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Death and Resurrection in Modern Anglo-Irish Dramas

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Introduction

Modern Anglo-Irish dramas have rich and vivid representations of death and resurrection—often in secular or pagan contexts—that open a space in which the characters can unwittingly confess their true sentiments or emotional traumas. In these dramas, the vigils and wakes after the death of a character function as inducements for the other dramatis personae to release their emotions and comment on the resurrection within the social order and values of their community. This study reads modern Anglo-Irish drama representations of death and resurrection as indicators of the temporary disarmament of reason and a trigger for candid confessions. Additionally, it argues that the dramatic mixture of the gravity of death and buoyancy of resurrection make possible the temporary casting off of socially accepted psychological constraints on the expression of crude emotions and the freeing of the characters to look into and speak from the bottom of their hearts. It is through these confessions of the dramatis personae that Anglo-Irish theatre has vitalized a secular equivalent of the church.

1. A frolicsome Lazarus: Dion Boucicault's *The Shaughraun*

Dion Boucicault, an Irish dramatist writing in the 19th century, had powerful expressions of death and resurrection in his 1874 play, *The Shaughraun*(1). His festive, buoyant energy jolted the romantic comedy genre out of monotonous convention into more imaginative entertainment. With his refreshing treatment of the traditional genre, he revitalized the typical social order motifs of subversion and recovery. *The Shaughraun*, which has a by-plot focused on punishing evil, evolves from the classic boy-meets-girl story in which the troublesome, undulating course of love for two noble couples is brought to a happy ending. Kinchela, a villain of a propertied class, plans an illegal take-over of Arte O'Neal' estate, a lady of Irish gentry lineage. To overcome ownership obstacles, Kinchela accuses Robert, a young Irish gentleman and Arte O'Neale's fiancé, of being a subversive rebel, and gets him deported to Australia. Captain

Molineux, a young English officer, who oversees the arrests of antisocial activists and the maintenance of public order, falls in love with Robert's younger sister, which results in an agonizing dilemma between his official duties and his love. Therefore, the love between the two couples does not run smoothly. Conn, a vivacious vagabond (*shaughraun* in Irish) intervenes in these tangled affairs and lightheartedly overcomes all the difficulties, resulting in a happy union of the two couples and the rightful downfall of the villain and his subordinates. In conventional romantic comedies, Conn's trickster character would be limited to a secondary role; however, in *The Shaughraun*, Conn is the driving force of the plot and the main resolver of the dramatic conflicts. By making Conn the protagonist, Boucicault shook the foundations of normative romantic comedies and created a merry variation of the genre, and it was this buoyant sense of destruction of the old and the creation of the new that revitalized the motifs of death and resurrection in the play.

Conn declares "the soul of every fair, the life of every funeral," (258) as he stages his death and resurrection, which temporarily strengthens the sense of communal solidarity between the diverse local people and induces the vile scoundrels to reveal their innermost secrets. When Conn helps Robert out of an impending crisis and is shot and slightly injured in his head and back ("I've a crack over the lug, an' a scratch across the small o' me back."(312)), he takes this opportunity to play dead ("Poor fellow! he met his death while aiding my brother to escape." (310)), with this death of the jovial trickster leading to the staging of a traditional Irish wake — a mixture of consolation and uplifting festivity — that gives rise to communal solidarity and a mutual sharing of deep feelings.

Kinchela, rather than valuing the mutual help and social cooperativeness of the locals, is a twisted version of a new emerging class that values wealth and social decency and is deeply obsessed with possessing a prime estate(2). The local people's psychological solidarity at the wake allows for expressions of heartfelt feelings and emotions. A group of local women surround Conn's dead body (as they believe so) and start to rock to and fro while wailing. Then, a group of men joins them to sing a deep lamentation:

> Together —
>
> Why did ye did? — why did ye die?
>
> Laving us to sigh, och hone!
>
> Why did ye did? — why did ye die?
>
> Oolaghaun! — oh, Oolaghaun! (315)

[...]
All (*chorus*).
Laving us to sigh! Och, hone! (316)

This collective lamentation and keening forge a closer mutual trust relationship and an atmosphere of intimacy as they bare their emotions and pour out their hearts to each other without the restraint of reason. Kinchela's underlings, Reilly and Sullivan, while mingling with the people at the wake, are slowly influenced by the disarming atmosphere, thus, relaxing their vigilance and lowering their guard. As soon as all the people withdraw, Reilly and Sullivan unwittingly talk about their evil designs while standing over Conn's body. Conn rises up causing bewilderment in the henchmen:

BOTH. Murdher, alive!
CONN. That's what I am. Murdher, alive! (318)

The henchmen's unwitting confessions quickly lead to their undoing, which then causes a chain reaction and the downfall of their plans. The death and resurrection staged by Conn gives rise to the communal intimacy that promotes confessions from the wake attendees and psychologically disarms the henchmen's reason, after which the English captain, Molineux, and the constabulary physically disarm them.

