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ALICE L. MILLIGAN:
THE CELTIC TWILIGHT'S FORGOTTEN STAR

by

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Bachelor of Arts, University of North Dakota, 1986

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Submitted to the Graduate Faculty
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This thesis, submitted by Kathryn J. O'Hehir in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts from the University of North Dakota, has been read by the Faculty Advisory Committee under whom the work has been done and is hereby approved.

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This thesis meets the standards for appearance, conforms to the style and format requirements of the Graduate School of the University of North Dakota, and is hereby approved.

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To Thomas J. Clifford

"Credo quia impossibile."
ABSTRACT

During the course of a historical examination of any given time period, persons and events are remembered in some texts and forgotten in others. The historical process of selection and rejection of materials is, in itself, the subject of much study. This study unearths a forgotten turn of the century Irish patriot named Alice L. Milligan, a Protestant nationalist writer from County Tyrone, Northern Ireland.

She is worthy of study in that she breaks traditional sectarian lines still drawn in Ireland today, where the stereotype prevails that only Catholics desire a reunited Ireland, with Protestants desiring inclusion with Great Britain. Political lines, like borders, are subject to change.

Collection of data continued over a two year period, as very little has been written about the author. I made several summer research trips to Dublin and inspected the archives of the National Library. Milligan's books have been out of print since the 1920s, but antiquarian bookshops supplied some copies of her texts. Letters were placed in northern newspapers advertising the project and
requesting information from persons who remembered her. Several responses were received, and a meeting, with four individuals who knew biographical information about Milligan, was held in Omagh, County Tyrone, in November of 1990. The meeting was recorded on tape.

After examining a large sample of Irish historical texts it became clear that Alice Milligan was mentioned predominantly in texts where radical involvement or the Irish literary revival were discussed in detail. She was omitted from texts that dealt with the broader scope of Irish history. Equally clear was the fact that her omission was a result of the heavy political content in her poems, plays, novels and literary publication. Over the past twenty-five years, Irish history has undergone a revisionist writing of the events that lead up to the fated 1916 Rising.

Milligan ceased to publish shortly after this event because the market for nationalism had dried up. The current political struggle in the north gives modern historians cause to downplay the events of the turn of the century, which in turn makes it easier to live within the continuing confines of the British occupation in the North. Persons advocating a nationalist attitude as fervently as Milligan did now face the real risk of being labeled "pro-terrorist."
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INTRODUCTION

In *The Savage Mind* critic Levi-Strauss elaborates on the system of partiality in the writing of history:

Even history which claims to be universal is still only a juxtaposition of a few local histories within which (and between which) very much more is left out than is put in. ... What makes history possible is that a sub-set of events is found, for a given period, to have approximately the same significance for a contingent of individuals who have not necessarily experienced the events. ... History is therefore never history, but history-for. It is partial in the sense of being biased even when it claims not to be, for it inevitably remains partial—that is, incomplete—and this is itself a form of partiality. (257-8)

Levi-Strauss was referring to the partiality of histories of the French Revolution in particular; however, his observations have broader application as well. This partiality of history, decided by the historian for the historian's audience, is particularly significant in discussing the history of Ireland in determining the
rationale behind what is included and what is left out. Seamus Deane, professor of Modern Irish Literature at University College-Dublin and well known scholar of Yeats and the Celtic literary revival, would not only concur with Levi-Strauss' partiality theory, he takes it even further in examining the inclusion and exclusion of historical events in Irish history from the point of view of the group called Field Day, a politically engaged theatrical company, with his introductory remarks in Nationalism, Colonialism and Literature (one of Field Day's publications):

Field Day's analysis of the situation [political upheaval in Ireland] derives from the conviction that it is, above all, a colonial crisis. This is not a popular view in the political and academic establishment in Ireland. Historians in particular have been engaged for more than twenty years in what is referred to as a revision of Irish history, the chief aim of which was to demolish the nationalist mythology that had been in place for over fifty years, roughly from 1916 to 1966. This polemical ambition has been in large part realized. The nationalist narrative, which told the story of seven hundred years of English misrule (finally brought to a conclusion by the heroic rebellion of 1916 and the violence of the following six years, and now culminating in the unfinished business of the North), has lost much of
its appeal and legitimacy save for those who are committed to the IRA and the armed struggle. (6)

It is important to note that the year 1966 is significant as a date when nationalism began its historical revision because it is also the same year in which Britain introduced troops into the North of Ireland, attempting to quell sectarian violence. Modern historians face the awkward role of rewriting events that lead to the ousting of British rule while British troops occupy a portion of the island at the time of writing. The South, while politically independent, is so precisely at the expense of trading off independence for the North; this political Caesarian section has never been completely accepted. Deane characterizes as false the justification for the revision under the guise that political circumstances are so complex they can't be truly explained; and what can't be explained is omitted:

Revisionism defends itself against those who describe it as simply another orthodoxy, created in accord with the political circumstances of the moment, by claiming to have revealed such a degree of complexity in Irish and Anglo-Irish affairs that no systematic explanation is possible. It has effectively localized interpretation, confining it within groups, interests, classes, and periods. Any attempt to see these issues as variations on a ghostly paradigm, like colonialism,
is characterized as "ideological" and, on that account, is doomed. Ultimately there may have been no such thing as colonialism. It is, according to many historians, one of the phantoms created by nationalism. . . . All nationalisms have a metaphysical dimension. . . the form may be a political structure or a literary tradition. . . . In response, insurgent nationalisms attempt to create a version of history for themselves. . . . They are usually, as in Ireland, under the additional disadvantage that much of their past has been destroyed, silenced, erased. (7-9)

The violence experienced in Ireland today is no different than the violence experienced by the subject of this thesis, Alice L. Milligan, during her recorded years, the turn of the century. From her vantage point as poet, dramatist, literary editor and novelist/historian, she clearly saw the effects of colonialism, having been born into a "planted" Methodist household of non-Gaelic speakers, some of whom held allegiance to Great Britain. Her mixed birth coupled with the shock she received in adolescence on learning there existed an ancient tradition in Ireland that had nothing in common with her own background, and that had been kept secret from her, served as a foundation for her ardent nationalist beliefs. While she knew that she was born a child of colonialism with all
the inherent advantages of same, she was also born an Irish woman and thus her work could well be defined by what Levi-Strauss called a historical "sub-set": a non-Catholic-nationalist writer, one best left out because her work slips through the cracks of traditional sectarian philosophy, where Catholics are nationalist and Protestants are Unionists. The entire twentieth century literary revival is a larger sub-set of Irish history, one small group dedicated to a now unpopular cause—nationalism. The fact that Ireland's most significant leaders were non-Catholics, i.e., Wolfe Tone, Parnell, and Pearse, is deliberately not pointed out in historical texts. To draw attention to it would invite criticism of religious identification instead of political, even though that fact of identification itself is part and parcel of the Irish make-up and inherent to the struggle which was initiated by sectarianism, delivered from England in the late 1600s. The fact that Milligan, Tone, Parnell, and Pearse were non-Catholic and politically active nationalists serves to dispel the myth that the children of oppressors couldn't agree with the demands of the oppressed. Were the Protestant leaders who worked toward Irish independence political mutants, or were they symbols of a deeper vein? Not all northern Protestants believed the country was better off under British rule. If this fact is recognized, then attention would have to focus on the policies of the
ruler rather than focusing on the inadequacies or political failings of those wishing self-rule. Milligan's writings serve two purposes: to revive, textually, ancient Celtic lore that depicts the Irish race prior to the advent of British colonialism as valiant and courageous, something other than washerwoman or drunk; and two, to expose the British policies that undermined the nationalist movement of self-rule.

Hayden White discusses what he terms the "fictions of factual representation" in a chapter by the same name in *Tropics of Discourse*:

"the literature of fact"... is the extent to which the discourse of the historian and that of the imaginative writer overlap, resemble, or correspond with each other. Although historians and writers of fiction may be interested in different kinds of events, both the forms of their respective discourses and their aims in writing are often the same. (121)

This information, combining the roles of novelist and historian, is significant in determining the causes of historical revision because nationalist sentiment feeds the Irish stigma now attached to a nationalist attitude of reunification. Anyone now advocating or emulating the revivalist period with similar patriotic fury is subject to the label "pro-terrorist." If, as White states, the approach of a fictional writer and a historian is similar,
if not the same, then a logical question would be: Is there any great loss to history by the omission of the lesser artists and patriotic participants? The answer is obviously yes. When one sub-set of history is lost, albeit now considered politically unacceptable, what remains is colored by the omission and lends itself to the over-emphasis of others. For example, the recounts of the Rising of 1916 read as if its roots had only taken place and were carried out in Dublin, while the remaining ninety-nine percent of the country stood blind to the activities. It is known this is not true. Milligan's work chronicles the activities on both Unionist and nationalist fronts in the north just prior to the rising as will be seen in The Dynamite Drummer. The fact that the literary revival had a distinct effect on the Irish population has been verified; how much effect it had, however, still remains a mystery, one of the many aspects "erased or silenced" as mentioned by Deane. What is not a mystery is the role the revivalists played as messengers of a new political coming.
CHAPTER 1

Alice Letitia Milligan: A Biographical Sketch

To understand who Alice Milligan was, it is appropriate that she speak for herself about her work and the audience who received it. In her program notes for the February 19, 1900 production of *The Last Feast of the Fianna* at the Gaiety Theatre in Dublin (reprinted from the April, 1900 issue of *Beltain*, the official publication of the Irish literary theatre), she elaborated on the necessity to explain the plot as follows:

An audience of Kerry peasants would have no need for the background information provided. It is the Dubs and Trinity College intellectuals who neither understand nor respect the literature of ancient Ireland. (43)

Alice Milligan did not write the program notes to insult or anger her audience, made up largely of Dubliners and Trinity College intellectuals. She devoted her life to the task of educating the Irish about their culture and history to illustrate to the Irish, through her poems, plays, novels and newspapers, they were something other
than what England had presented them to be—inferior. She herself was a victim of the Anglicization of Irish history as she grew up in Omagh, County Tyrone, and educated under a British system which taught only British history. But as she pointed out to her audience, the north was not alone merely by virtue of intense British influence in its ignorance of Irish culture, a culture that was so entwined in the lives of "Kerry peasants."

The southern universities were guilty of omission as well. Gaelic was not taught in any Irish school system as yet, and wouldn't be until after 1922 when the Irish Free State was formed. The universities did not teach the myriad of folk tales and songs that constitute an oral history, a history that existed orally largely due to the expenses incurred in writing and the free availability of singing. The least educated kept alive a history not put on paper, the ancient history of Celtic Ireland. Alice Milligan devoted her life to rectifying this historical gap of knowledge—but first she had to educate herself.

She was born into a Methodist household in Omagh, County Tyrone, in the north of Ireland on September 14, 1866, the daughter of Seaton F. Milligan, a wealthy businessman with historical and archaeological interests, and a member of the Royal Irish Academy. Her mother, Charlotte, was a Burns from Dungannon. She had three brothers: Charles F. Milligan (politician), Dr. Earnest
Milligan of London, and William H. Milligan, with whom she would later co-write two novels: *Son of the Sea Kings* (1914) and *The Dynamite Drummer* (1915), along with two sisters Edith (Mrs. George Wheeler), a Unionist [loyal to England], and Mrs. C. Milligan-Fox. Mrs. Fox helped her in the production of *Last Feast* by orchestrating the music (Hogan and Kilroy 72). Throughout her life Alice Milligan never waivered from her nationalist views, but not everyone in her family felt as strongly nor showed their support so openly. Her brother William was a member of the British Army prior to 1916 (from which he was asked to leave), and it is not known exactly why he was removed, but in co-writing *The Dynamite Drummer*, with its anti-Unionist theme, it is apparent he was not a "rabid imperialist" as Alice describes her sister Edith in a correspondence to the poet AE (George Russel) in 1917. With such diverse political views under the same roof, there can be no doubt Alice Milligan grew up in an atmosphere of lively debate.

Her father was interested in archaeology and wrote a book and several articles on major archaeological sites in Ireland. After college Seaton Milligan intended to send Alice to Germany for further study, but the young Milligan protested she would rather study Irish in Dublin, having been exposed to the Gaelic language after earning a scholarship from her primary school to study for a short time in Donegal (*Ulster Herald*, 1953). She had first
become acquainted with Gaelic from her great uncle, Armour Alcorn, a farmer who did business in Gaelic with his workers and at market (The Irish Times, April 14, 1953).

Alice Milligan's primary school days were spent at the Loreto Convent school in Omagh. Her middle school years were spent at the Methodist College in Belfast and high school at Magee College in Derry. She majored in history at King's College in London. It is obvious that aside from her brief studies in Gaelic and historical discussions with her father, her education followed a strict English curriculum. At some point during these school days Alice Milligan received her first lesson in Home Rule, as remembered by Maureen Canon, now a resident of Donegal:

She told me it was a nurse from the mental hospital in Omagh who first gave her a lesson on Home Rule. She met him one day on what was known as The Rope Walk, a road in Omagh which overlooked our school play fields. She was a talkative person, even as a child, and evidently got into conversation with this man. She made some reference to her country—England. He told her England was not her country, that she was Irish, and that Ireland was her county.

Henry Mangan reprints another version of Milligan's first lesson on Home Rule in Poems by Alice Milligan excerpted from her article "Ulster and Home Rule" which ran in the Dublin Evening Telegraph:
The first time the words "Home Rule" came under my notice, I was a small girl in the County Tyrone, riding on a shaggy pony along a country road. A hired boy who rejoiced in the name of Roddy held the rein. He was the first native Irishman I remember to have conversed with, and he was a veritable Rory of the Hills. As we went along he discoursed treason in fascinating style, and when we came to a quiet and suitable corner, he danced jig-steps to his own whistling. It was he who interpreted for me the words Home Rule for Ireland, which appeared in white painted letters on a grey stone wall, and why the harp rudely shaped was there without a crown. I went to the newspapers to learn more about these things, and found the names of Isaac Butt and Parnell, which were henceforth as interesting to me as those of the little Princes in the Tower, and Margaret of Anjou and Walter Raleigh, and other famous personages in the history book. I grasped the fact that history was making even in my own lifetime. I kept my eyes open. But the wall inscriptions were not allowed to remain unchallenged. From time to time we found the harp obliterated, the legend altered to "No Home Rule," and very rude remarks were added about His Holiness the Pope.
Nearly ten years passed before again I had a chance of talking politics to a Home Ruler. Intermediate examinations and the glories of English and foreign literature absorbed my attention. I learned nothing of Ireland. . . . (xvi)

It is possible to get a glimpse of how Alice Milligan perceived her childhood, within the confines of a Methodist household, by looking at one of her earliest poems "When I Was A Little Girl":

When I was a little girl
In a garden playing
A thing was often said
To chide us delaying:
When after sunny hours
At twilight's falling
Down through the garden walks
Came our old nurse calling.
"Come in! for it's growing late
And the grass will wet ye!
Come in! or when it's dark
The Fenians will get ye." . . .
Four little pair of hands
In the cots where she led those
Over their frightened heads
Pulup the bed clothes.
But one little rebel there
Watching all with laughter
Thought "When the Fenians come
I'll rise and go after."
Wished she had been a boy
And a good deal older--
Able to walk for miles
With a gun on her shoulder.

