To Throw a Whole World in Colour on a Canvas Though it be but a Man’s Fine Face: Colour in the Plays of Sean O’Casey

Ryan K Evans

This thesis is submitted for the degree of Master of Philosophy

August 2019

English and Creative Writing

Declaration

This thesis has not been submitted in support of an application for another degree at this or any other university. It is the result of my own work and includes nothing that is the outcome of work done in collaboration except where specifically indicated. Many of the ideas in this thesis were the product of discussion with my supervisors Tony Pinkney and Tony Sharpe.

Ryan Evans

Lancaster University, UK

Abstract

This thesis examines the presence and use of colour in the plays of Sean O’Casey and argues that while a portion of colour in the drama is aesthetic, another portion is intentionally utilized as a means to provide additional contextual commentary, be it cultural, religious, political, or artistic in nature. This practice stems, I argue, in part because of O’Casey’s tendency towards an appreciation for beautiful things stemming from his artistic leanings. I also argue that the politics of his youth: associations with the Irish Citizen Army and the Labour Movement, his family’s poverty due to the early passing of his father Michael, his relationship with religion, and his desire to open the arts to the masses influenced how and why he wrote. I use as a support to these ideas Michael Pierse’s recent publication on Irish working-class writing history and the colour theories of Sabine Doran and Ulf Klaren and Karin Fridell Anter to analyse the texts of the plays as well as analysing productions of eight O’Casey plays. I come to the conclusion that O’Casey utilized colour as a means of enhancing the reality perceived within his plays to provide context on the various historical, political, and social movements addressed.

“To Throw a Whole World in Colour on a Canvas Though it be but a Man’s Fine Face”: Colour in the Plays of Sean O’Casey

Acknowledgements

Thank you to Tony Pinkney and Tony Sharpe for their unwavering patience and the many hours they spent helping me in my studies. Thanks as well to Neal Kirk for providing friendship, support, and great conversations in the office. Thanks as well to the various faculty of the English and Creative Writing Department at Lancaster University who supported me and were so kind to me throughout my studies at Lancaster University. Finally, a huge thanks goes to my wife, for supporting me above all else and sacrificing her time to move to a foreign country and raise our kids, often without my help. I love you, my Nika!

Table of Contents

1 Introduction: O'Casey and his eye for colour

"The People! Damn the People! They live in the abyss, the poet lives on the mountain-top; to the people, there is no mystery of colour; it is simply the scarlet coat of the soldier; the purple vestments of a priest; the green banner of a party; the brown or blue overalls of industry…to the poet the end of life is the life that he creates for himself; life has a stifling grip upon the people's throat – it is the poet's musician." *The Shadow of a Gunman*, 127

"– Oh, I've a great respect for our National Gallery, and have gone through it, of course; but what has all this got to do with our difficulty?
He hasn't any eye for colour, thought Sean. Here are the golden trumpets of musk sounding at his very ear; a carillon of purple fuchsia bells pealing pensively, and he can hear neither; and there was the rose window of a scarlet geranium behind them, and his eyes were too clouded with worldly things to see it. This man couldn't understand that when Sean's mother reverently touched the blossoms with her gnarled finger, God Himself was admiring the loveliness He had made." *Autobiographies 1*, 600

Some might question whether Sean O'Casey's drama is still relevant today, and if any of his later plays match the quality of his more successful Abbey plays, consisting of the Dublin Trilogy (consisting of *The Shadow of a Gunman*, *Juno and the Paycock*, and *The Plough and the Stars*) and *The Silver Tassie*. Director Sean Holmes and the Abbey Theatre, in the marketing campaign and production of *The Plough and the Stars* in 2016, rightly saw the modern relevance of a play about poverty, mislaid dreams, and political strife. A more difficult question to answer is how to identify O'Casey: is he a political activist who used the stage for his political platform, or is he a dramatist who followed specific theatrical forms?

In this thesis, I contend that O'Casey was a playwright and not a political activist; I believe, as does Michael Pierse, that O'Casey took inspiration from his working-class experiences[1] when he created his art. In addition, I wish to discuss the general lack of enthusiasm regarding O'Casey's later plays, which I think results from the negative reviews of his Abbey work stemming from the circumstances behind O'Casey's self-imposed exile from Ireland.[2] The typical attitude that O'Casey manifested towards critics and naysayers was aggression and hostility. Each editorial and each of O'Casey's responses after the *Tassie* rejection became more about O'Casey's relationship with Ireland and his status as an Irish writer and less about the drama he was creating. To confirm this, one need simply compare reviews of the Dublin Trilogy with the reviews of and critical reaction to O'Casey's post-Ireland plays.

The language of early production reviews is much more positive in tone. O'Casey may have struggled to convince the Abbey to stage his plays,[3] but his first play, *The Shadow*

[1] This is a slightly problematic statement, because of a mix up of the address of the playwright's childhood home; Anthony Butler provides convincing evidence that O'Casey was in fact born to a lower middle class family, "The Early Background," in *The World of Sean O'Casey* ed. By Sean McCann (Four Square Books, 1966), p. 12. However, O'Casey's involvement with labour unions and the Irish Citizen Army, as well as his history of manual labour employment prior to his writing career suggests that the adjectival use of working-class is appropriate. As mentioned, others like Michael Pierse argue that O'Casey ought to be considered as a working-class author in *A History of Working-Class Writing* (Cambridge University Press, 2018), which Pierse edited.

[2] The best place to explore the circumstances behind the Abbey Theatre's decision to reject *The Silver Tassie* is in volume I of *The Letters of Sean O'Casey* edited by David Krause.

[3] O'Casey submitted four plays (*The Harvest Festival*, *The Frost in the Flower*, *The Robes of*

of a Gunman, was an immediate success. Critics enthusiastically praised his characterization, and even though there was some general criticism over the stagecraft and plot of the play, they were all positive in tone. F. J. H. O'D remarked in the *Evening Herald* (April 12, 1923) that O'Casey's characterization was "excellent and convincing;" M. F. McH. echoed this sentiment, saying in the *Freeman's Journal* (April 12, 1923) that there was "very excellent characterization" in spite of a play that did not conform to "the conventional idea of good stagecraft." The review posted in *The Irish Times* (April 13, 1923), while more critical regarding the plot and elements of the play, still admitted that O'Casey had a play that could "live for a very long time." Likewise, *Juno and the Paycock* proved to be very popular, elevating O'Casey from being a published dramatist to a master of irony. H. L. M., writing in the *Freeman's Journal* (4 March 1924), used that phrase for the title of the review, remarking that "O'Casey is the nearest approach to a genius we have had in Irish dramatic literature…for some very considerable time." A. O'R., in the *Irish Examiner* (30 May 1924), comments of Juno that "were Ibsen or Shaw writing in Ireland for an Irish audience, they would give us characters like those of O'Casey." Clearly, Lady Gregory's comment that O'Casey's strength could be found in his characterization resonated with Dublin audiences as well as with O'Casey, remaining a consistent element throughout his dramaturgy (Gregory, 73).

For all of the controversy the play caused, whether through its representation of prostitution in Dublin, the placement of the tricolour in a public house, or its criticism of the Easter Rising and Irish Nationalism, production reviews remained positive, identifying it as a

---

Roisin, and *The Cooing of the Doves*) to the Abbey before *Shadow* was accepted; the Abbey Theatre director's rejections and responses to them can be found in David Krause's *The Letters of Sean O'Casey Vol. 1*, Macmillan (1975).

success. One example comes from the *Irish Examiner* (10 February 1926), which questions whether *The Plough* is "as good as *Juno*," and protests against the use of "profane expressions" and coarse language while also conceding the success of one's response, saying that the response to the play depends largely on one's interest in the topic, and that the play is sold out for weeks to come. In her public protest at the Abbey's production, Hannah Sheehy Skeffington, widow of Easter Rising martyr Francis Sheehy Skeffington, decried the negative representation of the participants of the Rising while also admitting to the accuracy of the characters in the play (*Letters* Vol. 1, 178). In a debate between her and O'Casey, Sheehy-Skeffington commented that O'Casey "has rather the art of the photographer rather than the art of the dramatist," seeming to indicate accuracy (albeit skewed), and compliments his plays as having the mark of genius, wishing (rather dramatically) that "a dramatist will arise who will deal with what is great and fine in 1916." Her primary complaint was that O'Casey was being overly accurate: in a letter to the *Irish Independent* (15 February 1926), she complained that his art was "the realism that would paint not only the wart on Cromwell's nose, but that would add carbuncles and running sores in a reaction against idealisation." In spite of this, *The Plough* remains O'Casey's most produced work by the Abbey Theatre, with at least 80 productions in the last 90 years.[4]

More rigorous academic studies of O'Casey's dramaturgy did not take off until the 1960s. Few scholars have agreed on anything other than the experimental nature of his work. I think that it is important to consider this fact before (if at all) delving into the specific criticism of individual scholars. To begin, critics struggle to assign any one specific label for O'Casey himself, tending to situate his drama within two or three periods: the Abbey plays,

[4] Specific information about each production can be accessed through the Abbey Theatre Performance Database at https://www.abbeytheatre.ie/about/archive/.

which were written for the Abbey Theatre, the expressionistic plays, and the later plays; nearly all agree that the plays created after *The Silver Tassie* lack the literary merit of the early works. Ultimately, scholarly attempts to fit an experimentally complex history of work within a simplistic set of definitions is problematic, making this pattern the wrong fit.

Instead, consideration of the man himself will allow for a fuller understanding and better appreciation of O'Casey's drama. Was he a playwright, experimenting with a variety of styles and forms to create his art, a political activist using art to further his political agenda, or a manual labourer who wrote simplistic drama to make a living? There can be no simple answer to these questions because of the interconnectedness of those three elements (playwright, political activist, or working-class entrepreneur) that all exist within his plays. O'Casey should be considered a playwright who was influenced by his working-class background and the extraordinary historical events of his time.

Perhaps the best way to approach this apparent conflict of elements is to define the term playwright. Bernard Benstock defines this seemingly basic term in his evaluation of O'Casey by focusing on the latter part of the word "playwright" through a consideration of utilization of stagecraft. The noun "wright" can be defined as an artificer, or creator (OED), suggesting that not only would Benstock evaluate O'Casey's drama by its literary nature – the creation of words – but also through the landscapes that O'Casey created, both through stage directions and on stage. He argues that O'Casey's meticulous directions, while at times incredibly difficult to accommodate, develop specific images necessary to the characterization and themes of each play. This is the "O'Casey touch:" the ability to envision a flexible stage setting and its interaction with the movement of the characters within the story.[5] One obvious example in support of this argument can be seen in the stagecraft of

[5] Benstock, 90. See also Ronald Ayling, "A Note on Sean O'Casey's Manuscripts and His

Juno and the Paycock. The Boyle's home mimics its inhabitants; in Act I, before they meet Charles Bentham, the poverty of the family is shown through the state of the furniture and decoration. Act II shows a transformation of the home as a reflection of the Boyles' newly discovered inheritance, and its being stripped of everything by the end of the play parallels the devastating breakdown of the family.

Each of these situations is fastidiously directed by O'Casey with specific goals in mind. Examples of this precision can be found in all of his dramatic work, and in the later plays the stagecraft he employs evolves to match the context of the play. For example, *Oak Leaves and Lavender* calls for an evolving stage that starts as a traditional home and transforms into a mechanical space that moves and lights up according to the text and backdrop of the play. In Act I, the wireless cabinet (a radio) intermittently flashes a swastika for the audience to see that the cast does not. By the end of the play in Act III, a foreman directs the mechanical nature of the room much as he might do in a factory (*Oak Leaves*). John O'Riordan reads the play as a "commemorative tribute to the Battle of Britain" (O'Riordan, 272). Through a recognition of the stagecraft, Benstock emphasizes the element of creation and argues that O'Casey's genius as a playwright stems from the art he wrought. This emphasis adds to Lady Gregory's preference for O'Casey's well-developed characters, and makes an important point. In drama, stagecraft and visual organization can play as

---

Working Methods," in *Bulletins of the New York Public Library* (1969) who argues that based on an examination of O'Casey's early drafts of the plays, one could only conclude that he was a "literary craftsman in his working habits" (367). Later, in his *Continuity and Innovation in Sean O'Casey's Drama* (1976), Ayling reaffirmed this statement, identifying O'Casey as a conscious literary artist (p. vi), with a command of stagecraft resulting from "extensive experimentation" (vii).

important a role as the literary nature of the words spoken. O'Casey created remarkably believable characters and set them in meticulously directed landscapes. On the other hand, stagecraft and artistic creation may be overshadowed by political discourse.

The argument for O'Casey as a political playwright, at times as a propagandist, has been explored by O'Casey scholars.[6] In *Sean O'Casey: Politics and Art*, C. Desmond Greaves insists that politics plays as much of a role in the creation of O'Casey's drama as do "artistic considerations" (Greaves, 7). As a result of this, Greaves' evaluation of O'Casey relies solely on the evolution of his politics in relation to the world around him, taking up over half of the contents of the text. The readings of the plays are by his own admission not concerned with literary criticism but with the politics of each play and O'Casey's response to them. Greaves first starts analysing O'Casey's drama with *Shadow* (107). To his credit, he clearly states his intentions in the preface and seems to research the politics of the early twentieth century Irish troubles thoroughly. In this connection, Greaves identifies a divide in the critical response of American and European critics to Irish politics. Of the Americans, his concern is that they only accept O'Casey's plays as works of art and ignore the political connections. There may be some validity to that statement as early scholars such as David Krause and Bernard Benstock certainly focus more on the dramatic and literary themes of the plays. Certainly, Robert Lowery's *O'Casey Annual* and *The Sean O'Casey Review* have been

[6] For other analyses of O'Casey and politics within his drama, see Robert Lowery ("O'Casey, Critics, and Communism," *The Sean O'Casey Review*, Vol. 1.1, 1974 pp.14-18), Jack Mitchell, *The Essential O'Casey: A Study of the Major Plays of Sean O'Casey*, (1980), Stephen Watt, *Joyce, O'Casey, and the Irish Popular Theatre*, (1991), and Shakir Mustafa, "Saying No to Politics: Sean O'Casey's Dublin Trilogy," in Stephen Watt, Eileen Morgan, Shakir Msutafa, *A Century of Irish Drama: Widening the Stage*, (2000).

accused of protecting O'Casey's dramatic image rather than promoting stringent critical practices.

This claim is problematic, though. Scholars[7] like Greaves take the political environment of each play as proof of O'Casey's role as a political activist. However, while the early reviews of the Dublin Trilogy tended to focus on the politics, the Irish literary authorities of the day – namely William Butler Yeats, Lennox Robinson, A.E. Russell, and Lady Gregory of the Abbey Theatre – were encouraged by his artistic abilities, Lady Gregory famously complimenting O'Casey on his ability to create strong characters, as I have already noted. I find myself agreeing with Benstock that, while O'Casey certainly was influenced by and had strong opinions about Irish politics, he wrote his plays for primarily artistic purposes, and it is within the artistic elements of O'Casey's plays that carries the most influence. I would argue that the Ireland (and indeed the world) of O'Casey's time promoted political discourse within art without the need to engage in it as propaganda.

Geoff Gould, the founder and artistic director for a contemporary Irish theatre company, Blood in the Alley, based in Cork Ireland, supports this argument, stating that the Irish conception of a playwright "is someone of great writing talent who has the ability to continually question our understanding of life and present those observations through dramatic constructs, elaborated in a written script" (Gould 117). Drama staged at the Abbey Theatre during the O'Casey's life confirms Gould's definition; several of the leaders of the

[7] See also Jules Koslow sixth chapter of *Sean O'Casey: The Man and His Plays*, 1966; Pat M. Esslinger makes the compelling point that O'Casey's alienation from Ireland occurred long before the Abbey's rejection of *The Silver Tassie,* which means the political activism would have been more apparent in the earliest of plays, which most scholars argue against "The Irish Alienation of Sean O'Casey," *Eire-Ireland*, 1.i (1966), 18-25.

Easter Rising were associated with the Abbey Theatre and wrote several plays questioning the need for outside rule. Much of the drama of the early twentieth-century Dublin concerned Irish nationalism, revolution, social, and political change. James Moran recently published plays from four popular Rising leaders: James Connolly, Padraig Pearse, Thomas Macdonagh and Terence MacSwiney in his Four Irish Rebel Plays. The Abbey additionally recognized the connection between the theatre and the rebellion at the centenary celebration in 2016 by updating a plaque commemorating theatre employees who participated in the Rising (https://1916.rte.ie/event/the-abbey-theatre/). Additionally, the rise of Irish nationalism, the question of Home Rule, and the onset of World War I directly affected Irish politics and ultimately led to the Easter Rising. An impoverished working-class clearly saw revolution as the solution to both national and financial independence.

The young O'Casey engaged in these political conversations both through the inflammatory literature of the day and as a young working-class railroad labourer and founding member of the Irish Citizen Army. Irish nationalism, socialism, and global economic depression inspired many Irish writers; Morris Freedman suggests that one such connection exists between O'Casey and Oscar Wilde: Wilde in his concern with "the smaller politics in his society that determine marriage," and O'Casey with "the politics of the dissolution of domesticity," as can be clearly seen in the homes of the Boyles, Clitheroes, Heegans, and Breydons, among others (Freedman, 520). This connection is overshadowed, however, by the plays' similar use of tragicomedy, i.e. their artistic rendering (521). Therefore, the purpose of utilizing events such as the Easter Rising should be considered, and perhaps better recognized.

The Plough and the Stars, then, serves as a demythologizing of the Rising ten years after the fact, and this demythologizing can also be seen in the later plays, such as *The Star Turns Red*, a more overtly political play. Vic Merriman recently countered the popular

reading of *The Star* by pointing out the obvious connections that exist between it and *The Plough*.[8] While others see the more overt use of colour and stock characters in *The Star* as either simplistic drama and/or for crude political purposes, Merriman argued that O'Casey was instead artistically reimagining what Ireland might have looked like had a workers' revolution succeeded, therefore negating the world of *Juno*. Too many similarities exist between the plays to ignore the connection: for example, *The Star* takes place on a Christmas Eve whilst *The Plough* has connection with Easter, and similar characters appear in both plays. Similarly, connections could be made with *The Harvest Festival, Red Roses for Me, The Drums of Father Ned,* and the rest of the Abbey plays. What is important is to remember that while the political nature of each play serves as a backdrop for O'Casey's representation of individual lives and relationships, it is not the guiding purpose for its creation.

Colour and its application to the *The Star* becomes more significant in this context, especially when compared to its more famous predecessor particularly in the context of Merriman's comments. Where *The Plough* tends to be contextualised through the Easter Rising and O'Casey's relationship with the Irish Citizen Army (and Ireland in general), *The Star* cannot be contextualised through its non-history. As a representation of a possible Ireland stemming from O'Casey's imagination, *The Star* cannot be adequately evaluated through the politics and imagined historical environment. O'Casey, who is already a problematic narrator,[9] situates a history based not only on what he would have liked to have

[8] A keynote lecture given at a conference for the Irish Society for Theatre Research on 28 April 2017. The title of Merriman's paper was 'Re-Actions, Re-Visons: Counter-Revolution and Dramaturgy in Twentieth-Century Ireland'.

[9] O'Casey is notorious for exaggerating, bending, and outright misrepresenting facts and events. This is at least a part of the motivation of Sean McCann's *The World of Sean*

seen happen, but also based on a political system that at the time was not as popular nationally as he wanted. In short, where *The Plough* reflects the historicity of the Easter Rising and the popularity of Irish nationalism, *The Star* reflects O'Casey's personal opinion and personal political opinion. The one-dimensional nature of that depiction makes it easy to understand why the play is consistently labeled propagandistic and one of O'Casey's less popular plays. The element of *The Star* that ought to be considered is in how O'Casey applies colour to the stage setting and the characters. They are still heavily influenced by the politics of communism, but instead of acting as a political narrative, the overall play takes on the characteristic of an ideological artefact. Easter is replaced by Christmas, which only serves to transition Ireland to communism. To be clear, the problematic nature of the play dampens this conversation, but I am more interested in the impact of colour use beyond simple aesthetics. Red Jim may be simplistically named solely to represent his political views, but the star of Bethlehem turning red at the end transcends simple politics.

Providing an alternative perspective in his chapter "Sean O'Casey: History into Drama," Christopher Murray argues that O'Casey was not a political but a chronicler and revisionist of Irish history. He points to Joep Leerssen's argument that traditional historical method in nineteenth-century Ireland ignored realism and instead deployed mythology as a means of inspiring the present. O'Casey subverts that pattern in his dramaturgy, Murray argues, by demythologizing Irish history in the Dublin Trilogy to establish realism (Bort, 223). Similarly, Ronan McDonald argues that the Trilogy "debunks the mythology of Mother Ireland […] replacing it with images of real suffering mothers, of families torn apart

---

O'Casey (1966). In addition, several authors, most notably Robert Lowery as editor of *Essays on Sean O'Casey's Autobiographies* (1981) explore the problematic historical contradictions in O'Casey's autobiographies.

by men drunk on ineffable dreams of political utopia and doggedly sober on a doctrine of arid, inflexible political principals" ("Disillusionment, 137).[10] In his later plays, however, O'Casey utilized myth as a means of advocating a specific social change.

Murray describes the demythologization of Irish historical events such as the Easter Rising as an emptying out of history (Murray, 227). In the Dublin Trilogy, the realism of O'Casey's drama combined with the historical backdrop of each play allows the dramatist to debunk the romanticisation of the Easter Rising and nationalism. In *The Shadow*, O'Casey portrays characters who distort or misunderstand history to promote patriotism and nationalist participation. In *Juno*, he examines that historical ignorance and exposes a culture willing to shape history as a means of furthering personal and political agendas. In the original production of *The Plough*, O'Casey attacked the romanticised portrayal of Easter Week rebels, which was one of the causes of riots in the first days of its production. Murray contends that a combination of the photographic realism causing discomfort among audiences and O'Casey's irreverent use of mythologized symbols served as a means of "upsetting orthodox opinion" (231). In spite of the initial negative response, Murray notes that *The Plough*, while inflammatory, differs from J. M. Synge's *The Playboy of the Western World* in that it was popular from the beginning, even with the riots it caused. *The Playboy of the Western World* is rightfully very popular; however, while Synge's play was very successful, public opinion was negative before it became more positive. Therefore, the message resonated with audiences despite its controversial nature.

Murray contends that O'Casey left Ireland with the realization that the "In the Free

[10] "See also Elizabeth Mannion's "Unwriting the City: Narrating Class in Early Twentieth-Century Belfast and Dublin (1900-1929)," in *A History of Irish Working-Class Writing*, ed. by Michael Pierse, pp. 140-152.

State the artist was not free to demythologise," and that he then decided to employ myth as a means of promoting social change (231). James Moran argues in *Staging the Easter Rising: 1916 as Theatre* that O'Casey wrote The Plough as a way to address misconceptions of the Rising as well as react to other more embellished and nationalistic plays (p. 35). Similarly, Susan Cannon Harris argues that *The Star Turns Red* should not be read as propaganda, but as O'Casey's artistic manifesto with the Communist symbols as a means to an end, not the play's "*raison d'être*" (359). Using three of the later plays (*The Star Turns Red*, *Red Roses for Me*, and *The Drums of Father Ned*), Murray shows that O'Casey provided a basic historical framework like the Dublin lockout or War of Independence. However, O'Casey would link the play to contemporary issues and explore the possibilities of future social changes. So, in *The Star Turns Red*, O'Casey writes against nationalism in support of the oppressed and socialism while also making statements against fascism and religious control. He revises the Dublin lockout into a worker's revolution, changing the result and widening the scope of the conflict. Similarly, in *Red Roses for Me*, the historical moment is a railway strike that O'Casey participated in. Ayamonn, the artist/revolutionary, mirrors O'Casey and his participation in the 1911 railway strike. Here, O'Casey leaves the result but creates a martyr in Ayamonn after he invigorates Dublin with his vision of what might be. *The Drums of Father Ned*, set between the shadow of the War of Independence and an incoming cultural revolution, pits the traditional older generation under the direction of Father Fillifogue against their children who follow the idealized character of Father Ned. In this, Murray argues, the Tostal celebration serves as O'Casey's attempt to see an Ireland free from religious control. What unifies both versions of O'Casey is his outspoken nature, and the willingness to deconstruct or even alter history as a means of considering the past through the present and what might be in the future.

Set against Benstock's and Gould's definition of the term playwright, and through

Murray's consideration of O'Casey as a revisionist and not an activist, I argue that O'Casey's work is best viewed as not political but artistic. O'Casey created works of art through his use of characterization and stagecraft, creating colourful and detailed sets with the purpose of defining the context of the play and advancing the plot, while also observing and questioning the prevalent issues of his time. It makes sense to me, then, that O'Casey scholarship starts with the publication of Robert Hogan's *The Experiments of Sean O'Casey* (1960) and David Krause's *Sean O'Casey: The Man and His Work* (1962). Rather than considering the political connections of O'Casey's drama, they consider instead its artistic nature. Hogan, for example, identifies O'Casey as a self-conscious artist whose work evolved through experimentation (Hogan 15). While he is happy to apply general labels to groupings of plays, Hogan concludes that ultimately the plays come to represent an amalgamation of each of the various effects used. Krause's analysis, on the other hand, supports the idea of experimentation but with more emphasis on O'Casey's drama through recognized forms and techniques. He focuses more on elements that influence O'Casey's experimentation as opposed to an active employment of form.

For example, as is the case with most O'Casey scholars, Krause identifies The Silver Tassie as the first major break from naturalism to expressionist techniques.[11] However, he

[11] Expressionism is one of the more popular styles scholars refer to. Denis Johnston argued in 1926 that O'Casey was not a realist but an expressionist (in Ayling's Modern Judgements, 1969). Other proponents of this line of thought are Vincent De Baun ("Sean O'Casey and the Road to Expressionism, Modern Drama, Vol. 4, no. 3 1961); Joan Templeton ("Sean O'Casey and Expressionism" Modern Drama, Vol. 14, no. 1 1971 – who argues that O'Casey is the only major British dramatist to use Expressionism, p .47); John P. Frayne (Sean O'Casey 1976); Seamus Deane (Celtic Revivals, 1985, p. 119); Raymond Williams (Drama

argues that this move was not an acceptance of expressionist doctrine, but an experiment with techniques that O'Casey modified and reshaped according to his own needs within a framework based in reality.[12] From these two seminal works to current scholarship, very few scholars feel comfortable placing O'Casey within any specific literary form or structure. More recently, Vic Merriman argues that O'Casey's need to experiment occurred before 1928, pointing to The Tassie as a convenient cut off point for critical approaches that have created an erroneous perception that the Dublin Trilogy is not experimental (in Moran's Theatre, 215). James Moran agrees, arguing that O'Casey "remained a formally experimental, politically engaged, brilliant, but often flawed writer" (239). The Dublin plays,

---

from Ibsen to Brecht, 1987), Michael Pierse, who argues that O'Casey transitioned from expressionism to Total Theatre (See footnote 10). Those who disagree include the following: those like Katherine Worth (O'Casey's Dramatic Symbolism, in Modern Judgements, ed. by Ronald Ayling, and her chapter on O'Casey in The Irish Drama of Europe from Yeats to Beckett, 1978), who sees O'Casey transitioning from realism to symbolism, not expressionism; and those like Robert Hogan, Carol Kleimann,(Sean O'Casey's Bridge of Vision: Four Essays on Structure and Perspective, 1982) and Nesta Jones (O'Casey and Expressionism, 1988) who argue against O'Casey as a true expressionist but as a dramatist who utilized expressionist elements through experimentation.

[12] Krause, The Man and His Work, p. 133. See also Saros Cowasjee, Sean O'Casey: The Man Behind the Plays, (1963); Bernard Benstock, Sean O'Casey (1970); Herbert Goldstone, In Search of Community: The Achievement of Sean O'Casey (1972); Ronald Ayling, Continuity and Innovation in Sean O'Casey's Drama, (1976); and Jack Mitchell, The Essential O'Casey: A Study of the Major Plays of Sean O'Casey, (1980) for similar arguments.

then, should also be considered from their experimental standpoint.

Although the experimental nature of O'Casey's drama is generally accepted and exists in the earliest critical analyses, very little consensus can be found in a specific form or style that can be applied to the entirety of his work. I would like to suggest that rather than attempting to identify specific forms or styles as a means of explaining the whole of O'Casey's drama, scholars should instead recognize him as experimental working-class writer who experimented within the general framework of Modernism. According to the Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms (ODLT), Modernism is a "general term applied retrospectively to the wide range of experimental and avant-garde trends in the literature (and other arts) of the early 20th century" (213). The key phrase in that statement is experimental, particularly in drama; from this time period, we see a revolt against the well-made play, and the emergence of atypical forms like expressionism and symbolism.

Additionally, the *ODLT* argues that Modernism expresses a "sense of urban cultural dislocation" (213). This urban cultural dislocation coincides with the global changes that an industrialised world experienced: along with the millennia-old tradition of imperialist conquest by world powers, increased production of materials led to the panic of 1893 in the US, and a global depression in the 1920s. World War I and the introduction of trench warfare and biological weaponry along with improved mass communication put gore and fear on the global stage. Civil wars and immigration laws began to reshape the modern world and the people who lived it had to learn how to understand it. Concerning Ireland, Joe Cleary argues in the introductory chapter to his Cambridge Companion to Irish Modernism, that Irish Modernism is known primarily for three figures: W.B. Yeats, James Joyce, and Samuel Beckett. Their popularity has led to them being distinguished as European literary figures,

and as such, very little has been written about Ireland's own modernist phase (Cleary, 1).[13] However, Cleary argues that in order to better understand those three figures, other experimental Irish authors – one of them being Sean O'Casey – must be considered as well, particularly during the years of 1890 and 1960 (2). I think it is significant that Cleary defines modernist artists by their experimentalism; in doing so, he allows for a more open analysis of the whole of an artist's work and confirms the interconnectedness of experimentation within individual artefacts.

How then do we label Sean O'Casey? Is he a playwright or a political activist? A naturalist, a realist, or an expressionist? The answer is that in order to understand both the art and the evolution of O'Casey as an artistic and historical figure, a proper analysis must be as open as possible to allow for a holistic view. Focusing on the individual style within one or two plays limits one's ability to see the whole of O'Casey's vision. Therefore, I choose to define him as an Irish working-class modernist playwright who experimented with various forms and styles, but must never be confined to any one particular tradition. That he utilised elements of various forms is clear, but at no point does O'Casey's dramaturgy – individually or collectively – commit fully to any one form or style. His life was an education in political and social turmoil, but he also saw and created beauty in the world around him. He didn't know a life of comfort and consistency; instead his life was disrupted by personal tragedies and outside historical events. Educated, but not as a writer, O'Casey largely learned his craft through experimentation and repetition. Understanding his work fully will come through the appreciation and analysis of his work as a whole.

[13] A handful of people speak of O'Casey in terms of being a modernist (Cleary and Levitas for one in Irish Modernism and Pierse and Merriman in History of Irish Working-class Writing on working-class literature), but most scholars tend to focus on form and style more.

The dramatic work of Sean O'Casey has been examined in great depth academically; in fact, the argument might be made that O'Casey has nothing left to offer. His early works, while still produced, don't share the same popularity as his contemporaries, and his later work has only recently been given more academic consideration. However, his plays, like the playwright himself, have kept themselves relevant in literary discourse through their stubborn unwillingness to be ignored. The plays' discussion of poverty among the lower classes and abuses by the social and political elite resonate as much today as they did during his lifetime. The United Kingdom's impending exit from the European Union and the 2016 US Presidential election stand as perhaps the greatest current examples of this discussion, stemming in a great portion from the question of how to receive political refugees. As such, O'Casey's dramatic work still has new perspectives to be analysed. One aspect that has yet to be considered is his use of colour, and it is my intention to argue that a culture of colour can be identified within the works of O'Casey. The beginnings of this discourse may be seen in the epigraphs included at the beginning of this introduction.

