

W. B. Yeats and The Abbey Theatre

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I

It is just after the hopes for the establishment of Irish Parliamentary Home Rule ended that W. B. Yeats gave birth to the Irish Dramatic Movement. The constitutional campaign of Charles Stewart Parnell (the leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party) was first to be successful in laying the groundwork for Home Rule; his party's main objectives were land reform and legislative independence from England. Hence he supported land agitation as he believed it would help to achieve his objective of self-government in Ireland, but the bills for Irish Home Rule were not passed.

Parnell was a Protestant Wicklow landlord who devoted himself to the emancipation of peasants from the landlords, and also to that of Ireland from English rule. As he was a well-to-do Protestant, his political campaign, together with Maud Gonne and Constance Markievicz, actually meant revolt against his own class. Supported by many Irish Catholics, he soon became President of the Land League founded by Michael Davitt, a Fenian leader. Through his parliamentary efforts, the Gladstone government finally passed the Land Act in 1881, recognizing "the three F's" of Tenant-rights: Fixity of Tenure, Free Sale and Fair Rents. However, just as hopes of Home Rule reached a peak, they were completely dashed when Parnell's partner Katharine O'Shea's divorce proceedings

came to court.

Immediately after Parnell's unlawful relationship became known to the public, the Catholic Church denounced him, and this incident became an ugly political scandal as it was the Victorian period, when social mores and decorum were highly valued. Parnell had been successful in uniting major different factions, such as the Fenians and Catholic Church, into one strong force, but the unified factions were split because of his scandal; consequently political settlement became impossible. Parnell's downfall became inevitable, though he was able to marry Katherine O'Shea soon afterwards.

On top of this, Parnell's sudden death four months after his marriage befuddled people aspiring for independence, since achieving Home Rule by political means became almost impossible. Mass rallies were no longer systematically organized, and the parliamentary debates became much less effective.

It was at this time that W. B. Yeats met Maud Gonne through the introduction of John O'Leary's sister in 1889. She captivated him throughout his life with her beauty and intelligence. The fall and death of Parnell devastated Maud Gonne, but her strong will never faltered and her devotion to the Land War never changed. Elizabeth Coxhead expounds on Maud Gonne's staunch stance on nationalism even under adverse circumstances.

What she [Maud Gonne] could hardly guess at was the profoundly traumatic effect which the loss of Parnell was to have on the liberation movement, deflecting the interest of the young intellectuals away from politics and toward literature and the arts. It made an immediate difference to the aims and attitudes of many among her

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friends; but it made none at all to hers.

Because of this disunity and the devastating course of events for Home Rule, the Irish people in general became apathetic towards politics. Yet, though the majority of the people lost interest in politics and in achieving independence through parliamentary movements, the nationalist movement never actually died down completely. Intellectuals, influenced by Standish O'Grady, felt compelled to create national literature and drama in order to express their desire for independence. They wanted to establish their national identity through the literary movement, part of a cultural nationalist movement which came to be known as "the Celtic Renaissance."

Concurrently, a new "Young Ireland" movement, initiated mainly by Fenians, was gaining ground. John O'Leary, as its leader, had proved his patriotism with this movement in the difficult social and political circumstances. It was through the personal influence of John O'Leary that a group of hopeful intellectual patriots, W. B. Yeats, George Russell, Maud Gonne, John F. Taylor and others, found another means of achieving the goal of independence; they initiated a new Irish literary movement. This became a substitute for the political movement to enhance the Irish people's spirit of independence from the English rule. Yeats's artistic aim of the Celtic Revival was to restore the lost Irish culture, raise the national consciousness and establish national identity through literature, using Irish mythology and folklore as their materials.

Yeats, "The Great Founder" as Sean O'Casey called him, helped to found the Irish Literary Society in London in 1892 (the same year as Parnell's death) at his father's home in Bedford Park. In the same year he met the well-to-do Catholic landowner Edward Martyn through

Arthur Symons. In the following year he traveled to Dublin to found the Irish National Literary Society. While the London society was for intellectual and social affairs, the Dublin society was for publishing books, holding open lectures and discussion sessions with distinguished figures in Irish history or on contemporary Irish political problems. Maud Gonne was a devoted member in Ireland, trying to rediscover Irish nationhood through Irish literature and myth. She was also the force behind the creation of a national lending library network in Ireland.

While Yeats was in London, he discussed integrating music, speech and dance into “the applied arts of literature” with his close friend Florence Farr. Yeats writes:

Have not all races had their first unity from a mythology, that marries them to rock and hill? We had in Ireland imaginative stories, which the uneducated classes knew and even sang, and might we not make those stories current among the educated classes, rediscovering for the work's sake what I have called “the applied arts of literature,” the association of literature, that is, with music, speech, and dance, and at last, it might be, so deepen the political passion of the nation that all, artist and poet, craftsman and day-labourer would accept a common design?⁽²⁾

In 1892, Yeats's play *The Countess Kathleen* (changed to *The Countess Cathleen* in 1895), was first staged at the Athenaeum Theatre in London. George Moore's *The Strike at Arlingford* was produced in 1893. In the following year Yeats's one-act curtain-raiser *The Land of Heart's Desire*, written for Florence Farr, was performed at the Avenue Theatre in London and received a favorable review for its romantic and poetic

quality. However, *A Comedy of Sighs* by John Todhunter, a poet and founding member of the Irish Literary Society in London, turned out to be a disaster. In response to Florence Farr's telegram asking for help, G. B. Shaw offered *Arms and the Man*, and it came to be on the same bill a few weeks later.

Around this time most of Yeats's energy had been spent on establishing an Irish theatre as a home base from which to promulgate Irish culture. After he was acquainted with Edward Martyn, Yeats was introduced to Lady Gregory and George Moore through Martyn. When Yeats met Martyn and Lady Gregory at Duras House on the border of County Galway and County Clare in 1897, Yeats casually talked about his project to establish an Irish theatre for Irish drama. However, he knew the difficulty in realizing this project lay in a lack of funding. Lady Gregory encouraged him, saying she would either collect or provide the necessary money. This was the beginning of the subsequent Irish Dramatic Movement.

We went on talking about it, and things seemed to grow possible as we talked, and before the end of the afternoon we had made our plan. We said we would collect money, or rather ask to have a certain sum of money guaranteed. We would then take a Dublin theatre and give a performance of Mr. Martyn's *Heather Field* and one of Mr. Yeats's own plays, *The Countess Cathleen*. I offered the first guarantee of £25⁽³⁾.

