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De WAIDE

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IN THE
PLAYS OF
LADY
GREGORY

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THE CONCEPT OF THE IRISHMAN IN THE PLAYS OF LADY GREGORY

A Thesis

Presented to

the Faculty of the Department of English

University of New Mexico

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

by

Lucile DeWaide

June 1952

This thesis, directed and approved by the candidate's committee, has been accepted by the Graduate Committee of the University of New Mexico in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This study will attempt to show the nature, attitudes, and beliefs of the Irishman in the plays of Isabella Augusta Persse (Lady Gregory). Born in 1852 in County Galway, Lady Gregory was an acute observer of the Irish scene and a woman actively interested in Irish politics and Irish social problems throughout her long and fruitful lifetime. This project was undertaken because there seems to be some question of what the real Irishman is like. Is the real Irishman the stage type frequently seen in films and on the boards? In a study of Irish literature, Willis D. Jacobs, professor of English at the University of New Mexico, points out that "Samuel Lover (1797-1868) and Charles Lever (1806-1872) were the proud fathers of this caricatured Irishman. They endowed him with most of his possessions, planted the clay pipe firmly in his mouth and the begorrahs in his teeth.[1] Dissatisfaction with such an idea of the Irishman is easily understood. Dr. Jacobs calls him a "caricatured" Irishman. Disbelief in the nineteenth century stage Irishman was also expressed by George Bernard Shaw. When the Irish players were on tour, Shaw was asked whether he thought there would be trouble with the Clan-na-Gael in New York. Shaw's reply was,

> I think there may be trouble anywhere where there are men who have lost touch with Ireland and still keep up the

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[1] Willis D. Jacobs, "John M. Synge," unpublished M.A. Thesis (University of New Mexico, 1937), pp. 108-109.

> old bragging and posing. You must bear in mind that Ireland is now in full reaction against them. The stage Irishman of the nineteenth century, generous, drunken, thriftless, with a joke always on his lips and a sentimental tear always in the eye, was highly successful as a borrower of money from Englishmen--both in Old and New England--who indulged and despised him because he flattered their sense of superiority.[2]

It may be that the Irishmen who appear in these plays are not all typical of all Irishmen. The plays here considered reveal, naturally, the character of men and women--mostly of the Irish folk or legendary type--as seen through the eyes of one woman. It will not necessarily be the same character that J. M. Synge shows in his "Maurya," that Edward Martyn shows in his reverent plays, that Yeats depicts in his poetic dramas, or that A. E. records in his mystical presentations. This study, furthermore, will consider only the thirty original plays--not the translations from Moliere, Suderman, Pirandello and Goldoni, or her collaborations with Douglas Hyde, W. B. Yeats and others, of which there were many. Cornelius Weygant, an alert American critic of Irish literature and a contemporary of Lady Gregory, warns that "it is more than dangerous to dogmatize where so many races went to the making of a people as went to the making of Anglo-Irishmen and Americans."[3]

However, there may be found to occur certain consistencies of character in the plays to be examined. If these consistencies are found, and if they may, because of the capabilities, talent,

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[2] Lady Gregory, Our Irish Theatre (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1913), p. 301.

[3] Cornelius Weygant, Irish Plays and Playwrights (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1913), pp. 135-136.

and background of the playwright and because of the conditions under which they were meant to be produced, be taken as Irish, it is hoped that whatever conclusions are reached may be of value in adding to the material pointing to a truthful, just portrayal of the Irishman. It was somewhat the same sense of dissatisfaction that led the founders of the Irish Literary Theatre to action. Lady Gregory says that she and her associates made this promise when asking guarantees for the Irish Literary Theatre (later the Abbey Theatre): "We will show that Ireland is not the home of buffoonery and easy sentiment, as it has been represented, but the home of an ancient idealism."[4]

Since characters in plays must speak, act and show feeling, and since the drama is the expression of human feeling, it may be that the typical Irishman can be found in Irish plays by Irish playwrights. Weygant explains that "it is in character, in ideals, in atmosphere, in color, that drama must be native, and in color and in atmosphere, in ideals and in character the Abbey Theatre drama is Irish."[5] George Bernard Shaw remarked that "Lady Gregory's plays are penetrated by....intense love of Ireland....She writes about the Irish as Molière wrote about the French, having a talent curiously like Molière."[6]

It would seem therefore, that the drama is an authentic and profitable place to search for the projection of the real Irishman.

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[4]Gregory, op. cit., p. 8.
[5]Weygant, op. cit., p. 14.
[6]Gregory, op. cit., p. 302.

And since the plays of Lady Gregory reflect her intimate knowledge of the folk aspects of the Irish people, will serve the purpose of this paper better than most, this study will be confined to them.

Space does not allow following through all the Abbey plays; therefore, those of Lady Gregory will be taken to be representative. It is hoped that since Lady Gregory was qualified to write about Ireland, since her desire was to portray truth, since her heart was with the people, and since it was the aim of the Abbey (her organ of expression) to present Irish idealism, the plays written by her and given by that theatre will yield material to furnish insight into the character of the Irishman as this percipient Protestant Irishwoman actually saw him.

Weygant places Lady Gregory in relation to some of the others in this way:

> Synge, the master dramatist of the new movement, while he does not reproduce the average Irishman, is just as natively Irish in his extravagance and irony as the old folktale of the "Two Hags"; Lady Gregory in her farces is in a similar way representative of the riot of West-country imagination; and Mr. Yeats, if further removed from the Irishman of today, is very like, in many of his moods, to the riddling bards of long ago. The later men, many of them, are altogether Irish, representative of the fold of one or another section of the country....[7]

Not every character in every play of Lady Gregory will be like every Irishman, to be sure. But in tallying and considering the qualities of all, some aspects of a real character--not a caricature--may be reconstructed.

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[7] Weygant, op. cit., p. 15.

Admittedly, the worth of such a concept would depend upon the background, observation, and conscience of the author--in this case, Lady Gregory. Was she in a position to create characters who would be typical? Did she possess the art to put into her work the people whom she observed in real life? Was she courageous enough to show her true observations, provided she could make them and portray them? The first chapter of this study will therefore examine, in order to answer the above questions, the background of Lady Gregory, because her social and financial condition and her political and religious philosophy would almost necessarily have bearing on the type of man which she would present in her plays.

For the Abbey Theatre Lady Gregory left her comfortable home at Coole to do any chore which should become necessary to its success. That story will be briefly told also in Chapter Two.

The influence of the Abbey Theatre and those associated with it was felt in other than literary ways. Lady Gregory, herself, adept as she was at public relations, found other means of using her influences than playwriting--newspaper and pamphlet writing, for instance.[8] But her milieu was the Abbey Theatre and her metiér was playwriting. The importance of the Abbey in the politics of Ireland would be an interesting study in itself. A study of the encouragement given by this little Irish Theatre in the reestablishment of the Irish language in Ireland would also

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[8]Lennox Robinson (ed.), Lady Gregory's Journals, 1916-1930 (New York: Macmillan, 1947), p. 129. During the time of terror (1919), "She wrote of the Black-and-Tans' deeds in a series of articles published in the English weekly, The Nation, writing them anonymously not from lack of personal courage but because she wanted to preserve Coole unburnt for her grandson."

be of value and interest. A study of the renewed interest in Irish legend and Irish folklore resulting from presentation of folk-history on the stage would also yield abundant fruit. These studies must remain for a later time. It is hoped, however, that some light will be shed in the course of this paper on those matters.

Chapter Three will survey the nature, attitudes, and beliefs of the Irishman in the plays of Lady Gregory. The plays will be examined in order to disclose the attitude of Lady Gregory's Irishman toward women, love and marriage, his attitude toward other men, toward morals, his essential philosophy on the subject of religion, his ideas concerning the ultimate meanings of life and death, his beliefs in folk-lore, gossip, and heroes, as well as his attitudes toward political issues, law, and authority, freedom, courage, minority groups, and foreigners. Chapter Four will set forth conclusions reached in the study.

CHAPTER II

LADY GREGORY

Biography

Wilfrid Blunt, country squire, self-directed champion of nations and of freedom, poet, author, and literary critic, once remarked to Lady Gregory, "I know and have often said that you have done more than any other individual for Ireland."[1] Who was this great lady? How was she able to merit such an opinion? What was her social background? Her financial position? What were her political beliefs and her philosophy of life?

First of all, Lady Gregory was an Irishwoman--born March 15, 1852, at Roxborough House, County Galway, Ireland. She was Augusta, youngest daughter of Dudley Persse, country gentleman, and owner of more than four thousand acres--a family property since 1677, the time of Charles II. She had been brought up to take an interest in the land, its cultivation, its improvement, and, above all, in the people who lived on it. Several times in the course of her visits to the United States Lady Gregory was suddenly taken back to Roxborough in memory by meeting someone from there or whose parents had been from thereabouts. Once in New York she wrote, "Last night as I went into the theatre I heard my name spoken, and a girl told me she was the daughter of old Matt Cahel, the blacksmith who had

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[1] Edith Finch, Wilfred Scawen Blunt, 1840-1922 (London: Jonathan Cape, 1938), p. 369.

lived at Roxborough, and she had come to see the plays and said her father would have been so proud if he had lived, to know I was here."[2]

Yeats once wrote to Lady Gregory, "One has to live among the people like you, of whom an old man said in my hearing, 'She has been a servingmaid among us,' before one can think the thoughts of the people and speak them with their tongue."[3] Here is just another reminder of the sympathetic understanding of a woman who could be at home equally with humble and high--a noble woman.

As a study of Lady Gregory's work proceeds, this interest in the people becomes increasingly evident. There is scarcely a play which does not show her dependence upon observation or memory of people, folklore, or legend. Her experience was constantly enriched by her sense of the reality of history, which held for her great personal significance. Although the story of her early life sounds rural, secluded and peaceful, it was not without event, because there had been uprisings and the house at Roxborough had been fired upon, which doubtless left their inevitable impressions on the youthful Augusta.

Memories of Roxborough enriched Lady Gregory's appreciation of the home of George Washington when she visited Mount Vernon. One of the party remarked that no wonder a man would fight for such

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[2]Lady Gregory, Our Irish Theatre (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1913), p. 198.

[3]Cornelius Weygant, Irish Plays and Playwrights (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1913), p. 55.

a home as that. Lady Gregory wrote:

> "Washington had been a friend of my grandfather's, who had been in America with his regiment. There was a case of stuffed birds at Roxborough which was said to have been a present from Washington, and there was a field there called Mount Vernon. My Grandfather had built a little sea lodge on the Burren coast and had called that also Mount Vernon, so I was specially interested in seeing the house."[4]

Lady Gregory was Irish, but she was not Irish Catholic. The family, as were the Washingtons, was Episcopalian, and the grown-up Augusta remembers the old servant who had "braided her hair"[5] as a child that she might be in time for family prayers. She taught Sunday School and speaks often of her attendance at church and enjoyment of certain sermons. She appreciated the Catholic church as the church of her people, and John Eglinton, literary critic and essayist, and contemporary of Lady Gregory, says she was tempted to become a Catholic in order to be brought nearer to Ireland.[6] What is important to this study is that Lady Gregory, though a sympathetic one, was rather an acute spectator, a recorder of the scene about her, than a prejudiced participant in that scene. Actually, much of Lady Gregory's own philosophy is, perhaps, acceptable to both the Anglican and the Catholic churches. Her passion play, The Story Brought by Brigit (1924), was written in such a way as to merit the approval of Father Hegarty, a priest

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[4] Gregory, op. cit., p. 197.

[5] Ibid., p. 177.

[6] John Eglinton, Irish Literary Portraits (London: Macmillan, 1935), p. 7.

beloved by the people of Mayo, who had said that he would be glad to have the Irish players put on such a play in his parish.[7] In this play many simple statements are given to the chorus of women to say and to the character of St. Brigit, herself, which may be taken to mark Lady Gregory as Christian. It is traditional for a playwright to use some device like a chorus to carry his own opinions to an audience. This Lady Gregory does in nearly every play. Sometimes, only one or two voices are used, but the watchful ear can hear the same voice or voices consistently revealing Lady Gregory's own message. Lady Gregory calls St. Brigit "the Mary of the Gael,"[8] and she tells that "Gaelic Scotland in its folklore makes her the serving maid at the Inn of Bethlehem, but that in Ireland it brings the Holy Mother and Child to our own country."[9] There Brigit, the peasant girl, was allowed to be the foster mother of Christ. In the play St. Brigit is also present at the cross. Among other lines carrying the simple Christian message as reflected in the personality of Lady Gregory, Brigit is given, "He is the just Prince of patience. He gives kindness for hatred,"[10] and "....Surely, there will never be any man east or west will refuse to forgive another, where our Lord gave forgiveness to his enemies."[11]

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[7] Lady Gregory, The Story Brought by Brigit (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1924), p. 91.

[8] Loc. cit.

[9] Loc. cit.

[10] Ibid., p. 68.

[11] Ibid., p. 69.

Episcopalian she was, certainly. And as an Episcopalian, she insisted upon her right of interpretation and simplification. But her philosophy was not confined to her church creed. Rather say, Christian she was--above all--and above any unjust distinction or discrimination.

Coole Park, Gort, in the barony of Kiltartan, not far from Roxborough, was the property of Sir William Gregory, and home to Augusta after their marriage in 1880. Lennox Robinson writes that "she would rather be there than anywhere."[12] Sir William had admonished her in a letter just before their marriage: "I know you can and will do everything in your power to make them [the country people] love and value us."[13] And so she was always generous to the people--generous with fruit and flowers, and when possible and necessary, with money. When the other large estates in Galway were breaking up, Lady Gregory expressed the desire to stay at Coole till the end of her life, or, at least, that it be preserved for the grandchildren. And there she remained until her death in 1932. In 1920 she wrote in her diary:

> I think of all the arguments--through so many storms, through 150 years or more, Coole has been a place of peace. We came through the Land League days and through the sale of the outlying property without war, without police protection or any application to the country for compensation--for there were no outrages. Coole has been not only a place of peace during all that time, but a home of culture in more senses

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[12] Lennox Robinson (ed.), Lady Gregory's Journals, 1916-1930 (New York: Macmillan, 1947), p. 11.

[13] Loc. cit.

than one. Arthur Young found Mr. Gregory making a "noble nursery the plantations for which would change the face of the district," and those woods still remain; my husband added rare trees to them and I have added acres and acres of young wood. Richard Gregory collected that fine library; William's father died from famine-fever brought on through his ministrations to the poor. He himself had a highly honoured name in Parliament and in Ceylon [Sir William was governor of Ceylon before his marriage to Lady Gregory], loving Coole all the time, all through his life-time. Robert [their son, killed in Italy in World War I] loved it and showed its wild sterm beauty in his paintings; left it through high-mindedness and died fighting for a good cause. I have lived there and loved it these forty years and through the guests who have stayed there it counts for much in the awakening of the spiritual and intellectual side of our country. If there is trouble now, and it is dismantled and left to ruin, that will be the whole country's loss. I pray, pray, pray.[14]

The story of her decisions to let the place, her questions concerning selling, her labors in trying to preserve it, yet finally having to sell it, are another story, but Coole is a part of Lady Gregory and a part of the history of her literary accomplishment and that of Ireland, and it had to be mentioned here.

Influences on Playwriting

People and Places. Much as she loved the country, the land, the little neighborning church, and her home, Lady Gregory was, also, a woman of the world. It was in Egypt that she met Sir Wilfrid Blunt whose influence gave her the self-confidence to interest herself in Nationalism--first for Egypt, later for Ireland. In America she achieved success with her theatre, and there, also, people liked her for herself. She enjoyed Europe, and counted among her personal friends many of Royalty and nobility. But it was for Ireland she lived, and only in the country was she at home.

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[14] Ibid., p. 15.

George Moore, in his vivid Hail and Farewell! is often sarcastic, satirical or piquant, but in speaking of Lady Gregory, there is only sincere admiration: "She was a young woman, very earnest, who divided her hair in the middle and wore it smooth on either side of a broad and handsome brow. Her eyes were always full of questions, and her Protestant high-school air became her greatly and estranged me from her." He says that although men of assured reputation in literature and politics frequented her drawing room and the best of reading material rested upon her tables, her literary ability seemingly remained latent until she met Yeats. She assisted him by her love and knowledge of the people and their language and legends. Yeats spent much time at Coole where their literary partnership was richly productive. There is a nostalgic note in Moore as he writes of all this, rather pathetic, as though he, too, would have welcomed so close a relationship: "She has been wise all her life through, I said; she knew him to be her need at once, and she never hesitated ...yet she knew me before she knew him."[15]

The inter-play of personality on personality and of mind on mind resulted in mutual inspiration for many who partook of the hospitality of Coole. John Quinn, the American critic, in his perceptive and vividly descriptive essay writes of Coole:

> I carried away two vivid impressions: first, the realization of a unique literary friendship between the chatelaine and the poet Yeats [out of whom she had got, with infinite tact and sympathy, the best]; and, second, of the gentleness and

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[15] George Moore, Hail and Farewell! (New York: Appleton and Company, 1925), I, 244-245.

> energy of this woman, the stored-up richness of whose mind in the next eight or nine years was to pour forth essays, stories, farces, historical plays, and tragedies, and translations from Molière and Suderman; and who has, at the cost of infinite time and pains, proved herself to be, with Yeats, the directing genius of the new Irish drama....

And Quinn says further that Douglas Hyde had once told him that, "apart from his lyric poetry, Yeats's greatest gift to Ireland was the drama. I should add that another gift of Yeats to Ireland was the introduction to the Irish drama of Lady Gregory and John M. Synge."[16]

Sir Wilfrid Blunt's compliment to his long-time friend, Lady Gregory, has already been cited. Edith Finch, his biographer, remarks that Blunt always felt that Lady Gregory owed much of her achievement to his influence. She continues,

> She had 'focussed,' and so greatly increased, the value of Ireland to others, to Hyde and to Yeats, for instance. And he noted, 'I am more than ever struck with Lady Gregory's intellectual superiority to every other woman I have known. It is not a man's intellect, it is a woman's; but she has the power of continuous original work--and dramatic construction': no slight praise, and its sincerity is borne out by the trust that he put in her judgment, especially on literary matters.[17]

Irish Life and Politics. Signe Toksvig, after a visit to Lady Gregory in 1920, gives a later picture of "the very house where Irish Revival had warmed itself." She had begun to feel that her car was "violating Faery" when they drove into a great open meadowy place with haystacks on it, in the center of which stood a tall, white, square, unromantic house. Lady Gregory was for her a little,

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[16] John Quinn, "The Abbey Theatre," Outlook (U.S.A.), XVI (1911), 915-925.

[17] Finch, Wilfred Scawen Blunt, 1840-1922, p. 369.

welcoming black figure with "fresh complexion, bright penetrating brown eyes, white hair black-veiled, slight tendency to stoutness, black mourning clothes and little black silk apron". The quietude of Coole, in actuality as well as in atmosphere was something to be remembered always. She says

> I knew then why poets came to Coole....I felt--as farmers, stone-cutters, workhouse wards, beggars must have felt--that here was a woman without mockery, a human being in whom there was the safety of kindness, and a keen simplicity of interest that warranted understanding. Those who have read her own creative works and compilations of Irish poetry, history and legend, and who know the Irish peasant, will know how faithfully and beautifully she has preserved this amazingly imaginative language. Synge knew it, and learned from her "the dialect he had been trying to master". Yeats knew it, and she collaborated with him in the writing of most of his plays, especially Cathleen ni Houlihan. On the evening she read to the guests from the Life of Sir Hugh Lane we learned clearly that the passion of Lady Gregory is to help preserve and develop the arts of Ireland....Here was a woman who loved Ireland of the present as well as Ireland of the past. She, also, will have helped make possible the Ireland of the future".[18]

Mrs. Toksvig, in her familiar and intimate view of Lady Gregory, had already sensed the significance of her life and work in Irish literature, and consequently, in Irish politics. She was much more than a great patron of letters. Weygant pays his compliment to her perceptiveness in this way: "Lady Gregory knows Irish life, from bottom to top, as few Irishwomen and few Irishmen of her day know it; she has a large heart, wide tolerance, and abounding charity;..."[19] He sees her "an artist in words who is to be valued

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[18] Signe Toksvig, "A Visit to Lady Gregory," North American Review, CCXIV (1921), 190-200.

[19] Weygant, op. cit., p. 148.

as a presenter of Irish life, past and present, with a beauty that was not in English literature before she made it.[29] Her sense of history acutely approved the following words of Alexander Hamilton: "After this war is over, will come the real war, the great battle of ideas," and she further points out that Ibsen had been banished from his country, that Molière had been refused Christian burial, and that other dramatists had fought for their ideals, too.[21] Her expressed purpose transcended any bounds of church or state. Perhaps this was the reason that her influence was able to extend itself over so wide and versatile a theatre of action. The clue to the purpose of Lady Gregory's writing (and consequently, the clue to her purpose in creating the characters to be studied in this paper), the key to her philosophy, was first observed, not in the plays, after all (though in reading the plays, one sees the theme enlarged and highlighted and spotlighted), but in a preface written long before, wherein is found her dedication to a goal as sacred as any ever lifted by Diarmuid, Finn, or Parnell:

> If we would create a great community--and what other game is so worth the labour?--we must recreate the old foundations of life, not as they exited in that splendid misunderstanding of the eighteenth century, but as they must always exist when the finest minds and Ned the beggar and Seaghan the fool think about the same thing, although they may not think the same thought about it."[22]

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[20] Weygant, op. cit., p. 148.

[21] Gregory, Our Irish Theatre, p. 254.

[22] Lady Gregory, Gods and Fighting Men (London: John Murray, 1905), p. xxiii.

Since Lady Gregory chose to use plays as one vehicle for the presentation of her deeply felt message, the actual impetus for the writing of plays, the Abbey Theatre, appears in a light of importance. With the Irish literary revival came a parallel theatre revival.

The Abbey Theatre

The Irish Literary Theatre, begun in 1899, turned as a consequence of the coming together of certain kindred spirits, into the Abbey Theatre of Dublin by 1904, and continued its presentations (and therefore, its influence) throughout the period of scenery construction and on through the violence of the rehearsals of the various acts necessary to the accomplishment and performance of the Irish Free State, which emerged complete with literature, language, and government of its own. The share of the Abbey in this accomplishment is beyond question. It remains only to record a series of incidents to show her what Stephen Gwynn calls a "ceaseless and most versatile worker".[23] Her rare judgment and managerial ability were important in making the new venture permanent. Her home was headquarters for the whole Irish literary movement.[24] Yeats had at first thought of putting his poetic theatre in London, but Stephen Gwynn suggests that it was Lady Gregory's idea to put the theatre in Dublin; furthermore, she undertook to raise the money to do so. Gwynn tells that "guarantees were secured from Irishmen and Irishwomen of every shade of opinion in religion and politics; for the literary movement

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[23] Stephen Gwynn, Irish Literature and Drama (New York: Nelson and Sons, 1936), p. 18.

[24] Eglinton, op. cit., p. 7.

had made itself widely felt".[25] At every turn is seen the broad scope of the acquaintance and influence of Lady Gregory, and from the list of those who gave, she must have included a great number of her own influential friends in Ireland, England, and elsewhere in her asking letters.[26] The willingness with which they gave is witness to their esteem of Lady Gregory. It was she, also, who hurried along proceedings to enable the first play to be given without patent. And to her the patent was granted when the time came.[27] Consequently, not only plays, but the players, were to be her responsibility. The secret of getting the patent was merely the old one of knowing the right person. She and Sir William had visited Sir Wilfrid Blunt the winter of 1881 in Cairo, where he was acting as unofficial intermediary. Before this time Lady Gregory had taken little interest in politics. Through this friendship (which was to last for more than forty years) she became sympathetic with the Nationalists. Sir William had succeeded as governor of Ceylon in establishing agreeable relations between rulers and subjects. He also supported Blunt's view. Edith Finch relates "In after years he [Blunt] was wont to say he had educated Lady Gregory in politics: as indeed he had, if only by overcoming her self-distrust and engaging her interest in Egyptian Nationalism."[28] What this new interest of Lady Gregory's meant to the Abbey Theatre

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[25] Gwynn, op. cit., p. 148.

[26] Gregory, Our Irish Theatre, p. 16.

[27] Ibid., p. 42.

[28] Finch, op. cit., p. 137.

and to Ireland will be shown in part as this study continues. An event incident to the actual granting of the patent is mentioned in Blunt's diary for May 10, 1904: "Dined with Lady Gregory, Yeats, Gilbert Murray, and Robert Gregory....Yeats talked to me about getting George Wyndham to grant them a patent at Dublin for their new theatre. This I readily agreed to see to."[29] The next day he recorded, "Lunched in Park Lane. George promised at once to befriend the Abbey Theatre as I was sure he would."[30]

Lady Gregory's own wrds in Our Irish Theatre and in Lennox Robinson's edition of her journals tell the story of duties and pleasures connected with the theatre too numerous to mention here; however, a few are revealing. The Abbey Theatre and its goals must have meant a great deal to Lady Gregory. She speaks of her achievement with a lighting effect, of choosing appropriate furniture, properties, and costumes, of going after midnight to the newspaper offices asking "as a favor"[31] for notices. The ever-important publicity is remarked upon by Weygant: "Alone of the quartette [Martyn, Yeats, Moore, Gregory] that founded the Irish Literary Theatre, Mr. Martyn [Edwin Martyn] is possessed of none of the instincts of the publicist. Lady Gregory has edited articles about ideals in Ireland at home, and on the lecture platform she has

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[29] Wilfred Scawen Blunt, My Diaries (London: Martin Secker, 1919), II, 103.

