



BERNARD SHAW AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES



Bernard Shaw and the Making of Modern Ireland

Edited by
Audrey McNamara
Nelson O'Ceallaigh Ritschel

palgrave
macmillan

Bernard Shaw and His Contemporaries

Series Editors

Nelson O'Ceallaigh Ritschel
Massachusetts Maritime Academy
Pocasset, MA, USA

Peter Gahan
Independent Scholar
Los Angeles, CA, USA

The series *Bernard Shaw and His Contemporaries* presents the best and most up-to-date research on Shaw and his contemporaries in a diverse range of cultural contexts. Volumes in the series will further the academic understanding of Bernard Shaw and those who worked with him, or in reaction against him, during his long career from the 1880s to 1950 as a leading writer in Britain and Ireland, and with a wide European and American following.

Shaw defined the modern literary theatre in the wake of Ibsen as a vehicle for social change, while authoring a dramatic canon to rival Shakespeare's. His careers as critic, essayist, playwright, journalist, lecturer, socialist, feminist, and pamphleteer, both helped to shape the modern world as well as pointed the way towards modernism. No one engaged with his contemporaries more than Shaw, whether as controversialist, or in his support of other, often younger writers. In many respects, therefore, the series as it develops will offer a survey of the rise of the modern at the beginning of the twentieth century and the subsequent varied cultural movements covered by the term modernism that arose in the wake of World War I.

More information about this series at
<http://www.palgrave.com/gp/series/14785>

Audrey McNamara
Nelson O'Ceallaigh Ritschel
Editors

Bernard Shaw and the Making of Modern Ireland

palgrave
macmillan

Editors

Audrey McNamara
School of English, Drama and Film
University College Dublin
Dublin, Ireland

Nelson O’Ceallaigh Ritschel
Massachusetts Maritime Academy
Pocasset, MA, USA

Bernard Shaw and His Contemporaries

ISBN 978-3-030-42112-0

ISBN 978-3-030-42113-7 (eBook)

<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-42113-7>

© The Editor(s) (if applicable) and The Author(s) 2020

This work is subject to copyright. All rights are solely and exclusively licensed by the Publisher, whether the whole or part of the material is concerned, specifically the rights of translation, reprinting, reuse of illustrations, recitation, broadcasting, reproduction on microfilms or in any other physical way, and transmission or information storage and retrieval, electronic adaptation, computer software, or by similar or dissimilar methodology now known or hereafter developed.

The use of general descriptive names, registered names, trademarks, service marks, etc. in this publication does not imply, even in the absence of a specific statement, that such names are exempt from the relevant protective laws and regulations and therefore free for general use. The publisher, the authors and the editors are safe to assume that the advice and information in this book are believed to be true and accurate at the date of publication. Neither the publisher nor the authors or the editors give a warranty, expressed or implied, with respect to the material contained herein or for any errors or omissions that may have been made. The publisher remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by the registered company Springer Nature Switzerland AG.

The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

*For Ian
and
Carolina*

FOREWORD

When government buildings in Dublin were bombed, Shaw observed (with what seemed more like relief than concern) that “I am an Irishman without a birth certificate”. He had good reasons not to over-invest in the notion of filiation, which used to seem the crucial point of a birth certificate. Thousands of such certificates were destroyed in the hostilities—and a remarkable number, it has recently emerged, were saved. But Shaw never believed in patrilineage. The more surrogate parents, the better, as far as he was concerned—because this blessed state left him free to invent himself and appoint alternatives at will. In his ideal world, each post office might contain a “paternity register”, with self-descriptions by every male who had fathered a child: if any child were discontented with the biological father, that child could scan the register and choose an alternative. Or father himself, which is what Michael Holroyd said Shaw did in creating George Bernard Shaw (GBS) as “the self-invented child of his own writings”.

This would become a major element in the story of Irish modernism. Wilde joked that his parents seemed to have lost him: “I don’t actually know who I am by birth”, says Jack Worthing in *The Importance of Being Earnest*: “I was ... well I was found”. Yeats wrote many tales of foundlings, so many that he may at moments have fancied himself to be one. Synge’s Christy Mahon decides, having killed his father, to self-authenticate: “Is it me?” And Joyce’s Stephen Dedalus becomes “himself his own father, made not begotten”.

One could see this Oedipal denial of fathers as a denial, also, of a hateful Irish past, filled with compromise, oppression and humiliation. That was

certainly how Shaw viewed what he called “the slack-jawed blackguardism” of his father’s Dublin. Yet he, like the other writers just mentioned, espoused an Irish future, exhilarating to precisely the extent that it could still be made. Central to their notions of self-invention was the ancient myth of androgyny: that manly women and womanly men could somehow incarnate a future free of the horrific results of binary thinking—empire, hypernationalism, machismo. Through the 1890s, both Shaw and Wilde depicted forceful women and retiring men, paving the way for those moments of high modernism when Joyce gave voice to Molly Bloom, Yeats to Crazy Jane and, of course, Shaw to Joan of Arc. It was as if each author found in such figures images of self-election and self-determination. In some ways, it is Shaw’s Joan who best captures the meaning of liberation. Listening to inner voices, she by-passes the world of priests and preachers and bishops, and insists on a mysticism which derives only from herself. Shaw’s anti-clericalism was rooted in a very Protestant idea: that all religious professions—whether puritan clergymen denouncing social activists, or Catholic priests inveighing against trade unionists—were conspiracies against the laity. And, of course, he extended the critique to all professionals (doctors, lawyers etc.) whose jargon was but a form of self-love, designed to prevent people from thinking for themselves.