W. B. Yeats, Lady Gregory and George Moore were Anglo-Irish Protestants who belonged to what was known as the ascendancy class. Lady Gregory belonged to the Persse family which owned a large estate

called Roxborough in Co. Galway. At the age of 28 she married the 63-year-old Sir William Gregory of Coole Park, a former MP and Governor of Ceylon. She first met Yeats in 1893, and four years later in 1897 Yeats stayed with her at Coole Park. Under Yeats's influence she restarted her study of Irish language, literature and folklore in the Clare-Galway district; she believed that "he [Yeats] would help her out of conventions and prejudices, and give her wings to soar in the free air of ideas and instincts."⁽⁴⁾

On the other hand, Martyn was from a wealthy Roman Catholic landlord who had been exempted from the Penal Laws of 1709 by Act of Queen Anne. His country home was called Tullira Castle which was close to Lady Gregory's Cool Park. His interests lay in language, folk music and Ibsen plays.

Yeats was born in Dublin and spent most of his school holidays in Sligo with her mother's family, the Pollexfens, well-do-do Protestants who owned mills and a shipping company. In 1884 he met George Russell at the Metropolitan School of Art, and the next year he met John O'Leary who introduced him to translating Irish literature into English. Then after reading Standish O'Grady's history books and fictions, he decided to give Irish legends and mythology a new literary expression. He wanted to recreate the forgotten Irish cultural heritage through poetry and drama. Thus Yeats wanted to make the literary arts into an expression of the ancient Irish psyche. He also started to establish a literary theatre where his mystic and intellectual plays would be performed. He wrote his ideas in "The Reform of the Theatre":

We have to write or find plays that will make the theatre a place of intellectual excitement. . . . If we are to do this we must learn that

beauty and truth are always justified of themselves, and that their creation is a greater service to our country than writing that compromises either in the seeming service of a cause. . . . Such plays will require, both in writers and audiences, a stronger feeling for beautiful and appropriate language than one finds in the ordinary theatre.⁽⁵⁾

In 1896 there occurred a crucial incident which had a tremendous effect on the future of the Irish Dramatic Movement: the first meeting of Yeats and Synge in Paris. Yeats recorded the meeting:

I said, 'Give up Paris, you will never create anything by reading Racine, and Arthur Symons will always be a better critic of French literature. Go to the Aran Islands. Live there as if you were one of the people themselves; express a life that has never found expression.' I had just come from Aran and my imagination was full of those grey islands, where men must reap with knives because of the stones.⁽⁶⁾

It was, however, not until 1898 that Synge took Yeats's advice, and went to the Aran Island. It was the year that Yeats's *The Countess Cathleen* and Edward Martyn's *The Heather Field* were performed in Dublin. Yeats's first visit to the Southwark Irish Literary Club in London was in 1888, and it was eleven years later that the Irish Literary Society was established. Lady Gregory came to act as provisional Honorary Secretary, Florence Farr as General Manager, and Edward Martyn, who financed the first year's venture, as Treasurer. None of its members had much experience in theatre. Yeats and Martyn had only written a few plays, but Lady Gregory had as yet written none, though she was to

become a prolific Abbey playwright later. She issued the "Statement for Guarantors" with W. B. Yeats in 1897 on behalf of the Irish Literary Theatre. It stated the basic principle of a 'Celtic or Irish theatre . . . confident of the support of all Irish people, who are weary of misrepresentation, in carrying out a work that is outside all the political questions that divide us'⁽⁷⁾.

The formation of the Irish Literary Theatre in the midst of the Irish Literary Renaissance accidentally coincided with the centenary year of Wolf Tone's revolt against the British reign in 1798; old rebel songs were sung, heroic stories of insurrections were retold, and patriotic feelings were reawakened by Stuart Parnell's Land War and parliamentary campaigns for national freedom and independence. At the same time, the nationalists led by Arthur Griffith strengthened their footing. All those political aspects of the movement had a significant influence on Yeats's Irish Literary Theatre as literary people around him also rediscovered the Irish cultural heritage in mythology and folklore untainted by the English.

Douglas Hyde advocated the nationalist ethos by founding the Gaelic League along with Eóin MacNeil in 1893. Hyde was one of the most inspiring men in the Irish Literary Revival. His influence on Irish literature was not just through his plays in Irish language. In contrast with Yeats's movement, the Gaelic League soon spread to all corners of Ireland and played a vital role in restoring the national ethos and identity, reviving the Irish language among Irish citizens. Hyde stated the importance of the Gaelic League to the members:

To the members of the Gaelic League, the only body in Ireland which appears to realize the fact that Ireland has a past, has a histo-

ry, has a literature, and the only body in Ireland which seeks to render the present a rational continuation of the past. I dedicate this attempt at a review of that literature which despite its present neglected position they feel and know to be a true possession of national importance⁽⁸⁾.

Douglas Hyde was not a revolutionary. He was a scholar and a poet who established the Gaelic League in order to revive the Irish language and literature. His movement was enthusiastically welcomed, as it meant an opportunity to restore the forgotten native language and bring back to the people the lost ancient epics, legends and music of their forebears.

The main purpose of Yeats's movement was to establish the basis for Irish drama, which was theoretically in line with Hyde's movement. Yeats's early letters to Katherine Tynan are the evidence for his desire to have his plays produced for this purpose. He suggested that they should move to set up a more firmly established organization. In January 1897, he wrote to Fiona Macleod, proposing to form a society branch in Paris:

Our Irish Literary and Political Literary organizations are pretty complete (I am trying to start a Young Ireland Society, among the Irish here in Paris at the moment) and I think it would be very possible to get up Celtic plays through these Societies. They would be far more effective than lecturers and might do more than anything else we can do to make the Irish, Scotch and other Celts recognize their solidarity. My own plays are too elaborate, I think, for a start, and have also the disadvantage that I cannot urge my own work in committee. If we have one or two short direct prose plays, of (say)

a mythological and folklore kind, by you and by some writer (I may be able to move O'Grady, I have already spoken to him about it urgently) I feel sure we could get the Irish Literary Society to make a start.⁽⁹⁾

The Irish Dramatic Movement in the 1890s was similar in many ways to what Ole Bull, Björnson and Ibsen had aimed for in the Norwegian theatre. Yeats established the Abbey Theatre, while Douglas Hyde established the Gaelic League, which was to become the core of the Sinn Féin movement. Dawson Byrne describes the similarities thus:

Ibsen wrote a series of plays dealing with life in the heroic age in Norway to teach the people what they had been, and followed them by a series in which he satirized the modern life of his country to convince them that from a splendid manly race they were sinking into a people lacking in all moral stamina . . . The condition in Norway in Ibsen's time was very similar to that in Ireland in the eighteen-nineties.⁽¹⁰⁾

II

The founders of the Irish literary Theatre W. B. Yeats, Lady Gregory and Edward Martyn united for the aim of the spiritual independence of Ireland from England though they differed in their interest and tastes. Their aim was to establish an Irish theatre for the Irish people by an Irish theatre company with Irish actors, presenting Irish problems and aspirations on stage.

