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“ALWAYS A FRIEND”¹
THE COMPLEX LIFE OF LADY GREGORY
ARISTOCRACY, WOMANHOOD, AND THE INDIGENOUS IRISH

Sarah Weinstock

May 2022

Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Women’s History
Sarah Lawrence College

¹ Lady Gregory to John Quinn, October 12, 1906, Berg Collection Lady Gregory, New York Public Library, New York City, NY.

ABSTRACT

Lady Gregory was an important part of nineteenth and twentieth-century Irish History, but her name is not associated with it as much as her male counterparts. Being born into an Anglo-Irish family, Lady Gregory was awarded certain privileges throughout her life in colonial Ireland. After marrying her husband, Sir William Gregory, she was a part of an elite titled family that awarded her more status. Her family, both strict unionists and heavily Protestant, taught her that women should succumb to the patriarchal society that raised her and hold status over the indigenous Irish. Nonetheless she created her own ideologies becoming a middle person for both viewpoints of nationalism and unionism. She broke down the societal standards put in place for her as a Victorian woman to preserve the history and language of the indigenous Irish. In the beginning, I believed that this thesis would argue that Lady Gregory was the oppressor of the indigenous Irish and used her status to create a career off of their stories. However, throughout my research in reading her archived sources, I have changed my opinion of her. She understood her status as an elite woman in Ireland but used her privileges to award those who were less fortunate. She used her status and power to help more than oppress. Lady Gregory created a career for herself after her husband's death and established the Abbey Theatre in Ireland to uphold Irish playwrights. My thesis argues that the lack of women historians around the time of her death and the new Irish Republic became why she has not kept her popularity in modern historical narrative.

Dedications

Thank you, Lady Enid Layard, who gifted Lady Gregory her traveling typewriter making future research possible because Lady Gregory's handwriting is challenging,

My Mom who translated any letter that was not typed,
And to both my parents for being the greatest support system I could ask for.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	2
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	3
LIST OF FIGURES.....	4
Introduction:	page 6
“...unselfish, devoted and unconquerable woman.”	
Chapter 1.....	page 20
“Breaking of a new day”	
Chapter 2	page 31
“She could not take from him any part of what had proven, after all his one real popular success.”	
Chapter 3.....	page 51
“...no English blood, and that I am as glad for.”	
Chapter 4.....	page 75
“I perceive no one in Ireland cares in the very least about her. She is almost forgotten already”	
Conclusion:.....	page 85
“And if she does not always put down her own errors in mistakes it is not because she does not know and is not sorry for them.”	
Bibliography	page 91

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Figure 1:Map of Ireland after Partition	page 88
2.. Figure 2:Example of the subjects taught in Mangnalls Questions	page 89
3. Figure 3:Queen Elizabeth’s Statue in the Prince’s Chamber	page 90
4. Figure 4:Elizabeth O’Farrell’s Feet Being Airbrushed Out of Photo	page 90

Introduction

“...unselfish, devoted and unconquerable woman.”²

“Likely to outlast the English translation of Homer, higher praise than this would be hard to give” is what Putnam and Sons Publishing Company declared in a letter sent to Irish-American lawyer John Quinn dated April 24, 1903, about Lady Gregory’s book *Cuchullian of Muirthemne*.³ However, while I was browsing through the extensive British and Irish literature section at a famous bookstore in the East Village of New York City, Lady Gregory’s name was nowhere to be found.⁴ The works produced by Lady Gregory reignited Ireland’s love for its history and language. Nevertheless, she had been erased from the bookshelves in a mere one hundred years, while her male counterparts Yeats, Synge, and other Irish creative minds are still considered a significant part of literary history. A common theme when talking about Irish literary history is the downplay of Lady Gregory’s importance. Class and gender in nineteenth and early twentieth-century Ireland shaped the life of Lady Gregory and consequently erased her from history.

Although she gained popularity in the early twentieth century, it quickly declined after her death in 1932. In the following centuries, the lack of women historians and the establishment of the independent Republic of Ireland diminished her fame compared to her male colleagues and friends. Lady Gregory made a literary career, became friends with some of the most prominent historical figures of the time, traveled as a single woman, and helped establish and run

² Lady Gregory to John Quinn, November 28, 1923, Lady Gregory Collection, New York Public Library, Berg Room, NY.

³ Messrs. G. P Putnam and Sons Publishing to John Quinn, April 24, 1903, Lady Gregory Collection, New York Public Library, Berg Room, Referring to Homer’s book and English translation of the Iliad and Odyssey and epic poem of the Trojan Wars.

⁴Out of the countless bookstores that I have visited in the US. None had written works by Lady Gregory, even the ones that have specific sections on Irish history and literature. This is a drastic and almost amazing departure from the esteem in which she was held during her lifetime.

the Abbey Theatre in Dublin, all before she would have been allowed to vote at the age of sixty-six.⁵ Lady Gregory's life started when Ireland was recovering from The Great Famine (Great Hunger or Irish Potato Famine) that reduced Ireland's population by half due to either starvation or emigration, wiping out the majority of Gaelic-speaking indigenous Irish.⁶ By the end of her life, the 1922 partition of Ireland divided the country into two, creating Northern Ireland, which remained a part of the United Kingdom, and the Republic of Ireland, a free state. These two significant events in Irish history encapsulated Lady Gregory's life.

Lady Gregory traveled across Ireland to translate and transcribe the folklore and history of the indigenous Irish and was one of the leading forces who saved and preserved the tales in history. Yet, she was also an Anglo-Irish landowner and the epitome of what Irish nationalism opposed. The Anglo-Irish class that she was born into is the reason for the oppression of the indigenous Irish for centuries. From a young age, she was fascinated with indigenous folklore and history. The dynamic of being raised on one side, but adoring the other, would be a conflict that would plague her for the rest of her life.⁷ Lady Gregory's whole life was caught between two ideological worlds but using her profits from one to help the other.

Being born into the Anglo-Irish class and marrying into nobility allowed her a certain privileged status. Her class status came from centuries of suppression and exploitation of the indigenous Irish. Paradoxically, this dynamic gave her the ability to do her work to help preserve the Gaelic language and folklore. While not an extremely wealthy woman, she did have incomes that did not rely on her being a part of a brutal labor force. That same class structure allowed her

⁵ She was seventy years old when the Irish Free State granted all people equal voting rights, not just in Ireland but abroad. The Abbey Theatre is also known as the National Theatre of Ireland.

⁶Sean Duffy, ed., *Atlas of Irish History*, second ed. (Dublin, Ireland: Gill & Macmillan, 2002), 94.

⁷ Lady Gregory, *Seventy Years*, ed. Colin Smythe (New York, NY: Macmillan Publishing Co, 1976).

the opportunity to be the patron to both authors and the theatre. Being born into the Anglo-Irish class allowed Lady Gregory to help the indigenous Irish more than she would have been able to if she had been born into an indigenous Irish family herself. The people she sympathized with and wrote about did not have the same opportunities to scribe and create as she did. Lady Gregory took her privilege and used it in a way that helped the underprivileged, which her class oppressed.

What does it mean to be an Anglo-Irish aristocrat? The noted Irish revival historian Sinéad Garrigan Mattar describes Anglo-Irish as “both colonizers and colonized.”⁸ As a colony of England, class, and religion divided Ireland’s population between the indigenous Catholic Irish and English Protestant settlers. Lady Gregory grew up profiting off the privileges rewarded to the Anglo-Irish; privileges we can infer were the reasons she, as a widowed woman, could make a career for herself and be a patron to others.

Lady Gregory was born and raised in Victorian-era Ireland.⁹ Her upbringing made her aware of her position as a woman, making her cautious and reluctant. She believed she should not be in the spotlight. Later in her career, this notion followed her when she often gave her male counterparts the recognition for good praise on works they collaborated together on, while she took sole responsibility of the negative reviews. When she published her husband’s diary in 1894, she underplayed her role in his life in the publication.¹⁰ When she co-authored *Cathleen Ni Houlihan* with author W.B Yeats (1902), she did not protest when the critics left her name out of the papers, and admirers only gave credit to Yeats. She often chose to be sidelined and let her

⁸ Sinéad Garrigan Mattar, “Wage for Each People Her Hand Has Destroyed,” *Irish University Review* 34, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 2004): 51.

⁹ Victorian Era is defined as being from 1837 to 1901.

¹⁰ Hill, *Lady Gregory*, 134. Recent publications of the autobiography have put Lady Gregory’s name as the author, specifically the 2018 and 2021 versions.

male colleagues become the product of the fascination of admirers. Nonetheless, her erasure from historical memory is not only because of her actions but because Lady Gregory existed in an era that did not promote the successes of women. It was not until the emergence of women-centric historical research that Lady Gregory received the credit she was due.

Brief Irish History

England had to start their imperial empire somewhere, and that place was Ireland.¹¹ In 1827, the leader of the Catholic Emancipation, Daniel O’Connell, said about the colonization of Ireland by the British, “Accursed be the day...when invaders first touched our shores. They came to a nation famous for its love of learning its piety. Its heroism [and]...doomed Ireland to seven hundred years of oppression.”¹² The class dynamic of Ireland from the sixteenth century to the nineteenth was one based on religion and ancestral background. Two major religious happenings shaped Ireland’s class structure. First, is the arrival of Christianity in 432 C.E. Ireland, once filled with different polytheistic indigenous clans that believed in many different gods and goddesses, was converted into a monotheistic Catholic nation. The second was the English King Henry VIII breaking from his Catholic faith and Rome to make himself and future English monarchs head of the Church of England.¹³ This division separated the English Protestants from

¹¹Lindsey Earner-Byrne, “Why were women omitted from modern Irish history?,” RTÉ Raidió Teilifís Éireann, Ireland’s National Public Service Media, last modified March 8, 2022, accessed April 11, 2022, <https://www.rte.ie/brainstorm/2021/0318/1204659-women-modern-irish-history-gender/>.

¹²S. J. Connolly, ed., *The Oxford Companion to Irish History*, second ed. (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2002), 182. Henry VIII broke from the Catholic Church and became head of the Church of England. This created a system of oppression that allowed English Parliament to discriminate against Catholic Irish and barred them from having a seat in Parliament. Irish emancipations’ goals were to allow Catholics to be able to sit in parliament and be able to have a say in government. In 1829 this was achieved; however, if elected, Catholics still had to vow that the pope was in no way going to be a part of their decisions, furthering the divide and discrimination toward Catholics. Connolly, *The Oxford*, 578.

¹³ Meaning the Catholic Pope Clement VII did not grant King Henry VIII the divorce he wanted from Catherine of Aragon.

the Irish Catholics throughout Ireland's history. This factor would soon become a divide in all aspects of anyone and anything on Irish soil.

The indigenous Irish fought the British colonizers throughout every century. The British Parliament enacted anti-Catholic Penal Laws that oppressed the indigenous Irish class. These laws restricted them from owning the land their ancestors cultivated, having a seat in Parliament, practicing their religion without fear of persecution, and many other authoritarian laws.¹⁴

Between the middle of the sixteenth century and the early twentieth century, indigenous Catholic Irish succumbed to the oppressive Anglo-Irish Protestant class.¹⁵ The colonization of Ireland started the destruction of its native history and language. The traditions and folklore of the native Irish passed down through families from word of mouth, and little was transcribed due to illiteracy throughout the peasantry.

The nineteenth century started with a gleam of hope for the indigenous Irish. The Act of Union in 1800 established the United Kingdom, creating a governmental body where Ireland could have a say in the decisions. However, Irish Ministers of Parliament (MPs) had to meet in England, and Catholic Irish were still not allowed a seat.¹⁶ Social movements like the Catholic Emancipation, which removed Penal Laws and allowed Catholics to have a seat in Parliament, the start of the Irish suffrage movement to help gain women's right to vote, Land Wars along with Home Rule bills worked to get indigenous Irish the right to owning land, making the Irish question an unforgotten issue through Parliament.¹⁷ Cultural movements like Gaelic Revival,

¹⁴ Connolly, *The Oxford*, 438. Also known as popery laws.

¹⁵ This statement assumes that there was not a Catholic unionist position. However, few there were Catholic Irish who believed that Ireland was better off being under the colonial rule of Britain.

¹⁶ Connolly, *The Oxford*, 565.

¹⁷ Connolly, *The Oxford*, 254. The revival is also referred to as the Irish Literary Renaissance and Celtic Twilight. Also referred to as popery or Penal laws. This set of parliament legislation restricted Catholics from going overseas for education, teaching Irish schools, and others that discriminated against Catholics and Protestants.

Gaelic League (Conradh na Gaeilge), and the Gaelic Athletic association; all promoted historically indigenous Irish culture like language, sports, and history.

While the nineteenth century offered a small glimmer of hope for retribution and a better life for indigenous Irish, it was also a time in which one of the deadliest famines in Irish history plagued the lower class. In 1847 the Great Famine hit the tenant class of indigenous Irish the hardest, as the average Irish adult male ate nearly thirteen pounds of potatoes a day.¹⁸ Therefore, the loss of the potato crop was more than devastating to the people who relied on it for their everyday survival. The Great Famine further divided the classes between native Irish and Anglo-Irish until its end in 1852, the same year that Lady Gregory was born.

Histography

Lady Gregory wrote and collected an abundance of primary sources about her life and surroundings. She was not only the biographer for both herself and her family, but she was an author of Irish folklore mythologies and plays. Lady Gregory's elite class status and career surrounded her friendship circle with people who have separate biographies and primary archived sources. While she was not the subject of research for decades, academics did write about her in conjunction with her male counterparts. The difficulty of writing about someone who wrote extensively about their and others' lives as Lady Gregory did, is also how one can manipulate their narrative. Lady Gregory would not have been able to write about herself in a broader context of history. Lady Gregory is known for purposely leaving out details or changing stories; the reasoning for this will be described in further chapters. The two most notable autobiographies that Lady Gregory wrote are *Lady Gregory Journals 1892-1902* (1925) and *Seventy Years 1852-1922 Being the Autobiography of Lady Gregory* (1976). Descendants of

¹⁸P. M. Austin Bourke, "The Use of the Potato Crop in Pre-Famine Ireland" (PhD diss.), 1.

Lady Gregory slowly sold her archived works to the New York Public Library after allowing Mary Coxhead to write *Lady Gregory, A Literary Portrait* (1961).

Lady Gregory wrote her biography stating, “If written it must be, she will herself take the burden and not expect another to do well what she thinks cannot be done supremely well or put the task on some friend dear to her, or leave it to some indifferent scribe.”¹⁹ Lady Gregory writes *Seventy Years* decisively like a biography done by another; in the quote about her decision, she writes it in the third person. However, she is writing about herself. At some points, she writes in the first person in a quote. A footnote will mention that this is an example of Lady Gregory writing in third person. Lady Gregory was not alive when it was published. She gave her work to W.B. Yeats and a publisher to have it finished because she did not want to be alive to see it published. However, forgotten for decades, her work was found and published in 1976, nearly forty-four years after her death. There is something poetic and foretelling that those in charge of publishing forgot about her autobiography.

Lady Gregory, A Literary Portrait (1961) written by Elizabeth Coxhead is the first biography to be written about Lady Gregory twenty-nine years after her death. Lady Gregory’s family allowed Coxhead access to Lady Gregory’s belongings before the family sold them to the New York Public Library Berg Collection. Coxhead’s biography is the first book to consider the world surrounding Lady Gregory and some of the postmortem events that Lady Gregory could not write in her biography. Coxhead divulged that she did not go into an in-depth review of Lady Gregory and believes her work should be a steppingstone for others to write more. Coxhead even states, “This book does not pretend to be the documented biography that must be written one day, when all the materials are available...who can set her into the whole complicated

¹⁹Lady Gregory, *Seventy Years*, 2.

perspective of the Irish literary revival....”²⁰ Coxhead mentions that she is English, which is crucial in her aspect of her as an author of *Lady Gregory*. She stated that she hoped one day that an Irish academic would pursue writing a more in-depth one. Coxhead’s mentioning of her English ancestry is a good sign of self-awareness of the everlasting legacy of colonialism over Ireland. Anglo-Irish versus English is a lasting theme of research on *Lady Gregory*. To be Anglo-Irish is seen as English, and the statement of Coxhead wanting someone other than an English person to write a biography adds to the retelling of *Lady Gregory*. Other notable historians who wrote biographies on *Lady Gregory* include Colm Tóibín’s *Lady Gregory’s Toothbrush* (2002), and Judith Hill *Lady Gregory, an Irish Life* (2005) James Pethica who edited *Lady Gregory Journals 1892-1902* (1996), *Lady Gregory Early Irish Writings 1883-1893* (2018), and “‘A Young Man’s Ghost’: *Lady Gregory* and J. M. Synge” (2004).²¹

Colm Tóibín wrote *Lady Gregory’s Toothbrush* during a fellowship at the New York Public Library and the Berg Room collection of *Lady Gregory*. In his acknowledgments, he describes the difficulty of *Lady Gregory’s* handwriting, along with his gratitude for the translations and typing of most of her primary sources. Readers can tell that *Lady Gregory’s Toothbrush* writes with the same material that Elizabeth Coxhead first used. However, this book is a prime example of the need for further research on *Lady Gregory*; to further conceptualize her impact on Irish History.

Judith Hill immediately mentions *Lady Gregory’s* relationship with being a woman and her tendency to put men first consistently. While this is accurate, it is not as straightforward as Hill makes it sound. *Lady Gregory* knew womanhood treated all women differently than men,

²⁰ Elizabeth Coxhead, *Lady Gregory A Literary Portrait*, second ed. (London: Secker & Warburg, 1966), VI.

²¹James Pethica’s edition of *Lady Gregory Journals* were not used in this thesis but his work publishing them is appreciated and they were used for research and understanding *Lady Gregory*.

but further research has also separated gender from Lady Gregory. Along with agreeing with Hill, chapter four argues that while gender played a part in Lady Gregory's decisions, she was not afraid of men; yet had an intense distaste for the spotlight. The *Irish University Review* published many scholars, specifically in the Special Lady Gregory edition, in the spring and summer of 2004. Notice the encapsulating dates of the publishing of Tóibín and Hill. Between 2002 and 2005, Lady Gregory became a popular research topic.

The *Irish University Review* published a special Lady Gregory edition in 2004. This issue is where a bulk of scholarly articles about her have been published. Sadly, since this edition, publications solely about Lady Gregory have tapered off in popularity. The subjects surrounding the writings of Lady Gregory are Michael McAteer's "'Kindness in Your Unkindness': Lady Gregory and History," James Pethica, "'A Young Man's Ghost': Lady Gregory and J. M. Synge," and Paige Reynolds, "The Making of a Celebrity: Lady Gregory and the Abbey's First American Tour." These scholarly articles can become specific subjects about the life of Lady Gregory, something that book authors may not have the privilege to do when it comes to writing about her.

While Lady Gregory did write extensively about herself and others, she could not intellectualize the amount of history that would further analyze her reputation and other aspects of her life she may not have considered significant. Kate Pickles's book, *Female Identity and National Identity the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire Women*; and Eliza Redis's article, "Gender, And the Promotion of Empire: The Victoria League, 1901–1914" analyze how the social standards of Lady Gregory's childhood and adulthood have and helped shape the position of aristocratic women in colonized societies. Both scholars argue that the purpose of imperial women was to help promote the conforming of colonized groups to their colonized societies.

However, while Lady Gregory abided by these standards, she did not use them in the way society created them but instead used them to benefit the colonized and promote nationalism.

Some papers allude to the androgyny of Lady Gregory. However, most focus on her femininity. Further on in this work, an analysis of gender would describe her androgyny and how Lady Gregory often downplayed both her femininity and sexuality so as not to have them overshadow her professional achievements. Eion Martin's "Jacob Epstein, Lady Gregory and the Irish Question"; described Lady Gregory's transcriptions as feminine, compared to her cousin and Standish O'Grady's Irish history that described them as masculine. Further chapters would argue against the narrative that Lady Gregory's feminist writing was an active choice. Because she does not speak or write about the need for women's equality as an ideology her feminist writing should not be considered something she purposely did.

