Mother England, Mother Ireland: National Allegory and Maternal Authority in Anglo-Irish Literature and Culture, 1880-1922

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Abstract

"Mother England, Mother Ireland" proposes a new way of reading allegories of nation-building and national identity in Anglo-Irish literature at the end of the nineteenth century. I argue that authors who claimed affiliations with both England and Ireland (Maud Gonne, Lady Augusta Gregory, Bram Stoker, and Oscar Wilde) exploited the capacity of allegory to infiltrate a range of genres and, in doing so, discovered hidden potential in the links between motherhood and motherland. Examining nonfiction, novels, drama, speeches, and public spectacles, I show how these writers adapted allegorical representations of Ireland as a mother not only to confront Ireland's vexed political and cultural relationship with England, but also to explore cross-cultural links between Ireland and Britain's outlying colonies.

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Introduction

Reconsidering National Allegory

In the late 1880s the Anglo-Irishwoman Fanny Parnell was at the height of her popularity as an Irish nationalist poet. The younger sister of Charles Stewart Parnell, the Protestant politician and champion of Irish Home Rule, Fanny Parnell wrote patriotic poems, but she also devoted herself to activism, founding the American branch of the Ladies' Land League, an organization that subsequently flourished in Ireland (albeit briefly) under her sister Anna's guidance. Like most patriotic literature in nineteenth-century Ireland, Fanny Parnell's poetry relied upon allegories of the Irish nation as a mother who longs for her brave Irish sons to claim independence from England.

In her poem "Ireland, Mother!" Parnell declares her loyalty to this maternal figure: "Fairest and saddest, what shall I do for thee?" (qtd. in Côté). Despite her own success as a patriotic poet and activist, Parnell admits in the poem her anxieties about serving Mother Ireland adequately: "I am a woman, I can do naught for thee, / Ireland, mother!" (qtd. in Ward, *Unmanageable Revolutionaries*, 12). Parnell's poem dramatizes the predicament of Irish women with political aspirations in the nineteenth century: although nationalists routinely envisioned Ireland as a female figure, women faced considerable obstacles when they sought to participate in Irish politics.

To what extent did the very representation of Ireland as a mother contribute to these obstacles? Many scholars argue that the portrayal of Ireland as a woman (and, more particularly, a mother) has eclipsed the genuine political accomplishments of Irish women. It has become standard since the 1980s to regard this figure disapprovingly.[1] This dissertation,

however, argues that Anglo-Irish authors employed Mother Ireland in ways that legitimized women's political and artistic aspirations.

I show how the Anglo-Irish imagination transformed images of the nation as a mother to challenge gender roles in Ireland, to scrutinize the nation's contested status within the United Kingdom, and to experiment with cross-cultural identifications between Ireland and Britain's other colonies. The authors within this study—Maud Gonne, Lady Augusta Gregory, Bram Stoker, and Oscar Wilde—discovered new possibilities for feminized allegory as a result of their hyphenated national status, which impelled them to revise established depictions of Mother Ireland, but also to dissect and exploit the ways that representations of maternity were used to justify the British Empire's pursuits in Ireland and further abroad.

Evaluating the charged period between the Home Rule debates of the 1880s and the emergence of the Irish Free State in 1922, I consider essays, novels, and plays alongside public spectacles and political speeches. This attention to form allows my project to make claims about genre and gender in Ireland. I propose that Anglo-Irish writers gained access to the radical potential of a maternal Ireland by pursuing genres not commonly associated with literary expressions of Irish nationalist identity in the nineteenth century. As a result, the authors in my project eluded the idealized representations of motherhood that had calcified in popular forms such as the ballad and nationalist drama. They also revealed the political viability of allegory by disputing the notion that it operates indirectly and obliquely. While Fanny Parnell protests women's limited political roles in her ballad "Ireland, Mother!," my argument suggests that she—and Anglo-Irish writers like her—might have articulated greater

possibilities for Irish women if she had avoided the ballad form, noted for its veneration of women as passive symbols, not political activists.

As my dissertation title suggests, an evaluation of Mother Ireland obliges a reassessment of "Mother England"—namely, the ways that the English mobilized portrayals of maternity to account for England's colonial relationship with Ireland. Analogies for colonialism often rely on particular gender configurations: the colonizer (described as male) violates the colonized (described as female), or the paternalistic colonizer assists the childlike, helpless (and thus feminized) colonized. As David Cairns and Shaun Richards describe it, colonialism creates a situation whereby the colonized are "constrained to assert a dignified self-identity in opposition to a discourse which defines them as, variously, barbarian, pagan, ape, female; but always subordinate and inferior" (8). My dissertation shows that equally potent were representations in which England acted as a compassionate mother toward her colonial children.

This mother/child relationship is especially apparent in my first chapter, in which I show how Queen Victoria marshaled images of her own maternity to represent England's aptitude for governing Ireland. Maud Gonne, I argue, challenged Victoria's claim to the maternal role, but also adopted some of the Queen's political strategies. The image of Queen Victoria looms in a less conspicuous (but no less forceful) way over my other chapters as well. Augusta Gregory, the focus of my second chapter, was herself described by Gonne as "a queer little old lady, rather like Queen Victoria" (MacBride 321). In the third and fourth chapters, Victoria emerges in maternal characters such as Oscar Wilde's Herodias, Queen of Judea in his play *Salome* (1894), and Bram Stoker's Janet MacKelpie, who is playfully

named "empress" in his novel *The Lady of the Shroud* (1909), evoking Victoria's adoption of that title in 1876.

Ireland is of course not unique in its tradition of national allegory, particularly of imagining the nation as a mother. As Ida Blom notes, "In the Nordic countries, as well as in India, the mother figure represented the nation" (8). This kind of iconography can be found in imperial nations of the nineteenth century (France's Marianne and England's Britannia) as well as colonized nations such as Egypt and Ethiopia. Scholars have scrutinized women's power under these female images of the nation, often concluding that there is an "inverse relationship between the prominence of female figures in the allegorizations of nation and the degree of access granted women to the political apparatus of the state" (Pierson 44).

Marina Warner, for instance, claims that male figures of nationhood such as England's John Bull or America's Uncle Sam are free to be seen as individuals with whom real men might identify. "The female form," however,

> does not refer to particular women, does not describe women as a group, and often does not even presume to evoke their natures. We can all live inside Britannia or Liberty's skin, they stand for us regardless of sex, yet we cannot identify with them as characters. [. . .] Liberty, like many abstract concepts expressed in the feminine, is in deadly earnest and one-dimensional. (12-13)

Female personifications of the nation, from Warner's point of view, do not represent the "collective consciousness" of women (12). She contends that while masculinized allegory may hold political potential for the men living under its sign, feminized allegory holds none of the same promise for women.

While Warner faults feminized allegory for its tendency to reinforce gender hierarchies that are damaging to women, national allegory more broadly has been criticized by postcolonial scholars for perpetuating power inequities of both gender and ethnicity. Jean Franco, for example, claims that "the problems that national discourse engendered—problems of patriarchy and of power and its attendant techniques of exclusion and discrimination—could not be resolved by a genre [allegory] that was implicated in these very procedures" (133). From Franco's perspective, allegory itself is expressive of the most oppressive forms of nationalist and imperialist thought.

Franco's charges against allegory emerge in her response to Frederic Jameson's 1986 essay "Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism." In this essay, Jameson argues that "all third-world texts are necessarily [. . .] allegorical, and in a very specific way: they are to be read as [. . .] *national allegories*" (69). Jameson acknowledges that the varied histories of the nations he categorizes as "third-world" prevent him (and indeed anyone) from proposing "some general theory of what is often called third-world literature" (68). We can, he suggests, nevertheless draw some conclusions about the differences between the literature of the "third-world" and "first-world" (and by "first-world" he means American) (69). Jameson sees most conspicuously a separation between public and private experiences in American literature that is absent in the literatures, for instance, of Africa and China, the two main examples in his essay (69). Even if third world texts seem "private and invested with a properly libidinal dynamic," they are still dominated by a political impulse that can always be read as an allegory of the particular circumstances of the third world condition (69). The private/libidinal is a first world privilege because of its stable public identity, which rests on its powerful national and economic status.

From this perspective, critics argue, third world literature cannot aspire beyond national allegory. Its literature inevitably concerns the collective rather than the individual. Aijaz Ahmad, in "Jameson's Rhetoric of Otherness and the 'National Allegory,'" disagrees fundamentally with Jameson's assumption that third world literature can be thought of as "an internally coherent object of theoretical knowledge" (77). Jameson's reliance on the blanket term *nationalism* is equally problematic: "[t]here are hundreds of nationalisms in Asia and Africa today; some are progressive, others are not" (Ahmad 79). For Ahmad, because Jameson's understandings of "national" and "nationalism" are reductive, national allegory, at least in Jameson's formulation, is ultimately an insufficient genre.

Franco arrives at this same conclusion, but her approach more directly criticizes Jameson's perceptions of genre. In "The Nation as Imagined Community," she claims that

> it is one thing to recognize that not only the novel but also the essay and the 'great poem' have been deeply implicated in the process of national formation and its attendant problems of national and cultural identity and quite another to claim [. . .] that the 'national allegory' characterizes Third World literature at the present time. (130)

Franco argues that Jameson unnecessarily privileges the genre of allegory, and in doing so, he ignores that "literary genres and styles are inevitably hybridized" (130). Treating allegory as a non-hybridized, straightforward genre, she doubts whether it is useful for the complexity of national literatures (130-31). She indicates that even when a text uses conspicuously allegorical names for its characters, such as "Goldseeker," it is with the intention of calling up allegory in order to reveal its insufficiency (131). From this perspective, allegory is a

limiting and simplistic genre that cannot generate the complicated meanings needed to express contested national identities.

I propose, however, that national allegory possesses the capacity to express the fraught and unstable nature of national identity precisely because of its ability to participate in the generic hybridity that Franco argues is beyond its scope. The Anglo-Irish authors within my study experiment with allegory through a variety of genres—essay, autobiography, speeches, plays, and fiction. Each of these endeavors, moreover, results in a different manifestation of Mother Ireland, which challenges the assumption that genre, nationhood, or gender identity can ever have impervious boundaries. I show, for instance, how Gonne and Gregory turned to nonfiction because that genre was less populated with static, romantic images of motherhood. Wilde experimented with allegory through Symbolism, a fin-de-siècle form borrowed from a Continental (and not English) aesthetic tradition. Stoker employed a hybridized novelistic form—a gothic-turned-adventure tale—to express his hopes that Ireland and England would develop a mutually beneficial partnership. In each of these instances, national allegory does not present nationality or allegory as a totality; rather, it exposes the instability of both.

Jameson claims that "the allegorical spirit is profoundly discontinuous" (73). It is, he explains,

> a matter of breaks and heterogeneities, of the multiple polysemia of the dream rather than the homogenous representation of the symbol. Our traditional conception of allegory—based, for instance, on stereotypes of Bunyan—is that of an elaborate set of figures and personifications to be read against some one-to-one table of equivalences: this is, so to speak, a one-dimensional view of this signifying process, which might

> only be set in motion and complexified were we willing to entertain the more alarming notion that such equivalences are themselves in constant change and transformation at each perpetual present of the text. (73)

The problem is not, then, that allegory itself intrinsically simplifies into the familiar two-tiered structure, but rather that we have the tendency to restrict it interpretatively to those two levels. Jameson's perspective opens up not only the heuristic, but also the political potential of allegory.

This potential is discernable in what he calls the "'floating' or transferable structure of allegorical reference," in which the tenor is described through an array of different vehicles or the "allegorical tenor and vehicle change places" (Jameson 78, 74). Allegory exhibits its most robust interpretive promise when different vehicles coexist within one text, jostling for primacy or revealing hidden likenesses. When tenor and vehicle change places in a text, the allegory itself can either be the text's main focus (the plot details are thus subordinated to the allegory's broader meaning); or the details of the text can be seen as a crucial manifestation of the larger allegory (thereby prioritizing texture over broad strokes) (Jameson 78). This "optional nature" of allegory (78) allows us to discover as much about the ideas, objects, or characters that embody the allegorized concept as we discover about the larger concept itself.

When Anglo-Irish authors allegorized the Irish nation as a mother, they not only envisioned a new identity for their nation, but also demonstrated particular ways that motherhood was politicized in Ireland. While Jameson uses examples of allegories of the nation as a woman in his essay, he neglects their political viability for female nationalists. Gonne and Gregory, for instance, successfully managed depictions of Mother Ireland by

alternating between the encompassing symbol of Mother of the Nation and the detailed experiences of national mothers. They, in turn, reveal a function of national allegory absent from Jameson's analysis: allegories of the nation as a mother are most productive for women when they can alternate at their own will between embodying these national symbols and detaching from them.

Ireland is an especially provocative place to consider the role of national allegory because of its complicated history of colonization, especially in the nineteenth century. Scholars such as Cairns, Richards, and Declan Kiberd have forged an "Irish postcolonial" perspective by highlighting, among other things, the forced displacement of the Gaelic language by the English language and the racial stereotyping of the Irish by the British. Scholars critical of this enterprise argue that Ireland fits uneasily into a colonial model for a number of reasons, including Britain's long rule of Ireland, which originated in the twelfth century and led to Ireland's incorporation into the United Kingdom by the Act of Union in 1801. Arguing that after 1801 Irish soldiers contributed to the colonial rule of other nations by joining the British army, scholars such as Roy Roster and Edna Longley maintain that Ireland in the nineteenth century shared more similarities with England and other European nations than with colonized nations such as those in Africa or Asia. Ireland's ambiguous position within a postcolonial framework has encouraged some to view the nation as a "'first world' country with a 'third world' colonial history" (Foley 8).

In *Transformations in Irish Culture* (1996), Luke Gibbons draws on this "colonial history" as he brings the discussion of allegory to an Irish context. As I will discuss in more detail in my first chapter, Gibbons proposes that allegory can be politically empowering when "there is an instability of reference and contestation of meaning to the point where it

may not be at all clear where the figural ends, and the literal begins" (20). Gibbons's "instability of reference" is similar to Jameson's notion of allegory's "optional nature" (20, 78). Gibbons claims that allegories of Ireland as a woman challenge the typical representations of a masculine colonizer and a feminine colonized by designating public (and therefore political) space as feminized. By embracing feminized allegories, Gibbons claims, Irish nationalists "turned the colonial stereotype against itself" (20).

Feminized allegories thus represented a shrewd response to England's feminization of Ireland. Matthew Arnold's 1867 essay "On the Study of Celtic Literature" promoted the idea that the "Celtic nature" was naturally "feminine" (83, 89). Primarily "sentimental," "quick to feel impressions," and "keenly sensitive to joy and to sorrow," the Celt was "peculiarly disposed to feel the spell of the feminine idiosyncrasy; he has an affinity to it; he is not far from its secret" (83, 89). The masculinized English could access this mysterious and charming secret if they tapped into the Celtic strain of their national personality, which Arnold believed coexisted with a German and Latin strain in English identity. While the Celtic strain would help extinguish the vulgar "Philistinism" of English culture, the perceived connection between the Celt and Teuton could benefit the Irish, too. Since the Celt was, in Arnold's opinion, "ineffectual in politics" due to his lack of "balance, measure, and patience," Arnold does not question England's governance of Ireland (88, 85). Instead, he chastises the English for governing Ireland in an unproductive way: the Irish are more likely to accept that they are "inextricably bound up" with the English if the English take an interest in Celtic culture (xx). The "spiritual kinship" between England and Ireland that Arnold champions not only legitimizes colonial rule, but also links the "feminine idiosyncrasy" with dependence and helplessness (71).

Arnold's Celt helped solidify the English stereotype of the feminized Irishman, but a more hostile representation of the Irish male also existed. As L. Perry Curtis, Jr. suggests, cartoons in *Punch* often harshly depicted the Irishman as a destructive Fenian monster bent on destroying British rule at any cost. Curtis argues that English cartoonists of the mid- to late-nineteenth century drew upon the "emerging sciences" of physiognomy, phrenology, and ethnology, which hierarchized facial features to differentiate the "civilized" Englishman with his prominent forehead and vertically-angled face from the "barbarous" Irishman with his small forehead and projecting mouth and jaw (*Apes and Angels* xix-xx). These simianized representations not only cast the Irish as uncivilized and unfit for self rule, but also intimated that their antagonism required active suppression.

While depictions of failed Irish masculinity (through effeminacy, on the one hand, or violent hyper-masculinization on the other) relied on perceived differences between the English and Irish, English representations of Irish femininity operated on the reverse premise. Visual portrayals of Ireland as a woman, named Hibernia or Erin, "suggested all that was feminine, courageous, and chaste about Irish womanhood" (Curtis, *Apes and Angels* 75). The typical portrait of Hibernia or Erin in *Punch* contrasts with that of her fellow Irishman; where his facial features assign non-white ethnicity, her facial features designate a whiteness read as "civilized." The Irish woman, in fact, when allegorized as nation, is judged to be similar to the white, middle-class English woman, whose purity and chastity at once symbolize the civilizing mission of colonialism and compel its continuation. Occasionally the English imagined the Irish woman as an unkempt, simianized domestic sovereign, whose "*domestic degeneracy*," as Anne McClintock puts it, aligns her with the slovenly (and often dangerous) Irishman (53). Yet when Irish femininity is associated with nationhood, the

visual representations almost always characterize Irish womanhood as a model of Victorian feminine virtue. This virtue did not suggest the possibility of Irish self governance; on the contrary, these depictions of Irish femininity pictured an honorable Ireland which operated on the same gender codes as its ruling neighbor and therefore required the protection of Britain and its mighty Empire.

Irish nationalists claimed their own unique tradition of allegorizing their nation as a female figure. The Irish, in fact, had been describing Ireland as a woman since pre-colonial, pre-Christian times. In Celtic mythology, for example, the figure of Ireland-as-woman was described as the goddess of sovereignty, who represented both abstract sovereignty and the physical landscape of Ireland. For the Celtic king to claim his land, he had to mate ritually with this goddess in a sacred marriage called the *banfheis rígi* (MacCana 521; Johnson 3). This goddess endured into Irish medieval texts as a sexually promiscuous figure who held the power to select the king most fit for the land. In these texts, the female figure, such as Queen Medbh of Connacht in the stories of *Táin Bó Cuailgne,* is considered a real-life personification of the Celtic sovereignty goddess (Johnson 3).

This robust female figure, however, changed as Ireland's aristocracy was increasingly challenged by England throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. By the eighteenth century, while the Catholic Irish were suffering severe penalties by the English, the sovereignty goddess as a symbol for Ireland was replaced with a passive female figure who laments her colonial persecution. This figure was developed through what is known as *aisling* poetry, with the *spear bhean* (literally, sky-woman) as the ethereal Ireland-as-woman who waits for her Jacobite prince. Although the Act of Union in 1801 officially absorbed Ireland under English government, Irish agitation for independence throughout the nineteenth

century prompted Irish writers and artists to again transform the feminized figure into a symbol for Irish Home Rule and national independence.

Nineteenth-century renderings of a feminized Ireland took the form of either a wholesome maiden such as Erin or Dark Rosaleen, or a suffering old woman, such as the Shan Van Vocht (literally, poor old woman) or Mother Ireland. Dublin cartoonists depicted Erin in a variety of roles, from "frail and maidenly" to "strong and defiant" (Curtis, *Images* 15). The Shan Van Vocht was portrayed alternately as a lamenting hag or a bold, unruly virago—the latter drawing upon Celtic incarnations of the goddess of war (Clark 168-9). After the Great Famine in Ireland from 1845-51, many Catholic Irish found renewed comfort in the figure of the Virgin Mary, and by the late-nineteenth century, Mother Ireland and the Mother of God were often connected in literary and cultural representations (Innes 41).[2]

Motherhood was an especially weighted category in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Ireland. Both the cult of the Virgin Mary and nationalist systems of belief idealized the figure of the mother; the prominent nationalist Patrick Pearse, like many of his political peers, relied heavily upon "myths of motherland" to promote "the mother church of Catholic revival; the motherland of national revival; and the mother tongue of Gaelic revival" (Kearney 118-19). Pearse's final poem before he was executed for his role in the 1916 Easter Rising was entitled "The Mother," which spoke through his own mother's voice not only to express her personal anguish, but also to transform this anguish into a nation's lament for her lost sons. Maternity soon after earned state endorsement in the 1937 Irish Constitution's protection and support of women in their exclusive roles as unemployed wives and mothers.[3]

The worry that politicizing motherhood traps women in the procreative function of providing the nation with healthy citizens has made scholars such as Elizabeth Butler Cullingford wary of Irish nationalism's glorification of maternity. The code of "hyper-masculinity" for nationalist men, which insists on a "hyper-feminine" standard for women, has "in the Irish Catholic context meant an intensification of the already heavy emphasis on virginity and motherhood, and a denial of autonomous female desire," sexual or otherwise (Cullingford, "'Thinking of Her'" 6). As Enda Duffy puts it, in Ireland "the effort to hold sacred the figure of the mother as a starred site for the representation of statehood is combined with an apparent determination all the while to avoid the physical reality constituting that motherhood" (211). Maternity—not the individual mother—claims a hallowed role within Irish nationalism.

The Irish documentary *Mother Ireland* (1988) offers an alternative perspective on images of Ireland as both a woman and a mother. Written and directed by Ann Crilly, *Mother Ireland* was initially banned in the Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom for its interviews with Mairead Farrell, a commanding officer in the Irish Republican Army. The documentary focuses on the way Ireland imagined as a woman is perceived by contemporary feminists and nationalists (and, occasionally, when the title fits, feminist nationalists) (Lyons 114). Farrell makes what is perhaps the most gripping comment in the whole documentary. Reflecting on her ten-year incarceration in Armagh Gaol, Farrell refers to a common saying the women prisoners shared: "It became a standard joke in there [. . . .] We would say, 'Mother Ireland, get off our back.'"[4] Here the joke is on Mother Ireland—for Farrell and the other women prisoners, she has become a nagging, outmoded representation of Irish womanhood.

Farrell, however, does not get the last words on Mother Ireland. Crilly's interviews with Irish women, from civil rights activists to journalists, demonstrate that Mother Ireland is so embedded within Irish culture that both feminists and nationalists have a hard time dispensing with her. *Republican News* editor Rita O'Hare maintains that Mother Ireland is a good image in that it depicts woman as both nurturing others *and* fighting for herself, and that the image is negative only when she is distorted to represent womanhood as clinging and dependent. Activist Bernadette McAliskey concurs by insisting that she still sees herself as a "child of Mother Ireland," despite the figure's "weaknesses and contradictions." The contradictions built into the documentary's representation of Mother Ireland suggest that the figure does not necessarily need to be rejected so much as it might be available for empowering transformations.

Maternity, after all, encompasses a wide range of significations: children, young mothers-to-be, mothers, and grandmothers. This comprehensive understanding of maternity is central in the chapters to follow: Gonne, Gregory, Wilde, and Stoker all rely upon generational tensions to craft their visions of Mother Ireland. Gonne pits a fresh-faced Mother Ireland against the image of an old, decrepit Queen Victoria. Gregory bypasses an interest in the younger figure to embrace the mature mother figure. Wilde relies on the tensions between Salome and her mother Herodias to fashion his Irish allegory in *Salome*, while Stoker's *The Lady of the Shroud* provides both young and old aspects of Mother Ireland in two characters, Princess Teuta and the Scotswoman Janet MacKelpie.

Each author in this study in some way claimed national affiliations with both England and Ireland, which I designate by the term "Anglo-Irish." Gonne's heritage was the most English of the four. While she claimed a rather hazy Irish ancestry through her great

grandfather, the tension between her largely English background and her political sympathies for Ireland molded her in the same cast as the Anglo-Irish elite who were inclined to nationalist beliefs. The families of Gregory and Wilde were verifiably Anglo-Irish, descending from the long line of English colonial settlers in Ireland. Bram Stoker's father was Anglo-Irish and his mother Irish, a combination that prompts Joseph Valente to label Stoker "Anglo-Celtic" rather than "Anglo-Irish" (16).

I have chosen to place emphasis on the term "Anglo-Irish" because I think it is useful to consider the ways Gonne, Gregory, Wilde, and Stoker benefited from, and indeed exploited, their accessibility to both nations. They discovered new directions for feminized allegory based on their hyphenated status; they capitalized on their dual ability, on the one hand, to adopt the distinctive perspectives of each nation and, on the other, to see from a new, hybrid perspective. These writers used the dual identity of "Anglo-Irish" to express a unique outlook on Ireland's relationship with England, on its position within the United Kingdom, and more broadly, within the British Empire.

By virtue of their mixed heritage, Anglo-Irish authors experienced national identity as a cross-cultural enterprise. It is no surprise, then, that they were willing to explore models for national identity based on connections between Ireland and nations other than England. As my chapter on Lady Gregory details, many Irish intellectuals imagined their sense of Irishness by drawing on transnational associations. Artists at the center of the Celtic Revival movement, for instance, frequently relied on impressions of the East to craft their sense of Irish national identity. Many nationalists understood Ireland to be linked to nations such as India and South Africa based on their mutual desire to gain independence from British rule.

All of my chapters reveal this kind of cross-cultural pollination. Gonne turns to South Africa; Gregory to Egypt; Wilde to the Middle East; and Stoker to the Balkans. What distinguishes my dissertation from other studies of transnational politics in Irish literature, such as Joseph Lennon's *Irish Orientialism* (2004), is that in the works I analyze transnationalism finds its fullest articulation through the maternal body. The four Anglo-Irish authors in my study discovered motherhood to be dynamic and manifold—the opposite of the insular depictions of Irish maternity revered by many forms of Irish nationalism in the nineteenth century.

In my first chapter I analyze Gonne's essays and performances as that of Ireland's uncrowned royalty, with a particular emphasis on her diatribes against Ireland's monarch, Queen Victoria. Considering the ways in which Gonne used journalism as a means to shape her public role as "Mother Ireland," I argue that she petitioned for Irish mothers' involvement in nationalist politics and sustained her elite class position by manipulating Victoria's own embodiment of maternal sovereignty. When the gender codes of Victorian domesticity, Catholicism, and Irish nationalism threatened to compromise Gonne's assertion that Irish mothers were natural activists rather than passive symbols, she shifted her focus to depictions of women in other nations. Gonne thus tailored the allegory of nation-as-mother to support Irish women's political activism by imagining transnational solidarities with mothers in Britain's distant colonies.

In my second chapter, I examine Gregory's alternative solution for thinking of Ireland as a mother. While Gonne competed with Queen Victoria, Gregory pursued a cooperative model of Irish maternity based on women's shared coping strategies. She used this model to confront key representational problems that she saw afflicting the Celtic Revival, including

Anglo-Irish writers' appropriation of native Irish folklore and her own difficulty in balancing the Revival's commitment to literary collaboration with her desire to be identified as an accomplished individual author. I show how Gregory confronts these problems by concocting dominant maternal figures in her nonfiction, from her essay celebrating the mother of an Egyptian nationalist to her collection of tales about the Irish healer and "witch" Biddy Early, whom Gregory fashions as a revised Mother Ireland.

My third chapter regards the title character in Wilde's play *Salome*, arguably the most notorious femme fatale in the nineteenth century, as a new kind of female figure symbolic of Ireland. I suggest that Wilde utilizes the most "un-English" of the fin-de-siècle literary modes—Symbolism—to conjure a fantastical imperial backdrop of Eastern rule in order to stage a number of anxieties about Ireland's uneasy position within the British Empire. The play dramatizes these anxieties through the tension between Salome and her mother Herodias. Unlike Gonne and Gregory, Wilde questions maternal authority. Yet he also suggests that Salome's relationship with her mother stimulates her artistic imagination, which ultimately grants her (and thus Ireland) the capacity for self-definition.

In my final chapter I read Stoker's 1909 novel *The Lady of the Shroud*, which is set in the Balkans, as a response to the changing roles of Irish nationalist women. In the first decade of the twentieth century, female activists in Ireland moved away from perceiving their politics as an extension of their maternal sympathies—what Gonne and Gregory had once eagerly promoted. Stoker maps this shift onto his gothic-turned-adventure text, but he is not willing to dispense with the centrality of the maternal. I argue that Stoker uses a technologically savvy mother figure to suggest closer ties between England and Ireland than Gonne, Gregory, or Wilde had envisioned. As this hi-tech maternal figure meets modernity

head on, Stoker's novel advertises the potential of technology to help Ireland claim its position as a valued member not only of the United Kingdom, but also of a rapidly globalizing world.

Ultimately, these four authors turned to representations of maternity to understand the depth and elasticity of Irish national identity. They probed the differences between categories such as *Anglo-Irish* and *British*, and they also comprehended Irishness against an international backdrop, especially by imagining connections between Irish motherhood and portrayals of maternity in places such as Egypt and South Africa. My project reveals that these authors' literary experimentations with Mother Ireland help us better appreciate the delicate boundaries of nationality within the British Isles, but they also demand that we recognize the cross-cultural mingling that informed even the most rigid pursuits of national character in nineteenth-century Ireland. To access this globally expansive understanding of Irishness, the authors in this study turned to allegory. Their choice illuminates how allegory in an Irish context reaches its fullest potential as a political genre in the hands of mothers, whether real or fictional, who are also activists.

Chapter One

Rival Maternities: Maud Gonne, Queen Victoria, and the Reign of the Political Mother

In the opening pages of her autobiography, *A Servant of the Queen* (1938), Maud Gonne discloses that the queen to whom her title refers is none other than Cathleen ni Houlihan, the female personification of Ireland whom Gonne famously performed in William Butler Yeats's and Lady Gregory's 1902 play.[1] Another queen, however, lurks in the title. By the time Gonne's autobiography was published, Victoria had been dead almost four decades, but Gonne's text—a work intended to shape her legacy within the Irish nationalist movement—nevertheless invokes her rivalry with Queen Victoria, sovereign of Ireland.

During the latter part of Victoria's reign, Gonne devoted her energies to denouncing British imperialism and promoting Irish nationalism by writing essays for nationalist newspapers and delivering speeches in Europe and America.[2] Gonne was celebrated by her contemporaries for her oratory, but she was even more renowned for her compelling personifications of Ireland. Gonne embraced her identifications with Ireland-as-woman, believing them to be politically effective. A striking woman with an impressive voice, she turned down nearly all of the theatrical roles she was offered in fear that acting would monopolize her time and talents, but she eagerly adopted the role of Cathleen ni Houlihan: "I did it," Gonne explains, "because it was only on that condition that Willie Yeats would give us the right of producing his play, and I felt that play would have great importance for the National movement" (MacBride 177). The "us" Gonne refers to here is *Inghínidhe na hÉireann* (Daughters of Erin), the first prominent Irish nationalist organization for women since the disbandment in 1882 of the short-lived Ladies' Land League. Gonne's acceptance

of the Cathleen role reveals not only her desire to situate *Inghínidhe na hÉireann* in the center of nationalist cultural life, but also her willingness to serve as the embodiment of an aspiring autonomous Ireland.

Because of the critical trend to view symbols of Ireland as a mother as impediments to Irish women's autonomy, scholarship devoted to Gonne's activism often aims to rescue her from the damage that Mother Ireland may have inflicted on her political legacy.[3] This chapter argues, however, that Gonne harnessed the potential of this figure to justify revolutionary possibilities for Irish women. She did so through a model of maternal activism, crafting a version of Mother Ireland that promoted the political endeavors of Irish mothers.

I locate Gonne's maternal activism in a selection of her essays and performances, with particular emphasis on her written and spoken diatribes against Queen Victoria, her play *Dawn* (1904), and her autobiography *A Servant of the Queen*. Through these texts and spectacles, Gonne was careful both to validate the figure of the "political mother" beyond procreative and symbolic functions and to model to other Irish nationalist women how they could employ—even embody—the figure while not becoming confined by it. When the gender codes of nationalism and Catholicism in Ireland endangered her endorsement of political motherhood, Gonne turned to representations of maternal power in other colonies of the British Empire, thereby suggesting the utility of cross-national alliances for the goals of Irish feminism *and* Irish nationalism. Gonne did not reject the symbolic applications of Mother Ireland; instead, she learned how to get inside the symbol, to work from within it in strikingly innovative ways. She exploited the symbol when it proved useful and discarded it when its political value diminished.

While philanthropy based on motherly virtues represented a typical enterprise for middle- and upper-class Victorian women, Gonne's maternal activism was uniquely shaped by the tension between her English heritage and her political sympathies for Ireland.[4] Gonne acknowledged that motherhood in particular was a fundamental identity for many Irish women, who had a narrower range of female roles to choose from than their Anglo-Irish or English contemporaries. Seeking to sever her ties dramatically with England in order to lay claim publicly to legitimate Irishness, Gonne conceptualized her revision of Mother Ireland in relation and in opposition to Queen Victoria's own embodiment of maternal sovereignty.

By depicting Victoria as a symbol of mismanaged British rule in Ireland, Gonne exploited the figure of the Queen as mother and monarch to argue for the necessity of Irish independence. Victoria's visit to Ireland in 1900 provided Gonne with two opportunities to engage the Queen in representational battle, first through her composition of the political essay "The Famine Queen," and second, in a public demonstration she superintended known as the Patriotic Children's Treat. As I discuss in more detail later in the chapter, both written diatribe and civic spectacle envision Victoria as representative of an imperial maternity that Gonne challenged with her own vision of an Irish national motherhood. Although Gonne molded her image of Mother Ireland to compete figuratively with Britain's monarch, she also secured her own privileged class status by borrowing from the Queen's representational tactics.

Like Gonne, other Irish nationalists sought to depose Ireland's reigning Queen. Nationalists of the 1880s routinely matched Victoria against Charles Stewart Parnell, the parliamentary nationalist who, despite his status as a Protestant landlord, managed to build a populist party united for Home Rule. In a June 1880 issue of the American journal *Celtic*

Monthly, a "noble and generous" Parnell is honored as the "'uncrowned king of Ireland,'" while Victoria is described as "selfish, mean, and vixenish" (qtd. in Murphy 200). If Victoria's femininity is maligned by contrast to the benevolent paternal figure of Parnell, the Queen fares even worse when she is pitted against female personifications of Ireland. "Under Which Queen," a poem by M. Crotty that appeared in the nationalist newspaper the *United Irishman*, frames a dialogue between "Britain" and "Erin" and uses the news of Victoria's visit to Ireland in April as a context to insinuate that the figure of Britain is the Queen herself. The feminized Britain in the poem attempts to woo stalwart Irish men:

> Come forth men of Erin, come forth at my call,
> My Empire's in danger, I've need of you all—
> My own Saxon soldiers can savages hunt,
> But with Boers to deal with *you* must be in *front*.
> I've treated you badly—had many a row,
> But my heart's really aching for love of you *now*.
> (1-6)

Connecting the Irish and Boer situations, Crotty finds it ludicrous to think that they might fight one another rather than both battling Britain. Worried that Irishmen may discover their common bond with the Boers, the feminized symbol of Britain in the poem claims, "I don't think they love me as much as I thought [. . .] / Perhaps they'd be 'listing [enlisting] if they should see *Me*." As Crotty ventriloquizes the Queen in these last lines, he confirms what Irish nationalists feared about the Queen's visit to Ireland in 1900: that it was undertaken exclusively to recruit soldiers for the Boer War (Arnstein, "Queen Victoria's Other Island" 58). The "ache" of love in the first stanza ridicules Victoria's own pretended longing for the

Irish, whom she is prepared to bribe for a "shilling a day" of army wages. Eroticizing military recruitment, and underscoring the reluctance of the Irishmen depicted in the poem, Crotty mocks the eighty-one year-old Queen's lack of sexual allure.

Although nationalists were vilifying Victoria in their texts, there is evidence that many in Ireland perceived the Queen favorably.[5] She certainly thought so. About her first visit to Ireland in 1849, she remarked to her uncle that "a more good-humoured crowd I never saw [. . . .] We drove out yesterday afternoon and were followed by jaunting-cars and riders and people running and screaming, which would have amused you" (Hibbert 80). In 1853 and 1861, as James Murphy has argued, Queen Victoria and Prince Albert visited Ireland "as patrons of education, industry, and the arts, on the one hand, and as promoters of a new sort of engagement with the countryside as a resort from urban life, on the other" (110). In 1853, they celebrated the ways that Victorian values had ostensibly taken hold in Ireland with a visit to Ireland's "Crystal Palace," "the first Irish attempt to play host to an international exhibition of the wonders of modern technology and industry" (Arnstein, "Queen Victoria's Other Island" 54). Victoria's final visit to Ireland in 1900, her first visit as a widow, produced a similarly agreeable reaction, both from Victoria and the Irish people she encountered: "The cheers and often almost screams," Victoria declares in her 4 April 1900 journal entry, "were quite deafening. Even the Nationalists in front of the City Hall seemed to forget their politics and cheered and waved their hats. It was really a wonderful reception I got and most gratifying" (Buckle, Vol. III 523). About twenty days later Victoria recalls, "I can never forget the really wild enthusiasm and affectionate loyalty displayed by all in Ireland, and shall ever retain a most grateful remembrance of this warmhearted sympathetic people" (Hibbert 344). As Murphy argues, the popularity of the Queen's visits represents a

complex relationship between Victoria and Ireland. At the beginning of her reign, she was mistakenly perceived to support the repeal of the Act of Union, and although her opinion of Ireland worsened during the 1860s Fenian rebellions and the pinnacle of Irish parliamentary nationalism in the 1880s, the great numbers of Irish soldiers who fought for the British in the Boer War of 1899-1902 inclined Victoria to see Ireland as "a valued and normal part of the United Kingdom," an attitude the Irish seemed to support by their enthusiastic cheers during her visit (Murphy xxviii, 276).

Yeats, however, viewed the fanfare Victoria received from the Irish during her final visit to Ireland with less optimism, espousing a view more in line with Crotty's poetic castigation of the Queen a month earlier. In an essay published in the *United Irishman*, Yeats is at pains to remind his readers "how little meaning there is in the cheers" for kings and queens who "come and go" ("Noble" 5). He claims that despite a warm welcome from the Irish in 1900, Victoria's previous three visits "commonly foreshadowed a fierce and sudden shaking of English power in Ireland," confirmed by significant nationalist responses following the Queen's visits of 1849, 1853, and 1861: respectively, the origin of the Tenant League, the organizing of the Fenians, and the first publication of the Fenian newspaper the *Irish People* ("Noble" 5). Yet Yeats's assertions are strained, at best, and, at worst, blatantly inaccurate: Victoria's visit in 1849, for example, followed rather than preceded a "sudden shaking" of political unrest in Ireland in the form of the 1848 Young Ireland uprising.

Yeats's imprecise political chronology notwithstanding, the Queen certainly did notice rebellious developments in Ireland. She was a harsh critic of Irish nationalism when it threatened the harmony of the United Kingdom, and she refused to entertain the notion of a royal residence in Ireland, though Prime Minister William Gladstone pressed her.[6] She

defended her infrequent presence in Ireland, contending that "Scotland and England deserved it much more" (Hibbert 212). Put off by the way that law was "openly defied" in Ireland, the Queen worried that "such an example may spread to England, if it prove successful in Ireland" (Hibbert 265-66). Though the "wild enthusiasm and affectionate loyalty" she received during her 1900 visit touched her greatly, she often perceived Ireland as the sole unruly part of the United Kingdom, which refused to "behave properly," a striking contrast to the "more deserving" Scotland (Hibbert 204, 344).

Eager to remind his readers of the Queen's tepid devotion to Ireland, Yeats claims in his essay that the "young men" of Ireland have two loyalties, "loyalty to this English Queen, [and] loyalty to her we call Kathleen Ny Hoolihan" ("Noble"). Both are "called up before them, that they may choose with clear eyes the harder way, for man becomes wise alone by deliberate choice and deliberate sacrifice" ("Noble"). Yeats closes his essay by calling loyalty to Victoria an "intellectual sloth and self-applauding egotism," whereas allegiance to Ireland-as-woman, or "Kathleen Ny Hoolihan," derives from "supreme emotion" ("Noble").

Gonne had demonstrated just this kind of supreme emotion in her first public speech in June 1890 at Barrow-in-Furness, Lancashire. Lending support to the Irish Parliamentary Party (a party she would later reject), Gonne put to use her training as an actress and drew upon her first-hand experiences with evictions in the west of Ireland. She describes this speech in her autobiography:

> It was easy telling a straightforward story of the scenes which I had witnessed and which were so terribly in my mind. I told of the old couple driven out of the house they had built fifty years ago; of the woman with her one-day-old baby left on the roadside; of the little children trying in vain to kindle a fire in the rain; of the

> desolation of the overcrowded workhouse and the separated families. I forgot where I was and then suddenly I remembered and I became aware of a dead silence, of thousands of eyes looking at me and my mind a complete blank. I stopped in the middle of a sentence, my knees began to shake and I sat down and began to cry; I would have given worlds to hide, to disappear [. . . .] I did not realise that, after the intense silence which had startled me, the audience had risen to its feet and was applauding me. (MacBride 120-121)

From her mesmerizing eviction stories to her buckling knees onstage, Gonne performs the dual role of symbolic and real woman—one unaltered by the physical world around her and the other vulnerable to visual scrutiny. Gonne's symbolic role is that of Mother Ireland, a character she inhabits through her public declarations about the fragmentation of families, the suffering of children, and the hardships of mothers. Gonne radically suggests that her own transformation from real to symbolic (and back again) is not only possible but also particularly accessible—it merely involves sharing a "straightforward" tale of her experiences, a circumstance presumably available to any woman with maternal sympathies.