They believed that the theatre movement was the most appropriate

medium not only to present current social affairs and difficult political situations in Ireland, but also to make people conscious of the indigenous Irish culture such as Irish mythology and legends. The “peasant play” (a term coined by Annie Horniman), whose protagonists were peasants, had their settings in rural areas. These types of plays were written after the hard struggle for peasant landownership known as the Land War, and the peasant plays, together with Yeats’s Irish myth and Lady Gregory’s Irish folk tales, became the main type of drama presented by the Irish Literary Theatre. This literary movement coincided with a political movement for fostering a national spirit for independence from British rule. Gerald Fay writes:

The original book of rules, which remained in force until after the Abbey Theatre was opened, stated that the objectives of the Society were “To create an Irish National Theatre, to act and produce plays in Irish or English, written by Irish writers, or on Irish subjects; and such dramatic works of foreign authors as would tend to educate and interest the public of this country in the higher aspects of dramatic art.”⁽¹¹⁾

W. B. Yeats sought the Irish spirit in the Gaelic sagas, and Lady Gregory, who spoke Gaelic, also gathered materials for her plays among Irish folklore. Edward Martyn, who became President of the original Sinn Féin organization, was an executive member of the Gaelic League. In addition to those three people, Edward Martyn’s cousin George Moore was also deeply involved with the movement; he was a novelist with theatrical experience and supervised the rehearsals for the first productions of the Irish Literary Theatre.

Unfortunately, Yeats's fundamental idea of the Irish Literary Theatre was incompatible with Edward Martyn's artistic credo, though the manifesto in the first number of *Beltain*, the official publication of the Irish Literary Theatre, apparently supported Martyn's stance:

Norway has a great and successful school of contemporary drama, which grew out of a national literary movement very similar to that now going on in Ireland. Everywhere critics and writers, who wish for something better than the ordinary play of commerce, turn to Norway for an example and an inspiration.⁽¹²⁾

Edward Martyn had direct knowledge of the experimental theatre movements in France and in Germany (the Théâtre Libre in Paris and the Freie Bühne in Berlin), where he found the only hope for dramatic movement. Though the manifesto showed part of the aim of the Irish Literary Theatre was the introduction and propagation of the modern European drama, it would soon become evident that the main focus was on Irish themes about Irish people.

Though the original founders all agreed on the general principle as liberation of the Irish people, they differed in their approach and their dramatic intentions; Yeats and Lady Gregory found inspiration in the life of the peasantry, and tried to create either poetic drama or folk drama whose materials were drawn from Irish mythology and folklore, whereas Martyn and Moore valued cosmopolitan themes, even looking at contemporary Irish problems. Especially, Martyn, the forerunner in Ireland to propagate Ibsenite plays in terms of social and psychological settings, tried to link his own country and the Continent. He regarded Ibsen as his mentor and wanted to present Ibsen's plays or write Ibsen-type plays,

similar in themes and character settings. George Moore, who found the cast for the productions in London, wrote in the Introduction to Edward Martyn's *The Heather Field* that it was "the first play written in English inspired by the examples of Ibsen. . . . A play that possesses qualities of balance, design, sequence is a work of art and will hold its own in any company; and although 'The Heather Field' will seem small by the side of 'The Wild Duck', it will hold its own by the side of 'The Wild Duck,' or 'Macbeth'. . . ."⁽¹³⁾

So when Martyn and Moore saw that theatrical ventures were deviating from the directions they had expected, their withdrawal from the Irish Literary Theatre movement, whose initiative was now taken by Yeats, was inevitable. The difference might be summarized as a clash between national and cosmopolitan ideals.

In the early phase of the Irish Literary Renaissance, Edward Martyn, who wrote *The Heather Field* and *Maeve*, played an important role in establishing the Abbey Theatre. He wanted to achieve in Ireland a cultural and political independence similar to that which Ibsen and Bjørnson had achieved in Norway. Though all of them were wholly dedicated to their mission, they never set out to be political propagandists. They hoped to establish the cultural basis in Dublin as it had been done in Bergen and Christiania (Oslo) by Ibsen. The aim was identical, but what Yeats promoted was a different type of play: "a revolt against realism and the Ibsen-type drama."⁽¹⁴⁾

Yeats personally believed Ibsen to be "immoral", and he never tried realism in his plays. On the other hand, Martyn insisted on presenting the works of Ibsen, as he had worshipped him as the great innovator of the modern drama. Unlike J. M. Synge, who denounced Ibsen and denied the merit of Ibsenite plays in spite of his own indebtedness to Ibsen,

Edward Martyn devoted himself to introducing Ibsenite plays to Ireland as he took a special interest in social and intellectual drama as opposed to folk drama. Thus from the beginning, the Irish Literary Theatre struggled with two divided notions of drama: first, cosmopolitanism vs. nationalism, and the second, realism vs. symbolism. Yet Part of the manifesto of the Irish Literary Theatre, signed by Lady Gregory, Edward Martyn and W. B. Yeats in 1897, clearly stated their firm conviction to work together for the united purpose:

We propose to have performed in Dublin, in the spring of every year certain Celtic and Irish plays, which whatever be their degree of excellence will be written with a high ambition, and so to build up a Celtic and Irish school of dramatic literature. We hope to find in Ireland an uncorrupted and imaginative audience trained to listen by its passion for oratory, and believe that our desire to bring upon the stage the deeper thoughts and emotions of Ireland will ensure for us a tolerant welcome, and that freedom to experiment which is not found in theatres of England, and without which no new movement in art or literature can succeed. We will show that Ireland is not the home of buffoonery and of easy sentiment, as it has been represented, but the home of an ancient idealism. We are confident of the support of all Irish people, who are weary of misrepresentation, in carrying out a work that is outside all the political questions that divide us.⁽¹⁵⁾