While patriarchy is an ever-pressing question in the study of history, primary sources written by Lady Gregory showed no sign of her caring or succumbing to the patriarchy as much as previous authors have mentioned. Specifically, in Michael McAteer's "Kindness in Your Unkindness: Lady Gregory and History," Lady Gregory's work, when compared to Standish O'Grady's, were likened through her not pushing the boundaries of the patriarchal narrative implemented in Irish history to this point. Lady Gregory became an androgynous writer refusing to conform to gender norms and often seen as a "middle" gender, somewhere between masculine and feminine. Lady Gregory did not focus on gender but instead wrote history as if it should be written and produced. Mckeeter portrays Lady Gregory's work as constricted by a patriarchal stronghold. Although his argument is not wrong, my work will argue that Lady Gregory did not actively choose gender in her plays; instead, the way the world says it was in a gendered view.

Sinéad Garrigan Mattar's argument in "Wage for Each People Her Hand Has Destroyed" is that while Lady Gregory influenced the surrounding men in her life, she was also fully independent in her choice of ideologies. Mattar's analysis of Lady Gregory's autonomy is a fundamental fact in the retelling of Lady Gregory. Research conducted for this thesis contains little evidence that Lady Gregory conformed to the standards given, and patriarchy was not a leading force in her ideology but rather in her perception of fame. To add to that argument, researchers initially saw gender as the predominant factor in her career. Nevertheless, the evidence is lacking that she genuinely felt that way about herself. From this article, this thesis will aim to prove that Lady Gregory broke Victorian social standards instead of conforming to them.

The subsequent chapters will explain the various parts of Lady Gregory's life that allowed her to accomplish everything she produced or helped to produce. Chapter 1 focuses on Lady Gregory before her career, analyzing her upbringing and marriage and how they both played critical, often conflicting parts in her life. It will describe her life being the "rebel" in a large Anglo-Irish family at Roxborough.²² This chapter will function as a reference to the influences that helped shape the ideologies of Lady Gregory. Instead of arguing against another interpretation, it will bring a concise analysis of the raising of a Victorian girl and a married woman of nobility. Chapter One's main literary works that will help form the analysis of Lady Gregory will be Mary Coxhead's *A Literary Portrait*, Judith Hills *Lady Gregory, An Irish Life*, and Lady Gregory's autobiography *Seventy Years*. These books, while illuminating, focus solely

²²Ann Saddlemyer and Colin Smythe, eds., *Lady Gregory Fifty Years Later* (Totowa, NJ: Barnes and Noble Books, 1987).

on telling Lady Gregory's life from a biographical standpoint instead of analyzing her contributions in the broader aspect of history.

All of the written works about Lady Gregory follow the same storyline within the first couple of pages. A daughter was born, a mother disappointed she was not a son, and a Catholic nanny sparked the fascination of the indigenous Irish to a young girl who longed to read books that her mother restricted. This one is no different. These brief points are the foundation of understanding Lady Gregory. It would be ideal to find new ways of retelling the upbringing of Lady Gregory. She wrote her biography, giving future researchers no need to change the telling of her childhood, and the reemergence of research about Lady Gregory has not produced any other interpretations. The possibility has not occurred yet, because the study is still in the early stages. There is no need to further open academic subjects for her when academics have not answered the basic questions. Nonetheless, this chapter will use the same information to understand Lady Gregory and examine her part in Irish history.

Chapter 2 explores Lady Gregory's career and race in Ireland. What does Lady Gregory's career have to do with race? Everything. The Irish Renaissance set about to promote Irish authors and break down the stigmatization of the indigenous Irish in the arts. The Irish Renaissance changed the perception of native Irish on the stage; and fought for the freedom of production for plays like J.M Synge's play *The Playboy of the Western World* that viewers rioted against, and Bernard Shaw's play *Blanco Posnet* that was censored in England and banned from production there. Lady Gregory used her elite status to attract donors to the Abbey Theatre. She used her creative ability to write and produce plays that highlighted Irish folklore, mythologies, and politics. This chapter also analyzes the feminist tones in Lady Gregory's plays *Grania* and *Devorgilla* and the backlash she received from them. Apart from her plays, this chapter will

summarize Lady Gregory's written works on the history of Ireland and translations of Irish folklore. It will also explore the role gender and androgyny played in Lady Gregory's career.

Chapter 3 describes the importance of understanding Lady Gregory through the ideologies of imperialism and nationality. This chapter focuses on works that describe the world Lady Gregory was supposed to adhere to in terms of social customs and behavior women of a particular status were encouraged to follow. It also describes Lady Gregory's relationship with Irish colonization after her formative time in Egypt, exploring the importance of Home Rule in Ireland. Understanding the societal expectations demanded of women of a particular class status at the height of British imperialism allows us to understand the choices and exceptional life Lady Gregory made for herself.

Nationalism is arguably one of the most prominent ideologies in early twentieth-century Ireland. It is also one of the crucial elements in understanding Lady Gregory's relationship with her family and friends. Lady Gregory's political ideologies are essential to deciphering her place in early modern Ireland as an Anglo-Irish woman. Sinéad Garrigan Mattar describes her as "...immersed in the very culture she opposed," which is an ongoing subject in the research of Lady Gregory.²³ This chapter describes how Lady Gregory followed the social standards set on elite women of the nineteenth and twentieth century while paradoxically not conforming to the same standards. This chapter will describe elite women's philanthropic work and the use of women to promote imperialism.

Chapter 4 analyzes the study of women's history and its relationship with the remembrance of Lady Gregory. This chapter will aim to answer the core question of the

²³ Sinéad Garrigan Mattar, "'Wage for Each People Her Hand Has Destroyed,'" *Irish University Review* 34, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 2004): 50.

reasoning behind the disappearance of Lady Gregory from the historical narrative when researching early modern Irish history. It will also analyze the contributions of Gerda Lerner and the creation of the subject of women's history. This chapter considers the importance of Lady Gregory's death, the political atmosphere of the newly independent Republic of Ireland, and the lack of women's acknowledgment in history as the perfect place for the erasure of her accomplishments.

This thesis brings to light a woman whose accomplishments were diminished because of an era that did not promote historical analysis of women. Lady Gregory, like many other women, has been a significant part of history. Women like Gregory deserve historical analysis without writing about them in the context of their male counterparts. Lady Gregory became a footnote in history. This thesis will bring to light that she is more than that and she deserves her own story.

Chapter 1

“Breaking of a new day”²⁴

On March 15, 1852, in the corner room of the manor house on the Roxborough estate, a baby girl was born a disappointment. Her mother wanted a boy and made her unhappiness over her newborn daughter immediately known, casting the baby off, not caring if the child lived or died.²⁵ A nurse soon came to pick up the baby and saved her life. The child’s upbringing was influenced by her mother’s (or mistress, as she states in her autobiography) disappointment and restrictions on what the girl can do.²⁶ The mistress would give the governesses to the girl and her sister strict guidelines for their education, restricting almost all books except religious texts.²⁷ Nights in the salon, where the family would congregate, would be silent. However, her native Irish nanny Mary Sheridan would tell her stories of indigenous folklore.²⁸ Mary Sheridan taught the girl Irish folklore and mythologies, stories of legend, heroes, and histories, starting the young lady’s lifelong fascination with the indigenous Irish. As a young child, she would also read nationalist ballads, also known as Fenian books written by the literary group Young Ireland.²⁹ Isabella Augusta Persse lived through the hardship years of her mother’s evident disappointment to become the famous Irish author, Lady Gregory.

²⁴ Lady Gregory, *Seventy Years*, ed. Colin Smythe (New York, NY: Macmillan Publishing Co, 1976), 15.\

²⁵ Saddlemyer and Smythe, *Lady Gregory*, 57. A quilt was laid on top of Augusta and she nearly suffocated.

²⁶ Lady Gregory, *Seventy Years*, I.

²⁷ Lady Gregory, *Seventy Years*, I.

²⁸ Lady Gregory, *Seventy Years*, ed. Colin Smythe (New York, NY: Macmillan Publishing Co, 1976).

²⁹ Jason Willwerscheid, “Critiquing Cultures of Agonism: Games in Lady Gregory’s Plays and Translations,” *New Hibernia Review* 18, no. 2 (2014): 53. Saddlemyer and Smythe, *Lady Gregory*, 60 Fenian is a term used to describe multiple nationalistic groups of Ireland that would grow to become a term used for Irish emigrants in other countries, most notably America. Notable groups under this term would be the Irish republican brotherhood and Fenian brotherhood.

As an adult, she lived a life of strong will and independence, whereas, in her childhood, she viewed her gender as the “the weaker side” and inferior to men.³⁰ She was heartbroken when informed of her near-death experience at birth, and it began her acknowledgment of her estrangement as a member of her family.³¹ Augusta would see that women were subject to the control of men her whole life, but she eventually did not let it dictate her choices.³² Although her upbringing was extremely controlled by gender, she did try to break out from the restrictions placed on her. She grew up watching her brothers hunt and play childhood games in ways that were considered inappropriate for a girl of her time.³³ Sometimes she could persuade them to invite her to play the games and hunt. While her father was never angered when watching Augusta play with her brothers, her mother was.³⁴ She had to outgrow the assumption that all women were lesser than men.³⁵ As she grew up, her family believed she would never marry and become the spinster aunt of the family.

Her mother’s interests dictated Augusta’s education. Her reading would consist of memorizing *Mangnalls Questions*.³⁶ Created by headmistress and schoolteacher Richmal Mangnall, *Mangnalls Questions* consisted extensively of subjects from agriculture to Roman history. The Persse girls were not the only ones having to memorize this book, *Mangnalls Questions* was the standard curriculum for governesses and all-girls schools in the nineteenth century.³⁷ Governesses in the Victorian era were used to teach girls to be just educated and

³⁰ Lady Gregory, *Seventy Years*, 12.

³¹ Saddlemyer and Smythe, *Lady Gregory*, 59.

³² Judith Hill, *Lady Gregory an Irish Life* (n.p.: Collins Press, 2011), 5.

³³ Hill, *Lady Gregory*, 5.

³⁴ Saddlemyer and Smythe, *Lady Gregory*, 57.

³⁵ Hill, *Lady Gregory*, 5.

³⁶ The original name was Historical and Miscellaneous Questions for the Use of Young People: With a Selection of British, and General Biography, by Rechmal Mangnalls originally published in 1798.

³⁷ Geoffrey Russell Richards Treasure, *Who’s Who in Late Hanoverian Britain, 1789-1837* (Stackpole Books, 2002), 89-90.

interesting enough for marriage but not enough to make a career. This reasoning left a lot of women ignorant in their marriage when it came to money or controlling a household.³⁸ The mistress believed that the girls of the family would not need anything more than memorizing those questions and answers, and if that were to happen, that is when they would be able to get another book to study.³⁹ Lady Gregory accounts in her autobiography *Seventy Years* about the memorization regulation to get a new book "... and of course, they never could."⁴⁰ The romantic novel *Lalla Rookh*, written by Thomas Moore, was her favorite book, but her parents deemed it not fit for a girl.⁴¹ Contemporary historians believed that Moore was using *Lalla Rookh* as an allegory of the 1798 Irish rebellion. It is not clear if young Augusta knew of this, but the reasoning behind her parent's restriction was because of the nationalist undertones in it rather than it being unfit for girls. When Lady Gregory wrote about it in her autobiography, she does not mention what drew her love to the book, just why she was not allowed to read it.

In later chapters, an analysis of Lady Gregory not conforming to these standards can be noted as her first breaking of gender rules. She often used her allowance from memorizing and reciting bible verses on Sundays to buy Fenian Pamphlets. Anne Saddlemyer stated the time when she first started "revolting" was when she was finding her passions by breaking from the social rules of an Anglo-Irish family, its political ideologies, and family instructions for the education of girls.⁴²

³⁸ Charles Petrie, "Victorian Women Are Expected to Be Idle and Ignorant," in *Victorian Women*, comp. Clarice Swisher (San Diego, Ca: Greenhaven Press, 2000), 178

<https://archive.org/details/victorianengland00swis/page/186/mode/2up>

³⁹ Lady Gregory, *Seventy Years*, 5.

⁴⁰ Lady Gregory, *Seventy Years*, 5. Note this is an example of Lady Gregory writing in third person. This is her writing her biography but instead of writing "we never could" she writes "they never could."

⁴¹ Lady Gregory, *Seventy Years*, 5.

⁴² Saddlemyer and Smythe, *Lady Gregory*, 61.

Some of Lady Gregory's earliest times of being stranded between her "two worlds" include when she learned of the Fenian Rising of 1867 and acquired the same sympathies as her nurse while her family had opposing opinions. Augusta used the sixpence she received if she recited her bible versions perfectly on Fenian Pamphlets or national literature from Little Loughrea Bookshop.⁴³ She would read through them and keep them protected for the rest of her life; some of the names of the national ballads on these pamphlets included *The Harp of Tara* and *The Irish Son Book*. She was so consistent in buying these pamphlets that the shopkeeper said, "I look to Miss Augusta to buy all my Fenian books."⁴⁴ Her older sister gave her the book *Spirit of the Nation* for her birthday but then wrote "Patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel" inside.⁴⁵ She believed that her older siblings did not think that she could have any sympathies different from theirs.⁴⁶ While Nanny Sheridan was a nanny to all of the Persse children, from analyzing Augusta's writings about her family, it was apparent that she is the only sibling that felt this way.

Religion

Augusta grew up in an Anglo-Irish landowning family.⁴⁷ Her mother was extremely religious, and the family was a part of the Church of Ireland Evangelical. Ireland, heavily divided by religion meant that her religion would give certain privileges not awarded to the practitioners of Catholicism.⁴⁸ Religion played an enormous part in early twentieth-century Irish history, a choice that would become an important character trait of Lady Gregory, bringing her criticism

⁴³ Lady Gregory, *Seventy Years*, 58.

⁴⁴ Lady Gregory, *Seventy Years*, 13. In 1918 she noted that she still had her Fenian pamphlets from childhood (Howarth, *The Irish*, 88).

⁴⁵ Lady Gregory, *Seventy Years*, 13.

⁴⁶ Lady Gregory, *Seventy Years*, 14.

⁴⁷ Hill, *Lady Gregory*, 11.

⁴⁸ Hill, *Lady Gregory*, 6.

from some, and rank from others. English imperialism relied on the oppression and subjugation of those whom they considered other, this focused on the colonized religion. Even though England brought the standardized monotheistic religion of Catholicism, it soon became the reason for Ireland's oppression of its indigenous peoples.

The "breaking of a new day" was when her sister got two volumes of *Chambers Encyclopedia of English Literature*.⁴⁹ The bible was no longer everything to her. She was able to see that there was a world of literature beyond it.⁵⁰ While her whole life she was religious, she did not see it as of great importance to her everyday life. Lady Gregory had a spiritual awakening at fifteen that made her see and use religion differently than her family, in her world describing religion as more "practical and philanthropic rather than spiritual."⁵¹ In *Seventy Years* Lady Gregory describes acts of charity she did as a way of fulfilling her religious duties.

She gave up a good deal of her time to works of charity, taking the poorest village on the estate...going day after day the couple miles on foot with food and comforts saving her pocket money for such purposes, she visited the sick and clothed the children, and tended the dying. These visits of charity sometimes brought her under suspicion of wishing to turn those she succoured from the catholic faith.⁵²

Her family's religious practices would become the scorn on Lady Gregory's reputation throughout her life, she was constantly accused of using her philanthropy to convert Catholics to Protestantism, a practice she valiantly opposed her whole life. Yeats insinuated that Lady Gregory thought to convert to Catholicism to be closer to the people, but nothing in her primary sources and diaries confirm this.⁵³

⁴⁹ Lady Gregory, *Seventy Years*, 15.

⁵⁰ Lady Gregory, *Seventy Years*, 15.

⁵¹ Lady Gregory, *Seventy Years*, 16.

⁵² Lady Gregory, *Seventy Years*, 16.

⁵³ Elizabeth Coxhead, *Lady Gregory A Literary Portrait*, second ed. (London: Secker & Warburg, 1966), 189.

Landowning

From a young age, Augusta was in love with Ireland. The land, foliage, mountain hikes, and the ocean encapsulated young Augusta's fascination and became her first love.⁵⁴ Her adoration for the land followed her through her life but began in childhood. She viewed families like hers as legally owning the land, but the indigenous Irish and her tenants emotionally owning the land.⁵⁵ Arguably one of the most devastating and oppressive parts of the Penal Laws was the 1704 Act, enacted to prevent the property growth of Catholics.⁵⁶ This law took away the native land of the Irish and restricted them from owning or inheriting any land. This act would become the driving divide between Lady Gregory and the tenant Catholic Irish. The landowning Anglo-Irish class lived comfortable lives until the Great Famine of 1847, which wiped out their tenants because of the lack of access to food, drove them to death, eviction, and or emigration.⁵⁷ The Irish population dropped by three million by the end of the famine, reducing the population by half. The surviving tenants became outspoken about their rights and were willing to fight for them. Landowners that were on good terms with their tenants walked on eggshells, trying not to incite outward hatred, which would destroy their property and possessions. However, as much as they tried to stop the rebellion of their tenants, they were still able to assert a class distinction.

Dudley Persse, Augustus's father, had multiple assassination attempts throughout his life.⁵⁸ The family would also suffer several attacks on their home from revolting tenants and Land Leaguers. Pearse owned thousands of acres of land, which was cultivated and worked on by hundreds of tenants whom he controlled.⁵⁹ One example of the differences between Lady

⁵⁴ Saddlemyer and Smythe, *Lady Gregory*, 57.

⁵⁵ Saddlemyer and Smythe, *Lady Gregory*, 57.

⁵⁶ Connolly, *The Oxford*, 462.

⁵⁷ Connolly, *The Oxford*, 240.

⁵⁸ Saddlemyer and Smythe, *Lady Gregory*, 57.

⁵⁹ Saddlemyer and Smythe, *Lady Gregory*, 57.

Gregory and the Catholic Irish was how her family handled the Great Famine of 1845. The Great Famine happened before Augusta was born. Nevertheless, the fact of her family's contributions and survival is pivotal to her life story. Nearly half of the Irish population died or emigrated during the Great Famine. The most impoverished Irish, mostly Catholics, relied upon the wealthier classes like Augusta's family to support them. As a tenant landowning family of nearly twelve thousand acres, Augusta's family would be the landlords of many families hit the hardest by the Great Famine.⁶⁰ However, they were not supportive of their dying tenants, which resulted in evictions, emigration-which was highly encouraged, or death.⁶¹ This example shows how deeply class distinction played in the social structure of nineteenth-century Ireland, where Augusta's landowning family would be a significant part of her upbringing and future life choices. Being born into a landowning family gave her the privilege to become a great literary author. Even though she was not expected to become educated, her friendship and eventual marriage to Sir William Gregory would expand her mind in the arts, travel, and literature.

Marriage

Throughout Augustus' childhood, her mother and surrounding family members told her that she was not beautiful, and the marriages during the Victorian era relied heavily on looks. Believing all that her mother said to her and comparing herself to her sisters, Augusta believed that she would never find a romantic love or marry.⁶² After spending most of her twenties taking care of her older brothers who were dying of consumption, she found romance in her much older neighbor Sir William Gregory. Although it started as him being an outlet for her to explore books in his expansive library and taking an interest in her education, it became a romantic

⁶⁰ Hill, *Lady Gregory*, 14.

⁶¹ Hill, *Lady Gregory*, 14.