There are certain dangers in claiming Shaw or Wilde as key figures in Irish literary tradition, as there are in making such claims for Yeats, Joyce or Synge. They all belong in the end to the wider world. But there are dangers also in denying the influence of that Irish context which enabled them to achieve articulation—and, indeed, to take Ireland as a test-case of the modern. The Irish element in Yeats, Joyce and Synge has always been taken for granted, if only because of the recurrence in their work of the national setting—but in the case of Shaw and Wilde this was not always so clearly seen. As a student over forty years ago I never knowingly set out to prove that those two great comic dramatists were Irish. I simply assumed it—on the basis of so many techniques and themes shared not just with each other but with later Irish authors. Later, as a lecturer, I was repeatedly astonished to find that many of their greatest admirers and advocates had no understanding of this background. It is hard to believe that the first-ever international conference on Shaw in Ireland occurred as late as 2012 (but following three Shaw Summer Schools hosted by Dublin Institute of Technology, Kevin Street during the 1990s under Eibhear Walshe, and the Dublin Shaw Society that flourished during the second half of the twentieth century): but that says as much about Irish as about

foreign blindness to the kind of analyses which enrich this volume. Shaw's overt influence on O'Casey and Behan has been long documented and well acknowledged by both succeeding playwrights, but it is fascinating to read here of the inspiration which he provided for Kate O'Brien and Elizabeth Bowen, not to mention the possibility that he also opened many themes and techniques for Brian Friel. When the late great Donal McCann joked that the latter was "a good man fallen among academics", he was not only referring (most unfairly) to the Field Day movement but literally tracing a revolutionary lineage back to GBS.

The Shaw who emerges in this volume is as alert to an English as to a Protestant substratum in Irish nationalism. Again and again, he told his readers in London papers that the Irish, in resisting invaders, were simply doing what any true-born English persons would do, should their country be occupied. This was a view already propounded at some length by John Henry Newman, whose strictures on the logic of Irish nationalism were designed to be overheard in England. By an analogous logic, Shaw's education of his English readers on many themes was also designed to be overheard in Ireland. He was critical of narrow nationalism but also of the imperialism into which it could so easily morph. And his linked exposés of the injuries of class touched off allergic reactions in both countries, perhaps more often in England than in Ireland (although William Martin Murphy is shown here to have responded with brazen effrontery to the challenge posed by Shaw to philistine capitalists).

From his vantage point in London and Ayot St Lawrence, Shaw saw clearly that the Irish Question was also an English Question—something as true in the age of Brexit as it was when first he made the observation. As a socialist radical, he intuited the ways in which Irish answers to certain questions were prophetic of ones still to be offered in England: the expropriation of the landed, gentry, for instance, or the delinking of church and state. As a colony, Ireland was also a laboratory, a forcing-ground of the modern; and Shaw realized that England had some catching-up to do. Even before formulating a defence of Roger Casement in 1916, he had wisely advised the London authorities to treat the captured rebel leaders as prisoners of war, rather than to shoot them as if they were no better than common deserters on the Western Front. He had written *O'Flaherty*, *V. C.* in 1915 in order to demonstrate just how inflected were the views of those Irishmen fighting in the British army—and he instinctively understood that the 1916 rebel leaders were themselves huge admirers of English literary traditions.

Had he been listened to, events might have taken a happier turn. It is arguable that, in his advocacy of Irish independence, he did more for that cause than many of the insurrectionary leaders. His analysis was much like that of Synge—that Ireland would gain less from bombing campaigns than from the spread of socialist ideas among the English. After all, both men reasoned, the interests of the English working class and of Irish separatists were overlapping, and they required only the removal of a parasitic landlord class. If androgyny might replace the polarized, unequal relationships between men and women in a sexist culture, then the overthrow of imperial orders might reduce the appeal of nationalisms, making way for a truly international order.

Yet Shaw could understand the appeal of nationalism in Irish circumstances, and his attitude to Michael Collins, as revealed in these pages, was respectful. In all likelihood, he would have endorsed James Connolly's idea that once Ireland was repossessed by its own people, the empire would soon be gone. Of course, as a gradualist (or "stages theory" man), he would not have agreed with Connolly's method, summed up in the rebel's phrase that "a pin in the hand of a child could pierce the heart of a giant".

Even after the cessation of the Anglo-Irish war, Shaw went out of his way to assure prospective English visitors that they could tour Ireland in total safety. He had, after all, shown in *John Bull's Other Island* that while the Irish and English might oppose one another in theory, in the everyday life of individuals, they invariably became fast friends. He was right in his guess that those English brave enough to visit Ireland so soon after the War of Independence would be warmly applauded and embraced. He himself wrote much of *Saint Joan* in county Kerry in the summer of 1923 as the country emerged from the atrocious experience of war and civil war.

For Shaw the role of women was a central test of any society, and he followed the playwright Henrik Ibsen in that belief. President Michael D. Higgins brilliantly evokes the recurrence of the feminist theme through so many works of the Irish revival by referring to "five Noras"—Ibsen's, Shaw's, Synge's, O'Casey's and Joyce's. One could find a very different meaning in each experience and a sense of liberatory intent in their various ways of coping with difficult situations, but it is also true that each of the male authors depicts the women as not fully free agents. Those who "choose freedom" and walk away from the prison house of domesticity may be as finally constrained as those who decide to conduct their rebellions within the system, whether in silence, madness or sheer

counter-statement. As Marx had so sadly observed, people do make and remake the world, but never in circumstances of their own choosing.

President Higgins, in commenting on a philistine capitalism which agitated against an art gallery for Dubliners, makes a crucial link between democracy and pleasure—the practice of the former should ensure the right to the latter. This was a point on which Yeats and Shaw—for all their other differences—concurred. Each of them saw a play as a way of challenging the preconceptions of an audience while also affording deep aesthetic pleasure. They collaborated closely in their earlier years in stage productions, and this reminds us of oft-neglected facts. The social radicalism of the younger Yeats has often been under-estimated, as has the formal modernist audacity of the mature Shaw (his use of theatre as opera anticipates Tom Murphy, for instance, just as the choric antiphonies between falsetto Irish voices and Broadbent's basso profundo prefigure Friel's in *Translations*). Both Shaw and Yeats had much the same view of the English language as Frantz Fanon would take of French: that it should be treated as a captured weapon, seized from an imperial enemy and liberated from its darker historic meanings.