But ironically, their intentions were misconstrued from the beginning by Arthur Griffith and the general public. Yeats's aspiration was basically the same as Arthur Griffith's; to propagate indigenous Irish culture. The nationalists, however, were skeptical about Yeats's movement

for establishing Irish identity through Irish theatre and Celtic dramatic literature, even though Arthur Griffith's statement of intent basically echoed Yeats's:

We look to the Irish National Theatre primarily as a means of regenerating the country. The Theatre is a powerful agent in the building up of a nation. When it is in foreign and hostile hands, it is a deadly danger to the country. When it is controlled by native and friendly hands it is a bulwark and a protection.⁽¹⁶⁾

The Irish Literary Theatre was officially founded at a meeting of the Council of the National Literary Society in January 1899. The symbolic plays *The Heather Field* by Edward Martyn and *The Countess Cathleen* by Yeats were produced at the Antient Concert Rooms on Brunswick Street (now Pearse Street), on May 8th, 1899. It was memorable for Martyn that he made his debut as a dramatist in the same year when Ibsen laid down his pen forever. Martyn's *The Heather Field* became more popular than Yeats's *The Countess Cathleen* which faced denunciation even before the opening night on the grounds that it lacked religious orthodoxy. The Roman Catholic archbishop of Dublin, Cardinal Logue, also condemned the play because it included scenes of bartering souls for money with the devil.

While the land troubles and the famine were viewed only from the peasants' point of view in *The Countess Cathleen*, *The Heather Field* looked at the sufferings of the landlords who went through agrarian unrest caused by the Land League. The difficult situation of the landlords were depicted from the landowners' viewpoint. It is undeniable that Parnell's Land League's constant resistance brought about unrest in the

countryside, even while it produced substantial benefits for the peasants. Although these plays were staged in Ireland, they had to be rehearsed in London as there were no professional actors in Ireland at that time. In case of Yeats's *The Countess Cathleen*, Florence Farr, an English actress, was appointed General Manager and played the part of Aleel, the Bard.

The Irish Literary Theatre's second season was in the year of 1900. They again brought in English actors for three productions at a bigger stage of the Gaiety Theatre; George Moore's adaptation of Edward Martyn's *The Tale of a Town*, titled *The Bending of the Bough*, and two shorter pieces — *The Last Feast of the Fianna* by Alice Milligan and *Maeve* by Edward Martyn.

The Bending of the Bough was a satire and a provincial Irish adaptation of Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People*. *The Last Feast of Fianna* was a play taken from the Fenian mythological cycle, and *Maeve* was a mixture of Ibsenite realism and Irish saga. Yeats proudly wrote in *Beltaine*, "We have brought the 'literary drama' to Ireland, and it has become a reality."⁽¹⁷⁾ After the advent of J. M. Synge as the "savior" of Yeats's dramatic movement, the current of Irish drama shifted more to the provincial drama, though Martyn's enthusiasm of cosmopolitan drama never died down. After Martyn severed relations with the Irish Literary Theatre, he joined forces with Padraic Colum, and launched a new theatre project called the Theatre of Ireland. Their first programme was Seumas O'Cuisin's *The Racing Lug*, Douglas Hyde's *The Twisting of the Rope*, and the fourth act of Ibsen's *Brand*. The Ibsenite Martyn continued to present controversial Ibsen plays, *A Doll's House*, *Hedda Gabler* and *The Master Builder* at the Gaiety Theatre in Dublin by an English company, and then went on to produce plays by Strindberg, Chekhov and Maeterlinck, and also John Galsworthy.

Though Martyn made an effort to present Ibsenite plays with the help of George Moore, they were completely overshadowed by J. M. Synge's peasant plays, which at first caused uproar, but later became popular sensations. At this time Martyn said, "If I could have written capable peasant plays, which I could not because they do not interest me, in that the peasant's primitive minds is too crude for any sort of interesting complexity in treatment . . ."⁽¹⁸⁾

In the same way that Synge's plays have been acknowledged as forming the basic style of Irish plays, Martyn's contribution to the development in the areas other than the peasant plays should be given its due. Synge depicted the peasants' primitive mentality and their crude lifestyles, while Martyn emphasized social aspects through drama, as his mentor Ibsen had done. It is interesting, though, that Synge denounced Ibsen and yet there is a great deal of evidence of Synge's indebtedness to Ibsen; hitherto it has often been overlooked because of Synge's disparagement of Ibsen and his self-proclaimed innate originality.

As Jan Setterquist elaborately proved through his detailed comparisons of Ibsen's and Synge's plays, it is unmistakable that Synge was influenced by Ibsen, which is totally different from Martyn's case. Martyn advocated Ibsen, as G. B. Shaw did in his *Quintessence of Ibsenism*, and followed Ibsen's principles such as in *Mrs. Warren's Profession* and *Widowers' Houses*. Jan Setterquist acknowledged that both Edward Martyn and J. M. Synge played important roles in the development of Irish drama. He says, "Without Edward Martyn, the modern Irish drama might never have been born. Without Synge, it would have died in early childhood."⁽¹⁹⁾ While Edward Martyn followed Ibsen's style and contents, J. M. Synge wrote indigenous, seemingly original, Irish peasant plays, opposing to the Ibsenite style of plays. Synge wrote in the preface to

The Tinker's Wedding:

The drama, like the symphony, does not teach or prove anything. Analysts with their problems, and teachers with their systems, are soon as old-fashioned as the pharmacopoeia of Galan — look at Ibsen and the Germans — but the best plays of Ben Jonson and Molière can no more go out of fashion than the blackberries on the hedges.⁽²⁰⁾

In its initial stages, the Irish Dramatic Movement's main problem was not just to find dramatists and play scripts, but actors who could present the plays. First they had to make do with hiring English actors and actresses to perform Irish plays. But unfortunately these actors could not pronounce the Irish accent well enough to make the Irish plays sound authentic. So George Russell introduced Yeats to William Fay, the leader of an amateur theatrical group, the Comedy Combination of the Ormonde Dramatic Society. William Fay, a director and also a comic actor, and his brother Frank Fay had been already performing many short plays, sketches in small halls around Dublin. In 1899 the Fay brothers were working with amateur actors in a small group.

