
Nationalism & Cosmopolitanism

A Study of the Abbey and the Gate Theatre, 1926-30

Master Thesis Literary Studies: English Literature
Student: Willem Laurentzen
Student number: s4018583
Supervisor: Dr. Marguérite Corporaal
Second Corrector: Ruud van den Beuken, MA

Radboud University Nijmegen

ENGELSE TAAL EN CULTUUR

Teacher who will receive this document: Dr. Corporaal & Dhr. Van den Beuken, MA

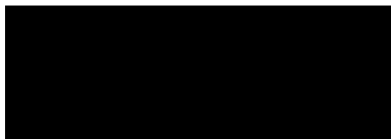
Title of document: Master Thesis; Willem Laurentzen, s4018583

Name of course: LET-ETCMLK027_2015_JAAR_V: 1516 Masterscriptie Engelstalige Letterkunde

Date of submission: 18 July 2015

The work submitted here is the sole responsibility of the undersigned, who has neither committed plagiarism nor colluded in its production.

Signed

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of the student.

Name of student: Willem Laurentzen

Student number: s4018583

Abstract & Key Words

Two theatres in Dublin, the Abbey, created after a merger in 1904, and the Gate Theatre, founded in 1928, have aimed, from their inception, to perform avant-gardes plays. In scholarship, the Abbey Theatre is generally regarded as a national theatre that performed nationalistically themed, pastoral plays, especially in its early decades. By contrast, the Gate Theatre, in its early years, has often been regarded as mainly a stage for experimental, avant-garde and cosmopolitan theatre.

The aim of this thesis is to question these assumptions, which have defined the Abbey and the Gate Theatres as playhouses with diametrically opposed agendas. Both theatres will be compared and contrasted on three aspects: their manifestoes, two plays that were produced by each theatre, and their use of stage design. In order to contrast both theatres most effectively and objectively, this thesis will specifically look at plays and stage design from the late 1920s.

Abbey Theatre; Denis Johnston; *Diarmuid and Grainne*; Gate Theatre; George Shiels; Hilton Edwards; Lady Gregory; Micheál Mac Liammóir; Seán O'Casey; *The New Gossoon*; *The Old Lady Says 'No!'*; *The Plough and the Stars*; W.B. Yeats;

Nationalism & Cosmopolitanism

A Study of the Abbey and the Gate Theatre, 1926-30

Table of Contents

Introduction	5
Chapter One: Manifestoes	13
Chapter Two: Plays	26
Chapter Three: Stage Design	49
Conclusion	59
Works Cited	67
Appendix	71

Introduction

We should keep before our minds the final object which is to create in this country a National Theatre something of after the Continental pattern [...] Such a Theatre must, however, if it is to do the educational work of a National Theatre be prepared to perform even though others can perform them better, representative plays of all the great schools. (qtd. in Flannery “W.B. Yeats” 183).

Thus, in 1906, William Butler Yeats paraphrased the 1897 manifesto by Lady Gregory, Edward Martyn and himself for the Irish Literary Theatre in Dublin, which, two years later, merged into the Abbey theatre. In the quote the writers clearly stress their ambition that the ILT would become a national theatre that aspired to rival other great theatres from the continent. This manifesto would later be republished by and serve as an assertion, as well as a source of criticism for another theatre in Dublin, the Gate. The Gate’s critique on as well as fulfilment of some of these points from the Abbey manifesto and the Abbey’s failure to fully live up to the ideals it had set itself in their manifesto, is something that will be examined in depth in this introduction. The ILT manifesto is also one of the primary reasons why these two playhouses are often said to have diametrically opposed ambitions, which, as this dissertation aims to demonstrate, is not as straightforward as often presented. Despite this, both theatres have also been presented as diametric opposites in academic literature, which is not doing either one justice. This thesis, therefore, asks: in which ways is it legitimate to look at the Abbey and Gate Theatres as diametric opposites, the Abbey Theatre on the one hand functioning as a stage concerned with national theatre and the Gate on the other as one concerned with avant-garde, cosmopolitan theatre in the late 1920’s and early 1930’s? In order to answer this question, this thesis will look in depth at the manifestoes, four plays as case studies and an analysis of the stage design of both the Abbey and the Gate theatre in their respective chapters. Firstly, a brief history of both theatres will be given.

The Abbey Theatre

The Abbey theatre was founded in 1904, after the Irish Literary Theatre had been taken over by the Irish National Dramatic Society in 1902 to form the Irish National Theatre Society in

1903 (Flannery “W.B. Yeats” 179). Frank and Willie Fay, the former directors of the Irish National Dramatic Society, wanted the INTC to be a politically motivated Irish company of amateur actors like the INDS used to be (Flannery “W.B. Yeats” 179-180). They were, however, out-staged by Yeats, who rather wanted to perform more complex plays, that is to say highly professional Irish versions of continental dramas with complexly layered characters in various settings, instead of the Fay brothers’ plea for relatively amateurish Irish peasant comedies in pastoral settings (Flannery “W.B. Yeats” 183). In reality, the other co-directors were against Yeats’ plan to stage productions of other than pastoral Irish plays (Flannery “W.B. Yeats” 187). Furthermore, after the departure of the Fays and some actors loyal to them in 1908, and the withdrawal of subsidies from the English philanthropist Annie Horniman in 1910, the Abbey theatre was somewhat understaffed and underfunded, having to gain all of their revenues through ticket sales (Flannery “W.B. Yeats” 188). To make matters even more bleak, on 24 March 1909, one of the Abbey theatre’s co-directors, John Millington Synge, died (Robinson *Theatre* 65). Because of these circumstances, the Abbey theatre could neither train amateurs nor afford to attract a cast of better actors to perform the more complex plays that Yeats desired (Flannery “W.B. Yeats” 194).

Thus, in 1910, the Abbey theatre seemed to have created a de facto ‘house-style’, that is to say that, for the foreseeable future, the Abbey would not, or would not be able to, set up any complex plays like those in Britain or on the Continent, as was mandated by its manifesto. While this point of view is true to a certain extent, it is not very nuanced. Scholars like James W. Flannery and Elizabeth Mannion often construct a historical narrative around the idea that the Abbey theatre produced mainly popular, national and pastoral plays, especially after a notice that the Abbey might lose its annual subsidy from Annie Horniman in 1910 (“W.B. Yeats” 187, 40, 42-43). In academic literature, as will later be demonstrated, it is also often supposed that in the 1930s the Gate theatre became a counterweight to the Abbey. This is because the Gate had set up these more complex, avant-garde and cosmopolitan plays, of which Yeats wanted to make Irish versions. Nevertheless, the notion that the Abbey theatre only produced national plays and the Gate functioned as its counterpart, producing avant-garde cosmopolitan plays, is not an entirely valid claim.

If we look more closely at the early plays of the Abbey theatre, Karen Dorn provides an interesting perspective, pointing out the theatre’s constant balancing of “its controversial naturalistic productions and its interpretation of Irish legends” (*Players* 4). Dorn notes that, while audiences pressed the Abbey to produce plays that glorified the nation, the Abbey did not blindly give in to this. She illustrates this by citing plays like Yeats’ *The Countess*

Cathleen (1899), which was accused of containing unorthodox Christianity, and Yeats and Moore's *Diarmuid and Grania* (1901), as well as Synge's *In the Shadow of the Glen* (1903) and *The Playboy of the Western World* (1907), which, Dorn argues, were heavily influenced by naturalism (*Players* 2-3). That is not to say that the Abbey did not produce some national plays: Yeats' *Cathleen ni Houlihan* (1902) was praised for its passionate nationalism, *Deirdre* (1906), was adapted from Lady Gregory's play based on the Irish historic saga, *Cuchulain of Muirthemne*, and Lady Gregory's *The Rising of the Moon* (1907) showed a Fenian protagonist, who partly convinces a police sergeant of his point of view (Dorn *Players* 2, 4). As Dorn observes, the latter play also sparked controversy, because it showed the Irish police force as a group of complex characters who, especially when they were young, had Fenian sentiments, instead of being a group of one dimensional, clear-cut antagonists (Dorn *Players* 2). Some nationalistic audience members took offence with the ambiguous, and arguably more realistic, nature of the antagonistic police officers as people with conflicting thoughts and emotions, who were not portrayed as homogeneous unionists. Dorn's case, nevertheless, remains highly valuable, because it shows the Abbey theatre's conscious attempts to produce national plays, but also nationalistically controversial plays in, for the time, avant-garde styles, such as naturalism.

Perhaps one of the best examples of when avant-garde theatre happened to be intertwined with Irish nationalism at the Abbey theatre was the censorship of George Bernard Shaw's 1909 play *The Shewing-Up of Blanco Posnet*. Shaw's play, originally intended to premiere in London, was, as Christopher Morash puts it, "a deliberate snare, designed to trap the English censorship laws in their own absurdities" (143). Because of this, the play was, unsurprisingly, promptly banned from being performed in Great Britain by the Lord Chamberlain on grounds of blasphemy (Morash 143). Shaw then submitted *Blanco Posnet* to the Abbey theatre, which agreed to stage Shaw's play and provocatively scheduled its premiere during the busiest week of the Irish theatrical calendar (Morash 144). The Abbey, according to Morash, wanted to stage *Blanco Posnet*, because they needed a new play to replace John Millington Synge's *The Playboy of the Western World* (1907) with another piece that would shock audiences, and thus create name recognition for and hopefully draw audiences to their theatre (Morash 143). Because the Lord Chamberlain's jurisdiction did not extend to Ireland, it was legal to perform *Blanco Posnet* at the Abbey, but the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland was allowed to revoke the Abbey theatre's patent, if it performed any offensive material (Morash 144). Thus the Abbey came into conflict with the government of Ireland, which they cleverly spun to be an issue of English censorship in Ireland (Morash 144). This

brought staunch Irish nationalists into the fold who had previously opposed the Abbey during the ‘*Playboy* riots’, and eventually made the government of Ireland relent (Morash 144). Thus, by turning the pending prohibition of staging *Blanco Posnet* from a prevention of obscene avant-garde art from theatres into a resistance against the influence of the English censor in Ireland, the Abbey created an image of itself as a defender of Irish national theatre. In actuality, however, it only wanted to perform a highly provocative avant-garde play that is not at all nationalistic.

The Gate Theatre

The Gate theatre was founded in 1928 by Hilton Edwards and Micheál Mac Liammóir, and, as stated earlier, expanded on the ideals of the National Theatre Society by striving to perform highly professional Irish versions of continental dramas, which Yeats had struggled to get off the ground at the Abbey (Fitz-Simon “*The Boys*” 61). While the Abbey theatre had largely been founded to generally produce national plays, the Gate’s repertoire included plays by respectively realist and naturalist continental playwrights, such as Henrik Ibsen and August Strindberg (Fitz-Simon “*The Boys*” 61). Additionally, the Gate theatre, influenced by playwright Denis Johnston, wanted to turn itself away from the realist theatrical productions at the Abbey during the late 1920s and thirties by reinventing theatre as theatrical (Morash and Richards 60). Johnston had, namely, realised that the new medium of film would always outcompete theatre as a realist medium, and therefore theatre had to be transformed back into a literally fantastic, or, as Johnston put it, dynamic display (Morash and Richards 59). Mac Liammóir shared Johnston’s opinion, stating in *Motley*, the Gate’s theatre journal, that “[s]ince [the Gate theatre] was founded we have presented comparatively few realist plays, and have already avoided realism in production. We consider that realism has been badly overdone, and if the drama has a future that future will not be found to lie in a realistic direction.” (qtd. in Brown 90). Thus the Abbey maintained its national and realist styles of theatre, whereas the Gate moved away into new, experimental and avant-garde territory of play styles. It should be noted, as Morash and Richards also do, that while the Abbey produced national and realist plays vis-à-vis the Gate’s avant-garde productions, this was arguably only so in terms of their style of acting. The Abbey, however, introduced a lot of experimental features into their stage design, as will be analysed in greater detail in the chapter about stage design (Morash and Richards 59).

One other important linguistic issue that we need to be aware of, when comparing the Abbey with the Gate, is that of national theatre versus nationalistic theatre. National theatre,

for the purposes of this dissertation, consists of dramatic productions relating to a nation or country, while nationalistic theatre includes those that advocate or eulogise characteristics of the nation. This distinction is often underrepresented, if not entirely absent, in much of academic writing on both the Abbey and the Gate theatres, but especially the former. In *The Dublin Gate Theatre 1928-1978*, for example, Richard Pine and Richard Cave contrast the Abbey with the Gate, and even though they make the distinction between national and nationalistic theatre for the Gate, they fail to do so for the Abbey. That is not to say that national and nationalistic theatre never walked a fine line at the Abbey; Pine and Cave correctly point this out by referring to Lady Gregory's statement that the aim of the Abbey was "to bring upon the stage the deeper thoughts and emotions of Ireland [...] the home of an ancient idealism" (12). It is, however, as will be further pointed out in the remainder of this introduction and in the following chapters, too simplistic to interpret any 'national play' as a 'nationalistic play', or any 'national play' at the Abbey, as automatically having to be nationalistic. One clear example of this is *John Bull's Other Island* (1904) by George Bernard Shaw, which the Abbey, according to Shaw, refused to perform in 1904, because it gave "an uncompromising presentment of the real old Ireland, [and] not the idealized Kathleen O'Houlihan of the neo-Gaelic movement" (Weintraub 143). W.B. Yeats, however, stated that he refused to play *John Bull's Other Island* at the Abbey Theatre, because of practical reasons. Christopher Morash for instance points out that Yeats stated that "[the Abbey Theatre] did not have the actors to play it" and states that both Shaw's and Yeats' arguments for refusing to let *John Bull's Other Island* premiere at the Abbey Theatre were valid (143). By 1916, however, at least the ideological difference between Shaw and Irish nationalists was resolved, the play was received very favourably, and the Abbey performed it annually from September 1916, after the Easter Rising, up and until 1932 ("*John Bull's Other Island*", par. 1). The play was most likely revived, because, at that time, Shaw's reputation among the nationalists had been very high. Shaw had namely bitterly critiqued of the British government for executing the Easter revolutionaries; even going as far as to refer to the government in Westminster as a 'Terrorist administration' (Welch 70). Shaw's play, however, is but one example of the Abbey producing a play that is national in its content, but not nationalistic in its message.

The distinction between national and nationalistic theatre is also important with regard to the Gate theatre. While some directors, individually, may have been in favour for setting up nationalistic productions, the Gate, unlike the Abbey, did not formally pursue this kind of theatre (Pine and Cave 16). The Gate, furthermore, endorsed the importance of international

theatre and international influences on their national productions. Lord Longford, for instance, said in 1936 that “the Gate Theatre is convinced that it has a distinct part to play in the intellectual life of Ireland [...]. The Gate is an international theatre [...] it excludes nothing but the inferior. It is also a national theatre [...] and is conscious in all its activities of doing a service to the nation.” (qtd. in Pine and Cave 16). This latter part of the quote regarding the service to the nation is to be understood in a context of educating the Irish audiences instead of eulogising Ireland. David Sears’ *Juggernaut*, for instance, is said by Christopher Fitz-Simon to have been “an early attempt to deal with the effect of the ‘troubles’ of 1922 on the middle-classes” (“*The Boys*” 57). Hilton Edwards, co-founder of the Gate theatre, had, furthermore, initially been mute on the topic of nationalistic theatre at the Gate, but later stated that he had always thought that there was no place for propaganda in theatre and vice versa (Pine and Cave 17).

Methodology

A recurring thought of this dissertation comes from Oona Frawley’s *Memory Ireland*, which cites that memory, the way historical events or figures are remembered, is usually through a collectively maintained narrative that possesses political aspects and often enacted through performances (20). This is both true for the plays at the Abbey and Gate theatres, which literally perform a version of these collectively maintained memories, but also for the academic literature that has been written, based on the plays; these re-enactment of collectively maintained memories. Thus these scholarly text have also become part of these narratives. That is not to say that scholars like the aforementioned James W. Flannery or Elizabeth Mannion make entire false statements regarding the performance of avant-garde, cosmopolitan plays at the Abbey Theatre. Both Flannery and Mannion recognise the use of naturalism as a style of theatre at the Abbey, and while Karen Dorn has pointed out that the Abbey consciously produced nationalistically controversial plays, she also noted that the Abbey produced far more nationalistically convenient plays than nationalistically controversial ones (Flannery “the Abbey” 180; Mannion 42; Dorn *Players* 2-4). Of the thirteen plays¹ of the Irish Literary Theatre and early Abbey productions that are listed by Dorn, only four can be considered to be controversial (*Players* 2-4). Additionally, only one, *The Rising of the Moon*, can be said to be largely catering to nationalistic audience members

¹ *The Countess Cathleen* (1899), *Diarmuid and Grania* (1901), *Cathleen ni Houlihan* (1902), *In the Shadow of the Glen* (1903), *The Hour-Glass* (1903), *The King’s Threshold* (1903), *The Shadowy Waters* (1904), *On Baile’s Stand* (1904), *Deirdre* (1906), *The Playboy of the Western World* (1907), *The Rising of the Moon* (1907), *The Golden Helmet* (1908), and *The Green Helmet* (1910).

in spite of some controversial elements, such as the ambiguity of the characteristics of the play's antagonists (Dorn *Players* 2).

Mannion notes the controversy of *The Playboy of the Western World*, referring to the successful boycott of Synge's play, spearheaded by the anti-unionist group, Sinn Féin (42). She, however, largely sides with Flannery on the idea that the Abbey produced a notable amount of Irish propagandistic plays (Mannion 40). Flannery, Mannion and, to a lesser extent, Dorn, have in common that they do not focus primarily on the avant-garde and cosmopolitan aspects of certain productions of the Abbey theatre. Instead they zoom in on its nationalistic or its educational plays of Irish history and culture. Their statements are therefore not false, but they do make the Abbey theatre seem less multifaceted than it actually was. When the avant-garde and cosmopolitan aspects of the Abbey Theatre are underexposed, it also indirectly makes the Gate Theatre seem to stand out more from the Abbey. This is a problem that will be further and fully addressed in this dissertation.

The aforementioned nuance between national and nationalistic theatre is also for examining the Abbey and the Gate Theatre important, because it prevents us from making the too simplistic conclusion that any dramatic production at the Gate theatre relating to Ireland thus had to be nationalistic. It also gives us a proper tool for comparing seemingly similar plays. When we, for instance, compare two plays that are set in Ireland, like Lady Gregory's play *Kincora* (1905) with George Bernard Shaw's *John Bull's Other Island* (1904), it becomes clear that the former is a nationalistic play, while the latter is a national one. One nationalistic aspect of *Kincora* can be seen when one of the play's protagonists, Brian, the king of Munster, eulogises Ireland. During the play's prologue he, for instance, says, "I will not give up Ireland, for it is a habit of my race to fight and to die; but it was never their habit to see shame or oppression put on their country by any man on earth" (6). This is in sharp contrast to the following line by Father Keegan, one of the Irish main characters, if not arguably the only one, in *John Bull's Other Island*, "[w]hich would you say this country [Ireland] was: hell or purgatory? [...] Hell! Faith I'm afraid you're right. I wondher what you and me did when we were alive to get sent here" (2.1.24). *Kincora* can be seen as a nationalistic play, because it praises the greatness of Ireland and the importance to fight for the freedom of the nation and its people. *John Bull's Other Island*, by contrast, cannot be said to do the same, because it is more critical of Ireland. It still relates to the nation, and is therefore a national play, but, because it does not eulogise Ireland, it cannot be said to be nationalistic. This contrast between national and nationalistic plays will also recur as an important issue in this dissertation, when two plays of the Abbey theatre, *The Plough and the*

Stars (1926) and *The New Gossoon* (1930), and two of the Gate theatre, *Diarmuid and Grainne* (1928) and *The Old Lady Says "No!"* (1929) will be analysed.

The goal of this dissertation is thus to take a close look at how the Abbey and the Gate theatres wanted to and actually performed historical events or figures in their plays, which version of the collectively maintained narrative or memory of the Irish people these theatres highlighted, and to make a properly nuanced assessment of the validity of the supposed dichotomy between the Abbey and the Gate theatre in academic literature.