It is doubtful that Alice Milligan had such thoughts so early on, but through the poem it is obvious that she wishes it were so. By Mrs. Canon's retelling of her first home rule lesson, and Milligan's own differing written account, since she was walking or riding down a road in both cases, it is obvious that she was well out of the cot (crib) by the time she realized Ireland was her country, a country she wished she could fight for.

Mrs. Canon also retells Alice Milligan's story of meeting Patrick Pearse, a poet and teacher who would become the leader of the 1916 rebellion, when he was a Gaelic "hedge teacher" (itinerant teacher who instructed rural children outside). Alice Milligan was accompanied by childhood friend Roger Casement who would, along with Pearse, go on to play a pivotal role in the Easter rising:

I remember her telling us Patrick Pearse was a "dour" young man, with little humor. On one occasion he was teaching a lesson on Irish in a village near (where I now live) in Donegal. It was in the open
air, near the hotel, and he had a blackboard erected in the field, and had drawn a picture of a donkey on the board with its name in Irish "asal" written underneath. Much to the amusement of the class a donkey came to the fence surrounding the field, and began to bray, as if amused at Pearse's effort. I remember her saying herself and Roger Casement were in the class (though she never claimed to have made progress in learning Irish) her interest was more in Irish history than in the Irish language.

At the age of 22, in 1888, Alice Milligan published her first work *Glimpses of Erin*, with the help of her father. She contributed poems and he wrote sketches of Irish history and topography. In 1892 she published her first novel *A Royal Democrat*, the storyline revolving around an English prince who, while shipwrecked in Ireland, becomes an Irish patriot. William J. Feeney, contributing editor to the *Dictionary of Irish Literature*, describes the novel as "dwindling into stock love-and-honor romanticism" (447).

During this seemingly milder turn of the century, Milligan became acquainted with William Butler Yeats and Maude Gonne. Milligan had met Yeats at some point before September 23, 1894 when he wrote a letter to her which shows early on how each would approach the cause of nationalism:
My experience of Ireland, during the last three years, has changed my views very greatly, and now I feel that the work of an Irish man of letters must be not so much to awaken or quicken or preserve the national idea among the mass of the people but to convert the educated classes to it on the one hand to the best of his ability, and on the other—and this is the more important—to fight for moderation, dignity, and the rights of the intellect among his fellow nationalists. Ireland is terribly demoralized in all things—in her scholarship, in her criticism, in her politics, in her social life. She will never be greatly better until she govern herself but she will be greatly worse unless there arise protesting spirits. I am doing what I can by writing my books with laborious care and studied moderation of style; and by criticism whenever the chance offers. . . I write this partly because your last letter to "United Ireland" reminds me that you are a very effective prose writer and if ever the sacred anger descend upon you will do good work.

I return your poems, and only extreme amount of work keeps me from writing much more about them. I go to Ireland this week and shall meet you probably and
criticise at length. I hope you will find all needful leisure for your work in Donegal (306).

It is clear from this early letter the two paths each writer will take. Yeats desires "moderation, dignity & the rights of intellect." This is the well-heeled path Irish politicians had been pursuing for years in the form of Home Rule, and to date, unsuccessfully. They both agreed Yeats' literary revival was an excellent vehicle to reintroduce Irish culture to the Irish, however Alice Milligan preferred a hands-on approach by working within that context in Ireland, rather than pontificating on Ireland's woes from across the sea in England, where Yeats spent the majority of his life.

Maude Gonne (McBride) was one of the founding members of Yeats' Irish Literary Society in Dublin and writes of a meeting between herself, Yeats, Alice Milligan and Ethna Carbery, (pseudonym for Anna Johnson), in approximately 1898:

It had been one of our late nights in my rooms over Morrow's Library, for Anna Johnson and Alice Milligan from Belfast were staying in Dublin and Anna had read us some of her poems and we were full of almost envious admiration of some numbers of the Shan Van Vocht, the daring little paper Anna and Alice were editing. They were so different but worked well together--Anna, tall and romantic, with her long face
and tender dreamy eyes—Alice small, aggressive and full of observant curiosity. I thought Dublin would have to look to its laurels if it were not be be outdone in literary journalism by Belfast. Willie Yeats had read his play, *The Countess Cathleen*; he wanted to have it produced in Dublin and he wanted me to play in it. (O'Broin 81)

Having grounded Milligan's friendship with the founders of the Celtic literary revival, it was natural that she would become involved with their efforts. After the publication of *Democrat* there is much evidence about Milligan's activities in Gaelic theatre. In the appendix of Hogan and Kilroy's *The Irish Literary Theatre: 1899-1901*, they offer their rationale for the inclusion or exclusion of certain works as follows:

"This list attempts to give... the significant plays of the Irish Dramatic Revival in its first years... It does not include plays written by Irishmen but basically English in inspiration,... it does not, for the most part, include plays which lack any tincture of literary or theatrical or historical merit. It does, however, include a handful of plays written before 1899, which belong to the spirit of the Dramatic Revival" (131).

The list begins with Yeats' *The Land of Heart's Desire* which was produced in London. Alice Milligan's *The Green*
Upon the Cape is next which was not produced but printed in *The Shan Van Vocht* on April 4, 1898. *The Daily Express* published Milligan's *Oisin in Tir-Nan-Oig* on October 7, 1899, part two of a trilogy of the wanderings of Oisin, and published *Oisin and Padraic* the third part of the trilogy on November 4 and 11, 1899. *The Last Feast of the Fianna* is part one of the trilogy.

Yeats was just getting his Irish Literary Theatre off the ground in Dublin after establishing the Dublin Literary Society in 1892. Yeats' *The Countess Cathleen* was the first play offered on May 8, 1899, and was met by demonstrators who objected to the main character's willingness to sell her soul to help the poor. It was seen as blasphemous and anti-Catholic (Clarke 4).

Hogan and Kilroy draw attention to the activities of Celtic theatre taking place outside Dublin: "The attention given by historians to the Irish Literary Theatre has obscured the fact that work was being done quietly in the provinces by other Irishmen, to further the cause of an Irish drama" (52). They reprint the January 21, 1899, letter Alice Milligan wrote as a response to a letter Yeats had written to *The Daily Express*:

Sir--Mr. W.B. Yeats, in his interesting letter of Saturday last on the Irish Literary Theatre, made references to the dramatic entertainments given in connection with the recent Aonach Tir-Conail at
Letterkenny, Co. Donegal, and quoted the success of those ventures as encouraging him to believe that plays appealing to the higher intelligence of an audience can attain success.

Having taken part in the production of one of these plays *The Passing of Conall*, (the first modern production in the Irish language) I think that I may be permitted to express an opinion on the subject. Both Mr. Yeats, as an Irish literary man, and a "West Briton" [in reference to another letter signed "West Briton" indicating the Gaelic language was dead] will be interested to know that a main feature of the Letterkenny play was the introduction of an act written in Gaelic verse by a living Gaelic poet, and enacted by Gaelic speakers. The experiment was so successful that Dr. Douglas Hyde, Miss Norma Borthwick, and other leading members of the Gaelic League, present at the production, were convinced of the importance of using the stage to promote the revival of the native Irish language as a medium of literature and culture.

... Our [Dublin] venture will come off most likely a full month after the production of Mr. Yeats' and Mr. Martyn's plays [the 1899 season], and the fact that the Gaelic League has theatrical ambitions will only increase public interest in the National
Literary Theatre's dramas. We will have much to learn from each other, and perhaps our Gaelic production will lead Mr. Yeats to decide on dramatizing or adapting his own "Wanderings of Oisin" for the Literary Theatre to produce in the first year of the next century. (54)

It would appear he took Alice Milligan's public challenge to heart, as indeed she is telling the great poet plainly that part of the Irish Literary Revival is centered on the ancient Celtic productions and the Gaelic League is actively working toward that goal. She even suggests he translate his poems on the Wanderings of Oisin for the stage. Instead, Yeats chose to use Milligan's The Last Feast of the Fianna along with Edward Martyn's Maeve to open the season on February 19, 1900.

The Last Feast of the Fianna was the first of a trilogy and is significant because it is attributed as the first Celtic twilight play in setting, character and theme produced in Dublin, depicting King Finn McCool's familial trials and quarrels around the 3rd century A.D. The storyline has many fairytale qualities, i.e., spells are cast and revenge is vowed and carried out via a fairy. Niamh is the fairy who Oisin, the son of Finn, has agreed to marry if she takes him to Tir-na-Ogue, the land of honey where you never die.
On page 67 Hogan and Kilroy quote Yeats' and Milligan's responses to the play in an article printed in Beltain:

The emotion which a work of art awakens in an onlooker has commonly little to do with the deliberate purpose of its maker, and must vary with every onlooker. Every artist who has any imagination builds better than he knows. Miss Milligan's little play delighted me because it has made, in a very simple way and through the vehicle of Gaelic persons, that contrast between immortal beauty and the ignominy and mortality of life, which is the central theme of ancient art. (65)

Milligan responded to Yeats' elevated view of art by describing her writing process and her rather practical thought process:

I understand that Mr. W.B. Yeats has explained my little play as having some spiritual and mystical meaning, but to tell the truth I simply wrote it on thinking out this problem. How did Oisin endure to live in the house with Grania as a stepmother after all that had happened? We know, as a matter of fact, that he was allured away to the Land of Youth by a fairy woman, Niamh of the golden locks. I have set these facts side by side, and evolved from them a dramatic situation. (67)
An interesting footnote to the play's production was that one of the cast members, John O'Leary, Yeats' friend and old Fenian leader, "favored the authoress by appearing amongst the band of warriors feasting at the banquet board" (152). This is significant as O'Leary was one of the original Fenians of the 1848 insurrection and if he graced the stage with his presence, it would in fact be giving it a nationalist seal of approval.

Even while the play has a distinctive place in Irish theatre history, the reviews, while generally favorable, were mixed depending on the critics' approval or disapproval of the literary revival. This was partly due to an audience becoming accustomed to the idea of an Irish folklore revival, and secondly a predominantly English cast that had less an idea of what the play meant than the audience. A sample of reviews follow:

The Daily Express

... it has charm, particularly for Irish people, which makes up for its deficiencies in dramatic intensity. If it has no other merits, it reproduces, at all events, in a vivid manner the main characteristics of the heroic age of Ireland. ... It was curious to see a crowd of spectators, accustomed to the highly-spiced vulgarities of the modern theatre, applauding with genuine relish a poetical thought or a musical passage.
The scene was beautifully staged . . . all richly attired in ancient Gaelic costume. . . . The text is of an impressive and rhythmical style, but not altogether innocent of crudities. . . . The piece was received with great enthusiasm. Miss Milligan was called before the curtain, and had to bow her acknowledgement.

The Independent noted the twenty minute play was "not altogether innocent of crudities," but chose to focus on its excellent reception rather than its opening night flaws. The Irish Times was not so kind.

The Irish Times

The declared object of the Irish Literary Theatre is worthy of the most intense respect and admiration; that the dry-rot which has eaten into the English drama should be needed everybody will agree, but if, in place of vivacity and a relief from care and the seriousness of modern life, we are offered insipidity, dullness, the very condemnation of wit, of vigour, of liveliness, . . . then give us back, by all means, the musical comedy, the insane farce . . . give us something which means nothing in place of that which is supposed to mean everything, but which requires a bore at your elbow to explain it and its hidden and incomprehensible mysteries.
Miss Milligan's one-act piece has no pretence to be a play. Miss Milligan, however, has caught far more intensely the imaginative and poetic features of the subject than its immense human interest, and the result is a series of very pretty animated pictures.

and throughout the second piece she sustained a herculean task with little less than genius. (72-74)

It is clear that even while the style of the production had no fans at the Times, Milligan's talent was described as "little less than genius." A little known author could do worse in Dublin literary circles.

William Butler Yeats, Lady Gregory and Maude Gonne all were instrumental in the literary revival and produced this production at the Gaiety theatre four years before the founding of the Abbey Theatre which would become the permanent home of the Irish literary movement. Alice Milligan continued to work with the Dublin literati as well as independently.

The production of The Last Feast came at the heels of two major accomplishments: the publication of The Life of Theobold Wolfe Tone in 1898, which she published herself from the offices of the Shan Van Vocht (Old Haggard Woman), a revolutionary monthly literary magazine she and Ethna Carbery (Anna Johnson) published between 1896 and 1899.
The name is taken from a late 18th century poem which depicts the French armada assisting the Irish during Wolfe Tones' insurrection of 1798 when the French landed in Lough Swilly near Donegal:

Shan Van Vocht
(1796-1798)

Oh, the French are on the sea
Says the Shan Van Vocht
The French are on the sea
Says the Shan Van Vocht;
Oh, the French are in the Bay;
They'll be here without delay,
And the Orange will decay,
Says the Shan Van Vocht.
And will Ireland then be free?
Says the Shan Van Vocht;
Yes! Ireland shall be free
From the centre to the sea;
Then hurrah for liberty!
Says the Shan Van Vocht. (anonymous)

Writing under the pen name Iris Olkryn, she and Anna Johnson (Ethna Carbery) developed a hardworking friendship. Johnson was a Catholic raised in a liberal Belfast family. Her father was Robert Johnson, a timber merchant and representative for Northern Ireland on the Supreme Council of the IRB (Irish Republican Brotherhood). James Connolly
was organizing in Belfast at this time and wrote articles for the paper questioning if republicans could also be politicians (Revolutionary Underground, 1976). However, Margaret Ward in Unmanageable Revolutionaries adds "The earliest writings of James Connolly were included within the varied pages of the journal, although the editors made it plain they disagreed with his socialism" (45). Ward also elaborated on what she considers Milligan's and Johnson's chief aim in producing the paper:

... Shan Van Vocht hoped it would avoid the acrimony surrounding the men's organisation as women, lacking the vote and excluded from all groups, were not "called upon to have any opinion whatever as to who has a right to speak for Ireland." Despite the bitterness of the comment, this debarment was, for once, seen as a positive blessing.

... unmarred by political wrangles, Shan Van Vocht took great pleasure in hammering home the point. "Is it not a fortunate thing that the better half (numerically of course, I mean) of the population of Ireland is not involved in these differences of the polling booths?" As well as honouring the spirit of 1798 by arranging an exhibition in Belfast, by decorating neglected graves of old heroes, selling home-produced goods and collecting money for memorials, the women considered their task to be that
of giving men "safe guidance out of the hurly-burly of the political faction fight into which they have wandered from the straight path." Their lack of political experience was not regarded as a disadvantage. . . and their reaffirmation of the need to develop an authentic national spirit through the formation of organisations that spring from the people. (46)

Arthur Griffith (founder of Sinn Fein) was also a staunch supporter of the publication and when Anna Johnson married Seumus MacManus, a Donegal poet, in 1900, Griffith took over the publication incorporating it with the United Irishman, which evolved into the publication Sinn Fein [translation: Ourselves Alone] (We Sang For Ireland, foreword, 1950). Another account of Griffith's involvement with the Shan Van Vocht is offered by Margaret Ward in Unmanageable Revolutionaries: "Shan Van Vocht folded in April 1899. The final edition explained that by steering clear of all sectional differences, they were deprived of the backing of any party and so had no choice but to cease publication. The editors sent their subscription list to Arthur Griffith, their rival, who had begun the publication of United Irishman" (47). Neither author notes their sources specifically enough to re-examine the evidence for their assertions, but it is very clear the readers of Shan
Van Vocht were of the same political caliber as those who would read United Irishman.