Before they were fully affiliated with the Irish Dramatic Movement, they were once asked by Maud Gonne who had organized the women's section of a nationalist group of the Gaelic League called *Inghinidhe na hÉireann* (the Daughters of Erin). It was a women's political and cultural society which held classes in Irish history, music, literature and art, and also had a small dramatic company. Though William Fay was associated with this patriotic Irish theatre group, it is doubtful whether he acted for the cause of nationalism or patriotism like Maud Gonne; his main concern was to have an Irish group of acting as it would not be a

national theatre without any Irish actors in it. When Yeats explained his project of the national drama, the Fay brothers became enthusiastic about it, mainly because of the opportunity it presented to act for a more Irish audience.

In terms of acting and the national theatre movement, Yeats and the Fay brothers were nothing original. A Norwegian composer Ole Bull had already shown an example in establishing Norwegian National Theatre, forming a highly regarded dramatic company through training amateur Norwegian actors. This movement echoed through Europe; André Antoine had opened the frugally-equipped back-street experimental theatre Théâtre Libre in Paris in 1887. The Fay brothers, who were ardent admirers of the French realist André Antoine, got their inspiration from him; the basic elements of their acting style were realism in scenery, language and dress, with moderate gestures. The Fay brothers also followed Antoine's example of actors' collaborative efforts, without the need for any particular star actor. This was comparable in almost every respect to the "Method" acting done by Stanislavsky. In answer to the question whether there is a link between Stanislavsky's Method acting and theirs, the Irish actor Barry Fitzgerald replied: "We have been using 'the Method' since the Abbey opened only we never called it by that name ."⁽²¹⁾

III

Yeats and Lady Gregory, together with George Russell, welcomed the unification of separate theatre movements. However, George Moore and Edward Martyn were not keen on this collaboration. As was always the case, Yeats's opinion was weightier than either Moore's or Martyn's

as the next phase of the Irish Dramatic Movement began. The Irish Literary Theatre's third season, in 1901 at the Gaiety Theatre, was with Yeats's *Diarmuid and Grainne*, and Douglas Hyde's *Casadh an tSugáin* (*The Twisting of the Rope*). The former was performed by an English company led by Frank Benson, and the latter was performed by the Keating Branch of the Gaelic League with Hyde in the leading role. This year was memorable for the Irish Dramatic Movement in two respects. It was the last year that an English professional company was brought in, and also the first year that a play in the Irish language was performed in a major theatre in Dublin by amateur members under the direction of William Fay.

While Yeats's dramatic movement was gaining ground and was ready to establish the Irish National Theatre Society, the amateur actor and director William Fay was forming the Irish National Dramatic Company with his brother Frank, as well as collaborators Dudley Diggers, P. J. Kelly, C. Caulfield, Maire Quinn, Maire Nic Shiubhlaigh, Padraic Colum, James Cousins, F. J. Ryan and Brian Callender. The first Irish play the Fay brothers became involved in was *Deirdre* by George Russell, a tragedy in the Ulster Cycle. They also performed Yeats's patriotic one-act play *Cathleen ni Houlihan*, in which the Queen (played by Maud Gonne) disguised as a poor old woman (symbolizing Ireland) inspires a young man, engaged to be married shortly, to join the fight for independence of Ireland at the time of the 1798 Rising. Those two plays were presented in St. Teresa's Convent Hall in Dublin in 1902. Lady Gregory was among the audience, and was impressed with the acting of the Fays' theatre group. Gabriel Fallon related the incident:

Later we saw her [Lady Gregory] talking earnestly with the

Fays and A. E. [George Russell], pointing at parts of the stage, apparently suggesting improvements and renovations. Although we did not know it, we were witnessing the conception of the Irish National Theatre Society and the real beginning of the movement that was to bring us into the Abbey Theatre.⁽²²⁾

After the success of these performances, the Irish National Theatre Society was founded in 1903 to develop the Irish Literary Theatre on a more permanent basis. It was then officially unified under the scheme of the Irish Dramatic Movement. Yeats became President of the Irish National Theatre Society with Maud Gonne, George Russell and Douglas Hyde as Vice-Presidents, and William Fay as Stage Manager. Yeats began to energetically write plays with the Fay brothers in mind: *On Baile's Strand*, *The Hour-Glass*, *The King's Threshold* and *The Shadowy Waters*. William Fay also played the title role in *The Playboy of the Western World* by Synge. His presentation of the chief male characters of major Synge's plays became the role model of the Irish peasant plays, whereas Frank Fay contributed by training the company members. The success of Yeats's dramatic movement owed in many aspects to their theatrical experience and practical knowledge.

Yeats, Lady Gregory, Synge and the Fays were not extreme political activists, unlike Maud Gonne or George Russell who regarded the theatre as the place for championing political and nationalist causes. Yeats was theoretically in a position to determine the course of their Movement, but the nationalists tended to follow George Russell's directions. Besides, in the initial stages of the Movement each member of the society had an equal vote. Therefore decisions were made democratically; Yeats had to be careful not to be outnumbered in the decision making

process. In a letter to Frank Fay, Yeats lamented it would be difficult to maintain artistic ideals when the nationalists demanded that the plays should incite nationalistic feelings among the audience. In order to counterbalance the nationalistic group members, Yeats contrived to form a reading committee in 1903, which would judge the plays to be performed. The members were Yeats, George Russell, Lady Gregory, F. J. Ryan, Padraic Colum, Arthur Griffith and Maud Gonne.

J. M. Synge completed *Riders to the Sea* and *In the Shadow of the Glen* in 1903 and gave readings to Yeats and Lady Gregory. Yeats liked the plays and decided to present *In the Shadow of the Glen* with his own *The King's Threshold*, *The Hour Glass*, *Cathleen ni Houlihan*, and *The Pot of Broth*, Padraic Colum's *Broken Soil*, Fred Ryan's *The Laying of the Foundations*, Edward Martyn's *The Heather Field*, George Moor's *The Untilled Field*, and Lady Gregory's first play *Twenty-Five*. Later in the same year, Padraic Colum and Synge joined Yeats, and the group grew into the Irish National Theatre Society.