Research Question

Thus, considering the often cited dichotomy between the Abbey and the Gate Theatres in academic literature, it becomes necessary to ask: in which ways is it legitimate to look at the Abbey and Gate Theatres as diametric opposites, the Abbey Theatre on the one hand functioning as a stage concerned with national theatre and the Gate on the other as one concerned with avant-garde, cosmopolitan theatre in the late 1920's and early 1930's? In order to answer this question I will firstly take a look at how the Abbey and Gate Theatres differed from each other in terms of their manifestoes. The Abbey theatre, according to its manifesto, was founded on a premise that encouraged more experimental styles of theatre of the Edwardian era, such as realism, naturalism, experimentalism, or surrealism. The Gate Theatre, by comparison, was founded on the idea of performing cosmopolitan theatre. Next, I will examine the way in which *The Plough and the Stars* (1926), *Diarmuid and Grainne* (1928), *The Old Lady Says "No!"* (1929), and *The New Gossoon* (1930) illustrate the often claimed diametrically opposite aims of the Abbey and the Gate Theatres. All four of these plays have been produced in roughly the same time period. Seán O'Casey's *The Plough and the Stars* and George Shiels' *The New Gossoon* have premiered at the Abbey, the former being an urban drama and the latter a pastoral comedy. Micheál Mac Liammóir's *Diarmuid and Grainne* and Denis Johnston's *The Old Lady Says "No!"*, however, premiered at the Gate, the latter being an urban comedy and the former a folkloric drama. Lastly, I will take a look at to what extent the décor or stage design, that were used, underline the often claimed difference between the Abbey and the Gate theatres. The Abbey and Gate theatres both used particular styles of stage design for their respective productions. This final chapter will primarily focus on the ideas and the justifications for the choice of the styles and types of stage design, such as backdrops, costumes and attributes. It will also examine any similarities and differences between the stage design of the Abbey and the Gate theatre.

Manifestoes

While the Abbey theatre was the result of the 1902 merger between the Irish Literary Theatre and Frank and William Fay's politically motivated Irish National Dramatic Society, an Irish company of amateur actors, it drew a lot from just the manifesto of the ILT as guidelines (Flannery "W.B. Yeats" 179, 183). This manifesto would prove so influential that even the Gate theatre would, amongst others, use it as inspiration for their own policies. To better understand and compare both theatres, it is thus necessary to also compare certain texts, including the ILT manifesto that constituted or influenced the majority of the policy decisions of both companies. These decisions can vary from issues to which plays to perform, how to stage these plays, which actors to hire, and which stage design to use. Chronologically, the first half of this chapter will therefore be devoted to the manifestoes, that is to say the constitutional and influential texts, of the Abbey theatre, while the second half will subsequently be devoted to those of the Gate.

The Abbey Theatre Manifesto

The Abbey Theatre was often regarded in its early years as the national theatre of Ireland, because of its vast range of Romantic plays based on Irish mythology or that were set in the idyllic, Irish countryside that was uninfluenced by the industrial revolution. Examples of these mythical plays, set in pre-Norman, Gaelic Ireland, are *Kincora* (1905), *The Golden Helmet* (1908) and *Deirdre of the Sorrows* (1910), by Lady Gregory, W.B. Yeats and posthumously by J.M. Synge respectively. Some examples of pastoral plays, set in a romanticised version of the contemporary, or the near contemporary, Irish countryside, are *In the Shadow of the Glen* (1904), *Spreading the News* (1904) and *Hyacinth Halvey* (1906), the former by J.M. Synge, and the latter two by Lady Gregory. *Kincora*, *The Golden Helmet* and *Deirdre of the Sorrows*, for instance, are epics that are set during the Viking invasions of Ireland (795-980), or based on the tales of Cú Chulainn, and that of Deirdre in the Ulster Cycle² respectively. *In the Shadow of the Glen*, *Spreading the News*, and *Hyacinth Halvey*, on the other hand, are each somewhat comic unravellings that are set in an isolated farmhouse, a small village in rural Ireland, and at a village festival respectively. Nevertheless, despite a large variety of these kind of Romantic plays, these following paragraphs will argue how the Abbey came to produce a large number of this kind of plays. However, more importantly, it will be argued

² Various mythic tales of Irish heroes that were written down during the early medieval period (Gantz i).

that these plays are but a small reflection of the much broader ideological convictions of the directors of the early Abbey Theatre.

While the Abbey Theatre did not, strictly speaking, have a manifesto of its own, it did continue to rely on that of the Irish Literary Theatre that was written in 1897, two years before its inception, by William Butler Yeats, Lady Gregory and Edward Martyn. This manifesto, as will be demonstrated, left some relatively significant margins open for interpretation, regarding the precise goal and aspirations of the ILT and, subsequently, the Abbey. According to the manifesto, the Irish Literary Theatre was to be the opposite of the non-literary, commercial, London theatre, and was to be firmly anchored to the national literary revival (Hunt 19). Yeats intended this to be interpreted as broadly as possible, meaning that Irish plays had to be comparable to those of the professional playwrights on the Continent. In order to achieve this goal, he was even open to the idea to hire professional actors from England who were capable enough of performing these more complex plays (Flannery “W.B. Yeats” 179). After the merger of the Irish Literary Theatre and the Irish National Dramatic Society in 1902, however, English actors were no longer hired until the production of *Deirdre* in 1906 (Robinson *Theater* 5; Flannery “W.B. Yeats” 180). Lady Gregory shared a similar opinion with Yeats, stating in 1898 about the ILT that “[w]e hope to find in Ireland an uncorrupted and imaginative audience trained to listen by its passion for oratory, and believe that our desire to bring upon the stage the deeper thoughts and emotions of Ireland will ensure for us a tolerant welcome, and that freedom to experiment which is not found in the theatres of England and without which no new movement in art or literature can succeed” (qtd. in Robinson *Theater* 4). Like Yeats, Lady Gregory does not exclusively define an Irish theatre as a theatre of Irish actors, or plays about Ireland or Irish culture. Instead she states that an Irish theatre is one that uses experimental styles of theatre that can captivate an Irish audience.

By the 1890s, most of the theatres in the British Isles were dominated by an English influence, that is to say by English theatre companies and by the preferred style of theatre of the English at that time, namely melodrama. According to Robinson, “[w]hen lovers of the English theatre talk of making a National Theatre they mean, I suppose, making a great building and marshalling the rich materials that lie ready to their hands” and “[Dublin] possessed three or four excellent theatres, but they were mainly dependent [...] on touring English companies. The only Irish actors in the country would be a company touring the melodramas of Boucicault” (*Theater* 1,3). Melodrama, a style of theatre that was strongly influenced by romanticism and characterised by a large diversity of scenic effects, an intensely but codified style of acting, and grandly spectacular effects, was the dominant style

of British theatre from the 1790s until the early twentieth century (Booth “Nineteenth” 300). It presented “a world of certainties where confusion, doubt, and perplexity are absent; a world of absolutes where virtue and vice coexist in pure whiteness and pure blackness; and a world of justice where after immense struggle and torment good triumphs over and punishes evil, and virtue receives tangible material rewards” (Booth “*English*” 14). In his early plays, Yeats wanted to move away from the melodramatic style of theatre and, much like other Continental playwrights like Stanislavski, he emphasised inner truth over outward gestures. Yeats was greatly concerned with creating characters who defined themselves by a suggestive force of expression that was inward and spiritual (Taylor 5). Yeats therefore argued for a new drama that would be more stylised and rhetorical, which he stressed in his 1903 outline of the goals of the Irish National Theatre Society (Taylor 5). Yeats, for instance, stated that “plays should generate intellectual excitement”, and “make speech even more important than gesture” (qtd. in Taylor 3). He also called for a simplification of acting techniques, as well as the form and colour of the scenery and costumes (Taylor 3).

It is important to note that Yeats’ interpretation of Irish theatre was based on different styles of theatre on the Continent, instead of the Irish peasant plays that directors, like William and Frank Fay, asked to produce (Flannery “*W.B. Yeats*” 181). This was met with fierce opposition from Frank and William Fay, the Stage managers of the Abbey Theatre between 1904 and 1907. Frank Fay had already warned Yeats in 1901 that “plays should be so written as to appeal to as large a section of his countrymen as possible; otherwise no good can result to us from [the Irish Literary Theatre’s] production” (Flannery “*W.B. Yeats*” 181). The Fay brothers rather argued for the production of more popular plays at the Abbey again in 1907, when they received notice that their annual subsidy from Annie Horniman would no longer be available in 1910 (Flannery “*W.B. Yeats*” 188). A year earlier, however, Yeats had tried to go into a completely different direction by revitalising some of the ideas that had originally been a driving force for him to found the Irish Literary theatre. In 1906, he, for instance, stated that:

We should keep before our minds the final object which is to create in this country a National Theatre something of after the Continental pattern [...] Such a National Theatre would perforce keep in mind its educational as well as artistic side. To be artistically noble it will have to be the acknowledged centre for some kind of art which no other Theatre in the world has in the

same perfection. This art would necessarily be the representation of plays full of Irish characteristics, of plays that cannot be performed except by players who are constantly observing Irish people and things [...] Such a Theatre must, however, if it is to do the educational work of a National Theatre be prepared to perform even though others can perform them better, representative plays of all the great schools. (qtd. in Flannery “W.B. Yeats” 183)

This statement by Yeats again shows that as long as the play had Irish characteristics and was produced by people who were quite intimate with Ireland and Irish culture, but not necessarily Irish themselves, the play would, according to Yeats, still count as Irish theatre (Flannery “W.B. Yeats” 183).

This created some tensions at the Abbey theatre in 1906, because Yeats was again open to hiring professional actors from England. Yeats wanted actors, who were capable enough of performing some of his Irish plays that should imitate or emulate critically acclaimed Continental dramas (Flannery “W.B. Yeats” 179). As a result, Yeats proceeded by hiring an English actress, named Florence Darragh, for the lead role in *Deirdre* (1906), a decision that was unappreciated by his co-directors, Lady Gregory and John Millington Synge (Flannery “W.B. Yeats” 180). While this was just a singular instance that was met with a lot of criticism at the Abbey, it is, from a theoretical viewpoint, still incredibly insightful to see how broadly the premise of the Abbey’s manifesto could be interpreted by one of its key founders (Flannery “W.B. Yeats” 182).

It should also be noted that Yeats founded the Dublin Drama League with Lennox Robinson, which, between 1918 and 1928, performed, almost exclusively, plays by contemporary foreign playwrights, such as Eugene O’Neill from America, French playwright Jean Cocteau, Martinez de Sierra and the Quintero brothers from Spain, and the Italian Luigi Pirandello and Gabriele d’Annunzio, at the Abbey Theatre on Sundays and Mondays (Fitz-Simon “*The Irish Theatre*” 174). The idea behind the DDL was to add more variation to the largely exclusive offer of National plays in Ireland at that time (Fitz-Simon “*The Irish Theatre*” 174). The specifics of the Dublin Drama League, however, are beyond the scope of this dissertation, but it is still worth to mention it as an example of the larger diversity of plays at the Abbey, since it had been founded from within the Theatre.

Nevertheless, despite its broad ideology, which left room for a certain degree of cosmopolitanism and experimental theatre, the Abbey Theatre had become largely regarded by audiences and in academic literature as a theatre of nationalistic, romantic, pastoral plays that are set in a mythical, heroic age or in the idyllic countryside. Christopher Fitz-Simon explains that the Abbey became synonymous with the ‘the Irish Theatre’, because, in its early years, it made the conscious decision to produce plays by Yeats, Synge and O’Casey in a very recognisably Irish style of presentation and acting (“*The Irish Theatre*” 133). The Abbey Theatre, furthermore, bolstered its reputation for being an ‘Irish Theatre’ by purposefully producing romantic plays based on Irish mythology or set in the idyllic, Irish countryside that is uninfluenced by the industrial revolution (Fitz-Simon “*The Irish Theatre*” 133-134). The choice to focus on romantic, but not always necessarily lucrative, plays paid off in the end, especially in terms of name recognition, Fitz-Simon explains, because of the growing demand in Ireland for plays about Irish mythology and folklore (“*The Irish Theatre*” 133-134).

That is not to say that the Abbey did not produce any plays that were not idyllic, pastoral or folkloric; the manifesto of the Irish Literary Theatre, as stated before, allowed for Irish versions of Continental plays. Edward Martyn, one of the founding members of the ILT, for instance, wrote an Irish version of Ibsen’s Norwegian, realistic play: *En folkefiende*³ (1882), which was later adapted for the stage by George Moore, under the title of *The Bending of the Bough*, and produced by the ILT in 1900 (Fitz-Simon “*The Irish Theatre*” 137). Martyn was a great admirer of Ibsen’s realistic plays, but his dramatic abilities were, according to Hugh Hunt, not sufficient enough to create similar masterpieces (22). As a matter of fact, Martyn’s and Moore’s collaboration on *The Heather Field*, first drafted in the 1890s, led to a number of unsuccessful attempts to get it produced in London (Hunt 22). Only after collaborating with the Irish Literary Theatre, was *The Heather Field* performed in 1899, as part of a double bill with Yeats’ *The Countess Cathleen* (Hunt 22, 28).

It is also not accurate to say that the Abbey Theatre was fully committed to Irish nationalism, or a theatre that sought to exclusively glorify or eulogise the nation. The Abbey Theatre also produced, most notably, John Millington Synge’s *The Playboy of the Western World*, which was so upsetting to their base audience that half of them, spearheaded by Sinn Féin, boycotted it during the ‘Playboy Riots’ in 1906 (Mannion 42). The problem with Synge’s play was, that nationalists in Ireland wanted artists to “promote the image of a steady, sober, self-reliant people. Instead, with *The playboy of the Western World*, Synge gave them a

³ *An Enemy of the People*, trans. (Fitz-Simon “*The Irish Theatre*” 137).

play in which a village loon splits his father's head open with a spade, runs away, tells people he "killed his da" and is promptly installed as a hero by excitable women and drunken men" (Kiberd par. 2). According to Kiberd, the fact that *The Playboy* was staged at "Ireland's national theatre" only aggravated the situation (par. 2). At the start of the Irish Literary Theatre, years before Synge's play was even conceived, tensions between nationalists and the ILT were already present, because of Yeats' uncompromising view on the intellectual freedom that an artist should have (Hunt 72).

That, however, is not to say that the Abbey theatre did everything in its power to prevent this situation from escalating. Before the play had even started production, Synge had told Willie Fay that with the next play he would write, he would make sure to annoy nationalists (Hunt 73). In response, Yeats, Lady Gregory and Willie Fay all asked for bits of *The Playboy* to be cut, but aside from some censored parts by the Lord Chamberlain, Synge refused to tone down his play (Hunt 73). Instead of pursuing any changes to the play, the directors of the Abbey decided in favour of Synge. At its Sunday premiere, *The Playboy of the Western World* was to be played in a fairly humourless, realistic style of theatre to many hostile reactions and criticism (Hunt 74). Furthermore, at its second show the day after, the directors had decided to double down: members of the Dublin Metropolitan Police had lined the walls of the auditorium and, later that night, had to arrest several members of the audience (Hunt 75). The worst decision that was made to escalate the situation even further, according to Hugh Hunt, was "Yeats's agreement to introduce a gang of toughs from Trinity College, who, besides being drunk, chose to sing the British National Anthem" (75). Nevertheless, while the escalating riots may have damaged the Theatre's finances in terms of ticket sales, two hundred copies of *The Playboy* were sold in the first week, and much international attention was cast on the Abbey in general and on Synge particular after the riots (Hunt 76).

Lastly, as mentioned in the introduction, Lady Gregory and W.B. Yeats had also feigned nationalistic sympathies to prevent a controversial play, *The Shewing-up of Blanco Posnet*, from being censored in 1909 (Morash 144). That year, W.B. Yeats and Lady Gregory claimed that the censorship of *The Shewing-up of Blanco Posnet* was unjust, because it was an example of the English censor, lawfully, exercising his authority over an Irish play in Dublin. In actuality, Yeats and Lady Gregory only caused a row for financial reasons; that is to say, to secure the performance of the play in the first place, to dramatically draw attention to the play thus contributing to its name recognition, and lastly to encourage nationalists to attend the performance of the play (Morash 144). Nonetheless, despite the Abbey's Irish version of Continental plays, it is its controversial plays and its feigned nationalistic sympathies, its

popular romantic plays, and specifically their contribution to the Abbey's name recognition, that made the Abbey Theatre synonymous with 'the Irish theatre'.

The Gate Theatre Manifesto

Even though the Gate Theatre did not have a single manifesto, it used other publications to voice its convictions with regard to what theatre should be. Chief among these publications in the Gate's early years was *Motley*, the Gate's own theatre magazine, which comprised a wide array of essays on theatre, poems, theatre programmes, and correspondence of their readers. The magazine itself was highly reflective of the opinions on theatre by the leading members of the Gate theatre. These were, according to *Motley*: the directors; Hilton Edwards, Micheál Mac Liammóir, the Earl of Longford, Norman Reddin and Denis Johnston, and Mary Manning; the magazine's editor, as well as Barbara Astley; the magazine's manager. Some of the pieces, especially the essays, in *Motley*, therefore, provide a keen insight into the stance that the leading members of the Gate took on theatre in the early thirties. These following paragraphs will mention the various styles of theatre that the Gate Theatre preferred, as well as those that it tried to distance itself from. The central focus of these paragraphs, however, is on the reason why the Gate adopted these styles of theatre, and how the Gate used these to balance their cosmopolitan ideology with some of their national plays.

One particular style of theatre that the Gate disfavoured, according to their magazine, was realism. In its December 1932 issue, *Motley* states, in an article specifically on realism, that "realism is not essential to drama", because, as the article argues, theatre ought to be a display of art, a spectacle or a show instead of a mimicry of real life (2). The article, furthermore, claims that realism "make us forget the inherent and necessary theatricality of theatre" and that it "tries hard to relieve [audiences] of the need for using [their] imagination" (2). The author of the article, identified as Micheál Mac Liammóir by Terrence Brown, even goes as far as to claim that the Gate would have emancipated itself from "the realist obsession", and, as a consequence, produced but a comparatively few realistic plays and the "best plays that [the Gate] receive[s] are non-realistic" (90; 3). Realism, namely, relied on techniques to bring out the complex emotional conflicts underneath the surface of the dialogue (Esslin 357). As a result, the characters' narration differs from their internal conflicts, because, much like in real life, people do not simply, precisely or truthfully say how they feel (Esslin 356-357).

While this was a popular style of theatre by renowned playwrights and directors, like George Bernard Shaw, Henrik Ibsen, August Strindberg, Anton Chekhov, Konstantin

Stanislavski and Vladimir Nemirovich-Danchenko, the theatre itself was not the prime location for it. Cinema had become a major industry by the late 1920s and 30s, and the huge advantage of cinema was its continuity of action (Tocher 3). According to Johnston, realistic stage acting and realistic staging techniques would come across as artificial or lacking “a real sense of drama”, relative to the dynamic nature of the moving pictures (Tocher 3). As a matter of fact, lacking a real sense drama had always been at least a minor issue of realistic theatre that critics have raised. In 1889, the *People* reviewed *A Doll's House* by Henrik Ibsen, the first unaltered translation of a realistic play in British theatre, as “unnatural, immoral and, in its concluding scene, undramatic” (qtd. in P. Thomson 415). This is why, despite the fact that amongst some of the more popular plays at the Gate in 1932 there were those of realist playwrights, like Ibsen's *Peer Gynt* (1876), and Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard* (1904), Mac Liammóir urged that the Gate theatre's quality ensemble of non-realistic plays should be seen as a beneficial prospect of the theatre (“The Gate Theatre” 2; “Realism” 3).

Denis Johnston shared a similar viewpoint with Mac Liammóir, regarding styles of theatre at the Gate. In the April-May edition of *Motley* of 1933, Johnston outlined his principles of a dynamic and theatrical future for theatre plays (Tocher 3). According to Johnston, theatre had become too static, and was therefore not engaging enough with the audience (Tocher 3). Johnston noted that static, realistic, acting was better suited for something as undoubtedly authentic as a picture, which had the result that people preferred to visit the cinema to see this kind of acting in the 1920s and 1930s (Tocher 3). Theatrical productions vis-à-vis cinematic ones, Johnston proposed, had to be like a painting compared to a picture, that is to say imaginative, dynamic, and open to experimental styles, as opposed to a plain depiction of the object it imitated (Tocher 3). Mac Liammóir phrased this similarly in his book *Theatre in Ireland*, stating: “The audience must be led towards a fuller understanding of the art of the stage, an art which may yet be doomed to eclipse by that of the screen unless we discover a new and varying series of forms and expressions” (42). Johnston, moreover, wanted a play to transcend its text, music, plot, or even its stage, meaning that the final product of a theatrical production was not the play itself, but the emotions, images and experience it created in the minds of the audience members (Tocher 3-4). To achieve this, Johnston also proposed the use of symbolism and music in plays, and the deconstruction of clichéd constructions, such as the controlled and artificial pace in plays, that is to say the usage of literal or literary devices to artificially move the plot along or to forcefully structure a play in three acts (Tocher 4).