As the Shan Van Vocht was the first publication of its kind, a publication that combined literature and politics within the same pages, history books note its influence on the wave of public opinion toward a rising, indicating it was one wave of many during this time. Dorothy Macardle, in the *The Irish Republic*, mentions it as follows: "The Separatists [persons wanting an independent Ireland, separate from English rule] were in these years a small minority; they were without a political programme but the ideal found expression in small periodicals like the Shan Van Vocht" (62). Leon O'Broin in *Revolutionary Underground: The Story of the Irish Republican Brotherhood 1858-1924*, mentions the Shan Van Vocht:

. . . she [Milligan] had begun in January 1896 to produce the periodical Shan Van Vocht in which through prose and verse they sought to serve the cause of Irish freedom. The title was taken from a popular song of 1798 and was a reminder of the significance of the approaching centenary. For an allegedly revolutionary journal the Shan Van Vocht was a mild and inoffensive affair and made little or no effort to identify itself with the "new movement" [Irish National Brotherhood]. It ran for less than three years, and in its first issue commended the advice of
a correspondent in the Transvaal, addressed to nobody in particular, to learn to shoot straight. It colourlessly reported meetings of miscellaneous associations and literary societies which INB personalities attended. But it was only in the ninth issue that the INB's front association, the Irish National Alliance, was mentioned by name. This was in a report of a manifesto setting forth the Alliance's policy which, reduced to simple terms, was to reject the parliamentary humbug [Home Rule] of the past seventeen years and to look to revolution for redemption. The magazine made no comment of its own on this, but did reproduce part of a commentary from the Irish Republic of New York which declared plainly that a Home Ruler should be regarded as inimical and dangerous to the cause of nationality as were the royalists during the American War of Independence. (80-81)

Tim Pat Coogan mentions her in his book on the I.R.A. as follows: "The poetry of Ethna Carbery and Alice Milligan and James Fintan Lalor's writings on the land issue all helped towards creating a body of opinion, however small, in favour of staging a rising against the British" (32). Milligan's work is mentioned in Eion MacNeill and the Making of a New Ireland. MacNeill served as president of the Gaelic League in which Milligan was
extremely active, and he helped to found the Irish Volunteers. Bulmer Hobson worked with MacNeill in founding the Irish Volunteers and was apparently influenced by Milligan and Carbery according to the following excerpt: "Young Hobson, while still a schoolboy and without any urging from home, instinctively turned towards Irish nationalism as expressed in its literary form in Ulster by Alice Milligan and Ethna Carbery" (115). The Shan Van Vocht, Milligan, and Carbery are missing from F. S. L. Lyons' text, Ireland Since the Famine, the definitive text on Irish history currently used in Irish universities. Much is written about Arthur Griffith and the United Irishman, but not its precursor. This inclusion and exclusion of revivalists in Irish historical texts has come to be known by modern Irish scholars, such as Seamus Deane, as "revisionist history" which began to take hold approximately 1960 when violence again erupted in the north.

Even if the significance of Ireland's first nationalist literary publication was missed by some future historians because its effect was difficult to ascertain, it did not miss the attention of writers in Milligan's day. George Bernard Shaw mentions the Shan Van Vocht in his political play about Ireland, John Bull's Other Island, which was written at Yeats' request for the Abbey Theatre and produced on September 25th, 1916 after in 1905 it had
been offered and rejected. One of the main characters, Doyle, an Irish engineer living in London, attempts to explain the differences between the Irish and the English to his counterpart Broadbent:

He [the Irish] can't be intelligently political: he dreams of what the Shan Van Vocht said in ninety eight. If you want to interest him in Ireland you've got to call the unfortunate island Cathleen ni Hoolihan and pretend she's a little old woman. It saves thinking. It saves working. It saves everything except imagination, imagination; and imagination's such a torture that you can't bear it without whiskey. (517)

It should be noted that Shaw could have been referring to either the 1798 song, or the 1898 publication when he refers to Shan Van Vocht. The image he wishes to produce is synonomous. Professor Richard Harp notes historical trends resurfacing within the Shan Van Vocht in an article published in Eire Ireland in 1988:

This way of reading and interpreting Ireland's historical and legendary past was one the Shan Van Vocht maintained throughout its publication. . . . Reading of the past allegorically and applying the allegory to present-day issues is of course characteristic of literary renaissances. The Middle Ages did much the same thing with the ancient British
and Welsh past concerning the stories of King Arthur.

. . . And so, too, did Alice Milligan and Ethna Carbery draw together the national themes of the Young Ireland movement of fifty years earlier (47).

After leaving her position at the Shan Van Vocht Milligan continued writing and in 1901 completed her third play The Harp That Once. After the success of The Last Feast of the Fianna, Maude Gonne asked her help with organizing plays to be sponsored by the Daughters of Erin. On December 30, 1900, she wrote:

Before leaving Ireland, I write to ask if you will really help the Inghinidhe na hEireann [Daughters of Erin] with the Gaelic tableaux we talked of when I and Miss Killeen were in Belfast. Without your help we feel very much afraid of trying them as none of us have had much experience in tableaux. (Hogan and Kilroy 85)

The joint efforts of Milligan and Gonne resulted in the production of two Milligan plays, The Harp That Once on August 26, 1901, and the following night The Deliverance of Red Hugh. The Irish Independent reported:

This piece is strong in dramatic interest. It represents the captivity of Red Hugh and his comrades, the defiance which the young Irish chieftain offers to his jailers, and the ultimate escape of The O'Donnell
and the two O'Neill's through the friendly offices of
one of the guards. (91)

Arthur Griffith published her fourth play, The Daughter of Donagh, a Cromwellian Drama in Four Acts, in the United Irishman in serial form December 5, 12, 19, 26, 1903; it was reprinted in book form in Dublin in 1920. She continued writing plays, publishing The Escape of Red Hugh in 1904 and The Last of the Desmonds in 1905 (Dictionary of Irish Literature).

In 1908 her first book of twenty-seven poems Hero Lays was published in Dublin. Bulmer Hobson remarked about Hero Lays in The Peasant: "The poems have a strength and a character and a feeling all their own. They are unlike anything that we have seen in Ireland. They strike a new note in our literature" (Poems by Alice Milligan, foreword by H. Mangan, p. x). Mangan also offered an insight into Milligan's writing habits: "Miss Milligan sometimes did not choose to polish her poems before publication--and never afterwards; she did not even collect them. They had served their purpose: that was enough for the writers who really helped to make the national resurgence" (xi).

Hero Lays was well received by nationalist minded persons as Milligan founded her poetry in the legends and myths of Ireland's great past. Digging up past heroes must have given much needed courage to the Irish men and women considering another attempt to break from English rule.
This found much favor with the leading revolutionaries of this time. Just two years before his execution for his part in the Easter Rising, poet and political activist Thomas MacDonagh, one of the six signers of the Irish Proclamation, is quoted from an article in the Irish Review:

I should like to begin with the best. At ordinary times, I think I should explain this term "best" in connection with the term "Irish," making clear my immediate choice. Now I have no time for explanation, as I have no difficulty in choosing. I have no time to spare in a time of war when my country is preparing for her own part. I have no difficulty of choice because my ears can listen with joy only for the song of a poet who sings for Ireland. . . . It is meet that this Irish national poet should be a woman. It is meet that she, like so many of the leaders of Irish Volunteers, should be of North-East Ulster. Alice Milligan, Ulster Protestant, Gaelic Leaguer, Fenian, friend of all Ireland, lover of Gaelic Catholic as of her own kith, strong in faith and in hope and in charity, clear of eye and of voice, single-minded, high, inspired and inspiring, humorous and solemn, taking praise and encouragement and blame and rebuff as they come, without thought of herself, with thought always of Ireland's cause--Alice Milligan
is the most Irish of living Irish poets, and therefore the best.

I know her personally, . . . I have heard her speak of her poems and know the frank sincerity with which she regards them. . . . For the rest, I shall merely quote from her book, *Hero Lays*, 1908, and recommend all Irish people buy it. . . . (Mangan ix-x)

An example of her eclecticism in all things national is illustrated by a song written by Milligan called [Wolfe] *Tone is Coming Back Again*:

Cheer up, brave hearts, to-morrow's dawn will see us march again;
Beneath old Erin's flag of green that ne'er has known a stain.
And ere our hands the sword shall yield or furled that banner be--
We swear to make our native land from the tyrant's thraldom free!

Her inherent patriotism is obvious and singing has traditionally meant a show of solidarity that everyone could participate in. In this manner Alice Milligan could reach even the illiterate, or those who could not afford theatre, newspapers or books of poetry, with her message of a free Ireland. Milligan's desire to reach out to the everyday Irish person was the direct opposite of Yeats' wish to hit hard in intellectual circles. Milligan must
have believed, and rightly so, that the very persons Yeats sought had an inherent disadvantage of being educated through British eyes. As a result Yeats developed a far greater following for his work in England than he did in Ireland. The reverse was true with Alice Milligan.

By 1909 the United Irishman had turned into the political organ for the Sinn Fein political party and was now called Sinn Fein. It published her play Oisin in Tir nan Og on January 23, 1909, and reprinted her one-act play Oisin and Padraic on February 20. Both were Celtic revival plays depicting Irish heroes predating Christianity, and they completed a trilogy that began with the adventures of Oisin in The Last Feast of the Fianna. The Sinn Fein publications are the last known printing of her plays with the exception of the reprinting of The Daughter of Donagh in Dublin in 1920.

Between 1909 and 1914 along with her brother William (Willy) she wrote an epic novel Son of the Sea Kings, (Dublin, 1914) an 800 page monolith detailing the Viking founding of Dublin. It is a historical novel and extensively researched. Another novel, co-written with her brother, The Dynamite Drummer, in 1915, is almost farcical in nature, depicting an American who believes he has inherited land in Donegal and naively sells dynamite to militant Orangemen in Belfast who are fearing Home Rule will pass. This text is discussed in detail in Chapter 4.
In 1930 Donegal writer Seamus MacManus edited a collection of Milligan's and his wife Ethna Carbery's poems in Gaelic entitled *We Sang For Ireland*. It was reprinted in English in New York in 1950. *Poems by Alice Milligan* was published in Dublin in 1954 with a foreword by collector and editor Henry Mangan.

It appears that with the exception of two collections of poetry, that Alice Milligan stopped publishing after 1914. There is evidence that she continued writing and possibly was published using a pseudonym as she did while publishing the *Shan Van Vocht*. Much of this evidence is in letters written by Milligan where she states she continues to write.

One such note is found in the Manuscript Room at Trinity library which states "My later verse which was generally written anonymously since 1915. Alice L. Milligan." It is collected with a few other scraps on a card, the exact date is unreadable, but the year is 1921. She does not mention the pseudonym she used and no other writings have been found to date. She does have a lengthy letter to AE (George Russell) about her later writing plans that will be discussed in later. It is clear she did stop publishing, at least under her own name. This would be understandable since after the failed Easter Rising, the British used every force available to them to suppress the
nationalist movement. Macardle discusses actions taken by the British government:

On September 5th (1919) John O'Sheehan of Roscommon was sentenced to two years' imprisonment for singing *The Felons of Our Land*. On September 26th P. O'Keeffe, member of Dail Eireann [newly formed Irish parliament] for North Cork, received a sentence of two years for a seditious speech. Numbers of Republicans were sentenced to two years' imprisonment for reading at meetings the manifesto of Sinn Fein.

. . . The next day's (Oct. 27) list showed the machinery of the *Southern Star* dismantled; . . . On September 20th all Republican papers were suppressed (Macardle 316).

The period 1916 through 1922 was a time of great fear in Ireland. Spies were everywhere; conspiracy ruled on both sides. Irish were jailed under newly enacted laws under the "Restoration of Order in Ireland Act" where any acts, written or verbal, could be considered seditious. The country was at war, and at times it was difficult to tell who the enemy was since the Irish Army could not openly wear uniforms. No Republican in their right mind would write openly during this time. Only a very few privileged could, and Yeats was one, largely due to an audience in England that enjoyed his work.
How to go about accomplishing the goal of a free Ireland left much dissention across the island. Spiritualism and mysticism were popular in intellectual circles at this time with Yeats, T.W. Rolleston and AE (George Russell) devoting a great deal of study toward it. Yeats, Rolleston and Milligan had all been involved in the INB (Irish National Brotherhood) until, "Rolleston quickly extricated himself when the young poetess Alice Milligan, herself caught up in the INB, told him she had dreamed he was in danger of arrest, but Yeats carried on and featured in time in the police reports as 'a literary enthusiast, more or less of a revolutionary,' which was not an unfair description of him at that time" (O'Broin 63-4).

As Yeats' stature continued to climb in the literary world, he began to disassociate himself from stringent nationalist writers and "Celtic Twilight" themes. By 1910 he had written a very short yet scathing retort to his critics:

TO A POET, WHO WOULD HAVE ME PRAISE

CERTAIN BAD POETS, IMITATORS OF HIS AND MINE

You say, as I have often given tongue
In praise of what another's said or sung,
'twere politic to do the like by these;
But was there ever a dog that praised his fleas?

(Selected Poems and Three Plays of William Butler Yeats, 3rd ed.)
AE continued to support young poets and publish their work. He had helped Alice Milligan early in her career. Yeats and he often differed on this subject, as noted by Norman Jeffares in *Anglo-Irish Literature*:

One of the poets praised by AE, to Yeats' disgust since he saw them as echoing his own early "Twilight poetry," was Seamus O'Sullivan. . . and it echoed the kind of poetry Yeats had developed in the nineties and had now virtually left behind. (163)

The exact date of a falling out between Yeats and Milligan can not be pinpointed, but the 1910 poem gives a rough estimate. Mrs. Maureen Cannon remembers running into Milligan where:

. . . she was going up to sell some of Yeats' letters to the National Museum. "Surely," I said, "You're not going to commercialize Yeats?" "Of course I would. Why not?" was her reply. She had no great regard for him, great poet though he was." (personal correspondence, 1990)

Milligan continued her friendship with AE (George Russell), who remained close to Yeats, having met him in art school. As well as helping James Joyce, he helped most everyone on the Dublin literary scene. He, too, was very interested in spiritualism. Lyons explains his interest in the occult and the literary movement:
... the renaissance itself was the work of a quite small and closely-knit group who were exposed to certain very specific influences. Briefly, these might be described as theosophy, occultism and magic, Irish fairy-tales and folklore, the Celtic sagas, geography and politics. Esoteric Buddhism, or Madame Blavatsky's version of it, might seem a far cry from a literary revival, but the mysticism which informs, say, Yeats' early Irish plays or the poetry of AE, owes much to the capacity of both men to see visions and dream dreams, a capacity powerfully reinforced in AE's case by his theosophy.