IV

When Synge's *In the Shadow of the Glen* was performed, it was bitterly criticized by devout Catholics and fervent nationalists as an insult to both parties; it abused the chastity of Irishwomen and was profane against the sacred honour of marriage. Maud Gonne left the auditorium in protest against Synge's misrepresentation of Irish women. The split between the factions became explicit when Maud Gonne, Dudley Digges and Maire Quinn openly disapproved of Yeats's *The Land of Heart's Desire* as well as Synge's plays because they were an insult to Catholicism and portrayed the abuse of Irish women. This eventually led to

Maud Gonne's resignation from the Irish National Theatre Society. After Synge joined the initial members, the balance of power within the group began to shift considerably. J. M. Synge effectively took over the position of Edward Martyn, who had already withdrawn from Yeats's Movement. Annie Horniman also started to be involved with the Movement as a patron. When she obtained the lease of the Mechanics' Institute (a small theatre mainly for vaudeville shows), she asked the architect Joseph Holloway to convert it to a bigger theatre. He recorded the terms in his diary:

The Patent shall empower the patentee to exhibit plays of the Irish and English languages written by Irish writers on Irish subjects, or such dramatic works of foreign authors as would tend to interest the public in the higher works of dramatic art.⁽²⁴⁾

He also wrote to W. B. Yeats, demonstrating his enthusiasm towards contributing to the Movement:

Dear Mr. Yeats,

I have a great sympathy with the artistic and dramatic aims of the Irish National Theatre Company, as publicly explained by you on various occasions. I am glad to be able to offer you my assistance in your endeavours to establish a permanent Theatre in Dublin.⁽²⁵⁾

Yeats had been associated with Annie Horniman in the Theosophical Society known as Order of the Golden Dawn, where Madame Blavatsky's theories were practiced. She was independently wealthy, as she had received her father's inheritance. Not only was she interested in

spiritualistic matters but also had a passion for theatre. When she applied to Dublin Castle for the Royal Letters Patent in 1904, she learned that she was not qualified as an applicant because she had to be living in Ireland; her residence was in England. So Lady Gregory received the patent on behalf of her. According to the patent, the plays produced there had to be written by Irish authors or translated from Continental language, or depicting Irish life, or more than a hundred years old.

W. B. Yeats summarized his purpose and his own dramatic approach in *Samhain* in 1904:

What attracts me to drama is that it is . . . what all the arts are upon a last analysis. A farce and a tragedy are alike in this, that they are a moment of intense life. An action is taken out of all other actions; it is reduced to its simple form. . . . The characters that are involved in it are freed from everything that is not a part of that action; and whether it is, as in the less important kinds of drama, a mere bodily activity . . . or as it is in the more important kinds, an activity of the souls of the characters, it is an energy, an eddy of life purified from everything but itself. The dramatist must picture life in action, with an unpreoccupied mind, as the musician pictures her in sound and the sculptor in form.

When the Abbey Theatre officially opened on 27 December, 1904, with Yeats's *On Baile's Strand*, and *Kathleen Ni Houlihan*, Lady Gregory's *Spreading the News*, and J. M. Synge's *In the Shadow of the Glen*, it was hailed as a pioneering theatre for the new dramatic movement, in the same way as Théâtre Libre in Paris, Frie Bühne in Berlin and the Independent Theatre in London had been. Sara Allgood became a com-

pany member, and William Fay became the principal actor and the stage manager. As Gerard Fay stated, the objective of the Abbey Theatre was:

To create an Irish National Theatre, to act and produce plays in Irish or English, written by Irish writers, or on Irish subjects; and such dramatic works of foreign authors as would tend to educate and interest the public of this country in the higher aspects of dramatic art.⁽²⁷⁾

Towards the end of 1905 the Irish National Theatre Society became the National Theatre Society (a limited company) with the help of Horniman's additional subsidies. The former egalitarian procedures for deciding the policies of the Abbey Theatre was abolished because decision-making could not be done smoothly. The democratic process did not work well, at least for Yeats. However, even after it became a professional theatre company, the National Theatre Society had no particular interest in making their company commercially successful.

When W. B. Yeats, Lady Gregory and J. M. Synge formed the Board of Directors, the Fay brothers lost power and were demoted to mere shareholders together with Sara Allgood, Udolphus Wright and Vera Esposito. The Board of Directors was entitled to "appoint and remove stage manager, business manager and all other employees, fix their salaries and arrange their duties."⁽²⁸⁾ In consequence of this monopoly of directorship by the playwrights, actors became dissatisfied with this unilateral decision by Yeats and Lady Gregory. The Fay brothers' final separation from the Society was imminent.

While J. M. Synge and Lady Gregory were each producing their plays, new playwrights like William Boyle, Padraic Colum, and Ruther-

ford Mayne and the so-called 'Cork Dramatists' such as Lennox Robinson, T. C. Murray, and R. J. Fay appeared. Colum dealt with the theme of the troubles of families and their flight from the land. He was on the side of the anti-Synge faction at the time of *The Playboy* riots, but gave his play *Thomas Muskerry* to the Abbey after Synge's death. Among the Abbey playwrights, Lady Gregory was regarded as the leading folk playwright, and J. M. Synge was seen as the originator of the prototypical Irish folk play. Denis Johnston writes on this:

Although Yeats and Lady Gregory are rightly regarded as the centerpieces of the Irish theatrical renaissance, it was Synge far more than either of these who gave the movement its national quality, and left to the world the type of play that has since become the prototype of Irish folk drama.⁽²⁹⁾

But it was Padraic Colum who actually created the first Irish peasant drama. Hans-George Stalder writes:

Padraic Colum was the first of the peasant dramatists, in the strict sense of the word; he was, that is to say, the first to dramatise the realities of rural life in Ireland. Where Synge's fantastic intuition divined human prototypes, Colum's realistic insight revealed local peasant types, whose general significance is subordinate to the immediate purpose of the dramatist. Together they define the limits within which our folk-drama has developed, for none of the later playwrights has added anything to the tradition initiated by Padraic Colum and J. M. Synge.⁽³⁰⁾

Padraic Colum became a member of the Fay brothers' group as early as 1901, and took part in the production of Geroge Rusell's *Deirdre* in 1902. His most famous peasant plays were *Broken Soil* (1903), *Land* (1905) and *Thomas Muskerry* (1910). Synge had previously written *In the Shadow of the Glen* (1903), but it was *The Playboy of the Western World* (1907) that attracted the attention of the public and the media. Consequently, *The Playboy* contributed to the Abbey Theatre financially, but William Boyle decided to withdraw his plays (*The Building Fund*, *The Eloquent Dempsey*, and *Mineral Workers*) from the Abbey Theatre in protest to the contents of *The Playboy*.