Gonne's personification of Mother Ireland relies, in Luke Gibbons's words, upon the power of allegory to evoke "dense connections with the physicality of the flesh, and in particular, the maternal body" (20). In an Irish context, he continues, allegory defies the "common misapprehension that the 'figural' is implacably at odds with the 'real,' as if something only possesses allegorical—or symbolic—resonances to the extent that it is emptied of its own materiality, be it a sign, an object, or the body of a person" (20). From this perspective, the allegory of nation-as-woman has empowering implications for individual women in a colonial context such as Ireland:

> The figuration of Ireland as woman intensified under a system of cultural apartheid in which the entire native population, both male and female, shared the condition of women in the metropolitan centre. In these circumstances, the recourse to female imagery in poetry and popular protest turns the colonial stereotype against itself, positing an alternative "feminized" public sphere (imagined as the nation) against the official patriarchal order of the state. (20)

Gibbons acknowledges that the meanings of Mother Ireland calcified in potentially damaging ways for Irish women under certain ideologies of nationalism, and that in order for allegory to "retain its critical valency, it is vital that there is an instability of reference and contestation of meaning to the point where it may not be at all clear where the figural ends, and the literal begins" (20).

Gibbons's reading suggests that in the moments when Gonne acted as a personified Ireland, such as in her first public speech at Barrow-in-Furness and in her later dramatic performance of Cathleen ni Houlihan, she cultivated an enabling ambiguity between the figural and the literal, embodying a figure in order to reveal its relevance to the suffering of real people, such as the evicted tenants in her speech. Yet for Gonne, her ability to remove herself from that ambiguous space where figural and literal merge and to reclaim the literal was equally important—her capacity, that is, to become again Maud Gonne but *without* the attendant identification of Cathleen ni Houlihan or Mother Ireland. Using the trope of Mother Ireland to blur the borders between "real" and "unreal" posed particular risks for any woman hoping to establish authority in the public sphere. The risk—one not faced by any man deploying this potent imagery—would be that one would become merely a vehicle for the figural rather than an active agent manipulating it as a mask.

Indeed, Gonne performed the role of Ireland-as-woman so convincingly that she occasionally lost control over the meanings constructed by her role-playing. This is evident in a poem that appeared in the *United Irishman* about a month after the journal's first publication in 1899. Written by an anonymous poet, "To a Daughter of Erin" responds to the news that evicted tenants had asked Gonne to give speeches on their behalf in America. Though the context of the poem draws explicitly on Gonne's political activities, in the first stanza the poet emphasizes Gonne's identification with the green-garbed woman from the mythical Brian Ruadh prophecies:

> Chaste, gentle form, robed in greenest of green,
> With the pace and the face and the grace of a queen;
> A soul moved by pity, a heart full of love,
> In thy mission as true, nigh as fleet, as the dove.
> God bless that brave mission and prosper thy aim,
> Such virtues as thine drive the bigots to shame.
> ("To a Daughter" 1-6)

Though the poet remarks later that she is the "stout foe of her foes and their alien laws," this mild poem strips Gonne of her political accomplishments and enshrines her merely as a virtuous, beautiful, and merciful "daughter" of Ireland—a striking contrast to the persona of the powerful mother that Gonne crafted for herself.

Another anonymous poem, "Maud Gonne," published two years later, envisions more possibilities for Gonne than the innocuous figure portrayed in "To a Daughter of Erin." In "Maud Gonne," her heart beats with both "love and rage," and her eyes are turned toward other nations that have endured colonization by the British. The poet refers to Gonne's

essays about India (possibly "The World's Justice" and "India," both published in the *United Irishman*):

> . . . [S]he marks the stride
> Of death and famine in the Hindoos' land,
> Where chronic hunger holds eternal sway.
> She knows it is the self-same cruel rule
> That starves the Hindoo on his fertile soil
> And makes the fairest isle of all the earth
> A place for cattle, but no place for men.
> ("Maud" 48-54)

Gonne's passion for ending oppression in the British Empire prompts the poet to pay tribute to her place in history: "Through lapse of ages, in all future time / Millions of mouths shall utter forth her praise." The poet does his or her part to ensure this legacy: the title of the poem, after all, is "Maud Gonne." For this poet, Gonne moves from the symbolic and universal "Daughter of Erin" to the political figure who deserves to be named up front. In fact, the poem claims that Gonne's trust in the revolutionary action of the "rifle's sharp and deadly crack" will overshadow the "speeches of the patriot men / Who for a hundred years have thundered forth / In noble words, with eloquence sublime, / Orations in behalf of Ireland" ("Maud"). Though Gonne herself does not take up the rifle in this poem, the poet assigns greater honor and influence to her than to the political successes of male nationalists.

This poet is able to imagine Gonne as more than a passive symbolic figure because of his engagement with her political essays. One way that Gonne successfully avoided the disabling consequences of her identification with Mother Ireland was to write about the

figure. Gonne wrote many of her political essays while she was abroad in Europe. From the 1890s to 1918, she spent much of her time in France, where she raised two children and visited her lover, the Frenchman Lucien Millevoye. After her relationship with Millevoye ended, Gonne resided in France with her husband Major John MacBride, who could not enter Ireland for fear of being arrested for his allegiance to the Dutch during the Boer War. Later when Gonne's appeal for divorce from MacBride failed, she was forced to live again in France to retain custody of their son Sean. Despite her distance from Ireland, Gonne tirelessly produced nationalist essays in which she developed the character of the political Irish mother and brought it into emblematic battle with her equally well-crafted image of Queen Victoria.

Gonne begins shaping Victoria's opponent in her 1899 essay "The Reward of Serving England." In it, Gonne aims to persuade Irishmen not to join the British Army by drawing attention to Irish veterans who once served the Empire faithfully, but now are sick and without pension in Ireland. To protect them from further shame, as she puts it, Gonne refuses to name these Irishmen who fought for and then were abandoned by the Empire. Rather than personalize the "same dreary tale" of each former soldier, she treats them collectively as examples of England's attitude that the Irish are disposable: "England has cast them aside," Gonne explains, "and they have come back to the motherland they have wronged and forsaken" ("Reward"). Now abandoned by the Empire, these "worn-out and useless ruins" can provide a warning tale and nothing more; their lives are spent, and "[w]ith the future, so far as this life goes, they have little part" ("Reward"). Each merely waits to die in a workhouse in Ireland.

Gonne, however, offers a more promising outlook for Irish mothers:

> Think of this, Irish mothers, even when there is the hunger in your cabins and things look dark and hopeless for the land we love. Tell the children round the turf-fire what England's service means, and what are the rewards it brings and tell them, above all, that Ireland's children must be true to her and that Freedom will come at last. ("Reward")

While the opening of Gonne's essay describes the "old, broken-down, and hopeless" Irishmen who "cower around the fires" of the workhouses, in the conclusion Irish mothers wield a special power of their own around the "turf-fire." For Gonne, the mothers actively exert a political influence of which the passive Irishmen are incapable. Gonne promotes a conventional Victorian attitude toward women's domestic influence—that they have power *only* "round the turf-fire." In doing so, however, she distinguishes between the motherland *of* Ireland and the mothers *in* Ireland: Gonne transforms the Irishmen who fought for the British army into Mother Ireland's careless children, but allows Irish mothers to claim a political role beyond their symbolic identification with their motherland. She charges Irish mothers with an active task—to spread the word to their children about England's mistreatment of Irish soldiers and to teach them that refusing England's call is a step toward Ireland's freedom. Gonne also moves discreetly from Irish "children" to "Ireland's children," the latter symbolizing Irish adults in their figurative relationship with Mother Ireland. The slippage between the two types of "children" suggests that Irish mothers may have influence over more than just their own children "round the turf-fire." Their activism, Gonne suggests, can transcend the private sphere.

Upper-class women in Ireland had already started to transcend the private sphere. Gonne and other nationalist women found an outlet for their political aspirations through

their membership in *Inghínidhe na hÉireann*, an organization that Gonne founded when she was refused admittance to male nationalist organizations such as the Celtic Literary Society and the National League. Acting as the inaugural president, Gonne delivered a speech entitled "The Goddess Brigid" at the group's first meeting in October 1900, a transcript of which was printed the following month in the *United Irishman.* While Gonne's stated aim in her speech is to "revive the memories of the Irish heroines, which have been too much forgotten of late years," her lecture also suggests that representations of symbolic motherhood do not preclude Irish mothers from political activity ("Goddess").

Saint Brigid was the patron saint of *Inghínidhe na hÉireann*, and the women in the organization adopted Gaelic names, often of Irish goddesses or Irish women warriors, to protect their identity from employers unsympathetic to nationalism. Gonne took Maeve as her name; Queen Maeve (or Medbh) of Connacht was a female figure regarded as a personification of the sovereignty goddess of pre-Christian Ireland. In Gonne's speech on Brigid, she focuses on "Brigid the Goddess," while she remarks that a later speech will be given by another member of *Inghínidhe na hÉireann* on "Brigid the Saint." Gonne notes that the two titles overlap, that they are "so woven into one another by tradition and romance that it is difficult to separate them" ("Goddess"). Brigid's refusal to be defined in neat categories makes her a suitable patron for the women of *Inghínidhe na hÉireann*, who fulfilled the conflicting dual roles of mothers and activists. The forthright goal of the group, after all, was the "re-establishment of the complete independence of Ireland" (Ward, *Unmanageable* 51).

Gonne concludes her speech by turning specifically to Brigid's role as a mother. The goddess marries "Elathan (Knowledge), King of the Fomore" and bears a son named Bress, "which means Beauty" ("Goddess"). Just as Yeats and Augusta Gregory in two years would

present an asexual title character in *Cathleen ni Houlihan*, Gonne artfully omits the procreative act, instead describing how Elathan gives Brigid a ring "for the son that should be born to her" and then promptly disappears "over the sea" ("Goddess"). In this omission of sexual activity, Brigid is portrayed by Gonne as chaste, more like the Mother of God than the pleasure-seeking sovereignty goddesses of Celtic mythology. Though motherhood is disconnected from sexuality, it is not detached from activism. As patron of *Inghínidhe na hÉireann*, Brigid acts as a role model, a reminder of forgotten Irish heroines whose inspiration might guide Irish women if they "but called on them" ("Goddess"). Brigid's motherhood makes her an exemplary model for Gonne and her "sisters," who are meant not only to gain encouragement from Brigid's power as a goddess, but also to exercise a power of their own through nationalist activism. That these Anglo-Irish women adopted alter-egos as various other saints and goddesses indicates their self-assurance in moving between their mythic personas and their personal activism.

Gonne not only promoted nationalist activism for the Irish women around her, but also advocated their awareness of transnational alliances between women. She claims in her essay "The Boer Women," published in the *United Irishman* on St. Patrick's Day in 1900, that mothers of all nations must move into the realm of political action. She introduces to her Irish readership the Dutch Boer women of South Africa as exemplars of this belief. The Boer women rank, in Gonne's estimation, among "the mothers of the great nations of the earth" ("Boer"). The "great nations" for Gonne are those that oppose England: in a number of *United Irishman* essays, Gonne stresses Ireland's connection to other nations, whether they are nations which share a history of colonization by the British Empire (such as South

Africa) or nations such as France that should be aligned with Ireland in their mutual hatred of England.[7]

For Gonne, the white Boers in the South African Republics stand particularly triumphant because of their accomplishments in the second Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902 ("Signs of Hope"). Many Irish nationalists, including Gonne's husband John MacBride, denounced England's objective to eliminate the two Boer republics from southern Africa. MacBride joined some four hundred Irishmen in fighting the English with the Boers (Murphy 276).[8] Though there are other "mothers of the great nations" with whom Irish women might align themselves, the Boer mothers are an exemplary set due to their nation's *military* success against the British Empire. For Gonne, what is exciting—and commendable—about these mothers is their ability to slide between successful domestic and military roles.

"[T]he Boer women," Gonne asserts, "go to battle with [their] husbands and fathers" ("Boer"). Gonne immediately qualifies this bold statement. After claiming that Boer women are called to the front lines, Gonne tones down her rhetoric by explaining that the Boer women go to war "not essaying the role of Amazons," but by "trying to soften some of the horrors of battle" by acting as the "faithful wife, the devoted mother, the fearless companion" ("Boer"). Yet Gonne presses beyond the common image of the domestic sovereign to clarify that the Boer women, among them "feeble mothers and grandmothers," load guns "with lightning-like precision" ("Boer"). "As cool as old soldiers," these Boer women are part militant, part maternal ("Boer").

This hybrid role emerges with much ambivalence in Gonne's essay. She endows the Boer women with the aptitude of soldiers, but also slips in a casual reminder that their involvement in the affairs of the battlefield does not compromise their womanly duties:

> Disdaining a saddle she rides all day by the side of her brother, and uses rifle or pistol with the skill of a sharpshooter. Tall, strong, with muscles like iron, she does not know the meaning of fatigue. With all this she is strictly a domestic woman. She is satisfied by her own fireside. Her whole heart is centred in the little world that she calls by the sacred name of home. It is big enough to hold all her ambitions, all her hopes, all her dreams. ("Boer")

The abrupt shift in tone makes it questionable whether the vigorous and fearless Boer woman who rides all day across the South African landscape might find home "big enough" to hold *all* her ambitions, hopes, and dreams. Gonne seems obliged to mitigate the freedoms that she gives her Boer woman by returning her to her "proper" place, the hearth—a circumstance that leads to a set of rather awkward transitions in her essay. Yet Gonne also presents military action and domestic service as congruous activities. If it seems doubtful that the warlike Boer woman could find all her contentment in the domestic realm, it is important to notice that by wedding the martial with the domestic, Gonne also presents another possibility—that the Boer mother at home is never limited to that space.

The permeability of the boundary between domestic space and the realm of activism is all the more striking here because in her other essays and speeches Gonne is reluctant to encourage Irish women to participate in revolutionary action similar to that of Irish nationalist men. Gonne appears to divest her imagined Boer woman of power the moment she grants it to her, but we should consider this ambivalence within the context of the pervasive nationalist images of Mother Ireland as a vulnerable woman who seeks independence through the actions of heroic Irish men. Gonne maneuvers between, on the one hand, her devotion to Irish nationalism and its established symbols of womanhood and,

on the other hand, her desire to offer Irish women a way to circumvent these symbols. Her allusion to a Cape Town newspaper article suggests that her essay was inspired by the accomplishments of a real Boer woman, but these accomplishments are important to Gonne to the extent that they model forms of activism for Irish women. Emboldened by her ability to write about women outside of her own immediate environment, Gonne is able to suggest through analogy revolutionary possibilities for Irish mothers who are also activists, without disturbing the conservative gender codes of nationalism in Ireland.

The Protestant Boers are particularly suitable as role models for Irish women because of their commitment to Christianity. The Boer woman has been taught two things, Gonne tells us—"to use her Bible and her pistol" ("Boer"). Born into a Protestant English family, Gonne herself converted to Catholicism in 1903, a decision which she described to Yeats in a letter as an extension of her politics: "I felt for my work it was necessary for me to become more completely united to the soul of my people so that I could more completely understand their thoughts & help them better" (White 170). By insisting that the Boer women's religion is compatible with her militancy, Gonne offers an outlet through which Irish women might engage in nationalist activism that was already central to their lives.

The Boer women serve as fitting role models for Irish women because of their religious fidelity, but Gonne also implies that the similarities between the Irish and the Boers extend to racial identity. Relying on yet another transnational connection, Gonne suggests the dangers posed by the indigenous peoples of South Africa:

> The women of the [American] frontier had also many of the characteristics of the Transvaal women. In their constant fear of the Indians they were ever ready to protect their homes. The Boer women have likewise had to dread their savage

> enemies—the Kaffirs and Matabeles—ever on the watch to despoil their homes. ("Boer")

The primary threat Gonne describes is that of domestic violation. Just as the American women must safeguard their homes from the pernicious threat of the Native Americans, so the Boer women must protect their domestic space from black South Africans. In her eagerness to align Irish mothers with the white, Christian Boers, Gonne proves unable to imagine across racial lines: she ignores the struggles of black South Africans. In this instance Gonne reveals the limitations of imagined transnational alliances, which can serve to reduce complex national histories and reinforce narrow understandings of the links between nationhood and maternity. Gonne, for instance, overlooks that black South Africans have been dispossessed of their lands, and she thus ignores the potential correlation to evicted Irish tenants and the massive emigration out of Ireland following the Great Famine.

Gonne avoids the analogy; she instead aligns Irish women with the Boers and Americans, who are defined in terms of their racial opposition to the other inhabitants of their lands. Gonne connects Ireland to America via the Boers in part because she is eager to promote the relationship between Ireland and the large Irish population in America that might have nationalist inclinations. In a later essay Gonne declares her concern for "Ireland's children . . . in America" and worries that "[i]n Ireland we are as ignorant of Irish-America as they are of us" ("Ireland and Irish-America"). In imagining Boer and American women—and thus Irish women by analogy—as fierce defenders of their homes, Gonne also reacts against English portrayals of rural Irish women as consummately bad mothers who could not adequately care for their large families (Kipp 106). As Anne McClintock has argued, the English routinely used the "domestic barbarism" of the Irish to signal racial

otherness (53). Victorian stereotypes in a similar manner characterized the Boers as "crude," "dirty," and thus "culturally degenerate" (Krebs 117). These kinds of assumptions about racial characteristics had been popularized in the nineteenth century by burgeoning ethnological studies aimed at arranging the human races in a hierarchy from most to least "civilized." Not surprisingly, the Celt and the Boer ranked considerably lower than the Anglo-Saxon in this hierarchy. Gonne disputes this ranking by emphasizing the whiteness of the Boers and the Irish rather than turning a critical eye on the underlying theories of race.

Gonne is quick to affirm the whiteness of the Irish, but she also makes use of the in-between racial status of the Irish through her Irish-Boer analogy. Gonne explains that the Boer have had "to deal with the persecutions of the white man [that is, the English] *and* the fiendish treachery of the native tribes" ("Boer"; my emphasis). The Boers, like the Irish, are superior to both the imperial brutality of the English and the perceived "savageness" of the indigenous peoples. Gonne disengages Ireland from England by associating Ireland with England's other colonies, but she also maintains Ireland's connection to empire through racial hierarchies.

The Boer War provided Gonne with exemplary revolutionary mothers, but it also grounded her most famous diatribe against Queen Victoria. In "The Famine Queen," published in *The United Irishman* on 7 April 1900, Gonne blames the Queen for exploiting the Irish through famine, evictions, and recruitment into the British army and calls on the Irish people to rebuke her during her 1900 visit to Ireland (the Queen's fourth and final one).[9] What is salient about this attack is that Gonne wages it against Victoria as figurehead of the British Empire (atrocities are carried out in the Queen's "name") and against Victoria as a woman and a mother. Ireland is victim to the "criminal policy" of the Queen's reign and,

more personally, it is the "country she hates" ("Famine"). The Queen's visit is both a political ruse (to enlist more Irishmen) and an opportunity for Victoria the woman to "contemplate the ruin she has made" ("Famine"). Victoria thus attempts the dual role—figurative and literal woman—that Gonne herself found so empowering.

Yet Gonne permits Victoria no such empowerment. While Gonne distances herself from her role as figurehead of Ireland when it threatens to consume her, she denies Victoria this option. Gonne asserts that

> [e]very eviction during sixty-three years has been carried out in Victoria's name, and if there is a Justice in Heaven the shame of those poor Irish emigrant girls whose very innocence renders them an easy prey and who have been overcome in the terrible struggle for existence on a foreign shore, will fall on this woman, whose bourgeoise virtue is so boasted and in whose name their homes were destroyed. ("Famine")

Embedded within Gonne's critique of the Queen's rule is a jab at her womanhood. Victoria has forced homeless Irish girls to find refuge in England, where their "innocence" leaves them vulnerable. Given the "shame" these girls feel, Gonne suggests that their bodies in particular are vulnerable to sexual predators. Gonne calls for this shame to fall onto Victoria in order to expose her bogus "bourgeoise virtue." In this phrase itself the political and personal mingle: Gonne's attack on the values of England's thriving middle-class (compared to a poor and under-industrialized Ireland) couples with an assault on the Queen's virtue, a culturally feminine characteristic. Gonne thus conflates Victoria's bungled rule in Ireland with her failure as a woman. "[F]or after all she is a woman," writes Gonne of the Queen, "and however vile and selfish and pitiless her soul may be, she must sometimes tremble as

death approaches when she thinks of the countless Irish mothers who, shelterless under the cloudy Irish sky, watching their starving little ones, have cursed her before they die" ("Famine"). Victoria has failed to uphold the womanly sphere of domestic tranquility and betrayed her natural inclinations as a woman by wrecking the hearth and home of the Irish.

Gonne goes on to impugn Victoria's maternal instincts: she is "cursed" by dying Irish mothers, who are vulnerable to starvation like their children. For Victoria, too, "death approaches," but her longevity (or, as Gonne puts it, "the decrepitude of her eighty-one years") points to her fundamentally "selfish" nature: the Queen has preserved her well-being even when faced with the misery of her subjects ("Famine"). In contrast, the main priority of the Irish mothers is their children, whose hunger prompts their cursing of the Queen. In this way, Gonne judges Victoria against these Irish mothers to emphasize their moral superiority and to demonstrate the Queen's failure as "mother monarch." Victoria does exactly the opposite of what a mother should do: she starves her children.

By branding Victoria a "bad mother" Gonne turns the charge of domestic delinquency onto the Queen and away from the Irish, dispelling the notion identified by Julie Kipp that rural Irish women were consummately bad mothers whose "natural capacity to bear children contrasted sharply with their abilities to rear them" (106). Gonne's own memories of the evicted Irish mothers and children during the 1890s confirmed her belief that English rule prevented Irish mothers from adequately caring for their young. In her autobiography, Gonne emphasizes the difficulty evicted mothers had in keeping their families together, and describes an especially horrific tale of a mother whose child was burnt badly when her landowner's henchmen set fire to her house. "The mother of the burnt child," Gonne chronicles, "surrounded by a large family of children, was sitting with the moaning baby on

her knees in the back kitchen of the village shop. She told me she and some of the other evicted tenants had gone back to their houses after the bailiff had put them out, because they had nowhere else to go but the workhouse, and there they would be separated from their children" (MacBride 302). In light of Gonne's rhetoric about Queen Victoria, such reminiscences can be read as embedding a critique not of the maternal inadequacies of Irish mothers but of Victoria's failed instincts as both queen and mother.

Gonne's attack on the monarch in "The Famine Queen" culminates in her personification of Victoria as queen of a vampiric empire. The British Empire has provided Victoria herself with "more gold than any of her subjects" and has ensured that the only thriving citizens in England are the "giants of finance and of the Stock Exchange" ("Famine"). These giants of finance, according to Gonne, are "vampires" who have made their money by draining the life out of the "millions of human beings" under the Empire's rule, including the members of the English working class who are left with "no blood in their veins, no strength in their arms" ("Famine"). Gonne describes Victoria as heeding the demands of these rapacious vampires: "Trembling on the brink of the grave, she rises once more at their call" ("Famine"). A poem published in the *United Irishman* about a month before Gonne's essay similarly describes Britannia—a covert Queen Victoria—as having "sucked slowly the blood of [Irish] martyrs" (Fraser 2). Though Gonne was not the first to associate Victoria with vampirism, at least indirectly, she clearly believes that Victoria has infected her middle-class subjects with an unquenchable blood-lust for imperial wealth. Moreover, the association of Victoria with vampire tendencies corroborates her maternal inadequacies: instead of providing nourishment for her colonial and working-class subjects, she saps the life out of them.

To depose Victoria's vampiric motherhood, Gonne offers a vision of Irish national motherhood in the final paragraph of "The Famine Queen." Though Gonne explains that the voice at the end of her essay comes from the "lips of the Irish people," it is soon clear that the voice is in effect Mother Ireland's, who at once denounces the way that Victoria has let the Irish people "die of hunger" and boasts of her "green hills and plains," a fertile description for the maternal nourishment Ireland offers ("Famine"). Unlike Victoria, Mother Ireland is fecund, but she is also stern, ready to disown the Irish who pledge loyalty to England: "As to those who to-day enter your service to help in your criminal wars, I deny them! If they die, if they live, it matters not to me: they are no longer Irishmen" ("Famine"). Ignoring the material realities of the Irishmen who may have found needed employment in the British army, Gonne's Mother Ireland calls for the Irish to resist the demands of the Empire at all costs. Gonne sets up her fertile and battle-ready Mother Ireland to replace the Queen, now incapable of child-bearing, whose "withered hand" expectantly but futilely holds a shamrock ("Famine").

Gonne's indictment of Victoria in "The Famine Queen" was scathing enough to be judged threatening. Most copies of the essay were confiscated upon their publication by the Dublin police on grounds of libel (Murphy 283; Steele, *Maud* 54). Many other attacks on Victoria had recently been published in the *United Irishman* and other nationalist journals. The inflammatory moniker of Gonne's title—"Famine Queen"—had been used to describe Victoria a little over two weeks earlier by Anna Parnell in a letter to the editor of the *Freeman's Journal* on 20 March 1900.[10] Both Parnell and Gonne insist that the Queen's visit is political in nature and primarily geared toward military recruitment. Both also worry about Irish enthusiasm for the Queen's visit: Gonne ridicules the Queen's spurious "royal

glamour" ("Famine"), and Parnell explains that any cheers from the crowd will be the result of "commandeered enthusiasm" ("Famine"; Parnell 6). Parnell's letter goes on to suggest that Victoria's "long reign" has "cost a million deaths amongst her unhappy subjects, from starvation and its accompaniments" (Parnell 6). Parnell even mocks the Queen's old age, and scoffs at her preference for the "insignia of mourning" so long after Albert's death (6).

Despite its personal attack on the Queen, Parnell's letter, unlike Gonne's essay, triggered no alarm with the authorities. Perhaps Gonne's public visibility as an orator drew heightened attention to her condemnation of the Queen. Yet Gonne's essay differed from other nationalist representations of the Queen in at least one important respect. Whereas Victoria's "vixenish" personality, her sexuality, and even her taste in literature had been ridiculed in other texts, Gonne's essay attacked the Queen's maternal sensibilities (qtd. in Murphy 200). Even Parnell's letter, which connected Victoria to starvation in Ireland, did not attribute this tragedy to the Queen's failure as a mother, as did Gonne's essay.

Margaret Homans and Adrienne Munich have contended that motherhood was inextricably tied to Queen Victoria's role as sovereign. Homans argues that in her role as wife to Albert and mother to her children, Victoria became a "model for the middle class" at a time when "gender hierarchy was becoming a hallmark specifically of the middle-class family" (7). Munich asserts that Victoria's maternal body came to be figured as that which both "feeds the empire" (5) and is a "symbol of its imperial power to incorporate the Other" (5-6). Victoria's corpulent body represented the fecundity of empire:

> The Queen could be taken as the Mother of the Empire. In this maternal embodiment . . . Victoria has become the perfect, self-abnegating mother, alert and responsive to all her children. Not only could people imagine her in this idealized role, but they

> could believe that it was she and not her government who foresaw the wisdom of empire. (Munich 16)

When Gonne attacked Victoria's maternity, then, she also undermined a much larger justification of Empire as beneficent care-taking.

The Queen's final visit to Ireland in 1900 revealed just how much she relied upon representations of her maternal fitness to demonstrate England's imperial aptitude. The same day that "The Famine Queen" was published in the *United Irishman* the Queen held a public gathering at Phoenix Park in Dublin where her entourage dispensed free sweets to throngs of Irish children. Victoria warmly recounts in her journal that "52,000 school-children from all parts of Ireland were assembled with their masters and mistresses. It was a wonderful sight, and the noise of the children cheering was quite overpowering. I drove down the line so that they could all see me" (Buckle, 3: 524). As David Cannadine notes, this kind of parading was a common way the Empire represented itself through the English monarchy during this period and into the twentieth century. Cannadine explains, "every great *royal* event was also projected as an *imperial* event" in which "carefully orchestrated processions" presented the British Empire as an "ordered, unified hierarchy, with a semi-divine sovereign at its apex" (109). The Queen's demonstration at Phoenix Park expressed a familial relationship through which Ireland received protection and provisions from its imperial parent.[11]

Refusing to allow the Phoenix Park performance to vanquish her image of Irish national motherhood, Gonne set the wheels in motion for a special "Patriotic Children's Treat" to feed the children who did not attend the Queen's theatrical display. Gonne organized a group of women, the Patriotic Children's Treat Committee, to execute her counter-demonstration. On July 1, an estimated thirty thousand children gathered in

Clonturk Park for Gonne's Treat, prompting Gonne to publish a letter in the *United Irishman* discrediting accounts of the number of children who attended the Queen's demonstration. In contrast to the thousands who participated in her own Treat, Gonne claimed that only 5,000—rather than the 52,000 recorded in the Queen's report—actually came to Phoenix Park. Her letter goes on to praise those absent from the Queen's treat who instead turned out in Clonturk Park: "It is most encouraging to note what an immense number of children had the firmness and courage to refuse to attend the Queen's treat in the Phoenix-park. Out of the 35,000 children which made up the school attendance in Dublin only 5,000 allowed themselves to be used for a Unionist demonstration" ("Patriotic" 8). Significantly, the women who comprised the Patriotic Children's Treat Committee, emboldened by their success, went on to form the nationalist group *Inghínidhe na hÉireann* (Ward, *Unmanageable* 50; White 28). Outperforming the Queen's maternal authority, then, turned out to be a fundamental step for establishing a legitimate role for nationalist women—and mothers—in Irish politics.

While Gonne validates the political mother figure through her actions, she curiously undermines it in "What We Owe the Children," an essay she published in the *United Irishman* in the weeks following the Children's Treat. In the essay, Gonne praises the children for their enthusiastic response to her demonstration and for their "spirited refusal to be bribed" by the Queen ("What We Owe"). "Yes, little ones," Gonne addresses them, "you have done your part well, you have brought your brightness to cheer us in the struggle, and your uncompromising and fearless Nationality have washed away the stain of the self-seekers" ("What We Owe"). Gonne transforms the children into useful symbols of a victorious future for Ireland. She implicitly raises the importance of women's work as

mothers to a national level, for these children will go on "to serve our Mother and Queen, Ireland" as adults, which will guarantee "ultimate success" for Ireland's independence ("What We Owe"). Although Gonne's focus on the children implies maternal influence of a nationalist bent, she omits any reference to the direct participation of Irish mothers, and neglects to credit the nationalist women responsible for carrying out the demonstration. For Gonne, in this moment the symbolic role of the children outweighs that of the mothers.

As a result, the symbolic depiction of Irish motherhood (now rendered almost completely invisible) is supplanted by a younger, fresher Ireland-as-woman: "[A]ssuredly," Gonne claims at the close of her essay, "it is good for us, too, to see [Ireland] sometimes as we saw her last Sunday, not as the Shan Van Vocht, 'the mother of exiles,' wailing for the children who have gone, but as Kathleen the Beautiful, bright with hope, and powerful with the wonderful vitality of the Irish race" ("What We Owe"). Here Gonne deposes the "mother of exiles" in a symbolic ousting that mirrors her shift in focus from the nationalist work of mothers, now pushed behind the scenes, to the political service of those mothers' children. Gonne's promotion of the powerful mother figure was therefore vulnerable to the self-sacrificing codes of Irish motherhood, which dictated that a child's welfare signified greater than a mother's accomplishment.

Yet those who witnessed the Children's Treat remembered Gonne's role rather than the children's. A letter to the editor of the *United Irishman* reveals that the event boosted Gonne's own popularity as an activist and a maternal figure. Thomas Timmins, representing the builders' laborers, writes:

> We can never forget this accomplished lady, or thank her sufficiently for her deep interest and untiring energy manifested by her endeavouring to promote the well-

> being of the working classes of the Irish people and their city by her organising the Patriotic Children's Treat [. . . .] We rejoice and thoroughly appreciate her self–sacrificing on that glorious day [. . . .] Her services to the land of the Shamrock have been unparalleled, and there is no name that will ever shine out with greater prominence in the history of our country than that of our beloved lady, Miss Maud Gonne. (7)

It must have pleased Gonne tremendously that her actions were said to have touched the working classes—a personal triumph over Victoria's "bourgeoise virtue" ("Famine"). Timmins appoints Gonne as the central figure of the event, which earns her a hallowed place in Irish history. To be sure, Gonne not only led the committee which carried out the Children's Treat, but also delivered a speech that day defining herself as the premier political mother of Ireland, whose duties ("to promote the well-being" of the Irish) sustained her activism. Moreover, Timmins designates the "self-sacrificing" Gonne as "our beloved lady," suggesting her association with the most prominent mother of all in Catholic Ireland.

Gonne writes of her own event that "Queen Victoria's children's Treat had been eclipsed" (270). While Gonne's response to Victoria's treat reveals that she very deliberately pitted herself against the Queen, it also exposes how Gonne effectively borrowed Victoria's representational tactics in parading her own maternal body. In fact, Gonne's description of the Patriotic Children's Treat in her autobiography sounds remarkably like Victoria's cheerful memory of riding through Phoenix Park: "Mary Quin [sic] and I, on an outside car, drove up and down the line. . . . When the last child had left the Park I drove round to all the city hospitals" (MacBride 270). Gonne is the triumphant mother on display, with a trip to the hospital confirming her role as nurturer and caretaker of Ireland. This caretaker, however,

parading up and down in her car, is notably distanced from the Irish masses. Just as Queen Victoria was the main player in her Phoenix Park performance, in the Patriotic Children's Treat Gonne placed herself center stage in front of (but separated from) her devoted audience.

Gonne was able to take center stage literally as the "proper" Queen of Ireland two years later as the title character in the production of Yeats and Gregory's play *Cathleen ni Houlihan.*[12] The play is set in Killala, a town in County Mayo where French troops landed in 1798 to assist the United Irishman's nationalist uprising. A mother and father, Peter and Bridget Gillane, are preparing for the wedding of their son Michael to a local girl named Delia. Michael, however, is wooed away by the other-worldly old woman Cathleen, who stops at the Gillane's house looking for Irish lads to join her fight for independence. Through Michael's sacrifice for Ireland (it is plain that he will most likely die for the cause), Cathleen experiences her transformation from old woman to young maiden.

The figure of Cathleen in the play drew together for its audience characteristics of previous representations of Ireland-as-woman, such as the Shan Van Vocht, and sovereignty figures like the Hag of Beare, an old woman who becomes a beautiful maiden once her rightful Irish king claims her (Clark 169). An Irish audience would have also been familiar with the nineteenth-century poet James Clarence Mangan's translation of a popular eighteenth-century poem about Cathleen ni Houlihan by William O'Heffernan (Clark 168). Though Yeats and Gregory's Cathleen was based on more aggressive, active versions of Ireland-as-woman, their Cathleen parts ways with the traditional sovereignty figure. Unlike the sexually assertive sovereignty goddess of Celtic mythology, Cathleen here maintains a sexual purity which links her to the Virgin Mary: though Cathleen has had many "lovers"

(devotees to her cause), she had "never set out the bed for any" (Yeats, *Cathleen* 9). Gonne's reputation for embodying Ireland—in her twin roles as political mother and "our beloved lady," as Thomas Timmins titled her—made her a compelling choice for the role of Cathleen.

Gonne made good use of the influence she wielded in the role. She was reported to have arrived late opening night, "[sweeping] through the auditorium in lordly disregard of previous instructions and commotion in the audience" (Levenson 194). Gonne, then, did not oppose—and perhaps encouraged—her personal identification with the figure of Cathleen, at least for the purposes of the performances. Susan Cannon Harris argues that on the opening night of the play, 2 April 1902,

> everyone in that theater would have known who Maud Gonne was and recognized her under the Old Woman's costume [. . . .] Gonne's celebrity as a nationalist activist would have made audiences aware that underneath the stage Cathleen was a 'real' Cathleen who would eventually drop the disguise and assume her true and radiant form. (57)

The old woman's costume, however, may have been pulled from Gonne's own wardrobe. In a letter to Yeats about her preparation for the role, Gonne remarks, "I think I had better wear a black dress (one of my old ones cut shorter will do)" (White 149). Gonne's costume choice, then, suggests that she identified with the *older* maternal figure, not the younger maiden Cathleen. Moreover, Cathleen's transformation into the "young girl" with the "walk of a queen" occurs off-stage (Yeats, *Cathleen* 11). That the audience's final vision is of the *old* Cathleen indicates that the play intends to preserve the figure of the "mother of exiles" even while it spells out that this form is temporary. Gonne's focus on the older Cathleen in

Yeats's play, then, reverses the priority she granted to "Kathleen the Beautiful" in "What We Owe the Children."

For if the "mother of exiles" was deposed in favor of "Kathleen the Beautiful" in that essay, the former reigns supreme in *Cathleen ni Houlihan.* The play, in fact, is chiefly about mothers: Bridget Gillane, Michael's biological mother, and Cathleen, Michael's otherworldly mother.[13] Cathleen's describes her problem—England's rule of Ireland—as a domestic one, of "putting the strangers out of [her] house" (Yeats, *Cathleen* 9). Cathleen herself is a stranger in Bridget's home, where she has been carefully preparing her son's wedding clothes. Bridget is firmly rooted in the financial remuneration her son and family will gain upon Michael's union with Delia. When her youngest son Patrick remembers a warning from "Winny of the Cross-Roads" about a "strange woman that goes through the country whatever time there's war or trouble coming," Delia rejects this superstition and shifts the focus back to Michael's arrival: "Don't be bothering us about Winny's talk, but go and open the door for your brother" (Yeats, *Cathleen* 4). It is Bridget who lets Cathleen into her home, though Michael is reluctant to have visitors on the day before his wedding. And Bridget is the first to catch on that Cathleen is no ordinary old woman. Her husband remarks that Cathleen's "trouble has put her wits astray," but Bridget intuits, "Or is she a woman from beyond the world?" and notices first that her son Michael "has the look of a man that has got the touch" (Yeats, *Cathleen* 8).

With this realization, Bridget makes one last attempt to remind Michael of his material responsibilities in marriage. Bridget even confronts Cathleen herself: "Maybe you don't know, ma'am, that my son is going to be married" (Yeats, *Cathleen* 9). Bridget's efforts ultimately fail, as Michael leaves with Cathleen. While his promise to join the

nationalists is what prompts Cathleen's transformation, his conversion is ultimately not the focus of the play's conclusion. Bridget's loss and Cathleen's gain *as mothers*—one biological, one symbolic—command primary attention. Irish motherhood ultimately commands authority, too. Cathleen's "walk of a queen" at the end of the play hints at the rule of Queen Victoria, who had died one year before *Cathleen ni Houlihan* opened (Yeats, *Cathleen* 11). With Victoria dead and the older Cathleen as the final image onstage, the play visually confirmed that a mature Irish queen reigned.[14]

While Yeats and Gregory's play celebrated the authority of motherhood in two forms (Bridget the biological and Cathleen the symbolic), Gonne merges these two in her play *Dawn*, an (unstaged) one-act play of three tableaux published on 29 October 1904 in the *United Irishman*.[15] Gonne's choice of the tableau form connected *Dawn* to the growing genre of national drama, which "established forms of nationalist discourse as historical narratives, legends, and ballads" (Quinn 43). Drawing on Gonne's own experience with evictions, *Dawn* tells the story of a peasant woman Bride, her daughter Brideen, and other peasants who work in the labor force of the Famine Relief Works to earn money. In at least one important way, *Dawn* responds to the representations of womanhood in *Cathleen* and does not merely retain its ideology: unlike *Cathleen ni Houlihan*, *Dawn* imagines its mother figure, named Bride, as embodying *both* "real" and symbolic maternity.[16] Yet Gonne's propositions about politicized maternity in *Dawn* are not as dynamic as they are in her nonfiction. This is not surprising: the tradition of poetic drama in which *Cathleen ni Houlihan* and *Dawn* participate was firmly grounded in more traditional representations of women.