Johnston, however, was not completely, factually correct in his assertion of plays by realistic writers. Anton Chekhov's three great plays, *The Seagull* (1896), *Uncle Vanya* (1897) and *The Cherry Orchard* (1904), for instance, all have four acts. Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House* (1879), to name another, is a play that is divided into three acts, and one that heavily relies on plot devices, such as illegal bonds. *Ghosts* (writ. 1881, perf. 1882), but another famous play by Ibsen –which also consists of three acts– does, however, not rely on artificial devices to move the plot along. After the characters are set up in the first act, the play naturally reaches its logical conclusion. Any sudden revelations in the play, for example that Regina Engstrand, the maid of Mrs Alving, is actually the illegitimate daughter of the late Captain Alving, is not reasonably shocking considering that the character of Captain Alving has been described as a frequent adulterer at the start of the play. In the first act, for instance, Mrs. Alving confides to Pastor Manders that “Mr. Alving had his way with the [housemaid]” (1.1.647). As a final, complicating example, Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895) was trimmed down from four to three acts to conform with growing viewer expectations for three-act plays (Sammells 83). Nonetheless, *The Importance of Being Earnest* was reviewed by George Bernard Shaw as being too much conforming to melodrama, while Wilde's four-act play, *An Ideal Husband* (1895), was praised by Shaw that same year for being in line with realism (Kaplan 428-429). Nevertheless, while Johnston's definition of realism is not one that accurately describes all realistic styles of theatre, his solution to his perceived flaws of realism are still worth exploring, because they have been a major influence on the experimental theatre that was performed at the Gate.

In his article, “Towards A Dynamic Theatre”, Johnston proposes a number of measures to make theatre more appealing to the audience. These include: removing all unnecessary interruptions of the play, including the “three-act form”; making the audience conscious that they are watching a live performance; reintroducing, for the early twentieth century, archaic features of theatre, such as music; and having the scenery dictate the dialogue, instead of the other way around (Tocher 4). Moreover, according to Johnston, a work of theatre should both play on the audience's conscious, rational understanding of the played out events, and on their subconscious, emotional reception of these events; and, lastly, dialogue should be meaningful, or, in other words, serve to convey meaning, instead of serving as “a frame for the chatter of the characters” (Tocher 4). Johnston has, of course, also implemented these ideas into his own plays. In *A Bride for the Unicorn* (1933), for example, his stage directions called for a revolving stage, which he also suggested in “Towards A Dynamic Theatre” as a way to remove unnecessary interruptions of a play, including walking

on and off the stage (Hogan 138; Tocher 4). The Gate Theatre, however, did not have a revolving stage, but they did construct a ramp at the front of the stage to shatter the illusion of a barrier between the audience and the actors (Hogan 138). Johnston, furthermore, included archaic features, that is to say Greek choruses, into this play, and he played on the audience's subconscious by using the theme of death (Hogan 139). On this topic Johnston stated his intentions as follows:

[T]o write a play on the theme that the fear of Death is an illusion. That a Death at the proper time is our subconscious objective, whether we imagine we are scared of it or not; that what we think is chasing us is in fact the thing that we are chasing; and that when we find out what it actually is, we should feel greatly relieved. (qtd. in Hogan 139).

A Bride for the Unicorn could even be seen as a psychoanalytic work, because it is a play that both literally and figuratively breaks subconscious barriers. Similar to Freud's psychoanalysis *A Bride for the Unicorn* relies on the notion of the unconscious, or subconscious as Johnston refers to it, which is "a part of the mind behind the consciousness which nevertheless has a strong influence upon our actions" (Barry 92). Psychoanalysis also supposes that there is a process called 'regression', "the 'forgetting' or ignoring of unresolved conflicts, unadmitted desires, or traumatic past events so that they are forced out of conscious awareness and into the realm of the unconscious" (Barry 92-93). The purpose of psychoanalytical therapy is therefore to make the barrier between the conscious and the unconscious more porous in order to let the regressed memories re-enter the consciousness (Barrie 92). Johnson, and the Gate Theatre in general, do this by, quite literally, removing the barrier between the actors and the audience during the play's original performance. The use of the ramp at the front of the stage made the subconscious divide between the floor of the auditorium and that of the elevated stage disappear. That is to say that, during a theatrical performance, the audience generally does not expect the actors to cross or even to make eye contact with the audience through the invisible, one-way mirror of the 'fourth wall'. A figurative example of psychoanalysis in the play is the notion that the protagonist of the play has regressed the notion that he is actually looking for death, which, in the play, he 'sublimates' for a quest to chase 'the Girl with the Mask' (Barry 93). On the regression of looking for one's death, Johnston writes: "It is supposed to be a statement that the business of

life is itself, and that its crown is its ending, and that consciously or subconsciously we are aware of this, and that most of our activities show our awareness” (qtd. in Hogan 139). In the play, this regression is evident from the journey, in which the protagonist and his schoolmates take part in a life-long search to find, as it turns out, death itself.

So far, it has been established that the Gate Theatre made a break in their early years from the more established styles of theatre, such as melodrama, realism and naturalism, in favour of experimentalism. The Gate, however, was also revolutionary in its thematic approach of plays. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the Dublin Dramatic League, founded by W.B. Yeats and Lennox Robinson, was the first amateur and part-time movement to pioneer other, that is to say avant-garde and cosmopolitan, plays than the sneeringly referred to ‘native product’ (Fitz-Simon “*The Irish Theatre*” 174). The Gate Theatre, on the other hand, was the first professional and full-time theatre company in Dublin that devoted itself to these kinds of productions. In its early years it had distinguished itself by presenting a large variety of contemporary plays that had previously not been performed in Ireland, as well as a couple of productions of Shakespeare, Molière and some eighteenth-century dramatists (Fitz-Simon “*The Irish Theatre*” 176). In its first two seasons the Gate had put an emphasis on Eastern European and American plays, because those were written in an expressionistic style of theatre, which, as previously established, is one that the Gate favoured for its dynamic qualities (Fitz-Simon “*The Irish Theatre*” 176; Tocher 3). The first season, for instance, included the Russian Nikolai Evreinov’s *The Theatre of the Soul* (1915), the American Eugene O’Neill’s *Anna Christie* (1921) and *The Hairy Ape* (1922), the first production of Oscar Wilde’s *Salomé* (1891)⁴ in the British Isles, and *Diarmuid and Grainne* (1928), Mac Liammóir’s translation of his own play, *Diarmuid agus Grainne* (1928) from a Gaelic play that he wrote for An Taibhdhearc, the first Gaelic language theatre in Ireland, whose directors, at the time, were Anew McMaster and Hilton Edwards (Fitz-Simon “*The Irish Theatre*” 176-177; Morash 178). For its second season, the Gate’s programme included the Czech Karel Čapek’s *Rossum’s Universal Robots* (1920), the Russian Leo Tolstoy’s *The Power of Darkness* (1886) and Nikolai Evreinov’s *A Merry Death* (1908), the American Elmer Rice’s *The Adding Machine* (1923), the English John Galsworthy’s *The Little Man* (1915), and the Irish David Sears’ *Juggernaut* (1929) (Fitz-Simon “*The Irish Theatre*” 177).

Nevertheless, despite its abundance of experimental plays from Eastern Europe and America, the Gate also performed domestic plays that were on par with their continental

⁴ First written in 1891, first published in French in 1892, first translated into English in 1894, first performed in French in 1896, first performed in English in 1928.

counterparts. Starting with *Salomé*, the Gate has, for instance, produced a number of plays by Wilde, such as *Lady Windermere's Fan* in 1931, *An Ideal Husband* in 1932, *The Importance of Being Earnest* in 1933, *The Portrait of Dorian Gray* in 1945, and even a hugely successful one-man show by Mac Liammóir, called *The Importance of Being Oscar* (1960); all of which were revived frequently (Morash 183). In short, cosmopolitanism, based on the plays that were produced by the Gate, was defined in terms of styles of theatre. Cosmopolitanism, from the Gate's perspective, equals avant-garde theatre, which is why, at the Gate, they would produce plays by both Čapek, Evreinov and O'Neill, as well as those by Mac Liammóir, Sears and Wilde. While those playwrights have fairly little in common in terms of nationality, they have a lot more in common in terms of a comparable style of expressionistic, or experimental theatre.

In its early years, some directors at the Gate Theatre also considered including more national plays into its repertoire, or even presenting the Gate as a national theatre. Director Norman Reddin, for example, stated in *Motley* in 1931 that "A National Theatre should primarily be a source of intellectual education and refinement [...]. It is for the public to judge whether the 'Gate' comes within the description or not. It is certainly my ambition to see the 'Gate' not merely conforming with the definition of being a National Theatre, but one day of meriting it" (qtd. in Pine and Cave 16). Lord Longford, chairman of the Gate Theatre between 1930 and 1936, likewise stated in 1934 that the Gate was a National Theatre (Hobson 10). He comes to this conclusion by reasoning that "[the Gate] has given their first production to many new Irish plays, it has presented the great works of bygone Irish dramatists, has developed Irish acting talent, and is conscious in all its activities of doing a service to the nation" (Hobson 10). In short, both Reddin and Longford defined the Gate as a national theatre, because of its Irish actors and, because the theatre company was based in Dublin. Nonetheless, it is very telling that they did not define it as a national theatre, because of the themes of the plays in the Gate's repertoire, since the themes of the plays at the Abbey have, in part, been the defining issue to refer to it as a national theatre (Fitz-Simon "*The Irish Theatre*" 133-134).

That is not to say that the Gate Theatre did not produce any plays with Irish themes, however. Two plays that premiered at the Gate and that will be examined in the next chapter, Mac Liammóir's *Diarmuid and Grainne* (1928) and Denis Johnston's *The Old Lady Says "No!"* (1929), both have Irish themes. The former is rooted in Irish mythology and the latter is based on an event in Irish history. Other examples of plays with national, that is to say Irish mythological or pastoral, themes, performed at the Gate, are: *Dark Waters* (1932) by Dorothy

Macardle, *Youth's the Season?* (1932) by Mary Manning, *Grania of the Ships* (1933) by David Sears, and *Ascendancy* (1935) by Lord Longford. The former is set in the west of Ireland and features supernatural activity, alike those of Irish mythology, the next is written as a sixteenth-century parody of the tale of Grania in the Ulster cycle, and the latter is about the bitter religious divides of pre-Victorian Ireland. This apparent paradox of the Gate as either a national or an experimental theatre, however, was addressed by Hilton Edwards in 1958, when he stated that "[t]he Gate, although it has presented many plays by Irish authors and on Irish themes, is not a national theatre. It is simply a theatre. Its policy is the exploitation of all forms of theatrical expression regardless of nationality" (3). In other words, according to Edwards, only ideology can define a theatre as a national theatre. The answer to whether the Gate is a national theatre, therefore depends on the person, whose views of theatre are examined: in this case, Reddin, Longford and Edwards.

So far, we have analysed the national and cosmopolitan aspects of the manifestoes of both the Abbey and the Gate Theatre, and how these ideas have turned out in practice. In the next chapter, we will look at four of these plays more closely in terms of concepts like style, national and nationalistic, as well as cosmopolitanism and avant-garde.

Plays

The Abbey and Gate theatres produced a number of plays during the final years of the 1920s, four of which will be examined in this chapter. The first that will be examined is *The Plough and the Stars* (1926) by Seán O'Casey, an urban play that was produced by the Abbey Theatre. The second is *Diarmuid and Grainne* (1928) by Micheál Mac Liammóir, a mythological play produced by the Gate Theatre. Subsequently, this chapter will analyse *The Old Lady Says "No!"* (1929), an urban play that is similar to O'Casey's *The Plough and the Stars*, by Denis Johnston and produced by the Gate. Finally, *The New Gossoon* (1930), a pastoral comedy, by George Shiels and produced by the Abbey theatre will be explored.

These four plays were specifically chosen on the basis of three criteria. Firstly, they were relatively popular plays during the late twenties and early thirties in Dublin, in that these plays, their message and content, was relatively well received by audiences over multiple years. Therefore any statements made about these plays can be seen as valid reflections of the agenda of either the Abbey or the Gate theatre, because these plays themselves would have been largely associated with the theatre that produced it frequently over the course of a number of years.

Secondly, these plays had successful runs during the time, in which they were written. *John Bull's Other Island*, for example, consistently drew many attendees throughout the 1920s and early 1930s, but it was written back in 1904. The four aforementioned plays, however, were both written in the late 1920s or 1930s and also had successful runs throughout these decades. Therefore they can be argued to contain more of the zeitgeist in which they were performed than older, successfully revived plays like *John Bull's Other Island*.

Lastly, these four plays are very diverse, meaning that they, as mentioned before, range from mythological plays, to pastoral as well as urban plays. For a close and representative analysis of the drama performed at the Abbey and Gate theatres, it would be necessary to take four extremely similar plays, for example, four urban plays. However, because this dissertation focuses primarily on whether it is legitimate to look at both theatres as diametrical opposites, it is necessary to concentrate on the full and complex, that is to say multifaceted, range of both theatres, instead of examining one key issue that might expose coincidental similarities between the two playhouses. Therefore, one urban and one non-urban play from each theatre have been selected to highlight and to explore the full range of both the Abbey and the Gate.

Considering the scope and focus of this dissertation, these four plays will only be compared and contrasted in terms of their national or cosmopolitan content. Cultural memory, the way historical events or figures are remembered in the plays and their political aspects, will be a focal point in the analyses of the plays (Frawley 20). The plays will be analysed chronologically, starting with *The Plough and the Stars*.

***The Plough and the Stars* (1926)**

Plays that were written in the years after 1923 occupy a special place in the zeitgeist of Irish theatre, because of the nearly seven years of major armed conflicts in Ireland: the Easter Rising (1916), the Irish War for Independence (1918-1920), and the Irish Civil War (1922-1923). Micheál Mac Liammóir, one of the founders of the Gate theatre, explained this in a lecture on the topic of Irish problem plays at the Abbey theatre in 1938 (Van den Beuken 2). According to Mac Liammóir, the purpose of national drama was to represent and to cope with certain traumatic historical events in cultural memory that defined Irishness (Van den Beuken 2). This is similar to how Oona Frawley defined cultural memory, namely “all memory is social, [...] often enacted as performance, though ritual, gesture and commemoration; [...] control of a society’s memory largely conditions the hierarchy of power” (20). Some of these politicised historical events that Van den Beuken cites are anti-colonial struggles and the civil war, which are especially relevant for *The Plough and the Stars*, next to the famines, the Irish Diaspora, and the religious tensions in Ireland (2). Aside from the major national themes, *The Plough and the Stars* also evokes a minor sense of cosmopolitanism, because of how it creates empathy for characters of various national and cultural backgrounds that are opposing each other in the play.

In terms of the play’s national aspects, it should be pointed out that the armed conflicts in Ireland during the early twentieth century arguably have left their mark on the Irish cultural memory; in particular in the way that the Irish people would look at the use of armed violence while resisting oppression. Seán O’Casey’s *The Plough and the Stars* is one example of a play that is concerned with the cultural memory of Ireland, because it is set in the months before and during the Easter rising. *The Plough and the Stars*, in addition, is an important play for Irish cultural memory, because it complicates and critiques the narrative of the Easter Rising. One example of this in the play that exposes the sectarian tensions that underlie later Irish cultural memory, are the deaths of Jack Clitheroe and Bessie Burgess. Jack is a character who is a Catholic and who has been a former member of the pro-republican Irish Citizen Army. In the play, Jack picks up his arms again to fight against the English

during the Easter Rising. He is told, in the fourth act, to have been killed in battle, his last words having been “I’m proud to die for Ireland” (758). Bessie, on the other hand, is a Protestant street fruit-vendor, who, at the last moment, pulls Nora, Jack’s wife who has been mistaken for a sniper by the English, away from a window, only to get shot herself (763). These two deaths in the play show how O’Casey introduces some complications in the narrative. When he wrote his play for the Abbey, he could have shown Irish nationalists as characters of virtue and the English and the Irish Unionists as characters of vice. Considering that many regular audience members at the Abbey Theatre shared nationalistic opinions, as shown in the introduction, O’Casey would have probably not risked a drop in ticket sales by writing a very idealistically nationalistic play. This, however, is what makes *The Plough and the Stars* such an interesting play to examine in this dissertation. O’Casey chooses to give both characters, Jack and Bessie, a heroic, but, ultimately, sad, death. Jack’s death is lamented, because he gave his life for Irish freedom, but O’Casey does not let Jack’s death diminish the sadness of Bessie’s death. When Captain Brennan tells Bessie that Jack as been shot through his arm and through his lung and that he put a rosary in between his fingers, Bessie responds thusly:

Bessie [with partly repressed vehemence]: Ah, you left him!
You twined his Rosary beads round his fingers, an’ then, you
run like a hare to get out o’ danger!

Capt. Brennan [defensively]: I took me chance as well as him...
he took it like a man. His last whisper was to “Tell Nora to be
brave; that I’m ready to meet my God, and that I’m proud to die
for Ireland”. An’ when our General heard it, he said that
“Commandant Clitheroe’s end was a gleam of glory”. Mrs.
Clitheroe’s grief will be a joy when she realizes that she has had
a hero for a husband.

Bessie: If you only seen her, you’d know to th’ differ. (758).

This passage is quite telling, firstly because it shows that Captain Brennan speaks quite highly of death, especially the act of dying for a good cause, for example the fatherland. Brennan, however, when the occasion arose to die for a good cause, was too cowardly to give his life.

Bessie, on the other hand, does not speak highly of the idea of dying. Instead, she exposes the underlying, less sentimental ugliness of death: Jack Clitheroe being found by his comrade, having been put a rosary in his hand and left for dead. Bessie, and Nora later indirectly, express the notion that heroism cannot make death glorious; it is primarily a sad occasion. When Bessie dies, accidentally and Christ like, her death seems to parallel that of Jack:

Bessie: I do believe... I will believe... that... Jesus... died...
for... me, That... on... the... cross He... shed... His... blood.
From... sin... to... set... free. [she ceases singing, and lies
stretched out, still and rigid. A pause; then MRS. Gogan runs
hastily in by door R. She halts at door and looks round with a
frightened air]

[...]

Mrs. Gogan [She sees BESSIE, runs to her and bends over the
body] Bessie, Bessie! [She shakes the body] Mrs. Burgess, Mrs.
Burgess! [She feels BESSIE'S forehead] My God, she's as cold
as death. They're afther murderin' th' poor inoffensive woman!
(763)

With the deaths of both the Republican Jack Clitheroe and the Protestant Bessie Burgess, O'Casey stretches the inclusiveness of what it means to be Irish. During a conflict for Irish independence, both Catholics and Protestants made heroic sacrifices to safeguard Irish people. In other words, religion in *The Plough and the Stars*, ultimately, is not a divisive issue, and all deaths, regardless of creed or ideology, could, and perhaps should, be seen as sad occasions.

Another important aspect of cultural memory in *The Plough and the Stars* is the perspective it takes on the national past of Ireland. Being written relatively recently after the three major armed conflicts in Ireland during the early twentieth century, *The Plough and the Stars* can be said to reflect specifically on the Easter Rising. The play was performed only ten years after the Rising, which, at the time, was still quite fresh in the collective cultural memory of the Irish. Yeats and Lady Gregory had written fairly one-dimensional nationalistic plays regarding the concept of death during the earlier years of the Abbey. In for example *Cathleen ni Houlihan*, the character of the Old Lady, Cathleen ni Houlihan in disguise, tells

Michael that if he fights for her cause that he will be heroically remembered throughout the ages. She tells of people who died hundreds of years ago and is able to name them by their first name (7). She exits the stage by singing: “They shall be remembered for ever, [t]hey shall be alive for ever, [t]hey shall be speaking for ever, [t]he people shall hear them for ever” (9). O’Casey, however, complicates this heroic idea of dying for a good cause by showing that, while the character of Captain Brennan, similar to Cathleen ni Houlihan, is positive about this concept, others, like Bessie or Nora, are distraught by it. Moreover, in *Cathleen ni Houlihan* Yeats and Lady Gregory only show armed resistance from the perspective of one Irish household, whereas O’Casey stages the narrative of the Easter Rising, a national, historic event, by introducing characters from various backgrounds, thus providing a certain cosmopolitan aspect to the play.