Reading through these pages, one is struck by that versatility of mind which permitted Shaw to know so many different human types at a level of true intimacy, whether the leaders of the literary movement at Coole or the political inventors of modern Ireland at Kilteragh. He had a tremendous sympathy for women who had lost their men in some tragedy or other of the national struggle—his letter to a sister of Michael Collins just days after his assassination is moving in its rallying of her spirits, and the energy which he invested in advising and supporting Hanna Sheehy Skeffington is a true act of solidarity. Tony Roche captures Shaw's affinity for radical, marginal women very well in his chapter here. Perhaps that affinity was rooted in Shaw's insistence that women were in almost every respect just like men and should be treated so. Nor is this a simple matter of one radical dissident empathizing with another. What recurs through all of Shaw's career, despite the common complaint that he was a cool rationalist, is a sense of emotional and ethical engagement with the unlucky, the misjudged, the outcast. His politics were hardly those of Parnell but he steadfastly defended him, and likewise in his solidarity with Oscar Wilde. Casement would be just a single figure in a long line of Irishmen facing English courts who found in him one of their most formidable apologists and advocates—and that advocacy was ultimately rooted in feeling and compassion. It is high time to retire Yeats's nightmare in which he

was haunted by Shaw in the image of a mechanical sewing machine: first-hand acquaintance with GBS at the dinner table revealed to William Butler Yeats a very different man.

The chapter gathered here asks us to consider Shaw in entirely new ways. His engagement with the forces of religion is a rich topic indeed, and it may well be that, after the foolish attempt by Catholic prelates to prevent the children of striking Trade Unionists from procuring helpful accommodation with sympathetic families in England, he ran out of patience with it. Yet Joan of Orleans somehow manages to reincarnate elements of that mysticism which animated Peter Keegan in a 1904 play. Equally interesting is the question of how someone generally considered anti-war could produce what seems like a recruiting play in *O'Flaherty, V. C.* ... and then proceed in the play to dismantle the pretensions of both imperialist and nationalist. Shaw was keenly aware that among the many Irish who enlisted in the British army during World War I were many who had been Parnellites and others who felt that England would reward their contribution with some form of Home Rule. Yet he was also the man who joked when asked by curious English people about the meaning of the words "Sinn Féin", that "I tell them it is the Irish for John Bull".

He must have been astounded, as were many others, when Sinn Féin won an unprecedented number of seats on an anti-conscription policy in 1918. At last the ideas of Francis Sheehy Skeffington seemed to prevail. And Shaw might have hoped, as the First Dáil of 1919 called for a radical redistribution of land and a reimagining of community, that the hopes voiced in various of his essays might now be fulfilled. Sadly, it was the rather dire warnings issued in *John Bull's Other Island* which would be confirmed over time.

Horace Plunkett is reported in this volume as attending Shaw's lecture on "Equality" at the Abbey Theatre in 1918. What an amazing occasion that must have been—a reminder of the immense role played by the national theatre in an occupied land. In the lecture, Shaw in effect said, "it's the economy, stupid", and renewed the call made in *John Bull's Other Island* for a debate about land use rather than land ownership. Plunkett, as a leader of the co-operative movement, heartily agreed: yet, like many admirers of Shaw's play, he found the writer stronger on diagnosis than on prescription. But there is always embedded in every description an implied set of solutions. It was not just Marx but Flaubert who said that nothing could be more radically transformative than an account of things as they are. Shaw has proved a striking prophet, not only on the matter of Ireland

but also on the pains felt by England as the most deeply penetrated colony of all. That he could issue such prophecies in plays of verbal wit and formal audacity is something to lift every human heart. Nelson O’Ceallaigh Ritschel and Audrey McNamara have, yet again, done him proud and left us all in their debt.

Clontarf, Dublin
29 November 2018

Declan Kiberd

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We wish to thank Peter Gahan, friend, eminent Shaw scholar and series editor of *Bernard Shaw and His Contemporaries*. Peter's excellent advice throughout the process of organizing and editing of this anthology has been supreme and much appreciated. We also wish to thank our editors at Palgrave Macmillan, Eileen Srebernik and Jack Heeney. Their support and commitment to the project has been steadfast, professional and extremely constructive.

We also wish to thank the scholars who have contributed work to this anthology (listed in the order in which their contributions appear): Declan Kiberd; President of Ireland Michael D. Higgins; Anthony Roche; David Clare; Elizabeth Mannion; Aisling Smith; Susanne Colleary; Aileen R. Ruane; Peter Gahan and Gustavo A. Rodríguez Martín. All have been generous, patient and supportive through the entire process.

Special thanks also go to Declan Kiberd, who has been a stalwart scholar of Irish literature for decades, in addition to exemplifying, by impressive example, the process of encouraging new scholarly voices to extend the discussion of Irish literature and drama, and who has known for decades that Bernard Shaw has been and remains an integral part of that literary canon. We are extremely grateful for the Foreword to this study.

Anthony Roche, the leading scholar and light, also for decades, of Irish drama is to be thanked further, and much further than our words here can express. His inspiration over the years has led many of us to delve further into Irish drama, and his enthusiasm and support is always present—his assistance on a few occasions with this anthology has been exceedingly appreciated.

President of Ireland Michael D. Higgins also receives our great thanks. His commitment to Ireland's literary voices, his generosity to us both, his friendship that is deeply cherished and his support since the first year of his presidency, 2012, are eternally appreciated. His inspirational presidency, embodying the best of Shavian attributes and directions, has opened Ireland to a celebratory inclusiveness and an understanding that are now embedded within the Irish identity. Knowing that Ireland's literary heritage is never far from its international and multinational role at home and abroad awakens in us all social responsibility that Shaw so well understood and practised. Helen Carney and Claire Power, stalwart leaders on President Higgins's staff, are also thanked for their support and assistance, as always.