⁶² Saddlemyer and Smythe, *Lady Gregory*, 59.

marriage. Coxhead describes their relationship they had with each other and the impact it had on her life because he took her education seriously when no one before him had, “Persse, despite the difference in their ages, loved him deeply, because he was far and away the most vital and intelligent person who had come into her world.”⁶³ Although age gaps were not uncommon during this time, Augusta’s family believed her to be too old for marriage. While we see the thirty-five-year age difference as bizarre between the Persse and Gregory’s, the bizarreness was that Augusta would be married at all. Originally Sir William put in his will that his “friend” Augusta Persse would receive six books after his death. In a November 1st, 1920, letter to John Quinn, she jokes that because she married him, she inherited the whole library but she would have chosen Evelyn “Silvia”⁶⁴ Through research, it can be inferred that she is talking about John Evelyns *Sylva or A Discourse of Forest-Trees and the Propagation of Timber in His Majesty’s Dominions*, which would make sense because of her love for trees and forestry, which she had her whole life but took seriously later in life.

Augusta Gregory married Sir William Gregory, thirty-five years her elder, in 1880.⁶⁵ Because he was once Governor of Ceylon and had the title of knight, Augusta upgraded her title to Lady Gregory.⁶⁶ One year later, their son William Robert Jr. was born.⁶⁷ Like Augustus’s family, Sir William was born into a wealthy landowning Anglo-Irish family of Coole Park. For a short period, Sir William was a member of Parliament, and during that time, he passed the Gregory Clause of the Poor Law Bill of 1847.⁶⁸ This clause would restrict relief to people

⁶³ Coxhead, *Lady Gregory*, 22.

⁶⁴ Lady Gregory to John Quinn, November 1, 1920, Berg Collection Lady Gregory, New York Public Library, New York, NY.

⁶⁵ She was Twenty-eight when she got married to the sixty-six-year-old Sir William Gregory.

⁶⁶ Hill, *Lady Gregory*, 29.

⁶⁷ Hill, *Lady Gregory*, 51.

⁶⁸ This was an amendment to the original 1837 Poor Law to help relieve the potato famine plaguing the lower class, Irish.

suffering from the Great Famine.⁶⁹ Even though Sir William enacted the Gregory Clause, he did not use it on his tenants. Because he did not apply his clause to his tenants, they saw him as a reasonable landowner. Nonetheless, it opened the doors for other landowners to use in disastrous and even deadly ways to their tenants. Sir William Gregory fought to show that he was an excellent landowner to his tenants up to his death.

After his death, Lady Gregory decided to publish Sir William's journals. She wanted to show how her husband compromised and conformed to the Land War.⁷⁰ Furthermore, she used it in a way to show his dedication to his tenants.⁷¹ An example of where her husband's ideologies and class aligned, Daniel O'Connell, mentioned in the introduction as the leader of the Catholic Emancipation, would have been Sir William Gregory's ideological opponent. This fact adds to the reasoning of Lady Gregory being a part of the oppressive class that plagued the people that she studied and wrote about in her career.

Lady Gregory began her love of the arts with her husband. Although she started her professional career after her husband's death, she learned her love for writing with him. Starting her career later in life is one of the most common critiques of her work.⁷² The belief was that her career started after she met W.B Yeats, and he was the driving force of her artistic exploration.⁷³ However, her husband took great pleasure in opening Lady Gregory's eyes to art and literature. Sir William would plan "grand tours of the continent" to expose his young bride to a world she was once restricted from seeing.⁷⁴ At this point in her life, she immersed herself in the different

⁶⁹ Hill, *Lady Gregory*, 31.

⁷⁰ After a less than profitable harvest, tenants asked for relief from their landowners, and when they did not give any, tenants started to focus more on land rights.

⁷¹ Hill, *Lady Gregory*, 134.

⁷² Eglantina Rempert, "'I usually first see a play as a picture': Lady Gregory and the Visual Arts," *Irish University Review* 41, no. 2 (2011).

⁷³ Rempert, "'I usually,'" 50.

⁷⁴ Rempert, "'I usually,'" 51.

forms of visual arts. Her husband's friend circles "included museum directors such as Sir Frederic Burton, Sir Coutts Lindsay, Sir Charles Robinson, Claude Phillips, and J. W. Comyns Carr."⁷⁵ The Gregory's social circles consisted of artists, authors, diplomats, and anyone who could enrich Lady Gregory's life.

These grand tours are also where Lady Gregory got her first introduction to colonial politics and became aware of the outcomes of British colonialism in Ireland.⁷⁶ When she was on her grand tours, she mentioned in her autobiography *Seventy Years* of a specific political view of Robert Percy Ffrench, "Europe is divided into two sexes the female countries, Italy, the Celts, have their soft pleasing quality and charm of a woman and no capacity of self-government. The male countries must take them in hand."⁷⁷ This distinction of women as a country with an inability to self-govern itself made her acutely aware of the "patronizing" view that patriarchal society had of women.⁷⁸

Sir William Gregory's view on the indigenous Irish was one of sympathy and believed they should have religious autonomy. His work in government was appreciated by the Catholic emancipator Daniel O'Connell. Lady Gregory's political beliefs grew with Sir William's, and her experiences as his wife opened her eyes to politics. With him, she became an advocate for nationalism in many countries.

To be an Anglo-Irish woman at this time, she considers herself an emigrant in her home country because she spent most of her marriage outside of Ireland. This can allude to a future

⁷⁵ Rempert, "I usually," 51.

⁷⁶ Audrey McNamara, "Lady Gregory and Irish National Theatre: Art, Drama, Politics by Eglantina Rempert," review of *Lady Gregory and Irish National Theatre: Art, Drama, Politics*, by Eglantina Rempert, *SHAW: The Journal of Bernard Shaw Studies* 39, no. 2 (November 2, 2019): 312.

⁷⁷ Lady Gregory, *Seventy Years*, ed. Colin Smythe (New York, NY: Macmillan Publishing Co, 1976), 99.

⁷⁸ Carla De Petris, "Lady Gregory and Italy: A Lasting and Profitable Relationship," in "Lady Gregory," special issue, *Irish University Review* 34, no. 1 (2004): 42.

chapter and the construction of an Anglo-Irish persona. During her marriage, she traveled and mostly lived outside of Ireland and felt like an emigrant in her country when she would go back. After her time in Egypt, she started to understand the nationalist cause and ideologies, and it disassociated her from her landowning family and friends. She no longer had the same feelings she was taught a woman of her class should have; she started to create her own political ideology. This was when she wrote her work *The Emigrant Notebook*, which was unpublished at the time.

Chapter 2

“She could not take from him any part of what had proven, after all his one real popular success.”⁷⁹

In his 1651 book *The Leviathan*, Thomas Hobbes describes the “three principles cause of quarrel,” as the three leading causes of violence in societies. Those causes accept that even the most stabilized society can still make someone commit acts of violence, whether they are male or female. While cause and action are ever-changing, human beings have perpetrated violence throughout history. A superiority complex between humans makes them feel as if they need to hold power over their counterparts, continually making a never-ending cycle of acts of aggression or microaggressions that create class systems of oppression. All violence has a reason; the perpetuation of that violence can somehow find its way into one of the categories of the Leviathan; competition, diffidence, and glory.⁸⁰

The colonization of Ireland created a system of oppression that exemplified these acts of violence to be perpetrated in different forms. Stigmatization of the native Irishman and women became a way for acts of aggression and oppression to become a new way of alienating Anglo-Irish from indigenous Irish and falling into the glory section of the Leviathan. English theatre started presenting an Irishman as the drunk aggressor or overtly and comically ignorant, while the portrayal of the Irish woman was that of a jezebel. This stigmatization, is found in the

⁷⁹ Elizabeth Coxhead, *Lady Gregory A Literary Portrait*, second ed. (London: Secker & Warburg, 1966), 68.

⁸⁰ Thomas Hobbes, *Three Principles Causes of Quarrel* (1651) quoted in Steven Pinker, *The Better Angels of Our Nature Why Violence Had Declined* (London, England: Penguin Books, 2011), 33. Hobbes describes The Leviathan “So the nature of man, we find three principal causes of quarrel. First, competition; secondly, diffidence; thirdly glory. The first maketh men invade for gain; the second, for safety, and the third, for reputation. The first use of violence to make themselves masters of other men’s persons, wives’ children, and cattle; the second to defend them; the third for trifles, as a word, a smile a different opinion, and any other sign of undervalue, either direct in their persons or by reflection in their kindred, their friends, their nation their profession or their name.” In an extremely simplified fashion, Hobbes has laid out the principal causes of violence throughout history. While some reasons may be more complicated than labeling it to one of the three, from war to everyday acts between two people will most likely have a part of one of those three principles. In all acts of violence, there are three parties: the aggressor, the victim, and the bystander. Attributes that are natural in any situation.

American portrayal of African Americans, using the same characteristics eventually becoming a racialized form of oppression through false stereotyping.⁸¹

Thomas Hobbes, an English philosopher, accurately described the reasoning for the violence perpetrated by the English on the indigenous Irish.⁸² Violence was throughout the colonization of Ireland to suppress the power the indigenous the Irish had over their agency. Non-Physical ways of violence were used by the English and Anglo-Irish to assert dominance over indigenous Irish to suppress their human rights. A non-physically violent way of asserting dominance was through English theatre. The arts became an outlet for indigenous Irish narratives of foreignness because of their religion and ancestral lineage.⁸³ Unable to create a space for their stories to be told, the indigenous Irish arts did not have a chance to go against the English stereotypes. In the grand scheme of history, it is only recently that Irish stereotypes could compete with the opposing narratives of their lives. Unfortunately, the indigenous Irish could not create this space for themselves.

Lady Gregory's literary career helped make space for indigenous Irish to have their chance to exemplify their stories and slowly break down stereotypical portrayals in the arts. Lady Gregory was the first to contribute to the creation of the first Irish-centric theatre, with a sum of twenty-five pounds. In 2022 this would equate to nearly three thousand pounds, a sum that most indigenous Irish would have been unable to fathom.⁸⁴ The equity that Lady Gregory acquired from her elite landowning status was the reason she was able to be a patron of the arts. By the

⁸¹ This thesis recognizes the white privilege of indigenous Irish racism. It also recognizes race as a social construction used to oppress other societies.

⁸² Who Calvin Hobbes the beloved cartoon was named after.

⁸³ Andrea Bobotis, "From Egypt to Ireland: Lady Augusta Gregory and Cross- Cultural Nationalisms in Victorian Ireland," *Romanticism and Victorianism on the Net* 48 (January 17, 2008): 3, <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/017439ar>.

⁸⁴ Lady Gregory, *Our Irish Theatre* (1913),5.

time of her husband's death, she had already published political articles as well as helped write his autobiography. Recent publications of *Sir William Gregory, K. C. M. G., Formerly Member of Parliament and Sometime Governor of Ceylon: An Autobiography* have given credit to Lady Gregory as the author. As a widow with her needs met, she now had the freedom and funds to explore her creative abilities. After meeting W.B Yeats in 1896, her work as a writer and playwright began. Lady Gregory's devotion to the Irish literary revival and her constant fight for its popularity made it possible for Irish writers to become famous. Her home at Coole Park became a mecca for academic circles to have a space to work. The friends she made in her marriage whom she believed would one day help her son unintentionally worked to help her the most.

During this time of her life, she was able to find herself as a writer and became intimate with some of the most infamous names of the early twentieth century. Most importantly, her work helped break down centuries of English stigmatization and racial oppression of the indigenous Irish. Her work helped save the dwindling Gaelic language along with the folklore that had not yet been translated. As an Anglo-Irish woman of ascendancy, her family lineage and others like them are the ones who created a system that oppressed the indigenous Irish but afforded her the privileges that allowed her to do her work. Lady Gregory struggled through constant critiques of her work due to her ascendancy status and womanhood, but her devotion to the indigenous Irish and their stories never weakened.

Lady Gregory and the Irish Revival

Lady Gregory's professional literary career started at the age of forty-four when she met W.B Yeats at a lunch party.⁸⁵ They had a conversation about the need for a space for Irish authors to produce their plays in Ireland, and from there, the Abbey Theatre began to form. Considered an old woman at this time, she was often called the "Old Lady" as critics tended to focus on her age and not her talents.⁸⁶ This period produced some of the most recognized plays by the most famous Irish authors, W.B Yeats, J.M Synge, Sean O'Casey, and others. The authors of the revival focused on Irish mythology, folklore, language, culture, and stories of the indigenous Irish. Lady Gregory, W.B Yeats, and Edward Martyn established the Abbey Theatre in Dublin in 1904, the first of its kind because it focused on uplifting plays by Irish authors and promoted Irish themes.⁸⁷

Lady Gregory's function in the establishment of the Abbey Theatre may be her most significant contribution to Irish history. The Abbey Theatre was revolutionary because it was the first theatre in Ireland where its prime focus was to portray Irish folklore and Irish themes that did not try to promote stereotypes of indigenous Irish. While there were theatres in Dublin, they only produced English plays that portrayed stereotyped Irishman and women, focusing on English authors and their portrayal of history. Not only did the Abbey produce Irish plays, but the research the authors needed to write these plays immortalized the stories of the indigenous Irish. Lady Gregory's research of understanding the folklore created a history that may have been lost without her contributions. However, viewers and researchers then and now criticize these plays because the authors were Anglo-Irish, and stigmatization was still prevalent and

⁸⁵ S. J. Connolly, ed., *The Oxford Companion to Irish History*, second ed. (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2002), 334.

⁸⁶ I say this while presenting it because it is late to start something you are passionate about.

⁸⁷ The Abbey Theatre is also known as the Irish National Theatre Society.

challenged by viewers. For example, J.M. Synge's *Playboy of the Western World* was opposed by viewers relentlessly because of its portrayal and over-exaggeration of the poverty that native Irish lived in because of the suppression they were put through for hundreds of years.

The *Playboy of the Western World* conflict followed Lady Gregory throughout her life, and she was constantly fighting to produce it. However, Lady Gregory and W.B Yeats disagreed with the play's message. Lady Gregory was outspoken in her hatred of it, nonetheless, they both believed in a playwright's right to artistic freedom.⁸⁸ Lady Gregory had a deep devotion to the theatre and was caught in multiple conflicts while fighting for the creative freedom of others.⁸⁹ Lady Gregory was so committed to writers having a place where they could execute their freedom of speech that during an American tour of the *Playboy of the Western World*, she was threatened with arrest, but still refused to stop the production. She later described the threats to the theatre in a letter to her son:

Our manager at the Adelphi to say that he had warning from libelers that we might have to change the bill tonight [sic] and take off the Playboy. I said that could not be done, but he said it might be necessary, there is some legal point and that we might all be arrested if we go on. I said I would rather be arrested than withdraw the play. He said there was also a danger Shubert to whom the theatre belongs might close it, I said that would be bad but not so bad as withdrawing Playboy, for it would be Shubert's defeat not ours that might not be much help in the public view.⁹⁰

At the end of the letter, she recounts a call to John Quinn where she said, "I would [sic] sooner go to my death than give in."⁹¹ Her devotion to her fellow authors was unbreakable and showed her love for the theatre as well as her ability to establish dominance. The American production of *Playboy of the Western World* went on, all protesters against it were suppressed, and anyone

⁸⁸ Coxhead, *Lady Gregory*, 127.

⁸⁹ *Playboy of the Western World* and Bernard Shaw's *Blanco Posnet* were the two most famous plays.

⁹⁰ Lady Gregory to Robert Gregory, January 17, 1912, Lady Gregory Collection, New York Public Library, Berg Room.

⁹¹ Lady Gregory to Robert Gregory, January 17, 1912, Lady Gregory Collection, New York Public Library, Berg Room.

whom the police arrested because of the production were released and received legal help.⁹²

Even the former president of the United States, Theodore Roosevelt, went to production to show support to his close friend. Coxhead describes the importance Theodor Roosevelt the night he saw *The Playboy of The Western World*,

The second night was distinguished, and calmed, by the presence of Theodore Roosevelt, who was not willing to have his friend and the work of Synge again insulted. He found time to dine with Lady Gregory and share her box next to the stage; the audience rose and cheered him as he entered it, and he firmly handed his hostess forward to take the applause. This took the heart out of the opposition, who raised their voices from time to time but were quickly snubbed by those around them. Roosevelt went backstage after the first act, was introduced to the company, and told them, using her own phrase, that they were increasing the dignity of Ireland.⁹³

Lady Gregory's early role in the Abbey Theatre was to be a patron and do what she could to find funding for productions. In the beginning, she had only been writing political articles and had not learned Gaelic yet. In the early days, admirers of the Abbey Theatre did not recognize her talent as a writer. These critiques could have been because of her womanhood, or because she never was outspoken about her talents. However, she brought different skills to the Literary revival that others did not possess. Others like Yeats helped her with the skills she did not have and created a symbiotic relationship where both authors needed the other for their work. While early credit for her plays *Workhouse Ward* and *The Rising of the Moon* had been given to her contemporaries, they are now considered Lady Gregory's most famous comedies.⁹⁴

The Writer

Lady Gregory started her writing after her time in Egypt with her husband, who was reporting on the ongoing revolution there. At the start of her career, her most notable publication

⁹² Lady Gregory to Robert Gregory, January 17, 1912, Lady Gregory Collection, New York Public Library, Berg Room.

⁹³ Coxhead, *Lady Gregory*, 156.

⁹⁴ Coxhead, *Lady Gregory*.82.

is “Arabi and His Household” which she worked on with her husband and nationalist supporter Wilfrid Blunt. This publication was before she thought she could make a career of writing, but Egypt gave her so much passion she worked hard to be outspoken about it.

After publishing “Arabi and His Household” Lady Gregory started to write under Pseudonym Angus Grey for her publications in London. These were “A Philanthropist,” “A Gentleman,” and “Peeler Astore” all of them surrounding English, Anglo-Irish and Irish themes.⁹⁵ In the nineteenth century, Irish women writers were in great numbers. However, most wrote under pseudonyms because of the stigmatization and the need for protection. Elisabeth Thomasina Meade wrote nearly two hundred and eighty volumes under the pseudonym Meade. Modern-day female writers still use pseudonyms to gain popularity because of stigmas against women writers.⁹⁶ Lady Gregory’s reasoning for a pseudonym was not the same as most of the Irish women writers of her time because she only used it when publishing in London while her husband was still working in a government position. She showed that she was comfortable publishing under her name as “Arabi and His Household” shows. While some women authors of this time wrote all of their work under a pseudonym, Lady Gregory only wrote three under the name of Angus Grey; specifically for the pieces published in London, she did not want her name seen.⁹⁷ Judith Hill is one of the first authors to publish about the reasoning that Lady Gregory wrote with the pseudonym.

The wrote three short stories, two of which were published, both under the pseudonym of Angus Gray – she wanted her views but not her name known in London. She found the mechanics of writing difficult, especially linking different scenes, but the finished results suggest she was inspired less by the desire to craft a good story than to explore the

⁹⁵ James Pethica, ed., *Lady Gregory Early Irish Writings 1883-1893* (Buckinghamshire, UK: Colin Smythe Ltd, Gerrard Gross, 2018), 185, 201, 213. Hill, *Lady Gregory*, 116.

⁹⁶ Anne Colman, “Far from Silent: Nineteenth-Century Irish Women Writers,” in *Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century Irish Women Poets* (Galway: Kenny’s Bookshop, 1996), 203.