Annie Horniman was dissatisfied not only with the productions of *The Playboy*, but with most productions in general at the Abbey Theatre. One month after *The Playboy* riots, she insisted on bringing an English actor and director Ben Iden Payne as director for the Abbey Theatre, which virtually meant the dismissal of William Fay. Synge became a mediator and drew up a compromising proposal that Payne should be an overall director and director of Yeats's plays, while William Fay had complete control of 'dialect work' and should have his wages increased as compensation.

This forceful introduction of an English director by an English woman shook the basis of the principle of "an Irish theatre by Irish people for Irish people." This motion inevitably worsened the relationship between Annie Horniman and the Abbey Theatre actors. Their relationship deteriorated considerably during the company's tour to England. The Fay brothers' eventual resignation came just ten months after Payne was posted in February 1907.

While the Fay brothers were part of the company, Frank Fay played Forgael in *The Shadowy Waters*, Seanchan in *The King's Thresh-*

old, Naisi in *Deirdre* and Conchulain in *Baile's Strand* of Yeats's plays. In J. M. Synge's plays, William Fay played the Tramp in *In the Shadow of the Glen*, Martin Doull in *The Well of the Saint*, Christy Mahon in *The Playboy of the Western World*. Even after they left the Abbey Theatre their legacy remained; their naturalistic acting and the 'teamwork without a star actor' system became the norm of the Abbey Theatre.

Though Annie Horniman stipulated that the Abbey Theatre should not be the platform for political campaign, they produced G. B. Shaw's *The Shewing-up of Blanco Posnet* (1909) banned by the Lord Chamberlain in England. This was interpreted as an act of defiance not only to the British authority, but to Annie Horniman. The already-testy relationship between the Abbey Theatre and Annie Horniman deteriorated to the point where any spark might have caused an explosion.

In 1910, when King Edward VII died, the then director Lennox Robinson did not cancel the performance on the same night mainly because of communication trouble with telegrams between Lady Gregory and him. This incident triggered Annie Horniman's anger, and the final decision to withdraw her financial support of the Abbey Theatre was made. This was a severe financial blow to the management of the Abbey Theatre, though it won back the nationalists' support.

In order to keep the Abbey Theatre open, the company had to go on tour to America. During the first trip in 1911, in many cities, they met protesters and criticism from all corners of society, especially by Irish Americans. In Philadelphia they were even arrested for performing the "immoral" play *The Playboy of the Western World*.

Until it was given the status of national theatre in 1914 with an annual grant by the government of the Irish Free State (the first such case among English-speaking countries), the Abbey Theatre existed only

through the arduous efforts of Lady Gregory. She spent as much time and energy smoothing out difficulties between the Abbey Theatre and Dublin Castle as she did writing plays (more than thirty of them) as well as translations and adaptations from Molière and other French dramatists. Without her consistent effort and devotion to the development of the Irish Dramatic Movement, W. B. Yeats alone could not have sustained it, and the Abbey Theatre might well have been dissolved. Ann Saddlemeyer emphasizes Lady Gregory's contribution:

The spirit of Lady Gregory reigned longer than Synge's or Yeats's at the Abbey Theatre, partly because she had learned her trade on its boards, more so because of her driving ambition, the preservation and care of an institution which she felt could once more bring dignity to Ireland.⁽³¹⁾

As Lady Gregory's effort bore fruit, Synge's folk drama, as well as Padraic Colum's, set the standard of Irish folk drama. The plays which followed the pattern of Padraic Colum's and Synge's folk dramas were *The Cross Roads* (1909) and *Harvest* (1910), (both Ibsenite analyses of provincial life by Lennox Robinson), *The Troth* (1909), in which a Catholic and a Protestant farmer unite in a plan to murder an oppressive landlord, and *Red Turf* (1911), which portrayed hunger for land and agrarian murder in Galway, both by the Japan-born Rutherford Mayne. Also in this canon are George Fitzmaurice's *The Country Dressmaker* (1907), *The Pie-dish* (1908) and *The Magic Glasses* (1913), plays combining peasant realism and satire with symbolism and fantasy, Michael J. Mollay's, *The Old Road* (1943) and *The Wood of the Whispering* (1953), which dealt with the inevitability of emigration in the poverty-stricken

west of Ireland, and John B. Keane's *The Field* (1965), which portrayed an obstinate farmer's obsession with the land. Those playwrights' didactic treatment of Irish country life was part of their strong patriotic message. But it was often mistaken for hostile expressions by nationalists, as in the case of Synge's plays. However, these realistic folk dramas went on to become the tradition of the Abbey Theatre.

The year 1925 was also a memorable one for the Abbey Theatre as it acquired an experimental theatre space, the Peacock Theatre, in the adjoining building. Less than a year later, in 1926, the Abbey Theatre faced more controversy in the production of *The Plough and the Stars*⁽³²⁾ by Sean O'Casey, which took the Easter Rising as its subject. Protests were made by participants in the Easter Rising and the victims' families and also by the nationalists when the Irish Citizen Army brought the national flag (designed by George Russell) into a pub where a prostitute was among the customers. Yeats made a speech in defense of Sean O'Casey, as he had done for Synge:

You have disgraced yourselves again. Is this to be an ever-recurring celebration of the arrival of Irish genius? Synge first and then O'Casey. The news of the happening of the last few minutes will go from country to country. Dublin has rocked the cradle of genius. From such a scene in this theatre went for the fame of Synge, Equally the fame of O'Casey is born here tonight. This is his apotheosis.⁽³³⁾

Yeats later reminisced about his Dramatic Movement and summed up the contribution of the Abbey theatre to Ireland, if rather sarcastically:

The Abbey Theatre can never do all we had hoped. . . . We have

been the first to create a true “People’s Theatre,” and we have succeeded because it is not an exploitation of local colour, or of a limited form of drama possessing a temporary novelty, but the first doing of something for which the world is ripe, something that will be done all over the world and done more and more perfectly: the making articulate of all the dumb classes each with its own knowledge of the world, its own dignity, but all objective with the objectivity of the office and the workshop, of the newspaper and the street, of mechanism and of politics. Yet we did not set out to create this sort of theatre, and its success has been to me a discouragement and a ⁽³⁴⁾defeat.

Though Yeats negatively assessed his achievement, what he had contributed to the development of Irish theatre movement and the eventual independence of Ireland (though not yet in its entirety) should never be underestimated.