Another special thank you goes to Gerardine Meaney, who during her time as Director of Humanities in University College Dublin (UCD), facilitated and supported the first Irish International Shaw conference in UCD, Dublin, in 2012. Her generosity in sharing her wealth of advice and experience contributed to the success of the conference and laid the seed for this anthology. In thanking Gerardine, we cannot but acknowledge the hard work and invaluable contribution to the conference of the administrative manager of the Humanities, Valerie Norton.

Elisabeth Mannion is further thanked. She responded immediately to the call for papers and has remained a friend through Irish literary scholarship. Similarly, David Clare is further thanked for his expert and concise advice along the way, supplying key suggestions on possible contributors. A great friend and scholar, David is much appreciated. Susanne Colleary, for her continued support, friendship and sound advice during this process and all things Shaw, is also much appreciated. Gustavo A. Rodríguez Martín, friend and scholar, who has furthered the Shavian cause in Spain, is warmly thanked.

Officers of the International Shaw Society (ISS) are also to be thanked, not just for their commitment to the continuation of Shaw Studies, but also for their strong support of Palgrave Macmillan's *Bernard Shaw and His Contemporaries* series and the University Press of Florida's earlier Shaw Series, edited by Richard Dietrich. Current ISS President Bob Gaines is greatly thanked, as are former presidents Richard Dietrich (the ISS's founder), Leonard Conolly and Michael O'Hara—as well as additional ISS officers (former and present), such as Ellen Dolgin and Jennifer Buckley. Dick Dietrich has been a keen supporter of Shaw Studies for

decades, and without him, it is difficult to imagine the ISS emerging when it did. Many thanks are to owed Dick.

Great thanks are extended to the Society of Authors, on behalf of the Bernard Shaw Estate, for permission to quote from Shaw's work.

We also wish to thank scholars and friends who have played key roles in our respective journeys through Shaw and Irish Studies: the late Don B. Wilmeth, Stephen Watt, Gary Richardson, Spencer Golub, L. Perry Curtis, David Krause, Nicholas Grene, Brad Kent, Julie Sparks, Al (Charles) Carpenter, Martin Meisel, Stanley Weintraub, Louis Crompton, Charles Berst, Sue Morgan, Bernard Dukore, Sally Peters, Susanne Colleary, Zeljka Doljanin, Eamonn Jordan, Gerardine Meaney, Ian Walsh, Colette Yeates, Eva Urban-Deveraux and Kasia Lech.

On personal levels, Nelson wishes to thank partner and wife, Carolina Ritschel, for her support and love. Audrey wishes to give special thanks and love to her son Ian, her mother Laura, her late sister Denise and brothers Patrick, Brian, David and Noel—and their families.

Praise for *Bernard Shaw and the Making of Modern Ireland*

“The complexities of G. B. Shaw’s distinctive relationship and encounters with the country of his birth gives rise to this unique volume of essays. How Ireland manifests in dramaturgical practices, economic reflections, and in the political activism of G. B. Shaw is sometimes obvious, but more often than not less so. Distinguished, distinctive and original, these essays exemplify the sorts of telling engagements that Shaw’s radical and inflammatory works and ideas incite. For example, consideration is given to connections between Shaw and other Irish writers, including Elizabeth Bowen and Kate O’Brien, and Shaw’s relationship with trade union activism to Shaw’s engagements with an international media and his fascination with the gentry houses associated with Horace Plunkett and Lady Augusta Gregory. Indeed, these essays suggest not only the significance and vitality of Shaw’s provocative literary, cultural, economic and political contributions, but that his uncanny and prescient insights are now even more deserving of consideration of the world in which we now find ourselves.”

—Eamonn Jordan, Associate Professor of Drama Studies,
University College Dublin

“By considering Shaw’s writings and actions in regards to the debates and movement towards Irish independence this rich volume of essays discovers in his work surprising connections to other Irish writers such as Kate O’Brien, Elizabeth Bowen and Sean O’Casey, reveals how his activism and friendships in Ireland shaped his subsequent work, and explores his staging of the complex interplay between the national and international in his dramas. These fascinating essays open up new areas and modes of enquiry for Shaw scholarship but will also be of great interest to students of Irish studies, modernism and theatre studies.”

—Dr Ian R. Walsh, Lecturer in Drama and Theatre Studies, *NUI Galway*

CONTENTS

1	Introduction	1
	Audrey McNamara and Nelson O’Ceallaigh Ritschel	
2	Speech at the First International Shaw Conference, Dublin	11
	President of Ireland Michael D. Higgins	
3	“The Rush of Air, the Windows Opened on Extravagance and Storm of Idea ...”: Kate O’Brien’s <i>The Last of Summer</i> and Bernard Shaw’s <i>Man and Superman</i>	19
	Anthony Roche	
4	Shavian Echoes in the Work of Elizabeth Bowen	51
	David Clare	
5	“An Incurable Propensity for Preaching”: Shaw and His Clergy	69
	Elizabeth Mannion	
6	Bernard Shaw and Sean O’Casey: Remembering James Connolly	85
	Nelson O’Ceallaigh Ritschel	

7	The Economics of Identity: <i>John Bull's Other Island</i> and the Creation of Modern Ireland	119
	Aileen R. Ruane	
8	<i>O'Flaherty V.C.</i>: Satire as Shavian Agenda	145
	Susanne Colleary	
9	Shaw, Women and the Dramatising of Modern Ireland	161
	Audrey McNamara	
10	WWI, Common Sense, and <i>O'Flaherty V.C.</i>: Shaw Advocates a New Modernist Outlook for Ireland	181
	Aisling Smith	
11	Bernard Shaw in Two Great Irish Houses: Kilteragh and Coole	205
	Peter Gahan	
12	Shaw's Ireland (and the Irish Shaw) in the International Press (1914–1925)	237
	Gustavo A. Rodríguez Martín	
	Index	261

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

David Clare is Lecturer in Drama and Theatre Studies at Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick. He previously held two Irish Research Council (IRC)-funded postdoctoral fellowships at National University of Ireland, Galway. Clare's books include the monograph *Bernard Shaw's Irish Outlook* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2016) and the edited collection *The Gate Theatre, Dublin: Inspiration and Craft* (2018). His essays on Irish and Irish Diasporic writers have appeared in numerous journals and edited collections, and he is the curator of the IRC-funded www.ClassicIrishPlays.com database.