⁹⁷ Hill, *Lady Gregory*, 116.

problem of the place of her class in Ireland in the aftermath of the Land War and Land Purchase, particularly her own possible role after William's death.⁹⁸

She started to make a career for herself in the following years after her husband's death in 1892. Lady Gregory would travel to secluded parts of Ireland where the Irish language would be primary to its inhabitants and collect their folklore and mythologies. Like all of her adoration for the indigenous Irish, her love for the Gaelic language started as a child with Mary Sheridan. When she asked to learn Gaelic, her parents told her that "...it was not ladylike language and that it the servants spoke."⁹⁹ As chapter one mentions, the alienation she felt from her family was an essential part of her upbringing, and the division she had with their ideologies followed her into adulthood. Lady Gregory's career as a writer gave her the "emotional richness" of the absent feeling her family left her with during her upbringing.¹⁰⁰ Nonetheless, as an adult and widowed woman, she started to learn the Gaelic language for her literary research, thus fulfilling her childhood desire. Many of her contemporaries did not know the language, and she became a coach of sorts for their writing, making herself invaluable to them. However, her Anglo-Irish elite status did make critics of her translations harsher, and they often criticized her for minor mistakes, while ignoring the time and work it took to learn the language.

In her collections book *Visions and Beliefs of the West of Ireland*, Lady Gregory mentions that while she often forgot everyday things such as names, dates, and numbers that when it came to folklore, she could "cultivate a photogenic memory" of the stories and retain them.¹⁰¹ Class differences heavily influenced her collections. Furthermore, the repertoire that

⁹⁸ Hill, *Lady Gregory*, 116.

⁹⁹ Coxhead, *Lady Gregory*, 10.

¹⁰⁰ Ann Saddlemyer and Colin Smythe, eds., *Lady Gregory Fifty Years Later* (Totowa, NJ: Barnes and Noble Books, 1987), 89.

¹⁰¹ Lady Gregory, *Visions and Beliefs in the West of Ireland*

came from the differences is heavily included in her stories. For example, on top of traveling, she used her tenants as the storytellers' informants, and they would often change the stories so as not to show as much criticism to the landowner. While she was using the tenants as informants, she still was their landlord, and they knew it would be beneficial to remain on her good side.¹⁰² Lady Gregory changed the names of the informants because, on paper, a tenant helping the Anglo-Irish landowner looked suspicious of some nationalist causes.¹⁰³ Using her tenants as informants for folklore and their relationship meant that she most likely did not get the hateful stories about "wicked" landlords. This detail also reveals that Lady Gregory studied, wrote about, and loved Irish folklore no matter how much. She was still an Anglo-Irish landlord born into a wealthy landowning class. That is why so many of her informants were considered second-class citizens in Ireland.¹⁰⁴ George Moore, her once colleague, writes about this time in her life when she started to learn the Irish language "...as she moved among her people, she learned to love the beautiful speech of those who think in Irish."¹⁰⁵

Lady Gregory's work in preserving the folklore and mythologies of the indigenous Irish was a significant reason that the Gaelic language is still spoken in Ireland today. J.M Synge, who stayed and studied the people of the Aran Islands at the same time as her and did not learn Gaelic, said her contributions made it possible to write Irish historical drama again.¹⁰⁶ Her work mirrored the indigenous Irish dialect, the Kiltartan dialect. Her autobiographer Mary Coxhead recounts a conversation with actor Michael Mac Liammóir where he described a boy's accent being "...like a Lady Gregory" character, without knowing anything of the boy. That boy was

¹⁰² Maureen Murphy, "Lady Gregory: 'The Book of the People,'" *Colby Quarterly* 27, no. 1 (March 1991): 41

¹⁰³ Murphy, "Lady Gregory," 41.

¹⁰⁴ Murphy, "Lady Gregory," 41.

¹⁰⁵ George Moore, "Yeats, Lady Gregory, and Synge," *English Review*, 350.

¹⁰⁶ Coxhead, *Lady Gregory*, 120.

Kiltartan, County Galway where Lady Gregory grew up and lived.¹⁰⁷ This example shows just how detailed she was about her work and how much of an impact her study of dialect had on the future of Ireland.

For the rest of her literary career, Lady Gregory, while focusing on the peasantry, brought in specific themes that would show how the world perceived womanhood. In her play, *Devorgilla*, she depicted the solid independent female character of Devorgilla, also known as the Lady of Galloway. Lady Gregory had to apologize for displaying such a strong female influence on the stage.¹⁰⁸ At this time, audiences did not like to see such powerful female historical figures portrayed on the stage. This dislike can also be compared to how critics saw Lady Gregory and how they did not want a strong woman to have control. Viewers can conceive it as her being feminist, modern interpretation does not see the patriarchy as something she feared or succumbed to in her life.

Cathy Leeny in her book *Irish Women Playwrights, 1900-1939: Gender and Violence on Stage* describes Lady Gregory as a “Proto-Feminist” meaning she had attributes that would have been considered a feminist in modern context because of her gender equality ideals. However, to say that Lady Gregory was not in the right time or place for feminism would be semi-incorrect. Her age could have been a factor in her outspoken ideals, but she lived through the first wave of feminism and the suffrage movement.¹⁰⁹ In her autobiography *Seventy Years*, she states, “I was not interested in votes for women, but I began to think it was a useful measure.”¹¹⁰ When her close friend Lady Layard signed a petition against women’s suffrage, she was not one of the

¹⁰⁷ Coxhead, *Lady Gregory*, 123.

¹⁰⁸ Michael McAteer, “‘Kindness in Your Unkindness’: Lady Gregory and History,” in “Lady Gregory,” special issue, *Irish University Review* 34, no. 1 (2004):100.

¹⁰⁹ Cathy Leeny, *Irish Women Playwrights, 1900-1939: Gender and Violence on Stage* (New York, NY: Lang Publishing, 2010), 49.

¹¹⁰ Lady Gregory, *Seventy Years*, 58.

signers. Herbert Howarth believes this might be her quietly showing support. However, there is no conclusive reasoning for why she did not sign.¹¹¹ Lady Gregory did not think of herself as a feminist but clearly had feminist ideals.

Her work was often labeled as feminine or masculine throughout her career rather than just being analyzed for the writing. Lady Gregory's cousin James O'Grady wrote a book called the *History of Ireland*. Readers compared the depiction of the stories to each other focusing on the gender of each author.¹¹² This book would compromise of the female narrative that Lady Gregory tried to produce because of the inherited masculine storytelling in the *History of Ireland*. The connection of admirers rejecting her plays is because of the inherent patriarchal narrative developed in the new telling of Irish history.¹¹³

Lady Gregory's interpretations of folklore made it more easily accessible for those who did not read Irish texts and written records.¹¹⁴ Her plays and depiction of Irish folklore critiques often compared O'Grady's *History of Ireland* to Lady Gregory's work. However, as they often told the same stories, Lady Gregory would tell the parts of the stories that O'Grady would deem inappropriate and not often include women.¹¹⁵ The patriarchal narrative that the *History of Ireland* portrayed influenced so much of Lady Gregory's work and would become a key reason for her participation in the writing of *Cathleen Ni Houlihan*. History would not give her the full credit for her part in writing it that she deserved until centuries after her death.¹¹⁶

¹¹¹ Herbert Howarth, *The Irish Writers 1880-1940* (New York, NY: Hill and Wang, 1958), 106.

¹¹² McAteer, "Kindness in Your," 106.

¹¹³ McAteer, "Kindness in Your," 106.

¹¹⁴ Coxhead, *Lady Gregory*, 62.

¹¹⁵ McAteer, "Kindness in Your," 99.

¹¹⁶ McAteer, "Kindness in Your," 100.

Yeats and Kathleen Ni Houlihan/Cathleen Ni Houlihan¹¹⁷

While speculations have been made specifically by their coworker Mrs. Horniman that Lady Gregory wanted to be romantically involved with Yeats, it is undoubtedly clear they did not see each other in that way. Despite this, their friendship and work relationship indicate that she had an undying devotion to him nonetheless.¹¹⁸ Both Yeats and Lady Gregory were extremely loyal to each other's work and strived for the success of the Abbey Theatre. Yeats saw her not just as a woman but also as a non-gender-conforming person saying about her, "She has been to me mother, friend, sister, brother."¹¹⁹ He often describes Lady Gregory's as having a "masculine" presence and power, and his writings and memoirs have shown his de-sexualization of her.¹²⁰ Yeats believed that "the Irish were a feminine race with masculine imaginations, and the English were a masculine race with feminine imaginations," and used this to describe Lady Gregory's writings. His comparison to Lady Gregory's work exemplifies her writing as being Irish, not English.¹²¹

While discourse has given all of Lady Gregory's publications popularity credit to her relationship with Yeats, they both needed each other for their writing. Lady Gregory relied on Yeats's opinion on her work, but he did not do anything to help her, something they both believed would help her grow to be a better writer. Yeats would tell her to change something, and she would have to figure out what was wrong and what needed to be changed.¹²² In Yeats's work, he relied on Lady Gregory to give his writing the connection to the viewers that he could

¹¹⁷ Lady Gregory wrote it with a "K," and Yeats wrote it with a "C."

¹¹⁸ Coxhead, *Lady Gregory*, 89.

¹¹⁹ Deirdre Toomey, ed., *Yeats and Women*, second ed. (New York, NY: St. Martins Press, 1997), 175.

Gender non-conforming is a present and modern view of it. He did not say she was gender non-conforming because there was no word for that in their time.

¹²⁰ Toomey, *Yeats and Women*, 175.

¹²¹ Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland*, 84.

¹²² Herbert Howarth, *The Irish Writers 1880-1940* (New York, NY: Hill and Wang, 1958), 85.

not do. Lady Gregory had an exceptional understanding of what the indigenous Irish wanted to see and how to put their embodiment in the plays. Yeats never learned how to make that connection and never learned how to speak or understand Gaelic.

Lady Gregory was not just a friend and coworker but also was the patron of Yeats, personally making sure his needs were met so he could devote his entire focus on his writing and the Abbey Theatre. Being a writer of this time did not bring in enough money to sustain a comfortable life of luxury, and with the Abbey Theatre barely breaking even, it was not a profitable endeavor for Lady Gregory or Yeats. Even the actors employed by the Abbey had day jobs, rehearsed after working a full day, and were unpaid for their work in the theatre.¹²³ The Abbey Theatre was criticized often for its disheveled state because lack of funding made it almost impossible to repair. Lady Gregory usually took full blame for faults in the theatre so Yeats would not have to worry about the criticism.¹²⁴ When things went well, she would often give him sole credit. It was not until 1924 that the Abbey Theatre made a profit.¹²⁵

Lady Gregory did not have to rely on anyone to support her financially because of her minimal lifestyle after the death of her husband and the income that landowning gave her. However, Yeats had none of this. His father stopped being a lawyer and became an artist when he was a young boy, depleting any inheritance Yeats could have had.¹²⁶ Most writers had side jobs at this time, but the relationship Yeats had with Lady Gregory and her patronage made him able to commit to writing as a full-time job, maybe one of the first writers to be able to do so up until then. His success can be attributed solely to Lady Gregory giving him the space and

¹²³Coxhead, *Lady Gregory*, 175.

¹²⁴ Coxhead, *Lady Gregory*, 201.

¹²⁵ Telegram by Lady Gregory, November 24, 1924, Berg Collection Lady Gregory, New York Public Library, New York, NY.

¹²⁶Howarth, *The Irish*, 110.

availability to write, so he did not have to. In the publication of his eleven-volume *Plays in Prose and Verse* he states that only two can be considered “wholly” his because of his collaboration with Lady Gregory and his work.¹²⁷ Close friend and Irish American lawyer and patron of the arts John Quinn believe that the credit for Yeats work should go chiefly to her because of her patronage.¹²⁸

Lady Gregory, throughout her career, was blamed for holding back Yeats, changing his plays, and ultimately derailing his success. This dynamic followed Lady Gregory throughout her life, with critics often questioning her ability to write and produce plays. Although her nickname “Old Lady” was given to her with malice, she instead used it to assert her superiority. Lady Gregory and Yeats had control over what plays the Abbey produced. When Denis Johnston wanted to produce his play *Shadowdance* at the Abbey Theatre, it was denied, and the manuscript said, “the old lady says no,” Denis Johnston changed his play’s name from *Shadowdance* to *The Old Lady Says “NO!”* While this was initially used to project Johnston’s anger, it also shows how important she was to the Abbey and how her word was last.

James Pethica describes *Cathleen ni Houlihan* in his article “‘A Young Man’s Ghost’: Lady Gregory and J. M. Synge:”

Cathleen ni Houlihan turns on the arrival of a ‘disturber’ figure, of the superior power of imagination and language, who challenges the everyday materialist concerns of the inhabitants of a peasant cottage, thereby bringing them to a moment of crisis or revelation. In each play, the figure of the poet-disturber is recognized as a potentially dangerous, demonic, force whose visionary call is potentially revitalizing and threatens those who respond to it with high real-world costs. Almost all the significant figures of the early Irish theatre movement would revisit this ‘disturber’ master plot in some form since it offered a means of investigating their roles as literary makers, and particularly the question of what impact, if any, might result from their aspiration to shape, as well as comment on, Irish political and social realities. In following Cathleen’s seductive call to political martyrdom, Michael Gillane loses the prospect of marital happiness and material

¹²⁷ Toomey, *Yeats and Women*, 205.

¹²⁸ Toomey, *Yeats and Women*, 168.

prosperity and effectively relinquishes his agency. The play's action ultimately offers no possibility of compromise between the demands of what Yeats termed 'an ideal cause' and the hopes and pleasures of the realm of the actual.¹²⁹

Among all Lady Gregory's plays, translations, and published works, *Kathleen Ni Houlihan/Cathleen ni Houlihan* could be considered one of the most popular. However, Yeats got all the credit.¹³⁰ This examination is a lingering effect of the patriarchal overview of Irish society and history. It is not so much a matter that the admirers of the theatre did not give her due credit, but that she did not give herself the recognition she deserved. That is why out of all the plays that one could have dissected to compare the gender relation of Lady Gregory's influence on the Irish literary world, the 1902 *Cathleen Ni Houlihan* is the perfect example.

The Abbey Theatre productions followed a theme that made the viewers believe that only plays that projected Irish Nationalist ideas would be accepted.¹³¹ Plays that Lady Gregory and Yeats called "agitational propaganda."¹³² *Cathleen ni Houlihan's* overall theme is to provoke nationalist thought. The older woman in *Cathleen ni Houlihan*, the play's main character, represents Ireland. The old woman is a stranger in the house and the inhabitants believe her to be a beggar. She convinces the man to drop everything and fight for her. The history behind the play is the 1798 Irish rebellion that Irish Martyr Wolfe Tone died in trying to create a more sovereign Ireland. This play pushed the narrative that Ireland is worth dying for its freedom.

¹²⁹ Pethica, "'A Young,'" 8.

¹³⁰ At the time of the production, she was not given credit however modern accreditation gives Lady Gregory most of the credit for her part in *Cathleen ni Houlihan*

¹³¹ McAteer, "'Kindness in Your,'" 106.

¹³² Adrian Frazier, *Behind the Scenes: Yeats, Horniman, and the Struggle for the Abbey Theatre* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 78.

Cathleen ni Houlihan is considered the epitome of “political theatre.”¹³³ Fourteen years after the Abbey Theatre first produced *Cathleen ni Houlihan*, the Easter Rising of 1916 broke out.¹³⁴ The Rising led to years of civil unrest and civil wars, which ultimately led to Ireland splitting into two with the independent Irish Republic and Northern Ireland, which is still a part of the United Kingdom. Yeats feared his play sent the men (and women) who died on that day to their death beds because of the message of dying for Ireland. He wrote a mournful poem to lament the deaths in his poem *The Man and the Echo*:

I lie awake night after night.
And never get the answers right.
Did that play of mine send out
Certain men the English shot?¹³⁵

In consideration today, Lady Gregory is given her due credit for the co-authorship of *Cathleen ni Houlihan*; however, when the play was released, it was Yeats’s name in the newspaper headlines. Viewers and critics believed that Lady Gregory’s only part in the play was the translations and a brief time playing the older woman on stage. Yeats himself did not give her the credit of being a co-author. Viewers made little attempt to provide her with the due credit she deserved for the co-authorship. When her family questioned her reasoning for not correcting the false sole accreditation to Yeats she said, “She could not take from him any part of what had proven, after all his one real popular success.”¹³⁶

The myth that critics have projected is that Lady Gregory is merely a patron to W.B. Yeats and others.¹³⁷ Michael Mckeeter, in his essay “Kindness in Your Unkindness: Lady

¹³³ P. J. Mathews, “Stirring up Disloyalty: The Boer War, the Irish Literary Theatre and the Emergence of a New Separatism,” *Irish University Review* 33, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 2003): 99, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25517216>.

¹³⁴ *The Oxford*, 487. Also referred to as Easter Rising. Connolly,

¹³⁵ William Butler Yeats, *Man and the Echo*.

¹³⁶ Coxhead, *Lady Gregory*, 68.

¹³⁷ James Pethica, “‘Our Kathleen’: Yeats’s Collaboration with Lady Gregory in the Writing of *Cathleen ni Houlihan*,” in *Yeats and Women*, comp. D. Toomy (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1997), 3.

Gregory and History, examines Lady Gregory's work as part of a patriarchal society where critiques of her work are disregarded because of her womanhood. He states:

While this testifies to the force exercised by patriarchal ideology upon her work, she continually pushed against its boundaries, particularly in the folk-history plays; though influenced by History of Ireland, Gregory was never circumscribed.¹³⁸

Examining these factors in part with *Cathleen Ni Houlihan*, one can get a comprehensive example of how admirers cast off Lady Gregory's works to the side of her male counterparts. However, while much of Lady Gregory is disregarded, she also accepts this. It may have been her upbringing and her ideals of womanhood that made her shun the spotlight. Nevertheless, these examples further the notion of how gender played a role in the remembrance of Lady Gregory in her works. She was not just the patron of authors and the theatre; she was an active participant in writing plays and revitalizing Irish literary circles. When Yeats won his Nobel prize for literature in 1923, famous Irish journalist T.P. O'Connor wrote:

It is impossible to mention Mr. Yeats without adding something of what he and Ireland owe to an unselfish, devoted and unconquerable woman who has helped him, and Ireland towered the great literary renaissance of modern days. I mean Lady Gregory...¹³⁹

Throughout her career and the revival, Coole Park became a hub for artists and authors to take refuge and interact with one another. She took her class privileges and used them effectively for the growing Irish Literary Revival. Lady Gregory was head of the house until her son was of the age to take over the responsibilities of being a landowner. The fact that she was still pushing to keep her land during this time shows that she was not ready to relinquish her class privilege.

¹³⁸ McAteer, "Kindness in Your," 98.

¹³⁹ Lady Gregory to John Quinn, November 28, 1923, Lady Gregory Collection, New York Public Library, Berg Room, NY.

Although landowning was a privilege she was born into, it was the defining factor that differentiated her from the people she studied. She was known as a friendly landlord to her tenants. It was also something she worked tirelessly to project to the indigenous Irish and history. Chapter three analyzes her work, publishing her husband's journals, going into more detail about the significance of her wanting to preserve her family in good light. As well as why she worked tirelessly to make sure to push the narrative that her husband was a sympathetic and caring landlord, and that would be something she would pass on to her son when it was his time to gain the land.

The nickname for Coole Park in the early twentieth century was "Workshop of Ireland," and Lady Gregory was the leading force behind it.¹⁴⁰ The authors cultivated at Coole Park, and it would become an allyship of creativity. Lady Gregory had created an environment unlike anything an independent author had done before.¹⁴¹ She offered her thoughts to others on their work to help create, and in the same way, she accepted other opinions to make her own better. She would feel like her work would be incomplete without the overview and edits from Yeats and valued his ideas most about her work.¹⁴² Her class and privileges allowed her to be a patron to artists and authors to provide them with the artistic freedom needed to write and produce art. Her money, inherited from landowning and marriage, allowed her to fund these creative freedoms.¹⁴³ Her influence stretched further because of the intensive friendship group that would grow her influence through other social circles.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴⁰ Hill, *Lady Gregory*, 247.

