady Gregory, and Sean O'Casey, with the rural-set works of Synge, Yeats and Gregory dominating on the printed page in collections specific to the Abbey Theatre. However, within the Abbey's repertoire, the most frequently staged works remain the urban-set plays of O'Casey, specifically his Dublin trilogy of *The Shadow of a Gunman* (1923), *Juno*

and the Paycock (1924) and *The Plough and the Stars* (1926).[1] Although the rural plays have been the works most scrutinized and most associated with the Abbey, there is an urban tradition that can be traced to the beginning of the Abbey's history, preceding O'Casey's debut in 1923 and continuing after his Dublin trilogy premiered. The rural canon overwhelmingly supports the tenets of the cultural nationalist movement, both through adapting the mythological and by dramatization of the conflicts between an Irish "us" and a colonizing "them." In stark contrast to the rural plays, the urban canon challenges the movement's ideology by rejecting or deconstructing the mythological, and by revealing conflicts of Irish society that, more often than not, reveal an "us" and a "them" to be two sides of one internal coin.

Thirteen plays set in urban Ireland were produced by the Abbey prior to the launch of the O'Casey trilogy, representing 7% of total first-time productions between the years 1904-1922. They include Dublin-, Cork City- and Belfast-set works by W. F. Casey, Daniel Corkery, Edward McNulty, St. John Ervine, A. Patrick Wilson, Oliver St. John Gogarty and Joseph O'Connor. Although urban plays were in the minority of Abbey productions during these years, their portrayals of pre-partition Ireland show that the urban challenged the ideology of the cultural nationalist movement, of which the Abbey was a leading proponent. By omitting or satirizing the mythological, which was a cornerstone of the movement's historical base, several dramatists challenged the periphery-dominated centre with significant critical and box-office success long before O'Casey became the first canonical urban playwright of the National Theatre. But, as their publishing histories and critical consideration attest, these writers have remained largely in the shadow of O'Casey and of the Abbey's rural tradition. Critical examination of these works is scarce and undoubtedly

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[1] *Gunman* has been staged 56 times, numbering 585 performances; *Juno* 44 times (571 performances); and *Plough* 54 times (730 performances).

a reflection of their rather erratic publishing histories. Marginalization might also rest, in part, on their lack of convenience: they neither fit easily into what has come to be identified as the Abbey framework nor into the majority of Anglo-Irish literature from the period. Nevertheless, these plays provide intimate dramatizations of Irish urban life during the early part of the century. In their explorations of both the private and public spheres, they are material evidence that there was a bit of O'Casey on the national stage before the man himself.

When the urban plays that premiered during and after the O'Casey trilogy years are factored into the total Abbey output through 1951, urban Ireland remained a minority setting but there was a marked increase. Playwrights contributing to the minority genre during these years expanded the pre-O'Casey use of the urban setting to criticize political and socioeconomic power bases by introducing a significant amount of historically based prison, courtroom and melodramas. Contributors of this time period include Lennox Robinson, Kenneth Sarr (Reddin), Arthur Power, Brinsley MacNamara, Denis Johnston, Louis D'Alton, Hugh Hunt, Frank O'Connor, Paul Vincent Carroll, T.C. Murray, Seamus Byrne, George Shiels, Joseph Tomelty, Roger McHugh, and Walter Macken. Although many of this group had greater success in the publication of works, the urban plays of these writers, like their pre-O'Casey predecessors, remain largely marginalized. Only in recent decades have several been examined and re-published with academic attention (Ruth Sherry's work on Hugh Hunt and Frank O'Connor plays being one noteworthy example).

One might argue that this delay in attention to the Abbey's urban repertoire is due in part to the richness and sheer volume of O'Casey material available for examination, and that since he remains the canonical playwright of the Irish urban experience, one need not dig deeper. However, to rest on these points is to assume

that the Dublin tenement is the only Irish urban setting and that social criticism within Irish urban drama was employed solely by characterizations of the poor. When the 54 plays that comprise the Abbey's Irish urban repertoire through 1951 are compiled as a unified body of work, there is no denying that the plays of O'Casey stand out. One also discovers several works that more than hold their own, including at least one that O'Casey saw prior to his debut that it is hard to ignore as a probable influence. O'Casey is certainly the undisputed leader of the pack, but he was in good company.

Foundations

For an answer to why urban-set plays are in the minority in the Abbey repertoire, one need not look much further than 1) the writings of the Abbey's founding directors: Gregory, Yeats, and Synge; and 2) the tenets of the cultural nationalist movement of which the Abbey's foundation was a component. Taken in total, they explain the rural majority while simultaneously revealing an ironic position of the urban minority. They also highlight one of the quirks of the movement itself: urban centres dictating the rural as the authentic Irish aesthetic.

When the Abbey incorporated as the Irish National Theatre, Ltd., it did so with the following manifesto:

> We propose to have performed in Dublin in the spring of every year certain Celtic and Irish plays, which whatever be their degree of excellence will be written with a high ambition, and so to build up a Celtic and Irish school of dramatic literature. We hope to find in Ireland an uncorrupted and imaginative audience trained to listen by its passion for oratory, and believe that our desire to bring upon the stage the deeper thoughts and emotions of Ireland will ensure for us a tolerant welcome, and that freedom to experiment which is not found in theatres of England, and without which no new movement in art or literature can succeed. We will show that Ireland is not the home of buffoonery and of 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, in carrying out a

> *work that is outside of all political questions* that divide us (italics mine). (Gregory 1991, 378-379)

The two most arresting elements of this manifesto are the references to "ancient idealism" and the assertion that the theatre would operate "outside of all political questions." The infusion of an apolitical stance is, in and of itself, a political statement. And, as Lionel Pilkington has successfully argued, the theatre was deeply influenced by and a conduit of both "constructive unionism [...] and those energies associated with the struggle for Irish political independence"[2] (2001, 2).

The notion of an "ancient idealism" is a reflection of the cultural nationalist agenda that can be traced to the 1880s. In his study of the cultural nationalist ideology, William Thompson outlines the characteristics that defined its foundation. Citing the influence of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century works of Irish history that emphasized reclaiming Celtic mythology, Thompson traces the influence that Sylvester O'Halloran, George Petrie, Standish O'Grady[3] and other antiquarians and scholars had on the literature and drama that emerged in the Literary Revival, as well as its significance within Irish cultural nationalism. Thompson identifies one of the characteristics of the ideology that shaped the literary revival and its dramatic component as "the rejection of industrial civilization. The next natural step was to move out from the individual to society, and to present, against the fragmented collective of Ireland's vestigial feudalism and primitive capitalism, an image of the beautiful community of moor and glen" (42). This articulates the rejection of urban

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[2] Constructive unionism is a term for that which "owed nothing to cultural nationalism, nothing to crusades for 'Irish Ireland'; and very little to [...] parliamentary pressures" (Lyons 1971, 198). Rather, proponents felt they could halt the nationalist movement's progression in Ireland by implementing (long-overdue) social improvements (i.e. housing). Often summed up by Wyndham's famous quotation as "killing the Home Rule movement with kindness."

[3] O'Grady was perhaps the most influential on Yeats, Russell and other young enthusiasts. Ironically, he found their stage adaptations of the heroic legends to which he introduced them to be a mistake. After seeing *Deirdre* and *Cathleen Ní Houlihan* at St. Theresa's Hall, O'Grady wrote in the *All Ireland Review* that they had best "leave the heroic cycles alone and [not] bring them down to the crowd" (12 April 1902).

representations and serves as a further explanation for its marginalization on the national stage.

Thompson argues that, because of its mythological component, this ideology is based on imagination. With its intrinsic reliance on the imagined, it erases urban realism from literary and dramatic prominence. But it should be remembered that (as Thompson suggests) the elements of the movement did not emerge from isolation. Rather, they are a culmination of what John Hutchinson identifies as three distinct stages of Irish cultural nationalism:[4]

Preparation	**Crystallization**	**Articulation**
Antiquarians of mid-18th century	Royal Irish Academy 1785.	Society of United Irishmen (1791); the Belfast journal *Northern Star* (1792).
Historical scholars and poets of 1830s	*Dublin Penny Journal* (1832); *Dublin University Magazine* (1833).	Young Ireland group of journalists in the *Nation* (1842).
Poets and folklorists of 1880s	Gaelic League (1893); Irish Literary Theatre (1899).	Arthur Griffith's *United Irishmen* (1899); D.P. Moran's *Leader* (1900); W.P. Ryan's *The Irish Peasant* (1905). (1987, 50)

Hutchinson reminds us that the Literary Revival, of which the National Theatre and its predecessors (including the Irish Literary Theatre) were leading institutions, embraced a cultural nationalism that evolved over time, and that this culminative effect served to reinforce Dublin's identification of centrality and demarcation as the metropolis of the movement. With the exception of the Belfast-based *Northern Star*, all of the major vessels that explored and gave shape to strata of cultural nationalism emanated from Dublin.

In addressing the link between the political and cultural mandates that existed within the early twentieth-century nationalist movement and the inconsistencies inherent to both, Declan Kiberd observes:

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[4] See also Lyons' *Ireland Since the Famine* (part 2, ch. 5), and Thompson's *The Imagination of an Insurrection* for examinations of the movement's key historical touchstones.

> The fact that some of the fiercest fighting between the rebels and the forces of occupation took place in cities has never much dented the notion of rural Ireland as real Ireland. Like other forms of pastoral, this complex of ideas was a wholly urban creation [...that] helped to create the myth of a rural nation. (481)

When considered in a literary and dramatic context, Kiberd's declaration of a "complex of ideas" being woven to create a synchronistic political and cultural mandate as a form of pastoral reveals several issues that speak to the "myth of a rural nation" as one created by internal, primarily eastward-moving, migrants whose recent roots could often be traced to rural communities. Those who settled in Dublin eventually made an imprint on political and cultural nationalism which was on par with that of the Ascendancy participants, but their voices remained on the periphery of the national stage; in essence, they were subverted by the imagined. This subversion, like Kiberd's observation, is reflective of Edward Shils' theory that "the exercise of authority from [the centre or metropolis] reinforces the inclination to heed whatever emanates from it" (357). The impulse to regard the centre's authority is strengthened by virtue of its very imposed position within a society. As a result, the pause of consideration only adds to its position of power. The national theatre movement preceding and including the foundation of the Abbey only stood to benefit from its own self-created objectification and location. As Shils notes, "the connection with the metropolitan centre confers on an object or a symbol a quality of its own quite independently of any inherent features, so that much of what comes from the centre, even though it might be no better in itself than what originates in the province, profits from the special nature of its place of origin" (357).

Kiberd's use of the term *pastoral* to describe the political and cultural mandate of a newly urbanized leadership speaks directly to the paradox of the "rural as real." While the term pastoral applies to a wide variety of literary forms, its roots (from

Theocritus and Virgil) are in an inherently false representation of country people enjoying an eternal summer of romantic idylls, where toil and hardship are romanticized or simply go unrepresented. But the pastoral applications of the foundational Abbey rural tradition break from this mould significantly. While the comedies, for the most part, embrace Virgilian qualities transplanted to the West of Ireland, the tragedies maintain personal hardship as the dominant force, as do, poignantly, the tragicomedies of Synge. Overall, the Abbey rural plays reflect the Wordsworthian intent and rationalization expressed in his Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*. The aligned intent (and glaring difference) between Wordsworth and the Abbey directors is brought into relief when Wordsworth's Preface is read in contrast to the 1906 pamphlet, *Irish Plays*, authored jointly by Gregory, Yeats and Synge.

> **From the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads***
> Humble and rustic life was generally chosen because, in that condition, the essential passions of the heart find a better soil in which they can attain their maturity, are less under restraint, and *speak a plainer and more emphatic language* (italics mine). (Wordsworth 386)

> **From *Irish Plays* by Yeats, Gregory and Synge**
> The Irish peasantry of the hills and coast *speak an exuberant language* and have a primitive grace and wildness due to the wild country they live in, which gives their most ordinary life a vividness and colour unknown in more civilised places (italics mine). (qtd. in O'Toole 111)

In both cases, the respective authors are explaining their similar intent for reflecting the pastoral, but the glaring issue of language separates them when the Abbey directors decry "more civilised places" as being less worthy of dramatic interpretation. Wordsworth clearly points toward a desire for simple, clearly defined language that is stripped of artifice, whereas the Abbey directors strive for the opposite. The issue of language, like the setting, is a crucial element in differentiating an urban aesthetic from a rural one in Anglo-Irish drama. Speaking of urban

playwrights at the Irish Theatre Company,[5] Nelson O Ceallaigh Ritschel notes that "these writers used their own everyday urban language [...] the speech familiar to urban nationalists was, thus, an integral part of the urban aesthetic, an alternative way to portray dignity in the Irish image" (20). One would be hard-pressed to connect the Abbey's intention to replicate what it deemed "exuberant" peasant language in any way with Ritschel's observation, but it does have applications to the Abbey's urban repertoire.

Considering the context in which it is offered, it is difficult to read the Abbey directors' opinion regarding "civilised" locales as anything other than the urban or metropolitan space. This deliberate positioning of the urban/metropolitan as being less worthy of representation equates to it being less culturally significant, less real, and less authentic. One explanation for this can be found in Thompson's perception of a Wordsworthian link to the adoption of pastoral motifs, a link he makes specific to Ascendancy participants of the Revival:

> writers like Hyde, Yeats, Synge, and Lady Gregory, were people of good family who had stumbled upon difficult times; in the eighteenth century the Anglo-Irish upper classes had known an era of brilliance and prosperity, but with the Act of Union and the Industrial Revolution, feudal Ireland went into eclipse, and Dublin became a provincial city. Born into a world that favored the machine, commerce, and the growth of cities, slums, and empires, a person of imaginative capacity recoiled from a setting that offered no role for his abilities. (41)

In this light, the pastoral literary tradition seems an appropriate device for urbanized political and cultural leadership that is compelled to build on the mythical or imagined when the present is volatile and the future uncertain. As Hutchinson paraphrases the majority opinion of cultural nationalism scholarship (including Kohn and Gellner),

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[5] The Irish Theatre Company was founded by Edward Martyn, Thomas MacDonagh and Joseph Plunkett in 1914. Knowing what they did not want to be, the three men avowedly positioned their theatre in opposition to the Abbey peasant repertoire. See Feeney's *Drama in Hardwicke Street* for a history of this company.

cultural nationalism is a "*defensive* response by educated elites to the impact of exogenous modernization on existing status orders, which may result [...] in a reassertion of traditionalist values in the community" (1987, 32). Therein lies one of the polarities inherent to urban productions at the national theatre, particularly in its early decades when cultural nationalism was at a heightened state of alert in Dublin: within the defensiveness of the "elites" there existed, in the form of urban playwrights, an assertion of contemporary issues that stood to challenge the "haze of sentiment and nostalgia" (Kiberd 481) that dominated the Abbey stage. With very few exceptions, the Abbey playwrights who chose to explore urban themes rejected pastoral sensibilities in a manner that transcends the obvious signifier of location.

Kiberd notes, "Dublin was in 1904 [the year the Abbey opened] a classic example of a periphery-dominated-centre, that is to say, a conurbation dominated by the values and mores of the surrounding countryside" (484). However, like many other Dublin-based institutions of the cultural nationalist movement, the Abbey was predisposed to disseminate largely rural representations to a predominantly urban audience. The domestic urban target audience was the one common denominator. Consequently, the representation of urban Ireland takes on significance. If, as Pilkington asserts, a national theatre "serves both as a prominent public site associated with the prestige of national self-representation, and as a means of instituting, or attempting to institute, norms of political agency" (2004, 232), then the marginalization of urban productions, with their tradition of challenging the imaginative elements of cultural nationalism, denote the urban as too prominent to be ignored, but too subversive to be championed. It would appear the Abbey trod a line between minimizing representations that were "real" to its predominantly urban audiences and offering representations that were "authentic" to the ideology from

which the institution emerged. The Abbey archive retains limited records of plays refused staging during this time period, so no absolute pattern can be discerned regarding possible urban-set play rejection patterns. However, based on what was staged, one can determine the rural preference.

Hutchinson argues that within cultural nationalism there are "unique, autonomous and integrated territorial communities [with] two educated groups [...] fundamental to its emergence: secular intellectuals, who are the formulators of its ideology, and the intelligentsia, who form its first constituency and its political organizers" (1987, 3). In his construct, the formulators are primarily the scholars and artists who give shape to the cultural ideals, and the intelligentsia are those (journalists, politicians, etc.) who "transform these ideals into concrete political, economic and social programmes" (1987, 3).

Because its early managers, primarily Yeats and Gregory, contributed greatly to defining the dramatic representation of the ideology and to dictating its stage-based articulation, they each served a dual function as formulators and intelligentsia in the Abbey's early decades. That both Yeats and Gregory favoured the pastoral and invocation of the mythological is well established, and this preference is reflected in the plays they authored and the majority of those they championed. Those managers and peripheral participants who dissented from this aesthetic (those who dissented on strict political grounds left for their own reasons) quickly parted company with the organization. Most notable of these dissenters is Edward Martyn, a key artistic and financial catalyst in founding the Irish Literary Theatre. Realism and an urban aesthetic had a staunch ally in Martyn, first president of Sinn Féin, and co-director with Yeats and George Moore (Martyn's cousin) of the Irish Literary Theatre. But when he parted company with Yeats and Gregory after the Irish Literary Theatre's

third season, in part because of their significant predisposition to peasant drama, any desire to incorporate an urban aesthetic went with him, leaving Yeats' and Gregory's preferences for the rural and the romantic the foundation on which the Abbey repertoire took root. Martyn's disagreement on what should constitute a national repertoire was a significant factor in his withdrawal from the ILT. Martyn had "no interest whatever in peasant plays [...and was] absorbed in the new conception of drama that had been introduced by Ibsen and Strindberg" (Gwynn 136). His position was in direct opposition to that of Yeats. [6]

The rural may have represented an "authentic" Ireland to Abbey directors during its foundations, but the city — based on population statistics —represented reality to the overwhelming majority of its actors, its domestic audience, and the citizens of Ireland. By the turn of the century, most Irish citizens were living in urban centres and they were a combination of people who had lived in the city for several generations and people who were first-generation urbanites. While both segments may have had experiential connections to rural Ireland, the city was the practical reality for the majority of audience members if for no other reason than that it was their home. Of course, it was home to the Abbey Theatre. But if rural Ireland was depicted as authentic Ireland by the Abbey decision makers, how did that occur? And what did urban Ireland depict?

The Abbey operators knew well that they were creating an image of Ireland and that it was a creation they had to mould in opposition to Ireland's urban reality. As Fintan O'Toole notes:

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[6] A superficial argument is often made that Martyn left on religious grounds (he was a staunch Catholic who reacted strongly to many plays he perceived as anti-Catholic). However, as Gwynn and Feeney document, Martyn remained with the ILT during the years that this was an issue, not leaving until repertoire issues were his primary motivation. Martyn would go on to co-found The Theatre of Ireland, with which he was affiliated from 1906 to 1912, and The Irish Theatre Company, with whom he worked from 1914 to 1920. Each of these theatre companies was self-identified as having a nationalist remit and strove to include urban plays in its repertoire.

> The notion of the peasant and of the country which the peasant embodied was *not a reflection of Irish reality but an artificial literary creation*, largely made in Dublin, for Dubliners. It was a political image of the countryside which helped to create a sense of social cohesion in a country which was trying to define itself over against England. ...[*The] Abbey had to create an imagined country in the heart of the city*. …In presenting revolutionary new plays, the Abbey players were already presenting an image of their own collective past, already in a sense *disowning the present* (italics mine). (112)

O'Toole's assertion that the rural literary/dramatic creation was a "political image" forged to help define Ireland apart from England is quite logical in relation to the Abbey's early years, when Ireland remained colonized by England and the political and cultural nationalist movements were operating synergistically.

Williams argues that "rural virtues […] mean different things at different times and [depending upon the time in which they are portrayed] quite different values are being brought to question" (1973, 22). This is certainly evident in the Abbey's rural canon, which is dominated largely by conflicts between characters struggling to maintain presence or property against outside influences (often class- or political-based figures and/or power bases that are representative of colonization). Synge is one of the few Abbey writers of rural-set plays to critique from within and, as such, one of the few to follow a key characteristic of the urban repertoire. When dramatizing conflicts within the society, an Irish playwright of this time period would confront three cornerstones of the cultural nationalist movement (all of which would be held sacred for decades): family, nation and church.[7]

While not common on the Abbey stage, criticism of these three factions was not unheard-of in Anglo-Irish literature of the early twentieth century, perhaps most notably in the writings of James Joyce. All three are questioned in *Dubliners* (portions

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[7] Synge, of course, faced great criticism for this predisposition. Although the *Playboy* riots in 1907 are perhaps the most vivid example of the criticism he faced, republican and Catholic protest of his work goes back to his first play, *In the Shadow of the Glen* (1903, Molesworth Hall), which was targeted by nationalists for representing an Irish loveless marriage. *The Tinker's Wedding* (with its greedy, cynical priest) was rejected for Abbey staging upon its completion (1907), and not staged there until 1971.

of which were first published in the *Irish Homestead* in 1904), and are expanded upon in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. When *Portrait's* protagonist Stephen Dedalus proclaims that he "will not serve that which I no longer believe, whether it call itself my home, my fatherland or my church" (181), he claims the only arms at his disposal for such criticism to be "silence, exile and cunning" (181). Stephen (and Joyce) left Dublin for the Continent because of a feeling of claustrophobia, holding the opinion that the only way to effectively observe and freely criticize Ireland — and its entrenched cultural nationalism — was from a distance. However, the Abbey did give voice to many playwrights who shared a Joycean critical voice and, in doing so, the national theatre utilized the pen and the stage as significant tools and arms of cunning, particularly as use to challenge the tenets of the cultural nationalist movement.

Fifteen Percent

Williams' argument that "rural virtues [...] mean different things at different times" (1973, 22) begs the question if, conversely, urban virtues — and representations — might also mean different things at different times. The following overview of the Abbey's urban repertoire from 1904 through 1951 suggests this is true. While the plays remain constant in their predisposition toward dramatizing conflicts within Irish society, and focus mostly on those urban centres that were the most highly industrialized (Belfast and Dublin), there is a significant increase in plays set in the cities post-Treaty and after independence from England is achieved.

There were approximately 370 first-time productions[8] staged at the original Abbey Theatre. While the majority of these plays are set in rural Ireland,

[8] Exclusive of pantos, Irish-language plays, and translations.

approximately 15% are set in urban centres of the island and these plays dramatize a broad range of social, political, economic and historical subjects. Within the Abbey theatre's repertoire, the most frequently staged works remain the urban-set plays of O'Casey. His Dublin trilogy of *The Shadow of a Gunman* (1923), *Juno and the Paycock* (1924) and *The Plough and the Stars* (1926) remain the most-frequently staged plays in Abbey history and O'Casey, arguably, the most canonical urban playwright in Anglo-Irish drama. It is not the intention of this research to minimize the significance of O'Casey's contributions, but a close examination of the Abbey's urban canon reveals that he was one of many. The objective here is to catalogue the company he kept and the cities they staged, and to document the existence of an urban tradition on the Abbey stage.

A printed anthology of urban-set plays at the original Abbey (1904-1951) would contain 53 plays across various genres, and represent the urban centres of Belfast, Cork, Galway and Dublin as follows:

	No. of Plays	**% of Total Urban Repertoire**	**% of Total Repertoire**
Dublin	42[9]	79%	11%
Belfast	7	13%	2%
Cork	3	6%	<1%
Galway	1	2%	<1%

Considering the Abbey's role as a conduit of the Dublin-based cultural nationalist movement, it is not surprising that Dublin comprises the largest segment of urban settings.[10] Heinz Kosok also suggests that for many plays, a Dublin-set focus is the result of convenience, and Irish playwrights sometimes chose the city as setting "because it was the milieu of their intended audience" (1984, 27). His assertion bears

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[9] *The Laying of the Foundations* (1902) is included in this total. Although not staged at the original Abbey, it was part of their repertoire.

[10] Kosok acknowledges that the activities of the Irish Dramatic Movement at the turn of the century "seem to have directed the attention of playwrights to Dublin not only as the place where they might have their works produced without regard to the English market, but also as the setting for plays themselves" (27). He categorizes these plays as "accidental" in their choice of Dublin setting.

consideration in light of the many melodramas where Dublin serves no significant purpose apart from anchoring the drama in a location familiar to audience members, and where the story being staged offers no commentary specific to Irish or urban life. While the same could be said for several of the Belfast plays (which were often imports from the Belfast-based Ulster Theatre Company), the majority of them — like those set in the cities of Cork and Galway — use their setting to address issues specifically pertinent to events or situations unique to their locations.

~Dublin

In his 1984 essay, "The Image of Dublin in Anglo-Irish Drama," Kosok acknowledges the "vague general notion that, with the exception of O'Casey, Dublin did not figure prominently in Anglo-Irish drama until quite recently" (18). He goes on to refute that notion, documenting the first Dublin-set play as the Restoration comedy *St. Stephen's Green; or, The Generous Lovers* by William Philips (which was staged at the Theatre Royal in Dublin's Smock Alley in 1700) and cataloguing several dozen other plays that were staged in various Dublin venues prior to the opening of the Abbey in 1904. The first Dublin-set play of the Abbey repertoire also pre-dates the 1904 opening of the Abbey Theatre. Frederick Ryan's *The Laying of the Foundations* was staged for Cumann na nGaedeal in October 1902 at the Antient Concert Rooms, and again in December by that group's successor, the Irish National Theatre Society (INTS), at 34 Lower Camden Street. Produced by Willie Fay's Irish National Dramatic Company (INDC), it became part of Yeats' London fundraising efforts for the INTS, which was the governing body of the original Abbey Theatre.[11]

[11] The name changed to the National Theatre Society, Ltd. in 1906, and remains the name today.

To a large degree, *The Laying of the Foundations* set the standard for representations of Dublin on the Abbey stage in its early decades. In an examination of what he calls "the alternative aesthetic," Ritschel argues that early "urban aesthetic dramatists ultimately owed more to Yeats" (21) than met the eye. Ritschel observes that their plots, although not rurally or mythically-based, and their characters, although not mythically developed or lyrically-spoken, often mirrored the Yeats-Gregory model of self-sacrifice personified by Michael Gillane in *Cathleen Ní Houlihan*. Ritschel finds that "there was no room in early Irish theatre's urban or rural aesthetic plays for Ibsen-type characters suffering with personal dilemmas. It was a theatre that primarily attempted to offer an elevated Irish model rather than to portray people as they were" (21). This is particularly applicable (as Ritschel notes), to Frederick Ryan's *The Laying of the Foundations*. It is one of the few early urban plays that Yeats supported in its initial production. While still in rehearsals, Yeats wrote to Gregory describing the play as "excellent [...and] a really astonishing peice (sic) of satire" (1994, 232).[12]

The play dramatizes corruption within the Dublin county council's building department while simultaneously presenting a sympathetic point-of-view of the burgeoning labour movement. The play's protagonist, Michael O'Loskin, is a Dublin city architect who unknowingly receives his position because of a backroom agreement between his father, a wealthy and influential publican, and his father's business partner, City Alderman Farrelly. Michael soon learns how he came to be appointed and that he is expected to approve all construction projects at the direction

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[12] Yeats' appreciation for the work did not diminish over time. According to Lennox Robinson, Yeats wanted to revive the play at the Abbey to honour Ryan following his death in 1913, but the script could not be located. In a letter to Abbey secretary W.A. Henderson dated 17 September 1913 (NLI ms. 25,497), Robinson writes, "I believe the MS. has been lost. We certainly have not got it here." The abbreviated play summary in this chapter is taken from the published Act II and the synopsis contained in the *United Irishman* (8 Nov. 1902).

of his father and Farrelly, disregarding any defects in their existing buildings. Michael also discovers that they are owners of some of the city's worst slum tenements, that the Alderman receives city contracts due solely to his position in local government, and that he exploits his workers. Although offered a bribe to ignore these facts and retain his job, Michael stands his ground to face what promises to be an ugly fight against city power brokers. At the play's conclusion, he vows to do his part in building a "city whose foundations are laid in Liberty and Truth" (Ryan 37) and is every inch the self-sacrificing man looking to the common good as prototyped by Yeats and Gregory. In this regard, the Ryan play can be viewed as a transition drama that transplants a component of the Yeats-Gregory tradition (self-sacrifice for a common good) from a rural to an urban setting.

This chapter's introduction to Dublin-set Abbey plays faces the same conundrum to which Kosok alludes in his essay: how to shape a large body of work without providing simply a list of play titles, playwrights, and years of first production. Kosok elected to categorize them based on a classification that focused on the "dominant tendency in the use of city settings" (1984, 29), and this section borrows loosely from his construct. It retains several of his construct categories, [13] but operates on the presumption that all of the plays share three dominant elements that separate them from the Abbey's rural canon (in ways that transcend setting): 1) a predisposition toward criticizing Irish society from within; 2) a rejection of the mythological; and 3) a preference for presenting the "real" over conflicts that set up a dichotomy opining on the "authentic."

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[13] The Kosok categories are: Critical, Descriptive, Factual, Autobiographical, Emotional, Symbolic, and Allegorical. See Kosok 1984. The ones used herein are Critical, Factual, Autobiographical, and Descriptive.

Kosok defines the Critical plays as those where "authors pursue a satirical purpose [...and are...] not predominantly interested in the places they depict but in the society represented by them, and they [are] determined to ridicule, and in consequence to improve, this society" (1984, 27-28). *The Laying of the Foundations* is the first Dublin-set play of the Abbey repertoire to fit this most-represented category. These plays comprise the largest percentage of urban plays of this time period and are the most aggressive in their confrontation of metropolitan power bases. The power bases they confront include city government, the church and church-related charitable organizations, the press, the healthcare system, big business, and, most notably, elements and conduits of cultural nationalism itself. The first Dublin play to premiere at the Abbey fits this critical label: Lennox Robinson's *The Cross-Roads* (1909). The prologue (the only portion set in Dublin) presents Co. Cork native Ellen McCarthy as a scrappy, up-and-coming member of the Erin Debating Society. The men who run the Society are dismayed when she announces her withdrawal from the Society in order to return to Co. Cork:

> I thought Dublin was the hub of the country; I thought it was the centre of nationalism and that if I wanted to work for Ireland I could do the best work up here — but I've found out my mistake. The few houses that we call Ballygurten [...] is more of a centre of nationalism than Dublin. (Robinson 1911, 14-15)

This comment, spoken within the city, addresses one of the contrasts between the "ideas of the country and the city" Williams offers; specifically, associations with mobility and isolation. Ellen has relocated to the city in anticipation of being part of a metropolitan-based movement, but is disillusioned to discover that the city's centrality to ideas takes precedence over any ability to turn those notions into actions. She retreats to the country, where articulation is less significant, and where she expects to find greater activity that contributes to the nationalist cause. However, her

retreat to the country leads her into a life of isolation, in direct contrast to the "idea of the country" that she sought to embrace.

Ellen foregoes romantic love in favour of an arranged marriage, through which she believes she can contribute to Ireland (via her community) by implementing efficiencies on her new husband's farm and starting a village cooperative to export fresh farm products to Dublin. When one of her suitors from the Society arrives in Cork some years later, finding her a poor, neglected and beaten wife, he proposes to take her away, to which she initially agrees. This acceptance (temporary though it comes to be) shows that Ritschel's observation of self-sacrifice without any hesitation or personal dilemma does not hold fast in all Dublin (or partially Dublin) Abbey plays. Ellen ultimately decides to remain in her loveless marriage, even though she knows that her commitment to putting Ireland ahead of her own happiness has resulted only in misery. This play subverts the association of the city with a place of isolation, while simultaneously targeting the notion of martyrdom that it borrows from the Yeats-Gregory model. As such, it serves as the first example of urban Abbey plays confronting notions espoused by the very theatre in which they are produced.

This quality of confronting Abbey-espoused notions is exhibited in several other plays, most notably in *Blight* by Oliver St. John Gogarty and Joseph O'Connor (1917). *Blight* is the second tenement-based play of the Abbey repertoire (*The Slough* of 1914 by A. Patrick Wilson being the first), but it is the first one to indict the theatre-going public as complicit in the city's efforts to ghettoize the poor. It is also the first Abbey play that Sean O'Casey is said to have attended, and its plot, tone, and characterizations can be judged to have paved the way for the success of his Dublin trilogy (the parallels are most evident in comparison to *Juno and the Paycock*). In his

description of *Blight* as "a problem play [...] exposing the social ills of the tenements to fuel a campaign for urban renewal" (111), Nicholas Grene touches on one of the qualities that contributes toward defining *urban* on the Abbey stage: the emergence of harshly critical self-examination. In the words of one biographer, *Blight* is an attack on "the middle classes who refused to face up to the reality of the sickness and poverty in their midst" (O'Connor 1964, 153). As such, it is an exposé of hypocrisy within the Abbey's own stalls. The play speaks directly to the Abbey audience base who were part of the city's philanthropic set that, at least through the authors' eyes, perpetuated poverty by funding projects to house it rather than funding reform to end it.

Other plays that fit Kosok's Critical category are: W.F. Casey's *The Man Who Missed the Tide* (1908), *The Critics* by St. John Ervine (1913), A. Patrick Wilson's *The Slough* (1914), *The Lord Mayor* by Edward McNulty (1914), *The Revolutionist* by Terence MacSwiney (1921), *Scrap* by J.A. O'Brennan (1931), *The Critic* by Lennox Robinson (1931), *The Big Sweep* by M.M. Brennan (1932), *The Grand House in the City* by Brinsley MacNamara (1936), *Caesar's Image* by E.F. Carey (1939), *Remembered For Ever* by Bernard McGinn (1941), and *The O'Cuddy* by Anthony Wharton (1943). Several other critical plays are distinguished by their parodic elements, and are worthy of mention as a sub-category. The critical parodies are: M.M. Brennan's *The Young Man from Rathmines* and *The Leprechaun in the Tenement* (both 1922), Sean O'Casey's *Kathleen Listens In* (1923) and Paul Vincent Carroll's *Coggerers* (1937). In all instances, the city itself is not positioned as a negative to a positive country ideal. Rather, it is taken as a norm to be navigated on its own terms; social ills and/or conflicts — along with the potential for improvement — are identified as coming from within.

In Kosok's construct, Factual plays are those where "the representation of the city [...] was obviously not at the heart of the playwright's purpose [...] In the case of biographical and/or historical plays, the choice of setting is predetermined by the choice of the material" (1984, 28-29). Plays of this type appear in every decade of the Abbey through the 1940s, with those based on biography being most often staged. These are split equally between the literary and the political. However, those based on literary biography focus predominantly on Jonathan Swift, whose writings tended to contain overtly political messaging (both direct and allegorical). There are three Swift plays, all of which take liberties with his biography in attempts to solve various mysteries of Swift's colourful life: specifically, his relationships with "Stella" and "Vanessa," and his provocation for writing the series of pamphlets known as *The Drapier's Letters*. These plays are: *The Dean of St. Patrick's Cathedral* by G. Sidney Paternoster (1913), *The Drapier Letters* by Arthur Power (1927), and *The Words Upon the Window-Pane* by W. B. Yeats (1930). The one non-Swift literary bio-drama is Louis D'Alton's *The Man in the Cloak* (1937), a dramatization of the final hours of the poet James Clarence Mangan (no stranger to the 18th century foundational years of the cultural nationalist movement). The biographical-based works set on the lives of political figures are: Conal O'Riordan's *An Imaginary Conversation* (1909) and Lennox Robinson's *The Dreamers* (1915), both of which focus on the life of Robert Emmet; and McHugh's *Rossa* (1945), which addresses the life of Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa.

In addition to biography, politics plays a central role in the period's two historical event dramas: *The Invincibles* by Hugh Hunt and Frank O'Connor (1937) and *Trial at Green Street Courthouse* by Roger McHugh (1941). *The Invincibles* was the first instalment of O'Connor's Fenian trilogy, and focused on the 1882 Phoenix

Park Murders; and *Trial at Green Street Courthouse* (the first courtroom drama of the Abbey) is a dramatization of the trial of Robert Kelly, who was accused and acquitted of the murder of a former RIC Head Constable (Thomas Talbot) in 1871 in what remains one of the most celebrated trials in Dublin history. In these factual plays, like the critical ones, the city is often a site of poverty, political corruption and intrigue; but it is also a site for interrogating (from within society) political factions that impede social progress.

There is a group of plays, like the Factual, where the use of the Dublin setting is not "at the heart of the playwright's purpose" (Kosok 1984, 29). These appear to be using Dublin simply as a setting of convenience to provide a point of reference to the domestic audience. Although they become most frequently staged during the Abbey company's years at the Queen's Theatre (1951-1966), there are a few staged at the original Abbey: *The Suburban Groove* by W.F. Casey (1908), *The Wooing of Julia Elizabeth* by James Stephens (1920), *Apartments* by Fand O'Grady (1923), *Never the Time and Place* by Lennox Robinson (1924), *A Deuce O'Jacks* by F.R. Higgins (1935), *Blind Man's Buff* by Denis Johnston (1936), and *A Spot in the Sun* by T.C. Murray (1938). These plays are a mix of marriage comedies and melodramas, and do not distinguish the Abbey's urban canon in any substantial fashion.

In the category he terms Autobiographical, Kosok asserts that "the choice of setting is determined by the author's private experience; he decides on a certain locality simply because he is personally familiar with it" (1984, 29). He makes a strong case for this application to O'Casey's *The Shadow of a Gunman* (1923), and the balance on the O'Casey trilogy (*Juno and the Paycock* (1924) and *The Plough and the Stars* (1926)) can also be traced to this category; it is most notably applicable, however, to Seamus Byrne's *Design for a Headstone* (1950). Few successful Abbey

plays mirror the private experience of their author in such a traceable fashion. The Dublin-born Byrne served as a solicitor for nine years before political activism — and later playwriting — became his primary interest for several years. In 1940, he was sentenced to two years for illegal radio transmissions on behalf of the I.R.A. While serving his sentence, he went on hunger strike and was released, having served less than ten months of his sentence. In addition to being the most significant post-O'Casey autobiographical urban play of the period, it marks the emergence of the I.R.A. prison drama on the national stage.[14] This play addressed such tempestuous issues as political classification of prisoners, the motivation and ramification of hunger strikes, and the relationship between the I.R.A. and the Catholic Church.

In addition to its setting of a thinly disguised Mountjoy Prison, the size of the cast was one of the noteworthy aspects of the production (there were over twenty speaking parts and at least nine non-speaking), but the subject matter was more so. As Luke Gibbons notes, Byrne was one of the few playwrights of the period to "introduce more controversial subjects into the dramatic canon" (47) and in this, his first play, he managed to touch on several that piqued certain audiences and critics alike. Although the play enjoyed a successful six-week run, one Abbey actor recalled its controversy five years later:

> On the sixth night of the play's presentation a group of people in the audience gave vent to shouts of protest which resolved themselves into charges that the author was (a) using his play 'as a vehicle for Marxian philosophy'; (b) attempting to 'smear the Catholic priesthood'; (c) insulting Ireland, Irishmen, and a Temperance Association. At one point in the play (when Aidan O'Leary mentions Jacques Maritain) a number of young men rushed towards the stage shouting 'Maritain was wrong!' The incident would not be worth mentioning did it not reflect a line of thought and action which is consistent with certain attitudes in Irish Catholicism. (Fallon 1956, 4)

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[14] Pre-dating the debut of Brendan Behan's *The Quare Fellow* at Dublin's Pike Theatre by four years.

The play contains several story lines, with the hunger strike of the political prisoner Conor and the O'Casey-esque antics of criminal prisoner Jakey at the fore. The political and criminal prisoners are presented as leading distinctly different lives during their incarceration. The political prisoners meet regularly to study Irish, devise escape methods, and share information on what is happening with the republican movement outside of the jail. Meanwhile, the criminal prisoners focus on angling for favoured work assignments and, it is suggested, view prison as an escape from the harsher realities of economic survival and family commitments that face them outside of the prison walls.

A descriptive use of the Dublin setting "can best be described in negative terms: it neither intends to criticize, correct and improve, nor does it reach beyond the immediate reality depicted on stage by suggesting any type of general or symbolic significance" (Kosok 28). This category of play on the Abbey stage encompasses a broad range of works, from the comedic to the melodramatic. W. F. Casey's *The Suburban Groove* (1908), Sean O'Casey's *Nannie's Night Out* (1924), Kenneth Sarr's *The Passing* (1924), and Gerald Brosnan's *Before Midnight* (1928) all fit this category. These plays, while radically different from one another, share a portrayal of Dublin as a city of intimate complacency; there is a sense that neither the city nor its inhabitants are to change in any way. People and circumstances will always move along in a whole rhythm that is greater than its parts. Whether characters are in a community or not, the primary protagonists in each play all live within inner worlds that nobody is likely to penetrate or share. They tap into Williams' observation that the city, by the late 19th and early 20th centuries, is associated, in part, with "mobility and isolation." Considering the centrality of Dublin in the early decades of the twentieth century, Williams' claim that this association "only emerges as a major

theme during the metropolitan phase of development" (1973, 348) bears consideration.

Borrowing elements of Kosok's construct, one discerns a pattern in the Dublin plays at the Abbey. Although approximately the same ratio of Irish urban to Irish rural plays are set at the Abbey before and after the establishment of the Irish Free State, it serves as a point of demarcation that ties into the alternate side of Williams' argument that "rural virtues [...] mean different things at different times and [depending upon the time in which they are portrayed] quite different values are being brought to question" (1973, 22). It would appear that urban representations not only mean different things at different times on the Abbey stage, but that they are also used to different ends.

	% of Total Dublin-Set Plays	
	Pre-Independence	**Post-Independence**
Critical (19)	19%	26%
Factual (9)	7%	14%
Convenience (7)	5%	11%
Autobiographical (4)	0	9%
Descriptive (4)	2%	7%

While use of the urban space to criticize society remains fairly constant both before and after Irish independence from England, its use for merely descriptive and convenient purposes more than doubles. This supports the logic of O'Toole's observation that the early Abbey (pre-Independence) focused on the rural, in part, as a means of further support for the cultural nationalist movement's desire to distinguish Ireland from industrialized England. After independence is achieved, a willingness to set plays in Dublin merely as backdrop — with no substantive social criticism — is accepted. Also noteworthy is the significant increase of the factual and the emergence of the autobiographical, reflecting in both instances a willingness to reclaim the urban as an Irish locale apart from English dominance.

~Belfast City

The seven plays set in the city of Belfast are: *Mixed Marriage* (1911) and *The Orangeman* (1914) by St. John Ervine, *Money* by Hugh P. Quinn (1931),[15] *Birth of a Giant* by Nora MacAdam (1940), *The End House* by Joseph Tomelty (1944), *The Old Broom* by George Shiels (1946), and John Coulter's *The Drums are Out* (1948). These plays are primarily sectarian-related melodramas, with West Belfast serving as the prevailing setting. Only *The Old Broom* and *Money* break from this dominant theme and locale. These plays centre on parent-child relationships and dreams that fathers have for their sons (*The Old Broom*) and mothers have for their daughters (*Money*). The one quality these plays share with those plays dealing with the Troubles is the attempt to reconcile generational division. *The Orangeman* serves as a bridge between these plays and those focusing on the Troubles, but relies on predictable stereotypes in its portrayal of a loyalist father bullying his only son to take his place in the following day's march commemorating the Battle of the Boyne. Complete with a long-suffering wife and angry son who has inherited his father's penchant for violence rather than articulation, it offers no insight into a young man who refuses to "beat the drum" (apart from not wanting to because his father does) nor into the older man whose commitment to marching appears only to stem from a desire for routine (rather than tradition or political ideology).

Ervine, MacAdam, Tomelty and Coulter treat the issue of sectarianism in West Belfast from a familial point of view. For the most part, they rely on rather simplistic, one-dimensional portrayals: the Catholic families are victims of oppression who react to their condition with drink and violence, and the Protestants are

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[15] Published as *Mrs. McConachy's Money* to avoid confusion with the Butler Lytton play of the same title.

oppressors who are cavalier in their positions of power. But within several of the plays, these stereotypes are tempered with subtleties that provide deeper commentary on the social conditions of West Belfast, and interrogate attempts by younger generations to question the reasons beyond religion in the sectarian world they stand to inherit. This is most notable in *Mixed Marriage* and *Birth of a Giant*, when younger men contemplate the unrest at their workplaces. Although *Mixed Marriage* was written and staged before the first period to be labelled 'the Troubles' (1916-1923), sectarian riots in the West Belfast area between the Shankhill and Falls Roads occurred as early as 1857.[16] *Birth of a Giant* is set in 1855, when sectarian unrest among shipyard workers was already simmering. In both plays, these pre-Troubles periods of unrest are dramatized when younger workers consider that management is pitting Catholic and Protestant workers against each other as a ploy to hide the real issue of poor working conditions. But their efforts to encourage older men to see that working together across religious divides can improve the community as a whole are unsuccessful. Both plays end with the death of a young optimist and the impression that nothing is likely to change.

The one play that provides the most multi-dimensional portrayal of both sides of the equation is John Coulter's *The Drums Are Out*. Set in the Shankhill-Falls Road district during the early 1920s, it is based partly on the author's own experiences of growing up Protestant in West Belfast. Its Abbey run began on 12 July 1948[17] and was a critical and popular success: its scheduled one-week run was extended to five weeks.[18] The plot centres on the Sheridan family and the roles the father and daughter play in the Troubles. The father, a police sergeant, is a loyalist, and his daughter, Jean,

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[16] See Downing, p. 202, for map of Major Sectarian Riots in Belfast 1857-1980.

[17] A symbolic opening date; 12 July being the anniversary of the Battle of the Boyne and the height of the North's "marching season" by the Orange Order.

[18] According to Coulter, the Abbey planned to revive the play in 1951, but the fire derailed those plans.

a teacher, is a republican. Her parents know this and agree to disagree on the issue; it is not a point of contention within the family. Neither of Jean's parents are aware that she is secretly married to Denis, an I.R.A. man on the run, and is pregnant with his child. When street fighting breaks out (off stage), Denis arrives at the Sheridan home to seek shelter because he has been shot and, with Jean, tells her parents about their marriage and her pregnancy. Sheridan keeps Denis hidden until fellow I.R.A. men (disguised as policemen) arrive to take him out of West Belfast, where he is being hunted by the police. Sheridan feels guilty for assisting Denis and for his duty to his family overriding his duty as a policeman. Sheridan decides to report his having harboured the fugitive in order to save his neighbours from the indignity of house-to-house searches. The play ends with Jean exclaiming, "we should pray our babies never would be born into a mess like this, except to change it" (Coulter 77).

What is remarkable about *The Drums Are Out* is its ability to play against type. It is the only Belfast city play centring on the Troubles that achieves this. With the exception of one officer, none of the principal characters are one-dimensional. Denis is committed to his republican activities, but not at the expense of Jean's family's safety; Jean is committed to her support of republican causes, but is neither a strident activist nor interested in pushing her beliefs onto her loyalist parents. Finally, Sheridan struggles with his responsibilities to job, family, and neighbours. When he, ultimately, decides to be true to his job, he risks losing the pension that is only one year away, in order to be able to live with himself. This representation of decent humanity and cooperation across the Belfast divide had not previously been seen on the Abbey stage. The issue of job security permeates this play and, like the labour issues at the forefront of *Mixed Marriage* and *Birth of a Giant*, becomes one

component of the cultural nationalist movement that carries over into the works set in Dublin (to be examined in detail in chapter three).

~Cork City

Of the so-called 'Cork Realists' (including Daniel Corkery, Frank O'Connor, T.C. Murray, and Sean O'Faolain) that wrote plays staged by the Abbey, Daniel Corkery and Frank O'Connor, whose paths first crossed when O'Connor was a young student of Corkery's, were the only ones to focus on the urban in Abbey plays prior to 1951. The Cork City plays of these years are: Corkery's *The Labour Leader* (1919), O'Connor and Hugh Hunt's *Moses' Rock* (February 1938), and O'Connor's *Time's Pocket* (December 1938). Those contributed to by O'Connor represent two-thirds of his Fenian trilogy, which examines major events during Ireland's struggle for independence. The two that include Cork City focus on the fall of Parnell (*Moses' Rock*) and the Civil War years (*Time's Pocket*). [19] The Corkery play focuses on labour unrest on the Cork Quays.

Of the three, *The Labour Leader* is the least compelling and appears to be an attempt to build on the success of A. Patrick Wilson's *The Slough* which also featured a worker's strike and a Larkinesque figure as a chief protagonist when staged five years earlier (see chapter three for details of this play and others dealing with the Dublin labour movement). But Corkery fell far short of Wilson, and *The Labour Leader* was a critical and popular failure. Several Dublin theatre critics of the day pointed to the play being entirely set in the Union committee room as a major fault. Cork City is alternately praised and condemned, but its presence is only off-stage, and the characters themselves are so unsympathetic that it is difficult to feel support for

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[19] The third, the Dublin-set *The Invincibles* (about the Phoenix Park murders), was co-authored and directed by Hunt in 1937 and staged at the Abbey.

their efforts to improve working conditions. This play provides no sense of the city because the city never actually permeates the stage. *The Slough* succeeded, in part, on a familial sub-plot that brought Dublin slum conditions to life (the acts alternate between committee room and a worker's tenement home), but *The Labour Leader* failed, as one Corkery scholar observes, because "critics found a naturalistic portrayal of a committee meeting as boring as a real committee meeting" (Maume 64).

Unlike Corkery, O'Connor (both alone and with Hunt) favours an intimacy of character interactions within inner worlds. This quality served him well in his celebrated short stories and novels (one might also argue that it was a high mark of his biography on Michael Collins), but it often posed a stumbling block in his stage plays. The biographer James Matthews observes: "Place is never the primary dimension in an O'Connor story; setting for him is atmosphere, emerging as a complement to the voice of the story. Thus most of the stories are wrapped in darkness, casting the disarray and desolation in silhouetted relief" (68). As a result, his stage efforts suffer from a reliance on overly melodramatic moments, in an attempt to portray characters' inner conflicts and to fortify interactions with characters that have carried emotional burdens.

Moses' Rock premiered on 28 February 1938 and marked the third collaborative effort of O'Connor and Hunt. As Ruth Sherry notes in her introduction to the edition published in 1983, "the stage directions indicate the time of the action quite clearly [December 1890 through the day after Parnell's funeral in October 1891], but they do not specify the place; the dialogue nevertheless makes it apparent that the events occur in Cork" (27). Textual references further narrow the location to Cork City, which anchors the Parnell drama within the heart of his constituency. As such, the city serves a metaphorical rather than substantive purpose.

Time's Pocket portrays over ten years in the life of Nance, a young woman whose high spirits and passion are a threat to local clergy and conservative members of her community. Against the backdrop of the Civil War, she falls in love with a young republican, Dargan, who is eventually imprisoned. Left alone and pregnant, she is forced to marry a man who feels that because he "saved" her from disgrace, she is his possession to abuse as he wishes. When Dargan is released from prison, he returns to Cork to find Nance a beaten woman, old before her time. Upon learning of the existence of his son, he takes them both from the abusive home to live with him. Dargan's return gives Nance back some of her spirit, and she stands up to the priest, husband, and community members who threaten to destroy her for living outside the norms of society by leaving her husband to live with Dargan. When the community, led by the priest, imposes its will again, it appears the Dargans will finally succumb to the city's imposed conservatism. But Dargan's former allies come to his aid, and the commitment he showed to his nation is rewarded with the promise that he can continue to lead a quiet life with Nance and their son on the edge of the city. The play's critique of conservative Catholicism is so muted by its assault and attention to Nance's victimization that it gets lost; when it does emerge, it is unexplained and confusing. This repeated disruption — as well as an anti-clerical message during the very conservative 1930s — can be pointed to as part of the play's lack of success.

~Galway

The countryside of Co. Galway is a dominant location in the Abbey's rural plays, but the city of Galway appears only once: in Walter Macken's *Mungo's*

Mansion (1946).[20] Macken, a novelist, playwright and actor, was no stranger to Ireland's theatre community. In Galway, he was a leading force behind Irish-language theatre and an active member of Taibhdhearc na Gaillimhe. But he was also known well at the Abbey, where he performed in several productions.

Set in the Galway slums, *Mungo's Mansion* represents a somewhat gender-based generational divide between the romanticism of the father and the practical realism of his wife and children (most vocally by their eldest daughter, Nellie). Mungo King is, as his surname suggests, very much the king of his castle. His castle, however, is a derelict tenement on Buttermilk Lane in Galway's inner city, where he was born and raised, and where he is determined to remain to rear his eleven children. He is initially presented as an indifferent father, husband, friend, and neighbour; but as events unfold, it becomes clear that he is simply afraid to leave the Lane for a new Council house. His identity is deeply entrenched in his home, and to leave it would mean relinquishing the status that his familiarity in the Lane provides. But following a string of unfortunate events — including his son being diagnosed with diphtheria and an upstairs neighbour going mad and murdering his wife — he begins to agree with his wife and daughter about leaving the Lane. When a horse upon which he placed a bet leads to Mungo winning a sweepstakes fortune of £2000, the decision is settled.

It appears that the Galway slum location, while popular with Abbey audiences, provoked some degree of protest. Macken felt compelled to address this in a note he wrote in the 1948 publication of *Vacant Possession*:

> Lest readers of this play and *Mungo's Mansion* should visualise the city of Galway as a town of tenements and condemned houses, I hasten

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[20] Macken revisits this setting in *Vacant Possession* (1948) and *Home is the Hero* (1952). The former was not staged by the Abbey, and the latter was staged by the Abbey company during its years at the Queen's Theatre.

> to make it clear that Galway Corporation is one of the most efficient bodies in the land, that they have eradicated slums and have almost abolished tenements, and that it would be virtually impossible to find the "Ganthry"[21] in the up-to-date city of to-day (sic). (1948, v)

Noble as this defence of his home city is, *Mungo's Mansion* was set in 1946, and the slums were still very much in evidence when Macken wrote his comments in 1948. Still prevalent too were the childhood illnesses and high unemployment that are explored in the play. However, on the Abbey stage, Dublin was the dominant home for staging these (and other) ills and conflicts within Irish urban society.

Conclusion

There is no denying that an urban tradition can be traced to the beginning of the Abbey's history, preceding O'Casey's debut in 1923 and continuing after his Dublin trilogy premiered. With 15% of its repertoire depicting the Irish urban experience, that first Abbey building at the corner of Marlborough and Abbey Streets in Dublin's north inner city presented urban Ireland at all points of the compass: the heavily industrialized north of shipyard workers and sectarianism, the slum conditions of the west, the labour and political unrest of the south, and the emergence of a capital city in the east. But, overall, there are several constants among the Abbey's urban repertoire. First, in whichever city the plays are set, they tend to be full of references that assume in the audience an intimate knowledge of their locales. Dublin was, even at the turn of the century, a city that absorbed internal migration from across the island and the reliance on local specificity suggests the plays were staged to appeal primarily to a domestic audience. As will be explored in chapter six, the box office

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[21] Ganthry is the name of the crumbling house that is home to the primary characters in *Vacant Possession*.

returns on the significant majority of these works suggest the target audience responded favourably.

In the mid 1980s, Fintan O'Toole argued that most twentieth-century urban-set drama simply transplanted rural ideology onto an urban landscape and that only in the 1980s was "an urban literature from within the modern city […] beginning to develop [that stood to] reclaim modern Irish history by those who have been written out of it" (116). While O'Toole is not speaking solely of dramatic literature, his assertion is certainly true of drama at the national theatre: most plays do not contain urban representations. However, more were staged prior to the 1980s (both before and after O'Casey) than historical texts of the national theatre would lead one to believe. In at least two noteworthy cases, it was urban plays that allowed the Abbey to recover from turbulent financial crises: those of W.F. Casey in 1908 (*The Man Who Missed the Tide* and *The Suburban Groove*) and O'Casey's Dublin trilogy, which began in 1923 with *The Shadow of a Gunman*. Considering the infrequency with which urban plays were staged, there is a disproportionate success rate for their productions.

Depictions of urban Ireland and social distinctions within it have changed over time, but not nearly as radically as one might expect considering the significant political and socioeconomic transformations in Ireland during the first half of the twentieth century. What remains constant is an aggressive resistance to the imagined and fantastic, an opposition which changes in an almost direct correlation to political and cultural forces of power. The urban plays seldom whisper for permission to be noticed: their messages are largely self-reflective of the city and hardly ever subtle. As varied as the Abbey's urban repertoire is, this aggressiveness is one shared quality, and one reason they appear so deliberately chosen for inclusion in Abbey productions at very specific points in the nation's history. The majority are too confrontational to

be viewed as apolitical. Still, this leaves the Abbey's motive for staging them open to interpretation. Although the themes of urban productions remain fairly consistent (societal and economic disenfranchisement dominate), the political targets fluctuate over time in their dominant focus between the very local and the more national in scope. But one must consider the intent of both the playwright and the Abbey in challenging various political and economic power bases, and, as the following chapters will explore, the intentions do not always appear to be one and the same.