Gonne's play clearly intends its audience to be familiar with *Cathleen ni Houlihan.* Bride in many ways resembles Yeats and Gregory's Cathleen. Just as Cathleen laments her "four beautiful green fields" stolen by "strangers in the house," Bride "never goes far from her land; each day she wanders round the fields that was hers—it's that which angers the Stranger against her" (Yeats, *Cathleen* 136, *Dawn* 74). Just as Cathleen insists "it is not silver I want," Bride, too, rejects money in favor of her stolen land and "vengeance for her dead" (138, 76). An old man named Michael (recalling the young Michael in *Cathleen*) faints from work exhaustion, and calls out,

> Bride, Bride of the Sorrows, it is your service I took, I have been faithful [. . . .] Only one of the little stones which keep her feet from sinking in the soft bog, till she drives the Stranger from her fields. There are many little stones that the feet of the queen have rested on shining out across the bog. (77)

Years later in her autobiography, Gonne uses the same language to envision an encounter with Cathleen ni Houlihan (MacBride 9). Bride also endures all the material worries of Yeats and Gregory's Cathleen, especially in regard to absent sons: of Bride's three sons, one is dead, the other has joined the British army, and another has emigrated to America. In addition, Bride's daughter is sickly and her husband is dead. By inventing Bride as both a real and symbolic mother, Gonne experiments with one figure occupying both roles (Quinn 54)—what Gonne herself endeavored to do as an activist.[17]

Bride is thus a clever revision of the Cathleen figure. Because she is not merely a symbolic figure, she avoids Cathleen's experience of transformation to young queen. The final lines of dialogue in the play, spoken by one of the peasants, promise that if the peasants fight for Ireland, they will "make Bride of the Sorrows Bride of the Victories" (84).

Significantly, there is no indication that this transformation would necessitate Bride's becoming a young queen (84). If the off-stage metamorphosis in Yeats's play helped draw attention to the older Cathleen figure, Gonne's play leaves no room for question: it is the "mother of the exiles" who retains authority in her dramatization.

Not only does the mother reign supreme, but the mother-daughter relationship is central for Gonne. Unlike *Cathleen ni Houlihan*, in which the young Michael renews Ireland, the men in *Dawn* are absent. Bride's daughter Brideen fills in for these male figures. When asked if she might leave her mother for America, Bride's daughter Brideen replies like a good nationalist soldier:

> No, I will never leave her. How could I leave the place where I was born, and the mother who reared me? I couldn't sleep at nights out there thinking of her and she wandering about here with no one to help her but the poor neighbors or maybe the Stranger that took all she has, and it's black help she would get from him. (76)

Brideen is an informed woman, unsympathetic to the Stranger, a male character who represents Anglo-Irish landlords and, more generally, British occupation. Michael, however, is merely bewitched by Cathleen when he claims, "I do not know what [your] song means, but tell me something I can do for you," (Yeats, *Cathleen* 139). Brideen refuses to speak to the Stranger, even when he insists that she has failed as a mother: "It's hard on your child," he jeers, "and I have a mind to send the police to take him from you [. . . .] You have no right to keep a child when you have no roof to cover him" (78). Avowing that "it was he [the Stranger] who tore down the roof," Brideen blames British occupation for the woes of the Irish family—its absent fatherhood and strained motherhood (78).

When Brideen dies at the end of the second tableau, Bride describes her daughter's death as a sacrifice akin to that of nationalist men who fight for Ireland's cause. Bride assures Brideen that her sacrifice will lead to hope for Ireland: "Daughter of mine, take courage, the night is coming on, and it is very dark, but the day will dawn . . . because you did not leave the country—because you have been faithful to me" (*Dawn* 77). Brideen transcends her role as peasant woman to become a nationalist martyr. Even though the men are the ones who go off to fight at the end, Brideen is the one whose sacrifice makes possible the coming "dawn" of Irish independence. And it is Brideen's loyalty to her mother, Gonne suggests to us, that makes this sacrifice possible.

Gonne's 1938 autobiography, *A Servant of the Queen*, elevates her lifelong focus on Irish motherhood to the status of legend. It also shows her continued focus on the older mother figure, a shrewd preference considering that Gonne sustained her activism well into her eighties. As Margaret Ward explains, Gonne's memoirs, "wonderfully racy in narrative pace though they are, are not the place to go for dates or hard facts" (*Maud Gonne* 3). Perhaps by virtue of the questionable veracity of Gonne's autobiography and the distance the publication date allowed from the events being described, we are able to see how she desired to fashion her public reception. What seems to be the driving force behind Gonne's autobiography, then, is not an accurate account of her life, but rather, as Karen Steele suggests, the corroboration of a "heroic image of herself begun in Yeats's writings and sustained by the dramatic presentation of herself in nationalist events" (146).

This "heroic image" is related to Gonne's perception of her maternal role. Indeed, even her motivation to exclude and alter factual details of her life was intended to protect her children: Gonne omits her love affair with Lucien Millevoye (he is instead only a great

friend) to protect her daughter Iseult Gonne, one of two children Gonne conceived with Millevoye (their first child, Georges, died at age one). She instead refers to Iseult as her adopted daughter (MacBride 288). In addition, Gonne conceals her father's illegitimate daughter Eileen Wilson, who appears as "Daphne" in her memoirs (MacBride 53). Purportedly Gonne's family, especially her son Sean MacBride, convinced her to obfuscate some of these details (Ward 176; White x-xi). But one also has the sense that Sean's exclusion from the text and Iseult's very infrequent appearances suggest the protectiveness of a mother who does not want to exploit her children even while she exploits her own image as Ireland's living Cathleen.

It is clear from her autobiography that Gonne is interested above all in preserving this image. The opening lines of the text read: "I was returning from Mayo triumphant. I had stopped a famine and saved many lives . . ." (9). These opening lines allow Gonne to rival Queen Victoria yet again, even though the Queen had died almost four decades earlier. With the autobiography's title—*A Servant of the Queen*—evoking both Victoria and Cathleen, Gonne sets out to establish finally which queen best serves Ireland. Gonne plays the part of the otherworldly and powerful Cathleen in the exaggerated opening when she explains that she returns from Mayo after stopping a famine. Referring to sickness and starvation in Mayo in 1898, Gonne implies that she has succeeded where Victoria failed. While Britain's monarch was unable (or unwilling) to assist her Irish subjects, Gonne-as-Cathleen steps in dramatically to rescue them.

Through the exaggerated claim that she stopped a famine, Gonne indicates that she will be participating in myth-making of her own, in which she interprets her own political acts as the fruits of her powerful and awe-inspiring role as Cathleen. Just as Gonne implies

that she *is* Cathleen, however, she also explains that she has *seen* her, a "tall, beautiful woman with dark hair blown on the wind" (9). Gonne remembers Cathleen's words to her: "'You are one of the little stones on which the feet of the Queen have rested on her way to Freedom'" (9). Here Gonne cleverly confirms and refutes her identity as a personified Ireland to demonstrate her control over this identity. As Steele explains, by casting "herself as both a servant of Cathleen ni Houlihan and the embodied queen herself" Gonne was able to adopt "dual personae of the political radical and the society lady" ("Biography" 146-7). Gonne embodies the figure of Cathleen when she desires, but insists on her ability to detach from the figure as well.

As Gonne demonstrates her control over the Cathleen figure, she also draws attention to the perspective from which she writes her autobiography—as an older woman. "Being old now and not triumphant," Gonne explains, "I know the blessedness of having been 'one of those little stones' on the path to Freedom" (9). Here Gonne explicitly identifies with the older political mother figure, one that is significantly disconnected from the symbolic representation of Cathleen. Although Gonne goes on to embody the symbolic Cathleen elsewhere in her text, she sets the tone in these first pages: the political mother figure can exist on its own, free from its symbolic origins.

When Gonne *does* explicitly adopt various Ireland-as-woman mythical personas in her autobiography, they are all engaged in maternal or domestic activities. In Donegal in 1891, for example, Gonne watches impoverished families evicted from their homes, often by means of battering rams, because they could not pay rent to their landlords. Gonne helps build alternate housing for these families (called "Land League huts"), and often rents hotel rooms for recently evicted tenants (Ward, *Maud* 24). Gonne is dedicated to the peasants, but

she is also defiant of the local authorities, who, "always respectful to ascendancy" (MacBride 134), are obliged to tolerate her because of her upper-class standing.[18] Because of this class power, Gonne is known as the "woman of the Sidhe," who rides on a "white horse surrounded by birds, to bring victory to the people" (Ward, *Maud* 27). She bolsters her identification with her mythical alter-ego: when a member of British Parliament is so smitten with her beauty that he gives her a diamond pendant, Gonne promptly hands over this diamond to a family on the verge of eviction. As a result, Gonne reports that the "legend had grown . . . the people were saying the woman of the Sidhe scattered jewels which brought luck and stopped evictions" (MacBride 137-38). Gonne's cultivation of her role as the mythical figure underscores her role as domestic protector: "In Donegal," Gonne explains, "being the woman of the Sidhe had helped me to put evicted families back in their homes" (253).

Just as Gonne defends domestic spaces through her identification with the woman of the Sidhe, she claims that "being the woman of the prophecies in Mayo would help me to stop the famine" (253). In 1898, she traveled to the west of Ireland to help care for children affected by a famine that had afflicted counties Mayo and Kerry. Gonne tells in her autobiography that the people of Mayo believed she was the woman from the prophecies of Brian Ruadh, a scholar who predicted that during a famine a "woman dressed in green would come and preach revolt . . . [and] the English would in the end be driven out" (MacBride 252). While performing this role as the Brian Ruadh woman, Gonne encourages the starving peasants to steal their landlords' sheep rather than go hungry. Her justification for their stealing is the protection of their children: "'You are worse than sheep-stealers,'" she explains to them, "'if you allow one of your children to die of hunger when there is food to

be taken" (MacBride 247).[19] Gonne's emphasis on nourishing the children fashions the Brian Ruadh woman into a maternal figure. But, like the Mother Ireland figure Gonne crafts at the end of "The Famine Queen," this maternal figure has a backbone, too. Gonne feeds the children, but she also uses her authority to call upon the peasants to embark on a violent attack of the landlords if their needs are not met: "The prophecy of Brian Ruadh was my best hope. Some of the men, I knew, would obey me and people would certainly get killed" (MacBride 256). Gonne describes herself as nurturing and awesome in her role as Mother Ireland. Although she requires sacrifice from those who follow her, Gonne makes clear in her autobiography that this sacrifice pays off. In Mayo, for instance, Gonne successfully gains all of her requests from the landlords. Gonne's Mother Ireland delivers.

According to Gonne, her foil Queen Victoria most certainly does not deliver. Describing her first introduction to Victoria's reign, Gonne explains that her Aunt Augusta in London required her servants to give a portion of their salaries in honor of the Queen during one of the her jubilees (MacBride 22). Gonne describes her response to this act of "spontaneous" giving:

> All had evidently been prepared and knew that on this spontaneous demonstration of loyalty to old Vic. their places depended. I understood then how Jubilee funds attained their noble proportions, for, in every reputable English household, as well as in most of the shops and factories, the same pressure was brought to bear. (MacBride 23).

For Gonne, the rapacious Queen endlessly acquires and rewards no one but herself. While the Queen calcifies in her repeated role as failed mother, Gonne slyly moves between various

figures of Ireland-as-woman, illustrating her willingness to adopt them when necessary but her reluctance to remain identified with any of them.

In the final chapters of *A Servant of the Queen*, Gonne raises the specter of Victoria for one last competition, this time religious in nature. Gonne describes her conversion to Catholicism in 1903 as a response to Victoria. As Gonne tells it, she is prompted to think about conversion when a young priest, l'Abbé Dissard, asks her, "'You won't recognise old Victoria politically and yet you recognise her as head of your religion?'" (332). In the pages of her autobiography, Gonne's conversion is yet another way for her to surpass the Queen, or rather, the Queen's memory, as Victoria had been dead two years before Gonne entered into the Church.

Gonne provided herself as a role model for other nationalist mothers who sought to employ symbolic representations of maternity without being restricted by them. This must have been an especially personal objective for Gonne, who was forced to remain absent from Ireland because, as she no doubt saw it, her illegitimate child would have compromised her reputation. If she was unwilling to dispute openly the limited perceptions of female sexuality, she instead rejected the confinement of motherhood to the domestic sphere.

Throughout her career, Gonne treated Victoria just as she dealt with feminized depictions of nationhood such as Cathleen: as a symbol to be manipulated for political purposes. Gonne showed that the depictions of Mother Ireland in particular could be usefully plastic; by contrast, she represented Victoria as a monument of failed maternity. The Queen was more dynamic and more sympathetic toward Ireland than Gonne's representation of her allowed. Gonne thus cleverly reduced Victoria—by the end of the nineteenth century the

most famous woman in the world—to a static and distorted symbol that could be exploited for Irish political gains.

Edward Said has explained that colonizers construct a "whole series of possible relationships" with their colonies while always maintaining superiority (7). Gonne responded to England's claim of authority over Ireland by turning the tables on this colonial tactic and using it to her nation's benefit. She successfully constructed an array of sometimes contradictory identifications that promoted Ireland's cause. Indeed, Gonne positioned herself to be, at once, an embodiment of nationalist motherhood and a political mother of two children; a symbol of woman-as-nation and a female revolutionist detached from symbolic representation; a woman activist who borrowed from Victoria's representational tactics and an Irish nationalist who remained in fierce opposition to the Famine Queen.

Chapter Two

Collaborative Motherhood in Lady Gregory's Nonfiction

While Maud Gonne regarded Queen Victoria's unfit maternity as a symbol of Britain's failed authority, Lady Augusta Gregory judged Victoria more moderately. "Poor old Queen," Gregory remarked upon hearing of the monarch's death, "good in England—very callous to Ireland" (26 January 1901; Pethica 298). About the Queen's visit to Ireland two years earlier, Gregory had suggested that opposition to Unionism and "not the Queen's visit should be the point of attack," a sentiment that Gonne clearly did not share (4 April 1900; Pethica 264).

Gonne once referred to Gregory as "a queer little old lady, rather like Queen Victoria," a barb reflecting Gonne's belief that Gregory was not fully devoted to the national movement (MacBride 321).[1] While Gregory was in fact an ardent nationalist by this time, Gonne was not altogether mistaken in her comparison of the two women. Just as the Queen engaged in prolonged mourning for Albert, Gregory never pursued marriage after her husband's death. Instead, she concentrated on her roles as mother and grandmother, a strategy that guided her writing and helped her nurture the Celtic Revival.

As one of this movement's key architects (the only woman to claim such a position), Gregory possessed the authority to dictate some of its boundaries. This chapter suggests that rather than focusing on rivalries between women or on competing forms of motherhood, as Gonne favored, Gregory relied on depictions of collaborative maternity in her nonfiction in order to solve key representational problems that she saw afflicting the Celtic Revival.

One of these problems was the ethical dilemma of appropriating the folklore of Irish peasants. Gregory approached this issue when she transcribed their oral tales in *Visions and*

Beliefs in the West of Ireland (1920), which catalogued the stories she collected in the 1890s. I argue that she modeled her methods of collection on one of the real-life characters within these tales—Biddy Early, a healer who allegedly derived her otherworldly powers from fairies. Gregory approached story-collecting by mimicking the ways that Biddy Early mothered, without infantilizing, the peasants to whom she administered "cures." Biddy is Gregory's revised Mother Ireland, and through this character Gregory proposes that the ubiquitous tales about fairies that she encountered, which could be interpreted to endorse women's helplessness, in fact offered rural Irish women a means of social power. Gregory's cooperative vision of maternity emphasized women's shared coping strategies and the ways that their spoken stories contributed to these strategies.

Gregory applied this vision to her own writing. My emphasis on her advocacy of women's voices offers a new perspective on her literary career, which has been dominated by attention to her patronage of male writers such as Yeats. Gregory is long known to have written many of the plays, essays, and letters attributed to men such as Yeats, Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, Douglas Hyde, and her husband Sir William.[2] Although she frequently allowed her contributions to be silent, her nonfiction reveals an author keenly interested in her own literary persona.

Committed to the Revival's ethos of literary collaboration, Gregory nevertheless desired to be identified as an accomplished individual author. She modified her collaborative model of maternity to address this dilemma. In her autobiographical work *Our Irish Theatre* (1913) she imagines literary collaboration as a familial pursuit that requires an empowered mother figure to impart her maternal—and authorial—presence.

Gregory crafted her dominant maternal figure by drawing from older, wiser renderings of Mother Ireland, rather than from youthful versions of the figure. Her attachment to the mature maternal figure reflected her desire to secure a central position within the Irish literary movement even as she aged. She presented herself proudly and shrewdly as a "very active grandmother" (*Our Irish Theatre*, Coole Edition 162). Gonne later in her career understood the benefits of aligning herself with an older maternal figure to justify sustained activism, but she only adopted this figure after Queen Victoria's death. Gregory, however, who courted premature age by taking up perpetual widowhood at the age of forty, preferred the older maternal figure from the outset, a choice that illuminates her reluctance to attack the aged Queen Victoria, as Gonne unreservedly did. Gregory embraced (Grand)Mother Ireland throughout her nonfiction career.

I suggest in this chapter that it is no coincidence that Gregory found in nonfiction the fullest potential of the empowered mother figure. While her dramatic representation of Cathleen ni Houlihan offered a figure whose symbolic import overshadowed her capacity to signify as a politically active Irish woman, the powerful mothers within Gregory's nonfiction easily move between their figural and literal roles. They capitalize on their associations with the long tradition of female allegory in Ireland, yet they also assert their duties as female activists. I argue that this dual potential is a function of Gregory's choice of genre. In nineteenth-century Ireland, plays and ballads were used most prominently to express nationalist views. These two forms relied so greatly on feminized allegory as to make it a convention, one that ultimately promoted a static image of Irish womanhood—for the most part symbolic, silent, and passive. Nonfiction, however, due to its less celebrated relationship to the nationalist literary tradition, offered a genre free from the confining gender

codes to which allegories such as Mother Ireland were susceptible. Within the relatively uncharted space of Irish nonfiction, Gregory was able to experiment more boldly with her ideas about collaborative motherhood. Moreover, the essay form in particular encouraged Gregory to contemplate these ideas beyond the boundaries of her own nation altogether.

Gregory's first published work, an 1882 essay, takes this very step. Published in the London *Times* and entitled "Arabi and His Household," this essay introduced her to the reading public of England and Ireland as a nonfiction writer, a role that has received far less critical attention than her occupation as a playwright. The essay also launched a dominant thread in her writing of the next four decades: her gradual embrace—and revision—of Irish nationalism. "Arabi and His Household," which aims to defend the reputation of the Egyptian nationalist Ahmed Arabi, reveals that Gregory first assessed the codes of gender and race in Irish nationalist thought through her engagement with a nationalist struggle outside of Ireland entirely. Her conclusions in the essay provide a foundation for the model of collaborative maternity that she would continue to employ and refine throughout her career.

By imagining Irishness through a Middle Eastern setting, Gregory participated in what Joseph Lennon and Joep Leerssen have termed, respectively, *Irish Orientalism* (the title of his recent book) and "self-orientalization" (167), two concepts that I will turn to in a moment. Gregory drew connections between Ireland and the Orient in her writing, and in doing so, she joined a conversation about Ireland's racial and cultural origins that had proliferated in intellectual circles throughout the nation in the nineteenth century. Gregory co-opted this prevalent cultural discourse to argue for the importance of women's ideas in nationalist politics. "Arabi and His Household" illustrates how Gregory exploited the

widespread influence of presumed links between Ireland and the East to forge a correspondence between maternal power and nationalist politics.

Both Joseph Lennon and Joep Leerssen trace the precedent of the Irish imagining their nation in relation to the Orient from the eighteenth century. Leerssen explains that

> [s]peculative antiquarians in the eighteenth century, many among them highly respected members of the scholarly elite, tried to account for the uniqueness of this Gaelic language area on the fringe of the Atlantic by linking it back to other 'mystery civilizations.' Thus, to the extent that Ireland was mysterious and exotic it was speculatively linked to other mysterious and exotic cultures: to the Phoenicians, to the Etruscans, and even to the Chinese. (166)

If Irish Orientalism burgeoned during the eighteenth century, it reached its pinnacle, Lennon claims, during the Celtic Revival, in which "Irish cultural nationalists wrote plays, essays, stories, poems, and novels with Oriental themes, ideas, and images woven as leitmotifs to Celtic themes" (xxi).

Irish writers drew upon models of African and Asian cultures to understand and to create their notions of Irishness. For Lennon, "Celtic-Oriental comparisons allowed Irish writers to rhetorically assert both their proximity to the metropole, or center of Empire, and their proximity to the periphery, depending on the context, audience, and purpose of their argument or representation" (xxvi). Thus, on the one hand, Irish writers' treatments of the East reinforced imperial culture by drawing upon Orientalist assumptions. On the other hand, as Lennon explains it, Irish writers (especially those sympathetic to Irish nationalism) drew comparisons between the East and Ireland to distance their nation from England imaginatively, a practice that prompted these writers to reflect on their own depictions in

empire and their own Celtic identity (Lennon 147). The phenomenon of Irish Orientalism, then, exemplifies the complex position of the Irish in the nineteenth century—caught between the imperial metropolis and the colonized periphery; that is, part of the United Kingdom, but not an equal member.

Leerssen has criticized the tendency to make a case for Ireland's colonial condition based on the nation's imagined links to colonies such as Egypt or India. Leerssen maintains that "[t]o see Ireland merely as an oppressed country in colonial bondage fails to do justice to the fact that Ireland, when all was said and done, was considered part of Europe; and that as such it was capable of adopting the European discourse of orientalism" (171). Yet Leerssen finds salient the impulse which drove Irish thinkers to imagine their own culture by looking beyond their national borders. "To begin with," Leerssen explains, "it is interesting to point out that there is at least the possibility of an attitude which drives orientalism [. . .] so far that one wills to be oriental oneself. Secondly, it is interesting that this type of speculation is more prominently represented in Ireland than in England" (167). Leerssen points to Ireland's erased "native history" as one prominent reason why the nation would have been more tolerant of wide-ranging speculations about its cultural heritage (167). More particularly, Leerssen sees an "*auto-exoticist*" leaning in nineteenth-century Anglo-Irish literature, in which Anglo-Irish authors imagined Ireland "in terms of its strangeness, its foreignness" (169). To write about Ireland from an Egyptian perspective, for example, would come naturally to an Anglo-Irish writer accustomed to deciphering Ireland for an English audience.

"Arabi and His Household" adopted this approach. Writing for an English readership in the *Times*, Gregory sought to mollify public opinion about the Egyptian nationalist Ahmed Arabi. Dedicated to granting Egyptians greater rule over their own

government, Arabi (or Urabi) was a peasant who rose through the ranks of the military while expressing his uncertainties about the governing bodies of Egypt—the Turkish Sultan of Constantinople, as well as the English and the French, the two nations with the greatest financial investments in Egypt (Kohfeldt 57). Gregory became interested in Arabi's political objectives while she lived in Egypt with her husband Sir William, who held the post of English Foreign Secretary. She and her husband joined a group of British officials living in Cairo, and it was there she first met the English diplomat Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, whose critiques of the British Empire influenced her nascent interests as a writer.

In 1881 Arabi, then a colonel in the Egyptian army, began to promote the belief that Egypt's debt to foreign powers should be overseen by an Egyptian council, not the Turkish khedive (Mayer 5-6). When the English and French governments endorsed the khedive, Arabi, who had by that time been promoted to the rank of Minister of War, accused the khedive of being a traitor and launched a military revolt with the backing of his soldiers (Mayer 6). The British army intervened and began to suppress the revolt in July 1882. Arabi and his army returned to Cairo to surrender, were captured on 15 September 1882, and were charged with treason.[3]

Negative images of Arabi circulated in the Egyptian press and educational system (Mayer 7). Accounts of Arabi in England faired no better. A reporter for the *Times* on 4 July 1882 portrayed Arabi as ignorant and foolish: "Arabi showed himself what I have always deemed him—a simple fellah, of very small intelligence, labouring under the impression that he was supported by an omnipotent Sultan, and without the smallest notion as to the relative powers of Europe, Turkey, and Egypt" (5).

Other English reports grant Arabi more intelligence, but this intelligence is perceived as threatening. On 30 October 1882, a letter to the editor of the *Times* claims that "Arabi hangs at one end of the balance and the peace of Europe at the other" (8). Another letter describes Arabi as clever and ruthless (Berdine 127). When the *Times* featured a vociferous debate about the rule of Egypt, Blunt sent an open letter to Gladstone, arguing that the Suez Canal, nearly half of the stock shares owned by British and French investors, should be sold back to Egypt (Longford 86, 89). Blunt's assertions earned him many enemies; one of his opponents claimed that "'both Blunt and Arabi ought to be shot'" (qtd. in Longford 89).

Gregory, then, chose a volatile subject for her first publication. Already aware of the contentious environment surrounding the discussion of Arabi, she begins her essay carefully by first asserting what it is *not*: "I am not writing a history of Arabi," Gregory tells her readers ("Arabi" 7). Ostensibly freeing herself from the dictates of historical detail, she nevertheless presents her argument about Arabi's reputation in a logical and linear rhetorical structure, backed up by first-hand and second-hand reports. She makes it abundantly clear, moreover, that she has done her research. Faced with the rumor that Arabi tortured Circassian prisoners, she promises her readers that "having searched the Blue-book laid before Parliament" she finds little evidence of its proof ("Arabi" 4).

Gregory demonstrates her ability to undertake serious research, but she also acknowledges the impact of anecdotal stories of Arabi's bravery and kindness. When Said Pasha, a royal of Egypt, outlaws the fast of Ramadan, Arabi steps in to confront the ruler and re-establish the fast, quoting the Koran as his authority. Far from punished, Arabi is promoted to the rank of corporal for his religious devotion. Gregory pits these memorable

stories—which center on communal values such as faith, honesty, and honor—against English propaganda that aimed to discredit Arabi.

Gregory also aims to revamp his character by drawing a new verbal portrait of the Egyptian nationalist. "[H]is smile is very pleasant," Gregory assures her readers as a guarantee against circulating photographs of Arabi: "His photographs reproduce the sternness," Gregory goes on to clarify, "but not the smile, and are, I believe, partly responsible for the ready belief which the absurd tales of his ferocity and bloodthirstiness have gained" ("Arabi" 4). Rather than ask her English readers to reinterpret Arabi's serious physiognomy—he is a man of "immense influence," Gregory later testifies—she aims to make him appear harmless, as demonstrated by the charm of his smile ("Arabi" 5). Gregory moves on to his eyes: "He speaks very earnestly, looking you straight in the face with honest eyes" ("Arabi" 5). Gregory eliminates complexity from his countenance and presents his honest eyes and pleasant smile as indicators of his virtuous nature. Gregory reiterates Arabi's peaceful demeanor: "I believe him to be exceedingly gentle and humane," she declares, while also offering testimony from an English official that Arabi is not the "brute" he is characterized to be ("Arabi" 4).

Gregory defends Arabi, but her methods seem at first to perpetuate the depictions she aims to counteract. Crafting him as a familiar and innocuous figure far removed from Victorian caricatures of the brutal Eastern tyrant, Gregory opts for an uncomplicated portrayal of Arabi. She remains unapologetic for his political inclinations, but she also is at pains to make him more palatable to English tastes. Gregory confirms the notion that leaders such as Arabi must be defused before they can be accepted.

Joseph Lennon claims that although Gregory's representation of Arabi

> does not escape the 'dominating frameworks' of Orientalism, she writes to subvert what she sees as the dominant representation of the Oriental in support of anticolonialism. Emphasizing the humanistic and cosmopolitan traits of Arabi, she points to the personal, ordinary, and familiar traits of his life, rather than categorical ones that have positioned him 'exactly opposite to the European.' (230)

Gregory certainly both draws upon and challenges the broad underpinnings of imperialist representations, as Lennon suggests, but I propose that she had a more specific goal in mind when she portrayed the Egyptian nationalist as a non-threatening figure. Arabi allowed Gregory to confront a predicament closer to home for her. While she attempts to negate images of a violent Arabi, the essay also gives her an outlet to respond to English ideas of the inherent brutality of the Irish. On the evening of 6 May, only months before Arabi had mobilized troops to advance the cause of Egyptian nationalism, the Chief Secretary of Ireland, Lord Frederick Cavendish, and his Under Secretary, T. H. Burke, were murdered in Dublin's Phoenix Park by Irish republicans. For the English public, the murders produced deep distrust about the state of affairs in Ireland, especially the nation's bid for self-rule, which was perceived by some as a doorway to increased chaos and violence.

Gregory's commitment to Arabi reveals her nascent sympathies for his nationalist cause, but it also exposes her deep ambivalence toward nationalist activity in her own country. The two men murdered in Phoenix Park, after all, were members of her elite class in Ireland. Gregory was considered a compassionate landlord, but she was a landlord nonetheless.[4] She wrote her essay on Arabi while in Ireland, in the wake of the Phoenix Park murders and at the tail end of the Land War, which was marked by agrarian violence toward landlords. Gregory's objective to neutralize portrayals of Arabi can be viewed as a judgment

against militant nationalist politics—especially that of the "unruly" Irish. While Gregory's loyalty to Egyptian nationalism may have planted the seed for her subsequent embrace of Irish nationalism, her pamphlet "A Phantom's Pilgrimage; Or, Home Ruin," which would come eleven years *after* "Arabi and His Household," views transnational alliances between Ireland and other colonies from the perspective of their danger to England.[5]

Yet Gregory's sensitivity to the complicated reality of women's political expression puts her characterization of both Arabi and nationalist politics in a different light. While she appears to domesticate and infantilize him at times, Gregory is also careful to document the obstacles he encounters when attempting to articulate his beliefs. A luminous leader who preaches and recites the Koran to his devoted soldiers, Arabi is harassed by Egyptian authorities who have suspicions of him as a "'man with ideas'" ("Arabi" 6). His ideas are immediately identified as treacherous, confirming Gregory's aphorism at the start of her essay that men's speech holds more weight than women's in the public sphere. But Gregory prefers to portray Arabi as a figure on the lower rung of power. Forced to work within structures over which he does not have control, he responds initially to the Egyptian authorities not by wielding his intimidating sword, which Gregory describes earlier in her essay, but rather through a petition that outlines the army's grievances. Gregory once again may be crafting a more agreeable version of Arabi by downplaying the military power that he ultimately achieves, but her focus on his use of a written document to plead his case connects him to her own self-proclaimed use of the essay form to defend him. Arabi is a figure who, like Gregory and other women, must find resourceful ways to articulate political beliefs.

Gregory even characterizes Arabi as having maternal inclinations. He presses a picture of Gregory's son to his lips and refers to his political followers as his "'children'"

("Arabi" 8). While these descriptions might mark him as feminized and thus "weak" in a different context, Gregory's maternalization of Arabi in light of her essay's veneration of domestic authority effectively grants him a different (and more potent) form of power in her eyes. In this sense, "domesticating" Arabi does not connote rendering him docile and apolitical. Instead, it signifies a new vantage point on national politics.

This alternative perspective on feminized national identity relates to Ireland's political scene, too. Gregory offers a different understanding of representations of a feminized Ireland that had plagued other Irish nationalists. Responding to English characterizations of a vulnerable Erin or helpless Hibernia, nationalist organizations such as the Gaelic Athletic Association sought to masculinize the Irish so as to counteract notions of the colonial feminine. On the contrary, Gregory embraces and revises the portrayal of a feminized Ireland, rather than disowning it. This strategy refuses to associate feminization with political passivity, and in doing so, Gregory indirectly entitles Irish women to participate in nationalist activism. The Egypt-Ireland connection that emerges in "Arabi and His Household" thus provides Gregory with rich terrain for contemplating both women's roles and the legitimacy of militancy within nationalist movements. Ultimately, she more readily accepts the former, presumably viewing women's increased activism as an antidote to political violence.

Nowhere is this more apparent than Gregory's portrayals of Arabi's wife and mother in the essay. Gregory's valorization of the role of the domestic and maternal in nationalist politics finds its fullest articulation in her attitudes toward these two women. While ostensibly focusing only on Arabi's reputation, Gregory's essay shifts its narrative focus to the plight of his wife and mother. Accompanied by Lady Anne, wife of Blunt and a fluent

speaker of Arabic, Gregory recounts her visit to Arabi's home to visit these two women—a visit that serves as the moral and political centerpiece of the essay. For Gregory, the modesty of Arabi's home conveys the humility of his character. It is significant that his wife and mother, and not Arabi himself, welcome Gregory into their home. Looking "rather overcome with the cares of maternity," Arabi's wife is humble, hospitable, and kind, all the traits that Gregory aims to associate with the nationalist himself ("Arabi" 9).

Her description of Arabi's mother, dressed in "common country fashion—a woollen (sic) petticoat and blue cotton jacket," comes across as a portrait of a humble Irish peasant, like those that Gregory and other Revivalists were apt to imagine as representing an ideal Ireland. Gregory is not merely reproducing a facile image. On the contrary, Gregory refits the allegories of Ireland as an honorable peasant and Ireland as a woman, the latter of which had remained a ubiquitous image throughout nineteenth-century Ireland. Envisioning the Irish peasant figure through an Egyptian mother, Gregory stresses the shared experiences of women. While Arabi's mother does not participate in militant political activism, she and Arabi's wife are also not detached from nationalist politics. The wife gives a "vivid account of the imprisonment" of Arabi and two other colonels, explaining that the moment she hears news of her husband's release from prison, she gives birth to a daughter, whom she names "'Bushra' (good tidings)" ("Arabi" 9). Arabi's wife treats her labor as analogous to her husband's political struggles. And she offers her own temperate outlook on political relations between Egyptians and the British: "'We can't get on without the Christians, or they without us'" ("Arabi" 10).

The wife's story draws attention back to Gregory's own political narrative. Gregory insists boldly at the beginning of her essay that her words may change public opinion about

Arabi, but she subsequently downplays this ambitious claim by distancing her writing from historical fact. She also acknowledges that her inability to understand Arabic hinders her knowledge of Arabi, and she confesses that her opinion is clouded by his personal kindness toward her family. Gregory displays a mix of self-effacement and self-importance in her writing, discrediting her story just as she emphasizes its significance. Calling attention to her role as writer by using a highly self-reflexive mode of representation, Gregory ultimately advertises the effectiveness for women writers of this type of rhetoric, which fuses the domestic and the political.[6]

Gregory introduces her essay, after all, by examining the theory that women possess greater latitude in political expression because of their supposed detachment from politics. "'A lady,'" one of Gregory's English friends tells her, "'may say what she likes, but a man is called unpatriotic who ventures to say a word that is good of'" Arabi ("Arabi" 3). Gregory seems to sense that this verbal power is of little use to a woman if her political voice is ignored in the public arena. Yet Gregory also understands that political influence happens through a number of different outlets and that approaching activism through domesticity is a legitimate tactic for women. "I, like Master Shadow," Gregory wryly asserts about her role as an allegedly apolitical woman, "present no mark to the enemy" ("Arabi" 3).

Gregory's initial claim that her essay does not aspire to historical accuracy seems less tentative when it becomes clear that she aims to redefine the parameters of the historical. She admits that Arabi's tarnished reputation was not what chiefly inspired her to seek publication of her essay, long after she had written it. Instead, Gregory's emotions are galvanized when she hears news of his wife and mother fleeing from danger of arrest, forced to find refuge in another woman's home. Gregory treats her act of publishing as a political

undertaking, one grounded in one woman's empathy for two women who are expelled from the sanctity of their hearth.

Her intervention is charged with empathy, but it is still important to note that she cannot imagine Arabi's wife and mother as exceeding their domestic roles. At almost every turn Gregory speaks *for* these Egyptian women. Reina Lewis has considered how the "gendered agency" of women intellectuals like Gregory both "contributed to and drew on the imperial project" (12). Lewis argues that during the height of the British Empire in the late-nineteenth century, the "proto-feminist concern for 'native' women was itself frequently structured by the same assumptions of white superiority and civilization [. . .] that drove imperial policy" (22). At the same time, Lewis reminds us that European women were marginalized at home because of their gender, and thus their relationship to Orientalism was necessarily fractured (Lewis 18). Because Western women could employ Orientalist beliefs while experiencing 'otherness' themselves, they revealed that "the representation of the Orientalized other is never one of a secure and absolute difference, although it may evidence a will to be just that" (Lewis 43). Lewis further suggests that we view "women's relationship to Orientalism and imperialism as a series of identifications that did not have to be either simply supportive or simply oppositional, but that could be partial, fragmented and contradictory" (237). These contradictions mark Gregory's essay: she politicizes domestic space, but she is the only one who claims a public voice from this arrangement.

Gregory, however, offers a glimpse of how she might envision sharing that public voice in her portrayal of Arabi's mother. The last portion of "Arabi and His Household" suggests that Gregory could in fact imagine Egyptian voices in dialogue with, rather than dictated by, her own. The final paragraphs of the essay consist of reported quotations from

the mother. This "old mother" tells Gregory that her son's political position impacts his family. "'We were happier in the old days,'" the mother explains, before Arabi became the Minister of War in Egypt ("Arabi" 11). Worried about the physical and emotional toil that her son endures, Arabi's mother takes issue with his oft-repeated belief: "God will preserve me" ("Arabi" 12). "'God will preserve me!'" his mother responds, offering her revision of his axiom: "'It is not the will of God that we should perish" ("Arabi" 12). Arabi's mother disagrees with her son in more than one way. Learning that he petitions for the abolition of slavery in Egypt, she exclaims,

> He ought not to do it [. . . .] He does not see the consequences as I do. All the slaves will leave as soon as they are freed, and European women will take their places, and they will seduce their masters, and their children will be stronger than ours, and we shall be driven out of the country. ("Arabi" 12)

Shifting the home to the center of political relevance, his mother predicts that the issues surrounding the public debate about slavery, particularly those of racial purity, begin in the home and expand outward. Arabi's mother suggests that women's bodies are valuable for their ability to produce future heirs to a nation. The maternal body becomes the bearer of national and racial purity, a powerful responsibility, but one in which negligent motherhood can be blamed for the inferior racial makeup of its citizens and the failures of the nation.

To the mother's speech, Gregory responds: "Poor old soul!" ("Arabi" 12). This brief and ambiguous response is notable in an essay that spells out in elaborate detail its defense of Arabi. The fact that Gregory does not respond more directly may reveal that she has misgivings about the idea of the maternal body as bearer of national tradition. Yet later in her career Gregory found utility in the figure of Ireland as a woman in the play *Cathleen ni*

Houlihan, which she co-wrote with Yeats. Gregory's reaction more likely indicates her reluctance to judge the Egyptian woman. Gregory may or may not share the beliefs of Arabi's mother, but it is significant that these beliefs occupy the final paragraphs of Gregory's essay. Rather than resolve the differences between them, Gregory sets up a dialogue between herself and the mother that acknowledges the inevitable conflicts between women from distinct national backgrounds. Her approach is grounded in practicality, and reflects how, as Lennon suggests, Gregory's "vision of the Orient did not emerge from Theosophical borrowings from India," but rather "upon firsthand knowledge and experience" of Eastern life (232). "One cannot help wondering," Lennon goes on, "if her political involvement in Asian and West Asian politics kept her from overly romanticizing the mystical East the way so many of her fellow Revivalists did" (232). Gregory's knowledge about Arabi's mother, after all, is based on their actual encounters. Implicit in Gregory's attitude toward the mother is the proposal that sympathies between women of different nations are rooted in dynamic and dialogic interaction.

Gregory's interest in the political ideas of Arabi's mother differentiates her writing from another Victorian woman's accounts of Egyptian "harems." In her memoir *Eastern Life, Past and Present* (1848), Harriet Martineau attempts to set aside her cultural assumptions:

> Before I went abroad, more than one sensible friend had warned me to leave behind as many prejudices as possible; and especially on this subject, on which the prejudices of Europeans are strongest. I was reminded of the wide extent, both of time and space, in which Polygamy had existed; and that openness of mind was as necessary to the accurate observation of this institution as of every other. (148)

Martineau ultimately concludes that "virtual slavery is indispensably required by the practice of polygamy" (159). In her essay on Arabi, Gregory does not mention whether he has numerous wives. If he did, she no doubt left out this information in an attempt to make Arabi appear less unfamiliar to an English audience. Both Gregory and Martineau approach Egyptian home life with good intentions, if still retaining their English preconceptions, yet Martineau does not attempt to hear the stories of the women whom she visits. Gregory, on the other hand, makes the tales of Arabi's wife and mother central to her essay. This attention to marginalized voices anticipates Gregory's interest in collecting the tales of the native Irish, which she would begin in earnest a decade later. When she wrote "Arabi and His Household," however, Gregory could articulate greater political aspirations for women—Egyptian or Irish—than she could for those nations such as Ireland and Egypt that sought independence from Britain.