¹⁴¹ Hill, *Lady Gregory*, 250.

¹⁴² Hill, *Lady Gregory*, 256.

¹⁴³ Hill, *Lady Gregory*, 250.

¹⁴⁴ Hill, *Lady Gregory*, 250.

In 1911 Lady Gregory sailed to America to tour with the Abbey Theatre. This tour shows how popular she had become internationally. Irish American admirers thanked her for her writings and bringing their connection to their homeland to the forefront of the arts. Many elite American women commented to her on the tour that their Irish workers were excited that their bosses would meet Lady Gregory, “Many of the ladies I meet tell me their cook or laundress or man is so excited at their seeing me and know/me or all about me.”¹⁴⁵ In one instance, one of the admirers came up to her and said:

pleased to meet you. I want to tell you what a pleasure it has been to read or see your plays. My mother, grandmother or grandfather was Irish, from some particular country &c&c till her or she is pushed on and another comes¹⁴⁶

Nonetheless, this was after describing her as a “rather dreadful human being.”¹⁴⁷ Still asserting that no matter how much she admired the Irish working class, she still had class status and prejudice, just like how she would criticize the indigenous Irish and as she specifically stated Catholic nationalists for not using toothbrushes.¹⁴⁸ Stating the differences between her and people who have been historically impoverished are “those who use and toothbrush and those who don’t.”¹⁴⁹

Virginia Wolfe said that for there to be more women writers, they needed to have a room of their own (and money). Lady Gregory was born into a room of her own but was given no material because her family had no desire for her to become a famous writer. She built the tools

¹⁴⁵Lady Gregory to Robert Gregory, October 8, 1912, Lady Gregory Collection, New York Public Library, Berg Room, NY.

¹⁴⁶Lady Gregory to Robert Gregory, October 8, 1912, Lady Gregory Collection, New York Public Library, Berg Room, NY.

¹⁴⁷Lady Gregory to Robert Gregory, October 8, 1912, Lady Gregory Collection, New York Public Library, Berg Room, NY.

¹⁴⁸ Colm Tóibín, *Lady Gregory Toothbrush* (Dublin, Ireland: Pan MacMillan, 2003), 65.

¹⁴⁹ Tóibín, *Lady Gregory*, 65.

she needed to have a successful career and went on to work extremely hard for others to have that same opportunity. She made a name for herself by showing the world that when walls were built higher, you simply continued to climb. While there is no way to know what the Irish Literary Revival would have been if not for Lady Gregory's devotion and influence, it is clear that it would not have succeeded without her.¹⁵⁰

¹⁵⁰ Chang, "Re-evaluating Lady Gregory in Modern Irish Literature: A Feminist Ethics Study," *GEMA Online® Journal of Language Studies* 18, no. 3 (August 2018): 101, <http://doi.org/10.17576/gema-2018-1803-06>.

Chapter 3

“...no English blood, and that I am as glad for.”¹⁵¹

At the opening of the English Parliament, the reigning monarch ceremoniously walks the historic halls of Westminster to take part in a tradition that dates to the sixteenth century.¹⁵² The procession takes place between the Royal Gallery and ends at the Lords Chamber. The parade consists of the monarch passing through the Prince’s Chamber. Adorning the Prince’s Chamber are twenty-eight Tudor Dynasty paintings. What stands out is not a Tudor, but a Hanover. One of the most significant pieces in the room is an eight-foot-tall marble statue of Queen Victoria, commissioned by her husband and Prince Consort Albert. The statue was rumored to be contracted to give the Queen the confidence boost she needed to complete the opening ceremonies.

Ironically, during Queen Victoria’s reign, she, like all women, would have been barred from holding a place in the English government. This means that in every opening of Parliament that she conducted during her reign, there were upwards of six-hundred male Members of Parliament (MPs); she would be the only woman. Not until 1918, seventeen years after Queen Victoria’s death, would Parliament pass the Qualification of Women Act. This act would ensure that a woman could hold a seat in government.¹⁵³ If the woman who held the highest power of the time in the United Kingdom (arguably the world) was limited because of her gender, what chance did Lady Gregory have to succeed in the Victorian era?

¹⁵¹ Lady Gregory to John Quinn, August 17, 1907, Berg Collection Lady Gregory, New York Public Library, New York City, NY.

¹⁵² “State Opening of Parliament,” UK Parliament.

¹⁵³ UK Parliament, *Parliament (Qualification of Women) Act 1918*, <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Geo5/8-9/47/enacted>.

Lady Gregory was raised in a traditional Victorian Anglo-Irish household. Her family would uphold traditional son and daughter relationships but conform to the nineteenth-century ideals in place for their daughters. In *Victorian Women Were Expected to be Idle and Ignorant*, Charles Petrie describes the Victorian era as, “Where women were concerned, as in practically every other aspect of life, the Victorian age was revolutionary.”¹⁵⁴ Elite women in the Victorian era had a unique position of being a part of the privileged class and yet, they remained oppressed by a patriarchal society.¹⁵⁵ Noted women historian Gerda Lerner describes the oppression of elite women that, “They are oppressed, but not quite like either racial or ethnic groups”¹⁵⁶

The life of almost all women changed at this time. The industrial revolution sent women out of the home and into the cities. Even though a trend of women in the workforce was gaining popularity for women of a particular class, it would be seen as a last resort and only when their family was in utter “financial ruin.”¹⁵⁷ Societal rules became heavily governed for upper-class women, and their education became a way to find a husband rather than preparation for a career.¹⁵⁸ Governesses became an essential part of a Victorian girl’s upbringing, even for middle-class families to prepare them enough for marriage but not enough for a career. As mentioned in Chapter 1, Lady Gregory’s mother had put heavy restrictions on what the governess could and could not teach the girls of the Persse family.

¹⁵⁴ Charles Petrie, “Victorian Women Are Expected to Be Idle and Ignorant,” in *Victorian Women*, comp. Clarice Swisher (San Diego, Ca: Greenhaven Press, 2000), 178, <https://archive.org/details/victorianengland00swis/page/186/mode/2up>.

¹⁵⁵ Katie Pickles, *Female Imperialism and National Identity The Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire* (New York, NY: Manchester University Press, 2002), 176.

¹⁵⁶ Gerda Lerner, “Placing Women in History: Definitions and Challenges,” *Feminist Studies*, 35, no. 1 (Fall 1975): 8, accessed April 12, 2022, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3518951>.

¹⁵⁷ Petrie, “Victorian Women,” 178.

¹⁵⁸ Petrie, “Victorian Women,” 178.

While women of status had more opportunities than the lower-class women, they still had constraints on the available ventures they could take part in outside of the home. The women who held this status worked around the lack of rights to promote other experiences and fulfill their “boredom” in ways that did not damage their image.¹⁵⁹ Imperialism and nationalism were at the forefront of Lady Gregory’s everyday life. Women’s groups grew in popularity, ranging from suffrage groups to fight for women’s voting rights to imperial groups that promoted what the colonized could profit from conforming to the colonizer’s home society. Elite women started to do philanthropic work so they can play an integral part in this new era, without projecting that their family was not doing well financially. In her book *Irish Women Playwrights 1900-1939: Gender and Violence on Stage*, Cathy Leeny wrote that Lady Gregory’s greatest accomplishments were not her writing. In fact, she states that Lady Gregory’s writing overshadowed her political work.¹⁶⁰

Imperialism

The term imperialism first entered the world’s vocabulary in the 1870s. The growth of Imperialism started to encapsulate world politics; in a short time, Imperialism became the “most powerful movement” the world had seen.¹⁶¹ Women soon became a significant part of the imperial world. It did not start this way; the western world saw colonization as a masculine enterprise exuding dominance and control over others, something that was “no place for white women.”¹⁶² A July 2, 1910, *The (Irish) Times* article identified women as the ““home-makers —

¹⁵⁹Lady Gregory, *Seventy Years*, ed. Colin Smythe (New York, NY: Macmillan Publishing Co, 1976), 93.

Lady Gregory mentions her philanthropic work as an outlet for her boredom of being a landowner’s wife.

¹⁶⁰ Cathy Leeny, *Irish Women Playwrights, 1900-1939: Gender and Violence on Stage* (New York, NY: Lang Publishing, 2010), 3.

¹⁶¹ Nupur Chaudhuri and Margaret Strobel, *Western Women and Imperialism: Complicity and Resistance* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1995), 91.

¹⁶²Chaudhuri and Strobel, *Western Women*, 3.

the social weavers—and use their gifts for Imperial purposes. They are following up the fight and finding ways to bind the citizens of the Empire together, ways quiet, and unobtrusive, but nonetheless effective and lasting.”¹⁶³ Solidifying the notion that imperial women had an important role during this time.

The British Empire projected this narrative to English colonists worldwide to help promote the English propaganda of new lifestyle standards. The British Empire tried to get the new colonies to mirror them in societal norms. In the early stages of colonization, women did not travel with the men, leaving bachelor societies. Once colonizers settled in the new country and the viability of life became more like society, women and children became a part of the imperial narrative. Motherhood is a significant part of Imperialism, the progression of creating a new society relied on women to develop the colonies future. This ideology relied heavily on the eugenics movement that was happening simultaneously.¹⁶⁴ Eugenics promoted the creation of the perfect race, and for certain women to develop the next generation of the “imperial race.”¹⁶⁵ The decline of pregnancies in the nineteenth century started a push for better health policies. Along with doctors and trained professionals, the volunteers, most likely women of prominent classes, would use their wealth and influence on society.¹⁶⁶

Philanthropy became the most used mode of education and promoted the imperial narrative by women. The women’s group in Canada Imperial Order Daughter of the Empire (IODE) describes this imperial narrative and their work as “making Britishness.”¹⁶⁷ Other groups

¹⁶³ Eliza Riedi, “Women, Gender, and the Promotion of Empire: The Victoria League, 1901-1914,” *The Historical Journal* 45, no. 3 (spring 2002):569.

¹⁶⁴ Anna Davin, “Imperialism and Motherhood,” in *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*, ed. Ann Laura Stoler and Frederick Cooper (n.p.: University California Press, 1997),90.

¹⁶⁵ Davin, “Imperialism and Motherhood,” 88.

¹⁶⁶ Davin, “Imperialism and Motherhood,89. Men were also a part of volunteering.

¹⁶⁷ Pickles, *Female Imperialism*, 4.

like the Victoria Society and many others used their philanthropy to help the colonized.¹⁶⁸ Colonization created not only a class divide but also a racial divide. The women in the groups were using the oppression they created to “fix” the people who occupied the land. It is the natives that they believe needed to conform to their social standards of “Britishness.” The indigenous people did not have the capital to spend their money to counter the wealthy women who could devote their time and money to philanthropy.

Ireland became an essential part of the British Empire. In other colonies, the difference that Ireland had over other commonwealth countries is that in 1800, it joined the United Kingdom with the Act of Union.¹⁶⁹ At the same time, this becomes a way of differentiating it from places like India and the African colonies because race became a factor of Imperialism. Nevertheless, England still saw it as a profit. Ireland had the status of being a part of the United Kingdom but was still “...caught between the imperial metropolis and the colonized propriety; that is part of the United Kingdom, but not an equal member.”¹⁷⁰ Ireland still was fighting for its autonomy because of the realization that they were not treated equal member of the United Kingdom.

When Ireland became a profitable colony for the English crown, it became a class-based system of oppression for the indigenous Irish, dividing the indigenous Irish and the Anglo-Irish by a socially constructed race classification.¹⁷¹ Even though pre-reformation, the traditional religion of England was Catholicism, the Protestant Irish considered themselves as the ideal

¹⁶⁸These two are known societies that are comprised of primarily women, while imperial societies had an equal number of men and women.

¹⁶⁹ S. J. Connolly, ed., *The Oxford Companion to Irish History*, second ed. (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2002), 565.

¹⁷⁰ Andrea Bobotis, “From Egypt to Ireland: Lady Augusta Gregory and Cross- Cultural Nationalisms in Victorian Ireland,” *Romanticism and Victorianism on the Net* 48 (January 17, 2008): [Page #], <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/017439ar.3>.

¹⁷¹ Steve Garner, “Ireland; From Racism without ‘Race’ to Racism Without Racists,” *Radical History Review* 104 (Spring 2009): 44.

citizen in Ireland. At the same time, the stereotype of indigenous Catholic Irish was “religiously backward, semi nomadic, rural, collective property-owning, feudal, and savage people.”¹⁷² This switch created centuries of conflict and oppression. Steve Garner’s article “Ireland; From Racism without ‘Race’ to Racism Without Racists” deep dives into the concept of racism in Ireland and how it is a class system shaped without a “race.”¹⁷³ Ireland created a racist society with all peoples being white. He argues that class and economic gain the “Anglo-Saxons” profited from the indigenous Irish is indisputable evidence of the study of “race.”¹⁷⁴ The socially constructed use of race in Ireland would be used for centuries of discrimination and exploitation against indigenous Irish.

Although accused of it in some moments of her life, Lady Gregory had no sign of wanting to change the people she helped, unlike in the prerogative of the imperial societies. When she was accused of using her philanthropy to persuade Catholics to convert to Protestantism, a struggle she had with one friend George Moore when he published this accusation in *Hail and Farewell*. Lady Gregory admits that her sisters and mother did participate in this action; however, she says she, “Shrank from any effort to change the faith of others.”¹⁷⁵ In a January 17th, 1914, letter to George Moore, she pleads with him to stop the publication of his accusation:

Dear Mr. Moore,
 There is something in what you say, but I must be guided by my circumstances. I don’t want to write at all if not necessary. I may have to write at a much greater length but would rather defer this. The suspicion of me began when I had to take the part of an ill-treated woman against both churches, but that is a long story. Yesterday I had a cable from New York, from John Quinn who helped our theatre so much: - SUGGEST NOTE OF CORRECTION. TO ENGLISH REVIEW REGARDING MOORS CHARGE

¹⁷² Garner, “Ireland; From,” 45.

¹⁷³ Garner, “Ireland; From,” 41.

¹⁷⁴ Garner, “Ireland; From,” 41. Garner used the name Anglo-Saxons, but it is interchangeable with Anglo-Irish.

¹⁷⁵ Colm Tóibín, *Lady Gregory Toothbrush* (Dublin, Ireland: Pan MacMillan, 2003), 14.

PROSELYTIZING.’ This shows that I was not exaggerating the harm the article might do, in America as at home.¹⁷⁶

Compared to other women from Ireland to British colonies in Africa, Lady Gregory’s style would be the opposite of the prerogative that women of her time were doing. Irish women who worked in British colonies included Flora Shaw, who traveled throughout Africa writing for *The Times*. She believed in the ideologies of colonization and Imperialism and that Africa would benefit from it and wrote articles that pushed the narrative.¹⁷⁷ While Flora Shaw became an independent writer like Lady Gregory, this contrast shows an alternative route that Lady Gregory could have taken in her writing but did not.

Like Lady Gregory, other Irish women did work to break the imperial narrative, like famous Irish suffragist Margarete Cousins, who went to India to promote feminist activism.¹⁷⁸ Cousins was the wife of Irish poet James Cousins, a prominent author in the Irish Literary Revival, and was close friends with Yeats. She began her time in Madras teaching at Theosophical College.¹⁷⁹ She created feminist groups like The Women’s Indian Association (WIA), Weaker Sex Improvement Society, and the All-India Women’s Conference (AIWC). Cousins used her status as a “sympathetic Irish Woman” to help Indian women fight back against the “[British] imbecility.”¹⁸⁰ Even though they spent time together in close circles, there is no writing that Lady Gregory and Margarete Cousins talked about their endeavors.

¹⁷⁶ Lady Gregory to George Moore, January 17, 1914, Berg Collection Lady Gregory, New York Public Library, New York, NY.

¹⁷⁷ Chaudhuri and Strobel, *Western Women*. 81

¹⁷⁸ Margarete’s cousins grew up in a protestant family. Helped create the Irish Women’s Franchise League (IWFJ) to promote and eventually achieve Irish women’s right to vote.

¹⁷⁹ Chaudhuri and Strobel, *Western Women* 126.

¹⁸⁰ Chaudhuri and Strobel, *Western Women*,” 126.

Often, in her life, Lady Gregory was compared to Queen Victoria. Both short-statured women wore mourning clothes for the rest of their lives. The actor Gerald Fay says of her, “I met her twice only. Both times at the theatre when I was playing a small part in the hourglass, she was so like Queen Victoria (to my eyes) that I almost called her ‘your majesty.’”¹⁸¹ Coxhead description of others associating her with Queen Victoria,

The fantasy was not too far-fetched, for she was queenly in a way with her. She ruled the Abbey for years ‘the same regal impression was received by Michael MacLiammoir, who says in his biography *All for Hecuba*: “Although for the gentle frosty dignity, as of some royal personage, never left her manner she was always kind always courteous, always encouraging.”¹⁸²

In her tour of America in 1915, Nic Shiubhlaigh compared Lady Gregory to Queen Victoria; he intended to insult her.¹⁸³ He said the resemblance came from the similarities between her and the Queen as an older woman being short in stature and adorned with the same black mourning dresses the Queen would wear.¹⁸⁴ However, Lady Gregory took this as a compliment because being compared to Queen Victoria as an Anglo-Irish person; would be comparing two women who exercised extensive amounts of authority and power, but only in America.¹⁸⁵ From a nationalist standpoint, this would be considered one of the biggest insults one could receive, but this shows how Lady Gregory would conform to both sides and not take a full political standpoint.

She was not afraid or shy about speaking ill of monarchs or the English. In a November 28, 1923, letter she states “I daresay poor King George would give it up if he was allowed. He is

¹⁸¹Elizabeth Coxhead, *Lady Gregory A Literary Portrait*, second ed. (London: Secker & Warburg, 1966),207.

¹⁸² Coxhead, *Lady Gregory*,207.

¹⁸³Judith Hill, *Lady Gregory an Irish Life* (Collins Press, 2011),263.

¹⁸⁴ Hill, *Lady Gregory*,263.

¹⁸⁵ Hill, *Lady Gregory*,264.

all for peace, though somehow he lacks dignity.”¹⁸⁶ Her statements about the British monarchy are often said with an aspect of disrespect towards them. When she stated “...no English blood, and that I am as glad for,”¹⁸⁷ she was talking about her daughter-in-law who was Welsh and not English. Lady Gregory was in fact outspoken about her detestation for the English but not always open out her thoughts of an independent Ireland.

There is no evidence in the writings of Lady Gregory that she fit into the complete Victorian woman narrative. She understood Imperialism as her upbringing taught it to her from a pro-imperialist view but understood the movements for independence in places like Egypt, South Africa, and Ireland. Lady Gregory sympathized with the “ruled and the rulers,” which complicated the future of not being enough for both sides.¹⁸⁸

Nonetheless, her time in Egypt shaped her perception of her Anglo-Irish status Her love for philanthropic work that she already had made her into a woman breaking down the Victorian stereotype while also conforming to it. She soon became a supportive figure for the Irish Nationalists when a Land Leaguer called out to his brother while being arrested, “Go to Lady Gregory for help.”¹⁸⁹The man arrested was her tenant. This fact can also add to the relationship she had with her tenants in that they were comfortable enough to ask for her help when most landowners would have opposing views, and the tenants would most likely not go to them for help. Until her death, she made sure to help the people who needed it most, and she made sure that she met the conceivable needs of her tenants; workhouse children were able to have presents at Christmas and parties at Coole Park.

¹⁸⁶ Lady Gregory to John Quinn, November 28, 1923, Lady Gregory Collection, New York Public Library, Berg Room, NY. This is reference to George V who was reigning monarch 1910-1936.

¹⁸⁷Lady Gregory to John Quinn, August 17, 1907, Berg Collection Lady Gregory, New York Public Library, New York City, NY.