The first, which comes from the second act of *The Shadow*, appears at a moment of self-reflection from Donal Davoren, the play's antihero. Mistaken as a gunman on the run, Donal prefers to write poetry, O'Casey describes him as one who is devoted to "the might of design, the mystery of colour, and the belief in the redemption of all things by beauty everlasting" (Shadow, 93). This phrase comes from George Bernard Shaw's *The Doctor's Dilemma*, which follows the story of a doctor who is forced to choose to save his friend, a good and moral colleague who is poor and contributes very little to society, and a young artist, Louis Dubedat, who produces great and beautiful paintings but is a scoundrel and a blackguard. As in *The Shadow*, a woman is drawn to the perception of the artist, assuming he is something that he is not (in the case of The Doctor's Dilemma, a good man) and pays a heavy price for that assumption. Unlike Minnie, however, Mrs. Dubedat lives to the end,

remaining sole owner of the complete collection of the scoundrel's artistic work. Both women end the play with their visions of male heroism intact, Minnie dying for the shadow of a gunman and Mrs. Dubedat believing in the supposed goodness of her husband.

Understanding the context behind the quote O'Casey uses in *The Shadow* as a description of Davoren makes it possible to identify a culture of colour within what seems to be a theology of art. In The Doctor's Dilemma, Louis Dubedat makes this statement on his deathbed and proclaims the words as a declaration of faith similar to a Christian who might say a prayer. Dubedat replaces the traditional notion of God and Christian doctrine with art as a deity that preaches beauty as a universal principle to be worshipped. Note how the phrases "the might of design, the mystery of colour, [and] the redemption of all things by Beauty everlasting" are used to personify art (The Complete Plays, 540). Rather than praying to the Holy Trinity – God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost – Dubedat prays to "Michael Angelo, Velasquez, and Rembrandt" (540). Shaw's choice and O'Casey's subsequent appropriation of the quote as a description of their characters reveals much about the authors.

Michelangelo, Diego Velazquez, and Rembrandt all lived in different European countries and time periods, but in the context of Dilemma, their artistic preferences unite them as an artistic godhead that focuses on the form of the human body. Michelangelo's work on the Sistine Chapel may be most recognizable, but he is also celebrated for his ability to represent the human body and his striving "with an incredible singleness of purpose to master this [representation]…" (Gombrich, 305). Diego Velazquez, who utilized naturalism in his painting, devoted "his art to the dispassionate observation of nature regardless of conventions" (405). See, for example, Las Meninas, a well-known canvas depicting the mirror image of the target of a painting. Instead of showing the two people who are sitting for the portrait, the canvas depicts the people who are in the room while the painting occurs.

E. H. Gombrich, in The Story of Art, likens Las Meninas to a photograph, capturing "a real moment of time long before the invention of the camera" (408). Rembrandt, the final member of the trinity of art, is known for his ability to "be able to get into the skin of all types of men, and to know how they would behave in any given situation" (423). Their focus on the human body in its natural form, portraying reality in images and seeking to understand the individual are all elements that are found in *The Shadow* and *The Doctor's Dilemma*. Dubedat's lack of Christian morals makes sense because he does not adhere to Christianity; rather, his morals originate from his devotion to art. To him, art and beauty replace Christianity and is the object of his praise and devotion. In short, Dubedat views the world through the lens of art.

O'Casey subscribes to a similar view in his depiction of Donal Davoren. That Davoren identifies as a poet suggests that his valuation of colour and design relates not only to the written word but also to beautiful things within the world as well. Like Dubedat, Davoren sees the redemptive power of beauty, which allows him to see wildflowers instead of weeds. This, along with the autobiographical nature of *The Shadow*,[14] suggests that O'Casey held a similar opinion regarding the beauty of the written word and elements of the world. This preference in his role as poet can be seen in his mannerisms and actions throughout the play. For example, Davoren often quotes Shelley when he is annoyed or frustrated, proclaiming "Ah me! alas, pain, pain ever, for ever!" (Shadow, 96). Lennox Robinson, the noted playwright and a director at the Abbey Theatre, indicated that the whole play was built on the Shelley phrase (Jordan 143). Conversely, his companion Seumas Shields, who is politically (un)aware declares, "Oh Kathleen ni Houlihan, your way's a

[14] See William Armstrong's "History, Autobiography, and The Shadow of a Gunman" (Modern Drama, Vol. 2, Feb. 1960, pp. 417-424) as one example of this commentary.

thorny way" (96). This immediately separates Davoren from Seamus, emphasizing their separate worldviews, Davoren through art and Seamus through politics. It also separates them from the audience not as a means of alienation but as a preparation to understanding their decisions at the end of the play. Seamus's disenfranchisement from Irish nationalism becomes his excuse to refuse any responsibility for Minnie's death; Davoren's selfish and dramatic self-judgement originates from a sense of self-preservation.

Davoren differs from Dubedat in that he recognizes and submits to the basic political and theological moral structures already existing in Ireland whereas Dubedat rebels against societal norms and does whatever he can to perpetuate his love of art. Although he clearly prefers to write his poetry, and because he so clearly wishes to impress Minnie, Davoren entertains the vain ambitions of Tommy Owens and the plight of poor Mr. Gallogher by acting the part. His disdain for nationalist politics does not keep him from encouraging his neighbour's perception of him as the heroic gunman on the run. His desire to enjoy beautiful things and an unwillingness to engage in the politics of the Irish war of independence represent a crossroad for him, forcing him to choose between life and death. Either he takes the bombs, maintaining his ruse as a gunman on the run but risking death at the hands of the Auxiliaries, or he allows Minnie to take the risk for him and live to write more poetry. The self-applied title of "poet and poltroon, poltroon and poet" at the end of the play demonstrates the recognition that Davoren must now flee his home to avoid bearing responsibility for Minnie's death, but also to be able to continue writing poetry (157). Bernice Schrank argues that Davoren's self-ascribed title represents "Donal the poet watching Donal the man expressing himself," exploiting and refashioning Minnie's death into a lamentation for himself (Schrank, 59). Schrank expands on Herbert Goldstone's exploration of responsibility in The Shadow of a Gunman in his book In Search of Community: The Achievements of Sean O'Casey, particularly in Chapter 1. Goldstone argues that Davoren's self-condemnation

does not reflect an acceptance of his role in Minnie's death, but is instead self-pity and self-concern (33).

Davoren's devotion to art also shows in his interactions with his neighbours. When Minnie talks of politics, he sarcastically remarks that the only way to make politics important is to be drunk when discussing it (Shadow, 106). To Tommie Owens, who declares his undying loyalty to the Republican Volunteers, Davoren flatly rejects any political association at all. The fact is that Davoren only participates in political conversation when it suits his purposes, whether as a means of impressing Minnie, or escaping harm at the hands of the Auxiliaries. He has no interest at all in the politics of the day except as a means of self-preservation. It is only through a recognition of the historical time frame and the comments of Davoren's neighbours that one can identify the political landscape of Dublin in the play at all. Even at the end, when he has proclaimed his culpability in Minnie's death, Davoren only thinks of himself. Where Minnie Powell and Mrs. Henderson find their salvation in the IRA, and Seumas Shields and the Grigsons find it in religion (and the bottle), Davoren finds his salvation in Art. This may be indicative of the author's own experience and interest in art as well. To an audience, Davoren's devotion may not be recognized, except to separate him from the other characters on stage. I would like to suggest that such a focus should be turned on the author himself instead; Davoren's moral base may instead originate from O'Casey's.

Obviously, Donal Davoren is not Sean O'Casey portrayed in writing. Whatever autobiographical elements do exist in the play are certainly important but cannot be taken as a representative view of O'Casey's personal beliefs. However, ample evidence exists that suggests O'Casey' appreciation for art is similar. One such examplecan be *found Drums under the Windows,* the third volume of O'Casey's autobiography, which recounts an experience with Mr. Henchy, an official of the Protestant Orphan Society, which provided funding for his nephew's clothing and education (Autobiographies I 598). Concerned with

the boy's unwillingness to attend church services, a requirement for receiving funding, Mr. Henchy encouraged O'Casey to persuade the young man to change his behaviour. In the ensuing argument, O'Casey comes to the conclusion that I include as the second epigraph at the start of this chapter.

It is important to understand the problems associated with the form of O'Casey's autobiography. That they are written in an omnipotent third person voice, with a structure similar to a work of fiction presents significant historical issues.[15] In this discussion, however, historical inaccuracies are less important than the intent behind the text. It seems that O'Casey went out of his way to include moments like his conversation with Mr. Henchy to explain his attitude towards his neighbours, his political ideology, and perhaps most importantly, his creative motivation and inspiration. Therefore, the method through which he describes his experiences would be more important than its historicity. In his conversation with Mr. Henchy, the young O'Casey begins by admitting that his nephew was purposefully missing church services and that he turned a blind eye to it, if the boy "found the play of the streets more colourful" (598). O'Casey takes on the social issue regarding poverty and inequalities of the classes, citing Shaw as the source for his stance, labelling him a "priest of the theatre" (598).

This is an important moment in the text, because it identifies the moment where O'Casey and Mr. Henchy are unable to relate to each other. Up to this point, the two discussed differing opinions easily, recognizing the similarities of what the other was trying to accomplish – O'Casey trying to provide for his nephew a better life, and Mr. Henchy

[15] James Moran's "Moving-Pictures in the Hallway: Dramatising the Autobiographies of Sean O'Casey" (Irish Studies Review, vol. 20 no. 4, November 2012, pp. 389-405) discusses this concern as a prelude to his primary purpose for writing the article.

trying provide needy orphans with cloths and an education. However, they worship different gods. On the one hand, Mr. Henchy represents a faith-based charity orphanage with specific faith-oriented requirements for eligibility. O'Casey, on the other hand, represents the worshipper of art and beauty who is trying to lift his nephew from the oppressiveness of poverty. His use of the phrase "eye for colour" transcends Mr. Henchy's faith and church and the clothes and education that the charity provides. Where Mr. Henchy focuses on the black and white issues of the charity's rules and regulations, O'Casey seems to consider grey areas, the complexities of the human endeavour, in his appreciation of his mother's flowers, seeing within them God's hand. At the very least, he seems to consider art and education as equally important elements of elevating the poor to a better life.

Perhaps a clarification is in order. It is not the intent of this thesis to establish a theology of art in or out of O'Casey's dramatic work. I am not suggesting that O'Casey worshipped art as a form of deity, but that he identified it as a redemptive power in human life. Additionally, this thesis does not aim to establish or debunk his religious practices. A cursory study of his life demonstrates that while his relationship with religion is complex, he acknowledged the existence of a God. Instead, as is illustrated in his encounter with Mr. Henchy, O'Casey's interest in raising his nephew out of poverty was motivated in part by his own love for beautiful things. Herbert Goldstone suggests that his self-education produced that love, arguing that "a liberal education in literature and the arts not only enables the ordinary person to enjoy some of the fruits of culture usually denied him, but helps him satisfy an almost religious zeal through artistic appreciation and self-development" (Goldstone 13). It is O'Casey's religious zeal towards art and self-development, particularly with regards to colour, that I wish to consider. It is my contention that this zeal towards colour is best described as a culture.

In using the term "culture," I follow a similar line of thought that can be found in

Terry Eagleton's Culture. Eagleton provides four basic definitions while simultaneously recognizing the complexity of the term: "[Culture] can mean (1) a body of artistic and intellectual work; (2) a process of spiritual and intellectual development; (3) the values, customs, beliefs and symbolic practices by which men and women live; or (4) a whole way of life" (Eagleton, 1). The obvious thought would be to clump O'Casey under the first definition and when it comes to his approach with colour, and others have. For example, Raymond Williams protests against the description of O'Casey as an Elizabethan writer, arguing instead that any use of colour is artificially infused, not natural (Eliot, 171). Readers, he warns, must be careful not to be tricked into believing that his use of colour is anything more than a mechanical habit (173). Williams has a fair point; O'Casey overloads his plays with colour references, poetry, and music (the latter two which rely on vivid imagery, ie colourful language). In a later, updated edition of the same text, Williams changes his approach somewhat, recognizing the impact of language in the Dublin Trilogy, but avoids any acknowledgment of the text as being rich (Brecht, 151). What Williams might be missing, though, are the moments of significance that exist within the mire of mechanical text.

Eagleton points out that a "good deal of culture involves less what you do than how you do it," which while providing some support for William's argument also leaves an opening for an alternative theory (Eagleton 5). I would suggest that Eagleton's other three definitions might be equally employable, and his particular use of colour better falls under the fourth definition, being a way of life. O'Casey seems to have lived a life with an appreciation of rich colours, stemming from his unhealthy eyes as a child. As a result, colour pervades O'Casey's plays, in the titles, the description of his characters and sets, and within the text. For the most part, however, critical consideration of colour is very limited, fragmented into what seems to be two basic approaches: a general overview of O'Casey's

theatrical practices or a close reading of a limited number of works. Both approaches always examine colour on the periphery, either as an element of language, dramatic form or movement, or stagecraft. They consider O'Casey's insertion of colour only as an element of a specific dramatic form or movement employed in the text. I disagree, though, that O'Casey needed an excuse to experiment with colour and lighting changes. Colour and light permeate his dramatic work; his later infusion is as much an indicator of artistic vision as it is formulaic. The problem is that scholars try to label O'Casey, to insert him within firmly established definitions of literary or theatrical forms. Instead, his work should be evaluated as both a literary work and an artistic representation. Rather than trying to define O'Casey's writing style, one ought to focus on the evolution of his experimentation.

Bernard Benstock introduces this line of thought in Sean O'Casey, attributing O'Casey's use of colour to his ability to create a poetic stage capable of both internal and external change. Benstock contests the general disdain towards O'Casey's complete work through a consideration of the interaction of stage directions and stage design with the text. Meticulous directions, while incredibly difficult to accommodate, develop specific images necessary to the characterization and themes of each play. This, Benstock argues, is the O'Casey touch: the ability to envision a flexible stage setting and its interaction with the movement of the characters within the story (Sean O'Casey 90). One obvious example in support of this argument can be seen in the stagecraft of Juno and the Paycock. The Boyle's home mimics its inhabitants; in Act I, the poverty of the family is shown through the state of the furniture and decoration. Act II shows a transformation of the home as a reflection of the Boyle's newly discovered inheritance, and being stripped of everything by the end of the play parallels the devastating breakdown of the family. Each of these situations are fastidiously directed by O'Casey with specific goals in mind.

Benstock argues that recognizing this helps us to understand O'Casey as a playwright,

and how he "give[s] his setting the physical power of internal change," materialising the latter through the use of lighting and colour (92). Using the statue from Within the Gates as an example, Benstock shows how in each act lighting allows the statue to change character similar to an "accomplished actor" (93). Therefore, the statue's significance changes in each act, interacting with the characters in varying ways while the statue itself never actually changes. Although the statue does not prominently figure in the dialogue of the play, the method of its portrayal engages the audience, directing their reactions. This seemingly aesthetic measure takes on meaning of its own, and similar practices can be traced back to the earlier plays.

For example, in The Shadow of a Gunman, light reveals the duality of Donal Davoren's nature; during the day he perpetuates the ruse of being a poet-gunman, but the night-time raid brings out his cowardice. In Juno and the Paycock, the relationship between Johnny Boyle and the red votive light is significant in that it acts as both a redemptive force – a prayer for forgiveness for Johnny regarding his hand in Tancred's death – and as a representation of justice, extinguishing to coincide with Johnny's capture and eventual execution. The setting and props interact with the actors to move the story forward; in Juno, Johnny obsessively watches the votive candle as a means of putting off responsibility for his betrayal. Though used sparingly in the early O'Casey plays, light and colour are used more often and more symbolically in the later plays.

Benstock sees this evolution of O'Casey's stage as a means to tracing what he identifies as an occasional use of colour symbolism. As Benstock sees it, O'Casey starts in the earlier plays by attaching "almost magical properties to an occasional touch of color" as a means of sustaining characters within the "drab reality" of their environment (99). Benstock considers Mary Boyle's discourse on which ribbon to wear, and Nora's silver hat, and I would suggest that Johnny Boyle's relationship with the votive candle is equally significant.

It is only when the light is extinguished that Johnny's downfall is realized. This practice certainly explains the significance that O'Casey attributes to his mother's flowers in his encounter with Mr. Henchy. Amidst the poverty of tenement Dublin, O'Casey's description of the flowers as musical instruments inside a place of worship, whether as a church building or a music hall, takes on as much significance as the nephew that Mr. Henchy is so concerned about.

A similar relationship can be found in the autobiographical Red Roses for Me between Mrs. Breydon and her flowers. Mrs. Breydon values her flowers so much that when rioters throw stones through her windows at Mr. Mulcanny, she worries first for their welfare, and then for the welfare of the individuals in the house; she doesn't even notice that Brennan has returned the statue of the Virgin Mary to its usual spot (Red Roses 176). Benstock focuses on the colour of costuming, labelling bright, clean, and/or new clothes as symbolic of youth and vitality. He even specifies various types of fabrics of various colours in order to separate symbolic from mechanical use. Therefore, in The Silver Tassie Jessie Taite's dress represents her sexual vibrancy, not because of its colour but because of how it is worn and what it reveals, whereas the dress that the prostitute from Within the Gates wears has symbolic meaning (100). Colourful silk clothes symbolize youth and wealth, whereas natural coloured clothes represent social standing. Benstock could be said to argue that bright colour reflects both reality and the symbolic while natural tones are suggestive of Naturalism.

The problem with Benstock's approach is that it lacks depth and relevance. Youthfulness as a sign of vitality and simply defined colours do not invite much analysis, nor does an analysis of colour in those terms allow for a response beyond a basic recognition of stage design and theatrical representation. This approach forces the topic of colour to the periphery, resulting in a section of an article, or the chapter of a book. A more open approach to the study of colour in O'Casey is necessary, one that recognizes its presence but does not

limit its scope. Scholars, in an attempt to come to terms with that in O'Casey's drama, felt the need to abandon the notion of a holistic practice of analysis and consider instead individual plays.

For example, Robert Hogan contests the argument that the later plays are inferior to the Dublin Trilogy through an analysis and description of them as pastoral in nature (Hogan). He briefly lists several characteristics of pastoralism, of which colour does not play a part, and briefly comments on several plays. It is only when he discusses *The Bishop's Bonfire* that he includes colour in his analysis, arguing that O'Casey's "acute visual sense" sharpened as he grew older and his eyesight decreased (246). There is a recognition of his appreciation and use of colour, but not of its presence in the earlier plays.

Michael Pierse, on the other hand, has provided a potential means of looking at O'Casey's plays as a whole without taking away from the individual strengths and weaknesses of each. In *A History of Irish Working-Class Writing*, Pierse's focus on the working-class as an other mainstream to Irish culture allows for the possibility of a writer like O'Casey to exist and thrive in Irish literature (Pierse, 12). A working-class history, which Pierse locates within the shrouds of silence (1), finds itself in an attempt to reconcile its own existence. Working-class writing would focus on the political realities of being the ruled but distort reality and the truth of those who are oppressed (2). However, writers like O'Casey push back against that silence through their writing, usually by framing the reality of the working-class condition through "ideology, epistemology and historiography" (4). Nearly all of O'Casey's writing serves to push back against some ruling authority that keeps the poor – almost always portrayed through a working-class character – in the tenement homes and without money or power. Additionally, Pierse notes that while many Irish working-class texts are rooted in reality, they take an "ironised form – adopting subversive, metafictive narratorial strategies that challenge the limits of what is normatively constituted as the real"

(7). Again, this fits O'Casey fairly well; his plays are all rooted in a basically recognizable reality (even Within the Gates takes place in a recognizable Hyde Park setting) while also allowing for non-realistic elements to participate in the story. In the case of O'Casey, colour seems to behave as one of his means of introducing political or social thought as an enhancement or continuation of reality.

Colour studies is a difficult topic to discuss because so often those discussions devolve into colour coding and/or basic colour symbolism. Sabine Doran, in The Culture of Yellow or The Visual Politics of Late Modernity, argues that "[w]hat is needed is a new perspective that recognizes the complex nature of color and its inscription in a network of meaning" (Doran 1). The complexity of colour ought not to refer simply to various hues and shades, but to other factors such as functionality, utility, and abstract meaning. That is to say, colour does not become complex because red and yellow create orange which mixed with blue becomes brown. Nor does colour alone necessarily maintain an intrinsically universal meaning. Red may signify to drivers that they need to stop their vehicles, but only in the legally defined area of the road, and specifically at an intersection. Elsewhere, within that same framework, a red sign may simply alert those same drivers to maintain a specified speed limit, or refrain from turning down a specified street. Outside of that framework, the colour red may refer to life, to political association, and a myriad of other tangible things and intangible ideas. Therefore, contextual understanding becomes essential to a proper understanding of colour.

Indeed, humans perceive the world contextually. Ulf Klarén and Karin Fridell Anter,[16] identify three circles of perception: categorical perception, direct experience, and

[16] Klarén is employed by the University College of Arts in Sweden in the Crafts and Design faculty, and Karin Fridell Anter is employed Royal Institute of Technology in Sweden in the

indirect experience. Categorical perception provides a "basic spatial and temporal structure" to perceived reality (Delong 5). In short, a human's perception of the world is determined by colour, even to the extent of identifying surrounding objects through a recognition of shading and visual diversity. Put another way, blindness could be explained as the inability of the human eye to perceive basic colours and shading in the world around them. Basic, categorical perception, is then, a necessary aspect of visual arts in that 1) in order to appreciate the theatre fully, one must be able to perceive the stage and action thereon and, more importantly, 2) even the basic perception of shading, light and dark is necessary to understanding the expressiveness of the play. A similar example might be of one who is colour blind; one can perceive the world around them, but not colour beyond that initial spatial and temporal structure. To analyse the visual arts properly, one must perceive not only the spatial and temporal structure of the stage, but the less obvious and less definable ideas and emotions being conveyed.

This process continues through the second circle of seeing colour, what Klarén and Anter call direct experience, "things that we gradually learn through living" (DeLong 9). Considering the connection between emotion and objects or space or art, Klaren and Delong point out that colour presents visual qualities that produce emotional content. Therefore, a consideration of a stage setting allows the audience not only to recognize the portrayed location, like a living room, but the emotional context of its purpose, like the recognition of the comforts of home. Direct experience recognizes the natural colour of objects; for, example, the green leaves on a tree or the natural colour of human skin. Alterations from the natural colouring of objects or space become recognizable and symbolic. Therefore, when an

---

Architecture department. They have published and presented several papers regarding how colour is seen.

object is represented abnormally, the interpretation of that object becomes more than its natural form. The authors identify these alterations as expressive symbols (10). Such information matters less in that it has little bearing on one's ability to survive in the world. However, seeing the natural colours on stage allows one to interact with the play and its settings more effectively.

The main body of this thesis will consist of two sections. The first section, comprising of chapters two and three, will deal with close reading and textual analysis of colour within O'Casey's drama as well as how productions at the Abbey Theatre interpreted that with and without O'Casey's assistance. In each chapter, I will analyse the plays by attempting to establish a culture of colour through a consideration of stage directions, the characters, and the lighting. I also want to look at how colour is used in the text overtly and lyrically.

In chapter two, I argue that the Dublin Trilogy and The Silver Tassie serve as a medium for O'Casey's reaction against the mythologizing of Irish nationalism and war in the years following the Easter Rising and WWI. As naturalist plays, with the obvious exception of Tassie's expressionistic Act II, O'Casey's extensive description creates the image of tenement Dublin. The argument can be made, however, that the naturalism of his stage does not reflect the reality of the Dublin tenements but the extent of his opinion. In this sense, he used lighting and colour as a tool to convey those ideas. In this section I want to explore various elements: the notion of shadow in The Shadow of a Gunman and The Plough and the Stars, the votive light in Juno and the Paycock, as well as more direct instances of colour use in Uncle Peter's uniform and Davoren's claim to understanding the mystery of colour. I also want to examine the text to see how language is affected by the use of colour, whether as a poetic measure like Meltzer's semantic boomerang method, or as a synaesthetic evaluation involving dialect.

I also want to explore how colour is used in O'Casey's drama compared to other contemporary Irish dramatists of his time. O'Casey scholars have pointed to various dramatists both within Ireland and out of it, and a consideration of those works might help to explain O'Casey's dramaturgical decisions regarding colour. Keeping in line with the argument that the Trilogy and Tassie demythologize nationalism, it is worth examining plays that influenced him. The influence of playwrights such as Yeats, Shaw, and Henrik Ibsen can be seen in O'Casey's works, but the influence of lesser known playwrights has similar significance. Nationalist playwrights preceding O'Casey elevated the nationalist movement above the individual and created much of the environment that O'Casey mocked.

In chapter three, I look at the same plays as chapter two but through their production history. Productions that O'Casey directly participated in are limited because of his well-publicized disagreement with the Abbey Theatre over *Tassie*. Therefore, he only participated in the production of the Dublin Trilogy in Ireland, unless one includes the aborted production of *The Drums of Father Ned* at the failed 1958 Dublin International Theatre Festival. However, O'Casey influenced other productions and an examination of that content will be examined. The difficulties however with such an examination are numerous; very little photographic evidence exists, and that which does is exclusively in black and white. There are newspaper reviews and newspaper articles, but they do not provide an in-depth criticism of the play. Mentions of colour only come through tangentially and typically as a description of set pieces, costuming, or lighting. Personal accounts do exist, but the riots of *The Plough* and the controversy behind *Tassie* divert the focus from any discussion of art and symbolism. This will limit my analysis of the early production history of O'Casey's work, but there are several artefacts that deserve consideration. O'Casey's correspondence includes several clues in the form of directions and in at least one instance drawings. I had access to the Irish News Archives, a depository of digitized newspapers going back several centuries. This

allowed me to access all newspaper reviews and articles of those productions. Finally, I had access to some of the personal correspondence of Joseph Holloway, a Dublin citizen who kept a detailed diary, as well as the correspondence and accounts of other literary figures who personally viewed those productions. Yeats, Lady Gregory, Lennox Robinson, and other Abbey personnel had close first hand experiences with the early plays and their commentary proved valuable. The Abbey archives (as well as other archival evidence) also helped with a lot of this research. Looking at how O'Casey made decisions in preparation for productions provides insight into his artistic sense concerning colour.

In the second section, I will examine O'Casey productions to continue establishing a culture of colour, particularly in how it relates to Irish politics and religion. This section will also consist of two chapters: one which four of O'Casey's later plays (*The Star Turns Red, Red Roses for Me, Cock a Doodle Dandy, and The Drums of Father Ned*), and another which considers the productions and how effective they were in dealing with O'Casey's increasingly experimental style. I will separate the latter performances into two categories: the heritage approach, which remains true to the text, and what I will call the interpretive approach, or what Moran describes as "a stark and anti-naturalistic presentation" of the original text (Moran 204).[17] I will look at play reviews, personal accounts, and, when able, recordings and live showings of O'Casey productions. I will utilize the resources of the archives of the Abbey Theatre, NUI Galway, the National Library of Ireland, to collate and analyse potential data.

In his later plays, O'Casey's style evolved from naturalism to include more artistic

[17] In this instance, Moran is speaking of Garry Hynes' 1991 Abbey production of The Plough and the Stars. O'Casey's later works obviously do not strictly adhere to naturalism, but the distinction between a literal and interpretive approach is still relevant.

elements. His use of colour became more overt, being used as symbols to advance the plot. The stage setting became more complex, often changing in terms of shape and functionality, but also in terms of colour and lighting. Chapter four will consider plays like *Red Roses for Me* and *The Drums of Father Ned* which remained familiar to the style of the early plays and like *Tassie* included expressionistic elements, whereas others like *The Star Turns Red and Cock a Doodle Dandy* included supernatural or symbolic elements. O'Casey also expanded his social critique to include not only nationalism and war but also the church and capitalism. The conflict between the various classes – Catholics vs. Protestants, nationalists vs. loyalists, employees vs. employers – and the individuals who manipulate them are his focus. Irish issues such as the lockout of 1913 expanded to become global issues as O'Casey became more vocal in his support of Marxism. At the same time, O'Casey's appreciation of beauty and art retained its significance in his work; Ayamonn is an artist as well as an activist, Michael and Nora are young, intellectual and beautiful. Colour is used both aesthetically and symbolically to propose an idealistic future. O'Casey's culture of colour becomes much more pronounced in these later works.

Chapter five will look at the production histories of the four later plays examined in chapter four. While significantly more archival evidence exists of later productions in various mediums, there is an inadequate amount of artefacts to allow for a thorough analysis. In spite of O'Casey's tumultuous relationship with Ireland and the Abbey Theatre, his productions have been very well attended through the present day. The Dublin Trilogy is by far the most produced, but the later work is also represented in theatres across the British Isles and elsewhere. Analysing the interpretations of later directors and their productions will help me to establish O'Casey's colour culture. I will limit my analysis to productions from the Abbey.

“To Throw a Whole World in Colour on a Canvas Though it be but a Man’s Fine Face”: Colour in the Plays of Sean O’Casey

Taking O’Casey at his word with regards to any topic is problematic at best, but one of topics he seems to be most consistent about is his love for beautiful things, for art. It seems natural to me that we should consider the artist through his own terminology. While he may have written about the working class Irish, Donal Davoren better reflects the author’s view of art. To O’Casey, it should be assumed that the mystery of colour was not simply about the colour of industry. He had an eye for colour; in short, colour held literary and artistic weight to him. Therefore, the use of colour in his drama ought to be given more consideration, lest the scholar miss a potentially significant element of the O’Casey touch.

2 Colour and naturalism in the Dublin Trilogy and *The Silver Tassie*

The dramatic work of Sean O'Casey endures through their universally relevant themes. The same discussion of poverty among the lower classes and abuses by the social and political elite of his time resonate equally in ours. The United Kingdom's impending exit from the European Union, the 2016 US Presidential election, and the upcoming French election stand as perhaps the greatest current examples of this discussion, stemming in a great portion as a reaction towards globalism, world conflict, the refugee crisis. This relevance stems from O'Casey's utilization of naturalism. Raymond Williams defines naturalism in *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* through an examination of its historical evolution. Originally a term in religious and philosophical argument from the 17th century, it acted in opposition to the belief of the presence of an outside force, like God or spirituality, influencing man, or supernaturalism. It later expanded to be used in ethical and moral arguments as well, and in the 18th century came to include science as well, focusing on what is now called physics and, most commonly, biology. Williams contends that by the 19th century, the term came to be primarily understood as standing in opposition to supernaturalism or the representation of the study of natural history.

The use of naturalism in literature did not occur until the 20th century and was characterized as simple – as in a natural manner of writing – and a philosophical and scientific sense. Primarily, naturalism was a close and detailed observation of characters. Authors like Emile Zola included the scientific method in their literature, focusing as much on the environment of the study as on the "heredity in the story of a family" and describing and interpreting human behaviour in natural terms. Environment up to this point had never

been recognized as influencing characters and action until now, and naturalism focused primarily on the influential or determining effects within a story. These two specialized applications, a critical investigation of the social environment and the role of natural selection within human relationships, plus the fundamental rejection of the supernatural are still influential in the term today.

However, Williams also points out that the inclusion of the scientific method began to narrow the definition of naturalism in the arts to only what could be observed and reproduced. Today, naturalism is primarily a style of accurate external representation. This narrowing definition of the term has excluded several processes and ideas which has led to some merging with supernatural ideas. Expressionism and impressionism in particular appeared and Williams views them as connected to naturalism in its earlier forms. Additionally, the aspect of the relationship between the observing subject and the observed has led to naturalist ideas merging with empiricism and materialism.

This meshes with O'Casey's plays. In his Dublin Trilogy, the set and characters are fairly representative of the social, historical, and political conditions of the times in which each play is set. The characters are often based on people from O'Casey's life, and their dialogue is considered to reflect the geographical location of each play. Additionally, O'Casey's experimentation with expressionism falls within the evolution of naturalism as well. O'Casey's interest in European authors such as Ibsen and Shaw and their influence in his life and writing suggest a familiarity with naturalism.