The traditional religious authority and a secular equivalent of the church coexist in *The Shaughraun*; however, it is the latter that powerfully resolves the communal disturbance. Father Dolan, a revered Catholic priest from the local parish has the power to enforce moral discipline and social obedience on the parishioners; therefore, when Kinchela's sinister plot is exposed to the public and the menacing crowd closes in on him, it is Father Dolan that orders the crowd to restrain itself:

KINCHELA. Save me - protect me!
FATHER DOLAN (*facing the crowd*). Stand back! — do you hear me. Must I speak twice? (*The crowd retire, and lower their weapons.*) (325)

While the authoritative power of the priest has a great effect on the local crowd, it is Conn, the jovial, lighthearted Lazarus, who overwhelms the villains. Conn's murder ruse that ends in the

ritualistic festivities, crude emotions, excitement, sorrow, and joy at the wake has a powerful effect on the villains, which then ends in exposing the truth and finding an effective solution to the communal disorder.

2. Post-resurrection disorder and confessions: W. B. Yeats's *The Resurrection*[3]

W. B. Yeats, an earnest devotee of occultism and spiritualism, wrote *A Vision* with the help of his wife, Georgie Hyde Lees, and privately published it in 1925[4]. In *A Vision*, Yeats revealed his esoteric belief that human history and the individual mind follow an inevitable pattern. Yeats devised a diagram called a "gyre," in which there were two cones that penetrated each other from opposite directions (with one apex reaching the center of the other) and alternately moved in a spiral-like a double vortex[5]. Each gyre whirled around a two-thousand-year historical cycle, with each phase in the cycle having an opposite phase, such as the two thousand years of Greco-Roman civilization versus the two thousand years of Christian civilization[6]. Yeats then internalized the idea of the gyre in the plot of *The Resurrection*.

The Resurrection is a play for "a specially chosen audience," and has a plot that revolves around how three characters belonging to different ethnic backgrounds; a Hebrew, a Greek, and a Syrian; witness the reunion of the resurrected Christ and the Apostles and their reactions to this post-resurrection appearance. The esoteric elements of the play are epitomized in two poems, one that opens the play, and the other that closes it. The poems are sung in a smooth harmony aligned with "the unfolding and folding of the curtain" (579), which was apparently an adaptation of an *agemaku*—an entranceway curtain used on Japanese Noh stages—to accentuate the present manifestation of the ancient past. The opening poem foretells the whirling gyres of human history:

I

I saw a staring virgin stand
Where holy Dionysus died,
And tear the heart out of his side,
And lay the heart upon her hand
And bear that beating heart away;
And then did all the Muses sing
Of *Magnus Annus* at the spring,
As though God's death were but a play.

II

Another Troy must rise and set,
Another lineage feed the crow,
Another Argo's painted prow
Drive to a flashier bauble yet.
The Roman Empire stood appalled:
It dropped the reins of peace and war
When that fierce virgin and her Star
Out of the fabulous darkness called. (579–580)

In the first part of the opening poem, the "staring virgin," Athena, who is the perpetual virgin goddess of wisdom and war, takes away the "beating heart" of the dead Dionysus, the Greco-Roman deity of chaos and fertility. The heart continues to beat in the human body of Jesus ("her Star") when the Virgin Mary ("fierce virgin") conceives and gives birth to Him in the second part of the poem. Therefore, Athena and Dionysus are joined with the Virgin Mary and Jesus in the cycle of history in Yeats's version of "Magnus Annus." In the incessant whirling gyres of history, "Troy must rise and set" again. When the Greco-Roman civilization reaches its terminus ("The Roman Empire stood appalled"), another cycle of the Christian civilization begins ("When that fierce virgin and her Star / Out of the fabulous darkness called"). The opening poem predicts the plot of the following play as if it were an unchanging program that human beings are inevitably involved in. Just as the closing poem depicts, the beating hearts of Dionysus and Jesus, and subsequently all human beating hearts, fall within the ceaseless cycles of the gyres:

Whatever flames upon the night
Man's own resinous heart has fed. (594)

All people are inevitably involved in the whirls of the gyres and are forced to consume their own "resinous heart" in pursuit of "everything man esteems," which "endures a moment or a day." (594) In the opening and closing poems, Yeats' focus shifts, as pointed out by Daniel Albright, from the divinity of great events to the life of the commons.[7] Accordingly, the main action of the play focuses on the effects of the divine events upon the commons and on how they witness and react to what is clearly beyond their understanding. Jesus appears only

briefly "in pity for man's darkening thought" (594), and the Apostles do not show themselves on the stage. The audience never sees the moment of Jesus's death, the resurrection, or the reunion of Jesus and the Apostles, which are only verbally reported through the three dramatis personae; the Hebrew, the Greek, and the Syrian; who are the representatives of the commons and, metaphorically, of the appreciative audience ("a specially chosen audience").

The mysterious nature of the divine event frees the three dramatis personae from the ordinary restraints of reason and induces them to confess their fears, doubts, conflicting emotions, and innermost thoughts, and to speak from a full heart. The Hebrew is a plain commonsense man, who underscores the human nature of Jesus, believing that He is "nothing more than a man" (583) who "thought that he himself was the Messiah." (584) The Hebrew almost supports a rumor that "some of our people planned to steal the body and to put abroad a story that Christ had arisen" (590). After the Hebrew lays his heart bare at the event, he sees the figure of Christ walk toward the refuge of the Apostles, and he "*backs in terror*" (593) into an obscure corner. The Greek on the other hand, is a man of practical thinking.

Because of their different ways of interpreting the mysterious event, they cultivate a comradeship to defend the place of refuge for the sacred Apostles and develop common bonds with the kindred spirits as eyewitnesses to the death and resurrection of Christ. As the holy mystery is utterly beyond their imagination, the overwhelming inscrutableness of the event opens their psychology and urges them to pour out their hearts and vent their deepest feelings and thoughts. The Greek denies Jesus is "a living man" (583) and claims that there is nothing but "a phantom" (583) on the Cross at Calvary. He believes that Jesus is a sort of psychological construct shared by the local society and that his Crucifixion and resurrection is a collective illusion produced through mass hysteria. When the figure of Christ finally appears, the Greek touches the side of the figure and finds, as foretold in the opening song, "the heart of a phantom is beating." (593) For all his previous opinions and beliefs, he is now forced to acknowledge the cycle of human history is what Yeats claims in *A Vision*. The Syrian is a man of amenable and ductile nature, easily influenced by happenings in the surroundings, and always ready for the shock of the new and moments when socially accepted ideas and values are turned by something totally different:

> What if there is always something that lies outside knowledge, outside order? What if at the moment when knowledge and order seem complete that something appears? (591)

The Syrian loses control of himself and breaks into a spasm of laughter, feeling the premonition of the inevitable coming of something that surpasses human intelligence, of the return of "the irrational" and another beginning of "the circle." (591) The astonishment and the ecstatic entrancement of these three characters indicate that they become new men when they experience the mystery and pour out their hearts and innermost thoughts. What the death and resurrection of Jesus in *The Resurrection* ultimately brings about is the death of the old self and a resurrection of the new self.

When Yeats permitted the Abbey Theatre to stage *The Resurrection* for the first time, he was somewhat nervous as he had only ever intended the play to be performed to an inner circle of empathetic theatergoers, that is, an already initiated audience who would understand his intent.[8] He also did not want any reviews by theatre critics to be published He felt that *The Resurrection* was an intimate confession about his innermost beliefs about an unknown and invisible wisdom, which was yet to be fully grasped or understood as he had only managed to describe the unknown using the known, that is, by using the aesthetic form from esoteric Japanese Noh plays and available ritualistic themes for the representations of death and resurrection.