[30] Loc. cit.

[31] Gregory, Our Irish Theatre, p. 46.

stoutly fought the battles of "The Playboy of the Western World" in America."[32] This play by John M. Synge was without doubt the most violently received of all the plays. And incidents connected with its controversy served to add to the trials of Lady Gregory, who found lecturing difficult at first. Over it the Gort town council, according to her letter to Blunt, boycotted her and forbade the school children to attend her teas and entertainments, "lest their morals be corrupted."[33] Blunt said the Sinn Fein (which organization for unity Lady Gregory favored, at least in spirit) that had done it. Later Blunt remarks that the play seemed harmless enough in London, where it played to half a house who found the language hard to understand and received it as any farce. But for its presentation in Dublin (and in Chicago, too), Lady Gregory's very life was threatened.

A letter from W. B. Yeats, written in 1909 from Coole, to his father unwittingly relates another duty undertaken by Lady Gregory: "My dear Father--There is an unfinished letter to you on Lady Gregory's typewriter. I was dictating it, but she went to Dublin a week ago to start rehearsing a new play and to fight down a quarrel between two of our players....."[34] Lady Gregory was evidently accepting the responsibility given to her in the patent,

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[32] Weygant, op. cit., p. 74.

[33] Blunt, op. cit., p. 173.

[34] Joseph Hone, J. B. Yeats (New York: E. P. Dutton, Inc., 1146), p. 122.

which was made out in her name and in which she was made responsible for the players. Another problem was finding suitable plays, but inevitably kindred talent drifted toward a point which centered in the Abbey Theatre.

In retrospect, George Moore remembers one trip to the demesne of Lady Gregory:

> Coole was beginning to be known to the general public at the time I went there to write Diarmuid and Grania with Yeats. Hyde had been to Coole, and had been inspired to write several short plays in Irish; one of them, The Twisting of the Rope, we hoped we should be able to induce Mr. Benson to allow us to produce after Diarmuid and Grania. If Yeats had not begun The Shadowy Waters at Coole he had at least written several versions [corrections of poor Martyn's unsuccessful first draft] of it under Lady Gregory's roof-tree; and so Coole will be historic; later still, it will become a legend, a sort of Minstrelburg....[35]

Lady Gregory played the Martha role. The theatre to be a theatre must have plays. And plays must be written: "She would cross the sword and pacify us, and tempt us out of argument into the work of construction with some such simple question as--And your second act--how is it to end?"[36] writes Moore. It was she who went into the cottages and listened to the stories while Yeats waited outside, "sitting on a bit of a wall" and enjoying the fresh air and flowers of the orchard.

Lady Gregory diplomatically kept peace, made policy, directed, produced, and--in emergency--acted in plays. By her judgment the

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[35] Moore, op. cit., pp. 202-203.

[36] Ibid., p. 307.

theatre was kept alive, and through her inspiration the young were encouraged to act and to write the plays which were the life blood of the enterprise. It was after the premiere of Sean O'Casey's Juno and the Paycock that she remarked, "This is one of the evenings at the Abbey that makes me glad to have been born."[37] Lady Gregory had recognized another genius, one who could "penetrate to the heart of the Irish people."[38] From her friends, Lady Gregory begged the money to pare down debts when money was needed. In the end it would be her influence which would, with pride in the achievement, obtain a subsidy from the government for the Abbey. Her care and attention to details made the difference, oftentimes, between mediocrity and trueness in the performances.

It is significant that when Yeats took the Playboy to America, he returned to Dublin and his poetic theatre as soon as possible, leaving Lady Gregory with the brunt of the tedium of that tumultuous journey. Yeats felt himself aloof from the arguments of the nineteenth century concerning Irish home rule. For him a high art was the answer to everything. His objectives of dignity and poetry perhaps saved the Abbey from an untimely political death and kept it going until its influence could be felt in the literary and political life of Ireland. Yeats felt that by dreaming high dreams, Ireland "might keep her eyes on the light that was ahead and not on

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[37] Peter Kavanagh, The Story of the Abbey Theatre (New York: The Devin-Adair Company, 1950), p. 133.

[38] Loc. cit.

the ditches along the way."[39] Yeats' prelude of poetry furnished a secure foundation and one acceptable to the public--for Lady Gregory's peasant theatre which for half a century was to carry a standard for Irish literature.

The Plays

Some of the persons connected with the Abbey Theatre have been mentioned. A few representative events incidental to the management of the theatre have been described. It is only fitting, also, that some generalizations be made of the plays. Several writers --Peter Kavanagh, for one, have written interestingly and capably concerning the history of the plays, but because playwriting was the stimulus for some of Lady Gregory's best work, it might be repeated here that "she would never have written a play if she had not met Yeats...."[40] It is to be noted, also, that Moore points out the importance of Lady Gregory's talent (once it began to unfold) in this way: "We must get it into our heads that the Abbey Theatre would have come to naught but for Lady Gregory's talent for rolling up little anecdotes into one-act plays."[41] Lady Gregory's artful talent and commendable industry in the use of folk material was one of her most practical contributions to the success of the Abbey Theatre.

These little plays of hers which she meant for comedies, but which, according to the rules, are farces, will yield for us,

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[39] Ibid., p. 81.

[40] Moore, op. cit., p. 320.

[41] Ibid., p. 319.

perhaps, some of the most potent of Lady Gregory's observations on Irish life. George Moore, in his gossiping manner, tells how Lady Gregory rescued the theatre after the inimitable Fays left it:

> She could write easily and well, and had shown aptitude for writing rural anecdotes in dialogue, and it is an open secret that she was Yeats's collaborator in the Pot of Broth and in Cathleen ni Houlihan; and feeling that the fate of the movement depended upon her, she undertook the great responsibility of keeping the theatre open with her pen, writing play after play, three or four a year, writing in the space of ten years something like thirty plays. And is there one among us who would undertake such a job of work and accomplish it as well as Lady Gregory?[42]

Lady Gregory, herself, says, "It is the existence of the Theatre that has created play-writing among us."[43] She also relates the story of how the talents of the story-tellers and the poets were turned toward the drama. Weygant remarks.

> Certain it is that Lady Gregory's farces were a great help, both in building up and in holding the Abbey audience.... They attracted all who loved laughter and merriness and a loving caricature of the country folk,....[44]

It is to be noted with care at this time, however, that these so-called caricatures often speak messages of extreme significance, and Weygant eventually writes, also, that her farces grow at times as serious as comedy and that enough characters are presented to make the farces a "reading of life".[45] In all her plays he finds, too, serious indictment of national weaknesses as, for instance, in

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[42] Ibid., pp. 318-319.

[43] Gregory, Our Irish Theatre, p. 58.

[44] Weygant, op. cit., p. 31.

[45] Ibid., p. 148.

The Deliverer, a folk-biblical allegory telling of the desertion of Parnell by his own people. "To him who knows only a little of Irish life it is easy to see the meaning but superficially concealed by the farcical bustle, the laughter, and the lamentations."[46] Revelation of the degree of seriousness of intent of the plays will, perhaps, be one of the outcomes of the remainder of this study. A reliable guidepost in examination of her plays to use in determining the author's intention would be the critoria by which Lady Gregory says all were asked to write for the Abbey:

> A play to be suitable for performance at the Abbey should contain some criticism of life, founded on the experience or personal observation of the writer, or some vision of life, of Irish life by preference, important from its beauty or excellence of style; and this intellectual quality is not more necessary to tragedy than to the gayest comedy.[47]

By this formula, by drawing upon her own rich background of "personal observation," and by dint of perseverance, Augusta Gregory became the most popular of the Irish playwrights. She suffered danger and gossip and physical hardship for the Abbey, but her patronage gave personal satisfaction, enriched her own talent, perfected her technique, and rounded out her life, enabling her to use her peculiar talents and possessions for Ireland.

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[46] Ibid., p. 149.

[47] Gregory, Our Irish Theatre, p. 101.

CHAPTER III

THE CONCEPT OF THE IRISHMAN IN THE PLAYS OF LADY GREGORY

This chapter, which will form the bulk of the study of the concept of the Irishman in the plays of Lady Gregory, will include examination of such issues as attitudes toward women (including attitudes toward love, the home and children), attitudes toward men and morals (including attitudes toward gossip, heroes and ancestry), attitudes toward established religions, folklore, and ultimate meanings of life and death, and attitudes toward political issues (including attitudes toward minority groups and foreigners). It will not be assumed here that a characteristic appearing rarely is typical of Lady Gregory's idea of the Irishman. Before conclusions can be reached, all the plays must be read and consistent attitudes found.

Attitude Toward Women

The first question to be considered in this paper is the attitude of the Irishman toward woman. Is woman considered an equal of man? What is her place in his life? What is her importance in the home and in the outside world? Does he dominate her? Does he allow her to dominate him? What is her importance in his home--in the outside world? The attitude of the Irishman toward woman as Lady Gregory saw this attitude can best be determined by considering two related aspects of his thinking--namely, his attitude toward love and his attitude toward marriage and the home. Although the two can scarcely be separated for very long, the attitude toward love will be

considered first in so far as possible. The dialog perhaps will reveal the characteristics, attitudes and qualities which we seek. In the dialog also, will be found the expression of an ideal or the lack of it. Sometimes a man speaks the keynote of his own character; sometimes something given to a woman to say about a man carries the message; and sometimes, it is not a phrase at all, but an action which reveals a man's feeling.

The folk-history play, Grania (1912), yields material for the purpose of this project, since it is about a woman--a stronger woman than Dièrdre, "who when overtaken by sorrow made no good battle at the last," and, according to Lady Gregory's notes, of a different type: "Grania had more power of will, and for good or evil twice took the shaping of her life into her own hands."[1] Grania's own words are: "....But I said I would take my own road."[2] But this play about a woman is extremely revealing of the character of two men, true to her, and, in the long run, true to each other. It is perhaps this latter quality which makes the play, since honor is placed above consideration of the selfish desire of the woman. The play would thus insist that honor is stronger than love. Actually, love as a theme is not often found in the old legends, except as a motive of a tale. Love itself "plays a small part in early Celtic literature," says a recent collector of Celtic lore.[3]

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[1]Lady Gregory, Irish Folk-History Plays (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1912), I, 195.

[2]Ibid., p. 4.

[3]Kenneth Hurlstone Jackson, A Celtic Miscellany (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1951), p. 97.

According to Lady Gregory's own understanding, the play, Grania, is about love. "Love itself, with its shadow Jealousy," she says, "is the true protagonist...."[4] Weygant, however, believes jealousy to be not the shadow, but the true protagonist.[5] This jealousy was provoked because Diarmuid, though the "best lover of women in the whole world,"[6] placed honor higher than love.

Finn, the king to whom she was promised and whom she deserted for Diarmuid, and an older man himself, defines love according to the old people: "I asked the old people what love was, and they gave me no good news of it at all. Three sharp blasts of the wind they said it was, a white blast of delight and a grey blast of discontent and a third blast of jealousy that is red."[7] He warns Grania at the beginning that the red blast is the wickedest of the three. And, certainly, it proves "a bad thing for whoever knows it."[8] Love, in Finn's eyes is a tormenting thing, a whip and a scourge. Grania finds pleasing the idea of a lover's going through punishment for her. And there never was a grander picture of the Irish hero than the one of Diarmuid giving up his life for this fickle, jealousy-ridden woman; or the one of Finn--who boasts at the first meeting with her that he is glad to be done with the punishments of love--but who is destined

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[4]Gregory, Loc. cit.

[5]Cornelius Weygant, Irish Plays and Playwrights (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1913), pp. 135-136.

[6]Gregory, op. cit., p. 5.

[7]Ibid., p. 7.

[8]Ibid., p. 8.

in his constancy to walk the roads as a beggar for her sake, and to send Diarmuid, his own, to death for her sake. Because he is an Irishman and true to one woman, he has "kissed the sign of your foot in every place all through Ireland."[9]

The men of Lady Gregory's plays have many faults, but they are not fickle in love. McDonough, for instance, in the play, McDonough's Wife, drinks and gambles, but he cannot bear seeing his loved Catherine buried without all due honor. Finn, loyal himself, sternly expects loyalty from his wife in return; he warns her that "if ever any man should come between her thoughts and mine I would not leave him living, but would give him the sorrow of death."[10] Diarmuid cannot blame him. Any Irishman would do the same, he says. It is he who offers us the clue to the universal: "There is no good lover in Ireland but would do the same and his wife or his sweetheart failing him." And in the end he takes his own punishment willingly. He has experienced love by that time: "What is there but love can twist a man's life, as sally rods are twisted for a gad?" But Grania will not see love so misunderstood: "No, it was jealousy, jealousy of the King of Foreign, that wild dark man, that broke the hedge between us and levelled the wall."[12]

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[9] Ibid., p. 47.
[10] Ibid., p. 14.
[11] Loc. cit.
[12] Ibid., p. 25.

The Songmaker in Devorgilla insists that the "thing brings mostly all mischief into the world" is "the changeable wagging nature of a woman."[13] In Kincora (1912), Brian's bitter experience with Gormleith leads him to cry, "And may God have mercy on every woman's changing heart!"[14] Finn has no good word for love; his definition leaves nothing to be wondered at: "And what at all is love, but lies on the lips and drunkenness, and a bad companion on the road."[15] In spite of all he says, however, he still believes in the power of love shared: "But you and I together could have changed the world entirely, and put a curb upon the spring-tide, and bound the seven elements with our strength."[16] There is a marked difference between love shared and love unrequited.

Grania is tense, sarcastic, hard, and bitter--like Hedda Gabbler. Against her coldness, the constancy of Finn burns mightily. She accuses him of changing.

> ....It is women are said to change, and they do not, but it is men that change and turn as often as the wheel of the moon. You filled all Ireland with your outcry wanting me, and now, when I am come into your hand, your love is rusted and worn out....[17]

but he does not: "I thought to leave you and to go from you, and I cannot do it...."[18]

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[13] Ibid., p. 175.
[14] Ibid., p. 151.
[15] Ibid., p. 60.
[16] Ibid., p. 51.
[17] Ibid., p. 63.
[18] Ibid., p. 66.

After Diarmuid's death, Finn is all for decency and for showing respect, at least. He begs her 'wait till the months of mourning are at an end, and till your big passion is cold."[19] He warns her, "The men of the armies will laugh and mock at you, seeing you settle out a new wedding in the shadow of your comrade's wake.[20] If only she will consider how her actions appear to others--to his men--she will wait "till the darkness of the night, or the dusk of the evening itself."[21] It is the man--not the woman--who remembers the conventions proper to queenly behavior. But Grania says, "There is many a woman lost her lord, and took another, and won great praise in the latter end, and great honor. And why should I be always a widow that went so long a maid?"[22] She will console herself with the crown. And with showing herself beside Finn. It is well she has brought the golden dress. Yet all the glory is no consolation against the numbness which is to be hers from this time on. Bitter irony colors her last action and her final speech. Even the derisive laughter of Diarmuid's friends cannot hurt her. "For there is not since an hour ago any sound would matter at all, or be more to me than the squeaking of bats in the rafters, or the screaming of wild geese overhead."[23] Unrequited love and betrayal would appear to be very difficult

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[19] Ibid., p. 64.
[20] Ibid., p. 65.
[21] Loc. cit.
[22] Loc. cit.
[23] Ibid., p. 67.

experiences for the Irishman in Grania, since he cannot with honor, revenge himself.

It is found to be in his favor that the Irishman in the legends, although true to his home and his loved one, places honor above love, itself, and for the honor and good name of his loved one, will sacrifice much--even his life.

Concerning the home, including the concept of love shared, the plays of Lady Gregory often speak very tenderly. The idea of the helpmeet--the husband gained, the wife loved, and the comrade lost--is dominant, occurring again and again. Yet the facts that several of the women are dominating and that vociferous discussions are carried on by both men and women is not to be ignored in Lady Gregory's picture of Irish life. Two great kings (in different plays) are advised of the desirability of the comrade. Diarmuid in Grania suggests to Finn: "What is a home or a house without a wife and a companion at the hearth?"[24] Brennain says of Brian in Kincora, "There is no one but must say that Brian has done his best for peace, and he going so far as to bring home a wife, as a notice and as a sign that the country should be tranquillised."[25] Brian's own ideal for the home includes a good woman: "A house without a good woman over it is no better than a busy hillside, where men are shouting, and hounds are snapping at their prey, and mannerly ways

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[24] Ibid., p. 12.

[25] Ibid., p. 80.

are out of mind."[26] This is certainly not a pretty picture--but it is an accurate one describing his own home--a condition brought about by the very woman for whom he had had such great plans.

If a comrade is good for a man, the same is needed for a woman, too. In the poignant little one-act tragedy, The Gaol Gate (1909), a play with which Lady Gregory herself was so satisfied that she "never changed a word"[27] of it, Mary Cushin whose husband had been mistakenly hanged for political reasons, wails the longing of one mate for another and expresses the need of woman for man as companion and helper. The mother of the boy who died in prison is affected by the tragedy as well as his wife. And both are "without learning."[28] They could not even read the notice of the boy's death. Although no direct calumny is put upon these women in the dialog, the very situation brands their life with sorrow. Only brusqueness characterizes the words of the gatekeeper to the two unfortunate women: "Those that break the law must be made an example of. Why would they be laid out like well behaved man? A long rope and a short burying, that is the order for a man that is hanged."[29] His words, though not of the name-calling variety, could be no more effective in putting disgrace upon the two women. The mother, too, is affected by this injustice as well as the wife: "What justice

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[26] Ibid., p. 92.

[27] Lady Gregory, Seven Short Plays (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1909), p. 202.

[28] Ibid., p. 177.

[29] Ibid., p. 183.

is there in the world at all?"[30] Tell it out in the streets for the people to hear, Denis Cahel from Slieve Echtge is dead. It was Denis Cahel from Daire-caol that died in the place of his neighbour."[31] Mary's keen concerns itself as much with the opinion of the county as with her own grief:

> Every woman with her own comrade, and Mary Cushin to be walking her lone!
>
> What way will I be the Monday and the neighbours turning their heads from the house? The turf Denis cut lying on the bog, and no well-wisher to bring it to the hearth!
>
> What way will I be the night time, and none but the dog calling after you? Two women to be mixing a cake, and not a man in the house to break it!
>
> What way will I sow the field, and no man to drive the furrow? The sheaf to be scattered before springtime that was brought together at the harvest.[32]

Even Peggy, the old, old midwife in The Image (1909), will go so far as to revenge anyone's speaking against her long gone husband: "The parting of us two was the parting of the body with the soul. I tell you there never set his foot on the floor of the world, and never told his secret to a woman, so good a man. Where would I find, east or west, the like of him of a comrade?"[33] But Mrs. Coppinger explains that he was no better than any other: "The talk she does be always making about Patrick Mahon, you would say, listening to her, he was mostly the pride of the headland. And he

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[30] Loc. cit.

[31] Ibid., p. 184.

[32] Ibid., pp. 181-182.

[33] Lady Gregory, The Image (London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1909), p. 42.

but a poor-looking little creature they were telling me, and having an impediment in his speech."[34] From references to appearance and size here and elsewhere it must be concluded that the ideal comrade would have great stature and fine speech: but Peggy's attitude shows clearly that the having a home together and faith in one another would lend a never-to-be-forgotten glamour to the poorest mate.

For the social times and the times of harvest the man-comrade is needed. All would not necessarily be pleasant; there would be disagreements (and these would be allowable), but each comrade would be needed to do his own work of provision and of making the home comfortable, and each should be taking his place at the table. This idea so often found in the plays is not without precedent in the early writing of Lady Gregory. In her preface to Gods and Fighting Men, she cites an old legend:

> Goll, old and savage, and letting himself die of hunger in a cave because he is angry and sorry, can speak lovely words to the wife whose help he refuses. "'It is best as it is,' he said, 'and I never took the advice of a woman east or west, and I never will take it. And oh, sweet-voiced queen,' he said, 'what ails you to be fretting after me? and remember now your silver and your gold, and your silks...and do not be crying tears after me, queen with the white hand,' he said, 'but remember your constant lover Aodh, son of the best woman of the world, that came from Spain asking for you, and that I fought on Corcar-an-Dearg; and go to him how,' he said, 'for it is bad when a woman is without a good man.'"[35]

The men in the modern plays listen more to the wives (perhaps because the women talk more) than old Goll would listen. It might be of

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[34] Ibid., p. 28.

[35] Lady Gregory, Gods and Fighting Men (London: J. Murray, 1904), p. xvii.

interest to follow the rest of the story in order to discover whether Goll was not more influenced by the queen than he wished to be. It is certain that Lady Gregory shows that to be the case with Brian in Kincora, as she also shows men being influenced by women in the modern plays. Brennain, Brian's servant, would be as determined as old Goll, if he were in his master's place: "If I was itself, there is no woman cranky or civil, coaxer or cross, would ever put me from my own opinion, I once to have laid it down."[36] It is well to note that Lady Gregory often gives lines to servants which are revealing of the meaning of the play; consequently, it is important to pay attention to them as one would to the chorus, for instance, in a play of Sophocles. Another servant, Phelan, scoffs: "It is easy to see, Brennain, that you were never joined with a wife."[37] Phelan has not heard the fourteenth century poem In Defense of Women which begins "Woe to him who speaks ill of women!"[38] for he continues, "I tell you there are women in it, would coax the entire world."[39] The chorus would seem to say that Lady Gregory does not underestimate the influence of woman. Further reading in other plays bears out this opinion. Even Sitric, the Dane, in Kincora, though in anger, does not belittle women. Rather, he warns against them all: "It

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[36]Gregory, Irish Folk-History Plays, I, 99-100.

[37]Ibid., p. 99.

[38]Kenneth Hurlstone Jackson, A Celtic Miscellany (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1951), p. 97.

[39]Gregory, Irish Folk-History Plays, I, 100.

is only a fool would pay attention to big words from any woman at all. Queen or no queen she will turn timorous, and run and fail you at the last."[40]

And to the servant, Phelan, again is given this line: "It was a woman's wit baffled King Solomon at the end...."[41]

Many are the warnings against fickle women and women who will betray a man for their own selfish purposes. Grania, Gormleith, and even Dervorgilla are like this in different ways. Delia, sister of Damer in Damer's Gold (1912), even plots against her own brother when she believes there is a chance for her to get his crock full of money by plotting. Mary Gillis may be accused, also, of mild conspiracy in attaining for herself the company of Hanrahan, the poet, in Hanrahan's Oath (1918).

Not all the Irishmen in the plays are as considerate of women as Finn and Diarmuid and Brian, the legendary heroes, whose importance to the conclusions of this study is not, however, to be discounted because they are legendary. Their words are nonetheless given modern significance by Lady Gregory, who says of Grania that she has "held but lightly to the legend" and "taken but enough of the fable on which to set, as on a sod of grass, the three lovers..."[42] One example of a modern Irishman who loves himself better than any woman and his old friend better than his sister is Mike McInerney

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[40] Ibid., p. 133.

[41] Ibid., p. 102.

[42] Ibid., p. 195.

in the popular little farce, The Workhouse Ward (1906). He is very much elated about the prospect of leaving the workhouse to go live on Mrs. Donohoe's farm until he learns that there is work to do: "Sure you could be keeping the fire in, and stirring the pot with a bit of Indian meal for the hens, and milking the goat and taking the tacklings off the donkey at the door; and maybe putting out the cabbage plants in their time. For when the old man died the garden died."[43] Her own high purposes of charity dwindle perceptibly as she names the long list of chores which nobody likes to do. He would have to begin at the beginning. Even the cabbage plants have died. It is probable that he would have gone along, however, but he could not bear leaving his old friend and enemy, and Mrs. Donohoe would not take the both of them. Rather than enter that clean, well-ordered woman's domain, he will remain in the workhouse arguing and fighting as always, for "quarreling is better than loneliness."[44]

Along with tragedy, calumny, disrespect, threats, and quarreling, women are also faced with suspicion at times in the plays of modern life--just as men are warned against betrayal by women in the legends. This suspicion may have assisted Mike McInerney in his decision to remain in the workhouse. He may have suspected that Mrs. Donohoe would take over his life and use him to her own ends. (As, indeed she has planned to do. She has said the weeds are growing fast.) She has every appearance of appearing to dominate him.

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[43] Gregory, Seven Short Plays, p. 148.

[44] Weygant, Irish Plays and Playwrights, p. 152.

Michael Cooney in The Jackdaw (1907) boasts a long line of suspicious ancestors: "I might or I might not. I had it in my mind this long time to come hither [to offer charity to his needy sister] and to look around for myself. There are seven generations of the Cooneys trusted nobody living or dead." Cooney agrees with Nestor that Ulysses had reason to suspect his wife, and says that he would be right to suspect his sister:

> Nestor: Indeed I was reading in some history of one Ulysses that came back from a journey and sent no word before him but slipped in unknown to all but the house dog to see was his wife minding the place, or was she, as she was, scattering his means.
>
> Cooney: So she would be too. If Mary Broderick is in need of relief I will relieve her, but if she is not, I will bring away what I brought with me to its own place again....It is too good a welcome she will give me I am thinking. It is what I am in dread of now, if she thinks I brought her the money so soft and so easy, she will never be leaving me alone, but dragging all I have out of me by little and little.[45]

The battle of the sexes does not end with words, but occasional physical fracases are seen on stage. For one example, in Spreading the News (1909), poor, harmless Bartley Fallon, wrongly accused of murder with a hayfork is suspiciously the safety of her stall by Mrs. Tarpey, the apple seller. When he pleads for help in hiding the fork which would incrimimate him for certain, she becomes vehement: "Take your fork out of that! Is it to put trouble on me and to destroy me you want? putting it there for the police to be rooting it out maybe. (Thrusts him back)."[46] And it is felt that further argument would be met by a blow of her apple basket.