Gregory's opinions had not changed substantially a decade later. In 1893 she published anonymously a pamphlet entitled "A Phantom's Pilgrimage; Or, Home Ruin." When approaching Gregory from her twentieth-century texts, in which her devotion to Irish nationalism is evident, this pamphlet can appear somewhat surprising in its harsh rejection of Irish self-governance. Responding to William Gladstone's proposed Home Rule bill, the pamphlet frames its story with characters from Egyptian mythology, who rule the afterlife by punishing or rewarding mortals for their deeds on earth. As Gladstone awaits his judgment, the god Osiris offers him a deal: if Gladstone returns to witness the results of one of his deeds on earth, and if those results are positive, then he will enjoy the bliss of heaven.

Gladstone chooses to observe the outcome of Home Rule in Ireland, which in Gregory's fantasy has been authorized by his 1893 bill. Gladstone remarks to his judges that

he will gladly accept the consequences of an endeavor that "'conferred self-government on an oppressed nation'" ("Phantom" 3). Gladstone's confidence haunts him as he is whisked off to Ireland. Immediately he recognizes that "he had in his lifetime seen but little of the country he had believed himself to understand so well" (4). Ireland's self-governance has left the nation in shambles, crippled by massive taxes and unable to export due to crop and livestock diseases. Everywhere he turns he sees devastation. The starving and desperate Irish people whom Gladstone encounters are nostalgic for the days of landlords and workhouses, and the chaos that he witnesses reaches its pinnacle when a priest is murdered by a group of unemployed, idle men. That Gladstone receives his moral lesson from a jury of Egyptian gods and goddesses is not surprising. Just as in "Arabi and His Household," Gregory employs the Egypt-Ireland connection to make claims about Ireland to an English audience. In this pamphlet, however, it is harder to see sympathy for political nationalism. On Home Rule in Ireland Gregory seems staunch: it leads to utter chaos.

Yet the focus on women and children again supplies a subtler political message. Similar to the way that Gregory's attention to Arabi's wife and mother develops her conclusions in "Arabi and His Household," the emphasis on the devastation of Irish families in "A Phantom's Pilgrimage" transforms the essay into more than a mere diatribe against Home Rule. As James Pethica notes: "[D]espite its seemingly party-line arguments, the essay manifests little in the way of narrow concern for Lady Gregory's own vested interests"; the text instead "sympathetically considers the prospects for Irish people of all classes, whether landlords or tenants, strong farmers or merchants, factory labourers or children" (xvi).

Gregory portrays the home as capable of withstanding the harshest of times: the only "sign of human life" that has survived Irish self-governance is "a curl of blue smoke issuing from the chimney of a cottage" ("Phantom" 4). Famine takes its toll, however, and Gladstone finds underneath a heap of stones "a dead woman's face, looking upwards" (5). This woman, her eyes turned toward heaven, is the first to die in her family; she has presumably made the ultimate maternal sacrifice, depriving herself of food so that her children may eat what little there is left. Another mother gives voice to the problems that have beset her community since the passing of Home Rule: "'Look now at that man in the door-way!'" she commands, indicating her husband,

> 'The day I married him he was a strong farmer, with a nice way o' livin'. An' now to see a calf or a cow about the house you couldn't; nor so much as a pig within on the flure, not if you lighted all the candles in the town of Galway! My curse an' the curse o' the country be on the Home Rule, an' on them that gave it to us!' (7)

Just as a mother's curse is enough to challenge the authority of Queen Victoria in Gonne's essay "The Famine Queen," here it accompanies the curse of Ireland itself. Mothers, Gregory suggests, are the keepers of the nation.

Five years later, Gregory embarked on an editorial project that cultivated the nascent sympathies in "A Phantom's Pilgrimage." She gathered correspondence written by her husband's grandfather, who had been a landlord and Under-Secretary of Ireland from 1813-31. This research led her to acknowledge the abuses of power by landlords, and if it did not usher her into a full-fledged support of Irish nationalism—which would occur in the next decade of her life—it certainly built a foundation (Pethica xxiii). When *Mr. Gregory's Letter-Box, 1813-1830* was published in 1898, Gregory had already begun to collect stories

for *Visions and Beliefs in the West of Ireland*, which would help solidify her commitment to nationalism. Like the texts before it, this collection of tales demonstrated Gregory's path to national politics through her exploration of women's forms of power.

In the opening pages of *Visions and Beliefs*, Gregory establishes her protocol for collecting stories from the homes of Irish men and women in the West of Ireland. "Even when I began to gather these stories," Gregory explains, "I cared less for the evidence given in them than for the beautiful rhythmic sentences in which they were told" (15). By prioritizing the form of the tales over their content, Gregory elevates the task of story collecting to that of high literature. From one point of view, this impulse distances Gregory from the Irish storytellers. Unlike the generations of Irish who had transmitted folk tales orally, Gregory's practice of written transcription transforms the tales into aesthetic objects to be appreciated (and also dissected) by her literary circle at Coole. Her focus on the mellifluous sentences of the native Irish over the ideas expressed within them can be perceived as an unwillingness to value those ideas. English caricatures of the Irish, after all, had long characterized them as loquacious, but incompetent.

Gregory's attention to form attempts to resist those very characterizations. She was adamant in retaining the Kiltartan dialect that these storytellers used, which combined elements of the English and Irish languages. As Seamus Deane has noted, "Irish English was not only a dialect or patois; it was one that was consistently characterized as suffering from deformity—excess, illogic, mispronunciation" (Deane, *Strange Country* 55). Gregory resists this portrayal by representing Kiltartan as a valuable form of hybridity that embraced its Gaelic roots while freely sampling from the English language that had become by the late-nineteenth century a requirement for Irish schoolchildren.[7] While the publishers of fellow

story-collector Douglas Hyde had failed to support his work, claiming that a book containing dialect would never be profitable, Gregory refused to alter her collections. She was convinced that the tales would lose their impact if she fully Anglicized the language.

Gregory remained alert to the difficulties in representing Irish folklore. She elaborates on her methods in *Visions and Beliefs*: "I had no theories, no case to prove, I but 'held up a clean mirror to tradition'" (15). Exposing her motives just as she insists that her project is free from them, Gregory reveals the limits of realism. The "mirror" of realism that reflects the world in its inverted image is positioned to represent "tradition." Gregory's collections reveal that the traditional folk tales of the Irish are inchoate, shifting, and contradictory: "For tradition," Gregory explains, "has a large place in 'the Book of the People' showing a sowing and re-sowing, a continuity and rebirth as in nature" (15). Gregory at once dictates that realism is her method of representation and insists that it is insufficient for her purposes. The first sentence of her Preface explains that the "Sidhe [fairies] cannot make themselves visible to all" (9). What good is the "clean" mirror of realism, Gregory suggests, if much of what is to be captured is beyond conventional representation?

Gregory finds political utility in pressing the boundaries of realism. "It is hard to tell sometimes," she goes on, "what has been a real vision and what is tradition, a legend hanging in the air, a 'vanity' as our people call it, made use of by a story-teller here and there, or impressing itself as a real experience on some sensitive and imaginative people" (15). Her catalog of terms obscures rather than illuminates. "Real vision" and "tradition" may be opposed to one another; read another way, they may represent two possibilities in a series that includes "legend" and "vanity." The phrase *real vision* itself raises a host of

complications. "Real vision" may indicate the "real experience" that Gregory refers to at the end of the sentence—that is, the ability to verify something visually or experientially. But the phrase also insinuates a paradox: in what sense can a vision—a dream, a hallucination—be "real," a word whose definition is also multivalent?

Moreover, the word *vision* is loaded with supernatural connotations, especially in relation to the occult practices and theories in which both Gregory and Yeats found interest. Eager to find the space "where things visible and invisible meet," Gregory became committed to occultism, a perspective that can be thought of as corresponding to her support of Irish nationalism (15). Occult practices in the late-nineteenth century stemmed in part from the desire "to resist the omnipresent threat of materialism" (Tryphonopoulos 21). To many nationalists, including Gregory, England represented the apotheosis of materialistic greed in contrast to a more virtuous and spiritual Ireland. The contradiction of "real vision" throws doubt on the idea that Ireland's pursuit of national identity can occur through predictable means. In Gregory's complex explanation, the definition of "tradition" is above all slippery. Therefore, holding up a clean mirror to tradition—what she claims is the guiding force behind her methods of story collecting—is foolhardy. Gregory proposes that it is inadequate to rely upon realism to communicate a collection of tales that do not play by the rules of verisimilitude.

Gregory's choice to collect the tales of the Irish, and to call attention to their language, represents a common undertaking within a national literary movement like the Revival. As Anglea Bourke notes, "newly emergent nation-states" often looked to "oral tradition for a sense of their past which would be independent of the narratives imposed by their colonizers" (26). The stories that Gregory collected focused heavily on descriptions of

the Sidhe, or fairies, that were common in nineteenth-century folklore. The fairies were most often described as changelings who existed in human form and lived either within regular communities of the Irish or alone on the outskirts of villages. The Irish storytellers feared and respected the fairies, telling of elaborate methods by which normal people might mollify the ire of the fairies.

Tales of the Sidhe challenged the borders between the real and unreal, existing in the ambiguous space that Gregory terms *real vision*. Her treatment of a central character in these tales, the healer Biddy Early, reveals that Gregory's method of story collecting was inseparable from her scrutiny of those methods. Her reproductions of the tales of the native Irish, while ostensibly transmitting oral legends to written record with little artifice, are indelibly marked with indications of her sensitivity to the power dynamics of this transmission.

The Catholic church's opposition to Biddy Early provides Gregory with one outlet to explore these power dynamics. Gregory, for instance, offers the story of a man who seeks Biddy Early's help after he hurts his hand working in the fields. "She brought me into a small room," reports Mr. McCabe, "and said holy words and sprinkled holy water and told me to believe. The priests were against her, but they were wrong. How could that be evil doing that was all charity and kindness and healing?" (34). Biddy Early freely borrows from the rituals of Catholicism for her own ceremonies as a healer. Encouraging her visitors "to believe," Biddy Early creates a space that is at once familiar to her Catholic patrons and free from the doctrine of the Church. It is assumed that those who visit the female healer may believe as they choose. Mr. McCabe disregards the priests' condemnation of her because he finds in her home the virtues of charity, kindness, and healing—traits that defy "evil" from

his point of view. These traits also evoke the sanctity and safety of the domestic sphere, where one finds both compassion and, most importantly, care for sickness. The effectiveness of Biddy's maternal care, which caters to the suffering of the body, offers Mr. McCabe the justification to question the Church's authority.

In fact, it is Biddy Early's attention to physical comfort that makes her a particular threat to the priests. "She was good, and better," explains a little girl, "to the poor as to the rich. Any poor person passing the road, she'd call in and give a cup of tea or a glass of whiskey to, and bread and what they wanted" (37). The priests in her surrounding area react to these acts of physical consolation by depriving Biddy Early's visitors of their possessions: a blacksmith insists that the "priests [. . .] used to be taking the cloaks and the baskets from the country people to keep them back from going to her" (37). Rather than entice Biddy Early's visitors with food or shelter, the priests deprive them of it in a lesson of religious renunciation. Aiming to discipline the bodies of his parishioners, one priest drives away Biddy Early's visitors with a riding whip (34).

Biddy Early's visitors, though, fail to see a stark division between her deeds and the spiritual acts of the priests. One man claims that "the priests won't let on that they believe in them [the Sidhe] themselves, but they are more in dread of going about at night than any of us" (35). Many also believe that the priests can perform cures like Biddy Early. While some suggest that the priests refuse to practice their own powers of healing because it is spiritually destructive, several of Gregory's interviewees insist that priests avoid performing cures due to reasons of social control and bodily discipline demanded by the Church. Daniel Shea explains to Gregory: "Some say the bishops don't like them [the priests] to do cures because the whiskey they drink to give them courage before they do them is very apt to make

drunkards of them" (44). A woman named Mrs. McDonagh insists that Biddy Early's fortune telling amounts to sacrilege," yet also insists that the "priests can do cures as well as she did, but they don't like to do them, unless they're curates that like to get the money" (41). Gregory shows that the Irish readily merge two systems of belief in their lives by viewing Biddy Early's healing as an extension of the Catholicism's power to heal spiritually and even physically.

This ideological flexibility demonstrates the resilience with which the Irish poor confronted their lack of social power, and it also provides a check on Gregory's position as a member of the Anglo-Irish elite. "To gather folk-lore," Gregory proposes at the beginning of *Visions and Belief*, "one needs, I think, leisure, patience, reverence, and a good memory. I tried not to change or alter anything, but to write down the very words in which the story had been told" (15). "Leisure" is clearly a mark of the Anglo-Irish, and Gregory positions herself as merely a conduit for the stories she is told. Aside from introducing each chapter, Gregory rarely inserts herself as auditor into the interviews. This method implies at first that as an arranger she is secondary to the stories told to her. It also brings to mind Gregory's own tendency to efface her own authorial presence. Gregory does not even indicate how she edits the stories or what scheme she uses to arrange them, other than organizing them by large topical headings. While this may be a sign of self-effacement, Gregory's concealed strategies also suggest that the invisible yet impalpable presence behind the text is that of Anglo-Irish authority.

Yet the stories themselves are cannily attentive to this predicament. The stories of the Sidhe, whose existence is not often witnessed by human eyes, provide an outlet for the Irish to consider the power dynamics of their relationship with the Anglo-Irish. The healer Mr.

Saggerton describes the fairies to Gregory as rich, "handsome" creatures who have their choice of "wine from foreign parts, and cargoes of gold" (64). With power and wealth like the Anglo-Irish, the fairies steal young Irish men and women to perform manual labor such as digging potatoes, while their homes are "ten times more beautiful and ten times grander than any house in his world" (64). The permanence of the fairies—they have been living "from past ages"—recalls the generations of Anglo-Irish in Ireland. The fairies even have "different queens," which suggests the Anglo-Irish loyalty to the English monarchy, as opposed to the Irish tradition of sovereignty goddesses (64). Mr. Saggerton's description ends with a judgment, which implies an abuse of power by the Sidhe even greater than the ones he details: "[T]hey can never die," he explains, "till the time when God has His mind made up to redeem them" (64). His implied comparison of the fairies to the Anglo-Irish reveals that the undetectable power of the Anglo-Irish is just as treacherous as demonstrable forms such as evictions.

To address these subtle forms of power, Gregory looks to the Irish themselves for a model to approach their stories. Biddy Early's maternal impulses provide Gregory with one model. Biddy pursues the political implications of mothering and particularly the power of maternal guidance to maintain a community. Rumored to have received her mystical powers from her own dying son, Biddy mothers the poor but turns away unruly men who had "a drop too much drink taken," creating her own set of rules and values that she expects her visitors to follow (37). She offers advice on child-rearing to local mothers: "'It's a thing you should never do,'" Biddy pronounces, "'to beat a child that breaks a cup or a jug'" (35). Offering her own guidelines for a strong community, Biddy is finicky about whom she will heal. She embraces only those priests who have been expelled from the Church, referring to them—

positively—as "'disgraced'" and "'discarded'" (41). Embracing outsiders and allowing for flexibility in her principles (she, for instance, enjoys whiskey but does not tolerate disorderly drunkards), Biddy offers a scheme for living based on strategic mothering—maternal sympathy with an agenda.

Gregory applies this attitude to her methods of story collecting. She exerts her control in the structuring and layout of the tales in her collection, but she also insists on retaining certain core elements of Irish life, such as the English-Irish dialect and suspension of disbelief about the Sidhe. Drawing from Biddy's acceptance of hybrid rather than "pure" forms of authority, Gregory carefully brings her authority to bear on the project of story collecting while also preserving the authority of the storytellers themselves.

Moreover, Gregory mothered the rural Irish in her daily life in a manner that evoked Biddy Early. "Grandma certainly did give to anyone who came to the house asking for things," Gregory's granddaughter Anne explains in her memoir *Me & Nu* (1978):

> I can remember the streams of people out of Gort who came to ask for flowers for their church, for graves of relatives or to put in their windows when there was to be a holy procession along the streets of Gort. [. . .] I can remember my incredulity and then my fury years later when George Moore wrote saying that Grandma had tried to proselytize the Catholics of Gort. [. . .] How often and often she went out in the pouring rain to get the flowers for them [. . .] It still makes me mad to think of it. Even the Parish Priest had come once, when there was a special celebration and there had to be special flowers for the altar, and Grandma gave him every single lily out of the greenhouse, to be put on the altar of the Roman Catholic Church. If this was proselytizing, there is no doubt who gained from it. (*Me & Nu* 93-94)

Here Gregory takes on Biddy Early's role as the woman who has a reputation for providing things for the community. The writer George Moore plays the part of the parish priests in Biddy's stories, and Gregory responds in much the same way as Biddy: she selectively utilizes the Church and its beliefs.

Gregory's ability to incorporate into her own life Biddy's methods of strategic mothering reveals one of the most potent ways that the healer stands for the dispersal of power from a single source. On the one hand, Biddy represents an otherworldly symbol of maternal power, but, on the other, she is also a political Irish mother. This latter role is available to all Irish women who may, like Gregory, adopt Biddy's power for their own incentive.

Biddy's symbolic status is bolstered by her connection to the Irish tradition of the sovereignty goddess. A figure from Celtic mythology that endured into Irish medieval literature, the sovereignty goddess represented both abstract sovereignty and the physical landscape of Ireland. For a Celtic king to rightfully claim his land, he had to mate ritually with this goddess in a sacred marriage called the *banfheis rígi* (MacCana 521; Johnson 3; Cullingford 2). This goddess manifested in Irish medieval texts as a sexually promiscuous figure who held the power to select the king most fit for the land. In these texts, the female figure, such as Queen Medbh of Connacht in the stories of *Táin Bó Cuailgne,* is considered a real-life personification of the Celtic sovereignty goddess (Johnson 3). Like the sovereignty goddess, Biddy Early is notorious for having multiple husbands. Biddy's husbands are all young, impressionable, and willing to comply with her lifestyle. A man named Daniel Curtin tells Gregory that Biddy "had four or five husbands, and they all died of drink one after another" (*Visions* 34). Viewing her taking up of husbands as a sign of promiscuity, the

priests, Gregory learns, "wouldn't marry her to the last one, and it was by the teacher that she was married" (49). That Biddy Early marries her first three or four husbands in Catholic ceremonies is unsurprising: she adopts the structures of the Church at her will, and when those structures threaten to compromise her lifestyle, she elevates alternative forms of authority, such as having a teacher perform her last marriage.

The sovereignty goddess served as one of the models for later allegorical representations of Ireland as a woman, such as Yeats's and Gregory's Cathleen ni Houlihan. The version of Cathleen in their 1902 play conspicuously lacks a sexual drive, a characterization Maud Gonne imitated in her revision of that figure in her 1904 play *Dawn*. Gregory, however, restores the figure's sexuality in her representations of Biddy Early, who is not only sexually, but also politically active. In this way Gregory constructs Biddy as the opposite of the ubiquitous images of Mother Ireland that populated nationalist ballads and banners in the nineteenth century—as a passive maternal figure with no meaningful words, actions, or sexuality of her own.

Biddy uses her extraordinary power to confront destructive landlords. The story of Biddy's own eviction from her home is told by Mary Glyn:

> She lived in a little house near Feakle that time, and her landlord was Dr Murphy in Limerick, and he sent men to evict her and to pull the house down, and she held them in the door and said: 'Whoever will be the first to put a bar to the house, he'll remember it.' And then a man put his bar in between the two stones, and if he did, he turned and got a fall someway and he broke the thigh. After that Dr Murphy brought her to the court, 'Faeries and all,' he said, for he brought the bottle along with her. So she was put out, but Murphy had cause to remember it, for he was living in a house

> by himself, and one night it caught fire and was burned down, and all that was left of him was one foot that was found in a corner of the walls. (49)

While Biddy's mystical powers are central to Mary Glyn's description, Biddy can also be seen as a defiant tenant whose retaliation recalls the tradition of militant land agitation promoted by nationalists such as Michael Davitt in the 1860s and 70s. These protests, moreover, are firmly rooted in domestic terms. Biddy Early's rebellious efforts aim to preserve her home. She fails, but her revenge is severe. She cripples one man and kills another, a potent advertisement for the potential of physical force uprisings by Irish tenants. By telling the tale of Biddy Early's expulsion and subsequent reprisal, evicted Irish tenants reclaim power imaginatively.

Gregory in fact situates Biddy Early alongside male rebels such as Michael Davitt, one of the nationalist politicians who founded the Land League. On her journey to Biddy Early's last known home—which remained standing even after her death—Gregory recounts her visit to an inn in which pictures of Davitt and John Dillon, one of the founders of the Young Ireland movement, hang on the wall alongside a framed warrant for the landlady's son, imprisoned for his participation in the Land War. The landlady tells Gregory that a portrait of Charles Stewart Parnell had also hung on the wall until "the priest had told her he didn't think well of her hanging it there" (31). Gregory hints at the battle to come between the priests and Biddy Early, and she also positions Biddy as the next "portrait," this time verbal rather than visual, whose likeness is sketched by a variety of different, but equally valued, Irish voices.

While Gregory reveals Biddy's extraordinary power, she also makes plain her more grounded role as a female activist—a political Irish mother. It is salient that the verbal

portraits of Biddy Early are featured alongside public nationalists such as Dillon and Davitt as well as the nameless son of the landlady. Biddy herself moves between the public and private spheres, calling attention both to acknowledged acts of resistance and to private, unknown undertakings. She is a figure to be commemorated like the male nationalists—a picture to be hung on the wall—but she also defies such notoriety and thus presents the possibility that ordinary Irish women, such as the landlady herself, can access Biddy's revolutionary spirit. At the close of the preface, Gregory makes clear that she transmits the tales of Biddy Early from one domestic space to another, gathering the stories from the homes of the Irish and then returning to the inn, where the landlady and her neighbors wait eagerly. Their enthusiasm convinces Gregory that Biddy Early's "fame" will continue to grow. But this fame constitutes a different kind of status. While the portraits of male nationalists hang on a wall in order to be idealized and mythologized, the myths of Biddy Early are more diffuse—they "always hang in the air"—and thus are more present and available to Irish women (32).

Gregory interviews one of these Irish women, Mrs. Sheridan, who is a seer of a different sort. While Biddy Early's legend is sometimes greater than the woman herself, Mrs. Sheridan represents an ordinary Irish woman who claims to possess clairvoyant gifts. Gregory describes her journey to Biddy Early's home as a pilgrimage, but she introduces Mrs. Sheridan as a barefoot woman who has her own tales of the notorious healer. Unlike her second-hand reports of Biddy Early, Gregory has access to Sheridan's own words. "I know," Mrs. Sheridan says, "that I used to be away among them [the fairies] myself, but [. . .] I believe when I was with them I was cross that they wouldn't let me go, and that's why they didn't keep me altogether, they didn't like cross people to be with them" (56). As in her

tales of Biddy Early, Gregory does not question the veracity of Mrs. Sheridan's claims. Mrs. Sheridan's own account suggests that her belief in the supernatural provides an effective means to cope with the struggles of rural Irish life. While the men are away washing sheep by the river, Mrs. Sheridan sits alone as her baby chokes to death. Mrs. Sheridan makes sense of this tragedy by insisting that the fairies took the baby, a frequent explanation of dead or missing children that Gregory hears repeatedly in her interviews (52).

By showing how Biddy's power is disseminated to all Irish women, Gregory reveals how Irish storytelling, especially tales about the Sidhe, consolidates women's social power. This also demonstrates the radical malleability of the supernatural as an explanation of certain forms of oppression (such as Anglo-Irish power) and a strategy against others (such as women's limited authority). In her introduction to the tales of Mrs. Sheridan, Gregory describes the old, barefoot woman as claiming unconventional forms of power. Mrs. Sheridan is poor and feeble, but she has detailed knowledge of places she had never traveled. Like Yeats, Gregory interprets this ability through the lens of occultism. Quoting an occultist, Gregory explains that

> [i]t may even be that a World-soul is personally conscious of all its past, and that individual souls, as they enter into deeper consciousness enter into something which is at once reminiscence and actuality . . . . Past facts were known to men on earth, not from memory only but by written record; and these may be records, of what kind we know not, which persist in the spiritual world. (51)

Gregory sets "written record," the domain of "*men* on earth," against records of the "spiritual world," which are presumably more readily available to women like Mrs. Sheridan (51, my

emphasis). The realm of the supernatural thus acts as a haven for women to exercise their influence.

Gregory introduces her chapter "Herbs, Charms and Wise Women" by sharing an Irish proverb: "'An old woman without learning, it is she will be doing charms'" (148). Women across the West of Ireland, Gregory finds, act as local "healers" in their villages—less prominent versions of Biddy Early. While these women believe in the power of the fairies, they also rely upon their own complex methods for collecting and dispensing herbs and potions. One Mrs. Quaid instructs, "The *slanugad* (ribgrass) is very good, and it will take away lumps. You must go down when it's growing on the scraws, and pull it with three pulls, and mind would the wind change when you are pulling it or your head will be gone" (150). This kind of knowledge passes from mothers to their children and offers remedies not only for physical illness, but also for social problems.

One Mr. Mangan tells Gregory that his mother performed cures and imparted her gifts to him. He offers Gregory a "good charm to say in Irish," which she divides into short lines of verse: "A quiet woman. / A rough man. / The Son of God. / The husk of the flax" (157). Flax protects women in several of the stories Gregory collects. One mother and daughter miraculously spin flax to elude being burned as witches (159). Flax, Mrs. Quaid insists, contains powers that helped her mother escape a man of the fairies who threatened to kill her in her home before she was married (150). Instructing her to "go to bed" each night in punishment for her "sitting up so late," the man's command suggests sexual violence, an act he is not allowed to commit because Mrs. Quaid's mother, flax in hand, always has "some answer" that halts his abuse (150).

Mr. Mangan's charm-turned-poem thus suggests that a woman who endures the "rough" treatment of her husband may turn for help with equal comfort to Christianity or to the wisdom of the women around her, whose stories suggest resistance to domestic abuse.[8] This resistance, moreover, is not merely defensive. One Mrs. Holloran suggests that her mother, a midwife, "put" the "pain" on a man who "had no compassion for his wife" (160). Gregory thus counters the notion that fairy stories always taught women the tragic consequences of overstepping bounds of acceptability.

Angela Bourke has explored those consequences in her analysis of the real-life burning in 1895 of an Irish woman named Bridget Cleary, who was condemned by her family to this fate because they claimed that a fairy inhabited her body. For Bourke, the deeds of Bridget Cleary's husband and extended family exemplified the way that fairy stories signified "communal power against a woman whose behavior they found unacceptable" (135). Bridget Cleary and her husband were rising in economic status in their community, and Bridget embraced her burgeoning new social role. She dressed fashionably and spoke her mind. Bridget's family—including her husband—grew uncomfortable with the social power that Bridget claimed and to discipline her they invoked the legend of a fairy's ability to "take away" a person and inhabit his or her body to perform immoral acts. Cleary's family was ultimately tried and charged with Bridget's murder. "The wider importance of this story," Bourke claims, "lies in the clash it illustrates between two different world views, two ways of dealing with troublesome people, two ways of accounting for the irrational, at a time of profound social, economic and cultural change" (205).

Unionist and Tory newspapers used the Bridget Cleary story to demonstrate the backwardness and barbarism of the rural Irish (Bourke 147-150). A London correspondent of *The New York Times* notes on 31 March 1895:

> 'As might be expected, the barbarous episode near Fethard, in Tipperary, of a woman being tortured to death by her husband and her male relatives in the process of expelling a witch that had taken possession of her body is being gravely cited by the anti-Irish papers here as evidence of the mental degradation and savagery of the Irish peasant population.' (qtd. in Bourke 151)

Bridget Cleary's coroner had suggested that "'[a]mongst Hottentots one would not expect to hear of such an occurrence'" (qtd. in Bourke 114). As Bourke notes, "Coroner Shee's remark was to be the first in a long series of analogies drawn—or repudiated—between the Irish people and various African civilizations in the weeks that followed" (115).

Gregory's focus on the positive (and feminist) aspects of fairies and charms challenges these kinds of accusations of native Irish savagery. While episodes such as the Bridget Cleary tragedy confirmed to some that the Irish were not able to govern themselves, Gregory selects folk tales and central figures such as the empowered Biddy Early to demonstrate that the rural Irish could in fact provide effective models for how Ireland should be governed. The supernatural was not merely a convenient way for the Irish to make sense of the world around them. It was a sophisticated and flexible means to allot power to those who had none. This empowerment, Gregory wants us to realize, includes forms of national as well as gender authority. This linkage is in keeping with Gregory's understanding of national power manifesting through women's power.

Two essays by Yeats, attached to the end of *Visions and Beliefs*, make explicit the political force of the unseen. In "Witches and Wizards and Irish Folk-Lore," Yeats explains that the Irish "often attribute magical powers to Orangemen and to Freemasons" (302). The appeal of the occult, then, is that it provides an outlet to imagine a particular world order for whichever group embraces it. Yeats goes on to convey legends of witches and wizards in the sixteenth century; temporality, he reminds us, is beside the point in matters of the occult. Yeats makes relevant to his own era stories of women persecuted for their connection to the occult: "Alison Pearson who was burnt in 1588," he says, "might have been Biddy Early or any other knowledgeable woman in Ireland today" (307). Like Gregory, Yeats humanizes Biddy Early by connecting her to other Irish women. These powers, Yeats suggests, are not merely supernatural. Knowledgeable women in Ireland are accused of occult practices because they are threatening. Grounding the occult in real-life circumstances, Yeats implies that "[t]here are more women than men mediums today" because women pursue alternative means of authority.

Gregory, too, finds personal autonomy through the supernatural. "[S]he was not guided by any theory of mine," Yeats announces, perhaps with mild surprise, at the start of his second essay, "Swedenborg, Mediums, and the Desolate Places," which serves as the conclusion of Gregory's collection. This bald statement comes as less of a surprise to the reader. While Gregory's introductions throughout her collection are sprinkled with remarks about the occult, both of Yeats's essays situate the stories rather heavy-handedly in that context. Gregory's voice does not dominate her collection, but Yeats brings back the autobiographical "I," shifting the focus away from the Irish voices that populate Gregory's book so that he can emphasize his participation in collecting these tales. He stresses, for

instance, that he roams "from cottage to cottage" with Gregory (311). His essay makes her choice of style for her collection all the more conspicuous. She emphasizes the communal and the oral through her compilation of different voices and her use of the Kiltartan dialect. In contrast, Yeats's densely-written essay blends first-person accounts with secondary sources on occultism, which draws attention exclusively to the writer's experiences and acquired knowledge. While Gregory's reluctance to intrude in her collection might signal the invisible but potent force of the Anglo-Irish, Yeats's domineering narrative voice suggests that Gregory is up to something different: she attempts to offset the marginalization of native Irish voices.

After she had collected the stories of the native Irish but before she published them as *Visions and Beliefs* in 1920, Gregory wrote an unpublished lecture entitled "Laughter in Ireland" (1916). This lecture clarifies how her commitment to suppressed voices found an outlet in the national literary movement of Ireland. "I remember a story," Gregory describes,

> of an artist in India who sent to an illustrated paper some sketches of scenery. They were accepted but when he saw the reproductions, the foreground of each was stocked with palm trees; he was indignant and complained, 'There are not palm trees in that district.' 'That does not matter,' said the editor, 'when there is a picture of India the British public demand palm trees.' (McDiarmid 294)

By 1916 Gregory had embraced Irish nationalism, a circumstance reflected in part by her willingness to draw explicit, positive cross-cultural associations between Ireland and another colonized nation, the sort of connection that she had previously treated with apprehension in "Arabi and His Household" and actively avoided in "A Phantom's Pilgrimage." Just as the "British public" required a fantasy of India as exotic and scenic, filled with palm trees that

are not indigenous, so that same public preferred a particular image of Ireland. "In like manner," Gregory goes on, "Ireland was not to be represented to the British public without what it demanded, if not palm trees, then at least potatoes, poteen and pigs. The stage Irishman came next; he must not appear without a sprig of shillelagh, and a dudeen stuck in his high crowned hat" (McDiarmid 294). The problem of undignified Irish caricatures is one that Gregory returns to again and again in her nonfiction, and especially salient is her willingness to adopt the dilemmas of the Irish as her own.

While she was exposing the voices of the Irish to a new audience in *Visions and Beliefs*, Gregory was also obscuring her own literary voice, allowing the men around her—most often her husband and Yeats—to sign their names to her work. The year she published her first work under her own name, she also wrote a letter to the *Spectator* for which her husband took authorial credit. Her interest in writing was even discouraged at times by her one of her biggest fans, Douglas Hyde, who shared her dedication to folklore. "'He rather snubs my idea of the Cuchulain book,'" Gregory records in her journal about her desire to undertake a translation of Irish mythology: "'I think his feeling is that only a scholar should do it, and he is bewildered by my simple translation'" (qtd. in Dunleavy 136). After her husband's death, Gregory was considered for the position of political writer for a women's magazine in London. Although that magazine never materialized, it revealed her intentions to forge a career as a writer (Coxhead 34).

A profound tension regarding authorial control marks her memoir *Our Irish Theatre: A Chapter of Autobiography by Lady Gregory* (1913). The title makes it unclear as to whether the Irish theatre or Gregory is the subject under inspection. Both are significant—this would be, after all, Gregory's personal account of the dramatic movement—but the word

"our" serves as a counterpoint to the singular emphasis on one life suggested in the term "autobiography." Similarly, the appearance of "Lady Gregory" in the title announces her authorship, while the word "chapter" suggests a collective authorial presence: Gregory will presumably record one chapter in the larger story of the Irish theatre. There are other authors, she implies, to help her write the rest of that story. The text covers the years from 1896 to 1913, and while it offers Gregory's impression of the growth of the dramatic movement in Ireland at the turn of the century, it also more brazenly conveys the gender politics that she introduced in "Arabi and His Household" and developed in *Visions and Beliefs*.

As its title suggests, *Our Irish Theatre* is preoccupied with the friction between collaboration and individual authority. Gregory describes her now-famous conversation with Yeats and Martyn in 1897, in which they pledged their loyalty to fostering a national dramatic movement in Ireland:

> We went on talking about it, and things seemed to grow possible as we talked, and before the end of the afternoon we had made our plan. We said we would collect money, or rather ask to have a certain sum of money guaranteed. We would then take a Dublin theatre and give a performance of Mr. Martyn's *Heather Field* and one of Mr. Yeats's own plans, *The Countess Cathleen*. I offered my first guarantee of £25. (*Our Irish Theatre* 19)

Unlike her other essays, which tend to become more inclusive, moving from "I" to "we," this paragraph demonstrates the opposite as it shifts from the collective "we" to the insistent "I." Gregory had no plays yet to her name, but she readily inserts her financial contribution to

their scheme alongside Yeats's and Martyn's literary offerings. Imagining the future of Irish literature, Gregory makes her distinctive role known.

Gregory fashions the national theatre movement in familial terms. Inspired by Hyde's commitment to "folk-tradition," Gregory imagines a "return to the people, the reunion after separation, the taking and giving," which will form "the perfect circle, the way of nature, the eternal wedding-ring" (51). Her language is replete with images of community, marriage, and family. Describing how there were very few plays to choose from in the early days of the theatre, Gregory quotes an Irish proverb: "'When the time comes, the child comes'" (52). What draws her to translate the poems of the blind nineteenth-century Irish poet Raftery is that he "creat[es] a community of people drawn together to hear their language" (Welch 262). In its focus on oral transmission, Irish poetry itself seemed to tout the power of literary collaboration.

In Gregory's familial fantasy, members supported one another unconditionally. She, for instance, became embroiled in what she terms a "fight with the castle" to produce George Bernard Shaw's play *The Shewing-up of Blanco Posnet* at the Abbey (84). Shaw's play had been banned by the English censors, but due to a loop-hole in the Abbey's patent, English censorship laws did not have authority. Nevertheless, the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland launched a campaign against the play on behalf of the English monarchy and instructed Gregory by letter to cease preparations for the play's production. Gregory sprang to action on Shaw's behalf, writing the Lord Lieutenant and eventually visiting Dublin Castle to air her grievances. The Lord Lieutenant's letter, which was written by one of his subordinates, touched a nerve: "'The play,'" it reads, "'does not deal with an Irish subject, and it is not an Irish play in any other sense than that its author was born in Ireland'" (85). While Shaw's

play was indeed not explicitly related to Irish concerns—it dealt with a horse-thief and an Ibsen-esque fallen woman among religious themes—Gregory viewed the controversy as an affront to the national literary family that she had been cultivating.

Quick to take advantage of easy publicity, she played up the histrionic elements of this confrontation between Dublin Castle and the Abbey Theatre—and she did not forget to elaborate on her individual role as the Abbey's passionate defender. She recounts the controversy in *Our Irish Theatre*. Upon visiting a Castle official, Gregory dramatically inquires, "'Are you going to cut off our heads?'" (86). Later she injects a mock-heroic tone, roughly sketching the events of a trip with Yeats to visit another official: "The courtesy shown to us and, I think, also by us; the kindly offers of a cup of tea; the consuming desire for that tea after the dust of the railway journey all across Ireland; our heroic refusal, lest its acceptance should in any way, even if it did not weaken our resolve, compromise our principles" (93). Gregory understands herself to be playing a role in an elaborate production in which, in Yeats's words, they "were trying to create a model on which a great national theatre may be founded in the future" (91). The "heroic refusal" of tea is both tongue-in-cheek and a clever instance of Gregory's turning a domestic act into a political one.

Gregory was thus alert to the ways that she could find her own individual literary voice within the collaborative drive of the national theatre movement. She accomplished this most effectively by emphasizing her role as a maternal figure. *Our Irish Theatre* is dedicated to "Richard Gregory, Little Grandson," and each chapter begins with an epistle to him (17). She explains her reasons for writing to her grandson: "Some day when I am not here to answer, you will maybe ask, 'What were they for, the writing, the journeys, and why did she have an enemy?' So I will put down the story now, that you may know all about it bye and

bye" (17). Busy with the theatre movement, Gregory defends her inability to perform maternal duties, such as playing with him in the garden or spending time with him during Christmas (17). The text, which is a history of a literary movement, is also framed by Gregory as an intimate monologue delivered by a grandmother. Gregory thus conflates the large-scale audience, those interested in the establishment of the Irish national theatre, with an intimate communication between grandmother and grandson. Her chronicle of the dramatic movement is a public *and* private family tale, passed down from one generation to the next.

While Gregory acts as a grandmother here, her role as the mother of Major Robert Gregory made her more famous. Yeats memorialized her son in three 1919 poems "An Irish Airman Foresees His Death," "In Memory of Major Robert Gregory," and "The Sad Shepherd." In the latter poem, a goatherd asks about Lady Gregory, "How does she bear the grief?" and the shepherd suggests at the end of the poem that as a "wife and mother" who had lost both husband and son, she might gain a "quiet thought" through the poetic elegy (ln. 35, 129). Robert Gregory explicitly supported the English government and the British Empire, and his ideas were what perhaps prevented Gregory from proclaiming her nationalist beliefs earlier. As Maureen Murphy notes, "[H]er son whom she adored was an Imperialist and he was her first loyalty" (149). Gregory's role as a grandmother, however, gave her more ideological freedom. While Yeats crafted the portrait of her as a grieving mother in his poetry, she was free to fashion every aspect of her position as a politically-involved grandmother.

Gregory directs the final words of her autobiography to her grandson, whom she admits that she missed greatly while promoting Synge's *The Playboy* in America:

> Now, little Richard, that is the story of my journey, and I wonder if by the time you read this you will have forgotten my coming home with a big basket of grapes and bananas and grape fruit and oranges for you and a little flag with the Stars and Stripes. [. . .] I was very glad to be at home with you again while the daffodils were blooming out, and to have no more fighting, perhaps for ever. And if it is hard to fight for a thing you love, it is harder to fight for one you have no great love for. [. . .] So think a long time before you choose your road, little Richard, but when you have chosen it follow it on to the end. (139)

Gregory's guilt for her absence from Coole while she defended Synge's play is replaced at the end of the passage by a conviction that her devotion to Irish drama sets a good example for her grandson.

Her mothering of the Irish theatre thus presents an expanded idea of maternal care, one compatible with more traditional duties of (grand)motherhood. That she desired to present herself as the living embodiment of this is apparent in an interview with Boston's *Evening Globe*: "Lady Gregory is first a grand-mother," the reporter concludes, "a fact which she announces with smiles and tenderness—and everyone knows how sympathetic and interesting all grandmothers are. But a very active grandmother is Lady Gregory" (*Our Irish Theatre*, Coole Edition 162).