3. Staging a death and a resurrection: J. M. Synge's *The Shadow of the Glen*[9]

In J. M.Synge's *The Shadow of the Glen,* the main character, Nora Burke, has a contextual affinity with Nora Helmer in Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House*[10]. Both Noras live in a male-centric society, feel isolated, and leave their houses as independent women to seek fulfillment in life. Nora Helmer unwittingly reveals her innermost emotions and her long suppressed will when dancing the tarantella, which is a South Italian dance characterized by rapid steps and quick gyrations. As a tarantella is usually danced in pairs, the passionate solo dance performed by Nora implies her lack of a fitting equal and foretells her imminent departure from her home and from traditional wifehood. Likewise, Nora Burke lacks a fitting equal and decides to leave her chauvinistic husband behind.

The plot of *The Shadow of the Glen* is based on "a story of an unfaithful wife" (*Prose* 70) that Synge had heard from Pat Dirane, a local storyteller in Inishmaan (Inis Meáin), which was also included in *Aran Islands*, a collection of his journals. Dirane's story had a phallocentric moral that rewards good and punishes evil from a male-dominated societal viewpoint. When traveling, Pat was offered a night's accommodation by a housewife who was holding a wake for her husband; however, Pat discovered that the husband was only playing dead to secure posi-

tive evidence that his wanton wife was having an affair with a younger man. After the wife brought her lover into the bed in the next room, the husband stopped playing dead and brutally beat the young adulterer with his "two fine sticks" (*Prose* 72) in retaliation. Synge modified Pat's story into a story about a woman's independence from a misogynistic husband. The husband in Synge's play plays dead, as did the man in Pat's story, and then eavesdrops on a conversation between his wife and a young farmer to discover that the latter wants to marry his wife. The husband stigmatizes his wife rather than the farmer as an adulterer even though there had been no love affair between the two. The wandering tramp, who was given a night's shelter by the wife at the beginning of the play, witnesses all the events and then leaves the house with the wife. While the wife in Pat's story was promiscuous, the on in *The Shadow of the Glen* is the victim of a domineering husband and is unfairly tarred with the stigma of an adulterer. It is the husband's staging of his death and resurrection that reveals his innermost fears and hatred of women, which ultimately gives the wife the courage to leave.

As the characters' situations at the beginning are quite odd for an Irish wake, the recovery from these occasional oddities underlays the play's tone. The play begins with a peculiar solitary wake scene in which Nora Burke holds a lonesome silent vigil over the body of her husband. Unlike the ritualistic festivity of the wake depicted in *The Shaughraun*, the lonely wife sits in silent thought while inwardly looking for someone to talk to and share her plight. A wandering tramp drops by and asks for lodging for the night as it is pouring with rain and is amazed at "a queer look" (*Plays* 33) of the body lying on the bed. At this point, Synge gives a hint that the body may not actually be as dead as it appears, which also underscores the oddity of the solitary wake. The unexpected visit of the vagabond turns the cottage kitchen into a space in which the private and the public intersect to represent a microcosm of the community. The conversation between Nora and the tramp gives an initial signal that the wake is a communal event, which livens Nora's mind and encourages her to talk without reserve:

> NORA [*half-humorously*]. He was always queer, stranger, and I suppose them that's queer and they living men will be queer bodies after. (*Plays* 33)

The added emphasis on the queerness of her husband was clearly intended to have a comical effect on the audience and was also a covert reference to his misogynistic tendencies. When the tramp discovers that the husband claimed he would put a curse on her if she touched his dead body, he was surprised at such "a queer story." (*Plays* 35) However, the passage obviously

has a double meaning as the husband must have feared that if she touched his body, the wife would realize that he was not dead. Additionally, the passage also referred to the husband's desires to avoid any physical contact with her, the truth of which is revealed when Nora discloses a conjugal secret to the tramp:

> NORA [*looking uneasily at the body*]. Maybe cold would be no sign of death with the like of him, for he was always cold, every day since I knew him, — and every night, stranger — (*Plays 35*)

The word "knew" has an archaic nuance here and implies the sexual consummation of a marriage as the marriage was "cold" and had been ever since ("every night"). As Nora opens her heart to the tramp, the unusual lonely wake moves toward the more common communal ritual, which strengthens the sense of unity between the attendants and temporarily constructs the basis for the intimate confession. Nora eventually pours out her heart about the ordeals she had gone through and was still going through, such as her solitude ("very lonesome" (*Plays* 39)), and her fear of getting old ("It's a pitiful thing to be getting old, but it's a queer thing surely (*Plays* 51)), which gives her the courage to judge herself and make the decision to leave her repressive husband behind. Nora finally ceases to be the "lady of the house" (*Plays* 33) and liberates herself from her slavish wifehood to become a "woman of the hills."[(11)]