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[45] Gregory, Seven Short Plays, pp. 103-104.

[46] Ibid., p. 17.

Mrs. Tarpey, a woman, threatened the man. In McDonough's Wife McDonough threatens physical violence to a woman in a similar manner. One of the hags ventures near him with sympathy, but he is rudely ungrateful: [for the Hag has attended his wife in her last illness.]

> Second Hag: (Venturing near.) Do not go fret after her, McDonough. She could not go through the world forever, and travelling the world. It might be that trouble went with her.
>
> McDonough: Get out of that, you hags, you witches you! You croaking birds of ill luck! It is much if I will leave you in the living world, and you not to have held back death from her!
>
> Second Hag: That you may never be cross till you will meet with your own death! What way could any person do that?
>
> McDonough: Get out the door and it will be best for you![47]

Though men and women in Lady Gregory's farces grow vehement in conversation and throw things at each other, it is seldom that a husband shows disrespect for his own wife. Bartley Fallon, however, in The Full Moon (1913) is openly critical of his wife: "It's good for him to have a woman will keep the door open before him and his victuals ready and a quiet tongue in her head. Not like that little Tartar of my own."[48] Somehow, it is hard to blame him, though, for here he is--awaiting her in the train station, because she has "locked the door [of their house] till such time as she will come back on the train."[49]

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[47] Lady Gregory, New Comedies (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1913), p. 142.

[48] Ibid., p. 31.

[49] Ibid., p. 27.

The worst treatment of a woman by men in a play of Lady Gregory occurs in Shanwalla (1915) in which the crook, Brogan, tries first to trick Bride, then speaks to her in uncouth language, threatening her through three pages of dialog, and finally murders her, as he promises in his threat:

> Brogan: You are making a great mistake! Give me your promise to be quiet or I'll gag your mouth. I'll master you!
>
> Bride: You might not get leave to do that. It is the Almighty is our master in everything.
>
> Brogan: You need not think to escape me! I'll come down on you! I'll put right fear on you. I'll make you go easy from this out--I'll banish you out of the world.
>
> Bride: God will not forgive you those threats.
>
> Brogan: I'll destroy Lawrence along with you!
>
> Bride: Living or dead I'll be against you, and you trying to do injury to my man! (Brogan clutches her, she calls out) Lawrence! Lawrence!
>
> Brogan: I'll put you under the clay! I'll have the life of you.
>
> Bride: (Trying to free herself) It is hard to quench life![50]

But he finally does quench her life. And not the least calumnious of all this is the fact that the murderer is Bride's own cousin. He would like to have married her, himself. Barring that, he hoped to use her in his scheme of race-fixing.

Cruel men are seen in the plays, and disrespectful men are seen, also. The plotting woman has been seen also. On the other

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[50] Lady Gregory, Shanwalla (London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1915), p. 28.

hand, others are seen to make sacrifices for their husbands and for their homes. In two plays, The Wrens (1921), a political satire, and On the Race Track (1903), a little melodrama, wives give up much for their husbands. Wilfrid Blunt called the latter, which is a re-writing of Lady Gregory's first play, Twenty-five (1925), "quite the most perfect little work of art and the most touching play I have ever seen acted."[51] Although Lady Gregory did not see fit to have the play published, it was included in an anthology of one-act plays suitable for stage and study. Julia has no real home, since it is their business to travel from fair to fair setting up a gaming table. Nevertheless, she has a certain ideal: "If it was but a ring of rushes, I have respect for the marriage rite. I am no tinker's woman to be marketed from hand to hand, if it was for all the treasures of the Eastern World."[52] Although she feels quite certain that her former lover would be rich by now, she remains with her husband in the most unfavorable circumstances. The fact that the first boy is really no better off than the present one doesn't make her any less the good wife. In the end, however, she is pictured as shallow, and ironically enough the men both sacrifice for her--the one loses honor and the other his money. Here is the play's ending:

> Julia: No, but tricking you did it. You are a tricker and a rogue of the gallows. I tell you it is to cheat you did. You maybe lost God doing that.

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[51] Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, My Diaries (London: Martin Secker, 1919), II, 55.

[52] Walter Prichard Eaton, One-Act Plays for Stage and Study, Second Series (New York: Samuel French, 1925), p. 298.

Michelin: So I was thinking myself. Which of us lost the most? If he parted with his earthly store, it is likely I may have parted with Heaven.

Julia: Why did you win it so?

Michelin: For the same reason he lost it. To fill your little mouth with bees' honey and with bread.

Julia: (Looks in her little glass) The both of you did that for me? Well, men are a comical class![53]

In The Wrens, Lady Gregory says in her notes that she

had planned "a human comedy, the changing of sides of man and wife," and that if she helps to a victory for the over-Government "to bring away the Parliament out of Ireland" (1899) it is against her own conviction, and but to save her husband from drunkenness and gain a home for herself, and that in so doing it is likely she would be praised by moralists, but the common people would put their curse upon her and him as they have put it on the even less responsible Wrens that lost Ireland a victory through awakening the Danish sentinels by pecking at the crumbs upon their drums.[54]

The husband had felt so sure that the Irish would win that he had sworn not to touch drink until the bill passed. She continues to sing "Out with the Union" until reminded by a servant nearby that if the English bill were cast out her husband's pledge would be swept along with it. She changes her song when promised "A sober man and a quiet at your side"[55] so that a "little house I'd have"[56] and a pincushion. When reprimanded for joining with "them that would send Ireland to the slaughter,"[57] she explains "It is not Ireland I

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[53] Ibid., p. 308.

[54] Lady Gregory, The Wrens (London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, Ltd., 1921), p. 28.

[55] Ibid., p. 22.

[56] Loc. cit.

[57] Loc. cit.

have in charge. It is William Hevenor I have in charge."[58] The servant replies, "A great wonder it is, Judas not to have been a woman!"[59] But she has still the best reason of all: "If you had a hundred in family a husband is the nearest. Isn't it better to me Parliaments to go to wrack in the clouds than my man to go live blazing drunk!" Even in the face of the great displeasure of her husband, Margy's ideal for a little house "as white as snow, and a bunch of keys in my hand!"[60] is her goal:

> Hevenor: I never enjoyed a worse day. There was nothing in it but was wrong.
>
> Margy: No, but the best day ever came before you. We'll have great comfort in the bye-and-bye and a roof to put over the child. You'll be running down drink from this out, the same as the fox and the cherries. Give me now that money where you will not put it astray on me this time. We'll go get the little pincushion out of pawn.[61]

And so the play ends--with the realization of her dream, yearningly expressed earlier in the play:

> Margy: My pincushion I got from the minister's wife and I a child rising up. The first little stick of furniture I ever had, and I bringing it from road to road till such time as I'll get a little table to put it on, and a room would hold the table, and the bed; and a little kitchen along with it, the way I'd be in Heaven having a little place of my own.[62]

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[58] Ibid., p. 23.

[59] Loc. cit.

[60] Ibid., p. 7.

[61] Ibid., p. 26.

[62] Ibid., p. 14.

Lest it be argued that these dreams are of Irish women and not Irish men, a line given by Hevenor must be recorded here. When asked to take a temperance pledge he replies with the well-turned Shakespearean-like quip: "I'm too well pledged before this, being pledged to herself!"[63] Although he cannot trust her political ideas ("Women have no intellect to give out such things; great voice and little head!")[64] let us suppose that her home-dreams are his.

Margy could be said to be "'A good woman for her husband,'...." but a "bad woman for the country".[65] Another woman who tries to do good for her husband, was, of course, Gormleith, whose ambition brought Brian of Kincora into war again after he had accomplished peace. It is to be remarked, however, that Brian is extremely patient with her and forgiving in his attitude, even in the face of her betrayal of the country into the hands of the Danes. Another king, considerably less patient and forgiving with his wife, with considerably less to forgive--of a lesser degree of seriousness, that is--is the King in the play The Dragon (1921). All she does for the King and the Kingdom are in the spirit of helpfulness. "She is a great manager of people,"[66] but the diet she plans for him is too small and the exercise too great, and the Princess does not appreciate the learning which the new Queen deems necessary to her education.

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[63] Ibid., p. 15.

[64] Ibid., p. 10.

[65] Ibid., p. 29.

[66] Lady Gregory, The Dragon (London: Putnam, 1921), p. 8.

King: A month to-day since I wed with her, and well pleased I am to be back in my own place. I give you word my teeth are rusting with the want of meat. On the journey I got no fair play. She wouldn't be willing to see me nourish myself, unless maybe with the marrow bone of a wren.

Dall Glic: Sure she lays down she is but thinking of the good of your health.

King: Maybe so. She is apt to be paying too much attention to what will be for mine and for the world's good. I kept my health fair enough, and the first wife not begrudging me my enough. I don't know what in the world led me not to stop as I was.[67]

King: It's seldom I met a woman with right respect for food, but for show and silly dishes and trash that would leave you in the finish as dwindled as a badger on St. Brigit's day.[68]

Queen: I never annoyed any person in my life, unless it might be for their own good. But it fails some to recognize their best friend.[69]

And, at the end, when the Princess is brought back to life by a sacrifice of love--love of a prince--the Queen has not changed. As the lovers embrace, she valiantly insists, "There now I have everything brought about very well in the finish!" But Lady Gregory explains that she is the only one in the play not to experience a change of heart--even to the dragon: "She is satisfied that she has moved all things well, and so she must remain till some new breaking up or re-birth."[70]

Managerial ability is also displayed by Mrs. Coppinger in The Image. In spite of the fact that her work is a bit more

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[67] Ibid., p. 7-8.
[68] Ibid., p. 43.
[69] Ibid., p. 12.
[70] Ibid., p. 88.

diplomatically achieved, it is nonetheless more effective. It is her ambition for the success of her husband, the statue-maker, which inspires her to encourage the townspeople in the plan (which, sadly enough never materializes) to build the great statue to Hugh O'Lorrha, a supposed hero, which shall be like the Statue of Liberty in America and which shall give back answering greetings to it across the ocean!

But the ideal wife, the Bride in Shanwalla, is neither too pushing nor too ambitious: "That is my wish indeed, to be a helper to him."[71] It is a great pity that she and Scarry were never destined to establish their little home together. Her murder, however, did not lessen his love for her or his belief in her: "Oh, Bride, my heart is linked to you yet, that you could draw me to the ends of the grey world!....She to be living she would not leave me my lone, if she had to break through the flags of the floor of heaven!"[72]

The Mother in The Travelling Man (1910) finds her happiness in being a good wife, too. The Christ led her, a homeless girl, to a house in which she was needed: "I came in like this, and your father was sitting there by the hearth, a lonely man that was after losing his wife. He was alone and I was alone, and we married one another; and I never wanted since for shelter or safety. And a good wife I made him, and a good housekeeper."[73] "And when the King of the World shall return, his best blessing will be on the house."[74] Here a man

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[71]Lady Gregory, Shanwalla (London, G. P. Putnam's Sons), p. 30.

[72]Ibid., pp. 37-38.

[73]Gregory, Seven Short Plays, p. 160.

[74]Ibid., p. 161.

is shown keeping a simple little home. This is his way of life. The play commends his compassion in taking a wife to keep it. Such a house will be blessed.

Advice is given from time to time to men concerning women--how to handle women, how to choose a wife, and what will please them. Malchi says of King Brian, "Brian may be a great man, Maelmora, and he may have earned a great name. But he hadn't a stim of sense, no more than I myself [he himself had been married to Gormleith before Brian], when it came to the choosing of a wife."[75] The solution, however, may not be so much in the woman, but in how the man handles her: Gormleith's brother, Maelmora, though unable to get along with her either, advises her former husband: "You took her on the wrong side always, crossing and criticizing her, and tormenting her to attend to the needle and to the business of the house. Brian will make a better hand of his marriage, letting her go her own way, and believing as he does there are not her three equals in the world wide!"[76] Malachi had had no such idea of coddling for a wife--and still has not: "A good house and good means and a good name"[77] should be enough, he feels, to satisfy any woman, and for all that she should keep her nose out of his business.

Some of the men in Lady Gregory's plays also offer advice to women concerning their place in their husbands' lives. To be

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[75] Gregory, Irish Folk-History Plays, I, 71.
[76] Ibid., pp. 71-72.
[77] Ibid., p. 72.

sure, the advice is usually given by a man, but that will suit the purpose of this study very well, since it concerns the attitude of some of the Irishmen toward women. A woman should be as Gormleith says she and Brian were at first: "I lived in his looks and he in mind."[78] She is "wishful indeed to be pleasant to him. He was very good to me. The world never saw a better man".[79] This statement by his own wife will be supported by other evidence later in the study when the discussion turns to the attitude of the Irishman concerning men and morals. In many ways, Brian is pictured as the ideal of a man. But Gormleith, for the sake of her own ambition and for Brian's own good (remember the excuse of the Queen in The Dragon for her policy of interference), is unable to stay out of politics. She must call out the army--for review if nothing else--in her effort to inspire her husband's ambition and detract his attention from what she considers over-indulgence in church ritual. Her brother, Maelmora, advises her at length:

> You had best left the army to its rest. There is no peacock can have his tail spread out ever and always. And mind what I say, it is a woman's trade to be making all easy for her comrade the time he has a mind to live easy. To go rising early, hunting, or fighting, he is well content to do it, if it is of himself he does it. But a woman to be rousing him at the calling of the pigeons to the dawn, and to be drawing down on him the work he has to do, he will think her the worst in the world.....Give in to him now and humour him. If it pleases him to make much of learned men, let yourself make more again of them. If it pleases him to be praying, let you be at hand to say out the Amen; and believe me you will put a

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[78] Ibid., p. 126.

[79] Loc. cit.

> net about him that will never give way.....He is near spun out, and it is right for him to be attending to his soul. Do not be grudging him his own comfort in fasting and in psalms. To be worrying yourself starts wrinkles. Keep the flowery look in your face and do not be managing more than your share.[80]

Maelmora was well versed in psychology, and it would be interesting to see a play in which he was given a wife on whom to practice his theories. To conclude the remarks concerning ideal womanhood; it might be well to turn to the page where the servants' ideas are given. There Brennain is heard describing a very nice "biddable" woman:

> Brennain: Sure we had a Queen in it previously. Murrough's mother that was a girl of the Hynes out of Connacht. A very nice biddable woman, rocking the cradle with Murrough, and thanking God for her own good luck through the Sundays and holidays of the year. And what Brian got at the first offer, it is not likely it will fail him secondly, and he being high up in the world, and getting sense and experience through up to near three-score years.[81]

And we do get the impression as the play continues that Brian, living up to his years and his experience, becoming almost an exemplary hero as far as morals and ideals are concerned, desirous of peace and prosperity for his people, is deserving of a "biddable" woman, indeed. Therefore, let the discussion end on a note of hospitality. His servant, Brennain, trained in his own palace at Kincora welcomes the Queen graciously after her morning's outing, "A welcome before you, Queen, and that you may keep your luck ever and always; and what you havennot to-day, that you may have ten times more this day twenty years."[82] Brian's own advice to his son is significant:

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[80] Ibid., pp. 126-127.

[81] Ibid., p. 80.

[82] Ibid., p. 81.

"Shut your ears, Murrough, to stiff words said under your own roof."[83] The home is to be sacred. Even Grania, princess and queen, thought of the home as a pleasant place of soothing comfort. Things might have been different had she and Diarmuid been allowed the aura of a home: "But we to have a settled home and children to be fondling, that would not have been the way with us, and the day would have been short, and we showing them off to one another, and laying down there was no one worthy to have called them into the world but only our two selves."[84]

The study of the home would be incomplete without some mention of the children. Some of Lady Gregory's plays were written for children;[85] several include children in the cast of characters; and wherever there are children in the plays, or wherever children are spoken of, it is with gentleness and sympathy, and always with profit to any reader interested in training children. It has been noted that Margy, trying so valiantly to achieve a home for herself and her drinking husband, also yearns for a roof to put over the child. Queen Gormleith, in Kincora, in betraying Ireland, could do no less, really. It is for Sitric, her Danish son.

Joel, the little mountain boy in the passion play, The Story Brought by Brigit, is really a key person, and his character is

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[83] Ibid., p. 91.

[84] Ibid., p. 48.

[85] The Dragon, The Jester, The Golden Apple.

pictured with loving sympathy: "I think the time will never come when I will see him!"[86] he exclaims, waiting for Jesus to pass. Daniel, one of the few scoundrels in the plays, is made all the more scoundrel-like by his teachings to the boy: "Little he'll lead you to that will be of any use."[87] "Ah, freedom never put a penny in anyone's pocket...."[88] and other discouraging remarks are answered capably, and in a way freighted with understanding for the freedom-loving audience by the intelligent boy: "Ah, be quiet. You only want to grab for yourself. Little you care for the country or the nation."[89] His capability for understanding is superseded only by his capacity for feeling. This is demonstrated as Silas tricks him into shouting against the Christ: "My bitter curse on you, where you deceived me a while ago, making me call out against the best man the world ever saw!"[90] "Oh, shining God! Why couldn't we fight and beat them all! Oh, let me hide myself! His eye to fall on me my heart would break like a nut!"[91]

In the little miracle play, The Travelling Man (1910), which pictures Christ's visit to a humble home, the little child is treated

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[86] Lady Gregory, The Story Brought by Brigit (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1924), p. 1.

[87] Ibid., p. 2.

[88] Ibid., p. 3

[89] Ibid., p. 4.

[90] Ibid., p. 74.

[91] Ibid., p. 75.

by the exemplary Man (who represents the Christ) with sympathy and understanding. The child's questions are answered patiently, and the adult joins in the child's imaginative play. Nothing in the house is too good to be used in this game. "I would not refuse these hands that were held out for them. If it was for the four winds of the world he had asked, I would have put their bridles into these innocent hands."[92] Furthermore, it is to the child that the message is given whereby the Mother is sure that their visitor had been "the Kind of the World."[93]

Old Peggy, in The Image, who may be taken as a sort of chorus and therefore bearer of Lady Gregory's own philosophy, remembers her first son and that he was a "present from God."[94] She says, "So he was, so he was. Every baby is a present from God, it is for God we should attend it."[95]

The Jester (1919), written for Lady Gregory's grandson, Richard, and supposedly, to be given at his school, is really an entertaining children's morality play, and offers many words of idealism for Irish boys. The Jester encourages the princes:

> Jester: I never could know the meaning of that word "impossible." Where there's a will there's a way.
>
> 1st Prince: It seems to me like the sound of a bell ringing a long way off, that I had leave at one time to go here and there.

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[92] Gregory, Seven Short Plays, p. 169.

[93] Ibid., p. 171.

[94] Gregory, The Image, p. 27.

[95] Ibid., pp. 27-28.

Jester: If you are in earnest wanting to come to that freedom again you will get it.

2nd Prince: No, we would be followed and brought back through kindness.

Jester: If you have the strong wish to make the change you can make it.[96]

These were potent messages of freedom to Irish boys in 1919. Although the Jester's sacrifice is supposed to be to the "little god of laughter"[97] he teaches obedience, truth, courage, knowledge, manners, music, history, and (what is most important of all to the youngsters of an occupied country in need of unity,) security and cooperation.

Jester: It's likely you'll do great actions, for there is an ancient word, That comradeship is better than the parting of the sword,
And that if ever two natures should join and grow into one,
They will do more together than the world has ever done.
So now I've ended my business, and I'll go, for my road is long,
But be sure the Jester will find you out, if ever things go wrong!"[98]

The Princes and Princess in The Dragon, though nearly ready to be married, are pictured as barely past the age of irresponsible childhood. The Princess is learning her music and books, and she proves in the interview with her prospective husband's prissy old aunts that she knows the behavior expected of a princess, but the play is so written as to give her the whole-hearted approval of the

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[96]Lady Gregory, The Jester (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1919), p. 22.

[97]Ibid., p. 64.

[98]Loc. cit.

audience as well as that of the young price, himself, when she romps out of the room, daring the young price to follow her in a game of tag. She has been brought up by her father in a strangely modern fashion and many of her speeches but echo his philosophy: "I'm tired of palaces. There are too many people in them," and "Give me the little rush cabin by the stream and I'll be content."[99] But when it is time for realization to come to her, she grows up gracefully and with responsibility: ..."It is well I am told the truth [that she is soon to be eaten by a dragon] where the whole of you were treating me like a child without sense, so giddy I was and contrary, and petted and humoured by the whole of you. What memory would there be left of me and my little life gone by, but of a headstrong, unruly child with no thought but for myself."[100]

The children in the plays are real ones. They become hungry. Their clothing gets soiled. They prefer to romp and play rather than to sit and study. They sometimes wish to be other than they are. But the children are found to respond properly to the kindly sympathetic treatment of their elders. Their fathers speak their minds regarding their training, but the mothers are equally responsible for its administration. They are given their own important place in society since the time of the old legends. In these plays Irish children are expected to act intelligently and courageously, and they reward this high standard of expectation by acting accordingly.

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[99] Gregory, The Dragon, p. 13.

[100] Ibid., p. 35.

From the foregoing study the following conclusions can be made concerning the attitudes of the Irishman in the plays of Lady Gregory toward women, love, marriage, and children:

1. He says adverse things at times of love. Love brings mischief. Love is lies, bitterness, torment to him at times.

2. Though terrible on occasion, love is worthy of complete sacrifice. Love shared is a source of strength.

3. Comradeship of man and woman is looked upon as the best way of life. It is repeatedly shown that man without woman is lonely, as is, also, woman with man.

4. Woman appears to enjoy equal voice with man in cottage or castle, and woman's influence, for good or evil, is powerful in the community and in the country and is not to be underestimated.

5. Woman is not put upon a pedestal or shown to be weak. She is called a helpmeet and is treated as an equal. She is, therefor, even treated disrespectfully in some instances. It is as though her lively participation in discussions (and brawls) calls for the man's speaking up to her. Women are often seen and heard in the streets and squares as in The Image and milling in the crowds as in Brigit.

6. On occasion woman is not only equal with man, but is allowed, with reservations, to dominate.

7. However, like Mike, in The Workhouse Ward and the king in The Dragon, the Irishman in these plays is often rude enough to refuse this domination, even when it is meant for his own good.

8. Children in the plays of Lady Gregory are real. They get hungry, dirty, and are lively.

9. The father speaks his mind regarding the training of the children, but the mother is equally responsible for its administration.

10. Children in these plays speak and act with intelligence and courage.

Men and Morals

In attempting a discussion of the attitude of the Irishman in Lady Gregory's plays toward men and morals, it may be well to keep in mind that one facet of that discussion has already been presented: the picture of his attitude toward women and the home. The ideal male is not to be found in the plays. Since Lady Gregory took many of her characterizations from real life, they are realistic. However, a satisfactory transition can be made from the discussion of the attitude toward women to that of men by looking at the record of two or three legendary heroes.

It would be safe to assume that the telling and re-telling of the old sagas had some effect spiritually and morally on the modern Irishman. Since both modern plays and folk-history plays are to be examined, however, it will not be necessary to rely solely on such an assumption. Here is what is known about Diarmuid at the beginning of Grania: He has a good name; he is loved by all; he is the "best lover of women in the whole world and the most daring in war."[101] Because these are mentioned in a complimentary way, they may be taken to be considered desirable qualities. Diarmuid sounds like an ideal man, and a true Irishman, for is he not of the Fianna itself?

Finn, to whom the heroine pays her own compliment, is almost a legendary figure even in his own time: "I had an old veneration for you, hearing all my lifetime that you are so gentle

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[101] Gregory, Irish Folk-History Plays, I, 5.

to women and to dogs and to little children, and you wrestling with the powers of the world and being so hard in war." Grania has already asked him, "Are you not the best of all the world's big men?"[102] This play, incidentally, was offered with the two others in the volume--three plays concerning strong people of the world--to Theodore Roosevelt, "one of the world's strong men."[103]

Finn's honesty is given trial later when Grania, having lost Diarmuid, begs Finn to take her back. He answers: "I gave him my promise I would leave you to him from this out, and I will keep it to him dead, the same as if he was still living."[104] Grania has already pointed to this standard in another connection: "Does any man at all speak lies at the very brink of death, or hold any secret in his heart?"[105] Honor was part of the code, and both men lived up to it.

The tragic irony of the situation, of course, is that Grania, having caught a glimpse of the love spot on Diarmuid's forehead, is powerless not to love him, and that he by honor must obey her will and at the same time, remain true to his friend and master, Finn. As Thomas B. Heaphy has pointed out,[106] this irony depends upon the

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[102] Ibid., p. 4.

[103] Ibid., Dedication.

[104] Ibid., p. 63.

[105] Ibid., p. 62.

[106] Thomas B. Heaphy, "Celtic Mythology in the Poetry of George Russell (A.E.) and William B. Yeats" (Unpublished Master's Thesis, Dept. of English, University of New Mexico, 1951), pp. 20-21.