CHAPTER 2
DIFFERENT C/KATHLEENS: DECONSTRUCTING THE TROPE

Sean felt a surge of hatred for Cathleen Ní Houlihan sweeping over him. He saw now that the one who had the walk of a queen could be a bitch at times.
—*Sean O'Casey,* Innishfallen, Fare Thee Well

On 22 July 1929, several hundred people gathered in Co. Clare to watch President William T. Cosgrave throw the switch that officially opened the first stages of Ireland's national grid. The Shannon hydro-electric scheme had been in planning and debate since shortly after the end of the Civil War, when the new Free State faced significant infrastructural challenges after the border "cut it off from the heavily industrialised areas around Belfast; [leaving] industrial skills and training […] scarce" (Moody and Martin 334). After debate ended in June 1925, the Shannon Scheme created over 2,000 jobs and marked the first significant effort toward the self-sufficiency mandate that was a hallmark of the early Free State government. The scheme proved to be "one of the very few undertakings in the first decade of independence which might be said to represent a fulfilment of earlier separatist ambition" (Brown 17). On the same day that Cosgrave threw the switch on the Shannon Scheme, rehearsals were underway at the Abbey Theatre in Dublin for W.B. Yeats' *Fighting the Waves*. This ballet was an adaptation of *The Only Jealousy of Emer* (1919), a Noh-modelled addition to Yeats' Cuchullain cycle based on the Ulster sagas that gained prominence during the first peak of the cultural nationalist movement in the nineteenth century. While the young nation was taking its first major step toward modernization in the rural West, the national theatre was glancing backward toward ancient myth in the capital city of Dublin.

This contrast between the Free State's emerging modernity and the National Theatre's reliance on the romantic was a fitting conclusion to the decade. During the

1920s, there was more than a doubling of Abbey productions set in urban Ireland, but rural plays remained the most frequently produced additions to its repertoire. This balancing act between the urban and the rural had been underway at the Abbey since it opened. But it is during the 1920s that the cornerstone of the Abbey's rural and cultural nationalist repertoire, *Cathleen Ní Houlihan*, began to be deconstructed by Abbey playwrights on the national stage.

Many of the urban plays that premiered at the Abbey through the years made pointed references to the trope of the play's title. Indeed, Seumas Shields' comment in *The Shadow of a Gunman* that "[her] way's a thorny way" (O'Casey 1998, 6) speaks well to the prickly path that marks Cathleen's transformation from a rural setting to one that is increasingly urbanized. While many of the Abbey's urban-set plays make reference to the nation as female, and specifically to Cathleen Ní Houlihan, there are two that borrow so closely from the structure and plot of the Yeats-Gregory play as to beg consideration as parody of this benchmark in the framing of the rhetoric of nationalism: Sean O'Casey's *Kathleen Listens In: A Political Phantasy in One Act* (1923)[1] and Paul Vincent Carroll's *Coggerers* (1937). The parallels are numerous. All are one-acts; all rely on a spatial tension that is poised between a domestic (or domesticated) interior and a nationally tumultuous exterior; all use music to reinforce the historical references of the times in which they are set (albeit to different ends) in an effort to infuse the political nationalism with cultural nationalism; and all are set against a violent backdrop of Irish history, with the representation of the nation as C/Kathleen a pivotal component. However, the female nation takes on decidedly different characteristics, based not only on the historical

[1] The play was published as ***K****athleen Listens In* and O'Casey uses this spelling when referring to it in his autobiographies and letters, but the Abbey and reviews use the ***C****athleen Listens In* title. This chapter relies on the O'Casey spelling.

backdrop against which she is placed, but also on the degree of urbanization in which she is set.

Fintan O'Toole has argued that the works of Irish urban playwrights who set their plays in the city offer nothing dramatically different from those rural-set works that dominated the repertoire of the Abbey in its early decades. O'Toole states that "the forms and the structures evolved through the myth of the country were so powerful in a political culture dominated by rural values that they took precedence over the development of specifically urban forms" (114). O'Toole's observation of the urban centre being dominated by rural values taps into the "periphery-dominated-centre" discussed in chapter one, and also asserts that no literary or dramatic "urban forms" emerged in the works of Dublin playwrights. While not all of the Abbey playwrights of the period in question who wrote Dublin-set plays were themselves Dubliners, the two featured in this chapter's comparison have *bona fides*: O'Casey was born and bred in the inner city, and Carroll lived in Dublin for several years and acknowledges being influenced by the Abbey productions he saw during that time. Regardless of their connections to Dublin, each wrote plays set in the city that embody the form of parody which, while not "specifically urban," is certainly a form that gained its momentum in urban writing circles and on metropolitan stages.[2] The target of their sting was the rural-set play that, it could be argued, embodied the cultural nationalist movement: *Cathleen Ní Houlihan*. As such, these playwrights and their works possess qualities that emerge as decidedly different from the rural-set plays in a way that transcends setting alone.

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[2] The reference here is to the urban pastoral form that gained momentum in the 18th-century Scriblerian circle and in London theatre (i.e. Gay's "Newgate pastoral" *The Beggar's Opera*). One might argue that *The Beggar's Opera* was simply a reaction to Italian operettas of the time, but, when considered in conjunction with the emergence of urban pastoral poetry of the period, it suggests that a new, accepted form was actually taking root. Further examples can also be found in Paris theatre of the time.

In the simplest terms, parody is a practice that involves the imitation and transformation of another person's words. There are as many definitions for the practice as there are theorists who wrestle with analysis of its form, but the ones of particular interest here are those that address its cultural ramifications from an intertextual position. Toward that end, *Kathleen Listens In* and *Coggerers* are analyzed here as parodies of *Cathleen Ní Houlihan* drawing from Simon Dentith, for clarification of terminology, and Mikhail Bakhtin, for theoretical framework. Dentith defines parody as "any cultural practice which provides a relatively polemical allusive imitation of another cultural production or practice" (9) and names those parodies aimed at a specific precursor text as "specific parody" and those aimed at a whole body of texts or kind of discourse as "general parody." In this discussion, *Cathleen Ní Houlihan* is very much a precursor text (or benchmark work), but it will be argued that the urban plays being contrasted with the precursor text blur the lines between specific and general parody. They achieve this hybrid by following strictly the format of only one specific dramatic work, but by selecting an iconic work that is a hallmark of cultural nationalist drama (*Cathleen Ní Houlihan*), they transcend parody of the text to parody of the movement it represents.

There are two primary directions in which parody can be read: it can be seen as a celebration of a precursor text or form (in essence serving as homage) or it can be seen as oppositional. Parody in the second instance "attacks the official word [and] mocks the pretensions of authoritative discourse" (Dentith 20). It is this second reading of parody that is supported by Bakhtin, who draws the origins of such a reading from a model of religious carnival, which he reads as a revolutionary act of free speech and evidence of religious decline. In reading both *Kathleen Listens In* and *Coggerers* in this light, a parallel can be drawn between religious carnival as evidence

of a decline in dominant church authority, and parody of *Cathleen Ní Houlihan* as evidence of a decline to dominant cultural nationalist authority in the Abbey repertoire. In Bakhtin's theory of parody, specific texts stand in opposition to their targeted work. While he acknowledges that unity exists between the oppositional works, he views this as unity in opposition. He sees parodic discourse as containing

> two 'languages' (both intra-lingual) [that] come together and to a certain extent are crossed with each other: the language being parodied […] and the language that parodies. This second parodying language, against whose background the parody is constructed and perceived, does not — if it is strict parody — enter as such into the parody itself, but is invisibly present in it. (75)

That which is invisible in *Kathleen Listens In* and *Coggerers* is the cultural nationalist movement that was embodied by the Abbey's founding charter.

There are three key elements of "unity in opposition" that require specific address to read the parodic elements of *Kathleen Listens In* and *Coggerers*, all of which have connections to the cultural nationalist movement: the trope of Cathleen Ní Houlihan, the plays' historical backdrops, and the use of political ballads. All three pave the path of the "thorny way" alluded to by Seamus Shields and get to the heart of the different C/Kathleens portrayed in the early decades of the Abbey.

Background: Benchmark Productions of the Trope

The roots of Cathleen Ní Houlihan are found in very early traditional Irish social order, which was "dominated by [the] image of the *puella senilis*, the woman who is literally as old as the hills yet endlessly restored to youth through union with her rightful mate" (MacCana 520). This union served both parties: the old woman regained youthful beauty, and the man gained the promise that his descendents would rule the land. The old woman, as a "goddess of sovereignty" (Ní Bhrolecháin 525), therefore, had significant power. As oral tales converged to written literature, the

trope evolved. Initially, her sexual powers remained in the foreground; but, by the time Yeats and Gregory constructed their adaptation, the trope — while still representative of the land — was more commonly used to represent the idea of a nation. As the nationalist movement gained momentum, this became the dominant conceptual usage. Concurrent with this shift to nation was the elimination, quite naturally, of sovereign reciprocity. The sovereign element was replaced by the promise of immortality for those who sacrificed themselves in order to fulfil the Old Woman's desire to reclaim her nation.

The nation's *literary* gendered representation has taken many names over the years, including "Hibernia, Éire, Erin, Mother Ireland, the Poor Old Woman [or] Shan Van Vocht, Cathleen Ní Houlihan, [and] the Dark Rosaleen" (Innes 2). But perhaps no use of the trope has solidified its *dramatic* endurance as much as the 1902 Yeats-Gregory collaboration *Cathleen Ní Houlihan*, in which she (the national trope) is sometimes called "the Poor Old Woman, [but] there are some that call [her] Cathleen, the daughter of Houlihan" (Yeats 1991, 9). Its first staging, famously starring Maude Gonne, was produced by Willie Fay's Irish National Dramatic Company in 1902 at St. Theresa's Hall on Clarendon Street (Dublin). This initial production converted the mythical Cathleen into a stage-based nationalist symbol and icon. When the Abbey opened in December 1904, *Cathleen Ní Houlihan* was the centrepiece of the opening night triple bill[3] (with Maire Nic Shiubhlaigh, who played Delia in the 1902 production, starring in the title role). Its enduring affiliation with the Abbey is attested to by its having been revived 71 times, numbering 300 performances[4] to date, the overwhelming majority of which were performed prior to 1951 on the original Abbey

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[3] The other plays being Yeats' *On Baile's Strand*, Synge's *In the Shadow of the Glen* and Lady Gregory's *Spreading the News*.

[4] This figure represents Abbey stagings; it is not inclusive of Abbey touring productions.

stage.[5] The Yeats-Gregory Poor Old Woman requires the sacrifice of young men in order to reclaim her "four beautiful green fields" (Yeats 1991, 7) and, consequently, to reclaim herself. The promise alone of a blood sacrifice is enough to transform her into "a young girl [...with] the walk of a queen" (Yeats 1991, 11). This Poor Old Woman, wandering the countryside in search of recruits, is deeply entrenched in a specifically non-urban space that reinforces the national image as a rurally-based female. A comparative reading of *Cathleen Ní Houlihan*, *Kathleen Listens In* and *Coggerers* reveals that when this nationalist trope and icon of cultural nationalism is moved toward the city and, ultimately, placed within it, she is less sacred and, therefore, open to criticism by an audience. The playwrights use the Yeats-Gregory model to expose the wreckage left in Cathleen's wake and to directly challenge the tenets of cultural nationalism espoused by the play and its title trope.

The Place & Time of C/Kathleen

The most noteworthy contrast between the Abbey's rural and urban plays is, by definition, the settings. Comparison of the three works in question finds that both O'Casey and Carroll, while moving Cathleen away from the rural sphere, do retain the Yeats-Gregory construct in two significant ways: by linking her presence with a historical battle, and by juxtaposing her presence with a domestic (*Kathleen Listens In*) or domesticated (*Coggerers*) interior. However, while the benchmark work makes Cathleen a noble contributor to a historic battle (by inspiring men to fight) and an intrusive — but necessary — presence in the domestic sphere, the later works question her intentions and the gullibility of those who enter battle on her behalf, while incorporating her into domesticated spaces and deconstructing the ideology of

[5] At the original Abbey, *Cathleen Ní Houlihan* was staged 64 times, totalling 230 performances.

cultural nationalism. In doing so, O'Casey and Carroll make the first step toward deconstructing the trope. They place her among the masses (population shifts had already skewed east by the turn of the century), amid battles that were witnessed in their lifetimes, and, perhaps most notably, they demonstrate the aftermath of her presence: these qualities remove all traces of the romanticism and call-to-action entrenched in *Cathleen Ní Houlihan*.

With its setting of a cottage in Killala, Co. Mayo in the year 1798, *Cathleen Ní Houlihan* is clearly rural, and it uses the time or place in which it is set to provide a clear context to the action, leaving little ambiguity regarding the protagonist's connection to the nation. The setting of this play embeds itself amidst the memory of Wolfe Tone and the failed Rebellion by the United Irishmen. Killala was the landing point for the approximately 1,000 French forces that arrived in August 1798 to assist the United Irishmen in their liberation effort, and it is the arrival of these forces that is alluded to in the opening of the play when Peter and Patrick Gillane wonder about the noise they hear in the distance. This effort at rebellion, of course, would lead to surrender at Ballinamuck in September and, ultimately, to the suicide of Tone in November. It is toward the fighting, and away from the domestic cottage and impending marriage, that Michael Gillane is lured by the Poor Old Woman.

O'Casey's *Kathleen Listens In* premiered the first week of October 1923, and the author specifically set the action in the present, establishing the play as taking place in the wake of the Civil War. This war could be said to be an act of deconstruction of the cultural nationalist movement, whose unity peaked during the post-Rising period. The War was the result (in its most simplistic description) of Sinn Féin members being split between support of and opposition to the Anglo-Irish Treaty signed on 6 December 1921. It concluded in May with the defeat of the opponents of

the Treaty, but had lasted for twelve long months and greatly divided the citizens of Dublin, where some of the War's fiercest fighting took place. While the citizens of Dublin city were breathing a collective sigh of relief that the War was over, and enjoying a degree of pragmatic optimism that such a moment would naturally elicit, there were factions clamouring for attention and competing for representation. Unlike the protagonist of *Cathleen Ní Houlihan*, who is a nomadic outsider to a domestic interior, O'Casey's Kathleen O'Houlihan is safely protected inside and doted upon by her parents. With the fighting over and recruits no longer needed, she excludes the citizens from a safe hearth and is perfectly content to keep them outdoors to fend for themselves. If one accepts the O'Houlihan home as the Free State House, then there are dual metaphors at play: the O'Houlihan house maps against the national boundaries, and Kathleen herself is the national image ensconced within fixed perimeters imposed upon her by the various fighting factions.

Unlike the time period, the location of the action is slightly ambiguous. O'Casey sets the play in the garden beside the damaged house of the O'Houlihan family (the surname, along with the play's title, being the first overt parallels to *Cathleen Ní Houlihan*). Although the setting is no more specific than that, Bray is referred to by one of the characters as being nearby, suggesting that our Kathleen has moved further toward the urbanized east, if not yet directly within the confines of the city of Dublin. This step toward the city, and toward modernity, is reinforced within the play by Kathleen's preoccupation with the broadcasts from London to which she "listens in." The ancient tales of her namesake have given way to jazz music and stories from the English capital.

Like O'Casey, Paul Vincent Carroll borrows freely from the Yeats-Gregory play and modifies the trope in *Coggerers*. Carroll's central character is an urbanized

Poor Old Woman more aligned with Bridget Gillane, mother of the self-sacrificing Michael, rather than with the woman who seduced him to her cause. As a female representing both national mother image and birth mother, she is a hybrid of *Cathleen Ní Houlihan*'s two primary female characters: the Poor Old Woman and Bridget Gillane. There is no room in an urban uprising for the notion of sacrifice to be romanticized by this Old Woman. Like Bridget Gillane, the protagonist of *Coggerers* shares the same name (with a variation on the spelling) and has a young adult son. Brigid Galgoogley (note the initials) is an old charwoman who works at a Dublin city library near St. Stephen's Green and who dotes on the statues of John Mitchel, Lord Edward Fitzgerald, Wolfe Tone, Robert Emmet and Charles Stewart Parnell that adorn the library's entrance hall. Her care and attention to the fallen patriots, interspersed with her stories of her son, Oweneen, make her a mother figure. That care and her maintenance of the library establish the library as a domesticated space.

The action occurs on the morning of Monday, 24 April 1916, the first day of the Easter Rising. On that morning, various factions of the rebel forces took hold of buildings throughout the city of Dublin: the General Post Office, the Four Courts, Jacob's Factory, the South Dublin Union, Boland Mills, and, on St. Stephen's Green, the College of Surgeons. The Easter Rising is the most significant Irish rebellion of the twentieth century and, arguably, the most romanticized political event in the nation's history. Its overlap with the cultural nationalist movement is significant both in terms of its timing (it occurs after the emergence of the movement, which became most clearly established in the 1880s) and in regard to its participants (most notably the author, Gaelic Leaguer and educator Pádraig Pearse). Carroll's choice of this event as historical backdrop to the action, in which the library statues of fallen patriots serve as "chorus for the big drama outside and for its microcosm inside, the

death of the charwoman's son" (Hogan 1967, 58), eliminates any ethereal memory of *Cathleen Ní Houlihan*. Part of the success of the original play rested with its reliance on a historic failed battle from the significant past as backdrop: the mythological Poor Old Woman can weave her spell more effectively on an audience when there is nothing tangible to disrupt collective memory. One need not rely on the imagination of an audience that could, at the time of *Coggerers*' premiere, still point to remnants of urban warfare.

By moving the trope eastward, O'Casey and Carroll reflect the nation's population shift and the city of Dublin's centrality to the nation. They place her among the most densely populated region and within earshot of the seats of government. In doing so, they strip her of the rural fantasy that was very much a core of the cultural nationalist movement and confront Dublin's construct as a "periphery-dominated-centre" (Kiberd 484).

Singing the Nation

O'Casey and Carroll use songs to deconstruct further the Yeats-Gregory play and the trope. While the original work has songs sung by the Poor Old Woman to support her noble intent and cause, O'Casey uses song to foreground his criticism of the political parties in the new Free State. The futility of following an ideal nation is personified by a now-bourgeois trope. Carroll uses song to celebrate the grittiness of Dublin and its citizens, and to emphasise the harsh reality of the Easter Rising, rather than to romanticize the battle and its fallen men. What both of the later plays share in their mimicry of the prominent use of song in *Cathleen Ní Houlihan* is further parody of that earlier work.

The songs in *Cathleen Ní Houlihan* are sung only by the Poor Old Woman and rely heavily on two recurring "themes of rebel balladry: the cult of the dead hero and the glorification of martyrdom" (Zimmerman 69). When she is inside the cottage, she sings of a man who died in her name, drawing the interest of Michael. This first song marks the beginning of her seduction of the young man, and from it emerges her stories of men from Ireland's historical past. Michael's mother, Brigid, observes the interaction and does her best to break the Old Woman's spell by suggesting she be given some food and "a few pence or a shilling" (Yeats 1991, 8) and sent on her way. But Michael continues to engage the Old Woman and ultimately offers to go with her to serve her cause. As she moves away from the hearth, with the seduction achieved, her songs change from tales of others to celebrations of herself, which begin as she stands in the doorway luring Michael outward. Finally, outside of the cottage and moving toward the fighting, the songs shift to those that promise immortality for those who follow her cause. The Old Woman is, at this point, giving Michael no way out of his commitment to her: she is singing orders. Without exception, music in this play is used to facilitate the Poor Old Woman's seduction and to establish a connection between her power as a national metaphor and justification for the actions of young men who sacrifice themselves in her name.

In contrast to Cathleen Ni Houlihan, Kathleen is no longer wandering the countryside, but resident in a family home (one that appears to be urban). Rather than seeking out men to support her cause, she remains stationary, refusing to admit men who approach her about their conflicting agendas. The songs of *Kathleen Listens In* belong to the men that Kathleen refuses to see, as they plead for her attention and try to draw her outside to them. Unlike the Yeats-Gregory Cathleen, O'Casey's Kathleen is not a pursuer. The nation is now established as the Irish Free State and no longer

seeks the favours of men. Rather, this Kathleen is "a modern young woman" (1963, 274) who is spending the day inside the family home practicing fine manners and "listening in" to jazz broadcasts from England "so as to be [...] lady-like when [...making her] deboo into the League o'Nations" (1963, 282).[6]

Those wooing her are identified by their special interests and include: the Free Stater; the Republican; the Business Man, who could be said to be representing urban interests; the Farmer, representing rural interests; and the Man with a Big Drum, representing the Orange Order. O'Casey's use of the definite article in naming the characters is noteworthy for its emphasis on specificity, which reinforces the characters as archetypes rather than stereotypes. He would most famously employ the same technique three years later in his final instalment of the Dublin trilogy, *The Plough and the Stars* (1926), with the naming of The Figure in the Window. With a reliance on archetype, O'Casey is tapping into the Jungian "racial memory" and "collective unconscious" that was used to great effect in *Cathleen Ní Houlihan*; but by applying it to elements that emerged from the cultural nationalist movement (most notably the Man in the Kilts/Gaelic Leaguer), he is using it as an additional layer of parody.

Archetypes in literature take many forms, and include recurrent character types used to "stir profound emotions in the reader [and in the case of drama, the viewer] because they awaken images stored in the collective unconscious and thereby produce feelings or emotions over which the reader [or audience member] initially has little control" (Bressler 155). O'Casey is drawing on the historical past and evoking the historical resonance of both the mythological trope and her characterization in *Cathleen Ní Houlihan*. However, where the original work used

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[6] The Irish Free State became a member of the League of Nations on 10 September 1923.

archetype to inspire citizens to follow, O'Casey uses it to draw attention to nameless faces that reinvented her for nineteenth- and twentieth-century consumption only to be dismissed by Kathleen. O'Casey also exposes the cultural nationalist movement's predisposition toward inventing modernized ancient authenticities. The only two male pursuers who are worthy of names in the cast list are Joey and Johnny, identified as members of the Nationalist Party,[7] but even they are reduced to 1st Man and 2nd Man within the text.

Singing is plentiful throughout the play and encompasses a broad range of traditional Irish ballads, including: *Wrap the Green Flag Round Me, Boys*, *A Soldier's Song*, *The Harp that Once Through Tara's Halls*, *Kathleen Mavourneen*, and *There's a Dear Little Colleen (The Dear Little Shamrock)*. However, O'Casey makes several of the songs uniquely his own, changing key lyrics to emphasize his parodic point. For example, to draw attention to the imposed idleness of Joey and Johnny, their chorus of *Wrap the Green Flag Round Me, Boys* changes from the original as follows:

Original Lyric	**O'Casey Version**
Wrap the green flag round me, boys, to die were far more sweet. With Ireland's noble emblem, boys, to be my winding sheet.	Wrap the green flag round me, Joe, to die were far more sweet. Than to be sacked out of me job, and sent to walk the street.

This raises a question that continues today: what becomes of republican fighters when they put down their guns? This bit of song from Joey and Johnny suggests that fighting in battle would be preferred to idleness, and that the idleness has been imposed on them by the establishment of the Irish Free State. The song reinforces their abandonment by Kathleen, now that their service is over, and suggests they have been "sacked" by her.

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[7] Since 1st Man states, "the pair of us went to school with Kathleen; we learned our first lesson together in Easter Week" (281), O'Casey's use of the term Nationalist Party appears to be his term for the unified forces (Citizens Army and Volunteers) that fought during the Easter Rising.

But perhaps the sharpest cut is in O'Casey's selection of song for the Gaelic Leaguer (the Man in the Kilts). With numerous Irish songs of glory and valour at his disposal, the playwright nonetheless elects to have this character sing the children's song *Ce Chuirfidh Tu Liom?* (or as the playwright phonetically spells it, *Key Kirheh Thoo Lyume*). Loosely translated, its title is *Who Will You Send with Me to Herd the Cows?* and its origin was as a traditional song sung by girls spinning at the wheel. Each girl would sing a verse, asking another the question and the respondent would reply with the name of a favourite boy, and so on. This choice of song suggests childish stubbornness on the part of the Irish language movement and highlights how songs in this play, in contrast to those in *Cathleen Ní Houlihan*, are used to ridicule elements of the cultural nationalist movement rather than to celebrate them. When the curtain falls amidst the men invading the house to reach Kathleen, the songs become an overture that reminds the audience of their ongoing internal bickering. Any potential for noble narrative is lost in the cacophony.

The use of songs suggests that O'Casey reinforced his exposure of divided national interests by deliberately trying to divide the audience, a somewhat inverted metadramatic element that further enhanced O'Casey's parodic efforts. Gabriel Fallon, who played the Man in the Kilts in the original production, recalls the opening night:

> Throughout the performance of *Kathleen* there was much sectional laughter. Hardly more than ten percent of the audience laughed together. The effect on the stage was slightly unnerving. In a flash it became clear what was happening. You laughed when my party fell under O'Casey's lash; I laughed when your party caught it. Both of us tried to laugh when the other fellow's party was made to squirm. And then slowly but surely all the laughing died away. (1965, 14)

The laughing that died away as the play progressed on opening night was only one part of the stunned audience's reaction. O'Casey claimed to be the only playwright to

have an Abbey opening that met with absolutely no applause: "after curtain-fall, every mother's son and daughter in the theatre kept a dead silence, got up from their seats, and silently filed out of the theatre without a single had clap or a word" (O'Casey 1989, 380). While the sharp dialogue most certainly contributed to this sectarianism, there can be no doubt that a domestic audience would have been intimately familiar with the powerful tradition of Irish political ballads and their ability to sing up one party as a way of singing down another.

In *Coggerers*, the singing belongs primarily to Brigid. In transporting qualities of the trope to an urban environment, Carroll's Dublin engulfs her, and she becomes as much the spirit of the city as the spirit of the nation. Although the statue of Wolf Tone sings a few lines of *My Dark Rosaleen* (echoing another version of the female trope), he does so only to encourage Brigid to sing about the city of Dublin. As much as Tone's invocation of the Dark Rosaleen frames Brigid as a worthy national trope in her own right, she primarily personifies the birth mothers of the nation's fighting men and serves as critic of the mythical, rural-based, Cathleen Ní Houlihan. As a hybrid of Cathleen and Bridget Gillane, her main function is as conscience of the capital city, and this is reinforced in her song. Early in the play, she is asked how the city looked to her on her walk to work that morning, and she replies, "Sure, jist as it always looks — like a woman paradin' in all her finery, but a dirty house at home. That's Dublin" (Carroll 6). This observation is further emphasized when she sings of the city. In her song, the city of Dublin is a mother itself, albeit not the sort likely to have ever been celebrated in traditional ballads embraced by nationalists.

> Oh, Dublin is a frowsy dame, 'Tis her's the brazen Tartar,
> Her petticoats are Saxon lace, her perfume's Guinness's porter.
> To see her kneelin' at the Mass, you'd swear she was a martyr,
> 'Til Parnell in O'Connell Street[8] stares cock-eyed down at her garter.

[8] The statue of Charles Stewart Parnell (unveiled 1911) is located on the north end of O'Connell Street.

She'll sit on Dan O'Connell's[9] steps, And froth at Anna Liffey,
She'll coort a bit with Dick Muldoon, and cod little Father Fiffey.
Oh, Jerry Mooney is her boy, and Father Matt's[10] her other,
And damn the knowing either knows such caperin' in a mother.
She'll take a sup with Jer O'Brien, and say an Av'[11] with Father Fiffey,
Fill up with spleen in College Green, and empty all into the Liffey.
(Carroll 10-11)

All efforts to locate the origins of this song have been unsuccessful: it is not known if it is an original by Carroll, a variation on a standard, or an old Dublin ballad. However, Carroll (unlike O'Casey) was not prone to using song in his plays and it is unlikely that he wrote this.[12] Regardless of its origins, this song inverts the nobility of the songs of *Cathleen Ní Houlihan* and, in doing so, satirizes the trope and begins a more forceful parody of the Yeats-Gregory play.

Different C/Kathleens

The previous sections of this chapter outline key points in the parodic elements of the two plays and are critical to establishing the parallels between them and the original work. Those points addressed are primarily support for the argument that, like many of the urban-set plays at the Abbey, both *Kathleen Listens In* and *Coggerers* belie O'Toole's assertion that urban-set plays reflect the rural sensibility entrenched in the Dublin-dictated notion that rural Ireland was real Ireland. To get to the core of this argument, one must investigate the character of Cathleen Ní Houlihan, examine the parody of the character that mirrors the parody of the trope, and thereby reveal the parody of the cultural nationalist movement itself.

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[9] The pedestal steps at the statue of Daniel O'Connell (unveiled 1882), located on the south end of O'Connell Street.

[10] Father Theobald Mathew (1790-1856) was founder of the Catholic temperance organization, Pioneer Total Abstinence Association.

[11] Ave Maria.

[12] A survey of Dublin street ballads reveals this song to be similar in meter and subject to *Dublin Jack of All Trades*, which is included in the Joyce Collection of 1873 (a definitive text on Irish ballads), so it was composed in the nineteenth century or earlier. Like *Dublin Jack of All Trades*, Brigid's song of Dublin takes in the streets of the inner city.

Kathleen Listens In finds Kathleen ensconced in "the Free State house" (Hogan 1961, 247) and curious enough about the men who have come calling for her to stick her head out of the window. But on hearing their pleas for her attention and criticism of her attention to England, she tells them to go away and stop annoying her before quickly retreating back inside the house. Their relentless outbursts ultimately disrupt her day to the point where she is overcome by the attention and, feeling faint, takes to her bed with the attending doctor proclaiming silence her only chance for recovery. The doctor informs all that "a whisper may prove fatal — she'll need perfect peace and quietness for the rest of her National life" (O'Casey 1963, 295). This warning, perhaps predictable considering the play's comedic and almost slap-stick elements, falls on deaf ears. The curtain falls with the special interests continuing to clamour for her attention, while various snippets of theme songs representing the quarrelling political parties serenade the audience. The play that opened with a curious Kathleen concludes with her unable to bear any more intrusions on the part of her citizenry. She is exhausted by their insistence that she include them and by their intrusions into her attempts to hear the outside world via her radio. Meanwhile, the men continue to fight. Their songs carry beyond the curtain to indicate the fighting will continue both among the characters and among the audience members whom they represent.

Kathleen Listens In is a satire in its own right, but it is also a parody of *Cathleen Ní Houlihan*. The Juvenalian element is expressed best by O'Casey himself, who wrote in 1961, "it was written specifically to show what fools these mortals were in the quarrelling factions soaking Ireland in anxiety and irritation after the Civil War" (O'Casey 1992, 191). This certainly documents his satirical target as the country's various political factions, but in borrowing the construction of *Cathleen Ní*

Houlihan and only slightly modifying its title, he is employing parody as well. As such, it reveals as a second target the play *Cathleen Ní Houlihan* itself. One might read the parodic target as Yeats (who was the recognized author of the work during O'Casey's lifetime[13] and no stranger to having his work parodied by other writers[14]), but *Kathleen Listens In* was written and staged long before the author's departure from the Abbey over the theatre's rejection of *The Silver Tassie*. Therefore, it is a more reasonable conclusion that O'Casey was responding to the cultural messaging of *Cathleen Ní Houlihan*, rather than the author.[15] much as Ezra Pound and other poets targeted the Yeats' poetic aesthetic of "lyric beauty, plangent melancholy, and fantasies about rural life" (Dentith 36), rather than the author.

In parodying *Cathleen Ní Houlihan*, O'Casey targets both the political and cultural branches of the nationalist movement. As has been laboriously documented, *Cathleen Ní Houlihan* was taken in its day as a call to action by many republicans. However, while the original text frames the rhetoric of nationalism by placing Cathleen in a historic past rebellion that, although unsuccessful, had been widely co-opted by republican parties by the time of the play's premiere,[16] O'Casey places the trope in his contemporary, post-Civil War environs of Dublin. At the time *Kathleen Listens In* premiered at the Abbey, a truce had been agreed between the armed parties, but the details had yet to be finalized and, as is often the case, the devil was in the details. Like Yeats-Gregory, O'Casey relies on historical framing of his female

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[13] However, in the *Inishfallen, Fare Thee Well* installment of his Autobiographies, he does express knowledge of Gregory's contribution to the play, noting Gregory was "foster-mother to some plays of Yeats, weaving in dialogue for *Cathleen Ni Houlihan*" (122).

[14] One noteworthy example is, as Dentith notes, Ezra Pound's "The Lake Isle" (1917) as a parody of Yeats' "The Lake Isle of Innisfree" (1893).

[15] Similarly, Ezra Pound and other poets were known to target the Yeats' poetic aesthetic of "lyric beauty, plangent melancholy, and fantasies about rural life" (Dentith 36), rather than the poet.

[16] The co-opted figurehead is Wolfe Tone. See the chapter "The Cult of Tone" in Elliott for a concise summary of wide-spread embracement of Tone by republican factions, traceable, primarily, to Davis and the Young Irelanders movement of the 1840s.

protagonist to characterize the nation of Ireland; and the details of his characterization of Kathleen present a self-absorbed nation that is experiencing the growing pains of rebellious adolescence.

Kathleen's father, Miceawl, is the nation builder. The tools he uses to make improvements on the O'Houlihan house are metaphors for the infrastructural improvements he discusses as his primary concern when the men interrupt his work. When they intrude upon his home, he tells them he's "busy now with th' plans for the electhrification of the Shannon an' Suck, th' Lee an' th' Liffey, th' Bann an' th' Boyne an' th' Tolka" (1963, 279). The rivers he lists in this passage cross the entire island of Ireland and run through several cities, including Cork, Dublin, Belfast, and Limerick. However, his borderless Ireland stands in stark contrast to the reality of the times and the more practical side of the nation-building he is undertaking. His reference to electrification via hydro-power speaks to the very real infrastructural challenges facing the new Free State government after the Civil War and the debates that ensued regarding the location of the power station. Prior to the Shannon Electricity Bill becoming law in June 1925, numerous proposals were made (as early as 1922) regarding which river should be first utilized and in which city the first power station of the national grid should be located.

Miceawl is looking forward, away from the icons of Emmet and Tone that once held his interest. The men he hired to adorn his walls with images of those figures, self-described as the citizens who performed "th' hardest [work] an' [were] th' worst fed" (1963, 280) are, like the other men gathering at the O'Houlihan home, simply in the way of his progress. It is Miceawl's indifference to them that causes the men to pursue Kathleen; but her father attempts to warn them off, telling them they cannot see her because "it's young men she's lookin' for, not oul' fossils like [them]"

(1963, 281). Like her namesake, this Kathleen wants her men young; but in contrast to Cathleen, she is not embodying the past, but is very much in the present and looking forward. In the words of one of the play's theme songs, she is forsaking the life of Tone and the poetry of Davis to "read th' hymnbook o' Churchill"[17] (1963, 282), a reference to England that is reinforced by the English broadcasts to which she is listening at home. The doubling of the English focus adds irony to the play's title: it is not the new nation of Ireland Kathleen is listening to, but rather its previous oppressor. She is looking outward toward them in preparation for her debut, rather than looking for inspiration at home.

O'Casey's use of Kathleen is two-fold: to satirize the Civil War's primary opposing factions and the special interest groups within them, and to deconstruct the trope itself. His satirization of "the silliness and danger of the then divided Ireland — Free State [vs.] Republican, Labour [vs. private enterprise], Northern Catholic [...vs.] Northern Protestant" (O'Casey 1989, 194) marks his intent as one of reform. By transforming them from orators in hallowed halls or government buildings to shouting bullies in the garden of a house in disrepair, O'Casey strips them of any dignified pretence. In doing so, he creates street fighters interested solely in their own positions rather than in reform for the common good of the nation as a whole. They all claim to love Kathleen and to be acting in her best interests, but their aggressive courtship is for their own self-preservation at her expense. Their posturing and inability to compromise is making the image of Ireland (Kathleen) they claim to serve physically ill. In essence, they are destroying the national image they foolishly elevated to iconic status and, as a result, maintaining a nation of division.

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[17] From the song *Kathleen Mavourneen*.

The deconstruction of the icon Cathleen Ní Houlihan is as swift as the men's pursuit of O'Casey's young protagonist, and it is through Kathleen that the deconstruction of the trope and the cultural nationalist movement occurs. Before considering the deconstruction of Cathleen (and *Cathleen Ní Houlihan*), one must recognize that the trope Cathleen Ní Houlihan is a metaphor. As such, it is mapping against something that contains abstractions — in this case, a nation. While one can point to a plethora of examples of what constitutes a nation, and certainly point to borders to identify its perimeters, the nation remains conceptual to a large degree; thus metaphor serves to give shape and voice to its abstractions. In this case, CATHLEEN NÍ HOULIHAN IS THE IRISH NATION breaks down to WOMAN IS IRELAND and, still further, to WOMAN IS NATION. As Innes points out, this metaphor marks woman as "the site of contestation" (Innes 3) in Ireland's precolonial history; however, this is maintained post-Independence in *Kathleen Listens In* (and invoked in Carroll's play which although written in 1937, is set before independence). With this in mind, how does deconstruction work with metaphor; specifically, the metaphor of Cathleen Ní Houlihan as deconstructed in *Kathleen Listens In*?

As Nicolas Royle explores in "What is Deconstruction?,"[18] efforts to define the term *deconstruction* can be quite slippery. However, there does seem to be a consensus that as the term applies to the critical analysis of a literary text, its aim is to expose unquestioned assumptions. The unquestioned assumption of *Cathleen Ní Houlihan* is, primarily, that the Poor Old Woman is noble in her quest for young blood and, secondarily, that the young men who heed her call are equally so. It is these assumptions of nobility that O'Casey challenges most directly.

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[18] *Deconstructions* (New York and London: Palgrave, 2000), pp. 1-13.

O'Casey's Kathleen is not transformed into a woman "with the walk of a queen," but one could certainly make the case that she is a bit precious. While her mother and father work tirelessly fixing and cleaning their house, the most effort Kathleen exerts is rearranging the ornaments on the mantle over the fireplace. Her father doesn't know "what's [come] over her — she won't do a [hand's] turn" (1963, 288) since she started listening to English broadcasts. She is also deaf to all attempts by those eager for her attention, if they do not have the degree of sophistication she hears from the wireless. When her mother implores her to give the men a bit of time, she makes it clear that she has heard enough from them all to last a lifetime: "Oh, I've heard this too often, ma; I'm getting' sick of it…it's all codology!" (1963, 292). If there is any transformation to speak of, it is that the memory of a noble, female national spirit/image has been transformed into the reality of a self-absorbed, female national spirit/image that (ironically) cannot listen in to its own people, but can only look afar for inspiration.

The male citizenry seeking attention from Kathleen are not, like Michael Gillane, selfless young men willing to sacrifice themselves in order to help her recapture her home. Rather, they are the young and the old men who want recognition and gratitude for their labours on her behalf. Once again, nobility is absent. Kathleen's inability to receive them results in their rushing the house and undoing the progress that Miceawl and his wife had made on restoring it. In O'Casey's vision, the Civil War continues beyond the control of official truces; both the builder and the image of the nation are housed together, but the citizenry is intent on preventing them from repairing windows shattered by their outrage. At the street level, no armistice exists.

While O'Casey used the construct of *Cathleen Ní Houlihan* to provide critical commentary of both political and cultural nationalism, Carroll used it to re-examine what is perhaps the most romanticized and pivotal moment in the establishment of the nation of Ireland in the twentieth century: the Easter Rising of 1916. In doing so, he questions the legacy of several icons of both the political and cultural nationalist movements while, like O'Casey, deconstructing the title trope of *Cathleen Ní Houlihan*.

Coggerers, Carroll's third play for the National Theatre,[19] premiered on 22 November 1937 and must have been quite a shock to fans of his earlier works. Although his previous Abbey plays — *Things That Are Caesar's* and *Shadow and Substance* — were somewhat controversial and gave rise to criticism for their anti-clerical commentary, *Coggerers* broached the sacred nationalist event of the Easter Rising. To bring this to the stage was a rather radical act even in a year that was more than a decade after Independence and the much-analyzed riots following O'Casey's *The Plough and the Stars*, which, like *Coggerers*, presented the Rising in a less than romantic light. In addition to interrogating the Rising, *Coggerers* satirizes the icons of Charles Stewart Parnell, Wolfe Tone, Robert Emmet, John Mitchel, Lord Edward Fitzgerald, and (in absentia) Daniel O'Connell, in one fell swoop.

The primary targets of Carroll's satire are the men who contributed to Ireland's independence and who gained iconic status more in death than in their lifetimes. Carroll uses them — and the memory of them — to shine a critical eye on both the icons and the Dublin citizens who keep their memories alive without considering the consequences of such reverence. Rather than being portrayed as active, Parnell, Tone, Emmet, Mitchel and Fitzgerald are presented in the form of

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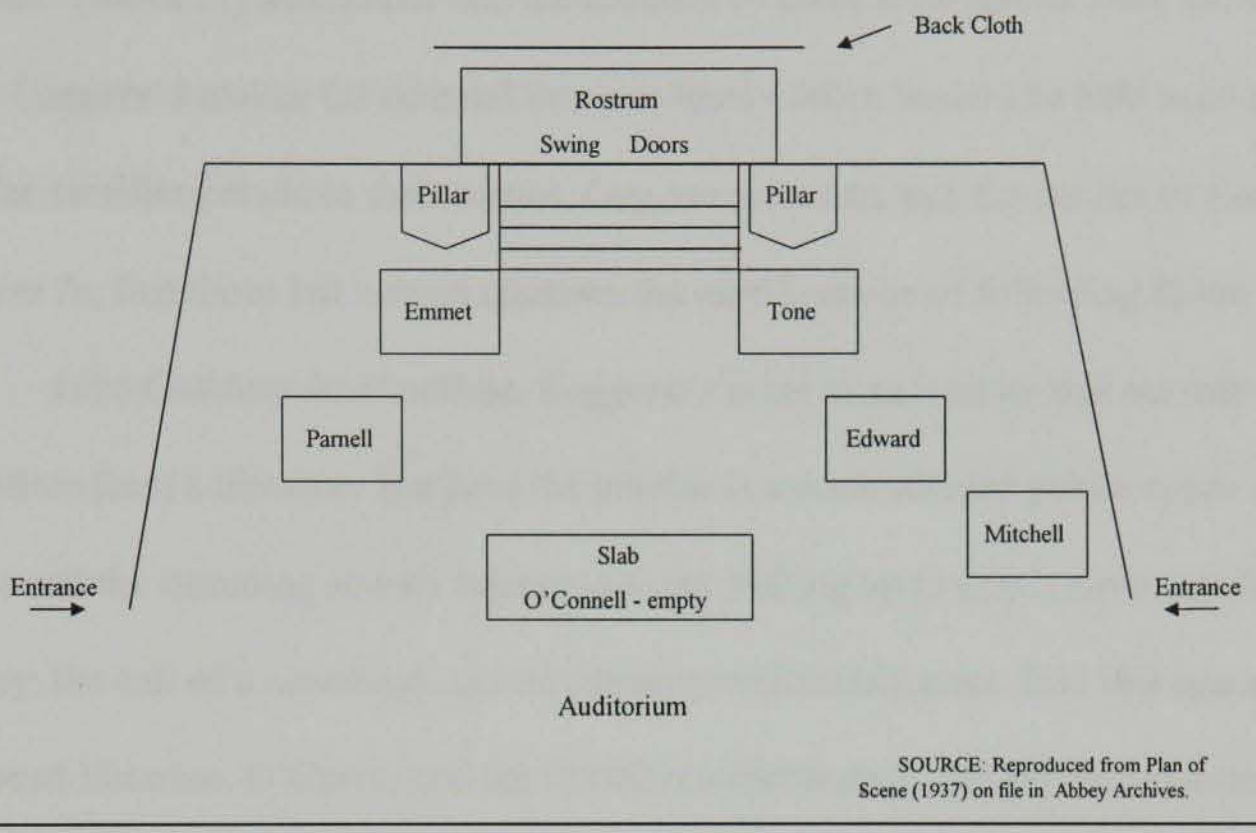
[19] His previous works were: *The Watched Pot* (Peacock, 1930), *Things That Are Caesar's* (Abbey, 1932), and *Shadow and Substance* (Abbey, January 1937).

statues. Gracing the hall of a Dublin Library, they are situated on the stage (see Figure 1) in rank of age, with those that died youngest the farthest removed from the audience. The slab reserved for the senior member of the group, Daniel O'Connell, is ultimately used to hold the young man who dies during the Rising.

Fig. 1: Coggerers Set



SOURCE: Reproduced from Plan of Scene (1937) on file in Abbey Archives.

While the figures are elevated on pedestals and set in places of prominence in a public building, their marble forms reinforce that they are of the past and it is more the *idea* of these men and their deeds that permeate the memory of the nation and of Dublin as the Rising begins. O'Connell's empty pedestal (slab), in the stage's most dominant location foregrounds the absence of leaders who favour progress by legislative, rather than violent, means.

Like *Cathleen Ní Houlihan*, this one-act reveals a son joining the nation's fight for independence and employs the rhetoric of nationalism. However, the 1916 urban setting contributes a heightened cynicism toward the harsh realities of warfare. This is in stark contrast to *Cathleen Ní Houlihan*, which leaves the audience unaware of whether Michael has reached the battle. This is one of the very few in the Abbey

repertoire —apart from *The Plough and the Stars* and *Juno and the Paycock* — to portray a direct collision between the periphery and the centre on the Abbey stage. Like those two O'Casey plays, *Coggerers* shines a light on the rhetoric of cultural nationalism within the harsh realities of the impact of urban warfare on a Dublin family. If *Cathleen Ní Houlihan* "marks the demand for commitment by the sons of Ireland" (Innes 27) and insists that the mothers of those sons honour their sacrifice, then *Coggerers* makes the demand that previously fallen leaders be held accountable for the sacrifices made in their names. *Coggerers* insists, like the suitors of *Kathleen Listens In*, that those left behind question the ramifications of following fallen leaders.

Like *Cathleen Ní Houlihan*, *Coggerers* is set in an interior that outside noises penetrate from a distance. But here the interior is a domesticated public space housing icons and the intruding sounds belong to a city waking up (a ship's siren call from the Liffey, the call of a newsboy), not its citizenry welcoming arms. Into this space enters the head librarian, O'Curry, and the librarian's charwoman, Brigid, representing the educated and poor working classes (respectively) of Dublin. Each reveres the icons in their own way: O'Curry with solemnity, Brigid with motherly concern and a bit of cheek. The library is closed to the public for the Easter holiday weekend, but both are present on this morning; O'Curry to change into the uniform of the Volunteer Army before joining the efforts on St. Stephen's Green, and Brigid to tend to the cleaning. Both talk to the statues, but the statues hold the humans in very different levels of esteem. They view the educated O'Curry with contempt: Mitchel refers to him as "a puzzling old fool" (Carroll 3) and Tone calls him a "stupid old classical bookworm" (4). Even when he removes his coat, revealing a Volunteer uniform beneath before slipping out the door unseen by Brigid, their anticipation of the events about to unfold invigorates them, but the gentleman going out to fight earns no respect. Unlike

O'Curry, Brigid is held in esteem by the statues, all of whom are grateful for her care and attention to their upkeep.

The play opens with O'Curry going off to fight (unknown to Brigid) and Brigid dusting Parnell's face with reverence, but this opening is not without its light moments. O'Connor is absent because he is out for repairs to replace two of his toes, one "wee finger" and the curls from one side of his head broken off by American tourists, who Tone identifies as "the new Barbarians" (2); and the smell Edward and Emmet think is gunpowder is identified by Parnell as being the stench of the River Liffey. O'Curry (wearing a Volunteers uniform beneath his overcoat) is on his way to join the Rising when he encounters the cleaning woman. O'Curry asks her how Dublin looked to her on her way in that morning, and she provides the play's primary description of the city: "Sure jist as it always looks — like a woman paradin' in all her finery, but a dirty house at home" (6). Once O'Curry leaves, after telling Brigid to go home for the day, the statues come back to life. They believe "the moment" has finally arrived and fall silent in the presence of the cleaning woman, who is clearly the mother figure of the Nation-to-be, and a hybrid of Bridget Gillane and the Poor Old Woman of *Cathleen Ní Houlihan*. As a hybrid, the death of her son brings a further deconstructive element to the use of the trope. In *Cathleen Ní Houlihan*, the Poor Old Woman stands only to gain by the sacrifice of Michael; in *Coggerers*, the Poor Old Woman will lose her "one little bit of riches that [she] was hiding" (14) from the marble icons.

Emmet tells Brigid that her son is not at home, and she becomes alarmed: "What's wrong with Oweneen? Tell me, or be Jaysus I'll tear yous down to pieces and flitter yous and thramp on yous" (12). Gunfire is heard from outside in the street, and the statues become "a chorus for the big drama outside and for its microcosm

inside, the death of the charwoman's son" (Hogan 1967a, 58). Lord Edward tells her to be brave, and Emmet tells her that Oweneen is behind the barricades in St. Stephen's Green. Parnell, a man known for his verbal obstructionist tactics at Westminster, claims to have "no words. I have cast them all to the winds." As a sudden rapid volley of shots are heard, Parnell continues, "That, that you hear is the words of the new generation, and I am too old to read them" (13). But Brigid neither lets Parnell off the hook for not warning her, nor faces the unfolding events with stoicism. To her, the nation is an old bitch, these marbled icons are ungrateful for her service to them, and, most importantly, her son is not to be sacrificed to meet the unfulfilled goals of these ghosts:

> (*Wringing her hands*) Yous knew this was comin' and yous wouldn't tell me! Yous villains and cut-throats and stinkin' coggerers! I that always had the wee word for yous and the wipe of me duster. And did I not sing for yous the song of the greedy oul bitch[20] that yous all died for. (*volley of shots*) I know what it is that's up with yous! Yous are jealous of Oweneen and the way his strong arms can fling a hundred o' coal on his shoulder – jealous of the pant of his breath, the cry of this blood and the ring of his heart beats. My Oweneen has warm blood that he will give not to yous, nor to that oul' bitch that wanders O'Connell Street (*volley of shots*). My seven curses on yous and my seven curses on the oul' bitch yous died the death for! (13-14)

Carroll devotes the majority of the play to challenging tenets of political and cultural nationalism through the character of Brigid. But, in the end, she acquiesces to the statues' request for her son's body, as though her own fire has gone out with the death of her son. When Emmet tells her that he tips his hat to the spirit of her son for his sacrifice for Ireland, she responds with "pathetic eagerness" (17) and places his body on O'Connell's pedestal. Her action is met with solemnity by the fallen leaders; but once Brigid leaves the building, they return to the empty rhetoric that Brigid accused them of earlier. Although Brigid leaves the stage in sadness and shock, Parnell views

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[20] The ultimate reduction of Cathleen Ní Houlihan.

her as containing "hope in the heart" (17). The play closes with Emmet celebrating the gunfire on the Green as a symphony of freedom, the loss of Brigid's son quickly forgotten.

Although Emmet and the others quickly overlook Oweneen's dead body lying on O'Connell's pedestal, the audience would not have been able to overlook the juxtaposition of the body (in the most prominent place on stage in relation to the position of the audience) against Emmet's bliss at the "spitting of Thompson guns" (17). Carroll's closing image reinforces Brigid's message throughout the play and completes it when she no longer has a voice. The contrast between the closing of this play and that of *Cathleen Ní Houlihan* is striking. In both plays, males receive the closing words and they contain an air of enchantment; but the young Patrick Gillane of *Cathleen Ní Houlihan*, clearly taken by the "young girl [...with] the walk of a queen" (Yeats 1991, 11), has been replaced by Emmet's euphoric reaction to the sound of gunfire on the streets of Dublin. The mythical rural-based trope has been displaced by the reality of urban battle.

Conclusion

What emerges when reading these three plays comparatively is that the Cathleen Ní Houlihan trope undergoes dramatic alterations as she travels eastward, following the migration patterns of Ireland's citizenry and the dominance of Dublin as the centre of the cultural nationalist movement. The closer the trope gets to the environment that elevated her to a stage-based, tangible figure, the more she implodes. It is as though the very weight of her status makes it impossible to carry the notion of her from the countryside to city streets. The rural icon of *Cathleen Ní Houlihan*, staged prior to Ireland's independence, is an outsider viewed with scepticism by the domesticated

Gillane family intent on upwardly mobile conformity; she spends more of her time outside of the cottage or in its doorway than she does within its confines. Nonetheless, it is her physical presence that takes the son away from his family — she with her noble cause and he to noble service. The suburban Kathleen we meet, as the Irish Free State is about to join the League of Nations, is a thoroughly domesticated product of an upwardly mobile family. She is so far removed from the rural that she never actually steps foot outside her house. No longer a Poor Old Woman calling on men for service, she is a daughter of the nation relegated to swooning melodrama as the father/nation-builder takes the dominant role in building the nation beyond the mythical dreams she once represented. Finally, in the Dublin version, Cathleen Ní Houlihan is consigned to fragmentation; she is part of Brigid and Brigid is part of her until Brigid loses her son. Once she is a childless mother, Brigid uses all of her energy to condemn that "oul' bitch that wanders O'Connell Street" (Carroll 14).

Just as Cathleen Ní Houlihan is a metaphor for Ireland, *Cathleen Ní Houlihan* is a metaphor for the cultural nationalist movement as staged by the Abbey Theatre, displacing WOMAN IS NATION with *CATHLEEN NÍ HOULIHAN* IS IRISH CULTURAL NATIONALIST DRAMA. By parodying this work, both O'Casey and Carroll are parodying the movement it represents and, in doing so, drawing attention to its fundamental irony of being an urban creation dictating rural ideals. This questions the movement's predisposition toward "invocation of the past [...] to inspire [the] community to ever higher stages of development [...] with the goal of providing 'authentic' national models of progress" (Hutchinson 1987, 9). The "higher stage of development" implied by *Cathleen Ní Houlihan* is independence from England, via violence and sacrifice of young men, in a noble quest that fortifies the trope. O'Casey and Carroll deconstruct the trope and, through their parody of it, offer

an alternative ending to the work. Their alternative endings are, in essence, the result of attempting to naturalize something that is not natural.

O'Toole might be correct that the urban playwrights of the early decades of the twentieth century fell short of introducing an "urban form" to theatre in Ireland. But an examination of the urban canon of the Abbey reveals that they did, in fact, swim against the tide of rural-dominated productions. They did this by challenging the doctrine upon which the dominant repertoire was based. Much of the rural-based repertoire was, like the medieval literature referenced by Bakhtin, based in "memory, and not knowledge [...and it served] as the source and power for the creative impulse" (15), a description that mirrors the cultural nationalist movement quite well. Both O'Casey and Carroll, like many of the other playwrights who contributed to the Abbey's urban canon, crafted plays that challenged a memory constructed by the cultural nationalist movement. In doing so, they suggest that the mythological has little to offer once it is confronted with the reality of an emerging nation.

CHAPTER 3
STAGING LABOUR

The expression 'Working Classes' shall include mechanics, artizens, labourers, and others working for wages; hawkers, costermongers, persons not working for wages but working at some trade or handicraft without employing others except members of their own family; and persons other than domestic servants, whose income in any case does not exceed an average of 60s. per week; and the families of any such persons who may be residing with them.
—Section 16 of the Housing of the Working Classes (Ireland) Act, 1908

The Irishizing of everything within the four seas of Ireland is our objective.
—James Larkin

On 22 August 1913, workers from the Dublin United Tramways Company approached Irish Transport and General Workers Union (ITGWU) leader James Larkin for assistance in negotiating better terms at their place of employment. Their grievances concerned rates of pay, and the desire for "one day off in every eight instead of one day in every ten; time and a half for Sunday work; and that the weekly payday be a Friday" (Keogh 188). Larkin met with Tramways management on 26 August, but they refused to hear the workers' grievances since they were presented through the ITGWU rather than through the workers directly. That the workers had previously attempted to have these requests met on their own was not deemed relevant. Larkin immediately called for a strike, and it quickly spread to other ITGWU members in companies throughout the city. But Larkin's strategy of syndicalism, a general strike of sympathy by ITGWU members across the city rather than one specific to the Tramways Company, was challenged on 3 September when the Dublin Employers' Federation[1] (DEF) passed the following Agreement:

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[1] The DEF, modelled on the Cork organization that was founded to defeat a sympathy strike in that city in 1909, was an association of 404 Dublin business owners led by Tramways chairman William Martin Murphy. Prior to the lockout, the DEF had succeeded in breaking the ITGWU strike of the Great Southern and Western Railway (of which Murphy was a board member) in 1911.

> We hereby pledge ourselves in future not to employ any persons who continue to be members of the [ITGWU], and any person refusing to carry out our lawful and reasonable instructions, or the instructions of those placed over them, will be instantly dismissed, no matter to what union they belong. (qtd. in Nevin 42)

So began the Dublin lockout. In a city where poverty and unemployment of general labourers were among the highest in Europe during the best of times, approximately 25,000 more (an additional 15% over the first half of 1913) were out of jobs.[2] With none of the strike's objectives realized, those labourers whose employers permitted them to return to work began doing so at the start of 1914. The ITGWU ended strike pay in February, and the DEF officially ended the lockout in March.

In the end, even the British unions, whose members had supported the Dublin workers with significant contributions of cash and food during their winter of unemployment, were alienated by Jim Larkin's aggressive condemnation of their less radical philosophy of organized labour. Working-class Dublin was, as James Connolly wrote in the 9 February 1914 edition of *Forward*, "isolated." Dublin labourers were isolated not only from the rest of Britain's organized labour force, but also from the majority of middle- and upper-class citizens in their home city. However, the lockout created a strong sense of solidarity among workers and, eventually, unification with the predominantly Catholic nationalist community. It is the combination of this communal unity and convergence that can be considered the most significant outcome of the otherwise failed strike.