The communal trust Nora feels allows her to make her confession, and the ritualistic, mutual atmosphere induces the husband to lay bare his heart. After Nora exits the kitchen to ask the young local man to circulate the news of her husband's death to the villagers, the supposedly dead husband sits up in his bed and tells the frightened vagabond to bring him whiskey. When the husband hears Nora blow a long whistle outside, he "fiercely" (*Plays* 41) curses at her:

> Ah, the devil mend her...Do you hear that, stranger? Did ever you hear another woman could whistle the like of that with two fingers in her mouth? (*Plays* 41–2)

Nora was able to act tactfully and practically when the situation demanded it, which apparently overwhelms the husband as his curse could have been because of his fear of being emasculated by the image of a more superior masculinity in Nora's mind. He tells the tramp that his wife was "a bad wife for an old man" (*Plays* 43) and that he kept "a black stick" (*Plays*

43) to chastise her and/or any of her companions. While he wants to keep his phallocentric control, he is also aware that he is physically inferior to her. After Nora leaves the house, the husband, unlike the husband in "a story of an unfaithful wife" in *Aran Islands*, welcomes a young local farmer to share his whiskey:

> I was thinking to strike you [...] but you're a quiet man, God help you, and I don't mind you at all. (*Plays* 59)

Synge concludes the play by drawing the audience's attention to the husband's masculine homosocial disposition, which contrasts with the positive identity Nora shows in the end. The psychological effects of the staging of the death and the resurrection in *The Shadow of the Glen* ironically turn out to be reciprocal as it discloses the innermost fears and desires of both characters.

4. The fear of being *queer*: Tomas Kilroy's *The Death and Resurrection of Mr. Roche*

While the husband in *The Shadow of the Glen* was a male chauvinist with homosocial inclinations, the repetition of the word "queer" did not necessarily imply that he was homosexual. The word "queer" is also repeatedly used in Tomas Kilroy's *The Death and Resurrection of Mr. Roche*[(12)]; however, in this case, it undoubtedly implies homosexuality. The sexual orientation of Kelly, the protagonist in Kilroy's play, is relatively ambiguous. He has probably never had sexual intercourse with women, but because he had had a one night experience with a middle-aged man, this guilty secret has caused him psychological trauma. The death and the resurrection depicted in this play results from a nightmarish delusion that nevertheless encourages Kelly to confront said trauma.

The plot revolves around Kelly, a bachelor in his thirties, who regularly spends his weekends drinking and merrymaking with male friends and old acquaintances. After a drinking bout at a local pub, he seeks to continue the merrymaking at home at which Mr. Roche, a middle-aged acquaintance he had met on an earlier occasion, appears with a young male companion. Kelly and his friends play a practical joke on Mr. Roche and lock him in a small cellar. However, Mr. Roche, who has severe claustrophobia, suffers from a panic attack and has a fit, and when finally found, appears to have died. While this death is an accident of drunken revelry, it forces Kelly to look into the bottom of his own heart.

The old popular songs and poems that Kelly sings and recites reveal his male-centered thinking and his own sexual inclinations. One of his friends recalls the day when Kelly sang at a wedding reception at which he had dramatically recited the song 'A Bachelor Gay Am I' (18) from the British operetta *The Maid of the Mountains*[13], which is set in a bandit camp high in a mountainous area. As the story develops, a colorful and merry character called Beppo confesses his deep unrequited love for the heroine through song and uses the term "bachelor gay." When Kelly sang the song at his friend's wedding ceremony, however, he changed this phrase with homosexual innuendo as a joke:

> Seamus That's right. 'A Bachelor Gay Am I.' Wasn't that the song, Kelly, if I remember right? (*Laughter*)
> Kelly Oh, indeed, and you have a lot to laugh at. You're easily amused, the pack of you. (18)

Kelly has a deadpan expression and comments that he cannot "see what's the joke of a fellow singing at the wedding of his best friend." (18) By parodying the operetta, he clearly knew that homosexuality was seen as a social stigma and could result in a person being a laughingstock in the community.