Celtic conception of Geasa, or bonds of honor, a system of behavior more rigid than that found in the Greco-Roman myths or in Christian or Jewish literature. The standard of forgiveness, for example, is exemplified in one of the stories which Lady Gregory chose from the old sagas for her Gods and Fighting Men. In the tale of Roc Diocain who refused to take revenge for the death of his own son, Roc Diocain's reason for so acting is, "There is no man in the house it is easier to get satisfaction from than from him, for his son [Diarmuid] is here, and I have but to put him between my two knees [as Donn had jealously crushed his son], and if I let him go from me safe, I will forgive the death of my son."[107] This idea of forgiveness seems fully as strong as the Christian one--and more consistently practiced. Lady Gregory uses the idea of clemency, too. Diarmuid forgives Finn in Grania. In Kincora Brian releases his rightful prisoners and returns to them their property which he has earned according to the rules of war.

Not every man is perfect, however. Brian, though a "hard man, and very hard at making his own bargain,"[108] is a man of his word. He might be allowed to give in occasionally without losing face. Malachi says, "Every man has a right to do that, and not to push things too far. It would seem a queer rope that would not

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[107] Gregory, Gods and Fighting Men, p. 316.

[108] Gregory, op. cit., p. 72.

be slackened at one time or another."[109] Brian is fair and acts according to what is natural, believes Malachi, his brother-in-law and rival for the high kingship, since he would probably do the same in Brian's position. "I sounded the pipes yesterday, you are sounding them today."[110] Brian lives up to his reputation. He does drive a hard bargain, and he does stay with it. And why not? He has a high goal: his desire is peace. He earns by a lifetime of fighting the right to turn from "wicked to kind."[111] When Brian explains that fear is a scarce thing with any of them, Malachi agrees that the kind of courage necessary to go into battle is different from the harder thing which is "to hold to what is won, and to keep out meddlers, and to force respect for the law."[112] Brian in the play is a hero--brave, forgiving, fair, home-loving, and religious.

The legends tell of various types of men. Strangely enough, Finn, Diarmuid, and Brian, though new at the practice of Christianity, warriors and near to nature, rough and rugged, are portrayed as men of high ideals, of strong morals, and gentle attitudes toward women. Another legendary figure, entirely, however, Diarmuid MacMurrough, who had stolen Dervorgilla, was a man

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[109] Ibid., p. 73.
[110] Ibid., p. 75.
[111] Ibid., p. 76.
[112] Loc. cit.

great of body, hardy in fight, hoarse with shouts of battle. "He had leifer be dreaded than loved."[113]

The White Cockade (1905) tells the story of a brave man, Patrick Sarsfield, whose fame, historical rather than legendary, rests upon an incident in which Sarsfield saves the life of King James at the risk of his own. Patrick has faith enough in the Irish army and possesses enough initiative for himself and James, too. "He who says 'danger' is a bad advisor".[114] And Lady Gregory states in her notes that in the songs of sorrow for Ireland and the indictment of England, the Stuart himself is often forgotten. Sarsfield, often sung about, is a fine example of a man, both in deed and in appearance: "It is different with Patrick Sarsfield, Earl of Lucan, a "great general that killed thousands of English;" the brave handsome, fighting man, the descendent of Conall Cearnach, the man who, after the Boyne [1690] offered to "change kings and fight the battle again."[115]

In the play, Sarsfield tries to make the best of a fleeing king who would use Ireland as a "good rod to beat England with."[116] James himself describes Sarsfield as an uncertain quantity: "He makes me start up. He has no feeling for repose, for things at their proper time, for the delicate, leisurely life. He frets and

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[113] Ibid., p. 181.
[114] Ibid., p. 95.
[115] Ibid., p. 193.
[116] Ibid., p. 101.

goads me. He harries and hustles. I hear him now! (Starts)"[117] Although he does not really fear the Irishman, James admits that "there is something about him--some danger in his eye, or in the toss of his head....a something--that takes away my strength, that leaves me bustled, marrowless, uncertain."[118] But, as might be expected, when the king is exposed, it is Sarsfield who protects him from the jeers of the rabble. For any adverse criticism, they will have to answer to Sarsfield!

As soon as James has gone to the ship on which he will slip away to France, Sarsfield's bitterness comes out in a monolog of indictment. It is the bitterness of all Ireland.

> Sarsfield: Gone, gone; he is gone--he betrayed me--he called me from the battle--he lost me my great name--he betrayed Ireland. Who is he? What is he? A King or what? (He pulls feathers one by one from cockade.) King or knave--soldier--sailor--tinker--tailor--beggarman--theif! (Pulls out last feather.) Thief, that is it--thief. He has stolen away; he has stolen our good name; he has stolen our faith; he has stolen the pin that held loyalty to royalty! A thief, a fox--a fox of trickery! (He sits down trembling.)[119]

Still Sarsfield's patriotism is not daunted. His courage--or his madness--takes him back to the battle, following, perhaps, he says, the "call of some old angry father of mine, that fought two thousand years ago for a bad master!"[120] Maybe habit or custom is holding him. Maybe it is, as the priests say, "the cloud of witnesses."[121]

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[117] Ibid., p. 126.
[118] Ibid., p. 127.
[119] Ibid., p. 140.
[120] Ibid., p. 141.
[121] Ibid., p. 140.

The legendary Irishman is found to be true to his love, daring in war, loyal to his friends, and gentle as well as brave. He is honest, too, and forgiving, and he looks forward to the day when Ireland shall have peace, with time for scholarship and worship.

It may be more difficult to find the ideal modern Irishman in Lady Gregory's plays than the ideal hero, because the modern Irishman can be seen at closer range, and his faults have not been softened by the judgment of time. In The Image, for example, the whole village is seeking the name of a great man--one to whom a statue can be erected. "And what place in the wide world are we to go looking for the name of a good man?" They are really looking for 'some big man'[122] a '98 man, a '48 man, one of the old string of heroes such as O'Connell, O'Brien, or some living man? Parnell, some say, was the best man ever lived. There is even some question whether the villagers are capable of choosing a hero until Coppinger assures them: "Why wouldn't we be fitted? A man that has the gift, will get more out of his own brain than another man will by learning, and there's many a man without learning will get the better of a college bred man, and will have better luck too."[123]

On various counts a man can be a hero and can choose or be chosen for a monument, but there is no doubt concerning the worst ruffian, the rogue in Shanwalla:

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[122] Lady Gregory, The Image, p. 48.

[123] Ibid., p. 45.

Darcy: He must be a terrible ruffian! I never heard of a worse case in my lifetime! To come breaking into my stables and to try to do away with my horse!

2nd Policeman: It was a very ruffianly deed.

Darcy: To go hurt a man you would want to put out of the way it would be bad enough. But I think it seventeen times worse to make an attack on an innocent creature that gave no provocation to anyone. You'd have been sorry to see the way he was![124]

A "worst man" is also spoken of in Lady Gregory's passion play, The Story Brought by Brigit. Daniel, who, for money to buy drink, has persuaded the loafers on the street to shout against Jesus at the proper moment in order to sway the decision of Pilate, insists that Judas is more accomplished than he:

(Judas goes on.)

Daniel: (Still rather drunken, catching hold of him as he passes) You did that night work well surely. I am a good man myself to do a job of the sort, but you are a better.

Judas: Leave go of me!

Daniel: To bring the soldiers up so nice and so quiet through the darkness, where there was no one to call out, or to make any disturbance at all.

Judas: Let me go, I say! (The Women have gathered around them.)

[These women are somewhat like the Greek Furies.]

Daniel: Sure you need not mind me knowing it. Don't be so stiff now. I earn my money fair and honest calling Hi! for one, and Down with another, according as I am paid. Why wouldn't I earn my little supper shouting with my voice as good as labouring with my hands? Do not be so unfriendly now. Aren't we on the one side? The two of us are covetous for money. You are a big man, and I am a small man that

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[124] Gregory, Shanwalla, p. 61.

> drank away my means, and must go forage along the roads. And I don't begrudge you your reward. If all I got out of it is these coppers, and they gave you silver on this job, there's not the black of my nail between us. For if I have the corner boys all bought, you have your Master sold!
>
> 3rd Woman: Oh, isn't he the terrible type of a ruffian?
>
> 1st Woman: The worst man you could think of wouldn't do a thing like that![125]

It is to be remarked that not only Daniel (one man) but all the corner boys (many men) did their mischief for the money to buy strong drink.

Love of drink was a failing of Margy's husband and of Julia's husband, too, it will be remembered.

Akin to the Irishman's love of sensual pleasures is, perhaps, the love of money for itself alone. Lady Gregory's play, Damer's Gold, is based on the sane skepticism of Montaigne:

> Verilie it is not want but rather plentie that causeth avarice....And after you are once accustomed, and have fixed your thoughts upon a heape of monie, it is no longer at your service; you dare not diminish it; it is a building which if you touch or take any part from it, you will think it will all fall....Feraulez who had passed through both fortunes, rich and poor, and found that encrease of goods was no encrease of appetite to eat, to sleepe or to embrace his wife; and who on the other side felt heavily on his shoulders the importunitie of ordering and directing his Oeconomicall affairs as it doth on mine, determined with himselfe to content a poore young man, his faithfull friend, greedily gaping after riches, and frankly made him a present donation of all his great and excessive riches....[126]

Damer is made to realize also before it is too late, that the possession of money can be a great hindrance to a man's enjoyment

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[125] Gregory, The Story Brought by Brigit, pp. 59-60.

[126] Gregory, New Comedies, pp. 161-163.

of life. Delia, his sister, says, "There be no more grasping man within the four walls of the world."[127] Some said that he had a full gallon jar of gold that no one could lift, that his heart and soul had gone into it, and that he would let the poorhouse bury him if only they would leave it down with his bones. His second act philosophy sounds better: "In my opinion it was to keep temptation from our path the gold of the world was covered under rocks and in the depths of the streams. Believe me it is best leave it where it is, and not to meddle with the Almighty."[128]

Lady Gregory says the fable in the play came to her in the course of clarifying the purpose of the Abbey Theatre. The advice of well-meaning friends would have been good "if we had wanted to make money, to make a common place of amusement. Our advisers did not see that what we wanted was to create for Ireland a theatre with a base of realism, with an apex of beauty."[129]

Another miser who remains miserly to the end is Michael Cooney in The Jackdaw. His sister, Mrs. Broderick, has written him for money to save her small shop but "got no answer at all.... It's long since I saw him, but it is the way he used to be, his eyes on kippeens and some way suspicious in his heart; a dark weighty tempered man." She is told that "A person to be crabbed

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[127] Ibid., p. 94.

[128] Ibid., p. 115.

[129] Ibid., pp. 159-160.

and he young, it is not likely he will grow kind at the latter end."[130] In Cooney is to be observed a queer quirk in character. He will help his sister, but in order to avoid future imposition he will give the money anonymously.

Money is next to life for Peter Canavan, the miller. This miserliness, as well as his mugwumpish attitude toward the over-government, is probably prompted by fear. No worse epithets can be found in the plays than the ones he uses on the widows who have discovered his money:

> Oh, the spies! The peerers! The pryers! The magpies! The bloodhounds! The witches! Was ever a man in such danger and such peril of his life? To be watched and be nosed and be scented that way! To be tracked like a fox in his den! I not to be safe on my own floor, or by my own hearthstone! Is there no place, within or abroad, where a man can keep himself safe?...."[131]

Peter is a man of many other fears, including the fear of death. He is a very fearful man. Is this because his kindness waits for expediency?

In Coats (1910) there are two men who would see scoundrels, looking in the mirror. And yet, they are respectable (though contentious) editors. They will go to any extent to fill their columns. Each stands ready to print the obituary of the other. At least, that piece of news is considered by each as a potential, the value of which is not neglected in going over the day's possibilities,

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[130] Gregory, Seven Short Plays, p. 97.

[131] Gregory, Irish Folk-History Plays, II, 37.

kept ready at hand for the time when occasion shall arise to make use of it. The humor of the situation rests upon mutual discovery.

In Shanwalla, as in Dave (1927), violence resolves itself into murder and near-murder. In both, however, evil is used as a foil for good--as a backdrop on which to show the nearness of Heaven.

Even the wicked Dragon is the means of King Manus's being able to bring his message to the Princess: "Take courage and keep courage through this day. Do not let your heart fail. There is help beside you."[132]

If an ideal is to be found among the Irishmen in modern life, perhaps it is Hyacinth Halvey whose attempts to disprove the three pounds of testimonials sent on his behalf to Cloon from the home folk in Carrow last merrily through the two plays, Hyacinth Halvey (1906) and The Full Moon (1910). Peter Tannian insists that "writing is easy." But Mrs. Broderick argues that a year of residence in Cloon speaks for the truth of the testimonials: "Look at him since he was here, this twelvemonth back, that he never went into a dance-house or stood at a cross-road, and never lost a half-an-hour with drink. Made no blunder, made no rumours. Whatever could be said of his worth, it could not be too well said."[133]

Hyacinth feels, however, that a man should not be perfect.

> How would I be what they make me out to be? Was there ever any person of that sort since the world was a world, unless

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[132]Gregory, The Dragon, p. 47.

[133]Gregory, New Comedies, pp. 32-33.

> it might be Saint Anthony of Padua looking down from the chapel wall? [Not Saint Anthony alive, mind you, but Saint Anthony on the wall.] If it is like that I was, isn't it in Mount Melleray I would be, or with the Friars at Esker? Why would I be living in the world at all, or doing the world's work."[134]

In The Full Moon, sequel to the play in which appears the above passage, Hyacinth has still no desire to be the village saint:

> I wish I wasn't in this place tonight. I would like well to be going on the train, [to the fair] if I wasn't for the talk the neighbors would be making. I would like to slip away. It is a long time I am going without any sort of funny comrades.[135]

They have installed him in a room near the priest's house, introduced him to the priest's housekeeper, a nice, acceptable young lady, and now every person in the town is giving him out for more than he is. His "....I wonder could I go--for one night only--and see what the lads are doing"[136] is pitifully wistful.

Hyacinth Halvey is not the only Irishman in the plays of Lady Gregory who concerns himself with the neighbors' opinions. Indeed, gossip and its related facets effects the plots of some of the plays and the lives of some of the characters. Cornelius Weygant remarks that "it is true that the motive most recurrent in her plays, that of fear of the opinion of the neighbor, an attitude probably spring of the clan system, is dominant in Irish life...."[137]

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[134] Gregory, Seven Short Plays, p. 43.

[135] Gregory, op. cit., p. 40.

[136] Ibid., p. 29.

[137] Weygant, Irish Plays and Playwrights, p. 155.

A discussion of the moral attitude of the Irishman in Lady Gregory's plays would be incomplete without consideration of this attitude. Even in the face of fear or sorrow, concern for gossip is often noted. Mary Cushkin in The Gaol Gate keens: "Oh, Oh, Denis, my heart is broken you to have died so many nights in company! What way will I be going back through Gort through Kilbecanty? The people will not be coming out keening you, when they will say no prayer for the rest of your soul!"[138]

The king of the Fenians does not escape the fear of mockery: "And I am not like a man of the mean people, that can hide his grief and his heartbreak, bringing it to some district where he is not known, but I must live under that wrong and that insult in full sight of all, among mockery and malicious whisperings in the mouth of those maybe that are shouting me!"[139] It is Finn who speaks for decency at Grania's bitter moment. Not only for her own sake, but for the sake of appearances should she wait until the end of a decent period of mourning for Diarmuid before marrying Finn. The men of the armies might laugh and mock at her, seeing her settle out a new wedding in the shadow of her comrade's wake. And when she insists upon showing herself before them with him and wearing her golden dress, he urges her to wait, at least, until the darkness of evening. When she will not, he does not refuse her. He loves

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[138] Gregory, Seven Short Plays, p. 181.

[139] Gregory, Irish Folk-History Plays, I, 50.

her still; he is old and she is young; and having done his best to protect her honor, he supports her as she opens the door herself and goes out to greet the mocking armies, a wild, ironic cry on her lips. The loud mockery of the men turns to the silence of shock. Again--the standard of honor is upheld by the men in the legend.

Anthony Canavan, in danger of losing his life, concerns himself with the opinion of the neighbors. In fact, he would rather not be noticed at all--even for heroism such as deserting from the English army: "I wouldn't wish the widows to know I deserted from the army. They would be putting big mouths on themselves among the neighbors, shouting me till a bonefire would be lit in my praise. Let no person know in Scartana I did anything worth praising at all." He would be glad just to be a miller or a butcher, even, just so he would not be credited higher than he is. Like Hyacinth, he cries: "I wonder, Peter, for what length of time should I be a miller before I'd get the name of a hare's heart like your own?" But he cannot escape being a great man. He has surely done some good thing, the Queen's army to make an attack on him.[140]

Mike McInerney of The Workhouse Ward will be proud to come up in the world. He really desires recognition. Enabled by his sister to leave the workhouse for her little farm home, he feels that the name of the McInerneys will be "rising on every side." Incidentally she has brought him a new suit of clothes to wear,

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[140] Ibid., II, 16.

not because he needs clothing, but in order that he will look better "coming among the neighbors."[141]

The puny character of Nicholas in the mystical play, Dave, is revealed by his exaggerated pride of race. Why, one of his ancestors has helped to drive the Danes from England.

The Jackdaw and Spreading the News (where the business of the town is talking about each other) are based upon gossip and their plots depend upon its effects. Mrs. Broderick, in The Jackdaw, about to face foreclosure, seems to worry more about being seen in court than about losing her store:

> Haven't I the mean, begrudging creditors now that would put me into the Court? Sure it's a terrible thing to go in it and to be bound to speak nothing but the truth. When people would meet with you after, they would remember your face in the Court. What way would they be certain was it in or outside of the dock?[142]

The sin of the tongue is certainly one of the seven deadly sins observes the poet in Hanrahan's Oath: "A cross word in this house, and a quarrel out of it in the next house, and fighting in the streets from that again, till the whole world wide is at war. The man that would make a good gad for the tongue would be put far beyond Alexander that laid one around all the kingdoms of the world!"[143] When the occasion arises for Hanrahan to take his revenge on prying Mary Gillis, he does it with a curse: "....and it is good curses I'll be making, and the first I'll put on you

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[141] Gregory, Seven Short Plays, pp. 147-148.

[142] Ibid., p. 96.

[143] Gregory, Hanrahan's Oath, p. 11.

is the curse of dumbness, for that is the last curse of all!"[144] In this play as in The Jackdaw and Spreading the News a person is nearly sent to his punishment "through chattering."[145] Hanrahan's own self-imposed penance is the worst that he can think of--an enforced period of silence!

Peter Canavan, the miller in The Canavans, the man who is kind so long as kindness will reap benefits for himself, resembles another who is honest and good--when expedient. Mr. Quirke, the butcher of Cloon, in Hyacinth Halvey, is like Peter. He is always thoughtful of the neighbors, in a kind sort of way. Mrs. Delane says to him: "Indeed you always treat the neighbors very decent, Mr. Quirke, not asking them to buy from you." This is doubly obliging of him, since he admits that the poor would never make a profit from their dead meat without him. Would one ever think to call dishonest so kind a man? In his beneficence he has sent all his meat to England--which must be "a terrible country with all it consumes?"[146]

Quirke's evasion of law--the law of the over-government--is similar to that of the policeman in The Rising of the Moon, but the motives are different. Quirke makes his money be fooling the meat inspector. The policeman, on the contrary, stands to win a reward of money, advancement and personal glory by giving up the

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[144] Ibid., p. 33.

[145] Ibid., p. 10.

[146] Gregory, Seven Short Plays, p. 51

prisoner and standing on the side of the over-government--of which he is actually a representative. The problem of the play is interior, and its resolution takes place in the mind of the policeman whose decision to allow the Irish patriot to escape proves his clemency and sympathy but shows him neglecting his duty. The "Rising"--a word frequently used by the Irish to mean "uprising"--is in his own heart.

Conclusions. The following conclusions may be made after the above examination of the plays of Lady Gregory for the attitudes of the Irishman in the plays toward men and morals:

1. The legendary Irish hero is bound to honor and truth. These he holds above even love if called upon to do so. He is courageous in battle and loyal to friends.

2. In the plays of modern life (with exceptions) the Irishman is loyal to his home and faithful to his love, although he shows less respect to other women than to his wife.

3. He thinks much of the opinion of others, expecially his neighbors. He is greatly concerned with what people will think of his actions--as much as with the moral implications of these actions.

4. A characteristic frequently seen in the modern Irishman in these plays is miserliness.

5. Not only might this Irishman be reprimanded for his exaggerated concern with public opinion, but also he is to be commended for the value which he places on a good name. He is

proud of his ancestry and lineage, and well he may be, for he is often the descendant of a king.

6. If he is convinced a thing is right, or if a thing suits his own purpose, he does it without regard to established rules or law. He often places himself and his own gain above social acceptability. Canavan and Quirke are interested in personal gain, too, but they would also place great store by public opinion and the acceptance of society--especially society in their own locale.

7. An occasional Irishman in Lady Gregory's plays brawls, steals, talks disrespectfully to women (who bring this on themselves, usually) poisons horses, takes bribes, evades the law, indulges in strong drink and even commits murder. The real scoundrel in these plays, however, is written in for contrast: for example, Judas is contrasted with Jesus and Lawrence Scarry with Brogan. Judas sells his Lord for the price of property. Jesus is the ideal of Christianity. Brogan is a seducer of women and a murderer. Scarry is faithful to his home, honest, well-meaning, and dependable.

8. In many of the plays, especially the one-act farces, Lady Gregory has characterized the Irish peasant character in his village square or in the group gathered about his own dooryard as curious, vociferous, convivial (at time, to the point of excess), bigoted, nearly illiterate, provincial, opinionated, and superstitious. His limitations, it must be noted, are the narrow peasant environment of his locality. He is without malice, but he does not put himself out to do kind deeds.

9. He is possessed of a natural wit to express simply and without design whatever he feels to be the truth.

10. His intense patriotism is shown in word and action. This patriotism and love of country he shares with the legendary hero of the three-act plays. He speaks of the legends and the heroes, but his own actions are unconsidered. He is a realistic portrayal of the character of the Irish peasant, deprived of the cultural heritage which might, perhaps, have given him a viewpoint broader than that of his own village.

Folklore, Religion, and Philosophy

What is the attitude of the Irishman in the plays of Lady Gregory toward things of the spirit? Does he really believe in the old legends and in folklore? What does he says regarding the ultimate meanings of life and of death? What is his attitude toward established religion? Is he Catholic or Protestant? What is his essential philosophy?

Reference to folklore in the plays of Lady Gregory would make a sizeable study in itself. In fact, the threads of the religious and the folklore elements are very closely interwoven. The old legends are daily conversation in these plays, where there is rarely pause to differentiate their philosophy from that of St. Patrick's religion or with its modern counterpart. As Weygant says, "Brigit and Patrick are still household words among all the children of the Gael".[147] It is a credit to the intelligence of Patrick that he used rather than abused the old legends, too. For the modern Irishman, including the Irishman of these plays, is a product of both the philosophy of the old sagas and of Christian teaching.

Thomas Heaphy, in a study of Celtic mythology, notes that George W. Russell praises the ethical standards of the heroic age of Ireland[148] and that Russell suggests in the following passage

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[147] Weygant, Irish Plays and Playwrights, p. 142.

[148] Thomas B. Heaphy. "Celtic Mythology in the Poetry of George Russell (A.E.)." Unpublished Master's thesis, Department of English, University of New Mexico, 1951, p. 36.

the continuation of this influence:

> During all these centuries the Celt has kept in his heart some affinity with the mighty beings ruling in the unseen, once so evident to the heroic races who preceded him. His legends and fairy tales have connected his soul with the inner lives of air and water and earth, and they in turn have kept his heart sweet with hidden influence.[149]

Wherever this sense of relationship to the divinity is preserved, there appears the simplicity of practical faith. Much evidence of this appears in the daily conversation depicted in the plays of Lady Gregory. The simple faith of the Irish in miracles, big and little, has often been the subject of story and play, and Lady Gregory does not neglect to make use of this subject, too.

Malachi, in The Deliverer asks "What way at all will he get us out of this?" Dan answers without hesitation, "By the miracles of God, and the virtue of those ships beyond at the quay."[150] Although the miracle is never questioned, there seems to be expected, as in the days of Jesus, some use made of "men and ships" and things of this world.

In Shanwalla, about the intrigue of a race-fixing, the sweet faith of a young jockey brings back the spirit of his wife to effect for him acquittal and freedom. Her threat to the rogue, Brogan, at once a curse and a prophecy, had been: "Living or dead

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[149] Darrell Figgis, A.E. (George W. Russell) (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1916), pp. 58-59.

[150] Gregory, Irish Folk-History Plays II, 165.

I'll be against you,...."[151] It is explained that she was "born at sunrise and at the birthday of the year."[152]

The supernatural scene is set early in the play by old Conary's dual reference to his own blindness and to his faith in the other world: "I used to be hungering and hoping to see so much as one human face before I'd die. But since I went so far I am satisfied to wait till the walls of this world will be broke for me, and I will get a view of them that have lost the body and are upon the other side." Bride explains: "You to see such things at this time itself it would be natural, for those that are blind should see more than such as have their earthly sight. They do be saying one of Mr. Darcy's old fathers does be seen around this place, as it is here he kept his horses and his hounds." When her new husband would not "give in to such things," she says, "Surely the priests know there are ghosts, and tell you they are poor souls that died in trouble."[153] They speak, also, of other strange beliefs: "Every time you see a tree shaking there is a ghost in it" and "When one goes that has a weight on the soul that is more than the weight of the body, it cannot get away, but stays wandering till some one has courage to question it."[154]

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[151] Gregory, Shanwalla, p. 28.