¹⁸⁸ Hill, *Lady Gregory*, 110.

¹⁸⁹ Hill, *Lady Gregory*, 110.

Breaking Down the Victorian Woman

The height of Lady Gregory's career was between 1902 and 1912, at the latter end of the Victorian era, but she started her philanthropic work long before she started her literary career. At the age of fifteen after having a religious breakthrough, she began to help those in need before it became popular through the elite ascendancy class. In the nineteenth century, the realization that everyone has similar feelings, thoughts, and actions known as "social consensus" became a popular philosophy that led people to helping those in need more frequently.¹⁹⁰ In her early days of charity, she would give her own money to the poor along with food as well as hire a sewing teacher for the young girls in Gort.¹⁹¹ She even denied her family from throwing her a coming out party to instead spend the money on the poor.¹⁹² Her family is known for trying to convert Catholics to Protestants with manipulative charity she was asked by Catholic clergymen to stop, even though she denied ever trying to do anything of the sort.¹⁹³

In *Lady Gregory, an Irish Life*, Judith Hill considers that Lady Gregory used philanthropy to transcend her elite status.¹⁹⁴ A contemporary study of Lady Gregory's philanthropy could conclude that her use of philanthropy could be her way of healing a feeling of sorrow and longing she might have felt in her childhood. Even though Lady Gregory, in parts, did conform to this social standard of a Victorian woman, she used her life experiences to understand the need for independence in colonized countries and, while adhering to the social norms, used them in a way that contradicted the original reasoning for the ideals.

¹⁹⁰ Hill, *Lady Gregory*, 93, Saddlemyer and Smythe, *Lady Gregory*, 65—Everyone has similar feelings, thoughts, and actions.

¹⁹¹ Ann Saddlemyer and Colin Smythe, eds., *Lady Gregory Fifty Years Later* (Totowa, NJ: Barnes and Noble Books, 1987), 65.

¹⁹² Saddlemyer and Smythe, *Lady Gregory*, 66.

¹⁹³ Saddlemyer and Smythe, *Lady Gregory*, 65.

¹⁹⁴ Hill, *Lady Gregory*, 96.

The Poor Law Act of 1838 established workhouses around Ireland that became places for impoverished families to live.¹⁹⁵ The children went to school at workhouse schools, and adults worked in various jobs within the facilities.¹⁹⁶ Creators of the workhouses specifically designed them to “deter anyone, not in dire need from entering,” however, Lady Gregory and other elite found them a respite for their “boredom” and philanthropy.¹⁹⁷ When she lived in England for the decade after her time in Egypt, she worked in the Southwark workhouses while still supplying Christmas presents to Gort workhouse.¹⁹⁸ Lady Gregory received many thank-you letters from the Gort Workhouse and Sister Xavier throughout many decades.¹⁹⁹ One specific letter Sister Xavier sent to Lady Gregory was thanking her for sending presents to the children even though she was not in Ireland. She thinks of the children even when she does not need to because she cares so much about working with them. Today it may seem easy to send presents from far away, but if one puts themselves in the shoes of someone who did not have any modern technology but could still get presents for children on Christmas, it becomes clear that this is a significant charitable act, which requires consideration and planning.

Lady Gregory’s motivation for philanthropic work came from her childhood memories of disappointment. She was determined to ensure every child’s experience with her filled them with excitement and happiness. She recollects in *Seventy Years*:

But the memory of that disappointment, those untasted berries has made me always careful to give children rich or poor some pleasant little thing to eat or take away whenever they come, so that my poor little great-niece, Vera Shaw Taylor, said once as I took her to rummage in the storeroom, “It is always Christmas in this house.”²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁵ Connolly, *The Oxford*, 452

¹⁹⁶ Connolly, *The Oxford*, 600.

¹⁹⁷ Connolly, *The Oxford*, 600.

¹⁹⁸ Greg Winston, “Redefining Coole: Lady Gregory, Class Politics, and the Land War,” *Colby Quarterly* 3, no. 3 (September 2001):208.

¹⁹⁹ Sister Xavier and Clerk of the Gort Union to Lady Gregory, n.d., Berg Collection Lady Gregory, New York Public Library, New York, NY.

²⁰⁰ Lady Gregory, *Seventy Years*, 24. The berry reference comes from a story of her childhood when she visited Mrs. Gregory (her soon to be grandmother-in-law) and saw mulberries growing on a tree. However, Mrs. Gregory did not

From her writing, she talks about how philanthropy became one of the great joys of her and her husband's life.²⁰¹ She started by supplying a Christmas tree for a school in an underprivileged parish, and it became a tradition for her. While looking through her husband's correspondence, she found a letter that he had written, explaining how proud he is of the work she does "...three-hundred children had clothes and were feasted to a surfeit all done by herself...it is a good and Christian thing in the right sense of the word Christian to brighten the lives of so many unfortunate fellow-creatures."²⁰² When her tenants complained about the high prices of the shops in town, she opened shops in county Galway to compete and ultimately drive down costs for them.²⁰³ She also made sure to help all of her tenants in a way that helped relieve preventable stress; they gave firewood as gifts and other amenities that improved their living standards.²⁰⁴

In *Seventy Years*, she writes that she believed the first time she became aware that the actual change in Ireland was happening was in 1896 when she was forty-four years old.²⁰⁵ It was not her first-time hearing of the nationalist struggle. However, this was the first time it showed signs of success. After centuries of strength, the Anglo-Irish gentry was slowly dissolving and not holding the power it once had. Being a landowner did not hold the same power as it once did, and Lady Gregory started to prepare for it. At the same time, her upbringing discouraged her from talking about nationalism. In his book *Irish Writers 1880-1940*, Herbert Howarth explains the dynamic of the "strict Orangeism" lessons Lady Gregory had with her family and how Mary

offer her any, so when she married Sir William Gregory, she was excited to finally taste the berries she was so disappointed not to have been offered. However, the tree was dying, and she could still taste them.

²⁰¹ Lady Gregory, *Seventy Years*, 84.

²⁰² Lady Gregory, *Seventy Years*, 80—definition of surfeit is an excessive amount of something.

²⁰³ Coxhead, *Lady Gregory*, 11.

²⁰⁴ Deirdre Toomey, ed., *Yeats and Women*, second ed. (New York, NY: St. Martins Press, 1997), 170.

²⁰⁵ Lady Gregory, *Seventy Years*, 307.

Sheridan, teaching her indigenous Irish history and struggles, gave her a balanced view of both sides.²⁰⁶ This example is perfect for understanding Lady Gregory's choices later in life. She often chose the middle ground, understanding both sides.

She slowly became more outspoken in support of nationalist ideologies in the early twentieth century. She understood the need for there to be an independent Ireland. Lady Gregory would live in a society that would benefit from class status while understanding the need to reform it and knowing that her beliefs would contradict her lifestyle.²⁰⁷ Accepting the contradiction and preparing to live in it should be seen as a progressive step as it was opposite from most of the Anglo-Irish landowners around her, who tried to fight the change or left Ireland altogether.

Nevertheless, because of her class status and the people she surrounded herself with within her social circle, she often found herself cautious of whom she spoke to about her nationalist ideals. After translating and recording folklore, she became sympathetic to the poor and their rights.²⁰⁸

Nationalism

The indigenous Irish had constant nationalist movements, riots, and protests throughout Ireland's history. As a result, Ireland became one of England's greatest challenges for British colonization. Lady Gregory saw Ireland's most significant nationalist movements during her lifetime: Home Rule, 1916 Easter Rising, and the Partition of Ireland 1922.²⁰⁹ Her awareness and understanding of nationalist movements started in Egypt in the 1890s, when Sir William got

²⁰⁶ Orangeism/Protestant political Society refers to supporters of the Orange Order a pro-unionist movement in Ireland that believed that it should stay a part of the United Kingdom. Connolly, *The Oxford*, 415.

²⁰⁷ Howarth, *The Irish*, 83.

²⁰⁸ Lady Gregory, *Seventy Years*, 81.

²⁰⁹ The Easter Rising failed but became one of the largest steppingstones for the Partition.

back into a government position that moved him and Lady Gregory around Egypt. Egypt had given her invaluable experience in political propaganda and campaigning, starting with the October 23, 1882, publication of Lady Gregory's first political article, "Arabi and His Household," to invoke outside sympathies of the Egyptian nationalist movement and leader Ahmed Urabi.²¹⁰ What is exceptional yet in need of careful studying is the way that Lady Gregory portrays Arabi. She focuses on the westernization of his household but does not allude to anything about his race.²¹¹ Coxhead describes the valuable knowledge that started this part of Lady Gregory's life:

The parallel with British treatment of Irish nationalist leaders could not be lost on an intelligent woman. She also learned how to organize: how to run a campaign, enlist sympathy, raise funds, use influential or wealthy acquaintances, if need be, in ways they were not fully cognizant. In later years, she was accused of valuing her title and her position in the county; she was often socially careless to a fault. Nevertheless, she did love them for the practical results they could achieve. Sir William's intervention in the Arabi affair had shown her that it mattered to bear the famous name of Gregory, that it was something which could be used in a worthy cause. He had put a weapon into her hand.²¹²

McDiarmid states that this is the time that Lady Gregory breaks into the intellectual work of being a "public moralist."²¹³ Steven Collins defines the term public moralist in his book *Public Moralists: Political Thought and Intellectual Life in Britain, 1850 -1930* as the "leading minds" of the century. These would some of the most famous names of the era, they were the

²¹⁰Lucy McDiarmid, "Lady Gregory, Wilfrid Blunt, and London Table Talk," *Irish University Review* 34, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 2004):69.

²¹¹ Sinéad Garrigan Mattar, "'Wage for Each People Her Hand Has Destroyed,'" *Irish University Review* 34, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 2004):58.

²¹² Coxhead, *Lady Gregory*, 29.

²¹³ McDiarmid, "Lady Gregory," 69.

“political and cultural celebrities, the diplomats, journalists, historians, and ‘public intellectuals’ of their day” and Lady Gregory was one of them.²¹⁴

One of the things her husband introduced her to was what she calls “London Table Talk,” where London’s elite and most influential people of the time discussed current events and ideologies with one another. After its publication, “Arabi and His Household” became a popular dinner talk for London’s Elite, including Prime Minister Gladstone. Once the shy new wife of these dinners, she became an active mind in the conversation, eventually becoming the topic of the dinners. Because her husband died while Robert was still young she made sure he did not miss out on profitable connections that Sir Gregory would have exposed Robert to if he was alive to do so at these events. This was the main reason she kept connections in London, so when her son was old enough to profit from them he could. She says her friendships in London are in “constant repair” and she often went out of her way to make sure she stayed relevant with them.²¹⁵ She believed that the connections made at these dinners would one day become profitable for her son but instead, they became beneficial for her.²¹⁶

Upon her return from Egypt, Lady Gregory became an active supporter of the Home Rule movement that was taking place in Ireland.²¹⁷ At the time, Ireland’s Home Rule and Land War were at their peak of promotion. She recounts in *Seventy Years* that in this time, she was “not working for home rule but preparing for it.”²¹⁸ This quote further exemplifies that she was different from the indigenous Irish. While nationalists worked for home rule, they did not

²¹⁴Stefan Collini, *Public Moralists: Political Thought and Intellectual Life in Britain, 1850 -1930* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1991), McDiarmid, “Lady Gregory,” 67.

²¹⁵Toomey, *Yeats and Women*, 171.

²¹⁶Toomey, *Yeats and Women*, 171.

²¹⁷ Home Rule was the leading nationalist movement in Ireland in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. The objective of the movement was to bring more self-governance to Ireland. Connolly, *The Oxford*, 224.

²¹⁸ Lady Gregory, *Seventy Years*, 54.

prepare for it. She knew that her life would change for the worse if it happened without preparation. Even though she supported it, she knew that her class status would change if they passed Home Rule. At this time, she decided to edit her family's memoirs, specifically her husbands and grandfathers.²¹⁹ Lady Gregory taking charge of the family history meant that she would help the Gregory name become synonymous with supporting the indigenous Irish. She wanted Coole Park to be remembered as an "exemplary estate," avoiding scorn on their name when their status as aristocracy would be displaced in the Irish hierarchy.²²⁰ Winston describes Lady Gregory's intricate steps and reasoning for editing the family history "...Lady Gregory not simply editing and annotating the correspondence of a previous generation, but also cleverly rewriting and conveniently reshaping contemporary class relations at Coole."²²¹

Coole Park was not the primary residence of the Gregory's during their marriage. While Sir William was alive, they had their time in Egypt, but Sir William inherited several properties from his family that they chose to live in instead of Coole. Winston used the term "absentee landlords" to summarize their part in Coole during the nineteenth century.²²² Even though they were not every day at Coole, the Gregory's wanted to make sure the tenants remembered them as compassionate landlords. The 1882 Land War was a way for tenants to get better redistribution of land and negotiate rent. Absentee landlords were heavily fought against during the Land War. It shows just how good a standing the Gregory's actually were with their tenants because they were absentee landlords but did not have a problem negotiating with their tenants like other landlords had. The Gregory's finalized rent negotiations with their tenants at Coole peacefully, while at Roxborough, Lady Gregory's siblings hired armed guards to protect them from revolting

²¹⁹ Winston, "Redefining Coole," 210.

²²⁰ Winston, "Redefining Coole," 210.

²²¹ Winston, "Redefining Coole," 215.

²²² Winston, "Redefining Coole," 211.

tenants.²²³ In the coming decades, her family home of Roxborough would be burnt down and sold off during the Civil War, while Coole Park remained until it was willingly sold to the national parks and eventually demolished for stone.²²⁴

As previously stated, her writing of Coole Park and Gregory's history reshaped the class relations between the Gregory's and their tenants. An example of this is the link to the rent negotiations' story. While Lady Gregory has written that her husband could peacefully suppress what could have been a violent negotiation, she purposefully omitted the part where between 1883-1887 he threatened evictions to his tenants.²²⁵ Mentioned before she took an active role in making sure the Gregory name was synonymous with good landowners, this omission of threatening evictions shows the way she would cleverly write to make sure there was no scorn on her family name.

Lady Gregory the Nationalist

Throughout her life and after life critics contest Lady Gregory being labeled a nationalist because of her social class. Even though she confesses sympathies in her publishing and journal writings and promotes the nationalist cause. Greg Winston's article "Redefining Coole: Lady Gregory, Class Politics, and the Land War," he states that Lady Gregory was a nationalist when it was most safe and profitable for her to do so.²²⁶ Lady Gregory would have had no profit from being a nationalist, nevertheless she was one. Her willingness or unwillingness to be outspoken should not disregard her status as a supporter of the Irish nationalist movement, but instead should be seen as revolutionary because she was able to be comfortable with both political

²²³Herbert Howarth, *The Irish Writers 1880-1940* (New York, NY: Hill and Wang, 1958), 104.

²²⁴Toomey, *Yeats and Women*, 170.

²²⁵Toomey, *Yeats and Women*, 197.

²²⁶Greg Winston, "Redefining Coole: Lady Gregory, Class Politics, and the Land War," *Colby Quarterly* 3, no. 3 (September 2001).

ideologies and ultimately choosing for herself what she wanted to support. When Sir William Gregory was alive, it easily can be seen as her protecting his job and influence in government. Some see her not outwardly speaking out in every cause because she saw her husband as a moral compass. Lady Gregory describes her works as being controlled by a triangle of people who help her choose the right pathway for her life and career. Ultimately, she is one of the sides, and two other significant people in her life who give opposing advice make up the rest of the triangle, “Blunt served as her muse, and Sir William served as gatekeeper.”²²⁷ After the death of her husband, Lady Gregory was able to express herself more in ways that conflicted with her friendships and family circles but did not always choose to. Near the end of her life when asked about her politics, she said, “I kept out of politics and could not say in any case what I was, for I see so much to agree with in principle on both sides and so much to disapprove of in practice on both sides.”²²⁸

Nonetheless, her family and friendship circles surrounded their political ideologies with unionism. She was open but not outspoken about her nationalist principles, except for her writing for *The Cornhill Magazine* in 1900 titled “The Felons of Our Land.”²²⁹ Lady Gregory writes a ballad about the ongoing Boer War in South Africa.²³⁰ Irish participation in the Boer War a pivotal part of their unification of Irish Nationalism over empathizing with the Boers through the common ground of British colonization.²³¹ She used this piece to enhance her Irish sympathies for fighting for land. She regards this article as not only her most outwardly politically published

²²⁷ McDiarmid, “Lady Gregory,” 71 After her husband’s death, Yeats became the other side of her triangle.

²²⁸ Lady Gregory to John Quinn, November 28, 1923, Lady Gregory Collection, New York Public Library, Berg Room, NY.

²²⁹ Hill, *Lady Gregory*, 216.

²³⁰ Anglo-boar war Faught in South Africa over land rights between the British Empire and Boer states.

²³¹ Mathews, “Stirring up Disloyalty,” 100.

piece but also as her one and only.²³² It is her only piece because after she published the ballad, her neighbor Le Comte De Basterot gave her a “talking to” about the article and how he believed it was inappropriate. After that experience, she vowed not to be so public and “publish anything so nationalist again.”²³³ She recalled her time as a quiet nationalist surrounded by outspoken unionists as alienating.²³⁴ In his article “Jacob Epstein, Lady Gregory and the Irish Question,” Eion Martin describes Lady Gregory’s close friend group as having “anti-nationalist sentiments”²³⁵ She became self-cautious in her outspoken politics and started to distrust her unionist friends.²³⁶

While she tried to please both of her differing ideological friend circles it did not always work because most did not have the ability to see qualities on both sides like she did. Her friend and lover Wilfred Blunt whom she met in Egypt, a staunch supporter of nationalism during the Irish land war and others in many countries, remembers that he felt unwelcome in her house because of her unionist friends.²³⁷

Arguably, her most important reason for not being an outspoken nationalist is her son Robert, a staunch imperialist.²³⁸ Her motives for not being vocally political are because she feared exile from her son. She put her relationship with her son first as she said her reason for not confirming her nationalist ideals was “...partly because if Robert is Imperialist, I do not want to

²³² Hill, *Lady Gregory*, 216.

²³³ Hill, *Lady Gregory*, 217. Willwerscheid, “Critiquing Cultures,” 53.

²³⁴ Hill, *Lady Gregory*, 215. Unionism is the political ideology of Ireland wanting to keep British governmental control. Connolly, *The Oxford*, 563

²³⁵ Eion Martin, “Jacob Epstein, Lady Gregory and the Irish Question,” *Sculpture Journal* 26, no. 2 (2017): [Page #], <https://doi.org/10.3828/sj.2017.26.2.3.160>.

²³⁶ Hill, *Lady Gregory*, 215.

²³⁷ Winston, “Redefining Coole,” 208.

²³⁸ Promotion of imperialist ideals was not a negative connotation for most during this time. At the height of Imperialism, it was a profitable enterprise. It was not until centuries later that the study of the adverse effects of Imperialism came into consideration by historians.

separate myself from him.”²³⁹ Her son Robert had his own differing opinions from her, and she knew that his ideals were one that she would respect to keep her relationship with him civil. Lady Gregory’s devotion to the relationship with her son and suppression of her nationalist ideal show when it is clear after her son tragically dies in WWI in 1918 that she becomes more outspoken about her nationalist support.²⁴⁰

After vowing not to publish anything so nationalist as “The Felons of Our Land,” she plays to both sides of the Irish demographic to not upset either side. Her play *The Rising of the Moon* debuted at the Abbey Theatre in July 1903. It is considered a play of “Romantic Nationalism.”²⁴¹ Lady Gregory uses her native Irish nanny’s childhood stories as inspiration for her plays. This play would also reflect her adoration for the style of Anthony Raftery, as she copies the tone of his work.²⁴² *The Rising of the Moon* played to the viewers, and not one opinion would raise too much controversy from both sides. For example, the policeman depicted in the play the nationalist thought his treatment was too easy, and the unionist said his treatment was too harsh.²⁴³ Not projecting too many nationalistic tones, she still produced plays that encapsulated her nationalist ideologies and wrote the stories she idolized so much growing up.²⁴⁴ Irish folklore gave her the inspiration for stories that were relevant in her life to current nationalist themes. Her stories ran along the line of pushing out invaders from Ireland. Coxhead

²³⁹ Willwerscheid, “Critiquing Cultures,” 53.