The convergence was the direct result of the labour movement exposing a lack of cohesion between its followers and the leaders of the political and cultural nationalist movements. This lack of cohesion also contributed to an uneasy

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[2] The Dublin unemployment rate of general labourers was 10% for the first half of 1913. General labourers and their dependents numbered approximately 100,000 or one third of the Dublin population. See J. O'Brien and Yeates for census figure analyses of this period.

relationship between nationalists and labour during the ITGWU's growth. This relationship went from fractured to unified as the lockout progressed. The fractured relationship was largely due to the labour movement's exposure of class conflict. As John Hutchinson notes:

> Urban class-conflict subverted cherished nationalist stereotypes of Ireland as a spiritual rural community opposed to the materialist urban-class society of England, and it exposed the failure of the revival to reach the large working-class population. (1987, 186)

However, the labour movement positioned itself as a part of the cultural nationalist movement. Although the class conflict it exposed was problematic to the nationalist agenda, Larkin and other leaders of the rank and file considered the ITGWU a component of the cultural nationalist project. This view was shared by, among other established cultural nationalists, Standish O'Grady, who had 20 articles published in Larkin's *Irish Worker* between 1911 and 1914. Even *Leader* editor and "Irish Ireland" proponent D.P. Moran and Sinn Féin president Arthur Griffith initially supported the notion of a general union based within Ireland:

> The modernizers, Griffith and Moran, were at first not unsympathetic to the formation of a union run on Irish lines, believing that there was no essential antagonism between capital and labour and that it could work for the regeneration of Irish industry. Moreover, since the bulk of Dublin employers were Protestant unionists and led by William Martin Murphy, whom because of his factionalism they regarded as embodying all that was worst in nationalist Ireland, they were supportive of a just consideration of the workers' claims. (Hutchinson 1987, 186-187)

Both Moran and Griffith would withdraw their support as the lockout progressed, and, as will be explored later in this chapter, they were not alone among leaders of cultural and political nationalism in sending either mixed or evolving messages of support. This mixed reaction reflects the problematic place organized labour held within the movement, a situation further reflected by the labour plays staged at the Abbey.

During the 22 weeks of labour unrest, the labouring classes of Dublin were invisible on the Abbey stage. The only Dublin-set play to premiere at the national theatre during this time was St. John Ervine's *The Critics, or a New Play at the Abbey*. Far from critiquing the upheaval that was surrounding the theatre, *The Critics* was a rather self-serving one-act satirical comedy that premiered during the height of the lockout on 20 November 1913. It achieved two primary aims: for the author to lambaste the newspaper critics who panned his previous Abbey play, *The Magnanimous Lover*, and to critique the theatre-going public for not appreciating or understanding cultural events, including the artistic merits of Abbey productions. It was all about Ervine and, as one can ascertain by the Abbey's staging, it was all about the Abbey. While not reflecting Dublin's labour movement, this dichotomy between *us* and *them* did reflect an escalating social schism that was pronounced in Dublin during the years 1913 and 1914. The strike may have failed in attaining its objectives of rank-and-file expansion and improving working-class life, but the subsequent lockout succeeded in creating a sense of community and an uprising of solidarity among Dublin's labourers. This community, deeply concentrated in the north inner-city neighbourhood of the Abbey Theatre, was eventually represented on the Abbey stage and portrayed with great sympathy. However, the union leaders it rallied around are harshly criticized in the labour plays. The actions of the rank and file are also questioned, specifically regarding the retribution they seek against those who do not support their cause.

As would be the case on other occasions when portraying factions of "Irish Ireland" in an urban setting, the Dublin-set plays challenge the tenets of the cultural nationalist movement. The hostilities of the 22 weeks of labour unrest carry over into the Dublin plays on the subject, and they target the rank and file as much as the

leadership. These plays contain a recurring theme of the families most in need of support being victimized by organized labour. The Dublin labour plays deflect the *master figure* away from big business and onto the men who dominate the union. The victims become those men who did not adhere to the union's call for action. In doing so, they present organized labour, rather than big business, as the primary agents in victimizing the labouring class of the city.

Labour and the Abbey's Dublin Repertoire

The first Dublin play of the Abbey repertoire to make reference to organized labour was Frederick Ryan's *The Laying of the Foundations*. The primary plot of the Ryan play is concerned with corrupt city government, but organized labour is an underlying component, and a labour organizer, Nolan, is a pivotal character. Nolan serves as the catalyst for protagonist Michael O'Loskin's awakening to the municipal corruption of which his father, a construction company owner, is a part, and to which O'Loskin is expected to acquiesce. Nolan makes O'Loskin aware of unfair labour practices within the construction business, as well as the deplorable living conditions in the tenements owned by O'Loskin's father, who fails to maintain them adequately. When O'Loskin learns from Nolan that his father's investment income is derived primarily from his ownership of tenements that house poor labourers, a direct link is made between institutional poverty, business owners who perpetuate it, and Dublin Corporation members who facilitate it by creating municipal rules that favour business and tenement owners. Nolan is the first character of the Abbey repertoire to personify the organized labour movement in Dublin and one that can easily be interpreted as modelled on the pre-ITGWU Larkin. By the time *The Laying of the Foundations* premiered in 1902, Larkin was not only a close friend of Ryan's, but their friendship

was largely the result of their shared interest in worker's rights. Although he had not yet formed the ITGWU, Larkin was already well-established as a local leader of the Liverpool dock workers.

The Laying of the Foundations is not dogmatic on the subject of organized labour, but rather uses the labour-organizer character to link labouring classes with tenement living. Nolan is a strident but altruistic figure on the urban scene, and the only labour organizer to be portrayed in such a positive fashion in the Abbey's Dublin repertoire. As explored later in this chapter, future Dublin labour organizers would be portrayed in a much less sympathetic manner. However, the link this play makes between labour and tenement life would go on to be a hallmark of *The Slough*, the definitive Abbey lockout play, wherein the workers' living conditions and the plight of housing security become prominently juxtaposed against labour unions that are presented with increasing cynicism.

Over a decade would pass before labour-related commentary returned to the national stage. Edward McNulty's *The Lord Mayor* opened in March 1914, and is set shortly after the ITGWU suspended strike payments and the DEF officially ended the lockout. The three-act comedy moves from the office of Gaffney, a Dublin solicitor and backroom controller of Mansion House, to Mansion House itself, and finally to the office of the Lord Mayor. Each of these settings follows the footsteps and political climb of O'Brien, an ironmonger and meek City Council member who ascends from the brink of bankruptcy to the title of Lord Mayor. With its comedic elements often undermined by stinging commentary on the corruption of city government and a younger generation questioning the *status quo*, it contains subtle parallels to *The Laying of the Foundations*. The character of O'Brien ultimately shares O'Loskin's predisposition toward self-sacrifice for the common good. Ending with O'Brien

vowing to be "the independent champion of the people's rights" and "the citizen's Lord Mayor" (McNulty 50), the conclusion of *The Lord Mayor* echoes the conclusion of *The Laying of the Foundations*, in which O'Loskin vows to help build "a city whose foundations are laid in Liberty and Truth" (Ryan 37). Both plays can be viewed as transition dramas (as discussed in chapter one), transplanting the *self-sacrifice for the common good* tradition of the Yeats-Gregory ethos from a rural to an urban setting. However, *The Lord Mayor* contains characters who transcend this state of being, taking the emerging urban repertoire a step further away from the rural than its predecessor. Its younger characters, Moira and Kelly, both assert independence from the *status quo* by acting in their self-interest (deciding to marry against elders' wishes) and by challenging nationalist ideologies that permeate Mansion House.

Moira, O'Brien's daughter, and Kelly, Gaffney's assistant and O'Brien's speechwriter, introduce economic issues into the nationalist discourse. In doing so, they challenge the position of Arthur Griffith and other nationalists of the period, and reflect the schism between labour and nationalist leaders that lasted throughout the strike and lockout period:

> KELLY: There are plenty of Gaffney's in Ireland, plenty in England. The world is all the same [...] everywhere rich and poor. England has done me no harm. England doesn't sweat me. England hasn't kept me on starvation wages. Gaffney has. England doesn't hang all around my life and choke down my soul like a nightmare. Gaffney does. What's the good of being patriotic if it doesn't raise my wages?
>
> MOIRA: If Ireland was free and a Republic you'd be better off.
>
> KELLY: Not a bit. I'd be just the same. There would be a change of government officials, but that wouldn't change me. (32-33)

Kelly's view of his economic and professional standing — and the unlikelihood of either one changing with the establishment of a Republic — is particularly stinging. His example, that Gaffney embodies imperialism hidden within the guise of a self-

professed nationalist leader, shatters the illusion of nationalist leaders independent of corrupt capitalism and draws them directly into the debate that Larkin put forward during the lockout. Describing Gaffney as "the greatest bully and tyrant that ever [walked] the earth" (McNulty 33), his comments are blatantly oppositional to Griffith's "Sinn Féin and the Labour Question" and place him clearly in support of organized labour and "alienated from the nationalist struggle" (Levitas 210). This position makes him an outsider at Mansion House, where the Lord Mayor's office had been a bastion of nationalism since 1881.[3]

In a letter to Yeats three days after the play's premiere, Lady Gregory reported that Kelly's comment — about patriotism not having a significant purpose if it doesn't raise his wages — was "one of the most applauded" lines of the play (qtd. in Levitas 211). Like the character of Nolan in *The Laying of the Foundations* and the Covey, later in *The Plough and the Stars* (1926), Kelly taps into an underlying working-class discontent that permeated Dublin in the early twentieth century, at the expense of the political nationalist cause. Groups such as Sinn Féin and the Irish Republican Brotherhood successfully redressed this situation by 1916. Both the sentiment and the redress would appropriately be echoed by the Covey when, amidst the start of the Easter Rising, he demands to know what the use of freedom is "if it's not economic freedom" (O'Casey 1998, 100). That this sentiment was so popular at the conclusion of the lockout is likely not a coincidence, and it suggests that the Abbey audience was perhaps more diverse than mainstream Abbey histories indicate. Unfortunately, Holloway's unpublished diary does not elaborate on *The Lord Mayor* audience in either his opening night remarks or his commentary on subsequent

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[3] There had been a gentlemen's agreement that the Lord Mayor position be rotated between conservatives and nationalists, but the refusal of conservative Lord Mayor George Moyers to award a Freedom of the City honor to Parnell in 1881 changed things. As Joseph O'Brien notes, "thereafter, none but those with the necessary nationalist credentials attained the highest municipal office" (71).

productions. Although the play's popularity endured for almost two decades, *The Lord Mayor* was very much a play of its time. By the early 1920s, its subtitle in Abbey programs changes from being "a Comedy" to "A Satire of the Past."

Like many Dublin-set plays of the Abbey repertoire, the commercial success of *The Lord Mayor* was substantial. Its initial five-day run could not be extended because of other scheduled commitments at the theatre, but it was revived twice the following month and two more times in 1915, when it was included as part of the Abbey's December anniversary celebrations. It remained popular with Abbey audiences for well over a decade, revived 25 additional times through 1934 for a total of 162 total performances.

Although *The Laying of the Foundations*, *The Lord Mayor* and *The Plough and the Stars* all touch upon Dublin labour issues, there are only two plays prior to 1951 that deal specifically with the lockout: *The Slough* by A. Patrick Wilson (1914) and *Scrap* by J.A. O'Brennan (1931). These plays serve as bookends of a sort, *The Slough* dealing with the lockout in near-real time, and *Scrap* examining its ramifications decades after the event. In both instances, the workers and their families are portrayed as victims of an aggressive labour movement that stigmatizes those who do not support its objectives. *The Slough* was the first work to tap into the drama of the 1913 lockout while simultaneously exposing life in the Dublin tenements, which in 1914 remained among the worst slums in Europe. Perhaps more significantly to the urban drama of the national theatre, it was the first step in creating the Dublin world that would be established by O'Casey as emblematic of urban Ireland in terms of tenement setting, language, and characterization. While there is no evidence that O'Casey attended *The Slough*, one cannot help but note the plot structure and

character parallels between this and O'Casey's early works, most notably *Juno and the Paycock* and *The Plough and the Stars*.

The Slough is the first tenement-set play in the Abbey repertoire; this alone makes it a precedent-setting production, as the tenement would come to personify Irish urban drama both domestically and abroad with the debut of *The Shadow of a Gunman* in 1923. The use of the tenement set in *The Slough* connects the poor housing conditions of general labourers with their reactions to the IGTWU's recruitment efforts. The deplorable living conditions of the tenements contributed to Larkin's support among general labourers who dwelt in them. As the *Irish Times* noted on 4 September 1913:

> [T]he condition of the Dublin slums is responsible not only for disease and crime but for much of our industrial unrest [...] The workers, whose only escape from these wretched homes lies in the public house, would not be human beings if they did not turn a ready ear to anybody who promises to improve their lot.

But these conditions also contributed to some men electing not to join the union's efforts. Some men who were employed chose not to join the strike out for fear of losing the very little they already had, as would be examined later in *Scrap*. Others, like Hanlon of *The Slough*, left the union when it failed to meet their needs during earlier labour actions, or to understand their fear of not providing for their families.

The Slough operates on a dual trajectory, the labour action framing an underlying allegorical representation of an individual's struggle to remain free of a group or mob dictate. Hanlon wants to remain an individual in a community that insists he join their efforts. The play's allegorical framework[4] is made overtly clear by

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[4] Wilson was the earliest playwright to employ allegorical framework to a Dublin play, but would certainly not be the last. O'Casey would use allegory to great effect in, among other works, *Kathleen Listens In* (1923). See Corballis for a discussion of allegory in O'Casey's early Abbey plays.

the author's program note, in which he cites the following lines from Part One of John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*:

> They drew near to a very miry slough that was in the midst of the plain…This miry slough is such a place as cannot be mended…It is not the pleasure of the King that this place should remain so bad…But it is the Slough of Despond still, and so will be when they have done what they can.

Labelling this passage as "the Argument" of the play, Wilson makes a direct parallel between the work of Bunyan and *The Slough*. Wilson's argument establishes *The Slough* as an exploration of what would become of Christian (Hanlon in *The Slough*) had he never found release from The Slough of Despond and made his way to the Wicket Gate that marked entrance to the Celestial City. In citing the reference that the slough "cannot be mended," and titling the second Act which is set in the Union Committee Room as "the Mending of the Slough," Wilson puts forth the notion that organized labour wears a false face. It presents itself as that which can offer salvation, but in reality it cannot.

The Slough has been described as a play that, unlike *The Lord Mayor*, does not show "labour in ascendancy," but rather portrays it "with the forces for social redress overwhelmed by lack of solidarity" (Levitas 219). This suggests that the play is pro-union, and that the union falls only because of those workers who scabbed. However, this argument ignores the play's allegorical content. In doing so, it overlooks the play's foregrounding of the individual, the worker (Hanlon), and his downfall at the hands of union members. In this play, the lack of solidarity is actually the result of the union ignoring one man's basic need to, however failingly, be his own man. He pays a dear price for this attempt, but the play demonstrates that the union's failure to see individuality is as great as the man's failure to achieve it against insurmountable odds.

This play never identifies its setting as 1913 Dublin, but the allusions are numerous. Considering that *The Slough* is often incorrectly cited as the Abbey's first Dublin play, the fact that the playwright never states the location as Dublin is noteworthy. The setting, following the play's allegorical framework, is simply "a City." The original script was lost in the 1951 Abbey fire, and the only known script (deposited in the British Library and referenced herein) has no direct references to Dublin, nor is there any evidence that such a reference existed in the original Abbey production.[5] The Lord Chamberlain's office reviewed it for consideration of performance by the Liverpool Repertory Theatre to open 10 December 1914.[6] In its Recommendation for License dated 30 November 1914, they refer to it as "a gloomy sordid little tragedy of an abortive strike in the North" (presumably the North of England). This setting was assumed even though the Liverpool program retains that of the Abbey's in identifying the location simply as "a City." The play's setting seemed open to a local interpretation by the locale where it is staged.

Considering the many allusions to 1913 Dublin, it is not surprising that the play was seen by Abbey audiences and critics as being set in that city in that year. The labour leader Allen bears many similarities to Larkin, and the events are strikingly similar to the lockout. Like Larkin, the Allen character is a proponent of temperance and is renowned for his oratory skills; the strike is described as being syndicallist in nature; and Allen echoes Larkin's desire for "one big Union" (Wilson 45). The character of Peg is equally reflective of 1913 Dublin. She is the eldest daughter of the Hanlon family and supplements her shop-girl wages with part-time prostitution.

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[5] Although the play's allegorical framework makes direct reference to a specific city unlikely, the possibility that the Abbey production contained Dublin references was explored. While newspaper reviews allude to *The Slough* as reflecting 1913 Dublin, they too refer to the setting as "a city," and not Dublin specifically.

[6] The Abbey touring production of *The Slough* played at the Liverpool Reportory Theatre on a double-bill with Gregory's *Hyacinth Halvey* 10-12 December.

Young women were among the most vulnerable workers in the city at the time, and shop girls in particular were notoriously underpaid. This was a situation not overlooked by Larkin. As Dublin historian Joseph O'Brien notes, "their condition was often offered as evidence for the prevalence of prostitution [...and the Larkin-edited] *Irish Worker* was especially active in exposing the 'slavery' imposed on these young girls" (205). In the end, for Dublin audiences, *The Slough* was a thinly disguised portrayal of the 1913 strike and lockout, with the challenges and consequences of tenement living serving as a backdrop to the labour action. Most importantly to this discussion, *The Slough* is harshly critical of the Larkinesque labour leader, reiterating the point made by Larkin's detractors that he used poor workers to keep himself in a "soft" job, and of the tactics of organized labour overall. With this negative portrayal of the organized labour movement, Larkin's (and the ITGWU's) self-professed position as an element of the cultural nationalist movement — or, as Larkin deemed it: "Irish Ireland" — is directly under attack.

Wilson subtitles the first act, set in the Hanlon tenement, as "The Nature of the Slough." With this notation, Wilson is suggesting the "slough" of the play's title to be "a state or condition (esp. of moral degradation) in which a person … sinks or has sunk" (OED def. 1b) rather than the more common usage of "muddy ground." As such, in the first act, the tenement and those it houses are identified as elements for which "degradation" is a primary characteristic. This implies that the author wrote these un- and under-employed characters as victims of a societal structure that is stacked against them. As the three acts progress, the family falls further than even the opening scene suggests, and the source of their downfall is the very union that professes itself to be supportive of the city's workingmen.

As his few defenders in the Union comment, Peter Hanlon was once "a good trade unionist" (Wilson 39), but "has been victimized through the callous action of [...] the Union's officials" (37). It is revealed that Hanlon's refusal to pay his union dues (which led to his blacklisting and eventual expulsion) was the result of his being denied union-controlled employment, because he "scabbed" during a previous strike in order to pay his sick wife's medical bills. The union offered no help during his time of need and prevented him from earning a living once his wife recovered. His downward spiral of drink, bitterness and poverty permeate his family. His daughter, Peg, leaves the city to become a prostitute in Liverpool; his son, Jack, unleashes his frustration and anger on his sisters and mother before he leaves home, shutting off one of the family's few steady sources of income; and his daughter, Anne, endures harsh factory work that contributes to her death from consumption. Anne's demise predates Moser's in *The Plough and the Stars* by over one decade, and its treatment is radically different, although it serves a similar purpose. O'Casey elected to have Moser's death occur between acts and used it in tandem with Nora's still-birth (occurring between the same acts) to emphasize a symbolic lost generation of the city. In *The Slough*, Wilson has Anne's death occur on stage and, in tandem with Peg's emigration to Liverpool and the son's decision to leave the family, it emphasizes a generation lost to one immediate family that cannot maintain unity amidst poverty and lack of opportunity.

By the third act, "the Mire of the Slough," in which Peter is assaulted by union workers and dragged off to jail with a serious head wound while his daughter lies dying in the tenement, Wilson shifts from slough as *degradation* to "the slough of poverty" (58). The Hanlons are the product of living amid the tenement's symbolic mud and mire, but the hypocrisy within the trade union movement is complicit in their

circumstances. Death has freed Anne, but for those remaining amid the mire, there is no available alternative. As the Hanlon's neighbour states solemnly before the closing curtain, "Pray. It is the only thing left for poor people like us to do" (76). Only a few years later, with the premier of *Blight*, the notion of a tenement family turning to prayer as a last resort is ridiculed. But in 1914 Dublin, this conclusion, although sombre in tone, remained fitting for the tragedy on stage.

The Slough was a critical and popular success, revived at least three times within the first year of its debut in November 1914. Critical reviews were overwhelmingly favourable and focused on the timeliness of addressing the strike and lockout. The *Irish Times* acknowledged the point of view presented in "the strike play" as that of "the underdog," but its critic appeared relieved to note that "the author does not intrude his sympathies" into the work. However, for at least one audience member, Joseph Holloway, the site of a tenement setting on the Abbey stage resonated more than the strike plot, and he noted on its opening night, "the slum play was a complete success" (167). The combination of strike plot and tenement set underscores the play's ability to portray the inner-city community that was in the fore of Dublin's consciousness since the lockout. Dramatic representation of Irish organized labour on the Abbey stage had been seen before, but only in a play set in Belfast (*Mixed Marriage*, 1911) and overshadowed by issues of sectarianism. When *The Slough* brought the Dublin tenements and labour movement to the national stage for the first time, it focused critical attention on Dublin labour issues and challenged union leadership.

When the lockout was revisited 18 years later, the tenement set was replaced with a more habitable council house, but the family it houses is as fractured as the Hanlons. Their demise is also the direct result of the father's refusal to join a Dublin

union. J.A. O'Brennan's one-act tragedy *Scrap,* which premiered in 1931, portrays what remains of the Tobin family and considers that uncooperative union members may have survived the "big strike" unscathed at the time, but that loyal union members' desire to avenge any workers who "scabbed" will eventually be satisfied. Once again, an individual is made to pay for rejecting union pressure. In addition to presenting organized labour as a force that destroys familial solidarity, *Scrap* also implicates union revenge as a factor in forced emigration.

When the play opens, three of the four Tobin sons have already emigrated to America, and the youngest, Billy, is packing to leave that night. The father, Ned, enters the house and announces he has been fired from his job. With this news, the mother urges Billy to stay in Dublin to help support the family. Ned is beyond middle age and unlikely to be able to secure a new position as a labourer. The parents appear to have been oblivious to why their boys have all left, until the mother's urging compels Billy to state what had previously remained unspoken:

> Don't you know why I must clear off out of this? (*a pause*). Don't you know why the others went — Tom and Pat and Michael? It wasn't that they wanted to go. I'm going away for the same reason as my brothers went. It was always thrown up at them as it is to me — the Tobins — the sons of the man — that broke the strike. (O'Brennan 22)

The community, because of Ned Tobin's behaviour, has socially and professionally ostracized the sons. None of the boys have been able to secure steady employment, let alone build careers.

Billy's departure leaves his parents alone and overwhelmed at the prospect of their future. Ned had enjoyed the comfort of a steady job because his company's chairman rewarded him for not joining the strike, but with the chairman's death Ned's job security was lost. It is implied that the late chairman's son, who succeeded his father, now runs a union shop; the union doesn't want Ned on its rolls as penance for

Ned's behaviour many years ago. The shock of his situation brings forth Ned's memories of the strike: "Now they can mock me — now they can jeer me. Yeh, I see them … ould Tobin, ould Tobin the fool … your turn now" (19). As he clings to a now-worthless letter of promised job security that the late chairman wrote in thanks, and that his wife has kept, his self-pity gives way to a flood-gate of guilt that he has clearly harboured for decades:

> I broke the strike…I broke the hearts of good men. (*pause*) Aye…I met them many times after…Poor devils, they hadn't a smoke. An' the women! Hunger, fear, dread — wrote all over them. (24)

Ned acknowledges that his legacy is that of "the man who broke the strike." As he tosses pieces of the letter into the fireplace, his wife sees what he is doing and becomes hysterical. The play closes on the couple alone and in anguish. While Ned was fortunate to survive for many years after the actual event, the strike's legacy on this family is ultimately the same as that on the locked-out workers about whom he reminisces: complete obliteration.

Aligning itself with the sentiment of many cultural and political nationalists of 1913, *Scrap*, like *The Slough*, is sympathetic to the plight of workingmen and their families, but harsh in its treatment of the labour movement itself. When reminiscing about the "big strike," Ned's wife timidly comments on the foolishness of the workers who heeded the union's call. Ned's passionate reply judges the union for leading metaphorical sheep to slaughter:

> they went out because they were brought out…(*sadly*) and they never went back. Good men, men years in the job — men with homes, and wives. And they never got back. Never. Never got a job anywhere — after…died, died on the scrap-heap. (19)

Like many workers who tried to return to work after the failed 1913 strike, those to whom Tobin alludes in *Scrap* found they had no jobs to return to, because employers banded together to blacklist strike sympathisers. Conversely, once unions gained

more traction in the decades that followed, the balance of power shifted and those workers who didn't support the failed strike in 1913 received, like the character of Ned, their comeuppance.

The retribution imposed on Ned through the loss of his job is the final action in a progression that began with the blacklisting of his sons and their subsequent forced emigration. The overriding theme of *Scrap* is that while Ned endured for a few decades, the union leadership and rank and file ultimately achieved a triumph they failed to years earlier — but it was a victory *over* a working class family rather than *for* them. The union is ultimately responsible for the Tobin family's demise. As in *The Slough*, the union of *Scrap* is portrayed as unforgiving of any man who didn't support the failed strike. Such a position assumes these men had a choice, and should have chosen labour solidarity over medical care for a sick wife (*The Slough*) or a roof over the heads of a growing young family (*Scrap*).

There is an evolution of labour representations in the Abbey's Dublin repertoire that is somewhat reflective of the times at which the various plays premiered. While organized labour was segmented into many small unions and trade associations at the turn of the century, there was relative harmony with Dublin business owners. This was reflected in *The Laying of the Foundations*, when the altruistic Nolan encourages O'Loskin to devote himself to fighting city corruption. By 1914, with the strike and subsequent lockout prominent in Dublin theatre-goers memories, the politics of labour become pronounced and anticipate a more radical philosophy. As *The Lord Mayor* demonstrates with the character of Kelly, there was an awakening to just how far nationalist ideology could deliver in its assertion that independence from England was the answer to Dubliners' desires for better lives. The lockout itself created disruption throughout the city for several months and when it is

most directly addressed, in *The Slough* and *Scrap*, family becomes the conduit through which the city's social divisions are portrayed. While *The Slough* and *Scrap* share many similarities, the method by which each portrays union rank-and-file retribution is quite different. When *The Slough* union members seek revenge on Hanlon, it is physical and immediate, almost a reaction to the event itself (which had concluded only nine months prior to the play's premiere). Conversely, the union members of *Scrap* are more deliberate and, it could be argued, more sadistic. They attack Tobin slowly, removing his sons from his life one by one before leaving Tobin and his wife alone to face destitution in their old age.

The evolution of retribution parallels the evolution from powerlessness to power that unions held in Dublin from the period of 1914 to 1931. *The Slough* premiered at a time when the ITGWU was decimated by the lockout. Larkin left Dublin in 1914 and James Connolly assumed leadership, but failed to bring the union back to its previous dominance and unemployment of general labourers remained high. It wasn't until the 1916 Easter Rising — an event marked in part by the convergence of general labourers and the Catholic republican movement — that the ITGWU began to rebuild. By 1919, the ITGWU had over 100,000 members and was the largest union in the country. In 1923, Larkin returned to Dublin and eventually founded the Workers' Union of Ireland (WUI). Combined, the ITGWU and the WUI were dominant general unions by the time *Scrap* premiered in 1931.[7] Staged after Larkin's promise of a large, general union was realized, but during a time when there were two such organizations battling for dominance in Dublin, *Scrap* reflects the tenacity and often dubious methods employed by trade unionists to gain or maintain

[7] The history of organized labour becomes much more protracted in the 1940s, but eventually the ITGWU and the remnants of the WUI joined forces in 1990 to become what remains known as SIPTU, the largest union in the Republic of Ireland.

dominance. In the end, one can reflect on the labour repertoire as being very much theatre of its time, and allegorically reflective of labour's own place within the cultural nationalist movement.

Labour and the Cultural Nationalist Movement

Larkin's opinion on labour as a part of the cultural nationalist movement is made clear in the *Irish Worker* of 4 January 1913, when he writes, "the Irishizing of everything within the four seas of Ireland is our objective." The industrial movement was, like the Abbey Theatre, prone to challenges from factions both within what represented this mandate of "new nationalism" and from external forces, most notably the Catholic Church. Although many members of cultural nationalist groups — including the Gaelic League, the Gaelic Athletic Association, the Abbey Theatre and Sinn Féin — supported the locked out workers with donations of time and money, neither official condemnation of the tactics of the DEF nor official support of the ITGWU was forthcoming from the recognized leaders of these organizations. Like employers who objected to Larkin, it was less a reaction to organized labour as such (which had existed in Ireland for decades), but more a response to his being viewed as an "agitator who adulterated bona fide trade unionism with the syndicalist sympathetic strike" (E. O'Connor 31). However, Church opposition to syndicalism and the "Kiddies Scheme" compelled many of the leading figureheads of the cultural nationalist movement to become vocal on the subject.

The "Kiddies Scheme" involved a Larkin-supported plan initiated by Dora Montefiore, a British social worker supportive of the union's efforts. She organized volunteers in England to provide passage and homes for worker's children, so they could be cared for (and their parents' financial burdens lessened) while the lockout

continued.[8] The Catholic Church declared it an outrage that children would be cared for by non-Catholics, challenged the morals of parents who were willing to allow their children passage, and sent clergy to the docks from which the children were to depart to intimidate and physically challenge the organizers and parents. Although Church leaders made contributions toward children's funds during the lockout and attempted to organize several "peace meetings" between the DEF and ITGWU, the venomous attacks made by the Church upon parents who were trying to do their best for their families seems somewhat extreme.

A partial explanation can be found in Pope Leo XIII's encyclical *Rerum Novarum* which critically addressed the spread of socialism in Europe, and was read by the Dublin clergy as a document supporting its anti-syndicalist position. Issued in May 1891, the *Rerum Novarum* focused on "the integration of Catholics into modern society" (Furlong 4), including the fields of politics and labour. Like most Vatican-issued encyclicals, it has more than one interpretation, but this one was read by the Irish Catholic Church as being a mandate not to acquiesce to the liberal movement that was gaining momentum throughout Europe and advocating a separation between Church and State. Asserting that Catholics cannot separate their faith from their role in society, Irish dioceses put the *Rerum Novarum* forward as evidence of syndicalism being a form of socialism — and socialism was unequivocally identified by the Vatican as a form of godless society. The irony of the Church's position was not lost on James Connolly, who observed that the Church's practice of excommunication "applied the principle of sympathetic action with a thoroughness and ruthlessness that the Labour movement could not hope to equal" (Fox 158).

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[8] Such schemes were not uncommon during strikes. See Wilmer (pp. 107-108) for such an example in 1913 America.

The 6 September 1913 edition of the *Irish Catholic* described the strikers as "members of the very lowest and most degraded section of the unemployable class who came out from the slums attracted by plunder" (Daly 115). Exactly whose coffers were available for plunder and under whose direction the slum dwellers were attracted to it is never stated, but the allusion is to Larkin, as a pied piper leading the lowly and degraded to do his bidding in an attempt to raid the profits of Dublin businessmen. According to the *Irish Catholic*, both the unemployed and the ITGWU were unworthy of assistance. The ITGWU's acceptance of assistance from British union sympathizers appears to have only aggravated the church further. It would take several weeks (25 October) before the *Irish Catholic* would soften its position and "emphasise that the clergy must become involved in slum improvement" (Daly 115). But their intent, as revealed in a series of pamphlets published by the *Irish Messenger* the following year, appears to have been — ironically, like Larkin's — partly based on membership expansion and/or retention. As one of the early pamphlets stated, "Destitution is reducing thousands of our fellow Catholics to a condition of which the loss of Faith is a natural sequence" (qtd. in Daly 116).

The Church's behaviour during the "Kiddies Scheme" compelled various cultural nationalist leaders to speak out on the topic of the lockout, including Abbey director W.B. Yeats. But the seeds for Yeats' reaction had already been sown during DEF leader and Dublin Corporation member Murphy's opposition to the Lane proposal. In September 1913, the Dublin Corporation announced its decision to reject Hugh Lane's offer to donate his extensive art collection to the city of Dublin if the city would build a gallery to house it. This ended a debate that had endured since Lane first offered the collection in 1905. Lane enlisted an architect whose proposed

design would span the Liffey in the city centre, replacing the Ha'penny Bridge. It was this final proposal — presented by Lane in the form of an ultimatum — that ended the Corporation's consideration.[9] Lane was the nephew of Lady Gregory, and Yeats was enthusiastically supportive of the project (as was Jim Larkin) and assisted Gregory in her fundraising efforts to defray the cost to the city should the plans be approved.[10] It was at the city's rejection of the proposal and during the early days of the lockout that Yeats penned "September 1913" and stated that he "had not thought [he] could feel so bitterly over any public event" (Gregory 1921, 129).

Yeats' bitterness and concern that the construction of a national culture was being derided by material concerns and church influence is evident in the opening stanza of "September 1913," in which he likens businessmen to petty merchants who "fumble in a greasy till" (1997, 51) while solemnly hording away their takings:

> What need you, being come to sense,
> But fumble in a greasy till
> And add the halfpence to the pence
> And prayer to shivering prayer, until
> You have dried the marrow from the bone;
> For men were born to pray and save:
> Romantic Ireland's dead and gone,
> It's with O'Leary[11] in the grave.

There is no doubting Yeats' passionate belief that, in 1913, Dublin was on the precipice of a cultural downfall. He also targeted Murphy personally as being representative of the root of this problem. As one of his biographers observed:

> For Yeats, Murphy personified all that he most feared and loathed about the ignorant materialism of the Dublin Roman Catholic middle

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[9] At the time, Lane's collection was housed in the Dublin-Corporation-owned 17 Harcourt Street, a building that even the Corporation acknowledged was structurally inadequate to maintain the collection. Proposed sites rejected by the city for various reasons prior to the Liffey design included St. Stephen's Green and Merrion Square.

[10] See the Yeats poem, "To a Wealthy Man who Promised a Second Subscription to the Dublin Municipal Gallery if it were Proved the People wanted Pictures," for his most direct poetic commentary on this subject.

[11] John O'Leary (1830-1907) was a significant foundational influence on Yeats' exposure to Irish myths/legends and a president of the Young Ireland Society.

> classes. Here were those who showed 'how base at moments of excitement are minds without culture'. Not only did they threaten the artistic life of the city and the nation at large, but events were to convince Yeats that they threatened the basic liberties of the people too. This he believed had been particularly clearly shown when Murphy and his fellow members of the Employers' Federation obtained written undertakings from their men that they would not join trade unions such as the [ITGWU]. (Coote 330)

However, Yeats' disdain for the middle classes that were in opposition to the strikers did not compel him to be overtly supportive of the workers or the union. Although it has been argued that "Yeats and Larkin were on the same side" (Cullingford 78), close reading of Yeats' two noteworthy public displays of support reveals him to have been tacit or evasive when it came to a public record of the strike and lockout. His direct commentary on the lockout is scarce, reflecting what has been aptly referred to as his disposition toward a "disillusioned detachment from public events" (Frayne 406). His comments at a Mansion House meeting in October, and his letter "Dublin Fanaticism," published in the *Irish Worker* on 1 November, are the only substantial public comments that reveal his position. At the Mansion House meeting, he began by stating that he could not "imagine a more difficult task than being impartial on the lockout," but he managed to sidestep it nonetheless:

> No man who walked through the slums of Dublin, and saw the tumbling rabbit warrens of misery, could easily be impartial. The dispute has done untold damage not only to the financial but also the moral interests of Dublin. Every one of us has a right to speak here, even those who have no part in the dispute, like myself, and whose selfish interests are suffering. I am one of the directors of a theatre, which is suffering every week as a result of the dispute. (*Laughter.*) Those who went into the conference would have to think of those outside, who are not combatants. I do not complain of the fanaticism of Dublin. I do not think that we can have strong religious feelings anywhere without fanaticism; but I have not words sufficient to express my contempt for the press of Dublin. (qtd. in Yeates 296-297)

Yeats criticizes the Church and zealots for their fanatical reaction to the Kiddies Scheme without naming them directly, and lambastes the mainstream press and the

Murphy-owned *Irish Independent* for providing them a platform. However, his "contempt for the press of Dublin" also includes the Larkin-edited *Irish Worker* for publishing the names of those who crossed the picket lines, and Nationalist newspapers for fuelling unrest with their opposition to Larkin. In naming the lockout simply as "the dispute," Yeats further evades the issue at hand. His only direct commentary is reserved for the inhabitants of "the slums of Dublin," a large percentage of whom were the locked out workers and their families.

In his "Dublin Fanaticism" letter published in the 1 November issue of the *Irish Worker*, Yeats demanded "to know why the mob at North Wall and elsewhere were permitted to drag children from their parents' arms" (Yeats 1975, 406). This letter, however, is the only overtly direct public record of support he shows for the workers. Based partly on comments he made during the Mansion House meeting, it reserves most of its vitriol for the press and police for not protecting the civil liberties of the Dublin citizenry, specifically those targeted by the Church zealots.

Like Yeats, Lady Gregory had a personal interest in the lockout. She had great disdain for Murphy, both for his leadership on the Dublin Corporation's rejection of the Lane gallery, and for the manner in which his newspaper, the *Irish Independent*, relentlessly featured articles discrediting the project in an effort to sway public opinion. But, like Yeats, she remained largely silent on the issue.[12] However, she shared Yeats' distaste for the state of affairs in Ireland at the time and of the public's complicity. One of her few visits to Dublin in 1913 was to attend the 19 September Dublin Corporation meeting announcing its decision, on a fairly close vote of 32 to 25, to reject the Lane proposal. After the meeting, she commented:

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[12] Gregory was absent from Dublin for most of 1913. She toured North America with the Abbey players from January-April (spending a considerable amount of this time fundraising among Irish-Americans for the Lane project) and spent most of the remainder of the year in Coole, convalescing from an injury she sustained while sailing back to Europe, and to be with her family following the birth of her grandchild.

> the aldermen were so far from any understanding of what was offered and what the gift would mean to the country. It is not their fault, it is the fault of the system that puts our precious things in the hands of a democracy. (qtd. in Kohfeldt 240)

Clearly, her disdain for the city officials extended to the public that elected them. This is, perhaps, an elitist position, but one that appears grounded in a belief that the housing of "precious things" should not be left in the hands of petty bureaucrats. It is reasonable to read her comments as those of a woman exhausted by the failure of many years' effort, and rather in line with Yeats' exasperation over cultural decisions being made by a short-term "bottom line" rather than with a larger, grander long-term vision.

The only leading Abbey name that could be said to have publicly supported the IGTWU and who played any remotely significant part in the events of 1913 was the actress Helena Moloney.[13] A friend of Larkin, it was Moloney who helped (with Casimir Markievicz) create his disguise so he could evade police in an effort to address the worker's rally on what would become known as Ireland's first Bloody Sunday.[14] Moloney was also with Larkin when he was arrested at the Murphy-owned Imperial Hotel on O'Connell Street before the police attacks began.

The Abbey was not unique in its official evasion of the subject. Leading cultural nationalist organizations, with the exception of the Gaelic Athletic Association, remained silent, and the Gaelic League primarily supported the locked-out workers via its London branch, rather than through its Dublin headquarters. On the other hand, political nationalist groups were quite vocal; however, theirs was a consistent public record of opposition. This was partly the result of the class divisions

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[13] Although Sean O'Casey was an ITGWU member and staunch supporter of Larkin during this time, these events predate his affiliation with the Abbey Theatre by almost a full decade.

[14] Casimir Markievicz (husband of Countess Markievicz) is generally credited with coining this phrase. According to Yeates, his reference was to "the shooting of over a hundred Russian workers during a peaceful protest outside the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg on 22 January 1905."

that labour exposed. Arthur Griffith, as president of Sinn Féin, was one of the most vocal critics of the ITGWU. Griffith had a long record of questioning any organization that was deemed, or deemed itself, part of the nationalist movement, be it cultural or political. He had a tendency to view all others as misguided in their efforts. Although originally a supporter of Yeats and his notion of establishing a national theatre, he officially distanced himself from that effort after viewing Synge's *In the Shadow of the Glen* in 1903 at Molesworth Hall. Referring to the INTS's decision to stage it as "ill-advised" in the 17 October 1903 *The United Irishman*, he claimed:

> The play [...] is no more Irish than the Decameron. Synge's play purports to attack 'our Irish institution, the loveless marriage' [...] according to Mr. Synge, marry lacking love, and, as a consequence, the woman proves unfaithful. Mr. Synge never found that in Irish life.

Thereafter, Griffith kept Yeats, Synge, and eventually the Abbey under watchful eye, in attempts to discover further evidence of plays that presented an Ireland other than how Griffith saw it.

In "Sinn Féin and the Labour Question" (published in *Sinn Féin* 25 October 1913), Arthur Griffith left no ambiguity as to his organization's position regarding the ITGWU. He claimed that the ITGWU was missing the point: that capitalism was not the enemy, as Larkin opined, but that England was, because they instilled the capitalist economy in Ireland. Griffith considered the labour movement's stance un-nationalistic in its attack on Dublin employers — many of whom were considered nationalist in their political stripes, albeit of the parliamentary kind in Murphy's case[15] — and in its service to what they considered an apolitical cause. This article is,

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[15] Murphy was an MP from 1885-1892 and a nationalist, conservative Home Ruler. Like all Home Rulers, he believed nationalist tenets and a place within British parliament need not be mutually exclusive.

in many respects, an "incantation against the forces of modernism" (Yeates 355), be they capitalist or socialist in scope.

> It is the right and function of the Nation to say to Labour: you are Labour. You shall sell your services to Capital for a lawful price, and a lawful price is that which will enable you to live in decency and comfort and provide against the material ills of the world. For I am the Nation — your father and the father of Capital also, and in my house my children shall not oppress the other — it shall not be a house divided against itself.

This passage is reflective of the overall tone of the article. The nation is God-like and must be served equally by all factions within society. Every faction's service must be to the nation and to serve anything else (union leader or labour collective) above that is to do so at the detriment of the whole. As lockout historian Pádraig Yeates observed:

> this elevation of the nation to a deity, and the insistence that only through identification with a religion, a culture and a nationality could an individual hold any rights, was the stock in trade of most nationalists throughout Europe. Griffith's denial of the right of Larkin [...] to claim Irishness was also a denial of [his] right to a political existence. (355)

Officially, Sinn Féin opposed the union's efforts (Eamonn Cant was the only vocal detractor to Griffith's position) as did the Irish Republican Brotherhood. But the IRB was less adamant, and Pádraig Pearse and Tom Clarke were on record as supporting the ITGWU's cause. Just as the Kiddies Scheme further aggravated the Catholic Church and compelled Yeats to voice an opinion on the lockout, Larkin's willingness to accept "charity" from England may well have contributed to the animosity directed at him from political nationalist groups like Sinn Féin.

Largely ignored by the cultural nationalist organizations of the day and attacked by the political nationalists, the lockout left Larkin and the labour movement as "isolated" as the Dublin workers. Parties would converge a few years later during

the Easter Rising,[16] but the chief convergence at this time was with both nationalist segments (political and cultural) and the labouring classes. Both political and cultural nationalist organizations saw the potential of tapping into the disenfranchised labourers that rallied behind Larkin, and both made significant efforts to re-direct that passion to their mutual causes. For the Abbey Theatre, this effort took the form of supporting the plight of the workers with plays sympathetic to their living conditions, while simultaneously portraying union leadership as being partially responsible for the plight of the labouring class they claim to serve. This does not suggest a manipulative action on the part of the labour repertoire or the Abbey directors, but rather an opportunistic action that was quite reflective of the political climate of the times. In examining these labour plays, one wishes that there was a way to determine if pro-union plays were submitted and rejected by the theatre. Sadly, there are no Abbey records of works declined during the time period in question.

Conclusion

Organized labour is but one example of the many factions that comprised the cultural nationalist movement in Ireland in the early twentieth century, but it is one of the more problematic components of the movement. This is partly because it blurred the operational lines between the political and cultural efforts. As Hutchinson observes, political and cultural nationalism efforts tend to operate by distinctively different political strategies. The political effort focuses on a top-down effort in order to construct a state from above with "one overriding goal — political autonomy" (2000, 591), and the cultural effort "perceive[s] the nation not as a state but as a distinctive

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[16] This convergence is most evident in the form of the Irish Citizen Army, which began under Connolly's watch as second-in-command to Larkin during the lockout. The ICA was formed primarily to counter police brutality and middle-class hostility toward the strikers on picket lines and at union meetings, but they also played a part in protecting tenement dwellers facing evictions for lack of rent payments during the lockout.

historical community. Since a community is a spontaneous order of different groups and individuals…it cannot be constructed like a state from above, but can only be re-animated from below" (2000, 591-592). Under Larkin's leadership, these two systems of operation were crossed with each other. Larkin rallied a community from a grassroots level and fulfilled the cultural nationalism remit of educating and building cohesiveness, but by highlighting the disenfranchised workers who were either alienated by or simply unmoved by the cultural nationalism project, he inadvertently highlighted a failure of the movement. Furthermore, the ITGWU operated in strictly hierarchical terms: it was a top-down structure with Larkin orchestrating all efforts. Considering these dichotomies, it is perhaps neither surprising that the lockout failed nor that the plays on the subject staged by the Abbey were so negative in their allusions of the event (*The Slough*) and its aftermath (*Scrap*).

Perhaps the Abbey's predisposition to portraying organized labour in a negative light also reflected a majority opinion of the community of which the Abbey leadership was a part. As Joseph O'Brien summarizes:

> Larkin's newly founded weekly, the *Irish Worker*, alienated the bourgeois Nationalist politicians of both the Irish Parliamentary Party and Dublin Corporation through its uncompromising and withering attacks on their alleged cynical disregard of the workers' interests. The growing strength of the labour party in Britain coupled with Lloyd George's radical legislation induced the men of property to draw together against what were described as the accelerating forces of socialism in Ireland. Not unnaturally, the Dublin employers devised their own defenses by the creation of the Employers' Federation [and…] the general public also received solemn warnings from the press and pulpit. (220)

All things considered, it is quite plausible that *The Slough* was staged, in part, for purely commercial reasons. Under Yeats' and Gregory's leadership, the urban plays were often the works that sustained the company through lean financial periods, and late 1913-14 was certainly one of those. The American tour of 1911-12 had been

successful enough, even with its *Playboy* controversies, to keep the Abbey afloat for a time, but the financial reserves did not last long. As will be discussed more fully in chapter six, Abbey financial records indicate that the urban plays were often the 'bread and butter' that kept the Abbey open during its early years.[17] This pattern began as early as 1908 (with the plays of W.F. Casey) and continued through the 1920s, when the O'Casey trilogy provided a much-needed financial boost.

The Slough was well-received enough when it premiered in November 1914 to have an additional six performances staged later the same month. It was revived again at the Abbey in February 1915, and also became part of the Abbey tour to the Cork Opera House and Manchester's Gaiety Theatre later in the year. But this is where *The Slough* ends: roughly at the same time the convergence between the labouring classes and republican movements coalesced and began their final trajectory toward 1916. It is as though the Abbey and its audiences lose their appetites for representations of division between these two segments of the population, again, potentially reflecting the political climate.

Both Yeats and Gregory were long retired from the Abbey by the time *Scrap* premiered in 1931, and, by this time, the theatre was receiving the government grant that made it "the first state-subsidized theatre in the English-speaking world" (Robinson 1968, 126). Thirty percent of the plays to premiere at the Abbey in 1931 were set in urban Ireland: Lennox Robinson's adaptation of Sheridan's *The Critic, or a Tragedy Rehearsed* (Robinson moved the setting to Dublin), Hugh Quinn's *Money* (set in Belfast), and *Scrap*. The majority of the balance of new works were written by the old guard (including the Yeats plays *The Cat and the Moon* and *The Dreaming of the Bones*) and set primarily in the west of Ireland. And the Free State was embarking

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[17] See Flannery's "High Ideals and the Reality of the Marketplace: A Financial Record of the Early Abbey Theatre" for details on this period.

on a period marked by the leadership of a now firmly established Catholic bourgeoisie, and on the precipice of the de Valera-led Fianna Fáil decades. This was no time for revisionism; rather, it was a fine time to reinforce a failure on the part of an upstart segment of the population that, by 1931, had either been partly absorbed into what would be the minority political party[18] or further marginalized in Dublin's societal structure. While not political animals, the Tobin family of *Scrap* are certainly a reminder of what ultimately happened to those who did not acquiesce to the pressure imposed by a now-rising class. That the cultural nationalist movement was, by 1931, no longer a dominant presence is somewhat irrelevant. It had entrenched itself so thoroughly into the national psyche through the years leading up to the establishment of the Irish Free State, that by 1931 it became simply part of the governing fabric.

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[18] Cumann na nGaedheal and the Labour Party were united in their attempts to prevent Fianna Fáil from gaining power.

CHAPTER 4
THE TENEMENT PLAYS: DOMESTIC DUBLIN

The tenement is essentially an urban version of the rural setting.
—Fintan O'Toole

In the early decades of the twentieth century, Dublin tenements were among the most squalid living conditions in Europe. As the upper classes vacated the inner city for newly developed suburbs on Dublin's expanding outer perimeters, some grand Georgian homes remained intact for the upper classes, but they were few and primarily concentrated on the south side of the city. Most in the north inner city were broken up into one- or two-room flats and left in deplorable, unsanitary conditions to accommodate the existing labourers and those who continued to migrate from rural Ireland in search of work. These derelict Georgian houses in the north inner city joined the southside Liberties area, near St. Patrick's and Christ Church cathedrals, as the most densely populated and squalid neighbourhoods for the city's poor. The tenements of these two areas are the most frequently used settings to represent the city on the Abbey stage through 1951, with over 25% of the Dublin plays that premiered during this period employing a tenement set.

Fintan O'Toole identifies the tenement as the "classic location of Irish urban writing," but asserts, "the tenement is essentially an urban version of the rural setting" (114). This chapter seeks to challenge O'Toole's assertion by responding to the thesis he offers in "Going West: The Country versus the City in Irish Writing."[1] In doing so, its goal is threefold: to demonstrate that the tenement setting stands on its own as emblematic of the city; to show that the issues explored in the tenement plays speak to an urban experience without deliberately positioning themselves against a rural

[1] This essay was written in 1985 as a call to action for Irish writers to create literature of the city that is true to the urban experience. While his essay deals with drama and literature, the focus here is on the assertions he makes regarding urban drama of the early Abbey decades.

collective consciousness; and to document, through the plays themselves, that the tenement plays are predisposed to challenge the tenets of cultural nationalism espoused by the Abbey's founding charter, which would likely not be the case if these plays were simply a transplantation of the rural repertoire.

Missing Links

The thesis O'Toole offers in claiming that the tenement is an urban version of the rural setting is predicated, in part, on a symbolic relationship between the tenement and the Ascendancy class:

> [T]he pull of the past is present in the fact that the Dublin tenements are immediately associated with the fall from the Golden Age, being the elegant homes of the ascendancy fallen into the hands of the poor. They are a physical embodiment of a decline, imposing a sense that the city is not the ground of the future but a place fallen into decadence from a glorious past. (114)

O'Toole's analogy of that which housed the city's Ascendancy falling from grace only to be occupied by a less deserving class omits a crucial link. The stately Georgian homes were built primarily by and for the Ascendancy, but they were reconstituted into tenements that were inhabited by the poor; this reconstitution was a deliberate act, not a tragic, symbolic transference inferred by the "fallen city" analogy.

This deliberate act was by the Anglo-Irish who elected to leave and turn their properties over to agents, and was aided by the complicity of the Dublin Corporation. As the city's governing body, Dublin Corporation was in control of building codes and had the power to see that the codes were maintained. Furthermore, the overwhelming majority of the tenements were owned either by the corporation as a governing body or privately by individual members, who were the replacement power brokers of the largely self-displaced Ascendancy class. When the Act of Union was

passed in 1801, the Ascendancy left Dublin in mass numbers but retained ownership of their homes. Numerous agents, who were responsible for supervision of the properties, allowed them to fall into disrepair. This further decreased the already-diminished property values. The declining property values were a key part of the Georgian transformation. As Dublin historian Kevin Kearns notes, the values of these houses "plummeted to unimaginable levels. Georgian houses, which had been purchased for £8,000 in 1791, sold for only £2,500 a mere decade later [after the Act of Union]. And by 1849 the same houses commanded a paltry £500" (1983, 41). The initial property slump of 1801 could possibly have been a temporary supply and demand issue that would go on to correct itself, had it not been for deliberate intervention. By allowing the properties to deteriorate, agents stood to profit either by purchasing the properties at low prices and becoming profiteering landlords themselves, or by purchasing them to re-sell to the city at a profit.

The city of Dublin faced a severe working-class housing shortage for most of the second half of the nineteenth century, when, during the Famine years, it "became the principal catchbasin for the rural masses fleeing hardship elsewhere in the country. By the late 1840s, the city had assumed the role of a massive refugee camp" (Kearns 1983, 45). The profiteering landlords had willing tenants, no matter how deplorable the conditions. Furthermore, they had ready buyers in the form of local businessmen, who were willing to be slumlords themselves, and in the Dublin Corporation that faced an increasing housing crisis. Quite often, these roles of landlord, slumlord, and city bureaucrat merged. As both *The Laying of the Foundations* (1902) and *Blight* (1917) would later dramatize, many of these profiteering landlords were or became members of the municipal government. The deliberate action was based on modest short-term returns (tenement income), but

looked forward to long-term windfall profits as the city developed. Combined, the city government, many of its Corporation members, and the wealthy who had vacated the city earlier all played a part in the transformation of stately homes into tenement slums. In this historical context, the tenement represents currency and profit, arguably the most tangible signs of a city in modernity, rather than a glance backward to more glorious times.

The second point of O'Toole's argument rests with the notion of the tenement as a "self-contained community" that reflects the rural experience rather than the urban:

> It is, of its nature, an enclosed world where everything is known about everybody. It thus simulates a rural community as opposed to the displaced sense of being constantly in collision with unknown people which stems from the city. (114)

This point assumes that city living is dominated by a lack of connectivity with others, that encounters are random. This is only one aspect of urban life. Early- to mid-twentieth century Dublin was comprised of neighbourhoods where people made connections with those who lived and worked among them. The notion of the "displaced" or isolated urban dweller is a concept far more contemporary than the period in question. The Dublin poor of the first half of the twentieth century lived in very close-knit communities. It was not until the Dublin Corporation began its most aggressive slum clearance in the 1940s and 1950s that these close-knit communities began to undergo any sort of radical alteration. As Kearns notes:

> The urgency to provide cheap housing for the lower classes from the tenements led to the creation of typically sterile, dreary housing blocks devoid of social life and sense of community. Though the occupants finally had decent sanitation, basic amenities, and privacy, many felt depressed over being uprooted from their old neighbourhoods and transplanted in a lonely alien setting. (1996, 21)

Before the major clearances, life in the tenements was brutal, but as one former resident recalled, "we were all one family, all close. We all helped one another" (qtd. in Kearns 1996, 5). This sentiment is shared repeatedly in the oral history of tenement life compiled by Kearns. While this notion of over-familiarity may have been a rural truth, it was also an urban reality for tenement dwellers, negating O'Toole's assertion that to portray "an enclosed world where everything is known about everybody" is to portray only a rural experience. The older citizens of Dublin who comprise Kearns' oral history do not speak in a nostalgic fashion of a romantic past, as is the case in the examples cited by O'Toole, who argues that "even those Dublin writers who sought to glorify the city above the country often found themselves drawing on the sense of the city as a landscape of the past" (115). The former tenement residents remain clear-eyed about the suffering of tenement life and the rats, disease and over-crowding, but they return repeatedly to the close-knit community that existed within these conditions, acknowledging that humour and solidarity could, and did, co-exist among the hardships and social ills. As will be examined later in this chapter, the tenement plays often closely mirror this aspect of the oral histories.

Perhaps the clearest picture of how the reality of the tenements perpetuated a "world where everything is known about everybody" lies in the statistics of occupation. According to the *Census of Ireland: City of Dublin 1901*, the twentieth century began with "over 72,000 people (one quarter of the population) living in 21,747 single rooms, of which 12,925 were occupied by three or more persons" (qtd. in J. O'Brien 130). By 1913, conditions had hardly improved. The 1913 Housing Inquiry, instigated in part by public outrage over the Church Street incident,[2] released

[2] On 2 September 1913, the tenements at 66 and 67 Church Street collapsed, killing seven people and injuring eight others. It was revealed that these premises had only recently been approved as safe for habitation by the City's housing inspectors.

findings that verified not only the deplorable structural conditions that existed in housing of the poor and labouring communities, but also the incredible overcrowding that was experienced by most inhabitants:

Classification	**Number**	**Families**	**Persons**
First Class: Structurally sound, capable of being put in good repair.	1516 tenements	8295	27,052
Second Class: Decayed or so badly constructed; approaching the border line of unfit for habitation.	2288 houses	10,696	37,552
Third Class: Unfit for habitation and incapable of being rendered fit.	1518 tenements	6831	22,701

(qtd. in McManus 32)

The one room in a converted Georgian (typically four stories plus basement, approximately 5,000 square feet) was, on average, only 15 square feet. A single tenement house[3] contained as many as 100 people. Contrary to O'Toole's assertion, it would actually have been difficult — if not impossible — for people who lived this closely together *not* to know everything about everybody. Close proximity would have bred familiarity, and this was an urban reality of the Dublin tenements rather than a transplanting of a rural societal construct. Proximity and over-familiarity were not a dramaturgical choice to "simulate a rural community" as O'Toole asserts, they were a dramaturgical choice made to evoke the reality of Dublin tenement life.