[152] Ibid., p. 4.

[153] Ibid., p. 5.

[154] Ibid., p. 6.

In the resolution of the play it is Conary's courage to listen which enables Bride to make her ghostly witnessing plain. Scarry, the young husband, who had his own witness to heaven, was able only to hear the sweet sound of music and to see in his dream "some white place," but he knows he "was through the world".[155] He is convinced that "she came anear me in my sleep."[156] When Brogan tries to insist, "....There is no one comes back from the dead,"[157] Scarry no longer takes any interest in Brogan's plan of revenge on Darcy. In the end, Brogan is convinced, Conary is awed, but, ironically, Scarry, though freed, will not believe the part of his wife in the confession:

> Conary: (To Scarry) Surely God has some great hand in you, giving leave to the woman to keep her promise for your help. And didn't she behave well, coming challenging through myself your enemies in the court, the way you got over them all, and you so near your last goal!
>
> Scarry: Through you is it? Stop your raving. She to have left her standing in Heaven it is not with you she would have come speaking, or with any one at all only myself![158]

Lady Gregory speaks of eternity in her notes: "....for here in Connacht there is no doubt as to the continuance of life after death; the spirit wanders for a while in that intermediate region to which mystics and theologians have given various names."[159]

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[155] Ibid., p. 52.
[156] Ibid., p. 53.
[157] Ibid., p. 54.
[158] Ibid., p. 86.
[159] Ibid., p. 88.

Lady Gregory tells us in her notes to the play McDonough's Wife (which she wrote during her first voyage to America) that a piper named McDonough always played for the sheep-shearing dance at Roxborough. After his death his playing became mythical as had that of his father before him whose pipes could play by themselves without the assistance of the piper. If we assume that the hags in the play act in the nature of a chorus whose duty it is to tell the story and serve as the mouthpiece of the author, here is Lady Gregory's legend of one Irishman and the power of his supernatural music.

> First Hag: He is a great one to squeeze pipes surely. There is no place ever he went into but he brought the whip out of it.
>
> Second Hag: His father was better again, they do be saying. It was from the other side he got the gift.
>
> First Hag: He did, and from beyond the world, where he befriended some in the forths of the Danes. It was they taught him their trade. I heard tell, he to throw the pipes up on top of the rafters, they would go sounding out tunes of themselves.
>
> Second Hag: He could do no more with them than what McDonough himself can do--may ill luck attend him! It is inhuman tunes he does be making; unnatural as they are.
>
> First Hag: He is a great musician surely.
>
> Second Hag: There is no person can be safe from him the time he will put his "come hither" upon them. I give you my word he set myself dancing reels one time in the street, and I making an attack on him for keeping the little lads miching from school.[160]

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[160] Lady Gregory, New Comedies (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1913), pp. 137-138.

Lady Gregory relates that an old woman tells of McDonough's death: "Himself and Reilly and three other fine pipers died within that year. There was surely a feast of music going on in some other place."[161]

It was said in the legend that McDonough was a proud man, would never go to a wedding unasked and would never play through a town. In the play, he pockets his pride to pipe the people away from the fair to the funeral of his wife, since he had acted amiss. By not returning sooner with his earnings from Roxborough, he had come too late to attend his wife at death. Worse than that, since he has wasted his money in drink and gambling, he has none to hire a proper funeral. It appears that the poorhouse car will have to carry her to her burial. Then, suddenly, overcome by the desire for a proper recognition by the town:

> I will show Galway and the world that it does signify. That it is not fitting McDonough's wife to travel without company and good hands under her and good following on the road. Play now, pipes, if you never played before! Call to the keeners to follow her with screams and beating of the hands and calling out! Set them crying now with your sound and with your notes, as it is often you brought them to the dance-house! (Goes out and plays a lament outside.)
>
> First Hag: (Looking out.) It is queer and wild he is, cutting his teeth and the hair standing on him.
>
> Second Hag: Some high notions he has, calling them to show honour to her as if she was the Queen of the Angels.
>
> First Hag: To draw to silence the whole fair did. Every person is moving toward this house.[162]

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[161] Ibid., p. 165.

[162] Ibid., pp. 151-152.

And the men quarrel over the privilege of carrying the piper's wife to her rest as McDonough cries triumphantly: "It is the story of the burying of McDonough's wife will be written in the book of the people!"[163] This cogent little legend is only one of dozens, it seems, resting on the almost supernatural effect of a regular every-day occurance, and in this one, the Irishman himself plays the leading role.

Oaths are many times mentioned in the plays. Hanrahan's Oath is a play in which the resolution of the plot depends upon Hanrahan's oath to remain silent for his own self-punishment. Here is the King's oath in The Dragon: "I swear by....the seven things common to us all; by sun and moon; sea and dew; wind and water; the hours of the day and night...."[164] This, he says, is the oath his people swear by. It is understood that he means the peasants.

Ancient and modern ideas are mixed in the same play. The meddling Queen has in mind to eliminate the "one-sided look" effected by the blind eye of Dall Glic if she has to put out the sight of the other in order to accomplish her purpose, but he assures her that it has been given out that it cannot be cured--"by doctors and by druids."[165] In The Image it is said that "king's blood used to cure the evil" as oil of whale is now used to "cure ulcers and cancers."[166]

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[163] Ibid., p. 154.
[164] Gregory, The Dragon, p. 2.
[165] Ibid., p. 11.
[166] Ibid., p. 16.

Ernest Boyd, authority on Irish literature, mentions two striking traits of Irish peasant character--"an unlimited faith in the possibilities of witchcraft together with a profound belief in the more picturesque legends of Catholicism."[167] This study will not include a search for witchcraft in the plays, or for Boyd's definition of witchcraft. It can be said, however, that the many references in the plays to the world of the spirit bear out Weygant's observation that to Irishmen, "the Other World is very instant."[168] In Spreading the News Bartley Fallon, who is unjustly accused by gossips of the murder of Jack Smith, upon hearing Smith's voice, very much alive, raised in song, instantly believes it is a ghost come to plague him.

> Bartley: It's Jack Smith's voice--I never knew a ghost to sing before--. It is after myself and the fork he is coming! (Goes back. Enter Jack Smith.) Let one of you give him the fork and I will be clear of him now and for eternity!

And poor Bartley wasn't even guilty!

An interesting combination of the Lord and the banshee is made in The Workhouse Ward. The two old paupers argue which is of the more prominent family. Michael Miskell's father has had the bigger funeral. Mike McInerney insists that the banshee has cried for his ancestors, though--proving the antiquity of his family.

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[167] Ernest A. Boyd, Ireland's Literary Renaissance (New York: Knopf, 1922), pp. 104-105.

[168] Weygant, Irish Plays and Playwrights, p. 133.

As with the Christianized American Indian, the old philosophy and the new are integrated:

> Michael Miskell: It is a pity the banshee not to be crying for yourself at this minute, and giving you a warning to quit your lies and your chat and your arguing and your contrary ways for there is no one under the rising sun could stand you. I tell you you are not behaving as in the presence of the Lord![169] [Italics are mine]

Almost the same sort of bragging comes from Malachi in The Deliverer: "Stop your lies! We had some in our generation that never knew the power of death. We had saints and angels visiting our old fathers, before ever there was a Pharaoh on the Nile!"[170]

Old Peggy in The Image is securely muddled as to whence comes creation. She is sure that "It is God puts you into the world and brings you out of it, and beyond that there is a woman in the stars does all."[171] She never questions where the power of God ends and where the power of the woman begins, or which is most important.

The Songmaker or poet-historian in Dervorgilla is full of legends. Some are in a more serious vein and some are light-hearted --for entertainment only. The following, but one of many in the plays, is of the latter type:

> Songmaker.....Talking, the neighbors were, about St. Martin's mitten. It was St. Martin made a throw of his mitten at the mice one time they had him annoyed, nibbling at the oatenmeal

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[169] Gregory, Seven Short Plays, p. 144.

[170] Gregory, Irish Folk-History Plays, II, 159.

[171] Gregory, The Image, p. 28.

> in the mill; and, in the throwing, it turned to be a cat, and scattered them. That was the first cat that ever was in Ireland.
>
> Mona: To be sure; so it was. St. Martin's mitten was the first cat. Everybody knows that.
>
> Songmaker: But it is what my grandfather said, and if St. Martin himself had wished it along with them, it would fail them to have turned that cat to be a mitten again, furry and innocent, and having no claws!172

This very practical miracle appears to be taken for granted by singer and listener alike.

Here is a legendary reference is a humorous play, Hyacinth Halvey:

> Sergeant.....The subject of the lecture is "The Building of Character."
>
> Mrs. Delane: Very nice indeed. I knew a girl lost her character, and she washed her feet in a blessed well after, and it dried up on the minute.
>
> Sergeant: The arrangements have all been left to me, the Archdeacon being away.173

But this whimsical bit brings more than a chuckle. Its casual use shows the naturalness with which the matter of legend is treated. No exception is taken of Mrs. Delane's statement. The conversation goes calmly on, notwithstanding her interpolation. No more attention is paid to the reference to the supernatural than if a cloud had momentarily covered the sun.

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172 Gregory, Irish Folk-History Plays, I, 167-168.

173 Gregory, Seven Short Plays, p. 34.

One of the most casual uses of folklore is in The Full Moon, where, although only incidental to the plot and not of the importance given it in Shanwalla, it contributes to the general fun and picturesqueness of this merry sequel to Hyacinth Halvey. The various reasons given for madness include superstitions and traditional knowledge--or traditional ignorance. Each speaker offers a different solution. One feels that madness may be contagious: "Take care would the madness catch on to ourselves the same as the chin-cough or the pock." Another solution is that of nature: "Ah, that's not the way it goes travelling from one to another, but some that are naturally cracked and inherit." They are all discussing Cracked Mary who, incidentally, expresses some of the most important ideas in the play. It is felt by Shawn Early that this diagnosis applies to her: "It is a family failing with her tribe. The most of them get giddy in their latter end." Miss Joyce, the priest's housekeeper, echoes a popular suggestion: It might be it was sent as a punishment before birth, for to show the power of God. Peter Tannian feels that it might be caused by diet: "It is tea-drinking does it, and that is the reason it is on the wife it is apt to fall for the most part." (He offers no statistics for this. In fact, he seems to ignore the fact that Davideen, the brother of Cracked Mary, is nearly as loony as she.)

Mrs. Broderick quickly and firmly stands up for her sex: "Ah, there's some does be thinking their wives isn't right, and

there's others think they are too right." The exemplary Hyacinth appropriately enough, brings the conversation back to the point: "There are some say it is the moon." And Shawn Early, in spite of his first reference to the family, is inclined to agree. He demonstrates great knowledge of astronomy--which, incidentally, seems to smack of Renaissance lore: "So it is, too. The time the moon is going back, the blood that is in a person does be weakening, but when the moon is strong, the blood that moves strong in the same way. And it to be at the full, it drags the wits along with it, the same as it drags the tide."[174]

And that seems to settle the matter. But for poor Hyacinth, it is still full moon time, and he still has hopes of escape from a dilemma in which he finds himself an example to the townsfolk--a high and mighty example which he is in no wise prepared to live up to.

> Miss Joyce: What way could he leave it?
>
> Hyacinth Halvey: No way at all, I'm thinking, unless there would be a miracle worked by the moon. [By the moon!]

But Mrs. Broderick sensibly brings everyone back to the present: "Ah, miracles is gone out of the world this long time with education, unless they might happen in your own inside."[175] Hyacinth, himself, "would not give in to any pagan thing." Bartley Fallon, after all, "will not give in to going to demons or druids or freemasons!" Hyacinth, too scoffs, "That's foolishness. These are not the ancient times, when Ireland was full of haunted people."[176]

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[174] Gregory, New Comedies, pp. 36-37.

[175] Ibid., p. 38.

[176] Ibid., p. 53.

There seems to be a general scoffing at the other world and a decided leaning toward the practical attitude toward madness, in spite of the fact that each has offered a solution depending upon tradition rather than science. Even Cracked Mary, herself, is strangely brave: "Let you throw open the door, Davideen. It is not ourselves are in dread that the white man in the sky will be calling names after us and ridiculing us. Ha! ha! I might be as foolish as yourselves and as fearful, but for the Almighty that left a little cleft in my skull, that would let in His candle through the night time."[177] And it is the light from Mary's candle, at last, which enables Hyacinth to make his escape from the neighbors and the meetints of the Board. What matter if they think him mad, also? In the words of Shawn Early, "He is a gone man surely."[178] Hyacinth's declaration of freedom has appeared already under the discussion of morals. For the time of the fair, at least, he is a wild free man--under the influence of the full moon.

Not everything handed down is considered good; not everything legendary is accepted, in the plays. For instance, Brian in Kincora constantly upholds the doctrine of peace and forgiveness. "They have earned death," but he will give them liberty. He will "make an end of quarrels....of this custom of death answering to death through the generations, like the clerks answering to one another at the Mass."[179] He, in his reign, will make some changes.

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[177] Ibid., p. 55.

[178] Ibid., p. 60.

[179] Gregory, Irish Folk-History Plays, I, 119.

Brian's story is one of history as well as legend and it was Lady Gregory's hope that the school children should have their imagination stirred about the people who made history, instead of knowing them "but as names."[180] History, though founded as she says, "one must think, on the legends of the people," has, in the plays of Lady Gregory, significance for the present. And, so, according to her understanding and practice, must legend be significant.

Lady Gregory wrote in the field of legend five other plays in addition to the above-mentioned Kincora, four three-act plays and one long one-act play. Since the purpose of each of these plays transcends the legendary story itself, and since each has little reference in the dialogue to legend, they have not been used to any great extent in this section on the attitude of the Irishman toward the sagas and folklore. They can be mentioned here and used in their proper places as reference elsewhere. Grania, the story of love and jealousy, has been used already to some extent in other section of this paper. Kincora, centering about the battle of Clontarf, will be alluded to in the study of established religion and again will furnish light on the study of the Irishman's attitudes toward politics.

Dervorgilla, the story of the red-haired woman who put the great curse on Ireland by bringing in the English, finds place

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[180] Ibid., p. 200.
[181] Ibid., p. 203.

throughout the study, leading toward explanation of ultimate meanings of life and death, as well as pointing up the attitude toward woman, but, especially, it stands as history which is supposed to kindle or re-kindle in the mind of the modern Irishman the fires of patriotism. This is found to be one of the chief purposes--and a commendable one in the light of Ireland's recent history--of the use by Lady Gregory of the six legends which she chose to use for her long history plays. Each one is especially chosen, it would appear, to emphasize some poignant time in the history of Ireland. Each tells its own story of courage, a quality so much needed at the time of the presentation of these plays in the Abbey Theatre. Consequently, some of these plays will appropriately find their way into the final section of this study--the one on the attitude of the Irishman toward politics.

Established Religion. In addition to a rich vocabulary from the field of folklore, the dialogue of Lady Gregory's plays shows frequent reference to the phraseology of established religion. Enough characters of both Protestant and Catholic faiths are shown to establish a reading of life. True to life, also, there are more Catholics than Protestants in these Irish plays, and there are a few pagans, as well.

If the only intention in the plays is a picture of life, that is accomplished. But a second reading--and often a first--

yields something more than characterization, important as that is in playwriting. There is often to be found acute consciousness of differences between Protestants and Catholics and, on occasion, there is a deep religious satire which cannot be ignored.

The Full Moon offers a bit of situation humor. Hyacinth Halvey, tired of being considered a model man, is trying desperately to find some way to disprove the sheaf of testimonials which have been sent in his favor and which are believed to the letter by the people of Cloon.

> Hyacinth: (Looking round.) I would take apples if I could see them. I wish I had broke my neck before I left Carrow and I'd be better off! I wish I had got six months the time I was caught setting snares--I wish I had robbed a church.
>
> Fardy: Would a Protestant church do?
>
> Hyacinth: I suppose it wouldn't be so great a sin.[182]

A lengthy description of the relative importance of the two churches could never have been so revealing. This passage does nothing more nor less than to depict things as they are. Hyacinth is not intentionally ironic or satirical. There is only a bit of a laugh at the expense of the church of the minority--Lady Gregory's church. As in most of the plays, it is taken for granted that the people are Catholic. The proximity of the Protestant church would make it the obvious one to rob, but the credit for robbing it would be sacrificed a bit compared with credit for robbing the Catholic church.

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[182] Gregory, New Comedies, p. 61.

The shafts are equally distributed eventually, however. The plot of The Wrens concerns chiefly the question of Union, which is political, so it may be that anything said about Protestants only refers to the English as anything about Catholics could refer to Ireland. One passage may be revealing, however, of the fact that some Irish people in the plays are traditionally Episcopalians. Margie, a good Irish girl, is chided by her not-so-discriminating husband who sings for anyone who will give him money to buy a drink:

> Hevenor: (To Castlereagh's Servant.) [Lord Castlereagh is supposed to have been the one who gave the treacherous deciding vote in favor of England.] It is emancipation she begrudges us, and we to be equal with the Protestants.
>
> Margy: (To Kirwan's Servant.) [Lord Kirwan was the faithful Irishman.] All the laws of England would not make you the equal to myself! I never will give in to be reduced to a Catholic!
>
> Hevenor: (To Castlereagh's Servant.) Isn't she the great Protestant with her high notions?
>
> Margy: If I am, it's in the shadow of a Protestant house I was reared, and a good house. Wasn't my grandmother hen-woman to the Duke of Leinster?[183]

There may be satirical humor in The Image in Mrs. Coppinger's "We should give in, so, I suppose and to put up with the loss. It's best not vex a priest or to rub against him as all."[184]

Because the play, Coats, is merely a curtain raiser, we may not be able to take the two arguing editors seriously. On the

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[183] Gregory, The Wrens, p. 12.

[184] Gregory, The Image, p. 24.

other hand, the naturalness with which they would be expected to speak, as well as the casualness with which the audience would be expected to react to their speeches, would indicate that we should be able to judge the content of such speeches typical, at least. Here is a combining of superstition and religion which has been found again and again:

> Mineog: I would recognize your voice, and you to be living or dead.
>
> Hazel: You say that now. But my ghost to come calling you in the night time to rise up and to clear my character, you would run shivering to the priest as from some unnatural thing. You would call to him to come banish me with a mass![185]

In Shanwalla the religious elements are simple, sincere, and serious, in keeping with the pathetic nature of the play. Poor Scarry, the young husband whose wife was murdered on the third day of their marriage, when reassured, "There is no one but will tell you that you will surely come to her again, on the far side of the world", cries out his loneliness and faith in one breath:

> There is no world of the living on the far side! That is a deception and a vanity! She to be living she would not leave me my lone, if she had to break through the flags of the floor of heaven! We to die there is nothing left of us but as if a breeze of wind that is passed away, and no more about it.[186]

But later in the play her visit to him is certain in his mind: "The world wouldn't put it out of my head that she came anear me

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[185] Gregory, Coats, p. 18.

[186] Gregory, Shanwalla, p. 38.

in my sleep." Brogan offers cold fact: "That is but vanity and foolishness. There is no one comes back from the dead." But he has seen the vision, and will not be deterred from his belief: "So nice she looked and so calm and so mournful. I am going to you now, Bride, till I will cry my fill for you! God knows, she to come back I would give her a good welcome, shadow and all as she might be!" He has gained new bravery and the courage to refuse to follow out the plan of the crook, Brogan, and he cannot be frightened or shamed out of his steadfastness. When Brogan taunts: "Is it that you are a traitor or in dread to keep your purpose?" Scarry turns from the door with: "Is it of the like of ye I would be afeared?"[187]

He lived close to God that night and slept under the wings of the angels. He was blessed as blind Conary had said he would be. The words are almost like a lullaby: "(Goes over to Lawrence [Scarry] then comes back.) Let him sleep on now while he can do it. God is the best and maybe after a while he'll quieten things all over!"[188]

The Story Brought by Brigit, a passion play, offers many views of politics and religion, since the parallels between Rome and Jerusalem and England and Ireland, with their separate religious creeds, are thinly veiled. Could it have been felt that the English could give Catholic Emancipation without endangering their position?

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[187] Ibid., p. 54.

[188] Ibid., pp. 48-49.

Here, Lady Gregory is obviously on the side of the Catholics, because such a stand would support Ireland, and, all in all, this appears to be her true position.

> Marcus: There are some are saying this man you are running down is a messenger sent from your own Jewish God.
>
> Silas: That is blasphemy. He that goes eating and drinking with a low class that do not so much as wash their hands!
>
> Marcus: What have we to do with that? It is nothing that will bring our Government into danger.
>
> Silas: To keep the people within the four corners of the law of Moses will check the coming in of this mischief, and will give strength to your hands as well as to our own.
>
> Marcus: A good deal of your law could be broken without bringing any danger to the Empire of Rome.[189]

Provided the Catholic religion is considered the Irish one, here is another argument for it--unless Lady Gregory means exactly the opposite:

> Silas: [Silas is the Pharisee] There are some without sense that will run after anyone that is new and would loosen the commands of the law. An ignorant man! Paying no respect to learning! [The priests and the church] Would make nothing of breaking the ten commandments. [Established ritual--tradition] Caiaphas will whip them in on the Feast days and bring them back to their duties.[190]

The accusations of Christ by the Jew somehow have the familiar ring of a priest's scholding. On the other hand, remembering that Lady Gregory's own philosophy is carried often by the women's chorus in

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[189] Gregory, The Story Brought by Brigit, pp. 12-13.

[190] Ibid., pp. 11-12.

this play and by St. Brigit, who follow Christ's simple teachings, these words of Silas are blasphemous.

The Jew again may be taken to represent the Catholic position in Ireland. His traditions are threatened by the simplicity of Christianity much as the Catholic tradition was being threatened by the Anglican. In the following passage, the English come in for criticism for attacking illegally, so to speak, the church and customs of the people rather than the laws and government, which was, perhaps, more their province--if any:

> Silas: (interrupting) Blind as you are can't you see that when he thought himself strong enough to make an attack, what he attacked was not the palce of Pilate or his Court. No, but the Temple of the Jews, our own Temple and the glory of our own nation. Threaten he did to knock the whole of it within three days. Could he do that without the foreign soldiers' [Roman help?] To knock down our laws along with it, and our customs. What had he in mind doing that but to put Judea entirely into the hand of Rome, the same as a bird's nest?[191]

It begins to be doubtful that this Irishman is Catholic. What hurt was the knocking down of laws and customs. Could it be that those not supporting Catholicism and Gaelic language and customs were doing the same for Ireland? This earnestly satirical and ironic play was written for presentation in Catholic country communities. Its message of freedom was directed to the country people of County Mayo. In their ignorance would they have discrimination to know that the part of established religion was being taken by a scoundrel?

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[191] Ibid., p. 42.

Hanrahan's Oath is a humorous satire at the expense of an evangelical priest as well as the customs of self-punishment and repentance. The humor of the situation calls for a country woman's confession to a wandering poet, since she is under the mistaken impression that he is a holy man:

> He is a great saint; he is so saintly as that there couldn't be saintlier than what he is. He is living in the wilderness on nuts and the berries of the bush, and his two jaws being bloomy all the time.[192]

The most serious consideration of exaggerated form and ceremony is seen in the play Kincora. The backdrop is historical. The foils to organized religion are the pagan, uncivilized Danes. They stand for war. Brian stands for peace. "Brian is surely getting a great name of piety to put along with his name of riches and of power; having, as he has, his head in the skies, and his hand in every good work."[193] We are repeatedly told that he is a good man. But he drives a hard bargain, and he works the captive Danes like slaves to the plow.

There is considerable inconsistency between his church practices and his politics. Gormleith's outcries against his practices are not to be ignored: "It was to a great king I came as a wife, not to a monkish man serving heaven on his knees."[194] It is perhaps

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[192] Gregory, Hanrahan's Oath, p. 21.

[193] Gregory, Irish Folk-History Plays, I, 125.

[194] Ibid., p. 145.

religious differences as much as political differences which separate them in the end. Her irritation with his concern over bells and bishops is beyond control: "....Peace, the priests have their tongues framed to it, peace, peace, peace."[195] She has no patience with "all the talk of love and charity".[196] Sitric, the Dane, Gormleith's son, estimates that Brian would sell his kingship just so he would "be left with the most thing he cares for, with his churches and with his bells."[197] At least, this is what he promises Gormleith that Brian will be allowed to keep if she will only sign the treacherous agreement with the Danes.

Partly pagan, Gormleith's own philosophy is plain: "This is the world and you cannot change the world's old custom.. There must be fighting so long as there is anything at all worth fighting for. If there was not war in the world it would be right to make a war, to search out something to hate."[198]

Perhaps Brian, the Catholic, embraces a religion not of this world? "I will be satisfied and well satisfied the time I will have shaped everything that is under me to the will of God. [This, somehow, has a very arbitrary sound.] There is no fighting in that good place the Almighty has of his own."[199] But he must face her betrayal

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[195] Ibid., p. 135.
[196] Ibid., p. 136.
[197] Ibid., p. 130.
[198] Ibid., p. 136.
[199] Ibid., p. 135.

at last. His repetition of the admonition to "Pray and repent" may certainly be satirical as was her own "Peace, peace, peace...." "Go, Gormleith, to the church and pray, bend your knees, and pray and repent, pray and repent, till the wildness has gone from your eyes and the pride from your heart, and the darkness from your vexed unhappy mind."[200] This is ironic in another way, also, because Gormleith, not being sufficiently civilized or Christianized, will never carry out the instructions.