As the plot gradually unfolds, Kelly unwittingly discloses his inner life to the audience. At the beginning, as a sign of his long years of a single life, the audience sees Kelly's basement flat with "*piles of paperback books all over the floor*." (11) When he casually picks up a book and reads some passages to his friends, it turns out that he is reading from Dostoevsky's *Notes from the Underground* ("I am a spiteful man. I am an unattractive man." (25)) as if the dark memoirs of the solitary narrator in the novel speak for Kelly's dreary loneliness and unknowingly reveal his misogynistic disposition. He amuses himself by comparing the bodies of women to cars that men can tune up as they want and drive around ("Women. Keep the ignition firing. Ha! Ha! [...] Keep the headlamps shining in the darkness." (23)) He often uses this type of rough boy's club language with his drinking companions as if sensitivity is a disgraceful label for men. Each time he exposes his feelings to his friends, he does it defensively ("I'm not afraid to broadcast it. I'm not ashamed of my feelings" (17) / "I've never been ashamed of me feelings yet" (19)), which makes it sound like he is making excuses and that feelings are an indication of an emasculation that compromises his masculinity. His repeated revilement of homosexuality also sounds defensive and an excuse not to squarely look into his own heart and examine what makes him curse people with same-sex orientations. When Kelly's friends tell him that a local

acquaintance named Mr. Roche ("the queer" / "the Queen of Dunleary" (15)) will join them soon, he gets upset at the news, saying "we don't want him and the type he goes around with. Perverts!" (15) After his friend repeatedly derides Mr. Roche as "the queer," (30) Kelly almost hysterically criticizes Mr. Roche as a "dirty, filthy pervert." (30) Kelly's friends generate a negative portrayal of Mr. Roche to which he agrees. When Mr. Roche finally arrives at his flat, Kelly repeats the curse his friends have used and abuses Mr. Roche to his face ("you queer" (40)), indicating that besides being homophobic, he wishes to express his agreement with the dominant conventional community attitudes toward homosexuality. When Kelly is forced to face Mr. Roche's apparent death, the audience are given a great deal of information about Kelly's inner life and his innermost agonies, that is, his dreary solitude, the mental block on his innermost feelings about both sexes, and a deep fear of being branded with the social stigma of homosexuality, which he fears more than homosexuality itself. Kelly is unable to break free of the longstanding traumas, fears, and anxieties that linger over his life like ghosts ("we have to be looking to the future. But [...] the place has a lot of auld character" (20)).

Kilroy conjures up a serene sanctity in Kelly's sordid everyday life. For example, while "a crucifix" over the bed in Kelly's flat is commonplace in Irish life, it gradually gains unexpected significance during the play.

Kelly facetiously turns nationalistic cheering into a parody ("Up the Republic! God! [...] Up God" (12)) and names his rumpus room the "holy hole." (11) However, for all his defiant, blasphemous jests, he does not renounce his religious faith when Mr. Roche "dies" from Kelly's wild practical joke:

> Oh, my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee and I detest my sins. [...] Oh, my God, I just want to live. [...] I know now —— I know now I was on my own all the time. (65)

For the first time in the play, Kelly looks into his own heart and acknowledges his dreary solitude and guilty conscience. When one of his friends comes back to Kelly's flat to deal with the aftermath of Mr. Roche's death, Kelly finally discloses his secret and confesses that he had had a homosexual relationship with Mr. Roche that had lasted only one night. ("God forgive me. I let him handle me" (63)). Kelly's hatred of women comes to the surface on several occasions during the action, making the audience realize the agonizing complexities of sexuality:

I'll be honest with you, boy, I can't abide their skittering and giggling. It gives me a royal pain in the arse to be listening to them. (57)

D'you know I haven't looked side ways at a woman since that night we were at the dress dance out in the Airport. (57)

It's only that I can't abide the hullabaloo they go on with — women! (58)

While Kelly's sexual orientation remains ambiguous, he still seems to believe that he has a chance to get along with women ("I was just thinking a while back there that there was nothing wrong with me a good rattle wouldn't cure"(68)). However, after Mr. Roche's dramatic resurrection, Kelly becomes psychologically alive and disposed to attend Mass ("Let's all go to Mass"(77))[14]. The death and resurrection of Mr. Roche urges Kelly to face his own past traumas, forces him to give a candid confession, and encourages him to psychologically revive. Therefore, the play begins with the flippant blasphemies of a sordid drunk and ends with the renewed faith of a sober layman.