The third and final point of O'Toole's argument asserts that the use of interior sets was a way to extend the "super-naturalistic" prop tradition of the rural plays. A survey of the Dublin plays confirms that the urban plays relied almost exclusively on interior domestic sets (see chapter five for exceptions to this convention). But his assertion that the tenement represents "an indoor community" solely as "a way of

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[3] There are no figures to differentiate between Georgian and non-Georgian tenements in the city of Dublin. It is assumed the occupancy of Georgians was on par with this average.

bringing people into contact in their own homes, thus allowing for the continuance of super-naturalistic sets and props" (114) assumes a deliberate aesthetic choice, made when other options were available. It overlooks the practical aspects of the Abbey stage through 1951 and the impact the space had upon playwrights' and producers' selections of interior settings.[4] The proscenium of the original Abbey measured 21 feet wide by 14 feet high, and the stage was only 15 feet deep. As a result, there were constraints when it came to play settings. There was also very limited back-stage space, which made the moving of sets and props between acts problematic.[5] Brenna Clarke makes the connection between the Abbey stage's size and layout and the dominant use of interiors:

> Lady Gregory records in *Our Irish Theatre* that the proscenium stage affected Synge's writing of *The Playboy of the Western World*. Originally, Synge had 'planned the opening act in the ploughed field,' but 'when he thought of the actual stage he could not see any possible side wings for that 'wide, windy corner of high distant hills.'[6] Therefore, he changed the setting to an interior. The nature of the stage probably accounted for the predominance of interior settings which were used in the theatre by all the playwrights. (35)

Clarke also observes that the Abbey stage accommodated a "stage cottage [that] was perfectly scaled to the exact dimensions of an Irish cottage one would find in the West: 12 feet high in front, sloping down to 8 feet at the back wall, 20 feet long and 12 feet wide" (Clarke 57). Coincidentally, these dimensions (except for the height) approximate the typical tenement room of 15 feet square. There is no evidence to suggest that the Abbey's traditional use of interiors was based on a decision to further

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[4] The stage of INTS headquarters on Lower Camden Street from 1902-1904 also presented challenges. As Flannery notes, "there was (sic) no backstage facilities and the stage itself was less than six feet deep" (1982, 247). This is particularly relevant considering the INTS's role in shaping the early Abbey repertoire.

[5] Entrances and exits of actors were equally problematic as a result of the backstage limitations. Actors sometimes had to leave the theatre entirely in order to get from one side of the backstage space to another. They would exit through the alleyway and run around to the other side entrance.

[6] *Our Irish Theatre*, pp. 131-132.

a "super-naturalistic" aesthetic. Rather, the propensity of interior sets, be they cottage kitchens or tenement rooms, appears to have been borne of practicality.

An Alternative Use for Grand Houses in the City

Before examining the tenement plays, there are two seldom-produced Dublin plays[7] that should be acknowledged as dramatic evidence of the symbolic link that O'Toole makes between the Ascendancy and the declining Georgian home in urban drama. Although not set in tenements, M.M. Brennan's *The Big Sweep* (1932) and Brinsley MacNamara's *The Grand House in the City* (1936) can be viewed as companion pieces to the tenement plays in that both are set in converted Georgians. The female owners still live in and maintain them, but both women have turned the homes into boarding houses out of financial necessity in order to retain ownership.[8] Both plays use the Georgian home to explore the declining Ascendancy: *The Big Sweep* from the point of view of lower- and middle-class Dubliners, and *The Grand House in the City* from the point of view of the Ascendancy. In both plays, the house represents a place of convergence for the fallen Ascendancy, Catholic nationalists and rural transplants. Working against the cultural nationalist notion of Irish authenticity being reserved for the rural non-Ascendancy, *The Big Sweep* presents the Dublin melting pot as a symbol of the nation needing harmony among all citizens in order to move forward. *The Grand House in the City* undermines multiple tenets of cultural nationalism in its examination of the State's post-independence redistribution of wealth.

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[7] *The Big Sweep* was staged only twice (1932) and *The Grand House in the City* only three times (twice in 1936 and once in 1949).

[8] There is a third boarding house play in the Dublin repertoire: *Apartments* (1923) by Fand O'Grady (a pseudonym for Kathleen Sheehy). However, the playwright does not indicate the home is a former Georgian one and so *Apartments* is not included here.

These plays reflect a segment of the Ascendancy seldom represented on the Abbey stage in the first half of the century: those who remained after the Act of Union in the belief that there was still a place for them in Dublin. As Kearns notes:

> Not all affluent Dubliners were eager, or even willing, to relinquish their established roots. Many tenaciously clung to their former world, hoping that conditions would stabilize and they could find security in the new social and political order. (1983, 42)

The Big Sweep concerns the declining fortunes of the Ascendancy (in the character of O'Grady), and incorporates both the sympathetic and antagonistic receptions they received from non-Ascendancy Dubliners. However, the antagonistic reception slowly erodes, as O'Grady proves himself to be a decent, caring man worthy of his new neighbours' affections. In the end, the play becomes a propagandistic piece, championing the role of the Ascendancy in the life of early independent Ireland and uniting it in a loving union with the downtrodden of the inner city. Mrs. Hayden, the keeper of the boarding house, is a wicked, miserly widow who resents her unemployed brother Pat and stepdaughter, Kitty. Mrs. Hayden treats them both with contempt and uses her economic power as property owner to enslave and bully them. The other residents include Gerald O'Grady, the new arrival at the boarding house, who is described as "the last of an impoverished line" (Brennan [1933], 1); Miss de Lacey, a 50-year old music teacher; Dermot Sullivan, a junior grade civil servant and ardent nationalist; and Michael Rooney, a childless widower and retired country shopkeeper "who has decided to spend the remainder of his days in the city" ([1933], 7).

This is the first Dublin play not to have a traditional family relationship central among its primary protagonists. The only blood relationship, between Mrs. Hayden and her brother Pat, is tenuous at best, and Mrs. Hayden only allows her brother to remain a boarder in exchange for his help in maintaining the property (the same is

true of Kitty). Here we see the emergence of what would, in contemporary terms, be deemed an "urban family," that is, one constructed by people for whom the city has become an adopted home either by choice or by circumstance. Brennan identifies his characters by their ages, creating an allegorical family that maps against the traditional and encompasses conventional stereotypes. The 50-year old Miss de Lacey and 60-year old Rooney embody the sage reason and sympathetic tones of kindly grandparents; Pat is the fallible but good-natured uncle, and Sullivan the bratty brother (or spoiled child). This leaves the orphaned Kitty and O'Grady as the outsiders destined to be united.

It is revealed that O'Grady had to sell everything, including his family home, in order to pay off debts on the property, and that he is now down to his last £125 and in search of employment. Even with this hardship, Sullivan is antagonistic toward O'Grady from the start. However, Sullivan's hostility toward O'Grady eventually softens: "I haven't any animosity towards him personally. It's to the system that produced his class that I object" (10) and he becomes somewhat sympathetic to the new arrival's situation. O'Grady's attributes are echoed by de Lacey throughout Act One and focus largely on his generous nature and willingness to face odds that are stacked against him in the new social order of the nation.

By the end of Act One, O'Grady and Kitty are aligned as the play's pacifists, against Sullivan and Mrs. Hayden as the play's aggressors. Sullivan is a young Catholic nationalist who romanticises the past decade's fighting, as though he regrets not having been a part of it. This does not go unnoticed by de Lacey, who defends Sullivan as best she can to O'Grady, who has been given the cold shoulder by the young nationalist: "You mustn't take all he says too seriously. He's young enough to

hold the old idea that the world can be made a better place by chopping off heads, or blowing them off, or getting them off in some violent way" (25-26).

When O'Grady is made aware of the brutality Kitty suffers at the hands of Mrs. Hayden, he becomes determined to find a way to help her. Realizing he holds two tickets to a sweepstakes (the "big sweep" of the play's title), he tells Kitty to go to his room and take one for herself. Naturally, Kitty's is a wining ticket. It is worth £600 and the chance to win an additional £30,000 at the next week's horse race. Upon learning of Kitty's good fortune, O'Grady asks for no share of the winnings, but offers his sincere congratulations. This is one more method by which this scion of the old guard is elevated to sainthood by all around him, and he grows more beloved in the eyes of Kitty.

In order to provide absolute clarity for the one or two audience members who may not have grasped his unambiguous lines of demarcation between the decent, honourable, old guard (O'Grady) and the violence-loving, argumentative young nation (Sullivan), Brennan has Sullivan also draw a winning ticket. This effectively pits Altruistic ascendancy against violent nationalist in a game of chance. When Sullivan (representing the young nation) realizes that good fortune has landed in his lap, he faints, suggesting that the young nation is incapable of recognizing opportunity for its own sake. Before the curtain falls on the embracing couple of Kitty and O'Grady, who have professed their love for each other while awaiting the race results and are now engaged to be married, Mrs. Hayden has been revealed for the horrible human being she is. The sage elders (de Lacey and Rooney) have restored harmony to the chaotic household.

Rather than using the boarding house as a site of unification, *The Grand House in the City* uses it to examine the State's post-independence redistribution of

wealth. The new socioeconomic climate has resulted in one Ascendancy family's financial hardships, but that situation is significantly marginalized in favour of presenting a neighbouring non-Ascendancy landowner as a greedy man who attempts to manipulate the fallen Ascendancy out of their property. This is the one play that most conforms to O'Toole's "fallen city" analogy, but it is not a tenement play. The play opens with a set described as:

> distinguished from the sitting room of the average city boarding-house by some lingering sense it seems to hold of the North side of Dublin in the spacious days of Grattan's Parliament. This note of faded splendour has a dwindling reflection in the present appointments of the room, which have a certain faded grandeur. (MacNamara 1.1)

The majority of the boarding house's tenants are Ascendancy members who cling aggressively to their old status and view non-members as "peasant creatures from the country" and "upstarts" (1.4). The class divides are never breached in this house. As various Ascendancy characters struggle to legally reclaim their former homes and the "grand house" owner, Diana, struggles to keep up the house's appearance, the house itself becomes a metaphor for an old way of life. Resolution of all claims occurs in the countryside of Westmeath, and it is not until Diana decides to sell the Dublin house, thereby letting go of the past, that she too finds solace.

With its use of the faded Georgian metaphor and its plot resolution occurring in the countryside, *The Grand House in the City* uses an urban domestic setting to fuse the rural and the past onto an urban set. In doing so, it was "a travelogue into [a] collective past" (O'Toole 113). However, once the urban plays turn their attention to the Georgian tenements, the past is largely discarded in favour of the underbelly of urban life in the present, and O'Toole's assertion of the urban tenement as a westward-looking setting becomes problematic.

The Tenement Plays

Fred Ryan's *The Laying of the Foundations* (1902) was the first Dublin play of the Abbey repertoire to allude to the plight of tenement living, but *The Slough* by A. Patrick Wilson (1914) was the first one to re-create a tenement room on the Abbey stage. Eleven others followed in fairly quick succession: *Blight* by St. John Gogarty and Joseph O'Connor (1917), *The Young Man from Rathmines* and *The Leprechaun in the Tenement* by M.M. Brennan (both 1922), *The Shadow of a Gunman* by Sean O'Casey (1923), *Juno and the Paycock* by O'Casey (1924), *The Passing* by Kenneth Sarr (1924), *The Plough and the Stars* by O'Casey (1926), *The Drapier Letters* by Arthur Power (1927), *The Man in the Cloak* by Louis D'Alton (1937), *Caesar's Image* by E.F. Carey (1939) and *Remembered For Ever* by Bernard McGinn (1941). During this 27-year span, the tenement was also present in numerous revivals, including 81 of the O'Casey works alone. This section explores what has been by far the most symbolic setting of Irish urban drama on the national stage. It will examine the implications of the inner city tenement setting as a vehicle for providing social criticism on the cultural nationalist movement, while considering the socioeconomic distance between the Dublin portrayed and some of the Dubliners who comprised the Abbey audience.

The first Dublin tenement play, *The Slough*, premiered in November 1914. While labour and related economic issues are the catalyst of the play's action, its tenement setting in the first and third acts serves to contrast the second act, set in the union committee room. The second act features the union leadership focused on using capital to maintain loyalty to the union. The leadership forgives arrears to men who acquiesce to union authority, but expels those who challenge it. The union leadership is intent on building power by numbers, and money and labour are second to that

objective. When the play moves to the tenement, money and work become tangible issues by their absence. *The Slough* alludes to organized labour and rigid class structures as collusive, contributing factors that perpetuate a family's poverty, but the second tenement play of the Abbey repertoire, *Blight* by Oliver St. John Gogarty and Joseph O'Conner,[9] takes this notion of outside forces' complicity and drives it to the fore. *Blight* achieves this, in large part, by blurring the lines of division between the public and private spheres that were rigidly demarcated in *The Slough*.

Blight uses the tenement setting to accentuate the harsh living conditions of Dublin's poor, but the setting also lends considerable aggressiveness to the challenge against urban power brokers that began in *The Slough*. The urban power brokers of *The Slough* were working-class members of the community whose quest for power compelled them to turn their back on one of their own. But where *The Slough* suggests power in numbers — a mob mentality — as the dominant method for workingmen to turn their backs on one of their own, *Blight* focuses on the power of an individual and, once power is attained, what he does with it. *Blight* also expands condemnation of urban power brokers to include upper- and middle-class leadership of the medical community, the Church, and Church-related charities. In doing so, it suggests that the social and governmental order of the city of Dublin is not only complicit in perpetuating tenement poverty, but active in maintaining a ghettoized class. The class distinctions clearly defined in *Blight* undermine the notion of a homogeneous citizenry that was paramount to the cultural nationalist project. It also reflects what Hutchinson refers to as a "waning of the Revival," due in part to "growing class-conflict in Dublin [...] which not only focused attention on the social

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[9] Although originally presented as equal co-authorship (under the pseudonym "A and O" or "Alpha and Omega"), a strong case is made for O'Conner's contribution being minimal. See Carens' introduction to *The Plays of Oliver St. John Gogarty* for authorship analysis.

questions neglected by cultural nationalism but also polarized the Revival itself" (1987, 184). Because tenements signify housing of the poor, class distinctions are brought into focus in virtually all of the Dublin tenement plays. With this comes exposure of the polarization to which Hutchinson alludes. This polarization is a centrepiece of *Blight*.

Predicting the *Report on Dublin Housing* that would be published the following year, the play suggests that environmental determinism "prevails for the average person [...] and just because some certain individuals rise above their appalling surroundings [...] it does not negate [the] central reality" (Prunty 3) that most cannot. The many social ills explored in this play are all the results of poverty and its perpetuation by ruling classes. Consideration of tenement life was an issue only marginally explored in *The Laying of the Foundations* and a backdrop (albeit a potent one) to the strike storyline of *The Slough*, but it is thoroughly dissected in *Blight*. By examining a multitude of effects that result from the poor being institutionally ghettoized — including absentee fathers, prostitution, disease, and alcoholism — this play is the first of the Dublin repertoire to aggressively oppose any "cultural distinction between what is urban and what is Irish" (O'Toole 115). Unlike *The Slough*, where union committee members lamented "labouring men from the country" (Wilson 41) and their inability to face the reality of harsh city living, *Blight* omits any mention of the rural. In what would become a hallmark of the overwhelming majority of Dublin tenement tragedies and tragicomedies, the city is presented as an Irish reality, with no consideration or underlying metaphor pertaining to a notion of authenticity.

The author and producers of *Blight* included the following note in the program of the first production, which premiered 11 December 1917:

> Of the 25,822 families inhabiting the tenement houses, 78% or 21,000 families, consisting of about 90,000 persons, occupy each only one room. No description can adequately convey to the mind the extreme wretchedness of such homes as these, where there can be no effectual separation of the sexes, where the parents, the adolescent, and the child must live, sleep, dress, cook, eat, wash body and clothes, read and study in one apartment. — *The Evening Herald*, November 3rd

In addition to preparing the audience for the setting they are about to witness, the use of a press account to document tenement living conditions accurately reflects the role played by journalists to bring Dublin's tenement problems to the public consciousness. As early as 1898 (in *The Daily Nation*), journalists ran exposés of tenement life with photographs of gaunt children and personal accounts of hardships in the slums. The journalistic tradition of bringing the tenements to daily press readership reached a fury in 1913, following the collapse of two tenement buildings on Church Street. It was revealed that both houses had recently been approved by the City Council as meeting building codes, and the press diligently reported both the sham of housing code protocol and the failure of the Dublin Corporation to maintain its own codes. As Kearns notes, "for many [upper- and middle-class Dubliners], the tenement slums suddenly became a stark reality" (1996, 18). The imposition of this reality upon middle- and upper-class Dubliners was further progressed on *Blight*'s opening night at the Abbey.

The first two acts of *Blight* are set in a tenement room that is home to the play's primary protagonist, Stanislaus Tully; his pregnant sister, Mary; and her six children, including a crippled son, Jimmy, and a part-time prostitute daughter, Lily. Tully is faking a back injury in the hope of receiving a large compensation for a work-related accident, and takes to his bed in order to deceive any caseworkers that may appear to investigate the authenticity of his claim. Tully's windfall is less than one day away and serves to compensate him for "the only day's work [he] ever did"

(Gogarty 2001, 512). Arriving to check on Mary's need for assistance, a caseworker immediately begins preaching the power of prayer as a solution to the family's dire circumstances, remarking that "the poor are as important in His eyes as the rich [...and] always with us" (513). By "always with us," she means in the prayers of others, but Tully makes a turn of her phrase and replies, "you'd think it was planned so that the poor would be always here" (513), setting the tone for the play's accusatory pitch. Her horrified reaction, "you shouldn't say that, you mustn't say that!" (513) only reinforces the charitable community's inability to comprehend any questioning of its intentions. When she goes on to say that, "God helps those that help themselves!" (513), effectively removing responsibility from the city leaders and institutions in favour of divine intervention, Tully asks her how they are to help themselves considering the city's complicity in their impoverishment.

Mary supports herself and her six children on an inadequate Separation Allowance provided while her husband, George, serves in the British Army during World War I: it is the only steady work he could secure. The hospital has yet to provide a room for Jimmy to have his operation, and the tenement in which they live breeds disease and illness, due to the city disregarding its own building codes. The investigating caseworker puts the blame back on Tully, saying "there is much that lies in your power to do and you neglect it" (514), and then, after discovering a barrel of stout, blames the family circumstances on Tully's drinking. While she rants, Tully responds with composure, beginning a lengthy dialogue with the observation that "in spite of all your charitable work [...] it's sad to see how little you know how the poor live" (514). That comment and Tully's speech that follow are the heart of this play:

> With noise, misery and vermin rest is impossible, not to talk of sleep. Man, woman and child must live, sleep, dress, cook and eat and wash body and clothes in this wan place. Why don't you ask us why we are huddled here together without distinction of sexes? No, ye don't! That

> would raise one of these questions about capital and labour that touch upon vested interest and are so embarrassing. Ye prefer the cheap and easy cant about drink. Why do we drink? Because we want to sleep, because it's cheaper than chloroform! Who could stand this living hell without drink? [...] Was it drink gave Jimmy his diseased hip?[...] Yer putting the cart before the horse, me lady. Poverty *first*, then dirt and disease and discontent and vice followed by your preaching. ... Was it drink sent Georgie to the war for the sake of the Separation Allowance? Did it ever strike you that nothing good was every done by preaching in this town? What built Findlater's Church? Was it preaching or drink? Drink. And the new hostel in Hatch Street? Drink. What put a roof on Christ Church Cathedral? Drink. What renovated St. Patrick's and cleared Bull Alley? Drink. What gave us Stephen's Green — Drink...drink doesn't keep us poor; but poverty makes us drink. (514-515)

When Tully wins his claim and is awarded £300, he initially uses his financially fuelled bravado to initiate a rent strike in the tenement to force the owner, Bannermann, to make basic health and safety improvements. But this benevolence is short-lived. Tully buys the tenement from Bannermann, and becomes a slumlord himself as well as a member of the City Corporation. His threat to Bannermann that "the day I'm elected Town Councillor the effect of my councilling will be [...] felt by you" (518) is not carried through. As a Board member, he bestows menial patronage jobs to some of his neighbours, but that is the extent of his generosity. None of the jobs he provides are substantial enough to lift his neighbours from their tenement living conditions, and he makes no efforts to ensure that his fellow landlords on the Board maintain their tenements or that the Board enforce tenement building codes.

In the first two acts, set in the tenement, Tully is all bravado and optimism: bigger than his surroundings and ready to confront the city's complicity in the circumstances of his family and neighbours. But the third act, set in an elegant boardroom, finds him absorbed by the setting. He has become "one of the Corporation star turns" (529) and is focused only on his own chance to profit from his tenement investment. His earlier passion against hypocrisy is taken over by Tumulty, a Board

member disgusted at the group's plans to further ghettoize the city's poor. Tumulty observes that "In no town is charity vainer or more misplaced [...] vast, useless sums are spent yearly in the name of charity and nothing comes of them, but misery continues unabated" (539). He, rather than Tully, takes a stand to champion the plight of Tully's family and neighbours, but is overruled and silenced by all fellow Board members, including Tully. Upon resigning, Tumulty's parting comment that "this city will continue to be the breeding ground of disease, vice, hypocrisy and discontent" (544) is a prophetic prediction that stands to be fulfilled by the other Board members. Provocatively, this Board mirrors the social standing of the Abbey's own opening night audience as well as its directors and shareholders. Records from the 1911 filing by the National Theatre Society Limited, which gave Yeats and Gregory ownership after the dissolution of the group's relationship with Annie Horniman, were destroyed during the Civil War.[10] However, share distribution did not fluctuate significantly during the early decades, and it is likely that the 1911 distribution[11] reflected that of the 1921 records. The 1921 shareholders were: Gregory, Yeats, Udolpho Wright, Sara Allgood, Edmund Bourke, the Rt. Hon. William F. Bailey, Philip Hanson and Lennox Robinson. Apart from the standing of the recognized Abbey figures (Gregory, Yeats, Wright, Allgood and Robinson) in the community, the social standing of these shareholders is reflected in their professions as listed in the share filing: an Estates Commissioner (Bailey), a Commissioner of Public Works (Hanson) and the Inspector of the Local Government Board for Ireland (Bourke).

Joseph Holloway found the group assembled for the opening night performance as noteworthy as the play itself:

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[10] These papers were destroyed when the Four Courts burned. See Kavanagh for details on the Articles of Association for the NTSL.

[11] Which would include 1917, the year *Blight* premiered.

> Not for years has such an audience been inside the Abbey as assembled tonight to see the first performance of *Blight*, a play of Dublin slum life by A. and O. (Dr. Oliver Gogarty and Joseph O'Connor, Heblon of *Studies in Blue* fame). To me the audience was quite as interesting as the play. In the vestibule before eight were grouped together Con Curran, Conroy (the Gaelic writer), Susan Mitchell[12] and her sister, George Russell, Mr. and Mrs. Darrell Figgis,[13] Mrs. Stopford Green,[14] Seumas O'Sullivan, Estelle Solomons, Lady Gregory, Mr. and Mrs. James Stephens,[15] George Roberts and Mrs. [George Roberts] (*nee* Maire Garvey), and crowds of other well-known figures. (Holloway 1967, 194)

Blight ends as it begins, with the play serving to "attack the complacency of the middle classes who refused to face up to the reality of the sickness and poverty in their midst" (U. O'Connor 153). In doing so, the play is challenging the very architects of the Abbey's own brand of cultural nationalism. There are no accounts of either Yeats or Gregory's reaction to the play, but Holloway claimed that, after speaking with a member of Gregory's party, "the general opinion was that the piece was more a discussion than a play, and that the characters argued more than conversed" (Holloway 1967, 195). This is a rather defensive reaction to the play, suggesting the authors' targets recognized the accusations launched in their direction, but nonetheless felt disengaged from the debate.

The authors' message did not go unnoticed by the members of the press attending the opening night, including one *Irish Times* critic who noted of the opening night performance:

> The moral is skilfully pointed. The authors send their shafts accurately home, and no one is spared. The Corporation, the Health Committee, the slum landlord, the agent, and the hypocritical philanthropists are unmercifully and justifiably laid under the lash. (12 Dec. 1917)

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[12] Editor and poet (1866-1926).

[13] Figgis (1882-1925) was a prominent author who became well known in republican circles for his involvement with Erskine Childers in the Howth gun-running scheme of 1914. He became a member of the Dáil in 1918.

[14] Historian and author (1847-1929). She ran one of Dublin's more fashionable salons from her home on St. Stephen's Green.

[15] Poet, author and founding member of the Irish Academy of Letters. Registrar of the National Gallery 1915-1924.

This direct attack was met with mixed results. One biographer of Gogarty suggests the pressure of criticizing the city power players and the government during the tumultuous year of 1917 was too much for Lady Gregory. This assertion is echoed by Holloway, who notes that on opening night "the theatre was abuzz with excitement before the play began; it had got about that the play might be suppressed after the first performance — that, in fact, it was very 'hot stuff'" (1967, 194). The play ran its scheduled ten-day run, playing to packed houses. It was a financial and popular success, "taking in £160, a record for the Abbey" (U. O'Connor 154). Although further Abbey house records indicate that the play was revived one month later and at least two additional times in 1918, to repeated financial success, the assertion that it was perhaps too confrontational for the Abbey Board is plausible. Three revivals were far fewer than the norm during this time period (especially for a play that was a box office success during its first run), and it was never staged again.

One other reason *Blight* may have had limited longevity on the Abbey stage was its utter lack of comic relief. The other tenement tragedies did not fare much better: *Caesar's Image* and *The Man in the Cloak* were each staged only once, and both *The Drapier Letters* and *The Passing* had only two productions each. Each of these tragedies is more depressing than the next. *Caesar's Image* is set in a rat-infested tenement room where men, when they are not avoiding the responsibility of parenthood, are getting drunk or dying of pneumonia brought on by their poor living conditions. *The Man in the Cloak* is a dramatization of the last hours of the poet James Clarence Mangan.[16] Mangan's dependency on alcohol and opium is dramatized through what appears to be the haze of an opium-induced state, as cholera sweeps

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[16] The title is taken from a Mangan story that appeared in the *Dublin University Review* in 1838, but is not an adaptation of that story.

through the Bride Street doss house in which he resides. *The Drapier Letters* is set in the slums near St. Patrick's Cathedral. In its attempt to identify an individual who inspired Swift to write his pamphlet series, known as *The Drapier's Letters* (1724-1725), the play focuses on a young woman living in abject poverty who is accidentally shot by police as they search the tenement looking for the author. She dies after proclaiming she was the one who urged Swift to write the pamphlets. *The Passing* is equally depressing. This one-act play, set in an attic tenement on the Quays, dramatizes the final hour of a streetwalker who, as she lays dying, laments over the son she will leave behind. Her son is a young mentally handicapped man who stands over the woman's bed unaware and unable to comprehend that she is dying.

With the exception of Bernard McGinn's *Remembered For Ever* (1941), which was only staged once, tragicomedies tended to have the greatest longevity on the Abbey stage. The McGinn play has been described as one of "frustration at a lost idealism" (MacAnna 98), but that is only one small part of a very crowded storyline that includes observations of racketeering slumlords, corrupt politicians, and disingenuous republicans, as well as the ghosts of Parnell, Emmet, Pearse and Mitchel. The play's central character is Brosnan, a man approaching middle age who has raised his daughter alone. They live in a Dublin tenement, where Brosnan struggles to make ends meet with a series of menial jobs. When he learns that funds have been raised to erect a statue in his honour in his hometown of Rossnakill, it forces him to reveal his background to a friend.

Brosnan had been a captain of the local volunteers in 1921 when he killed a Black and Tan. He put his clothes on the dead Tan to stage his own death, so that he could leave his old life behind and take care of Nora. He and Nora's mother were engaged to be married, but his republican activities kept him on the run, preventing

him from marrying her when they found out she was pregnant. His fiancée died in childbirth, and he took Nora with him to Dublin. The comedic elements of this play are limited to the scenes that occur in Rossnakill, where Brosnan travels to confront the hypocrites who are honouring him. These are the same men who refused to help him with his daughter some 20 years earlier, forcing him to fake his death and move to Dublin, where he and Nora had lived in complete poverty ever since. The humour is found in characters who, once Brosnan's identity is revealed, become enthralled with meeting "a real live Irish rebel." The Dublin tenement of this play is a veil of secrecy for Brosnan while he lives a secret life, one whose hardships become a comfort when compared to the undignified conduct of his former comrades as they cash in on their romanticized pasts.

The preference for tragicomedy among Abbey audiences is not unique to the urban plays. From Gregory's *Spreading the News* to Synge's *The Playboy of the Western World* and the rural plays of Louis D'Alton, William Boyle and George Shiels, the lighter works — even when containing dark elements — were most often the plays of greatest longevity. What distinguished those urban plays that successfully bridged tragedy and comedy from the rural was a propensity to use key political events as either catalysts of, or intrusions to, the tenement settings. The only tenement plays to fill this role were those comprising the Dublin trilogy of O'Casey: *The Shadow of a Gunman*, *Juno and the Paycock* and *The Plough and the Stars*. These were also the Dublin plays to enjoy the greatest popular and critical success.

Tenement Comedy

Although the outcomes of *The Shadow of a Gunman*, *Juno and the Paycock* and *The Plough and the Stars* are all tragic, these plays each contain moments of great comic

relief. The comedic elements are most often found in the form of characters who "fight against all forms of authority and respectability — Irish as well as British, religious as well as nationalistic" (Krause 98-99). When Seumas Shields reminds Donal Davoren that he once "believed in nothing but the gun," the comic foil Davoren resists being drawn into Shields' romantic notions of the violent aspect of Irish nationalism. The moment of resistance becomes an opportunity to critique the origins of that fallacy:

> Ay, when there wasn't a gun in the country; I've a different opinion now when there's nothin' but guns in the country…An' you daren't open your mouth, for Kathleen ni Houlihan is very different now to the woman who used to play the harp an' sing 'Weep on, weep on, your hour is past', for she's a ragin' divil now, an' if you only look crooked at her you're sure of a punch in th' eye. (O'Casey 1998, 39)

In *Juno*, the comedic antics of Joxer and the Captain are based solely on their efforts to avoid all forms of respectable work or sobriety. There are numerous examples in *The Plough and the Stars* where comic relief relies on the juxtaposition of opposing ideologies or notions of respectability; including the Covey/Uncle Peter, Fluther/Mrs. Grogan, and Bessie Burgess/Rosie Redmond. In each instance, the comedy is at its highest pitch when the one who takes comfort in the path of least resistance foils the character that believes he or she is taking the higher road.

The comic relief of the trilogy and the majority of the other tenement plays offsets the tragic events that they contain, be they the deaths of innocent bystanders or the trauma of poverty with no hope of a better life in sight. But there are two Dublin tenement plays where the setting is a backdrop to farce: M.M. (Matthew) Brennan's *The Young Man from Rathmines* (April 1922) and *A Leprechaun in the Tenement* (September 1922). In both instances, Brennan's application of farce to poverty falls horribly flat. As the juxtapositions fail, they make victims of the Abbey's intent to avoid negative Irish stereotypes and its objective of avoiding any notions of

"buffoonery." Victimizing these Abbey values is the one quality these plays contain that can be read as challenging tenets of cultural nationalism.

Both one-act plays portray tenement families seeking upward mobility, one through the daughter's marriage, the other through that most plucky of reliable means: a leprechaun. Both plays are noteworthy for the author's adoption of stereotypes that have been imposed on Irish culture, the use of which stands in opposition to the tenets of cultural nationalism espoused by the Abbey's founding charter. *Young Man from Rathmines* attempts to co-opt simian caricatures, but in doing so impugns the intelligence of Irish citizens. Portrayals of unintelligence are also the centrepiece of *The Leprechaun in the Tenement,* which uses the leprechaun figure as foil. In both cases, the plays are the antithesis of the Abbey charter's mission neither to show Ireland as "the home of buffoonery" nor to stage material that ignores an audience "weary of misrepresentation" (Gregory 1991, 379).

The Young Man from Rathmines is a simple play of mistaken identity. Set on Dominick Street, which contained some of the worst slums in Dublin by the turn of the century, the play concerns the potential marriage of Mary Dowd. The play opens on the Dowd family engaged in an absurd staging of their home for the arrival of Mary's suitor, George. Mrs. Dowd is wearing a "faded black silk dress [with a] large piece of cheap lace" (Brennan [1923], 5) around her neck, Mr. Dowd is struggling to put on a collar at the insistence of his wife, and their neighbour, Mrs. Sullivan, is in costume as their maid. Mary has been dating Barney, a labourer of her own social class, but has been corresponding with the newly arrived Dublin medical student, George Jackson, since answering his newspaper advertisement for "a nice, refined girl to correspond with him" (7). Because of his studies and Rathmines mailing address, Mary and her mother consider him a more promising potential husband than Barney.

While they are preparing for George's visit (which, based on their correspondence, is expected to include a proposal of marriage), Barney shows up unexpectedly, confronts the family when he suspects there is another potential suitor, and is sent away. The play concludes as follows:

> MRS. DOWD: (*in her most honeyed tones*) Come in. (*the door opens slowly*)
>
> MRS. SULLIVAN (*covering her face with her hands*): Here's yer young man from Rathmines, Mary.
>
> *(A young man enters and pauses inside the door, bowing and smiling. He is a Nigger. Mrs. Dowd and Mary stare at him in open-mouthed bewilderment. Mr. Dowd starts back in amazement, and almost tumbles into the fire)*
>
> MRS. DOWD: (*in tones of horror*) A black student!
>
> MARY: Oh, Barney, Barney, why did I ever send you away?! (*weeping she rushes into her mother's arms, and buries her face on that lady's bosom*).
>
> MR. DOWD: An' it was for a black haythen that I was made put on this. (*wrenches off the collar and dashes it on the ground, then strips off his coat and starts rolling up his shirt sleeves*). Just wait a minit, me buckoo, an I'll give ye such a pair of black eyes that the rest of yer face'll look white. (22-23)

Considering the simian portrayals that were prominent in Victorian publications in correlation with the rise of the Fenian movement, Brennan's selection of a black male as representing an unworthy and threatening Other raises several questions, not least of which is the possibility that the author was using this play as a platform to dilute the power of the cartooned attacks from British publications. Although Brennan's methods are overly simplistic in their transferral of the negative stereotype, he does remove it from the family portrayed and place it upon an outsider. In doing so, he portrays the Dublin family as intolerant of racial differences and lampoons them by having them believe that costume will disguise their surroundings. Judging from the play's success, the use of racist humour was acceptable during this

time period; just as it had been in late nineteenth-century American minstrel shows and, to a slightly lesser extent, in the early twentieth-century vaudeville circuit. One of the elements George shares directly with the American models was that the part of George was played in blackface (the part was played by Abbey regular Gabriel Fallon, a white Irish actor).[17] Although Abbey records cannot confirm this absolutely, reviews suggest this to be the case.

The history of slavery in America forces one to consider the use of blackface on that country's stages as an entertainment vehicle to rationalize racial oppression.[18] Male characters in blackface were commonly presented in ways that reinforced a white audience member's comfort level of black stereotypes. By portraying black men as idle or unintelligent (which was a common portrayal), it reinforced a white audience's need to see themselves as superior. The irony of the blackface character, George, in *Young Man*, is that he is of a socially superior standing than the Dowd family. This doctor-to-be neither lives in a tenement nor stands to in the future. When faced with this man of a race he feels beneath his own, Dowd is confronted with his own standing and reacts with violent outrage. He does so with an appropriate gesture of stripping off the very costume he assumed (coat and collar) in order to appear above his own social class.

A Leprechaun in the Tenement[19] opens on Mrs. Reilly and her daughter, Mary Kate, discussing marriage and lamenting on Mary Kate's inability to keep a

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[17] Christopher Morash has noted performers in blackface make-up were not unfamiliar to Irish audiences and appeared on Irish stages as early as an 1837, in a production by Thomas Dartmouth Rice at the Theatre Royal in Dublin. Rice, perhaps best known for his Jim Crow character, was the most popular and arguably influential of the American blackface performers who toured in Europe. See Morash's *A History of Irish Theatre, 1601-2000,* pp. 107. Following the popularity of American blackface entertainments, it soon became popular in British Music Hall, primarily between 1850-1930.

[18] The use of blackface in pre-vaudeville days is a slightly different issue, beyond the scope of this chapter. See *Inside the Minstrel Mask* (Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 1996) for a comprehensive overview and critique of the use of blackface in minstrel.

[19] Script and promptbook of *Leprechaun* remain missing (possibly destroyed in the 1951 Abbey fire). Summary notes are derived from reviews and synopses that can be found in NLI ms. 25,505.

boyfriend. Mr. Reilly returns from fishing on the banks of the Liffey to announce that he has a leprechaun in his basket.[20] Reilly captured the leprechaun and brought it to the tenement in order to have his wish of wealth and a home on Merrion Square granted, and to allow his family to choose two wishes of their own. Mary Kate wishes for a new dress, and her wish is granted. The son, Mickey, described in the *Irish Times'* opening night review as "a painfully portrayed imbecile," wishes for the family to remain in the tenement because his only friend is a dog that lives in the building and he doesn't want to leave it behind. While the plans are underway to move to Merrion Square, an argument breaks out among the parents, Mary Kate, and their neighbour. During the commotion, Mickey steals the basket containing the leprechaun and leaves the flat. The dog eats the leprechaun, ending Reilly's hopes for an upscale life but fulfilling Mickey's dream to remain in the tenement, and the play ends.

An attempt to ascertain Brennan's motives for employing stereotypes in his work is futile: he is absent from biographical sources, Holloway's journal, published Abbey histories and the Abbey archives. Even the drama critics of his day gave him only scant notice. Brennan is a ghost of Abbey history. It could be argued that the internal stereotyping of unintelligent "labouring" fathers, marriage-obsessed mothers and daughters, and meddling female neighbours are, as one critic stated, "true to a type" (*Irish Times*) that was apparently acceptable on the national stage during this time period. Even though the characterizations are overwhelmingly negative, none were commented on as such in the press reviews of the plays. However, several critics specifically cite the "buffoonery" of Mickey in *Leprechaun*. "Buffoonery" appears too often in reviews from a wide variety of newspapers for it to be arbitrary. Its use

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[20] The leprechaun character is not cast and remains unseen and unheard throughout the play.

suggests a condemnation more of the Abbey management than of the playwright, echoing as it does the Abbey's founding statement that "we will show that Ireland is not the home of buffoonery" (Gregory 1991, 378). Abbey management seems to have taken the hint to heart: the play ran its scheduled six nights but, in an unusual circumstance for one-act comedies of the time period, was never revived to fill double or triple bills. On the other hand, *The Young Man from Rathmines* was revived four times in 1922 and additional productions were staged as late as 1924. This pattern suggests that Abbey audiences found it acceptable to lampoon a black man of foreign birth and to present the urban poor (particularly the female characters) as intellectually inferior, but a line was drawn when it came to a young handicapped Irish man serving as a foil.

Brennan's use of broad comedy reinforces and expands the burgeoning tradition of Dublin's north inner city signifying urban Ireland by presenting it in a way that transcends melodrama. However, if one reads these two plays as employing satire and exaggeration in order to challenge the urban society, then the targets become social standing (*The Young Man from Rathmines*) and the reliance on the mythological/fantastic (*Leprechaun in the Tenement*) in the dogma of cultural nationalism. In both cases, the plays take the "buffoonery" condemned in the charter of the National Theatre and put it centre stage.

Conclusion

The tenement, as O'Toole asserts, is the "classic location" of urban Ireland in the Abbey repertoire. However, O'Toole's claim that the tenement is "essentially an urban version of the rural setting" does not hold up when the tenement plays are examined in their entirety. The use of former Georgian mansions as tenement sets

reflects a reality of Dublin's architectural landscape and the city's response to a severe housing shortage for the poorer members of its society, not a "pull of the past" being imposed on urban plays. The portrayals of enclosed worlds where "everything is known about everybody" reflect a reality of tenement overcrowding. This is not a dramaturgical choice to "simulate a rural community." And the use of interior sets was more likely the result of stage constraints at the original Abbey theatre, not an aesthetic choice based on a desire to continue the use of super-naturalistic sets and props. Overall, the tenement setting was a reality that spoke to an urban experience without deliberately positioning itself against a rural collective consciousness. The tenement plays stood in opposition to the dominant rural repertoire and cultural nationalist tenets in three ways: by using an urban setting, by portraying societal class divisions, and (in the comedies) by undermining the tenet of avoiding stage Irishness.

Although the trilogy of Sean O'Casey would become the most canonical of the tenement plays, the setting was employed numerous times before his trilogy premiered in 1923 with *The Shadow of a Gunman*. *The Slough*, *Blight*, *The Young Man from Rathmines* and *The Leprechaun in the Tenement* were all staged prior to *Gunman* and, although they met with varying degrees of success, these plays established the Dublin tenement in the Abbey's urban repertoire quite early in the theatre's history. In doing so, they helped pave the way for the trilogy, which would, as will be discussed in chapter six, take its place among the most frequently performed and financially successful plays at the national theatre.

CHAPTER 5
PUBLIC SPACES: DUBLIN OUTSIDE THE HOME

Oh, Mother Ireland, get off my back!
—Design for a Headstone

The celebrated public house of *The Playboy of the Western World* notwithstanding, plays set in a non-domestic interior are mostly found in the Abbey's Dublin repertoire. As discussed in chapter four, the home dominated the Abbey stage from the beginning, and this setting lent itself to examining the private, domestic consequences of external events. Where a rural or peasant play is set entirely or partially outside a farmhouse or the much-celebrated cottage kitchen, it is most often a lane, road or other outdoor space and noted for being remote or desolate. As such, public places used in the rural repertoire reinforce the seclusion of the farmhouse or kitchen and essentially serve as extensions of the private sphere. Domestic interiors, be they cottage kitchen or tenement room, consistently show significant moments writ small and, in doing so, portray the consequences of external events upon private lives. When the Dublin plays venture out of the home and into the public arena, they maintain a dialogue between external events and domestic impact, but they also open a discourse on how public institutions operate *in response* to the citizenry. This discourse stands in opposition to the domestic being *acted upon*, as portrayed in the plays set in the private sphere.

What the domestic and public settings do share is a tendency to highlight class divisions within Irish urban society. The existence of this division, as discussed in chapters three and four, was diametrically opposed to the image of a harmonious, indigenous population as put forward by the nationalist project. Depending upon the public space in which they are set, the Dublin plays with action occurring outside of

the home not only comment on class divisions, but also portray the impact these divisions have on the outcome of the public events or institutions being scrutinized.

As examined in chapter one, throughout Ireland's stages of cultural nationalism, Dublin usually served as the administrative centre of the movement's activities, but the third phase, which included the establishment of the Abbey Theatre, was the most uniquely Dublin-centric. That the Dublin plays are the component of the Abbey repertoire most often to feature public institutional settings parallels the city's centrality to the movement and the institutions that gave shape to its articulation. While they address a broad range of social topics and events, they are predisposed to explore the legacy of leadership of such institutions and the public's relationship with that leadership. In doing so, they reveal tension between those who lead or create doctrines and those who resist that to which they are expected to acquiesce.

Examination of the Dublin repertoire reveals the primary public settings to be those that house the arts and governmental or judicial bodies, with the most social of Dublin institutions, the pub, also making a strong showing. All of the Dublin plays that contain settings in the public arena use their settings to draw attention to the role these places perform in Dublin, if not Irish, society. They all reflect on some component of the nationalist project and critique its relationship with the public. The first cluster of plays that will be examined, those set in the Abbey theatre, are the most overt examples of this phenomenon. Rather than focus on drama in a generic fashion, they specifically address the drama that was staged by the Abbey and, through metadramatic form,[1] suggest a disconnection between drama at the national theatre and the national citizenry. The second cluster, those set in government

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[1] Although the origins of metadrama were referred to as metatheatre (Lional Abel, *Metatheatre: A New View of Dramatic Form*, 1963), the concept has become more commonly referred to as metadrama and so that is the terminology used herein. See Lovrod for a brief discussion of the evolution of the terminology.

institutions also suggest a disconnection, but they do so in a decidedly different fashion. Whereas the metadramatic plays use the theatrical experience to explore fissures in communication of the cultural nationalist agenda, those set in the courtroom and prison rely on the dramatization of historical events to suggest that fuelling the flames of heightened nationalism can have consequences that actually undermine the movement's objectives. Finally, examination of the public house considers its use as a site of intrigue, where citizens gather to interrogate issues of nationalism and, more often than not, serve as evidence of its failings or failed attempts at realization of doctrine.

Metadrama in the Dublin Repertoire

At its most basic level, metadrama is that which "uses the stage to explore theatricality and, very often, its relation to life" (Lovrod 497). But Richard Hornby hones in on metadrama as an experience rather than a technique, and it is that experience that is of interest here. Relying on Brecht's foundational 'alienation' theory, Hornby states:

> The metadramatic experience for the audience is one of unease, a dislocation of perception. It is thus possible to talk about the degree of intensity of metadrama, which varies from very mild to an extreme disruption. At times, metadrama can yield the most exquisite of aesthetic insights, which theorists have spoken of as "estrangement" or "alienation." This "seeing double" is the true source of the significance of metadrama. (32)

The notion of an audience "seeing double" is derived from the impact that metadramatic elements can have upon the cultural dynamics contained in a play. If employed effectively, these elements can estrange the audience from a production in such a way that they see themselves seeing the work being staged. As a result, they

stand to observe themselves contained within the cultural artefact, and to interrogate their own roles within the culture being documented.

Hornby isolates five primary varieties of "conscious or overt metadrama" as: the play within the play, the ceremony within the play, role playing within the role, literary and real-life reference, and self-reference.[2] The metadramatic elements of the rural repertoire are found primarily in the use of literary reference and the ceremony within the play, most often weddings and funerals. The literary references appear most often in the works of Yeats and Gregory, whose joint efforts to incorporate the Celtic mythology embraced by the nineteenth century cultural nationalists and to reclaim oral tales from the West of Ireland were cornerstones for many of the rural and peasant plays they authored for the Abbey. However, it could be argued that Yeats' literary references were either unrecognizable or too familiar to create an impact on the audience. As Hornby notes:

> The degree of metadramatic estrangement generated is proportional to the degree to which the audience recognizes the literary allusion as such. When they do recognize it, the result is like an inset type of play within the play in miniature; the imaginary world of the main play is disrupted by a reminder of its relation, as a literary construct, to another literary work or works. (88)

One can assume that at least some of the theatre goers were familiar with the Ulster sagas and Ossianic legends upon which Yeats so often based his plays, but it is equally likely that a percentage were not. Likewise, as David Krause has argued, it could have been the public's observation that Synge was linking his roguish characters with the rebellious spirit of Oisín that caused so much outrage to his works.[3] If these sagas were too familiar to the audience, the literary references may

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[2] Although Hornby discusses these elements in numerous essays, the most comprehensive examination is in *Drama, Metadrama and Perception*.

[3] See "The Hidden Oisín" in Krause's *The Profane Book of Irish Comedy* for an interesting consideration of a link between the Oisín tales and the comic characters in Synge and O'Casey.

have been too well-known to have a metadramatic impact. The same holds true for the folk stories recycled by Gregory. As Hornby states, "The references to well-known Bible stories and characters, standard mythology, and popular folk tales [...] are no more disruptive than a description of a tree or a rock" (89). The manner in which ceremonies are employed can also determine the extent to which an audience experiences metadramatic estrangement. Hornby argues that the use of the ceremony within the play is metadramatic "in the sense of examining a cultural phenomenon that is closely related to theatre via the medium of performance [...] and thus, by extension, stimulates an interest in the nature of human 'performing' generally" (55). The end result is that this variety of metadrama is most often reflective of a desire to explore social concerns. If the ceremony is fulfilled/completed as prescribed, as it is in the majority of the rural repertoire that incorporates this element, the underlying message is of continuity and tradition. As a salve to a dominant cultural nationalist ideology, it is apt that this model is most commonly found in the rural repertoire.

The most notable exception to this pattern is Synge. He claimed the basis of the language and plots of his plays through *The Playboy of the Western World* to be based on that which he overheard by real people. But he repeatedly uses both marriage and death ceremonies in his plays to challenge those early dramatic tenets of cultural nationalism that relied heavily upon presenting an indigenous continuity or endurance of a family line. Synge's weddings (and attempted weddings) are always problematic, and are used to expose fractures or hypocrisy rather than unity; and the keening of *Riders to the Sea* can be read as a lament to the death of a way of life, as much as to a son lost at sea. The works of Synge are an exception to the rural repertoire's use of metadramatic elements to reinforce cultural continuity or tradition.

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Appendix A: Dublin Plays 1904-1951, List of First Productions

*The Laying of the Foundations** — First Staged: 29 October 1902
Author: Frederick Ryan
Director: N/A

Cast:		
	Mr. O'Loskin, T.C.	F.J. Fay
	Michael	P.J. Kelly
	Alderman Farrelly	J. Dudley Digges
	M. MacFadden	Frank Walker
	Mr. Nolan	N. Butler
	Mrs. O'Loskin	Maire Nic Shiubhlaigh
	Mrs. MacFadden	Honor Lavelle
	Eileen	Maire T. Quinn

*Produced by the Irish National Dramatic Company at the Antient Concert Rooms, but part of the Abbey repertoire.

The Man Who Missed the Tide — First Staged: 13 February 1908
Author: W.F. Casey (William Francis Casey)
Director: N/A

Cast:		
	Dr. Gerald Quinn	Arthur Sinclair
	James Walsh	Fred O'Donovan
	Martin Kelly	J.M. Kerrigan
	Mrs. Gerald Quinn, Moira	Sara Algood
	Sheila Kennedy	Maire O'Neill
	A Housemaid	Eileen O'Doherty
	A Barmaid	Eileen O'Doherty

The Suburban Groove — First Staged: 1 October 1908
Author: W.F. Casey (William Francis Casey)
Director: N/A

Cast:		
	Dick Dalton	J.M. Kerrigan
	James O'Connor	Fred O'Donovan
	Mrs. James O'Connor	Sara Algood
	Jack O'Connor	U. Wright
	Una O'Connor	Maire O'Neill
	Claude Callan	Arthur Sinclair

The Cross-Roads (prologue only) — First Staged: 1 April 1909
Author: Lennox Robinson
Director:

Cast:		
	Ellen McCarthy	Sara Allgood
	Brian O'Connor	Fred O'Donovan
	James O'Reilly	Sydney J. Morgan
	Sydney Doyle	Eric Gorman
	Henry Blake	J.A. O'Rourke
	Mrs. McCarthy	Maire O'Neill
	Mrs. Desmond	Eileen O'Doherty
	Mike Dempsey	J.M. Kerrigan
	Tom Dempsey	Arthur Sinclair

An Imaginary Conversation — First Staged: 13 May 1909
Author: Norreys Connell (Conal O'Riordan)
Director: Norreys Connell (Conal O'Riordan)

Cast:		
	Kate Moore	Sara Allgood
	Tommy Moore	J.M. Kerrigan
	Emmet	Fred O'Donovan

The Dean of St. Patrick's Cathedral — First Staged: 23 January 1913
Author: G. Sidney Paternoster
Director: Lennox Robinson

Cast:		
	Patrick	Michael Conniffe
	Sweetheart	Helena Moloney
	Mistress Esther Johnston	Nell Byrne
	Mrs. Dingley	Nora Desmond
	Dr. Jonathan Swift	Patrick Murphy
	His Grace, the Archbishop of Dublin	George St. John
	Mr. Joseph Addison	Farrell Pelly
	Mrs. Van Homrigh	Ettie Fletcher
	Mistress Anne Long	Una O'Connor
	Mistress Hester Van Homrigh	Ann Coppinger
	Mrs. Touchet	Nell Stewart
	First Lady	Kathleen O'Brien
	Second Lady	Betty King
	Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke	Philip Guiry
	Royal Servant	Thomas Barry
	Mr. Congreve	A. Patrick Wilson
	His Grace, the Duke of Ormond	Charles Power
	Dr. John Arbuthnot	Eric Gorman
	Robert Harley, Earl of Oxford	Sean Connolly

The Critics, or a New Play at the Abbey — First Staged: 20 November 1913
Author: St. John Ervine
Director: Lennox Robinson

Cast:		
	Mr. Barbary	J.M. Kerrigan
	Mr. Quacks	Fred O'Donovan
	Mr. Quartz	Sydney J. Morgan
	Mr. Bawlawney	Arthur Sinclair
	An Attendant	H.E. Hutchinson

The Lord Mayor — First Staged: 13 March 1914
Author: Edward McNulty
Director: A. Patrick Wilson

Cast:		
	Mrs. Murphy	Sheila O'Sullivan
	Mrs. Moloney	Maura O'Byrne
	Gaffney	Reginald Montgomery
	Kelly	Michael Hayes
	O'Brien	Sean Connolly
	Mrs. O'Brien	Maureen Delany
	Moira O'Brien	Cathleen MacCarthy
	Scanlon	Michael Conniffe
	Doherty	Edward Reardon
	Mrs. Moran	Ethel Fletcher
	Mr. Butterfield	Arthur Shields
	Lackey	Thomas O'Neill

The Slough — First Staged: 3 November 1914
Author: A. Patrick Wilson (Andrew Patrick Wilson)
Director: A. Patrick Wilson

Cast:		
	Peter Hanlon	Arthur Shields
	Mary Hanlon	Maura O'Byrne
	Annie Hanlon	Kathleen Drago
	Peg Hanlon	Eithne Magee
	Jack Hanlon	Philip Guiry
	Edward Kelly	H.E. Hutchinson
	Margaret Kelly	Nora Desmond
	Tom Robinson	Fred O'Donovan

	Jake Allen	A. Patrick Wilson
	Joe Moran	J.F. Barlow
	Jim Crocker	Sydney J. Morgan
	Tim Daly	J.A. O'Rourke
	Bill Nolan	J.M. Kerrigan
	Pete Riley	Michael Conniffe
	Matt Taylor	Thomas O'Neill

The Dreamers — First Staged: 10 February 1915
Author: Lennox Robinson
Director: A. Patrick Wilson

Cast:	John Brady	Arthur Sinclair
	Robert Brady	A. Patrick Wilson
	Martin Brady	U. Wright
	Robert Emmet	Fred O'Donovan
	Lacey/Quigley	Eric Gorman
	Sarah Curran	Sara Allgood
	Henry Howley/Morrissey	J.M. Kerrigan
	Thomas Freyne	James Smith
	McCartney/Con/Mangan	Sean Connolly
	Hannay/Jones	H.E. Hutchinson
	Trenaghan	Philip Guiry
	Peter Freyne	George St. John
	Roche/Mike	J.A. O'Rourke
	Mulligan	William Shields
	Julia	Kathleen Drago
	Jerry	Tomas O'Neill
	Jim	J.F. Barlow
	Peter Flynn	Sydney J. Morgan
	Felix Rourke/Larry	J.M. Kerrigan
	Mickey	Michael Coniffe
	Kate	Shiela O'Sullivan
	Mary	Cathleen MacCarthy
	Philips	Fred Harford
	Mrs. Dillon	Ann Coppinger
	Mrs. Palmer	Helen Molony
	Jane Curran	Nora Desmond
	Major Sirr	Philip Guiry
	Other Men	Arthur Shields, Edward Reardon, Jack Dunne

Blight: The Tragedy of Dublin — First Staged: 11 December 1917
Authors: Alpha and Omega (Joseph O'Connor and Oliver St. John Gogarty)
Director: Fred O'Donovan

Cast:	Stanislaus Tully	Fred O'Donovan
	Mrs. Mary Foley	May Craig
	Jimmy	Michael MacLiammoir
	Lily	Irene Kelly
	Miss Maxwell-Knox	Margaret Nicholls
	Mrs. Larissey	Maureen Delany
	Mr. Bannermann	Maurice Esmonde
	Jimmy Larissey	P.J. McDonnell
	A Labourer	Barry Fitzgerald
	Medical Dick	Arthur Shields
	Medical Davy	Clement Garrick
	Charwoman	Dorothy Lynd
	Members of the Board of the Townsend Sanatorion:	
	Mr. Norris Galbraith	Eric Gorman
	Mr. Tisdall-Townsley	Fred Harford
	Mr. Morphy	Peter Nolan

	Mr. William McWhirter	Hubert McGuire
	Mr. Tumulty	Louis O'Connor
	George Foley	Bryan Herbert

The Wooing of Julia Elizabeth — First Staged: 10 August 1920
Author: James Stephens
Director: Lennox Robinson
Cast: Not available. The program of this production lists the cast as Arthur Shields, J.M. Kerrigan and F. J. McCormick. However, the roles called for two males and one female. All attempts to identify the proper cast have been unsuccessful.