There are some discrepancies, however. Initially, O'Casey does not reject the notion of supernaturalism. His use of the votive candle in *Juno and the Paycock,* and the tapping on the wall in *The Shadow of a Gunman* may be used to further the plot of each play, but his depiction of Father Ned in *The Drums of Father Ned* and the deification of Communism in *The Star Turns Red* promote spiritualism and the idea of an outside force influencing

mankind. Linguistically, while O'Casey includes dialogue true to the accents and dialects of the time and location, the argument can also be made that such language loses its authenticity and colour on stage, particularly outside of Ireland or even outside of Dublin. This practice runs the risk of taking on a farcical tone instead of an authentic tone and limits a director's approach to interpreting the play outside of its geographical space.

As such, O'Casey's dramatic work still has new perspectives to be analysed, and one that I will consider is his use of colour and lighting. The beginnings of this discourse may be seen in two quick examples. The first, which comes from the Second Act of *The Shadow of a Gunman*, appears at a moment of self-reflection from Donal Davoren. In the stage directions at the beginning of the play, O'Casey describes him as one who is devoted to "the might of design, the mystery of colour, and the belief in the redemption of all things by beauty everlasting" (*Shadow*, 93). This phrase comes from Shaw's *The Doctor's Dilemma*, which follows the story of a doctor who is forced to choose to save his friend, a good and moral colleague who is poor and contributes very little to society, and a young artist who produces great and beautiful paintings but is immoral and scandalous. Understanding the context behind the quote O'Casey uses in Shadow as a description of Davoren makes it possible to identify a culture of colour within what seems to be a theology of art. In conversation with Seumas Shields in Act II, Davoren echoes the young artist's devotion to colour, declaring

"The People! Damn the People! They live in the abyss, the poet lives on the mountain-top; to the people, there is no mystery of colour; it is simply the scarlet coat of the soldier; the purple vestments of a priest; the green banner of a party; the brown or blue overalls of industry…to the poet the end of life is the life that he creates for himself; life has a stifling grip upon the people's throat – it is the poet's musician" (*Shadow*, 127).

In *The Doctor's Dilemma*, Louis Dubedat proclaims his devotion to art in the same way a Christian might describe God. In replacing the traditional notion of God and Christian

doctrine with art as a deity that preaches beauty as a universal principle to be worshipped, the phrases "the might of design, the mystery of colour, [and] the redemption of all things by Beauty everlasting" act as characteristics that personify art (*The Complete Plays*, 540).

O'Casey subscribes to a similar view in his depiction of Donal Davoren. Like Dubedat, Davoren sees the redemptive power of beauty, allowing him to see wildflowers instead of weeds. This, along with the autobiographical nature of *Shadow*, suggests that O'Casey may have held a similar opinion regarding the beauty of the written word and elements of the world. Obviously, Davoren is not Sean O'Casey portrayed in writing. Whatever autobiographical elements that do exist in the play are certainly important but cannot be taken as a representative view of O'Casey's personal beliefs. However, ample evidence exists that suggests O'Casey' had a similar appreciation of art.

The second example, from his autobiography, relates to an experience with a representative of a charitable organization supporting his nephew (Autobiographies I 598). Concerned with the boy's unwillingness to attend church services (a requirement for receiving funding) the representative encouraged O'Casey to persuade the young man to change his behaviour. In the ensuing argument, O'Casey concluded that the man

> hasn't any eye for colour…Here are the golden trumpets of musk sounding at his very ear; a carillon of purple fuchsia bells pealing pensively, and he can hear neither; and there was the rose window of a scarlet geranium behind them, and his eyes were too clouded with worldly things to see it. This man couldn't understand that when Sean's mother reverently touched the blossoms with her gnarled finger, God Himself was admiring the loveliness He had made. (Autobiographies I, 600)

This scene, or recollection, provides a glimpse into the mind of O'Casey, and this conversation with Mr. Henchy provides some insight in his attitude towards his neighbours, his political ideology, and perhaps most importantly, his creative motivation and inspiration.

Where Mr. Henchy focuses on the black and white issues of the charity's rules and regulations, O'Casey seems to consider the colour and complexities of the human endeavour in his appreciation of his mother's flowers, seeing within them godliness. At the very least, he seems to consider art and education as equally important elements in elevating the poor to a better life.

The Shadow of a Gunman focuses very little on the visual representation of colour. However, I still find it significant to discuss this play because of Donal's position as an aspiring poet, and because of O'Casey's specific use of lighting throughout the play. O'Casey is very specific in his lighting directions, where in other plays he focuses more on the setting of the landscape instead of the stage. By this I mean that O'Casey spends more time exploring the personality of his character or of the room that is currently on stage and less about how the stage should accommodate the setting. One other point of consideration that also warrants some comment is the theme of shadows. Half of the play takes place in the morning and half at night, in the shadows cast from a full moon. Donal is also a shadow in the sense that he allows his neighbors to believe that he is an IRA gunman on the run from British law enforcement.

Where O'Casey depicts the characters of his later plays through colour, in *Shadow* he points to mental attitudes or environmental influences. He does utilize lighting in Act II, which I will discuss later as a means of setting up and exposing Donal Davoren's hypocrisy, all centring around the notion of shadows. However, one additional visual element in particular bears mentioning. As is seen in the epigraphs of the introduction, O'Casey has a both a penchant for including flowers as an indication of transcendent beauty, as well as a belief in beauty's redemptive power. In *Shadow*, the flowers are connected to Minnie Powell as a means of inspiration for Donal's poetry. Her description of the flowers as weeds provokes a response from Donal:

> "Wild flowers is a kindlier name for them, Minnie, then weeds. These are wild violets, this is an *Arum maculatum,* or Wake Robin, and these are Celandines, a very beautiful flower related to the buttercups [he quotes]:
>
> One day, when Morn's half-open'd eyes
> Were bright with Spring sunshine –
> My hand was clasp'd in yours, dear love
> And yours was clasp'd in mine –
> We bow'd as worshippers before
> The Golden Celandine" (*Shadow*, 107)

Where his mother Susan Casey identified her flowers as an indicator of God's love and the beauty of the world, in *Shadow* O'Casey identifies flowers as an indicator of intimacy and inspiration.

A variation of the poetry that he includes in the text appears in his later work *Windfalls*, in the poem "A Walk with Eros" (7). Although *Windfalls* was published over a decade later, the poem's presence in *Shadow* suggests that O'Casey developed it throughout those intervening years. Christopher Murray, in his biography *Writer at Work,* supports this by pointing out that the poem is autobiographical, a reflection of O'Casey's two main love interests – Máire Keating and Eileen Carey. In the first stanzas of the poem, in which the quote is included, O'Casey speaks of Máire, who he pursued throughout his young adult life, and the love that was not realized before transitioning into his relationship with Eileen Carey, whom he later married after *Shadow* was produced (Murray 229). Therefore, Davoren's use of the poem in *Shadow* connects him to O'Casey, and appears to connect Minnie to Máire. I would argue that while an autobiographical connection exists, the significance of its use in the play is the implied emotional attachment that informs Donal's decisions, not his connection to O'Casey.

Donal connects the three types of flowers (wild violets, Wake Robins, and Celandines) with beauty, but particularly the Celandine, positioning it as something to be worshipped by lovers. When Minnie asks which girl Donal is referring to in his poetry, he responds that the poem was about the Celandine, but could refer to any girl (*Shadow* 108). This moment is his first real advance towards Minnie, but is also the moment when he connects her to the flower. From this point on in the play, two basic influences exist for Donal: his desire to seduce Minnie, and his appreciation of poetry. The wildflowers exist in the play only as a means of creating this connection, and are ignored from that point on. Minnie and her admiration, on the other hand, influences Donal's behaviour and ultimately leads to her death.

This is not to relieve Donal of responsibility for Minnie's death; after all, Donal never corrects the idea of him being a gunman on the run. No, Minnie remains entirely innocent, even in attempting to save him from arrest because she acts in good faith according to her own political will and conscience. Nor is Donal entirely culpable for her death, as Seamus and the other men in the building share in the blame. Even the Auxiliaries are not wholly responsible, as Minnie dies trying to escape their custody during an IRA ambush (156). O'Casey assigns blame to all the men in the play, men who represent Ireland, nationalism, and oppression. Minnie goes to her death willingly because of her belief in and admiration for the idea of Donal as an IRA gunman. That admiration and her beauty fuels Donal and, along with the lust he feels for her, influences the decision he makes to maintain the ruse of being a hero. Like the flowers, Minnie serves as inspiration for Donal, not a potential relationship to invest emotionally in. He shows this by maintaining the deception of him being a gunman.

Donal has several opportunities to clarify his relationship with the IRA that he either deflects or outright ignores. Seamus brings this knowledge to his attention after the landlord,

Mr. Mulligan, attempts to evict them, mentioning that the reason for their eviction stems from Mulligan's fear of a raid (100). Donal laughs it off, and Seamus leaves to sell his goods. When Minnie repeats Mulligan's suspicion that Donal is a gunman (109), Donal has the opportunity to correct her and the neighbourhood, thereby avoiding the raid at the end of the play. The bombs would have still been left by Maguire, but Tommy Owens would not have boasted of his association with Donal as IRA soldiers, and the Auxiliaries would not have targeted the tenement for the raid. Maguire did not live in the flat, which means that his death at Knocksedan might not have led back to Donal. Had Donal simply been honest, Minnie might not have died, and Donal could have continued to write poetry; or, if the raid still occurred, Donal would have been innocent of any wrongdoing, maintaining his integrity in the eyes of the audience.

Instead, Donal gives in to his attraction towards Minnie neither denying nor confirming the rumour. Minnie's admiration for him grows, and she asks him if he ever becomes afraid during ambushes (110). This innocent question entraps Donal in his lie, forcing him to create a person that does not exist in order to seduce Minnie. When she calls him by name, and offers to cleans his place despite what the neighbours might think, Donal has completed his seduction. O'Casey uses this moment of seduction to also foreshadow Minnie's death in the stage directions after Donal tells her to use his first name. She does so *"[r]apidly, half afraid of Davoren's excited emotions"* (110). Although she sees him as a hero, she recognizes his sexual urges, and might wonder at his motivations. Tommy Owens' arrival stops things from turning physical, but only after Donal attempts to kiss her.

The rest of Act I marks the various opportunities Donal has of correcting his neighbour's views of him as a gunman. Doing so, however, would require him to admit his lie to Minnie, removing her admiration and any possibilities of a physical relationship. Therefore, when Tommy implies their shared association through the IRA, Donal does not

deny being a gunman, only his association with the nationalist movement (112). Instead of turning away Mrs. Henderson and Mr. Gallogher, he – somewhat unwillingly – accepts responsibility for delivering Mr. Gallogher's appeal for IRA intervention in a personal matter (120). This serves to further entrap Donal, creating physical evidence tying him to the IRA, but also threatening to force him into that role or risk losing Minnie's admiration as well.

Despite all of these opportunities and the risks involved in maintaining the ruse, Donal consciously decides to continue, stating in the concluding lines of Act I:

> "Donal, Minnie; Minnie, Donal. Very pretty, but very ignorant. A gunman on the run! Be careful, be careful, Donal Davoren. But Minnie is attracted to the idea, and I am attracted to Minnie. And what danger can there be in being the shadow of a gunman?" (124)

The danger he mentions might refer to Minnie discovering his lie, and not the potential harm that could come from the Auxiliaries or Black and Tans thinking he an IRA rebel. I would think that if he was referring to the Auxies or Black and Tans, he would easily see the danger. Therefore, his dismissal of any possible danger would be indicative of his focus on seducing Minnie. This line of thought is confirmed in the second act, when he discovers the Mill's – grenades (Murray 51) – bombs in Maguire's bag. Up to that point, he is happy to accept the admiration of his peers; the discovery of those grenades forces him to accept two realities. On the one hand, he must act as a gunman in order to maintain the admiration that Minnie has for him. More importantly, however, is the realization of the physical violence that comes from being a gunman. Donal's abject terror in the presence of those grenades signifies this realization and explains his inaction when Minnie takes them away, sacrificing herself.

In addition to receiving her admiration, developing a physical relationship with Minnie becomes significant in Donal's writing process. Just before they are interrupted by Tommy Owens, Donal finds joy in Minnie's courage. When read in the context of his

ultimate goal for the end of Act I, which is to get a kiss from Minnie, the term joy seems to describe his sexual urges, not his mental state. His resulting declaration connects her as his soul, declaring her a pioneer in action and he a pioneer in thought; he identifies them as "two powers that shall 'grasp this scheme of things entire, and mould life nearer to the heart's desire'" (111). [18] In short, Minnie's admiration provokes Donal's poetic inspiration, which fuels his lust for her. Donal identifies his need for her admiration as a way to write more poetry in addition to the physical benefits of sex. Typing her name with his, albeit at her request, links the two influences she has over him while also sealing his fate when she dies.

Minnie doesn't come back into the play until after the raid has started in time to take Maguire's bag to her room and save Donal. Their reactions in this moment of uncertainty are telling; Donal, who is terrified of the grenades, does nothing to stop Minnie sacrificing her freedom as a sign of her love for him (146). After her capture, Donal does nothing to protect Minnie either, choosing only to lament his decision to let her leave, without actually doing anything to save her, or reveal the truth about who he is. Minnie's death only provokes him to consider the new inconveniences, because he at no point confesses his lies. Ironically, Minnie's death creates a paradox for Donal in creating a new source of poetic inspiration that he dares not use because of how it reflects on his own actions. His self-attributed title of poltroon and poet embodies this; his poetic inspiration within the play is born out of a lie that ends in death. He will likely be implicated through the discovery of the slip of paper with Minnie's name (with his covered in blood), which means he will need to leave the tenement immediately to avoid capture. At the same time, his poetry will only be of his shame in her

[18] The main part of this quote is a variation of Edward Fitzgerald's translation of the stanza entitled "Ah, Love! Could Thou and I with Fate Conspire" in the Rubaiyat by Omar Khayyam.

death – "Oh, Donal Davoren, shame is your portion now till the silver cord is loosened and the golden bowl be broken" (157) – which he can't write without admitting his culpability in her death through the perpetuation of his lie.

At the same time, Minnie's death serves as further poetic inspiration for Donal. In her article "Poets, Poltroons, and Platitudes: A Study of Sean O'Casey's *The Shadow of a Gunman*," Bernice Schrank argues that Davoren avoids taking responsibility in Minnie's death. Though he initially admits his responsibility for her death, Schrank points out that his language becomes more poetic. She comes to the conclusion that "[r]ather than Donal expressing himself, Donal the poet is watching Donal the man expressing himself" (Schrank 59). In other words, Donal's proclamation of his guilt is not a confession, but a descriptive narrative of his emotions. He doesn't mourn Minnie's death as much as he mourns his own loss of status and freedom. Minnie is no more significant to Donal than his wild flowers: beautiful living things that inspire his writing. Davoren has become a literal shadow of a gunman, who is forced to go on the run to avoid taking responsibility for his decisions.

Shadows and lighting

The primary means of symbolic colour as visual representation in *The Shadow of a Gunman* lie in the lighting and shading of the production. However, O'Casey gives limited specific direction regarding the lighting and colouring of the stage. This is a common practice among playwrights; Irish dramatists contemporary to O'Casey typically gave few, if any, stage directions. Plays by Shaw, Synge, and Yeats focus on the dialogue, either relying on dramatic styles to inform stage design (as in Yeat's Noh plays), or leaving stage construction to the producer's interpretation. Whatever the case, stage directions in those plays tend to be very minimal. O'Casey, on the other hand, provides very detailed stage directions regarding the setting, props, and functionality of the stage. As he provides little by

way of direction regarding the use of lighting in the stage directions in *Shadow*, it becomes important to combine the existing stage directions with textual clues.

While the inclusion of technical aspects like lighting and shading in a literary analysis might not seem necessary, I contend that it is essential in this instance in order to fully evaluate the message O'Casey gives to audiences. Because he pays particular attention to the details of his stage design, it would be relevant to consider the potential reasons behind his use of lighting on stage. For example, O'Casey added some additional direction to the Samuel French 1958 printing of *Shadow* that should be considered. Included in the text is a stage design and lighting plot, directing in Act I that white floats and the "No. 1 batten" flood the stage on a "full up" setting (*Shadow,* Samuel French edition, 48). A float is British jargon for footlight, while a batten is a border light or striplight, which in theatre and stage design provides a basic cover of light over the stage called flooding (Reid 13). In his *Stage Lighting Handbook*, Francis Reid identifies flooding as the process of controlling the direction of light; it cannot be focused or shaped, which makes it a very basic tool for the stage designer (11). O'Casey called for two additional "four-white lamp" strips to be added to the stage, completing the lighting directions (*Shadow,* Samuel French edition, 48).

While this might not be as obvious to audiences as the props on stage, it is important to note that white is the only colour used in the lighting scheme of Act I. As Reid points out, the simplest reason for adding colour to stage lighting is to enhance the look of scenery, costumes, and actors (Reid 77). Therefore, the use of white light set at full doesn't make sense if O'Casey's intent was to create an entirely realist set. Although Act I is set during noontime on a Sunday in May,[19] a time of year when the sun will nearly be at its brightest, the

[19] Donal, in answer to Seamus' question of the time, states that "it must be half-past twelve" (Shadow 96).

whole play takes place inside the tenement building. I would expect that there would be some colour in the lighting to create a more suitable, natural light, similar to what is described in Act II. Instead, O'Casey creates an artificial environment. Reid supports this notion, stating that because of its limited controllability, the overuse of floodlighting highlights the framing of the stage instead of the acting area (Reid, 11). Therefore, setting the floodlights at full with only white would not be the most effective use of lighting for a stage manager.

The resulting appearance of the stage of *Shadow* with such lighting would potentially look to audiences as a picture within a frame. It can be inferred that whether O'Casey did or did not have the technical knowledge to recognize this initially, his participation in the original production rehearsals and additional lighting directions to the later edition indicate that the lighting was, at the very least, intentional. O'Casey flooded the stage intentionally, knowing that the lighting would take away from acting space, creating a frame like quality; what, then, was his purpose for doing that? O'Casey was not educated as a dramatist; he was a home-schooled, working-class labourer. His theatrical education came from his participation in literary clubs and his connection with the Abbey, but that experience would indicate only a cursory education on the technical skills of staging drama. O'Casey likely added the lighting directions through experimentation during rehearsals.

As a result, the lighting in *Shadow* provides a physical framework for an analysis of the text. Within the context of the play, the white light of Act I highlights the constructed realities and hypocrisies of the various men. Donal is not a gunman on the run, but maintains the ruse in order to pursue Minnie Powell. By accepting and advancing the false perception of him being an IRA gunman as a means of seduction, Donal is a metaphorical shadow, or a partial representation, of a gunman. He, as well as the rest of the cast, also becomes a metaphorical shadow as a representation of the Irish people, in the same way that *The Drums*

of Father Ned is a "mickrocosm of Ireland." Tommy Owens declares himself ready to fight with the IRA to impress Donal, and Mr. Gallogher appeals to Donal for IRA justice instead of dealing with his neighbours himself. Seamus speaks out against the nationalist movement after having been a nationalist himself.

Each man in his own way is a shadow of something. Grigson is the shadow of a good man, but is in reality a drunk that abuses his wife in the name of religion. Maguire is a shadow in that he dies in Knocksedan acting as a counterpoint to Davoren's deceit. He should be the most important character in the play, in that he actually is participating in the War of Independence, but he is relegated to the periphery. This is a reflection of O'Casey's opinion as shared through Seumas Shields, when he declares that "I draw the line when I hear the gunmen blowin' about dyin' for the people, when it's the people that are dyin' for the gunmen! With all due respect to the gunmen, I don't want them to die for me" (*Shadow* 132). O'Casey doesn't want a war that ignores the needs of any group of people. Perhaps the only exception to this is Mr. Mulligan, the landlord who serves Seamus an eviction notice, and does nothing else throughout the play. During the day, the men of the play promote false ideas of themselves to impress their neighbours. Just as the lighting creates a stage that focuses more on the framing of the stage then the actors, the characters create an image of themselves that is meant to enhance their own importance to their neighbours.

The darkness of Act II, then, serves to expose reality, breaking down the constructed realities and hypocrisies of Act I. The lighting of the stage, which takes place in the early morning of the following day (*Shadow* 131) contrasts with the white light of Act I, utilizing blue lighting within the room, frosted baby amber on the candle, and a steel blue flood coming through the window over Seamus' bed creating moonlight (*Shadow*, Samuel French edition, 48). Although O'Casey includes more realistic lighting in Act II, its simplicity serves as a contrast to the purpose of the white lights in Act I. Where the various characters speak

of action during the day, they are forced to act during the raid at night. Donal, who has embraced the false notion of being a gunman, is forced to deal with the threat of that perception mixed with Maguire's bag of Mill's bombs during an Auxiliary raid. Reality dashes his hopes for peace to write, as he must surely recognize the trap his lies have created for him.

The tragic results of the raid are foreshadowed as O'Casey considers the relationship between light and darkness further through Davoren's poetic ruminations. In Act I, Davoren speaks of love and springtime, constructing an image of him and Minnie "bow'd as worshippers before/The Golden Celandine" (*Shadow*, 107). I argued earlier that the celandine, along with the wild violets and Wake Robins on Davoren's desk, served as a symbolic trinity of beauty. In addition to that argument, in the context of light and darkness, the Celandine serves as a symbol of the sun as well. The sun, which brings light, coincides with the lighting choices in Act I as well as Davoren's notions of love. Therefore, where the "Golden Celandine" would be considered a God of love within the trinity of beauty, it would then also be connected to the sun as the external appearance of human behaviour. Donal creates the notion, or shadow, of a gunman in his pursuit of Minnie Powell. The onset of night, then, exposes reality through the moon.

I believe that the inclusion of the Donal's poem is a rather crude attempt to set up the beginning of Act II. Quoting from Percy Bysshe Shelley's "Epipsychidion," the act starts with the following lines:

> The cold chaste moon, the Queen of Heaven's bright isles,
> Who makes all beautiful on which she smiles;
> That wandering shrine of soft yet icy flame,
> Which ever is transformed yet still the same (*Shadow*, 135).

Davoren's melancholy reflections at the beginning of Act II stand in stark contrast to

his carefree attitude at the end of Act I. This change in mood may be meant as a foreshadowing of Minnie's death and Davoren's recognition of his cowardice. However, a more interesting consideration places Minnie as the moon in those lines. Her beauty, which O'Casey describes as "a rare thing in a city girl," has exerted her influence on Davoren, as seen through his pursuit of her (105). Like the Lady Emilia Viviani, for whom "Epipsychidion" is written, Minnie has been imprisoned (Shelley xi).

Where Lady Emilia was sent away to a convent, Minnie's poverty and lack of education have prevented her – at least in Davoren's eyes – from realising her potential as an artist: "Had poor Minnie received an education she would have been an artist" (*Shadow* 130). Even with the lack of formal education, Davoren sees her beauty as a redeeming quality in the tenement, making everything around her more beautiful. However, he does not include his room as redeemable, calling it "thrice accursed" (125). Why say it is cursed at all, and three times? Perhaps he sees the inhabitants in the room as cursing it. Maguire has been killed, Seamus is stuck selling wares that are either bent or broken, and Davoren can't seem to find the peace he wants in order to write his poetry.

Another, perhaps more likely, alternative could be that this moment of reflection focuses inwardly. In Shelley's poem, the line just following the quoted section says that the moon "warms not but illumines" (Shelley, line 285). Davoren's seduction does not fulfil him because it is a lie. He must recognize that at some point he will either have to admit his lie, or act on it. This is the ugliness that he refers to that cannot be made beautiful, because its illumination represents the end of his means of poetic inspiration and sexual satisfaction. Foreshadowing Minnie's death, Davoren declares his "last state is worse than [his] first" (*Shadow,* 125). He further explains through writing his own poetry, describing the moon, and therefore Minnie, seeing that "All beautiful and happiest things are dead" (125).

As he sits in the shadows of the early morning, contemplating the light of the moon,

the audience is meant to see him as a literal shadow. Davoren's transformation to being a shadow of a gunman comes during the raid through to after the ending of the play. Having realized that Maguire's bag contains grenades, he is frozen in fear, unable to say anything even as Minnie comes to take them away and sacrifice her freedom, and ultimately her life for him. His only options are to either stay with Seamus in the room and deal with the consequences of his lies or to escape them by leaving the tenement as a shadow of a gunman on the run.

Juno and the Paycock, O'Casey's second play, takes place in 1922 during the violent Irish Civil war. Where colour in *Shadow* is limited, in *Juno* it is scarce, placed mostly adjectively with little or no symbolic meaning. However, I chose this play for two reasons: first, it is one of O'Casey's most popular and produced plays, and second, because while instances of colour are scarce, there are a couple of significant instances of colour that warrant analysis. One example of colour symbolism comes at the very beginning where Mary Boyle debates between wearing a blue or green ribbon. Given O'Casey's sense of political awareness, the historical context of the play, and Mary's own political activism, the colours seem to act as opposing Irish attitudes regarding nationalism and labour. Later in the play, when Mary asks Charles Bentham which ribbon she should wear, the question seems loaded with political and social undertones. With the Republic's recent separation from the United Kingdom, Mary's question could be read as not only as a manifestation of companionship but also as a willingness to forsake her national identity to follow him.

Considering her declaration of love for him in Act III and resulting pregnancy within the religious and cultural context of early 20th century Ireland, this is not a difficult argument to make. Mary's behaviour might be considered a betrayal as deep as Johnny's of his friend and comrade, Commandant Tancred. Captain Boyle certainly reacts in this manner, promising that "if I lay me eyes on her, I'll lay me hans on her, an' if I lay me hans on her, I

won't be accountable for me actions!" (*Juno*, 77). In Mary's case, though, O'Casey clearly identifies her as the victim at the hand of the incompetent Charles Bentham. Therefore, whatever betrayal the Boyle men feel is the result of the religious culture in Dublin and the damage to their social well-being. Both the Captain and Johnny first react by demanding that she hide her sin through marriage, either to Charles Bentham (74) or to Jerry Devine (82).

The more obvious example of colour comes in Act II with the transformation from poverty to wealth in the Boyle home. At the beginning of the play, O'Casey calls for what seems like a typical tenement home: basic functional furniture and a stove and basic religious decorations (*Juno* 3). With the knowledge of a pending inheritance, the Boyles redecorate so that by beginning of Act II the stage is:

> The same, but the furniture is more plentiful, and of a vulgar nature. A glaringly upholstered armchair and lounge; cheap pictures and photos everywhere. Every available spot is ornamented with huge vases filled with artificial flowers. Crossed festoons of coloured paper chains stretch from end to end of ceiling. (36)

The vulgar and gaudy furniture, artificial flowers, and cheap pictures create a fragile appearance of wealth, but are obviously also meant to underscore the tenuous nature of Boyle's apparently new found wealth. While Act II sets up the tragic events of Act III, it also serves as perhaps O'Casey's perception of Ireland and the violence of the revolutionary period. Having become disenfranchised with the Irish Citizen Army and its embracing of nationalism, O'Casey creates the image of a nation with an artificial sense of its own stability.

Juno finds its symbolism in the lighting of the play, both in the stage design and in the dialogue and text. In the Samuel French edition of the play that O'Casey commissioned, the lighting plot creates a more natural stage, utilizing various coloured lights to simulate sunlight/moonlight and electric light, as well as light via a fireplace and hot plate (Samuel

French *Juno*, 64). Where lighting in Shadow focused on an artificial stage, the lighting of Juno returns the focus to the characters and the plot. Therefore, the room might be considered a natural representation of a tenement home and go largely unnoticed by audience members who focused on the farce and tragedy of the character's decisions. The significant use of light comes primarily from the votive candle that is lit on stage to the Virgin Mary and the unseen votive candle lit to St. Anthony offstage in Johnny's room. Both seem innocently placed, common for the home of a practicing Catholic, yet they serve to represent the historical context of Dublin and the civil war as well as Johnny Boyle's betrayal.

The light of the votive candle, then, serves as representational space in several ways. In the first instance, the light of the candle represents the religious culture that pervades all of O'Casey's dramaturgy. It is introduced in the opening stage directions as being located under a picture of the Virgin Mary, floating in a crimson bowl (3). Obviously a sign of religious adherence, the picture and candle are the only types of church influence that figure in the play, yet O'Casey always had a lot to say about the influence of Christianity in Ireland. In his dramatic work, O'Casey always includes religion in some manner; See, the role of the church in *Red Roses for Me*, *The Harvest Festival*, *Cock a Doodle Dandy*, *The Bishop's Bonfire*, *Within the Gates*, and *The Star Turns Red* – each of which contains a priest or reverend as a primary or influential character - or again, see the cultural influence of religion as felt in the Dublin Tetralogy and shorter plays, each of which discusses some moral or social issue in addition to the ubiquitous political message recognizable in O'Casey. Additionally, a good deal of the problems after 1916 Ireland included conflict between Catholics and Protestants and the influence of the church in Irish politics. While the candle serves as a marker for Johnny's death, it also situates the staged area firmly within the influence of religious Ireland. This is not to say that the Boyle family is necessarily faithful, but points more to the political and social control the Catholic church held in Ireland during the 1920's, as well as the

Boyles' adherence to the cultural norms of their surroundings.

On the surface, in addition to being the focal point in the home, religion in Juno also serves to advance the plot line surrounding Tancred's death, Johnny's involvement in his death, and Johnny's death as a response. Although this superficial response dominates the course of action in the play, it goes largely unnoticed on stage both both literally and figuratively. The candle to the Virgin Mary is placed onstage, but is hidden by the red bowl it is put in. Rather than exuding red light onstage through the already present red bowl, O'Casey includes the second, unseen candle dedicated to St. Anthony offstage. Johnny's description of Tancred "kneelin' down before the statue…an the red light shinin' on him", (46) and Charles Bentham's confirmation of "light burning bravely before the statue" (47) are the audience's only reminder of that second candle's existence. Yet without the candle and Johnny's obsession with it being lit, there is little else that suggests Johnny's guilt over his responsibility for Tancred's death.

As I have argued earlier, the state of the Boyles' tenement home serves as a representation of Ireland. I would like to expand on that argument through a consideration of the votive candle as a mode of historical context with regards to the Irish Civil War. *Juno,* which is set in 1922, contains several nods to the various events of that tumultuous year. Mary's participation in a trades union strike in support of a fellow worker hints at the several strikes that persisted throughout the early years of the Irish Republic. Johnny, along with Tancred and the gunmen, obviously represents the soldiers and conflict of the civil war. In "*The Integrity of Juno and the Paycock*," William A. Armstrong points out the similarities of Tancred's and Johnny's deaths with real life incidents found in *Inishfallen, Fare Thee Well* (Armstrong, 2-3).

Mr. Nugent, Maisie Madigan, the coal vendor, and sewing machine vendor all represent the economic hardships that Ireland experienced as well. Charles Bentham can

easily be seen as the imperialist and victimising Brit who remains indifferent to Ireland's plight. Finally, the Boyle family serve as a very real representation of the people of Ireland, led by a "procrastinator and prognosticator" – Captain Boyle's favourite insult – who talks a big game but spends all of his time avoiding work by hiding in pubs (*Juno* 32). Juno Boyle, a working wife who struggles to keep her family together, can be likened to the Roman Goddess of the family and fidelity as well the figure of Kathleen ni Houlihan. Having been informed of their inheritance, the family squanders the money before they even have a chance to see it, and the family disintegrates with Johnny's death and Mary's pregnancy.

That being said, most of these elements are only discoverable sub-textually. The only mentions of civil war are all indirect, and the only violence portrayed on stage happens at the end when Gunmen enter the Boyle's home to take Johnny away to execute him for his role in Tancred's death (59). That execution, which occurs during the play, happens offstage. Therefore, audiences would have to infer that historical information for themselves. In the case of *Juno,* the votive candle connects the Boyle home to the Irish civil war. The light of the votive candle in *Juno* serves as a representation of Johnny Boyle's betrayal of commandant Tancred. The text hints at this betrayal starting with the first words of the play. The curtain raises on Mary sitting at a table reading a newspaper while Juno waits for Captain Boyle to come home. The newspaper article, which describes Tancred's death, causes an immediate reaction from Johnny. His first lines are to denounce the description of Tancred's wounds, declaring that "It'll soon be that none of you'll read anythin' that's not about butcherin'!" (4) This initial outburst is innocent enough, obviously not worrying Juno or Mary, who seem to only find it odd that he needs two votive candles lit. However, this moment, along with the several others culminate in the understanding that Johnny was attempting to hide his association with Tancred to avoid taking responsibility for Tancred's death.