²⁴⁰ “Robert Gregory (1881-1918): ‘Soldier, Scholar, Horseman,’” Irish Literary Studies at Washington and Lee University, accessed April 13, 2022, http://ireland.wlu.edu/landscape/Group1/robert_gregory.htm.

²⁴¹ Hill, *Lady Gregory*, 257.

²⁴² Anthony Raftery or Antoine Ó Raifteirí, a blind Irish poet of the eighteenth and nineteenth century, who would walk around Ireland taking note of Irish folklore and language however he never wrote down his work. Lady Gregory’s transcription of Gaelic and Raftery’s work is significant to her work of writing Irish Folklore. She paid for his headstone nearly one hundred years after death.

²⁴³ Hill, *Lady Gregory*, 256.

²⁴⁴ Hill, *Lady Gregory*, 256.

summarized the relevance of the folklore storyline as “lessons which the year 1014 could teach directly to the year 1905.”²⁴⁵

Nevertheless, much as she was opposed to some of the unionist ideals, she did keep quiet about her own because she wanted to stay in the good graces of the wealthy class ascendancy.²⁴⁶ A significant factor in telling Lady Gregory’s life is that even though she knew her friends had oppressive views different from her own but related to her class, she did nothing to change her class status. Her class position is a status symbol she would capitalize on throughout her life and differentiate her from the lower classes. These factors into her life because no matter how much she sympathized with and loved the culture and stories of the people she studied for their folklore; she was still not one of them. She still participated in the things that enhanced the oppression of the indigenous Irish. She was considered an “emotionally distant aristocrat unconcerned with the muck of Irish politics or the mundanity of middle-class life.”²⁴⁷ Previously stated, her husband called the poor creatures, and her correspondence often call those of lower classed terms like these.

In 1909 Lady Gregory and Yeats produced Bernard Shaw’s play *Blanco Posnet* at the Abbey Theatre, even though it had been banned for blasphemy in England by Lord Chamberlain. Gregory and Yeats found a clause in the law that allowed them to produce it in Ireland, so they decided to have Bernard Shaw’s play performed in Dublin. When Lord Chamberlain found out about this, he sent Lord Aberdeen to try to communicate with them to stop the play. He saw that Lady Gregory was an aristocrat and tried to appeal to her alone to have some sympathy.

²⁴⁵ Coxhead, *Lady Gregory*,89.

²⁴⁶ Willwerscheid, “Critiquing Cultures,56.

²⁴⁷ Willwerscheid, “Critiquing Cultures,” 53.

However, as Coxhead states, as a disappointment to him, “he had come to the wrong aristocrat.”²⁴⁸ She showed no compassion or loyalty to the aristocracy and produced the play.

When the Dublin Castle undersecretary Sir James Daughtry asked to see her about the English censor banning the play and her still producing it at the Abbey, she recalled in a letter to Bernard Shaw after the meeting that some of her first words were, “I said—’are you going to cut off our heads.’”²⁴⁹ This ode to beheadings can be attributed to the long history the English have with beheading their prisoners and was used in many literary scenes most notably the Queen of Hearts in *Alice and Wonderland* cutting off the heads of anyone she wants. But realistically, beheadings in England became political execution. Henry VIII is most famous for beheading two of his six wives Anne Boleyn and Catherine Howard.²⁵⁰ The argument for stopping the production of *Blanco Posnet* is that even though Bernard Shaw was Irish, he wrote the play in England about the English. They were going against the original reasoning for creating the Abbey Theatre to make sure that Irish plays had a place for Irish writers to produce their works. However, Lady Gregory and Yeats believed in freedom of speech and production, just like James Joyce’s *Playboy of the Western World*. They fought for the right to produce it, even if it meant having to take legal action.²⁵¹

The apex of the Irish Nationalist movement was between 1912 and 1922.²⁵² In the span of ten years, Lady Gregory saw World War I kill her son, the death of her nephew Hugh Lane on the Lusitania, the 1916 Easter Rising kill nationalists and innocent civilians, and a civil war that

²⁴⁸ Coxhead, *Lady Gregory*, 131.

²⁴⁹ Lady Gregory to Bernard Shaw, August 12, 1909, Berg Collection Lady Gregory, New York Public Library, New York, NY.

²⁵⁰ Lacey Baldwin Smith, *Catherine Howard* (Amberley, 2009), 91-214.

²⁵¹ J. B. Daughtry to Lady Gregory, August 12, 1909, Berg Collection Lady Gregory, New York Public Library, New York, NY.1

²⁵² MacDonagh, *Ireland the Union*, 72.

burnt down her childhood home. In a letter to John Quinn, she speaks of this time filled with “profound loneliness.”²⁵³ A fear she had as well is that her living family members were in danger because the tenants thought of them as the enemy. Gort, where she resided, was historically considered a small peaceful town but was a hot spot for terror during the civil war.²⁵⁴

While most aristocrats were fleeing to England, Lady Gregory stayed. She worked with the leader Michael Collins in her fight to get her nephew Hugh Lane’s paintings back to Ireland, for them to reside in an Irish museum and was heartbroken by the death of Collins in 1922.²⁵⁵ She believed that Edmond De Valera would bring peace to Ireland.²⁵⁶ Coxhead explains the distance she had from the war multiple times and how Lady Gregory did not believe in violence. While she considered herself a Republican, she does not believe the cause is worth the fight and death of Irish men and women.²⁵⁷ Believing that violence is unnecessary shows that while she believed in the Irish cause, she still had the privilege to distance herself from the violence, something that so many fallen people could not do for Irish independence.

One of Lady Gregory’s harshest critiques from nationalists would be that she was not fully part of the Irish Literary Revival because she did not outwardly embrace Irish nationalism. To critique her authenticity to the nationalist movement because she wanted to remain civil with her family is invalid. She had no good outcome on both sides. Coxhead explains that she reaped the rewards of suspicion and vilification, often simultaneously, from both sides. To her class, she seems a traitress to the nationalists, a “blackleg.”²⁵⁸ If she were outspoken, she would lose her

²⁵³ Lady Gregory to John Quinn, n.d., Berg Collection Lady Gregory, New York Public Library, New York City, NY.

²⁵⁴ Coxhead, *Lady Gregory*, 188.

²⁵⁵ Michael Collins was a leading figure in the early twentieth-century fight for Irish independence. He was tragically killed in an ambush of rebels in the civil war.

²⁵⁶ De Valera a leading politician in the independent Republic of Ireland holding many different positions. De Valera was an integral part of the multiple draft constitutions and the official 1937 constitution.

²⁵⁷ Coxhead, *Lady Gregory*, 189.

²⁵⁸ Coxhead, *Lady Gregory*, 124. A blackleg in this usage means British, also an insult.

loved ones. She was already somehow not popular enough to garner the sole media attention for her plays and shared the credit with her contemporaries. Perception of Lady Gregory would not have changed if she was more politically outspoken, however her status with her friends and family would have changed drastically. She was protecting herself. When she was outspoken, she got backlash from the people around her social circles. She made her decisions alone and made the ones she believed would further protect her life and career. She was able to conform to both sides and become independent, something she had grown accustomed to her whole life.

Chapter 4

“I perceive no one in Ireland cares in the very least about her. She is almost forgotten already”²⁵⁹

Dr. Lindsey Earner-Byrne, a professor of Irish gender studies at the University College Cork, asks, “Imagine if someone asked you how including men in the story would change the history we write?”²⁶⁰ Changing the narrative of how women have been left out of history, making a reader think of how absurd it is that women had to be rewritten into history. Irish women played a massive role in the Irish nationalist movements, not just becoming healers and caregivers but putting their bodies on the line during combat. On April 24, 1916, Patrick (Padraig) Pearse read *The Proclamation of the Republic of Ireland* on the steps of the General post office in Dublin starting the Easter Rising. In the proclamation he stated that those Irish men and women were to break from the British rule and gain equal rights in the new independent Republic of Ireland. The proclamation granted Irish women over twenty-one their right to vote. If it had succeeded, it would have been two years before England would grant women suffrage.²⁶¹ Nearly two hundred and fifty women played intricate parts in the Easter Rising and seventy-seven were arrested for their participation in it.²⁶² Countess Markievicz was the only woman sentenced to execution but the charges were dropped because of her gender, leaving

²⁵⁹ Elizabeth Coxhead, *Lady Gregory A Literary Portrait*, second ed. (London: Secker & Warburg, 1966), V.

²⁶⁰ Lindsey Earner-Byrne, “Why were women omitted from modern Irish history?” RTÉ, last modified March 8, 2022, accessed April 11, 2022, <https://www.rte.ie/brainstorm/2021/0318/1204659-women-modern-irish-history-gender/>.

²⁶¹ Olivia O’Leary, “Why, 100 years after the Easter Rising, are Irish women still fighting?” *The Guardian*, last modified March 2016, accessed April 11, 2022, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/mar/25/100-years-after-easter-rising-irish-women-still-fighting-gender-equality>. After a week of combat the Irish rebels surrendered to the British, and Irish women did not gain the right to vote until 1918 when England granted women the right to vote.

²⁶² Mary McAuliffe and Liz Gillis, *Richmond Barracks 1916 We Were There: 77 Women of the Easter Rising* (Dublin, Ireland: Dublin City Council, 2016).

sixteen of the top male leaders of the rising to be executed.²⁶³ Soon after the establishment of the independent Republic of Ireland, the contributions of those women started to disappear from Irish history and their equal rights would be stripped from the upcoming constitutions or Constitution of Saorstát Eireann [Free State].²⁶⁴

The Republic of Ireland started to literally erase women from the Easter Rising. Elizabeth “Nurse” O’Farrell stood with Pádraig Pearse when he surrendered to the British after a week of rebellion and had her feet airbrushed from the photo.²⁶⁵ The practice of airbrushing or writing out Irish women from their part in Irish history became the new norm. The Republic of Ireland had wanted to create new social standards for women in their newly independent state and wanted to assert male dominance, and the women who fought for that independence would have their accomplishments removed from the narrative. While the 1916 proclamations declared equal rights for Irishmen and Irish women, the 1922 draft constitution left out article three that secured equal rights no matter the gender. Noted Irish women’s historian Mary Luddy called article three of the free state constitution the “charter of their liberties” for Irish women.²⁶⁶

Lady Gregory lived ten years in the Republic of Ireland but died five years before the 1937 constitution, which is part of the reason for her eradication from Irish women’s history. Lady Gregory was a supporter of the nationalist movement but was silent about it, depending on the people she was around. As previously mentioned, she was disgusted with violence and heard about the Easter Rising while she was at Coole Park and showed her ability as an elite woman to

²⁶³ O’Leary, “Why, 100 years,” *The Guardian*. Men who were executed for their part in The Easter Rising: Éamonn Ceannt, Thomas James Clarke, James Connolly, Seán MacDiarmada, Thomas MacDonagh, Patrick Pearse, Joseph Mary Plunkett, Roger Casement, Con Colbert, Edward Daly, Seán Heuston, Thomas Kent, John MacBride, Michael Mallin, Michael O’Hanrahan, William Pearse

²⁶⁴ Mary Luddy, “A ‘Sinister and Retrogressive’ Proposal: Irish Women’s Opposition to The 1937 Draft Constitution,” *Royal Historical Society*, 2005, 180, <http://doi.org/10.1017/S008044010500030>.

²⁶⁵ *Eirebrushed - the woman ‘written out’ of Irish history (and why this isn’t unusual)*, August 4, 2004, photograph, accessed April 13, 2022, <https://www.thejournal.ie/eirebrushed-play-1428985-Apr2014/>.

²⁶⁶ Luddy, “A ‘Sinister,’” 180.

disconnect herself from the problems. Nonetheless, the consequences of the rebellion and the Republic of Ireland influenced how her legacy was remembered in Irish history.²⁶⁷ Lady Gregory would not make a reappearance until decades after her death. While Lady Gregory had no part in this new society in Ireland, she fought to have its independence implemented which would cause the drastic social standards that would affect her standing in its history.

Coxhead describes the scene of libel after Lady Gregory's death and the fact that it was never contested because of the new Republic of Ireland and the lack of promotion of women in its history. After her death "literary gossips" used the fragile and old age of W.B. Yeats to create slander against her achievements. Coxhead portrays the scene this instance of Yeats being exploited for liable.

Nevertheless, by disregarding these, waiting till she was dead, and then trapping Yeats into the conditioning of misstatements in his old age, a group of Dublin literary gossips headed by the egregious Oliver St. John Gogarty succeeded in completely disordering the picture. Their efforts, which I can make out, passed pretty well unchallenged in the anti-feminist country, have subjected Lady Gregory's reputation to injustice as outrageous as any that literary history can show.²⁶⁸

Coxhead references the gossip being "unchallenged in the anti-feminist country," eluding to the end of Lady Gregory's life in the institution of a Catholic majority government changing the dynamic of women's roles in the Republic of Ireland.²⁶⁹ This change was the nationalist outcome Lady Gregory believed Ireland should have, but it was also a significant component of her legacy and erasure. Bernard Shaw said after her death, "I perceive no one in Ireland cares in the very least about her. She is almost forgotten already"²⁷⁰

²⁶⁷ Diarmaid Ferriter, "Lady Gregory's political dilemmas offer lessons for today," *The Irish Times*, last modified December 2014, accessed April 11, 2022, <https://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/lady-gregory-s-political-dilemmas-offer-lessons-for-today-1.2047717>.

²⁶⁸ Coxhead, *Lady Gregory*, 105.

²⁶⁹ Coxhead, *Lady Gregory*, 105.

²⁷⁰ Coxhead, *Lady Gregory*, V.

After centuries of religious suppression, the newly independent Republic of Ireland put Catholic ideals at the forefront of its new government. Contents of the multiple constitutions were heavily swayed by the Catholic clergy and almost immediately erased women from the Irish historical narrative. Morality was now expected of all Irishmen and Irishwomen, specifically in Article 41.2 social standards of Irish women were laid out.

1. In particular, the State recognises that by her life within the home, woman gives to the State a support without which the common good cannot be achieved.
2. The State shall, therefore, endeavour to ensure that mothers shall not be obliged by economic necessity to engage in labour to the neglect of their duties in the home.²⁷¹

Irish Suffragist Hannah Sheehy Skeffington called the 1937 Constitution a fascist in its subjugation of women by implying that they are the weaker sex.²⁷² Women's groups like Women's Graduate Association (WGA), Irish Women's Workers Union (IWWU), and Cumanna mBan all protested the constitution.²⁷³

The effect of the constitution harmed women who did not fit into this perfect Catholic narrative. The use of Magdalen Laundries where girls believed to be "fallen women" were forcibly sent to by their families be isolated from the "morally righteous" society.²⁷⁴ Between 1922 and 1996 nearly ten thousand Irish girls and women were sent to Magdalene Laundries. These women are still ashamed of their time and often do not outwardly speak about it; this is in

²⁷¹ Government of Ireland, "Constitution of Ireland," Irish Statute Book, accessed April 12, 2022, <https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/cons/en/html>.

²⁷² Luddy, "A 'Sinister,'" 181.

²⁷³ Luddy, "A 'Sinister,'" 180, 186, 189.

²⁷⁴ Rebecca Lea McCarthy, *Origins of the Magdalene Laundries: An Analytical History* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2010), 65. The term "fallen woman" referred to a girl who were pregnant before marriage, raped, or thought of one day becoming fallen women without doing anything but were seen as flirtatious to men. Historians now consider the work done in Magdalen laundries as slavery because the girls were not paid for their work and were forced to work long hours and under back-breaking conditions. This cycle of hard labor with no wages would ultimately keep a woman in the laundry for far longer than she would want because of the realization that they have no money and no connection to the outside world. The dehumanizing practices of the Magdalen Laundry started with the removal of names. The nuns took away the girls' names and gave them numbers instead of being called by their birth names. They were restricted from socializing with other madeleines. Women who went to the institutions pregnant often had their babies adopted out to American families with the consent that they were tricked into upon entering the Magdalene Laundry.

direct correlation with the Irish constitutions. Dr. Lindsey Earner-Byrne started her research because of the erasure of the girls of the Magdalene Laundries from Irish History. She states, “I wanted to understand how a culture that valorized motherhood could subject single mothers to such structural violence.”²⁷⁵ The Madeleines are arguably the most extreme case of violence and erasure, but their treatment was just one of many ways the Republic of Ireland altered and regulated the vision of Irish women and their importance in the twentieth century. Women’s role in the nationalist movement was underplayed and cut out of the historical narrative.

As previously mentioned, Lady Gregory lived during some of the most successful times of the Irish nationalist movement. She saw the initiation of the Irish Free State and multiple draft constitutions. However, that constitution may be why her accomplishments were not uplifted in the new Republic of Ireland. After centuries of Catholic suppression, the new government was heavily based on Catholic values that promoted women to stay home to fulfill their Catholic duty. Furthermore, promoting a widowed protestant woman who spent most of her life independent from the legal marriage of a man and worked her life would not be the ideal person to use as an idol.

Lady Gregory’s religion as a protestant woman also played a heavy factor in her remembrance. In the Republic of Ireland protestants still feel like they are excluded from being considered Irish compared to Catholics.²⁷⁶ Heather Crawford, whose research on the treatment of protestants in Southern Ireland calls this behavior “‘Outcropping’ ... modes of expression in everyday speech which disclose assumptions of lack of acknowledgment of, or tolerance of

²⁷⁵ Lindsey Earner-Byrne, “Why were women omitted from modern Irish history?,” RTÉ, last modified March 8, 2022, accessed April 11, 2022, <https://www.rte.ie/brainstorm/2021/0318/1204659-women-modern-irish-history-gender/>.

²⁷⁶ Heather K. Crawford, “Irish Protestants and ‘Irishness,’” *Oral History* 39, no. 1 (Spring 2011): accessed April 12, 2022, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25802215>.

difference.”²⁷⁷ Crawford’s example of outcropping is seen in allegations like, “But you *have* to be Catholic to be Irish!” toward Irish citizens that are not protestant.²⁷⁸ Outcropping has major significance in the historical analysis of Lady Gregory in Irish History. Women often have this expectation of perfection; otherwise, their accomplishments as a whole get diminished. Lady Gregory’s Protestantism diminished her value as Irish. However, that same view does not follow Yeats even though he too was Protestant and a part of an Anglo-Irish family.

Women’s history in general

Gerda Lerner asked the same question as Dr. Lindsey Earner-Byrne, “Where are women in history?” As a professor at Sarah Lawrence College in the 1970s, Lerner created a first-of-its-kind masters in women’s history program aiming to create an entirely separate subject in academia that focused on making women a viable part of history. Her work created a space for others to study women in a historical context. The male experience had been at the forefront of history, building a whole world history that left out half of the population, and if women were written about, it was still by the male experience.²⁷⁹ Lerner explains the reasoning and outcome of women’s history in her article “Placing Women in History: Definitions and Challenges:”

The historical scholarship was far from objective or universal because it was based on the male experience placing men at the center as all measures of all things human, thereby leaving out half of humankind. In the past two decades, the situation has changed considerably in an enormous and enormously growing body of scholarship women have been rendered visible.²⁸⁰

²⁷⁷Heather K. Crawford, “Irish Protestants and ‘Irishness,’” *Oral History* 39, no. 1 (Spring 2011): 55, accessed April 12, 2022, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25802215>.