Susanne Colleary is teaching fellow at Trinity College Dublin and a lecturer/theatre practitioner at Sligo Institute of Technology. She has published two books, *The Comic 'i'* (2015) and *The Comic Everywoman* (2019), in addition to being widely published on Irish theatre, drama and comedy. Recent theatre works include *Marian and Joseph: A Revolutionary Love Story* (Sligo and Samuel Beckett, Dublin, (2016), written and directed by Susanne. *Here We Are at The Risk of Our Lives* (Dublin, 2016) was created with artist Sue Morris. Susanne's most recent play *Murmur* is an absurdist comedy, written for women, which will be produced in 2020. She is co-editing *Tell Me Who I Am* (Trinity Education Papers 2020), which deals with the political and the social in young people's theatre work, and is an essayist and reviewer for the *Arena Arts Show* on RTE Radio One.

Peter Gahan is co-editor of Palgrave Macmillan's book series *Bernard Shaw and His Contemporaries*, serves on the editorial board of *SHAW: The*

Journal of Bernard Shaw Studies, edited *Shaw and the Irish Literary Tradition* (2010), and is author of *Shaw Shadows: Rereading the Texts of Bernard Shaw* (2004) and *Bernard Shaw and Beatrice Webb on Poverty and Equality in the Modern World, 1905–1914* (2017).

President of Ireland Michael D. Higgins is currently serving his second term, having been first elected in 2011 and re-elected in 2018. President Higgins has forged a career as an academic (Political Science and Sociology), poet and political representative on many levels. He was a member of Dáil Éireann for 25 years and member of Seanad Éireann for 9 years. He was Ireland’s first Cabinet Minister for Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht (1993–1997) and has campaigned for decades for human rights and the promotion of peace, as well as advocating for climate sustainability—in Ireland and across the world. In 2016, he published *When Ideas Matter: Speeches for an Ethical Republic*, which followed four collections of poetry and political science studies, such as *Renewing the Republic* (2012). His ties to literary Ireland are numerous. In 2012, he opened the George Bernard Shaw: Back in Town Conference, University College Dublin (in conjunction with the International Shaw Society). He is married to Sabina Coyne Higgins, who was a founding member, along with Deirdre O’Connell, of the Focus Theatre in Dublin.

Declan Kiberd is Keough Professor of Irish Studies at the University of Notre Dame. He was for many years Professor of Anglo-Irish Literature and Drama at University College Dublin. He was recently elected a member of American Academy of Arts and Sciences—and has long been a member of the Royal Irish Academy. He has been Director of the Yeats International Summer School and President of the Shaw Society. Among his many books which cover Shaw are *Men and Feminism in Modern Literature* (1985), *Inventing Ireland* (1995) and *Irish Classics* (2000). He served for six years as a director of the Abbey Theatre in Dublin.

Elizabeth Mannion holds a PhD from Trinity College, Dublin. Beth’s teaching and research focus on theatre and an interdisciplinary range of Irish Studies, from revivalist drama to contemporary crime fiction. She is the author of *The Urban Plays of the Early Abbey Theatre*, editor of *The Contemporary Irish Detective Novel* (Palgrave Macmillan), and co-editor of the forthcoming *Guilt Rules All: Irish Mystery, Detective, and Crime*

Fiction (Syracuse University Press). She teaches at Baruch College (City University of New York) and is currently completing a monograph on the theatre of Wallace Shawn.

Audrey McNamara holds a PhD in Drama from University College Dublin and lectures there. Her monograph *Bernard Shaw: From Womanhood to Nationhood—The Irish Shaw* is forthcoming. Publications include essays on the work of Bernard Shaw, Conor McPherson, Enda Walsh and Benjamin Black. She wrote the programme note for the Abbey Theatre’s production of *Pygmalion* (2014) and was a plenary speaker for the National Theatre of London’s production of *Man and Superman*. She was guest co-editor with Nelson O’Ceallaigh Ritschel for *Shaw 36.1: Shaw and Money* (2016) and *Shaw and Modern Ireland* (Palgrave, 2017), and guest co-editor of *The Eugene O’Neill Review Spring 2018 Edition*.

Nelson O’Ceallaigh Ritschel is the author of five monographs, including the most recent titles, *Bernard Shaw, W. T. Stead, and the New Journalism* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017) and *Shaw, Synge, Connolly, and Socialist Provocation* (2011). He is the co-editor of Palgrave Macmillan’s *Bernard Shaw and His Contemporaries* series and a member of the Editorial Board of *SHAW: The Journal of Bernard Shaw Studies*, and has co-guest edited special editions of *SHAW* (Spring 2016) and *The Eugene O’Neill Review* (Spring 2018). In 2017 he was interviewed for the sixty-minute programme *The Point* on National Public Radio in the United States, titled “George Bernard Shaw and the Freedom of the Press”. He is a professor of Humanities at Massachusetts Maritime. He has completed a new monograph on Bernard Shaw, Sean O’Casey, and James Connolly.

Anthony Roche is Professor Emeritus in the School of English, Drama and Film at University College Dublin and the author of numerous books and articles on Irish drama and theatre. Recent publications on Shaw include: “Bernard Shaw and ‘Hibernian Drama’”, in *Oscar Wilde in Context*, eds. Kerry Powell and Peter Raby (2013); “The Abbey Theatre”, in *George Bernard Shaw in Context*, ed. Brad Kent (2015); a chapter titled “Bernard Shaw: The Absent Presence”, in Anthony Roche, *The Irish Dramatic Revival* (2015); and “Bernard Shaw: Crusading New Journalist and Anti-poverty Pioneer”, in *Irish Studies Review* 26/1 (2018).