The *Silver Tassie* tends to be considered O'Casey's first expressionist play, but expressionistic elements can be seen in *The Plough* as well. This play has much more in terms of colour to be considered and analysed. One of those elements is Uncle Peter, whose presence in the play serves to mock the romantic notion of the Irishman. Peter remains static, only reacting to the environment around him and not changing it. He responds to the Coveys' treatment of him by complaining but rarely retaliating. Although he is older than Nora, he defers to her authority in the house and throughout the play, indeed, he defers to the authority or assumed authority of the others around him. This inability to change manifests, at least in part, in the uniform that he wears in the first two acts. Although the quality of the picture in figure 1 itself is very poor – it comes from a scanned newspaper clipping – several inferences can be made. He is wearing a uniform, probably the Foresters' uniform described in the stage directions, which means that his coat is green with gold braids and his slouch hat is green; his shirt, trousers and the feather in his slouch hat are white (O'Casey 180). Also included in the picture are Tom the barman, Fluther Good, and Rosie Redmond. Fluther appears to be wearing a well-worn suit and hat, and Rosie and Tom seem to be dressed in fairly clean clothes. The contrast between Peter and the other three is very clear.

Clearly supporting nationalism (the Foresters' basic ideology supported Irish nationalism), Peter willingly dresses up and participates in the parade in Act II. However, Peter stays away from the fighting during Easter Week, too scared to even join in with the looting that occurs in Act III. Peter does not avoid the fight because of a fear of the law; he tries several times to follow Fluther and the Covey, but sounds of the fighting sends him running back in fear. He does go in search of Nora with the Covey, but one gets the sense that he does so only out of love for her as a relative. That in itself is heroic, but he only manages to do it with others, and Fluther eventually finds Nora on his own. Once Peter returns to the tenement, he does not leave it until marched out by British soldiers at the end of the play.

This hypocrisy also manifests in Peter's uniform in that it has little actual substance compared to the Irish Citizen Army (ICA) uniform that Clitheroe, Brennan, and Langon wear. His uniform portrays the image of heroism instead of actually being heroic (see figure 2), and is decorative, meant to be looked at and admired, but put away before any damage ruins it. O'Casey does this intentionally, noting in the acting edition of *The Plough* that "intelligent Irishmen" viewed the uniform as a "subject of amusement" (O'Casey Acting Ed. 74).

Whereas Peter wears a sword as a part of his uniform, Jack and his companions are prepared to fight in a sensible green uniform with a practical Sam Browne belt that carries a firearm, ammunition, and other supplies. The uniform itself uses a darker green colour, one more suited to the battlefield and made of thick material designed to endure extended use. The symbol of the ICA, the Red Hand, is small and serves a functional purpose on their slouch hat. More important is their attitude and later action regarding the upcoming fight. Where Peter enters and exits the pub multiple times to grab a drink and revel in his nationalistic enthusiasm, Clitheroe, Langon, and Brennan only come in at the end of the parade to drink to Ireland. They clearly state their intent to fight with all their might in the defence of Ireland and accept death as a potential outcome. Another symbol of their devotion can be seen in their holding of the Plough and the Stars (the ICA flag) and the Tricolour. This contrasts with everyone else, for whom alcohol takes precedence, whereas the three soldiers drink only to demonstrate their absolute commitment to the coming rebellion.

The fourth act reveals each character's true motivations. Peter, the Covey, and Fluther all hide in Bessie Burgess' tenement room with Nora and Mrs. Gogan, whereas Langon has been dead since Act III, and Brennan returns from the battlefield to bring news of Clitheroe's participation and death at the General Post Office prior to the surrender. Peter, the Covey, and Fluther insult Corporal Stoddard in a moment of political bravado while Brennan attempts to

hide among them and escape notice. Whether Peter is still wearing his Forester's uniform is unknown, because O'Casey's only costuming directions of Peter are in the first and second act. Images of the original production support the inference that because of the time lapse of several months between Acts I and II, III, and IV, Peter has changed out of his uniform for similar apparel as his neighbours (see figure 3). Clitheroe and Langon both die in their uniforms and Brennan only changes out of his once the surrender takes place and he is on the run from English soldiers. Peter, on the other hand, seems to have left his nationalist zeal at the parade in Act II. O'Casey exposes Peter for the hypocrite he is by contrasting his experience with Clitheroe, Langon, and Brennan. However, he also attacks the mythologized idea of Ireland before all by recognizing the flaws and weaknesses of even those who died in Easter Week.

This stark portrayal of the men of 1916, along with Nora's declaration that the rebels are "afraid to say that they are afraid" (O'Casey 221) help to explain the reaction of audience members during the initial production. Several wives of fallen revolutionaries attended and participated in the riots at the Abbey theatre, accusing O'Casey of defaming the sacrifice of their husbands, among them Mrs. Pearse, Mrs. Tom Clarke and Mrs. Sheehy-Skeffington (Holloway 254). James Moran comments on Margaret Pearse's adverse reaction to her son being portrayed as "grey and gloomy figure" in *Staging the Easter Rising*, noting the ironic point that O'Casey literally positions Pearse in a bad light (Moran 48, 46). Reducing him to a shadow of a man through a window, away from the real life of Dublin which is inside the pub is reminiscent of the character Donal Davoren from *The Shadow of a Gunman*. Where Donal assumes the false guise that he is a gunman on the run and lets Minnie die to save him, Pearse only appears as a shadow in Act II and seemingly disappears, leaving Clitheroe and Langon to die for him. O'Casey obviously knew of Pearse's participation in the Rising and his resulting execution. It is easy to see how Mrs. Pearse could have seen her son's reduced role

in a poor light as insulting.

O'Casey argued against the idea that he was portraying the Rising as a failed effort and its participants as cowards; in response to Hannah Skeehy-Sheffington's editorial in the *Irish Independent*, O'Casey stated that "[t]here isn't a coward in the play. Clitheroe falls in the fight. Does Mrs. Skeffington want him to do anymore?" To her criticism that he ought to write as the Greeks did in terms of tragedy, he replies that rather than write about "ancient gods and heroes," he "is interested in men and women" (*Irish Independent* 26 Feb. 1926 page 8). Clearly, O'Casey sought to portray the Rising realistically, purposefully rejecting the mythologizing Republicanism that portrayed 1916 in terms of unflinching heroes who marched happily to their deaths. To him, suppressing the realities of the efforts of all of the participants detracted from the real point, that the politics of the Rising is far more complex than simple nationalism.

One final thought regarding colour in the original production. Benstock writes in Sean O'Casey that O'Casey "equated the pretty girl in pretty clothes with a vibrant love of life, in significant contrast to the mean existences of sex-fearing males" (Benstock 103). In *The Plough and the Stars*, Nora does fit that type, at least in the first act, literally carrying new life within her and displaying a desire to live above her social class by ordering nice hats and dressing in nicer clothes than those around her. However, by the end of the production, she is unkempt in her night gown, has lost her baby, and has suffered some sort of mental breakdown. Caused by Clitheroe and his political zeal as well as the political and economic environment of 1916 Dublin, the devolution of Nora's vibrancy and mental state is O'Casey's way of visualizing the negative effects of war and the basis for his denunciation of it. Only one woman retains that vibrancy throughout her part in the production and that is Rosie Redmond. The name itself is suggestive of colour, with the name Rosie resembling the shade of red and the word red being a part of her surname. She becomes associated, at least to me,

with Hester Prynne of *The Scarlet Letter*. In figure 4, Mia Rooney, who played Rosie, stands next to O'Casey in what appears to be a posed shot. While her clothes seem worn, they also do not make her appear to be destitute. She is fair skinned with an air of self-assuredness that matches Rosie's actions in the text. Her attempts to seduce the men of the pub during the parade bolster the image of an independent woman who controls her own fortune.

Not affiliated with the Rising, she says whatever her mark wants to hear, whether it is Fluther and his fighting prowess or the Covey and his Marxist ideology. She does not seem interested in the parade itself, staying for the most part inside the pub, while the others seem to come in to grab a drink and head back out or listen to the Man in the Window. Responding aggressively to the Covey calling her a prostitute, she defends her femininity and is restrained by Fluther, who takes it upon himself to fight on her behalf. The only real indication of potential self-doubt is her "wild humiliation" at being called a prostitute (O'Casey 210). She identifies herself as a woman, and the Covey's remark confines her identity to a perceived inferior role. She chooses to not base her identity on her profession, instead utilizing her skills to make a living within her social and financial environment. She does not concern herself with the Rising or nationalism in general; by the end of Act II, she has succeeded in seducing Fluther, and the two of them saunter off stage arm in arm in drunken bliss. While she does not appear in any of the other three acts, one has to assume that she willingly participated in the looting during Act III. This would certainly increase the odds of her being injured or killed during the fighting; however, the political events affect her ability to provide for herself, and she is entrepreneurial enough to do so without any outside assistance. Again, it is not difficult to understand why a mostly Christian audience might react negatively to a confident and enterprising prostitute on stage.

Despite the limitation of available photographic and written evidence, analysing the use of colour in the 1926 production remains possible. The comparison of Peter Flynn's

uniform and actions as a nationalist with Clitheroe's, Langon's, and Brennan's allowed O'Casey to flesh out the complexity of the narrative 10 years after the Easter Rising. I did not include the role that Bessie Burgess played as the mother of a son fighting for the English army in WWI, nor did I cover much of the role of the Irish Volunteers, which O'Casey certainly knew about, and therefore must have intentionally left out.[20] However, focusing on Peter and Jack, particularly on the colour and utility of their uniforms, allows for some interesting conclusions. Peter's flashy and fashionable uniform and decorative sword confirms his hypocrisy and similarity to the likes of Joxer Daly from *Juno and the Paycock* and Seumas Shields from *The Shadow of a Gunman,* willing to talk and complain but never to take any sort of action. Jack's more sensible and battle-ready uniform consisting of a heavy green coat and set of trousers with a highly functional Sam Browne belt set him apart as one who acted upon his political dreams. O'Casey certainly faults him for abandoning Nora for Irish glory, but he shows appreciation for his valour in Jack's death in the GPO. Rosie's youth and vitality set her apart from the other characters in the play, particularly over Nora who starts out that way but by the end of the play has deteriorated because of her losses. In

[20] Bessie Burgess's character represents those Irish men and women who, while supporting the Home Rule effort, saw the need to set that aside until the end of World War I. Many Irish soldiers fought with the allied troops in Europe and a division arose between those who supported the war effort and those who saw the war as a means of achieving independence. Many of the British soldiers who quelled the Rising where in fact Irish. In addition to this, the participants of the Easter Rising were made up of a coalition of the Irish Citizen Army, a working class socialist movement, and the Irish Volunteers, an Irish Nationalist movement. It is this coalition that drove O'Casey from the ICA, as can be read about in his *History of the Irish Citizen Army*.

portraying the reality of the Easter Rising and ignoring the prevailing habit of mythologizing Easter week, O'Casey successfully addresses the complexities and issues of the nationalist movement.

The *Silver Tassie* has historically been separated from *Shadow*, *Juno*, and *Plough*, most likely a result of the controversy surrounding the expressionistic Act II and its rejection from the Abbey Theatre in 1928. O'Casey's resulting well-documented public argument with Yeats regarding its utility as a play and self-imposed exile from Ireland, however, dominated the early critical dialogue surrounding the early productions and polarized critics ever since. Because of these factors, *Tassie* is consistently excluded from the earlier trilogy. Benstock categorizes *Tassie* with *Within the Gates*, (Benstock 90), but I will argue that *Tassie* ought to be included in with what should become the Dublin Tetralogy. In this play, O'Casey uses colour similarly to how he does in the later plays, bringing it out more specifically to carry more significant symbolic weight.

To do this, one need only consider the basic geographical location and construction of the play. While the setting of *Tassie* is situated in France for Act II, it still fits within the framework of his tenement plays. Act I takes place in the Dublin tenement home of the Heegans, within sight of a quay and a steamer that turns out to be the transport ship for Heegan's unit. The primary characters of the play are Harry Heegan's neighbours, and Acts III and IV take place within the same Dublin community as Act I. Even in France, the only non-Irish characters onstage are the staff wallah and the visitor. Geographically, *Tassie* is better suited with *Shadow*, *Juno*, and *Plough* then *Within the Gates*, which seems to avoid any direct connection to Ireland. Additionally, claims that *Tassie* is better suited outside of the Dublin plays because of its expressionist Act II ignore or dismiss the elements that don't quite fit with those earlier works. Instead of separating *Tassie* from them, we ought to view the four plays as the early evolution of O'Casey's dramaturgy. In *Shadow*, Seaumus hears a

supernatural tapping on the wall; in *Juno*, Johnny's life depends on the light of the votive candles in his home; and in *Plough*, the shadowy figure heard offstage motivates the action of the play. *Tassie*, and specifically Act II, represent the next stage of O'Casey's revolution, but not one that is fundamentally different than its predecessors. The better choice for that role would be *Within the Gates*. The logical solution would be to connect *Tassie* with the Dublin Trilogy, making it a tetralogy.

3 Interpretations of the Dublin Trilogy and *The Silver Tassie*

Providing a definitive analysis of a single play's production history in the form of a monograph proves to be a difficult venture; providing the same sort of analysis for four plays within one chapter would be impossible. Therefore, this chapter does not claim to provide that analysis, instead analysing only some of the various Dublin Tetralogy productions. Where in the previous section I relied heavily on the text for my analysis, in this section my analysis is the result of production reviews, first-hand accounts, archival research, and field research. For the most part, I will limit my study of theatrical productions to those attached to the Abbey Theatre, but I also include in this analysis examples from other mediums. Focusing on Abbey productions makes sense in that, with the exception of *The Silver Tassie*, all of them premiered there and all four plays are among the Abbey's most performed productions. Even *Tassie* returned to the Abbey in 1936 to be staged.[21] However, there are also other productions outside of the Abbey that are worthy of attention as well. Perhaps more importantly, though, are the film adaptations of *Juno* (directed by Alfred Hitchcock in 1929) and *Plough* (directed by John Ford in 1936). While neither were commercially successful, both utilised actors from the respecting original production, and can therefore

[21] It should be noted that while the Abbey waited until 1936 to stage *Tassie*, the play has seen six productions and over 120 performances since then. Additionally, *Tassie* has been staged successfully several times by other theatres and tends to be considered with the Dublin Trilogy whenever it is staged.

provide some insight for my analysis.

Three issues inhibit an effective analysis of colour in O'Casey's early dramatic work at the Abbey: a limited amount of photographic evidence, other factors that dominated much of contemporary newspaper accounts, and a fire in 1951 that destroyed the Abbey theatre and much of its potential archival evidence. The few photographs that have survived come from private collections or through newspaper articles, some of which have been procured by the Abbey. However, those same photographs are all in black and white, making the identification of specific colours implausible. Fortunately, enough evidence exists to make some inferences regarding the use of colour and its effect on the Abbey audiences. The limited number of photographs that do exist show some of the stage and characters, and is then enhanced by the first-hand experiences of audience members and critics which can then be compared to O'Casey's extensive stage directions and character descriptions.

Despite the limitation of available photographic and written evidence, analysing the use of colour in the early productions remains possible. For example, a comparison of Peter Flynn's Foresters uniform and actions as a nationalist with Clitheroe's, Langon's, and Brennan's Irish Citizen Army uniform in *The Plough and the Stars* allowed O'Casey to flesh out the complexity of the narrative 10 years after the Easter Rising. Focusing on Peter and Jack, particularly on the colour and utility of their uniforms, allows for some interesting conclusions. Peter's flashy and fashionable uniform and decorative sword confirms his hypocrisy and similarity to the likes of Joxer Daly from *Juno and the Paycock* and Seumas Shields from *The Shadow of a Gunman*, willing to talk and complain but never to take any sort of action. Jack's more sensible and battle ready uniform consisting of a heavy green coat and set of trousers with a highly functional Sam Browne belt set him apart as one who acted upon his political dreams. O'Casey certainly faults him for abandoning Nora for Irish glory, but he shows appreciation for his valour in Jack's death in the GPO. Rosie's youth and

vitality set her apart from the other characters in the play, particularly over Nora who starts out that way but by the end of the play has deteriorated because of her losses. In portraying the reality of the Easter Rising and avoiding the prevailing habit of mythologizing it, The Plough, O'Casey successfully addresses the complexities and issues of the nationalist movement.

The Shadow of a Gunman, 1923

By the time *The Shadow of a Gunman* was produced in April 1923, O'Casey had unsuccessfully submitted four plays and, as he was to tell Lady Gregory, had nearly given up on seeing one of his plays produced. Likewise, the Abbey was struggling financially, on the verge of bankruptcy. Although On the Run (as *Shadow* was originally titled) was accepted, the Abbey only staged it four times at the very end of the 1923 season. The success that was about to benefit both writer and theatre was unrecognized until after it was clearly realized. Therefore, it comes as no shock that only three newspapers provided reviews and that no visual evidence of that first production exists. The only way to develop a somewhat clearer idea of what how colour might have interacted on stage in April 1923 is in the commentary of some of the actors and audience members. The obvious problem with such an inquiry is that the commenters are not capable of analysing an entire play in a short newspaper review, nor are personal accounts likely to represent a holistic view of the stage setting, the character's clothing, or poetic dialogue. I chose this particular production because I wanted to get a sense of O'Casey wanted to organize his stage and lighting. What does become clear with regards to *Shadow* is that any use of colour was judged on how the play represented Ireland in a historical setting.

This includes the language of the play; audiences of *Shadow* identified favourably with the dialect and dialogue on stage, but not because of its poetic or artistic merit. In his

journal, Joseph Holloway recorded that what the play "lacked in dramatic construction, it certainly pulled up in telling dialogue of the most topical and biting kind, and the audience revelled in the telling talk" (Holloway 215). One reviewer praised F. J. McCormick, who played Seumas Shields as "an excellent study, his midnight talk from the blankets deliciously true" (Freeman's Journal), while another described the whole cast as being perfect, having "really felt [O'Casey's] men and women were but photographs, …nothing less than the work of a genius" ("Treat at the Abbey"). The recognition of O'Casey's strength of characterization is corroborated somewhat famously by Lady Gregory, who in response to one of his earlier submissions stated that his "strength lies in characterization" (Gregory 511-512). At the same time, negative criticism focused on the photographic nature of O'Casey's characters. The Irish Times review, which seems a bit more critical of the production, commented that while "the dialogue [was] very well done," McCormick's "accent was admirably flat," before ultimately admitting that he demonstrated "the impression of a real understanding of a part superficially easy but difficult to get the most out of" (13/4/1923). Of Arthur Shield's portrayal of Donal Davoren, only one newspaper ventured to evaluate his attempt at poetry, commenting that he "was not very convincing as poet, or would-be poet until the end of the play, when he became human instead of poetic" (*Freeman's Journal*).

It is important to note here that while I am interested in how colour affects the text of *Shadow*, all the reviews and critical response to the original production focus solely on the authenticity of the play as a historical representation of civil-war Dublin. Actors in *Shadow* also commented on the authentic nature of the language. In his biography *Sean O'Casey: The Man I Knew*, Gabriel Fallon described hearing McCormick and Shields rehearsing their lines as the "richest Dublin Dialogue" he had ever heard (5). Eileen Crowe recounts in *The Sting and the Twinkle* of the comment an unidentified person made that "O'Casey is not a playwright. He's a reporter, and his plays will be forgotten in ten years" (Mikhail, 36). So it

was not the poetic nature of the dialogue that Fallon valued, but the accuracy and authenticity of the dialect in its representation of Dublin tenement dwellers. This in itself is certainly indicative of O'Casey's success in inserting Dublin culture into the play, worthy of being tied to the notion of colour language. However, the lack of commentary on the poetry present throughout the play outside of the *Freeman's Journal* shows that the literary value was less important than the connection to Dublin life, the social commentary on the political violence, and the Dublin people. Additionally, the play's naturalistic structure discouraged any real consideration of potentially poetic language any further than as a reflection of the environment being portrayed.

Juno and the Paycock

Gemma Bodinetz's 2015 production of "Juno and the Paycock" at the Old Vic in Bristol, England represents an amalgamation of the historic Irish troubles in the early 20th century with the current economic turmoil of the 21st century. I saw this production and chose to use it in this thesis because I would be able to provide a personal analysis of the play itself and how colour might be significant on stage. "Captain" Jack Boyle and his wife Juno are tenement dwellers who are suffering through severe economic difficulties. Captain Boyle suffers from mysterious self-diagnosed ailments that prevent him from being able to work, and his only cure is spirits from the local pub with his "butty" Joxer Daly. Juno works hard to keep her family afloat and to convince her lazy husband to provide for his family. Their two children are products of their time: Johnny Boyle is a disabled veteran who is plagued by his experiences and decisions, while Mary is a beautiful young woman caught up in whatever political movement is occurring at the moment as well as obsessing over young Mr. Bentham. The Boyle family is lifted out of their life of poverty when a relative bequeaths a fortune to them. Even with this temporary financial reprieve, the Boyle family struggles to deal with

the consequences of their actions.

As a whole, the play was excellently managed and performed. The stage was designed to represent the Boyle's home as well as the walkway leading up to their door. The home had no walls, which initially made envisioning a living and dining room difficult; however, the audience adapted to their environment fairly quickly. Large piles of furniture formed the walkway leading up to the front door and showed prominently throughout, serving as a convenient place to store props and also provide room for the ensemble to perform. The Boyle home was cheaply furnished, suggesting to the audience that most (if not all) of the pieces originated from the furniture piles outside. In the Second Act, the change from cheap, second -hand furniture to newly purchased furniture was subtle yet profound. By the end of the play, when the creditors came and took everything, the stage felt completely empty even with the large piles of furniture in the background.

Music was an unexpected yet pleasant addition to the production. A number of instrumental pieces and songs played throughout, helping to direct the audience's emotions. The music distracted me at first, but quickly became essential to the success of the overall story. Different types of songs seemed to represent different moods and character types. For example, a violin and piano created a sombre attitude, while Irish folk songs created a festive mood. Joxer Daly, Maisy Madigan, and Captain Boyle were the prominent voices, usually singing when they drank.

The clear stars were Captain Boyle and Joxer Daly, and Juno. Captain Boyle, played by Des McAleer, had such great chemistry with Joxer, played by Louis Dempsey, that the audience couldn't help but love to mock them. They served as the comedic release in a very intense story. Feeding off of each other while also working against each other, alcohol and laziness seemed to be the only connection they sharee. Joxer appears to be single, and Captain Boyle is not; Joxer is younger, and Captain Boyle is older. As soon as Boyle learns

of his inheritance, he promises to stop meeting Joxer even though he knows that Joxer is hiding within earshot.

Juno, played by Niamh Cusack, was the spine of the production. She was the breadwinner, the homemaker, and the enforcer of the Boyle family. While the captain assumed the role as head of the family, Juno acted as the literal head. This could be seen at the end of the play, when Johnny has died, the creditors have taken everything, Mary has been disgraced, and Captain Boyle has drowned himself in debt and drink. Juno alone cared for what was left of her family and mourned her losses.

The character that struggled the most in the play was Charlie Bentham, the young school teacher and Mary's lover. Sean O'Casey described him as having "a very high opinion of himself generally" (O'Casey Act I). Robin Morrissey's performance of him as a timid, fragile young man made him appear incompetent. Certainly, his mistake in writing Mr. Ellison's will is significant, but also a mistake that a young or new and confident employee could be expected to make. To be honest, Bentham came across as so naïve that I was a little surprised he successfully impregnated Mary. Bentham should have played the role of an arrogant or superior British oppressor and less the ignorant idiot. Obviously meant to be wealthier than the Boyle family, the economic disparity between them and Mr. Bentham should have been more clearly exploited.

The candle that stayed lit throughout the play until Johnny's capture is problematic as well. According to the stage directions, "this votive candle must be always plainly visible" (O'Casey Act I). The candle used in the production, while somewhat visible, did not dominate the room as it should have. That candle represents Sean O'Casey's use of the supernatural to progress the story towards its ultimate climax. Johnny's capture and death, as well as the overall destruction of the Boyle family. The candle always seemed to be overshadowed by the other items on the table, and the actors pointed the audience's focus

towards the picture of the Blessed Virgin. This is indicative, perhaps, of the difference in direction from the text.

The candle should have been more prominently displayed. While the director made very few changes to lines, she included many nonverbal cues that directed the audience's response. This could have been done with the candle easily as well. Additionally, while O'Casey certainly commented on financial difficulty, he focused more on the inequality of the working man by criticising the ideology of Kathleen ni Houlihan. The true victims of the Irish "troubles" were, he maintained, those tenement dwellers forced to give their lives needlessly for a corrupted nationalistic government. This is most poignantly displayed through Mrs. Tancred's lamentation of her dead son and again at the end with Juno's final monologue.

Criticism aside, "Juno and the Paycock" deserves the highest praise. Bodinetz brought the characters to life in a modern, relevant manner, entertained the audience, mostly held true to the original script, all while inserting her own voice into the production. Although there were aspects that I personally would have changed or altered, I cannot fault her decision.

The Plough and the Stars

I have selected five productions over the last 90 years to analyse the use of colour. I did so with the knowledge that the Abbey has produced *Plough* several dozen times under several dozen directors, so I endeavoured to find a representative sampling. Selecting the original and 2016 productions were the most obvious choices because O'Casey was personally involved in the original production and I was able to attend the most recent production at the Abbey. Seeing the new production allowed me to get a first-hand view and understanding of the stage and costuming and see how the director used colour on stage. Another natural selection was

the RKO Pictures 1936 film version of *The Plough* directed by John Ford, because of the controversy surrounding the film and its availability online. Although it is not a production of the Abbey Theatre, it includes several of the original cast and gives a good representation of what some aspects of the original play may have looked like. Its transformation from social commentary to propaganda reflects the overall reaction to O'Casey's original production. I had a more difficult time selecting the last two productions, and relied on the advice of Mairead Delaney, the current archivist at the Abbey Theatre.

She suggested that I look at the 1964 production, which was the Abbey's first production of *Plough* after O'Casey banned his plays from Ireland following the failed Dublin Theatre Festival in 1959, and Garry Hynes' 1991 production, a radical interpretation of the play. There were other productions that I might have used; the 2002 production represented a rejuvenation of the play at the Abbey, according to Delaney, and the 2010 and 2012 productions offered plenty of resources to analyse. However, these plays all took more of a traditional approach to the play, and the 1964 and 1991 productions allowed for a more diverse analysis. The productions that I looked at recognized and utilized O'Casey's love of colour in differing levels of intensity to provoke specific audience responses throughout the play. The earlier productions used colour in a more naturalist approach, which is to say that very few moments of colour symbolism appeared on stage. The ones that did – like Peter's uniform, the tricolour, and the Man in the Window – have a similar impact on the text as do later productions that use colour more freely in presentation. Colour represents O'Casey's language of emotion in accurately representing his character's lives while openly questioning the national attitude regarding Irish nationalism and the mythologizing of the Easter Rising.

Three issues inhibit an effective analysis of colour in the Abbey's original production of O'Casey's *The Plough and the Stars*: a limited amount of photographic evidence, the public political and social outcry that dominated much of contemporary newspaper accounts,

and a fire in 1951 that destroyed the Abbey theatre and much of its potential archival evidence. The few photographs that have survived come from private collections or through newspaper articles, some of which have been procured by the Abbey. However, those same photographs are all in black and white, making the identification of specific colours implausible. Enough evidence exists, however, to make some inferences regarding the use of colour and its effect on the Abbey audiences. The limited number of photographs that do exist show some of the stage and characters, and is then bolstered by the first hand experiences of audience members and critics as well as O'Casey's extensive stage directions and character descriptions. A mixture of *The Plough's* realist background, expressionistic figures like Uncle Peter and the Man, and political and social criticism was too provocative for Dublin audiences to not react against.

In spite of the limitation of available photographic and written evidence, analysing the use of colour in the 1926 production remains possible. The comparison of Peter Flynn's uniform and actions as a nationalist with Clitheroe's, Langon's, and Brennan's allowed O'Casey to flesh out the complexity of the narrative ten years after the Easter Rising. I do not include the role that Bessie Burgess played as the mother of a son fighting for the English army in WWI, nor do I cover much of the role of the Irish Volunteers, which O'Casey certainly knew about, and therefore must have intentionally left out. However, focusing on Peter and Jack, particularly on the colour and utility of their uniforms, allows for some interesting conclusions. Peter's flashy and fashionable uniform and decorative sword confirms his hypocrisy and similarity to the likes of Joxer Daly from *Juno and the Paycock* and Seumas Shields from *The Shadow of a Gunman*, willing to talk and complain but never to take any sort of action. Jack's more sensible and battle ready uniform consisting of a heavy green coat and set of trousers with a highly functional Sam Browne belt set him apart as one who acted upon his political dreams. O'Casey certainly faults him for abandoning Nora for

Irish glory, but he shows appreciation for his valour in Jack's death in the GPO. Rosie's youth and vitality set her apart from the other characters in the play, particularly over Nora who starts out that way but by the end of the play has deteriorated because of her losses. In portraying the reality of the Easter Rising and ignoring the prevailing habit of mythologizing Easter week, O'Casey successfully addresses the complexities and issues of the nationalist movement.

1936 Film: Mythologizing Realism

While the existence of the RKO Pictures' 1936 film *The Plough and the Stars* directed by John Ford is easier to analyse than the Abbey production, its being filmed in black and white makes analysing the use of colour difficult as well. However, there are elements of the film that invite discussion in that it is a product of discomfort. Featuring original Abbey actors such as F. J. McCormick, Barry Fitzgerald, Arthur Shields, and Eileen Crowe, the film addresses several of the scenes that sparked the riots of 1926. Rosie Redmond's role is heavily reduced, and the only hint of her as a prostitute is when the Covey refers to her as a "Judy" in the bar scene which only serves to provoke the fight between Fluther and the Covey. Gone is her confidence and entrepreneurial spirit, and in its stead is what basically amounts to an uncredited extra. A mythologized view of women replaces O'Casey's grittier portrayal; Nora manipulates Jack out of fear by burning his commission, but submits to his decision to fight when he lovingly reminds her that a man's duty is to fight. Her response that a woman's duty is to weep downplays what women actually did in Easter week. Three women are portrayed as participating in the Rising as leader of children or as nurses, whereas the rest are literally huddled together at the parade of Act II, wearing shawls while listening to General Connelly speak and watching their men march, already mourning their soon to be dead sons and husbands.

Ford portrays Jack, on the other hand, as a hero central to the rising itself. Jack is clean cut, wears a suit and courageously survives the fight while everybody else seems to die around him, even surviving to the end of the play in direct contrast to the original text. In contrast to the original text, Ford focuses the attention of the film on the soldiers rather than the citizens of Dublin. In the play, most of the action occurs offstage, and the story centres around the non-combatants and how their lives were affected by the Rising. In the film, Jack and the rebels are the main characters, replacing Nora and the women. Nora comes home to find Jack contemplating by the window, and Nora seeks to keep him from honouring his duty as a soldier to stay with her. Instead, he leaves with Brennan to attend the parade where he stands at the head of the soldiers in front of Connolly. Instead of seeing the shadow of a man through the bar window, the audience sees Connolly stand over them as he compares the ICA and Volunteers to earlier revolutionaries and declares Ireland's impending liberty. Pearse is removed from the parade in the film and is replaced by General Connolly. His speech differs from the text of the play, inviting more heroism and mythology. Ford connects the tricolour with the soldiers, and both play a role in depicting the events of the Rising. Ford reduces Pearse's role in the film to reading the proclamation behind closed doors. Gone are the fiery speeches for war, being replaced by heroic moment defiance of a great enemy. Because of Ford's directional changes, colour lessens in importance by transforming into simple propaganda. In this, the nationalist mythology of the tricolour overwhelms O'Casey's original point which was to depict the working-class members of Dublin and how the Easter Rising failed them.