... From their theosophical inquiries, and particularly from Madame Blavatsky's Secret Doctrine, they had derived notions of a coming Messiah, and of a new revolutionary epoch springing from a great international war which both Yeats and AE had seen foreshadowed in separate visions in the year 1896. (Lyons 234-5)

Milligan's trust and regard for AE is illustrated in a very strange letter she wrote him in 1917. Milligan wrote a very personal, confessional letter to AE asking his help about a vision of her own. It is a reasonable assumption that Milligan and Yeats have already had a falling out, the rising has since failed and Milligan has lost her mother, father and sister during the last year. She had also
travelled to London to witness the trial and execution of her friend and fellow patriot, Roger Casement, with Alice Stepford Green. The effect of these events need be considered in analyzing the letter, and in attempting to ascertain Milligan's frame of mind. The following is a transcript of the letter, housed in the Trinity Library Manuscript Collection, indexed under the letters of AE. Information offered in brackets are explanatory and not part of original text.

37 St. Patrick's Road
Drumcondra [Dublin]

Dear AE:

The more I hear you discussing politics etc--the less I like the idea of confiding in you. Take care lest you yourself turn into an Ulster man instead of converting them. But to talk seriously I came to Dublin with a definite end in view and have done nothing in the matter. I want a confidant on a very serious and sacred topic and thought you would fit the part--then I fixed my hopes on Susan Mitchel [poet and secretary to AE] but found accidentally that she knew some of the persons connected with this affair and that it was impossible to talk to her, much as I wished to. With the convention [Dail Erinn] so near I
fear to intrude on your attention but this concerns the Ulster difficulty and may dispose of part of it.

To be brief—I have kept a secret for about 23 years [since 1894] or only told certain points of it when necessary. I very often longed to tell you, but restrained myself, and this was just as well, for it might have looked like a case of collusion between us, you doubtless read Gerald Balfour’s [Tory Chief Secretary] article in Hibbert Journal about May, on certain psychical phenomena, and that by Oliver Lodge in a later number—demanding cases of precision verified by cross correspondence methods.

I have in my possession documents which go to prove that last year’s events—the trial of Casement, Rising, etc. were all foreseen and foretold. The documents are in the writing of Mr. T.W. Rolleston now employed as a government censor, I believe. Moreover I may add that all the events of last winter, including Mrs. MacDonagh’s [possibly wife of Thomas MacDonagh, executed for his role in 1916 rising] funeral, were foreseen in most extraordinary detail as long ago as 1894. The narrative would be long and complicated, but I intend to write and publish it—in the form of a scientific article, framed for scientific investigation. Later I will enlarge on the subject in a book or booklet entitled "The Vision
Splendid" (you remember Wordsworth)--the whole thing is poetical and sublime, not merely curious and scholastic like the communication of Mrs. Pyper--moreover I have never gone in for psychical research--things came to me and I was not so much a visionary as an interpreting intelligence.

Milligan is explaining to AE that she had visions of political events she couldn't understand at the time, but which had recently come clear to her. The above paragraph explains her desire to write about these events scientifically as opposed to artistically because she did not want to appear flakey. AE, an ardent follower of theosophy, would likely be sympathetic to her views, which as the following paragraph indicates, are a bit bizarre.

... People unacquainted with each other, and sometimes unacquainted with me, told in [undecipherable] at intervals, sometimes spread over months, separate dreams or visions which fitted together like a puzzle to illustrate a poem (Mangan's Lament for the Princes of Tir-Owen) [ballad depicting the flight of the Earls in 17th century]. When these things first happened I was terribly startled, and told the whole affair to Rolleston (who came into it in a queer way). I detested telling him, but I had to. I longed to tell you but restrained. I did not see the meaning and drift of it all, but was sure an
explanation would come some day and now the explanation has come. I thought I knew everything when I came up, but it widened and complicated itself til yesterday. I think it would be best to write giving pseudonyms for the people involved, but leaving a key in the hands of respectable people. The chief witness in his own handwriting is T.W.R. [Rolleston] others include Mr. J. Stirling, late of Belfast Chamber of Commerce, Mrs. Wheeler [sister], secretary of Women's Section Ulster Unionist Organization Medical Board U.V.F., my sister Mrs. R. Fox, a rabid imperialist. Mrs. P. Wilson who is an absolute visionary: if I appealed to her she would see things past and present, absent and distant and I would not trust to imagination. Unquestioned, she has come to me and told me wonders. I never breathed a word about this affair to my sisters who are silly about psychical research. All the Unionist Headquarter ladies have been attending lectures on psychical research, and their minds are ripe to be impressed, given an impression and their covenant etc. dissolves into nothingness—Roger Casement's [executed for his part in Rising] personal and political character will be cleared of all suspicion and the Irish national movement will have a leader supported by the people, north and south— the Catholic churches and most likely
The Army (what comes back of it) [WW I soldiers were being conscripted now] If I had related the whole thing 23 years ago to T.W.R. and submitted it to him in writing of years ago, I would probably be thought a lunatic. Will you be able to see me before I go away for about half an hour? Have you a fireproof safe and will you take charge of incriminating documents? Do you remember telling me one vision at Kilternan about 1900? Fire and smoke and battle and after that the face of a stern young man emerging—well my vision twenty three years ago seems to have told me that I would see him at Glasnevin [a cemetery in Dublin], near O'Connell's monument, on the day that a lady was buried who had been drowned and wife to a soldier who had his head shot off. He was to come out of prison (like Red Hugh). I don't intend to put all that in scientific magazine article—but I have enough solid fact foreseen and proved to be foreseen by hostile witnesses to make all the rest credible when I choose to tell it.

Alice

If Milligan gave the "incriminating documents" to AE, they are not among his collection housed in Trinity library. Milligan's psychical interest is reflected in a scene from Dynamite Drummer where she has an American graduate student hold a seance in an attempt to contact
Angus of Og, the Celtic God of love, who she wishes to include in her thesis. Milligan depicts the seance in a farcical tone, having Daniel Webster appear. The group believes they have the spirit of the late orator, only to find they are in the presence of Mark Twain's famous jumping frog who, of course, never lived at all. Angus can not be reached because he is at the end of a long queue. This indicates a skepticism of psychical phenomenon that she expresses in the letter. It also indicates she had an interest in the subject to include it at all. One can only assume something happened between the publishing of Drummer in 1915 and the letter of 1917, to incite her interest. No documentation for or against this thesis has surfaced since her death in 1953.

Very little information regarding Milligan is available after this letter. Newspaper accounts all claim she was disheartened after the division of Ireland and lived the life of a recluse, first with her brother William in Omagh where she became a foundation member of the Ulster Anti-Partition Council. She wrote "A True Story" for the Christmas edition of the Irish Weekly Independent in 1920. One paper, the Cappagh Parish News states "Alice was living in Dublin with her brother for several years prior to 1916 but both of them moved to England when the Easter Rising took place. Later Alice left England and came to Mountfield where she lived for several years" (1977). She
probably resided in Bath, England, as one note in AE's collection said her papers could be found in Omagh and in Bath. This same Parish news also states that Milligan lived in the home of the Boyds in Kells, County Antrim, presumably after William died. Mrs. Maureen Cannon of Donegal retells of visiting Alice Milligan during her stay with the Boyds:

It was cold wintry weather, the snow lay on the ground. Alice wrote to me to say she was feeling depressed, would I go to see her? I had no car at the time, so I arranged with my sister Sheila, who had a car, to spend the weekend with me, so that we could visit her on the Saturday. We set off, and, as we came near Ballymeena, we enquired on how to find Maxwell's Walls. When we mentioned Miss Dobbs and Miss Milligan, folk seemed to smile. Evidently they were regarded as something out of the ordinary in the area. Eventually we reached the house, the home of Miss Dobbs. Alice told us that she had met Frank Dobbs, this lady's brother, at the Abbey Theatre in Dublin. He had said to her, "why don't you go to Annie?" so I came to see Annie and here she was six months later!

The two ladies were quite isolated here. They were both frail, and seemed to have no help in the house, but a man-servant, who served our lunch wearing
an apron made of sacking. They were delighted to have visitors, and had so much to say. The phone kept ringing, ringing, and Alice told me they had asked someone to come to repair it, but no one had arrived. Everything had an appearance of neglect about it—an appearance of "has been." A beautiful damask linen table cloth, but coffee stained, beautiful old, but neglected furniture. I was really sorry for them. She had bought Wellington boots to go out in the snow to collect the eggs. At that time she was writing a play about a bastard son of Hugh O'Neill, who was at school at Eton. She said the nuns at Omagh Convent were going to produce it for her. However, I never heard anything further of that play (correspondence, 1990).

She is said to have continued lecturing on Ireland and its history during this time, giving lectures over RTE and the BBC. Mrs. Cannon and Ben Kiely both retold the story about Milligan being scheduled to give a talk on Ulster Television, but would not enter the building until a Union Jack, waving over the building, was taken down.

This information comes from Omagh natives and includes writer Benedict Kiely, who met Milligan when he was boy growing up in Omagh, and would cycle over to Mountfield where she was living. He recalls his brother giving him a hard time for not finding a girlfriend "with a little less
grey hair." Kiely was impressed with the old woman who was now Dr. Alice Milligan, having a Doctor of Literature degree conferred on her by the National University in Dublin in 1941. Father John McKenna (whose dog was believed to speak Gaelic) took the young Kiely to meet Alice Milligan. When they arrived Father McKenna called out "Alice! Alice! Wherefore art thou, Alice!" Alice Milligan appeared at the door and asked the two if they minded smoke. They said they did not. She invited them into a drawing room that was quickly filling with smoke from a flue which was not drawing properly due to a bird's nest lodged in it. Kiely said his strongest image of Alice Milligan was her old, strong voice calling out while her body disappeared into a mist of smoke. He spent the majority of that first visit with his nose up her chimney and later went to get help (Interview, 1990).

This anecdote illustrates the poverty that Milligan endured during her last years. To help alleviate her situation, friends collected subscription to publish a collection of her poems. The Testimonial reads, in part:

While she is still alive we think something should be done to show our appreciation of her work. We feel there is more definite obligation on us of making to her some return, however slight, for a lifetime's work that brought no income, no royalties,
but left her much poorer in worldly goods. (National Library, 1942)

The testimonial was presented in 1943 at the Tyrone Feis in Omagh. While the collection they sought to produce did not appear until the year after her death, the money raised was given to Father McGlinchey who saw to it Alice Milligan lived as comfortably as possible in her last decade. She died April 13, 1953, and is buried outside Omagh in the family cemetery in Drumragh. The official cause of death of listed as senility.
CHAPTER 2
Milligan as Historian

Milligan's work is more significant now in light of the facts Seamus Deane illuminates regarding the efforts to suppress the nationalist mythology. Milligan was an eye witness to the events being suppressed and now revised. Works that have survived were written by authors who took a more conservative approach to recording the era—authors like William Butler Yeats, whose politics changed and diluted as the era wore on. Milligan held a nationalist tone throughout her life and her message never wavered. Her message is now considered politically incorrect by some major historians, even if historically accurate and truthful.

Conor Cruise O'Brien in Writers and Politics succinctly sums up the message of the literary revivalists while confessing that the effects of the message were unclear:

Their message—they certainly had one—was formally destined for Ireland but its ultimate addressees were, one feels, the cultivated European public: "See what can be done here, with this storehouse of legends, in
contact with this soil and with this unspoiled people," they seemed to say. And much was done: a great theatre was founded, great plays and poems were written, the memories of great lives were left. But as for the effect of the message, literally understood...that is not so clear. (94)

After reading the poems, literature and drama of the revival it is hard to understand what was unclear. The message itself was clear, as O'Brien points out: Ireland had a distinct non-British heritage that would equal any culture in Europe and need no other justification to champion the cause of self-rule. It is the extent of the effect of the message, not the message, that cannot be pinpointed. Perhaps that is because among the leaders of the revival there are mixed messages to be found surrounding the central message.

In Chapter 1 it was noted that Alice Milligan and William Butler Yeats knew each other at least as early as 1894 and, of course, Yeats went on to receive the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1923 while Alice Milligan quickly dropped into obscurity. This is not to suggest a potential nobel laureate was over-looked. Milligan never made any pretenses of literary or universal superiority or excellence. As Mangan pointed out, she rarely, if ever, even redrafted her work. The subject matter of her work has more to do with her disappearance from history than the
quality of her writing. The fact that she was a significant member of a revival that launched Yeats' career is undeniable. As the economic realities of separation from England loomed on the horizon, Yeats pulled away from national rhetoric and Celtic mythology and more into mainstream (non-national) drama and verse as early as 1905, and Alice Milligan did not. Yeats' changing attitude toward nationalism is quoted in Seamus Deane's Celtic Revivals in his chapter on Joyce and Nationalism. Deane explains that the nationalism preached by Patrick Pearse and (the early) Yeats was "a crusade for decontamination . . . to be freed of the infecting Anglicizing virus and thus restored to its primal purity . . . History too could be realized in a new form" through Patrick Pearse's line of heroes: Tone, Emmet, Davis. These men advocated revolution while Yeats preferred Swift, Burke, and Goldsmith (94), writers who preferred working within the established system. Pearse demanded that patriotism needs service; it is not sufficient to say "I believe" unless one can also say "I serve." This ideal of physical service repelled both Joyce and Yeats. Alice Milligan embraced the cause of service even though her sex prevented her from physically serving, as illustrated in her poem "When I Was a Little Girl":

Wished she had been a boy/And a good deal older--
Able to walk for miles/With a gun on her shoulder.

Following is an excerpt from Yeats' diary, seven years before the rising, on March 12, 1909:

There is a sinking of national feeling which is very simple in its origin. You cannot keep the idea of a nation alive where there are no national institutions to reverence, no national success to admire, without a model of it in the mind of the people. You can call it "Cathleen-ni-Houlihan" or the "Shan Van Vocht" in a mood of simple feeling, and love that image, but for the general purposes of life you must have a complex mass of images, making up a model like an architect's. (95)

Yeats seems to downplay the importance of his own work in the nationalist movement, founding a national theatre whose original aim was to bring Irish writing to the stage, a stage he invited Milligan to share with her _Last Feast of the Fianna_. Apparently he did not feel even this to be considered a "national institution" that he professes does not exist; Ireland must strive for more "complex mass of images."