One way O’Casey complicates the narrative of *The Plough and the Stars* is by letting bad things happen to the good characters in his play, due to a flaw in their own actions, instead of by the design of an antagonist. Edward Pixley, for instance, points this out by saying that “*The Plough and the Stars* is [...] O’Casey’s most intricately designed attempt to reveal the havoc wreaked by the seemingly innocent actions of foolish characters upon themselves and those around them” (75). What Pixley means is that the havoc in the play is not so much caused by conflicts such as the Easter Rising, but that it is rather a result, which was catalysed by the small, foolish and ordinary choices the characters make.

O’Casey appears to have written *The Plough and the Stars* with a kind of butterfly effect in mind. At the start of the play, some characters have spoken favourably of fighting for their independence. Chief amongst these characters is Jack Clitheroe, who, in the second act, swears with his compatriots that he is willing to be incarcerated, wounded, or killed for Ireland (747). However, because he diverts all his attention to the rebellion, he neglects his pregnant wife Nora. Due to her husband’s carelessness, Nora is forced to go into labour alone, and, because of the emotional stress over her husband’s safety, she has a still birth. After this, she is also told of her husband’s demise and descends into a frenzy. Shortly thereafter she hears fighting between the English and Irish republicans in the streets, falsely believing that her husband is still alive. She runs towards a window, calling out for him to come back home, when an English officer tells her to move back. Because of her emotional state, she keeps standing behind the window, at which point she is mistaken for a sniper and shot at by another English soldier. However, it is Bessie that, in the end, is killed by two English soldiers who, when rushing into the tenement house, are still oblivious to this fact:

Sergeant Tinley [bending over body]: 'Ere, wot's this? OO's this? Oh, God, we've plugged one of the women of the 'ouse!

Corporal Stoddart [at window]: W'y the 'ell did she go to the window? Is she dead?

Sergeant Tinley: Dead as bedamned. Well, we couldn't afford to tike any chances. (763).

After this scene, Mrs. Gogan has to cover up Bessie's body and consolidate Nora, while the two English soldiers, without permission, start to drink some tea from the tenement house.

The lack of empathy that the English soldiers have for the death of an innocent person comes across as horrific, but, in *The Plough and the Stars*, the English and the Unionists are never directly responsible for the deaths of Jack and Bessie. Rather, they are merely the catalyst for a series of unfortunate events. O'Casey's play can be argued to be a nationalistic play, because it eulogises the fight for independence, but, unlike *Cathleen ni Houlihan* or *Kincora*, it does not evidently present a hero or villain. O'Casey instead points to the small seemingly insignificant choices that the characters, both Republican, Unionist and English, made, which let the tragedy escalate. For example, if Jack had been more moderate, if Nora had been more self-assured, or, if Bessie had been more apathetic, the play would not have been this tragic. The way in which O'Casey thus re-enacts the historical events, is therefore a complicated version. On the one hand, the play eulogises the nation in the character of Jack, but, on the other hand, Jack is also the first domino in O'Casey's tragic version of the butterfly effect. The English soldiers are portrayed as callous, but not as villainous, and the Irish Protestants, like Bessie Burgess are also victims in this conflict. *The Plough and the Stars* can be considered to be both a national and nationalistic play with a wide variety of fleshed-out characters from different backgrounds and nationalities, who are, in a narrow sense of the word, cosmopolitan. In terms of performance techniques, *The Plough and the Stars* is innovating realistic theatre; abandoning the unity of place and enacting violent scenes on stage, which give the play a certain cinematic quality (Fitz-Simon "*The Irish Theatre*" 169). However, while innovative within this style of theatre, realism, unlike experimentalism, on the whole could not truly be considered a global avant-garde style of theatre. In this sense, the play, because of its performance techniques, cannot arguably be considered cosmopolitan.

In short, *The Plough and the Stars* is a play about a key moment in Irish history. It does not reject nationalism or armed national conflicts, but it nuances both by showing how fanatical patriotism and fighting for the ‘noble cause’ can subvert human relationships. While the play uses some innovative staging techniques within the realistic style of theatre, it could not be considered cosmopolitan, like other plays with the globally more innovative expressionistic style of theatre. The large variety of main characters from different backgrounds and nationalities, however, could be said to make the play be considered cosmopolitan in a more narrow sense.

***Diarmuid and Grainne* (1928)**

While it was said before that Mac Liammóir viewed Irish drama as a way to represent and to cope with certain traumatic historical events in the cultural memory of Ireland, his play *Diarmuid and Grainne* paradoxically does not conform to this mandate. This particular play by Mac Liammóir appears to be rather disengaged from any criticism of society. Lady Gregory, for instance, referred to it as “beautifully staged and lighted; but just the simple story of Finn and the lovers. Simple language, a straight story, very moving.” (Fitz-Simon “*The Boys*” 54-55). The play is thus national, because it is based on Irish mythology, but not nationalistic, because it does not eulogise the nation.

Lady Gregory’s description of Mac Liammóir’s *Diarmuid and Grainne* can be said to be accurate, because, aside from one singular instance in the play, there is no direct, or even clear, reference to traumatic historical events in Irish cultural memory. In the play the characters of Diarmuid and Grainne elope together before the latter’s marriage to Finn Mac Cool, the man to whom Diarmuid has sworn fealty. In the third act it is revealed that Finn and Diarmuid have made amends, but, in the closing lines of the play, Finn refuses to help a dying Diarmuid. The latter then responds by saying:

Not for myself or for Grainne will I weep, nor for you, Finn Mac Cool, but for Oisín and Osgur and Caolite, for Goll and Conan and my comrades [...] making a lament for the Fianna in a time when Ireland shall be changed (111).

One problem with interpreting these prophetic lines as a reference in general is that it is a particularly elusive one. Diarmuid also states that Finn’s betrayal will lead to a disunity and death among many members of the Fianna, which will be the reason to lament it in a time

that Ireland has changed. However, this change can mean anything, ranging from cultural, religious, economic, to political changes. It is equally valid to claim that, through Diarmuid, Mac Liammóir says that the Fianna will be lamented during an economic shift, like the Industrial Revolution, or during a political shift, like the creation of the Irish Free State in Mac Liammóir's own time. For both of these examples, one can furthermore provide reasonable circumstantial evidence. The Ossian Cycle, on which Diarmuid and Grainne was based, was a Romantic tale of Gaelic folklore that was written during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century to nostalgically revitalise the pre-industrial, mythological age in Scotland and Ireland (D. Thomson 1-2). Alternatively, the lament of the Fianna could be a reference to the Irish Free State, during which Éamon de Valera revived the myth of the Fianna as his new political party, Fianna Fáil, with which he successfully negotiated a complete Irish independence from Britain (Jackson 295). In short, as has now been demonstrated, there is not enough clear evidence to link this possible reference to any specific part of the Irish cultural memory.

Another, equally important problem with interpreting Diarmuid's prophetic comment as a reference to future or past events is that, when he says to Finn that his betrayal to help him will doom the Fianna, he is already almost dead due to exsanguination. There is no realistic possibility to save Diarmuid's life, and the only 'help' that Diarmuid asks for is to have some water, which Finn, after initially refusing to, gives him. Thus, even after Diarmuid's prophetic statement, it is averted not a moment later by Finn Mac Cool:

DIARMUID (Suddenly, in a loud voice) Not for myself or for Grainne will I weep. Nor for you, Finn Mac Cool, but for Oisín and Osgur and Caoilte, for Goll and Conan and my comrades---- I see, now, Goll: stretched in a lonely place where the wind lifts the hair from his cold white brows--- I see Osgar lying dead, his body that was comely and whiter than milk torn like a tree in the wind with a thousand red battle-wounds --- I see Caoilte, an old man fretting after his sons and death coming on him in a lonesome house --- I see Oisín, who will live after them all, an old withered man, making a lament for the Fianna in a time when Ireland shall be hanged, an old white broken man bending low with the burden of his sorrow beneath the heavy clouds, listening to the voice of bells --- to the voice of bells --- in a tie

when Ireland shall be changed --- (His voice grows fainter) Finn
 --- water! bring me water! (Finn motions to Oisín who brings
 water in a copper bowl. He pours out some of the water into
 Finn's hands [...] Finn bringing the water to Diarmuid (111-
 112).

This makes the 'prophetic reference' in Mac Liammóir's play, if included unconsciously, just a false prophecy. If Diarmuid's statement was included consciously, it has become evident that, while to the audience members it might feel like a prophecy, it actually is nothing more than a threat to Finn.

Moreover, the mythological figure of Gráinne⁵, in Mac Liammóir's *Diarmuid and Grainne*, follows the trope of 'the woman' in the cultural memory of the nation. In *Woman and Nation in Irish Literature and Society*, Catherine Lynette Innes writes about characters such as Gráinne, observing, that it is "the responsibility of her class and the responsibility of women to reject the view of themselves as mere victims of history" (155). This is exactly what happens to the character of Gráinne in Lady Gregory's *Grania* (1912), because, in this play, Grania becomes the victim of her desire "to be married to a great king and so to become part of the great world" (C.L. Innes 155). However, it is not simply Grania's desire that becomes her downfall as "figure of scorn", it is also due to "male misogyny and male bonding in driving women to make certain choices and in the judgements pronounced upon them once those choices are made" (C.L. Innes 156).

There is a scene quite early in the play that illustrates this best. When Grania has fallen in love with Diarmuid, she goes to him that same night to confess her love for him. When this is discovered by Finn, her fiancé, however, Finn blames Diarmuid for stealing Grania and Diarmuid blames Finn for letting Grania slip away, as she should be under his supervision. The two actually start brawling, until Grania breaks in thusly:

It is not his fault! It is mine! It is on me the blame is entirely! It
 is best for me to go out a shamed woman. [...] Forgive me,
 Finn, and I have more cause yet to ask you to forgive me,
 Diarmuid (19).

⁵ Because there is no standardisation of the name, the mythological figure's name, in this dissertation, is spelled as 'Gráinne'. Characters in plays who are based on or are a representation of this figure are variously spelled as 'Grania' in Yeats and Moore's *Diarmuid and Grania* (1901) and in Lady Gregory's *Grania* (1912), and as 'Grainne' in Micheál Mac Liammóir's *Diarmuid agus Grainne* (1928) and *Diarmuid and Grainne* (1928).

This is quite a powerful statement, because taking responsibility for one's own actions supposes that oneself, in this case Grania, ought to be in control of one's own actions as an independent human being. Nonetheless, Grania's strong independent statement is then immediately undercut by Diarmuid, who seizes her and says, "I will not let you go out this way [in shame]. I will not fail you!" (19). This may be a noble statement, but it simultaneously does not validate Grania's empowering statement. Moreover, from this moment onward, Finn and Diarmuid simply continue to direct their anger at each other instead of aiming it at Grania. Finn, furthermore, exclaims that, "[i]t is likely [Diarmuid] will soon be broken. Grania is no withered pitiful hag with the hair matted wild to her knees" (19). This remark could be explained as Finn elevating Grania over other women. However, it is also very misogynistic, because it reduces Grania as a commodity that needs to be handled, like a horse or, in twenty-first-century terms, a sports car.

In short, in Lady Gregory's *Grania*, the character of Grania starts her own downfall by being inflexible in her plan to become a big player on the world stage, because that plan had to involve her marriage with a great king. The completion of this inflexible plan alone, however, is not enough of a fatal flaw that caused her downfall. Grania's downfall, in the play, happened because, even with her new position of power, she, as a woman, would always be subservient to her male peers. This gives the character of Grania very limited room for personal freedom, and makes her go to desperate measures to escape the patriarchal social structure, which eventually leads to her downfall as a despised figure.

This focus on a female character, who, while restricted, remains able to a certain extent to make personal choices and actions, is in stark contrast to Mac Liammóir's Grainne. This character rather moves to the fringe of Mac Liammóir's play, and falls victim to magic instead of her inner struggle to balance two opposing desires. Mac Liammóir's Grainne says: "I have not mind for marriage. [...] I've no mind for marriage, I say. I have no fish for it. What is Finn Mac Cool to me?" (9). Furthermore, Grainne does not naturally fall in love with Diarmuid; instead she falls under a love spell after accidentally seeing an enchanted mark on his forehead. Diarmuid, similarly, has no love for Grainne in Mac Liammóir's play. After Grainne has drugged everyone at her father's court, she demands that Diarmuid takes her away with him. However, Diarmuid pledges his loyalty to Finn Mac Cool, the leader of his war band, and tells Grainne: "He is my captain and the friend of my heart. My word is pledged to him. I will not bring you away with me" (36). In the end Grainne, still under the

enchantment, has to place a spell, the 'Driud Bonds' onto Diarmuid for him to obey her command.

Thus, Mac Liammóir's Grainne is completely the opposite of Lady Gregory's Grania, in the sense that Grainne does not even become a victim of the patriarchal social structure of her time, but of magic and her own volition to combine her self-interest with that of society. In short, Mac Liammóir's Grainne, partly in a preternatural way -through the use of magic-, seems more nationally conservative. This is because the themes of wifely duty, loyalty and social fulfilment are at the foreground of the play, without challenging the early twentieth-century, Irish idea of the role of women in their nation. The marriage between Diarmuid and Grainne, however, can be a commentary on Anglo-Irish relations, since marriages in Irish novels in the past have been used as a symbolic union between the political and colonial relations in Ireland (C. Connolly 87). Diarmuid marrying Grainne under unnatural circumstances and thus betraying the Fianna, therefore might be a metaphor for Ireland joining the United Kingdom relatively quickly 1800 (C. Connolly 400). According to S.J. Connolly, the acts of union of 1800 were more or less forced upon Ireland, because, during the chaotic period of the Napoleonic Wars, "the existence of Ireland as a separate but subordinate kingdom came to be seen as irreconcilable with the security of the British state" (400). The unnatural, magical circumstances that formed a union between Diarmuid and Grainne in Mac Liammóir's play are therefore arguably similar to the supernormal, unusual political situation in Europe at the turn of the eighteenth century during the Napoleonic Wars.

Now that it has been established that there is no or hardly any concrete reflective commentary in *Diarmuid and Grainne* on Ireland or the Irish in any point in history, it becomes important to place this play both vis-à-vis the other plays in this chapter, and as a production at the Gate theatre. In other words, it has been established that Mac Liammóir's play is a national play, but, being a production of the Gate theatre, it is expected also to be a cosmopolitan play. The significance of *Diarmuid and Grainne* as a play in the Gate's repertoire has to do with the fact that, in its early years, the Gate had ambivalent point-of-views of itself. From its establishment, the Gate had come out strongly against any notion of it being an 'Irish theatre'. Co-founder Hilton Edwards, for example, explicitly stated that the Gate is "not a national theatre", and the Gate's early upstart, Mary Manning, wrote that the Gate "is simply a theatre" whose "policy is the exploitation of all forms of theatrical expression regardless of nationality" (Van den Beuken, 3). Nevertheless, other early associates of the Gate theatre, such as Norman Reddin, Denis Johnston and the Longfords, addressed theatrical nationalism, and some of them have even explicitly labelled the Gate as a

national theatre (Van den Beuken, 4). Reddin, for instance stated that: “[i]t is certainly my ambition to see the ‘Gate’ not merely conforming with the definition of being a National Theatre, but one day of meriting it”, and Longford alleged that the Gate Theatre was “conscious in all its activities of doing a service to the nation” (qtd. in Pine and Cave 16; Hobson 10). The Gate theatre thus simultaneously offered “a kaleidoscopic cross-section of modern European and American drama”, but it also produced plays by Irish playwrights, such as Mary Manning, Denis Johnston, David Sears, and Lord and Lady Longford (Fitz-Simon “*The Boys*” 13; Beuken 3).

By choosing to perform *Diarmuid and Grainne*, Mac Liammóir therefore seems to have sided with the faction of the Gate theatre that saw it as a national theatre. For example, Seán O’Casey’s *The Plough and the Stars* and Mac Liammóir’s *Diarmuid and Grainne* are set in and based on Irish history and mythology respectively, and are therefore rooted in Irish cultural memory. However, unlike *The Plough and the Stars*, *Diarmuid and Grainne* does not eulogise, or even directly refers to the Irish nation. Because it is set in Ireland and based on Irish mythology, Mac Liammóir’s play is very arguably a national play, but, because it does not eulogise the nation, it cannot be classified as a nationalistic play. Furthermore, while it is arguably correct to label *Diarmuid and Grainne* as a national play, there is an additional, even more important, reason why Mac Liammóir chose to produce and perform this play. In 1950, Mac Liammóir wrote about the early years of the Gate:

[A]s the Abbey failed, by the very strength of its popular appeal, to realise the dream of its creator for a poet’s theatre [...] so have we failed in the main to discover those authors who shall write for us our masterpiece. The real business of the Gate, as it turned out, was with methods of acting, production, design and lighting (28).

Yeats’ intentions for the Abbey theatre had always been to launch a theatre that would perform professional Irish versions of continental dramas, some of which were, for instance, based on Irish mythologies (Flannery “W.B. Yeats” 183). One example of this was his own co-written version of the myth of Diarmuid and Gráinne, a play in poetic prose called *Diarmuid and Grania* (1901). Based on Mac Liammóir’s aforementioned statement, it could be argued that Mac Liammóir had a similar vision for the Gate as Yeats did for the Abbey, and by producing *Diarmuid and Grainne*, he may have tried to imitate or emulate Yeats’ idea

of a, not necessarily national, ‘poet’s theatre’. Mac Liammóir did not explicitly state this in any of his stage directions, descriptions of the scenes, or by the play’s stagecraft: merely the choice of this play’s subject matter suggests this. However, the very first production at the Gate Theatre was Henrik Ibsen’s *Peer Gynt*; based on a Norwegian fairy tale, which is of a similar type of subject matter as the Irish myth of Diarmuid and Gráinne, that is to say mythical, old, probably fictional stories. Mac Liammóir and Edwards had a dispute over the productions aesthetics; the former wanting build a richly and pictorially decorated production and the latter opting for a barely decorated abstract design, eventually settling on a compromise between the two styles (Pine and Cave 34). After *Peer Gynt*, Mac Liammóir devoted most of his time to the productions of *Diarmuid agus Grainne* and of *Diarmuid and Grainne*, on which he was already working during the production of *Peer Gynt* (Pyne and Cave 34). Mac Liammóir and Edwards worked quite harmoniously together on *Diarmuid and Grainne* and on *Salomé* thereafter, which might suggest that, only during the preparation of his very first productions at the Gate Theatre, that Mac Liammóir, like Yeats, strived for high-quality conventional theatre in Ireland.

In summation, due to its content material that does not eulogise the nation, Mac Liammóir’s *Diarmuid and Grainne* is a national, but not a nationalistic play that may have been written with the idea of imitating or emulating Yeats’ original plan for the Irish Literary Theatre, that is to say high-quality conventional theatre in Ireland by an Irish playhouse.

The Old Lady Says “No!” (1929)

Similar to the *The Plough and the Stars*, *The Old Lady Says “No!”* by Denis Johnston is also an urban play that is critical of nationalism, specifically with regard to the practical outcome of armed national resistance. However, even more than O’Casey’s play, *The Old Lady Says “No!”* is also critical of nationalism itself. It, furthermore, distinguishes itself from *The Plough and the Stars* by its experimental and dynamic style of theatre, which is a much more cosmopolitan, especially Eastern European and American style of theatre.

The Old Lady Says “No” is a play about an episode in Irish history in 1803, during which a couple of armed men, led by Robert Emmet, tried to establish Irish sovereignty (Pine and Cave 44). In this sense Johnston’s play truly is a national play, but, because of the ridicule with which the self-righteous character of Emmet is presented, the play seems to satirise everyone who shares or sympathises with his ideas and ideals. The character of ‘the Speaker’, the main protagonist of the play, is an actor who believes he is the historical Robert Emmet. He tries to present himself as quite respectable, but when he talks to Grattan, an Irish MP,

who campaigned for legislative freedom for the Irish Parliament in the late 18th century, and introduced as a former freedom fighter in the play, the conversation goes as follows:

SPEAKER: I am Robert Emmet. I have written my name in letters of fire across the page of history. I have unfurled the green flag...