Gustavo A. Rodríguez Martín holds a PhD in English Philology from the Universidad de Extremadura (Spain), where he lectures on Modern Literature, Phonetics, and ESL (English as a Second Language). He is the editor of the Continuing Checklist of Shaviana, the annual annotated bibliography published in the *SHAW Journal*, and the author of the bibliographical essay on Shaw for *The Year Work's in English Studies*. His research mainly focuses on the intersection between linguistics and literary stylistics. He is currently working on an edited volume in this series, provisionally titled *Bernard Shaw and the Spanish-Speaking World*.

Aileen R. Ruane is a doctoral candidate in Études littéraires at Université Laval. She holds an MA in French Studies from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Her doctoral thesis analyses Québécois translations of Irish theatre via the concept of performativity, specifically in the works of Bernard Shaw, W.B. Yeats, Martin McDonagh, and Mark O’Rowe. She will soon begin work on a Fonds de Recherche du Québec—Société et Culture postdoctoral fellowship project at Concordia University, tentatively titled “Féminité performative et féminismes performants: les théâtres québécois et irlandais et leurs traductions aux XXe et XXIe siècles.”

Aisling Smith obtained her PhD in Drama, Theatre, and Performance studies from National University of Ireland, Galway in 2019 and is both an early-career research practitioner and a freelance theatre director. In completing her PhD project “Re-directing George Bernard Shaw: Exploring the Staging of Shaw’s Play-Texts for Contemporary Audiences through Practice as Research”, Aisling produced experimental stage productions of Shaw’s *O’Flaherty V.C.*, *Pygmalion*, and the *Millionaires*. Aisling also holds a BA in English and Classical Studies from University College Dublin and an MA in Text and Performance from The Royal Academy of Dramatic Art and Birkbeck University of London.



CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Audrey McNamara and Nelson O’Ceallaigh Ritschel

On 26 November 1926, a letter was composed in Paris and mailed to George Bernard Shaw on the occasion of Shaw’s recent Nobel Prize. The brief letter, merely one sentence, offered “felicitations to you on the honour you have received and to express my satisfaction that the award of the Nobel prize for literature has gone once more to a distinguished fellow townsman” (Joyce, *Joyce Letters*, III, 146). The letter was from James Joyce, which Shaw scholar Dan Laurence maintained was the only congratulatory Nobel Prize letter Shaw kept (Ellman, “Notes”, *Joyce Letters*, III, 146).¹ It was a significant acknowledgement from arguably Ireland’s most important modernist fiction writer to a contemporary, if older, modernizing Irish dramatist who had done much to pave the road to

Progress is impossible without change, and those who cannot change their minds cannot change anything (*Shaw, Bernard*. Everybody’s Political What’s What. New York: Dodd Mead, 1945. p. 330)

A. McNamara (✉)

School of English, Drama and Film, University College Dublin, Dublin, Ireland

N. O’Ceallaigh Ritschel (✉)

Massachusetts Maritime Academy, Pocasset, MA, USA

e-mail: nritschel@maritime.edu

© The Author(s) 2020

A. McNamara, N. O’Ceallaigh Ritschel (eds.), *Bernard Shaw and the Making of Modern Ireland*, Bernard Shaw and His

Contemporaries, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-42113-7_1

modernism. It is a matter for debate as to the extent that Joyce recognized Shaw as an Irish or Dublin author from their perspective internationalisms but the recognition was posited. Arguably, Joyce had maintained an occasional eye on Shaw for some time, from turning to Grant Richards with his *Dubliners* manuscript so soon after the publisher had released a separate volume of Shaw's *Mrs Warren's Profession* in 1902.² As the play was blocked by the Lord Chamberlain's Office from professional performance in England, which persisted from the 1890s into the 1920s, on the grounds of immorality, Joyce most likely saw Richards as a possible publisher for *Dubliners*, which too challenged the sham guise of social morality—and, of course, Richards eventually published the book in 1914 after Joyce's fallout with the Dublin publisher Maunsel. And as Joyce thematically undermined militarism within his literature, Shaw too had done the same, from his 1894 play *Arms and the Man* through to his 1914 master journalistic response to the early months of the Great War, *Common Sense About the War*—a work that Shaw made clear in its early pages that in writing it, “I shall retain my Irish capacity for criticizing England with something of the detachment of a foreigner” (16–17). But while Joyce and Shaw hailed from Dublin and wrote mostly in exile, only one would consistently be viewed as an Irish writer and always be included within the arena of Irish Studies. Yet, this grievous error with regard to Shaw has been challenged repeatedly, and now with more and more critical voices.

In his superb study *The Irish Dramatic Revival 1899–1939* (2015), Anthony Roche begins his Shaw chapter, titled “Shaw and the Revival: The Absent Presence”, by writing that in his “two magisterial literary studies, *Inventing Ireland* (1995) and *Irish Classics* (2000), Declan Kiberd has persuasively made clear the case for George Bernard Shaw to be considered an Irish writer” (79). Roche followed this by lamenting that studies of the Irish Dramatic Revival failed to seriously consider Shaw as part of that revival or to consider Shaw's lasting imprint on Ireland. Indeed, as inspirational as the above two Kiberd books have proven to be for scholars who have considered Irish drama and literature since, Shaw has for most remained an outsider, perhaps flippantly brushed aside due to his long residence in England—despite the fact that, as Nicholas Grene noted in his 1992 essay “Shaw in the Irish Theatre: An Unacknowledged Presence”, such a fate did not greet other Irish writers who chose to live in self-exile, such as Sean O'Casey and Joyce. Nonetheless, despite the fact that the three major critics of Irish drama since the early 1990s, Grene, Kiberd, and Roche, have not ignored him, Shaw remained outside the realms of Irish Studies until, arguably, 2010.