The inclusion of Uncle Peter in the Ford film seems forced in that Peter plays a very minimal role and does nothing to really advance the plot. His hypocrisy is still portrayed, but is very quickly overshadowed by the other, more pressing storylines of the parade and Fluther's fight with the Covey. His introduction in the film takes place in the pub, apparently

after the meeting has taken place. However, there is no indication that he was even at the meeting when it occurred and, perhaps more importantly, he appears to be the only individual dressed up in a Foresters Uniform. The soldiers all dress in either suits similar to that of the ICA uniform or casual suits. The women all wear shawls, and even the children who are in the marching band wear conservative uniforms. Peter's uniform, on the other hand, is similar to the original production, consisting of a very stylish overcoat of a dark colour that is likely green with white shoulder boards and what presumably is gold epaulettes and a dark hat with a very large white feather. The coat appears to be fancy evening wear, having coattails that reveal a white lining over white trousers. Being the only person dressed in this manner separates Peter from the Irish people as opposed to O'Casey's original point that so many Irish men and women hypocritically enjoyed Irish mythological heroism while avoiding any actual participation.

Including Peter in the film seems more like a way to acknowledge that some hypocrisy did exist in Dublin than a commentary on any general hypocrisy. By separating Peter through his uniform, Ford portrays a more unified Ireland willing to sacrifice their comforts and lives for independence in contrast to Peter. This mythologized viewpoint reads more as nationalist propaganda, and Peter therefore is mocked as misrepresenting the efforts of nationalism itself as opposed to the weakness of many Dubliners that O'Casey portrays. He only associates with characters like the Covey, Fluther Good, Bessie Burgess, and Ginnie Gogan – characters who profit from the Rising by looting – until the end of the play when they are forced to hide in Bessie's flat. There is no mention of Peter's relation to Nora and Jack; only the fact that they live in the same building connects them at all. Where Peter and his colleagues inhabit the pub, Jack and Nora attend the parade; the next day, they walk in the park dressed in their nicest clothes. Ford elevates the Clitheroes to middle class citizens while Peter and his associates appear to be a minority of dissidents and dissolutes who are largely

ignored and unwanted by society. Just as in the play, they pay lip service to the idea of independence, but have nothing to do with the implementation of the work needed to accomplish that goal. The difference is that in the film they are disconnected from the nationalist movement and therefore do not represent them.

The nationalists, on the other hand, rally around their soldiers to cheer them on in preparation for the fight. That national unity and the events of the Rising are symbolised in the flags, specifically the tricolour. In the film, the parade takes place on the Saturday before Easter and features General Connolly instead of Pearse as the main speaker. As the scene opens, we immediately see the Starry Plough and the tricolour being held by soldiers standing at attention (see figure 6). The scene cuts to the crowd watching a children's band marching past the main stage followed by soldiers under the direction of Clitheroe. Instead of taking place within the pub, the audience sees the marching soldiers, crisp in their new uniforms and surrounded by new flags. The tricolour stands united with the Starry Plough, but the parade is the only time the latter flag is displayed. The focus of the film is not on the citizens or the poor of Dublin under the Starry Plough; it is on the soldiers who all wear the same uniform. They are identified through the flag of national revolution, and though General Connolly credits both the ICA and Volunteers, his message is one of heroic struggle for national independence, comparing their efforts to previous revolutions. Instead of speaking of bloodshed as a "sanctified and cleansing thing" (O'Casey 193) we hear of past heroic Irish men who gave their lives in that pursuit and that the Rising will realize that ultimate goal.

The whole parade serves to represent the unification of the people; even Nora attends when in the original text she does not. Her despair at hearing Jack's comment that Ireland is greater than a wife separates her from the other women in the crowd who are all wearing shawls. While shawls may be the standard of dress at the time, that and their sombre appearances depict them as women in mourning. In response to Connolly's declaration that

men have died in the past (and will die in the coming conflict) to free Ireland, the picture switches to two women in the crowd, comforting each other, seemingly preparing for the impending deaths of their loved ones. Nora, who wears a shawl at the beginning of the film, does not at the parade and seems stricken at Jack's nationalistic excitement. She repeatedly asks Jack why he must fight, not quite understanding his reasoning until the end of the film when he has kept his promise to her in returning and promises never to give up until Ireland is free. Her response is that while the men keep on fighting, the women will continue weeping. She has put on the shawl and has finally accepted her role as an Irish woman just like the women at the parade. This mythologized view of Irish women weakens them as it portrays them as reliant on their men for safety instead of participants in the revolution.
The portrayal of the tricolour in the film serves as a barometer of the Rising itself. When the rebels march on the GPO, the flag leads the way in to a brightly lit beautiful room. Taking less than a minute, the scene serves to prepare the audience for its raising over the GPO to triumphant music, almost as if the rebellion has succeeded before even beginning. This politically symbolic gesture may be what O'Casey intended in his production; that the posting of a flag does nothing to feed the poor or elevate the working-class. The music of the film portrays the rebels as heroic, reducing the English army to fortified vehicles with machine guns and military police at the end. However, up to this point, all that has happened is the uncontested taking of the GPO. No shots have been fired, and no casualties have been incurred. The climax of the movie, a movie of revolution, happens before a single shot is fired. When the English do open fire, the shot turns to the flag waving in the breeze new and clean as in figure 7, representing the Dublin soldiers and their confidence. They are strong and brave, ready for a fight they know is coming.

Later, during the fighting, the flag is shown worn down with bullet holes, similar to the mood of the soldiers. Just after that, General Connolly is injured and the Proclamation

nailed to a column of the GPO is destroyed by gunfire, signalling the beginning of the end. In terms of the fighting itself, very little is shown on the screen; rather, it is heard, or, as is most often the case in the film, the aftermath is shown. Perhaps the most violent moments of the film are when individual rebels and soldiers sit in sniper perches and shoot at targets. The tricolour's wear-and-tear matches the defeated rebels who march by Nora, and the music that accompanies the flag scene is dramatic, indicative of potential danger. With the surrender of the rebels at the end, the flag is thrown down unceremoniously to the ground as Jack and Nora look on. Although the rebellion is defeated and the last scene takes place at the church building where Mollser's coffin has been carried (which also happens to conveniently in sight of the GPO), the end of the movie has a positive feeling. Jack courageously declares that Ireland will never stop fighting and General Connolly goes to his execution heroically, while Ireland rejoices in the glorious rebellion that led to Irish Independence. After all, the men will keep on fighting and the women will keep on weeping.

The fundamental shift that Ford and the RKO film company inserted into *The Plough and the Stars* transforms a realist portrayal of 1916 tenement Dublin into a propaganda film of nationalist Ireland. Instead of portraying the realistic Dublin of O'Casey's text, Ford elevated the nationalist movement above the poverty and hypocrisy within Dublin itself and, at least according to O'Casey, the ICA and Volunteers. Uncle Peter transforms from a representation of all Dublin men to a minor group of undesirables. His uniform separates him from the actual soldiers and participants in the parade while his presence in the pub with the drunk Fluther Good fills a comedic, and therefore less important, role. Instead of highlighting Nora and the bystanders in the Rising as O'Casey did to portray the realities of war, Ford focused on the soldiers and linked them to the flag, mythologizing them in the process. This alteration likely served to portray the Rising in a more positive light, but the result is a piece of ineffective propaganda.

1964 Production: Change Observed

Like the other productions in this paper, the 1964 production is difficult to analyse because of limited pictorial evidence; only one legitimate image is readily available. This image (see figure 9) shows only a very small portion of the stage as well as only two of the actors in the production. The two characters shown, Uncle Peter and the Young Covey, are dressed simply, and the background appears to be the fronts steps of the outside of the Clitheroe's tenement home, placing the picture in Act III but not allowing for much insight of how colour might have been used. A second, unverified image exists (see figure 10), but I am only able to infer its connection to the 1964 Abbey production. Getty Images, who owns it, identifies it as being an "Abbey Theatre production of a play" from approximately 1964. Resembling the pub in Scene II, the image appears to show Bessie Burgess, the Young Covey, the Barman, and Rosie Redmond at the bar on the left. The Man in the Window sits at centre stage in what might be a mirror or window, and a soldier watches him attentively. Two other soldiers stand at the doorway holding what appears to be the tricolour and the Plough and the Stars, and the three soldiers are probably Clitheroe, Langon, and Brennan. Finally, on the right side at the table are three figures who could be Fluther Good, Peter Flynn, and Ginnie Gogan. The man I identify as Peter Flynn wears a decorative uniform similar to the descriptions from *The Plough,* and it looks as though the woman sitting next to him could be holding a baby. I feel confident in identifying the image as being from *The Plough and the Stars*. If two images of what appear to be Peter and the Young Covey are compared, the actors look similar enough for me to conclude that they are the same actors in the same production. Therefore, I will use both in my analysis, because the second, unverified image allows for a stronger analysis of the use of colour in the production. The remaining available evidence comes from reviews and newspaper articles that have provided some hints on costuming and lighting. Colour does

not play a significant role in this production as in later productions, but a look at set design and costuming is worthy of some comment.

The significance of this production stems from the fact that it is the first time O'Casey allowed his plays to be produced in Ireland after his well-publicized ban following the failed Dublin Theatre Festival in 1959. Critics recognized it as being true to the original realist productions, which means that it ought to be comparable, at least in part, to the 1926 production. As one critic said in the Irish Press, "To those of us who remember the early productions, it was more than nostalgic…" (12 Feb. 1964 page 7). Using the two images as a barometer of the play and its connection to 1926, this statement seems accurate. The first image shows a relatively traditional public house that resonated with critics. Desmond Rushe, in the *Irish Independent*, commented that "Thomas MacAnna's settings are exquisitely authentic" (12 Feb. 1964 page 3) while the London *Times* declared that "The marvellous second act, in a drably authentic public-bar, goes off with marked impact" (29 April 1964 page 2). In terms of colour, the set would therefore be consistently realistic, portraying the poverty of the times and realising the political turmoil of revolutionary Dublin. Not much of the set would be symbolic outside of the tricolour and some of the costuming, all of which is reminiscent of the original production.

One critic noted the lighting of the stage itself; David Nathan, of the Daily Herald, commented that "The Abbey's standard of stage design and lighting still make everything look as if it is happening at the end of a long, dark cave…" (reported in the *Irish Examiner* 28 April 1964 page 3). Incidentally, this matches my experience of the Abbey theatre. The current theatre hall is very dark, and all of the productions I have attended utilize darkness often in their productions. The notion of a stage being at the end of a long, dark cave feels fair as criticism. Neither of the two pictures show this darkness, as both scenes come from relatively light moments of the play. The pub scene of Act II mixes a lot of comedic relief

with the seriousness of the parade, and the lighting of the picture makes for a very clear view for audiences. The image from Act III takes place during the Rising, and is fairly well lit, also utilizing comedy to depict the looting in connection with the violence as well as Nora's mental turmoil.

However, darker moments legitimize Nathan's comments. The set for Act I, for example, calls for a dim stage that is primarily lit by the fire in the fireplace with an oil lamp providing light in the street outside. Act IV also takes place in the evening, and O'Casey directs that the only light come from two candles, the fireplace of Bessie Burgess's room, and the burning skyline of Dublin (O'Casey 239). The lighting seems to direct an audience's reaction to scenes; in Act I, the squalor of 1915 Dublin is portrayed in dim light and highlights Nora's struggle to keep Jack safe and at home. The political fervour of the parade and the comedy in the public house of Act II are well lit as well as the chaos of Easter week in Act III. Finally, darkness pervades in Act IV as the tenement dwellers come to terms with the failed Rising, British occupation, Nora's madness, and Clitheroe's death. With very little lighting in the last act, the stage would indeed look like the end of a long dark cave. Tomás MacAnna did this intentionally, and a consideration of his thoughts on later productions might help to piece that together.

In an interview with Christopher Murray in 1980, MacAnna discussed his approach to the lighting on stage. As early as 1965, he decided to move away from the "rather solid traditional, ever-expected, fourth-wall naturalistic idea" of stage design and move towards a more open, "epic style" approach (MacAnna 132). He recognized that O'Casey wanted his actors to use "every possible aspect of their act, as well as colour and light" to realize the full benefit of his plays (137). When he directed O'Casey's *Red Roses for Me* and the expressionistic Act Three, he decided to use changes in light colour to bring out fuller shades of the colour of the set design to show the city's transformation in Ayamonn's vision (132).

Therefore, while *Plough* may have been produced as a naturalist play, in terms of lighting it is an easy play to experiment with. MacAnna certainly utilized the stage directions to provoke audience emotions by creating a cave-like experience in Act IV. That dark atmosphere helps to contribute to the overall despair that is felt by the survivors of violence. It would also enhance feelings regarding Ireland's contemporary issues as well. Offering a realistic portrayal Dublin in 1916 while exploring the emotional impact of the Rising in 1964 through lighting, had the potential to create controversy like the original production. Unfortunately, critics felt that the production failed in that regard, and O'Casey criticized the production as well in the *Irish Press* (30 June 1964 page 5).

The costuming of *Plough* only allows for limited comment as well. Uncle Peter's uniform appears to be very similar to the one from the original production, with some minor differences. Rather than wearing white pants, as in the earlier production, the picture from Act II shows him in dark pants, and his uniform is more decorative than the earlier uniform. A pointed goatee and nose gives his face a more angular look. He portrays the hypocrite that O'Casey originally intended and, like Clitheroe, Langon, and Brennan, he separates himself from the parade occurring outside of the pub. While he does participate in the parade by leaving the pub several times, Peter, like Clitheroe and his comrades, associates more closely with the working-class poor within the pub.

The most significant noticeable difference in Act II from the original production is the presence of the window where the Man is seen clearly instead of as a shadow. Whether director Frank Dermody made that change in response to the negative reaction in 1926 or as a part of a natural progression over the course of nearly 40 years is unknown, but its presence impacts the act. Instead of the grey, gloomy shadow from the text, audiences see Pearse in military uniform surrounded by the tricolour and the Plough and Stars. The voice is no longer the recognizable yet undefined presence of a respected Irish nationalist; it is now embodied,

giving the speech and nationalist tendencies more gravity. The presence of the flags in the bar are posted in a respectful fashion. The Plough and Stars is lowered slightly in deference to the tricolour which is posted standing straight up. Showing Pearse through the window of the pub places him with the soldiers and parade, whereas Langon, Brennan, and Clitheroe have removed themselves from the parade to join the citizens in the pub. They have left their comrades, and while their sacrifices are not diminished, they also do not necessarily represent the rebellion like they do in the original production.

This separation recognizes O'Casey's views of the differences in roles that the Volunteers and the ICA had. Pearse, a noted leader of the Volunteers, serves as the voice of a movement largely motivated by nationalism in the play whereas the three soldiers in the pub are members of the ICA, representing the working-class and the voice of the people. They are also the only Irish soldiers seen in the play. In this sense, Langon, Brennan, and Clitheroe belong in the pub as it is filled with their friends and family and they share similar fates. In presenting this image, Dermody reminds the audience who suffers for nationalism. Nationalism has no family or bills or stomach, and therefore cannot be made to suffer in failure. As an idea, it persists on until it succeeds or is forgotten. Soldiers, however, have all of those concerns and can be made to suffer even after a movement ends regardless of success or failure. This surely had to have been one of the underlying questions of the production, as Ireland had received its independence but not freed itself from political turmoil nor elevated the working-class out of their financial, economic, and social poverty.

Interestingly, Rosie Redmond shares the focus of figure 10 with the Man in the window. Sitting at the bar, her clothing seems a lot cleaner and nicer than everybody else's, except for perhaps the soldier's uniforms. Her skirt is glossy and clean, appearing to be made of silk or nylon, her hair is styled, and she wears shoes with a short heel. She seems more like a woman out enjoying a Friday evening and less like a prostitute. Additionally, of the actors

on stage, only her skin is white and smooth. This fits into Benstock's arguments equating youth and nice clothes with a vibrancy and love of life mentioned previously. Rosie's confidence, bolstered by nicer clothes, places her more at the level of Pearse and the soldiers rather than with the citizens in the pub. In the 1926 production, Mia Rooney embodied a similar confidence as a prostitute, but the poorer quality of her clothing highlighted her poverty. In the 1964 production, Rosie's clothing suggests that she is fairly successful. Only her profession keeps her in a state of social poverty, lending a little more emotional value to her outrage at the Covey's insulting comments near the end of Act II.

While the limited amount of evidence makes a thorough analysis of colour difficult, what is available provides insight to the 1964 production of The Plough and the Stars. In conversation with Mairead Delaney, the archivist at the Abbey theatre, I learned that the 1964 production is one of the first productions to break away from the 1926 production. In looking at what the critics had to say, I found it difficult to agree with her at first. Most critics commented that the production was very similar, and that the failures and successes of the production originated from a comparison to the original. However, utilizing the lighting and stage sets to resemble Dublin, while also exploring emotional interaction, allowed Dermody to tie the characters to audience members and contemporary Ireland. The simple change of the Man in the Window from being a shadow to a visible person changed the dynamic of the play itself. By transforming a grey shadow of a man into Pearse himself, Dermody more closely explored O'Casey's intentions regarding the Easter Rising and its participants. Portraying characters in slightly different fashion allowed for an alternative interpretation of their identity. Rosie changes from being an impoverished yet confident prostitute to being a vibrant and confident prostitute between the two productions, producing similar yet significant results.

The previous three productions represent the traditional realism – or reaction to it –

that O'Casey wrote and produced in 1926. Colour was limited in large part to more of an aesthetic approach, and the few examples that I have highlighted like Peter or lighting all act as experiments within the productions and play smaller roles. As the decades passed, productions of *The Plough and the Stars* split into two types: what James Moran identifies as a heritage approach (Theatre 204), and a non-naturalist approach. The heritage approach is fairly self-explanatory, but the non-naturalist approach deserves some comment. In an interview with Moran, director Garry Hynes reflected on the expressionist elements of the Dublin Trilogy:

> "…These three plays were looked on as great pillars of naturalism, and *The Silver Tassie* as his break from naturalism, and I felt that's just absolutely not true. These plays are not pieces of naturalism, they are as ferociously theatrical – perhaps more resolved pieces of theatre than the *Tassie* – but the same person who wrote the *Tassie* wrote those three plays in the preceding six years, so these plays are connected, and I wanted to explore that." (202)

Directors starting to take more experimental approaches to *Plough* utilize colour to great effect, altering the environment surrounding the set and under or over emphasizing different aspects of the play to present their interpretations of O'Casey's intent.

In the 1991 and 2016 productions, the characters retain much of the spirit of the original play by inviting audience members to focus on specific aspects like desperate poverty on a white canvas or the starry plough on a green wall. Instead of focusing solely on the politics of 1916, both productions utilize the historical significance of the play to make more obvious political and social statements specific to the time in which they were produced. Objects like flags are over exaggerated, in some cases literally covering the stage or walls, and others like the walls of the flat are minimalised or removed with the expectation that the audience does not need a physical manifestation of them. The modernization of *The*

Plough also addresses issues that may not have been specified but would certainly have been approved by O'Casey. Diversity, mental health, feminism, and other radical approaches to the history of 1916 all figure prominently in later productions are often emphasized through the use of colour.

1991 Production: Radical Approaches in Black and White

Garry Hynes' 1991 production of *The Plough and the Stars* is perhaps the most radical interpretation the Abbey has produced to date. 75 years after the Rising, Ireland still had not broken free of its Troubles, and British Imperialism plays a major role in the production. The first thing audience members saw when they took their seats was an enormous Union Jack covering the floor of the stage, and that same flag covered the stage at the end (Griffith 97). Instead of staging a traditional realist production, Hynes created a sparse stage of black and white; in an interview with James Moran, she stated that she wanted to show "the brutal violent poverty that is at the heart of [the Dublin Trilogy]" (*Theatre* 202). This radical interpretation openly denounces British involvement in Ireland, portraying British soldiers as prison guards and Dubliners as prisoners. Nationalism is not glorified either, but it certainly takes a softer light as it is shown to be a lesser evil to the Crown. A sense of national exhaustion pervades the very slow-moving production reflecting a desire to end all political violence.

Very little photographic evidence can be found online, but I was able to procure one black and white picture of the production itself. I was also able to watch the production at the archives on a recent research trip so I am able to comment on my impressions to that. Therefore, my analysis comes from my observation of the play on a grainy VHS tape played on a computer screen in a cramped office above the Abbey stage. Additionally, much of the news surrounding the 1991 production focuses on a comparison to Sam Mendes' production

of *The Plough* at the Young Vic in London of the same year. This likely stems from the differences in style of each production; Mendes follows a more traditional approach contrasted by Hynes' more radical interpretation. In Hynes' production, colour and the lack of colour serves to highlight the poverty that O'Casey was so concerned with.

From before the play actually starts, audiences were prompted to question the continuation of political violence. On the stage was a raised platform that served as the primary acting space painted in white. The walls up the side and directly above the stage facing the audience were also white with the black spray painted phrase "We Serve Neither King nor Kaiser but Ireland" as graffiti. This phrase, linked with the ICA and the Irish Transport and General Workers Union, is a clear act of defiance of British influence. However, at the start of the play, a Union Jack covered the entirety of the floor creating tension as the audience anticipated the conflict to come. Behind the raised stage, the walls and ground were painted black. Just seeing the stage alone prompted me to view the world in extremes. There was no construction that would show the inside of a flat or a pub or outside; all that was provided was a table, some chairs, and some small props. In Act I, only a table gave any indication of a living space. It sat in the middle of the room and was where most of the dialogue took place. Covering much of the floor, the black walls produced a darker stage, and demonstrated the dark mood of the characters before the Rising. In the pub scene of Act II, some construction was added in the form of a bar with windows behind it which blocked off much of the black wall and created a lighter set. The Man in the Window speaking to the crowd was visualised through a mirror behind the bar, but the Man actually spoke from the audience, suggesting that the audience was outside participating in the parade. In addition to seeing him, the audiences see their own reflection. In Act III, the stage was bare except for the chair that Mollser sat in.

The sharp contrast that the black and white provided creates the sense of extremity.

For example, when Jack is reunited with Nora during Act III, he is accompanied by Brennan and Langon, who has been shot (see figure 11). By Act III the white stage has been dirtied by foot traffic from the various actors, but when Langon is dragged of stage, a trail of blood remains visible for the remainder of the act. While no mention was made of the mark, that mark captured the audience's attention for long after Langon left the stage. That visual reminder of the violence occurring offstage added to the horror that Hynes intended her audience to feel regarding the social conditions that have resulted from the neglect of the British government. It also openly questioned the validity of the nationalist movement, and forced audiences to consider the contemporary impact that Irish nationalism has had in the previous 75 years following the Rising. Hynes made the clear argument that violence needs to end because it was ultimately destroying the Irish people. This destruction is further represented through the appearance of the characters and in the death of Mollser and Act IV. The stage was darkened to the point that the white floor was very muted with the only light being a soft moon light. The Rising has failed, Nora has lost her mind, and Mollser has died; the men huddle around Mollser's coffin and play cards because that is all that is left for them to do. The despair in Act IV is almost palpable, and only continues to worsen as news of Jack's death comes through Brennan, the men are taken away, and Bessie is shot. The stark portrayal of death in *The Plough* offers no solution; the Union Jack replaces the stage, covering Bessie Burgess' body while British soldiers sing "Keep The Home Fires Burning." Violence has solved nothing, and has destroyed the lives of tenement dwellers.

Where I have been preoccupied with Peter's Forester's uniform in previous productions, I found that his is the least interesting of any of the characters in this one. Very similar to any of the other four Abbey productions, the uniform he wore has two potentially notable exceptions. His hat was considerably bigger than other productions, particularly the feather which dominated his head. This fits with the clown-like behaviour that he exhibited in

his interactions with the Young Covey. Instead of reacting in irritation to the Covey's antics, Peter overreacts to perceived insults that do not really seem to be there. His clumsiness and absolute inability to navigate social interactions on stage really diminish any role he might have, and the cowardice that is starkly apparent in other productions is largely ignored as a result of his ineptitude in this production.

The second exception is a notable red sash that Hynes included with the uniform. This served to confuse Peter's political associations; his Forester's uniform is indicative of his nationalist political leanings, but the red sash also identifies him with sympathizing with the ICA and its socialist political beliefs. Obviously both the Volunteers and the ICA participated in the Easter Rising, but the red sash does not appear in O'Casey's directions regarding Peter's dress, nor does it appear on any images of the Foresters uniform after a cursory internet search. Hynes' inclusion of the red sash specifically identifies the ICA and Volunteers as a unified entity, and was designed to make the broader argument that political violence does not set people free. Political mechanisms such as the British government, the nationalist movement, and the socialist movement in Ireland all perpetuate the violence and extreme poverty that was portrayed. As Steven Griffith points out in his review of the production, "violent actions beget violence and nothing else" (Griffith 98). In this sense, Peter stands out in stark contrast to his peers as a means of propaganda within the context of the play and as a mode of ridicule to audiences. Peter in Act's I and II fit in more with the rebel soldiers as well as the British soldiers in that they promoted political violence. The violence that occured did nothing but harm the citizens of Dublin, and Peter's hypocrisy during the Rising seemed to serve as a condemnation of the inability of political leaders to find a peaceful solution. Peter stands in contrast to the Covey, who blatantly supports a socialist approach but avoids any sort of violence at all.

If Peter serves as a mode of ridicule and the soldiers act as a part of the political

mechanism, then the Covey, Fluther, and the women fill the role of prisoner or victim. Each character has short or shaved heads and is poorly dressed; Griffiths declares that the "costumes are ciphers that use subdued colors more than line and shape to suggest meaning" (Griffith 98). This apt statement points to the blatant poverty manifested in the character's costuming and stage props but also the political statement underpinning the purpose for those items. Hynes highlights the mental exhaustion of *The Plough*'s Dublin in addition to the financial issues of the lower classes. Colours like brownish red and reddish orange dominate in the tablecloth and clothing of several of the characters, giving a rust-like appearance. Such colouring supports the argument that Nationalism and political activism not only no longer appeals to the populace, but that Ireland in 1991 is tired of the constant calls for violence. The political machine of nationalism is rusting, and is in need of removal because of the harm it causes the people.

The women of the play provide an example of the harm inflicted by nationalism. With shorn heads and worn-down clothes, they appear more like prisoners than humans. The addition of white makeup highlighting sharper features that makes them appear to be starving is reminiscent of victims of concentration camps. Mollser in particular appears extremely frail, leaving no doubt that her death will be realized by the end of the play. Similar to victims of the Holocaust, the women were being shown to lose their personal identities. Their short hair confused their gender, bringing them closer in appearance to the men, and the similarity in their dress constituted an attack on their personal identity. Nora's purchase of the hat at the beginning of the play demonstrated a greater significance in that it was indicative of her attempts to reclaim her own identity. In this production, Nora's mental state was threatened as she attempted to keep her husband away from the political violence that pervaded their lives. When she finds Jack in Act III, her joy quickly turns into madness as she realizes that he is determined to fight as long as possible. In other productions, this moment is significant

because most people interpret Nora to be pregnant at this time. There are a handful of references in the text that hint at a pregnancy, but nothing definitive exists in the text. When Jack pushes Nora away in other productions, Nora experiences a miscarriage which leads to her ultimate mental break. However, in this representation, Nora did not appear to be pregnant and her break from reality comes directly from Jack's response, not the combined stress of losing a baby. While subtle, this interpretation showed Nora's mental deterioration as the result of Jack's allegiance to the political movement rather than her failing to deal with the loss of her husband and unborn child. Through Nora, Hynes argued that the violence needed to stop or else more of Ireland's people would be destroyed.

The 1991 production fit with the political climate of Ireland; in the year previous to the production, there were several instances of IRA violence. The lyrics of the 1994 song "Zombie" by The Cranberries echoes a similar sentiment:

"It's the same old theme since nineteen-sixteen

In your head,

In your head they're still fightin'

With their tanks and their bombs

And their bombs and their guns

In your head, in your head they are dyin'"

The mental exhaustion present in the lyrics exists in *The Plough*. The use of black and white both as lighting and as colour on the stage serve to argue that Ireland is tired of the violence and death that it has endured decades after the rebellion. Hynes argued O'Casey's original point that it is the people and not the soldiers who suffer in political conflicts like the Troubles. The deaths of Langon, Mollser, Jack, and Bessie and Nora's mental breakdown do not serve Ireland's interests; they serve nationalism as inevitable casualties of war.

2016 Production: Radical Approaches in Green and Yellow

The centenary celebratory year marking the Easter Rising seems to have been a year of unearthing the radical and alternative histories of 1916 Dublin. Movements like #WakingTheFeminist and The Abbey's "Priming the Canon" as well as the rededication of the plaque commemorating Easter Rising Participants with connections to the Abbey including several women have featured in Dublin. Therefore, it makes sense that Sean Holmes' production of *The Plough and the Stars* would follow a similar non-traditional path. Instead of creating a heritage production, Holmes marries Dublin 1916 with Dublin 2016, uniting them under the Starry Plough. Familiar issues of poverty and hypocrisy mingle with more contemporary issues of immigration and diversity, with the casting of several non-Irish actors in key roles as well as dressing much of the cast in contemporary clothing. Ultimately, Holmes wants audiences to connect with the characters, their issues, and the themes shared in both eras. He does so most obviously by breaking the fourth wall often; Mollser begins the production by walking out of the audience to perform to sing *A Soldier's Song* in Gaelic, and Fluther Good sings to the audience, expecting a response. However, Holmes also sought to remain true to the original text and O'Casey's original intent; Rosie Redmond's previously neglected song is included while the Woman from Wrathmines is removed from the production. Throughout the play, Jack's ambition and Nora's desperate fear remain the centre of the action.

Colour plays an essential role in this production as well. Peter certainly contributes with his brightly coloured uniform (see figure 12), but other character's costumes do as well. Jack, who is identified as a bricklayer in the original text (O'Casey 160), enters in modern dress and the bright yellow coat of a modern construction worker. Later, he changes into the historically accurate uniform of the ICA. Other characters, like Bessie Burgess and Mrs. Gogan, only dress in more modern clothes while Fluther only seems to be dressed in 1916

attire, wearing a simple but dirty black suit with a black bowler hat. The choice to use both modern dress with vintage 1916 dress creates an interesting dialogue between the present and the past. Stage props and stage lighting also contribute synaesthetically, intentionally directing audience reactions to specific actions or thoughts. In addition to using light to indicate the time of day or physical location, lighting provokes the consideration of several ideas and ideals. The most significant aspect of colour use in the play, and perhaps the most significant aspect of the entire play, are the walls surrounding the set. The walls are simple, painted green with LED lights in the shape of the Plough (or the Big Dipper). Combined with the Abbey Theatre's advertising practices and the modernization of Holmes' production, it makes a powerful statement on the connection between 1916 and 2016 Dublin. In short, Holmes uses colour to direct audience reactions and provoke social and political dialogue, indicating that there is still a need for that discourse.

The uniqueness of costuming in this production sets it apart from all previous Abbey *Plough* productions in that it mixes 1916 and modern dress, as is seen in Figure 13. Fluther Good, wearing clothes more familiar to the early 20th century, attempts to cheer up Mollser, dressed in a Manchester United Jersey with modern red sneakers, in Act III. Both Fluther and Mollser stay in those costumes throughout the play, and identify different issues. Fluther's more historically accurate costuming seems to serve the role of identifying old traditions that still persist today. Fluther's propensity to talk and not act, as well as his alcoholism, are still issues that might resonate with modern audience members. On the other hand, Mollser's costume raises the more recent interest in the issues of children in Dublin 1916 as well as their role in violence both historically and in contemporary society.