GRATTAN: Letters of fire?

SPEAKER: Their graves are red but their souls...

GRATTAN: Ah yes, the graves are red... the grave of one poor helpless old man, the justest judge in Ireland... dragged from his coach by the mob and slaughtered in the road (70-71).

The speaker wants to present Robert Emmet as a noble revolutionary, but Grattan, who has fought himself, rejects this narrative of remembering Robert Emmet, and points to the fact that the only victim of Emmet's 'rebellion' was Kilwarden, the Chief Justice of Ireland at the time, and, according to Grattan a decent man who did not deserve to die like that.

Another example of a scene, in which Robert Emmet's heroic reputation is being questioned, is when the speaker tries to present himself to an older man among a lewd crowd at a bus stop. The older man prominently, and sneeringly, presents the speaker as follows:

OLDER MAN: Ladies and gents... we are very fortunate... in having with us tonight... one, who.. I am sure... will need no introduction from me to a Dublin audience... His fair fame... his manly bearing... his zeal in the cause of the Gael... his upright character... his unbounded enthusiasm for the old cause... whatever it may or may not have been his Christian charity... his wide experience... his indefatigable courage... his spotless reputation... and his kindness to be poor of the city... have made his name a household word wherever th' ole flag flies. [...] In introducing him to you this evening... I can say with confidence... that you will one and all listen to what he has to say... whatever it may be... and I am sure we are all looking forward to it very much indeed... with the greatest interest and with the deepest respect... The views which he has

a heart... are also very near to the hearts of ever one of us in this hall... and before calling upon him to address you I would just like to say that the committee will be glad to see any or all of you at the Central Branch Whist Drive in Ierne Hall next Friday and the treasurer will be waiting in the passage as you pass out for those members who have not yet paid their subs. Ladies and gets, Mr—er—er—

A VOICE: Emmet.

OLDER MAN: Mr Robert Ellis. (82).

It becomes very much clear that the historical figure of Robert Emmet does not matter to neither the older man nor to his audience. The historical Robert Emmet is a commodity, an identity that can be sold to people; be it as a nationalistic hero, an obscurity at a bus stop, or a play -like *The Old Lady Says "No!"* itself-. Thus the people of the Irish Free State would, according to the play, treat their national past without much scrutiny; nationalism arguably takes a subservient place to idealism or even capitalism. According to the play, it does not matter, to the ordinary Irishman or woman, whether the national past is accurately represented. What matters most is the, even inaccurate, story that they can spin around it or to sell to others.

Perhaps one of the clearest examples of Johnston's play critiquing nationalism, is how, in the play, Cathleen ni Houlihan is being ridiculed, when the protagonist and Grattan discuss the benefits and disadvantages of an armed rebellion near an old tattered flower woman who sits on a pedestal. This woman does not really mingle into the discussion, until the protagonist and Grattan start to talk about shedding blood, at which point she suddenly becomes aware of the situation and starts quoting lines from the poor and old woman from Yeats and Lady Gregory's *Cathleen ni Houlihan* (70-72). *Cathleen ni Houlihan* was a play named after a personification of Ireland, in which an old woman, the character being a reference to the namesake of the play, successfully argues that armed resistance against the English, or any other occupying force, was just. She, for instance, states that "They [the freedom fighters] that had red cheeks will have pale cheeks for my sake; and for all that, they will think they are well paid" (Yeats and Lady Gregory 9).

The scene in Johnston's play, between the Speaker, Grattan and the old woman, is both contextualising and satirising. Robert Emmet, a leader of the armed resistance, should agree with the message that the character of the old woman proclaims in *Cathleen ni*

Houlihan, while Henry Grattan, a diplomatically skilled politician, would disagree with such extreme measures. The best example of this is when Grattan and the Speaker reflect on the death of judge Kilwarden by the hand of Emmet and his men:

GRATTAN: Kilwarden's grave is red.

SPEAKER: Who said that? I did my best to save him, but the people were mad...

GRATTAN: 'Let no man perish in consequence of my death,' he cried, as his lifeblood stained the cobbles crimson...

SPEAKER: ... maddened by long centuries of oppression and injustice. I did my best to save him. What more could I do?

GRATTAN: 'Let no man perish, save by the regular operation of the laws.' And with that, pierced by a dozen patriot pikes, he died, at the feet of his gallant countrymen.

SPEAKER: It was horrible. But it was war. (71)

This conversation between Emmet and Grattan is a debate about the best option to achieve Irish independence, through armed rebellion or through diplomatic means. The Speaker, who thinks he is Robert Emmet, believes that extreme measures are a necessary evil of warfare, while Grattan rejects any violent measure, except those that are in accordance with the law. Emmet's statements initially might seem to be as proper or valid as Grattan's, until the old woman is introduced.

By adding the character of the old woman into the scene, Johnston satirises Emmet's arguments, because the old woman, a parody of Cathleen ni Houlihan, shares Emmet's ideals, but bluntly and, by her demeanour, outwardly shows how irrational or even insane these are. The old woman in *The Old Lady Says "No!"* inexplicably yells: "Me four bewtyful gre-in fields. Me four bewtyful gre-in fields", which is a paraphrase of the old woman's lines from Yeats' *Cathleen ni Houlihan*, in which she says: "My land that was taken from me. [...] My four beautiful green fields" (Johnston 70; Yeats and Lady Gregory 6). In *The Old Lady Says No!*, the old woman also says: "Spare a copper for yer owin old lady, for when th'trouble is on me I must be talkin' te me friends", which is also paraphrased from *Cathleen ni Houlihan*, in which the character of the old woman says: "When the people see me quiet, they think old age has come on me and that all the stir has gone out of me. But when the trouble is on me I must be talking to my friends" (Johnston 72; Yeats and Lady Gregory 5).

Through the sheer use of a vulgar sounding, regional variety of English, as spoken by members of the lower classes in Ireland, Johnston linguistically dethrones, that is to say dissociates the mythological woman from any regal status. By staging the scene as this, Johnston beautifully contrasts Yeats' and Lady Gregory's image of Cathleen ni Houlihan with that of his own. She is still a poor old woman on a pedestal, but, in Johnston's play, she is rather a nuisance, having a weird obsession with shedding blood rather than being a person to revere who has "the walk of a queen" (Yeats and Lady Gregory 11). In short, Johnston is critical of nationalism without eulogising it, unlike O'Casey, who was critical, but still eulogised the nation in *The Plough and the Stars*. Therefore, *The Old Lady Says "No!"* can be categorised as a national play, but not as a nationalistic one.

As a cosmopolitan play, the Gate theatre proved to be a good fit for the experimental style, in which *The Old Lady Says "No!"* was written. Johnston had originally proposed *The Old Lady Says "No!"*, under its original title of *Shadow Dance* to be performed at the Abbey theatre (Trotter 96). Should it be performed at the Abbey theatre, then it could have been a nice play to follow-up the already successful urban plays of O'Casey's so-called 'Dublin Trilogy', being *The Shadow of a Gunman* (1923), *Juno and the Paycock* (1924), and *The Plough and the Stars* (1926) (Ayling 491). However, while the Abbey later decided to reject Johnston's play, the Gate theatre, with its cosmopolitan repertoire, proved to be a good fit for this experimental kind of presentation of cultural memory of Ireland (Pine and Cave 44). Johnston's ideas on theatre coincided with that of Hilton Edwards, who also had a dismissive attitude towards the realistic style of drama of the film industry. In addition, Johnston was influenced by foreign experimental plays, such as Josef Čapek's *The Land of Many Names* (1923) and Kaufman and Connelly's *Beggar on Horseback* (1924) for *The Old Lady Says "No!"* (Van den Beuken 7; "Old Lady Says 'No'" par. 3). That is not to say that Johnston, from that moment on, wrote exclusively for the Gate nor that he never collaborated with the Abbey theatre again. His play, *The Dreaming Dust* (1940) was produced by the Gaiety theatre in Dublin, and *The Moon in the Yellow River* (1931) as originally produced for and performed at the Abbey theatre for a total of eighty-one times so far ("Denis Johnston" par. 2, + "the Moon" par. 1).

One example of the cosmopolitan, expressionistic style of theatre in *The Old Lady Says "No!"* is how Johnston breaks the dimensions of the stage. In his discussion with Grattan, the Speaker suddenly disrupts the illusion that the play is an art form, rather than a realistic performance of real life. The Speaker suddenly breaks the so-called fourth wall and says:

Listen! Something is telling me that I must go on. I must march proudly to the final act. Look ! (*Pointing [to the audience]*) The People are waiting for me, watching me (72).

The Speaker then proceeds to directly address the audience, a performance piece that could never happen in realistic theatre:

He is an old man. He does not understand the way we do. He can only doubt... while we believe... believe with heart and soul and every fibre of our tired bodies. Therefore I am not afraid to go on. I will kiss my wounds in the last act. I will march proudly through, head high, even if it must be to my grave (72).

In this small fragment, the Speaker both directly addresses the audience and acknowledges that he is in a play and that he knows the scripted outcome of it. This latter issue, however, is also because the Speaker, at the start of the play, is an actor playing Robert Emmet, but, after receiving a trauma to the head, he dreams during the remainder of Johnston's play -including the conversation with Grattan- that he is a self-proclaimed heroic figure in an age, where there is no practical need for him. This idea of theatre as a dream-reality is another feature of experimental theatre.

In summation, while *The Old Lady Says "No!"* has a national theme, Robert Emmet's 1803 rebellion, it is merely a national, but not a nationalistic play. The aim of the play seems to have been to critique armed insurrections and provide a nuanced representation of the legacy of Emmet, without eulogising either. The play can also be considered a very cosmopolitan play, because of its experimental style of theatre; breaking the fourth wall, creating a dynamic theatre -the absence of 'cuts' or lulls between scenes- and providing a dream reality within the play.

The New Gossoon (1930)

This play by George Shiels is an interesting case study, because it arguably tries to discover the line between what is acceptable in a national narrative and what is not as time changes. Two of the play's major themes are the purity of the Irish countryside and the role of women

in Ireland, especially their role within rural Irish societies. Shiels' play is about a small rural community of mostly farmers, one poacher and his family, whose social structure, morals and values are being disturbed by the ever modernising world around them. The characters' struggle to preserve their traditional way-of-life is one of the play's national themes, since the west of Ireland has often been cited as the real or true Ireland, unspoiled by any foreign influence. Note, for instance, this description of the Western Irish countryside, specifically the north Connaught along the Donegal Bay, by W.B. Yeats:

To the wise peasant the green hills and woods round him
are full of never-fading mystery. When the aged
countrywoman stands at her door in the evening, and, in
her own words, 'looks at the mountains and thinks of the
goodness of God,' God is all the nearer, because the pagan
powers are not far: because northward in Ben Bulbin,
famous for hawks, the white square door swings open at
sundown, and those wild unchristian riders rush forth upon
the fields, while southward the White Lady, who is
doubtless Maive herself, wanders under the broad cloud
nightcap of Knocknarea (151-152).

However, *The New Gossoon*'s message is not that this traditional social structure should be perfectly conserved. The play ultimately comes to the conclusion that, while the social hierarchy may change, the traditional values can be maintained. This theme, on the one hand, can be seen as providing nuance to the Irish national narrative, while not challenging its values. However, with the theme of the role of women in Ireland, Shiels does seem to go against a nationalistic presumption that women ought to be maternal figures, especially in literature. Rather, the women in *The New Gossoon* do not only have agency, it is largely through their agency, especially that of the young Sally Hamil, that the social structure is reformed and ends up being stronger than it was at the start of the play.

The New Gossoon is a play about a rural community that, in its current state, cannot be sustained because of the influences of the modernising world. The play focuses on Luke Cary, the boy, who soon is going to be the new owner of his mother's farm, and whose values and worldview are therefore soon going to be dominant. At the start of the play, Luke is presented as a character who is corrupted by the modernising world, his motorcycle being a symbol of

it. He is presented as lazy, only wants to ride his motorcycle, and secretly sells his mother's sheep to be able to continue his hobby.

RABIT: That's [the motorbike] where the sheep went, Ellen. He blamed my dogs for chasing them off the mountain, and put up placards to give colour to it. But I knew all the time where the sheep went. [...] He [Luke]'s racing to the town every night on this devil's needle of a thing, and if he doesn't break his own neck he'll kill somebody else. And if he doesn't do that he'll come home some night with a town hussy perched on that tail-board at the back. (*Points.*) That's what that bracket behind is for-for a town hussy to sit on, with her brazen face and her bare legs shaming the world (140)

However, the play initially cleverly hides the fact that it is not the modernising world that is responsible for the disintegration of the rural community. The play concludes, for instance, that, "[a] motor-bike is all right and very useful—if the owner is all right" (191). Instead, it is the traditional patriarchal paradigm that makes life in the small rural community unstable.

Like Mac Liammóir's *Diarmuid and Grainne*, George Shiels' play questions the role of women in a nationalistic narrative. According to Catherine Innes, these narratives often had the idyllic notion of marriage, in which men were concerned with power and with fraternity and women had to live intellectually and socially unfulfilling, domestic lives (C.L. Innes 157-158). Shiels goes against this notion by letting all the characters in the play initially make decisions or statements within this nationalistic paradigm, which, in the play, seem idiotic and actually detrimental to the social structure. Luke Cary, the soon-to-be-heir of his mother's farm, for example, prematurely exerts his patriarchal role by mindlessly starting to spend his money before he has even inherited it. As the poacher Rabbit Hamil tells Luke's mother Ellen:

[h]e won eight pounds on a dog they call Owen Roe O'Nail, and lost two of it in the same night on a bitch they call Red Maeve. That left him six in pocket. Then he sold five of your sheep off the mountain for ten pounds, and borrowed the remainder from a certain party.... And there's where he banked it (*the motor*). A skilled man tells me it isn't worth thirty shillings (140).

The other characters in the play also make foolish decisions following this paradigm. Ellen refuses to remarry Ned Shay, because her already long dead husband made her swear not to do so, and because being a mother is seen as a more important task than her own personal desires. As she tells Luke:

I see myself, the old-fashioned fool mother, expecting nothing from you but a snap if anything displeased you, and content with myself if you didn't bite too deep. [...] I've told for you with my own tow hands—held the plough myself like a man, with you tied in a shawl at the end of the field. I could have married again and had a good man to work for me, or with me, but I never gave it a thought. 'T was enough to've a good home for you when you grew up. And see what I've got: a lazy, selfish, headstrong rascal, and about half wise (153).

Ned, in turn, as a servant on the farm and therefore not in a position of power, cannot confess his love for Ellen, and, instead, decides to move away as soon as Luke takes over. Mag Kehoe, a former servant girl to Ellen, initially allows herself to be manipulated by Rabbit Hamil, under the pretence of romantic love, to let him manage her money, even though she is the only one bringing means into the household. Ellen's brother-in-law, Peter, is asked to come and talk some sense into Luke, but only makes ridiculous statements. Lastly, Sally Hamil, who had been in love with Luke, initially rather wanted to go to her sister in Scotland than wanting to be under any patriarchal authority, be it Luke's or her father, Rabbit's. As Luke has broken off their engagement to go after another girl, Sally says this:

The love business isn't the same now, Mrs. Cary, as when you were in it. A man could sneak after a girl for twenty years, and then sneak off with himself: and she, poor thing, would be too proud to mention it. But now a young girl uses her head first and her heart after, and she doesn't care a damn who knows it (149).

This quote strikes the very heart of the play: where, as one generation earlier, Ellen had to conform to the paradigm, being subservient to men, Sally indicates that times have changed. Women in the 1930s, according to Sally, are independent and proud of themselves and not their status; they will not be courted for years and then cheated on, while being too proud to

complain about it, because of the high status of being a married woman. In the 1930s women will rationally look out for their own interests.

At first, it thus seems that the entire community is going to fall apart by clashes between the ideals of the new generation and the values of the traditional, national paradigm, that is to say the new values of individual freedom and autonomy versus the old values of community life and inequality between genders and classes. However, in the end the situation becomes resolved by reshaping the paradigm according to everyone's wishes, without the community falling apart. Mag becomes financially independent, Rabbit is given back his rights to poach on the mountain and decides to go live there, Ellen remarries Ned, and Luke and Sally also renew their marriage plans. In the end, the community remains largely the same and it stays together, nonetheless. However, while the rural community remains a rural community with traditional family relations, the patriarchal elements have been removed. Rabbit, a dominant and central male figure, has been removed to the literal and figurative fringe in and of the story by literally moving away from the community and onto the mountain. Ned has been elevated to a status, equal to that of the other main characters, Mag, a former servant girl, is now financially autonomous, and Luke has tempered his behaviour to be more attentive to the community in general and to Sally, his new fiancée, in particular. During the play's conclusion, Sally says, "the fashion never changes—it's only the frills", which arguably is true, considering how the rural community is stable again (192). However, this metaphor also arguably undercuts the incredible scope of paradigm shift that has taken place during the course of the play from a community based on a patriarchy and a social hierarchy to one of individual equality and autonomy. While advocating worldwide emancipated values, *The New Gossoon* cannot truly be considered cosmopolitan, since it remains a play about rural communities in Ireland. With regard to styles of theatre, the script does not contain any stage directions that suggest more avant-garde styles of theatre, such as lighting effects or references to surreal set designs or backdrops.

In short, George Shiels' *The New Gossoon* can be considered a national play, because of its setting, or even a national play, for celebrating the idyllic and traditional rural, farming communities of Western Ireland. Nevertheless, it should also be noted that the play is also quite progressive for questioning the legitimacy of the traditional paradigm of men and women, vis-à-vis each other in society, and for advocating -for creating a peaceful resolution of the plot- that this paradigm needs to change by creating more equality between both genders in society. In this respect the play is also quite cosmopolitanism, considering that, in a way, it engages to a certain extent with international movements, such as feminism.

Combined, these four aforementioned plays have provided us with some keen nuances in the supposed diametric opposites of the Abbey as a national theatre and the Gate as an avant-garde, cosmopolitan theatre. *The Plough and the Stars* by O'Casey shows how the Abbey created a more nuanced and less heroic concept of nationalism, and *Diarmuid and Grainne* suggests how a play with a national theme could be performed at the gate; a playhouse that was largely known for its avant-garde plays. *The Old Lady Says "No!"*, another one of the Gate's productions, nicely contrasts with *Diarmuid and Grainne* as a play that can combine, experimental theatre, with national themes. Lastly, *The New Gossoon*, which premiered at the Abbey, shows how traditionally national values can be challenged in a play with a national setting. In the next chapter, we will take a look at different examples of stage design, including a few examples of costume design, at the Abbey and Gate Theatres.

Stage Design

Because a play is also a visual spectacle, this chapter will pay special attention to how the stage design of productions at both the Abbey and the Gate Theatre conforms or contrasts with the ideology of the respective theatres, as has been argued in the chapter on their manifestoes. For practical purposes, stage design, including lighting effects, has been chosen as the focal point for examining the visual aspects of both theatres. In general, this chapter shall not primarily examine the costumes or attributes as visual aspects of theatre, because there is relatively more material available on stage design than on costumes and attributes. This chapter will also pay special attention to the different styles of theatre that influenced the stage design at both theatres: realism and expressionism. The different use of these styles of theatre is also important, because it may indicate the national or the cosmopolitan direction of the Abbey and the Gate Theatre respectively.

In shaping the Irish Literary Theatre, the Irish National Theatre Society and later the Abbey Theatre, Yeats, in general, purposefully used realism as the style of theatre for his plays. He wanted to create characters who defined themselves by a suggestive force of expression that was inward and spiritual, seeking to “make speech even more important than gesture”, and to create an Irish drama that was more stylised and rhetorical than the previous melodramatic plays in British theatres (qtd. in Taylor 3, Taylor 5). However, by the 1920s and 1930s realism had become too mainstream in Ireland to be avant-garde, and the Gate Theatre even went as far as to distance itself from realism as a style for their theatrical productions (“realism” 2, Tocher 3). It, instead, defined cosmopolitanism not as plays by overseas playwrights, but as experimental or expressive theatre.

