

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND, GALWAY
Ollscoil na hÉireann, Gaillimh

M.A. (Mode B) EXAMINATION 1998/99

EN558 STUDIES IN IRISH THEATRE HISTORY

PROFESSOR GEORGE WATSON
PROFESSOR ALASTAIR MINNIS
PROFESSOR KEVIN BARRY
DR LIONEL PILKINGTON

TIME ALLOWED: TWO HOURS

ANSWER TWO QUESTIONS TAKING CARE NOT TO WRITE ON THE SAME
PLAY TWICE.

1. Write a short essay on the relationship between the political movement known as 'constructive unionism' and the Irish Literary Theatre.
2. Discuss the representation of gender and sexuality in any two of Synge's plays, and offer some discussion of the relationship between this and Irish social and political history.
3. Write a short essay on Gregory's and Yeats's *Cathleen Ní Houlihan* in the light of John Dowling's scathing assessment from the mid 1930s:

If it were not tragic it would be laughable to remember that these plays [*The Rising of the Moon*, *The Dreamer*, *Cathleen Ní Houlihan*, and *The Piper*], the themes of which would suffice to destroy the morale of the Spartans, have been the four most popular with militant Irishmen and a couple of them were almost invariably chosen to be played at I.R.A. concerts organised to swell company arms funds from 1914 onwards. It is a tremendous tribute to the morale of the I.R.A. that it appears to have been little affected by them, for it is hard to believe that any man who attended a course of these plays could ever summon up courage to fire a shot. (John Dowling, 1937)

4. What in your view is the main bias of Irish theatre history, and how is this bias manifest in descriptions of the early years of the Abbey Theatre?
5. Write a short essay on any one theatre controversy in the period 1899 to 1907.

END.