Alice Milligan was not so complex a patriot. She did not look for complex images. She drew her images from the mythological past as brought to textual life by historian
Standish O'Grady and patriotic poet Samuel Ferguson, her historical heroes being the same as Pearse's. She saw her role simply: to bring the history of the Irish race to life in print and on the stage so the Irish may know from whence they came, prior to the arrival of the English. The early Yeats did likewise; he, too, was influenced by the writings of O'Grady and yet he outgrew them. Both Yeats and Milligan strove to convince the Irish they were Celtic before they were colonized by the British. However, Yeats culled a sophisticated, in large part, Anglo audience: those who could afford his books and the leisure time to discuss them. Milligan wrote exclusively for the Irish, a smaller population who could not afford many books. Nowhere does this attitude come across more clearly than in the preface to her biography of eighteenth century patriot Theobold Wolfe Tone:

This little volume is written for the benefit of that numerous class of people in Ireland who cannot afford the luxury of expensive books and who have not access to libraries. It may also perchance fall into the hands of persons of education and culture ignorant of their country's history. We have met with graduates at Trinity College (Tone's own Alma Mater) who knew nothing of him, and men of culture and intelligence in Belfast unaware of his connection with that town. (6)
If you will remember from Chapter 1, her statement rings with a tone similar to her program notes for *The Last Feast of the Fianna*. Nothing in her lifetime convinced her that the educated were any more knowledgable than the everyday Irish person in things national. Milligan published the paperback biography in 1898, the centenary year of Tone's failed rising of 1798, now known as the "Year of the French" (Tone successfully solicited and achieved French assistance in the rising). Milligan was head of the centenary committee celebrating in Belfast. The book sold for 6d (.12) and was published in the office of the *Shan Van Vocht* on George's Street in Belfast. The back two pages carry advertisements for beer and mineral waters as well as a self-advertisement for the *Shan Van Vocht* on the back cover previewing "romances of Irish history dealing with the struggles of the great Gaelic Chieftains in the Elizabethan, Confederate and Jacobite wars."

To begin the analysis of her biography of Wolfe Tone, it should be noted upfront that Alice Milligan is as guilty of partiality as the numerous other historians cited in this text and for much the same reason. This fact only serves to underscore the theory that history is written for a particular audience who hold similar values; as Levi-Strauss said, "history is therefore never history, but history-for." In this instance it is history-for the
poorer, less formally educated Irish, not the better educated English or European audiences Yeats catered to. There is no attempt at objectivity; English concerns are not mentioned or noted, only their brutality. The style of fervid patriotism is so deep at times it could be termed melodramatic. It is not a true scholar. text; it is not referenced nor cited. It relies heavily on the journal of Theobald Wolfe Tone, presumably given to Alice Milligan by Miss Kate A. Maxwell, great granddaughter of Wolfe Tone to whom Milligan dedicates the book. There is also an absence of arrogance: Alice Milligan refers to the text as a "sketch" rather than a "biography" and fully admits to focusing her attention on his two years in France lobbying the French government for financial and military assistance in forming the 1796 rising.

In the preface Milligan immediately reminds her readers that "in olden times" Ireland was a free and civilized country, with a government and judicial system and an education system grand enough to attract princes and scholars. She suggests it was the Irish who brought civilization "to the adjacent island now called Great Britain" by colonial settlement, setting up not only equality between the islands, but proposing a once superior stance. She then elaborates briefly on historical events which led up to and followed the invasion of Ireland by England during the seventeenth century. "Since that time
she [Ireland] has been struggling in the grasp of England—never quieting into perfect submission, never quite breaking free" (3). It is clear by her framework of events that it is perfectly acceptable to conquer intellectually, but not to be conquered in a physical sense. Her justification is that Ireland historically conquered with books and Christianity, England with a sword.

To reenforce the malevolence of English rule over the Irish and to illustrate the need to emulate past patriots' actions, Milligan sprinkles her nationalist ideology in the Wolfe Tone text by glorifying her hero with patriotic diction:

The life that commenced on that midsummer day was one which was to be devoted unselfishly to the saving of the country in which the first heartbeats thrilled, the first breath was drawn. In that hour of darkness, when many deemed that the beacon fire of Freedom had for ever dwindled into nothingness, here like a tiny kindling spark was a soul awakening that ere long would fire it into a living blaze, flaring forth the signal that swords were yet to be unbarred in Erin. (9)

... Courage was inbred in him, as in every one of his kin, and to-day, a hundred years after his death, the Irish race are thanking God that to it was
added, in his case, a heroic, unselfish spirit which led him to devote himself to the cause of his suffering country. He stands supreme as one of the most dangerous foes that ever threatened the existence of England's rule in Ireland. (10)

While the majority of the text offers a factual account of his schooling, marriage, and his efforts in France, Milligan offers no information on how England rose from mythological times when Ireland was the more highly civilized country to where, by the seventeenth century, it was seen by England as highly uncivilized. To do so would have been to sabotage her efforts to convince the Irish population they were at least as civilized as their oppressor through reminders of an ancient glorious past, not a past sprinkled with famine, disease and emigration. No small feat considering the English influence via propaganda and modernization had effectively convinced them they were not. The British policies suggested that Irish sufferings were caused by "Acts of God" and not misrule or uncaring agricultural mismanagement. It cannot be over emphasized that during this historical period "the sun never set on the English empire" and a great many of the Irish wanted to be considered part of that empire and its glory, not the famine stricken nation of only a generation past. Thus, the phrase "West Briton" came into being to describe this latter Irish attitude of colonial allegiance.
Milligan strove to foster a "courageous" attitude, to reject English rule and the industrial modernization that would also instill English attitudes and morals even further upon a people that were inherently different and to illustrate and embrace those differences via a glorious past, a past that was constantly being repressed by the lure of advancing modernization.

O'Brien describes the political and emotional paradox of the time Alice Milligan was writing:

If I have stressed the fact that to many contemporaries nothing very important seemed to be going on in Ireland between 1891 and 1910, I have done so precisely because many important things were going on, and because these important things cannot be understood unless we feel also something of the weight of indifference against which they were working. . . . There was an unusual amount of mental activity, an unusual degree of intensity and self-dedication in the minds, certainly not of the people as a whole, but of quite sizeable groups of people. (88)

. . . The revivalists sought in Ireland the kind of dignity and the kind of health that the industrialized world, the modern world, had lost. . . . But as for the effect of the message, literally understood, upon the first Abbey audiences, those guinea pigs of archaism, that is not so clear. We can
hardly be surprised if the poor creatures occasionally, maddened by confusing signals, turned and bit the fingers of the demonstrator. (94)

... National history--especially the history of peripheral literatures--tend to distort. They distort because of their inherent need to eliminate what is apparently irrelevant to the continuity of the subject. A large part of the eliminated area is the context that affected all the various phases of the subject's existence: the general political, economic and military situation at any given moment. A history current in the literature of a peripheral country is particularly exposed to this danger of distortion; that does not mean that such a history is not worth undertaking. (104)

Given O'Brien's explanation of the mixed signals the Irish were enduring during this time (i.e., modernization will bring prosperity and jobs while the educated also knew modernization would bring slums and disease) the literary revival can be seen to re-establish the concepts not only that Ireland's past rural lifestyle was honorable, for example as depicted by the glorification of the peasant life in Synge's work, but also that the sanctity of an Irish life needed to be preserved, albeit one without modern conveniences. In order to fight the lure of factory work and indoor plumbing (made in England), distortion was
inevitable. Given these facts it is not surprising that
the rural areas were always the stronghold of the
nationalist movement and it was these people that Alice
Milligan strove to reach. It was necessary to downplay any
advantage English colonialism might bring in order to
continue to convince the Irish population that self-rule,
no matter how poverty-stricken it may look when compared to
the modernizing world, was still better than being second
class citizens to a ruler who would always exploit the
ruled.
CHAPTER 3

Fiction as History

With the political considerations explored and Alice Milligan's task laid out, it is more easily understood why Milligan chose to recreate the past to explain to a largely uneducated audience the dangers of imperial powers. She wanted to remind the Irish that the horrors of the past could, and logically would, reappear in a different form. To do so Milligan wrote a play, *The Daughter of Donagh*, to remind the Irish of the initial English invasion and the disastrous effects it had on the native Catholics and other non-puritans and how the Ascendancy came into power, which has an additional effect of explaining how the Irish lost their own political power. She strove to convince her audience that Irish sufferings were historically at the hands of the English who propagandized that they were "improving" the land and people by their interventions. The play was not produced on a stage; it was serialized in *The United Irishman*, a nationalist newspaper, during December, 1903. It was published in book form in 1920. The fact that it was not a stage production did not limit its appeal during this time. As mentioned earlier, the
audience Milligan worked to reach were those to whom theatre was not readily available, and while they could not afford many books, almost everyone read newspapers. This, in effect, had the outcome of reaching and influencing far more in print than she ever could have with a stage production.

The Daughter of Donagh is based on historical fact, as is the Wolfe Tone text. However, the Cromwellian wars, which preceded the Wolf Tone rising by one hundred years, were so wrought with horror and slaughter there was little need to embellish the tale with excessive patriotic fervor. Milligan chronicles the life of one Irish family during a epoch of history often excluded in history texts. What is interesting about this play is that it is presented through the eyes of one victim, a woman, who has witnessed the hanging of her father for not forfeiting his Ulster lands before the "last day of grace" (May 1). In doing so, Milligan succeeds in bringing to an Irish audience a perspective each member could relate to: how one family dealt with the destruction of their lives through English colonialism. Her tone is far more moderate and educative than in the Wolfe Tone text, as illustrated in her introductory notes:

In the following Drama the Author aims at realizing the facts of a historical epoch, and its result on Irish life and politics since then till now. The
following edicts in connection with the Cromwellian settlement give a basis to the plot.

First—That Irish landowners forfeited their lands and were banished before a certain date named the last day of grace. Neglecting to transplant before then they were liable to be hanged.

Second—Cromwellian soldier settlers marrying Irish women forfeited their lands and became liable to transplantation.

Third—The labouring classes were allowed to remain and serve the settlers.

Fourth—Outlawed soldiers, landowners who had refused to transplant, and other vagrants hiding in bogs and mountains were denounced as Tories and hunted down, a price being set on their heads, as also on the heads of wolves and priests.

The historical accuracy of her introduction is verified in R. F. Foster's Modern Ireland 1600-1972:

. . . the agricultural labouring population also remained; all in all, the pattern of replacement was far less total than its architects had hoped. Summing up in 1659, Henry Cromwell (brother of Oliver Cromwell the conqueror) wrote:

There are many deficiencies of lands to adventurers, soldiers, and to persons transplantable by virtue of decrees, many
public debts and engagements mentioned in the said act for satisfaction, besides what other public engagements lie upon the Commonwealth to be discharged thereout, which were contracted in the redeeming and reducing this poor land from the enemies thereof. (113)

Foster used town corporation documents to determine land holdings during this time:

. . . Ex-Cromwellian officers predominate in town corporations from the 1650s and become prominent in the landlord class of the Restoration era. The lottery system of allocation distributed the new settlers throughout Ireland. . . . And as in Ulster, the old inhabitants often stayed on as tenants. (112)

Regarding the validity of the atrocities committed by the Cromwellian army Foster admits:

. . . As with later wartime outrages, the argument was proffered that such tactics saved lives in the long run by acting as scare tactic; but this, too, has the tone of an ex post facto rationalization. Certainly, the supposed atrocities of 1641 were frequently invoked in extenuation; and one of the uncontested events of that year had been the massacre of a garrison at
Augher after their submission. . . . By the late summer resistance was restricted to guerrilla bands living a "tory existence." (102-03)

The term "tory" is explained in a footnote: it derives from the Irish word "toraidhe" and was used from the mid 1640s for the banditti remnants of Irish armies and was later used satirically for political outlaws.

A fact exposed in the plot was the exportation of Irish as slaves to the West Indies. Foster objectively footnotes this as follows:

The Irish population of 1650 is hard to estimate. It has certainly dropped; 34,000 soldiers emigrated, and others were conscripted or sold abroad. "Slave hunts" certainly happened, though their extent has been exaggerated; there were possibly 12,000 Irish in the West Indies by the late 1660s. (107)

Foster explains the English rationale for the choice of site location for the evicted Irish and the methodology behind the actions:

Connacht and Clare were the designated areas for transplantation of proprietors who forfeited their lands elsewhere; they were to be settled within a cordon sanitaire imposed by the Shannon and the sea. The reasons for choosing this area were strategic, not economic; Uls:er, not
Connacht, was still considered the poorest province. Early ideas of a total clearance were abandoned, not for reasons of humanity as much as because of the difficulty of attracting an English yeomanry to replace the evicted peasants. But the notion of radically removing the previous owners was in many ways a new development in the plantation idea. (110)

Finally, Foster elaborates on Milligan's central purpose in writing the drama, that history often omits what it wants forgotten:

This history of Ireland in the ensuing decade of Cromwellian rule has often been passed over, by historians and even by reflective contemporaries, for political reasons as well as lack of evidence. It was for many an interlude more tactfully forgotten. (103)

Milligan locates our vision in the particular, showing us a domestic scene in the household of victims. Until the play is reprinted, we need to content ourselves with a synopsis the drama. It opens in the rural Ulster farm home of Donagh Cavanagh who had fought with the Irish against the Cromwellian forces and is nursing his daughter, Onora, back to health. His wife has recently died of the same fever that has stricken his daughter. The time of year is spring. Donagh has lost track of the days and is worried
that the last day of grace has passed and he will be caught on his land and his daughter will be discovered by the soldier who has been given his land. Donagh has been given until the first day of May to bury his wife and vacate; he made no mention of his sick daughter because he feared she would be sent to Barbadoes as a slave. Even in the midst of eviction and transplantation, Milligan presents the indelible Irish spirit, as illustrated in the following dialogue:

DONAGH: Is it not to Connacht we will go, Onora.

ONORA: Not to Connacht? I thought it was ordered so by the Parliament.

DONAGH: What is ordered by the law is not always what is done, not in Ireland. There are some who have defied the law. Up there in the glen of the Galtees they live the outlaw's life, soldiers and gentlemen, comrades of my own are there. The planters shall yet know of them to their own cost.

ONORA: Ah! father dear, and so your fighting days are not yet over?

DONAGH: Not while there is life in me, and a land left to fight for. (8)

This exchange sets up the political and moral lines drawn in the evolving drama. Donagh knows if he is caught on the land there will be no fight. He will be hanged.
Given this, his patriotic ideals are passed on for the last time to his only heir, ensuring that even after his death the fight will continue. Realizing the soldiers will come soon, he instructs Onora to hide in a secret passage within the house should anything happen and to follow the stream up to the mountain where the Tories are hidden. Within minutes Cromwellian soldiers led by Gabriel Fairfax and a jealous neighbor, Simon Kincaid, approach the house. The jealousy of Kincaid over Fairfax's larger share of land serves within the plot to illustrate the larger political reality of countries coveting neighboring lands, and it is pivotal to the plot because his inherent suspicion leads to Fairfax's later downfall into Onora's vengeful hands.