Mollser sets the emotional stage at the very beginning of the play, coming from out of the audience and before the curtain is raised to sing the Irish national anthem. This introduction is intentionally misleading and I, as an audience member, automatically assumed

that she was unrelated to the production; that she was a local youth who had been selected to open the play showing respect to Ireland much like sporting events which start with the respective country's national anthem. It was not until she began to cough blood onto her music that I realized what was going on. Unlike in previous productions, Mollser is also present in each act; in Act II, she sits on a couch inside the pub at stage right. She never moves, appearing to play on a cell phone or hand-held gaming device. Mollser's presence on stage acts as a not so subtle reminder of the participation of children during the Rising and the effect it had on them. While Mollser dies at the end, it is only indicative of the reasons Dubliners felt the need to rise in the first place. Literary critics like James Moran and historians have recently begun to explore the stories of the children who died in the rising. The Abbey's "Priming the Canon" program has introduced Irish drama to children and specifically to Sean O'Casey through Ali White's production *Me, Mollser. Mollser* speaks to the audience about what is was like to live in 1916 Dublin, as well as what a child could do when they got sick. In Holmes' play, her red jersey on top of her coffin acts as a reminder, not of the Rising or even the poverty of Dublin, but of the impact that those elements have on children.

Colour also pervades the set of *Plough* to emphasize specific moments of the production through lighting changes. When Jack serenades Nora in the first act, the lighting changes from the mixture of natural and artificial light familiar in an apartment to the garish light more common to a karaoke bar. Similarly, when Jack returns in the middle of Act III with Brennan and a wounded Langon, his embrace with Nora triggers a light change of pink and red. The audience enters the romance of the moment, Jack being reunited with Nora and his recognition and manifestation of his love for her. However, the moment proves to be a fantasy and a glaring white light brings the reality of the Rising and Jack's situation in it – while also foreshadowing his impending death – when Brennan screams at him to help

Langon who is dying. Langon's blood and the blood from Nora's pretty horrific looking miscarriage at the hands of her husband are the last images Nora gets of Jack.

During Act IV, the stage is dark, hiding the green walls and indicating the evening time, but it also serves to identify Nora's state of mind. The constant fear of Jack dying compounded by learning of his death as well as coming to terms with the loss of her baby and the violence around her understandably drives her mad. She replaces Mollser and becomes childlike, requiring the care of Bessie Burgess to function. That darkness tempers the mood of the tenement just as much as the failed rebellion, as can be seen in the actions of everybody onstage. The final significant action of the play is after the actors have come out as the cast to the audience's applause and left the stage, typically marking the end of the play. A light covers the apartment ground in the form and colours of the tricolour, with the orange light covering the body of Bessie Burgess and the green light coving the room where Nora spent most of her time in Act IV (see figure 14). At this point in the play, most audience members got up to leave and began speaking with one another, but the stage and its setting deserve some thought.

Holmes seems to be questioning the goal of the Rising, and the symbolism of the tricolour itself. According to the current Irish government standards regarding the flag, the colours originally represented the desire for unification (white) between Catholics (green) and Protestants (orange) and have come to represent "the inclusion and hoped-for union of the people of different traditions" within Ireland ("The National Flag"). The connection of Bessie's death and Nora's madness to the tricolour seem to indicate that work still needs to be done to accomplish that ideal. 100 years after the Rising, Ireland has only recently seen lasting peace in her separation from the United Kingdom and is only recently taking a holistic approach to the study of the rebellion. I watched the play the weekend of Easter 2016, and Bessie's complaint about the Irish ignoring "poor little Catholic Belgium" was particularly

poignant in light of the bombing at the Brussels airport earlier in the week (O'Casey 201). Holmes clearly questions the world's attitude toward the current refugee crisis as well, reminding us that those largely affected by displacement are the innocent and weak and deserving of care and sympathy. Bessie's care for Mollser and Nora in the play reinforces O'Casey's original argument that unification will be found through the people, not a government or political system.

This is why the green walls and LED lights in the shape of a plough on the stage are the most significant aspects of the play. From the beginning, the audience is enveloped in the Starry Plough. Holmes draws the audience onto the stage, connecting them with the Rising and identifying them with the ICA. The stars are visible even when the lighting is dark, and although the tricolour is the focus of the rebellion, audiences are clearly meant to identify with Nora and the people and not Jack and nationalism. No longer spectators, audience members become participants in the Rising and Irish social and political events. This connection starts even before audiences sit down in the theatre. The Abbey Theatre's marketing campaign consisted solely of creating a modern day version of the Starry Plough flag by putting everyday items in yellow on a field of green with stars in the shape of a plough (see figures 15, 16, and 17). The presence of modern looking objects like a shoe, a toaster, a pram, and an electronic tea kettle immediately identify a modernized play, but it prepares potential audience members by connecting them to the play and the characters on stage. The trailer produced by the Abbey Theatre presents a similar theme, showing Jack in his modern dress and Nora in more traditional dress interacting with a background of green with yellow stars falling over them (YouTube).

The Abbey also utilized an urban marketing campaign where murals were painted onto the sides of buildings with the added text "Th' time for Ireland's battle is now" (see figure 18). This line, coming from Langon at the end of Act II, seems to indicate the need for

change in 2016 (O'Casey 213). This, combined with the tricolour of light at the end of the play, reinforces O'Casey's message regarding the importance of the people and the role of government. Unless a government will take up the poorest of its citizens, no amount of rebellion will ever be sufficient. I do not know if Holmes is actively encouraging Ireland to revolt because the current Irish government is failing its people, but in creating a production that so completely connects 1916 Dublin to 2016 Dublin, he is certainly encouraging them to consider the need. Ireland may have its independence, but there is still poverty and prejudice within the country. Ireland has a responsibility to the world as a member of the global community.

The social and political commentary of *The Plough and the Stars* finds its voice in the characters on stage at the Abbey theatre. However, Holmes' use of colour through dress, lighting and the stage walls connects audience members in 2016 to the Dublin citizens of 1916. From the moment an individual learns of the production to the moment they get out of their seats to leave, they are positioned to be a participant in the play rather than a mere spectator. Marketing posters and advertisements of green and yellow that contain modern household items and an image of the plough made of stars spark conversation about how the play might be produced. The addition of similarly coloured urban advertisement with the provocative statement urging Ireland to fight now further inflame conversation. Upon entry into the theatre, the audience is immediately drawn into the production through Mollser and the practice of breaking the fourth wall. The combination of contemporary and historic dress with the lighting strategies direct the audience's reactions, drawing them in more deeply to themes of poverty, action and inaction, hypocrisy and cowardice, and diversity. The final comment of the play comes in the form of a question as the stage is lighted to look like the tricolour. Has Irish unification been achieved? With the cost of human lives, has all the trouble been worth it? Surrounding all that and encompassing the audience as well is the

Starry Plough, serving as a silent reminder that people, not institutions or governments, were and are affected by social and political issues of today. O'Casey's original intent has been realized, even with its non-realist representation, and that realization comes largely through the use of colour in each medium that is presented.

The Plough and the Stars confronts the horror of war and downfall of political systems that do not focus on elevating all people. In questioning the Easter Rising, O'Casey forced the people of Dublin to come to terms with the idea that the violence from Easter week may not have been in Ireland's best interest. Displaying Dublin in a naturalistic manner highlighted the negative results of revolution: families torn apart, the poor kept in their poverty, and Dublin in chaos. It is easy to understand why audiences reacted so negatively to the initial production; all of the their tightly held beliefs regarding politics and morality are openly questioned in the text. However, the questions that O'Casey posed to them are worthy of consideration. This has led to over 1,000 performances by the Abbey Theatre alone and being one of the most fruitful productions the theatre has had (*Theatre* 174).

The use of colour in each production varies depending on the director and the production, but there is a definite significance to O'Casey's inclusion of it. Whether through the expressionistic experimentation of Peter Flynn or the Man in the Window, the show of vibrant life through the clothes and attitudes of Nora and Rosie, the set design and lighting practices, or the political significance of the flags, colour remains an essential part of understanding and reacting to this play, and all of O'Casey's other plays. Even in its original naturalist environment, Peter's uniform stands out as a message to both the characters within the play and to the audience members observing it. The presence of the Starry Plough and the tricolour make specific political statements to audience members, and ask specific questions of them. Reading the text sometimes makes this difficult to visualize because of the significant presence of aesthetic colour throughout the text as well, but when visualised on

the stage, the synaesthetic importance becomes more obvious.

Additionally, the break away from the practice of heritage productions allows for directors to use colour to emphasize the significance of O'Casey's intent, which was to highlight the oppressive consequences of the Rising on the very people it was meant to liberate. Instead of freeing the working-class citizens of Dublin, the nationalist movement simply provided a way for Dublin's men and women to suffer. If the Rising had succeeded, the poor would not have been lifted from their social and financial despair as the ICA had originally hoped for. Even with the successful separation from the UK, Ireland suffered from terrible violence and financial insecurity for nearly a century. This national exhaustion that manifested itself in the 1991 production demonstrates the clear relevance still felt in *The Plough* and the 2016s advertisement campaign that there is still a battle to be fought suggests that there is still much to be done to realize O'Casey's ultimate goal of social equality for all men and women.

4 Politics, religion and colour in O'Casey's later plays

Where political issues dominate the Dublin Tetralogy, religious influence – for the most part – dominates the later plays. This is not to say that political issues are no longer discussed; rather, political influence is enhanced by the influence of the Church (be that Catholicism or Protestantism). While the Catholic church seem to be O'Casey's primary target, I include Protestantism because there are some instances of Protestant clergy allowing, if not exactly encouraging the antagonists of plays. Consider, for example, the powerless Reverend Griffin of *The Harvest Festival*. Clearly a Protestant minister, he is unable to rise above the influence of his wealthy parishioners to deny Jack Rocliffe a Christian burial. Nor are all Catholic priests bad. The Brown Priest of *The Star Turns Red* clearly respects and sympathizes with Red Jim even though he respects the authority of the Purple Priest. Finally, O'Casey does not altogether condemn Christianity or religion, which can be seen in his portrayal of Father Ned as a disembodied priest, but also as a symbol of Ireland as it should be: an Ireland with religion that does not oppress its people from a foreign place, an Ireland that empowers all of its people. In many cases, historical events of political significance continue to provide the background for the plots of plays, sometimes repeating or reacting to the same moments or even to earlier plays. One of the main conflicts in the later plays is the conflict between art and religion. Art, which to O'Casey is a natural expression in all humans, is intended to serve as a liberating force to characters in his plays in opposition to the oppressive nature of a religion in Ireland that exerts its influence in Irish politics and society.

Take, for instance, O'Casey's thoughts in "The Arts Among the Multitudes," an essay

published in *The Green Crow* (O'Casey 149). In it, he argues that art is intended for the benefit of the masses, not selected groups. However, because art is collected in galleries and museums and not included in educational curriculums, the masses are alienated from it, never learning how to understand it. Furthermore, as artistic representation becomes limited to exclusionary locations, the few assume the role of critic and direct the many as how to respond to art. This erroneous notion, argues O'Casey, seeks to destroy the natural artistic talent that exists in all humanity and should be eradicated. Art, he concludes,

> "should become, in some form or other, common in an uncommon way, in the home, in the school, in the church, in the street, and in the parks where man sits to think or look around. They must be brought among the people so that man may become familiar with them, for familiarity breeds, not contempt, but a liking." (153)

In other words, art must be available to all, no matter their social, political, or economic standing. This attitude manifests in all of O'Casey's written work, but especially in his later plays.

This statement is of course self-serving in a way. Without a theatre for him to write plays – by which I mean the practice of revising during rehearsals based on viewing actors reciting his lines or staging his scenes – O'Casey would have been forced to continue working as a manual labourer or make his mark in another, less artistic manner. In every single play, there is an obvious social or political argument to be made. This would also explain why his plays are often considered propagandistic, because O'Casey never attempts to camouflage his opinion in mythology, as found in Yeats, or in the abstract scenes of Beckett. Therefore, it makes sense that his plays take on a less refined style of humour, appealing to a wider Irish audience and address contemporary issues in a more direct manner, even in his more artistic plays. In conversation with David Phethean, director of the 1960 production *The Drums of Father Ned* at Queen's Theatre in Hornchurch, O'Casey described

the theatre as a "place of magic. It should be full of colour and excitement and gaiety. That what it's there for! To bring colour in to people's lives!" (Mikhail 112). Colour identifies the complexities of individual characters and their role in the overall story. Therefore, analysing the use of colour in *The Drums of Father Ned*, as well as the other O'Casey plays, leads to a better understanding of his views of the Irish people and the problem of outside governance.

In the case of the later plays, excessive colour can be seen as an enhancement of O'Casey's perception of reality – which is shown in the realistic nature of each play – and the representation of his opinion – shown through more artistic and, more importantly, non-realistic means – regarding the underlying conflict of the play. To explain further, all of O'Casey's plays fit within an easily recognizable and realistic setting. All but one of the plays have settings located in Ireland and all of them focus on Irish men and women and on themes concerning political or social issues stemming from, or directly affecting, Ireland. The only exception is *Within the Gates*,[22] which is O'Casey's main attempt at employing expressionism throughout an entire play. However, it takes place in a London park, another recognizable space, and has recognizably British and Irish characters.

This helps to explain O'Casey's portrayal of religion as a limiting function within each play. Aside from the individual characters in the various plays, which I will address later in this chapter, O'Casey situates organized religion as one of the primary contributors to the removal of art education and appreciation in Ireland. Raised as a Protestant in Catholic Dublin, O'Casey shows more antagonism towards Catholic priests than Protestant priests, which is much less severe. For example, Father Fillifogue from *The Drums of Father Ned* is portrayed as a blithering idiot who enjoys the control and power he maintains over the

[22] The title in the 1933 printed edition is Within the Gates: A Play of Four Scenes in a London Park.

citizens of Doonavale. Connected to the mayor and vice mayor, who also happens to be the major business men of the city, Fillifogue takes on a very sinister attitude towards the youth and their Tosthal festival. The Brown Priest of *The Star Turns Red*, the most positively portrayed Catholic, is counter balanced by the ruthless and uncaring Purple Priest in his persecution of Red Jim and the worker's movement. Father Domineer, from *Cock a Doodle Dandy*, murders a man in a fit of rage and expels Loraleen from Nyadnanave because of her perceived loose values, and because of her supposed connection with the supernatural Cock. In contrast is Reverend Clinton from *Red Roses for Me*, who laments Ayamonn's religious inactivity but supports his revolutionary passion; it is easy to understand why many critics see an imbalance.

It can, however, just as easily be argued that O'Casey was not attacking the individual priests or churches but the imbalance of influence that organized religion had over local government in Ireland. Catholic priests are targets for O'Casey's drama because the Dublin of the late 19th and early 20th centuries was primarily Catholic. In a country where the prevailing religion influences national and local politics, one would expect the priests of that prevailing sect to be O'Casey's target. One specific element that appears often in O'Casey's plays is the *Rerum Novarum*, an encyclical of Pope Leo XIII published 15 May 1891.[23] This letter, subtitled "On Capital and Labour," addressed the growing Socialism movement. In it, the Pope teaches that "the impelling reason and motive of [a man's] work is to obtain

[23] http://w2.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_15051891_rerum-novarum.html An encyclical is a circular letter within the Catholic Church, often used as a means of teaching. A Papal encyclical is sent among specified Bishops, and while does not necessarily demand consent, can be highly influential in determining theological disputes.

property, and thereafter to hold it as his very own" (Leo XIII v. 5). Socialists, whose primary goal is to transfer property from the individual to the "community at large, strike at the interests of every wage-earner, since they would deprive him of the liberty of disposing of his wages, and thereby of all hope and possibility of increasing his resources and of bettering his condition in life" (Leo XIII v. 5). In the Pope's eyes, the Socialist movement represented a breakdown of law and order, starting with the basic right to own property.

In addition to encouraging Catholics all over the world to avoid joining dangerous revolutionary organizations, readers are reminded that the Church is an essential institution that maintains harmony between the rich and the poor. The clear implication is that faithful members will look to the church for guidance, shelter, and food; more importantly, however, they will avoid idleness and greed in an effort to preserve their souls. Emphasis is placed on the need to observe the Sabbath day and other holy days, but the Pope is quick to clarify that any time off should not be used "for spending money and for vicious indulgence as mere giving way to idleness" (verse 41). The principle of protecting the soul through religious observance of the Sabbath and holy days and then working the rest of the time clearly identifies the importance of work and the church as equals in the Pope's eyes.

To say that O'Casey disagreed with the Pope is an understatement. In a letter to William Rust dated 16 April 1948, he declared the *Rerum Novarum* to be a "string of platitudes from start to end" (Letters Vol. II, 519). This phrase reoccurs several times in his letters, and he attributes the phrase to a Father Yorke of San Francisco in the dedicatory paragraph "The Memory Be Green" at the beginning of *The Drums of Father Ned* (Plays Vol. 5, 130). In his opinion, the encyclical – as well as others before it – were "just efforts to ensure that in all conditions the ecclesiastics will have the real power" (Letters Vol. II, 519). This is clearly reflected in the four plays, always couched as either the complaint of a working man or as a means of control by the clergy.

The inclusion of conflict between the arts and religion seems to mirror O'Casey's own conflicted personal political and religious beliefs. That he was raised Protestant, became disenchanted with Christianity, and supported socialism and Marxism is a matter of record. However, although he left organized religion and promoted Communism, he continually referred to a belief in Christ while never actually publicly joining any communist or socialist organization. By the same token, his allegiance to art (as explained in the introduction chapter) was a continual source of contention between himself and both religion and politics in Ireland. It also served as a convenient medium for him to challenge social norms and politically acceptable injustices.

This is not to say that O'Casey only used art to further any specific political or social agenda in each play. If one considers the entirety of his dramaturgy, only one idea remains truly the same throughout. That the idea of the poor and ruled always being the first to suffer at the hands of the rich and rulers might be thought as constant is understandable, but the rulers do not stay the same, nor does O'Casey ever endorse a particular brand of rule or anarchy. More importantly, O'Casey doesn't seem overly fond of the poor. He is at least as harsh on the poor as he is on the wealthy. This is because O'Casey did not define wealth through money or political or religious influence; he found it in the people themselves and their natural artistic tendencies. No, the one true constant in all of O'Casey's work is the cultivation of art, or as he describes in his autobiographies, developing an eye for colour.

Michael Pierse, in his chapter "*Cock-A-Doodle Dandy*: O'Casey's Total Theatre," argues that O'Casey's "ambition to wed all the arts in Drama" through the application of Total Theatre is largely ignored because of scholarly neglect of his later plays (*Letters III*, 642, quoted in Pierse, 48 FIX). Subscribing to Erwin Piscator's definition of Total Theatre as "the place of intersection of all the arts," Pierse labels such theatre a three-dimensional poem (Pierse, 47). This interesting connection certainly seems to hold true and contradicts

Williams' thoughts on O'Casey's use of colour as an aesthetic function only (Williams, 265). As a poem provokes imagery through economised and concise language, so too would a play that properly utilized the various elements of language, music, and stagecraft. This is not to say that drama would have fewer and more concise words or stage direction, but that the dialogue and scenery would be exploited for its connection to the outside, or real world. The poetic imagery comes, then from the artistic choices and attached symbolism within the text of the play.

On the other hand, Total Theatre doesn't completely suit O'Casey because he resisted any sort of concrete classification or style. Total Theatre revolves around the notion of the intersection of all arts, but Casey also includes political agendas, morals, and social opinions. This might suggest where the accusations of propaganda come into play. In this instance, Yeats would seem better suited with his Noh plays. *At the Hawk's Well* certainly has a political point to be made, but it is well camouflaged by the style of theatre, the costuming, the lighting, the music, and the choreographed movement. On top of all of that, Yeats focuses on the art more than the mythology, which is where the political message is located. O'Casey, on the other hand, refers to mythological characters in conversation, not as a primary means of discourse. Doing this, as well as locating his stories in specific historical moments, pushes the political message to the fore, even in plays that emphasize his artistic exploration.

Therefore, it makes sense that O'Casey began his first real experimentation in *The Silver Tassie*, with the controversial second act dealing with World War I. Breaking free from the confinements of naturalism, he sought to provoke an emotional response within the historical realities of fighting in the Great War. The chanting of the soldiers, reducing them from individuals to a unit, and the stylized depiction of their battle at the end of Act II represent O'Casey's opinions on war in general. In reality, the soldiers could have been

fighting in any conflict; World War I was simply the most convenient example for him to use. The later plays are his artistic experimentations with various art forms to further his personal ideas and present his idealized view of Ireland.

O'Casey also uses colour often throughout the dialogue in his plays, as when describing Father Ned through the use of colour and its relation to nature. Colour is used to describe vivid ideals as well as physical items on the stage. For example, in *The Drums of Father Ned*, O'Casey extensively describes the inside of McGilligan's and Binnington's homes, down to the specific pictures that are present in the room. If the use of colour was mechanical, there would be no need for those minute details. Neither does he avoid consistent patterns in his use of colour. O'Casey takes the effort to describe a room or person extensively, focusing on the colour of a person's clothes, the time of the year, the location of the sun.

He also focuses on the colours of the Tricolour flag, the political symbolism the colours represent and their connection with Father Ned who, as a supernatural figure, embodies Orange, White, and Green, connecting him with Ireland as a physical entity. In Act II, Mrs. McGilligan compares the Tòstal celebration to the predecessor of the Tricolour flag, a flag with a green field and golden harp (208). O'Casey also uses the Starry Plough, a flag used by the Irish Citizen Army at the time of the Easter Rising; this flag has a green field with a yellow plough and silver stars. This is an obvious influence for O'Casey's *The Plough and the Stars*, a play that is set before, during, and after the Easter Rising of 1916. The flags and the colours used are not just described and used as obvious mechanical devices but also as inherent political symbolism. The colour a person wears, adorns, or pledges allegiance to gives a good indication of how O'Casey intends the reader to perceive them. His personal prejudices form the essence of who each of the characters are, how they behave, and how they advance the plot. Those personal prejudices can be seen through the use of colour.

Additionally important is the fascination his primary characters have with art in general. Ayamonn from *Red Roses for Me* lends his artistic viewpoint which showcases O'Casey's use of colour through the imagery of the candle as a symbol of Ireland. At the end of the first act, Roory O'Balacaun declares that Ireland still has the "light of freedom; th' tall white candle tipped with its golden spear of flame" (*Red Roses for Me*, 245). In a time of such economic difficulties, Ayamonn's Dublin still has the right to question and protest the social and political norms of the day. Roory and Ayamonn sing "Th' Bould Fenian Men" and their resolve is strengthened (245-246). Later in the third act, Finnoola compares Dublin to a candle that was "white as snow" and "gold speckled" (272). Roory and Finnoola create an idealized image of tenement Dublin shortly before the Easter Rising. Reality shows the bleak poverty that exists among the working-class characters who decide to go on strike for a rise of one shilling (220). The candle imagery, then, seems out of place in the bleakness of the story. Ayamonn obviously has the respect of the strikers, but they are fighting for very little, and the light of freedom that Roory strives for becomes an illusion. Finnoola perhaps describes the devolution of the candle best when she laments over how far Dublin has fallen when she says "yellowish now, leanin' sideways, an' guttherin' down to a last shaky glimmer in th' wind o' life" (273).

The candle that once was pure as snow and gold specked has been used, the wax has melted, and the colours have combined to create the image of an old, used candle that has little utility left. This matches the state of the people in the play. Living in the tenements, with nothing but apples and violets to sell for pennies, Finnoola and Eeada are brought low. Mr. Brennan's back is literally bent, and his constant paranoia over the security of his money in the Bank of Ireland give him no rest. The people are worn down, and the working-class feel that they have no alternative except to strike. The people are not, though, the only things that are worn down; the buildings, the landscape, and the weather are as well.

In the stage directions of the first act, O'Casey describes the walls of the Breydon home as being whitewashed and "dwindling into a rusty yellowish tinge" (215). The walls of the house share the same colour as the worn-down candle, and act as a constant reminder throughout the play of the poverty of the Breydon home. Another reminder of that poverty is the statue of the Blessed Virgin that Eeada, Finnoola, and Dympna revere. Described as having been "once a glory of purest white, sparkling blue, and luscious gilding;…the colours have faded, the gilt is gone,…and the face of the Virgin is sadly soiled by the grime of the house" (224). Even God is brought low in Dublin. Despite their attempts to keep the statue clean, Eeada, Finnoola, and Dympna can only watch as the statue declines with them. The statue divides the house between Protestants and Catholics, creating contention. Ayamonn alone tolerates both groups, requesting that everyone be more tolerant of the other.

The Church of St. Burnupus also suffers from a lack of beauty, being located in what is described as a "poor and smoky district" (290). The church's location, and the people who claim membership or seek safety within its gates, suggest that the church serves the working-class, indicating that not much money would come in via tithes and offerings. This fits in with the overall feeling of Dublin itself in the play. In the third act, Dublin is described as having a "gloomy grey sky, so that the colours of the scene are made up of the dark houses," without any sun over the working-class people (271). The weather reflects the despair of the people trying to survive. Dympna reemphasises this when she states that "Th' sun is always at a distance, an' th' chill grey is always here" (272). Ireland has diminished from the glory that Roory sees in his candle of liberty; that candle has been reduced to melted wax.

O'Casey uses these images to convey the despair of the tenement house. Where Ayamonn sees what Dublin could be through the eyes of an artist, the poor of Dublin cannot. They act out of desperation; nothing but their own action will save them. They must literally fight for an extra shilling. Their only delusion is that they have the force necessary to compel

that raise. Ireland's glory has diminished and the candle no longer retains its shape, and its colour has irrevocably changed. Ayamonn represents the one true chance for an Irish revival; not as a worker, but as an artist. O'Casey uses *Red Roses for Me* to argue that Ireland needs to be educated beyond the simple curriculum endorsed by the employers and religious leaders who influence local politics.

Ayamonn's failure comes through his naivety which is fairly easy to track. He feels confident that a strike won't happen, that the employers will recognize their employee's needs and do the right thing (220); he encourages others to respect differing religious in a country with such religious contention (221); he believes that Tim Mulcanney's anti-religious attitude will not bring him harm (224); and he believes that Sheila will love him regardless of their religious differences, and that love would be sufficient to sustain them (222). This unabashed confidence does have its merits. His love for his neighbours and of the arts leads him to actively take part in determining a solution for the lockout. He organises a minstrel show in an effort to raise money in case wage negotiations fail, and he speaks on behalf of the workers to the public at large. His first action is through peaceful and constructive action, and his second is through the support of measured political resistance. Ayamonn embraces the idea of being an artist, even when it means losing sleep.

For example, there are several paintings specified in *Red Roses for Me* and the various plays that aren't especially important to the overall storyline. While paintings of the Pope or William the Orange point to specific religious and political influence, there are also paintings noted for their artistic importance. In *The Plough and the Stars*, the painting of Venus serves as a convenient means of alienating Nora and her middle class aspirations from her tenement neighbours. However, it also plays into O'Casey's belief that art should be for all, and that in Ireland, it was not. By including paintings onstage, O'Casey normalized art for the masses while also making social and political statements and using it to theatrical effect. This idea is

perhaps best personified in the character of Ayamonn Breydon *in Red Roses for Me*.

As the protagonist of the play, the audience is meant to sympathize with Ayamonn's decisions. O'Casey exploits this given sympathy to also make his statement regarding arts in Ireland. He positions Ayamonn in the play as not only one of the supporters and leaders in the worker's union but as one who is well respected by many around him. Even though he is a Protestant in a primarily Catholic Dublin, the workers listen to him and ask him to represent them in their strike meetings. O'Casey also positions him at the head of the workers who ultimately fight Inspector Finglas and Dublin's police force. Likewise, even though he is not a practicing Protestant, he is well respected by his neighbours and his previous minister, Reverend Griffin. There is really nothing about the character that might provide a reason to doubt his integrity. In this role, not only is he a revolutionary leader, he is a public speaker and a charitable man. His speech is the keynote at the worker's rally, and in spite of his busy schedule, he takes the time to help his Catholic neighbours look for their missing statue.

The root of Ayamonn's character, though, is that he is an artist. In Act I, Roory notices Ayamonn's copies of a Fra Angelico and John Constable[24] painting on the wall and asks about them. Ayamonn's responds by indicating his desire to be a painter, declaring his desire to

> "To throw a whole world in colour on a canvas though it be but a man's fine face, a woman's shape asthride of a cushioned couch, or a three-bordered house on a hill, done with a glory; even delaying God, busy forgin' a new world, to stay awhile an'

[24] Ronald Ayling comments that Fra Angelico and John Constable were both painters who O'Casey greatly admired. Fra Angelico was a leading Italian painter from the 1500s and John Constable "dominated British landscape-painting in the early 19th century" with J. M. W. Turner. Seven Plays by Sean O'Casey, 524.

look upon their loveliness" (157).

From this encounter, the audience learns two things. First is that Ayamonn wants to be a painter and actively seeks to educate himself in the arts. That he is committed to this goal is reinforced previously when his mother complains that he spends too much time "sketchin', readin', makin' songs, an' learnin' Shakespeare" to which he replies, "They are all lovely, and my life needs them all" (132). The second is that he is not a talented painter. Roory's assumption of Ayamonn's art being created by a kid matches the initial stage description of them as being "childlike" (127).

Another component of colour to be considered in the later plays is how O'Casey utilized lighting on stage to highlight the tensions between religious influence and the arts. Where I have argued that O'Casey attacked Irish political movements in the Trilogy, in the later plays light starts as a means of highlighting religion and its political sway over Ireland. *The Star Turns Red*, the earliest of the four plays analysed, does this in an obvious way through how the star is lit as it hangs over the stage. Set on Christmas Eve, the star is referenced as the Star of Bethlehem very early on by (the mother) and is identified as silver. Christmas and its influence is felt immediately; a choir sings "O Come All Ye Faithful" as the curtain rises, Christmas celebrations are discussed throughout, and one of the characters talks of playing Father Christmas at a Christmas party. However, the conflict within the play is over a political strike taken up by labourers who are opposing their employers.

This, with the overall tone of the play, indicates that the issues of the play are political, not religious. Where are the political leaders and employers, though? There is the mayor, a kindly yet useless leader and his overbearing wife. There is the committee of union leaders who attempt to depose Red Jim, but they are political figures within the worker's movement, not the employers. No employers are actually named, nor are any local government resources utilized in the struggle. For example, where is the law enforcement

presence that would surely be essential during a worker's strike? The Saffron Shirts, a Catholic paramilitary force, enforce the law in the first act by punishing Julia for her attitude and dress. Red Jim's soldiers arrest Brannigan for drunken and disorderly behaviour and bring him to the labour hall for punishment. Clearly, the authority in place is the Church under the direction of the Purple Priest and the revolutionary belligerent is Red Jim and his communist labour party. This is confirmed through the Brown Priest when the Purple Priest encourages Jack and Julia to remove the Red Star from their coats, initially exhorting them to "do what the church commands" (271).

Later, when they continue to refuse, the Purple Priest demands that they "Do what the State commands" (274). The Purple Priest's connection of the Church and State, his absolute influence over the Saffron Shirts, and his involvement in the plot to usurp Red Jim of his role as party leader place him as a leader of the city of Dublin and antagonist of the play. He may not be an elected official, but he determines city policy to the detriment, according to O'Casey, of the Irish people. As mentioned earlier, both priests endorse *Rerum Novarum* as a means of ensuring obedience from all good Catholics. Red Jim and his followers directly contradict *Rerum Novarum* and Church leadership, making them heretical citizens, in need of correction. All of this is done under the silver star of Bethlehem, a clear symbol of Christianity, and the views its religious leaders espouse.

The beginning of hostilities, and the first indication of change, again comes through the star, which turns from silver to red in Act III. Red Jim declares to the Purple Priest:

> "Look at the star, look at the star, man! The crescent has come, and the crescent has gone; the cross has come, and the cross is going! [To the Red Guards] What is left to take their place, comrades?
>
> *Red Guards [loudly and in chorus]* The Red Star is rising! The Star will take their place and burn in the heavens over our heads for ever!" (351-352)

Red Jim's statement that the cross had come and is now going indicates his view of it as a political entity. This can be seen in the other political entities that surround Christianity. The crescent, as a political symbol for Islam, would be a distinct reference to the Ottoman Empire, which lasted over 600 years, but had dissolved in O'Casey's lifetime. This is an anachronism in the play, as the play seems to be set around the Dublin lockout of 1911, and dedicated to the strikers of 1913. However, the time of the play is identified as taking place "tomorrow, or the next day" (240) and it could be argued that therefore, the historical inaccuracy is irrelevant. The cross, then, would refer specifically to the Holy Roman Empire, or Catholicism. Viewed as an empire and a political organization, and compared to one that had waned and dissolved, O'Casey's clear message is that a new political empire, communism, would need to take its place.