Ultimate Meanings of Life and Death. There is some of the feeling of necessity or fate in the attitude of these Irishmen toward life as well as toward death. There is often expressed the idea of inevitability--of predestination--the inevitability of bowing to tradition, of suffering, of the running out of time, of punishment or judgment. Many times the scenes are not pretty. And yet, there are glimpses of heaven even in the midst of adversity, of peace in the midst of war.

Dervorgilla's downfall is that "a deed once done has no undoing". Fascination for her had brought the King of Leinster to call in the strangers. A lifetime of penance could not atone for her part in this betrayal. The pain caused by her young friends' returning her gifts, once they knew who she was, is sweet; their cruel words are, in a sense, a rack upon which she is prepared for the last judgment.

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[200] Ibid., p. 143.

Dervorgilla: Do not be afraid to give me my gifts....For there is little of my life spent, and there has come upon me this day all the pain of the world and its anguish, seeing and knowing that a deed once done has no undoing, and the lasting trouble my unfaithfulness has brought upon you and your children forever. (Mamie lays down her necklace and goes away sadly.) There is a kindness in your unkindness, not leaving me to go and face Michael and the Scales of Judgment wrapped in comfortable words, and the praises of the poor, the lulling of the psalms, but from the swift, unflinching, terrible judgment of the young! (She sinks slowly to the ground holding to the chair. The stage begins to darken; the voice of the Songmaker is heard coming nearer, singing:)

> The rat in the cupboard, the fire in the lap;
> The guest to be fattening, the children fretting;
> My curse upon all that brought in the Gall,
> Upon Diarmuid's call, and on Dervorgilla![201]

Finn in Grania said, "....Many a day goes by, and nothing has happened in it worth while. And then there comes a day that is as if the ring of life, and that holds all the joy and the pain of life between its two darknesses" and "There is a great space for rememberings and regrettings in the days and the nights of seven years."[202] "There is no man but must go through trouble at some time;...."[203] "A red death is a clean death, and the thing that is done cannot be undone, and the story is ended, and there is no other word to say."[204] The acceptance of predestination extends even to death. Mona in Dervorgilla would have desired a death of honor for her Flann:

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[201] Ibid., p. 186.
[202] Ibid., p. 46.
[203] Ibid., p. 40.
[204] Ibid., p. 55.

> Mona: And if it was with the sword itself he was killed, that's natural. His brothers were killed with the sword. But an arrow! Not one of the family was killed with that before. That is not a thing you would be hearing in the ballads.[205]

A death of honor is worth the trouble, but a quick, sudden, unsought death with no opportunity to fight back--that is not heroic. The poets writing ballads of historical--even moral--significance would never think twice of a man killed by an arrow.

Gormleith in Kincora would consider a death in battle a good death, but the death of a hostage of war would be a "poor shameful lonely death".[206] She, also, spoke of the world and the impossibility of chanting "the world's old custom."[207] And Finn's philosophy is much the same: "It is hard for any man to escape the thing was laid down for him, and that he has earned."[208]

It is Dervorgilla who assures Flann, "There is no use at all trying to go against the prophecies.[209] It was she who said, also, "There is no hiding it, no hiding it. Dreams come true."[210] Manus in The Dragon appears just in time to rescue the Princess because he says, "It was dreamed to me that the King's daughter in this house is in a great danger."[211] And, truly, a magician had

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[205] Ibid., p. 184.
[206] Ibid., p. 111.
[207] Ibid., p. 136.
[208] Ibid., p. 52.
[209] Ibid., p. 162.
[210] Ibid., p. 179.
[211] Gregory, The Dragon, p. 41

prophecied as much.[212] The King in the same play sums up the whole argument for dreams and prophecies in this simple way: "I tell you, it being to be, it will be."[213]

The fantasies and histories are not alone in showing this philosophy of inevitability: "You are talking fool's talk and giving out words that are foolishness! There is no one at all can put away from his road the bones and the thinness of death," says the Hag in McDonough's Wife. "It is a great mystery, and it is hard to say of any man, did he earn hatred or love," parries Bartley Fallon in Spreading the News, and Damer in Damer's Gold explains, "It was fortold for me."[214]

Pity is seen in the little miracle play, The Travelling Man, when the mother whom Christ has led to shelter fails to recognize Him upon his promised return: "There are fruit and flowers on it. It is a branch that is not of any earthly tree. (Falls on her knees.) He is gone, he is gone, and I never knew him! He was that stranger that gave me all! He is the King of the World!"[215]

The sense of the running out of time is felt in Maelmora's: "....age is coming upon him as it must come upon us all...." [Kincora] and Brian's answering, "But the time fails me, and I have leave in

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[212] Ibid., p. 32.

[213] Ibid., p. 18.

[214] Gregory, New Comedies, p. 127.

[215] Gregory, Seven Short Plays, p. 171.

my own narrow kingdom to begin the thousand years of peace."[216] It must be remarked that, for Brian, peace is achieved, and mystically, the audience feels that achievement. The key to peace is unity: "Do not, [harm this girl] for it is not to the north or the south we belong now, but to the whole of Ireland." And to Gormleith, the beggar continues: "You are out of it. Queen, his life is near its beginning--the beginning of the lasting life of Heaven."[217] Brian, in his humility, has said, "It is sometimes those that go sleeping on the straw of a haggard have their own view of the angels of heaven." And he said, also, "Let you do your plowing for the harvest in heaven!"[218]

In The Jackdaw a somewhat more cheerful idea is presented of this present world: "....Sure heaven is the best place, heaven and this world we're in now!"[219]

One little farce, The Bogie Men, is based upon the premise that people do bring worries upon themselves which God never bestowed. Mistaken identity makes the fun. Through the images put up by their mothers, (lies to startle them into good behavior) two cousins, Darby and Taig, live in fear of grand relations until accidentally revealed to each other. The moral is that fear of a ghost is wasted energy.

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[216] Gregory, Irish Folk-History Plays, I, 136.
[217] Ibid., p. 140.
[218] Ibid., p. 105.
[219] Gregory, Seven Short Plays, p. 98.

> Taig: You no better than myself! And the prayers I used to be saying for you, and you but a sketch and an excuse of a man!"
>
> Darby: Ah, I am thinking people put more in their prayers than was ever put in them by God.[220]

When relieved of the burden of ignorance and misconception, there is freedom. Taig's is a message of philosophy for a discontented country: "I'm in dread of neither bumble or bagman or bugaboo! I will regulate things from myself from this out." and what a message is Darby's: "There is magic and mastery come into me! This day has put wings into my heart!" and "There to be fineness of living in the world, why wouldn't I make it out for myself?" He will sweep chimneys till he can see the Seven Stars and the three gates of Heaven. And Taig encourages him: "It's like enough, luck will flow into you. The way most people fail is in not keeping up the heart ...."[221]

It was fitting that the spiritual and the mystic in Lady Gregory's philosophy be put into a late play inspired by an idea which she heard put simply by a poor woman in a workhouse: "There is no child comes into the world but brings with him some grain of the wisdom of Heaven."[222] Dave, an Irishman as much as any others of the characters in Lady Gregory's plays, kings and peasants, alike, completes her circle of humanity. It is his mission to be the means

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[220] Gregory, New Comedies, p. 20.

[221] Ibid., p. 22-23.

[222] Gregory, Three Last Plays, p. 164.

of Kate's regaining her mystic vision--which she "has lost somewhere in the great monotonous round of daily detail, but which she finds again as the boy returns to the bleak life of every day from that "so-near" other side. But it is Dave, himself, we are interested in. What made it possible for him to see beyond? Perhaps it was his simplicity or a sweet, childhood memory of some forgotten security prompted the vision of warmth and comfort--the "music and the laughing --merry laughter, not mocking,"[223] with someone calling him brother--someone of his own whose head is held high and proud--as the music comes to him again, "sweet quieting music".[224] From Kate comes the mystical explanation: "There is surely someone having a wish for him, in or out of the world....He is maybe listening to the Birds of Heaven. It is sometimes a vision is sent through the passion sleep of the night.[225] The best way Dave can express it is to say that "it had what should be the sound and feeling of home....It was nearly like as if I was a king's son or a great gentleman."[226]

Of course, this "spailpin" of a boy has seen heaven, has been quickly converted and has made his vow to return there after he shall have finished his work on earth. This he chooses shortly as he dedicates himself to care of the poor, the famine-sick and

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[223] Ibid., p. 154.
[224] Ibid., p. 153.
[225] Ibid., p. 154.
[226] Ibid., p. 155.

dying among his countrymen. This quickness to vow help to the needy, as in the instance of Manus in The Dragon, recollects stories of the Fianna and early knighthood and is surely what Weygant means by the spiritual inheritance of the Irish and what A. E. meant when he began his poem, "The gods have taken alien shapes upon them...."[227] For, as Kate says for Lady Gregory: "It is likely he will walk with his head up from this out, for it may be it was himself he saw in that dream." It is the re-creation of that feeling of comfort and security which he is seeking when he vows to reach a hand to "brothers under trouble".[228] For Kate assures him that any place that has the love of God in it is a part of heaven, and that he would beckon others to it as he had been beckoned to. He has the ability to do this, she assures him and the grace and goodness, for he possesses the secret of the soul's unity with its Maker: "It is certain the Man Above never sent you here without some little flame of His own nature being within you....Mind you never let that flame be quenched in you."[229] He will go out as he came in, with his spade and the strength of his two hands that are all his estate, in search of those who need help. His Christian confession is his last moment on stage: "I give you my word I never felt so merry or so strong. I am like one that has

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[227] Ibid., p. 164.

[228] Ibid., p. 156.

[229] Ibid., p. 157.

found his treasure and must go share it with his kin. Why wouldn't I be airy doing that? (Goes out.)[230]

Even crabby, proud old Nicholas is converted. Home will be a pleasanter place for Kate since he vows to quit forever boasting of his ancient lineage. At least, for the moment, Josephine, too, ceases her saucy language and asks, "....Will you let me stop and care you?"

Nicholas offers, too, to allow Kate to call back Dave, but she is wiser: "I wouldn't ask it. God has surely some great hand in him. He had the look of being very glad in the mind. His head held high, and a light on his brow as bright as the bow of heaven. May friends and angels be around him and steer him to a good harbour in the Paradise of the King!"[231]

Although there are inconsistencies in the beliefs of the various men shown in the plays and inconsistencies in the beliefs and behavior of certain individual men, the following general conclusions can be made regarding the attitudes of the Irishman in Lady Gregory's plays toward folklore, religion, and philosophy:

1. He believes in predestination, prophecy, and the realization of dreams. Here the threads of folklore and established religion are almost indistinguishable.

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[230] Ibid., p. 160.

[231] Ibid., p. 163.

He believes in life after death and often he believes in some communication between this life and the next, for to him the other world is "very instant."

3. His daily conversation holds much reference to folklore and legend, and he makes comparisons and examples from the latter for the purpose of evaluating behavior--both his and his neighbor's.

4. In spite of occasional scoffing, he yearns to believe in miracles and stories of the supernatural.

5. He is usually Catholic; he is conscious that there are other religions, however, and he bickers considerably about various religions, about miracles, and about folklore and superstitions. He is interested in the beliefs of the other person, and if ever any one is his brother's keeper, it is this Irishman. Some of his argument may stem from the fact that differences in religion often include, also, differences in politics.

6. Although the Irishman in the farces is often illiterate to the point of humor and even satire, he is nevertheless vociferous in his discussion of both folklore and established religion. Lady Gregory has given him the natural wit which is his birthright, and he expresses simply and without design whatever he feels to be the truth.

Political Issues, Freedom, Law

This last section will be concerned with the attitudes of the Irishman as characterized in the plays of Lady Gregory toward politics and the related subjects of freedom and nationalism, toward foreigners, and toward law and authority.

Andrew E. Malone, a contemporary of Lady Gregory, remarks that "she has been flattered by the imitation of many who accept her buffoonery without a thought for her satire or other qualities of her best work."[232] Malone indicates that Lady Gregory's plays are usually farces, because the humor is the humor of situation rather than the humor of character. It must be noted, however, that in her own mind, Lady Gregory was attempting to write comedies,[233] and consequently, used her characters as a medium of expressing her ideas of what the Irishman is. Malone acutely remarks that "it is possible a political satire is intended, and perhaps the play [in this instance, The Workhouse Ward] says more about Irish politics than the politicians have yet learned." The play certainly could be an indictment of Irish lethargy, and it could have been concerned with lethargy in the attainment of independence. With Lady Gregory, history came "next to religion," says Malone. In the light of

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[232] Andrew E. Malone, "The Plays of Lady Gregory," The Yale Review, XIV (1925), 540-551.

[233] Lady Gregory, The Image (London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1909), p. 99.

recent Irish history, perhaps the plays of the Abbey Theatre, particularly those of Lady Gregory, can be further evaluated with regard to their importance in political issues and solutions of political problems. Cornelius Weygant was aware that at times her "farce grew as serious as comedy" and that "in all her plays [there is] serious indictment of national weaknesses...."[234] As the plays are examined, it becomes increasingly impossible to ignore the political significance of the message in those plays. The farces do not escape their share, but the history plays are packed with the propaganda of freedom.

In the first scene of Dervorgilla, Flann pictures a situation which appears to have changed very little in seven hundred and fourteen years: "Fighting and killings and robbery, that [not sports and games for prizes] is the sport they were brought up to, and that is all the sport that was in it for the last twoscore years." A yearning for an ideal situation is very clear as Mona prays: "The Lord be with the good old times, when a woman suckling her child would be safe crossing Ireland from sea to sea!"[235]

These historical characters represented the people who remembered a free Ireland. They were coming right on the stage and speaking out to an occupied Ireland. The picture of the "bad

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[234] Weygant, op. cit., p. 149.

[235] Gregory, Irish Folk-History Plays, I, 157.

times" when Queen Dervorgilla gave means and cattle to those the English had robbed, is very familiar. Flann speaks the message of cheer and of change from "things as they are": "It would be a queer thing if it would not be kept to the end."[236] Such lines as these would be powerful enough to effect the turbulence which existed like a bloody aura around the Abbey Theatre. The Irishman in the plays of Lady Gregory is a plain speaker, indeed. The pattern of his message often follows that of the above passage: first, the reminder of the past, then the line of incitement or, at least, of excitement, then the line of cheer or courage, the reminder of attainable freedom.

Political Issues. Political issues are likely to be many-sided. The issues of the first quarter of the twentieth century in Ireland were not without exception, and the dialog of Lady Gregory's plays does not ignore these arguments. For instance, one was to the effect that Ireland had been not so well off up to now and would probably continue in the same way if she did not give up the old struggle and join with England. Another argument was similar to the effect that those who do not stand together have to stand alone. The latter was used mostly by those who favored, as did Lady Gregory, Irish unity and Irish independence.

The Image, written in 1909, in which Lady Gregory shows various images or visions crumbling at the touch of reality, would seem to say at first that the more ecstatic the vision is, the more

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[236] Ibid., p. 158.

impossible is its realization. However, in the end, it is clear that accomplishment is made only by the inspiration of dreams--even broken ones, since, though fragile, they are the stuff perseverance is made of.

The presentation of this play followed a series of events influential in the organization of Ireland for freedom--the Gaelic League (1893), the centenary celebrations of the Insurrection (1898) and the foundation of the United Irishmen (1899), which continued to promote a policy of self-reliance and passive resistance for Ireland as an alternative to insurrection or parliamentarianism. By 1906 the Sinn Fein was organized with one policy--Irish Independence.

The Image reveals the conflict concurrent with the above achievements. Malachi's criticism of the laggard is potent: "There were always good fighters in Ireland till this present time. The people have no fight in them now worth while, so lagging they are grown to be and so liary."[237] And so, in the play, they must search further for a hero to whom to erect their proposed statue of liberty.

> Costello: It's a statue of Liberty Brian Hosty was talking about in the commencement.
>
> Mannion: Ah, who the hell cares about liberty? It is what the Board made sure you had the name chosen of some good man. Word I have to send them by the post-car will be passing at the break of day. (Goes off up street.)
>
> Malachi: (Rises and comes to them.) Is it what ye are going to do, to put up the name of some big man?

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[237] Gregory, The Image, pp. 38-39.

Costello: It is, and his image along with it.[238]

Mrs. Coppinger's interest in her husband's advancement has been mentioned in another section. She is a symbol of those who still try to achieve freedom. She maybe said to encourage passive resistance. But ironically, she would not be beyond catering to the English. Her attitude would stimulate those who are becoming lethargic as Malachi has said. Her husband has not finished cutting the name on his own tombstone--and for a very good reason:

> Coppinger:....I am thinking I might get a name yet would look bigger and handsomer on my tomb.
>
> Hosty: Whatever way you maywrite out your name or raise it, it will be but Thomas Coppinger in the end.
>
> Mrs. Coppinger: It might not. Look at all that voted for the Parliament going from College Green to England, and that went to bed nothing and rose up lords in the morning! I would like well Thomas to be a lord, with two hundred acres of land.[239]

Mrs. Coppinger's reference is to the bill for union with Great Britain which passed in 1789. This was a victory for the over-government "to bring away the Parliament out of Ireland," says Lady Gregory in her notes to The Wrens which she re-wrote for production in 1921, the year the bill of 1789 was undone and the Irish Free State given the title of Dominion. The reference she says is from folklore:

> As to the Union, it was bought with titles. Look at the Binghams and the rest, they went to bed nothing, and rose

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[238] Ibid., p. 48.

[239] Ibid., pp. 17-18.

> up lords in the morning. The day it was passed, Lady Castlereaugh was in the House of Parliament, and she turned three colours, and she said to her husband, 'You have passed your treaty, but you have sold your country.' He went and cut his throat after that. And it is what is said by the old people, there was no priest in Ireland but voted for it, the way they would get better rights, for it was only among poor persons they were going at that time. And it was but at the time of the Parliament leaving College Green they began to wear the Soutane that they wear now.[240]

According to the stories of the country folk, the priests and some of the new-made landowners had profited well in 1789, and although she would have been the first to criticize Lady Castlereagh, Mrs. Coppinger had her own ideas for the future.

The Wrens, a play about the bill for union, was freighted with significance when played in 1921, at the time the treaty with England hung in the balance. The arguments of 1789 were similar to those of 1921:

> Kirwan's Servant: There is no man is honest and is straight but will give his voice against it.....
>
> Castlereagh's Servant: If it is [defeated] it will be because there's more fools than wise men within the walls of that house....There is no person having sense but would wish to be within the Empire of England.
>
> Kirwan's Servant: He would not, unless he would come of a bad tribe and a bad family, and would be looking for a pension for his vote....
>
> Castlereagh's Servant to Kirwan's: There is no one against the bill but some that are like yourselves not having learning and that don't travel....
>
> Kirwan's Servant: I tell you the most thing in the mighty world could not save that bill from being thrown out and refused.

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[240] Gregory, The Wrens, pp. 27-28.

> Porter: It's hard to say. There was no great strength in the wrens that destroyed Ireland the time they went picking crumbs on a drum, and wakened up the army of the Danes.[241]

Margy, the strolling singer, says, "England is all promise and no pay" and "....it is to turn Dublin you would to be but a little village of houses."[242] But her most potent argument and the one most appropriate in 1921, just before the civil war in Ireland is this: "We might ate one another at some times, but they'd ate the whole of us!" to her husband's "It's a bad way we are getting up to this!"[243]

The conflicting ideas concerning Irish politics were even shown in Lady Gregory's passion play, The Story Brought by Brigit. The parallel of the Roman over-government of the Jewish people and the English over-government of the Irish people is obvious. The arguments for and against rebellion, for example, would be the same anywhere. The setting for the play is Jerusalem, but the characters speak in Kiltartanese, the Irish peasant dialect used by Lady Gregory in all her plays, their point of view is Irish, and the issues are those which Irish people understand. Daniel's "Let him [Jesus] frighten them with fire to their heels till they'll divide with us the riches they own," shows that Daniel's mind, as would the mind of one type of Irishman, centers on the question of money.

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[241] Ibid., p. 6.
[242] Ibid., p. 10.
[243] Ibid., p. 11.

Daniel's criticism of his masters shows indictment of the unjust overlord and of the niggardly Irish underdog at the same time. Joel, the boy from the mountains, describes this Irish enemy of Ireland to his face: "....You only want to grab for yourself. Little you care for the country or the nation." Then follows argument for and against an issue very familiar to Irish ears--that of actual rebellion against England:

> Daniel: It is you rebels are destroying us with all your foolish talk. I don't know what put it in your head at all.
>
> Joel: I heard rebellion talked ever and always and I a child in the high mountains and on the low ground. Our country a ruin, our people scattered--
>
> Daniel: Sure enough the country is in tatters. It is hardly worth begging around for your bite, let alone striving to find the price of a drink.
>
> Joel: There can be no content until we send the foreign devils back to their own place in the North, or wherever Rome may be. [Italics mine] They thinking it is crucifying the half of us will bring the rest of us kissing their hand. We'll put trembling in their heart yet!
>
> Daniel: You'll put yourselves in jeopardy, that's sure enough. And you never will have strength to stand against them.[244]

This argument it is remembered was played out on the Abbey stage during the Irish civil war. To read Lady Gregory's diary of 1924 (the year of publication of this play) lends a measure of clarification:

> Feb. 22, 1924. The plumber, mending the pump, said how quiet Gort is now, the trouble over. And I, feeling that though the

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[244] Ibid., pp. 3-4.

> Republicans are beaten they are not won, said I hoped good feeling would come and, now the fight is over, they will all shake hands, and he said, "That's right." But, later, typing my diaries of 1922, the shooting of that Connemara lad and of the others at his funeral, I felt more doubtful of a swift forgiveness in the face of such bitter memories. The Dublin executions were more conspicuous, but it is the countryside that remembers.[245]

The children had grown up under the influence of conflict. But terrorizing would only serve to deepen the impression and to increase their determination to put fear into the hearts of their oppressors. Later in the play, Lady Gregory has Marcus, a sergeant of Pilate's guard, say:

> Let him try that and welcome. Pilate is for policy and for patience. To tell the clean truth, a little Rising now and then is no harm at all. It gives us an excuse to get rid of disturbers and to bring more of our armies in. A Rising too is very apt to lead to splits and splits are a great help when you want to keep a country down.[246]

This is a plain warning. Those youthful listeners who would have been attracted by the "convienient sum"[247] of sixpence were not forgotten by Lady Gregory. The play was tailored also, it must be remembered, for impressionable country audiences.

The play, The Canavans, though set in the time of Queen Elizabeth, was appropriately presented. It shows teetering Peter Canavan, a small property owner, fluctuating between service to the

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[245] Robinson, Lady Gregory's Journals, pp. 196-197.

[246] Gregory, The Story Brought by Brigit, p. 15.

[247] Winifred Letts, "Young Days at the Abbey Theatre," Irish Writing, No. 16 (September, 1951), 43-46.

queen and whole-hearted joining with the people of the village. Peter, in his indecision, merits the sympathy of the audience. For his own protection he would like to be on both sides. The situation offers excellent opportunity for discussion of issues which faced Ireland at the time of its presentation--December 8, 1906. It will be recalled that this was the year that Sinn Fein, with its goal of Irish independence, was organized. A deal of talk must have gone into the preparation for its creation. Lady Gregory used in The Canavans, which she considered one of her most inspired pieces of work, more of folklore than written history, especially where the traditions of Queen Elizabeth are concerned. Some of the dialog, then, since it is taken directly from the stories of the people, would be readily understood by them. In Kiltartan they had little use for Queen Elizabeth or any of the Tudors.[248] Peter Canavan offers a lively picture of Ireland in 1906--first afraid to break from the protection of England, then gaining courage to stand on her own. Many of his lines are arguments of the people--for and against joining with "the strongest"; for and against independence. The miller has furnished Essex's men with grain and with flour. He would like to accept the offer of the English deputy, who will give him the position of mayor of the village. Should he accept? He does so much want to be "safe".[249]

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[248] Gregory, Irish Folk-History Plays, II, 189-190.

[249] Ibid., p. 6.

Taking the oath of allegiance to the English queen might go against him "in the eyes of the neighbors"[250]. Furthermore, it is perfectly possible that the Irish may get the upper hand one of these days, and at such a time, the neighbors being offended, "the mill is a lonesome place--the roof of it is but thatch--any attack at all to be made on it would be a great danger."[251] He could do worse than remain friendly with the town, leaving his brother, Anthony, to be sworn to the Queen, thus keeping the family safe on every side.

Although his brother Anthony reminds him that "many a man would be proud of the honour of being beheaded,"[252] poor Peter would still like to be safe. "Would any one now think that a thing to hang a man for, to have striven to keep himself safe? Hiding is it? Why would nature teach the rabbits to hide, and the badgers to live in clefts, if there was harm in it and rebellion?" (Lady Gregory proudly notes that this passage was chosen by the "new University" at one time as part of a literature examination to "put Irish on").[253] In one of his moods for joining with the strongest, Peter plans his future:

> I'll give them plenty of gaol according to their crimes! Oh there is a certain assurance of quiet and good in settling yourself to the strongest. There is very great peace and

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[250] Ibid., pp. 6-7.

[251] Ibid., p. 8.

[252] Ibid., p. 32.

[253] Gregory, Our Irish Theatre, p. 95.