The form of *Our Irish Theatre* testifies to Gregory's role as a "very active grandmother" in the family of the dramatic movement. Including large excerpts from letters by Yeats, Martyn, Bernard Shaw, as well as clippings from newspapers, Gregory positions her voice alongside an assortment of others. Her second chapter is entitled "The Blessing of the Generations," and in it she reiterates the names of those who supported the Irish

movement from its inception. Gregory builds a family tree of sorts so that future generations—including her grandson—can trace the founding of the movement to its collective origins. She quotes people at length, and she even inserts passages from her own diaries and notes. The somewhat chaotic result is that Gregory's text comes across as a vibrant dialogue among numerous people, the conversation of a noisy and animated family around the dinner table. There are also a number of inserted texts that are expressly joint endeavors, such as the collective statement of purpose for the national theatre. *Our Irish Theatre* reads like a family scrapbook.

The structure of the text, though, also calls attention to Gregory's individual role as author and arranger. There are several instances in which her compilation of texts creates a dialogue between various excerpts of her own writing. In one particularly layered moment, she transcribes sections of her speeches in America while quoting from her letters and journals about her experience delivering those speeches. Gregory's inclusion of excerpts from her own works draws attention to her other publications in magazines and journals such as *The Yale Review* and *Collier's National Weekly*. In an interview with the New York newspaper *The Evening Post* in 1911, Gregory clarifies her contribution to the national literary movement in Ireland: "I was the first to write in the Irish dialect—that is, the English of Gaelic thinking people. I wrote in it before Synge did. He said he was amazed to find in my 'Cuchulain of Muirthemne' his desired dialect" (*Our Irish Theatre*, Coole Edition, 156).

Gregory's apparent pride in her own literary accomplishments again raises the question: why does she seem willing to allow her name to be omitted from jointly-written texts while she defines herself chiefly by her role as a writer? In the opening pages, she is modest about her contributions to Yeats's plays, explaining that she would only "suggest a

sentence here and there" or help to "fill spaces" (53). While Gregory most likely understates her participation, she appears satisfied with the role of unacknowledged partner. She is more forward about her contributions elsewhere: when Yeats is dissatisfied with his play *Where There is Nothing*, which he dedicated to Gregory as "'part your own,'" she does not tiptoe around her authorship when she claims that together they "have since re-written it" (53).

She is unusually clear about her authorship of one play in particular. "Later in the year," Gregory chronicles, "we wrote together *Kathleen ni Houlihan*" (Gregory favored the "K" to the "C" that would be reprinted in future editions) (53). Just as Edward Martyn's play *Maeve* produced unexpected enthusiasm from its audience, *Cathleen ni Houlihan* roused its viewers to unanticipated levels of excitement due to the symbolic title character. Although her name never appears on the playbill or the in play's subsequent publication form, Gregory is unwilling in her autobiography to obfuscate her role as co-author of this play, with its powerful female figure. She quotes a letter from Yeats:

> One night I had a dream almost as distinct as a vision, of a cottage where there was well-being and firelight and talk of a marriage, and into the midst of that cottage there came an old woman in a long cloak. She was Ireland herself, that Kathleen ni Houlihan for whom so many songs have been sung and for whose sake so many have gone to their death. I thought if I could write this out as a little play, I could make others see my dream as I had seen it, but I could not get down from that high window of dramatic verse, and in spite of all you had done for me, I had not the country speech. One has to live among the people, like you, of whom an old man said in my hearing, 'She has been a serving maid among us,' before one can think the thoughts of the people and speak with their tongue. We turned my dream into the little play,

> *Kathleen ni Houlihan*, and when we gave it to the little theatre in Dublin and found that working people liked it, you helped me to put my other dramatic fables into speech. (54)

She describes this note as an "introductory letter," once presumably meant to appear with the playbill (54). While this letter is not included in subsequent publications of the play (and Gregory's name continues to be omitted from title pages), she chooses a prominent text to document Yeats's acknowledgement of their collaboration—in an autobiography that also serves as a history of the national theatre. Gregory imaginatively inserts her name back on the play's title page. Admittedly there is a note of arrogance in Yeats's confession that he pursues Gregory's help because he cannot escape the rigors of high literature (the "high window of dramatic verse") to write the "little play" of *Cathleen ni Houlihan*. Yet Yeats's description of their collaboration also expresses his need for Gregory's assistance. She happily answers this call and is meticulous in recording her willingness to do so. Again Gregory has it both ways: she indicates her unique contribution but also insists on the importance of collaboration.

Not unlike Maud Gonne's autobiography *A Servant of the Queen*, *Our Irish Theatre* emphasizes popular representations of Ireland as woman while it constructs its author as a character hovering between the realms of ordinary and extraordinary. While Gonne merges with the figure of Cathleen ni Houlihan in her autobiography's opening chapter, Gregory describes herself throughout her book as a slightly larger-than-life character who nurtures the national theatre movement into being. Gregory is a figure of compromise, who views the movement as relying on the personal bonds that are its foundation: "I was troubled," she tells, "by the misunderstanding of friends" (48). When not exercising her powers of

negotiation, she is at the theatre's disposal in other ways, such as making a last-minute trip to America to train an understudy in the finer points of folk dialect for a production of Synge's *The Playboy of the Western World.* Gregory excerpts a letter from Yeats to emphasize her special skills for this task: "'One thing I am entirely sure of,'" he tells her, "'that there is no one but you with enough knowledge of folk to work a miracle'" (87). She also carefully documents the first boycott of a play by the Anglo-Irish authorities, which occurs in reaction to Martyn's *Maeve*. While George Moore's *The Bending of the Bough*, which shared a playbill with *Maeve*, was the first play to deal with the "vital Irish question," it is Martyn's play that stirs controversy. Gregory notes that tremendous applause is elicited by the title character of his play, who is an "old woman in rags in the daytime, but living another and second life, a queen in the ideal world, a symbol of Ireland" (28). Like Martyn's *Maeve*, Gregory portrayed herself as inhabiting two extremes—invisible collaborator one moment and prominent author the next.

Gregory is both the figurative mother of the Irish theatre and a real grandmother. About the occasional controversies over plays, especially in America, Gregory explains, "Is not the new baby always the disturber in the household? Our school of drama is the newest birth in Ireland, that Ireland which had become almost consecrated by distance and romance" (255).[9] Earlier, in an article for *The Yale Review*, Gregory sets out this mother-child analogy: "I was asked the other day to tell when the Irish Theatre had come into being. I said I could tell the very day, almost the moment, and that was true in a sense—I was, as it were, present at its birth" ("The Irish Theatre").

Gregory's ability to move between symbolic figure and political grandmother represents a greater power than she gave her fictional character Cathleen ni Houlihan, who is

trapped in her symbolic function. Gregory's choice of nonfiction—as opposed to the more common nationalist forms of drama and the ballad—made this extension of power possible. In "The Felons of Our Land," published in 1900 in *Cornhill Magazine*, she stresses the importance of finding new forms to express a new Ireland. Characteristically, she delivers this idea with an exceedingly cooperative spirit. After a lengthy tribute to Irish emotionalism, which in her view has the potential to triumph over English materiality, she also remarks that "[s]ome of us are inclined to reproach our younger poets with a departure from the old tradition because they no longer write patriotic and memorial ballads." Gregory suggests her personal involvement ("us," "our younger poets"), and she uses this intimate position to propose change. Defending the literary innovations of a new generation of Irish writers, she promises that "they have not departed from" traditional forms such as the ballad, but rather that "they have only travelled a little further on the road that leads from things seen to things unseen" (McDiarmid 268). "[The poet] must be left to his own growth," Gregory goes on, "like the tree that clings to its own hillside, that sends down its roots to find hidden waters, that sends out its branches to the winds and to the stars" (McDiarmid 268-69). Using language that both evokes the occult and literary strategies beyond realism, Gregory above all insists that a young poet must not be trapped in old forms

While she struggles against the predominance of the ballad, Gregory also participates in the same kind of call for literary renewal that had ushered in that form's predominance in the nineteenth century. As Seamus Deane describes, it, ""The issue of representation had to be central for a culture that wished to defend its autonomy on the basis that it had not been and could not be represented in colonial-imperial forms and must therefore find alternatives more suited to it" (54). By the time Gregory wrote "The Felons of Our Land," the ballad had

long clinched its position as a suitable revolutionary form for Irish nationalists, while drama such as *Cathleen ni Houlihan* was about to hit its stride as a nationalist genre, too. By questioning the authority of the ballad, Gregory proposes change within the boundaries of an Irish tradition that favored national identity through stylistic innovation.

As Deane sees it, fiction was one of the primary genres in Irish literature that pursued stylistic innovation for political purposes at the beginning of the twentieth century. "It remained a charged issue in Irish fiction thereafter, undergoing its ultimate transformation in Joyce's work, where the idea of representing an already existing national character was replaced by that of forging the national identity through the act of writing" (57). Before the idea of a stylistic revolution took hold, fiction of the nineteenth century, Deane argues, had been characterized by a "strangeness" that was a result of the nation's inability to represent itself politically (150).

Deane's focus on fiction is understandable: how could nineteenth-century Irish fiction claim the ubiquitous third-person omniscient narrator of the Victorian novel when, as he claims, its national identity had still yet to consolidate (146)? He states that "[i]t is obvious that the ease or difficulty encountered by a community in verbally representing itself has an effect on the ease or difficulty it has in being politically represented" (150). Yet with its emphasis on documenting "real life," nonfiction would seem to be even more content-driven than realist fiction. If Irish fiction was hindered by the political circumstances of Ireland's inability to express a national identity, then surely Irish nonfiction suffered from the same problem. To some extent, this situation explains the lack of a developed nonfiction tradition within Ireland, as compared to Victorian England. Nineteenth-century Ireland boasted no Carlyle of its own.

While for Deane this demonstrates the fundamental problem of representation within Irish discourse, especially during the years of Great Britain and Ireland's union between 1801 and 1922, I suggest that the lack of a mature nonfiction tradition benefits Irish women writers. When Gregory thinks beyond the ballad form in "The Felons of Our Land," she may be envisioning the dramatic tradition in which she was soon to take a commanding role. But she also may be thinking of nonfiction, a form that predated her play-writing and indeed launched her literary career. Within nonfiction Gregory found greater potential for women's authority, which continued to inform her national politics. While her Cathleen ni Houlihan expressed symbolic forms of women's power, her Biddy Early revealed the superior political function of moving between the roles of symbolic and literal mother. Gregory became a prolific playwright, but within the dramatic movement she also frequently relinquished her literary voice to the men around her. It is in her nonfiction, *Our Irish Theatre* in particular, that Gregory reclaims her authorship of plays such as *Cathleen ni Houlihan*. Nonfiction, unlike drama and poetry, offered Gregory a space uncluttered with prescribed gender conventions.

Gregory once explained that she, "'the woman of the house,'" valued Irish tales that had been silenced by the "Trinity dons" (qtd. in Dunleavy 137). In *Visions and Beliefs*, Gregory addressed the power dynamic of her role as "woman of the house," the Anglo-Irish Big House. Across her nonfiction works, Gregory envisioned a new Ireland by requiring that women occupy roles of authority. She stressed collaborative forms of maternal power when she adopted the methods of Biddy Early and revealed that fairy stories underpinned forms of women's communal authority. Her commitment to collaboration and cooperation underscored her milder political approach when compared to contemporaries such as Maud

Gonne or Constance Markiewicz. Gregory looked to the past to craft her sense of Ireland's future, but this should not obscure the innovations in her nonfiction writing. Her unique contributions to Irish nonfiction have been overlooked because of a focus on her role as one of the founders of the Irish National Theatre. We would do better to think of Gregory as providing a lineage for twentieth-century Irish women writers such as Eavan Boland, whose simultaneous adherence to innovation and tradition bears a striking resemblance to Gregory's own methods.

Chapter Three

The Princess as Artist: Mother-Daughter Relations in the Irish Allegory of Oscar Wilde's *Salome*

During his lecture tour of America in 1882, Oscar Wilde delivered a talk at San Francisco's Platt Hall entitled "Irish Poets and Poetry of the Nineteenth Century." Directing his attention primarily to the Young Ireland poets, Wilde admits during this talk that he is "anxious, perhaps naturally anxious, to come to the poetesses of the movement" (32). Wilde's professed anxiety stems from his mother's place among these poetesses, and he goes on to praise her poetry while admitting his bias: "Of the quality of Speranza's poems I perhaps should not speak—for criticism is disarmed before love—but I am content to abide by the verdict of the nation which has so welcomed her genius" (33). Wilde's reluctance to comment in detail about his mother's poetic talent does not prevent him from elaborating on her melodramatic introduction to Irish nationalism. Wilde reports that his mother, who was "brought up in an atmosphere of alien English thought," witnessed from her affluent Anglo-Irish home the funeral procession of Thomas Davis, one of the leaders of the Young Ireland movement (32). As Wilde tells it, Speranza is so moved by the mourners' grief over Davis's death that she immediately buys his book of poems and discovers "for the first time the meaning of the word country" (33).

Speranza's emotional response to Davis's funeral is a fitting conversion narrative. The Irish, after all, had been assessed earlier by Matthew Arnold (and Ernest Renan before him) as predisposed to sentimentality. During his talk at Platt's Hall, Wilde endorses Arnold's praise of the Celtic bard Macpherson. From Wilde's point of view, Arnold rightly perceived the "penetrating passion and melancholy" of Macpherson's lyric (28). Wilde, in

fact, sounds thoroughly Arnoldian when he extols the "Celtic imagination" and its contribution to the "sentiment of modern thought" (28). Yet before he turns to his mother's place in Irish letters, Wilde rebuffs Arnold's belief that the "Celtic genius" has no ability for "sustained inspiration" (32). For Wilde, reading aloud from a selection of luminous Irish poets during his talk supplies more than adequate evidence to refute Arnold's criticism.

Speranza's poetry was part of Wilde's arsenal against Arnold that evening. He read from two of her nationalist poems, "The Brothers. A Scene from '98" and "Courage" (known also as "The Year of Revolutions"). Wilde also quoted from the poetry of Speranza's female contemporary, Mary "Eva" Kelly; her verse, according to him, simultaneously expresses "love of Liberty" and "devotion to Beauty" (32). For Wilde, these Irish poetesses demonstrated the ability to fuse politics and aesthetics, an accomplishment impressive enough to challenge Arnold's theory that Irish genius was naturally fickle. As Wilde explained to his San Francisco audience, Speranza's "passionate expression" finds an outlet in both political action and poetic energy (32).

Some years later Wilde found himself preoccupied with another impassioned figure, this time a "daughter of passion," in the title character of his play *Salome* (Holland and Hart-Davis 556).[1] A favorite of fin-de-siècle artists, Salome provided Wilde with a character already richly invested with associations, allusions, and imaginative possibilities.[2] Of these possibilities, recent critics have been preoccupied with the text's exploration of sexuality. The princess has been cast variously as a sensual girl, a transvestite, a gay male, or a lesbian.[3] This chapter, however, proposes that Salome's passion signifies more than her defiant sexuality. Just as Speranza's "passionate expression" moves beyond sentimentality to political and poetic zeal, Salome's own multivalent passion reveals the play's investment in

the relationship between national and gender identities. Ultimately, Salome becomes a new kind of female figure symbolic of Ireland.

This chapter re-evaluates the character Salome through an examination of the play's Symbolist techniques alongside its setting of Roman imperial administration. What emerges from a focus on this setting is a different angle on the play's reliance on symbolism: characters signify their position within the imperial hierarchy through their attitudes toward and engagement with the highly pliant symbols that structure the text. I argue that the play conjures a fantastical imperial backdrop in order to stage a number of anxieties about Ireland's uneasy position within the United Kingdom and the British Empire at the end of the nineteenth century. The play's anti-realist Symbolism produces an allegory of empire. *Salome* does not aspire to comment on first-century Roman imperialism; instead, it uses this backdrop to evoke the power dynamics of imperial rule and explore how language functions in these circumstances.

Salome is not merely a passive female figure on whom meanings of nationhood are projected. As she crafts symbols drawn from the colonial environment around her, her manipulation of language demonstrates that, among her various acts of self-presentation, she also performs the role of the artist.[4] Rather than perceive her as "a protagonist with a critical lack of self-knowledge [. . .] whose yearnings are too strong to overmaster" (Donohue 131), my reading reveals a Salome who exploits language to defy Herod's imperial authority. She thus finds a way to alternate between acting as a symbol of nationhood and wielding the powers of symbolic representation herself. Like Speranza, Salome is a female artist whose poetic ingenuity fosters her politics.

This poetic ingenuity is driven by the tension between Salome and her mother Herodias. Wilde offers a different perspective on motherhood than promoted by Gonne and Gregory by questioning the authority of the maternal role. Yet Salome is capable of defining herself (and thus Ireland) precisely because of her charged relationship with her mother. Wilde's account of his own mother's dual political and poetic ambitions serves as a model for his treatment of the "Irish question" in *Salome*.

Salome's role as the artist thus turns us toward Wilde himself. The princess's capacity for self-transformation through language suggests a strategy for an artist like Wilde, whose Irish identity left him susceptible to narrow stereotypes and derogatory representations in nineteenth-century England. Especially in light of Wilde's obsession with self-styling, Salome herself serves as a particularly fitting agent to communicate the idea that the figure of the artist can productively frustrate racial stereotypes (such as the improvident Celt) only when he crafts works of art *and* presents his body as a work of art itself.

Finally, attention to the play's colonial setting also prompts a reassessment of the collaboration between illustrator and playwright in *Salome*. Elliot Gilbert, in his 1983 essay "'Tumult of Images': Wilde, Beardsley, and *Salome*," countered the long-held critical assumption that Aubrey Beardsley's drawings for *Salome* lack relevance to Wilde's text. Instead, Gilbert argued that the interplay of illustrations and text produces a "single strong focus" which attacks fin-de-siècle patriarchal structures through a simultaneous celebration of and aversion to the female sexual energy that emerges in the play (134). This chapter continues Gilbert's project of investigating the evocative interaction between Beardsley's drawings and Wilde's text, but it proposes that this interaction generates a different "strong focus." While Beardsley's drawings certainly reinforce, even intensify, the text's monstrous

sexual imaginings as Gilbert urged us to see, they also complement the play's interest in foreign exoticism, veiled women, and the wares of imperial plunder.

Two attendants of Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Judea,[5] initiate the reader into the play's highly symbolic language and Salome's relationship to this figural landscape. The Syrian remarks on Salome's beauty in the play's opening line, and the Page immediately invokes the moon as a feminized symbol: "Look at the moon," the Page demands, "How strange the moon seems!" (Wilde, *Salome* 65).[6] The Page demonstrates this "strangeness" with two similes: "She is like a woman rising from a tomb. She is like a dead woman" (65). Engaging the (dead) female body as an abstraction, the Syrian catches on to this particular metaphorical game and recommends two more similes for the moon's appearance: "She is like a little princess who wears a yellow veil, and whose feet are of silver. She is like a princess who has little white doves for feet" (65). The Syrian, however, does not specify his intended antecedent to "she" in his reply. While his participation in the Page's collection of similes suggests that he describes the moon, the Syrian's initial reference to the Princess Salome hints that the "she" may refer to her as well, thus conflating Salome with the moon. With the two linked, the Syrian's description of the moon as a "dancing" princess "who wears a yellow veil" foreshadows Salome's impending dance, and the Page's comments on the moon anticipate her desire for Iokanaan's (John the Baptist's) head on a silver platter: "One might fancy," the Page augurs, "she was looking for dead things" (65). As the play opens, the exchange between the Syrian and the Page establishes Salome as a figure who accumulates various (and sometimes contradictory) symbolic associations.

Exchange, however, may be too strong a word here for the interaction between the two men. Their lines behave more like alternating lines of verse than dialogue. Wilde wrote

much of the initial manuscript of *Salome* without designating character names (Donohue 120), suggesting that he viewed the different characters' lines as merging into a unified poetic narrative.[7] The two attendants' catalog of similes about Salome-as-moon follows a pattern of repetition in which each simile is delivered with the simple (and anaphoric) phrase "She is like." The accumulating similes function as incremental repetition or refrain: the Page, for instance, states initially, "She is like a dead woman," and then modifies his line to "She is like a woman who is dead" (65). Acting as poetic refrain, the repeated lines here and throughout the text accrue meaning each time they recur. The structure of the refrain alone produces a layered effect to the moon's symbolic significance, suggesting its multiple connotations. The incremental aspect of the repeated phrases—repetition with a difference—suggests that images adjust and amend themselves continually, even if ever so slightly. This capacity for constant transformation intimates that Salome's abstracted figure is mutable, too. Salome-as-symbol, at least in the Syrian and Page's employment, resists a static classification as any one of the descriptions attributed to her. Salome's symbolic status allows her to alternate between incongruous descriptions, such as the Syrian's adjacent epithets that her feet are "of silver" and like "little white doves," or to enact these opposing descriptions simultaneously (65).

These contradictions are part and parcel of the Symbolist techniques that Wilde adopted when writing *Salome*. Arthur Symons proposes, in *The Symbolist Movement in Literature*, that symbolist poetry "sum[s] up in itself the whole paradox of humanity" (102). As Symons describes it, this paradox results from the nineteenth-century struggle toward "an ideal of spiritual consolation," in which spirituality signifies "no miraculous descent of the Holy Spirit" but rather a "spirit within us" (102, 163). The consolation inherent in Symons's

sense of the spiritual is that paradoxes unite to reveal a universal "invisible life" (146). For Symons, a poet crafts symbols that evoke the world rippling just beneath the surface of everyday life. Challenging the precise descriptions of naturalist literature, Symons instructs the poet that in order to craft these symbols he must eschew the "old bondage of rhetoric" and "exteriority" so that "beautiful things may be evoked, magically" (9). Magic, however, does not imply an undemanding artistic process. While the naturalists harness their energies to "build in brick and mortar inside the covers of a book," the symbolists take on a "heavier burden" to transform literature into a religious vocation "with all the duties and responsibilities of the sacred ritual" (7, 10). The highest duty of the symbolist artist is to attend closely to the symbol to extract its multivalent meaning.

Salome demonstrates her willingness to take on this duty. About the moon, she claims,

> She is like a little piece of money, a little silver flower. She is cold and chaste. I am sure she is a virgin. She has the beauty of a virgin. Yes, she is a virgin. She has never defiled herself. She has never abandoned herself to men, like the other goddesses. (68)

Describing the moon as a "silver flower" and a "little piece of money" (suggesting a metallic coin), Salome borrows the Syrian's color palette, whose moon has "feet of silver." Yet her portrayal of the moon departs from the Syrian's and the Page's, as she not only calls up the abstraction, but also insinuates the earthier consequences of the objectification of the feminine. While the Page's depiction of the moon as a dead woman portends an ominous fate for those men associated with this feminized figure, Salome's description of the moon as money suggests the commodification of the figure herself, in which her body can be valued as priceless or worthless, with the "purity" of virginity garnering a high value. Salome

participates in this particular sexual economy when she values highly her moon's chastity (and judges other goddesses for defiling themselves through sex). Her declaration that the moon is "cold and chaste" also hints at her knowledge of the way women are punished for both sexual maturity and sexual frigidity.

Salome, however, reveals more in this passage: she demonstrates her understanding of the symbolic world prompted by the play's initial dialogue. This world is governed by the visual: Salome can confidently assert that the moon is a virgin solely because it has the "beauty" of a virgin. The emphasis on beauty recalls the Syrian's first declaration of Salome's own loveliness, as well as her conflation with the moon. By gazing upon the moon, Salome temporarily distances herself from her association with it; like the men, she exercises her ability to invoke and shape feminized symbols. Yet Salome does not completely detach from her symbolic connection to this lunar body. By describing the moon's sexual virtue, she suggests the sexual boundaries which define and limit her as well. At the end of the play, moreover, Salome accuses Iokanaan of stealing her virginity, indicating that she earlier imagined the moon as a symbolic proxy for herself (91).

Alternately adopting and shedding her identification with it, for Salome the moon above all has shifting significance. When confronted for the first time with the body of Iokanaan, Salome conflates his figure with the moon without hesitation: "I am sure he is chaste, as the moon is" (71). Salome here recycles the same language used to describe her own association with the moon. This is a clever strategy: she illustrates, on the one hand, that she is not the only figure vulnerable to symbolic abstraction, and, on the other, that Iokanaan himself is available for a host of interpretive possibilities.

To be sure, when Iokanaan emerges fully from the cistern in which he is held, Salome continues to interpret his body. Salome begins her verbal dissection:

> It is his eyes above all that are terrible. They are like black holes burned by torches in a tapestry of Tyre. They are like the black caverns where the dragons live, the black caverns of Egypt in which the dragons make their lairs. They are like black lakes troubled by fantastic moons. (71)

The hallmark style of accumulating simile is put to use again, but this time the descriptors invoke, for Wilde's contemporaries, Eastern exoticism. In the context of the play, both Tyre (a Phoenician seaport city know for its commerce) and Egypt are part of the Roman Empire. Egypt, however, had the potential to call up for an English audience anxiety about their nation's own present-day imperial conquests. In the decade leading up to the publication of *Salome*, England had dispatched troops to Alexandria in 1882 and then Khartoum three years later to suppress nationalist uprisings, setting into action a course of events that included the death of the English General Charles Gordon and subsequent reprisals by the British forces. In Salome's speech Egypt is described by the language of myth (dragons and "fantastic moons"), a technique that detaches Egypt from its present-day imperial associations for Wilde's contemporaries but, then again, always promotes such associations by way of the play's connection to the genre of biblical parable, a narrative designated by its excess of meaning (71).

Salome's anatomization of Iokanaan's body, a style that may have been suggested to Wilde by the Song of Solomon, is replete with similes of foreign exoticism that both invoke the biblical setting of kingdoms under Roman rule and invite the English reader to connect this catalog of exotic items to England's own colonial rule of distant lands. Salome saturates

her descriptions of Iokanaan with these exotic references: his body is whiter than the "garden of spices of the Queen of Arabia" (72); his hair is like the "clusters of black grapes that hang from the vine trees of Edom," a neighboring kingdom of Israel in Salome's time (73). As she makes these comparisons, Salome follows a pattern of embracing and then rejecting Iokanaan's body parts when he rebuffs her advances. When Salome desires to touch his hair, Iokanaan's response ("Back, daughter of Sodom! Touch me not") prompts her to withdraw her previous admiration: "Thy hair is horrible. It is covered with mire and dust" (73). Salome's systematic praise and derision does not merely punish Iokanaan for rejecting her desires. Her rejoinders indicate that her ardor for Iokanaan's body is as much a demonstration of her ability to manipulate the language of metaphor as it is a potent display of her physical lust. As suggested by her sumptuous language for both embracing and denying Iokanaan's body parts, Salome seems to relish her attacks on his body as much as she finds ecstasy in it. The emphasis thus rests primarily on Salome's dazzling catalog of symbols and similes.

Salome imagines the Roman Empire beyond the scope of her stepfather's kingdom, and she freely samples this colonial setting in order to craft her fantastical descriptions. Her place within the power structures of the Roman Empire is complex: she is the stepdaughter of the tetrarch, which gives her a privileged place under his rule, but her status as a woman undercuts this privilege, leaving her as vulnerable as the prisoners and slaves within Herod's kingdom. Salome benefits from Herod's power, but is not exempt from his tyranny.

Her unique position suggests Wilde's own intermediate identity as an Anglo-Irishman, who felt obliged to minimize his Irish accent while in England, but who also

celebrated the resourcefulness of the Irish to embrace the English language. To his San Francisco audience in 1882, Wilde asserts,

> I do not know anything more wonderful, or more characteristic of the Celtic genius, than the quick artistic spirit in which we adapted ourselves to the English tongue—the Saxon took our lands from us and left them desolate, we took their language and added new beauties to it. ("Irish Poets" 31)

Still battling Arnold's assumption about the Celt's inability to sustain genius, Wilde fights back on the level of language, a tactic that distances his brand of nationalism from de-Anglicization movements in Ireland, which sought the revival of the Gaelic language. Wilde is aligned here with other Anglo-Irish writers, such as Yeats, Synge, and Joyce, who, "in their different ways, promoted [. . .] the linguistic freedom and vigour that they believed was allied to political and social independence for Ireland" (Deane 119). Wilde capitalizes on his own hyphenated national identity by celebrating an Irish-English language synthesis and by calling attention to Irish linguistic virtuosity. Both Wilde and Salome adapt to their colonial circumstances by using language as a means to claim authority.

The Symbolist movement was for Wilde an ideal vehicle to express this virtuosity. Irishness, in fact, informs Symons's theorization of the movement in *The Symbolist Movement in Literature*. Symons dedicates his text to Yeats, whom he calls both "the chief representative" of the movement and England's "only conscious Symbolist" (*Symbolist* v; *Study* 8). Although Symons's assessment of the Irish genius draws upon Arnold's familiar stereotypes,[8] he identifies the "Irish literary movement" as one of the chief manifestations of Symbolism (*Symbolist* v). National identity is thus a component of Symbolism, one that accounts for Symons's later insinuation that aesthetic movements are anti-imperial.

Complaining about England's sluggish embrace of aestheticism, Symons asks,

> Can any other public, I wonder, be as incapable as the English public of taking a work of art as a work of art, and not asking it to be anything else? I ask myself whether this lack of instinct in a race which has the instinct of creation can be an actual dislike of beauty, due to Puritan influences, or a mere inattention to beauty, due to the hasty Imperialism which was devouring the energies of the country. (*Study* 16-7)

England's energies, as Symons puts it, have been swallowed up by the Empire's desires, leaving little room for attention to beauty. Symons pits politics and aestheticism against one another. It is unlikely, for instance, that Symons would perceive anti-imperialist nationalist movements in a more favorable light than imperialism. Yet Symons's alignment of the Irish literary movement with Symbolism suggests that the politics of national identity have a place in the aesthetic arts. Aestheticism's opposition to politics does not render the two irrelevant to one another; instead, aesthetic movements can be perceived as a form of political resistance.

Wilde's experimentation with Symbolism offered him a political outlet, but *Salome* in another sense already participated in an established tradition of Irish resistance to English rule. Like other nineteenth-century Irish artists, Wilde's mother in her collections of Irish oral tales had featured allegories of Ireland imagined as a woman; she showcased the battle-ready versions of Ireland-as-woman, such as Queen Maeve, alongside domesticated, spiritually-oriented figures, such as St. Bridget.[9] Salome resembles the more aggressive forms of Ireland-as-woman, demanding the lives of Irish men for the cause of Irish independence. After all, the stakes of Salome's affection are fatally high: Iokanaan, whom

she adores, and the Syrian, who adores her, are condemned to death. Irish tradition relied upon meanings projected onto the Ireland-as-woman figure by male nationalists; Salome, too, is consistently the focus of the imagination of the play's male characters.

Salome's mother Herodias suggests the risky consequences when women's bodies are taken as symbols of nation-building. Herodias possesses an entirely different perspective on symbolism than other characters in the play. She rejects symbolic structures entirely and makes her position amply clear by turning her attention to the play's interpretive locus: "No," Herodias asserts bluntly, "the moon is like the moon, that is all" (75). Herodias is skeptical about Salome's willingness to offer up her body for allegorical purposes. Herodias is, after all, the older version of her daughter. While Herod longs to have Salome as his queen-in-waiting, Herodias is positioned as the disposable and redundant queen. When Iokanaan condemns the marriage of Herodias and Herod, the latter acknowledges that Iokanaan may point out one truth, that it was unwise to marry his brother's wife. "It may be he is right," Herod concedes. "For of a truth," he spells out to Herodias, "you are sterile" (82). Though Herodias dismisses Herod's indictment as false, she is marked as merely a procreative unit for her husband's kingdom. Recognizing that she is replaceable by her own daughter, Herodias is as keen as Herod to maintain allegiance to Caesar. She is delighted when the judgmental voice of Iokanaan, which threatens her tenuous position as queen, is silenced by Salome, even if the princess has her own intentions in mind. While it is unlikely that she cares greatly for her daughter's welfare, Herodias does reveal that the symbolic association of womanhood with nationhood can render women's bodies powerful only when they represent national fertility.

Salome, however, is a significantly revised Ireland-as-woman. By experimenting with the symbols manipulated by the male characters around her, she not only demonstrates her interpretive ability, but also challenges the meanings associated with her own body. Furthermore, with Salome acting as a personified Ireland, her relationship with her mother presents further possibilities. With the princess poised to dethrone Herodias, we glimpse the quiet suggestion of a young Ireland-as-woman ready to replace the literal Queen of Ireland—an aging Queen Victoria. Wilde thus plays on the generational differences between the two women in a markedly different way than most other versions of the Salome story. While those rely on the princess's maternal allegiance as motivation for her desire to behead Iokanaan, Wilde's narrative pits mother and daughter against one another as rival personifications of nation-as-woman. In this rivalry, Salome is not merely a passive and static allegory of Ireland-as-woman. Instead, her embodiment of nationhood is characterized by her ability to manipulate language shrewdly.

Salome's power over language allows her to manipulate the way she is *seen*. She may objectify Iokanaan's body, but it is her body that is available for examination throughout the play, especially when Herod desires to see her dance. Salome's bodily dissection of Iokanaan is all the more intriguing, then, because the scopophilia that pervades the play predictably centers on her own body. The Page frequently warns the Syrian that looking at Salome can be a dangerous sport: "You are always looking at her [. . .] Something terrible may happen" (65). Herodias also chastises Herod for staring at Salome: "You must not look at her! You are always looking at her!" (75). Herod, in fact, is introduced into the play as someone fundamentally associated with looking when the two soldiers initially remark that he is looking at "something," then "someone" (65). Shifting the relentless gaze of the play

away from her body, Salome is the one who calls for Iokanaan's emergence from the cistern: "Bring out the prophet. I would look on him" (70). By insisting that Iokanaan's body join the visual landscape, she redirects the gaze to the male body—what Marjorie Garber calls "regendering the gaze" (342). Salome thus claims authority of this gaze for her ostentatious litany of symbols to describe his body. Iokanaan, too, recognizes and validates Salome's command over the language of looking. Rather than proclaim his refusal to look upon Salome, Iokanaan declares, "I will not have her look at me" (72). Iokanaan prioritizes her gaze, and his protest is ultimately futile: not only will she look upon him, but she will wield her gaze to the point of seemingly exhausting the symbolic potential of his body.

As it turns out, Salome's visual obsession with Iokanaan differs radically from Herod's scopophilia. While his gaze indicates his desire to possess, Salome's ode to Iokanaan's body works to reveal that both of their bodies are at once vulnerable to scrutiny and available for multiple interpretations. And, ultimately, both of their deaths result from the clash between two opposing perspectives on the function of the visual: while Salome invests Iokanaan's body with manifold symbolic potential (to the extent that her verbal dissection of Iokanaan has the power to bring about his literal dissection), Herod is violently displeased that his object of scrutiny does not acquiesce to his fixed perception of her. Salome, in fact, desires to look at another, an action that throws into sharp relief Herod's failure to calcify the meaning of her body as his passive object of pleasure. Moreover, Salome goes one step further to flout Herod's attempt to staunch interpretive possibilities through her impressive sermon on Iokanaan's body parts. Salome exploits the language of symbolism to argue for the body's multiple meanings.

Salome also implicitly instructs the reader/viewer how to perceive the non-linguistic actions of her notorious dance. The sparse stage directions of the play, which indicate only that "*Salome dances the dance of the seven veils*," resist imposing an authorial appraisal of Salome's dance (85). While a director would be obliged to choose a specific visual manifestation of the dance, the text's unassuming stage directions leave the interpretive demands on the reader, who is obliged to imagine as many interpretive possibilities for Salome as Salome invents for Iokanaan. The reader, at least for this moment, experiences the burden Salome places on Herod to contemplate the various facets of meaning demonstrated by her dance. Salome thus acts out the dual role of symbolist artist (evoking both her personal impression of "truth" and "beauty" through her symbolic movements) and the symbol itself (as her body serves as the vehicle). Salome both manifests an "unseen reality" (to use Symons's phrase) in her dance and places extraordinary burdens on the reader, who must work to interpret her bodily ritual (*Symbolist* 4).

Herod, however, refuses the effort of interpretation—he is a lazy reader of her visual art. As a result, Salome's dance represents the epitome of his lack of power at a moment when he ostensibly appears to be in control. When Salome dances, which Herod requests repeatedly, he lauds her for participating in this sexual exchange (85). He has, after all, promised her "even unto half of [his] kingdom" (83) if she will readily present her body to him: "Ah! wonderful! wonderful!," Herod boasts to Herodias after Salome's dance, "You see that she has danced for me, your daughter. Come near, Salome, come near, that I may give thee thy fee. Ah! I pay a *royal* price to those who dance for my pleasure. I will pay thee *royally*" (85, my emphasis). Herod's scopophilic demands are aligned with his royal authority. Salome disrupts the notion that Herod's pleasure or his authority holds priority.

Instead, it is Salome's gaze that has the potential to disrupt his court. What seems like a straightforward way to exercise control over Salome—to make her dance for his pleasure—turns out not to be primarily about Herod's erotic self-interest. Salome makes clear that she acts on her own desires: "It is not my mother's voice that I heed," Salome explains to Herod, "It is for mine own pleasure that I ask the head of Iokanaan in a silver charger" (86). Her dance is about her own self-determination—fulfilling her own pleasures and challenging the royal authority of Herod.

Turning Herod's own language of authority against him, Salome is not merely a clever negotiator, but she also brings her own system of symbolic meanings to bear on Herod and his imperial rule. Salome's earlier comparison of the moon to a "little piece of money" gains more relevance as she cunningly secures her deal with Herod, who has "sworn an oath by [his] gods" before he inquires about what compensation she demands for her dance (86). Salome's dance may register a number of different things—her pleasure, her scopophilic delight, even her savvy economic sense. But her dance is not limited to this list. Herod is furious because he realizes that his attempt to exercise power is splintered by the many symbolic possibilities that Salome produces through her body.

Herod's rejection of these symbolic possibilities marks him as an imperial authority in the text. He grows frantic when he witnesses how Salome wields symbols to suggest additional meanings and alternate structures of power. This extreme agitation points to the ways that imperial rule conditions the bodies under its sway: the bodies of not only the *ruled* but also the *rulers*, evident in Herod's own acute and visible anxiety.[10] He, for instance, weighs in on his perception of the moon, by now a litmus test for where the various characters stand in relation to the text's symbolism:

> The moon has a strange look tonight. Has she not a strange look? She is like a mad woman, a mad woman who is seeking everywhere for lovers. She is naked, too. She is quite naked. The clouds are seeking to clothe her nakedness, but she will not let them. She shows herself naked in the sky. She reels through the clouds like a drunken woman . . . . I am sure she is looking for lovers. Does she not reel like a drunken woman? She is like a mad woman, is she not? (75)

Herod echoes the Page's warning that the moon has a "strange" look, yet his questions reveal his fear of reading the moon as a symbol, a hesitation which contrasts with Salome's certainty of the moon's attributes. For Herod, the moon is ominous: partly, one suspects, because his reading of the moon's lascivious sexuality and wanton behavior anticipates the power Salome later exerts from her will to desire Iokanaan. Most importantly, though, Herod's discomfort with his impression of the moon exhibits his anxiety about symbolic representation.

Herod is, in fact, excruciatingly literal elsewhere. When Iokanaan prophesies the arrival of the "Saviour of the world," referring to Jesus, Herod asks of whom Iokanaan is speaking. When the young Roman Tigellinus replies that it "is a title that Caesar adopts," Herod looks no further than the literal meaning handed to him: "But Caesar is not coming to Judea," Herod quizzically exclaims, "Only yesterday I received letters from Rome" (78). The others are wise to Herod's literal-mindedness: "It was not concerning Caesar that the prophet spake these words, sire," the First Nazarene is at pains to explain (79). The tetrarch's literal-mindedness makes him fear Iokanaan because he cannot understand his language: "I cannot understand what it is that he saith," Herod complains, "but it may be an omen" (81). Like the two soldiers and the Cappadocian in his imperial court, Herod is

unwilling to interpret Iokanaan's utterances. Twice he reports triumphantly that he is "happy," but when he recalls the omens that may signify something beyond his comprehension, he quickly and erratically confesses that he is "sad tonight" (83). The potential fear for ill omens works him into a frenzy to the point that he declares that it is "not wise to find symbols in everything that one sees" (84).

Herod is able to dismiss the symbols which cause him so much anxiety only when he touts his own success in the hierarchy of the Roman Empire. When Iokanaan predicts that Herod will be "eaten of worms," the tetrarch replies with assurance: "It is not of me that he speaks [. . . .] It is of the King of Cappadocia that he speaks; the King of Cappadocia who is mine enemy. It is he who shall be eaten of worms. It is not I" (82). Herod feels confident to transfer his misfortune to the King of Cappadocia because, as Herod remarks, "Caesar, who is lord of the world, Caesar who is lord of all things, loves me well" (82). For Herod, empire can act as a stabilizing force that creates static meanings over which he may exercise authority. He is eager to retain power in his own kingdom precisely because it is always in jeopardy: historically, a tetrarch like Herod was obliged to pay allegiance (through money, bribes, and troops) both to the emperor himself and the elite Roman governors of surrounding kingdoms.[11] The term *tetrarch* itself designates a subordinate ruler, one below both ethnarch ("ruler of the people") and king, both titles to which a ruler in the Roman imperial expanse could aspire (Metzger 738).