Act III of *Red Roses for Me* uses light to show the audience how O'Casey views Ireland now and what it could become in the future as seen through Ayamonn's artistic mind. Starting with the drab, grey scene as mentioned earlier, lighting in the stage directions helps to lead this expressionistic act to its full potential. Focusing the sun light away from the bridge onto a church building, the lighting is dark (271). As the act progresses, the stage darkens as the sun sets until only Nelson's spire is seen in the distance (283). This fading light coincides with the poor workers on the street falling asleep at the end of the day. Their conversations slowly degrade into murmurs, and only pick up when aroused by the arrivals of the Reverend, Rector, and Mr. Brennan. Each time they are aroused, they quickly return to their slumber-like state, until Ayamonn approaches.

Ayamonn's arrival on stage in such dark lighting has the feeling of a dream. The dream begins when he declares to the sleepers to "Rouse yourselves; we hold a city in our hands!" (281) The poor, who are dressed in "the blackness of a dark night," slowly begin to rise and release their despair (272). Their faces, now "aglow," begin to lift up, and their

clothes transform into beautiful greens and silvers (285); the scene brightens and shows a refreshed Dublin. Ayamonn's vision of Dublin's potential raises up those around him and convince even the most destitute that such beauty exists among them. O'Casey appears to propose the artist as Ireland's great hero and not the great gunman that Donal played at. His appearance and subsequent description of the city inspires the vivid imagery that everyone else sees. When Finnoola begins to dance, Ayamonn joins in and they are bathed in golden and violet light (286). When Ayamonn leaves, the dream leaves as well, a foreshadowing of what Ireland will lose when he dies at the end. Ayamonn is the key to Ireland's success, and O'Casey feels like the key is destroyed from within Ireland. The lighting of the vision comes from Ayamonn and could be argued to be an extension of Ayamonn himself.

Sean O'Casey used music in his plays to great effect, mirroring perhaps his own personal love for music. From an interview with his wife, Eileen, Gerard A. Larson learned that:

> "O'Casey also used song when he was writing and creating. [He] asked Mrs. O'Casey what writing habits he had, and after a moment, she replied, 'Well, you know, he'd dawdle the mornings away. He'd putter. He wrote mostly in the afternoon and at night. I could always tell when he was working because he would hum or sing out loud. I guess he was very happy then, or maybe the songs helped to inspire him, but he always did it. Not popular songs, you know, but the old songs, and the old ballads.'" (Larson 236)

This love can also be seen in the few recorded interviews with him as well. The inclusion of music in O'Casey's work tends to fall under three genres to various uses within his plays. Each genre, folk songs, political ballads, and religious hymns, identify the three basic elements of Irish culture.

The first and most prevalent, folk songs, seems to serve as a means of connecting the

setting of a play to an idyllic Ireland. A great example of this is in the expressionistic third act of *Red Roses for Me*, where Brennan o' the Moor's song serves as a prelude for Ayamonn's vision of Dublin. The song, a simple love song of a man's amorous pursuit of a beautiful woman, initiates the direction to darken the stage which heralds Ayamonn's vision.[25] Folk songs seem to serve as O'Casey's way to remind his audience of their shared culture. These songs, which often seem more suited to a pub, come at significant moments like the bridge scene.

In contrast to folk songs are the Protestant and Catholic hymns that O'Casey uses to represent the control of the clergy over the working-class. In *The Drums of Father Ned*, Father Filifogue devotes his energies to two things: finding the elusive Father Ned, and preventing the apparently evil influences of Bach, Mozart, and others from invading his congregation as a result of the An Tòstal Festival and the efforts of his conductor, Mr. Murray. O'Casey forges a schism between hymns and political songs (which is the third form of music), placing the two at odds with each other. In doing this, O'Casey identifies his personal opinion that the political system in place is more important than the religious

[25] Interestingly, I can't seem to identify the origin of this song. What I have determined is that it is called "Easy and Slow," and that its authorship is contested. It may be that O'Casey wrote the song and it was later adapted into a full song, or that it was a folksong that O'Casey heard and used. Dominic Behan, a Dublin born singer and brother of the playwright Brendan Behan, claims to have taken some of O'Casey's version and created the rest. O'Casey certainly has the stronger claim, publishing it in 1942 with Red Roses for Me, whereas Behan's first album "Songs of the Irish Republican Army" was first released in 1958 (https://www.discogs.com/Dominic-Behan-Songs-Of-The-Irish-Republican-Army/release/6014371). O'Casey's letters only indicate that he knew and liked Behan.

influence over said political system. Therefore, in *The Star Turns Red*, "The Worker's Internationale" marks Red Jim's success in his worker's revolution in Dublin, replacing "O Come, All Ye Faithful," which started the play.

Often connected to music both on and off stage is dance, and when used in O'Casey's work, dance is often used in the later plays as to symbol of life. It is not a common occurrence, but its inclusion tends to come at significant moments in the play's storyline. In the context of the tension between O'Casey's view of art and religion, dance serves as a condemnation of the oppressive nature of religion which requires humility and piety from its members. Additionally, the movement of the human body and the union between two dancers suggests a more open attitude towards sexuality and merriment. O'Casey's connection of dance and youthfulness also suggests a similar openness, as the moments where dance is included in his plays either highlight the potential for intimacy or a mockery of those who would attempt it. There is also a political element to be considered in dance, more specifically in marching. While not connected to the arts, marching serves both a practical and symbolic function. Therefore, how O'Casey employs marching in his plays ought to be considered here as well.

The best early example of the utilization of dance in O'Casey may be found, as might be expected, in *The Silver Tassie*. The play ends with Harry and Teddy having left the commemoration of the soldiers associated with the Avondale Football Club. Susie, in response to Jessie's lament for Harry, urges her to forget him and get up and dance, stating that "Teddy Foran and Harry Heegan have gone to live their own way in another world. Neither I nor you can lift them out of it" (*Complete Plays*, V. II, 103). Primarily referring to their physical disabilities, Susie identifies herself and Jessie as going through the fire unharmed, and that they must go on living. Dancing becomes a symbol for life in the play, and places Harry and Teddy firmly outside of Susie's definition of the living world. Even

had they stayed, O'Casey implies, neither of them could dance with the rest of the crowd. Their youthfulness has been destroyed by the war, a dark message and clear condemnation of the need for war. The powerful image of the dancers at the end of *The Silver Tassie* clearly contrasts with the trudging of the soldiers in Act II whose youth and life, O'Casey argues, has been subverted and stolen.

O'Casey's 1940 *The Star Turns Red* promotes a similar message in its approach to dance. There is no dancing in the text, but a Fancy Dress Dance event happens to be occurring on the same night as the start of the worker's revolution. In this instance, Jack asks Julia to honour the wishes of her father, Michael, to not go to a fancy dress dance. Instead, he wishes her to go to the Hall with Jack and follow the Red Star. She initially refuses, wanting a night of fun and merriment. It is this refusal that gives the Purple Priest the excuse to sanction her punishment by the Flash and the Circle, which in turn leads to Michael's death. Interestingly, she changes her mind just before the religious militants come onstage, promising to stay with Jack and follow the Red Star. Killing Michael cements the resolve of both parties, setting the stage for Act III. In this example, in contrast to *Red Roses*, dance (and art in general) are disregarded or subverted for political reasons. Like *The Silver Tassie*, youthfulness and life is set aside while politics and religion take priority.

In this instance, however, O'Casey is revising Ireland's historical record to envision what a successful worker's revolt might look like. Instead of portraying the Easter Rising of 1916 (as in *The Plough and the Stars*), he places his story within the historical context of a worker's lockout in Dublin on Christmas Eve of 1913 (240). It is easy to understand why this politically charged play might be labelled propaganda. By focusing on a worker's revolt, O'Casey ignores entirely the nationalist movement that came to dominate the Easter Rising, precluding the need for a change in the resulting government of Independent Ireland while ensuring that the revolution produced immediate results. While Jack dies in defense of the

ideals he espoused like Jack Clitheroe from *The Plough*, the Jack of *The Star Turns Red* does so without regard for himself or his position. Therefore, when "The Internationale" plays as the curtain drops, Jack is a hero as opposed to Jack Clitheroe, whose death is portrayed as wasteful and damaging.

This is also where the conflict between the arts and religion come into play. Although there is no actual dance throughout the play, the dance event serves as a practical dramatic tool for the Purple Priest to antagonize the workers. Also worthy of consideration is the final fight that takes on the qualities of a dance in its representation. Rather than stage a realistic battle with the accurate sounds and flashes of light and gunpowder, not to mention the blood from gunshot wounds, O'Casey chooses instead to have the actors

> "go through the movements of firing and loading their rifles, and some do the same with machine-guns. Occasionally, one of them slides over, wounded or dead, while [Alexander] Galzounov's Preamble to his 'Scènes de Ballet,' Op. 52 is played to represent the heat, the firing, and the stress of battle." (349)

O'Casey's use of this musical piece indicates to any potential director that the fight scene is more of a choreographed movement than anything, and more importantly, that the tone the actions are meant to be taken as epic and heroic. The song is dominated by brass instruments with a minimal use of percussions. The score itself is in a major scale, which creates an upbeat or celebratory moment. The simple melody of the song (along with the fact that ballet is in the title of the song) suggests that the soldier's actions would have been choreographed to be more graceful than realistic, more usually found in a dance. There should be no doubt in a reader's mind that Red Jim's soldiers – the only soldiers on stage during this scene – are meant to be heroic. This conclusion is driven home by the music and the implied choreographed movements. (254-257, 270-271)

Similarly, in *Red Roses for Me*, dance is used particularly epically and heroically

during Ayamonn's transformative vision of Dublin in Act III. Where *The Star Turns Red* focuses on the political and religious tensions, with the political movement finding victory, Ayamonn's dance with Finoola seems to represent a courtship and her reaction to his death the bereavement of a widow. In this sense, he definitely fits into Finnoola's romanticized image of the "patched coat, shaky shoe, an' white hungry face of th' Irish rebel" (O'Casey Vol. 3, 192). The dance, which she initiates, is directed by O'Casey to be a flute rendition of a "Gavotte, or an air of some dignified and joyous dance" (201). This can easily be described as a celebratory dance, and the fact that Ayamonn and Finnoola are the only dances could reflect a wedding dance between a bride and groom. There is some evidence to support this; in *The Encyclopedia of World Folk Dance,* the author suggests that the Gavotte was a used at weddings in Ireland during the 15th century, which could have survived through to contemporary Ireland (Snodgrass, 110). Ayamonn's death is announced in Act IV by Finnoola who pronounces his last wishes before becoming nonresponsive to Reverend Griffin's questions. I would argue that Finnoola could be seen as Ayamonn's wife, and that her exit from the play could be interpreted as death, tying the two of them together.

The marriage of art and rebellion within the play, which differs from *The Star*, informs O'Casey's argument that true social revolution includes the accessibility of the Arts for all. The figurehead of the rebellion is Jack, an artist who never actually anticipates fighting to be necessary. Instead, he utilizes his artistic abilities to raise funds and motivate the workers to join his cause. His artistic abilities are demonstrably questionable; in the stage settings of Act I, two pieces are described as being childlike in appearance. This can be assumed to be Ayamonn's because no children appear in the play, and Ayamonn seems to be the only person interested in art at all within the play. While this does Ayamonn no favours, it certainly fits within O'Casey's belief that art is a natural talent within all humans and should be accessible to all regardless of education and skill. His participation is also viewed

as essential to the strike's success, as both union leaders and Reverend Griffin attempt to convince him to either participate or not. In this instance, the church also plays a more or less neutral role in the strike, with the religious antagonists coming from the vestry members who also happen to be employers. Ayamonn is positioned by O'Casey as the leader of the belligerents in direct opposition to Inspector Finglas, who is positioned as the leader of the law enforcement response force representing the employer's rights.

By the time *Cock-a-Doodle Dandy* was written, O'Casey had fully transitioned from primarily criticizing the role of political movements to criticizing the influence of religion in local politics. In *Cock*, dance is associated with the Cock, who stands opposite to Father Domineer and the church. In this play, there is no real discussion of local politics; there is no worker's revolt or nationalist uprising occurring. Two men sit on their front porch and negotiate the cost of transporting turf while one complains about his apparently wayward daughter. The women also dance a lot, and dancing in the play becomes associated with sexual intimacy. Michael, the father of Loraleen, talks in the early part of the play of worrying for her soul because of her dancing (vol. 4, 125). The Cock and Loraleen are connected from the very beginning of the play by their dancing which is soundly condemned by Father Domineer who clearly controls the town of Nyadnanave.

The Cock dances throughout the play, causing mayhem where ever it goes. When it does not dance, it is only to appear suddenly and crow and just as suddenly disappear. Interestingly, only the messenger is able to catch it and hold it calm. The messenger, a young man who supports Loraleen and loves Mahan's maid, rebukes those present for being so scared of the Cock and in an effort to lighten the mood marches off stage with it while goose stepping. The Goose Step is a military march common throughout the world, but its use in the play prompts some thought. According to George Orwell, a military march is indicative of the social atmosphere of a country. He says

> "A military parade is really a kind of ritual dance, something like a ballet, expressing a certain philosophy of life. The goose-step, for instance, is one of the most horrible sights in the world, far more terrifying than a dive-bomber. It is simply an affirmation of naked power; contained in it, quite consciously and intentionally, is the vision of a boot crashing down on a face. Its ugliness is part of its essence, for what it is saying is 'Yes, I am ugly, and you daren't laugh at me', like the bully who makes faces at his victim." (Orwell)

Orwell's more sinister view of the march makes the Cock's mockery of the other characters, particularly their social leaders, divisive. Those social leaders, of which Father Domineer sits at the head, are shown to be domineering (hence the blatantly obvious name), leading through fear. Father Domineer threatens many of the characters several times with the consequences of sin on their souls, leaving the only path towards absolution through him. On the other hand, the Cock's march serves as a foreshadowing for the exodus that will occur at the end of the play, when the young and less religious crowd will remove themselves from the influence of the church, indicating that religious influence will diminish. In this way, the Cock resembles Father Ned, except as a devil instead of a priest.

In this can be seen the added tension between the arts and religion with the very (for the time) controversial inclusion of sexuality. O'Casey never shied away from including sexual elements from his plays: witness the seduction of Minnie Powell by Davoren, Mary Boyle's pregnancy, Rosie Redmond.[26] In Cock, though, dance takes on a seductive power,

[26] This is not to say that explicit sexuality was ever staged in an O'Casey play. Consider that Rosie Redmond takes Fluther offstage, Minnie is impregnated between Acts, and Loraleen is accused of promiscuity rather then caught in the act. While O'Casey certainly did not hide from it – His short story "The Star-Jazzer" (*The Green Crow*, Virgin Books, 1957) deals with

particularly through Loraleen. In this respect, Father Domineer's moral high ground (sexual sin is, after all, one of the more serious of sins in Christendom, especially in 1950's Ireland) stays intact until he loses his temper and kill's a lorry driver who is living with a woman he is not married to.

In this, O'Casey positions Father Domineer's authority as being higher than any government when he tries to convince Mahan to fire his disobedient yet highly effective employee. When Mahan hesitates, Domineer declares "We're above all nations. Nationality is mystical, maundering nonsense! It's a heresy! I'm the custodian of higher interests. [*Shouting*] Do as you're told – get rid of him!" (186). This statement might be considered confusing because of how it starts, but I would argue that the "We're" Father Domineer alludes to is humanity with a particular reference to their souls. By positioning them under the authority of God – in reality, under the authority of the church, and therefore clergy – Father Domineer both subverts any political power to religious authority and legitimizes his own authority as ruler in Nyadnanave. That Mahan refuses to fire his lorry driver and that the lorry driver refuses to obey Father Domineer provokes the rage of the priest and results in the lorry driver's death.

The power of the church is confirmed with the expulsion of Loraleen from the town and the resulting evacuation of all but one of the women. Throughout the play, Loraleen is portrayed as a one of muddled birth by a troubled woman. Her exposure to the outside world has introduced her to a lifestyle that is condemned by Father Domineer and much of the town. The centre of the town's condemnation falls on her perceived lasciviousness which manifests through her dancing. Ronald Ayling ascribes this to the connection between the

---

sexuality fairly clearly – he had to recognize that audiences would not have stood for themes like sex on stage in a public setting such as a theatre.

name Loreleen and Lorelei, "a maiden who threw herself into the Rhine in despair over a faithless lover and became a siren luring fisherman to destruction" (Ayling 530). Loreleen flirts with the various men of the play throughout, and her beauty is such that several of the men seem supernaturally affected by her. The culmination of this occurs in Scene II when she, Lorna, and Marion dance with Michael, Mahan, and the Sergeant and begin to transform into the image of a cock (Vol. 4, 183-184). Only Father Domineer's appearance stops the seduction and his condemnation of Loreleen precedes the death of the lorry driver.

By the end of Scene III, Loreleen has been caught compromising Mahan, is expelled and leaves Nyadnanave with all of the women but Julia, a faithful but sick woman who sought a miracle cure from Lourdes (153).[27] Julia, who went to France in faith, returns after the other women leave and delivers the news that she has not been cured. The only women remaining in Nyadnanave will die. In short, O'Casey completely strips any power and influence that the church has in favour of the Cock. The play ends with one wondering what will become of all of the characters, the one group without a home but representing the life of Ireland, and the other being the church retaining its authority but seeing that faith proved useless.

In *The Drums of Father Ned*, we see the result of the conflict between two similar groups. The youth of Doonavale, led by Father Ned, Michael Binnington, and Nora McGilligan, find their motivation in the An Tòstal[28] festival, preparing decorations,

[27] https://www.lourdes-france.org/en/ This is a reference to Lourdes, France, where in the mid-19th century, the Virgin Mary was seen in vision several times; apparently, there is a tradition of belief in the curative powers of the water from the spring found in the Grotto of Massabielle in what is now the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Lourdes.

[28] An Tóstal, which is a festival designed to celebrate Irish Culture and attract tourists. The

rehearsing for a play, rehearsing songs to sing, and participating in the upcoming local government elections. This group represents the artistic side of the overall theme between art and religion. The group representing religion consists of the Father Fillifogue, Mayor McGilligan, Vice-Mayor Binnington, and their wives, and their desire for power – as well as the intense hatred Binnington and McGilligan hold for each other – prevents them from being able to compete against their children in the long run. Dance is not nearly as prevelant in *Drums*, but there are three short examples worthy of mention.

The first and worst example of dance can be found in the humorous chase between Father Fillifogue and the metaphysical Father Ned. Throughout the play, Father Fillifogue attempts to find Father Ned to show him "that th' Church comes before th' Tosthal" (174). This, along with encouraging the mayor and vice mayor to register themselves in the upcoming election, is his primary purpose in the play. O'Casey weaves him in and out of the various scenes never really giving him any consistency or gravity as a character. In Fillifogue the audience finds slapstick humour as one might find in a Charlie Chaplin film. This choreographed motion is meant to be physical throughout the play, with Fillifogue's demeanor and breath quickly diminishing as he fails to find and exert his will upon Father

---

first was held in April 1953 (Letters vol. 2, 883 note). Des Hickey and Gus Smith translate the word Tóstal from the Gaelic as "a hosting" in A Paler Shade of Green, in which they discuss the controversy surrounding the production of The Drums of Father Ned. A proposed theatre festival was to be held in the 1958 Tóstal and O'Casey was invited to submit a play along with Samuel Beckett. Unfortunately, O'Casey felt that his play's content was at risk of being censored and withdrew his play in protest. Joyce's Ulysses was withdrawn, and Samuel Beckett withdrew his plays in support of O'Casey; the Theatre Festival had to be cancelled.

Ned. When he collapses at the end of the play, his defeat is as much physical as it is mental in his inability to maintain control over the inhabitants of Doonavale.

The second, and more realistic example of dance in *Drums* is the formal dance expected at the beginning of the Tòstal. The whole of the play plays as a buildup to a Tòstal celebration, which also happens to take place around an election for Mayor and Vice Mayor. Because of this, McGilligan and Binnington and their wives spend some time practicing a dance and choreographed walk that they must complete to open the celebrations. Throughout the whole play, they demonstrate that they are completely incapable of learning the simple moves that several of their younger citizens demonstrate very ably. This is because the two couples view the dance as they view their piano: something left only to an expert and therefore, only owned or learned as a means of displaying their wealth and authority.

In *Drums*, where dance is foreign to the older generation, which represents the forces oppressing Ireland, it is natural to the youth who represent the future of Ireland. This can be seen in the character of Bernadette. She is a somewhat confusing character in the play. She works for both the Binningtons and the McGilligans, and is friendly with them while also showing some contempt at their ineptitude. At the same time, she is friendly with Nora and clearly supports Father Ned. She does not seem to fully embrace Father Ned's path as easily as Michael and Nora, though. She is a willing participant in the Tòstal celebrations, but she is also a bit of a hypocrite, using her sexuality to seduce young Tom Killsallighan and bait Alex Skerighan. Bernadette can become the ideal Irishwoman that Father Ned wants if she changes. There is no clear indication that she has changed by the end of the play, nor does O'Casey mean to show that. She is in the crowd of Tòstal supporters, but not one of its leaders or even necessarily an enthusiastic participant.

However, Bernadette can dance, and in this is representative of the youth of Doonavale. This suggests that dance, at least in the play, is meant to be a natural skill among

O'Casey's artistically educated masses. She ably demonstrates the formal dance with McGunty that the Binningtons and McGilligans are meant to learn in Act II. The better example comes, though when she dances with Skerighan. More important than the dance itself is the motivation behind their reasons for dancing. In Skerighan, one easily sees the physical reaction to an attractive dancer, but Bernadette seems to demonstrate a naivety, focusing instead on the mythological and cultural history of Ireland and how it inspires the townsfolk. Thus, when Skerighan kisses her and she accuses him of assaulting her, audiences are meant to sympathize with her. It is only after she leaves and Father Fillifogue enters that Skerighan realizes he has been had. Bernadette's dance, along with the youthful preparation for the Tosthal festival, show O'Casey's firm belief in the takeover of the town governance from the older generation to the younger generation. The old represent the power of the employers, the church, and the wealthy, whereas the younger represent what O'Casey might label as Irish ideals – a recognition of the past, a community where all benefit from the collective effort of all.

5 Expressionism and Multi-valent Figurations in Abbey productions of *The Star Turns Red*, *Red Roses for Me*, *Cock a Doodle Dandy*, and *The Drums of Father Ned*

Confining O'Casey's collected works to a specific dramatic form, or even group of forms is difficult, as he writes outside of such limits. In a letter to Herbert Coston, O'Casey revealed that his plays "simply grew. I don't make a scenario, and so there is nothing like a framework similar to a skeleton of a steel-framed building" (*Letters* III 641). This organic process suggests that O'Casey was more concerned with the story he was trying to tell and less with how he told it, although he did not necessarily ignore formal structure entirely. The Dublin Trilogy manifests clear naturalist influences; according to Styan, O'Casey's tenement Dublin resembles Zola's "clinical laboratories" in which O'Casey might scientifically explore the consequences upon his characters of their birth and background (Styan 6). As a result, productions of O'Casey plays are difficult to fit within a specific theory or dramatic structure. How directors interpreted those plays and how those productions were received at the Abbey Theatre provide possible insights to understanding O'Casey's intentions with his symbolic use of colour.

This is a difficult task because of the visual nature of drama and the tendency to define colours symbolically as opposed to recognizing colour as a multifaceted tool with an infinite potential for a variety of purposes. Sigmund Skard introduced "The Use of Color in Literature" in 1946 as an attempt to create a hub of colour research across multiple genres and languages. He identifies the primary problem of colour research as being isolated from

other literary movements. The tendency of scholars to limit their studies to a national literature inhibits their ability to provide much more than what Sabine Doran describes as an "index of meaning, " or a basic assignment of meaning to colour within a given literary movement (*Culture* 1). She argues that what is actually needed is a "new perspective that recognizes the complex nature of colour and its inscription in a network of meaning" (1). While she focuses on the colour yellow and its role during the *fin de siècle* period, Doran's arguments on the general cultural mood of yellow has important ramifications of colour study in general. First, while colour may be specific to a particular ideology or movement, there is also a culture of colour that has universal ties. In order to understand the universality of colour within a given subset, one must understand the cultural influence as well. Therefore, although there will be differences between different mediums of the arts, there should be a similar culture of colour within all or most of them. Second, while Doran has chosen to focus on the culture of yellow in the *fin de siècle* period, there may be other colour cultures in different movements that are affected by a variety of other factors. Doran identifies this connection a multivalent figuration.

Drawing on Mikhail Bahktin's chronotope and Sergei Eisenstein's definition and use of the term synaesthesia, Doran defines a multivalent figuration as "the idea that yellow connects divergent conceptual and affective realms, such as art, politics, religion, physiology, and ethics, in time-bound matrices" (18). In other words, an outside force has the ability to signify a specific realm of meaning within a text as a time marker. This idea evolved from a connection to her interest in colour which Doran saw in Bahktin's chronotope as theorized by Hayden White as not only the practice of marking time and space through literature but also through historical cultural analysis as well (189). Changing the measure of time in space to colour, Doran explored the idea of a chromotope in her essay "Chronos/Chroma: Yellow figures in Proust's *La Prisonnière* and Bely's *Petersburg*," but ultimately decided to use

multivalent figuration because of its ability to capture the "multiplicity of meanings" colour has to offer (190). This also includes Sergei Eisenstein's use of synaesthesia in *The Film Sense*, which he defines as the ability to experience something like colour with two senses – the example he gives is that of seeing sound as colour (Eisenstein, 149). This ability, translated into the ability to perceive a historical context or literary connection through an author's use of colour in a text will not create an absolute relationship, but by the "emotional intelligibility" created by a natural grouping of colour within the text and its relationship with the text as a whole (151). This suggests that an author or group of authors who utilize colour synaesthesia in a text would do so only as an enhancement to the text. This fits O'Casey and his text well in that his work is unavoidably connected to his political and social opinions regarding Ireland and its people.

O'Casey's plays provided social commentary critical of nationalism in a time when Irish nationalism was very popular. Following the prosperity the literary revival of the late 19th century the turbulent times of the failed rising but ultimately successful Irish bid for independence (at least for what is now known as the Republic), O'Casey's criticism was not set in a time or political climate to be popular. His stories and characters are complex, with no immediate solution available for public consumption. It is no wonder that audiences reacted with such fury; they watched their own lives play out on the Abbey theatre stage as contributors to Ireland's decline. However, O'Casey found naturalism to be lacking, complaining that it "usually show[s] life at its meanest and commonest, as if life never had time for a dance, a laugh, or a song" (*Sean* 201). This led to the creation of *The Silver Tassie* and his infamous falling out with the Abbey Theatre and WB Yeats. From that point on, O'Casey wrote primarily what he called fantasies, which brings us back to the difficulty of categorizing him into one specific genre.

This has not stopped O'Casey critics from trying to fit him in a singular genre or

school of thought, however. In that same letter to Coston, O'Casey shows some irritation by declaring that "Henceforth, I'll answer questions [with regards to expressionism] no more. I've answered them hundreds of times, and must give up, for the sake of my eyes and the work I still hope to do" (*Letters III* 641). The different theories about what dramatic process or device he used all seem to focus on a central theme of experimentation and innovation. In her article "O'Casey's Dramatic Symbolism," Katherine Worth argues that symbolism is all encompassing in O'Casey's complete works. Worth argues that the characters and sets all have symbolic importance – from the removal of furniture from the Boyle household to the types and colouring of clothing that the various characters wore (Worth 183). On the other hand, Richard Corballis argues that it would be better to consider each play as an allegory as opposed to expressionism or symbolism. "Allegory does not connote a mood," he states, and therefore allows a critic to "dissect the essential structure of the plays without being distracted by the elaborate superstructure – the song and dance, the vivid colours, the eccentric props – with which they are embellished" (Corballis 74). D.E.S. Maxwell, in his book *A Critical History of Modern Irish Drama 1891 – 1980*, claims that "absurdist is the most easily attachable [label]," arguing that O'Casey most likely did not write his plays with any sort of "moral system" (Maxwell 104). Seamus Deane doesn't even try to label O'Casey arguing that "there is no point" (104).

O'Casey's own words may be also partially to blame for the confusion. In a letter to Harry M. Ritchie, dated 26 November 1957, he says that he had no knowledge of expressionism (*Letters III* 497). To the previously mentioned letter to Coston, dated 30 October 1958, he reaffirms that notion that he did not understand expressionism at the time he wrote *The Silver Tassie* and he points out that he wrote fantasy plays well before that time (641). After just over 30 years after his falling out with the directors of the Abbey Theatre,

O'Casey claimed to still not having a clear understanding of the structure.[29] This does not exclude him from being labelled an expressionist; on the contrary, the natural progression of his experimentation compels me to accept him as having expressionistic qualities at the very least. J.L. Styan, author of *Modern Drama in Theory and Practice 3: Expressionism and Epic Theatre*, argues that "[w]e must judge less by intentions than by results" (x). In this chapter, I will begin the process of identifying O'Casey as an expressionist dramatist.

Expressionism began as a term applied to painting, used to separate artists like Van Gogh from early impressionists. Rather than paint an object or person as they appeared, expressionist artists attempted to portray the object in the way that they perceived it, "conveying his private experience, his inner idea, or vision of what he saw" (Styan 1). Therefore, the artist's personal thoughts and opinions would affect how an audience understood the object or thing being captured. Expressionism in drama follows a similar pattern, portraying a story through the author's own viewpoint. Paul Kornfeld argued that humanity is too complex to be authentically portrayed through acting; realist acting is "miserably earthbound" while expressionism should represent Seelen drama, or the drama of the soul (4). Starting as a reaction to realism, which authors and critics saw as too shallow, it sought to give more complexity to the individual characters being portrayed. In Germany, it acted as a "drama of protest" against the rigid power structure and the industrialization and mechanization of society (3). Expressionism developed into a sort of neo-realism with the onset of World War I, assuming a more universally radical role (4). Instead of maintaining

[29] This also does not mean that O'Casey did not know what expressionism was; he was notorious for exaggerating the truth in his writing. The biggest evidence of this are his six volumes of self-proclaimed autobiographies that feature complete conversations that he most likely could not have remembered.

an individual character like Lulu, authors portrayed movements or societies.

The film industry provided an ideal venue for portraying more complex characters. For example, in Thomas Edison's *Frankenstein*, the monster's ugliness is apparent from the beginning. As Dr. Frankenstein attempts to come to terms with what he has created, he realizes that the monster is simply a manifestation of himself. The writer J. Searle Dawley shows this by having the monster disappear into a mirror and reverting to Dr. Frankenstein (*Frankenstein*). Dr. Frankenstein has successfully hidden his darker nature and can now proceed with his happy life. In *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, directed by Robert Wiene, the audience realizes only at the end that Francis is a patient at Dr. Caligari's asylum, and that the story that he has told is actually the story of his insanity. Each character is actually a manifestation of Francis, and create the polyphonic dialogue that Strindberg championed.

Other films, like Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* and Sergei Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemken*, portray the perceived evils of industrialization and class distinction, putting workers in underground cities and treating them as machines. The mechanical nature and precision of the workers are only improved by creating robots that never tire. The employers, who live in the city above ground, are only concerned with the profitability of the workers and ignore the deadly conditions their employers suffer under. The protagonist, Freder, comprehends the social disparity when he explores the underground city and falls in love with Maria. The working-class is literally lower than their employers, and even their attempts to liberate themselves are controlled by the subversive machine man that the employers create. In *Battleship Potemken,* politically created social classes keep the lower class in check. When the soldiers rebel against their superior officers for having to eat rotten meat, all but one officer joins with the bourgeois captain. These films show the social discontent that exists as a result of class separation.