> immunity in surrendering our will to their commands. There is good in them, if there is no other good but that they are commands."[254]

Here would have been the philosophy of false optimism put out by the opponents of Irish indiependence. Its purpose in the play at this moment is ironical.

Peter's last brave line is a message of courage to every listener. Reaching out his protecting arm over Headly (who has "Englished his name") and Anthony (who has fought for the English army), like a true Don Quixote, speaking for Ireland, he breaks forth:

> Let you not be daunted! It is I will protect the whole of ye! Where is fear? It is banished from the world from this day! The strongest! Isn't it the fool I was wasting time--wasting the years looking here and there for the strongest? I give you my word, it was not till this present minute that I knew the strongest to be myself![255]

But this tremendous mental victory is achieved only after three acts of turning around and around like the windmill that Ireland had been for seven centuries. And, ironically, even now the gun which he holds is not loaded. The message is one of cheer, but the time is not ripe for its fulfillment.

In Kincora, which Mary Colum calls one of Lady Gregory's "not very good historical plays,"[256] King Brian is pictured as desirous of peace, but not peace at any price.

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[254] Gregory, Irish Folk-History Plays, II, 52.

[255] Ibid., p. 20.

[256] Mary Colum, Life and the Dream (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1947), p. 124.

Malachi: You were saying awhile ago the country was in great need of peace.

Brian: Entire peace is what is badly wanting, but a half peace is no better worth the winning than the half of the living child was brought to the Judgment of Solomon.

Malachi: In my opinion, you will not see entire peace or the end of the quarrels in Ireland, till such time as the grass stops trowing or talk comes to the thrush.

Brian: I tell you I will make no settlement that will leave any one of the five Provinces a breeding ground for the enemies and the ill-wishers of Ireland....This tossed tormented country has to be put in order, and to be kept in order, and travel whatever road God laid out for it, without arguing and backbiting and the quarrelling of cranky bigoted men....[257]

Unity is his ideal for Ireland, and his sword will not rest so long as there is a whisper of rebellion or of treachery anywhere, for progress lies only in peace: "Give me twenty year, or ten year itself, of quiet, and the world will bow down to the name of Ireland."[258]

Kincora is read all the more carefully when it is remembered that some of the young audience remembered "long pieces of that play heart."[259] Here they learned of their racial inheritance, of their cultural traditions of poetry and scholarship. Here they were instructed in their own literature, and repeatedly they were reminded of their own folk literature with its historical implications.

Phelan, the servant, must offer his bit of satire, reminiscent of Peter Canavan's English relative: "The dog to get a

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[257] Gregory, Irish Folk-History Plays, I, 94-95.

[258] Ibid., p. 101.

[259] Colum, Life and the Dream, p. 124.

bone, the dog's tail must wag. I do but wag as my master pleases."[260]

The emphasis in this play on the attempt of the two kings to equalize the power in Ireland and to cooperate for the sake of peace and mutual protection (since they were in fear of the Danes) is a message of courage for the Ireland of 1909 when the issue of foremost importance was independence.

> Malachi: There, you have an equal share of Ireland with myself.
>
> Brian: That is right now. Yourself and myself between us can sweep the whole country, and turn it all to peace.[261]

Again, the arguments are given in a play, and this time they concern peace:

> Phelan: This peace is a great celebration now of Brian's wedding with Queen Gormleith. Malachi the High King owning the whole of the North. Brian King of the whole of the South! Maelmore safe in his own place in Leinster. Meddling with one another no more than the white and the yolk of an egg! Peace as round and as sound as the eggshell itself. Peace forever in Ireland and in Leinster and in Kincora!
>
> Brennain: [Answering for the servant-chorus of the author] Ah, what signifies talking about eggs and about agreements? The one is as perishable as the other. Believe me there is some mother of mischief does be always at roost overhead in Ireland, to claw and to shatter pacifications or any well disposed thing at all. Peace and treaties! I would make no treaty with the Gall but to strike their head off![262]

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[260] Ibid., p. 98.

[261] Ibid., p. 75.

[262] Ibid., p. 79.

There are ever those who build and those who destroy; there are ever those who favor diplomacy and those who trust only in force.

The whole play, The Deliverer, which revolves around the conflict connected with the betrayal of Parnell, is an indictment of the people who will not follow a leader to the end. This play, also, is a series of arguments. Ard, the spokesman, is an equivocal as Peter Canavan: "It's hard to know. Some are terrible wicked, but some are fair enough."[263]

Ard's lines recollect the Irish famine of two generations ago and bemoan the taxes of the present: "We would be better off there in hungry times itself, than the way we are in this place, with the over-government taking the hens off the floor and the plates from the dresser, and the bed itself from under us with their taxes and with their rates."[264] The play is set in Egypt, but the people, with their hens and their plates, are strangely Irish.

Oftentimes, in the plays, insight is gained concerning one character by listening to what another says about him. The name of Ard had been used for the King in early Irish history, and it is highly evident at the beginning of the play that Ard's people will listen to him, in spite of the fact that Malachi is older, of better stock, and should have more influence. It is a lusty leader they are looking for, and Ard thinks in physical terms. True enough,

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[263] Gregory, Irish Folk-History Plays, II, 173.

[264] Ibid., p. 146.

his jealousy of the king's adopted son is mixed with an envy for position. He suspicions double meaning in every word and action of the king's nurseling (Moses-Parnell): "That is what he would wish you to be thinking." Dan's wife can see "no flaw in him at all". But Ard, with the chip on his shoulder, is quick to feel a personal intention. "You are thinking him to be far above myself I suppose?"[265]

Ard's caution to wait until they know how much they are to be charged for their freedom and his reminder (still thinking of the physical) that the hero has given out no money even with which to drink his health are as suspicious as his "What way can we be sure this voyable will not be more for killing than for profit?"[266] and his "I'm in dread it is to put a good mouth on himself, he made big promises, and to have us in worse case after."[267] The hero must bear another criticism: "....The lad is proud and he is giddy. He is no way religious...." And they agree that he ought to be "stiff in his religion". He should not be a Pagan but should be able to "say off the catechism."[268] Denis Ireland, in an article on Irish Protestantism, notes that, "Parnell stood, in fact, between the Protestant Nation of the eighteenth century and what we might

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[265] Ibid., p. 152.
[266] Ibid., p. 170.
[267] Ibid., p. 171.
[268] Ibid., p. 172.

call the Protestant negation of the day before yesterday. He represented the last peak or high point in a graph that had been declining long before his time."[269] In the play, at least, his choice of religion goes against him with the people.

Not until after they have fought and Ard has downed the hero does Ard realize: "We were never destroyed out and out till now...."[270]

Malachi's wife expresses another common viewpoint: "Well, the story is done now, and let you leave it to God." Malachi utters their tribute: "It is sorrow you will sleep with from this out. You will not find the like of him from the rising to the setting sun."[271]

It is thought he is seen, but he is vanished from them. It is but his ghost. They wonder might it be an angel? And would the hero ever come back to them? But Malachi prophecies more wandering --more than two score years' wandering to come--in boggy places and stony places--"and no man will see the body put in the grave. A strangething to get the goal, and the lad of the goal being dead."[272] Lady Gregory tells in her notes of hearing an old man among the people at a festival on Galway Bay saying that Parnell was alive still. And another man answered, "After all no one ever saw the

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[269] Denis Ireland, "Postscript for Irish Protestants," Irish Writing, No. 12 (September, 1950), 60-62.

[270] Gregory, Irish Folk-History Plays, II, 182.

[271] Ibid., p. 183.

[272] Loc.cit.

body that was buried."[273] The feeling created by the play is that of confusion and conflict, of unrest, of mistrust of the leader, and, then, of sadness after the rejection--even on the part of Ard.

It is found that the Irishman in these plays is outspoken regarding current issues. He chides his lagging fellows. Aware that there are those who would betray Ireland, and that some would cater to England for the sake of protection or self-advancement, he, himself, favors Home rule and will achieve it by whatever means he must--be it passive resistance or actual rebellion, and he is willing to wait until the proper time comes for its accomplishment.

Freedom. Lennox Robinson explains that "the upheaval of the European war in 1914 further worsened the Irish situation. The Home Rule Bill, which had been introduced in 1912 and passed its final reading in 1913 was suspended, the Ulster wrecking movement was encouraged, and, under the Defence of the Realm Act, freedom of speech and freedom of expression were denied to the Irish Nationalist."[274]

In the plays at times there is an idea of hopeless unattainability regarding Home Rule, but again and again the message of courage rings through clearly. In The Wrens Heavenor's "Too much of quarrelling and slandering. It is time for us to live in peace" brings forth a typical answer from Margy: "Ah, for ten thousand

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[273] Ibid., p. 195.

[274] Robinson, Lady Gregory's Journals, p. 128.

years Ireland was fighting and what would ail her to stop at this time."[275] This play, although produced in 1921, differs little from the earlier ones, The Gaol Gate (1906), for instance, and their messages of hope and courage.

> It was not a little thing for him to die, and he protecting his neighbor!
>
> Denis would not speak, he shut his mouth, he would never be an informer....
>
> I will go through Gort and Kilbecanty and Druimdarod and Daroda; I will call to the people and the singers at the fairs to make a great praise for Denis!
>
> The child he left in the house that is shook, it is great will be his boast in his father! All Ireland will have a welcome before him, and all the people in Boston.
>
> I to stoop on a stick through half a hundred years, I will never be tired with praising! Come hither, Mary Cushin, till we'll shout it through the roads, Denis Cahel died for his neighbor![276]

Kincora, first played in 1905, contained the following ideal held by Brian, the king, spoken by his servant, Brennain:

> Brian to get it [the kingship, and consequently his way--peace] he would make Ireland the leader of the universe! The men of arts from every part coming to learn their own trade; coming by schools they would be, like mackerel on the spring tide! Every scholar in a school speaking the seven languages! Every village of cabins a city with towers and with walls! Towers am I saying, no but rounded steeples would penetrate the thunder in the clouds.[277]

The same servant in the same play offers an ideal and inspiration of freedom for the country which would stay word for word in the

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[275] Gregory, The Wrens, p. 11

[276] Gregory, The Gaol Gate, p. 185.

[277] Gregory, Irish Folk-History Plays, I, 101-102.

minds of the young listeners for years:[278] "We will have to widen the whole world to hold Ireland, and to widen Ireland herself to hold Kincora!" The words of his master, King Brian, would never be forgotten until they were realized.

> Brian: Their best work [the soldiers' work] would be to put a thatch to their houses, and to turn all the wild scrub to barley gardens. What did the wild woman say? To bring down Adam's paradise again. I had some dream in the night time, it has gone from me--some dream of a place where war was not remembered....I have made Ireland safe. I have put her name up among the nations. I have put on her the three crowns, the crown of wheat for strength, the crown of apples for pleasantness, the crown of lasting peace....[279]

In Dervorgilla, as in other plays, it is difficult to tell where Lady Gregory's "history to stir the imagination" leaves off and where the propaganda of freedom begins. In fact, they may be often the same. The death of Flann, by an English arrow, though accepted as her fault by Dervorgilla, is actually due to the fact that the country was occupied rather than to the civil war caused by her own abduction.

> Dervorgilla: Your trouble is no greater than my trouble. It was for my sake and in following my bidding he died.
>
> Mona: It was the Gael killed his two brothers and destroyed the house and trampled down the field of oats. What did they want killing him? Wasn't it enough to have destroyed his oats?[280]

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[278] Colum, Life and the Dream, p. 124.

[279] Gregory, Irish Folk-History Plays, I, 134.

[280] Ibid., p. 183.

This would seem almost to be propaganda of incitement. Just when the burden seems greatest comes in a line of hope like "Our best time is coming, and our shining time."[281]

In The Story Brought by Brigit four arguments in a row are given, and all of them are ironical, the insidious propaganda of lethargy, and each is answered with the hopeful messages of Joel:

1st Man: Maybe the right time didn't come yet.

Joel: Do not renage now! Come on and put them to the rout!

2nd Man: Sure enough we might find ourselves taken and tormented in a gaol.

3rd Man: I've no mind to put myself in a sharp-toothed trap.

1st Man: In my opinion we can serve the country better living than dead.

....

3rd Man: I wouldn't wish to go against the neighbors. (Goes)[282]

Always there is Daniel's kind of satire, carrying the opposite meaning from the one intended by the chief purpose of the play:

Joel: ....He will deliver you from your enemies. He will go through them, as a young lion among the flocks of sheep! To give us our freedom.

Daniel: Ah, freedom never put a penny in anyone's pocket. What is wanted is to do away with the rich, and to give their goods to the poor.

Joel: Instead of a bondwoman our country will become a free woman.[283]

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[281] Ibid., p. 109.

[282] Gregory, The Story Brought by Brigit, pp. 40-41.

[283] Ibid., p. 3.

Of what use, Daniel has asked, is this man, Jesus. Joel's appropriate indictment of empire follows vehemently:

> Every use! To put out the Roman strangers and to take off their yoke. Haven't they enough of countries in their hand without coming ploughing through the sea for to meddle with our own?[284]

Any time the idea of appeasement or of lethargy or any negative or hopeless expression is given in these plays, it is only for the purpose of giving the answer the opportunity of expression.

The application of the delightful little comedy, The Bogie Men (1912), to the message of freedom may be only one of courage and hope for the present rather than one of actual realization. And yet, in one way, it can be both hope and realization: things are not so bad as they appear, for what only seems impossible of creation can be realized by a change of viewpoint. At any rate, there is in the play the idea that fear is fruitless, since the thing feared is not real, after all--or, at any rate, not beyond conquering.

Even though "we are maybe not clear of the chimneys yet,"[285] the chimneys, themselves, may be a stepping-stone to the goal. "It's like enough, luck will flow into you. The way most people fail is not keeping up the heart. Faith, it's well you have myself [the one he had previously feared will now, with cooperation, be of

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[284] Ibid., p. 2.

[285] Gregory, New Comedies, p. 22.

assistance] to mind you. Gather up now your brush and your bag." Together they will reach the stars.[286]

The Full Moon, the sequel to Hyacinth Halvey, could well have been called The Revolt of Hyacinth Halvey. With the aid of a mad dog for protagonist and a mad woman, "one of those unruly ones who give in to no limitations," to speak the words of the chorus, a "miracle happened in Hyacinth's own inside" and "he is free".[287] Once his mind is made up, the way is clear.

> Hyacinth Halvey: (Getting up.) I have my mind made up, I am going out of this on that train....Let me go, or I'll tear the heart out of ye!....Mad am I? Bit by a dog, am I? You'll see am I mad! I'll show madness to you! Let go your hold or I'll skin you! I'll destroy you! I'll bite you! I'm a red enemy to the whole of you! Leave go your grip! Yes, I'm mad! Bow wow wow, wow wow!
> (They let go and fall back in terror, and he rushes out of the door.)[288]

Remembering that many Irish peasants knew themselves descendants of kings, what would have been the Nationalist reaction to the beating of Malachi in The Deliverer for his statement that his people were powerful before the Pharoahs. The steward's reason for beating him is that he calls this a treason-felony and rebellion.[289] It is then that the prince kills the steard, and following that he makes his own prophecy: "I am under trouble from this out surely." And shortly follows his own defense: up to now he never knew of his

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[286] Ibid., p. 23.

[287] Ibid., pp. 156-157.

[288] Ibid., pp. 61-62.

real station; furthermore, the over-government is blamed for "putting a bad name"[290] to his mother's race and rearing him to shun and mock them and to think himself a better breed. His renunciation of the easy way and of high living is one of the most poignant scenes for the stimulation of pity with a man as the central figure written for the modern stage--especially considering the audience for which it was planned and their memory of Parnell and all the martyrs to the cause of Irish freedom, some of whom were not far away in space and time. "I will not eat bread or take my sleep again in that house. I will banish it from me forever,"[291] seems like a final cutting off from himself of any comfort at all in the world. And Dan drives deep the shaft with: "You do not know well what you are doing, and we being a crushed miserable race," a line which would have broken the heart of an Irish audience had it not been for the message of hope returned by the prince: "It is not to a crushed miserable race I have a mind to belong."[292] This was spoken in 1911 when to be a Nationalist was to be a law-breaker. It might well be the slogan of the Irishman throughout all the plays of Lady Gregory. Actually, many lines are discouraging, but they are never offered with the conviction that the lines of hope, courage, and freedom are offered.

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[289] Ibid., p. 160.

[290] Ibid., p. 161.

[291] Loc. cit.

[292] Ibid., p. 162.

In the passion play, The Story Brought by Brigit, the philosophy of nationalism is plainly exciting; and there is no doubt to whom the name of foreigner refers:

> Silas: What has happened?
>
> Joel: (coming after him.) It is begun and well begun!
>
> Silas: Speak plain, can't you!
>
> Joel: Those big men and those sons of pride in the Temple that are content to be under the foreigners and have struck no blow for freedom, he has brought down their pride![293]

Foreigners and Strangers. Usually, in the plays "foreign" is just a word meaning "another place," with no connotations of despicibility. The English are certainly foreigners, however, and are often spoken of with a sneer. Some references are found showing the attitude of the Irishmen in the plays toward foreigners and minority groups, but more often than not, the foreigner referred to, as in the following line, is the English or the over-government. When Joel says "I see yourself [Silas] very thick with the foreigners," he means the Romans. If then, the Romans represent the English, the Jews representing the Irish come in for as much indictment as the Romans, themselves. That is the ironic message in Lady Gregory's plays, in which often--not always, but often--national weaknesses are shown. In the indictment of Jesus, the Jews are plainly far more at fault than the Roman over-government. Now, the Jews, it is to be remembered, represent in Brigit the traditional religion

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[293] Gregory, The Story Brought by Brigit, p. 25.

with its over-emphasis on form and ceremony, its moneyed interests, and its meddling in the government. Did the Scribes and Pharisees represent priests in this religious-political satire? Or is Lady Gregory again writing with sympathetic irony?

> Christ: Why do ye also transgress the councel of God by your tradition? Ye hypocrites! Well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, "This people draweth nigh to me with their mouth and honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me!" ....O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killeth the prophets and stonest them that are sent to me as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wing, and ye would not. If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace! But now they are hid from thine eyes. Behond your house is left unto you desolate.[294]

It may be that, in this case, at least, the enemy within was in for more criticism than the over-government. Earlier in the play, another group than the church group--the wealthy--is arraigned: "....They are saying it is the moneyed people are keeping up the foreign Government."[295] Again foreigners, overlords, are referred to:

> Silas: You were I suppose a close friend of the Nazarene?
>
> Joel: I never saw him till yesterday, but I know him to be the man is come to save us.
>
> [The parallel is appropriate, because it was supposed by the people that Jesus would effect a political change.]
>
> Silas: You thought him to be like yourself--a red enemy to the Romans?
>
> Joel: There is no good man but is that.

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[294] Ibid., pp. 19-20.

[295] Ibid., p. 3.

[This has certainly the stamp of revolt.]

Silas: To be sure, to be sure. I am saying nothing against it. Wouldn't we all be well pleased having the country in our own hands?

Joel: I see yourself very thick with the foreigners.

And the friend of the church and state answers, explaining his diplomatic reasons for his apparent betrayal of his countrymen: "Getting what I can by civility. I do more for the country that way than you rebels by showing your ill-will.[296]

In The Image, "the headland is a very wholesome place, without killing or murdering, and the youngsters all go foreign, and in my opinion the dead are nearly all dead--unless it might be old Peggy Mahon within the house beyond."[297] The attitude toward strangers in the village is plainly antagonistic. They will fire stones, sweep them away with reaping hooks, drive them under the sway of the "living fishes of the sea," tackle them with forks and spades, "put a terror on them" and "banish them".[298] Mrs. Coppinger's "idolator or a foreigner, that went breaking all the commandments!"[299] gives pause. Did she mean, in her ignorance, that the two are synonymous?

Ignorance and illteracy, of course, play their part, along with fear, in affecting the limited viewpoint of the peasant. When

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[296] Ibid., p. 41.

[297] Gregory, The Image, p. 7.

[298] Ibid., p. 21.

[299] Ibid., p. 59.

the process server in The Jackdaw asks Mrs. Broderick whether she still has the summons, her dual fear and disdain of the process of the law which she doesn't comprehend are evidenced in her answer:

> I believe it's there in under the canister. (Takes it out.) It had my mind tossed looking at it there before me. I know well what is in it if I made no fist of reading it myself. It's no wonder with all I had to go through if the reading and writing got scattered on me.[300]

She could write, and she could read, but if the two got mixed, she would have a great problem on her hands to get straight again, so she just put the summons under the canister and ignored it.

In Coats, the conversation of the two arguing editors shows a common, everyday feeling toward the foreigner which came quickly and, perhaps, unbidden, to the lips of Mr. Hazel, and also gives Mr. Mineog's unconscious reaction:

> Hazel: A rabbit mushroom thing might say me to be, with no memory behind or around me!
>
> Mineog: Not at all. The world knows you to be civil and brought up to mannerly ways.
>
> Hazel: They might say me to have been a foreigner or a Jew man!
>
> Mineog: I can bear witness you have no such yellow look. And Hazel is a natural name.[301]

To accuse one of being a foreigner would be one way of insulting him. A natural name would be a desirable one.

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[300] Gregory, Seven Short Plays, p. 95.

[301] Gregory, Coats, p. 83.

Fear, as well as ignorance, is the cause of one viewpoint of the stranger. In the play, The Canavans, as has been mentioned, the miserliness of Canavan is expressed in the sentence, "Is there no place, within or abroad, where a man can keep himself safe?...."[302] In its larger implications, the domination of Ireland by England can be seen in the violation of the hearthstone, the feeling of insecurity, and the fear of being hunted. His fear is pitiful to behold: "No, no, every rib of my hair is rising! I am afeared, I am afeared, in the very cockles of my heart!"[303] The fear of Peter Canavan, though contributing to a humorour picture on the stage in this play, is freighted with serious significance. Is it in consequence of generations of fear, that men like Peter Canavan have been affected in such a way that their actions are morally acceptable only when expedient to their own purposes?

In summary, although he takes devious means of expressing courage and hope, the Irishman in the plays recalls the heroes of history and legend of the past, the ideals of peace, and Irish culture, and he offers them as inspiration for the present. He mistrusts foreigners, since foreigner to him means the English overlord. There is no doubt of his nationalistic beliefs.

Law and Authority. It has been shown that the philosophy of nationalism was prominent in Lady Gregory's plays and that

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[302] Gregory, Irish Folk-History Plays, II, 37.

[303] Ibid., p. 18.

arguments of contemporary issues went hand in hand with farce and philosophy. It is important, also, to note the attitude of the Irishman toward law and authority. Once "Edward Martyn told George Moore it was unforgivable in an Irishman to seek the protection of the police."[304] This attitude is clearly shown in the dialog and in the plots of the plays of Lady Gregory. "Would any one now think it a thing to hang a man for, that he had striven to keep himself safe?"[305] Peter Canavan asks plainly.

Lady Gregory says in her chapter on playwriting in Our Irish Theatre:

> I may look on The Rising of the Moon (1907) as an historical play as my history goes, for the scene is laid in the historical time of the rising of the Fenians in the sixties. But the real fight in the play goes on in the sergeant's own mind, and so its human side makes it go as well in Oxford or London or Chicago as in Ireland itself. But Dublin Castle finds in it some smell of rebellion and has put us under punishment for its sins. When we came back from America last March, we had promised to give a performance on our fifst day in Dublin and The Rising of the Moon was one of the plays announced. But the stage costumes had not yet arrived, and we sent out to hire some from a depot from which the cast uniforms of the Constabulary may be lent out to the companies performing at the theatres--the Royal, the Gaiety, and the Queens. But our messenger came back empty-handed. An order had been issued by the authorities that "no clothes were to be lent to the Abbey because The Rising of the Moon was derogatory to His Majesty's forces."[306]

So it is evident that the political significance of the so-called historical play was recognized by both Lady Gregory and Dublin Castle.

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[304]Peter Kavanagh, The Story of the Abbey Theatre (New York: The Devin-Adair Company, 1950), p. 58.

[305]Gregory, Folk-History Plays, II, 32.

[306]Gregory, Our Irish Theatre, pp. 96-97.

As Jean-Paul Sartre was able to use Greek mythology as a vehicle for the veiled propaganda of his gospel of freedom when Les Mouches was produced under the nose of the conqueror in 1943 in occupied France, so Lady Gregory was able to use history at times to serve the need of occupied Ireland. In most of her plays the gospel was there. Few escaped. In the Rising of the Moon it happened to be detected. The remarkable thing is that Lady Gregory's plays were not more often banned in those days, now that their message and its effect is plain, but it is probable that her usual vehicle, the farce, was discounted by those who might have stopped certain productions as an unlikely place to find subversive material.

One of these farces which nobody ever thought to ban is Hanrahan's Oath, where it is said that one of the worst names a person can get is the name of "informer." Maybe this was funny to Dublin Castle, or could they have thought it sarcasm? Or did they consider it harmless?

> Mary Gillis: You had drink taken. You have no recollection what you said in the spree-house in Monivea. It is the name of an informer you have gained in those districts, where you gave out the account of Feeney's deed, in the hearing of spies and of Government men.
>
> Hanrahan: That cannot be so! An informer! That would be a terrible story![307]

It is a real compliment to be called a "rebel".

> Joel: If he was not a rebel itself, his name will surely be written in the book of the people! His friendship would be better to me than all the world's gold.[308]

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[307] Gregory, Hanrahan's Oath, p. 9.

[308] Gregory, The Story Brought by Brigit, p. 74.