It is not surprising, then, that Herod calls on the hard-won fruits of his imperial reign in order to bribe Salome. He cannot comprehend that Salome's request for Iokanaan's head might be a consequence of her sexual desires:

> The head of a man that is cut from his body is ill to look upon, is it not? It is not meet that the eyes of a virgin should look upon such a thing. What pleasure couldst thou have in it. There is no pleasure that thou couldst have in it. No, no, it is not that thou desirest. (86)

Before allowing Salome to answer his initial question, Herod launches into another speech, in which he attempts to sway the princess's decision by enticing her with items such as exotic peacocks and an array of jewels, fans, and ostrich feathers amassed from the reaches of empire (87-88). Herod's listing of these colonial wares is frenzied; verbally deluging Salome, Herod begins each entreaty with a statement of possession: "I have topazes yellow as are the eyes of tigers [. . .] I have onyxes like the eyeballs of a dead woman" (88). On one level Herod attempts to exchange these items for Iokanaan's life. But Herod is also asking for Salome to exchange one interpretive method for another. Against Salome's multiplicities of meaning, Herod barters items of imperial plunder which represent a closed-off system of meaning based on the power differentials of colonial rule that he frantically desires to keep in place. If Salome accepts these riches, she acquiesces not only to spare Iokanaan's life, but also to relinquish her ability to produce interpretations that challenge Herod's power.

Salome's death, however, reveals that Herod's power is more than merely challenged—it is ultimately broken. Regenia Gagnier has rightly suggested that Herod relinquishes his power at the end of the play when he retreats off-stage because "there can be no central authority without the visible symbols of sovereign power in the aspect of the king" (168). Herod as a symbol of colonial power has been vanquished, and, as his retreat signifies, he removes himself from the stage when he realizes that Salome's system of symbolic multiplicity has upstaged him.[12]

Thus, even though Herod executes Salome, his attempt to suppress her symbolic import is ultimately futile. Salome is crushed by soldiers' shields, and her death is merely a last endeavor for Herod to exercise his military power. As he climbs the staircase to remove himself from the scene, Salome commands center stage at the play's conclusion, her execution a reminder of the excesses of meaning that Herod desperately tries to stamp out. While Herod may seem to have the last authoritative words of the play—"Kill that woman!"—the stage directions go on to clarify that "*The soldiers rush forward and crush beneath their shields Salome, Daughter of Herodias, Princess of Judaea*" (91). Not only does Salome's full title occupy the final words of the text, the title is also delivered in the same wording with which she introduces herself to Iokanaan: "I am Salome, daughter of Herodias, Princess of Judaea" (72). The stage directions impersonate Salome, perhaps even resurrect her, giving her both the last utterance of the text and a defiant response to Herod's murderous command. This response is a declaration of her self-named identity: Salome defines herself both in "matrilineal" language (133), as Joseph Donohue has noted, and crucially, in terms which revise her position within the colonial hierarchy. If her role as Princess of Judaea initially placed her within Herod's royal family line, by the end of the play Salome the Princess is sovereign over her own interpretive realm.[13]

My reading of Salome's death grants more autonomy to her than critics such as Joseph Donohue have acknowledged. Donohue argues that "[i]n this final moment, Salome has now become a fully articulated icon of desire and love, even while, in a more tragic mode of understanding, she has become the victim of an embattled patriarchal society's remorseless revenge" (135). While Salome is indeed punished for her illicit sexuality, she is

also punished for taking on the larger oppressive structures of Herod's imperial rule, in which sexuality plays a role. Donohue goes on to claim that

> Salome has acted with such single-mindedness of purpose and has remained so implacable in her desire that she has overmastered the weaker will of the patriarch, compromising his supreme power and stature in the kingdom and forcing him into the most extreme of actions: first, the killing of the prophet despite deep misgivings about the advisability of such a deed, and then the cowardly, vindictive murder of Salome herself. (133-134)

While I agree with Donohue that Salome ultimately defeats Herod, my reading stresses that she is not solely guided by the relentless and overpowering purpose of her desire. Instead, she recognizes and exploits how desire functions under Herod's rule in order to challenge not only the boundaries of sexuality, but also the structures of imperial law. Herod's decree for Salome's murder, therefore, is not only a personal act of cowardice and revenge, as Donohue suggests, but also a public demonstration of the collapse (not merely the compromise) of his sovereign power.

While Salome's assault on Herod's power is the most devastating, she is not the only character who defies him. The Syrian, who slays himself, disturbs the imperial hierarchy, which dictates that his body is controlled by Herod. The latter is thus considerably puzzled by the Syrian's suicide: "I issued no order that he should be slain," Herod remarks curiously, "For what reason? I had made him captain of my guard!" (75). Ranked by Herod's standards, the Syrian violates his position as the son of a king driven from his kingdom by the tetrarch. Though the Syrian's slain body lies between Iokanaan and herself, Salome does not remark on his death, a verbal omission that speaks less about her cold-heartedness

(toward a man whom she ostensibly seduces earlier) than about her insight that he is punished for overstepping his position within Herod's worldview. Salome's obsession with Iokanaan's body is thus rendered more daring as she continues to produce meanings beyond Herod's authority; it is through her witnessing the Syrian's death that Salome perhaps already understands her own inevitable fate.

The relationship between the two, however, initially suggests a naïve man manipulated by an alluring woman. Salome persuades the Syrian to bring Iokanaan from the cistern by demanding,

> Thou wilt do this thing for me, Narraboth. Thou knowest that thou wilt do this thing for me. And on the morrow when I shall pass in my litter by the bridge of the idol-buyers, I will look at thee through the muslin veils. I will look at thee, Narraboth, it may be I will smile at thee. Look at me, Narraboth, look at me. Ah! thou knowest that thou wilt do what I ask of thee. Thou knowest it. . . . I know that thou wilt do this thing. (70)

Salome invokes the Syrian's name (Narraboth) repeatedly to establish an intimacy that implies more than the promise of flirtation. Her vow that she will look at the Syrian through "muslin veils" anticipates her dance of the seven veils for Herod, an act that superficially indicates a sexual exchange, but more significantly demonstrates Salome's power of self-definition. Salome's command, "Look at me," may suggest that the Syrian will be duped like Herod: both men assume that they may figuratively lift Salome's veil to locate the site of their own desires, and both are shocked to realize that what they find there are Salome's own desires that are willfully incompatible with their own. The two men's opposing reactions—

Herod kills Salome, the Syrian kills himself—aptly display their positions in the imperial hierarchy, but point no less to Salome's power over both of them.

The Syrian, though, is more than merely a victim of Salome's highly developed skills of seduction. Just as the dance of the seven veils does not merely represent a sexual demonstration, Salome also offers more to the Syrian. Her injunction ("Look at me") invites him to engage in the interpretive possibilities of her body, a proposal that, unbeknownst to Salome, encourages the Syrian to resume the metaphor-making he performed at the beginning of the play. Salome urges the Syrian to look upon her body in the same manner that she looks upon Iokanaan's. She offers the Syrian the same linguistic authority.

This linguistic authority ultimately challenges the notion that Salome is merely an exoticized and Orientalized princess.[14] Wilde undoubtedly indulges in Orientalist assumptions about the East by depicting Herod's imperial rule as tyrannical, extravagant, and mystifying and by portraying Salome as a sexually-charged woman. In this light, Salome's dance may represent the trope of the veiled woman "through which Western fantasies of penetration into the mysteries of the Orient and access to the interiority of the other are fantasmatically achieved" (Yeğenoğlu 543). Salome, however, uses her veil as a mask, not to dissemble or cover up, but rather to signify the layers of her identity, which has no authentic core that can be accessed by stripping away the veils. If one of the purposes of Salome's dance is to express the impermanence of meaning, assumptions about the Orient are also unfixed. Wilde's use of cultural generalizations does not necessarily signal condescension. After all, Wilde's reliance on Arnoldian generalizations of the Celt in "Irish Poets and Poetry of the Nineteenth Century" does not compromise his call for Irish sovereignty in the same lecture (27).[15]

To be sure, Wilde's play does not make any proposals about British rule in the East. As I have been suggesting, though, the play can be thought of as making claims about the relationship of language to Irish national and colonial identity. *Salome* manages these issues related to Wilde's Anglo-Irishness *not* through an English or Irish setting, but rather through a Middle Eastern one.

Language was central to Irish intellectuals' efforts to trace Celtic origins to the East. These intellectuals sought to furnish Ireland "with an oriental pedigree distinct from the genealogy of the Anglo-Saxons, whose language had Teutonic origins" (Cullingford 106). Lady Wilde (Speranza), for instance, introduces her 1887 collection of Irish tales via the Celtic-Oriental connection:

> It is, therefore, in Ireland, above all, that the nature and origin of the primitive races of Europe should be studied. Even the form of the Celtic head shows a decided conformity to that of the Greek races, while it differs essentially from the Saxon and Gothic types. This is one of the many proofs in support of the theory that the Celtic people in their westward course to the Atlantic travelled by the coasts of the Mediterranean, as all along that line the same cranial formation is found. Philologists also affirm that the Irish language is nearer to Sanskrit than any other of the living and spoken language of Europe; while the legends and myths of Ireland can be readily traced to the far East, but have nothing in common with the fierce and weird superstitions of Northern mythology. (*Ancient Legends* 4)

Lady Wilde here demonstrates the mish-mash of indicators that comprise the link between Ireland and the Orient. She draws from craniological and ethnographic studies popularized across Europe in the nineteenth century by works such as Arthur de Gobineau's *Essay on the*

Inequality of the Human Races (1853), Cesare Lombroso's *Criminal Man* (1876), and John Beddoe's *The Races of Britain* (1885). These kinds of ethnographic studies, which sought to reveal a connection between moral fiber and biological traits (read through facial features, head shape, and skin color), often ranked the Irish as far inferior to their Anglo-Saxon neighbors. As L. Perry Curtis notes, "However much disagreement and inconsistency there was among Englishmen about the effects of mixing Celtic and Saxon blood, almost all Anglo-Saxonists agreed that the Irish Celt occupied a rung considerably below themselves on the ladder of human races" (48). Lady Wilde attempts to rescue the Celt from this inglorious position by connecting him to the "Eastern cradle" of civilization (*Ancient Legends* 1).

Her additional Celtic-Greek analogy is not unusual: Irish intellectuals made use of what Elizabeth Butler Cullingford calls a "sliding political signifier," in which they traced their lineage through a variety of incompatible origins, such as Jewish, Egyptian, Greek, Phoenician, and Scythian, according to their desired political objectives (142). Lady Wilde's politics center on the prominence of language to the Celt's genius, which validates her exercise in collecting ancient tales of Ireland and more importantly, distances Ireland from England culturally and linguistically.

Despite her celebration of the Irish vernacular, Lady Wilde's *Ancient Legends* are translated into English. Furthermore, accompanying her assertion that the Greeks and the Irish are "of the same original race" is the acknowledgement that the Irish, unlike the Greeks, are "eternal children" who lack the knowledge to doubt their own superstitions, a trait that makes their oral legends all the more rich and powerful (7). By promoting the distinctiveness of the Irish, Lady Wilde undercuts her own nationalist inclinations by reinforcing unflattering representations of the Irish—such as their childlike nature—commonly used to validate the

notion that the Irish were unfit to rule themselves. The contradictions embedded in Lady Wilde's pronouncements about the Irish shed light on the conflicting influences regarding Irish creativity and competence that shaped Oscar Wilde's understandings of his own national identity. Yet the contradictions ascribed to Irish identity are not unproductive: by imagining their identity through a range of often conflicting racial pedigrees and analogies to other colonial peoples, the Irish radically diversified their potential for self-description. By investing in multiple analogies, the Irish eluded the rigid traits assigned to them by the English and surpassed their relationship with the English by imagining laterally across the British Empire and through a range of ethnicities.

Salome's Jewishness is pertinent here. Many fin-de-siècle representations of Salome created before and after Wilde's version bear the influence of ethnological studies that grouped women and Jews, among others, under the classification of "degenerate races" (Dijkstra 387). Literary and visual representations of Salome in the late 1890s increasingly relied upon the notion of the "bestial virgin Jewess" based on "scientific-archeological explorations of the link between gender and race in the realm of degeneration" (Dijkstra 385). Wilde's play has been described as a "call for gynecide" based on his representations of Salome's ethnicity and gender (Dijkstra 396). Yet Wilde's Salome embodies a number of conflicting roles that challenges an essentialized understanding of her identity: she represents Jewishness, but also Irishness; she claims authority as a member of Herod's royal family and yet is still vulnerable to her stepfather's rule; and she is simultaneously the art-object and the artist. The latter is Salome's most powerful paradox: Wilde allows his Jewish princess the power of self-transformation through language. This power, of course, applied not only to the Jewish Salome, but also to her Irish inventor.

While Salome's Irish-Oriental and Irish-Semitic associations helped Wilde imagine his national identity, they also offered him a means to explore his sexuality.[16] Recent critical debates have centered on how precisely to frame our language surrounding Wilde's sexual identity. Like *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Salome* has been analyzed by critics according to its potential to represent same-sex desire. Richard Dellamora, for instance, states unambiguously that "Wilde fashions *Salomé* so as to develop a self-consciously homosexual outlook. By including a homosexual triangle in the play [Salome, the Page, and the Syrian], he offers a dramatized representation of explicit male-male desire" (248).[17]

Joseph Bristow has cautioned against using our contemporary sense of the term *homosexual* to describe Wilde's identity or the sexual intentions within his texts:

> Before the débâcle of 1895, there is little evidence to suggest that Wilde had much or any interest in the ways in which sexual behavior had become a focus of fascination for those thinkers—such as Karl Heinrich Ulrichs, Richard von Krafft-Ebing and Havelock Ellis—who were by that time compendiously classifying types of human sexuality. (198)

Critics such as Bristow, Alan Sinfield, and Ed Cohen have argued in various ways that Wilde did not view himself as an *invert* (the popular model for homosexuality at the end of the nineteenth century) and thus would not have self-consciously crafted this particular identity in his texts. Sinfield warns that we might be misled to read Wilde's style—his posture of the effeminate dandy in particular—as representative of homosexual identity because we *now* view Wilde as a modern gay icon (1). This does not mean that various forms of uncategorized same-sex desire do not emerge in Wilde's texts; Cohen, for instance, explores

how homosexuality is implicitly represented through concentration on the visual in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*.[18] Several of these scholars have put forward the idea that the identity of the homosexual—the modern *social* identity, as Moe Meyer puts it—became codified through the 1895 trials in which Wilde was convicted of acts of "gross indecency" with men (101). Indeed, only after the trials is there evidence in his letters that Wilde begins to conceive of his sexual proclivities as warranting a particular label.[19]

These critical debates about textual representations of Wilde's sexuality continue to proliferate because at stake is the larger proposal that homosexuality challenges representational codes, a perspective that has been taken up by both Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and Lee Edelman. The former argues that sites of meaning in twentieth-century Western culture (gender, ethnicity, for instance), ever since the conflation of "knowledge" and "sex" pinnacled in the nineteenth century, have been marked with the "historical specificity of homosexual/heterosexual definition"; homosexuality, then, operates alongside heterosexuality in contributing to representations beyond that of sexuality (*Epistemology* 72). Edelman notes that "the legibility of gay sexuality as the site at which the unrepresentable finds representation as a resistance to the *logic* of representation thus effectively, if counter-intuitively, *secures* the order of representation and renders gay sexuality central to any enterprise of legibility, of identity-determination, that occurs within it" (Edelman xv). We begin to understand, then, that the extra-linguistic representation of homosexuality is part and parcel of overt representations of heterosexuality.

Representations of ethnicity, too, offered a means to express unauthorized forms of sexuality. Western representations of the Orient routinely capitalized on assumptions of the profligacy of Eastern sexuality, in which distant lands were "libidinously eroticized" and

imagined as spaces of "sexual aberration and anomaly" (McClintock 22). While Wilde may not have thought of his desire for men as constituting a discrete sexual identity, the Orient's reputation for sexual "aberration" offered him the possibility to imagine forms of sexuality that defied heterosexual conventions. The Eastern setting of *Salome* was a space for Wilde to experiment with a variety of sexual possibilities without naming or otherwise classifying them.

Aubrey Beardsley's illustrations, included in the first English edition of *Salome*, complement the play's interest in sexuality, as demonstrated by a number of critics.[20] These critics, however, have been less attentive to the way that Beardsley's drawings elaborate on the play's colonial setting, as well as Salome's position within this setting. Though he reportedly was initially skeptical of the British illustrator's drawings for his play, Wilde eventually acknowledged the insights in Beardsley's interpretations. On a copy of the 1894 edition, Wilde wrote, "'For Aubrey: for the only artist who, besides myself, knows what the dance of the seven veils is, and can see that invisible dance. Oscar'" (Holland and Hart-Davis 578n). Despite this endorsement by Wilde, it is understandable why many critics have perceived the drawings as unrelated to the details of the text: what is immediately conspicuous about them is that it is often very difficult to determine which character Beardsley is depicting. All of the characters in the illustrations share similar traits—elaborate hair, compact faces, flowing gowns—which impede the viewer's ability to differentiate Salome from Iokanaan or Salome from Herodias. Furthermore, even if a character is successfully identified, that character most likely is rendered differently in other drawings.

While the interchangeability of characters at first appears to distance the drawings from Wilde's play, Beardsley in fact visually corroborates the play's interest in Herod's exertion—and loss—of power. Herod, in fact, is the one character in Beardsley's drawings who cannot be mistaken for another. He appears only in *The Eyes of Herod* (Figure 1) and is immediately recognizable. The uncomplicated lines used to illustrate his head differ markedly from the sumptuous details Beardsley invests in his drawings of other characters. Salome and Herod exchange glances in this drawing, the princess's face noticeably vexed by this shared gaze. The female figure here could arguably be Herodias, too, displeased by her husband's obsession with her daughter, but the focus on Herod's looking (in the drawing's title and in its depiction of the act) indicates that the woman who appears here is most likely Salome, the habitual object of his gaze. It is not irrelevant, though, that Salome and Herodias would be exchangeable, as the text also insinuates. Both Salome's apparent irritation with Herod's gaze and her elevated positioning in the drawing, which renders her glance downward to Herod, situate her as in control of the scene. The outline of Herod is drawn as an approximate mirror image of flames jutting from a candelabra positioned beside his head. Salome, in contrast, is illustrated in a more detailed manner, flower-like tendrils budding from her hair, a feature that associates her with the peacock placed immediately below her and connected to her flowing gown. The peacock, which recalls the exotic peacocks Herod promises Salome, sits close to the center of the drawing and faces Herod just as Salome does. It is possible that Salome looks down at the peacock rather than over at Herod—it is difficult to tell precisely which—and, if so, her aggravated facial expression may convey her rejection of Herod's attempt to bribe her with this exotic booty. But even as she rejects this bribe,

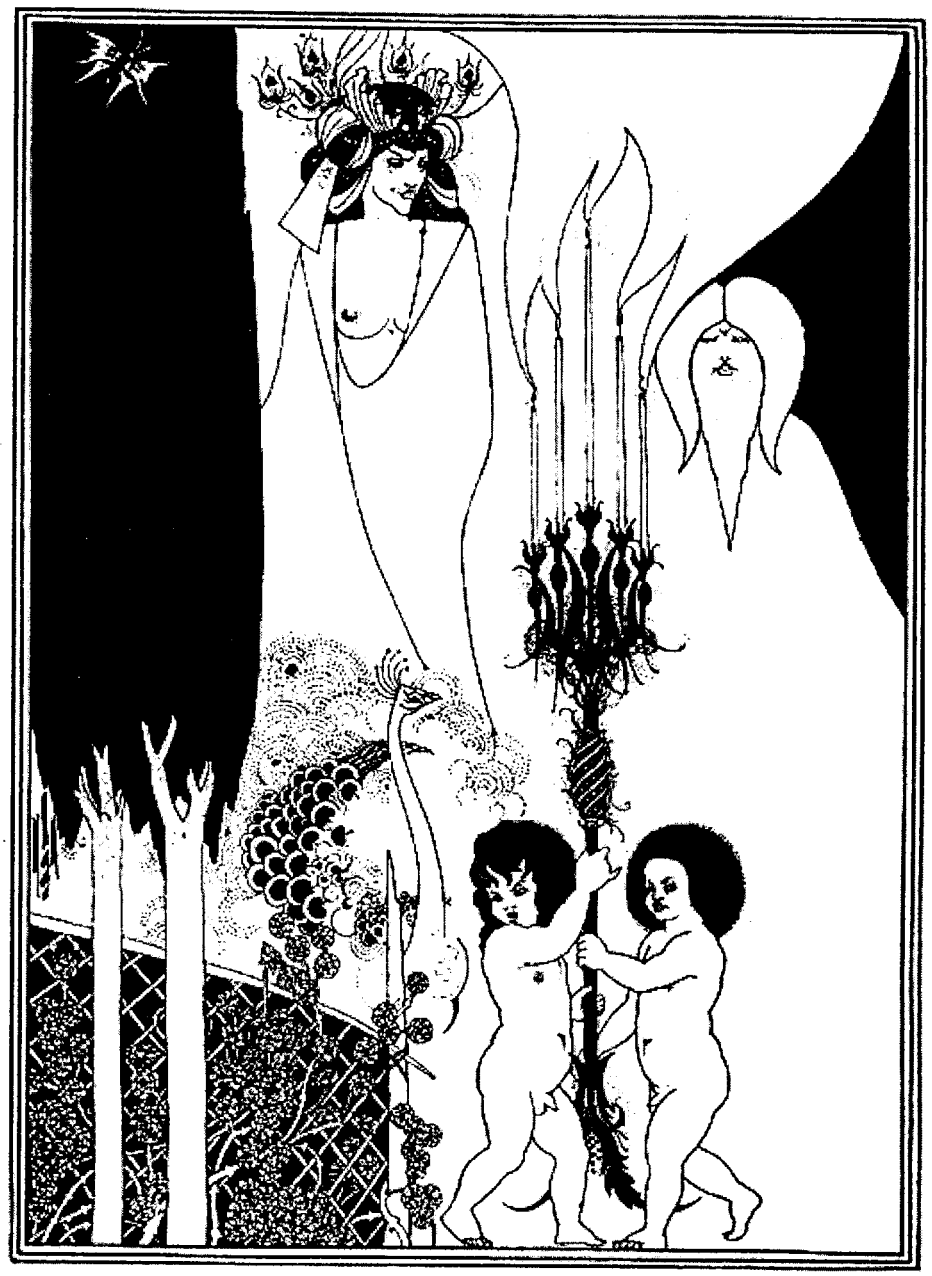

Figure 1, *The Eyes of Herod*

Salome is also aligned with the peacock—they both are placed on the same vertical plane in the drawing, and their visual flourishes correspond.

Salome is explicitly connected to the peacock in *The Peacock Skirt* (Figure 2). Here her imposing figure appears to swoop down upon the male figure. This male figure is most likely the Syrian, to whom Salome promises "I will look at thee" in exchange for bringing Iokanaan from the cistern (8). It could also be Iokanaan, but Beardsley devotes another drawing, *John and Salome*, to that pairing. Regardless of which man is depicted here, it is Salome who dominates the illustration. The smaller male figure, whose robe is carefully chiseled with linear lines, poses as a statue, one arm at his hip, one held up. Against this immobility, Salome's peacock skirt swells to encompass the entire bottom portion of the drawing, its form and details drawn with bold curves that imply movement. One of the peacock feathers which adorns Salome's head even sweeps through the middle of the drawing in an "S"-curve. A diminutive peacock is positioned next to Salome, the curve of its neck mimicking the princess's bodily curve. Herod's attempt to blackmail Salome with the peacock has failed because she usurps the exotic symbol for her own designs. Not only does she literally cloak herself in it, but she also inhabits it, judging from the way that her body molds itself to the shape of the voluminous skirt. There is no suggestion that Salome's body lurks underneath, ready to be revealed in an erotic strip-tease. Just as she exploits her association with the moon in the text, here Salome embodies the peacock for her own intentions: to coerce the Syrian to bring out Iokanaan, whom she wishes to engage in the same gaze. In fact, in Beardsley's drawing *John and Salome*, not included in the 1894 publication, the princess gets her wish, as the two stare intently at one another. In Wilde's text, Salome addresses Iokanaan's severed head, lamenting "Well, thou hast seen thy God,

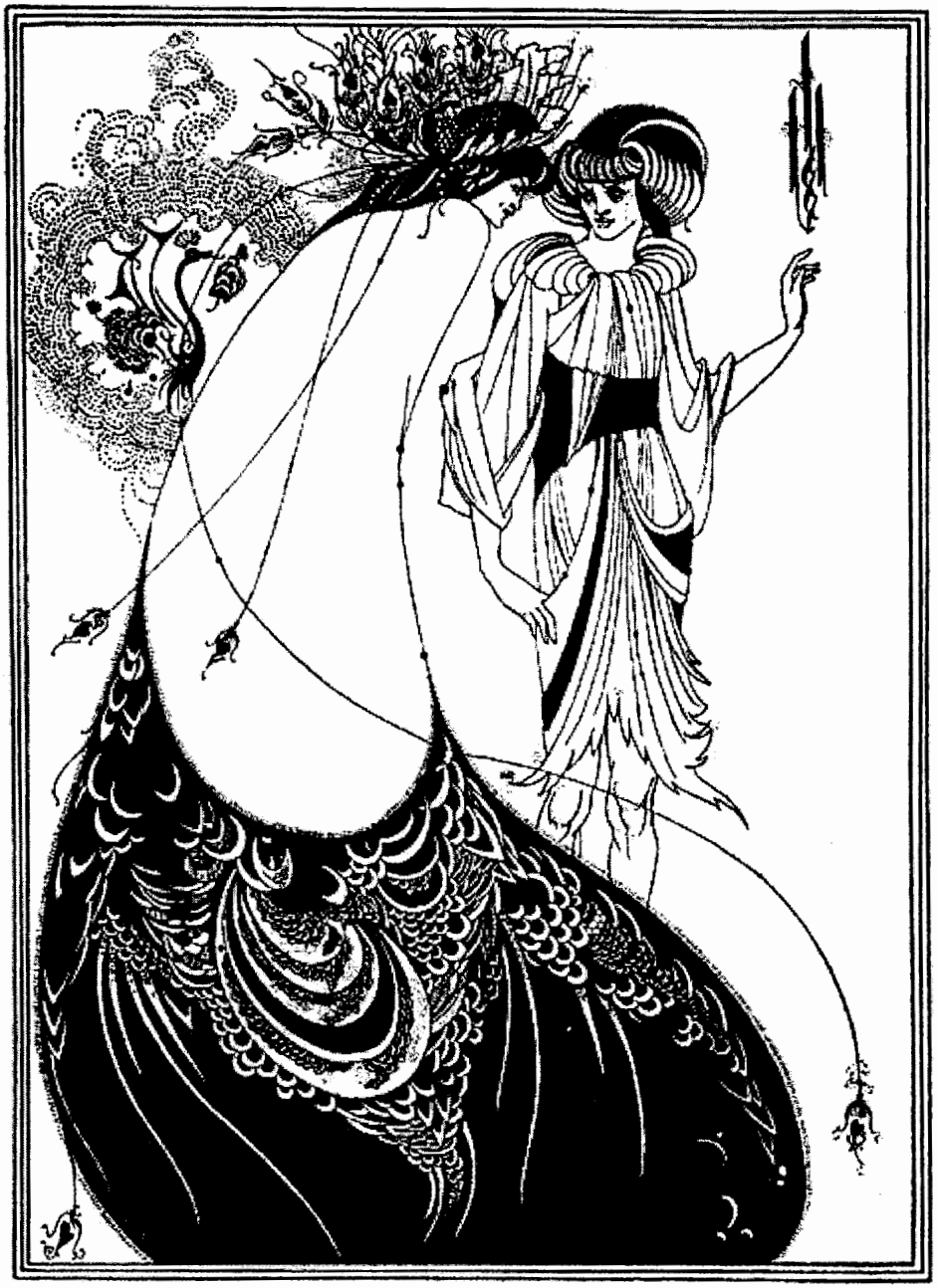

Figure 2, *The Peacock Skirt*

Iokanaan, but me, me, thou didst never see," and asking twice "Ah! wherefore didst thou not look at me, Iokanaan?" (91-2). Whereas Iokanaan prioritizes Salome's gaze, she wants him to look at *her*. By engaging Iokanaan and Salome in a mutual gaze, Beardsley's illustration here entitles Salome to a desire that she is denied in the text.

Beardsley, then, expands on the text's display of Salome's power. He accomplishes a similar feat in the suppressed first version of *The Toilette of Salome* (Figure 3), which was allegedly censored because of its depiction of masturbation, notably the servant in the lower left-hand corner whose hand rests between his legs (Pease 100-02). Initially this sketch seems to downplay the role of the princess. While Salome dominates the drawing in *The Peacock Skirt*, she recedes into the background of *The Toilette of Salome*: in the former, Salome's swooping figure places emphasis on her potent gaze; in the latter she is reclined, head down, eyes closed. Salome, however, is still the center of focus for the other figures in the illustration: three servants wait upon her, one attends to her hair, and all face toward her. And, as Allison Pease recognizes, Salome's hand, like the servant's, is casually placed between her legs, indicating masturbatory pleasures (100-02). In addition to this radical display of autoeroticism, Salome serves as the focal point in the drawing because of her relationship to the array of items displayed on the dressing table in front of her. In the drawing's composition, Salome's lounging body is balanced by this collection of items, which includes toiletries, vases, books, and a small, white figurine which mimics the shape of a servant (a disfigured old man) in another drawing, *Enter Herodias*. Whereas Beardsley customarily invests Salome with extravagant detail, here he instead uses simple and spare lines to outline her form. Unlike in *The Eyes of Herod*, in which Herod's stark form contrasts with the lavish and dominant Salome, in *The Toilette of Salome* there is no other

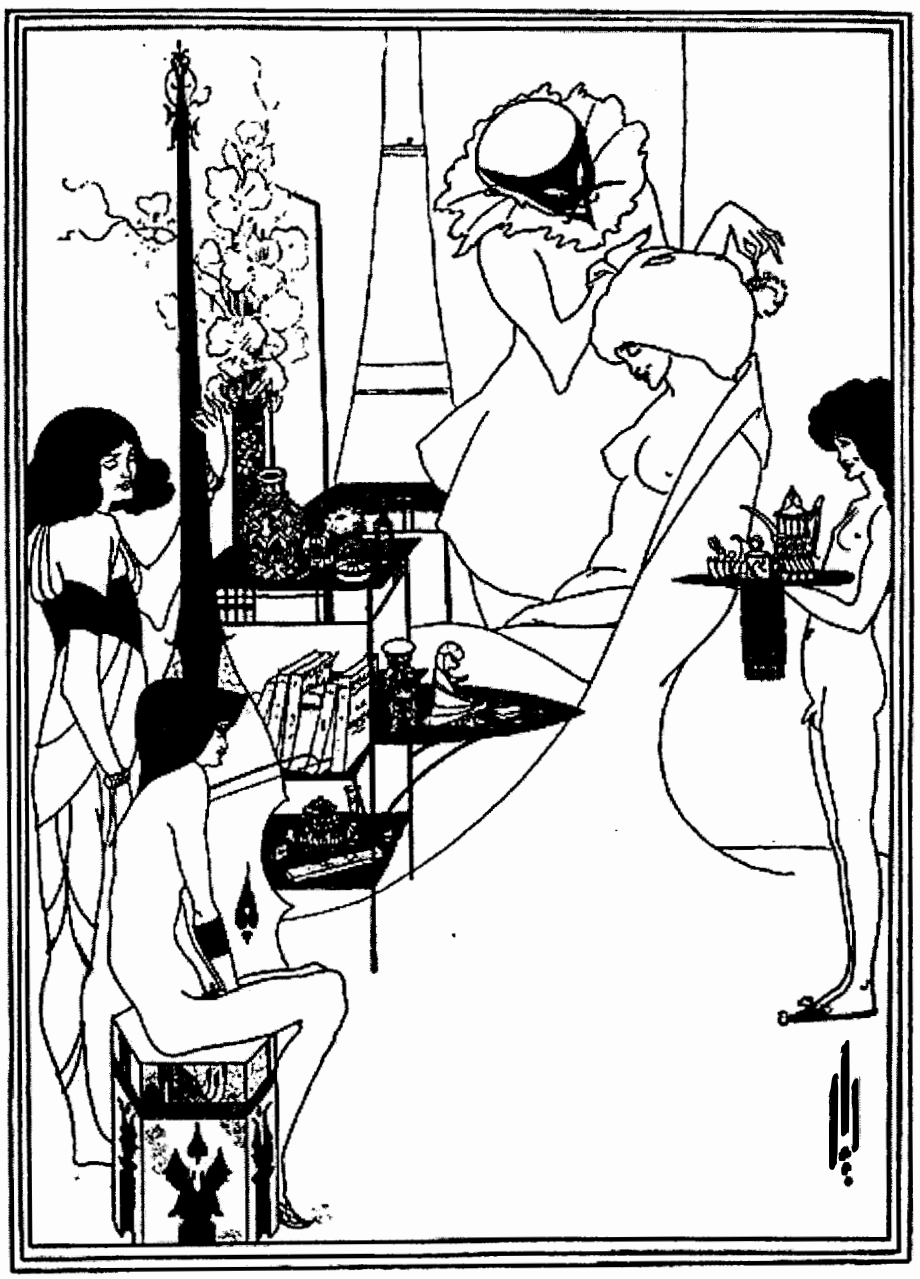

Figure 3, *The Toilette of Salome* (suppressed version)

figure who competes for visual supremacy. The baubles on the table are drawn with the intricacy and solidity usually reserved for Beardsley's portraits of the princess. Similar to the peacock in other drawings, these baubles suggest the riches of imperial booty, emphasized in the text by Herod's catalog of bribes. Salome is aligned with these imperial wares in this drawing: her figure is the mirror image of the small figurine which sits in front of her and is rendered in the same simple lines.

Salome, then, is drawn into the collection of items: she is another figurine, albeit on a larger scale, just as the servant in *Enter Herodias* has been shrunk to bauble-size in this drawing. While this does suggest that both Salome and other bodies under Herod's rule (such as the servant) are in danger of being trafficked as pieces of merchandise among the tetrarch's sundry commodities, it also reveals something more suggestive. Rather than render Salome passive in this illustration, as her reclining figure might at first indicate, her identification with the exoticized items (similar to her association with the peacock) intimates her ability to embody them for her own intentions. Salome's association with these items reinforces the text's notion that she has command over objects, such as the moon, which she can align with, embody, or objectify according to her wishes.

Among the items displayed before Salome is a collection of books, two of which are Zola's *La Terre* and Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du Mal.* When Beardsley was forced to draw a second version of *The Toilette of Salome* when the first was censored, he included more books in the illustration, among them Zola's *Nana* (about the life of a courtesan) and a work by the Marquis de Sade (who lends his name to the term *sadism*). Removing the blatant representations of masturbation, Beardsley relied on these added texts, Allison Pease suggests, to demonstrate obliquely Salome's "voracious sensual appetite" (91). The texts by

Zola and Baudelaire in the suppressed version of *The Toilette of Salome* suggest that Salome's masturbatory impulses are enhanced or indeed originate in her readings of the sexually explicit and decadent texts. If Salome's mirroring of the items arrayed in front of her reveals her ability to inhabit them as well, her association with the fin-de-siècle texts also indicates her position not only as a reader of these texts, but also as a *text herself.*

The suggestion that Salome's body is a text does not render her passive. On the contrary, Salome's willingness to use her body as a work of art corresponds with Wilde's own obsession with self-styling. Wilde championed the idea of the artist embodying the art of his era. At a time of unprecedented commercialism in 1880s and 90s, the artist's body itself could function as the marketable product. Using his own body to reinforce these philosophies, Wilde moved from the garb of the aesthete to the pose of the dandy when he returned from America in 1882; of this change in costume, Wilde claimed, "'All *that* belonged to the Oscar of the first period. We are now concerned with the Oscar Wilde of the second period, who has nothing in common with the gentleman who wore long hair and carried a sunflower down Piccadilly'" (Lambourne 175; see also Gagnier 67). The fin-de-siècle dandy was, above all, adaptable—his livelihood relied on posing as a gentlemen without the necessity of an educational or aristocratic pedigree. An assault on bourgeois values as well as the aristocracy whom he mimicked, the fin-de-siècle dandy insisted that the "aesthetic existence was the most graceful form of inactivity," but also actively promoted himself in the public sphere and, in doing so, revealed the malleable performances of class, gender, and even the role of the artist (Moers 301).

Like the dandy, Salome offers her body as a work of art. In Beardsley's drawings, the princess's identification with the peacock signifies her dual position as artist and

artwork.[21] By the nineties, the peacock was a ubiquitous adornment for artists who followed in the aesthetic tradition of the Pre-Raphaelites and who were aware of the popular use of the bird in the decorative arts, the most famous of which was Whistler's Peacock Room (1876-77), his luxurious and controversial design for a room in the London home of wealthy patron F.R. Leyland (Lambourne 56-8). If Salome's connection to the peacock affiliates her with the role of the artist, it also suggests links between art and ethnic or national identity. Whistler's Peacock Room is thought to have been influenced by Japanese art as part of the "cult of Japan" in England, where increasing international trade, a consequence of Britain's imperial reach across the globe, allowed an influx of Japanese artifacts (Lambourne 31, 56). To be sure, Beardsley's erotic and sumptuous illustrations in *Salome* also indulge in oversexualized depictions of the East. But Beardsley does not show Salome as overmastered by these Orientalized images.[22] She is free to inhabit them and to readjust them to suit her own desires, or, it could be inferred, to abandon them altogether.

Beardsley's illustrations and Wilde's text together offer Salome authority as an artist figure who manipulates the colonial setting around her. Wilde's Salome diverges from the typical late nineteenth-century *femme fatale* because her actions are not limited to the yearnings of her own self-destructive lust. This lust, of course, is a consuming portion of her character, but it is not merely sexual: Salome also yearns to define both herself and others. She lusts after words, descriptions, symbols—anything that can satiate her need to create new interpretations against the will of her stepfather and the conventions of his rule. Salome is undoubtedly an unruly figure, and in this manner she is aligned with certain Victorian caricatures of the Irish. But she disrupts the established order to claim a self-imposed

identity, and she accomplishes this through language—both strategies related to Irish cultural nationalism at the turn of the century.

Wilde's experimentation with Symbolism in *Salome* produced an excessive text. *Salome* the play, like Salome the princess, possesses the capacity to register a number of different allegorical possibilities at once. The character Salome simultaneously represents an Orientalized Jewish princess; the figuration of Ireland as a woman; the anomalous situation of the Anglo-Irish; and the role of the ethnic artist like Wilde. In his famous assessment of *Salome*, Richard Ellmann argued that Herod was a psychological portrait of Wilde.[23] In her desire for self-definition, however, Salome is another character through whom we might examine Wilde's various identities. In fact, Ellmann's biography of Wilde featured a seeming photograph of Wilde cross-dressed as Salome. From the time when this photograph was revealed to be specious, critics have been reluctant to consider Salome's struggles for self-definition as a portrait of Wilde himself.[24] Wilde, of course, most likely did not purposefully craft Salome as an alter ego. However, the complex and shifting symbolic resonances of his title character point not only to the possibility that Wilde might locate elements of himself in Salome, but also to his recognition of the elasticity and permeability of identity itself. The Jewish princess, then, was another pose for Wilde to strike as an artist. She offered another costume for him to wear—figuratively—in drag.

Chapter Four

Technologies of the Maternal in Bram Stoker's *The Lady of the Shroud*

In 1909 the Irish nationalist Constance Markievicz delivered a speech in which she advocated new objectives for women's activism. Addressing the women of Ireland, she insisted:

> Arm yourselves with weapons to fight your nation's cause. Arm your souls with noble and free ideas. Arm your minds with the histories and memories of your country and her martyrs, her language, and a knowledge of her arts, and her industries. And if in your day the call should come for your body to arm, do not shirk that either. (16)

Markievicz's figurative call-to-arms transforms into a petition for women to pick up real weapons if the need arises. The need *did* arise, and Markievicz herself fought alongside Irish nationalist men during the Easter 1916 rebellion. In the first decades of the twentieth century, the climate surrounding women's activism in Ireland was changing: Markievicz's militant proposal was not idiosyncratic, but rather reflected how motives for women's political involvement shifted away from the maternal sensibilities that had been cultivated by nationalist leaders such as Maud Gonne.