Stage Design at the Abbey Theatre

The Abbey Theatre’s stage design was extended beyond the scope of the stage itself to include the entire building. When the Abbey was founded in 1904, Annie Horniman could only spend a relatively small amount of money on the construction of the theatre, so she instructed that it should be “a very little Theatre, and it must be quite simple” (Robinson and Ó hAodha 9). The old Mechanics’ Institute Theatre in Lower Abbey Street and the Penny Bank in Marlborough Street were converted for the company by architect Joseph Holloway (Robinson and Ó hAodha 9). The Abbey Theatre was remodelled in a way that would conform to Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko’s requirements of realistic theatre. According to both, a proper theatrical experience should give the audience the illusion that

they are part of a fictional world, starting at the cloakroom itself (Esslin 353). The Abbey Theatre conformed to this theatrical illusion of Irish mythological and pastoral theatre, by incorporating a number of symbolic, decorative items into the design of the theatre. With the exception of just a few articles, all decorations were made and all alterations were carried out by Irish people. In the entrance hall of the Abbey, for example, they installed a stained glass window (Fig. 1, p. 71) by Sarah Purser of a tree, using only particular shades of green and blue, which, arguably, have strong symbolic connotations to Ireland and Irish culture, such as the green of the ‘emerald isle’ and the ‘Irish blue’ background of the coat of arms of Ireland (Robinson and Ó hAodha 10-11). The symbol of a tree could, furthermore, evoke connotations of Irish mythology or that of a pastoral scene. Another example of symbolic decorating is one of the large copper mirror frames (Fig. 2, p. 71), also in the entrance hall, from the new metal works at Youghal, which was decorated with woven bands like those on a Celtic cross (Robinson and Ó hAodha 11).

Some of the stage design used at the Irish Literary Theatre, and later the Abbey, also conformed to the theatrical style of realism. Looking at his design (Fig. 3, p. 72), for the production of *The Shadowy Waters* (1896), for example, it can be seen that Yeats intended to design a fairly straightforward, realistically looking set. On his sketch, the deck of a boat is visible, which includes realistic details, such as the round shields that are placed on the side of the ship, which created the appearance of a Viking longship⁶. Another major feature is the, what seems to be at least ten-feet-tall, mast and sail in the centre right of the design. This huge set piece would make it impossible to manoeuvre during a scene, which means that, for at least one entire act, this set piece would have to remain statically on the stage. This would not allow the production to be quite as dynamic as in later, more experimental theatrical productions. A final feature of Yeats’ design is the backdrop, which seems to be a painting of the air. Based on his sketch, it seems that Yeats intended to use paint, rather than lighting effects, to create a sense of depth on this background, and to create the shapes of clouds. The use of paint instead of lighting effects suggests a realistic set design.

Another example of a realistic stage design at the Abbey theatre, is Robert Gregory’s work (Fig. 4, p. 72), for Lady Gregory’s *Deirdre* (1906). This stage design mostly consists of a backdrop of deciduous trees in winter, which are partially obscured from the audience by long, decorative sheets that hang from the ceiling above the stage. The top of the stage is being obscured by a long horizontal rag that stretches from the very left to the very right of

⁶ The Vikings first permanently settled in Ireland in 839 (McKay et al. 249).

the stage. The partially obscuring, vertical sheets cut the outside world of the trees off from what appears to be the inside of someone's home. They also immediately communicate to the audience that the person who lives there is quite wealthy, considering how tall his house is and how luxurious the fabric of these sheets look. However, because they only partially block the view of the trees, the audience also immediately gets the feeling that the people inside the house have a strong connection to the outside nature or to the symbolic decay of the outside trees. The luxury of the house, combined with the decay of the surrounding nature, may be a reference to the degradation of the lives of Deidre and the sons of Usna, originally Uisneach in Gaelic, in the Ulster cycle (Conner 187). The horizontal rag at the top of the stage further communicates this sense of decay. This is again clearly an example of realistic set design, because it is much less detailed than melodramatic set design, and it evokes a universal feeling, wealth and decay, in the members of the audience. Experimental theatre, by contrast, would create an idiosyncratic interpretation of the stage design in relation to each individual member of the audience.

During its early years, the Abbey Theatre also used some elements of expressionism in its stage design. One famous example of this is the collaboration between W.B. Yeats and E.G. Craig on plays, such as *The Hour-Glass* (1903), for which Yeats based the stage design and the costumes as far as possible on Craig's original designs during a revival of the play in 1911 (Clark and Clark 684). Craig believed that theatre should be a total work of art, in which all elements of a production should harmoniously coexist in order to create a unified aesthetic experience (Kennedy 17). For Craig this meant that a production started with its scenography; its stage design, lighting effects, costume design and choice of attributes. Craig neither liked a stage that had a rich, abundant decoration, as was usual in melodramatic plays, nor a minimally decorated stage, as was common for realistic plays (Kennedy 17). Instead, he wanted his productions to use an expressionistic scenography, which meant that he relied on his décor to help express emotion (Miller 50). For his production *The Hour-Glass* in 1911, Yeats gave the character of the Fool a mask to make it look more expressive (Fig. 5, p. 73). As Craig put it a couple of years earlier:

The advantage of a mask over a face is that it is always repeating unerringly the poetic fancy [...] Durability was the dominant idea in Egyptian art. The theatre must learn that lesson. [...] Let us again cover the actor's face with a mask in

order that his expression –the visualized expression of the Poetic spirit– shall be everlasting (qtd. in Dorn “W.B. Yeats” 126).

Yeats later intended to adapt this particular feature of Craig’s avant-garde style of theatre - having characters wear a mask- recur in his revival of *Baile’s Strand* in 1915 (Dorn “W.B. Yeats” 126).

Craig’s influence can also be seen in, for instance, Lady Gregory’s production of *Mirandolina* (1910), for which Yeats had designed the décor and the props based on some original concept pieces that were envisioned for him by Craig (Miller 154-156). For this production, Yeats also considered giving the characters a mask to wear at least for part of the play to differentiate between the self, the actor’s face, and the uncanny, marionette-like or “übermarionette”, anti-self, when the actor would wear a mask (Flannery “Yeats” 98). Yeats, additionally, also appropriated these designs to the dimensions of the Abbey Theatre’s stage (Miller 154-156). Craig’s original sketches contained a number of folding screens and backdrop curtains that, according to Craig, were intended to be formed and painted to “produce the illusion of the actual scene intended by the playwright”, but also to “assist the imagination of the spectator by suggestion” (Miller 150-151).

Craig, furthermore, was known for removing all materials on and near the stage that were used to conceal the overhead lighting and stage machinery, instead of using elaborately painted backgrounds, Craig merely used coloured lighting on simply painted areas of his stage design to make these evoke a certain mood within the audience (Miller 50). In a production of Handel’s *Acis and Galatea* (1902), he even used a spotlight on an offstage actor to have his shadow appear as a character onstage (Bablet 50). That is not to say that Craig had a monopoly on the stage design at the Abbey. When Yeats was responsible for the stage design, he would only use certain bits from Craig’s original design that he thought could be applicable to certain plays. One of such appropriated elements in *The Hour-Glass*, for example, was Craig’s design for the mask of the character of ‘The Fool’ (Clark and Clark 684). Another example of a play that adopted Craig’s stage design was Lady Gregory’s *Mirandolina* (1910), for which Yeats designed the décor and the props based on some of Craig’s original sketches (Miller 154-156). Nevertheless, Craig, or his stage design, must have had at least some name recognition at the Abbey, because, in one of the stage directions in his script for *The King of the Great Clock Tower* (1934), Yeats refers to one element of the stage design as “a semi circle of one-foot Craig screens” (Fig. 6, p. 73), which were small, tall panels that are placed in such a way to create a curved or wavy stage design, in order to help

direct the lighting on stage, or to create extra entrances or exits for the actors on stage, without any further explanation of what these are (Clark and Clark 494).

Stage Design at the Gate Theatre

While the Abbey Theatre occasionally experimented with their stage design, the Gate Theatre made much more regular and extensive use of experimental stage design, which was congruent with their avant-garde productions. Moreover, like Edward Gordon Craig's designs, those by Micheál Mac Liammóir included not merely the décor, but also costumes and lighting effects that would both complement each other and the décor. Similar to Yeats at the Abbey Theatre, Mac Liammóir became one of the most influential, if not most experienced stage designers during the early decades at the Gate (Hobson 12).

According to Christopher Fitz-Simon, "Mac Liammóir's style was heavily influenced by Bakst's designs for the Russian ballet, and by neo-Celtic art. Under Hilton Edward's direction, productions at the Gate were the first in Ireland to give serious scope to the design elements of setting, costumes, and lighting" (Fitz-Simon "*The Irish Theatre*" 143). When designing the décor for a production, Léon Bakst (1866-1924), born Lev Samoilovich Rosenberg, tried to explore new dimensions of theatre aesthetics, using much more colourful sets (Ingles 7, 15; Academy Editions 1). For example, when drawing the décor for a production of Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov's symphonic suite, *Sheherazade*, also called *Scheherazade*, in 1910, Bakst drew backgrounds in bright colours with broad brush strokes. In the image (Fig. 7, p. 74) that is included in this thesis, one can clearly see the contrast with the brightly green, Persian sheet that seems to hang from the ceiling. The sheet and the cushions below are richly decorated with gold paint, and the sheet seems to be imprinted with Persian phrases, also drawn in a gold colour. In the bottom right corner figures, seemingly dressed in Middle Eastern fashion, can be distinguished. However, they are painted in much darker, red tones. The lack of brightness and contrast would make them almost indistinguishable from afar. Because of the contrast between the bright sheet and the darkened figures, the viewer's attention is drawn to the sheet. The painted figures only help to create a sense of depth and the idea of a crowded stage, even if only a few actors would stand in front of it. This backdrop clearly shows how Bakst could exploit the concept of an experimental, dreamlike stage design by painting his sets in an impressionistic style with, at times, fuzzy or out-of-focus depictions or designs, which, nevertheless, contained a great amount of detailed, albeit sometimes out-of-focus, strokes (Ingles 53; 31).

The chiaroscuro out-of-focus depictions of Bakst's décor can be well compared to one of Mac Liammóir's décors for Padriac Colum's play *Mogu of the Desert* (1931), which is also set in Persia. For this production, Mac Liammóir painted a backdrop (Fig. 8, p. 74), in which a Persian man sits on what seems to be a covered, golden throne in a garden or forest. What immediately becomes clear in comparison with Bakst's backdrop for *Sheherazade* is that Mac Liammóir has also used bright green and gold paint for the sky and trees, and for the throne respectively. Also, like Bakst, Mac Liammóir has used chiaroscuro to draw attention to the brighter throne in the centre of the backdrop vis-à-vis the trees, which are painted in gradually darker shades of green and ocean blue near the left and right edge of the backdrop. However, in contrast to Bakst's design for *Sheherazade*, Mac Liammóir has used a more subtler transition in his chiaroscuro effect, which makes Mac Liammóir's design look more brightly overall. In addition, Mac Liammóir painted his backdrop for *Mogu of the Desert* with a much smaller brush, creating a much sharper contrast compared to that of Bakst. Finally, Mac Liammóir painted this backdrop with more detailed features, such as the visibility of the stamens and pistils, and the petals of the flowers. In Bakst's décor, the Persian letters or the gold drops were the most visible details of his set design, but, in Mac Liammóir's backdrop, the flowers, which are roughly of the same size as Bakst's gold drops, have been given that extra level of detail.

Aside from being inspired by individual artists, Mac Liammóir was also influenced by a popular revival of historical drawing styles for set designs, indirectly via Bakst and directly via his Irish heritage. During the early twentieth century, much of the Russian stage design was influenced by Edward Gordon Craig's experimental and dreamlike stage design, a hallmark of which was that props or the décor would miss some realistic or correct details, such as doors without handles (C. Innes 43). This superficial appearance or imitation, which implied an expression of a subjective, intense and often idiosyncratic interpretation, of reality, was, in early twentieth-century Russia then in turn combined with a revival of pre-Christian, Russian art in theatrical stage designs (Styan 1-2; Ingles 40). This can most clearly be seen in, for instance, Bakst's costume design of Prince Ivan Tsarevich in *L'Oiseau de Feu* (1910), *The Firebird*, which was based on Russian fairy tales. For his costume of Tsarevich (Fig. 9, p. 75), Bakst combined specific fabrics with distinctive fashion styles, which created the impression of a medieval, Russian nobleman's garments. A similar, cultural hybrid of influences can be found in Mac Liammóir's experimental, neo-Celtic designs, such as those for the first production of his own play in Gaelic, *Diarmuid Agus Gráinne* (1928) at the Taibhdhearc in Galway. This design would also later be used for *Diarmuid and Grainne* (1928), Mac

Liammóir's translation of his own play into English, at the Gate Theatre (Pine and Cave 35). In his set design, Mac Liammóir, like Bakst, used images that had connotations with the national cultural heritage. For instance, he included two disks, which were decorated with woven bands like those on a Celtic cross, as well as a bed with sheets that had been imprinted with a similar pattern (Fig. 10, p. 75). In the left, top corner Mac Liammóir included a foaming pot, and behind it someone who seems to be Diarmuid, considering the feathery looking headdress, in long, regal robes.

That is not to say that Bakst and Mac Liammóir were entirely alike in their design style. Bakst's stage designs were generally more lavish, even going so far as to include fabric in the set pieces themselves (Academy Editions 1). Furthermore, for the production of Tchaikovsky's *La Belle au Bois Dormant* in 1922, Bakst designed over one hundred intricate costumes and an enormous, baroque set (Academy Editions 3). Moreover, Bakst's designs in general, especially his costumes, were generally a bit more exotic and definitely more erotic, such as some of the female costumes (Fig. 11, p. 76) in *Sheherazade*, in which the actresses would not be able to cover their private parts (Academy Editions 3; Pine and Cave 21). Nevertheless, the ample similarities between the designs of an avant-garde painter and designer for *Les Ballets Russes* like Bakst and Mac Liammóir's stage design can only underline the tremendous commitment of the Gate theatre to cosmopolitan, in this case Russian, avant-garde art in terms of stage design.

A final similarity between Bakst and the Gate Theatre in general is the effect of the stage design on the play. For example, for the productions of Euripides' *Hippolytos* and Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus* in the Alexandrinsky Theatre in Saint Petersburg in 1902 and 1904 respectively, Bakst's sketches for the décor dictated or were fundamental for the costume designs (Ingles 48). This is similar to Craig's notion that the scenography should be the foundation of theatre, but also to Denis Johnston's suggestion in his article, "Towards a Dynamic Theatre", in *Motley*, that the scene itself, instead of the dialogue, should provide meaning to a scene (Kennedy 17; Tocher 4). This is most clearly done in Johnston's own productions of *The Old Lady Says "No!"* (1929) and *A Bride for the Unicorn* (1933). Mac Liammóir's design for both plays tried to cope with the plays' constant and rapid shifting of scenes, for which he painted a series of curtains with bold and surreal caricature designs that could be pulled over the stage into the wings (Pine and Cave 47-48). For the latter play, Johnston called for a revolving stage, and eventually got a ramp from the stage into the audience, to remove any idea of a barrier between the two (Hogan 138). It was necessary for

both plays to be preformed properly that these implementations, the series of curtains and the revolving stage or, at least, a ramp, were added to bring the level of dynamics to the play.

Another noteworthy aspect of the Gate Theatre's stage design is its use of technical innovations, most importantly by its lighting capabilities, which were more under the supervision of Hilton Edwards. While he was generally responsible for lighting, choreography and diction, Mac Liammóir was generally responsible for the colours, shapes and textures of the stage design (Pine and Cave 22). According to Richard Pine and Richard Cave, Edward Gordon Craig and Léon Bakst were so influential in terms of lighting effects and stage design, and costume and stage design respectively, that all other producers and stage designers could not ignore their influential work (22). In 1978, Hilton Edwards, for instance, acknowledged the influence of Craig, but also explained the challenge of implementing his stage design by stating:

Of course [Craig's] work influenced me and I think it was he who introduced the stage sans footlights and overhead batten lighting, and more or less invented the use of the spot light as it is known today, but his stage designs were usually of such dimensions that no theatre could accommodate them and, had they been reduced to the normal proportions of the normal theatre, they would have lost much of their strength and beauty. (qtd. in Pine and Cave 22).

When the Gate was still playing at the Abbey's 'Peacock Theatre', the theatre company's members painted the back wall in a neutral blue-grey, on which they directed eight 500-watt lanterns, thus creating the illusion that the stage would somehow be infinitely deep (Hobson 24). They, furthermore, also used six baby spots, and let them shine on the back wall in such a way as to create the illusion that the stage would be much broader, even cylindrical or panoramic (Hobson 24). While, unlike E.G. Craig, the Gate did not obscure the lighting in the Peacock Theatre, it also experimented with lighting effects; using silhouettes to create the illusions of mountains, or, by aiming blue and amber lights from a certain angle without the use of a light-pit, evoking the illusion of a desert landscape (Hobson 24). At The Rotunda, the Gate Theatre was even better technically equipped, with several 500-watt dimmers, baby spots and floods, and even a couple of 1,000-watt focus lanterns, a 1,000-watt horizon lantern and a batten of ten 100-candle-power blue lamps (Pine and Cave 40). That is not to say that it

had every technical feature that a playwright might ask for. For his play, *A Bride for the Unicorn* (1933), for example, Denis Johnston's stage directions called for a revolving stage, with which The Rotunda Stage was not equipped (Hogan 138). Nevertheless, a ramp was constructed before the front curtain, in order to try to make the play seem to be more dynamic (Hogan 138). As a matter of fact, according to Pine and Cave one of the great successes of the Gate in terms of set design, was its adaptability in deviating from set designs to allow for growth and manoeuvre (Pine and Cave 31). For example, the Gate occasionally fabricated a set design that was originally designed by E.G. Craig, but always made some practical changes to it in order to fit and compliment the size and acting capabilities of its own theatre company. Thus, in short, the similarities between the experimental lighting effects and set design of the Gate theatre and that of the influential, Continental productions and experimental lighting effects and set designs of E.G. Craig again underline the huge commitment of the Gate theatre to conform to cosmopolitan, avant-garde theatre in terms of lighting effects.

A final feature of the stage design at the Gate Theatre that should be noted, is that it also, either intentionally or unintentionally, used one of Stanislavski and Nemirovich-Danchenko's aforementioned realistic theatrical techniques. At the start of this chapter, it was discussed, how the Abbey Theatre used Celtic elements as decorations in order to introduce the audience to the kind of plays or theatrical experience that they were about to enjoy. The Gate Theatre did something similar, when the company moved to its new location at The Rotunda from the Abbey's 'Peacock Theatre' in 1930 (Hobson 16). For its second season, still at the Peacock Theatre, the Gate opened in 1929 with *The Powers of Darkness*, for which a colourful set was designed (Hobson 14). Later, when the theatre company moved to their new location, it was preserved in a model and put in The Rotunda's vestibule (Hobson 14). This is not to say that this one piece of stage design would have the same effect as the many decorative pieces in the Abbey Theatre, but it would give the members of the audience at least an indication of the kind of plays, or at least the kind of stage designs, that they might be able to expect from the production they were going to attend. The idea for displaying a piece of set design in its vestibule may also have functioned as a kind of museum piece, that served as a reminder of previous productions. Nevertheless, whether intentional or unintentional, the placement of such a piece would put the audience in a certain mood or give them some kind of expectation of the kind of theatrical productions that it would attend, and therefore conforms to Stanislavski and Nemirovich-Danchenko's notion that the theatrical experience should begin at the theatre's entrance (Esslin 353). In this respect, the Gate thus, either

consciously or unconsciously embraced an aspect of a, by the 1920s and 1930s, more traditional style of theatre that had often been used for national plays in Ireland.

In short, both the Abbey and the Gate Theatre used stage designs that were influenced by realism and experimentalism. The Abbey, however, would only occasionally appropriate more experimental stage designs based on those by E.G. Craig, while the Gate would almost exclusively use experimental stage design, based in part on Léon Bakst's designs, and the playhouse experimented more freely with lighting effects. Nevertheless, the Gate Theatre also, either intentionally or unintentionally used some realistic decorative techniques by Stanislavski and Nemirovich-Danchenko. Moreover, either playhouses used set designs that were to compliment national plays, such as *The Shadowy Waters* (1896) and *Deirdre* (1906) at the Abbey Theatre, or that were based on Celtic motives, such as *Diarmuid and Grainne* (1928) at the Gate Theatre. More experimental set design was also used at the Abbey in productions, such as the use of masks and Craig screens in *The Hour-Glass* (1903) and *Mirandolina* (1910), and at the Gate in the form of backdrops, such as in *The Old Lady Says "No!"* (1929) and in *Mogu of the Desert* (1931).