The soldiers pound on the door, demanding "In the name of the Parliament of England, open, I say" (10). They break down the door and find only Donagh. Fairfax recites the legal rationale for seizing the property:

And now, my friends, let all that is done be in conformity with law and justice. Irishman! We have not come into this your house, nor did Cromwell and our army come into this your land for plunder and conquest merely. I have come as he came, to execute justice, and to maintain law. Your nation stands accused, aye, and convicted of foul rebellion, cruel massacre, and impious idolatry. As Gideon went against the Philistine, as Joshua among the
Canaanites, was the coming of our Lord Protector [Cromwell] into this land. And as Canaan was shared amongst the Israelites, this land has been divided amongst our army. This house and land have fallen to my lot. (12)

The purpose of this speech is to reiterate the logic behind the Cromwellian invasion: to suppress the rebellion against the plantation owners and to bring puritan ethics to the majority Catholics. They were stealing fair and square. Religious supremacy is cited and biblical precedent is used to justify punishing "sinners" who Milligan portrays as religious martyrs. Here, as now, sectarianism is a convenient guise for dividing and conquering. Fairfax removes Donagh from his home, and Onora comes out of hiding and watches her father hang from a nearby tree, the legal puritan penalty for defying the transplantation order.

Onora does as instructed and runs up the mountain where she is found by a rebel soldier Seaghan "frightened and shedding tears." Her frightened state appears at first glance as a normal womanly response; but as the play progresses Onora's transformation from helpless female to avenging angel is chronicled to serve as an example, not just to the other characters, but for modern audiences as well. Seaghan carries her to the Tory camp where her father's name is known among the soldiers and respected.
The soldiers offer their swords for her command and revenge. There are also women in the camp, complaining of their harsh existence, chastising one another for not being grateful for escaping the puritans. One of the women, Cathlin, is fond of Maurice, who has fallen completely for "Lady" Onora, much to Cathlin's dismay. Allegiances are important among the men and the women, as the men hunt for food, and having no man could signal starvation, again underscoring that allegiance to the stronger signifies survival. In addition, it is an example of the apparent helplessness of women during the takeover, whose position was less than the men in that they are dependent upon them for survival. With this hierarchy in place, Seaghan attempts to woo Onora by kissing her and saying "You shall never want a supper while I live, lady, should I bring it cooked from the Puritan's table" (23).

A triangle soon develops between Maurice, a Tory soldier loyal to the Catholic Stuarts who have just lost power in England in favor of Cromwell (recently named Lord Protector), and Seaghan, the Irish rebel, who also wants Onora. Maurice's English loyalties keep him in the company of outlawed Irish rebels awaiting the return of the Catholic Stuarts to power in England. The dynamics of this triangle illustrates the entire region was politically unstable at this time, both in England and Ireland, and also how quickly allegiances can change. He, too, wishes
to woo the lovely Onora and promises his sword for her vengeance. But Onora cannot think of love; she informs him "Indeed, I do not think I love you yet. I have been dreaming of revenge, not love—I have been dreaming of revenge" (25). In doing so, Onora depicts placing loyalty above all things, even survival, and thus, sets an example for all.

The state of the Catholic church at this time is depicted by the introduction of an outlawed priest, Father Michael, who is forced to dress as a beggar to avoid punishment by hanging for the offense of practicing his religion. He offers Christmas mass to the outlaws, reminding us of the survival of the Catholic faith during its darkest hour. Maurice is overjoyed by the sight of him as now he has the opportunity to have Onora marry him by the priest's blessing. Onora protests: "What, against my will! Without my word of promise! This is a soldier's wooing" (31). Onora's protest is significant in that it lays the background for her eventual revenge against Captain Fairfax. If she must marry against her will, the only "profession" (aside from convent work) open to women at this time, then she will only so disadvantage herself to avenge her father. The priest gives her a plan while sitting around the fire offering hopeful news to the outlaws:
Their plantation cannot outlast a generation. They are nearly all wifeless. The English women fear to come to the wilds of Ireland. Wifeless, childless, without heirs to inherit, they shall be blotted out from our midst. (33)

Maurice remarks that no Irish woman would fill that gap willingly, to which the priest responds it is forbidden by law and yet has happened. He explains how a handsome Irish woman stole a planted soldier's heart, the soldier hides her Irish Catholic background and is later transplanted along with his bride to Connaught. The greatest irony of all is the invader having to survive in the midst of the invaded. Onora inquires if the woman could have tricked the soldier for the purpose of vengeance, to which Maurice replies "Impossible. No woman's mind could devise such a trick. No woman's heart consent to it" (33). Onora informs Maurice "Yet, what men achieve by their weapons, women must with their wits. It may have been a cunning trick of the woman's" (34).

Maurice again insists on Onora's promise to marry him, and when she asks what will he do to avenge her father he replies he will travel to the Court of France and seek assistance so that the King (Charles Stuart, who has been beheaded--unknown to the rebels) will rule again. She refuses him, stating: "My father fought against your King. He fought for Ireland always, for Ireland only, against
both Crown and Parliament. Your sword, Sir Maurice, is pledged to right that King. It cannot avenge my rebel father" (35). It is interesting to note that the historical use of England's natural enemies by Ireland, France and later Germany, is emphasized and reemphasized in Milligan's work.

Later that night Onora makes her decision. In a soliloquy reiterating her weakness as a woman, she vows to avenge her father by wooing Captain Fairfax. She is full of doubt in her ability to do so. She musters her courage by focusing on her hate for the oppressor with his "cold, cruel eyes and harsh, taunting voice" (37). She must go that night or never, leaving behind "all thoughts of love and happy life. My father's memory, my country's woes, wronged Ireland's woes, inspire me. I go in quest of vengeance" (38).

Milligan has taken great pains to show the frailty of women whose lot is a subservient role in an outlaw's existence—the shortest straw of all. This is juxtaposed against the role women were playing during the time of the writing of this drama. While women did not yet have the vote to change political policies, they participated, as Milligan did, in arenas where they could. Here, in the seventeenth century, they worked by marriage, but by the nineteenth century women participated by organizing along national lines in the arts, by publishing, or by working
within organizations that promoted nationalist causes such as the Gaelic League or the Daughters of Erin. Just as the Shan Van Vocht, a nationalist organ run by just two women, made a political difference, women's role in the movement is personified by Onora's quest to avenge her father's death because the men are impotent to do so. She illustrates the importance of individual efforts while waiting out more collective efforts.

As Onora explained to Maurice, Milligan, like Onora, resorted to her wits to seek vengeance against the oppressors. Milligan drove home the point to her audience that if men's efforts fail, women, historically, are available to take up the cause. In this sense Milligan is advocating a feminist stance, and indeed she held friendships with known feminists of the day, namely Alice Stepford Green, Maude Gonne McBride and Hanna Sheehy Skeffington, the latter of whom ran messages under fire to and from the GPO for Pearse during the week long siege in Dublin.

Perhaps it was Milligan's friendship with Maude Gonne which helped to influence the marital theme that encircles this drama. Gonne's well documented rejection of Yeats' various marriage proposals on the grounds that he was not nationalistic enough, despite his various political poses, is identical to the rejection of Maurice by Onora. Maurice may be a soldier in Ireland, but his loyalties are
still with England. So, too, with Yeats, as his largest audience were the English. While it may have no actual bearing on this discussion, it is interesting to note at this point that Milligan herself never married; it cannot be determined if this was a decision made by fate or conviction. If it was the latter, then it could be concluded that Milligan believed if one is to be destroyed by marriage, then a marriage that would help to destroy even one oppressor's spoils would be worth the sacrifice.

The message of sacrifice is clear to the audience who would not help but identify with the weakened condition of Ireland--so often personified as a woman, Yeats' Cathleen ni Hoolihan and Milligan's Onora. The difference is that Yeats uses Cathleen's beauty to inspire soldiers to the aid of Ireland, while Milligan has Onora taking on the quest herself. Yeats used the mask of womanly beauty as symbol of insurrection; Milligan uses flesh and blood of women who serve rather than personify the image of service: real versus surreal participation.

Onora's plan works in large part because Fairfax's betrothed, Phyllis Gwynn, refuses to leave England due to reports of rebels still inflicting destruction on claimed lands. Fairfax has busied himself in a melancholic state by reading Milton's works on divorce, which he heartily advocates, and brooding on horseback through the woods and fields. The state of the Irish peasants left to serve
their new masters is exemplified by the servants Teig and Maurya. They are ordered about and treated as simpletons by Fairfax's lazy servant Hosea, who refers to them as "these dogs of Irish" (41) and who reminds the melancholy Fairfax that there are "Tories to hunt, and hang, wolves to shoot, priests to trap" (42), which seemingly would illustrate a typical day in the life of a planted soldier.

During Fairfax's wanderings in the wood he hears a lovely voice singing and catches glimpses of a beautiful woman—which is obviously Onora whom the peasants Teig and Maurya have been hiding since her departure from the camp. Fairfax questions Teig on the native superstitions about fairies, asking if they are beautiful and inhabit the woods by day or by night. Teig, realizing he must have spotted Onora, insists it is dangerous to seek them, as folklore describes a man held captive by the "Duine Sidhe" for ten years for just looking upon one. The Captain responds that it must be ten years of bliss and "If you should see a fairy in the woods, tell her, say I have said, it is not safe for other men to see her. There are dangers. Fairies should walk only beside the brook, in the blackthorn copse after sunset, and if I see a fairy there she need not flee from me" (46). It is obviously a thinly disguised message Fairfax wants to send through Teig to inform the woman she need not fear him and he wants to meet with her.
Fairfax begins a soliloquy acknowledging that the woman must be an exile in hiding and professing his need for what Virginia Woolf describes as an "angel in the house" when he says "If only I could have her here for ever beside me, shining in this lonely house like one of heaven's angels" (47). This wish for a communion with the natives bespeaks Milligan's own desire and belief that planted persons could embrace the "angelic" qualities of the Irish as personified here by Onora, rather than the judicial edicts which govern the forbiddance of it, guidelines the planters are sworn to follow.

Fairfax resorts to the bible to help him sort out his mixed emotions:

Eden was never rightly paradise until woman was created. . . . Is the thought sin? Is it mere human weakness that I should conquer? She is doubtless Irish, therefore an idolator, and the Scripture tells us how the judgment of heaven smote down the Israelites who loved the daughters of the heathen. But then--ah, then--even in the same scripture we read of Ruth. She was a Midianite, and from her espousal to an Israelite sprang the house of David (47).

Here Milligan illustrates how religious dogma can be twisted to suit the needs of the religious.

Fairfax's jealous neighbor Kincaid attempts to match Fairfax up with his niece Unity Kincaid, but Fairfax is not
only not interested, he is rude to her reminding her how wild the area still is. Kincaid has also brought his wife and a minister. In this scene the materialistic attitude of acquisition in the puritan ethic is illustrated when Kincaid's wife and Unity peek about the cupboards and bins of Fairfax's house, checking on what household goods exist should Fairfax consent to the marriage. Fairfax further insults them by not escorting the party to the Kincaid home, preferring to go walk in the woods, obviously to seek out Onora.

Onora and Maurya are in the woods talking. Maurya tells Onora of the visit and Onora fears her plans are crumbling even though Teig has passed on the message from Fairfax. While she ruminates, Fairfax approaches her. He questions her if she knows the penalty for not transplanting and she admits she does. He then asks: "If they find you, how shall I save you, lady? Indeed, indeed, I would do much to save you" (54). He begins to tell her of a plan he has and explains that if she has the wit and spirit he believes she does, she should play the part of his English betrothed, Phyllis Gwynn, who comes from near the Welsh border and sounds not totally unlike Onora. Onora could take her name and live in safety with him. He suggests she stay with the minister until the wedding. Gabriel seals his fate in the following exchange:
ONORA: Your wife? I am a stranger; you do not know my name.

GABRIEL: I do not ask it, for I am fain to give you a new name, a new faith, and a new country.

By not asking the name of this daughter of Donagh Cavanagh, his last hope of recognizing the trap laid for him is lost. He is soon to find a double trap because he has insulted his neighbors by rejecting Kincaid's niece, Unity, for a wife, whose protective uncle would look unfavorably on any other woman. Onora will not hold up to much scrutiny, as Fairfax neglects to realize. Onora agrees to the wedding, telling him it is a better fate than being sent into slavery. Fairfax is made out to look quite foolish, but there was no record of any children living in the Cavanagh house, so he has no overt reason to suspect she is not telling the truth.

It is interesting to note that, traditionally, a wedding is light-hearted event—a day of joy. Milligan turns tradition upside-down by having the wedding actually represent a trail of the oppressor. On the day of the wedding at the minister's house Kincaid tells the minister of his suspicions that Onora is a "papist." The minister forbids Kincaid to say anything to his wife or she will forbid the marriage. The Minister does not believe Kincaid's accusations. Kincaid does not want her faith discovered until after the marriage, as he stands to claim
Fairfax's soon-to-be forfeited lands. Everyone is busy unknowingly sowing the seeds of destruction with Unity Kincaid creating the wedding dress Onora wears. While alone Onora decides the wedding feast would be the time to reveal her true identity. Teig and Maurya no longer speak to her, not knowing of her plans. They believe she is attempting to better herself. In fortifying her courage she ends her soliloquy thus:

I, a woman, will do this, though I suffer anguish. And Ireland's sons--will they do less? No! The day will come when in their wrath and courage they will rise and drive forth the English alien--the oppressor.

(59)

The next to the last scene begins after the solemn puritan wedding has taken place and they are now married. The guests are all high-ranking officials in the area. They eat and give toasts to the health of Cromwell and then the Parliament. A political discussion ensues with the wisdom of killing the King. The conversation then turns to local affairs where a battle is announced with the band of Tories in the hills. Those who survived have been transplanted to the Burren in County Clare where the President declares "You will not find there water enough to drown a man, wood enough to hang him, nor earth enough to bury him in. The place is fit for the rebels" (62). Onora is very upset by this news and Fairfax has to remind her to
be quiet, lest she give herself away. He reminds his company this is a wedding feast and not a council of war, asking the conversation to turn to more pleasant thoughts.

Kincaid insists on continuing the grim discussion, telling of a priest who approached him disguised a workman; but after searching him he found evidence of his calling and "I acted on the letter of the law. I hanged him" (63), looking directly at Onora. With this news Onora can not contain herself and begins to wail "He hanged the holy father! The saintly, innocent man. Oh! blessed martyrs, another is added to your number--another from persecuted Ireland" (63). After this outburst where "Phyllis" is considered mad, Kincaid interjects she is not mad, but Irish.