Markievicz gave her speech in the same year that her fellow Anglo-Irishman Bram Stoker published his novel *The Lady of the Shroud* (1909). This chapter argues that Stoker's novel acts as a response to new directions in Irish feminism at the turn of the century, especially Irish nationalist women's increased expertise in technologies such as arms. While female activists in Ireland moved away from perceiving their political commitment as an extension of their motherly sympathies, Stoker was not willing to dispense with the centrality

of the maternal for his vision of Irish identity. *The Lady of the Shroud* offers a compromise: a technologically savvy mother figure, named Teuta, whose difficult path to autonomy is mapped onto the novel's generic shift from gothic tale to imperial adventure. This shift—or more precisely, mingling—of forms sets the terms for a new genre altogether, what we might call the *imperial occult*, which envisions methods of imperial conquest based on reciprocity rather than imposition. Moreover, this genre endorses women's political involvement by allowing the adventure tale—a predominantly male-centred genre—to draw on the unusual and unconventional world of the occult.

I show how Stoker uses the form of the imperial occult to supply Ireland with its own tradition of the New Woman, a feminist figure who had invigorated and bedeviled English politics two decades earlier. For Stoker, women's roles in politics are central to the economic and national health of Ireland, a belief he experiments with in a setting other than Ireland in *The Lady of the Shroud.* Stoker promotes imagined connections between Ireland and other nations (including England) in his novel. The text both touts the importance of realizing national identity against an international backdrop and rejects insular notions of nationality. While Maud Gonne pitted her Mother Ireland against Queen Victoria in my first chapter, here in my final chapter Stoker's hi-tech mother is unapologetically a symbol of Mother Ireland *and* Mother England. In Teuta Stoker concocts an Irish New Woman armed (literally) with an agenda for her nation's prosperity.

Set in an invented country in the Balkans, *The Lady of the Shroud* follows an Anglo-Irishman, Rupert Sent Leger, on his path from vagabond world traveler to upstart leader of the Land of the Blue Mountains. Rupert not only transforms the small coastal nation into an industrial powerhouse, but also unites it with its adopted mother country, England, as well as

with a federation of neighboring nations, resulting in a cooperative international network. Rupert achieves these feats with the assistance of Colin MacKelpie, a Scotsman, and even more crucially, Teuta, who masquerades as a vampire for the first half of the novel in order to protect her true identity as the princess of the Land of the Blue Mountains. It is through his marriage to Teuta that Rupert can officially lay claim to governing the Land of the Blue Mountains, and the birth of their son guarantees the perpetuation of Rupert's brand of nation-building.

The one English character in Stoker's novel who merits admiration is portrayed as a benevolent and honest imperialist. Roger Melton is an English adventurer who has made an incredible fortune by financing burgeoning nations across the globe:

> He knew one half of the world, and so kept abreast of all public and national movements that he knew the critical moment to advance money required. He was always generous, and always on the side of freedom. There are nations at this moment only now entering on the consolidation of their liberty, who owe all to him, who knew when and how to help. No wonder that in some lands they will drink to his memory on great occasions as they used to drink to his health. (*Lady of the Shroud* 43)

This ringing endorsement of the adventurer comes after his death and is delivered by his attorney, Mr. Trent. Roger Melton has built an empire with his financial clout, but this empire is fueled by love of liberty, not greed. Trent envisions his former employer as the monarch of this empire, toasted by his distant citizens all over the world. Melton's charitable benevolence calls to mind Britain's justifications for its imperial pursuits, many of which were prompted by financial enterprise and "civilizing" missions. In fact, the Melton family

genealogy bears the trace of the British Empire: Roger's brother Geoffrey is killed in Meerut during the Indian Mutiny, and his sister Patience marries an Irishman decorated with British honors for fighting in the "Ashantee Campaign" (3-4). The novel's hero, Rupert, is the child of Patience and the Irishman, Captain Sent Leger. Rupert is an adventurer himself, carrying on the family tradition as he travels to Central America, Western Africa, the Pacific Islands, and India—in short, he resides anywhere but England (16). Travel away from England is characterized as adventure, not exile. This spirit of foreign travel is what draws Roger Melton to his nephew Rupert, whose undertakings Melton follows through a network of agents throughout the world, his "private 'intelligence department'" (37). Ignorant of his uncle's watchful eye on him, Rupert is rewarded for these escapades: Melton is impressed by his nephew's passion for foreign climes, and he leaves his fortune to him. Most importantly, Melton also charges Rupert with carrying on the development of his most cherished investment, the Land of the Blue Mountains.

Rupert is rewarded so generously because he is unlike other Englishmen in the novel. His cousin, Ernest Roger Halbard Melton, is Rupert's main rival for the Melton family fortune. In his record about the dispersal of his grand-uncle's will, Ernest does not acknowledge Rupert as a true member of the Melton line because of Rupert's Irish blood. Ernest's disrespect is displayed on the level of language: he refuses to use the version of Rupert's last name (Sent Leger) chosen by the Irish line of the family, preferring instead St. Leger. Furthermore, Ernest habitually misnames Miss Janet MacKelpie, the Scottish nurse who helped raise Rupert. Ernest's attitude toward the Irish and the Scottish characterizes him as a narrow-minded Englishman, whose myopic vision about national identity shapes his attitude toward England's neighboring nations as well as his contempt for England's pursuits

abroad. The one time Ernest visits the Land of the Blue Mountains, he is forced to leave early because of his lack of civility towards its inhabitants. In a gesture that reveals the novel's alignment of Ireland and Scotland with England's distant colonies, the insolent Ernest greets both the Scotsman Colin MacKelpie and the Blue Mountaineer Teuta by extending *one finger* for a handshake. After Ernest insults Teuta in this way, Rupert recalls: "I well remembered that episode of his offering one finger to the old gentleman in Mr Trent's office [. . . .] He is really an impossible young man, and is far better out of this country than in it" (208). Ernest is banished from the Land of the Blue Mountains and forced to return to England. He is exiled *to* England, the only fitting place for his parochialism.

The attorney Mr. Trent represents a different type of Englishman, who, while not officious like Ernest, similarly reveals the problems of a barren English imagination, which cannot envision nationality beyond its country's own borders. He desires to be a father figure for Rupert: "I was delighted with Rupert," Trent exclaims, "He is just what I could have wished his mother's boy to be—or a son of my own to be, had I had the good-fortune to have been a father. But such is not for me" (44). Trent himself anticipates why his relationship with Rupert fails to emulate a father-son bond, pointing out that Rupert possesses a "daring that is disturbing to an old dryasdust lawyer" (44). Despite the disclosure that he likes Rupert "more than [he] ever liked anyone," Trent is portrayed as an unfulfilled man, unfit to be a role model for the adventurous Rupert.

While Roger Melton and his attorney Mr. Trent both vie to be Rupert's father figure, a mother figure proves most prominent in his life. "Aunt" Janet, a Scottish woman related distantly to Rupert (she is the sister of his mother's sister-in-law), is his primary caregiver after his mother's death. He writes Janet letters when he takes up residence in the Land of

the Blue Mountains, and he plans for her to follow him there. In fact, Rupert's insistence that she take up residence in the Balkans reveals his royal aspirations. Trying to coax her, Rupert promises Janet, only half jokingly, that when she arrives she "will be an EMPRESS" (52). The term brings to mind foreign royalty—European female sovereigns could be empresses—yet it also registers for an English audience a title connected to their country's recent past. In 1877 Queen Victoria became Empress of India, a symbolic designation that prompted dismay from many English who associated the term *empress* with foreign despots (Murphy 194). Janet, of course, does not officially become the empress of the Land of the Blue Mountains, but she is "treated like one" by Rupert once she arrives to live with him (62). Positioned to be the symbolic ruling matriarch of the Balkan nation, Janet domesticates her role as empress: she is not a foreign despot, but rather a capable and caring Scottish woman. Just as Rupert later proves himself to be an Anglo-Irishman with a keener sense of imperial conquest than his English counterparts, Janet is a revised version of Victoria. While Queen Victoria sought to establish closer ties to her beloved Scotland by frequenting her Scottish estate Balmoral, Janet is presented as the real thing: an authentic Scotswoman who brings to the Land of the Blue Mountains knowledge of her nation's own unique history of colonization by England.

Yet the connection to Queen Victoria also suggests that Janet's figurative rule is already overstayed. By the time Stoker's novel was published, Queen Victoria had been dead eight years. While Janet represents a benevolent Scottish empress, her position is immediately usurped. Soon after she arrives in the Balkans, Rupert falls in love with the daughter of the most prominent family in the Land of the Blue Mountains. Teuta's father is primed to be the nation's next ruler, a position he ultimately hands over to Rupert. Teuta

herself thus moves from princess to queen in the course of the novel. While much younger, she replaces Janet as the female figurehead of her nation.

Rupert narrates their first encounter:

> [T]he moment Teuta saw her [Janet] she ran straight over to her and lifted her in her strong young arms, and, raising her up as one would lift a child, kissed her. Then, when she had put her sitting in the chair from which she had arisen when we entered the room, she knelt down before her, and put her face down in her lap. (194)

Their meeting suggests a shifting mother-child relationship characterized by a tug-of-war over authority. While assuming the maternal role in lifting Janet up to kiss her, Teuta then makes herself submissive and childlike by placing her head in the older woman's lap. Teuta sits in Janet's lap, and Janet confirms, momentarily, her position as the mother figure: "Rupert will always be my 'little boy,'" she explains to Teuta, "and, in spite of all his being such a giant, he is so still. And so you, that he loves, must be my little girl" (194). Despite Janet's desire to maintain her role as matriarch, Rupert finally allows Teuta to claim this role. At the close of his journal entry, Rupert still describes Teuta on Janet's knee, but he remarks lastly that Teuta puts "the old lady's white head on her young breast" (194). Teuta pulls Janet to her, a maternal action that establishes Teuta, from Rupert's point of view, as the reigning mother figure. In her own subsequent journal entry, Janet recalls another moment in which the two women pose as mother and child. Not surprisingly, though, Janet's memory places her in the more powerful maternal role: "I took her in my arms," Janet says of Teuta, "and laid her head on my breast" (195).

The two women's competitiveness reveals the importance of motherhood to nation-building in the Land of the Blue Mountains. Whoever claims the status as reigning mother can embody the nation as princess, queen, or empress. Janet in fact anticipates that her replacement waits in the wings. Before she meets Teuta, she has a vision of the young woman in a dream. Rupert records Janet's dream in his journal:

> 'I saw your hairt bleeding, laddie. I kent it was yours, though how I kent it I don't know. It lay on a stone floor in the dark, save for a dim blue light such as corpse-lights are [. . . .] An' yet that was not all, for hard by stood a tall imperial shape o' a woman, all arrayed in white, wi' a great veil o' finest lace worn o'er a shrood. An' she was whiter than the snow, an' fairer than the morn for beauty; though a dark woman she was, wi' hair like the raven, an' eyes black as the sea at nicht, an' there was stars in them.' (137-138)

Janet's Scottish dialect, absent from her own journal entries, is emphasized by Rupert, who turns attention to the orality of her tale. Janet is established as a storyteller, and she describes Teuta as a mythical and beautiful woman, not unlike the Irish tales of Cathleen ni Houlihan, Erin, or Dark Rosaleen. Even Janet's description of herself suggests a figure from Celtic mythology. Promising that she will "feel [her] youth again" once Teuta produces a child and heir, Janet is like the Cailleac, an old hag who is magically restored to her youth when Irish men promise to fight for their nation's independence (194).

While Janet entertains the idea of her own lasting embodiment as the feminized national figure, she ultimately passes on the role to Teuta. Janet sees Teuta in her trademark white shroud and recalls the young woman from her dream: "[S]he walked across the room with the gait of an empress" (196). Here Janet's language evokes the final line of Gregory

and Yeats's play *Cathleen ni Houlihan*, in which Cathleen transforms from a crone to a maiden when martyrs sacrifice themselves for Ireland: "I saw a young girl" young Patrick Gillane says at the play's conclusion, "and she had the walk of a queen" (Yeats, *Cathleen* 11). Janet, the old Cathleen, is transformed figuratively into Teuta, the young Cathleen, who becomes the reigning empress symbolizing the Land of the Blue Mountains' difficult journey to nationhood.

Teuta's own journey to achieve the status of nation-as-mother is a complex one. To avoid capture by the Turks, the Blue Mountaineer's most imminent enemy, Teuta goes into hiding. Her body already functions as a symbol of the nation; if the reigning Turkish family kidnaps her, they will have rights to the Land of the Blue Mountains (145). This unusual method of land acquisition has its roots in Celtic mythology; in these myths, in order for the Celtic king to claim his land, he had to mate ritually with the goddess of sovereignty, who represented both abstract sovereignty and the physical landscape of Ireland.[1] Teuta adopts a costume for her role as "sovereignty goddess," a long, white shroud that conceals her true identity even from the Blue Mountaineers, who have been told that she died from an illness. To allow her to escape the confines of her hiding place, the crypt of the church of St. Sava, a legend is spread throughout the Balkan kingdom that a vampire roams the land.

For the first half of the novel, Teuta's name and identity are concealed from both Rupert and the reader, and *The Lady of the Shroud* is ostensibly another vampire tale like *Dracula*. Teuta's performance as a vampire turns out to be an enabling and empowering role. She proposes the vampire scheme, and her suggestion shocks the other men: "At first we men could not believe," the Archbishop of the Eastern church reports, "that any woman could go through with such a task, and some of us did not hesitate to voice our doubts—our

disbelief. But she stood to her guns, and actually downfaced us" (147). The phrase "stood to her guns" already begins to associate Teuta with technology, which provides the most powerful outlet for her authority later in the novel. Teuta is an active symbol of nationhood, "willing [. . .] to make any personal sacrifice which might be deemed necessary for the carrying out of her father's task for the good of the nation" (147). She devises the vampire story as a political tactic. She not only symbolizes a sovereign Land of the Blue Mountains; she also actively works to maintain her nation's independence.

Teuta's status as a vampire legitimizes behaviors that would be off-limits for a "respectable" woman.[2] Rupert's first encounter with Teuta occurs when she is roaming the countryside at night, and she discovers the fire in his room as a haven from the cold. Rupert is immediately captivated with the shrouded woman at his window, and he justifies his allowing an unaccompanied woman into his room at night by stressing the "sense of her helplessness" (70). Rupert rationalizes in his journal: "[S]he was a woman, and in some dreadful trouble; that was enough" (70). From the beginning Rupert takes into account that Teuta could be a ghastly apparition, her shroud acting as "grave-clothes" (69). Even so, he is still concerned about her violation of proper etiquette:

> This woman I did respect—much respect. Her youth and beauty; her manifest ignorance of evil; her superb disdain of convention, which could only come through hereditary dignity; her terrible fear and suffering—for there must be more in her unhappy condition than meets the eye—would all demand respect, even if one did not hasten to yield it. Nevertheless, I thought it necessary to enter a protest against her embarrassing suggestion. I certainly did feel a fool when making it, also a cad. I can truly say it was made only for her good, and out of the best of me, such as I am. I felt

> impossibly awkward; and stuttered and stumbled before I spoke: "But surely—the convenances! Your being here alone at night! Mrs. Grundy—convention—the—." (72)

Teuta replies forcefully: "I am above convention. Convenances do not trouble me or hamper me" (73). She realizes that her role-playing as a vampire—though she never confirms this identity to Rupert—allows her to be peripatetic.

Rupert, though, continues to be troubled by her breach of convention. After she has visited his room a number of times, he concludes on his own that she is a vampire. He goes through a tireless search to come to this conclusion by studying Janet's occult books. Rupert's belief that Teuta is a vampire is curiously devoid of fear. Even though Teuta visits him routinely at night, he not once fears that she will try to bite him. He cannot be hypnotized by her vampiric powers—she has none, after all. Rather, his belief that Teuta is a vampire has a practical incentive: if she is a vampire who roams during the night, she is exempt from the Grundified conventions that worry him. The vampire ruse grants Teuta a means to advance her nation's independence in a manner that circumvents traditional gender roles, and it permits Rupert, much to his relief, to dismiss the rules of social propriety.[3]

The ruse does not last long, and Teuta's true identity is finally revealed. When this revelation occurs, the narrative shifts its focus to issues of nation-building in the Balkan kingdom. As it turns out, the vampire tale that opens the text and the subsequent adventure narrative are tied to one another. Imperial escapades and issues of the occult mingle throughout the novel. When Roger Melton watches secretly as an intrepid Rupert makes his name as an adventurer, Melton is forced to increase his "intelligence department" due to Rupert's far-flung travels (37). In doing so, Melton's searches stimulate new magazines

"devoted to certain branches of inquiry and adventure" (37). In fact, the first introduction of the "lady of the shroud," Teuta's vampiric alter ego, occurs through the pages of *The Journal of Occultism*, in which she is sighted by an Italian steamship.

Janet is believed to possess the gift of "Second Sight," allowing her to have visions of a shrouded Teuta before meeting the princess, and Rupert himself, after encountering Teuta, explains the need to record the meeting: "I have investigated and reported," Rupert explains, "on too many cases for the Psychical Research Society to be ignorant of the necessity for absolute accuracy in such matters of even the minutest detail" (46) Rupert painstakingly reads up on the figure of the vampire in Janet's occult books to figure out Teuta's curious identity; after much study, Rupert reaches his "Vampire theory" (78). Although he preaches elsewhere about love as a more powerful instinct than reason, Rupert documents his findings and provides a list of evidence, from Teuta's wanderings at night to her need to be "helped" into Rupert's room—all, Rupert explains, according to "'Vampire etiquette'" (78). Even Janet's visions are a potential source of information for Rupert's investigation, as he admits that he may "learn something from them" (97). Just as Teuta claims mobility and freedom from her vampire role-playing, Janet's association with the occult, through her clairvoyance, grants her a degree of authority: Rupert constantly fears that his aunt will discover his clandestine meetings with the lady of the shroud, and Janet's visions keep her, for the most part, informed about the goings-on in the castle.

Rupert connects the occult to his prior foreign adventures. These travels provide him with what he believes to be valuable preparation for his circumstances in the Balkans. To face the possibility that Teuta may be a vampire, Rupert recalls "other moments of terrible stress" during his foreign adventures:

> Of wild mystic rites held in the deep gloom of African forests, when, amid scenes of revolting horror, Obi and the devils of his kind seemed to reveal themselves to reckless worshippers, surfeited with horror [. . . .]
>
> Of scenes of mystery enacted in rock-cut temples beyond the Himalayas, whose fanatic priests, cold as death and as remorseless, in the reaction of their phrenzy of passion, foamed at the mouth and then sank into marble quiet [. . . .]
>
> Of wild, fantastic dances of the Devil-worshippers of Madagascar, where even the very semblance of humanity disappeared in the fantastic excesses of their orgies. (128)

Rupert employs the language of the occult to describe these distant lands: they are mysterious, savage, and charged with an excessive sexuality, descriptions infused with Western assumptions about the profligacy of the East (McClintock 22). Rupert presents these experiences as a catalog, his characteristic style for explaining unfamiliar phenomena. He inventories that which is unknown to him, whether it be Teuta's actions or the customs of a foreign land. The Land of the Blue Mountains is not spared from Rupert's relentless accumulation of knowledge. His "exploration" around his newly adopted land takes on "a systematic form" (89). He inventories the land around him like a colonial surveyor, making note of the exploitable resources of the land and alternately passing judgment on or adopting the local customs. Thus the shift from gothic tale to imperial adventure, prompted by the revelation of Teuta's identity, reveals a subtle generic transformation rather an abrupt change of direction.

By building connections between the occult and foreign travel, Stoker devises a form that we might term the *imperial occult*, which envisions a new style of imperialism. From

Stoker's point of view, this new imperialism relies on women's involvement. He dramatizes the importance of this involvement by posing a problem at the center of his imperial occult tale: that women's political roles were often curtailed when they became too comfortably "real." Teuta is allowed unconventional freedoms due to her play-acting as a vampire, but when she casts off this disguise *and* wants to retain those freedoms, she encounters resistance from those around her.

The primary "adventure" of the latter half of the novel is Teuta's kidnapping by the Turks. Exempt from the main action of the narrative while held hostage, she becomes merely an abstraction: as the Archbishop claims, Teuta "must be taken as representing in her own person the glory of the old Serb race, inasmuch as being the only child of the Voivoide Vissarion, last male of his princely race" (145).[4] Teuta is situated in a royal family line, and her significance derives from what she represents, not what she accomplishes. As she becomes an immobile symbol of nationhood, her body is regarded as more vulnerable than when she roamed the countryside freely in her shroud. Her status as a figurehead of her nation does not exempt her body from violation; on the contrary, when Teuta's embodiment of nationhood is rendered passive, her body becomes particularly susceptible to the gender conventions she avoided while acting as a vampire. Rupert for the first time articulates his concern about the potential victimization of her body: he worries that she may end up in a Turkish harem and shudders to think how her captors have "submitted her to the indignity of gagging her and binding her hands" (156). The threat of her bodily harm signifies more than her defenseless womanhood; it also represents an endangered nation. The text's transition from gothic to adventure tale is mapped onto Teuta's body; she transforms from a peripatetic vampire to an immobile icon of nationhood.

Teuta's rescue from the Turks does not appear to restore her old freedoms. Her role as wife and mother seemingly indicates that her authority dissolves. When Rupert is crowned king of the Land of the Blue Mountains for fighting valiantly alongside the Blue Mountaineers, Teuta refuses the title of queen and instead prefers her position as a wife. As Teuta explains to her fellow Blue Mountaineers:

> And it would ill become me, whom my husband honours, wife to the man whom you would honour—to take a part in changing the ancient custom which has been held in honour for all the thousand years, which is the glory of the Blue Mountain womanhood. What an example such would be in an age when self-seeking women of other nations seek to forget their womanhood in the struggle to vie in equality with men! Men of the Blue Mountains, I speak for our women when I say that we hold of greatest price the glory of our men. To be their companions is our happiness; to be their wives is the completion of our lives; to be mothers of their children is our share of the glory that is theirs. (224)

Teuta here sounds far from "beyond convention" (73). She is beholden to a tradition that celebrates women in their roles as wives and mothers, and she scorns women of other nations who aim to exceed these roles.

Attention to women's rights in England intensified in the years surrounding the publication of *The Lady of the Shroud*: in 1903, for instance, the campaign for women's suffrage strengthened with the founding of the Women's Social and Political Union. The Blue Mountaineers signify their national difference based on their opposition to the kind of advancement of women's rights displayed in nations such as England. Teuta's position as a static figuration of nationhood is reflected in the limited authority of the Blue Mountain

women. Once Teuta becomes pregnant, she is prevented from driving her "own aeroplane" just when she becomes "an expert in it" (237). Her shroud becomes a "national emblem," and one of the closing images we see of Teuta reveals her "wrapped in her white Shroud, holding her baby on her breast" (154). Teuta has finally achieved literally what she role-played with Aunt Janet: she is a mother, both of her son and of her nation. This achievement at first glance comes at the cost of her authority and mobility.

Yet the various narrative points-of-view in the novel suggest that limiting Teuta to the roles of wife and mother may hinder the growth of the Land of the Blue Mountains. While it is not unexpected that the nationalist ideology of the Land of the Blue Mountains would authorize Teuta's transformation into an idealized and silenced woman, the military strategies *devised by her* are responsible for ushering in the nation's era of peace and prosperity. The narratives that validate Teuta's diminishing authority are largely administrative, written by the scribe of the National Council and the correspondent of *Free America*, an American journal aimed at chronicling the newfound prosperity and advanced national defenses of the Balkan nation. Outside of these narratives, which focus mainly on hierarchies of power within the nation, it is apparent that Teuta's influence on matters military, financial, and economic is profound.

For instance, after Teuta is rescued by Rupert and the other Blue Mountaineers, the attention shifts to her father, who is also captured by the Turks. Teuta devises a plan to save him; as Rupert reports, "a whole plan of action, based on subtle thinking, had mapped itself out in her mind" (168). Rupert executes her intricate plan, and in his own account of these events, it seems incongruous (and comical) when he notes that "[l]ike a good wife, she obeyed" (170). Even if Rupert receives most of the glory for saving her father, Teuta makes

this occasion possible by inventing new ways to use the airplane as a military vehicle. Teuta's pregnancy, which prevents her from flying her trademark airplane, can thus be seen as a threat to the nation's well-being, even though her pregnancy provides a required heir to the kingdom. Her talents for military strategy surpass her ability to reproduce.

Teuta's vision extends beyond military action. She also offers commercial and economic designs for her nation. "'I, too, have had a dream—a day-dream—,'" Teuta explains to a roomful of men,

> 'which came in a flash, but no less a dream, for all that. It was when we hung on the aeroplane over the Blue Mouth. It seemed to me in an instant that I saw that beautiful spot as it will some time be [. . .] a mart for the world whence will come for barter some of the great wealth of the Blue Mountains.' (214).

This "day-dream" again exposes women's roles in the "imperial occult": Teuta offers a vision for her nation's future, just as Janet predicted she would. Teuta notices the commercial potential of the "virgin forests" and "vast mineral wealth" of the mountains (214). Her visions are ultimately grounded in tangible research: she avidly reads geological reports, the same type of surveying that Rupert undertakes. As it turns out, she is as much of an enthusiast for commercial growth as Rupert, and her overarching ideas are "not of war, but of peace" (212). In fact, we learn that a "great Balkan Federation," drawing together the interests of bordering nations, has been "the dream of Teuta's life" (239). The "imperial occult" thus presents a mother as the source of national prosperity—beyond her procreative function.

This prosperity is achieved only through the pursuit of a global network of nations. Stoker suggests that the same formula for national success pertains to Ireland in his lecture

"The Necessity for Political Honesty." He claims that a strong sense of nationhood relies on internationalism:

> What is this internationalism but the dawning of truth—the broadening out of justice from the nations to the world at large—the casting off of the petty chains of local prejudice, and of that quasi-nationality which is the very apotheosis of parochialism [. . .] When will men learn that patriotism is not merely to sneer at and be jealous of surrounding nations, nor to gather all the love and affection with which God has dowered the heart of man into one little spot till it becomes a garden, whilst all the rest of the world remains, for them, a waste? The true patriot is he who wishes his own country to lead the van of thought and action by a good example, and not he who would make all the earth subservient in everything to his own land. (43)

The Land of the Blue Mountains offers, literally, an improved "garden," in contrast to the imperfect one Stoker mentions above. Rupert praises the gardens of his adopted homeland for the way they integrate various national styles—"Greek, Italian, French, German, Dutch, British, Spanish, African, Moorish"—and he even promises to contribute to this cross-cultural organics by adding elements of Japanese landscape (55). Blue Mountain soil promotes a prosperous co-existence between nations. Stoker's fear of parochialism in Ireland springs from forms of nationalism that established Irish national identity by refuting England and all its characteristics, such as industrial progress. While he critiques insular forms of nationalism, Stoker also takes aim at the British Empire when he disapproves of those ideologies that would "make all the earth subservient." The British Empire, to Stoker's mind, does not yet promote an acceptable form of internationalism, which must build upon a philosophy of nationalities co-existing equally and peacefully.

From Stoker's perspective, Ireland is on the cusp of realizing the necessity of internationalism. "The Celtic race," he claims, "is waking up from its long lethargy, and another half century will see a wondrous change in the position which it occupies amongst the races of the world" ("Necessity" 45). Drawing on and adapting Arnold's caricature, Stoker avows that the "passionate feeling" of the Celt can be transformed into "shrewdness, and enterprise, and purpose in commercial prosperity" ("Necessity" 46). "The Necessity for Political Honesty" was an early speech in Stoker's career; he envisioned industrialism and commerce as solutions for Ireland before he experimented with these ideas in his fiction. Advocating that the "new order must be based on no sectarian feuds" and that Ireland must forgive England for its mismanaged English-Irish relations, Stoker sees a clear decision for his nation: "We can choose whether we shall live for the future or follow the past; and it needs little effort to see the nobler choice" ("Necessity" 46).[5]

This early essay's portrait of Ireland is strikingly similar to Stoker's characterization of the Land of the Blue Mountains. He explains that Ireland's "advantage" is that "her people have remained the same whilst other peoples have slowly changed for the worse. And now amongst these others comes forth this old-world people—seeming half barbarous amid an age of luxury, but with strength and pride intact, and claims its position, as, at least, their equal" (45). Rupert describes the Blue Mountaineers similarly as "the most primitive people I ever met—the most fixed to their own ideas, which belong to centuries back" (59). "Primitive" is perceived optimistically as dedication to an ancient culture, a strategy employed by Irish nationalists in the nineteenth century who sought to recuperate the depictions foisted on them by the English—that is, by imagining *primitive* as *traditional* or *overly sentimental* as *expressive*.

The Blue Mountaineers are characterized by their warlike quality, suggestive of the aggressive tribes of Celtic mythology as well as the barbaric Scythians, one of the only races of people to escape the tyranny of the Roman Empire. Forging an imaginative connection between the Roman and British Empires, Irish nationalists often claimed the warlike Scythians as predecessors to the Irish (Cullingford 106). Like Ireland, the "gallant little nation" of the Land of the Blue Mountains is said to have a "strange history" of national independence (32). The government of the Balkan nation transferred from a ruling King to an authoritative governing council, both of which relied upon the spiritual influence of the Greek Orthodox Church. There is no disputing Catholicism's importance to Ireland's distinctive national past, which includes colonization by the British in the eleventh century, a renewed British colonization in the sixteenth, and a union with Great Britain in the nineteenth century.

The Land of the Blue Mountains, like Ireland, is ripe for industrial exploitation even though its climate may be better suited for agriculture. The wealth of the Balkan kingdom is "yet undeveloped," with "virgin forests of priceless worth" as well as "vast mineral wealth of many kinds" hidden within the vast mountain ranges (214). Stoker promises in another essay, "The Great White Fair in Dublin," that in Ireland one may already find "some individual industrial undertakings, the largest and most successful of their kind in the world" (147). Written in 1907 for a special Irish number of the London periodical *World's Work*, Stoker's essay documents his praise of a Dublin exhibition of industry and the arts, one of several in Ireland modeled after England's 1851 Great Exhibition.[6] He, moreover, corroborates his claim about Ireland's potential for successful industry in "The World's Greatest Shipbuilding Yard," an essay published in the same Irish number of the *World's*

Works. Referring to the shipping business in Belfast, Stoker claims that the "founders and developers" of this industry "have proved beyond all doubt that success is not necessarily dependent on natural local conditions" (150).

Industrial progress, Stoker insists, "will introduce Patrick to his new self" (146). It is perhaps no surprise that Stoker decides to gender Ireland male in "The Great White Fair in Dublin"; after all, the most celebrated aspect of the fair, from Stoker's perspective, is its demonstration of Ireland's "strenuous, industrious spirit" (145). Though he associates Ireland's industry with masculine vigor, the impression of Ireland's "femininity" is not completely eclipsed: as Stoker reports, a visitor to the exhibition exclaims that the main entrance sits magnificently against "a sky of Irish blue" that is evocative of "'a colleen's eyes'" (147). In its alignment of femininity with nature, this description reinforces the gender politics of Stoker's essay, associating the masculine with technological advancement and the feminine with pastoral beauty. One result of this characterization is an update of the Patrick figure, regularly portrayed as a foolish laborer by English cartoons, whom Stoker now associates with industrial progress.

Industry, then, promises to introduce Patrick exclusively to his masculine self. This kind of self-knowledge, as Stoker sees it, is vital to Ireland, a nation whose geographical isolation has caused "a personal ignorance both of itself and of the outside world" ("Great" 146). Stoker's dual initiative to educate Ireland about itself and to introduce his nation to the rest of the world carries on the basic undertaking of the Celtic Revival a decade before. Fueled by an anxiety of national self-representation, Stoker aims to redress stereotypes of the inept Irishman. He proudly anticipates that the industrial fair in Dublin will abolish the "stage Irishman and the stagey Irish play," with its "rows and its shillalahs" ("Great" 145).

Similarly, revivalists Gregory, Yeats, and Edward Martyn aimed a decade earlier to dispel the notion that Ireland was "the home of buffoonery and of easy sentiment" (Gregory 378). Stoker shares the revivalists' goal to re-invent Ireland, but his methods are markedly different. While the Celtic Revival sought to reclaim an unadulterated Irish past, an "ancient idealism," Stoker instead looks toward the future—and to technology in particular—for Ireland's desired identity (Gregory 378). Stoker's portrait of an industrial Ireland relies on England as a role model. Insisting in his essay that Ireland possesses the potential for development, he avoids blaming England for failing to advance Irish industrial growth.

Stoker is less generous in *The Lady of the Shroud*. The Land of the Blue Mountains is tied to England (via the charitable imperialist Roger Melton) for its budding prosperity as a nation, but the English are not responsible for its ultimate triumph. In Stoker's novel, the colonizer must learn from its colonies. The first lesson is that national identity is not rigidly exclusive. Though Rupert brings British commerce to his adopted nation, he also assimilates to their local customs by marrying Teuta in the Greek Orthodox Church and participating in other native rituals, such as the traditional dances of the Blue Mountaineers and their ceremonial use of weapons. Rupert helps transform the nation into a technological utopia, but he also takes care to preserve their culture. During the celebration that merits the presence of the British monarch, the "history of the Land of the Blue Mountains" is told in "ballad form" (233). As Seamus Deane has noted, the ballad tradition was central to the politics of nineteenth-century Irish nationalists, who sought to claim a distinct sense of Irishness in the "language of utopian possibility" of anonymous ballads (2). Though the Land of the Blue Mountains becomes more like England in its industrial progress, it retains its unique history and native forms of art like Ireland.

Contrary to his intentions in "The Great White Fair in Dublin," Stoker does not aim in *The Lady of the Shroud* to introduce Patrick to his industrial self; instead, he reveals Mother Ireland's technological alter ego. Teuta, unsurprisingly, is central to the new dynamics of power that Stoker sets out between colonizer and colonized. While Teuta is the literal queen of her land, she is also the "namesake" for, as she puts it, a "Queen in the old days" (196). Teuta is situated in a royal lineage that evokes the British monarchy. Tellingly, the King and Queen of England make an appearance during a celebration of the industrial and commercial growth of the Land of the Blue Mountains, and their approval validates—and then is ultimately surpassed by—the royal authority of Rupert and Teuta. A correspondent for the journal *Free America* describes the event:

> For myself, I can never forget that wonderful scene of a nation's enthusiasm, and the core of it is engraven on my memory [. . . .] [T]he King and Queen of the greatest nation of the earth received by the newest King and Queen—a King and Queen who won empire for themselves, so that the former subject of another King received him as brother-monarch on a history-making occasion, when a new world-power was, under his tutelage, springing into existence [. . . .] But all were eclipsed—even the thousand years of royal lineage of the Western King, Rupert's natural dower of stature, and the other Queen's bearing of royal dignity and sweetness—by the elemental simplicity of Teuta's Shroud. (255)

Rupert and Teuta are, ultimately, greater monarchs than the King and Queen of England because they have developed a nation—"won empire," as the correspondent puts it—by their own initiative and hard work, rather than by mere inheritance. After all, the King of England at the time of the novel's publication, Edward VII, did not forge an empire himself, but rather

became heir to the sprawling empire of his mother Queen Victoria. Rupert and Teuta represent a new generation of empire-builders who outperform the English.

The English monarchy is willing to acknowledge this new generation of imperialists. Rupert records in his journal a message from the King of England: "'His Majesty wishes Mr Sent Leger to feel assured of the good-will of Great Britain to the Land of the Blue Mountains, and even of his own personal satisfaction that a gentleman of so distinguished a lineage and such approved personal character is about to be—within his own scope—a connecting-link between the nations'" (210). Rupert's impressive "lineage" points to his English uncle's financial success in England and abroad, but it also brings to mind Rupert's Irish heritage, an aspect of his pedigree that contributes to his success as an improved imperialist.

The Editor of *Free America*, moreover, replaces the reference to the "greatest nation on earth" (referring to England) with the "greatest *Kingdom* on earth" (255). This reference to Scotland, Ireland, and Wales again calls up Rupert's Irishness and intimates that these parts of the United Kingdom support not only England, but also its outlying colonies. While Rupert earns the title "brother-monarch," the symbolic transfer of power from outmoded King and Queen to new King and Queen centers on Teuta. The American correspondent confirms that Teuta is ultimately the figure who "won an empire through her own bravery, even in the jaws of the grave" (255).[7]

Technology, of course, is central to Teuta's success, and her ease with its gadgetry evokes the technical expertise of the New Woman in fin-de-siècle England.[8] Critics have offered substantial evidence that Stoker imagined his heroine Mina Harker in *Dracula* as a New Woman figure.[9] Stoker wrote *The Lady of the Shroud* on the heels of the fervor over

the New Woman in 1880's and 90's England. Gender roles were slower to change in Ireland, where Catholicism's emphasis on virtuous maternity (promoted by the Cult of the Virgin Mary) and Irish nationalism's reverence of motherhood still claimed considerable influence. To what extent, then, did feminist issues surrounding the New Woman in fin-de-siècle England apply to Irish women at the beginning of the twentieth century?

In addition to her involvement in campaigns such as women's suffrage and marital reform, the New Woman in England was characterized by her association with technology. Rita Felski in *The Gender of Modernity* points to the horror often accompanying women's embrace of the technological in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. She argues that women were inextricably tied to the experience of the modern even though many of the recognizable figures of modernity—"the man of the crowd, the stranger, the dandy, the flâneur"—were gendered male (Felski 16). In the nineteenth century, working class women, middle-class consumers, and late-century feminists and social reformers all gained access to the public sphere. These peripatetic women were to "play a role in prevailing anxieties, fears, and hopeful imaginings about the distinctive features of the 'modern age'" (Felski 19). In particular, three figures—the prostitute, the actress, and the machine woman—claimed prominence in the modern cultural consciousness. The prostitute represented "the ambiguous boundaries separating economics and sexuality," the actress displayed the artificiality of consumerism, and the machine-woman revealed society's simultaneous awe and disgust for both technology and the feminine (Felski 19).

In his analysis of women's uneasy association with modernity, Andreas Huyssen suggests that women became linked to the *mass* aspect of *mass culture*: "The fear of the masses in this age of declining liberalism is always also a fear of woman, a fear of nature out

of control, a fear of the unconscious, of sexuality, of the loss of identity and stable ego boundaries in the mass" (52). The image of woman as mass culture, in turn, was used by society as a repository for all the anxieties and fears accompanying modern progress.

Ann Heilmann and Margaret Beetham emphasize that the New Woman should not be thought of as a strictly English phenomenon. Their recent collection, in fact, aims to "situate the New Woman in a much wider geographical and cultural context" in order to respond to narrow definitions that perceive the figure "almost exclusively within national boundaries" (1).[10] This scholarship widens an understanding not only of the figure itself, which has received much critical attention from scholars of Victorian England, but also of the histories of feminism in various national contexts.

Ireland's cultural and material differences from England thus offer a new perspective on the New Woman. One important difference was that Ireland lagged behind England in its industrial progress, for which Stoker proposes solutions even in his earliest essays. Technical jobs for women, such as typewriting and clerking, which caused public anxiety in England as they became increasingly available, did not abound in Ireland, even by the first decades of the twentieth century. The Great Famine of 1845-51, which resulted in rampant poverty and emigration, stifled any expectations that industry would develop significantly in Ireland in the latter half of the nineteenth century. As Gordon Bigelow argues, post-famine Ireland was perceived by England as a different nation, one whose economy was distinctive (112). English economists thus presumed that England could no longer serve as a model for Ireland—what Stoker proposes in his essay "The Great White Fair of Dublin." Anxiety over women's roles in Ireland therefore were not expressed as vehemently through issues of

technology. The "machine-woman" (to borrow Felski's phrase) was not as visible in Ireland at the turn of the century (19).

Yet *The Lady of the Shroud* displays its machine woman prominently, and she is a symbol of Ireland just as much as she is a symbol of England. Teuta represents a technologically advanced Mother Ireland, but her name also suggests the Teutons, one of the Germanic tribes that settled in England in the fifth century. Stoker thus imagines through Teuta a post-industrial Ireland that does not yet exist. While she may be, like Mina Harker, representative of the English New Woman, her role as an embodiment of Ireland reveals a more innovative take on feminist politics in the novel. Stoker's decision to stage Mother Ireland's encounter with technology, then, is all the more potent. Stoker hands Mina a typewriter to signal women's increased technical training, but he provides Teuta with an airplane, a more substantial and more ambitiously conspicuous symbol of technological progress. Stoker presents Teuta as an Irish New Woman because controversies surrounding the New Woman in England were in large measure a result of technology's increasing role in the daily lives of Victorians. For Stoker, to imagine an industrial Ireland in *The Lady of the Shroud* was necessarily to imagine a new set of possibilities for Irish women.