Victor Merriman considered Shaw's presence or lack of presence, not in Dublin during the Irish Dramatic Revival, but within Irish Studies itself in his 2010 essay "Bernard Shaw in Contemporary Irish Studies: 'Passé and Contemptible?'" After considering Shaw within, or without Irish Studies at the time, Merriman concludes:

The whole point about modernity, which Shaw asserts time and again, and recent events dramatize [international downturns in world economies], is that, while it is the impetus for national movements and national consciousness, it is a transnational economic and cultural system. It knows no boundaries, and recentring Shaw's work, and his sharp, utopian, critical stance in Irish Studies, may enable its practitioners precisely to go beyond the kind of inherited disciplinary boundaries summarized by Fintan O'Toole: "From the 1890s, until recently, the principal subject of Irish writing had been 'Ireland.' ... Thus ... *John Bull's Other Island* is an Irish play because it deals with the matter of Ireland. But *Pygmalion*, because its settings and characters are English, isn't. Never mind that what it deals with—class, language, sexuality—things which are central to the experience of Irish people as they are to anyone else." ["Review of *I Know My Own Heart*, by Emma Donoghue," in *Critical Moments*, ed. O'Hanlon and Furay, 118]. Applied to current debates around Irish Studies, Shaw's strategy of establishing and then disrupting dialectical consciousness using all available forms—from drama to policy analysis and journalism—may enable a rethinking of problems and possibilities arising within that field. If it does, it may well enable insights struggled for in Irish Studies, in their turn, to inspire critique—and human progress—not only in Ireland but in other parts of a troubled, shrinking world. p. 231

There is much in these words, from Merriman and O'Toole, regarding the necessity of including, forcibly even, Shaw within Irish Studies. Interestingly, and arguably, Merriman's essay appeared in a volume that launched a new initiative to reconnect Shaw to Irish Studies.

Merriman's essay was included in a special-themed volume of *SHAW: The Annual of Bernard Shaw Studies* titled *Shaw and the Irish Literary Tradition*, edited by Dublin-born Shaw scholar Peter Gahan, author six years earlier of the imminently insightful *Shaw Shadows: Rereading the Texts of Bernard Shaw*.³ The ambitious volume included stalwarts of Shaw Studies, such as Stanley Weintraub, Martin Meisel, and Christopher Innes, mixed with important Irish Studies scholars such as Eibhear Walshe, James Moran, Brad Kent, Heinz Kosok, Victor Merriman, Terry Phillips, scholars of international focuses such as Kimberly Bohman-Kalaja, and one of

the co-editors of this anthology, Nelson O'Ceallaigh Ritschel. The volume represented important steps for both Shaw Studies and Irish Studies, recentering, to use Merriman's term, Shaw into the Irish equation and that equation into Shaw Studies, commencing a new exploration of Kiberd's argument that Shaw *is* of the Irish literary tradition.

In the year following *Shaw and the Irish Literary Tradition*, O'Ceallaigh Ritschel's *Shaw, Synge, Connolly, and Socialist Provocation* (2011) was published, revealing, as Richard Dietrich noted in his Foreword to the book, "how often things Shaw said, wrote, and did *really mattered* to the Irish in Ireland who had revolution on their minds and were responded to in ways that directly affected the outcome of events, most particularly in the works and deeds of two of Ireland's major cultural leaders of the twentieth century, John Millington Synge and James Connolly" (xii). The book used as a springboard Kiberd's statement in *Irish Classics* that Shaw's influence in Ireland was significant: "His plays were much admired not just by intellectuals but by trade unionists" (345). Following this book, in 2012, was the International Shaw Society's conference at University College Dublin, organized by the co-editor of this anthology, Audrey McNamara. The conference, which was opened by Michael D. Higgins, President of Ireland (whose opening speech from the conference is included in this anthology), featured a keynote address by Grene, as well as plenary lectures by Gahan, Roche, and O'Ceallaigh Ritschel. A major convergence of purpose was underway, as the conference facilitated platforms that assisted the next noted contribution to the agenda of "recentering" Shaw within the Irish literary tradition and Irish Studies: David Clare's 2016 *Bernard Shaw's Irish Outlook*. Clare's book drew on both Kiberd and O'Toole, along with Dietrich's call in the above-mentioned Foreword, a work that establishes Shaw, "like Joyce and Yeats, ... wrote *always* as an Irishman" (xi). Clare's book demonstrates just that; that even in plays set outside of Ireland, Shaw's thoughts and consciousness are never far from Ireland: it is a seminal work indeed. This not only echoed Merriman's quoted excerpt from O'Toole, but also through Kiberd's balanced argument in *Irish Classics* that a play such as *Arms and the Man* (1894) set in 1880s Bulgaria reflects an Irish sense through its character Bluntschli, the Swiss mercenary, who, as the outsider on many levels, is "set down" within a culture not his natural own, much like Shaw himself being an Irishman "set down" in London, beginning in 1876 (345). Yet the impact of McNamara's conference did not end with Clare's book. These exciting directions in research related to "Shaw and Ireland" include

O'Toole's 2017 *Judging Shaw*, that seemingly prompted the Irish television documentary *My Astonishing Self* in the same year—collectively elevating Shaw's presence in Ireland.