V

Some decades after the Theatre was established, in 1951, a fire destroyed the back-stage area of the Abbey Theatre. The government decided to build a new building worthy of Irish National Theatre, rather than restoring only the damaged part of the theatre. The Irish government defined Ireland’s national identity in terms of drama and tried to fortify the bonds of the Irish people by fostering Irish drama both in Irish and English languages. The capacity of the new Abbey Theatre completed in 1966 was 628 seats, 100 more than the original theatre.

The Abbey Theatre had always been the centre of the “Celtic Ren-

aissance". But it was also an epicenter for rows and riots led by nationalists and pious Catholics over the content of plays. W. B. Yeats, J. M. Synge and Sean O'Casey, all three major dramatists at the Abbey Theatre met the audience's protests. Nonetheless, the Abbey Theatre was of vital importance not only as a place to represent the Irish people, but also to create talented playwrights and actors and significant plays. Ann Saddlemyer states how the Abbey Theatre worked as a central hub in the dramatic movement in "Worn Out With Dreams".

. . . how Yeats "discovered" their first playwright in a Paris attic, and twenty years later Lady Gregory nurtured the second in a Dublin slum; and how during the period between Synge and O'Casey the Abbey became a symbol not only of the "Celtic Renaissance" but of a specific tradition in playwriting, producing, and acting.⁽³⁵⁾

A century has passed since the establishment of the Abbey Theatre by W. B. Yeats, Lady Gregory, and the Fay brothers. The Irish drama of the Abbey Theatre has produced many Irish playwrights who now enjoy international fame: Brian Friel, Frank McGuinness, Tom Murphy, Thomas Kilroy, Bernard Farrell and Marina Carr. Without Yeats's Dramatic Movement these playwrights' magnificent plays might never have been written.

The Irish government is currently planning to build a new Abbey Theater of over 24,000 square meters in size at Dockland's area at George Dock in Dublin. It will have three auditorium spaces, equal to the National Theatre in Britain. In this theatre, the dreams of Yeats and his fellow members of the Abbey Theatre will surely live on for many more centuries.

Notes

- (1) Elizabeth Coxhead, *Daughters of Erin: Five Women of the Irish Renaissance* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1965), p. 21.
- (2) W. B. Yeats, *The Autobiography of William Butler Yeats* (New York: Macmillan, 1938), p. 169.
- (3) Lady Gregory, *Our Irish Theatre* (London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1914), pp. 6-7.
- (4) George Moore, *Vale* (London: Heinemann, 1933), p. 548.
- (5) Francis Bickley, *J. M. Synge and the Irish Dramatic Movement* (London: Constable and Company, 1912), p. 68.
- (6) W. B. Yeats, *Essays and Introductions* (London: Macmillan, 1961), p. 299.
- (7) See Warwick Gould, John Kelly and Deirdre Toomey (eds.) *The Collected Letters of W. B. Yeats*, Volume II 1896-1900 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), p. 123-5.
- (8) See Hans-Georg Stalder, *Anglo-Irish Peasant Drama: The Motifs of Land and Emigration* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1978), p. 13.
- (9) Robin Skelton and Ann Saddlemyer, *The World of W. B. Yeats* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1965), p. 77.
- (10) Dawson Byrne, *The Story of Ireland's National Theatre: The Abbey Theatre, Dublin* (Dublin: The Talbot Press, 1929), pp. 8-9.
- (11) Gerard Fay, *The Abbey Theatre* (London: Hollis & Carter, 1958), p. 45.
- (12) *Beltaine*, May 1899, p. 6.
- (13) Edward Martyn *The Heather Field* (London: Duckworth & Co., 1899), p. xxiii.
- (14) J. M. Synge, *Synge: The Complete Plays* (London: Methuen, 1963), p. 4.
- (15) Lady Gregory, *Our Irish Theatre*, pp. 8-9.
- (16) Arthur Griffith, in Editorial, *The United Irishman*, in 8 Nov. 1902, p. I.
- (17) See David H. Greene and Edward M. Stephens, *J. M. Synge 1871-1909* (New York: Macmillan, 1959), p. 108.
- (18) Jan Setterquist, *Ibsen and the Beginnings of Anglo-Irish Drama II. Edward Martyn* (Dublin: Hodges, Figgis & Co., 1960), p. 20.
- (19) *Ibid.*, p. 101.
- (20) J. M. Synge, *Synge: The Complete Plays*, p. 108.
- (21) G. A. Duncan, *The Abbey Theatre in Pictures* (Dublin, The National Press Service of Ireland, 1963), p. 12.
- (22) Gabriel Fallon, *The Abbey and The Actor* (Dublin: The National Theatre Society, 1969), p. 13.

- (23) Oscar Wilde described the uproar caused by this play as “the rage of Caliban at seeing his own face in the glass” See W. G. Fay and Catherine Carswell, *The Fays of the Abbey Theatre* (London: Rich & Cowan, 1935) , p. 140.
- (24) Peter Kavanagh, *The Story of the Abbey Theatre: From Its Origin in 1899 to the Present* (New York: Devin-Adair, 1950) , p. 42.
- (25) See Shella Gooddie, *Annie Horniman* (London: Methuen, 1990) , p. 60.
- (26) Robin Skelton and Ann Saddlemyer, *The World of W. B. Yeats* , p. 57.
- (27) Gerard Fay, *The Abbey Theatre* (London: Hollis & Carter, 1958) , p. 45.
- (28) Robin Skelton and Ann Saddlemyer, *The World of W. B. Yeats*, pp. 86-87.
- (29) Denis Johnston, *John Millington Synge* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965) , p. 3.
- (30) Hans-Georg Stalder, *Anglo-Irish Peasant Drama: The Motifs of Land and Emigration*, p. 335.
- (31) Ann Saddlemyer, *In Defence of Lady Gregory, Playwright* (Dublin: The Dolmen Press, 1966) , p. 102.
- (32) With its quality and the media attention, *The Plough and the Stars* became the longest running play in the Abbey theatre: 457 times; Synge’s *The Playboy of the Western World* in 1907 was 249 times. Later, in 1928, the Peacock Theatre was let to Hilton Edwards and Michael Macliammóir, which helped them to establish the Dublin Gate Theatre later.
- (33) See Harold Bloom, *Sean O’Casey* (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1987) , pp. 7-8.
- (34) Robin Skelton and Ann Saddlemyer, *The World of W. B. Yeats*, p. 76.
- (35) *Ibid.*, p. 74.