Teuta endures the tumult of an accelerated industrial revolution in the Land of the Blue Mountains. Not only does she thrive in this new environment, but she participates in its development. Her pregnancy does not preclude her role in the military and commercial progress of her nation. Rupert and Teuta's son does not necessitate that her role as mother preempts the other roles she has established for herself. She manages to maintain the freedom she experienced in her performance as a vampire as she takes on the roles of literal

mother of her son and figurative mother of the Land of the Blue Mountains. Moreover, she performs her new roles by accepting rather than rejecting technology.

The desire to accelerate Irish industry in Stoker's novel reveals an eagerness to model England's industrial revolution and ultimately to thrust Ireland into a global network of technologically advanced nations. But hastening Ireland's progress also provides Irish women with the expanded vocational and political roles that English women had discovered two decades earlier. Just as Markievicz embraced weapons as advancing the cause of Ireland and its women, Stoker's novel imagines a full-blown technological utopia that elevates Irish women's opportunities to the level of English women's.

David Glover suggests that Stoker's own attitudes toward feminism were dismissive. Glover proposes that "[a]t various moments in his novels Stoker imagines a new Ireland, [and] a new womanhood purged of the disturbance of feminism" (17). Stoker, however, celebrates women's independence in an 1886 lecture in London. In "A Glimpse of America," he lauds American culture for the way its "petty restraints" are set aside so that women have more freedom (19). "In the United States," Stoker goes on, "a young woman is, almost if not quite, as free to think and act for herself as a young man is" ("Glimpse" 19). Stoker does qualify this assertion by noting that this freedom, which necessitates a "very stringent law of personal discretion," is a considerable burden for many women, and he estimates that "of the suicides reported in the papers the vast majority were women, mostly young, and with, in every case, a sad old story behind" (19). Stoker expresses concern that when a society does not properly prepare women for self-sufficiency, expanded freedoms may give rise to greater dangers for these women. He realizes this hypothesis in *The Lady of the Shroud* by imagining a society in which female self-sufficiency has long been an integral

part of national identity. In The Land of the Blue Mountains, women are just as likely as men to tote weapons on the front lines of battle. Teuta's autonomy, moreover, from her vampiric excursions to her skilled handling of an airplane, is what keeps her safe.

Teuta's technical expertise is all the more striking for the way it revises the traditional Ireland-as-mother figure, which had been associated with a nostalgic, pre-colonized Ireland and with the natural landscape of Ireland (Gregory and Yeats's Cathleen ni Houlihan desires the return of her "four beautiful green fields") (7). In these representations of Mother Ireland, the maternal body epitomizes a pre-modern femininity, one which is grounded in representations of bodily nourishment, the renewal of death-into-life, and the natural landscape of Ireland unspoiled by industrialism.

Stoker's novel not only draws Irish women into the New Woman debates of England, but also positions itself between an older form of Irish feminism and the one rapidly replacing it. In the early 1880s the formation of the Ladies' Land League, with Anna Parnell as its leader, encountered unenthusiastic support because its members clung to the image of a "traditional female role" (Ward, *Unmanageable* 16). The group faced the difficulty of finding women who could leave the domestic sphere in order to address the land rights of peasants all over Ireland (Ward, *Unmanageable* 17). When they did finally find adequate numbers for their organization, the women provided money and support for evicted tenants; much of their time was spent building temporary huts for homeless families. The Ladies' Land League revolutionized the conventional Irish "mass meeting," an "exclusively male practice" that Daniel O'Connell had popularized four decades earlier in his bids for Catholic Emancipation and Home Rule (Ward, *Unmanageable* 23). Parnell and the other women held mass meetings of their own to promote the cause of the Land League, an undertaking that

thrust these women activists into the public eye. The Ladies' Land League finally disbanded in 1882—only a year after its inception—due to two problems: lack of support from Charles Stewart Parnell, Anna Parnell's brother and leader of the original men's Land League, and steady opposition in Ireland to women's public activism (Ward, *Unmanageable* 32).

Ireland would wait eighteen years for the next prominent women's nationalist organization, *Inghínidhe na hÉireann*, for which Maud Gonne acted as inaugural president. The organization lasted fourteen years, and its longevity, when compared to the Ladies' Land League, may have developed out of an increasing acceptance of women in the public arena. More likely, however, the success of *Inghínidhe na hÉireann* was linked to the group's emphasis on the education and support of children. The women's first notable demonstration was the Patriotic Children's Treat, which I discuss in detail in my first chapter. After the dissolution of *Inghínidhe na hÉireann*, Gonne continued to shape her activism around maternal duties. In 1922, she organized the Women's Prisoners' Defense League (WPDL) to support Irish political prisoners. Not surprisingly, the women in this group were known as "The Mothers" (Ward, *Maud* 135).

Even before the disbandment of *Inghínidhe na hÉireann*, Gonne was no longer the most prominent female nationalist in Ireland. This role was assumed by Markievicz, who took her new feminist outlook to the next major nationalist group for women, *Cumann na mBan*. While *Inghínidhe na hÉireann* focused on children's knowledge of Ireland's language and folk tales, Markievicz had other plans for them:

> Ireland wants her girls to help her to build up her national life. Their fresh, clean views of life, their young energies, have been too long hidden away and kept separate

> in their different homes. Bring them out and organise them, and lo! you will find a great new army ready to help the national cause. (12)

Describing children's contributions to the national cause in militaristic language, Markievicz goes on immediately to state, "The old idea that a woman can serve her nation through her home is gone, so now is the time; on you the responsibility rests. No one can help you but yourselves alone; you must make the world look upon you as citizens first, as women after" (12). She begins by suggesting that children (girls, specifically) inspire nationalist ambitions—a sentiment in keeping with Gonne's attitudes—but Markievicz is quick to circumvent the conventional wisdom that when these girls become mothers, they will be most valued for their domestic influence and their ability to reproduce. Instead, Markievicz aims to instruct these girls early on to eschew the label *woman* and embrace the gender-neutral term *citizen.*

As her title "A Call to the Women of Ireland" suggests, Markievicz proposes a change to Irish women's roles. Yet she views herself as overseeing this change rather than participating in it. Markievicz's pamphlet was originally a lecture delivered to the Students' National Literary Society in Dublin under the title "Women, Ideals, and the Nation." The "women" referred to in both titles, then, are young women, from whom Markievicz distances herself when she states: "We older people look to you with great hopes and a great confidence that in your gradual emancipation you are bringing fresh ideas, fresh energies, and above all a great genius for sacrifice into the life of the nation" (3). Markievicz nurtures a new generation of female activists. Situating herself as a mother figure to their cause, Markievicz again cleverly draws on the ideals of earlier Irish feminists, for whom

motherhood was central to notions of women's activism, with the purpose of moving beyond those ideals.

For Markievicz, motherhood is a dangerous justification of women's activism. The kind of exaggerated care associated with maternity, she suggests, is precisely how England has justified its colonial presence in Ireland. Personifying England as a woman, Markievicz explains,

> She has systematically overtaxed us—for our own good; she has depopulated our country—and it is for our own good; she has tried to kill our language—for our own good; she entices our young men into her armies, to fight her battles for her—and still it is for our own good. (4)

Her diatribe sounds similar to Gonne's outrage against Queen Victoria in her essay "The Famine Queen." But whereas Gonne invents her own sovereign maternal figure to rival Victoria's, Markievicz distrusts the maternal analogy.

Markievicz, moreover, is not afraid to portray Irish women as domestic deserters, a characterization unthinkable by Gonne or Gregory, whose essay "Arabi and His Household" pins its hopes for women's authority on their stories told around the hearth. Rebuking those Anglo-Irish who left Ireland for England, Markievicz explains that "[i]n this desertion our women participated quite as much as our men, they abandoned their Dublin mansions, to hire or buy houses in London" (5). Her answer to this abandonment is not to revere the Irish home all the more, depicting it as the last refuge for Irish identity. Instead, Markievicz looks away from the home to the battlefield, calling up the "magnificent legacy of Maeve, Fleas, Macha and their other great fighting ancestors," emphasizing the warrior (rather than the maternal) aspect of these female personifications of Ireland (5). The militant example of

these figures is not limited to the actual battlefield. Markievicz suggests other alternatives to the home: political rallies, the classroom, the lecture platform.

Like Stoker, Markievicz defines Irish identity by looking to other nations. "In Ireland," she maintains, "the women seem to have taken less part in public life, and to have had less share in the struggle for liberty, than in other nations" (3). Pointing to the military action of women in Russia and Poland, Markievicz suggests that Irish women may follow the lead of these foreign women. She goes on to align Ireland with other colonies within the British Empire: "England is now holding by force three civilised nations—nations whose ideals are Freedom, Justice and Nationhood—Ireland, India and Egpyt, not to consider her savage territories and South Africa" (15).

Despite these transnational alliances, Markievicz, unlike Stoker, ultimately envisions an insular national identity. She stresses that one of the "greatest gifts" that young Irish women can bring to the national cause is an "Inward Vision, that will show their nation glorious and free" (6). Ireland will lose "all that distinctiveness which pertains to a nation" if it remains under England's rule (8). Markievicz sees technology as accelerating Ireland's loss of identity: "Of course all modern inventions have helped England in the task of submerging our interests in hers—trains, the penny post, the telegraph system, have brought her nearer, and given her more power over us" (8). International trade, too, degrades Ireland: Markievicz encourages Irish women to "make Irish goods as necessary to your daily life, as your bath or your breakfast" (10). This impulse to look inward, while it threatens to limit women's roles, also boldly ignores traditional gender conventions in Ireland. Women are, Markievicz promises, free to be leaders, workers, and soldiers—the final receiving her most enthusiastic endorsement.

In contrast, Gonne's nationalist writings avoided directly endorsing militant action on behalf of Irish women. The closest she came to sanctioning women to pick up the rifle was her writing about the Dutch women of South Africa, whom Gonne described fighting alongside the men during the Boer War of 1899-1902. While Gonne suggests through analogy in her essay "The Boer Women" that Irish women could claim the freedoms of the Boer women, Markievicz proposes outright that women should carry out military roles previously limited to men. The last line of Markievicz's pamphlet proclaims: "May this aspiration towards life and freedom among the women of Ireland bring forth a Joan of Arc to free our nation!" (16). In her call for a Joan of Arc to emerge from the ranks of Irish women, Markievicz conspicuously positions her revolutionary style against an outmoded brand of activism represented by *Inghínidhe na hÉireann*. Gonne herself, after all, was known as the Irish Joan of Arc. Markievicz thus invites Gonne's replacement.

Stoker chooses Teuta as his preferred replacement. Markievicz recoils in her speech at the prospect of Ireland being "brought more and more in touch with England," but this is exactly what Stoker pursues in *The Lady of the Shroud* (8). He imaginatively unites England and Ireland through a different national setting altogether: *The Lady of the Shroud*, like *Dracula* (1897), projects Irish concerns onto Eastern European setting. Stoker's decision to work through Irish issues via a distant nation allowed him greater freedom in devising political solutions—he was not beholden to a particular narrative of Irish history—and it suggested that Ireland's most promising understanding of itself lay beyond its own borders.

Teuta's leadership points to a new model altogether for international relations, one opposed to the concept of inward-turning national identification. Embodying the best qualities of both England and Ireland, Teuta is at the center of the novel's proposal that

imperial conquest, when carried out properly, offers a glimpse of a better world order characterized by constructive partnerships between nations. And the first step toward this new arrangement, the novel suggests, is for the colonizer (England) to learn that it has much to learn from the colonized (Ireland).

Stoker's hybrid mother meets modernity head on in order to advertise the potential of technology to help Ireland claim its position as a valued member not only of the United Kingdom, but also of a rapidly globalizing world. For Stoker, moreover, at the center of this global vision lies the necessity of Irish women's expanded roles as political activists. In doing so, he is in keeping with Markievicz's belief in the priority of women's political activism. But Stoker diverges from the kind of Irish feminism she champions in two important ways. He preserves the emphasis on maternity that she aims to move beyond. And he looks on global forces such as trade and industry as strengthening, not diminishing, women's political power and Ireland's national identity.

Technologically adept, Teuta is positioned to be an improved Mother Ireland, while she also suggests a new type of Mother England, one who favors internationalism over tyrannical forms of imperialism. The national scribe of the Land of the Blue Mountains asserts that "[a]ges hence loyal men and woman [. . .] will sing her deeds in song and tell them in story" (191). Teuta's dual role as allegory of England and Ireland implies that the two nations are ultimately compatible and points to the necessity of viewing England as Ireland's ally.

While the novel emphasizes the shortcomings of its English characters, it offers Irish and Scottish characters as necessary counterparts who teach England—and the rest of the world—a superior method of imperial conquest and nation-building. The triumph of the

Land of the Blue Mountains suggests that national unity affords the possibility of transnational harmony. The celebrated "Federation of the Balkans" thrives because the Blue Mountaineers both take pride in their national distinctiveness and acknowledge their nation's global position. The marital union of Rupert and Teuta, after all, models on a smaller scale the distinctiveness *and* compatibility of different nationalities.

Not willing to dismiss the importance of motherhood to women's lives, the novel settles on the notion that motherhood and modernity are compatible elements of national identity, a far cry from the usual pastoral representations of Mother Ireland. *The Lady of the Shroud* ultimately suggests that pitting maternity and technology against one another, and, moreover, dictating a narrow understanding of motherhood—what the Irish Constitution would do almost three decades later—are not constructive principles for the progress of a nation.

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Endnotes

Introduction

[1] Key texts criticizing representations of Ireland as a woman are Cullingford's "'Thinking of her . . . as . . . Ireland': Yeats, Pearse and Heaney" and Eavan Boland's *A Kind of Scar: The Woman Poet in a National Tradition.* Though she was one of the first advocates of the feminist stance against figures of Ireland as a woman, Cullingford now refers to this criticism as "utterly commonplace" in her most recent book *Ireland's Others* (2001) (5).

[2] For more information on the many-faceted figure of Ireland-as-woman, see C.L. Innes's *Woman and Nation*; Cullingford's "'Thinking of her . . . as . . . Ireland'" (the basis for her chapter "Thinking of her as Ireland" in *Gender and History in Yeats's Love Poetry*); the introduction to Toni O'Brien Johnson's and David Cairns's collection *Gender in Irish Writing*; Rosalind Clark's *The Great Queens: Irish Goddesses from the Mórrígan to Cathleen Ní Houlihan*; Proinsias MacCana's "Women in Irish Mythology"; Belinda Loftus's *Mirrors: William III & Mother Ireland*; and L. Perry Curtis, Jr.'s *Apes and Angels: The Irishman in Victorian Caricature* and *Images of Erin in the Age of Parnell.* See also the 1988 documentary *Mother Ireland*, written and directed by Ann Crilly, for a brief history of the figure alongside interviews that address how Mother Ireland is perceived by contemporary feminists and nationalists.

[3] Article 41 (2.1) of the 1937 Irish Constitution states that "by her life within the home, woman gives to the State a support without which the common good cannot be achieved." This article goes on (2.2) to affirm that the "State shall, therefore, endeavour to ensure that mothers shall not be obliged by economic necessity to engage in labour to the neglect of their duties in the home" (*Bunreacht Na hÉireann*).

[4] All quotations from *Mother Ireland* come from my own transcription of the documentary.

Chapter One

[1] Gonne performed the title character in the premiere of Yeats's and Gregory's *Cathleen ni Houlihan* on 2 April 1902 as a launch for the Irish National Theatre Company.

[2] For more on Gonne's political activities, see Karen Steele's *Maud Gonne's Irish Nationalist Writing, 1895*-1946 and "Biography as Promotional Discourse: The Case of Maud Gonne"; Elizabeth Butler Cullingford's *Gender and History in Yeats's Love Poetry*; C.L. Innes's *Woman and Nation in Irish Literature and Society, 1880-1935*; and Margaret Ward's *Maud*

Gonne: Ireland's Joan of Arc, *Unmanageable Revolutionaries*, and *In Their Own Voice: Women and Irish Nationalism*.

[3] See my introduction for examples of critical works that perceive Mother Ireland negatively. Karen Steele, in her compelling essay "Biography as Promotional Discourse: The Case of Maud Gonne," is one of the only critics devoted to a recuperation of Gonne's politics to suggest that her association with female personifications of Ireland was a "clever strategy": "Her invocation of Cathleen ni Houlihan made it difficult for Cuman na nGaedheal and Fianna Fail politicians to critique her public role without also sounding like detractors of Irish independence; moreover, by linking her life to a powerful foremother, Gonne downplayed her socially unorthodox behavior as a political woman" (148). I suggest, however, in the discussion to follow that Gonne invoked the figure of Ireland as a mother to call attention to (not downplay) her own role as a political woman.

[4] Gonne was born into an affluent, Protestant family in Victorian England. Her father Thomas Gonne, a captain in the British Army, was stationed in Dublin and moved his family there in 1868. Throughout her life Gonne insisted that she could produce evidence of her Irish ancestry, a claim that Anna MacBride White (Gonne's granddaughter) and A. Norman Jeffares corroborate, though somewhat ambiguously, in their edition of Gonne's letters. As White and Jeffares indicate, Maud Gonne's great-grandfather William Gonne left Ireland in the eighteenth century to pursue the wine industry in Portugal (n495-96). However, most biographers and critics regard Gonne as primarily of English ancestry (see Ward, *Maud Gonne* 2; Levenson 8; Steele, *Maud Gonne's Irish Nationalist Writings* xix).

[5] This is the major proposal of James H. Murphy in his book *Abject Loyalty*: "The perhaps startling reality," Murphy writes, "is that the British monarchy, inasmuch as it was perceived as a threat by nationalists in nineteenth-century Ireland, was not a threat because it had any political power but because it was popular in Ireland and because it was seen to symbolize a future for Ireland as a contented part of the United Kingdom that was anathema to nationalists" (xii).

[6] Victoria wrote a memorandum on 25 June 1871 explaining her refusal of an Irish royal residence: "Mr. Gladstone spoke to me on the subject of Ireland this afternoon, and on the wish expressed again and again that there should be a Royal residence there, and said that a motion on the subject was about to be brought on, to which an answer must be given. We went over the old ground, the pretensions of the Irish to have more done for them than the Welsh or English; the visits to Scotland being in no one way political or connected with the wishes of the people, but merely because the climate and scenery are so healthy and beautiful, and the people so charming, so loyal, and the residence there of the greatest possible advantage (to mind and body) to our family, myself, and everyone connected with me and my Household. That, therefore, to press and urge this was unreasonable" (Hibbert 212).

[7] See Gonne's essays "India," "Signs of Hope," and "Ireland and her Foreign Relations," all published in *The United Irishman*. In the latter of the three, Gonne recalls Ireland's historical

connection to France, whereby the French lent troops to aid the Irish in the Battle of the Boyne in 1690 (in which the Catholic James II unsuccessfully tried to wrest Ireland from the hold of the Protestant William III), and in the United Irishman's (also ill-fated) uprising against the British in 1798. Gonne exhorts the Irish people to cultivate this historical alliance between the two countries: "Let us look away from England and turn our eyes to France, and strengthen by every means in our power the relations, commercial, social and political, which exist between us and that great Republic. England's policy of grab, greed, and plunder must make for her many enemies abroad. Ireland need not share those enmities; she does not share, nor wish to share, England's plunder. Every enemy whom England has must necessarily be a friend of Ireland."

[8] Ireland, however, was not unilaterally devoted to the Boer cause. Although some Irish saw the white, Christian Boers as similar to the Irish in regard to the British Empire, twenty-eight thousand Irishmen fought with the British Army to exterminate the Boers (Murphy 276).

[9] The article was first published as "Reine de la Disette" in the March/April issue of Maud Gonne's French paper *l'Irlande Libre*.

[10] Gonne, in fact, may have read Parnell's letter to the editor before she wrote "Reine de la Disette," the original version of "The Famine Queen." Gonne was in France when the letter was published in the 20 March 1900 issue of the *Freeman's Journal*; even so, she may have had access to this issue while she was writing her diatribe against the Queen. Gonne notes, for instance, in her correspondence to Yeats on 29 March 1900 that she is hard at work on "a special Queen's no of *l'Irlande Libre*," and she praises Yeats for his letter to the editor about the Queen's visit, which appeared in the same issue of the *Freeman's Journal* as Parnell's letter. It is unclear, though, whether Gonne had access to the entire issue or to a copy of Yeats's letter only.

[11] For debates about whether Ireland should be considered a "colony," see two recent texts: *Ireland and Postcolonial Theory* (eds. Clare Carroll and Patricia King) and *Ireland and the British Empire* (ed. Kevin Kenny).

[12] As I will explain in my second chapter, there is considerable evidence that Lady Gregory acted as co-author of the play. As C.L. Innes notes, "Yeats generally spoke of the play as if it were entirely his own creation, but while it is impossible to disentangle precisely the parts for which each author was responsible, the evidence of the notebook in which the first draft is written suggests that Lady Gregory played a major part in its composition" (45).

[13] Many critics have persuasively interpreted the female characters in *Cathleen ni Houlihan* as representing two modes of Irish reality. On the one hand, the mother Bridget and young woman Delia represent the practicalities of peasant motherhood and wifehood, while Cathleen, on the other, symbolizes the ideological realm of martyrdom and blood sacrifice that Irish men are compelled to embrace for their nation's independence (Cullingford, *Gender* 67-8; Innes 49-51; Harris 53; Quinn 44).

[14] Indeed, years before Gonne had participated in a protest proclaiming the symbolic death of the British Empire. During Victoria's 1897 Diamond Jubilee, Maud marched in a counter-demonstration in which James Connolly had arranged a coffin, representing the British Empire, to proceed down the streets of Dublin. At O'Connell Bridge, however, the police interceded, and, as Maud tells it in her autobiography, "Connolly gave the order to throw [the coffin] in the Liffey. The whole crowd shouted: 'Here goes the coffin of the British Empire. To hell with the British Empire!'" (217)

[15] *Dawn* has been reprinted in *Lost Plays of the Irish Renaissance* and the fourth volume of *The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing*. Page references here are from the former.

[16] Here I part ways with Antoinette Quinn's valuable essay "Cathleen ni Houlihan Writes Back: Maud Gonne and Irish Nationalist Theater." Quinn stresses Gonne's support of *Cathleen*'s symbolic depiction of nationalist womanhood and describes *Dawn* as Gonne's rejoinder to the non-emblematic female character Nora Burke in John Millington Synge's play *In the Shadow of the Glen* (51). While it is evident from Gonne's walk-out from the latter's opening night performance that she disapproved of Synge's portrayal of Nora Burke's unfulfilled domestic, sexual, and economic life, Gonne's embrace of Yeat's symbolic *Cathleen* does not preclude her also understanding (and responding to) the ways that certain forms of symbolic femininity could be limiting to Irish women.

[17] As Antoinette Quinn rightly points out, "Bride [. . .] combines the roles of realist victim and nationalist icon, of Mrs. Gillane and Cathleen" of Yeats's play (Quinn 54).

[18] Gonne refers in her autobiography to her good clothes as "passports" to elude the police (109, 112).

[19] Gonne, in fact, wrote a pamphlet, "The Rights of Life and the Rights of Property," with the socialist James Connolly on behalf of the right of starving people to steal food if necessary, and she delivered a speech on the same topic at Ballina, northern Mayo. In their pamphlet, Gonne and Connolly draw upon quotations from popes, cardinals, and St. Thomas Aquinas to support their doctrine.

Chapter Two

[1] Gonne also objected to Gregory's encouragement of Yeats's role in Ireland's dramatic movement. After Irish theatre had been preoccupying Yeats's life for more than a decade, Gonne made clear to him in a letter that she believed poetry his most worthy literary form: "Don't think I under rate the value of your theatre but it is as NOTHING in comparison with your poems & while you are absorbed in the business management of the theatre you won't write a line of poetry" (MacBride 301).

[2] As Elizabeth Coxhead notes, "All literary collaboration is a mystery; but in the case of the Abbey dramatists it is less mysterious than usual because they—and particularly Lady Gregory—have left clear indications of the ways in which they helped and were helped" (98). Coxhead devotes two chapters of her biography to clarify Gregory's authorial presence in plays by Yeats, Douglas Hyde, and J. M. Synge. Colin Smythe's "Lady Gregory's Contributions to Periodicals: A Checklist" offers a catalog of articles, letters, and plays that Gregory co-authored.

[3] While he was detained under British arrest, Arabi received money from the Gregory family for his trial. Ultimately, William Gregory's political stature and his public sympathy for Arabi influenced the British decision to exile the rebel leader rather than execute him. William Gregory arranged for Arabi to be exiled to Ceylon, where Gregory had once acted as Governor and still had friendly connections.

[4] Born into a wealthy Anglo-Irish family on the estate known as Roxborough in Galway, Gregory's marriage to the eligible older bachelor Sir William Gregory, who had been member of Parliament for years and was a former Governor of Ceylon, made her a joint landlord (and after his death, sole landlord) of the impressive estate of Coole.

[5] In "A Phantom's Pilgrimage; Or, Home Ruin," Gregory images Ireland and India uniting to join Russia in an attack against England.

[6] Elizabeth Coxhead claims that "Arabi and His Household" is "not a political tract" because Gregory's "aim is to present the human and personal side of Arabi's history" (25-6). I suggest on the contrary that Gregory's objective is to elevate the domestic details of Arabi's life to the level of political importance.

[7] Robert Welch claims that Gregory "was not just seeking contact with a Gaelic world, the vestiges of which still lay around her estate; she was also turning aside from the anonymity and lifelessness of modern English, trying to translate that language itself into Irish, rather than just transacting the more predictable enterprise of translating specific Gaelic poems into reasonable, acceptable English" (264).

[8] As Angela Bourke indicates, fairy stories could also be used to justify domestic abuse: "Fairy-legends carry disciplinary messages for women as well as for children, warning them about behavior considered by a patriarchal society to be unacceptable. Undoubtedly, too, some of them have been used as euphemisms for domestic violence. [. . .] A woman in nineteenth-century rural Ireland who had obviously been beaten might explain the marks of violence as having been inflicted by fairy abductors, while a violent husband might account for his actions as loss of patience with a fairy interloper. This is not to say that such explanations would normally be accepted, or taken literally. Fairy-legend charts the territory of no man's land. It carries with it an air of the preposterous, the nod and wink, that allows one thing to be said, while another is meant" (37).

[9] While the quotations from *Our Irish Theatre* in this chapter come from the text's "Coole edition," which includes additional essays and alterations made by Gregory after the book's publication, this quotation is from the original 1913 text.

Chapter Three

[1] About the publication of the first French edition of *Salomé,* Wilde wrote to his friend Campbell Dodgson, "That tragic daughter of passion appeared on Thursday last, and is now dancing for the head of the English public" (Holland and Hart-Davis 556). Wilde wrote the original manuscript of *Salomé* in French while living in Paris in late 1891, and the following year he asked the acclaimed actress Sarah Bernhardt to play the title role in a London production that would be spoken entirely in French. By late June, when the actress had been rehearsing for two weeks at the Palace Theatre in London, Lord Chamberlain's Examiner of Plays, Edward F. Smyth Pigott, revoked Wilde's license to perform the play based on a prohibition against biblical characters on the stage, a law dating back to the Protestant Reformation's ban on Catholic mystery plays (Finney 57). Unable to launch a production of the play, Wilde published in February 1893 the first French edition of *Salomé* through the Librairie de l'Art Indépendent in Paris and through Elkin Mathews and John Lane in London. The first English edition, dedicated to Lord Alfred Douglas and illustrated by Aubrey Beardsley, was published as *Salome* (without the accent on the final "e") a year later through the same publishing house in London and by Copeland and Day in Boston.

[2] Gustave Flaubert, Stephen Mallarmé, Gustave Moreau and J.K. Huysmans had already developed their visual or literary interpretations of the Salome story by the time Wilde turned his attention to the material. All expanded upon brief biblical narratives of Salome, the unnamed daughter of Herodias in Matthew 14: 1-12 and Mark 6: 14-29. Late-nineteenth-century reviews of Wilde's *Salome* criticized the play for its lack of originality. An unsigned notice in *The Times* on 23 February 1893 notes that the "opening scene reads to us very like a page from one of Ollendorff's exercises," referring to the method of learning languages based on repetition developed by the nineteenth-century linguist Henri Godfrey Ollendorff (qtd. in Beckson 133). An unsigned review in the Pall Mall Gazette explains that "*Salomé* is a mosaic. Mr. Wilde has many masters," such as Gautier, Maeterlinck, and Flaubert. Of the latter, the reviewer notes that if he "had not written *Hérodias*, *Salomé* might boast an originality to which she cannot now lay claim" (qtd. in Beckson 136).

[3] See Richard Dellamora's "Traversing the Feminine in Oscar Wilde's *Salomé*," Elaine Showalter's *Sexual Anarchy*, and Marjorie Garber's *Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety*.

[4] In his article "Shalom/Solomon/Salomé: Modernism and Wilde's Aesthetic Politics," Jean Paul Riquelme suggests in the course of his argument about the play's relationship to modernism that Salome can be considered a "portrayal of the artist as a young *woman*, whether we take the 'artist' to be Wilde in particular or the artist generally speaking" (594).

While Riquelme explores this possibility in the context of the play's role as a politically-charged modernist text, I argue that Salome-as-artist connects to an exploration of Wilde's Irish identity.

[5] Technically, Herod Antipas rules Galilee and Perea, the northern and eastern portions of Judea (or Judaea), respectively.

[6] My quotations from Wilde's play are from an edition of the play edited by Peter Raby. Hereafter I will only include page numbers parenthetically.

[7] Although this writing technique suggests a uniform tone that in some ways prioritizes the entire play's poetic narrative over the characters' individual contributions, it does not preclude our distinguishing between the characters. The characters' language may often sound alike, yet their individual attitudes toward this highly symbolic language, as we shall see, serve to differentiate them.

[8] Symons explains that Yeats brings a "wild magic over from Ireland" and that Wilde's wit is "typically Irish in its promptness and spontaneity" (*Study* 8, 72).

[9] See Lady Wilde's *Ancient Legends, Mystic Charms and Superstitions of Ireland* (1887).

[10] Analyzing the psychology of the self under colonialism, Ashis Nandy in his important work *The Intimate Enemy* theorizes that colonizers always live with a persistent and crippling fear that the colonized "will discover an alternative frame of reference within which the oppressed do not seem weak, degraded and distorted" (11). In this way, any false hierarchy erected to reinforce colonial rule "handicaps the colonizer much more than it handicaps the colonized" (11).

[11] Much of my biblical history comes from *The Oxford Companion to the Bible*, edited by Bruce M. Metzger and Michael D. Coogan, and Peter Raby's thorough notes in his edition of Wilde's play.

[12] Historically Herod Antipas's reign also flounders after John the Baptist is beheaded. When a change in Roman emperors occurs, from Tiberius to Caligula, the latter grants Antipas's lands to his nephew Agrippa. Antipas and Herodias go to Rome in 39 CE to regain this land, an attempt which prompts Caligula to banish Antipas to Gaul.

[13] While the stage directions are the closing words of the text, Beardsley's final drawing, a cul de lampe entitled *The Burial of Salome*, leaves the last visual impression on the reader by showing the naked body of the princess lifted above an elaborate coffin by two figures. This drawing emphasizes the ambiguity of Salome's demise as it is difficult to tell if Salome is being placed into her coffin for a final burial or lifted out from it as an indication of her resurgence.

[14] Marjorie Garber, for instance, argues that the "story of Salome and her mesmerizing Dance of the Seven Veils has become a standard trope of Orientalism, a piece of domesticated exotica that confirms Western prejudices about the 'Orient' and about 'women' because it is produced by those prejudices, is in fact an exercise in cultural tautology" (340).

[15] Wilde is reported to have remarked on the "legislative independence so unjustly robbed" from the Irish. This portion of Wilde's manuscript of "Irish Poets and Poetry of the Nineteenth Century"—which he never attempted to have published—is missing. This quotation is reported by the *Chronicle*, one of the newspapers that gave an account of Wilde's lecture (Pepper 27).

[16] The chronology of Wilde's sexual saga is by now well known: in February of 1895, the Marquess of Queensberry, in an attempt to sever the relationship between Wilde and his son Lord Alfred Douglas, sent Wilde a card reading, "To Oscar Wilde posing Somdomite (sic)." As critic Moe Meyer points out, "Wilde's response is history" (90). In short, Wilde sued the Marquess for libel, only to be counter-sued and prosecuted under the Labouchere Amendment of 1885 for acts of "gross indecency" with men, punishing Wilde with two years of hard labor in jail.

[17] Similarly, Gail Finney uses the notion of Salome as a disguised man to argue that the play depicts a "masked depiction of one man's prohibited longing for another" (65). Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick maintains that *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is "among the texts that have set the terms for a modern homosexual identity" (*Epistemology* 49).

[18] Cohen writes, "While homoerotic desire must be muted in a literary text that overtly conforms to dominant codes for writing—which have historically excluded same-sex desires as unrepresentable—it is nevertheless metonymically suggested by a verbally unrepresentable medium, the painting, whose linguistic incommensurability deconstructs the apparent self-sufficiency of these represenational codes" (75-6).

[19] In a particularly disquieting letter written to the Home Secretary while incarcerated, Wilde describes himself in accordance with Max Nordau's notion of the degenerate artist (in the 1895 translation *Degeneration*) in order to petition for the availability of more books to read in his cell. However, while condemning himself as suffering from "sexual madness" and "erotomania," Wilde also makes the case that solitary confinement such as he was enduring would drive anyone mad (Holland and Hart-Davis 656-658). We will never know to what extent Wilde really believed himself to be Nordau's degenerate type, but this letter indicates that Wilde was confronted with the notion of an identity as associated with his sexuality.

[20] See Elliot Gilbert's "'Tumult of Images': Wilde, Beardsley, and *Salome*," Allison Pease's *Modernism, Mass Culture, and the Aesthetics of Obscenity*, and Linda Gertner Zatlin's *Beardsley, Japanisme, and the Perversion of the Victorian Ideal.*

[21] Besides the ones I have reproduced, Beardsley aligns Salome with the peacock in two additional drawings, "The Stomach Dance" and "The Climax." In the former, peacock

feathers adorn her head; in the latter, peacock feathers dominate one corner of the drawing as they seemingly emerge from the figure of Salome.

[22] Linda Zatlin argues that Beardsley's use of Japanese artistic techniques represented his desire to dispute the "myth of British cultural and racial superiority" bolstered by the accomplishments of the British Empire (2).

[23] Ellmann argues that Wilde-as-Herod is caught between the philosophies of Walter Pater (Salome) and John Ruskin (Iokanaan). Ellmann claims that "[b]ehind the figure of Iokanaan lurks the image of that perversely untouching, untouchable prophet John [Ruskin] whom Wilde knew at Oxford," and "when Salome evinces her appetite for strange experiences [. . .] she shows something of that diseased contemplation for which Wilde had reprehended Pater" ("Overtures to *Salome*" 89). In the middle of these two figures, Herod expresses Wilde's "own nature, susceptible to contrary impulses but not abandoned for long to either" ("Overtures to *Salome*" 90).

[24] Ellmann believed the photography to be real. Wilde's grandson Merlin Holland later discovered the true identity of the figure, a Hungarian opera singer named Alice Guszalewicz, photographed in Cologne in 1906. Before Holland's exposé, several critics based their readings of Salome as a man in drag on the photograph.

Chapter Four

[1] See MacCana 521; Johnson 3.

[2] That Teuta can both find freedom in her vampirism and avoid social persecution in that role signals that *The Lady of the Shroud* is a very different text from *Dracula* in terms of its treatment of female vampirism. Vampirism distorts maternal faculties in the latter, as several critics have noted (see Craft 120; Glover 97; Eltis 456-457). As a vampire roaming Hampstead Heath, Lucy Westenra profanes the act of breastfeeding by *feeding upon* a child that she holds to her bosom. Later, the Count forces Mina Harker to suckle blood from his chest, an act suggesting both breastfeeding and fellatio. Lucy and the other vampy women in the text, including Mina, are punished for the unfettered desire that vampirism unleashes in them: Lucy and Dracula's three female minions are stabbed through the heart with a stake by Arthur Holmwood and Professor Van Helsing, respectively, actions returning the penetrative powers to men (Craft 118; see also Glover 97). Mina, too, is seared on her forehead by a communion wafer, a mark that identifies her potential to disrupt boundaries of feminine purity.

[3] Teuta, in fact, is provided more freedoms than her predecessor Mina: Teuta employs the guise of the vampire at her own command. She does not need to rely, as Mina does, on a figure like Dracula to grant her the mobility that vampirism affords. This distinction is an important one in *The Lady of the Shroud*, which not only contains a bogus vampire, but also

defangs its gothic tale midway through the novel. *The Lady of the Shroud* capitalizes on the success of *Dracula* while allowing Stoker to pursue other narrative interests. Significantly, though, the vampire story in *The Lady of the Shroud* also allows Stoker to evoke his more famous novel: Teuta's decision to adopt the vampire role as a tool to help her attain the freedom she desires calls to mind the mobility granted to Mina as a vampire. In *The Lady of the Shroud* vampirism is stripped of its authenticity so that it may be touted solely as a political tool. As a result, women's autonomy in the novel, unlike in *Dracula*, is allowed to exist outside the bounds of the terrifying.

[4] Much in the same way that Teuta's kidnapping in *The Lady of the Shroud* transforms her into a static symbol of nationhood, Mina's isolation converts her from active sleuth to a fixed body in *Dracula*: "[Y]ou must be our star," Van Helsing instructs her. Although he insists that she has a "man's brain," Mina's feminine temperament is viewed as an encumbrance, and she is sent to her bedroom during the men's discussions (240). Mina's isolation thus affords Dracula the opportunity to prey upon her. For both Teuta and Mina, when their intelligence and natural capacity for action are denied them, they become vulnerable to external threats.

[5] Joseph Valente argues that in "The Necessity for Political Honesty" Stoker "begins to articulate a kind of *domestic cosmopolitanism*, whose unifying impetus embraced rather than erased social contradiction and complexity in Britain" (23). While I agree with the assertion that Stoker moves toward a "multicultural ethos," Valente's uses his reading of the essay to support his argument that Stoker opposed British imperialism, a stance that he finds lacking in current scholarship (23; 16). I suggest in this chapter, however, that Stoker promotes internationalism (or the "domestic cosmopolitanism" of the United Kingdom, as Valente puts it) for the purpose of improving British imperialism rather than abandoning it.

[6] Exhibitions modeled after (and commemorating) the 1851 Great Exhibition cropped up in Cork (1852 and 1883) and Dublin (1853, 1865, 1872, 1882); increasingly, the fairs in Dublin celebrated Ireland's nationalist tendencies (Murphy 214).

[7] It is not surprising that the American correspondent, who reports much of the news about Rupert and Teuta, would be in an favorable position to gauge the success of the Land of the Blue Mountains. Stoker, in much of his writing, imagines America as a nation both unencumbered by the social restraints of England and enterprising in its business prospects. Stoker's lecture "A Glimpse of America," given at the London Institute on 28 December 1885, envisions America as a nation particularly prepared and willing to conduct business on the international scene. Stoker bemoans what he sees as Britain's lack of familiarity with America—similar to his complaint in "The Great White Fair" about Ireland's lack of knowledge about the rest of the world. Stoker claims that America is "not merely like ourselves, but ourselves—the same in blood, religion, and social ideas, with an almost identical common law, and with whom our manifold interests are not only vast, but almost vital" ("Glimpse" 11). Stoker again stresses the benefits of a global network of nations. Cannily, Stoker assesses that America and England have common business interests from which both nations could profit: "In some ways this ignorance of ours is not only an

individual loss, but a national misfortune. The value to us of a widespread and accurate knowledge of a country with which we have so much to do in the way of business, and whose ramifications on lines similar to our own are so vast, is simply immeasurable" ("Glimpse" 12).

[8] "Named" in Sarah Grand's 1894 essay "The New Aspect of the Woman Question," the New Woman challenged traditional Victorian notions of femininity, and was portrayed by her detractors as masculinized and detestably aggressive, sexually and intellectually (9).

[9] See Sos Eltis's "Corruption of the Blood and Degeneration of the Race: Dracula and Policing the Borders of Gender," Carol A Senf's "*Dracula*: Stoker's Response to the New Woman," and Jennifer Wicke's "Vampiric Typewriting: Dracula and Its Media."

[10] See *New Woman Hybridities: Femininity, Feminism and International Consumer Culture, 1880-1930* (2004). This collection contains two articles that address the New Woman in 1920's Ireland. See "Locating the Flapper in Rural Irish Society: The Irish Provincial Press and the Modern Woman in the 1920s" by Louise Ryan and "Subverting the Flapper: The Unlikely Alliance of Irish Popular and Ecclesiastical Press in the 1920s" by Maryann Gialanella Valiulis.