After the commotion of the discovery concludes with everyone feigning ignorance, even Fairfax tries to say she betrayed him, but after his long engagement it is obvious he was aware that this woman is not the Phyllis to whom he was engaged. After pleading for a divorce and citing Milton, he begs his lands not be forfeited as it was his only pay for ten years of service. With this said Onora's heart hardens. If he had accepted his punishment she could have pitied him, but not now. As the wedding has brought together the legal principals of the area, the President announces "We will have a formal trial for justice's sake. It will be brief" (64).
That woman is a Papist and Irish born. Write, it is not denied. You, Captain Gabriel Fairfax, have married her. Write the names of all here as witnesses. The crime is proved, and now comes the sentence. Stand forth, take your wedded wife by the hand. She is already sentenced, and proscribed to slavery over the sea for not transplanting. I might send you with her to the Barbadoes; but there are settlers there, staunch Puritans. I will not send you there, nor her. But since you have chosen to link yourself with this idolator of the Irish race, I sentence you to go and live among them. You shall go across the Shannon into the wastes of Connacht, and further into Arran in the Atlantic sea. Your confiscated land shall be divided amongst the neighbouring planters. (64)

The only difference between the trials and crimes of Donagh Cavanagh and Captain Fairfax is that Fairfax escapes with his life. In both cases colonial justice is swift and unmerciful, delivered at the hands of "Christians." But what type of life waits Fairfax living among people he personally helped to put there? He consoles himself by comparing his lot ironically with Adam and Eve's, believing Onora will yet reward him with her love and gratitude.
The last scene opens with the remaining Tories of the mountains nearing the end of their own journey into exile, where at the shores of the Shannon they must have their papers examined by the governing authorities before crossing the Shannon. The Boatman basks in Cromwell's wisdom of not slaughtering all of the inhabitants, extolling their value:

We have them to do all menial and tedious labour, and can so spare more time in the exercise of arms to keep them in subjection. Who comes here? Two others I suppose, of the same party, that have lagged behind. The woman looks pale and weary. The man, of a verity, is of an English and more Christian aspect. (66)

Of course this is Onora and Fairfax arriving shortly after the mountain rebels. The discourse makes it clear, even from a distance, that anyone looking on Fairfax will spot him for what he is, an English soldier. Before Fairfax can go to the Fort for processing, he needs to know Onora's real name. She tells him it is better that he not know, so that he can then honestly swear to his ignorance. Fairfax complains about a change in her, how cold she has been to him since their marriage and journey. He informs her she will "learn from me the meek and loving behavior due from a wife to her lord and husband, and at the outset you must obey me in this" (68). She agrees to tell him, but only
after he returns from the Fort. After he leaves, Onora talks to herself, considering her situation:

He pleaded that he has given up all for me. That was not so. All was taken from him against his will; if he could have done it he would have had his marriage declared invalid. I need not pity him—and yet—and yet this seems a cruel thing I have to do. What will he say? How will he look when I tell him that all I did was done for vengeance? (68)

This passage is particularly significant because here both the female conscience and awareness of the consequences of her actions are brought out in a remarkably realistic form. Rather than take pleasure in her vengeance, her inherent humanity prevents this traditionally masculine view of the situation. Onora allows compassion for both sides of the conflict to enter the play at this point. We know Fairfax has feelings for her, but these are not feelings of compassion, rather feelings of sexual attraction. Here Onora is rising above the horror that surrounds her and ponders real justice: how far is right divided from wrong? Onora, representing Ireland personified in human form, must answer the much asked question: Do two wrongs make a right? Is punishing Fairfax regaining anything for Ireland after all? She has realized no personal satisfaction with her vengeance. Her father's lands are now in Simon
Kincaid's hands; she is headed toward barren lands and is bereft.

When Onora's old friends return from the Fort she hides her face in a shawl and, while recognizing their voices, does not call to them. Cathlin, feeling pity for the grieving creature, gives her name and her husband's, Capt. Maurice, and she is welcome to visit them in Clare, Ireland's budding stronghold of evicted residents. Seaghan is among them and is told to wait behind with the next load. Seaghan is told of who he will be travelling with and recognizes the name of the soldier who received Donagh's land and vows to kill him still. Onora stops him and reveals her plot and asks him to watch its consummation. She asks him to take her away after to "some desert cell, where I may take a vow of poverty, and of life-long celibacy--for I must never know the joy of wifely love. I have used the sacred vows of marriage sinfully, falsely, God forgive me" (70). Seaghan tells her she is the bravest woman in Ireland.

Gabriel, standing at the shore, calls for Onora to have the boat brought near him. He utters possibly the most poignant line in the play "The river is deep and wide between us. Too far for me to cross." Onora answers "tell me, can you not see there is a deeper gulf between us, between your race and mine? The billows of it are red. Yes, they are red with the blood of victims and martyrs"
Gabriel pleads for better or for worse, and Onora tells him who she is, explaining that her existence was hidden, when he at first does not believe her. Now he laments his total grief and ruin, crying "houseless, landless, homeless," sharing the fate of the evicted Irish. Seaghan takes Onora up river toward Clare telling her of the songs and poems that will be written for her of her brave deeds and vengeance. The thought does not console her. She offers the audience the final say on the subject of vengeance:

Victory! Triumph, Ah! Seaghan, you do not understand. The sword of vengeance is so fashioned that it must wound the wielder of it. I took that heavy weapon into my weak hand. I took it willingly, and, as you see, have executed judgment—righteous judgment—he weeps, he suffers, and I, who, for his sins, have been the dealer of punishment—shall suffer while I live. (73)

Onora's final words "shall suffer while I live" reinforce the theme of thwarted generic expectation. Love does not conquer all—there is no "happily ever after." This is not Romeo and Juliet: death is not a viable option; living with the realities of changing politics is.

No doubt Milligan wanted to leave her readers with this consequence of colonialism: even the conquerors will suffer ultimately. You can not cause suffering without it
coming back upon your own house, especially if the home was stolen to begin with. The entire plot is set up so there is little room for misunderstanding. Good and bad are portrayed distinctly; however, it is evident that the term "spoils" applies to both victor and victim.
Alice Milligan's last novel *The Dynamite Drummer* takes a completely different turn in style from her previous works. Ten years have passed since *The Daughter of Donagh*; at the time of writing—1913—the world is involved in a multinational war and Home Rule has been approved by the English parliament, but shelved until after the war. This particular period in Irish history sets the stage for the rationale behind the reasons why partition was granted after 1922, perhaps the most confusing to understand. This text, co-written with her brother W. H. Milligan, of whom almost nothing is known, illustrates what was transpiring in Ulster just prior to the 1916 Rising. The farcical tone the novel takes is such a departure from Alice Milligan's traditional flag-waving seriousness, it is quite possible she had, by this time, re-evaluated her approach to the audience and opted for satire to continue her nationalist goals. Milligan may have been attracted to this approach believing that a softer and yet still thickly national flavor could be combined to reach a greater audience who undoubtedly were feeling freedom was merely
the war's end away. Milligan, living in the north, realized freedom from English rule was not going to be agreed to by the majority of northerners without a fight. This, is the basis for her plot.

Looking at this novel with hindsight, it appears both Milligans were foreshadowing the turmoil soon to transpire in the North. Living there, they were very much aware of Unionist feelings toward Home Rule, regardless of England's final approval and the North's threats to fight it to the bitter end, even to the point of setting up a separate parliament. The text takes place all over the island, but the majority of events transpire in the north between Donegal and Belfast.

The source for farce and comedy revolves around the novel's main character Telemachus (or "Tel") DuQuesne, an Americanized form for Kane in his ancestral home near Donegal. His family immigrated to Oshkosh, Wisconsin, where he was born and is a member of the Wapiti Elks lodge. He is a dynamite drummer (salesman) for DuPratt's and has been found to be his uncle Barney Kane's only living relative. Barney has recently met his demise, without leaving a will, dying at the hands of a 60 pound monster pike while fishing near his village in Tubbernesk.

With this barest summary of plot in hand, it is immediately clear that the Milligans are attempting to set up what David Krause calls "the comic denial of
expectations" in his *The Profane Book of Irish Comedy*. He elaborates:

Irish comedy is based on what might be called an oxymoronic view of life: losers can be winners; vices can be virtues; folly can be wisdom. This paradoxical approach to dramatic laughter thrives on contradictions and exaggerations that allow the comic characters to insulate themselves from the inevitable villanies of the world . . . The audience [or readers] are temporarily alienated or liberated from its baggage of received ideas and preconditioned feelings by a cathartic denial of expectations. (256) Americans, historical allies of Ireland, appear to be helping hands to the "villains," Orangemen of the North who are plotting resistance and making plans of war and gathering armaments. A good deed will be perceived as a "bigamist act," level-headed people seek out the dead, giant fish walk on land and the scenes of Ireland pass by the windows of a full-to-overflowing American Mercedes touring car. Outrageous as it all sounds, by the end, all misconceptions are cleared up, the alternating hero and antihero, Tel, is vindicated of any wrong doings, his folly making Ireland somewhat safer from the Orange threat by helping to expose it. In the course of this mixing of misunderstanding, readers get an individual look at how bigotry operates, even if on a farcical level.
Believability never completely leaves the realm of possibility. The point is made that all is rarely what it appears at first glance.

The Milligans use the eyes of the American protagonist, Tel, though he is the confused interpreter of events; but the tale is told throughout in third person. The naivety of the Americans is effectively used without insult to illustrate the inherent ignorance of outsiders to Ireland's political situation, and it also affords Alice Milligan the opportunity to have the characters visit local areas of Irish interest and describe these scenes and events in great detail. As with all her work, much of the material in the book is factual, particularly when dealing with the local politicians who enter into the story. Unionist leaders of the day, circa 1913, were in Belfast as she places them, in that month, in that year making plans to resist the advent of Home Rule.

To get the flavor of the novel a synopsis of the storyline is in order. The text opens in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, where Tel is packing to go to Donegal to meet with lawyers and settle the estate. News of political uprising in Ireland is known to the DuQuesnes, and Tel's wife, Helena, is concerned for his safety. She decides not to accompany him after a letter from a Derry lawyer revealed:
Ulster's humming like a hive of angry bees with warlike preparations. Edward Carson's [Union leader in parliament] on the warpath right e-nough; his army's ready to take the field, and bloody revolution may break out at any moment. (5)

The couple's ignorance is illustrated by the fact they have no idea who the dreaded Orangemen will fight and Tel promises that if he sees an Orangeman he'll "hop it for the tall timber instanter, without attempting to argue matters over" (6). However, he assures his wife if he should come across one he will let him say his piece and if it looks like trouble he will whistle "Dolly's Brae," a unionist song about a party fight that is sung by others later in the novel. He leaves promising his wife that "if I do come across an Orangeman, I'll double-cross him somehow" (9), thus foreshadowing the main plot of the story: it will appear that Telemachus willingly sells a large order of Dynamite to the Orange leaders during the week of July 12. As such, his loyalties are questioned from that early point on.

Tel arrives in Tubbernesk examining his newly inherited fifty acres, fishing lodge plus lake, where the famous uncle-eating pike resides, called "piasht" by the locals. Piasht is asterisked in the text as "monster" in Irish. While surveying the property Tel meets his neighbor and local landlord, Colonel Saunders-Martyn, who will
introduce him to other local Orangemen through the newly established Ulster Provisional government. Tel mentions that he is a dynamite drummer and Martyn realizes his potential value—considering the local crisis. At their initial meeting they discuss Tel's desire to blow up the fish with dynamite; the Colonel advises against this action, however, informing him "You'd be ostracized, tabooed, and boycotted, to say nothing of what the pike himself might do to you. No use running your head against a stone wall, and getting up against the prejudices of the people the minute you arrive" (23). This, too, foreshadows the inherent "prejudices" of the people of the area and what might happen should you try to rid them of it. Tel is not convinced by local superstitions.

Tel finds an Oshkosh friend and fellow Wapiti Elk, Mac McGillcuddy, in Derry; he is in Ireland visiting his grandmother. Mac serves as Tel's sidekick and alter ego throughout the novel. Together they poke around Derry, giving Milligan the opportunity to relate some history regarding the siege of Derry in 1798. Together they meet the Rev. Erasmus Ebenezer McClurg, D.D., who is in Ireland recruiting emigrants for Canada. His role alternates between comic relief and boogie-man, representing early 20th century English immigration to Canada; his cause is hopeless in Ireland as the Irish historically prefer America rather than Canada, the Atlantic West Britain. He
is also a foil for Tel, who sabotages his Canadian lectures every chance he gets by expounding on the wonders of America and warning the Irish of the arctic temperatures and wild beasts of Canada. The Reverend plays on the locals' fear of violence to encourage the more timid into leaving Ireland, saying "your cities will be rent and shattered . . . and even the mighty walls of Derry themselves may go down amid that chaos of fire and slaughter" (33), encouraging them to "flee from the evils of Home Rule." Again, as with Daughter, Milligan illustrates how religion was used as a tool for anti-nationalist causes and to instil fear and not charity among believers.

Tel continues on his way to the prearranged meeting in Belfast with Colonel Martyn's companions, and it becomes apparent that each character he meets identifies his politics within the context of answering various common questions Tel may ask about the landscape or Ireland. On a train a man sings a song about the Apprentice Boys of Derry shouting "No surrender," the national battle cry of the Orange Order. Other American tourists dot the landscape wherever he arrives, often taken advantage of by locals to the point where tourguides lasso patrons onto a boat ride. Here Tel meets a group of visiting female college students, led by Mrs. Longspear Williams and her fancy Mercedes touring car she has brought over from
America. The female members of the party are described by Mac not by mere physical characteristics, but rather by the manufacturing concerns their families represent: "the plump blonde is a carpet sweeper from Grand Rapids; the red haired, saucy-looking one you've seen that brand of pill advertised; an adding and calculating machine from New York, linked to a gas producer plant from Pittsburg; following them a lightning bug exterminator, talking to an anti-septic coughdrop" (47). This type of description is foreign to Alice Milligan's usual careful, detailed panoramic view and offers insights into the Irish perceptions of Americans. Beyond this is the stereotype laid down of American wealth that will persist through the novel; the lavish American lifestyle and holiday is contrasted against the many, many simple Irish people they encounter.

Mac saves one female student for last, as she is the object of his desires—Miss Artemis Longspear-Williams, a Vassar graduate who is working on her thesis, interestingly on the Celtic revival, which she pursues throughout the trip while Mac pursues her. She is the wealthiest of the lot and the most serious about her studies. She also serves to characterize the desires of the exiled American children for knowing their heritage and history. As a counterbalance of the stereotypical male responses to women and war, it is interesting to note that the females
constantly pursue the culture of Ireland while the men busy themselves with one political fiasco after another.

Earlier in the novel Tel is adamant, to the point of making a bet with Mac, that he will not go to the famed Giant's Causeway, to see that sight. However, after meeting up with the Vassar women, Mac convinces him to go, seeing they are so close to it. What transpires at the stone bridge will reflect on Tel's character for the remainder of the story. Mac and Tel cannot cross the bridge with their guide because a young newlywed named Sammy is stuck in the middle suffering from a severe case of vertigo. The only way to get him to budge, they decide, seeing that his wife indicates he is an Orangeman, is to insult King Billy (King William of Orange) in hopes of angering him to forget his predicament and get him to move. It is an interesting situation to have an Orangeman, stuck in the middle of a bridge, completely paralyzed. It is obviously allegorical to the Irish-British situation in that the bridge could represent a path, as this timeframe is a pivotal one on Ireland's political path for freedom: an Orangemen blocking the way cannot be overlooked, nor can the fact that his precarious position has paralyzed him. His bride not only tells of his Orange background, but that he is "pig-headed" as well and only an insult can roust him off that bridge. Mac and Tel do as they are advised and shout "To hell with King Billy" (66), which causes him to
come after Mac swinging. He is restrained and is told the plot was for his own good. Unfortunately he is on the wrong side of the bridge and refuses to cross back over, preferring to wait for a boat.