O'Casey does not fit perfectly within the expressionist movement, but he

utilizes expressionistic elements, and the argument could be made for him to be aligned with the movement. Although he never claimed to ever have any knowledge of expressionism, there is a precedent to being able to place him there. Büchner, Wedekind, and Strindberg are all considered expressionists, yet none of them actually lived during that time period. O'Casey's body of work has clear expressionistic tendencies, so whether he intended to be one is irrelevant. He enjoyed reading Strindberg and Wedekind, and he obviously incorporated some of their writing style into his own.

Büchner and Wedekind are not authors that O'Casey followed much, but their approaches to drama had a significant impact on his writing. Although they both lived before the time period of expressionism, both are considered forerunners and many expressionistic qualities are derived from them. For example, Wedekind focuses on sex and sexuality. Where Ibsen mocked the uptight Christian morality (and hypocrisy), Wedekind blatantly and explicitly explored human sexuality itself (19). He cast prostitutes and criminals as heroes, and has them engage in all manners of lasciviousness. His characters range in age and he explores puberty, infidelity and everything in between. In writing such controversial stories, Wedekind attacked bourgeois family values (17). Wedekind does take a somewhat naturalist approach, but he also includes elements of fantasy and nightmare as well (23). His characters are typecast and generalized. On top of that, Wedekind focuses on enticing his audience to sympathize with the audience while relating them more to the chorus and secondary characters. Therefore, the audience would feel like the antagonist.

O'Casey followed a similar pattern of creating strong-willed women who are victimised and vilified by the men in their life, the oppressive nature of the English or Irish government, and the economic and social environment around them. Minnie Powell is a confident, pretty woman who is relatively uneducated because of her socioeconomic status who is eventually betrayed by Donal Davoren, the man she believes is a gunman on the run.

Mary Boyle sticks to her feminist and nationalist principles, but is seduced, impregnated and abandoned by the English Charles Bentham and belittled by the other men in her life. Jessie from *The Silver Tassie* finds herself torn between two men, the one she loved before he went to war, and the one she currently loves. The old woman and the young woman from *Within the Gates* are looked down upon by the bishop, who is actually the young woman's father. Each woman's sexuality violates social norms.

Many audiences would have viewed Minnie's sexual confidence as shameful, and Donal was aware of it. When she mentions that she will start coming down to his room to do some cleaning, Donal suggests that other tenants might talk. Minnie spitefully replies that she doesn't care, that "she's not going to ask their leave, now, to do what she wants to" (*Plays 2* 19). When Donal despairs at her death by the end of the play, the audience has realized that they are being compared to the poltroons of the play. Mary's untimely pregnancy brings shame to her family because of Ireland's religious culture. During this time period, Captain Boyle's outrage would have been completely understood by his peers in the play and in the audience, but because he is a lazy drunkard, they can't help but feel sympathetic for Mary and Juno who decide to leave the house and raise the baby with two mothers (*Plays 1* 84). O'Casey uses sexuality and social issues to force audience members to see their own imperfections in the form of the antagonist.

Additionally, Wedekind continued Büchner's habit of fragmentary dialogue, episodic scenes, and social criticism. The Lulu plays and their short scenes within each act create a disjointed environment that are hard to follow. Both Wedekind and Büchner's critical and satirical lyrical plays would not have been popular in the era of the well-made play. Indeed, none of Büchner's plays were produced until the early twentieth century and after his death. Similar to many naturalist authors, he created characters that were neither good nor bad, and often his plays had ambiguous endings. His practice of dual main characters and abrupt

dialectical transitions became very useful in later expressionist plays.

The unfinished and fragmented *Woyzeck* lends validity to the experimental approach expressionism values. Because of the expressionistic theme of subjectivity, producer and directors can shuffle the different scenes to reflect their own interpretation. Likewise, O'Casey's own experimental approaches to his writing opened creative opportunities for him. While the text of his plays are rigidly set, his willingness to experiment with new forms and styles are more obvious. The influences that other authors had over him are obvious, and no other author is more influential than the Swedish playwright August Strindberg.

In a letter to Robert Loraine, O'Casey identified August Strindberg as "the greatest of them all" (*Letters I* 217). To Ivar Ohman, he emphasized that Strindberg "is one of the giants of drama…he is one of the greater souls who will be remembered forever" (*Letters II* 569). Writing to Evelyn Jansson, O'Casey called Strindberg "a far more important dramatist than I" (*Letters IV* 325). Strindberg viewed the world as an asylum, and as a result, his characters often resembled patients (Styan *Expressionism* 24). As a result, his plays took on a dream-like quality, sometimes pleasant and sometimes nightmarish.

The way Strindberg developed a different way of considering and creating characters was by creating multiple personalities who represented one overall character. That character could be a people (such as mankind), or a single individual (and it seems like he usually wrote about himself). He distorted reality through these polyphonic characters, centring on his discontent of society. O'Casey used each of his plays as commentary on the Irish people, portraying them as polyphonic characters, all pointing to why Irish nationalism is no better than British rule. O'Casey is as revolutionary in his plays as any member of the Irish Citizen Army, but he attempted to prove to everyone that nationalism simply created artificial pride and courage. Until the Irish people acted, they would be no better off than under British rule.

In addition to his innovations on characters, Strindberg changed how dramatists

approached the structure of a play. Rather than attempting to create the complex environments of his fantasies and nightmares, he came to view simplicity as essential. Few, if any, props existed on the stage; often, a light and differing light colours were that was needed. O'Casey followed a similar pattern in his later plays, keeping a relatively simplistic setting for *Within the Gates* by focusing on a garden with a bench and light.

Expressionists continued this practice in plays and films like Büchner's *Leonce and Lena* and Robert Wiene's *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*. The sets and environments of these dream plays would be distorted and disproportional. For example, the kingdom in *Leonce and Lena* is called Popo, a German child's word for buttocks (Büchner 105). The characters act like children and are very simple minded, yet they are the royalty of the land and actively govern their citizens. In *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, the architecture of the town is misshapen and either over or under sized. When Dr. Caligari visits the public office to receive a permit for his somnambulist show, the desk he approaches is almost twice as tall as he is. Yet the clerk who steps down is an average height (Wiene).

Why would O'Casey be so interested in Strindberg's unrealistic and fantastical plays? His own plays primarily fulfilled the political objective of condemning British rule, yet he clearly loved the idea of the fantasy play. He considered *The Dream Play* one of the "loveliest plays [he had] ever read" and longed to see other Strindberg plays performed to the level that he felt they deserved (*Letters II* 568). I imagine that he saw in fantasy and expressionist plays the ability to experiment at a broader level. *A Dream Play* provided the possibility of creating social conversation as well as social change. *Shadow*, *Juno*, and *The Plough* sparked riotous results from his Irish audiences because they saw Donal Davoren and Captain Boyle in themselves. O'Casey wanted to expose the decline of Irish culture through nationalistic corruption, but saw his plays condemned as immoral or anti-Ireland. A dream-like play, even as a nightmare, might not have provoked the same response; in any event,

O'Casey's later plays became more political.

While O'Casey does not follow a strict expressionistic structure throughout his plays, several of them (including the Dublin Trilogy) do have dreamlike qualities. The destructiveness and inevitability of war in Act II of *The Silver Tassie* creates a nightmarish scene. In *The Shadow of a Gunman*, Seumas Shields hears a knocking on the wall that he perceives as a foreboding sign, ending the play solemnly saying "I knew something ud come from the tappin' on the wall" (*Plays 2* 62). Seamus' superstitious behaviour in *Shadow* conceals the knocking's true purpose, which is to induce a feeling of dread that builds to Minnie's ultimate death and the revelation that Davoren and Shields are both poltroons (*Plays 2* 62). Knocking as an episodic tool can also be seen through the myriads of people who enter the only room on stage. The traffic constantly moving in and out of the room throughout the play creates a disjointed sense of time. Additionally, although *Shadow* is not set in a dreamlike state, the second and third act take on a nightmarish tone as Davoren and the other tenement companions suffer through a night raid by the Black and Tans and a skirmish with the Auxiliaries.

In *Juno and the Paycock*, Johnny Boyle desperately attempts to preserve his own life by keeping a votive candle lit, and is subsequently captured and killed when the flame dies. *The Plough and the Stars* does not manifest a similar supernatural quality, but it progresses via short episodes throughout the entire play. In *Within the Gates*, O'Casey utilizes polyphonic characters, characters who share a single personality, "representing a facet of the whole and together illustrating the conflicts of the mind" (Styan 25). The symbolic, supernatural, and psychological aspects in each play significantly progress them to the conclusion.

O'Casey used each of his plays as commentary on the Irish people, portraying them as polyphonic characters, all pointing to why Irish nationalism and religious governance is no

better than British rule. O'Casey is as revolutionary in his plays as any member of the Irish Citizen Army, but he attempted to prove to everyone that nationalism simply created artificial pride and courage. Until the Irish people acted, they would be no better off than under British rule.

While O'Casey may not fit entirely within expressionism, the many expressionistic qualities that he uses in his plays makes the genre the best fit. Having no knowledge of expressionism would not exclude him from being expressionistic; the primary figures of the movement all lived long before the generally accepted timeframe of expressionism. His plays have definite elements of naturalism, but O'Casey preferred writing what he identified as fantasy plays. His use of sexuality in his plays is similar to Wedekind's approach as a protest against the dominating bourgeois family culture of the time. O'Casey's criticism of Irish nationalism and British rule is similar to the satirical criticism of Büchner's *Leonce and Lena* and Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*. However, the strongest influence on O'Casey came through Strindberg and his characterization. Using polyphonic characters to criticize society, O'Casey focused his argument on the future of Ireland. Seamus Deane may be right when he argued that categorizing O'Casey is not reasonable, but expressionism is the best option.

6 Conclusion

At the end of 1956, the O'Casey family was dealt a tragic blow in the form of the death of Sean and Eileen's son Niall. Taken by Leukemia at the young age of 21, Niall's death affected Sean the most of the whole family. In the Introduction to *Niall*, a diary of his feelings regarding the time following Niall's death, Eileen noted that the dramatist keened for his lost son for so long that she eventually felt the need to ask him to stop (13). The diary itself is short, at least in terms of O'Casey's previous publications, but intense in its emotional weight. This personal document is only published because Eileen felt that the thoughts expressed within it were too important to be forgotten (13), but there are also some consistencies that are worth connecting to the purpose of my thesis.

O'Casey starts by simply stating in his entry for December 30, 1956 that "Niall died," and then writing nothing but a weekly date for the next 14 weeks (15). The grief contained in the white space of that page is palpable to anyone who has lost a loved one, and probably most relatable to those parents who have lost children.[30] The second entry O'Casey included is slightly longer, showing his languish over burying his father as a young boy and then his son as an old man (15). It is his first substantive entry, made on April 27, 1957 that caught my attention, however. Rather than write about his son and what he was like, or tell his son's story, O'Casey chooses to focus on his garden that is missing the presence of Niall (16). He

[30] I include this section here for a couple of reasons, one of which is personal. In the five year journey that I experienced as a student at Lancaster University, I have lost a grandfather to old age, an Uncle to disease, a brother to suicide, a friend to suicide, and that friend's sister (and my friend) and her two daughters to a car accident. Death has followed me throughout this whole process and had a significant impact on my studies.

writes

> In our little garden, a lilac tree s flushed with its purple importance, insinuating, with sweet innocence, the dusky air of the evening, the breath of it delicate scent; and at the end of the same little garden thousands of pale-yellow buds have formed on the tall and busy laburnum trees; buds, which in a week or so, will be a drooping cascade of Golden blossom.
>
> Both are beautiful, but both seem lonely; seem to need an admiring glance from bright eyes closed for ever now. I know this aspect of loneliness is but an image in my own mind, but these handsome trees seem to share it, and to silently murmur, We miss him too. (16)

While the passage continues on for several more lines, the sentiment is the same. The lack of Niall's presence weighs heavily on O'Casey's mind but not only as a lost member of his family. This vividly described image of the O'Casey family garden is another reminder of O'Casey's eye for colour. Without his son, the garden has lost some of its lustre – not in reality but in the author's ability to perceive it. This terrible loss has taken away his ability to appreciate the beautiful things of the world.

I include this section in the conclusion to demonstrate that however problematic O'Casey's prose can be, there are elements of truth and reality that can be gleaned from it. *Niall* was never meant to be published; not by its author, and not by the family. Eileen states that she was unaware of the diary's existence until she found it after O'Casey's death in 1964 and even she waited 34 years to publish it because of the sensitivity of the content (13). What I can conclude then, is that this diary was not written for an audience but for a father trying to process the loss of his son. It is safe to say that the words included are more honest and real then anything O'Casey wrote that was ever published. Of course there is still a lot of potential for factual errors and misrepresentation, but these words were meant for one person

and one person only. This is likely the best writing artefact that can help O'Casey scholars understand the artist as a man through his own view of the world. When used as a base line for considering the rest of O'Casey's work, vivid imagery and beautiful things take on importance. Added to the epigraphs used in the introductory chapter of this thesis, those beautiful things are beautiful because of – at least in part – how they fit within that image artistically. This fits with O'Casey's statement on the theatre and how he defines culture in his 1960 article "Art is the Song of Life:" What is called Culture isn't just the theatre here, the other arts there, music yonder: Culture is the life we live…" (77). In this context, culture and art could be viewed as an organic and natural occurrence, which leaves more room for symbolic significance where other schools of thought like naturalism might not. This is what led me to contemplate O'Casey's decisions on colour usage in his drama.

This project started out as an exploration into the politics of Sean O'Casey. Having been introduced to O'Casey in grad school in America, I was intrigued by the notion of a western author subscribing so enthusiastically to the tenants of communism. Of course, this had more to do with my geographic location and nationality then it did with any sort of global knowledge base. After spending time engaging in the critical scholarship on my author of choice, I realized that I would have to change my initial point of research. While political influence certainly played a role in my work, I started to notice the pattern of colour use that came to be my focus. It fascinated me that so much of O'Casey's drama is set in vividly described settings and that no one had really given much consideration to this fact. When one of my supervisors suggested I read Sabine Doran's *The Culture of Yellow or the Visual Politics of Late Modernity*, I realized that I wanted to pursue this topic. Doran's theory of multivalent figuration, that colour can connect "divergent theories…in time-bound matrices," resonated with me as being contextually relevant to how O'Casey used colour in his writing (Doran 18). This also proves problematic in that not all instances of colour used in his plays

are significant or beyond simple aesthetics all the time. Raymond Williams is not wrong to criticise O'Casey in *Drama from Ibsen to Brecht* for haphazardly incorporating colour into his dramatic language. What concerns me is that Williams either missed or chose to ignore the instances where colour carries symbolic significance beyond simple aesthetics.

This is where my thesis and my decision to look at colour comes in. Where O'Casey is routinely seen as a political dramatist, even in his more artistic based dramaturgy, his use of colour supports the idea of identifying him as an artist first. The Dublin Trilogy and *The Silver Tassie* represent his most popular work and all stay relatively within the limits of naturalism. However, while the expressionistic Act II of *Tassie* acts as an exception to the previous statement, elements in each of the four plays make it difficult to fit them within a strict definition of any literary movement. In my introduction, I argue that O'Casey is best viewed as a working class Irish writer who fits best within the more general tenants of modernism. This is based primarily on the experimental nature of his dramatic work.

My intent in analysing the Dublin Trilogy and *The Silver Tassie* (which I maintain is better identified as the Dublin Tetralogy) was to find a connection between current O'Casey scholarship and colour that has intended symbolism beyond simple stage directions. *The Shadow of a Gunman*, which first got me interested in Irish studies, provided a first basic building block. While there are few references to colour in the two act play, there is one consistent element of colour that provides a fundamental and significant purpose. Although shadows are not typically seen as colour, they are by nature on the fringes of it. Shadows represent an incomplete image of a figure and are grey or black. In literature, and particularly in *Shadow*, a shadow can also refer to a diminished or unseen object or person. In the case of this play, the shadow of the gunman is Donal. By allowing himself to be perceived as a gunman on the run, Donal chooses to play a part that he does not understand and cannot handle in the end. He is a diminished character; by the end of the play, he has been forced to

transform from the lively poet who lived among admirers to the very shadow he allowed others to think he was, not a gunman, but the reason that Minnie Powell dies. His dishonesty and unwillingness to take responsibility for his actions reduces him to a shadow of the person he was.

However, Donal is not the only shadow in the play. Each of the other characters are in their own ways shadows. Minnie Powell becomes a ghost (which is sometimes called a shade, similar to a shadow), forever doomed to haunt Donal for his cowardice. More obviously, though, is Tommy Owens who wants to be important without having to do anything but drink; or Adolphus Grigson, who wants to be respected even though he is nothing but an abusive drunk; or Mr. Gallogher, who thinks he is more intelligent then he actually is. Each character in the play, and in the other three plays represent O'Casey's view of the Irish people. The *Shadow of a Gunman* becomes a judgement of Ireland and its people through them. The shadowy figure of *The Plough and the Stars* certainly fits within a similar frame, being a shadow of Padraig Pearse that even O'Casey wasn't comfortable with, but also in accusing the Irish with going along with the mythologising of the Easter Rising heroes.

The other factor with *Shadow* that I felt was important to analyse was how O'Casey incorporated light through his stage directions. While this might be better suited in a production analysis, reading the stage directions as a part of the script is equally important. Recognizing that O'Casey wanted to light the stage with a bright white light similar to Zola's laboratory not only signifies the use of naturalism in the play but also in how O'Casey wanted the audience to view the characters in the story. The effect of the lighting created the image of a picture frame, suggesting that the purpose of the characters were to be a reflection or representation of something. When considered through this lens, *Shadow* is not only a play based in historical events; it is a judgement by the author of the characters involved in those particular events. While the lighting directions lessened in the later three plays, a

similar judgement can be identified through the naturalistic elements of the play suggesting that the author incorporated his opinion regarding the events into the course of the play.

This seems to run counter to the claim that I have made that O'Casey should be viewed as an artist first. It has never been the intent of this thesis to negate the political aspects of O'Casey's writing. If anything, the symbolic use of colour that I analyse in this thesis tend to centre on O'Casey's judgement or opinion regarding some form of Irish politics or culture. This is why the later plays became significant in my research, because while they are not valued by the general scholarship, there are more obvious instances of colour use that demonstrate this effectively. The Cock in *Cock-a-Doodle Dandy* not only acts as a means of moving the storyline of the play forward, it actually serves as O'Casey's personal judgement against the influence of the church in Ireland.

All of this has led me to conclude that more work remains to be done in O'Casey scholarship. While colour studies is not necessarily the most popular topic in literary studies, more is being written about colour in other disciplines that would easily fit in with literary analysis. Doran's *Culture of Yellow* is an excellent start to this field, but it is intentionally narrow to one colour and late modernism. What is needed is a deeper exploration into colour in general that allows for intelligent discourse without falling prey to colour symbolism through overly narrow definition. In other words, green can be a symbol of Irishness and Irish Protestantism, and not all at the same time. What is needed is further discussion into how Irish writers utilize colour in their writing. For example, the drama of WB Yeats could analysed for colour usage, particularly his Noh plays but also his plays that deal with Irish mythology. How colour is naturally incorporated into each will be significant for different reasons, and it would be interesting to compare the two styles for any similarities. Additionally, it would be useful to have more of a connection between literary analysis and dramatic/production analysis to better understand how either discipline influences the others.

I read a lot of literary theorists and theatrical practitioners, and there seems to be a disconnect between the two.

From this project I have considered a couple of projects that could stem from this topic. While there are a relatively large number of production artefacts regarding O'Casey productions, there are very few organized curated archives for this. The Abbey Theatre archive in Dublin is a treasure trove that Mairead Delaney is beginning to effectively organize, but she has a lot of work to do and only a couple of assistants. Also, Patrick Lonergan at NUI Galway has recently developed an online database archive combining the resources and artefacts of the Abbey Theatre archive and the NUI Library which will prove to be a highly useful research tool. However, the database is limited to computers on campus at NUI Galway and are unavailable anywhere else. What is needed is a publication or website resource that allows scholars access to elements of that research without violating copyright laws. One such project that seems like a valuable resource is a publication with images of O'Casey productions at the Abbey Theatre. Such a collection would allow for a more effective analysis of productions, even if the photos are black and white. Another would be a resource publication of stage directions and notes from directors to get a better understanding of how O'Casey's work has been interpreted over the decades. Finally, a database of O'Casey related news articles would be a very beneficial resource to O'Casey scholars who are forced to search through old news archive websites through thousands of pages of news publications for one or two paragraphs of useful information. While much of the sensational news coverage of O'Casey's conflict with the Abbey is already published, there are numerous production reviews and interviews that would be useful for O'Casey scholars to utilise in their research.

Sean O'Casey and his artistic vision is far from irrelevant and recent productions of his work at both the Abbey and the National Theatre in London have demonstrated this. The

dramatist envisioned a world where the working class where elevated to the social standing and financial status of the employers. Today our world is in constant turmoil, much of which stems from the majority of humanity not being able to find food or shelter or a living wage. O'Casey decried the powerful who manipulated the masses through politics, religion, or social practices; we live in a world that calls for globalisation and cooperation yet still has managed to remain isolated from each other. Are not Brexit and President Trump's brand of American Nationalism symptoms of this isolation? O'Casey called for the poor to be better treated, to be treated as most religions claimed they ought to be treated; we still live in a world where refugees who are forced to flee from their homes are not guaranteed any comfort or protection from their neighbours who instead treat them as invading inconveniences. Above all, O'Casey sought for a world that appreciated all beautiful things, artistic or otherwise, and that is a world that we should always continue to strive for.

Works Cited

Writings by O'Casey

O'Casey, Sean. *Windfalls: Stories, Poems, and Plays*. London: Macmillan and Co., 1934.

---. "The Golden Boys." *Hands Off the Daily Worker*. London: Daily Worker, 1940.

---. *The Irish*. London: Daily Worker League, 1943.

---. *The Shadow of a Gunman: A Tragedy*. London: Samuel French, 1958.

---. *Juno and the Paycock: A Tragedy*. London: Samuel French, 1959.

---. *The Drums of Father Ned: A Mickrocosm of Ireland*. London: Macmillan & Co, 1960.

---. *The Plough and the Stars: A Tragedy*. London: Samuel French, 1960.

---. *Behind the Green Curtains: Three Plays*. London: Macmillan & Co, 1961.

---. *Autobiographies 1*. London: Macmillan and Company, 1963.

---. *Feathers from the Green Crow*. London: Macmillan & Co, 1963.

---. *Under a Colored Cap*. London: Macmillan & Co, 1963.

---. *Blasts and Benedictions: Articles and Stories Selected and Introduced by Ronald Ayling*. London: Macmillan, 1967.

---. *Collected Plays*. 4 vols. London: Macmillan London, 1971.

---. *Five One Act Plays*. London: Macmillan London, 1971.

---. *The Story of the Irish Citizen Army*. London: Journeyman Press, 1980.

---. *Autobiographies 2*. New York: Carroll & Graff, 1984.

---. *Seven Plays by Sean O'Casey: A Students' Edition*. London: Macmillan Publishers, 1985.

---. *The Complete Plays of Sean O'Casey*. 5 vols. London: Macmillan London, 1984.

---. *Niall: A Lament*, Paris: Calder Publications, 1991.

---. *The Green Crow: Selected Writings of Seán O'Casey*. London: Virgin Books, 1994.

---. *Sean O'Casey: Plays*. 2 vols. London: Faber and Faber, 1998.

---. "Sean O'Casey's The Cooing of Doves: A One-Act Play Rediscovered. Ed. Christopher Murray. *Princeton University Library Chronicle* Vol. LXVIII No. 1-2. The Friends of the Princeton University Library, Autumn 2006 - Winter 2007, Dexter. pp 327-356.

---. *The Plough and the Stars: Educational Edition with Notes for Students*. Ed. Christopher Murray. London: Faber and Faber, 2016.

Performances of O'Casey Plays

Juno and the Paycock 2014 Everyman & Playhouse Liverpool

The Shadow of a Gunman 2015 Abbey Theatre Dublin

The Plough and the Stars 2016 Abbey Theatre Dublin

The Plough and the Stars 2016 National Theatre London

Purple Dust (archives) Abbey Theatre Dublin

The Silver Tassie (archives) Abbey Theatre Dublin

The Silver Tassie (archives) National Theatre London

Criticism and Scholarly Works

Armstrong, William. "History, Autbiography, and the Shadow of a Gunman," *Modern Drama*, Vol. 2 Feb. 1960, pp. 417-424.

Ayling, Ronald. *Sean O'Casey: Modern Judgements*. Nashville, Aurora Publishers Incorporated, 1970.

Baldick, Chris. *Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Benstock, Bernard. *Sean O'Casey*, Cranbury, Associated University Presses, Inc., 1970.

Büchner, Georg. *The Major Works*. Matthew Wilson Smith, ed. Trans. By Henry J. Schmidt. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2012.

Cannon-Harris, Susan, "Red Star vs. Green Goddess: Sean O'Casey's The Star Turns Red

and the Politics of Form, *Princeton University Library Chronicle*, vol. 68, no. 1-2, 2006-2007, p. 359.

Čapek, Karel and Josef. *R.U.R. and The Insect Play*. Trans. by P. Selver. Adapted by Nigel Playfair. London: Oxford University Press, 1970.

Cleary, Joe, editor. *The Cambridge Companion to Irish Modernism*. Cambridge University Press, 2014.

Cowasjee, Saros. *Writers and Critics: O'Casey*. London: Oliver and Boyd, 1966.

---. *Sean O'Casey: The Man Behind the Plays*. London: Oliver & Boyd, 1963.

Delong, Marilyn Barbara Martinson, Ed. *Color and Design*. London, Berg, 2012.

Doran, Sabine. "Chronos/Chroma: Yellow Figures in Proust's La Prisonnière and Bely's Petersburg," *The Comparatist* 28 (2004), 53-75.

---. *The Culture of Yellow or the Visual Politics of Late Modernity*. London: Bloomsbury, 2013.

Eagleton, Terry. *Culture*. London, Yale University Press. 2016.

Eisenstein, Sergei. *The Film Sense*, trans. Jay Leyda, New York: Harcourt Brace and Company, 1969.

Esslinger, Pat M., "The Irish Alienation of Sean O'Casey," *Eire-Ireland*, i no.1 (spring 1966), pp. 18-25.

Freedman, Morris. "The Modern Tragicomedy of Wilde and O'Casey." *College English* Vol. 25, No. 7 (Apr. 1964): 518-522+527

Goldstone, Herbert. *In Search of Community: The Achievement of Seán O'Casey*. Cork, W. & G. Baird, 1972.

Gombrich, E. H. *The Story of Art*. London, Phaidon Press, 1995.

Gould, Geoff , *"Death of a Playwright," Perspectives on Contemporary Irish Theatre: Populating the Stage*, ed. Anne Etienne and Thierry Dubost, 2017.

Greaves, C. Desmond, *Sean O'Casey: Politics and Art*, London, Lawrence and Wishart, 1979.

Gregory, Augusta, *Lady Gregory's Journals 1916-1930*, Ed. by Lennox Robinson, Putnam and Company, 1946.

Hogan, Robert. *The Experiments of Sean O'Casey*, St. Martin's Press, 1960.

Jordan, John. "Illusion and Actuality in the Later O'Casey," *Sean O'Casey*, ed. By Ronald Ayling, London, MacMillan and Co., 1969, pp. 143 – 161.

Koslow, Jules. *Sean O'Casey: The Man and His Plays*. New York: The Citadel Press, 1966.

Krause, David, *Sean O'Casey: The Man and His Work*, Collier Books, 1962.

---. ed. *The Letters of Sean O'Casey*. 4 vols. Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1992.

Larson, Gerard A. "An Interview with Mrs. Sean O'Casey." *Educational Theatre Journal* Vol. 17, No. 3 (Oct. 1965): 234-239.

Lowery, Robert G. *O'Casey Annual*. 4 vols. London: Macmillan Press, 1985.

---, ed. Essays on Sean O'Casey's Autobiographies, Palgrave Macmillan, 1981.

---, ed. *The Sean O'Casey Review,* 8 vols, 1974-1982.

Malone, Maureen "Red Roses for Me: Fact and Symbol" *Modern Drama* Vol. 9, No. 2 (Sep. 1966): 147-152, *Project Muse*.

Mannion, Elizabeth, "Unwriting the City: Narrating Class in Early Twentieth-Century Belfast and Dublin (1900-1929)," in *A History of Irish Working-Class Writing*, ed. Michael Pierse, Cambridge, University Printing House, 2018, pp. 140-152.

Maxwell, D.E.S. *A Critical History of Modern Irish Drama*, 1891-1980. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984.

McCann, Sean, ed. *The World of Sean O'Casey*, London: The New English Library Limited, 1966.

Moran, James. *Four Irish Rebel Plays,* Irish Academic Press, 2007.

---. "Moving-Pictures in the Hallway: Dramatising the Autobiographies of Sean O'Casey." *Irish Studies Review*, vol. 20 no. 4 (November 2012): pp. 389-405.

---. *The Theatre of Sean O'Casey*. London: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2013.

---. *Staging the Easter Rising: 1916 as Theatre*. Cork: Cork University Press, 2005.

Murray, Christopher. Sean O'Casey. London: Faber and Faber, 2000.

---. "Sean O'Casey: history into drama," in *Commemorating Ireland: History, Politics, Culture,* ed. by Eberhard Bort, Irish Academic Press, 2004.

---."Sean O'Casey's Dublin Trilogy: Disillusionment to Delusion," in *The Cambridge Companion to Twentieth Century Irish Drama*, ed. by Shaun Richards, Cambridge University Press, 2006.

O'Casey, Eileen. *Sean: An Intimate Memoir of Sean O'Casey*. New York: Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, INC, 1972.

O'Connor, Garry. *Sean O'Casey, A Life*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1988.

O'Riordan, John, *A Guide to Sean O'Casey's Plays*. London, MacMillan, 1984.

Orwell, George. "The Lion and the Unicorn: Socialism and the English Genius," *Fifty Essays by George Orwell*, produced by Colin Choat, Project Gutenberg Australia, 2003.

Pierse, Michael. *A History of Irish Working-Class Writing*, Cambridge University Press, 2018.

---. "Cock-a-Doodle Dandy: O'Casey's Total Theatre," in *Beyond Realism*, ed by Jose Dean Lanters and Joan FitzPatrick Amsterdam: Brill, 2015.

Schrank, Bernice. "Poets, Poltroons and Platitudes: A Study of Sean O'Casey's The Shadow of a Gunman." *Mosaic* Vol. 11, No. 1 (1977): 53-60. Odyssey Ariel.

Shaw, Bernard. *The Complete Plays of Bernard Shaw*. Ed. Paul Hamlyn. London: Paul Hamlyn, 1965.

Skard, Sigmund. "The Use of Color in Literature: A Survey of Research." *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* Vol. 90, No. 3 (Jul. 1946): 163-249. *JSTOR*. Web. 21 Aug. 2015.

Snodgrass, Mary Ellen. *The Encyclopedia of World Folk Dance*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, Inc., 2016.

Strindberg, August. *A Dream Play*. Adapted by Ingmar Bergman. Trans. By Michael Meyer. London: Secker and Warburg, 1971.

Styan, J. L. *Modern Drama in Theory and Practice: Realism and Naturalism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

---. *Modern Drama in Theory and Practice: Expressionism and Epic Theatre*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Wedekind, Frank. *Lulu: Plays and Other Sex Tragedies* (German Expressionsim). Trans. By Stephen Spender. London: Calder and Boyars, 1972.

The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari, dir. by Robert Wiene, Decla-Bioscop, 1920.

Williams, Raymond. *Drama from Ibsen to Brecht*. London: The Hogarth Press, 1987.

---. *Drama from Ibsen to Eliot*. London, Chatto and Windus Ld., 1965.

Worth, Katherine. *The Irish Drama of Europe from Yeats to Beckett*. London, The Athlone Press, 1986.