The Revolutionist — First Staged: 24 February 1921
Author: Terence J. MacSwiney
Director: Lennox Robinson

Cast:	Mrs. Sullivan	Maureen Delany
	John Mangan	Barry Fitzgerald
	Father O'Connor	Michael J. Dolan
	Hugh O'Neill	F.J. McCormick
	Con Sheehan	Peter Nolan
	Doyle	Maurice Esmonde
	Nora Mangan	Gertrude Murphy
	Fan O'Byrne	Christine Hayden
	Dr. Foley	Alan Duncan
	Father O'Hanlon	Eric Gorman
	Mackay	P. Kirwin
	Bennett	J. Lynch
	Maher	Gabriel Fallon
	Kiely	V. Young
	Rohan	Hubert McGuire
	Keane	Tony Quinn
	Lawlor	U. Wright
	Servents, Followers	J. Barlow, P. MacDonnell, J. McCarthy, M. Gogarty

The Young Man from Rathmines — First Staged: 6 April 1922
Author: M.M. Brennan
Director: Lennox Robinson

Cast:	Mr. Dowd	Michael J. Dolan
	Mrs. Dowd	Mai Neville
	Mary Dowd	Crissie Byrne
	Mrs. Sullivan	Sheila Murray
	Barney Reilly	Tony Quinn
	George Jackson	Gabriel J. Fallon

A Leprechaun in the Tenement — First Staged: 5 September 1922
Author: M.M. Brennan
Director: Lennox Robinson

Cast:	Mr. Reilly	Barry Fitzgerald
	Mrs. Reilly	Sheila Murray
	Alice Kate	Eileen Crowe
	Mickey Reilly	Tony Quinn
	The Widow Murphy	May Craig

The Shadow of a Gunman — First Staged: 12 April 1923
Author: Sean O'Casey
Director: Lennox Robinson

Cast:	Donal Davoren	Arthur Shields
	Seumas Shields	F.J. McCormick
	Tommy Owens	Michael J. Dolan
	Adolphus Grigson	P.J. Carolan

	Mrs. Grigson	May Craig
	Minnie Powell	Gertrude Murphy
	Mr. Mulligan	Eric Gorman
	Mr. Maguire	G.V. Lavelle
	Mrs. Henderson	Christine Hayden
	Mr. Gallogher	Gabriel J. Fallon
	An Auxiliary	Tony Quin

Apartments — First Staged: 3 September 1923
Author: Fand O'Grady
Director: Lennox Robinson

Cast:	Mrs. MacCarthy	Sara Allgood
	Michael MacCarthy	Michael J. Dolan
	Geraldine MacCarthy	Gertrude Murphy
	Maude MacCarthy	Irene Murphy
	Mr. Kiernan	Arthur Shields
	Mr. O'Flaherty	F.J. McCormick
	Miss O'Rourke	Pearl Moore
	Mrs. Quinn	Eileen Crowe

Kathleen Listens In — First Staged: 1 October 1923
Author: Sean O'Casey
Director: Lennox Robinson

Cast:	Miceawl O'Houlihan	F.J. McCormick
	Sheela O'Houlihan	Maureen Delany
	Kathleen	Eileen Crowe
	Tomaus Thornton	Barry Fitzgerald
	Jimmy	Michael J. Dolan
	The Man in the Kilts	Gabriel J. Fallon
	The Free Stater	Arthur Shields
	The Republican	Tony Quinn
	The Business Man	U. Wright
	The Farmer	Maurice Esmonde
	The Doctor	Eric Gorman
	The Man with the Big Drum	Peter Nolan
	Two Men	Walter Dillon, P.J. Carolan

Never the Time and Place — First Staged: 19 February 1924
Author: Lennox Robinson
Director: Lennox Robinson

Cast:	Mrs. Sheep	Sara Allgood
	Mrs. Fitzsimons	Eileen Crowe
	Mrs. Mooney	Maureen Delany
	Roderigo Callanan	Arthur Shields

Juno and the Paycock — First Staged: 3 March 1924
Author: Sean O'Casey
Director: Michael J. Dolan

Cast:	"Captain" Jack Boyle	Barry Fitzgerald
	"Juno" Boyle	Sara Allgood
	Johnny Boyle	Arthur Shields
	Mary Boyle	Eileen Crowe
	"Joxer" Daly	F.J. McCormick
	Mrs. Maisie Madigan	Maureen Delany
	"Needle" Nugent	Michael J. Dolan
	Mrs. Tancred	Christine Hayden
	Jerry Devine	P.J. Carolan
	Charlie Bentham	Gabriel J. Fallon
	First Irregular	Maurice Esmonde
	Second Irregular	Michael J. Dolan

	First Furniture Remover	Peter Nolan
	Second Furniture Remover	Tony Quinn
	Coal-block Vendor	Tony Quinn
	Sewing Machine Man	Peter Nolan
	Two Neighbours	Eileen O'Kelly, Irene Murphy

Nannie's Night Out — First Staged: 29 September 1924
Author: Sean O'Casey
Director: Michael J. Dolan

Cast:	Mrs. Polly Pender	Maureen Delany
	Oul Johnny	Barry Fitzgerald
	Oul Jimmy	Michael J. Dolan
	Oul Joe	Gabriel J. Fallon
	Irish Nannie	Sara Allgood
	Robert	Gerald Breen
	A Ballad Singer	F.J. McCormick
	A Young Man	Arthur Shields
	A Young Girl	Eileen Crowe
	Crowd	Seaghan Barlow, F. Ellis, W. O'Hara, and M. Judge

The Passing — First Staged: 9 December 1924
Author: Kenneth Sarr (Reddin)
Director: Michael J. Dolan

Cast:	Nann	Sara Allgood
	Jimmie	Michael J. Dolan

The Plough and the Stars — First Staged: 8 February 1926
Author: Sean O'Casey
Director: Lennox Robinson

Cast:	Jack Clitheroe	F.J. McCormick
	Nora Clitheroe	Shelah Richards
	Peter Flynn	Eric Gorman
	The Young Covey	Michael J. Dolan
	Fluther Good	Barry Fitzgerald
	Bessie Burgess	Maureen Delany
	Mrs. Gogan	May Craig
	Mollser	Kitty Curling
	Captain Brennan	Gabriel J. Fallon
	Lieut. Langon	Arthur Shields
	Rosie Redmond	Ria Mooney
	A Barman	P.J. Carolan
	A Woman	Eileen Crowe
	The Voice	J. Stephenson
	Corp. Stoddard	P.J. Carolan
	Sgt. Tinley	J. Stephenson

The Drapier Letters — First Staged: 22 August 1927
Author: Arthur R. Power
Director: Arthur Shields

Cast:	Mary-Bridget	Shelah Richards
	Mrs. Cafferty	Eileen Crowe
	Mrs. Kate	May Craig
	Sally O'Gorman	Maureen Delany
	Biddy	Aoife Taaffe
	An English Officer	P.J. Carolan
	Private Thomson	M. Scott
	Private Smith	T. Moran
	Robert Blakely	Peter Nolan

Before Midnight — First Staged: 16 July 1928
Author: Gerald Brosnan
Director: Lennox Robinson

Cast:	Patrick Kiley	F.J. McCormick
	"Knacker" Keener	Michael J. Dolan
	Det. Long	P.J. Carolan
	Joe Mason	Barry Fitzgerald
	Mike Bannon	Michael Scott
	Amey	Ria Mooney
	Civic Guard	Arthur Shields
	Detective	Thomas Marshall

The Words Upon the Window-Pane — First Staged: 17 November 1930
Author: W.B. Yeats
Director: Lennox Robinson

Cast:	Miss McKenna	Shelah Richards
	Dr. Trench	P.J. Carolan
	John Corbet	Arthur Shields
	Cornelius Patterson	Michael J. Dolan
	Abraham Johnson	F.J. McCormick
	Mrs. Mallet	Eileen Crowe
	Mrs. Henderson	May Craig

The Critic — First Staged: 6 January 1931
Author: Lennox Robinson (a modernization of the Richard Brinsley Sheridan play)
Director: Lennox Robinson

Cast:	Mr. Dangle	Michael J. Dolan
	Mrs. Dangle	Maureen Delany
	A Servant	Frolie Mulhern
	Mr. Sneer	Fred Johnson
	Mr. Plagiary	Arthur Shields
	Puff	F.J. McCormick
	Interpretor	John Barton
	Signora Pasticcio Ritornello	Christine Hayden
	Anna	Geraldine Byrne
	Nella	Jill Gregory
	Stage Manager	P.J. Carolan
	Cast of "The Spanish Armada"	
	Don Whiskerandos	Arthur Shields
	Tilburina	Eileen Crowe
	Confidante	May Craig
	Two sentries	Michael Finn, Michael Clarke
	Sir Walter Raleigh	Barry Fitzgerald
	Sir Christopher Hatton	Eric Gorman
	Governor of Tilbury Fort	Thomas Moran
	Master of the Horse	U. Wright
	Knight	Denis O'Dea
	Earl of Leicester	J. Stevenson
	Justice	John Barton
	Justice's Lady	Christine Hayden
	Constable	Michael Finn
	Son	Denis O'Dea
	Relations	U. Wright, Michael Clarke, W. O'Gorman, Pat C. Cahill
	Lord Burleigh	J. Stevenson
	Beefeater	J. Winter
	Two nieces	Frolie Mulhern, Gertie Quinn
	The Thames	Noel de la Rue
	Thames' Banks	Geraldine Byrne, Jill Gregory

	The Ballet	Chris Sheehan, Doreen Cuthbert, Cepta Cullen, Thelma Murphy, V. Wynburne, Noel de la Rue
Scrap		First Staged: 7 July 1931
Author: J.A. O'Brennan		
Director: Arthur Shields		
Cast:	Ned Tobin	Michael J. Dolan
	Kate Tobin	May Craig
	Billy Tobin	Fred Johnson
	A Young Man	Denis O'Dea
The Big Sweep		First Staged: 7 November 1932
Author: M.M. Brennan		
Director: Lennox Robinson		
Cast:	Gerald O'Grady	Tom Purefoy
	Michael Rooney	Don Barry
	Dermot Sullivan	Joseph Linnane
	Miss De Lacey	Christine Hayden
	Mrs. Hayden	Bel Johnston
	Kitty Hayden	Dorothy Clement
	Pat Burke	W. O'Gorman
The Silver Tassie		First Staged: 12 August 1935
Author: Sean O'Casey		
Director: Arthur Shields		
Cast:	Sylvester Heegan	Barry Keegan
	Mrs. Heegan	Ann Clery
	Simon Norton	Michael J. Dolan
	Susie Monican	Eileen Crowe
	Mrs. Foran	May Craig
	Teddy Foran	P.J. Carolan
	Harry Heegan	F.J. McCormick
	Jessie Taite	Aideen O'Connor
	Barney Bagnal	Fred Johnson
	Soldiers	Denis O'Dea, J. Winter, Cyril Cusack, J. Hand, P.J. Carolan
	The Corporal	J. Stephenson
	The Visitor	Edward Lexy
	The Staff Wallah	Tom Purefoy
	Stretcher-bearers	W. O'Gorman, M. Finn, M. Clarke, B. Carey
	Casualties	W. Redmond, Edward Lexy
	Surgeon Forby Maxwell	Tom Purefoy
	The Sister of the Ward	Truda Barling
A Deuce O'Jacks		First Staged: 16 September 1935
Author: F.R. Higgins		
Director: Michael J. Dolan		
Cast:	Knacker Byrne	P.J. Carolan
	A Tin Whistle Player	J. Davenport
	Golden Maggie	Maureen Delany
	Luke Gaffney	Michael J. Dolan
	Harefoot Mike	Fred Johnson
	Pharoah's Daughter	Muriel Kelly
	Yockle Brough	F.J. McCormick
	Michael Moran	Denis O'Dea
	A Priest	William Patterson
	A Melodeon Player	M. Schiff
	Jezebel	Chris Sheehan

	The Nobbler	John Stephenson
	Hawkers/Ballad Singers/Corner Boys	Michael Clarke, Ann Clery, Cyril Cusak, Michael Finn, Kathleen Murphy, William O'Gorman, Nora O'Mahony and J. Winter

The Grand House in the City — First Staged: 3 February 1936
Author: Brinsley MacNamara
Director: Hugh Hunt

Cast:	Henry Bergan	Michael J. Dolan
	Massie Ward	Maureen Delany
	Diana Gilsenan	Eileen Crowe
	Walter Gilsenan	Cyril Cusak
	Olivia Petit	Christine Hayden
	Vincent Kelch	Arthur Shields
	Mary Ward	May Craig
	Brian Merriman	Fred Johnson
	Richard Gilsenan	F.J. McCormick
	Owen Lynam	P.J. Carolan
	Delia Lynam	Aideen O'Connor

Blind Man's Buff — First Staged: 26 December 1936
Authors: Ernst Toller and Denis Johnston
Director: Hugh Hunt

Cast:	Laura Chavasse	Patsy Fitzpatrick
	Mary Quirke	May Craig
	Dominick Mapother	F.J. McCormick
	Dr. Frank Chavasse	Arthur Shields
	Dr. Anice Hollingshead	Eileen Crowe
	Sgt. Carey	P.J. Carolan
	John Roche	Eric Gorman
	Theobald Thin	Michael J. Dolan
	Liam Poer	Fred Johnson
	Henry Harrican	Austin Meldon
	Mr. Justice Drooley	Tom Purefoy
	Registrar	Frank Carney
	Seamus Ua Caoilte	Denis O'Dea
	Juryman	Brian Carey
	Solicitors, Barristers, Clerks, etc.	Messrs. Barror, Finn, Considine, and Hickey

The Man in the Cloak — First Staged: 27 September 1937
Author: Louis D'Alton
Director: Hugh Hunt

Cast:	Clarence Mangan	Cyril Cusak
	James Mangan	Fred Johnson
	Kate Mangan	Ann Clery
	John Mangan	Malachi Keegan
	Mick Fogarty	Eric Gorman
	Bridie Gilheaney	Josephine Fitzgerald
	Marty Phelan	W. O'Gorman
	Con Colgan	Seumas Healy
	Cis Carmody	Shela Ward
	Catherine Hayes	Shelah Richards
	Blythe	J. Winter
	Laurence Tighe	Tom Purefoy

The Invincibles — First Staged: 18 October 1937
Author: Hugh Hunt and Frank O'Connor
Director: Hugh Hunt

Cast:	First Fenian	Dermot Kelly
	Second Fenian	Michael Finn

	Publican	Victor Boyd
	James Carey	Fred Johnson
	Timothy Kelly	Cyril Cusack
	P.J. Tynan	Frank Carney
	Joe Brady	W. O'Gorman
	Daniel Curley	Eric Gorman
	Ned McCaffrey	Laurence Elyan
	Maggie Fitzsimons	Sheila Ward
	Caretaker	Seumas Healy
	Mr. O'Leary	W. Redmond
	The Publican (at Chapelizod)	Brian Carey
	The Angler	P.H. Considine
	Michael Kavanagh	M. Kinsella
	Dan Delaney	John MacDarby
	Man with Proclamations	M. Kinsella
	Inspector Mallon	C. Barror
	Mrs. Brady	Christine Hayden
	Warder	Malachi Keegan
	Governor of Prison	Gerald Hickey
	Sister of Mercy	Ann Clery

Coggerers — First Staged: 22 November 1937
Author: Paul Vincent Carroll
Director: Hugh Hunt

Cast:	Eamonn O'Curry	Eric Gorman
	Mrs. Galgoogley	Josephine Fitzgerald
	Owen, her son	W.T. O'Connor
	Parnell	Fred Johnson
	Wolfe Tone	Frank Carney
	Robert Emmet	W. Redmond
	John Mitchel	W. O'Gorman
	Lord Edward Fitzgerald	P.H. Considine

A Spot in the Sun — First Staged: 14 February 1938
Author: T.C. Murray
Director: Hugh Hunt

Cast:	Denis Harman	Cyril Cusack
	Rose Harman	Shelah Richards
	Mrs. Harman	Christine Hayden
	Annie	Ann Clery
	First Man	Fred Johnson
	Second Man	Malachi Keegan

Caesar's Image — First Staged: 6 February 1939
Author: E.F. Carey
Director: Louis D'Alton

Cast:	Maria Brady	Eileen Crowe
	Dan Brady	Fred Johnson
	Katie Brady	Phyllis Ryan
	Patsy Brady	W. O'Gorman
	"Sloper" Neale	Michael J. Dolan
	Mrs. Hogan	Maureen Delany
	Mrs. Behan	May Craig
	The Widow Whooley	Christine Hayden
	Chrissie Whooley	Ria Mooney
	Martin Powell	Denis O'Dea
	Young Man	Victor Boyd
	Detective	Malachi Keegan
	Policeman	Gerard Kiernan

Trial at Green Street Courthouse — First Staged: 9 January 1941
Author: Roger McHugh
Director: Frank Dermody

Cast:		
	Ryan	Joseph Linnane
	Jerry	Finbarr Howard
	Old Man	John McDarby
	Isaac Butt	F.J. McCormick
	Frederick Falkiner	W. O'Gorman
	Dowse	Austin Meldon
	Armstrong	Michael J. Dolan
	Chief Justice Whiteside	Tom Purefoy
	Chief Baron Pigott	James Dunne
	Dr. Stokes	Michael Walsh
	Dr. Tufnell	Harry Brogan
	Doctor McDonnell	Eric Gorman
	Edmund Vesey	Denis O'Dea
	Constable Mullen	Seumas Healy
	Constable Grimes	J. Winter
	Henry Talbot	U. Wright
	Dr. O'Leary	Edward Byrne
	Rose O'Leary, his wife	Ria Mooney
	Clerk of the Court	Malachy Dooney

Remembered For Ever — First Staged: 18 August 1941
Author: Bernard McGinn
Director: Frank Dermody

Cast:		
	Roderick Brosnan	Denis O'Dea
	Nora Brosnan	Eithne Dunne
	Brian	Liam Redmond
	Michael Murphy	W. O'Gorman
	Christopher O'Connell	Austin Meldon
	Dan Cassidy	Dermot Kelly
	Martin O'Keefe	Michael J. Dolan
	Guard Hennessy	Fred Johnson
	Miss O'Sullivan	Eileen Crowe
	A Figure	Gerard Healy

The O'Cuddy — First Staged: 8 March 1943
Author: Anthony Wharton
Director: Frank Dermody

Cast:		
	George Posnett	Michael J. Dolan
	Clench	Fred Johnson
	Countess Pilsudska	Joan Plunkett
	Lord Kilfoyne	Gerard Healy
	Thaddeus Cuddy	Cyril Cusak
	Dr. McRoney	F.J. McCormick
	Cormac O'Cuiddeach	Denis O'Dea
	Michael	Brian O'Higgins
	A Masked Figure	Harry Webster
	Two Guards	Ciaran O hAnnrachain and Michael O'Brien

Rossa — First Staged: 31 March 1945
Author: Roger McHugh
Director: Frank Dermody

Cast:		
	The Speaker	Seumas Locke
	The Bugler	H. Hossler
	John O'Connell	Fred Johnston
	Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa	W. O'Gorman
	A Magistrate	Fred Johnson

Mary Irwin	Brid Lynch
Parish Priest	Seumas Healy
Mrs. Luby	Eileen Crowe
Judge Keogh	Cyril Cusack
Governor	F.J. McCormick
Governor's Secretary	May Craig
First Warder	Denis O'Dea
Chaplain	Michael Dolan
Second Warder	Michael O'Brien
First Commissioner	Eric Gorman
Second Commissioner	Pat O'Rourke
Third Commissioner	Sean O Maonaigh
Rossa's Secretary	Siobhan McKenna
Mr. Lanigan	Austin Meldon
Mr. Madigan	Harry Brogan
General Ryan	Michael Cosgrave

Design for a Headstone
Author: Seamus Byrne
Director: Ria Mooney
First Staged: 8 April 1950
Cast:

Political Prisoners:	
Conor Egan	Michael Hennessey
Aiden O'Leary	Eddie Golden
Kevin Shields	Ray MacAnally
Tommy McGovern	Ronnie Walsh
Jim O'Shea	Sean Mooney
Ructions McGowan	Walter Macken
Bill Dunne	Michael Dunne
Joe Fitzpatrick	Thomas MacAnna
Micheal Breathnach	Michael O'Brien
P.J. Corrigan	Hugh Gunn
O'Sullivan	Traolach Hennessey
Prison Warders:	
Pat Gerachty	Philip O'Flynn
Mouth Phelan	Geoffrey Golden
Charles Grimes	James Carty
Principal Warder	Noel Guy
Criminal Prisoners:	
Jakey	Brian O'Higgins
Muscles Rogan	Harry Brogan
Butcher Healy	Leo Keogh
Bayer	Michael J. Dolan
Father Maguire	Bill Foley
Kathleen Egan	Brid Lynch
Other prisoners, warders, etc:	Michael O'Herlihy, Colm O'Kelly, Harry O'Reilly, Tom Dullaghan, Pol O'Meara, Finbar Howard, Michael Conway, Joe Cooney, and Joe Nolan

SOURCES: The Abbey Theatre Archives, National Library of Ireland Dept. of Manuscripts, and *Ireland's Abbey Theatre: A History 1899-1951* (Lennox Robinson, Port Washington, NY: Kennikat P, 1951). NOTE: Where the Robinson text contradicts either the Abbey Archives or NLI, the latter sources are used (this is particularly relevant to errors in dates of first productions in Robinson).

NOTE: In the interest of continuity, actors who used both English and Irish spellings professionally are named in English. Where actors went solely by English or Irish spellings, the relevant usage is adhered to.

Appendix B: Irish Urban Plays 1904-1951 (Non-Dublin Settings), List of First Productions

Belfast City:

Mixed Marriage		First Staged: 30 March 1911
Author: St. John Ervine		
Director: Lennox Robinson		
Cast:	John Rainey	Arthur Sinclair
	Mrs. Rainey	Maire O'Neill
	Tom Rainey	U. Wright
	Hugh Rainey	J.M. Kerrigan
	Nora Murray	Maire Nic Shiubhlaigh
	Michael O'Hara	J.A. O'Rourke
The Orangeman		First Staged: 21 March 1914
Author: St. John Ervine		
Director: A. Patrick Wilson		
Cast:	John McClurg	A. Patrick Wilson
	Jessie McClurg	Cathleen MacCarthy
	Andy Haveron	Sean Connolly
	Tom McClurg	Thomas O'Neill
Money		First Staged: 9 March 1931
Author: Hugh P. Quinn		
Director: Arthur Shields		
Cast:	Mrs. McConachy	May Craig
	Mickey	Michael J. Dolan
	Aggie	Kate Curling
	"Ducksy" Duggan	Denis O'Dea
	Sam Meehan	P.J. Carolan
	Mr. Blaney	F.J. McCormick
	Bella MCCann	Maureen Delany
	Rosy O'Grady	Frolie Mulhern
	Liza	Shelah Richards
Birth of a Giant		First Staged: 13 May 1940
Author: Nora MacAdam		
Director: Michael J. Dolan		
Cast:	Robert Watson	W. O'Gorman
	Lily Watson	Eileen Crowe
	Ruth Watson	Sheila Manahan
	James Cathcart	Austin Meldon
	Harry Moody	J. Prendergast
	Mrs. Larkin	May Craig
	Pat Larkin	J. MacDarby
	Susan Larkin	Kitty Thuillier
	Tommy Mallin	C. Fitzsimons
	John Myers	Denis O'Dea
The End House		First Staged: 28 August 1944
Author: Joseph Tomelty		
Director: Frank Dermody		
Cast:	Wallace MacAstocker	F.J. McCormick
	Saralice	May Craig
	Monica	Siobhan McKenna
	Seumas	Cyril Cusack
	Stewartie Pullar	Michael J. Dolan
	Mrs. Griffith	Eileen Crowe
	Constable Hanna	Harry Brogan
	Insurance Visitor	Christine Hayden

	Mrs. Fruin	Brid Lynch
	Policemen	Brian O'Higgins, Seumas Locke
	Baker	Denis O'Dea
	R.U.C. Sergeant	Fred Johnson

The Old Broom (p/t Belfast, Act 2) — First Staged: 25 March 1946
Author: George Shiels
Director: Frank Dermody

Cast:	Ben Broom	Denis O'Dea
	Barbara Broom	Peggy Hayes
	Austin Broom	Sean Mac Labhraidh
	Rachel Broom	Siobhan McKenna
	Archy Broom	Sean O Maonaigh
	Emily Broom	Maire Ni Dhomhnaill
	Tom Frailey	Harry Brogan
	Sarah Frailey	Brid Lynch
	Hubert Dobie	Brian O'Higgins
	A Landlady	May Craig

The Drums Are Out — First Staged: 12 July 1948
Author: John Coulter
Director: Ria Mooney

Cast:	Mrs. Sheridan	Eileen Crowe
	Sgt. Sheridan	Brian O'Higgins
	Jean	Maire ni Dhomhnaill
	Nixon	Philip O'Flynn
	Denis	Raghnall Breathnack
	Matt	Harry Brogan
	Three Men	Reamonn Mac an Fhailghigh, Micheal O Duinn, And Labhras O Gallchobhair

Cork City:

The Labour Leader — First Staged: 30 September 1919
Author: Daniel Corkery
Director: Lennox Robinson

Cast:	Tim Murphy	Hugh Nagle
	John Clarke	George St. John
	Mrs. Donovan	Margaret Nicholls
	John Dempsey	Peter Nolan
	Dan O'Rielly/Caretaker	M.J. Dolan
	Jack O'Donoghue	W. Fitzgerald
	Battie Donovan	Hubert Maguire
	Phil Kennedy	F.J. McCormick
	David Lombard	Paul Farrell
	James O'Sullivan	Eric Gorman
	Mrs. Tobin	Maureen Delany
	Quay Laborers	Brian Herbert, R.C. Murray, A. Quinn

Moses' Rock — First Staged: 28 February 1938
Author: Hugh Hunt and Frank O'Connor
Director: Hugh Hunt

Cast:	Cady O'Leary	W. O'Gorman
	Kate O'Leary	Ann Clery
	Joan O'Leary	Shelah Richards
	Shuvaun O'Leary	Shelah Ward
	Ned Hegarty	Cyril Cusack
	Jer Coghlan	Fred Johnson
	Lieutenant Grant Fortescue	P.H. Considine

	Dr. Corney Jackson	Liam Redmond
	Biddy Lally	Christine Hayden
	Sorry O'Sullivan	Evelyn MacNeice
	Nelly	Gertrude Quinn

Time's Pocket — First Staged: 26 December 1938
Author: Frank O'Connor
Director: Prionnsias Mac Diarmada

Cast:	Abby Driscoll	Eileen Crowe
	Nance	Ria Mooney
	Patrick	Denis O'Dea
	Denis	Austin Meldon
	Martin Conlan	F.J. McCormick
	Sergeant Daly	Fred Johnson
	Corporal Dargan	W. O'Gorman
	Red Fahy	Victor Boyd
	Ned Sullivan	J. Winter
	Father Costello	Michael J. Dolan
	The General	Eric Gorman
	The General's Wife	Shelah Ward
	Mylie Dargan	Brian McAuliffe
	Sergeant of Police	Malachi Keegan
	Policemen	Michael Finn, Paud Holahan
	Soldiers	Thomas O'Gorman, Gerald Hickey
	Orderly	Wilfred Brambell

Galway City:

Mungo's Mansion — First Staged: 11 February 1946
Author: Walter Macken
Director: Frank Dermody

Cast:	Mungo King	F.J. McCormick
	Mairteen	Micheal O'Briain
	Nellie	Siobhan McKenna
	Winnie Gilhealy	Eileen Crowe
	Mr. Skerret	Michael J. Dolan
	Mowleogs	Harry Brogan
	Jack Manders	Denis O'Dea
	Mrs. Manders	Brid Lynch
	The Doctor	Fred Johnson

SOURCES: The Abbey Theatre Archives, National Library of Ireland Dept. of Manuscripts, and *Ireland's Abbey Theatre: A History 1899-1951* (Lennox Robinson, Port Washington, NY: Kennikat P, 1951). NOTE: Where the Robinson text contradicts either the Abbey Archives or NLI, the latter sources are used (this is particularly relevant to errors in dates of first productions in Robinson).

NOTE: In the interest of continuity, actors who used both English and Irish spellings professionally are named in English. Where actors went solely by English or Irish spellings, the relevant usage is adhered to.

Appendix C: Dublin Plays 1904-1951, Total Productions & Total Performances
*ALL CAPS denotes premiere performance.

		Start Date	Number of Performances
1908	THE MAN WHO MISSED THE TIDE	13-Feb	4
	The Man Who Missed the Tide	20-Feb	4
	The Man Who Missed the Tide	30-Apr	4
	The Man Who Missed the Tide	25-Aug	3
	THE SUBURBAN GROOVE	01-Oct	4
	The Man Who Missed the Tide	22-Oct	4
	Suburban Groove	05-Nov	4
	Suburban Groove	26-Dec	2
1909	The Man Who Missed the Tide	04-Feb	4
	Suburban Groove	04-Mar	4
	The Man Who Missed the Tide	17-Mar	4
	THE CROSS-ROADS	01-Apr	4
	Suburban Groove	12-Apr	1
	The Cross-Roads	06-May	4
	The Man Who Missed the Tide	23-Sep	4
	The Cross-Roads	07-Oct	4
	Suburban Groove	14-Oct	4
	The Man Who Missed the Tide	26-Dec	2
	AN IMAGINARY CONVERSATION	13-May	4
	An Imaginary Conversation	27-May	4
1910	Suburban Groove	27-Jan	4
	The Cross-Roads	03-Feb	4
	The Man Who Missed the Tide	10-Mar	4
	The Cross-Roads	22-Aug	2
	Suburban Groove	15-Sep	4
	The Man Who Missed the Tide	06-Oct	4
	The Cross-Roads	10-Nov	4
	Suburban Groove	27-Dec	4
1911	The Man Who Missed the Tide	26-Jan	4
	The Cross-Roads	02-Feb	4
	The Man Who Missed the Tide	19-Apr	3
	The Cross-Roads	27-Apr	2
1912	The Man Who Missed the Tide	25-Apr	4
	Suburban Groove	10-Oct	4
1913	THE DEAN OF ST. PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL	23-Jan	4
	The Dean of St. Patrick's Cathedral	27-Feb	4
	The Dean of St. Patrick's Cathedral	26-Mar	2
	The Dean of St. Patrick's Cathedral	20-Oct	4
	Suburban Groove	13-Nov	4
	THE CRITICS	20-Nov	4
	The Man Who Missed the Tide	04-Dec	4
	The Critics	18-Dec	4

		Start Date	Number of Performances
1914	THE LORD MAYOR	13-Mar	5
	The Lord Mayor	13-Apr	3
	The Lord Mayor	21-Apr	3
	Suburban Groove	09-Sep	5
	The Man Who Missed the Tide	06-Oct	6
	THE SLOUGH	03-Nov	6
	The Slough	17-Nov	6
	Suburban Groove	03-Dec	4
1915	THE DREAMERS	10-Feb	5
	Suburban Groove	17-Mar	5
	The Lord Mayor	06-May	4
	The Lord Mayor	27-Dec	7
	The Man Who Missed the Tide	03-Mar	5
	The Slough	24-Feb	5
1916	Suburban Groove	04-Jan	6
	The Dreamers	22-Feb	6
	The Man Who Missed the Tide	21-Mar	6
	The Lord Mayor	06-Nov	9
	The Man Who Missed the Tide	15-Nov	5
1917	The Lord Mayor	14-Feb	5
	Suburban Groove	16-May	5
	The Lord Mayor	28-May	7
	Suburban Groove	06-Nov	6
	The Lord Mayor	20-Nov	6
	BLIGHT	11-Dec	6
1918	Blight	01-Jan	3
	The Lord Mayor	26-Feb	6
	Blight	12-Mar	6
	The Cross-Roads	30-Apr	6
	Suburban Groove	14-May	6
	Blight	10-Dec	6
	Suburban Groove	26-Dec	5
1919	The Man Who Missed the Tide	18-Nov	6
1920	THE WOOING OF JULIA ELIZABETH	10-Aug	4
	An Imaginary Conversation	24-Aug	6
	Suburban Groove	26-Oct	6
	Suburban Groove	27-Dec	8
1921	THE REVOLUTIONIST	24-Feb	8
	The Lord Mayor	07-Apr	4
	The Lord Mayor	30-Apr	2
	The Lord Mayor	04-Oct	6
	The Revolutionist	11-Oct	7
	The Dreamers	25-Oct	6
	Suburban Groove	29-Dec	4

		Start Date	Number of Performances
1922	The Lord Mayor	17-Jan	6
	The Revolutionist	07-Feb	6
	An Imaginary Conversation	21-Feb	6
	YOUNG MAN FROM RATHMINES	06-Apr	4
	The Lord Mayor	17-Apr	4
	Young Man from Rathmines	20-Apr	4
	Young Man from Rathmines	07-Aug	3
	Young Man from Rathmines	15-Aug	1
	Suburban Groove	17-Aug	3
	A LEPRECHAUN IN THE TENEMENT	05-Sep	6
	An Imaginary Conversation	12-Sep	6
	The Lord Mayor	10-Oct	6
	Young Man from Rathmines	21-Nov	6
1923	THE SHADOW OF A GUNMAN	12-Apr	4
	The Shadow of a Gunman	06-Aug	7
	The Shadow of a Gunman	15-Aug	1
	The Man Who Missed the Tide	20-Aug	7
	Young Man from Rathmines	20-Aug	7
	APARTMENTS	03-Sep	7
	Suburban Groove	10-Sep	7
	KATHLEEN LISTENS IN	01-Oct	7
	The Shadow of a Gunman	15-Oct	7
	Apartments	13-Nov	6
1924	The Lord Mayor	15-Jan	6
	The Shadow of a Gunman	28-Jan	7
	The Shadow of a Gunman	07-Feb	4
	NEVER THE TIME AND THE PLACE	19-Feb	6
	JUNO AND THE PAYCOCK	03-Mar	12
	Never the Time and the Place	08-Apr	6
	The Shadow of a Gunman	08-Apr	6
	Juno and the Paycock	29-Apr	12
	Young Man from Rathmines	07-Aug	6
	Never the Time and the Place	11-Aug	3
	The Shadow of a Gunman	11-Aug	3
	The Shadow of a Gunman	14-Aug	7
	Juno and the Paycock	15-Sep	7
	NANNIE'S NIGHT OUT	29-Sep	7
	Suburban Groove	06-Oct	7
	Apartments	13-Oct	7
	The Shadow of a Gunman	27-Oct	7
	Juno and the Paycock	11-Nov	6
	THE PASSING	09-Dec	6
	The Lord Mayor	09-Dec	6
1925	Never the Time and the Place	06-Jan	6
	Juno and the Paycock	12-Jan	7
	An Imaginary Conversation	03-Feb	6
	Kathleen Listens In (Rev Script)	03-Mar	6
	Apartments	17-Mar	6
	The Shadow of a Gunman	24-Mar	6

		Start Date	Number of Performances
1925	Juno and the Paycock	17-Aug	14
(Con't)	The Shadow of a Gunman	07-Sep	7
	Never the Time and the Place	21-Sep	7
	An Imaginary Conversation	09-Nov	7
	The Shadow of a Gunman	23-Nov	7
1926	The Lord Mayor	26-Jan	6
	Apartments	02-Feb	6
	THE PLOUGH AND THE STARS	08-Feb	7
	Juno and the Paycock	22-Mar	7
	The Plough and the Stars	03-May	7
	Juno and the Paycock	05-Jul	7
	The Shadow of a Gunman	05-Aug	4
	The Passing	23-Aug	7
	Juno and the Paycock	13-Sep	7
	The Lord Mayor	20-Sep	7
	Apartments	27-Sep	7
	Never the Time and the Place	11-Oct	7
	Juno and the Paycock	27-Dec	8
1927	THE DRAPIER LETTERS	22-Aug	7
	The Lord Mayor	16-May	7
	The Shadow of a Gunman	08-Mar	6
	The Shadow of a Gunman	04-Jul	7
	The Shadow of a Gunman	11-Oct	6
	Juno and the Paycock	04-Aug	4
	Juno and the Paycock	21-Nov	7
	The Plough and the Stars	18-Jan	6
1928	The Shadow of a Gunman	20-Feb	7
	The Drapier Letters	27-Feb	7
	The Lord Mayor	27-Feb	7
	Never the Time and the Place	06-Mar	6
	Apartments	12-Mar	7
	Juno and the Paycock	23-Apr	7
	The Plough and the Stars	09-May	5
	The Plough and the Stars	02-Jul	7
	BEFORE MIDNIGHT	16-Jul	7
	Juno and the Paycock	20-Aug	7
	The Shadow of a Gunman	17-Sep	7
	The Plough and the Stars	29-Oct	10
1929	Before Midnight	07-Jan	7
	Juno and the Paycock	21-Jan	7
	The Shadow of a Gunman	25-Feb	7
	The Lord Mayor	18-Mar	7
	The Plough and the Stars	20-May	7
	Apartments	17-Sep	6
	The Lord Mayor	29-Oct	6
	The Shadow of a Gunman	12-Nov	6
	Juno and the Paycock	26-Dec	6
	An Imaginary Conversation	31-Dec	7

		Start Date	Number of Performances
1930	The Shadow of a Gunman	25-Feb	7
	The Lord Mayor	17-Mar	1
	The Plough and the Stars	01-Apr	7
	Never the Time and the Place	08-Apr	7
	Apartments	06-May	7
	The Lord Mayor	07-Jul	7
	The Plough and the Stars	14-Jul	7
	The Shadow of a Gunman	18-Aug	7
	THE WORDS UPON THE WINDOW-PANE	17-Nov	7
	The Lord Mayor	17-Nov	7
	Juno and the Paycock	26-Dec	11
1931	THE CRITIC	06-Jan	6
	The Plough and the Stars	26-Jan	7
	Apartments	03-Mar	6
	The Critic	11-May	7
	The Shadow of a Gunman	02-Jun	6
	The Words Upon the Window-Pane	02-Jun	6
	SCRAP	07-Jul	6
	The Plough and the Stars	13-Jul	7
	Juno and the Paycock	04-Aug	4
1932	The Words Upon the Window-Pane	02-Jul	4
	Juno and the Paycock	11-Jul	7
	The Plough and the Stars	01-Aug	3
	Suburban Groove	24-Oct	7
	THE BIG SWEEP	07-Nov	7
	The Big Sweep	26-Dec	7
1933	Juno and the Paycock	26-Jun	7
	The Shadow of a Gunman	21-Aug	7
	The Plough and the Stars	18-Sep	7
	The Words Upon the Window-Pane	30-Oct	7
	The Lord Mayor	18-Dec	5
	Never the Time and the Place	18-Dec	5
1934	The Shadow of a Gunman	29-Jan	7
	Juno and the Paycock	09-Apr	7
	The Plough and the Stars	28-May	7
	The Lord Mayor	11-Jun	3
	Juno and the Paycock	07-Aug	4
	The Plough and the Stars	03-Sep	7
	The Lord Mayor	20-Sep	4
1935	The Plough and the Stars	08-Aug	3
	THE SILVER TASSIE	12-Aug	6
	A DEUCE O JACKS	16-Sep	6
	Juno and the Paycock	28-Oct	6
	The Shadow of a Gunman	16-Dec	6
	The Words Upon the Window-Pane	16-Dec	6
	The Critic	26-Dec	3

		Start Date	Number of Performances
1936	THE GRAND HOUSE IN THE CITY	03-Feb	6
	The Plough and the Stars	17-Feb	6
	The Grand House in the City	20-Apr	6
	The Shadow of a Gunman	18-May	6
	The Plough and the Stars	21-Sep	6
	The Shadow of a Gunman	05-Oct	6
	Juno and the Paycock	16-Nov	6
	BLIND MAN'S BUFF	26-Dec	25
1937	The Plough and the Stars	01-Mar	6
	Juno and the Paycock	10-May	6
	The Shadow of a Gunman	31-May	6
	Blind Man's Buff	12-Jul	6
	THE MAN IN THE CLOAK	27-Sep	12
	THE INVINCIBLES	18-Oct	12
	COGGERERS	22-Nov	6
1938	The Invincibles	31-Jan	6
	A SPOT IN THE SUN	14-Feb	6
	Blind Man's Buff	14-Mar	12
	The Plough and the Stars	18-Apr	12
	The Invincibles	04-Aug	3
	The Plough and the Stars	16-Aug	2
	The Plough and the Stars	29-Aug	6
	Blind Man's Buff	26-Sep	6
	Juno and the Paycock	31-Oct	6
	The Shadow of a Gunman	12-Dec	6
1939	The Plough and the Stars	02-Jan	6
	CAESAR'S IMAGE	06-Feb	6
	Blind Man's Buff	27-Feb	6
	Never the Time and the Place	08-May	6
	Juno and the Paycock	22-May	6
	The Plough and the Stars	14-Aug	6
	The Shadow of a Gunman	04-Sep	6
	The Plough and the Stars	02-Oct	6
1940	Juno and the Paycock	15-Jan	6
1941	TRIAL AT GREEN STREET COURTHOUSE	06-Jan	18
	Trial at Green Street Courthouse	26-May	6
	REMEMBERED FOR EVER	18-Aug	12
1942	The Plough and the Stars	26-Jan	36
	Juno and the Paycock	02-Nov	30
1943	THE O'CUDDY	08-Mar	6
1944	The Plough and the Stars	13-Mar	17
	The Shadow of a Gunman	08-Apr	13
	The Plough and the Stars	01-May	6
	The Words Upon the Window-Pane	31-Jul	6

		Start Date	Number of Performances
1945	Juno and the Paycock	26-Feb	23
	ROSSA	31-Mar	13
	The Plough and the Stars	02-Oct	35
1946	The Shadow of a Gunman	11-Mar	12
1947	The Words Upon the Window-Pane	07-Jul	3
	The Words Upon the Window-Pane	04-Aug	3
	The Plough and the Stars	13-Oct	18
	The Plough and the Stars	10-Nov	3
1948	Blind Man's Buff	26-Apr	18
1949	The Grand House in the City	31-Jan	24
1950	DESIGN FOR A HEADSTONE	08-Apr	25
	The Shadow of a Gunman	26-May	44
1951	Juno and the Paycock	12-Feb	36
	The Plough and the Stars	14-May	53

SOURCE: Compiled by author from records on file at the Abbey archive.

Appendix D: Dublin Plays 1904-1951, Production v. Performance Figures

Table 1: In Rank of Most Frequently Produced

	Productions	**Performances**
The Shadow of a Gunman	35	262
The Plough and the Stars	32	328
Juno and the Paycock	31	290
The Lord Mayor	30	162
The Suburban Groove	26	123
The Man Who Missed the Tide	21	89
Apartments	10	65
Never the Time and the Place	10	59
The Cross-Roads	9	34
An Imaginary Conversation	8	46
The Words Upon the Window-Pane	8	42
Young Man from Rathmines	7	32
Blind Man's Buff	6	73
Blight	4	21
The Dean of St. Patrick's Cathedral	4	14
The Grand House in the City	3	36
The Invincibles	3	21
The Revolutionist	3	21
The Dreamers	3	17
The Slough	3	17
The Critic	3	16
Trial at Green Street Courthouse	2	24
Before Midnight	2	14
The Big Sweep	2	14
The Drapier Letters	2	14
Kathleen Listens In	2	13
The Passing	2	13
The Critics	2	8
Design for a Headstone	1	25
Rossa	1	13
Remembered For Ever	1	12
The Man in the Cloak	1	12
Nannie's Night Out	1	7
A Deuce O'Jacks	1	6
A Spot in the Sun	1	6
Caesar's Image	1	6
Coggerers	1	6
Scrap	1	6
A Leprechaun in the Tenement	1	6
The O'Cuddy	1	6
The Silver Tassie	1	6
The Wooing of Julia Elizabeth	1	4

Table 2: In Rank of Most Frequently Performed

	Productions	**Performances**
The Plough and the Stars	32	328
Juno and the Paycock	31	290
The Shadow of a Gunman	35	262
The Lord Mayor	30	162
The Suburban Groove	26	123
The Man Who Missed the Tide	21	89
Blind Man's Buff	6	73
Apartments	10	65
Never the Time and the Place	10	59
An Imaginary Conversation	8	46
The Words Upon the Window-Pane	8	42
The Grand House in the City	3	36
The Cross-Roads	9	34
Young Man from Rathmines	7	32
Design for a Headstone	1	25
Trial at Green Street Courthouse	2	24
Blight	4	21
The Invincibles	3	21
The Revolutionist	3	21
The Dreamers	3	17
The Slough	3	17
The Critic	3	16
The Dean of St. Patrick's Cathedral	4	14
Before Midnight	2	14
The Big Sweep	2	14
The Drapier Letters	2	14
Kathleen Listens In	2	13
The Passing	2	13
Rossa	1	13
Remembered For Ever	1	12
The Man in the Cloak	1	12
The Critics	2	8
Nannie's Night Out	1	7
A Deuce O'Jacks	1	6
A Spot in the Sun	1	6
Caesar's Image	1	6
Coggerers	1	6
Scrap	1	6
A Leprechaun in the Tenement	1	6
The O'Cuddy	1	6
The Silver Tassie	1	6
The Wooing of Julia Elizabeth	1	4

Appendix E: Box Office Receipts 1920-1951
(Exclusive of Touring Productions and Theatre Rental to non-Abbey companies)

Bold indicates Dublin-set play; ALL CAPS denotes premiere performance.

Box Office Returns 1920 (Aug-Dec)

Aug 2-7	Cathleen Ni Houlihan/Mixed Marriage	£304.15.5
Aug 9,11,13	Riders to the Sea/Androcles the Lion	153.17.5
Aug 10,12,14	Workhouse Ward/Maurice Harte/**WOOING OF JULIA ELIZABET**	169.-.-
Aug 17-21	Enchanted Trousers/Gaol Gate/Jackdaw	184.15.7
Aug 24-28	**An Imaginary Conversation**/Whiteheaded Boy	161.17.6
Aug 31-Sep 4	Yellow Bittern/Country Dressmaker	145.3.5
Sep 7-11	Spoiling of Wisdom/The Drifters/Spreading the News	184.1.5
Sep 14-18	Queer Ones/Family Failing	148.4.7
Sep 21-25	A Royal Alliance/The Bribe	142.10.-
Sep 28-Oct 2	Mineral Workers/A Minute's Wait	137.5.1
Oct 5-9	The Serf/The Coiner	188.1.-
Oct 12-16	The Island of Saints/Birthright	153.14.11
Oct 19-23	Good-Natured Man	84.12.8
Oct 26-30	Workhouse Ward/**Suburban Groove**	79.7.1
Nov 2-6	Sable and Gold	92.1.3
Nov 9-13	Magnanimous Lover/Spring/Jackdaw	98.4.7
Nov 16-20	Island of Saints/Sovereign Love/A Night at an Inn	100.14.7
Nov 23-27	John Bull's Other Island	71.1.9
Nov 30-Dec 4	Land for the People/Meadowsweet	47.12.-
Dec 27-Jan 1	Candle & Crib/**Suburban Groove**	107.18.11

Total Box Office (Gross): £2,754.19.2

Box Office records Jan-May unavailable.
Abbey Co. on holiday June-July.

Box Office Returns 1921

Jan 3-5	Eloquent Dempsey	£65.16.1
Jan 6-8	Bedmates/The Serf	78.-.3
Jan 10-12	Country Dressmaker	37.14.8
Jan 13-15	Whiteheaded Boy	94.2.-
Jan 20-22	Patriots	56.11.1
Jan 27-29	The Drifters/Bedmates	69.19.11
Feb 24-26	**THE REVOLUTIONIST**	173.-.-
Mar 3-5	**The Revolutionist**	69.14.4
Mar 10-12	Family Failing	18.2.6
Mar 17-19	Aristotle's Bellows/Bedmates	52.17.6
Apr 7-10	**The Lord Mayor**	82.15.11
Apr 12-16	Whiteheaded Boy	97.5.6
Apr 21-23	Mixed Marriage	57.6.6
Apr 28-30	Mineral Workers/Whiteheaded Boy/**Lord Mayor**	57.13.2
Aug 1-6	The Rising of the Moon/Meadowsweet/Blanco Posnet	304.2.2
Aug 8,10,12	Aristotle's Bellows/Bedmates	153.3.5
Aug 9,11,13	John Bull's Other Island	224.10.1
Oct 4-8	**The Lord Mayor**/A Serious Thing	242.1.5
Oct 11-15	**The Revolutionist**	171.18.3
Oct 18-21	A Merry Death/Deaman in the House/Spreading the News	118.10.-
Oct 25-29	The Dreamers	129.17.7
Nov 1-5	The Devil's Disciple	167.8.1
Nov 8-12	Yellow Bittern/Courting of Mary Doyle	174.11.9
Nov 15-19	King's Threshold/Piper of Tavran/Rising of the Moon	134.13.4
Nov 22-26	Spring/Mineral Workers	73.3.4
Nov 29-Dec 3	The Parnellite	89.13.7
Dec 6-10	The Saint/The Perfect Day/A Minute's Wait	91.11.-
Dec 13-17	Insurance Money/Queer Ones	59.18.4
Dec 26-28	Pot of Broth/Courting of Mary Doyle	132.5.9
Dec 29-31	Pot of Broth/**The Suburban Groove**	95.1.7

Total Box Office (Gross): £3,373.9.1

Abbey Co. on holiday May -July.

Box Office Returns 1922

Jan 3-7	Shadow of the Glen/Country Dressmaker	£125.19.2
Jan 10-14	Aftermath	192.19.9
Jan 17-21	Island of Saints/**The Lord Mayor**	196.1.8
Jan 24-28	Gaol Gate/The Dragon	88.7.2
Jan 31-Feb 4	The Round Table/Workhouse Ward	154.3.1
Feb 7-11	**The Revolutionist**	90.10.8
Feb 14-18	The Serf/Meadowsweet	48.19.-
Feb 21-25	Courting of M Doyle/**An Imaginary Conversation**	147.12.3
Mar 2-4	Well of the Saints/The Coiner	47.5.2
Mar 9-11	Insurance Money/Man of Destiny	68.4.1
Mar 16-18	Family Failing/Rising of the Moon	76.19.11
Mar 23-25	The Bribe/The Hour Glass	50.5.3
Mar 30-Apr 1	Aftermath	40.10.2
Apr 6-8	King's Threshold/Ann Kavanagh/**YOUNG MAN FROM RATHMIN**	138.19.4
Apr 17-19	Ann Kavanagh/**The Lord Mayor**	94.2.9
Apr 20-22	The Round Table/**Young Man from Rathmines**	89.4.5
Apr 27-29	The Devil's Disciple	83.8.11
Aug 7-9	Cathleen Ni Houlihan/**Young Man from Rathmines**	138.15.10
Aug 10-11	Mixed Marriage/The Rising of the Moon	77.13.3
Aug 14,16,18	Workhouse Ward/Shadow of the Glen/The Building Fund	105.17.4
Aug 15	Cath Ni Houlihan/Maurice Harte/**Young Man From Rathmines**	42.12.9
Aug 17,19	The Hour Glass/**The Suburban Groove**	80.12.10
Aug 22-26	Whiteheaded Boy	149.5.9
Aug 29-Sep 2	The Moral Law/The Country Dressmaker	75.4.1
Sep 5-9	Ann Kavanagh/**LEPRECHAUN TENEMENT**/Man of Destiny	122.13.5
Sep 12-16	**An Imaginary Conversation**/Dramer's Gold/Meadowsweet	75.17.11
Sep 19-23	Birthright/Insurance Money	65.11.10
Sep 26-30	Island of Saints/Courting of Mary Doyle	199.14.1
Oct 3-7	Paul Twyning	165.6.1
Oct 10-14	Spring/**The Lord Mayor**	123.10.3
Oct 17-21	The Serf/A Minute's Wait	91.10.-
Oct 24-28	Grasshopper	88.16.9
Oct 31-Nov 4	Aftermath	61.14.10
Nov 7-11	The Round Table/Sovereign Love	53.18.2
Nov 14-18	The Land for the People/Crabbed Youth & Age	134.9.-
Nov 21-25	Eloquent Dempsey/**Young Man from Rathmines**	104.19.6
Nov 28-Dec 2	Paul Twyning	72.10.9
Dec 5-9	Arms and the Man	83.5.9
Dec 12-16	Country Dressmaker/Meadowsweet	58.16.4
Dec 26-30	John Bull's Other Island	174.-.8
	Total Box Office (Gross):	£4,080.9.11

Abbey Co. on holiday May -July.

Box Office Returns 1923

Jan 2-6	The Rising of the Moon/Maurice Harte/The Coiner	£88.7.6
Jan 9-13	Pot of Broth/Long Road to Garranbraher/Man of Destiny	90.11.1
Jan 16-20	Whiteheaded Boy	222.12.1
Jan 23-27	Island ofSaints/Aristotle's Bellows	113.1.5
Jan 30-Feb 4	Countess Cathleen/Blanco Posnet	114.-.10
Feb 6-10	Patriots/Hyacinth Halvey	54.18.10
Feb 15-17	The Prodigal	37.9.8
Feb 22-24	The Fiddler's House/Crabbed Youth & Age	47.12.10
Mar 1-3	Family Failing/The Jackdaw	59.13.6
Mar 8	Land of Heart's Desire	15.15.4
Mar 9	Moral Law	10.19.2
Mar 10	Twixt the Giltmartins and the Carmodys	28.8.3
Mar 15-17	Shadowy Waters/Courting of Mary Doyle	40.16.10
Mar 22-24	A Doll's House	70.5.9
Apr 2-7	She Stoops to Conquer	169.5.5
Apr 9-11	Paul Twyning	28.-.8
Apr 12-14	**SHADOW OF A GUNMAN**/Sovereign Love	65.1.6
Aug 6-11,15	**Shadow of a Gunman**/Crabbed Youth & Age	262.8.10
Aug 13-14	Land of Heart's Desire/Mixed Marriage	62.11.4
Aug 16-18	Maurice Harte/Blanco Posnet	150.8.5
Aug 20-25	**Man Who Missed the Tide/Young Man from Rathmines**	248.8.8
Aug 27-Sep 1	Durvorgilla/The Eloquent Dempsey	151.-.4
Sep 3-8	**APARTMENTS**/The Bribe	213.17.3
Sep 10-15	Cathleen Ni Houlihan/**The Suburban Groove**	166.16.2
Sep 17-22	The Dragon/Meadowsweet	128.5.-
Sep 24-29	Paul Twyning/Songs by Miss Algood	198.12.10
Oct 1-6	Man of Destiny/Riders to the Sea/**KATHLEEN LISTENS IN**	220.7.-
Oct 8-13	Arms and the Man/The Coiner	162.5.4
Oct 15-20	**Shadow of a Gunman**/The Jackdaw	224.18.1
Oct 23-27	The Hour Glass/Courting of Mary Doyle	156.3.4
Oct 29-Nov 3	Insurance Money/Spreading the News	127.1.2
Nov 5-10	John Bull's Other Island	145.14.10
Nov 13-17	The Round Table/**Apartments**	110.2.9
Nov 19-24	Country Dressmaker/Shadow of the Glen	94.8.6
Nov 27-Dec 1	The Glorious Uncertainty	155.16.6
Dec 3-8	Twixt the Giltmartins and the Carmodys/The Building Fund	78.1.-
Dec 11-15	Birthright/Blanco Posnet	93.9.6
Dec 18-22	A Doll's House	100.6.7
Dec 26-29	First Aid/Whiteheaded Boy	155.4.6
Dec 31-Jan 5	The Glorious Uncertainty	151.13.2

Total Box Office (Gross): £4,815.1.9

Abbey Co. on holiday May-July.

Box Office Returns 1924

Jan 7-12	Fiddler's House/**Young Man from Rathmines**	£129.19.5
Jan 15-19	The Perfect Day/**The Lord Mayor**	138.17.6
Jan 21-26	Aftermath	122.19.3
Jan 28-Feb 2	Queer Ones/**Shadow of a Gunman**	225.1.11
Feb 4-6	She Stoops to Conquer	47.14.2
Feb 7-9	**Shadow of a Gunman**/Meadowsweet	67.3.8
Feb 12-16	The Shephards/The Rising of the Moon	107.5.11
Feb 19-23	The Two Shephards/**NEVER THE TIME AND THE PLACE**	138.8.5
Feb 25-Mar 1	Courting of Mary Doyle/First Aid	173.4.4
Mar 3-8	**JUNO AND THE PAYCOCK**	254.4.2
Mar 11-15	**JUNO AND THE PAYCOCK**	246.2.7
Mar 17-22	The Glorious Uncertainty	151.8.6
Mar 26-29	Maurice Harte/Man of Destiny	74.4.8
Mar 31-Apr 5	Whiteheaded Boy	141.14.10
Apr 8-12	**NEVER THE TIME PLACE/SHADOW OF A GUNMAN**	200.16.2
Apr 15-19	Story Brought by Brigit	71.10.10
Apr 21-26	John Bull's Other Island	183.4.-
Apr 29-May 3	**Juno and the Paycock**	325.-.7
May 6-10	**Juno and the Paycock**	311.18.5
May 12-17	The Retreivers	175.-.5
July 21-26	The Retreivers	163.18.5
July 28-30	Ann Kavanagh/Country Dressmakers	81.-.3
July 31	Cathleen Ni Houlihan/Maurice Harte	32.11.4
Aug 1-2	The Rising of the Moon	61.7.11
Aug 4-6	Grasshopper/Workhouse Ward	146.1.9
Aug 7	Riders to the Sea/Whiteheaded Boy	55.10.8
Aug 8	Cathleen Ni Houlihan/Workhouse Ward	70.14.-
Aug 9	Riders to the Sea/Whiteheaded Boy	64.4.8
Aug 11-13	**Shadow of a Gunman/Never the Time and Place**	163.15.2
Aug 14-16	Glorious Uncertainty	161.4.3
Aug 18-23	Shadow of the Glen/**Shadow of a Gunman**	380.12.1
Aug 25-30	The Clancy Name/The Two Shephards	168.16.6
Sep 1-6	Mixed Marriage/Hyacinth Halvey	158.18.10
Sep 8-13	Autumn Fire	244.19.-
Sep 15-20	**Juno and the Paycock**	406.8.10
Sep 22-27	Paul Twyning	198.3.9
Sep 29-Oct 4	**NANNIE'S NIGHT OUT**/Arms and the Man	316.18.-
Oct 6-11	The Gaol Gate/**The Suburban Groove**	173.-.-
Oct 13-18	**Apartments**/Insurance Money	202.14.11
Oct 20-25	Island of Saints/Whiteheaded Boy	222.4.3
Oct 27-Nov 1	Riders to the Sea/**Shadow of a Gunman**	237.18.10
Nov 3-8	Kindgom of God	161.17.4
Nov 11-15	**Juno and the Paycock**	238.13.-
Nov 18-22	The Retreivers	142.19.8
Nov 24-29	The Image/Crabbed Youth and Age	118.19.11
Dec 2-6	Courting of Mary Doyle/Meadowsweet	139.19.6
Dec 9-13	**THE PASSING/The Lord Mayor**	116.15.3
Dec 16-20	The Playboy of the Western World/Sovereign Love	259.4.4
Dec 22-27	Aristotle's Bellows/Old Mag	96.7.2
Dec 29-Jan 3	The Glorious Uncertainty	140.10.2
	Total Box Office (Gross):	£8,412.9.6

Abbey Co. on holiday 18 May-20 July.