The guide informs the group it will be quite a while for the boat and suggests that Tel and Mac take the bride, Sarah, and bridesmaid, Maggie, to tea at a local hotel; the women eagerly jump at the chance to be seen in such a fine car that Mrs. Longspear Williams has loaned the twosome for an afternoon of sightseeing. Then Sara brags and tells those watching at the hotel that Tel is her "rich American" husband, going so far as to ask Tel to sign the register with her true husband's name for "poor Sammy." Tel plays along obliging his "proxy bride." An innocent enough deception, but as Milligan will point out there are no innocent deceptions in Ireland. The Rev. McClurg arrives just in time to see their departure, and a quick chat with the Boots, who describes the wedding party, gives McClurg ammunition that Tel is a far greater foil than he had supposed—a bigamist—as he had told McClurg about his real wife Helen during their earlier discussion. McClurg jumps to the conclusion that he must be a Mormon and goes off to inform the proper authorities (73).

Tel arrives in Belfast the evening of the eleventh of July. Colonel Martyn has impressed upon him before his departure that:
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dismissing as Ulster bluff might turn out to be Ulster rebellion. Evidence had been reaching the authorities that arms and ammunition were being brought secretly and in increasing quantities into the north of Ireland. This evidence was only too well-founded.

By anchoring the story-line within actual historical persons and events, Milligan uses descriptions of both Catholic and Protestant rituals to further a reader's sense of living within the time and how the historical events influenced the population of Ireland, and how that influence is reflected within their rituals. She devotes much space to describing the sights, sounds and colors of the annual July twelfth display so readers may get a precise feel for the event and the enthusiasm of the participants:

The blaze of colours was bewildering--crimson, orange, purple, and royal blue predominated, with a dash of every colour of the rainbow, while gilt letters and scroll work were applied in lavish style . . . . There now came along an array of drumming parties, each evidently trying to outdo the other. A perfect inferno of sound shook the air. Applauded by their friends among the accompanying crowd the excited drummers seemed as though possessed . . . . their wrists frayed with the constant friction against the
drum hoops, dripped blood—it was a sanguinary and savage sight. (79)

Her description of the "savagery" of the Orangemen beating their drums until they "drip blood" to celebrate the ancient battle of the Boyne underscores the point that the battle continues because it was never truly won. The spectacle has an effect on Tel, who declines to go to the field to hear the annual speeches, preferring to have his driver take him outside the city so his ears may rest before his meeting with the Orangemen. A detective follows his car.

From his hotel he hears the continuing commotion from the street, which affords Milligan an opportunity to describe the songs and chants that help to makeup the atmosphere of the twelfth celebration, which she deftly shows as a celebration of bigotry wherein she transcribes two often-sung ditties:

Edward Carson had a cat
    That sat upon the fender,
If anybody said "Home Rule"
    It mewed out "No surrender..."

... while a flute player raked in the half-pence for the following contribution "Ould Orange Flute:

At the chapel on Sundays, to atone for past deeds,
    He said pater and ave and counted his beads,
Til after some time, at the priest's own desire,
He went with his ould flute to play in the Choir.
But all he could whistle, and finger, and blow,
To play Papish music he found it no go,
"Kick the Pope," and "Boyne Water," it sweetly
would sound,
But one Papish squeak in it couldn't be found.

So the ould flute was doomed and its fate was pathetic,
It was fastened and burned at the stake as heretic;
While the flames roared around it they heard a strange noise,
Twas the ould flute still whistling "The Protestant Boys."

The political comment the songs depict cannot be overlooked, although it is covertly brought out in song. Milligan then makes it appear as if Tel has been influenced by the sights and sounds of the overt bigotry as he walks down the street "whistling the (above) catchy air" toward his meeting with the Executive Council of the Ulster Party. By whistling a "catchy" air, it appears Tel has "caught," as if it were a disease, the Protestant influence and inherent bigotry, especially in spite of the fact he is on his way to sell dynamite to further the Protestant cause.
While waiting his turn he chats with various other salesmen who hope to supply flannel, bandages, splints, wooden legs and various necessities of war Belfast is busy preparing for. Tel remarks to another, "Twill be a case of North against South over again, and I'd back those drum bangers against all comers." This comment seems to cement Tel's turn for the worse as he is shown into an apartment where the Ulster Volunteer Force is meeting. Tel relates his often told pitch of the qualities of his Ragnarock brand of dynamite and an order is quickly processed. On leaving, he remarks, "business is business! He [DuPratt] gets his profit and I a good commission, and if these Ulster folk are crazy, what that ain't our lookout" (88).

These apparent seeds of doubt planted at this point in the text are significant in that the American is portrayed with suspicion from all angles. He is perceived as a bigamist which we know he is not; he now clearly aids the Orangemen without apparent care to the consequences. It is impossible at this point to tell what actual intentions are transpiring, a common ambiguous Irish condition which is difficult to explain; Milligan shows it via the alternating American hero/antihero actions. Everyone has a different opinion of him, each believing they are correct; and, in the text as in Ireland, confusion rules.

Tel's apparent treason is left behind in Belfast as he catches a ride back to Donegal with Mrs. Williams, Mac and
the Vassar women who are excited about the upcoming Celtic festival they will partake in. Again, Milligan has the opportunity to contrast the Protestant rituals against Celtic ones in back to back chapters, illustrating the contrasting lifestyles separated by a relatively short distance in miles, but centuries of culture.

Upon his return to the lodge Tel spends much time with the Colonel which "tended to make him less popular with the lads at the College, and the people of the country [i.e. suspicious]; however, he was keen for fishing, and his military friend spent much time and trouble in initiating him into its mysteries" (95). A mitigating factor in the friendship is Tel's desire to lure the English over for fishing vacations, but he still has the problem of the monster fish in his lake which he desires to blow up though he has been warned against such action. It is not a coincidence that the "monster" continues to live on the advice of the neighboring Orangeman which serves to shift focus away from the "monstrous" policies the Colonel appears to adhere to and has involved Tel in. The fact that Tel wishes to destroy a danger in the area indicates his true intentions.

Throughout the text the huge monster pike looms in the background and seems to represent the trouble brewing beneath the surface of the characters' activities. In Chapter 15 when the monster "moves," it signals a move in
political events as well. While listening to a tale about
the fish attacking a local mare (grabbing her by the nose),
the Colonel appears and he and Tel make final arrangements
for the delivery of the dynamite. The Colonel has arranged
for over three hundred cars and reporters will meet the
ship, "it will cause a world-wide sensation when the news
appears" (140). It is an unlikely coincidence that this
news is presented in the presence of the sensational fish,
furthering a connection between the two. Tel is concerned
about the police, but the Colonel assures him "they won't
put in an appearance" (140), exposing the blindness of the
Ulster officers to harmful Unionist activities. Tel seems
to reiterate his helping stance when he informs the Colonel
"DuPratt was just tickled to death by your dynamite order.
... We have supplied our explosive for several important
South American revolutions" (140). Their conversation
circles back to fishing where the monster pike makes his
appearance in the Colonel's lake, indicating trouble is now
in his own backyard. The chapter closes with a description
of the dynamite being unloaded.

The politics and activities of Tel and the Colonel are
set against the preparations for the Celtic festival in
Donegal. Squeezed between these two subplots Milligan adds
a chapter where the Gaelic tongue provides a backdrop
included seemingly as pure humor. Funny as it is, she
illustrates that there still remain unspoiled areas in
Ireland, untouched by colonialism. This is represented by the unsuccessful emigration purveyor, Dr. McClurg, who receives an invitation (that has been offered from Tel and Mac in disguise) to visit Tory island on the far ragged western coastline of Donegal, where, he is assured, "conditions are so hard, and the soil so poor, that it should not be difficult for a skilled and persuasive lecturer to induce the whole population to emigrate in a body" (108). Likewise, a letter is sent to the local chieftain informing him of the arrival of the "Champion Booster [dancer] of the World" who will challenge Tory's best. Upon McClurg's arrival, needless to say, confusion reigns. McClurg is stupefied at the request to dance, and offers his lecture on emigration instead. The Chieftain allows this because of the promise of moving pictures, and readers get a good laugh after the Chief explains to McClurg that his captivated audience doesn't understand or speak a word of English. While the comic relief brings home the point of the importance of Gaelic in Irish life, it also serves to distance the reader from the multitude of activities that, by now, are quickly swirling to a climax.

While the revival and meetings and faux pas run rampant throughout the text, spies and detectives have been watching and collecting information on Tel, reiterating the suspicion theme that runs throughout the text. A character named Scully, disguised as a student at the Tubbernesk...
College, is really a detective assigned to monitor Tel's actions. In an attempt to glean information from a local butcher, who is also a gossip, Scully arrives while he slaughters pigs. Seeing through Scully's motives, he recites poetry instead of information, all the while the squeals of pigs orchestrate the background. Having the butcher recite poetry affords Milligan a chance to again cover additional ancient ground with the poems recounting tales of Oisin and Patrick and Saint Brigid and other legends. The informer leaves with no incriminating evidence against Tel, but more knowledgeable in the culture of ancient Ireland.

Scully's activities are again chronicled back at the lodge where Mac queries Tel about the dynamite, seeing how they are aware of Scully, but not why he has been watching them. Tel reveals his intentions, "You hav'nt got to worry, old man Du Pratt has got his eyes skinned all right, and if they do land me, they'll get the surprise of their lives" (147) meaning he has been coordinating the delivery with Du Pratt all along which turns out to be not delivery of dynamite, but soap. However, he (and Milligan) doesn't let Mac, or anyone else, in on the secret yet.

Now, having thoroughly confused the reader as to what is really happening with the dynamite in Donegal, as with the Gaelic chapter, Milligan diverts the readers attention during a week's break in the festival when the entire group
goes down to Dublin for the Oireachteas or Celtic feast to
dance, listen to Gaelic League lectures, watch parades and
visit galleries. Each instance affords Milligan an
opportunity to offer additional information on the Celtic
traditions: we seem always to be standing next to a
history professor from the National University or some
other knowledgeable person who explains the significance to
the Americans.

It also affords Milligan opportunity to resurrect
ancient Celtic myth, and poke fun at superstition in
general, by using Artemis, who becomes smitten by Angus Og,
the Celtic god of love, a figure displayed on a float in
one of the parades. Unknown to her, Angus being played by
Mac himself, hooked into the floating role at the last
minute. This sets up a sub-plot between Mac and Artemis,
who is determined to contact Angus from the grave, with
comic result. Artemis confesses her desire to a Dublin
poet who informs her of a cave where, if she conducts a
seance, she may reach him. Artemis, a member of the
"American Society for Psychical Research," becomes very
excited at the prospect.

The group arrives at the cave in Drogheda with Mrs.
Longspear-Williams declining to crawl into the cave and
remaining outside. The caretaker has given them a small
circular table and candle. Artemis instructs the spirits
to communicate with her by making the table respond with
three taps for yes, one for no, as she calls out the alphabet to identify them and answer her questions. The first spirit to respond is Archimedes, which pleases Artemis, but she requests Angus. She is informed that he is at the end of the queue where "hundreds" are in front of him. The next spirit is a "John L" who Tel excitedly interprets as John L. Sullivan the boxer. Artemis asks Sullivan to bring Angus forward, but Sullivan gives a description of a fight between Christopher Columbus and Brigham Young, and leaves to go break it up. The table begins to jump around furiously and spells out the last visitor, Daniel Webster. Everyone is quite impressed until the table informs them it is not the famous orator, but the jumping frog from Mark Twain's story. He tells Artemis that Angus is still jammed in the queue and can't come. Very disappointed and stuffy, the party attempts to leave, only to find the small entrance blocked by a large person who turns out to be Tel's wife Helena. She has come after talking with Mr. DuPratt in Oshkosh and is worried because an Irish chief of police called to ask questions about his character back home.

The drive home to Donegal is again described in topographical detail. The police are waiting for Tel when they arrive and promptly arrest him on the charge of bigamy. The arrest will afford a stage for the unfolding of the various sub-plots: the dynamite, the fish, the
Colonel, and the lodge. As Father Cassidy explains to Artemis, a scheduled dance will not be cancelled on account of the absurd charges, "The guests I can assure you will turn up in full force, eager to show their confidence in his innocence, and their sympathy for his wife. Hitherto, I had better explain, his intimacy with the Colonel has made people here a little shy of him; the arrest will undo all that and make him the hero of the hour" (183). Ironically, mistaken identity will be the cause for ultimate justice, exposing the Orangemen's plot.

Tel is kept in the barracks near the Colonel's barn where the dynamite is being stored. During the night the building next to the barn catches fire. A crowd has gathered to help put it out, that is until they learn what is in the barn next to it. Every person in the area stampedes for a high hill yelling "shule leat!" (run, run). All the characters save Tel are safely up on the hill where Helen cries for her husband's fate, still locked in the barracks as even the police have headed out, leaving him. Mac goes back for the rescue but is stopped by Scully (a/k/a Detective Malone) who he must fight to get Tel out of the jail. Here, Tel finally confesses to Mac that the boxes marked dynamite really contain "McClintock's Superfine Gorilla Soap" as it was the same weight and color of Ragnarok because the "Colonel didn't want to have all those dynamite boxes coming over empty" (192), thus
correcting the mistaken assumptions made about the Colonel who wanted to allow the Orange show, but not the blow. In doing so, Milligan points out that the Protestant neighbors are not all set on bloodshed, attempting to work within the fiery political context of the day. If Tel had not taken the order, it may have gone to someone who truly would have filled it as so many others did. The gatherers feel a sense of unity as no one is certain the cause for the blaze or rumor, and neighbors for miles around walk toward the town fearing an insurrection of some time. When safety is assured, all feel more unified as a result of the false alarm.

Tel's trial is held next day and only one witness is called to his defense, namely Andrew James Gillespie, the guide who was present the day of Sammy's adventure on the bridge. He testifies to suggesting Tel take the women while he waited with Sammy for the boat, thus clearing Tel's name. The narrator exposes the religious prejudices of the locals by saying "Fine fools they had made of themselves, thinking they had caught a real live Mormon, and bigamist, and he all the time a free-handed, gay-hearted, nice-spoken American tourist gentleman" (212), indicating if Catholicism is a lesser religion, it is even worse to be a Mormon whose values (of multiple marriage) are of a lesser status than the Catholics.
Artemis discovers Mac was really Angus in the parade and agrees to marry him after he comforts her for the embarrassing report she sent to the American Psychical Society telling of John L. Sullivan's appearance from the grave when he is actually still alive. This twist gives the Milligans a chance to poke fun at the theosophy that was very popular among some well-known writers such as AE and Yeats.

In the conclusion Mac and Artemis are to be married, Tel and Helena return to Oshkosh, leaving the lodge in the hands of the local help; and they receive notification from a newspaper article that the giant piasht has finally met his demise, having eaten one of Tel's now famous Owl brand cigars. The light-hearted ending revolves around the fact that much ado was made over rampant suspicion; and what should be raising eyebrows, namely the activities of the Orange Order, are left—while dynamiteless—still a danger to the now familiar area. It would appear Alice Milligan was appealing to an American audience with the text; as it turns out, an American saves the day. In order to save the day, however, Tel had to engage in trial by fire in an almost literal sense.
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