Regardless of the framework used, the play usually contains considerable political satire, reference, or a message of freedom. Lennox Robinson says of Lady Gregory, "Like a good Irishwoman she was always inclined to be 'agin the Government'."[309] She did become Republican, and it shows in the plays.

Here is another example of political and religious satire: "There is not a hound belonging to you dares so much as to follow a hare across the merings, without leave from the judges or the law.... having no liberty the way you used....The priest sounds the bell, and Brian follows it and the rest of you follow after Brian."[310] The practices of the church are all mixed with old age and softness in the mind of Gormleith. And the church and the law are of the same breed to her.

The above display of sarcasm and bitterness is followed by a diminution on the part of Maelmora who would attempt to belittle such talk as belonging to the ravings of a Friday-born shrew, but it has been said, it lingers in the memory to color the thinking, and it is not to be ignored just because the hero does not speak it! Once Brian explains to her that "it is the law that the High King must judge kings and makings of kings," but the queen advises him, "That is a crooked law. Break away from it, Brian." A crooked law need not be obeyed.

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[309]Robinson, Lady Gregory's Journals, p. 166.

[310]Gregory, Irish Folk-History Plays, I, 128.

The Story Brought by Brigit offers a clear case against law--for it is by the law that Jesus is crucified.[311] Silas has said to Marcus, the Roman who was in Jerusalem not to protect Jewish law but Roman law, "That is where you make a great mistake. You have a right to join with us on the side of keeping law and order...."[312] But Marcus never becomes interested in "gibberish about your laws!"[313]

As for authority, the authority of the law in the person of the English police, Malachi in The Image, has a plain speech:

> Malachi: So he would too. [Leave his mother's house] What would happen to the world the like of him to have stopped at home? He wasn't one would be sitting through the week the same as the police, having his feet in the ashes.[314]

Because law is sometimes a crooked law as with Gormleith, or a bad law, the Irishman in the plays takes liberty to excuse himself from obeying it. From there, it is a short step to the attitude that he may evade the law for his own profit. The former attitude excites a certain sympathy; the latter is often disgusting. The reasoning seems to be that if the law is sometimes wrong, all law is to be used as if it were wrong. This attitude throughout centuries may have had its moral effect the same as the fear of centuries has had its effects in miserliness, mistrust, and evasion.

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[311] Gregory, The Story Brought by Brigit, pp. 64-65.

[312] Ibid., p. 12.

[313] Ibid., p. 74.

[314] Gregory, The Image, p. 38.

Ard, spokesman in The Deliverer, refers to this ever-present contemporary problem: "If it is law it is bad law that keeps us labouring out under the mad sun. A king of Foreign to be getting his own profit through our sweat, and we to be getting poor and getting miserable."[315] "....If it is law it is wrong law some to get their seven times enough, and ourselves never to get our half enough" is certainly casting a reflection upon respect for law as such, that is, law which benefits the few, rather than the whole people. "It is not right and it is not justice...."[316]

The mother in The Gaol Gate gives the general attitude toward informing: "Better for him have killed the whole world than to give any witness at all!"[317]

The feeling that a man will do as he himself thinks right without thought for or against the law is expressed in the attitude toward patricide in another play by another Abbey playwright: "That was a hanging crime, mister honey. You should have had good reason for doing the like of that."[318] Would a man kill his own father if he could help it?

Once when the police came to Coole for information, Lady Gregory gave them fruit and told them "the country would never be

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[315]Gregory, Irish Folk-History Plays, II, 146.

[316]Ibid., p. 149.

[317]Gregory, Seven Short Plays, p. 181.

[318]John M. Synge, The Playboy of the Western World, in William Smith Clark II, World Drama (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1946), p. 897.

right till there is a National Government that honest people will support, for now no one will give up ill-doers to justice, lest they should be helping the police and the soldiers and the English--all felt to be in the same basket."[319]

In Spreading the News, deaf Mrs. Tarpy when asked by the magistrate what the chief business of the town is, replies in such a way as to at once amuse the audience and befuddle the English representative of the law:

> Mrs. Tarpey: Business, is it? What business would the people here have but to be minding one another's business?
>
> Magistrate: I mean what trade have they?
>
> Mrs. Tarpey: Not a trade at all but to be talking.
>
> Magistrate: I shall learn nothing here.[320]

This is one attitude toward administration. And it is an attitude of which the magistrate is well aware. He has just been suspiciously examining the wares of the apple woman. There might be some unlicensed goods in the bottom of the basket. He continues to suspect everyone in sight: "The smoke from that man's pipe had a greenish look. He may be growing unlicensed tobacco at home. I wish I had brought my telescope to this district...."[321]

In The Rising of the Moon even the policeman is careful not to allow duty to interfere with patriotism.

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[319] Robinson, op. cit., p. 129.

[320] Gregory, Seven Short Plays, pp. 4-5.

[321] Ibid., p. 5.

> Policeman X: And if we get him itself, nothing but abuse on our heads for it from the people, and maybe from our own relations.
>
> Sergeant: Well, we have to do our duty in the force. Haven't we the whole country depending on us to keep law and order? It's those that are down would be up and those that are up would be down, if it wasn't for us...."[322]

The speech of appreciation of the escaping patriot is of more worth to the policeman than the hundred pounds reward he would have received for turning him in to the magistrate:

> Man: (Going toward steps.) Well, good-night, comrade, and thank you. You did me a good turn to-night, and I'm obliged to you. Maybe I'll be able to do as much for you when the small rise up and the big fall down....when we all change places at the Rising (waves his hand and disappears) of the Moon."[323]

In The White Cockade the king, himself, is hidden; in The Canavans, Anthony hides under the miller's grain bags in a highly amusing scene, and in Hyacinth Halvey, the amusement comes from a dead sheep which is hidden from the law. Here Mrs. Delane's description is typical:

> Mrs. Delane: A very nice man indeed. A little high up in himself, may be. I'm not one that blames the police. Sure they have their own bread to earn like every other one. And indeed it is often they will let a thing pass.

Mr. Quirke, the butcher, having had experience of another sort, feels differently: "Sometimes they will, and more times they will not."[324]

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[322] Gregory, Seven Short Plays, p. 78.

[323] Ibid., p. 91.

[324] Ibid., p. 39.

But he will keep himself in the good graces of the sergeant by attending the lecture in his best coat: "I suppose I must go upstairs and ready myself for the meeting. If it wasn't for the contract I have for the soldiers' barracks and the Sergeant's good word, I wouldn't go anear it. (Goes into shop.)"[325]

A little later, however, he finds things a bit more serious and immediately so, for Mrs. Delane, the postmistress (and she is in a position to know) warns him of the imminence of an officer from Dublin Castle. It seems quite regular for an Irishman not only not to inform against the police but also to warn a harmless law-breaker when the occasion arises. After all, he tells the customers to salt his questionable meat before using it. Although Mrs. Delane must send the message to the sergeant, she doesn't hesitate to give it to the butcher first. And he is duly grateful: "I'm obliged to you, indeed. You were always very neighbourly, Mrs. Delane. Don't be too quick now sending the message. There is just one article [the dead sheep] I would like to put away out of the house before the Sergeant will come."[326]

In the meantime, Hyacinth has chosen the most dastardly thing he can think of to do in his attempt to discount all the testimonials for his character and that is to steal the sheep which

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[325] Ibid., p. 41.

[326] Ibid., p. 50.

is hanging before the butcher's door. His "confession" draws from Quirke a surprising answer.

> Mr. Quirke: Say! I say I am as glad to hear what you said as if it was the Lord telling me I'd be in Heaven this minute.
>
> Hyacinth: What are you going to do to me?
>
> Mr. Quirke: Do, is it? (Grasps his hand.) Any earthly thing you would wish me to do, I will do it.
>
> Hyacinth: I suppose you will tell--
>
> Mr. Quirke: Tell! It's I that will tell when all is quiet. It is I will give you the good name through the town!
>
> Hyacinth: I don't well understand.
>
> Mr. Quirke: (Embracing him.) The man that preserved me!
>
> Hyacinth: That preserved you?
>
> Mr. Quirke: That kept me from ruin!
>
> Hyacinth: From ruin?
>
> Mr. Quirke: That saved me from disgrace!"[327]

The whole town will bless Hyacinth for his part (however inadvertent) in outwitting the police. Hyacinth has said earlier:

> Hyacinth: I will break the law. Drunk or sober I'll break it. I'll do something that will have no excuse. What would you say is the worst crime that any man can do?
>
> Fardy: I don't know. I heard the Sergeant saying one time it was to obstruct the police in the discharge of their duty--[328]

But Hyacinth fears he would consequently be considered a patriot and therefore, a greater hero than ever. He will not go quite that far.

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[327] Ibid., pp. 56-67.

[328] Ibid., pp. 44-45.

In Spreading the News Shawn Early reassures the gossip-made widow: "Take comfort now, Mrs. Fallon. The police are not so smart as they think."[329] Yet there are crimes and crimes. When everyone thinks Bartley Fallon has murdered, none will assist him to hide. On the other hand, none will inform against him, either.

> James Ryan: (Backing) There is many a thing I would do for you, Bartley Fallon, but I won't do that!
>
> Shawn Early: I tell you there is no man will give you any help or encouragement for this day's work. If it was something agrarian now--[330]

Still the police are the police, and in the pay of the crown:

> Tim Casey: Look, boys, at the new magistrate, and Jo Muldoon along with him! It's best for us to quit this.
>
> Shawn Early: That is so. It is best not to be mixed in this business at all.
>
> James Ryan: Bad as he is, I wouldn't like to be an informer against any man.[331]

Summary. In summarizing the attitudes of the men in Lady Gregory's plays toward political issues, freedom, nationalism, and foreigners and their attitudes toward law and authority, the following generalizations can be made:

1. The contemporary issues of free speech, Home Rule, resistance and peace continue to find their place in any discussion of the attitude of Lady Gregory's Irishman toward freedom, because

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[329] Ibid., p. 15.
[330] Ibid., p. 18.
[331] Ibid., p. 19.

these issues all center about freedom from English domination and its related aspects of courage, rebellion, and even revolt.

2. The Irishman in these plays is usually interested in peace, but not in peace at any price. He is for Home Rule, but he often feels rather hopelessly that the fighting has been going on for a long time and may do so for a long time to come. He is chided for this laxity, however, and there is always someone about to bolster up the courage with a potent remark or a reminder of a past victory.

3. He feels that unity is desirable and that it is a virtual necessity in the face of high taxes and other impositions by the overlords, although there are those who feel the need of English protection and others who says that liberty would be too costly in personal sacrifice.

4. He is aware of corruption in the high places of both church and state and does not hesitate to vent his resentment of this corruption.

5. He is condemned for sharing certain national weaknesses: love of money, selfishness (which interferes with whole-hearted patriotism and bravery), betrayal of leadership, over-quick choices, and suspiciousness and fear--if not cowardliness.

6. However, in fairness, it must be said that the above weaknesses are not without their opposites, and are shown in contrast with examples of courage, joyousness, fearlessness, patriotism, charity, and idealism.

7. The expressions of the Irishman for freedom to enjoy his own language, his own nation, are fresh, exciting, enthusiastic, and almost lyrical at times.

8. His attitude toward foreigners is suspicious and maledictory, partly from ignorance and provincialism, and partly because "foreigner" to him means overlord.

9. The Irishman in the play of Lady Gregory is seldom on the side of law and order, probably because "law" to him means "oppression." If he can understand the reason for it, he is more likely to obey it. If, on the other hand, he is right in his own mind in disobeying the law, he disobeys--and with the consent and support of his whole town. He feels entirely responsible for himself morally.

10. Not only will this Irishman evade the law if he feels right in so doing, he will assist others to evade its authority also, if to do so will further the attainment of his one goal--freedom from the English oppressor.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

What can now be decided concerning the nature of the Irishman as he is shown in the plays of Lady Gregory? Into the work of this acutely observant playwright of early twentieth century Ireland went meaningful history, as well as enlightening contemporary issues. Lady Gregory's untiring interest in her locale and her world, supplemented her talent and her industry. She identified herself with Ireland by living there, by interesting herself in the peasants, and by use of her personal influence, as well as that of her pen, as many another Irish author had not. And though she was not Catholic, she gained thereby, perhaps, an objectivity which enabled her better to evaluate the life about her.

What kind of man, then, is pictured in her plays? How does he regard such facets of life as love, marriage, the home, and children? What are his ideals for men and morals? What are his religious beliefs and his philosophy? Does he believe in folklore? What is his attitude toward current political issues, toward law and authority? Some conclusions to these questions can be suggested. For example, the home and the home place are of great importance to this Irishman. The opinion of his neighbors means more to him than rewards of money (which is very important to him, also). He protects the people of his own village, even though they be wrong, and listens to their freely offered advice, whether he takes it or not. This includes the advice and counsel of his wife who is given equal voice

in all discussions. She enjoys his respect and his disrespect alike as another person, and not as a weakling or an idol on a pedestal. She talks to him in the square, in the street, and in the house, and does a great deal of his planning for him, even in slightly shady schemes to get ahead.

In some of the legend plays, such as Grania and Dervorgilla, and even in Kincora, where Brian is so miserably disappointed in Gormleigh, the woman is idealized in spite of the fact that she may not deserve adulation, and the man gives up everything, even life, if necessary, to protect her good name faithfully.

The children in the plays both speak and listen and are treated with utmost sympathy and understanding.

In Grania, too, the same high standard of morals and faithfulness in relationships with men is seen. In some other plays, however, it is difficult to see much evidence in the daily lives of the men of the ideals which have been handed down in the stories--ideals like truth and faith in men.

Oftentimes, the men are like Peter Canavan, who will be on the winning side at any cost. A. E. Malone remarks that this aspect of Irish character is too seldom subjected to the treatment given it by Lady Gregory.[1] As has been noted in this paper, fear and oppression have perhaps taken their toll on Irish morals. The ideals of

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[1]Andrew E. Malone, "The Plays of Lady Gregory," The Yale Review, XIV (1925), 540-551.

the men in the plays are self-imposed ones, and to these they are firm.

At times, these Irishmen are miserly, loving money for itself, and sometimes they place personal gain above all. They are urged along at times in this vice by their wives.

Although certain consistencies are found, conclusions concerning the attitude of the Irishman in Lady Gregory's plays toward folklore, church, and philosophy are no more definite than conclusions in other sections can be, owing to the fact that the characters are real people--not puppets. Quite often they actually lived. The events of their lives were interesting enough to Lady Gregory to need little changing to make them appropriate play material. In the plays of legend as well as those of life, her own personality is in her writing, as would be the personality of any translator.

Nearly always the Irishman in these plays believes in predestination ("It being to be it will be"). Dreams do come true. Although he tries to talk himself--and others--out of it, he still leans toward belief in the folklore which is his inheritance, in legend and in miracles. In established religion, he is, with few exceptions, Catholic, but this does not prevent his being, frequently and unfeignedly, satirical. In Lady Gregory's plays, then, is found the real and the ideal common to the group of playwrights to which she belonged. "....She allows her fancy to give deeper quality to the world of actuality, constantly she exploits....the

contrast between the real and what men think is real," acutely remarks Allardyce Nicoll.[2]

This Irishman is very much a mystic, too--the other world is very near for him--as it was for Dave, in the play, Dave, for whom the veil was lifted once--and Kate assures him of its reality: "Next time it will be no dream."[3]

The Irishman in the plays of Lady Gregory, seldom on the side of law and order and authority, as maintained by the English magistrate, obeys law as such only if he thinks it is right. He and his compatriots and townsmen assist each other in this apparent disregard for authority. He feels responsible for his own morals. On the surface, this attitude appears entirely rebellious. Yet it has a deeper significance. It is an attitude of rebellion against injustice. This man appears responsible to himself and to no one else for his actions. He is, therefore, obligated to act in a way acceptable to his own conscience, which makes him morally answerable to himself. It may be in consequence of this attitude that his actions appear at times to be in the nature of revolt and rebellion. He would prefer to make his own rules, since the present ones are unjust. Since only a free man can assist others in the attainment of freedom, he must remain free in his own mind. Here, again, is

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[2]Allardyce Nicoll, World Drama (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company), 695.

[3]Lady Gregory, Three Last Plays (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1929), p. 156.

the use of the real and the ideal. The Irishman in these plays is very much aware of the conflict of unpleasant reality with the ideal of nationalism.

Stephen Gwynn remarks upon this spirit of revolt in the "songs, nationality, [and] religion" in the poetry of the Gaelic peasants. He notes that "Stopford Brooke, in the preface to a Treasury of Irish Poetry which he and T. W. Rolleston compiled at the close of the last century, says that all the poetry from which they chose concerned itself with three main themes--nationality, religion, and revolt."[4] These themes are foremost in the plays of Lady Gregory, also, and of the three, the theme of revolt against English oppression leads them all. Her farcical characters are funny, according to their purpose in the situation of the play, but they also speak words which are not funny--words of hope and courage in the tradition begun by Swift as "he taught the technique of revolt to a disarmed people" and in which "Ireland learnt that the written word in English might be a weapon" which "could incite and animate the disarmed to combination."[5]

Lady Gregory's folk-histories, creating interest in the legendary beginnings of Ireland and pride in its princely races were of moment to the peasant, though the educated people who spoke only English had missed their significance, and, as it happened,

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[4] Stephen Gwynn, Irish Literature and Drama (New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1936), p. 9.

[5] Loc. cit.

their importance. In Cathleen ni Houlihan, for example, a play in the creation of which Lady Gregory collaborated with W. B. Yeats, the old wandering woman's "riddling words,"[6] incomprehensible to the educated people and the English, were perfectly understood by the Irish audience, "quick to catch the implications: memory of a nation's youth, memory of a man's youthful generosity, half-forgotten later. But the song that rebel Ireland had made for itself when Ireland was grown English-speaking was a song about 'The Poor Old Woman.'"[7]

It is in the tradition of the poet-historian, "praising some new feat, or satirizing something which the Irish were taught to despise"[8] which Lady Gregory writes her plays. For centuries the Irish had been trained to listen for messages--orally given messages--in any place where they might be found.

The conclusion is inescapable that the type of language used by Lady Gregory as a medium of expression for her Irish characters enhanced the effectiveness of their messages. Nicoll attributes much of the value of Synge's great work to his "prose style that had within it the richer cadences we associate with the poet while at the same time retaining ties with the common speech of men,"[9] and

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[6] Ibid., p. 159.

[7] Ibid., pp. 159-160.

[8] Ibid., p. 13.

[9] Ibid., p. 691.

to his "treasury of language" without which his best plays would be of little worth in arousing "vital response."[10] Since the Irish were under compulsion to use English, a type of English sounding most like Irish was a valuable choice for Lady Gregory.

In Lady Gregory's own apology to Gods and Fighting Men, her book of legends of the Fianna, she tells one reason for using her carefully constructed Kiltartanese: "I have found it more natural to tell the stories in the manner of the thatched houses, where I have heard so many legends of Finn and his friends, and Oisin and Patrick, and the Ever-Living Ones, and the Country of the Young, rather than in the manner of the slated houses, where I have not heard them."[11] Her other, more subtle, reasons are unexpressed.

Lady Gregory, as does Molière, shows certain human weaknesses in her characters for the purpose of correcting these very weaknesses. It is found that the Irishman in her plays is boisterous, sly, satirical, even miserly, on occasion. In many instances, he does not appear to be kin to the legendary heroes of his native land, but neither has he forgotten those heroes and their heroism. He was created for the express purpose of instructing the audience about them. He is shown in the midst of situation humor, and he speaks in the high poetry of Kiltartan dialect, but, in effect, he is more than a caricature, because he brings a message. He must remind the

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[10] Ibid., p. 692.

[11] Lady Gregory, Gods and Fighting Men (London: John Murray, 1905), p. 461.

Irish audience of a day long past--when Ireland was free. He must recall for them a set of high ideals, a cultural inheritance, and a historical background rich in heroism and noble characters. He must offer words of courage for the present, because there must be no giving up or turning back, and he must encourage them (to the point of incitement, if necessary) with the reminder that future freedom is not impossible of attainment.

Regardless of the setting--farce, passion play, history drama, or legend, the Irishman in the plays of Lady Gregory always stands on "a sod of grass,"[12] always speaks in Irish dialect, and always reminds the Irish audience for which he was created, of their proud ancestry, their present dilemma, and of a brighter future to come.

Don Quixote, whose story Lady Gregory so delicately translated into her own prose-poetry, was, himself, a knight in humble dress, and though his armor and his manners became a bit rusty at times, and though his very madness brings a chuckle, on occasion, his ideal was the ideal of Lady Gregory, and that of the Irishman in her plays.

Lady Gregory's book, Our Irish Theatre, ends with the following passage, written in 1913 upon returning from America:

> Now, little Richard....I was very glad to be at home with you while the daffodils were blooming out, and to have no more fighting, perhaps for ever. And if it is hard to fight for a thing you love, it is harder to fight for one you have no great

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[12] Lady Gregory, Irish Folk-History Plays (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1912), I, 195.

love for. And you will read some day in one of those books in the library that are too high now for you to reach, the story of a man who was said to be mad but has outlived many who were not, and who went about fighting for the sake of some one who was maybe "the fright of seven townlands with her biting tongue" though he still called out after every battle, 'Dulcinea is the most beautiful woman of the world!' So think a long time before you choose your road, little Richard, but when you have chosen it, follow it on to the end.[13]

This Lady Gregory's hero, Brian, does--he chooses his road, and he follows it for Ireland and the peace of Ireland--to the end.

Brian: Ireland, Ireland, I see you free and high and wealthy; wheat in every tilled field, beautiful vessels in the houses of kings, beautiful children well nourished in every house. No meddling of strangers within our marings, no outcry of Gael against Gael!...."[14]

This was her dream and his vision and the vision of Ireland forever:

Brian: I saw in my dream a woman coming to me, many coloured, changing, that was Acibell the friend of my race. She came and she called to me and swept the darkness away, and showed me the whole country, shining and beautiful, an image of the face of God in the smooth sea. All bad things had gone from it like plover to the north at the strengthening of the sun. The rowan berries on Slieve Echtge were the lasting fruits of Heaven. The Gael had grown to be fitting comrades for the white angels [civilized and Christianized] I could hear the joyful singing of the birds of the Land of Promise.

Beggar: That was a good vision and a very good dream. Those that hear that music will never be satisfied in any place where it is not found.[15]

Near the end of Our Irish Theatre Lady Gregory sums up the efforts of a lifetime:

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[13]Lady Gregory, Our Irish Theatre (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1913), pp. 256-257.

[14]Gregory, Irish Folk-History Plays, I, 121.

[15]Ibid., p. 141.

> It is after all the old story of the two sides of the shield. Some who are lovers of Ireland believe we have lessened the dignity of Ireland by showing upon the stage countrymen who drink and swear and admire deeds of violence, or who are misers and covetous or hungering after land. We who are lovers of Ireland believe that our Theatre with its whole mass of plays has very greatly increased that dignity, and we are content to leave that judgment to the great arbitrator, Time....[16]

It is hoped that the conclusions regarding the nature of the Irishman in the plays of Lady Gregory will contribute in a small way, at least, to "that judgment" of which Lady Gregory speaks.

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[16] Gregory, Our Irish Theatre, p. 255.

APPENDIX

PLAYS BY LADY GREGORY[1]

Twenty-Five (Irish Literary Theatre)	1903
Spreading the News	1904
Kincora	1905
Grania (not produced)	1905 (publication)
The White Cockade	1905
Hyacinth Halvey	1906
The Gaol Gate	1906
The Canavans	1906
The Jackdaw	1907
The Rising of the Moon	1907
Dervorgilla	1907
The Workhouse Ward	1908
The Image	1909
The Travelling Man	1910
The Full Moon	1910
Coats	1910
The Deliverers	1911
MacDonough's Wife (later changed to MacDarragh's Wife)	1912
The Bogie Man (Court Theatre, London)	1912
Damer's Gold	1912

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[1] Unless otherwise indicated, the above dates are those of production of the plays at the Abbey Theatre, Dublin, as recorded in Peter Kavanagh, *The Story of the Abbey Theatre* (New York: The Devin-Adair Company, 1950), pp. 187-199.

PLAYS BY IAN CHESNEY[1]

Twenty-Five (Irish Literary Theatre)	1903
Becoming the Slave	1904
Elegeia	1905
Oresta (not produced)	1905 (published)
The White Goddess	1906
Hyacinth Halvey	1906
The Gaol Gate	1906
The Canavans	1906
The Jackdaw	1907
The Eleven of the Hour	1907
Perseverilla	1907
The Workhouse Ward	1908
The Image	1909
The Travelling Man	1910
The Full Moon	1910
Costa	1910
The Deliverer	1911
Macpherson's Wife (later changed to Macpherson's Wife)	1912
The Poets Pan (Court Theatre, London)	1912
Queer's Gold	1912

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[1] Unless otherwise indicated, the above dates are those of production of the plays at the Abbey Theatre, Dublin, as recorded in Peter Canavan, The Story of the Abbey Theatre (New York: The Devin-Adair Company, 1950), pp. 147-155.

Shanwalla	1915
Hanrahan's Oath	1918
The Dragon	1919
The Jester (written for grandson Richard)	1919 (not produced)
The Golden Apple	1920
Aristotle's Bellows	1921
The Wrens	1914
The Old Woman Remembers	1923
The Story Brought by Brigit	1924
Dave	1927
My First Play (published)	1930 (not produced)

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