Box Office Returns 1925

Jan 6-10	The Fiddler's House/**Never the Time and the Place**	£101.9.8
Jan 12-17	**Juno and the Paycock**	210.9.5
Jan 20-24	The Well of the Saints/Hyacinth Halvey	81.15.10
Jan 26-31	The Mineral Workers/Cathleen Ni Houlihan	86.14.4
Feb 3-7	The Country Dressmaker/**An Imaginary Conversation**	92.5.5
Feb 10-14	John Bull's Other Island	129.11.5
Feb 17-21	First Aid/The Playboy of the Western World	89.16.3
Feb 24-28	Land of Heart's Desire/The Old Man/The Coiner	98.11.7
Mar 3-7	**Kathleen Listens In**/Whiteheaded Boy	101.12.11
Mar 10-14	Maurice Harte/The Man of Destiny	72.15.4
Mar 17-21	Anti-Christ/**Apartments**	169.14.2
Mar 24-28	**Shadow of a Gunman**/Spreading the News	187.11.5
Mar 31-Apr 5	Portrait/The Building Fund	147.12.5
Apr 11-14	The Glorious Uncertainty	77.1.8
Apr 16-19	The Shadow of the Glen/The Eloquent Dempsey	101.14.5
Apr 21-25	Workhouse Ward/Fanny's First Play	206.5.7
Apr 28-May 5	The Proposal/Fanny's First Play	186.-.10
Aug 3-5	The Playboy of the Western World/Crabbed Youth & Age	150.17.10
Aug 6-8	Arms and the Man/The Rising of the Moon	150.-.-
Aug 10-15	Man and Superman	213.19.5
Aug 17-22	**Juno and the Paycock**	385.6.8
Aug 24-29	**Juno and the Paycock**	384.1.4
Aug 31-Sep 5	Autumn Fire	255.18.4
Sep 7-12	The Proposal/**Shadow of a Gunman**	337.-.-
Sep 14-19	Professor Tim	376.6.10
Sep 21-26	**Never the Time and the Place**/Whiteheaded Boy	238.16.10
Sep 28-Oct 3	A Doll's House	247.10.11
Oct 6-10	The Hour Glass/Fanny's First Play	215.1.10
Oct 12-17	White Blackbird/Meadowsweet	232.6.10
Oct 26-31	The Bribe/A Minute's Wait	152.11.9
Nov 3-7	Professor Tim	244.8.9
Nov 9-14	**An Imaginary Conversation**/Androcles & the Lion	198.11.5
Nov 16-21	Spring/The Playboy of the Western World	178.14.7
Nov 23-28	Portrait/**Shadow of a Gunman**	271.19.11
Dec 1-5	Grasshopper/Hyacinth Halvey	116.19.2
Dec 15-19	Paul Twyning	113.0.3
Dec 26-Jan 2	Professor Tim	381.13.8
	Total Box Office 1925 (Gross):	£6,986.9.-

Abbey Co. on holiday May-July.

Box Office Returns 1926

Jan 4-9	The Would-Be Gentleman/Pot of Broth	£350.5.9
Jan 12-16	Rising of the Moon/Would-Be Gentleman	258.7.5
Jan 18-23	Sovereign Love/Fanny's First Play	187.17.2
Jan 26-30	Ann Kavanagh/**The Lord Mayor**	180.18.10
Feb 2-6	White Blackbird/**Apartments**	178.13.2
Feb 8-13	**THE PLOUGH AND THE STARS**	434.10.-
Feb 16-20	Dr. Knock	156.2.10
Feb 22-27	She Stoops to Conquer	142.3.8
Mar 2-6	Professor Tim	228.16.5
Mar 8-13	In the Zone/Deirdre (Yeats)/Damer's Gold	132.3.2
Mar 16-20	Whiteheaded Boy/Shadow of the Glen	126.10.4
Mar 22-27	**Juno and the Paycock**	417.1.9
Apr 3-10	Workhouse Ward/Would-Be Gentleman	180.18.2
Apr 12-17	Look at the Heffernans	400.6.8
Apr 19-24	Fanny's First Play/Crabbed Youth & Age	139.-.-
Apr 27-May 1	The Glorious Uncertainty	164.14.3
May 3-8	**The Plough and the Stars**	421.6.10
May 10-15	Professor Tim	284.9.7
May 17-22	Autumn Fire	350.7.1
July 5-10	**Juno and the Paycock**	419.4.8
July 12-17	Shadow of the Glen/Maurice Harte/Spreading the News	129.15.4
July 19-24	Whiteheaded Boy/Crabbed Youth & Age	197.18.1
July 26-31	Look at the Heffernans	349.19.8
Aug 2-7	Prof Tim/Meadowsweet/**Shadow of a Gunman**	442.11.8
Aug 9-14	John Bull's Other Island	315.-.2
Aug 16-21	Mr. Murphy's Island/Workhouse Ward	410.17.10
Aug 23-28	**The Passing**/Aristotle's Bellows (Gregory)	150.4.11
Aug 30-Sep 4	Autumn Fire	351.5.9
Aug 6-11	The Big House	414.2.9
Sep 13-18	**Juno and the Paycock**	429.12.7
Sep 20-25	Ann Kavanagh/**The Lord Mayor**	247.-.6
Sep 27-Oct 2	**Apartments**/The Two Shephards	182.4.11
Oct 5-9	Thomas Muskerry/Sovereign Love	160.9.2
Oct 11-16	Mr. Murphy's Island/**Never the Time and the Place**	228.6.9
Oct 18-23	The Devil's Disciple	259.4.6
Oct 26-30	The Glorious Uncertainty	157.10.4
Nov 2-6	The Big House	257.1.4
Nov 8-13	The Importance of Being Earnest	220.19.2
Nov 15-20	Spring/The Playboy of the Western World	181.7.8
Nov 22-27	John Bull's Other Island	207.12.7
Nov 30-Dec 4	A Doll's House	170.12.1
Dec 7-11	Oedipus the King (Yeats)/Showing Up of Blanco Posnet	218.-.2
Dec 13-18	Look at the Heffernans	248.1.3
Dec 27-Jan 1	**Juno and the Paycock**	450.15.2

Total Box Office (Gross): £11,534.12.1

Abbey Co. on holiday June.

Box Office Returns 1927

Jan 3-8	Professor Tim	£348.10.9
Jan 11-15	White Blackbird/The Coiner	234.14.2
Jan 18-22	**The Plough and the Stars**	386.16.2
Jan 24-29	Trifles/Emporer Jones	281.13.9
Jan 31-Feb 5	Man and Superman	331.4.10
Feb 7-12	Autumn Fire	286.12.8
Feb 21-26	The Big House	199.13.2
Feb 28-Mar 5	The Importance of Being Earnest	120.6.-
Mar 8-12	The Rising of the Moon/**Shadow of a Gunman**	307.19.5
Mar 14-19	Sancho's Master	177.19.2
Mar 22-26	Workhouse Ward/Dr. Knock	160.8.4
Mar 28-Apr 2	Paul Twyning	218.-.8
Apr 5-9	Parted/The Eloquent Dempsey	206.11.10
Apr 16-23	John Bull's Other Island	285.13.10
Apr 26-30	The Land for the People/Spreading the News	165.-.7
May 2-5	Whiteheaded Boy/Meadowsweet	194.4.11
May 9-14	Dave/Fanny's First Play	212.6.10
May 16-21	Black Oliver/**The Lord Mayor**	155.1.6
July 4-9	Parted/**Shadow of a Gunman**	381.9.6
July 11-16	Proposal/The Playboy of the Western World	163.12.6
July 18-23	The Round Table	204.2.8
July 25-30	Kathleen Ni Houlihan/Emporer Jones	206.2.7
Aug 1-3	The Big House	187.4.4
Aug 4-6	**Juno and the Paycock**	289.14.6
Aug 8-13	Professor Tim	365.5.9
Aug 15-20	Shadow of the Glen/The Eloquent Dempsey	292.4.1
Aug 22-27	**THE DRAPIER LETTERS**/Arms and the Man	248.-.5
Aug 29-Sep 3	Autumn Fire	272.3.8
Sep 5-10	Oedipus the King (Yeats)/Blanco Posnet	166.3.8
Sep 12-17	Oedipus the King (Yeats)/Crabbed Youth and Age	149.1.10
Sep 19-24	John Bull's Other Island	293.6.3
Sep 26-Oct 1	The Glorious Uncertainty	266.4.6
Oct 3-8	Fanny's First Play/The Pipe in the Fields	317.1.5
Oct 11-15	Meadowsweet/**Shadow of a Gunman**	297.2.-
Oct 17-22	Look at the Heffernans	384.11.2
Oct 24-29	Caesar and Cleopatra	203.10.9
Nov 1-5	The Big House	192.10.2
Nov 8-12	Birthright/Man of Destiny	196.17.11
Nov 14-19	The Two Shephards/Spreading the News	124.4.-
Nov 21-26	**Juno and the Paycock**	424.13.3
Nov 29-Dec 3	Cartney & Kevney	358.12.6
Dec 26-31	The Nativity/Cartney & Kevney	293.4.4

Total Box Office (Gross): £10,550.2.6

Abbey Co. on holiday June.

Box Office Returns 1928

Jan 3-7	Hyacinth Halvey/Glorious Uncertainty	£212.4.5
Jan 9-14	John Bull's Other Island	212.12.4
Jan 16-21	Pipe in the Fields/Whiteheaded Boy	221.3.-
Jan 24-28	Professor Tim	315.6.2
Jan 30-Feb 4	The Eloquent Dempsey	245.12.6
Feb 7-11	The Doctor's Dilemma	305.19.4
Feb 13-18	The Doctor's Dilemma	380.9.3
Feb 20-25	Spring/Shadow of a Gunman	276.1.3
Feb 27-Mar 3	**The Drapier Letters/The Lord Mayor**	165.15.7
Mar 6-10	The Master/**Never the Time and the Place**	322.2.-
Mar 12-17	The Playboy of the Western World/**Apartments**	187.8.10
Mar 20-24	The Courting of Mary Doyle/Shadow of the Glen	241.9.10
Mar 26-31	Autumn Fire	192.18.5
Apr 3-7	John Gabriel Borkman	147.6.10
Apr 9-14	The Master/The Coiner	370.16.8
Apr 16-21	White Blackbird/School of Ballet performances	206.5.9
Apr 23-28	**Juno and the Paycock**	388.12.6
Apr 30-May 5	The Blind Wolf	279.10.10
May 9-12	**The Plough and the Stars**	301.16.10
May 14-19	Look at the Heffernans	334.11.6
July 2-7	**The Plough and the Stars**	405.9.-
July 9-14	The Playboy of the Western World/Cathleen Ni Houlihan	223.13.11
July 16-21	**BEFORE MIDNIGHT**/Fanny's First Play	169.9.14
July 23-28	Professor Tim	361.14.7
July 30-Aug 4	Ann Kavanagh/Glorious Uncertainty	218.13.6
Aug 6-8	Maurice Harte/The Coiner	204.7.8
Aug 9-11	John Bull's Other Island	240.3.8
Aug 13-14	Riders to the Sea/Whiteheaded Boy	116.2.6
Aug 15-18	Professor Tim	239.10.4
Aug 20-25	**Juno and the Paycock**	437.12.5
Aug 27-Sep 1	Full Measure/Blanco Posnet	336.17.10
Sep 3-8	Mixed Marriage/Meadosweet	359.1.4
Sep 10-15	The Master	286.4.-
Sep 17-22	Gaol Gate/**Shadow of a Gunman**	369.16.2
Sep 24-29	The Player Queen/Ballet School/The Faun	224.-.2
Oct 2-6	Autumn Fire	230.9.6
Oct 8-13	Look at the Heffernans	375.16.10
Oct 15-20	Workhouse Ward/Cartney & Kevney	291.18.5
Oct 22-27	The Far-Off Hills	418.19.3
Oct 29-Nov 3	**The Plough and the Stars**	400.1.4
Nov 6-8	**The Plough and the Stars**	181.11.2
Nov 9-10	She Stoops to Conquer	124.3.8
Nov 12-17	Birthright/Women Have Their Way	171.4.6
Nov 19-24	The Big House	247.12.6
Nov 26-Dec 1	King Lear	187.6.6
Dec 26-29	Spring/The Eloquent Dempsey	232.19.6
Dec 31-Jan 5	Doctor's Dilemma	294.4.8

Total Box Office (Gross): £12,657.8.11

Abbey Co. on holiday June.

Box Office Returns 1929

Jan 7-12	**Before Midnight**/The Would-Be Gentleman	£243.13.8
Jan 15-19	Paul Twyning	308.18.2
Jan 21-26	**Juno and the Paycock**	400.1.10
Jan 28-Feb 2	The Blind Wolf	123.1.2
Feb 5-9	Crusaders/The Jackdaw	135.14.8
Feb 12-17	Professor Tim	236.-.8
Feb 18-23	Look at the Heffernans	270.18.-
Feb 25-Mar 2	Crabbed Youth and Age/**Shadow of a Gunman**	226.9.-
Mar 5-9	Mountain Dew	321.15.2
Mar 12-16	A Doll's House	140.11.4
Mar 18-23	Pipe in the Fields/**The Lord Mayor**	189.12.6
Mar 30-Apr 6	The Far-Off Hills	388.2.2
Apr 8-13	The Master	187.17.6
Apr 15-20	John Bull's Other Island	260.3.10
Apr 22-27	Courtney & Kevney	235.18.-
Apr 29-May 4	John Ferguson	249.13.10
May 6-11	The Playboy of the Western World/Spreading the News	259.6.4
May 14-18	Ballet/Fanny's First Play	125.8.4
May 20-25	**The Plough and the Stars**	361.18.10
July 2-7	Mountain Dew	262.4.2
July 9-14	Look at the Heffernans	314.17.6
July 16-21	Full Measure/Blanco Posnet	167.4.6
July 23-28	Autumn Fire	265.2.3
July 30-Aug 4	John Bull's Other Island	277.12.6
Aug 5-11	Professor Tim/Far-Off Hills	555.8.8
Aug 13-18	Fighting of the Waves/Whiteheaded Boy	322.8.6
Aug 20-25	John Ferguson	277.15.2
Aug 27-Sep 1	The Glorious Uncertainty	309.2.-
Sep 3-8	Paul Twyning	321.18.10
Sep 10-15	The Woman	331.-.8
Sep 17-22	Rising of the Moon/Birthright/**Apartments**	298.12.6
Sep 24-29	Pipe in the Fields/Courting of Mary Doyle	353.2.-
Oct 1-6	Professor Tim	396.11.8
Oct 8-13	Ever the Twain	414.12.6
Oct 15-20	Ever the Twain	409.-.10
Oct 22-27	The Far-Off Hills	326.11.-
Oct 29-Nov 3	Gods of the Mountain/**The Lord Mayor**	260.13.2
Nov 12-17	Hyacinth Halvey/**Shadow of a Gunman**	255.-.10
Nov 19-24	Spreading the News/Oedipus the King/Ballet	128.6.3
Nov 26-Dec 1	Pot of Broth/Mixed Marriage	183.14.4
Dec 3-7	Mountain Dew	144.18.4
Dec 26-29	**Juno and the Paycock**	325.-.2
Dec 31-Jan 5	Dark Isle	236.19.4

Total Box Office (Gross): £11,803.2.8

Abbey Co. on holiday June.

Box Office Returns 1930

Jan 7-12	The Far-Off Hills	£197.9.8
Jan 14-19	Arms and the Man/A Night at an Inn	242.14.8
Jan 21-26	The Playboy of the Western World/The Rising of the Moon	172.3.-
Jan 28-Feb 2	Peter	387.3.2
Feb 4-9	Peter	391.17.10
Feb 11-16	The Woman	121.11.-
Feb 18-23	Ann Kavanagh/Whiteheaded Boy	150.7.-
Feb 25-Mar 3	Countess Cathleen/**Shadow of a Gunman**	176.12.-
Mar 4-9	Mountain Dew	123.17.10
Mar 11-16	In the Zone/Birthright/Crabbed Youth & Age	100.11.6
Mar 17-23	Cathleen Ni Houlihan/The Reapers/**The Lord Mayor**	157.19.2
Mar 25-30	Ever the Twain	167.1.8
Apr 1-6	**The Plough and the Stars**	285.-.4
Apr 8-13	**Never the Time and the Place**/Glorious Uncertainty	151.14.10
Apr 19-27	The New Gossoon	548.4.10
Apr 29-May 4	Autumn Fire	127.-.2
May 6-11	The White Cockade/**Apartments**	197.12.-
May 13-17	Peter	224.7.4
Jul 1-5	The New Gossoon	301.14.2
Jul 7-12	**The Lord Mayor**/Spring	199.11.4
Jul 14-19	**The Plough and the Stars**	367.3.8
Jul 21-26	John Bull's Other Island	247.13.2
Jul 28-Aug 2	Professor Tim	373.1.10
Aug 4,6,8	Playboy of the Western World/Rising of the Moon	211.17.4
Aug 5,7,9	Look at the Heffernans	240.17.4
Aug 11-16	The Far-Off Hills	319.15.10
Aug 18-23	**Shadow of a Gunman**/Pipe in the Fields	324.2.2
Aug 25-30	Hour Glass/Eloquent Dempsey	308.19.10
Sep 1-6	A Night at an Inn/Arms and the Man	200.19.6
Sep 8-13	Ever the Twain	307.11.10
Sep 15-20	Let the Credit Go	365.4.-
Sep 22-27	Let the Credit Go	342.15.10
Sep 29-Oct 4	Dervorgilla/Courting of Mary Doyle	236.3.-
Oct 6-11	Peter	267.3.2
Oct 13-18	The Doctor's Dilemma	193.7.6
Oct 20-25	The New Gossoon	260.19.6
Nov 4-8	Professor Tim	248.15.-
Nov 10-15	Look at the Heffernans	268.13.8
Nov 17-22	**WORDS UPON THE WINDOW-PANE/The Lord Mayor**	176.8.4
Nov 24-29	Spring/Mineral Workers	109.8.4
Dec 2-6	The Big House	156.8.2
Dec 26-Jan 3	**Juno and the Paycock**	265.13.7

Total Box Office (Gross): £10,217.8.1

Abbey Co. on holiday June.

Box Office Returns 1931

Jan 6-10	**THE CRITIC**	£209.3.11
Jan 12-17	**THE CRITIC**	232.7.1
Jan 19-24	Paul Twyning	268.17.-
Jan 26-31	**The Plough and the Stars**	234.-.-
Feb 3-7	The Master	103.10.10
Feb 9-14	The Rune of Healing/Ballets	106.1.-
Feb 16-21	John Ferguson	62.-.2
Feb 23-28	Peter the Liar/Emporer Jones	184.13.8
Mar 3-7	White Blackbird/**Apartments**	119.18.2
Mar 9-14	Money/Blanco Posnet	80.9.4
Apr 4-11	Let the Credit Go	243.4.4
Apr 14-18	Ann Kavanagh/The Eloquent Dempsey	97.11.4
Apr 20-25	The New Gossoon	264.17.10
Apr 27-May 2	The Moon in the Yellow River	168.4.10
May 5-9	Professor Tim	234.11.2
May 11-16	Meadowsweet/**The Critic**	104.18.-
May 25-30	The Far-Off Hills	181.18.8
Jun 2-6	**Shadow of a Gunman/Words Upon the Window-Pane**	147.8.6
Jun 8-13	The Admirable Bashville/Birthright	134.2.4
Jun 15-20	Riders to the Sea/Mixed Marriage	129.4.10
Jun 22-27	Paul Twyning	195.7.6
Jun 29-Jul 4	John Bull's Other Island	145.6.4
Jul 7-11	**SCRAP**/Courting of Mary Doyle	197.15.4
Jul 13-18	**The Plough and the Stars**	285.17.-
Jul 20-25	Look at the Heffernans	279.3.2
Jul 27-Aug 1	Mountain Dew	214.4.6
Aug 3	Whiteheaded Boy/The Rising of the Moon	48.2.-
Aug 4,6,8	**Juno and the Paycock**	229.18.-
Aug 5,7	The Whiteheaded Boy	143.12.4
Aug 11-15	The Moon in the Yellow River	152.5.10
Aug 17-22	The New Gossoon	314.4.4
Aug 24-29	Cathleen Ni Houlihan/A Disciple/The Admirable Bashville	164.19.2
Aug 31-Sep 5	John Ferguson	152.14.10
Sep 7-12	Hyacinth Harley/The Playboy of the Western World	203.19.8
Sep 15-19	Land of Heart's Desire/Glorious Uncertainty	236.12.4
Sep 21-26	Cat and the Moon/Fanny's First Play	132.3.6
Sep 28-Oct 3	Professor Tim	359.13.11

Total Box Office (Gross): £6,763.2.9

No performances after Oct 3. North American tour until April 1932.

Box Office Returns 1932

May 30-Jun 4	The Far-Off Hills	£270.6.-
Jun 6-11	The New Gossoon	163.7.6
Jun 13-18	John Bull's Other Island	93.16.-
Jun 20-25	Autumn Fire/Professor Tim	262.10.-
Jun 27-Jul 2	Michaelmas Eve	388.16.6
July 5-9	Michaelmas Eve	225.2.-
Jul 12-17	**Juno and the Paycock**	341.19.6
Jul 19-23	Paul Twyning	290.12.6
Jul 25-30	All's Over, Then?	326.9.-
Aug 1,3,5	**The Plough and the Stars**	217.1.-
Aug 2,4,6	**Words Upon the Window-Pane**/Birthright/Workhouse Ward	183.16.-
Aug 9,11	Cathleen Ni Houlihan/Playboy of the Western World	83.6.-
Aug 10,12,13	Shadow of the Glen/Whiteheaded Boy	157.9.6
Aug 15-20	Things That Are Caesars	336.16.6
Aug 23,25	John Ferguson	59.14.-
Aug 24,26,27	**Shadow of a Gunman**/Crabbed Youth & Age	168.-.-
Aug 29-Sep 3	Look at the Heffernans	367.18.6
Sep 6-10	Things That Are Caesar's	242.-.6
Sep 12-17	Temporal Powers	278.11.-
Sep 20-24	The Big House	233.6.6
Sep 26-Oct 1	The Far-Off Hills	311.3.-

Total Box Office (Gross): £5,002.1.6

Abbey Co. on North American tour through April.
Back on tour (North America again) Oct-Dec.

Box Office Returns 1933

Jun 26-Jul 1	**Juno and the Paycock**	£343.12.6
Jul 3-6	Autumn Fire	59.5.-
Jul 7-8	The Far-Off Hills	61.2.-
Jul 10-15	The New Gossoon	283.1.-
Jul 17-22	Margaret Gillan	285.15.-
Jul 24	Professor Tim	50.-.-
Jul 25	At the Hawk's Well	35.11.6
Jul 26	Hyacinth Halvey	31.6.-
Jul 27	The Drinking Horn	55.2.6
Jul 28-29	Bluebeard	104.6.-
Jul 31-Aug 5	Michaelmas Eve	199.16.-
Aug 7,9,11	Professor Tim	212.14.-
Aug 8,10,12	Glorious Uncertainty	186.4.-
Aug 14-19	Pipe in the Fields/Playboy of the Western World	NA
Aug 21-26	The Jezebel/**Shadow of a Gunman**	293.11.-
Aug 28-Sep 2	Things That Are Caesar's	213.4.-
Sep 4-9	Mountain Dew	292.19.6
Sep 11-16	Margaret Gillan	166.-.6
Sep 18-23	**Plough and the Stars**	350.1.-
Sep 25-30	1920	186.19.-
Oct 2-7	Look at the Heffernans	291.3.-
Oct 9-14	Paul Twyning	296.1.6
Oct 16-21	Drama at Inish	334.17.6
Oct 24-29	Drama at Inish	281.11.-
Oct 30-Nov 4	**Words Upon the Window-Pane**/Courting of Mary Doyle	241.16.6
Nov 6-11	Rising of the Moon/Whiteheaded Boy	213.18.6
Nov 13-18	Grogan and the Ferret	323.14.6
Nov 20-25	Grogan and the Ferret	281.-.6
Nov 27-Dec 2	Oedipus/Sovereign Love	60.5.6
Dec 4-6	John Ferguson	41.15.6
Dec 7	Shadow of the Glen/Glorious Uncertainty	85.5.-
Dec 11-16	The New Gossoon	163.19.6
Dec 18-22	**Never the Time and the Place/Lord Mayor**	103.8.6
Dec 26-30	You Never Can Tell	282.-.8

Total Box Office (Gross): £6,411.8.2

Abbey Co. on North American tour Jan-May.

Box Office Returns 1934

Jan 1-6	You Never Can Tell	£202.6.6
Jan 8-13	Professor Tim	285.19.-
Jan 15-20	Far-Off Hills	185.13.-
Jan 22-27	Moon in the Yellow River	131.9.6
Jan 29-Feb 3	Spreading the News/**Shadow of a Gunman**	245.2.6
Feb 5-10	Marriage Packet	182.9.6
Feb 12-16	Peter	192.12.-
Feb 19-24	Workhouse Ward/Poetry Readings/White Blackbird	64.7.-
Mar 31-Apr 7	Grogan and the Ferret	364.13.-
Apr 9-14	**Juno and the Paycock**	339.1.6
Apr 16-21	Days Without End	345.9.6
Apr 23-28	Days Without End	266.2.6
Apr 30-May 5	Drama at Inish	167.14.-
May 7-12	Look at the Heffernans	158.18.-
May 14-19	Mountain Dew	166.6.6
May 21-26	Church Street/Coiner	188.8.6
May 28-Jun 2	**Plough and the Stars**	210.10.6
Jun 4-9	Paul Twyning	154.17.6
Jun 11-16	Rising of the Moon/**Lord Mayor**/Glorious Uncertainty	115.2.-
Jun 18-23	Bridgehead	203.18.-
Jun 26-30	Bridgehead	180.19.6
Jul 2-7	The New Gossoon	125.12.6
Jul 9-14	On the Rocks	219.-.-
Jul 16-21	Shadow of the Glen/Courting of Mary Doyle	258.-.4
Jul 23-28	All's Over, Then?	198.9.-
Jul 30-Aug 4	The Resurrection/King of the Great Clock Tower	251.13.-
Aug 6,8,10	Grogan and the Ferret	223.17.-
Aug 7,9,11	**Juno and the Paycock**	245.1.-
Aug 13-18	Days Without End	251.12.-
Aug 20-22	Far-Off Hills	162.3.-
Aug 23-25	Playboy of the Western World/Spreading the News	169.11.-
Aug 27-Sep 1	Drama at Inish	300.13.6
Sep 3-8	**Plough and the Stars**	350.18.6
Sep 10-15	Well of the Saints/Hyacinth Halvey	150.10.-
Sep 17-19	Look at the Heffernans	128.5.-
Sep 20-22	Riders to the Sea/**Lord Mayor**	161.18.6
Sep 24-28	Resurrection/Whiteheaded Boy	171.15.-
Oct 1-6	Parnell of Avondale	340.-.6
Oct 8-13	Parnell of Avondale	237.11.-
Oct 25-Nov 2	Macbeth	187.6.6
Nov 12-17	Gallant Cassian/School for Wives	99.8.-
Nov 19-24	Gallant Cassian/School for Wives	37.6.-
Dec 3-8	Six Characters in Search of an Author/Glittering Gate	78.-.-
Dec 10-15	Glittering Gate/The Canavans	72.7.-
Dec 26-Jan 5	At Mrs. Beam's	256.6.-

Total Box Office (Gross): £9,029.4.4

No performances March.

Box Office Returns 1935

Apr 20-26	Drama at Inish	£191.9.4
Apr 29-May 4	King of Spain's Daughter/The Wrack	18.15.6
May 6-11	The Parnellite	41.8.6
May 13-18	Deirdre of the Sorrows (Synge)/Rising of the Moon	100.11.-
Aug 5-7	Bridgehead	218.19.-
Aug 8-10	**The Plough and the Stars**	230.15.-
Aug 12-17	**The Silver Tassie**	363.13.6
Aug 19-24	John Bull's Other Island	351.10.4
Aug 26-31	Grogan and the Ferret	362.8.-
Sep 2-7	The Far-Off Hills	374.5.4
Sep 10-14	Look at the Heffernans	377.-.-
Sep 16-21	Maurice Harte/**A DEUCE O' JACKS**	212.2.6
Sep 23-28	The New Gossoon	288.14.6
Sep 30-Oct 5	Village Wooing/Candida	235.9.6
Oct 7-9	Cat and the Moon/Courting of Mary Doyle	190.8.6
Oct 14-19	Parnell of Avondale	167.19.6
Oct 21-26	Drama at Inish	171.8.6
Oct 28-Nov 2	**Juno and the Paycock**	290.4.-
Nov 4-9	Noah	198.7.6
Nov 11-16	[Belfast Opera House]	
Nov 28-23	Noah	101.4.-
Nov 25-30	Glorious Uncertainty	140.8.6
Dec 2-7	A Saint in a Hurry	123.13.6
Dec 9-14	Summer's Day	101.2.6
Dec 16-21	**Words Upon the Window-Pane/Shadow of a Gunman**	182.13.-
Dec 26-Jan 4	**The Critic**/Songs by O'Higgins	281.9.6

Total Box Office (Gross): £5,316.1.-

North American tour Jan -15 April.
Abbey Co. on holiday June-July.

Box Office Returns 1936

Jan 6-11	Professor Tim	£267.-.-
Jan 13-18	Coriolanus	122.13.-
Jan 20-21	Coriolanus	8.7.6
Jan 22-25	Paul Twyning	76.7.-
Jan 27-Feb 1	Paul Twyning	136.12.-
Feb 3-8	**GRAND HOUSE IN THE CITY**	291.19.-
Feb 10-15	Mountain Dew	171.7.-
Feb 17-22	**The Plough and the Stars**	325.15.6
Feb 24-25	Boyd's Shop	117.5.6
Feb 26-29	Ash Wednesday	177.13.-
Mar 2-7	Far-Off Hills	166.1.-
Mar 9-14	Autumn Hills	192.13.-
Mar 16-21	Katie Roche	252.6.6
Mar 23-28	Look at the Heffernans	206.-.-
Mar 30-Apr 4	Bridgehead	147.2.-
Apr 13-18	The Passing Day	334.9.-
Apr 20-25	**Grand House in the City**	131.17.6
Apr 27-May 2	Boyd's Shop	205.17.6
May 4-9	Grogan and the Ferret	234.8.6
May 11-16	Moon in the Yellow River	218.1.-
May 18-23	Shadowy Waters/**Shadow of a Gunman**	197.3.6
May 25-30	The New Gossoon	164.12.6
Jun 1-6	Hassan	215.12.6
Jul 13-18	Drama at Inish	295.-.6
Jul 20-25	Drama at Inish	262.16.6
Jul 27-Aug 1	King of Spain's Daughter/Playboy of the Western World	322.-.-
Aug 3,5,7	Far-Off Hills	222.16.6
Aug 4,6,8	Thomas Muskery/Meadowsweet	168.5.-
Aug 10-15	King of Spain's Daughter/Deirdre (Yeats)/Meadowsweet	459.2.-
Aug 17-22	Professor Tim	353.13.-
Aug 24-29	Summer's Day	168.12.-
Aug 31-Sep 5	Glittering Gate/Playboy of the Western World	232.17.-
Sep 7-12	Far-Off Hills	281.-.6
Sep 14-19	Silver Jubilee/The Piper	234.11.-
Sep 21-26	**The Plough and the Stars**	333.10.-
Sep 28-Oct 3	Boyd's Shop	298.15.6
Oct 5-10	Kathleen Ni Houlihan/**Shadow of a Gunman**	224.18.-
Oct 12-17	The Jailbird	361.7.-
Oct 19-24	The Jailbird	356.5.6
Oct 26-31	The Passing Day	175.15.6
Nov 2-7	Hyacinth Halvey/Fanny's First Play	119.15.6
Nov 9-14	The Wild Goose	99.7.6
Nov 16-21	**Juno and the Paycock**	297.17.-
Nov 23-28	The New Gossoon	168.3.6
Nov 30-Dec 5	Wind from the West	198.7.6
Dec 7-12	Wind from the West	133.7.-
Dec 14-19	The Jailbird	192.15.6
Dec 26-Jan 2	**BLIND MAN'S BUFF**	276.2.-

Total Box Office (Gross): £10,598.5.-

Box Office Returns 1937

Jan 4-9	**Blind Man's Buff**	£320.12.6
Jan 11-16	**Blind Man's Buff**	323.-.-
Jan 18-23	**Blind Man's Buff**	299.8.6
Jan 25-30	Shadow and Substance	222.1.6
Feb 1-6	Songs and Poetry/Katie Roche	72.5.6
Feb 8-13	The Silver Jubilee/The End of the Beginning	166.15.-
Feb 15-20	Margaret Gillan	73.6.-
Feb 22-27	Arms and the Man	124.-.-
Mar 1-6	**The Plough and the Stars**	305.13.-
Mar 8-13	Look at the Heffernans	215.13.-
Mar 15-20	Drama at Inish	202.6.-
Mar 29-Apr 3	Quin's Secret	368.9.-
Apr 5-10	Quin's Secret	331.18.6
Apr 12-17	Quin's Secret	285.4.-
Apr 19-24	Dervorgilla/Killyceggs in Twilight	245.9.-
Apr 26-May 1	The Jailbird	226.4.-
May 3-5	Boyd's Shop	103.7.-
May 6-8	Shadow and Substance	121.18.-
May 10-15	**Juno and the Paycock**	221.6.-
May 17-22	Who Will Remember?	166.2.-
May 24-29	Grogan and the Ferret	218.6.-
May 31-Jun 5	In the Train/**Shadow of a Gunman**	275.12.-
Jun 12-17	**Blind Man's Buff**	341.9.-
Jun 19-21	Far-Off Hills	319.16.-
July 26-31	The New Gossoon	340.5.-
Aug 2-4	In the Train/Silver Jubilee	189.13.-
Aug 5-7	The Patriot	219.16.6
Aug 9-14	The Patriot	248.4.-
Aug 16-21	Rising of the Moon/Playboy of the Western World	340.9.-
Aug 23-28	Spring/Temporal Powers	216.16.6
Aug 30-Sep 4	Lost Leader	326.9.-
Sep 6-11	Lost Leader	276.11.6
Sep 13-18	Quin's Secret	239.12.-
Sep 20-25	Drama at Inish	168.14.-
Sep 27-Oct 2	**THE MAN IN THE CLOAK**	155.14.6
Oct 4-9	**THE MAN IN THE CLOAK**	110.12.6
Oct 11-16	Boyd's Shop	215.14.-
Oct 18-23	**THE INVINCIBLES**	272.16.-
Oct 25-30	**THE INVINCIBLES**	212.15.6
Nov 1-6	The Far-Off Hills	165.13.6
Nov 8-13	Cartney and Kevney	187.17.-
Nov 15-20	Cartney and Kevney	139.11.-
Nov 22-27	**COGGERERS**/Playboy of the Western World	85.10.-
Nov 29-Dec 4	Whiteheaded Boy	159.9.-
Dec 6-11	Whiteheaded Boy	89.9.-
Dec 27-Jan 1	She Had to Do Something	243.10.6

Total Box Office (Gross): £10,155.46

Box Office Returns 1938

Jan 3-8	She Had to Do Something	£142.6.-
Jan 10-15	New Gossoon	142.7.6
Jan 17-22	Neal Maquade	129.7.-
Jan 24-29	Neal Maquade	77.6.6
Jan 31-Feb 5	**The Invincibles**	153.12.6
Feb 7-12	Boyd's Shop	215.1.6
Feb 14-19	**A SPOT IN THE SUN**/Fanny's First Play	150.19.6
Feb 21-26	Drama at Inish	107.7.-
Feb 28-Mar 5	Moses' Rock	152.6.6
Mar 7-12	Moses' Rock	86.-.6
Mar 14-19	**Blind Man's Buff**	171.18.-
Mar 21-26	**Blind Man's Buff**	108.14.-
Mar 28-Apr 2	Quin's Secret	99.18.6
Apr 4-9	Dear Queen/On Baile's Strand/Rising of the Moon	103.3.-
Apr 18-23	**The Plough and the Stars**	279.16.6
Apr 25-30	**The Plough and the Stars**	120.7.6
May 2-7	New Gossoon	150.7.-
May 9-14	Casadh an tSugain/Playboy of the Western World	85.11.6
May 16-21	Far-Off Hills	92.19.6
May 23-28	Well of the Saints/Riders to the Sea	78.2.6
July 4-9	Riders to the Sea/Silver Jubilee	214.-.-
July 11-16	Church Street/Damer's Gold	242.8.6
July 18-23	Blanco Posnet/Maurice Harte	208.1.6
July 25-30	Moon on the Yellow River	249.16.6
Aug 1-3	Shadow and Substance	221.15.-
Aug 4-6	**The Invincibles**	221.15.6
Aug 8,13	Kathleen Ni Houlihan/Playboy of the Western World	179.1.6
Aug 9	Riders to the Sea/Well of the Saints	59.12.6
Aug 10	Purgatory/Rising of the Moon/Damer's Gold	76.14.6
Aug 11	On Baile's Strand/Blanco Posnet	68.8.-
Aug 12	Maurice Harte/Church Street	93.3.6
Aug 15	New Gossoon	87.13.6
Aug 16,18	**Plough and the Stars**	172.4.-
Aug 17	Moon on the Yellow River	97.14.6
Aug 19	Casadh an tSugain/Katie Roche	53.17.-
Aug 20	Shadow and Substance	110.9.-
Aug 22-27	Drama at Inish	289.6.-
Aug 29-Sep 3	**Plough and the Stars**	332.6.6
Sep 5-10	New Gossoon	332.13.6
Sep 12-17	Bird's Nest/Workhouse Ward	341.15.6
Sep 19-24	Great Adventure/Bird's Nest	271.5.-
Sep 26-Oct 1	**Blind Man's Buff**	223.15.6
Oct 3-8	Jailbird	273.2.6
Oct 10-15	Pilgrims	175.1.-
Oct 17-22	Far-Off Hills	227.19.-
Oct 24-29	Quin's Secret	172.11.6
Oct 31-Nov 5	**Juno and the Paycock**	302.1.6
Nov 7-12	Silver Jubilee/Gaol Gate	119.7.-
Nov 14-19	Professor Tim	279.7.-
Nov 21-26	Boyd's Shop	139.15.-
Nov 28-Dec 3	Grogan and the Ferret	263.4.-
Dec 5-10	Purgatory/Playboy of the Western World	112.5.-
Dec 12-17	**Shadow of a Gunman**/Baintigheama an Ghorta	121.13.-
Dec 26-31	Time's Pocket	168.15.-
	Total Box Office (Gross):	£9,150.11.-

Jan 2-7	**Plough and the Stars**	£170.17.6
Jan 9-14	Paul Twyning	191.6.-
Jan 16-21	Paul Twyning	164.-.-
Jan 23-28	Jailbird	135.6.6
Jan 30-Feb 5	[Theatre closed due to death of W.B. Yeats]	
Feb 6-11	**CAESAR'S IMAGE**	139.14.6
Feb 13-18	Drama at Inish	103.10.-
Feb 20-25	New Gossoon	151.17.6
Feb 27-Mar 4	**Blind Man's Buff**	144.7.-
Mar 6-11	Professor Tim	156.9.6
Mar 13-18	Tomorrow Never Comes	191.16.-
Mar 20-25	Tomorrow Never Comes	104.1.-
Mar 27-Apr 1	Mixed Marriage	231.16.-
Apr 3-6	Story Brought by Brigit	44.18.9
Apr 10-15	The Heritage	336.2.6
Apr 17-22	The Heritage	196.11.6
Apr 24-29	Dear Queen/Bird's Nest	110.18.6
May 1-6	Shadow and Substance	280.13.6
May 8-13	Insurance Money/**Never the Time and the Place**	146.1.-
May 15-20	Insurance Money	54.7.-
May 22-27	**Juno and the Paycock**	219.16.-
May 29-Jun 3	Silver Jubilee/Meadowsweet	95.15.6
Jul 3-8	The Heritage	193.5.6
Jul 10-15	Grogan and the Ferret	301.19.6
Jul 17-22	Far-Off Hills	252.10.-
Jul 24-29	Bridgehead	297.8.6
Jul 31-Aug 5	Illumination/In the Train	337.14.6
Aug 7-9	Jailbird	225.1.-
Aug 10-12	Boyd's Shop	237.3.6
Aug 14-19	**Plough and the Stars**	333.5.6
Aug 21-26	Paul Twyning	302.11.-
Aug 28-Sep 2	Fonham the Sculptor	102.8.6
Sep 4-9	King of Spain's Daughter/**Shadow of a Gunman**	171.11.6
Sep 11-16	Professor Tim	56.3.-
Sep 18-23	Drama at Inish	169.10.6
Sep 25-30	Kindrid	222.18.6
Oct 2-7	**Plough and the Stars**	214.-.6
Oct 9-14	Illumination/In the Train	114.4.6
Oct 16-21	Far-Off Hills	139.14.-
Oct 23-28	Whiteheaded Boy	213.7.6
Oct 30-Nov 4	Give Him a House	240.18.-
Nov 6-11	Give Him a House	174.2.-
Nov 13-18	Boyd's Shop	151.12.-
Nov 20-25	New Gossoon	135.2.-
Nov 27-Dec 2	Quin's Secreet	133.14.-
Dec 4-9	They Went by the Bus	203.3.6
Dec 11-16	Jailbird	166.4.-
Dec 26-30	Look at the Heffernans	248.14.6

Total Box Office (Gross): £8,708.13.3

Abbey Co. on holiday June.

Box Office Returns 1940

Jan 1-6	Look at the Heffernans	£239.7.-
Jan 8-13	Mixed Marriage	197.6.6
Jan 15-20	**Juno and the Paycock**	250.2.-
Jan 22-27	Spring/Bird's Nest	129.14.-
Jan 29-Feb 3	The Spanish Soldiers	223.3.6
Feb 5-10	Sovereign Love	132.1.-
Feb 12-17	Bridgehead	147.4.-
Feb 19-24	Paul Twyning	140.10.-
Feb 26-Mar 2	Shadow and Substance	196.17.-
Mar 4-9	Shadow and Substance	181.2.-
Mar 11-16	Give Him a House	129.-.6
Mar 18	Give Him a House	51.12.-
Mar 23-30	William John Mawhinney	252.4.6
Apr 1-6	William John Mawhinney	123.4.6
Apr 8-13	The Heritage	126.10.-
Apr 15-20	Silver Jubilee/In the Train	83.16.6
Apr 22-27	Mount Prospect	225.18.6
Apr 29-May 4	Mount Prospect	167.2.6
May 6-11	Glorious Uncertainty	227.9.-
May 13-18	Birth of a Giant/Ballet	60.18.6
May 20-25	The Passing Day	102.11.-
May 27-Jun 1	Look at the Heffernans	147.6.6
Jul 1-6	Jailbird	116.17.6
Jul 8-13	Far-Off Hills	107.2.6
Jul 15-20	Today and Yesterday	211.14.-
Jul 22-27	Today and Yesterday	202.3.6
Jul 29-Aug 3	Today and Yesterday	156.11.6
Aug 5-10	The Rugged Path	272.9.6
Aug 12-17	The Rugged Path	258.11.-
Aug 19-24	The Rugged Path	268.-.-
Aug 26-31	The Rugged Path	280.16.-
Sep 2-7	The Rugged Path	304.12.-
Sep 9-14	The Rugged Path	318.17.6
Sep 16-21	The Rugged Path	328.1.6
Sep 23-28	The Rugged Path	333.16.6
Sep 30-Oct 5	The Rugged Path	329.11.6
Oct 7-12	The Rugged Path	331.5.6
Oct 14-19	The Rugged Path	329.9.6
Oct 21-26	The Rugged Path	330.6.-
Oct 28-Nov 2	Drama at Inish	129.15.6
Nov 4-9	Three to Go	146.17.6
Nov 11-16	Three to Go	71.-.6
Nov 18-23	Mount Prospect	100.7.6
Nov 25-30	Peeping Tom	222.-.6
Dec 2-7	Peeping Tom	160.1.-
Dec 9-14	Strange Guest	209.-.-
Dec 16-21	Strange Guest	192.15.6
Dec 26-Jan 4	Strange Guest	268.11.-

Total Box Office (Gross): £9,515.15.6

Abbey Co. on holiday June.

Box Office Returns 1941

Jan 6-11	**TRIAL AT GREEN STREET COURTHOUSE**	£247.1.-
Jan 13-18	**Trial at Green Street Courthouse**	224.4.6
Jan 20-25	**Trial at Green Street Courthouse**	200.18.-
Jan 27-Feb 1	The Rugged Path	238.2.-
Feb 3-8	The Rugged Path	247.6.-
Feb 10-15	The Summit (sequal to The Rugged Path)	312.2.6
Feb 17-22	The Summit	273.18.6
Feb 24-Mar 1	The Summit	248.6.6
Mar 3-8	The Summit	212.6.6
Mar 10-15	The Money Doesn't Matter	282.18.-
Mar 17-22	The Money Doesn't Matter	302.13.6
Mar 24-29	The Money Doesn't Matter	296.1.-
Apr 12-19	The Money Doesn't Matter	372.8.6
Apr 21-26	The Money Doesn't Matter	295.3.-
Apr 28-May 3	The Money Doesn't Matter	273.15.6
May 5-10	The Money Doesn't Matter	238.13.6
May 12-17	The Money Doesn't Matter	254.7.6
May 19-24	The Lady in Twilight	198.4.-
May 26-31	**Trial at Green Street Courthouse**	205.4.-
Jun 30-Jul 5	Friends and Relations	284.11.-
Jul 7-12	Friends and Relations	266.15.-
Jul 14-19	Friends and Relations	287.12.6
Jul 21-26	Peter	307.15.-
Jul 28-Aug 2	Peter	310.9.6
Aug 4-9	Peter	317.19.-
Aug 11-16	Peter	319.13.-
Aug 18-23	**REMEMBERED FOR EVER**	305.5.6
Aug 25-30	**Remembered For Ever**	261.16.-
Sep 1-6	The Fire Burns Late	319.12.6
Sep 8-13	The Fire Burns Late	300.10.-
Sep 15-20	The Fire Burns Late	279.9.6
Sep 22-27	Swans and Geese	310.14.-
Sep 29-Oct 4	Swans and Geese	295.2.-
Oct 6-11	Swans and Geese	246.15.-
Oct 13-18	Swans and Geese	223.10.6
Oct 20-25	Lover's Meeting	275.6.-
Oct 27-Nov 11	Lover's Meeting	250.7.-
Nov 3-8	Lover's Meeting	255.3.-
Nov 10-15	Lover's Meeting	251.5.-
Nov 17-22	Shadow and Substance	275.-.-
Nov 24-29	The Three Thimbles	272.-.-
Dec 1-6	Shadow and Substance	273.2.-
Dec 8-13	Shadow and Substance	217.12.-
Dec 15-20	Shadow and Substance	170.12.-
Dec 26-Jan 3	Forget-Me-Not (no performance on Dec 28)	453.15.-
Dec 28	The Fiddler's House/Black Fast	27.5.6

Total Box Office (Gross): £12,282.11.6

Abbey Co. on holiday June.

Box Office Returns 1942

Jan 5-10	Forget-Me-Not	£251.14.6
Jan 12-17	Forget-Me-Not	196.13.6
Jan 18	Fiddler's House/Black Fast	42.9.6
Jan 19-24	Jailbird	259.1.-
Jan 26-31	**The Plough and the Stars**	351.5.6
Feb 2-7	**The Plough and the Stars**	350.16.6
Feb 9-14	**The Plough and the Stars**	351.3.-
Feb 16-21	**The Plough and the Stars**	344.16.6
Feb 23-28	**The Plough and the Stars**	325.13.-
Mar 2-7	**The Plough and the Stars**	333.1.6
Mar 9-14	The Cursing Fields	180.11.6
Mar 16-21	The Money Doesn't Matter	251.19.-
Mar 23-28	The Money Doesn't Matter	182.2.0
Apr 4-11	Boyd's Shop	372.14.-
Apr 13-18	The Fort Field	329.6.6
Apr 20-25	The Fort Field	355.5.-
Apr 27-May 2	The Fort Field	346.4.-
May 3	A Night at an Inn/La La Noo	29.4.6
May 4-9	The Fort Field	310.14.-
May 11-16	The Fort Field	277.5.6
May 18-23	The Fort Field	236.11.-
May 25-30	The Canavans/Gaol Gate	140.8.6
Jun 29-Jul 4	Jailbird	181.16.6
Jul 6-11	The Whip Hand	265.13.6
Jul 13-18	The Whip Hand	342.5.6
Jul 20-25	The Whip Hand	334.12.-
Jul 27-Aug 1	The Whip Hand	347.3.-
Aug 3-8	Strange Guest	340.8.6
Aug 10-15	Whiteheaded Boy	350.14.6
Aug 17-22	Whiteheaded Boy	346.17.6
Aug 24-29	Whiteheaded Boy	296.6.6
Aug 31-Sep 5	Whiteheaded Boy	306.13.6
Sep 7-12	An Apple a Day	305.12.-
Sep 14-19	An Apple a Day	276.17.6
Sep 21-26	An Apple a Day	242.13.6
Sep 28-Oct 3	Lover's Meeting	216.9.6
Oct 5-10	Country Dressmaker	342.5.-
Oct 12-17	Country Dressmaker	352.18.6
Oct 19-24	Country Dressmaker	334.9.6
Oct 26-31	Country Dressmaker	287.5.6
Nov 2-8	**Juno and the Paycock**	342.7.-
Nov 9-14	**Juno and the Paycock**	342.3.-
Nov 16-21	**Juno and the Paycock**	302.14.6
Nov 23-28	**Juno and the Paycock**	238.2.6
Nov 29-30	An Storm	33.2.4
Dec 1-5	**Juno and the Paycock**	179.1.6
Dec 6-12	Clancy Name/Church Street	172.17.6
Dec 14-19	Clancy Name/Church Street	100.8.-
Dec 26-Jan 2	The Playboy of the Western World	378.5.6

Total Box Office (Gross): £13,379.3.10

Abbey Co. on holiday June.

Box Office Returns 1943

Jan 4-9,11-16	The Playboy of the Western World	£587.5.6
Jan 18-24	The Playboy of the Western World	330.7.-
Jan 24-30	Faustus Kelly	273.4.6
Jan 31-Feb 1	An Bhean Chrodha	21.8.-
Feb 2-6	Faustus Kelly	180.8.6
Feb 8-13	The Whip Hand	152.4.6
Feb 15-20	Boyd's Shop	255.10.6
Feb 21-22	Ar an mBothar Mor	28.1.-
Feb 23-27	Boyd's Shop	209.9.6
Mar 1-6	Boyd's Shop	186.6.-
Mar 8-13	**THE O'CUDDY**	202.18.6
Mar 15-20	Grogan and the Ferret	277.18.-
Mar 22-27	Grogan and the Ferret	232.17.-
Mar 21	Assembly at Drum Creat/Hyacinth Halvey	18.12.-
Mar 29-Apr 3	Grogan and the Ferret	215.1.-
Apr 4-5	An Coimisinear	18.1.-
Apr 6-10	Far-Off Hills	196.4.6
Apr 12-17	Far-Off Hills	201.4.6
Apr 24-May 1	Old Road	341.2.6
Apr 26	Lost Light/Dervorgilla	44.8.-
May 3-8	Old Road	231.15.6
May 10-15	Old Road	205.10.-
May 17-22	Friends and Relations	216.18.-
May 24-29	Friends and Relations	244.15.6
May 30-31	An Traona Sa	17.5.6
Jun 28-Jul 3	The Rugged Path	212.11.-
Jul5-10,12-17	The Rugged Path	489.14.6
Jul 19-24	Autumn Fire	323.16.-
Jul 26-31	Autumn Fire	256.18.6
Aug 2-7,9-14	Look at the Heffernans	689.15.6
Aug 16-21	Look at the Heffernans	308.7.6
Aug 23-28	Look at the Heffernans	309.8.-
Aug 30-Sep 4	Thy Dear Father	347.3.6
Sep 6-11	Thy Dear Father	355.1.6
Sep 13-18	Thy Dear Father	339.9.6
Sep 20-25	Thy Dear Father	314.17.6
Sep 27-Oct 2	The Playboy of the Western World	273.10.6
Oct 4-9,11-16	The Country Dressmaker	547.4.6
Oct 18-23	The Lost Leader	249.-.6
Oct 24-25	Ordog an Bhais	60.12.6
Oct 26-30	The Lost Leader	198.11.6
Nov 1-6	Jailbird	281.15.-
Nov 8-13	Peter	300.14.-
Nov 15-20	Peter	282.4.-
Nov 22-27	The Bribe	234.4.6
Nov 29-Dec 4	Paul Twyning	283.8.6
Dec 6-11	Paul Twyning	217.7.-
Dec 12	Ordog an Bhais	13.17.6
Dec 13-18	Paul Twyning	165.10.6
Dec 27-Jan 1	Poor Man's Miracle	244.18.6
	Total Box Office (Gross):	£12,183.8.6

Abbey Co. on holiday June.

Box Office Returns 1944

Jan 3-8	Friends and Relations	£261.12.6
Jan 10-15	Friends and Relations	248.17.-
Jan 17-22	The Fort Field	225.9.6
Jan 24-29	Whiteheaded Boy	248.9.6
Jan 30-31	Laistiar Den Eadan	27.19.6
Feb 1-5	Whiteheaded Boy	182.3.-
Feb 7-12	The Wise Have Not Spoken	348.3.6
Feb 14-19	The Wise Have Not Spoken	332.11.-
Feb 21-26	The Wise Have Not Spoken	240.8.-
Feb 28-Mar 4	The Wise Have Not Spoken	218.11.-
Mar 6-11	The New Regime	217.7.6
Mar 13-18	**The Plough and the Stars**	329.-.-
Mar 20-26	**The Plough and the Stars**	319.1.-
Mar 26-27	Stiana	23.17.6
Mar 28-Apr 1	**The Plough and the Stars**	272.-.-
Apr 8-15	Lost Light/**Shadow of a Gunman**	312.16.-
Apr 17-22	Lost Light/**Shadow of a Gunman**	222.12.-
Apr 24-29	Look at the Heffernans	190.9.6
May 1-6	**The Plough and the Stars**	215.7.6
May 8-13	The Coloured Balloon	114.-.-
May 15-20	Grogan and the Ferret	206.9.-
May 21-25	Sodar i dDiaidh na nUasal	56.9.10
May 23-27	Grogan and the Ferret	136.6.-
May 29-Jun 3	Friends and Relations	119.19.6
Jul 3-8	Jailbird	225.7.-
Jul 10-15	Shadow and Substance	305.12.6
Jul 17-22	Shadow and Substance	228.12.6
Jul 24-29	Old Road	183.4.6
Jul 31-Aug 5	The Player Queen/**Words Upon the Window-Pane**	133.13.6
Aug 7-12	Whiteheaded Boy	174.2.6
Aug 14-19	Boyd's Shop	215.3.6
Aug 21-26	Boyd's Shop	239.17.-
Aug 28-Sep 2	The End House	338.11.-
Sep 4-9	The End House	340.3.-
Sep 11-16	The End House	307.12.6
Sep 18-23	The End House	278.4.-
Sep 25-30	Glorious Uncertainty	335.11.6
Oct 2-7	Glorious Uncertainty	295.14.6
Oct 9-14	Glorious Uncertainty	229.14.-
Oct 16-21	John Bull's Other Island	347.17.-
Oct 22-23	Borumha Laighean	55.11.-
Oct 24-28	John Bull's Other Island	288.17.6
Oct 30-Nov 4	John Bull's Other Island	279.12.6
Nov 6-11	John Bull's Other Island	214.6.6
Nov 13-18	Peter	196.6.6
Nov 20-25	The Railway House	210.16.6
Nov 27-Dec 2	The Railway House	153.17.-
Dec 4-9	Professor Tim	314.15.-
Dec 11-16	Professor Tim	298.17.-
Dec 26-30	Professor Tim	294.13.6
	Total Box Office (Gross):	£11,556.13.4

Abbey Co. on holiday June.