²⁷⁸ Crawford, “Irish Protestants,” 55.

²⁷⁹ Karen Offen, Ruth Roach Pierson, and Jane Rendall, eds., *Writing Women’s History International Perspectives* (Indianapolis and Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1991), 1. Lerner, “Placing Women,” 7

²⁸⁰ Gerda Lerner, “Placing Women in History: Definitions and Challenges,” *Feminist Studies*, 35, no. 1 (Fall 1975): 7, accessed April 12, 2022, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3518951>.

Lerner describes women's history as needing to switch from the "male-oriented to female-oriented consciousness."²⁸¹ Women have always had power. It is not something contested in the field of women's history. Nonetheless, women in power still relied on men to keep them in power, which meant they needed to be perfect to maintain their dominance. This is a crucial part of the patriarchy that Lady Gregory's life surrounded.²⁸²

For all of Lady Gregory's career, her fame was connected to the men around her. Not only was she continuously critiqued in comparison to them, but they also were some of her most helpful partners. Her complicated professional relationships are exemplified in specifically her relationship with Yeats. Not only was her professionalism disregarded because critics thought that she loved him, but she continuously had her work diminished because of her relationship with him.

Lady Gregory was a famous socialite in the early twentieth century. Not only did she gain fame as an accomplished writer and creator of the Abbey Theatre she also was connected to some of the most famous people of her day. Some of her friendships came from her husband's connections to some of the most influential people in England and Ireland, but she was able to make her own connections with people. As a widowed woman, she was able to make a name for herself independent from her husband. During her American tour, President Taft invited her to the White House to present, which she did.²⁸³ She had two decades of correspondence and friendship with Theodore Roosevelt, writing to her on June 8th, 1910, "I'm sure I need not say how much I enjoyed my glimpse of you the other day."²⁸⁴ She was able to personally write to

²⁸¹ Lerner, "Placing Women," 10.

²⁸² Gerda Lerner, *The Creation of the Patriarchy*, revised ed. (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1987)

²⁸³ Coxhead, *Lady Gregory*, 153.

²⁸⁴ Theodore Roosevelt to Lady Gregory, June 8, 1910, Berg Collection Lady Gregory, New York Public Library, New York, NY.

Scottish American tycoon steel Andrew Carnegie to ask for assistance with funding to get her nephew Huge Lane's paintings to be rehomed in Ireland instead of England.²⁸⁵ She dined with Prime Minister Asquith at Ten Downing Street, where she was even able to say, "only dull-witted people like the king would do that!"²⁸⁶ The casual candor that she had with some of the most prominent figures of her time is not just a one-time meeting for publicity purposes but as friends; this only illustrates how much of an influence she is.

Lady Gregory has warranted enough fame to be a part of history but compared to her male counterparts, she is left out of the larger narrative of Irish historical research. Take into consideration that her biography was the only biography written about her for decades, even after publishers had forgotten it. It was not until Mary Coxhead wrote her biography *Lady Gregory: A Literary Portrait* that she started to have publications that exclusively focused on her. It is small varieties of how history is constructed that have created a space where her accomplishments are not valued in comparison to other men who surrounded her life. It is when Yeats gets the credit for work, and she gets a minor footnote or written about in his narrative. Lady Gregory has been written about in relation to the stories of her male counterparts and not as an individual author. The next step in giving Lady Gregory the credit she deserves is to write about her experience and understanding that while her life did have male influence, it was not a male experience.

Even today, there is a "sexist bias" in history that concludes that facts about women are based on stereotypes that affect how women are portrayed.²⁸⁷ This could be a conservative or unconscious bias, but it is still prevalent in modern-day historiography.

²⁸⁵ Andrew Carnegie to Lady Gregory, March 14, 1913, Berg Collection Lady Gregory, New York Public Library, New York, NY.

²⁸⁶ Lady Gregory to John Quinn, July 12, 1914, Berg Collection Lady Gregory Collection, New York Public Library, New York, NY. She talked about the treatment of incarcerated suffragettes and the force-feeding while they were on hunger strike.

²⁸⁷ Lerner, "Placing Women," 10.

Like women in the Irish nationalist movement, American women in the abolition movement had their participation ignored. While American women's abolition societies outnumbered men and their contributions have been widely ignored in the twentieth century, it is only recently that the stories of their contributions have been analyzed after the creation of women's history as a separate subject.²⁸⁸ Gerda Lerner created an outlet where the three leading Irish women historians—Margaret MacCurtain, Mary O'Dowd, and Maria Luddy—could create an academic space where women's part in Irish history could be appropriately researched and appreciated. While Ireland started their journey by implementing women's history into academia in the 1970s the first women's history association was not established until 1987.²⁸⁹ The movement of executing women's history in Ireland's academic world was slow but it has shown promising outcomes.

Erasure of Lady Gregory

As mentioned at the introduction, the popular New York bookstore McNally Jackson has an extremely well-categorized selection of Irish literature. While having multiple volumes of W.B Yeats they did not have any works by Lady Gregory. There were the books of English novelist Philippa Gregory, but there is no relation between the two. Searching through many bookstores across the country, specifically in California, New York, and Wisconsin, notable Irish novelists have been found, but they are all males. The Esther Raushenbush Library at Sarah Lawrence College houses six books written by and about Lady Gregory. Nevertheless, if one were to shift the moveable bookshelf to the right, they would see the six shelves and over one

²⁸⁸ Lerner, "Placing Women," 9.

²⁸⁹ "The Bibliography of Irish Women's History," Women's History Association of Ireland, accessed April 13, 2022, <https://womenshistoryassociation.com/the-bibliography-of-irish-womens-history/>.

hundred books on W.B Yeats. One more to the right is the collection of Colm Tóibín's books but missing from them is his book *Lady Gregory's Toothbrush*.

On the Calm app, Phoebe Smith writes a descriptive sleep meditation of a train ride through Ireland, narrated by Irish Peaky Blinder actor Cillian Murphy. Throughout the meditation, many Irish authors have mentioned some examples of “searching for inspiration in this intellectual city that gave birth to some of Ireland’s greatest literary icons James Joyce, Oscar Wilde, W.B Yeats, Samuel Beckett, among others.”²⁹⁰ One of the most significant examples of erasure is about the description of the Aran Islands, a place where Lady Gregory collected the most Irish folklore and learned the Gaelic Language from the inhabitants “is the string of islands known as Aran which inspired their heartbreaking works of the Irish playwright John Millington Synge”²⁹¹ While they did not plan on being there together, Lady Gregory and J.M. Synge were in the Aran Islands while often passing each other. Then the narrator continues, “Living landscape is commonly known as Yeats country immortalized in the poetry of William Butler Yeats.” Other authors mentioned in this thirty-minute meditation are the more modern authors that had nothing to do with the Irish Literary Revival, C.S Lewis, and J.R.R Tolkien. No women authors were mentioned. These examples are small erasures of Lady Gregory as she was an essential part of the life of these authors, specifically J.M. Synge and W.B. Yeats and she paved the way and built a platform for other Irish authors to make careers for themselves in Ireland.

²⁹⁰ *Crossing Ireland by Train*, narrated by Cillian Murphy, by Phoebe Smith, Calm App, audiotape.
16:30

²⁹¹ *Crossing Ireland*.

Conclusion

“And if she does not always put down her own errors in mistakes it is not because she does not know and is not sorry for them.”²⁹²

Lady Gregory left a lasting legacy in Ireland, her work made it possible for Ireland to become proud of its indigenous history and language. She was born at just the right time and given just enough privilege to do her work. Her placement in history put her in the perfect place and time when the language was on a decline after the Great Famine. Any later and there might not have been a Gaelic speaker left. Great authors of the time relied on Lady Gregory to make their plays Irish. Lady Gregory broke the mold of what was expected of her while still valuing societal standards. She became a middle person for both sides using the privileges from one to help the other. Her greatest accomplishment is that she chose for herself. She did not succumb to anyone telling her what should be expected of her. She was not born into the right era to be remembered. Herbert Howarth, author of *The Irish Writers 1880-1940*, describes the out of the ordinary choices Lady Gregory made for a woman of her class:

In the long run the interest of the life lies in the east she pressed beyond what birth gave her. She might have been satisfied with caste and charity, but was not. Of the possibilities afforded by her traditions, growing up, marriage, she took those that made for action and change.²⁹³

Modern narratives recognize more of Lady Gregory’s contributions to the Irish Literary Revival, nationalist movement, and her co-authorships with her male contemporaries. Popular media has projected her as an Irish nationalist like in the award-winning television show *Downton Abbey* when Lady Sybil marries an Irish nationalist Branson and leaves her elite family to live in Ireland. When Branson gets in trouble with the law, the couple are able to find

²⁹² Lady Gregory, *Seventy Years*, ed. Colin Smythe (New York, NY: Macmillan Publishing Co, 1976), 2.

²⁹³ Herbert Howarth, *The Irish Writers 1880-1940* (New York, NY: Hill and Wang, 1958), 89.

refuge with the connection Lady Sybil's family has. They are never to go back to Ireland again as Lord Grantham, her father, says, "With Sybil they think they could have another Maud Gonne on their hands or Lady Gregory."²⁹⁴ followed by Lady Grantham saying, "Lady Gregory, Countess Markievicz... why are the Irish rebels so well born?"²⁹⁵ Modern media, in an era that is uplifting the voices of women now is making strides to incorporate historically forgotten women in to a narrative that removes them from their male counterparts and is now able to conceptualize them as an independent people. The move toward equality that Gerda Lerner pushed for in women's history.

In March 2020, the New York Public Library created an exhibit dedicated to Lady Gregory displaying her archive that the Berg Collection holds. Sadly, a few days after it opened the Covid-19 pandemic shut down the exhibition.²⁹⁶ It was removed before the New York Public Library opened to the public again. Trinity College Dublin is commissioning a bust of her to be placed in their Long Room of the Old Library. Her bust will be one of three other women (Ada Lovelace, Rosalind Franklin and Mary Wollstonecraft) to adorn the room currently filled with forty other all male busts.²⁹⁷

Lady Gregory is revolutionary. While she may not have thought it in her time, she was able to create a name for herself and arguable was the reason so many other Irish (mostly male) were able to make a career for themselves as well. She was extraordinary from her childhood

²⁹⁴ *Downton Abbey*, season 3, episode 4, "Episode Four," directed by Andy Goddard, written by Julian Fellowes, aired October 7, 2012.

²⁹⁵ *Downton Abbey*, season 3, episode 4, "Episode Four," directed by Andy Goddard, written by Julian Fellowes, aired October 7, 2012.

²⁹⁶ "All This Mine Alone: Lady Gregory and the Irish Literary Revival," New York Public Library, <https://www.nypl.org/events/exhibitions/all-this-mine-alone>.

²⁹⁷ "Trinity to commission four new sculptures of women for display in Old Library," Trinity College Dublin, last modified November 2020, accessed April 23, 2022, https://www.tcd.ie/news_events/articles/trinity-to-commission-four-new-sculptures-of-women-for-display-in-old-library/.

because of her ability to understand what she likes and sympathizes with and not to conform to others. While she did hide a lot of her sympathies and ideas, it is not cause for diminishing her importance. On the contrary, she broke down societal standards put in place to suppress her mind and used her privileges to help those who were not awarded the same.

Victorian-era Ireland, while making large strides in equality for women, nonetheless raised Lady Gregory to believe she needed to succumb to the responsibilities of femininity. If she had followed the rules of her childhood, she would have become the person idle and ignorant and reliant on a man to control her life. Instead, she understood that she was different from her family and that transformed her into the person she is known for today. She knew she had faults those cautious and un-cautious.²⁹⁸ If she just stuck with reading the *Bible* and *Mangnalls Questions*, we might not have the Gaelic language today. In a letter to John Quinn on October 12, 1906, she signed her letter “Always a friend” which she was not to just him, but to all of Ireland.²⁹⁹

²⁹⁸ Lady Gregory, *Seventy Years*, 2.

²⁹⁹ Lady Gregory to John Quinn, October 12, 1906, Berg Collection Lady Gregory, New York Public Library, New York City, NY.

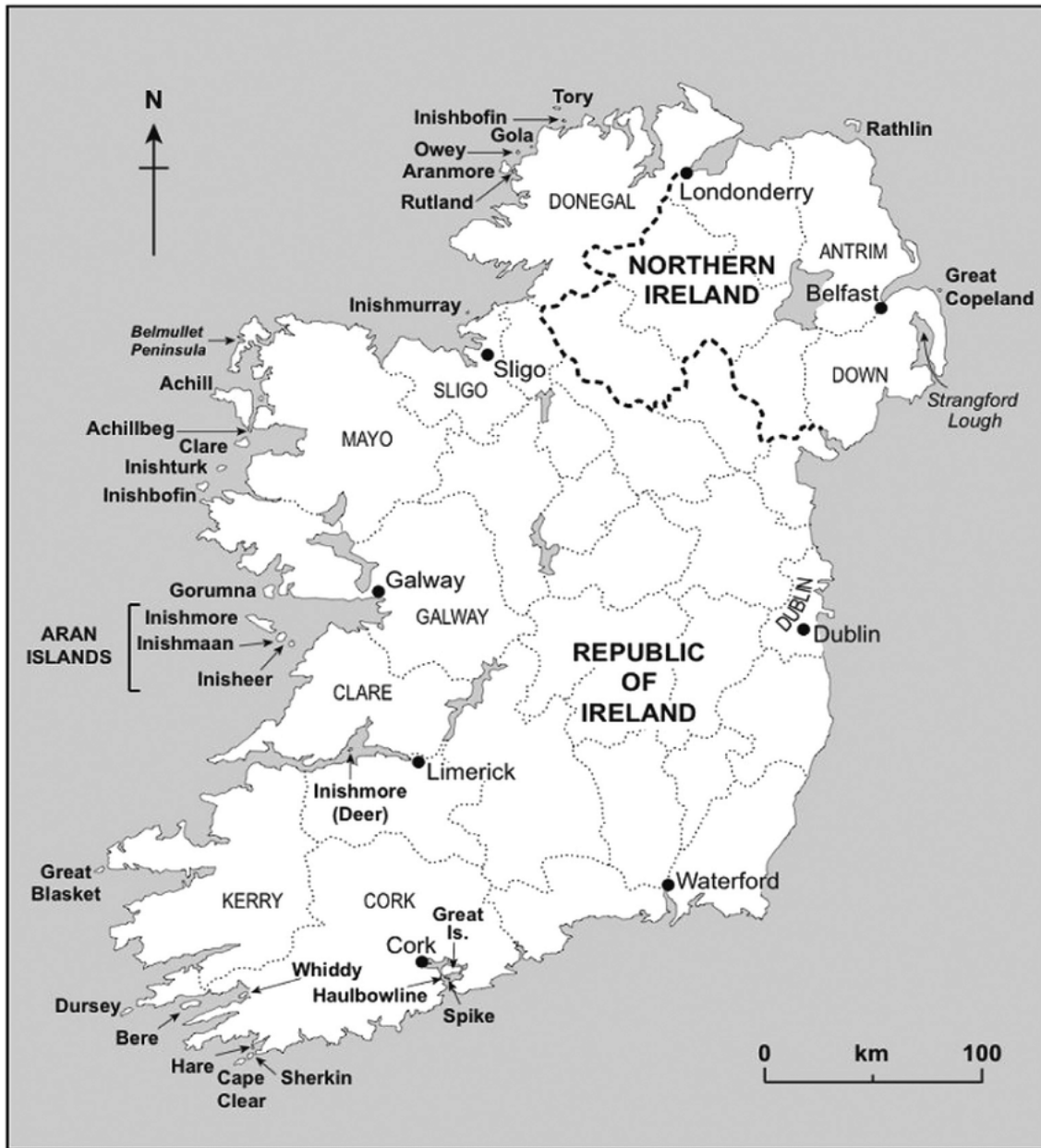


Figure 1: Map of Ireland after Partition

Vanessa Burholt, Thomas Scharf, and Kieran Walsh, "Imagery and imaginary of islander identity: Older people and migration in Irish small-island communities," *Journal of Rural Studies* 31 (July 2013); <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2013.01.007>

CONTENTS	
Questions on History, comprehending a Sketch of General History	
PAGE	1-10
Alexander the Great	6
Athens, origin, and early history of	3
present state of	9
Babylon, description of	2
Carthage	7
Chaldaea, origin of	1
Chinese Empire, origin of	2
Egypt	5
conquered by Persia	5
present state of	8
Europe, early state of	2
Greece, eminent Men of	6
Italy, War in, 1859	10
Persia and Greece	5
Phœnicians	2
Rome, founded by Romulus	6
early history of	7
and Greece	15
under the Cæsars	8
Revolutions of	9
Sparta	4
Questions on the most remarkable Events from the Christian	
Era to the middle of the 19th century	
PAGE	11-41
Battle of the Alma	34
Assaye	18
Balaklava	35
Inkermann	45
the Nile	23
Tchernaya	37
Trafalgar	26
Bonaparte, Napoleon	17
Cawnpore, Massacre of	42*
Crimæan War	33-38
Crystal Palace of 1851	32
Delhi, Mutiny at	41*
Siege and Capture of	43*
Eminent Men of the 16th century	15
17th do.	45
18th do.	16
England, changes in, during the 19th century	38
Europe, a Poem	42
Miscellaneous Questions on Grecian History	
PAGE	43-59
Alexander the Great	56
Athens, great Men of	50
Thirty Tyrants of	53
Ephori, the	54
Games, Olympic and Isthmian	46
Greek Oracles	59
Hero and Leander	58
Marathon	48
Ostracism	49
Peloponnesian War	51
Persian War	51
Phidias, the sculptor	52
Philosophers and Sages	47
Social and Sacred Wars	55
Spartans	45
States, the most important	43
Sybaris and Sybarites	59
Thermopylæ	49
Troy, expedition against	44
Xenophon	54
Miscellaneous Questions in General History, chiefly ancient 60-73	
PAGE	63
Antiquities, Egyptian	67
Athenians and Lacedæmonians	64
Battles, celebrated, of antiquity	68
Brahmins	64
Cardinals, origin of	70
Conclaves and Councils	70, 71
Crosses	65
Darius	65
Dominions, Alexander's, how divided	67
Egyptians, the	62
Emperors, Peruvian	65
Roman	63
Emperors, Turkish	63
Jews, the	61
Mahomet	70
Marbles, the Arundellian	69
Monarchies, the Four Ancient	60
Persians, the	63
Popes, the	71
Priests, the Egyptian	63
Punishments, barbarous	66
Sardanapalus	61
Sicilians, the	65
Tournaments	72

Figure 2-Example of the subjects taught in Mangnalls Questions

Richmal Mangnall, *Historical and miscellaneous question*



Figure 3: Queen Elizabeth’s Statue in the Princes Chamber

BBC News, *PRINCE’S CHAMBER*, photograph, accessed April 23, 2022, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/english/static/in_depth/uk/2000/parliament/prince_chamber.stm.



This sequence shows the original photograph (left) of the moment Padraig Pearse surrendered to General Lowe. Beside Pearse (obscured) is Nurse O’Farrell. In the second photograph the expressions of the British soldiers’ faces were changed — and by the third picture Nurse O’Farrell was eliminated from the scene.

Images Courtesy: National Museum of Ireland, Decorative Arts & History / Kilmainham Gaol

Figure 4: Elizabeth O’Farrell’s Feet Being Airbrushed Out of Photo

Eirebrushed - the woman ‘written out’ of Irish history (and why this isn’t unusual), August 4, 2004, photograph, accessed April 13, 2022, <https://www.thejournal.ie/eirebrushed-play-1428985-Apr2014/>.

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