The 2012 Dublin Shaw conference also led, directly or indirectly, to the next books by Gahan and O'Ceallaigh Ritschel, *Bernard Shaw and Beatrice Webb on Poverty and Equality in the Modern World, 1905–1914* and *Bernard Shaw, W. T. Stead, and the New Journalism: Whitechapel, Parnell, Titanic, and the Great War*, respectively. While focusing on Shaw's international concerns beyond, and outside of Ireland, the two books, in their own ways, echo Merriman's view that the Irish Shaw can still change the dynamics of Irish Studies by focusing on the international and Irish implications of Shaw's work, particularly as these monographs focus on Shaw's crusading political work outside his plays. In a similar vein, Roche's plenary lecture in the 2012 conference fed what would become his Shaw chapter in *The Irish Dramatic Revival 1899–1939*. In addition, one might also say that the formation of Palgrave Macmillan's *Bernard Shaw and His Contemporaries* series grew from conversations between Gahan and O'Ceallaigh Ritschel concerning the 2012 conference in the three years following it. Given such stimulation generated by considering Shaw within his native city, it seems that the conference itself should be the starting point to present representations of new and emerging scholarship on Shaw and Ireland, specifically setting President Higgins's seminal speech that opened the conference as the starting point. The President's speech represents a significant recognition of Shaw's contributions to the making of modern Ireland and the international stage. Concentrating on Shaw's public persona, President Higgins traces Shaw's social and political engagement, as an Irishman, within an international community and opens the debate for Shaw's ongoing influence on and relevance in modern Ireland. It heralds the platform from which new "Shaw and Ireland" directions are taking off, as seen in the work of long-established, recently established, and important emerging voices within "Shaw and Ireland" scholarship.

This unique collection explores the many facets of Shaw's work in the opening decades of the twentieth century and demonstrates how influential a figure he was in the ongoing debate and movement towards Irish independence. This collection also highlights the international vision Shaw had for a modernizing Ireland. The first essay following President Higgins's speech, "The Rush of Air, The Windows Opened on Extravagance and Storm of Ideas: Kate O'Brien's *The Last Summer* and

Bernard Shaw's *Man and Superman*", by Anthony Roche, demonstrates how Kate O'Brien's work is strongly influenced by the work of Bernard Shaw. He argues that "a revolution of consciousness [was] initiated within Kate O'Brien by what she saw and heard on stage" when she attended Shaw's *Man and Superman* performed in the Abbey in 1917. In the essay, Roche also convincingly turns the notion of a fractious relationship between Shaw and the Abbey on its head. David Clare's "Shavian Echoes in the Work of Elizabeth Bowen" argues that Bowen endorsed Shavian ideals with regard to notions of Irish and English identity. He discusses how these notions are represented within a literary context that spills over from the stage and are overtly present in both Bowen's literary journalism and her novels. Through an exploration of a selection of Shaw plays and writings by Bowen he creates an indelible thread of influence. He concludes by noting that this Shavian influence can be detected and connected to the work of many other Irish writers.

Elizabeth Mannion examines how the rally to support the workers of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union (ITGWU), held in the Albert Hall in 1913, was instrumental in the change in the way Shaw created his religious characters. She argues that he turned them from a source of amusement to a source of disdain. She claims that "when it came to the Kiddies Scheme and religious officials standing in the way of tenement children receiving relief, the stakes were rather too high to keep the jokes flowing, and the Church behavior beyond the range of humor". Also looking at the role of the ITGWU, in the second and third decades of the twentieth century, Nelson O'Ceallaigh Ritschel explores events, stemming from what can be described as an Irish socialist revolution in his essay, "Bernard Shaw and Sean O'Casey: Remembering James Connolly". Using the trio as a triangulation of personalities, he explores the different perspectives at play during this very chaotic and important period in Irish history.

In "The Economics of Identity: *John Bull's Other Island* and the Creation of Modern Ireland", Aileen Ruane uses a post-colonial method to interrogate how Shaw fosters an economic agenda "using his stereotypes ... as a fundamental marker of identity". Examining how the land question is dealt with within the play and how deeply rooted this question was in the Irish psyche, she argues that Shaw "was firmly on the side of modernization, but asks that audience to question its roots and the

ideology that inspires it". Further exploring the Irish psyche, Susanne Colleary's "*O'Flaherty V.C.: Satire as a Shavian Agenda*" takes account of the patriot, the nationalist, and the materiality of family life during WWI in Ireland. In particular, Colleary highlights how the female characters, Mrs. O'Flaherty and Tessie, "represent comic and at times ironic stereotypes in critiquing Irish small-mindedness", which is responsible for the stunting of economic and social progress. Through this interrogation, Colleary "highlights the chasm between Mother Ireland and the harsh poverty of daily life that permeated these 'flesh and blood' women's lives".

The critique of Shaw's female characters continues in Audrey McNamara's "Shaw, Women and the Dramatizing of Modern Ireland". Concentrating on three plays, McNamara investigates how Shaw writes against the mythologized Yeatsian ideal of Kathleen Ni Houlihan by addressing the main female character's roles in *John Bull's Other Island*, *Pygmalion*, and *Heartbreak House*. McNamara argues that these characters are valuable in connecting Ireland to the international vision Shaw had for Ireland. Reinforcing Shaw's international outlook for Ireland, Aisling Smith in "WWI, Common Sense and *O'Flaherty V.C.*: Shaw Provides a Modernist Outlook for Ireland" argues that this call for "a new nationalist outlook" reverberates through to modern times. She maintains that "the themes of class, national patriotism, and identity explored within it by Shaw, as he advocated for cultural change, have proved prevailing issues; which not only influenced the founding of modern Ireland, but continue to be direct concerns of contemporary society", continuing on themes of identity and bearing in mind that theatre is an "active force".

Delving deeply into Shaw's Irish connections, "Bernard Shaw in Two Great Irish Houses: Kilteragh and Coole" by Peter Gahan traces and explores Shaw's friendship with the hosts of these two houses, Horace Plunkett and Lady Augusta Gregory. Gahan's Joycean style of writing concentrates on what he terms as "the revolutionary period that led to Irish independence" stretching from 1910 to 1922. This enlightening chapter reinforces the engagement Shaw had with Irish affairs from the east to the west coast of Ireland, connecting him in a physical as well as an intellectual sense. Following the theme of Shaw's public persona, introduced in President Higgins's speech, the final essay by Gustavo Rodríguez Martín "Shaw's Ireland (and the Irish Shaw) in the International Press (1914-1925)" brings the volume full circle. Rodríguez Martín explores