Box Office Returns 1945

Jan 1-6	Professor Tim	£316.18.6
Jan 7-8	An tUbhall Oir	48.19.6
Jan 9-13	Professor Tim	270.17.-
Jan 15-20	Professor Tim	294.3.-
Jan 22-27	Professor Tim	225.3.-
Jan 29-Feb 3	Professor Tim	263.7.-
Feb 5-10	The Money Doesn't Matter	289.13.-
Feb 12-17	The Money Doesn't Matter	305.-.-
Feb 19-24	The Money Doesn't Matter	249.12.6
Feb 26-Mar 3	**Juno and the Paycock**	347.18.-
Mar 5-10	**Juno and the Paycock**	351.4.-
Mar 12-17	**Juno and the Paycock**	321.16.-
Mar 18-19	Giolla an tSoluis	32.4.-
Mar 20-24	**Juno and the Paycock**	277.12.-
Mar 31-Apr 7	**ROSSA**	291.2.-
Apr 9-14	**Rossa**	210.-.6
Apr 16-21	Far-Off Hills	285.3.-
Apr 23-28	Far-Off Hills	262.-.6
Apr 30-May 5	The New Gossoon	328.7.-
May 7-12	The New Gossoon	326.12.6
May 13-14	An tUdar i nGleic	30.7.6
May 15-19	The New Gossoon	258.14.-
May 21-26	The New Gossoon	239.14.6
May 27-28	Oighreacht na Mara	41.5.6
May 29-Jun 2	The New Gossoon	214.12.6
Jul 2-7	Well of the Saints/Village Wooing	203.16.-
Jul 9-14	Well of the Saints/Village Wooing	271.12.-
Jul 16-21	Drama at Inish	333.17.-
Jul 23-28	Drama at Inish	312.18.6
Jul 30-Aug 4	Drama at Inish	224.9.-
Aug 6-11	Marks and Mabel	385.-.6
Aug 13-18	Marks and Mabel	379.8.-
Aug 20-25	Marks and Mabel	374.2.-
Aug 27-Sep 1	Marks and Mabel	362.1.6
Sep 2-8	Marks and Mabel	405.2.6
Sep 10-15	Tenants at Will	336.13.6
Sep 17-22	Tenants at Will	304.19.-
Sep 23-29	Tenants at Will	361.14.-
Sep 30-Oct 1	Nuair a bhionn Fear Marbh	43.5.-
Oct 2-6	**The Plough and the Stars**	324.16.-
Oct 8-13	**The Plough and the Stars**	386.10.-
Oct 15-20	**The Plough and the Stars**	385.13.6
Oct 22-27	**The Plough and the Stars**	371.-.-
Oct 29-Nov 3	**The Plough and the Stars**	341.10.6
Nov 5-10	**The Plough and the Stars**	318.1.6
Nov 12-17	Thy Dear Father	282.6.6
Nov 19-24	Thy Dear Father	235.14.6
Nov 26-Dec 1	The Playboy of the Western World	353.2.-
Dec 3-8	The Playboy of the Western World	285.9.6
Dec 10-15	The Playboy of the Western World	226.17.-
Dec 26-Jan10	Panto (Gaelic) [first Abbey Panto]	666.3.3
	Total Box Office (Gross):	£14,558.9.9

Box Office Returns 1946

Jan 11-Feb 9	Panto (Gaelic)	£1356.-.6
Feb 11-16	Mungo's Mansion	359.9.6
Feb 18-23	Mungo's Mansion	363.14.-
Feb 25-Mar 1	Mungo's Mansion	317.13.-
Mar 4-9	Mungo's Mansion	278.6.-
Mar 11-16	**Shadow of a Gunman**/Rising of the Moon	373.15.-
Mar 18-23	**Shadow of a Gunman**/Rising of the Moon	394.9.6
Mar 25-30	The Old Broom	335.9.-
Apr 1-6	The Old Broom	293.17.-
Apr 8-13	The Old Broom	307.19.6
Apr 20-27	Cathleen Ni Houlihan (Irish)/The Money Doesn't Matter	447.15.-
Apr 29-May 4	The Money Doesn't Matter	270.15.-
May 6-11	Strange Guest	264.14.6
May 13-18	Strange Guest	218.7.-
May 20-25	Professor Tim	363.18.6
May 27-Jun 1	Professor Tim	339.12.-
Jul 1-6	Professor Tim	383.10.6
Jul 8-13	Professor Tim	324.19.6
Jul 15-20	Professor Tim	375.7.6
Jul 22-27	Professor Tim	368.12.6
Jul 29-Aug 3	The Righteous are Bold	385.9.-
Aug 5-10	The Righteous are Bold	392.13.-
Aug 12-17	The Righteous are Bold	394.9.-
Aug 19-24	The Righteous are Bold	391.11.-
Aug 26-31	The Righteous are Bold	394.9.6
Sep 2-7	The Righteous are Bold	392.10.-
Sep 9-14	The Righteous are Bold	395.7.-
Sep 16-21	The Righteous are Bold	393.13.6
Sep 23-28	The Righteous are Bold	394.9.6
Sep 30-Oct 5	The Righteous are Bold	392.3.6
Oct 7-12	The Righteous are Bold	394.10.6
Oct 14-19	The Righteous are Bold	395.2.6
Oct 21-26	The Righteous are Bold	393.17.6
Oct 27	Ar An mBothar Mor	46.15.-
Oct 28-Nov 2	The Righteous are Bold	394.7.-
Nov 4-9	The Righteous are Bold	395.6.6
Nov 10-16	The Righteous are Bold	460.7.-
Nov 18-23	The Visiting House	384.-.6
Nov 25-30	The Visiting House	371.13.6
Dec 2-7	The Visiting House	289.7.-
Dec 9-14	The Visiting House	224.16.-
Dec 29-31	Panto (Gaelic)	158.14.-

Total Box Office (Gross): £15,573.17.-

Abbey Co. on holiday June.

Box Office Returns 1947

Jan 1-Feb 15	Panto (Gaelic)	£2244.5.5
Feb 18-22	They Got What They Wanted	307.2.-
Feb 24-Mar 1	They Got What They Wanted	363.3.6
Mar 3-8	They Got What They Wanted	380.14.6
Mar 10-15	They Got What They Wanted	379.3.-
Mar 17-22	They Got What They Wanted	393.8.-
Mar 24-29	They Got What They Wanted	390.8.6
Apr 5-12	They Got What They Wanted	461.18.-
Apr 14-19	They Got What They Wanted	380.15.6
Apr 21-26	They Got What They Wanted	297.9.6
Apr 28-May 3	They Got What They Wanted	322.12.-
May 5-10	They Got What They Wanted	365.7.6
May 12-17	The Dark Road	347.10.6
May 19	Oiche Mhait Agat a Mhic Ui Dhomhnaill/Caitriona Parr	17.-.6
May 20-24	The Dark Road	212.15.6
May 26-31	The Dark Road	259.6.6
Jun 30-Jul 5	Far-Off Hills	385.1.6
Jul 7-12	Shadow of the Glen/Workhouse Ward/**Words Window-Pane**	388.9.6
Jul 14-19	Shadow of the Glen/Workhouse Ward/**Words Window-Pane**	392.14.6
Jul 21-25	Far-Off Hills	328.18.6
Jul 28-Aug 2	Far-Off Hills	388.4.-
Aug 4,6,8	Shadow of the Glen/Workhouse Ward/**Words Window-Pane**	197.9.6
Aug 5,7,9	Far-Off Hills	198.6.6
Aug 11-16	Far-Off Hills	388.3.6
Aug 18-23	Far-Off Hills	378.15.-
Aug 25-30	The Great Pacificator	368.19.6
Sep 1-6	The Great Pacificator	311.5.-
Sep 8-13	The New Gossoon	391.11.-
Sep 15-20	The New Gossoon	389.10.6
Sep 22-27	The New Gossoon	486.7.6
Sep 29-Oct 4	The New Gossoon	471.18.-
Oct 6-11	The New Gossoon	472.-.-
Oct 13-18	**The Plough and the Stars**	496.1.-
Oct 20-25	**The Plough and the Stars**	495.2.-
Oct 27-Nov 1	**The Plough and the Stars**	435.15.6
Nov3-6,13-15	Diarmuid and Grainne	332.2.-
Nov 10-12	**The Plough and the Stars**	338.4.-
Nov 17-22	The Righteous are Bold	486.18.-
Nov 24-29	The Righteous are Bold	498.13.6
Dec 1-6	The Righteous are Bold	484.15.-
Dec 8-13	The Righteous are Bold	458.10.6
Dec 15-17	The Righteous are Bold	239.8.6

Total Box Office (Gross): £17,326.4.5

Abbey Co. on holiday June.

Box Office Returns 1948

Jan 1-31	Panto (Gaelic)/Realt Dhioomida	£1196.2.5
Feb 2-7	They Got What They Wanted	354.16.-
Feb 9-14	They Got What They Wanted	364.3.-
Feb 16-21	The Caretakers	496.1.-
Feb 23-28	The Caretakers	500.19.-
Mar 1-6	The Caretakers	495.12.6
Mar 8-13	The Caretakers	499.13.-
Mar 15-20	Maire Ros	145.3.-
Mar 22-27	The Caretakers	244.10.6
Mar 29-Apr 3	The Caretakers	503.10.-
Apr 5-10	The Caretakers	479.7.-
Apr 12-17	Mungo's Mansion	461.11.-
Apr 19-24	Workhouse Ward/Mungo's Mansion	331.6.6
Apr 26-May 1	**Blind Man's Buff**	408.2.6
May 3-8	**Blind Man's Buff**	452.19.-
May 10-15	**Blind Man's Buff**	355.6.6
May 17-22	Boyd's Shop	452.17.6
May 24-29	Boyd's Shop	473.7.-
Jun 28-Jul 2	Boyd's Shop	500.12.-
Jul 5-10	Boyd's Shop	478.4.-
Jul 12-17	The Drums Are Out	491.12.-
Jul 19-24	The Drums Are Out	495.17.-
Jul 26-31	The Drums Are Out	483.12.-
Aug 2-7	The Drums Are Out/Cathleen Ni Houlihan	492.16.-
Aug 9-14	The Drums Are Out	499.8.-
Aug 16-21	Playboy of the Western World	497.17.6
Aug 23-28	Lucky Finger/Cathleen Ni Houlihan/Playboy of the W World	499.4.-
Aug 30-Sep 4	Lucky Finger/Cathleen Ni Houlihan/Playboy of the W World	504.3.-
Sep 5-11	The Lucky Finger	585.17.6
Sep 13-18	The Lucky Finger	499.13.6
Sep 20-25	The Lucky Finger	503.5.-
Sep 26-Oct 2	The Lucky Finger	586.8.6
Oct 4-9	The Lucky Finger	494.5.-
Oct 11-16	Na Cloigini	451.9.2
Oct 18-23	The King of Friday's Men	478.2.6
Oct 25-30	The King of Friday's Men	495.13.-
Nov 1-6	The King of Friday's Men	498.16.-
Nov 8-13	The King of Friday's Men	491.5.-
Nov 15-20	The King of Friday's Men	473.7.-
Nov 22-27	The King of Friday's Men	473.1.6
Nov 29-Dec 4	The King of Friday's Men	452.-.6
Dec 6-11	The King of Friday's Men	426.15.6
Dec 13-18	The King of Friday's Men	432.9.-
Dec 27-Jan 1	Panto (Gaelic)	253.15.-

Total Box Office (Gross): £20,754.16.7

Abbey Co. on holiday June.

Box Office Returns 1949

Jan 3-8	Panto (Gaelic)	£287.-.-
Jan 10-15	Panto (Gaelic)	247.12.-
Jan 17-22	Panto (Gaelic)	243.5.6
Jan 24-29	Panto (Gaelic)	317.14.9
Jan 31-Feb 5	**The Grand House in the City**	379.10.-
Feb 7-12	**The Grand House in the City**	444.7.6
Feb 14-19	**The Grand House in the City**	444.8.6
Feb 21-26	**The Grand House in the City**	430.11.-
Feb 28-Mar 5	Drama at Inish	323.16.-
Mar 7-12	Drama at Inish	294.16.6
Mar 14-19	Bugle in the Blood	393.10.8
Mar 21-26	Bugle in the Blood	368.6.-
Mar 28-Apr 2	The Caretakers	390.13.6
Apr 4-9	The Caretakers	325.4.-
Apr 11-16	The Caretakers	221.1.6
Apr 18	Dervorgilla/Rising of the Moon/Lost Light	75.-.6
Apr 19-23	All Soul's Night	432.12.6
Apr 25-30	All Soul's Night	316.2.6
May 2-7	The Righteous Are Bold	481.11.6
May 9-14	The Righteous Are Bold	424.-.-
May 16-21	The Righteous Are Bold	468.5.-
May 23-28	The Country Dressmaker	483.14.6
Jun 27-Jul 2	Dreaming of the Bones/Country Dressmaker	305.5.6
Jul 4-9	Dreaming of the Bones/Country Dressmaker	337.-.6
Jul 11-16	The King of Friday's Men	370.5.6
Jul 18-23	The King of Friday's Men	442.11.-
Jul 25-30	The King of Friday's Men	441.4.6
Aug 1-3	The King of Friday's Men	305.4.-
Aug 4-6	Katie Roche	304.9.-
Aug 8-13	Katie Roche	500.11.-
Aug 15-20	Katie Roche	498.5.6
Aug 22-27	Katie Roche	500.12.6
Aug 29-Sep 3	Katie Roche	500.1.-
Sep 4-10	Katie Roche	575.5.6
Sep 12-17	Katie Roche	501.9.-
Sep 19-24	Katie Roche	492.8.6
Sep 25-Oct 1	Katie Roche	553.4.6
Oct 3-8	Ask for Me Tomorrow	486.4.6
Oct 10-15	Ask for Me Tomorrow	481.8.-
Oct 17-22	Ask for Me Tomorrow	403.14.-
Oct 24-29	Jailbird	466.17.6
Nov 7-12	Jailbird	375.18.6
Nov 14-19	Shadow and Substance	424.19.6
Nov 21-26	Shadow and Substance	416.14.6
Nov 28-Dec 3	Shadow and Substance	346.14.-
Dec 5-10	Boyd's Shop	371.15.6
Dec 12-17	Boyd's Shop	297.6.-
Dec 26-31	Panto (Gaelic)	317.14.-

Total Box Office (Gross): £18,810.7.5

Abbey Co. on holiday June.

Box Office Returns 1950

Jan 2-7	Panto (Gaelic)	£318.11.6
Jan 9-14	Panto (Gaelic)	309.-.6
Jan 16-21	Panto (Gaelic)	301.-.6
Jan 23-28	Panto (Gaelic)	379.16.-
Jan 30-Feb 4	Marks and Mabel	342.4.6
Feb 6-11	Marks and Mabel	320.19.6
Feb 13-18	Marks and Mabel	291.19.-
Feb 20-25	Rising of the Moon/Countess Cathleen	434.5.-
Feb 27-Mar 4	Rising of the Moon/Countess Cathleen	355.12.6
Mar 6-11	Rising of the Moon/Countess Cathleen	266.10.6
Mar 13-18	They Got What They Wanted	309.13.6
Mar 20-25	They Got What They Wanted	295.9.6
Mar 27-Apr 1	They Got What They Wanted	243.6.-
Apr 3-4	The House of Bernarda Alba	141.18.-
Apr 8	**Design for a Headstone**	94.7.-
Apr 10-15	**Design for a Headstone**	559.5.6
Apr 17-22	**Design for a Headstone**	482.5.-
Apr 24-29	**Design for a Headstone**	419.18.6
May 1-6	**Design for a Headstone**	537.18.-
May 8-13	The Lucky Finger	358.18.6
May 15-20	The Lucky Finger	312.1.6
May 22-25	Tristan agus Isialt	47.2.6
May 26-27	Village Wooing/**Shadow of a Gunman**	197.10.6
May 29-Jun 3	Village Wooing/**Shadow of a Gunman**	560.13.6
Jul 3-8	Village Wooing/**Shadow of a Gunman**	569.2.-
Jul 10-15	Village Wooing/**Shadow of a Gunman**	564.1.-
Jul 17-22	Village Wooing/**Shadow of a Gunman**	565.9.6
Jul 24-29	Village Wooing/**Shadow of a Gunman**	583.2.-
Jul 31-Aug 5	Village Wooing/**Shadow of a Gunman**	594.-.-
Aug 7-9	Village Wooing/**Shadow of a Gunman**	302.10.6
Aug 10-12	Mountain Flood	289.16.6
Aug 14-19	Mountain Flood	583.7.-
Aug 21-26	Mountain Flood	521.17.6
Aug 28-Sep 2	Friends and Relations	596.12.6
Sep 4-6	Friends and Relations/Cath Ni Houlihan/Shadow of the Glen	297.13.6
Sep 7-8	Friends and Relations	199.15.6
Sep 9	Cathleen Ni Houlihan/Shadow of the Glen/Rising of the Moon	100.-.-
Sep 11-16	Friends and Relations/Cathleen Ni Houlihan	593.19.6
Sep 18-23	Friends and Relations	582.5.-
Sep 24-30	Friends and Relations	664.11.-
Oct 2-7	The Goldfish in the Sun	586.12.6
Oct 9-14	The Goldfish in the Sun	528.14.-
Oct 16-21	The Goldfish in the Sun	428.13.-
Oct 23-28	The Goldfish in the Sun	404.6.-
Oct 30-Nov 4	Whiteheaded Boy	509.13.6
Nov 6-11	Whiteheaded Boy	489.9.6
Nov 13-18	Whiteheaded Boy	403.9.6
Nov 20-25	Whiteheaded Boy	325.3.-
Nov 27-Dec 2	Professor Tim	379.8.-
Dec 4-9,11-16	Professor Tim	669.17.6
Dec 26-30	Panto (Gaelic)	311.6.-
	Total Box Office (Gross):	£20,525.2.6

Box Office Returns 1951

Jan 1-6	Panto (Gaelic)	£381.5.-
Jan 8-13	Panto (Gaelic)	338.18.6
Jan 15-20	Panto (Gaelic)	240.12.6
Jan 22-27	Panto (Gaelic)	249.19.-
Jan 29-Feb 3	Panto (Gaelic)	343.17.-
Feb 5-10	House Under Green Shadows	380.12.6
Feb 12-17	**Juno and the Paycock**	553.11.-
Feb 19-24	**Juno and the Paycock**	590.16.-
Feb 26-Mar 3	**Juno and the Paycock**	540.1.6
Mar 5-10	**Juno and the Paycock**	503.8.-
Mar 12-17	**Juno and the Paycock**	479.5.6
Mar 19-20	**Juno and the Paycock**	176.12.6
Mar 21	Maurice Harte/Blanco Posnet	94.7.-
Mar 26-31	Maurice Harte/Blanco Posnet	516.4.6
Apr 2-7	Maurice Harte/Blanco Posnet	442.11.-
Apr 9-14	The Rugged Path	480.11.-
Apr 16-21	The Rugged Path	375.13.-
Apr 23-28	The Rugged Path	332.4.-
Apr 30-May5	Far-Off Hills/Geamaireacht Droichid an Diabhail	493.10.6
May 7-12	Far-Off Hills/Geamaireacht Droichid an Diabhail	444.1.-
May 14-19	**The Plough and the Stars**	586.5.6
May 20-21	An Ciste Togala	22.12.6
May 22-26	**The Plough and the Stars**	504.17.6
Jun 25-30	**The Plough and the Stars**	636.15.-
Jul 2-7	**The Plough and the Stars**	610.5.-
Jul 9-14	**The Plough and the Stars**	630.2.6
Jul 16-17	**The Plough and the Stars**	174.-.6
	[Abbey fire began approximately 1am on 18 July]	
		£11,122.19.6

Abbey Co. on holiday June.

There are also examples of role playing within the role and the play within the play in the Abbey repertoire. Beginning with the casting of Maude Gonne in the Irish National Theatre Society's production of *Cathleen Ní Houlihan* in 1902, metadramatic moments are entrenched in the history of the Abbey. With the ardently republican Gonne in the title role, the play's allegorical link to the contemporary political climate was accentuated and lent a "doubling" to the production. However, the most explicit metadrama is restricted to the Dublin plays and, while they are primarily focused on plays within plays, both works employ all of the "conscious or overt" varieties referenced by Hornby.

The most overt metadramatic plays in the Abbey repertoire are two set, appropriately enough, at the Abbey Theatre. The two plays that use an Abbey set are St. John Ervine's *The Critics, or a New Play at the Abbey* (1913) and Lennox Robinson's modernization of Sheridan's *The Critic, or a Tragedy Rehearsed* (1931). Both are comedies that rely heavily on real life reference, with the references to real persons, places, and events requiring a knowledge not only of the theatre's history, but also of the city of Dublin during the times in which they premiered. Both plays were very topical in their day and would retain a great deal of their humour to an audience today, if that audience were comprised of *devotées* of Abbey history. Both plays also contain a play within the play, with Ervine's occurring off stage and Robinson's as an on-stage dress rehearsal. The combination of metadramatic elements with the Abbey setting makes these two plays not only the most overt examples of metadrama in the Dublin repertoire, but also the most vivid displays of how two Abbey playwright-directors viewed their own experiences at the national theatre.

St. John Ervine's *The Critics, or a New Play at the Abbey* is the first Dublin play to be set entirely in the public sphere. With its lobby setting during an Abbey

Players' production of *Hamlet*, *The Critics* is among the most self-reflective, both of an Abbey author and of the critical climate in which the Abbey was operating in the early part of the twentieth century. Additionally, its metadramatic elements draw attention to the cultural nationalist climate of the day and its impact on audience reception to Abbey plays. Its Abbey setting draws attention to the audience's immediate environment, reminding the audience that it is in a theatre. But the real-life references of *The Critics* do not stop there; its set featured lobby portraits of Lady Gregory and George Russell, and the dialogue contains several insults of Yeats by the drama critic character. The play's numerous references to the Abbey and its leading practitioners are the first and most immediate metadramatic elements of the play and continue throughout. In addition to these real-life references, *The Critics* also employs the play within the play (even though the inner play occurs off stage), the role within the role, and self-reference. The only variety omitted is the ceremony within the play, the variety most often employed in the rural plays of the period.

The Critics premiered on 20 November 1913 under the subtitle "Being a Little Morality for the Press," and it is Ervine's payback to the city's drama critics for their reviews of his *The Magnanimous Lover* that had premiered at the Abbey in October of the previous year. *The Critics* was a well-timed return volley, since it preceded the premiere of *Mixed Marriage*, Ervine's first full-length play since *The Magnanimous Lover*, on the evening's double bill. This play indicts drama critics and the theatre-going public, who are portrayed as being as ignorant as the critics and equally overzealous in attacking, rather than attempting to comprehend or appreciate, the actual plays being staged. The newspaper critic, represented in the character of Barbary, is unprofessional and unable to comprehend either the intent or productions of the national theatre. The domestic public is represented by three Dubliners

(Quacks, Quartz and Bawlawney), all of whom walk out of *Hamlet* midway through the production. When not on guard for how Irish people are portrayed on the national stage, they are blissfully ignorant of the content of the play they have just attended.

Barbary has been reassigned from the City Desk of his newspaper to fill in for an ailing drama critic. His contempt for the dramatic literati and the theatre as cultural institution is apparent from the beginning when he suggests the Abbey building's prior use was more auspicious than its current incarnation: "That's a bad end for a Morgue — bein' turned into a theatre" (Ervine 81). He spends the entire play in the lobby, never witnessing the play he is there to review. While there, he encounters the three Dubliners leaving the performance in disgust, and from them he elicits the play's summary. Between providing plot points, the trio express their mutual disgust at such a "disgraceful" play being staged at the national theatre, with Quacks calling it "the worst outrage that has ever been perpetrated [...and an affront to] the fair name of the Irish people [and] the purity of the Irish women" (86-87). This echo of the public outcry against Synge's *The Playboy of the Western World* is the first of many self-reflective references to the Abbey's relationship with the theatre-going public that permeate *The Critics*.

Beyond the play itself, the management of the Abbey is also criticized for staging such an affront. Yeats is certainly at fault because "all he cares about is fairies and leprechauns" (89) which is Bawlawney's explanation for the presence of what he is not convinced was a ghost; Lennox Robinson is to blame for the bad language, after all "he reads Strindberg" (90); and Lady Gregory certainly contributed to the dialogue because "That he is mad, 'tis true: 'tis true, 'tis pity, and pity 'tis 'tis true [...] came straight out of Kiltartan" (91). Quacks calls for "a crusade in Ireland against this piece

and all the Abbey plays" and insists that they "demand the immediate institution of a censorship" (93).

In contemplating what his review will contain, Barbary is criticized by the other men for intending to publish a review of a play he has not seen. When they point out that it cannot, as a result, be factual, Barbary exclaims, "if we started printin' facts, the public would go out of its mind. If we were to tell the truth about Dublin, they'd burn the city down" (95). This brings into question exactly which and whose "truth" is being critiqued in *The Critics*. While Ervine's primary target is the Dublin drama critic, Barbary's use of the collective "we" (in reference to the city's journalists) targets the intelligentsia who propagate cultural political agendas as well. Dublin, in this Ervine play, is a city where truth is not paramount if it does not fit the cultural nationalist agenda or, more specifically, the agenda as represented by the Abbey itself.

Ervine's representation of the theatre going public, however, is painted with a broad stroke. While drama critics are the play's primary target, the public are actually given more rope with which to hang themselves, and serve as Ervine's conduits not only for criticizing the public's myopic vision of drama, but also for opening dialogue on a humorous aspect of what remains a century-long obsession regarding analysis of Ireland's national theatre: Whose Irishness does it represent? The theatre goers' comments pertaining to this issue are numerous, but Quacks sums it up succinctly in his attempt to align *Hamlet* with Irish society: "You may marry your deceased wife's sister, but you may not marry your deceased brother's wife; and, therefore, I say that this play is a horrible outrage on the instinctive purity of the Irish people" (92). Since *Hamlet* did not conform to Irish values in this audience member's view, it had no place on the stage of the national theatre. Furthermore, his use of the word

"instinctive" links cultural nationalism to Ervine's targets by reinforcing the concept of an innate purity by birthright or lineage.

In reading the play's metadramatic elements, it is clear that Ervine is challenging both the audience and the critics to like his new play, *Mixed Marriage*, which followed *The Critics* on the double-bill. This is primarily achieved through the use of role playing within the role and the real life references alluded to earlier. The role playing within the role is employed twice: the Dubliners are audience members playing critics, and the critic is a city hall reporter playing a drama reporter. In both cases, the roles are essentially false, but "the dual device still sets up a feeling of ambiguity and complexity with regard to the character[s]" (Hornby 67). In doing so, it challenges the audience in the theatre to be more receptive to the drama on stage by challenging their own notions of what is or is not "good" theatre. As such, this component of the Dublin repertoire presents a parody of the Abbey's defensive position against public and critical onslaught.

Lennox Robinson also turned to the Abbey to stage his most metadramatic work: a modernization of Sheridan's *The Critic, or a Tragedy Rehearsed.* When *The Critic* opened at the Abbey in January 1931, audience members found a prologue by Robinson in their programmes, and the author himself appeared on stage to shake hands with an actor portraying Sheridan.[4] Robinson drew attention to some of the play's metadramatic elements in the programme note: "When it was written, its first act was very topical and much of its humour in that act is derived from the fact that it mentioned by name contemporary persons, newspapers and events" (Robinson 1931, prologue). All of these elements were updated to contain Dublin references. He goes on to inform the audience that "the ridiculous inner play, *The Spanish Armada*, is left

[4] Neither the character of Sheridan nor an appearance by Robinson occurred on any other night, but the prologue was retained in the programme.

unaltered" because "the 'yon battlements' style of drama is still being written, worse luck; it is my misfortune to have read many such plays each twelve months" (Robinson 1931, prologue).[5]

Although the first act is the only one not set in the Abbey (it is set in the Dublin home of Mr. and Mrs. Dangle), it is worth noting here for its introduction to the real life references that abound. The play opens with the couple having breakfast and reading the morning newspapers. Mr. Dangle is reading the *Irish Times* and reading aloud the headlines it contains:

> Adverse Balance Rising, Stormy Scenes in the Dublin Corporation, The Scandal of Compulsory Irish, Foot and Mouth Disease Suspected in Kerry, Mr. Blythe's Budget — psha! Nothing in the whole paper but Ireland and politics, and I hate all politics except theatrical politics. Where's the *Daily Express*? *[his wife hands him the* Daily Express]. Ah, here we are! Irish Theatrical news […] "I am told that a new play has just been put into rehearsal at the Abbey Theatre. It is called 'The Spanish Armada' and […] it is written in romantic blank verse. We are all very glad to see that the Abbey Theatre is breaking away from peasant plays. Only four new plays have appeared this season and it seemed as if the Abbey's best days were over and that…" — Oh, then he goes on with the usual old thing. (1931, 1.1)

Dangle is a take-off on Joseph Holloway, whom Dangle's wife mentions as a bad influence on her husband. It is not long before their breakfast is interrupted by an assortment of theatre practitioners, including the playwrights Plagiary, Sneer and Puff (author of *The Spanish Armada*). When talk turns to Puff's new Abbey play, Plagiary (a perfect name for a man obsessed with plagiarism because he himself does it so often) comments that he will "never send another play there," as he sent them a five-act Elizabethan tragedy once, "and it was returned. Within six months, it appeared on the Abbey stage as a one-act Kiltartan comedy!" (1931, 1.9-10). This reference to Abbey director Lady Gregory putting her stamp on submitted works foreshadows the

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[5] Robinson was made a director of the Abbey in 1923 and, therefore, was among those who read both solicited and unsolicited playscripts.

editing that *The Spanish Armada* will undergo at the hands of the Abbey Players and other interested parties.

Acts two and three are set at the Abbey, where Dangle attends a dress rehearsal of *The Spanish Armada* at the invitation of Puff. Shortly into the rehearsal, it becomes clear to Puff that a substantial number of cutting has been done to his script. When he protests, the Stage Manager explains that the Players have taken Puff's advice and cut anything they found "dull or unnecessary," and that the play is so short now that he thinks it might be necessary "to begin the evening with *The Workhouse Ward*" (1931, 2.3). The irony of this line is that the Gregory play was the one-act that preceded *The Critic* throughout its two-week run. It is then left to the Stage Manager to explain other changes as the rehearsal progresses:

> STAGE MANAGER: There's been a little trouble in the Company, Maureen Delany was cast for the part of Britannia but either for patriotic reasons or because she was afraid of being lowered from the flies [...] she refused to play the part and we can't get another woman in the company to take it on. [Furthermore,] the Thames felt the same way but as he's only from the School of Ballet so he didn't dare to object, but he was heard to say, in his dressing room, that he'd rather be the river Lee — he's a Corkman — and that his father would beat the life out of him if he knew his son was going about impersonating an English river. [And] about the fight — well the Dublin branch of the League of Nations got to hear of it and made strong representations. Said it was a bad example to children and would make them bloodthirsty, and then there's a certain political set in the city who mightn't like to see a Spaniard beaten — might think we meant something political by it — so for all those reasons, we've cut the fight out.
>
> PUFF: But the ballet?
>
> STAGE MANAGER: Well of course we couldn't give in to the Lee — you know what Corkmen are — we're having the Shannon and its tributaries instead. (1931, 3.16-17)

In the end, Puff's epic with ballet has been turned into a one act about the Shannon Hydroelectric Scheme: there is no Spain and no armada. Puff capitulates, pronounces the play wonderful with its changes, and *The Critic* ends. The integration of the inner

and outer plays rests upon the modus operandi of the Abbey and its place within the cultural orbit of Dublin. If, as Robert J. Nelson asserts, a play within a play operates as a reflection of "a given dramatist's controlling conception of the theatre" (x), then Robinson's conception of the Abbey is that its productions are reduced to a lowest common denominator. This reduction is in response to the nationalist impulses that encircle the Abbey from without (special interest groups) and from within (actors, who are citizens first). In the end, Robinson uses the metadramatic to present the Abbey as an institution where artistic output is diluted by the nationalist project to the point where plays simply breed banality.

What *The Critics* and *The Critic* share (apart from their impossibly similar titles) is use of metadrama to parody both public perception of the Abbey Theatre and the methods by which the Abbey writers and directors respond to the public's criticism and that of the players, who are citizens first and players second. In doing so, they reinforce the Abbey's position as the dominant institution of culture in Dublin and challenge the theatre going public to examine themselves as carefully or carelessly as they critique the theatre.

Governmental and Judicial Institutional Settings

Much as the Abbey was an appropriate setting for interrogating the cultural politics of Dublin, Mansion House and city courtrooms were useful settings to foreground issues of politics and justice. As with the metadramatic plays, the nationalist agenda intrudes upon the operation of these institutions and changes them as a result. Mansion House is the primary setting for Edward McNulty's *The Lord Mayor* (1914), and both Denis

Johnston's adaptation of Ernst Toller's *Blind Man's Buff* (1936)[6] and Roger McHugh's *Trial at Green Street Courthouse* (1941) make use of the inner city's criminal court building. Issues of justice are also explored in the Kilmainham Gaol scenes in Hugh Hunt and Frank O'Connor's *The Invincibles* (1937), and in Seamus Byrne's semi-autobiographical *Design for a Headstone* (1950), set in Mountjoy Prison.

The Lord Mayor features O'Brien, an ironmonger and City Council member who is forced into the position of Lord Mayor by Gaffney, a solicitor who needs a puppet in the ceremonial high office to appease London for him while he controls the Dublin chamber. Set partly in Mansion House, the plot relies on how well (or badly) O'Brien succeeds as an ironmonger playing the role of politician. Gaffney presents himself to the public as a republican, but he uses O'Brien to placate London, so that he can play both sides of the political fence to his own benefit. The underlying message of Gaffney's duplicity is that the old political guard may well be placating the public mood in 1914, but the public should question their intent and perhaps look to a new generation to sincerely represent the undercurrent of republicanism that was percolating in Dublin during this time. This is reinforced by the younger characters of Moira and Kelly, whose commitments to their beliefs are in contrast to the old guard. When their example inspires O'Brien to stop being Gaffney's puppet, it delivers on the metadramatic promise.

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[6] Toller approached Johnston to write an adaptation of his *The Blind Goddess* (1932), but Johnston ultimately made so many changes to Toller's structure and plot that Johnston's *Blind Man's Buff* can hardly be deemed an adaptation. However, due to legal restraints based on their initial meeting, it remains listed as such. See Johnston's *Strange Occurrence on Ireland's Eye* (1956), a re-working of *Blind Man's Buff,* for a much more compelling treatment of the actual case on which it was based.

Although a courtroom set is partly used in *Blind Man's Buff* and McHugh's *Rossa* (1945),[7] *Trial at Green Street Courthouse* is the first indigenous play of the Abbey repertoire that can legitimately be deemed a courtroom drama. McHugh noted that some critics in the 1950s coupled this play with *The Invincibles* as dual "attempts to romanticise political murder" (1945, 78), but when the plays are examined in close reading with consideration of the historical context in which the plays premiered, one discovers that both actually obliterate any romantic notions of violence. In doing so, these historical plays oppose the notion of martyrdom celebrated in the Abbey's earliest overtly nationalist play, *Kathleen Ní Houlihan*, and stand in opposition to violence by any means, be it in the name of nationalism or not.

Trial at Green Street Courthouse is a dramatization of the 1871 trial of Robert Kelly, a Dublin carpenter tried for the murder of Thomas Talbot, a former Head Constable of the Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC). Talbot was rewarded with early retirement and a double pension for his undercover work in Carrick-on-Suir, which led to the arrest of over 50 Fenians. He eventually relocated to Dublin, where the Fenian rising had essentially been crushed by the time he arrived, but where there was still an undercurrent of support. Talbot was quickly recognized by those sympathetic to the Fenian cause and harassed on a regular basis. He was shot while walking home from a pub one night and, on the way to the hospital, named Robert Kelly as the man who shot him. Talbot survived for a short while, but died in hospital days after the operation for the bullet wound. Kelly went on trial in November 1871 for the murder, in what remains one of the most sensational trials ever to have taken place in Ireland. Domestic and international newspapers ran extensive, detailed reports; street vendors

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[7] The Dublin courtroom scene of *Rossa* serves no purpose except to demonstrate the plot point that Rossa was found guilty. It is the shortest and least significant scene in the play and, therefore, is omitted from courtroom analysis here. Likewise, the prison scene is set in England and is, therefore, not included.

along the Dublin quays sold souvenir pictures of both Kelly and Talbot, and ballads were written about the trial and its assorted characters. Kelly, defended by the celebrated barrister (and pre-Parnell leader of the Home Rule movement) Isaac Butt, was acquitted of the crime. Butt successfully argued that the direct cause of Talbot's death was the treatment he received in hospital, not the bullet that struck him.

McHugh wrote *Trial at Green Street Courthouse* from detailed trial reports and took pains to follow the historical record. One key part of the record that he captured well was the Dublin public's disdain for informers or police-spies. This became a critical element of the play's composition, almost overshadowing the trial that one might expect to dominate the play. The trial was 70 years past by the time the play premiered; as such, impact of the trial itself was diminished by time. The trial was controversial and unique in its day, but the passage of time and the fading from history of Kelly would likely have kept it from being memorable to the theatre going audience. Fresher in the minds of the audience would be the role that police-spies played in the city's history and their suppression of the republican movement. Public interest in the trial was directly related to its disdain for police-spies and for the RIC, who had attacked an Amnesty gathering in Phoenix Park only weeks before the trial, further fuelling the lack of trust the public already had in the RIC. Crowds surrounded the courthouse every day of the trial and taunted RIC members who escorted Kelly between Kilmainham Gaol and Green Street. By the time *Trial at Green Street Courthouse* premiered in 1941, the Irish Free State had been established but the memory of police infiltrating the community and conspiring against the public remained fresh in citizens' minds.

True to the historical record, neither the victim (who was dead) nor the accused (Kelly never spoke one word during his trial) are portrayed in the play. Their

omission facilitates the prominence of Isaac Butt, who, in the end, was the most memorable character in the trial and who remained an icon of Dublin city long after his death.[8] All ancillary characters serve as a Greek chorus, echoing the public mood and adding to the play's effectiveness in characterizing the Fenian movement that was struggling to regain momentum in Dublin at the time. The ten scenes that comprise this play pay meticulous attention to the alternating sets of pub (to be discussed later) and courtroom. Each set was designed to the author's detailed specifications and was constructed to make the audience as much a part of the proceedings as possible. This positioning reinforces the fact that public pressure brought a great deal to bear on the trial's outcome. Although the Abbey alternated which set was to be foregrounded in various productions, its first staging had the pub set on a raised platform behind the courtroom, and in all productions both sets remain on stage throughout; there were no set changes. The author notes:

> In the court scenes, the proper placing of the witness-box is important. If it is placed at the back it should project, so that counsel need not speak to the back, but can examine the witness from the side and thus speak partly in the direction of the audience. This has further advantages; the expression of the witness can be seen clearly and the audience is in the natural position of the jury. (McHugh 1945, xiv)

Staging the courtroom set in such a way that the audience is in the "natural position of the jury" affords the audience the experience of being part of the cultural process they entered the theatre to witness in dramatic form. Placed in the position of jury, a position they would recognize since they are familiar with this ceremony of justice, the audience would experience an acute perception of witnessing a ritual of their culture from an active position: they would, in a sense, be role playing the roles of jurists. This actually touches upon the metadramatic component of role playing within a role.

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[8] Butt's legacy among nationalists was related to his defence of IRB leaders in 1865-1867.

Role playing within the role occurs whenever "a character for some reason takes on a role that is different from his usual self" and "shows not only who the character is, but what he wants to be" (Hornby 67). Taking that assumption and moving it to the audience as role players is a metadramatic indicator. If, as Hornby suggests, this "dualistic device [...] sets up a feeling of ambiguity and complexity with regard to the character" (Hornby 67), then this device infuses the theatre goers with a self-ambiguity and complexity that heightens how they see themselves in the courtroom scenario. It forces them to hear the "evidence" as those who will eventually pass judgement and, in scene seven — the dramatic pinnacle in which Armstrong sums up his case for the Crown, and Butt does so for the defence — to take in the arguments knowing they have been presented against a backdrop of public support for Kelly: public support largely based upon public resentment against the informer Talbot.

Public resentment of an informer who took part in an historical event is also a key element of Hugh Hunt and Frank O'Connor's *The Invincibles*, which premiered at the Abbey on 18 October 1937.[9] Its title refers to the secret assassination club that gained notoriety for the 1882 Phoenix Park murders of the Chief Secretary Lord Cavendish and Under Secretary Burke.[10] The public locales used as various sets include pubs and Kilmainham Gaol. The prison does not appear until the last two scenes, but it is here that a key Invincible member, the group's *de facto* leader Carey,

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[9] Text quoted herein is that used for the 1967 revival at the Abbey Theatre (containing minor revisions upon the 1930's script by Hunt). The 1930s script remains missing.

[10] The group planned to assassinate Chief Secretary Forster, but failed in several attempts. By the time they planned the Phoenix Park murder, Forster had resigned in protest over the Treaty of Kilmainham and the release of Parnell from jail. But the Invincibles went ahead with their plan, changing the target to Burke and inadvertently killing Cavendish. Unlike Forster, Cavendish was openly sympathetic to the Home Rule movement. The Phoenix Park murders were viewed by Parnell supporters and republicans as impeding all progress that had been made to date.

turns informer to save himself, and where even the officer to whom he divulges information is repulsed by his behaviour.

In scene six, Carey is in his cell refusing to inform on who committed the murder or to confirm the names of the organization's membership. Inspector Mallon enters to offer Carey a deal if he talks, but Carey refuses.

> MALLON: You planned the murders, I say. It wasn't the other poor goms [...] First, they wouldn't have the brains; second, they wouldn't have the money. No, Mr. James Carey, it was you, the respectable man, the building contractor, the city councillor, with the tidy bank balance behind you. (Hunt and O'Connor 60)

Mallon lists off what he believes to be facts of Carey's involvement, but Carey doesn't verify any of it and comments that listening to the scenario Mallon outlines is "as good as a play" (60). The fake civility of the scene takes an abrupt turn when Mallon tricks Carey into believing that another member of the group is about to inform on him. Losing his composure and discarding his mask as a respectable man of the city — a mask Mallon has seen through all along — Carey cries out: "I'm the ring-leader [...] the man that plotted everything, but not guilty, not guilty of the murder!" (65).

In the end, as was the case in the real Phoenix Park events, after Carey names names, all members of the Invincibles inform on each other — except for two of the four members (Brady and Kelly) who actually committed the murders. The inspector keeps his word and agrees to Carey's release in exchange for his testimony. For the final scene, the stage is split to show the cell of Carey and the cell of Brady. Carey is awaiting release, and Brady is preparing to be executed. A light comes up and fades down to indicate the action alternating between each cell. The first focus is on Brady and a warder, who witnessed the final visit of Brady's mother and comments to Brady on his awe of the women's strength as she told her son to take his secrets to the grave.

Brady replies, "That's the one thing I spared her — to see her son an informer" (66). Brady's concern quickly turns to the public mood and he asks the warder if there are crowds gathering in support of the Invincibles. Upon being told there are crowds surrounding the jail, Brady asks if they are protesting in support:

> WARDER: How could they and everyone — the priests, the bishops and even Mr. Parnell — after telling them you were wicked murders?
>
> BRADY: God's curse on them! (68)

A nun enters as the lights go down on Brady's cell, and up on Carey's. Carey too is obsessed with the public mood and with the public shame of being an informer. In anger and despair, he puts down the newspaper he is reading, "the things they say about me in the papers. Look at what they're calling me — the Arch Informer" (69). Carey momentarily regains his mask of being a community power player and argues that his former status in the community can continue as Mallon confronts him for not implicating all of the Invincibles:

> MALLON: Have you any explanation?
>
> CAREY: Here's my explanation. I have to live in Dublin and I have to leave some of them off or the people would get to distrust me. I was only writing to the Corporation to say 'twould be another couple of weeks before I could be back.
>
> MALLON: Are you mad? Go back to the Corporation? Do you think you can ever live in Dublin again?
>
> CAREY: And where else? Do you think I could live out of it? Dublin is the breath of my body, man. I'm known here, thirty years, man and boy; I know every jackstraw here.
>
> MALLON: (*Lays revolver on table*): Here! Better that that!
>
> CAREY: What's that for?
>
> MALLON: You think there's one human being in Dublin that would be seen talking to you? Let me tell you, I don't trust my own policemen not to kill you in the van. I'll consider myself a lucky man if I can get you to South Africa alive. You can consider yourself a lucky man if you're alive two days after you get there. (70)

Meanwhile, Brady sits with a nun, sharing his final thoughts as he contemplates the execution he is to face in the morning.[11]

> BRADY: The people ask for murder. Every day they asked for it, everyone you met was crying out for it. What did Parnell and the rest want if 'twasn't murder? Why did they talk to us of our wrongs, of the people that died by the roadside, the perjured judges, the drunken Protestant juries from Rathmines? Why only that they wanted us to strike back? No, 'twas the names they were afraid of; 'murder,' 'nives,' 'assassins.' Like that crawling reptile, Carey, Ireland ran away from the names they put on us and went whining to her prayers. But one day, mark my words, she'll do the same thing to Parnell, and then he'll know what we went through in the long nights at Kilmainham. I was right, right! I'm ashamed of nothing. (72-73)

The spotlight remains on Brady's cell as another comes up on Carey's. Kelly, another prisoner to be executed, begins singing a Marian Hymn from off stage and is soon joined by the voices of other prisoners throughout the jail. The sound of this church hymn breaks Carey down, "Let me out, I say. I didn't do it, I didn't betray them! I'm no Judas Iscariot!" (74). The hymn has no impact on Brady, who remains unrepentant. His final lines, "Tis Ireland's shame, not mine! Poor Ireland with slavery in her blood, poor Ireland that runs away from words like a child from a bogey man! I'm ashamed of nothing" (74), close the play.

These final scenes undermine the notion that this play in any way romanticized political murder. Brady, the one character that romanticizes political murder is left a cynical, unrepentant man who will die shortly. With him will go all romantic notions of death or murder in the name of country. The crowds who gathered did so out of curiosity, as though to view an oddity. Brady's way of life is over. The final religious overtones — Carey invoking the biblical, cowardly traitor Judas, and Kelly's song, the Marian Hymn "Hail, Queen of Heaven" — suggest that

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[11] Brady, Kelly and three others were executed; eight others were sentenced to long prison terms. Because his testimony indicted all thirteen, Carey was the only one released. Carey was executed by a fellow passenger while travelling to South Africa. See T.H. Corfe's "The Phoenix Park Murders" for comprehensive historical overview of the event and its aftermath.

the powerful presence of the Church in the early decades of the Free State overpowered the secret societies to which it was so opposed. However, even this powerful conclusion does not overshadow the play's recurring theme of the Republican and Home Rule movements' refusal to accept any responsibility for the climate they created that led to the formation of this fringe group.

When the play premiered, Hunt and O'Connor felt compelled to address that situation by including the following Author's Note in the program:

> The absolute unanimity of opinion, Irish and English, on the Phoenix Park assassinations, makes it obvious that the last word has not yet been said.
>
> English defamation of Brady and his friends is largely propaganda, as is shown by its frequent contradictions and the flat and positive denial given by a prosecuting judge who was compelled to admit that his victims were all men of high character. The propaganda went to insensate lengths; Kelly was accused by rumour of sexual crimes; Brady's head was chopped off and wise men of the College of Surgeons gravely declared that his brain showed a complete incapacity for pity or remorse, while a Trinity College Professor kept a class of students convulsed by an imaginary analysis of the dead man's mental processes.
>
> The Irish calumnies, on the other hand, seem to have been inspired by a very bad conscience. No such monsters ever existed as are pictured by Nationalist and Catholic historians — the 'butchers' of Canon Sheehan, the 'Ferocius cut-throats' of Parnell's biographers — while the libelling of Carey, a simple, vain, weak man who had given years of his life to the service of Ireland and failed only when tricked by Mallon, passes the bounds of all decency. It is intelligible at all only if one assumes that *Nationalist Ireland blackguarded these brave and decent men in order to conceal from itself the fact that it had betrayed them* (italics mine).

The betrayal commented on by the authors is one of revisionists refusing to accept their complicity, a situation that began immediately upon the murders and which, it could be argued, was an effort to conceal the fact that the nationalist leadership was, at this time, not in control of the citizens it professed to lead.

The definitive prison drama of the Abbey repertoire is Seamus Byrne's *Design for a Headstone*. The Dublin-born Byrne was as a solicitor whose legal practice was interrupted for several years, first by political activism and later playwriting. In 1940, he was sentenced to two years for illegal radio transmissions on behalf of the I.R.A. While serving his sentence, he went on hunger strike and was released, having served less than ten months of his sentence. The autobiographical elements in *Design for a Headstone* are self-evident.

Design for a Headstone premiered at the Abbey on Easter Saturday, 8 April 1950. The play takes place in the 1940s, and while it never states the location as Dublin's Mountjoy Prison, there are numerous references to Dublin landmarks and streets that place it within the city proper. Additionally, the names and layouts of the cell blocks correspond to those of the legendary Dublin jail. All of the action occurs within the prison — with sets denoting cells, the prison kitchen, and the visitors' room — over the course of 30 days, the duration of Conor Egan's hunger strike for recognition of his political status.[12]

The prisoners are a mix of political and criminal, led by the characters of Egan and Jakey, respectively. The play contains several story lines, with the hunger strike of the political prisoner Egan and the antics of recidivist criminal prisoner Jakey at the fore. The political and criminal prisoners are presented as leading distinctly different lives under incarceration. The political prisoners are a mix of the "twenty-two crowd" (Byrne 89) and some who were incarcerated at some later point. It is the "twenty-two crowd," veterans of the War of Independence and the Civil War, whose activities

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[12] This is not the first Abbey play to include the hunger strike as a political weapon. That distinction belongs to Yeats' *The King's Threshold*. Although the original production in 1903 by the I.N.T.S. (and subsequent productions through 1920) did not include this plot point, Yeats revised the play to have Seanchan use this method to shame the King for heeding the request of "Bishops, Soldiers and Makers of the Law" to have the poet (Seanchan) banished from the court. McGreevy and other critics argue strongly that this revision was made after Terence MacSwiney died on hunger strike in 1920.

confront what has been well-described as the "sanitized nationalist sentiment" (Welch 150) of mid-century Ireland. The political prisoners meet regularly to study Irish, devise escape methods, and share information about what is happening within the republican movement outside of the jail. Meanwhile, the criminal prisoners focus on angling for favoured work assignments while, it is suggested, viewing prison as an escape from the harsher realities of economic survival and family commitments that face them outside of the prison walls.

The size of the cast is one of the noteworthy aspects of the production (there were over twenty speaking parts and at least nine non-speaking), but the subject matter is more so. As Luke Gibbons notes, Byrne was one of the few playwrights of the period to "introduce more controversial subjects into the dramatic canon" (47), and in this play he managed to touch on several that piqued audiences and critics alike. Although the play enjoyed a successful six-week run, it was not without controversy, as Gabriel Fallon recalled:

> On the sixth night of the play's presentation a group of people in the audience gave vent to shouts of protest which resolved themselves into charges that the author was (a) using his play 'as a vehicle for Marxian philosophy'; (b) attempting to 'smear the Catholic priesthood'; (c) insulting Ireland, Irishmen, and a Temperance Association. At one point in the play (when Aidan O'Leary mentions Jacques Maritain) a number of young men rushed towards the stage shouting 'Maritain was wrong!' The incident would not be worth mentioning did it not reflect a line of thought and action which is consistent with certain attitudes in Irish Catholicism. (1956, 4)

Of the subject matters to which Fallon refers, the attack on Byrne for "insulting Ireland [and] Irishmen" ties most directly into the Abbey's history as a conduit of cultural nationalism. However, this play was staged long after the death of the Abbey founders, and at a time of cultural and societal dominance by the Catholic Church. As such, the nation and men it was deemed to have insulted were radically different from those of the early century. What remained constant was the notion that the play

attacked an essence of Irishness. The Irishness under attack is the legacy of the men of '22, those who fought in the War of Independence and, more recently, on the losing side of the Civil War. Micheál Ó hAodha argues that the combination of the political prisoner characters demonstrate the author's intent to "stress the point of the continuity of the I.R.A. [and that Byrne's] argument would appear to be that Egan, O'Leary, McGowan and the rest are carrying on the unfinished business of 1922 and 1916 and as far back as you wish to go" (42). There is no denying that each of the three primary political prisoners is true to a stereotype of I.R.A. man that has been constructed for cinematic and dramatic consumption over the years. Egan is a "die-hard" type and a Catholic, selective of which Church doctrines do or do not fit his political beliefs; O'Leary is an idealist who "believes in a purely Irish culture and an uncompromising national outlook" (Ó hAodha 41); and McGowan appears modelled loosely on Connelly, a man for whom Marxism and other leftist political doctrines must be intertwined with nationalism for it to be freed from cultural trappings. However, although these men continue to maintain their position while incarcerated, their rationales for sticking to their "type" are all proven to be false.

The play opens and concludes with a game of chess, which is used as a metaphor for the posturing of the political prisoners and their perceived relationship to authority, both real and symbolic. During the matches, political prisoners reveal their strategies for dealing with their incarceration and their strategies for obtaining release. As a man set apart and living in the past, Egan is the only one who never participates. Nonetheless, he is an unwitting pawn in a power play led by the State: the jailers intended to provide Egan political status all along, and he would not have to die for it. McGowan is the most thoughtful player, but one who, when he makes a move, makes a bold one that contains the greatest risk of capture. But in the reality of

the prison escape, he hesitates, and it costs him his life. O'Leary, the most ardent and aggressive game player, becomes the only survivor of the trio. In shock at the loss of his comrades, he forces another political prisoner to play chess with him, goading him on and, as he ponders his next move, says "We'll play this out to a finish" (119).

Were it not for the setting of the play, one might argue that the survival of O'Leary, the play's one prototypical republican idealist, supports the notion that this play in some way romanticized political murder. After all, the character who endures is often used to symbolize an implied theme of continuity. But O'Leary remains trapped in the prison and, as such, his ideals are trapped with him. He and his ideals are separated from society and, once the authorities learn of his participation in the attempted escape, unlikely ever to rejoin it. As such, the play can be read as the death of two branches of republican ideology (as characterized by Egan and McGowan) and the isolation of the third, most mainstream, as characterized by O'Leary. If, as Ó hAodha suggests, O'Leary "represents the popular idea of what an I.R.A. man was and still is" (42) and his popular idea remains behind bars, then the "unfinished business" is not to be played out in society. In other words, society is fine with the "uncompromising" I.R.A. man remaining true to his ideals as long as he remains true to them under lock and key, away from them.

The Public House

The public house first appeared on the Abbey stage in 1908, with W. F. Casey's *The Man Who Missed the Tide*. Used only in the third and final act, the bar indicates the final stop in the failed life of James Walsh. When the play opens, Walsh has recently left the seminary and is optimistic about finding a profession for which he is passionate. His status as a "spoiled priest" leads to four years of personal and

professional rejection as societal retribution for not doing what was expected of him. As one reviewer put it, "He never recovers lost ground, and progressing from one failure to another, winds up a wreck of humanity in a Dublin hotel bar" (*Irish News*, 14 Feb. 1908). In this play, the barroom is used to set a man's final failure. Although not in a positive sense, the bar maintains its primary social function as a public place of rest. Contrarily, its use in other plays of the period is one of action. Although bar scenes often begin innocuously, they soon become locations where pressures intercede or are used as settings of plotting and intrigue. Each of the pub plays is a drama that incorporates historical events in the history of Dublin city. This is the case in all of the plays of the period with key pub scenes: *The Dreamers* by Lennox Robinson (1915), *The Plough and the Stars* by Sean O'Casey (1926), *The Invincibles* and *Trial at Green Street Courthouse*.

The Dreamers and *The Plough and the Stars* both reference Dublin risings; the former dealing with Emmet's failed attempt to take hold of Dublin Castle on 23 July 1803, and the latter focusing on the Easter Rising of 1916. In act two of *The Dreamers*, there are two scenes set in The While Bull Inn on Thomas Street. In the first, Emmett learns that his message to the Wicklow leadership has failed to be delivered. He realizes the effort will certainly be futile, but nonetheless decides to proceed with the plan. The pub here is a setting of intrigue and political uprising that ultimately transforms into a scene of impending doom. The second scene occurs while the rising is underway, and shows a group of Emmett supporters who have backed out of the plan in favour of several pints. This jovial, raucous gathering is one of the few pub scenes in a Dublin play to avail of a "realistic" mood of a pub setting, but the audience knows that outside of its doors Emmett is about to fail, which undermines the scene's otherwise jovial tone.

History intrudes more directly in act two of *The Plough and the Stars*, where various characters have gathered to drink and gossip about the Rising occurring in their midst. This scene has been labelled the "most severe critique of Irish nationalism" in part because it "juxtaposes the Pearse quotations [through the Voice of the Man] and the public house discourse" (Mustafa 108). The presence of the Voice of the Man citing Pearse has an impact on the audience, but it is lost on those gathered in the pub. This dramatic irony is only broken when Clitheroe, Brennan and Langon enter with the tricolour. At this point, the rally outside becomes a presence to the pub interior. The three men react to the Voice while having their drinks, but the rest of the crowd remains unmoved. As with *The Dreamers*, the pub serves a dual function as setting for rebellion and traditional location of respite.

Three of the ten scenes in *Trial at Green Street Courthouse* are set in Barney Kiernan's pub on Little Britain Street. In the year the play was set, it was one of the busiest pubs in Dublin and, due to its proximity to the criminal court on Green Street, one frequented by "barristers, solicitors, policemen, jurymen, informers, and all those associated in any way with the law" (McHugh 1945, xii). The pub serves as the conduit through which the Dublin citizenry voice their sympathy for Kelly solely through condemning the actions of Talbot. The songs and chants of the crowds that gathered outside of the courthouse are heard through the pub's open doors, and this public support is echoed by the men who gather inside contemplating the trial's outcome (scene one), awaiting the verdict (scene eight) and, ultimately, celebrating Kelly's acquittal (scene ten). The pub set opens and closes the play and serves as more than a place of respite from the trial being dramatized. The conversations that occur in the pub all make reference to the public mood, which is more against Talbot's status as police-spy than it is in support of Kelly for possibly being wrongly

accused. This is most clearly stated in the opening scene between two local Dubliners awaiting the trial's start, who comment on the players involved and the climate of the city in general while Fenian tunes can be heard from out on the street:

> RYAN: Poor old Butt! Champion of lost causes. The '48 men, the Fenians, and now Robert Kelly.
>
> OLD MAN: Many's the time I saw the same Talbot himself staggering round the city spending the double pension he got for informing and babbling with his boozy tongue about his dirty deeds. God forgive me, it's often I wished I could shoot him myself. [...]
>
> RYAN: Oh, it looks simple enough. Talbot dies. Kelly swings. And the circulation of the *Freeman* goes down until another peeler is shot. No doubt the Lord will provide. (1945, 5-6)

Even this scene's conversation between Butt and O'Leary, the expert witness Butt hopes to call to support his claim that the operation Talbot underwent could well be what actually killed him, focuses on the public mood. The two men spend more time discussing the status of the Fenian movement than they do the trial itself. In the end, the scenes in the pub serve as an expression of trial by public opinion that parallel and impact upon the trial by jury that is occurring in the courtroom.