Conclusion

In modern Anglo-Irish dramas, there are often candid or unwitting confessions in the dramatic treatments of death and resurrection. This paper examined the extent to which Dion Boucicault, W.B. Yeats, J.M. Synge, and Thomas Kilroy tactfully handled the death and resurrection motif and made the resulting confessions convincing in their works. The deaths and resurrections in *The Shaughraun*, *The Resurrection*, *The Shadow of the Glen*, and *The Death and Resurrection of Mr. Roche* were dramatic contrivances in which the reasoning powers of the dramatis personae were temporarily disarmed and the socially accepted self-restraint of crude emotions, cast off. By producing these powerful representations of death and resurrection and the accompanying candid confessions of the characters, these playwrights added a secular aspect equivalent to the church to their modern Anglo-Irish theatre.

Notes

(1) Dion Boucicault's *The Shaughraun* was first staged at Wallack's Theatre, New York, on November 14, 1874.

(2) Perhaps in the funeral sequence and the accompanying keening sequence by the local inhabitants, the conflict between modernity (the idea of personal ownership and the sense of social decency) and pre-moder-

nity (the idea of communal solidarity and emotional collectivity) was detected. Hélène Lecossois regarded the keening like lamentations depicted in J.M. Synge's *The Playboy of the Western World* (1907) as a deliberate alternative to the norms of modernity. For this, see Hélène Lecossois. 'Groaning wicked like a maddening dog': Bestiality, Modernity, and Irishness in J. M. Synge's *The Playboy of the Western World*. https://doi.org/10.4000/sillagescritiques.4441.

(3) *The Resurretion* was first staged by the Abbey Theatre on July 30, 1934, along with the first performance of Yeats's *The King of the Great Clock Tower*. See Richard Allen Cave. "Notes for Further Research: A Stage Setting by W.B. Yeats: A Document from the National Library of Ireland." *The Canadian Journal of Irish Studies*, vol. 32, no. 2, 2006, pp. 54.

(4) W. B. Yeats substantially revised *A Vision* and published the extended version in 1937.

(5) *The Collected Works of W. B. Yeats, Volume XIV, A Vision, The Revised 1937 Edition*, ed. Catherin E. Paul and Margaret Mills Harper. New York; Scribner, 2015. p. 50.

(6) Stuart Hirschberg. "The 'Whirling Gyres' of History." Studies: *An Irish Quarterly Review*, vol. 68, no. 272, 1979, p. 305.

(7) *W. B. Yeats: The Poems*. edited by Daniel Albright, London: Everyman's Library, 1992. p. 662.

(8) On August 4, 1934, W. B. Yeats wrote as follows: "*The Resurretion* was played for the first time at the Abbey a few days ago. Like *The Cat and the Moon* it was not intended for the public theatre. I permitted it there after great hesitation. Owing perhaps to a strike which has prevented the publication of the religious as well as of the political newspapers and reviews, all is well." For this, see *The Variorum Edition of the Plays of W.B. Yeats*. New York: Macmillan, 1966, p. 1308.

(9) *The Shadow of the Glen* was first staged by the Irish National Theatre Society in Dublin, 1903.

(10) *A Doll's House* (*Et Dukkehjem*) premiered at the Royal Theatre in Copenhagen, Denmark, on December 21, 1879.

(11) In one of earlier drafts of *The Shadow of the Glen*, the tramp used the phrase "Maybe it's not woman of the house I'll be calling you but woman of the hills" (*Plays* 257). Synge did not use this line in the final version of the play probably because the phrase would have too flatly revealed the nature of the new Nora.

(12) *The Death and Resurrection of Mr. Roche* was first staged at Olympia Theatre in Dublin on October 7, 1968.

(13) *The Maid of the Mountains* is a British operetta with the book by Frederick Lonsdale, lyrics by Harry Graham, and music by Harold Fraser-Simson. When it was first staged at Daly's Theatre in London in 1917, the operetta achieved a huge success and consequently had 1,352 performances. For this, see Robert Ignatius Letellier. *Operetta: A Source Book, vol. II*. Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015. p. 972.

(14) Kilroy's setting of the church was based on the St. Mary's church at the Carmelite Centre in Bloomsfield Avenue, Dublin; however, Kelly somehow referred to the location as "Gayfield." (81) Perhaps the playwright let Kelly unwittingly disclose his sexual orientation here.

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