Conclusion

The purpose of this dissertation was to analyse in which ways it is legitimate to look at the Abbey and Gate Theatres as diametric opposites, the Abbey Theatre on the one hand functioning as a stage concerned with national theatre and the Gate on the other as one concerned with avant-garde, cosmopolitan theatre in the late 1920's and early 1930's. This conclusion will give a bird's-eye perspective of how the Abbey and Gate Theatres differed from each other in terms of their manifestoes or similar documents, how *The Plough and the Stars* (1926), *Diarmuid and Grainne* (1928), *The Old Lady Says "No!"* (1929) and *The New Gossoon* (1930) illustrate any often claimed diametrically opposite aims of the Abbey and the Gate Theatres, and how the stage design, being the décor and to a lesser extent the costumes, was influenced by the different ideologies or styles of theatre of both theatres. However, this conclusion will also underline the new insights that this dissertation has provided, regarding the contrast and comparison of both theatres. Lastly, this conclusion will end with a number of suggestions for future research on this topic.

Manifestoes

The analysis of the various manifestoes, plays and stage design of the Abbey and Gate Theatres clearly indicates that it is not legitimate to look at these theatres as diametric opposites. Based on the manifestoes and the interpretation of these by various members of both theatre companies, it has become clear that the manifestoes did not dictate an absolute artistic direction for either playhouse, and that, depending on the member of either theatre company, both theatres could be seen as national theatres or cosmopolitan theatres.

The Abbey Theatre did not have a manifesto of its own, but, instead, it used that of its predecessor, the Irish Literary Theatre, written by W.B. Yeats, Lady Gregory and Edward Martyn. This manifesto, however, was open to a wide variety of interpretations, of which Yeats' opinion to hire English actors to star in the Irish plays was the most controversial. During the 1890s melodrama was still the most popular style of theatre in the British Isles, but it was dismissed by Yeats, who favoured a more realistic style of theatre. Yeats also wanted to imitate and emulate Continental plays, which was met with fierce opposition by the Fay Brothers, who, as well as the directors of the Abbey, were against Yeats' decision to hire an English actress to star in a play based on Irish mythology. The Abbey Theatre also further experimented with continental theatre in the form of a part-time, amateur group, called the Dublin Drama League between 1918 and 1928. Nevertheless, despite its attempts at a more

experimental theatre, the Abbey is largely known for its abundance of realistic, Romantic dramas based on Irish mythology or written as contemporary Irish pastoral plays. Edward Martyn and George Moore tried within this framework to push for more realism with their imitations of Ibsen plays, which were ultimately not well received. J.M. Synge, W.B. Yeats, and, to a far lesser extent, Lady Gregory also struggled within this frame against nationalists by allowing the 'Playboy Riots' in 1906 to escalate needlessly. They also feigned nationalistic sympathies in 1909 to prevent a controversial play, *The Shewing-Up of Blanco Posnet* from being censored by the Lord Chamberlain.

The Gate Theatre did not have one single manifesto at all, but published a couple of articles in *Motley*, its own magazine, that were indicative of the politics of theatre, embraced by the directors and playwrights at the Gate. The Gate, in general, seemed to take a stance against realism, although it successfully produced a number of plays by realistic playwrights, and it also advocated for a more dynamic kind of theatre to make theatrical productions more appealing during the rise of cinema. For these dynamic theatrical plays, all unnecessary interruptions of the play were removed, including the "three-act form"; making the audience conscious that they are watching a live performance; reintroducing, for the early twentieth century, archaic features of theatre, such as music; having the scenery dictate the dialogue, instead of the other way around; a work of theatre should both play on the audience's conscious, rational understanding of the played out events, and on their subconscious, emotional reception of these events; and, lastly, dialogue should be meaningful, or, in other words, serve to convey meaning, instead of serving as "a frame for the chatter of the characters". Lastly, the Gate Theatre is known for its cosmopolitan theatre, but, while it introduced a lot of foreign, most of which Eastern European and American, plays during its first seasons, it also produced the work of a number of Irish playwrights. The Gate, it seems, did not define cosmopolitan as foreign theatre, but as experimental or expressive theatre. This meant that, to the Gate, cosmopolitanism, in general, became synonymous with avant-garde, experimental theatre.

Plays

Based on the repertoire of the Abbey Theatre in general, but also on the case studies that were analysed in this dissertation, we can see that, in practise, the Abbey theatre mainly produced national and nationalistic plays. However, it has also been demonstrated that the Abbey included some cosmopolitan, avant-garde elements in their repertoire, the clearest example of which being the plays of the Dublin Dramatic League, a subset of the Abbey Theatre. The

repertoire of the Gate Theatre, as well as the plays that were used as case studies in this dissertation show that the Gate Theatre was only a truly cosmopolitan theatre, in terms of their cosmopolitan, meaning experimental, style of theatre. That is to say that while the Gate performed many foreign plays on their stage, they also promoted the works of Irish playwrights with, occasionally, Irish themes, such as Micheál Mac Liammóir's *Diarmuid and Grainne* (1928), which was based on an Irish myth, and Denis Johnston's *The Old Lady Says "No!"* (1929), which staged an episode in Irish history.

Plays that were written in the years after 1923 occupy a special place in the zeitgeist of Irish theatre, because, after the major armed conflicts in Ireland between 1916 and 1923, national theatre had to deal with, represent and cope with these traumatic and historical events in cultural memory. One play that does this extremely well, is Seán O'Casey's *The Plough and the Stars*, because it complicates and critiques the narrative of the Easter Rising. O'Casey achieves this by giving two of his characters, Jack Clitheroe, a catholic freedom fighter, and Bessie Burgess, a protestant civilian, both a heroic but, ultimately, sad death. O'Casey does not distinguish between the two warring parties during the Easter Rising, and he simply critiques the concept of violence as a whole. Patriotism is dissected to reveal those who are brave and those who cower, and no specific religion is privileged both; Catholics and Protestants gave their lives to safeguard Irish people during the Easter Rising.

Another way that O'Casey complicates the narrative of *The Plough and the Stars* is by letting bad things happen to the good characters in his play, due to a flaw in their own actions, instead of by the design of an antagonist. That is to say that the havoc in the play is not so much caused by conflicts such as the Easter Rising, but that it is rather a catalyst for the small, foolish and ordinary choices the characters make. *The Plough and the Stars*, ultimately, does not reject nationalism or armed national conflicts, but it nuances both by showing how fanatical patriotism and fighting for the 'noble cause' can subvert human relationships. However, the large variety of main characters from different backgrounds and nationalities, could be said to be the play's only small cosmopolitan aspect.

Diarmuid and Grainne is a national play, because it is based on Irish mythology, but not nationalistic, because it does not eulogise the nation. There is one instance of what seems to be a prophetic statement on Mac Liammóir's contemporary Ireland, but that gets refuted almost immediately. Another interesting aspect of the play, is the role of women, specifically Grainne, in Mac Liammóir's play vis-à-vis women in the national discourse, which were often modelled on certain stereotypes of being subservient to their male peers. The character of Grania in Lady Gregory's *Grania* tries to do this, but cannot, eventually, escape the

misogynistic social hierarchy. Mac Liammóir's Grainne, however, does not even challenge this stereotype at all, moving her to the fringe of his play and being even more helpless and adhering to a more traditional female role than Lady Gregory's Grania. This is paradoxical, because Mac Liammóir's *Diarmuid and Grainne* was performed at a later point in time at a playhouse that was characterised by its progressive styles of theatre, for example experimentalism, if not progressive theatre in general.

The significance of *Diarmuid and Grainne* as a play in the Gate's repertoire has to do with the fact that, in its early years, the Gate had ambivalent point-of-views of itself. From its establishment, the directors at the Gate were divided on whether the Gate should be an 'Irish theatre' or a 'cosmopolitan theatre'. By staging *Diarmuid and Grainne*, it seems that Mac Liammóir may have intended the Gate to become similar to the Irish Literary Theatre of Yeats, Lady Gregory and Martyn.

Similar to the *The Plough and the Stars*, *The Old Lady Says "No!"* by Denis Johnston is also an urban play that is critical of nationalism, specifically with regard to the practical outcome of armed national resistance. However, even more than O'Casey's play, *The Old Lady Says "No!"* is also critical of nationalism itself. It, furthermore, distinguishes itself from *The Plough and the Stars* by its experimental and dynamic style of theatre, which is a much more cosmopolitan, especially Eastern European and American mode of theatre. Examples of the cosmopolitan, expressionistic style of theatre in *The Old Lady Says "No!"* is how Johnston's characters break the fourth wall, there is always one character who remains on the stage, keeping the narrative dynamic, and most of the story takes place in a dream reality.

Two of *The New Gossoon's* major themes are the purity of the Irish countryside and the role of women in Ireland, especially their role within rural Irish societies. The characters' struggle to preserve their traditional way-of-life is one of the play's national themes, since the west of Ireland has often been cited as the real or true Ireland, unspoiled by any foreign influence. However, *The New Gossoon's* message is not that this traditional social structure should be perfectly conserved. The play ultimately comes to the conclusion that, while the social hierarchy may change, the traditional values can be maintained. Like Mac Liammóir's *Diarmuid and Grainne*, George Shiels' play questions the role of women in a nationalistic narrative. However, at the end of *The New Gossoon*, the characters have challenged and changed the patriarchal paradigm, replacing it by a more egalitarian and sustainable social structure.

In short, *The Plough and the Stars* is a national, or even nationalistic, play, because it is set during the Easter Rising. The national setting, however, is also at certain points in the

play transcended by the universal theme of, often personally caused, human suffering during armed conflicts. The diverse national backgrounds of the characters contribute to this universal theme, which respectively makes *The Plough and the Stars* (Abbey Theatre) a cosmopolitan play in a narrow sense. *Diarmuid and Grainne* (Gate Theatre), based on its theme, depiction of the female lead and some seemingly ideological similarities to the ILT, can be seen as a traditionally national play. Nevertheless, because it does not eulogise the nation, it cannot be considered a nationalistic play. While being set in Ireland and including Irish historical figures and therefore a national play, *The Old Lady Says "No!"* (Gate Theatre) is also a cosmopolitan play, because of its dynamic, experimental, avant-garde style of writing and performing. Lastly, *The New Gossoon* (Abbey Theatre) is a national play, because it is a play about the traditional rural communities in Western Ireland, but it is also a very moderately progressive play, because it advocates for the gentle, meaning not radical, shift in the traditional values of the community.

Stage Design

An analysis of the stage design at the Abbey and Gate Theatres also shows that the Abbey generally used a nationally more prevalent realistic style of set design, though this design more than occasionally included experimental, avant-garde designs, based on those from the Continent. The Gate, on the other hand, more monolithically used experimental, cosmopolitan stage designs. However, just like the Abbey, it consciously or unconsciously featured one of the maxims for realistic theatre by Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko, that the theatrical experience should start at the theatre's front doors.

When the Abbey Theatre opened its doors in 1904, it had converted the old Mechanics' Institute Theatre in Lower Abbey Street and the Penny Bank building in Marlborough Street into two simple theatres. The old Mechanics' Institute Theatre was furthermore redesigned according to the theatrical maxim by Konstantin Stanislavsky and Vladimir Nemirovich-Danchenko, so that the theatrical illusion, spectacle or experience should start at the entrance. A number of decorative items in the entrance hall were designed to have a symbolic significance for Irish mythologies or the Irish country side, and were almost exclusively made by Irish artisans. Examples of these are a stained-glass window of a tree and large copper mirror frames with Celtic motives.

The Abbey Theatre's set designs were in general always realistically designed or contained some other experimental influences. Examples of realistic set design are the almost true to size longship and painted background of Yeats' *The Shadowy Waters* (1896), or the

lush interior of Deidre's home in front of realistically painted deciduous trees in winter for Lady Gregory's *Deirdre* (1906). Examples of realistic set designs with some experimental influences are the décor and lighting effects in Yeats' *The Hour-Glass* (1903) and in Lady Gregory's *Mirandolina* (1910) that both produced an illusion of the actual scene as intended by the playwright, but also assisted the imagination of the spectator through suggestion. This was done through the use of specially designed set pieces and props that would alienate a character from the audience, such as masks without any clear expression.

Many of the experimental aspects of the Abbey's stage designs were inspired by sketches of Edward Gordon Craig, who, in his stage design, was known for approaching a theatrical production by starting with its scenography, but especially for his lighting effects. He was famous for removing all materials on and near the stage that were used to conceal the overhead lighting and stage machinery, and for, instead of using elaborately painted backgrounds, to use coloured lighting on simply painted areas of his stage design to evoke a certain idiosyncratic mood in each respective member of the audience. While Yeats never used Craig's designs, the appropriation of some of Craig's elements were apparently very known at the Abbey. In his script for *The King of the Great Clock Tower* (1934), Yeats, for example, wrote that the stage design should include a semi circle of one-foot Craig screens, without any further explanation of what these exactly are or any further specifications of how they should look.

The Gate Theatre made much more regular and a much more extensive use of experimental stage design than the Abbey. Micheál Mac Liammóir was one of the most influential, if not the most experienced stage designers during the early decades at the Gate Theatre. He was influenced by the colourful, experimental and dreamlike stage designs of Leon Bakst and by the popular neo-Celtic art style of the early twentieth century in Ireland. Bakst's influence on Mac Liammóir can be seen in his stage design for the Persian themed play *Mogu of the Desert* (1931), which has appropriated elements from Bakst's design for *Sheherazade* (1910), also set in Persia, such as the colourful and dreamlike design, as well as the use of chiaroscuro. Similar to the Russian stage, the Irish stage was also influenced by historic art styles. This can be seen in Mac Liammóir's design for his production of *Diarmuid Agus Gránnie* (1928), which included two disks and bed sheets that were decorated with woven bands like those on a Celtic cross, as well as a large feathery looking headdress for presumably the character of Diarmuid.

A final similarity between the Gate Theatre and the effect of stage design by Bakst and Craig on a play is how, especially in plays by Denis Johnston such as *The Old Lady Says*

“No!” (1929) and *A Bride for the Unicorn* (1933), the scenography of the play dictates the scenes. For its avant-garde and experimental theatre, the Gate Theatre could make use of its extensive lighting capabilities; especially Hilton Edwards’ work, based on that of E.G. Craig, was influential. This mainly included neutrally painted backgrounds, which were then subjected to a colour scheme by various spotlights. Moreover, while the Gate Theatre’s Rotunda building was not equipped with a revolving stage, a compromising innovation, a ramp in front of the stage, was created for the premiere of Denis Johnston’s *A Bride for the Unicorn*. While this made the stage slightly less dynamic, it did remove the barrier between the stage and the actors on the one hand, and the auditorium and the audience on the other hand. Furthermore, while the Gate Theatre occasionally fabricated a set design that was originally designed by E.G. Craig, it always had to make some practical changes to the design in order to fit and compliment the size and acting capabilities of the theatre company. An analysis of the stage design at the Abbey and Gate Theatres also shows that the Abbey generally used a nationally more prevalent realistic style of set design, albeit this design more than occasionally included experimental, avant-garde designs, based on those from the Continent. The Gate, on the other hand, more monolithically used experimental, cosmopolitan stage designs. However, just like the Abbey, it consciously or unconsciously featured one of the maxims for realistic theatre by Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko, namely that the theatrical experience should start at the theatre’s front doors. In short, the Abbey theatre was largely influenced by realism and produced a number of plays with a national theme, but it also introduced some avant-garde, cosmopolitan elements to their stage design by incorporating design elements by E.G. Craig. The Gate Theatre, however, used a very experimental and cosmopolitan stage design, although they also used some features, such as the stage design of the entrance hall of the Rotunda building, which was an already nationally known realistic style of design.

The incorrectness of the claim that the Abbey and Gate Theatres are diametric opposites, therefore makes it necessary to review how we tend to think about the artistic vision of both theatres. There should come more nuance in any further analysis of both theatres in academic literature. The Abbey Theatre should more clearly be recognised for its experiments with cosmopolitan, experimental styles of theatre in its plays and stage design. There should, furthermore, be a greater nuance of the Abbey as a venue for national plays that either or both aggravated their nationalistically minded audience members and were intended as sensational plays to focus the public’s attention on their theatre, such as, for example, *The Playboy of the Western World* (1907) or *The Shewing-Up of Blanco Posnet* (1909). The Gate

Theatre should more clearly be described in academic literature as a cosmopolitan theatre, but chiefly because of their experimental style of theatre. During the 1920s and 1930s the Gate produced a wide array of plays by both Irish and by foreign playwrights. The one common trait these plays generally possess, is their avant-garde, cosmopolitan, that is to say experimental style of theatre

Further Research

For further research, it is necessary to replicate the analysis of this dissertation, especially considering the plays that were used as case studies. Good scientific research supposes that the parameters of this research, the manifestoes, repertoire and stage design, are to be re-examined in order to see whether the same conclusions can be reached. The largest variable in this research has been the plays that were used as case studies. Due to the scope of this dissertation, only four could be examined, and while these plays were chosen based on strict criteria, it is necessary to examine if other plays, based on these or on other criteria, will generate the same outcome as the four plays that were examined in this dissertation.

This dissertation compared and contrasted the Abbey Theatre with the Gate during the early twentieth century, and especially during the 1920s and 1930s. As two final suggestions for further research, one could perform a similar research between two other theatres, or between either the Abbey or the Gate Theatres and another theatre in Dublin during this time period. This would show, if these theatres are comparable or contrary to each other in similar ways as the Abbey and the Gate Theatres were. Alternatively, one could also replicate this analysis of the Abbey and Gate Theatres during another period of time, such as the mid or late twentieth century or even the present day, considering that during these time periods, there are different people in charge of both theatres with their own, different artistic visions.

Works Cited

Primary Texts

- Clark, David R., and Rosalind E. Clark, ed. *The Collected Works of W.B. Yeats Vol II: The Plays*. New York: Scribner, 2001. Print.
- Edwards, Hilton. *The Mantle of Harlequin*. Dublin: Progress house, 1958. Print.
- Ibsen, Henrik. *Ghosts*. Writ. Henrik Ibsen. Rome and Chicago, 1881-1882. *Project Gutenberg*. Web. 16 July 2016.
- "John Bull's Other Island." *abbeytheatre.ie*. The Abbey Theatre. Web. 16 July 2016. <
<http://www.abbeytheatre.ie/archives/search/plays/john%20bull/s%20other%20island/>
>.
- Johnston, Dennis. *The Old Lady Says "No!"*. Dublin, 1929. *Blackboard.ru.nl*. Web. 16 July 2016.
- Lady Augusta Gregory. "Grania." In: *Irish Folk-History Plays*. 2nd ed. Dublin:Maunsel & Co, Ltd., 1905. Print.
- Lady Augusta Gregory. *Kincora, A Play in Three Acts*. First Series. Ed. New York and London: The Knickerbocker Press and G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1912. Print.
- Mac Liammóir, Micheál. *Diarmuid and Grainne*. Dublin, 1928. TS.
- O'Casey, Seán. "The Plough and the Stars." In: *Twenty Five Modern Plays*. 3rd ed. Ed. Alan S. Downer. New York: Harper & Bros. Publishers, 1953. Print.
- "Realism." *Motley* Dec. 1932: 2-3. Print.
- Shaw, George Bernard. *John Bull's Other Island*. London, 1904. *Project Gutenberg*. Web. 16 July 2016.
- Shiels, George. "The New Gossoon." In: *Selected Plays of George Shiels*. Ed. Christopher Murray. Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe Ltd., 2008. Print.
- "The Gate Theatre, 1932-32." *Motley* Apr.-May. 1933: 2-3. Print.
- "The Moon in the Yellow River." *abbietheatre.ie*. Abbey Theatre, Web. 16 July 2016.
<<http://www.abbeytheatre.ie/archives/search/plays/the%20moon%20in%20the%20yellow%20river/>>
- Tocher, E. W. "Towards a Dynamic Theatre." *Motley* Apr.-May. 1933: 3-5. Print.
- Yeats, W.B., *The Celtic Twilight*. London: A.H. Bullen, 1893. Print.
- Yeats, William Butler, and Lady Augusta Gregory. *Cathleen ni Houlihan*. Dublin, 1902. *Blackboard.ru.nl*. Web. 16 July 2016.