In the final scene, the action returns to the pub where crowds are celebrating outside with bonfires and song even though Kelly is not free. He has been remanded for shooting one of the policemen who arrested him. Three of the locals contemplate his fate:

> RYAN: When the excitement has died down and Dublin has forgotten him, Robert Kelly will be quietly given about fifteen years.
>
> JERRY: Still and all, he has his life, hasn't he?
>
> RYAN: What sort of life? He'll come out of gaol an old man at fifty. There'll be no torches and cheers for him then.
>
> JERRY: Ah, you have me heart scalded!
>
> RYAN: Dublin, my dear Jerry, spends its time celebrating causes and forgetting men.

> OLD MAN: He'll be remembered all right.
>
> RYAN: What makes you so sure? The crowd outside will forget him tomorrow [...] They'll cheer as long as their torches flare; they'll cheer for a while and forget their slums and their hunger. (1945, 69-70)

This passage nullifies any possibility of long-term public support for the underdog. The Old Man clings to romantic notions, but the younger Ryan is more pragmatic and acknowledges that the trial has merely been a diversion for the residents of the inner city. The pub is also used to house public reaction to a real-life murder case in *The Invincibles*.

Pubs are the setting for three key scenes in *The Invincibles*: the plotting of the murders (scene one); the re-grouping and brief post-murder assessment (scene three); and the scene where the men who committed the murders become aware of the impact their actions have had on public opinion, that they stand to be ostracized by other republican factions, and that they will likely not survive the man-hunt currently underway (scene four). The play opens in a pub in the autumn of 1881, with Kelly being recruited into the Invincibles by Tynan, Carey and Brady. In this and the two subsequent scenes, the pub is a setting for secrecy, plotting and manipulation. Playing on the reluctant Kelly's republican passions, Tynan assures him that joining the group will offer him the opportunity to "strike such a blow for Ireland that your name will be written forever in the hearts of all *true* Irishmen" (Hunt and O'Connor 13). Kelly takes the oath, and he and Brady are assigned to carry out the murders in Phoenix Park.

Scene three opens in a pub on the edge of Phoenix Park, with the publican and a visiting angler lightheartedly discussing Parnell and the appointment of Lord Cavendish as the new Chief Secretary. The Invincibles enter to review the murder they have just committed and to discuss how to best leave the area undetected.

Initially, they are full of themselves for a job well done, but the mood quickly changes when they realize they have murdered the populist Lord Cavendish in addition to their intended target, Burke. As the men leave the pub, others are entering sharing the rumour of the murders and agreeing that it was a horrible injustice to murder Cavendish — "a friend of the people" (37) — and certainly not done by the Fenians.

Scene four returns to the pub of scene one. Kelly and Brady are sharing news of public reactions: an opera at the Gaiety was cut short, with the audience leaving "in a fright," and local clergy are condemning the murderers as "low breed assassins not worthy of the name of Irishmen" (41). Public fear and pulpit pronouncements do not concern them, though. It is only when Fenians enter the pub condemning the murders and carrying official proclamations signed by various Fenian groups throughout the city as well as by Parnell himself — this is what gets under their skin. Carey enters as they are reading Parnell's Proclamation, but he is unfazed by it. He calms Kelly and Brady, sends them away with instructions to "lie low," and resumes his pint. But Carey's relaxation is interrupted by two policemen who briefly question him about the events in Phoenix Park before dragging him from the pub.

As with the previous plays, the pub setting of *The Invincibles* is used to house figures of insurrection and to give voice to public opinion. It is also the only place apart from the prison where Carey maintains his dual faces: a pillar of the community playing the part of leader of an assassination squad, and the leader of an assassination squad playing the part of a community leader. As a result, he is both a man with evil inside wearing the mask of an honourable man and an honourable man wearing the mask of an evil one. The blurred line between private (the snug) and public space that is inherent to pubs parallels the ambiguity created by Carey's duality. It is not until the previously mentioned prison scenes, where he ultimately becomes a much-

abhorred informer, that the "real" Carey is revealed to be the assassination squad leader, not the man of civic service.

Conclusion

Venturing outside of the domestic space and into public institutions is one of the qualities that sets the Dublin plays apart from the dominant rural and peasant plays of the period. While the rural plays set outside of the domestic sphere rely on remote or isolated outdoor spaces, the Dublin plays largely avoid these settings in favour of institutional public domains. The Abbey Theatre, the Green Street criminal courthouse, prisons and pubs are the most frequently used public places of the Dublin repertoire. These settings are primarily used to exemplify a disconnection between communication of the cultural nationalist project and the citizenry. The metadramatic plays, *The Critics* and *The Critic*, demonstrate that the nationalist project falls short of its agenda while simultaneously parodying the public pressure under which the national theatre operated. The prison and courtroom dramas, *Trial at Green Street Courthouse* and *The Invincibles*, dramatize historical events to provide examples of how the political end of the project 'got away from itself' and resulted in public behaviour that stood to undermine any notions of fair justice. The public house not only reflects these communicational disconnections, but reinforces the public's own plotting to undermine notions of societal harmony inherent to the nationalist project.

CHAPTER 6
DID THE DUBLIN PLAYS HAVE AN AUDIENCE?

> *Financial records generally make dull reading. But in the case of a complex and costly enterprise like the theatre [...] the importance of such considerations [...] cannot be over-emphasized.*
> —James W. Flannery

Considering Yeats' lack of concern that the Abbey ever be a popular theatre house, it may seem unusual that this project concludes with an examination of the popularity of the Dublin plays. But audiences and finances played a large part in the Abbey's evolution, and there does appear to be a connection between the growth of the Dublin repertoire and the financial fluctuations of the Abbey. As such, this chapter explores the complete production and performance records (1904-17 July 1951) as well as existing box office records (partial through 1919; complete thereafter) from the period in question in order to discover if they shed any light on the emergence of the Dublin repertoire and to confirm the assumption that the Dublin plays met financial need as much as public demand.

In 1982, James Flannery published "High Ideals and the Reality of the Marketplace: A Financial Record of the Early Abbey Theatre." His objective was to analyze the role that finances played in the creation and subsequent administrative and artistic development of the national theatre.[1] Flannery shows that the Horniman subsidy made viable several key foundational elements, all of which contributed to putting the Abbey on the theatrical map:

> Were it not for her gift of a permanent home it is likely that the Irish National Theatre Society would have drifted from hall to hall, as did so many companies of the time, without ever acquiring a focus for its work. [The] subsidy also made possible the development of a company of professional actors [...] it provided the technical resources that enabled the Irish Players to stage over fifty original plays between the

[1] Flannery's analysis also includes records of The Irish Literary Theatre (1899-1901) and the Irish National Theatre Society (1902-1904).

> opening of the Abbey in 1904 and December 1910; and it enabled the company to make a number of tours to England without which the name of the Abbey Theatre and the work of its dramatists would not have achieved world renown. Perhaps most importantly, the subsidy [...] allowed the Abbey Theatre to present and keep before the public plays which no ordinary commercial theatre would have dared to present. (1982, 252-253)

Concentrating on the pre-1920 years of the Abbey, Flannery relates evidence of meagre houses and the necessity of the Horniman subsidy to cover production short-falls. In June of 1907, Horniman put the Abbey directors on notice that her subsidy would cease at the end of 1910. Conversations between the Fay brothers and Holloway confirm that the Fays viewed this as a need, as much as an opportunity, to bring more commercially popular plays to the Abbey stage.

> Until the announcement of the withdrawal of Miss Horniman's subsidy, they put up with much that was really at variance with their basic concepts of theatre. Yeats' mysticism, the obscurity of some of his dramatic verse, and experiments such as pitched verse speaking had little appeal to them. Nor did they enjoy facing a howling mob night after night in order to keep *The Playboy of the Western World* on the boards. When Yeats insisted on challenging that mob, and when attendance figures began to drop drastically as a result, a spirit of rebellion began to set in. Disheartening as it was to play to empty seats, the Fays were bothered even more by the thought that no money was coming into the box office [...] to them the principal significance of the loss of Miss Horniman's subsidy was that salaries were going to have to be paid through ticket sales. It was obviously going to be necessary to win back 'the man in the street'. And the only way that could be accomplished was by performing "popular plays." (4 July and 26 July 1907; qtd. in Flannery 1976, 226-227).

By August, Holloway reports that the Abbey was "anxious to get [William] Boyle's plays back into their repertoire" (1967, 93), a desire certainly based on the directors' desire to establish a solid rotation that would increase ticket sales in preparation for the post-subsidy years. Boyle's *The Building Fund* (1905), *The Eloquent Dempsey* (1906) and *The Mineral Workers* (1906) had all been very popular with audiences, and when he pulled his plays from the Abbey in protest against *The Playboy of the Western World*, there was a visible gap left in the Abbey repertoire. Holloway reprints

a letter Boyle wrote to D.J. O'Donoghue[2] in which it is clear he took some delight in refusing the Abbey's request that he reconsider his refusal of allowing the Abbey to stage his works:

> The Abbey folks are amusing. Of course, I won't have any more to do with them under any condition. But the suggested payment! It's on par with Roberts 5/-. They must be fools pure and simple to take me for a fool of such magnitude. Still I'm glad you didn't give them a direct answer, as I'd like to have the pleasure of giving a direct refusal. (qtd. in Holloway 1967, 93)

With Boyle refusing their request and ticket sales in a lull, it becomes clear that "it would be necessary to produce [...] deliberately popular work" (Flannery 1982, 257). Enter W.F. Casey, whose plays were contributing factors in pointing the Abbey finances toward the black, and who wrote the first two Dublin plays — *The Man Who Missed the Tide* and *The Suburban Groove* (both 1908) — to premiere on the Abbey stage.[3]

In Casey's world, Dublin society is presented as stagnant, provincial, and permeated by a culture determined to suppress change or outside influence. Casey's works were among the most popular staged during the Abbey's early days. *The Man Who Missed the Tide* was revived four times within the first year of its premiere (and an additional 16 times through 1923), and *The Suburban Groove* was staged 26 times through 1924. According to Flannery, Casey's plays were a primary reason that 1908 was the first year that box office receipts covered the theatre's operating expenses. However, Flannery points out that Casey's work would not have been considered by the Abbey had the theatre not been facing severe financial hardship. He notes:

> In order to survive, starting with the 1908-1909 season, the Abbey began to produce on a regular basis the very kind of stage Irish

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[2] Literary historian and librarian at UCD from 1909. Perhaps best known for *Poets of Ireland* (1893) and *The Life and Writings of James Clarence Mangan* (1897).

[3] As discussed in previous chapters, although part of the Abbey repertoire from its initial INDC staging, Ryan's *The Laying of the Foundations* was never staged at the Abbey.

> parodies of life in Ireland that the whole movement was originally designed to combat. Ironically, such bastions of high culture as the *Irish Times* applauded this new departure. In an editorial published in August 1910, the *Times* declared that the middle class comedies [...] of writers like Casey [...] were 'of greater educational value than whole Iliads of prehistoric Irish myth, or entire worlds of Irish fancy'. (262)

While the *Times* editorial referenced by Flannery also mentions the popular success of peasant satires by William Boyle (which were rivalled only by Casey's plays in terms of financial success for Abbey productions during this time period), it is the negative commentary on "prehistoric Irish myth" that bears consideration. The *Times* is clearly questioning the relevance of this element of the Abbey repertoire. Considering the box office receipts, audiences were questioning it as well. As Holloway noted some years later, the plays of both Boyle and Casey were looked down upon by a certain type of drama critic, but they played well to the public:

> That [a play] is literary does not matter a straw if the dramatic instinct is absent. Most of those who judge the plays at the Abbey are literary critics pure and simple, and have little sense of the theatre — hence the puffery of literary craftsmanship and the belittling of true dramatic work. To be successful as a dramatist on the Abbey stage is to be despised by the highbrows. Boyle and Casey, who know well how to write successful plays and draw audiences as well, are no class with the high and mighty type of non-theatrical critic brought into being by the production of undramatic literary plays. They can only see merit in the unactable. If the turn of phrase pleases, then its dramatic worth may go hang. (153)

What did these Casey plays contain to bring forth such notice? Before embarking on the production and financial records of the post-1920 years, it is worth taking a brief look at the Casey works in order to see not only what the public responded favourably to, but also to obtain some insight into the evolution of Dublin portrayals in the Abbey repertoire.

Casey's Dublin

Although identified by more than one critic of the early century as "one of the most promising" (*Irish News*) Abbey dramatists of the time, Casey wrote only two plays for the Abbey. Both foreground and then suppress the dreamer, and, in doing so, subvert the imaginative. Casey's protagonists take ownership of their imagined dreams and ambitions, but, in juxtaposing their dreams against an urban landscape, the author presents dreaming as an attempt to survive in a city that demands conformity. As the early urban works often shared double bills with Yeats and Gregory, it is an arresting contrast to say the least — as though audiences were put in a position of choosing between an ideal and the mundane. *The Man Who Missed the Tide*, the first Abbey play to be identified by Abbey publicity and critics as "urban" or "metropolitan," premiered in February 1908. Its popular success led to the Abbey requesting a second play by Casey, and *The Suburban Groove* was staged in October of the same year. Subsequently, Casey revised the first two acts of *Tide*, and the new version was staged at the Abbey shortly thereafter.

The Suburban Groove was billed as a "mild satire." The three-act comedy is, on the surface, a light glimpse into the conventions of marriage as viewed by James O'Connor, a middle-class civil servant. O'Connor encourages a young family friend, Dick Dalton, to avoid romantic entanglements, because marriage would kill Dalton's ambition of quitting his drab (but secure) insurance job in Dublin for the dream of a journalism career in London. O'Connor warns Dalton that, if he marries, he will end up like O'Connor: a middle-aged man full of regret for giving up his own ambitions, leaving him unfulfilled and sleepwalking through a safe suburban routine (the "groove" of the play's title). The family is comprised of a practical father, a silly wife, and an insightful daughter, Una. Una sees through her mother's upwardly mobile

illusions and those of Claude, the man her mother would like her to marry. She is drawn to Dalton's ambition not to settle for the mundane simply because it is safe. But on the night before he is to depart for London, the couple profess their love for one other and resolve to stay in Dublin. This closing scene reveals Casey's intended satire of middle-class marriage conventions to be more an observation of men who dream big but live small. Casey's play does not criticise this social strata, it merely observes it with ironic detachment.

What this play brought to the Abbey stage, apart from a Dublin setting, was a twist on the mythological. Like the rural plays that dominated the Abbey stage, it invokes myth — but here the myth is self-created. It is an urban myth perpetuated by a man who blames female-dominated societal pressures to marry rather than his own inability to take a risk. The myth of *The Suburban Groove* is that women pressure men into giving up dreams in exchange for marriage and stability, but the underlying message is that men are searching for an excuse not to take risks, and women conveniently serve that end.

The Man Who Missed the Tide[4] is the more satirical of Casey's plays. Focusing on provincial life, it spans four years and focuses on three men: the pompous Dr. Quinn, the "spoiled priest" James Walsh, and the practical Martin Kelly. The lives of the three young men intersect when Quinn moves from Dublin to a northern town to set up his medical practice. The first two acts take place in the Quinn home and the third is set in the bar of a Dublin hotel. Quinn is described as a man who, because he spent years in Dublin, can "look down with fine contempt on the futilities of provincial life, though he is provincial to the backbone" (*Irish News*). The

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[4] Script and promptbook of *The Man Who Missed the Tide* remain missing (possibly destroyed in the Abbey fire of 1951). Summary notes of the play are taken from reviews that can be found in NLI ms. 25,489.

man referred to in the title, the man who "missed the tide," is James Walsh. Walsh begins the play described as a "spoiled priest," denoting his status as a failed clerical student, who is considered something of a dreamer by his surrounding community. He is a dreamer because he wishes to work in a profession for which he is passionate. This is impractical by community standards: one should do what one sets out for initially (not change paths) or what has been pre-ordained by birth order or other familial plans. His hometown rejects him for turning his back on the priesthood, and he spends the rest of the play facing similar rejections both personally and professionally as societal retribution for not doing what he was "supposed" to do. As one reviewer put it, "He never recovers lost ground, and progressing from one failure to another, winds up a wreck of humanity in a Dublin hotel bar" (*Irish News*). His dreams of a journalism career have been replaced by dreams of a big win at the race track. In this play, Dublin represents the last chance of opportunity for a young man who has spent four years being told there is no place for him. His ambition remains unrealized; societal pressure to conform has killed it. He missed his one opportunity, and another one will not be offered.

Casey's work initiates two qualities of early Abbey drama that span its introduction of a middle-class urban setting: paralysis and urban myth. The notion of Dublin as a city of paralysis is one most readily identified with James Joyce but which Casey explored six years before the full publication of *Dubliners* (1914).[5] However, where Joyce overtly identified the external forces of Nation, Church, and family as pressures that created a Dublin paralysis upon its citizenry, Casey keeps the paralysis either internal (*Groove*) or non-specifically societal (*Tide*) and does not

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[5] Serialization of some of the stories that went on to comprise *Dubliners* began in 1904 with the publishing of "The Sisters" (13 August), "Eveline" (10 September) and "After the Race" (17 December) in AE's *Irish Homestead*. However, the full collection was not published until 1914.

venture deeply into its contributing factors. By his not naming names, we are left to interpret O'Connor's and Dalton's fears of risk as isolated inertia on the part of Dublin men both old and young. The script revisions suggest Casey's original intent was slightly more sombre and that he wrote O'Connor as a representative of a risk-free generation that recognizes the frustration that can emerge from safety, but is incapable of imparting this wisdom to the next generation. This sombre tone was caught by one critic who described O'Connor as "an old and disillusioned civil servant with a plentiful harvest of regrets" (*Irish Mail*), and by another as a man who "has fought his battle and lost" (*Irish News*), the "battle" being one waged by the individual against society.

Although *Tide* is set primarily in a small town rather than in the city, the source of the town's provincialism is identified as containing urban roots (in the form of Dr. Quinn). James Walsh is forced toward Dublin in an effort to find a home in which his ambitions can be realized. But even in Dublin he is forced to revert to a type that society permits. Although relegated to the margins, he is permitted to exist as a man with a drink in one hand and the racing sheets in the other. Walsh, as a vehicle of unrealized ambition, has been silenced and is safely out of mainstream society's path. In the end, the capital city is just as provincial as the small northern town from which Walsh has fled.

The two Casey plays were part of the reason the Abbey finances began to show signs of improvement in 1908, the first year that box office receipts covered operating expenses. Although the box office records for the years prior to 1920 are incomplete, there is enough evidence to show that the emergence of a Dublin repertoire was the result of popular success. Although some Dublin plays missed the mark, the majority remained popular with audiences for several decades beyond their

premiere dates. The nine Dublin plays of this period — *The Man Who Missed the Tide*, *The Suburban Groove*, *An Imaginary Conversation* (1909), *The Dean of St. Patrick's Cathedral* (1913), *The Critics* (1913), *The Lord Mayor* (1914), *The Slough* (1914), *The Dreamers* (1915) and *Blight* (1917) — were all revived at least once (*An Imaginary Conversation*, *The Critics* and *The Dreamers*) and as many as 19 times (*The Man Who Missed the Tide*) prior to 1920. Most of them continued to be staged well into the 1930s. As the decades progress and the Dublin repertoire grows, many continued to find an audience at the Abbey.

The popularity of the Dublin plays may rest, in part, on a rejection of the backward glance that was a cornerstone of much of the rural repertoire. Although many rural plays were heartily received by Abbey audiences, copious volumes of critical analysis document a resistance as well. Some, including Synge's *The Well of the Saints* and *The Playboy of the Western World*, were met with outrage as an affront to sacred national ideologies. Others, including Yeats' *The Countess Cathleen*, were challenged for their disregard to the power of the Catholic Church. Although many of the Abbey plays set in urban Ireland touch on controversial subject matter including clerical and nationalist subjects, for the most part they avoid public outcry to their content. The most notable exceptions, *The Leprechaun in the Tenement* and *The Plough and the Stars*, received public opposition due to representations of the mentally handicapped (*Leprechaun*) and of nationalist symbols, icons and events (*Plough*). But there has never been an urban play, let alone a Dublin play, that was challenged in the court of public opinion simply for how it portrayed the city, or for how it juxtaposed rural Ireland with urban Ireland. Overall, the city setting seems to have been well received.

This reception might be reflective of a desire to see Ireland in the present, and for Dublin audiences to see themselves and their city as it is, whether good or bad, tragic or humorous. It is as though the rural plays piqued audiences more than the urban plays, because the rural challenged cultural nationalist tenets with an imposed notion of what constituted "real" Ireland. Dublin audiences found opportunities to reject the setting by objecting to the messaging. This generalization bears consideration in light of the fact that so many urban plays challenged nationalist and clerical doctrine, but remained popular enough with audiences for those issues to be tolerated with considerably less protest than the rural-set plays with similar themes. It is as though Dublin audiences found these issues acceptable if presented in an urban setting.

This may be partly attributable to an urban audience's desire to see its history or its contemporary life as it is, not as those architects of cultural nationalism wish it to be. G.J. Watson argues that there was a deep ambivalence among urban Irish citizens about the concept of the Irish peasant, and that this carried over into urban domestic reception of dramas presented at the Abbey.

> Many natives did not like being reminded that Ireland was an overwhelmingly rural or peasant society. This applied even when the reminder was offered as a source of pride and self-belief, the more so when it was offered by Anglo-Irish 'gentlemen' [such as Yeats and Synge]. The point was that the natural audience for this drama was urban, Dublin-dwellers who felt they had made good by leaving the land, as many of them had in the recent past. The Famine had produced not merely a tradition of emigration, but an inexorable drift to the town. (25-26)

It has been suggested that perhaps "the rural was the site for the theatre's national remit, but the urban was in response to the theatre's civic responsibility" (Singleton 2005). A review of the production histories, performance histories and financial records supports this notion. But the records also indicate that, like the Casey plays,

the theatre's "civic responsibility" went beyond a need to give Dublin audiences plays that spoke to their urban experiences and the city's history. The responsibility was also to the theatre itself, in the form of its financial survival.

Productions v. Performances

Comprehensive production and performance data exist in the Abbey archives for the entire history of the original theatre, from the opening on 27 December 1904 through the final production on its main stage in the evening of 17 July 1951, when *The Plough and the Stars* played its final performance on the Abbey's original stage. These records provide ample evidence that the urban plays were the significant minority genre of the overall repertoire. They also support the assertion made in chapter one that plays set in urban Ireland accounted for 15% of the total Abbey repertoire through the period in question, with 11% being set in Dublin. However, the repertoire figures alone do not provide the full picture of the urban presence on the Abbey stage. When the production figures are compiled, the 11% presence expands to 26%; when the performance figures are examined, that figure increases further to 34%. In the end, one sees that although the Dublin plays remain the minority genre, the frequency with which they were staged is quite substantial.

As the chart on the following page illustrates, the majority of the top ten most frequently produced plays at the original Abbey were rural-set plays authored by its founding directors. However, four of the top ten are plays set in Dublin.

Top Ten Most Frequently Produced Plays
Abbey Theatre 1904-1951

	Total Productions	% of Total
1. *The Rising of the Moon* (Gregory, 1907)	78	16%
2. *Cathleen Ní Houlihan* (Yeats/Gregory, 1904)[§]	64	13%
3. *In the Shadow of the Glen* (Synge, 1904)[§]	52	11%
4. *Spreading the News* (Gregory, 1904)	45	9%
5. *The Whiteheaded Boy* (Robinson, 1916)	41	9%
6. *The Playboy of the Western World* (Synge, 1907)	37	8%
6. *Riders to the Sea* (Synge, 1905)[§]	37	8%
7. *The Shadow of a Gunman* (O'Casey, 1923)	35	7%
8. *The Plough and the Stars* (O'Casey, 1926)	32	7%
8. *The Country Dressmaker* (Fitzmaurice, 1907)	32	7%
9. *Juno and the Paycock* (O'Casey, 1924)	31	6%
10. *The Lord Mayor* (McNulty, 1914)	30	6%

These figures reveal that while the Abbey was dominated by rural productions, it was not to the extent suggested by published accounts or public perception. The fact that the rural was the most often produced may be a partial explanation for the perception that it had dominant presence on the stage. When one considers that the earliest of the four urban plays contained in the top ten (*The Lord Mayor*) did not debut on the Abbey stage until a full decade later than the earliest of the rural plays (*Cathleen Ní Houlihan, Spreading the News* and *Riders to the Sea*), the presence of the Dublin plays is more significant in that they were staged in a shorter time period.

When the top ten most frequently performed plays are compiled, the Abbey directors again dominate the list, but to a lesser extent. Furthermore, the urban presence is revealed to be even more substantial (34% v. 26%). In comparison to the most frequently produced figures, the chart that follows shows that while rural plays

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[§] These plays first premiered prior to the opening of the Abbey: *Cathleen Ni Houlihan* in 1902 at St. Theresa's Hall, *In the Shadow of the Glen* in 1903 at Molesworth Hall and *Riders to the Sea* in 1904 at Molesworth Hall. This and the following tabled dates and number of performances relate solely to stagings at the Abbey Theatre; therefore, the 1904 dates for these three plays reflect their first appearances on the Abbey stage.

dominate the top positions of those plays most often *produced*, they fall back in the order when one considers which plays were most often *performed*:

Top Ten Most Frequently Performed Plays
Abbey 1904-1951

	Total Performances	% of Total
1. *The Plough and the Stars* (O'Casey, 1926)	328	13%
2. *The Rising of the Moon* (Gregory, 1907)	317	13%
3. *Juno and the Paycock* (O'Casey, 1924)	290	11%
4. *The Whiteheaded Boy* (Robinson, 1916)	273	11%
5. *The Shadow of a Gunman* (O'Casey, 1923)	262	10%
6. *Cathleen Ní Houlihan* (Yeats/Gregory, 1904)	230	9%
7. *The Playboy of the Western World* (Synge, 1907)	227	9%
8. *Spreading the News* (Gregory, 1904)	204	8%
9. *The Country Dressmaker* (Fitzmaurice, 1907)	198	8%
10. *In the Shadow of the Glen* (Synge, 1904)	196	8%

These figures indicate that on average the urban plays enjoyed longer runs, a result of audience popularity overriding the Abbey's standard repertoire rotation. The Abbey maintained a repertory system throughout its history in the original building, seldom deviating from its one-week/five-day rotation schedule from 1920 to 1936. Because the records prior to August 1920 are incomplete, they are not included. However, the records that do exist (the Henderson papers and the partial information contained in *Reports of the Chief Registrar of Friendly Societies*) contain no evidence that these figures were exceeded during that time period. To the contrary, it appears the play runs tended to be shorter, from one to three performances per rotation.

Run-of-Show

Like the production and performance figures, the run-of-show data provide evidence that the Dublin plays not only had an audience, but that the audience had an impact on standard operating procedure at the Abbey. *Juno and the Paycock* was the first premiere to break the post-1920 norm of one-week/five-day rotations, which on

average encompassed six performances, including a Saturday matinee. As such, this Dublin play was a watershed in altering Abbey play rotation. Scheduled for a two-week run in March 1924, its first week's receipts of £254 challenged the box office record established by the double-bill of *Cathleen Ni Houlihan* and *Mixed Marriage* that ran 2-7 August 1920 (£305), a record only previously challenged by the Dublin double bill of *The Man Who Missed the Tide* and *The Young Man from Rathmines* that was staged 20-25 August 1923 (£248). The success of Casey's *Tide* so many years after its 1908 debut gives further credence to the longevity of its popularity with Abbey audiences. The two-week premiere of *Juno* brought over £500 to the Abbey box office. *Juno* played in two additional standard one-week runs later in 1924 and returned for a second two-week engagement in 1925, breaking all box office records with a production gross in excess of £769. Even with this success, the repertory rotation was very seldom altered. Including *Juno*, the only plays to run for two consecutive weeks through 1936 were:

Play (Author)	**Year(s) of Two-Week Run**
Juno and the Paycock (O'Casey)	1924, 1925
Oedipus the King (Yeats)[6]	1927
Cartney and Kevney (Shiels)[7]	1927
The Doctor's Dilemma (Shaw)	1928
The Plough and the Stars (O'Casey)	1928
Ever the Twain (Robinson)	1929
Peter (Mayne)	1930
Let the Credit Go (Cooper)	1930
The Critic (Robinson/Sheridan)	1931
Michaelmas Eve (Murray)	1932
Drama at Inish (Robinson)	1933, 1934
Grogan and the Ferret (Shiels)	1933
Days Without End (O'Neill)	1934
Bridgehead (Mayne)	1934
Parnell of Avondale (Fearon)	1934
Gallant Cassian/School for Wives (Schnitzler/Molière)	1934
Coriolanus (Shakespeare)	1936

[6] Although this ran for two weeks, it was part of a double bill, and the second play was switched out in week 2 (from *The Shewing Up of Blanco Posnet* to *Crabbed Youth and Age*).

[7] This ran alone in week 1, and on a double-bill with *The Nativity* in week 2 (Christmas week).

Paul Twyning (Shiels)	1936
The Jailbird (Shiels)	1936
Wind from the West (O'Callaghan)	1936

By the end of 1936, two-week runs become commonplace, and 1937 opens with the first further-extended run at the Abbey. It was a Dublin play that once again altered the theatre's repertory rotation. The crime/courtroom melodrama *Blind Man's Buff* was scheduled for two weeks (the last week of 1936 and the opening week of 1937), but was extended due to popular demand. With its four-week run, a new precedent was set, and extended runs soon became acceptable at the national theatre. *Blind Man's Buff* remained the longest running Abbey play until the premiere of George Shiels' *The Rugged Path* in August 1940. Breaking significantly from the rather sentimental themes of his earlier and consistently popular rural plays, Shiels' *The Rugged Path* ran an unprecedented twelve weeks (from August through October). Thereafter, runs of four to six weeks appear almost annually. The longest consecutive runs-of-show through 1951 were:

Play (Author, year first staged)	**Year**	**Length of Run**
1. *The Righteous are Bold* (Carney, 1946)[8]	1946	16 weeks
2. *The Rugged Path* (Shiels, 1940)	1940	12 weeks
3. *They Got What They Wanted* (D'Alton, 1947)	1947	11 weeks
4. *The King of Friday's Men* (Molloy, 1948)	1948	9 weeks
4. *Katie Roche* (Deevy, 1936)	1949	9 weeks
5. *The Money Doesn't Matter* (D'Alton, 1941)	1941	8 weeks
5. *Professor Tim* (Shiels, 1925)	1944/45	8 weeks[9]
5. *Village Wooing*/*Shadow of a Gunman* (Shaw, 1935/O'Casey, 1923)	1950	8 weeks
6. *The Caretakers* (Shiels, 1948)	1948	7 weeks
7. *The Plough and the Stars* (O'Casey, 1926)	1942	6 weeks
7. *The Fort Field* (Shiels, 1942)	1942	6 weeks
7. *The Plough and the Stars*	1945	6 weeks
7. *Professor Tim*	1945	6 weeks
7. *Juno and the Paycock* (O'Casey, 1924)	1950	6 weeks
7. *The Plough and the Stars*	1951	6 weeks[10]

[8] For reasons that cannot be explained, this play (set in Co. Mayo) is omitted from published Abbey histories with regard to length of run. All accessed, including Robinson, cite *The Rugged Path* as the longest-run Abbey play. However, the box office notebooks stand as evidence to this play's run.

[9] With one-week break for pre-scheduled Irish language performance.

8. *Juno and the Paycock*	1942	5 weeks[11]
8. *Marks and Mabel* (MacNamara, 1945)	1945	5 weeks
8. *The New Gossoon* (Shiels, 1930)	1947	5 weeks
8. *The Righteous are Bold*	1947	5 weeks
8. *The Drums Are Out* (Coulter, 1948)	1948	5 weeks
8. *The Lucky Finger* (Robinson, 1948)	1948	5 weeks
8. *Design for a Headstone* (Byrne, 1950)	1950	5 weeks

Numerous plays also enjoyed four-week runs, including several set in urban Ireland. The Dublin-set *The Grand House in the City*, the Galway City play *Mungo's Mansion*, and the Belfast plays *The Drums Are Out* and *The End House* were among those plays scheduled for two weeks that were extended to four.

While length-of-run is one factor that reveals shows held over due to popular demand, run-of-show also bears consideration in determining the audience response to the repertoire. Factoring the entire rural repertoire is beyond the scope of this project, so the sampling used for the following comparison includes the top ten most frequently performed plays set in urban Ireland against the top sixteen most frequently produced and performed plays set in rural Ireland (an increase of 50% plus 1 over the urban sampling). This comparison reveals the average run-of-show of the rural play to be 6.95 versus 7.33, the average run-of-show for the urban Irish plays. Although the difference between the two categories is marginal, the urban plays do surpass their rural counterparts. The following table shows the top ten net results of this comparison and reveals the highest run-of-show through July 1951 to be largely dominated by urban plays (including the Belfast plays *The Drums Are Out*, *The End House* and *The Old Broom*; the Galway City play *Mungo's Mansion*; and the Cork City play *Moses' Rock*), with the Dublin plays most represented:

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[10] With one-week break for pre-scheduled Irish language performance. Run interrupted by Abbey fire in the early morning hours of 18 July.

[11] With one-week break for pre-scheduled Irish language performance.

Run-of-Show (Number of Performances) Top Ten
Abbey 1904-1951

	Total Productions	Average Run-of-Show
1. *The Rugged Path* (1940)	4	30
1. *The Drums Are Out* (1948)	1	30
2. *Design for a Headstone* (1950)	1	25
3. *The End House* (1944)	1	24
4. *The Old Broom* (1946)	1	18
5. *Mungo's Mansion* (1946)	2	14.5
6. *Rossa* (1945)	1	13
7. *Blind Man's Buff* (1936)	6	12.2
8. *The Grand House in the City* (1936)	3	12
8. *Moses' Rock* (1938)	1	12
8. *Trial at Green Street Courthouse* (1941)	2	12
8. *The Man in the Cloak* (1937)	1	12
8. *Remembered For Ever* (1941)	1	12
9. *The Plough and the Stars* (1926)	32	10.3
10. *Juno and the Paycock* (1924)	31	9.4

The ultimate conclusion of the production, performance, extended run and run-of-show data shows that, while part of the minority genre, the Dublin plays did have fairly steady and substantial audiences. The final data, box office receipts, shed further light on which Dublin plays had the largest audiences from their premieres, and which grew over time.

Box Office

Box office receipts for the period prior to 1920 are, unfortunately, problematic to report. The Abbey archive does not have these figures available at present, and the Henderson papers (NLI) and the *Report of the Chief Registrar of Friendly Societies* are incomplete.[12] The records beginning with 2 August 1920 are comprehensive. Handwritten logs were kept by various personnel over the years (see Appendix E for transcript), and are still undergoing archival restoration. Please note that the box

[12] When the INTS, Ltd. was established, it was registered with the Friendly Societies and required to disclose annual financial records. However, these records are incomplete and, where available, box office income is not differentiated from other income (i.e., theatre rental).

office totals that follow are the author's own compilations from the 1920-1951 notebooks. While every effort has been made to accurately transcribe the notebooks, the totals are the author's own and have been certified by the Abbey archivist solely on good faith.

The ideal format for these records would include expenses so that one might discover which plays were profitable. Needless to say, a successful taking at the box office does not make a financially solvent production. However, the profit and loss figures appear only intermittently, so the only consistent evidence to work with is the box office receipts alone. Taken on their own, the box office figures do offer insight into which plays drew audiences to the Abbey. The following chart represents a topline of total box office receipts for the period from 1920 through 17 July 1951 reported in Appendix E (including the final performance of *The Plough and the Stars* that played on the main stage before the fire).

	Box Office (Gross)[13]	**Dublin Plays Share of Box Office**[14]	
		Income	**% of Total**
1920[15]	£2,755	£231	8%
1921	3,373	685	20%
1922	4,080	704	17%
1923	4,815	842	17%
1924	8,412	3,270	39%
1925	6,986	1,998	29%
1926	11,534	3,303	29%
1927	10,550	1,796	17%
1928	12,657	2,943	23%
1929	11,803	1,710	14%
1930	10,217	1,670	16%
1931[16]	6,763	1,550	23%

[13] Exclusive of panto productions (which begin in 1945 and were performed annually through and including Jan-Feb 1951).

[14] Share of box office determined by single productions (100%) and, where a Dublin play is part of a multiple bill, by the proportional amount applicable to double- or triple-bills (50% and 33% respectively).

[15] The figures for 1920 represent box office income as of 2 August. Box office records Jan-May remain missing from the Abbey archive.

[16] The sharp decline in box office gross is attributed to the Abbey company's extensive North American touring schedules in 1931-1933 and 1935. See E-12, E-13, E-14 and E-16 for tour dates.

1932	5,002	819	16%
1933	6,411	1,333	21%
1934	9,029	1,387	15%
1935	5,316	1,314	25%
1936	10,598	1,868	18%
1937	10,155	2,744	27%
1938	9,151	2,360	26%
1939	8,709	1,381	16%
1940	9,516	250	3%
1941	12,283	1,444	15%
1942	13,379	3,461	26%
1943	12,183	203	2%
1944	11,557	1,469	13%
1945	13,892	3,927	28%
1946	14,060	384	3%
1947	15,082	2,091	14%
1948	19,306	1,216	6%
1949	17,398	1,699	10%
1950	18,906	4,062	21%
1951	9,571	5,986	62%

~1920s

It is unsurprising that the substantial spike in Dublin plays' share of box office occurs in the period of 1924 through 1926. O'Casey's *Juno and the Paycock* premiered in 1924 and was staged repeatedly in both 1924 and 1925. The 1926 share of box office can also be attributed to O'Casey, contributed to by the premiere of *The Plough and the Stars* and by four one-week revivals of *Juno* (as well as a one-week revival of *Plough*). Although several other Dublin plays (*Never the Time and the Place*, *The Shadow of a Gunman*, *Nannie's Night Out*, *The Suburban Groove*, *Apartments* and *An Imaginary Conversation*) had above-the-mean box office receipts during these years, *Juno* and *Plough* were the plays that had the most significant box office share.

Throughout the 1920s, *Juno and the Paycock* dominates the Abbey box office, representing approximately 9% of the decade's total receipts. Its closest competitors among single productions (plays not included as part of a double- or triple-bill) were:

The Plough and the Stars, which earned £2890 (or 4% of the decade's receipts), and Brinsley MacNamara's rural-set *The Glorious Uncertainty*, which earned £1425 (or 2% of the decade's receipts).

~1930s

The 1937-1938 spike of Dublin plays' share of box office can be attributed to Denis Johnston's *Blind Man's Buff*. It closed 1936 with strong receipts on a one-week run, and its share of box office in 1937 was £1283 (or 13% of the total year's gross), and in 1938 it earned an additional £503 (5%). Other Dublin plays to have significant box office returns during this decade included Lennox Robinson's adaptation of Sheridan's *The Critic*, whose single box office of £442 surpassed even *Juno* and *The Plough* in 1931. Both *Juno* and *The Plough* continued to have box office success, although *Juno* falls drastically from its dominance of the previous decade (£3093 or 4% share v. £6785 or 9% share) and *The Plough* increases only slightly (£5115 or 6% v. £2890 or 4%).

Although this decade finds the Dublin plays decreasing marginally in percentage of box office share from the 1920s (20.3% v. 21.3%), the 1930s does show a wider range of Dublin plays sharing box office receipts. This is reflected in the decreased dominance of O'Casey's Dublin trilogy and in the influx of Dublin plays being introduced into the Abbey repertoire.

~1940s

This decade shows that, on average, Dublin plays had a 12% share of box office, a significant drop from the previous decades. The lowest ebb, the year 1943, had only one production, a one-week run of the premiere of Anthony Wharton's *The O'Cuddy*

(which would never be staged again). Although it had a fairly respectable box office (just over £202), it failed to earn at or above the mean for the year's takings. As will be explored shortly, this appears (whether coincidentally or deliberately cannot be verified) to be the measurement against which the decision to revive Dublin plays was, at least in part, based. The other two dismal years, 1940 and 1946, also contain only one Dublin play each: *Juno and the Paycock* and *The Shadow of a Gunman* (on a double bill with *The Rising of the Moon*). Both were among the highest grossing productions of their respective years.

The most significant year for the box office of Dublin plays in this decade was 1945. Three Dublin plays ran this year: *Juno and the Paycock*, *Rossa* and *The Plough and the Stars*. *Juno* played four weeks (taking £1248), *Rossa* played two weeks (£501), and *Plough* played six weeks (£2127). Combined, they account for almost one third of the year's box office gross.

~1950s

Box office receipts for this decade are too small to bear significant comment, but it does appear that until the fire broke out in July, Dublin plays were on their way to being major contributors to the Abbey's box office. They earned the highest grosses in both years. In 1950, the premiere of Seamas Byrne's *Design for a Headstone* earned £2093, or 11% of the year's gross, and *The Shadow of a Gunman* was part of a double bill with Shaw's *A Village Wooing* that ran seven weeks and grossed an impressive £3935 (20%). By comparison, the highest-grossing play set in rural Ireland was the premiere of Donal Giltinan's *The Goldfish in the Sun*, set in Co. Cork, which grossed £1947.

O'Casey dominated the first half of 1951. *Juno* ran for over five weeks and grossed £2843; and *The Plough* was in the midst of its sixth week and had already earned £3141 when the fire broke out in the middle of the night, after the 17 July performance. The closest competitor to these Dublin plays was Shiels' *The Rugged Path*, which grossed £1188.

Exceptions to the Box Office

There is evidence to suggest that box office figures were factored into the decision to stage urban plays, more so than when decision had to be made concerning rural productions. There is a much higher propensity of the plays set in rural Ireland being given more time to find their audiences than is the case for the urban plays, particularly those set in Dublin. Examples of rural plays that fell below the mean in the year in which they premiered (and for at least two more consecutive productions), and yet remained in the rotation, include George Shiels' *Paul Twyning* (1922) and Lennox Robinson's *Crabbed Youth and Age* (1922). Both of these plays eventually became reliable crowd-pleasers, perhaps in part because they were given time to grow. This opportunity is, statistically, given less frequently to the Dublin plays.

Of the Dublin plays that premiered between 1920 and 1951, ten — *Never the Time and the Place* (1924), *The Passing* (1924), *The Drapier Letters* (1927), *Before Midnight* (1928), *The Words Upon the Window-Pane* (1930), *The Man in the Cloak* (1937), *Coggerers* (1937), *A Spot in the Sun* (1938), *Caesar's Image* (1939) and *The O'Cuddy* (1943) — failed to earn box office income at or above the relevant year's mean during their premiere productions. Of these, only *Never the Time and the Place*, *The Passing*, *The Drapier Letters*, *Before Midnight* and *The Words Upon the Window-Pane* were given additional stagings in an attempt to find an audience. *Never*

the Time and the Place earned well above the mean when staged two weeks after its premiere (on a double bill with *The Shadow of a Gunman*) and went on to eight additional productions as part of various double bills with both urban and rural plays. All of the others were pulled if they failed to find box office success on their second outings.

Yeats' only Dublin play, *The Words Upon the Window-Pane*, is the one anomaly in this group. It not only fell below the mean in its 1930 premiere (on a double bill with *The Lord Mayor*), but did so again in its second staging in 1931 (with *The Shadow of a Gunman*), and its third staging in 1932 (on a triple bill with T.C. Murray's *Birthright* and Gregory's *The Workhouse Ward*). Regardless of this pattern, it was given a fourth outing in 1933 on a double bill with Edward McNulty's *The Courting of Mary Doyle*. Although produced eight times, this 1933 production and a run in 1947 with *In the Shadow of the Glen* and *Workhouse Ward* were the only times *The Words Upon the Window-Pane* was part of a bill that earned box office above the year's mean. This begs the question: why did this particular Dublin play continue to be staged against box office indicators when the others were all pulled?

The most obvious (albeit cynical) explanation is that it was written by an Abbey director and, as such, its audience reception was overlooked even though audience reception did appear to be a factor in determining the continuation of the other Dublin plays. Yeats was notoriously averse to a play's success being measured by audience attendance, let alone box office receipts. Although he repeatedly supported plays that were not necessarily well received, those examples, *The Plough and the Stars* notwithstanding, tended be outside of the urban repertoire. Did this contribute to a decision to measure *The Words Upon the Window-Pane* against a different scale than the other urban and Dublin plays? Although his attitude toward

this issue pre dates the opening of the Abbey, there is ample evidence to be found during the Abbey years themselves. As Kavanagh notes:

> When Yeats opened the Abbey Theatre, his bottomless contempt for public opinion was [...] apparent: he included Synge's *In the Shadow of the Glen* in the first program. Yeats played [it] because it was certain to displease [based on its earlier reception when produced by the INTS at Molesworth Hall in October 1903]. Thanks to the novelty of having a new theatre, many people attended during the first week. (50)

Kavanagh argues that by "expressing his contempt for critics and public" from the start, Yeats then felt "content" to produce some "non-controversial" plays. "Non-controversial" equates to popular as much as to those plays that do not contain characters or plots likely to incite outrage by clergy or nationalists. This opened the door for Boyle as well as Casey. But what of *Window-Pane*?

The Words Upon the Window-Pane appears to have had sentimental value to Yeats that may have even exceeded any customary pride of authorship. He wrote the play at Coole Park during the summer of 1930 while Lady Gregory was in her final years, and suffering from breast cancer. Dedicated "to Lady Gregory in whose house it was written," it was as personal of provenance as it was of content. The play concerns a séance in a Dublin lodging-house, in which the assembled group attempt to contact Jonathan Swift. Yeats was an avid reader of Swift's work and, by 1930, had already spent decades engaged in various mystic pursuits.[17] The play resonates with Yeats' personal interests. It also reflects the nostalgic sense of youth passing that permeates his poetry of this period. It is quite impossible to separate the man from the work in this instance, and difficult to find an explanation beyond the personal to substantiate *Window-Pane*'s repeated stagings.

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[17] Yeats joined the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn in 1890.

Unlike the plays discussed above, the majority of premiere productions of the Dublin plays did earn box office above the mean in the year in which they premiered. They went on to be revived at least once and as many as 35 times (*The Shadow of a Gunman*). There was an average of between eight and nine revivals for all Dublin plays that were produced more than once. Of those that earned box office above the mean in their premiere production, only seven were never staged again: *The Wooing of Julia Elizabeth* (1920), *The Leprechaun in the Tenement* (1922) *Nannie's Night Out* (1924), *Scrap* (1931), *A Deuce O'Jacks* (1935), *Rossa* (1945) and *Design for a Headstone* (1950).

Design for a Headstone can be eliminated from examination because the author was actually in negotiations with the Abbey for a revival when the fire disrupted those plans. However (at the risk of a slight digression), the extended run of this play (five weeks) is noteworthy at this point, because it offers evidence of one of the last trends noted in the Abbey's history in its original building. Whereas box office receipts show that earlier plays that were met with public outcry of one sort or another (including *Playboy*, *In the Shadow of the Glen* and *The Plough and the Stars*) experienced temporary box office declines until the controversies died out, *Design for a Headstone* was evidence of a break in this trend. As Tomás MacAnna recalled:

> During a performance of Seamus Byrne's *Design for a Headstone* in 1950, the audience, although applauding the determination of the outlawed IRA to win complete freedom for Ireland, protested against the communist sentiments expressed by one of the characters in the play, aptly called Ructions. The play had a longer run than intended; whereas earlier audiences had stayed away following alleged outrage, the tendency now was to throng in to find out what it was all about. (99)

This leaves six curiosities: *The Wooing of Julia Elizabeth*, *The Leprechaun in the Tenement*, *Nannie's Night Out*, *Scrap*, *A Deuce O'Jacks* and *Rossa*. All had successful box office returns when they premiered, but none were ever staged again.

Neither James Stephen's *The Wooing of Julia Elizabeth* nor F.R. Higgins' *A Deuce O'Jacks* was noticed by the critics. Innocuous, one-act comedies of no significance to the repertoire, the box office success enjoyed by both premieres was likely the result of the plays with which they shared bills, namely T.C. Murray's *Maurice Harte*.[18] The Murray play was consistently popular with Abbey audiences since its premiere in 1912 (and continued to have strong box office receipts as late as 1951, when it appeared on a double bill with Shaw's *The Shewing Up of Blanco Posnet*).

The public outcry against Brennan's *The Leprechaun in the Tenement* (as discussed in chapter four) may well have contributed to the Abbey viewing it in a new light once it had been staged. While it is interesting in reviewing the evolution of the Abbey's urban repertoire, it simply has no redeeming qualities. Although Brennan's other Dublin one-act, *The Young Man From Rathmines*, continued to be staged through early 1924, his work disappears from the Abbey repertoire until 1932, when his full-length *The Big Sweep* premieres. The man himself remains a mystery,[19] but there is no mystery in the lack of revivals for *Leprechaun*. While well-attended in its first and only production, it was simply too flawed a play to be staged again. Its attendance may be attributed to audience expectations, since this followed after his successful *Young Man*, or to its sharing the bill with *Ann Kavanagh*, a one-act by Dorothy Macardle that was quite popular from 1922-1924.

O'Casey's one-act *Nannie's Night Out* premiered, like *Kathleen Listens In*, amidst the Dublin trilogy. O'Casey was never completely happy with the final results of either play. Although he went on to make minor revisions to *Kathleen Listens In*

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[18] *The Wooing of Julia Elizabeth* also had the often-revived Lady Gregory play *The Workhouse Ward* as part of its triple bill.

[19] In the *London Times* obituary of W.F. Casey, *The Young Man From Rathmines* is listed as one of his Abbey plays. The possibility that Brennan was a pseudonym for Casey was investigated. However, it seems the inclusion of *Young Man* was merely an editorial error (mixing it up with the Casey play, *The Man Who Missed the Tide*).

and it did have one additional staging, *Nannie's Night Out* was left alone and not staged again until O'Casey gave permission to an Indiana theatre company to stage it in 1961. Evidence of the author's unhappiness with this play is evident from the very night it premiered. Holloway writes in his journal that O'Casey "doesn't much care for the farce [...] now that he sees it on the stage" (1967, 239). It is a realistic assumption that *Nannie* not being re-staged at the Abbey was the choice of O'Casey. As he noted in *Inishfallen, Fare Thee Well*, it was "a play no-one (*sic*) liked except AE [...] an opinion that didn't bother Sean, for he knew AE knew nothing about the drama" (1992, 146).

As discussed in chapter three, J.A. O'Brennan's *Scrap* was a one-act depicting the demise of a man who kept working during the 1913 Dublin Lockout. Although its box office (£197) surpassed the mean (£181) on its double bill with McNulty's *The Courting of Mary Doyle*, it did so only marginally. This play seems to have dealt with a subject that held limited interest when staged in 1931 and, as noted in earlier chapters, the Dublin plays that had the most sustained success with audiences were those that contained some degree of comic relief, a quality that is lacking in this play.

The situation of Roger McHugh's *Rossa* (1945) is a bit of a mystery. Its not being re-staged defies patterns of Abbey revivals both in terms of financial precedent and subject matter. It ran for two weeks, grossing in excess of £500, a respectable gross for the time period. A look back on the life of the celebrated Fenian Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa, it was awarded the Abbey Theatre Prize for historical play for 1945. The only assumption that can be made is that its large cast (there were over twenty speaking parts) required a much higher than 'respectable' box office gross to cover expenses. (By comparison, *Design for a Headstone*, which had an equally large cast, grossed £1041 in its first two full weeks of production.)

The Highest Grossing Urban Plays

Examination of the highest grossing plays is segmented between those plays that ran as single productions and those that were part of double- or triple-bills. In light of the production and performance records already discussed, the box office receipts of solo productions contain few surprises. However, by including the full urban repertoire, insight is gained into how the Dublin plays performed amid the full scope of plays set in urban Ireland. Although Dublin does dominate (which can be, in part, due to the fact that there are so many more of them than of plays set in Belfast, Cork and Galway), the other Irish cities hold their own in the mix.

The two full-length plays of O'Casey's Dublin trilogy, *The Plough* and *Juno and the Paycock*, lead the list by exponential margins. After these two plays, the distances between box office grosses are not very substantial.

Box Office 1920-1951
Plays Set in Urban Ireland
Single Productions

Play (Author, year first staged)	**Gross[20]**
The Plough and the Stars (O'Casey, 1926)	£18,240
Juno and the Paycock (O'Casey, 1924)	15,638
Blind Man's Buff (Johnston/Toller, 1936)	3,426
The Grand House in the City (MacNamara, 1936)	2,123
Design for a Headstone (Byrne, 1950)	2,094
The Drums Are Out (Coulter, 1948)	1,970
Mungo's Mansion (Macken, 1946)	1,781
The End House (Tomelty, 1944)	1,264
The Old Broom (Shiels, 1946)	937
Trial at Green Street Courthouse (McHugh, 1941)	877
The Invincibles (Hunt/O'Connor, 1937)	861
Remembered For Ever (McGinn, 1941)	567
The Revolutionist (MacSwiney, 1921)	505

[20] Rounded to the nearest pound.

Rossa (McHugh, 1945)	501
The Critic (Robinson, 1931)	441
Mixed Marriage (Ervine, 1911)	429
*The Silver Tassie (*O'Casey, 1935)	364
The Man in the Cloak (D'Alton, 1937)	266
Moses' Rock (Hunt/O'Connor, 1938)	238
The O'Cuddy (Wharton, 1943)	203
Time's Pocket (O'Connor, 1938)	169
Caesar's Image (Carey, 1939)	140

The gross receipts of urban plays that were part of double- and triple-bills, which consist primarily (but not exclusively) of one-acts, tend to reflect the frequency with which they were produced and performed. As the final table indicates, the first instalment of the Dublin trilogy, the two-act *The Shadow of a Gunman*, leads the list significantly, and McNulty's *The Lord Mayor* has a strong gross.

Box Office 1920-1951
Plays Set in Urban Ireland
Share of Double or Triple Bills

Play (Author, year first staged)	**Gross**
The Shadow of a Gunman (O'Casey, 1923)	£6300
The Lord Mayor (McNulty, 1914)	1567
Never the Time and the Place (Robinson, 1924)	897
Apartments (O'Grady, 1923)	880
The Words Upon the Window-Pane (Yeats, 1930)	827
The Young Man From Rathmines (Brennan, 1922)	415
The Suburban Groove (Casey, 1908)	351
An Imaginary Conversation (O'Riordan, 1909)	338
Mixed Marriage (Ervine, 1911)	336
The Drums Are Out (Coulter, 1948)	246
The Drapier Letters (Power, 1927)	206
Before Midnight (Brosnan, 1928)	206
The Critic (Robinson, 1931)	193
Mungo's Mansion (Macken, 1946)	165
Nannie's Night Out (O'Casey, 1924)	158
The Passing (Sarr, 1924)	133
Kathleen Listens In (O'Casey, 1923)	124
The Man Who Missed the Tide (Casey, 1908)	124
A Deuce O'Jacks (Higgins, 1935)	106
Scrap (O'Brennan, 1931)	98
A Spot in the Sun (Murray, 1938)	75
The Wooing of Julia Elizabeth (Stephens, 1920)	56
Coggerers (Carroll, 1937)	43

The Leprechaun in the Tenement (Brennan, 1922)	41
Money (Quinn, 1931)	40
Birth of a Giant (MacAdam, 1940)	30

The gross of these plays is apportioned to the urban play in relation to those other plays that accompanied them on the bills. As a result, the accompanying plays are, of course, a factor in the box office receipts. Although the urban plays are most often paired with rural plays, there is a high degree of diversity in the pairings. Dorothy Macardle's *Ann Kavanagh* and Lady Gregory's *The Workhouse Ward* are the rural plays that most often share a bill with a Dublin play. There does not appear to be any significant fluctuation in gross when a Dublin play is paired with another Dublin play on multiple bills; with two exceptions. When a Dublin play is paired with either *The Shadow of a Gunman* or *The Lord Mayor* it tends to have a box office boost. *The Shadow of a Gunman* is the Dublin play of less than three acts with the largest number of productions and, as a result, the largest and most diverse list of accompanying plays. Its most substantial box office success was when it played with Shaw's *A Village Wooing* or Lady Gregory's *The Rising of the Moon*. Beyond that, there are no discernible patterns.

Conclusion

There was an audience for Dublin plays at the Abbey, and that audience contributed to the Dublin plays having a financial impact on the theatre and on its operating methods. Although the Dublin plays comprised only 11% of the repertoire, they contributed significantly above this level in terms of box office income. On average, they represented almost 20% of box office receipts for the period in question. The plays of W.F. Casey helped bridge the financial gap as the Abbey faced the loss of the Horniman subsidy, and O'Casey kept the theatre close to solvent in the lean years

prior to the State subsidy. The popular reception of the Dublin plays also served to alter the theatre's rotation schedule of its repertoire. With the reception of *Juno and the Paycock*, two-week runs became acceptable, and with the premiere of Johnston's *Blind Man's Buff*, runs beyond this length further altered the norm. The reception of the Dublin plays demonstrates that their audiences drove their success, and that they worked in tandem to impact the evolution of the Abbey theatre.

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Abbreviations

ATA Abbey Theatre Archive, Dublin
BL British Library, London
NLI National Library of Ireland, Dublin
NYPL New York Public Library

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