Secondary Sources

- Academy Editions, ed. *Bakst*. Fakenham: Cox & Wyman Ltd, 1977. Print.
- Ayling, Ronald. "Popular Tradition and Individual Talent in Sean O'Casey's Dublin Trilogy." *Journal of Modern Literature* 2:4 (1972): 491-504. Print.
- Bablet, Denis. *The Theatre of Edward Gordon Craig*. Trans. Daphne Woodward. London: Eyre Methuen, 1981. Print.
- Barry, Peter. *Beginning Theory*. 3rd ed. Manchester: Manchester U. Press, 2009. Print.
- Beuken, Ruud van den. "MacLiammóir's minstrel and Johnston's morality: cultural memories of the Easter Rising at the Dublin Gate Theatre." *Irish Studies Review* 23:1 (2015): 1-14. Print.
- Birch, Dinah, ed. *The Oxford Companion to English Literature*. 7th ed. Oxford: Oxford U. Press, 2009. Print.
- Booth, Michael R. *English Melodrama*. London: Herbert Jenkins, 1965. Print.
- Booth, Michael R., "Nineteenth-Century Theatre." In: John Russel Brown, ed. *The Oxford Illustrated History of Theatre*. Oxford: Oxford U. Press., 1995. Print.
- Bryars, John A. "The Brief and Troublesome Reign of Cathleen ni Houlihan (1902-1907)." *South Atlantic Bulletin* 40.2 (1975): 40-46. *Jstor*. Web. 30 Mar. 2016.
- Brown, Terence. *The Literature of Ireland*. Cambridge: Cambridge U. Press, 2010. Print.
- Conner, Lester I. *A Yeats Dictionary: Persons and Places in the Poetry of William Butler Yeats*. Syracuse: Syracuse U. Press, 1998. Print.
- Connolly, Claire. *A Cultural History of the Irish Novel, 1790-1823*. Cambridge: Cambridge U. Press, 2012. Print.
- Connolly, S.J. "Reconsidering the Irish Act of Union." *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*. 10. (2000): 399-408. *Jstor*. Web. 16 July 2016.
- "Denis Johnston." *Irish Playography*. Irish Theatre Institute, Web. 16 July 2016.
- Dorn, Karen. *Players and Painted Stage*. Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1984. Print.
- Dorn, Karen. "W.B. Yeats's Theatre Collaboration With Gordon Craig." *Yeats and the Theatre*. Ed. Robert O'Driscoll and Lorna Reynolds. London and Basingstoke: the MacMillan Press Ltd., 1975. 109-136. Print.
- Esslin, Martin. "Modern Theatre: 1890-1920." In: John Russel Brown, ed. *The Oxford Illustrated History of Theatre*. Oxford: Oxford U. Press., 1995. Print.
- Fitz-Simon, Christopher. *The Boys: a double biography*. London: Nick Hern Books, 1994. Print.

- Fitz-Simon, Christopher. *The Irish Theatre*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1983. Print.
- Flannery, James W. "Yeats and the Theatre." *Yeats and the Theatre*. Ed. Robert O'Driscoll and Lorna Reynolds. London and Basingstoke: the MacMillan Press Ltd., 1975. 82-108. Print.
- Flannery, James W. "W.B. Yeats and the Abbey Theatre Company." *Educational Theatre Journal* 27.2 (1975): 179-196. Print.
- Flannery, James W. *W.B. Yeats and the idea of a theatre: the early Abbey Theatre in theory and practice*. New Haven: Yale U. Press, 1976. Print.
- Frawley, Oona. "Toward a Theory of Cultural Memory in an Irish Postcolonial Context". *Memory Ireland. Volume 1: History and Modernity*. Ed. Oona Frawley. Syracuse: Syracuse U. Press, 2010, 18-34. Print.
- Gantz, Jeffrey, ed. *Early Irish Myths and Sagas*. St. Ives: Clays Ltd., 1981. Print.
- Hobson, Bulmer, ed. *The Gate Theatre*. Dublin: Alex Thom & Co Ltd. and Priters, 1934. Print.
- Hogan, Robert. *After the Irish Renaissance*. London: MacMillan, 1968. Print.
- Hunt, Hugh. *The Abbey, Ireland's National Theatre 1904-1979*. Dublin: Gill and Mamillan, 1979. Print.
- Ingles, Elisabeth. *Bakst, Die Zauberwelt des Theaters*. Trans. Anja Ploch. London: Parkstone P. Ltd., 2000. Print.
- Innes, Catherine Lynette. *Woman and nation in Irish Literature and Society, 1880-1935*. New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993. Print.
- Innes, Christopher. *Edward Gordon Craig, A Vision of Theatre*. Singapore: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1998. Print.
- Jackson, Alvin. *Ireland 1898-1998*. Oxford and Malden: Blackwell, 1999. Print.
- Kaplan, Joel. "1895 A critical year in perspective." In: Joseph Donohue, ed. *The Cambridge History of British Theatre*. Vol. 2. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004. Print.
- Kennedy, Dennis. "British theatre, 1895-1946." In: Baz Kershaw, ed. *The Cambridge History of British Theatre*. Vol. 3. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004. Print.
- Kiberd, Declan. "The riotous history of The Playboy of the Western World." *The Guardian* 23 Sept. 2011. *Google*. Web. 2 June 2016.
- Mac Liammóir, Micheál. *Theatre in Ireland*. Repr. with sequel. Dublin: at The Three Candles, for The Cultural Relations Committee of Ireland, 1964. Print.
- Mannion, Elizabeth. *The Urban Plays of the Abbey*. Syracuse: Syracuse U. Press, 2014. Print.

- McKay, John P., et al. *A History of Western Society*. 9th ed. Boston and New York: Bedford and St. Martins, 2008. Print.
- Miller, Liam. *The Noble Drama of W.B. Yeats*. Dublin: The Dolmen Press, 1977. Print.
- Morash, Christopher. *A History of Irish Theatre 1601-2000*. Cambridge: Cambridge U. Press, 2004. Print.
- Morash, Chris, and Shaun Richards. *Mappin Irish Theatre*. Cambridge: Cambridge U. Press, 2013. Print.
- “Old Lady Says ‘No’.” *Oxford Reference*. University of Oxford, Web. 16 July 2016.
- Pine, Richard, and Richard Allen Cave. *The Dublin Gate Theatre*. Cambridge: Chadwycheale, 1984. Print.
- Pixley, Edward E. ““The Plough and the Stars”: The Destructive Consequences of Human Folly.” *Educational Theatre Journal* 23.1 (1971): Jstor. Web. 30 Mar. 2016.
- Robinson, Lennox. *Ireland’s Abbey Theater*. Folcroft Library Ed. New York: Samuel French, 1973. Print.
- Robinson, Lennox. *Ireland’s Abbey Theatre*. London: Sidgewick and Jackson Ltd., 1951. Print.
- Robinson, Lennox, and Micheál Ó hAodha. *Pictures at the Abbey*. Dublin: The Dolmen Press, 1983. Print.
- Sammells, Neil. *Wilde Style*. Essex: Pearson Education Ltd., 2000. Print.
- Styan, J.L. *Expressionism and epic theatre*. Cambridge: Cambridge U. Press, 1981. Print. Modern drama in theory and practice Ser. 3.
- Taylor, Richard. *The Drama of W.B. Yeats*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1976. Print.
- Thomson, Derick S. *The Gaelic sources of Macpherson’s “Ossian”*. Folcroft Library Ed. Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd, 1973. Print.
- Thomson, Peter. “The new drama and the old theatre.” In: Joseph Donohue, ed. *The Cambridge History of British Theatre*. Vol. 2. Cambridge: Cambridge U Press, 2004. Print.
- Trotter, Mary. *Modern Irish Theatre*. Cambridge: Polity, 2008. Print.
- Weintraub, Rodelle. “Doyle’s Dream: John Bull’s Other Island.” *SHAW The Annual of Bernard Shaw Studies* Vol. 21 (2001): 143-150. *Project Muse*. Web. 30 Mar. 2016.
- Welch, Robert. *The Abbey Theatre, 1899-1999: Form and Pressure*. Oxford: Oxford U. Press, 1999. Print.

Appendix

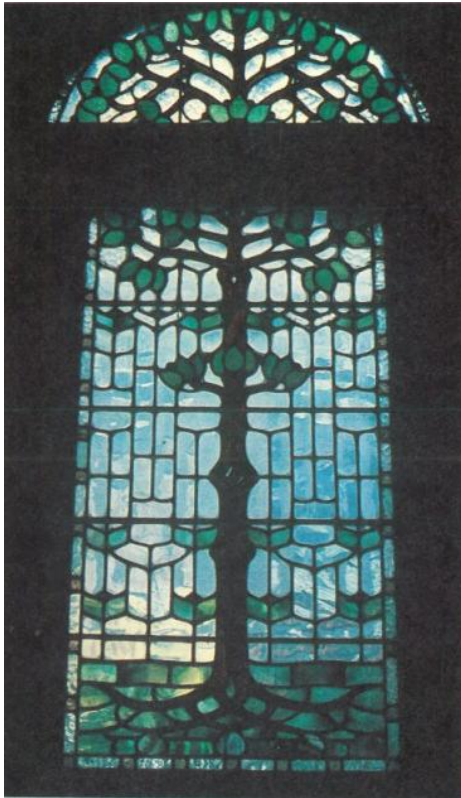


Figure 1. The Stained Glass in the Entrance Hall of the Abbey Theatre at their Venue in Lower Abbey Street. (Robinson and Ó hAodha 10).



Figure 2. One of the Copper Framed Mirrors at the Abbey Theatre in Lower Abbey Street. (Robinson and Ó hAodha 11).

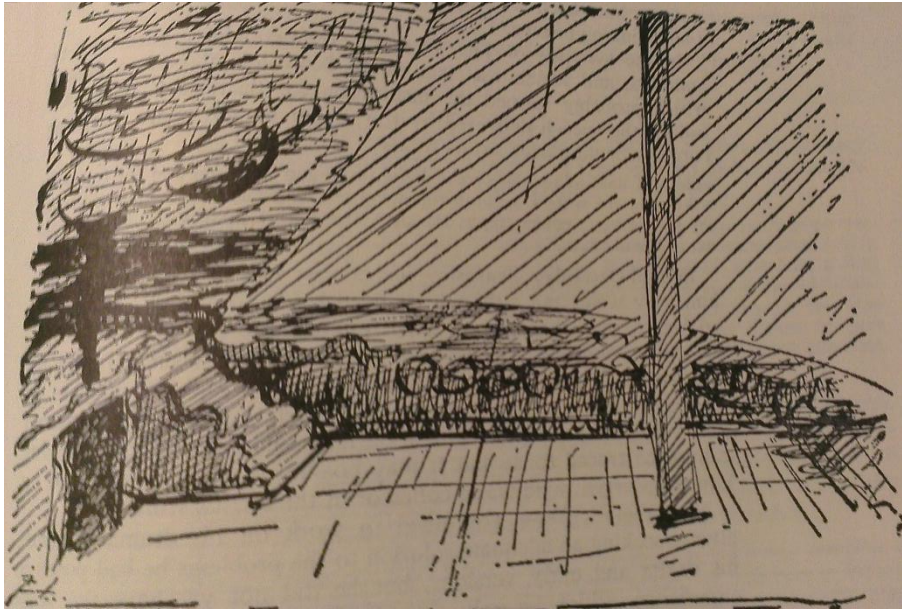


Figure 3. W.B. Yeats' stage design for *The Shadowy Waters*, 1896. (Miller).

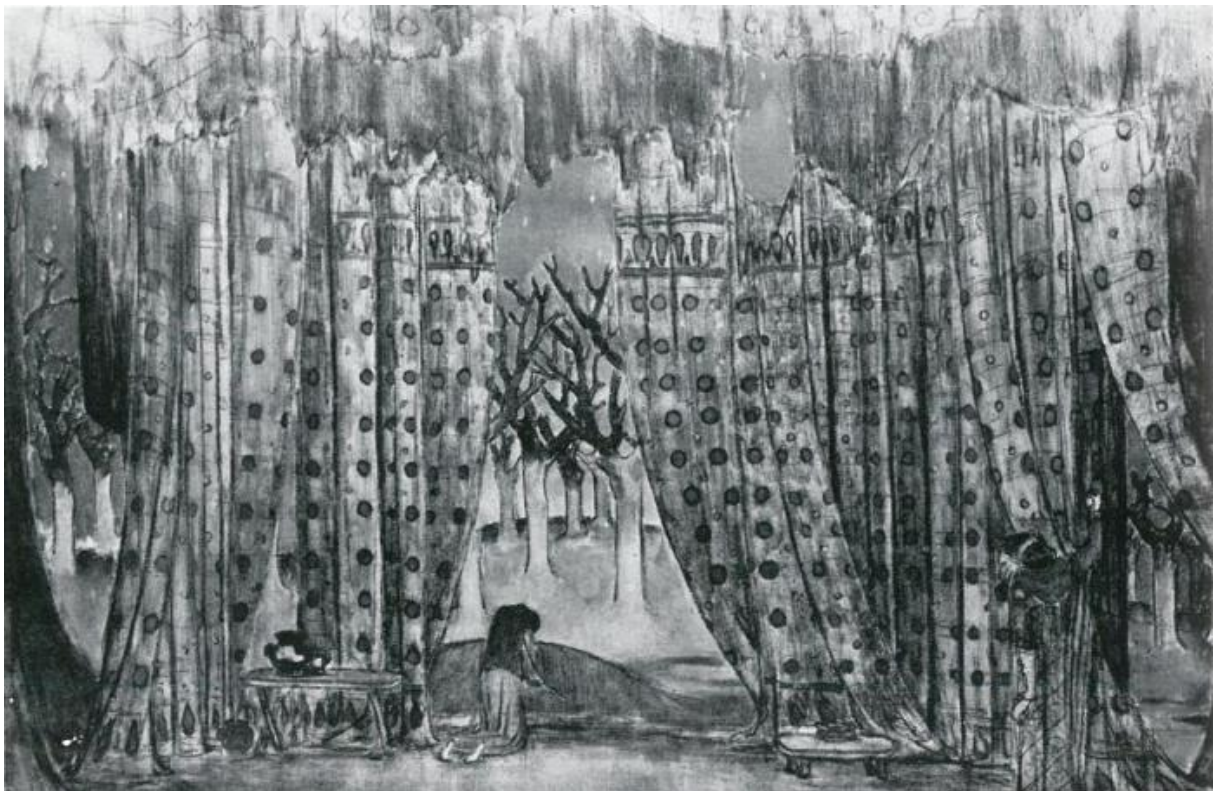


Figure 4. Robert Gregory's Scene Design for *Deirdre*, 1906. (Miller 340).



Figure 5. E.G. Craig's costume design for 'The Fool', including his 'domino mask' for W.B. Yeats' production of *The Hour-Glass*, 1911 (Dorn *Players* 50.k).

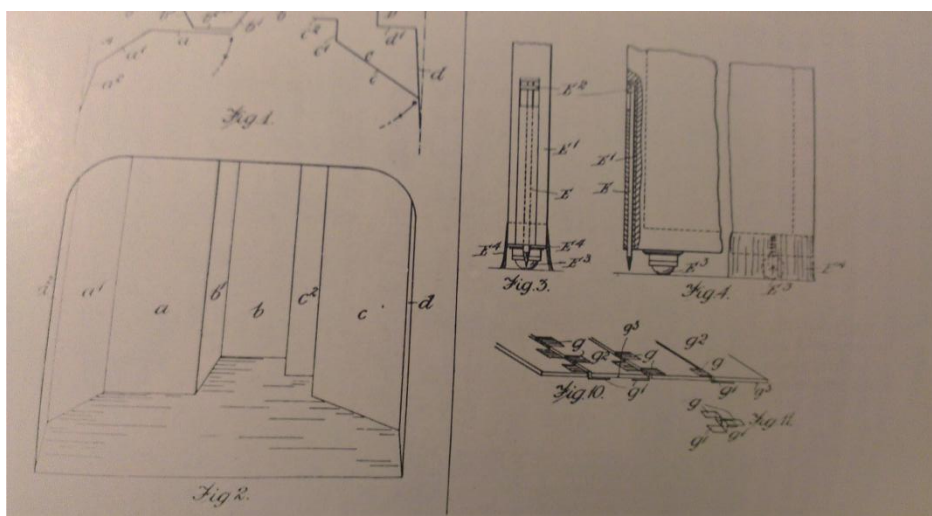


Figure 6. Detail from patent application for Craig Screens. (Dorn "W.B. Yeats" 114.b).



Figure 7. *Sheherazade*: Décor, 1916. (Academy Editions 12-13).

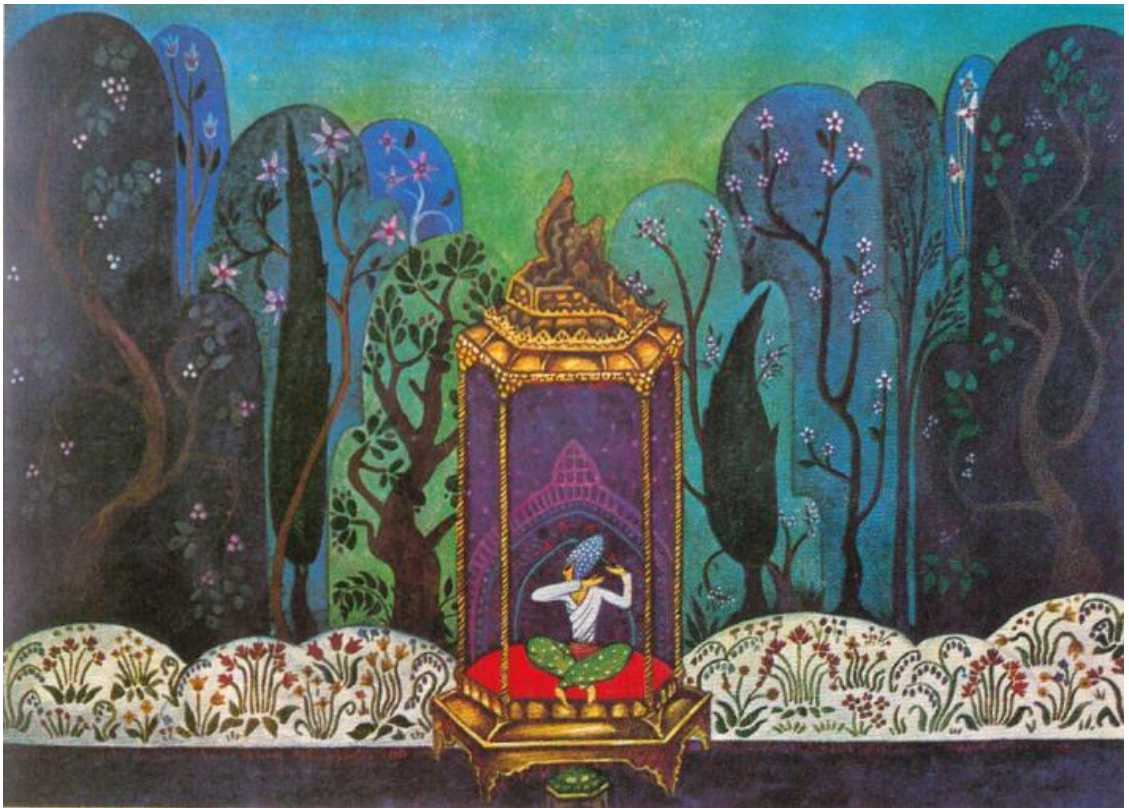


Figure 8. Stage design by Micheál Mac Liammóir for Padraic Colum's *Mogu* at the Gate Theatre in 1931 (Fitz-Simon "The Irish Theatre" 143).



Figure 9. *L'Oiseau de Feu*: Tsarevich, 1910. (Academy Editions 32-33).



Figure 10. Neo-Celtic design by Micheál Mac Liammóir for *Diarmuid agus Gráinne* and *Diarmuid and Grainne*. (Fitz-Simon “*The Irish Theatre*” 183).



Figure 11. *Sheherazade*: La Sultane Jaune, 1916. (Academy Editions 16-17).